



Department of  
Youth Services

## Message from DYS Director Harvey Reed

Response to Recent Report

June 7, 2013

Dear Staff and Stakeholders:

I wanted to take a moment to address the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) report of findings from youth surveyed in custody in 2012, culminating in the stories that recently appeared.

The safety of our youth is our top priority, and Governor Kasich has called for an interagency task force, which met yesterday and today to begin analyzing the report to make sure we have the strongest possible safeguards in place at our facilities. The anonymous survey approach used by BJS differs from the incident-based approach that states use, and the new information is important to us to make sure we are doing everything possible to protect our youth.

We are taking immediate action including assigning a Climate Assessor to reach out to staff and youth at Circleville Juvenile Correctional Facility beginning this weekend. The Climate Assessor will reach out to youth and staff and observe the institutional culture in order to report back to the task force, which will meet again on Monday. Over the next two weeks, additional Climate Assessors will be in place at all four DYS facilities.

While we have clear policies and procedures in place that establish a zero tolerance standard for any type of sexual abuse, harassment or assault at DYS, we must do a better job ensuring that youth feel comfortable enough to report. This is an opportunity for DYS to make systematic improvements.

A successful transformation cannot be accomplished without the support and cooperation from all of our staff and stakeholders. I appreciate your efforts in implementing the reform that has taken place and your willingness to continue to make DYS a safer and better environment for our youth to live.