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### JJPOC Monthly Meeting Agenda

Date: May 15, 2025

Time: 2:00PM-3:30PM

Location: LOB Room 1E / Via Zoom

Viewing Options [YouTube](#) or [CT-N](#)

Welcome and Introductions

Representative Toni Walker  
Undersecretary Daniel Karpowitz

Overview of Meeting and  
Announcements

Brittany LaMarr, TYJI

CCA: Report on Connecticut Youth  
with Disabilities in the Justice System

Sarah Eagan, Executive Director, CCA;  
Dr. Andrea Spencer; Attorney Marisa  
Halm

DCF-JJEU

Dr. Glen Worthy, Education Administrator,  
DCF-JJEU; John Tarka, Assistant  
Superintendent, DCF-JJEU; Tina Mitchell,  
Assistant Superintendent, DCF-JJEU

JJPOC 2025-2029 Strategic Plan

Brittany LaMarr, TYJI

**Next Meeting: June 26, 2025**





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University of New Haven

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# Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee

May 15, 2025

2:00PM – 3:30PM

Legislative Office Building, Room 1E

Zoom Option available

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# Agenda

**Welcome and Introductions**

**Rep. Toni Walker/Undersecretary Daniel Karpowitz**

**Overview of Meeting & Announcements**

**Brittany LaMarr, University of New Haven, TYJI**

**CCA Report: Missed Cues & Lost Opportunities**

**Sarah Eagan, Executive Director, CCA; Attorney Marisa Halm; Dr. Andrea Spencer**

**DCF-JJEU Presentation**

**Dr. Glen Worthy, Education Administrator, DCF-JJEU; John Tarka, Assistant Superintendent, DCF-JJEU;  
Tina Mitchell, Assistant Superintendent, DCF-JJEU**

**2025 JJPOC Strategic Plan**

**Brittany LaMarr, TYJI**



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## Administrative Updates

# Workgroup Upcoming Meetings and Focus Areas

Workgroup	Upcoming Meeting Date	Meeting Topics/ Focus Areas for Upcoming Months
Cross Agency Data Sharing Workgroup	May 19th, 2025 9:30am-11:00AM (ZOOM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Updates from CCA regarding their localized racial and ethnic disparities working group meetings</li><li>• Discussion of a JJPOC P20WIN Request and potential focused research questions</li></ul>
Education Workgroup	June 2, 2025 12-2PM (ZOOM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Presentation/Discussion with CSDE on current initiatives re: chronic absenteeism, truancy, and exclusionary discipline</li><li>• Finalize Education Workplan and next steps</li><li>• CSDE School Discipline Report Discussion</li><li>• Update from DCF-JJEU re: C-TEC</li></ul>
Conditions of Confinement Subgroup	June 4th, 2025 2-3PM (ZOOM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Finalize the Workplan for the year</li><li>• Chemical Agent and Restraint Form</li></ul>
Gender Responsive Subgroup	June 2, 2025 2-3PM (ZOOM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• JBCSSD and DOC Gender Responsive Training Review and Discussion</li></ul>
Incarceration Workgroup	June 16, 2025 1-1:30PM (ZOOM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Updates on Reentry Success Plan Implementation</li><li>• Updates from GR Subgroup</li><li>• Updates from Conditions of Confinement Subgroup</li></ul>



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## CCA Report: Missed Cues & Lost Opportunities



Fighting for the legal rights of Connecticut's most vulnerable children

## **Connecticut Youth with Disabilities in the Justice System**

**Missed Cues and Lost Opportunities: Briefing for  
the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight  
Committee (JJPOC)**

**Presented by**

**The Center for Children's Advocacy, with support from  
Dr. Andrea Spencer and Attorney Marisa Halm**



# CCA's Work with Justice Involved Youth

*“Know your Rights training”*

*Speak Up! Youth Project— meeting with detained and incarcerated youth*

*Individual legal representation of incarcerated and re-entering youth*

*Individual legal representation of children with disabilities, and children in the child welfare system*

# Report Purpose

Examine school  
and justice system  
responses to 10  
incarcerated youth  
with disabilities

Identified (missed)  
opportunities for  
early support

Develop specific  
recommendations  
for systemic reform

# CCA Report. Methodology

- Review educational, developmental and social histories for 10 incarcerated young adults in DOC custody.
- All youth had received educational advocacy from CCA.
- Each participant provided consent for their involvement.
- Youth Interviews
- Records reviews conducted by Dr. Andrea Spencer, Phd.—Faculty St. Josephs
- IEPs reviewed dated from 2015 to 2022, as available per youth.

# CCA Report

*“I am almost 21 years old, and I have spent 8 years of my life locked up, starting when I was 12. I really hope that what you are doing with this report can change things for the kids who come after me.”*

**- Report Participant**

# Incarcerated youth at MYI

All of the youth who participated in CCA's Report are Black, Latino, or Multiracial males

All youth were incarcerated before age 18 in adult facility

Youth records revealed a variety of disabilities: ADHD, learning disorders, autism, schizophrenia, PTSD

All youth were from major urban centers

# CCA Report. Adverse Childhood Experiences.

## **Violence. 100% of youth self reported exposure to violence in their childhood**

- One youth witnessed the shooting death of a close friend.
- One youth was a gunshot victim.
- Two youth reported being a victim of child abuse, verbal and physical.
- Two youth reported witnessing domestic violence.
- Six youth reported witnessing/impact of community violence and death/death of family members

# CCA Report. Adverse Childhood Experiences.

Multiple youth reported previous injuries, surgeries (gun shot, dog attack, altercations)

One youth reported history of homelessness

Two youth reported a history of multiple psychiatric hospitalizations

One youth reported a history of multiple foster care placements.

Two youth reported child abuse

Six youth had an incarcerated parent

Family economic challenges; parental separation; parental disability; immigration concerns; parental m/h and s/a challenges.



# Anthony's Story

Anthony had Birth to Three services due to a developmental disability but did not receive special education services upon entering school

His father was incarcerated when he was a baby and Anthony was close with his mother. He witnessed his mother victimized by interpersonal violence.

As he entered school, Anthony exhibited behavioral outbursts. He was retained in the first grade. No referral for a special education evaluation took place.

By middle school he was placed in an alternative program, where his struggles continued and he became further dis-engaged.

He was incarcerated at MYI by age 16. His mother and legal advocate helped get Anthony identified for special education services due to a language-based disorder.

Anthony reported his goals and aspirations. He wants to work with his hands and learn a skilled trade.



# Missed Cues. Youth Education records

- 8/10 education records indicate no documentation of ACEs in early childhood.
- Most youth (7/10) IEPs did not indicate a confirmed psychiatric or clinical psychological evaluation and diagnosis (consistent with research findings regarding clinical diagnosis for minority youth).

# Lost opportunities from an early age.

1. The majority of youth did not meet academic goals from **early elementary grades** but were not referred for special education and evaluation timely.
2. The median age at the time of youth's referral for special education was 13.5, with a range of age 3 to age 18.
3. 6/10 youth were successfully referred for special education by their legal advocate, and in one case, DCF. **Most referrals were initiated *after* youth's incarceration.**
4. **Youth described increasing levels of disengagement from school** in relation to academic difficulties and increasing feelings of anxiety and isolation/not belonging/academic failure began to seem inescapable.

*It all got worse in middle school..." Participant 3*

*"I never felt like I belonged in school..." Participant 8.*

# Jayden's story

Jayden reported not feeling safe in his neighborhood and reported including being mugged when he was 12. He didn't feel safe walking to school so sometimes he didn't go.

Jayden reported school getting extremely hard in middle school, and he felt overwhelmed

Jayden reported multiple traumatic injuries to his head (two car accidents and being kicked in the head).

He was referred for special education in high school, but because he was "in and out of jail/detention" the referral did not get completed until he was incarcerated.

Jayden eventually received a diploma, and at the time of the conclusion of this Report was taking a college course. He aspired to be a mentor for kids like himself one day.

(Jayden is now re-incarcerated in adult prison)

# Youth Educational Records

- 8/10 youth's records indicated attentional concerns (ADHD/OHI/"Distractibility")
- All youth below grade level in reading
- 4/10 records indicate grade retention. One youth was retained 3 times. One youth was promoted by exception in 9<sup>th</sup> grade

# Missed Cues/Language Impairment

- Multiple youth's records indicate language impairment– strongly correlated with development of “problem” behavior, particularly as children get older.
- Lack of language-related assessments in youth's records, with only a single exception in this group.
- Deficits in pragmatic language have been linked to behavior problems, mostly commonly hyperactivity and lack of prosocial behavior.

# Lost Opportunities/Discipline and Incarceration

- **8/10 youth received multiple suspensions** and/or expulsion from school.
  - 8/10 youth were either placed in an in-district alternative school or an “out placement,” due to behavior challenges.
  - 8/10 youth were arrested before 9<sup>th</sup> grade.
- ***4/10 youth were incarcerated for the first time before 9<sup>th</sup> grade.***



# Leo's Story. CCA Report

Leo grew up with an incarcerated father.

His mother had many personal struggles that led to legal and child protection system involvement.

Leo had trouble focusing from an early age and was a late reader. He was retained in elementary school.

In 7<sup>th</sup> grade Leo was expelled for a full year due to an altercation with a peer in the school cafeteria. Records do not indicate that he received schooling during this time.

Leo repeated 7<sup>th</sup> grade but wound up on a downward trajectory.

Leo stopped going to school until he was sent to detention.

He was given an educational advocate and attorney. Leo was ultimately identified for special education due to a reading disability in what should have been his third year of high school.

His teachers described him as “diligent,” and “engaged,” “respectful,” and wanting to do well. Leo was able to complete high school while incarcerated. Leo has the goal of becoming a barber and an active father and participant in his daughter's life. After re-entering the community last year, he recently recidivated.

# Lost Opportunities/Inadequate education in Justice System

- Youth records reflected minimal special education service hours
- Transition serves were very limited, typically one hour per month
- Median IEP service hours/week for the ten youth were 2.75 hours, with a range of 1.5 hours to 5.5 hours
- Most youth, 6/10, had no LEA representation at PPTs



# Recommendations. Special Education Oversight, Guidance & Monitoring.

## **CSDE Oversight /Monitoring of LEA implementation of Child Find through MTSS**

- LEAs must have processes in place to ensure that children demonstrating certain risk factors – grade retention, excessive truancy, etc. – are in fact being referred for review and potential special education referral
- CSDE should monitor districts feeding JJ system for referrals at certain key points (fourth/fifth grade)

## **CSDE Guidance**

- CSDE should issue guidance on the importance of screening for trauma/being trauma informed to flag special education and related mental health needs as a part of MTSS, and guidance underscoring the importance of bio social histories as a part of the special education referral process conducted by trained staff who can assist in identifying ACES
- CSDE should create checklist to identify trauma indicators for special education referral process
- CSDE should issue guidance regarding the need to conduct assessments/evaluations for language-based disorders and the connection with school disengagement and dysregulated behavior.

# Recommendations. Qualitative Oversight of Self-Contained and Alternative Settings

## **CSDE Enforcement.**

- Ensure implementation of research-based and evidence-based positive behavioral support interventions, including in self-contained and alternative school settings and APSEPs
- Provide qualitative oversight for all programs where children spend less than 50% of their time with non-disabled peers (e.g., self-contained settings, alternative schools, private special education schools, including **secure settings**)
- Progress monitoring/corrective action (publicly available) for programs with high rates of school-based arrests, suspensions, restraint/seclusion

## **LEA Reporting on Education in Self Contained/Alternative/Secure settings.**

- LEAs must have effective monitoring of quality of self-contained and alternative programs, including their individual contracts with private special education programs.

# Recommendations.

## Prevention/Prevention/Prevention

### **Professional Development.**

- Facilitate professional development for all justice system employees on relationship between language-based disorders and externalizing and problem behavior, often overlooked in boys.
- Training on impact of ACES and trauma on cognitive abilities, including executive functioning

### **Reform use of Exclusionary Discipline.**

- Phase out suspension and expulsion in elementary school, limit discipline in higher grades to extreme/severe behaviors that compromise safety of others, create incentives to engage in alternative discipline/restorative practices, oversee implementation of research-based interventions, and ensure social work supports and trauma-responsive supports in elementary programs.

### **Expand Access to Educational Advocacy**

- Expand Educational Success (ESS) model to include JRB as well as adult system

### **Secure Settings.**

- Ensure JJEU can work with parents to make special education referrals; Require reports re Child Find; Evaluations; Special Education for youth in justice settings
- Ensure JJEU have access to ESS/Educational attorneys

### **Remove minors from adult correctional system.**



Tow Youth  
Justice  
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## DCF-JJEU Report

# **Department of Children and Families**

## **Juvenile Justice Education Unit**

**JJEU's comprehensive strategy to fulfill statutory mandates**



**CONNECTICUT**  
Children & Families

**JJEU's comprehensive  
strategy to fulfill statutory  
mandates**

# The Work



Data and Academic Accountability Measures



Re-entry



Support Teachers and Administrators' Effectiveness



Invest Resources in Vocational Training

# Data and Accountability Measures

Mandate	Progress Toward Mandate	Next Steps
(2)(3)(5)Develop and review quarterly reports, on <b>academic performance</b> , and other similar issues concerning students educated by the unit;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Utilize <b>Star Assessment</b> to assess reading and math levels. To gather baseline, assess student growth, and use data to drive planning.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Utilize the results of Star to drive instruction.</li></ul>



