



Making Progress on the State’s Plan to Oversee the Educational Delivery of Justice-Involved Youth

2025–27 Operating Budget Decision Package

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

It is imperative that Washington improve services and outcomes for students being educated in juvenile justice institutions. Access to the same fundamental educational opportunities as their peers and the ability to maintain academic progress while involved in juvenile justice programs are critical to these students’ success after release. Beginning in the 2027–28 school year, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) will be responsible for the delivery of basic education services to justice-involved youth located in facilities across the state. To improve the delivery of services, OSPI requests funding for the county Juvenile Detention Centers (JDCs) and for additional education advocates to support student transitions.

FISCAL DETAIL

Operating Expenditures	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Fund 001-1 (program 035)	\$4,651,000	\$6,099,000	\$6,227,000	\$6,358,000
Total Expenditures	\$4,651,000	\$6,099,000	\$6,227,000	\$6,358,000
Biennial Totals	\$10,750,000		\$12,585,000	
Staffing	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
FTEs	0	0	0	0
Average Annual	0		0	
Object of Expenditure	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Obj. N	\$4,651,000	\$6,099,000	\$6,227,000	\$6,358,000
Revenue	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Total Revenue	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Biennial Totals	\$0.00		\$0.00	

PACKAGE DESCRIPTION

OSPI has been working in conjunction with the Joint Select Committee on Governance and Funding for Institutional Education, established under 2023 House Bill 1701: *Concerning basic education services to youth who are served through institutional education programs*, to complete a model for the delivery, governance, and accountability of institutional educational services beginning in the 2027–28 school year.

The institutional education landscape can be broken out into three types of facilities:

1. JDCs (21 sites across the state): These are primarily operated by county juvenile courts and are usually the first interaction with the institutional education system for youth. Education at the JDCs is delivered by the school district or regional educational service district (ESD) where the JDC is located. Most students who enter a JDC will return to the community and their local school district. Some students will go onto the long-term facilities described below.
2. Long-term Residential Centers (2 sites; Green Hill School and Echo Glen Children’s Center): These are operated by the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). Education is provided by the school districts where the centers are located.
3. Community Facilities (7 active sites): These are also operated by DCYF and are focused on transitioning students back into the community. Education is usually onsite and provided by local school districts.

What is the problem, opportunity, or priority you are addressing with the request?

While Washington state works to establish the model as directed under HB 1701, there is an urgent need for additional resources at the 21 JDCs across the state. These sites have fluctuating student populations and are significantly understaffed. The current funding model allocates only one certificated educator for every 10 students and does not provide any funding for administrative or paraeducator staffing. In addition to problems with the funding model, the fact that student counts vary within any given month means that JDCs often have more students than they are staffed to serve. Understaffing negatively impacts the students served by these institutions and leads to adverse outcomes for these already vulnerable students. Lack of sufficient staff becomes especially challenging when students must be separated from one another due to restrictions set by the justice system or safety concerns.

Similarly, the importance of the successful transitioning of justice-involved youth into and out of institutional facilities is a major finding from OSPI’s experience working with juvenile justice facilities, outlined in a report to submitted in 2022.¹ There are many different transitions that a student will go through during their time in the juvenile justice system and these transitions can be jarring and cause unnecessary interruptions in the delivery of educational services.

¹ Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Children, Youth, and Families. (1 December, 2022). *Improving Institutional Education: Final Report*. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED625850.pdf>.

Transitions occur with greater frequency when students are entering and exiting JDCs, where stays are often short. Smooth transitions are crucial to the success of and positive outcomes for students served in these facilities. Each transition is an opportunity to ensure continuity and connection.

What is your proposal?

OSPI proposes funding for additional support for the institutional education system and justice-involved youth through immediate, targeted, and timely investments to both stabilize the current system and prepare it for change in the coming years. OSPI requests funding to support high-quality and consistent instruction for students at the 21 JDCs across the state. Currently, teachers and administrators try their best to meet the diverse, urgent, and extensive educational needs of these students within very limited resources. Current resources allocated under an outdated model are insufficient to provide the education to which these students are legally entitled, all while also supporting the significant social emotional needs of these young people.

OSPI proposes funding for one additional certificated teacher per 25 students, and no fewer than 0.75 new full-time equivalent (FTE) staff at each JDC. This additional resource will support each JDC and provide much-needed additional funding to support these institutions in the lead up to OSPI's taking on oversight of the delivery of basic education to these students.

In addition to the additional JDC staffing, OSPI proposes enhanced support for student transitions when entering and exiting JDCs, whether those transitions be to long-term facilities or back into the community. Currently, every ESD has an educational advocate to support justice-involved student transitions. OSPI requests funding for one educational advocate for each JDC, with a scalable factor of 1.0 FTE per 25 students. The addition of educational advocates to the juvenile justice system has shown great success at the ESD level, and expanding this service to each JDC will better support youth transitions and lead to better outcomes for these students.

How is your proposal impacting equity in the state?

1. This proposal is directly connected to equitable access to educational opportunities for Washington students. See above for more details.
2. At the forefront of every program, policy, and decision, OSPI actively focuses on ensuring all students have access to the instruction and support they need to succeed in our schools. This proposal is focused on the needs of our most vulnerable students, particularly students of color, American Indian/Alaska Native students, and highly mobile students including students living in migrant families, those living in foster care, and those experiencing homelessness. These student groups face unique systemic barriers to completing their K–12 education, barriers which perpetuate larger systemic inequities that persist along racial and socioeconomic lines.
3. See above.
4. See above.

What are you purchasing and how does it solve the problem?

