

**OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL**  
**STEVE WHITE, INSPECTOR GENERAL**

**•PROMOTING INTEGRITY•**



**SURVEY OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS AT  
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS  
LEVEL IV INSTITUTIONS**

**JULY 2003**

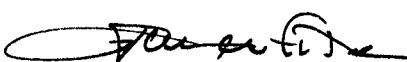
**GRAY DAVIS, GOVERNOR**



## Memorandum

Date: July 23, 2003

To: EDWARD S. ALAMEIDA, JR. Director  
Department of Corrections

From: STEVE WHITE   
Inspector General

Subject: SURVEY OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS AT LEVEL IV INSTITUTIONS

Enclosed is a report of the survey conducted by the Office of the Inspector General of education programs at Department of Corrections Level IV institutions.

The survey revealed the classroom education model to be an inefficient and expensive means of delivering education to Level IV inmates because frequent lockdowns cause academic and vocational classes to be closed down more than 60 percent of the time. At the five Level IV institutions locked down for the largest percentages of time, education programs operate an average of only 24.5 percent of the time. And even with classes closed for long periods, inmates continue to receive day-for-day sentence reduction credit as though they were attending class and teachers continue to be paid as though they were providing instruction. Meanwhile, institutions have no systematic means of accounting for teachers' activities during lockdown periods or of temporarily assigning them to other duties.

Even if the programs were operating 100 percent of the time, only a relatively few inmates would be receiving instruction because the classes can accommodate only a small percentage of those eligible for the programs. At the five Level IV institutions surveyed, only 10.4 percent of eligible inmates were enrolled in academic classes and another 10.4 percent were enrolled in vocational classes, resulting in the exclusion of almost 80 percent of inmates eligible for classroom education.

The Office of the Inspector General recommends that the Department of Corrections investigate other methods of delivering academic and vocational instruction to inmates.

Please call me if you have questions concerning this report.

SW/dj

cc: Robert Presley, Secretary, Youth and Adult Correctional Agency  
William A. Duncan, Deputy Director, Institutions Division  
Yvette Page, Chief, Education and Inmate Programs

# **OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL**



## **SURVEY OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS AT CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS LEVEL IV INSTITUTIONS**

**JULY 2003**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the results of a survey conducted by the Office of the Inspector General of inmate participation in education programs at the state's Level IV correctional institutions. The survey was performed under the Inspector General's oversight responsibilities under *California Penal Code* Section 6126. The purpose of the survey was to determine the extent to which institution lockdowns have affected academic and vocational education programs at Department of Corrections Level IV institutions. The survey was prompted by management review audits conducted by the Office of the Inspector General showing that inmates at state correctional institutions receive only limited classroom instruction because classrooms are closed for significant periods as the result of lockdowns, teacher vacancies, and other program disruptions. The survey was conducted from January 2003 through June 2003.

The survey revealed the classroom education model to be a distinctly inefficient and expensive vehicle for delivering education to Level IV inmates. The Office of the Inspector General found that although the Department of Corrections has budgeted more than \$48 million to provide academic and vocational classes to inmates at Level IV institutions, frequent lockdowns and other program disruptions prevent inmates from receiving the instruction budgeted and intended by law. Overall, with lockdowns frequently lasting several months, classes at the state's 11 Level IV institutions operate an average of only 30 percent of the time. At the five Level IV institutions surveyed — those locked down for the largest percentages of time — academic and vocational education programs operate an average of only 24.5 percent of the time. And even with classes closed for long periods, inmates continue to receive day-for-day sentence reduction credit as though they were attending class, and teachers continue to be paid as though they were providing instruction. Meanwhile, institutions have no systematic means of accounting for teachers' activities during lockdown periods or of temporarily assigning them to other duties.