# CSSD STAR Assessment Performance Sep 2024 – Feb 2025

All data preliminary – not for distribution

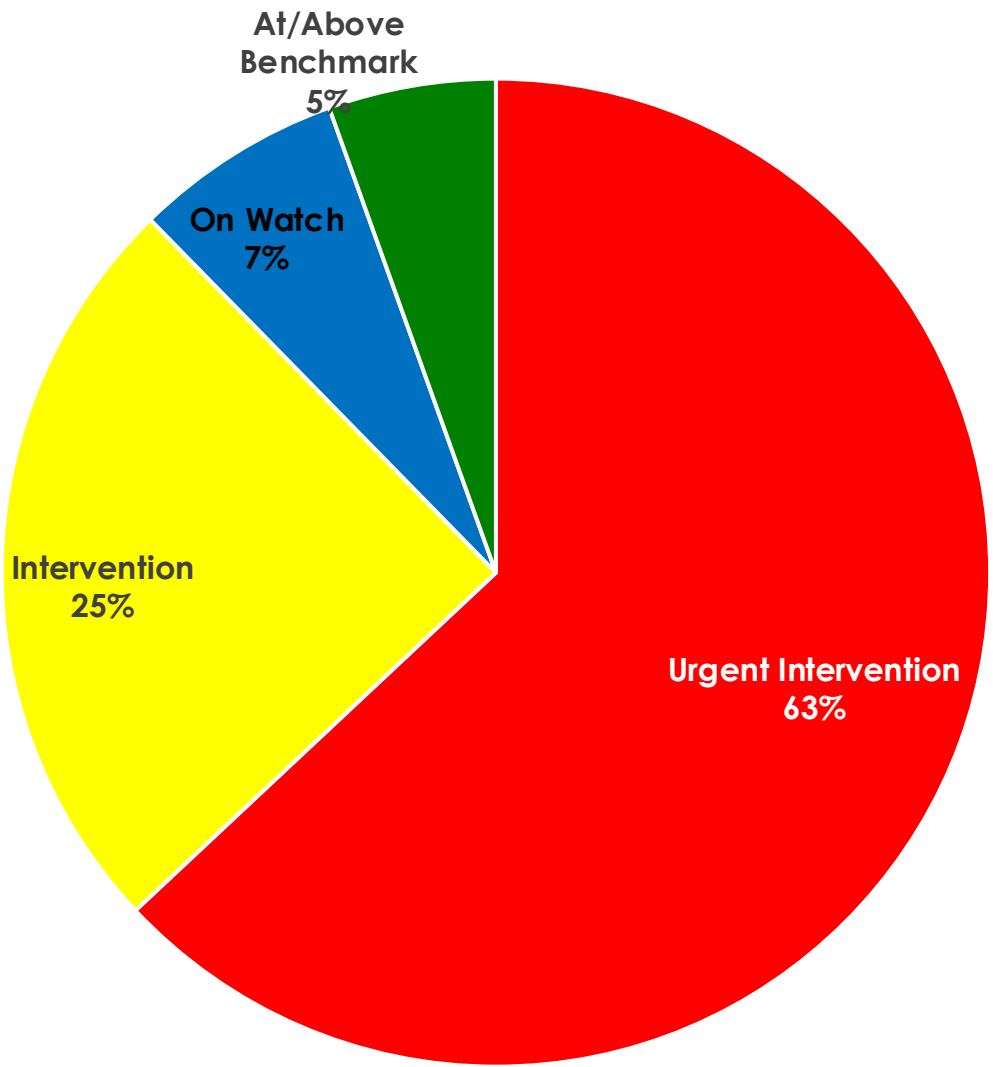
	# Students with data pairings	Average % score increase from initial assessment
<b>Reading</b>	73	5%
<b>Math</b>	69	4%

Note: Some students initially assessed prior to  
September 2024

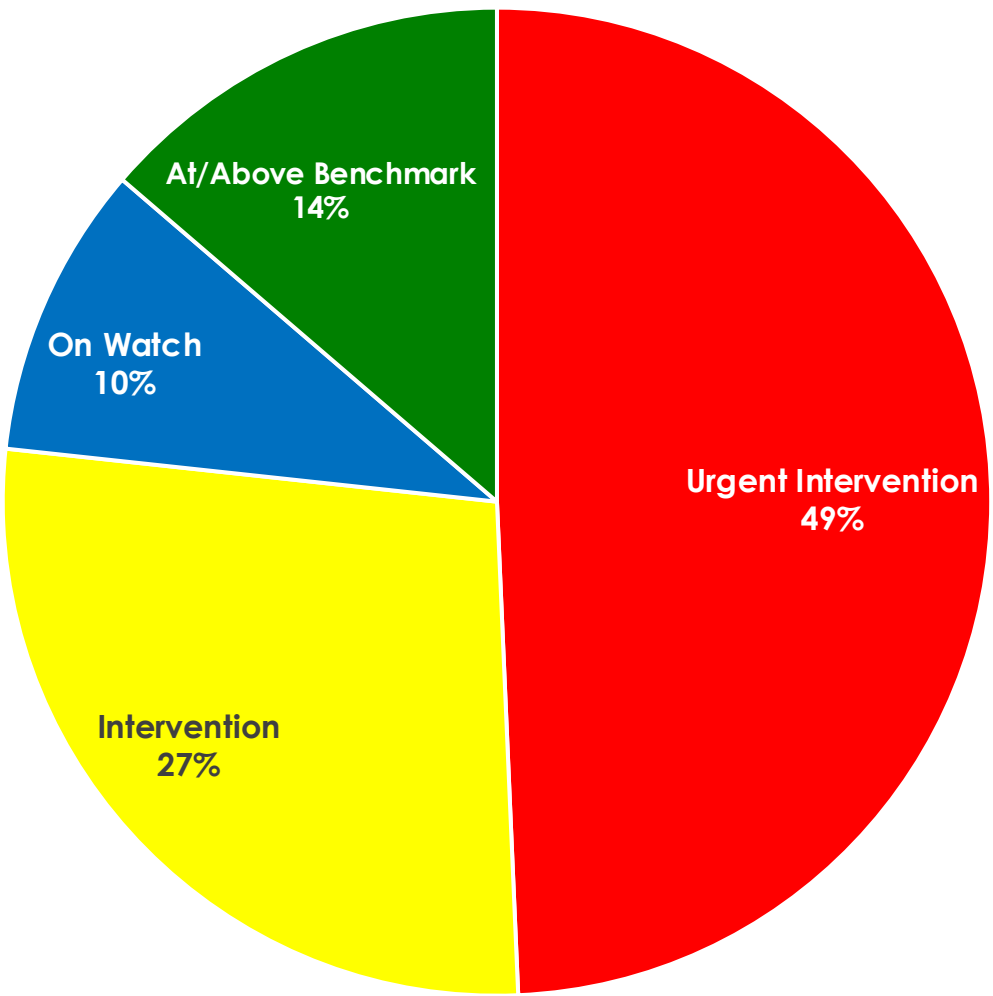
# CSSD STAR Reading Progress (73 students)

All data preliminary – not for distribution

Baseline Assessment



Summative Assessment

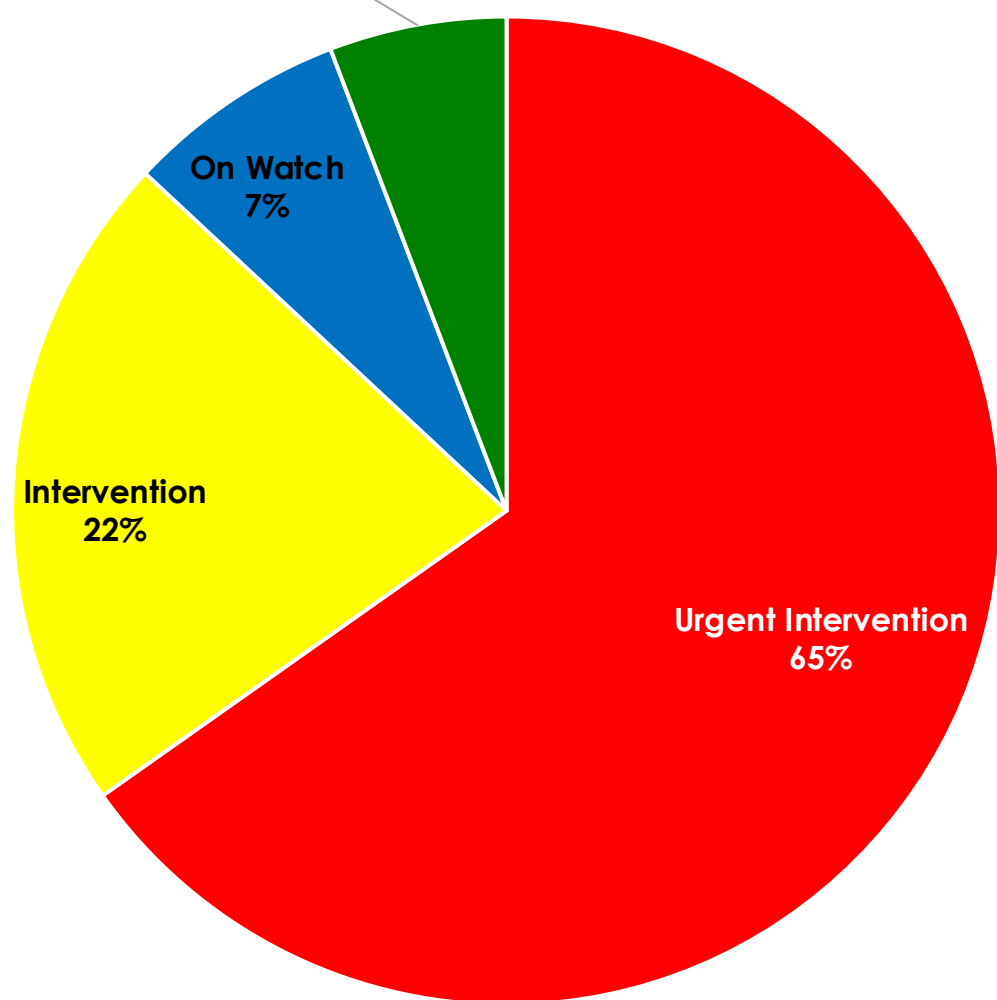


At/Above Benchmark	On Watch	Intervention	Urgent Intervention
Students meeting or exceeding the benchmark score	Students slightly below the benchmark score	Students below the benchmark score	Students far below the benchmark score

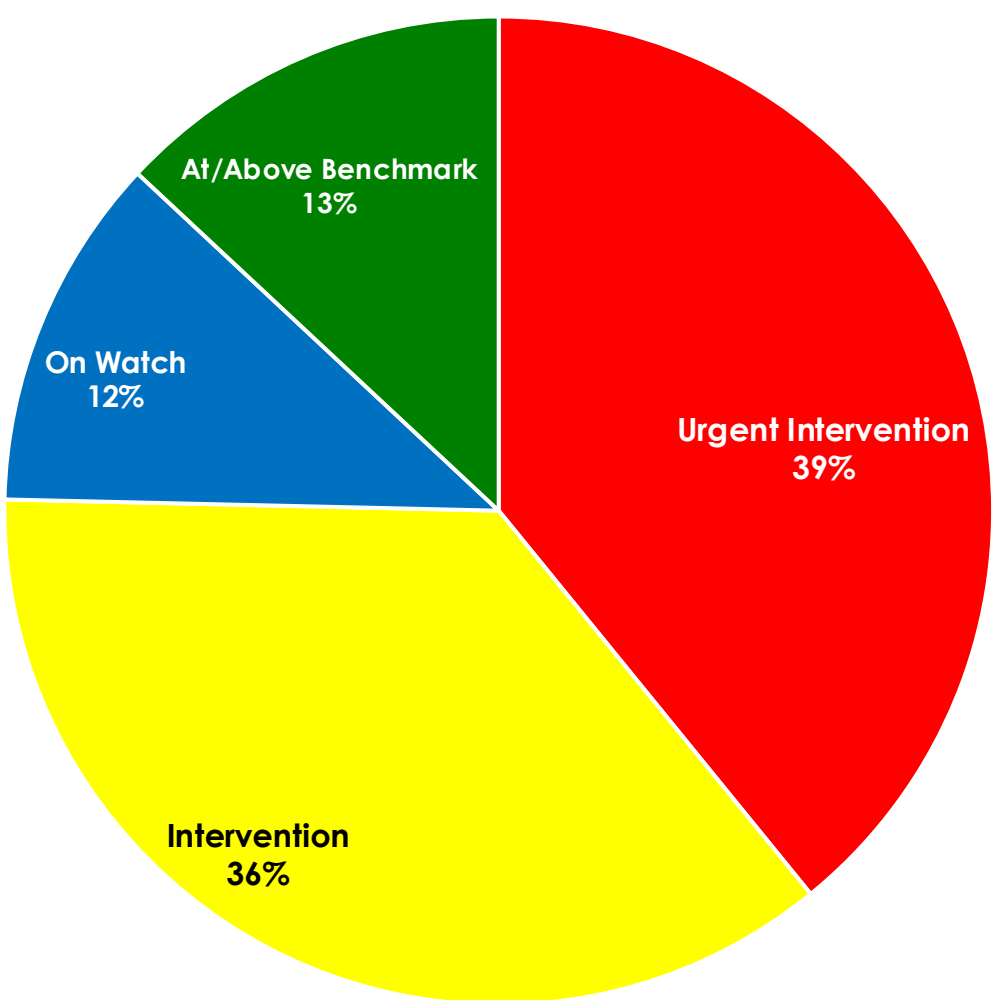
# CSSD STAR Math Progress (69 students)

All data preliminary – not for distribution

Baseline Assessment



Summative Assessment



At/Above Benchmark	On Watch	Intervention	Urgent Intervention
Students meeting or exceeding the benchmark score	Students slightly below the benchmark score	Students below the benchmark score	Students far below the benchmark score

