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University of Washington Tacoma

# Strengthening Education in Short-term Juvenile Detention Centers Manual

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1. Introduction**

The Center for Strong Schools at the University of Washington Tacoma, in partnership with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), Juvenile Court Administrators and Detention Education Directors received a four-year grant in 2012 from the U.S. Department of Justice – Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP).

The stated goals of the Strengthening Education in Juvenile Detention Center (SEJDC) grant were to: (1) Assess the current educational practices in the state’s 23 juvenile detention centers, which are designed for short-term and transitional residents under the age of 18; (2) Identify high quality educational principles as well as challenges to effective service delivery in order to guide positive and consistent improvement at all sites; and (3) Develop a Quality Assessment Tool (QAT) and SEJDC Manual to guide educational delivery for youth in short-term detention facilities.

### **2. Purpose of SEJDC Manual**

This SEJDC Manual is one of the products of the above research. It is intended to provide juvenile detention center (JDC) educators, staff, and leadership with examples of promising and research-driven strategies to consider when implementing educational practices in juvenile detention centers. We define JDC educators as school teachers, administrators, and support staff (e.g., paraeducators) directly providing or supervising youth academic learning opportunities; JDC staff are non-school staff responsible for non-school duties, such as security, transition coordinators, and mental health specialists. The SEJDC Manual was designed in tandem with the QAT, which is a tool to help JDC education staff assess their capacity in areas associated in research with high quality centers. Both tools should be regarded as companion documents. JDC educators, staff, and leadership team are encouraged to use the SEJDC Manual to guide improvements to the effectiveness of the educational supports in areas where the QAT scores suggest a need for improvement.

### **3. Manual Content and Format**

The SEJDC Manual and QAT are aligned with five (5) Guiding Principles emerging from federal research produced by the United States Department of Education and the Department of Justice. These Guiding Principles have been customized by University of Washington researchers to include findings from the SEJDC research. Brief descriptions of each Guiding Principle are presented below.

#### **Principle 1: POSITIVE CLIMATE**

A safe, healthy, and positive facility-wide climate exists. The climate prioritizes education and provides the social emotional conditions for learning.

#### **Principle 2: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

A safe and healthy relationship with community agencies is present. Community agencies and the JDC are coordinated to ensure the provision of education, skill building, treatment and intervention resources.

### **Principle 3: HIGHLY EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM PRACTICES**

A highly effective educator is a critical element of a high quality learning experience. The recruitment, retention and professional development of qualified education staff, with skills relevant in juvenile justice settings, is essential. A process exists for sharing effective classroom practices which emerged from local and national youth detention center work across detention sites . In addition, necessary social emotional services are in place that address individual youth needs, including those with disabilities and English language learners are in place.

### **Principle 4: ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT**

Rigorous and relevant curricula aligned with state academic, career and technical education standards that utilize instructional methods, resources and practices to promote college and career readiness are in place.

### **Principle 5: COORDINATED TRANSITION SUPPORTS**

Community and family based strategies that prevent recidivism are part of a coordinated transition support system that leads to successful navigation across child serving systems and smooth reentry into communities.

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A brief overview of the research which informed the content of the manual is provided below in Chapter Two. Readers are invited to review the comprehensive technical report emerging from this research for a detailed explanation of SEJDC study methods, results, and implications. *Those seeking practical strategies and interventions are advised to review the Implementation Toolbox found in Appendix B of the comprehensive technical report.*

## CHAPTER TWO

### 1. Research Methods

The SEJDC study examined two primary questions. These questions are offered in the text box to the right.

In order to answer the first question, research methods focused on developing an understanding of how the JDC educational centers and programs operated. This included an identification of strengths and challenges from the perspective of persons working in these centers.

1. Are Washington State's short-term juvenile detention centers providing effective educational programs to meet the needs of high-risk youth?
2. What are the impacts on academic progress of detained juveniles following juvenile detention placement?

Data gathering strategies included:

- a. Surveys and interviews with 46 teacher and classroom professionals;
- b. Interviews with Education Service District (ESD) administrators and transition specialists;
- c. Review of curriculum, policies, regulations, and transition policies;
- d. Classroom observations; and
- e. Descriptions of local practices and policies pertaining to local juvenile courts and obtained through interviews with local Juvenile court officials and published records.

The above information shed light on the strengths, challenges, and staff perceptions of JDCs. A qualitative review of the data suggested the following themes:

- Teacher efficacy in student engagement;
- Instructional and classroom management strategies;
- Current professional development opportunities;
- Professional development interests and needs;
- Administrative management support of effective education;
- School climate and behavioral support;
- Instructional resources to support effective education.

In order to answer the second research question, research methods were designed to find out about the long term experiences of students after they exited detention. The characteristics of 4,830 students detained in short-term detention centers in Washington state in calendar years 2004 through 2013 were examined. Each student had at least one visit to juvenile detention in 2010-2011 school year. Following their exit, educational and court records were explored to examine post-enrollment recidivism and school enrollment in 2011-2013 school years. A number of quantitative analysis procedures such as descriptive analysis were used during our examination of data.

