



CONTACTS:

KATY OTTO (JUVENILE LAW CENTER)

OFFICE: 215-625-0551 ext. 128 CELL: 240-478-9387 EMAIL: kotto@jlc.org

Spencer Malloy (Education Law Center)

(215) 346-6905, smalloy@elc-pa.org

Advocates Launch Website with Educational Resources and Best Practices for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System

Philadelphia, PA (April 27, 2017) – Today The Legal Center for Youth Justice and Education (LCYJE) – a national collaboration of Southern Poverty Law Center, Juvenile Law Center, Educational Law Center-PA, and the American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law unveiled the website [Blueprint for Change: Education Success for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System](#). This website, modeled on the successful [Blueprint for Change: Education Success for Children in Foster Care](#), offers a framework for promoting educational success for youth in the juvenile justice system. The site includes benchmarks for success and resources broken down both nationally and state by state.

The *Blueprint for Change: Education Success for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System* presents **10 goals** that set forth the broad framework for promoting education success for young people involved in the juvenile justice system. There are correlating **Benchmarks** for each Goal that, if achieved, would indicate progress toward improving educational outcomes. The Benchmarks are the more specific and concrete policies and strategies for achieving the broader goals. Each Goal includes **Examples** of programs, legislation, resources, policies, and practices that exist to improve educational outcomes for children in the juvenile justice system.

“Young people involved with the juvenile justice system are often chronically behind in school, due in part to the wholly inadequate education they receive while in placement that sets them on a collision course to dropping out after they are released from the system,” said Deborah Gordon Klehr, executive director at the Education Law Center. “We are excited to launch this dynamic, interactive tool that can be used by multiple stakeholders – including judges, families, lawyers, probation officers, juvenile justice and education administrators, as well as federal, state, and local policymakers – to improve the educational and life outcomes of youth in their jurisdiction.”

Southern Poverty Law Center funded the development of this website, and sees it as integral to the organization’s work as a whole. “Too frequently, young people exit the juvenile justice system unprepared to succeed in either school or the workforce,” said Eden Heilman, SPLC managing attorney. “One of the best ways to prevent a child from returning to the system is improving education in custody, so that youth can return

to their communities ready to contribute. We are thrilled to support the development of this Blueprint, which we believe will help give meaningful second chances to our youth.”

The Legal Center came together to ensure that all youth in and returning from the juvenile and criminal justice systems could access a quality education. Partners work to build collaborations among juvenile justice and education professionals, highlight innovative model litigation strategies, and reshape federal, state, and local policies. The website is a key step forward in doing this effectively.

Kate Burdick, staff attorney with Juvenile Law Center, added, “Young people involved in the juvenile justice system encounter multiple barriers to educational success. Yet, across the country, good work is being done to combat these challenges and empower young people to succeed. The new online Blueprint centralizes these resources and programs to encourage broad sharing and replication, and to drive policy change that helps young people get a quality education while in the system and upon discharge—lifting them up rather than putting more roadblocks in their path.”

The Legal Center will host a webinar on June 27, 2017 at 2:00 pm EST to introduce the website platform and model its use. Interested individuals can register for the webinar [here](#).

Juvenile Law Center is the oldest non-profit, public interest law firm for children in the nation. Widely published and internationally recognized as thought leaders in the field, Juvenile Law Center’s impact on the development of law and policy on behalf of children is substantial. Juvenile Law Center uses an array of legal strategies and policy advocacy to promote fairness, prevent harm, ensure access to appropriate services, and create opportunities for success for youth in the foster care and justice systems. For more information about Juvenile Law Center’s work, visit www.JLC.org.

The Education Law Center-PA (“ELC”) is a non-profit, legal advocacy organization dedicated to ensuring that all children in Pennsylvania have access to a quality public education. Through legal representation, impact litigation, trainings, and policy advocacy, ELC advances the rights of vulnerable children, including children living in poverty, children of color, children in the foster care and juvenile justice systems, children with disabilities, English language learners, LGBTQ students, and children experiencing homelessness. For more information visit <http://www.elc-pa.org/> or follow on Twitter @edlawcenterpa.

The Southern Poverty Law Center, based in Alabama with offices in Florida, Georgia, Louisiana and Mississippi, is a nonprofit civil rights organization dedicated to fighting hate and bigotry, and to seeking justice for the most vulnerable members of society. For more information, see www.splcenter.org.

The American Bar Association Center on Children and the Law improves children's lives through advances in law, justice, knowledge, practice and public policy by focusing on child abuse and neglect, child welfare and protective services system enhancement, family preservation, adolescent health and other child protective legal issues. The Center on Children and the Law works in individual communities across the county. Informed by that local engagement and positioned within a 400,000 member association, the Center on Children and the Law collaborates with other organizations to be a centralized resources for the children's law field. For more information visit www.americanbar.org/child.

#