

2013 Year-End Summary: Ed Policies Committee

In addition to routine agenda items, our committee elected to spend the year gathering information about two macro issues that affect our ability to deliver on our promise relating to student success. These issues are:

1. the difficulty incurred by transferring high school seniors in qualifying for college level courses in mathematics and English;
2. the lack of funding that would allow us to apply what we know about the educational value of small, highly structured, learning communities, in part because the state is unable to reduce its costly incarceration and recidivism rates.

We did not begin this focus with a view toward resolving either problem; only to understand them better and, where possible, to recommend policy steps that might affect either issue in a positive sense.

###

College Readiness

Most colleges have an assessment process that is designed to identify a student's academic skills in both mathematics and English. These assessments have indicated that, on average, 70% of transferring high school students do not qualify at the college level courses in either field. Chancellor Bryce Harris commented at the most recent CCLC Conference that the rate is actually higher. He puts it at 77%. This is not simply a local statistic; it is a national problem.

We began our investigation by speculating about the myriad of possible explanations for this national problem, and we conclude our study with anecdotal speculation that no single factor is responsible but that much of the explanation can be captured by a focus on:

- the socio-economic background of the student;
- the need to forge stronger connections between feeder high school and SBCC faculty, particularly in gateway disciplines;
- stronger focus on the flow of curriculum in gateway disciplines between local high schools and SBCC.
- the absence of "refresher" or "prep course" opportunities prior to taking the assessment.

Left unattended, this becomes a costly experience for both student and taxpayer. We know, for example, that the student who does not assess at the college level in mathematics, may take up to five years to catch up or -- knowing that this is a likely outcome -- simply gives up going to college. Hence, leaving this problem

unresolved runs counter to our commitment to insure student success.

Admittedly, we are not in a position to alter a student's socio-economic status by simply waving a magic wand, but we certainly can encourage both the development of increasing contacts between our faculty and high school faculty so that the awareness gap about what is expected at the college level is reduced.

The current "Common Core" approach to primary and secondary education is likely to help in the long run in terms of preparing students more rigorously, but that is not likely to be helpful for students who are nearing the end of their high school experience. During the coming year, our committee intends to keep a close watch on this development and actively participate in discussions with K-12 Education leaders wherever appropriate.

There is some evidence that timing is having a serious impact on college readiness, with college expectations not recognizing the impact of some rather recent K-12 decisions. For example, students now take Algebra in 8th grade. The assessment for Algebra at the college level is experienced four years later and many students have forgotten much of the work.

Once the student arrives at SBCC, we know that programs like ***Express to Success*** actually work well to accelerate student achievement. The core elements of this approach have to do with class size, structure, being a part of a learning community, having proper counseling and dedicated faculty, and a solid commitment by the student to do the work needed to succeed. This approach is not rocket science. We know it works. We also know that the cost is higher than most other classes. Hence, funding becomes a major issue.

Conclusion: The political sensitivity of this issue is obvious. Though we may be concerned about why secondary school graduates are not ready for college level courses, the concern of others in the educational system is whether they will be blamed for the shortfall. This is understandable, especially given the ongoing political pressure from above related to accountability. The result is an absence of clear communication about expectations and the difficulties in meeting those expectations. No one is talking with one another out of a sense of concern that someone will be blamed. The most obvious truth in this equation is that nothing will change until we begin having those conversations.

It is our recommendation that ways be found by which the faculty of area secondary schools, especially in math and English, be encouraged to have conversations with SBCC faculty about how best to construct a process that can respond effectively to the problem. Our goal should be to reduce significantly the percentage of area high school students who do not qualify for college level work in mathematics and English.

Education and Recidivism

The focus of our concern has to do with funding. A dollar spent on someone incarcerated in state prison is a dollar that cannot be spent on education. We argue that an increased focus on education, as stipulated above, is more likely to have a beneficial affect than continuing to emphasize a punitive approach to criminal justice.