Even without lockdowns and even if the programs were operating 100 percent of the time, only a relatively few inmates would be receiving instruction because the classes can accommodate only a small percentage of those eligible for the programs. At the five Level IV institutions surveyed, only 10.4 percent of eligible inmates were enrolled in academic classes and another 10.4 percent were enrolled in vocational education classes, resulting in the exclusion of almost 80 percent of inmates eligible for classroom education. With the most recent state-wide survey showing that 68 percent of inmates test below the ninth grade achievement level, those participation levels fall far short of meeting the statutory mandate that the Department of Corrections make literacy programs available to at least 60 percent of eligible inmates and ensure that inmates achieve a ninth-grade reading level before they parole.

The Office of the Inspector General recommends that the Department of Corrections re-evaluate classroom education programs at Level IV institutions to determine whether they warrant continued operation and investigate other methods of delivering academic and vocational instruction to inmates. Among the options considered should be eliminating formal classroom instruction and retaining a small educational staff to coordinate in-cell study courses. Instruction through cable television and correspondence courses could also be developed to assist inmates in achieving educational goals.

The following summarizes the Office of the Inspector General's observations.

## **OBSERVATION 1**

**The Office of the Inspector General found that only a small percentage of inmates at Level IV institutions are enrolled in education classes and that the classes are closed a large percentage of the time because of lockdowns and other disruptions.**

The Office of the Inspector General found that education programs at Level IV institutions are shut down more than two-thirds of the time because of lockdowns, teacher vacancies, and other disruptions. Even if the programs were operating 100 percent of the time — which the department sets at 6.5 hours a day, five days a week — only a relatively few inmates would be obtaining instruction because only a small percentage of eligible inmates are enrolled in classes. Although the most recent statistics show that 68 percent of state prison inmates test below the ninth-grade achievement level, only about 20 percent of inmates are assigned to education classes. As a result, inmates at Level IV institutions receive much less academic and vocational instruction than budgeted and intended under state law, and the State is receiving little in return for the \$48.4 million it presently budgets annually for inmate education at Level IV institutions.

## **OBSERVATION 2**

**The Office of the Inspector General found that the department and the institutions have no means of accounting for the activities of teachers during lockdowns and that labor agreements hamper the redirection of teachers to other functions during those periods.**

Lockdowns and other disruptions at the institutions can leave teachers without students and classes for months at a time, yet the Department of Corrections and the institutions lack a system for tracking how teaching resources are used during those periods and have no effective means of redirecting teachers to other activities.

## **OBSERVATION 3**

**The Office of the Inspector General found that when lockdowns and other program disruptions are taken into account, the annual per-inmate cost of the education programs at Level IV institutions greatly exceeds the annual per-inmate cost budgeted.**

The Department of Corrections budgets \$48.4 million for inmate education at the state's 11 Level IV institutions. At the five Level IV institutions surveyed, the budget for inmate education is \$16.3 million, which translates to an average annual cost of \$5,859 per inmate — compared to an average daily attendance cost of \$4,700 per student for the state's public schools. But when the education time lost at Level IV institutions because of lockdowns and other disruptions is taken into account, the actual per-inmate cost of a year of instruction increases as much as four-fold. The higher costs result from the fact that teachers' salaries and other fixed costs continue even when lockdowns are in effect and classes are not held.

## **INTRODUCTION**

This survey of education programs at California Department of Corrections Level IV institutions was conducted under the oversight authority provided to the Office of the Inspector General in *California Penal Code* Section 6126. The Office of the Inspector General initiated the survey after management review audits at High Desert State Prison and California State Prison, Solano revealed that education classes at those institutions were frequently closed due to lockdowns, teacher vacancies, and other program disruptions. A subsequent review of education programs in state correctional institutions statewide showed inmate participation to be lowest at Level IV institutions — institutions housing inmates who require the highest levels of security and staffing because of commitment offenses and behavior. The present survey was undertaken to assess the impact of lockdowns and other disruptions on education programs at these institutions.

