

SUBCOMMITTEE NO. 5

Agenda

Senator Loni Hancock, Chair
Senator Joel Anderson
Senator Lois Wolk



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Consultant: Keely Martin Bosler

Item Number and Title

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Special Prison Education Panel: Status of Prison Education Programs

- Aaron Edwards, Fiscal and Policy Analyst, Legislative Analyst’s Office
- Elizabeth Siggins, Chief Deputy Secretary, Adult Programs, CDCR
- Allen Baraldi, Principal, Deuel Vocational Institution, CDCR
- Scott Kernan, Undersecretary, Operations, CDCR
- Steve Bowman, Teacher, Mule Creek State Prison, CDCR
- John Kern, Vocational Teacher, Ventura Youth Correctional Facility, CDCR
- Jody Lewen, Executive Director, Prison University Project

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CA Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (5225)

Departmental Overview. Effective July 1, 2005, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) was created pursuant to the Governor's Reorganization Plan No. 1 of 2005 and Chapter 10, Statutes of 2005 (SB 737, Romero). All departments that previously reported to the Youth and Adult Correctional Agency (YACA) were consolidated into CDCR and include YACA, the California Department of Corrections, Youth Authority, Board of Corrections, Board of Prison Terms, and the Commission on Correctional Peace Officers' Standards and Training.

According to the department's website, its mission is to "enhance public safety through the safe and secure incarceration of offenders, effective parole supervision, and rehabilitative strategies to successfully reintegrate offenders into our communities."

The CDCR is responsible for the incarceration, training, education, and care of adult felons and non-felon narcotic addicts, as well as juvenile offenders. The CDCR also supervises and treats adult and juvenile parolees, and is responsible for the apprehension and re-incarceration of those parolees who commit new offenses or parole violations. The department also sets minimum standards for the operation of local detention facilities and selection and training of law enforcement personnel, as well as provides local assistance in the form of grants to local governments for crime prevention and reduction programs.

The department operates 33 adult prisons, including 12 reception centers, a central medical facility, a treatment center for narcotic addicts under civil commitment, and a substance abuse facility for incarcerated felons. The CDCR also operates five juvenile correctional facilities, including two reception centers. In addition, CDCR operates dozens of adult and juvenile conservation camps, the Richard A. McGee Correctional Training Center, and nearly 200 parole offices, as well as contracts to house inmates in several in-state and out-of-state correctional facilities.

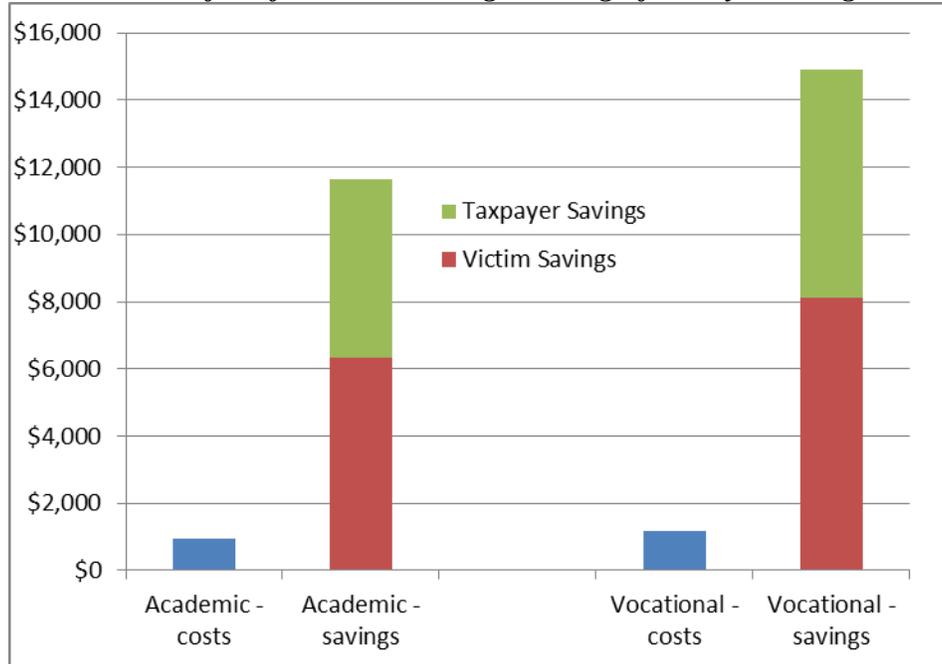
Budget Overview. The Legislature passed SB 69 (Budget) on March 17 of this year. This conference report appropriates \$9 billion, including \$8.9 billion from the General Fund for the support of CDCR. However, this proposed funding level includes \$1 billion in savings related to the realignment proposal. However, these savings may not be achievable if the taxes are not extended and realignment does not occur. The Governor's May Revision on May 16 will update the inmate population estimates for the current and budget years.

