



**ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT  
OF LAKE COUNTY, ILLINOIS  
DIVISION OF JUVENILE PROBATION AND DETENTION SERVICES  
JUVENILE DETENTION EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING**

*SMAART Performance Report  
December 2015*

**ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE CIRCUIT COURT OF LAKE COUNTY, ILLINOIS**  
**DIVISION OF JUVENILE PROBATION AND DETENTION SERVICES**

**Mission Statement:**

The mission of the Circuit Court of Lake County is to serve the public. The Court accomplishes this mission by providing a fair and responsive system of justice, committed to excellence, and fostering public trust, understanding and confidence.

The Division of Juvenile Probation and Detention Services supports the mission of the Court by serving a juvenile justice system that ensures public protection from further acts of juvenile delinquency, and assisting in the accountability and rehabilitative needs of youthful offenders.

The goals of the Division of Juvenile Probation and Detention Services include the following:

- To provide a comprehensive assessment process and continuum of evidence-based interventions for youth and families referred to the division in order to reduce recidivism and increase compliance with court-ordered conditions.
- To provide a structured and secure environment for youth assigned to detention in order to assure the safety of youth and protection of the community.
- To facilitate collaboration and cooperation among juvenile justice partners in order to share information, increase professional understanding among participants, and enhance the delivery of evidence-based services for clients.
- To provide opportunities for employee development in order to enhance client/customer services, facilitate growth within the division, and improve staff competencies.

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**EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING**

**Program Purpose:**

An integral component of the detention center programming continues to be education. School is held 5 days a week, 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., with classes taught by certified teachers with an emphasis on the special education needs of the residents. The school program is continually evaluated and modified if deemed necessary. In 2010, some very positive changes were implemented including more computer-based learning projects, individualized placement in math, and a more intensive "homework hour" in the evening designed to assist residents in preparing for their transition to the community. In addition, new report cards/progress reports are being prepared on a daily basis and are available for court hearings and other involved parties including parents. These reports are eventually sent to the home school districts with information about grades, behavior, and a calculation of actual credits depending on the length of stay completed course work.

Ongoing communication between the Detention Educational Program and home school districts continues to play a crucial role in the residents' educational plans and results in positive communication and cooperation during the period of custody and upon release. Residents are able to receive and complete their home school work from their schools of enrollment if feasible which is either obtained by their family, caseworkers/Probation Officers and sometimes school personnel themselves.

Educational staff members have attended several continuing education workshops and credit classes to meet their certification requirements, keep current in their field and to interact with their peers in the community. The Lake County Regional Office of Education (R.O.E.) and local school districts, Lincolnshire Prairie-view Grade School and Stevenson High School, continue to play an important role in the education program by assisting with training, networking, and funding.

The Detention Center continues to benefit from the services of and great relationship with the Vernon Area Public Library. Library staff conducts a bi-weekly book club (partially funded by Oprah Winfrey's "Angel Network") with the residents as part of the educational program in which they introduce, read and discuss new books together. The library has also assisted in obtaining 2 grants for the Detention Center and FACE-IT residential program during 2008 which will be used for the purchase of new books in the near future. New and "gently used" books have also been added to the in-house library through community donations

**Program Description:**

The program has three classrooms with a fourth being created. There are currently three teachers and three teacher assistants. The teacher assistants are certified substitute teachers and sworn officers, functioning in the same role as Juvenile Counselors who are responsible for

the direct supervision and behavior management of the residents in detention. Each of the classrooms has nine computer stations, each assigned to a specific resident during their stay in detention.

Frequently community members and/or organizations are brought in to deliver presentations on various topics such as motivation, career planning, and development and life skills. Additionally, residents receive instruction in computer usage, arts and crafts, and physical education. There are three library sections located in the detention center and local volunteer librarians meet with residents regularly engaging them in book discussions.

The Apex Learning digital curriculum provides teachers with standards-based instructional tools to deliver individualized, student-centered direct instruction with integrative formative, summative, and diagnostic assessment. The curriculum creates active learning experiences that keep students attentive and engaged as they read, watch, listen, inquire, write, and discuss. Multimedia tutorials provide students with opportunities to explore and understand new concepts, allowing each student to move at their own pace.