## **BACKGROUND**

Declaring that “there is a correlation between prisoners who are functionally literate and those who successfully reintegrate into society upon release,” the Legislature in 1987 enacted the Prisoner Literacy Act, which required the California Department of Corrections to provide literacy programs at every state prison. Codified as *California Penal Code* Section 2053 *et seq.*, the act required the department to make the programs available to at least 60 percent of eligible inmates in the state prison system by January 1, 1996, with the goal of ensuring that inmates achieve a ninth-grade reading level by the time they parole. Pursuant to the statutes, the California Department of Corrections provides an education program consisting of both academic classes and vocational training for inmates at state correctional institutions.

Inmates receive time credit for participating in work and education programs in the form of a day-for-day reduction in confinement time. For most inmates, every six months of full-time performance in a qualifying program earns a six-month reduction in the confinement term. The department monitors work-time credits through its inmate work incentive program, with the education program providing the majority of qualifying work incentive assignments.

Education programs at each institution are managed by an on-site supervisor of correctional education programs and are monitored by the Education and Inmate Programs Unit of the Department of Corrections in Sacramento. Institutions provide monthly reports to the Education and Inmate Programs Unit giving staffing information and summarizing statistical data on inmate participation in academic, vocational, and literacy programs. Classes are designed around a ratio of 27 students for each teacher.

The Department of Corrections budget presently includes \$48.4 million and 702 positions for academic and vocational education at the state’s 11 Level IV institutions. (See the Attachment to this report.) In the period July 1, 2002 through March 31, 2003, total inmate enrollment in education programs at the 11 institutions averaged 10,176. A reduction in the budget is likely for the 2003-04 fiscal year because of the State’s present fiscal crisis.

## **OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY**

The objective of this survey was to measure inmate participation in education programs at California Department of Corrections Level IV institutions and to assess the effect on education programs of lockdowns and other disruptions at the institutions.

The survey was conducted in two phases. In the initial phase, the Office of the Inspector General met with managers and staff in the Education and Inmate Programs Unit in Sacramento to gather statewide statistics in order to analyze inmate participation in education programs by institution. The Office of the Inspector General performed the following procedures during this phase of the review:

- Reviewed monthly education reports for all 33 institutions
- Obtained financial data and staffing information for Level IV institutions
- Reviewed applicable policies and procedures concerning inmate education
- Reviewed Director's Advisory Committee recommendations concerning education
- Reviewed Western Association of Schools and Colleges visiting committee reports for selected Level IV institutions
- Obtained a list of contacts for future site visits

When the data revealed that education time lost to lockdowns and other program disruptions was highest at Level IV institutions, the Office of the Inspector General selected for further evaluation the five Level IV institutions with the largest percentages of lockdown time during the review period. Those five institutions were California State Prison, Sacramento, Calipatria State Prison, High Desert State Prison, Pelican Bay State Prison, and Salinas Valley State Prison. The Office of the Inspector General conducted site visits to California State Prison, Sacramento and Salinas Valley State Prison and performed the following:

- Toured academic and vocational classrooms
- Interviewed academic and vocational instructors about the programs
- Interviewed the supervisor of correctional education programs and middle managers at each institution
- Interviewed members of the inmate education advisory committee and inmates participating in the programs
- Interviewed selected custody personnel
- Reviewed monthly reports and related tracking documents
- Reviewed inmate education files
- Reviewed inmates' central files

To assess factors affecting the education programs at the remaining three institutions, the Office of the Inspector General obtained information through telephone, facsimile, and electronic mail.

The survey was conducted from January 2003 through June 2003. The Office of the Inspector General received excellent cooperation during the survey from management and staff of the California Department of Corrections.

