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MARIN COUNTY  
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

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December 13, 2017

The Honorable Kelly V. Simmons  
Marin County Superior Court  
P.O. Box 4988  
San Rafael, CA 94913-4988

Ron Brown, Foreperson  
Marin County Civil Grand Jury  
3501 Civic Center Drive, Room #275  
San Rafael, CA 94903

Dear Judge Simmons and Mr. Foreperson:

The Marin County Superintendent of Schools/Marin County Board of Education and the Marin County Sheriff hereby submit a joint status update for the 2016-17 Marin County Civil Grand Jury's report *Marin County Jail Education: No One Should Be Barred*.

Thank you for your continued interest in and support of our public schools and community at large. Your work is appreciated.

Sincerely,

ROBERT T. DOYLE,  
Marin County Sheriff

MARY JANE BURKE  
Marin County Superintendent of Schools

Attachments

**Marin County Office of Education and Marin County Sheriff  
Joint Follow-Up Report to the Marin County Civil Grand Jury  
*Marin County Jail Education: No One Should Be Barred*  
December 13, 2017**

On June 5, 2017, the Marin County Civil Grand Jury released the report, *Marin County Jail Education: No One Should Be Barred*. This is a follow up to the report from the Marin County Office of Education and the Marin County Sheriff. This report provides an overview of steps taken to address the recommendations in the report by the Marin County Office of Education and the Marin County Sheriff.

**R1. The Marin County Office of Education (MCOE) should review educational programs in other jail facilities to develop an improved curriculum in the Marin County Jail.**

Response:

*The recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be completed in the next school year.*

*We agree that there is merit in evaluating "best practices" in other programs, especially those with comparable resources, similar physical parameters, and that have an emphasis on the successful completion of the GED or HiSET tests.*

Update:

We have reviewed educational programs in other jails and detention facilities, specifically, best practices related to supporting inmates through the HiSet testing process for a high school diploma.

We have conferred with Dr. Lindy Khan, Director of Student Programs/Ed Services at Contra Costa County Office of Education (CCCOE). Dr. Khan has responsibility for the jail education programs operated by CCCOE at the Contra Costa County Jail. CCCOE runs jail education programs at three separate facilities. Their program at the Contra Costa Main Jail is the most comparable to the Marin program in that it prepares students for GED and HiSet testing.

We have also conferred with Mr. Kevin Kessler, Administrator for Education Programs with the California Department of Education and Adult Education Principal, responsible for jail education program in the detention facilities in Sacramento County. Mr. Kessler is an acknowledged expert in jail education programs and was able to provide additional resources for best practices. Both Dr. Khan and Mr. Kessler provided valuable information in areas such as:

- Use of Technology / Tablets to improve testing preparation and results
- Budget and Potential Financial Resources
- Collaborations with Community Colleges
- Collaborations with Adult Education Consortiums
- Referrals and leads for other best practices and programs similar in size and scope to Marin County.

**R3. The MCOE should evaluate the academic program at the County Jail to determine whether inmates are making progress toward obtaining their GED or HiSET tests.**

Response:

*The recommendation has been implemented through the review of students served during the year and their success rates in passing their GED or HiSET tests.*

*We agree that additional assessment of the program can be beneficial especially related to the changeover from the GED to the HiSET exam.*

Update:

MCOE is continuing to implement a review of students served and tested as indicated in our response above.

**R4. Marin County Jail and MCOE should hold regularly scheduled meetings.**

Response:

*The recommendation has been implemented with the agreement of the Marin County Jail and MCOE to hold quarterly meetings to review jail programs, in addition to any regular communications taking place throughout the year as part of routine program management. Meetings commenced on March 23, 2017.*

Update:

In addition to the above referenced regular meetings, additional communication and discussion has been ongoing between MCOE and the Marin County Sheriff and jail education staff, with the last meeting occurring as recently as November 28, 2017

**R5. The MCOE should apply for additional funding for the Jail's educational program.**

Response:

*The recommendation requires further analysis and collaboration with the Marin County Jail staff to determine possible program expansions and necessary resources should an expansion occur.*

*A status report on the progress of this work will be provided to the Grand Jury in December.*

Update:

As indicated above, we have engaged in discussions with other jail education providers (Contra Costa County Office of Education; California Department of Rehabilitation) to learn about many best practices, including potential new sources of funding or strategic financial partnerships to support programs.

Outreach has been made to the Marin County Adult Education Consortium and the California Department of Education – Adult Education programs, to learn about the potential of, and requirements for, the utilization of adult education funding to support jail programs.

