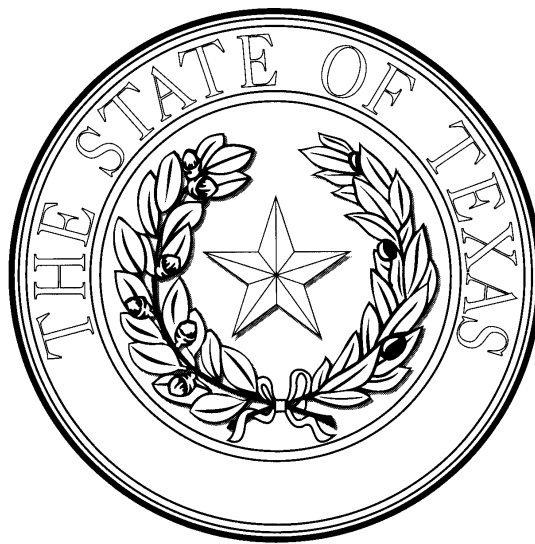


Impact of Educational Achievement of Inmates in the Windham School District on Post-Release Employment



Criminal Justice Policy Council
June 2000

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Executive Director

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Note From The Director

The Criminal Justice Policy Council has been evaluating the performance of the Windham School District which operates educational, vocational, and life skills training programs in Texas prisons. While a prior report evaluated the performance of the District's educational programs, this report evaluates the impact of education on post-release employment by tracking the employment records of over 30,000 inmates released from prison in fiscal years 1997 and 1998. These records were tracked using the Unemployment Wage Record system of the Texas Workforce Commission. This is the system in which employers must report wages earned by employees for unemployment insurance purposes. The employment record for each inmate was tracked for one year after release from prison.

Inmates released from prison have a higher unemployment rate than the general population. One year after release, 30% of releasees did not report earning any wages. In other words, these releasees had a 30% unemployment rate compared to the statewide unemployment rate of 4.8% in September 1998. Nevertheless, a releasee's level of education has a positive impact on his employment prospects and earning potential: the higher the educational achievement of inmates at release, the more likely they are to be employed and the higher their average yearly wage. However, most inmates who are employed are not employed for a full year (the average is 7.4 months), and even the highest average yearly salary was not much more than the equivalent of a minimum wage salary for one year. Specifically:

- Of those inmates who left prison with a grade education equivalent of 9th grade or higher, 75% were employed at least one day in the year after their release compared to 57% of those with less than a 4th grade education. The group with the higher education level earned an average of \$2,442 more a year (\$10,139 vs. \$7,697).
- Average wages earned by inmates with the highest education grade equivalent (9th grade or higher) was only \$267 above the yearly minimum wage salary (\$9,872 at the minimum wage of \$4.75 at the time of the follow-up). The average yearly wage earned by a person completing a high school equivalent education (GED) in Texas in 1998 was \$11,736.

Inmates who achieve a higher education level in prison because of their participation in a Windham School District education program have better employment and earning prospects than those offenders who participated but did not improve their educational achievement. The greatest benefit occurs for those who achieve a GED and have the highest educational achievement scores when they leave prison. The relationship between educational achievement, improved employment opportunities, and higher earning prospects remained regardless of inmate characteristics (e.g. age) that are associated with employment differences. In addition, earning a vocational certificate in prison adds to employment and earning prospects. Specifically:

- Of those who earned a GED in prison and left prison with an educational achievement score of 11th grade or higher, 76% were employed at least one day in the year after release and had average yearly wages of \$10,542. Of those who became literate, 72% were employed and had average yearly wages of \$8,075. Of those who stayed functionally illiterate, 61% were employed and had average yearly wages of \$7,582.

Note From The Director

- ✓ Inmates who earned a GED with high achievement scores earned an average of \$2,960 more a year than functionally illiterate inmates who were employed.
- Compared to inmates who earned a GED but did not get a vocational certificate, inmates who earned a GED with a vocational certificate had a higher average yearly wage (\$9,383 compared to \$8,587) and were more likely to be employed in the year after release (77% compared to 75%).

Inmates who participated in the Project RIO program (Re-Integration of Offenders), administered by the Texas Workforce Commission, were more likely to be employed in the year after their release than those who did not participate. However, employed RIO participants were also more likely to have lower wages than employed non-RIO participants. Specifically:

- The Project RIO participants' employment rate during the year after release was 86% compared to 62% for non-participants. Average yearly wages for participants were, however, \$1,794 less than wages for non-participants (\$9,514 compared to \$7,720).
- There were no differences in the demographic and offense characteristics between Project RIO participants and non-participants. In addition, wage differences remained the same for all education levels. Thus, while Project RIO may increase employment opportunities, it does not increase earning potential. The impact of this on recidivism will be examined in a subsequent report.

As discussed in the prior report, most inmates received an average of 605 hours of educational instruction during their entire incarceration period due to resource limitations. Unless prison education resources are increased, it seems that concentrating these resources on the population most likely to complete a high school equivalent and a vocational certificate would have the maximum impact on improving the employment prospects and earning potential of inmates after release from prison. Furthermore, while Nonreaders and Functionally Illiterate inmates required the greatest number of instructional hours, they had relatively low employment rates and little gain in wages earned. In general, these groups cannot receive the education needed to earn a GED given the availability of present prison educational resources. If resources have to be shifted to get the best return in terms of post-release employment for inmates, prison education dollars should be shifted to GED and vocational training programs. If similar findings are identified in the recidivism study (upcoming), they could suggest that current prioritization practices favoring inmates with the greatest educational deficits should be reversed to emphasize GED and vocational certification attainment.

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Acknowledgments

The Criminal Justice Policy Council would like to thank Marc Anderberg and Sammie Garcia of the Texas State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (SOICC) for their assistance in providing wage data for this study. Additionally, we would like to acknowledge the assistance of Burt Ellison, Project RIO Director for the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) in providing data regarding Project RIO participation. Finally, we would like to thank Mike Morrow, Superintendent of the Windham School District (WSD), Marjie Haynes, Director of Programs, and Richard Yawn, Director of Operational Support, for their assistance and review of this report.