We performed data analysis with a secondary dataset. The dataset had a variety of JDC student data were collected and analyzed by linking cross-agency data. Variables included:

- Student demographics (gender, ethnicity, home language, age, migrant status);
- Student circumstances (homeless status, special education, disability, health, Free or reduced price lunch status);
- Juvenile offense histories; and
- Post juvenile offense and school enrollment records.

Discussions of the research findings along with input from the SEJDC Advisory Board informed interpretation of research findings and recommendations. The SEJDC Advisory Board was comprised of cross sector representatives, including JDC Directors. The SEJDC Advisory Board informed use of Guiding Principles taken from the Department of Justice (DOJ) “Guiding Principles for Providing High-Quality Education and Juvenile Justice Secure Care Settings”.

## **2. Research Findings**

### **Description of the JDC Student Population**

The JDC study population is representative of the juvenile detention population in Washington state. American Indian/Alaskan Native comprised 358 (7%); Asians 70 (1%); Black/African American, not of Hispanic origin 412 (9%); Hispanic or Latino of any race(s) 874 (18%), Native Hawaiian/other Pacific Islander 26 (1%), White, not of Hispanic origin 2900 (60%), and two or more races 160 (3%). Most (72%) of the students were male and 28% female. The majority (90%) reported that their home language was English; 383 (8%) identified Spanish as their home language, and a total of 72 other home languages were reported.

### **Many Students Needed Intensive Education and Support**

There were 4,830 juvenile detainees in the dataset. Most of the students, 3,831 (79%), had been enrolled in school at some point between 2004-2010. During the above time period, 759 (36%) had a history of special education. By the time of the study focus year, (i.e. 2010-2011 School Year), 3,475 (84%) of the students were in grades 9 to 12; 762 (16%) had experienced homelessness; 25% were identified as having some form of disability, including learning disabilities, health impairments and emotional/behavioral disabilities, mental retardation, communication disorders, multiple disabilities, autism, traumatic brain injuries, hearing impairments, brain injuries and deafness.

### **The Length of Time That Students Stayed in Centers Was Limited**

The length of time that students stayed in centers was limited 7 days or less; 1,607 (33%) stayed for 8 to 30 days; and 461 (10%) stayed for 31 or more days. The limited duration of time and the constant moving in and out of students underscores the need to focus immediately on transition planning, targeted instruction, school and community re-engagement.

### **JDC Sites Strengths and Challenges Differed**

JDC sites varied considerably in their methods of classroom management, instructional content and approaches, staffing, relationships with the schools, on and off site connections to community partners, and access to professional development. All exhibit strengths and weaknesses in different areas, such as environmental climate, teacher professional development, and transition support, which are identified in the Five Guiding Principles in the QAT and presented later in this Manual. For example, most reported that their sites were safe and secure. Many, however, experienced challenges engaging parents. All voiced concerns



about the shortage of resources to support the academic, short and long-term transition needs of youth. A variety of reasons, such as institutional priorities, funding, JDC target population, availability of community resources, and access to professional development, contributed to these differences. Many JDC teachers and education staff identified the need for additional training. Structured opportunities to discuss their training needs, and to share and learn evidence based practices were limited.

### **Recidivism Among Youth Who Have Exited JDCs Was High**

We define recidivism as new record(s) of “juvenile offense” in the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) system upon release from the detention centers in 2010 and in the following years till 2013. Although the severity of the cause could be very different ranging from truancy to severe violence activities, we could not determine since the data was not available. In terms of the school enrollment data, it was reasonable to believe that some youth did not enroll back to school due to transition to other service agencies (e.g., mental health service), we could not identify this sub group and exclude from the analysis. Readers are advised to keep this information in mind when interpreting the findings. Follow up data on youth showed that a disturbingly high number (81%) of juveniles offended again after they exited the JDC and 45% committed one to three offenses upon release.

### **The Number of Students Who Drop Out of or Stop Engaging in the Educational System Was High**

Follow up data revealed that over half of the juveniles (52.2%) dropped out or stopped engaging in the educational system after they exited the JDC. When reviewing the long term educational outcomes, gender, home language and homelessness status were not statistically significant. The long term educational outcomes were statistically significant when looking at ethnicity. Compared to the educational outcomes for White students, (49.8%), the Native Hawaiian (62.5%) and African American (55.2%) students had higher dropout rates. Students with disabilities were also much less likely to get a GED (12.7% versus 25.2%) and much more likely to drop out (57.5% versus 49.2%). Similarly, students with migrant status were much less likely to get a GED (12.9% versus 21.5%) and more likely to drop out (60.6% versus 51.3%). This data highlights the need for stronger school re-engagement services and post JDC educational persistence supports.

