

Subcommittee on Education
Government Efficiency Task Force
401 Senate Office Building
May 29, 2012
1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Roll Call
- 3) Recommendations on University Procurement
- 4) Public Comment
- 5) Adjourn



Florida Government Efficiency Task Force

Subcommittee on Education

Recommendation Analysis

Subject Matter: Inmate Education and Re-entry

Subcommittee Members: Belinda Keiser (Chair), Senator Lizbeth Benacquisto, Ann Duncan, Michael Heekin, and Eric Silagy

RECOMMENDATION SUMMARY

On May 9, 2012, the Subcommittee on Education voted to approve the following recommendations regarding inmate education and re-entry:

- ***Individualized Inmate Re-entry Plans***
 - Create an individualized inmate re-entry plan that, based on information obtained from assessments, outlines programming to be provided during the period of incarceration.
 - Consider educational needs when determining an inmate's facility placement.
 - Assessments to determine literacy skills are critical. Focus and priority should be given to this process of assessing literacy skills to provide appropriate foundation for other educational programs and opportunities after prison.
- ***Mandatory Literacy Program:***
 - Require prisoners who meet the requirements of the Mandatory Literacy Program to successfully complete the program by attaining a total battery score of 6.0 on a Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE).
- ***Online Education Opportunities:***
 - Investigate opportunities to introduce online and e-learning educational and vocational training in prisons.
 - Set up a pilot program to develop widely-acceptable security protocols for Internet access.
- ***Mission Driven Prisons:***
 - Convert some of Florida's prisons to institutions that focus on chemical dependency, literacy and basic education, and vocational education.
 - Align the missions of vocational education prisons to meet the needs of the employment market.
- ***Program Efficiency:***
 - Adopt policies regarding prioritizing the eligibility of educational and vocational programs to inmates whose likelihood of recidivism will be most improved as a result of this instruction.
 - Expand vocational education programs.
 - Research implementation of a double-track education system.
- ***Metrics and Statistics:***
 - Conduct a cost-benefit analysis to evaluate rehabilitative programs, such as educational and vocational programs.
 - Develop a regular report on the cost-effectiveness of rehabilitative programs, including those provided by entities outside of the Department of Corrections (department).

FULL RECOMMENDATION(S) ANALYSIS

A. BACKGROUND

After inmate and public safety, the most important goal of the correctional system is reducing recidivism.¹ Reducing recidivism results in fewer crimes, fewer victims and cost savings for Floridians.² One way to reduce recidivism rates is to promote the successful rehabilitation and re-entry of ex-offenders. This can be implemented by providing substance abuse treatment, educational and vocational training, and by assisting inmates with community support services after their release.³

Prisoner Statistics

As of January 2012, Florida housed 100,345 inmates across 60 state prisons, including seven private prisons.⁴ The average cost per inmate is \$19,473 annually.⁵ Most of Florida's inmates (88.6 percent)⁶ will eventually be released, and of those approximately one in three will return to prison.⁷ The high budgetary demands and social costs incarceration places on the state make reducing recidivism rates a strategic investment. Rehabilitative programs, such as education and vocational training, are shown to reduce the likelihood of repeat offending, decrease inmate idleness and promote institutional security, and may also achieve cost savings.⁸ Each inmate who is successfully rehabilitated and does not return to prison saves the State of Florida at least \$19,473 each year.

According to the Department of Corrections (department), the probability of reoffending is reduced by 3.7 percent for each grade of adult basic education completed.⁹ Currently, 64 percent of the tested inmate population in Florida has not achieved General Education Development (GED) Prep literacy skills (scoring less than 9th grade level¹⁰).¹¹ Studies have also found that inmates who have a GED

¹ "Final Report of the Governor's Ex-Offender Task Force", November 2006, p. 9, (copy on file with Government Efficiency Task Force staff).

² Florida Department of Corrections, "Recidivism Reduction Strategic Plan", June 2009, p. 13, <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/orginfo/FinalRecidivismReductionPlan.pdf> (last visited 5/10/2012).

³ *Id.* at p. 7.

⁴ Florida Department of Corrections, "Quick Facts about the Florida Department of Corrections," Revised February 2012, <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/oth/Quickfacts.html> (last visited 5/14/12).

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ Florida Department of Corrections, "Doing Time," August 2011, <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/pub/timeserv/doing/> (last visited 5/14/12).

⁷ Florida Department of Corrections, "Quick Facts about the Florida Department of Corrections," Revised February 2012, <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/oth/Quickfacts.html> (last visited 5/14/12).

⁸ Office of Program Policy Analysis & Government Accountability (OPPAGA), "Corrections Rehabilitative Programs Effective, but Serve only a Portion of the Eligible Population," February 2007, p. 1, <http://www.oppaga.state.fl.us/Reports/pdf/0714rpt.pdf> (last visited 5/16/2012).

⁹ Florida Department of Corrections, "2009 Florida Prison Recidivism Study Releases From 2001 to 2008," May 2010, p. 14, <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/secretary/press/2010/RecidivismStudy.pdf> (last visited 5/14/2012).

