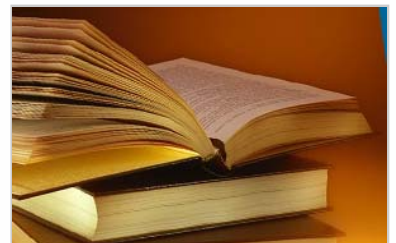# Evaluation of the Department of Youth Services Education Initiative

Final Report

Implementation, impacts, and strategic considerations for
the Department of Youth Services Education Initiative

February 2008

Acknowledgements

Evaluation of the Department of Youth Services Education Initiative

Final Report

Implementation, impacts, and strategic considerations for the Department of Youth Services Education Initiative

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Report Information

This study was conducted under contract with the Commonwealth Corporation on behalf of the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services.

About the Donahue Institute

The University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute is the public service, outreach, and economic development unit of the University of Massachusetts President's Office. Established in 1971, the Institute strives to connect the Commonwealth with the resources of the University through services that combine theory and innovation with public and private sector applications. The Institute's Research and Evaluation group specializes in applied social science research, including program evaluation, survey research, policy research, and needs assessment. The Research and Evaluation group has designed and implemented numerous innovative research and evaluation projects for a variety of programs and clients in the areas of education, human services, economic development, and organizational development.

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Executive Summary

Beginning in 2003, the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services (DYS) undertook an unprecedented reform of DYS Education programs. This reform process, commonly referred to as the Education Initiative, was a direct response to deficiencies identified in a study report submitted by DYS to the Massachusetts State Legislature in February 2001.[1] That study was undertaken due to concerns that high teacher turnover rates were substantially eroding the quality of educational services provided to youth in DYS care. Beyond this specific concern, the report identified "a resource and systems crisis" with regard to educational services, and articulated widespread inconsistencies and deficiencies in several major areas. The report concluded that these deficiencies combined "to make DYS's educational efforts ineffective and inefficient, thereby impacting the rehabilitative objective set forth in its own mission."

The Department quickly moved to address deficiencies identified in that report by setting the Education Initiative in motion, with the Commonwealth Corporation (CommCorp) and the Hampshire Educational Collaborative (HEC), under sub-contract to CommCorp, as key reform partners.

Evaluation of the DYS Education Initiative

In spring 2006, DYS engaged the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute to conduct an extensive third-party evaluation of the Education Initiative. This evaluation reflects DYS's interest in formative feedback to guide planning and decision-making related to the Education Initiative, and to identify possible steps toward the next phase of the reform process.

Overall, the findings show remarkable progress in the development and implementation of key interventions and positive initial impacts. Following three years of active reform within DYS Education, tangible evidence indicates important systemic changes to educational service delivery, support of student transitions, and overall system management. Important new programs, policies, and infrastructure are now in place, which have facilitated improvements in the stability and quality of the DYS teacher workforce, in the instructional resources and methods used in DYS classrooms, and in the operative culture in which teachers and students function each day. Positive impacts are evident, and continued progress is likely, assuming DYS can sustain its vigorous investment of time, resources, and attention. At the same time, the findings underscore not only the need to continue and expand improvement efforts in the coming years, but also the challenges associated with delivering educational services to adjudicated youth.

Implementation of Reforms: Accomplishments and Opportunities

The evaluation first focused on assessing the extent to which DYS has successfully implemented education reform strategies and the factors that have influenced these improvements. These include changes in DYS's educational services, transition services, and system management capacities.

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[1] Future Management Systems, Inc., *Establishing Partnerships for Educational Success: A Report on Education Services in the Department of Youth Services*. February 2001.

A. Educational Service Delivery

Key Finding

DYS has dramatically improved the competitiveness of education staff salaries in order to attract and retain well-qualified teachers.

Prior to the Education Initiative:

- A 2001 DYS Legislative Report identified "concern about the extraordinarily high turnover rate amongst DYS teachers and its effect on the quality of educational services."[2] It concluded that high turnover and problems with recruiting qualified staff were primarily attributable to salary inequities between DYS and public school districts.

In response:

- DYS implemented a more competitive salary scale that increased the minimum salary for bachelor's-level teachers, bringing starting salaries in line with state averages. The new salary structure also offers compelling incentives for teachers to pursue full professional licensure.

Looking ahead:

- As DYS continues to consider important reforms to its salary structure, it may need to offer higher salaries in key sub-regions where public school salaries are highest. Further, DYS may need to equalize teacher benefits and working conditions across program vendors.

Key Finding

DYS has made substantial progress in the development and implementation of a system-wide curriculum approach supported with instructional guides, templates, and material resources.

Prior to the Education Initiative:

- There was "little evidence of consistency across programs for curriculum content, teaching methodology, or student learning expectations."

In response:

- DYS and its partners have been building a curriculum approach tied to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, and inclusive of content goals, instructional methods, templates to aid in lesson planning and unit design, and self-evaluation and reflection. This approach is responsive to the unique challenges that a juvenile justice setting presents to students and teachers.

- DYS has made substantial investments in new curriculum materials and technology to support student learning, dramatically increasing the availability of teaching resources, Internet access, and student computers.

Looking ahead:

- DYS should consider replacing the existing lesson planning template with a more streamlined one, which may be easier to implement and thus encourage more consistent compliance.

- Systems to support the purchase of and feedback to new curriculum materials are ready to move to the next level. A materials inventory and accounting system should be created, and systematic feedback should be collected regarding the suitability of materials for DYS students in varying contexts.

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[2] All citations in the "Prior to the Educational Initiative" sections of the Executive Summary come from Future Management Systems, Inc., *Establishing Partnerships for Educational Success: A Report on Education Services in the Department of Youth Services.* February 2001.

<u>**Key Finding**</u>

DYS and its partners have implemented an extensive professional development system and instructional coaching model.

Prior to the Education Initiative:

- There was "no comprehensive Department-wide professional development (PD) plan for educators." Further, "professional development needs of teachers [were] identified and met sporadically."

In response:

- DYS and its partners have established a robust series of PD offerings consisting of several components, including statewide events, regional trainings, summer academies, and teaching coordinator trainings.

- Full-day statewide PD, focused on both curriculum content and pedagogy, has been provided five times per year since 2004-05. DYS has successfully eliminated key barriers to participation in statewide PD events, resulting in improved attendance. Teacher ratings of the relevance and value of statewide PD have gradually increased over time.

- DYS has established on-site instructional coaching in support of classroom teachers' implementation of the DYS curriculum approach and the use of instructional techniques presented in PD.

Looking ahead:

- Feedback from DYS teachers indicates a strong interest in the use of more trainers with experience in the DYS classroom or a similar environment, more strategies for working with high-mobility students, and more training in "extreme" differentiation of instruction, which continues to challenge many educators.

- It may be important to offer two PD tracks, one targeted to veteran staff who have effectively integrated past PD into practice, and another for new teachers or those struggling to apply concepts in the classroom.

- The non-supervisory nature of the instructional coaches' role and the confidentiality of coach-to-teacher contact are critical components of their work and should be protected. Further, as the role of the DYS instructional coach continues to evolve, the existing job description may need updating.

B. Transition Services

<u>**Key Finding**</u>

DYS has identified a need for more robust employment pathways for appropriate DYS youth and is actively piloting and assessing new programs, and taking other steps, to support this need.

Prior to the Education Initiative:

- A 2001 study observed that "a growing number of youth in DYS… would benefit from participation in vocational training, work skill development, and job preparation training," and described vocational and job training opportunities within DYS as "sporadic."

In response:

- DYS has actively supported new partnership-based models to enhance the career-readiness and employability of DYS youth, highlighted by the Bridging the Opportunity Gap Initiative, which funded 14 pilot programs in FY 2007.

- The Department is taking proactive steps to support GED and employability programming directly within its educational programs. Such steps include revising policies vis-à-vis GED services (currently under review), integrating career decision-making tools into the student assessment regimen, and plans for developing an instructional guide for career readiness and employability (due in June 2008).

Looking ahead:

- Partnership-based program models are highly practical and offer economies of cost and expertise. They are also complex to develop and manage, and the long-term sustainability of programs that rely on grant funding remains uncertain.

- A focus on GED attainment and employability skills for appropriate youth in DYS residential programs may offer great benefits to students who would be receiving services in a closely-monitored and accountable environment.

Key Finding

DYS has improved the infrastructure to support student transitions within DYS and into academic settings in the community. New models to facilitate transition are being pursued.

Prior to the Education Initiative:

- Support for student transitions within DYS and to community-based academic settings was often inadequate. It was observed that "DYS does not have standard protocols in place nor the resources to execute them..." Further, Education Liaison positions showed high vacancy rates.

In response:

- DYS has engaged in several partnerships with urban school districts and communities to facilitate student transitions into academic settings.

- The Universal Student Transcript is among the most tangible evidence of the development and implementation of more effective transition protocols. Public school officials indicate an improved ability to assess DYS students' academic experience, resulting in improved credit recovery and timelier student placement.

- The stability of DYS's Education Liaison positions was benefited by the introduction of the same wage scale that applies to DYS teachers. All ten positions were filled at the time of this study.

Looking ahead:

- DYS managers and staff agree that student transition remains an area in need of continued reform and investment by DYS. Ultimately, attention to this component of the continuum of care will be essential to realizing and measuring the long-term outcomes of the Education Initiative.

- Further study is required to understand the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of partnerships with urban school districts and community organizations; little information is currently available or reported to DYS.

- Anecdotal reports of non-compliance with Universal Student Transcript protocols at some programs, related to turnaround time in particular, suggest that ongoing training, as well as enforcement of compliance, may be advisable.

C. Education System Management

Key Finding

DYS has expanded its management capacity and educational expertise through use of external vendors – most notably CommCorp and HEC.

Prior to the Education Initiative:

- DYS did "not have a management infrastructure capable of supporting its education, job training, and employment programs. Prior to the budget cuts of 1990, the Department had an education and job training

staff of ten. Through attrition and early retirement, this number was reduced to two central office education staff, and no central office job training staff" as of 2001.

In response:

- DYS has taken steps to address deficits in its management capacity and educational expertise utilizing a partnership approach with external vendors.

- DYS has approved funding for new management positions which constitute a promising step forward in support of a more unified approach to critical program areas including transition services, career readiness programs, and education data management.

Looking ahead:

- The use of contractual arrangements with external vendors has enabled much of the Education Initiative's progress to this point, but may not meet DYS's interest in developing internal management capacity.

- Increasing DYS management capacity through additional state positions would enhance the Department's ability to effectively manage its education system and public investment in its improvement.

Key Finding

DYS has improved its education system coordination and has taken important steps toward establishing more effective system-level accountability.

Prior to the Education Initiative:

- Studies concluded that DYS lacked the internal administrative capacity to coordinate and sustain an education system of this magnitude. Further, these studies reflected the absence of clear expectations relative to the standards for education within DYS.

In response:

- DYS increased program-level accountability through the development and implementation of Minimum Education Standards that set clear expectations and are applicable to all programs.

- DYS implemented a Field Assessment process to collect information on programs' compliance with the Minimum Education Standards. This process established a foundation upon which more rigorous progress-monitoring and continuous improvement systems may be built.

- DYS has made substantial progress with MCAS coordination and administration, and the attendant training and information provided to support MCAS activities are well regarded in the system.

- DYS Education has improved system coordination in many regards. For example, DYS now routinely convenes functional workgroups and system-wide meetings of key staff to support communication and decision making related to education services.

Looking ahead:

- As an increasing number of programs are meeting the Minimum Education Standards, DYS is now in a position to "raise the bar" for performance.

- As DYS will not conduct the Field Assessment process in FY 2008, ideally this will provide a pause to consider options for a more robust, program-level data-collection and feedback system to serve the future needs of DYS Education.

- DYS data-collection protocols and information-sharing mechanisms may be among the areas most in need of further intervention at this time. In the aggregate, protocols and systems to support the collection and movement of data within the organization are under-developed and often inefficient. This is unlikely to be resolved in the absence of a comprehensive information management system.

Short- and Mid-Term Impacts of the Education Initiative

A. Short-Term Impacts of the Education Initiative

At this point in the reform process the outcomes of the Education Initiative remain preliminary; however, it appears to have resulted in several positive short-term impacts within DYS Education. These manifest as changes in capacity and practice, which may be expected to support increased student learning and other outcomes upon which the success of the Initiative will ultimately be judged.

Perceptions of Education Quality

- Following three years of active reform, DYS teachers' perceptions of the quality of education provided to DYS youth have markedly improved, and future expectations are for continued improvements in quality.

Workforce Stability and Qualifications

- Data show positive impacts on the stability and qualifications of the DYS teacher workforce over the past three years, including a decrease in teacher turnover and in August vacancy rates. In addition, a far greater percentage of DYS teachers held a teaching license in FY 2007 compared to the previous year.

Changes in Instructional Practices

- According to teachers, new curriculum tools and templates have made a positive impact on instructional practice, and instructional coaches' reports indicate that teachers are now implementing recommended practices with increasing frequency and quality.

- Teachers report that statewide PD has had a moderate to high impact on their instructional practice and student learning in the past three years. Data also suggest that instructional coaching helps many teachers reflect on their teaching style and encourages them to adopt new teaching strategies.

Impact on Educational Culture

- Data suggest that a positive cultural shift has resulted from the adoption of education reform within DYS, and that a stronger professional culture has emerged within DYS Education. These trends are strongest among treatment programs, but are evident system-wide.

B. Mid-Term Impacts of the Education Initiative

The mid-term impacts of the DYS Education Initiative, conceptualized to include improvements in student literacy and numeracy, standardized test scores, and transition outcomes, cannot yet be assessed with great confidence, but data are encouraging.

High School Diplomas Earned

- Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) Benchmarks data, collected and reported by DYS, show that the number of committed youth receiving diplomas has generally increased over the past four years. While this is a positive trend, the finding is limited by the fact that it does not present the data as a percentage of all DYS students who were eligible to earn a diploma, though DYS intends to do so in the coming year.

GED Attainment

- Benchmarks data show that the number of DYS-committed youth earning GEDs is rising steadily. These data undercount GED attainment by excluding youth who have been discharged to the community. DYS intends to make data more robust by expanding community-level data collection and by calculating pass rates for committed youth.

MCAS Achievement

- MCAS pass rates among DYS youth reveal positive trends. Grade 10 English language arts (ELA) pass rates surged from 51% in 2005 to a historical high of 71% in 2006. MCAS math pass rates also improved steadily, from 17% in 2002 to 42% in 2006. In the future, DYS can strengthen attribution of these results to the Education Initiative by connecting them to data related to student characteristics and services received. Pre/post testing of student literacy and fluency gains while in DYS Education programs may further clarify the role of these programs in student MCAS achievement.

Strategic Considerations Moving Forward

DYS can be proud of its many achievements, while at the same time much work remains. At its core, the system has created a stronger and more stable foundation for success. Having established this foundation, a set of strategic considerations related to DYS's educational services, transition services, and system management capacities are provided in the full report. These strategic considerations are intended to provoke discussion and inform debate among DYS and its partners as they move into the next phase of education reform.

The full report also contains a separate section which features six case studies that focus on new programs, tools, and processes developed through the Education Initiative. Each case study introduces the featured practice's purpose and importance to DYS, describes its implementation, articulates its benefits to the DYS system and to DYS youth, and outlines opportunities for enhancement of the practice. Additional evaluation reports available include two literature review reports, and results from the DYS teacher survey administered in January 2007.

I. Introduction

Beginning in 2003, the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services (DYS, or the Department), in close collaboration with the Commonwealth Corporation (CommCorp) and the Hampshire Educational Collaborative (HEC), undertook an unprecedented reform of DYS Education programs. The DYS Lead Entity Education Initiative (referred to herein as the Education Initiative, or the Initiative) reflects the Department's commitment to meeting state and federal standards for educational programming through the development of a more coordinated and appropriately resourced educational system.

The Education Initiative was a direct response to deficiencies identified in a study report submitted by DYS to the Massachusetts State Legislature in February 2001.[3] That study, referred to herein as the 2001 DYS Legislative Report, was undertaken in response to concerns that high DYS teacher turnover rates were substantially eroding the quality of educational services provided to youth in DYS care. Moving beyond this specific concern, the report identified "a resource and systems crisis" with regard to educational services, and articulated widespread inconsistencies and deficiencies in the following areas:

- Teacher recruitment and retention

- Education administration and support infrastructure

- Curriculum, instructional resources, and the learning environment

- Vocational education programs

- Special education services

- Student transition

The report concluded that these deficiencies combined "to make DYS's educational efforts ineffective and inefficient, thereby impacting the rehabilitative objective set forth in its own mission." The Department quickly moved to address deficiencies identified in that report, selecting CommCorp and HEC (under sub-contract to CommCorp) as key reform partners through a competitive RFP process. The Education Initiative comprised a broad range of interventions in response to a defined set of goals:

1. Improve DYS's educational services – programs, curriculum materials, pedagogy, and assessment – and thereby improve educational outcomes for youth

2. Design, test, refine, implement, and institutionalize new programs and services that enable DYS youth to increase academic skill and prepare for postsecondary education and workforce entry

3. Improve educational and transition opportunities for DYS youth

4. Improve conditions, salaries, and resources for DYS teachers

5. Expand the resources available to the DYS Education system

6. Advocate for the DYS Education system and youth through evaluation, reporting, dissemination, and other publicity

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[3] Future Management Systems, Inc., *Establishing Partnerships for Educational Success: A Report on Education Services in the Department of Youth Services*. February 2001.

To accomplish these goals, a targeted set of strategies was developed that would logically result in short- and mid-term impacts that would in turn support improvements in the long-term outcomes of DYS youth.

Evaluation of the DYS Education Initiative

In spring 2006, at the request of DYS, CommCorp solicited a third-party evaluation of the Education Initiative. The broad purpose of the evaluation was to provide critical formative feedback on the Initiative's implementation and outcomes, and to identify critical next steps in the reform process. The evaluation contract was awarded to the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute (the Institute) through a competitive bid process. The contract called for a two-phased approach to program evaluation.

Evaluation Phase One

Phase One of the evaluation ran from May through September 2006 and included an extensive review of literature;[4] interviews with Education Initiative leaders from DYS, CommCorp, and HEC; site visit interviews at eight programs within five geographically and programmatically diverse DYS settings; participation in various gatherings, including a national "Juvenile Justice and NCLB" conference in Florida and a DYS field assessment retreat in Georgetown, Massachusetts; and a series of meetings with members of the Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC), comprised of key leaders from DYS, CommCorp, and HEC.

These activities informed the development of three Phase One deliverables: a review of literature related to effective educational practice in juvenile justice settings; a formal presentation of preliminary findings attended by top executives and program managers of DYS, CommCorp, and HEC; and a comprehensive evaluation plan for the DYS Education Initiative. The evaluation plan was reviewed and approved by the DYS Evaluation Advisory Committee in fall 2006.

Evaluation Phase Two

The DYS Education Initiative evaluation was guided by three core research questions, which formed the basis for development and implementation of the Institute's Phase Two research methodology and are as follows:

1. To what extent has DYS successfully implemented strategies designed to improve the educational and life outcomes for youth they serve? What factors have influenced the extent and success of implementation?

2. Have the Education Initiative's core strategies led to, or are they leading to, anticipated short- or mid-term impacts? What other impacts or outcomes have resulted from the Initiative?

3. Based on key findings of the evaluation, what should DYS focus on over the coming years in order to realize the long-term goals/outcomes of the Education Initiative?

The evaluation relied on multiple sources of evidence and encompassed a range of both quantitative and qualitative data (see appendix A for a list of data sources). Several major data collection and analysis milestones were achieved through Phase Two of the evaluation, including:

- A DYS teacher survey that gathered the perspectives of over 90% of classroom teachers, Teaching Coordinators, and Title 1 teachers serving DYS youth in Massachusetts

- In-depth interviews of approximately 50 educators (including Teaching Coordinators, classroom teachers, and Program Directors) working at 12 DYS Education programs around the state

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[4] Featured in a report titled *Educational Practice in Juvenile Justice Settings, Review of Current Literature*. UMass Donahue Institute, September 2006.

- A targeted review of literature related to student transition and employability programs for students in juvenile justice settings, youth placed at-risk and culturally responsive education practices, and literacy interventions for a juvenile justice population

- Collection and analysis of all available institutional data obtained from DYS, CommCorp, and HEC

- Extensive observation of professional development classes at a statewide professional development event

- Selection and documentation of promising practices emerging across the DYS Education system

- Case study research on six "featured practices" developed for system-wide application through the Education Initiative

- On-site observations of selected programs and events

- A presentation of evaluation findings to key leaders from DYS, CommCorp, and HEC

About this Report

The findings of this evaluation are presented in a manner consistent with the study's three core research questions.

Context

The context section summarizes the unique characteristics of DYS and other juvenile justice education systems, which differ substantially from traditional education environments. Differentiating characteristics include both the requisite service delivery structure and the student population these systems serve.

Implementation of the Education Initiative

The implementation section focuses on the first core research question in light of DYS's efforts to improve educational service delivery, student transition services, and educational management systems. This section addresses the extent to which implementation has been achieved and offers a subject-by-subject review of implementation highlights, as well as points to consider as implementation continues.

Short- and Mid-Term Impacts

The short- and mid-term impacts section focuses on the second core research question and includes findings related to the stability and qualifications of the teacher workforce, the quality and consistency of instructional practice, and changes in the educational culture of DYS.

Strategic Considerations

The conclusions and strategic considerations section focuses on the third core research question and presents a range of strategic considerations for DYS. The purpose of this section is to identify possible priorities for education system improvement and to illuminate key supports and hindrances to the pursuit of system goals. These strategic considerations are intended to promote an informed debate regarding the next steps in DYS Education's reform process.

Featured Practices

The featured practices section presents six case studies that focus on new programs, tools, and processes developed through the Education Initiative. Each case study introduces the featured practice's purpose and importance to DYS, describes its implementation, articulates its benefits to the DYS system and to DYS youth, and outlines opportunities for enhancement. These cases are supported by available system data and by site visits and interviews of DYS educators and partners with direct knowledge of each initiative.

II. Context

DYS Education is a unique enterprise in Massachusetts, set apart from other education environments both by the population it serves (adjudicated youth) and by the service delivery structure required to maintain an effective continuum of services (youth detention, assessment, short- and long-term treatment, and revocation programs) across five Massachusetts regions.

The following is a review of some specific factors that present challenges to DYS teachers and program managers working to implement education reforms and improve student outcomes.

Characteristics of Youth in Juvenile Justice Settings

In the aggregate, DYS students present more challenges than students in traditional public schools for a number of reasons. The following characteristics of DYS students were reported in a document titled *DYS Public Information Packet*, updated in 2006. Overall, DYS students:

- Display wide ranges of academic knowledge and ability as they enter DYS programs, with a large proportion working substantially below grade level

- Have chronic academic and behavioral difficulties including truancy, grade retention, and suspension

- Are disproportionately placed in an out-of-home residence by another agency prior to commitment to DYS (nearly 50%)

- Are disproportionately identified as having special learning needs (45%)

- Are diverse in age, increasingly older (average age is 17), and possessing limited educational options

- Bear educational risk factors associated with their household or community status. For example:

  – Nearly 55% of DYS-committed youth received services from the Department of Social Services prior to commitment

  – Less than half of students' biological parents have completed the 12th grade

  – 61% of DYS-committed youth report using alcohol prior to commitment, with 25% of the population reporting weekly consumption

  – 82% of DYS-committed youth report using marijuana prior to commitment, with nearly half of the population reporting at least weekly use

Factors Affecting Delivery of Educational Services

The context of education delivery is another challenge. Several factors complicate the delivery and management of educational services within DYS. (These factors may also offer offsetting benefits, which are not described here.)

- DYS's purchased services model relies on multiple vendors to provide educational services throughout the state. Educational, clinical and residential services, which must be closely coordinated, are sometimes provided by different vendors at the same program site. Further, special education services are provided system-wide by a separate vendor under contract to the Massachusetts Department of Education (MA DOE). The multitude of organizations complicates coordination and management.

- The continuum of DYS service consists of a range of program types – detention, assessment, revocation/time-out, short- and long-term treatment, boys/girls, etc. – with differing mandates and conditions of operation. This can result in competing priorities within programs, which complicates implementation of system-level reforms.

- The continuum also consists of a variety of program environments – staff-secure and hardware-secure, small and large, isolated and urban – each of which presents unique requirements and restrictions,.

- Students are highly mobile, often moving in and out of programs with great frequency. Students arrive and depart from programs at irregular intervals, in some instances with minimal notice, complicating the development of definitive start and end points for units of instruction.

- Security concerns limit certain academic activities (e.g., labs, Internet).

- Programs are by design small and geographically dispersed. This often means teachers must instruct across multiple subject areas, requiring a broader range of content expertise.

- Teachers must commonly accommodate students of widely different ages and ability levels in the same classroom at the same time.

- Information management systems within DYS are limited in their ability to support education-related data collection and reporting.

- Nationwide, there is a scarcity of literature specific to effective or "best practice" juvenile justice education, or, for that matter, systemic reform of similar systems.

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III. Implementation of the Education Initiative

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This section focuses on the first of three core questions that guided this evaluation of the DYS Education Initiative:

> **To what extent has DYS implemented strategies designed to improve the educational and life outcomes for youth they serve? What factors have influenced the extent or success of implementation?**

This question is considered in light of DYS's efforts to improve or develop systems in three areas: educational service delivery, educational management systems, and student transition services. Each of these areas is discussed in turn, with a review of the manner and extent to which the Initiative had addressed it as of July 2007. This section also highlights key challenges and considerations for the future, which are intended to inform ongoing management of the education system.

This evaluation provides a snapshot of an Initiative that remains very much in motion. The comprehensive reform being undertaken by DYS, with the support and expertise of CommCorp and HEC, amounts to a substantial reengineering of education and related transition services to DYS youth. Following three years of active reform, implementation progress reflects strategic choices and priorities within a resource-constrained environment. Accordingly, in some areas, changes are at an advanced stage, while some other changes are just beginning.

A. Educational Service Delivery

DYS has focused substantial attention on developing more effective educational programming. Following is a review of progress, challenges, and opportunities with regard to the implementation of three multi-faceted improvement efforts, including:

- Improving the stability and qualifications of education staff through a competitive salary structure
- Enhancing the education curriculum and related materials, tools, and resources
- Enhancing instructional support through professional development and instructional coaching

1. Improving Staff Stability and Qualifications through a Competitive Salary Structure

What was the state of the DYS Education salary structure prior to the Initiative? What effect did it have on the stability and qualifications of DYS teachers?

DYS's 2001 Legislative Report described "a concern about the extraordinarily high turnover rate amongst DYS teachers and its effect on the quality of educational services provided to detained and committed youth in the Commonwealth." In addition, it noted ongoing staff vacancy rates of roughly 20%. The study concluded that high teacher turnover rates were primarily, but not exclusively, attributable to salary inequities between DYS and other Massachusetts public school districts.

A follow-on report prepared by DYS for the Massachusetts House and Senate Committees on Ways and Means in March 2002[5] (the 2002 DYS Legislative Report) showed that the mean salary for a bachelor's-level public school

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[5] *Delivering Effective Education to Youth: A Report on Education Services in the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services.* Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Department of Youth Services. March 19, 2002.

teacher in Massachusetts ranged from $29,427 (average lowest step) to $46,983 (average highest step) in FY 2001 compared to a salary range of $20,740 to $33,865 for DYS teachers (regardless of credential). Differences between the wage scale for DYS teachers and Boston Public School (BPS) teachers were even more dramatic, escalating to $22,115 at the highest step, as shown in the table below. BPS teacher salaries are used as a basis of comparison since BPS is the largest employer of teachers in the state, is located near many DYS education programs, and is included in the 2002 DYS Legislative Report.

Table 1

DYS vs. State of MA		DYS	MA Public Schools	Difference	
		Single Scale	Bachelor's Level	Percent	Dollars
FY 2001	lowest step	$20,740	$29,427	42%	-8,687
	highest step	$33,865	$46,983	39%	-13,118

DYS vs. Boston		DYS	Boston Public Schools	Difference	
		Single Scale	Bachelor's Level	Percent	Dollars
FY 2001	lowest step	$20,740	$35,996	74%	-15,256
	highest step	$33,865	$55,980	65%	-22,115

Salary disparities, the study showed, were exacerbated by differences in working conditions. Specifically, most DYS teachers were required to work a 210-day school year, compared to the standard 180-day teaching contract prevalent in other public schools. Further, most DYS teachers did not have access to the Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement System. In contrast, DYS special education teachers employed through DOE's Educational Services in Institutional Settings (ESIS) program received pay and benefits commensurate with that of public school teachers statewide. The fact that ESIS teaching staff displayed ongoing vacancy rates of approximately 1% (2001 Report p. 10) supported the conclusion that teacher salary and benefits were a critical aspect of the teacher turnover problem.

The 2002 DYS Legislative Report emphasized the impact of uncompetitive teacher salaries on teacher quality. It observed, "With salary differentials of this magnitude, it is no wonder that DYS staff and providers report difficulty in filling teaching vacancies with qualified, certified staff" (p. 29). The report went on to note that "Programs routinely operate classrooms without certified teachers for several months at a time" (p. 30). These findings were validated by an Educational Field Assessment Report of vendor-operated sites prepared by CommCorp for DYS in August 2004 that found that "licensure continues to be an issue. Almost all programs had at least one teacher who was not licensed. Many of those who were licensed were not teaching in the areas in which they were certified." Similar findings were reported in a separate report focused on HEC-run educational programs.

How did DYS address problems in teacher retention and qualifications?

The DYS Education Initiative recognized the need for comprehensive reform to improve teacher quality and retention. The proposed reform included the provision not only of competitive wages, but also of research-based curricula and materials, instructional support, effective professional development, and programmatic initiatives tailored to the characteristics of youth in the DYS system.

DYS made a high priority of implementing changes in its teacher salary structure. In spring 2006, a new salary schedule was adopted (retroactive to the beginning of the 2005-06 school year) leading to significant pay increases for most DYS educators and introducing incentives for teachers to pursue Teaching Coordinator roles and higher levels of licensure and credentials. The following table presents a simplified view of the new salary scale for bachelor's-level teachers employed by HEC, who comprised approximately two-thirds of DYS teachers,

including Teaching Coordinators, identified in available FY 2007 salary data spreadsheets. This pay scale is applicable system-wide. Master's-level teachers earn an additional $1,000 in their base salaries while "Master's Plus" teachers – those with a certificate of advanced graduate studies or a doctorate – earn an additional $1,500 in base salary. Accordingly, a "Master's Plus" teacher with a professional license would earn $48,500. DYS's emphasis on incentivizing teacher qualifications is apparent in this new salary structure.

Table 2

DYS Bachelor's-Level Salary Scale July 1, 2006 - June 30, 2007	
Licensure Status	**Salary/Bonus**
Not licensed	28,000
Preliminary	35,000
Expired	35,000
Initial	40,000
Professional	47,000
Additional Earning Potential ("Bonus")	
Teaching Coordinator	5,200
Summer salary	4,200
Additional TC summer salary	1,000

As shown in the table below, implementation of this new salary schedule brought salaries for DYS teachers with a preliminary license into alignment with minimum salaries of public school teachers statewide, closing what had been a 42% wage gap in FY 2001 and thereby reducing a crucial barrier to the recruitment and retention of teachers within DYS. This was accomplished by a 69% increase in that minimum salary. This increase also narrowed the wider gap between minimum DYS and BPS salaries from 74% in FY 2001 to 21% in FY 2006.

