

# Students First

## Educational Opportunity for Students in Connecticut's Juvenile Justice System


Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee  
November 19, 2015

Center for Children's Advocacy  
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## Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee

PA 14-217 Sec 79  
(f)(5)  
**Identify strengths and barriers that support or impede educational needs of youth in juvenile justice system.**

(g)(4)  
**Examine ways state agencies and local boards of education can collaborate to reduce number of children who enter the juvenile justice system.**  
(school-based efforts and other processes)

Center for Children's Advocacy [kidscounsel.org](http://kidscounsel.org) and [speakupteens.org](http://speakupteens.org) 

## Students First

### Why?

**“Quality education linked to employment is viewed, unequivocally, as the most powerful tool in recidivism reduction.”**

Macomber, Grigorenko et. al., “Education in Juvenile Detention Facilities in the State of Connecticut: A Glance at the System,” *Journal of Correctional Education*, Vol. 61, No. 3 (September 2010) at 224.



## Students First

### Why?

**“What parent defines success as going to school, not doing drugs, and avoiding arrest?”**

**. . . school's job is to help students reach their dreams . . few people's dreams are limited to avoiding recidivism.”**



## Students First

### Who?

Many students in our juvenile justice system:

- Have unidentified special education needs
- Attend low performing schools (73% from Alliance Districts)
- Change schools frequently
- Chronically absent
- Excluded from school for disciplinary reasons
- Sent to alternative education
- Behind grade level
- Score poorly on achievement tests
- English Language Learners



## Students First

### Who?

Many students in our juvenile justice system also:

- Lack involvement in extracurricular activities
- Lack access to quality magnet, charter, vocational schools
- Have parents who did not graduate from high school
- Lack consistent adult to advocate for education needs
- Lack consistent adult to encourage attendance / homework



## Things We Don't Know about Students in our Juvenile Justice System

- What do students think about education received and services needed for future success?
- How many students graduate from high school?
- Are students more or less likely to graduate as result of juvenile justice involvement?
- At what point in juvenile justice system are students most likely to drop out of school?




## Students First

Who?




## Improving Educational Opportunity Top 3 Action Steps


1.  
**Address chronic absenteeism**



Chronic Absenteeism
2.  
**Address unmet special education needs**




Special Education
3.  
**Provide concrete academic supports for success at all stages, especially transition back to community**




Academic Supports


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## How Bad is Chronic Absenteeism?




- Over 56,000 Connecticut students chronically absent each year
- Chronic absenteeism rates especially high (approximately 25%) in districts with high juvenile justice referrals



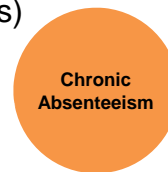
Chronic Absenteeism

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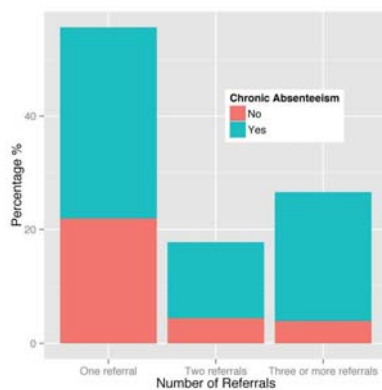
## How Bad is Chronic Absenteeism?

- 69.8% of juvenile justice involved students were chronically absent in at least one grade from pre-K to 12
- Most absenteeism in grades 9 and 10
- 33% of juvenile justice involved students were chronically absent in *more than one* grade. (20% for two grades; 13% for three grades)

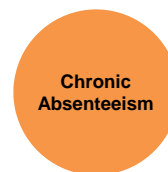


## How Bad is Chronic Absenteeism?

The number of referrals to court by chronic absenteeism



- **Strong association between chronic absenteeism and number of referrals to court**
- Chronically absent students are admitted to detention twice as often as students not chronically absent


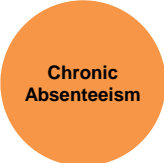


Foundation for Alliance for Education Report, Jun, 2015, from CSSD and SDE data, 2009-2010.

