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Federal Bureau of Prisons Mission Statement

The Federal Bureau of Prisons protects society by confining offenders in the controlled environments of prisons and community-based facilities that are safe, humane, and appropriately secure, and which provide work and other self-improvement opportunities to assist offenders in becoming law-abiding citizens.

Cultural Anchors/Core Values

■ *Bureau family*

The Bureau of Prisons recognizes that staff are the most valuable resource in accomplishing its mission, and is committed to the personal welfare and professional development of each employee. A concept of "Family" is encouraged through healthy, supportive relationships among staff and organization responsiveness to staff needs. The active participation of staff at all levels is essential to the development and accomplishment of organizational objectives.

■ *Sound correctional management*

The Bureau of Prisons maintains effective security and control of its institutions utilizing the least restrictive means necessary, thus providing the essential foundation for sound correctional management programs.

■ *Correctional workers first*

All Bureau of Prisons staff share a common role as correctional worker, which requires a mutual responsibility for maintaining safe and secure institutions and for modeling society's mainstream values and norms.

■ *Promotes integrity*

The Bureau of Prisons firmly adheres to a set of values that promotes honesty and integrity in the professional efforts of its staff to ensure public confidence in the Bureau's prudent use of its allocated resources.

■ *Recognizes the dignity of all*

Recognizing the inherent dignity of all human beings and their potential for change, the Bureau of Prisons treats inmates fairly and responsively and affords them opportunities for self-improvement to facilitate their successful re-entry into the community. The Bureau further recognizes that offenders are incarcerated as punishment, not for punishment.

■ *Career service orientation*

The Bureau of Prisons is a career-oriented service, which has enjoyed a consistent management philosophy and a continuity of leadership, enabling it to evolve as a stable, professional leader in the field of corrections.

■ *Community relations*

The Bureau of Prisons recognizes and facilitates the integral role of the community in effectuating the Bureau's mission, and works cooperatively with other law enforcement agencies, the courts, and other components of government.

■ *High standards*

The Bureau of Prisons requires high standards of safety, security, sanitation, and discipline, which promote a physically and emotionally sound environment for both staff and inmates.

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Mandatory Literacy

Evaluating the Bureau of Prisons' long-standing commitment

Sylvia G. McCollum

While education programs for inmates have always been a priority, the Federal Bureau of Prisons established its first mandatory literacy program for Federal prisoners in 1982. The program began modestly, with the 6th grade as the literacy standard and a mandatory enrollment period of 90 days. In 1986 the standard was increased to the 8th grade; the 90-day enrollment remained unchanged. In 1991, a high school diploma or its equivalent, the General Educational Development certificate or GED, was made the new literacy standard, and the required enrollment period was raised to 120 days to accommodate the anticipated longer time necessary to achieve the higher standard.

Several program-related conditions remained constant over the years, despite the changing standard:

- All promotions in institution-based and prison industry jobs above the entry level were contingent on meeting the literacy standard.
- All institutions were required to employ a special education instructor to work with students with special needs.
- Instructional materials were multimedia and computer-based wherever possible to assist the instructors, particularly in drill and practice.
- Most important, each institution's education department was required to establish incentive programs to motivate and recognize student accomplishments. (McCollum, 1989)

The impact of the mandatory program was almost immediate. Previously empty classrooms filled up. Students who had been diverted to institution or prison industry assignments were routed to



education first, to meet their education requirements. The table at right tells the story.

Literacy completions rose more than 700 percent during the period 1981-1990, compared with an increase of about 123 percent in the Bureau's average daily inmate population during the same period.

Education and recidivism

The question of whether prison programs, especially education, have any effect on repeat offenders is a continuing concern of correctional administrators. Correctional educators have frequently responded to the question by pointing to the value of education as a positive use of time that contributes to effective prison management. They have also suggested that postrelease outcomes should not be correlated with any one prison program or situation, that it was the total prison experience (as well as the families and communities to which prisoners returned, general economic conditions at the time of release, and the prevailing community attitude toward ex-offenders) that significantly contributed to postrelease success or failure. Pownall (1976), in a pioneering study of post-release success predictors, found that preincarceration employment was the best barometer by which to forecast postrelease employment and the capacity to stay out of prison.

Notwithstanding the precautions not to tie postrelease behavior to any single prison program—and the earlier studies that did not find a direct link between participation in prison education and post-incarceration behavior—a respectable number of studies have begun to connect education and positive post-imprisonment outcomes.

