



Blueprint for Change

Education Success for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System

Overview of the Blueprint 10 Goals

- 1: Youth Voice
- 2: Adult Support
- 3: Educated in Community
- 4: Full Opportunities in Community
- 5: Quality Education in Facilities
- 6: Supportive School Environments
- 7: Career Pathways
- 8: Post-Secondary Access
- 9: Smooth Transitions
- 10: Protecting Especially Vulnerable Youth

GOAL 1: Youth are informed and entrusted to make decisions about their own education and future.

- 1.1** - Youth receive full information about educational opportunities available to them, and are regularly asked about their educational preferences and needs. Youth preferences, strengths, and needs are central to curricular and placement determinations.
- 1.2** - Youth receive training about their educational rights including due process and special education rights, and self-advocacy.
- 1.3** - Youth participate in school and juvenile justice system meetings about their education and future.
- 1.4** - Youth are given an opportunity to participate in court proceedings; courts and attorneys are trained on involving youth in court and in asking questions about educational interests, goals, and progress.
- 1.5** - Youth are supported by school and juvenile justice professionals with appropriate knowledge and training who engage youth in education planning.
- 1.6** - Youth opinions and wishes are prioritized in determining their educational decision maker, placement, educational goals and program, and post-secondary decisions, including living and school placement upon release.
- 1.7** - Youth with disabilities actively participate in special education meetings, the development of their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) including transition planning, and receive the support they need to be self-advocates.
- 1.8** - Youth who are English language learners and/or limited English proficient receive the supports they need to be effective self-advocates for their educational needs.

About The Blueprint

The Blueprint for Change: Education Success for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System presents 10 goals that set forth the broad framework for promoting education success for young people involved in the juvenile justice system. There are correlating Benchmarks for each Goal that, if achieved, would indicate progress toward improving educational outcomes. The Benchmarks are the more specific and concrete policies and strategies for achieving the broader goals.

About The Legal Center for Youth Justice and Education

The Legal Center for Youth Justice and Education (LCYJE) is a national collaboration of Southern Poverty Law Center, Juvenile Law Center, Education Law Center-PA, and the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law. Our mission is to ensure that all youth in and returning from the juvenile and criminal justice systems can access a quality education. We build collaborations among juvenile justice and education professionals, highlight innovative model litigation strategies, and work to reshape federal, state, and local policies.

Explore the Online Tool:

Visit www.jjeducationblueprint.org - an interactive website with searchable policies, practices, and resources to implement the Blueprint benchmarks.



SPLC
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Juvenile
Law
Center



GOAL 2: Youth have adult support in their education before, during and after involvement in the juvenile justice system.

2.1 - Youth are supported by parents who are engaged and have received information and training about educational rights, special education law, and advocacy sufficient to maintain their engagement.

2.2 - When a youth's parent is available but requires supports to fully engage in education advocacy, the juvenile justice system and other stakeholders collaborate to provide access and support to the parent in order to build capacity and best serve the youth.

2.3 - When, even with supports, the parent is not available to participate in the youth's education, another legally-authorized education decision-maker is identified for the youth, with the youth's preference solicited and prioritized. All youth without an available parent, not just those with identified disabilities, are appointed an education decision-maker. If a family member is not available or appropriate, youth have access to a pool of qualified, independent, and well-trained individuals who speak the youth's native language who can serve in this role and be timely appointed, and in compliance with the IDEA if applicable.

2.4 - Staff are sensitive to and supportive of the cultural and ethnic background of youth and their family.

2.5 - All youth, including youth with disabilities, youth of color, LBG and gender expansive youth, and youth who are English Language Learners or limited English proficient, have mentors who are culturally competent to empower and support them and understand their strengths and unique barriers to educational success.

2.6 - Youth's parents who are limited-English proficient receive information about their children's education in their native language, including all information needed to advocate on behalf of their children.

2.7 - Youth are supported by trained professionals, including school staff, behavioral health staff, judges, defense counsel, case managers, Juvenile Probation Officers, child welfare workers, and facility staff, to gain access to high-quality education and career/technical programs. Youth receive assistance from interagency liaisons and/or transition specialists who get to know the youth and forge an ongoing relationship.

2.8 - Youth attend schools, including placement schools, that engage parents and families, and rely on parents/guardians as education decision-makers, including ensuring that parents or other legally authorized decision-makers make decisions with regard to a youth's special education needs.

