



# R & D NEWS



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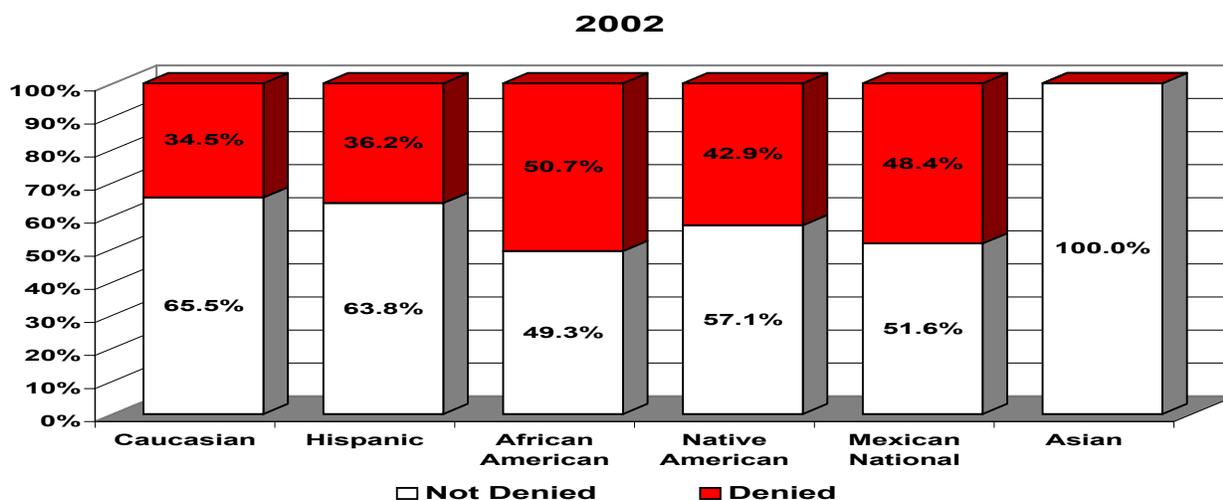
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## SUPERINTENDENT RELEASE BOARD RESULTS



Lonn Lanza-Kaduce et al., Juvenile Transfer to Criminal Court Study: Final Report, Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, 2002.

Lanza-Kaduce et al., concluded that transferring youth to the adult criminal court was more likely to aggravate recidivism than to reduce it. They examined youth transferred to adult criminal court in 1995 and constructed a comparison group composed of similar offenders that were retained in the juvenile justice system. The comparison group was matched on age, gender, race and four different delinquency measures. Their analysis included 950 cases or 475 matched pairs. In addition they also interviewed juvenile and adult justice officials regarding their perceptions of the problems posed by inmates under 18 years old, and 144 incarcerated males between 17 and 20 regarding their views of the adult and juvenile courts. Transferred cases were more likely than cases retained in the juvenile system to result in felony recidivism after the age of 18, and when both cases in the matched pair had

felony recidivism, the adult transfer cases tended to recidivate for more serious offenses. Correctional administrators interviewed acknowledged that inmates under 18 have special needs, that the transferred youth had difficulty adjusting to prison life, and they were more likely to join gangs and violate institutional rules. The youthful offenders interviewed by Lanza-Kaduce et al., described the juvenile court in more positive terms than the adult court and they characterized the latter as formal and hurried with little opportunity for them to be heard.

### ARIZONA JUVENILE JUSTICE TRIVIA

What percentage of ADJC commitments are on probation at the time of their commitment?

“Transferred youth were especially critical and mistrustful of public defenders.” The juvenile offenders interviewed characterized “low end” juvenile placements as ineffective in changing their delinquent attitudes while “deep end” juvenile sanctions were perceived to be more positive because of the nature of the programming and the longer lengths of stay. Adult probation was rarely seen as beneficial to the juvenile offenders interviewed. Meanwhile, “a majority of the judges and prosecutors thought that the transfer reforms did not increase public safety.”

Phillip Cook and John Laub, *After the Epidemic: Recent Trends in Youth Violence in the United States*, Crime and Justice A Review of Research, 2002.

Cook and Laub note that American youth violence peaked in 1993 and has been followed by a rapid, sustained drop. The increase in violence was affected by an increase in homicides which the authors found to be particularly intense for African American juveniles under the age of eighteen. While the epidemic was narrowly confined with regard to age and race, it affected all regions of the country. Cook and Laub contend that the introduction of crack cocaine and the prevalence of hand guns provided major sources for deadly conflicts during this period. Observed increases in aggravated assault, however, were a reflection of changes in police reporting practices related to domestic violence cases. No consensus has developed to explain the drop in youth violence, and the downside has not been a mirror image of the upside. Indeed, the authors found the 1998 youth homicide rate to be substantially lower than it was in 1993, however, it was similar in composition with respect to sex, race/ethnicity, and weapon type. “Thus the high concentration among minorities and males, and the prevalence of guns, may be long-lasting hangover from the epidemic.”

Patricia Van Voorhis et al., *The Impact of Offender and Programmatic Characteristics on the Effectiveness of a Cognitive Skills Program*, paper presented at the 2002 annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology.

Van Voorhis et al., present the results of a randomized controlled experimental design for adult offenders who participated in the Georgia Cognitive Skills Program to those that did not. The specific focus of this research was on responsiveness, or the relationship between offender and program characteristics. The authors found that overall, recidivism rates were only slightly lower for experimental participants than for control group members. Van Voorhis et al., found that white parolees benefited from the Cognitive Skills Program more than the nonwhite parolees. Moreover, individuals in classes with greater than seven members were less likely to be rearrested or revoked than those from smaller classes. “The analyses suggests that the presence of clearly stated and enforced standards for classroom behavior and participants’ responsibilities in treatment is particularly important in maximizing the benefits of the program for participants.” Other characteristics of success included: *demonstration of learned skills* i.e., participants required to practice skills did better than those that were not required to practice the new skills; and *detached coaches* i.e., facilitators who did not allow themselves to become pulled into offender thinking or manipulation had offenders with lower recidivism rates than facilitators that allowed themselves to be manipulated. The Georgia Cognitive Skills Program seeks to modify offenders’ impulsive, egocentric, illogical and rigid thinking patterns. The research was conducted between July 1998 and April 2000 and it involved 25 parole districts across Georgia. The sample included 963 parolees considered high-risk with IQ scores above 80, and without serious substance abuse problems. They were predominantly African American and their average age 32.

#### **ARIZONA JUVENILE JUSTICE TRIVIA ANSWER**

During fiscal year 2001, over three quarters (78.8%) were on some form of probation. Approximately one-quarter (25.2%) were on juvenile intensive probation and one half (53.6%) were on standard probation.