

Testimony to the Little Hoover Commission
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**PROPOSAL TO INCREASE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF CDC EDUCATION SERVICES, REDUCE
RECIDIVISM, AND SAVE PRISON COSTS**
"Skills Training, Awareness, Re-entry, and Treatment (START) Centers
(Revised CDC Education Program)

Revised Program Mission: To reduce prison costs and other costs associated with a high prison recidivism rate by maximizing the reentry potential of each inmate.

Revised Program Goals:

1. To accomplish the mission by providing a menu of skills preparation, issues victims, reentry, and substance treatment services that address the custody requirements and individual needs of the diverse inmate population
2. To accomplish the mission by coordinating inside and outside custody, counseling, skills preparation, issues awareness, reentry, and other services to assist offenders in making a successful transition from incarceration to reintegration into society.

Major Components of the Revised Program:

1. Education/job skills/reentry counseling—START counselors would meet with inmates to prepare plans that meet a range of custody and individual needs.
2. Job Skills, Literacy Skills, Social/Cognitive, and Reentry training—START teachers would deliver a range of course curricula tailored to the needs of the inmate population and augmented with resource/reading specialist services.
3. Transitional services—Transition coordinators would see that inside and outside services are linked and coordinated, working with parole agents, treatment providers, partnership agencies, and outside START staff.
4. Outside services—START personnel, working in Treatment/Community Correctional Centers or with partnership agencies and school districts would provide a continuum of services including job and treatment referrals.

Existing Programs to Serve as Models for the Revised Program:

1. Incarcerated Youth Offenders (IYO) Program-- This program exists at about 10 facilities currently and is based on successful prison programs in other states. It uses an integrated, individualized model that relies on early planning and a continuum of services.
2. Outside Reentry Program-- This program was recently established in partnership with the Charles A. Jones Skills and Business Education Center. It involves a CDC Reentry teacher working with Sacramento City Unified School District (SCUSD) staff in a "skills center" for clients, including parolees, with various reentry needs. The teacher's duties include counseling, referral, follow-up and reporting activities required by the grant and a contract between CDC and SCUSD.
3. Anger Management, Family Relations, Decision Making, Victims Awareness, Substance Abuse, Life Skills and Social Skills Programs—Many of these programs/curricula are implemented within CDC already; others are in effect in other California agencies; many successful programs and models exist in other states.

New Program Locations and Implementation Strategies:

1. "Halfway Back Programs" or "Community Correctional Reentry Centers (CCRCs)--CDC Parole and Community Services Division has proposed these programs/centers for implementation sometime in 02-03 FY. The locations are not specific. In the 03-04 Governor's Budget, the programs/centers appear to receive funding under Community Programs, and many new positions for Parole Agents are listed. (Although this proposal calls for literacy, vocational, and job skills training; the 03-04 Budget does not propose new teacher positions under Community Programs.)
2. Northern California Women's Facility and Duel Vocational Institute—CDC proposes to make both of these facilities "reception centers;" however, the trend is toward a decreasing prison population and parole options that reduce the number of violators placed back in prison. The programs/centers mentioned above (This section, #1) are recommended to be used as both halfway out and halfway back facilities. Therefore, these facilities would be ideal for new START program focused on helping offenders reenter society, rather than return to prison
3. All 33 Institutions—START centers should be in every facility with staffing and services tailored to the custody levels and inmate populations because every institution regardless of security level releases inmates to the communities. The CDC Parole and Community Services Division recommend placing Parole Agents inside institutions to coordinate transition services. However, such services, if they are to focus on preparing an inmate for successful reentry, are best delivered by staff with a background in rehabilitation.

Revised Program Recidivism/Prison Costs Reductions:

1. By re-designating two facilities as START centers, security costs would go down. When necessary to monitor the whereabouts of participants, electronic monitoring might be used at a cost of \$1.50 per day.
2. Because the effectiveness of transitional and follow-up services is well-documented in reducing recidivism, the new programs are virtually guaranteed to produce costs savings in prison operations.
3. Money now designated for new parole positions would offset the proposed cuts in Education services. Initially, no staffing augmentation would be needed as the current Education staff and budget redirected are redirected to the new program.

Staffing and Other Changes Required for the New Program:

1. New classifications with new job descriptions and duties would be established through the SPB and Contract bargaining processes currently in place.
2. Teachers currently employed would acquire the necessary training via continuing education provisions in the current Contract and the bargaining process to become START counselors, specialists, transition coordinators, and/or to teach new courses.
3. Teachers would receive IST and OJT training coordinated through local IST services.
4. Teachers would receive training coordinated through agencies and personnel involved in partnerships with CDC
5. New staffing would be developed through apprenticeship/intern programs established through the Contract bargaining process.