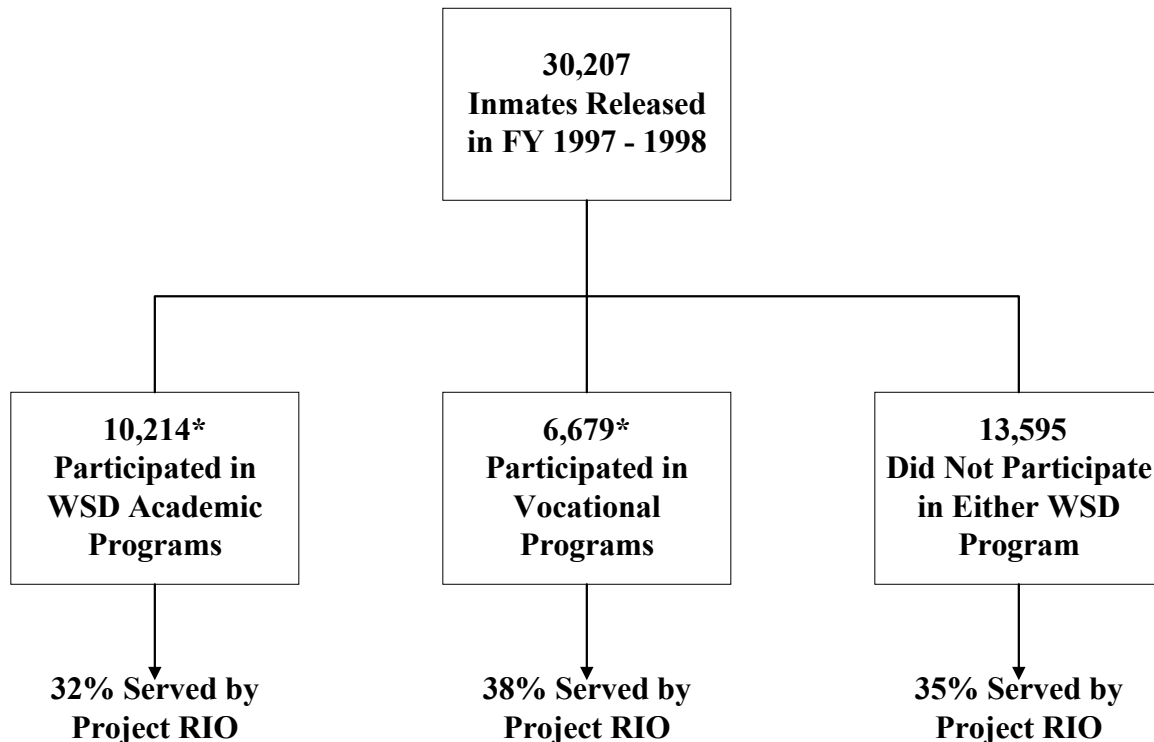
I. Overview of Study

Does Educational Achievement in Prison Lead to Increased Post-Release Employment?

An Overview of the Study

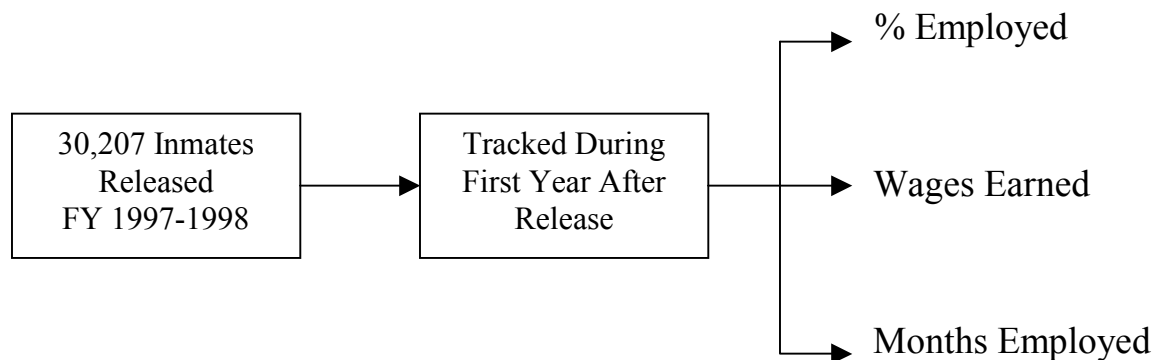
- The Criminal Justice Policy Council (CJPC) issued a report in April 2000 (*Educational Achievement of Inmates in the Windham School District*) evaluating the educational achievement of inmates participating in educational programs in Texas prisons.
 - ✓ The report tracked the prison education experience of 32,020 inmates who were released from prison in fiscal years 1997 and 1998.
 - ✓ The report examined educational achievement (EA) for Nonreaders (functioning at less than 4th grade reading score), Functionally Illiterate inmates (less than 6th grade), and GED/College Path inmates (6th grade level or higher) working towards a GED or enrollment in college.
 - ✓ Achievement measures evaluated the number of inmates who became Readers, became Functionally Literate, earned a GED, or attended college while in prison.
- This report examines the relationship between education in prison and post-release employment and wages earned during the first year after an inmate was released from prison.
 - ✓ The effect of earning a vocational certificate in prison and the impact of receiving services from Project RIO, a job placement program for releasees, were also examined.
 - ✓ The Windham School District (WSD) provided prison education data.
- Employment and wage data were gathered from the Unemployment Wage Record database maintained by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC).
 - ✓ Employers must report wages earned by employees for unemployment insurance purposes; wages are reported on a quarterly basis.
 - ✓ Inmate records were matched to the database using social security numbers. Inmates with missing social security numbers (1,813) were not included in the study.
 - ✓ Some employers may not report wages to the TWC, as in some contract labor situations, which may result in the under-reporting of employment and wages earned.
- Participation in Project RIO was determined by matching the social security numbers of inmates in this study to Project RIO's database also maintained by the TWC.
 - ✓ Project RIO offers employment services to inmates both while incarcerated and after release.
 - ✓ Inmates did not have to participate in Project RIO during incarceration in order to receive job placement services after release from prison.

The Relationship Between Achievement in Prison and Post-Release Employment and Wages Will Be Analyzed



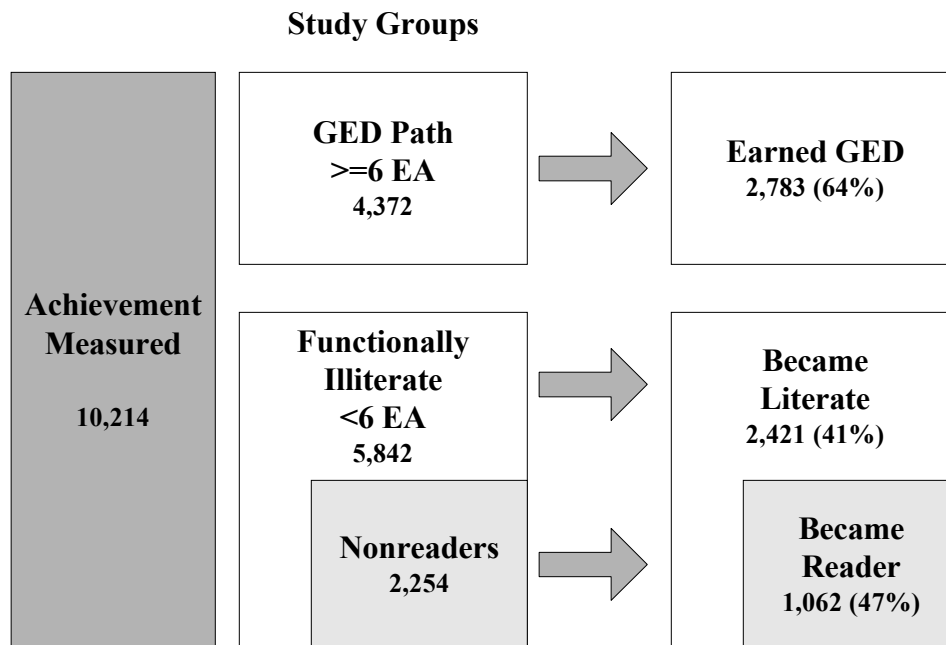
- This study examines the relationship between achievement of inmates participating in Windham academic and vocational programs while in prison and post-release employment and wages.
 - ✓ Inmates participating in Windham academic programs must have two or more EA tests to measure achievement. Inmates who entered with a High School diploma are not included in this group since they were not eligible to participate in adult basic educational achievement programs at the time of their incarceration.
 - ✓ Inmates who participated in Windham vocational programs are inmates who participated in either a WSD or college vocational program. Inmates who entered with a High School diploma are included in this group.
 - ✓ Inmates who did not participate include those who: were eligible to participate in either program, but did not; were not eligible to participate in either program (High School graduates could not participate in WSD academic programs but could participate in a college vocational program if they met the recommended EA score); or, participated in an academic program but did not have two tests.
 - ✓ Inmates “Served by Project RIO” are those releasees who received some type of employment assistance from this program after release from prison.
- Inmates could participate in both educational and vocational programs.
 - ✓ *Inmates could be counted twice if they participated in each program.