# MYI STAR Assessment Performance Fall 2023 – Fall 2024

All data preliminary – not for distribution

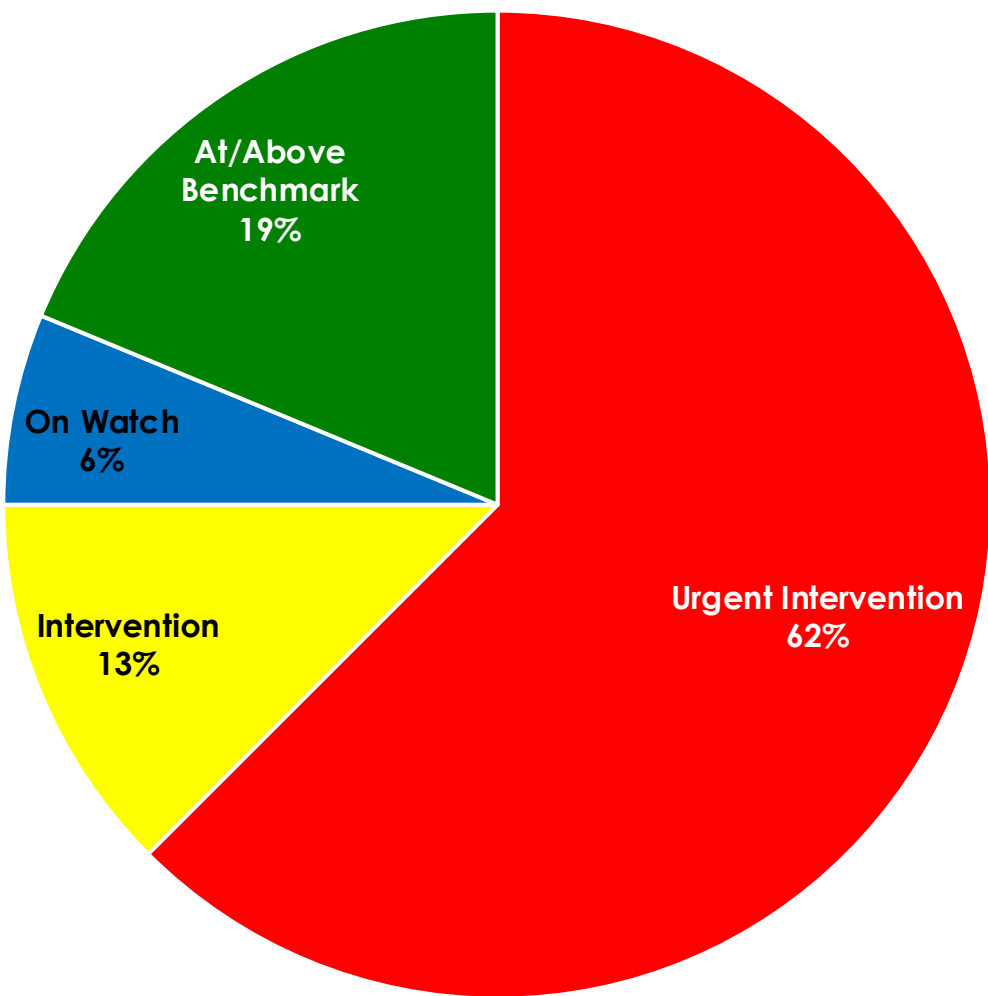
	# Students with data pairings	Average % score increase
Reading	16	3%
Math	16	2%

Note: Some students initially assessed in Spring 2024

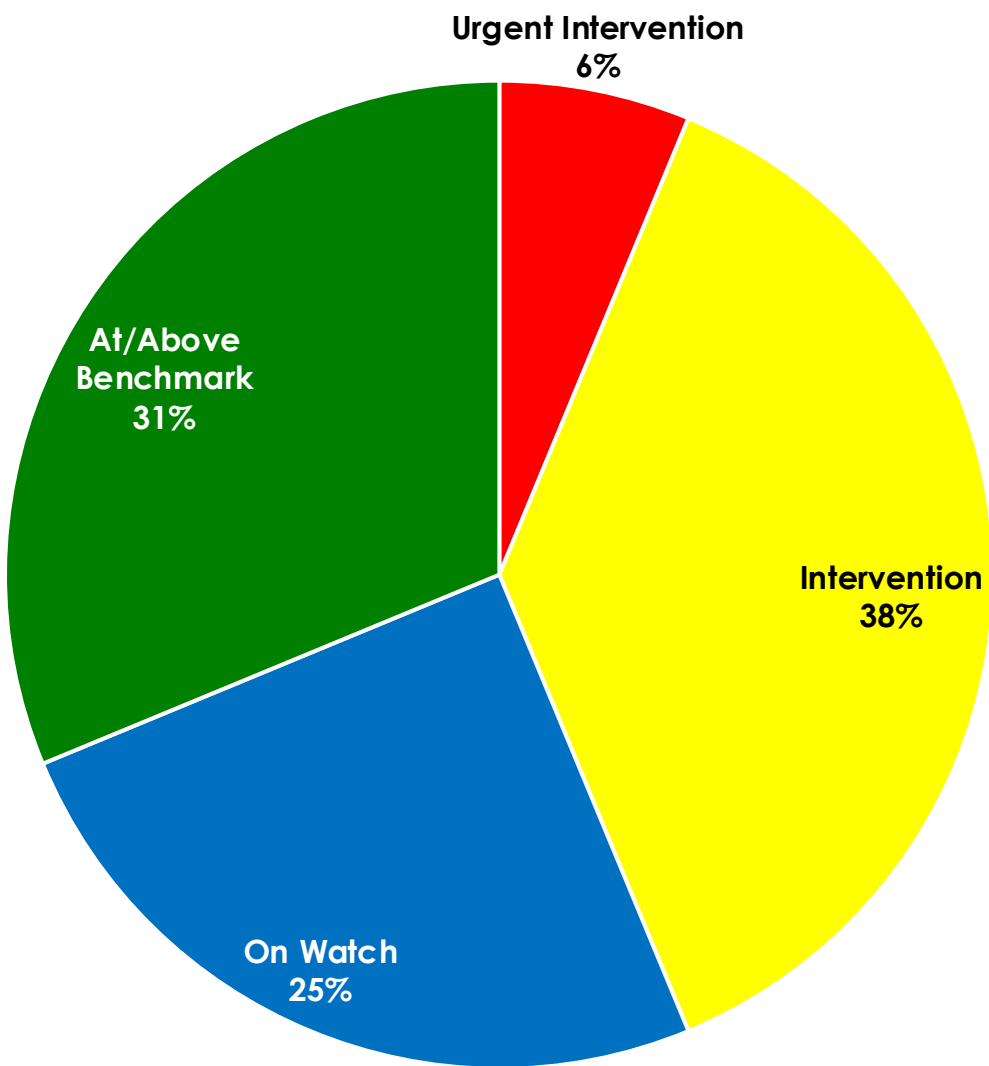
# MYI STAR Reading Progress (16 students)

All data preliminary – not for distribution

Baseline Assessment



Summative Assessment

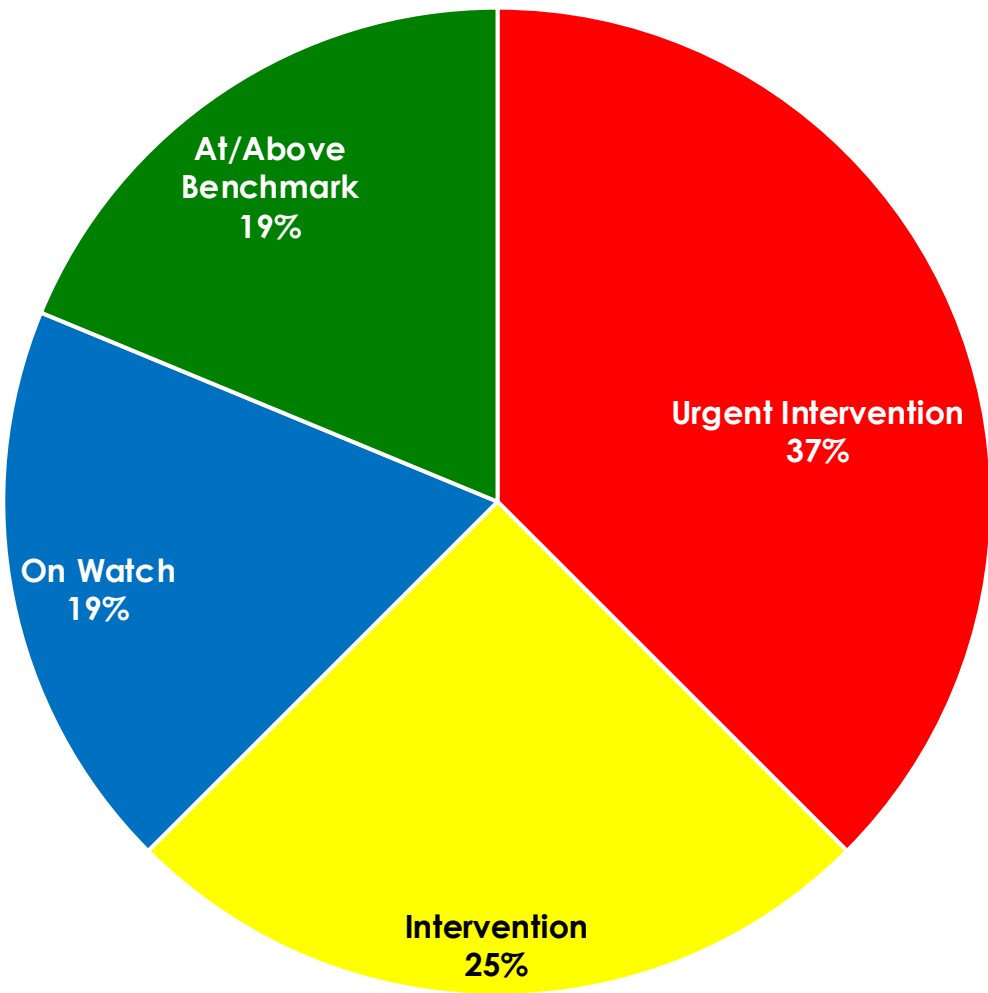


At/Above Benchmark	On Watch	Intervention	Urgent Intervention
Students meeting or exceeding the benchmark score	Students slightly below the benchmark score	Students below the benchmark score	Students far below the benchmark score

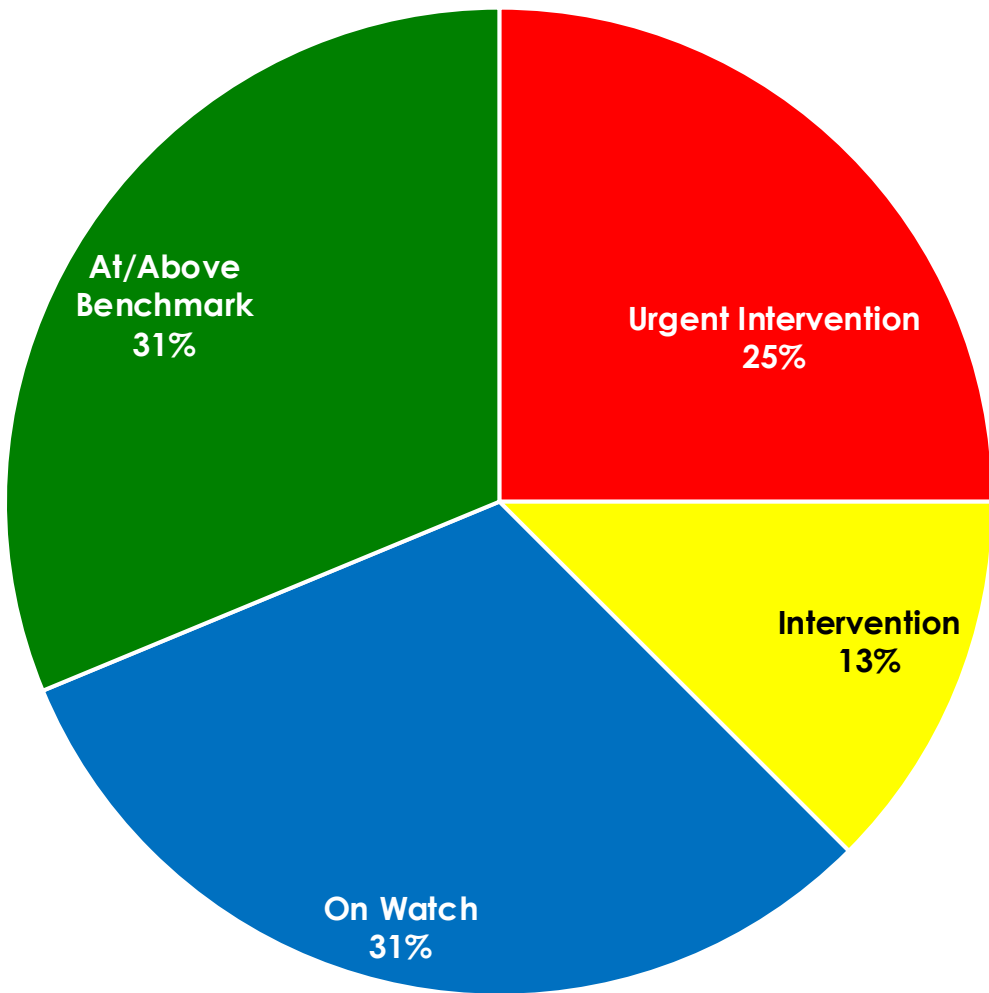
# MYI STAR Math Progress (16 students)

All data preliminary – not for distribution

Baseline Assessment



Summative Assessment



At/Above Benchmark	On Watch	Intervention	Urgent Intervention
Students meeting or exceeding the benchmark score	Students slightly below the benchmark score	Students below the benchmark score	Students far below the benchmark score

# Data and Accountability Measures

Mandate	Progress Toward Mandate	Next Steps
(6)(7) Enable students to have access to web-based content including <b>credit recovery</b> programs to allow students to earn a credit for a course he or she did not satisfactorily complete.	Virtual Academy: <b>Credit recovery</b> during summer programming and during the school year.	Virtual Academy and <b>credit recovery</b> programs are used with efficacy across all facilities. Collaborate with CSSD to facilitate increased access for credit recovery during summer period.