¹⁰ Section 1004.93(2), F.S., identifies students who must be served by the adult education program. The 9th grade reading level is the separating line between primary and secondary school. According to the law, the adult education program must serve students studying to achieve basic literacy (students who demonstrate skills below the 5th grade level); students trying to achieve functional literacy (students who demonstrate skills at or above 5th grade level but below the 9th grade level); students earning credit for a high school diploma or preparing for the GED; students who have earned a high school diploma and are pursuing a postsecondary degree, certificate career education program, or develop competence in the English language; students enrolled in lifelong learning courses; and students who enroll in courses related to recreational or leisure pursuits. *See s. 1004.93(2), F.S.*

¹¹ Florida Department of Corrections, "2010-11 Annual Report," p.34, <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/pub/annual/1011/pdfs/AR1011-Final.pdf> (last visited 5/16/2012).

when released recidivate at a rate 7.9 percent less than the overall inmate population.¹² Inmates with vocational certificates are 17 percent less likely to return to prison than those without certificates, and those participating in vocational training are less likely to have disciplinary issues.¹³ Of the 2011 inmate population, those with vocational certificates were 35 percent less likely to have received a disciplinary report that year than inmates without a certificate.¹⁴ The Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) found that inmates who earned a GED or high school diploma were 9.3 percent more likely to be employed than other inmates, and those who earned a vocational certificate were 17.9 percent more likely to be employed than other ex-offenders.¹⁵

Florida Prisoner Education Programs

The Department of Corrections' Bureau of Re-Entry Programs and Education is responsible for the oversight and support of the department's academic and vocational education programs. In FY 2011-12, the Legislature appropriated \$2,277,324,021 to the department, of which \$21,779,443, or less than one percent (0.95%), was allocated to correctional education programs.¹⁶ The department currently allocates 299 Full Time Employees (FTE) to meet the educational needs of inmates (students) enrolled in education programs.¹⁷ Academic educational programs are operated in 53 correctional facilities with an enrollment capacity of more than 6,500 students.¹⁸ Local Education Agencies (LEA) operate programs in two additional facilities, each with an enrollment of 55 students.¹⁹ Total enrollment capacity in department-operated academic education programs is approximately 6,600 students, which is 6.5 percent of the total inmate population.²⁰ In addition to the education services provided in the 53 department-operated facilities, seven contracted facilities utilize 141.5 FTEs to provide education services for students, with an enrollment capacity of approximately 2,471 students.²¹

The department's current allocation of FTEs has enabled the number of inmates earning GED certificates to rise for the fifth year in a row. In FY 2010-11, inmates in department-operated facilities earned 2,930 GED certificates.²² Contracted facilities awarded 356 GED certificates during the same period.²³ There was a 20 percent increase in the number of vocational certificates awarded in FY 2010-11, for a total of 2,217 certificates earned in department-operated facilities.²⁴ Contracted facilities awarded 880 vocational certificates during this period.²⁵

¹² *Id.* at p. 35.

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ OPPAGA, "Corrections Rehabilitative Programs Effective, but Serve only a Portion of the Eligible Population," February 2007, p. 5, <http://www.oppaga.state.fl.us/Reports/pdf/0714rpt.pdf> (last visited 5/16/2012).

¹⁶ Florida Department of Corrections Email, March 29, 2012, (copy on file with Government Efficiency Task Force staff).

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ Florida Department of Corrections, "Education Program Capacity, FDC-Operated Correctional Facilities," August 2011, (copy on file with Government Efficiency Task Force staff).

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ *Id.*

²¹ Department of Management Services, "Operations and Management Contract," http://www.dms.myflorida.com/business_operations/bureau_of_private_prison_monitoring/facilities (last visited 5/15/12).

²² Florida Department of Corrections, "2010-11 Annual Report," p. 35, <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/pub/annual/1011/pdfs/AR1011-Final.pdf> (last visited 5/15/2012).

²³ Correctional Education Certificates Awarded by Facility, by Quarter FY 2010-11, October 2011 (copy on file with Government Efficiency Task Force staff).

²⁴ Florida Department of Corrections, "2010-11 Annual Report," p. 35, <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/pub/annual/1011/pdfs/AR1011-Final.pdf> (last visited 5/15/2012).

²⁵ Correctional Education Certificates Awarded by Facility, by Quarter FY 2010-11, October 2011 (copy on file with Government Efficiency Task Force staff).

Academic and Special Education

To assist students in achieving GED and vocational certificates, the department offers several academic programs, including:²⁶

- Adult Basic Education/General Education Development (ABE/GED);
- Special Education;
- Close Management Education (CME);
- Inmate Teaching Assistant Program (ITA);
- Local Education Agency (LEA)-Operated Academic Education Programs;
- Volunteer Literacy Programs;
- Mandatory Literacy;
- Ready to Work; and
- Federally-Funded Academic Programs and Services.

The department offers inmates 85 vocational education courses in 36 distinct vocational trades at 33 state operated institutions. The total enrollment capacity for vocational education is 1,584 students, or 1.6 percent of the total inmate population.

