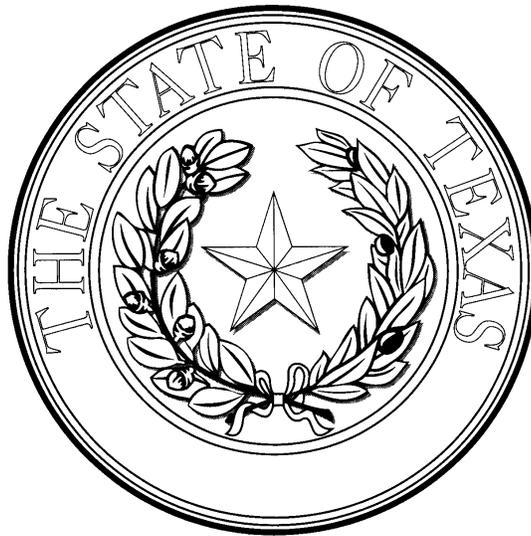


Educational Achievement of Inmates in the Windham School District



Criminal Justice Policy Council
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Tony Fabelo, Ph.D.
Executive Director

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Note From The Director

A February 2000 Criminal Justice Policy Council (CJPC) report presented an overview of the Windham School District (WSD) which operates educational, vocational, and life skills training programs in Texas prisons. This second report evaluates the performance of the District's educational programs. Subsequent reports will evaluate the impact of educational achievement and vocational training on post-prison employment and recidivism.

This study tracks the prison education experiences of 32,020 inmates released from prison in fiscal years 1997 and 1998. The educational achievement of each inmate was tracked from admission to their release from prison using WSD educational records. Educational progress and achievement was measured for inmates who were nonreaders, functionally illiterate, and who were on a program path to earn a GED or attend college.

Of the 32,020 inmates tracked, 23,822 were eligible to participate in Windham adult education programs. Of these, 44% (10,485) were Functionally Illiterate (functioning at less than a 6th grade level) and 56% (13,337) were in the GED/College Path program (functioning at the 6th grade level or higher). Of the functionally illiterate inmates, 36% (3,774) were nonreaders (functioning at less than a 4th grade reading level). In general, African American and Hispanic inmates entered prison at lower educational achievement levels than Anglos.

The WSD does not function like a typical free-world school district. Unlike a free-world school district, WSD cannot educate every inmate because of capacity and funding constraints. The WSD is staffed to provide services for approximately 24,000 prison inmates at any one time, or 18% of the 131,256 inmates in Texas prisons in fiscal year 1999. Because of inmate turnover, however, the WSD served over 56,000 inmates in that year. Inmates are a difficult population to educate as there are a high proportion of participants with low IQs, substance abuse problems, emotional problems, and mental illnesses. In addition, the demands of prison work and rehabilitation programs may create difficulties in providing educational services to the target population. Therefore, those inmates with lower educational achievement levels, who are closest to release and are not a security risk, receive priority for educational programs.

The need to prioritize education as a program for inmates close to release means that regardless of how long an inmate is incarcerated, the average educational time that an inmate can get in prison is equivalent to one prison school year (approximately 630 hours). The average hours of participation in educational programs for inmates in this study was 604 hours during the inmates' incarceration. Therefore, educational exposure time impacts the ability of the WSD to improve inmates' educational levels. Furthermore, improvements in educational performance are not likely to be significant in the future unless program capacity is expanded. Redeployment of educational resources may be an option to increase effectiveness and some recommendations regarding this are made here. Proper redeployment will also depend on evaluating the impact of educational programs on employment and recidivism. This will be examined in two subsequent reports.

Note From The Director

Taking into consideration the operational and policy constraints discussed above, the WSD performs well in:

- Selecting inmates with the greatest need for participation. Of the 23,822 inmates eligible for participation in adult education programs, 68% (16,205) participated. Of the Nonreaders 78% participated compared to 74% of the Functionally Illiterate inmates and 63% of the GED/College Path inmates.
- Advancing the grade level of inmates. Windham students gained an average of 1.5 grade levels during their incarceration period. The average hours of participation for inmates in educational programs was 604 hours during the inmates' total incarceration period. Nonreaders advanced an average of 1.5 reading levels, Functionally Illiterate advanced 1.7 grades and GED/College Path inmates advanced an average of 1.2 grades.
- Advancing "borderline" students to the next achievement level during their period of incarceration. Of the 46% of Nonreaders who became Readers, 64% were one grade away from becoming a reader (4.0 EA Reading score or higher). Of the 40% of Functionally Illiterate who became functionally literate, 55% were one grade away when they entered the program. Of the 59% of the GED/College Path who earned a GED or attended college classes, 46% increased no more than one grade level.
- Advancing the grade equivalent level of African American and Hispanic students earning a GED. African American and Hispanic inmates earning a GED in prison leave prison with higher EA scores than those entering prison with a High School diploma. African American inmates who earned a GED while in prison had average EA scores of 9.1 compared to average EA scores of 7.0 for those who entered prison with a High School diploma. Hispanic inmates who earned a GED while in prison had average EA scores of 9.3 compared to average EA scores of 8.2 for those who entered prison with a High School diploma. Anglos who earned a GED in prison scored lower on their exit EA than Anglos who entered prison with a High School diploma (10.1 vs. 10.4).

The WSD may be able to improve the delivery of their educational programs by reexamining their inmate selection and participation processes. Specifically the WSD needs to determine if:

- Inmates can be better identified so that educational resources are not utilized for those who will not progress.
- ✓ Approximately 58% of the educational gain of inmates making progress occurred in the first 300 hours of instruction. Inmate gains become smaller after the first 300 hours of participation. A better assessment of potential gain could be done after 300 hours of instruction to determine who should continue participating.

Note From The Director

- Inmate selection for participation may be improved when parole guidelines become operational.
 - ✓ Inmates with short sentences are less likely to participate and less likely to receive enough hours of education to make significant educational progress. Guidelines currently under development by the Parole Board may lead to a more predictable release date that will give Windham more certainty regarding timing for program selection.

Post-release employment and recidivism may be impacted by inmate participation in WSD educational programs. The WSD may want to redirect resources to those programs that appear to have the greatest impact in reducing recidivism and increasing employability after release. Subsequent reports by the CJPC will examine these questions.

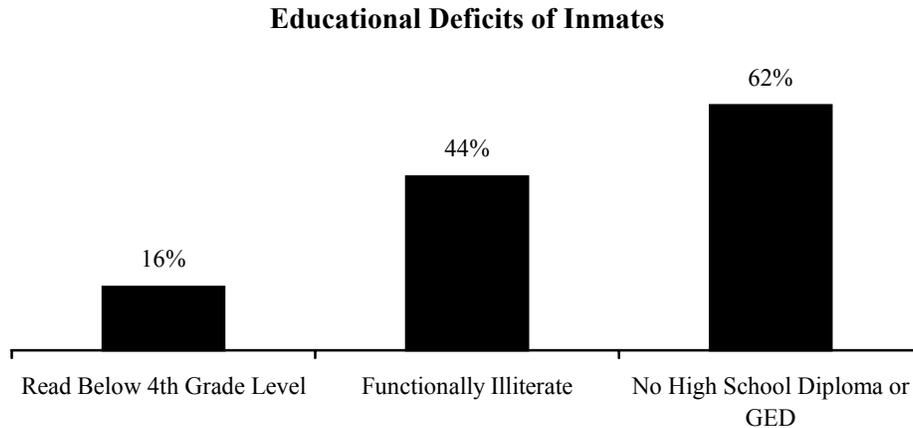
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I. Introduction and Methodology