Table 3

Minimum Teacher Salary Comparison[6]			Change	
	FY 2002	**FY 2006**	**Percent**	**Dollars**
Department of Youth Services*	$20,740	$35,000	69%	$14,260
State of Massachusetts (average)	$29,427	$34,995	19%	$5,568
Boston Public Schools	$35,996	$42,355	18%	$6,359

* Assumes DYS teacher holds a preliminary license to teach in Massachusetts

The decision to use minimum compensation as a basis for comparison rather than average compensation is worthy of explanation. In fact, the average compensation of DYS teachers and Teaching Coordinators is approximately $39,385. This compares unfavorably to statewide and BPS averages of $56,587 (NEA FY 2006) and $70,256 (BPS FY 2007 "At a Glance" data) respectively. However, these averages are skewed by the more substantial tenure common within most public schools, including BPS, as compared to DYS. Mean tenure among DYS teachers included in the average wage calculation is 4.1 years, overall. This may undercount DYS teachers' full

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[6] Data sources: All data assume minimum of Bachelor's degree is held. FY 2002 data reproduced from the 2002 DYS report to the Massachusetts State Legislature. FY 2006 DYS data from HEC salary scale reports. FY 2006 Massachusetts averages from a report of the National Education Association citing the Massachusetts Teachers' Association. FY 2006 Boston data reported by the Boston Teachers' Union.

years of creditable teaching service (including years outside the system), but this cannot be verified due to a lack of system data. It is notable that teacher interviews did reveal many relatively new teachers, including recent college graduates and career changers.

Average salary data are more useful for the purposes of internal comparison. The table below presents FY 2007 base salary data.[7] DYS teachers and Teaching Coordinators earned averages of $36,930 and $46,081, respectively. The $9,151 difference in the average pay of teachers and Teaching Coordinators is a result of the base $5,300 salary differential between the two positions, as well as greater average experience (6.6 vs. 3.2 years in DYS) and typically higher credentials among Teaching Coordinators compared to standard teachers.

As per the new salary scale, educators can increase earnings if they choose to teach during the summer. And, notably, some program vendors continue to require a 210-day year of their teachers. It is DYS policy that these teachers are entitled to the summer teaching bonus, but additional earnings data were not available for analysis, and therefore uniformity of the implementation of this practice could not be verified.

Table 4

Average Base Salaries of DYS Teachers FY 2007	Grand Total (N = 173)
Teacher	$36,930
Teaching Coordinator	$46,081
Total	$39,385

As a final note, while comparison of average teacher salary data may be misleading due to differences in tenure among DYS teachers and those found in public school districts, it is nonetheless helpful to view average public school teacher salaries statewide as a means of comparing prevailing market wages in the Commonwealth's sub-regions. As shown in Figure 1, average salaries tend to be highest in the Boston and metro-west regions and substantially lower in western Massachusetts, as well as in selected communities in the southeastern and central regions.

The extent to which lower average salaries within DYS are attributable to differences in average teacher tenure is not clear. However, DYS's salary scale does not currently include a "step" increase mechanism that rewards tenure, so long-term salary competitiveness may become an issue as well-qualified DYS teachers build years of service. It is possible, however, that the gap in average salaries will diminish as greater numbers of DYS teachers acquire higher levels of certification and educational attainment, which are now incentivized.

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[7] Base salary data provided by HEC for DYS teachers employed by HEC and by DYS for all other DYS teachers.

Figure 1
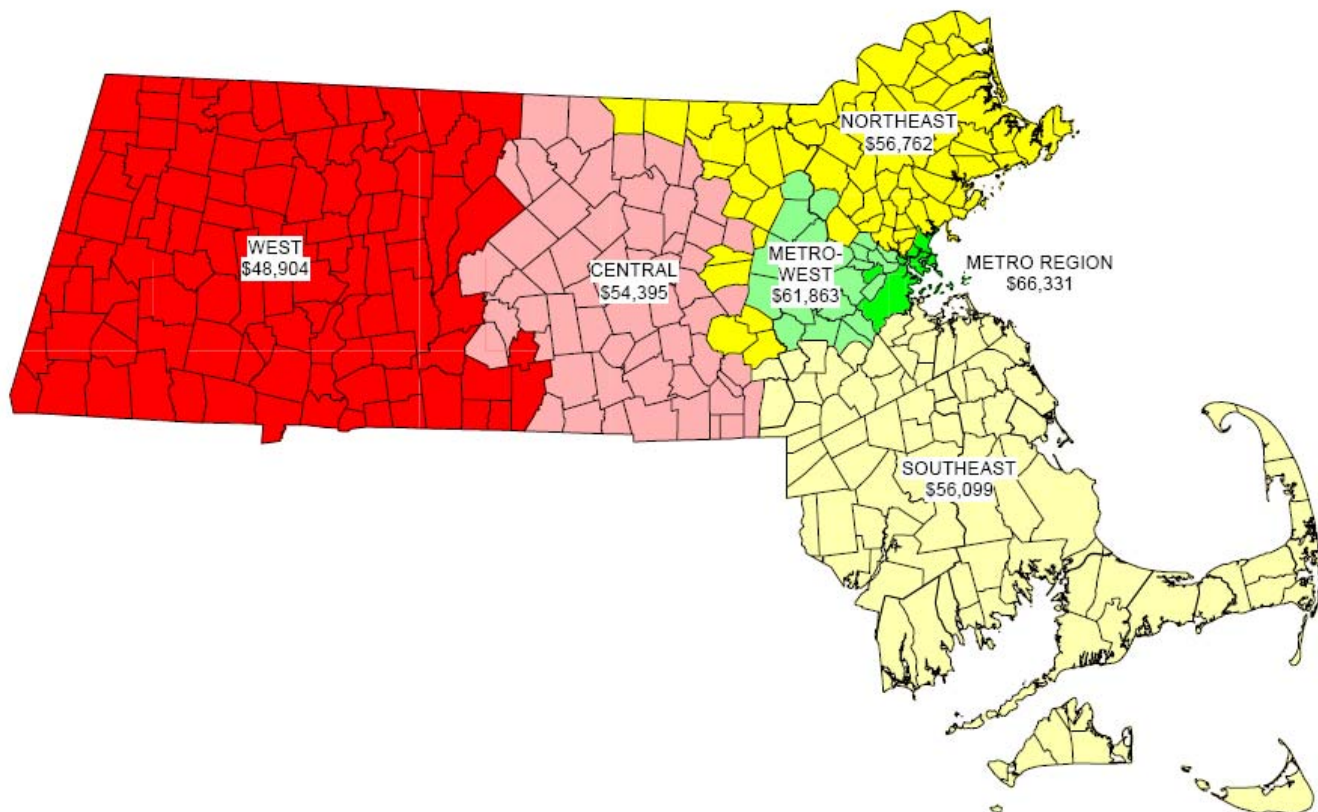
DYS teacher salary structure: Highlights and points to consider

- DYS achieved substantial progress with regard to teacher salary structure reform. The new scale eliminated a 42% gap in the minimum salary for bachelor's-level DYS teachers, bringing their salaries in line with state averages.

- DYS continues to consider important reforms to its salary structure to ensure that wages are competitive. DYS salaries appear most competitive in the western region of the state and in sections of the central and southeast regions. Salaries are least competitive in the Boston and the metro-West regions.

- The new DYS salary structure contains compelling incentives for teachers to pursue full professional licensure. A teacher with a professional license earns a minimum salary of $47,000, in contrast to an unlicensed teacher, for whom minimum salary is $28,000.

- Within DYS, certain teacher benefits are not yet uniform, which may potentially result in recruitment and retention issues for some programs. HEC, the largest employer of DYS teachers, offers teachers a 185-day school year (with options for summer teaching) and access to the Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement System. However, not all vendors reportedly provide these benefits.

2. Developing a System-wide Curriculum Approach and Related Tools and Resources

DYS has been working to enhance classroom curriculum and related materials, tools, and resources. These enhancements are vital to developing and maintaining a qualified workforce, and to improving the quality of instruction in DYS classrooms. Among the many staff who have contributed to enhancing DYS curriculum, materials, tools and resources, HEC's DYS Professional Development Director has played a particularly crucial role, and interviews suggest that she serves as a visible leader to teachers throughout the DYS system.

Following is an assessment of DYS's efforts to develop and implement a system-wide curriculum, provide complementary instructional tools and templates to support instructional quality, and purchase and distribute appropriate curriculum-related materials and supplies, including technology.

a. Development and Implementation of a DYS Curriculum Approach

Development of a DYS curriculum approach: Why was it needed?

At the inception of the initiative in FY 2004, DYS lacked a consistent system-wide curriculum. While the 2001 DYS Legislative Report noted that some education programs had developed curricula that aligned with the Massachusetts State Frameworks, it also noted that "A significant number of programs have only a partial written curriculum or no curriculum at all" (p. 13).

How did DYS approach its goal to develop a coherent, standards-based curriculum approach, and what has been accomplished?

Early on, system managers defined the need for a DYS curriculum approach and laid out a plan, using the development of "mini-units" as the basis for an array of content-focused lessons aligned with state standards for each subject area. Educators then had the opportunity to develop mini-units in their content-specific professional-development sessions throughout that year. Concurrently, DYS began work on the *English Language Arts Instructional Guide for DYS Schools*, which would anchor the system's English language arts (ELA) curriculum and serve as a model for building a coherent system-wide curriculum for other core subject areas.

Statewide professional development and lesson planning tools (discussed later in this section) were critical to building system-wide content knowledge and a more focused curriculum. However, DYS recognized that comprehensive instructional guides were essential to institutionalizing a system-wide approach to curriculum, instruction, and assessment of learning. As described in the guide *Math Teaching in DYS Schools*,

> *Good curriculum translates broad, overarching frameworks, strands, and standards into concrete lessons, mini-units, daily activities, assessments, and supporting materials. These provide the means through which teachers engage their students and lead them through actions that will result in students meeting their learning objectives. (page 33)*

DYS has employed a methodical approach to the development of its Instructional Guides. It targeted ELA first due to the substantial body of research that identifies literacy skills as the key to the long-term success of adjudicated youth.[8] The ELA guide was completed and introduced in September 2005 at a statewide professional development meeting. This guide presents a framework for curriculum and instruction in DYS settings. The curriculum approach that it presents is flexible and organized around the study of broad themes tied to a calendar for implementation. The guide helps teachers by defining the theme, a set of essential questions related to the theme, and suggested readings and writing assignments. It also provides an overview of the development and use of mini-units, which are recommended in academic literature for use with adjudicated youth in transitional (short-term) educational settings. The guide continues with an overview of instructional planning practices and an

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[8] Moore, Kaufman, Ellis. *Educational Practice in Juvenile Justice Settings: Review of Current Literature*. University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute (pp. 7-9).

emphasis on helping educators to focus on literacy, differentiate their instruction, and provide culturally responsive instruction. Finally, it highlights assessment practices for the purpose of student screening and placement, diagnosis of skill deficits, measuring progress towards learning standards, and final attainment of standards.

A second instructional guide, focused on teaching math in DYS schools, was published in October 2006 and again was introduced through a statewide professional development meeting. Development of this guide was aided by outside consultants from TERC – a nonprofit research and development organization located in Cambridge, Massachusetts, whose mission is to improve mathematics, science, and technology teaching and learning. In response to teacher demand, this guide offers a greater number and range of sample units and lessons than the ELA guide. The math guide also offers month-by-month pacing, rather than the quarterly approach used in the ELA guide. Tighter pacing is being pursued to improve educational continuity for students who transfer between programs (for example, from detention to assessment or from assessment to treatment).

In addition, DYS engaged a professional designer to make the guide's contents more accessible to teachers. The math guide has since been used as a template – in terms of development process, content, and layout – for instructional guides in other core subjects. A science guide is scheduled for release at a PD event in September 2007. A social studies/history guide is also under development. It will be released in two installments – U.S. History 1 and 2 – in January and June 2008, respectively. Development of a practitioner guide related to Career Readiness and Employability is also scheduled for release in June 2008.

How were the instructional guides introduced, and have they been adopted into practice? How have they been received by DYS educators?

Overall, survey and interview data suggest that the ELA and math instructional guides have been effectively disseminated to ELA and math teachers and Teaching Coordinators. These tools are widely used, but not all teachers have embraced them. The few educators who expressed a concern about the DYS instructional guides most commonly worried that they would be required to use the lessons in the guides and thereby be limited in their opportunity to design their own standards-based lessons. However, while the guides offer content and pacing aligned with the MA State Curriculum Frameworks as well as sample lesson plans, they also leave substantial discretion to teachers.

Dissemination and training in use of the ELA and math instructional guides has been promoted during regularly scheduled statewide professional development events. These events offer different content tracks based on teacher subject area and are very well-attended by staff throughout the DYS Education system. Quarterly Teaching Coordinator meetings also devote time to the distribution of materials and to training, and are another point of dissemination for the instructional guides. These dissemination channels are further supplemented by web-based distribution at http://www.commcorp.org/dys/resources.html. Interviews with staff of 12 programs revealed that ELA and math teachers have access to the guides for their subject areas, and only one teacher reported unfamiliarity with the guide.

Respondents to the DYS Teacher Survey, administered by the UMass Donahue Institute in January 2007, were asked how often they utilized the curriculum guides. The responses of ELA and math teachers (presented in Table 5) suggest that the vast majority of teachers utilize the guides as a resource, though frequency varies. It is important to note that these guides are planning tools. As such, weekly use to support lesson planning may be the maximum expected frequency of use, and less frequent use is not surprising.

Analysis of sub-group responses did not reveal consistent trends in use of the guides by sub-groups based on tenure in DYS Education, region, or program type. However, interview data collected from a smaller sample of DYS teachers, suggest that very experienced teachers and teachers in programs with a history of strong internal curriculum development may rely less on these guides to inform their instructional planning and practice than other teachers.

Table 5

Use of DYS Instructional Guides *(During a Typical Week)*					
	N	Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely/Never
Refer to the ELA instructional guide (ELA teachers)	61	16%	38%	39%	7%
Refer to the math instructional guide (Math teachers)	60	27%	28%	33%	12%

In April 2007, CommCorp conducted a brief survey of a subset of 41 DYS math teachers to obtain additional feedback specifically related to the math guide.[9] Findings, presented in Table 6, suggest that the math guide is generally perceived as helpful, well organized, and easy to use. Overall, 94% of respondents reported that they would use the math guide in some way in the coming school year.

Table 6

Math Instructional Guide: Selected CommCorp Feedback Survey Results*					
	Very ⟵			⟶	Not Very
	1	2	3	4	5
Overall, how helpful have you found the [math] guide?[a]	20%	25%	48%	5%	3%
How easy do feel the guide is to use?[b]	15%	53%	25%	0%	8%
How well-organized is the guide?[c]	18%	40%	23%	18%	3%
How useful is the guide for Developing Curriculum?[d]	28%	23%	30%	18%	3%
How useful is the guide for Delivering Relevant Instruction?[d]	18%	24%	40%	13%	5%
How useful is the guide for providing Mini-Unit Samples?[d]	22%	22%	30%	22%	5%
How useful is the guide for providing Problem of the Day Samples?[d]	16%	18%	40%	18%	8%
How useful is the guide for providing Curricular Resource Lists?[d]	8%	31%	39%	15%	8%
How effectively does the guide address working in a DYS setting?[e]	11%	35%	30%	22%	38%
How effectively does the guide address working with a diverse population of students?[e]	5%	24%	41%	22%	8%

* N = 41 DYS math teachers. Numbers may not add to 100% due to rounding

Key to Survey Scale Variations

[a] 1 = very helpful; 5 = not very helpful   [b] 1 = very easy; 5 = not very easy   [c] 1 = very well organized; 5 = not very well organized

[d] 1 = very useful; 5 = not very useful   [e] 1 = very effectively; 5 = not very effectively

Ratings suggest that the guide is a useful support, as it facilitates many teachers' development of curriculum and delivery of instruction. In contrast, findings of how effectively the guide addresses working in a DYS setting are skewed toward the "not very effective" side of the scale. Findings of how effectively the math guide addresses

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[9] Many questions on this survey utilized a five-point numeric scale with labels only on each end of the scale (at "1" and "5"). Examples of these labels include "very helpful" (1) to "not very helpful" (5) and "very useful" (1) to "not very useful" (5). The lack of opposing labels (e.g., "very useful" and "not at all useful") complicates interpretation, as the central point (3) does not represent a definitive neutral point between opposing choices, and responses of 4 and 5 are not inherently negative. However, by isolating the definitive high points of the scale (1 and 2), some conclusions may be drawn. That is the approach used to draw the conclusions presented herein.

working with a diverse population are mixed, with only 5% of respondents reporting it was "very helpful" in this regard.

Instructional Guides in Support of a DYS Curriculum Approach: Highlights and points to consider

- The ELA and math instructional guides provide a framework for curriculum and instruction in DYS. They reflect a focus on aligning content with state standards, identifying strategies to engage DYS youth, and presenting appropriate unit and lesson planning strategies.

- The ELA and math guides have been adopted into ongoing practice by most DYS teachers. Science and social studies guides are under development and may be of particular benefit to new teachers and those who teach multiple subject areas.

- The development of a career readiness and employability guide reflects DYS's understanding of its student population. The average reported age of DYS youth is 17, and many of these youth have limited prospects for completing high school, increasing the relevance of employability skills training as a complement to traditional academic subjects.

- DYS and its partners have actively sought teacher feedback following the roll-out of the instructional guides, and are applying that feedback to future products. For example, in response to teacher interviews, the math curriculum guide contains more practical, hands-on lessons than the ELA guide.

- While the guides have been well-received, survey data suggest both strengths and weaknesses in the math guide, which should be considered in the development of future guides. Some specific concerns about instructional guides included the following:

    - Some teachers express concern that the pacing of the math curriculum is overly optimistic for DYS classrooms, which are commonly comprised of students of widely diverging academic skill and motivation.

    - A few teachers expressed concern that the science guide, in particular, may narrow the range of content that can be taught in DYS classrooms, as it attempts to focus on core subjects emphasized on the 10th grade MCAS.

b. Tools and Templates to Support Instructional Quality

DYS's focus on improving the stability and qualifications of its education workforce, combined with an emphasis on establishing statewide curricula aligned with the state frameworks, provides a critical infrastructure for the delivery of quality education services. Through the Education Initiative, DYS also set out to create and implement a set of tools and templates to facilitate educators' translation of that curriculum into effective classroom instruction. For the purpose of this report, we focus on three specific tools:

- A template for the development of "mini-units" of instruction

- A template for the development of effective lesson plans

- A rubric for assessment of instructional planning and delivery

Instructional tools and templates: Why were they needed and how do these tools contribute to DYS's strategy for providing quality instruction?

In the first year of the Initiative, instructional coaches conducted a series of site visits to observe educational programs and classroom instruction. This experience confirmed a wide variation in educators' knowledge and practice vis-à-vis instructional planning. It also confirmed the difficulty, noted by many DYS teachers and in the juvenile justice literature, of educating students in short-term placements, ranging most frequently from several

days to several months, and with arrivals and departures occurring at irregular intervals throughout the school year.

With these factors in mind, standards-based lesson plans and mini-units of instruction were identified as essential components of the DYS curriculum approach and were central to creating what system managers referred to as "a unified DYS." The use of standard lesson planning templates is common, and increasingly mandated, in public school districts as they work to better align teaching with the state curriculum frameworks; and short units of instruction, or mini-units, in short-term, high-turnover environments is recommended in juvenile justice education literature.[10] Finally, establishing a rubric responded to DYS's goal of articulating and effecting quality instruction at the classroom level.

How were these tools and templates introduced, and have they been adopted into practice? How have they been received by DYS educators?

From the onset of the Initiative, statewide professional development was a core element of the strategy to create a more consistent and pedagogically sound approach to education in DYS. Beginning in 2004-05, DYS and its partners organized a series of statewide PD events (further described in Section III.A. *Development of Comprehensive PD Programs within DYS*). Through statewide PD, the role of mini-units and lesson planning were initially introduced and positioned as core components of the DYS curriculum approach. Statewide PD also prompted educators to work with templates and design mini-units and lesson plans for use both in their classrooms and throughout the DYS system.

Recognizing the complexity of transitioning to a more unified and, in many instances, more structured approach, DYS allowed for a phased in approach to these new tools and their attendant practices. As the DYS Professional Development Director communicated when she described the importance of the mini-unit and lesson planning templates with educators at a statewide PD event in September 2004:[11]

> *The templates provide a consistent format for outlining the mini-unit and the lesson plan. As we begin to share mini-units and lesson plans across the system, we can be assured that all components of quality planning are evidenced. Developing a written curriculum does take time. Teachers are not expected to immediately write a complete mini-unit for every unit they teach. As we all work together, the units will be written over time. The key is to share the quality of instruction we have throughout the system. (Presentation slides 13-14)*

The ELA and math instructional guides serve as enduring supports to the implementation of mini-unit and lesson planning templates in those subject areas, as both guides provide descriptions and examples of these methods and tools in practice. As described in the *ELA Instructional Guide for DYS Schools*, "Mini-units are chunks of curriculum, designed to last from one to three weeks, organized around key elements of standards-based education. Mini-units cover a relatively large topic [and] include a series of lessons" (p. 29). Lesson plans offer specific instructional approaches and goals with which to accomplish the learning objectives of the mini-units.

The Elements of Quality Instruction Rubric is the third instructional template to be introduced through the Initiative. This rubric defines 17 critical dimensions of planning, instruction, and classroom tone, as well as clearly defined performance standards linked to a four-point scale. Teachers are encouraged to use this as a basis for conceptualizing their work and as a tool for self-assessment. This rubric, along with unit and lesson planning requirements, has been integrated into the standard protocol for DYS instructional coaches, who support teachers' understanding and use of these tools.

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[10] Moore, Kaufman, Ellis. *Educational Practice in Juvenile Justice Settings: Review of Current Literature*. University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute (pp. 6 and 20).

[11] Gilfether, S. *A Unified DYS: Where have we been, where are we going?* Hampshire Educational Collaborative (2004).

Respondents to the DYS Teacher Survey were asked how often they utilized the mini-unit and lesson planning templates during a typical week in their classroom (Table 7). Data suggest that lesson plans are at least frequently used by nearly three-quarters of DYS teachers, while about half of educators at least frequently use mini-units as a basis for their instruction. Among respondents, only 62% of teachers from assessment programs reported at least frequent use of lesson plans, compared to 83% of teachers in treatment programs.

Table 7

Use of Mini-unit and Lesson Plan Templates *(During a Typical Week)*					
	N	Always	Frequently	Sometimes	Rarely/Never
Use mini-units as a basis for your teaching	160	13.8%	37.7%	29.6%	18.9%
Utilize daily lesson plans to guide your instruction	161	33.1%	38.8%	20.0%	8.1%

It is notable that the question pertaining to lesson planning did not explicitly identify use of the DYS lesson planning template and that subsequent on-site interviews revealed that many teachers use the DYS lesson planning template when required, but use streamlined, locally adapted tools on a more regular basis. It is unclear whether use of these local templates is incorporated into responses to this question.

In addition, spring 2007 interviews suggest that DYS has successfully integrated mini-unit techniques into classrooms in most programs, but that there is room for development of additional units. Educators' chief concerns regarding these tools are the difficulty of developing plans that are effectively differentiated for the range of learners in their classrooms, and the lack of available time to construct lesson plans using the DYS template.

Instructional tools and templates: Highlights and points to consider

- DYS has implemented mini-unit and lesson planning templates, and an Elements of Quality Instruction Rubric. These new curriculum tools are intended to build consistency and method throughout the system, thus addressing a critical system problem identified prior to the Education Initiative.

- Implementation of these tools both supports and is supported by the new DYS instructional guides, as well as by statewide professional development and instructional coaching. While implementation rates vary by tool, the concepts and methods of planning and self-assessment appear to be taking root among staff.

- Mini-units are a research-supported approach that responds to the issue of high student turnover, and are commonly used as a basis for unit planning by DYS teachers. PD and coaching are supportive factors in their implementation, but educators in DYS detention programs frequently report difficulty using mini-units due to extremely high student transience and unpredictable start and end dates.

- About 72% of DYS teachers report frequent use of lesson plans. Among the critical factors affecting implementation, teachers reported having insufficient time for instructional planning, most particularly in assessment programs, where a competing mission – assessment – was often noted during interviews.

- Interviews suggest that the DYS lesson planning template requires more detail than most educators feel is necessary, and simpler planning templates are commonly used. The DYS lesson planning template appears to be used primarily in the context of teacher evaluations and instructional coaching observations. A streamlined template may be easier to implement and encourage more consistent compliance.

c. Purchase and Distribution of Curriculum Materials and Technology

Investment in Curriculum Materials and Technology: Why was it needed and what has been accomplished?

The 2001 DYS Legislative Report noted that "curriculum and instructional practices vary among programs, making it difficult for students to transition between programs and for teachers to plan for the many students who enter and leave their classrooms." Among the other concerns emphasized in the report, the availability of supplies varied across programs: some classrooms had no manipulatives, while others had no computer equipment or educational software. Interviews conducted with teaching staff in spring 2007 confirmed the uneven availability of material resources prior to the education initiative. Some education program vendors were noted to have been very attentive to purchasing instructional materials and supplies prior to the Initiative, while others were described as neglectful of these investments.

Over the past three years, DYS has made substantial investments in curriculum-related materials and supplies, as well as technology. Purchasing data show that close to 30,000 individual items (materials and supplies) were purchased and distributed to DYS Education programs in 2006-2007 alone. Further, DYS and program vendors have invested in new computers, NEO's, and related peripherals, upgrading many programs' capacity for technology-assisted instruction.

Definitive and comparable data summarizing expenditures on materials, supplies, and computer hardware were not available at the time of this evaluation. However, historical purchase and inventory records in a variety of formats were made available to the research team. These records, Educational Field Assessment data, educator interviews, and direct observation of new materials and equipment during site visits confirm that DYS has made progress with respect to the purchase and distribution of new educational materials, supplies, and technological resources, with some sites having stronger corresponding documentation than others.

How were new materials and technology introduced, and have they been adopted into practice?

Materials and Supplies

In 2003-2004, there was little or no catalogue of system-wide inventory related to curriculum materials or technology within DYS Education programs. With the challenging task of defining the DYS curriculum approach still very much at its beginning, DYS purchased "pilot kits," consisting of single copies of various curriculum materials and supplies – including textbooks, software, calculators, and GED and MCAS preparation books – for each of the programs operated by HEC (24 at that time), as well as 12 programs operated by other vendors.[12] These materials related to the core subject areas of ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies. As described in a document produced by HEC titled *DYS Curriculum Materials and Resources: Phase II 2004-05 School Year*, these pilot materials were

> *Selected based on their appropriateness for the DYS student population. Reading level was at upper elementary/middle school level, content focus was middle/high school level, and in many cases the resources were supplemental, therefore supporting the need to have variety when dealing with a diverse student population and constructing mini-units of instruction.*

The pilot process allowed DYS to test what worked and to invest accordingly. The same document also described an interest in continuing with a pilot project approach, trying new materials and resources in programs "where they have the best chance of success (frequently based on teacher enthusiasm, technology support and infrastructure, and cooperation of the facility director)."

The purchasing process was described as being driven by two major considerations. First, the materials had to be research-based, culturally appropriate, and aligned with the state standards. Second, they had to be selected with

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[12] Source: Phase II Curriculum Materials and Resources report.

substantial input from DYS teachers. To that end, Teaching Coordinators of programs that received pilot kits were asked not only to review those materials and indicate whether they wanted additional student editions, but were also asked to provide a prioritized list of resources that would be useful to their programs. This represented one of a number of formal and informal surveys conducted to gauge teacher interest in various curriculum materials and resources.

The process picked up pace and significantly more money was spent on materials and supplies in 2004-2005. While an infrastructure was developed to guide the purchasing process, fewer resources were available to support the tracking of expenditures and distribution. As a result, it is difficult to determine the costs associated with the purchase of curriculum material and resources after 2004-2005. However, records indicate that the quantity of materials requested and purchased have continued to increase. Approximately 24,357 items were purchased in 2005-2006, and 36,883 items were purchased in 2006-2007. Some of these were long-term investments, such as books and software, but many were consumables, such as workbooks and lab materials. A purchasing worksheet from 2006-2007 displayed the distribution of materials by program and suggests that all programs received substantial quantities of new materials.

Technology

As noted in the 2001 DYS Legislative Report, technology and Internet access were frequently unavailable in DYS classrooms. To address this deficit, DYS utilized a federal program, E-Rate, operated by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Innovation and Improvement. This program provides discounts of up to 90% on Internet access services and the acquisition and installation of equipment. According to the DYS 2005 Annual Report, during 2005 the "installation of computers was completed for nearly 80% of DYS's educational programs, enabling Internet access for more than 1,000 students" (page 21). More recent reports suggest that Internet access has been extended to all but "a handful" of DYS Education programs. Additional data provided by DYS indicate 346 personal computers were purchased "off-lease" and distributed for student use in 33 DYS Education programs during FY 2007. No previous historical data were available.

Many of the vendors that operate programs have also deployed new technology, independent of DYS's efforts. Site visits conducted by the Education Field Assessment team in winter and spring 2007 confirmed system-wide availability of instructional technology. As presented in the 2007 Educational Field Assessment Summary of Findings and Recommendations, staff of 94% of programs have access to at least one computer, and some larger programs have as many as 13. Similarly, 96% of programs have student computers, and 86% have at least five computers on site for student use.

The Field Assessment report offers a summary finding that "DYS educational programs have made significant improvement with regard to integrating technology into instruction," but also notes that "Student Internet access has been discontinued at a number of sites due to safety concerns. Some programs experience problems with DYS tech support, particularly sites remotely located." It also suggests that opportunities exist to improve the effective use of technology in instructional delivery. These gains in technology availability and integration – as well as concerns regarding security, technical support, and integration of technology into instruction – are consistent with the findings of the UMass research team's spring 2007 site visits to 12 programs.

How have new materials and technology been received by DYS educators?

Materials and Supplies

Survey and interview data suggest that the quality and availability of curriculum materials and supplies have improved substantially. In fact, when asked in an open-ended question to identify the most beneficial changes for education within DYS over the past 1-2 years, DYS Teacher Survey respondents most frequently cited the addition of a range of enhanced or expanded curricular resources, including curriculum guides, books, classroom materials, classroom supplies, and teaching or instructional materials.

The table below presents DYS Teacher Survey results to questions related to the quantity of curriculum and instructional materials, the quantity of teaching supplies, and the overall quality of curriculum and materials. Overall, 59% of respondents rated the quantity of *materials* as good or excellent, while 55% offered similar ratings of the quantity of *teaching supplies*. These responses show a split among staff of detention programs and those working in short- and long-term treatment or assessment centers. On both questions, detention program teachers offered substantially lower ratings than educators in other programs.

