C. Title I, Part D: Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth who are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk

1. Transitions Between Correctional Facilities and Local Programs (ESEA section 1414(a)(1)(B)): Provide a plan for assisting in the transition of children and youth between correctional facilities and locally operated programs.

RIDE’s administration of Title I, Part D, Subpart 1, supports programs to support children and youth who are neglected, delinquent, or at-risk of being such. These children and youth reside in local and State institutions that provide services to: (1) improve educational services so these students have the opportunity to meet challenging State academic content and achievement standards; (2) provide them with services to successfully transition from institutionalization to further schooling or employment; and (3) prevent at-risk youth from dropping out of school, and to provide dropouts and children and youth returning from correctional facilities a support system to ensure their continued education.

The state of Rhode Island has three correctional facilities, two juvenile corrections facilities that are run through the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) and one adult corrections facility that is run by the Rhode Island Department of Corrections. Rhode Island law requires that the state’s juvenile justice facilities have procedures in place to ensure that students are transitioned effectively into the juvenile justice system, and, that plans are in place as students exit the juvenile justice facility and return to their LEA. ESSA requirements reinforce the current practices of Rhode Island’s juvenile corrections facilities.

Juvenile Corrections

Students who are placed in the juvenile justice system are given opportunities to earn high school credits through the educational programs of the DCYF, and the Department of Corrections. At least 15% of funding for these programs is used to support transition and re-entry into high school.

Students attending the state’s juvenile corrections facilities are generally still enrolled in a school at the time of incarceration. For these students, the procedure is for the LEA to send records to the juvenile facility, and for students to do coursework that aligns with their current educational goals. At the Rhode Island Training School, the average length of student enrollment is less than two weeks, and less than 10% are enrolled there for more than one year. Therefore, it is a shared responsibility between the sending LEA and the juvenile corrections facility to ensure that the student stays on track with their educational program. This typically begins with a review of the student’s Individual Learning Plan (a required element of secondary programs in Rhode Island that support development of current and future student academic, career and personal/social goals) and discussions between
the Rhode Island Training School and school counselors from the student’s school of origin. Topics addressed in the initial planning consider timely enrollment, participation in credit-bearing coursework, and ensuring that students are on a path to high school graduation. Exit planning takes place between the school of origin and the correctional facility to ensure immediate re-enrollment and appropriate course placement.

To improve program options at the juvenile justice facilities, this year RIDE made available the “Advanced Course Network” to students attending the Rhode Island Training School, the state’s largest juvenile justice facility. This network allows students to begin courses while incarcerated, and continue those courses once they are back in their school of origin, thus ensuring continuation of high-quality academic coursework, and improved chances at earning high school credit during transition.

Adult Corrections

The adult correction facility is not directly connected to the LEAs in the same manner as the juvenile corrections system. In 2015 the adult correctional system served approximately 400 youth; 77 on a typical day. Over half of the youth adult correctional population has a high school diploma, however, all are academically screened and those who do not pass the pre-assessment are placed in GED courses. Those students who are of school-age generally have dropped-out and have had no connection with a school for period of time prior to incarceration. To support academic development, the adult correctional facility provides adult education and coursework towards obtaining a General Equivalency Diploma. Transition plans include placement into community based GED programs upon release.

The State has implemented a range of strategies to reduce the number of youth incarcerated in Rhode Island. The Rhode Island Training School enrollment has decreased significantly over the past 10 years: from 1,123 in 2006 to 470 in 2015. Since fewer students are entering the juvenile justice facilities, RIDE believes that ensuring the educational attainment of youth is more feasible through personalization strategies, including the frequent review of the student’s Individual Learning Plan. The ILP process provides meaningful opportunity to develop informed transition goals by reviewing assessments and activities in which students have participated in over the years that contribute to their current goals and necessary supports.

2. Program Objectives and Outcomes (ESEA section 1414(a)(2)(A)): Describe the program objectives and outcomes established by the State that will be used to assess the effectiveness of the Title I, Part D program in improving the academic, career, and technical skills of children in the program.

Title I, Part D program data is collected through the annual Consolidated Resource Plan (CRP). Data is returned to the juvenile justice facilities each spring, at which time RIDE meets with the DCYF to review data and set annual benchmarks aligned with the needs of students currently enrolled. A meeting takes place each fall to conduct data reporting, review transition plans and provide technical assistance. These twice annual visits with the DCYF provide ongoing communication between RIDE and the state’s juvenile justice facilities.
RIDE is conducting an analysis to address reporting of the progress of students affiliated with juvenile justice as part of the State Report Card. As the number of students enrolled in the juvenile justice centers from one particular school or LEA is typically less than the reportable n-size, districts have not been able to review data on this population. RIDE hopes to address this by collecting and reporting educational outcomes for children involved in the juvenile justice system at the state level.

Although the RIDE focus is on student progress and achievement, the agency continues to provide annual monitoring for compliance with state and federal education laws and regulations. Findings are addressed immediately. Annual data collection includes vocational outcomes, number of students who have completed high school or earned a HS diploma, description of the transition plan, number of students with a transition plan, number of students who receive their GED and credits earned toward GED. In addition to annual desktop monitoring, RIDE conducts onsite visits at the juvenile justice facilities to review plans once every three to five years. Meetings take place with DCYF each fall and spring to review program data and set annual benchmarks, and offer technical assistance to meet program goals.