Background – Research on Prison Education Programming

Research on Prison Education Programs. According to studies, only about one-quarter of state inmates are able to read at a high school level.

Research consistently finds that effectively designed and operated rehabilitation programs are an effective tool to reducing reoffending when inmates are released from prison. For example, the Washington State Institute for Public Policy (WSIPP) has conducted meta-analyses which compile and consolidate the findings of numerous other reports and concluded that inmate education and vocational programs reduce recidivism by 7 percent and 9 percent, respectively. As shown in the figure below, WSIPP found that the savings to taxpayers and the public from providing these programs far outweighs the costs to provide them. In their report, WSIPP estimated that these programs resulted in *net savings* of \$10,700 per academic education participant and \$13,700 per vocational education participant. These findings suggest that funding for these programs not only benefits public safety, but can yield long-term fiscal benefits to taxpayers.

Financial Benefits of Education Programs Significantly Outweigh Costs



Source: Washington State Institute for Public Policy, October 2006.

Principles for Effective Correctional Programs. Research finds that it is not enough to simply provide “evidence-based programs”. To achieve results, it matters *how* the programs are delivered, often referred to as program fidelity. The description below lists the key components to delivering programs effectively.

Criteria for Effective Correctional Rehabilitation Programs

Source: LAO, “From Cellblocks to Classrooms: Reforming Inmate Education to Improve Public Safety”

Research shows that successful correctional rehabilitation programs—whether they are education, substance abuse, mental health, or other types of programs—and the case management systems that place inmates into those programs have several key components. The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation should create a process for evaluating whether its programs—including, but not limited to, education programs—adhere to these criteria, which we describe below.

- ***Program Model.*** Programs should be modeled on widely accepted principles of effective treatment and, ideally, research demonstrating that the approach is effective at achieving specific goals.
- ***Risk Principle.*** Treatment should be targeted towards inmates identified as most likely to reoffend based on their risk factors—for example, those inmates who display high levels of antisocial or criminal thinking, low literacy rates, or severe mental illness. Focusing treatment resources on these inmates will achieve greater net benefits compared to inmates who are low-risk to reoffend even in the absence of treatment programs, thereby generating greater “bang for the buck.”
- ***Needs Principle.*** Programs should be specifically designed to address those offender needs which are directly linked to their criminal behavior, such as antisocial attitudes, substance abuse, and illiteracy.
- ***Responsivity Principle.*** Treatment approaches should be matched to the characteristics of the target population. For example, research has shown that male and female inmates respond differently to some types of treatment programs. Important characteristics to consider include gender, motivation to change, and learning styles.
- ***Dosage.*** The amount of intervention should be sufficient to achieve the intended goals of the program, considering the duration, frequency, and intensity of treatment services. Generally, higher-dosage programs are more effective than low-dosage interventions.
- ***Trained Staff.*** Staff should have proper qualifications, experience, and training to provide the treatment services effectively.
- ***Positive Reinforcement.*** Behavioral research has found that the use of positive reinforcements—such as increased privileges and verbal encouragement—can significantly increase the effectiveness of treatment, particularly when provided at a higher ratio than negative reinforcements or punishments.
- ***Post-Treatment Services.*** Some services should continue after completion of intervention to reduce the likelihood of relapse and reoffending. Continuing services is particularly important for inmates transitioning to parole.
- ***Evaluation.*** Program outcomes and staff performance should be regularly evaluated to ensure the effectiveness of the intervention and identify areas for improvement.