Fiscal year	New enrollments	Comple-tions	BOP avr. daily pop	Increase over prev. yr.	
				Compl.	Pop.
1981	2,653	1,441	24,933	—	—
1982	3,785	1,983	27,730	37.6%	11.2%
1983	6,004	3,774	29,718	90.3	7.2
1984	6,896	4,909	30,723	30.1	3.4
1985	8,048	5,221	33,263	6.4	8.3
1986	9,000 est.	6,161	38,402	18.0	15.4
1987	n/a	n/a	41,838	n/a	8.9
1988	10,665	8,384	43,837	n/a	4.8
1989	11,380	10,138	47,804	20.9	9.0
1990	13,204	11,872	55,542	17.1	16.2
Increase '81-'90	10,551	10,431	30,609	723.9%	122.8%

*In 1991 the Bureau of Prisons adopted the GED as its literacy standard and revised its education data system to merge ABE and GED data. ABE enrollments are now reported only at the GED level.
Note: The Bureau established a new Education Data System in fiscal year 1987. Data for that year are not available.
Source: BOP internal data systems: Inmate Information System, Inmate Program Reporting System, and Education Data System.

Ryan (1990) defined the components of effective literacy programs for adult prisoners, then described several literacy programs in State and Federal prisons that showed positive outcomes. Reports from Canada (*Forum*, 1991) of an analysis of seven basic education programs among adult male inmates, including samples ranging from 75 to 3,000 men, showed a positive effect on recidivism. A Bureau of Prisons study (Saylor and Gaes, 1991) reported that inmates who worked in prison industries and who participated in vocational training "showed better adjustment, and were less likely to be revoked at the end of their first year back in the community, were more likely to be employed in the halfway house and community, and earned slightly more money than inmates who had similar background characteristics, but who did not participate in work and vocational training programs." Although more inmates in this study participated in work programs, the 15 percent of prisoners who completed vocational training were just as likely to succeed as their counterparts who worked in industries.

Beyond the basic literacy levels, several recent studies have suggested that ad-

vanced education also contributes to reduced recidivism. A New Mexico prison study (Fairchild, 1990) reported a 15-percent recidivism rate for prisoners who had completed one or more college courses, compared with a 68-percent rate for the general population. A Folsom Prison study (Fairchild, 1990) in the early 1980's reported zero recidivism for college graduates, compared with 55 percent for the general prison population within 3 years of release from Folsom. Still another study of a State prison, this time the Indiana Reformatory (Fairchild, 1990), reported that of the more than 200 prisoners who had earned a degree in a Ball State University extension program begun in 1976, none had returned to the Reformatory.

Another recent study (Wreford, 1990) traced State Prison of Southern Michigan prisoners who participated in a college program offered by the Jackson Community College from 1976 through 1986. The study concluded, "After taking into account the differences between released graduates and the criterion groups, the recidivism rates of the graduates (907) were significantly lower than those of both the national sample and the Michigan parolees."

The new GED literacy standard

The Bureau of Prisons' long-standing commitment to literacy is based on many factors, not least the hoped for post-release success of individual offenders. However, quite independent of this consideration are the additional factors of the positive use of time while incarcerated and the impact of positive programming on a prison's internal climate. The average length of sentence served by Federal prisoners is rapidly approaching 10 years. As well, the increase in the number confined has led to severe crowding, which can contribute, in the absence of positive uses of time, to heightened levels of tension. Both staff and inmates alike suffer when idleness is excessive.

The quality of the inmate workforce available to provide institution services, including maintenance, and to work in prison industries, is also an important consideration. Illiterate workers who cannot read instructions, fill in job-related forms, prepare brief reports, or perform work-related math are unnecessary strains on correctional systems that are already carrying heavy resource burdens. The longer sentences served also raise significant questions about the appropriate use of inmate time. Can any correctional administrator justify the return of an illiterate person to the community after 10 years of incarceration?

It was against this background that the Bureau of Prisons began considering increasing its literacy standard from the 8th grade to high school equivalency. An interesting phenomenon developed as discussions progressed. GED enrollments, which were not yet mandatory, began to increase significantly, and the

Year	Average Daily Population		:	GED Tests	
	Number	% inc. over prev. yr.		Number	% inc. over prev. yr.
1981	24,933	-	:	2,395	-
1982	27,730	11.2%	:	2,676	11.7%
1983	29,718	7.2	:	2,772	3.6
1984	30,723	3.4	:	3,607	30.1
1985	33,263	8.3	:	3,672	1.8
1986	38,402	15.4	:	3,800	3.5
1987	41,838	8.9	:	4,264	12.2
1988	43,837	4.8	:	3,897	-8.6
1989	47,804	9.0	:	3,980	2.1
1990	55,542	16.2	:	6,426	61.5
1991	61,404	10.6	:	7,896	22.7
1992	67,226	9.5	:	8,222	4.3

Source: Inmate Information System and GED Testing Service.

number of inmates who completed the courses and were ready to take the GED test also rose significantly. The table above provides an insight into this trend.