2.9 - Youth have access to legal representatives trained to identify and respond to education issues in juvenile justice cases, school disciplinary hearings, and special education matters.

2.10 - Youth appear before judges who consider their desires and educational needs in crafting dispositions and ordering placements, address education issues in depth at all review

hearings, and consider the quality and consequences of education available in the juvenile justice placement in all decisions while maintaining the youth at home and in community schools wherever possible.

GOAL 3: After being charged or adjudicated delinquent, youth remain in the same school whenever feasible, or enroll in a new school in their home community.

3.1 - Youth remain in the same school unless an out-of-home placement is necessary for the rehabilitation and/or safety of the youth, or the youth's decision-maker, in consultation with the youth, recommends a change in school placement, and the judge, placing agency and youth/family determine the student should be placed in a different school district or school placement.

3.2 - Youth remain at home and in their local public schools for truancy or other status offenses, with needed interventions and supports, rather than being placed in juvenile justice placements and on-grounds schools or being transferred to alternative disciplinary schools.

3.3 - Youth of color are not subject to and negatively impacted by racial bias because individuals involved in youth's placement are vigilant about collecting data and identifying and correcting bias that leads to disproportionate out-of-home placement of students of color.

3.4 - Youth with disabilities are placed in the least restrictive, most inclusive school environment that can meet their individual needs.

3.5 - When out of home placement is necessary and used as a last resort, youth are placed close to home, taking into account distance and the ability of the youth to continue at the current school.

3.6 - Youth in placement are afforded the opportunity to continue to attend their home school or attend the local public school close to the placement (as opposed to an on-grounds program).

3.7 - Youth are not referred to alternative disciplinary schools or otherwise pushed out of school on the basis of prior juvenile justice involvement.

3.8 - Youth are not held in detention awaiting appropriate community education programs.

GOAL 4: Youth involved in the juvenile justice system who are educated in the community receive access to the full range of educational opportunities and supports.

4.1 - Youth participate in the full school experience, and are not excluded from extra-curricular or recreational activities due to juvenile justice system involvement, conditions of probation, or electronic monitoring.

4.2 - All youth – in local schools, alternative disciplinary schools, or during disciplinary exclusion – receive access to adequate

education that meets their educational needs and provides a full array of educational opportunities.

4.3 - Youth receive needed academic and non-academic supports, including access to remedial programs, credit recovery, counseling and behavioral health services, gifted and talented education, career and technical programs, and job exploration opportunities.

4.4 - All youth feel safe, empowered, and free from discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, marital or parental status, religion, disability, HIV status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. If a school has sex-segregated activities such as gym class, health class, or extra-curricular sports, or facilities such as bathrooms or locker rooms, youth are permitted to participate in activities, programs and facilities consistent with their gender identity.

4.5 - Youth with disabilities receive the specially designed instruction, targeted interventions, services, and accommodations they need to make meaningful progress in the least restrictive environment.

4.6 - Youth who are English Language Learners and/or limited English proficient receive effective ESOL instruction and the modifications to curriculum and instruction to which they are legally entitled, and they and their families receive legally mandated interpretation and translation services.

4.7 - Youths' appointments and court appearances are scheduled to minimize their impact on the child's education, and youth are not penalized for missing school or work because of court or juvenile justice case-related activities.

4.8 - Youth are not subject to blanket education-related terms of probation that fail to take into account the youth's individualized education needs and traumatic experiences. Education matters – attendance, engagement with school, homework – should not be addressed by the probation system but rather by the school, service providers, and caregivers/family.

4.9 - Youth receive full due process before any exclusion from school or placement in a restrictive setting, including meaningful manifestation determination reviews for youth with disabilities to determine if the youth's conduct is related to or the result of a disability or the failure to follow the youth's IEP, and includes an assessment of the student's mental or behavioral health condition that may contribute to behavior, a functional behavioral assessment and the development of or revision to a youth's positive behavior support plan.

4.10 - Youth are not subject to school policies and administration of school discipline that disproportionately impact youth of color.

4.11 - Students receive sufficient information to understand all policies and practices related to school discipline and their substantive and procedural rights.

GOAL 5: Youth in juvenile justice placements receive a high quality educational experience that enables them to stay on track academically.