## **3. Research Recommendations**

### **Recommendations**

#### **(1) Establish a Strong “Future Ready” Implementation Team**

The SEDJC study results suggest that strong education programs in short-term JDC education centers include the types of strategies outlined in the Five Guiding Principles. The research also reveals that effective strategies would likely be more broadly communicated and applied if the work of JDCs was more robustly supported, shared and documented. One way to do this would be to form site-specific, regional and state JDC *Future Ready Transformation Teams* which agree to jointly identify, implement, track and continually improve the goals set forth in their transformation plan.

At the **site-specific** JDC level, the membership of the transformation team would be comprised of 5-8 people, including a teacher, Center Director, security officer and other core staff, such as

transition specialists/coordinators and counselors. As part of the transformation efforts, sites may want to administer the Quality Assessment Tool on an annual basis, and use the results to identify areas for improvement. This manual, along with the SEJDC Technical Report, provide guidance on how site-specific JDC teams can implement change and effective practices aligned to each Guiding Principle. Moreover, JDC staff or others seeking practical strategies and interventions *are advised to examine the Implementation Toolbox found in Appendix B of the comprehensive SEJDC technical report.*

At the **regional level**, which could be aligned with Educational Service District boundaries in the state, the membership would include similar representation, and comprise 8-10 persons, including teachers, Center Directors, and representative staff from each local JDC. This group would review, and roll-up site-specific plans and actions and inform state partners about the JDC work, progress and capacity-building needs.

At the **state level** the JDC Executive Transformation Team would comprise 8-10 people including, OSPI Administrative Leaders, Court, Law Enforcement, Workforce, School District, Community-Based Organizations and College Partners. The JDC Executive Transformation Team would present findings to policymakers and legislators, and showcase findings to increase investments in effective practices. They would also be responsible for identifying statewide and national professional development resources and opportunities.

## **(2) Promote Effective Professional Development Activities**

As part of the transformation efforts, sites may want to administer the Quality Assessment Tool on an annual basis, and use the results to identify areas where staff need and want professional development and coaching. A detailed review of potential professional development activities focused on assessment, transition, site and community-based re-engagement supports are outlined in the full technical report referenced earlier in this manual. Sites may also want to establish virtual and in person learning communities as a way to promote cross learning, and to gauge how colleagues apply and assess the value of the training they receive.

## **(3) Implement a “Future Ready” Approach to Service Delivery**

Transformation Planning and Professional Development efforts which prioritize strong “*future ready*” school re-engagement and connections to positive resources are needed. “*Future ready*” strategies which include assessment driven transition plans, timely and strategic partnerships with parents, community partners and schools are important to forge. To gauge the effectiveness of these “*future ready*” strategies the state-level Transformation Team would benefit from working with OSPI and the Educational Research Development Center (ERDC) to track the recidivism and return to school rates of students, drawing upon data collected by OSPI, the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges, and Washington State Employment Security Department. Ultimately, these measures are the true indicator of the metrics that Education Centers, in partnership with schools and the community as a whole, want to measure and move.

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Chapter Three of the Manual identifies effective strategies associated with each of the Guiding Principles identified in the QAT. Not all approaches will be consistent with the values, programmatic approaches and philosophy of individual sites, or be able to be financially

supported by all sites. These are included because they are present in one or more local sites, and recognized as promising practices in outside research.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Principle 1: POSITIVE CLIMATE

A safe, healthy, and positive facility-wide climate exists. The climate prioritizes education and provides the social emotional conditions for learning.

[Please refer to page 7 in the QAT]

#### 1.1 Climate and Environment

- ✓ JDC educators have a clear goal for what they want the JDC school to achieve and promotes the benefits of educating youth to all JDC staff (faculty, security, maintenance, etc.) to create a strong base and a web of support for education.
- ✓ JDC educators and staff meet regularly to build effective relationships and work as a team with common goals.
- ✓ JDC educators ensure all youth participate in an orientation class before they start the JDC school and all JDC educators implement strategies to support the academic and social-emotional health and safety of youth.
- ✓ JDC educators create an environment which features positive images of youth, examples of youth art work or stories, including those who have successfully exited detention, completed school, entered college or the workforce, or engaged in local education or community-based programs.
- ✓ JDC educators use positive behavior support strategies to ensure that the detention school and facility climate are free from threats of, or actual physical or emotional harm.
- ✓ JDC educators provide the social-emotional conditions for learning, and are able to identify academic, social, and behavioral needs of youth.
- ✓ JDC educators ensure that youth is not picked on or bullied during or outside the JDC school.
- ✓ JDC school is connected to or has social-emotional services in place that address individual youth needs, including those with disabilities and English language learners.

#### 1.2 Access to Specialized Staff

- ✓ JDC educators have access to staff and programs which have specialized mental, behavioral health and chemical dependency knowledge and experience to assess and address the needs of vulnerable and justice-involved youth.