Windham School District Provides Services to Inmates With Educational Deficits



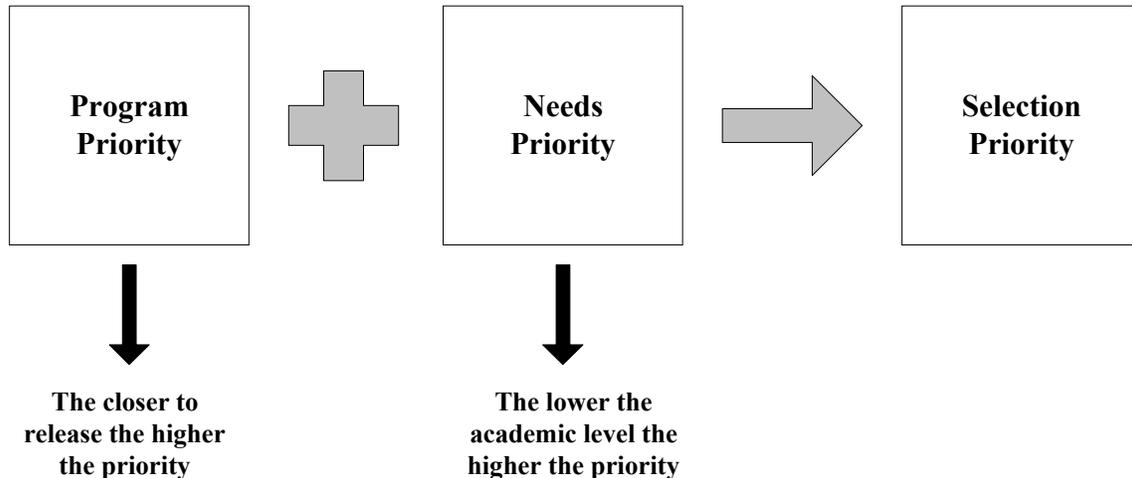
- The Windham School District (WSD), operated within the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) and funded by the Texas Education Agency (TEA), provides educational services to inmates in Texas prisons and state jails.
- Windham assesses the educational achievement of inmates at admission to prison using the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE). The educational achievement (EA) score indicates the grade level at which an inmate is functioning.
 - ✓ Program placement is determined by EA score and graduation status at entry to prison. For inmates who enter prison without a high school diploma, the EA score determines placement in an academic program.
- Inmates can participate in Adult Basic, Secondary, or Post-Secondary Education programs.
 - ✓ Adult Basic Education courses provide beginning and intermediate literacy programs to inmates whose educational achievement is below 6.0 at entrance to prison.
 - ✓ Secondary Education programs are available to inmates whose achievement is 6.0 or higher at entry to prison.
 - ✓ Inmates, in this study, who entered prison with a GED were allowed to participate in any Adult Basic or Secondary Education program, as well as Post-Secondary Education courses. Inmates who entered prison with a High School diploma were only eligible to participate in Post-Secondary Education courses.
 - ◆ Effective January 18, 2000, inmates with GED or High School diplomas who do not meet Texas Academic Skills Program (TASP) eligibility requirements (12.0 in reading, 7.5 in math, and 7.5 in language) may enroll in Windham adult education programs to the extent space is available.
 - ✓ Not all inmates are eligible for Windham adult education programs. HB 1 (1997) prohibited in-cell tutoring to inmates in administrative segregation that was previously provided by Windham.

Educational Programming for Inmates is Impacted by Prison Priorities and the Needs of the Population

Priorities & Problems of Prison Population
Education Availability Constrained by Program Capacity Limits
Security Takes Precedence Over Education
Education Competes for Time with Work & Rehabilitation Programs
Education Time Impacted by Time Before Release
Problems of Population Impacts Educational Performance

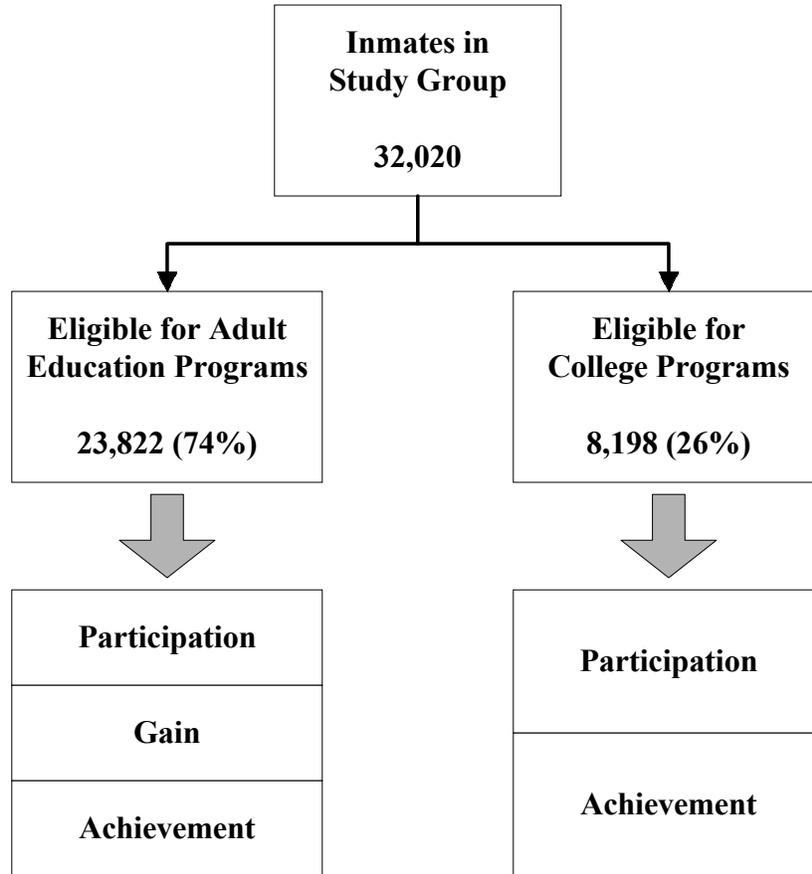
- Windham is staffed to provide services to approximately 24,000 prison inmates at any one time.
 - ✓ This program capacity represents approximately 18% of the 131,256 inmates in Texas prisons in FY 1999.
 - ✓ In FY 1999, 56,096 inmates participated in Windham programs.
- Because educational resources are limited, Windham must prioritize which and when inmates should be selected for program participation.
 - ✓ Windham focuses on serving inmates who are nearing release from prison.
- Unit location impacts accessibility to programs.
 - ✓ Not all Windham programs are available at each prison unit.
- The population served by Windham has special needs that are different from most other adult education programs. Some examples of these special needs include inmates with substance abuse problems, mental illness, and low IQ scores.

The Individualized Treatment Plan Prioritizes Selection of Inmates for Educational Programs



- The Individualized Treatment Plan (ITP) is used by prison and Windham officials to prioritize participation of inmates for various programs based on an inmate's needs, projected release date, and program availability.
- Program priority is determined by the amount of time left on an inmate's sentence, with highest priority given to those who will be released within two years, medium priority to those who will be released within five years, and the lowest priority to those who are more than five years from release.
- Needs priority is determined by an inmate's level of academic achievement with those who score below a 6.0 (6th grade level) on the entry TABE having the highest need, those who score 6.0 to 9.0 having medium needs, and those who score over 9.0 having the lowest need.
 - ✓ Inmates with the highest priority are those with an EA score under 6.0 who are within 2 years of release.
- To be placed in a program, a high priority inmate must be incarcerated in a facility that offers an educational program suitable to his/her needs and a vacancy in the appropriate program must be available.

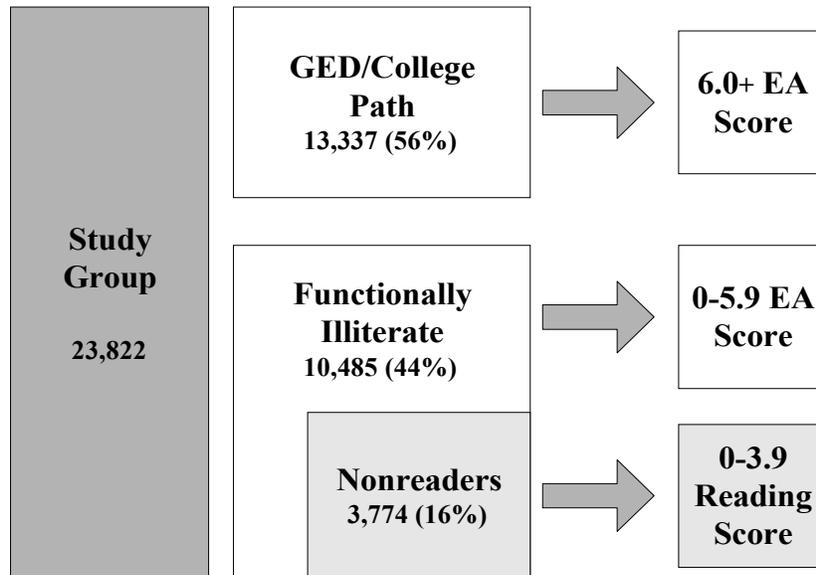
This Report Analyzes the Educational Achievement of Inmates During Their Incarceration



- The study group consists of inmates released from prison for the first time in FY 1997 and FY 1998.
 - ✓ Inmate participation in Windham educational programs, educational gains, and achievement were tracked from prison admission to release.
 - ✓ Participation was defined as attending one or more hours of Windham educational programming.
 - ✓ Gain was defined as an increase in EA scores on a subsequent TABE test for those participating in education programs.
 - ✓ Achievement was defined as attainment of specific educational goals.
 - ✓ State Jail and SAFPF (Substance Abuse Felony Punishment Facility) inmates were not included in the study group.