Previous Findings and Recommendations. In recent years, various reports have been issued related to CDCR's inmate education programs, specifically, or CDCR rehabilitation programs more generally. Below summarizes some of those reports.

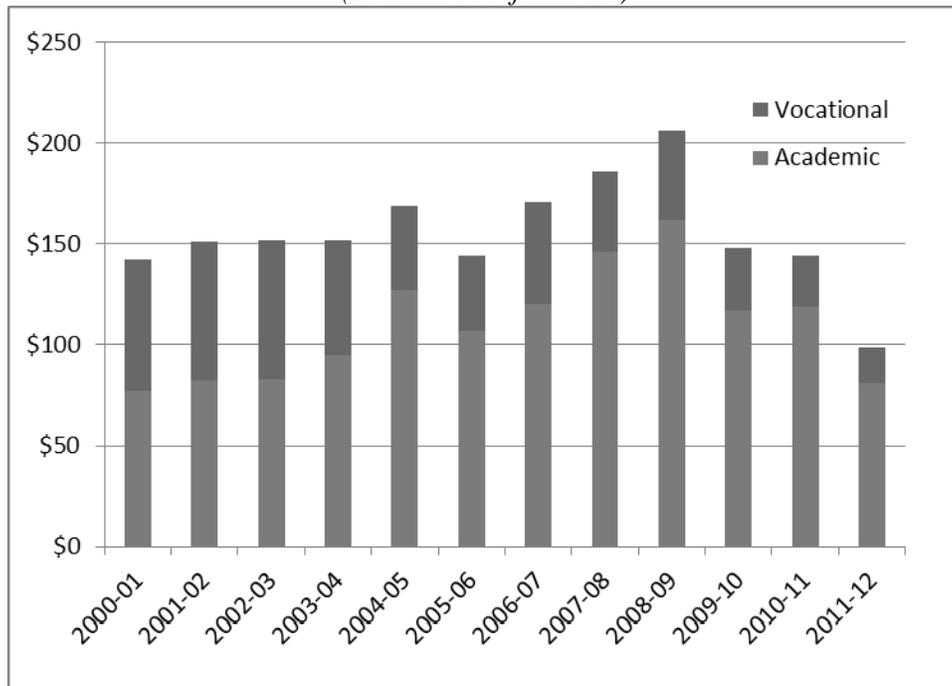
- ***Expert Panel on Adult Offender Reentry and Recidivism Reduction Programs, “Report to the California State Legislature: A Roadmap for Effective Offender Programming in California” June 2007.*** In 2007, a committee of department officials, as well as researchers and practitioners from around the country issued a report on how to reduce recidivism among those released from California prisons. The report looked broadly at both programmatic and structural issues within CDCR. Among the recommendations pertinent to inmate education, the Expert Panel recommended implementing systems of positive reinforcement for completion of programs, using risk and needs assessments to determine programming placements, developing case plans for inmates, expanding various programs including education, and developing systems to evaluate outcomes.
- ***Legislative Analyst’s Office, “From Cellblocks to Classrooms: Reforming Inmate Education to Improve Public Safety” February 2008.*** The LAO made various recommendations designed to improve both the performance and accountability of programs in the near term, as well as provided options for how to expand program capacity in the longer term. Recommendations included funding education based on attendance rather than enrollment, developing incentives for participation and achievement, filling teacher vacancies, limiting the impact of lockdowns on programs, utilizing effective case management practices, and creating half-day programs. The LAO argued that these efforts would better leverage the state’s existing investments in prison education programs to increase the number who participate as well as improve the quality of programs provided.
- ***California Rehabilitation Oversight Board (C-ROB), various reports.*** Over the past several years the C-ROB has issued reports on the progress made by CDCR in implementing rehabilitation programs, including inmate education. Among its findings in its most recent report, issued in March 2011, the C-ROB found that CDCR had successfully issued about 59,000 weeks of milestone credits to inmates who had successfully completed rehabilitation programs or program components. It was unclear to C-ROB the magnitude of the fiscal savings from this level of credit earning, making it difficult to compare to projections. The C-ROB also reported that CDCR had completed risk assessments of more than 95 percent of inmates and parolees, but significantly lower percentages of offenders had completed needs assessments.

