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## **Transition Toolkit 3.0: Meeting the Educational Needs of Youth Exposed to the Juvenile Justice System**

**THIRD EDITION**

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## The National Technical Assistance Center for the Education of Neglected or Delinquent Children and Youth

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## I. Introduction

The third edition of NDTAC's *Transition Toolkit* provides updated information on existing policies, practices, strategies, and resources for transition that build on field experience and research. The *Toolkit* offers practical information that enables State and local administrators, teachers, and service providers to provide high-quality transition services for youth moving into, through, and out of education programs within the juvenile justice (JJ) system.

Because each State, jurisdiction, and facility addresses transition differently, no exact model can be replicated and applied. However, system-wide administrative processes, coordination efforts, strategies, and communication practices can improve a youth's experience in the JJ system and reentry into the community. The intent of the *Toolkit* is to highlight the processes and practices that focus primarily on the educational needs of these youth and those who directly provide education services.

### Organization of the Toolkit

**Section I** of this document provides an introduction to and overview of the Transition Toolkit.

**Section II** of this document briefly addresses the topic of transition across five areas:

- The transition process for youth in the JJ system
- The complexity of the JJ system
- Characteristics of the population
- Relevant transition literature and policies
- Strategies for successful transitions

**Sections III–VI** each addresses a distinct stage of transition:

- Stage 1: Entry into the JJ system
- Stage 2: Residence
- Stage 3: Exit From Secure Care
- Stage 4: Aftercare

Each section provides strategies to improve the transition process at one of the four stages. Strategies specific to facilities, youth, families, and communities/systems are highlighted and examples are provided. Each section also includes pertinent resources, such as sample forms, protocols, and tools used at different stages of the transition process.

**Appendix A** contains a self-study and planning document to guide program improvement at each stage of the transition process. **Appendix B** includes legal considerations related to transition. **Appendix C** provides additional information about transition-related requirements in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that are introduced in Section II. **Appendix D** summarizes Federal funding resources available to support transition programs. **Appendix E** features highlights of four transition-related programs around the country.

## II. Overview of Transition

### The Transition Process for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System

The transition process for youth in the JJ system is complex. Transition does not occur only once for these youth; rather, it is an ongoing process that usually involves multiple transitions. Youth move from the community into detention, incarceration, or both—then back to the community. Youth also frequently move to different housing units or pods within a facility or from one facility to another. A youth takes no uniform route; rather, his or her path depends on many decisions, choices, and rulings made by law enforcement agencies and the courts (e.g., whether to prosecute; whether to detain between court hearings). See *Figure 1* for a simplified overview of the process. In addition, a sample transition pathway is

provided in *Figure 2*; this pathway will look different for each youth based on the needs of the youth and their family members.

Having options allows the JJ system to respond to each unique situation, but it can also create additional challenges. For example, a youth who is released to his or her home and returns to his or her public school while awaiting adjudication requires different supports than a youth who is detained and educated in an institution. Each step along the path to or from secure care entails a new transition for the youth and his or her family or adult advocate. For school placement alone, each transition requires a student to adjust to a new educational environment, including new teachers, new rules, and a new curriculum. On a practical level, each move requires coordinating information and transferring academic records between and among different agencies, which, if not done properly, can impede a student's educational progress and learning.

Effective transition for youth in the JJ system has been defined as “a coordinated set of activities for the youth, designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes successful movement from the community to a correctional program setting, and from a correctional program setting to post-incarceration activities” (Griller Clark, 2006). This definition identifies three elements of successful transition:

- It is coordinated.
- It is an outcome-oriented process.
- It promotes successful movement between the facility and the community.<sup>a</sup>

The first element—**coordination**—requires individuals from multiple systems to work together to plan for and ensure that youth involved in the JJ system receive appropriate support services at all stages. The primary individuals involved are the youth and his or her family or adult advocate. A transition coordinator or specialist, case manager, or placement specialist is also extremely important in leading and coordinating the process. Others who should be involved in the process include court and probation personnel; administrators, teachers, and staff from detention and corrections institutions; service providers from other agencies or programs (e.g., mental health, substance abuse, child welfare); and personnel from the community, including schools and employers. Ultimately, the individuals required to support the youth will depend on the unique needs of that child and his or her transition plan.

The second element—**an outcome-oriented process**—focuses on the goals of successful youth engagement with school and/or employment, avoidance of return to the JJ system, and reduction of the likelihood of future entry into the adult criminal justice system. Post-release engagement in school and/or work is critical to both short- and long-term transition success<sup>b</sup> and is not just the responsibility of the youth and the JJ agency coordinating the youth's release but a collective responsibility of the community and all those involved in the transition process (Mathur & Griller Clark, 2014).

The third element—**successful movement between the facility and the community**—requires awareness of all the systems and policies in place to help support the youth in navigating these systems and becoming positively engaged with his or her community. It also involves the successful movement of records and processes to support the youth in acquiring appropriate academic, career and technical, behavioral, social, and independent-living skills with a focus on preparing youth for college or career.

An effective transition process and high-quality support services within that process are essential for a youth to successfully live in the community following secure care. It is critical that the **transition process begin as soon as a youth enters the JJ system.**

*Figure 1* shows the JJ system and path to secure care. *Figure 2* identifies the possible path a youth may take while transitioning from the residential stage to the exit and aftercare stages.

<sup>a</sup> This concept of transition for eligible youth with disabilities from school to postschool activities was originally articulated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990. It continues to apply under current law. See 20 U.S.C. § 1414(d)(1)(A)(i)(VII) and 20 U.S.C. § 1401(34).

<sup>b</sup> See, for example, Bullis, M., Yovanoff, P., & Havel, E. (2004). The importance of getting started right: Further examination of the facility-to-community transition of formerly incarcerated youth. *The Journal of Special Education*, 38, 80–94.

Figure 1. The Juvenile Justice System and the Path to Secure Care

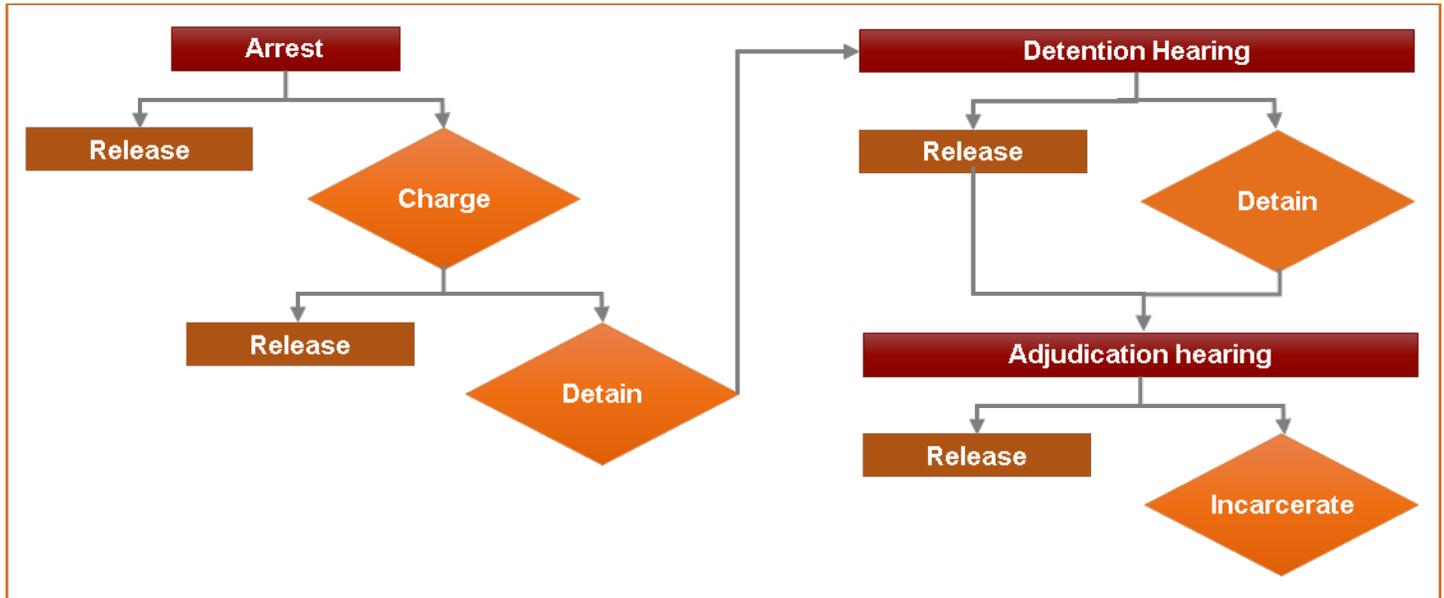
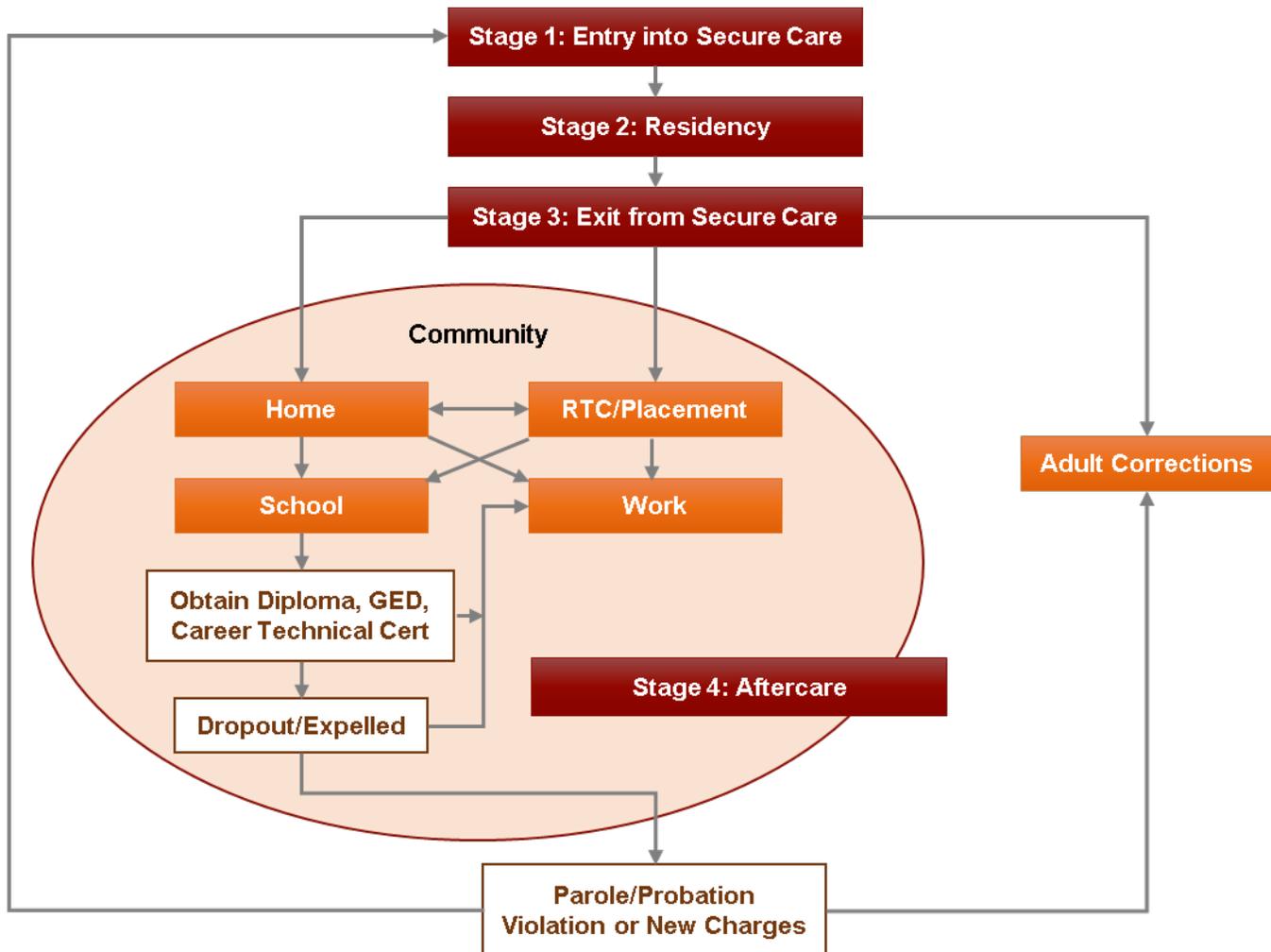


Figure 2 provides possible pathways during the transition process across all four stages. Each youth's pathway can be different based on needs of the youth and family and realistically the supports and services available to them in the community.

Figure 2. Transition Pathway



Helping a youth move through this complex system and make an eventual transition to the community requires a multidisciplinary, collaborative approach. The matrix in *Figure 3* identifies key players who may be involved in the transition process and where in the process their involvement is most beneficial.

**Figure 3. Key Players Involved in the Transition Process by Stage**

| Key Players  | Stage        |           |             |           |
|--|--------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
|  | System Entry | Residence | System Exit | Aftercare |
| Youth  | ✓            | ✓         | ✓           | ✓         |
| Parent or guardian   | ✓            | ✓         | ✓           | ✓         |
| Mentor   | ✓            | ✓         | ✓           | ✓         |
| <b>Institution</b>   |              |           |             |           |
| Assessment specialist  | ✓            | ✓         | ✓           |           |
| Transition specialist or coordinator   | ✓            | ✓         | ✓           | ✓         |
| Guidance counselor or academic advisor   | ✓            | ✓         | ✓           | ✓         |
| Treatment and/or mental health counselor/clinician   | ✓            | ✓         | ✓           |           |
| Instructional personnel  | ✓            | ✓         | ✓           |           |
| Behavioral staff   | ✓            | ✓         | ✓           |           |
| Person(s) responsible for sending, receiving, and maintaining youths' records                          | ✓            | ✓         | ✓           | ✓         |
| <b>School District</b>   |              |           |             |           |
| Registrar  | ✓            |           | ✓           | ✓         |
| Records keeper   | ✓            |           | ✓           | ✓         |
| Guidance counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, or academic advisor                     | ✓            |           | ✓           | ✓         |
| Principal or assistant principal   |              |           | ✓           | ✓         |
| Exceptional student education specialist (when appropriate)  | ✓            | ✓         | ✓           | ✓         |
| Classroom teacher(s) (including special educators as appropriate)                                      | ✓            | ✓         | ✓           | ✓         |
| <b>Community</b>   |              |           |             |           |
| Juvenile probation officer   |              |           | ✓           | ✓         |
| Conditional release or reentry counselor, when appropriate   |              | ✓         | ✓           | ✓         |
| Transition specialist or coordinator   | ✓            | ✓         | ✓           | ✓         |
| Alternative education and career and technical education (CTE) services, when appropriate              |              | ✓         | ✓           | ✓         |
| Family/guardian and/or youth counselors  | ✓            | ✓         | ✓           | ✓         |
| Mentors  |              |           |             | ✓         |
| Other community service providers (e.g., mental health, child welfare, and youth development agencies) | ✓            | ✓         | ✓           | ✓         |

## The Structure and Intricacies of the Juvenile Justice System

Youth come into the JJ system with a myriad of complex needs that are being served by multiple agencies and personnel. The JJ system is yet another labyrinth of services, programs, and personnel designed to rehabilitate children and youth by addressing the many complex needs present in the youth within its care.

### Organizational Structure of the Facility

Juvenile justice systems are operated in a variety of ways. Some employ all of their personnel, while others contract for services such as special education or mental health. Whatever the structure, the need for departments and personnel to communicate openly and frequently with one another regarding youth programming, progress, and transition is vital. Furthermore, security and education cannot operate in their own individual silos; they must be aligned and work collaboratively to meet the academic, behavioral, mental health, and transition needs of the youth within their care.

### Instruction

It is well known that youth in the JJ system, especially those with disabilities and English learners, have significant academic difficulties. These youth are typically functioning well below grade level and have more acute reading and mathematics deficits than their non-delinquent peers (Gagnon & Barber, 2010). As a result, there is a critical need for effective academic and career and technical instruction. Effective instruction for youth in JJ settings should be rigorous, relevant, and culturally and linguistically competent; build on prior knowledge, remediate deficits, and motivate new learning; include functional social skills, life skills, decision-making, transition, and CTE; and comply with the civil rights laws. For more information on instruction in JJ facilities, please see *Quality Education Services Are Critical for Youth Involved with the Juvenile Justice and Child Welfare Systems* (Gonsoulin, Griller Clark, & Rankin, 2015) and the [Reentry Education Framework: Guidelines for Providing High-Quality Education for Adults Involved in the Criminal Justice System \(https://lincs.ed.gov/reentryed/\)](https://lincs.ed.gov/reentryed/).

### Records

The efficient transfer of youth records and related information is vital to a youth's success because it allows continuity of learning, services, and supports. Records give staff the essential information they need to evaluate and accommodate the needs of youth as they transition into, through, and out of the JJ system. These four overarching strategies to improve the effectiveness of records transfer are embedded throughout the *Toolkit*:

1. Ensure accurate, complete, useful, timely, and confidential records and records transfer.
2. Identify and comply with pertinent Federal, State, and local laws.
3. Collaborate and communicate with all involved individuals and agencies.
4. Develop and use an electronic data system.

