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University of Washington Tacoma Center for Strong Schools



# Strengthening Education in Short-term Juvenile Detention Centers: Quality Assurance Tool (QAT)

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The 5 Guiding Principles listed below form the basis of the QAT. These principles expand upon the five (5) Guiding Principles emerging from federal research produced by the United States Department of Education and the Department of Justice’s “Guiding Principles for Providing High-Quality Education and Juvenile Justice Secure Care Settings.”

**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 for sharing effective classroom practices emerging from local and national youth detention center work across detention sites exists. In addition, necessary social-emotional services 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.

**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.

## Administration and Scoring Guide

The Quality Assurance Tool (QAT) is designed to assess and evaluate critical indicators that are associated with high quality educational programs in short-term detention centers. Stakeholders may use the results of the QAT to assess their current status, identify and prioritize area(s) for improvement, and compare their progress on an annual basis.

It is advised that the outside data collector complete the Facility Evaluation Tool prior to completing the QAT. Please contact the Greg Benner at [gbenner@uw.edu](mailto:gbenner@uw.edu) to request a copy.

To ensure that decisions are based on reliable and valid data, it is important to follow the directions below:

### ADMINISTRATION

#### Administrative Steps:

**1. Assemble a Juvenile Detention Center team.**

This should be a representative team of all education staff (teachers, administrator, and paraprofessionals) in addition to the Juvenile Court Administrator, Probation Officer, and/or any others that may have kept understanding of facility needs and strengths.

**2. The JDC team completes self-report of the QAT as a team.**

The team members should score each item independently and then compare the results as a group. Where disagreements on scoring an item occur, the team should discuss until consensus is reached. The team leader should keep detailed notes about reasons/evidences shared during group discussion in the final QAT copy.

**3. The team provides a final copy of the scored self-report QAT to the data collector.**

The data collector will likely be a representative from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, who conducts the site visit. The self-report QAT will include the overall JDC team rating for each item on the QAT as well as team notes. Thus, the data collector will have item by item scores from the JDC team prior to conducting their own administration of the QAT.

**4. Data collector meets with the JDC leadership team.**

The team leader and data collector discuss each item of the QAT. The data collector makes notes corresponding to each item and provides an initial score for each item.

**5. Data collector completes observations and interviews.**

The data collector first conducts observations in each location of the facility and brief interviews with staff on any items of the QAT that may warrant more data prior to scoring.

**6. Gather evidence sources (see list below).**

Evidence sources and the rated self-report QAT is provided to the data collector upon request to clarify any remaining questions. The JDC team should identify a facility contact person to gather the evidence and have them ready for the data collector should they be requested.

**7. Data collector scores the QAT.**

The data collector reviews the evidence sources, reviews notes taken, and completes scoring for each item of the QAT.

**8. Data collector meets with school administrator to discuss discrepancies in scoring and provides overall feedback to the whole team. If needed, data collector can arrange to meet with facility director/contact.**

Administering and scoring the QAT takes about three hours.

**Potential Sources of Evidence**

1. Discipline handbook
2. Program improvement plan goals (where applicable)
3. Annual Action Plan for meeting facility-wide goals
4. Social skills instructional materials and/or implementation time line (scope and sequence)
5. Behavioral incident summaries or reports (school and facility)
6. Behavior incident form(s) (school and facility)
7. Other related information (example: incident reports, isolation reports)
8. Educational program guidelines or handbook
9. Curricula, lesson plans, and samples of instructional materials
10. Transition planning materials

## 11. Evidence of parent, school, community collaborations

### RATING

It is important that the scoring team familiarizes themselves with all the items under each principle. All the items under one principle should be rated before moving to the next one. The JDC team and the data collector choose from “fully in place,” “mostly in place,” “marginally in place,” and “not in place” for each item based on the evidence. If there are any disagreements between team members on an item, it is advised that a lower category be checked (e.g., choose partially in place instead of fully in place).

