A Second Chance at School Success

The Los Angeles County Office of Education’s Juvenile Court Schools provide individualized teaching and support to young people who have been removed from their homes and schools due to delinquency or residential placements.

Our goal is to prepare students for a successful transition back into the community — regular high schools, trade schools, job training/placement, community colleges or four-year colleges/universities.

We are a major partner with the county’s Probation and Mental Health Departments, as well as other public agencies and community groups. Our common goal is to help reduce recidivism and give troubled youth the skills and resources they need to make a positive change in their lives.

Our Juvenile Court Schools …

- Are fully accredited by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. Credits and diplomas earned in JCS are accepted at all high schools, colleges and universities.
- Have the primary mission of improving the literacy skills of all students, as these skills are the gateway to learning, employment and full engagement as a citizen. Each school site has developed a variety of reading and math interventions.
- Ensure that students have full access to the state’s standards-based curriculum that will lead to high school graduation. Provide the special support students need to succeed in meeting the curriculum standards.

Our Students

- Most enter the system with serious gaps in their education and poor academic skills. They spend an average of three to six months in JCS.
- About 40 percent enter JCS reading at or below the fourth grade level and are functionally illiterate. Most will become independent readers before they leave JCS.
- At least one-third have learning and other disabilities. More than 2,200 receive special education services annually. Many of these students’ disabilities were previously unidentified or appropriate services had not been provided prior to being placed in JCS.
- At least 30 to 40 percent are English learners. More than 1,700 students annually receive testing and instruction from teachers who are trained and certified to meet their English acquisition needs.

How We Achieve Goals for Students

- Immediate and follow-up assessment of academic and special education needs
- Designing and implementing Individualized Education Plans for students with special needs and Individual Learning Plans for regular education students
- Small classes — maximum 17-to-1 student-to-teacher ratio
- Intensive reading and mathematics instruction supported by after-school tutoring
- Support from a credentialed, skilled team of teachers, instructional aides, counselors, administrators and other staff who are dedicated to a challenging population of students.

- Provide educational services to at least 2,300 students daily at 13 sites that include juvenile halls, probation camps, treatment centers and group homes.
- 300-350 students at high risk of dropping out earn high school diplomas or GED credentials through LACOE’s court school system each year.
Transition counseling to promote a successful return to the community. More than 150 students make this transition each month.

Career/vocational training (where facility/security issues permit), including: computer technology, network administration, culinary arts, fashion design, electrical/construction and virtual automotive design.

Offering testing for the General Educational Development (GED) credential to 500-700 eligible students each year. About 60 percent of these students earn the GED while in JCS.

Enrolling eligible students in college courses, via distance and online learning opportunities. At least 200 JCS students take advantage of these opportunities each year.

Involving parents in school decision-making groups and other organizations, including the state’s first PTA at a juvenile detention facility (Nidorf Juvenile Hall, Sylmar).

Special Programs

Academic Bowl
The annual JCS Academic Bowl is a rigorous scholastic competition that benefits more than 350 young people typically left out of mainstream academic contests. The program promotes self-assurance, academic enrichment and teamwork. The final competition is held before a large audience of students, educators, parents and officials at a community venue, with winning teams honored at an awards ceremony and banquet.

Operation Graduation
Students earning diplomas, GEDs or certificates in LACOE’s court schools and alternative education programs have the opportunity to participate in a commencement ceremony held at the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles. Each year, 300-400 students and their families participate in the Operation Graduation Commencement Ceremony, sponsored by LACOE and the County Probation Department.

For more information
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