A typical lesson comprises a number of activities including studies, practices, readings, labs, discussions, projects, explorations, reviews, and embedded assessments. The system also provides for teachers to effectively differentiate instruction and improve student outcomes. Teachers can monitor individual residents' progress with the aid of instantly reported computer-scored assessments. The program additionally records the residents' accomplishments and how much time has been spent in both the instructional and assessment sections. The teacher can then work one-on-one with those students needing extra assistance or those looking for additional challenges and address residents who may be off-task, motivating them to continue.

A startling number of high school students are struggling readers and for many reading below grade level the literacy barrier proves an insurmountable obstacle to learning and success. One pathway with the Apex Learning curriculum is Literacy Advantage courses, which support academic success in standards-based high school courses for students who are reading below proficient. Literacy Advantage courses assist students in mastering required grade-level content to earn credit towards graduation, while simultaneously developing reading skills. A new reading program was instituted to further address the needs of the residents, many of whom read substantially below their grade level. This program is designed to not only help improve reading skills but comprehension as well. Another new program is the "Job Group". This is a weekly session designed to teach the residents not just how to look for jobs and fill out applications but how to interview, focusing on how to dress, verbal/interview skills and body language.

### **Performance Measures:**

The school program is continually evaluated and modified if deemed necessary. During the 1997-98 school year, the local districts concentrated educational services privately for residents. What was discovered was that there was little interaction with the residents, as many of them

had special needs; they quickly became bored and/or frustrated. This resulted in behavior problems and did not provide a beneficial learning environment.

The education program then moved to an interactive tutorial based. A variety of teaching methods were used including audio/visual aids, specific course instruction, and group discussions. The classrooms would be comprised of approximately sixteen (16) residents ranging in age from 10 to 17 years. The challenge then became to effectively address the needs of the residents with such a diverse range of abilities and grade levels in the same classroom. Again residents became bored and disconnected from school. Behavioral issues began to increase again.

In 2008 research began and statistics started being collected regarding the behavioral issues during the school day in order to modify the education program. It was then decided to implement the Apex Learning digital program in the school.

The Apex Learning digital curriculum was implemented in 2010. Addressing the individual academic needs of each resident, coupled with an increase in individual attention has led to a decrease in behavioral issues during the school program. During the first year of Apex Learning there was a dramatic drop of 83% in disciplinary incidents.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Average Number of Residents in School per Day</b>	<b>Number of Disciplinary Incidents</b>
<b>2008*</b>	25.40	467
<b>2009</b>	22.71	840
<b>2010</b>	22.05	139
<b>2011</b>	27.01	266
<b>2012</b>	27.84	245
<b>2013</b>	21.15	235
<b>2014</b>	32.45	349
<b>2015**</b>	33.40	171
*No statistics for the months of February and March		
** Not including November and December		

During the two years prior to the implementation of Apex Learning the average number of disciplinary incidents was 654. During the next four years of program, since the introduction of Apex Learning, the average number of disciplinary incidents was 221, **a decrease of 66%**. The next two years (2014-2015) showed an increase in the resident population of 28% but only an

18% increase in the number of disciplinary incidents; still reflecting a **60% decrease** in disciplinary incidents since the time period prior to the Apex Learning program.

The Education Program continues to monitor the success of its residents and seeks ways to continually improve. One variable that is constant is the frequent turnover of the resident population which will confound the behavior issues. Individualizing their educational needs, helping residents realize that they can earn credit and work at their own pace aids in reducing the time it takes for residents to acclimate to the program. Additionally, residents are able to monitor their own progress, seeing their progress towards earning credits, which has aided in their visual need for immediate gratification.

Residents who were using the Apex Learning program at their home school were able to continue their course work. The work they did while in detention is then transferred back to their home school preventing a lapse in their education while confined in the detention center. Apex Learning is also utilized by schools for credit recovery for students that are behind in their academics. This too is a motivational tool for the residents to remain engaged in their work, being able to complete more work in less time the usual.