Mandatory Literacy Program

The Mandatory Literacy Program is a 150-hour literacy training program required by law²⁷ for all inmates who have at least two years of their sentence remaining when received at an institution and who receive a Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) total battery score below grade level 6.0.²⁸ The Mandatory Literacy Program is available to all inmates who meet the program requirements, as opposed to the other academic programs offered by the department, which are not mandatory and are provided based on availability.²⁹

Recommendation:

The Subcommittee recommends requiring prisoners who meet the requirements of the Mandatory Literacy Program to successfully complete the program by attaining a total battery score of 6.0 on a TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education). Currently, successful completion of the Mandatory Literacy Program requires completion of 150 hours of instruction or achievement of a total battery score of 6.0 or higher on the TABE. The importance of literacy and successful completion of this program is critical to reducing recidivism. The department estimates that only 21 percent³⁰ of inmates enrolled successfully complete the Mandatory Literacy Program.³¹ The Subcommittee

²⁶ OPPAGA, “Corrections Rehabilitative Programs Effective, but Serve only a Portion of the Eligible Population,” February 2007, p. 2, <http://www.oppaga.state.fl.us/Reports/pdf/0714rpt.pdf> (last visited 5/16/2012).

²⁷ Section 944.801(3) (i), F.S.

²⁸ *Id.*

²⁹ OPPAGA, “Alternative Placements for the Correctional Education Program would be more Costly”, March 2008, p. 1, <http://www.oppaga.state.fl.us/Reports/pdf/0816rpt.pdf> (last visited 5/16/2012).

³⁰ The Department of Corrections notes “this percent is only applicable to academic sites that provide special education programming.” Florida Department of Corrections Memo, May 2, 2012 (copy on file with Government Efficiency Task Force staff).

³¹ Florida Department of Corrections Memo, May 2, 2012, p. 1 (copy on file with Government Efficiency Task Force staff).

recommends that achievement of a total battery score of 6.0 on a TABE be the only method for successfully completing this program.

Special Education Services

Special education services are provided to inmates with disabilities who are eligible to receive special services required by state and federal law.³² The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires the department to provide free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment to exceptional students. Exceptional students are inmates under the age of twenty-two who have a previous special education history, have yet to obtain a high school diploma, continue to need special education and related services to benefit from participation in an educational assignment, consent to receive special education services, and have a current transition plan/individualized education plan.³³

Close Management Education Program

The Close Management Education Program (CME) provides close management inmates³⁴ both cell-front and correspondence-study instruction in mathematics, reading, language, and workforce readiness skills by certified academic teachers. Close management inmates are also afforded the opportunity to secure GED diplomas. CME programs are available in 5 correctional facilities.³⁵

Inmate Teaching Assistant Program

Recognizing the need to increase inmate access to education services, the department developed the Inmate Teaching Assistant Program (ITA). The ITA program provides grade-appropriate instruction in mathematics, reading, and language instruction to inmates with educational levels ranging from beginning literacy through GED. The program utilizes Inmate Teaching Assistants working under the direction and supervision of a certified teacher.³⁶ The Inmate Teaching Assistants are inmates with at least a high school diploma or GED who have received academic and practical training in various instructional methods from certified teachers.³⁷ The ITA program is available at 34 correctional facilities.³⁸

Other Programs

Local Education Agency (LEA)-Operated Academic Education Programs are available at three³⁹ facilities.⁴⁰ LEAs are federal grant-funded adult education programs provided by county school districts

³² OPPAGA, "Alternative Placements for the Correctional Education Program would be more Costly", March 2008, p. 1, <http://www.oppaga.state.fl.us/Reports/pdf/0816rpt.pdf> (last visited 5/16/2012).

³³ Florida Department of Corrections, "Education Services," <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/orginfo/education/index.html> (last visited 5/4/12).

³⁴ According to the department, close management is confinement of an inmate apart from the general inmate population. It is for inmates who commit acts that threaten the safety of others or the institution, or who demonstrate an inability to live in the general population without abusing the rights and privileges of others. Florida Department of Corrections, "FAQ Regarding Close Management," <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/oth/inmates/cm.html> (last visited 5/15/12).

³⁵ Florida Department of Corrections, "Education Services," <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/orginfo/education/index.html> (last visited 5/15/12).

³⁶ *Id.*

³⁷ Florida Department of Corrections, "Inmate Teaching Assistant Programs." <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/pub/annual/0405/pdfs/teaching.pdf> (last visited 5/15/12).

³⁸ Florida Department of Corrections, "Education Services," <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/orginfo/education/index.html> (last visited 5/15/12).

³⁹ Baker Work Camp, Putnam Correctional Institution, and Quincy Annex.

⁴⁰ Florida Department of Corrections Email 5/22/12, (copy on file with Government Efficiency Task Force staff).

or community colleges.⁴¹ Volunteer Literacy Programs utilize citizen volunteers and/or Inmate Teaching Assistants who have received tutoring training to assist inmates in improving their educational abilities. This program is available at nearly all major institutions, annexes and work camps.⁴² The Ready To Work program is a Florida Department of Education sponsored employee credentialing program that tests and scores job skills.⁴³ The department also received \$4,553,864 in federal grant funding in FY 2010-11 to provide academic and exceptional education services to inmates and training to correctional educators.⁴⁴

Recommendations:

The Subcommittee recommends the Department of Corrections conduct a cost-benefit analysis to evaluate its rehabilitative programs, such as educational and vocational programs. After inmate and public safety, the most important goal of the correctional system is reducing recidivism.⁴⁵ With this in mind, the department's educational and vocational programs should be measured by their effectiveness at reducing recidivism. To make a compelling case for increased support for correctional education, the department must conclusively document the contribution correctional education provides to society.⁴⁶ A cost-benefit analysis should assess outcomes of cohorts of inmates in the department's various programs and track these inmates after release. This would help identify programs that show the greatest return on investment by improving ex-inmate employment outcomes and reducing recidivism. A cost-benefit analysis will determine if increasing funding for these programs will yield overall monetary benefits and how to allocate resources most effectively.

