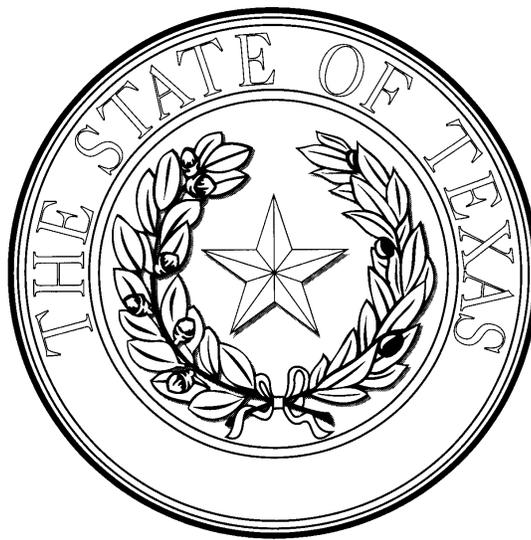


Impact of Educational Achievement of Inmates in the Windham School District on Recidivism



Criminal Justice Policy Council
August 2000

Tony Fabelo, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Impact of Educational Achievement of Inmates in the Windham School District on Recidivism

*To view or download this report, visit our website at
www.cjpc.state.tx.us*

Criminal Justice Policy Council
P.O. Box 13332
Austin, Texas 78711-3332
(512) 463-1810

Researched and Written By:

Alma I. Martinez
Michael Eisenberg

Contributors:

Nancy Arrigona
Lisa Riechers

Note From The Director

The Criminal Justice Policy Council has been evaluating the performance of the prison educational system – the Windham School District. Three prior reports have reviewed the operations of the Windham School District, examined the educational achievement of inmates participating in Windham programs, and analyzed the impact of educational achievement on post-release employment. This final report examines the relationship between educational achievement in prison and recidivism. Over 25,000 inmates were tracked in the community after release from prison to determine the number that were re-incarcerated after two years and how educational achievement during their most recent incarceration may have impacted their recidivism. To allow for this examination, only “first releases” – inmates released from prison for the first time – were tracked. Recidivism rates are usually reported by the CJPC for all releases, therefore, recidivism rates presented in this report differ slightly from those shown previously.

A number of factors need to be examined in order to understand the relationship between educational achievement and recidivism. Age of the inmate, type of incarceration offense, post-release employment, and wages earned, impact recidivism. For example, younger releasees who commit property crimes tend to have higher recidivism rates than older property offenders, regardless of educational achievement. Therefore, the analysis to determine the impact of educational achievement in prison on recidivism rates was conducted separately by age and type of offense to “tease out” the impact of these factors on recidivism. The relationship of employment, and earnings of releasees while employed, to recidivism was also examined.

In general, inmates with higher levels of education tend to have lower recidivism rates. Inmates with a 9th grade education or higher had an 18% lower recidivism rate than those with a 4th grade education or lower (14% were re-incarcerated after two years compared to 17%). Prison education has a positive impact in reducing recidivism for those inmates who improve their educational level. The largest impact on recidivism rates occurred when high risk inmates (young property offenders) who were Nonreaders became Readers. High risk Nonreaders who learned to read had a 37% lower recidivism rate than high risk Nonreaders who did not learn to read (19% recidivism rate compared to 30%). High risk offenders who were Functionally Illiterate and became Functionally Literate also benefited from their educational achievement resulting in a 17% lower recidivism rate (24% recidivism rate for young property offenders who became Literate compared to 29% for those who did not). Older property offenders who became Literate also benefited from a 14% lower recidivism rate (19% of older property offenders who became Literate recidivated compared to 22% of those who did not achieve literacy). In general, those releasees who earned a GED in prison had lower recidivism rates than those who did not complete one.

Acquiring a vocational certificate did not have a significant impact on recidivism: inmates who earned a vocational certificate had a 16% recidivism rate compared to 15% for inmates who did not earn a vocational certificate in prison. Little difference was noted even after

Note From The Director

considering age and type of offense. The apparent non-impact of vocational certification on recidivism may reflect the fact that only 21% of inmates who earned a certificate obtained employment in their field of training.

As reported in the prior report of June 2000, the higher the education level of releasees, the greater their job prospects and earnings potential. Releasees who were employed had a 17% lower recidivism rate than those who were not employed (15% of those employed in the first year after release recidivated within two years compared to 18% for those who were not employed). As reported in the previous study, releasees served by Project RIO, an employment services program administered by the Texas Workforce Commission, were more likely to be employed (86%) than releasees not served by Project RIO (62%). However, Project RIO and non-Project RIO releasees who were employed had the same recidivism rates (15%). Therefore, while Project RIO serves to employ more inmates upon release, Project RIO participation does not bring about a reduction in recidivism. It is unknown if Project RIO participants are a less employable population than non-Project RIO participants.

The findings of this series of reports suggest that present inmate educational policies have a positive impact on recidivism. However, this impact can be enhanced by allocating more resources to high risk (young property offenders) inmates over longer periods of their incarceration. Instructional resources are currently prioritized toward inmates with the most significant educational deficits. These inmates tend to be disproportionately lower risk older inmates who consume more education time per grade improvement. Presently, inmates receive an average of 604 hours of education instruction (approximately one year) during their incarceration due to limited program resources. During this time, inmates are able to raise their grade levels by an average of 1.5 grades. Targeting young offenders who have higher recidivism rates, and an ability to advance faster with less instruction, may be a more effective approach than focusing on older offenders who have the greatest educational deficits but lowest recidivism rates.

Concentrating further educational resources on advancing the grade level of high risk young offenders should have a more dramatic impact in reducing recidivism rates than the impact experienced under the present policy. The tradeoff, of course, is that fewer inmates will receive educational services, but those that do will receive more instruction over longer periods than is possible under the present policy. Finally, efforts to strengthen post-release employment job placement services for inmates earning vocational certificates may result in more releasees obtaining employment in their area of training and aid in achieving lower recidivism rates for this group.

Tony Fabelo, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Acknowledgments

The Criminal Justice Policy Council would like to thank Mike Morrow, Superintendent of the Windham School District (WSD), Marjie Haynes, Director of Programs, Richard Yawn, Director of Operational Support, and Burt Ellison, Project RIO Director for the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), for their assistance and review of this report.



I. Overview of Study

Does Educational Achievement in Prison Lead to Lower Post-Release Recidivism Rates?