- Data for the study was extracted from each inmate’s computerized prison and educational record.

Three Study Groups Were Used to Analyze Educational Achievement in Prison for Adult Education Programs



- Three study groups were used to analyze educational achievement in prison:
 - ✓ Functionally Illiterate inmates scored less than 6.0 on the entry composite TABE and were eligible to participate in Adult Basic Education classes.
 - ◆ Nonreaders are a subgroup of the Functionally Illiterate group who scored less than a 4.0 on the reading portion of the entry TABE indicating an inability to read (or reading at a beginning level).
 - ✓ GED/College Path inmates scored 6.0 or greater on the entry composite TABE and were eligible to participate in Secondary Education courses.

- Achievement relates to attainment of specific educational goals for each of the three groups:
 - ✓ Functionally Illiterate Goal: to attain at least a 6th grade level (6.0 or greater) on a subsequent TABE composite score; to “become literate.”
 - ◆ Nonreaders Goal: to score at least a 4th grade level (4.0 or greater) on a subsequent reading component of the TABE; to “learn to read.”
 - ✓ GED/College Path Goal: to successfully complete the GED or participate in college-level courses.

CJPC Measurement of Performance Is Different Than Performance Measures Reported by Windham to Legislature

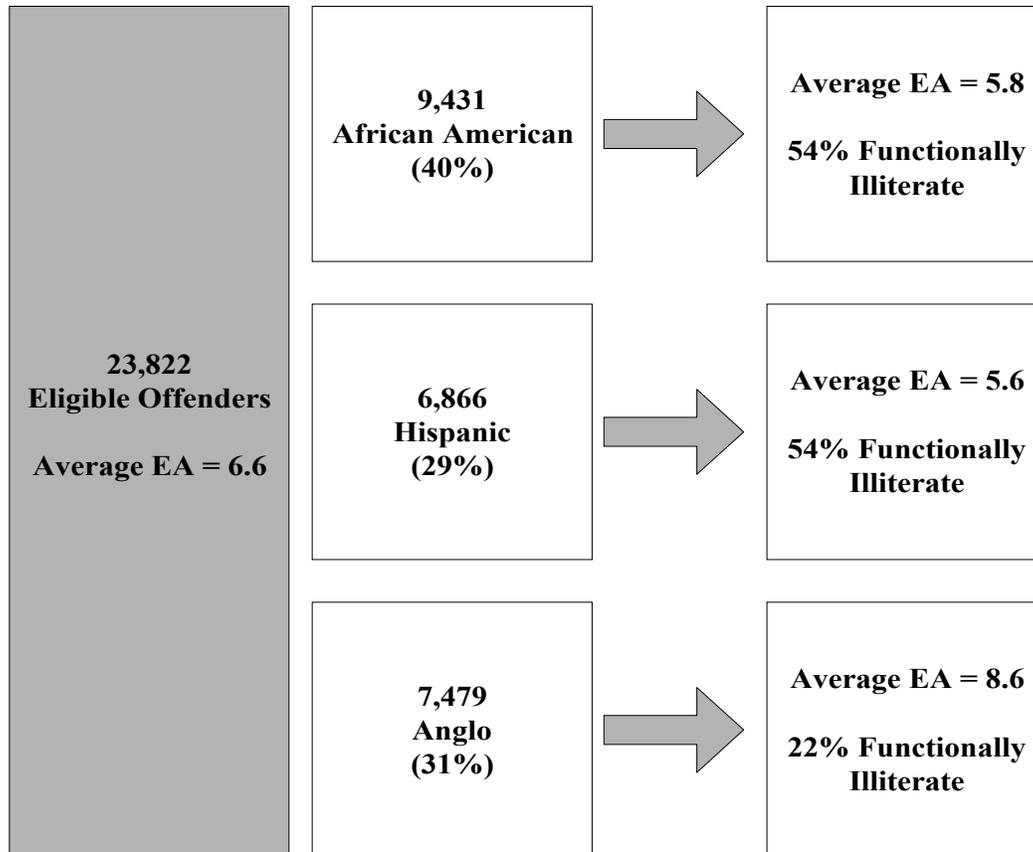
Performance Measurement	
CJPC	Windham
Measure EA at Entry to Prison Measure EA at End of Program Achievement During Incarceration for Each Participant	Measure EA at Beginning of School Year Measure EA at End of School Year Achievement During School Year for All Participants
	
Able to measure individual educational achievement in prison and its relation to post-release employment and recidivism	Unable to measure individual educational achievement in prison and its relation to post-release employment and recidivism

- Windham performance measures indicate the educational achievement an inmate makes during the school year, not achievement made during the period of incarceration.
 - ✓ The measurement of aggregate yearly gains cannot provide information on total inmate achievement or the effect of achievement on employment or recidivism.
 - ✓ Windham also measures participation rates, service hours provided, and GEDs attained.

- Evaluating individual inmate achievement made throughout a period of incarceration provides a more complete picture of inmate achievement and can be used to assess the impact of educational achievement on employment and recidivism.
 - ✓ The CJPC will examine the relationship between educational achievement during incarceration to post-release employment and recidivism in subsequent reports.

II. Overview of Population Characteristics for Inmates in Adult Education Programs

Eligible Inmates Entered Windham Adult Education Programs With Less Than a 7th Grade Educational Achievement Level



* The race/ethnicity of 46 inmates is unknown

- Inmates eligible to participate in Windham adult education programs entered prison with an average EA score of 6.6.
 - ✓ African Americans and Hispanics entered prison with achievement scores significantly lower than Anglos.
 - ✓ The majority of African American and Hispanic inmates were functionally illiterate.

The Characteristics of Eligible Inmates Varied Among the Three Study Groups

Eligible Inmates

	Nonreaders		Functionally Illiterate		GED/College Path		Total	
Race*								
African American	1,932	51%	5,054	48%	4,377	33%	9,431	40%
Hispanic	1,446	38%	3,734	36%	3,132	23%	6,866	29%
Anglo	387	10%	1,682	16%	5,797	43%	7,479	31%
Age**								
Under 30	1,132	30%	3,686	35%	6,712	50%	10,398	44%
30+	2,641	70%	6,798	65%	6,624	50%	13,422	56%
Average IQ	78		82		96		90	
Average Entry EA	2.6***		3.6		9.0		6.6	
Total	3,774		10,485		13,337		23,822	

