

# what's up doc?

by Dr. Mary Livers, PH.D, MSW, Deputy Secretary

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Hello, Everyone:

I don't know if all of your offices are like central office, but it seems like lately we've been limping along on one leg, with so many people out sick with viruses, back trouble, you name it, we've got it. I hope everyone is staying healthy, wherever you are.

It's especially important to stay well with the really crazy weather we have had this week—the pictures from around north Louisiana look like another state, not the sunny Deep South. North Louisiana is getting payback for the “snow days” we had down this way last year, with offices being closed for most of the week and people being socked in. I hope none of you lost electric power during the “blizzard” and that no one was hurt traveling the icy roads. We had to cancel our leadership meeting scheduled for this Wednesday in Bunkie because so many people were iced in and could not travel.

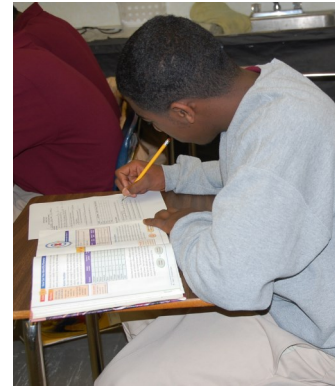
We attended a JJIC meeting this week, and interestingly, it was held in New Orleans at the Supreme Court building instead of the usual location in the Capitol. The Supreme Court is on Royal St. in the French Quarter, and it's a gorgeous old building that was renovated several years ago. It really does feel like “the halls of justice.” We provided an update on our recent activities, and focused on educational data in secure care. Our figures show that almost 70 percent of our young people in secure care are pursuing Carnegie units for high school credit rather than the HiSet track. We also presented a report on compliance with the provisions of Act 1225, and I am happy to note that OJJ has completed the reform provisions directly related to secure care, and the periodic review of youth in custody. As we told the members of JJIC, even though we have met the requirements of Act 1225, we don't believe that reform is complete (it will never be “complete”) and we continually review our policies and operations to identify ways to implement best practices.

By the time you read this message, the governor's proposed budget will have been presented and we may know a little more about what our budget figures will look like for the next fiscal year. It's too soon for us to be able to tell you all what it means for OJJ, but we will let everyone know as soon as we have had the time to digest it. Of course, the budget will not be final, final until the legislative process is complete when the session closes on June 11.

We have received provisional approval from Civil Service on our proposed retirement incentive plan, and we expect the full Civil Service Commission's official approval next week. We will send you the final details as soon as they are available.

The weather people are predicting 70 degree temperatures this weekend, so I'll close with my wish for you all to enjoy getting outside and enjoying some sunshine, especially up north where the snowmen will be melting fast. As ever, my sincere thanks to each and every member of the OJJ family, wherever your serve, for all you do, every day, in the sunshine, rain or even snow, to meet the mission.

Sincerely,  
“Doc” *Dr. Mary Livers*



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