5.1 - Upon arrival at all juvenile justice placements, a youth's educational needs and levels are assessed, with input from the youth and parents or other authorized education decision-maker.

5.2 - Youth are assessed for special education needs early on, referred for an initial evaluation where necessary, provided with an immediate temporary IEP where necessary, and benefit from the development and implementation of a comprehensive IEP.

5.3 - Youth are offered programs and instructional services that are responsive to their individual needs and free from racial or other bias.

5.4 - Home school records are transferred immediately, both at the beginning of placement and at any point of transfer or exit from juvenile justice placement, and a student's participation in individualized education services are never delayed because school records have not yet been received.

5.5 - Youth in placement schools are provided with high quality academics and the same state-aligned curriculum and instructional time as would be provided in traditional public schools. Short-term detention facilities work in collaboration with local school districts to provide educational modules or other approaches to keep young people on track with their home schools.

5.6 - Youth with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment, including needed special education and related services, transition planning and other supports through meaningful IEPs that are timely updated; developed with parent/family and youth input; and reflect the full range of services, accommodations and modifications necessary for academic progress.

5.7 - Youth who are English Language Learners and/or limited English proficient receive the interventions and support they need while attending school in placement, including ESOL instruction, modifications to curriculum and instruction, and access to translation and interpretation services as required by law.

5.8 - Youth are taught by qualified teachers (including special education teachers when applicable) who are properly certified, trained and permanently assigned to a placement and able to provide consistent instruction. Youth who receive instruction online or through a computer program are also supported by "live" certified and trained teachers.

5.9 - Youth receive all needed educational supports in placement schools, including intensive research-based remedial education and targeted literacy support, credit recovery, access to AP or IB courses and gifted education.

5.10 - Youth receive year-round educational programs when in placement school settings. Youth are not denied meaningful education services due to disciplinary consequences.

5.11 - Youth in juvenile justice placements have access to technology, including the internet, in order to complete educational assignments and academic activities.

GOAL 6: Youth in juvenile justice placements are educated in a supportive, positive school environment where they feel safe and have a voice.

6.1 - Youth attend schools free from discrimination based on race, sex, sexual orientation, gender presentation, national origin, language, disability or other characteristics and are educated in facilities that engage in data analysis and independent review to survey youth and assess programs to identify concerns and bias.

6.2 - Youth are taught by staff who are trained in culturally competent, gender responsive, trauma-informed, strengths based and developmentally appropriate responses to behavior.

6.3 - Youth are informed of the grievance or complaint procedure in any placement and are informed of their education rights. Youth are provided meaningful access to utilize the grievance process, even during a restrictive disciplinary placement like solitary confinement.

6.4 - Youth with disabilities are educated in a welcoming environment and are not segregated or excluded based on their disability or behavior that is a manifestation of their disability. Youth with disabilities receive appropriate interventions to address any behavior that interferes with their access to special education, whether a manifestation of their disability or not.

6.5 - Youth have access to comprehensive, supportive mental health services and school staff are educated and informed about each youth's unique needs and the appropriate educational approaches for those needs.

6.6 - Youth have access to comprehensive sexual health education that is inclusive of LGBTQ sexual health needs.

6.7 - Youth who are learning English are educated in a welcoming environment and receive access to the full range of educational programming offered to native English speakers.

6.8 - Youth are not segregated or discriminated against in a school setting for their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression. Youth identifying as LGBT/gender expansive receive support and interventions by teachers trained to be culturally competent to issues facing LGBT/gender expansive youth.

6.9 - Youth in placement schools receive positive disciplinary responses that do not rely on restraints of any kind or duration, solitary confinement, or other punitive interventions.

6.10 - Youth are not denied education either as a punishment for misconduct outside the school setting, or because of correctional placements such as solitary confinement.

6.11 - Youth are provided meaningful and thorough due process protections before any exclusion from school, including meaningful manifestation reviews for youth with disabilities to ensure that they are not punished for conduct relating to their disability or the school's failure to follow their IEP.

6.12 - Youth in placement schools have regular meaningful

family and community visits. Placement schools engage and involve parents in their child's education.

GOAL 7: Youth have access to high quality career pathway programs, especially in juvenile justice placements.

7.1 - Youth, including those in placement, receive meaningful career exploration, career planning, guidance and job training services as well as comprehensive social emotional and "21st Century" skills to identify, obtain, and sustain employment.