## Characteristics of the Population

### Youth with Disabilities

Youth within the JJ system have complex needs. These youth typically have histories of academic failure, poor school attendance, dropping out, and learning or behavioral disabilities (Leone & Weinberg, 2012). It is estimated that 30 percent to 60 percent of incarcerated youth have disabilities that require special education and related services (Quinn, Rutherford, Leone, Osher, & Poirier, 2005). In addition to requiring more intense and individualized services while incarcerated, youth with disabilities are also at a higher risk for recidivism, additional referrals to the justice system (Zhang, Barrett, Katsiyannis, & Yoon, 2011), and negative post-release outcomes in school and work (Griller Clark & Unruh, 2010). Because these youth are not able to navigate systems and obtain resources easily, they need additional support to help them make the transition from secure care to school, work, and community and to prevent them from moving to long-term incarceration (Bullis, Yavanoff, & Havel, 2004; Griller Clark, Rutherford, & Quinn, 2004; Mathur & Griller Clark, 2014; Zhang et al., 2011). For more information, please see (1) *Key Considerations in Providing a Free Appropriate Public Education for Youth with Disabilities in Juvenile Justice Secure Care Facilities*

(Gagnon, Read, & Gonsoulin, 2015); (2) [Improving Outcomes for Youth With Disabilities in Juvenile Corrections](#), a new resource from the U.S. Department of Education (ED); and (3) the [Correctional Education Guidance Package](#) released in 2014 by ED and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to assist States and jurisdictions in providing education and related services and to emphasize the importance of correctional education.

### Youth with Mental Health Disorders<sup>c</sup>

By some estimates, 60 percent to 70 percent of youth in confinement have at least one diagnosable mental health disorder, and nearly 30 percent have serious mental health disorders (Meservey & Skowyra, 2015), which include bipolar disorders, schizophrenia, or psychoses and warrant intense counseling and psychiatric treatment (for more information, please see: <http://www.nimh.nih.gov/index.shtml>). These disorders can increase rates of aggressive, impulsive, and oppositional behavior and may impair an individual's ability to function. Youth within the JJ system also experience high rates of trauma, including exposure to abuse, neglect, and violence (Meservey & Skowyra, 2015). Both mental health disorders and trauma must be taken into consideration when planning for transition, and transition plans should be sensitive to any related needs.

### Youth with Dual Status/Crossover Youth

Compounding needs related to education and mental health, up to 65 percent of youth within the JJ system have past or current involvement with the child welfare system (Baglivio et al., 2016). These crossover, or dually involved, youth present yet another set of challenges for transition. Although there is a growing understanding of the dynamic between child abuse, neglect, and delinquency, the systems that serve these youth have traditionally operated independently.

Yet the needs that these youth have cannot be served solely by one agency, highlighting the necessity for the child welfare system, as well as JJ, education, and mental health to work in a more collaborative manner (Baglivio et al., 2016). While there are attempts to address and connect services to meet the needs of these youth prior to, during, and after secure care, in general, there is lack of awareness and communication and a duplication of efforts. As a result, the various systems do not work collaboratively, and the youth become "disconnected" and fail to engage successfully. For more information on coordination between the JJ and child welfare systems, see *Guidebook for Juvenile Justice & Child Welfare System Coordination and Integration* (2013).

#### For more information on trauma, please see:

- SAMHSA's *Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach* <http://store.samhsa.gov/shin/content/SMA14-4884/SMA14-4884.pdf>
- Strengthening Our Future: Key Elements to Developing a Trauma-Informed Juvenile Justice Diversion Program for Youth with Behavioral Health Conditions <http://www.ncmhjj.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/traumadoc012216-reduced-003.pdf>
- *Trauma Among Youth in the Juvenile Justice System: Critical Issues and New Directions* [http://www.ncmhjj.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/2007\\_Trauma-Among-Youth-in-the-Juvenile-Justice-System.pdf](http://www.ncmhjj.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/2007_Trauma-Among-Youth-in-the-Juvenile-Justice-System.pdf)
- *Evidence-Informed Interventions for Posttraumatic Stress Problems with Youth Involved in the Juvenile Justice System* [http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/trauma\\_focused\\_interventions\\_youth\\_jjsys.pdf](http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/trauma_focused_interventions_youth_jjsys.pdf).

<sup>c</sup> Youth with mental health disorders may qualify as students with disabilities under federal antidiscrimination laws prohibiting disability discrimination, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. For more information about civil rights protections for students in JJ facilities, please see the ED Office for Civil Rights and DOJ Joint Dear Colleague Letter on the subject, <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-residential-facilities-201412.pdf>. Students in JJ facilities with mental health disorders may also qualify as children with disabilities under the IDEA and be eligible for special education and related services. More information is available at <http://www.rfkncj.org/images/PDFs/Guidebook-for-JJ-and-CW-System-Coordination-and-Integration-Cover.pdf>.

## Legal Considerations for Transitioning Justice-Involved Youth

Other than IDEA, there are no explicit Federal requirements to provide transition assistance to justice-involved youth who are released from a correctional facility and return to school. However, there are a number of Federal laws to be considered when building programs for these youth. The laws are listed below and are summarized in **Appendix B**.

- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI)
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX)
- Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504)
- IDEA (also addressed in *Appendix C*)
- Title I, Part D of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

## Principles of System Design

For any State, jurisdiction, agency, or entity providing transition services to youth from the JJ system, it is essential to be aware of and follow national guidelines and recommendations for designing systems that support and rehabilitate justice-involved youth, and provide needed transition services that promote successful outcomes for such youth. This section contains several suggestions that address the development of a JJ system that is designed to promote better outcomes for youth who are justice-involved.

### Building a High-Quality Correctional Education System

The aforementioned *Correctional Education Guidance Package* included [Guiding Principles](#), which emphasize understanding students' individual needs and the need for various levels of supports for all youth, including those with disabilities and English learners.

They point to the necessity of funding for JJ settings so they can meet the needs of all youth by providing services and supports, such as social skills training, anger management, self-regulation, career and technical training, and apprenticeship. Funding can be used to improve existing education-related practices or to implement new ones. The principles underscore the need for JJ facilities to recruit and retain effective educators in order to create effective and sustainable teaching and learning environments and provide high-quality education. High staff turnover is not only costly for facilities but also negatively affects youth outcomes.

The principles highlight the fact that, to be productive citizens and meet the demands of the global economy,

#### Guiding Principles

1. **A safe, healthy facility-wide climate** that prioritizes education, provides the conditions for learning, and encourages the necessary behavioral and social support services that address the individual needs of all youths, including those with disabilities and English learners
2. **Necessary funding** to support educational opportunities for all youths within long-term secure care facilities, including those with disabilities and English learners, comparable to opportunities for peers who are not system-involved
3. **Recruitment, employment, and retention of qualified education staff** with skills relevant in juvenile justice settings who can positively impact long-term student outcomes through demonstrated abilities to create and sustain effective teaching and learning environments
4. **Rigorous and relevant curricula** aligned with State academic and career and technical education standards that utilize instructional methods, tools, materials, and practices that promote college and career readiness
5. **Formal processes and procedures**—through statutes, memoranda of agreement/understanding (MOAs/MOUs), and practices—that ensure successful navigation across child-serving systems and smooth reentry into communities

### Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

Several agencies and facilities have put in place a framework of multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) that is familiar to educators in order to implement systems that improve the overall climate and environment in JJ facilities. MTSS can provide a framework for overcoming many of the barriers within JJ systems that inhibit communication and coordination (Ennis & Gonsoulin, 2015). MTSS, including Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), have been found to improve the overall climate of JJ facilities, promote prosocial behavior, and contribute to reentry success (Scott, Gagnon, & Nelson, 2008). MTSS has also been used to address the *Guiding Principles for Providing High-Quality Education in Juvenile Justice Secure Care Settings* outlined below (see Ennis & Gonsoulin, 2015). NDTAC's 2016 issue brief, [Multi-Tiered Systems of Support in Residential Juvenile Facilities](#), describes promising research and provides steps and considerations to review when making adaptations during the planning and implementation of an MTSS, particularly PBIS, in facilities.

reoffend, allowing facilities to invest resources and services according to risk levels. Doing so would minimize use of interventions for youth with a low risk of reoffending and focus the most restrictive and intensive interventions on youth with a high risk. At the same time, the objective assessment of youth's risk factors offers a way for systems to identify and focus on the causes of individual youth's delinquent behavior. Systems that use these assessment results, in conjunction with findings from mental health and substance use assessments and when developing case plans for youth and matching them with appropriate services, are best positioned to use system interventions effectively to reduce recidivism and improve other youth outcomes. Validated risk and needs assessments can help improve outcomes by identifying who should be supervised and prioritized for intensive supervision and services and by serving as the focal point for case planning and services.

**Principle two** details how systems can best address youth's needs by using data-based decision-making. These systems experience various data challenges (e.g., they have no data or have data they can't use or don't know how to use). Staff can benefit from leadership that helps build capacity to measure, analyze, collect, report, and use outcome data to guide ongoing system decisions. Evidence-based programs and practices should be used. For example, to promote youth's

youth in the JJ system need to be college and career ready now more than ever before. They need effective educators and support staff who can help them develop a wide range of academic and career and technical skills and abilities. JJ settings must ensure that they can provide opportunities comparable to those for students in community schools consistent with Federal and State laws. They need to provide access to the curricula that meet the youth's individualized goals and are aligned with the State standards. To ensure that definitions of "college and career ready" are inclusive of a wide range of perspectives on what youth in JJ settings should be able to do after release, facilities should solicit insight from a diverse group of stakeholders who serve students. It is important for facilities, public schools, community-based service providers, and other agencies that serve youth to have formal policies and procedures for communication and timely record exchange, as well as mechanisms to ensure accountability for following them. To accomplish this, many facilities and agencies have undertaken the initiative of linking agency databases, and such efforts are critical for timely and complete record transfer.

### Designing Coordinated Systems to Reduce Recidivism and Improve Other Outcomes for Justice-Involved Youth

Also in 2014, the Council of State Governments partnered with the MacArthur Foundation and DOJ to produce [Core Principles for Reducing Recidivism and Improving Other Outcomes for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System](#), which includes four core principles and recommended policies and practices for reducing recidivism and improving outcomes for youth under their supervision. The principles are as follows: (1) Base supervision, service, and resource allocation decisions on the results of validated risk and needs assessments; (2) adopt and effectively implement programs and services demonstrated to reduce recidivism and improve youth outcomes, and use data to evaluate system performance and direct system improvements; (3) employ a coordinated approach across service systems to address youth's needs; and (4) tailor system policies, programs, and supervision to reflect the distinct developmental needs of adolescents.

The **first principle** emphasizes the JJ systems' use of validated risk assessments to objectively identify youth who are least and most likely to

positive emotional and social development, systems can use cognitive behavioral approaches and family- and community-centered approaches that have been associated with substantial improvements in these outcomes.

As mentioned in **principle three**, many youth in the JJ system (and their families) experience significant mental health, substance use, child welfare, and education needs that can lead to or exacerbate delinquent behavior if left unaddressed. The JJ system should collaborate with all other service providers in a coordinated manner to fully address youth needs.

**Principle four** highlights the need to develop and implement policies and programs that meet specific developmental needs of youth in the JJ system. Supervision must take place to ensure successful implementation and to promote accountability of policies and programs.

### **Training and Professional Development for Facility Staff**

In order to build a high-quality education program and a coordinated system designed to promote positive outcomes, it is necessary to operate a strong training and professional development program within JJ facilities and agencies. All personnel within JJ facilities should be aware of the various types of educational, behavioral, and transition programming available to youth. Educational programming includes special education programs and services to meet the needs of each child appropriately. Behavioral programming includes teaching prosocial or desirable behaviors through social skills, problem-solving, or self-regulation. Transition planning and programming includes preparing youth for employment or postsecondary education. It is important for facility staff to be aware of all the components of the programming within the facility. For example, if substance abuse, anger management, or social skills programming is done by unit/line staff or contracted providers, teachers, probation/parole officers, and all other facility personnel should be familiar with the content of the programming. Conversely, if youth are taking career and technical, transition, or social skills courses in school, personnel throughout a facility should be familiar with academic course offerings and content. For more information on training and professional development for facility staff, see *Professional Development: A Capacity-Building Model for Juvenile Correctional Education Systems* (Mathur, Griller Clark, & Schoenfeld, 2009).

### **Effective Transition Practices**

As previously described, effective systems have policies in place and support collaborative relationships, communication, and cooperation among youth, family or advocate, courts, JJ facilities, schools, employers, and community-based service providers to enhance transition efforts. While each State or jurisdiction will have different factors that either promote or hinder transition efforts, the following practices provide some overarching guidance. These practices are general and should be applied to all transitions (into, between, and out of secure care settings). Key elements of these practices are also embedded in Sections III–VI of this *Toolkit*, which outline strategies for each stage of transition for facilities, youth, families, and communities/systems. The following pages present six overarching practices for successful transition.

#### **Practice 1: Transition Team (Starting Early and Communicating)**

Transition planning and communicating should begin the day a youth enters a facility, or prior to entry if there is knowledge that the youth will be entering. Communication among everyone involved in the transition process is critical to ensuring success. Each youth and his or her family member or guardian have a different set of needs and goals. As discussed in the Introduction, many are involved in multiple education, health, and social service systems. Therefore, educators, community service providers, juvenile justice officials, and other stakeholders must communicate and work together. A transition coordinator can be the catalyst to bring the correct partners to the table to ensure early and frequent conversation and coordination. In addition, the members of the transition team must seek out and incorporate input directly from the youth and his or her family (or adult advocate). The youth is more likely to be successful if the youth and his or her parents are involved in decision making and the transition.

Effective communication practices include the following:

- Ensure interagency/intersystem collaboration among all entities involved in the transition process, including JJ, workforce development, education, social services, health and mental health services, community-based organizations, and employment service providers.

- Conduct transition planning as a team, led by a transition coordinator or specialist, where each member's input is solicited and incorporated into the planning process. Planning should be youth guided and family driven. Regular and consistent times for planning should be set in advance.
- Establish formal agreements among agencies (e.g., contracts or MOAs/MOUs) that assign roles and responsibilities, specify accountability, and delineate communication channels.
- Establish regular and consistent communication with the youth and family in a language they can understand to discuss progress toward meeting transition goals and to get input into transition activities and ways to improve.
- Establish strong linkages with public school districts and schools, community-based providers, employers, and others that can help reintegrate the youth into the community.

### **Practice 2: Efficient Records Transfer**

The efficient transfer of youth records and related information is vital to a youth's success because it allows continuity of learning, services, and supports. Records give staff the essential information they need to evaluate and accommodate the needs of youth as they transition into, through, and out of the JJ system. These four overarching strategies to improve the effectiveness of records transfer are embedded throughout the *Toolkit*:

1. Ensure accurate, complete, useful, timely, and confidential records and records transfer.
2. Identify and comply with pertinent Federal, State, and local laws that pertain to records transfer to support this effort.
3. Collaborate and communicate with all involved individuals and agencies.
4. Develop and use an electronic data system

### **Practice 3: Transition Plan**

Transition planning and supports should be formalized in a written document that guides all transition-related activities. The plan should actively involve the youth, not simply be created *for* him or her. In addition, a transition plan should not be a static document—monitoring a youth's progress toward goals and adjusting the plan as needed should be done regularly by the transition team coordinator who has access to all team members including the parent and youth and relevant data and information.

Effective transition plans include the following:

- Create or revise an existing transition plan based on academic, behavioral, social-emotional, and career and technical assessments. The plan should identify required support services as well as who is responsible for the services.
- Involve the youth and his or her family member or guardian. The plan should be written *with*, not *for*, the youth and the family and should be culturally and linguistically appropriate.
- Use the plan to guide educational placement and programming. Youth placement in academic and career and technical courses, as well as treatment programming, should be based on the individualized needs and goals identified in the transition plan. A transition plan for a student with a disability should include ensuring that placement is in accordance with the needs and educational services outlined in the individualized education program (IEP) or Section 504 plan.
- Communicate throughout the process and ensure everyone is aware of the plan and what the individualized transition needs and goals are for the youth.
- Monitor and revise the plan on an ongoing basis. The plan should not be a static document; student progress toward transition and related goals should be regularly and systematically monitored, and changes to the plan should be documented, informed, and acknowledged by the youth and shared appropriately.

### **Practice 4: Research-Based Programming**

Youth involved in the JJ system need comprehensive, research-based programming to prepare them for success after they leave secure care placement. Programming includes academic (both general and special education) and career and technical instruction as well as social-emotional development, behavior management, mental health treatment, and a

variety of specialized areas such as anger management and sexualized behavior. These programs should be research-based, meaning they should have been scientifically tested and proven to have positive outcomes for youth. Each area (education, mental health, substance abuse, JJ) has different criteria or requirements for what constitutes “research-based.” For example, the Institute of Education Sciences maintains a *What Works Clearinghouse* (WWC) to provide educators with scientific evidence for what works in education to improve student outcomes. To determine effectiveness, the WWC identifies studies that provide credible and reliable evidence of the effectiveness of a given practice, program, or policy and attribute an effectiveness rating to the program or practice (<http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/default.aspx>). The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) also maintains a National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices. This is a searchable online database of mental health and substance abuse interventions (<http://www.samhsa.gov/data/evidence-based-programs-nrepp>). The Juvenile Justice Information Exchange provides detailed information on evidence-based practices, what it means to say that a program or practice is “effective” and different levels of effectiveness (<http://jjie.org/hub/evidence-based-practices/>). For example, some programs or practices may be classified as “evidence based,” while others may be “research based” or “promising.” JJ facilities may use programs and practices that are new or “promising” as long as they are collecting data on the effectiveness of the program. Programs should promote positive transition outcomes for youth. The transition plan should identify youth needs in each of the program areas, document how the needs will be addressed, determine goals, and be adjusted based on the students’ progress in all of these domains throughout their time in placement.

