TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT NOTICE	NO. 26-10
	DATE March 2, 2011

TO: STATE WORKFORCE AGENCIES
STATE WORKFORCE LIAISONS

FROM: JANE OATES /s/
Assistant Secretary

SUBJECT: Release and Availability of an Employment and Training Administration (ETA) Occasional Paper titled *Evaluation of School District-Based Strategies for Reducing Youth Involvement in Gangs and Violent Crime: Final Report*

1. Purpose. To announce the release and availability of an ETA Occasional Paper titled *Evaluation of School District-Based Strategies for Reducing Youth Involvement in Gangs and Violent Crime: Final Report.*

2. Background. The goal of the School District-Based Strategies for Reducing Youth Involvement in Gangs and Violent Crime grants was to enable high school completion and long-term employment by funding education and employment intervention services for youth offenders and youth at risk of crime and gang involvement. Five urban school districts—Baltimore, Maryland; Chicago, Illinois; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Orange County, Florida; and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania were awarded grants in June 2007, for $4.8 million each. The grants were used by school districts with large numbers of high school dropouts or youth in the juvenile justice system. Beginning in June 2007, the evaluation documented the different school district models and projects, examined and assessed the implementation projects, and identified innovative features and potentially promising strategies.

3. Publication Description. This final report is a summation from the evaluation conducted by Social Policy Research. The report's findings and lessons learned are based on three rounds of site visits, analysis of the grantees' management information system data and analysis of local arrest records from the Uniform Crime Reporting System. The information provides a comprehensive description of the grantees and their grant-related activities. The following are some of the report's findings:

- The range of services included educational, employment, case management, and other supportive services. Services for youth offenders were usually coordinated with partners, especially the juvenile justice system. Services were provided on-site for in-school youth and were subcontracted to workforce development partners for out-of-school youth.

- Best practices were identified as (1) use of case managers, to work closely with youth to connect them with others services, in the middle and high schools; (2) small class sizes, online

instruction with the flexibility of setting one's own pace, and a team teaching approach to engage at-risk and adjudicated youth in alternative schools; and (3) clear screening and retention strategies, youth leadership and autonomy, and wrap-around services for programs serving out-of-school youth.

- Grantees developed some noteworthy practices including: personalizing services for youth by connecting them with mentors and other caring adults and creating specific pathways for youth offenders to resume their education after they leave juvenile detention.

- Grantees found that increased connections with community partners helped them to leverage resources and obtain valuable information about how best to serve vulnerable youth.

- Changes in attendance boundaries sometimes meant that rival gangs were suddenly attending the same schools. As a result, project staff needed to pay special attention to community conflicts that might spill over into the school.

- Grantees struggled to recruit out-of-school youth. To address this challenge, grantees subcontracted with partners that have expertise in serving out-of-school youth.

- Grantees addressed the challenge of low attendance by having case managers closely monitor participants' attendance and call students in the morning to remind them to come to school. Offering incentives such as bus passes and gift certificates was also used to address attendance problems.

- Grantees sometimes struggled to adjust to their partners' cultural and philosophical differences. For instance, grantees differed with law enforcement officials who took a punitive approach to serving youth.

- Grantees that contract out most services often face coordination challenges. At times, such grantees had difficulty coordinating students' schedules to enable them to participate in grant-funded services.

- Strategies to develop formal procedures for sharing participant data, such as use of guardian signed waivers for consent to share information between relevant partners, was crucial to the success of the projects.

4. Inquires. To view an abstract of this publication as well as to download the full report, visit the ETA Occasional Paper Series Web site at: http://wdr.doleta.gov/research/keyword.cfm