Table 8

Ratings of the Quantity and Quality of Curriculum Materials and Supplies *					
Responses by Program Type					
	N	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
The amount of curriculum and instructional materials available for you to use					
Detention Programs	40	13%	33%	40%	15%
Assessment Programs	21	38%	29%	24%	10%
Short- and Long-Term Treatment Programs	79	27%	43%	22%	9%
Total (including all program types)	157	22%	37%	30%	12%
The amount of teaching supplies available to you					
Detention Programs	40	15%	28%	38%	20%
Assessment Programs	20	30%	40%	25%	5%
Short- and Long-Term Treatment Programs	79	24%	38%	25%	13%
Total (including all program types)	156	20%	35%	30%	15%
Overall quality of curriculum and materials you use to teach					
Detention Programs	40	13%	33%	43%	13%
Assessment Programs	20	20%	50%	30%	0%
Short- and Long-Term Treatment Programs	78	23%	47%	23%	6%
Total (including all program types)	156	18%	42%	31%	10%

* Does not include missing responses or those indicating unsure/NA

Survey respondents provided similar ratings of the quality of the curriculum and materials they use to teach their subject areas. Again, program type was a substantial factor in response, with teachers working in detention programs giving lower ratings to the quality of the curriculum and materials they use than did teachers from other programs.

Interviews conducted with educators in spring 2007 confirmed that the availability of curriculum materials and technology has improved through the Education Initiative. Some teachers did express concerns regarding long wait times for selected materials, but complaints were generally offered along with the recognition of progress. Consistent with the findings of the 2001 DYS Legislative report, some programs cited dramatic improvements over the past three years, while others described a steady continuation of good material support.

Technology

Overall, data suggest that technology tools are gaining ground as a mode for delivering and supporting education within DYS, but effective integration of technology remains a work in progress. The 2007 Education Field

Assessment report indicates that among DYS Education programs, 74% use technology in the classroom for word processing, 63% use it to run educational software, 63% conduct Internet research (or browsing), and 35% use technology for computer games. All of these data were reported by Teaching Coordinators or their designees who completed the Field Assessment Tool.

The DYS Teacher Survey asked individual teachers to characterize the frequency with which they utilize computer software in their instruction. Overall, 62% indicated they at least sometimes use computer software in the course of a typical week of teaching, while 23% reported that they frequently or always do so. Barriers to technology use – including security concerns related student Internet access and many teachers' self-reported inexperience integrating technology into instruction – appear to limit the full utilization of new technology. Further, DYS is still working to establish and encourage teacher use of system email accounts, which promise to improve system-wide communication.

Work was started on a system-wide technology plan, but this effort was put on hold in early 2007 because much of the technology work was reliant on central DYS information system capacities, as well as security policies, which need to be resolved before a plan can be fully developed and implemented. DYS Education intends to restart this work once those larger issues are resolved.

Curriculum materials and technology: Highlights and points to consider

Materials and Supplies

- Over the past three years, DYS made substantial investments in curriculum-related materials and supplies, and additional investments are anticipated in the coming years. Purchases are now made through a centralized system, supporting increased consistency of curriculum related materials.

- New materials and supplies were commonly identified as one of the most beneficial results of the Education Initiative, and purchasing managers have taken a feedback-driven approach to ordering new materials. However, feedback shows a need for continued investment in curriculum materials, particularly in detention programs, where ratings of materials availability and quality lagged.

- A critical next step for DYS is to identify and close gaps in the availability of specific materials within some programs. As needs are met at the system-level, ongoing identification and redress of gaps will require centralized access to inventories of material resources at each program, which will aid decisions regarding the purchase or reallocation of materials.

- Because DYS programs vary, it is not surprising that educators' opinions of curriculum materials also vary. Interviews revealed that some teachers find materials too sophisticated for their students, while others feel quite the opposite. Thus, affording teachers the flexibility to define their needs within the framework of approved materials lists may serve the best interest of students while also supporting overall improvements in curricular consistency.

- Systems for purchase of and feedback to new curriculum materials are ready to be expanded. Specifically, materials inventory systems should be created, and systematic feedback should be collected regarding the suitability of materials for DYS students in varying contexts. These systems will require improved software and personnel resources; however, these investments will increase accountability, efficiency, and information regarding what works best in various DYS settings.

Technology

- DYS has dramatically increased the availability of Internet access and student computers. This includes extension of Internet access to all program sites and deployment of 346 student computers in FY 2007 alone. Educators report varying levels of comfort using computers to enhance instruction.

- Additional technology is deployed in the classroom by individual vendors, and curriculum materials purchasing lists reveal that a wide range of educational software is used in DYS classrooms, often with the direct support of statewide professional development.

- Technical and security issues have complicated the process of developing a full technology plan for DYS Education, and successful implementation will require the resolution of these issues. Given that the potential of DYS computer hardware and software purchases is not yet fully realized, DYS would benefit from a more purposeful vision of how to optimize technology in the classroom, beginning with the documentation and assessment of technology currently deployed throughout the system.

3. Enhancing DYS Teachers' Skills through Professional Development and Coaching

What was the state of professional development and instructional support in DYS prior to the Initiative? Why was it important to improve these services?

A serious concern highlighted by the 2001 DYS Legislative Report was a "scarcity of professional development resources" (p. 6). With regard to DYS Education, the authors elaborated,

> *There is no comprehensive, department-wide professional development plan for educators, and funds are so limited that it is rare for a program to provide substitute teachers to cover classrooms. Moreover, the pressure to keep teachers in classrooms to address critical and chronic teacher vacancies routinely precludes teacher participation in basic training or in agency orientations to working in juvenile justice settings. As a result, the professional development needs of DYS teachers are identified and met sporadically, and programs are forced to give teachers a cursory, on-the-job overview of DYS operations. (p. 11)*

The 2002 DYS Legislative Report presented similar conclusions. Following exit interviews of teachers leaving the DYS system, the reports' authors concluded that a lack of professional development opportunities and teachers' sense of isolation from a professional learning community were adversely affecting staff retention (p. 10). These findings underscored the need to provide professional development (PD) related to both pedagogy and content, and to provide some portion of this PD through system-wide meetings, so as to build a sense of community and consistency of instructional practice. Further, the findings suggest a need to support PD at the classroom level in order to increase system-wide competence and consistency.

How did DYS address deficiencies in its professional development and instructional support?

From its inception, the Initiative plan recognized the need for system-wide training in appropriate curriculum and instructional methods. Accordingly, DYS focused substantial new resources and attention on PD and, subsequently, on site-based instructional coaching services. PD programming was initiated in 2003, and PD offerings expanded and became increasingly well-documented in the ensuing years. Following is a discussion and analysis of the variety of new PD mechanisms within DYS, followed by an examination of DYS's on-site instructional coaching, which facilitates implementation of PD content in the classroom and provides other, more generalized support to DYS teachers.

A. Comprehensive Professional Development Programs within DYS

How did DYS approach the development and support of a system-wide PD strategy and approach?

At the inception of the Initiative, the system lacked a consistent and coherent mechanism for delivering PD to educators. A September 2004 report by CommCorp titled "DYS Educational Services Field Assessment: Summary of Findings," presented results of an assessment of educational services at all DYS facilities conducted

the previous year. The report concluded that while teachers were pleased to now have some staff training available, there was a desire for more, and "in particular, many teachers requested training related to issues pertinent to teaching in a DYS setting." Further, the report concluded that "With few exceptions, vendors did not offer PD of their own for their teaching staff, nor do many programs provide tuition reimbursement. The field assessment indicated the absence of individual teacher PD plans. Many of the programs requested more information about PD and state requirements for PDPs" (page 3).

To address these deficiencies, HEC , in collaboration with DYS and CommCorp, led the development of a comprehensive PD plan for DYS Education and, ultimately, coordinated the delivery of PD across the state. HEC was well qualified to lead this aspect of the Initiative, as it housed a highly regarded PD unit and had the in-house expertise required to manage the implementation process. HEC appointed a DYS Professional Development Director to work with a PD subcommittee, described as a "driving force" in the development of PD goals.

The development of a system-wide PD plan began with the PD subcommittee convening a series of meetings to identify barriers to the development of a comprehensive PD system. The barriers they identified included high turnover among teachers; a wide range of expertise, teaching qualifications, and classroom experience among educators; a limited and often outdated supply of curriculum materials and instructional resources; the lack of a standardized curriculum; and the unique population of highly transient, academically deficient, and high special needs youth within DYS programs. In addition, the new PD system would need to counter attendance barriers stemming from a lack of substitute teachers, attendance incentives, and program-level commitments to sending teachers to PD.

System records show that DYS managers and subcommittee members spent considerable time weighing the implications of these challenges for PD system development. They realized that a flexible and diverse PD system would best accommodate the full range of teacher needs. These early discussions seem to have set the stage for what became two core strategies with regard to PD content and delivery:

1. The PD plan would be aligned with and supportive of key goals of the Initiative to:

    −   Train and support the use of new DYS curriculum and materials with a focus on, but not limited to, the four core academic areas (math, ELA, science, and social studies)

    −   Enhance instructional practice

    −   Infuse cultural awareness and sensitivity into classroom instruction

    −   Contribute to the professional culture of DYS educators

2. Decisions related to PD would follow an inclusive process, which would require managers to collect feedback and data from a variety of sources, including DYS educators, and use those data to guide decision making with regard to PD content and delivery. DYS actively collects and utilizes this feedback in their ongoing planning processes.

What is the structure for delivering professional development? Do teachers participate?

Over time, a robust PD delivery system has emerged, consisting of four major components:

- Statewide PD Events are held five times per year in central Massachusetts and generally consist of a full day of training. In place since 2004-2005, these events became mandatory for all DYS teachers in 2005-2006.

- Regional Trainings became a formal part of the PD system in 2005-2006. These events occur closer to many educators' job sites and supplement statewide trainings by providing a more intense focus on new classroom tools (such as Geometer's Sketchpad) or curriculum (such as EmPower Mathematics).

- Summer Training Academies occurred in summer 2004 and again in 2006 and 2007. These events are open to all DYS teachers and provide an opportunity to enhance content knowledge and teaching skills in a relaxed environment, outside the regular 185-day school year.

- Teaching Coordinator Training began in 2005-2006. This training occurs as part of quarterly regional Teaching Coordinator (TC) meetings and supports TCs' development as instructional leaders. A range of training has been provided to TCs, who are expected to share new knowledge with teachers at their sites.

Among these, statewide PD events are the most well-established and -documented, and constitute the foundation upon which other PD structures are built. As such, these statewide events were the primary focus of this evaluation. However, available data pertaining to the three additional PD components are also presented.

a. Statewide Professional Development Programs

Purpose and Delivery

Statewide PD programs are at the core of DYS's strategy to support curriculum development and implementation system-wide. In addition to providing a common venue and exposure to critical new instructional methods and content, these events provide an opportunity for professional networking among educators in a geographically dispersed system. All of these were specific areas of concern noted in the 2001 and 2002 DYS Legislative Reports.

DYS has held statewide PD events five times per year since 2004-2005, with options for extended learning time beyond the five events offered in 2004-2005 and 2006-2007. These trainings take place at The College of the Holy Cross in centrally located Worcester, Massachusetts. The first event of each year consists of one half-day of PD, while the four subsequent events are full-day. This allows time for an orientation of new staff on the morning of the first event. Implementation of these events has been supported by mandatory attendance policies (beginning in 2005-2006) and agreements among DYS and its educational programs to close DYS classrooms on these five dates.

Document review suggests that teachers receive ample notice of statewide PD events, which is conveyed through welcome-back letters sent to every teacher at the onset of each school year. These letters present clear information regarding the PD calendar for the year, including dates, times, content focus, and other information. Interviews and observations of statewide PD events provide compelling evidence that educators throughout DYS have a high awareness of statewide PD events and their focus, suggesting that system-wide communication is effective in this regard.

UMass Donahue Institute research staff attended three statewide PD events in 2006-2007, conducting a formal observation of one of these events. The conclusion reached through these observations was that statewide PD events were held in a very professional setting, were well organized, and featured qualified presenters who used a variety of instructional methods, including lecture, discussion, multimedia, and small group work. Participants appeared engaged and many sessions provided opportunities for teacher discussion and the sharing of classroom experiences and lessons among colleagues from different education programs.

Content Focus

Responsive to the concerns identified in the 2001 and 2002 DYS Legislative Reports, DYS's statewide PD events have focused on developing system-wide consistency of high quality curriculum content and instructional methods. A review of content in each of the past three years shows a primary focus for each year, with a shift from curriculum content in 2004-2005 to instructional delivery in the DYS context in 2005-2006 and back to content in 2006-2007, although at a more advanced level than in 2004-2005.

DYS also recognized that teachers from different programs were likely to have distinct strengths, weaknesses, and needs determined by their individual professional experiences and their program environments. For example,

DYS Teacher Survey data indicate that 67% of DYS educators teach multiple subjects and may have a greater need for training in one content area or another. Accordingly, Teaching Coordinators were encouraged to work with their teachers to choose the content that was most appropriate to their individual needs and the needs of their program. Following in this section are tables that describe the subject matter focus in each of the past three years and highlight the tracks that educators could pursue. Taken in their entirety, these offerings respond directly to the key goals of the Education Initiative.

Table 9 presents the subject areas addressed through statewide PD in 2004-2005. These display an emphasis on the four core academic areas, as well as art and life skills education. Extended course offerings in math and ELA were available to interested teachers. These courses included an option for participants to receive college credit as an incentive to participate.

Table 9

Statewide 2004-05 PD Events		
Subject Area	**PD Training Topic Area**	**Time**
English Language Arts	Teaching ELA in the DYS Classroom	4.5 days
	Pathways to Literacy: Taking Charge Reading	6.5 days
Math	Math Curriculum	4.5 days
	Missing Link Math Concepts	6.5 days
Science	Science Curriculum	4.5 days
Social Studies	Teaching Social Studies in the DYS Classroom	4.5 days
Art	Creative Arts Programming and Curriculum	4.5 days
Life Skills	Defining the Life Skills Curriculum	4.5 days

It is also important to note that statewide PD addressed critical goals that are not immediately evident in the course titles featured in Table 9. These included:

1. Teaching in compliance with MA Frameworks

2. Enhancement of overall literacy (math and language arts) throughout the curriculum

3. Focus on cultural diversity

4. Using differentiated strategies in planning curriculum, instruction, and assessment

As such, the emphasis of this PD was not only on conveying curriculum content, but also on the development of more consistent instructional methods within DYS. Accordingly, PD also presented several important tools and methods, including mini-unit and lesson planning templates, and the use of differentiated instructional strategies as a means of meeting the diverse academic needs of DYS students.

An exploration of data presented in "PD for Teachers in the Massachusetts DYS Programs: A Summary Report 2004-2005," illustrates DYS's interest in conducting a reflective self-examination of statewide PD. As such, this report demonstrates an early commitment to continuous improvement in the delivery of PD. For example, PD instructors were asked to identify ways in which their training addressed critical goals for PD in 2004-2005. They also submitted summaries of their PD programs that year, which reflected on the strengths and weaknesses of training sessions and presented overall perceptions, conclusions, and recommendations for the future.

Using data collected from surveys and evaluations from the previous year's PD events, the PD subcommittee designed a program for 2005-2006 that shifted toward an emphasis on promising instructional methods for teaching DYS youth. Unlike 2004-2005 when teachers chose a PD content track to attend at each of the five events, all teachers in 2005-2006 attended the same training. However, PD was intentionally designed to support strategies for promoting collegiality among teachers who taught same content areas or worked at the same type of program. For example, at one event, teams of teachers from the same program type (i.e., detention, assessment, or treatment) sat together at tables, and at another event, afternoon breakout sessions were organized by curriculum area. Table 10 presents the subject areas addressed through statewide PD in 2005-2006.

Table 10

Statewide 2005-06 PD Events	
PD Training Topic Area	**Time**
Campaign for Proficiency: Developing a High-Performance Culture in the DYS Classroom	½ day
LINKS Program: Instructional Tools for Teaching Writing in the Content Areas	1 day
Differentiating Instruction in a DYS Setting	2 days
Teaching in a Juvenile Justice Setting, with Sharing of "Best Practices"	1 day

The focus on PD in 2006-07 shifted back toward curriculum content development with a special emphasis on ELA and math. Integration of the arts into instruction was also emphasized, and all teachers attended a session devoted to this topic during the first PD event of the year. DYS's focus on this topic coincided with HEC's receipt of a three-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education to provide PD focused on the integration of arts into the core curriculum.

> In spring 2006, HEC received a three-year $1,050,000 Professional Development for Arts Educators grant from the U.S. Department of Education named *Unlocking the Light: Integrating the Arts in Juvenile Justice Education*. The program provides comprehensive job-embedded (on-site, in the classroom) PD related to the integration of multiple mediums of art into ELA, social studies, math, and science instruction. In FY 2007, PD was delivered through a full-day statewide PD event as one of the training topic options of four statewide PD days, as well as through regional workshops, artist educator residencies in DYS classrooms, and follow-up coaching services. HEC is in the process of crafting a new website to supply DYS teachers with examples of arts-based lessons that take into account the special circumstances of the DYS student population and that connect to state and national academic standards. As the program is still in its early stages, only preliminary data suggesting the program's efficacy are available. However, mechanisms to collect outcomes data are in place.

Eight courses were offered for the remaining four PD days. As in 2004-05, teachers had the option to register (at their own expense) for three college credits if they chose a seven-day course option. Offered in ELA and math, these courses expanded upon the required four-day classes and included additional work assignments and learning expectations. Table 11 presents the subject areas addressed through statewide PD in 2006-2007.

Table 11

Statewide 2006-07 PD Events		
Subject Area	**PD Training Topic Area**	**Time**
Art	Arts Integration and Meaningful Learning: An Introduction	1 day
English Language Arts	Literacy Learning for Secondary Students	4 or 7 days
English Language Arts	The Power of Student Writing: Writing in DYS Classrooms	4 or 7 days
Math	Teaching Mathematical Content in the DYS Classroom	4 or 7 days
Math	Learning Content to Teach Mathematics in the DYS Classroom	4 days
Science	"Ouch! Why does my head hurt?!" Science as Collaborative Inquiry	4 days
Social Studies	Teaching American History for Critical Understandings	4 days
Art	Arts Integration and Meaningful Learning: An Introduction	4 days
Life Skills	Effective Instruction in the DYS Life Skills Classroom	4 days

Statewide PD Attendance

In response to deficiencies identified at the onset of the Education Initiative, DYS has implemented a compulsory system of statewide training events and has established a set of strategies that support compliance with these systems. These strategies, which focus on accommodating teacher needs, overcoming program-based obstacles to participation, and encouraging attendance, include the following:

- Closing classrooms system-wide on statewide PD days, much as public schools cancel classes for teacher curriculum days. This strategy eliminates issues related to finding substitutes, having regular teachers out of the classroom, and gaining access to PD; and facilitates attendance of both teachers and other system educators.

- Mandating educator participation. Attendance rates have improved each year, and it is commonly observed that the mandatory attendance requirement put in place by DYS in 2005-2006 has supported this steady improvement. To help reinforce attendance expectations, teachers are required to complete registration forms with approval signatures from either or sometimes both their Teaching Coordinator and Area Education Coordinator (for HEC programs) or Program Director (for non-HEC vendors).

- Providing an opportunity for professional networking. Educators consistently identified the opportunity to meet with colleagues, both formally and informally, as the thing they look forward to most. This opportunity is of particular value because most DYS educators work in small, geographically dispersed programs.

- Incentivizing participation in PD. Incentives have been offered to further motivate teacher attendance. These include granting PD points to attendees, college credit options, the provision of lunch and refreshments, raffles, etc.

- Professionalizing the PD experience. Statewide PD takes place in an appealing conference-like setting. It is well organized and centrally located in Worcester, Massachusetts. Comments shared by teachers suggest that this environment adds to some teachers' enthusiasm for PD events and contributes to positive morale.

- Communicating a clear and well-planned PD calendar and agenda. PD-related information is disseminated through an array of communication channels and helps educators to plan ahead and prepare for upcoming events.

HEC provided the evaluation with statewide PD attendance files for each of the past three years. These data were analyzed and the results are presented in Table 12.[13] These data suggest that DYS is making great progress toward meeting their goal of establishing a PD system that is consistently well attended. The overall rate of attendance continues to increase, with a 10 percentage-point jump when attendance became mandatory in 2005-06. During 2006-07, PD events averaged 92% attendance, a substantial increase compared to the 85% average attendance in 2005-06 and 75% in 2004-05. Also in 2006-07, all but one event attained over 90% attendance, a level not attained for any event prior to that year.

Table 12

Attendance at Statewide Professional Development Events						
Academic Year	September	Early Fall	Early Winter	Later Winter	Early Spring	Yearly Average
2004-05	63%	73%	77%	82%	79%	75%
2005-06	86%	78%	87%	87%	86%	85%
2006-07	N/A	95%	92%	92%	89%	92%

Data also show that an increasing number of teachers participated in the maximum number of statewide PD events offered each year, rising from 43% in 2004-2005 to 71% in 2006-2007 (Table 13). It should be noted that attendance data for one of the 2006-2007 events were not available.

Table 13

Teachers who Attended all Statewide PD Events		
Academic Year	Count	% of Total
2004-05	77	43%
2005-06	102	54%
2006-07 (4 of 5 events)	137	71%

PD has been approached equitably across the state; that is, all educators have been provided equal access, regardless of vendor affiliation or program type. Compared to the virtual absence of any statewide PD before the Initiative, these data highlight a tremendous success for DYS.

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[13] Attendance records were obtained from HEC for each regular statewide PD event along with optional extra days offered in 2004-05 and 2006-07. Methodology used to generate attendance rates relied on standard but potentially imprecise methods due to inconsistencies and gaps in data collection. Whether teacher positions were not filled until after the PD events began, or were terminated before the PD events ended, is unclear and not uniformly marked. To generate rates of attendance, researchers need to know the total number of teachers eligible to attend these events. To do this, they used a variety of sources (e.g., human resource data, other DYS central office reports, etc.) to decide on a single number to represent the total teacher workforce for any individual year, and used this number as the denominator when calculating attendance rates. Specifically, there were 178 teachers in 2004-05, 190 in 2005-06, and 192 in 2006-07. Several attendees were marked as either arriving late or leaving early. For purposes of calculating attendance rates, these individuals were treated simply as attending. In some cases, teachers were marked as having either "excused" or "unexcused" absences. For purposes of calculating attendance rates, these individuals were all considered not attending.

How has DYS Statewide Professional Development been received by DYS educators?

Overall, teacher feedback acquired through open-ended DYS Teacher Survey questions and on-site interviews was very positive with regard to DYS's delivery of PD, particularly when contrasted to conditions before the Initiative began. In fact, the provision of PD was frequently recognized by educators as one of the chief factors contributing to recent educational improvement within DYS. Further, for teachers working in more isolated programs, the PD events bring colleagues together and thereby facilitate mutual support, idea sharing, updates, etc. One teacher who worked in a relatively isolated program shared that he has definitely seen an improvement in education overall, expressing that too many enclaves existed before.

> *As a result of PD, visits from Coaches, the new resources purchased and distributed, and communications with [the PD Director], everyone now seems to be more on the same page and operating with best intentions. Everything is much more positive than before and DYS has been very reflective. - Anonymous DYS Teacher*

The DYS Teacher Survey asked respondents to rate the full-day statewide PD events they attended in each of the past three years. To support an analysis of responses over time, survey data were disaggregated to focus on the 105 educators who reported that they attended at least one training event in each of the three years. As shown in Table 14, these data suggest that most educators consider these PD events not only relevant to their work, but also valuable to them as teachers.

Looking across years, responses are clustered around moderate to high, while each year there has been a small but notable increase in the percentage indicating very high. These findings suggest that PD offerings are relevant and offer value to most educators, but also underscore the challenge of meeting the diverse needs of teachers who bring a range of skill levels and experience to the classroom, and who function in a range of institutional settings.

Table 14

Ratings of Full-Day Statewide Professional Development Events							
Responses by Year of PD Event		**N**	**Very High**	**High**	**Moderate**	**Low**	**Very low**
The relevance of this training to your work							
	2004-05	105	14.3%	34.3%	34.3%	10.5%	6.7%
	2005-06	101	18.8%	27.7%	37.6%	11.9%	4.0%
	2006-07	103	24.3%	28.2%	33.0%	8.7%	5.8%
Overall value of statewide trainings provided							
	2004-05	103	9.7%	32.0%	38.8%	13.6%	5.8%
	2005-06	101	13.9%	29.7%	39.6%	10.9%	5.9%
	2006-07	101	16.8%	30.7%	32.7%	11.9%	7.9%

*Responses for only those who attended at least one PD event in each of the last 3 years including current year
Does not include missing responses

Data confirm that differences exist in the PD needs and expectations of DYS teachers and that these differences may account for a considerable portion of respondents who indicated PD has had moderate or limited relevance and value to their work. Making training relevant is further complicated by the fact that two-thirds of DYS teachers report they are teaching multiple subject areas, with a few teachers reportedly teaching as many as eight different subjects (Table 15). In this environment, teachers may want more in-depth, targeted instruction in their

area of expertise while simultaneously needing introductory content training in another area, complicating their choice of PD and potentially leaving them dissatisfied with the level of teacher knowledge around which a PD session is geared.

Table 15

Number of Subjects Taught by DYS Teachers	
Number of Subjects "Primarily" Teaching at Time of Survey	**%**
One	32.7
Two	30.3
Three	19.4
Four	9.7
Five or more	6.6

Constructive criticism of statewide PD generally focuses on two related themes. First, many teachers are interested in PD becoming more tailored to the DYS student population. The fact that youth at entirely different academic levels are typically in the same classrooms, and that many have "less than positive" educational histories has created a desire among educators for experience-based insight on how best to serve this population. The emphasis PD places on differentiated instruction would seem to be the logical response to this concern. However, data suggest that many educators continue to struggle to differentiate instruction. Even with differentiated instruction training, challenges to teaching such a wide group of learners remains a leading concern. A popular request from teachers is for an increase of PD instructors who are or have been successful in the DYS classroom to provide training on what works. Successful instructors from comparable systems in other states may also be suitable.

Second, teachers highly value training that incorporates strategies specific to working with students with widely varying lengths of stay and who often arrive and exit with limited notice. Some teachers feel that PD instructors have not adequately addressed the practical challenges of DYS's high mobility program environments. For some of these teachers, one of the most positive things about PD has been the sharing of "tried and true" lesson plans and other less formal communications that take place among colleagues. Some teachers have also expressed strong support for the instructional coaching model, which is designed to assist teachers in the implementation of curriculum and use of instructional practices learned through PD.

Fundamentally, DYS educators value professional development and are most interested in PD that acknowledges and makes accommodation for the unique attributes of DYS youth and DYS classrooms. The concerns some teachers raise underscore the significant challenges the DYS system faces in its quest to provide effective PD. The complex context in which education is delivered makes it extremely difficult to meet everyone's professional development needs. And now, more well-qualified teachers entering the DYS system are beginning to express demand for more specialized training.

While the general training is viewed by many as excellent, the gap between these generalized principles of good teaching and content knowledge, and the unique context in which DYS teachers operate is apparent. With no proven models and limited findings nationwide relative to best practices in juvenile justice education, DYS has employed a practical model for PD that relies to an extent on a "learn and adjust as you go" approach. It is a credit to DYS that it has embraced this flexible approach in its attempt to accommodate the full range of teacher needs, yet the concerns expressed by some teachers underscore the need to continue this learning process and to continue to refine PD offerings.

b. Complementary Professional Development Programming

While statewide PD stands out as the core of DYS's PD strategy, three other key initiatives have been launched to expand the capabilities of the overall PD system. Each either supplements statewide PD by addressing topic areas in greater depth, or fills niches for specific audiences. The three subsections to follow – Regional PD, Summer PD, and Teaching Coordinator PD – describe the purpose of these trainings, their design and content, attendance rates, and response from participants, as available. System documentation of these PD opportunities is not as complete as that of statewide PD, and therefore these opportunities are described in less detail than statewide PD.

Regional Professional Development

Regional PD was provided sporadically and somewhat informally until 2005-2006 when it became a formal part of the PD system. Participation at regional trainings is optional and these trainings are offered during the school day, which requires that teachers and programs arrange for classroom coverage in order to attend. Typically these regional events occur close to interested educators' job sites, although not in all instances. The regional trainings were launched to provide more in-depth training on classroom use of new curriculum and instructional materials disseminated to teachers during statewide PD events. Training topics generally complement statewide PD content by providing a more intense, singular focus.

Consistent with their inclusive approach to decision-making, DYS solicited input from teachers as to their interest in a selection of potential topic areas. For example, a survey was sent to teachers in fall 2005 to assess their interest in attending any of 16 potential training programs. Teachers were provided a brief description of prospective training content and duration. Responses were tabulated to determine which topic areas to present in 2005-2006. Although the intent is to provide similar trainings in each of the five DYS regions, at times specific training has been provided only in selected regions where teachers indicated sufficient interest. Teachers from other regions were eligible to attend, but may have had to travel greater distances.

In 2006-2007 regional training was provided in four topic areas. In total, these events attracted 119 educators (including some Area Education Coordinators and Education Liaisons). This represents 83 different participants after accounting for those who attended multiple sessions. Table 16 provides a review of 2006-2007 regional training topic areas and participation levels. No comparable data were available for past years.

Table 16

2006-07 Regional Training Events		
PD Training Topic Area	**# of Trainings**	**Total # of Participants**
Inspiration Basics	4	26
PowerPoint for Beginners	4	28
Reading Program Training	5	51
Learning to Use Geometer's Sketchpad	1	14
Annual Total	14	119

Limited data were available from attendees regarding their overall response to regional training. However, some important feedback did emerge related to attendance barriers during the UMass Donahue Institute's spring site-visit interview process. Foremost, several teachers (especially TCs) commented that they are out of the classroom too often already during the school year, and that during school and summer vacations they need to "recharge" themselves. Another disincentive mentioned is that having limited access to teacher substitutes makes leaving classrooms more difficult. As one teacher described, "The problem is that extra PD places strain on other teachers and on our program, which does not like absences – and we don't have subs." Finally, despite efforts to match

training topics to teacher needs, some teachers commented that the topics covered were not of high interest to them.

Summer Professional Development Programs

Summer PD Academies are open to all DYS teachers and are intended to provide an opportunity to enhance content knowledge and teaching skills in a relaxed environment outside the regular school year. Several workshops were offered in summer 2004, each providing multiple, full-day curriculum content training sessions across the four core academic areas. An additional training was targeted to new DYS classroom teachers.

After a one-year hiatus, The Summer PD Academy returned in 2006 to kick off the 2006-2007 PD calendar. As before, attendance was voluntary and participants received a stipend for each day they attended and completed assigned workshop activities. Seven different workshops were offered, including two full days of curriculum content training across the four core academic areas and single-day trainings in art and life skills. A separate session was targeted to Teaching Coordinators, which turned out to be the most well-attended workshop of the summer, with 22 participants. A total of 89 seats were filled throughout the week, representing 56 different teachers after accounting for those who attended multiple sessions. Table 17 provides a review of 2006 Summer Academy workshop areas and participation levels.

Table 17

Summer 2006 PD Workshops		
PD Training Topic Area	**Time**	**# of Participants**
English Content	2 days	10
Math Content	2 days	17
Science Content	2 days	11
Social Studies Content	2 days	14
Art Content	1 day	10
Life Skills Content	1 day	5
Teaching Coordinator Training	1 day	22
Total		89

Of note, the Summer Academy was provided again in 2007 with a variety of curriculum content training as well as a vendor fair where teachers could preview new curriculum materials. Data related to these programs were not available in time for this report.

