

Subcommittee on Education
Government Efficiency Task Force
Writing Studio, Keiser University, Orlando
April 9, 2012
1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

- 1) Call to Order
- 2) Roll Call
- 3) Presentation on Prisoner Education
William Carr, Assistant Secretary for Re-Entry Programs, Department of
Corrections
- 4) Member discussion of Prisoner Education
- 5) Member discussion of Spring Agenda
- 6) Public Comment
- 7) Adjourn



Florida Government Efficiency Task Force

Subcommittee on Education

Background Brief

Subject Matter: Prison Education

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

ISSUE SUMMARY

- Florida currently houses 100,345 inmates, across 60 state prisons, at the average cost of \$19,473 per inmate annually.
- In FY 2011-12, the Legislature appropriated \$2,277,324,021 to the Department of Corrections (department), of which \$21,779,443, or less than one percent (0.95%), was allocated to correctional education programs.
- An inmate's probability of reoffending is reduced by 3.7 percent for each higher grade of adult basic education achieved.
- Inmates with a General Education Degree (GED) are 7.9 percent less likely to recidivate than inmates overall and 9.3 percent more likely to be employed.
- Inmates with vocational certificates are 17 percent less likely to return to prison, more likely to stay out of trouble while in prison, and 17.9 percent more likely to be employed after release.
- Currently, the enrollment capacity for academic education is 6.5 percent of the inmate population and enrollment capacity for vocational rehabilitation is 1.6 percent the inmate population.
- Inmates are more likely to complete GED or vocational programs than they are to complete adult basic education programs.

FULL ISSUE(S) ANALYSIS

I. BACKGROUND

A. PRISON EDUCATION:

Prisoner Statistics

As of January 2012, Florida housed 100,345 inmates across 60 state prisons, including seven private prisons.¹ The average cost per inmate is \$19,473 annually.² Most of Florida's inmates (88.6 percent)³ will eventually be released, and of those approximately one in three will return to prison.⁴ The high budgetary demands and social costs incarceration places on the state make reducing recidivism rates a strategic investment. Rehabilitative programs, like education and vocational training, are shown to reduce the likelihood of repeat offending, decrease inmate idleness and promote institutional security, and may produce cost savings to the state.⁵

According to the Department of Corrections (department), the probability of reoffending is reduced by 3.7 percent for each higher grade of adult basic education completed.⁶ 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 level⁷).⁸ Additionally, studies show that inmates who have a GED when released recidivate at a rate 7.9 percent less than the overall inmate population. Inmates with vocational certificates are 17 percent less likely to return to prison than those without certificates,⁹ and those participating in vocational training are more likely to stay out of trouble. Of the inmates in prison in 2011, those with vocational certificates were 35 percent less likely to have received a

¹ Florida Department of Corrections. "Quick Facts about the Florida Department of Corrections". Revised Feb. 2012. see <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/oth/Quickfacts.html> (last visited 3/14/12).

² *Id.*

³ Florida Department of Corrections. "Doing Time" August 2011. see <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/pub/timeserv/doing/> (last visited 3/14/12).

⁴ Florida Department of Corrections. "Quick Facts about the Florida Department of Corrections". Revised Feb. 2012. see <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/oth/Quickfacts.html> (last visited 3/14/12).

⁵ Office of Program Policy Analysis & Government Accountability (OPPAGA). "Corrections Rehabilitative Programs Effective, but Serve only a Portion of the Eligible Population". February 2007. see <http://www.oppaga.state.fl.us/Reports/pdf/0714rpt.pdf> (last visited 3/22/12).

⁶ Florida Department of Corrections. "2009 Florida Prison Recidivism Study Releases From 2001 to 2008". May 2010. see <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/secretary/press/2010/RecidivismStudy.pdf> (last visited 4/4/12).

⁷ Florida statute 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.

⁸ Florida Department of Corrections. "2010-11 Annual Report". see <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/pub/annual/1011/pdfs/AR1011-Final.pdf> (last visited 3/22/12).

