

Results in Brief: Promoting Education and Transition Success for Neglected and Delinquent Youth: An Evaluation of the Title I, Part D Program

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The tens of thousands of youth in residential juvenile justice and child welfare facilities on any given day represent a substantial population of vulnerable youth at risk of academic failure, subsequent involvement with the justice and other social service systems, and sustained poverty. The Title I, Part D (Part D) Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk under the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act*, allocate funds to states and school districts to improve educational services for these youth. The Part D programs are designed to provide neglected and delinquent youth with the opportunity to meet challenging state academic standards and to help them successfully transition from residential facilities to further schooling or employment. In 2015–16, nearly 2,700 state and local programs received a total of \$162 million in support of more than 340,000 neglected or delinquent youth.

Part D is composed of two subparts: Subpart 1 for state justice and child welfare agencies responsible for providing free public education to neglected or delinquent youth in state-run facilities, and Subpart 2 for school districts to serve students in locally operated facilities for neglected or delinquent youth and in programs for at-risk youth. Under a provision unique to state programs, institution-wide projects (IWPs) allow state juvenile justice and child welfare facilities to use their Subpart 1 funds in conjunction with other federal and state funds to serve *all* youth and to support the facility's overall education and transition services.

This study was conducted to better understand how state and local agencies and facilities allocated Part D funds and planned for, implemented, and administered educational and related services and strategies funded by and in conjunction with Part D.

Study Questions

1. How do states and local agencies administer Part D programs?
2. What types of services and strategies do Part D funds directly support and are otherwise provided to youth in justice and child welfare facilities?
3. How do justice and child welfare agencies and facilities assist students in transitioning back to schools, including those outside their jurisdictions?
4. How do grantees assess the educational outcomes of students in Part D-funded educational programs?

Study Design

The study included both nationally representative surveys and in-depth case studies. Surveys were completed by Part D program coordinators in all 52 state educational agencies (SEAs) and 68 out of 83 other state agencies (SAs) surveyed, such as juvenile justice and child and family services agencies. At the local level, surveys were completed by 477 school districts and 533 local facility programs (LFPs), with response rates of 75 percent and 64 percent, respectively. Site visits were conducted in five case study states, including 111 interviews with agency and facility administrators, principals, and instructional and support staff in 19 facilities across 10 school districts.

Limitations of this study include an incomplete list of eligible LFP coordinators which may have led to some over- or under-representation for some states in the study sample, as well as a relatively low response rate for LFP coordinators (64 percent).

Highlights

- SEA coordinators most frequently reported focusing on creating and reviewing Part D funding applications, supporting federal data collection, and conducting program compliance monitoring; they less frequently focused on providing training and technical assistance to subgrantees or direct involvement in academic instruction in facilities.
- Few SA coordinators (11 of 37 responding) reported that one or more of their juvenile justice or child welfare facilities implemented an IWP under Subpart 1.
- Both SAs and local facilities used Part D funds primarily for personnel costs, most commonly for core instructional and supplemental teachers and counselors. However, roughly half of coordinators reported that facilities faced shortages of qualified instructional and support staff, and many reported challenges in employing teachers within their credentialed content area.
- In addition to core and supplemental academic programming, nearly all Part D-funded state facilities and roughly half of local facilities offered career and technical education (CTE).
- Less than 25 percent of all students entered a state or local facility with an existing transition plan; more than half had a transition plan developed while in placement.
- More than half of SA and LFP coordinators said their facilities provided some form of services to youth after exiting the facility, such as general education support and counseling. Typically, these services lasted less than two months.
- Roughly half of state and local facilities could not track any students after exit. Those that could track students most often tracked high school equivalency credentials earned and high school graduation rates.

Program Administration

On average, Part D funds represented less than 10 percent of SA education budgets and less than 20 percent of LFP education budgets.

For more than half of school districts (59 percent), declining numbers of youth in local justice and child welfare facilities led to decreased Part D funding within the last three years.

