

- Minority or inner-city students experience better outcomes across all areas in small classes as compared to non-minority students
- Students in smaller classes display less disruptive behavior than in regular-sized classes
- Reducing class size to fewer than 20 students produces higher achievement at every grade level
- Dropout rates are higher in larger schools than in smaller schools
- Smaller classes allow teachers more time to focus on individual students, as well as provide flexibility to use innovative instructional strategies
- Smaller schools have fewer incidences of negative school behavior than larger schools
- Students in smaller schools experience a greater sense of belonging in their schools when compared to larger schools.

While much of the evidence points to the efficacy of smaller schools and classes, a body of research³ supports cost savings and curricular benefits of larger schools. For example:

- Proponents of large schools argue that smaller classes and schools are costly, with higher costs per student
- Students have more curricular choices in large schools
- Affluent students often do better academically in larger schools.

Although evidence supports both sides of the school size issue, the preponderance of literature indicates that smaller schools, as well as small classes, are most beneficial to students, especially low-income and minority students. While there are some advantages to larger schools (e.g., cost-effectiveness, greater curricular offerings), other evidence counters these claims. For example, some argue that the cost-effectiveness analyses are dependent on

individual circumstances of schools and such analysis may not provide a comprehensive picture.⁴ In addition, while greater curricular offerings may be a benefit to larger schools, researchers have found that the added curricular offerings are often introductory courses, not higher-level courses.⁵ Finally, only five to twelve percent of the student body enrolls in those courses.⁶ In contrast, the numerous advantages to smaller schools and small classes, especially for minority and low-income students, should not be ignored.

Many of the same benefits associated with small schools could also be realized in small juvenile correctional facilities. The fact that a disproportionate number of minority and low-income youth are detained and confined in juvenile correctional facilities suggests that institutional size needs to be an important consideration when designing facilities or developing standards for optimal youth outcomes.

¹Barker, R., & Gump, P. (1964). *Big school, small school: High school size and student behavior*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press; Conant, J. (1959). *The American high school today: A first report to interested citizens*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

²Bowen, G. L., Bowen, N. K., & Richman, J. M. (2000). School size and middle school students' perceptions of the school environment. *Social Work in Education*, 22(2), 69-83; Cotton, K. (1996, May). *School size, school climate, and student performance*. Retrieved August 25, 2003 from <http://nwrel.org/scpd/sirs/10/c020.html>; Finn, J. D. (1998). *Class size and students at risk: What is known? What is next?* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Institute on the Education of At-Risk Students; Glass, G. V., & Smith, M. L. (1978). *Meta-analysis of research on the relationship of class size and achievement*. San Francisco: Far West Laboratory for Educational Research & Development; Pritchard, I. (1999). *Reducing class size: What do we know?* (Publication No. SAI 983027). Retrieved August 25, 2003, from <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/ReducingClass/title.html>

³Allen, R. (2002). Big schools: The way we are. *Educational Leadership*, 59(5), 36-42; Bowles, T. J., & Bosworth, R. (2002). Scale economies in public

education: Evidence from school level data. *Journal of Education Finance*, 28(2), 285-300; Pritchard, I. (1999). *Reducing class size: What do we know?* (Publication No. SAI 983027). Retrieved August 25, 2003, from <http://www.ed.gov/pubs/ReducingClass/title.html>.

^{4,5,6}See Cotton, K. (1996, May). *School size, school climate, and student performance*. Retrieved August 25, 2003 from <http://nwrel.org/scpd/sirs/10/c020.html>; Finn, J. D. (1998). *Class size and students at risk: What is known? What is next?* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Institute on the Education of At-Risk Students.

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The Job Satisfaction of Georgia's Juvenile Justice Teachers

By

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Teacher attrition is a national concern that often hinders keeping good teachers in the classroom.¹ Too many good teachers leave the classroom because of the working conditions. Issues such as inadequate

administrative support, stress, limited resources, high workloads, and student behavior contribute to teacher attrition.²

Thankfully, a significant amount of research has been conducted in the last several years on teacher attrition and retention. One of the implications of this research is that improved teacher satisfaction (i.e., working conditions) can encourage teachers to stay in the classroom.³

Keeping teacher attrition and retention in mind, David Houchins and Margaret Shippen collaborated with the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice to survey Georgia's teachers working in juvenile detention and commitment facilities. The survey was based on previous research and focused on teacher job satisfaction.⁴

Two main research questions were addressed. The first question looked at the current attitudes of Georgia's juvenile justice teachers. Teachers were asked about their job satisfaction. Satisfaction factors included: (a) general satisfaction; (b) resource satisfaction; (c) workload satisfaction; (d) preparation satisfaction; (e) role conflict; (f) role organization; (g) role efficacy; (h) autonomy; (i) collegiality; (j) support; (k) quality and quantity of administrative feedback; (l) role understanding; (m) experience with students; (o) experience with self; (p) experience in general; and (q) experience with stress. Teachers rated their satisfaction with each factor on a 1 to 5 Likert scale, with a score of one as the most positive and five as the most negative.