### **Practice 5: Regular Monitoring and Tracking**

To ensure that programs and services meet the transitional needs of students and families impacted by involvement in the JJ system, the transition process and outcomes should be regularly monitored and tracked. The regular monitoring and tracking of key components of a youth’s successful transition (across all four stages of transition) can be collected and analyzed by the transition coordinator on a regular basis. Data should be collected on individual, system, and community outcomes. In addition, the inclusion of multiple sources of data (e.g., self-assessments, independent program evaluations, monitoring reports) provides a broader perspective, which can increase the usefulness of the data. Furthermore, using multiple methods of data collection (e.g., questionnaires, surveys, checklists, interviews, documentation review, observation, and focus groups) ensures a more comprehensive approach to program monitoring. Following are some examples of program process and student outcome data that can be useful in monitoring transition focused on improving educational outcomes.

Examples of transition data collected for individual youth include the following:

- Number of days enrolled in school
- Number of passing grades or credits/courses completed
- Hours of career and technical education/training
- Number of career and technical certificates earned
- Number/percentage of youth graduating from high school
- Number of days it took for a student to receive an IEP meeting upon reentry to school
- Did student decide to pursue a GED, traditional high school diploma, career technical programming?
- Did student remain in school or drop out within 30, 60, 90, or 120 days following release?
- Did student reenter the JJ system?

Examples of transition data collected for systems include the following:

- Number of youth enrolled in school
- Number of youth enrolled in CTE courses
- Number of credits awarded
- Number of career and technical certificates awarded

- Number/percentage of youth graduating from high school
- Number/percentage of transition plans written/modified upon entry
- Number/percentage of youth provided with transition services

Examples of transition data collected for communities include the following:

- Number/percentage of youth graduating from high school
- Number/percentage of youth applying to and/or enrolling in postsecondary school
- Number/percentage of youth placed in apprenticeship programs
- Number/percentage of youth employed
- Number/percentage of youth returned to custody

## Practice 6: Adequate Funding

Even the best intentions can fall short if adequate funds are not allocated to provide necessary resources for transition services. States, agencies, and facilities should gauge what is needed in terms of staff and materials to establish and sustain comprehensive transition planning, services, and supports. When budgeting for transition services, it is imperative to not only consider the needs of staff who focus on transition (e.g., transition coordinators) but also the time commitments of others involved in the process; after all, transition is a team effort.

In funding transition services, in addition to State and local resources, Federal funds are available to support such services. For example, the State agency (SA) program (Subpart 1) of Title I, Part D (Part D) of the ESEA requires that each SA that receives Subpart 1 funding reserve 15–30 percent of its Subpart 1 allocation specifically for transition services (Section 1418(a) of the ESEA). All facilities served under Subpart 1 must designate an individual to be responsible for issues relating to the transition of children and youth between the facility or institution and locally operated programs (Section 1414(c)(11) of the ESEA).

Under the Local Agency Program (Subpart 2) of Part D, local educational agencies (LEAs) receive subgrants to operate programs that involve collaboration with locally operated detention facilities, including activities to facilitate the transition of children and youth from correctional programs to further education or employment (Section 1421(2) of the ESEA). In addition, LEAs receiving Subpart 2 funds may operate dropout prevention programs for students returning from locally operated correctional facilities (Section 1424(a)(1)-(2) of the ESEA). However, an LEA that serves a school operated by a locally operated correctional facility, in which more than 30 percent of the children and youth attending the school will reside outside the boundaries served by the LEA upon leaving the facility, is not required to operate a dropout prevention program within the school and may use all of its Subpart 2 funds for programs in locally operated correctional facilities (Section 1422(b) of the ESEA), provided that those facilities have a formal agreement with the LEA (Section 1423(2) of the ESEA). Finally, other Federal funding sources that may be used to support transition services are summarized in **Appendix D**.

## Next Steps

The following four sections of this *Toolkit* dig deeper into each stage of the transition process (i.e., system entry, residence, system exit, and aftercare) and discuss strategies that may be useful to facilities, youth, families, and communities. Each section includes examples and tools from States and communities around the country, and **Appendix E** includes program highlights that span across different stages. In addition, **Appendix A** is a self-study tool to help systems, agencies, and facilities determine their status in implementing key transition strategies and to plan next steps in program improvement efforts.

### III. Stage 1: Entry into the Juvenile Justice System

#### Introduction

The first stage of transition—**entry**—is a youth’s initial contact with the JJ system. In an effective system, planning for exit and aftercare begins at entry into the system, not just entry into a facility. Several court and justice processes are involved at this stage: arrest, intake, detainment, arraignment, and possibly adjudication and disposition. Transition activities should not be put on hold until justice processes are completed, as court calendars change, unforeseen circumstances arise, and frequent changes take place. Transition should begin as soon as possible after entry into the JJ system; these supports and services can be led by a transition coordinator who has a clear understanding of the needs of the youth and navigation of the multiple systems that need to be involved in the transition process. Youth should be screened and assessed, records should be requested and received, and data entry should begin. These activities should lead to the formation of a transition team and creating or modifying an existing transition plan. The following overarching activities are intended to provide guidance at this stage and ensure eventual transition success for facilities, youth, families, and communities/agencies.

#### Facility-Centered Activities

When a youth enters the JJ system, the transition process begins. Practices that will support the youth and lead him or her to a successful exit from the system and within the community should be set into place at this time. Because this is the initial stage of the transition process, timely implementation of these activities is crucial to ensure that the youth’s transition process at subsequent stages goes well. Essential facility centered activities include the following:

1. **Request Records.** During the entry stage, the facility should request the education records from the educational agency or institution (i.e., the school) that the youth is coming from in the community or system. Timely and efficient records transfer at this stage is crucial as it impacts whether or not the youth will receive the proper placements, referrals, and services necessary for his or her success. Any such transfer of educational records must comply with, among other privacy laws, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. § 1232g and 34 CFR Part 99. Gathering youths’ education records quickly and efficiently will provide maximum continuity in educational instruction and ensure that programming and services build on, rather than duplicate, that from prior placement. For this to occur, the receiving agency should have an effective and consistent process for requesting and receiving education records. Examples of education records may include grades, course of study, IEP, assessments, evaluations, previous placements, individual behavior plans, and immunization records. Ideally, receiving and managing a youth’s education records should be the responsibility of one staff person. Appointing a specific person to receive and maintain education records from past placements eliminates confusion and reduces the chance that records will be lost within the facility itself. In addition, this person should have the contact information for the designated staff members responsible for releasing education records at the sending agency. It may be helpful to establish formal agreements among agencies (e.g., contracts or MOAs/MOUs) that assign roles and responsibilities, specify accountability, and delineate communication channels.
2. **Conduct Intake Assessments.** Once a youth is arrested and brought to a detention facility, he or she should be screened for mental, emotional, behavioral conditions, and disabilities. If the youth is then adjudicated and transferred to a long-term JJ correctional facility, he or she should then be assessed for academic aptitude, special education needs, English language proficiency, and career and technical interests and abilities. As communication, coordination, and records transfer increase between public schools, alternative schools, residential treatment centers, and secure care, the need for the administration of new assessments may subside as assessment information is shared and used across systems.
3. **Assemble a Transition Team (Communicate).** A team should be formed to create a comprehensive and thorough transition plan. This team should comprise the individuals best suited to create a plan that meets that individual youth’s needs—those who can speak to and advocate for the various developmental and educational areas the youth needs to work on during and after secure care. The team may include a transition specialist or coordinator, educational representatives, a mental health counselor or advocate, a JJ administrator, security or staff that work

directly with youth on the living units who have first-hand knowledge of the youth's strengths and needs, JJ worker or case manager, and members of community-based agencies. This team should also include the youth and his or her family, adult advocate, mentor, or caseworker who can act on the family's behalf.

4. **Develop or Revise the Transition Plan.** A transition plan should be developed to implement the appropriate educational placements, programming, and support services, taking past academic and behavioral records into account. A good transition plan is comprehensive, containing all records related to the youth's progress—behavioral screening results, academic and career and technical assessment results, past IEPs, credits earned at other schools, transcripts—and relevant information from the youth and family, including goals for aftercare in areas related to school, work, housing, community, and other relevant areas.
5. **Provide Research-Based Programming.** The transition plan should describe the specific programming the youth will receive while he or she is in secure care. As outlined previously, this programming should include academic (both general and special education) and career and technical instruction, appropriate language assistance services, as well as social-emotional skill development, behavior management, mental health treatment, and any other needed specialized areas.
6. **Monitor and Track Youth's Progress.** The transition plan should not be a static document; rather, it should be updated and revised as a youth progresses through the JJ system and various programs and classes within the system. Monitoring and tracking also ensures that progress is being made in all domains. Many facilities hold regular meetings in which youth progress, or lack thereof, is discussed. One or more members of the transition team should be involved in these meetings so information can be coordinated and shared.

### Youth-Centered Activities

When youth first enter the JJ system, they are frequently unsure what to expect. Youth should be oriented to the facility and provided with an overview or handbook of rules, routines, services, and programs. Activities and programs that support the youth and lead him or her to a successful exit from the system should be initiated. Timely implementation of these activities is crucial to ensure that the youth's transition process at subsequent stages goes well. Essential activities centered on youth include the following:

1. **Participation in Facility Orientation.** Youth should be provided with a handbook or orientation to the rules, routines, services, and programs available at the facility. This orientation should be comprehensive and cover all aspects of the facility: school, housing, security, behavior, physical health, mental health, recreation, visitation, and any other relevant areas. It should also provide an overview of goals, expectations, assessments, and progress reporting methods for each of these areas or programs. Facilities should take into account the literacy and comprehension levels of youth in the facility in providing orientation and related materials. Facilities must also translate orientation materials or interpret orientation information in a language youth can understand.
2. **Participation in Intake Interview.** The transition specialist or another individual on the transition team should conduct an initial transition interview with the youth upon entry. This interview should take place prior to the transition team meeting, and information gleaned from the interview should be used in the development of the transition plan. This interview is frequently the first time education staff at the facility have the opportunity to discuss transition with the youth. Therefore, the interviewer should seek to obtain information on previous services, education, language assistance services, special education, career and technical training, and work experience and should focus on the youth's strengths, needs, and goals.
3. **Participation in Transition Planning as Part of the Transition Team (Communicate).** As previously mentioned, the transition plan should be written with the youth, not for the youth. Therefore, it is essential to hear the youth's voice. For transition to be effective and the youth to be successful, the plan must be based on the youth's interests, needs, and strengths. Frequently the adults in the youth's life believe they know what the best plan is for his or her transition; however, if the plan is reflective of what the youth wants, the youth will more likely "buy in" to the plan, increasing the chances that the plan and the youth will be successful.

- 4. Participation in Evidence-Based Programming Based on Individual Need.** It is important that the education, treatment, and other programming the youth receives are based on his or her individualized needs and are not determined solely by scheduling, security, or availability of staff and/or resources.

### Family-Centered Activities

Having a child enter the JJ system can also be an overwhelming experience for family members (or guardians). When youth first enter the JJ system, family members are frequently unsure what to expect. Practices that support family involvement and successful transition should be set into place at this time. Essential family-centered activities include the following:

- 1. Orient the Family to the Facility.** Family members want and deserve to know what experiences their child will encounter once in the JJ placement. A detailed orientation to the facility and school should cover goals, expectations, and rules; assessment and progress reporting methods; and opportunities for parent involvement. Logistical and demographic barriers can sometimes prevent parents from attending meetings or visitations. Using phone or video conferences can provide them with important information if they cannot be present.
- 2. Communicate with Families in a Way That Is Respectful and Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate.** Family members may fear that they are being judged by the court, facility, school, and community because of their youth's delinquent behavior. Interactions with them should be respectful, and facility staff should be sensitive to cultural traditions and beliefs. JJ facilities must develop and implement a process for determining whether a parent is limited English proficient and what their language needs are. Facilities must communicate with family in a language that the family members understand. In addition, JJ facilities must provide any needed auxiliary aids and services, such as a sign language interpreter, to effectively communicate with family members with a disability. Moreover, staff should avoid using jargon or specialized terms that are only understood by those working within the JJ system because this prevents others from fully engaging in communication.
- 3. Include Family Input in the Transition Plan.** Just as family members must be part of their child's IEP team, they are a great asset for identifying and acquiring information and records on youth relevant to transition. Asking for their assistance, and expressing the importance of continuity in an appropriate education, often produces positive results. They can also provide resources and support to the youth when he/she is released, so their involvement in creating a realistic transition plan will increase the likelihood of success for the youth post-release.
- 4. Make Support Systems Available to Families.** A facility or institution that has a parent or family support group should inform the family of its purpose and potential benefits of attendance and invite parents to attend the next meeting. Although parents may not respond to an initial invitation, the facility staff should not assume that they will never attend and should continue to invite them. If internal support groups are not available, parents can be referred to external groups. Detention and incarceration can be as hard for siblings as it is for parents, so any available sibling support groups should be shared with families. In addition, stipends can be offered for child care for siblings while parents visit youth or attend meetings.

### Community/Systems-Centered Activities

Collaboration, community engagement, and shared responsibility among child-serving agencies can improve educational success and youth engagement (Gonsoulin & Read, 2011). The goal of community engagement is that all providers, agencies, or stakeholders included in the youth's transition plan take an active role in the transition process (Mathur & Griller Clark, 2014). Therefore, practices that support community engagement should be put into place as early as possible to aid in post-release transition success for youth. The following community-centered activities are essential.

- 1. Seek Community Records and Information.** Timely and efficient records transfer at entry is crucial. The home base or sending school or agency should be contacted as soon as the youth is received. It is essential that everyone involved in the records transfer process understand applicable legal requirements to avoid placing unnecessary limitations on their ability to share a youth's information. In some cases, lack of effective records transfer and

information-sharing is the result of *perceived* Federal and State legal constraints on the agencies involved. Data-sharing agreements or MOA/MOUs may assist with this process.

2. **Increase Interagency Awareness.** Frequently the providers or agencies that send youth to and receive youth from the JJ system are unaware of the programs, policies, and practices within JJ facilities. Regular communication between community service providers and JJ facilities and agencies allows each to learn more about what the other provides and to identify practices that can more effectively assist youth while in placement and upon exit. When providers and community stakeholders increase their own understanding of existing JJ programs and reentry practices they will be more likely to help foster positive outcomes for youth (Mathur & Griller Clark, 2014). Professional development opportunities can be organized to increase awareness of programs and practices, which should increase communication, cooperation, and coordination.
3. **Include Community Stakeholder Input in the Transition Plan (Communicate).** Seeking input and collaboration from all entities involved in the transition process for the youth, including workforce development, education, social services, health and mental health services, community-based organizations, employment service providers, and employers, will aid transition success for youth. Agency staff and personnel from other districts, schools, agencies (e.g., mental health or substance abuse services), courts, probation, family members and/or adult advocate or mentor, and community partners (e.g., employers, nonprofit organizations, faith-based organizations, youth and parent advocacy organizations) should work collaboratively to coordinate transition planning and share information.

#### Examples and Resources Related to Entry

*Topic:* Transition coordinators

*Description:* Each Indiana Department of Correction facility has a transition coordinator for youth in the facility. Among other duties, these coordinators help youth and families support youth as they enter the facilities. These coordinators are supported by a Statewide transition coordinator, who facilitates peer-to-peer support and professional development for the facility coordinators and collaborates with the State's Department of Workforce Development and others.

*To learn more:* Susan Lockwood, Indiana Department of Correction, [slockwood@doc.in.gov](mailto:slockwood@doc.in.gov)

*Topic:* Transition coordinators; records exchange

*Description:* In Maricopa County, Arizona, transition coordinators help expedite the records transfer process, often going with parents or guardians to the school to help establish relationships and support the records exchange process. This process is part of the Transforming Juveniles through Successful Transition program, the mission of which is to help mid-high risk juveniles successfully transition from incarceration to school, work, and the community.

*To learn more:* Contact Dottie Wodraska, Educational Consultant, [wodraska@juno.com](mailto:wodraska@juno.com)

*Topic:* Transition coordinators; interagency communication and collaboration; records exchange

*Description:* In Utah, a MOU was established between the Utah State Office of Education, the Department of Human Services, and the juvenile court for the agencies to share educational data across agencies and expedite the exchange of student records and information. A job description of a transition coordinator is available for others to use or adapt.

*To learn more:* Murray Meszaros, Utah State Office of Education, [Murray.Meszaros@schools.utah.gov](mailto:Murray.Meszaros@schools.utah.gov)

*Topic:* Records Exchange

*Description:* The Connecticut State Department of Education, the Connecticut Judicial Branch Court Supported Youth Services Division, and the Yale University Child Study Center created the School-Justice Alliance for Education (AllEd) intended to improve the educational outcomes of court-involved youth. AllEd created a common electronic data sharing platform that allows researchers to examine the educational experiences of court-involved youth using large retrospective databases to identify areas for improvement in educational services.

*To learn more:* Contact Elena Grigorenko, [elena.grigorenko@yale.edu](mailto:elena.grigorenko@yale.edu)

*Topic:* Intake process; family and community engagement

*Description:* Washington's Education Advocate Program Manual includes guidance on the intake process (pages C5-C7) and family and community engagement (C13-C15), as well as sample forms, including an intake form that others can use or adapt (section D).

*For more information:* [http://www.k12.wa.us/InstitutionalEd/pubdocs/EA\\_Manual.pdf](http://www.k12.wa.us/InstitutionalEd/pubdocs/EA_Manual.pdf)

## IV. Stage 2: Residency

### Introduction

The second stage of transition—**residency**—may be the longest. Therefore, it is the stage in which the most time can be allotted to planning and working toward the youth’s future in the community. This time should be used wisely and diligently. All activities during the residency stage in JJ should focus on ensuring a youth is prepared for success after release. The following overarching activities are intended to provide guidance at this stage and to ensure eventual transition success for facilities, youth, families, and communities/agencies.