## OBSERVATIONS

### OBSERVATION 1

**The Office of the Inspector General found that only a small percentage of inmates at Level IV institutions are enrolled in education classes and that the classes are closed a large percentage of the time because of lockdowns and other disruptions.**

The Office of the Inspector General found that education programs at Level IV institutions are shut down more than two-thirds of the time because of lockdowns,<sup>1</sup> teacher vacancies, and other disruptions. Even if the programs were operating 100 percent of the time — which the department sets at 6.5 hours a day, five days a week — only a relatively few inmates would be obtaining instruction because only a small percentage of eligible inmates are enrolled in classes. Although the most recent statistics show that 68 percent of state prison inmates test below the ninth-grade achievement level, only about 20 percent of inmates are assigned to education classes. As a result, inmates at Level IV institutions receive much less academic and vocational instruction than budgeted and intended under state law, and the State is receiving little in return for the \$48.4 million it presently budgets annually for inmate education at Level IV institutions.

***Classes are frequently closed for long periods.*** Level IV institutions, which house a high percentage of violent inmates, are subject to frequent incidents ranging from minor altercations to major riots that threaten institution security and necessitate restricting inmates to cells and closing down programs. Facility B at California State Prison, Sacramento, which houses approximately 1,200 inmates, for example, has been in continuous lockdown since January 2002, and Facility C at Salinas Valley State Prison, which houses approximately 1,000 inmates, has been in nearly continuous lockdown since December 2000. The survey by the Office of the Inspector General showed that because of lockdowns, education programs at the state's 11 Level IV institutions were operating an average of only 30 percent of the time in the nine-month period from July 1, 2002 through March 31, 2003. At the five Level IV institutions locked down for the largest percentages of time, the education programs were operating an average of only 24.5 percent of the time, with academic and vocational classes operating an average of 22 percent and 27 percent of the time, respectively. The following chart shows the percentage of time academic and vocational classes were operating in the period July 1, 2002 through March 31, 2003 at the five selected Level IV institutions.

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<sup>1</sup> The term “lockdown” in this report refers to any restrictions imposed by institutions as a result of incidents of violence and other situations affecting institution security that prevent access to education programs. In Department of Corrections lexicon, a restriction may take the form of a “state of emergency,” “modified program,” or total lockdown. For purposes of this report, “lockdown” refers to all three types of restrictions.

PERCENTAGE OF TIME EDUCATION CLASSES WERE OPERATING BY INSTITUTION		
JULY 1, 2002 THROUGH MARCH 31, 2003		
Institution	Academic	Vocational
California State Prison, Sacramento	28%	37%
Calipatria State Prison	22%	39%
High Desert State Prison	19%	18%
Pelican Bay State Prison	23%	22%
Salinas Valley State Prison	18%	17%
Average per program	22%	27%
Average operating time for academic and vocational programs combined		24.5%

***Only a small percentage of inmates are assigned to classes.*** Despite the statutory requirement that the Department of Corrections make literacy programs available to at least 60 percent of eligible inmates — and even though the most recent statewide survey conducted by the Department of Corrections, in November 1996, found that 68 percent of the inmate population scored below the ninth grade level in reading — only 20.8 percent of eligible inmates at the Level IV institutions surveyed are assigned to education classes. The low level of inmate participation is explained partly by budget constraints. In fiscal year 2002-03, the number of academic teaching positions budgeted at the five Level IV institutions surveyed averaged 16, with an average of only 13 of those positions actually filled. At a ratio of one teacher for every 27 students, therefore, the academic program can accommodate an average of only 351 inmates at each of the institutions — 11.8 percent of the eligible inmate population (with “eligible” defined as those able to participate in a classroom setting). The actual number of inmates assigned to academic classes is even lower—an average of 308 per institution—resulting in an average of 10.4 percent of eligible inmates participating in academic instruction at the five Level IV institutions surveyed. The number of inmates participating in vocational programs reflects a similar percentage — with 308 out of 2,961 eligible inmates participating, again amounting to 10.4 percent of the population eligible for vocational classes.

