One of the more complex programming functions within facilities that confine youth is the delivery of the spectrum of educational services, which is vital to this population. Both the characteristics of the youth and the conditions of the particular confinement setting have an impact upon the ability of staff to provide quality educational services. The wide range of youth abilities, the high rates of special needs, the complex histories of the youth, and the variations in youth’s current legal status contribute to the unique challenge of educating this population. The educational needs of students in confinement settings require a wide continuum of services, and a multitude of non-school related variables are continuously influencing a student’s education program. This keeps many students’ education goals in a dynamic state.

The many limitations of a confinement facility’s procedures, safety and security requirements, resource availability, physical structure, and budget contribute to the challenges of developing meaningful, engaging, and functional education services within the confinement setting. By definition, the confinement facility creates a significant challenge for education programs: the high rate and unpredictable nature of student mobility (pre-adjudicated youth moving in and out of primarily short-term facilities), the variable lengths of stay in treatment options for adjudicated youth, and the need to match curricula from multiple school districts served by the facility. However, when successful, high-quality educational services from intake to reentry can help reduce recidivism, contribute to credit recovery, diploma completion, future employment, and support a youth’s successful reentry into family and community.

Rather than requiring the students to adapt to the program, high-quality confinement education programs should adapt to and meet the diverse needs of the
student population and make adjustments as needed within the constraints of safety and security and youth trauma. This is what makes confinement education programs unique from their public school and alternative education counterparts. Additionally, educational programs within facilities that confine juveniles operate in a unique circumstance. They are functionally distinct and geographically isolated from the traditional educational services in a public school district. Education staff also do not function in the same way as safety and security staff function. Consequently, the confinement education staff often feel isolated or separated from both colleagues working in their field of education, and other staff in the facility. To the degree the education staff work in tandem with the facility staff, they may overcome the isolation factor, which in turn can have a positive impact on the quality of the education program.

**Why Provide an Educational Program?**

There are many reasons to provide education programs in juvenile detention, corrections, adult jails, and prisons including legal requirements, such as compulsory and special education laws. Philosophically, education is a core component of programming that promotes youth rehabilitation and transformation. There are also economic and restorative principles behind the reasons for educating youth in custody. In summary, education is provided because:

- It is the law, and confinement facilities of all types are required to provide full educational services. Federal regulations such as No Child Left Behind [NCLB] and individual state regulations require all youth up to a specific age to attend school as well as the days and hours of compulsory education.
- Most youth admitted to facilities have a history of poor academic performance.
- A positive educational experience often begins during a period of crisis for youth, which can serve as a catalyst for change.
- In long-term facilities, an extended period of stability offers an opportunity for planning and implementation of a clarified educational or career plan.
- In short-term facilities, youth who are enrolled in school have an opportunity to keep current with their studies and return to school when released with minimum disruption to their education.
- Academic or vocational successes help to enhance the youth’s chances of employment following release.
- Academic success helps youth to see themselves differently, which can lead to enhanced self-esteem and improved problem-solving abilities.
- Youth who are not enrolled in school, who will not have the opportunity to complete an education at their home school, or who are not interested in
education, have opportunities to explore a general equivalency diploma (GED), life skills, and career or vocational opportunities.

- Youth engaged in pro-social programming such as education during their time in custody exhibit fewer behavior problems.[1]

Creating the Culture “Of and For” Learning: The Role of the Administrator or Leader

Culture counts. In an environment where education is not typically the first consideration, establishing a learning culture based on trust and mutual respect is critical. High achieving and effective confinement schools are safe, nonviolent places where students work hard and demonstrate respect for the physical and human environment. This often requires the lead teacher to actively protect instructional time and push back on the correctional culture by questioning long-standing policies that adversely impact teaching and learning and may compromise educational values. Creating the culture “of and for” learning is a deliberate responsibility of school and facility administrators and staff and is described in the following sections.[2]

Identify and Incorporate Values, Vision, and Mission

Effective confinement education programs are built on clearly articulated values, vision, and mission. Although it is probable that the values connect the education programs in the various confinement settings (all students can learn); it is equally probable that the vision and mission are affected by the nature of the custody setting and the characteristics of the students served. For example, education programs in juvenile corrections and adult prison settings can legitimately include, as part of pathways to the vision and mission, completion of high school credits, graduation, and preparing for or enrollment in post-secondary options. Alternatively, an average length of stay that is less than two weeks places real limits on the vision and mission for juvenile detention education programs to critical aspirations of reconnecting, inspiring, motivating, and rekindling hope in disenfranchised students.

Lead teachers must review program materials and ensure compliance with all state and federal regulatory requirements regarding the education of youth. Additionally, the education lead teacher is responsible for developing educational policy statements that conform with or reflect the mission, philosophy, goals, and objectives of the facility.
From the **Pathfinder Education Program** in the Lancaster Youth Services Center in Lincoln, Nebraska, a short-term pre-adjudicated detention facility operated by the Lincoln Public Schools.

“Our priority is inspiring students to want to learn and providing them with the necessary tools to be successful learners.” (Randall Farmer, Director, in an open letter outlining the program purpose) [3]

**Mission Statement:** “The students in the Pathfinder Education Program have diverse backgrounds, interests, needs, and academic records. It is the mission of the education program to provide educational opportunities that allows students the opportunity to enhance basic academic skills, technology, career options, and develop personal growth skills through individualized instructional programs of study. The education program introduces multiple pathways which might include earning credits toward completing a high school diploma, preparation for the General Education Diploma testing, and Skills needed for lifelong learning.” [4]

From the **See Forever Foundation**, Maya Angelou Academy at New Beginnings in Washington, D.C., a secure residential treatment facility operated by the Division of Youth Rehabilitation Services. Maya Angelou operates several charter schools in the D.C. area including New Beginnings.

**Mission Statement:** “Our mission is to create learning communities in lower income urban areas where all students, particularly those who have not succeeded in traditional schools, can reach their potential and prepare for college, career, and a lifetime of success. At Maya Angelou our students develop the academic, social, and employment skills they need to build rewarding lives and promote positive change.” [5]

From the State of Washington Department of Corrections, Policy Title: **Education and Vocational Programs for Offenders**

**POLICY:**

1. The Department’s philosophy and goals for offender education and vocational programs are to improve offender functioning in literacy, employment, communication and life skills, and community transition. The Department, working with the Washington State Board of Technical and Community Colleges and other contractors, develops
education and vocational programs to prepare offenders for higher skills work programs and to qualify for living wage jobs upon release.

2. The Department will provide vocational programs that develop the skills needed for facilities and Correctional Industries jobs and are accepted by community based training programs to allow the offender to transfer and complete the programs upon release, if necessary.

3. Academic and vocational programs are accredited, recognized, certified, or licensed by the state or other acceptable organization.

4. Offenders may be required to participate in a combination of work, education, and vocational programs.[6]

Get the Right People: Qualities of an Effective Teacher

Recruiting, hiring, and retaining the right people are the most critical elements to operating an effective education program in a custody setting.[7] Administrators should look for individuals who embody the education program’s values, vision, and mission. A qualified teacher should have the appropriate licensure and the education program must implement requirements for the continuous professional development of anyone teaching classes. Given what we know about student needs, at a minimum, confinement education programs should have teachers with certifications or endorsements in reading, math, and special education. Certified teacher–training programs prepare teachers in lesson design, assessment, evaluation, educational psychology, and a myriad of other skills that professionalize the delivery of instruction. A professional, licensed educator enhances all components of a program, engages with other professionals in the facility, and is required by law to provide a state-certified credit or diploma.

As part of NCLB 2001 (subsequently reauthorized), teachers are required to meet “Highly Qualified” requirements. Highly Qualified teachers hold a bachelor’s degree or higher from an accredited 4-year institution of higher education, have the content knowledge required to teach a core subject area and can pass a competency test in that area. At the time the NCLB Act was passed, there was great controversy around the implementation of this requirement. Teachers had to be reassigned to different classrooms and schools or had to return to school to earn credentials in the appropriate areas to be qualified to continue to teach in their classrooms. Rural schools and small education programs, such as a lot of confinement education programs, struggle to meet the Highly Qualified requirements. Although the intent was larger than this, over time, requiring states to develop plans to ensure that poor and minority children had access to experienced, knowledgeable, certified, and in-
their-field teachers also had a positive impact on youth in custody education programs.[8]

Whether a confinement education program is required to hire teachers that meet the Highly Qualified requirements depends on the type of funding the program receives. If the confinement education program is a Local Education Agency (LEA) under state law or is under the authority of the State Education Agency (SEA), teachers of core academic subjects employed by those entities must be highly qualified. If, however, the entities that employ these teachers are neither LEAs as defined under state law nor under the SEA’s authority, the requirements do not apply. Nevertheless, it is critical that all students, regardless of school setting, are able to achieve to the State’s academic content and academic achievement standards. Therefore, all educational entities—whether covered by the highly qualified teacher requirements or not—are urged to ensure that students have teachers with the content knowledge and pedagogical skills needed to help them succeed.”[9]

Although administrators cannot dismiss the importance of teachers having proficiency in their content area, there are other qualities that are equally important for teachers who work in custody settings. These intangible qualities include passion for the most difficult to teach students, knowledge of learning styles, ability to integrate engaging instructional strategies, and the persistence to present information—one more time, in yet a different way. Ideal qualities also include fortitude to overcome the multitude of obstacles presented by students, families, communities, and systems (juvenile justice, public school education, mental health) and the ability to form relationships with resisting, untrusting, and challenging individuals in a very short period of time. These qualities do not appear anywhere on a state teaching certificate or a NCLB matrix. However, these are the highest qualities a teacher in a custody school can possess.[10]

Ideally, the custody education program has an on-site administrator (education programs with five or more teachers) or lead teacher (education programs with four or fewer teachers) who is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the school program and who is in continuous communication with facility staff and administration. The administrator should be a licensed school administrator with the appropriate skills to oversee a custody education program. An administrator should be skilled in working with at-risk youth and should understand all aspects of program design and management. The best administrators have specific skills related to finding creative solutions in unique environments. When there is an on-site educational administrator, the facility administrator has a partnership or advisory role in programmatic and staffing decisions as they relate to the education staff.
As an alternative, facility administrators may assume responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the education program with oversight provided by an off-site education administrator that provides programmatic support. In this scenario, the off-site administrator should conduct frequent (at least bi-weekly) programmatic site visits in addition to being available to provide the necessary support for teachers and facility administrators. With this administrative design of the education program, facility administrators must have a supervisory role over the day-to-day operation of the education staff and program.

**Hiring and Retaining Teachers**

Most teachers applying for positions in custody education programs have experience in the public school setting and never intended to work as a confinement educator. Additionally, there are very few certified teacher–training programs that offer student teaching experiences in juvenile or adult detention or corrections. Consequently, when hiring a new teacher, the administrator should consider requiring the candidate to teach sample lessons or to interview with a panel of youth prior to offering them a position and should not hire a person based only on credentials and licensure. The skill set that allows a candidate to experience success in the traditional school setting does not automatically translate to success in the custody setting. Especially in programs where there is not an on-site education administrator and the facility administrator is responsible for the day-to-day operations and supervision of the school program and personnel, it is equally important to include this person in the decision-making process.

“More can be done to improve education by improving the effectiveness of teachers than by any other single factor.”[11] It is critical that, once hired, teachers receive ongoing training specific to the custody environment and to the skills teachers need to engage this population is critical. To the consternation of security staff, educators in confinement settings make questionable security decisions quite frequently. Teachers trained to provide education in a public school setting are not going to understand the nuances of providing education in a custody setting unless they are provided specific training to do so. The National Partnership for Juvenile Services (NPJS), with a grant from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP), created the National Training Curriculum for Educators of Youth in Confinement[3] to address this and similar issues. Similarly, direct care staff who are trained to focus solely on the principles of safety and security would benefit from knowledge of adolescent development and learning principles to support the educational process in the facility. For these purposes, cross–training between education staff and direct care staff is encouraged.
Additionally, teacher quality is improved through a consistent system for teacher observation and evaluation based on current best practice. Holding teachers accountable and not retaining low-performing teachers who are not working hard to improve is critical to the quality of the overall education program and the individual success of each student.[12]

Identifying Physical Classroom and Education Space

The education program should be in a location that is physically, environmentally, and aesthetically conducive for learning. Ideally, the school program should be in a low-traffic area with as few distractions as possible, separate from the living units. Often the location of the education program is dependent on the size, age, and mission of the facility. The boundaries that separate educational space from daily living space are crucial to the student’s ability to delineate and mentally separate between school and daily living activities.