Teaching Coordinator Professional Development

DYS has taken steps to increase the role of TCs as instructional leaders by incorporating PD into their existing regional meetings. Before 2005-2006, these meetings were described as business-oriented and focused mainly on administrative routines and procedures. As DYS became interested in introducing a training component into these gatherings, they conducted a survey of TCs to assess their needs and interests in areas of professional training. Following a review of survey data, DYS incorporated training into each of the four regional TC meetings held that year.

The TC meeting schedule was expanded in 2006-2007 to include five regional training days (each lasting three hours) and one full-day event focused on culturally responsive teaching. A portion of each meeting was reserved

for a discussion on multicultural teaching. These trainings were not geared specifically around how to be a TC; rather, the intent was for TCs to acquire new instructional knowledge and share it with teachers at their sites, thereby enhancing TCs' roles as instructional leaders.

Table 18 lists the topics covered in regional TC meetings held in 2006-2007. Results from an end-of-year HEC-administered survey are also included (see survey scale in table sub-notes). The survey asked TCs to rate the effectiveness of each training in supporting their role as a leader of their program. Data show that participants rated these events between somewhat and generally effective. The discussion around program and staff scheduling was rated the highest, which interestingly was not actually training but rather an exercise devoted to problem-solving and sharing of best practices.

Table 18

Ratings of 2006-07 Teaching Coordinator Regional Meetings	
Topic Area	**Mean Score**
Program and Staff Scheduling Discussion	3.3
Orientation to Math Instructional Guide	3.1
Reading Program for Juvenile Justice Adolescents	3.0
Managing the Multi-Cultural Classroom Workshop	2.9
We Can't Teach What We Don't Know Readings	2.6
Routines and Procedures Presentation	2.6
ESIS/DYS Focus Group	2.5

Rating Scale, 1 = not effective, 2 = somewhat effective, 3 = generally effective, 4 = highly effective

Comments from spring program site visits suggest that TCs greatly appreciate the opportunity to meet with colleagues to discuss practical challenges and share ideas. Many value this more than other more formal training and information sharing, which elicited a lukewarm response. Feedback pertaining to the multicultural teaching discussions – centered on "We Can't Teach What We Don't Know" readings – was mixed, but these discussions were generally not regarded as very useful. It is unclear whether feedback was reflective of the topic area or the discussion around it.

DYS professional development: Highlights and points to consider

- DYS's level of PD, both in terms of quantity and quality, has increased tremendously over the past three years. Teachers are now offered a variety of options for curriculum content training, instructional strategies, use of specific tools, and other essential components of effective practice. Taken in their entirety, these offerings respond directly to key goals of the Education Initiative.

- DYS PD directly supports the subject area instructional guides and curriculum tools to build consistent statewide practice with regard to curriculum, inclusive of standards-based content focus, instructional planning and delivery methods, etc.

- The decision to close school five days a year for PD, along with new requirements mandating participation in statewide training events, has been crucial to the substantial improvements in statewide PD attendance over the past three years. Contrasted with the virtual absence of statewide PD prior to the Initiative, these data highlight a tremendous success for DYS.

- Regional and summer PD attendance has not matched that of statewide PD, and scheduling difficulties and work overload are often cited as barriers to participation. DYS may want to consider incorporating more specific accommodations suited to regional and summer PD to increase attendance is desirable.

- DYS strives to create a flexible and diverse PD system to accommodate the full range of teacher needs. Managers are using teacher feedback to tailor their training while embracing a flexible and inclusive decision-making process to support this continuous "work in progress."

- DYS's original PD plan underestimated many teachers' needs for more basic training in curriculum content, lesson planning, and pedagogy. As a result, PD has refocused on elevating teaching skills and content knowledge to a base level, as a foundation for pursuing more advanced training. A more stable teacher workforce should enable PD instructors to provide more advanced training opportunities in the future.

- Moving forward, it may be important to offer two tracks of PD, one for veteran staff and another for new teachers or those struggling to embed concepts into the classroom. This will engage more experienced teachers with increasingly challenging PD topics while also addressing the fundamental training needs of new or struggling teachers.

- While not all teachers consider their needs adequately addressed, DYS may be positioned to do more now given its stronger foundation of licensed teaching staff, the variety of PD structures now in place, and its responsiveness to teacher feedback. Key interests of DYS educators include trainers familiar with the DYS classroom environment, strategies specific to working with high-mobility students, and strategies for "extreme" differentiation of instruction.

B. Development of an Instructional Coaching System

Development of an instructional coaching model within DYS: Why was it needed and what has been accomplished?

The 2002 DYS Legislative Report noted that "Instructional approaches vary from site to site and from content area to content area. There is no instructional methodology used with students at different grade levels and with differentiated instructional needs" (p. 10). Through the implementation of professional development and instructional guides that outline content, tools, and instructional methods, DYS has created a basis for more consistent practice; however, managers recognized that ongoing, on-site support was also essential to ensuring that these resources were effectively implemented at the classroom level. The DYS Education system is comprised of many small, and in some respects isolated, programs. In this environment, many teachers expressed a desire for help addressing the practical challenges of applying PD to their day-to-day instruction.

An instructional coaching model was developed in 2005 to assist DYS teachers in the implementation of the curriculum and high-quality instructional practices. Coaches are employed by HEC and report directly to HEC's DYS Professional Development Director. From the onset, services have been provided to all DYS teachers and programs.

How was the instructional coaching model introduced and what services have been provided to teachers?

Instructional coaching services began in 2004-2005. Site visit logs compiled by the two coaches indicate that during that year, the two coaches conducted over 60 site visits to DYS Education programs, facilitating implementation of new curriculum resources and instructional techniques, and addressing questions or concerns posed by teachers. This first-year process also provided the PD subcommittee and other Education Initiative

managers with critical information as to the instructional support needs of teachers, contributing to the conviction that a robust instructional coaching model was essential to the success of the Initiative.

In 2005-2006, two new full-time instructional coaches were hired: one to serve programs in the eastern side of the state, and the other to serve the western side. These coaches were hired based upon their "knowledge and understanding of quality and effective instructional practices," as well as their potential to contribute broadly to content development and content-related PD. The two coaches received a two-week training and orientation, and their year-end site visit logs indicate they conducted 215 visits to 57 different program sites.

In 2006-2007 a third coach was added to focus on programs in southeastern Massachusetts, resulting in a caseload of approximately 60 teachers per coach. This assignment model represented an important shift away from the original design (which was based on the number of programs per coach) and served to balance caseloads that previously were not proportional due to differences in program size in each region, most particularly in the metro-Boston area. Coaches' logs show a combined 263 site visits in 2006-2007.

Coaches' engagements with the field are both scripted and individualized. Typically, they meet initially with each teacher to develop goals for the year and, once goals have been established, set a schedule of visits. Coaches believe that the most critical component of the model is that their interactions with teachers are confidential, allowing them to establish trusting relationships with teachers and enabling open discussions about instructional practices, leading to a deeper collegiality and more meaningful and productive work together.

Based on the fact that classroom teachers have vastly different levels of experience, interests, areas of need, licensure, etc., the range of support provided by coaches has been broad. The following sampling of accomplishments reported by coaches suggests ways in which they have helped teachers to:

- Link PD to classroom practice
- Design and implement quality lesson plans
- Align instruction with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks
- Reflect on instructional practice
- Use questioning techniques to model reflective thinking practices
- Integrate technology tools into instruction
- Create more functional schedules
- Work with other teachers to integrate disciplines

Beyond their primary objective to provide instructional support to classroom teachers, some DYS teachers mentioned that the coaches have provided additional benefit by:

- Reducing their isolation by sharing key communications and opening doors to other DYS programs and teacher colleagues
- Providing recommendations and/or access to resources in a timely manner

How has on-site technical assistance and coaching been received by DYS educators?

Perceptions of coaching services vary from teacher to teacher, but on the whole are very positive. Data suggest that coaches have made significant progress in establishing trusting relationships with teachers. In a spring 2007 instructional coaching survey (conducted by HEC) of 109 DYS teachers, 89% of respondents agreed that they had developed a beneficial professional relationship with their coach. The DYS Teacher Survey of 165 teachers found that 78% rated working relationships with their coach as good or excellent.

On the HEC survey, 90% agreed that their coach is available to assist their instructional practice, suggesting that coaches have made themselves accessible to teachers. While survey data show that coaches are generally

perceived as accessible to teachers, interview data collected in spring 2007 suggest that more immediate availability is desired. While conflicting work demands and the travel time associated with large regional territories are limiting factors on coaches' availability, teachers' concerns weren't always about increasing the number of visits for classroom observations and discussions. Rather, some teachers simply value having someone they can easily and quickly access for answers to important questions. To this end, each coach has been provided with a cell phone and laptop to facilitate communication.

Interview data also revealed a range of teacher opinions with regard to the value of instructional coaching to their program. On the whole, feedback was positive and suggested the tone and style of the coaches were effective. Many interviewees felt that coaching should focus on the least-experienced and -qualified teachers, and identified a challenge for coaches in establishing their expertise and credibility when working with veteran DYS educators. Coaches were also valued for their knowledge of ongoing DYS initiatives and appear to play an important role in system-level communication.

On-site instructional coaching: Highlights and points to consider

- DYS has successfully established an on-site instructional coaching model. Although perceptions of their services vary, feedback on the whole is very positive.

- Data suggest that coaches have made significant progress toward establishing trusting working relationships with their assigned teachers/programs.

- Coaches are striving to communicate a clear understanding of their role, and evidence suggests that consistency is key, both in the coaches themselves and in their program assignments. Core understandings (i.e., their role as teacher support not supervisory, issues of confidentiality, etc.) take time to develop.

- Because coaching requires effective and trusting working relationships, the non-supervisory nature of the coaches' role and the confidentiality of coach-to-teacher contact are in fact woven into the instructional coach job description. The challenge ahead may be effectively measuring teacher quality improvements resulting from the instructional support provided by coaches while maintaining confidentiality.

- The role of the DYS instructional coach has recently expanded to include an active role in developing DYS curriculum guides and providing content-related training at statewide PD events and Teaching Coordinator meetings. Since these responsibilities increase demands on coaches' time, updating the existing job description may help managers prioritize critical functions and allot appropriate time to each.

- Due to the number and geographic spread of program sites, the coaches' evolving and expanding responsibilities, and the importance of developing effective coaching relationships with teachers, DYS has approved funding to hire a fourth coach in fall 2007.

- While coaches are in a position that requires constant engagement with teachers, they sometimes feel isolated from one another. These staff hope that expansion to four coaches will create greater opportunities for time to meet, coordinate, and share experiences among a wider circle of colleagues.

B. Student Transition Services

Among the goals of the Education Initiative is to develop effective new models to facilitate the transition of DYS youth back into the community. As conceptualized, these would include models geared to support re-entry into academic settings and also, where appropriate, into employment. This emphasis on employment transitions emerged as an important theme in the 2001 DYS Legislative Report, which noted:

> *A growing number of youth in DYS are older, not academically oriented, and unlikely to return to or remain in public school when they are discharged. Consequently, many would benefit from participation in vocational training, work-skill development, and job preparation training. (page 14)*

The Education Initiative did not focus on expanding employability pathways to the exclusion of student transitions into public- and alternative-school settings. In fact, these more traditional directions remain DYS's goal of choice for every student who enters the DYS system, and in many instances services that support transition to school and to employment operate side by side. As described later in this section, DYS is working to establish more consistent and effective transition practices, and has initiated a strategy to develop closer partnerships with public school districts throughout the Commonwealth, with the goal of facilitating DYS students' re-entry to and success in public schools.

It is important to note that this section is not intended to address the broader activities of DYS's system of Community Re-entry Centers and Neighborhood Centers, which were outside the scope of this evaluation.

1. Developing More Robust Employment Pathways for DYS Students

What was the state of employability-focused education opportunities within DYS prior to the Initiative?

The 2001 DYS Legislative Report described vocational education and job training within DYS as "sporadic." Further, it observed that "While some programs attempt to establish links with regional vocational/technical schools and community-based job training programs; there is little evidence of this type of partnership in most sites" (p. 14). Fundamentally, employability-oriented programs suffered from the same inconsistency of standards that was identified in traditional curriculum areas. There is no evidence to suggest that employability-focused programming was subject to evaluation to determine the efficacy of interventions.

What action has DYS taken to enhance vocational and employability pathways for DYS youth?

System-wide Availability of Vocational/Employability and GED Programming

System-wide, individual DYS Education programs provide some exposure to vocational and employability-related training, evidenced by the fact that 37% of respondents to the DYS Teacher Survey described opportunities to explore vocational interests as at least somewhat available to students within their programs. However, only 8% of respondents described these opportunities as very available, suggesting that these opportunities are generally limited, even where they are present. The 2007 Educational Field Assessment Summary Report offered a similar assessment when it observed that "39% of programs stated they have a vocational component," and further observed that 9% have designated vocational training areas, which may suggest more substantial offerings (p. 20). The report also noted that 53% of Teaching Coordinators suggested that vocational and job training options should be expanded (p. 28). There are no benchmark data against which to compare the relative availability of these offerings.

Interviews conducted with DYS managers and teachers clearly indicated that interest in increasing employment-oriented skills-development services is very high, system-wide. Similarly, they frequently expressed interest in enhancing access to GED opportunities for appropriate students. Field assessment data indicate that 42% of

programs have some GED preparation materials or course offerings available to students, while DYS Teacher Survey results suggest that written information (82%) and test preparation materials (90%) are at least somewhat available to students (57% and 63% indicated very available, respectively). A smaller proportion of respondents described GED courses (57%) and on-site testing (34%) as at least somewhat available (38% and 19% indicated very available, respectively).

As is the case with regard to availability of vocational/employability programming, no comparative benchmark data are available for measurement of progress with regard to provision of GED related supports over time. Complicating any benchmarking effort is a current lack of system-wide standards for what should constitute vocational or employability programming or GED support.

However, the imminent release of new GED guidelines developed by DYS (expected to facilitate access to GED services), the hiring of a statewide Vocational-Employability Program Manager (through CommCorp) in September 2007, and the implementation of new pilot initiatives to support student access to employability-related programs – some of which have direct links to GED services – all indicate increasing momentum for the development of programming in these areas as options for older students who are unlikely to re-enter high school.

Finally, vocational aptitude and interest assessments have been implemented through the Pilot Assessment Packet, which is used at several participating DYS assessment programs; and the Career Decision Making (CDM) tool was purchased and distributed to all DYS assessment programs. Implementation of the CDM has not been assessed, but anecdotal evidence suggests it should be more closely monitored to better understand its use and value to treatment program staff.

New Pilot Initiatives to Enhance the Employability Skills of DYS Youth

The Department has taken steps to develop complementary programming that supports the career readiness and employability of DYS youth as they transition to the community. In 2006, working with CommCorp, DYS initiated a pilot program to encourage the development of local, partnership-based models for career readiness and employability-related training. This program was supported by state funding and targeted both the development of regional vocational/employability pilot programs and the support of a competitive grant program called "Bridging the Opportunity Gap." These combined activities will be referred to as the Bridging the Opportunity Gap (or BOG) Initiative.

As described in a September 2007 report[14] issued by CommCorp on behalf of DYS, the BOG Initiative was guided by four goals:

1. To expand DYS Capacity through improved community connections and partnerships

2. To target partnership opportunities with vocational-technical high schools, community and faith-based organizations (collectively termed CBOs), workforce investment boards (WIBs), and career centers

3. To create pilot programs statewide with initiatives in each of the five DYS regions

4. To improve DYS youths' transitions to the community through increased access to career readiness and employability training opportunities

Fourteen programs were funded through the BOG Initiative across the three targeted partner groups: six with CBOs (98 youth), four with WIBs (64 youth) and four with vocational-technical schools (93 youth). These programs ranged in duration from nine weeks to eight months, serving a total of 255 youth. Adjusting for the fact that 25 students are in the early phases of a multi-year program (at ROCA in Chelsea), the overall youth completion rate for the pilot programs was 60% (138 of 230).

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[14] Daisley, et al., *The Bridging the Opportunity Gap Initiative: Massachusetts Department of Youth Services (DYS) Job Readiness and Employment Initiative*. Prepared by the Commonwealth Corporation on behalf of the Department of Youth Services, September 2007.

Program data (Table 19) show that the profile of participants was broadly representative of DYS students statewide, with the exception of a substantial under-representation of white students and a modest over-representation of Hispanic and Asian youth, and males. Students participated in internships, mentoring, job shadowing, and part- and full-time employment opportunities. In addition, students were subjectively assessed for behavioral changes, although the program did not appear to have a meaningful impact in this regard.

Table 19

BOG Pilot Participant Demographic Data							
	African American	Hispanic	White	Asian	Mixed/ Other	Male	Mean Age
Pilot Participants*	30%	33%	18%	10%	9%	90%	16.9
All DYS Youth**	27%	25%	38%	3%	8%	84%	17.2

* Note: percentages recalculated from raw numbers in original report tables

** Data source: 2006 DYS Public Information Packet

In September 2007, it was announced that a second round of funding would be available for additional BOG Initiative grants, which may be used for the purposes of continuing successful initiatives and creating new opportunities and partnerships across the state. Perhaps most importantly, DYS will be able to rely upon an established infrastructure that is goal and accountability focused, and will benefit from an organized accounting of what happened in the first year of the program, inclusive of a detail review of barriers to success and lessons learned, and inclusive of specific recommendations for program operation in FY 2008.

Among the programs expected to receive continuation funding is the Putnam Vocational Training Program, managed by the Massachusetts Career Development Institute in partnership with the Corporation for Justice Management (which operates DYS's Springfield Community Re-entry Center). This program allows DYS youth who are transitioning back into the community to attend after-school classes at Putnam Vocational-Technical School taught by certified vocational teachers in several subject areas. The Putnam Program, launched in summer 2006, has demonstrated success imparting job skills to students, supporting their attainment of GEDs and drivers' licenses, and placing students in both internships and full-time jobs following program completion. This program is further described in the *Featured Practices* section.

DYS employability and vocational programs: Highlights and points to consider

- DYS is taking proactive steps to improve and support GED and employability programming within its educational programs, including:
  - Hiring a statewide Vocational-Employability Program Manager (through CommCorp)
  - Revising policies to facilitate student access to GED services (currently under review)
  - Developing a practitioner guide for career readiness and employability, due for release in June 2008
  - Integrating career decision-making tools into the new DYS student-assessment regimen

- DYS is working to develop effective models for community partnerships to bring students into contact with career readiness and employability skills programming following their release from custody. Fourteen pilots were funded in FY 2007 through a competitive grant award process. Similar resources available in FY 2008 will enable the continuation of promising initiatives as well as the development of new partnerships.

- The BOG Initiative was goal-focused and articulated clear standards for monitoring and assessment, such that program managers will have a reasoned basis for replication of effective program models. Lessons learned through the first year will inform program implementation in FY 2008.

- Partnership-driven models for career-readiness and employability programming do offer cost economies in the context of the DYS's geographically dispersed educational service delivery structure, but these models are also complex to develop and manage, and sustainability remains uncertain. Logistical issues, such as transportation, and keeping students on track following their release to the community, are substantial challenges to the system.

- Students can be more closely monitored and held accountable when they are in DYS Education programs than when they are in the community. Acknowledging this, provision of employability and GED courses at the educational program level may be appropriate for students who are unlikely to return to school. However, a focus on core academic subjects during the regular school day leaves little time to address these subjects. DYS should carefully consider whether and how to create career readiness and employability pathways within educational programs.

2. Supporting Student Transition Back into Community-based Academic Settings

What was the state of educational transition services within DYS prior to the Initiative?

The Education Initiative identifies an increase in the number of students who transition successfully back to local schools as a key goal. DYS's 2001 Legislative Report spoke to what it concluded was a critical flaw in existing operations to support these transitions:

> *DYS does not have standard protocols in place nor the resources to execute them for students… who are transitioning back to the community. There is a need to develop operational protocols for educational and program staff to address the planning, coordination, and delivery of educational services as students transition from one location to another. (pages 11-12)*

That report did not identify baseline data with regard to student transition outcomes, but identified a lack of system-wide consistency as a key aspect of the problem. In addition, it noted that the caseloads of DYS Education Liaisons (ELs) were too high, with only seven of ten positions filled system-wide at the time of that report and with vacancies a chronic problem due to salaries starting at less than $30,000. Interviews with both DYS staff and public school guidance staff revealed that credit recovery problems also stood as an impediment to some students' re-entry into high school, since non-standard and in some instances insufficient transcripts made it difficult for schools to determine student credit status and placement.

What steps has DYS taken to enhance student transition back to community-based academic settings?

This report has described concrete steps DYS has taken to improve the system-wide quality of its teaching and learning. The Department's new personnel policies, standards-aligned curricula, related materials and technology, and robust instructional report were all undertaken with the goal of providing DYS students with content knowledge, skills, and educational routines (as basic as daily attendance of school) that will support successful reintegration into the community and successful school placement. In addition to these efforts, DYS is working to enhance the capacity of its Education Liaisons to support academic transitions and to develop collaborative models with public school districts in support of students' re-entry into high school.

Enhancing the Education Liaison System to Support Student Transition

Education Liaisons follow and support students as they transition between DYS programs and from DYS programs back into their home communities. The 2001 DYS Legislative Report cited EL caseloads approaching 400, and recommended 200 as a target, while noting that this figure still exceeded the average of 125 to 150 achieved in the early 1990s. The report suggested aligning EL salaries with a new statewide teacher salary scale and adding a program supervisor and four administrative assistants (p. 20).

Five years later, the goal of a 200 student average EL caseload has been achieved, and DYS has increased the attractiveness of the EL positions by raising wages. November 2006 personnel data show that wages have generally risen consistent with teacher salary increases resulting from implementation of the new DYS salary scale. The average salary of DYS liaisons was approximately $43,000 in FY 2006, and the same wage scale was applicable in FY 2007. Three of the ten ELs held a master's degree and the other seven held bachelor's degrees. In addition, seven of ten held either a teaching or social work license. Such credentials are important in a role that requires substantial engagement with school- and community-based resources and which has direct input to student placement and service decisions.

While caseloads have been reduced, ELs' jobs continue to evolve and require them to engage multiple institutions and programs in relation to each student. ELs also now play an expanded role supporting MCAS administration for the programs to which they are assigned, which is a complex task in a system characterized by high student mobility and sometimes uncertain student credit status. To ensure effective supervision and coordination of the EL staff, DYS approved the hiring of a Transition Coordinator, both to supervise the ELs and to assist them. In addition, this coordinator is working to create greater consistency in the transition process and is seeking to define specific protocols for student re-entry into public school districts. The goal is to make the process explicit, documented, and formalized through memoranda of understanding with each district.

Assisting with Credit Recovery through the Universal Student Transcript

While DYS is still in the early stages of establishing more consistent transition protocols, there have been significant developments, including implementation of a Universal Student Transcript (UST) and specific protocols to guide the process for determining student eligibility for, and the administration of, MCAS examinations. A discussion of DYS's MCAS administration support process appears in the forthcoming section, *Education Systems Management*.

The UST was developed in response to concerns that inconsistent tools for charting student work while in DYS custody were resulting in a loss of credit for time spent in the DYS classroom and lengthening the time it took for students to transition back into school following their release into the community. The 2002 DYS Legislative Report noted that "The uncertainty of receiving credit for accomplishments threatens motivation and jeopardizes the academic and clinical achievements gained while the youth was in residential placement" (p. 9). This was of great concern, as research demonstrates that the sooner youth are enrolled in school upon release, the better their likelihood for successful re-entry.[15]

In interviews, ELs recalled that prior to development of the UST, students would go back to their local public school with different transcripts from each DYS program they attended, and these transcripts would present information in different formats. According to contacts in several schools, this lack of uniformity made it difficult for administrators, guidance counselors, and teachers to decipher what DYS students had accomplished and increased the time it took to place them. In addition, school staff reported that often, neither the classes nor students' academic achievements were clearly described. A more complete description of the UST and its implementation appears in the *Featured Practices* section of this report.

The system has not maintained data relative to student "credit recovery" pre- and post-implementation of the UST, and this lack of outcomes data is of concern to program managers and staff. However, several school administrators attested that the UST has facilitated student re-entry. Among DYS teachers and even some ELs, there is a range of opinion as to how deep problems went in the past, perhaps because some programs or regions had more success in credit recovery than others. Some programs continue to employ customized transcripts, which expand upon the core content of the UST template. Further, interviews suggest a need to enforce transcript turnaround time in some locations. Teaching Coordinators received UST training in spring 2007, which may improve compliance with protocols. Such training should be provided to all incoming TCs.

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[15] Bloomberg, Pesta, Bales, Johnson & Berk. Incarceration, Educational Achievement, and Transition from Delinquency (manuscript).

Enhancing Support for Students as They Re-enter Public Schools

DYS has collaborated with urban school districts to facilitate more successful student transitions back into academic settings. These programs were not a direct object of study for this evaluation; however, information pertaining to three public school transition initiatives – in Holyoke, Lynn, and Boston – was provided to the evaluation team through an effort to identify promising practices within the DYS system. Program descriptions and outcomes provided through the promising practices initiative were not subject to further review or evaluation, as this initiative was postponed by DYS.

In Holyoke, the school district (HPS) and DYS's Holyoke Community Re-entry Center (CRC) operate a transition program for youth being discharged from DYS custody back to the district. Students are enrolled in this program, called the CRC School, immediately upon their release from a DYS program. The CRC School, staffed by an HPS teacher under the supervision of the principal of Holyoke's alternative school, attempts to avoid delays in placement and maintain the forward momentum of positive DYS educational experiences. DYS and Holyoke share responsibility for school supplies.

HPS high school students are required to complete any time remaining in the current semester before transferring to a standard HPS high school, while middle school students must first complete the current academic quarter. In addition, if a former DYS student attending a regular Holyoke school is suspended, the suspension is spent at the CRC School, rather than in the community. The school reports that completion rates have ranged from 50% to 68% over the program's five years of operation.

In Lynn, the Multi-Agency Student Transitional (MAST) School was established through collaboration between the Lynn Public Schools (LPS) and DYS. According to the promising practices application submitted by LPS and DYS, MAST "was designed to expedite the transition of the student to the community, to improve communication between LPS, DYS, and other involved agencies, and to conduct meetings in case review to… determine transition to other mainstream educational settings within the district."

MAST is a multi-faceted program with particular capacity to work with students with special needs. It offers what program managers describe as "a holistic approach" that integrates delivery of the LPS curriculum, a flexible schedule, alternative employability-skills programs, GED programs, and MCAS preparation and remediation. Managers report improved graduation rates and MCAS achievement overall, and anecdotal observations of improved rates of recidivism and revocation. Although none of these data were quantified in the application, the program indicated an ability to generate such data if needed.

In Boston, the Community Transition School (CTS), established in December 2004, is the product of collaboration between DYS and the Boston Public Schools (BPS), a process facilitated by CommCorp. Designed to facilitate the successful reintegration of DYS students into BPS high schools, CTS is viewed as a promising model for cooperation between DYS and public school districts. The school, operated and staffed by BPS, was reconstituted from a previous collaborative effort that was judged unsuccessful. The goal of CTS is to facilitate successful transition by providing a "step-down" from DYS Education to BPS high schools. This would reduce the need for a rapid readjustment to high school life, which is difficult for many adjudicated youth.

The CTS model requires that students spend a minimum of one full semester at CTS, and that they meet specific benchmarks before transitioning into a BPS high school. During this time, CTS staff learn students' strengths and interests, while exposing them to the standard BPS curriculum and, recently, its benchmark assessments. The intent is to bridge students from the DYS curriculum, which is aligned with the state frameworks, to the BPS curriculum, which is also aligned, but utilizes different resources, methods, and pacing. In this way, CTS facilitates students' reintegration into BPS grade-level work and positions them for academic success.

In addition to engaging students in core academic programming that is consistent with BPS high schools, CTS staff work closely with students to determine which BPS school is the best fit for them. CTS students develop portfolios of work, which they share with the schools they visit. These portfolios highlight their current academic skills and interests. Placement data show that students have been directed to numerous placements, including

traditional BPS high schools, pilot schools, and alternative schools. The CTS Principal believes that in addition to helping students identify which school is best suited to their needs, that personal visits and student portfolios lessen the concerns that some principals have about integrating DYS youth into their schools.

CTS can serve up to 25 students and works primarily with youth at DYS grid levels 3-6, which correspond to serious offenses. The CTS Principal noted that strong support within BPS administration is central to the program's success. When asked how to further improve student transition, she noted that the key is to help youth to sustain themselves in the community, which will require innovative new supports that keep students engaged academically. She suggested academic caseworkers engaged with DYS youth, their families, and their schools, as an example of such a support. The CTS program is described in greater detail in the *Featured Practices* section of this report.

Programs to support academic transitions: Highlights and points to consider

- DYS's Education Liaisons play a critical role supporting DYS youth transitions. Average EL caseloads have dropped from nearly 400 to about 200, while EL salaries have improved in line with overall DYS teacher salary improvements. These changes are likely to benefit both job performance and retention.

- Anecdotal data suggest that the Universal Student Transcript (UST) has improved credit recovery for DYS students transitioning back to public schools. Public school officials indicate an improved academic ability to assess the content and exposure DYS students have had to academic subjects, resulting in more timely and appropriate placement.

- While Teaching Coordinators received additional UST training in FY 2007, anecdotal reports of non-compliance with UST protocols at some programs suggest that ongoing training, as well as action to enforce compliance, may be advisable.

- DYS approved the hiring of a Transition Coordinator in January 2007 to provide supervision to its Education Liaisons, as well as to create greater consistency in the student transition process and to define specific protocols for student re-entry into public school districts. Ultimately, this may require formally agreed upon and documented processes to guide student transition.

- DYS is engaged in several partnerships with urban school districts including Holyoke, Lynn, and Boston to facilitate student transitions into academic settings using a range of strategies. Further study is required to understand the efficacy and cost effectiveness of each approach.

- Student transition remains an area of opportunity for continued reform and investment by DYS. Attention to this component of the continuum of care will be essential to realizing and measuring the long-term outcomes of the Education Initiative.

C. Education Systems Management

What was the state of DYS Education Systems Management prior to the Initiative?

Both historically and presently, DYS's faces several significant management challenges. Perhaps foremost are the complications of the purchased-services model through which educational, clinical, and other services are implemented. For example, in FY 2007, educational services were provided to youth through 57 programs distributed throughout the Commonwealth, which were operated by roughly 14 different vendors or by the state.

Educational programs also vary by program size, security level, or position in the continuum of care (detention, assessment, treatment, revocation). Additionally, special education services are not directly under DYS management, but are instead provided by the EDCO Collaborative as a contractor to the MA DOE. This all complicates communication, coordination, and oversight. According to the 2001 DYS Legislative Report, management of this complex matrix of vendors had been undermined by a vast reduction of human resource capacity in the previous decade. The report concluded,

> *The Department does not have a management infrastructure capable of supporting its education, job training, and employment programs. Prior to the budget cuts of 1990, the Department had an education and job training staff of ten. Through attrition and early retirement, this number was reduced to two central office education staff, and no central office job training staff.*

The 2002 DYS Legislative Report confirmed these challenges and added that the "Education infrastructure and management capacity of DYS has not changed in the past year. One education administrator provides on-going support to all programs. In addition, this lone administrator is responsible for the oversight and management of 16 different contracts." These conditions, combined with a limited management staff and a complex service delivery system, presented a substantial challenge to implementing reforms associated with the Education Initiative.