***The Department of Corrections sets low goals for inmate participation in education classes.*** The Department of Corrections does not interpret the statutory requirement that the department make literacy programs available to at least 60 percent of eligible inmates to mean that it must provide classroom instruction to that percentage of inmates. Instead, the department takes the position that it can fulfill the 60 percent requirement by allowing inmates to improve literacy independently through correspondence courses and other methods. But the department does not track inmate participation in correspondence courses and inmates do not receive time credit for participation, eliminating an important incentive for inmates to pursue independent literacy training. And despite the statutory requirement that the department try to ensure that inmates achieve a ninth-grade reading level by the time they parole, the department does not track to see that that goal is met.

Instead of pursuing the 60 percent inmate participation and ninth-grade achievement levels specified in state law, department policy prescribes much lower inmate participation and

achievement levels. *California Department of Corrections Operations Manual*, Section 53090.1 calls for wardens to ensure that inmates achieving below a sixth-grade level or who have limited English proficiency be assigned to adult basic education or English as a Second Language programs and for wardens to “make every effort” to assign 15 percent of the inmate population to academic programs and 18 percent to vocational programs.

As noted above, the actual percentage of inmates assigned to academic and vocational classes at the five Level IV institutions surveyed falls significantly below even the 15 and 18 percent goals. The percentage of eligible inmates enrolled in the education programs during the July 1, 2002 through March 30, 2003 survey period ranged from 3.9 percent in the vocational programs at California State Prison, Sacramento to 15 percent in vocational programs at Salinas Valley State Prison. The following table illustrates the percentage of the eligible inmate population enrolled in academic and vocational education programs at each of the five Level IV institutions surveyed.

<b>EDUCATION CLASSES AND PERCENTAGES OF INMATES ENROLLED AT SELECTED LEVEL IV INSTITUTIONS JULY 1, 2002 THROUGH MARCH 31, 2003</b>						
<b>ACADEMIC EDUCATION</b>						
<b>Level IV Institution</b>	<b>Eligible Inmate Population</b>	<b>Budgeted Teacher Positions</b>	<b>Number of Academic Classes Operating</b>	<b>Budgeted Enrollment</b>	<b>Actual Enrollment</b>	<b>Percentage of Eligible Inmates Enrolled</b>
California State Prison, Sacramento	2,968	11	10	267	232	7.8%
Calipatria State Prison	3,589	22	18	489	373	10.4%
High Desert State Prison	3,460	23	15	411	421	12.2%
Pelican Bay State Prison	1,416	8	6	168	129	9.1%
Salinas Valley State Prison*	3,373	17	14	385	387	11.5%
<b>Average:</b>	<b>2,961</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>351</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>10.4%</b>
<b>VOCATIONAL EDUCATION</b>						
<b>Level IV Institution</b>	<b>Eligible Inmate Population</b>	<b>Budgeted Instructor Positions</b>	<b>Number of Vocational Classes Operating</b>	<b>Budgeted Enrollment</b>	<b>Actual Enrollment</b>	<b>Percentage of Eligible Inmates Enrolled</b>
California State Prison, Sacramento	2,968	14	10	276	116	3.9%
Calipatria State Prison	3,589	29	20	552	400	11.2%
High Desert State Prison	3,460	23	17	468	444	12.8%
Pelican Bay State Prison	1,416	6	5	135	76	5.4%
Salinas Valley State Prison*	3,373	20	19	513	504	15.0%
<b>Average:</b>	<b>2,961</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>378</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>10.4%</b>

**Notes:**

Budgeted academic teachers and vocational instructors based on the FY 2003-04 Governor's Budget, Salaries and Wages Supplement.  
Excludes supervisory, clerical, and librarian positions.

The variance between budgeted academic and vocational positions and the number of programs operating is the result of teacher/vocational instructor vacancies.

\*Salinas Valley State Prison statistics do not include March 2003.

