



## MARIN COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

July 14, 2017

**Marin County Civil Grand Jury  
Jay Hamilton-Roth, Foreperson  
3501 Civic Center Drive, Room 275  
San Rafael, CA 94903**

**Reference Response by Sheriff Robert T. Doyle to the Civil Grand Jury Report Entitled "Marin County Jail Education No One Should Be Barred"**

**Dear Mr. Hamilton-Roth:**

Pursuant to Penal Code Section 933.05 (f), I am responding to the above-mentioned Grand Jury Report.

**Finding 1: Marin County Jail provides no assessment to determine an inmate's educational levels and needs.**

In general terms I agree with this finding. However, in 2016, the average length of stay at the Marin County Jail for a pre-trial inmate was 15 days and for a sentenced inmate it was 44 days. The implementation of a more thorough assessment and educational plan would need to take into account the short amount of time most persons spend incarcerated at the Jail.

**Finding 2: There is an initial question about an inmate's educational level upon booking into the Marin County jail, but this information is not shared with MCOE.**

I agree with this finding and this information will be shared with the MCOE upon their request.

**Finding 3: MCOE and Jail staff have little contact and coordination regarding the academic program.**

**Disagree-**I am unable to agree with this finding because the Marin County Sheriff's Office Program Coordinator is in routine contact with the MCOE staff regarding all aspects of the academic program at the Jail. Regular biannual

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meetings have been scheduled since March of 2017 as well as on-going communication between the two groups.

**Finding 4: Marin County Jail's academic program is funded exclusively by the MCOE general fund.**

Agree.

**Finding 5: The County of Marin's AB 109 budget provides no funding for the MCOE jail education programs even though education is expressly mentioned in the AB109 realignment program. No request for funding has been made by MCOE from the AB 109 budget.**

Agree, however, there are only 30 AB 109 inmates at the Marin County Jail with 23 of those 30 already possessing their high school diploma.

**Finding 6: Eighty percent of the incarcerated population is high school dropouts.**

**Disagree-** I disagree with this finding. After researching your footnote as it relates to your data in this finding, I found that you based this claim on an article in the Huffington post dated May 2014. The article was "High School Dropout Rates: Causes and Costs" by Matthew Lynch Ed.D. This article was originally a blog discussing the high school dropout rate in the United States. Specifically how it affects the dropouts throughout their lives regarding their earning potential, which in turn costs society. One sentence in this article that states, "Over 80 percent of the incarcerated population is high school dropouts." There is no reference to where this information came from nor is there any statistical information as to who was being surveyed or where the incarcerated survey was being completed other than in the United States.

We conducted our own study at the Marin County jail and our data shows almost opposite of the finding by the Grand Jury. The study of the Marin County jail population found that approximately 77 percent of the inmates were high school graduates. Because the Grand Jury refers to Assembly Bill AB109 and the Community Corrections Partnership as a funding source, we drilled down our study to the 30 AB109 inmates currently in custody. We found that 23 of the 30 were high school graduates, 6 did not graduate high school and one declined to answer when asked.

**Finding 7: The MCOE has not developed a definitive curriculum for the Marin County Jail academic program.**

I am unable to agree or disagree.

**Finding 8: The MCOE does not provide inmates with a written description of the academic program.**

Agree.

**Finding 9: The MCOE operates the academic program year-round but there is no G.E.D or HiSET testing during the summer months:**

Agree.

**Finding 10: There is a need for electronic tablets in addition to computer software programs for reading and math.**

I agree with this finding. Since mid-2016 this project has been examined and researched by staff, and was subsequently disseminated for a request for proposal to prospective vendors. We examined different products in regards to implementing tablets, and tablet programming capabilities. We also met with staff from MCOE regarding the contents of the software to be placed on these tablets for educational programs. The Grand Jury was not only advised of this prior to this report, a copy of our request for proposal was sent to the Grand Jury when it was released. I am disappointed this was not shared in your report.

**Finding 11: The only jail vocational programs are the culinary, baking and food handlers programs.**

I agree with this finding, however, in addition we provide a job skills class that focuses on resume building and job interview skills. Through Marin Health and Human Services, we provide CalWORKS employment services, which provide vocational assessment, job preparation, and professional employment counselors. As for more vocational programs, in addition to the culinary, baking, and food handler's courses we offer 46 different programs. These courses focus on changes in behavior and learning to make better choices in life, which directly affect their ability to obtain and maintain employment and be a better parent when released from custody.

**Recommendation 2: The jail should facilitate implementation of the programs developed by MCOE.**

This recommendation is already being implemented through our work with MCOE and current programs. We have a partnership with the MCOE and will continue to work closely with MCOE should they provide a new program they want implemented in the jail.

**Recommendation 4: Marin County Jail and MCOE should hold regularly scheduled meetings.**

This recommendation has been implemented, as we have informally met with MCOE staff Bi-Annually, however we will formalize our scheduled meetings.

