

Executive Board Adoption Date: June 13, 2005

EDUCATION IN JUVENILE DETENTION

STATEMENT OF THE ISSUE

Juvenile justice and detention professionals, supported by professional research, statute and case law, agree that quality education is important to the success of at-risk and delinquent youth. A quality education program adds structure to the confinement experience, strengthens self-esteem and confidence, builds useable skills and abilities and moves programs away from an adult-oriented, custodial philosophy and approach. A quality education program increases and improves the interaction between staff and youth while reducing boredom and idleness and is an effective bridge to community reintegration. Quality education programs in juvenile detention are an important program element in the juvenile confinement experience and a critical agent for restoring troubled youth to a law-abiding lifestyle.

NATURE OF THE ISSUES

1. Juvenile detention education is fundamental to the future success of at-risk and delinquent youth.
2. Juvenile detention education should be delivered in accordance with learning theory for at-risk and delinquent youth.
3. Juvenile detention education should be provided by educators who are appropriately certified, licensed, and trained.
4. In compliance with federal legislation (IDEA 2004), juvenile detention education should include a special education component.
5. In compliance with federal legislation (Perkins III), juvenile detention education should include appropriate vocational elements.
6. Juvenile detention education should be designed to maximize learning and remedial opportunities for youth.
7. Juvenile detention education should be designed to provide holistic services for youth through collaboration with other youth-serving and educational programs.
8. Juvenile detention education increases and improves the interaction between staff and youth while reducing boredom and idleness.
9. Juvenile detention education is an effective bridge to community reintegration.
10. Juvenile detention education should, at a minimum, be comparable to an equal education in hours and days as for those who attend public school settings.
11. Juvenile detention education should provide students the opportunity to earn credits towards graduation.
12. Juvenile justice staff employed by juvenile detention facilities play an important role in the education of youth in the facility. Every staff interaction with youth has the potential to be a learning opportunity. Juvenile justice staff can support and assist in the learning process by being actively engaged in the education classrooms.

POSITION STATEMENT

The National Juvenile Detention Association (NJDA) advocates for quality education for youth in juvenile detention facilities. NJDA believes that every confined youth is entitled to quality education services, offered in a dedicated educational space, delivered by trained, state certified or licensed educational staff, working cooperatively with juvenile justice staff. Juvenile detention education should meet the requirements of the school from which the student would graduate. Quality juvenile detention education services should include assessment, remedial and grade-level instruction, special education and curriculum based on the individual needs of students. Educational information should follow the youth in preparation for the achievement of future academic and vocational objectives. Quality juvenile detention education should be delivered utilizing a variety of strategies, in accordance with learning theory regarding at-risk and delinquent youth, including hands-on, experiential learning, social skill development and service learning activities.
