

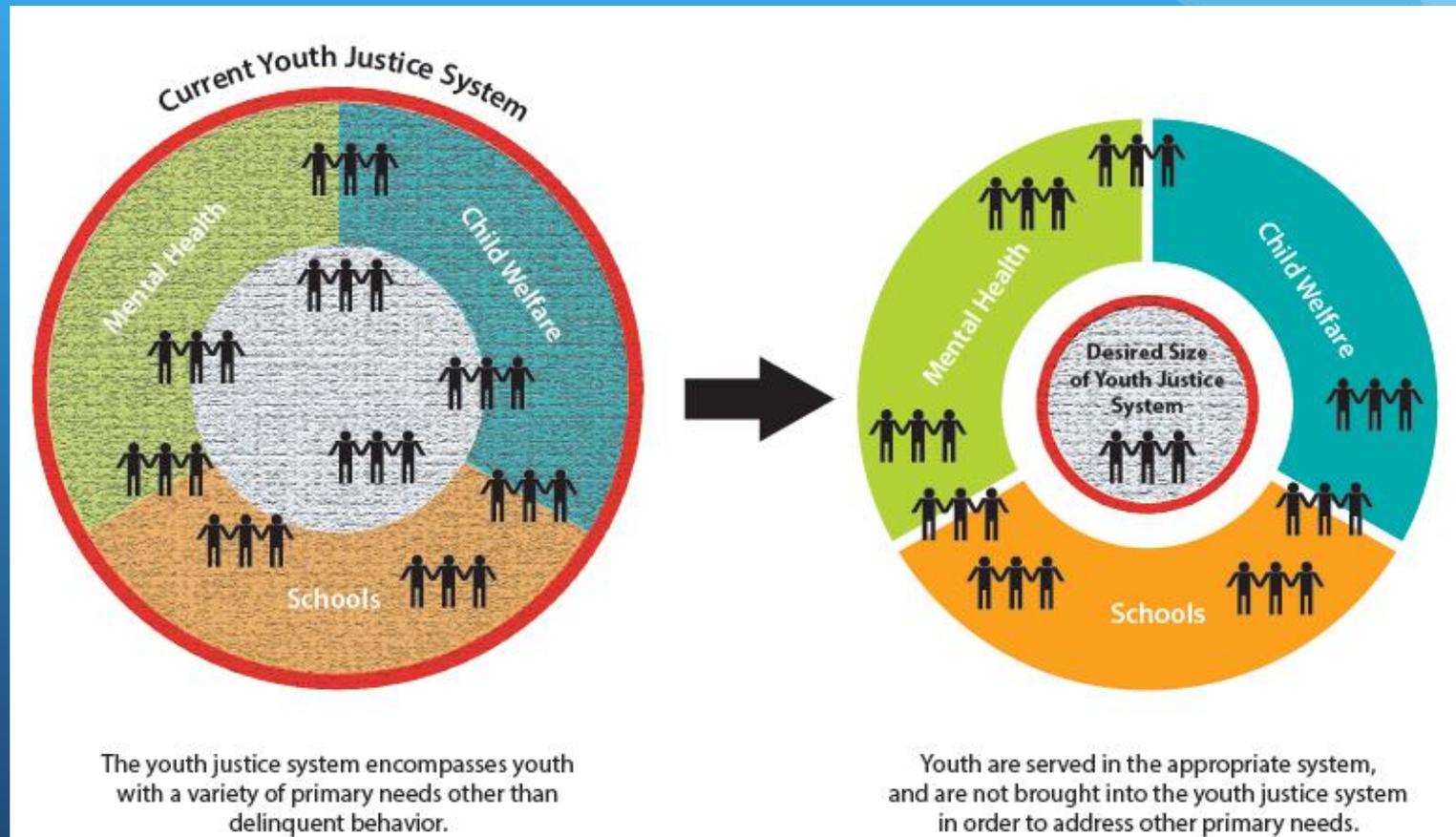
# Focused and Effective Delinquency Court Orders

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# The System Needs Change



# The Current Approach is Not Achieving Desired Outcomes

Loading up youth with terms and conditions, regardless of supervision and treatment goals



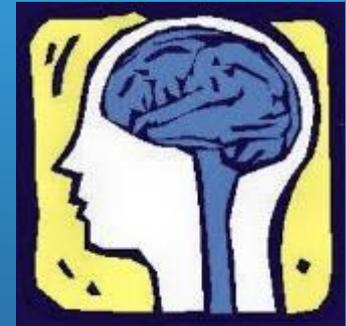
Emphasizing sanctions for negative behavior, instead of incentivizing incremental change



High rates of incarceration for violations of conditions  
Youth on supervision for a long time  
Significant court time on low level violations  
Inconsistency

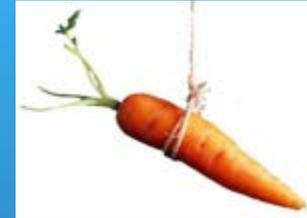
# Research Suggests Focused Orders Will be More Effective

- Adolescent Development
  - Expectations to follow multiple requirements over a significant time span and achieve full compliance are incompatible with adolescent development



# Research Suggests a Balance of Rewards & Sanctions Will Be Most Effective

- Rewards are great motivators
  - Adolescent motivational system is heightened - greater sensitivity to rewards



- Combination of rewards and sanctions is best
  - A combination of rewards and sanctions best promotes compliance with rules and progress toward goals
  - Use of incentives is affirmed in “what works” literature in probation and parole practices
  - Also seen with drug courts, PBIS in schools, etc.

Sanctions must meet certain criteria to be effective:

- Certain
- Immediate
- Proportionate
- Fair



# Judges Across the Country Are Looking at This Issue

## Pennsylvania:

- To be most effective, conditions should be active, specific, enforceable, and clearly understood. Better than imposing a long list of ‘standard’ conditions and restrictions - inevitably including some that are meaningless, unsuitable, and some that will get no enforcement priority at all - is to specify “concrete, individualized goals related to community protection, accountability, and competency development, and to concentrate on monitoring progress toward those goals.”
- When violations occur, it is best practice to treat noncompliance as a learning opportunity and communicate its purpose, use a graduated approach to sanctioning (as well as rewards), and find creative and flexible ways to respond swiftly to infractions.



# Judges Across the Country Are Looking at This Issue

## National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (2017 Resolution):

- “Juvenile delinquency court judges should ensure that court dispositions are individualized and include differential responses of sanctions and incentives”
- “Too many juvenile courts and juvenile probation departments impose conditions of probation that are not individualized, have too many requirements, and lead to unnecessary detention or incarceration for technical violations.”
- “Modernizing juvenile probation approaches... will (1) help youths understand, appreciate, and remember their probation requirements; (2) emphasize short-term, positive outcomes for probation compliant behaviors; (3) deliver sanctions for noncompliant behaviors in ways that enable youths to learn from their mistakes and modify their behaviors in the future; and (4) promote affiliation with positive peers.”

# Goal of Pilot is to Move Towards a More Research-Based Approach

## Current Approach

Lots of conditions in every case

Emphasis on sanctions for negative behavior

## Research-Based Approach

A few standard conditions

+

A few (if any) appropriate individualized conditions

Balance of sanctions & rewards; focus on incentivizing incremental progress