# Credit Recovery

All data preliminary – not for distribution

	2023	2024
Enrollment	17	54
Graduates	1	3
Credits Earned	1.5	17.8



# Transition Planning

Mandate	Progress Towards Mandate	Next Steps
(7c)(1)(2)(3)(d) transition specialists whose primary responsibility is to facilitate the successful <b>transition of children</b> from a secure facilities and then back to their local educational program upon release.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Transition meetings (pre-release &amp; post release), Reentry mtgs. &amp; circles</li><li>• Created a process and collaborated with LEAs (Local Educational Authority) to support reentry plan and help manage a successful transition.</li><li>• PSS monitor and ensure the educational credits of a student are transferred from out of home placement back to their community.</li><li>• frequent ongoing communication with reentry coordinators as well as on an annual statewide basis.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Build relationships and develop systems with smaller districts.</li><li>• Continue to implement the JJEU reentry process in LEAs and school districts.</li><li>• Continue to partner and support students returning to their educational program in their home community.</li><li>• Continue to partner with SDE to monitor and update reentry coordinator list.</li></ul>

# Our growing impact

All data preliminary – not for distribution

	Aug – Dec 2023	Aug – Dec 2024	Jan – Dec 2024
Total re-entry meetings	42	196	312
Students with re-entry meetings	24	40	65

## Family Engagement

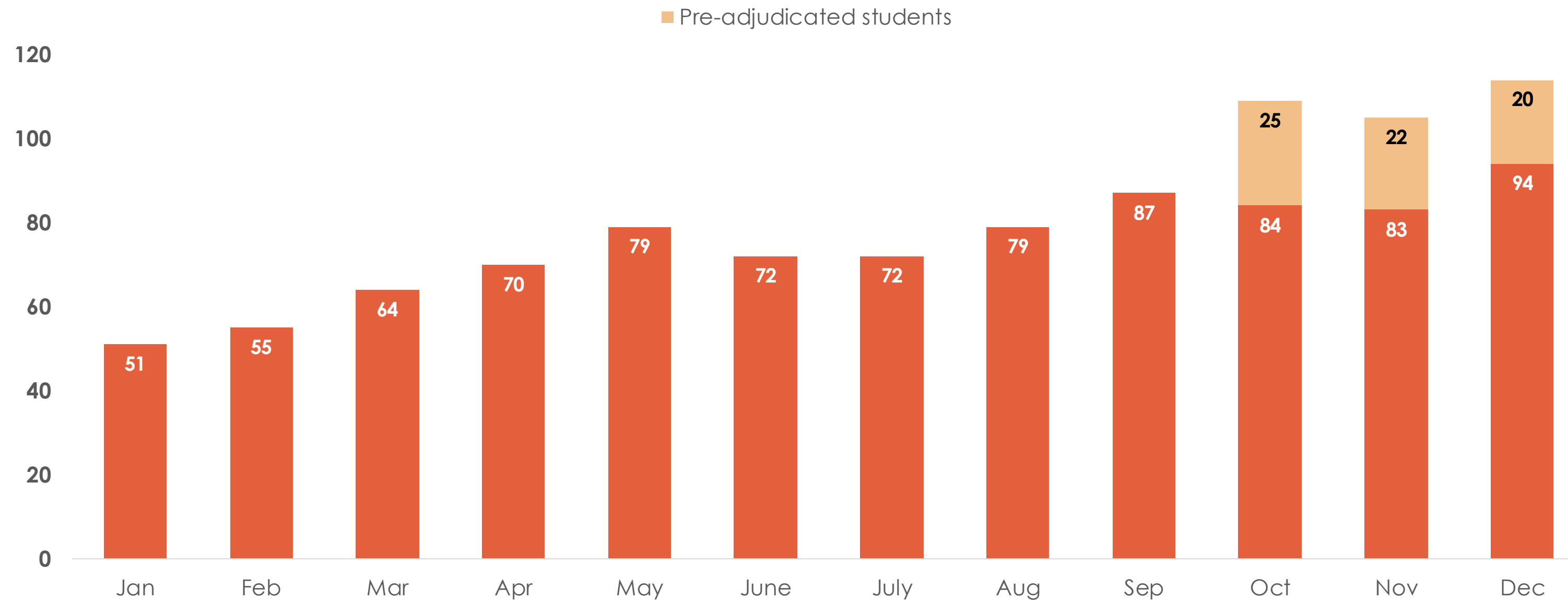
All data preliminary – not for distribution

		Mar – Dec 2023	Mar – Dec 2024	Jan – Dec 2024
Pre- release	REGIONS	193	237	270
	MYI	123	166	177
	<b>Total</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>447</b>
Post- release	REGIONS	198	523	558
	MYI	116	107	119
	<b>Total</b>	<b>314</b>	<b>630</b>	<b>677</b>

Connecting with families to provide updates on their child's progress in preparation for student's re-entry and building the student's support network as

# Students Served (2024)

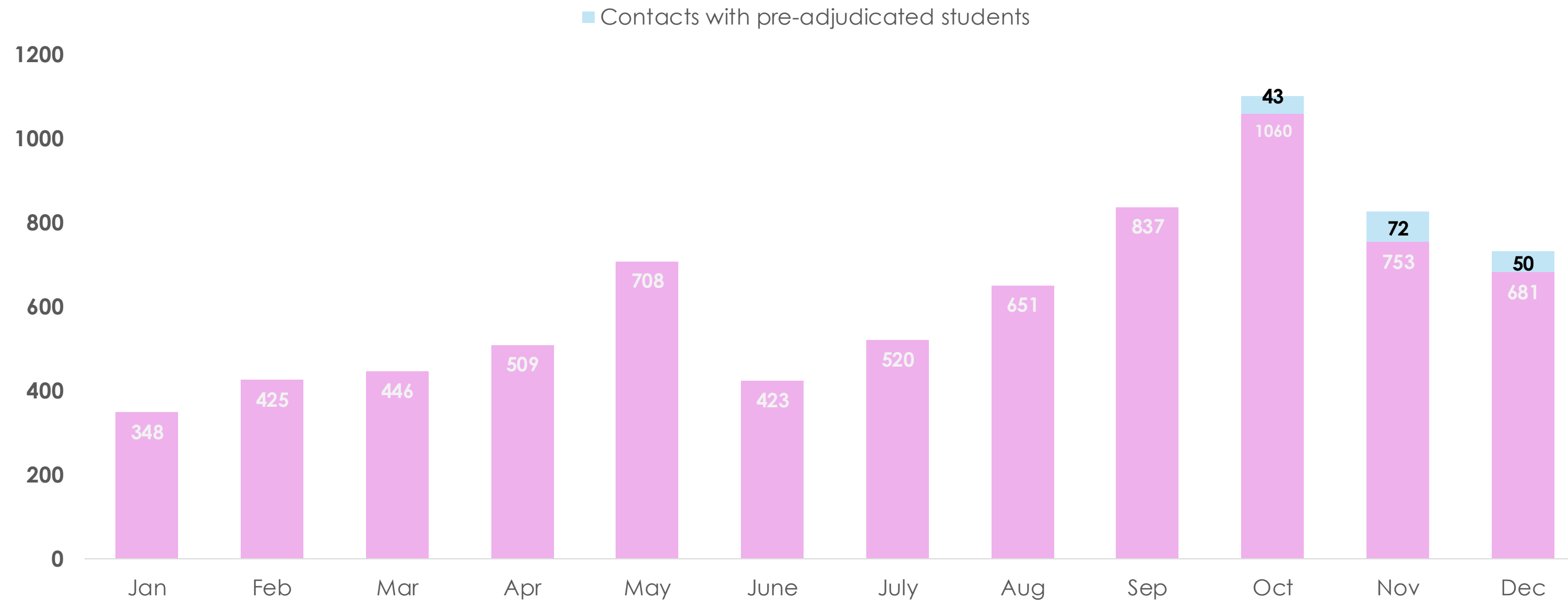
All data preliminary – not for distribution



Total of 174 students served

# Contact with students and supports (2024)

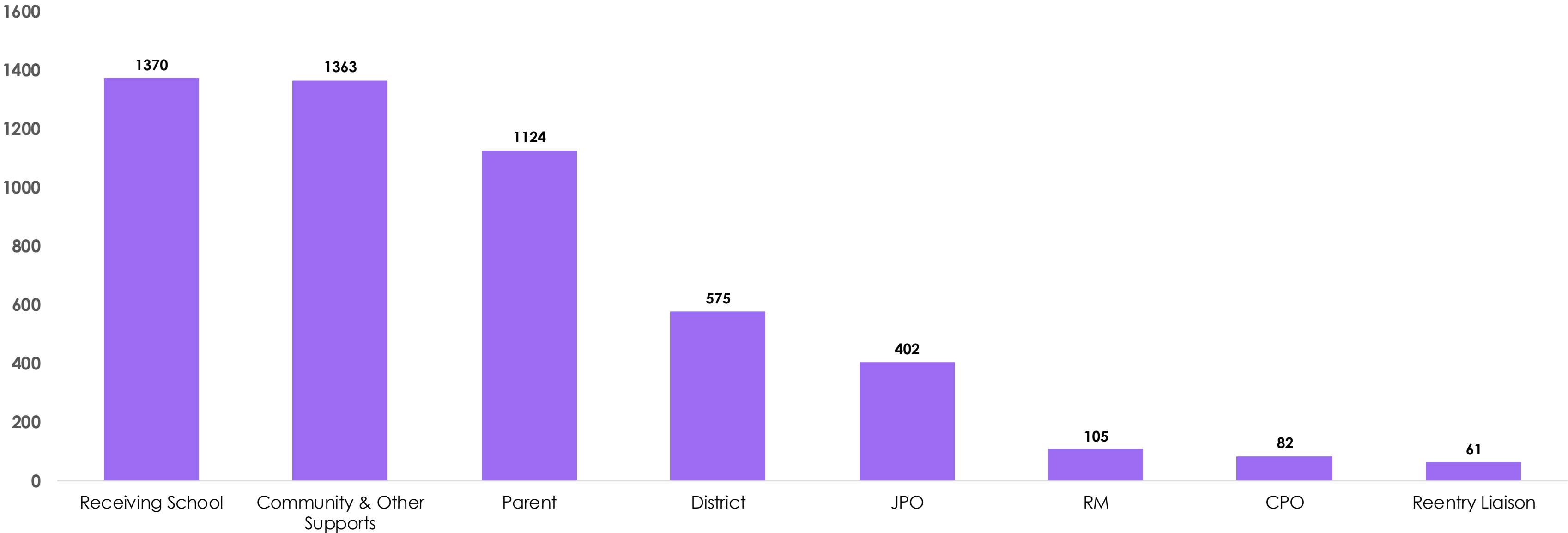
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Total of 7,526 contacts

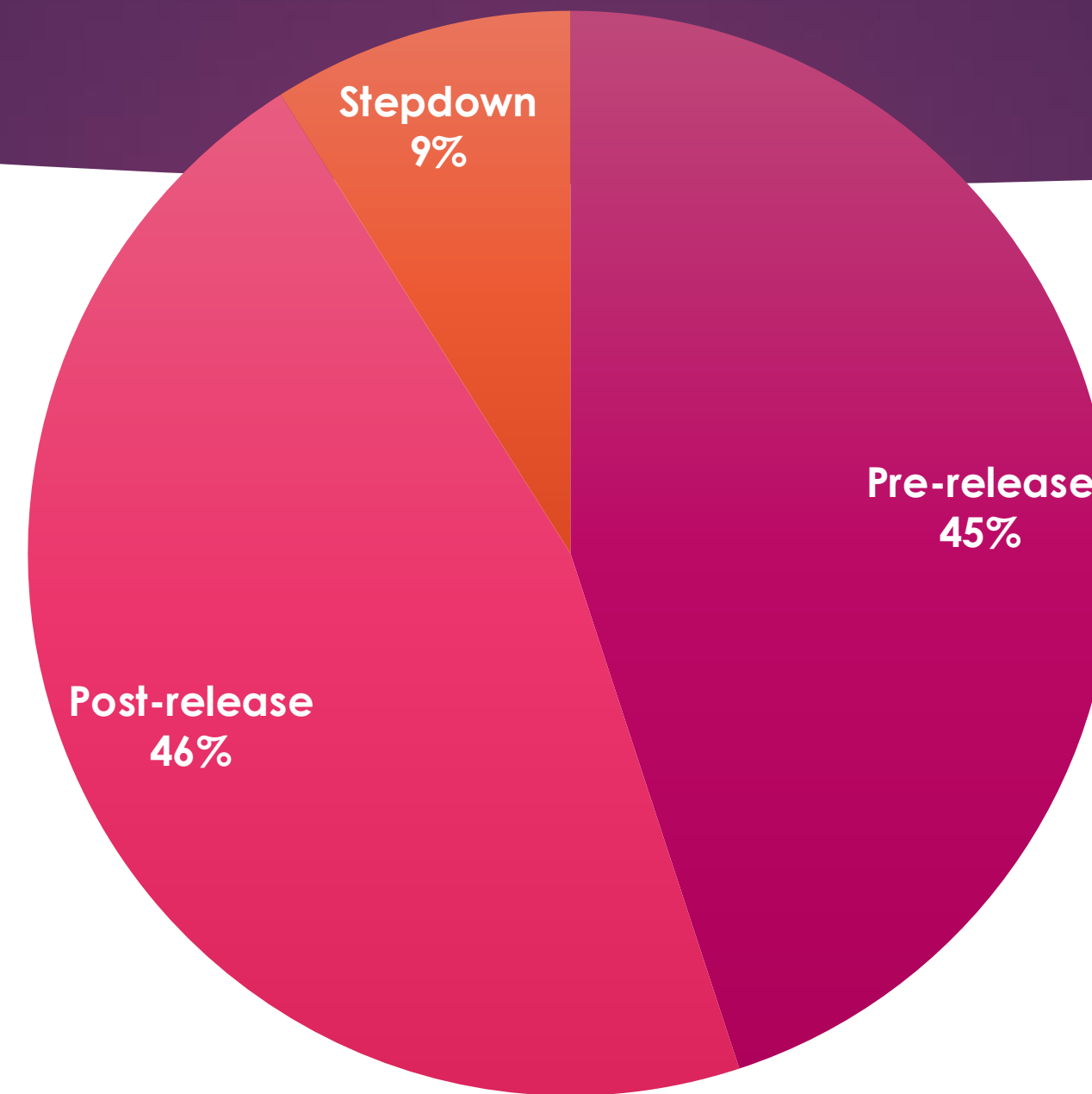
# Contacts with Supports (2024)