We are particularly concerned about an estimated 70% rate of recidivism over a 3-year period. That is, 70% of inmates return to the system within that first 3 years for one reason or another. Many speculate that (a) the absence of salable skills combined with (b) the absence of real preparation for re=entry to normal society contributes to this very high and very expensive process. It is estimated that it costs approximately \$56,000 per year per inmate, and the state of California has 163,000 such inmates. The toll on the taxpayer is enormous, and though short range gains are clear -- that offender is taken off the street -- the long range goal of improving the capacity of the inmate to succeed is not well served!

The Educational Policies Committee understands clearly that the societal policy affecting our state's incarceration practices is clearly outside its jurisdiction. What drives us to explore it relates primarily to the repeated demand at the state level for increased recourse allocations to support prisons and those incarcerated. We believe that these allocations could be more wisely distributed by increasing the state's commitment to the educational communities. We believe that much of the reason for the state's high level of incarceration has to do with the absence of a sense of opportunity, which in a very real sense, derives from an effective education.

In September, our committee held an open hearing on the subject. We invited the Sheriff and members of his staff, SBCC faculty and staff, and community leaders concerned about this issue. There was consensus about the seriousness of the issue and its general relationship to education. Sheriff Brown is committed to include an educational facility in the facility currently being built in Santa Maria and would welcome additional educational initiatives from the college. Our programs in inmate education and that focused on the recently released (Transitions Program) were well received and acknowledged for what has been achieved with very limited resources. (Attch. A: Notes from our meeting; Attch. B: Media coverage of our meeting, 8-9-13))

We are not alone in recognizing the problem. In late November of this year, State Attorney General Kamala Harris declared that a criminal justice system with a 70% recidivism rate is a failed system, and she committed her department's newly created Division of Recidivism Reduction to working closely with local agencies to achieve significant reductions. (Attch. C: Press Release from Attorney General's Office, 11-20-13)

Rates of recidivism vary greatly from one country to another, hence we have begun examining the practices engaged in by those societies with a relatively low rate of recidivism. The Scandinavian example could prove helpful here. Denmark's prison population has a recidivism rate of 27%, due largely to a very different approach to incarceration. The head of the Danish prison system, William Rentzmann, has invited us to visit and to see for ourselves. We have also learned that the Danish Minister of Justice has visited Attorney General Eric Holder, and at Holder's request, provided a complete overview of why their recidivism rate is as low as it is.

Santa Barbara City College is actively supporting small, pilot programs that provide recently released inmates the opportunity to transition successfully to higher education. Our Committee looks forward to reviewing the results of an ongoing evaluation of, and adjustments in, these programs. The evaluations will inform future policymaking in this area.

The committee found some recent studies that indicated that distance learning opportunities had a very positive impact on the rates of recidivism. SBCC has had distance learning in operation in the prison setting for several years. These programs may be able to be expanded when more prison space becomes available. (Attch. D: "Meta-Analysis: Technology-Led Education Drastically Curbs Recidivism")

Our Committee will continue to review the programs over the next few years both from the student and from the taxpayer perspective as policy decisions arise.

Conclusion: We acknowledge that efforts to modify the criminal justice system would appear to be well beyond our jurisdiction. Yet we see a clear link between the arena of education and that of criminal justice, especially when one includes the element of poverty in the mix. There is a clear correlation between poverty and the temptation to violate society's norms in order to get ahead financially, especially among those who see no way out of poverty. It would be a difficult "sell" to persuade this population that education is the preferred way out of the poverty cycle, but we believe it is possible! Further, we believe that a 70% recidivism rate during the first three years after release from prison is an indication of a failed – and expensive – system. Huge sums are required to pay for this revolving door, and these dollars cannot be spent both on recidivism and on education.

We believe there is a clear connection between education and the struggle to emerge from poverty, and just as clearly between poverty and the temptation to engage in activity that leads the criminal justice system. Though we cannot change this cycle by ourselves, we need to be advocates for change, and we need to connect with others who can affect that change.