Status of California Prison Education Programs

Spending on CDCR Education Programs. The Governor’s January budget estimates the department will spend a total of \$473 million on inmate and parole rehabilitation programs in the current year. (This does not include program administration funding – \$31 million.) This amounts to about 5 percent of CDCR’s budget. The 2011-12 Budget Act includes a one-time \$150 million reduction for department rehabilitation programs. This follows a \$250 million reduction in the 2009-10 budget.

Of the total funding in the current year, about \$144 million is for inmate education programs, including academic education (\$119 million), and vocational training (\$25 million). The figure below shows spending levels on inmate education programs since 2000-01.

Spending on Inmate Education Programs since 2000-01
(In millions of dollars)



* 2010-11: estimated amount; 2011-12: budgeted amount.

The department spends less than \$900 per inmate per year on prison education, down from \$1,300 in 2008-09, according to the LAO. By comparison, in 2008-09, the department spent about \$19,700 per inmate on security, \$12,400 on inmate health care, and \$3,500 on prison administration. See the LAO’s table on the next page.

California's Annual Costs to Incarcerate an Inmate in Prison	
<i>2008-09</i>	
Type of Expenditure	Per Inmate Costs
Security	\$19,663
Inmate Health Care	\$12,442
-Medical care	\$8,768
-Psychiatric services	1,928
-Pharmaceuticals	998
-Dental care	748
Operations	\$7,214
-Facility operations (maintenance, utilities, etc.)	\$4,503
-Classification services	1,773
-Maintenance of inmate records	660
-Reception, testing, assignment	261
-Transportation	18
Administration	\$3,493
Inmate Support	\$2,562
-Food	\$1,475
-Inmate activities	439
-Inmate employment and canteen	407
-Clothing	171
-Religious activities	70
Rehabilitation Programs	\$1,612
-Academic education	\$944
-Vocational training	354
-Substance abuse programs	313
Miscellaneous	\$116
Total	\$47,102

CDCR's Strategic Plan. In 2010, CDCR released a new department Strategic Plan. This plan differs from previous plans in that it identifies specific measurable objectives. Two objectives in the Strategic Plan speak to in-prison rehabilitation programs, specifically:

Objective 3.2 – By June 30, 2015, CDCR will increase by 50 percent the number of eligible offenders who receive, prior to release, evidence-based rehabilitative programming consistent with their risks and needs.

Objective 3.3 – By June 30, 2015, 50 percent of facilities will meet CDCR's space standards for custody, healthcare, and rehabilitation.

Academic Program Capacity and Enrollment. Currently, the department has budgeted capacity for 30,302 inmates in academic programs and 4,637 in vocational training programs as of February 2011.