7.2 - Youth, including those in placement, have access to career/technical education programs that offer industry-recognized credentials and certificates.

7.3 - Youth have equal access to career/technical education programs regardless of gender.

7.4 - Youth, including those in placement, have access to literacy and other academic programming that is fully integrated with career/technical education.

7.5 - Youth have access to their own employability documents (including social security card, birth certificate, resume).

7.6 - While in placement, youth are able to participate in internships and jobs in the placement and/or community.

7.7 - Youth with disabilities in juvenile justice placements are fully integrated and allowed full access to career pathways and career/technical education programs, with appropriate accommodations.

7.8 - Youth over age 16 (ideally 14) in juvenile justice placements receive thorough transition planning services that build on their identified strengths and interests, including, when applicable appropriate services and supports as required under the IDEA.

7.9 - Youth who are English Language Learners or limited English proficient receive the interpretation and translation services, ESOL instruction and modifications in career/technical education programs and equal access to employment opportunities to which they are entitled under federal and state law.

GOAL 8: Youth receive supports to prepare for, enter, and complete post-secondary education and training.

8.1 - Youth are exposed early to postsecondary education opportunities, receive academic and other support to achieve their future education goals, and are supported by a culture that reinforces their ability to attend and succeed in higher education or training.

8.2 - Youth working toward a high school diploma have access to dual enrollment programs.

8.3 - Youth with high school diplomas or high school equivalency degrees have access to a variety of post-secondary education or training, including while attending education programs in juvenile justice placements.

8.4 - Youth are educated about their rights and availability of

financial aid, and receive assistance with application for Pell Grants and other funding for higher education.

8.5 - Youth receive clear information and concrete help with obtaining and completing admission and financial aid documents.

8.6 - Youth receive support to expunge juvenile or adult records and advice on how to answer admission and job interview questions, so juvenile or criminal involvement does not foreclose post-secondary education options and access.

8.7 - Youth have access to optional peer groups, tutoring, and other supports for youth with juvenile justice involvement in higher education institutions.

8.8 - Youth who have drug-related convictions receive individualized support for navigating federal financial aid processes, including support in locating, enrolling in, and completing an approved drug rehabilitation program.

GOAL 9: Youth have smooth transitions between home schools and juvenile justice placements and receive effective reentry planning and supports.

9.1 - Youth receive robust education planning upon entering any juvenile justice placement – whether short or long-term – to ensure continuation of their then-current credit-bearing coursework and career/technical training program.

9.2 - Youth receive reentry planning from the moment they enter a juvenile justice placement, including planning relating to academic and career/technical education.

9.3 - Youths' education records are comprehensive and accurate.

9.4 - Records promptly follow youth to any new school or placement, are kept private and are shared only with necessary individuals working with the youth. There are short and definitive time frames set for record transfers and lack of records or a delay in receipt of records do not bar a student from enrolling in school (either in a placement school or a school in the community).

9.5 - Whether in a short- or long-term placement, youth have trained transition coordinators and multi-disciplinary transition teams to help them re-enroll in their next school and obtain needed supports before and upon reentry. The transition coordinator ensures that youth receive appropriate school programming when transitioning between school settings, sit for appropriate exams, obtain a transcript reflecting credits awarded and academic mastery, and register for appropriate coursework.

9.6 - Youth receive full or partial credit for coursework completed in prior school, or credit waivers for electives not required by state law, and youths' credits promptly transfer to a school or juvenile justice placement.

9.7 - Youths' career/technical competencies and credentials are passed along to the subsequent school, which takes into account the youth's career interests and experience in making curricular and school placement decisions.

9.8 - Youth required to change schools because of juvenile justice

involvement are allowed to participate in all academic, career/technical, and extracurricular programs upon reentry even if normal timelines have run or programs are full.

9.9 - Youth are not barred from enrolling in school for a high school diploma even if they obtained their high school equivalency while in placement.

9.10 - Youth are involved in an assessment of whether to return to their original school, and if it is not safe or appropriate for a student to return to their school of origin, placement staff assist with options and procedures to transfer to another school in the community.

9.11 - Youth are immediately enrolled in an appropriate school or job training program after leaving a juvenile justice placement, with a right to return to their school of origin, and are not placed automatically in alternative disciplinary programs nor automatically placed in a cyber education program.