⁹ *Id.*

disciplinary report that year than inmates without a certificate.¹⁰ 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-convicts.¹¹

Florida Prisoner Education Programs

Florida's Department of Correction's 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. The department currently allocates 299 FTEs to meet the educational needs of inmates (students) enrolled in education programs. Academic educational programs are operated in 53 correctional facilities with an enrollment capacity of more than 6,500 students. Local Education Agencies (LEA) operate programs in 2 additional facilities with 55 students enrolled. Thus the total enrollment capacity in department-operated academic education programs is approximately 6,600 students, which is 6.5 percent of the total inmate population.¹² In addition to the education services provided in the 53 department-operated facilities, seven (7) contracted facilities utilize 141.5 FTEs to provide education services for students, with an enrollment capacity of approximately 2,471 students.¹³

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 to 2,930 GED certificates earned in FY 2010-11.¹⁴ Contracted facilities awarded 356 GED certificates during the same period.¹⁵ Additionally, there was a 20 percent increase in the number of vocational certificates earned in FY 2010-11 to 2,217 certificates earned in department-operated facilities.¹⁶ Contracted facilities awarded 880 vocational certificates during this period.¹⁷

¹⁰ Florida Department of Corrections. "2010-11 Annual Report". see <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/pub/annual/1011/pdfs/AR1011-Final.pdf> (last visited 3/22/12).

¹¹ OPPAGA. "Corrections Rehabilitative Programs Effective, but Serve only a Portion of the Eligible Population". February 2007. see <http://www.oppaga.state.fl.us/Reports/pdf/0714rpt.pdf> (last visited 3/22/12).

¹² Florida Department of Corrections. "Education Program Capacity. FDC-Operated Correctional Facilities." August 2011. (Copy on file with Government Efficiency Task Force Staff).

¹³ Department of Management Services. "Operations and Management Contract". see http://www.dms.myflorida.com/business_operations/bureau_of_private_prison_monitoring/facilities (last visited 3/27/12).

¹⁴ Florida Department of Corrections. "2010-11 Annual Report". see <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/pub/annual/1011/pdfs/AR1011-Final.pdf> (last visited 3/22/12).

¹⁵ Correctional Education Certificates Awarded by Facility, by Quarter FY 2010-11. October 2011. (Copy on file with Government Efficiency Task Force Staff).

¹⁶ Florida Department of Corrections. "2010-11 Annual Report". see <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/pub/annual/1011/pdfs/AR1011-Final.pdf> (last visited 3/22/12).

¹⁷ Correctional Education Certificates Awarded by Facility, by Quarter FY 2010-11. October 2011. (Copy on file with Government Efficiency Task Force Staff).

To assist students in achieving GED and vocational certificates, the department offers several academic programs, including¹⁸ :

- 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 (TABLE 1). 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 law¹⁹ for all inmates having at least two years of their sentence left with a Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE) total battery score below grade level 6.0.²⁰ Although the Mandatory Literacy Program is available to all inmates who meet the program requirements, the other academic programs offered by the department are not mandatory and are provided based on availability.²¹

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.²² 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,

¹⁸ OPPAGA. "Corrections Rehabilitative Programs Effective, but Serve only a Portion of the Eligible Population". February 2007. see <http://www.oppaga.state.fl.us/Reports/pdf/0714rpt.pdf> (last visited 3/22/12).

¹⁹ s. 944.801(3)(i), F.S.

²⁰ *Id.*

²¹ OPPAGA. "Alternative Placements for the Correctional Education Program would be more Costly". March 2008. see <http://www.oppaga.state.fl.us/Reports/pdf/0816rpt.pdf> (last visited 3/22/12).

²² *Id.*

consent to receive special education services, and have a current transition plan/individualized education plan.²³

Close Management Education Program

The Close Management Education Program (CME) provides close management inmates²⁴ 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.²⁵

Inmate Teaching Assistant Program

Recognizing the need to increase inmate access to education services, the department developed the Inmate Teaching Assistant Program (ITA). ITA 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.²⁶ 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.²⁷ ITA is available at 34 correctional facilities.²⁸

Other Programs

Local Education Agency (LEA)-Operated Academic Education Programs are available at 2 major institutions, annexes, work camps and forestry camps. LEAs are federal grant-funded adult education programs provided by county school districts or community colleges.²⁹ 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.³⁰ The Ready To Work program is a Florida Department of Education sponsored employee credentialing program that tests and scores job skills.³¹ The

²³ Florida Department of Corrections. "Education Services". see <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/orginfo/education/index.html> (last visited 4/4/12).