How did DYS address deficiencies in its Education Systems Management?

While this evaluation is not intended to study the organizational structure of DYS or measure its internal management capacity, it is clear that management capacity impacts the conceptualization and implementation of the Education Initiative. As a matter of practicality, DYS moved to acquire additional education expertise and management capacity in support of the Initiative through external vendors – primarily with CommCorp, and in turn with HEC as a CommCorp subcontractor. In this way, DYS has extended educational expertise and infused the system with much-needed personnel resources, allowing DYS to engage educational and workforce development experts to assist in the design and implementation of the Initiative.

That the Education Initiative relies heavily on purchased services raises critical questions about the sustainability of new initiatives in the absence of these resources, and also about the extent to which the complexity of system management may have increased through implementation of the Initiative. However, as these questions were not the focus of this evaluation, this section instead provides a review of progress in the implementation of several specific systems management initiatives to enhance educational system accountability and coordination.

1. System Accountability

What was the state of the DYS Education accountability structure prior to the Initiative?

The 2001 DYS Legislative Report outlined a number of concerns relative to system standards and practices, highlighting the lack of consistency in the operation of programs:

Curriculum and instructional practices vary among programs, making it difficult for students to transition between programs and for teachers to plan for the many students who enter and leave their classrooms. A significant number of programs have only a partial written curriculum or no written curriculum at all. MCAS test preparation is inconsistent from program to program. There are several other factors that impact the learning environment:

– *Teacher/student ratios vary substantially across sites. At some sites, it is 1:8; at others, it can be as high as 1:25.*

– *There is no provision or funding for the use of substitute teachers to cover for regular teaching staff who are on vacation, out sick, or attending professional development programs.*

– *The level and quality of supervision of teachers varies across programs. At some sites, it is excellent; at most, especially ones where staff work for multiple providers, it is less effective, and some teachers report inadequate supervision.*

– *There is a lack of curriculum and materials for students who are Limited English Proficient (LEP), and DYS does not have sufficient LEP expertise on staff.*

– *Some sites have no computer equipment to do assessment, no CDs to use for curriculum support, and few examples of education disks available.*

– *Site visits revealed that some classrooms had no manipulatives, which are especially useful in math instruction.*

– *The availability of supplies varies across programs. Some teachers report using their own money for supplies and student incentives.*

These observations reflect the absence of clearly articulated expectations relative to the standards for education within DYS. Lacking a set of clear standards and sufficient staff and expertise to enforce them, the system had developed in an idiosyncratic fashion and was inconsistent with recommended practice for educational administration.

How has DYS approached its goal to develop an accountability system for educational programming?

DYS managers recognized that the development and communication of Minimum Education Standards would be central to the success of the Education Initiative. In January 2005 the Department adopted a set of minimum requirements for education – also known as Minimum Education Standards (MES). These standards are focused on nine aspects of educational service delivery: program facilities, staffing, professional development, class schedules, curriculum and materials, student transcripts, testing, services for students with special needs, and technology (Figure 2).

Figure 2

The adoption of MES represented a key milestone of the Initiative. By establishing and advancing a uniform set of standards, DYS accomplished two objectives. First, the standards sent an important message to DYS educators, managers, and staff that education is a priority and that programs are accountable for meeting specific standards. Second, they enabled DYS to measure individual program characteristics more systematically, and thereby supported the identification of system-wide priorities for improvement. Following development of the MES, DYS set out to provide the proper tools and personnel to create awareness of these standards and to begin implementing a more accountability-oriented educational system.

DYS uses a number of mechanisms to monitor program compliance with MES and other contractually stipulated obligations. These include personnel-based systems such as site visits from DYS Regional Directors or Area Education Coordinators (for HEC-run programs), which enable DYS to identify programs in need of immediate intervention. Other less formal day-to-day structures in support of compliance include program meetings between teachers, Teaching Coordinators, and Program Directors. However, DYS lacked a clearly defined system-wide accountability mechanism focused exclusively (or even primarily) on educational service delivery until it developed an annual Education Field Assessment (FA) process.

The DYS Field Assessment Process

According to DYS managers, the FA process was intended in part as a means to communicate the Minimum Education Standards (MES) to programs, particularly in its first year. It also functioned as a system-wide diagnostic, providing DYS with a broad view of educational service delivery across the state. As such, it allowed

DYS and its partners to identify areas of relative strength and weakness, and thus prioritize for reform. The assessment was conducted, in close collaboration with CommCorp, at all DYS Education program sites in 2004, 2006, and 2007, and at a sample of sites (16) in 2005.

Protocol requires that each DYS program complete an FA survey instrument in advance of a site visit by the FA team. This survey instrument is comprised of a battery of questions organized into eight topic areas that are closely aligned with the major sections of the MES document. Interviews with education program staff suggest that these surveys are generally completed by education staff – typically the Teaching Coordinator – but that Area Education Coordinators and Program Directors may also have completed the survey in some locations. The vast majority of programs returned the FA survey, with isolated instances of non-compliance. However, programs frequently failed to provide all of the requested information on the form. In addition to the FA instrument, the assessment protocol includes classroom observations and interviews with both staff and students, all of which are performed by CommCorp staff or consultants during a site visit.

The general FA protocol has remained consistent over time, with only minor modifications to the 2007 survey instrument, which refined response options in order to make results easier to analyze. As an example, a single question on the old instrument asked "Are teachers required to have daily lesson plans? Are these reviewed with a supervisor? Who? How often?" This was followed by two lines for responses. This approach often led to incomplete or unclear answers as well as complicated analysis and reporting. As DYS looked increasingly to benchmarking and trends analysis, the difficulty of coding responses in this very open format became evident. On the new survey, response options are generally pre-defined, and the question described above now consists of four distinct questions, each with categorical response options.

At the end of each year, the FA team presents key findings of the process in a summary report. This typically includes some reflection of DYS's observable progress in addressing the recommendations of past FA reports, as well as recommendations for existing and emergent issues. The FA process has generated a number of relevant and timely recommendations to the system. As importantly, it represents a critical first step in creating the awareness and expectation that education programs will be accountable to standards.

While the FA process generates a useful overview of the statewide system and has served as a mechanism to raise awareness of DYS Minimum Education Standards, it has, to date, stopped short of providing detailed feedback about programs' strengths and opportunities for improvement. In this way, it has not yet fully addressed DYS's long-term goal of creating strong program-level accountability systems to support and sustain continuous improvement at the program level. Another limitation is the lack of available resources to verify FA survey instrument findings.

DYS has opted to discontinue the FA process in FY 2008 as it regroups and considers its options for a more rigorous and objective reporting system. In essence, the FA process has created a foundation, both cultural and functional, upon which more robust accountability processes can be built in the coming years.

Other Initiatives Illustrating DYS's Focus on Accountability and Outcome Measurement

The Bridging the Opportunity Gap Initiative. In addition to developing program-level standards, DYS has taken steps to increase the level of accountability and evaluation associated with its new initiatives. Most notable are the processes established for current and future DYS pilot programs through the BOG Initiative in FY 2007. While early indications are that BOG was very successful in establishing new vocational and employability programs (see previous section on transition services), the accountability-driven pilot process employed by DYS and CommCorp is equally notable for moving from idiosyncratic to systematized approaches to program implementation.

Among the encouraging aspects of the BOG Initiative are the clear goals and standards set out in this competitive grant program's request for proposals, which were complemented by clearly detailed reporting requirements for grantees. This structure provides the ability to monitor pilot programs and assess their efficacy while

simultaneously establishing an important precedent in a system that is moving toward data-driven management and decision making.

Further, the BOG initiative developed an easy-to-use, web-based data reporting tool to support the collection of detailed demographic data on participating youth. This web-based system may serve as a model for data collection in DYS, which still relies heavily on paper-based systems for program-level data collection and reporting. All grantees received training on how to use the web-based interface and what data to collect. As a result of this emphasis on data collection, program managers were able to run a range of statistical reports at the end of the grant period, which contributed to managers' understanding of program success and supported the development of recommendations that may influence DYS's approach to distributing and managing BOG funds in FY 2008.

Formal evaluation requirements instituted for the BOG initiative constitute a promising step forward. A detailed discussion of this well-conceived and accountability-driven approach to pilot initiatives appears in the *Featured Practices* section of this report.

Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) Benchmark Reports. EOHHS has increasingly focused on the outcomes side of the accountability question, highlighted by their "Benchmarks" reporting initiative. DYS participates fully in this system and produces bi-monthly Benchmark reports that provide a snapshot of DYS performance, summarizing education, employment, and other critical outcomes for DYS youth. Through Benchmarks, DYS establishes outcomes goals and defines and describes annual objectives, past year results, and key lessons learned. These reports present a range of outcomes data – from revocation statistics to MCAS performance to GED attainment – and also identify specific recommendations for improving the collection and reporting of data in relation to each variable of interest.

Benchmark Reports are another important step toward an accountability system that focuses on student outcomes. However, the data presented in these reports may not in all cases adequately represent youth outcomes. This is generally due to two factors. First, it is often unclear whether outcomes are reported for all DYS youth or only for those who, for example, remain in school after discharge to the community. Second, the evidence of causality is not strong between DYS's educational services and, for example, MCAS results, due both to the first factor and to the inability to view results by sub-groups based on student or program characteristics. However, these limitations should not detract from the positive progress that the Benchmarks reporting system represents, particularly given that this system is currently in a formative and improvement-oriented phase. It represents a promising step toward measuring and understanding long-term outcomes of adjudicated youth.

DYS Education accountability structures: Highlights and points to consider

- In light of constraints on its ability to hire staff directly, the Department has established contracts with CommCorp and others to increase its capacity and educational expertise. While these contractual arrangements have enabled much of the Education Initiative's progress to this point, they may not in all ways meet DYS's interest in developing internal management capacity.

- DYS's development of Minimum Education Standards represents a key milestone for the Initiative. By advancing a common set of standards, DYS not only set expectations for educators, but also enabled DYS to measure individual program characteristics more systematically, and thereby supported the identification of system-wide priorities for improvement. As an increasing number of programs are meeting the standards, DYS is now in a position to "raise the bar" for performance.

- A critical step forward, the Field Assessment (FA) process built awareness of the Minimum Education Standards, provided a consistent snapshot of DYS programs statewide, and established a foundation, both cultural and functional, upon which more rigorous progress-monitoring and continuous-improvement systems may be built.

- Two initiatives provide encouraging signs of DYS's increasing capacity for educational accountability and evaluation:

    – The ongoing Bridging the Opportunities Gap grant program provides clear goals and standards, complemented by substantive reporting requirements and web-based data collection systems.

    – The EOHHS Benchmarks reporting initiative, in which DYS fully participates, is taking steps toward measuring and understanding the long-term outcomes of adjudicated youth. These outcomes data will become increasingly relevant as reporting and analysis are refined and as intermediate outcomes, such as student knowledge gains while in DYS Education programs, are better understood.

2. System Coordination

What was the state of system coordination prior to the Initiative?

As noted earlier, past legislative reports highlighted severe cutbacks to DYS's central office capacity during in the 1990s and raised concerns about whether DYS's management infrastructure was adequately resourced to support its education, job training, and employment programs. The 2001 DYS Legislative Report also addressed the need for DYS to institutionalize protocols for the delivery of educational services to strengthen continuity across programs. Specifically, that report concluded,

> *DYS does not have standard protocols in place, nor the resources to execute them, for continuing educational services for students who are transitioning between DYS programs, or who are transitioning from DYS programs back to the community. The lack of transition planning impacts students' ability to receive a continuum of services that meets their needs and abilities, based on past and planned courses of instruction. There is a need to develop operational protocols for educational and program staff to address the planning, coordination, and delivery of educational services as students transition from one location to another. These protocols should clarify roles and responsibilities for these staff.*

How did DYS approach its goal to develop better system coordination?

Educational programs, service delivery, and support methodologies vary to some extent from region to region and site to site, and DYS sometimes struggles to maintain uniform and well-coordinated services in this variable environment. Recently, DYS has taken substantive steps to better connect existing areas of focus and to ensure that new initiatives are aligned not only with other reform activities but also with the Initiative's short- and long-term goals.

Curriculum- and instruction-related coordination. DYS has made an enormous investment in the coordination of curriculum and instruction. To support the application of these investments in the classroom, DYS has selected HEC, a well-qualified organization, to manage the PD system, developed and implemented an increasingly well-resourced instructional coaching model, and established a collaborative decision-making process through a PD subcommittee.

System-wide meetings and functional workgroups facilitate communication and decision making. System-wide meetings, including regular meetings between managers from DYS, CommCorp, and HEC, have occurred frequently since the start of the Initiative. These managers have also attended or hosted separate meetings with the DYS Education Advisory Committee (which includes broad representation from other educational program vendors), Teaching Coordinators, Area Education Coordinators, Education Liaisons, the PD subcommittee, and others. These formal communication events are a positive step toward a more robust collaborative infrastructure

to support DYS's education and transition services. They have also supported DYS's efforts to strengthen the alignment of complimentary activities and approaches.

New management positions allow for more effective coordination of key program areas. Over the past year, DYS has allocated funding for new positions to support their infrastructure. These new positions expand the active management capacity of large program areas. For example, transition is an enormous and complex program area that is supported, in part, by ten Education Liaisons. In January 2007 DYS approved the hiring of a Transition Coordinator to create greater consistency in the transition process and to define specific protocols for student re-entry into public school districts. This marks the first time in many years that the Education Liaisons, who are critical to student transition, are working under the direction of a full-time supervisor.

In summer 2007 DYS approved the hiring of a Vocational-Employability Program Manager whose specific responsibilities and full-time hours represent a sizeable expansion of previous resources. One of the top priorities for this position is to facilitate and manage all activities related to community transition pilot projects and vocational/employability initiatives – two areas that many DYS staff and managers agree need additional attention and resources.

Finally, DYS recently approved the hiring of an Education Data Systems Specialist, a full-time HEC-based position to support the system-wide collection, management, and analysis of student, teacher, and program data. This position is intended to support the development and implementation of a data-management system, including Title 1 accountability and documentation needs, as well as to conduct data analysis and generate reports utilizing an electronic system that collects and disseminates educational records.

These three positions illustrate DYS's increasing investment in management systems that are critical to coordinating the education system. Whereas transition services, vocational/employability services, and data collection and analysis have been provided relatively haphazardly in the past, these positions constitute a promising step toward a clear and unified approach to critical DYS components, as recommended in past legislative reports.

Hiring an Education Data Systems Specialist is of particular interest to program evaluation, as DYS Education currently lacks the data collection infrastructure required to support a comprehensive program management system. For example, many ongoing reporting processes are submitted in paper form for later input into the outdated Youth Services Information System (YSIS). This system is not easily customizable in terms of the variables it measures or the reports it generates. Further, DYS Teacher Survey responses suggested concern among staff regarding the effectiveness of student information sharing between DYS programs; 61% rated it as fair or poor, including 70% of teachers working at detention, revocation, assessment, and multi-functional programs.

DYS has taken some steps to address these concerns, creating the new Transition Coordinator position and implementing the Universal Student Transcript; however, challenges remain. For example, student records are not requested from schools until a youth is committed to DYS, typically after the student completes his or her time in detention. This is in some respects practical, but leaves teachers with little information upon which to base their instructional approach to students. In addition, some Teaching Coordinators at treatment programs indicated that they don't always receive student transcripts from previous programs. This suggests a continued need to develop and support protocols for sharing information within and between programs.

Systems to support MCAS administration and information sharing have been instituted. Proper identification of students who need to take the MCAS requires effective cooperation from multiple agencies (school districts, MA DOE, DYS). Within DYS, meeting MCAS requirements necessitates a significant investment of time by Education Liaisons, teachers, DYS central office staff, and others. DYS has made substantial efforts to ensure that management and coordination of the MCAS process is effective, and evidence suggests great progress in this area.

DYS now runs a series of regional workshops to help ELs and MCAS test administrators (each DYS program is responsible for identifying at least one test administrator, typically the Teaching Coordinator) prepare for the full series of MCAS administration dates. Participants receive packets containing detailed information about testing schedules, procedures, new policies, security requirements, rules for distribution and return of materials, and more. Teachers interviewed during spring 2007 site interviews almost universally applauded these efforts to help them work through this complex task. One teacher said,

> Very well done. We know [who needs to take the MCAS] 2-3 weeks in advance. Follow-through with kids has improved a lot in the past year. The process is much tighter and much more focused, with more specific guidelines and communication. The MCAS guidelines and trainings have been very beneficial and are well organized.

The DYS Teacher Survey showed generally positive results regarding programs' effectiveness in carrying out MCAS-related functions. As displayed in Table 20, teachers expressed confidence in their programs' effectiveness identifying students who need to take the MCAS and administering the test to these students, with solid majorities indicating "very effective" in response to both questions, and relatively few respondents indicating "not effective." Notably, teachers from treatment programs were far more positive in their ratings than were their colleagues in detention, assessment, revocation, and multi-functional programs.

Table 20

Effectiveness in Carrying Out MCAS-Related Functions				
By Program Type	**N**	**Very Effective**	**Somewhat Effective**	**Not Effective**
Properly identifying students who need to take the MCAS				
Detention, Revocation, Assessment, and Multi-functional	65	49.2%	41.5%	9.2%
Short- and Long-Term Treatment	72	72.2%	25.0%	2.8%
Total	137	61.3%	32.8%	5.8%
Administering the MCAS to identified students				
Detention, Revocation, Assessment, and Multi-functional	67	61.2%	31.3%	7.5%
Short- and Long-Term Treatment	76	89.5%	9.2%	1.3%
Total	143	76.2%	19.6%	4.2%

Does not include missing responses or those indicating unsure/NA

In some of instances, students enter the DYS system with very little notice – most often at detention and revocation programs. These situations present a unique MCAS-related challenge. One Teaching Coordinator summarized the situation as follows:

> Because of the nature of our program, we are always on a standby mode. Kids may arrive the same morning MCAS is being given. We scramble and work with our Education Liaison to get it done. You need a type-A personality for this part of the job.

DYS Teacher Survey respondents offered mixed ratings of their ability to get MCAS eligibility information in a timely fashion, with approximately half reporting "good" or "excellent." Again, teachers in detention, revocation, assessment, and multi-functional programs were less positive in their ratings.

Students entering programs with little notice is just one of several unusual MCAS administration challenges for DYS. Field Assessment data and on-site observations suggest some programs lack space to administer the MCAS in an ideal environment. Issues of teacher coverage also pose a problem, as many teachers expressed concern with the amount of time MCAS administration takes from instruction of other students given limited ability to provide coverage during proctoring. Another specific concern expressed was that MCAS administration can distract from an EL's primary role of transition support during the spring months when the full MCAS test is given. Finally, teachers find it challenging to provide MCAS remediation or preparation in mixed-age classrooms.

DYS Education systems system coordination: Highlights and points to consider

- DYS has convened a number of regular system-wide meetings and functional workgroups to support effective communication and decision-making processes. These activities reflect a more collaborative infrastructure to support education and transition services.

- Over the past year, DYS has approved funding for a Transition Coordinator, a Vocational-Employability Program Manager, and an HEC-based Education Data Systems Specialist. These new management positions constitute a promising step forward in support of a unified approach to critical program areas.

- Pre-Education Initiative legislative reports concluded that DYS lacked internal administrative capacity required to coordinate and sustain an education system of this magnitude. Although system coordination has improved, many informants indicate that the Initiative still has too few people going in too many directions to allow for the level of documentation, reflection, planning, and oversight required in such a complex system.

- DYS has made great progress in the management and coordination of MCAS administration. Teachers appreciate the timely and valuable information they now receive from DYS information packets and regional workshops. Most teachers feel that their programs are effective at identifying students who need to take the MCAS and in test administration. Still, MCAS administration and preparation remains a challenge.

- DYS data collection protocols and information sharing mechanisms are inadequate in many instances, and teachers express concern regarding the ability to share student information between programs. The hiring of an Education Data Systems Specialist within HEC is a step forward, but challenges remain such as:
    - ELs do not collect public school data for youth in detention prior to commitment.
    - Teaching coordinators at some treatment programs reported that they don't always receive student transcripts from previous programs.
    - Some reporting processes are paper-based.
    - Information submitted by programs often requires substantial review by DYS.

IV. Short- and Mid-Term Impacts

The preceding section of this report outlines considerable progress in the implementation of reforms to education services within DYS. These accomplishments provide clear evidence of the commitment of DYS and its partners to implementing meaningful reforms and thereby better addressing the needs of DYS students. At this stage of the Initiative, different aspects of the reform process are in different stages of implementation, with policies, practices, and conditions surrounding educational service delivery being the most substantively transformed. This is the result of a conscious decision to direct available resources to the heart of DYS's educational enterprise and thereby ensure that the necessary personnel, resources, methods, and supportive infrastructure were in place to support improvements in educational quality.

Have the Education Initiative's core strategies led to, or are they leading to, anticipated short- or mid-term impacts? What other impacts or outcomes have resulted from the Initiative?

This section describes observable short- and mid-term impacts of the DYS Education Initiative through June 2007. At this juncture, short-term indicators, which demonstrate change in DYS capacity or practice, are the most relevant and clearly defined. At the same time, mid-term indicators of system performance are increasingly relevant, and are presented to the extent that data are available.

A. Short-Term Impacts of the Education Initiative

Changes in capacity and practice within DYS Education were measured through analysis of all available objective data as well as by more subjective ratings provided by educators through surveys and interviews. Areas of focus in this section include impacts of the Education Initiative on educational quality, teacher retention and qualifications, the quality and consistency of instructional practice, and the culture of education within DYS. This last point, the culture of education, emerged as a critical component of the Education Initiative, as cultural change, though difficult to achieve, is directly linked to school improvement in education literature.[16]

1. Impact on Educational Quality within DYS

Past reports regarding the overall quality of education within DYS, such as the 2001 and 2002 DYS legislative reports, provided a grim benchmark of the quality of education in DYS programs. These reports highlighted a wide range of deficiencies and offered a number of specific recommendations. As described in the *Implementation of the Education Initiative* section of this report, DYS has acted on many of these recommendations. Before turning to individual measures of short-term impact within the system, it is important to review a broader measure of the impact of these changes on the DYS Education system.

Figures 3 and 4 present survey responses collected in January 2007 through a confidential DYS Teacher Survey, conducted by the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute. Figure 3 shows the proportion of educators who rated the overall quality of educational services within DYS as either good or excellent in January 2005 (near the start of the Initiative) and in January 2007 (time of survey administration), and asked them to speculate on the level of quality they expect the system to achieve by January 2008. These ratings data include only those teachers who were working in the system prior to January 2005.

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[16] Ellis, Gaudet, Kaufman (2007). *Gaining Traction: Urban educators' perspectives on the critical factors influencing student achievement in high and low performing urban public schools*. MA Office of Educational Quality and Accountability.

These data display a very positive trajectory with regard to DYS educators' perceptions of the quality of educational services provided to DYS students since the inception of the Initiative. Overall, 52% rated educational quality in January 2005 as good or excellent. Two years later, these same educators perceive vast improvements in quality with 80% rating it good or excellent (Only 2% rated 2007 quality as poor). These educators expected continued progress in the coming year. As presented in Figure 4, only 8% of respondents rated the quality of DYS's educational services in January 2005 as excellent, compared to 19% in January 2007, while future expectations for excellent quality almost double to 37% in January 2008.

Figure 3

Trends in DYS Teacher Perceptions of Educational Quality
Proportion Indicating Good or Excellent

Figure 4

Trends in DYS Teacher Perceptions of Educational Quality
Proportion Indicating Excellent
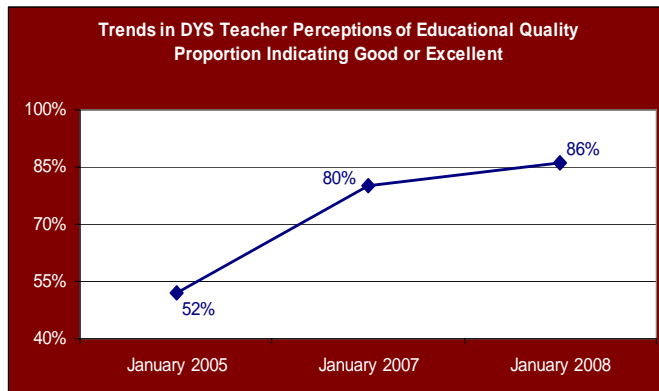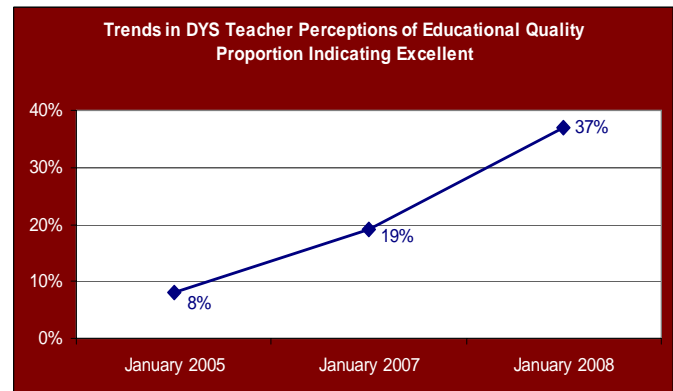
These trends indicate enthusiasm for the changes implemented over the past three years. This positive change in educators' perceptions is a singular measure of program quality in a system that currently lacks more objective means to determine program quality and effectiveness on a system-wide basis. Moreover, it speaks to a growing sense of efficacy among teachers and a sense of professional pride emerging in the DYS system.

2. Impact on Teacher Workforce

The 2001 DYS Legislative Report described high rates of teacher turnover and programs that "routinely operate without certified teachers for months at a time… pressing remaining staff to teach in overcrowded classrooms" (p. 10). Data suggest that the Initiative has resulted in positive impacts on the stability of the DYS Education workforce and on its qualifications, as indicated by rates of licensure.

a. Workforce Stability

Past DYS legislative reports chronicled high teacher turnover rates and teacher vacancies throughout DYS Education, inclusive of educators and Education Liaisons. Data presented in Figure 5 suggest that the implementation of salary reform and other improvements have led to a decrease in teacher turnover. Internal DYS reports show that the annual turnover rate (which is inclusive of, but does not differentiate among, retirements, relocations, firings, and resignations) declined from 44% in 2004 to 27% in FY 2006.[17] Summary data for FY 2007 were not yet available.

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[17] Source for teacher turnover and vacancy data is the *Annual Report of Education Staff for 2005-06* prepared by DYS.

Figure 5
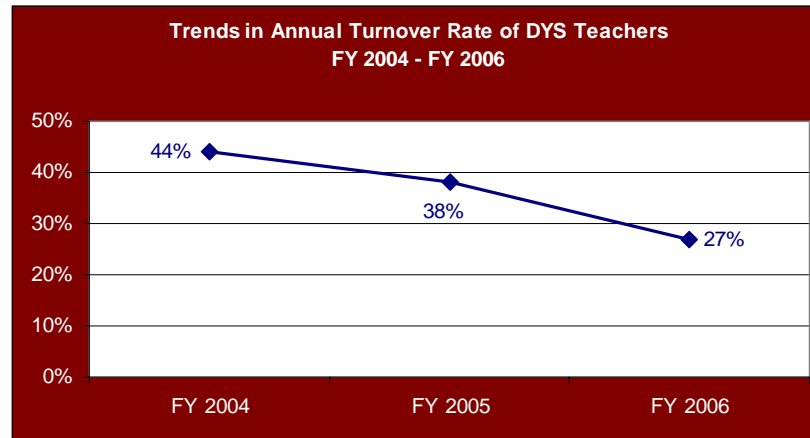
The Initiative has also coincided with a reduction in teacher vacancies, both overall and at the start of the school year. Data presented in Table 21, from internal DYS reports, show a modest reduction in 12-month average vacancy rates among DYS Education programs, from 6.6% in FY 2004 to 4.2% in FY 2006. A more dramatic reduction can be observed in the months of August and September, when vacancy rates were at a high of 20.2% and 10.2%, respectively, in FY 2004. In FY 2005 vacancy rates dropped to 8.1% in August and 6.0% in September. In August of FY 2006 the vacancy rate was 3.8%. (September FY 2006 data were not available.) As a result, DYS programs now enter the school year with a greater proportion of staff in place, ready to participate in September orientations and PD, and better prepared to begin the new school year.

Table 21

DYS Teacher Vacancy Data			
	Aug	**Sept**	**12 Month Average**
FY 2004	20.2%	10.2%	6.6%
FY 2005	8.1%	6.0%	6.1%
FY 2006	3.8%	NA	4.2%

The DYS Teacher Survey, administered in January 2007, asked respondents how likely they were to stay with DYS for at least two more years. Table 22 shows that 78% of respondents who had a sense of their plans were likely (33.6%) or very likely (44.8%) to stay in the DYS system for another two years. It should be noted, however, that 16% of respondents indicated don't know in response to this question. If responses of don't know were factored in, the percentage who indicated they are likely or very likely to stay decreases to 66%. In effect, these DYS teachers anticipated a likely *two-year* turnover rate of between 22% and 34%, depending on how "don't know" responses are interpreted. This compares closely with the most recent actual *single-year* turnover rates presented in Figure 5 (27% annual in FY 2006).

Table 22

Likelihood of Staying in DYS for at Least <u>Two More</u> Years						
	N	Very likely	Likely	Unlikely	Very Unlikely	Don't Know
All Respondents	159	37.7%	28.3%	10.7%	7.5%	16.0%
Respondents <u>excluding</u> "Don't Know"	134	44.8%	33.6%	12.7%	9.0%	-

b. Teacher Quality

Teacher quality was another critical concern motivating the Initiative. Teacher qualifications – as per the MA DOE teacher license requirements – are one acknowledged indicator of teacher quality. These requirements establish specific criteria for obtaining various levels of state licensure (e.g., preliminary, initial, professional). DYS system data were limited with regard to rates of teacher licensure prior to the Initiative. However, personnel data provided by DYS and HEC for FY 2006 and FY 2007 do provide an opportunity to examine current (FY 2007) system-wide teacher licensure rates and compare them to those of the previous year.

These data are presented in Figure 6 and show that the percentage of unlicensed teachers in the DYS system declined from 22% to 11% over the past year, with modest increases in the proportion of teachers holding preliminary, initial, and full professional licenses. Anecdotal data suggest that this improves upon historical averages, but that cannot be objectively confirmed. These results are likely affected by a number of factors, including more stringent hiring practices, better wages to attract licensed teachers, new PD programming to support licensure, and a more explicit emphasis on educational standards.