### Facility-Centered Activities

Several activities should take place at the facility during this stage to move toward a successful exit. When a youth is residing in a detention or correctional facility, activities begun at intake should be continued and new activities that take advantage of this time should be started. The following essential activities are centered on the facility.

1. **Use Assessment Data to Provide Research-Based Programming.** The assessment data obtained during entry should be used to drive placement in facility programs during residency. Programming includes general, special, and career and technical education, as well as treatment-based programming for behavior management, mental health, and other specialized areas. With regard to academics, the curriculum should be appropriate for youth and based on past school placements, special education services and records, as well as intake assessments. The curriculum used should parallel that used in the mainstream school so that the youth can earn credits while in placement and stay on track with the school he or she will eventually re-enter or be best prepared for postsecondary education, job training, and/or employment.
2. **Continue Transition Team Meetings.** The transition team should meet on a regular basis with all or nearly all members attending meetings. Meeting times and locations should be adjusted if members are not able to attend regularly. If the facility does not have a designated transition coordinator or specialist, responsibility for leading the meeting can rotate or be shared so all members of the team feel equally valued. Youth, as members of the transition team, should always be included in the meeting; youth-led meetings are ideal.
3. **Revise the Transition Plan.** Educational, behavioral, career and technical, and treatment assessment and progress information should be gathered on a regular basis and used to update or revise the plan.
4. **Quality Educational Opportunities—Monitor and Track Youth’s Progress and Update Records.** It is imperative that youth who find themselves in the JJ system receive high-quality educational services designed to meet their needs and improve both short- and long-term educational outcomes. Facility staff and education staff should continue to monitor and track student progress across all domains and to update records on a regular basis in an effort to ensure accurate records are transferred upon release or movement to another facility. These updates should be used to inform the transition team and will ensure that when the youth leaves, his or her records will accurately reflect progress made, regardless of the amount of lead time given before the youth changes placement. More importantly, updates promote the continuation of needed services and supports after the youth leaves. Improper or inefficient maintenance of records can impede transition when the youth leaves a facility. Documenting a youth’s academic progress requires regular and consistent administration of assessments in mathematics, reading, and other academic areas in which instruction is provided. Just as appropriate instruction for the youth depends on his or her unique needs as well as on State and local curriculum standards, facilities’ schools also need to select appropriate assessment instruments, using tests that are valid, age appropriate, grade appropriate, and free of cultural biases.

To ensure that records are reliably maintained, the process for updating records should be consistent regardless of who enters data. Automated data collection systems can be powerful tools for maintaining accurate records. At the facility level, an electronic database can store large amounts of youth data and allows an individual’s test scores, credits, and grades to be easily updated. Linkages to other education data systems in the district and/or State, or other means of sharing these records, are also important.

- 5. Provide Prerelease Transition Training.** In addition to the regular academic programming, prerelease transition training should include instruction in social skills, independent living skills, decision making, and workplace skills—all corresponding to and supporting the youth's transition plan. A comprehensive transition curriculum (such as *Merging Two Worlds*, <http://merging2worlds.education.asu.edu/>) or course is frequently the best method for providing training in these areas.

### Youth-Centered Activities

While in residence, youth should focus on accomplishing the initial goals outlined in their transition plan. Youth should be enrolled in and attend academic and career and technical courses, exemplify expected behavior, accomplish any treatment goals, and prepare for transition. The following are essential activities centered on youth during residency.

- 1. Continued Participation with the Transition Specialist and in the Transition Team.** During residency, youth should continue to meet with the transition coordinator/specialist and/or other transition team members on a regular basis. The transition specialist or other team member(s) help facilitate the transition process from entry through aftercare and may assist the youth in identifying barriers to success while in residency or aftercare, assist with obtaining records, begin establishing community contacts for school or work, assist in job planning and/or placement, or provide motivational interviewing. (Motivational interviewing focuses on engaging an individual's intrinsic motivation in order to change behavior. For more information, see <http://www.motivationalinterviewing.org/>.) It is also essential that the youth continue to participate, and even lead, the transition team meetings. When meeting with the specialist or team, youth progress and goals should be reviewed and new goals should be set.
- 2. Participation in Research-Based Programming Based on Individual Need.** Assessment data obtained during entry should be used to individualize a course of study and programming for the youth during residency. Youth should participate in general education, special education, and CTE, as well as treatment-based programming for behavior management, mental and behavioral health, and other specialized areas. Facilities should implement rigorous, relevant curricula and incorporate personalized learning opportunities that positively affect each youth's education and life outcomes.
- 3. Participation in Prerelease Transition Planning.** During residency, each youth should receive a variety of prerelease transition planning activities and courses. This includes instruction in social skills, independent living skills, decision making, and soft workplace skills, such as team work, communication, and problem solving. A comprehensive transition curriculum or course is frequently the best method for providing training in these areas.

### Family-Centered Activities

Family (or guardian) involvement can have a significant impact on outcomes for youth in the JJ system. Maintaining or revitalizing family involvement while a youth is incarcerated or adjudicated is correlated with successful transition and reduced recidivism (Garfinkel, 2010). The following are essential activities centered on families during residency.

- 1. Offer Programs to Family Members.** The goal is most often for a youth to return home to his or her family. In preparation, parents may benefit from classes that enhance their parenting or behavioral management skills. Classes can cover general parenting skills, such as development stages, positive reinforcement and behavior modification techniques, and effective communication skills. Classes can also address causes of behavior associated with secure care or adjudication and cover strategies to reduce recidivism.
- 2. Offer Family Counseling or Therapy.** Counseling or therapy can benefit both the youth and his or her family. Multisystemic Therapy (MST) and Functional Family Therapy (FFT) have both been proven to be effective in reducing recidivism and promoting positive youth outcomes (Garfinkel, 2010).
- 3. Continue to Communicate with Families in a Way That Is Respectful and Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate.** The facility should strive to not only share information with the family in a language that they can understand and provide needed auxiliary aids and services to family members with disabilities but should listen to the family's concerns and perspective. Regular communication on the youth's progress while committed, as well as improved test scores, course completions, and credit accrual are significant and may improve how the student is

received when returning home. Other types of progress, such as new academic interests or positive responses to specific teaching practices, are also worth communicating.

- 4. Continue to Include Family Input in the Transition Plan (Communicate).** Multiple modes of communication (phone, email, in person) should be employed to elicit family involvement. If initial attempts at engagement are unsuccessful, staff should analyze and change communication methods. If families are still not able to be involved, surrogate parents can be sought.

### Community/Systems-Centered Activities

During the community stage, the facility, the transition specialist, and the transition team should have an opportunity to engage community providers, agencies, and stakeholders in planning. The following essential activities are centered on community/agencies during residency.

- 1. Establish Opportunities for Community Engagement.** Engaging the community in transition planning while youth are in residency is critical to supporting transition activities during aftercare. Engagement can take a variety of forms: external speakers can be invited into the facility to share information on their agency or place of business; job fairs can be set up; and furloughs can be arranged for youth to visit programs, schools, or businesses.
- 2. Establish Procedures and Interagency Agreements to Promote Transition.** During residency, contact should be made with the school, treatment center, community-based program, or employer that the youth will be attending or working with after release.
- 3. Continue to Include Community Stakeholder Input in the Transition Plan.** As discussed previously, a key aspect of ensuring a youth's successful transition is thinking about community reintegration from the beginning. Community stakeholders provide a valuable asset to transition planning. They can add resources and opportunities for youth that facility and transition staff cannot access on their own.

#### Examples and Resources Related to Residence

*Topic:* Transition coordinators; data analysis

*Description:* Indiana's Statewide transition coordinator, who supports the Department of Correction's facility-level transition coordinators, analyzes youth data and uses the data to meet with facilities and make changes to curricula, school-based support services and instructional approach to better promote positive youth outcomes.

*To learn more:* Susan Lockwood, Indiana Department of Correction, [slockwood@doc.in.gov](mailto:slockwood@doc.in.gov)

*Topic:* Interagency communication and collaboration

*Description:* Interagency communication and collaboration starts at the State level, fueled by the State's Education of Systems-Involved Students (ESIS) Coordinator, who engages Nebraska's Title I, Part D coordinator and other partners in State-level advisory groups, ESIS meetings, and other activities. Such communication and collaboration supports facilities' and communities' transition-related activities.

*To learn more:* Pat Frost, Nebraska Department of Education, [pat.frost@nebraska.gov](mailto:pat.frost@nebraska.gov)

## V. Stage 3: Exit from Secure Care

### Introduction

This stage of transition—**exit from secure care**—is historically the stage where most transition activity takes place. However, as facilities become more proactive in communicating, planning, and coordinating at the first two stages of transition, exiting from secure care will just be another step in the transition process, with transition teams meeting regularly and transition plans continuing to be implemented. For youth who are exiting secure settings and have educational disabilities, it is critically important to reference the Dear Colleague Letter found in the ED/DOJ *Correctional Education Guidance Package* jointly to ensure all requirements under IDEA are addressed during this important stage of transition [http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/correctional-education/index.html?utm\\_source=Youth.gov&utm\\_medium=Announcements&utm\\_campaign=Reports-and-Resources](http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/correctional-education/index.html?utm_source=Youth.gov&utm_medium=Announcements&utm_campaign=Reports-and-Resources). It is important to keep in mind that many youth experience anxiety as their exit date gets closer. They have grown accustomed to the rules, routines, and schedules of confinement and are unsure how they will do and be received in their homes, schools, and communities after release. Youth may need an array of support services ranging from counseling to medical services, as well as additional tutoring or other academic supports to successfully reintegrate. Some of these services may be outside the scope of services provided by the mainstream education system and certainly outside the scope of an employer's responsibilities, adding another layer of complexity to successfully meeting the youth's transition needs. Planning for community-based services requires collaboration at multiple levels. The following overarching activities are intended to provide guidance at this stage and to ensure eventual transition success for facilities, youth, families, and communities/agencies.

### Facility-Centered Activities

Several activities, listed below, should take place at the facility immediately prior to and during a youth's exit. These activities should focus on reinforcing the skills and resources youth will need after release.

1. **Prepare Records and Transcripts.** All education records—including IEPs, assessments and data obtained during entry, and credits, courses, certificates, and work products/portfolios obtained while in residency—should be, in accordance with applicable law, gathered in a cumulative student file, given to the transition team or specialist, entered into a facility or Statewide data management system, and shared with the youth and his/her family.
2. **Continue Transition Team Meetings.** At this time, other community members can be added to the transition team and participate in meetings, if appropriate. A probation or parole officer is a vital team member and will be relied upon more heavily at exit. Meeting times and locations may need to be further adjusted if team members are not able to attend on a regular basis. It is ideal if youth lead meetings and feel empowered by their plan as they prepare to exit.
3. **Revise the Transition Plan.** By this stage, the plan should be fully developed and implemented. However, the plan must be flexible enough to allow for changes without compromising the underlying goals and objectives. At exit, circumstances frequently arise with placements, schools, or families, necessitating adjustments to the plan. It is important to use the most recent and relevant educational, behavioral, treatment, and career and technical information when revising the transition plan. It is also an ideal time to ensure the plan will make sense to and can be reasonably acted upon by the youth's school or placement or with the youth's employer.
4. **Monitor and Track Youth's Progress.** Facility staff and the transition specialist should work with the probation or parole officer and have a plan in place for monitoring and tracking youth progress after release. Progress indicators and reporting timelines should also be determined. This plan should be shared with the transition team, youth, family, and community school, placement, or employer.
5. **Prerelease Transition Training.** In addition to social skills, independent living skills, decision making, and soft workplace skills received while in residency, prerelease transition training should include job training and placement (when appropriate). At exit, facilities and the transition specialist should be contacting and enrolling youth in school or career and technical programs or helping youth set up interviews with employers.

## Youth-Centered Activities

At exit, or leading up to exit, many youth will experience anxiety about their release and their home, placement, school, and work situation after release. The following essential activities are centered on youth at exit.

1. **Increased Participation with the Transition Specialist and in the Transition Team (Communicate).** At exit, the youth will likely increase his/her communication with the transition specialist and/or the transition team. Because of the anxiety youth may have about being successful post-release, the transition specialist and/or other team members should work with the youth to identify, as realistically as possible, the barriers that he/she may encounter and discuss how these will be overcome or how contingency plans can be employed. Youth should be encouraged to use the decision-making and problem-solving strategies acquired in transition planning courses or programs during residency.
2. **Seek External Mentors and/or Peer Support.** At or prior to exit, youth should be encouraged to find a mentor and/or peer group that can offer support during exit and once back in the community. Mentors and/or peer groups are frequently available from faith-based or other community-based organizations, such as Boys and Girls Clubs. Transition specialists or other transition team members should assist youth in seeking a mentor or peer support group if the youth feels it could aid in transition success.

## Family-Centered Activities

As youth enter this stage of transition, family (or guardian) involvement is critical. Optimally, this is when youth will be reunited with their family. Consequences of decisions made at this stage, whether positive or negative, will have a direct impact on both the youth and the family. The following are essential activities centered on families at exit.

1. **Continue to Include Family Input in the Transition Team.** Families should be active members of the transition team throughout each stage; however, at exit, participation and communication will likely increase as plans for reintegration are put into motion. The facility should share pertinent information with the family in a language they can understand but should also incorporate services and supports to address family members' concerns and needs. As always, all communication with family members should be respectful and culturally and linguistically appropriate.
2. **Prepare the Family for Youth's Return.** Reintegration can be complicated. Families need to be made aware of how their child has changed while in residency. Holding conversations with parents regarding such things as behavior management, alcohol and substance use, mental health needs and treatment, positive leisure activities, educational progress, studying habits, and homework may give families information on how best to support their child and ensure that positive habits continue after exit from placement. The transition coordinator or another team member can supply the family with contact information of officials, inclusive of relevant school personnel as their child transitions to the community/school.
3. **Continue to Offer Family Counseling or Therapy.** Counseling or therapy can benefit the youth and his/her family during the reentry period. As mentioned previously, MST and FFT are effective in reducing recidivism and promoting positive youth outcomes (Garfinkel, 2010). MST uses multiple resources of influence including families, peers, school, and neighborhood to empower the youth and their families. FFT has been implemented in various treatment contexts and with culturally diverse client populations and has been found effective in developing alliances; reducing negativity and resistance; improving communication; developing family focus; and increasing motivation for change.
4. **Provide Assistance with Reintegration.** Families may need assistance other than counseling to prepare for a youth's reintegration. The transition team can provide information and resources for things like parenting classes, transportation, and housing. Families may also benefit from making transition gradual. It is ideal if the youth can return home on an approved furlough or pass for short visits of a few hours, then move to longer visits of a few days, before actually returning home full time. This process can help the family transition and identify potential problems while support services are still in place. These furloughs also allow the youth to get reacquainted with family members and to adjust to changes that have occurred in the home since they were placed in secure care.

## Community/Systems-Centered Activities

At this stage of transition, attention will shift from facility-centered activities to community-based activities. Facility staff, including the transition coordinator/specialist and/or other transition team members, should be increasing communication with community providers and stakeholders, such as mentors, to prepare them for the youth's release. The following essential activities are centered on the community/agencies.

1. **Provide Records and Information.** Timely and efficient records transfer at exit is just as crucial as it is at entry. For youth returning to school, the receiving school should contact the JJ facility or transition specialist as soon as the youth is enrolled to request his or her education records, including, but not limited to, transcripts, as well as verification of credits earned. For youth transitioning to jobs or job training programs, the employer or provider should contact the JJ facility or transition specialist to obtain copies of CTE credits, credentials, or certificates. All schools, job training providers, and employers should be aware of and must comply with Federal and State laws pertaining to privacy and information sharing. Data-sharing agreements or MOAs/MOUs may assist with this process. Many States have also established reentry initiatives in which policies and/or funding are used to support collaboration and information sharing. For example, in New York, the Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) established County Reentry Task Forces (CRTF). These CRTFs were designed to reduce recidivism by coordinating and strengthening community supports in response to high-risk offenders transitioning back to the community. In 2011, DCJS revamped the CRTF initiative by requiring the use of evidence-based practices. Contracts now are performance-based and achievements are measured by the attainment of specific goals implemented to reduce recidivism. Congress also recognized the importance of this issue by passing the Second Chance Act of 2007 (SCA). SCA provides Federal grants for programs and services that work to reduce recidivism and improve offender outcomes.
2. **Conduct Prerelease Visits.** For youth returning to school, just prior to exit, a visit to the receiving school and an admission interview should be conducted, if possible. Supportive schools will offer functional and appropriate placements and schedules that meet the needs of the youth and adhere to any necessary accommodations or modifications stipulated in the youth's IEPs or 504 plans. In fact, an IEP meeting can be initiated by the receiving school and conducted before the youth is enrolled to discuss any needed changes to the child's IEP and placement as appropriate (see Appendix C for additional IDEA regulations pertaining to transition). Supportive schools will also provide assistance to youth and families, in the form of counseling, peer mentoring, and academic support. Prerelease visits, apprenticeships, and/or job shadowing should also be arranged for youth transitioning to work, if they have not already been implemented as part of the transition plan. Supportive employers will offer assistance with hiring paperwork, peer mentors, and on-the-job training and support.
3. **Coordinate Opportunities for Engaging the Youth in the Community.** As valuable members of a transition team, facilities need to consistently collaborate and coordinate with community partners to identify and provide youth and families with access to the resources necessary to support youth and families after exit and to improve reentry outcomes for youth. This includes, but is not limited to, academic support, career planning and job training, community service, mental health, faith-based activities, leisure activities, and mentoring programs.