Quite frequently, the location of the education program also reflects the degree to which the facility staff is involved in the school’s operation. For example, in a small facility, the school may be in the dayroom area, with facility care workers actively involved in the classroom activities. In a large facility, the school may operate in its own space, resulting in facility staff being much more isolated from the school staff and educational activities. These situations require more direct effort on the part of direct care facility staff to be involved in the school program.

No matter how old or run down the facility, the education environment should reflect its values and exude high expectations and trust and provide for adequate space for instruction. In addition to good air, good lighting, low noise, and comfortable temperatures, student work and art should cover the walls and be recognizable reminders of student success.

Other possible education program space needs might include group activity space; individual study spaces; a library; storage for files, records, materials and books; and teacher planning and work space.

Securing Equipment, Furniture, Materials, and Supplies

All confinement education programs must develop, purchase, and maintain sufficient materials, furniture, and equipment to meet the needs of traditional classroom programs and nontraditional individualized learning programs. Depending on the size of the facility and the location of the education program, equipment and furniture may be either permanently installed or mobile. Furniture should be durable
and able to accommodate individual or group learning arrangements. Equipment should allow teachers to address the different learning levels, abilities, and styles of the youth served.

Equipment should include computer technology and software, DVDs, television, personal computers, tablets, projectors, screens, calculators, photocopiers, and miscellaneous office supplies. The teachers at the Maya Angelou Academy in the New Beginnings Residential Treatment facility (operated by the Division of Youth Rehabilitation Services in Washington D.C.), have skillfully incorporated Smart Board technology (the use of interactive whiteboards) into their daily lessons as a strategy for engaging students. The Correctional Education Association (CEA) announced the release of its Secure Education Prison Tablet, which allows agencies to customize applications including GED, adult literacy, reentry skills, English as a second language, and computer literacy and keyboarding. In addition, post-secondary courses through Ashland University are also available.

Materials and supplies should support the curriculum and the teacher's instruction method of teachers. For example, the program might need books, individualized learning folders, paper (colored, plain, or drawing), pens, pencils, rulers, clips, and erasers. It is important to consult with facility personnel concerning appropriate safety and security measures to be developed and followed when ordering, using, and storing equipment and supplies.

Ensuring Access to Computers and the Internet

The rapid and continuous development of technology creates a challenge for educators. Educators need to be trained and equipped to properly use and to safely control technology in the classroom. Acceptable moral, ethical, and socially appropriate usage policies are not yet standardized. There is a wide range of views and perspectives across the country about the appropriate uses of technology and the internet for students. Guidance for usage should be obtained by consulting facility administration, local school districts, and the local community. Up-to-date equipment and software are essential to providing students with an understanding of the real-world value and application of technology. The practical use of technology is a critical life and employment skill for youth. And, access to technology can enhance a student's motivation to learn.

Common security concerns with internet access includes student communicating in an unmonitored way with people outside the facility through chat boards or email or the possibility of students accessing inappropriate content. A wide variety of blocking and monitoring software is available to mitigate the potential for
inappropriate uses. However, software requires specialized training and staff vigilance. Complications can arise when the technological skills of youth exceed the security skills of the adults. In general, the best climate of safety and support exists when information technology departments (IT) are engaged to support the facility needs. Facilities will benefit from aligning their technology supports with the county or state government agencies or the local school district or post-secondary institution. These institutions have dedicated IT personnel that stay updated on new developments and have the expertise necessary to meet the demands of secure facilities.

Transfer of Education Files

Youth in the justice system experience many transitions as they move from one facility to another or from a facility to a community school. Education records frequently fall into a “black hole.” Processes must be put in place to ensure smooth and timely transition of educational records, ideally in advance of the youth’s placement, which is more feasible in the case of placement in or from juvenile corrections and adult prison programs than juvenile detention and adult jail programs.

Generally accepted minimum standards call for maintaining education files separately from the resident filing system within the facility. Many states and local education agencies have developed electronic files for educational records. Facility education programs should make every effort to gain access and to contribute to these electronic systems to facilitate a timely transfer of educational records.

This proactive records exchange assists schools in placing students with appropriate services and in maintaining continuity in the student’s educational instruction.

Although always considered preferable practice to do so, it is not a legal requirement to have parental or student consent to transfer school records from educational agencies and schools to the custody education program. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) has explicitly included correctional and juvenile justice facilities, longer-term alternative programs, and dropout prevention programs within the definition of “educational programs” to facilitate the exchange of educational records for students in these settings.[13]

Create a Reliance on Data

High-performing custody education programs have the tools to collect and assess student and school performance on a range of key metrics. These metrics should
include such things as student academic achievement, student engagement, student behavior plan accomplishments, the number of students successfully achieving program outcomes. Once these are gathered, the administrator and staff must have the courage to use the data to inform bold, meaningful changes based on the analysis, with the singular purpose of improving student outcomes. Once the initial reliance on a data-based culture is established, data collection systems can be expanded to monitor other key practices such as teacher recruitment, performance, and retention.

Manage Funding Options

Funding for confinement education programs varies from one jurisdiction to another. In some states, such as Nebraska, the Health and Human Services Department funds the detention education programs. Other local detention facilities, such as those in Michigan, primarily receive funding through special education funds. Some programs bill the individual schools or districts on a per-day basis. State-operated facilities may fund the education program as part of the facility budget. This inability to identify a consistent method for funding confinement education programs contributes to the difficulty programs experience in hiring the quality and quantity of staff required and in attaining the resources necessary for the variety of services required by the youth.

Contrary to established practice for the funding of many detention education and jail education programs, funding based on the population in the facility on a specific day of the calendar year ("fourth Friday") is not an appropriate funding formula. The unpredictable in-and-out nature of the facility population that is not within the scope of control of the school program means the facility could be way under capacity on the designated count day and over capacity on subsequent days. Making staffing and resource decisions in this manner could result in being understaffed and under resourced for a very long time. More appropriate funding formulas may be based on the facility’s license capacity—provided overcrowding is not a chronic issue in the facility—or on average daily population numbers (ADP).

Student Per Diem Payments

Both SEAs that operate education programs in juvenile corrections and adult prison facilities and LEAs or Regional Service Educational Agencies (RESAs) that operate the education programs in juvenile detention and adult jail facilities receive student per diem rates from the state department of education for the students enrolled in the program. The amount of the per diem is state specific and varies depending on whether the youth is a general or a special education student. In most states, it is the
intent that the per diem is attached to the student. Therefore, for whatever time period the student is enrolled in the custody education program, the program should receive the state education per diem rate.

Title I, Part D, Subparts 1 and 2 of the Elementary and Secondary Schools Act (as amended by No Child Left Behind, 2001)

Title I provides formula grants to SEAs for supplementary education services to help provide education continuity for children and youth in state-run institutions and for youth in adult correctional institutions (Subpart 1). The money is available to be used so that these youth can make successful transitions to school or employment once they are released. Although Subpart 1 focuses on transition and reentry services, Subpart 2 focuses on educational services in institutions. The Federal Department of Education allocates Subpart 2 funds based on the number of youth between the ages of 5 and 17 (on a specific date) living in a locally-operated facility that meets the definition of an institution for neglected children, delinquent children and youth, or an adult correctional institution.[14] In most cases, the facility administrator is responsible for submitting documentation to the LEA for this allocation. When there is an on-site school administrator or lead teacher responsible for the education program, this task is frequently delegated to this individual. The LEA is required to allocate a portion of its Title I Subpart 2 monies for the educational program at the institution.

Foundations and Grants

Many custody education programs supplement their activities with funding from foundations and other grants. Foundations often have large pools of donors and are willing to solicit them to fill various needs. In turn, foundations provide a way for the public to give tax-free donations. Examples of these are nonprofits such as the Lincoln Public Schools Foundation, which supports the Pathfinder Education Program in the Lancaster County Youth Services Center in Lincoln, Nebraska, or the Kalamazoo Juvenile Home Foundation, which supports the Juvenile Home Schools in the Kalamazoo County Juvenile Home in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Supplementing the Education Program with Grant Funding: A Review of Successful Practices

Field Author, John M. Luvera

John Luvera is an educator from the state of Washington who works in a small detention center on an island off the coast. John has done exceptional work bringing together community resources and programming to provide a unique and diverse educational program. John
represents the best of the best in terms of getting things done and finding creative solutions.

At the Island County Juvenile Detention Center (JDC), in Washington State, Coupeville Schools operates the educational program. The program experienced a 30% reduction in Title 1 funding, which once supported a secretary, transition specialist, a school-to-work program, life-skills, and fine arts. As the funding began to shrink, due to a reduction in incarceration rates, the remaining teacher began to search for alternative funding sources. The teacher contemplated how to meet the needs of the students and where to find and secure enough funding to continue to implement innovative and creative approaches, with the goal of engagement and shifting students norms. Fortunately, successful grant efforts have maintained the level of support programs.

Educational programs wanting to enhance programming options should consider multiple small grants instead of large grant support. The JDC education program has had a better success rate reaching out to small local charities for assistance and program support than with the larger agency or government grants. JDC has cobbled together a variety of types of grants.

In-Kind Grants. An in-kind grant is one that offers materials, supplies, or services instead of money. These are perhaps the easiest to obtain because these requests are for things your grantee is already supplying. Look to your local hospitals, medical services or even long-term care providers to help you locate guest speakers on health topics such as smoking cessation, STIs, or the benefits of dental care. Make requests of local office supply stores for their clearance, returns, or discontinued products that match student or program needs. Other charities may be willing to assist you by sharing their donated products. For example, food banks can share food items for a cooking class. When requesting an in-kind grant, be sure to specifically identify the need. Explain the rationale and the intended impact or outcome. If you are awarded an in-kind grant for materials or services, always send a thank you note. Be as public with the thank-you as possible, recognizing the group notifies the community of the help and reminds the community you are there, serving kids.

Financial Grants. These are more challenging than in-kind grants, because they involve the grantee receiving money. There is typically an application process that requires applicants to describe how the award will
help the community. Many of these grants can be found at the business web page. Carefully read each grant application and note the items the grantee is requiring for a funding request. You will need to inform most grant providers of your outcomes once the grant is completed.

In addition to in-kind grants, seek financial support from small agencies. Many communities across the country have community service groups such as the Elks, Lions, Kiwanis, and Soroptomists. The Coupeville community is fortunate to have all of these groups and many others, including a group of local artists. These organizations assist with meeting student needs. Many have grant applications with annual deadlines, but some accept requests on an ongoing basis. It is not difficult to write a letter of request with specific needs and financial requirements to meet those needs. Carefully review the group’s mission statement and make sure the request matches the community service goals. Volunteer as a guest speaker for their meetings. Staff of the JDC education program attends many community meetings to share their work and the impact the JDC has on kids in the Coupeville community. Nearly every organization has a community service component in their charter. Look for this as the “hook” to serve your needs.

**Local Agencies.** Don’t ignore the local groups in your own community. Look to your local business owners and agencies for small requests. There are often foundations associated with them. For example, many school districts have foundations to support educational efforts. There are small grants available through large retailers; Wal-Mart and Target both have educational grant funding for charitable groups located within their sales regions. Check the websites of major retailers to search for these types of grants.

Successful grant seeking should not rule out retailers, civic groups, or government agencies. Consider which businesses could fulfill your needs. Often retailers have merchandise to donate or even small foundations willing to help. Search their web pages for grants or better yet, meet the managers in person. There are times when larger government agencies are attempting large systemic change grants. Align your goals with their project and join them to gain some financial support.