Figure 6

Change in DYS Teacher Licensure Profile
FY 2006 to FY 2007
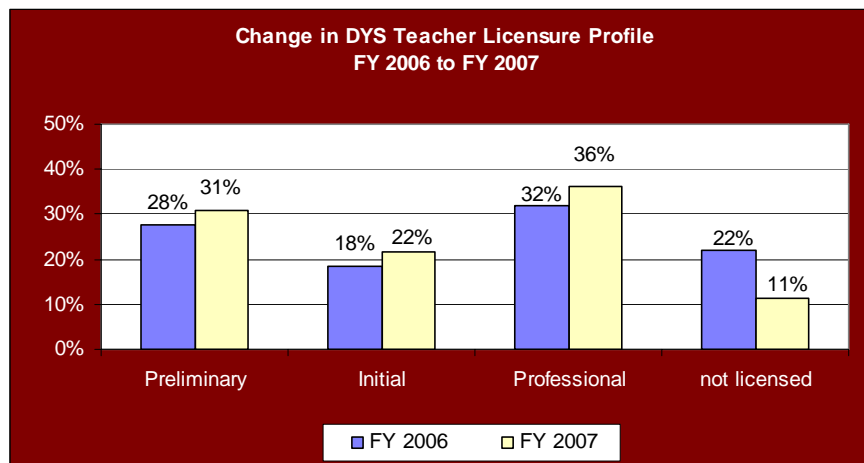
Available data were insufficient to support an analysis of the proportion of teachers who are licensed in the subjects they are teaching. In any event, the unique nature of the DYS educational setting, wherein 67% of teachers report that they teach two or more subjects, and 36% teach three or more subjects, complicates any assessment of teacher qualifications at the subject level. Of note, as of June 2007 at least 25 DYS teachers held elementary or other non-secondary-school licenses.

3. Impact on Instructional Practice

Prior to the Initiative, the educational curriculum was identified as inconsistent across programs, and some programs had no identified curriculum. As a result, both content and instructional practice varied widely, but

without clear purpose. The problem was not necessarily one of non-compliance, as no framework existed to define a system-wide approach to curriculum and instruction. Little or no objective system data provide a comparison of curricular and instructional practices over time. However, DYS Teacher Survey data suggest that new curriculum tools, professional development, and instructional coaching have resulted in beneficial changes in instructional practices and effectiveness of many DYS teachers.

a. Curriculum Tools

DYS has introduced a range of new curriculum tools to the system, with the goal of improving instructional consistency, quality and, ultimately, effectiveness. DYS Teacher Survey respondents were asked what impact, if any, these curriculum tools have had on their ability to teach effectively.

As presented in Table 23, virtually all respondents who teach English or math and use the corresponding instructional guides believe these tools have had a positive impact on the effectiveness of their instruction (96% and 100%, respectively). Among respondents to a spring 2007 survey (administered by CommCorp) focused exclusively on the math guide, 55% indicated that the guide had a positive influence on their instructional practice, with 39% reporting neutral influence, and 6% reporting negative influence.

With regard to other tools, a wide majority of DYS Teacher Survey respondents who use the mini-unit templates, lesson planning templates, and Elements of Quality Instruction Rubric indicated that these tools have had a positive impact on instructional effectiveness, although the proportions indicating very positive were less than half that of the instructional guides. As is discussed in the implementation section, not all teachers find the mini-unit and lesson planning templates beneficial.

Table 23

Impact of Selected Curriculum Tools on Teaching Effectiveness					
	N	Very Positive	Mostly Positive	Mostly Negative	Very Negative
ELA curriculum guide (ELA teachers only)	56	28.6%	67.9%	3.6%	0.0%
Math curriculum guide (Math teachers only)	52	30.8%	69.2%	0.0%	0.0%
Mini-unit templates	103	11.7%	62.1%	24.3%	1.9%
Lesson planning templates	120	13.3%	65.8%	17.5%	3.3%
Elements of quality instruction rubric	103	13.6%	75.7%	8.7%	1.9%

b. Professional Development

HEC has led the development and implementation of a PD system for DYS, which includes five statewide events each year, as well as periodic regional training events, annual "summer academies," and Teaching Coordinator training.

Determining the end results of PD is notoriously difficult. In the absence of other systems to monitor PD outcomes, the DYS Teacher Survey captured system-wide input with regard to the impact of PD, asking educators to rate the impact of statewide events on their classroom instruction and on student learning.

Table 24 presents the responses of all DYS teachers who reported attending trainings in each of the past three years. These ratings show gradual increases in the proportion of teachers who feel that trainings have a high or very high impact on instruction and learning, culminating at 44% and 42%, respectively, in FY 2007. Overall, 82% of respondents reported that statewide PD had at least a moderate impact on their classroom instructional practices, while 79% reported at least a moderate impact on student learning.

Table 24

Rating of Full-Day Statewide Professional Development Events							
		N	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Very low
Impact on your classroom instruction							
	2004-05	104	8.7%	30.8%	40.4%	14.4%	5.8%
	2005-06	101	11.9%	28.7%	42.6%	11.9%	5.0%
	2006-07	100	14.0%	30.0%	38.0%	12.0%	6.0%
Impact on student learning							
	2004-05	105	7.6%	28.6%	42.9%	13.3%	7.6%
	2005-06	100	10.0%	25.0%	47.0%	13.0%	5.0%
	2006-07	102	11.8%	30.4%	36.3%	13.7%	7.8%

c. Instructional Coaching

Instructional coaching is designed to support teachers as they implement new content and methods in the classroom, and data show that coaching systems are functioning well. As is the case with PD, it is difficult to determine conclusively the impact of coaching on curriculum implementation and quality of instruction, particularly within a system that continues to change in those areas. However, data collected from teachers through two separate survey initiatives provide a snapshot of the impact of Instructional Coaches on day-to-day classroom practice.

HEC administered a survey in spring 2007 to develop a better understanding of the value of instructional coaching to DYS teachers (Table 25). Of 109 respondents, nearly 90% agreed that coaching helps them to reflect on their teaching style and strengths, and that post-observation feedback makes them more aware of their practice. Further, 83% agreed that coaching encourages them to adopt new teaching strategies, and 66% agreed that it helps them to connect professional development with classroom practice. Among DYS Teacher Survey respondents, 94% reported that coaching had a mostly (60%) or very (34%) positive impact on their ability to teach effectively. In addition, annual Instructional Coaches' reports indicate that teachers are implementing recommended practices in their classroom more often and with higher quality.

Table 25

Impact of Coaching Support on Classroom Instruction	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Coaching encourages me to try new teaching strategies	35%	48%	15%	2%
Coaching enables me to reflect on my teaching style and strengths	31%	56%	9%	4%
Coaching has helped me connect PD to my teaching practice	20%	46%	29%	4%
Post-observation feedback allows me to be more conscious of my classroom practice.	38%	50%	10%	2%

HEC 2007 Instructional Coaching Survey, N = 109

4. Impact on Education Culture within DYS

The 2002 DYS Legislative Report described a range of adverse conditions within DYS Education that would naturally affect teacher efficacy and morale, with resultant impacts on workforce quality and instructional quality. That same report noted that teachers expressed a "feeling of isolation from a professional teaching community" (p. 10). Further, teacher interviews conducted by the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute in 2006 and 2007 reflected a sense among educators that education has historically been undervalued and that teachers were not respected in many DYS programs. In effect, the culture surrounding DYS Education was not functioning as a support to the pursuit of educational excellence.

The accomplishments of the Education Initiative, though not yet fully realized, demonstrate a new urgency to provide effective educational services. DYS leaders report a passion for reform and cite research connecting positive educational outcomes with better life outcomes for youth. The value of education to the DYS mission appears to be understood and embraced, as evidenced by recent investments in the DYS teaching workforce, curriculum, and instructional support. At the staff level, survey and interview data show that teacher morale has improved, that teachers feel that education is valued within DYS, and that they have an increasing sense that DYS youth can succeed academically. In the aggregate, these observations stand as indicators of an improved culture within DYS Education, which is fundamental to effective reform.

a. Teacher Morale and Job Satisfaction

Overall, DYS Teacher Survey respondents provided positive ratings with regard to the morale of teaching staff at their worksite, as well as their own personal job satisfaction. As displayed in Table 26, across both questions, the largest proportion of respondents viewed these aspects of their job as good, with similar proportions of staff indicating excellent or fair. Over 70% of teachers indicated good or excellent in response to each of these questions, with less than 8% (seven teachers) indicating poor. No statistically significant differences were observed among respondents of different tenure or working in different program types.

Table 26

Educators View on Job Morale and Personal Satisfaction					
Responses by Teacher Tenure	**N**	**Excellent**	**Good**	**Fair**	**Poor**
Overall morale of teaching staff at your site	159	24.5%	47.2%	20.8%	7.5%
Your personal job satisfaction	158	24.1%	49.4%	22.2%	4.4%

Data do not include missing responses or those indicating unsure/NA

b. Priority of Education within DYS

Extensive interviews of DYS leaders and staff indicate that education was not greatly valued or emphasized within many DYS programs prior to the Education Initiative. In some locations, students were routinely pulled from class for meetings or discipline, and education was perceived as subordinate to other program functions. With the adoption of Minimum Education Standards, monthly reporting of classroom hours and pull-outs, and other changes, many DYS teachers related that they and others received a strong message that the school day is now devoted to student learning.

DYS Teacher Survey results highlight this positive cultural shift. As presented in Table 27, 88% of survey respondents agreed that education is a high priority within their program, and 86% agreed that it is a high priority for DYS. Respondents working in treatment programs more frequently reported that they strongly agree (53%) that education is a high priority at their program than did teachers from other program types (34%).

Interview data suggest that this difference is due to the short-term nature of detention and many revocation placements, as well as the challenge within assessment programs of addressing both education and assessment during the school day. Importantly, ratings of the priority DYS places on education showed little variation across program types, suggesting that a consistent message is received from leadership, but that program context influences results on the ground.

Table 27

Priority of Education at Programs and for DYS	N	Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Education is a high priority at your program					
Detention, Revocation, Assessment, and Multi-function	83	33.7%	54.2%	12.0%	0.0%
Short- and Long-Term Treatment	78	52.6%	39.7%	6.4%	1.3%
Total	161	42.9%	47.2%	9.3%	0.6%
Education is a high priority for DYS					
Detention, Revocation, Assessment, and Multi-function	80	31.3%	55.0%	13.8%	0.0%
Short- and Long-Term Treatment	74	31.1%	56.8%	9.5%	2.7%
Total	154	31.2%	55.8%	11.7%	1.3%

Does not include missing responses or those indicating unsure/NA

c. High Expectations and a Professional Community within DYS

A wealth of research indicates that teacher efficacy – a belief that what educators do can result in improvements in student learning – is central to effectiveness. Among the messages communicated through DYS PD and its instructional guides is the message that "all youth can learn." As the results in Table 28 show, a wide majority of DYS educators see real chances for success in their students, as evidenced by the 69% of DYS Teacher Survey respondents who agreed that all DYS youth can attain grade-level standards. Again, ratings of teachers from treatment programs were higher than those of teachers from other program types, particularly with regard to the proportion who responded strongly agree (25% and 10%, respectively). Continuing to build on this sense of teacher efficacy will be essential to instilling both teachers and students with the confidence to succeed in the classroom.

Table 28

Belief that DYS Youth Can Achieve Grade-Level Standards	N	Strongly Agree	Mostly Agree	Mostly Disagree	Strongly Disagree
All DYS youth can achieve grade-level academic standards					
Detention, Revocation, Assessment, and Multi-functional	74	10.8%	54.1%	24.3%	10.8%
Short- and Long-Term Treatment	72	25.0%	47.2%	22.2%	5.6%
Total	146	17.8%	50.7%	23.3%	8.2%

Does not include missing responses or those indicating unsure/NA

Table 29 presents data collected through a spring 2007 survey (administered by HEC) regarding instructional coaching, which suggest that 80% of respondents now have higher expectations with regard to their teaching than they did previously. This increase in DYS teachers' professional expectations may be attributed to the instructional coaching model. Interviews also conveyed a growing sense of professionalism among many teachers, which was frequently linked to changes in how education is perceived within DYS since the inception if the Initiative.

Some interview respondents also emphasized the role of professional development as a support to an emerging professional community within DYS Education. They noted that statewide events bring colleagues together to network and share practices five times each year, easing the sense of professional isolation some educators feel when working in small and geographically dispersed programs.

Table 29

Impact of Coaching Support on Classroom Instruction				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
As a result of the Coaching program, I have created professional goals and raised my expectations.	28%	52%	18%	2%

HEC 2007 Instructional Coaching Survey, N = 109

Short-term impacts: Highlights and points to consider

- The Education Initiative has resulted in positive short-term impacts on the DYS system. These manifest as changes in capacity and practice, which may be expected to support increased student learning and other desirable outcomes. This evaluation identified promising trends with regard to educational quality, workforce stability and qualifications, enhancement of instructional practices, and education culture.

- Teachers' perceptions of the quality of education provided to DYS youth had improved markedly. Among surveyed teachers, 52% recalled the quality of education provided to DYS youth in 2005 as good or excellent, compared to 80% in January 2007.

- The Education Initiative has resulted in positive impacts on the stability and qualifications of the teacher workforce over the past three years. An ongoing commitment to maintaining competitive salaries and a well-supported culture will be critical to maintaining and enhancing stability in the workforce.

- According to teachers, the ELA and math instructional guides, mini-unit and lesson planning templates, and the Quality of Instruction Rubric have all made a positive impact on instructional practice; and instructional coaches' reports indicate that teachers are implementing recommended practices with increasing frequency and quality.

- Statewide professional development events are a primary vehicle for conveying the DYS curriculum approach and quality instructional practices. Teacher ratings suggest that statewide PD has had a moderate to high impact on classroom instructional practice and student learning in the past three years.

- Data suggest that instructional coaching helps teachers to reflect on their teaching style and to adopt new teaching strategies. Among DYS Teacher Survey respondents, 94% reported that coaching had a mostly (60%) or very (34%) positive impact on their ability to teach effectively.

- Education reform has generated a positive cultural shift within DYS. Approximately 70% of staff described their morale and job satisfaction as good or excellent, and over 85% agreed that education is a high priority within their program and within DYS overall.

- The continuing development of system-wide teacher and program monitoring and evaluation systems will enable DYS to establish increasingly objective criteria by which to assess changes in instructional capacity and practice, further strengthening connections between the Initiative and mid- and long-term outcomes realized by DYS youth.

B.   Mid-Term Impacts of the Education Initiative

Following three years of active reform, important new programs, policies, and infrastructure have effected positive changes in the stability and quality of the DYS teacher workforce, not only in terms of instructional resources and classroom practices, but also in terms of the operative culture. DYS continues to develop and implement important systems to monitor classroom instruction and to understand the impact of its instruction on students' learning, their transitions back to the community, and their pursuit of successful life outcomes.

The mid-term impacts of the DYS Education Initiative, conceptualized to include improvements in student literacy and numeracy, standardized test scores, and transition outcomes, cannot yet be assessed with great confidence, but preliminary data are encouraging. Two main factors limit assessment of mid-term impacts. First, active reform commenced three years ago, and while substantial progress is evident, many components remain in early stages of implementation. Second, and of great importance from a systems development standpoint, DYS is still in the early phases of implementing student-level assessments to measure DYS programs' value-added with regard to literacy and numeracy, in particular. As a result, it is difficult to complete the causal chain from instruction to outcomes indicators such as high school graduation, MCAS achievement, and GED attainment.

The good news is that these indicators appear to be moving in a positive direction, and recent steps taken by DYS promise to strengthen attribution. Such steps include DYS's pilot of the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) as a pre/post measure of student learning in spring 2007. If this pilot proves successful and is implemented system-wide, it may provide additional evidence that changes in standardized test performance, as well as success in high school and other settings, are linked to increases in student learning in DYS Education programs. In addition, DYS is taking steps to improve its monitoring of outcomes data, which is a complex task once students are released to the community.

a. EOHHS Benchmarks Data

Data collected and reported by DYS through the Executive Office of Health and Human Services' (EOHHS) Benchmarks initiative suggest positive trends with regard to DYS-committed youths' high school graduation rates, MCAS achievement, and GED attainment over the past four years. These results appear in the most recent available Benchmark data, compiled and reported by DYS in April 2007. Understanding that the causal chain between the Education Initiative and these outcomes is not fully established, these results are nonetheless informative and can be taken as positive indicators.

Figure 7
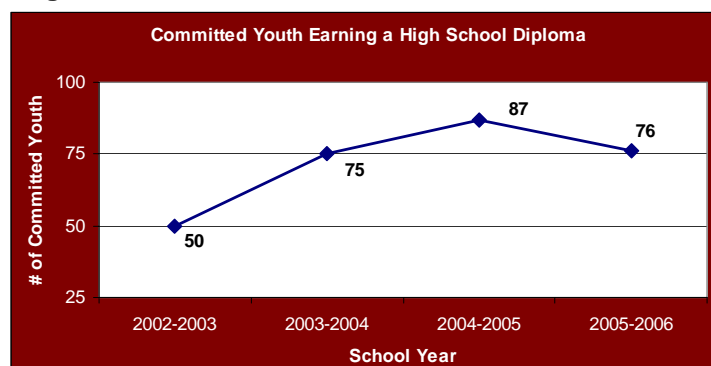
As presented in Figure 7, the number of committed youth receiving diplomas has generally increased, from 50 in 2002-2003 to a high of 87 in 2004-2005, with a dip to 76 in 2005-2006. While this is evidence of a positive trend, there are also important challenges to interpreting these data. First, it is unclear how many committed youth are eligible to earn a diploma, which would allow calculation of a "success rate" and provide a more meaningful comparison. DYS acknowledged this limitation in the April 2007 Benchmark report and plans to report diplomas earned as a percentage of eligible youth in the coming year, and has proposed a definition of eligibility. It is notable that DYS has achieved its EOHHS Benchmark target in each of the past four years.

There are other questions to consider when attributing these DYS high school graduation counts to the Education Initiative, which relate to assessing DYS's role in individual students' success. For example, how many credits did the student earn while in custody, and how many of those credits were accepted by the school district? To what extent did DYS Education and transition services contribute to the student's success? Clearly, youth come to DYS with vastly different educational histories and likelihoods of successfully re-entering and completing high school. Only by understanding and linking the characteristics of individual students to their outcomes can DYS begin to understand its true influence on graduation rates. The fact that these questions persist should not detract from the sense of accomplishment, but must be considered when discussing the attribution of outcomes. These questions should also be considered as DYS plans future strategies for collecting and integrating program data.

Figure 8 presents trends in General Educational Development (GED) attainment among DYS-committed youth. The GED is an international high school equivalency testing program that serves as an important credential and measurement of academic knowledge for individuals who are unable to complete high school. As noted previously, DYS is currently revising its GED policies to expand access to GED preparation and testing services for appropriate youth. As with high school diploma counts, the number of committed youth earning GEDs is rising, from 69 in 2002-2003 to 127 in 2005-2006, outpacing improvement benchmarks each year. According to DYS staff, these data are reported for youth who remain in custody, and therefore undercount GED attainment by omitting youth who have been discharged to the community.

Figure 8
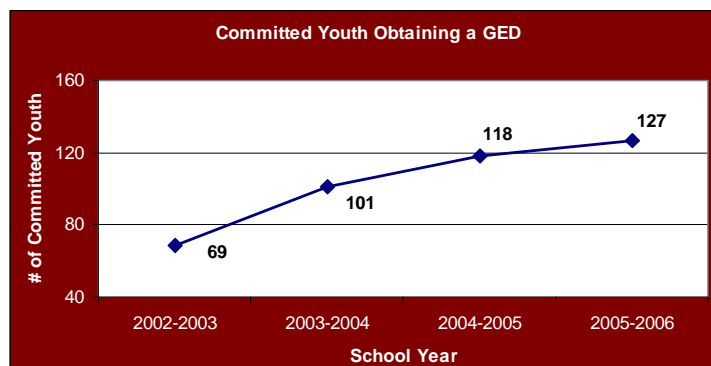
Again, DYS acknowledges a need for a more rigorous approach to reporting these data and, in the coming year, intends to report the number of youth who pass the GED as a percentage of all committed youth who take the test. A further step would be to count them as a percentage of all students who should pursue a GED, as determined by DYS based on age, credit status, and other factors. Attribution to the Education Initiative will also be clearer when assessments of classroom-level learning are fully implemented and when participation in DYS-based/facilitated GED support services is tracked, such that the impact of specific services and delivery strategies within educational programs, as well as within the community, can be better understood.

Perhaps the most promising news for DYS is the recent improvement in the percentage of youth who pass the ELA and Math MCAS exams while in DYS custody (figures 9 and 10). These data include all students who were in DYS custody at the time the MCAS exam was administered. DYS has implemented systems to ensure that all

eligible youth in DYS Education programs are tested, with eligibility determined by the student's home district. These data are considered very accurate, but do not include students who may have been in DYS programs for an extended period of time but were released to the community prior to MCAS administration. These records are delivered to students' parents or guardians and are difficult for DYS to obtain.

As illustrated, the grade 10 ELA MCAS pass rate of students in DYS Education programs jumped in 2006 from a rate that had hovered around 50% to a historical high of 71%. Math achievement has also made great strides, with a more consistent, if less dramatic, trend that has seen pass rates increase from 17% in 2002 to 42% in 2006. In the future, DYS will have the opportunity to strengthen attribution to the Education Initiative by connecting these results to a database of student characteristics that examines the length of stay of students prior to taking the test and, ideally, analyzes MCAS results in light of achievement on similar tests in earlier grades while in the community. It is important to note that this last approach exceeds the level of sophistication currently used in MCAS data analysis in most public school districts.

Figure 9

Grade 10 ELA MCAS Pass Rates for DYS Committed Youth

Figure 10

Grade 10 Math MCAS Pass Rates for DYS Committed Youth
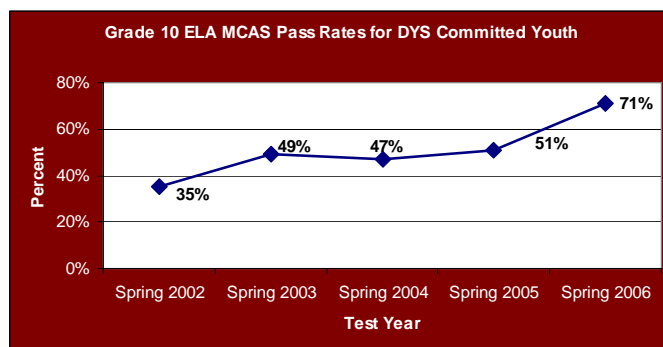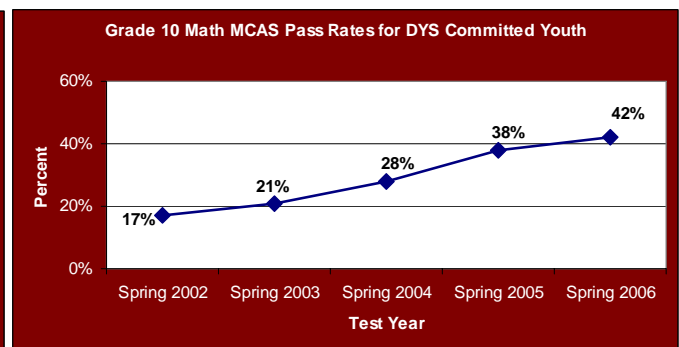
In summation, available data pertaining to mid-term impacts suggest positive trends in the performance of DYS-committed youth. Through improvements in data collection, integration, and reporting, DYS could improve the scope and quality of system data and more definitively link outcomes to its services. DYS may also wish to improve and standardize long-term monitoring of youth outcomes following release from custody so as to identify with greater confidence the transition outcomes of committed youth, including the longevity and success of placements in educational, program, and employment settings. It is unclear whether DYS currently has sufficient management information system capacity and personnel resources to support the collection and management of these data.

Mid-term impacts: Highlights and points to consider

- The mid-term impacts of the DYS Education Initiative cannot yet be assessed with great confidence, but data are encouraging. Planned improvements to data collection and measurement of pre/post student learning may strengthen the causal connection between the Initiative and recent increases in high school graduation, GED attainment, and MCAS achievement among DYS youth, allowing for more definitive findings in the future.

- EOHHS Benchmarks data show that the number of committed youth receiving diplomas has generally increased over the past four years. DYS achieved its Benchmark target in each of the past four years. While this finding does not present the data as a percent of all diploma-eligible DYS students, DYS intends to define eligibility and track student success rates in the coming year.

- The number of committed youth earning GEDs outpaced EOHHS improvement targets in each of the past four years. DYS intends to make these data more robust in the future by expanding community-level data

collection and calculating pass rates for committed youth. DYS's revised policies may facilitate increases in the number of youth who obtain a GED.

- Grade 10 ELA pass rates surged to a historical high in 2006, and math achievement saw a steady increase from 2002 to 2006. DYS can strengthen attribution of these results to the Education Initiative by connecting them to data related to student characteristics and services received. Pre/post testing of student literacy and fluency may further clarify the role of DYS Education in MCAS achievement.

- If DYS's pilot of the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) is successfully implemented system-wide, it could provide not only concrete evidence of student progress and learning in DYS Education programs, but also a highly relevant measure of DYS Education's value-added at the individual and aggregate level.

- DYS should consider both the human resource requirements and the technical requirements as it seeks to collect and analyze additional data. Tracking student outcomes will be a challenge, but pilot initiatives such as the Bridging the Opportunities Gap grant program hold promise for creating more effective data-collection systems.

V. Conclusions and Strategic Considerations

Conclusions

Following three years of active DYS reform, there is tangible evidence that the system has made important changes in its approach to educational service delivery, support of student transitions, and overall systems management. New programs, policies, and infrastructure are now in place, which have facilitated improvements in the stability and quality of the DYS teacher workforce, the instructional resources and methods used in DYS classrooms, and the culture in which teachers and students function each day. The likelihood for continued progress is favorable, assuming DYS can sustain their vigorous investment of time, resources, and attention.

The preceding sections of this report reflects DYS' interest in formative feedback to guide planning and decision making related to the Education Initiative. Much has been accomplished through the Initiative, but most informants acknowledged that the improvement process must continue. While much work remains, DYS can be proud of its many achievements. At its core, the system has created a stronger and more stable foundation for success. Quite prominently, a number of critical factors have emerged to help sustain system-wide momentum for achieving desirable Education Initiative outcomes.

Most programs have now reached at least the minimum level of educational standards, and classroom instruction is delivered by more qualified and better trained teachers than prior to the Initiative. A professional culture has been established within the educator community, typified by a raised level of stature for education and educators within DYS programs, a growing sense of camaraderie among educators across the state, and a general recognition of the need to embrace higher expectations for DYS youth. These are all essential to the long-term success of the Initiative and of the youth DYS serves.

DYS teachers now benefit from a range of services that support quality instructional practice. Through professional development, coaching, the instructional leadership of Teaching Coordinators, and curriculum and instructional resources, teachers can now count on opportunities to enrich their skills and receive needed assistance. Further, there is a strong desire and near-universal support from educators for DYS to continue to improve the education enterprise. Informants have offered carefully considered suggestions and concerns related to educational improvement. By and large, they greatly appreciate the changes implemented over the past three years, and can be expected to provide critical insights and suggestions for consideration as the next phase of reform takes shape.

DYS has also recently addressed important systems management needs through allocation of funding to fill new positions. These positions constitute a promising step forward in support of a more coordinated and accountable approach to program areas, including student transition and employability, as well as functional areas, such as data management. Finally, through this third-party evaluation, DYS has demonstrated its interest in gaining objective formative feedback regarding the Initiative's implementation and efficacy, and in using those data to identify possible next steps in the reform process.

When DYS first embarked on its mission to reform education, literature specific to effective or "best practice" in juvenile justice education was scarce, as, for matter, were models of education reform in similar systems in other states. Today, DYS has colleagues nationwide working on reform efforts. Nationwide conferences, expanded membership in related association groups, and a juvenile justice focus within private organizations like the Annie E. Casey Foundation are all positive signs that more research and resources will be devoted to juvenile justice education in the near future. This opportunity "to be part of something bigger" bodes well for DYS.

Strategic Considerations

With DYS Education having established a foundation for educational success, this section presents several strategic considerations to DYS and its partners. The intent is to identify possible priorities and opportunities for the continued improvement of DYS Education, and to illuminate key supports or obstacles to the pursuit of education system goals.

Based on key findings of the evaluation, what should DYS focus on over the coming years in order to realize the long-term goals/outcomes of the Education Initiative?

It is important to note that these considerations are not intended as recommendations per se, as it is the role of this report to inform, rather than supersede, the strategic planning process. Rather, they are intended to provoke discussion and debate among DYS and its partners as they move into the next phase of education reform by presenting plausible options for continued reform based on the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities identified through the evaluation process.

1. As DYS prepares for the next phase of education reform …

Maintain a focus on the continued implementation and refinement of core initiatives of the current phase of the Education Initiative

DYS, with support from CommCorp and the Hampshire Educational Collaborative, has created an infrastructure that provides educators with more competitive wages, improved access to research-based curriculum and instructional materials, greater levels of instructional support and professional development, and clear standards to drive instructional quality and consistency. Further, DYS has developed tools and launched promising pilot initiatives to expand the range of employability and academic transition options for DYS youth. It would likely be detrimental to the education reform process if any of these major achievements were considered over and done with or set aside. Rather, these and other promising initiatives should continue to be pursued and refined over the coming years.

Recognize the need to manage change carefully. Limit the scope of new initiatives to be pursued in order to maintain clear focus and avoid overload

As the next phase of DYS education reform is considered, it is important to recognize both the accomplishments and the challenges of the past three-plus years. System managers and staff have implemented a wide array of substantive changes in the delivery and support of education and transition services. Many of these changes are in advanced stages of implementation, while others are just beginning to launch.

Interviews with system leaders, managers, and teachers suggest a need for some period of time to fully implement, refine, and absorb these new systems into standard practice. While education reform must not stall, it would profit from an opportunity to catch its breath and gain equilibrium to ensure that continuous waves of change do not result in burn-out and a loss in momentum. Strategically, the system would benefit from taking stock of what is fully implemented and what is in-process, and working to improve implementation before immediately pursuing too many new initiatives in areas that have recently undergone extensive change.

Engage in a strategic planning process to support the next phase of reform

The deficiencies cited in the 2001 and 2002 Legislative Reports have in effect served as the Education Initiative's engine of change over the past several years. The Education Initiative "immersed" the DYS system in much-needed support – workforce quality, Minimum Education Standards, curriculum, professional development, instructional materials and support, technology, and more. The emphasis now is on thinking "smarter,"

capitalizing on lessons learned, and understanding that as quality has improved and standards have been raised, expectations should now be higher. In this environment, reform will benefit from a concentrated and appropriately resourced commitment to long-range strategic planning of a thoughtful, well-defined, and well-communicated plan of action that maps out what's been accomplished and what is on the road ahead. The Department should also keep in mind that decisions they now make will have increased meaning compared to the start of the Initiative when any change was likely to be considered an improvement.

2. As DYS considers educational service delivery …

Understand the implications of variations in program-level resources and approaches

DYS may find it advantageous to examine the distribution of resources and philosophical approaches across programs, to better understand the implications of these differences for the quality of education services. Some of these are planned differences, while others appear idiosyncratic. Structurally defined examples include variations in the availability of Title 1 and special education services (through ESIS), while program-level differences seem more commonly based on educational philosophies, resulting in variation in teacher ratios, staff deployment, elective program offerings, etc.