Measures of Employment Used in This Study



- Three measures were used to assess employment:
 - ✓ **Percent Employed:** The percent of releasees with any wages reported during the first year after release.
 - ✓ **Average Wages Earned:** Average of total wages reported to the TWC during the first year after release for inmates in the study. Releasees who did not have any wages reported during the follow-up year were excluded from the wage calculation.
 - ✓ **Average Number of Months Employed:** Wage and employment data are reported in quarters. To determine the average months worked, earnings for the year were divided by the amount earned at minimum wage in one month: \$822.70 (\$4.75 per hour x 40 hours x 4.33 weeks in one month).
 - ◆ For example, if the reported wages for the year were \$8,227.00, it was estimated that the releasee worked approximately 10 months during the year ($\$8,227 / \822.70).

Academic Study Groups are Used to Examine the Relationship Between Educational Achievement and Post-Release Employment

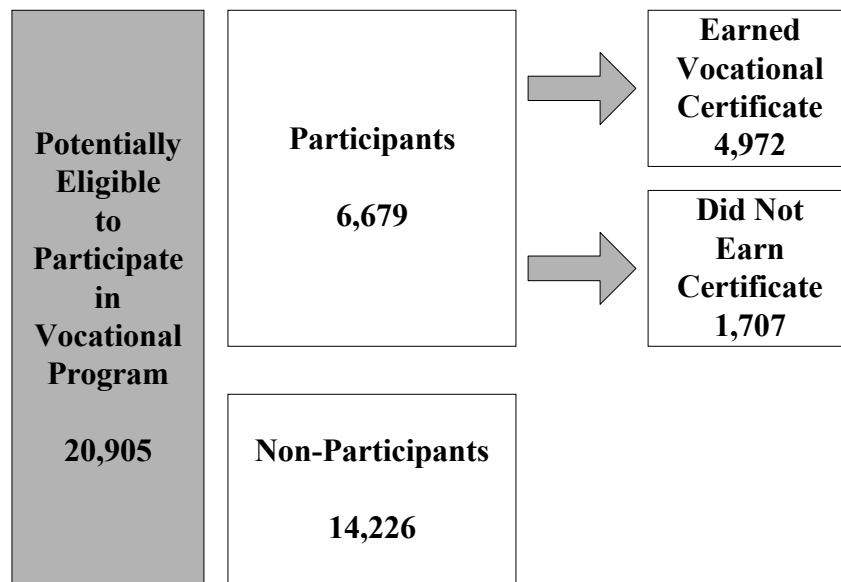


- The achievement of inmates participating in Windham academic programs is the focus of this study.
 - ✓ Groups are defined by educational achievement (EA) level at admission to prison.
 - ✓ Groups include only those participants who had at least two EA tests.

- Achievement relates to the attainment of a specific educational goal such as a Nonreader (EA Reading score < 4.0) becoming a Reader (EA Reading score ≥ 4.0).
 - ✓ The study groups are similar to those identified in the previous CJPC Windham study (*Educational Achievement of Inmates in the Windham School District*).
 - ◆ Inmates missing social security numbers were not included in the analysis.

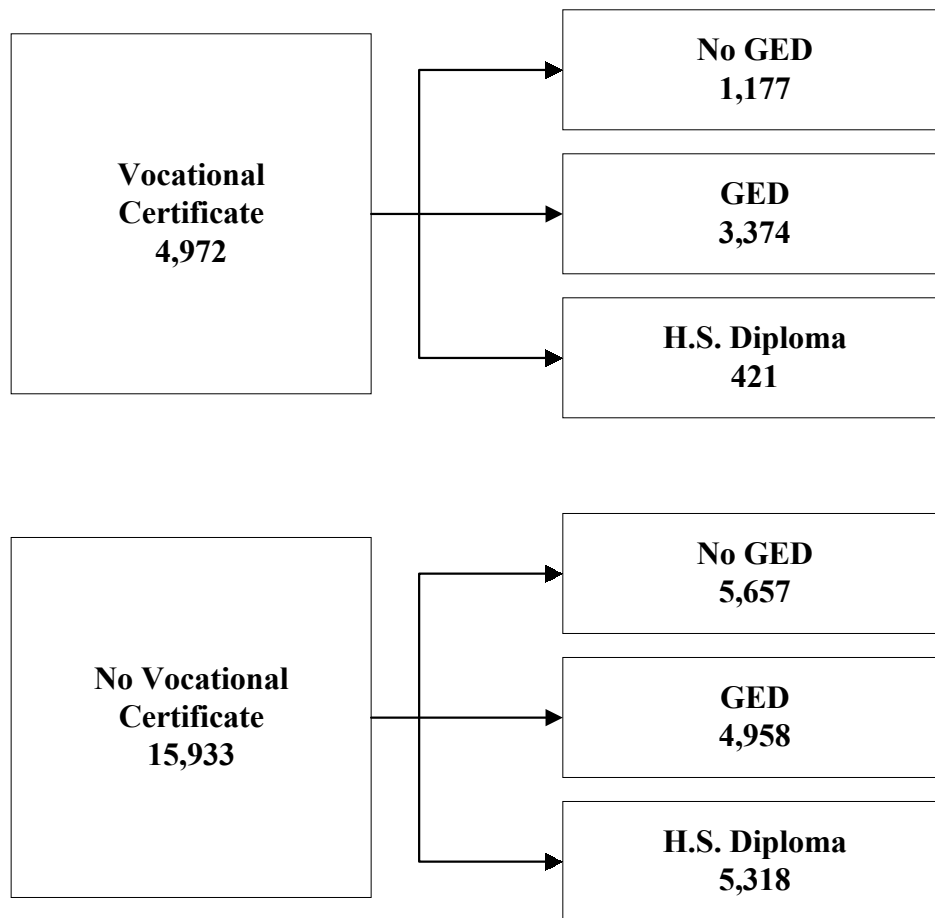
- The “Earned GED” group includes only those WSD academic participants who entered prison at a 6.0 EA level or greater and had two or more EA tests.
 - ✓ An additional 2,127 inmates earned a GED in prison. These GED completers include inmates with only one 1 EA test, those who did not participate in a WSD academic program but took GED test, or those who entered prison at an EA level below 6.0.
 - ◆ A total of 4,910 inmates in this study earned a GED in prison.