The CDCR is currently delivering academic education based on five different models and has 25,365 inmates currently enrolled in academic education programs based on the following five models plus a general literacy program. The CDCR currently has 68 percent of their total academic education slots filled. The five academic education models currently being used are as follows:

- Model 1: Literacy/Adult Basic Education (ABE) I – This model is staffed with one teacher and one teaching assistant and is designed to serve inmates with a TABE reading score of 0.0 through 3.9. Students meet three hours a day, five days a week. Approximately 3,062 inmates are currently enrolled in this model.
- Model 2: ABE II and III – This model is staffed with one teacher and one teaching assistant. The model is designed to serve the needs of inmates with a TABE score of 4.0 through 8.9. Inmates with a reading score of 4.0 to 6.9 will attend three days a week for a total of nine hours with six hours of homework. Inmates with a reading score of 7.0 to 8.9 will attend two days a week for a total of six instructional hours with an additional nine hours of homework. Approximately, 4,765 inmates are currently enrolled in this model.
- Model 3: ABE I, II and GED – This model is staffed with one teacher and one teaching assistant. There are four groups (called rosters) in this model and depending on reading level are assigned from 15 hours of instruction to three hours of instruction. Additional homework is assigned for the inmates with lower instructional hours up to 12 hours of homework per week for GED students. Approximately 2,432 inmates are currently enrolled in this model.
- Model 4: GED – This model is staffed with one teacher and students are required to attend class one day each week and to complete homework. Approximately 7,043 inmates are currently enrolled in this model.
- Model 5: High Security Combination – This model is staffed with one teacher and is designed to serve educational needs of inmates within high security institutions or designated yards. Inmates with ABE I level reading scores would receive nine hours of direct instruction three days per week. Inmates with ABE II level reading scores would receive direct instruction two days a week for six hours. Inmates with ABE III or GED levels would meet with a teacher one day a week for three hours. Approximately 2,567 inmates are currently enrolled in this model.

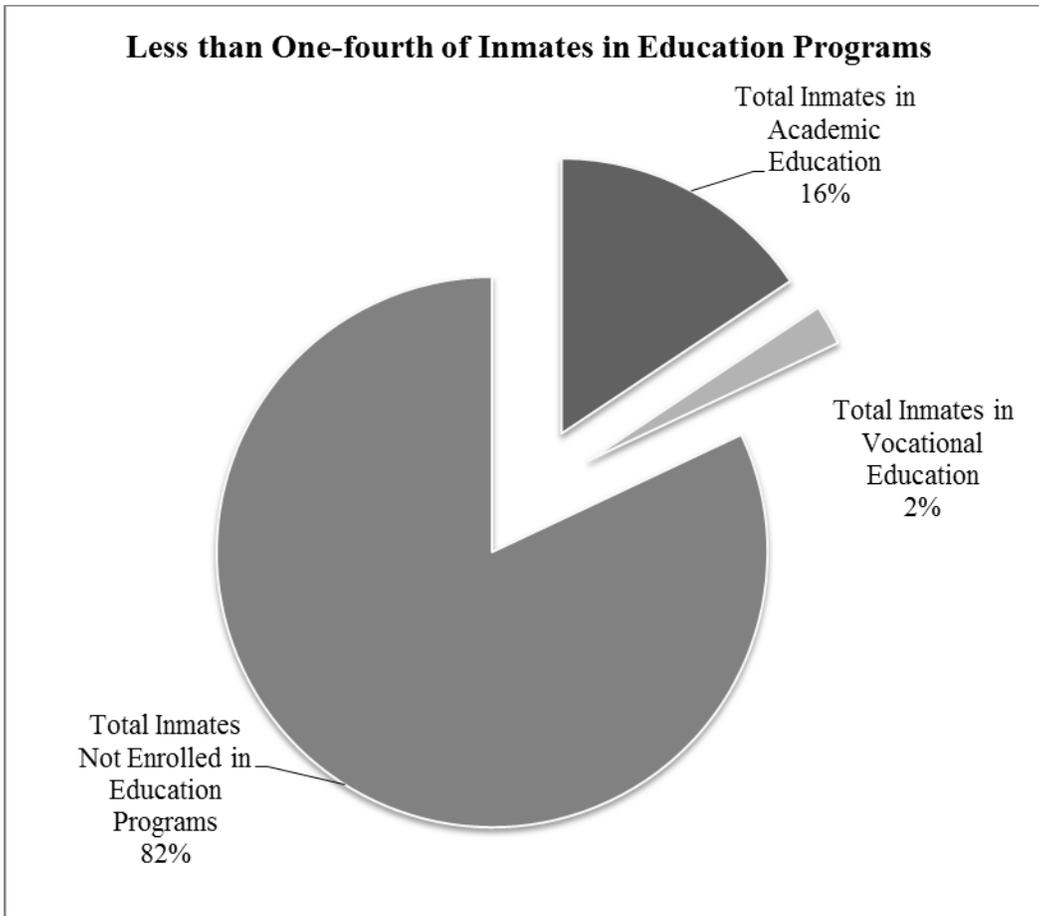
The CDCR is streamlining the models listed above starting June 1 of this year to better meet the individual needs of each institution. There will now be two main models, the general population academic program and the isolated population academic program for high security level inmates. These programs will build off the models listed above. The general population academic program will meet three hours a day, five days a week and the high security program will meet from one to five days a week depending on individual circumstances to be worked out between the Principal and other appropriate institutional staff.