**Charitable Pools.** There are churches, social groups, nonprofit thrift stores, and other resources to turn to as well. They often pool resources to
make a greater impact. Searching for funding from groups or associations can be successful. Appealing to church councils with specific needs can bring both in-kind and financial resources. Many of these groups will offer you one-time funding for a specific project. Do your homework; ask around and search local directories for foundations, church councils, and other organizations. Be willing to present your project goals and to attend meetings of potential funders.

**Partner Grants.** At times you can be a part of a larger grant. Many counties, states, or other agencies pursue large systemic grants. These are too complex for a small center to take on, often requiring hiring personnel to create a desired change in programming. Your organization can choose to partner with a larger group or agency to apply for these types of grants. Consider suggesting large grants available from the federal government to appropriate agencies and suggest what role the school can play. Be specific with ideas and the funding level you would need to fulfill your part of the grant. Be careful about outcomes, documenting progress, and deadlines for completing the grant-funded project. Often your partner agency will take on the accounting duties and you will be responsible for your itemized services. This is a way to get funding without all the challenges of managing the grant.

**Restorative Approach Enhances Grant Opportunities.** The JDC is not just a place to house youth. The JDC is a community service agency as well. The youth want to give back and feel successful. It is natural for youth to want to hear encouragement and praise. The youth serve the community while incarcerated through the community partnerships. This type of service has helped us succeed in requesting funding or in-kind assistance. The JDC education program has partnered with Habitat for Humanity in a project to refinish furniture for housing and for a thrift store to support their community-based efforts. The students repair, sand, and repaint furniture to be sold. The JDC is recognized as a place of rehabilitation and contribution, which enhances the requests for support, because they give back. Look to the community, town, or neighborhood for a need your students could fulfill while they are confined. Document your work, photograph your projects (omit student photos), and get the word out! Your students can be known in your community as contributors, making your requests for help so much more meaningful to the support groups.
Sure, you can go for those big grants, keeping your fingers crossed, but you may have greater success with your own community, supporting their own youth. If you are unsure of where to start, look at your town, city, or neighborhood to see what is happening right around you. Chances are there are people and civic groups waiting to help.

General educational grant guidelines to consider:

- Obtain small, one-time funding sources.
- Evaluate local community-based agencies in your area.
- Identify retailers in your area.
- Partner with other agencies.
- Match specific needs with requests and with the mission of the organization to which you are applying.
- Focus on projects that allow students to give back to their own community.
- Describe outcomes or results that have an impact or change.
- Follow all institutional requirements and school policies when applying for grants.
- Comply with your grant statements. If you are awarded, try to meet all or as many targets as you stated you would meet.
- Document your progress to prepare audits and reports required by the grantee.
- Thank all providers publicly.

Creating the Culture “Of and For” Learning: Program Design Considerations

The Role of Education in Juvenile Detention, Juvenile Corrections, and Adult Facilities that Serve Youth

Educators in custody education programs struggle to establish identity in the confinement facility. In traditional education programs, education is the only purpose; however, in a confinement facility, education is one of several programs, all of which compete for scheduling time and maintain alignment with the values, vision, and mission of the facility. To maximize the partnership between the justice facility and education staff, the following features are important:

- Regardless of the operating partnership, administrators and staff of the confinement facility consider the school program to be an integral part of the total facility program.
The lead teacher regularly participates in confinement administrative team meetings.
Confinement staff support the school program and school staff in every way possible.
Education programs are given priority over other daily activities except for legal proceedings or a medical or mental health crisis.
Confinement staff stress the importance of the school program and the expectation that each youth participate daily in a meaningful way.
The school program implements a common behavior-management system at the confinement facility (token economy, point system, reinforcement program).
The confinement facility staff share with school staff any information that could affect a youth’s program or behavior in school (information reported by the probation officer, behavior observed in other parts of the facility, or known physical problems).
Facility administrators expect and receive regular feedback from the school staff regarding the youth’s performance and achievement in the school program.[15]

The Role of Facility Staff in the Education Program

A critical component that impacts the delivery of education for youth in custody is the relationship between the direct care staff and the education staff. Without collaboration between them, the student’s educational experience is disjointed and conflicted by the opposing influences in their daily routine. When both programs are adequately staffed and all aspects of programming are functioning at the optimum level, the appropriate use of facility direct care staff would be in the role of a supportive parent who maximizes communication with the educational program and follows through with appropriate actions outside of school. However, some program designs and staffing levels require direct care staff to engage more actively in the education classrooms. If this is the case, consideration should be given to the following guidelines for engaging direct care staff in the education classrooms:

• In a spirit of mutual respect, the teachers and direct care staff operate as a team in the classroom.
• Teachers are responsible for teaching and classroom management; direct care staff are responsible for actively supporting the teacher in this process.
• Teachers are responsible for communicating with direct care staff what that support might look like in the classroom.
• Direct care staff are responsible for minimizing the disruption to the educational process with additional job duties.
• In collaboration with the direct care staff, education staff understand and practice the principles of safety and security in the classroom.

When these two components are synchronized, the opportunities are maximized for engaging students, and engaged students are less likely to behave inappropriately. The results for the facility are enhanced safety and security and smoother daily procedures. If the focus remains on the best results for students, in terms of both safety and education, then both groups have a foundation for collaboration. Maximizing the available school hours benefits all parties. Students receive more educational services; engaged youth minimize behavioral risks for the facility; and students maximize their academic skills and credit recovery. All of this eases a student’s transition back into school upon release. The role of education staff and facility direct care staff in an education program includes support of the program even beyond the classrooms; there should be an integration of education into the entire culture of the facility.

Implementing Behavior Plans

Behavior plans within the school program of any facility require coordination and collaboration with the facility’s behavioral programming, outside of the school day. The nature of a successful and engaging academic setting is to generate a challenging, invigorating learning environment. This can, at times, put students into states of emotional stress, both highs and lows; it can create frustration as students are pressed to perform at their best. Even the process of academic discourse generates emotional excitement, passion, and anger; this is what makes scholarly pursuits meaningful and valuable to students. Educators press students to perform at their best, stretch their understanding and analysis, and consider new and controversial perspectives. These are not behaviors and activities that impulsive youth with emotional control issues—youth typically found in confinement education classrooms—always handle appropriately. But, such experiences are valuable, teachable moments. This sometimes places educational programs in conflict with the rigorous structure of a safety and security-driven facility. The challenge is to find the middle ground that allows a school to function in the best way to engage students, and yet maintains the necessary (and primary) function of safety and security. There are a number of behavioral programs available to educators that may be incorporated into a confinement facility’s behavior-management program. Examples of three commonly used behavioral programs in schools are:

• **Behavior Intervention Support Team (BIST)**. BIST is an intervention model designed to help teachers confront disruptive behavior. BIST services are
developed specifically for a particular school. The stated mission is to help teachers, administrators, parents, and students learn techniques to effect positive change and create a healthy learning environment for all.

- **Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)**. PBIS is designed as a prevention-oriented way for school personnel to organize evidence-based practices, improve their implementation of those practices, and maximize academic and social behavior outcomes for students.

- **Response to Intervention (RTI)**. RTI is a multi-level prevention system consisting of universal screening, progress monitoring, and data-based decision making to address students who may potentially have poor learning outcomes.

In summary, BIST is a program that systematically addresses behaviors that are interfering with academic progress in the classroom. PBIS is aligned with teaching positive behaviors using positive language to let students know what they should be doing, not what they should not be doing. RTI is an academically focused tool for responding to academic needs, measuring the response, and then applying adaptations.

High-level, focused, and consistent adult engagement and training are critical to the success of any behavior plan implementation. The purpose of any school-based behavior management plan is to create a safe environment that will enhance student engagement, resulting in higher student achievement. Behavior management can enhance cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement in students. These key components of the education program should be consistently monitored and the data used to enhance program development. The unique nature of the confinement setting creates an environment where the teaching of new behaviors in one part of the program allows for the reinforcement of those behaviors in other parts of the program. Therefore, any behavior-management plan developed and successfully implemented in the custody education program should also be generalized to the living units, and vice versa.

**School Year Versus Year-Round Calendar**

Educational services should occupy the maximum amount of time allowed by facility procedures, schedules, and budgets. The consistent need for remediation, credit recovery, skill development, and simple daily engagement within the facility would indicate a strong need for year-round school. Juvenile corrections and adult prison education programs typically operate on a year-round school schedule. Juvenile detention education programs frequently operate on a traditional 36-week school calendar, and educators are forced to create a separate summer school program, often using Title I funding to support the additional education program. The problem arises in facilities where the juvenile justice staff are left to develop
educational programming for the summer months with no additional funding. Staff have neither the educational expertise nor the funds to operate the school program. A detention education program should operate on a 52-week schedule and should be designed and administrated by licensed educators.

Class Size

According to Sherwood Norman, class sizes should be small, with a ratio of 10 students per teacher.[16] He specifically recommended that there should be no more than five students per class when teaching remedial subjects. Significant discussion surrounding staff-to-student ratios revolves around whether adults in all roles should be counted in the ratio. Certificated teachers, paraprofessionals, and facility staff all have different roles and provide different services. Two key considerations are that, regardless of qualifications, the positions should be defined by the role each person serves. The role of a teacher is different from the role of a paraprofessional (even if that person is certified), and the role of a direct care staff is different from that of an educator. Teaching, classroom support, and safety and security require attention to different components of the classroom, different interactions with students, and different physical activities within the classroom. The teacher’s ability to focus his or her full attention on all aspects of teaching maximizes learning for students.

Creating the Culture “Of and For” Learning: Teaching and Learning

Student Motivation and Engagement

Although the pursuit of credits and, ultimately, graduation is paramount, the instability in students’ lives often creates a need to first reengage an interest in learning. This is frequently a primary purpose of the short-term education program in a juvenile detention facility or jail. If students do not have an internal desire or a lifelong connection to learning, then internalization of their educational experience —knowledge—cannot take place.[17] For education to give youth a pathway to graduation and to create the kinds of adults who will contribute to society, students must be inspired to want to learn, to enjoy learning, rather than be coerced into learning or to learn simply to avoid negative consequences. Motivation is the desire to want to do something, and engagement is the action of doing it, but without a say about what is meaningful to them, youth take little ownership in their education.[18] A powerful avenue to develop a mindset of life-long learning is through showing students real world scenarios and examples that relate to their understanding and prior world knowledge and giving them multiple ways to express their understanding. Connecting learning to what is relevant has always been best practice in educating youth. Understanding what is relevant for youth that are confined, and
demonstrating the relevance of an existing curriculum are the challenges for educators in confinement settings.

Using Feedback to Increase Cognitive, Emotional, and Behavioral Engagement in Neglected and Detained Youth: Literature Review

Field Author: Bridget Koehler

Bridget Koehler is a new teacher at the Lancaster County Juvenile Detention Center with an extensive educational and research background in student engagement in a juvenile detention center. As part of her post-graduate studies she submitted the following work, which she shares now with the readers of the Desktop Guide:

Often when we think of engagement, we think of students doing their work and following instruction. Although these behaviors are part of engagement, the emotional and cognitive aspects of a student’s learning must also be given attention if true engagement is to be achieved.

There are multiple definitions of engagement, but the most relevant comes from a book by education expert Marzano titled, The Art and Science of Teaching, in which he defines “engagement.”

“Engagement includes on-task behavior, but it further highlights the central role of students’ emotions, cognition, and voice…. When engagement is characterized by the full range of on-task behavior, positive emotions, invested cognition, and personal voice, it functions as the engine for learning and development.”[19]

In a study titled, A Motivational Perspective on Engagement and Disaffection: Conceptualization and Assessment of Children's Behavioral and Emotional Participation in Academic Activities in the Classroom, researchers Furrer, Kindermann, and Skinner, also defined “engagement.” “At its most general, engagement refers to the quality of a child’s or youth's connection or involvement with the endeavor of schooling and, hence, with the people, activities, goals, values, and place that comprise it.”[20]

When students are engaged, we detect positive signs that manifest in on-task behavior and positive emotional states; and students show an increase in interest and enthusiasm. What this study examined was not whether students could be trained to control their behavior and focus their
attention, but rather what barriers exist in schools that hinder a student’s engagement. The researchers go on to state that if we examine engagement, we must also understand and examine its opposite. The opposite is not simply a lack of engagement, but disaffection. This disaffection does not necessarily mean that students are behaving poorly. When a student is disaffected, he or she exhibits signs described by Furrer, Kindermann, and Skinner as “passivity, lack of initiation, and giving up sometimes accompanied by the emotions of dejection, discouragement, or apathy.”[21]

Many disaffected students will go through the required motions but also exhibit signs of boredom, alienation, anxiety, and avoidance. Many students who feel disaffected have lost the desire to remain in their school setting, but because they cannot physically retreat, they emotionally retreat. Thus, to truly examine a student’s engagement, their behavior, emotions, cognition, and disaffection must all be taken into account, because all these factors affect one another.