### Examples and Resources Related to Exit from Secure Care

*Topic:* Interagency communication and collaboration; transition planning; transition monitoring

*Description:* Utah's Multi-Agency Transition Alignment and Collaboration Plan (TAC) aligns intake planning, assessments, skills training, school reintegration, employment, school and community resources, and transition monitoring. A copy of the TAC is available for others to use or adapt.

*To learn more:* Murray Meszaros, Utah State Office of Education, [Murray.Meszaros@schools.utah.gov](mailto:Murray.Meszaros@schools.utah.gov)

*Topic:* Transition coordinators; transition planning; youth and family engagement

*Description:* Washington's Education Advocate Program Manual includes a description of the roles and responsibilities of Education Advocates (pages C20-C22), who help youth transition back to communities. The advocates perform such duties as help youth with transition planning during residence; work with youth at exit as they meet with schools; and help parents understand how to navigate community agencies and systems after exit.

*To learn more:* [http://www.k12.wa.us/InstitutionalEd/pubdocs/EA\\_Manual.pdf](http://www.k12.wa.us/InstitutionalEd/pubdocs/EA_Manual.pdf)

*Topic:* Transition planning; youth engagement; interagency communication and collaboration

*Description:* The University of Minnesota is implementing a comprehensive transition project that aims to (1) develop reintegration planning facilitated by an already developed and tested reintegration framework designed to support interagency collaboration; (2) implement Check and Connect, a research-based mentoring and student engagement intervention model; and (3) implement a personalized approach and strategies to support youth's development of specific goals for their academic development, positive behaviors, study skills, school completion, postsecondary education, and employment preparation.

*To learn more:* David Johnson ([johns006@umn.edu](mailto:johns006@umn.edu)) and Jean Ness ([nessx008@umn.edu](mailto:nessx008@umn.edu)), University of Minnesota

## VI. Stage 4: Aftercare

### Introduction

Engagement is a central concept during the final stage of transition—**aftercare**—and an important indicator of success. Engagement typically refers to being enrolled in school, employed, or otherwise complying with conditions of release, being a productive member of society, and not committing delinquent or criminal acts or being placed back into the JJ or adult criminal justice system. Engagement is critical because if youth are not engaged within the first 30 days after release, their chances of recidivating are higher (Griller Clark, Mathur, & Holding, 2011). Furthermore, youth who engage in school or work 6 and 12 months after release are less likely to return to the JJ system (Bullis et al., 2002). The average recidivism rate for juvenile offenders is nearly 55 percent at 12 months postrelease (Snyder & Sickmund, 2006). It is only through collaboration and coordination, engagement, and shared responsibility and accountability among various child-serving agencies that youth can experience improved educational, career, and overall success (Gonsoulin & Read, 2011). The following overarching activities are intended to provide guidance during aftercare and to sustain transition success for facilities, youth, families, and communities/agencies.

### Facility-Centered Activities

Although no longer in secure care placement, most youth remain under the jurisdiction of the JJ system after leaving placement. Therefore, the youth's facility should ensure that the transition activities laid out in the youth's transition plan continue once the youth is back in the community. The following are essential activities at this stage.

- 1. Define Youth Engagement.** Prior to the youth returning to the community, facility administrators and staff, including the transition team, transition specialist, and the youth, should have a concrete understanding of what the conditions of probation or parole are for the youth, as well as what defines *successful engagement*. For example, if the transition plan states that the youth will enroll and attend school but the youth becomes employed instead, should that be counted as successful engagement? Clear definitions for successful engagement need to be established, and procedures for who will collect the data on engagement, how often, and by what means should also be discussed and documented by the transition team and facility administrators. Facilities should have access to and use more than one

measurement of engagement. Transition success should not solely be measured by recidivism but should include enrollment in school, GED or high school completion, participation in work-based training, employment, and other relevant indicators.

2. **Continue Transition Team Meetings (Communicate).** After the youth's release from the facility, the transition team should continue to meet. The role that each member plays will shift slightly as community providers or stakeholders and probation or parole officers become more central. The transition coordinator/specialist or team lead remains the main point person and should work in conjunction with the youth and family as the youth leads the meetings and "owns their plan." During aftercare, the focus of the transition meetings should move from creating and revising the plan to implementing the plan. The facility will continue to play a central role as long as they have administrative jurisdiction over the youth. The transition team should designate a member, likely the probation or parole officer or the transition specialist, to communicate youth progress by updating files or data management systems.
3. **Revise the Transition Plan.** Although the plan may need to be adjusted as different circumstances or barriers arise during aftercare, its underlying goals and objectives should remain intact. It is important to use the most recent and relevant educational, behavioral, treatment, and career and technical information during plan revisions. For example, if the plan states that the youth will enroll in school X but the family moves or the youth is moved to a group home and school X is no longer a viable option so the youth enrolls in school Y, the plan will need to be revised by the team. Again, the transition team should designate a member to communicate changes and youth progress to the facility and to update data management systems.
4. **Monitor and Track Youth's Progress.** The transition coordinator/specialist and/or transition team should have a monitoring and tracking system in place before the youth exits the facility. Access to this system or transference of the data within the system should be possible for the schools, probation or parole officers, and community service and support providers, as appropriate. Many agencies and States have systems that help service providers access records and other vital information with minimal delay. Finally, according to the Part D Non-regulatory Guidance, Subpart 1 funds can be used to purchase new equipment or to fund other needs with the purpose of easing youth transitions (Part D Non-regulatory Guidance, section H-1).

### Youth-Centered Activities

Youth engagement is multidimensional and usually consists of observable measures related to school (enrollment, attendance, grades), employment (job acquisition/retention), prosocial or desirable behavior (getting along with others), and internal factors related to cognitive processes (appropriate decision-making). Following are essential activities centered on youth during aftercare:

1. **Know How To Be Engaged.** Prior to aftercare, the youth should have a concrete understanding of what his or her conditions of probation or parole are, what his or her transition goal is, and how it will be measured. In other words, the youth should know what it means to be "engaged" and how his or her engagement will be measured.
2. **Meet With Transition Team/Transition Specialist (Communicate).** After release from the facility, the youth should continue to meet and communicate with the transition team and/or transition specialist on a regular basis. Methods and timelines for regular communication should be established prior to release, and the youth should follow these or suggest alterations. The youth should be honest with the team about the barriers and challenges faced during aftercare.
3. **Implement the Transition Plan.** Youth should now be active participants and implement their transition plan. They should enroll in school, attend school, engage with mentors or prosocial peers, participate in community service, participate in counseling, attend substance abuse classes, meet with probation or parole officers, actively seek employment, maintain employment, or engage in whatever ways the transition plan outlines. The plan may need to be adjusted as different circumstances or barriers arise during aftercare, but the underlying goals and objectives should remain intact. The youth should "own" their plan and put it into action.

- 4. Participate in Community Programming or Employment Based on Individual Need.** During aftercare, it is the youth's responsibility to participate in school, work, or other community-based programming, and it is the transition specialist and transition team's responsibility to help facilitate this participation. Facilitation can include helping with records or enrollment, providing resources, problem-solving transportation issues, monitoring progress, and providing feedback. However, the youth is the participant. He or she should carry out the activities outlined in the transition plan whether that be attending school, passing the GED, going to counseling, or getting a job.

### Family-Centered Activities

As the youth moves to aftercare, it is essential that every effort be made to support and involve the family (or guardian). The following are essential activities centered on families during aftercare.

- 1. Increase Family Input in the Transition Team (Communicate).** Although families should be active members of the transition team throughout each stage, participation and communication should increase during aftercare. The transition team should share pertinent information from the facility with the family in a language they can understand, communicate with the family on a regular basis in an appropriate language, support the family in transition needs, and encourage the family to be a major decision-maker in the transition process. Methods and timelines for regular communication should be established that are respectful and accommodating to the family's language and other needs.
- 2. Provide Assistance with Reintegration.** Families may continue to need assistance, other than counseling, during reintegration. The team can provide information and resources for things such as parenting classes, transportation, and housing.
- 3. Provide Family Resources, Counseling, or Therapy.** Offer training and workshops on parental rights and how they might advocate for their child to promote positive educational outcomes. Extend invitations to community public school counselors or liaisons to assist in building relationships during aftercare. Connect parents with a Parent Technical Assistance Center Network to provide special education assistance. (A Parent Center listing is available at <http://www.parentcenternetwork.org/parentcenterlisting.html>.)
- 4. Continue to Communicate with Families in a Way That Is Respectful and Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate.** Encourage the family to take an active role in transition and to respect the family's decisions and opinions. Provide a list of key personnel and their contact information. Have resources available to communicate with the family in a language they can understand. For more information, see *Facility Toolkit for Engaging Families in Their Child's Education at a Juvenile Justice Facility* (<http://www.neglected-delinquent.org/topic-areas/family-and-community-engagement>).

### Community/Systems-Centered Activities

Community engagement is a planned process in which key stakeholders have ongoing communication and collaboration to achieve a shared goal (Mathur & Griller Clark, 2014). The receptiveness and engagement of the community is even more crucial for youth with disabilities. The following essential activities are centered on the community/agencies during aftercare.

- 1. Increase Interagency Awareness.** If community providers and stakeholders increase their own understanding of aftercare for youth from JJ systems, they will be more likely to enhance meaningful outcomes for youth. Facilities can invite community providers and stakeholders to visit or to attend professional development opportunities to increase awareness. In addition, community providers and stakeholders can invite facility personnel to their locations. Community providers and stakeholders should ask questions about the youth who they are assisting or working with and gather information that will help facilitate their success during aftercare.
- 2. Define Engagement.** The term "engagement" does not just apply to youth; it also applies to communities/agencies. The communities need to be fully engaged to enable positive outcomes for youth. Each community provider or stakeholder should facilitate communication and sharing of information based on a common understanding of what constitutes best practice in transition and reintegration for youth released from JJ systems. In addition, community

providers or stakeholders should want the youth engaged in their program or company. They should be positive and encouraging and acknowledge the strengths of the youth and the benefit that the youth is receiving from their participation.

- 3. Increase Community Stakeholder Input in the Transition Plan (Communicate).** During aftercare, communication will likely increase between the transition specialist, youth, family, and relevant community schools, employers, or providers. These community stakeholders provide valuable resources and opportunities that should be outlined in the transition plan. School personnel or teachers, job-shadowing coaches, employers, or counselors are interacting with the youth on a regular basis and should reach out to the transition team or transition specialist with questions or concerns.
- 4. Share Resources.** Share fiscal, personnel, and other resources and expertise that may then increase system efficiency and effectiveness. For example, probation/parole officers or transition specialists can provide training to employers on how to manage youth behavior on the job, foster healthy relationships with coworkers, communicate effectively, or support engagement.

### Examples and Resources Related to Aftercare

*Topic:* Outcome planning; transition monitoring

Description: Utah's Transition Services Outcomes chart helps stakeholders involved in the transition process assess and monitor youth's progress through milestones found in their transition plan. A copy of the chart is available for others to use or adapt.

*To learn more:* Murray Meszaros, Utah State Office of Education, [Murray.Meszaros@schools.utah.gov](mailto:Murray.Meszaros@schools.utah.gov)

*Topic:* Outcome planning; transition monitoring; youth with disabilities

Description: Arizona's Project RISE (**R**e-entry **I**ntervention & **S**upport for **E**ngagement) is developing a model for effective reentry of youth with disabilities from secure care back into schools, employment, and community programs. It includes intensive educational programming, integrated transition services, and individualized aftercare for youth with disabilities. The re-entry practices focus on (1) intensive educational and CTE programming that follows IEP/ITP goals; (2) development of a transition portfolio for all youth with disabilities, and (3) individualized aftercare and community supports after release.

*To learn more:* Sarup Mathur ([sarup.mathur@asu.edu](mailto:sarup.mathur@asu.edu)) and Heather Griller Clark ([hgriller@asu.edu](mailto:hgriller@asu.edu)), Arizona State University

*Topic:* Youth engagement; youth with disabilities

Description: The University of Oregon is developing three model demonstration sites to implement the Strategies Teaching Adolescent Young Offenders with Disabilities to Use Transition Skills program, which will help special educators implement successful reintegration into education, employment, and community programs for youthful offenders. The goal of this project is to help maintain school engagement and post-incarceration educational experiences for youthful offenders with disabilities and ultimately improve this hard-to-serve population's transition to adulthood. They will recruit any young offender with an active IEP (or history of special education services) who has been incarcerated in a long-term closed custody setting and is returning or being placed in the school district and community.

*To learn more:* Deanne Unruh, University of Oregon, [dkunruh@uoregon.edu](mailto:dkunruh@uoregon.edu)

*Topic:* Records transfer

Description: Indiana uses a student information management system (SIMS) to generate transcripts, IEPs/ILPs, and student overview reports of students' education records upon release. Furthermore, in the SIMS system, correctional education teachers can secure the name of the youth's home base school and a contact person for the school to facilitate records and information exchange. Facilities also send letters to guidance counselors and superintendents giving permission for the transfer of students' education records.

*To learn more:* Susan Lockwood, Indiana Department of Correction, [slockwood@doc.in.gov](mailto:slockwood@doc.in.gov)

*Topic:* Interagency communication and collaboration; records transfer

Description: Montana has launched a Statewide transition project that is a collaborative effort of multiple agencies and organizations (e.g. Title I, Part D program; school mental health; special education; health and human services; correctional facilities; LEAs; alternative schools; group homes; residential therapeutic treatment facilities) to support youth going into and out of residential facilities. The project will focus on developing an electronic system that will allow for the transfer of pertinent information between districts and facilities to improve students' transition process.

*To learn more:* Heather Denny ([HDenny@mt.gov](mailto:HDenny@mt.gov)) and Erin Butts ([EButts@mt.gov](mailto:EButts@mt.gov)), Montana Office of Public Instruction

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## Appendix A: Self-Study and Planning Tool

The self-study tool is designed to help facilities and institutional schools reflect on their use of key strategies related to youth transitioning into, through, and out of the juvenile justice system. The ultimate purpose of the self-study tool is to have juvenile justice facilities prioritize the strategies presented in this document, assess the current level of implementation of each strategy, and then make a plan for revising current processes to make better use of the presented strategies. Strategies are organized into sections that parallel the *Toolkit*: (1) **General Transition Strategies**, (2) **Stage 1: Entry into the Justice System**, (3) **Stage 2: Residence**, (4) **Stage 3: Exit from Secure Care**, and (5) **Stage 4: Aftercare**. Because the strategies in the first section, General Transition Strategies, are broad, specific substrategies are presented for each strategy.

To complete the tool, assign each strategy a priority level (i.e., low, medium, high). Ideally, a multidisciplinary team of school and facility staff would convene to set priorities. The priority level might also be informed by other planning and systemic initiatives of the institution. Then examine the evidence of practice for each strategy to determine its current level of implementation.

Once you have collected all the data, analyze your findings. Review all high-priority strategies and their current level of implementation. Select areas for improvement by highest priority and lowest level of implementation.