All data preliminary – not for distribution



Does not include contacts with pre-adjudicated student supports

# When were supports contacted? (2024)



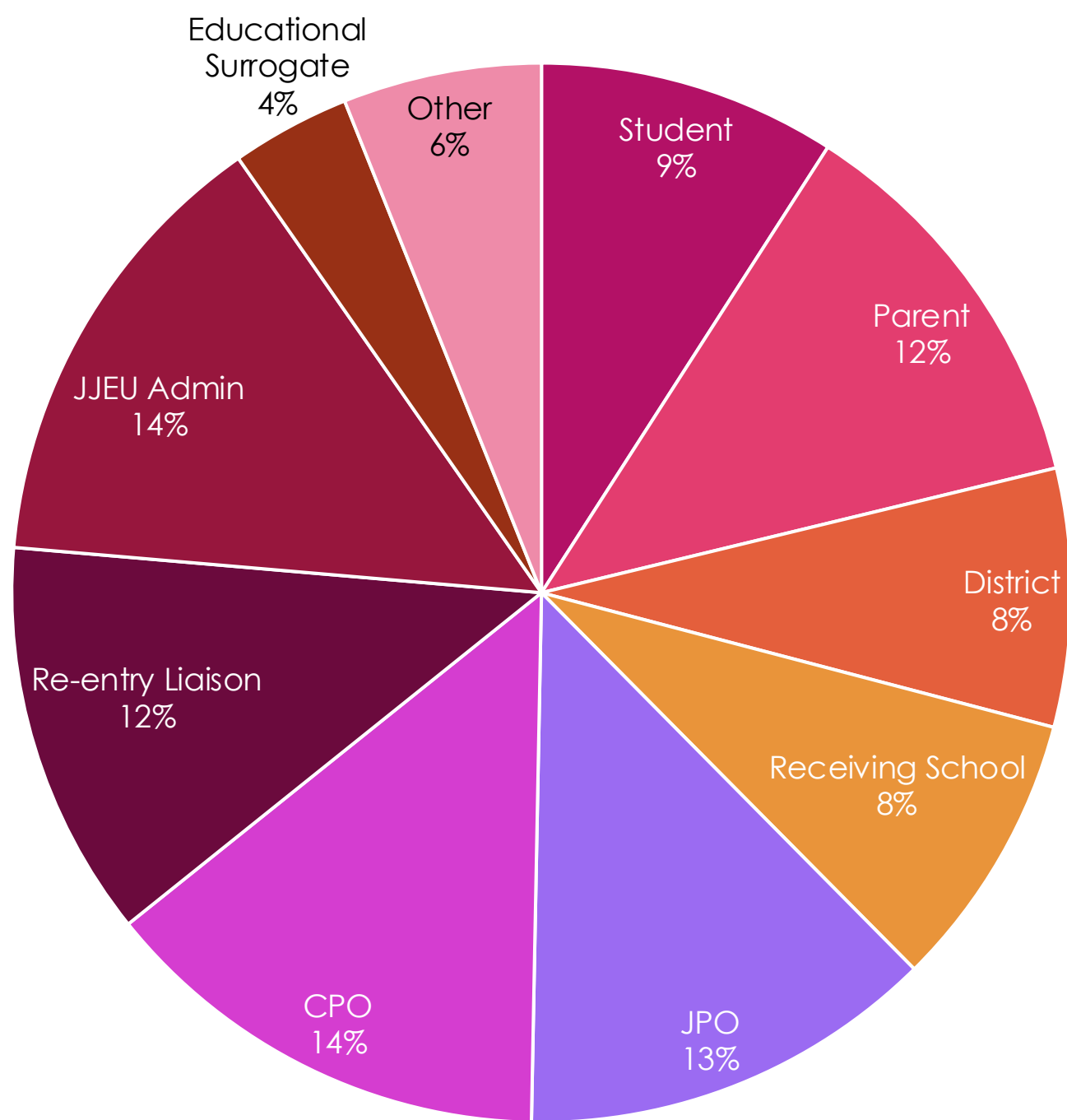
**Pre-release:** Transition planning to aid in student re-entry

All data preliminary – not for distribution

# Contact with pre-adjudicated student supports

Oct – Dec 2024

All data preliminary – not for distribution



**Other** = JJEU Orientation, Educational Advocate

Support	n	%
CPO	23	14%
JJEU Admin	23	14%
JPO	21	13%
Parent	20	12%
Re-entry liaison	20	12%
Student	15	9%
Receiving school	14	8%
District	13	8%
Other	10	6%
Edu. surrogate	6	4%
Total	165	100%



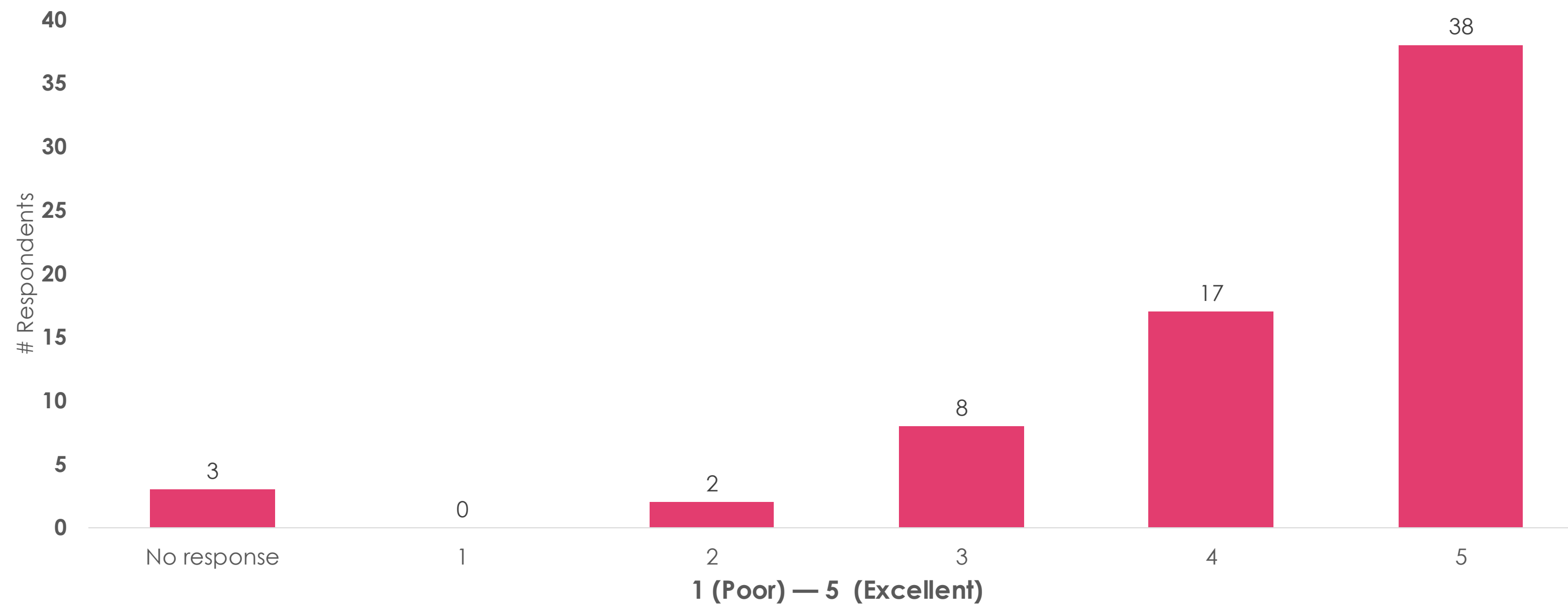
# Support Teachers and Administrators Effectiveness

Mandate	Progress Towards Mandate	Next Steps
Public Act 21-174, passed in June 2021, requires the unit to oversee and <b>monitor the education of children who reside in justice facilities</b> or who are incarcerated, creating standardization, reentry processes, and quality assurance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Developed a multi-step learning walk process partnering with the leadership at the facilities to identify strengths and areas of development.</li><li>• Provided Professional Development on student learning, teacher's planning, classroom management and ESL identification</li><li>• Meet with Educational Network providers monthly</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue with Learning Walk process to identify PD needs.</li><li>• Survey educational staff to gauge instructional needs and look for common trends in order to create PLCs and identify areas of growth.</li><li>• Continue to identify problems of practice with the Educational Network.</li><li>• Identify and develop new ways of supporting student learning through the network.</li></ul>

Total PD course evaluations received

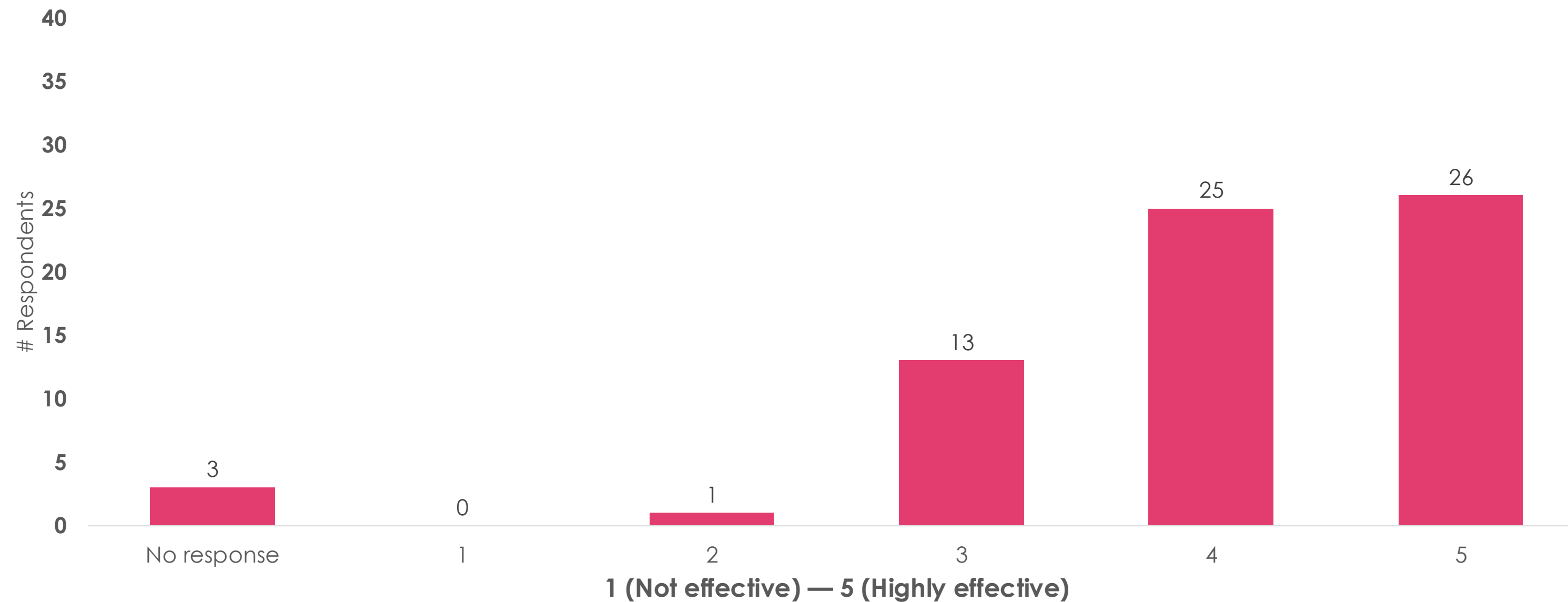
School	# Respondents
Hamden REGIONS	14
Hartford DOMUS	8
CJR	26
MYI	20
Total	68

# Rate the instructor's knowledge and delivery of the subject matter



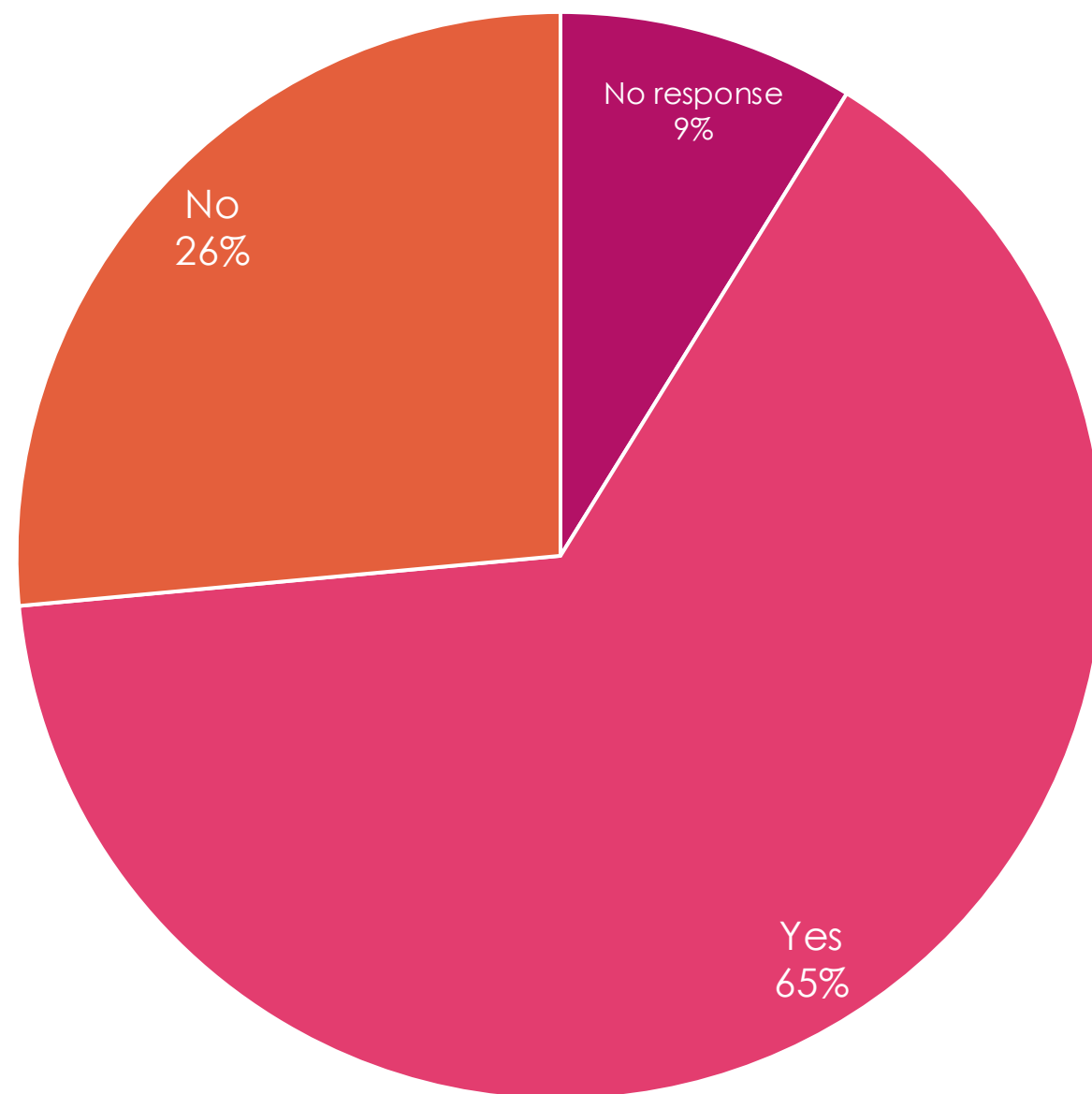
Average rating = 4.4 (65

# How effectively did the instructor explain complex concepts?



Average rating = 4.2 (65

# Have you been able to apply what you learned in your classroom or instruction?



## Applied topic

Building rapport (x3)

Do Nows (x3)

Managing behaviors (x2)

Better communication (x2)

Reflection on practices (x2)

School already applying PD content (x3)

## Example response

"... has been helpful in building rapport and establishing routines"