The Subcommittee recommends the Department of Corrections develop a regular report on the cost-effectiveness of rehabilitative programs, including those provided by entities outside of the department. The American Correctional Association recommends that programs be evaluated every two years to assess their contribution to an institution's mission.⁴⁷ According to OPPAGA, the department occasionally evaluates some rehabilitative programs; however it does not routinely measure and report on the effectiveness of these programs.⁴⁸ A regular report on program and provider cost-effectiveness would provide standardized and transparent information to the department and the Legislature. The report should provide an assessment of programs' success in reducing recidivism and efficiency. This evaluation will enable policy makers and those that provide funding or services to determine which program goals are being met and which require more attention.⁴⁹

⁴¹ *Id.*

⁴² *Id.*

⁴³ *Id.*

⁴⁴ *Id.*

⁴⁵ "Final Report of the Governor's Ex-Offender Task Force", November 2006, p. 9 (copy on file with Government Efficiency Task Force staff).

⁴⁶ Klein, S. and Tolbert, M., "Correctional Education," July 2004, p. 17, https://www.cedatanetwork.org/pdf/common_measures_of_perf.pdf, (last visited 5/10/2012).

⁴⁷ American Correctional Association., <http://www.aca.org/standards/revisions/pdf/StandardsProposalsforCOC2010.pdf> (last visited 3/20/2012).

⁴⁸ OPPAGA, "Department of Corrections Should Maximize Use of Best Practices in Inmate Rehabilitation Efforts," December 2009, p. 6, <http://www.oppaga.state.fl.us/MonitorDocs/Reports/pdf/0944rpt.pdf> (last visited 5/9/2012).

⁴⁹ Re-entry Policy Council, "Report of the Re-Entry Policy Council: Charting the Safe and Successful Return of Prisoners to the Community," January 2005, p. 89, <http://reentrypolicy.org/publications/1694;file> (last visited 5/9/2012).

Issues Facing Prison Education Programs

When an inmate enters the prison system they are given the TABE, which identifies their grade level. Subsequent assessments are taken at scheduled intervals or when an inmate is transferred to a new facility.⁵⁰ Unfortunately, because of limited slots in programs, most inmates are released without addressing their educational skills deficiencies.

Recommendations:

The Subcommittee recommends focus and priority should be given to the process of assessing literacy skills to provide appropriate foundation for other educational programs and opportunities after prison. Providing educational opportunities that will enable most people to read at the eighth-grade level, the level at which a person is considered functionally literate, should be a universal goal within corrections.⁵¹ Florida statutes define eligibility for the Mandatory Literacy Program as inmates with more than two years left on their sentence.⁵² Many inmates who require or would benefit from literacy or life skills education do not qualify for the Mandatory Literacy Program because they have less than two years remaining in their sentences. Therefore, the Subcommittee recommends that the department develop a program providing literacy and life skills training for inmates who are ineligible for the Mandatory Literacy Program due to prison term length.

The Subcommittee recommends creating an individualized inmate re-entry plan that, based on information obtained from assessments, outlines programming to be provided during the period of incarceration. The goal of rehabilitation programs is to reduce recidivism, which will ultimately result in cost savings for the state. In order to accomplish this, inmates must re-enter the community with enough education or skills to avoid returning to the correctional system. An inmate's re-entry plan should begin at intake, addressing an inmate's needs, and plan for the prisoner's eventual release and reintegration into the community. Based on the risk factors and skill deficits determined by the initial assessment, the plan should identify specific activities to be performed or skills to be acquired to prepare the prisoner for successful re-entry.⁵³ Relevant skill areas may include: education, including literacy and life skills training; employment;⁵⁴ health, mental health and substance abuse challenges; managing family conflict; mentoring; and strategies to develop pro-social behavior and desistance from crime. Each inmate's re-entry plan should be updated and modified as he or she moves through the correctional process and should reflect both progress and changes in risk and need.⁵⁵ The plan should be kept electronically, which will ensure that the plan can be shared system-wide, regularly updated, and accessed if the inmate returns to the system.⁵⁶

A critical component of the individualized inmate re-entry plan is the needs assessment. The department should make sure to go beyond the medical, mental health, education, alcohol abuse, and drug assessments to provide an in depth assessment addressing anger management, work and

⁵⁰ Re-entry Policy Council, "Report of the Re-Entry Policy Council: Charting the Safe and Successful Return of Prisoners to the Community," January 2005, p. 216, <http://reentrypolicy.org/publications/1694:file> (last visited 5/9/2012).

⁵¹ *Id.*, at p. 214.

⁵² Section 944.801(3) (i), F.S.