- ✓ JDC ensures that site staff includes persons who have the linguistic capacity to communicate with youth who need the assistance of an interpreter or do not speak English.
- ✓ JDC educators have access to special education services and hires or contracts with persons/agencies that are skilled at working with youth with disabilities (e.g. learning disabilities, health impairments and emotional/behavioral disabilities, mental retardation, communication disorders, multiple disabilities, autism, traumatic brain injuries, hearing impairments, brain injuries and deafness) who require individual education plans.
- ✓ JDC educators have formal relationships in place to expedite the retrieval of Individual Education Plans from local schools and expertise to incorporate this information into instructional strategies.

### 1.3 Behavior & Discipline

- ✓ Rules and positive behavior expectations such as honesty, mutual respect, friendship, courage, openness, listening when someone talks, participation, kindness, respecting other cultures and ethnicities, etc. are posted in classroom for youth to see.
- ✓ Directions about discipline are posted in Spanish, and other languages as needed.
- ✓ JDC educators do not use threats to redirect behavior, but instead use positive social and emotional interventions such as redirects, instructional choices, movement, and breaks.
- ✓ JDC educators support positive behavior and give recognition and rewards for good behavior.
- ✓ Class begins with a review of rules and expectations that teachers have of youth.
- ✓ JDC educators use social and emotional techniques to build self-management when youth become disengaged during instruction.
- ✓ JDC educators encourage youth to congratulate each other on good behavior.
- ✓ JDC educators celebrate youth success.
- ✓ JDC educators remind students of consequences (positive and negative) of behaviors and consistently enforce these consequences during class time.
- ✓ JDC educators re-arrange seating when students are disruptive, use *Classroom Reset* and other effective classroom management strategies, address the function of behavior and mental health needs by referring to appropriate health service, instead of simply applying solitary confinement to all disruptive behavior.

## Rationale

The needs of youth in short-term detention are complex, and include academic, behavioral and social needs (Anoshiravani, 2012; Patterson-Rose, Braverman, 2013). Not surprisingly, because the average stay of youth in detention centers is limited, the focus is increasingly on creating a safe, positive, environment where youth can start to regroup, and rapidly become connected to positive resources that will support their needs in one or more of the above areas. The University of Washington SEJDC study findings revealed that the length of stay in detention centers varied considerably with 58% of youth staying between one to seven days, and 43% staying 16 to 30 days. Only 10% of youth stayed 31 or more days. In order to make the most of a short period of time in detention, efforts to assess youth upon entry to the facility are a high priority. In particular, there is an urgency to ensure that students with disabilities or other special conditions or circumstances such as homelessness, migrant or parenting status, which require customized responses, are addressed rapidly. There is an acute awareness that the window for interventions is short, and the need to extend these interventions after exit from detention is great. It is critical to coordinate support systems in order to understand and meet youth needs (Horner & Sugai, 2000, Lane, Kalberg, & Menzies, 2009). As suggested previously, JDC transformation teams could serve to lead the creation of JDC support systems. Team members should work together to strategize how to stretch and align scarce resources and lay the path for youth to successfully transition from detention to appropriate service agencies.

In the SEJDC research, teachers and paraprofessionals were interviewed and observed during and after class. Members of these constituencies stressed the importance of focusing students on education and learning. This was accomplished by teachers and paraprofessionals setting clear ground rules and reinforcing these throughout the class. Also, given the short period of time youth were in the facility, teachers sought to create an environment that fostered learning. As part of this effort, respondents reported that it was paramount to get the facility staff on board and to cooperate with education staff. For example, JDC sites where facility and education staff worked together as a team, and shared the understanding that the education program was important, experienced a smoother transfer of youth from their pods to school. This happened because students saw their participation in class was a high priority and an expectation of *all* staff, resulting in classes starting on time, with fewer class disruptions. Another important consideration was the physical environment of the JDC classroom. At sites where the JDC school had a separately dedicated classroom, lessons could take place without distractions from facility staff. Teacher and paraprofessionals explained that it was essential for facility and all education staff to be in agreement on positive behavioral interventions and refrain from using threats or solitary confinement.

## **Principle 2: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

A safe and healthy relationship with community agencies exists, ensuring the provision of education, skill building, treatment and intervention resources.

[Please refer to page 8 in the QAT]

### **2.1 Connections to Resources**

- ✓ JDC educators incorporate trauma-sensitive approaches that focus attention on the resources needed to answer the question, *“What can the community do to help youth successfully transition safely and productively into the community?”*, and engage partners who provide these resources.
- ✓ JDC educators have access to guest speakers and community programming. Education staff invites community members to talk directly with youth on the phone, via technology or in person about the resources they offer, e.g. education, employment, chemical dependency, mental health, etc.
- ✓ JDC educators connect youth to mentors who are positioned to support them after they leave the program; whenever possible, the youth/mentor connection and relationship is initiated when the youth is still in detention.
- ✓ JDC educators have access to GED preparation materials, and offer GED programs on site.
- ✓ JDC educators expose youth to information showing the correlation between greater levels of education and their future socioeconomic benefit.
- ✓ JDC educators embed social and emotional learning instruction into the school experience.

