



Deana Williams

DJJ's Lead Educator Looks To Prepare Residents For Life After Classroom

With employers nationwide facing a chronic shortage of workers – especially those with a specific skill – Deana Williams, DJJ's School Superintendent for the Division of Education, sees a major opportunity for residents currently in DJJ's care.

“Employers throughout this country right now will tell you that the need has never been higher for skilled workers,” says Ms. Williams. “We're working closely with our Reentry Unit to implement robust vocational training programs to strengthen the pipeline of skilled trades employees, along with a smooth transition to a successful job placement in the community.”

Deana, a Richmond native, brings 22 years of experience in the education field to the task. After graduating from Huguenot High School in 1994, she went on to earn a bachelor's degree in psychology from Virginia Commonwealth University in 2002 and a master's degree in education from Virginia State University in 2008, with a concentration in curriculum and special education. She also earned a post-masters at George Washington University in 2013 as an education specialist. Deana is licensed and endorsed as a Virginia superintendent, administration and supervision Pre-K-12, and special education (specific learning disability and intellectual disability).

She began her career as a special education teacher in Richmond City Public Schools and then Henrico County Public Schools. She joined the Division of Education at DJJ in 2014, and has served in a number of leadership positions including special education compliance specialist, gifted coordinator, 504 coordinator, assistant principal, director of post-secondary programs, director of instructional programs, and acting superintendent.

“Our job is to help our residents become aware of, and tap into, skills they never knew they had, and then apply them in a good job when they return to their communities,” Ms. Williams says. “There is no greater reward for those of us who work with these young people, most of whom simply need someone who believes in them providing the support they need to succeed.”