An Overview of the Study

- The Criminal Justice Policy Council (CJPC) has issued three reports evaluating the Windham School District.
 - ✓ The first report, issued in February 2000 (*An Overview of the Windham School District*), presented an overview of Windham operations and a design for the evaluation of their programs.
 - ✓ The second report, issued in April 2000 (*Educational Achievement of Inmates in the Windham School District*), evaluated the educational achievement of inmates participating in educational programs in Texas prisons.
 - ✓ The third report, issued in June 2000 (*Impact of Educational Achievement of Inmates in the Windham School District on Post-Release Employment*), examined 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 current report examines the relationship between educational achievement in prison and post-release recidivism for inmates tracked for two years after their release from prison.
 - ✓ The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) and the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) provided re-incarceration data.
 - ◆ Inmate records were matched to these databases through the use of state identification numbers (SID).
 - ✓ This report tracks the re-incarceration experience of 25,980 inmates who were released from TDCJ prisons between September 1, 1996, and May 31, 1998.
 - ◆ 4,227 inmates from the previous CJPC employment study were dropped from this study because they did not have two years of release experience.
- The study groups used in this report to examine the impact of Windham programs on recidivism are similar to those found in the previous reports. These study groups include:
 - ✓ Academic achievement groups: Nonreaders becoming Readers (increasing reading EA score to 4.0 or higher), Functionally Illiterate becoming Literate (increasing EA score to ≥ 6.0), and the GED Path group working towards or earning a GED
 - ✓ Vocational certification groups: eligible inmates who did or did not earn a vocational certificate
 - ✓ Groups by employment and earnings (\$10,000 and over or less than \$10,000)

Recidivism Measure Used in This Study

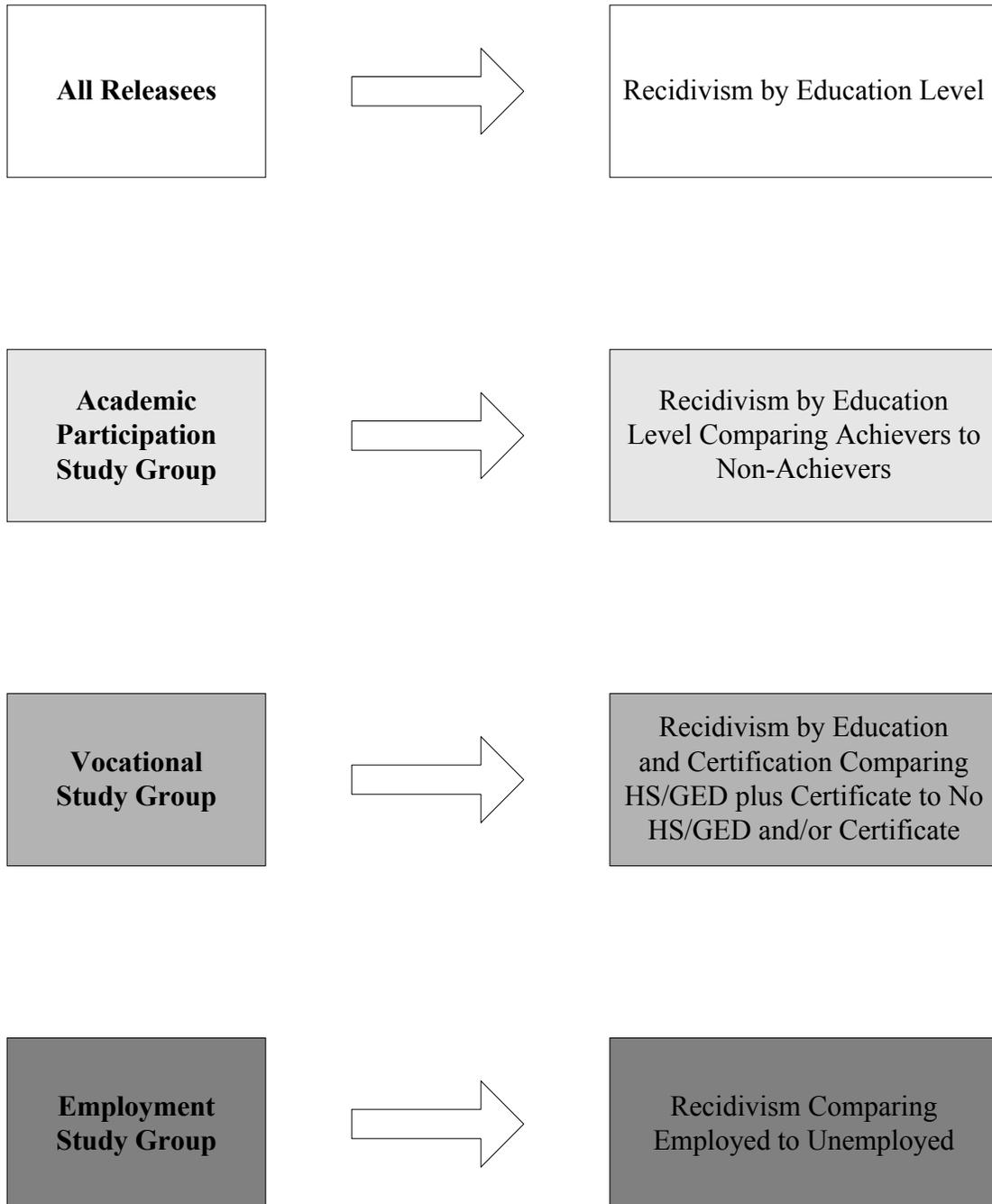


- Recidivism is defined as the reoccurrence of criminal behavior or supervision violations resulting in a re-incarceration for inmates released from prison in fiscal years 1997 and 1998.
 - ✓ Inmates were tracked for two years after their release from prison.
 - ✓ Inmates were “first releases,” that is, inmates released from prison for the first time.
 - ✓ Using a sample of “first releases” from prison allows for an examination of the relationship of educational achievement in prison to post-release recidivism, independent of any other programs or services inmates may have received during previous incarcerations.
 - ✓ Recidivism refers to the percent of releasees who were re-incarcerated in TDCJ’s Institutional or State Jail Divisions within two years of their release (after their original release date in FY 1997 or 1998), according to data collected from the TDCJ and DPS databases.
- Inmates in the group released between June 1, 1998, and August 31, 1998, were excluded from this study, as they did not have two full years of release experience when recidivism was calculated.

Summary of Different Study Groups

- The relationship between academic achievement and/or vocational training and recidivism is the focus of this report. The study examines the relationship between educational achievement scores and recidivism for all inmates released, as well as the relationship between achievement of inmates participating in Windham programs and recidivism.
- The relationship between specific achievements of inmates and recidivism was examined. Inmate achievement groups include:
 - ✓ 1,949 Nonreaders who participated in Windham academic programs, 47% (915) of whom improved their EA reading score to 4.0 and above.
 - ✓ 4,947 Functionally Illiterate inmates who participated in Windham academic programs, 41% (2,036) of whom increased their EA score to 6.0 and above.
 - ✓ 3,731 inmates with an EA score of 6.0 or greater at entrance to prison who participated in Windham academic programs, 64% (2,400) of whom earned a GED.
 - ✓ 17,974 inmates who were eligible to participate in vocational training programs.
 - ◆ Of the eligible, 5,701 participated and 4,213 earned a vocational certificate.
 - ✓ The impact of earning a vocational certificate and educational achievement on recidivism was also examined.
- The impact of employment and earnings on recidivism was also examined.
 - ✓ 70% of inmates were employed during their first year of release.
- The study groups described above are presented graphically on the next page.

