



JJPOC Executive Committee

October 2, 2019

1:00-2:30pm

State Department of Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Hartford, CT 06103

Meeting Summary:

- Review of P.A. 18-31
 - Discussion surrounding the potential problems associated with educating juveniles in out-of-home placement. These problems were:
 - Fragmentation - no single entity is responsible for outcomes and youth are cycling through multiple providers
 - Cost Inefficiencies – USD#2 had estimated it cost roughly \$35k/year to educate a child at CJTS and there wasn't always a teacher in every classroom
 - Quality Control – a quality education has not specifically been defined by the system
 - Specialization & Expertise – no opportunity for specialized curriculum, specialized professional development for teachers, and lack of multiple pathways to opportunity
 - Transitional Supports – youth frequently fall through cracks during transition back into public school system
- Dr. Peter Leone's Preliminary Presentation on Improving Educational Services for Youth in Justice System Custody
 - Standards for education services of incarcerated youth should be consistent or higher with those in public schools around the state. Funding should take into account mobility, academic disadvantage, and special education needs of the youth. There should also be annual reporting on the operations of educational programming for youth in the justice system.
 - A special school district should be created for incarcerated and other court-involved youth. This school system should have an independent school board.
 - The Education Committee suggested expanding USD#1 and making them independent of DOC. A second option would allow a collection of providers to deliver education services. A third option would give the responsibility to a single state agency or non-profit. All 3 options would require a legislatively mandated oversight commission comprised of representation from DOC, CSSD and SDE. DOC representatives were not in agreement with the alternative options provided by the Education Committee.

- The school district should receive CT average per pupil funding as well as additional supports for this high-need population. It was noted that in certain states, such as Oregon, juvenile justice youth receive twice the rate of their public school counterparts. Certain jurisdictions also bill the student's local school district for services provided in out-of-home placement.
- This new school district should be required to receive accreditation from an association of colleges and secondary schools within 36 months. There was discussion among the importance of accreditation and its connection to a much more seamless transfer of credits between schools in order to guarantee the transfer of credits to receiving institutions. It was noted that accreditation from a regional education body, compared to a correctional association, would be more beneficial in the above process and student's home schools would be obligated to acknowledge credits earned while in placement.
- A framework should be developed for accountability that includes educators, the court system, sending/receiving school districts, as well as the DOC and CSSD. DOC recommends that classroom personnel receive DOC training on classroom management. Dr. Leone warned that DOC training focuses on adult population and can be overly punitive.
- Education providers should have to report no less than semi-annually on student performance to the new school district and its board. Reporting measures should also take into account short-term vs. long-term placements.
- Education providers should also be required to develop and maintain relationships with LEAs, non-profits, local industries, and businesses. Dr. Leone noted the importance of students developing bonds and connections with the community, which will be useful upon release.
- It was highlighted that the process of transition truly begins the moment a juvenile is admitted into a facility. At this time, options should be discussed with them concerning their post-placement plan. The option of an intake classroom was discussed. This classroom would serve youth who first enter the system and allow for an easier transition into a longer term classroom.
- Special education requirements guarantee public education through an individual's 21st birthday and a disproportionate number of juveniles either qualify for special education or would qualify for special education given the opportunity for assessment.
- If a juvenile were to graduate pre-release, there should be appropriate continuing education/career tech-ed options available.

- Discussion
 - There was discussion on the potential impact of CCLP recommendations regarding MYI and YCI in relation to this work.
 - Concerns arised from the general lack of engagement and feedback from the Education Committee members throughout this process.
 - Members of the Executive Committee expressed concern over the current providers continuing services and oversight for this population without improvements or progress. This charge is dedicated to improving the quality of services and standards there is concern that keeping the current providers would prevent change.
 - The Executive Committee discussed sharing reentry coordinator information with relevant agencies as well as strengthening the relationship with the agency liaisons.
 - There was discussion in regard to organization of the presentation. Executive Committee member suggested that the presentation could be re-organized in way such that for each problem listed in the first four slides, the solution is provided directly below it. There was also a suggestion that the presentation dive into individual level fragmentations within the system.
 - The Executive Committee discussed the balance of tailoring education to meet specific high-level needs of youth in placement while also ensuring that the education provided is relevant to what the juvenile's home district requires.
 - There was discussion regarding non correctional accrediting bodies and their ability to meet then special social, emotional and security needs of youth in placement. Education Committee Chair highlighted Connecticut Junior Republic's educational service which is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. It was also noted that this accrediting body allows for greater transparency and accountability.
 - The Executive Committee wants to ensure quality of education for all youth, regardless of their security level. This includes the barriers for educating youth in high-security placements at MYI.
 - There was discussion on the problems associated with waiting lists for career-tech programs as well as potential deterrents of education at MYI. Currently, youth can drop out of school at age 18 and work a job that pays more money than going to school. Possible solutions include mandating school until the 21st birthday or increasing money received for attending school to pay equal to other work assignments.
- Next Steps
 - TYJI will look into regional accrediting bodies, such as the Northeast Association of Schools & Colleges (NEASC). Connecticut Junior Republic's Cable Education and Vocational School is currently accredited by NEASC. TYJI will also look into the Correctional Education Association's accreditation for comparison.
 - Dr. Leone will present his preliminary presentation to the JJPOC on October 17th, 2019

Next Meeting: November 6, 2019