Future Agenda

We recognize that both of the macro-topics explored this year will need to be monitored in the future. Significant change does not happen because of a year's exploration or because of good wishes. Hence, we are committed to continue our focus so as to insure that progress is being made.

In addition, we intend to explore the following:

1. Community College Baccalaureate Degrees: The Chancellor's office is currently exploring the feasibility and desirability of offering BA degrees in specific fields. We will want to explore that potential in terms of allowing community colleges to offer 4-year baccalaureate degrees in specific fields as a way of increasing the effectiveness of California's post-secondary educational opportunities.

2. Honors Students: Community colleges traditionally focus on students who, for one reason or another, were unable to be admitted to the university. The implication is that they may not have been entirely ready academically. But for many, this falls well short of an explanation. Finances often dictate where capable students apply, and as demonstrated by our Honors program and the rising number of students who are invited to join our honor society, Phi Theta Kappa, many of our students are quite exceptional. How can we, at the institutional level, be most effective in encouraging them to excel?

3. Institutional Review: Last year we engaged in an extensive review of our mission statement, the outcome of which generated the following:

Santa Barbara City College provides students a diverse learning environment that inspires curiosity and discovery, promotes global responsibility, and fosters opportunity for all.

The purpose of this review is to assess how we are doing in relation to specific aspects of this mission. Such an assessment might ask such questions as: Are we meeting the educational needs of all of our students? Do we have ways by which to reflect contemporary and "real world" needs in our curriculum? How to we insure that we foster opportunity for all?

Peter Haslund, Chair
February 5, 2014

Ed Policies Committee

September 5, 2013

ATTENDING:

Trustees: Peter Haslund (Chair), Marianne Kugler & Veronica Gallardo
SBCC Staff & Faculty: Lori Gaskin, Jack Friedlander, Marilynn Spaventa, Marsha Wright, Noel Gomez, Kenley Neufeld
Sherriff's Office: Sheriff Bill Brown, Under Sheriff Jim Peterson, Chief Deputy, Custody Operations, Laz Salinas and Custody Commander Jenny Sams
Community Solutions, Inc: Rick Roney, Chair of the Reentry Steering Committee, Katie Ward, Supervising Program Director, Day Reporting Center
Press: Brandon Fastman, The Independent, and Hannah Smith, The Channels

TOPIC: Role of Education in Reducing Recidivism (from the agenda)

This will provide an opportunity to hear about SBCC's updated Transitions Program, and other educational outreach efforts, receive feedback from Law Enforcement and Community Leaders, consider alternative courses of action, and develop specific "next steps" as appropriate.

1. Presentations

SBCC's Transitions Program: Marsha Wright told us that their program started in 2008 at the instigation of a parolee who shared how difficult it was to begin an academic journey, resulting in the creation of a 6-week summer bridge program called **Transitions**. It was clear that this program is funded by private donations and with the largely volunteer efforts of people like Marsha and Noel Gomez.

Noel outlined their approach including a 3-course summer program, a \$100 stipend/week, and weekly field trips. Not everyone completes the program, but this years results have been better than ever with an 80% completion rate, and with 100% of them transitioning to the regular fall program.

I was truly impressed by the progress being made in terms of making a lasting difference. Some basic if preliminary conclusions:

- Re-entry from incarceration is complicated. There is understandable fear about making the transition from prison – where everything is restricted – to a college campus where you are basically responsible for everything.
- Not all of those incarcerated are likely to benefit from anything we can do by way of education. But by definition, this means that a carefully identified part of that population might benefit tremendously.

- We know what to do. Our Transitions program has been successful on a very small scale and only in the summer due to the absence of funding. There is a belief that it can be successful over the long haul but not always without failures, either temporary or permanent.