After the tool has been completed and the information analyzed, develop a plan for action based on your findings. A form at the end of this section allows you to log next steps, the resources required to proceed, the responsible parties, and the evidence you can monitor to track your progress.

| General Transition Strategies |        |      |  |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|-------------------------------|--------|------|--|-------------------------------|--|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Priority Level                |        |      | Strategy   | Level of Implementation       |  |                           |                                      |                             |
| Low                           | Medium | High |  | 1. Not currently implementing | 2. Planning/preparing for implementation | 3. Beginning to implement | 4. Implementing with some regularity | 5. Consistently implemented |
| <b>General</b>                |        |      |  |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|                               |        |      | <b>I. Transition Team (Communication)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure interagency/intersystem collaboration.</li> <li>• Use team-based transition planning.</li> <li>• Establish formal agreements among agencies.</li> <li>• Establish regular and consistent communication with the youth and family/advocate in a language they can understand.</li> <li>• Establish strong linkages with community, businesses, and professional organizations.</li> <li>• Coordinate transfer of education records (e.g., assessments, IEPs, grade reports).</li> </ul> |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|                               |        |      | <b>II. Transition Plan</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop/revise the plan.</li> <li>• Use the plan to guide educational placement/programming.</li> <li>• Involve the youth and his or her family or advocate.</li> <li>• Communicate about the plan.</li> <li>• Monitor and revise the plan.</li> </ul>   |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |

| General Transition Strategies |        |      |  |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|-------------------------------|--------|------|--|-------------------------------|--|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Priority Level                |        |      | Strategy   | Level of Implementation       |  |                           |                                      |                             |
| Low                           | Medium | High |  | 1. Not currently implementing | 2. Planning/preparing for implementation | 3. Beginning to implement | 4. Implementing with some regularity | 5. Consistently implemented |
| <b>General</b>                |        |      |  |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|                               |        |      | <b>III. Evidence-Based Programming</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academics, social and emotional learning, and CTE</li> <li>Specialized programming (e.g., behavioral management, mental health, substance abuse, anger management, sexualized behavior)</li> <li>Instruction for youth in special education and English learners</li> <li>Transition curriculum</li> </ul> |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|                               |        |      | <b>IV. Regular Monitoring and Tracking</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transition data collected for individual youth, systems, and communities</li> </ul>  |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|                               |        |      | <b>V. Adequate Funding</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determine the level of effort and materials required to deliver adequate transition services.</li> <li>Earmark adequate funds for transition services that reflect current and anticipated future demand.</li> <li>Explore funding options for transition services, including Title I, Part D.</li> </ul>              |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|                               |        |      | <b>VI. Other:</b>  |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |

| Stage 1: Entrance Into the System            |        |      |   |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|--|--------|------|---|-------------------------------|--|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Priority Level                               |        |      | Strategy  | Level of Implementation       |  |                           |                                      |                             |
| Low  | Medium | High |   | 1. Not currently implementing | 2. Planning/preparing for implementation | 3. Beginning to implement | 4. Implementing with some regularity | 5. Consistently implemented |
| <b>Facility-Centered Activities</b>          |        |      |   |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | I. Request Records  |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | II. Conduct Intake Assessments  |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | III. Assemble a Transition Team   |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | IV. Develop or Revise the Transition Plan   |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | V. Provide Evidence-Based Programming   |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | VI. Monitor and Track Youth's Progress  |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | VII. Other:   |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
| <b>Youth-Centered Activities</b>             |        |      |   |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | I. Participation in Facility Orientation  |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | II. Participation in Intake Interview   |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | III. Participation With the Transition Specialist and in the Transition Team                            |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | IV. Participation in Evidence-Based Programming Based on Individual Need                                |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
| <b>Family-Centered Activities</b>            |        |      |   |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | I. Orient the Family to the Facility  |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | II. Communicate With Families in a Way That Is Respectful and Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | III. Include Family Input in Transition Plan  |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | IV. Make Support Systems Available to Family  |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
| <b>Community/Systems-Centered Activities</b> |        |      |   |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | I. Seek Community Records and Information   |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |

| Stage 1: Entrance Into the System |        |      |   |                               |   |                           |                                      |                             |
|-----------------------------------|--------|------|---|-------------------------------|---|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Priority Level                    |        |      | Strategy  | Level of Implementation       |   |                           |                                      |                             |
| Low                               | Medium | High |   | 1. Not currently implementing | 2. Planning/ preparing for implementation | 3. Beginning to implement | 4. Implementing with some regularity | 5. Consistently implemented |
|                                   |        |      | II. Increase Interagency Awareness                              |                               |   |                           |                                      |                             |
|                                   |        |      | III. Include Community Stakeholder Input in the Transition Plan |                               |   |                           |                                      |                             |

| Stage 2: Residency                  |        |      |   |                               |   |                           |                                      |                             |
|-------------------------------------|--------|------|---|-------------------------------|---|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Priority Level                      |        |      | Strategy                                      | Level of Implementation       |   |                           |                                      |                             |
| Low                                 | Medium | High |   | 1. Not currently implementing | 2. Planning/ preparing for implementation | 3. Beginning to implement | 4. Implementing with some regularity | 5. Consistently implemented |
| <b>Facility-Centered Activities</b> |        |      |   |                               |   |                           |                                      |                             |
|                                     |        |      | I. Use Assessment Data to Provide Programming |                               |   |                           |                                      |                             |
|                                     |        |      | II. Continue Transition Team Meetings         |                               |   |                           |                                      |                             |
|                                     |        |      | III. Revise the Transition Plan               |                               |   |                           |                                      |                             |
|                                     |        |      | IV. Monitor Youth's Progress; Update Records  |                               |   |                           |                                      |                             |
|                                     |        |      | V. Provide Prerelease Transition Training     |                               |   |                           |                                      |                             |

| Stage 2: Residency                           |        |      |  |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|--|--------|------|--|-------------------------------|--|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Priority Level                               |        |      | Strategy   | Level of Implementation       |  |                           |                                      |                             |
| Low  | Medium | High |  | 1. Not currently implementing | 2. Planning/preparing for implementation | 3. Beginning to implement | 4. Implementing with some regularity | 5. Consistently implemented |
| <b>Youth-Centered Activities</b>             |        |      |  |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | I. Continued Participation With the Transition Specialist and in the Transition Team |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | II. Participation in Evidence-Based Programming Based on Individual Need             |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | III. Participation in Prerelease Transition Planning                                 |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
| <b>Family-Centered Activities</b>            |        |      |  |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | I. Offer Programs to Family Members  |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | II. Offer Family Counseling or Therapy   |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | III. Continue to Communicate With Families   |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | IV. Continue to Include Family Input in the Transition Plan (Communicate)            |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
| <b>Community/Systems-Centered Activities</b> |        |      |  |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | I. Establish Opportunities for Community Engagement                                  |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | II. Establish Procedures and Interagency Agreements to Promote Transition            |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | III. Continue to Include Community Stakeholder Input in the Transition Plan          |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |

| Stage 3: Exit from Secure Care      |        |      |  |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|-------------------------------------|--------|------|--|-------------------------------|--|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Priority Level                      |        |      | Strategy   | Level of Implementation       |  |                           |                                      |                             |
| Low                                 | Medium | High |  | 1. Not currently implementing | 2. Planning/<br>preparing for implementation | 3. Beginning to implement | 4. Implementing with some regularity | 5. Consistently implemented |
| <b>Facility-Centered Activities</b> |        |      |  |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|                                     |        |      | I. Prepare Records and Transcripts   |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|                                     |        |      | II. Continue Transition Team Meetings  |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|                                     |        |      | III. Revise the Transition Plan  |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|                                     |        |      | IV. Monitor and Track Youth's Progress   |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|                                     |        |      | V. Prerelease Transition Training  |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
| <b>Youth-Centered Activities</b>    |        |      |  |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|                                     |        |      | I. Increased Participation With the Transition Specialist and in the Transition Team |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|                                     |        |      | II. Address Individual Barriers to Successful Transition                             |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|                                     |        |      | III. Seek External Mentors or Peer Support   |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
| <b>Family-Centered Activities</b>   |        |      |  |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|                                     |        |      | I. Continue to Include Family Input in the Transition Team                           |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|                                     |        |      | II. Prepare the Family   |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|                                     |        |      | III. Provide Assistance With Reintegration   |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|                                     |        |      | IV. Continue to Offer Family Counseling/Therapy                                      |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|                                     |        |      | V. Continue to Communicate With Families   |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |

| Stage 3: Exit from Secure Care               |        |      |  |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|--|--------|------|--|-------------------------------|--|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Priority Level                               |        |      | Strategy   | Level of Implementation       |  |                           |                                      |                             |
| Low  | Medium | High |  | 1. Not currently implementing | 2. Planning/preparing for implementation | 3. Beginning to implement | 4. Implementing with some regularity | 5. Consistently implemented |
| <b>Community/Systems-Centered Activities</b> |        |      |  |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | I. Provide Records and Information   |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | II. Conduct Prerelease Visits  |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | III. Coordinate Opportunities for Engaging the Youth in the Community      |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | IV. Continue to Include Community Stakeholder Input in the Transition Plan |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |

| Stage 4: Aftercare                  |        |      |   |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|-------------------------------------|--------|------|---|-------------------------------|--|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Priority Level                      |        |      | Strategy  | Level of Implementation       |  |                           |                                      |                             |
| Low                                 | Medium | High |   | 1. Not currently implementing | 2. Planning/preparing for implementation | 3. Beginning to implement | 4. Implementing with some regularity | 5. Consistently implemented |
| <b>Facility-Centered Activities</b> |        |      |   |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|                                     |        |      | I. Define Youth Engagement                          |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|                                     |        |      | II. Continue Transition Team Meetings (Communicate) |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|                                     |        |      | III. Revise the Transition Plan                     |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|                                     |        |      | IV. Monitor and Track Youth's Progress              |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |

| Stage 4: Aftercare                           |        |      |   |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|--|--------|------|---|-------------------------------|--|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Priority Level                               |        |      | Strategy  | Level of Implementation       |  |                           |                                      |                             |
| Low  | Medium | High |   | 1. Not currently implementing | 2. Planning/preparing for implementation | 3. Beginning to implement | 4. Implementing with some regularity | 5. Consistently implemented |
| <b>Youth-Centered Activities</b>             |        |      |   |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | I. Define Youth Engagement  |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | II. Continue Transition Team Meetings   |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | III. Revise the Transition Plan   |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | IV. Participation in Community Programming or Employment Based on Individual Need |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
| <b>Family-Centered Activities</b>            |        |      |   |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | I. Continue to Include Family Input in the Transition Team                        |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | II. Provide Assistance With Reintegration   |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | III. Continue to Offer Family Counseling/Therapy                                  |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | IV. Continue to Communicate With Families   |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
| <b>Community/Systems-Centered Activities</b> |        |      |   |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | I. Increase Interagency Awareness   |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | II. Define Engagement   |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | III. Continue to Include Community Stakeholder Input in the Transition Plan       |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |
|  |        |      | IV. Share Resources   |                               |  |                           |                                      |                             |

| Improving Transition Practices: Plan of Action |                |                  |                    |                    |
|--|----------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Strategy Identified as Needing Improvement     | Target Area(s) | Resources Needed | People Responsible | Evidence of Change |
|  |                |                  |                    |                    |

## Appendix B: Legal Considerations for Transitioning Justice-Involved Youth

Although there are no explicit Federal requirements to provide transition assistance to justice-involved youth who enter or are released from a correctional facility and return to school, there are a number of Federal laws you should consider when building programs for these youth. There are Federal civil rights laws requiring that youth have equal access to educational services and opportunities without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, or disability. In addition, Federal law sets out particular requirements for the provision of appropriate educational services to eligible youth with disabilities that address their needs for special education and/or related aids and services. Because a disproportionate number of youth currently incarcerated are youth of color or youth with disabilities,<sup>1</sup> appropriate transition assistance for those youth must take into consideration the requirements of these laws. ED and DOJ have worked to help schools avoid discriminatory practices that may lead youth into the justice system, and to ensure that justice-involved youth have nondiscriminatory access to educational services. In 2014, for example, the Departments issued joint guidance<sup>2</sup> to ensure that schools do not discriminate in administering school discipline and to ensure that JJ residential facilities do not discriminate in the educational services and supports they arrange for or provide.<sup>3</sup> ED's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services also issued guidance focusing on requirements of Part B of IDEA that apply to the education of children with disabilities in correctional facilities. As the Departments have advocated,<sup>4</sup> the fact that a student has been charged with or convicted of a crime does not diminish his or her substantive rights, procedural safeguards, and remedies provided under the IDEA, Section 504, and the ADA to students with disabilities and their parents. Every agency at any level of government that is involved in the provision of special education and/or related aids and services to students in correctional facilities must ensure the provision of a FAPE to eligible youth with disabilities even if other agencies share that responsibility. Thus, as the Departments have made clear, and as summarized next, justice-involved youth are protected from discrimination and have rights under a number of Federal laws, and those youth with disabilities also have rights under the IDEA.

### Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI)

Title VI and its implementing regulations<sup>5</sup> prohibit discrimination based on race, color, or national origin by recipients of Federal financial assistance. Virtually every public school (including public charter schools), public school district, public college, and public university receives Federal financial assistance from ED, and almost all private colleges and universities also receive such assistance, and so are recipients that must comply with Title VI. Title VI's antidiscrimination prohibition includes discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics and limited English proficiency.

### Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX)

Title IX prohibits discrimination based on sex by recipients of Federal financial assistance. This includes discrimination based on pregnancy or parental status, sex stereotypes (such as treating persons differently because they do not conform to expectations based on their sex or because they are attracted to or are in a relationship with persons of the same sex), and gender identity or transgender status.

### Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Title II prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by public entities, including public elementary and secondary school systems, regardless of receipt of Federal financial assistance. Under this law, a person (including a student) with a disability is one who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; has a record of such an impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment.

### Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504)

Section 504 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in programs or activities of entities that receive Federal financial assistance. The definition of disability is the same under both Title II and Section 504. Section 504 provides broad protections against discrimination on the basis of disability, including the right to FAPE for public elementary and secondary school students with disabilities. Section 504 requires the provision of FAPE regardless of the nature or

severity of the student's disability to each qualified student with a disability in the recipient's jurisdiction. Under Section 504, FAPE is the provision of regular or special education and related aids and services that are designed to meet the individual educational needs of students with disabilities as adequately as the needs of students without disabilities are met and that satisfy certain procedural requirements related to educational setting, evaluation and placement, and procedural safeguards. The Section 504 regulatory provision (34 CFR §104.35) requires individual evaluation of a student before classifying the student as having a disability or providing the student with specialized services. Assessments must be selected and administered that ensure accurate reflection of the student's aptitude or achievement or other factors being measured, rather than the student's disability, except where those are the factors being measured. Section 504 also requires that tests and other evaluation materials include those tailored to evaluate the specific areas of educational need and not merely those designed to provide a single intelligence quotient. The tests and other evaluation materials must be validated for the specific purpose for which they are used and appropriately administered by trained personnel (for details, see <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/504faq.html>). Furthermore, implementation of an IEP developed in accordance with the IDEA is one means of meeting the Section 504 FAPE standard. Under Section 504, recipients that operate a public elementary or secondary education program or activity must conduct a preplacement evaluation prior to the initial placement in regular or special education of a student, who because of disability needs or is believed to need special education or related services and any subsequent significant change in placement. For more information on Section 504, please see <http://www.ed.gov/ocr>.

## IDEA

States and school districts are required under the IDEA to make FAPE available to all eligible children with disabilities who need special education and related services because of disability in the LRE. These requirements apply to age-eligible youth with disabilities in juvenile correctional facilities. The law requires that each student with a disability receives FAPE through a properly developed IEP. Once a justice-impacted youth with an IEP who is enrolled in an educational program while in a correctional facility seeks to enroll in a new school in the same school year, the rules governing FAPE for transfer students apply. Although there are different requirements depending on whether the transfer occurs within the same State or a different State, the new public agency must ensure that there is no undue interruption in the provision of required special education and related services, and must ensure the provision of FAPE through the provision of services comparable to those described in the child's IEP from the prior public agency until an IEP for an eligible student with a disability is finalized. Both the previous agency and the new school must take reasonable steps to ensure prompt exchange of the student's records, including the IEP and supporting documents. Parents of eligible justice-impacted youth with disabilities also have the right to timely prior written notice of changes in their child's identification, evaluation, educational placement, or the provision of FAPE, and a notice explaining IDEA's procedural safeguards available to parents. These notices must be written in understandable language and provided in the parent's native language or other mode of communication used by the parent, unless clearly not feasible to do so. For additional guidance, the December 5, 2014, Dear Colleague Letter on IDEA and Students with Disabilities in Correctional Facilities is available at: <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/correctional-education/idea-letter.pdf>. This guide includes a detailed explanation of IDEA requirements applicable to State education agencies (SEAs), LEAs, and other educational and noneducational public agencies that are responsible for providing or paying for special education and related services for eligible justice-impacted youth with disabilities.

## Title I, Part D of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

The ED-administered Title I, Part D program provides financial assistance to SEAs for provision of education services to children and youth who are neglected or delinquent (N or D) who are in State-run institutions, attending community day programs primarily serving students who are N or D, in locally operated correctional facilities, or in programs for children who are neglected or at risk of school dropout. The N or D program is authorized by Part D of Title I of the ESEA, which was most recently reauthorized and amended by the ESSA. Major changes to the program under the ESSA include emphasizing the attainment of regular high school diplomas as the preferred program outcome; improving transitions for youth between correctional facilities and local education programs and schools, particularly to provide for educational

continuity, to ensure credit accrual, and to support the successful completion of high school and pathways into postsecondary education and the workforce; expanding the programs to better serve students in Bureau of Indian Education or tribal schools; focusing on the unique needs of children who have interacted with both the child welfare system and the justice system; and allowing local programs to use funds for pay-for-success initiatives. Like other Title I programs, the N or D program requires institutions receiving funds to gear their services to the same college- and career-ready State academic standards that all children are expected to meet under the ESEA. Under Subpart 1 of the N or D program, SA are required to reserve 15 percent to 30 percent of their allocations for projects to help N and D participants make the transition between State-operated institutions and schools served by the LEA or to support the successful reentry of youth offenders, who are age 20 or younger and have received a regular high school diploma or its recognized equivalent, into postsecondary and CTE programs.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/snapshots/DataSnapshot\\_CJRP2013.pdf](https://www.ojjdp.gov/ojstatbb/snapshots/DataSnapshot_CJRP2013.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [Guiding Principles for Providing High-Quality Education in Juvenile Justice Secure Care Settings](#), Dec. 8, 2014, available at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/correctional-education/guiding-principles.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201401-title-vi.html>

<sup>4</sup> Statement of Interest for the United States, G.F. v. Contra Costa County, No. 3:13-cv-03667-MEJ (N.D. Cal.) (filed Feb. 13, 2014), available at [http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/spl/documents/contracosta\\_soi\\_2-13-14.pdf](http://www.justice.gov/crt/about/spl/documents/contracosta_soi_2-13-14.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> 42 U.S.C. § 2000d; 34 C.F.R. 100.3.

## Appendix C: Additional Information about IDEA

As explained in the OSERS Dear Colleague Letter, “All of the IEP content requirements apply to eligible students with disabilities in juvenile justice facilities (34 CFR §300.320), including, but not limited to, a statement of (1) the student’s present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (IEP teams need to have the student’s academic and other school records in order to determine the student’s present levels of achievement and performance); (2) measurable annual academic and functional goals; and (3) the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services that will be provided to the student to enable him or her to advance appropriately toward attaining his or her IEP goals and to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum (the general education curriculum is the same curriculum provided to students without disabilities in the State).” In a subsequent OSERS Dear Colleague Letter, “in the case of a child whose behavior impedes the child’s learning or that of others, the IEP Team must consider – and, when necessary to provide FAPE, include in the IEP—the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and other strategies, to address that behavior (34 CFR §300.324(a)(2)(i) and (b)(2)).

