



*For Immediate Release*

## IDOC Announces Closure of South Bend Juvenile Correctional Facility

Indianapolis, IN (May 22, 2012) – The Indiana Department of Correction (IDOC) is announcing plans to close the South Bend Juvenile Correctional Facility in South Bend, IN. Many of the 76 students currently housed at the South Bend Juvenile facility will be assessed for participation in community-based re-entry and transitional services programs as part of the IDOC Division of Youth Services (DYS) and national best-practice model of providing youth services through the least restrictive means possible. Many of the youth will be transitioned to community-based programs before the facility officially closes on or about July 1st, 2012. Those who are not scheduled for release before then will be moved to the Logansport and Pendleton Juvenile Correctional Facilities. As part of this plan, the State will re-direct a portion of the South Bend operational budget to the Juvenile Transition Fund, which will help support and maintain additional re-entry and transitional programs aimed at providing better care and treatment for Indiana’s juvenile offender population.

In expanding the re-entry and transitional services, DYS aims to further reduce the overall juvenile population being held in secure prison facilities and ensure that only those youth who pose true public safety risks are committed and assigned to an IDOC juvenile correctional facility. IDOC/DYS hopes to continue working with juvenile courts through the Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative (JDAI) Statewide Expansion project to further reduce DOC commitments of lower risk, non-violent youth who can be better served through community-based diversion and treatment programs.

JDAI is a philosophy that relies on objective admissions criteria to replace subjective decisions that inappropriately place low-risk youth in custody. JDAI also provides Indiana with a unique opportunity to systemically examine its existing policies and practices through a racial lens to determine whether they have a disparate impact on youth of color in the juvenile justice system. The JDAI is a statewide initiative involving collaboration between the Indiana Supreme Court, Indiana Criminal Justice Institute and the Indiana Department of Correction as lead agencies involved in this effort.

In early 2009, the IDOC created the Division of Youth Services to oversee all aspects of juvenile services for those youth committed to the Department of Correction. DYS immediately undertook major efforts to reduce the length of stay of juveniles in secure (prison) facilities and to assign youth to the least restrictive setting based on their individual needs and risks in accordance with national best-practice approaches. IDOC has also worked closely with Juvenile Courts to establish appropriate community-based diversion programs aimed at reducing the commitments to secure confinement. Through these efforts, the overall juvenile population has been dramatically reduced from almost 1,100 youth to approximately 550 today.

“The Division of Youth Services by utilizing best practice approaches to youth in our care have significantly reduced our youth population. Through these efforts, these youth are spending less time in

prison and are returning to community-based programs as quickly as possible in order to re-establish family ties and support,” said Commissioner Bruce Lemmon.

Approximately 80 IDOC employees will be laid off with the facility’s closure, although all will be able to apply for vacancies at other IDOC facilities.

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