²⁴ 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, the institution, or 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". see <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/oth/inmates/cm.html> (last visited 3/19/12).

²⁵ Florida Department of Corrections. "Education Services". see <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/orginfo/education/index.html> (last visited 3/15/12).

²⁶ *Id.*

²⁷ Florida Department of Corrections. "Inmate Teaching Assistant Programs". see <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/pub/annual/0405/pdfs/teaching.pdf> (last visited 4/4/12).

²⁸ Florida Department of Corrections. "Education Services". see <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/orginfo/education/index.html> (last visited 4/4/12).

²⁹ *Id.*

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ *Id.*

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.³²

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.³³ Unfortunately, because of limited slots in programs, most inmates are released without addressing their educational skills deficiencies. 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.³⁴

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.³⁵

OPPAGA³⁶ 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-year³⁷ 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

³² Florida Department of Corrections. "Education Services". see <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/orginfo/education/index.html> (last visited 4/4/12).

³³ *Id.*

³⁴ 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).

³⁵ "Corrections Rehabilitative Programs Effective, but Serve only a Portion of the Eligible Population". February 2007. see <http://www.oppaga.state.fl.us/Reports/pdf/0714rpt.pdf> (last visited 3/22/12).

³⁶ *Id.*

³⁷ 2004-06

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.³⁸ 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.

Governor Rick Scott's Transition Team Recommendations

Governor Rick Scott's Law and Order Transition Team³⁹ recommended converting some prisons into mission focused prisons. For example, some institutions should focus on literacy or vocational education. The transition team recommended individualized inmate reentry plans. For this program, the department's testing of an inmate would identify their needs at reception. This enables the department to design an Inmate Re-Entry Plan for the inmate, which would be reviewed and modified when needed and assessed annually. The inmate would be assigned a facility that best meets their needs, such as education, job training or substance abuse treatment.

OPPAGA Recommendations

OPPAGA has made recommendations on the department's rehabilitation efforts. First, OPPAGA⁴⁰ recommended the department develop a monthly report identifying and categorizing reasons why inmate participation in education is interrupted, categorizing the disruption reasons including transfers for security, disciplinary action, health care, population management, work assignment change, program closures, et cetera. The report would make management staff more aware of inmate transfers that interrupt education program completion. Additionally, OPPAGA⁴¹ recommended the department conduct longitudinal cost-benefit analysis of its education programs. The analysis should assess the

³⁸ These factors are also associated with higher recidivism.

³⁹ Governor-Elect Rick Scott Law and Order Transition Team. "Department and Policy Review: Department of Corrections". Report on file with Task Force Staff.

⁴⁰ OPPAGA. "Corrections Rehabilitative Programs Effective, but Serve only a Portion of the Eligible Population". February 2007. see <http://www.oppaga.state.fl.us/Reports/pdf/0714rpt.pdf> (last visited 3/22/12).

⁴¹ *Id.*

outcomes of cohorts of inmates who participate in its various programs and track these inmates for various lengths of time after release. This would help identify those programs that show the greatest return on investment in terms of improving ex-inmate employment outcomes and reducing recidivism.

OPPAGA⁴² has recommended the department conduct reviews on the effectiveness of their rehabilitative programs in line with the standards of the American Correctional Association. The American Correctional Association recommends that programs be analyzed and evaluated every two years to determine their contribution to an institution's mission.⁴³ Currently, the department's reviews are conducted ad hoc, which does not regularly provide the Legislature with the information needed to target their resources to the most cost-effective or productive rehabilitative programs. Finally, OPPAGA recommended the department develop a routine report on the cost-effectiveness of rehabilitative programs, similar to the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice's (DJJ) annual program accountability measures. DJJ's measures provide an assessment of the program's effectiveness in reducing recidivism and providing cost-effective services. The measures give DJJ and the Legislature standardized and transparent information for comparing the effectiveness of programs and providers.

⁴² OPPAGA. "Department of Corrections Should Maximize Use of Best Practices in Inmate Rehabilitation Efforts". December 2009. see <http://www.oppaga.state.fl.us/MonitorDocs/Reports/pdf/0944rpt.pdf> (last visited 3/22/12).