⁵³ "Final Report of the Governor's Ex-Offender Task Force," p. 18 (copy on file with the Government Efficiency Task Force Staff).

⁵⁴ Including resume preparation, job seeking and interviewing. *Id.*

⁵⁵ The National Institute of Corrections, "TPC Reentry Handbook: Implementing the NIC Transition from Prison to the Community Model," August 2008, p.12, <http://static.nicic.gov/Library/022669.pdf> (last visited 5/10/2012).

⁵⁶ Re-entry Policy Council, "Report of the Re-Entry Policy Council: Charting the Safe and Successful Return of Prisoners to the Community," January 2005, p. 152, <http://reentrypolicy.org/publications/1694:file> (last visited 5/9/2012).

vocational training, criminological risks and needs, and prerelease/re-entry planning needs.⁵⁷ A study in 1992 found that inmates often lacked the ability to fully read and understand the types of documents encountered in everyday life, such as job applications, credit applications, and health forms.⁵⁸ Because of these deficiencies, the department should also investigate the implementation of an assessment of functional and life skills to identify possible deficiencies and barriers to a successful re-entry into the community.⁵⁹ These assessments should go beyond identification of education level to assess personal abilities that will enable the inmate to succeed in the workplace.⁶⁰ Once the assessments are completed, a program that prioritizes the inmate's highest needs first should be developed.⁶¹

Re-entry Statistics

According to the department, of the 35,117 inmates released in FY 2010-11:

- Approximately 66 percent left with TABE scores below the 9th grade level;
- 17,383, or 69.5 percent, of the 25,002 inmates eligible for academic programs did not receive services prior to release; and
- 11,442, or 82.7 percent, of the 13,836 inmates eligible for vocational training did not receive services prior to release.⁶²

Recommendations:

The Subcommittee recommends the Department of Corrections expand its vocational education programs. These programs have been proven to reduce recidivism, increase ex-offender employment success, and are cost effective. Additionally, these programs give the department the ability to partner with local businesses for additional job training.

The Subcommittee recommends the Department of Corrections adopt policies regarding prioritizing the eligibility of educational and vocational programs to inmates whose likelihood of recidivism will be most improved as a result of this instruction. Currently, the department initially assesses an inmate's needs using the Corrections Integrated Needs Assessment System (CINAS).⁶³ This assessment determines the inmate's risk to recidivate measured on a scale of 1 (least likely) to 5 (most likely).⁶⁴ The department uses this as a factor, along with release date, Mandatory Literacy Program eligibility, special education designation, and whether the inmate has a verified high school diploma or GED, to determine the inmate's academic program score.⁶⁵ The program score is used in a

⁵⁷ Thigpen, et. al., "Prisoner Intake Systems: Assessing Needs and Classifying Prisoners," February 2004, p. ix <http://static.nicic.gov/Library/019033.pdf> (last visited 5/10/2012).

⁵⁸ Re-entry Policy Council, "Report of the Re-Entry Policy Council: Charting the Safe and Successful Return of Prisoners to the Community," January 2005, p. 126, <http://reentrypolicy.org/publications/1694;file> (last visited 5/9/2012).

⁵⁹ *Id.* at p. 127.

⁶⁰ *Id.*

⁶¹ Council of State Governments Justice Center, "Screening and Assessment in Re-entry Court Program Design: Incorporating Risk, Need, Responsivity," February 16, 2011, p. 26, http://www.nationalreentryresourcecenter.org/documents/0000/0963/SCA_Reentry_Courts_Webinar_on_Screening_and_assessment_in_reentry_court_program_design_02_16_2011.pdf (last visited 5/10/2012).

⁶² As reported by the Florida Department of Corrections, Bureau of Research and Data Analysis, March 23, 2012 (copy on file with Government Efficiency Task Force staff).

⁶³ Florida Department of Corrections Memo, May 2, 2012, p. 6, (copy on file with the Government Efficiency Task Force Staff).

⁶⁴ *Id.*

⁶⁵ *Id.*

ranking algorithm⁶⁶ that includes the inmate's number of days before release and the inmate's Targeted Academic Services Score (TASS)⁶⁷ to rank inmates in order of highest need.⁶⁸

This program focuses its limited space to those inmates with a higher risk of returning to prison and who do not already possess a high school diploma or GED, within the last three years of incarceration.⁶⁹ The Subcommittee recommends that the system take into account which inmates will be able to complete a program, not just those nearing the end of their sentence. It is a better use of resources to ensure space is allocated to those inmates able to complete the program and are most likely to find gainful employment after release (i.e. younger inmates with non-violent crimes).

By making a concerted effort to effectively target resources on inmates with the highest-potential of successful completion, the department should be able to reduce recidivism. The assessment tool will be critical in identifying those who will be the most successful at education and vocation programs. The assessment should have vocational and educational components. The department should also develop an assessment tool, similar to those used for the unemployed, that is appropriate for the prison population and can be utilized to determine the type of vocational or educational training most compatible with an individual's interests and capacities.⁷⁰ The assessment should also take into account the inmate's readiness for work, along with a review of work history, skills, and educational attainment.⁷¹

The Subcommittee recommends considering inmates' educational needs when determining facility placement. A key to reducing recidivism is using the time of incarceration to create positive change by diagnostically identifying the inmate's individual needs, creating an inmate re-entry plan, and providing the services and support for the plan. To ensure the re-entry plan is successful, effort should be made to place and keep inmates in facilities that have programs commensurate with their educational needs. At times, department operations can cause inmates to be transferred before an education or vocation program can be completed.⁷² The Subcommittee recommends that the department should take steps to avoid transferring inmates who are nearing a program's completion to avoid program disruptions.