### **2.2 Connections to Treatment and Intervention Services**

- ✓ JDC educators have access to onsite treatment and intervention services, including mental health, chemical dependency, sex offender, health care, accommodation support, counseling, support group, victims advocate and other services that youth are assessed to need in order to stabilize their lives and transition to the community. If resources are too scarce to contract or offer these services on site, and youth are assessed to need these resources, JDC educators will work with school transition staff to provide youth with brochures, and the names of contact persons who can provide these services and help them fill out required paperwork.
- ✓ JDC educators create individual education plans with youth.
- ✓ JDC educators involve and engage family members/caregivers whenever possible.

## 2.3 Career Connections

- ✓ JDC transition staff engages youth in career assessments, such as those recommended by the Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board), and local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBS) to explore careers, and identify their interests and skills.
- ✓ JDC Schools offer vocational training-related opportunities, such as OSHA 10, or CPR training so that youth can earn industry-recognized certificates, and apply online for Food Handler Permits or other resources, and help youth to enter their achievements on resumes.
- ✓ School registrars/transition staff secure copies of the youth's online High School and Beyond Plan, and contact High School guidance staff at the youth's home school to see if youth can access specialized supports, such as tutoring, upon re-entry to school.
- ✓ School transition staff provide age-eligible (16-18 year old) youth who are not likely to return home, with brochures and information housing, food, training, case management, education and other supports that are available including programs such as Job Corps, a resource which is particularly helpful for youth exiting the foster system and homeless youth.
- ✓ School transition staff provides youth interested in career exploration or work opportunities with information about the age and eligibility requirements of WorkSource Centers, and other youth workforce program opportunities.
- ✓ School transition staff communicates regularly with local school districts and build relationships with the OSPI Open Doors re-engagement programs, alternative schools, treatment programs and other community re-entry or support resources which have a goal to connect youth to next step education or career resources.
- ✓ School transition staff refers youth, who will not be returning to school additional supports to social enterprise training opportunities, if they are assessed to require accommodations.
- ✓ School transition staff collaborates with family members, juvenile justice staff, community service organizations, and others associated with the successful transition of youth to the community.
- ✓ JDC school transition staff tracks youth 30-90 days post-release to see if they are connected to resources, and to assess the short term success of transition strategies.

### Rationale

Manual users are encouraged to explore community partnership programs in their communities and in other communities. Users are also encouraged to partner with evidence-based programs, such as those identified in the *What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse*. One example is a Florida program, called Avon Park Youth Academy (APYA) and STREET Smart (SS) Aftercare



Program. This program engages youth in remedial education and vocational and life skills training in a secure, residential custody facility for moderate-risk youth. The educational components of the facility are held in the Second Chance School, which is on the APYA campus but is part of the Polk County Public School District, and the vocational training component of the facility is managed by Home Builders Institute (HBI). Juveniles in HBI participate in supervised community service, on-the-job training, and paid employment in plumbing, electrical, carpentry, building and apartment maintenance, and landscaping. Group 4 Securicor, Inc. (G4S) operates the APYA/SS programs and provides additional training in culinary arts, desktop publishing, flooring, masonry, horticulture, auto maintenance, and auto detailing. They also collaborate with people involved in each youth's case both inside and outside APYA, including families, juvenile justice staff, and community service organizations (National Council on Crime and Delinquency, 2009).

Parent-focused programs are another opportunity to consider. The University of Washington SEJDC research underscored a great need to promote parent engagement; 87% of the participants reported that the parents never or rarely take an active part in their child's learning at the JDC site. Examples of parent partnership models include *Parenting With Love and Limits* (Early, Chapman, & Hand, 2013) and Family Integrated Transitions (Aos, 2004; Turpin, Kerns, Walker, DeRobertis, & Stewart, 2011). SEJDC data suggests that family involvement and engagement during the early stages, while the youth is still in residential treatment, may improve the likelihood that youth will complete treatment services and experience lower rates of rearrests, adjudication, felony adjudication, and recurrence of more serious offenses (i.e., felony offenses compared to misdemeanors).

Certain populations of students are particularly vulnerable for not returning to school. The SEJDC research showed that students with disabilities were much less likely to get a GED (12.7% vs. 25.2%) and much more likely to drop out of school (57.5% vs. 49.2%). It is essential that JDC educators follow the individualized educational plans (IEPs), which include specially-designed transition supports. Those seeking detailed and practical interventions for vulnerable youth are advised to review the Implementation Toolbox found in Appendix B of the comprehensive technical report.

### **Principle 3: HIGHLY EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM PRACTICES**

A highly effective educator is a critical element of a high quality learning experience. Therefore, recruitment, retention and professional development of qualified education staff, with skills relevant in juvenile justice settings, who can positively impact long-term student outcome strategies, is essential. A process exists for sharing effective classroom practices and programs emerging from local and national youth detention center work across detention sites and with partners exists. In addition, necessary social-emotional services that address individual youth needs, including those with disabilities and English learners, are in place.