Vocational Study Groups are Used to Examine the Benefit of Earning a Vocational Certificate in Prison



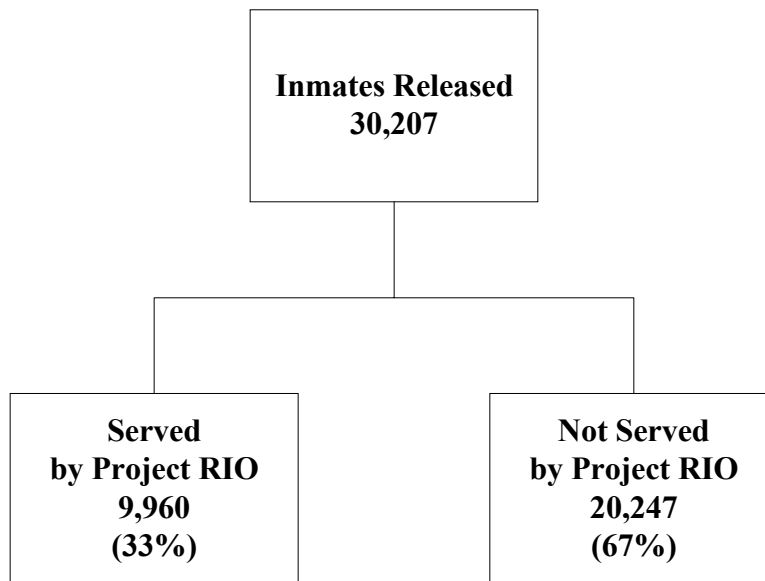
- Vocational or Career and Technology Education (CTE) programs in the WSD provide occupational training and industrial certification in 40 trade areas which may lead to a vocational certificate.
 - ✓ Inmates entering with a High School diploma were only eligible to participate in college vocational courses that may lead to a Certificate of Completion, as well as up to approximately 20 semester hours of college credit, to be earned upon satisfactory completion of the course.
 - ◆ 551 High School graduates participated and 421 earned a certificate.
- To participate in vocational training, the WSD recommends that an inmate have an EA level of 7.0 or higher.
 - ✓ Participants who did not have a GED must have been concurrently enrolled in adult education courses to raise their EA level to participate in vocational programs.
 - ✓ The WSD also tests inmates for aptitude and interest as a requirement for entering a vocational training program.
- While the WSD recommends that inmates have an EA of 7.0 to enter vocational programs, those with 6.0 or higher were allowed to participate. Thus, study groups for vocational certification were limited to inmates with a 6.0 EA or higher at exit from prison.
 - ✓ Exit EA scores were used to identify inmates who entered prison, or were able to raise their EA score during incarceration, to a level generally acceptable for participation in a vocational program.
- This report will examine the impact of earning a vocational certificate in prison on post-release employment and wages.

The Impact of Earning a Vocational Certificate Combined With Education Was Also Evaluated



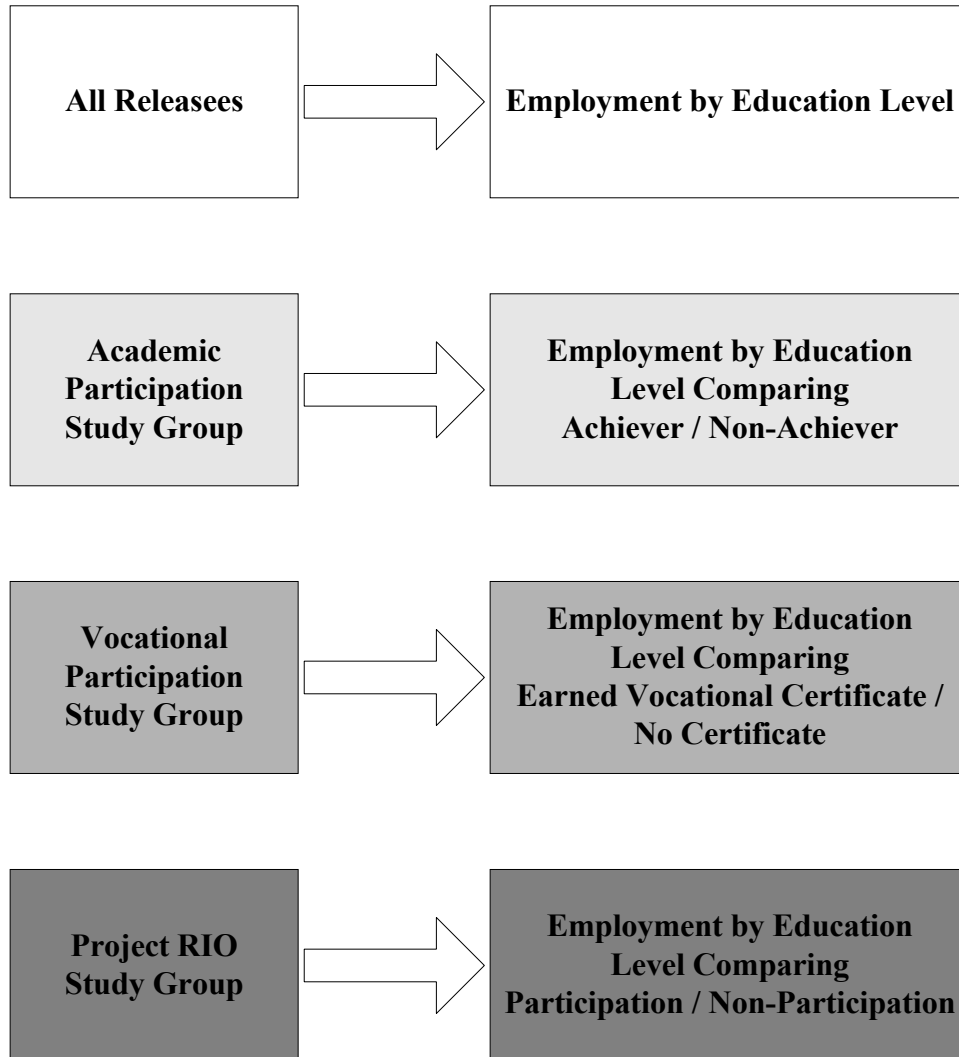
- Inmates with a GED could participate in vocational programs offered through the Windham School District or vocational programs offered by participating colleges.
- 42% (2,059 of 4,910) of all inmates who earned a GED in prison also earned a vocational certificate while incarcerated.
- Study groups were used to measure the impact of both education and vocational certification. These groups include all inmates with an EA level of 6.0 or higher at exit from prison.
 - ✓ Comparisons will be made between inmates who earned vocational certificates to those who did not.
 - ✓ The “No Vocational Certificate” group includes vocational participants who did not earn a certificate (1,707), as well as inmates who were eligible to participate in a WSD vocational program but did not (14,226).

