

# TYC Education Plan

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## Immediate Action Items for the Upcoming 2009 – 2010 School Year



In October 2008, the Texas Youth Commission received permanent leadership through the appointment of an executive commissioner. In January 2009, the agency hired a full-time superintendent of education. Since then, education services within TYC have undergone dramatic enhancements to improve academic outcomes from youth. The TYC Education Plan highlighted below will be fully implemented by August 2009, for the upcoming school year.

### **A**ccelerated Educational Programs

- In Fall 2009, the CSCOPE curriculum will be implemented in all TYC facilities. This will align TYC curriculum with what is being used in Texas public school systems and allow for a seamless transfer of coursework within TYC schools and into the communities.
- TYC is implementing a comprehensive reading skills program that will result in a projected first-year outcome of a two-to-three year increase in reading comprehension.
- In partnership with the Texas Virtual School Network and colleges and universities, there will be increased opportunities for educational coursework for all youth. This will allow 20 percent of youth to receive advanced diplomas and enter college programs.

- Expansion of vocational programming offered at facilities and dual credit college courses available in 2009 will enable 30 percent of TYC youth to complete vocational certification programs. In the 2008-09 school year, youth earned 457 industry certifications.

## Improved Special Education Initiatives

- TYC staff and curriculum fully comply with state and federal law and nationally recognized best practices. More than 50 percent of TYC teachers hold multiple certifications and more than 30 percent are certified in special education.
- 40 percent of TYC youth have identified special education needs. Expanded services under federal IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) grants will dramatically improve assessment and educational services to students with disabilities. Educational counseling and related services assist student transition services, appropriate grade level placement and modifications within the classroom. Staffing patterns and placement of teaching specialists will emphasize special education needs.
- Partnerships with nationally recognized special education and “at-risk” experts review practices for assessment; special education Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) notifications; and ensure students’ needs are met. A model of “Response to Intervention” will be completed by Fall 2009 and 100 percent of the student population will be assessed. Individual plans will be developed for students not meeting goals.

## Transition Services and Reentry into Community

- Working with public schools and workforce representatives, implementation of an accredited curriculum scope and sequence will facilitate students’ rapid reintegration into public schools. TYC is placing video conference equipment in all halfway houses and parole offices, allowing youth to finish coursework started at TYC upon release. This also will assist TYC education counselors in maintaining contact with youth to better provide guidance for reentry into school and workforce.
- Portable student portfolios (birth certificates, important tests results, industry certifications, important identification materials) will travel with students while at TYC and upon release. These documents will be invaluable to successfully reenter school, enter the workforce with higher paying jobs, or continue on to college. 100 percent of students will have portfolios.
- Education liaisons work with TYC students at halfway houses or on parole to help reintegrate them into the community. Liaisons work with local schools and industries to ensure education and/or employment opportunities. TYC’s goal is for 50 percent of the

youth returning to the community to be enrolled in local schools, industry programs, or college. The remaining youth should be employed after 30-60 days.

## Assessment and Proper Placement

- All youth receive an extensive educational assessment upon arrival at TYC. Review of coursework and placement is assisted by TAKS-released testing, TABE, workforce interest inventory, achievement and IQ tests. These assessments, together with teacher input, determine student educational needs and the proper course of study.
- Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP) services will determine each youth's proper educational placement. All students without a high school diploma will take the TAKS test.
- TYC will implement a centralized database that maintains education records to ensure staff access at any TYC facility. The database will coordinate with TEA databases to ensure youth records are available to educational programs outside TYC upon release of youth.
- Each student's educational certification program will link to industry and workforce needs in the home area to maximize employment options.

## Professional Development

- Teacher training in Response to Intervention (RTI), an alternative education approach, will provide early, effective assistance to youth with learning difficulties. While most students respond well to effective education programs, RTI provides three tiers of intervention for students that are not achieving like their peers. This ensures students not identified as needing special education services are not overlooked if they struggle academically.
- Positive Behavior Intervention programming will be fully implemented by Fall 2009. This will dramatically increase students' time in the classroom and allow teachers to address specific behavioral issues.
- Newly hired TYC teachers are now eligible to participate in the Teach for Texas Loan Repayment Assistance Program.