There are 3,847 inmates currently enrolled in 15 different vocational programs. The department currently has 83 percent of its vocational education slots filled. Vocational programs include the following:

- Auto Body
- Auto Mechanics
- Building Maintenance
- Carpentry
- Electronics
- Electrical Construction Work
- Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning
- Machine Shop
- Manicuring
- Masonry
- Office Services and Related Technologies
- Plumbing
- Sheet Metal Work
- Small Engine Repair
- Welding

According to the LAO, the department has struggled historically to ensure that inmates assigned to programs actually participate on a daily basis, generally because of staff vacancies and institution lockdowns. Consequently, LAO estimated that in 2006-07, only 43 percent of all enrolled inmates were actually in class on any given day. According to CDCR, this was up to about 71 percent for academic programs in February of 2011 and 62 percent for vocational programs. The Comparative Statistics collected by CDCR monthly (also referred to as COMPSTAT) for February 2011 indicates that custody issues and teacher vacancies continue to be the largest reason for missed instructional time. However, medical appointments are also a factor.

Share of Inmates Enrolled in Education Programs. The recent budget cuts have resulted in fewer inmates receiving rehabilitation programs. Currently, less than one-fourth of inmates are in educational programs. The following chart does not include inmates that may participate in an educational program that is part of the Prison Industry Authority (PIA) program. This chart also does not address any programming delivered in private prisons where CDCR inmates are currently housed.



Program Outcomes. The table below lists select outcome data related to prison education provided by CDCR in their annual budget report to the Legislature.

	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
GEDs and diplomas earned	3,743	1,812	2,738
Vocational program completion rate	Unknown	6.2%	7.3%
Vocational program achievement rate	Unknown	Unknown	51.2%
Vocational certificates earned	4,332	7,840	5,801

The education outcome data available does not measure well the progress of inmate students in their academic programming. Diplomas and GEDs are important metrics, but do not measure the gains that are made when functionally illiterate inmates gain basic literacy. It is difficult to compare much of this longitudinal data because there have been significant changes in programs and education models over the last several years. As programming models stabilize the year-over-year changes will be more meaningful.

Details on 2011-12 Reductions Made to Corrections Rehabilitation Programs

Background. In SB 69 (Budget), the budget conference committee report, passed March 17, 2011, an additional \$150 million was reduced from CDCR's rehabilitation programs. This was in addition to the \$250 million cut in the 2009-10 fiscal year. Due to the potential one-time nature of the reduction, CDCR has identified areas where savings can be achieved for one year—such as, terminating contracts or delaying new services.

Approximately 50 percent of this reduction (\$75 million) will come from in prison programs, 30 percent (\$44 million) from parole operations, and 20 percent (\$31 million from delaying new female offender programs).