Characteristics of success: It seems to me that some basic elements or characteristics of success emerged from the Transitions presentation:

- Commitment: A rejection of a past life. "I just don't want to go back to prison again."
- The experience of success: For a perennial "loser," nothing is likely to have as much impact as a genuine success leading to "I did it!"
- Relapse: Especially for drug offenders, this is identified as a part of sobriety.
- Support system: We all need cheerleaders, but in this situation, a support system is likely to be crucial.

Inmate Instruction Program: We are also providing education to incarcerated inmates. Marilynn Spaventa reported that the new GED exam will only be administered on line, hence inmates will need to learn a new skill if they are not familiar with computers.

- Data supplied by Custody Commander Jenny Sams: 111 males, 30 females

Bill Brown added that we are one of two states preparing inmates for the GED. Classroom space is in short supply. He indicated that he needs help in going to the Board of Supervisors (October 9) for an additional grant via SB 1022 to rebuild the existing prison. They don't have classroom space aside from the Helen Pedoti learning center. (I plan to visit this site)

He has been negotiating with Linda.com for "on-demand" education including vocational skills as well as inspirational messages.

2. Conversation

Rick Roney noted that we could pretty well double our capacity by helping Alan Hancock replicate what we are doing.

Katie Ward urged a gradual approach in reducing recidivism; if we could reduce by 10%, that would be good. She works with CSI (Community Solutions, Inc.). Kept referring to evidence-based models in determining learning styles, the nature of the risk, targeted intervention, CBT or cognitive behavior therapy, and stressing accountability.

Bill indicated that most crimes are done by first-time offenders...which gives rise to some interesting questions like: what percentage of inmates are first-time offenders, and what percentage are there for technical violations?

Kenley Neufeld asked about the usefulness of applying the principles of “restorative justice” and spoke of his experience as a volunteer. Bill indicated that they had several programs that made use of this approach.

Maryanne Kugler asked about whether they checked the literacy rate across the community. The answer seems to have been no.

AB 109 was mentioned but not defined. This is the legislation that seeks to realign the prison inmate population so that most non-violent, non-sex offender inmates can serve out their sentence in local county jails.

My sense of “next steps”

1. Share Our Approach: Work with Alan Hancock College to replicate what we are doing. Since they have recently hired a new President, this might be a good time to explore that idea. The idea might be shared by our College President as well as by our Academic Senate President. It should be recognized that ideas are easy to share and that the challenge of funding is universal.

2. Early Education: Explore what can be done in the early years by way of prevention. Some called this “front-end education.” This is certainly a sound idea but probably beyond the scope of a community college to advance. It also gives rise to some deeper socio-economic issues that may make such an approach difficult.

3. Public Engagement: The public needs to be educated. At several points, participants commented that success with the voting public is all about marketing. There is a segment of the public that believes that providing \$100/week stipends to Transition students is ill-deserved; that their young adult doesn’t get that \$100, and they never did anything wrong or served time in jail. Why should we pay for “coddling” inmates with educational benefits not available to the general public.

Public engagement will be critical and challenging. It seems to me that the state’s prison and incarceration system is in need of overhaul and that this reality is painful for the public to accept. We were ecstatic about adopting a “three strikes” program for repeat offenders, representing a simple solution to a growing problem. It turns out that this solution was a bit overly simple and often created more problems than it solved.

If we are to create a more effective process, the public will need to be convinced that simplistic solutions probably won't work and that we will need to learn from others whose recidivism rate is much lower than ours.

4. Lori suggested a "dream goal" of having a cohort based model that succeeds in its efforts to intervene. It would have to be a model that is consistent with our core mission and would involve a very real partnership with others within the community.

Conclusion: Many of these "next steps" fall outside the mission of SBCC. We know we have two programs that work reasonably well, and we should certainly see about both improving our effectiveness and expanding the number of people who can benefit from such programs.

As citizens, we can certainly advocate for systemic change and/or provide support for those who do. We can also keep the conversation going to insure a sharing of ideas and the provision of mutual support.