### SCORE INTERPRETATION

**1. Principle level:** Please use the principle summary form (page 13) to summarize the obtained scores. By comparing the total possible scores with the obtained scores, major areas of strength and difficulty at your site can be identified.

**2. Item level:** Once the major areas are identified, please use the item level summary form (page 14) to mark down the score by each item. This form will then give you a “big picture” of your current practices. Through team discussion, you may prioritize the improvement objectives. Once an improvement objective is identified, you may use the improvement plan (page 15) and resources in the manual to develop an action plan. You may also use the item level summary form to monitor improvement progress.

### USE

The data collector provides a copy of the completed QAT and debriefs the results with the JDC leadership team. The JDC leadership team identifies and prioritizes area(s) for improvement based on the results and the facility’s situation. An improvement plan (see page 15) is developed together with the JDC team and reviewed quarterly. Those seeking practical strategies and interventions are advised to review the SEJDC Manual and the Implementation Toolbox found in Appendix B of the comprehensive SEJDC Technical Report.

<b>Principle 1: POSTIVE CLIMATE</b>			
A safe, healthy, and positive facility-wide climate exists. The climate prioritizes education and provides the social and emotional conditions for learning.			
Please refer to page 8-10 in the manual			
	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Rating</b> 3=Fully in place 2=Mostly in place 1=Marginally in place 0=Not in place	<b>Evidence (circle sources used)</b> E= Evidence source from list (p. 4); I= Interview; O=Observation; T=Team Self-Report
1.1	Staff cites education programs as paramount, and is united in this common goal.	3 2 1 0	<u>Notes:</u>
1.2	Classroom environment is secured and engaging, expectations are reinforced.	3 2 1 0	<u>Notes:</u>
1.3	Facility and education staff have agreed to 5 or fewer positively stated facility rules/ behavioral expectations.	3 2 1 0	<u>Notes:</u>
1.4	The agreed upon rules and expectations are publicly posted.	3 2 1 0	<u>Notes:</u>
1.5	JDC leadership team conducts climate assessment (e.g., Facility Evaluation Tool) at least annually.	3 2 1 0	<u>Notes:</u>
1.6	JDC & school share information about facility wide climate assessments.	3 2 1 0	<u>Notes:</u>

<b>Principle 2: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</b>			
A safe and healthy relationship with the community, ensuring the provision of education, skill building, treatment and intervention resources.			
Please refer to page 11-13 in the manual			
	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Rating</b> 3=Fully in place 2=Mostly in place 1=Marginally in place 0=Not in place	<b>Evidence (circle sources used)</b> E= Evidence source from list (p.4); I= Interview; O= Observation; T=Team Self-Report
2.1	Effective relationships between education provider, Education Service District, school districts and alternative schools exist.	3 2 1 0	<u>Notes:</u>
2.2	Education provider works with community college partners to apprise students of educational and vocational alternatives, including GED programs and make appropriate referrals.	3 2 1 0	<u>Notes:</u>
2.3	There are connections to appropriate substance abuse and behavioral treatment programs.	3 2 1 0	<u>Notes:</u>
2.4	All staff works with cross-sector staff, community partners, students and families to access services. Students are referred to drop-out prevention, intervention and reengagement programs.	3 2 1 0	<u>Notes:</u>
2.5	Students are apprised of viable options and resources, including reentering school.	3 2 1 0	<u>Notes:</u>
2.6	When approved/invited by facility, parents participate in school and transition planning.	3 2 1 0	<u>Notes:</u>

**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 for sharing effective classroom practices emerging from local and national youth detention center work across detention sites exists. In addition, necessary social emotional services that address individual youth needs, including those with disabilities and English language learners are in place.

