

Improving Public School Re-Entry for Youth Involved with the Juvenile Justice System

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Introduction

Re-entering the community from a juvenile justice facility is a crucial time for youth. The success or failure of a student's return to public school has implications at the individual, community and national levels. Currently, youth re-entering public school in the District face many barriers. If these barriers are not addressed, more than 75% of youth released from juvenile justice facilities will continue to experience school failure.

Barriers to Successful School Re-entry

- Lack of planning for re-entry
- Lack of effective relationships between District and juvenile justice facilities
- Lack of advance notice of return
- Poor timing of release
- Schools are apprehensive about their ability to support these youth
- Youth are often credit deficient
- Youth have a history of school difficulty
- Many youth have behavior or learning difficulties
- Instruction is often primarily in basic skill areas

Data

Nationally, approximately 100,000 youth are released from custody each day.

Nearly 75% of these youth will not enroll in school.

Oregon completed a 5 year study examining transition outcomes for youth leaving incarceration.

Findings

- 60% recidivism rate
- 25% enrolled in school
- Fewer than 25% completed high school
- Significant barriers to school re-entry exist
- Rate of employment was less than 30%

The Proposal

Objective: The goal of this proposal is to improve school success of youth exiting juvenile justice facilities by providing them with support in re-entering District schools. Support will be provided by the creation of a Student Support Specialist position. The Student Support Specialist will serve adjudicated youth released from county residential treatment programs (Phoenix, Stepping Stone and Pathways) and state operated youth correctional facilities such as MacLaren.

The Student Support Specialist will:

- Create a partnership and act as liaison between the District and Juvenile Justice facilities
- Coordinate communication between school staff, probation officers, facility staff and families
- Develop relationships with mid/high school administrators, counselors and school resource officers
- Develop relationships with youth and their families
- Facilitate school based meetings
- Create a school transition plan with youth, family and school staff
- Monitor and support youth's level of engagement
- Assist youth and school teams in problem solving
- Provide transition related services
- Assist youth in accessing community support services
- Gather data on student engagement

Success of the project will be measured by:

- Rates of engagement at 3 month intervals up to 1 year after release
- Stakeholder surveys

Implementation Timeline

March/April 2009: Present proposal to District leadership teams and secure funding source(s)

May 2009: Finalize partnership agreements with Oregon Youth Authority

June 2009: Conduct hiring process and begin staff training and preparation

July-August 2009: Gather baseline data specific to the District
Begin developing caseload of youth and preparing for fall transitions

2009-2011: On-going implementation of supports
Conduct follow-up interviews at 3 month intervals up to 1 year after release

April 2011: Determine efficacy of service and whether or not it should be continued

Cost of Project Implementation

Cost

Staff: 8 hours classified.....	48,000
Travel and training.....	800
Materials + start up.....	1,000
Total Cost	49,800

Donated Resources

Office space at Serbu Youth Campus
Phone line in office

Potential Cost of not Implementing the Project

Continuing to ignore the struggles of youth exiting juvenile justice programs sets them up for a greater than 75% chance of school failure.

Implications of School Failure:

- Lower earnings
- Higher rates of unemployment
- Increased likelihood of receiving public assistance
- Higher rates of delinquency and adult criminality
- increased levels of drug and alcohol abuse
- Increased rates of teen pregnancy
- Increased likelihood of perpetuating the cycle of school failure with their children

Sources

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