



CALIFORNIA STATE PRISON, SACRAMENTO

**WARDEN JAMES WALKER
ONE-YEAR AUDIT**

**OFFICE OF THE
INSPECTOR GENERAL**

**DAVID R. SHAW
INSPECTOR GENERAL**

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

JANUARY 2010



January 6, 2010

Matthew L. Cate, Secretary
California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
1515 S Street, Room 502 South
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Mr. Cate:

Enclosed is the Office of the Inspector General's audit report concerning the performance of Warden James Walker at California State Prison, Sacramento (SAC). The purpose of the audit was to satisfy our statutory requirement to audit each warden one year after appointment.

The report concludes that James Walker has the skills necessary to manage a multi-mission institution like SAC and has successfully performed his job as warden. Most SAC employees we interviewed told us the institution's operations have improved under his stewardship.

If you have any questions concerning this report, please contact Jerry Twomey, Chief Assistant Inspector General, Bureau of Audits and Investigations, at (916) 830-3600.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. R. Shaw".

David R. Shaw
Inspector General

cc: James Walker, Warden, CSP SAC
Scott Kernan, Chief Deputy Secretary, Adult Operations, CDCR
George Giurbino, Director (A), Adult Institutions, CDCR
Elizabeth Siggins, Chief Deputy Secretary (A), Adult Programs, CDCR
Kim Holt, External Audits Manager, CDCR

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Results in Brief

Overall, James Walker receives high marks as warden

From its review, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) found that Warden Walker has successfully performed his job as warden at California State Prison, Sacramento (SAC). With over 30 years of correctional experience in the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), he has obtained the skills necessary to manage a multi-mission institution like SAC.

Most SAC employees we interviewed told us the institution's operations have improved since Walker became warden in October 2007, and several said he is the best warden they have ever known.

During our review, we surveyed SAC employees, key stakeholders, and department executives; analyzed operational data compiled and maintained by the department; interviewed SAC employees, including the warden; and toured the institution. We compiled the results and categorized them into four areas: safety and security, inmate programming, business operations, and employee-management relations. We received mainly positive responses regarding the warden's performance. On average, the warden's managers and employees rated him between very good and outstanding.

CALIFORNIA STATE PRISON, SACRAMENTO FACTS AT A GLANCE

Location: Folsom, CA

Opened: October 1, 1986

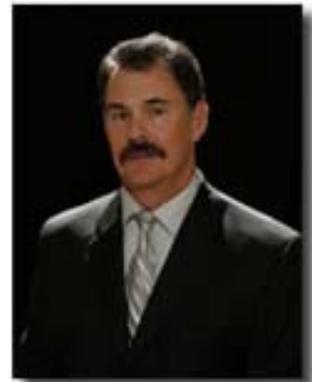
Mission: Multi – High Security, Medical, and Minimum Security

Inmate Population: 2,889

Designed Capacity: 1,828 inmates

Employees: 1,627

Budget: \$238 million, FY 2008/09



One-Year Evaluation of Warden James Walker

California Penal Code section 6126(a)(2) requires the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) to audit each warden of an institution one year after his or her appointment. To satisfy this requirement, we evaluated Warden Walker's performance at California State Prison, Sacramento (SAC) since his appointment.

Background of Warden Walker

Warden Walker, who has over 30 years of correctional experience, began his CDCR career in February 1977 as a correctional officer at San Quentin. He later promoted to sergeant and lieutenant at Folsom State Prison. In 1995, he promoted to facility captain at SAC, and in 2003, promoted to associate warden. He became chief deputy warden at SAC in December 2005, and was selected as acting warden in December 2006. In October 2007, Governor Schwarzenegger appointed him warden of SAC.

Institution Overview

California State Prison, Sacramento opened on October 1, 1986. The prison has 1,627 employees and had an operating budget of \$238 million (including medical, dental, and mental health services) in fiscal year 2008-09. Although SAC was designed to house 1,828 inmates, as of September 2009, it housed 2,889 male inmates or 158 percent of its design capacity.

Inmate Housing

The entrance to SAC is located next to Folsom State Prison (FSP) and shares approximately 882 acres with FSP. The institutions are located in the eastern portion of Sacramento County within the town of Folsom.

The prison is a multi-mission institution. It houses maximum security level IV inmates serving long sentences or those who have proved to be management problems at other institutions. Additionally, as of June 2009, almost half of the SAC inmates receive services in the prison's Psychiatric Services Units (PSU), Enhanced Outpatient, and other mental health units for serious mental health conditions. The institution also has an Outpatient Housing Unit and two Correctional Treatment Centers that provide inmates with nursing and mental health crisis care.