* The race/ethnicity of 46 eligible inmates

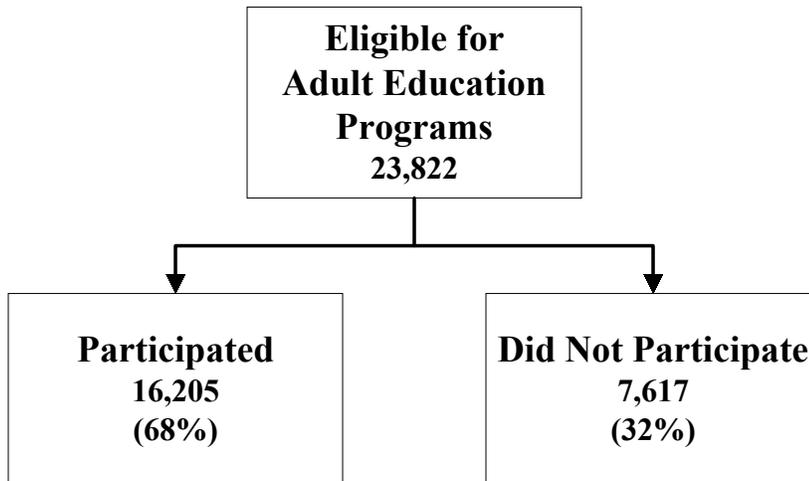
** The age of 2 eligible inmates is

*** EA score for Nonreaders represents the reading portion only while EA scores for the composite TABE

- African American and Hispanic inmates accounted for 84% of the Functionally Illiterate group compared to 56% of the GED/College Path group.
- Inmates age 30 and older make up the majority of the Functionally Illiterate group (70% of Nonreaders and 65% of the Functionally Illiterate), while inmates eligible for Secondary Education were evenly split between younger and older inmates.
 - ✓ Inmates between the ages of 17 to 25 entered prison with an average EA score of 7.4 compared to an average EA of 5.1 for those ages 50 and older.
 - ✓ The higher EA scores of younger inmates may reflect improvements in the Texas public school system in recent years.
- The average IQ score varies for the three study groups with Nonreaders showing the lowest average IQ (78).
 - ✓ An IQ score of 70 or below is an indication of mental retardation.

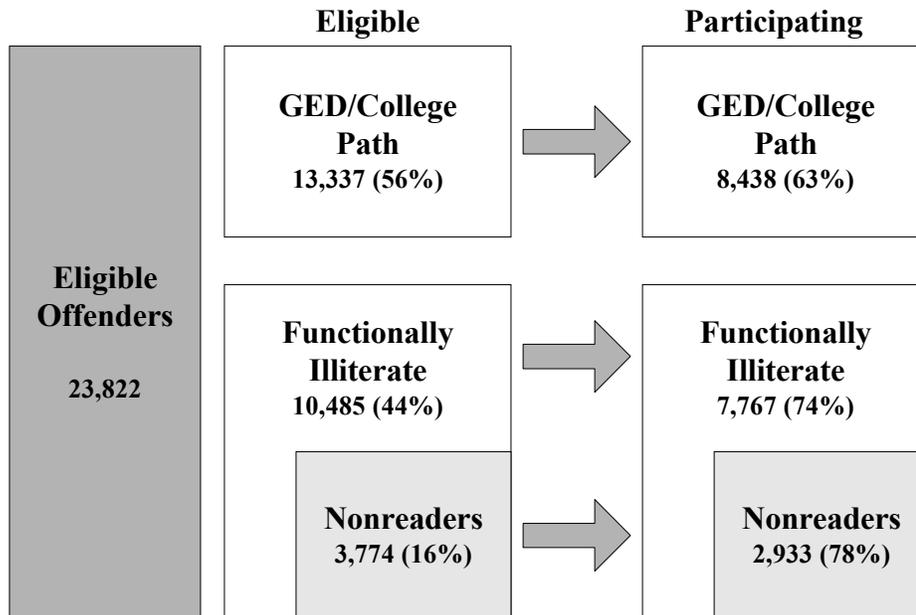
III. Participation in Adult Education Programs

68% of Eligible Inmates Participated in Windham Adult Education Programs



- A variety of circumstances may account for nonparticipation among eligible inmates:
 - ✓ There were no vacancies for appropriate programs during incarceration period.
 - ✓ The appropriate educational program was not available at the prison unit where the inmate was incarcerated.
 - ✓ Medical or health reasons may prevent inmates from participating.
 - ✓ Inmates awaiting transfer to prison who are housed in State Jails may not receive educational services since State Jails prioritize their own inmates for educational programs over those awaiting transfer.
 - ✓ Inmates may refuse to participate.

Inmates With Greatest Educational Need Had the Highest Participation Rates



- Although males account for 85% of eligible inmates, there were no significant differences in participation rates by gender.
 - ✓ Of all eligible females, 69% (2,372) participated in a WSD program while 31% (1,085) did not participate.
 - ✓ Of all eligible males, 68% (13,833) participated in an adult education program while 32% (6,532) did not participate.

- There were, however, differences in participation rates by race/ethnic groups.
 - ✓ Of all African American inmates, 74% (6,962) participated in an adult education program while 26% (2,469) did not participate.
 - ✓ Of all Hispanic inmates, 71% (4,842) participated in a WSD program while 29% (2,024) did not participate.
 - ✓ Of all Anglo inmates, 58% (4,368) participated in an adult education program while 42% (3,111) did not participate.

Nonparticipants Had Higher Educational Achievement Levels at Entrance to Prison and Had Shorter Sentences

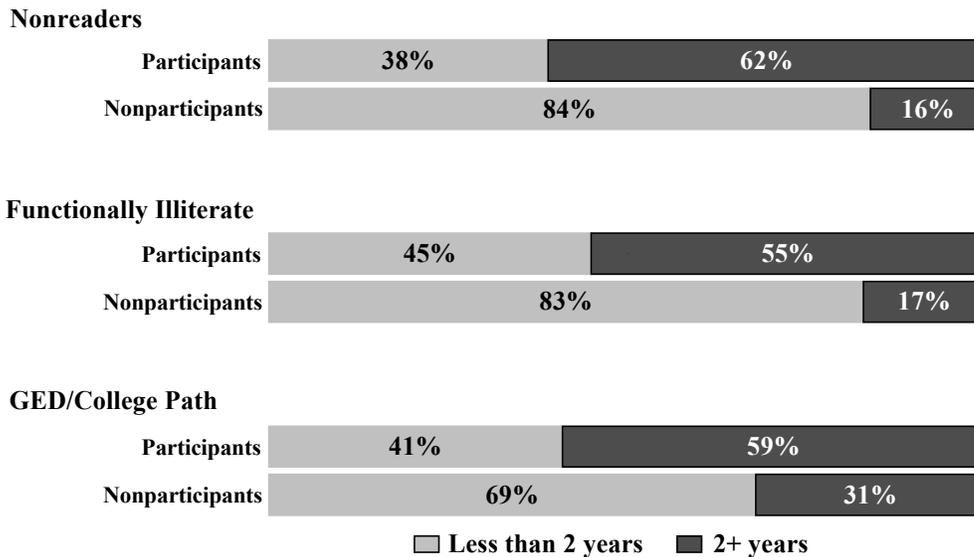
Comparison of Participant and Nonparticipant Averages

	Participants	Nonparticipants
# of Inmates	16,205	7,617
Entry EA Score	6.3	7.4
Age	33	33
Race		
African American	43%	32%
Hispanic	30%	27%
Anglo	27%	41%
Sentence		
2-5 yrs.	46%	68%
6+ yrs.	54%	32%
Time Served	2.8	1.7

- Nonparticipants entered prison functioning at a higher EA level (7.4 EA score) than participants (6.3 EA score).
- Inmates who participated in adult education programs had an average IQ of 89 compared to an average IQ of 93 for nonparticipants.
 - ✓ 6% of participating inmates (990) attended Special Education courses in Windham. Special Education courses provide educational opportunities for inmates who are learning disabled, mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed, or have visual/hearing/orthopedic/health impairments.
- A higher percentage of nonparticipants (68%) were serving sentences of 2-5 years, compared to participants (46%).