Summary of Different Study Groups





II. Recidivism Rates

16% of Releasees Were Back in Prison Within Two Years of Release



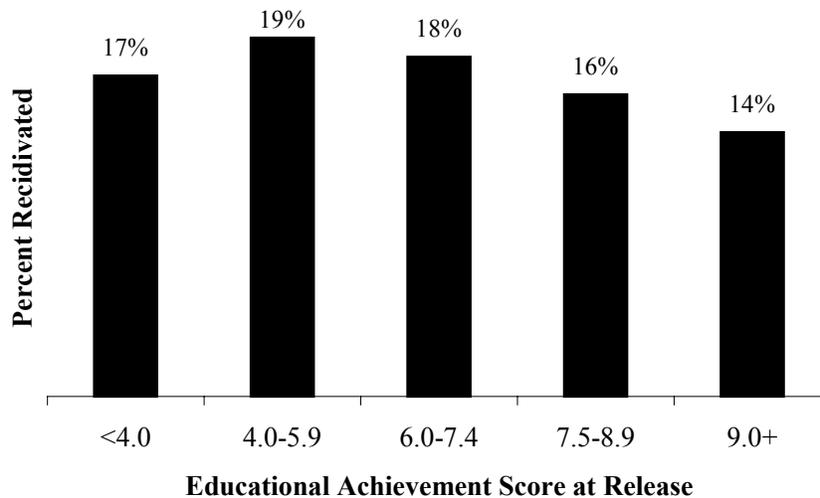
- Sixteen percent of inmates released for the first time between 1997 and 1998 had returned to prison within two years of their release.
 - ✓ Inmates “recidivated” if the data indicated that they had been re-incarcerated within two years of their initial release from prison.
 - ✓ First releasees were selected in an effort to isolate educational achievement occurring during a single prison experience.
 - ✓ Inmates who are first releasees generally have lower recidivism rates than all releasees (which includes inmates who have been incarcerated previously).
 - ◆ An upcoming CJPC study of all inmates released in fiscal years 1997 and 1998 reports a 20% recidivism rate after two years.
- Of the first releasees in the study who were re-incarcerated, 27% (1,126) were re-incarcerated within one year of release while the remaining 73% (3,048) returned to prison during their second year of release.
 - ✓ Date of release and date of re-incarceration (not date of arrest or violation) were used to calculate time of return to prison.

Younger, Male Offenders Had the Highest Recidivism Rates Within Two Years of Release

<i>Characteristics</i>	Percent Recidivated
Gender	
Female	11%
Male	17%
Race/Ethnicity	
African American	17%
Hispanic	14%
Anglo	16%
Age at Release	
<35	18%
≥35	14%
IQ Score	
50-70	17%
71-99	17%
100+	15%

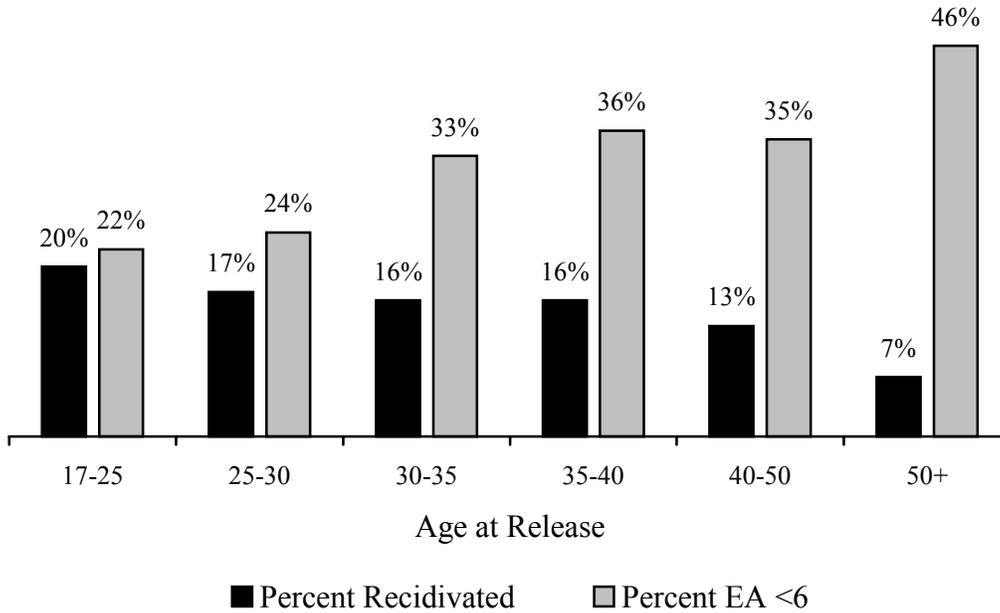
- Recidivism rates varied by offender characteristics.
- This study examines offender characteristics to determine if differences in recidivism rates were associated with educational achievement or offender characteristics.

Releasees With Higher Educational Achievement Scores Have Lower Recidivism Rates



- The chart above shows the relationship between educational achievement level at release and recidivism for all inmates in the study.
 - ✓ Inmates with a High School diploma or GED were included based on their educational achievement (EA) scores.
- In general, as EA scores increase, the percent of inmates who recidivated within two years of release decreased.
 - ✓ For example, inmates leaving prison with an EA score below 4.0 had a recidivism rate of 17%, while inmates who exited with an EA of 9.0 or greater had a recidivism rate of 14% at the end of their two-year release period.
 - ✓ The recidivism rate for the group with the highest educational achievement scores (9.0+) is 18% lower than the lowest educational achievement score group (<4.0).
- A number of factors such as age and offense are also related to both educational achievement and recidivism. As indicated on the following pages, these factors may confound the relationship between education and recidivism.
 - ✓ As age increases, recidivism decreases.
 - ✓ Older inmates have low educational achievement scores.
 - ✓ Property offenders have high recidivism rates.