Currently, the department places an inmate based on medical and security needs. The inmate will be transferred to a facility that can meet both types of needs at the level identified for that inmate.⁷³ Inmates are not normally placed in a permanent facility based on education or program needs, but rather are assessed for core programs (academic, vocational or substance abuse) once placed at their

⁶⁶ The program score is weighed so inmates with a program score of 4 are put lower on the ranking scale (highest need) followed by inmates that score 3, then 2 and 1. Inmates with a program score of 5 and inmates designated as mandatory literacy or special education are not ranked. Florida Department of Corrections Memo, May 2, 2012, p. 6 - 7 (copy on file with the Government Efficiency Task Force Staff).

⁶⁷ TASS is a numerical score comprised of specific academic and incarceration data including: special education designation, release date, number of Florida prison commitments, TABE scores, vocation enrollment, possession of verified high school diploma or GED, and Mandatory Literacy Program eligibility. Florida Department of Corrections Memo, May 2, 2012, p. 6 (copy on file with Government Efficiency Task Force staff).

⁶⁸ Florida Department of Corrections Memo, May 2, 2012, p. 6 (copy on file with Government Efficiency Task Force staff).

⁶⁹ *Id.* at p. 7.

⁷⁰ Re-entry Policy Council, "Report of the Re-Entry Policy Council: Charting the Safe and Successful Return of Prisoners to the Community," January 2005, p. 127, <http://reentrypolicy.org/publications/1694:file> (last visited 5/9/2012).

⁷¹ *Id.* at p. 128.

⁷² OPPAGA, "Corrections Rehabilitative Programs Effective, but Serve only a Portion of the Eligible Population," February 2007, p. 6, <http://www.oppaga.state.fl.us/Reports/pdf/0714rpt.pdf> (last visited 3/22/2012).

⁷³ Florida Department of Corrections Memo, May 2, 2012, p. 1 (copy on file with Government Efficiency Task Force staff).

first permanent facility.⁷⁴ After those needs are established and the inmate reaches the programming time frame (three years prior to release), the inmate will be moved as necessary based on the his or her specific program need and priority ranking for placement.⁷⁵ Generally, placements are made at institutions that have available beds.⁷⁶

Educational Program Length Challenges

While studies show that inmates who complete these educational and vocational programs are less likely to recidivate, OPPAGA found that 90 percent of inmates enrolled in ABE do not successfully complete the program, often for reasons within the department's control.⁷⁷ OPPAGA⁷⁸ found that while participants in GED and vocational programs had high completion rates, inmates in ABE programs either failed to complete program requirements or left the program for administrative reasons (such as being transferred) before completing the program. In a two-year⁷⁹ study, OPPAGA found that 79 percent of participating inmates completed GED courses; 73 percent completed vocational courses; and 90 percent of inmates taking the GED exam achieved a passing grade. However, only 10 percent of ABE students completed their courses over the same two-year period. OPPAGA attributed the lower success rate to program length, inmate demographic and behavioral characteristics, and department operations.

ABE programs often take inmates longer to complete than other programs, such as GED or vocational programs. To complete the ABE program, an inmate must attain a 9th grade level on the TABE, which may require more than two years of instruction. Additionally, ABE programs serve inmates with low educational levels (those with TABE scores below 9th grade), inmates requiring English as a Second Language instruction, and inmates with special education needs. Inmates participating in GED or vocational training can complete these programs in a two-year period. A GED program is completed when the inmate earns a GED Certificate, and most vocational training is completed in 9 to 40 weeks.

Because ABE classes are longer, there is a greater chance for the inmate to drop out, be discharged from the program for poor behavior, or be transferred to another institution. OPPAGA found that inmates who did not complete the ABE program had more disciplinary reports; spent more time in prison; had a higher number of drug offenses; and were more likely to have high custody classifications than inmates who completed the program.⁸⁰ Department operations cause some inmates to be removed before the program could be completed. Over 64 percent of the inmates in ABE programs were released from prison before completing the program. This can occur because the department moves inmates to meet a security or institutional need or transfers inmates to another facility for other reasons.

⁷⁴ Florida Department of Corrections Email, May 9, 2012, (copy on file with Government Efficiency Task Force staff).

⁷⁵ *Id.*

⁷⁶ Florida Department of Corrections, "Recidivism Reduction Strategic Plan," June 2009, p. 27, <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/orginfo/FinalRecidivismReductionPlan.pdf> (last visited 5/10/2012).

⁷⁷ OPPAGA, "Corrections Rehabilitative Programs Effective, but Serve only a Portion of the Eligible Population," February 2007, p. 4, <http://www.oppaga.state.fl.us/Reports/pdf/0714rpt.pdf> (last visited 5/16/2012).