An article from the California Psychologist titled, “An Exploration of Meaningful Participation and Caring Relationships as Context for School Engagement,” agreed with the findings of Furrer, Kindermann, and Skinner. The article stated that engagement required the students to feel a sense of autonomy, dignity, control, and ownership. In addition, the student must also feel that they are competent, active participants, and that they can relate to the material. These emotions are driven by the student’s positive relationships with adults, and their positive perception of their own ability.[22]

Student engagement is the most critical function of an education program in juvenile detention, long-term corrections, or for youth in adult facilities. Without engagement, learning will not take place.

Educational Assessments

Assessments provide insight into students’ capabilities and their growth over time, both of which provide guidance to teachers and administrators for program design, instruction level and function. When used as designed, appropriate, high-quality, reliable, and valid instruments help inform and improve instruction and guide programmatic changes.
Historically, districts or states that provided large-scale, standardized tests often overlooked youth in confinement facilities. The academic challenges common among incarcerated youth were not beneficial to the overall average test scores, and with the high rates of mobility, the youth were often difficult to locate or access. NCLB—as a component of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (PL107-110)—has mandated that every student must be tested to monitor a school’s progress toward federal requirements for student achievement. Consequently, districts and schools now actively try to locate their students for testing, regardless of the student’s circumstances or whereabouts. For example, for district students in short-term juvenile detention centers and jails, testing all students frequently requires school districts to coordinate testing with the confinement education program staff, to provide testing materials and possibly test proctors. When all students are tested, it creates a more complete and accurate picture of the successes and challenges our confinement schools face and provides evidence to validate the school’s activities. The importance of these individual test scores is a leverage point for facilities to encourage school districts to provide additional services to system-involved youth. Schools and districts now recognize the benefits they receive by addressing the needs of this population.

Unlike students enrolled in the education programs in short-term facilities, students in long-term juvenile or adult corrections facilities are typically removed from their previous public school rosters and assigned to the specific facility school. These schools are often considered part of their own LEA, thus are capable of providing all graduation requirements and directly providing the required state assessments.

Assessment of youth in detention, juvenile corrections, or adult facilities that confine youth encompasses a variety of factors relevant to the assessment’s accuracy and utility. Short-term facilities with high turnover require constant attention and considerable staffing to test youth consistently and collect the data. There is also a need to get the collected information to the teachers in a timely manner. The students are often dealing with significant physical or emotional events when they enter a facility, which can contribute to the challenges of testing. Testing in longer-term facilities needs a more comprehensive overview and consistent follow-up to monitor progress. Student records need to be consistently maintained and accessible to teaching staff. In addition, the students need to be made aware and regularly updated on their progress.

Youth involved in the juvenile justice system often do not test well on traditional tests. The results of standard testing formats often do not represent a student’s true capabilities. Classroom teachers that work consistently with students often have the
best comprehensive overview and the most complete understanding of the student’s progress. Varied assessments, both traditional and authentic (real-world examples that students relate to) are crucial to the best understanding of a student’s needs and abilities. The daily life issues in a facility can skew any single piece of assessment on any given day. Balanced and fair measures against established curriculum and standards by highly qualified professional educators offer the best evaluation of these youth.

State Testing

Beyond federal requirements, school districts in many states are required to conduct state-wide standardized tests that must be completed within a specified time frame. State testing allows for consistent scoring across student populations; it is required of any student enrolled in a public school or a school that receives state funding, which typically includes students enrolled in custody education programs. State testing can prove problematic if schools are not consistently aware of the location of their students, or if resources are limited for administering the test (limited proctors or materials). A trend toward computerized testing creates some significant difficulties, including a lack of sufficient quantity and quality of computers and security and internet firewalls. An additional challenge occurs when a youth who has not been tested at his or her home school enters a facility late in the testing window. It is in the best interest of the school to provide all the resources possible to allow the student to complete the testing. With enough advance warning, it is even possible to acquire a court order to make the testing possible.

District-Mandated Testing

Many school districts assess their schools at prescribed intervals during the school year. Strict adherence to this schedule ensures that districts are seeing an accurate picture of how their schools are impacting all students. It also provides a continuous view of student progress from year to year, thus ensuring that students receive the proper classes and services upon return to their home school.

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Schools Act (as amended by No Child Left Behind, 2001)

Title I testing is mandated if a school receives Title I funds. Every student must be pre- and post-tested in reading and math every 90 days to demonstrate continuous progress and to validate program effectiveness. This data collection is included in the required documentation for Title I services and funding.

Classroom Testing
The use of formative testing (progress) and summative testing (final exams) within confinement facilities is critical to an understanding of student success; it is also a tool to demonstrate to students what they know and are able to do. Students who have not consistently experienced educational success need continuous feedback to comprehend their own capability and build their confidence. Additionally, these classroom assessments provide feedback to teachers about the quality, degree, and effectiveness of their teaching.

Placement Testing

As students enter a facility, teachers should access the students' previous school history to gain insight into their academic capabilities. Title 1 testing requirements will assess their math, reading, and writing capabilities. Any additional district or school standardized testing can also provide information about the student’s position along the continuum of a particular course curriculum and for placement into appropriate classes. Challenges arise in long-term facilities when students have to be placed into already operating classes that have a set curriculum. It is particularly difficult to accurately assess youth entering and leaving short-term facilities to determine the appropriate instructional level and the student’s progress. The traumatic events related to being placed in short-term facilities can make accurate assessments a challenge. Additionally, short lengths of stay or uncertain release dates make post-testing youth almost impossible.

A common solution for individual classes is for teachers to develop standards-based assessments within their subject matter to determine how to place students in their own classes. The teacher should determine the design, focus, and content of such assessments to match the class profile.

Curriculum

Education for youth in confinement encompasses formal (academic) educational instruction, such as language arts, math, science, and social studies, as well as informal (non-academic) instruction, such as learning to follow rules, social skills, and non-cognitive skills such as sympathy, empathy, perseverance.

Core Curriculum

The foundations of any custody education program are the core academic subjects of mathematics, language arts, social studies, and science. The curriculum and assessments for these areas should be based upon a cohesive, clear, and aligned set of standards. These are available through local school districts, state departments of education, or the national Common Core Standards. To date, 48 states have adopted
the Common Core Standards. The alignment with a national set of curriculum standards could be very beneficial for youth in custody education programs. No matter what LEA or SEA the youth was previously enrolled in, all instruction in the custody education program is aligned with the same set of national standards. Ideally, the youth’s education reentry and transition process would be much simpler.

Physical Education

Physical education is a requirement for graduation in public schools and a necessary break from the classroom. In a confinement facility, if students are receiving adequate large-muscle activity outside the school day, they may benefit more from staying in the classroom for instruction on health, healthy lifestyles, and nutrition. Students are typically not eligible to receive academic credit for large-muscle activity unless a certified teacher provides the activities using an approved curriculum. When physical activity is included as part of the school curriculum, two key elements—sportsmanship and team play—should be emphasized. These and other social skills and behaviors will benefit youth beyond the classroom and can benefit the overall culture and climate of a facility. When addressed appropriately, consistently, and engrained into the behaviors of students, structured and positive physical activities help reduce behavioral incidents and increase academic achievement.

Access to Computers and the Use of Technology

It is a challenge to use computers with access to the internet in a custody education program to enhance the quality of the students’ education without compromising safety and security. In short-term facilities, a computer-supported curriculum can help students maintain contact with the schools and classes to which they may return to upon release. In longer-term facilities, the computer also provides real-world access to keep students in contact with current information, resources, and alternative learning opportunities not available in the facility. Comprehensive computerized curricula are available from a wide range of quality vendors. For small education programs that need a validated and approved curriculum to meet the Highly Qualified requirement in NCLB, computer-based materials may work well. But students with limited attention spans, multiple learning styles, and a lack of self-motivation often find it challenging when asked to work on computers for long periods of time. By combining blended instruction, proper teacher supports, and supplementary materials to engage students, computer-assisted learning and other digital media can help form a strong academic foundation.

Considerations for Maintaining the Safety and Security of a School Network within a Detention Program
David Beatty was raised in Northern Ireland. He earned his Bachelors Degree in Information Management through the School of Informatics at Queen’s University, Belfast. In 2009, he completed his Masters of Education Program in Curriculum and Instruction at Doane College, Lincoln, Nebraska. David uses a variety of instructional and assistive computer and internet-based technologies in the classroom on a daily basis, striving to enhance and empower student learning by incorporating creative uses of technology. David works at the Pathfinder Education Program located within the Lancaster County Youth Services building in Lincoln, Nebraska, serving as the school’s e-Learning Lab Instructor, where he facilitates and administers Apex (online) learning courses for students in need of credit recovery. David also teaches Technology and Business classes to the diverse multi-age level student population at the Pathfinder Education Program.

- When setting up a classroom for computer use, arrange student seating so the teacher and Juvenile Detention Officer can view all computer screens.
- Instructors should have clear objectives and plans detailing how the technology should be used in a lesson. This is a key element of instructional planning. Teacher expectations for computer use should be explained to students prior to assigning them to computers.
- Computer monitoring software that allows teachers or administrators to view all student computers from a single screen and record keystroke histories assists in supervising access. Keystroke logs can be used to track and provide evidence of a user’s activity. Logs can quickly show where usage policy may have been violated.
- Teachers should be aware of common vulnerabilities that may exist within network web filters, for example entering “https” to hack into a web address bar and refreshing the page multiple times or the use of portable proxy software.
- Web filters should be set to strictly allow only academic or instructional website content.
- Many web filters have a database feature that allows a technology liaison or specialist to define undesired or negative key words. Teachers can be notified when the user has typed keywords. This helps to block related web content.
• Student user privileges to access and change computer settings should be highly restricted. Students should not be able to access system preferences (change the appearance of the desktop, change the screen resolution). This will prevent tampering with hardware settings, which only a computer technician or liaison should alter.
• The option to authenticate (enter user credentials into a username and password fields) to gain access to a restricted website should not be available nor should the username or password fields be viewable at the student level access.

Additional considerations for maintaining the safety and security of a school network within a detention program:

• It is beneficial to have an assigned technology liaison within the educational program that has a general knowledge or interest in technology. This person need not have a strictly technical working knowledge of computers, but should be able to work routinely with school technology to understand how it is being used during instruction and maintenance needs.
• The technology liaison should regularly monitor the school network, frequently check user internet history reports and websites accessed by students, and have knowledge of computer resources available within the school by keeping an inventory.

General Educational Development (GED) or High School Equivalency Diploma

In some instances, older youth involved with the juvenile justice system will have large gaps in school attendance or limited academic success, resulting in a credit deficiency so significant that graduation becomes a challenge. Some students realize that graduation would require summer school or attending school even to age 21. A youth may believe these challenges are significant enough to pursue instead a GED or High School Equivalency diploma. Confinement education programs that incorporate a GED component should include GED pre-testing, skill-specific remediation, and post-testing. There are private organizations that provide study materials and testing. In some districts, students eligible for the GED preparation program cannot also be enrolled in the confinement education program operated by the district because of a dual enrollment status that is against district policy. Upon successful completion of these programs, the student is awarded a certificate recognizing his or her abilities that are expected to be equal to those of a high school graduate. Many employers and vocational or technical schools recognize these
alternatives to high school graduation. They allow for entry into many community and junior colleges. In many cases, major colleges accept students with a GED if they also have appropriate entrance exam scores.