Older Inmates Have the Lowest Educational Achievement Scores as Well as the Lowest Recidivism Rates



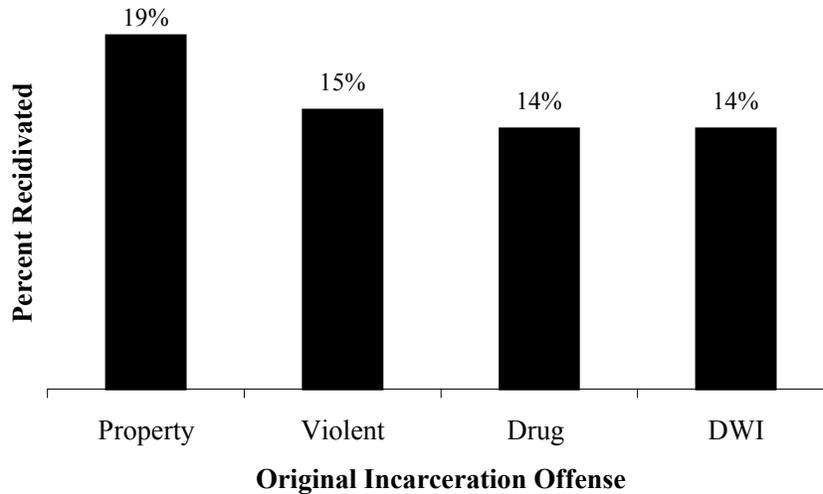
- Age is a factor in offender recidivism. Studies have consistently shown that young offenders recidivate at higher rates than older offenders.
- Education is also a factor in recidivism. Offenders with higher educational levels recidivate less often than offenders with lower levels of educational achievement.
 - ✓ Younger offenders have higher EA scores than older offenders.
- In an effort to isolate the effect of educational achievement on recidivism, releaseses have been divided into two groups (younger and older) and are examined separately.
 - ✓ Younger inmates were less than 35 years of age at exit from prison while older inmates were 35 years of age or older at release.
 - ✓ Younger inmates accounted for 58% (15,065) of the study group.
 - ◆ 18% (2,680) of those younger than 35 years of age had recidivated at the end of the two-year tracking period compared to 14% (1,494 of 10,915) of older inmates.

Educational Achievement Is More Strongly Associated With Lower Recidivism Rates For Younger Releasees Than Older Releasees

Exit EA Score	Percent Recidivated	
	Younger (<35)	Older (35+)
<4.0	20%	14%
4.0-5.9	22%	14%
6.0-7.4	20%	15%
7.5-8.9	18%	13%
9.0+	14%	12%
Overall	18%	14%

- All inmates are included based on their EA score and age at release from prison.
- Inmates less than 35 years of age at release with an exit EA score of less than 4.0 had a 20% recidivism rate compared to 14% for inmates in the same age group who had an exit EA score of 9.0 or higher.
- Previous research has indicated that reductions in recidivism are more likely when the expected recidivism rate is high. When expected recidivism rates are low, such as with older offenders, it is difficult to further reduce recidivism.

Property Offenders Have Higher Recidivism Rates



- A higher percentage of inmates incarcerated for property offenses returned to prison (19%, or 1,610 of 8,612) within two years of release than inmates incarcerated for non-property offenses (such as violent and drug offenses).
 - ✓ 14% of non-property offenders (2,564 of 17,368) were re-incarcerated within two years of release.
- Property offenders represented 33% (8,612 of 25,980) of all offenders in this study.
 - ✓ Non-property offenders represented 67% (17,368 of 25,980) of all offenders in this study.
- Similar to the problems of evaluating education and recidivism without the influence of age, the study also examines type of original incarceration offense in an effort to minimize the effects of offense on recidivism.
 - ✓ The study group will be divided into two groups: “property” and “non-property” offenders.
 - ✓ “Non-property” offenses include violent, drug, DWI, and all other offenses.

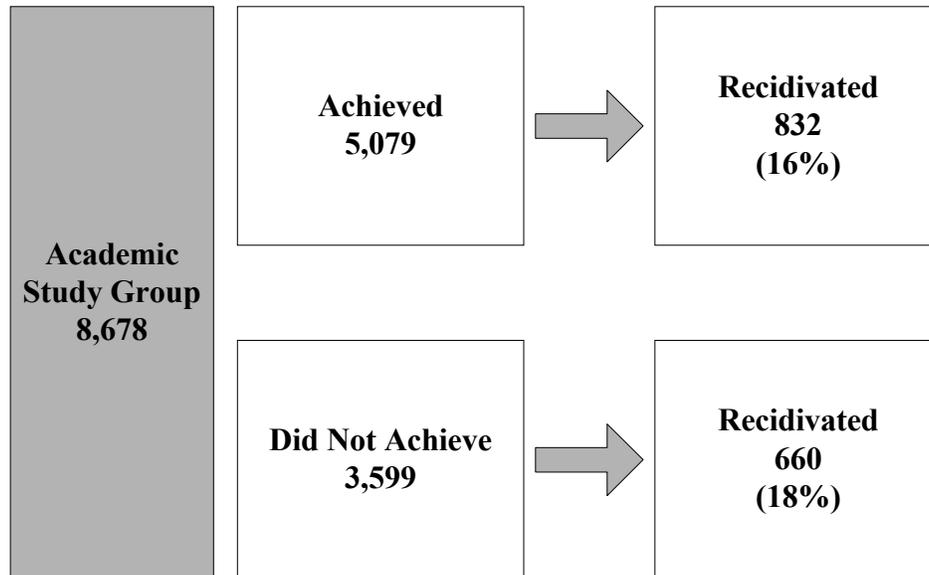
Younger Property Offenders With Low Educational Achievement Scores Have The Highest Recidivism Rate

Exit EA Score	Younger (<35)		Older (35+)	
	Property	Non-Property	Property	Non-Property
<4	25%	17%	18%	13%
4-5.9	24%	21%	16%	14%
6-7.4	22%	18%	19%	14%
7.5-8.9	20%	16%	16%	12%
9.0+	15%	13%	15%	12%
Overall	20%	17%	16%	13%

- In general, as EA scores increase, recidivism rates decrease.
 - ✓ Young property offenders who exit prison with an EA below 4.0 have a 25% recidivism rate compared to a 15% rate for young property offenders who exit prison with an EA of 9.0 or higher.
- Overall, young property offenders had the highest recidivism rate while older non-property offenders had the lowest recidivism rate: 20% and 13%, respectively.
- There is less variation in recidivism rates among older offenders regardless of type of incarceration offense.
 - ✓ Among non-property offenders the highest recidivism rate was 14% while the lowest was 12%.
 - ✓ Among property offenders recidivism rates ranged from 15% to 19%.
- After applying the age and offense categorization scheme, the study group (25,980 releasees) consisted of the following:
 - ✓ Young property offenders (5,844) accounted for 23% of all releasees.
 - ✓ Young non-property offenders (9,221) accounted for 35% of all releasees.
 - ✓ Older property offenders (2,768) accounted 11% of all releasees.
 - ✓ Older non-property offenders (8,147) accounted for 31% of all releasees.

