



Oregon Juvenile Department
Directors' Association
609 W 10th Street
Medford, Oregon 97501

*Representing Oregon's
County Juvenile Departments*
www.ojdda.org

- Debra Patterson, President
- Faye Fagel, President Elect
- Joe Ferguson, Treasurer

SB 5519: The OJDDA urges support to appropriately fund Juvenile Detention Education programs.

Within the State School Fund is an important line item which provides funding for the Juvenile Detention Education Programs (JDEP).

- The Department of education is required by federal law to provide five and a half hours of education per day for youth housed in juvenile detention centers. These services are provided through contracts with local school districts and ESD's. These youth are being held for committing delinquent acts and are unable to be safely released into the community.
- Annual funding from the State School Fund grant supports the operation of the JDEP's to ensure some form of education services to one of Oregon's highest risk populations. Because of the varying sizes of JDEP sites providing consistent educational opportunities has been very difficult at current funding levels.
- The JDEP programs operate on a 220 day contract as opposed to the 180 day public school contracts. The additional 40 instructional days is beyond the normal school year contract thereby stretching the JDEP contracts longer than the money supports.
- JDEP programs need to have consistent support for educational services for youth in detention. Each site should have at least one certified teacher to oversee the educational programming of the facility.

REASONS ADEQUATE FUNDING IS NECESSARY:

County Juvenile Detention Facilities detain a wide range of ages for various durations and where populations can increase or decrease on a daily basis, which complicates ensuring a consistent and adequate year round educational program.

Juvenile Detention Education Programs need consistent year round funding to ensure that there is not a great deficit for the approximately 10,000 youth who are detained annually in county detention facilities across the state. For every youth who drops out of school and gets involved in the criminal system it costs the system over \$1 million dollars. As we head into a very difficult budget process we are asked to spend our money where it will be the most effective. Any reduction in services to these at-risk youth will have a negative and costly affect by reducing a protective element in their lives. Engaging youthful offenders in an educational program is vital to their success as a young adult and more importantly their development into a responsible adult

PROBLEMS WITH THE CURRENT SITUATION:

The current method of funding for JDEP programs is based on a formula which includes Average Daily Membership (ADM) multiplied 1.5 times the amount of funding for each student. This method has created instability in the system as ADM is calculated two times during the year. Numbers of youth in detention facilities vary widely but whether the JDEP program has 1 student or 20 students the obligation to provide an education remains the same.

Detained youth have generally had very little success in the school setting and have often been pushed out of the regular school systems because they have difficulties, primarily with behavior. Frequently their parents have not placed much value in education, these youth are poorly supervised, and they receive little to no help with homework. These youth are often inadequately assessed for learning disabilities and often are behind in reading and math. Many of these youth are not currently engaged in any educational programming when they come to the detention setting.

There are many studies which link school failure to juvenile delinquency and studies which show that youth who do not receive an adequate education are much more likely to live a life of crime. For the juvenile justice system we have to look at our highest risk youth and focus our resources on this population because it will have the largest impact on our community.

County Juvenile Detention Education Programs' provide:

- ✓ A recognized assessment of what their educational strengths and/or deficits are.
- ✓ Facilitation of the transfers of school records between their home school or the last school attended, and detention education program.
- ✓ An individual educational plan for them to work on while in the facility.
- ✓ Students receiving-educational credit towards grade completion or graduation for the work they complete in detention and a facilitated plan for student returning to their home school.

Youth are successful in this setting because:

- ✓ It is very structured, individualized and may be one of the first times they actually experience success and achievement in any educational setting.
- ✓ Students get excited about learning and experience success in our detention school setting.
- ✓ This gives us the opportunity to get the youth back into their home school, on the right track and build upon the success they have experienced.

SUMMARY STATEMENT:

The OJDDA strongly urges support of SB 5519 so that the State School Fund can provide an appropriate level of educational services to “at-risk” youth. Making a statement that education is important is different than showing that education is important by directing the appropriate level of resources to support this high risk population of youth. Based upon research, detention is a critical time for this group of youth, and we should be increasing our efforts in education to provide them with enhanced opportunities to become productive citizens and to prevent them from becoming adult criminals.

For Further Information Contact:

Lara Smith 503-804-9750