**Enrollment figures reported do not accurately reflect inmate participation.** The number of inmates who actually attend education classes is even lower than the number reported as enrolled. The reasons are several. Enrollment figures reported by the institutions each month to the department's Education and Inmate Programs Unit count inmates as "enrolled" even when a class is not being held for long periods because of a vacant teaching position or other program disruption. Also, an inmate who chronically fails to attend class may nonetheless continue to be reported as enrolled because the process of officially removing an inmate from a class is difficult and time-consuming. Removing an inmate from a class presently requires the teacher to first document the non-attendance on a CDC 128 (general chrono), and if the inmate continues to not show up for class, to prepare a CDC Form 115 (rules violation), which requires a hearing and handling by the custody staff, which may give the issue low priority and may not always report the results to the teacher.

Enrollment figures are also undermined by another phenomenon: the failure of institutions to consistently include teachers in the classification process when inmates are assigned to education programs. To ensure that inmates are enrolled in appropriate education programs, *California Department of Corrections Operations Manual* Section 53090.3.4 requires an education representative to sit on all initial classification committees and requires the committee to evaluate the education background and determine the most suitable program for each inmate. The Office of the Inspector General found from the survey, however, that institutions do not consistently include an education representative on the classification committee, with the result that inmates may be assigned to the wrong programs. Not only does placement in the wrong class diminish the value of the instruction provided, but according to the teachers interviewed, inmates placed in the wrong classes are often disruptive, may not genuinely participate, or may not attend the classes at all.

**Inmates earn day-for-day credit even when classes are not held.** Inmates continue to earn day-for-day reduction in sentences even when classes are closed for months because of lockdowns, teacher retirements, vacant teacher positions, or other disruptions, and even when inmates fail to show up for class over long periods, but remain on the class roster pending official removal.

*California Code of Regulations*, Title 15 requires that inmates who are not directly involved in an incident that precipitates a lockdown be granted day-for-day credit, even during lockdowns lasting several months. The Office of the Inspector General found one such example of an inmate at California State Prison, Sacramento who was assigned to an academic class in August 2002 and, because of continuing lockdowns, had never attended the class, but nonetheless continued to receive day-for-day credit. Institution education staff told the Office of the Inspector General that this is a common occurrence in institutions that experience extended lockdowns. During lockdown periods, teachers are required to continue to prepare monthly inmate time cards and quarterly progress reports to account for work time credits and to comply with other reporting requirements.

Similarly, inmates may be assigned to classes and receive day-for-day time credit even when the classes are not held because the teacher position is vacant. For example, inmates at Salinas Valley State Prison continue to be assigned to participate in a computer lab as part of the adult basic education class even though the computer lab is closed because of teacher retirements. Institution officials told the Office of the Inspector General that they have received approval to

close the computer class, but have yet to remove the inmates from the class through the classification process, which can take months. In the meantime, inmates continue to receive day-for-day credit as though they were attending the class.

**Teachers often do not accurately report attendance.** The Office of the Inspector General also found that teachers often do not accurately report attendance. Teachers are required to track the attendance of each inmate on a CDC Form 151 (permanent class record card), but the Office of the Inspector General found that teachers routinely report 6.5 hours of daily attendance regardless of how long the class was in session, with inmates earning the time credits reported. The time recorded on the permanent class record card is also rolled into the monthly reports sent to the Education and Inmate Programs Unit. The survey showed, in addition, that teachers at California State Prison, Sacramento award education program credit to inmates participating in mental health treatment programs, coding the time spent in the enhanced outpatient program as “education,” in violation of rules governing the work incentive program. In general, the Office of the Inspector General found no department quality control procedures to ensure that appropriate absence codes are used or that the time reported is accurate.

