



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT  
OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

AVERY D. NILES, COMMISSIONER

## A MESSAGE FROM THE OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

Avery D. Niles, Commissioner

Jim Shuler, Director  
Office of Communications



### DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

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### **DJJ COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCES DISMISSAL of YDC INTERIM DIRECTOR NEW AUGUSTA YDC DIRECTOR SOON TO BE NAMED**

**(AUGUSTA - GA)** Today Department of Juvenile Justice Commissioner Avery D. Niles announced the dismissal of the Interim Director of the Youth Development Campus (YDC) in Augusta, Georgia.

DJJ Commissioner Niles announced that former Assistant Director of Security, Melvin Womble, was dismissed from his duties at the Augusta YDC effective at close of business December 31, 2012.

As the former Assistant Director of Security, Womble was named Interim Director of the Youth Development Campus following the resignation of former YDC Director Ronald Brawner in November 2012. Brawner resigned his post after five youth escaped from the facility. Assistant Director Womble acted as temporary Director for two months while DJJ Central Office launched an extensive search for a full time replacement for the Augusta YDC Director's position.

During the joint DJJ-GBI investigation that followed the escape at the YDC, Interim Director Womble was made responsible for improving safety and security deficiencies in areas which lead to the escape. However a serious assault also occurred on the YDC campus, which subsequently launched new investigations into problems with the timely reporting and incident coding of Special Incident Reports at the facility.

Because Womble was still on a 12-month "work probationary" period for actions which lead to the November escape, he was relieved of his role as Acting Director at the YDC and relieved of his responsibilities as Assistant YDC Director. Womble was placed on Suspension with Pay on December 11, 2012.

Based on investigative findings, as of December 19, 2012, the former Assistant Director was offered a demotion to a Juvenile Corrections Officer position at another DJJ facility without supervisory responsibilities, but declined. His dismissal became effective the last day of December 2012.

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During the time former Assistant Director Womble was on suspension in December and until a new Director is named, a DJJ Regional Administrator and a Special Operations Director from DJJ Central Office have been assigned by Commissioner Niles to work on-site at the secure facility to direct daily operations.

The DJJ support staff will remain on assignment until the Commissioner announces his final choice for a new Director and while the new Augusta YDC management team transitions to full command.

Commissioner Niles said a new Director is expected to be named soon for the Augusta facility. An official announcement of the Commissioner's final selection for the YDC Director position will be made in a separate news release.

Also effective December 31, 2012, the Commissioner announced the Augusta YDC has a new Assistant Director of Security and a new Captain of Correctional Officers effective in January 2013.

Commissioner Niles pledges to continue his unannounced visits to the Augusta YDC to perform safety and security assessments, make surprise inspections, and look for policy violations.

**(END RELEASE)**