In addition, a request will be made for the allocation of AB 109 funds to support current jail education programs.

**R6. MCOE and the Marin County Jail should work together to increase the hours of teacher contact time with inmates.**

Response:

*This recommendation has been implemented and commenced with discussion at the March 23, 2017 meeting between the Marin County Jail and MCOE. MCOE and teachers are working with Jail staff to maximize the time they are available to work with students within the parameters of the policies, schedules and facilities of the Jail.*

*We agree that it is essential to have the teachers as available as possible to the students, and this will be a standing item for discussion at meetings between the Marin County Jail and MCOE.*

Update:

As indicated above, adjustments have been made to expand the hours of contact that the teachers can work with students. Jail staff continue to be as flexible as possible to maximize the time for education support services within the schedules and facilities of the jail.

**R7. The Jail should forward each inmate's level of education to the MCOE Teachers**

**R8. Each inmate booked into the Jail without a high school diploma, should be assessed within two weeks to ascertain their reading and math levels.**

Response:

*This recommendation requires further analysis to determine the resources that would be needed for such assessments. The ability to commit to a two-week timetable within the current policies and schedules of the jail will need to be carefully reviewed. Since it is not within our purview to require inmates to participate in any education programs, an assessment of each inmate booked into the Jail may not be possible. A status report on the progress of this work will be provided to the Grand Jury in December.*

**R9. Each inmate without a high school diploma, GED or HiSET certificate should be given an individual instructional program to work toward obtaining a certificate of completion.**

Response:

*The recommendation will not be implemented because it is not within MCOE's purview to require inmates to participate in education programs.*

Update:

This update refers to recommendation seven, eight and nine. The Marin County jail staff and the Marin County Office of Education staff will work together to identify the education level of inmates choosing to utilize the education support services at the jail. Jail staff has agreed to provide information upon request related to what is known about the education level and high school graduation status of inmates. Inmates who do not have high school diplomas or equivalencies will be encouraged to participate in the education support services with the goal of successfully completing the HiSet exam.

**R10. A joint technology committee should be formed between the Jail and MCOE so that new devices can be researched before purchase.**

Response:

*The recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be if the Marin County Jail determines that technology devices are allowed as part of the Jail Program, and, if resources are found to fund new technology purchases and to fund program implementation. As both of these are unknown at this time, a specific date or timeframe for implementation is not possible.*

Update:

The Marin County Sheriff has decided to employ the use of tablets and new technology in the jail education program. This enhanced support will allow for assessment of student needs and a focus of study to support successful HiSet testing. Sheriff and MCOE staff have compiled preliminary information and recommendations related to existing education support services being used on tablets in correctional facilities. In addition, the California Department of Rehabilitation is in the process of developing curricular support and resources to assist with the implementation of tablets and new technology in correctional facilities. The joint technology committee will continue to meet to develop and implement the plan.

**R11. 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.**

Response:

*The recommendation will not be implemented by the Marin County Office of Education as MCOE does not provide any vocational programs for incarcerated adults and does not have the resources to do so.*

Update:

The response to this recommendation has not changed and there is no additional update.

**R12. GED or HiSET testing should be available year round.**

Response:

*The recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be with addition of testing dates during the summer of 2018 and each subsequent summer.*

Update:

Additional testing will be available to students during the summer of 2018.

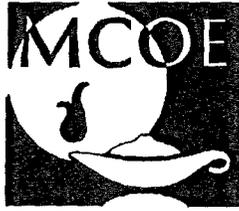
**R13. The Jail and MCOE should develop literature about the courses available in the MCOE's academic program and make them available for all inmates.**

Response:

*The recommendation has not yet been implemented but will be with information about the MCOE education support services ready to be presented to interested inmates in the fall of 2017, pursuant to obtaining permission to distribute by the Marin County Jail.*

Update:

An informational flier has been created (attached) that provides information to inmates on the education support services provided by the Marin County Office of Education. The recommendation states that literature should be developed about "courses available" in the jail program. It should be noted that there are no courses or classes that are part of the program. We are operating an education support service that is individualized for inmates in order to support their successful completion of HiSet testing. The attached document describes those services.



## Marin County Office of Education Jail Education Support Services

The Marin County Office of Education provides academic support services to inmates in the Marin County Jail who are working toward successful completion of their High School Equivalency Test (*HiSET*<sup>®</sup>). The *HiSET*<sup>®</sup> is a nationally recognized examination based on the United States Department of Education's College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education. This exam provides adults an opportunity to demonstrate skills and knowledge to earn a state-issued high school equivalency certificate.