One of the lessons learned through discussions of promising practices within DYS programs was that the most persistent challenge to replicating effective practices was the perceived variation in key resources from site to site. A statewide review and analysis of program-level resources and approaches to education service delivery may help support greater uniformity, to the extent that is desirable. It may also facilitate the identification of effective structural approaches to education within DYS.

Consider strategies to consolidate and align staff expertise with specific student needs

DYS adheres to the principle of "a continuum of care" in its delivery of education services, and seeks to maintain this continuum in each of its five regions. This strategy, which allows students to receive detention, assessment, and treatment services within proximity to their communities, is supported in juvenile justice literature. At the same time, one of the inherent challenges to effective instruction in DYS classrooms is the vast range of academic abilities and motivations of students. Further, an increasingly older DYS student population has resulted in a growing number of students for whom pursuit of a high school diploma is an unlikely course.

DYS should consider strategies to create centers of expertise that are aligned with specific student needs, whether differentiated by academic level or expected transition pathway (academic v. employment). Centers of expertise within each region – for example, programs with specialists in GED preparation and test-taking access, or programs for students who have failed the MCAS and may need intense remediation in preparation for retesting – are in synch with DYS's goal to establish a complete continuum of services in each region, and could more effectively address student needs and realize desired outcomes on an individual basis.

Continue to build communication and cooperation with ESIS to better integrate regular and special education services

Substantial research suggests that the delivery of regular education and special education services should be as seamless as possible. At present, DYS special education services are delivered through a separate contract managed by the Massachusetts DOE, resulting in misalignments and missed opportunities for integration of regular and special education services. Specifically, regular and special education staff work on different schedules, report to different supervisors, and have access to different professional development. Despite this, excellent models of collaboration between regular and special education teachers do exist within the system.

Recent data suggest that DYS and DOE are developing stronger relationships and communicating more frequently and more effectively with regard to special education services. This dialogue needs to continue with

the end goal of reducing barriers and misalignments, and improving integration of services. (Note: Because special education services do not fall directly under the auspices of DYS, the Education Initiative does not contain specific goals related to this area, nor was it a focus of the DYS evaluation.)

Enhance availability of GED preparation services and test-taking opportunities to appropriate DYS students

Educators agree that many DYS students in residential programs would benefit from greater access to GED preparation services and test-taking opportunities. DYS already has policies with established criteria for determining which students are eligible to pursue a GED in lieu of a high school diploma. Some programs are reporting success with their GED programming and could serve as models for expanded opportunities at other facilities. As DYS decides where to focus its attention in the next phase of reform, it should give careful consideration to removing remaining barriers to GED preparation and test-taking opportunities for appropriate DYS youth.

Establish a pool of substitute teachers to strengthen consistency of high-level instruction

A statewide or regional pool(s) of substitute teachers, with wages on par with or better than those offered in public school districts, would likely be well-utilized and enormously appreciated by DYS teachers and Program Directors. Qualified substitutes would need to participate in a basic orientation to the DYS curriculum approach and instructional context. Establishing a pool of substitute teachers may be difficult, but the unique challenges of the DYS classroom make the availability of well-qualified substitutes essential. In addition to disrupting education at the program level, the lack of substitutes was cited as a barrier to teacher participation in regional trainings.

3. As DYS considers student transition …

Continue to focus on "scaling up" effective models and institutionalizing transition pathways

The first three-plus years of the Education Initiative saw not only a substantial transformation of the operating conditions within DYS Education programs, but also the development of numerous pilot programs to support students' transitions to the community, including both academic placements and employment. DYS managers and staff agree that student transition remains an area of opportunity for continued reform and investment. Phase two of education reform offers an opportunity to leverage new human and programmatic resources to scale-up effective pilot models, institutionalize informal operating agreements with public school districts, and develop new transition services. It is clear that effective transition services and outcomes monitoring will be essential to realizing the long-term outcomes of the Education Initiative.

Conceptualize assessment as the beginning phase of transition

Identify realistic transition pathways and goals for each student during the assessment phase

There is an opportunity to more overtly conceptualize student transition as a process that begins within DYS assessment programs, which have an underutilized capacity to identify appropriate student pathways through a battery of education and career-related assessments. Leveraging existing processes and resources nested within assessment programs, student transition pathways could be determined through a comprehensive assessment of student characteristics, case history, academic status, and vocational interest and aptitudes, allowing a broader set of transition options to be considered and, ultimately, pursued. Further consideration of student pathways could also support program placements that more carefully join staff or program expertise to student needs, in support of transition goals.

Increase opportunities for input from teachers at key decision-making meetings

There are opportunities for increased input from educators during the assessment process, particularly when deciding treatment placement. Clearly, placement decisions coming at the end of the assessment phase are dependent upon many insights, inputs, and factors, some inclusive of educational need and many not (e.g., clinical, safety, medical, available beds, etc.). Elevating the stature of educator involvement and input could enhance the focus on students' transition pathways and goals.

Define standards for what constitutes employability services

As DYS continues to develop more effective employment and career readiness pathways, it will be important to define standards for what constitutes "employability services" within DYS programs. The planned career readiness and employability skills instructional guide may be a step in this direction. The goal is to set clear program standards such that the scope and quality of services provided by education programs can be assessed and held to high standards.

4. As DYS considers education systems management …

Expand in-house staff resources to allow for closer management of the system and the reform process

DYS is privileged to have a well-qualified and dedicated management team focused on the oversight and delivery of educational services. While this team's talents and energy are greatly expanded through subcontracts to CommCorp and HEC, DYS's internal management staff has not expanded substantially since a 2001 report to the Massachusetts State Legislature, which cited diminished management capacity. Clearly, DYS's current management team has succeeded in defining and pursuing a vision for improvement. However, in some circumstances it appears their time is too limited for the level of documentation, reflection, planning, and oversight required for a sweeping reform initiative in a geographically dispersed and organizationally decentralized system.

Further, reliance on external contracts for management capacity raises questions regarding the sustainability of newly implemented systems, many of which continue to evolve and could be substantially disrupted by major changes in staffing that might result from alterations in the contractual relationships between DYS and its partners. The question, ultimately, is what capacity does DYS need to build internally to ensure that its purchased service systems run effectively and with minimum risk of major disruptions due to vendor changes?

Implement a more robust student outcomes evaluation system that more directly measures DYS value-added and systematically tracks long-term student outcomes

If DYS is to effectively assess the long-term outcomes of its students, it will need to institutionalize systems that measure student knowledge- and skill-gains in DYS programs (pre-/post-assessments). Further, it will need to monitor and record student transition outcomes beyond what the system currently pursues. Lacking such a system, DYS will maintain its reliance on student success indicators that are less clearly associated with DYS services, such as MCAS achievement, GED pass rates, and high school graduation rates.

While these are important indicators of student achievement, there may always be questions regarding the attribution of these outcomes to DYS services. Further, these results generally do not offer immediate feedback to inform instruction at the classroom level. With its introduction of the TABE as a mechanism for pre- and post-comparative assessment of student learning, DYS is taking an important first step forward in the development of an outcomes measurement system that will directly measure the impact of DYS Education on student learning.

Establish a process for central information management with clear requirements, formats, and schedules for reporting system data

The DYS system generates and maintains a wealth of information related to its programs, purchases, staff, and students. However, much of that information is presently difficult to access, as it is disaggregated across multiple organizations or databases, even within the same organization. Creation of more efficient and comprehensive data systems would facilitate program oversight and decision making, and could potentially produce system-wide efficiencies, even as it creates a basis for stronger accountability. At a minimum, DYS stands to benefit from establishing consistent templates and processes for the reporting of key information and from enhancing their capacity to maintain and have immediate access to data. A set of easy-to-implement procedures and protocols for collecting data could serve as a valuable interim step between current data reporting practices and the more robust central information management system still to come. Waiting for a comprehensive solution does not appear advisable.

Support program improvement and accountability through program assessment and targeted site improvement processes

As progress continues, DYS will need to consider the development and implementation of a vigorous program-assessment and site-improvement process. This process should utilize methods developed in collaboration with representatives of a range of educational program vendors, as they bring diverse and important perspectives to the conversation. System components could be designed in such a fashion as to identify program strengths and deficiencies, and could lead to program improvement plans and targeted technical assistance, as needed. Such a process would create a recurring system of analysis and feedback between DYS education staff and education service providers, establishing a more effective mechanism for corrective intervention.

Implement a communication strategy targeted to both internal and external audiences

DYS has accomplished a great deal over the past three years and has an abiding interest in communicating both its successes and its continuing needs to staff, funders, and the general public. Accordingly, DYS would benefit from a dissemination, publicity, and public relations strategy to ensure that stakeholders, such as MA DOE, the State Legislature, etc., are well-informed about the practices and outcomes associated with the DYS Education Initiative. In particular, DYS stands to benefit from sharing its new approaches and reform achievements with school Superintendents such that they increase confidence in DYS students' ability to succeed in the classroom, which may promote increased collaboration and facilitate timelier student placements into public school settings following their discharge to the community.

Appendix A: Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation relied on multiple sources of evidence and encompassed a range of both quantitative and qualitative data. Following is an overview of the specific data sources and collection methods utilized. This overview is organized into two distinct sections:

1. Extant institutional data available from DYS, CommCorp, HEC, and other organizations associated with the DYS education reform initiative.

2. Data collected through new instruments and protocols that were specific to the evaluation activity.

Extant Institutional Data

The scope of this evaluation included a review of specific educational service delivery, student transition services, and education systems management efforts central to the DYS Education Initiative. Accordingly, a range of institutional data was collected from DYS, CommCorp, and HEC, and served as source data for the evaluation. These data were particularly important to the process of establishing a baseline of conditions within the DYS Education system prior to the Initiative and at various intervals following its implementation. All data received by the Institute was catalogued and the quality and appropriateness of each was assessed. Following is a general description of the institutional data used in this evaluation.

- DYS Accountability Reports – DYS legislative reports beginning with the initial report in 2001 and continuing through 2007. Selected data presented in winter and spring 2007 DYS Benchmark reports.

- Curriculum and Instructional Materials Data Files – All available information related to requests and purchases of books, materials, and supplies beginning in 2003 and continuing through 2007.

- Professional Development Data Files – Various information sources related to statewide, regional, and summer trainings over the past four years. Letters and agendas related to statewide professional development programs, hard copies of completed surveys, and attendance files. Data files related to the content of the professional development sessions including program descriptions and training topic surveys.

- Instructional Support and System Management Templates – Curriculum guides related to ELA, math, and science. Various instructional support tools including the elements of quality of instruction rubric, lesson planning template, and the mini-unit template. Other data collection and evaluation tools including the DYS universal student transcript, and selected teacher evaluation forms and supporting materials.

- Instructional Coach Data Files – Program contact management lists for 2006 and 2007, and selected coaching reports containing a narrative summary of the coaching experience. End of year HEC teacher survey on instructional coaching.

- Program and Personnel Data Files – Pertinent human resource data for all DYS educators employed in 2007. Salary schedule information for 2004, 2006, and 2007, and a description of the process used to determine the level of salary increase.

- Field Assessment Report and Data Files – Field assessment tools from 2004, 2006, and 2007, copies of notification letters and emails, and lists of supplemental questions. Field assessment data from 2004 and 2006, selected field assessment reports, and field assessment summary reports from 2004-2007.

- Vocational and Employment Transition Initiatives – Materials related to development of the Putnam Vocational Training Program and evaluation report. The Bridging the Opportunity Gap RFP requirements and awards list, template and user support guide for online pilot program reporting, and end of year report.

- Dissemination and Publicity – Selected newsletters, news items, and presentations.

- Educational Assessment – Notes from the DYS assessment committee and the complete assessment package.

- Title 1 Reports – Information related to Title 1 including the 2004-2005 internal evaluation report and the 2006 report to the US DOE.

Data Collected through Research Evaluation Methods

The evaluation relied substantially on a series of research methods developed and administered by the Donahue Institute as follows.

- A DYS teacher survey was administered, gaining responses from over 90% of all classroom teachers, Teaching Coordinators, and Title 1 teachers serving DYS youth in Massachusetts.

- Literature Review – Two literature review reports written by the Donahue Institute, first in October 2006 and a separate report in August 2007.

- Extensive observation of professional development classes at a statewide professional development event.

- Numerous interviews with key leaders and program managers from DYS, CommCorp, HEC, and selected vendors. Also including but not limited to the Director of DYS professional development, Transition Coordinator, Title 1 Director, Area Education Coordinators, Instructional Coaches, Education Liaisons, Field Assessment Coordinator, CommCorp Data Specialist, DYS consultants, and others.

- On-site observations of selected programs and events, including strategic planning retreats, professional development workshops, transition program events, etc.

- Selection and documentation of promising practices that are emerging across the DYS Education system.

- Case study research on six "featured practices" developed for system-wide application through the Education Initiative.

- Preliminary site visit interviews at eight programs within five geographically and programmatically diverse DYS settings (summer 2006)

- In-depth interviews of approximately 70 educators, Program Directors, and students at 12 geographically and programmatically diverse DYS Education programs around the state (spring 2007)

Featured Practices

The DYS Education Initiative has resulted in a wide range of new programs and resources designed to improve system effectiveness. This section presents six "featured practice" case studies, which highlight specific programs, tools, and processes developed through the Education Initiative. These cases explore the purpose and importance of each featured practice to DYS's goal of improving life outcomes for the youth it serves, and examine their development, implementation and opportunities for further improvement. These featured practices focus on the development and implementation of:

- A statewide professional development system

- A system-wide instructional coaching model

- A process for effective piloting of youth employability programs

- A work-based training program in partnership with Putnam Vocational Technical High School

- A universal student transcript to support student credit recovery

- A "Community Transition School" to support student re-entry into public schools

These practices were selected by the DYS Evaluation Advisory Committee from a broader list of programs, tools, and resources compiled by the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute research team. This list was compiled with the understanding that featured practices would be limited to those that could be directly attributed to the Education Initiative. Featured practice case studies were developed through on-site and/or telephone interviews, review of documentation related to each program, and analysis of any secondary data relevant to the practice.

Featured Practice: Creating a Statewide Professional Development System

The Need for Statewide Professional Development

Converging evidence supports the importance of ongoing comprehensive professional development for educators in juvenile justice facilities (Gagnon & Calvin, 2004; JustChildren, 2003; Mason & Gagnon, 2005; US DOE, 1999). However, the 2001 DYS Legislative Report noted a "scarcity of professional development resources" as a serious concern for the Department of Youth Services (DYS) (p.6). In response, DYS established a focus on PD during the development of the Education Initiative. The lynchpin of DYS's PD strategy is statewide, full-day PD training, which serves as the primary vehicle for sharing and conveying curriculum and quality instructional practices across the entire system. Accordingly, statewide PD is the focus of this featured practice. However, it is worthwhile to note that three other key initiatives have been launched – Regional, Summer, and Teaching Coordinator PD – which expand the capabilities of the overall PD system by addressing topic areas in greater depth or by filling niches for specific audiences.

Building a Statewide Professional Development System

Initial steps

DYS initiated statewide PD programming in FY 2004, directing substantial new resources and attention to PD. DYS, in collaboration with the Hampshire Educational Collaborative (HEC) and the Commonwealth Corporation (CommCorp), led the development of a comprehensive PD plan for DYS Education. Ultimately, HEC coordinated the delivery of PD across the state.

DYS began planning for statewide PD by identifying the barriers that had previously interfered with its capacity to support regular statewide PD. These included:

- High turnover among teachers;

- A wide range of expertise, teaching qualifications, and classroom experience among educators;

- A limited and often outdated supply of curriculum materials and instructional resources;

- The lack of a standardized curriculum; and

- The unique population of highly transient youth, a relatively high number with special needs, and many with limited academic exposure.

In addition, they recognized that the new PD system would need to counter attendance barriers stemming from a historical lack of substitute teachers, attendance incentives, and program-level commitments to sending teachers to PD. Based on these rather unique and complex challenges, DYS concluded that no "one-size-fits-all" approach would succeed in this environment. Instead, they developed a flexible and diverse PD system to accommodate the full range of teacher needs.

Logistics

DYS has held statewide PD events five times a year since 2004-2005, with options for extended learning time beyond the events offered in 2004-2005 and 2006-2007. These trainings take place at the College of the Holy Cross, a venue in centrally located Worcester, Massachusetts. The first event each year consists of a half-day of PD, while the four subsequent events are full-day. Implementation of these events is supported by mandatory attendance requirements (beginning in 2005-2006) and agreements among DYS and its educational programs to close classrooms on these five dates. Each year teachers receive welcome-back letters containing clear information about the year's PD calendar, including event dates, times, and content focuses,

among other information. Teachers indicate that they are aware of the events, suggesting that system-wide communication is effective in this regard.

Responsiveness

One especially commendable aspect of DYS's PD is that it has responded to the specific needs of the system. For example, based on the concerns identified in the 2001 and 2002 DYS Legislative Reports, DYS's statewide PD events have focused on developing system-wide uniformity of high-quality curriculum content and instructional methods. In addition, decisions related to PD have followed an inclusive process, which requires managers to collect feedback and data from a variety of sources, including DYS educators, and use these data to guide decision making with regard to PD content and delivery. Moreover, in response to deficiencies identified at the onset of the Education Initiative, DYS has implemented a compulsory system of statewide training events and has established a set of strategies to support compliance with these systems. These strategies have focused on accommodating teacher needs, overcoming program-based obstacles to participation, and encouraging attendance. Strategies have included the following:

- Closing classrooms system-wide on statewide PD days. Issues related to finding substitutes, having regular teachers out of the classroom, and gaining access to PD have been eliminated.

- Mandating educator participation. Attendance rates have improved each year; the mandatory attendance requirement established by DYS in 2005-2006 has supported this steady improvement.

- Providing opportunities for professional networking. Educators consistently identified the opportunity to meet with colleagues, both formally and informally, as the thing they most look forward to.

- Incentivizing participation in PD. Incentives serve to further motivate teacher attendance. Incentives include PD points for attendees, college credit options, the provision of lunch and refreshments, raffles, etc.

- Professionalizing the PD experience. Statewide PD takes place in an appealing conference-like setting. It is well-organized and centrally located in Worcester, Massachusetts. Comments shared by teachers suggest that this environment adds to some teachers' enthusiasm for PD events and contributes to positive morale.

- Communicating a clear and well-planned PD calendar and agenda. PD-related information is disseminated through an array of communication channels and helps educators to plan ahead and prepare for upcoming events.

Evidence suggests that the plans designed to remedy obstacles which may have created problems for teachers to attend PD are paying off. In fact, attendance data suggest that DYS is making great progress toward meeting its goal of establishing a PD system that is consistently well-attended. The overall rate of attendance continues to increase over time, with a 10 percentage point jump over the previous year when attendance became mandatory in FY 2006. In FY 2007, PD events averaged 92% attendance, a substantial increase compared to the 85% average attendance in FY 2006 and 75% attendance in FY 2005. Also in FY 2007, all but one event attained over 90% attendance, a level not reached for any event prior to that year.

Impact and Perceptions of Statewide Professional Development

Feedback collected through the DYS teacher survey, administered by the UMass Donahue Institute, suggests that statewide PD has had a positive system-wide impact. Educators were asked to rate the impact of statewide events on their classroom instruction and on student learning for each year they attended statewide PD. Responses show gradual increases in the proportion of teachers who feel that statewide PD has a high or very high impact on classroom instruction and on student learning, culminating at 44% and 42%, respectively, in FY 2007. Overall, 82% of respondents reported that statewide PD had at least a moderate impact on their classroom instructional practices, while 79% reported at least a moderate impact on student learning.

Survey respondents frequently cited the provision of PD as one of the chief factors contributing to recent educational improvement within DYS. As one DYS teacher commented, "Better professional development opportunities for DYS teachers have helped the education program." Another educator stated, "I leave the PD filled with content, inspiration, and motivation to apply what I learned." Several comments also suggest that for teachers working in more isolated programs, these PD opportunities also serve an "extra" purpose of bringing colleagues together and thereby gaining support, ideas, updates, etc., which may otherwise be few and far between.

Over time, DYS has developed a robust statewide PD program to support system-wide curriculum development and implementation, to provide a common venue and exposure to critical new instructional methods and content, to contribute to the professional culture of DYS educators, and to provide an opportunity for professional networking among educators working in a geographically dispersed system. Furthermore, evidence suggests that PD has been approached equitably across the state; that is, all educators have been provided equal access, regardless of vendor affiliation or program type. Compared to the virtual absence of statewide PD before the Education Initiative, these data highlight a tremendous success for DYS.

Considerations to Further Enhance the Model

While many view statewide PD as excellent and regard it as a successful initiative, some perceive a gap between the generalized principles of good teaching and content knowledge, and the unique context in which DYS teachers operate. The complex contextual factors in which education is delivered – a range of program types, a highly challenged and mobile student population, small and geographically dispersed programs, teachers commonly instructing across multiple subject areas, etc. – make it extremely difficult to meet everyone's PD needs. Recognizing this, the following considerations may help to enhance statewide PD.

- While not all teachers feel their needs are being adequately addressed, the system may now be better positioned to do more, with its increasingly strong foundation of licensed teaching staff, the variety of PD structures now in place, and its past responsiveness to teacher feedback and suggestions for improvement. Key improvements of interest to DYS educators include trainers who have experience in, or a well-developed sense of, the DYS classroom environment; strategies specific to working with high mobility students; and strategies for "extreme" differentiation of instruction, which continues to be a challenge to many educators.

- Professional development services have offered a broad range of content and have worked to bring all teachers up to a baseline of knowledge and skill. Moving forward, it may be important to offer two tracks of PD: one for veteran staff who have participated in

"basic" training in the past and have shown an ability to implement that training in the classroom, and another for new teachers or those struggling to employ concepts into the classroom. This will engage more experienced teachers with increasingly advanced PD topics while also addressing the most fundamental training needs of new or struggling teachers.

- Attendance rates at statewide PD days have greatly improved over the past three years. However, in FY 2007 an average of 8% of teachers still did not attend. A sharper focus on attendance data could lead to the development of strategies to reinforce compliance where appropriate and necessary.

Featured Practice: DYS System-wide Instructional Coaching

One of the central goals of the DYS Education Initiative (EI) was to develop greater system-wide consistency with regard to both curriculum and instructional practice across its educational programs. This was a substantial challenge in the context of an education system comprised of many small, and in some respects isolated, programs. From its inception, the EI focused on providing standardized curricula, materials and instructional approaches for system use, and establishing a statewide professional development system to orient educators to these resources and approaches. One of the key strategic questions that arose was how to most effectively support teachers' integration of the instructional practices presented through professional development (PD).

Supporting Curriculum Implementation Through Instructional Coaching

In 2004-2005, the Director of DYS Professional Development (the PD director) visited DYS Education programs across the state to observe teachers in their classrooms and provide them with feedback regarding their lessons. The director conducted over 60 visits to DYS programs that year, facilitating implementation of new curriculum resources and instructional techniques, but also addressing other questions or concerns posed by teachers. Additional visits were conducted by another member of the professional development team assembled for DYS by the Hampshire Educational Collaborative (HEC). The process provided program managers with a clear understanding of teacher support needs and certainty that a robust instructional coaching model was essential to the success of the EI. This certainty was also supported by an emergent strand of education literature linking coaching to improved implementation of content and instructional practice in secondary schools.[1]

In 2005-2006, DYS committed resources to hire two instructional coaches, each of whom would serve a specific geographical area – one serving programs in the eastern side of the state and the other in the west. Hired in September 2005, the two coaches received a two-week training and orientation to their job, performed by the PD director, who would supervise their work. Although one of the original coaches left and was replaced at mid-year, they still conducted some 215 visits to 57 different program sites in operation at that time. A third coach was hired in September 2006 to focus on programs in southeastern Massachusetts. The three coaches combined to conduct 263 site visits in 2006-2007.

According to the PD director, each coach was hired based upon her "knowledge and understanding of quality and effective instructional practices." Another key interest was is also in creating a team with complementary and diverse expertise, which would allow them to contribute broadly to DYS Education's content development and content-related professional development. In this way, instructional coaches could be viewed not only as coaches, but as system-level curriculum and professional development resources.

So what is the role of the coach in DYS education? That is precisely the question upon which the PD director asked coaches to reflect in their 2005-2006 year-end reports. One coach described her role as being someone to "whom teachers can turn to discuss ideas and thoughts on any number of scenarios in a non-evaluative format. [We] are a sounding board – a mirror, there to engage in reflective discourse to ensure that teachers have ample opportunity to hash out ideas before implementation, as well as a person with whom to reflect on practice after implementation." This captures the role philosophically while highlighting the practical importance of collegial, non-supervisory relationships between coaches and the teachers with whom they work.

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[1] Sturtevant, Elizabeth. (2003.) *The Literacy Coach: A Key to Improving Teaching and Learning in Secondary Schools.* Alliance for Excellent Education.

The DYS Instructional Coaching Model

Initially, each coach was assigned to a geographic region as a means to create an equitable distribution of work. In 2006-2007, the assignment model shifted away from a basis in the number of programs per coach to reflect a balanced number of teachers with whom each coach is to work. This new methodology evened out caseloads that previously were not proportional due to differences in program size, particularly in the metro-Boston area.

At the start of each school year, each coach contacts the Teaching Coordinators of programs to which they are assigned and arranges to visit the program and meet with all DYS Education classroom teachers. These initial teacher meetings focus on the development of coaching goals for the year with each teacher. These goals may be informed by a teacher's Individual Professional Development goals, recent supervisory observation results or goals established by the teacher, oftentimes influenced by self-evaluation using the DYS Elements of Quality Instruction Rubric. As one coach noted, "I use [the rubric] as a tool to see where teachers think they are and where they would like to be with regards to their teaching."

Once the coach has had an opportunity to meet with each program's teaching staff and begin to build a rapport, he/she will arrange to visit the teacher and observe a classroom lesson. For this observation, teachers are required to use the DYS lesson planning template and to provide it to the coach so he/she can assess the plan and its implementation in the classroom. Following the observation, the coach spends time with the teacher (as much as an hour may be required) using a "reflective questioning" model to promote discussion of facets of the observed lesson. The coach may also ask the teacher to complete the Elements of Quality Instruction Rubric to provide a framework for this reflective dialogue. This encourages critical self-examination and the identification of individual strengths and weaknesses.

In addition to teacher directed discussion of the lesson that was observed, the coach shares any comments or suggestions he/she may have written during the observation that have not yet been addressed. These may frequently address strengths as well as weaknesses. While providing instructional support is the central goal, so too is establishing a relationship in which both coach and teacher become open to their growth as educators, allowing a deeper collegiality to grow, which leads to more meaningful and productive collaboration. The confidentiality of coaching meetings is central to developing this trust and collegiality.

Coaches noted that each DYS education program and its staff is unique and may require varying degrees of engagement and varying types of support. While the goal is to have a coach visit each site every four to six weeks, some teachers and programs require more or less frequent contact. This decision is left to the coach's discretion. The range of support provided by coaches is broad, as the following sampling of accomplishments reported by coaches suggests.

- Link professional development to classroom practice
- Design and implement quality lesson plans
- Align instruction with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks
- Reflect on their instructional practice
- Integrate technology tools into their instruction
- Enhance hands-on activities/visuals to accent group dialogue
- Create more functional schedules
- Develop a program library

- Display student work effectively

- Work with other teachers to integrate disciplines

Additional Responsibilities of the Instructional Coach

The role of the DYS instructional coach is clearly articulated in a formal job description, but continues to evolve to meet the fluid needs of a dynamic system. Coaches' responsibilities have expanded over the past two years to include an active role in the development of DYS curriculum guides and an increased role providing content-related training at statewide professional development events and Teaching Coordinator meetings. While this flexibility allows the system to fully utilize them as resources, these additional responsibilities also increase demands on coaches' time. The PD director monitors coaches' site visit logs to ensure that these additional responsibilities do not detract from their primary commitment to be in the field working with teachers.

Impact and Perceptions of DYS Instructional Coaching

It is difficult to conclusively determine the impact of coaching on curriculum implementation and quality of instruction, particularly at such an early stage and within a system that is undergoing substantial change in those very areas. However, the following data, collected through two separate survey initiatives, provide a snapshot of what coaching means to DYS educators.

- In spring 2007 the instructional coaches designed a survey (the IC survey) that was completed by 109 teachers, 90% of whom agreed that their coach is available to assist their instructional practice, suggesting coaches have made themselves accessible to teachers.

- 89% of IC survey respondents agreed that they had developed a beneficial professional relationship with their coach. The DYS Teacher Survey, administered by the UMass Donahue Institute in January 2007 and completed by 165 DYS educators, found that 78% rated working relationships with their coach as good or excellent.

- Nearly 90% of IC survey respondents agreed that coaching helps them to reflect on their teaching style and strengths, and that post-observation feedback makes them more aware of their classroom practice.

- IC survey data show that coaching encourages educators to adopt new teaching strategies (83% agreed) and to better connect professional development with classroom practice (66%).

- Finally, 94% of respondents to the DYS Teacher Survey reported that coaching had a "mostly" (60%) or "very" (34%) positive impact on their ability to teach effectively.

Teacher interview data collected by the UMass Donahue Institute in spring 2007 also revealed a range of opinions with regard to the role and value of instructional coaching to their programs. On the whole, feedback was positive and suggested the tone and style of the coaches was effective. Many interviewees felt that coaching should focus on the least experienced and qualified teachers, and identified a challenge for coaches in establishing their expertise and credibility when working with some veteran DYS educators. Coaches were also valued for their knowledge of ongoing initiatives within DYS education and appear to play an important role in system-level communication.

Time was another overarching theme that emerged from interviews. It takes time for teachers to prepare for each observation and they require value in return. Survey data suggest that teachers value coaching. However, contrary to survey data, a number of interviewees noted that their coach's availability was limited and wished they could be more accessible. Teacher perceptions of and interest in coaching services vary from teacher to teacher, but were on the whole very positive.

Opportunities to Further Enhance the Model

DYS's instructional coaching model is widely regarded as a successful initiative. Coaches and DYS educators noted a few ways in which coaching could be made more accessible, including:

<u>Expanding Time with Teachers</u>

While survey data show that DYS instructional coaches are generally perceived as available to teachers, interview data suggest that greater opportunity for direct contact would be beneficial. As noted by one key observer, coaches now focus their time on those in greatest need, but the ideal of contact with each teacher every 4 to 6 weeks has not yet been realized in all DYS regions. Conflicting work demands and the travel time associated with large regional territories are limiting factors on coaches' availability. To address this, all DYS instructional coaches are provided with cell phones, so teachers can reach them as instructional questions arise, although not all teachers appear satisfied with the level of access this provides. DYS also plans to add a fourth coach for the 2007-2008 school year, if funding is available.

<u>Building and Maintaining Effective Relationships</u>

Clearly, coaching requires effective and trusting working relationships. To that end, it was suggested that the non-supervisory nature of the coaches' role be preserved and that confidentiality of coach-to-teacher contact be protected at all costs. These specific conditions or principles are in fact woven into the instructional Coach job description. In addition, coaches feel that a stabilizing of the territories, programs, and teachers they serve would be of benefit and avoid the need to build so many new relationships each year.

<u>Time for Collegial Engagement among Coaches</u>

Finally, it was noted that while coaches are in a position that requires constant engagement with teachers, they sometimes feel isolated from one another. The coaches did meet periodically in 2006-2007 and hope that an expansion to four coaches will create a greater impetus to meet, coordinate, and share experiences, and hope to benefit from a wider circle of colleagues.