## Action Steps

### Reduce Chronic Absenteeism

- Evaluate CT and national truancy reduction models and implement best
- Eliminate absenteeism in congregate care facilities
- Provide school stability for students in JJ system
- Monitor implementation of Public Act 15-225 (data tracking, students assistance teams, chronic absenteeism plans)


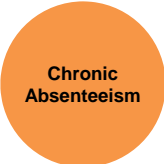


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## Reduce Chronic Absenteeism

### Evaluate CT Truancy Reduction Models

- Truancy Prevention Project – Hartford and Bridgeport
- Attendance and Engagement Clinics – New Haven and Waterbury Probate Courts
- Attendance Works – New Britain
- Truancy Intervention Project – New Britain
- Juvenile Review Boards
- CYFSC (Child, Youth and Family Service Centers)



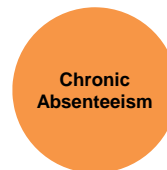
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## Reduce Chronic Absenteeism National Models with Evidentiary Support

- **Youth Advocate Programs**

Academic support services increased school attendance and graduation rates or GED completion, particularly for youth with prior out-of-home placements.

(John Jay College, evaluation July 2014)



## Reduce Chronic Absenteeism National Models with Evidentiary Support

- **Becoming A Man (BAM)**

Dropout and violence prevention program for at-risk male students grades 7-12 who missed more than 40 days of school

In-school programming and after-school sports to develop social-cognitive skills strongly correlated with reductions in violent and anti-social behavior

Randomized controlled trial by U. of Chicago Crime Lab: BAM reduces violent crime arrests (down 44%), weapons crime (down 36%), improves graduation rates.

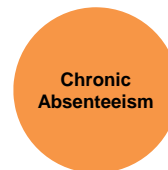




## Reduce Chronic Absenteeism National Models with Evidentiary Support

- **New York City Truancy Reduction Pilot**  
Schools in program significantly reduced chronic absenteeism  
**Mentorship** most important component:  
Increases attendance and likelihood that students stay in school.
- **Baltimore Truancy Court Program**  
Reduced unexcused absences by 71%

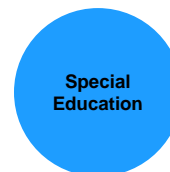
(Center for American Progress, 2015)



## How Bad is the Problem of Unmet Special Education Needs?

### For students in detention

- 70% of teachers report students' special learning needs are under-identified (Macomber, Grigorenko et al. 2010)
- 40-50% have special education needs (Grigorenko, 2013)
- 20.7% self reported history or status of special education (CSSD 2014)



## How Bad is the Problem of Unmet Special Education Needs?

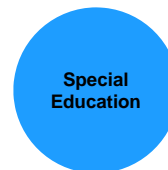
- **One quarter** of students on probation with documented histories of poor academic progress and serious emotional and behavioral problems **not identified** for special education services. (Spencer 2012)
- Students with special education needs show recidivism rates **almost twice as high** as students without special needs. (Grigorenko 2015, based on 2009-2010 data)



## Action Steps

### Address Unmet Special Education Needs

- Evaluate Educational Surrogate and ESS programs and expand if demonstrate positive outcomes
- Establish quality assurance system to implement Raise the Grade provisions, including compliance with Child Find obligations
- Implement best national models with evidentiary support



## Address Unmet Special Education Needs National Models with Evidentiary Support

### AMIKids Day Treatment Programs

Students with juvenile justice history who live at home, attend daily counseling and intervention services, and school in academic setting . .

**. . show significantly lower rates of recidivism, particularly for felonies, than similar youth placed in residential facilities, controlling for group factors and predictors of recidivism.**

(Winokur, Early et.al. 2010)

Special  
Education



## Address Unmet Special Education Needs National Models with Evidentiary Support

### PACE Center for Girls

Research-based non-residential program.  
Focus on future for middle and high-school aged youth.

Gender-responsive culture addresses needs of girls.  
National recognition as one of most effective programs for keeping girls from entering the juvenile justice system.

Special  
Education



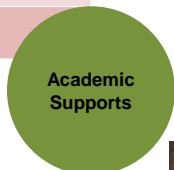
## How Bad is the Academic Achievement?