[Please Refer to Page 9-10 in QAT]

#### **3.1 Staff Recruitment**

- ✓ JDC school staff recruits teachers with a particular interest in, and compassion for working with youth in detention. Bilingual teachers, especially those who speak Spanish and, who understand the culture and experiences of youth are needed.
- ✓ JDC school staff recruits teachers who are skilled, dedicated and have self-efficacy and the skills to manage.
- ✓ JDC school staff recruits teachers who would succeed well (or have previously worked in jobs) as a mentor, tutor or re-engagement specialist for youth exiting correctional or therapeutic treatment settings in addition to teaching skills, as these skills are critical ingredients to teaching youth in detention.
- ✓ JDC school staff recruits teachers who are comfortable teaching courses in different subject domains, including life skills, computer technology and GED preparation.
- ✓ JDC school staff recruits teachers who understand the challenges of youth growing up in poverty, and who may have been traumatized, gang-involved or struggling with mental health issues themselves.
- ✓ JDC school staff recruits teachers with counseling backgrounds, especially if they have the skills to provide academic skill building exercises through positive, introspective activities.
- ✓ JDC school staff recruits teachers/paraprofessionals that understand the importance of strength-based services, and have real life experience contextualizing instruction, and embedding strategies that appeal to students with diverse skill levels, interests and aptitudes.
- ✓ JDC school staff builds a strong system for ensuring that a pool of qualified teachers are identified to replace the existing workforce, including reaching out to local teaching colleges.
- ✓ JDC school staff makes a special effort to hire staff with expertise in family engagement and in helping families see how they can support their youth.

### 3.2 Professional Development

- ✓ JDC facility provides cultural competency training to JDC educators and staff in order to promote an equitable and inclusive environment.
- ✓ JDC facility provides orientations and ongoing training to teachers so they can embed contextual learning and transition awareness exercises into their curricula.
- ✓ JDC leadership team provides education staff a chance to collaborate with other staff members for professional development, and exchange best practices with other JDC sites.
- ✓ JDC leadership team ensures that budgets include enough time and resources to support the professional development needs of teachers.
- ✓ JDC provides teachers with the opportunity to become fluent in best practices by receiving explicit instruction from expert teachers.
- ✓ JDC leadership team surveys teachers to identify where they need and want professional development and where they think they could provide peer training to others.
- ✓ JDC provides educators with professional development which includes focus on behavioral interventions, services to students with disabilities, instructional strategies, literacy promotion, assessment and classroom management training.
- ✓ JDC school leadership ensures that teachers have frequent opportunities to learn, practice and hone new skills, and receive regular feedback about their performance.
- ✓ JDC school leadership establishes a shared professional development site that teachers could access to find research, training and conference opportunities.
- ✓ JDC educators are encouraged by JDC leadership to innovate, test new strategies and share lessons learned.

## Rationale

The SEJDC research showed that existing professional development opportunities /curricula did not fully address the challenges faced in detention education settings. Specifically, only 17% of the JDC teachers found the training activities they received to be relevant to their needs, and over 70% said they would like more professional development opportunities. Teachers suggest the importance of learning effective practices from peer teachers in a regular basis so that they can better support the student needs. It is highly likely that Juvenile Detention Center educators will be better equipped to do their job if they receive ongoing professional development. Processes should be in place to ensure that teachers have regular opportunities to build their capacity and receive training in areas which they regard as critical for their growth and work. Training alone, however, is not enough. Teachers also need continuous feedback, coaching, and opportunities to discuss their ongoing skill building needs and successes. For example, some teachers in the SEDJC research expressed that they would like to collaborate with other JDC sites, and would welcome more opportunities to learn about and exchange best practices. Furthermore, they encouraged administrators to be more highly engaged in their education program, and anticipated that higher levels of administrative engagement would lead to increased support for professional development, and a sharper focus on innovative instructional practices. Furthermore, teachers emphasized that it was valuable to employ culturally competent, qualified individuals, who had tutoring or educational backgrounds as mentors for students. They also said it was particularly important for youth to connect to positive role models who had a deep understanding or connection to their culture.

Ongoing coaching is instrumental to building the capacity of teachers. Joyce and Showers (2002) meta-analysis of teacher training studies revealed that about 5% of teachers effectively used interventions when they received training that included opportunities to practice new skills and receive feedback during training, whereas 95% used interventions effectively when training was followed by in-class coaching by a competent coach. Longer term coaching yields positive results. To build capacity in any area, teacher support should continue for at least 12-15 months (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000).

Ongoing strategies to build a strong workforce of JDC teachers are critical, as the current workforce is aging. The SEJDC research showed that current teachers have 20 years of teaching experience and have worked an average 11.3 years in the JDC site where they are currently employed. Despite the longevity of staff, however, many still need and want more professional development, as the profession and resources available to JDC staff are ever-changing.

## **Principle 4: ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT**

Rigorous and relevant curricula aligned with state academic, career and technical education standards that utilize instructional methods, resources and practices to promote college and career readiness.