The number of GED tests administered in 1990 increased more than 60 percent above the figure for 1989, despite the fact that the average daily population increased only 16 percent. There was no significant increase in the percentage of the incoming population that did not have a GED credential. The percentage had been around 50 percent during recent years and did not change during the time that GED enrollments and completions surged upward. Teachers and supervisors of education shared the opinion that the pending mandatory literacy requirement spurred the increases, as inmates rushed to meet the anticipated standards so that they could be eligible for promotions.

Promotions to jobs above the entry-level labor grade in the Federal system have been contingent on meeting a literacy standard since the inception of the mandatory literacy program in 1982. However, as long as the standard peaked at the 6th or 8th grade and did not include the GED, the evidence suggests that many students stayed in class only

long enough to meet the requirement standard, and not a minute longer. Originally, some Bureau educators involved in the development of the mandatory literacy program speculated that there would be a dramatic increase in voluntary GED enrollments and completions as a result of the interest in education generated by the successful achievement of the 6th- or 8th-grade standard. This did not happen. Non-paid attendance in school did not compete well with paid employment.

Fiscal-year-end figures for 1991 revealed that the increase in the number of inmates who took the GED test leveled off, but the rate of increase, 22.7 percent over the number tested in FY 1990, was higher than the rate of increase for any of the preceding 5 years. It was also significantly higher than the 10.6-percent increase in the average daily population. Increases leveled off in 1992, when GED completions increased only 4.3 percent over the preceding year. The lower increase was attributable, in part, to greater emphasis placed on raising the pass/fail rate, which had dropped to 62.5 percent in 1991.

The Bureau has established a 70-percent pass rate as a national goal in 1993. Bureau educators anticipate a continued increase in the number of GED completions, but at a lower rate than in 1990 and 1991, since a greater emphasis will be placed on raising the pass rate.

It's the law

The mandatory education requirement for Federal prisoners has now been adopted into Federal legislation. The Crime Control Act of 1990 includes a requirement that the Bureau of Prisons establish an 8th-grade mandatory literacy standard. The law also provides that the enrollments must be "for a mandatory period sufficient to provide the inmate with an adequate opportunity to achieve functional literacy, and appropriate incentives which lead to successful completion of such programs...." The new law placed into Federal legislation a concept that had been adopted, through policy requirements, by the Bureau of Prisons as early as 1982. Significantly, during the 1991 legislative session there was considerable discussion in the U.S. Congress about legislation to support mandatory literacy standards in State prisons.

Another source of support for mandatory literacy has developed within the American Bar Association. The Corrections and Sentencing Committee of the ABA reviewed the question of mandatory literacy at considerable length during 1990 and 1991. There was some opposition to the mandatory literacy concept, particularly as it applied to adults, but a vote to support the concept, and a Model Act, carried at the committee's May 30, 1991, meeting. The Model Act provides, among other things, for a high school diploma or its equivalent, the GED, as the mandatory literacy standard in all State adult correctional institutions. Subsequently, at the ABA's 1991 annual meeting, the Criminal

Justice Section Council approved the "Recommendations Concerning Mandatory Literacy Program for Adult Offenders"; the recommendations were approved by the ABA House of delegates in February 1992 and became official ABA policy. The Bureau of Prisons' literacy program, which had begun as a direct spinoff of Chief Justice Warren E. Burger's well-known "factories with fences" speech at the graduation ceremonies of the George Washington University Law School in 1981, has now been validated in Federal legislation and in the actions of the American Bar Association. ■

