



DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

ADMINISTRATION

3200 East Highway 34
c/o 500 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501-5070
Phone: (605) 773-3478
Fax: (605) 773-3194

Website: <http://doc.sd.gov/>

Follow us on Twitter: @SouthDakotaDOC

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CONTACT: Michael Winder, SD DOC Communications and Information Manager

State Juvenile Corrections Programs Again Reach Highest Level In PbS Project

CUSTER, S.D.- South Dakota's juvenile corrections programs have again reached the highest level status possible under a national project that measures conditions and treatment services provided to incarcerated youth.

All three of the reporting programs at the State Treatment and Rehabilitation (STAR) Academy near Custer obtained Level 4 status during the October 2015 data collection period for the Performance-based Standards (PbS) project.

In April 2011, South Dakota became the first state to have all of its reporting programs achieve Level 4 status. The state repeated the feat in October 2012, April 2013, April 2014, October 2014 and again this fall.

"The DOC Juvenile Division and STAR Academy have established a tradition of operating the best juvenile correction programs in the country," said Doug Herrmann, director of Juvenile Services. "Their cooperative effort is reflected in each of the programs obtaining the highest level of achievement together for an unprecedented sixth time. I congratulate the leadership and our employees involved and admire their commitment to best practices and continual improvement in the PbS project."

At least one of the STAR Academy programs has achieved Level 4 status in the PbS project since 2009.

"Twenty-three of the 183 participating facilities in the nation reached Level 4 status for the most recent reporting period," said Corrections Secretary Denny Kaemingk. "Having all three STAR Academy programs at that level is reflective of the dedication to utilizing evidence-based practices to best serve the youth in our care."

(more)

Our mission is to protect the citizens of South Dakota by providing safe and secure facilities for juvenile and adult offenders committed to our custody by the courts. To provide effective community supervision to offenders upon their release and to utilize evidence-based practices to maximize opportunities for rehabilitation.

PbS is a program developed by the Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators (CJCA) for agencies and facilities to identify, monitor and improve conditions and treatment services provided to incarcerated youths using national standards and outcome measures.

Data is collected twice per year to measure safety, security, order, medical and mental health services, justice and legal rights, programming and reintegration planning.

STAR Academy has participated in the PbS project since 2001. Gov. Dennis Daugaard signed an executive order in 2012 requiring the state juvenile corrections programs to continue participating in the project and to report annually to the Legislature on the progress of the project.

The PbS project received a 2004 Innovations in American Government Award from the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard University and the Council for Excellence in Government. The South Dakota Department of Corrections juvenile division was used as an example of implementing the PbS principles for this award.

For more information on STAR Academy's participation in the PbS project or to view the most recent annual report, visit the Department of Corrections website at: <http://doc.sd.gov/juvenile/pbsp.aspx>.

For more information on the PbS project, visit the CJCA website at: <http://pbstandards.org/initiatives/performance-based-standards-pbs>.