The Role of Education in Reducing Recidivism

By Brandon Fastman (Contact)

Schools vs. Prison: Officials Discuss Whether the Twain Can Meet

Monday, September 9, 2013

Educators and law enforcement came together on the acropolis of Santa Barbara City College to talk recidivism Thursday afternoon. Convened by SBCC trustee Peter Haslund, a retired political science professor, attendees included Sheriff Bill Brown; chair of the Santa Barbara County Reentry Committee, Rick Roney; instructor of courses for parolees, Noel Gomez; and Dean Marilyn Spaventa.

Motivated by current events – the state is currently considering rival proposals to address a federal order to reduce the prison population – Haslund would like to explore how the educational system can help alleviate a metastasized corrections system. “If we can work together to reduce the rate of recidivism, all of us in California will be better off,” he said.

Spaventa said that about 140 inmates participate in the educational program that City College provides at the County Jail. When visiting recently, she by chance met a student who scored 100 percent on her GED exam. City College also provides a summer program for parolees with the goal of having them enroll in a degree or vocational program. “This summer,” said Gomez, “was the most successful we’ve had.” Out of 25 students, 22 enrolled for fall courses. Marsha Wright, director of the Equal Opportunity Programs Office at SBCC, opined that because the economy is better and jobs more available, academically-inclined students self-selected this year.

After hearing about the some of the positive outcomes, however, Haslund remarked that parolees who seemingly got on the straight and narrow need both an “inner commitment” and the “experience of success.” Roney, who helped kickstart the Day Reporting Center reentry program for parolees, added that they need personal relationships as well. “If you don’t have the relationship, it’s not going to work,” he said.

Vice President of City College, Jack Friedlander, asked why people drop out of such programs. Gomez said that there were several reasons, but substance abuse was a big one. Both he and Sheriff Brown said that relapse is part of recovery. Brown also warned that there must be a balance of approaches to the corrections system. While recidivism rates can be reduced, he said, not everybody is open to becoming a law-abiding citizen. “Some people will continue to offend,” said the Sheriff who has put much effort into raising funds for a North County branch of the Santa Barbara County Jail. On October 9, he will seek permission from the County Supervisors to apply for a grant — which maxes out at \$40 million — to add on to that branch.

Replicating some of the services offered by City College at Alan Hancock College, everybody agreed, would also be an easy way to increase educational services, especially because the majority of the jail population is from North County. While Haslund was happy enough to have everybody in the room meet each other, that seemed to be one of the more concrete takeaways.

"If I could dream about a next step," said SBCC President Lori Gaskin, her institution could provide an "ongoing sustainable model with full-time staff." As of now, Transitions is funded privately. Friendlander pointed out that the college needs to focus on its core mission. But if Darryl Steinberg's plan to address recidivism by investing \$200 million into prevention and intervention, Friedlander said, funds might become available. If Governor Jerry Brown's plan to spend even more by contracting out to private prisons, Haslund pointed out, state spending on corrections would outstrip spending on higher education.

[Click for Free Subscription to the IndyInsider.](#)



Our Mon-Wed-Friday newsletter keeps you up-to-date on all things Santa Barbara.

C

State of California Department of Justice
OFFICE of the ATTORNEY GENERAL
KAMALA D. HARRIS

Attorney General Kamala D. Harris Launches Initiative to Reduce Recidivism in California

Wednesday, November 20, 2013

Contact: (415) 703-5837

LOS ANGELES -- Attorney General Kamala D. Harris today launched a new initiative designed to curb recidivism in California through partnerships between the California Department of Justice's new Division of Recidivism Reduction and Re-Entry and the state's counties and District Attorneys.

The Division will support counties and District Attorneys by partnering on best practices and policy initiatives, such as the development of a statewide definition of recidivism, identifying grants to fund the creation and expansion of innovative anti-recidivism programs and using technology to facilitate more effective data analysis and recidivism metrics.