Specific Features and Benefits of Revised Program:

1. Services are well-coordinated within and outside the facility with START staff responsible for monitoring inmate START plans and ensuring a coordinated set of services inside and outside of the prison.
2. As soon as an inmate is identified as a candidate for the program, a START coordinator meets with the inmate to develop a START plan based on individual needs, background and custody requirements. The START counselor coordinates with custody personnel and other inmate service and job providers to develop and coordinate a START plan, then ensures the plan is communicated to affected personnel (e.g., Facility Captains, Program Lieutenant, Correctional Counselors, Job Supervisors, Parole Agents, etc.).
3. The classification process considers each inmate's START plan and ensures that programming and institutional placement allows an inmate to achieve the goals set out.
4. Program courses are not open entry/open exit, so teachers are able to present units and lessons with more continuity, have more time to teach, and can focus on individual student learning needs. As a result, students remain interested and engaged in the program, resulting in fewer disruptions and more learning time in class. (Note that elimination of an open entry/open process would be possible because inmates would have fewer job reassignments and institutional transfers).
5. Teachers would have a minimal amount of non-educational paperwork interfering with instruction because school programming would not provide Work Incentive programming for inmates who have concurrent jobs. For full-time students teacher paperwork would be greatly reduced or done by other staff.
6. Students would remain motivated to remain in school because they would have concurrent paying jobs or receive pay while going to school. A START plan would include a schedule of jobs an inmate should take to ensure that the inmate is prepared for reentry when released. START coordinators would coordinate with supervisors of prison programs providing jobs to balance the workforce needs with the rehabilitation of inmates.
7. Students would be motivated to progress in school because they would receive sentence reduction credit, in part, based upon achievement. Students would receive credit for homework and time bonuses for earning certificates of completion in GED, vocation, and other special programs.
8. Class sizes would be tailored to meet the needs of specific courses and students. Classes with students who require more one-on-one instruction or specialized assistance would have lower class sizes (20 students), while GED and other upper-level classes would have larger class sizes (27 students). In addition, distance learning might be implemented for some upper-level students where appropriate and subject to Contract bargaining. (Note that upper level teachers might have two classes per day because students are more capable of working independently, i.e., benefiting from "homework." Also note that institutional movement restrictions and safety of correctional classrooms prevents class sizes larger than 27 or more than two classes per day.)
9. Special education and reading/resource specialist services would be provided to students with special learning needs to enable them to meet the goals of their START programs.
10. Special training in anger management, family relations, decision making, life skills and social skills would be provided as standard offerings at all institutions for students to meet START goals.
11. Transitional and follow-up services outside the prison would be provided to ensure successful reentry as part of the START program.

Current Program Weaknesses:

1. Current programs have very limited personnel and systems for coordinating services within the Education program or between Education and other inmate services, such as drug treatment, psychiatric services, classification services and custody. Furthermore, services are not well coordinated between facilities.
2. Students are enrolled by Classification Services or an Assignment Lieutenant, occasionally on the basis of TABE or the recommendation of an Education supervisor, but no prior education/job skills counseling or planning is provided.
3. No consideration is given to the education and job skill needs of the inmate in the classification process. Currently, many inmates assigned to school are transferred or unassigned from programs before completing them, which results inmates falling between the cracks (i.e., having not skills training, academic education, or reentry services while incarcerated).
4. The open entry/open exit enrollment policy destroys course continuity, makes lesson planning more difficult, reduces teacher instructional time, requires more independent (workbook) learning, reduces student motivation, and contributes to class management difficulties as students fail to progress and become bored.
5. Teachers are hampered in providing instruction because they're expected to perform numerous non-professional duties, mostly paperwork duties.
6. Student motivation to attend school is hampered by fact other prison jobs pay a minimal wage allowing the inmates to purchase personal hygiene and food items at the Cantine. Students often leave school saying that they have no one sending them money and want to be able to purchase these items or to some money to their families.
7. School is considered a work assignment per the Work Incentive Law, earning students credit toward reduction in their sentences if they meet minimal performance standards. In school, this often translates to "seat time," rather than achievement (e.g., completion of a GED Certificate). Many students will emphasize sentence reduction credit over progress, staying in school longer than is necessary and/or doing just enough to avoid discipline.
8. Class sizes are insensitive to the needs of specific courses and students. CDC has implemented a "one size fits all" 27:1 class size. An ABE I class with non-readers, for instance, has the same class size as GED classes. Classes with diagnosed mentally ill and/or learning disabled students have 27 students, have just as many as those without students with diagnoses. (Note that CDC has refused to negotiate class size with the Union or to provide a class size exemption policy that considers the special needs of students per contract.)
9. Special education services are provided only for the Developmentally Disabled and Disability Placement Program students at a few sites. No special education or reading/resource specialist services are provided to the vast majority of students; even though a high percentage has special learning difficulties requiring the attention of specialists. As a result, students with special needs, often very motivated, fail to progress in classes, slows class turnover and prevents inmates on waiting lists from accessing programs.
10. Special training in anger management, family relations, decision making, life skills and social skills, proven effective in reducing recidivism, are provided only at a few institutions.
11. Transitional services, inside and outside the prison, as well as follow-up services outside the prison, are extremely limited or non-existent. Only a few limited services exist for the general population in the form of Friends Outside, Jobs Plus, and Reentry program contacts. Other, very limited programs are in place for diagnosed mentally ill inmates and youthful offenders.