### Achievement of Students Committed to DCF USD 2

CJTS, Solnit North/South

Percent proficient or better on 2013 CMT/CAPT (Source: DCF)

Subject Area	USD#2	State Average
Math	18%	84%
Reading	21%	81%
Science	16%	80%
Writing	28%	85%

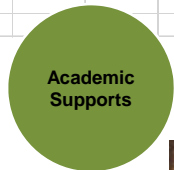


## How Bad is the Academic Achievement?

### Math SBAC Data

Grade	Level 4			Level 3			Level 2			Level 1		
	DCF %	SDE%	GAP	DCF %	SDE%	GAP	DCF %	SDE%	GAP	DCF %	SDE%	GAP
7	0.00%	16.72%	-16.72%	9.52%	22.07%	-12.55%	20.95%	29.75%	-8.80%	69.52%	31.45%	38.07%
8	0.64%	17.96%	-17.32%	5.77%	18.85%	-13.08%	17.95%	26.05%	-8.10%	75.64%	37.14%	38.50%
11	0.72%	11.65%	-10.93%	0.72%	18.91%	-18.19%	10.79%	23.19%	-12.40%	87.77%	46.25%	41.52%

Key	Gap	Level	Definition
Red	> 15%	4	Exceed the Achievement Level
Orange	>10%	3	Meet the Achievement Level
Yellow	>5%	2	Approaching the Achievement Level
Green	0-5%	1	Does Not Meet the Achievement Level



SDE/DCF Data, 2015

## How Bad is the Academic Achievement?

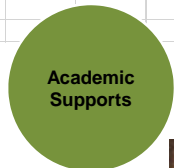
### Reading SBAC Data

Grade	Level 4			Level 3			Level 2			Level 1		
	DCF %	SDE%	GAP	DCF %	SDE%	GAP	DCF %	SDE%	GAP	DCF %	SDE%	GAP
7	1.90%	18.30%	-16.39%	18.10%	38.85%	-20.75%	19.05%	21.80%	-2.75%	60.95%	21.06%	39.90%
8	1.91%	16.96%	-15.05%	15.92%	37.05%	-21.13%	27.39%	26.13%	1.26%	54.78%	19.86%	34.92%
11	5.00%	21.12%	-16.12%	17.86%	32.30%	-14.45%	20.00%	24.52%	-4.52%	57.14%	22.06%	35.09%

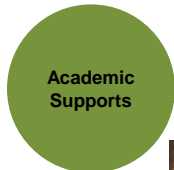
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SDE/DCF Data, 2015



## Action Steps Academic Needs of Students

- 1. Appoint Educational Advocate** (with parental consent) for any student returning to community from juvenile justice facility



## Action Steps

### Academic Needs of Students

#### 2. Educational Advocate determines necessary supports

- Educational histories
- Evaluations and assessments
- **Ask students and parents**



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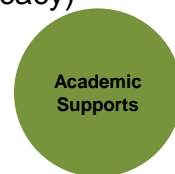
[kidscounsel.org](http://kidscounsel.org) and [speakup teens.org](http://speakup teens.org)

## Action Steps

### Academic Needs of Students

#### 3. Provide menu of concrete academic supports based on national models:

- Tutoring (individual or group)
- After hours programs
- Summer academic and enrichment programs
- Credit recovery
- Extracurricular support (funding and advocacy)
- Attendance services



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[kidscounsel.org](http://kidscounsel.org) and [speakup teens.org](http://speakup teens.org)

## Model of Academic Support Strong Evidentiary Foundation

**PACTT** (Pennsylvania Academic and Career/Technical Transition Alliance)

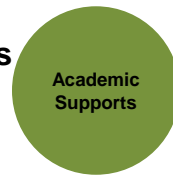
Working with community re-entry programs so released youth continue training

Establishing connections with community colleges and post-secondary training centers to continue technical skills training and certification

Key to success:

**Wrap-around supports to continue progress**

MacArthur Models of Change, 2012, (citing increased graduation rates in some PACTT areas and highlighting educational success as crucial to reducing recidivism)



## Educational Opportunity for Students Interagency Collaboration SDE, DCF, CSSD

1. Address absenteeism
2. Address unmet special education needs
3. Give reentering students the support they need
4. Create robust mechanism to solicit and incorporate student and parent feedback into individual educational program decisions and systemic quality assessment

## Educational Opportunity for Students Interagency Collaboration SDE, DCF, CSSD

### Data gathering, sharing, research

- determine graduation rates
- dashboard of measurable benchmarks

### Electronic information

- educational records
- student passport



## Students First