Post-Secondary Options

Youth who have completed their high school career, or have achieved a GED should have options to continue their education and become life-long learners. Students can take advantage of many online college classes if they have internet access and funding. Additional options would be certificate-granting programs that improve employability. Food-handler permits can be obtained online in some states. Some may even begin the process for certification in health services, welding, automotive, computer skills. Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields may be available through community colleges or other sources. Youth who engage in meaningful, continued personal growth by completing a secondary degree will have improved life outcomes.

Access to the Arts

The great artist Picasso claimed, “All children are born artists, the problem is to remain an artist as you grow up.” Creativity expert, British author, and educator, Sir Ken Robinson said, “We don’t grow into creativity; we grow out of it. In fact, we get educated out of it.” Research exists that supports the inclusion of the arts as a critical component of the curriculum of confinement education programs.[23] Mark Hubbard, former art teacher at the Kalamazoo County Juvenile Home Schools (juvenile detention and day school for court-ordered youth) identified the following reasons for including art in the curriculum:

1. **Art is motivating.** Often the successes experienced in the art class convince students that they can be successful at learning.

2. **Art supports success across the curriculum.** Many studies document the role of the arts in improving the basic skills of reading, writing, and math.

3. **Art fosters creativity.** All students have an innate urge and capacity to be artistically expressive. For many of the students in this program, this is their first opportunity to develop their creativity and expressive skills.

4. **Art promotes student engagement and persistence.** Art can emphasize creative discovery, which in turn creates an enthusiasm and motivation for all learning, requiring discipline and an effort to achieve excellence as a result of hard work.

5. **Art creates a medium for active processing of information.** Learning theory states that learning takes place only when students have had an opportunity to
process information actively. Including art in the curriculum enables students to engage in an active expression of concepts.

6. **Art enhances students self-esteem.** Through artistic expression, students develop a stronger vision of who they are and how they fit in their community and world.

At the time when Mark Hubbard was the art teacher, the art program at the Kalamazoo County Juvenile Home Schools consisted of basic art, ceramics, painting, stained glass, and photography. All lessons were taught by a certified art teacher with the assistance of a paraprofessional (who was also an artist) and were modified to meet all safety and security requirements of a confinement setting.

The Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center (CCJTDC) took a different approach to bringing arts back to the facility. “Arts Infusion” is a true collaboration between the CCJTDC, the Nancy B. Jefferson Alternative High School (the education program in the CCJTDC), the Chicago Public Schools, the Mayor’s Office of Public Safety, the Columbia College Chicago, and the Chicago Community Trust. By incorporating many media—creative writing and poetry, drama, computer-enhanced music composition, mural painting, keyboarding, clay works, and dance—into facility programming, visiting artists work with youth to achieve the goals of curbing violent behavior in the facility and demonstrating that sustained arts participation will reduce recidivism and promote positive life choices.

**Vocational Training**

Vocational training activities that result in skill development and certification are highly recommended in confinement facilities that serve youth. The hands-on application of real-world skills and the development of different abilities from academic courses reaches different learning styles, provides job skills, and opens up a variety of opportunities and motivation for additional study and training. These types of activities also teach logical reasoning, practice for mastery and following directions; they build confidence and inspire motivation. Often these types of courses incorporate behaviors appropriate to a work environment, such as time management and safety procedures. The traditional academic skills—writing, reading, measurement, and budgeting—are also woven into these programs. The ability to engage business partners in these programs can create internships, job opportunities, and community service activities.

Vocational training in different settings is quite challenging. Short-term detention facilities require a significantly different approach; they can expose youth to different areas and allow the students to control their own engagement. Longer-term facilities
can serve students best by offering engaging and detailed training in a specific area that could lead to certification. Areas such as food service (food-handlers permit), health (certified nursing assistant), welding (skill certification), or construction (safety certification) can provide skills and job access that are immediately useful to the youth upon release.

Social and Life Skills

Youth in facilities often have not had the typical training in basic social and life skills that many people take for granted. Providing this training is the responsibility of each facility. Social and life skills training entails a wide range of activities. The student population, the available time, and the skills of the instructor best dictate the specific content of such training. Youth may need job skills, college application skills, financial planning advice, basic hygiene, or cooking instruction. Advice on sexual health and medical care are crucial to any at-risk population. Engaging outside experts who can provide the most up-to-date and accurate information is highly encouraged. These classes are also an excellent opportunity to work on social skills, team building, and sportsmanship. Instruction in empathy, perseverance, problem-solving, and even anger management would be appropriate as well. There are a variety of prepared programs available such as Arnold Goldstein's Skillstreaming for Adolescents, Barry Glick's Aggression Replacement Training® (ART®) and Boys Town's Teaching Social Skills to Youth. The internet offers a continually changing variety of resources for life skills instruction. These updated and youth-focused resources help ensure that life skills are applicable to youth. (See [12] Ch. 10: Effective Programs and Services; [12] Ch. 18: Transition Planning and Reentry) [13] [13]

Instructional Design

Teachers must be proficient in their program and have a clear voice for the vision and mission of their work to design instruction in alignment with this vision. For each area of the curriculum, the instructional design must include a rigorous and relevant set of activities such as probing questions and projects that relate to diverse and meaningful issues that will engage students and staff.

Unlike the traditional public school instructional design, which includes sequential units of study that can last for weeks, confinement educators must accommodate the mobile population in custody settings. This may be accomplished by creating modular, stand-alone, short-term units that correlate with the facility’s average length of stay. Motivation and engagement findings indicate that developing topical units—those relevant to confinement youth and aligned with state and Common Core standards—are most effective strategies for instruction. Examples of such topical
units developed at the Maya Angelou Academy in the New Beginnings program include Justice, Ethics, Choice, Change, Power, Systems.

David Dimenici, former principal of the New Beginnings school program and current director of the Center for Educational Excellence in Alternative Settings, stated that teachers should focus on establishing school-wide instructional strategies that prepare students to learn and then provide targeted interventions to support students at a range of levels[24]. This is essential to achieving real, measurable academic achievement. Strategies provided in Doug Lemov’s *Teach Like a Champion* include 1) all classes starting the same way (Warm-Up), 2) all teachers using the same daily objective/goal (SWBAT, Student Will Be Able To), 3) students transitioning into and out of all classes the same way, and 4) all teachers using the same language and using timers or other devices to encourage a sense of urgency and expectations. All of these techniques have been used successfully in custody education classrooms.

**Differentiated Instruction**

Differentiation refers to instruction that is tailored to meet the learning preferences of different learners.[25] It refers to a variation in the instructional approach or method. “Differentiation is responsive teaching rather than one size fits all teaching.”[26] Differentiated instruction means that the teacher “proactively plans and carries out varied approaches to content, process, and product in anticipation of and response to student differences in readiness, interest and learning needs.”[27]

Teachers can differentiate through content (what the student needs to learn), process (the activities the student engages in to master the content), products (the culminating projects to rehearse, apply, and extend what the student has learned), and the learning environment (the way the classroom works and feels). The classroom environment may require the teachers to access multiple versions of an article or book, or to rewrite, summarize, or annotate. Differentiation may require multiple versions of assessments, appropriate supports, and accommodations. Teachers must develop scaffolded notes (note-taking sheet with grids of information to fill in), graphic organizers (knowledge of concept map that uses visual symbols to express a concept or convey meaning), and visual and cognitive clues to support students (checks on the board, color coding, editing strips).

**Individualized Instruction**

Individualization is another strategy that provides an alternative to the one-size-fits-all approach (critical in a custody education program). Similar to differentiated instruction, individualization recognizes that each student is different, has his or her own learning style, pace of learning, and approach to learning. As distinct from
differentiated instruction, individualized instruction allows learners to progress at a pace that is conducive to their learning needs and style. Thus, the learning goals are the same for all students, but the speed at which students complete the work varies. Traditional, general, whole-class education strategies do not recognize these differences in instructional approaches. Individualized instruction is effective with the at-risk, drop-out, and special education populations[28] and is frequently used in custody education programs.[29]

Custody education classrooms also often experience success by blending whole-group instruction with individualized skill-building time that is narrowly tailored to student needs during the application portion of the lesson. The education program may need to provide intensive “pull-out” services to support reading and math instruction for those students functioning significantly below grade level.

Occasionally students in custody education programs are advanced and function far beyond their peers in the facility. Teachers also need to be prepared to challenge these students through peer projects, the use of the internet, and by incorporating choice, creativity, and critical-thinking options into the curriculum.

Remedial Instruction

Many students experience learning problems that prevent them from fully participating in group instructional activities. Specific learning disabilities or problems often hinder the mastery of fundamental educational concepts. Individualized instruction and a variety of learning activities are crucial to meeting the needs of this population. Students who have already been traumatized should not be subjected to more behavioral or educational trauma while in facilities. Students need supportive, adaptable programs that have a capacity to meet their needs, from the initial moments of intake, through transitioning back to their schools. In short-term detention, this means appropriate skill-level activities, and in long-term corrections or adult confinement facilities, it means quality pathways that start at a student’s skill levels and progress forward to graduation. The requirement to provide special education services for all eligible students exists regardless of the type of confinement facility.

Physical Classroom Space

Physical space has a significant impact on the learning environment and is an especially sensitive issue in confinement facilities. Room arrangements, allowable student movement, teacher placement, even the focus of activities have safety and security ramifications. The education of students, their ability to interact with the
learning environment and each other, and their ability to interact with the subject matter influence the energy and mood of a classroom, as well as the academic success of the students. The more engaged, the more in control of their learning, the more creative the environment, the more likely the student will stay engaged and not be a safety or security risk. If the physical environment lacks access, control, or inhibits observation, security issues can arise. The educator, in collaboration with facility staff should seek a balance between the security of the facility and the learning opportunities available to students.

Effective Uses of Individual Classroom Space

Field Author: James S. Cudworth

James Cudworth is a retired teacher of over 30 years who worked with at-risk youth from diverse backgrounds including inner city Philadelphia and New York, as well as the backcountry hills of the Blue Ridge Mountains. He is an artist, a poet, and an extraordinary teacher of young adults.

How a teacher organizes classroom space has an effect on the learning that takes place in it. Proactive teachers regularly restructure classroom space, often with student input and assistance. In that scenario, not only do teachers and their students seek to breathe fresh air into the learning environment, but also thoughtfully aspire to enhance the breadth and depth of the student’s learning experience. Of course, classrooms are finite spaces, so arrangements within them are limited, but for most spaces, at least four types of classroom-learning arrangements have proven practical.

The first arrangement—a staple since the beginning of time—places teachers at the front or back of the classroom with students sitting in regular rows front to rear. This model works for the efficient dispensing of material every student needs to know. Typically, teachers present material using a board, perhaps an overhead projector, a smart board connected to a computer, or a device like a video microscope.

In the second arrangement, teachers remove themselves from the center of attention. Abandoning a front desk and instead moving in and among students, taking up residence wherever a student may need assistance, the teacher may speak from virtually any place in the class. Student desks are arranged frequently facing each other to encourage more “cross-talk,” while making individuals more focused on their own learning. Teachers
become less visible, emphasizing student assertiveness, opinions, and conclusions they have gained from their study materials.

The third arrangement seeks to eliminate any sense of hierarchy, front, back or side of the room, placing students into a circle. In this format, teachers consciously occupy different locations every day, removed further from the sense of being the center of attention, serving instead as a mere facilitator for discussion or debate. This model strives to enhance the communal–social dimension of learning, all students seated as equals with eye contact established. The arrangement is intended to help students articulate their ideas in an atmosphere of constructive criticism, debate, and consensus.

The fourth use of classroom space seeks to create the sense that there is no locus of authority or single source of learning, only unlimited opportunity. Teachers and students arrange desks to create private and communal space. Areas are thus set aside to allow intense concentration, study, and reflection, as well as collaborative problem solving. The space establishes learning centers, laboratories, and experimental centers. Teachers are seen as mentors or guides and circulate as equals—curious learners, rather than authorities. Students move freely, collaborating with whoever fits best. Problems with complex solutions are the norm, and no single individual (the teacher included) is seen to have a complete answer. In this atmosphere, answers frequently beget more questions.

