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A majority of states in the country offer inmates the opportunity in

*Corrections: Reducing the Criminal Activities of Offenders and Delinquents.*⁴ These findings were also replicated in 2006 by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy in a meta-analysis that again found that participation in correctional education programs was associated with a reduction in recidivism.⁵

ET In the Rand study, Davis et al. found that inmates who had participated in correctional education programs had, on average, 43 percent lower odds of recidivating than inmates who did not, which translates to a reduction in the risk of recidivating of 13 percentage points for those who participate in correctional education programs versus those who do not.⁶

ET Davis et al. also found that inmates who participated in high school and GED programs had 30 percent lower odds of recidivating than those who had not.⁷

ET Wilson et al. found that participation in correctional education programs (ABE, GED, and postsecondary academic programs) was correlated with an average reduction in recidivism of 11 percentage points.⁸

ET Mackenzie found that participation in correctional education

ET Wilson et al. found improved odds of employment among correctional education participants, although they did not quantify the relationship in terms of a percentage increase/decrease.¹¹

ET Davis et al. found that the odds of gaining post-release employment was 13 percent higher for inmates who participated in correctional education programs over those inmates who did not participate (including both academic programs and vocational programs). Though this figure was based on many studies, only one of the studies was of high quality. Still Davis et al. concluded that “[d]espite this limitation, our findings align with those produced in the meta-analysis by Wilson and colleagues, which also found improved odds of employment among correctional education participants.”¹²

In 2007 *The Prison Journal* published a study that evaluated the differences between education programs offered at two Maryland State Correctional Facilities.¹³ One facility was a traditional prison, the other a more therapeutic “boot camp” style facility. The researchers found that the inmates at the boot camp facility had an increased likelihood of obtaining a GED over inmates at the traditional facility. In both facilities, the individuals studied had been recognized by the criminal justice system as offenders who could be successful in a short-term incarceration program emphasizing treatment and rehabilitation—they were randomly assigned to a boot camp or a traditional prison. The inmates studied were all voluntarily participating in a mutual agreement program, a contract making them eligible for early release. Inmates received the same amount of money for going to school that they did for working regular jobs.

The General Educational Development (GED) test is a four subject test administered to individuals who have not earned a high school diploma. The GED was originally designed to allow veterans to take advantage of the GI Bill’s college program, not as a standalone degree. Students who successfully complete the GED test are given a high school equivalency certificate, which certifies that an individual has “met the state requirements

¹¹ Wilson et al., “A Meta-Analysis Of Corrections-Based Education, Vocation, And Work Programs For Adult Offenders.”

¹² Davis et al., “Evaluating the Effectiveness of Correctional Education,” p. 47.

¹³ O’Neill, L., D. MacKenzie, and D. Bierie, “Educational Opportunities within Correctional Institutions: ~~Docks~~

for high school graduation equivalency.”¹⁴ In general, high school diplomas have consistently been shown to be academically, economically, and socially superior to GED certificates, with an actual high school diploma resulting in far more in terms of wages, postsecondary education achievement, job attainment, and social perceptions.¹⁵ Because researchers who examine correctional education treat a GED and high school diploma as functional equivalents, there is no evidence to support or contradict these general findings of the inferiority of a GED in prison setting.¹⁶

Some specific findings in the difference between a GED and a high school diploma include:

ET 30.3% of those with a high school diploma go on to attend a four year college while only 16% of those with a GED go on to attend a four year college.¹⁷

ET Of those that go to a four year college 75% of those with a high diploma graduate while only 5% of those with a GED graduate.¹⁸

ET Individuals with a GED earn roughly 8% less compared to individuals with a high school diploma.¹⁹

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California defines its high school diploma/GED eligible population based on inmates' score on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE); inmates who score a 9.0 (out of 12) or higher qualify as eligible for a GED or high school diploma.²⁴ CDCR literature treats the GED and high school diploma as functional equivalents, and only inmates who have made "sufficient progress towards their high school diploma"²⁵ are eligible to earn a high school diploma.

The Utah Department of Education administers 24 correctional school districts that offer inmates the opportunity to earn a high school diploma along with other correctional education programs such as GED preparation and vocational certification. Utah awarded 927 high school diplomas to inmates in FY2013. This figure represents 20% of all enrollees in Utah educational programs in 2013 and an 8% increase from 849 high school diplomas earned in FY2011.²⁶ From 1998 through 2008 inmates earned 5083 GEDs and 6788 high school diplomas, making Utah the most productive state in terms of high school diplomas awarded to inmates.²⁷

Enrollment, diplomas awarded, and ratio of high school diplomas to GEDs awarded vary greatly by district. A 2012 performance audit of inmate high school education, performed by the Utah Legislative Auditor General, indicates that differing program outcomes reflect the values of the school district's adult education programs. In FY2011 the Nebo School District awarded 132 GEDs (the most of any district) but relatively few diplomas, reflecting the program's goal of helping inmates quickly achieve academic certification.²⁸

Comparatively, both Utah State Prisons awarded many more diplomas (472 combined) than GEDs (42 combined), reflecting the fact that "prison inmates are generally in custody

²⁴ California Office of Correctional Education, "General Education Development," A CDCR Fact Sheet, January 2014, accessed February 15, 2015, <http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/rehabilitation/docs/Factsheets/OCE-Factsheet-GED-Jan2014.pdf>.

New Hampshire correctional high school diplomas are awarded by the

Corrections Education funding, receiving around \$2.2 and \$2 million respectively. In FY2011, the cost per correctional student was \$653 in jails and \$1330 in prisons.⁴¹ The roughly \$2 million in Corrections Education funding is only distributed to the school districts within the two Utah state prisons, which attributes to their higher cost per student compared to jails.⁴² Available Adult Education funding is distributed to facilities based on the number of enrolled students, contact hours, and academic outcomes in ratios set at the beginning of the fiscal year. For example, in FY2012, 25% of total Adult Education correctional funding was distributed to facilities based on number of enrollees.⁴³

Nevada correctional high school programs cost around \$6 million in FY2012, and costs per enrolled student were \$1,606.63. 3,706 students (66% of eligible inmates) enrolled in correctional high school programs in FY2012.⁴⁴ The Nevada Department of Corrections primarily draws funding from the State General Fund and divides costs into five main categories, one of which is correctional programs. Nevada Department of Corrections literature does not provide a description of how program costs are estimated or funds distributed.⁴⁵

Ohio correctional educational services cost around \$30.8 million in FY2013 and FY2014 combined, and the educational services cost per inmate was \$598.60 in 2013 and \$613.20 in 2014. The Ohio Central School System does not provide more detailed information regarding methods to determine costs and distribution of funding.

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In conclusion, there are various working models, exemplified by other states, for educating incarcerated populations. This report reviewed the programs most similar to Vermont that offer prisoners the opportunity to