In Addition, The Impact of Job Placement Services Provided by Project Rio Was Evaluated



- The impact of Project RIO (Re-Integration of Offenders) services on post-release employment and wages, in addition to educational achievement and vocational certification, was also examined.
 - ✓ All releases, regardless of WSD academic or vocational participation, were included.
 - ✓ Inmates entering prison with a High School diploma were eligible to participate in Project RIO.
 - ✓ Approximately 33% of all inmates in this study were served by Project RIO after release from prison.
- Project RIO is a joint project of the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ).
 - ✓ Project RIO assists inmates while in prison by developing an employability development plan based on the inmate's skills and work history, and by conducting job readiness training programs.
 - ✓ When inmates are released from prison they may report to Project RIO offices around the state to receive job placement services.
 - ✓ This report examines the relationship between inmates served by Project RIO after release from prison and post-release employment.
- Data from the TWC was analyzed by matching social security numbers of inmates in this study group with Project RIO service data.
 - ✓ Releasees who were "Served by Project RIO" are those who were provided one or more job placement services by a Project RIO employment specialist.
 - ✓ Services may include job search workshops, job readiness training, and job placement searches and services.

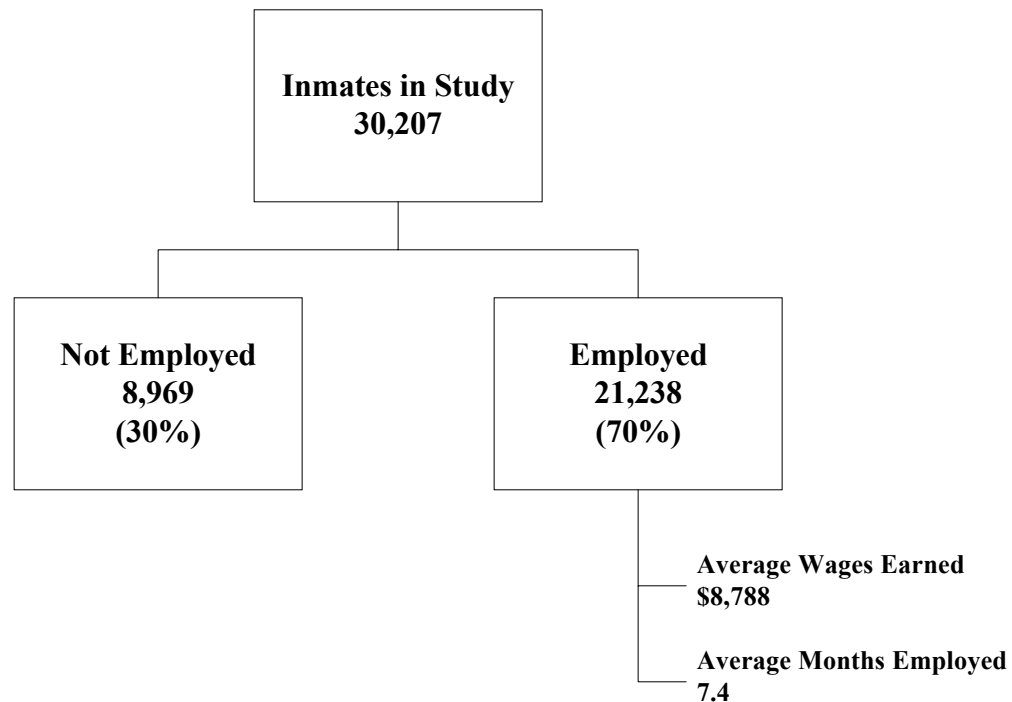
Summary of Different Study Groups



- The above groups and analysis were used to examine post-release employment and wages for this report.

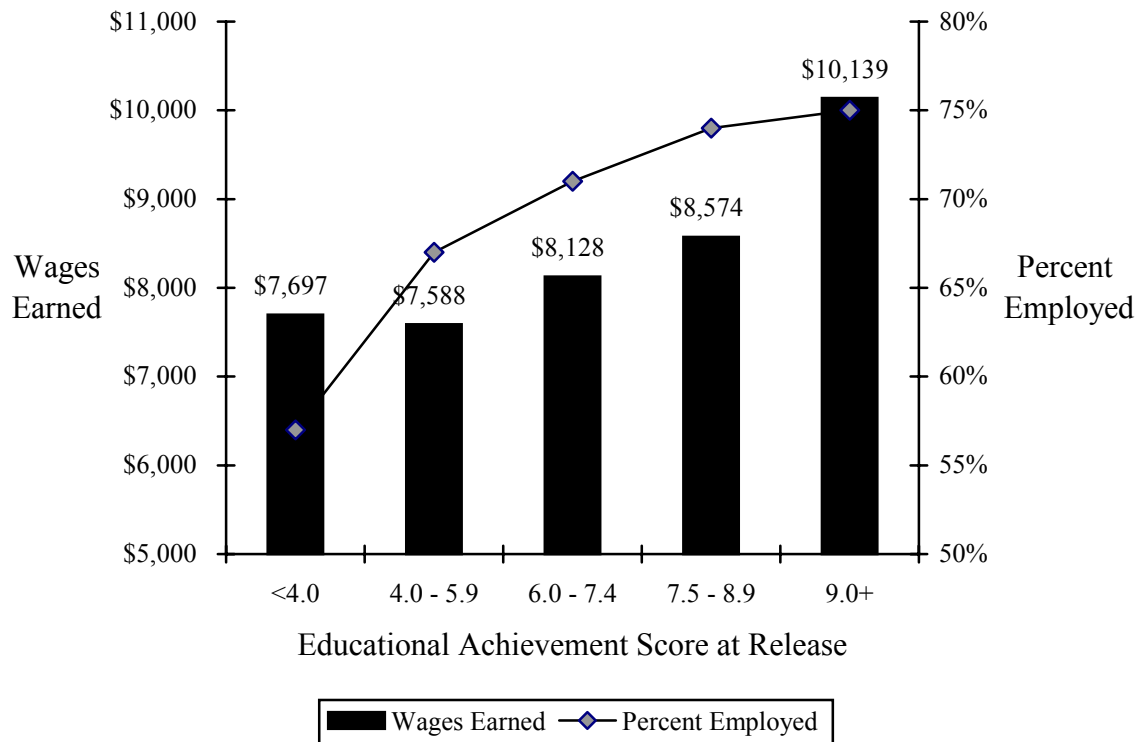
II. Post-Release Employment of Inmates

70% of Inmates Released Were Employed During the First Year After Release



- Approximately 30% of inmates in this study were not employed in the year following release.
 - ✓ Inmates were “employed” if employment and wage data indicated that they were employed for at least one day during one quarter of the year.
- In general, inmates have difficulty obtaining and maintaining employment after release due to their low education and skill levels, as well as the stigma of having a criminal background.
 - ✓ Recidivism also negatively impacts each of these employment measures.
 - ✓ The unemployment rate in Texas in September 1998 was 4.8%.
- Inmates in this study earned an average of \$8,788 in an estimated 7.4 months of employment at minimum wage. If these wages were annualized over a 12-month period they would equal \$14,251 a year.
 - ✓ Wages earned during the year ranged from \$2 to \$92,309.
 - ✓ The State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (SOICC) estimates that persons earning a GED in 1997 earned an average of \$11,736 a year, while students exiting Community and Technical colleges earned an average of \$21,692 a year.