Aerial view of California State Prison, Sacramento

There are three Level IV (high or maximum security) facilities named A, B, and C and a Level I (low security) facility at SAC. Each of the Level IV facilities contains eight housing units with each having 64 cells. An additional 100-cell stand-alone administrative segregation unit is separate from the other three facilities. The Level I facility has two 184-bed dormitory style housing units, which are outside the main institution's perimeter fence. Additional housing for Level I and Level II (low-medium security) inmates is located in the C-Facility gym.

Rehabilitation Programs

SAC offers various work, education, and rehabilitation programs. For example, the prison's vocational opportunities include office services, janitorial services, arts in corrections, and carpentry pre-apprenticeship. The prison's academic offerings include adult basic education, General Educational Development, independent study, and high school literacy programs. SAC also offers self-help programs including religious services and workshops.

Budget and Staffing

For fiscal year 2008-09, SAC's budget for institution and education operations was \$150 million plus \$88 million for medical operations. The institution has 1,745 budgeted positions, of which 1,101 (or 63 percent) represent custody positions. The table below compares SAC's budgeted and filled positions as of April 30, 2009. Overall, the institution filled 93 percent of its total budgeted positions.

Table 1: Staffing Levels at California State Prison, Sacramento

Position	Filled Positions	Budgeted Positions	Percent Filled
Custody	1,039	1,101	94%
Education	22	24	92%
Medical	324	343	94%
Support	150	172	87%
Trades	81	91	89%
Management	11	14	79%
Total	1,627	1,745	93%

Source: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, COMPSTAT ending April 30, 2009, California State Prison, Sacramento. Unaudited data.

Objectives, Scope, and Methodology

To fulfill our objective of assessing the warden’s performance, we employed a three-part approach. First, surveys were used to solicit opinions and comments from employees, department management team members, and other stakeholders. Next, operational data maintained by the department was analyzed by comparing it with the averages for like institutions¹ and all institutions statewide. In addition, we reviewed relevant reports prepared by the department or other external agencies. Finally, we visited the institution, interviewed various employees and representatives from the Inmate Advisory Council, and followed up on noteworthy concerns identified from the surveys, operational data, or reports.

To understand how the staff members and other stakeholders view the warden’s performance, surveys were sent to three distinct groups: department and SAC managers, SAC employees, and key stakeholders outside the department. For the employee survey, we randomly selected 262 of the institution’s employees and sent them a questionnaire and requested an anonymous response. The survey provides information about employees’ perception of the warden’s overall performance plus information about specific operational areas at the prison—Safety and Security, Inmate Programming, Business Operations, and Employee-Management Relations.

To simplify the analysis of the survey results, we requested respondents to broadly classify their job positions. From this information, survey respondents were grouped into three employment categories: Custody; Health Care; and Other (which includes employees in education, plant operations, administration, and clerical positions.) Then, to identify strong trends or patterns, we classified responses to our questions as either positive or negative. For example, if the respondent ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ with a question, we classified it as positive, and if the respondent ‘disagreed’ or ‘strongly disagreed’ with a question we classified it as negative.

Our inspectors also analyzed operational data maintained by the department (called COMPSTAT – comparable statistics) and analyzed the responses to the surveys. We also reviewed relevant reports related to the institution’s operations prepared by the

¹Institutions with a similar mission include: California Correctional Institution, Kern Valley State Prison, High Desert State Prison, Pelican Bay State Prison, California State Prison – Corcoran, and Salinas Valley State Prison.

department or external agencies. From these efforts, strong trends or patterns were identified – either negative or positive – or other issues that helped us identify topics for further review and evaluation during our on-site visit to SAC.

During our visit to SAC, we gained insight into the warden’s work environment. We interviewed certain key employees and other randomly selected employees, using information gathered from our analysis of statistical information and from employee surveys to identify potential issues for review. Our interviews involved employees in various operational areas throughout the prison, including:

- Business services
- Educational programs
- Employee/labor relations
- Food services
- Health care
- Housing units
- Human resources
- Information technology
- Inmate appeals
- Inmate assignments
- Inmate case records
- In-service training
- Investigative services
- Litigation
- Personnel assignment
- Plant operations
- Receiving and release
- Use-of-force review
- Warehouse management

We performed a site visit beginning August 13, 2009 and interviewed 48 individuals throughout the prison to describe and rate the warden’s performance. These individuals included custody employees, executive management, health care professionals, and two inmate representatives from the Inmate Advisory Council.