Participants in All Study Groups Served Longer Sentences in Prison Than Did Nonparticipants

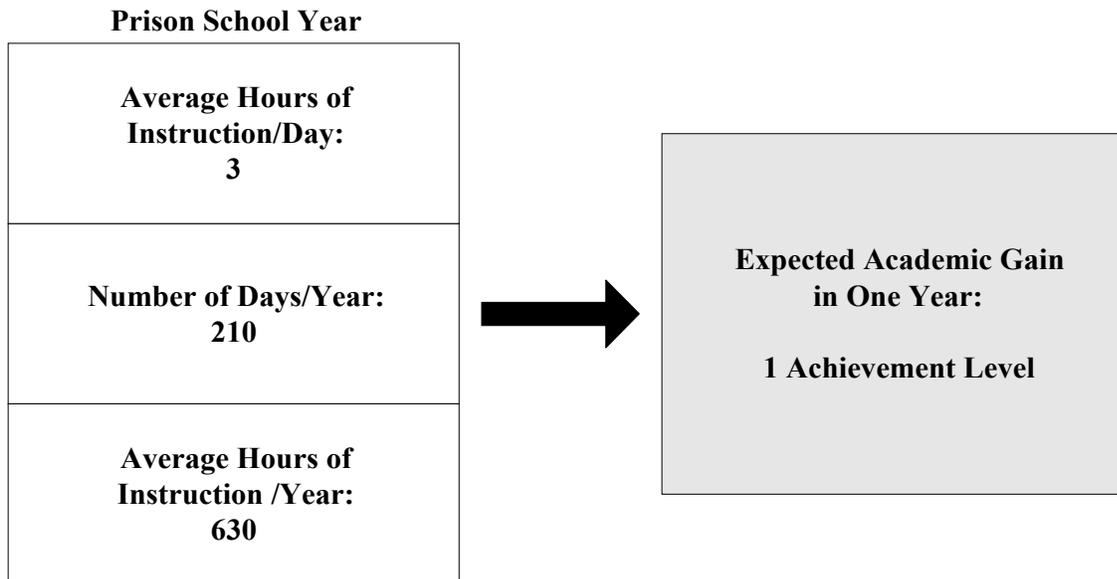
Time Served by Group



- Over 80% of nonparticipants in the Nonreaders and Functionally Illiterate groups served less than 2 years in prison.
 - ✓ Less time in prison limits opportunities for placement in educational programs due to capacity issues and matching appropriate programs to inmate needs.
- The majority of participating inmates served 2 or more years in prison.

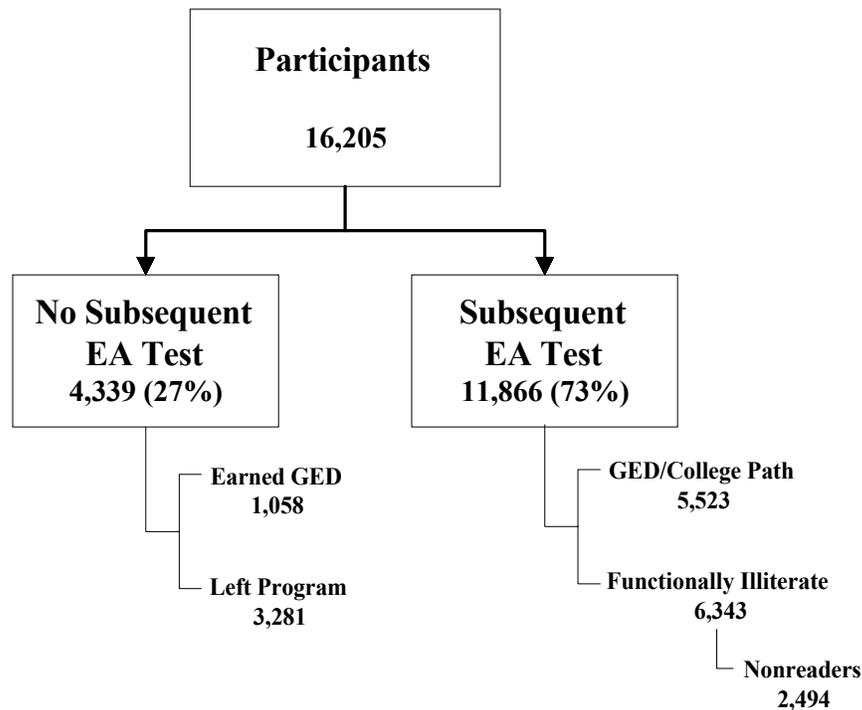
IV. Educational Achievement

The Windham School Year Provides a Relative Point of Reference for Achievement



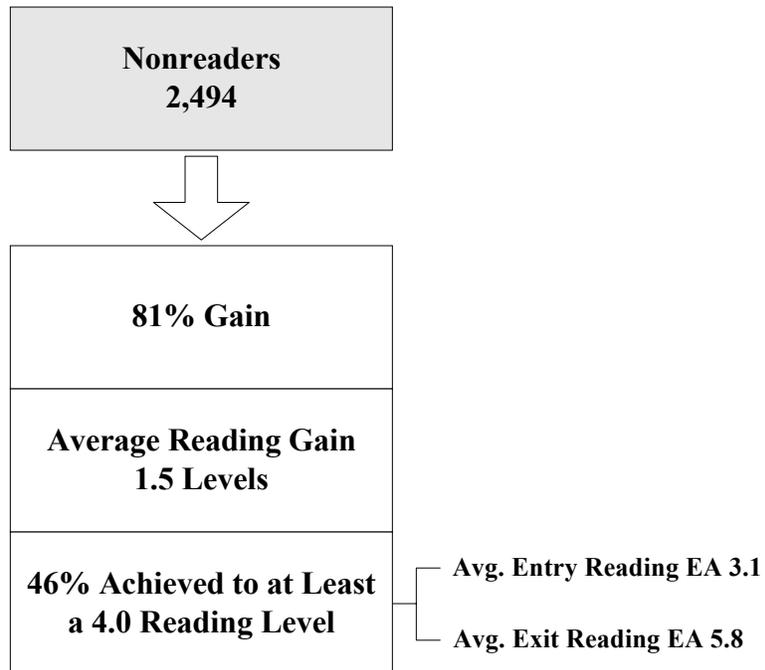
- There are currently no established benchmarks to measure expected gain in adult educational programs.
- The Legislature has established performance measures for all adult education programs including Windham.
 - ✓ The measure for adult education is the percent of learners who complete the level in which they are enrolled.
 - ✓ Hours of instruction per “school year” vary by program.

Participants Had to Have a Subsequent EA Test to Measure Gain



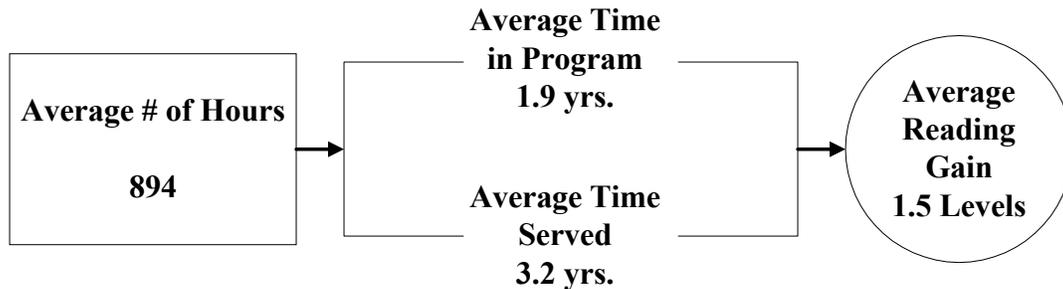
- Approximately 27% of inmates who participated in Windham adult education programs did not take a second EA test.
 - ✓ Inmates may successfully complete a GED before being administered a second EA test.
 - ✓ 1,058, or 24%, of inmates with one entry EA test earned a GED.
 - ✓ Inmates with only one EA test participated for fewer hours than inmates with two or more tests: 123 and 604 average hours, respectively.
- Factors associated with leaving the program include:
 - ✓ Inmates may dropout or be removed from programs by WSD or TDCJ due to lack of ability, interest, or disciplinary reasons.
 - ✓ Inmates may enter programs shortly before release from prison.
 - ✓ Inmates may transfer to another unit where similar programs are unavailable due to resources or capacity.
 - ✓ Inmates may leave due to medical problems or bench warrants.
- Inmates with only one EA test have been removed from their respective groups for the analysis of gain and achievement.

