

Department of Juvenile Justice  
**Zero Tolerance Summit Proposal**

**PROJECT DATE:** August 11 - 12, 2008

**PROJECT LOCATION:** Rosen Shingle Creek

9939 Universal Boulevard  
Orlando, Florida 32819-9357

or

Gaylord Palms Resort and Convention Center  
6000 W. Osceola Parkway  
Orlando, Florida 34746

**PROJECT SUMMARY:** To provide a statewide summit which brings key policymakers, practitioners and community leaders to discuss and develop innovative strategies and alternatives to “zero tolerance”, and establish solutions which will meet the needs of children, schools and communities. The Summit will result in an action plan to address zero tolerance policies and practices, and promote systemic changes that strike a balance between increasing public safety and providing opportunities for children to develop into responsible productive adults. Following the statewide summit, the Department plans to facilitate a series of restorative justice, civil citation and zero tolerance awareness trainings throughout the state of Florida. The series of trainings will assist in preparing a timeline for a plan-of-action to reduce the number of school related referrals to the Department and help reduce over-representation of minorities in Florida’s juvenile justice system.

Research suggests a link between the application of zero tolerance policies and juvenile justice involvement known as the “schoolhouse to jailhouse track.” During fiscal year 2006-07, 22,926 youth or 16.1% of the referrals to the Department of Juvenile Justice were school related and 19% of youth referred had at least one school related referral. The statewide average for first-time referrals coming from school referrals was 52%. A misdemeanor was the most serious charge for 67% of school related referrals.

Not unlike other states across the country, this “track” has contributed to the over-representation of minority youth in Florida’s juvenile justice system. While African-American youth make up about 23% of Florida’s student population, 47% of school related referrals involved African-American youth. Research has also shown that