As teachers and students consciously explore all the ways of arranging their learning space, the process naturally leads participants to ask, “How do we measure our learning?” As learning steers itself away from the teacher-centered “sit and git” model toward the student-centered, “sky is the limit” possibilities, old-fashioned written tests become obsolete. A natural outgrowth of the innovative use of classroom space spurs teachers and students to discuss ways to assess what has been accomplished. This evaluation process enables all to devise ways to value the content and quality of the year’s achievements. In this atmosphere, roles are reversed compared to old models. Students frequently serve as presenters, demonstrators, or models of intellectual pursuit. Classroom space is given over to student use entirely.

Federal Legislation that Impacts Custody Education Programs
Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) – No Child Left Behind (NCLB, 2004)

Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Schools Act Funding (as amended by No Child Left Behind, 2001)

A significant resource for youth in confinement is Title I funding. The portion of Title I funds designated for youth and programs in confinement is Part D Subpart 2. The federal government distributes funds to LEAs responsible for further distribution, expenditures, and accountability of the funds. Funds can be used to operate programs in local facilities with which the LEA has a formal agreement to provide services. Qualifying services include education programs that prepare youth to complete high school or enter job training or employment and activities that facilitate the successful transition from the institution to community, school, or employment, or that help prevent youth from dropping out of school. In addition, the LEA may use Title I Part D Subpart 2 funds to support programs for at-risk youth in the community who meet specific criteria. Programs within custody facilities that use these funds must 1) ensure coordination with the youth’s home school, specifically if the youth is eligible to receive special education services under the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA); 2) provide transition services including drug and alcohol assessment, tutoring, and family counseling; and 3) provide support services to encourage youth who have dropped out to re-enroll following release from the custody setting.

Highly Qualified Teachers

All educational providers, whether covered by the Highly Qualified requirements of NCLB or not, should strive to hire only those teachers with the content knowledge and skills required to teach the population of youth in the learning environment in a way that fosters success. As previously noted, a custody education program would require a combination of the appropriate licensure with intangible qualities such as passion and the ability to motivate reluctant learners. Given the current population of youth in custody, an argument could be made for placing the best teachers in custody education programs.

According to the Nonregulatory Guidance document produced in 2006 by the federal government, whether teachers in custody education programs need to be Highly Qualified depends on the funding structure of the program. Section 1119 of Title I of ESEA requires each State Education Agency (SEA) that receives Title I, Part A funds to ensure that all teachers teaching in core academic subjects within the State, including agencies or entities under the authority of the state are Highly Qualified. Section 1119, Part A requirements do not apply to county-operated
juvenile detention education programs whose teachers are hired through an LEA.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)

AYP is the measure by which schools, districts, and states are accountable for student performance under Title I. Due to the unique characteristics of custody education programs, such as high student turnover, in-and-out enrollment, and students who have no educational history with the district, the custody education programs may not be able to use the same measures of progress as applied to students in the traditional setting. Custody education programs should develop criteria specific to the program that can be approved by the state department of education to measure program effectiveness and outcomes for students.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

Facilities must provide appropriate special education services; failure to do so is a common area for litigation. The guidelines are specific and are backed by case law, so no matter the type of custody setting, providing special education services is required by law.

Child Find and Identification

The Child Find requirement of IDEA compels education programs to identify, locate, and evaluate all youth who are eligible or potentially eligible for special education services. In a custody education program, this means that two processes must be in place: 1) a process to become informed about previously eligible students upon enrollment, and 2) a process for identifying and evaluating students who may be in need of special education services but have not yet been formally identified.

For students previously eligible for special education services, educators have a responsibility to locate and obtain copies of the most up-to-date Individual Education Program (IEPs) and information relating to their students. The communication systems and procedures related to special education transfers vary from district to district. Some districts have networked student information-management systems; others require direct contact. To facilitate this process and avoid potential legal issues, it is important for facilities to retain knowledgeable, special education certified instructors.
Due to factors such as gaps in attendance, multiple placements, and lack of family advocates, it is not unusual for students in custody education programs to enroll with out-of-date IEPs. In this case, educators must initiate the evaluation process, regardless of the facility type. This requirement is particularly difficult for short-term education programs, both because the student in all likelihood will be released prior to the completion of the evaluation, and because short-term education programs typically do not have enough staff or staff with the right qualifications to complete the evaluation.[31]

Timeliness of the IEP

When a youth who is eligible for special education services is enrolled in the custody education program, the program has two options: implement the existing IEP or develop a new IEP. In the second case, the existing IEP must be implemented, to the extent possible until the new IEP is developed. Implementing the IEP includes teaching to goals and objectives, providing required ancillary services (speech and language, hearing or visually impaired consulting services, behavior support services), and communicating the required accommodations and modifications of the general education curriculum to the general educator. The goal is for the student to experience success in the general education classroom. Federal legislation does not identify a time limit for developing the new IEP. However, many state regulations interpret the federal legislation, and accepted practice in the field requires a new IEP within thirty days of the student’s enrollment. Every youth receiving services must be reevaluated for eligibility every three years.

Overlap Between Special Education Services and Facility Services

When a student who is eligible for special education services is confined, several issues related to special education have the potential for overlap with facility services. Students may have goals and objectives written into their IEPs that generalize to the living units. Examples include social skills, independent living, and behavior-based goals.

IDEA requires the inclusion of positive behavior supports in a student’s IEP that could be integrated into the facility’s behavior-management program or the youth’s treatment plan. At the very least, facility staff must be included in the process to understand when a youth’s behavior is a manifestation of the youth’s disability and to respond accordingly. Unlike in the adult facilities, where modifications can be made to the youth’s IEP if there is a “bona fide security or penological interest,”[32] when a youth in a juvenile facility who is eligible for special education services is in room confinement or lockdown for a behavior-related incident, the IDEA legislation does
not exempt the education program from providing the full range of special education services.\[33\]

The reentry and transition process implemented by the justice system should align with the transition process required by IDEA for special education students. Special education transition plans outline goals and objectives in the domains of a youth’s education or training, employment, independent living, and extra-curricular activities or hobbies domains beginning at the age of 14 (earlier if determined necessary).

Finally, depending on the severity of the youth’s disability, his or her IEP may require extended school-year services. This is significant if the youth is admitted to the facility during the summer months and the custody education program operates on a traditional school-year calendar.

Youth with Disabilities Convicted in Adult Criminal Court and Incarcerated in Prison

The age of eligibility for special education services is state specific and thus identified in each state’s regulations. Generally speaking, youth incarcerated in adult facilities, under the age of eligibility, are covered under the regulations of IDEA. There are exceptions, for example, if the student is determined to present a bona fide security or penological concern, the facility may not be able to arrange an accommodation. Additional exceptions include access to state-wide testing and transition services if a youth exceeds the age of special education eligibility prior to his or her release date.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Section 504

Any student with a disability has a right to an education that is protected by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and subsequent amendments. Section 504 is a civil rights law that ensures equal access to education and states, “No otherwise qualified individual with a disability in the United States . . . shall, solely by the reason of her or his disability, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance…”\[34\] To be eligible for Section 504, a student must be determined to 1) have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, 2) have a record of such an impairment, or 3) be regarded as having such an impairment. Major life activities include: walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, working, caring for oneself, and performing manual tasks. Section 504 requires school districts to provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to qualified students with disabilities, regardless of the severity of the disability. The intent of Section 504 is that educational services must
meet the needs of youth with disabilities to the same extent as they meet the needs of students without disabilities. These needs can be met in the general education classroom, by providing supplementary services, and related services in the special education classroom. Similar to an IEP for special education, a student eligible for services under Section 504 must have a “504 plan” that outlines these services. Education programs in custody facilities are required to meet the elements of the 504 plan to the extent possible.

Crossover Between IDEA and Section 504

Both IDEA and Section 504 make eligibility determinations specific to each youth. In both cases, the youth has a disability. A key factor is whether the disability adversely affects educational performance. If the disability adversely affects educational performance, the youth would be eligible for special education services and will be protected under Section 504. If the disability does not adversely affect educational performance, the youth would not be eligible for special education services, but typically would still be entitled to protections under Section 504 (access to education) and may require accommodations or modifications to the general education curriculum. An example of this may be a youth with asthma.

As a condition for funding from a federal government office (such as the Office of Justice Programs), recipients must comply with Civil Rights legislation including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 in terms of hiring (staff can have 504 plans protecting certain rights to accommodations for employment) and in the delivery of services or benefits (students can have 504 plans protecting their right to education).

Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Timely access to student records is always a critical factor in the delivery of a quality education program for youth in custody. Complicating the process are the varied lengths of stay, multiple out-of-home placements, a highly transitional population having been enrolled in different districts with gaps in their public school attendance and the youth and family’s right to confidentiality. FERPA addresses both the legal backing for the timely transfer of records and confidentiality issues. However, this complex piece of legislation has been subject to various interpretations, which can also complicate the transfer of student records.

One goal of FERPA is to allow for youth to experience a smooth transition into a new educational placement by allowing for the transfer of school records prior to that placement. Additionally, FERPA allows for the sharing of information between
placements to improve the youth outcomes in future placements. Recent clarification to the FERPA legislation includes correctional settings and juvenile justice placements among the facilities that educational records can be shared with or without parental release. Simon Gonsoulin provides additional information on the interpretation of FERPA and the transfer of student records.

Simon Gonsoulin

Simon Gonsoulin is the Project Director for the Neglected-Delinquent Technical Assistance Center (NCTAC) and Principal Research Analyst with American Institutes for Research. Mr. Gonsoulin provided access to the following document (produced in partnership with NDTAC and the Federal Interagency Reentry Council) that provides the facts when it comes to understanding the complexities of FERPA related to the transfer of the educational records of youth in custody. A link to this document is included with permission.

Reentry Myth Buster!: On Student Records

Transition and Reentry

Youth involved in the juvenile justice system often have extensive absences from school. Extensive absences may disrupt the student’s normal progression toward graduation and complicate their academic needs, their process through progressive curricula, and their transcripts. The translation of earned credits among various schools and facilities can be confusing. These complex academic and behavioral histories make communication with districts, schools, counselors, and teachers a significant challenge; they are nonetheless critically important.

Additionally, youth transitioning from a juvenile or adult facility to the public schools are not typically welcomed back easily. A student may be trying to re-enroll mid-semester, having already missed a significant number of days. Past behaviors may have them labeled as a troublemaker. The same peer group they engaged with prior to their involvement with the juvenile justice system may continue to be their peer group of choice. There are many obstacles in the way of a successful transition.

Academic Advancement Plan
Custody education programs address these issues by creating an academic advancement plan or some other form of documentation of the student’s school history and needs. The plan should compile previous academic placements, past academic credits earned, requirements still to be met, and a strategy for achieving graduation. Clearly-stated goals and objectives for the time in the facility and any accommodations needed should also be a part of the plan. There should be a regular review process in place to adjust the plan to changes in the student’s status and to identify a process for the plan to follow the student to the next placement. This type of academic plan is separate from the IEP mandated by federal regulations for Special Education students, although there will be overlapping information contained in both documents. All students should have an academic advancement plan. Only special education students would have an IEP. Youth should be familiar with and have access to a copy of their academic advancement plan. By role-playing, youth can practice being a self-advocate for their educational needs to improve their transitions between programs in the future.

Transition Specialist or Liaison

When facilities are doing excellent work with youth and stabilizing their academic and behavioral challenges in confinement, the next critical step is the reconnection with the school the student will attend upon release. Best practice would be to start planning for the youth’s release as soon as he or she enters the facility. School programs in facilities should initiate this process by contacting the previous schools for records and information, as well as informing the school of the student’s current location. A critical piece for students is helping them understand and come to terms with their future options for graduation. Informing students about future placements can also ease their anxiety and help them succeed. Regular and consistent follow-up with students at their new placement will provide staff an opportunity to help youth access resources and to intervene or support any emerging needs, before issues can have a negative impact. A school liaison should be familiar with the school districts, placements, the community, community resources, and the juvenile and adult justice systems. The liaison should be personable, reliable, detail-oriented, and able to quickly establish relationships with adults and youth. When working with school districts, the best person for assisting at-risk youth is not always someone who has been assigned, but instead someone who demonstrates a willingness and an interest. The liaison needs to be able to find these motivated and supportive individuals in the schools and develop working relationships with them. (See Ch. 18: Transition Planning and Reentry).