[Please refer to page 11 in the QAT]

### **4.1 Instructional Approaches**

- ✓ JDC educators have high academic expectations of youth.
- ✓ JDC educators have sufficient and updated resources (e.g., computer-based programs).
- ✓ JDC educators offer curriculum differentiated by ability.
- ✓ JDC educators employ instructional methods and materials customized to youth age, grade placement, development, and culture.
- ✓ JDC educators provide the level and type of academic and social supports that assessments indicate the students need.
- ✓ JDC educators use a pre-test or screener to determine academic ability and implement instruction that is realistic, given the minimal length of time that youth are in detention.
- ✓ JDC educators promote youth engagement through high educational expectations for all students in the juvenile justice system.
- ✓ JDC school staff requires that youth in juvenile justice residential facilities participate in the same curriculum and state accountability systems as youth in traditional schools.
- ✓ JDC educators provide instruction and assessments with appropriate services and accommodations for youth with disabilities and English language learners.
- ✓ JDC educators collect and use data to monitor youth academic progress, make data-informed decisions, and continuously evaluate and improve the education program.
- ✓ School program provides access to information about postsecondary programming, including college, career and technical education that prepares youth for successful transitions to adulthood.
- ✓ JDC educators interact frequently with youth, even if they are working independently to do “check ins”.
- ✓ JDC educators give youth frequent feedback, recognition and timely redirection.
- ✓ JDC educators make school fun and provide frequent opportunities for youth to respond to questions (see Appendix B of technical report for detailed examples).

- ✓ JDC educators discuss current events, and invite students to select an article in class and discuss it with the group.
- ✓ JDC educators provide youth with opportunities to enjoy learning, i.e. allows them to listen to music on the headphones while they work on math.
- ✓ JDC educators have students work on positive exercises, such as describing themselves using positive words.
- ✓ JDC educators are careful when offering 1:1 instruction, so that other students do not become detached, fall asleep or act out.
- ✓ JDC sites use paraprofessionals for 1:1 instruction, if possible.

#### **4.2 Contextualize Education**

- ✓ JDC educators provide multiple opportunities for youth to engage in interactive topics (e.g., the “Pros and cons of parents or guardians of adolescent offenders having to pay fines”).
- ✓ JDC educators give youth a chance to talk about relevant topics, such as staying off drugs.
- ✓ JDC educators ask youth to talk about the challenges or opportunities of interviewing for jobs, and what they could do to be more successful.
- ✓ JDC school partners with local libraries and the community to ensure a rich array of books and materials are available to students, especially targeting topics that are positive, inspiring, and reflective of the real life challenges and experiences of youth.

#### **4.3 Transition-Focused Instruction**

- ✓ JDC educators give youth opportunities to read, write or talk about their aspirations for the future.
- ✓ JDC educators have access to the homework provided by their schools when possible; when youth enroll, JDC school contacts the student’s regular school and arranges for homework to be picked-up/transmitted to JDC site.

#### **4.4 Incentives**

- ✓ JDC educators offer youth incentives for completing work, passing spelling and math tests, etc.
- ✓ JDC educators inform parents when youth earn a credit when possible.
- ✓ JDC educators give youth who finish exercises earlier, a chance to explore topics they want in the computer, or to read a book on a subject they enjoy.

- ✓ JDC educators offer weekly prize drawings for youth who set and pass objectives.
- ✓ JDC educators designate a “student of the week” every week.

## **Rationale**

The need to implement strategies which engage youth in school and next step education is strong. The SEJDC research showed that the long term educational outcomes of the students by JDCs were low; 52.2% of these youth dropped out or disappeared from the educational system. This research also underscored the importance of having a rich array of books and learning materials in the classroom.

The SEJDC data indicated that teachers strive to create a supportive and positive classroom environment that engages students and encourages them to learn. Effective strategies used and described by teachers and paraprofessionals included making sure that students miss as little instructional time as possible by redirecting disruptive behavior rather than sending students out of the classroom; offering students’ incentives to learn, such as reading time; and engaging students in activities that are aimed at their individual learning level, centered around current topics or inspire a positive future outlook. Computer-based programs were identified as effective for individualized learning. However, it was stated that often these strategies and approaches were not feasible due to the short-term nature of JDC instruction and the limited funding of JDC education programs. The need to offer alternative opportunities to students who decided not to continue education was emphasized. These included connecting students to vocational training, Integrated Basic Skills Education Training (I-BEST), Job Corps, short term certificate and credential courses.

Evidence based research supports many of the above approaches. After a decade of study into the educational needs of juvenile offenders, researchers of the Juvenile Justice Educational Enhancement Program (JJEED, 2005) concluded that explicit, individualized instruction, particularly focused on reading, was a best practice to address the educational needs of this population. In their systematic review of empirical evaluations of programs to reduce crime, researchers from the Washington State Institute for Public Policy found that educational programs made the largest contribution to crime reduction of the multiple programs reviewed, reducing recidivism by 19.4% (Drake, Aos, & Miller 2009). Moreover, among youths who were rearrested, those who attended school regularly following release were arrested for significantly less serious offenses compared to youths who did not attend school or attended less regularly (Blomberg, Bales, Mann, Piquero, & Berk, 2011).