"California's District Attorneys bring vital experience to the challenge of reducing recidivism, and it is important their perspective is incorporated," said Attorney General Harris. "This new division will support innovative, evidence-based approaches to recidivism solutions in California."

"San Diego County has been a statewide leader in working to reduce recidivism through innovative prisoner re-entry programs," said San Diego County District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis. "We welcome the Attorney General's leadership and commitment of resources in this area as our County continues to protect public safety while dealing with the ongoing challenges brought on by prisoner realignment."

"The Attorney General's initiative will provide local prosecutors with the accurate data we need to determine realignment's real impact on public safety," Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey said. "I look forward to working with other prosecutors in developing effective diversion programs for nonviolent offenders and seeking funds to expand alternative sentencing courts."

"Any successful crime reduction effort must include a strategic and well planned approach to combatting recidivism," said Alameda County District Attorney Nancy E. O'Malley. "Both low level criminals as well violent offenders will eventually return to our communities when released from jail or prison, and I welcome the opportunity to work closely with Attorney General Harris' office on putting into place the best possible strategies to reduce crime and recidivism rates."

"The decision to implement a new strategic plan that would ultimately help reduce crime and recidivism in our state is a powerful step forward, and I commend Attorney General Harris for her leadership in this area," San Bernardino County District Attorney Michael Ramos said. "It is a data-driven methodology that will not only better equip local DAs with resources and technical assistance, but one that will make our streets safer. As we continue to address the ever changing needs brought about by prison reform, this initiative is a much-needed, collaborative approach to tackling crime more effectively at the state and local levels."

"I appreciate the leadership of Attorney General Harris in focusing our collective attention to best practices to reduce

recidivism and crime in our communities," Los Angeles County Sheriff Lee Baca said. "The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department has been a national leader in rehabilitating jail inmates while incarcerated, and those efforts will only be enhanced with proven re-entry strategies focusing on helping offenders be successful upon release from jails and prisons."

"As the California Criminal Justice System continues to recalibrate itself with the implementation of Realignment, the California Police Chiefs Association is encouraged by the Attorney General's announcement that the Department of Justice will partner with counties to identify and implement successful reentry programs," California Police Chiefs Association President Kim Raney said. "Ensuring public safety in our communities is the primary mission for Police Chiefs, and we welcome the Attorney General's commitment to work with counties to ensure the safety of cities statewide."

The Division of Recidivism Reduction and Re-Entry will consist of three subdivisions focused on program development, evaluation and grants. It will be funded through existing California Department of Justice resources.

The Division will use innovative technology, such as the Department's recently created California SmartJustice system, to analyze offender populations and recidivism risk factors. SmartJustice, a new database and analytical tool created by the California Department of Justice, can track repeat offenders and offense trends to provide counties with more effective options in developing anti-recidivism initiatives.

In 2005, then San Francisco District Attorney Harris created a reentry initiative called Back on Track, which aimed to reduce recidivism among certain low-level, non-violent drug offenders. Over a two-year period, the program reduced recidivism among its graduates to less than 10 percent. Back on Track was designated as a model for law enforcement by the US Department of Justice.

###

CAMPUS TECHNOLOGY

Education & Crime | Research

Meta-Analysis: Technology-Led Education Drastically Curbs Recidivism

The largest study to date measuring the effectiveness of prison education programs found that technology-driven programs are at least as effective as teacher-led programs. Both types of programs have led to drastic cuts in repeat offenses and significantly higher employment rates for prisoners upon release.

- By [David Nagel](#)
- 09/11/13

Education programs in prison have a massive impact on recidivism. Based on a new meta-analysis, "inmates who participated in correctional education programs had 43 percent lower odds of returning to prison than inmates who did not." The study also set out to find whether technology-led instruction among inmates could cut down on recidivism as well as teacher-led instruction. The results were positive.