Inmates With the Highest Educational Achievement Scores at Release From Prison Were the Most Likely to Be Employed and Earn the Highest Wages



- The chart above shows the relationship between educational level at release for all inmates in the study, as well as their wages earned and percent employed in the year following release.
 - ✓ Inmates with a High School diploma or GED were included based on their EA levels.
- In general, as EA scores increase, the percent of inmates employed and wages earned both increase during the year after release.
 - ✓ For example, inmates leaving prison with an EA score below 4.0 earned an average of \$7,697 in the year after release. Approximately 57% of these inmates were employed at some time in the year.
 - ✓ Inmates leaving prison with an EA of 9.0 or greater earned an average of \$10,139 in the year after release. Approximately 75% of these inmates were employed at some time in the year.

Anglos, Males, and Older Inmates Had the Highest Wages of Those Employed in the Year After Release

Characteristics of Releasees	Percent Employed	Average Wages Earned	Number of Months Employed
Gender			
Female	70%	\$6,455	6.2
Male	70%	\$9,150	7.5
Education			
No H.S. or GED	65%	\$7,769	6.7
GED	76%	\$9,041	7.6
H.S. Diploma	73%	\$10,056	8.1
Race/Ethnicity			
African American	71%	\$7,702	6.8
Hispanic	70%	\$9,121	7.6
Anglo	70%	\$10,001	7.9
Age at Release			
<35	76%	\$8,242	7.1
≥35	63%	\$9,699	7.8
Offense Type			
Violent	71%	\$9,392	7.9
Property	74%	\$7,980	6.9
Drug	67%	\$8,500	7.2
DWI	66%	\$12,386	8.9
IQ Score			
50-70	60%	\$7,173	6.5
71-99	70%	\$8,476	7.2
100+	74%	\$9,774	7.8

- The percent employed, wages earned, and months employed varied by offender characteristics.
- This study examined offender characteristics to determine if educational achievement or offender characteristics were associated with differences in employment outcomes.
 - ✓ Regardless of characteristic, those with higher levels of education had higher employment rates and earned more.

III. Educational Achievement and Employment

Educational Achievement in the Windham School District is Associated with Increased Employment and Wages Earned After Release

		Percent Employed	Average Wages Earned in Year After Release	Average Months Employed in Year After Release
Nonreaders				
Stayed Nonreader	(1,192)	56%	\$7,978	6.6
Became Reader	(1,062)	66%	\$7,928	7.0
Functionally Illiterate				
Stayed Illiterate	(3,421)	61%	\$7,582	6.5
Became Literate	(2,421)	72%	\$8,075	7.0
GED Path Group				
Did not Earn GED	(1,589)	72%	\$7,954	6.9
Earned GED	(2,783)	77%	\$8,912	7.6

- In general, the higher the educational achievement, the higher the average percent employed and average wages earned in the first year following release.
- Inmates included in the academic study groups are WSD participants who had two or more EA tests.
 - ✓ The Nonreaders are inmates who entered prison functioning below a 4th grade reading level.
 - ◆ Inmates who did not achieve, or “Stayed Nonreaders,” are those who did not attain a score of 4.0 or higher on a subsequent EA reading test.
 - ✓ The Functionally Illiterate group consists of inmates who entered prison functioning below a 6th grade level on the composite EA test.
 - ◆ Inmates who did not achieve, or “Stayed Illiterate,” are those who did not attain a score of 6.0 or higher on a subsequent composite EA test.
 - ✓ The GED Path Group are inmates who entered prison functioning at a 6th grade level or higher on the entry EA test and did not have a GED at entry to prison.
 - ◆ Inmates who did not achieve, or “Did Not Earn GED,” are those who did not pass all portions of the GED.
- Non-achievers may have increased EA scores but did not achieve goals such as becoming a Reader, becoming Functionally Literate, or earning a GED.

Nonreaders Who Became Readers Had Higher Employment Rates, But There Was Little Difference in Wages Earned

	Percent Employed	Average Wages Earned in Year After Release	Average Months Employed in Year After Release
< 4 Reading at Entry			
Stayed Nonreader	56%	\$7,978	6.6
Became Reader	66%	\$7,928	7.0
Became Reader and Gained to:			
4.0-4.9 Reading Level	62%	\$7,475	6.6
5.0-6.9 Reading Level	69%	\$7,978	7.2
7.0+ Reading Level	69%	\$8,634	7.1

- While there was little difference between the wages earned for inmates remaining Nonreaders and inmates who became Readers, wages did increase with gain in educational achievement score for inmates who became Readers.
- 66% of inmates who became Readers were employed during the first year of release in comparison to 56% of inmates who remained Nonreaders.
- 27% of all Nonreaders (<4 Reading at Entry) had low IQ scores (50-70).
 - ✓ Inmates with low IQ scores accounted for 31% of those who were unemployed in the Nonreader group.
 - ✓ 24% of employed inmates in the Nonreader group had low IQ scores.
 - ◆ Inmates with low IQ scores earned an average of \$7,313 in comparison to earnings of \$8,341 for inmates who had IQs of 71 and above.

Functionally Illiterate Inmates Who Advanced Their EA Score Above 6.0 Had Higher Employment Rates and Wages Than Those Who Remained Functionally Illiterate

	Percent Employed	Average Wages Earned in Year After Release	Average Months Employed in Year After Release
< 6 EA at Entry			
Stayed Functionally Illiterate	61%	\$7,582	6.5
Became Literate	72%	\$8,075	7.0
Became Literate and Gained to:			
6.0-6.9 Composite EA	71%	\$7,497	6.7
7.0-8.9 Composite EA	73%	\$8,554	7.2
9.0+ Composite EA	78%	\$8,629	7.9

- Inmates who became Functionally Literate (increased their EA score from below 6.0 to 6.0 and above) earned \$493 more than those remaining below a 6.0 EA.
 - ✓ 72% of inmates who became Literate were employed during their first year of release in comparison to 61% of inmates who remained Functionally Illiterate.

- The higher the achieved EA score, the higher the wages and employment.
 - ✓ Inmates who increased their EA to 9.0 and above earned \$1,047 more than inmates who remained Functionally Illiterate.

- 17% of inmates in the Functionally Illiterate group (<6 Composite EA at Entry) had low IQ scores (50-70).
 - ✓ Inmates with low IQ scores accounted for 20% of those who were unemployed in the Functionally Illiterate group.
 - ✓ 15% of employed inmates in the Functionally Illiterate group had low IQ scores.
 - ◆ Inmates with low IQ scores made an average of \$7,291 in comparison to earnings of \$7,933 for inmates who had IQs of 71 and above.