Transition Services
Transition services are the responsibility of the confinement education program and should include:

- Informing schools of the location of their student within one day following enrollment in the school program.
- Welcoming the student into the program and initiating discussions on release.
- Locating and compiling the student's academic records.
- Providing the student with an academic road map to graduation.
- Providing the student with information on future placement and other relevant information.
- Connecting with the student's family and providing access to needed services.
- Accessing school counselors and planning for the student’s return.
- Following-up and supporting a successful transition back to school or placement.
- Providing for possible post-release assistance with job placement, tutoring services, counseling, food, clothing, and housing.

**Transition Examples: Lessons Learned**

Field Author: James Bennett

With over two decades of Youth Service experience, Jim Bennett’s career has included working with youth in transition in a variety of different capacities. Jim currently serves as the Program Specialist for Reentry for the Nebraska State Juvenile Probation Administration and is helping to lead Juvenile Justice Reform in the state of Nebraska for youth transitioning from out-of-home placement. Jim’s Youth Service career began at the Menninger Clinic working with youth in a mental healthcare setting. He moved into the juvenile justice realm working in the Lancaster County Attention Center and then shifted to the educational arena as a Transition Specialist with the Lincoln Public Schools at the Pathfinder Program in the Lancaster County Youth Services Center.

Through the evolution of the Pathfinder Transition Program, we learned tough lessons regarding what works when trying to communicate with youth and to get them to take advantage of the transitional help being offered after leaving detention. The first attempts were to give reentering youth a list of community resources and a phone number for the transition specialist at the detention center. We quickly learned that our discharge area trashcans were filling up with informational handouts, and we
ultimately received no calls that first year. As we developed new ideas, we gradually found out what worked with youth going through this transition.

We found out that building strong relationships with the youth while they are in the facility gave the transition process a foothold when they returned to school. When a personal connection was made with a youth in the facility, and the youth was aware that someone would be coming to check on their progress and offer them help, it put the youth more at ease when that school visit occurred. That awareness increased the participation in the program significantly. Youth were more likely to participate in tutoring services, participate in community programs, and engage other caring adults in the schools, coordinated through the Transition Specialist.

Those relationships built with the youth in the facility helped to “kick-start” the transition process and allowed the school to begin engaging the youth in a positive way. Many of these youth had burned their bridges with their old schools, and these youth came to school with all of that history and baggage with them. Having a caring adult help them walk through some of those processes and talk with other professionals in the school gave the youth some insulation from that past baggage and helped to establish relationships with other caring adults in the school. Trusting relationships are the cornerstone of all transition work done through the Pathfinder Program.

Another lesson we learned over time is the need to be prepared to meet each of these youth where they are at in the transition process. Our first attempts were to put a program in place that fit the needs of all youth equally. We gave all of the youth the same resources and provided the same service. We also expected the youth to do the footwork and get themselves to those services. Though we did have some youth choose to take advantage of these services and resources, after further scrutiny, we felt we were only reaching those youth who would have probably been fine without these opportunities, those that would have used the school resources provided to them. We were missing most of the youth we claimed to serve, specifically those at higher risk and those less motivated who were reluctant to trust and who feared adult interventions. We decided to change the program.

One of the first changes we made was to go to the youth instead of having the youth come to us. We decided to individualize the program and offer
services in the schools during open periods or after school. We offered community resources as well, but we had those community resources also go to the youth and meet with them in the schools to first build trust. In our experience with the youth served through the Pathfinder Program, the very first meeting had an extremely high no-show rate. Once we were able to make the first meetings happen at the schools and set them up ourselves, we were able to establish contact almost every time. From then on, our no-show rate for the second meeting was significantly lower.

Finally, we struggled with communicating effectively with youth. We were having trouble getting youth to remember appointments, getting ahold of them after they missed school, and contacting them to see how they were doing. We began to text. This may seem like a simple change, but it had profound effects on the program and on the quality of the service provided to the youth. Most every youth had a cell phone. Those that did not gave us the number of a friend that had a phone, and we were able to reach them that way. One might think a youth would be reluctant to provide their number but that is a generational misconception. Whereas a 45-year old might not want to give their number out to someone, a 16-year old is less concerned, given the accessibility and technological freedom a cell phone provides. Another benefit of the cell phone is access to the youth throughout the school day. Youth would respond to reminders and check-ins throughout the day, sometimes within minutes of a text going out. When a youth started to not respond to text messages, then it was time for another face-to-face meeting to find out what was going on. The lack of responses to text messages was a sign that something wasn’t going well or the youth was beginning to slip.

These are three of the many lessons learned throughout the process of determining what works for transitioning youth in the Pathfinder program. Nothing proved more beneficial for our transition support than asking the youth what they needed and what they appreciated in this program. Youth-driven direction helped to improve and refine the quality of the Pathfinder Transition Program.

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**Educational Options**

Students will often engage teachers and facility staff in discussions related to the value of staying in school, the educational options available to them, and strategies for completing their education, despite all of the other life struggles they may be
facing. Staff should be able to provide support for various educational options depending on the needs of the youth and his or her current legal situation.

**Top Five Reasons to Stay in School**

Here are the top five reasons to stay in school presented on the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network in 2014.

1. High school dropouts are four times as likely to be unemployed as those who have completed four or more years of college.
2. Graduating from high school will determine how well you live for the next 50 years of your life. On average, high school graduates earn $143 more per week than high school dropouts. College graduates earn $336 more per week than high school graduates ($479 more per week than high school dropouts).
3. Dropouts are more likely to apply for and receive public assistance than graduates of high school,
4. Dropouts comprise a disproportionate percentage of the nation's prison and death row inmates; 82% of prisoners in America are high school dropouts;
5. School districts all over the country provide alternative programs for students who are not successful in the usual school setting. The best programs in the country are featured in the National Dropout Prevention Center Model Programs Database.[35]

**Diploma vs. GED** [35] or High School Equivalency Diploma

The core subjects covered on a GED or a High School Equivalency diploma focus specifically on five subject areas: science, mathematics, social studies, reading, and writing. A traditional high school diploma encompasses a 12-year course of study in the core courses and includes various electives such as social skills, life skills, health, technology, and an array of other state-mandated educational components. A traditional high school diploma is the preferred outcome for any student, as it represents a capacity to complete a comprehensive and rigorous program of study. The benefits of graduating with some type of degree or through some type of high school equivalency program pays financial rewards throughout a person’s lifetime—increased earnings and job opportunities.
The reality of some life situations does not make this possible for all students. A GED or a High School Equivalency Diploma can still provide the foundational skills a student needs to enter the workforce or higher education. In general, employers look more favorably upon a traditional diploma, and some higher education options may be more limited by a GED or High School Equivalency Diploma. However, these are relatively minor barriers compared to not graduating at all.

Life Skills Development, Career Development, and Vocational Programs:

In addition to core academic subjects, educational programs within facilities must address the other significant deficits of the student population in the areas of life skills, career development, and vocational training. The availability and quality of these services, particularly career development and vocational training, are frequently limited by financial resources, physical space, equipment, and safety and security concerns. Often the community can provide resources to assist with these areas. Business partners, state vocational rehabilitation services, or community nonprofit youth groups can supply trained individuals who will voluntarily contribute this type of programming. Programming should be delivered in a prescriptive manner and be based upon individual student or general population trends and the needs specific to the youth in the facility.

Educational opportunities in these areas do not have to be stand-alone programs; they are often integrated across the curriculum of core courses. The benefits of such opportunities are limited to an exposure-level experience or pre-vocational training in short-term detention or jail facilities. These can be extended to career training and vocational opportunities in juvenile correctional or adult confinement settings. Long-term programs that can lead to or provide certifications and licenses (e.g., Food Handlers Permit, Certified Nursing Assistant) offer an incentive for youth to participate and career options upon release. The vocational program at the Lookout Mountain Youth Services Center, part of the Colorado Division of Youth Services, is such an example. Students in the program receive extensive training in landscaping, constructions, culinary arts, printing, computer-assisted design, and—in many cases—competitively-paid employment through their transition programs.

Bridges to Post-Secondary Education

Post-secondary education is not what many youth in facilities envision as a possibility in their future. They often come from homes where higher education is not a norm, not presented as a realistic option, and not a component of their discussions about life. A critical function of youth educational programming is breaking down that barrier and helping students to see additional educational
opportunities beyond high school as a viable option. Through regular and consistent expectations of this reality, through presentation of role models who have successfully engaged post-secondary education opportunities, and through showing the specific steps to the process, students will not only see the option, but believe it is a real, viable option. Short-term juvenile detention facilities and adult jails that house youth should continuously present the option of post-secondary education as a possibility. Longer-term juvenile correctional facilities or adult confinement facilities that house youth need to follow through with the steps to qualify for college entrance, such as meeting all college prerequisites and participating in classes and activities focused on post-secondary goals. As a component of transition, students should receive direct assistance related to the actual process of getting registered to attend post-secondary education after their release. This would include appropriate and consistent follow-up services.

**Online Educational Programming**

The use of computer-based online programs for educational services has been evolving for many years. Initially, these programs were simplistic and repetitive. They were not capable of holding a student’s interest, were susceptible to repetitive strategies used to only learn what was on the test, and did not have solid foundations in the curriculum.

Current versions of online educational services have evolved into blended-learning activities that are engaging, multi-faceted in their learning styles, and based solidly on curriculum. Their use and acceptance has grown tremendously among alternative educators and school districts. The use of interactive instructors and accreditation through reliable organizations adds to the value of these programs.

For certain students a traditional classroom setting can be problematic. Accommodations are and should be available to adapt to student needs. Online classes are one option that has proven to be valuable for some students. Most school districts offer online classes as an option and provide appropriate oversight and supervision of the process. Credit Recovery is also a valuable tool for many youth in confinement education programs.

Currently, a wide range of complete degree programs are available for both college and high school degrees. The University of Nebraska offers an online high school, and Phoenix University offers post-secondary degrees, which are regularly accepted in today’s business community. The Penn Foster high school program is accredited through the Commission on Secondary Schools of the Middle States Association, a
well established, highly respected national accreditation organization for many of the country’s top private schools.

Maintaining Gains

Field Author: Carol Cramer Brooks

Carol Cramer Brooks is the Director of the OJJDP National Center for Youth in Custody and the CEO of the National Partnership for Juvenile Services. She is a 20-year educator of youth in custody.

Statement of the Problem

The systems responsible for the care and transition of confined youth are juvenile justice, child welfare, mental health, and education. Many of their efforts are not effective in preparing youthful offenders for their return to community, school, and work. Quantifiable data required to draw an accurate picture of the effectiveness of transition services are not available. However, recidivism data and anecdotal accounts can reasonably lead us to these conclusions. Recidivism rates vary considerably, with estimates ranging as high as 50% to 70% among youthful offenders discharged from secure facilities without the benefit of transition services.[36] Nationally, the data suggest that only 5% to 10% of students exiting the juvenile justice system return to the public school system and graduate. Locally, 20% of the students transitioned from the Intensive Learning Center (the day school at the Kalamazoo County Juvenile Home) at the 2004–2005 semester break have experienced success in the public school system. This is a multi-systemic issue requiring a multi-systems solution. However, for the purpose of this paper, we will focus solely on the roles and responsibilities of the confinement and public education systems in providing effective transition services for detained youth.

Transition refers to a coordinated, outcome-based set of pre-release and aftercare services designed to help youth achieve social adjustment, employment, and educational success upon release from the juvenile justice facility or system. According to the National Center on Education, Disability and Juvenile Justice, transition planning is frequently ignored in confinement education programs, resulting in dismal youth outcomes after release.[37] Exposing the failures of the education system requires us to examine the system from two perspectives: the educational programs
inside the walls of the confinement facility and the educational options—primarily the public school system—outside the facility.

