

JUVENILE JUSTICE TASK FORCE
Education Workgroup

July 13, 2012

FY13-JJ #1 Amend Colorado Department of Education rules regarding age restrictions for the General Equivalency Diploma

Recommendation:

Request the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) amend its rules (1 CCR 301-2) to permit the General Equivalency Diploma (GED) option be opened for 16 year old juveniles appearing before the court when provided sufficient information to determine it is in the best interest of the youth.

Clarification:

Current rule:

1 CCR 301-2 ADMINISTRATION OF GENERAL EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (GED) TESTING PROGRAM

130.01 (2) Candidates seventeen (17) years and older. Sixteen (16) year old candidates may test under certain conditions.

130.01 (A) A sixteen (16) year old candidate may be tested provided he/she meets the following conditions. (A) the candidate must complete an age waiver application form, CDE 381.1; and (B) they provide a written letter from a university, college or vocational education program stating that the candidate is required to show documentation of a high school diploma or the equivalent to be eligible for admission to a specific educational or vocational education program.

Suggested rule amendment:

130.01 (A) A sixteen (16) year old candidate may be tested provided he/she meets the following conditions. (A) the candidate must complete **and submit** an age waiver application form, CDE 381.1; **and (B) along with either (1) they provide** a written letter from a university, college or vocational education program stating that the candidate is required to show documentation of a high school diploma or the equivalent to be eligible for admission to a specific educational or vocational education program **–or (2) upon approval by a judicial officer or administrative hearing officer when the candidate is currently subject to the court’s jurisdiction as a result of a delinquency or status offender hearing and where it has been determined that such request is in the best interest of the juvenile. This determination will be based upon the following criteria: a) the number of credits earned to date by the juvenile and number of credits needed to graduate; b) the outcome of credit recovery and school reengagement plans developed by the schools for with the juvenile; and c) wishes of the juvenile and/or his/her parents/guardians.**

Discussion:

The Commission members believe that all children should be provided an opportunity to achieve a high school diploma. Concerns were noted that not all juveniles benefit from a traditional school experience, especially those who become disengaged in their early education years. Although CDE has numerous opportunities to address these needs (EARRS programs, alternative schools) older students who have already lost years of academic credit need options such as pursuing a GED to complete their secondary education.

The Commission also feels that the adoption of this recommendation will result in a reduction in detention of juveniles that refuse to attend school and therefore cycle in and out of the court system for contempt of valid court orders to attend school.