These reductions represent the following:

- 20 percent reduction to adult programs, from \$362 million to \$288 million, including a 39 percent reduction to substance abuse contracts.
- 30 percent reduction to parole contracts.
- 50 percent reduction to planned female offender programming blueprint.

What Programming Remains. The CDCR has indicated that the following core adult programs will remain:

- In prison Substance Abuse Programs – 1,650 treatment slots with annual capacity of 3,700 inmates at 12 institutions and Leo Chesney Community Corrections Facility.
- Aftercare Beds – 2,200 community-based substance abuse treatment residential after-care beds, a little over 1,500 are the In-Custody Drug Treatment Program.
- Education – Maintains capacity but achieves \$12 million in savings through reductions in administrative staff, including reducing the vice principals and reducing other operating expenses.

The CDCR has also indicated that the following core parole programs will remain:

- All current high risk sex offender contracts will continue. New contracts will be delayed.
- Retains 1,179 residential beds or 65 percent of previous capacity used for remedial sanctions.
- Retains 2,005 non-residential slots which is 84 percent of the previous capacity.

The CDCR is planning to retain all of the activated female offender programs. However, new programs scheduled to be activated will be delayed.

Questions for the Education Panel. In reviewing this issue, the committee may wish to consider the following questions.

- **Goals.** What are the short-term and longer-term steps CDCR is taking to meet its Strategic Plan objectives with respect to prison education? If the department achieves its goal of a 50 percent increase, what percentage of inmates will be enrolled in education?
- **Recent Cuts.** Given the additional cuts to CDCR's rehabilitation programming, what has CDCR done to try and minimize the long-term damage to CDCR's program infrastructure?
- **Outcomes.** How well is CDCR doing at achieving measurable outcomes in prison education, such as GEDs and reductions in recidivism rates for program participants? How do these outcomes compare to prior budget cuts and redesign of the program delivery model for education? Are there any steps currently underway or that should be undertaken to improve outcome rates? What are the department's plans to improve measurements of other intermediate academic gains other than GEDs and diplomas?
- **Prison Operations.** What are the specific challenges of operating education programs in a prison environment? Is provision of education programs beneficial to prison operations in any ways?
- **Criteria for Effective Programs.** To what extent is CDCR's current delivery model consistent with the Criteria for Effective Correctional Rehabilitation Programs, as described by the LAO?
- **Factors that Determine Effectiveness.** To what extent do prisons vary in their ability to deliver effective education programs? What are the factors that make the biggest difference in whether programs are delivered successfully?
- **Quality Assurance.** How does the department ensure that programs are both designed and delivered effectively? How does headquarters evaluate the degree to which an institution or individual teachers are running effective programs? How is this measured?
- **Accountability.** What are the lines of responsibility for program effectiveness? To what extent are wardens evaluated based on the operation and effectiveness of education programs within their prisons? How does headquarters remedy situations where less effective programs are operating?
- **Expert Panel and LAO Recommendations.** To what extent has CDCR implemented recommendations of the Expert Panel and LAO? Given current fiscal constraints, are there some recommendations that can and should still be implemented to improve the delivery and effectiveness of programs? For example, do the recommendations regarding development of risk and needs assessments and case plans, increasing attendance rates, and developing incentives for participation and completion of programs still have merit?
- **Reentry.** In what ways can (or should) CDCR assist inmates released from prison after participating in education programs in continuing those efforts upon release? To what extent does (or should) CDCR assist inmates released from prison after participating in vocational programs in finding a job in that field? What are (or should be) the respective

roles of the Programs Division versus the Parole Division within CDCR in making these transitions?

- *Next Steps.* What are concrete ideas panelists would recommend to improve the provision of inmate education programs, specifically under current fiscal constraints? What are the specific things CDCR is committed to working on in coming months as part of its ongoing efforts to improve these programs?