The second research question focused on teacher views of the influence statewide reforms had on their job satisfaction since 1999. In that year, Georgia entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the U.S. Department of Justice. The MOA called for the State to make systematic changes in their academic, vocational, and behavioral programming for incarcerated

youth. The purpose of this part of the survey was to see if these systematic changes in juvenile justice over the last four years had influenced teacher satisfaction. (i.e., improved, stayed the same or worsened). Only those teachers who had been in working in the juvenile justice system since 1999 participated. Teachers rated the changes on a 1-5 Likert scale. Again, a score of a 1 was the most positive and a score of 5 was the most negative.

Ninety-eight percent of Georgia's juvenile justice teachers (i.e., detention, commitment facilities) responded to the survey. With the exception of two factors, all mean scores for teacher job satisfaction were slightly more positive than negative. The average mean score for the positive factors was 2.61. The only two negative scores, with an average score of 3.21, were in the areas of behavior management and workload.

Concerning teacher satisfaction in light of changes in juvenile justice, the mean scores were slightly more positive than negative for all variables. The average mean score was 2.64. Most importantly, a significant majority of teachers believed system changes made a positive difference in the lives of their students. Additionally, a majority of teachers planned on continuing to teach in juvenile justice because of the positive system changes.

While not definitive, there are several implications of this study. For the most part, Georgia's juvenile justice teachers are fairly pleased with their jobs. This finding is important since teacher attrition is a national concern. School systems that can keep good teachers have a better chance of providing their students with a quality education. We are not suggesting that there are not areas that need to be improved in Georgia's juvenile justice system. Indeed, teachers did have concerns with the amount of work that they do and student behavior. However, the results suggest that juvenile justice

educational settings can be positive places to work.

The second finding is that system change can have a positive impact on teachers' attitudes. The majority of teachers believed that the system reforms have made their job better. Although, the mean scores were only slightly in the positive direction. This suggests that the actions taken by the State of Georgia and the U.S. Department of Justice have had some positive effect on circumstances for teachers. Improving teaching conditions increases the chances that good teachers will remain in the classroom. There is still much work to be done. However, state-wide system reform has the potential to keep current and future juvenile justice teachers in the classroom.

A more extensive report about our study is forthcoming. The next step in our research on teacher satisfaction in juvenile corrections will be to survey teachers in the Louisiana system. Like Georgia, Louisiana recently participated in system reform. Both Georgia, under the direction of Dr. Tom O'Rourke, and Louisiana, under the leadership of Mr. Simon Gonsoulin, have central administrations that are willing to allow external evaluations of their programs. We believe our data can be used to improve the working conditions for teachers and ultimately improve the education of incarcerated youth. We anticipate continuing this type of research in other jurisdictions that have also participated in reform.

¹Darling-Hammond, L. (2000). The challenge of staffing our schools. *Educational Leadership*, 58, 12-17.

²Billingsley, B. (2002). *Research summary: Teacher retention and attrition*. Gainesville, FL: University of Florida, Center on Personnel Studies in Special Education (COPSSE); Brownell, M. T., & Smith, S. W. (1992). Attrition/retention of special education teachers: Critique of current research and recommendations for retention efforts. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 15, 229-248; Wald, J. L. (1996). *Culturally and linguistically diverse professionals in special education: A demographic analysis*. (Report No. ISBN-0-86586-

285-0). Reston, VA: National Clearinghouse for Professionals in Special Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED397579).

³Gersten, R., Keating, T., Yovanoff, P., & Harniss, M. K. (2001). Working in special education: A study of factors that enhance special educators' commitment and intent to remain in the field. *Exceptional Children*, 67, 549-567.

⁴Morvant, M., Gersten, R., Gillman, J., Blake, G., & Howard, L. (1992). *Working in special education*. Eugene, OR: Eugene Research Institute.

Issues Concerning Education and Incarceration

There is growing concern that policy decisions and funding should focus more on prevention of crime, rehabilitation and alternative sentencing, than on incarceration.¹ However, over the last 25 years, expenditures in corrections have increased at a rate 2.5 times greater than the rate of increase in spending on education.² In a recent publication, *Education and Incarceration*, Western, Schiraldi, and Ziedenberg (2003)³ addressed the issues of who has been most affected by the growth in the corrections system and how policy decision to fund prisons over schools has had the greatest impact on Americans with little education.

The authors reviewed previous research and noted that those without high school diplomas are disproportionally represented in the corrections population. For example, one study reported that 68% of state prison inmates had not received their high school diploma.⁴ The authors also reported that in 1999 among men ages 30-34, 13% of Caucasian and 52% of African American males without high school diplomas had prison records.

Educational disadvantage is perpetuated while these men are incarcerated. Specifically, between 1991 and 1997 the prison population increased by about 1/3, yet the percentage of state prisoners enrolled

in education courses fell from 57% to 52%.⁵

Western and his colleagues proposed that a policy shift is necessary to redirect spending from prisons to front end solutions. Recommendations include: (a) ensuring high quality schools, especially in low socioeconomic areas; (b) increasing supports to students to assure high school completion; and (c) expanding community-based learning and services. Given that low levels of education attainment are associated with risk for incarceration, the policy recommendations have the potential for affecting positive change for those at risk for involvement in corrections.