## **Principle 5: COORDINATED TRANSITION SUPPORTS**

Community and family based strategies that prevent recidivism are part of a coordinated transition support system that leads to successful navigation across child serving systems and smooth reentry into communities.

[Please refer to page 12-13 in the QAT]

### **5.1 Transition Planning**

- ✓ Education staff starts transition planning activities right after students enter the JDC. The day a youth enters short-term detention, the transition to the community clock ticks. Staff take a system's level approach to supporting the academic, behavioral and social needs of youth to ensure that the results of the assessment are driving short term JDC-based and transition planning actions. JDC school staff develops a transition plan with each youth that clearly outlines plans for enrolling in next step services and ensures that the plans are concrete and doable with "early and frequent successes" and capacity for "do-overs".
- ✓ JDC school transition staff creates an individualized prerelease plan upon entry of a youth into a juvenile justice residential facility. This plan is completed in partnership with the youth and his or her family. The plan identifies action steps necessary to promote re-enrollment in a school and reduction of behaviors that are likely to lead to rearrests or reoffending.
- ✓ JDC school transition staff informs youth and families about the options available for youth to continue their educational and vocational training, or to obtain employment.
- ✓ JDC school staff establishes policies and procedures that promote school assignments best suited for students' educational success and the timely transfer of their accurate education and related records.
- ✓ JDC school staff uses Edgenuity, Career Bridge, Washington Occupational Information System (WOIS) or other education and career planning tools to help youth identify their career interests and aptitudes.
- ✓ JDC school transition staff works with youth and families to determine the most appropriate post-release educational/vocational setting.
- ✓ JDC school offers additional earn and learn opportunities (such as a token or privileges system) for youth that are grounded in evidence- and practice-based service models and focused on social, emotional, and behavioral skill development.
- ✓ JDC school staff has effective communication systems with referral partners to see how/if referral systems are functioning to support transition.



## 5.2 Transition Partners

- ✓ JDC school transition staff connects students who will not be enrolling in school to appropriate services, e.g. WorkSource, Job Corps, Goodwill, Community College, etc., and encourages these partners to initiate workforce focused services while the youth is enrolled in the JDC.
- ✓ JDC school staff ensures that school transition staff coordinates with probation officers.
- ✓ JDC school staff has efficient communication and feedback systems with partner agencies.

## 5.3 Detention Center and School Partnership

- ✓ JDC educators engage Educational Service Districts as well as school district staff in transition planning efforts to increase the focus on transition services and the important role of guidance counselors.
- ✓ Systematic supports are in place to help students transition to school. School guidance counselors are informed that students will be returning.
- ✓ JDC school staff helps students see that their work in detention has meaning. The JDC school transition team facilitates the quick transfer of educational records between the JDC school and the youth's home school (or another educational setting) and ensures that all credits transfer.
- ✓ JDC staff ensures that transition planning takes into account measures to hold the youth accountable to their victims and restitution commitments, and protect the health and security of youth.

## Rationale

The November 2015 *Locked Out: Improving Educational and Vocational Outcomes for Incarcerated Youth* report cites model programs which facilitate the successful transition of youth to the community. For example, The Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) and Oregon Department of Education (ODE) provides older youth in long-term facilities with assessment-driven services that result in individualized education plans, enrollment in dual-credit courses, tutorial programming and work-based experience. Collaborations with workforce and college partners are also identified as essential to ensure that similar opportunities are in place to support youth transition to the community.

Furthermore, respondents in the SEJDC qualitative research highlighted the importance of good relationships between district schools and the JDC school for smooth transition. Respondents said they often faced difficulties re-enrolling youth in their previous school, as they had strained relationships with teachers and school staff. Some reported that the schools were hesitant to take students back, making the transition planning challenging and more time-consuming. A smooth transition was most likely to occur when the probation officer, regular school teacher and parents, advocates or other supportive partners worked together to create an exit plan in consultation with the youth. Most noted that to develop a better understanding of the

effectiveness of transition strategies, better feedback loops need to be in place. To ensure opportunities to make continuous improvement, the JDC school would like to be updated on the youth's re-enrollment and success for a four to six-week period post transition. The implementation of strong transition tracking systems and partnerships were regarded as a critical recidivism prevention tool.

## **Summary**

The SEJDC Manual is a living document that should be reviewed and updated annually to incorporate new promising and effective practices. Users of the manual are encouraged to set aside time within their learning communities and transformation planning efforts to make necessary improvements based on both the Quality Assessment Tool and SEJDC Manual. They are also encouraged to add updated literature in the rationale section and are invited to use this portion of the manual as a resource for developing case statements for grants.

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