"Elongated Do Nows and vocab we will encounter with the text"

"Asserting both expectations for classroom behavior while maintaining authentic-to-self responses in the moment"

"Better planning and communication between staff"

"Constant reflection about what worked, what didn't"

"Our school practices regularly the subject matter presented at this training"

# Vocational Opportunities

Mandate	Progress Towards Mandate	Next Steps
(6) (A) Ensure that students have access to earn credits toward high school graduation and have access to arts and <b>career and technical education courses</b> , state-wide and college preparatory testing.	<p>Introduced and facilitated the partnership between CSSD and the Justice Education Center to pilot a vocational training program for students, providing them with hands-on learning opportunities at both Kaynor Technical High School and Eli Whitney Technical High School.</p> <p>Introduced and facilitated the use of VR Transfer Goggles for Career Pathways are at the following facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Journey House</li><li>• Hamden CPA</li><li>• Hartford Detention</li><li>• Bridgeport Detention</li><li>• CJR Waterbury</li><li>• Manson Youth</li></ul>	<p>To expand this opportunity and ensure greater access for students, particularly those in our detention centers.</p> <p>Create industry recognized certificates designed with direct input from employers to ensure they meet workforce demands and prepare individuals for immediate job opportunities</p>



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## JJPOC 2025 Operations

### Upcoming Timeline:

Vote on / Adopt 2025-2029 Strategic Plan in May

JJPOC Orientation Manual sent out to Members in July

JJPOC Member In-Person Summit in September

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# Next Meeting – June 26, 2025



## April JJPOC Meeting Minutes

April 17, 2025

2:00 PM – 3:30 PM

Legislative Office Building Location

Zoom Option Available

### Attendance

Amy Marracino	Heriberto Cajigas	Toni Walker
Anthony Nolan	Jodi Hill-Lilly	
Betty Ann MacDonald	Martha Stone	
Charles Hewes	Melanie Dykas	
Colleen Violette	Michael Pierce	
Daniel Karpowitz	Paul Cicarella	
Erica Bromley	Ray Dancy	
Elizabeth Bozzuto	Sarah Eagan	
Gary Roberge	Sharmese Walcott	
Gary Winfield	Tais Ericson	
Hector Glynn	Talitha Coggins	

### TYJI Staff

Andrew Zhebrak  
Brittany LaMarr  
Paul Klee

### Welcome and Introductions

Daniel Karpowitz and Anthony Nolan welcomed everyone to the meeting.

### Overview of the Meeting

The April monthly meeting consisted of a discussion regarding H.B. 1243, a presentation from the Center for Children's Advocacy on their municipal racial and ethnic disparities work, and an overview of the JJPOC 2025 workplans. The Center for Children's Advocacy's Report on Connecticut Youth with Disabilities in the Justice System will be moved to the May JJPOC monthly meeting.

### Acceptance of JJPOC Meeting Minutes

Anthony Nolan asked for a motion to accept the March 20<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes. The motion was moved, seconded, and passed unanimously.

### Updates

No updates were provided.

### **Discussion of H.B. 1243**

The principal of the University High School of Science and Engineering along with one of his students presented H.B. 1243, which would allow for free bus transportation for high school students and veterans.

Transportation continues to be a barrier for students to access education and resources, but with bus passes being free of charge during the pandemic students were able to have more reliable, safer transportation to and from schools, medical appointments, extracurricular activities, and other beneficial resources. The principal determined that his students took 5,000 bus rides just within one month.

A student from the University High School of Science and Engineering further explained how advanced academic opportunities were limited to students due to a lack of reliable transportation. A JJPOC member inquired about how many students currently ride the public bus to school now because that is their only transportation option, and how many students would benefit from the implementation of this bus pass program on a wider scale. It was explained that significantly more students would be using public transportation through the city bus with this program due to a lack of or reduced personal expense. Currently, roughly 200 students at University High School of Science and Engineering are using these bus passes, as the pilot program of these free and reduced-price bus passes is currently in place at this school.

### **CCA: RED Presentation**

Representatives from the Center for Children's Advocacy (CCA) presented the work being done by the organization and its committees to address racial and ethnic disparities. The Racial and Ethnic Disparity (RED) Reduction Committees are in Bridgeport, Hartford, Hamden, New Haven, and Waterbury. Each committee has a diverse governing body, including but not limited to youth, law enforcement, clergy, school systems, and community service providers. The goals of these committees are to reduce the over-representation of youth of color at key decision points, reduce the disparate treatment of youth of color at key decision points, and to prevent youth of color from unnecessarily entering and moving through the juvenile justice system.

The RED committees have found that there are the highest proportion of Hispanic or Latino youth school enrollment in each of the five cities. Regarding Bridgeport delinquency specifically, there continues to be a disproportionate number of Black youths compared to other racial and ethnic groups. In New Haven and Waterbury, Black youth are considerably more likely to be arrested and referred to court, according to the Equity Dashboard's Relative Rate Index (RRI).

An example of a RED committee meeting agenda was presented, in this case from Hartford. Each meeting usually consists of a deep dive into the data across several systems, including schools, the Department of Children and Families (DCF), and diversion.

The benefits of RED committee collaboration are fivefold: (1) creates collaborative partnerships to cohesively discuss systemic issues around disparities in youth care coordination; (2) allows for quicker identification of readily emergent or continually emerging issues; (3) identifies both gaps in system coordination and programmatic supports; (4) elevates best practices and new strategies for service delivery to support youth; and (5) allows for a deeper dive into data across multiple systems to recognize patterns and areas of improvement.

Diversionary efforts are a focus of the RED committees, which review related data. These data are analyzed to determine which diversionary efforts are available and whether diversion efforts are successful. Data around recidivism rates is lacking, though. Each RED committee also reviews school-based arrests to determine which schools have the highest rates of school-based arrests and which gaps in services need to be addressed within these schools. This aims to provide more services and resources to better equip the school to adequately address these issues.

Additionally, the committees review community-based arrests. Statistics reviewed include time of day of the arrest, age, race, and gender of the arrestee, district of arrest, location of arrest, day of the week of the arrest, type of offense, and whether a diversion referral or court summons was given. This data is used to determine efforts that should be taken to reduce the arrest of youth, increase referrals to juvenile review boards (JRBs), and to identify gaps in services. There has been a 19% decrease in youth, community-based arrests between 2023 and 2024 in Hartford. A JJPOC member asked whether youth interaction with law enforcement is included in the data as well, where it was confirmed that these instances are included.

Data regarding crossover youth is also included in the analyses conducted by the RED committees. Specifically, DCF arrest data across Connecticut was presented, including the legal status, age, race/ethnicity, gender, and placement type for current

crossover youth. This information provides a more holistic view of these youth and which services they may require. The RED committees also focus their attention on school disengagement and prevention, which include students' absenteeism, engagement and reengagement efforts, and discipline involvement. This data is separated by school, age, race, and disabilities of youth. In Hartford schools specifically, roughly 1 in 3 students are chronically absent.

As for next steps, the CCA would like to establish RED committees in the jurisdictions that are showing the most significant RRI, such as Meriden and Norwalk. It was suggested that additional clarification be given to the JJPOC regarding the definition of crossover youth. This is to be added to the next monthly JJPOC meeting.

### **CCA: Report on Connecticut Youth with Disabilities in the Justice System**

This report will be moved to the next JJPOC monthly meeting in May.

### **Next Meeting:**

Hybrid Model Option (In person and available over zoom)

May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025

2:00 PM – 3:30 PM



University of New Haven

# Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee

## 2025-2029 Strategic Plan

### Creating Opportunities for Youth Success



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# Acknowledgements

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The **2024-2029 Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (JJPOC) Strategic Plan** stands as a testament to the power of collaboration, and we extend our sincere appreciation to all those who contributed to its successful realization.

First and foremost, we acknowledge the unwavering dedication and invaluable expertise of the **JJPOC Members**. This diverse assembly of experts, stakeholders, and residents from across the state generously shared their time and insights, actively shaping the contours of this plan. Their commitment to advancing the juvenile justice system is both commendable and inspiring.

We are grateful to **each and every individual who contributed to** the creation of this Strategic Plan. Their collective dedication to improving the juvenile justice system in our state is truly remarkable, and we are deeply grateful for their contributions.

It has been our pleasure to provide guidance and a framework for the development of this strategic plan and to facilitate the work of this committee that has produced such great results. We are happy to provide our expertise in **making connections and informing solutions**.

**Tow Youth Justice Institute (TYJI)**

# Letter From the Chairs

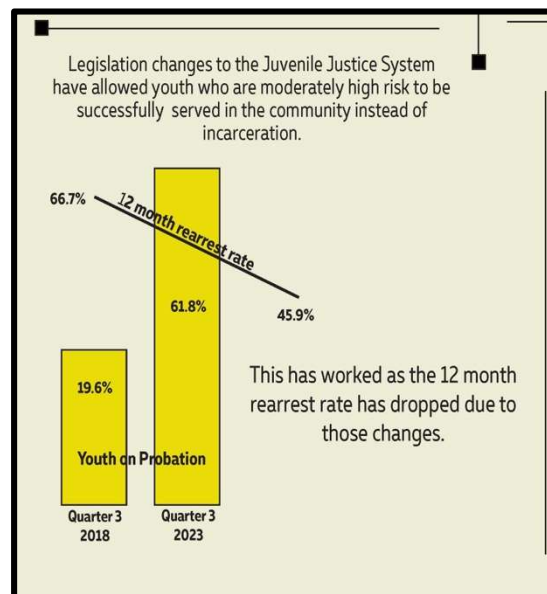
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Dear Members, Stakeholders, and Advocates,

It is with a sense of both urgency and optimism that we present this update of the strategic plan, highlighting **the vital work of the JJPOC** and our ongoing pursuit of a more just and equitable juvenile justice system in Connecticut.

Over the past few years, we have made commendable strides advancing juvenile justice reform. We have raised the age of juvenile jurisdiction<sup>1</sup>, reduced the number of young people in the system, increased public safety, expanded community-based and school-based alternatives, and amplified youth voices, ensuring their experiences and perspectives shape our advocacy and policy recommendations.

Our work is not complete. We remain steadfast in addressing systemic inequities that persist both demanding and necessitating continued inquiry of policies and practices that promote fairness, dignity, and opportunity for all young people. Our commitment to ensuring that Connecticut's response to youth delinquency and crime is preventative, restorative, intentional, and future oriented, remains resolute.



This Strategic Plan Update outlines our priorities for the coming years, focused on achieving tangible outcomes:

- **Reducing Racial and Ethnic Disparities:** We are committed to eliminating disparities by evaluating the effectiveness of youth-related policies and practices and their impact on youth of color.
- **Enhancing Diversion and Support:** We are committed to enhancing public safety by creating youth diversionary policies, practices, and trainings, and supporting positive youth development and community-based accountability.
- **Improving Engagement and Success Through Education:** We will champion educational opportunities and support systems that empower justice-involved youth to achieve their full potential and disrupt the potential of more youth becoming justice involved because of their disconnection from school.

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<sup>1</sup>In 2021, Connecticut raised the minimum age of criminal responsibility (MACR) from 7 to 10 years of age through Public Act 21-174.



- **Improving Conditions of Confinement and Reentry:** We will ensure that systems and facilities are responsive to the developmental needs of youth and have programming available to prepare youth for success.
- **Promoting Youth Voice and Empowerment:** We believe that young people should have a meaningful role in shaping the policies and practices that affect them. We will continue to elevate the voices of youth and create opportunities for them to participate in decision-making processes.

We are grateful for the dedication and support of our partners, stakeholders, and community members. Together, we can create a juvenile justice system that truly fosters the best interests of our young people and our communities—a safer, more just Connecticut for all.

Sincerely,

Representative Toni Walker  
Undersecretary Daniel Karpowitz

# Overview

## Background: Enabling Legislation

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In 2014, Public Act 14-217 established the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (JJPOC) to oversee the continued reform of the juvenile justice system.

### **This Committee was tasked with the following:**

- Recommending changes in state law regarding juvenile justice.
- Crafting a standard definition of recidivism.
- Setting goals for reform.
- Assessing the impact of the Raise the Age legislation.
- Assessing the quality of education within the juvenile justice system.
- Planning for implementation of Results-Based Accountability (RBA) by agencies and as a juvenile justice system.
- Analyzing the existence of disproportionate minority contact (DMC) across the juvenile justice system.
- Reporting to the state on the quality and effectiveness of a variety of programs in community supervision, congregate care, diversion, behavioral health, and other areas.

The University of New Haven's Tow Youth Justice Institute supports the JJPOC through staffing, research, and coordination of efforts. The work of the JJPOC has been largely conducted through six workgroups: **Diversion, Incarceration, Racial and Ethnic Disparities (RED), Community Expertise, Education, and Cross-Agency Data Sharing**. The workgroups are comprised of state, local, private, not-for-profit, and advocacy agencies who collaboratively develop system-wide and research driven strategies to improve youth justice in the state of Connecticut.

## Introduction

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In response to the dynamic challenges and opportunities that Connecticut youth experience, the JJPOC, in collaboration with the Tow Youth Justice Institute, has developed **a refined five-year strategic plan (2025-2029)**. This plan builds upon the progress achieved to date and charts a clear path toward our shared vision of positive youth outcomes, safer communities, and a fair, effective, and equitable youth justice system.

This strategic plan is not merely a static document; it is a dynamic framework that has been developed to ensure our efforts remain effective and responsive to changes we have seen over time. We are confident that, through the collective efforts of our dedicated team and the implementation of this strategic plan, we will achieve safer, healthier communities, contributing to a long-term impact on the quality of life of Connecticut families for generations to come.

For each strategic objective, the respective workgroup will create an action plan, routinely measure, and review progress toward the objective, and evaluate how the objective's strategies should be adjusted and improved by reviewing its impact.

## Strategic Planning Process

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The strategic plan is a culmination of a comprehensive, multi-stage process guided by the collective wisdom of a broad spectrum of stakeholders. This mixed-methods approach combined quantitative survey data with the qualitative insights generated through an in-person strategic planning day and follow-up meetings. This fostered an open dialogue, ensuring the final plan truly reflects the shared vision and priorities of all involved, while addressing the current opportunities and challenges.