### *The HiSET*<sup>®</sup>

The *HiSET*<sup>®</sup> exam is one of three tests U.S. states and territories use to measure high school equivalency skills. The General Educational Development (GED<sup>®</sup>) and the Test Assessing Secondary Completion (TASC<sup>™</sup>) are the other options.

*HiSET*<sup>®</sup> test takers can use the credential they earn to meet federal education requirements such as qualifying for federal student aid and for other government programs such as:

- Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- U.S. Military
- U.S. Department of Labor Job Corps Program

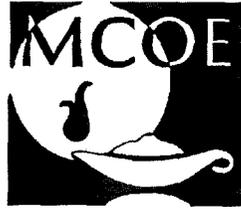
The *HiSET*<sup>®</sup> exam takes approximately seven hours from start to finish. These seven hours are broken into five subtests that can be taken on different days over a period of time. For some people, it takes a few weeks to complete and for others it could take a year.

## *Education Services*

The Marin County Office of Education provides two credentialed teachers to support students in preparation for the *HiSET*® exam. Students receive support in any subject area they need as part of their Independent Study in preparation for the exam. The teachers are also able to provide additional educational materials upon request.

Students can take the *HiSET*® exam while in custody. A Testing Examiner provides testing at the Jail facility for students who are ready to take one or more sections of the test.

Former Jail Education students can also take the exam after their return to the community. With the support of the Sheriff this service is provided at no cost to the student. Testing is conducted at the Marin County Office of Education. Contact the Marin County Office of Education **Safe Schools** department at **415-499-5816** for further details about dates and times of *HiSET*® testing.



## Oficina de Educación del Condado de Marin Servicios de Apoyo de Educación en la Cárcel

La Oficina de Educación del Condado de Marin brinda servicios de apoyo académico a los reclusos en la Cárcel del Condado de Marin que están trabajando para completar con éxito su Prueba de Equivalencia de la Escuela Secundaria (*HiSET*®). El *HiSET*® es un examen reconocido a nivel nacional basado en los estándares de preparación universitaria y profesional del Departamento de Educación de los Estados Unidos para la educación de adultos. Este examen brinda a los adultos la oportunidad de demostrar habilidades y conocimientos para obtener un certificado de equivalencia de escuela secundaria emitido por el estado.

### **El *HiSET*®**

El examen *HiSET*® es una de las tres pruebas que utilizan los estados y territorios de EE. UU. para medir las habilidades de equivalencia de la escuela secundaria. El Desarrollo Educativo General (GED®) y el Examen de Evaluación de Terminación Secundaria (TASC™) son las otras opciones.

Las personas que toman las pruebas *HiSET*® pueden usar la credencial que obtienen para cumplir con los requisitos federales de educación, como calificar para la ayuda federal para estudiantes y para otros programas gubernamentales tales como:

- Solicitud Gratuita de Ayuda para Estudiantes (FAFSA)
- Fuerzas Armadas de los Estados Unidos
- Programa de Job Corps del Departamento de Trabajo de Estados Unidos

El examen *HiSET*® demora aproximadamente siete horas de principio a fin. Estas siete horas se dividen en cinco sub-pruebas que se pueden tomar en diferentes días durante un período de tiempo. Para algunas personas, lleva unas semanas completarlas y para otras puede llevar un año.

### ***Servicios Educativos***

La Oficina de Educación del Condado de Marin proporciona dos maestros con credenciales para apoyar a los estudiantes en la preparación del examen *HiSET*®. Los estudiantes reciben apoyo en cualquier materia que necesiten como parte de su Estudio Independiente en preparación para el examen. Los maestros también pueden proporcionar materiales educativos adicionales a pedido.

Los estudiantes pueden tomar el examen *HiSET*® mientras están bajo custodia. Un examinador de pruebas proporciona pruebas en la instalación de la cárcel para los estudiantes que están listos para tomar una o más secciones de la prueba.

Los ex estudiantes de Educación en la Cárcel también pueden tomar el examen después de su regreso a la comunidad. Con el apoyo del Sheriff, este servicio se proporciona sin costo para el estudiante. Las pruebas se ofrecen en la Oficina de Educación del Condado de Marin. Comuníquese con el departamento de ***Escuelas Seguras*** de la Oficina de Educación del Condado de Marin al **415-499-5816** para obtener más detalles sobre las fechas y horarios de las pruebas *HiSET*®.