III. Educational Achievement and Recidivism

Educational Achievement in The Windham School District is Associated With Reduced Recidivism



- Inmates who “Achieved” are those who became Readers or Functionally Literate, or earned a GED.
 - ✓ 59% of inmates (5,079 of 8,678) achieved.
- Achievers and non-achievers differed in several respects:
 - ✓ Achievers exited prison with a higher average EA score (8.1) than non-achievers (5.5).
 - ✓ Achievers were approximately two years younger than non-achievers with average ages of 32.6 and 34.5 years old, respectively.
 - ✓ Achievers participated for approximately 95 more classroom hours than non-achievers, 661 compared to 565 hours.
- Achievement was associated with 11% lower recidivism than non-achievement.

In Most Analyses, Educational Achievement in The Windham School District is Associated With Reductions in Recidivism

Achievement	Younger (<35)		Older (35+)	
	Property	Non-Property	Property	Non-Property
Nonreaders				
Stayed Nonreader	30%	19%	33%	14%
Became Reader	19%	15%	15%	11%
<i>Percent Change</i>	-37%	-21%	-55%	-21%
Functionally Illiterate				
Stayed Illiterate	29%	18%	22%	14%
Became Literate	24%	19%	19%	14%
<i>Percent Change</i>	-17%	+6%	-14%	0%
GED Path				
Did Not Earn GED	16%	16%	14%	15%
Earned GED	21%	14%	14%	10%
<i>Percent Change</i>	+31%	-13%	0%	-33%

- Regardless of age or incarceration offense, inmates who entered prison as Nonreaders and became Readers had lower recidivism rates than inmates who remained Nonreaders.
 - ✓ 30% of young property offenders who stayed Nonreaders were re-incarcerated within two years of release compared to 19% of young property offenders who became Readers.
- In general, inmates earning a GED had lower recidivism rates than inmates not earning a GED.
 - ✓ The exception was young property offenders: those who earned a GED had a 21% recidivism rate compared to 16% for those who did not.
 - ◆ This result could not be explained with the data available for this study.

Significantly Increasing Educational Achievement Scores Was Associated With Lower Recidivism Rates

<i>Achievement</i>	Percent Recidivated
Became Reader and Gained to:	
4.0-4.9 Reading EA	17%
5.0-6.9 Reading EA	15%
7.0+ Reading EA	9%
Became Literate and Gained to:	
6.0-6.9 Composite EA	20%
7.0-8.9 Composite EA	17%
9.0+ Composite EA	17%
Earned GED and Exited at:	
6-8.9 Composite EA	16%
9.0-10.9 Composite EA	16%
11.0+ Composite EA	12%

- Nonreaders who became Readers and increased their reading EA score to 7.0 or above had the lowest recidivism rate of the three achievement groups.
 - ✓ One factor associated with the low recidivism rates of the Reader group is that this group has a disproportionate percentage of older inmates compared to the other achievement groups.
- Reduction in recidivism rates for inmates who became Functionally Literate was associated with increasing EA scores to 7.0 and above.
- Reduction in recidivism occurred for inmates who earned a GED and exited at an EA level of 11.0 and above.
- Analyses by age and offense type were not conducted for these groups due to the resulting small sample sizes.

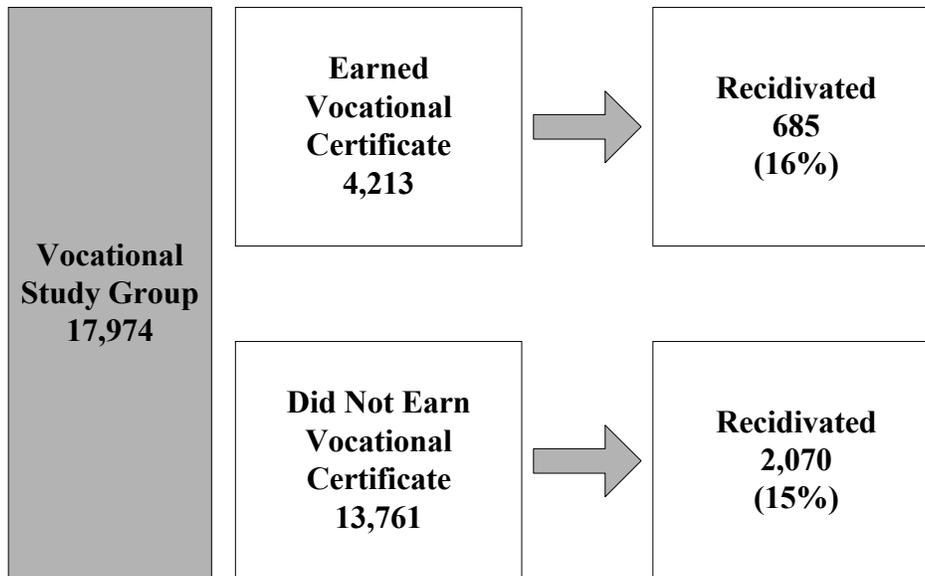
In General, Educational Achievement in Prison Was Associated With Lower Recidivism Rates, Regardless of Inmate Characteristics

<i>Characteristics</i>	Younger (<35)				Older (35+)			
	Property		Non-Property		Property		Non-Property	
	Yes Achieve	No Achieve	Yes Achieve	No Achieve	Yes Achieve	No Achieve	Yes Achieve	No Achieve
Gender								
Female	15%	14%	9%	17%	10%	14%	11%	12%
Male	23%	25%	17%	18%	18%	21%	12%	15%
Race/Ethnicity								
African American	25%	24%	17%	21%	17%	26%	13%	17%
Hispanic	21%	24%	12%	14%	14%	17%	9%	12%
Anglo	20%	21%	20%	19%	18%	12%	13%	16%
Overall	23%	23%	16%	18%	17%	20%	12%	15%

- In general, achievers had lower recidivism rates than inmates who did not achieve.
 - ✓ With the exception of young property offenders, achievers had lower levels of reported recidivism at the end of their two-year tracking period.
- Recidivism rates were associated with educational achievement and were not simply a function of participants' characteristics such as gender, race/ethnicity, or age.