### Process Overview:

- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Input was actively gathered from a diverse range of individuals and groups, including JJPOC members, workgroup chairs and members, state agencies, nonprofits, and community stakeholders. This engagement utilized a mixed-methods approach:
  - **Quantitative Data Collection:** Surveys and questionnaires gathered quantifiable data on perceptions, priorities, and needs.
  - **Qualitative Insights:** An in-person strategic planning day with group discussions and follow-up meetings fostered open dialogue, capturing nuanced perspectives, and generating innovative ideas.
- **Strategy Formulation and Synthesis:** Quantitative data was analyzed to identify trends and patterns, while qualitative insights were thematically organized to uncover key themes and opportunities. These findings were then merged to create a comprehensive understanding of the landscape and future opportunities to strengthen approaches.
- **Plan Review and Refinement:** A draft plan was circulated for feedback, allowing stakeholders to provide final input and ensure the plan's comprehensiveness and relevance.
- **Finalization and Communication:** The finalized strategic plan will be formally approved and communicated to all stakeholders, emphasizing transparency and shared ownership.

# Review and Reflect: Past Strategic Plans

## 2021 to 2024 Strategic Plan: Goal(s)

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**Goal 1:** Limit youth entry into the justice system.

**Goal 2:** Reduce incarceration.

**Goal 3:** Reduce racial and ethnic disparities of youth in Connecticut's juvenile justice system.

**Goal 4:** Right-size the juvenile justice system by setting appropriate lower and upper age limits.

## Ongoing Projects

### Re-entry Success Plan:

Driven by the need for a more robust and effective youth reentry system, the JJPOC's Reentry Subgroup has diligently developed a comprehensive Reentry Success Plan over the past two years. Mandated by Public Act 23-188, this plan is the culmination of extensive research, including the identification of gaps in existing services and the study of successful models from other states. The Reentry Success Plan aims to consider the unique needs of each youth reentering their community, emphasizing key areas for support such as education, employment, healthcare, behavioral health, restorative justice, credible messengers, and housing. This holistic approach to reentry reflects a multi-agency collaboration and the plan remains a high priority for the JJPOC, overseeing ongoing implementation efforts to improve the reentry process for young people involved in the justice system.

### Prearrest Diversion Plan

Since its inception in 2016, the JJPOC has prioritized increasing the use of diversion, leading to significant progress in diverting youth from the formal juvenile justice system in Connecticut. Key initiatives like the Community-Based Diversion System and the School-Based Diversion Initiative (SBDI) have resulted in a remarkable 31% decrease in delinquency referrals to juvenile court and a 3.5% increase in referrals to Youth Service Bureaus (YSBs) and Juvenile Review Boards (JRBs) by 2019. Building on this success, Public Act 23-188 mandates further efforts to strengthen the state's diversion system by focusing on diverting low-level offenses from the formal juvenile justice system to a community-based diversion system. The JJPOC Diversion Workgroup is actively developing this plan, with a focus on standardizing access to diversion, providing training, and considering crucial factors like service capacity and community-based accountability, and national best practices.

At the Legislature's direction, the Diversion Workgroup has prioritized this initiative to re-envision the state's approach to Diversion. The Diversion Workgroup will continue to develop, implement, and evaluate its recommendations in partnership with community, youth, law enforcement, and youth serving partners.

### **Gender Responsiveness**

In 2023, in response to the concerning experiences of young multi-system involved girls, the JJPOC created the Gender Responsiveness Workgroup and charged them with conducting a landscape analysis of Connecticut systems and their provision of gender responsive programs and services.<sup>2</sup> The group has been actively supporting the development of this landscape analysis and will continue to work with both state and community partners to develop immediate and long-term intentional solutions to gaps and barriers in our systemic response to vulnerable girls in crisis.

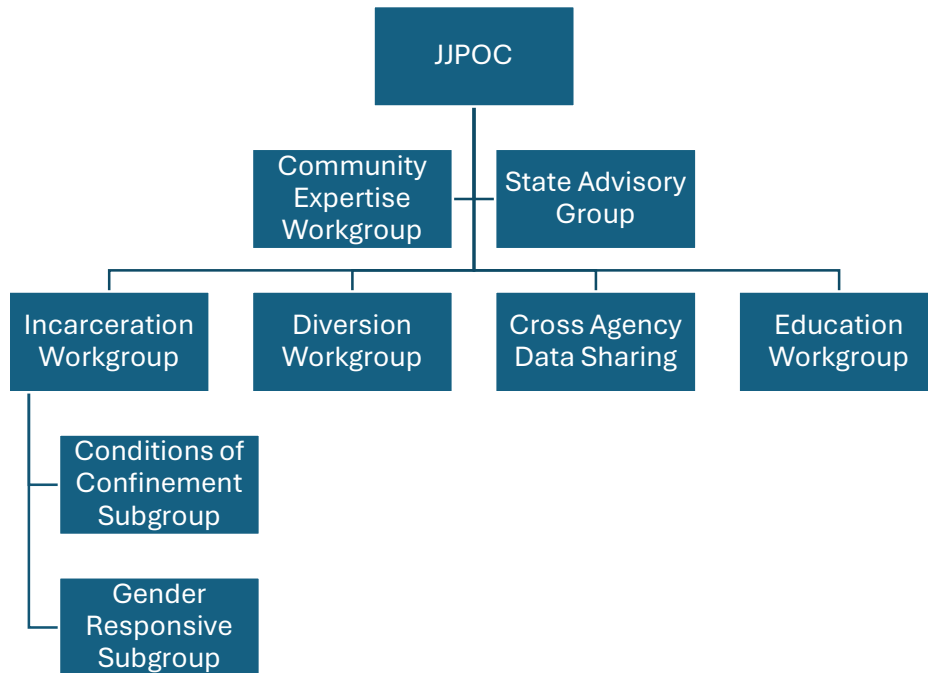
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<sup>2</sup> Public Act No. 23-188

# Going Forward: Strategic Plan 2025-2029

## Structure of the JJPOC

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The **Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee**, with administrative support from the TYJI<sup>3</sup>, employs a multi-tiered structure to strategically address the key objectives outlined in this plan. Utilizing dedicated workgroups centered on the pivotal areas of **diversion, incarceration, and education**, along with further division into specialized subgroups, the JJPOC ensures a focused and efficient approach. The workgroups are comprised of state, local, private, not-for-profit, and advocacy agencies and groups who collaboratively develop system-wide and research-driven strategies to improve youth justice in the state of Connecticut.

The committee also champions data-driven decision-making through the crucial **Cross-Agency Data Sharing Workgroup**, which supports the informational needs of all workgroups and generates insightful annual reports with the integration of members from the former Racial and Ethnic Disparities Workgroup. In parallel, **the Community Expertise Workgroup (CEW)** diligently prioritizes youth and community voices in JJPOC initiatives and legislative recommendations, underscoring a firm commitment to equity and meaningful youth engagement.

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<sup>3</sup> The University of New Haven's Tow Youth Justice Institute provides administrative support to the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (JJPOC), including staffing, research, and coordination of efforts. This support extends to the workgroups and subgroups.

These structural enhancements to the JJPOC's framework reflect a thoughtful and comprehensive strategy to tackle complex issues within the juvenile justice system. By capitalizing on the expertise of its diverse workgroup membership and prioritizing data analysis, community input, and the perspectives of young people, the JJPOC strives to strategically drive positive change and facilitate improved outcomes for youth navigating the complexities of the justice system.

## Strategic Plan Goals and Workgroups

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### Strategic Goal: Enhance Diversion and Community-Based Accountability

#### Workgroup: Diversion

##### Purpose Statement

Enhance public safety by creating youth diversionary policies, practices, and trainings, and supporting positive youth development and community-based accountability

#### The JJPOC's Commitment to Youth Well-Being and Community-Based Accountability

The JJPOC is dedicated to fostering the healthy development of Connecticut's youth by minimizing their unnecessary involvement in the formal justice system. We are committed to a strategy that prioritizes diversion, reserving formal system involvement only for the most serious offenses and those who pose an immediate risk to public safety. This approach aligns with extensive research demonstrating that community-based diversion programs provide a more effective and supportive approach to addressing the underlying challenges that contribute to delinquent behavior. By offering a constructive alternative to traditional justice system interventions, diversion programs are appropriately geared to identify youth in need of support, facilitating seamless access to services focused on repairing harm caused to victims and the community, while simultaneously equipping youth with the skills to prevent future offenses.

#### Connecticut's Progress and Ongoing Efforts in Youth Diversion

Connecticut has made significant strides in reducing youth arrests, particularly through the 2018 establishment of the Community Based Diversion System and School Based Diversion Framework. These reforms positioned YSBs and JRBs as central to



Connecticut's diversion system, serving as vital "service bridges" connecting families, police, schools, juvenile court, human service departments, mental health providers, and the Department of Children and Families (DCF). Despite their pivotal role, challenges including inconsistent funding and disparities in community resources across urban, rural, and suburban areas, impacting diversion service delivery and opportunity, underscoring a continued need to support, expand, and evaluate our diversionary system. The development of the Automatic Prearrest Diversion Plan, mandated by Public Act 23-188, Section 1, is a critical step in this direction.

## Looking Ahead

The JJPOC is optimistic about the future and acknowledges both the progress made and the work that remains. Committed to supporting full implementation of the forthcoming Prearrest Diversion Plan, the Committee understands that achieving success is not solely determined by whether cases are diverted but also by the quality of the diversion services youth receive once diverted. The goal of the Workgroup is to enhance public safety by creating youth diversionary policies, practices, and training, and supporting positive youth development and community-based accountability, ensuring a just and equitable diversion system truly serves the best interests of Connecticut's youth and communities.

## Goals & Objectives

1. **Standardize Diversion System:** Ensure youth in all communities have access to diversion programs and that referrals follow developmentally appropriate best practices.
2. **Develop Diversion Training:** Create, implement, and evaluate a diversion curriculum and training in partnership with law enforcement and the community.

Learning Agenda Questions	Performance Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What are the demographics of referred youth and prevalent disparities?</li> <li>▪ How is diversion operationalized at the municipal level and do all youth have the opportunity to be diverted?</li> <li>▪ Track progress and impact: How are youth who are offered diversion faring in the short term (entering diversion and being connected to resources, if warranted, to support their individualized needs) and long term (avoiding subsequent involvement in the justice system, improving their well-being, and achieving other important life goals)?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reduction in youth arrests and referrals to court for minor offenses</li> <li>▪ Increased accessibility of diversion programs, measured by an increase in diversion referrals in all areas of the state, particularly municipalities that historically have not had access to the diversion system, and districts with high court referral rates for minor offenses</li> <li>▪ Improved racial and ethnic equity in diversion outcomes</li> <li>▪ Positive short-term and long-term outcomes for youth who participate in diversion programs, measured</li> </ul>

	<p>through a harm reduction model and improved quality of life metrics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enhanced community safety</li> <li>▪ Availability of data on the effectiveness of diversion programs</li> <li>▪ Continuous quality improvement to inform resource allocation</li> </ul>
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## Strategies

### 1. Standardize Diversion System so youth in all communities have access

- a) The Diversion First Plan ensures that youth in every community have access to a diversionary program.
  - a. Review annual quality assurance reporting by DCF from local diversionary programs

### 2. Create, implement, and evaluate the diversion curriculum and trainings in partnership with law enforcement and community.

- a) The Diversion Workgroup will partner with the State of Connecticut's Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP), the Community Expertise Workgroup (CEW), and the Connecticut Police Officer Standards and Training Council (POST) to develop a *Statewide Pre-Arrest Diversion Policy*.
  - a. Policy should incorporate and consider best practices on age of juvenile jurisdiction
- b) The Diversion Workgroup will partner with DESPP, POST, and CEW to develop a *Youth Diversion Training Curriculum* that police departments across the state will be required to complete every three years as part of the law enforcement accreditation process.
- c) The Diversion Workgroup will partner with members of the CEW to "Identify Youth and Police Engagement Training Programs " that aim to educate youth on safe and effective interactions with law enforcement.

## Strategic Goal: Improving Engagement and Success Through Education

### Workgroup: Education

#### Purpose Statement

We are dedicated to reducing the likelihood of future youth justice system involvement by ensuring equitable access to education for all young people, with a particular focus on those impacted by or at high risk of encountering the justice system. Through strategic engagement and comprehensive support, we aim to strengthen positive educational protective factors, enhance academic efficacy, and promote meaningful achievement.

#### **The JJPOC is focused on advancing a future where children at risk of involvement with the juvenile justice system are provided with optimal conditions for learning.**

Students in the juvenile justice system face significant challenges in educational engagement, performance, and outcomes. Their unique and varied educational needs, coupled with their sometimes-transient nature, create obstacles that can hinder or even prevent them from consistently accessing education. Research shows contact with the juvenile justice system is linked to a myriad of challenges that tend to lead to undesirable educational outcomes. For example, arrest has been linked to higher school dropout rates and lower levels of college enrollment, while placement in a juvenile residential facility has been linked to lower rates of high school completion and increased odds of criminal involvement as an adult. Historically, the education system has played a pivotal role in youth's interactions with the criminal justice system, sometimes serving as the entry point for young people into the system. By improving support and oversight of the use of school discipline and our school's reengagement response for youth with attendance issues, we aim to empower all Connecticut youth to achieve their full potential and contribute positively to their communities, decreasing their chance of interaction with the juvenile justice system.

#### **The JJPOC remains dedicated to improving educational outcomes for justice-involved youth in Connecticut.**

The JJPOC, established with a clear mandate to prioritize education, has been instrumental in driving policy changes and reforms to address the barriers faced by justice-involved youth in accessing education. Through legislative recommendations and advocacy, the JJPOC has worked to improve coordination, supervision, and provision of academic services for young people. Recent legislation, including Public Act 18-31 and Public Act 21-174, has further strengthened this commitment, establishing an Education Workgroup within the JJPOC and requiring the DCF to create a dedicated administrative unit to oversee and monitor the provision of education of

children in juvenile justice system facilities or who are incarcerated.<sup>4</sup> Keeping both the education and varied infrastructures of confinement accountable for students' success.

## Looking Ahead

Connecticut is dedicated to ensuring that all children, regardless of their circumstances, have access to high-quality educational programming. Through continued collaboration, strategic planning, and data-driven decision-making, we strive to create a brighter future for young people. This strategic goal focuses on enhancing educational access and support, strengthening collaboration and accountability, and addressing systemic barriers to create a more just and equitable educational system for all youth in Connecticut. By prioritizing education and addressing systemic inequities, we aim to break the cycle of justice system involvement and provide quality education and support to guide youth toward positive outcomes.