Inmates Earning A GED in Prison Had The Highest Post-Release Employment Rates and Wages Earned of The Adult Basic Education Study Groups

	Percent Employed	Average Wages Earned in Year After Release	Average Months Employed in Year After Release
≥ 6 EA at Entry, GED Path			
Did not Earn GED	72%	\$7,954	6.9
Earned GED	77%	\$8,912	7.6
Earned GED and Exited at:			
6.0 – 8.9 Composite EA	77%	\$8,300	7.3
9.0 – 10.9 Composite EA	77%	\$8,333	7.4
11.0+ Composite EA	76%	\$10,542	8.1

- Inmates earning a GED in prison earned an average of \$958 more in the first year of release than participating inmates who did not earn a GED.
 - ✓ This difference increased to \$2,588 for inmates earning a GED and increasing their EA score to 11.0 and above.
 - ✓ 77% of inmates who earned a GED were employed in comparison to 72% of inmates who did not earn a GED.

- A separate analysis was conducted for inmates who entered prison with a GED.
 - ✓ This group consists of inmates who entered prison with a 6.0 or higher composite EA. These inmates participated in WSD academic programs as a means to increase their composite EA scores so that they could meet the requirements to participate in college courses.
 - ◆ Inmates entering prison with a GED who went on to participate in college courses after participating in a WSD program had a 77% employment rate and earned an average of \$10,232 during the first year after release.
 - ◆ Inmates entering prison with a GED who participated in WSD programs but did not participate in college courses while in prison had an 80% employment rate and earned an average of \$9,403 during their first year of release.

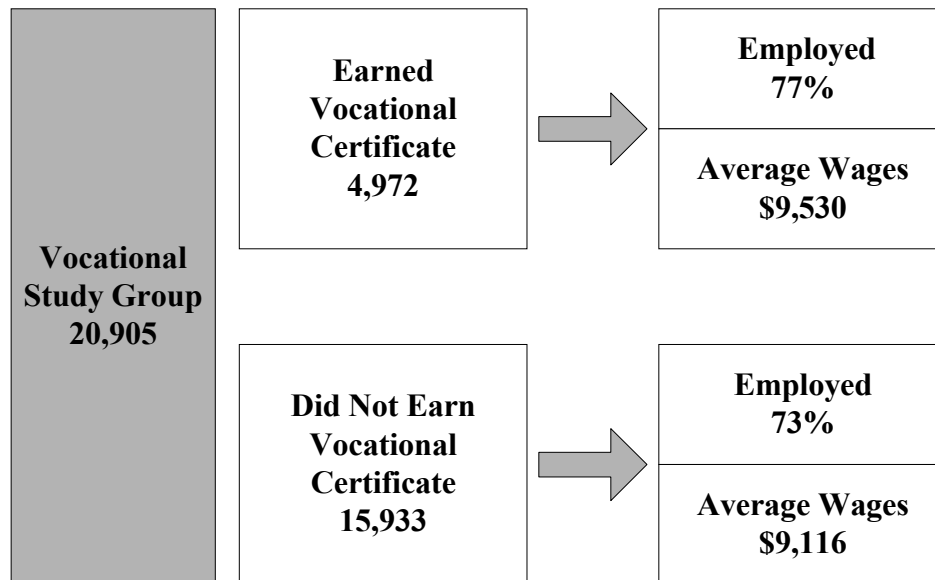
Educational Achievement in Prison was Associated with Employment Gains Regardless of Inmate Characteristics

	Percent Employed		Average Wages Earned in Year After Release	
	Did Not Achieve	Achieved	Did Not Achieve	Achieved
Total	65%	73%	\$7,716	\$8,440
Gender				
Female	60%	75%	\$6,219	\$6,441
Male	65%	73%	\$7,927	\$8,755
Race / Ethnicity				
African American	65%	74%	\$7,113	\$7,692
Hispanic	65%	72%	\$8,473	\$9,062
Anglo	64%	74%	\$7,848	\$9,158
Age at Release				
<35	70%	77%	\$7,175	\$8,130
≥35	57%	67%	\$8,570	\$9,094

- Inmates who “Achieved” are those who became Readers, became Functionally Literate, or earned a GED.
 - ✓ 58% of inmates (5,952 of 10,214) with two or more tests achieved.
- Achievers had higher employment rates and wages earned than inmates who did not achieve.
 - ✓ 73% of achievers were employed in comparison to 65% of non-achievers.
 - ✓ Achievers earned \$724 more than non-achievers during the first year of release.
- Increases in employment rates and wages earned were associated with educational achievement and were not simply a function of participants’ characteristics such as gender, race/ethnicity, or age.
 - ✓ For example, African Americans who achieved had higher employment rates and wages earned than African Americans who did not achieve.

IV. Vocational Certification and Employment

Earning a Vocational Certificate is Associated With Higher Employment Rates and Wages



- The Vocational Study Group consists of inmates whose highest EA score was 6.0 or greater at exit from prison.
 - ✓ All inmates with an exit EA score of 6.0 or greater were included.
 - ✓ 421 inmates who entered prison with a High School diploma earned a college vocational certificate.
- Inmates who earned a vocational certificate in prison had higher employment rates and wages earned than inmates who did not earn a vocational certificate.
- EA scores were similar for inmates who earned a vocational certificate (9.6) and those who did not (9.4).
- Inmates who participated but did not complete a vocational certificate had higher employment rates than inmates who did not participate in vocational training: 76% and 72%, respectively.
 - ✓ However, inmates who did not participate in vocational training earned \$897 more than inmates who participated but did not earn certification (\$9,217 compared to \$8,320).

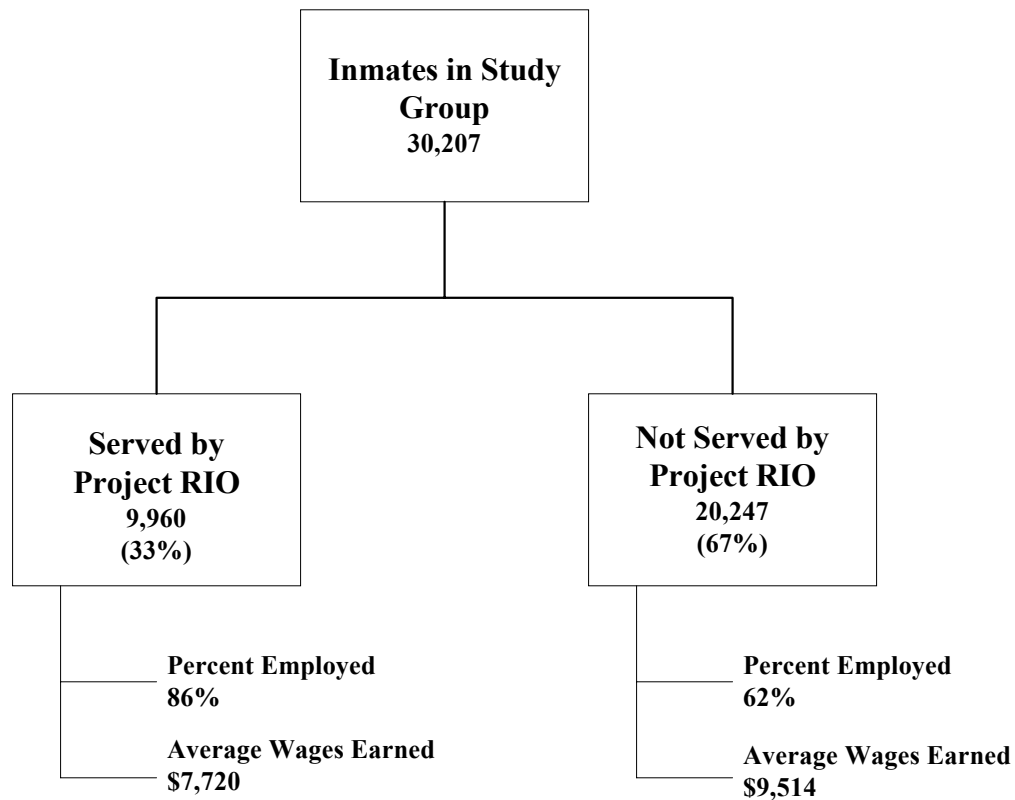
Earning a Vocational Certificate in Addition to a GED Adds to Employment Gains