IV. Vocational Certification and Recidivism

Inmates Who Earned a Vocational Certificate in Prison Had Recidivism Rates Similar to Inmates Who Did Not Earn a Vocational Certificate



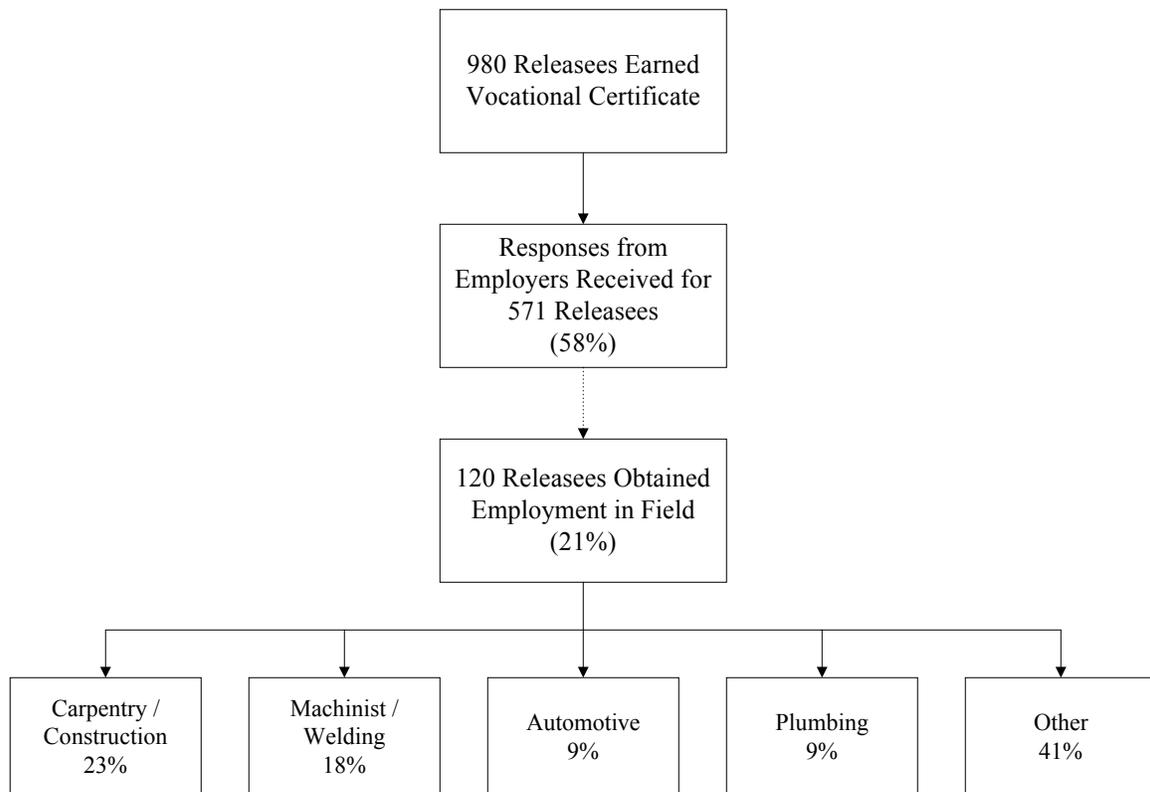
- The Vocational Study Group consists of all inmates whose EA score was 6.0 or greater at exit from prison regardless of Windham academic participation.
 - ✓ High School graduates were eligible for college vocational courses only.
 - ✓ 362 inmates who entered prison with a High School diploma earned a college vocational certificate.
- Inmates who earned a vocational certificate in prison and those who were eligible but did not earn a vocational certificate had similar recidivism rates.
- Inmates who participated but did not complete a vocational certificate had slightly higher recidivism rates than inmates who did not participate in vocational training: 17% (260 of 1,488) and 15% (1,810 of 12,273), respectively.

Analysis by Age and Offense Produced Mixed Results Regarding the Impact of Earning a Vocational Certificate on Recidivism

	Younger (<35)				Older (35+)			
	Property		Non-Property		Property		Non-Property	
	Yes Voc	No Voc	Yes Voc	No Voc	Yes Voc	No Voc	Yes Voc	No Voc
No HS or GED	25%	18%	17%	17%	15%	15%	15%	13%
Earned GED	23%	20%	14%	17%	20%	9%	10%	13%
Prior GED	18%	17%	14%	18%	21%	23%	15%	13%
HS Diploma+	24%	14%	13%	12%	18%	14%	15%	11%
Overall	22%	17%	14%	16%	19%	15%	13%	12%

- With the exception of younger non-property offenders, inmates who earned a vocational certificate in prison had a higher recidivism rate than inmates who did not earn a vocational certificate.

Vocational Certification May Not Have Impacted Recidivism Because Few Inmates Obtained Employment in Their Field of Training



- The CJPC contracted with the State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (SOICC) to determine post-release occupations for inmates who earned vocational certificates in prison.
 - ✓ The goal of the study was to determine if inmates were employed in the area of training that they received while in prison.
 - ✓ 980 releasees who earned a vocational certificate in prison and were employed during the third quarter of 1999 (with wages reported) were selected for the study.
 - ✓ Employers returned 571 occupational surveys (58% response rate).
- Approximately 77% of all releasees who earned a vocational certificate were employed in the year following release.
- Preliminary results indicate that a significant number of releasees did not obtain employment in their vocational field of training.
 - ✓ 21% of inmates who earned a vocational certificate were employed in their field.
 - ✓ This finding might be associated with the results that suggest earning a vocational certificate does not have an impact on reducing recidivism.
- Approximately 23% of inmates employed in their field of training were inmates who earned a vocational certificate in carpentry or construction.

Inmates Who Earned a Machinist/Welding Vocational Certificate Were The Most Likely to Obtain Employment in Their Field of Training

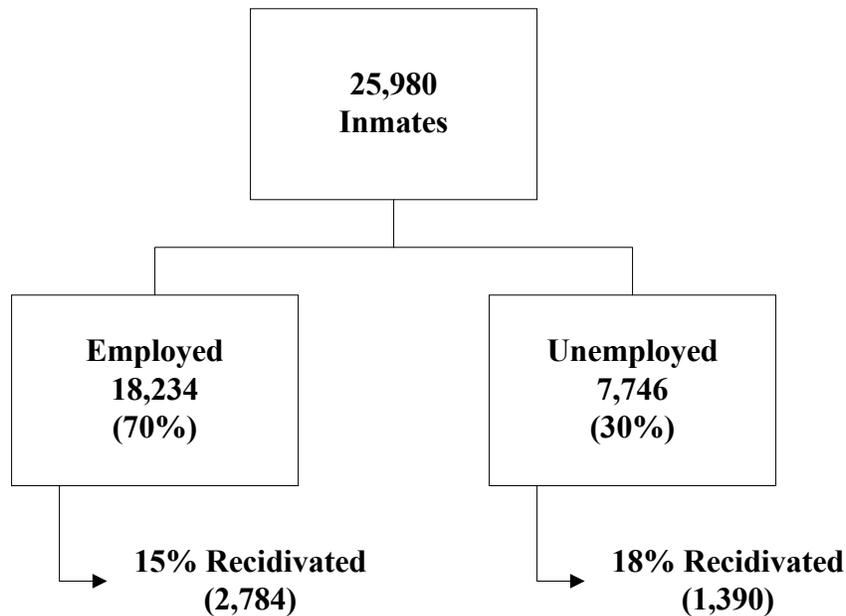
Vocational Certificate	Earned Certificate	Obtained Job in Field	Percent Obtaining Job in Field
<i>Carpentry/Construction</i>	86	27	31%
<i>Office/Computer</i>	72	9	13%
<i>Automotive</i>	93	11	12%
<i>Machinist/Welder</i>	49	21	43%
<i>Plumbing</i>	48	11	23%
<i>Electrical</i>	38	8	21%
<i>Other Certificates</i>	185	33	18%
Overall	571	120	21%