Review Results

We found that most responding stakeholders, including CDCR management, institutional managers, and employees believe the warden is doing a very good to outstanding job. The Inmate Advisory Council representatives we interviewed also believe he is doing a very good to outstanding job. In the four categories of safety and security, inmate programming, business operations, and employee-management relations, most respondents provided positive answers.

Category 1: Safety and Security

The department's primary mission is to enhance public safety through safe and secure incarceration of offenders. The importance of safety and security is embodied in the department's requirement that custodial security and the safety of staff, inmates, and the public must take precedence over all other considerations in the operation of all the department's programs and activities. As shown in Table 2 above, 85 percent of the prison employees we surveyed had positive opinions about the safety and security of the institution. Furthermore, we heard mostly favorable opinions from the employees we interviewed during our field visit.

Table 2: Safety and Security – Employee Survey Results

Respondents	Positive	Negative
Custody	82%	18%
Health Care	94%	6%
Admin, Plant Operations, and Other	83%	17%
Weighted Average	85%	15%

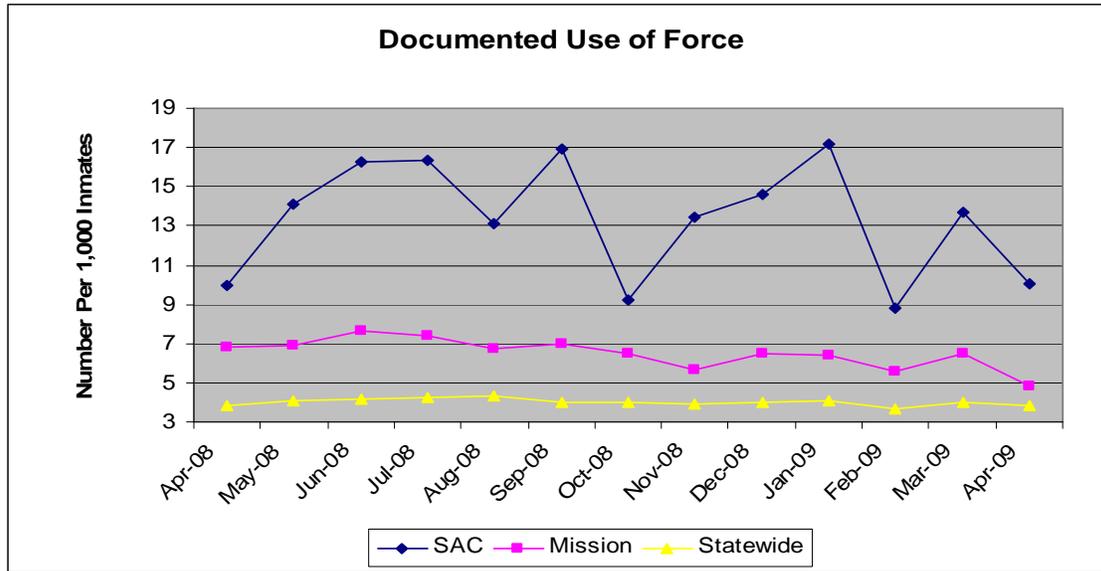
Source: OIG survey of SAC employees. See Appendix for details.

After considering the interviews in conjunction with comments from the warden, results from our employee survey, and departmental data on segregation housing and use of force incidents, we noted three areas for discussion: Use of Force, Administrative Segregation Unit, and Overall Safety and Security.

Use of Force

The number of incidents where force is necessary to subdue an attacker, overcome resistance, effect custody, or gain compliance with a lawful order is a measure of inmate behavior and the institution's ability to safely incarcerate inmates. To assess SAC's use of force, we reviewed the department's use of force data during the 13-month period from April 2008 through April 2009. As shown in Chart 1, documented use of force was higher than both the statewide average and other similar institutions. During our on-site interviews, inmate classification and management employees indicated that SAC's use of force may be higher than other similar institutions and statewide averages because many of its inmates are mentally disordered and violent. In fact, 75 percent of use of force incidents involve mentally disordered inmates. Employees also commented that SAC receives the most violent and unpredictable mental health inmates in California, who are housed in its Psychiatric Services Units (PSU).

Chart 1:



Source: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, COMPSTAT ending April 30, 2009, California State Prison, Sacramento. Unaudited data.

The PSU isolates inmates receiving psychiatric services from other inmates. While in PSU, inmates receive time outside but must remain isolated (Figure 1) for the safety of themselves and others. According to the classification and parole representative (C&PR), PSU inmates may assault people unexpectedly. Further, the C&PR said that when these inmates act out or assault others, immediate use of force is often required to prevent an incident from getting out of control.