9.12 - Youth with juvenile records are allowed equal access to neighborhood public schools, specific school programs, special admittance (e.g. "magnet"), and charter schools. Facility staff help youth complete school applications for the following year.

9.13 - Youth re-entering the community have access to credit-bearing coursework, career/technical education, job training and other career pathways programs, with needed accommodation and supports.

9.14 - Youth have a right to be enrolled in school and begin classes immediately and promptly receive all services required by IDEA or Section 504 when eligible.

9.15 - Youth have the ability to receive a high school diploma when they satisfy mandatory state requirements even when they have attended multiple schools with varying local graduation requirements.

9.16 - For students with IEPs, students' progress and continued need for intensive academic remediation post-release is documented and the school district provides these services post-release.

9.17 - Youth in detention or whose placement time is intended to be short remain enrolled in their home school.

GOAL 10: All marginalized youth – and particularly youth of color, youth with disabilities, girls, LGBT/gender expansive youth, English Language Learners, youth who are involved with both child welfare and juvenile justice systems, and those with intersectional identities – are educated in their home schools rather than being disproportionately assigned to juvenile justice placements, and receive the services, support and protections they need to address their unique barriers to educational success

2.5 - All youth, including youth with disabilities, youth of color, LGBT and gender expansive youth, and youth who are English Language Learners or limited English proficient, have mentors who are culturally competent to empower and support them and understand their strengths and unique barriers to educational success.

6.1 - Youth attend schools free from discrimination based on race, sex, sexual orientation, gender presentation, national origin, language, disability or other characteristics and are educated in facilities that engage in data analysis and independent review to survey youth and assess programs to identify concerns and bias.

6.2 - Youth are taught by staff who are trained in race positive, culturally competent, gender responsive, trauma-informed, strengths based and developmentally appropriate responses to behavior.

Youth of color

10.1 – Youth of color are offered programs and instruction free from racial or ethnic bias and individuals involved in youth's placement are vigilant about identifying and correcting bias that leads to disproportionate out of home placement of students of color.

Youth with disabilities

5.2 – Youth are assessed for special education needs early on, referred for an initial evaluation where necessary, provided with an immediate temporary IEP where necessary, and benefit from the development and implementation of a comprehensive IEP.

5.6 - Youth with disabilities receive a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment, including needed special education and related services, transition planning and other supports through meaningful IEPs that are timely updated; developed with parent/family and youth input, and reflect

the full range of services, accommodations and modifications necessary for academic progress.

6.4 - Youth with disabilities are educated in a welcoming environment and are not segregated or excluded based on their disability or behavior that is a manifestation of their disability.

Youth with disabilities receive appropriate interventions to address any behavior that interferes with their access to education, whether a manifestation of their disability or not.

7.7 - Youth with disabilities in juvenile justice placements are fully integrated and allowed full access to career pathways and career/technical education programs, with appropriate accommodations.

9.16 - For students with IEPs, students' progress and continued need for intensive academic remediation post-release is documented and the school district provides these services post-release.

English language learners

1.8 - Youth who are English Language Learners and/or limited English proficient are educated in a welcoming environment and receive the supports they need to be effective self-advocates for their educational needs.

4.6 - Youth who are English Language Learners and/or limited English proficient receive effective ESOL instruction and the modifications to curriculum and instruction to which they are legally entitled, and they and their families receive legally mandated interpretation and translation services.

7.9 - Youth who are English Language Learners or limited English proficient receive appropriate interpretation and translation services, ESOL instruction and modifications in career/technical education programs and equal access to employment opportunities to which they are entitled under federal and state law.

LGBT/gender expansive youth

4.4 - Youth are permitted to participate in activities, programs and facilities consistent with their gender identity.

6.8 - Youth are not segregated or discriminated against in a school setting based on their sexual orientation, gender identity or expression.

10.2 - Youth identifying as LGBT/gender expansive, at particular risk for attempting suicide or engaging in self harm, are not punished with segregation or isolation that is harmful to their mental health and excludes them from educational opportunities.

Girls

7.3 - Youth have equal access to career/technical education programs regardless of gender.

Youth also involved in the child welfare system

For goals and benchmarks specific to meeting the needs of children in foster care, please see:

www.fostercareandeducation.org/AreasofFocus/BlueprintforChange.aspx