¹Beldon, Russenello, & Stewart as cited in B. Western, V. Schiraldi, & J. Ziedenberg (2003), *Education & incarceration*. Washington DC: Justice Policy Institute.

²Gifford, S. L. (2002). *Justice expenditures and employment in the United States, 1999*. Washington DC: Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Statistics.

³Western, B., Schiraldi, V., & Ziedenberg, J. (2003). *Education & incarceration*. Washington DC: Justice Policy Institute.

^{4,5}Harlow, C. W. (2002). Educational and correctional populations. Washington DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office of Justice Programs.

Research to Practice Self-Management

This is Part 1 of a three-part series on promoting student self-management of behavior

The nature of juvenile corrections logically requires that many decisions are made for incarcerated youth. However, for youth to succeed in school or work upon release, they must have experience managing their own behavior. In fact, those students, who could benefit the most from learning to self-manage behavior, are often the ones who experience the tightest controls. The school provides an excellent

forum for structured and guided student decision-making.

Self-management consists of several sub-categories and this series will focus on four: (a) self-recording; (b) self-evaluation; (c) self-reinforcement; and (d) self-instruction. In general, self-management is effective with middle and high school students including those with learning disabilities, emotional disturbances, and mental retardation.¹ This approach is also effective in addressing a number of problem behaviors including staying on-task, being disruptive, inappropriate vocalizations, and aggression.²

“Self-managed students require less control by external agents, thereby allowing teachers to spend more time on other aspects of curriculum and instruction.”³ One component of self-management, self-monitoring, is the current focus.

Self-monitoring is a pro-active intervention that focuses on the development of adaptive student behaviors and may be applied across settings and situations.⁴

Self-monitoring may be the most feasible self-management procedure because it is relatively easy to teach and manage within the classroom.⁵ It allows for consistency and accuracy in recording of student behaviors.

Components of self-recording include:

- Selecting a target behavior
- Operationally defining the behavior (i.e., state the behavior in terms of exactly what the student will do)
- Selecting an appropriate system of data collection (see sample recording sheets below)
- Instructing the student in the use of the data collection system
- Monitoring at least one practice of data recording session
- Allowing the student to use self-recording independently, and
- Monitoring the results

School Self-Recording Sheet

- Enter class and sit quietly _____
- Complete warm-up problem _____
- Check answers with a partner _____
- Get math folder in preparation of the daily lesson _____

Job Self-Recording Sheet

Cafeteria Worker:

- Wipe tables _____
- Mop _____
- Empty Garbage _____
- Stack lunch trays _____

Self-recording can be an effective tool for youth in juvenile corrections. It provides a structured approach for youth to accept responsibility and monitor their behavior. However, it is critical that adults monitor the student work and assure that the tasks are actually completed. Teachers and supervisors may want to reinforce the youth for completing all required tasks and also for accurate and honest recording. With sufficient structure, monitoring, and reinforcement, self-recording can assist youth in corrections as they learn to become independent and accountable for their actions.

¹Carr, S. C., & Punzo, R. P. (1993). The effects of self-monitoring of academic accuracy and

productivity on the performance of students with behavioral disorders. *Behavioral Disorders*, 18(4), 113-129; Clees, T. J. (1994-1995). Self-recording of students' daily schedules of teachers' expectancies: perspectives on reactivity, stimulus control, and generalization. *Exceptionality*, 5(3), 113-129; Prater, M. A., Hogan, S., & Miller, S. R. (1992). Using self-monitoring to improve on-task behavior and academic skills of an adolescent with mild handicaps across special and general education settings. *Education and Treatment of Children*, 15, 43-55; Stecker, P. M., Whinnery, K. W., & Fuchs, L. S. (1996). Self-recording during unsupervised academic activity: Effects on time spent out of class. *Exceptionality*, 6(3), 133-147.

²Harris, K. (1986). Self-monitoring of attentional behavior versus self-monitoring of productivity: Effects on on-task behavior and academic response rate among learning disabled children. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 19(2), 417-423; Kern, L., Marder, T. J., Boyajian, A. E., Elliot, C. M., & McElhattan, D. (1997). Augmenting the independence of self-management procedures by teaching self-initiation across settings and activities. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 12(1), 23-32; Lam, A. L., Cole, C. L., Shapiro, E. S., & Bambara, L. M. (1994). Relative effects of self-monitoring on-task behavior, academic accuracy, and disruptive behavior in students with behavior disorders. *School Psychology Review*, 23(1), 44-58.

³DiGangi, S. A., & Maag, J. W. (1992). A component analysis of self-management training with behaviorally disordered youth. *Behavioral Disorders*, 17(4), 281-290.

⁴Rhode, G., Morgan, D. P., & Young, K. R., (1983). Generalization and maintenance of treatment gains of behaviorally handicapped students from resource rooms to regular classrooms using self-evaluation procedures. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 16, 171-188.

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