



DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

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Janklow Plans To "Phase Down" Juvenile Corrections At Plankinton

(Pierre) -- Gov. Bill Janklow said Wednesday he will gradually reduce the number of young people in the juvenile corrections programs at Plankinton and intends to close the programs there by the end of this year.

"We're frankly just running out of kids," Janklow said. "We're not able to provide all of the specialized programming with a group this small and do it cost effectively."

Currently there are 51 students in the State Training School and Juvenile Prison programs at Plankinton. Those not scheduled to be discharged by the time the facility closes will be placed in other specialized programs in either South Dakota or neighboring states that best meet their individual needs. They include students with histories of sexual offenses, violent behavior, other mental health problems and drug and alcohol abuse. About one-third of the students are enrolled in special-education classes.

Janklow told the mayor of Plankinton and the local school board president about his decision on Tuesday night. He said the decision is based on fewer young people being sent to the Department of Corrections and the need to find budget efficiencies because of the economic downturn's effects on government revenue.

Eliminating the programs at Plankinton and placing students in other specialized programs within South Dakota or in neighboring states would mean an estimated savings in excess of \$1 million annually for state government's general fund. The current Training School budget is about \$4.8 million with a staff of the equivalent of 98 full time positions.

Current cost per juvenile per day is \$239 for students at the Training School and \$545 at the Juvenile Prison. The average cost of alternative placements in programs outside Plankinton is currently \$197. The state currently has about 100 students already in alternative placements because of their specialized individual needs.

The savings would be used to help cover a budget shortfall that the governor currently estimates at \$11 million for the current fiscal year and in excess of \$40 million for next fiscal year.

"Our community programs are working, and that means fewer kids are getting into the serious trouble that requires them to be placed in Department of Corrections institutions, plus our aftercare programs are better for the kids who do go through DOC and that's resulted in fewer of them getting into trouble again," Janklow said.

Court commitments of juveniles to the DOC went down nearly 23% in the past 4 years from 480 to 372. The number of juveniles released from DOC and private programs who reoffended and were sent back into the system dropped from 35% two years ago to 25% last year.

Janklow said he is willing to work with the people of Plankinton on future uses for the campus. He specifically offered a long-term lease of the education buildings and related facilities if the community is interested in using the campus to replace the Plankinton public school that was destroyed in a propane explosion.