

# CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION GUIDANCE PACKAGE

Providing High-Quality Education Services for America's Confined Youth



## Why Correctional Education Guidance Is Needed

President Obama's My Brother's Keeper initiative, announced this past summer, aims to help all young people succeed in school and reach their potential in life. As part of this goal, the initiative's task force recommended that the juvenile and criminal justice systems be reformed to "enforce the rights of incarcerated youth to a quality education." To have a real chance at a second chance in their lives, youth must continue to have a solid education that unleashes and expands their potential to contribute to their communities, the nation, and the world. The President has set a goal that, by 2020, our nation will have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world and that all Americans complete at least one year or more of college or career training. The Administration believes that even youth in correctional facilities can play their part in helping us achieve that vision.

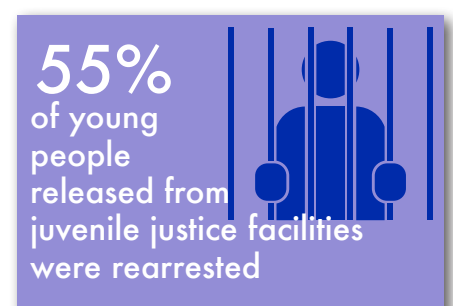
For young people who are incarcerated, access to a high-quality education during their confinement is a vitally important and cost-effective strategy for ensuring they become productive members of their communities. The average cost to confine a juvenile is \$88,000 per year – and a recent study showed that about 55 percent of youth were rearrested within 12 months of release. Inmates of all ages are half as likely to go back to jail if they participate in higher education – even compared to inmates with similar histories. To achieve this goal, the U.S. Departments of Justice and Education propose the five guiding principles listed on the reverse.

## Highlights From the Guidance

To strengthen educational services for youth in juvenile detention facilities, the Departments of Justice and Education are providing states and local agencies a **Correctional Education Guidance Package**. The package describes how

- Youth in juvenile justice facilities may qualify for Pell grants, if they otherwise meet applicable eligibility criteria, so that they may transition out of facilities and onto a path that helps them to pursue the purposeful opportunities afforded by higher education and to enter the workforce;
- Discriminatory education practices are prohibited in all settings for all students, including students with disabilities and English language learners;
- Absent a specific exception, all protections provided under the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*, including the obligation to identify and evaluate students with disabilities, as well as disciplinary and due process procedures, apply to eligible students with disabilities in correctional facilities and their parents; and
- Agencies and facilities serving youth in correctional facilities must provide education services comparable to those available to students in community schools.

## The Picture of Young People in Corrections Today in the U.S.



It is the responsibility of government at every level to work with communities and in collaboration with secure care facilities to ensure that committed youth are provided every opportunity to rehabilitate and re-enter the community prepared to exercise the duties and opportunities of productive citizenship. ... As a nation, we can do no less. —*Guiding Principles for Providing High-Quality Education in Juvenile Justice Secure Care Settings*, U.S. Departments of Education and Justice



Elias, a former student at the Northern Virginia Juvenile Detention Center School, leads Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, Attorney General Eric Holder, and Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director of Cabinet Affairs for My Brother's Keeper Michael Smith on a tour of the facility. They were joined by Principal Jeannette Allen of the Center.

## Five Guiding Principles for Providing High-Quality Education In Juvenile Justice Secure Care Settings

1. A safe, healthy facility-wide climate that prioritizes education, provides the conditions for learning, and encourages the necessary behavioral and social support services that address the individual needs of all youth, including those with disabilities and English learners.
2. Necessary funding to support educational opportunities for all youth within long-term secure care facilities, including those with disabilities and English learners, comparable to opportunities for peers who are not system-involved.
3. Recruitment, employment, and retention of qualified education staff with skills relevant in juvenile justice settings who can positively impact long-term student outcomes through demonstrated abilities to create and sustain effective teaching and learning environments.
4. Rigorous and relevant curricula aligned with state academic and career and technical education standards that utilize instructional methods, tools, materials, and practices that promote college- and career-readiness.
5. Formal processes and procedures – through statutes, memoranda of understanding, and practices – that ensure successful navigation across child-serving systems and smooth reentry into communities.



**Inmates of all ages are half as likely to go back to jail if they participate in higher education, even compared to inmates with similar histories.**

## Other Key Components of the Correctional Education Guidance

In addition to the five guiding principles, the Departments of Education and Justice have prepared “Dear Colleague” letters to clarify the obligations under the pertinent federal civil rights laws, regulations, and guidance for education in all schools, including in juvenile justice and correctional facilities, and for all students, including students with disabilities and English language learners. These are

- Dear Colleague Letter on the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* for Students with Disabilities in Correctional Facilities;
- Dear Colleague Letter on the Civil Rights of Students in Juvenile Justice Residential Facilities; and
- Dear Colleague Letter on Access to Federal Pell Grants for Students in Juvenile Justice Facilities

The four components of the guidance, along with frequently asked questions, provide information on resources to help facilities, and local and state education agencies provide a high-quality education to youth in juvenile justice and correctional facilities so they may answer the call to remove barriers to successful reentry and promote positive outcomes for them. The complete guidance package is available at [www.ed.gov/correctionaled/](http://www.ed.gov/correctionaled/).