Educational Achievement (≥6 EA at exit)	Percent Employed		Average Wages Earned in First Year of Release	
	Did Not Earn Vocational Certificate	Earned Vocational Certificate	Did Not Earn Vocational Certificate	Earned Vocational Certificate
Did not Earn GED in Prison	69%	75%	\$8,075	\$8,364
Earned GED in Prison	75%	77%	\$8,587	\$9,383
Entered Prison with GED	75%	79%	\$8,838	\$10,062
Entered Prison with HS Diploma	74%	78%	\$10,542	\$11,676
Overall	73%	77%	\$9,116	\$9,530

- Groups include all inmates who had an EA score of 6.0 or greater at exit from prison, regardless of participation in a WSD academic program.
- Inmates who earned a vocational certificate in prison in combination with an educational degree had higher employment rates and wages than inmates who only earned a vocational certificate.
 - ✓ For example, inmates who earned a GED and a vocational certificate earned \$796 more than those inmates who earned a GED only.
- High School graduates who earned a college vocational certificate in prison earned \$11,676 in the first year after release compared to \$9,331 earned by other vocational certificate completers without a High School diploma.
 - ✓ Inmates with a GED (entered prison with a GED or earned a GED in prison) and vocational certificate earned \$9,657 while inmates who completed only a vocational certificate earned \$8,364.

V. Project RIO and Employment

Releases Served by Project RIO Had Higher Employment Rates But Lower Wages Than Releases Not Served by Project RIO



- There were no differences in the characteristics (race/ethnicity, age, education, etc.) of the group served by Project RIO and the group not served by Project RIO that would account for the differences in employment rates and wages.
- Releaseses served by Project RIO were those that needed assistance finding a job. Releaseses not served by Project RIO may have had higher job skills and experience and did not require assistance from Project RIO in finding employment.
- While 32% of inmates who participated in a WSD academic program were served by Project RIO after release from prison, 38% of inmates who participated in a vocational program also received employment assistance.

Higher Employment Rates for Inmates Served by Project RIO were Associated With More Inmates Employed in Lower Paying Jobs



- Inmates served by Project RIO had higher employment rates but lower wages than inmates not served by Project RIO. This appears to be the result of placing additional inmates served by Project RIO in lower paying jobs rather than remaining unemployed.
- This relationship was examined by determining the percent of inmates earning over \$10,000 and under \$10,000, as well as the percent of unemployed inmates, during the first year after release.
 - ✓ While 26% of the Project RIO participant group and 24% of the non-participant group earned over \$10,000, 60% of inmates served by Project RIO made less than \$10,000 compared to 39% of inmates not served by Project RIO.
 - ✓ Releasees served by Project RIO had lower unemployment rates than releasees not served by Project RIO (14% vs. 38%).

Higher Employment Rates and Lower Wages for Inmates Served by Project RIO Persisted Regardless of Academic Achievement or Vocational Certification

	Percent Employed		Average Wages Earned First Year of Release	
	Served by RIO	Not Served by RIO	Served by RIO	Not Served by RIO
Did Not Earn GED or Vocational Certificate	84%	62%	\$6,958	\$8,773
No GED/ Earned Vocational Certificate	88%	68%	\$7,531	\$8,997
Earned GED / No Vocational Certificate	89%	68%	\$7,234	\$9,425
Earned GED and Earned Vocational Certificate	90%	69%	\$8,311	\$10,272

- The results presented above are for inmates who exited prison with an EA score of 6.0 or higher and who did not have a GED or High School diploma at entrance to prison.
 - ✓ All inmates, regardless of participation in a WSD academic program, are included.

- Releasees served by Project RIO consistently had higher employment rates, but lower wages, than releasees not served by Project RIO.
 - ✓ Additional analyses indicated that these relationships were similar for the other types of educational achievement (Functionally Illiterate and Nonreader study groups).



VI. Summary

Biggest Bang for Educational \$\$\$? GED and Vocational Certification

	Percent of Achievers Employed	Difference in Wages Earned	Educational Instruction Hours for Achievers
Nonreader to Reader	66%	- \$50	1,005
Illiterate to Literate	72%	+ \$493	827
No GED to Earned GED	77%	+ \$958	459
No GED / No Vocational Certificate to GED and Vocational Certificate	77%	+ \$1,308	--

- Of the three educational achievement study groups, the Nonreader and the Functionally Illiterate groups required the greatest number of instructional hours, had lower employment rates, and exhibited less gain in wages associated with their educational achievement in comparison to the GED study group.
 - ✓ In terms of percent employed, achievers did better than non-achievers for all groups.
- Inmates in the GED educational achievement group who completed a GED, and inmates who earned a GED with a vocational certificate, had the highest employment rates and gain in wages of the groups examined.
 - ✓ Differences are associated with educational levels at exit and vocational training skills attained in prison.
- The GED and Vocational group consists of all inmates who earned a GED regardless of having participated in a WSD academic program.
 - ✓ Hours of participation could not be calculated for this group since not all inmates who earned a GED with a vocational certificate had educational hours to report.
- If similar findings are identified in the upcoming recidivism study, the research could suggest that current prioritization practices favoring inmates with the greatest educational deficits be reversed so that resources will be reallocated to emphasize GED and vocational certification attainment.

Is Educational Achievement in Prison Also Related to Post-Release Recidivism?

- The statutorily established goals of the Windham School District include:
 - ✓ Increasing the success of former inmates in obtaining and maintaining employment
 - ✓ Reducing recidivism
- Educational achievement of inmates participating in the Windham School District is associated with increased post-release employment rates and higher wages earned.
- The Criminal Justice Policy Council will determine recidivism rates of inmates in this study to evaluate the relationship between educational achievement in prison and post-release recidivism in a subsequent report.
 - ✓ The same study groups in this study, and the previous report examining educational achievement, will be used in the upcoming recidivism study.
 - ✓ Recidivism rates will be determined by calculating the percent of inmates who were released in fiscal years 1997 and 1998 and who have returned to prison within 2 years of release.
- The Criminal Justice Policy Council will also present a report examining employment by occupation and training received in a vocational program for inmates in this study.