- Approximately 43% of inmates who earned a machinist or welding vocational certificate in prison obtained employment in their field of training.
- The most common occupations of releasees who earned a vocational certificate (n=571), regardless of type of training received, were:

Carpentry/Construction:	11%
Laborers:	9%
Drivers:	8%
Sales/Customer Service:	7%
Warehouse Worker:	7%
Facility Care/Janitorial	5%
Machinists/Welders:	4%

V. Employment and Recidivism

Releasees Who Were Employed Had Lower Recidivism Rates Than Releasees Who Were Not Employed



- 70% of inmates in the study were employed during their first year of release.
 - ✓ Inmates who were employed had lower recidivism rates than inmates who were unemployed: 15% and 18%, respectively.
 - ✓ This represents a 17% reduction in recidivism for employed releasees.
- The average number of days between release from prison and return to prison for offenders who recidivated was 466.
 - ✓ Inmates who were unemployed returned to prison sooner (441 days) than inmates who were employed (479 days).
- “Employed” was defined as an offender who had any wages reported to the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) in the first year following release from prison.

Releasees Earning Over \$10,000 in The First Year After Release Had Lower Recidivism Rates

	Younger (<35)		Older (35+)	
	Property	Non-Property	Property	Non-Property
<i>Total Unemployed</i>	24%	21%	17%	14%
<i>Total Employed</i>	19%	15%	16%	12%
Earned <\$10,000	22%	18%	19%	15%
Earned \$10,000+	9%	8%	9%	8%
Overall	20%	17%	16%	13%

- Releasees who earned \$10,000 or more during their first year of release had lower recidivism rates than releasees who earned less than \$10,000, regardless of age and offense.
 - ✓ Recidivism rates reflect the complete two-year tracking period.
- Differences in earnings may be the result of offender’s returning to prison
 - ✓ 39% of offenders who recidivated worked 1 to 6 months compared to 17% of offenders who remained in the community.
- Regardless of age and offense, releasees who were unemployed during their first year of release experienced higher recidivism rates than offenders who were employed.
 - ✓ 24% of young property offenders who were unemployed recidivated compared to 19% of those who were employed.

Releasees Earning Over \$10,000 in the First Year Had Lower Recidivism Regardless of Academic and Vocational Achievements

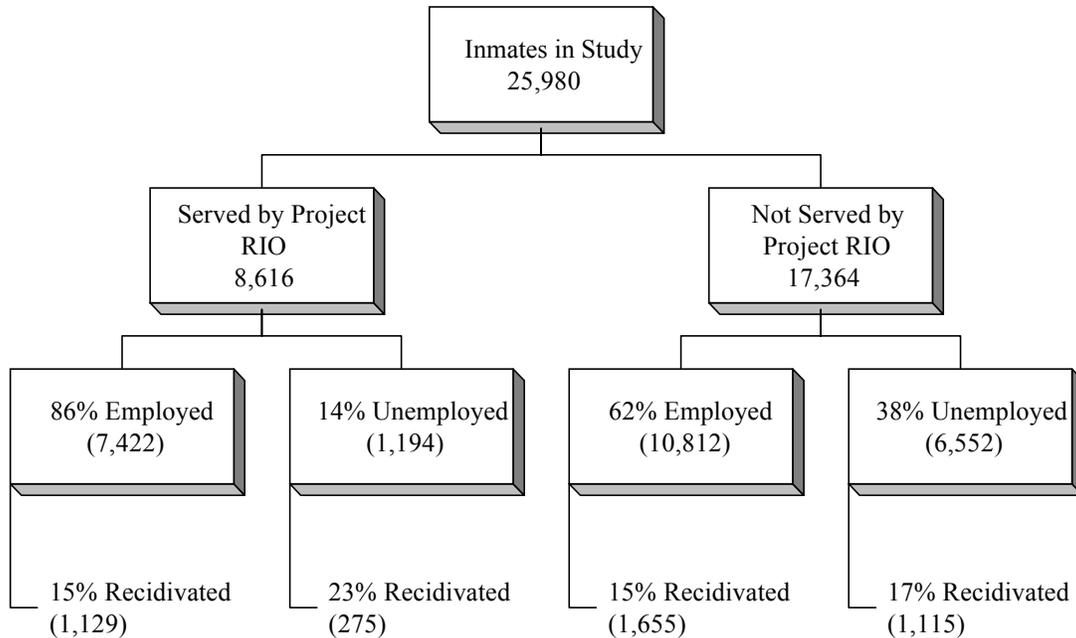
	No HS/GED		Earned GED		Prior GED		HS Diploma+	
	Yes Voc	No Voc	Yes Voc	No Voc	Yes Voc	No Voc	Yes Voc	No Voc
<i>Total Unemployed</i>	20%	20%	17%	18%	19%	19%	19%	14%
<i>Total Employed</i>	17%	15%	15%	16%	16%	16%	16%	12%
Earned <\$10,000	21%	18%	19%	20%	19%	20%	26%	15%
Earned \$10,000+	9%	7%	8%	9%	10%	9%	6%	9%
Overall	18%	16%	15%	17%	16%	17%	16%	12%

- The results presented above are for inmates who exited prison with an EA score of 6.0 or higher.
 - ✓ All inmates, regardless of participation in a WSD academic program, are included.

- Recidivism rates varied for educational and vocational achievements when examining employment and earnings for inmates exiting at a 6.0 level or higher.
 - ✓ In all achievement categories, earning \$10,000 or more during the first year after release resulted in lower two-year recidivism rates.