JDC Funding

This proposal requests funding equal to 1.0 FTE certificated teacher per JDC. As each institution has varying needs, this additional funding will be allocation based, like other apportionment funding, with decisions on how these dollars are spent left up to each JDC. The proposed allocation is 1.0 FTE per 25 students, with no fewer than 0.75 FTE per JDC.

Educational Advocates

This proposal funds an educational advocate at each of the 21 county Juvenile Detention Centers across the state. Similar to the JDC funding proposed above but with a slightly higher floor, this model requests 1.0 FTE per 25 students, with no fewer than 1.0 FTE per JDC.

What alternatives did you explore and why was this option chosen?

JDC staffing has been underfunded for many years already, and each year that this lack of investment continues, students served by these institutions and the juvenile justice system are harmed. This harm will only increase as OSPI anticipates student stays at JDCs to lengthen as institutions work to address overcrowding.

Similarly, failure to invest in additional educational advocates at JDCs will continue to put these vulnerable students at a further disadvantage by denying them access to support that has proven effective. Educational advocates have shown themselves to be successful in supporting student transitions into the juvenile justice system and transitioning them back into their home communities and local schools.

What resources does the agency already have that are dedicated to this purpose?

OSPI receives limited funding for institutional education, and this funding is already allocated to essential work and services. OSPI has no current funding that can be moved or adjusted to meet the needs outlined in this request.

The 2021 Legislature allocated \$1,1567,000 to support implementation of House Bill 1295 (2021): *Providing public education to youth in or released from institutional education facilities*. This funding is currently used to staff OSPI to support the work outlined in the bill, including working with DCYF to strengthen supports for students being served by juvenile justice facilities.

ASSUMPTIONS AND CALCULATIONS

Expansion, reduction, elimination or alteration of a current program or service:

This proposal increases funding for institutional education in Juvenile Detention Centers and expands on the existing Educational Advocate program.

The Institutional Education program overall has been funded at:

- \$14,074,000 in fiscal year 2022
- \$13,894,000 in fiscal year 2023
- \$16,148,000 in fiscal year 2024
- \$16,754,000 in fiscal year 2025

Within the funding amounts outlined above, the following amounts are dedicated to the Educational Advocate program:

- \$588,000 in fiscal year 2022
- \$897,000 in fiscal year 2023
- \$588,000 in fiscal year 2024
- \$897,000 in fiscal year 2025

Detailed assumptions and calculations:

Additional CIS Units

Using June 2024 annual average full-time equivalent (AAFTE) for institutional education county detention centers, OSPI estimates the maintenance level funding formula would drive approximately 36.6 full-time equivalent (FTE) certificated instructional staff (CIS) units in school year 2025–26 for approximately \$5.2 million. This proposal would allocate an additional 1.0 CIS FTE per 25 AAFTE with a guaranteed floor of 0.75 CIS FTE. OSPI estimates this would drive approximately an additional 18.8 CIS FTE for \$2.8 million per school year (\$2.2 million in fiscal year 2026 and \$2.8 million in fiscal year 2027).

Additional Educational Advocates

Using June 2024 AAFTE, OSPI estimates allocating an additional 1.0 educational advocate to each county detention center with an additional scale-able FTE unit when AAFTE is over 25.0. This would drive approximately 22.8 additional CIS FTE through the funding model. OSPI estimates the additional funding per school year would be \$3.2 million (\$2.5 million in fiscal year 2026 and \$3.3 million in fiscal year 2027).

Workforce assumptions:

None

Historical funding:

Fiscal Year 2026

- Total Funds = \$16.9 million
- Near General Fund = \$16.9 million
- Other Funds = \$0 million

Fiscal Year 2027

- Total Funds = \$16.9 million
- Near General Fund = \$16.9 million
- Other Funds = \$0 million

STRATEGIC AND PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

Strategic framework:

This request supports the Governor's Results Washington goals related to K–12 education by aiming to increase the percentage of students who graduate from high school, reducing opportunity gaps for students.

OSPI supports and empowers students, educators, families, and communities through equitable access to high-quality curriculum, instruction, and supports. This request makes progress toward the agency's vision to have all students ready for post-secondary pathways, careers, and civic engagement.

Performance outcomes:

Stabilized and Enhanced Educational Services

With the additional funding requested in this proposal, each JDC will have more consistent and adequate staff providing educational services that are reliably delivered to all students. This additional staffing and support will lead to better, more stable educational experiences for justice-involved students, regardless of the size of the cohort at any given time.

Improved Student Engagement and Support

The introduction of educational advocates at each JDC will improve the facilities' ability to manage student transitions into, within, and out of the juvenile justice system. These advocates will play a crucial role in maintaining educational continuity, reducing the educational disruption that sometimes accompanies these transitions, and supporting reintegration into communities and schools.

Preparation for Future System Changes

The proposed funding will act as a bridge during a time of transition for the system itself, adding stability to current institutional education programs and laying the groundwork for the eventual implementation of new funding models and oversight structures under OSPI set to be in place by 2027. This funding will ensure that the system is better equipped to handle upcoming changes without compromising the quality of education provided to students during this transition.

OTHER COLLATERAL CONNECTIONS

Intergovernmental:

None.

Stakeholder impacts:

The school districts and ESDs that operate JDCs have been requesting additional funding for several years and are very supportive of this proposal.

Legal or administrative mandates:

This proposal is the first request OSPI is making in relation to House Bill 1701 (2023) which directs OSPI to oversee institutional education across the state by 2027.

Changes from current law:

None.

State workforce impacts:

None.

State facilities impacts:

None.

Puget Sound recovery:

N/A.

Governor's salmon strategy:

N/A.

OTHER SUPPORTING MATERIALS

None.

Information technology (IT):

N/A