46% of Nonreaders Became Readers by Reaching a Reading Level of 4.0 or Higher



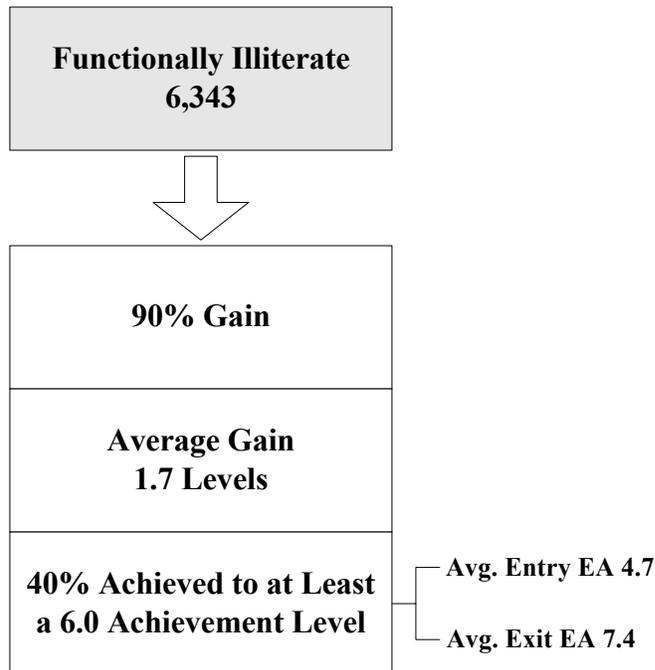
- Achievement for Nonreaders is the percent of inmates who become readers. Achievement is measured by inmates who reach a reading level of 4.0 or higher.
- 22% of inmates who became readers entered prison reading between a 3.5 and 3.9 reading level, while 42% started out between 3.0 and 3.4, and the remaining 36% entered prison functioning below a 3.0 reading level.
 - ✓ 64% were within one reading achievement level of attaining a 4.0 reading level or higher.
- Inmates who became readers had an average IQ of 81 compared to an average IQ of 75 for offenders who did not attain this level of achievement.

Nonreaders Gained an Average of 1.5 Reading Levels in 894 Program Hours



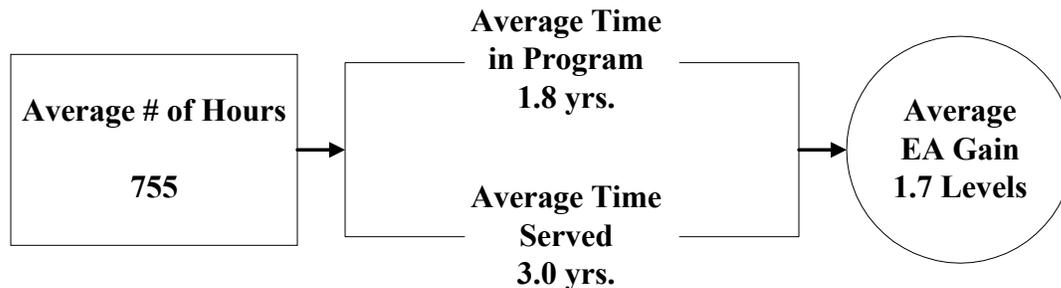
- 19% of Nonreaders (485) made no improvement on subsequent reading tests, while 53% (1,321) gained 1.0 or more reading levels.
 - ✓ Gains for Nonreaders ranged from 0 to 11.3 reading levels.
 - ✓ Nonreaders receiving less than 300 hours of instruction gained 1.2 reading levels.
- 23% of Nonreader participants were special education students.
 - ✓ Inmates in special education courses attended an average of 1,377 hours and gained an average of 1.1 reading levels compared to an average of 746 participation hours for non-special education inmates who had an average gain of 1.6 reading levels.
- Average time in program was calculated from the first entry date into an academic program to the last exit date from an academic program.
 - ✓ Inmates may have some period of time when they are moving from one program to another and are not participating in a program.

40% of Functionally Illiterate Inmates Became Literate by Reaching an Educational Achievement Level of 6.0 or Higher



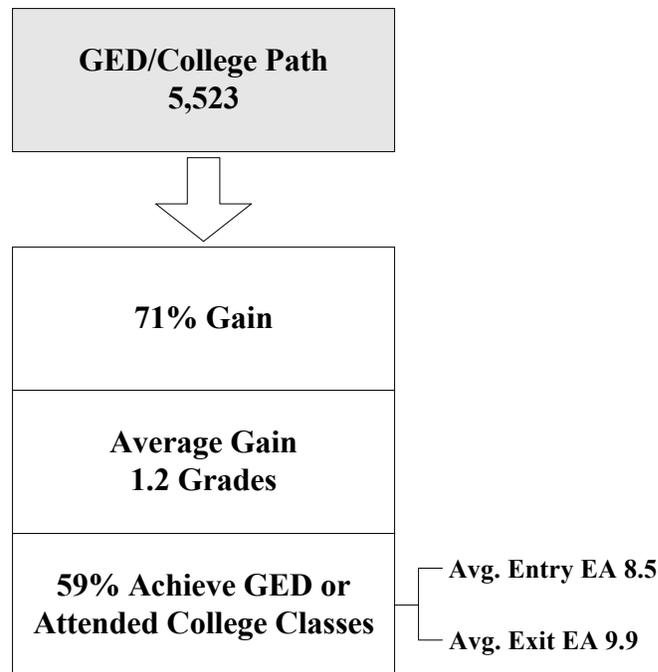
- Achievement for Functionally Illiterate inmates is the percent becoming literate, measured by inmates who gain to a composite 6.0 EA level or higher.
- 55% of inmates who gained to the 6.0 EA level or higher entered prison functioning between 5.0 and 5.9, while 26% who attained this level of achievement started out between 4.0 and 4.9. The remaining 19% of inmates who gained to the 6.0 EA level or higher entered prison functioning below 4.0.
- Inmates who became literate had an average IQ of 87 compared to an average IQ of 79 for inmates who did not attain an EA level of 6.0.

Functionally Illiterate Inmates Gained an Average of 1.7 Educational Achievement Levels in 755 Program Hours



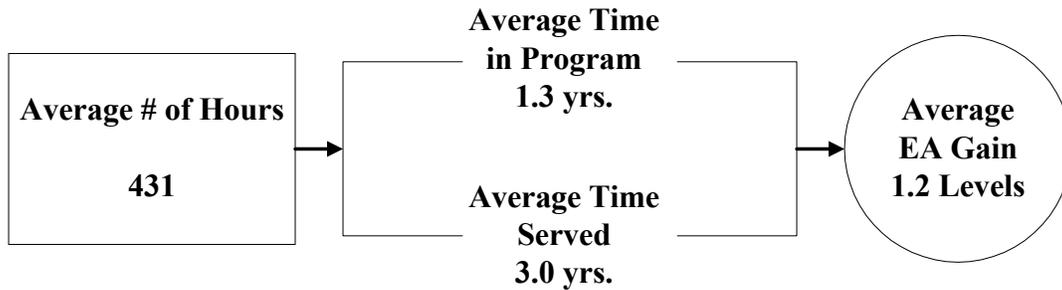
- 10% of Functionally Illiterate inmates (629) made no gain on subsequent composite EA tests, while 62% (3,963) gained 1.0 or more EA levels.
 - ✓ Gains for the Functionally Illiterate ranged from 0 to 12.8 EA levels on the composite TABE test.
 - ✓ Functionally Illiterate inmates receiving less than 300 hours of instruction gained 1.3 EA levels.
- 13% of Functionally Illiterate participants were special education students.
 - ✓ Special education participants attended programs for an average of 1,357 hours and gained an average of 1.4 achievement levels compared to non-special education students who attended an average of 665 hours and had a gain of 1.7 achievement levels.

59% of the GED/College Path Group Earned a GED or Attended College Classes



- Achievement for GED/College Path inmates is the percent earning a GED or participating in college-level courses.
- 17% (940) of GED/College Path inmates had a GED at entrance to prison.
- It is not necessary to have an EA composite score of 12.0 to earn a GED or attend college courses.
 - ✓ Windham begins offering GED tests at the 7.5 achievement level.
- Of the inmates who earned a GED or attended college courses, 2,913 participants (89%) entered prison with less than a High School diploma and earned a GED while incarcerated, while 365 (11%) entered prison with a GED, improved their EA score, and enrolled in college classes.

