



Janice K. Brewer
 Governor

MEMORANDUM

TO: Dona Marie Markley, Assistant Director

THROUGH: John Vivian, Ph.D., Research & Development Bureau Administrator

FROM: Michelle Anderson, M.A., Senior Research Analyst, Research & Development

DATE: November 20, 2014

SUBJECT: *Education Achievement and Recidivism*

The number of children achieving a high school diploma while under ADJC’s jurisdiction has increased 65% since fiscal year 2012 and approximately 80% of those that took the GED in FY 2014 passed (FY14 Performance Measures Master List). This accomplishment deserves recognition given that ADJC’s population has been largely unsuccessful in the public school system and is dealing with a host of risk factors that are associated with poor academic achievement. Many factors account for why some youth succeed and some don’t, lack of educational achievement is only one.

Examination of ADJC’s one & three year recidivism by level of education indicates that education helps reduce recidivism (see table 1). Level of education was defined by whether or not the juvenile had earned a high school diploma or GED certificate by the date of first release. New commitments that obtain a diploma or GED upon first release had a recidivism rate of 27.4% compared to 31.0% for those not obtaining a diploma or GED upon first release. Similarly, education achievers had a three year recidivism rate of 37.1% compared to 47.8% for those not achieving a diploma or GED upon first release (see table 2).

Table 1. Educational achievement prior to 1st release –12 months recidivism

2012 RELEASE COHORT (N=470) 100%	H.S DIPLOMA OR GED CERTIFICATE OBTAINED (N=106) 22.6%	NO EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT (N=364) 77.4%
30.3% ADC: 3.0% RECOMMIT: 0.9% PAROLE REV: 26.4%	27.4% ADC: 3.8% RECOMMIT: 0% PAROLE REV: 23.6%	31.0% ADC: 2.7% RECOMMIT: 1.1% PAROLE REV: 27.2%

Table 2. Educational achievement prior to 1st release –36 months recidivism

2010 RELEASE COHORT (N=588) 100%	H.S DIPLOMA OR GED CERTIFICATE OBTAINED (N=105) 17.9%	NO EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT (N=483) 82.1%
45.9% ADC: 21.9% RECOMMIT: 0.9% PAROLE REV: 23.1%	37.1% ADC: 21.9% RECOMMIT: 0% PAROLE REV: 15.2%	47.8% ADC: 21.9% RECOMMIT: 1.0% PAROLE REV: 24.8%

To date, the preponderance of research that supports reductions in risk of recidivating for those participating in correctional education programs versus those who do not has been conducted with the adult population or with juveniles confined in adult institutions. Because juvenile offenders have a right to a public education, the majority of research either reflects that of the adult research, validates the academic characteristics incarcerated youth tend to exhibit, such as; low-average to below-average intellectual ranges; academic performances between fifth- and ninth-grade levels; histories of grade retention, suspension and expulsion; and, increased learning disabilities, emotional or behavioral disturbances, or mental health issues (Foley, 2001; Brazzell, et al., 2009, Leone and Weinberg, 2010), or focuses on which types of correctional education interventions show the most promise.

A recent study conducted by the Ohio Department of Youth Services (OYS) found a negative correlation between education achievement and recidivism, similar to ADJC. OYS found that the 216 juveniles released that had earned a diploma or GED during 2012 had a one-year recidivism rate of 13.4%. This compared favorably to the 481 youth that had not attained this level of education, who had a rate of 31.6% (Sowards, 2014). Jeffords, Lindsey, and McNitt (1993), examined reincarceration rates within a year after release among 1,717 juveniles ages 16-21 held in the Texas Youth Commission correctional facilities. Among the 475 youth who earned GEDs while incarcerated, the estimated rate of reincarceration was 9 percentage points lower than among the 1,242 youth who did not.

Based on return to custody rates examining juveniles released from ADJC care, those who earned diplomas or GED certificates were less likely to recidivate within one and three years compared to those not earning a diploma or GED. While these findings are consistent with the literature on the relationship between educational attainment and recidivism there are other variables that are necessary for reducing recidivism, including: reentry preparation; effective case management and collaboration with community partners; family involvement; exposure to cognitive, social and independent living skills; therapeutic services to address criminogenic needs; and, providing or ensuring quality after-care.

References:

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