REENTRY
MYTH BUSTER!

A Product of the Federal Interagency Reentry Council

> **MYTH:** Juvenile correctional facilities that want to expand youth access to technology must be willing to compromise the security of the facility and the safety of detained youth.

> **FACT:** Many juvenile correctional facilities have successfully used technology, including the Internet, to broaden the scope of education programming while maintaining appropriate and effective safeguards for detained youth.

The use of technology in correctional classrooms offers many advantages, such as addressing a broad range of learning styles and academic readiness, reaching isolated or geographically remote populations, and leveraging limited instructional resources via virtual dissemination. While concerns over youth and community safety often prevent facilities from pursuing such options[i], states and jurisdictions have begun to explore options for offering their students and staff opportunities to use education techology while maintaining security and safety.

Indiana

State-run Juvenile Delinquent Facilities, statewide
Textbook Online Supplemental Materials via SMART Boards

How they got started. As many textbook publishers have begun to bundle online supplementary material with their textbooks, teachers in Indiana's state-run juvenile securities felt that, due to the lack of Internet access, their students were missing out on opportunities afforded their peers in local schools. Their principals sought assistance from the Indiana Department of Correction's (IDOC) Office of Juvenile Education, which soon developed a two-year plan to get SMART boards into each classroom within the state's juvenile correctional facilities. By 2013, many facilities had the SMART Boards and were tapping into online supplemental instructional and teaching materials. IDOC is continuing to install SMART Boards in every juvenile correctional facility classroom and is exploring more possibilities for supplementing textbook-based learning with online and other digital tools, and increasing the use of computer-based student assessments, including the newly redesigned General Education Development (GED) test launching in 2014.

How they paid for it. State support in conjunction with funding from Title I, Part D of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

How they ensure education and security. Each classroom's SMART Board is routed through desktop computers on each teacher's desk to ensure that access to online learning materials is used for the right purposes. The teacher ensures the security for the computer and has sole access to the computer's contents and Internet connection. Further, Internet access is provided and protected by a NovaNet intranet, which sets up firewalls that prevent access to content inappropriate for the classroom.

Loysville Youth Development Center, Pennsylvania

Loysville Youth Development Center (LYDC)
International Computer Driving License

How they got started. Over the past two years, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) has been working with the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare (PDPW), who operates the LYDC, to implement online training courses for the International Computer Driving License, or ICDL. The ICDL certification programs consist of seven modules that provide users with the skills necessary to be a proficient user of a computer and common computer applications. In 2013, LYDC began the process of expanding the youth's access to the ICDL outside of the classroom, during evening study hours, to supplement what youth accomplish during the school day. Loysville is in the early stages of implementing the ICDL facility-wide, and they have plans to explore other online and computer-based educational and vocational opportunities.

How they paid for it. The ICDL program is paid for exclusively by PDPW with state funding. PDE, in turn, provides the technological infrastructure, including computers and secure Internet connection, within the school setting to operate ICDL.

How they ensure education and security. Facility and PDE staff worked with state IT professionals to institute safeguards preventing access to any Internet content outside of the ICDL program. Students are continuously monitored by teaching and security staff to ensure they are not using the computers or Internet access for any other purposes. The facility also tracks all Internet usage and creates monthly reports. Any youth found using connections inappropriately meets with appropriate staff to discuss how their behavior jeopardizes not only their continued access to the ICDL and other opportunities but also the access of their peers.

Oregon

Juvenile Corrections and Detention Facilities, statewide
Oregon Virtual School District (ORVSD)

How they got started. In 2010, Oregon formalized access to the Internet and other electronic networks for all facilities statewide by enacting Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) Chapter 416, Division 040. The Rule provides guidelines for acceptable use of specific computers, hardware, software, storage media, and networks by youth within Oregon Youth Authority (OYA) custody that assists in their successful reintegration from confinement into the community. With OAR 416-040 in place, OYA and the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) have made available the Oregon Virtual School District (ORVSD) to all OYA facilities as of July 1, 2013. ORVSD allows students to supplement their classes with videos, podcasts, and

other online resources. ODE and OYA are supplementing ORVSD with a Hippo Campus server, which allows short-term students in OYA facilities to have access to a playlist of individual lessons without having to enroll in a full course. Oregon is embarking on a full-scale, statewide implementation of ORVSD in their facilities while adopting a uniform online student assessment that will let them track every student's progress at the state level.

How they paid for it. Because ORVSD began in the public schools, ODE already supports the technological "backbone" of the system and they have developed a separate "virtual school district budget." As ORVSD makes its way into OYA facilities, this budget covers all initial fees, the online courses, training materials, and server space for all facilities. The only financial responsibility for the facilities is the hardcopy instructional materials used by students and teachers.

How they ensure education and security. Security is maintained by the use of screening software and firewalls in place in each facility. Additionally, all facility superintendents (or designated staff) review the online history of all machines on a monthly basis and all employ continuous real-time monitoring of every computer within the facility, ensuring that no inappropriate content is accessed by anyone. Finally, OYA and ODE have worked with the ORVSD vendor, Oregon State University, to ensure youth cannot access online content outside of ORVSD.

For More Information:

NDTAC Technology Program Highlights
http://www.neglected-delinquent.org/neglected-or-delinquent-program-highlights

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[i] Borden, C., & Richardson, P. *The Effective Use of Technology in Correctional Education*. John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Reentry Roundtable on Education, May 31–April 1, 2008.

What is a REENTRY MYTH BUSTER?

This Myth Buster is one in a series of fact sheets primarily intended to clarify Federal policies that affect formerly incarcerated individuals and their families. Each year, about 640,000 individuals are released from state and Federal prisons. Another 9 million cycle through local jails. When reentry fails, the social and economic costs are high—more crime, more victims, more family distress, and more pressure on already-strained state and municipal budgets.

Because reentry intersects with health and housing, education and employment, family, faith, and community well-being, many Federal agencies are focusing on initiatives for the reentry population. Under the auspices of the Cabinet-level interagency Reentry Council, Federal agencies are working together to enhance community safety and well-being, assist those returning from prison and jail in becoming productive citizens, and save taxpayer dollars by lowering the direct and collateral costs of incarceration.

**For more information about the Reentry Council,
go to:** http://csgjusticecenter.org/nrrc/projects/firc/