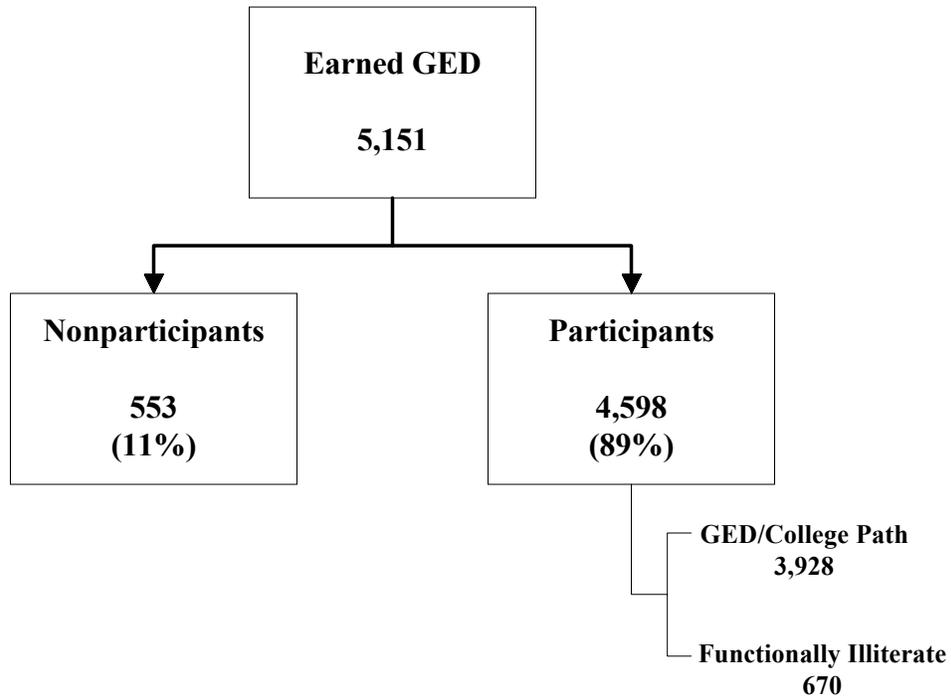
GED/College Path Inmates Gained an Average of 1.2 Levels of Educational Achievement in 431 Program Hours



- 28% of GED/College Path inmates (1,575) made no gain on subsequent composite EA tests, while 50% (2,765) gained 1.0 or more achievement levels.
 - ✓ Gains in EA levels ranged from 0 to 6.9.
 - ✓ GED/College Path inmates receiving less than 300 hours of instruction gained .9 EA levels.

V. Other Achievement

89% of Inmates Earning a GED Participated in Windham Programs While Incarcerated



- A total of 5,151 inmates earned a GED while incarcerated.
 - ✓ 89% of inmates who earned a GED participated in Windham education programs. These inmates entered with a composite EA score of 8.1 and exited with an EA score of 9.5 after participating in Windham.
 - ✓ 11% of inmates who earned a GED in prison did not participate in Windham adult education programs. These inmates had an average composite EA score of 9.4 at entrance to prison.
 - ✓ 10% of Functionally Illiterate inmates (67) who earned a GED started as Nonreaders.
- Inmates do not have to participate in Windham programs to earn a GED.
 - ✓ Inmates may have earned a GED with only one (entry) TABE test.

African Americans and Hispanics Earning a GED in Prison Leave with Higher EA Scores Than Those Entering Prison with a High School Diploma

Average EA Scores by Race/Ethnicity and Graduation Status

	Entered Prison with H. S. Diploma	Entered Prison with GED	Earned GED in Prison
	Entry EA	Entry EA	Exit EA
Overall	8.3	9.3	9.5
African American	7.0	8.1	9.1
Hispanic	8.2	8.9	9.3
Anglo	10.4	10.2	10.1

- African American and Hispanic inmates earning GEDs in prison leave with higher EA scores than inmates who entered prison with High School diplomas.
 - ✓ Inmates, in this study, entering prison with a High School Diploma were only eligible to participate in Post-Secondary Education programs.
- Effective January 18, 2000, inmates with GEDs or High School diplomas who do not meet the TASP eligibility requirements (12.0 in reading, 7.5 in math, and 7.5 in language) may enroll in Windham adult education programs if space permits.

Few Inmates Participate in College Academic Programs

Potential Participants for College Programs

17,395



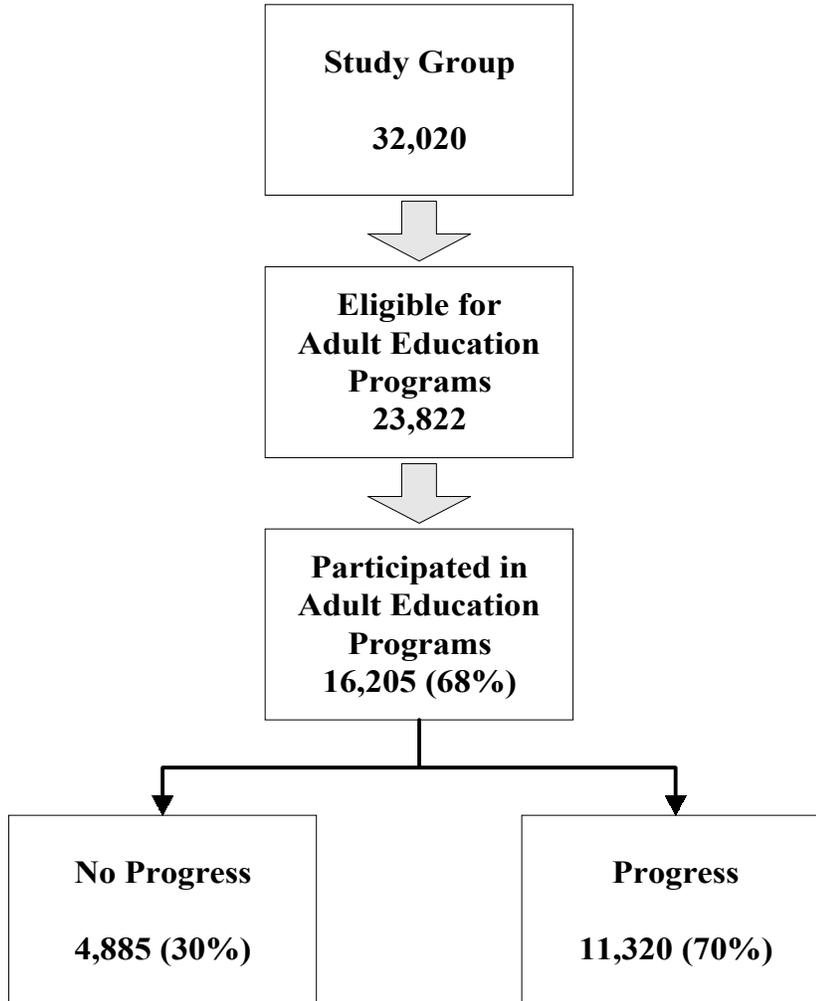
**2,022 Participated
(12%)**

**106 Degrees Awarded
(5%)**

- Inmates who are potentially eligible for college courses are those who enter prison with a High School diploma or GED, or who complete their GED while in prison.
 - ✓ Inmates who participate in college courses are required to meet TASP requirements (12.0 in reading, 7.5 in math, and 7.5 in language).
- Post-Secondary Education programs have been legislatively limited to inmates who:
 - ✓ Demonstrate a clear and convincing record of rehabilitation while incarcerated.
 - ✓ Demonstrate an interest in a field of study that lends itself to performing specific and beneficial tasks while incarcerated.
 - ✓ Demonstrate the aptitude and capabilities to do college level study.
- The WSD contracts with colleges and universities to provide college-level courses to inmates who meet requirements for Post-Secondary Education programs.
- Since inmates are not eligible for most financial aid programs, Post-Secondary Education costs must be paid by inmates or reimbursed as a condition of parole.
- College participants earned 99 Associate's, 4 Bachelor's, and 3 Master's Degrees while in prison.