Please refer to page 14-16 in the manual

	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Rating</b> 3=Fully in place 2=Mostly in place 1=Marginally in place 0=Not in place	<b>Evidence (circle sources used)</b> <b>E= Evidence source from list (p.4); I= Interview;</b> <b>O= Observation; T=Team Self-Report</b>
3.1	Education staff receives effective induction from former teachers and receives mentoring or support during the initial years of employment at the JDC.	3 2 1 0	<b>Notes:</b>
3.2	Education and facility staff reflect cultures of students served.	3 2 1 0	<b>Notes:</b>
3.3	School Administrators establish effective feedback/evaluation mechanisms and offer opportunities for peer learning.	3 2 1 0	<b>Notes:</b>
3.4	School staff assists students with future planning (i.e. trade schools, high school, and college).	3 2 1 0	<b>Notes:</b>
3.5	School staff are provided regular opportunities to identify training needs, gain new skills, and have opportunities to connect and learn from peers at other JDCs.	3 2 1 0	<b>Notes:</b>

3.6	Regular meetings occur for staff to communicate needs and gaps and to share concerns with management to inform change.	3 2 1 0	<u>Notes:</u>
3.7	School staff uses effective assessments to guide academic and behavioral interventions.	3 2 1 0	<u>Notes:</u>
3.8	Services meet the needs of all students, including those with Individualized Education Plans or 504 plans.	3 2 1 0	<u>Notes:</u>

**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 17-19 in the manual

	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Rating</b> 3=Fully in place 2=Mostly in place 1=Marginally in place 0=Not in place	<b>Evidence (circle sources used)</b> E= Evidence source from list (p.4); I= Interview; O= Observation; T=Team Self-Report
4.1	Staff uses relevant curricula appropriate to students' interests, level of education and career goals.	3 2 1 0	<u>Notes:</u>
4.2	There are strategies in place that allow students to gain academic credits.	3 2 1 0	<u>Notes:</u>
4.3	Resources are accessible and help students pinpoint areas of interest, educational and career resources (e.g. online courses).	3 2 1 0	<u>Notes:</u>
4.4	Instructional methods are individualized and classroom activities differentiated.	3 2 1 0	<u>Notes:</u>
4.5	Exploration of vocational, technical, education and employment opportunities is provided.	3 2 1 0	<u>Notes:</u>

**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 20-22 in the manual

	Indicators	Rating 3=Fully in place 2=Mostly in place 1=Marginally in place 0=Not in place	Evidence (circle sources used) E= Evidence source from list (p.4); I= Interview; O= Observation; T=Team Self-Report
5.1	There is a positive, working relationship between education, social services, and court systems that enables smooth transitions.	3 2 1 0	<u>Notes:</u>
5.2	Students are provided direct referrals to appropriate designees and youth service agencies.	3 2 1 0	<u>Notes:</u>
5.3	Students are provided opportunities to engage in healthy adult relationships.	3 2 1 0	<u>Notes:</u>
5.4	Students are assisted with transition plans to discuss viable high school and beyond plans.	3 2 1 0	<u>Notes:</u>
5.5	There is a student transition team comprised of detention staff, court, mental health, chemical dependency and school staff.	3 2 1 0	<u>Notes:</u>
5.6	The student transition team holds themselves accountable for student transition planning.	3 2 1 0	<u>Notes:</u>

5.7	Youth in need of long-term mentorship are receiving it.	3 2 1 0	<b>Notes:</b>
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**Principle Level Summary**

	Possible Points	Obtained Score	Mean	Summative Notes
Principle 1: Positive Climate	18			
Principle 2: Community Engagement	18			
Principle 3: Highly Effective Classroom Practices	24			
Principle 4: Academic Engagement	15			
Principle 5: Coordinated Transition Supports	21			
<b>Sum</b>	<b>96</b>			



## Improvement Plan

Principle	Action Item (What)	Who Is Responsible?	By When?
Principle 1 Positive Climate			

Principle	Action Item (What)	Who Is Responsible?	By When?
Principle 2 Community Engagement			

Principle	Action Item (What)	Who Is Responsible?	By When?
Principle 3 Highly Effective Classroom Practices			

Principle	Action Item (What)	Who Is Responsible?	By When?
Principle 4 Academic Engagement			

Principle	Action Item (What)	Who Is Responsible?	By When?
Principle 5 Coordinated Transition Supports			