Summer Greetings!

As you know, last week I began serving as the Interim Director of DYS. This Monthly Brief is an opportunity to share with you my vision for the coming months. With your dedication, we will continue to build on the transformation of our agency that began under Director Tom Stickrath’s leadership.

We will continue to move ahead full-steam with our reform efforts. Now in place at all DYS facilities, the Strength-based Behavior Management System (SBBMS), a multi-level behavior motivation system, is designed to increase positive youth behaviors through the use of reinforcements and decrease unwanted behaviors through a menu of appropriate sanctions. In the coming months, we will continue enhancing the treatment milieu of the living units with the introduction of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) for every unit. CBT focuses on targeting certain criminogenic factors youth might have and helps them to restructure, or change, the way they think and respond in various situations. Full-service units will allow youth to receive services in the unit where they live. Additionally, we will incorporate the New Freedom–Phoenix curriculum, designed to meet the specific needs of DYS youth. Some of the educational improvements underway include expanding educational resources from the classrooms throughout facility campuses and developing engaging, hands-on learning activities for students.

The agency will continue to improve the continuity of care for youth on parole. Over the coming months, we will increase community programming, continue to develop options for diversion of appropriate youth from DYS and expand Community Based Treatment Centers (CBTCs). The Release Authority and Parole will use technology to provide information and support family ties. We hope to reduce recidivism through implementing Effective Practices in Community Supervision (EPICS). Additionally, Disproportionate Minority Contact (DMC) efforts will increase, and the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) will rollout. We will also continue to develop stronger collaborations with Ohio Family and Children First, reentry courts and coalitions.

In closing, I would like to encourage all staff to continue with their hard work and professionalism as we strive to meet our mission: “To encourage positive change in the lives of youthful offenders through collaborative partnerships and culturally relevant therapeutic and academic interventions that support public safety and prepare youth to lead productive lives.”