VI. Big Picture Summary and Policy Issues

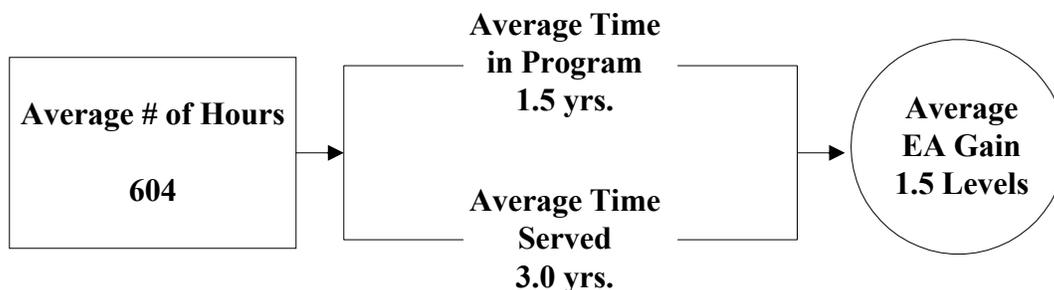
Participation in Adult Education Programs



- The progress category includes inmates who participated in Windham programs and earned a GED or increased their composite TABE or reading score.
- Approximately 48% (11,320) of all eligible inmates made progress. Another 2% (511) of eligible inmates earned a GED but did not participate in Adult Education programs.

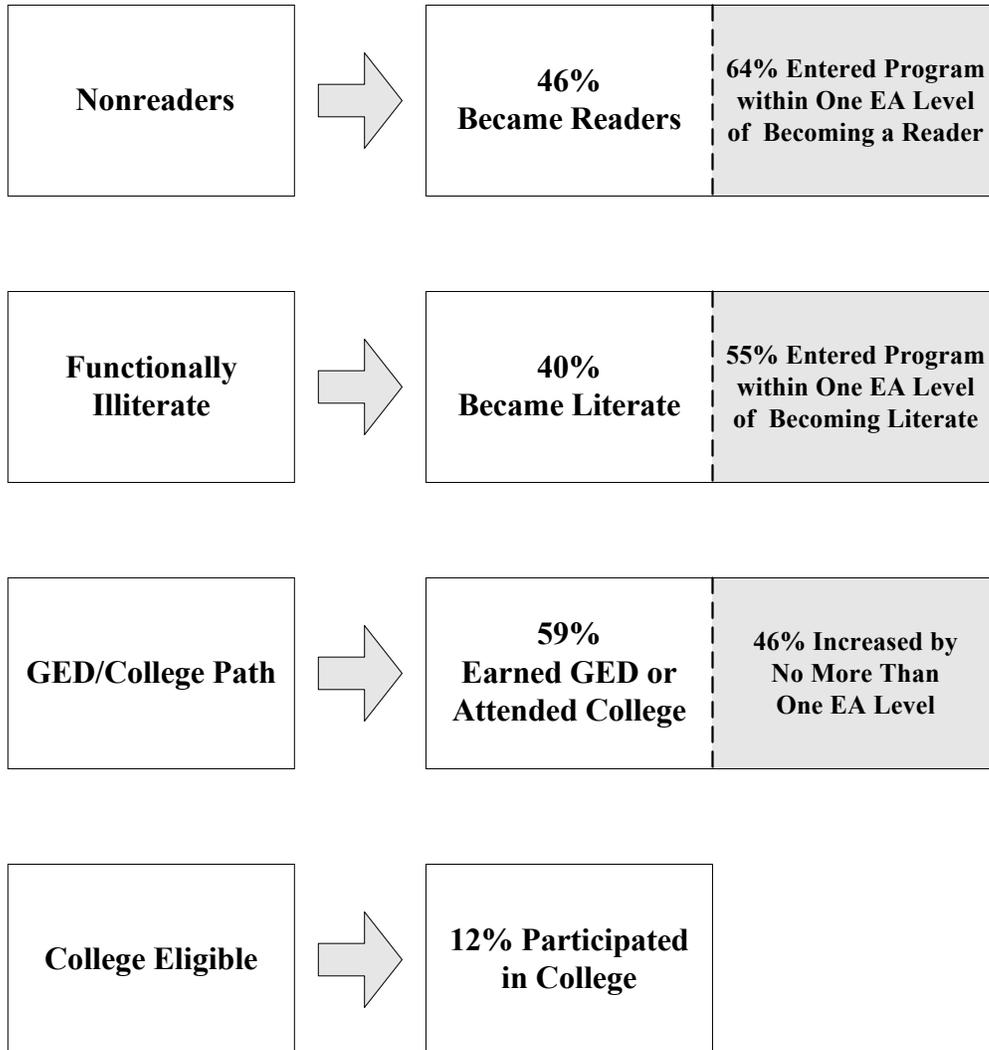
Educational Gain

All Participants



- 19% of all participants (2,204) made no gain on subsequent EA tests, while 57% (6,728) gained 1.0 or more EA levels.
 - ✓ Gains in EA levels ranged from 0 to 12.8.
- The overall gain for inmates in this study was 1.5 achievement levels (from 5.8 at entrance to prison to 7.3 at exit) after an average of 604 hours of instruction over 1.5 years of participation.
 - ✓ The overall gain for inmates receiving less than 300 hours of instruction was 1.1 EA achievement levels.

Educational Achievement



The Windham School District Performs Well in Certain Key Areas

Considering the constraints imposed on the operation of an educational program in a corrections setting, the Windham School District performs well in:

- Prioritizing services for inmates with the greatest need for education.
 - ✓ Of the inmates eligible for adult education programs, 78% of Nonreaders participated compared to 74% of the Functionally Illiterate and 63% of the GED/College Path inmates.

- Increasing participants' educational achievement during their term of incarceration.
 - ✓ Nonreaders gained an average of 1.5 levels on their EA reading score with an average of 894 hours of instruction and 46% advanced to at least a 4th grade reading level during their period of incarceration.
 - ✓ Functionally illiterate inmates advance an average of 1.7 grade levels on their EA scores with an average of 755 hours of instruction and 40% advance to a functionally literate level of 6th grade or higher.
 - ✓ Inmates in a GED path earn an average of 1.2 grades on their EA scores with an average of 430 hours of instruction and 53% earned a GED.

- Providing educational services to a population that failed to achieve in the public school system.
 - ✓ Inmates participating in Windham adult education programs entered prison with an average educational achievement score of 5.8. These inmates gained an average of 1.5 levels and left prison with an average achievement score of 7.3.
 - ✓ African American inmates who left prison with a GED had higher EA scores than African American inmates who entered prison with a High School diploma (9.1 vs. 7.0).
 - ✓ Hispanic inmates who left prison with a GED had higher EA scores than Hispanic inmates who entered prison with a High School diploma (9.3 vs. 8.2).

- Offering GED testing to all eligible inmates regardless of participation.
 - ✓ 553 inmates earned a GED in prison without participating in Windham adult education programs.

Analysis of Post-Release Employment and Recidivism is Critical in Evaluating Effectiveness of Present Allocation of Educational Resources

Critical Questions:

- Do participants in Windham educational programs have increased post-release employment and reduced recidivism rates resulting from educational achievement in prison?
- Which groups of participants benefit most from educational programming in terms of post-release employment and reduced recidivism?
 - ✓ We know that some inmates become literate because of Windham participation although they do not earn a GED. Other inmates who enter prison at higher achievement levels are able to earn a GED while in prison. We do not know how each group fares in terms of post-release employment and recidivism compared to those who did not participate in Windham educational programs.
 - ✓ We know that inmates who enter prison with a GED are eligible for adult education programs and that of those who participated, 36% made educational gains while in prison. We do not know if increasing the academic levels of inmates who enter prison with a GED impacts post-release employment and recidivism compared to those who have a GED at entrance to prison and do not participate in Windham programs.
 - ✓ We know that some inmates earn both a GED and a vocational certificate while participating in Windham programs. We do not know how this group compares in post-release employment and recidivism to inmates who earned a GED only.
 - ✓ We know that most inmates participating in Windham make educational gains while in the program. We do not know if the timing of program entry and the limits to extended program participation effect post-release employment and recidivism.
 - ✓ We know that some inmates do not make educational gains although they participate in Windham programs. We know that most educational gain occurs in the first 300 hours of instruction and additional gain slows significantly after that for all participants. We do not know if a process can be established to reduce the use of educational resources for those inmates who will not progress.
- Upcoming reports will examine the impact of prison educational participation, achievement, and vocational training on post-release employment and recidivism.