DATE: August 14, 2009

TO: Regional Directors

THRU: David L. Fairbanks, Assistant Secretary for Programs
       Peter Dicre, Assistant Secretary for Operations

FROM: Alan Abramowitz, State Director, Office of Family Safety

SUBJECT: Appointment of Circuit Education Champion and Lead Agency Education Liaison Due Date: August 21, 2009

PURPOSE: To provide information and direction regarding required action concerning the attached 2009 document titled “Interagency Agreement Between Florida Department of Children and Families (DCF), Florida Department of Education (DOE), Florida Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), Florida Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD), and Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) to Coordinate Services for Children Served by the Florida Child Welfare System.”

BACKGROUND: Section 39.0016(2), Florida Statutes, requires the Department to enter into an agreement with the Department of Education regarding the education and related care of children known to DCF (as defined in the interagency agreement). Section 39.0016(2), Florida Statutes, also requires the Department to enter into local agreements with district school boards or other local education entities regarding children known to DCF who are of school age, and children known to DCF who are younger than school age but who would otherwise qualify for services from the district school board.

The Agency for Workforce Innovation’s (AWI) Office of Early Learning (OEL) is the lead agency charged with administering Florida’s early childhood education system. The Office of Early Learning partners with DOE and DCF to provide a comprehensive early childhood education system. The Department of Juvenile Justice and the Agency for Persons with Disabilities also have educational responsibilities for children under their respective authority, many of whom are also served by DCF.

In July 2005, the Department entered into a state level interagency agreement with DOE and AWI. This resulted in local interagency agreements with all school boards and most of the local workforce boards throughout the state (a list of the current local interagency agreements and last known status is attached). The Community Based Care Lead Agencies are not a party to most of the current local agreements. The 2005 agreement
expired, and new circumstances arose that made expanding the participation in the agreement necessary.

The new state level agreement requires both the Department and Lead Agency participation in revising the current agreements with district school boards to fully implement the provisions of the 2009 state level interagency agreement. It also requires these partners to be active members in implementing the requirements of the agreement, using the “Guide to Improve Educational Opportunities for Florida’s Foster Youth” (attached).

Once the liaisons have been identified, the Office of Family Safety will have a conference call to provide additional guidance to the identified individuals in carrying out their responsibilities, including obtaining participation by the other agencies to the agreement.

The Department’s Education Champion is Mary Cagle, Director of Children’s Legal Services. Ms. Cagle has appointed Deborah Schrotth as her lead person in implementing this agreement statewide. The Family Safety Program Office lead to assist Ms. Schrotth is Frank Platt.

**ACTION REQUIRED:** Please share this information with Circuit Administrators, Community Based Care Lead Agencies, supervisors, Children’s Legal Services, and all other appropriate staff. Request that Circuit Administrators, in collaboration with the Circuit Managing attorney, appoint an Education Champion for each circuit and that each CBC Lead Agency appoint an Education Liaison.

The Circuit education champions and the CBC education liaisons will be responsible for assisting in revising all local interagency agreements among DCF, the school boards, workforce boards, and local representatives of DJJ and APD as described in the Interagency Agreement. This includes convening the meetings of the local teams required by this Interagency Agreement, completing the actions required and forwarding the reports of actions taken by the local teams.

Liaisons and Champions are jointly responsible for ensuring implementation of the requirements of this Interagency Agreement. It is expected that the Circuit and the Lead Agency served by each school board will be a party to that school board’s local agreement.
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Please report the names of the Circuit Education Champion and the Lead Agency Education Liaison no later than August 21, 2009 to Frank Platt in the Office of Family Safety. Mr. Platt can be reached at: Frank_Platt@DCF.state.fl.us, or by phone at 850-922-2860.

cc: Mary Cagle, Children’s Legal Services
Circuit Administrators
CEO’s CBC Lead Agencies

Attachments:
- Interagency Agreement between DCF/DOE/AWI/APD/DJJ dated July 30, 2009
- Guide to Improve Educational Opportunities for Florida’s Foster Youth
- Status of 2005 Local Interagency Agreements
- Current DCF educational liaisons (from 2005 agreements)
- List of the current DCF Education Liaisons