## OBSERVATION 2

**The Office of the Inspector General found that the department and the institutions have no means of accounting for the activities of teachers during lockdowns and that labor agreements hamper the redirection of teachers to other functions during those periods.**

Lockdowns and other disruptions at the institutions can leave teachers without students and classes for months at a time, yet the Department of Corrections and the institutions lack a system for tracking how teaching resources are used during those periods and have no effective means of redirecting teachers to other activities. In interviews with the Office of the Inspector General, institution education supervisors and staff described a variety of tasks that might be assigned to teachers while classes are closed, but they were generally unable to supply documentation of teachers performing those tasks. As a result, the Office of the Inspector General was unable to verify the amount of time teachers spent fulfilling functions outside the classroom. Several teachers interviewed did say that they continue to provide motivated inmates with educational materials during lockdowns through mail or even visits to inmates in housing units, but the department has no tracking mechanism to document those efforts and teachers are not required to perform those duties.

The tasks listed that teachers might perform during lockdowns included the following:

- Working on lesson plans
- Providing coverage for the library and law library
- Providing coverage for other teachers
- Working on institution projects
- Providing in-cell instruction through correspondence
- Assisting with meal preparation
- Assisting in the mailroom
- Assisting with documenting cell searches by listing property

- Assisting with special projects
- Leaving institution grounds and going home

**Barriers to allowing teachers to perform other functions during lockdowns.** The supervisor of education programs at Salinas Valley State Prison said that for various reasons, the institution is no longer allowed to assign teachers to some of the functions they once performed. For example, he said that teachers can no longer be required to work in the kitchen during lockdowns because it is difficult for older teachers to perform that type of physical labor. He also reported that a project in which vocational instructors were assigned to review inmate files to determine whether required forms were present was stopped by the union representing the correctional counselors, purportedly because the practice was affecting the ability of union members to earn overtime pay.

Efforts at Pelican Bay State Prison to make use of teaching resources during lockdowns have also been blocked. The supervisor of education programs at that institution had proposed implementing a classroom outreach program to bring education opportunities to inmates in cells during prolonged lockdowns. But in September 2002, before the program was officially implemented, the institution received a “cease and desist” memorandum from the teachers’ union. To date, the program has not been implemented.

### OBSERVATION 3

**The Office of the Inspector General found that when lockdowns and other program disruptions are taken into account, the annual per-inmate cost of the education programs at Level IV institutions greatly exceeds the annual per-inmate cost budgeted.**

The Department of Corrections budgets \$48.4 million for inmate education at the state’s 11 Level IV institutions. At the five Level IV institutions surveyed, the budget for inmate education is \$16.3 million, which translates to an average annual cost of \$5,859 per inmate — compared to an average daily attendance cost of \$4,700 per student for the state’s public schools. But when the education time lost at Level IV institutions because of lockdowns and other disruptions is taken into account, the actual per-inmate cost of a year of instruction increases as much as four-fold. The higher costs result from the fact that teachers’ salaries and other fixed costs continue even when lockdowns are in effect and classes are not held.

Annual per-inmate budgeted costs for education at the five Level IV institutions surveyed by the Office of the Inspector General range from \$4,168 per inmate at Salinas Valley State Prison to \$7,681 per inmate at Pelican Bay State Prison. The differences result from higher per-inmate costs at institutions where some of the budgeted teaching positions remain vacant, reducing the number of inmates receiving instruction, while the education budget remains the same. The following table shows the per-inmate costs budgeted at the five Level IV institutions covered by the survey.

<b>ANNUAL BUDGETED COST PER ENROLLED INMATE OF EDUCATION PROGRAMS AT SELECTED LEVEL IV INSTITUTIONS</b>	
<b>Institution</b>	<b>Annual Budgeted Cost Per Enrolled Inmate*</b>
California State Prison, Sacramento	\$6,929
Calipatria State Prison	\$5,834
High Desert State Prison	\$4,681
Pelican Bay State Prison	\$7,681
Salinas Valley State Prison	\$4,168
Average annual cost per enrolled inmate	\$5,859

\*Based on the fiscal year 2002-03 education budget, including personal services and operating expenses, divided by average enrollment for the period July 1, 2002 through March 30, 2003.