Among education program participants, recidivism was slightly lower for those who took computer-driven courses (either self-paced or used in combination with a teacher) than those who took teacher-led courses. Though the difference between the two wasn't enough to be statistically significant given the size of the samples studied, as the researchers indicated, it does mean that computer-led instruction without a teacher is, in fact, *at least* as effective as instruction with a teacher for cutting back on repeat offenses.

Further, according to the report, "Because computer-assisted instruction can be self-paced and can be supervised by a tutor or an instructor, it is potentially less costly to administer than traditional instruction. It is worth noting that since the publication of [studies measuring the effectiveness of computer-led instruction], the capability and utility of instructional technology has progressed,... which suggests that the effects of the newer technologies may potentially outstrip those found in the studies examined here. The current positive (though not statistically significant) result, the potential cost-effectiveness of computer-assisted technology, and the fact that the technology is getting better suggest that its use in this context could be promising."

This is significant because budget shortfalls have led to cuts in some prison systems' education programs in recent years and are expected to do so for the foreseeable future, though cuts have slowed in the last year. As an example, the report cited the Oklahoma Department of Corrections, which, "[s]ince 2008, [has] lost one-third of its full-time education staff and a similar percentage of

its Skills Center instructors."

The report, sponsored by the United States Department of Education, funded by the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance, and conducted by the nonprofit RAND Corp., is the largest study to date measuring the effectiveness of prison education programs. It found that not only was recidivism cut by 43 percent for prisoners who participated in education programs, but for those who were in academic or vocation programs, employment was 13 percent higher. And specifically among those who participated in vocational training programs, employment after release was a staggering 28 percent higher than among those who received no training.

Benefits were seen across all types of education programs. "We found a notable effect across all levels of education, from adult basic education and GED programs to postsecondary and vocational education programs."

The direct cost of educating a pool of 100 inmates is estimated at \$140,000 to \$174,400. Given the cost of reincarceration for 100 inmates (\$2.94 million to \$3.25 million), the economic break-even point for prison education, according to the report, would be a reduction in recidivism of 1.9 percentage points to 2.6 percentage points. Education programs went well beyond this break-even point, resulting in three-year reincarceration costs at about \$870,000 to \$970,000 less for a hypothetical pool of 100 prisoners participating in education programs than a pool of 100 prisoners not participating in education programs.

According to ED and the DOJ: "Each year approximately 700,000 individuals leave federal and state prisons; about half of them will be reincarcerated within three years." Extrapolating from there, the three-year reincarceration cost for those repeat offenders will be \$10.29 billion to \$11.37 billion without education programs.

"These findings reinforce the need to become smarter on crime by expanding proven strategies for keeping our communities safe, and ensuring that those who have paid their debts to society have the chance to become productive citizens," said U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder in a statement released to coincide with the report. "We have an opportunity and an obligation to use smart methods — and advance innovative new programs — that can improve public safety while reducing costs. As it stands, too many individuals and communities are harmed, rather than helped, by a criminal justice system that does not serve the American people as well as it should. This important research is part of our broader effort to change that."

"Correctional education programs provide incarcerated individuals with the skills and knowledge essential to their futures," said Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, also in a prepared statement. "Investing in these education programs helps released prisoners get back on their feet — and stay on their feet — when they return to communities across the country."

The complete report, "Evaluating the Effectiveness of Correctional Education: A Meta-Analysis of Programs That Provide Education to Incarcerated Adults," is freely available in PDF form on the Bureau of Justice Assistance's site. The full report, a research brief, and additional details can also be found on RAND's Correctional Education Project portal.

About the Author

David Nagel is the executive producer for 1105 Media's online K-12 and higher education publications and electronic newsletters. He can be reached at dnagel@1105media.com. He can now be followed on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/THEJournalDave> (K-12) or <http://twitter.com/CampusTechDave> (higher education). You can also connect with him on LinkedIn at <http://www.linkedin.com/profile/view?id=10390192>.

Copyright © 2013, 1105 Media Inc.

For private use only, please visit www.1105reprints.com for licensing/reprint information.