Featured Practice: Process for Implementation of Pilot Employability Programs

The need for improved services for students transitioning from juvenile justice systems back into their community is acute nationwide. Research suggests that these students require a tremendous amount of support due to their increased risk of experiencing harmful life events and/or being reincarcerated (Gagnon & Mason, 2004). A broad array of services are required, but for older students, programs to increase their employability skills and facilitate connections to vocational training and job opportunities hold particular relevance and promise.

Over the past year, the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services (DYS) has focused new energy on creating and assessing programs to provide its students with exposure to vocational pathways and employability skills training. Most prominently, DYS, in partnership with the Commonwealth Corporation (CommCorp), launched two initiatives – Regional Vocational/Employability Pilot Programs and Bridging the Opportunity Gap – providing funding to pilot innovative approaches to support the career readiness and employability needs of DYS youth as they re-enter the community.

With shared vision, goals, approaches and indicators of success, these two programs soon became commonly referred to as the Bridging the Opportunity Gap (BOG) initiative. Overall, the BOG initiative funded the development of 14 pilot programs distributed across the five DYS regions and engaged 255 DYS youth. The BOG initiative also placed substantial emphasis on program-based data collection and reporting, which was intended to facilitate identification of effective program models.

Bridging the Opportunities Gap: The Process

While indications are that the BOG initiative was very successful in establishing new vocational and employability programs, this featured practice highlights the exemplary "process" employed by DYS and CommCorp program managers. This process stands out as a thoughtfully conceived, well organized and managed, and highly regarded model of pilot project implementation. Among its features were:

- Establishing clear program goals and indicators of success
- Implementation support for individual projects furnished by way of technical assistance and networking opportunities
- Ensuring accountability measures were a core element of the initiative by mandating activity and outcomes data collection
- Opportunities to reflect on program success and consideration of next steps

<u>Clear Expectations for Potential Grantees</u>

Two approaches were used to distribute funds. In fall 2006, several programs were funded on a discretionary basis to support capacity of community re-entry centers across each of the five DYS regions. Second, a competitive grant process was used to encourage additional innovative proposals with the aim of strengthening connections between DYS services with workforce investment boards, career centers, community and faith based organizations, and public vocational high schools. This competitive grant process began with a Request for Proposals (RFP) that was issued in November 2006. This RFP announced that funds were available to provide direct services that would meet the career readiness, pre-employment, and employment needs of youth in the custody of DYS. The RFP identified explicit goals and objectives reflective of the project purpose which program managers had carefully conceived. It encouraged proposals that

would create partnerships among organizations with expertise in job readiness and employment services and lead to services being delivered in a supported, youth-friendly manner.

Information packets contained comprehensive information to support well-formulated and high-quality proposals and included: eligibility requirements, criteria for use of funding, examples of project activities and services, detailed instructions for completing and submitting an application, the process to be used for evaluating the proposals and what criteria the evaluation committee would use in determining awards, and a range of other useful materials (e.g., telephone contact information for all 33 DYS community re-entry centers). In post-program interviews conducted by the UMass Donahue Institute, the RFP materials and process was described by one grantee as "very clear'" and by another as "Very good on the part of CommCorp. They were excellent working with me and my time constraints."

Implementation Support

To support project implementation, managers assigned each of the 14 programs a staff member who served as the program's technical assistance liaison throughout the approximate 18 week funding period. This technical assistance strategy featured a set of visits (once every six weeks for at least three in total) to each program where liaisons would meet with key program personnel to receive updates, observe on-site or in-the-community activities, reinforce data reporting requirements, and collect any questions or concerns which needed to be addressed more fully by project managers. One pilot program administrator expressed how much he valued this assistance noting that they "Regularly touched based, it really worked well. The meetings to exchange ideas were great."

Implementation support also included a day-long networking event, which brought together representatives from each of the 14 pilots. The meeting's essential question was "What strategies can we employ to successfully engage youth, involved with DYS, to successfully access the skills, knowledge, and drive to experience success in the workforce?" This event provided pilot program managers and staff the opportunity to learn about their colleagues' successes and to capitalize on their feedback regarding ways to enhance their own pilots and to inform future programming.

Clearly, providing this time to collaborate was a wise decision, as participants actively contributed to the day's activities. One pilot program administrator highlighted this feature of the pilot process as indispensable, offering that "The most important thing was the collaboration between us, DYS, CommCorp, and the school system. That collaboration really made it work."

Activity and Outcomes Data Collection

Best practice research suggests that programs should use a variety of data collection techniques in order to continuously monitor and evaluate program efficacy – and the BOG initiative did just that. Regional and statewide indicators of success are clearly explained in a document titled, "DYS Statewide Vocational Funding: Overview of Statewide Goals, Success Indicators, and Recommended Pilot Component." And, programs funded through the BOG initiative were required to collect and report a variety of informative data in support of project evaluation and continuous improvement. Examples of these data include:

- A grant program summary including an assessment of program success in meeting DYS statewide goals and success indicators

- Progress at meeting project specific indicators, including participant retention numbers, number and quality of collaborating program partners, and specific ways that regional program capacity and linkages have improved

- Copies of individual Massachusetts Work-based Learning Plans for any participants that received an internship

- A copy of the full career readiness and/or employability curriculum if used

One of the most exciting components of the BOG initiative pilot process has been the development of an easy to use, web-based data reporting tool to support the collection of detailed demographic data on participating youth. The online database allows DYS and CommCorp to capture and analyze data, measure outcomes, and create statistical reports. Programs were provided technical assistance on how to use this database system and to clarify what data elements were required. This support came through the site visit process, as well as through an "Orientation Guide". The guide was disseminated and reviewed at the day-long networking event and details for the user a step-by-step process on how to enter the required information.

As a result of this emphasis on data collection, program managers were able to run a range of statistical reports at the end of the grant period describing:

- Participant data including name, age, gender, and ethnicity

- Participant's home community and current living situation

- DYS grid level offense

- Educational information including high school status, MCAS status, grade level, etc.

- Employment status (e.g., mentoring, internship, employed)

- Parental information

- Participation information including sessions attended, completed, etc.

- Pre- and Post-test assessment data

- The vocational and/or employability subject area the student completed work in.

Program managers report that all projects fulfilled the accountability requirements by entering the required information through the on-line database system. Still, feedback from the field has led the management team to commit to updating and revising the database to address nuances of the system that presented challenges to fully completing data collection templates.

Reflection on Program Success

A summative report of the pilot program highlighted a high degree of success in meeting the four goals and three major indicators of success for the BOG initiative. The report, released in September 2007, also included an honest reflection on which program elements were successful and which might be improved. These were presented in the form of "lessons learned" and "recommendations for FY'08." Evidence cited in this report, and from other emerging internal research, supports the notion that the resources DYS has targeted to expanding opportunities for students to gain exposure to career readiness and employability skills is beginning to pay off.

Furthermore, the process utilized to acquire funding, establish goals, disseminate information equitably across the state, promote and support high quality pilot programs consistent with the objectives of the DYS Education Initiative, and very notably, the creation of a data reporting system, stands out as a model for future DYS pilots. In fact, the program report was received

positively by the Commissioner of DYS and her senior staff at a September 2007 event, where she re-affirmed her commitment to continuing the program into FY 2008, during which time existing projects will be afforded the opportunity to continue and expand, and new pilot projects will begin.

Featured Practice: DYS Putnam Vocational Training Program

Supporting Transition through Vocational Education

The 2002 DYS Legislative Report outlined the great challenge of providing meaningful career development and work-based learning opportunities to DYS students. Provision of these opportunities was noted to be important because an increasing number of DYS students are older, not academically oriented, and unlikely to return to or remain in public schools when they are discharged. Accordingly, it was suggested that these youth would transition more successfully into the community and employment if they had exposure to vocational training, work skill development, and job preparation training.

In response, DYS, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Corporation (CommCorp), has actively pursued options for providing these types of experiences to DYS youth. The DYS Putnam Vocational Training Program (the Putnam Program), which began as a pilot program in summer 2006, is among the most exciting developments in vocational and employability training to date.

Program Development and Initial Implementation

Development of the Putnam Program was facilitated by a senior program manager of CommCorp, a quasi-public organization with a 25-year history of providing innovative workforce development programs. Working closely with the DYS Western Regional Director and leveraging her knowledge of youth oriented workforce development resources in the Springfield area; this program manager developed a partnership encompassing DYS, the Putnam Vocational Technical High School, the Corporation for Justice Management, and the Center for Human Development and the Massachusetts Career Development Institute (MCDI), which operates GED and youth employment programs. DYS provided funding for the program through both federal Title I dollars and a statewide appropriation targeted at employability and vocational training.

With the resources and knowledge provided by these strategic partners, the Putnam Program was launched as a pilot in summer 2006 at the Putnam Vocational Technical School. Ten youth from DYS's Springfield Community Re-entry Center (CRC) were chosen to participate in the program, which at that time focused on three subject areas: automotive mechanics, automotive body and workplace readiness skills. Shop classes (auto mechanics and auto body) were taught by certified vocational instructors from Putnam's faculty who delivered a curriculum based on the Massachusetts Vocational Frameworks. This curriculum focused on a set of vocational competencies that helped students gain technical knowledge as well as exposure to shop tools and equipment.

The workplace skills program, taught by CRC staff, utilized the SkillsUSA curriculum as well as the Hampden County Regional Employment Board's Workplace Readiness curriculum. Students were paid a small weekly stipend that was adjusted based on program participation, attendance and meeting a range of program expectations to help reinforce work skills. Of the ten participants, six successfully completed the pilot program.

With broad agreement regarding the success of the summer pilot program, it was decided that the Putnam Program would be continued into the coming school year (2006-2007). Course offerings were expanded to include auto mechanics, auto body, carpentry, culinary arts, and graphic arts, as well as the workplace readiness skills program. Putnam faculty designed and implemented curricula, and established competency goals that students should achieve by the end of each of the three 10-week semesters. Because school was in session, it was decided that DYS classes would meet three days a week from 3pm to 6pm.

Although selection criteria are flexible, Putnam Program participants are generally selected based on their level of interest, age, need for work experience, and possession of minimum 4th

grade reading and math skills. All students and their families are oriented to the program by its Director, Sire Diallo, of MCDI. Following this orientation, students participate in a weeklong exploratory phase that exposes them to all available shops. Students then select the shop they would like to pursue and begin their coursework. In addition, all students participate in the workplace readiness skills program for 60 minutes one day per week, focusing on skills such as workplace communication, task completion, how to interview and resume writing.

After two weeks, students receive shop uniforms, which they are expected to wear to school. In automotive mechanics and automotive body, students receive glasses, boots, and overalls. In carpentry classes, they receive glasses, boots, and shirts. In culinary classes, students receive chef ware and in graphic arts, students make their own t-shirts. The uniforms were initially required for safety purposes. However, Diallo notes that they have become a status symbol for youth in the community and a positive means to gaining respect the respect of their peers. In addition, the uniforms build camaraderie amongst the students working in the shops.

Connecting Youth to Positive Employment Experiences

Program managers and teachers emphasize their excitement at the potential of the Putnam Program. Mena Regan, the Springfield CRC's Vocational Coordinator, is a member of its management team and assists in family orientation, student transportation, paperwork, and delivery of the professional skills program. She describes the Putnam Program as "perfectly suited to our kids (at the CRC)," noting that DYS youth have been more successful at Putnam than in other employment programs the CRC has engaged.

Metal Fabrication shop teacher Victor Santos is quick to note that, absent a program such as this, "these kids are bored. They need a chance to work and do something." And Santos' description of the metal fabrication program and related projects makes it clear that these kids are, in fact, doing something. Students in the summer 2007 program were re-building an 18 foot metal hood for the Culinary Arts shop and learning everything from CAD skills, to welding, to building an installation support structure in the process.

The ultimate goal is to place youth in an internship or job when they graduate the program. Experience shows that getting students to the point where they are ready for such opportunities takes time; generally a full year. Santos notes that, like his regular day students, some students advance more quickly than others. Before he will "graduate" any DYS student, he notes, they must first demonstrate specific competencies and the maturity required to be successful. When a student is ready, program managers are informed and students are matched to employment opportunities in the community.

Sire Diallo and other staff work within the community to identify internship and other job opportunities. By paying students' wages, the program provides an incentive for employers to look past any biases they may have against adjudicated youth, and staff work hard to ensure that students are matched to opportunities for which they are well suited and prepared. Careful student placement has helped the program to forge mutually beneficial relationships between DYS and several local employers, which is critical to its success.

According to Diallo, the Putnam Program staff is committed to helping youth acquire a range of complementary skills and credentials needed for long term success. For example, they assist students in opening bank accounts and have an arrangement with a local driving school that allows students to take driver's education classes and get their licenses. Because most students cannot afford driver's education, the driving school offers DYS Putnam Vocational students a discount, and then the program subsidizes the remaining cost. The program also works to get

students into GED programming and a range of other education and training opportunities offered by MCDI. Finally, CRC staff provide students with transportation to facilitate participation.

Impact of the DYS Vocational Training Program

At its peak in February 2007 the program had 30 students, 20 of whom remained with the program at year's end. According to Regan, whose CRC works with DYS youth as they re-enter the community, this represents a high rate of success, as many of the youth who enroll in the program are "chronic revocators." In the future, she hopes to compile revocation data that will confirm that recidivism rates are lower among Putnam Program participants. In the meantime, she notes, "Even the kids who leave (the program), leave with an experience. We won't always see the success, it may happen down the road, (but) what we teach will kick in."

Ultimately, the program's success may best be measured by the opportunities that its students seize through the experience. On June 20, 2007, the DYS Putnam Vocational Training Program held a formal graduation for 16 students who had completed the program, which showed the nature of these opportunities. Of the 16, four secured full-time employment and 10 obtained summer employment through MCDI's Youth Works program. The event was an emotional celebration that included a key note speaker, staff testimonials, and recognition of student accomplishments. Numerous parents, guardians, and friends were on hand to enjoy the occasion.

As further testament to the program's value, Santos says, "To be honest, I really like it. If you give these students a goal and help teach and coach them to meet this goal in small increments, they can achieve. I've seen tremendous change in these kids."

Opportunities to Further Enhance the Model

The 2007 graduation celebrated a tremendous accomplishment both for these 16 youth and for the Putnam Program. Staff are enthused and have great visions for what the program might become. Some of these include:

- Expanding the program to serve more students and developing the requisite transportation arrangements required to facilitate their participation

- Increasing the number of vocational pathways available to youth, such as horticulture, which they hope to add in 2007-2008

- Developing new non-vocational education components focused on leadership, character development and entrepreneurism

- Expanding partnerships with local businesses and community based organizations to enhance the services available to youth and increase internship and employment options

- Additional educational options, including adult basic education (literacy/numeracy), GED preparation, and connection to the region's Workforce Investment Act (WIA) youth programming.

- Maintaining the relationship with Putnam Vocational Technical School, which is described as a "tremendous partner" to DYS

- Acquiring additional resources to sustain and expand the program

The Need to Enhance Student Credit Recovery

The Department of Youth Services (DYS) requires all of its programs to provide students with 5.5 hours of daily instruction and has established clear standards for curriculum and instruction in accordance with the Massachusetts State Curriculum Frameworks. However, until recently, there was some uncertainty regarding whether students would receive credit for their efforts in the DYS classroom upon their return to public schools.

This problem was summarized in the 2002 DYS Legislative Report, which noted that "the transition process for DYS youth leaving residential settings and re-entering the local public school district varies from site to site. Because there is not a prior agreement between DYS and the local school district, academic coursework in residential placement is often not accepted by the district when a DYS student returns to the community. The uncertainty of receiving credit for accomplishments threatens motivation and jeopardizes the academic and clinical achievements gained while the youth was in residential placement" (p. 9).

According to several DYS Education Liaisons, who help to facilitate student transitions between DYS programs and their communities and public schools, one of the key obstacles to students' recovery of academic credit was the lack of a standardized DYS student transcript. As recalled by school officials from several Massachusetts public schools, this lack of uniformity for reporting students' educational progress made it very difficult for school administrators, guidance counselors, and teachers to decipher what students had accomplished while in DYS classrooms. Typically, they would receive a number of transcripts from each separate DYS program the student attended classes at, invariably with dissimilar formats and containing inconsistent information.

The practice of using non-standard transcript forms was reportedly also contributing to the lag time between when students exited DYS programs and the time they entered public schools. As one school official remembers it, "we had to sort through and figure out students' educational experiences." Situations like these were all the more troublesome knowing that research consistently demonstrates that the sooner youth enroll in school upon release from juvenile justice settings, the greater their likelihood for successful re-entry.

Supporting Credit Recovery through Universal Student Transcripts

Beginning in FY'04 a development team — consisting of several Education Liaisons; DYS, Hampshire Educational Collaborative (HEC), and Commonwealth Corporation (CommCorp) staff; public school officials; and, DYS classroom teachers — met periodically with the goal of creating a "universal" DYS student transcript (UST). A set of standardized forms, with sections that detail course titles, topics covered, text and materials used, grades earned, contact hours and comments, were designed to improve credit recovery and reduce delays in student re-entry into public school. Version One of the UST was developed and piloted over an eight-week test phase, after which feedback was gathered from key stakeholders and incorporated into a final version prepared for widespread deployment. This new UST clearly delineated the important educational achievements of DYS students, in a format that aligned with the requirements of Massachusetts public schools.

Department of Youth Services
Student Transcript Report

Last Name   First Name   Middle Initial

SASID (If applicable)   MID (If Applicable)   Date of Birth

ESIS (Y/N)   Title I (Y/N)

DYS Program Site   Region

Attendance Period
From   To

Prepared by (Name/Title)   Date   Phone

Grading Key
A+ 100-97	B+ 89-87	C+ 79-77	D+ 69-67	F Below 60
A 96-94	B 86-84	C 76-74	D 66-64	P= Pass
A- 93-90	B- 83-80	C- 73-70	D- 63-60	F= Fail

Effort Key
Above Average	1
Average	2
Needs Improvement	3

English/Language Arts

| Course Title | Grade | Effort | Contact Hrs | Teacher |

Topics Covered/ Skills Addressed

Text/Materials

Math

| Course Title | Grade | Effort | Contact Hrs | Teacher |

Topics Covered/ Skills Addressed

Text/Materials

Student Transcript Report   As of September 2007   Page 1

Science

| Course Title | Grade | Effort | Contact Hrs | Teacher |

Topics Covered/ Skills Addressed

Text/Materials

Social Studies

| Course Title | Grade | Effort | Contact Hrs | Teacher |

Topics Covered/ Skills Addressed

Text/Materials

Additional Courses

| Course Title | Grade | Effort | Contact Hrs | Teacher |

Topics Covered/ Skills Addressed

Text/Materials

| Course Title | Grade | Effort | Contact Hrs | Teacher |

Topics Covered/ Skills Addressed

Text/Materials

Comment Section

Overall Academic Performance

Overall Behavioral Performance

Areas of Success/Potential

Student Transcript Report   As of September 2007   Page 2

DYS transcript consolidated to reduce white space. A typical completed transcript is several pages long and includes a cover page.

Introducing the Universal DYS Student Transcript

On July 21, 2004, the Deputy Commissioner of DYS sent a memo to all teachers and Teaching Coordinators alerting them that the UST had been finalized and that beginning in September 2004, all DYS educational programs would be required to use the new form for students being transferred to different DYS programs or being discharged to the community. That summer, DYS conducted a series of mandatory training workshops on the UST, which were intended to ensure that all DYS educators would understand how to effectively capture students' educational histories contained in the UST.

It was determined that transcripts must be generated for any DYS youth detained or committed who spends more than 15 consecutive school days in a residential DYS facility. If a student stays less than 15 days, they receive a certificate of attendance instead. Programs are required to complete and send out the UST (to the Education Liaison and the Area Education Coordinator)

within 48 hours of a student's release or transfer to another facility. A critical component of the process then takes place. The Education Liaison produces a UST cover sheet, which summarizes the student's academic accomplishments across whatever number of DYS programs the student was enrolled in, and refers to the attached UST for more detailed information.

Impact and Perceptions of the Universal Student Transcript

School officials from several Massachusetts public schools report that the UST has been extremely beneficial. There was widespread agreement that the transcripts have been a tremendous aid to the credit recovery process. As one school official stated, "It's not a guessing game anymore." In addition, many school systems use the UST to place students in appropriate classes and in some cases teachers use the transcripts to help acclimate students to class and to inform their instruction.

DYS Education Liaisons cite other positive impacts of the transcripts from their interactions with guidance counselors, school administrators, and teachers. Specifically, they note that guidance counselors appreciate that contact hours are included and teachers have indicated that the course descriptions are very helpful. Most often, the UST is described as a document that makes the transition process, especially credit recovery, run more smoothly for the student and for the receiving public schools. All of which helps to facilitate students' transitions back into public school classrooms. The UST has reportedly also been helpful in changing the negative perception held by some public school educators about DYS youth by highlighting, in some cases for the first time, the students' academic successes.

On the whole, feedback collected from DYS teachers by the UMass Donahue Institute in spring 2007 was very positive. Teachers cited how the UST has helped to build consistency across programs and generally seemed to appreciate the user-friendly forms that have been developed. One teacher said, "We take pride in doing our transcripts well and on time. There's lots of peer pressure [on students] to do well with transcripts. Kids care about what we write. It's an excellent form and information flow."

Of importance is that teachers recognize the UST as a nice balance between uniformity and flexibility, perhaps stated best by one teacher who noted, "In reality, the only thing that is universal is the form/look itself. Otherwise, each of the completed transcripts are very individual, as are the students."

Ongoing Training and Support in the Use of Universal Student Transcripts

Recently, DYS focused its efforts toward ensuring the UST process is consistently followed and is accomplishing its core purpose of aiding in student credit recovery. In FY'07 a training was held to orient new Teaching Coordinators to the UST and to refresh others as to their purpose, their format, the method for appropriately completing them, and the correct process for moving them through the system. Several handouts were given to participants including:

- Examples of completed student transcripts

- Information detailing the transcript completion process

- Procedures for generating transcripts on the computer

- A step-by-step process for moving transcripts through the DYS system

- Examples of appropriate language for teachers to use when completing the comments section of the transcript.

Opportunities to Further Enhance the Transcript

While it is clear that the UST has contributed to a more efficient process for students transitioning back to school, some suggestions for improvement have been offered which may inform program managers as they look toward the next iteration of the UST. These include:

- Several informants suggested expanding the amount of information collected in the UST such as: more information concerning student behavior; adding a section for test scores; reporting on class participation in addition to attendance; adding the number of school days attended; more specific references to classroom work, as an example, novels students have read, and; including pre- and post-test academic assessment data on transcripts to make them more useful instructionally.

Several suggestions focused on ways to improve the way the UST is used and offered ways in which the tool can have an even greater impact on the DYS education system. For example:

- Final transcripts created in preparation for transition into public schools provide valuable information regarding hours of class time accrued, a history of completed courses, a list of elective course opportunities, and so on. These data may provide useful feedback in DYS's efforts to build a more standardized educational system by helping to inform managers of potential gaps or discrepancies in the delivery of educational services between programs.

- Education Liaisons and public school officials both note that transcript turnaround could be improved. The 48-hour turnaround time is reportedly too often not met. This "delay" can lead to situations whereby DYS clients have many hours of potentially "frustrating" and "unstructured" time at their disposal.

Featured Practice: The Community Transition School

The Department of Youth Services (DYS) Education Initiative (EI) identifies effective transition services as instrumental to supporting positive long-term outcomes for DYS youth. The Department places particular emphasis on transitioning youth back into school, where they can continue to work toward a high school diploma, which research demonstrates is linked to positive life outcomes. Unfortunately, research also indicates that formerly incarcerated youth often struggle with school re-entry and that districts vary in their receptivity in re-enrolling these students, particularly those committed for serious offenses. In response, DYS, in collaboration with the Commonwealth Corporation (CommCorp) has worked to establish more effective partnerships with the state's large urban school districts, including the Boston Public Schools (BPS).

The Community Transition School: Improving Pathways for Student Re-entry

<u>Program Development</u>

Established in 2004, the Community Transition School (CTS) is a collaboration between DYS and the BPS. Designed to facilitate the successful reintegration of DYS students into BPS high schools, CTS is viewed as a promising model for cooperation between DYS and public school districts. The school is operated and staffed by the BPS, and is designed to respond to the needs of DYS youth as they transition from DYS Education programs back into the BPS. According to CTS principal, Habiba Davis, the intent is to offer a "comprehensive and meaningful transition" to DYS youth as they re-integrate into the BPS and to facilitate their graduation from a diploma granting school.

The CTS is a new incarnation of a previous DYS/BPS collaboration, the Angel Street School. Angel Street was operated by BPS' Alternative Education Office and staffed by BPS teachers and a DYS principal. Dissatisfied with the responsiveness of the Angel Street model to the needs of DYS youth, a working group of staff from BPS, DYS, CommCorp, and Jobs for the Future met over an extended period to define a more effective transition model for DYS students. According to a CommCorp program manager who worked on the project, the goal was to smooth the transition process by creating a "step-down" from DYS education programs to BPS high schools. This step-down would reduce the need for a rapid readjustment to high school life, which poses challenges to adjudicated youth.

The group's vision for CTS addressed this concern directly. Rather than placing students back into high school directly from DYS residential treatment, the new model would require they spend at least a full school quarter at CTS and meet specific benchmarks in order to transition into a BPS high school at the beginning of the next quarter. During this time, CTS staff, most of whom are BPS employees, would assess each student's academic strengths, challenges, and learning interests, while offering individualized instruction tied to the standard BPS curriculum and its benchmark assessments. The goal was to create an effective learning "bridge" between the DYS and BPS educational settings to reduce redundancy in learning and maintain steady learning progress.

During the "redesign" phase of the Angel Street School (which would become CTS) the working group identified the need for a position within the BPS structure that would facilitate collaboration and communication among DYS and BPS staff. As noted by one working group member, "Dual ownership was really critical" and DYS and BPS agreed to share the cost of this liaison, who was also BPS' High School Renewal Senior Program Coordinator. DYS utilized a grant from CommCorp's Communities and Schools for Success initiative which paid 50% of this position for two years, after which time the BPS assumed full responsibility. Through this position, Elliot helped to establish and maintain effective institutional connections, advocated within BPS for policies supportive of CTS, and helped establish the importance of student-by-student placement decision-making for DYS youth.

CTS Eligibility and Program

The Community Transition School serves students who reside in Boston, have been in DYS facilities for six months or longer, and have been assigned a DYS behavioral grid level of between 3 and 6, which correspond to serious offenses. The school, which features rolling admission, is designed to accommodate up to 25 students. DYS and CTS staff work together to ensure that DYS youth enroll in the program. "Ideally," says Davis, "every student knows they are heading to us from the start." DYS Education Liaisons, who support student transitions, inform eligible students of their likely placement at the school and Davis visits with each student at his (or her) DYS treatment facility in advance of transition, working to motivate him (or her) to come and complete the program. This encouragement is particularly important for students who view GED attainment as an attractive option, but who are still in a position to pursue a diploma.

When students arrive at CTS, program staff complete an intake process, which parents or guardians are encouraged to attend. This process includes a discussion of opportunities and expectations at CTS, and a student "inventory" aimed at assessing the student's grade level, preferred school setting, and career interests. These inventory data are useful to CTS teachers and facilitate the process of identifying which BPS school the student will attend following CTS. This assessment process is linked to the program's goal of providing academic programming consistent with grade-level BPS curricula and ensuring the eventual appropriate student placement.

During their time at CTS, students take English, science, and math classes that use the content, pacing, and assessments associated with the BPS curriculum. The school features small class sizes that allow for individualized instruction. There is one class for ninth and tenth grade students and another for grades eleven and twelve. Each subject is taught by a teacher with subject area expertise, with support from the program's Special Education (SPED) inclusion specialist. At the inception of the program, the expected length of stay for a student at CTS was one quarter, after which they would transition to a BPS school. More recently, that expectation changed to a full semester (or longer) to better accommodate the need to assess students and make effective placements.

Students at CTS must complete important objectives beyond their BPS coursework. For example, they develop a portfolio of their best work. This portfolio serves a number of purposes, including helping students to engage in their own education, understand how they work best, display and document their academic progress, work closely with supportive adults, and improve their oral presentation skills. As students prepare to transition from CTS to their next educational placement, they present their portfolio to their peers, CTS staff, and community-based partners. They may also share the portfolio with prospective schools. In addition to the portfolio, students must achieve specific social-emotional and academic competency benchmarks, consistent, says Davis, with our goal to "support kids academically, emotionally, and socially in transition."

Throughout a student's stay at CTS, staff work with the student to explore his or her school options, including facilitating visits to schools that offer a promising match, which facilitates enrollment. DYS students can make use of slots reserved at all non-exam BPS schools because BPS staff affiliated with CTS were able to successfully negotiate this access.

When students have met their benchmarks and are prepared to transition to a BPS school, a Transition Assessment Panel (TAP) is convened. This panel is comprised of CTS and DYS staff, representatives of community-based services that are working with the student, and the student's parents or guardians. Together, they examine the student's academic work, behavioral assessments, interests, and teacher recommendations and consider whether the school the student plans to attend is well-suited to support his or her progress. "It is the goal of the TAP to gather

information to assess the student's appropriateness for transition to BPS, assign the student to an educational setting in which he/she will be successful, and give the young person access to community resources" (excerpted from an undated program development report).

Outcomes

While there program outcomes data are limited at present, it is apparent that CTS students have been placed at a wide range of BPS high schools. Enrollment and placement data are currently available for 27 students who completed CTS in 2005-2006 and 40 students who completed the program in 2006-2007. These data show that students have transferred to a range of BPS schools, including comprehensive and vocational high schools, pilot schools, and alternative schools. In addition, some CTS students have opted to pursue their GED. Finally, several students were returned to DYS custody.

Three, six and nine month follow-up data will ultimately be available, but are not yet complete enough to support meaningful analysis. CTS is currently working with BPS district staff enable more effective tracking of former DYS students' outcomes in their new BPS school placements.

Challenges

Davis and her colleagues are excited by what CTS is accomplishing and see the collaboration between DYS and BPS as one that has facilitated program success. She notes that "There is no question that DYS is invested in this model (and that) it's easier to do in Boston due to their receptivity (to the program)." However, they also note challenges and opportunities for improvement as CTS moves forward. Specific points of emphasis include:

- Need for Innovative Youth Support Services: Acknowledging that substantial supports are already in place (particularly through Boston Youth Opportunity, the host location for CTS), Davis expressed concern that these interventions are not always sufficient to alleviate the challenges that confront DYS youth. She perceives a need for innovative new services to support DYS youth in the community. For example, a school-specific case manager who would work with students and families at their home or local Community Re-Entry Center, assisting them with homework and home issues that may affect academic success. Other supports might focus on supporting students' academic and social growth.

- Increased Teacher Training: CTS teachers lack specialized training in how to most effectively motivate and engage young people who reflect multiple educational, social, and emotional risk factors.

- Increased Data Collection and Analysis: CTS and BPS have begun to develop a data collection process that tracks student progress and retention in BPS. Continued work is needed to more effectively monitor student progress while they are in CTS and their success in school placements following completion of the program. These data will allow CTS staff to make better informed decisions and improve student outcomes.