When time lost to lockdowns and other program disruptions is taken into account, however, the actual per-inmate cost for the equivalent of a year's worth of instruction can be seen to be much higher. Adult basic education classes at the institutions are designed to be open entry/open exit, meaning that inmates may begin and complete the coursework at any time. When classes are held on a regular schedule, inmates can progress from the first level of adult basic education to the second within a year. But with classes operating only 24.5 percent of the time because of lockdowns, it may take as long as four years for an inmate to complete the first level of adult basic education, quadrupling the cost of a year's worth of instruction to an average of \$23,436 per inmate. At Pelican Bay State Prison, for example, the cost per inmate comes to \$30,736.

The cost of existing education programs at Level IV institutions is especially noteworthy considering that only slightly more than 20 percent of inmates eligible for the programs are served. To reach the statutory mandate of providing literacy training to 60 percent of eligible inmates at Level IV institutions through the classroom education model and using the same 1:27 teacher: inmate ratio would require a five-fold increase in the department's education budget, to \$242 million. But even that would not solve the problem of disruptions in instruction because of lockdowns; address the problem of fixed costs that must continue to be paid even when classes are not held; or remedy the issue of inmates receiving day-for-day sentence reduction credit for classes they could not attend because the institution was locked down and classes were closed.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Office of the Inspector General recommends that the Department of Corrections re-evaluate education programs at Level IV institutions to determine whether they warrant continued operation and investigate other methods of delivering academic and vocational instruction.**

**Among the options considered should be eliminating formal classroom instruction and retaining a small educational staff to coordinate in-cell study courses for inmates. Instruction through cable television and correspondence courses could also be developed to assist inmates in achieving educational goals.**

**If the department decides to continue formal classroom instruction, the Office of the Inspector General recommends that the department take the following actions:**

- **Ensure that classification committees include an education representative for the purpose of evaluating appropriate education placement for inmates.**
- **Develop a more efficient process for removing from classes inmates who are disruptive or who fail to attend class and for removing inmates from classes that are closed because of teacher vacancies and other reasons.**
- **Institute quality-control measures to ensure that inmate class attendance is accurately reported.**

**ATTACHMENT**

<b>CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS</b>						
<b>EDUCATION BUDGET - FOR LEVEL IV INSTITUTIONS</b>						
<b>FISCAL YEAR 2002-2003</b>						
<b>Institution</b>	<b>Academic Education</b>		<b>Vocational Education</b>		<b>Education Totals</b>	
	<b>Positions</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Positions</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Positions</b>	<b>Budget</b>
California Correctional Institution	38.6	\$2,561,186	26.0	\$1,907,122	64.6	\$4,468,308
California State Prison, Corcoran	31.2	\$2,023,844	12.0	\$891,814	43.2	\$2,915,658
California State Prison, Los Angeles County	34.5	\$2,183,535	60.0	\$4,327,583	94.5	\$6,511,118
California State Prison, Sacramento	18.2	\$1,219,630	16.8	\$1,191,626	35.0	\$2,411,256
Calipatria State Prison	31.7	\$2,040,974	34.4	\$2,474,823	66.1	\$4,515,797
Centinela State Prison	38.5	\$2,591,678	50.0	\$3,755,679	88.5	\$6,347,357
High Desert State Prison	34.0	\$2,172,661	26.0	\$1,876,234	60.0	\$4,048,895
Mule Creek State Prison	35.3	\$2,280,320	22.3	\$1,518,617	57.6	\$3,798,937
Pelican Bay State Prison	16.0	\$1,123,092	6.0	\$443,869	22.0	\$1,566,961
Salinas Valley State Prison	27.0	\$1,950,725	24.0	\$1,762,726	51.0	\$3,713,451
Substance Abuse Treatment Facility at Corcoran	70.9	\$4,439,470	49.0	\$3,746,345	119.9	\$8,185,815
<b>Totals</b>	<b>375.9</b>	<b>\$24,587,115</b>	<b>326.5</b>	<b>\$23,896,438</b>	<b>702.4</b>	<b>\$48,483,553</b>