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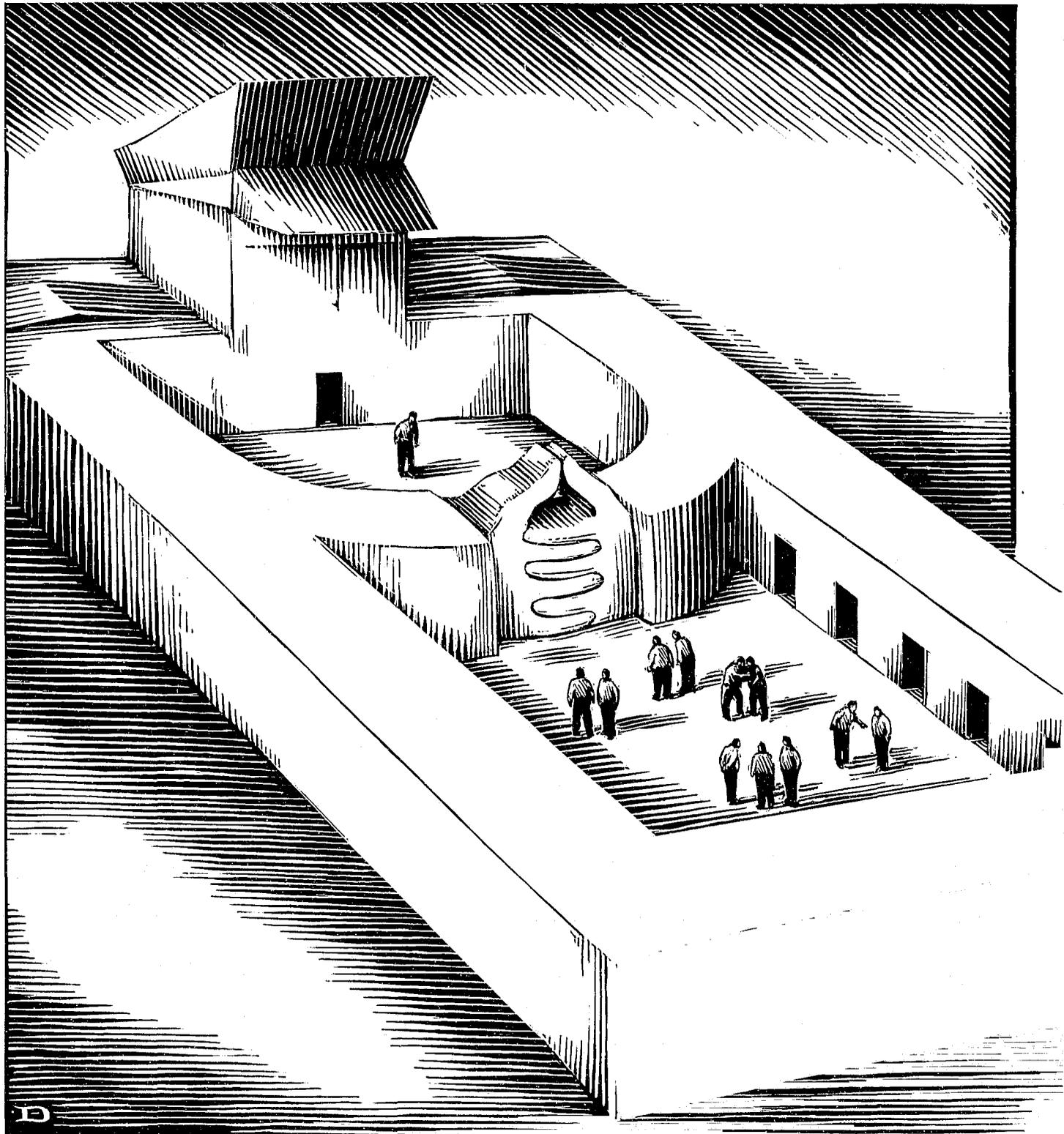
Recruitment *from p. 32*

Recruiters must ensure that requested job information is sent out immediately to the candidate. Remember, this person is looking for a job and will respond to the first information package he or she receives. If you wait 6 to 8 weeks to answer an applicant's inquiry, you probably will have lost him or her. On this note, please remember that if you use direct mail cards, you can expect upwards of a 3-percent return within the 2 weeks following the mailing. You will need to be prepared for an extensive information mailout when the cards are returned to you.

Finally, you must make an honest assessment of your recruitment program's effectiveness. Not all strategies work well in all areas of the country or for all positions. You will need to determine if you are tapping the appropriate applicant pool. For example, if none of 5,000 applicants meet your entry-level requirements, a new strategy is needed.

Recruiters coping with hard-to-fill positions, high turnover, and difficulty in finding qualified staff can adapt these proven ideas to help them establish a high-quality recruitment program. Innovative recruitment programs can lead to a decrease in vacancies and an increase in interested candidates for positions within your facility. ■

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