

# Memorandum

January 8, 2019

TO: Connecticut Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee

FROM: Peter E. Leone

RE: Initial thoughts and recommendations about education services for youth in justice system custody

As the Task Force considers and prepares recommendations to submit to the General Assembly, it is important to establish common understandings about the characteristics of incarcerated youth, the fiscal and social benefits of quality education services for youth, and the history of previous services. Quality education provides options and opportunities for all youth that can enable them to become competent and productive members of their communities as young adults. In general, children in justice system custody are the least academically competent students in the State. There is substantial evidence that higher levels of academic competence and achievement are associated with lower rates of re-arrest and recidivism.

Designing and delivering high quality education services is socially and fiscally responsible. In Connecticut and other states, minority youth as well as children with disabilities who are eligible for special education services are grossly overrepresented in the juvenile justice systems. High rates of mobility and the academic and social skills of incarcerated youth present challenges to providing education services. Connecticut's K-12 public education system ranks as one of the best in the nation; it is essential that services for the least academically competent youth in the State receive the high quality services experienced by many youth in the public schools.

A key issue in the reform of any human services system change is sustainability. Policy and regulation as well as by institutional culture shape practices in social services and education. Those entrusted with developing and guiding reform efforts need to ensure that children enmeshed in the system and their families, as well as the professionals who serve them, have the opportunity to provide input into the redesign process. The Taskforce should consider listening sessions and /or focus group meetings that enable families and professionals to comment on the elements of the proposed redesign. Professionals who have had input into the redesign process are more likely to implement reforms with fidelity and take pride in ensuring that youth achieve the outcomes envisioned by the new system.

The figure that accompanies this memorandum, Conceptualizing Juvenile Justice Education, provides a framework for thinking about, researching, and discussing the elements of a redesigned juvenile justice education system for Connecticut. While all elements listed under the three headings in the figure - Infrastructure, Service Delivery, and Outcomes – are important, the elements listed under Infrastructure are essential and should be the first priority for the

Taskforce. Absent shared understanding about things such as funding, school calendars, and partnerships, it is difficult to design elements of service delivery or to identify goals and outcomes for the redesigned system.

The three tables below identify some of the elements in the conceptual figure that accompanies this memorandum.

*Table 1: Infrastructure Elements*

Topics	Issues	Options	Challenges	Comment
<b>Accountability</b>	Traditional PS models	Link outcomes to ESSA	lengths of stay	
	Alternative models	Generate growth metrics	communicating accountability system to stakeholders	
	School level	Indiv. Learning Plans		
<b>Funding</b>	State vs. local contribution	Oregon -2x av. /pupil cost		
	generating an av./pupil cost	Missouri - bill LEAs + state supplement		
<b>Quality Assurance</b>	Sustainability: ensuring reforms endure	Shared responsibility between LEAs and justice		School board? Advisory board?
	Local accountability w/ state oversight Accreditation by professional assn. of schools			

*Table 2 Service Delivery Elements*

<b>Curriculum Alignment</b>	Credit transfer	Aligned with CSDE coursework	Who awards diplomas?
	graduation requirements: Future Ready CORE and Future Ready Occupation options	CSDE CORE or Occupational requirements for HS graduation	variability of HS grad requirements may be barriers for mobile, state-agency youth; consider CA model (meet CSDE grad requirements w/o local additions)

<b>Advanced Placement</b>	Dual enrollment, on-line options		
<b>Credit Recovery</b>	vendors, options, problems		
<b>CTE</b>	short-courses, industry demand	Explore: C-Tech; Paxton-Patterson; OSHA-10; ServSafe	ctechprograms.com/what-we-do/  www.paxtonpatterson.com/
	community connections	Partnerships w/ local businesses	

*Table 3 Outcome Elements*

<b>Community Reintegration</b>	Track outcomes	link to probation function; shared responsibility w/ LEAs, justice, and courts	Measuring outcomes: credit accumulation; reading and math score gains, reenrollment in school	Consider: GED program, job training, or postsecondary ed; diplomas, certificates, or credentials; sustained employment
<b>Juvenile Justice Transformation</b>	IL - underway; HI - maintenance of reforms; LA County - sustainability			
	MO model, community, small classes, few teachers; MA similar challenges to MO w/ current structure	Part-time and shared teachers; on-line options	providing range of courses needed for HS graduation in small programs	

Proposed Phase 2 activities could involve presentation and discussion with the Committee about the conceptualization of the elements of service delivery for justice-involved youth, development of memoranda about specific issues, and coordinating site visits to well-developed juvenile justice education programs. The resources listed below are brief descriptions and links to some of the most current documents and websites on juvenile justice education.

## Resources:

1. Blueprint for Change: Education Success for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System, The Legal Center for Youth Justice and Education, (2017): <https://www.jjeducationblueprint.org/>

The Blueprint for Change is organized around 10 goals that provide a framework for the design and delivery of education services to court-involved youth. Each goal includes a set of benchmarks followed by links to resources, policies, and practices.

2. Education and Employment Training (EET, King County, WA), Juvenile Justice, Benefit Cost Analysis (2018): <http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/BenefitCost/Program/616>

The benefit-cost analysis conducted by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy show the power and potential benefit of well-designed education and vocational programs for court-involved youth.

3. Education and Interagency Collaboration: A Lifeline for Justice-Involved Youth, Center for Juvenile Justice Reform, (2016): <https://tinyurl.com/ycnmaj92>

This report highlights the critical role of interagency collaboration in supporting court-involved youth with an emphasis on youth reentry following incarceration. The monograph describes in some detail the Education Advocate program in Washington State.

4. How Effective Is Correctional Education, and Where Do We Go from Here? The Results of a Comprehensive Evaluation, The Rand Corporation (2014): [https://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR564.readonline.html](https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR564.readonline.html)

This Rand Corporation report describes a meta-analysis of the effectiveness of education services for incarcerated juveniles and adults. Eighteen studies of education interventions in juvenile corrections met criteria for inclusion in systematic review described in the report. The document also reports on a national survey of the status of education services in adult corrections.

5. LOCKED OUT: Improving Educational and Vocational Outcomes for Incarcerated Youth, Council for State Governments Justice Center, 2015: <https://tinyurl.com/obrzc4p>

This report presents the results of a 50-state survey of juvenile correctional agencies with a focus on current education services and practices including outcome data and post-incarceration services.

6. Raising the Bar: Creating and Sustaining Quality Education Programs in Juvenile Detention, 2017: [https://neglected-delinquent.ed.gov/sites/default/files/NDTAC\\_Issue\\_Brief\\_Edu.pdf](https://neglected-delinquent.ed.gov/sites/default/files/NDTAC_Issue_Brief_Edu.pdf)

This monograph focuses on providing high quality, flexible services for youth in short-term detention facilities. Recommendations are centered around 1) engagement, 2) success, and 3) reentry.