

**MOTION BY SUPERVISORS MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS AND
AND SHEILA KUEHL**

July 11, 2017

Supporting Access to Careers in Los Angeles County’s Transportation Sector for At-Risk Youth

Nationally and locally, youth involved with the Los Angeles County (County) Departments of Children and Family Services and Probation (system-involved youth) have been provided limited educational and employment opportunities, which often times leads to struggles for self-sufficiency and hampers personal and professional opportunities. The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) serves nearly 35,000 children and their families across the County. High school graduation rates for this population are abysmal, with only 45 percent of foster youth in California completing high school, compared with 79 percent of the general student population. Nationally, only six percent of former foster youth have earned a two- or four-year degree by age 24, and only one in two foster youth is employed by age 24. Even more alarming, one in five foster youths becomes homeless after aging out of the system.

Additionally, on any given day the County’s Probation Department supervises approximately 6,000 youth in the community and holds another 1,100 youth in its juvenile halls and probation camps. Data suggests that these young people have not fared well educationally. The Probation Outcomes Study (Herz et al, 2015) found that youth in the County’s probation camps had a high number of school transitions (an average of eight), leading to unstable educational histories. This study also found that 85% of youth in the probation camps are credit deficient. A 2006 report by the Educational Coordinating Council found that Probation youth entering the juvenile halls and probation camps were performing at approximately a fifth grade level for both reading and math. National data has also found that approximately 30% of youth in juvenile justice custody report being diagnosed with a learning disability (Office of Juvenile

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Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2010), a much higher rate than in the general population. Justice-involved youth are also much less likely than youth in the general population to obtain a GED or high school diploma (Center for Juvenile Justice Reform, 2012).

The County has taken steps over the years to improve education and employment opportunities for these populations. In November 2004, the Board of Supervisors created the Los Angeles County Education Coordinating Council to raise the educational achievement of foster and probation youth. This body convenes and coordinates stakeholders across disciplines, and has helped coordinate training, data sharing, improved curriculum, transition supports, trauma-informed care, and more.

Additionally, the Los Angeles County Office of Education, which operates the court schools inside the probation camps and juvenile halls, has revamped its curriculum in the last several years to provide a project-based, multidisciplinary approach to education, and the Probation Department has developed partnerships to provide youth with post-secondary educational opportunities and facilitate career and technical education.

Moreover, a Countywide Youth Bridges Program, led by the Department of Human Resources in collaboration with the Department of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services, is being established to align and enhance youth employment programs for at-risk youth (Solis – Hahn motion, June 13, 2017).

Despite these efforts, additional strategies are needed to provide at-risk and system-involved youth with high-quality education opportunities and pathways into college and career. One such pathway is into the transportation sector, which is rapidly expanding following the passage of Measure M in November 2016. The Los Angeles Economic Development Corporation (LAEDC) estimates that 778,000 jobs and \$133.6 billion in economic output will be generated by infrastructure projects funded by the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro). LAEDC further projects that the construction, architecture and engineering fields would experience the highest percentage of growth.

Given the opportunities in this sector, exposure from an early age to transit-related careers combined with college readiness, vocational preparation and specific job training could significantly transform the self-sufficiency and well-being of young people in the County's care as they transition to adulthood. Utilizing the new Career Technical Education (CTE) Standards for grades 7 through 12 in transportation-related content, skills and pathways can expose youth

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to a field that might have been unknown to them. This type of collaboration could create a career pathway for many young vulnerable populations who are, or have been, under the care and supervision of the County.

Metro is developing a Program Model for a pilot educational and vocational training program that could target youth involved in the County's safety net and prepare them for college or careers in the transportation sector. Metro has suggested targeted youth in middle and high school for this initiative. The various County departments who serve this sub-population of youth should actively participate and collaborate in the development of this initiative.

WE THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

1. Direct the Chief Probation Officer, the Director of Children and Family Services, and the Director of the Department of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services, in coordination with the Los Angeles County Office of Education and the Education Coordinating Council, to partner with the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) on:
 - A. The development of a proposed Program Model for a pilot educational and vocational training program that:
 - i. Specifically, though not exclusively, targets youth involved in the County's juvenile justice and child welfare systems; and
 - ii. Facilitates career pathways for local youth into Los Angeles County's transportation sector, including alignment with relevant CTE standards, while maintaining college-readiness curriculum and opportunities.
 - B. A report back to the Board of Supervisors in writing within the next 90 days with an initial program design and implementation strategy, with biannual reports to the Board thereafter. The Departments shall also coordinate with Metro on routine report backs to the Metro Board of Directors.

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