



## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

**NOTE: There will be a press call on this announcement with Education Secretary John B. King Jr. and former Education Secretary Arne Duncan on Friday, Dec. 2, from 1-1:30 p.m. ET. Call in: [877-917-6905](tel:877-917-6905); Passcode: EDUCATION**

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# FACT SHEET: Reducing Recidivism for Justice-Involved Youth

The U.S. Department of Education [announced today](#) the release of [new guides and resources](#) to help justice-involved youth transition back to traditional school settings. The resources include a guide written for incarcerated youth; a newly updated transition toolkit and resource guide for practitioners in juvenile justice facilities; a document detailing education programs in juvenile justice facilities from the most recent Civil Rights Data Collection; and a website that provides technical assistance to support youth with disabilities with transitioning out of juvenile justice facilities.

“It is in the interest of every community to help incarcerated youth who are exiting the juvenile justice system build the skills they need to succeed in college and careers and to become productive citizens,” said U.S. Secretary of Education John B. King Jr. “Unfortunately, many barriers can prevent justice-involved youth from making a successful transition back to school. We want to use every tool we have to help eliminate barriers for all students and ensure all young people can reach their full potential.”

These resources are focused on helping justice-involved youth make a successful transition back to traditional school and avoid the dangerous cycle of further delinquency and recidivism. The resources promote successful transitions by emphasizing the importance of early planning and working with family, mentors, facility staff and school employees at every stage of the process.

Across America, more than 50,000 young people under the age of 21 are confined in juvenile justice facilities on any given day. It is in the interests of every community to help incarcerated youth who are exiting the juvenile justice system graduate from high school and build the skills they need to find a job and become productive citizens.

Unfortunately, many barriers prevent justice-involved youth from making a successful transition back to school, reinforcing a dangerous cycle of recidivism. More than a quarter of these youth drop out of school within six months, and only 15 percent of released ninth-graders graduate from high school in four years. Almost half of all youth released from juvenile justice facilities return to confinement within three years.

### “You Got This” Guide for Youth Transitioning from Juvenile Justice Facilities

The “[You Got This: Educational Pathways for Youth Transitioning from Juvenile Justice Facilities](#)” packet for empowering justice-impacted youth with the information, tips and resources they need to plan for their future after leaving a facility. The packet provides checklists, guidance, lists of resources, and templates of commonly required documents to help students prepare for a successful re-entry.

### Transition Toolkit for Practitioners

The Department’s [Office of Safe and Healthy Students](#) is releasing an update to its [Transition Toolkit](#), prepared by [the National Technical Assistance Center for the Education of Neglected or Delinquent Children and Youth](#). The toolkit brings together strategies, existing practices and updated resources to enable administrators and practitioners with proven, high-quality transition services for students moving in, through and out of the juvenile justice system. The Toolkit includes information at various phases through the transition process from entry to release, as well as best practices, legal considerations, and various opportunities for justice-impacted youth after exiting a juvenile justice facility. It also includes guiding principles for effectively supporting justice-impacted youth, specific practices for implementing those guiding principles, and structured guidance for practitioners as they implement these new practices.

**Improving Outcomes for Youth with Disabilities in Juvenile Corrections Website** For practitioners working with justice-impacted youth with disabilities, the [Office of Special Education Programs](#) has created a new, easy-to-use [website](#) that provides technical assistance to ensure that those students are given the supports they need to successfully transition out of a

juvenile justice facility. The website builds on many of the same guiding principles as the Transition Toolkit and offers specific guidance and links to effective resources that can help guide practitioners and families.

### **Document Highlighting Rights and Identifying Challenges Faced by Justice-Involved Youth**

The Department's Office for Civil Rights compiled a [document](#) that demonstrates some of the challenges faced by youth receiving an education in juvenile justice facilities and the way OCR protects their civil rights. Data from the [2013-14 Civil Rights Data Collection](#) indicate that many students in juvenile justice facilities receive fewer hours of instruction, are more likely to have their teacher be absent, and are less likely to have access to math and science courses than students in the traditional school system. These disparities could play a role in dissuading students from continuing their education after exiting a justice facility. The document also reaffirms the protections youth have under federal civil rights laws, and describes a recent investigation and resolution where OCR vindicated those rights.

### **Previous Efforts to Improve Outcomes for Justice-Impacted Youth**

Over the past eight years, the Obama Administration has worked to expand access to education to all students, regardless of background, disability or circumstance. In 2014, the Department [released joint guidance with the U.S. Department of Justice](#) aimed at improving school climate and reducing disproportionate discipline to disrupt the school-to-prison pipeline and a [separate joint guidance to justice](#) facilities to remind them that the Federal civil rights laws, regulations, and guidance that prohibit discrimination against students in traditional public schools also apply to educational services and supports offered or provided to youth in justice facilities. The Department also collaborated with Justice to release [guiding principles](#) for providing high-quality education to incarcerated youth.

Additionally, through our [Second Chance Pell](#) pilot program, the Obama Administration has [helped nearly 12,000 incarcerated students](#) access postsecondary education and training. And we've supported dozens of colleges and universities to think [Beyond the Box](#) and abandon the approach of inquiring about applicants' criminal histories in the admissions process.

As part of its role on the Federal Interagency Reentry Council, the Department also recently created a ["mythbuster" fact sheet](#) on the repayment of student loans for incarcerated individuals, including information on eligibility for income driven repayment plans.

These initiatives also build off of recommendations from the [Federal Interagency Reentry Council](#) and the [President's My Brother's Keeper Task Force](#), which have both emphasized the importance of helping justice-involved youth transition back to traditional school settings.

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