SEA coordinators most frequently reported focusing on creating and reviewing Part D funding applications, supporting federal data collection, and conducting program compliance monitoring. They less frequently focused on providing training and technical assistance to subgrantees or involvement in academic instruction in facilities.

Eleven of 37 responding SA coordinators reported that one or more of their juvenile justice or child welfare facilities used the option to implement an IWP under Subpart 1.

In case study interviews, SA coordinators in two states said they did not operate IWPs because their entire youth populations qualified for Part D-funded services, and supplemental services were made available to all youth; they perceived formal operation of an IWP to be “just more paperwork.”

According to the three SA coordinators with facilities operating IWPs that coordinated funds under the IWP, the Part D funds were most frequently coordinated with funds from the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*, Title II of the *ESEA*, state correctional education programs, and the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* program.

Services and Strategies Funded by Part D and Otherwise Provided in Facilities

Within state and local facilities, funds were predominantly used for personnel costs (83 percent and 74 percent, respectively).

Funds most commonly supported instructional teachers, education support staff, and counselors.

Many facilities faced shortages of qualified instructional and support staff, and roughly one-third of SA and LFP coordinators said their facilities faced challenges employing teachers within their credentialed content area.

Roughly half of SAs and less than 40 percent of LFPs reported offering incentives for hiring or retaining staff in facilities for neglected or delinquent youth.

To improve students’ academic outcomes, state and local facilities used student achievement data to inform instruction, provided individualized instruction, and implemented evidence-based practices in mathematics and in reading and English language arts.

Nearly all SA coordinators (96 percent) and roughly half of LFP coordinators (52 percent) reported that their facilities also offered CTE across a wide range of career pathways.

The most frequently offered CTE programs included construction and architecture, consumer and culinary services, and computer and information sciences.

Most SA and LFP coordinators reported that their facilities evaluated students’ need for special education (93 percent

and 86 percent, respectively) and assessed youths’ English proficiency (85 percent and 73 percent, respectively).

Facilities subsequently used a range of in-class services to support students with disabilities and pull-out ESL services and sheltered instruction for English learners.

Transition Planning and Supports

Less than 25 percent of all students entered state or local facilities with an existing transition plan from a previous placement; more than half had a transition plan developed while in placement.

Many SA and LFP coordinators reported that youth were substantially involved in their transition planning; parents and other family members were less involved.

SA coordinators overseeing juvenile justice and adult correctional facilities were significantly more likely than SA coordinators overseeing child welfare facilities to report substantial youth involvement in informing education plans within transition planning (78 percent and 56 percent, respectively). In contrast, family members were more likely to be involved in transition planning in state child welfare facilities than in justice facilities.

More than half of SA and LFP coordinators (59 percent and 51 percent, respectively) said their funded facilities provided some form of services to youth after exiting the facility, such as supports for continued secondary and postsecondary education and mental and behavioral health counseling. Typically, these services were provided for less than two months.

Where services were offered, general education support, mental health counseling, and substance abuse counseling were the most common.

Student Outcome Tracking and Assessment

Nearly all SA and LFP coordinators said their facilities measured students’ education outcomes (94 percent and 88 percent, respectively) using formal and informal assessments and through course grades and credits while youth were in placement.

Conversely, the majority of SA coordinators (66 percent) and half of LFP coordinators (51 percent) reported that it was “very difficult” for facilities to track long-term outcomes for youth who exited placement.

Significantly fewer child welfare coordinators than justice coordinators at both the state and local levels said facilities could track outcomes for some or all youth after exit.

The most common challenges to tracking long-term outcomes for youth after exit were a lack of cooperation from youths’ post-exit placements; a shortage of staff, funding, or other resources; and a lack of or disconnected student information systems.

For facilities that could track outcomes, most focused on high school graduation and dropout rates, high school equivalency credentials earned, postsecondary education acceptance and enrollment, employment and other labor market outcomes.

Additional Information

The complete report is available at www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/opepd/ppss/reports.html.