⁷⁸ *Id.* at p. 5.

⁷⁹ 2004-06

⁸⁰ These factors are also associated with higher recidivism.

Recommendations:

The Subcommittee recommends the Department of Corrections research implementation of a double-track education system. One track should consist of basic academic, life-skill and vocational education programs designed specifically for inmates incarcerated for less than one year. The program for this track should be designed to be completed in less than nine months. The second track should provide basic academic and vocational programs for inmates incarcerated for more than one year. A two-track system would enable the department to use the entry assessments to identify the most appropriate track for the educational or vocational programs in the inmate's re-entry plan.

In North Carolina, prison's educational offerings are determined by the minimum length of stay in the facility.⁸¹ All facilities offer some type of programming, but a matrix is used to ensure that programs are only provided at facilities where inmates will be able to finish them.⁸² In an attempt to accommodate those inmates whose sentences are not long enough to complete the entire GED curriculum during incarceration, the state of Washington offers a fast-tracked GED course offered at some facilities.⁸³ This program is available to offenders who already have the knowledge to pass a GED test, but may need additional practice preparing to take the test.⁸⁴

The Subcommittee recommends the Department of Corrections investigate opportunities to introduce online and e-learning educational and vocational training in prisons. Internet access in Florida's prisons would make enormous amounts of educational resources available to corrections staff and inmates.⁸⁵ To address funding and capacity constraints that limit access to educational and vocational training, policies should be revised to support development and expansion of Internet-based and electronic platforms for program delivery. Internet-based instruction allows a single instructor to deliver educational content to an unlimited number of incarcerated students across multiple prisons or the prison system as a whole.⁸⁶ In addition, internet-based coursework allows more students to be educated in a reduced space. Computer labs can accommodate terminals that allow students to progress through individualized educational programs at their own pace while sharing a physical space.⁸⁷ This is difficult to accommodate in a traditional classroom setting.⁸⁸ Finally, the economies of scale of internet-based instructional methods would reduce the per-student cost of providing educational programs, which would allow the department to make more efficient use of its funding for educational services.⁸⁹

Because many inmates have had limited exposure to technology, using computers, the Internet, and other communication technologies can be a learning experience in itself.⁹⁰ Interaction with computers

⁸¹ Brazzell, D. et. al., "From the Classroom to the Community: Exploring the Role of Education during Incarceration and Reentry," 2009, p. 29, http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411963_classroom_community.pdf (last visited 5/10/2012).

⁸² *Id.*

⁸³ Washington Department of Corrections, "Going Home: Accomplishments in Public Safety," 2009, p. 20, <http://www.doc.wa.gov/aboutdoc/docs/docannualreportgoinghome.pdf> (last visited 5/10/2012).

⁸⁴ *Id.*

⁸⁵ Spangenberg, Gail, "Current Issues in Correctional Education: A Compilation and Discussion," February 2004, p. 22, http://www.caalusa.org/correct_ed_paper.pdf, (last visited 5/10/2012).

⁸⁶ Gorgol, Laura, and Sponsler, Brian. "Unlocking Potential: Results of a National Survey of Postsecondary Education in State Prisons," Institute for Higher Education Policy, May 2011, p. 17, http://www.ihep.org/assets/files/publications/s-z/Unlocking_Potential-PSCE_FINAL_REPORT_May_2011.pdf (last visited 5/9/2012).

⁸⁷ *Id.*

⁸⁸ *Id.*

⁸⁹ *Id.*

⁹⁰ Brazzell, D. et. al., "From the Classroom to the Community: Exploring the Role of Education during Incarceration and Reentry," 2009, p. 33, http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/411963_classroom_community.pdf (last visited 5/10/2012).

or the Internet can serve as a form of vocational training,⁹¹ as both are an increasingly essential part of today's world. Many security concerns can be addressed with careful planning and regulations governing access and use.⁹² Firewalls and content filters can restrict Internet access, and clear rules and sanctions can deter misuse of technology.⁹³

The Subcommittee recommends the Department of Corrections set up a pilot program to develop widely-acceptable security protocols for Internet access. While security concerns exist with providing inmates with internet access, new computer and communication technologies have recently been incorporated into correctional education across the nation.⁹⁴ The department should investigate multimedia content and interactive learning opportunities delivered via the internet, closed or restricted computer networks, satellite, closed-circuit TV, CDs or DVDs, videotapes, or videoconferencing⁹⁵ for the pilot program.

The Correctional Education Association received grant money to conduct a feasibility study to identify potential technologies that may be appropriate to consider in providing future distance learning services through the nationwide Transforming Lives Network.^{96, 97} The feasibility study indicated that security measures exist to prevent security breaches.⁹⁸ By establishing a successful pilot program, some of these security concerns can be alleviated by developing acceptable security protocols for Internet access. These protocols would serve as a model for other Florida prisons.

The Subcommittee recommends converting some of Florida's prisons to institutions that focus on chemical dependency, literacy and basic education, and vocational education. Currently, Florida operates faith and character-based and re-entry institutions. Expanding on that concept, this recommendation will work in conjunction with the recommendation below on individualized inmate re-entry plans. An inmate's initial assessments should determine the type of facility best suited to the inmate's needs.