Despite a consensus in the literature that education programs containing effective transition components aid in the post-release success of system-involved youth, confinement education programs continue to focus on success only “within the walls.” The flawed design and delivery of confinement education creates a false sense of academic achievement and a reliance on an external behavior control system that does not translate to success in the public school environment. Curricula that focus on awarding credit units, grades, and academic content standards but omit social skills, independent living skills, and school success behaviors ignore the needs of confined youth and consign them to failure in the community, public school, and work environments. Confinement education programs boast of individualized education plans based on the needs of the student, yet they continue to educate youth in a cookie cutter, one-size-fits-all program designed to replicate the public school system, where delinquent youth experienced failure quite frequently.

Transitioning youth from the juvenile justice system to the public school system is rarely successful. There are many systemic factors contributing to this lack of success, including the design and purpose of the public school system, limited educational options and supports within the system, the resistance and attitudes of school personnel toward readmitting these students, and logistics such as credit and record transfers, timing, and attendance.

At the heart of transition failure is the fact that the students who are transitioning out of the juvenile justice system into the public school system are the very students that the public school system is designed to weed out. It was never the intent of the original designers of the public school system to ensure high levels of learning for all students. Opportunity was there for all, but accessed by only some. Alternative routes were available for participation as a citizen—military, industry, and agriculture. Today, all paths toward productive citizenry go through the public school system, and federal legislation is requiring that we leave no child behind. Being successful with all students requires the public school system to do more than just be successful with those students who have the right attitude, background, experiences, support systems, and aptitudes.
It requires a transformation of public school practices and the assumptions that drive those practices.[39]

At minimum, students with disabilities transitioning to the public school system have the benefit of a support system, an IEP and a continuum of options (center-based, self-contained classroom, resource room, teacher consultant services). Although this alone does not equate with success, special education students do transition with a support system in place. General education students (50–70% of transitioning students) do not have a legally mandated support system or a continuum of educational options. Despite behavior challenges, academic deficits, and severe gaps in their education, these students typically have one option: general education classes. In some communities, budget cuts eliminated alternative schools. In addition, transitioning students rarely meet eligibility criteria for vocational training programs.

Public school personnel are resistant to having justice-involved students return to their schools. This resistance plays out in the numerous and deliberate obstacles created prior to and during the student’s transition period. Obstacles include delayed enrollment, encouragement of dropping out or signing out, scheduling difficulties, and a refusal to accept transfer credits. Every minor problem in the transition process can result in serious setbacks for this population. Major problems usually translate into failure. [40] Once enrolled, a transitioning student typically carries a stigma, unable to shed a history of poor attendance, and discipline and academic problems. Minor problems, which for most students might result in in-school or after-school suspensions, are expellable offenses for students with a history. According to Suzie Boss in *Learning from the Margins: The Lessons of Alternative Schools*, 88% of teachers nationwide believe academic achievement would improve substantially if persistent troublemakers were simply removed from class.[41] Our anecdotal experiences in transitioning delinquent youth back to the public school system validate this statement. To maintain the gains students have reached during their involvement in the juvenile justice system, both confinement and public school education programs must make significant reforms.

Statement of Importance

There are three critically important concepts that point to the need for educational systems change:
1. It is the right thing to do for at-risk youth.
2. It is legally mandated.
3. It is fiscally responsible.

There is a widely accepted belief among juvenile justice professionals that if you treat the youth and then return him to his home environment, but did nothing to change that home environment, the individual quickly reverts to old behaviors. The same would hold true for school systems. If we treat the youth—teach social and school success behaviors and remediate academic deficits—but return the youth to the exact same school environment, we are wasting time and energy. School systems have to be responsive to the changing needs of students.

There is a legal mandate for school systems to educate all children—even those returning from the juvenile justice system. The U.S. Constitution requires state and local education officials to provide a “thorough and efficient system of free public schools” for the instruction of all children between the ages of five and eighteen. Additional federal legislation—IDEA, NCLB, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, ADA, and Title I, Part D—strengthen the mandate to provide appropriate education for all children. State statutes and local district policies further define this mandate. The design and purpose of the education system must be re-examined must comply with the standards outlined in federal and state legislation.

We have to rewrite the purpose and redesign the delivery of educational services in confinement facilities and in the public schools, because it is our fiscal responsibility to do so. In the U.S., youthful offenders cycle in and out of institutional facilities at an average annual cost of $66,000 to $88,000 per youth.[42] In addition, researchers cite societal costs from lower tax revenue, greater spending on public assistance and healthcare and higher crime rates as a result of higher drop-out rates.[43] Communities all across the country struggle with the social and economic costs of youth with no high school diploma, no support system, and no options in the community.

Proposed Resolution of the Problem

To effectively prepare for the reentry of justice-involved youth to community, school, and work, all related systems involved must commit to a truly collaborative efforts. In their book *Building Coalitions*, Jackson and
Maddy define collaboration as “the process of individuals or organizations sharing resources and responsibilities jointly to plan, implement, and evaluate programs to achieve common goals.”[44] Applying this definition to the role of the education system with transitioning youth requires confinement education and public school education to jointly develop and agree to a set of common goals and directions, to share responsibility for obtaining goals, and to work together to achieve the goals. The public school system cannot abdicate responsibility for their youth simply by virtue of their involvement in the juvenile justice system.

To achieve the mandate of NCLB—specifically that all students will learn at high levels—the public school system must begin a systematic effort to create procedures, policies, and programs aligned with that purpose.[45] This may result in a change in the curriculum scope and sequence. It may result in a change in school structure—class and school size, instructional hours and days, in-school program options, or the physical location of instruction. It may result in a change in course design and choice of instructional strategies. It would most certainly result in the creation of a continuum of educational options—within and in addition to the public school—designed to address the learning needs of a diverse population. Adlai Stevenson High School in Illinois (original Professional Learning Community) created a pyramid of 19 interventions to provide students with options that increased levels of time and support when they had trouble learning.[46] The short-term interventions enabled the student to transition through the difficult time. The Orange County Department of Education in California created an entire division—Alternative, Community, and Correctional Education Schools and Services (ACCESS)—to provide 160,000 students with educational options. Programs in ACCESS provide alternative learning strategies, acknowledging that students learn in a variety of ways. Teachers address the individual learning needs, interests, and abilities of each student. ACCESS is based on the belief that placing students in programs tailored to their individual needs develops their skills and talents and that the community benefits from students with skills and competencies.

Confinement education programs cannot wait for the public school system to change the way it does business. Juvenile justice facilities release about 100,000 youth annually, according to data from the U.S. Department of Justice. The first step is to realize that simply duplicating the public school model in confinement facilities has not increased the successful transition
of students. Confinement education is a different entity, serving different students, and therefore must educate in a different way. The second realization is that, for a majority of students involved in the juvenile justice system, the public school is not appropriate. However, as long as the public school system is the only option, the role of confinement education has to be to prepare students for success in that model. Finally, confinement education has to lead the charge, to initiate partnerships with public education, juvenile justice, mental health, the business community, and the community at-large to create opportunities to benefit these students.

Teaching differently can mean any combination of the following scenarios: same content, different instructional strategies; different content, different instructional strategies; alternative program design, different hours in the day, small class sizes. It does not mean a dumbing down of the curriculum. All of the research on educating at-risk youth supports high expectations combined with challenging experiences that connect academic learning to life in the community and the world of work.[47] Ziemelman, Daniels, and Hyde provide us with 13 interlocking principles that characterize best practices in education.[48] These principles have implications for teaching youth in confinement. Programs and curricula should be child-centered, experiential, reflective, authentic, holistic, social, collaborative, democratic, cognitive, developmental, constructivist, psycholinguistic, and challenging. Curricula should be behavior based—teaching the academic and social behaviors necessary for successful transition. Confinement education programs should teach community life skills, including problem solving, communication, daily living, money management, personal hygiene, and housekeeping. Focus should also be on core content, skill remediation, and literacy.

The majority of youth entering the juvenile justice system never successfully return to school. Therefore, it is critical that curricula in confinement education programs help youth prepare for and enter the labor market. “While correctional educators must find better ways to motivate students to return to school,” writes correctional education expert, Robert Gemignani, “they must also provide students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed in entry-level jobs.”[49] This would expand the number of transitional options and allow schools to meet the needs of students. Vocational curricula should include job readiness, vocational skills training, and an opportunity to apply knowledge in real-life situations or simulations such as on-the-job training, work experience,
internships, apprenticeships, mentorship or job shadowing. Effective implementation of the final component of the curriculum depends on confinement education programs developing partnerships with the business community.

Confinement education programs serve the students most likely left behind and least likely to advocate for their needs. Therefore, it is the responsibility of confinement educators to champion their cause. Crucial to successful transition is the development of an unconditional safety net of support. All service providers must commit to serving any youth under any circumstances and to adapt their supports and services when needed. [50] All students in confinement education programs should have a transition plan—modeled after the special education transition plans—which address the key areas of education, employment, independent living skills and community involvement. Transition planning should begin when the student enters the program—thinking exit upon entry. All of the student’s key stakeholders should have input into the plan. Once a plan is developed, it should guide all curriculum and programmatic decisions.

The responsibility for providing effective transition services belongs to many systems. However, to improve effectiveness, each system must focus inward to evaluate their role in this process. Education, key to the success of transitioning students, should lead the way.

Conclusion

Engagement is the most critical function of a student’s success. No one can make another person learn, they must choose to learn if the learning is to be meaningful and lasting. Educators must create the learning environment that allows students to be successful and must support their progress in a positive manner. Beyond that, educators of youth in custody have to lead the efforts to advocate for change in the systems to which youth are returning to sustain the gains that begin in the confinement settings.

Resources
**Behavior Intervention Support Teams:** Information is available at [http://www.bist.org](http://www.bist.org)[8].

**CEA Secure Prison Education Tablet:** Information is available at `<a>`.

**Common Core Standards:** Information is available at [http://www.corestandards.org](http://www.corestandards.org)[9].

**EDGAR:** To view current versions of the Education Department General Administrative Regulations, visit the U.S. Department of Education website at [http://www2.ed.gov/policy/fund/reg/edgarReg/edgar.html](http://www2.ed.gov/policy/fund/reg/edgarReg/edgar.html)[17].

**IDEA:** Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Information is available at [http://idea.ed.gov](http://idea.ed.gov)[18].


**Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports:** Information is available at [https://www.pbis.org](https://www.pbis.org)[7].

**Response to Intervention:** Information is available at [https://rti4success.org/](https://rti4success.org/)[22].


**Orange County Department of Education, Alternative, Community, and Correctional Schools and Services (ACCESS):** Information regarding alternative
education options for youth and adults in Orange County is available at: 
http://www.ocde.us/ACCESS [19].

**TITLE I:** “Title I, Part D: Neglected, Delinquent, and At-Risk Youth: Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth who are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk (N or D): Non Regulatory Guidance.” Washington, DC: United States Department of Education, 2006. Information related to Title I, Part D, Subpart 2 funding is available at: https://neglected-delinquent.ed.gov/what-title-i-part-d [20]. Depending upon the facility’s program design, different categories of Title I funding may also be available.

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attributed to Carol Ann Tomlinson (2005).


Forever Foundation. “Maya Angelou Schools: Mission and Vision.”.


National Dropout Prevention Center/Network. “Top 5 Reasons to Stay in School.” http://ndpc.sites.clemson.edu/family-student-resources/top-5-reasons-sta... [34].


Bibliography


**Endnotes**

[2] For the purpose of efficiency in this document, we will refer to the person in charge of education as the “lead teacher,” knowing that people with different jobs may be filling this role.


[4] Lancaster County, Nebraska, USA, "Educational Program: Pathfinder Education Program."


[6] Washington State Department of Corrections, “Education and Vocational Programs for Offenders Policy, Policy #500.000.”


18] Ibid.


21] Ibid.


Content


20 U.S.C. § 1414(d)(6)(B); 34 C.F.R. § 300.311(c).


National Dropout Prevention Center/Network, “Top 5 Reasons to Stay in School.”


National Center on Education, Disability, and Juvenile Justice, “Transition Planning and Services,” (College Park, MD).


[45] DuFour et al., *Whatever It Takes*.

[46] Ibid.


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