If there has been an interruption in the provision of special education and related services during the student’s transfer to the JJ facility, the IEP team should consider how the break in services has affected the special education and related services needed to provide FAPE to the student. In addition, the team must consider and when necessary to provide FAPE include in the IEP the use of positive behavioral interventions and supports and other strategies to address behavior, in the case of a child whose behavior impedes the child’s learning or that of others (34 CFR §300.324(a)(2)(i) and (b)(2)). If students who did not transfer to the facility with an IEP, or were not attending or enrolled in school at the time of incarceration, but have been subsequently determined to be a child with a disability under IDEA, a meeting to develop an initial IEP must occur within 30 days of the determination that the student needs special education and related services (34 CFR §300.323(c)(1)) and the responsible entity must make available special education and related services to the student in accordance with the student’s IEP (34 CFR §300.323(c)(2)). Specific attention should be given to related services that are likely to be required for students in juvenile justice facilities—for example, counseling, parent counseling and training, psychological services, transportation, and social work services in schools (34 CFR §300.34(c)(2), (c)(8), (c)(10), (c)(14), and (c)(16)). For details, see <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/correctional-education/idea-letter.pdf> and <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/files/dcl-on-pbis-in-ieps--08-01-2016.pdf>

### Secondary Transition

It is important that facilities comply with IDEA requirements related to transition services to facilitate the youth’s movement from school to post-school activities (34 CFR §300.320(b)). These transition services requirements must be included in the youth’s IEP to be in effect when the student turns 16 (or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP team), and updated annually thereafter. The IEP must include the following: (1) appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills; and (2) the transition services (including courses of study) needed to assist the student in reaching those goals. In addition, the responsible juvenile justice agency must invite the youth with a disability to attend his or her own IEP team meeting if a purpose of the meeting will be the consideration of the youth’s postsecondary goals and the transition services needed to assist the youth in reaching those goals, as required in 34 CFR §300.321(b). If the youth does not attend the team meeting, the agency must take other steps to ensure that the youth’s preferences and interests are considered. Moreover, to the extent appropriate, with the consent of the parents or a student who has reached the age of majority, the public agency must invite a representative of any participating agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services (34 CFR §300.321(b)(1)–(3)). These agencies may include staff who will provide career technical education, job coaching, mental health services, substance abuse support, mentor services, tutoring services, independent living assistance, or job placement services (not an exhaustive list). Finally, beginning not later than one year before the student reaches the age of majority under State law, the IEP must document that the student has been informed of the student’s rights under the IDEA, if any, that will transfer to the student on reaching the age of majority under 34 CFR §300.520 (34 CFR §300.320(c)). See 34 CFR §300.520 for further explanation on transfer of parental rights upon reaching the age of majority. For details, see <http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view/p/,root,regs,300,D,300%252E321>.

## Reentry/Transition

Reentry services should be provided to support effective reintegration of the youth back to communities upon release from facilities. A comprehensive approach to reentry includes individualized transition plans, CTE and life skills training, behavior management systems, and direct academic instruction. Reentry planning includes informing youth about their potential options after release, such as the student's school prior to commitment, charter schools, virtual schools, evening schools, adult education programs, community colleges, alternative schools for students with specific needs, schools with a dual focus on diploma/GED and CTE, and dual enrollment high/school/college programs. Information should be shared by (1) home visits; (2) information sharing between schools; (3) collaboration with community-based organizations; (4) school expos/reengagement fairs; (5) reengagement/ transition centers; (6) print and electronic media; (7) collaboration with probation and parole practitioners from both public and private sectors; and (8) community-wide campaigns.

## Appendix D: Federal Funding Resources to Support Transition Programs

### ED—Office of Elementary and Secondary Education

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#### **Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At Risk (Title 1, Part D) (Formula)**

Title 1, Part D comprises two parts: Subparts 1 and 2. In Subpart 1, ED provides grants to SEAs who make sub-grants to SAs that provide free public education for children and youth in institutions for neglected or delinquent children and youth, attending community day programs for neglected or delinquent children and youth, or in adult correctional institutions. In Subpart 2, ED provides grants to SEAs to make sub-grants to LEAs with high numbers or percentages of children and youth residing in locally operated correctional facilities for children and youth. To receive funding, SAs (for Subpart 1) and LEAs (for Subpart 2) must apply directly to SEAs. There are State pages available on the NDTAC website next, which include information on State Part D coordinators, application deadlines, and application forms, as well as lists of existing grantees for each State.

<http://www.neglected-delinquent.org/state-information>

### DOJ – Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

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#### **Title II Formula Grants Program (Formula)**

Supports State and local efforts in planning, operating, and evaluating projects that seek to prevent at-risk youth from entering the JJ system or that intervene with first time and non-serious offenders to provide services that maximize their chances of leading productive, successful lives. These services include job training, mental health and substance abuse treatment, community service and other forms of restitution, and school programs to prevent truancy. The formula grants program also provides funds to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of the juvenile justice system.

<http://www.ojjdp.gov/programs/ProgSummary.asp?pi=16&ti=&si=&kw=&PreviousPage=ProgResults>

#### **Mentoring Opportunities for Youth (Competitive)**

Funds national and community initiatives to develop and expand mentoring services for at-risk youth who are underserved due to where they live, a shortage of mentors, special physical or mental challenges of the targeted population, or other extenuating situations. This initiative also promotes collaboration among community agencies and organizations that support mentoring services. Such support includes assisting with mentoring recruitment and mentor retention, training mentors, matching mentors, developing and implementing evaluation plans, collecting and analyzing data, developing strategic and action plans, ensuring cultural competence, developing mentoring partnerships and coalitions, and educating community members.

<http://www.ojjdp.gov/programs/ProgSummary.asp?pi=54&ti=&si=&kw=&PreviousPage=ProgResults#Overview>

### U.S. Department of Labor – Employment and Training Administration

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#### **Reentry Employment Opportunities Program**

Provides funding, authorized as Pilot and Demonstration Projects under Section 171, of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 for youth, young adults, and adults who are formerly incarcerated. Participants in youth programs range in age from 14 to 24 and have been involved in the JJ system but never involved in the adult criminal justice system. Youth projects focus on pre- and post-release services, which include case management, educational skills training, tutoring, mentoring, high school diploma equivalency preparation, credit retrieval, restorative justice opportunities, occupational skills training, work experience, Summer Bridge programs, summer jobs linked to academic and occupational learning, job placement, staff and leadership development activities, utilizing nonprofit legal services providers for the expungement of juvenile records, diversion from adjudication, follow-up, and other supportive services.

<https://www.doleta.gov/REO/aboutREO.cfm>

## Appendix E: Program Highlights

Following are program highlights from around the country that relate to multiple stages of transition. These highlights were previously developed by NDTAC and feature three programs related to transition (Washington's [Education Advocate Program](#); Washoe County's [Transition and Prevention Programs](#); and Stadium View School's [Program](#)) and one program related to technology that can support transition programs (Oregon's [Virtual School District](#)).

## Program Highlights



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# Education Advocate Program Washington State

## Introduction

Nearly 10 years ago, increases in the number of juvenile justice offenders in Washington State, coupled with high rates of recidivism, indicated the need for effective reentry programs to help youth transition from institutional settings to their homes, schools, and communities. Washington State administrators took note of the importance of transitional services during this time. In 2004, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), with funding from Title I, Part D (Part D), began a pilot transition program managed by transition specialists in many detention centers across the State. Initially, transition specialists offered a range of services, from brief checkins with school and work placements to more intensive contacts with youth, their family members, and probation officers to develop transition plans. In the fall of 2006, OSPI expanded transition services by allocating Part D grants to three school districts in the State's three largest counties: King, Pierce, and Spokane. The districts hired Education Advocates (EAs) to work with youth transitioning from regional Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration facilities. The EAs assisted youth in transitioning back into the school system, entering community vocational programs, or pursuing General Education Development program (GED) options. In the fall of 2008, OSPI further expanded the transition service to reach multiple geographical areas across the State and widen the scope of transition services for youth in more communities.

The program was expanded strategically based on a review of the data across Washington State concerning the number of youth in detention, as well as the high school dropout rate. The review shed light on the need for transition, intervention, and prevention services to be expanded at the community level and in middle schools. Clear needs were identified across various areas, including academics, substance abuse, and mental health, which called for the design of reentry programs that were more comprehensive and multifaceted. The need for comprehensive services in facilities and schools was clear. Given this, Washington State began a relationship with its nine regional Education Service Districts to serve the at-risk population coming out of detention centers, and middle- and high-school youth at risk of entering the juvenile justice system.

## Program Objectives and Student Eligibility

The program is funded through Part D, Subparts 1 and 2. Subpart 1 is the State Agency Program, which provides supplemental supports for youth in State-operated institutions. Subpart 2 is the Local Agency Program; it funds support school district programs that collaborate with locally operated correctional facilities and programs for youth who are neglected, delinquent, or at risk. Objectives for the expanded EA program

include increasing support and case management for youth transitioning out of detention centers; helping youth overcome barriers to return successfully to school or work; and better facilitating school coordination activities for youth returning to or reengaging in school.

Youth are eligible for these services if they are between 5 and 21 years of age and meet any of the following criteria:

- They are involved in the juvenile justice system and ~~are at~~ moderate to high risk of reoffending.
- They are school-based youth at risk of dropping out of ~~school~~ reoffending, or showing signs of disengagement from school.
- They are served by community-based programs and at risk of not staying engaged in vocational or community programs, or need additional support to complete a high school diploma or GED.

## What Do Education Advocates Do?

Youth face multiple challenges at both the systemic and individual levels when reintegrating into their communities and schools.

System-level challenges include a lack of up-to-date and complete educational and personal history documentation for these youth. Individual challenges to successful reintegration include the disruption of their education due to confinement; the stigma associated with delinquency, arrest, and conviction; marginalization; and the social

difficulties of adjustment. These challenges call for a coordinated, collaborative, and multifaceted intervention. EAs are tasked with facilitating this process using a multitiered public health model. EAs' efforts are focused on prevention, intervention, and transition. This model enables the effective management of student caseloads by identifying three tiers of services distinguished by their intensity and students' needs. Tier 1 consists of youth at lowest risk, who require the least monitoring and support. Youth receiving Tier 2 services and supports require a moderate amount of case management (e.g., one visit a month), because they are deemed to be at low or moderate risk of reoffending, are able to make positive decisions, and have engaged family members. Tier 3 youth receive more intensive case management; they are usually contacted once or twice a week. Youth remain in Tier 3 for a minimum of 30 days to a maximum of 90 days.

EA services are central to Washington State's improvement efforts. EAs help incarcerated youth transitioning from juvenile justice secure facilities to reenter the community successfully. EAs identify vocational and employment opportunities or reengage youth with school.

### EA Voices:

*"What I try to do is celebrate each and every small success I see along the way....I celebrate anything I can find no matter how small it seems."*

This is the fourth in a series of highlighted programs supported by Title I, Part D, funding.

## Education Advocate Program, Washington State



Caseloads consist of 20–25 youths. EA services include:

- Assessing students' risk, needs, and strengths
- Providing case management, counseling, coaching, and gap support to help youth acquire improved coping skills, develop healthy relationships, and succeed in school
- Providing homework assistance
- Providing postsecondary and employment navigation
- Developing and monitoring individualized Student Success Plans, with specific goals to achieve personal growth outcomes
- Linking students and parents to schools and community services
- Monitoring behavioral cues, school attendance and grades, probation compliance, and participation in community programs

To tailor services provided to youth, EAs use education data from the beginning of students' entry into services to exiting. Upon referral to reentry services, information about a student's criminal history, risk of offending, interpersonal skills, history of behavioral health concerns, and current academic status is gathered. When students are referred to the middle school and high school programs, a variety of information is collected to assess their risk of dropping out. Some schools use a Dropout Early Warning Intervention System ([http://www.cgcpframework.org/?page\\_id=1326](http://www.cgcpframework.org/?page_id=1326)) that monitors failing academic grades, number of credits

accumulated toward graduation, and attendance records (among other indicators), and then screens and identifies students at the greatest risk of dropping out, becoming disengaged in school, and in need of services. Once students are screened, a child study team composed of teachers and staff meets to discuss students who show signs of being at risk of disengaging or dropping out. To triage the students, the team looks for persistently low grades, failing grades across multiple courses, falling behind in course work, being held back one grade, and lack of educational

engagement. If necessary, students are referred to EAs. Once students are referred to EAs, further information and data are gathered using an intake survey, which includes questions about demographics, school history, a history of juvenile justice involvement, and other pertinent histories. Mining these data enables EAs to develop a clear picture of students' needs and desires so they can develop appropriate individualized goals.

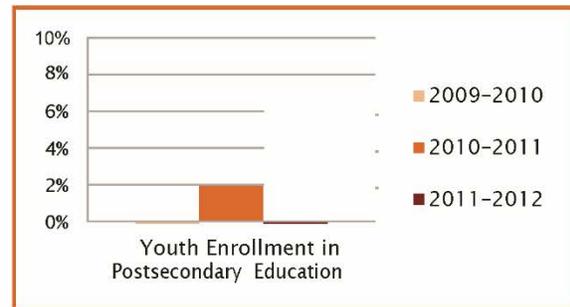
Once information is gathered during the referral and intake process, a plan for reaching students' goals can be developed. The intake processes help to develop a comprehensive plan focused on youths' strengths, needs, and contextual factors (e.g., family, school, employment). EAs and students jointly develop short- and long-term goals. Other adults, such as family and school personnel, also are involved in these conversations. Short-term goals are specific and achievable actions that move students closer to their long-term goals. There is a dual focus on academic and vocational goals. Long-term goals typically focus on earning credits, sustaining and improving acceptable

school attendance, graduation, and employment. Once goals are identified, a plan of action is developed. The plan of action is meant to identify specific steps to take and interventions to put in place to accomplish the identified goals. EAs meet with youth as often as needed until they are stable, decreasing contact as youth progress. Ongoing case management may continue on a voluntary basis until the youth is 21 years of age or no longer on probation.

### Outcomes and Data Use

To monitor progress, the program uses a variety of measures that are aligned with the outcomes promoted by the Part D statute. These include high school credits earned; earning a high school diploma or completing the GED certificate; returning to and staying engaged in school; enrolling in postsecondary school; enrolling in job training programs; obtaining employment; and, for youth enrolled for 90 days or more, demonstrating academic grade-level improvements in reading and math. For example, Figure 1 shows the percentage of youth enrolling in postsecondary education after receiving services. There is a gradual increase from 2009–10 to 2011–12; 1 percent in 2009–10, 2 percent in 2010–11, and 7 percent in 2011–12.

Figure 1. Youth Enrollment in Postsecondary Education



EAs use State-level data to assess and monitor students' progress. For example, the Comprehensive Education Data and Research System provides longitudinal education data. Student data include demographics, enrollment information, schedules, grades, and program participation.

Plans to collect more data are underway. Washington is beginning to assess Statewide data on recidivism for youth returning to detention. To improve accuracy of recidivism rates, plans have been initiated to coordinate with the Office of the Courts' youth assessment, the Washington Assessment of the Risks and Needs of Students (WARNS), which also collects information on students.

### Contact Information

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## Program Highlights

This is the fifth in a series of highlighted programs supported by Title I, Part D, funding.



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# Transition and Prevention Programs Washoe County, Nevada

## Introduction

Transitioning between the juvenile justice system and the general education setting can be difficult for youth due to a variety of personal and institutional challenges, including poor academic grades, credit deficits, poor conditions for learning, and the absence of effective communication and information exchange between sending and receiving schools. These barriers, along with many other challenges, make it difficult for youth to integrate and thrive in general education and facility-based settings and develop the skills necessary for postsecondary and workforce success. Proper transitional interventions and services may increase the likelihood of a youth succeeding in school and decrease the possibility of the youth reoffending.

Youth exiting the juvenile justice system in Washoe County, Nevada encountered similar difficulties, including receiving nontransferable and misallocated credits for courses. Youth also exhibited warning signs of disengagement from school. To address these transition issues, the Washoe County School District (WCSD) implemented the Title I, Part D (Part D)-funded Transition Specialist Program (TSP) in 2007. TSP's ultimate objective is to reduce the number of youth who recidivate and increase the number of youth who are successfully engaged in school, work, and their communities.

## The Transition Specialist Program

The challenges associated with reintegrating youth from juvenile justice placement into a community school, and providing appropriate educational services upon placement, often stem from the lack of systematic processes for transferring educational information between facility schools and community schools. Washoe County's TSP is designed to help assure the seamless transfer of youth and their records between public schools, detention centers, and community and employment agencies. The TSP program allocates Part D funds to provide Transition Specialists, whose responsibility is to facilitate communication between juvenile justice facilities and community schools, in order to provide a coordinated and strategic effort to ensure continued academic progress for youth.

Once a youth enters placement, a Transition Specialist evaluates the youth's academic and behavioral records and researches their social-emotional needs. The Transition

Specialist collects academic transcripts and pertinent information regarding special education services. The specialist then works with the facility teachers to provide youth with appropriate academic assignments. Upon entry to the facility school, students receive a pretest and posttest using the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) assessment, which focuses on reading and mathematics functioning. CASAS is a tool used by some correctional settings to measure academic progress made while youth are in placement. An additional assessment, called Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), is also conducted. This assessment is the standard metric used by Nevada school districts to assess proficiency in subject areas and measure achievement. Both assessments are used to place students in the appropriate curriculum. This step in the transition process is particularly important for Transition Specialists, because they are responsible for ensuring youth are enrolled in the required courses for high school graduation, as well as identifying supports, services, and accommodations found in newly developed and existing individualized education programs (IEPs) and individual learning plans (ILPs) for disabled and nondisabled students.