## Goals & Objectives

1. **Reduce chronic absenteeism and truancy rates** statewide through early identification, targeted interventions, and improved data tracking.
2. **Reduce the Use of Discipline in Schools** and support schools in implementing restorative practices and alternative appropriate responses.
3. **Ensure the provision of quality education to youth in justice facilities meets their educational needs and prepares them for educational success upon return.** Review facility education provision in justice facilities through DCF-JJEU and review efforts, metrics, and success upon return to the community.

Learning Agenda Questions	Performance Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ What are the best practices to improve and expand effective interventions for chronic absenteeism?</li> <li>▪ What trends in CSDE statewide and municipal data can inform strategies to increase attendance?</li> <li>▪ How can we effectively collaborate with municipal or statewide initiatives, taskforces, and commissions to be most impactful?</li> <li>▪ What is the accessibility of alternative education opportunities for students and their utilization and participation rates?</li> <li>▪ Are the educational needs of youth in facilities being met? Monitor and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increased school attendance and graduation rates for justice-involved youth.</li> <li>▪ Increased school attendance rates for youth with a history of unexcused absences</li> <li>▪ Increased proactive responses from school districts for youth who are disengaged</li> <li>▪ Improved time for connection between school and YSB to engage YSB student support</li> <li>▪ Positive trends in LEAP data related to attendance</li> <li>▪ Improved educational outcomes for youth in justice facilities, including</li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup>Conn. Gen. Stat. § 17a-3b

<p>oversee the provision of education services to youth in all juvenile justice facilities. Explore ways to enhance oversight and ensure quality education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Why are students being suspended and expelled in the community? Review these offenses.</li> <li>▪ What is the rate of recidivism for students who have been in juvenile justice facilities, and what are their eventual graduation rates?</li> </ul>	<p>increased attendance and participation, academic progress, successful transitions back to community schools and educational attainment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Decreased use of exclusionary discipline in schools statewide</li> <li>▪ Increased use of restorative practices by school districts</li> </ul>
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## Strategies

1. **Education Goals Strategic Planning:** Reduce chronic absenteeism and truancy statewide thereby increasing school attendance.
  - a) Review the impact of legislation to reduce chronic absenteeism.
  - b) Review and streamline referral processes for chronic absenteeism, ensuring timely intervention. Evaluate YSB response to absenteeism referrals.
  - c) Analyze LEAP (Local Education Agency Profiles) data to identify trends and areas for improvement.
  - d) Continue collaboration and information sharing between taskforces, commissions, and CSDE initiatives.
2. **Reduce the Use of Discipline in Schools**
  - a) Review and expand the School Based Diversion Initiative (SBDI) to provide alternatives to exclusionary discipline
  - b) Assess and strengthen CSDE's (Connecticut State Department of Education) role in guiding and supporting municipalities with disproportionate use of exclusionary discipline.
  - c) Increase utilization of restorative practices and other de-escalation programs in schools.
  - d) Analyze data on school-based arrests and expulsions, cross-referencing with municipal arrest data to identify disparities and areas for intervention.
3. **Review facility education provision in justice facilities through the DCF-JJEU and review efforts, metrics, and success, to ensure the provision of quality education to youth in justice facilities meets their educational needs and prepares them for educational success upon reentry.**
  - a) Increase the number of metrics and measurement of student success to properly assess longitudinal outcomes.

- b) Ensure that educational services in justice facilities are aligned with the state's academic standards and prepare youth for successful re-entry into schools in the community.

## **Strategic Goal: Improve Conditions of Confinement and Reentry**

### **Workgroup: Incarceration**

#### **Purpose Statement**

**Ensure systems and facilities are responsive to the developmental needs of youth and provide programming for youth to thrive and be successful in life.**

The strategic goal to reduce incarceration is to ensure youth who are incarcerated or detained in CT are safe in the least restrictive settings and have access to education, behavioral health services, and are able to reenter society seamlessly. We are dedicated to ensuring that systems and facilities are safe but also actively promote healthy development. Recognizing the unique needs of young people and their critical stage of development, we are committed to developmentally responsive practices, including practices that tailor interventions and programs to support youths' physical, emotional, and cognitive growth. Our approach will focus on treating adolescents, who should be treated as such to support their positive development into healthy and successful adults — ensuring they receive appropriate services and providing opportunities for education and skill-building. This approach will aim to support and empower young people to thrive and contribute positively to their communities.

**Continuous Improvement: Encouraging Collaboration for Positive Outcomes.** The call to remove youth from adult facilities underscores a growing understanding of the unique needs of young people within the justice system. We recognize that the developmental differences between youth and adults necessitate age-appropriate rehabilitation strategies. While developing and implementing a comprehensive plan to transition youth out of adult facilities will require time and dedicated effort, we firmly believe that immediate improvements within Department of Correction (DOC) facilities where youth charged as adults are currently incarcerated are both possible and necessary. We are committed to fostering collaboration and constructive dialogue among all stakeholders to achieve these improvements. Our goal is to find solutions that prioritize the safety and well-being of young people, while also recognizing the complexities of the justice system. We are committed to breaking the cycle of incarceration and creating a brighter future for all youth and communities in Connecticut.

## Goals & Objectives

- 1. Foster positive youth development through supportive environments, education, and rehabilitative opportunities.**
- 2. All youth leaving facilities have the identified individual supports desired and necessary for success.**
- 3. Programs, services, and system responses are gender responsive.**

Learning Agenda Questions	Performance Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ How can we further improve reporting and data collection mechanisms to ensure transparency and accountability of facilities housing youth?</li> <li>▪ What are the barriers to implementing the most effective strategies for reducing the use of restraints and chemical agents in youth facilities?</li> <li>▪ What are the barriers to implementing the most effective strategies for reducing future contact with the system among youth who have been incarcerated?</li> <li>▪ What are the gender responsive needs of youth involved in the justice system?</li> <li>▪ How can staff be trained to interact with youth in a trauma-informed and culturally responsive manner?</li> <li>▪ What structural and substantive changes can be implemented to create a more developmentally appropriate and supportive system response?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increased data collection and reporting by facilities housing youth.</li> <li>▪ Annual monitoring visits to facilities.</li> <li>▪ Implementation of a standardized chemical agent and restraint report.</li> <li>▪ Implementation and routine monitoring of the recommendations from the Reentry Success Plan.</li> <li>▪ Implementation of gender-responsive practices throughout the system.</li> <li>▪ Reduction in the use of restraints and chemical agents in youth facilities.</li> <li>▪ Improved mental and physical health outcomes for youth in custody.</li> <li>▪ Feedback from youth staff regarding the facility environment and youth-staff interactions.</li> </ul>

## Strategies

- 1. Foster positive youth development through supportive environments, education, and rehabilitative opportunities.**
  - a) Increase reporting requirements to JJPOC from facilities that house youth.
    - a. Increase data reporting from DOC/JBCSSD.
    - b. JJPOC to receive conditions of confinement data in addition to OCA.
    - c. Receive available updates on DOC / DOJ settlement.
  - b) Increase JJPOC oversight and monitoring of facilities that serve youth, including REGIONS and MYI and YCI.

- a. Review facility conditions by visiting facilities and speaking with youth annually.
- b. Review the recreation space and its utilization at each facility.

**2. Develop a chemical agent and restraint reporting form to be used by each facility.**

Review staff training curricula and ensure that it includes training in adolescent development, trauma-informed care, verbal de-escalation, and safe physical intervention techniques. In conjunction with the Education Workgroup, review the education services provided at each facility, including the delivery of special education services and career and technical education.

**3. Ensure all youth leaving facilities have the individual supports desired and necessary for success.**

- a) Oversee Implementation of Reentry Success Plan recommendations.
  - a. Recommended Strategy #1: Coordinate and Expand Reentry Supports for Connecticut's Youth
  - b. Recommended Strategy #2: Expand Access to Credible Messengers
  - c. Recommended Strategy #3: Improve Education Transition Planning and Monitoring
  - d. Recommended Strategy #4: Provide Access to Meaningful Vocational and Employment Opportunities
  - e. Recommended Strategy #5: Address Mental Health Service Gaps and Substance Use Treatment and Recovery Supports
  - f. Recommended Strategy #6: Increase and Expand Transition Supports
  - g. Recommended Strategy #7: Address Barriers to Transportation
  - h. Recommended Strategy #8: Expand Access to Housing Options
  - i. Recommended Strategy #9: Improve the Use of Restorative Justice Practices
  - j. Review routine progress monitoring and quality assurance reports

**4. Programs, services, and system responses are gender responsive.**

- a) Create a gender responsiveness landscape analysis
- b) Develop a gap assessment of the landscape analysis
- c) Identify solutions to address the gaps
- d) Review implementation of Gender Responsive recommendations



## Strategic Goal: Ensure That the Work of JJPOC is Led by Data, and Accuracy

### Workgroup: Cross Agency Data Sharing

#### Purpose Statement

We are committed to support comprehensive data requests from the JJPOC and its Workgroups, inform annual state agency presentations, and prepare the annual state of the system report. Furthermore, we will analyze policies and practices for their equitable implementation and effectiveness for all youth in Connecticut.

The JJPOC recognizes the critical need to inform its efforts and effectiveness through data. The Cross Agency Data Sharing Workgroup is an extremely unique workgroup that pulls data experts together in their relative fields and agencies to respond to the data inquiries of the Committee and its Workgroups exploring specific initiatives and understanding outcomes.

**We are committed to eliminating disparities by evaluating the application of police responses and legal policies and practices regarding young people and their impact on youth of color.**

The primary objective of this workgroup is to proactively address racial and ethnic disparities entrenched within and tangentially connected to the juvenile justice system. Despite an overall decline in youth incarceration, persistent racial and ethnic disparities remain, indicating that youth of color are disproportionately impacted at multiple points of contact with the justice system. Achieving equitable outcomes requires genuine collaboration with communities of color, ensuring that their perspectives are central to both the interpretation of data and the formulation of solutions. We are dedicated to ensuring that the interpretation and development of race and ethnicity data, as well as strategies to address disparities within the juvenile justice system, are conducted in genuine partnership with communities of color. We will also ensure the thorough collection, review, and transparent public reporting of race and ethnicity data at every crucial point of contact within the system. Serving as an assessment workgroup for the JJPOC, we will conduct racial equity impact statements on all recommendations put forth and use the available data to make intentional and directed outreach to support communities with high disparities.

## Strategic Goal: Promote Youth Voice and Empowerment

### Workgroup: Community Expertise

#### Purpose Statement

To empower youth, families, and communities to shape JJPOC decision-making, ensuring the voices and perspectives of those most impacted are valued and at the forefront.

**The JJPOC recognizes that genuine reform is only possible through authentic partnership with those most impacted by the system.**

We seek to ensure youth, families, and communities have a meaningful and sustained voice in shaping youth justice policy. This goes beyond merely listening to stories; it involves fostering true collaboration where lived experience directly informs decision-making. Welcoming diverse and inclusive perspectives the Community Expertise Workgroup—composed of individuals with firsthand experience of policies in action, will actively inform and educate JJPOC members, and guide JJPOC policies and legislative recommendations. This group will examine existing practices to encourage and support authentic community participation. We are committed to shifting the culture, ensuring that directly impacted youth, families, and communities are naturally integrated into all aspects of the Committee's work. This will ensure that the JJPOC's work is truly reflective of the needs and aspirations of those it serves. This group is responsible for the appointment of youth members and community members on the JJPOC.

## Goals

- **Authentic Partnership:** Move beyond passive listening to active collaboration, allowing lived experience to guide policy recommendations
- **Foster Collaboration:** Build bridges and improve communication between policy makers and the communities they serve.
- Remove juvenile from statute and replace with child/youth

## Strategies

1. Review and provide input on all JJPOC recommendations.
2. Create workshop trainings for young people on social justice and civic engagement.
3. Partner with TYJI to prepare youth who would like to attend and participate in JJPOC meetings, including matching youth with an adult JJPOC member.
4. Conduct community surveys to gather community insights and develop recommendations based on identified themes.
5. Create an annual Youth Report to highlight their perspectives and experiences with the justice system.
6. Collaborate with JJPOC Workgroups to ensure youth, family, and community voices are reflected in their conversations and proposals.
7. Run a workshop on interpreting data and how to find it
8. Train interested youth at MYI and YCI to have an active role on the CEW, trained by CEW cochairs and members

## Conclusion

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The JJPOC recognizes that investment in Connecticut's young people is an investment in our future. The Committee is committed to engaging stakeholders representing all perspectives to thoroughly understand the matters it chooses to focus on and to pursue collaborative data driven solutions. The Committee recognizes the time and commitment by its members to do this very important work and looks forward to the future.

## Quality Assurance Framework

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<b>Measuring JJPOC Policy Impact</b>
<b>Evaluate JJPOC legislation for its impact</b> <b>Redefine how we measure success to include, when appropriate:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Improved Housing Stability</li><li>Education</li><li>Attendance</li><li>Credit attainment</li><li>Suspension and Expulsions</li><li>Re diversion</li><li>Re arrest</li><li>Re adjudication</li><li>Re incarceration</li><li>Physical health</li><li>Mental Health</li><li>Employment</li><li>Racial Equity Impact Statements</li></ul> <b>Annual Review of System Trends with a lens toward RED</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Reentry Success Progress Monitoring and Quality Assurance Reports</li><li>Annual Conditions of Confinement Reports</li><li>OJJDP State Advisory Group (SAG) Reports</li><li>Annual State of the System Report</li></ul>
<b>Measuring JJPOC internal engagement and movement towards strategic plan</b>
<b>Annual report on measures that include:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>How many stakeholders engaged</li><li>How many meetings held</li><li>How many data presentations held</li><li>How many youth engaged</li><li>How much community feedback incorporated</li><li>How many strategic initiatives started</li><li>How many strategic initiatives completed</li></ul>

# Appendices

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## Legislation: 2021 to 2024

### Legislation 2024

- Public Act 24-139: An Act Concerning Recommendations From The Juvenile Policy And Oversight Committee

### Legislation 2023

- Public Act No. 23-167: An Act Concerning Transparency In Education,
- Public Act No. 23-188: An Act Concerning Juvenile Justice

### Legislation 2022

- Public Act 22-47: An Act Concerning The Recommendations Of The Juvenile Justice Policy And Oversight Committee

### Legislation 2021

- Public Act No, 21-174: An Act Concerning The Recommendations Of The Juvenile Justice Policy And Oversight Committee
- Public Act No. 21-104: An Act Concerning Court Operations