VI. Project RIO and Recidivism

Project RIO and Non-Project RIO Releasees Who Were Employed Had The Same Recidivism Rate

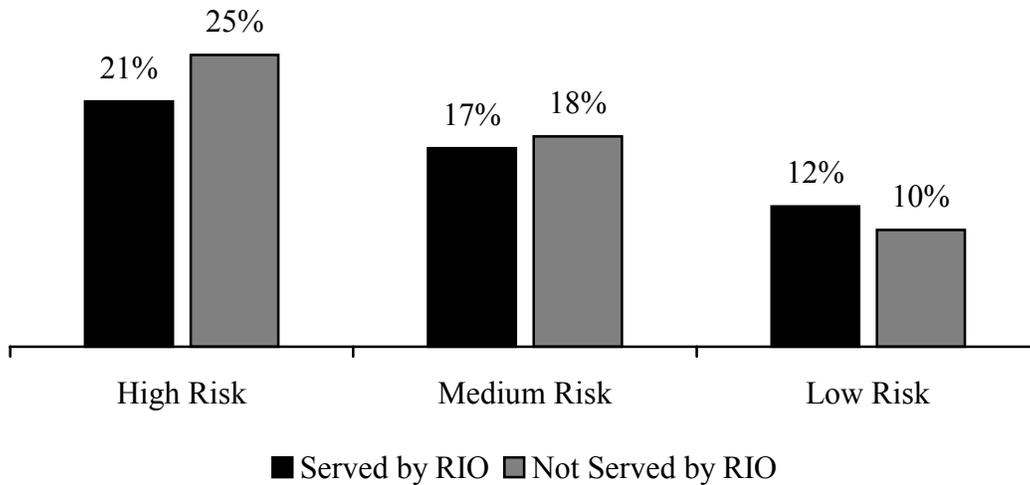


- Eighty-six percent (86%) of releasees who were served by Project RIO were employed at some time during the first year after release compared to 62% of releasees not served by Project RIO.
 - ✓ Employed releasees who were served by Project RIO had a 15% recidivism rate, the same as employed releasees not served by Project RIO.
 - ✓ “Served” refers to a releasee who received job placement assistance at a Project RIO office after release.

- Releasees served by Project RIO who remained unemployed had a 23% recidivism rate compared to 17% for non-Project RIO releasees.
 - ✓ There were no significant differences by age, race, or offense that would account for differences in recidivism rates of unemployed Project RIO and non-Project RIO releasees.
 - ✓ This result could not be explained with the data available for this study.

- The higher recidivism rate of unemployed Project RIO participants resulted in an overall recidivism rate for all Project RIO releasees to be identical to that of non-Project RIO releasees (16%).
 - ✓ It is unknown if Project RIO participants are a less employable population than non-Project RIO inmates.

High Risk Inmates Served by Project RIO Had Lower Recidivism Rates Than High Risk Inmates Not Served by Project RIO



- The Board of Pardons and Paroles ranks inmates as high, medium, or low risk of recidivism, based on the results of a score on a risk assessment instrument.
 - ✓ Approximately 15% of releasees served by Project RIO were ranked as high risk, 52% were medium risk, and 33% were low risk.
 - ✓ Approximately 16% of releasees not served by Project RIO were ranked as high risk, 50% were medium risk, and 34% were low risk.
- High risk inmates served by Project RIO had a 16% reduction in recidivism compared to high risk inmates not served by Project RIO.
 - ✓ There were no significant differences in recidivism rates for low risk and medium risk releasees.

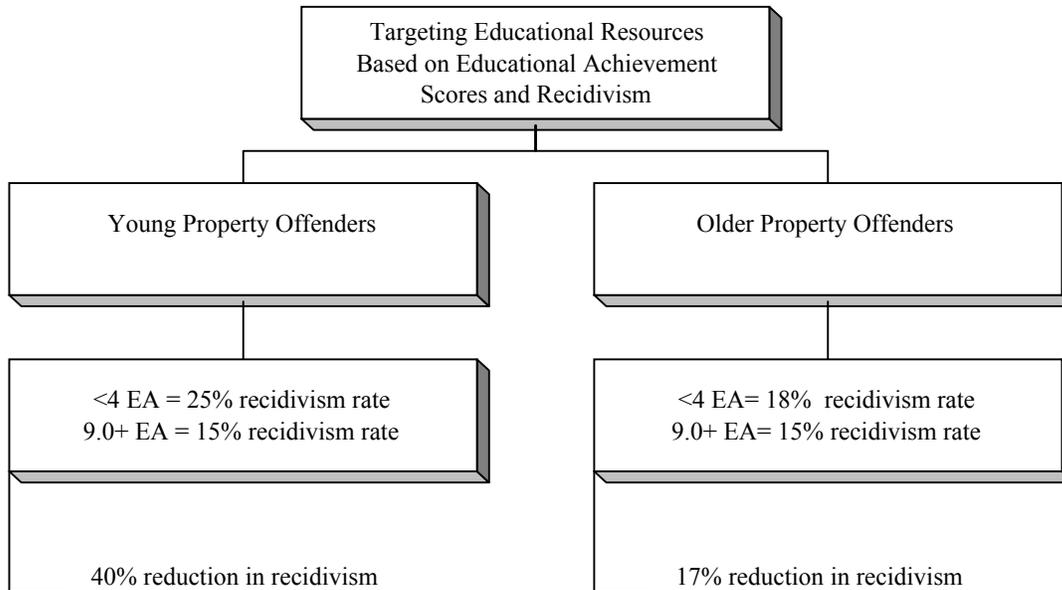


VII. Summary

Summary of Research Findings

- The Criminal Justice Policy Council has evaluated the educational achievement of inmates in prison and the relationship of educational achievement to post-release employment and recidivism. The most significant findings of this research include:
 - ✓ Based on available educational resources, inmates receive an average of 604 hours of educational instruction (approximately 1 school year) which raises EA scores by an average of 1.5 grade levels.
 - ✓ Instructional resources are now prioritized toward inmates with the most significant educational deficits. Inmates with the most significant educational deficits are disproportionately older inmates. However, older inmates require more instructional time than younger inmates to increase their educational achievement scores. Additionally, as inmates age, recidivism decreases, thus targeting educational resources toward older inmates may have limited potential for lowering recidivism rates.
 - ✓ Educational achievement is associated with higher post-release employment rates and higher wages. However, even with these gains, unemployment rates of releasees are significantly higher than the state unemployment rate and wages earned are low, averaging close to the minimum wage.
 - ✓ The most significant reductions in recidivism are associated with increasing educational achievement scores for high risk offenders (young property offenders).
 - ✓ Higher educational achievement scores are associated with lower recidivism rates.

Policy Implications of Research: Reallocating Resources Toward High Risk Offenders Offers Best Potential For Reducing Recidivism



- Targeting resources toward younger offenders may result in more significant gains in educational achievement scores than older offenders. Younger offenders appear to require fewer hours of instruction to achieve gain than older offenders.
- Allocating more resources to fewer inmates over longer periods of their incarceration may result in greater gains for fewer inmates but greater benefits in post-release employment and recidivism. Achieving significant gains for fewer inmates appears to be a better strategy than limited gains for many.
- Targeting younger offenders with high recidivism rates may result in the highest reduction in recidivism rates. The high recidivism rate of young offenders, coupled with their ability to advance faster with less instruction, appears to be a more effective approach than targeting older offenders who have the greatest educational deficits (requiring more hours of instruction) and the lowest recidivism rates.
- Efforts to strengthen post-release employment job placement services for inmates earning vocational certificates may result in more releasees getting jobs in their area of training and aid in achieving lower recidivism rates.