Providing appropriate credit transfer when a youth leaves the juvenile justice system and transitions into a community school has been a long-term problem for many programs across the country. A lack of coordination among multiple systems often creates barriers that prevent youth from seamlessly progressing through their education. Washoe County juvenile justice facilities had a history of awarding quarter credits for the work youth completed during their confinement, yet Washoe County schools did not accept these credits because their policies permitted them to only accept half or full credits. To resolve these credit issues, juvenile justice placement sites adopted the "A Plus" curriculum to align their courses' content with the content being implemented in all county schools. The A Plus curriculum is a competency-based program that provides planned lessons and tutoring based on a student's competency level in a given subject. Standard education programs place youth in classes by grade level, while A Plus assesses competency in subject matter without consideration of grade level. If a youth is assessed as knowing half the expected curriculum of a ninth-grade English course, he or she may be awarded half credit for the course. This is particularly beneficial for youth who

This is the fifth in a series of highlighted programs supported by Title I, Part D, funding.

## Transition and Prevention Programs, Washoe County, Nevada



are juvenile justice system-involved, as staff has noticed higher disengagement among youth when the curriculum is not relevant.

As Transition Specialists determine the youth's social-emotional needs through their record review process and communication with the facility staff, potential social-emotional learning opportunities are shared with the receiving community school, in order to promote positive outcomes for the youth. The schools are encouraged to provide the youth with social-emotional learning opportunities in a sequential and developmentally appropriate manner, given the youth's individual needs. The following is an example of social-emotional learning opportunities suggested for many of the youth who are served by the Transition Specialists: recognizing and managing emotions; developing caring and concern for others; establishing positive relationships with adults and peers; making responsible decisions, and handling challenging situations constructively and ethically. These opportunities promote skill development that enable youth to calm themselves when angry, make friends and sustain these relationships, resolve conflicts respectfully, and make safe choices.

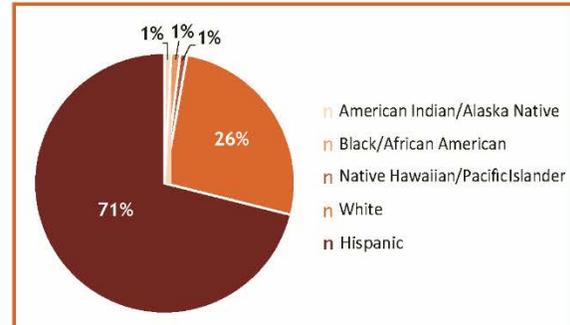
### Monitoring Transition

The transition between facility schools and community schools is not a singular event; it is a process through which youth must be supported to successfully integrate into their new setting. Washoe County's Transition Specialists are responsible for monitoring youth as they transition into community schools during a 90-day period following release. This is done through coordinated efforts with the schools, the youth, and their families. Standard monitoring calls and visits occur at the 10-, 20-, 60-, and 90-day benchmarks. Transition Specialists often visit youth at the school site to discuss their progress and meet with teachers and administrators. Transition Specialists access youth grades, attendance, and school work through the school's parent portal. The parent portal is a web-based program designed to give parents and caregivers up-to-date and easy access to information on the student's academic progress. Transition Specialists draw on this information, as well as meetings with youth, parents, and school staff, to monitor progress towards course completion and rectify any issues related to credit recovery and deficiencies.

During the 2011–12 school year, the TSP served approximately 300 youth (255 males and 46 females), who averaged 33 days in facilities. See Figure 1 for a breakdown by race/ethnicity of youth receiving TSP services. Of these youth, two-thirds saw an increase of at

least one-half of a grade level in reading, and 50 percent of the youth gained at least one-half of a grade level in mathematics.

Figure 1. Student Demographics: Race/Ethnicity



### Prevention Efforts: YES

WCSD determined that it was also necessary to provide prevention supports to reduce the number of youth entering the justice system. The Youth Empowered to Succeed (YES) program addresses the social-emotional and interpersonal issues that youth at risk of dropping out commonly experience, and thereby reduces the number of youth who come in contact with the justice system. The YES Program is a 1-year program offered at five schools (middle and high schools) in the WCSD. Initially funded by Part D dollars as a pilot study in three schools, the program showed success and was expanded and funded by local school district dollars. Youth recruited to this program exhibit at least three risk factors, which may include failing grades in two or more classes, high absenteeism, high rates of in-school detentions and suspensions, and a history of retention. YES offers youth various skill development opportunities such as leadership training courses, which emphasize the importance of education and foster self-awareness, student engagement, and continuous academic success. Students set individualized and student-driven goals that promote their overall success, and are matched with instructors who support and assist them in developing a formal plan to reach their goals. Evaluation of this program shows it has encouraged youth to improve their self-esteem, complete high school, and continue their education through vocational training, the military, or community college.

#### Contact Information

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## Program Highlights

This is the first in a series of highlighted programs supported by Title I, Part D, funding.



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# Stadium View School Minneapolis, Minnesota

## Introduction

Juvenile detention facilities face many challenges related to educating and providing services to students given the students' short-term stays. Stadium View School, which is housed in the Juvenile Detention Center in Minneapolis, has tackled these challenges in a number of ways to assist students in making great strides in their education and earning core subject credits toward graduation. Through a partnership between Minneapolis Public Schools and the Department of Community Corrections and Rehabilitation in Hennepin County, Minnesota, Stadium View provides an opportunity for its students to progress in school even though their stays average 18 days.

In 2010, Stadium View served 502 students who had not graduated from high school or who had not earned a GED, with the majority of students between 10 and 18 years old. The school benefits from Title I, Part D, funding, which is used for parent meeting costs, bus cards, supplementary education materials, a computerized curriculum, library resources, and to support staff salaries. The school also receives funding from the district general education fund and student allocations. The program focuses on family and community engagement, transition support, literacy development, and reengaging students in academics.

## Relationship Development

Given the students' brief lengths of stay in the facility, it is important that staff immediately start to build relationships with the students. Teachers engage in conversations with students to learn about their interests and activities. They show respect, listen to the students, and showcase student work. When students are assigned to the school, they complete a problem-solving survey that asks four questions: (1) What are the challenges in your life from your perspective? (2) What is the number one challenge? (3) What have you or others done to work on this challenge? (4) What would your life look like without this challenge? These questions direct the transition process and create a social-emotional map that allows staff to support students appropriately.

Each Tuesday morning a life skills coach and transition specialist hold meet-and-greet sessions. They provide social and emotional supports and meet with students one-on-one. All staff communicate the message to students that they are important and supported. By the school focusing on student production such as art, music, and student-written publications, students begin to view each other and themselves as competent and successful.

## Literacy

The primary academic goal of Stadium View's program is to engage students, during their brief enrollment period, in literacy through high-interest reading and writing learning opportunities. Lessons are tailored to individual student needs because the students enter the program at varying levels of knowledge, abilities, and ages. Upon arrival, students receive a journal and a small pocket dictionary. They use the journal independently. In class, students engage in extensive writing about themselves and in response to school activities. For example, when former gang members visited the school, students wrote poetry, narratives, and songs about the visit and for the visitors. In another instance, when a former Nobel Peace Prize Laureate spoke at the school, students did the same.

Students write frequently about topics such as anger, death, struggle, and other real-life issues. They particularly like to write about their own lives and experiences and enjoy sharing their writing with one another. Through mini-lessons using student writing, teachers provide instruction about the mechanics of writing, but most student writing is focused on self-expression rather than on perfecting a piece of writing. Twice a year, Stadium View compiles and publishes student writing.

Students also help choose books for the library. They express particular interests in reading memoirs, autobiographies, urban stories, and fiction about street life. Generally, students read at least two books per month.

### Student Demographics (March 2012)

|                  |     |
|------------------|-----|
| Male:            | 79% |
| Female:          | 21% |
| Black:           | 74% |
| White:           | 11% |
| Native American: | 11% |
| Latino:          | 4%  |
| Asian:           | 2%  |

This is the first in a series of highlighted programs supported by Title I, Part D, funding.

## Stadium View School, Minneapolis, Minnesota



### Family and Community Engagement and Transition Support

Stadium View has an active parent council, composed of parents of present and past students. The five- to six-member council meets monthly and seeks to provide information and support to other parents about the school. The council works in an advisory capacity to help communicate with other parents, to identify information parents need to know, and to plan for parent meetings, which are offered in different formats. In school year 2012–13, Stadium View has scheduled six formal parent meetings and six parent lobby visitation days, which are more informal and allow parents to get to know each other. Both meeting formats aim to bring parents together as a group.

Transition support and activities are an integral part of Stadium View's program. The school offers a wraparound system of supports to engage parents with students' progress and to connect parents and students to the community. Parents are continuously involved in student transitions. The school seeks to empower parents to work with their children and to give parents a "voice."

As students transition to the community, the transition specialist follows up within 30 days. This is done on an individual basis because students may transition to different types of settings. The goals are to support literacy, increase student engagement, and support emotional well-being.

Stadium View has a site council that includes parents, vocational and faith-based organizations, disability advocates, and other community organizations. The school works in partnership with more than 70 community organizations to provide additional supports. The school seeks to engage culturally specific service agencies.

Community agencies support the afterschool program in several ways. Weekly, students can participate in the program Mentoring Peace Through Art. This organization seeks to develop students through socially and culturally relevant self-expression in the arts. Students have produced more than 90 songs through a partnership with a music production organization, Amplified Life. The Bell Museum of Natural History provides lab materials for science projects.

The transition specialist has reached out to many other local and national organizations that contribute to Stadium View, such as Men Against Destruction Defending Against Drugs and Social Disorder (MAD DADS), the local YMCA, Rite of Passage, Healing Spirit, and Bridge for Runaway Youth.

### Program Outputs

Based on the school improvement plan, a specific set of indicators, such as parent involvement and communications, are used to measure outputs. From September 2010 to June 2011, more than 500 parents participated in the formal parent meetings and/or monthly parent council meetings. In addition, during this same time period, at least 100 parents attended the informal Sunday parent lobby visits.

Teachers receive professional development to strengthen their instruction and interactions with students. Instructional approaches are adjusted to fit each student's unique needs and do not emphasize traditional teaching methods.

### Challenges and Successes

The program's greatest success has been building relationships with the students and empowering them to advocate for their own education in the future through learning to express themselves, especially through writing. Stadium View has expanded its role and continues to provide support at the adult correctional facility. Preservice teachers are requesting the opportunity to intern at the school.

Stadium View is the only short-term correctional educational school accredited, other than those in Arizona, by AdvancED. One benefit of this accreditation is that students are allowed to receive credit for course work that applies to high school graduation requirements in core subject areas rather than just for elective credit. In this way, while at the school, students can make real progress in their education that can directly lead to high school graduation.

### Contact Information

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## Program Highlights

This is one in a series of highlighted programs using education technology in N or D facilities.



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# Juvenile Corrections Facilities Connect to the Oregon Virtual School District

## Introduction

This Program Highlight is the third in a series exploring the use of educational technology in juvenile secure-care facilities. This Highlight examines Oregon's State-operated juvenile justice facilities and their use of a virtual school district to provide online academic content to their students. Educational technologies such as these have become more common in classrooms across the country. Teachers and students can now take advantage of a world of digital content from curricula to training materials to traditional and social media. Both formal research and anecdotal evidence have shown that, when used properly, technology can enhance student achievement, improve student outcomes, and improve skills and knowledge of teachers.<sup>1,2,3,4</sup> However, juvenile detention and correctional facilities traditionally have been reluctant to employ educational technology because of perceived risks to security and safety. Many facilities feel the risk that students may use technology inappropriately outweighs its potential benefits—especially with regard to the Internet. This rationale is weakened by increasing evidence of the benefits of educational technology for students and teachers.

## The Oregon Youth Authority

The Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) operates 10 secure-custody facilities throughout the State that collectively serve approximately 750 of the State's most delinquent young people who commit crimes before their 18th birthday. Facilities house males and females of all races and ethnicities from ages 12 through 24, though the majority of youth in OYA facilities are Caucasian males aged 16–20. Many of the youth in OYA facilities share several key social characteristics (see Table 1). OYA's mission is to protect the public and reduce crime by holding youth offenders accountable and providing opportunities for reformation in safe environments. OYA staff and partners provide the youth with a range of evidence-based treatment and education programs designed to address delinquency risk factors and build protective factors. OYA uses standardized risk assessments and structured case planning processes to develop the most effective education and treatment plans and intervention strategies.

**Table 1. Social Characteristics of Youth in OYA Facilities**

| Social Characteristics                 | Percent Males | Percent Females |
|--|---------------|-----------------|
| Use of alcohol or drugs                | 69%           | 81%             |
| Parental use of alcohol or drugs       | 58%           | 72%             |
| Diagnosed conduct disorder             | 48%           | 40%             |
| Other diagnosed mental health disorder | 40%           | 65%             |
| Special education student              | 29%           | 35%             |
| Victim of sexual abuse                 | 14%           | 37%             |
| Past suicidal behavior                 | 6%            | 21%             |

## The Oregon Virtual School District

Several years ago, OYA, in partnership with the Oregon Department of Education (ODE), began exploring ways of providing greater access to online educational materials to youth. Their initial focus was on gaining access to the Oregon Virtual School District (ORVSD) (<http://orvdsd.org>) within State facilities. The ORVSD is a program led by ODE that, in cooperation with a consortium of virtual learning providers throughout the State, seeks to increase access to and availability of online learning and teaching resources free of charge to the public school teachers of Oregon. Seeing the growing success of the ORVSD in the State's public schools, ODE and OYA pushed for implementation of the system in juvenile correctional facilities in 2013. The departments worked with the system developers, Oregon State University, to bring the system into secure-care classrooms and develop curricula customized to students' needs rather than relying on off-the-shelf digital learning software. The ORVSD allows students to supplement classroom instruction with videos, podcasts, and other online resources. It also helps teachers deliver content to students and share resources and teaching strategies with their peers across the State, and it allows parents and community members to interact with teachers and collaborate with students.

## Overcoming Challenges to Implementation

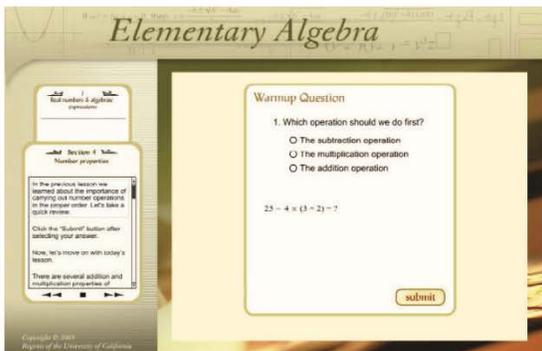
The implementation of the ORVSD in OYA facilities may not have been possible were it not for the enactment of Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) Chapter 416, Division 040 ([http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/pages/rules/oars\\_400/oar\\_416/416\\_040.html](http://arcweb.sos.state.or.us/pages/rules/oars_400/oar_416/416_040.html)). The State law provides guidelines for the acceptable use of electronic networks by youth in OYA custody facilities. It covers the use of specific computers, hardware, software, storage media, and networks by authorized youth within

This is one in a series of highlighted programs using education technology in N or D facilities.

## Juvenile Corrections Facilities Connect to the Oregon Virtual School District



OYA facilities to access education and employment information that facilitates their successful reintegration from confinement into the community. The message to lawmakers in considering the bill was that such a measure was necessary to ensure youth in the justice system were afforded the same educational opportunities as their peers in non-secure classrooms—meaning those that best prepare them for college and careers. With the rule in place, most of Oregon’s secure-care detention and correctional facilities are now able to tap into online and other digital technologies that will help youth in their care make successful transitions back to the community.



Because ORVSD began in the public schools, ODE already supported the technological backbone of the system. The department has now developed a separate “virtual school district budget.” As the ORVSD has made its way into OYA facilities, the budget has grown to cover all initial fees, online courses, training materials, and server space for all facilities. The only financial responsibility of facilities is for the hardcopy instructional materials used by students and teachers.

### Maintaining Security and Safety

OR 416-040 establishes a foundation that ensures the secure use of ORVSD by outlining how facilities are to maintain the security of any networked technologies. Security maintenance occurs through the use of screening software and firewalls in each facility. OYA and ODE have worked with the ORVSD developer to ensure that youth can easily access the educational content but nothing else. In addition, each facility employs continuous, real-time monitoring of computer activity, and each facility has designated staff to review the online history of every computer on a monthly basis. This helps ensure that no one accesses content they are not supposed to. Finally, knowing that some youth may find ways around the security measures, OYA built into their behavior management procedures ways of addressing use violations without denying access to students and of demonstrating to youth

who break the rules the importance of using the system responsibly, for themselves and their peers.

### Outcomes and Next Steps

Oregon is currently embarking on a full-scale, Statewide implementation of the ORVSD in its facilities. In the coming months, it will assess progress and make any necessary modifications to content, training, and support. They have heard from facility teachers and other staff that use of the ORVSD provides them with many more educational options than they had before. They report that students are better able to continue their coursework and academic skill building and enjoy the interactive modes of doing so.

To complement the expanding use of educational technology in facilities, the State has undertaken a number of other technological initiatives: it has rolled out a unified student information system (SIS) used by nearly all of the State’s OYA facilities and county-run detention centers; 79 of the K–12 public school districts are in the process of rolling out the Oregon Student Transcript Exchange (OSTX), an online system that makes it possible to quickly exchange student records and transcripts; and, it has adopted a uniform online student assessment through Let’s Go Learn that will let the State track every student’s progress.

OYA and ODE are committed to continuing their close collaboration to ensure the best educational opportunities and outcomes for all Oregon students and continue to pursue educational and vocational technologies that best prepare their youth for reentry back into the community.

**For more information** on the Oregon Virtual School District and the OYA/ODE partnership, contact:

|   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
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