**Recommendation 6: MCOE and Marin County jail should work together to increase the hours of teacher contact time with inmates.**

We have met with MCOE staff and this recommendation has been implemented. We continue to collaborate with MCOE staff to determine how best to take full advantage of the hours of teacher contact time with inmates within the confines of our facility.

**Recommendation 7: The jail should forward each inmates level of education to the MCOE teachers.**

This recommendation will not be implemented as it is stated. However, jail staff will provide the MCOE the level of education of each inmate they are working with upon request.

**Recommendation 10: A joint technology committee should be formed between the Jail and MCOE so that new devices can be researched before purchase.**

The jail staff has already met with and will continue to meet with MCOE staff regarding the implementation of tablets at the jail. The MCOE staff will give recommendations regarding educational software and other content for the tablets.

**Recommendation 11: The vocational program should teach computer skills and basic applications such as Microsoft Office, Google Documents, etc., as many jobs now require these as basic skills for employment. Many programs are available in electronic tablet form and should be considered for jail use.**

As stated in our response to 'Finding 10,' we are already in the process of obtaining and implementing a tablet program at the jail. MCOE staff will be providing input towards the educational software and programs that will be placed on the tablets.

**Recommendation 13: The Jail and MCOE should develop literature about the courses available in the MCOE's academic program and make them available for all inmates:**

Jail staff will make available MCOE's academic courses to inmates incarcerated in the county jail once MCOE finalizes their available courses by September 1, 2017.

**Conclusion comments: The Grand Jury researched the educational opportunities in both jails and prisons in the Bay Area. Although direct comparisons cannot be drawn from institutions that are different in size and resources, the MCOE and the Marin County Jail could utilize and adapt many of the good ideas the Grand Jury found. The officials at MCOE and the Marin County Jail are unaware of the educational programs that are being implemented in other penal institutions. They are not actively trying to improve the programs within the Marin County Jail. Their attitude is this is what we have had for years and it is good enough. The Grand Jury found abundant evidence of the power of basic education and its importance to inmate population. In addition, MCOE has not pursued additional funds to finance the education program at the Marin County Jail. The AB109 money in the Community Corrections Partnership, State Education Department (which funds other County Jails) and a Charter School option are all possibilities worth investigating.**

This conclusion is inaccurate and contradictory. The Grand Jury stated, *"Although direct comparisons cannot be drawn from institutions that are different in size and resources, the MCOE and the Marin County Jail could utilize and adapt many of the good ideas the Grand Jury found."* The Grand Jury only reported that they researched San Quentin State Prison and San Francisco County Jail, which is an unfair and unreasonable comparison to Marin County due to our physical footprint and resource availability. A more reasonable study would have been identifying best practices in a county jail similar in size and inmate population.

San Francisco County jail has four different active jails with one of these jails being dedicated to inmate programs and education. Because San Francisco has multiple jails, it allows them to have such opportunities as their own Charter School. The inmates who are transferred to this jail routinely have longer incarceration periods and are transferred from other jails in their county for the education and programs provided.

In regard to San Quentin State Prison, there is no reasonable comparison. State Prisons were originally built with self-reliance and commerce in mind. The State prisons now work hard at rehabilitation and providing services to the inmates. San Quentin sits on 432 acres and has numerous buildings on site that can be used for many different things. Not only do they function as their own city with their own workshops and their own minimum security Fire Department, the prison only houses inmates that are committed to multiple years of incarceration, which allows for more dedicated programs and education.

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The Grand Jury stated, "The *Marin County Jail is unaware of the educational programs that are being implemented in other penal institutions.*" The Administrative staff members at the jail regularly attend meetings with all of the Bay Area Jail Managers where the focus is to share information and keep up to date with best practices and new trends from safety and security concerns to educational programs. As part of this regular meeting, our command staff has toured San Francisco Sheriff's Office and met with their staff in regards to all facets of operations including education. In turn, the San Francisco Sheriff's Office command staff requested and received a tour and presentation from our jail, re-entry, and program staff, because of the innovative work they have done.

The Grand Jury stated, "*They are not actively trying to improve the programs within the Marin County Jail. Their attitude is this is what we have had for years and it is good enough.*" We have worked hard to be a leader in the area of programs and education. We currently provide 46 programs at the jail, with 21 of these programs being instituted in the past 18 months. Jail staff routinely evaluates each program at the jail for effectiveness and attendance to maximize what is being offered to the inmates to help prepare them for release back into our community.

The Marin County Sheriff's Office routinely evaluates and re-evaluates its practices and is always looking for ways to improve. We hope that this response to the Grand Jury's Report helps paint a more accurate and informed perspective on the state of Education Services available in the Marin County Jail.

Yours truly,



ROBERT T. DOYLE  
SHERIFF-CORONER