⁴³ American Correctional Association. see <http://www.aca.org/standards/revisions/pdf/StandardsProposalsforCOC2010.pdf> (last visited 3/20/12).

TABLE 1

Career and Technical Education Programs as of April 2012⁴⁴	
Facility / # of Programs	Career & Technical Education Programs
Apalachee CI - East (1)	(1) Cabinetmaking.
Avon Park CI (5)	(1) Automotive Service Technology, (2) Cabinetmaking, (3) PC Support Services, (4) Printing and Graphic Communications, (5) Turf Equipment Technology.
Baker CI (4)	(1) Cabinetmaking, (2) Electricity, (3) Masonry, Brick and Block, (4) Plumbing Technology.
Calhoun CI (1)	(1) Printing and Graphic Communications/WEB Design Services.
Columbia CI (1)	(1) PC Support Services.
Columbia Annex (1)	(1) Masonry, Brick and Block.
Cross City CI (3)	(1) Auto Collision Repair & Refinishing, (2) Cabinetmaking, (3) PC Support Services/Business Supervision/Computer Programming and Technology.
DeSoto Annex (3)	(1) Applied Welding Technology, (2) Carpentry, (3) Masonry, Brick and Block.
Florida State Prison – West (1)	(1) Printing & Graphic Arts
Franklin CI (1)	(1) Plumbing Technology.
Gulf CI (1)	(1) AC, Refrigeration, & Heating Technology.
Hamilton CI (3)	(1) Cabinetmaking, (2) Electricity, (3) Masonry, Brick and Block.
Hamilton CI Annex (1)	(1) PC Support Services.
Hardee CI (1)	(1) Carpentry.
Hernando CI * (1)	(1) Digital Design.
Holmes CI (3)	(1) Applied Welding Technology, (2) Auto Collision Repair and Refinishing, (3) PC Support Services.
Homestead CI * (2)	(1) Automotive Technology Career Services, (2) PC Support Services.

⁴⁴ Florida Department of Corrections. "Education Services". see <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/orginfo/education/index.html> (last visited 4/4/12).

Lake CI (2)	(1) Cabinetmaking, (2) Wastewater/Water Treatment Technologies.
Lancaster CI (6)	(1) Autotronics/Automotive Service Technology, (2) Carpentry, (3) Commercial Foods and Culinary Arts, (4) Environmental Services, (5) PC Support Services, (6) Printing and Graphic Communications.
Lawtey CI (1)	(1) Drafting Architectural.
Lowell CI and Work Camp* (6)	(1) Cosmetology, (2) Culinary Arts, (3) Drafting Architectural, (4) Equine Care Technology, (5) AC, Refrigeration, & Heating Technology, (6) PC Support Services.
Lowell CI Annex * (1)	(1) Fashion Design and Production.
Marion CI (4)	(1) Cabinetmaking, (2) AC, Refrigeration, & Heating Technology, (3) Electricity, (4) Water/Wastewater Treatment Technologies.
Polk CI (3) [1]	(1) Auto Service Technology, (2) Computer Systems Technology, (3) Plumbing Technology/Fire Sprinkler Systems Technology.
Sago Palm WC (1)	(1) PC Support Services.
Santa Rosa Annex (1)	(1) Commercial Class "B" Driving.
Sumter CI (5)	(1) Automotive Service Technology, (2) Consumer Electronics Technology, (3) Masonry, Brick and Block, (4) Masonry, Brick and Block (Youthful Offenders), (5) Drafting (Youthful Offenders).
Suwanee CI Annex (2)	(1) PC Support Services, (2) Plumbing Technology/Fire Sprinkler Systems Technology.
Taylor CI (1)	(1) Plumbing Technology.
Taylor CI Annex (3)	(1) Carpentry, (2) Masonry, Brick and Block, (3) PC Support Services.
Tomoka CI (2)	(1) Carpentry, (2) Masonry, Brick and Block.
Wakulla CI (1)	(1) Environmental Services.
Walton CI (2)	(1) Air Conditioning, Refrigeration and Heating Technology, (2) Carpentry.
(#) = DC-operated career and technical education programs	
* = Female facility	