The Subcommittee recommends aligning the missions of vocational education prisons to meet the needs of the employment market. Employment is highly correlated with successful reintegration into society.⁹⁹ It is important that the vocational education programs are demand-driven and focus on jobs available in regional areas. An advisory group should be created for each prison, consisting of representatives of local employers, economic development agencies, workforce investment boards, One-Stops,¹⁰⁰ educational institutions, and targeted community-community based organizations. The group should use its familiarity with the local job market to provide input on correctional programs to

⁹¹ *Id.*

⁹² *Id.* at p. 34.

⁹³ *Id.*

⁹⁴ *Id.* at p. 32.

⁹⁵ *Id.*

⁹⁶ The Transforming Lives Network (TLN) is a distance learning project administered by the Correctional Education Association and funded through member subscriptions. TLN provides corrections-specific offender education and staff development via satellite to the nation's correctional facilities and at-risk populations. See <http://tln.ceanational.org/TLN/index.htm> (last visited 5/9/2012).

⁹⁷ Borden, Cindy and Richardson, Penny, "The Effective Use of Technology in Correctional Education," John Jay College of Criminal Justice Reentry Roundtable on Education, March 31-April 1, 2008, p. 6, <http://www.urban.org/projects/reentry-roundtable/upload/Effective.pdf> (last visited 5/9/2012).

⁹⁸ *Id.* at p. 15.

⁹⁹ Re-entry Policy Council, "Report of the Re-Entry Policy Council: Charting the Safe and Successful Return of Prisoners to the Community," January 2005, p. 127, <http://reentrypolicy.org/publications/1694:file> (last visited 5/9/2012).

¹⁰⁰ Florida provides workforce program services through local One-Stop Career Centers. Each local area operates at least one physical One-Stop Center which may be supplemented by a network of affiliated sites. See <http://www.floridajobs.org/frequently-asked-questions-directory/frequently-asked-questions/category/09fca767-4604-488b-81a4-4a750922d306/x> (last visited 5/21/12).

ensure that participants obtain skills necessary to find employment when they re-enter the community. By focusing on the needs of employers in the community, prisoners can attain skills for industries in high demand outside the prison. The advisory group should meet every 12 to 18 months to ensure that the vocational course offerings are relevant to the current job market and are up-to-date with advances in technology and methodology.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ Re-entry Policy Council, "Report of the Re-Entry Policy Council: Charting the Safe and Successful Return of Prisoners to the Community," January 2005, p. 216, <http://reentrypolicy.org/publications/1694;file> (last visited 5/9/2012).



Florida Government Efficiency Task Force

Subcommittee on Education

Draft Recommendations

Subject Matter: University Procurement

Subcommittee Members: Belinda Keiser (Chair), Senator Lizbeth Benacquisto, Ann Duncan, Michael Heekin, and Eric Silagy

DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

- **The Subcommittee recommends the State University System adopt an electronic procurement platform(s) that offers functionality similar to the systems at Florida State University and the University of Florida.** The Florida State University (FSU) and the University of Florida (UF) utilize an electronic platform for procurement. Implementation of the system resulted in improved control and tracking of procurement spend, decreased ordering time for universities and vendors, and a reduction in paperwork. Utilization of technology, along with changes in procurement law, has allowed FSU to reduce its procurement work force by eleven positions. Implementation of similar procurement platforms would allow the other nine universities of the state university system (SUS) to realize similar benefits and savings. Consideration should be given to leveraging of such a system across multiple institutions.
- **The Subcommittee recommends that the Board of Governors, state universities, and the Department of Management services continue coordinating their efforts in the area of procurement in order to better manage tracking of spend, contracting, strategic sourcing, and best procurement practices.** Representatives from the Department of Management Services (DMS) and several SUS institutions (UF, University of North Florida (UNF), Florida Atlantic University (FAU) and Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU)) meet monthly to coordinate and improve procurement. This cooperative effort should continue and be expanded by the addition of other SUS institutions. The Board of Governors (BOG) should also consider having one person or current SUS institution procurement officer be the point person for DMS to contact regarding procurement issues and strategic procurement.
- **The Subcommittee recommends that the Department of Management Services and the State University System identify and jointly strategically source common goods and services in order to achieve maximum savings to both parties.** DMS should work with SUS institutions to identify those common goods and services in order to strategically procure them to the benefit of both the state and the SUS.
- **The Subcommittee recommends that state universities utilize state term contracts to achieve savings.** Utilization of state term contracts allows the state and other eligible users (OEU) to achieve savings, track spending, and leverage volume to strategically procure commonly-utilized goods and services. Increasing OEU utilization of state term contracts will provide additional leverage for the Department of Management Services (DMS) in negotiating better pricing. DMS and the SUS institutions

should also evaluate university contracts to determine if university pricing is more competitive than current state contracts.

- **The Board of Governors should leverage the creation of Florida Polytechnic to pursue opportunities to implement shared services models across multiple institutions.** Legislation was passed this year that creates Florida Polytechnic as the 12th university in the SUS. With this addition to the SUS, there is an opportunity to create shared service models and find efficiencies that can be applied system wide. Initial focus should be on shared services for smaller institutions that have comparable needs.

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