To address the high number of use of force incidents, some captains said that Warden Walker increased the number of escort staff for PSU inmates. The warden also ensures that employees receive proper training and are aware of the security issues when dealing with these mentally disordered inmates.



Figure 1 – Outside Psychiatric Services Unit Cells

Administrative Segregation Unit

Institutions temporarily place inmates who threaten the institution's safety and security in administrative segregation units (ASU). Inmates remain in administrative segregation until staff members assess the level of threat the inmates pose to the institution, conduct the required due process hearings, and determine where to relocate the inmates upon completion of their segregated housing terms. While placing problem inmates in segregation units plays an important role in prison population management, it also increases per inmate costs. By conducting timely due process hearings and investigations, and by avoiding other delays in releasing inmates from segregated housing units, institutions can minimize an inmate's length of stay and effectively save the department money while protecting the inmate's due process rights and maintaining institutional safety.

Our initial review of the department's data in Chart 2 revealed that the average ASU length of stay at SAC was consistently longer than both the statewide and similar mission averages. We also noticed that beginning in December 2008 the average length of stay increased significantly above other institutions with the same mission. When we asked the warden, management, and investigation employees about this issue, we heard four main reasons.

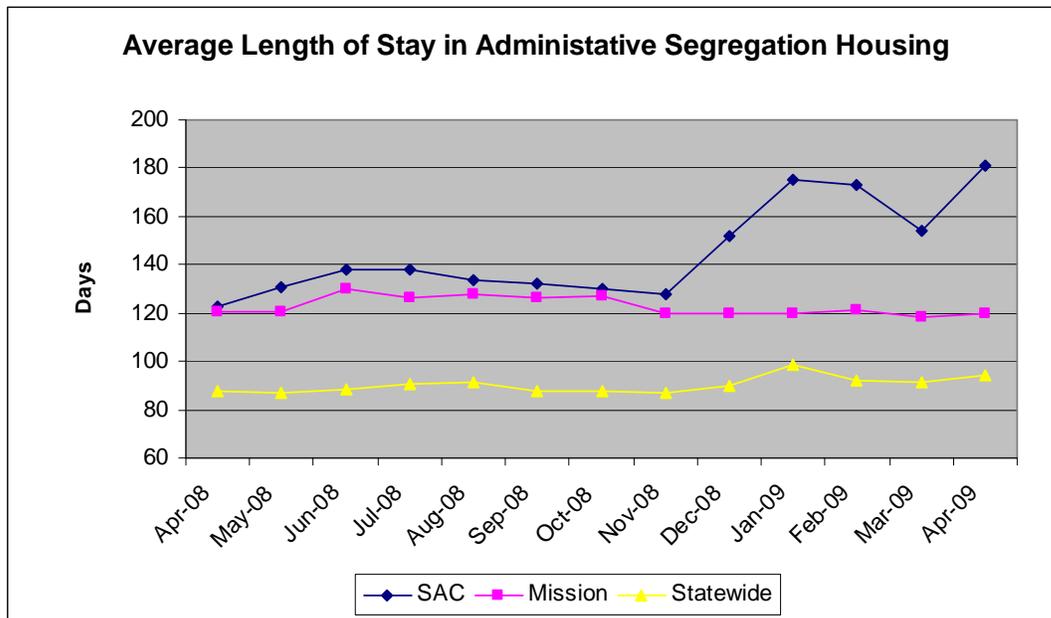
- First, mentally disordered inmates incarcerated at SAC are the most violent and unpredictable types of inmates and may lash out at anybody for no apparent reason. As stated above, when inmates present a danger to themselves or others, they must be placed in ASU.
- Second, many of the institution's inmates are serving Security Housing Unit (SHU) terms in ASU because of a statewide shortage of SHU beds. As a result, inmates waiting for SHU beds tend to increase the average length of stay in the ASU. Security Housing Units are dedicated sections within a prison that are specially designed with added security features to house inmates whose conduct endangers the institution's security or the safety of others. Inmates are generally moved to a SHU because they committed a serious rules violation while incarcerated, such as participating in gang activity, assault, or murder. Unfortunately, statewide SHU bed space is very limited. Inmate classification employees said that many inmates wait more than four months to transfer to a SHU at SAC, Pelican Bay State Prison, or California State Prison, Corcoran.
- Third, a high number of inmates in ASU are trying to get placement at prisons with Sensitive Needs Yards² (SNY) but the process is lengthy and the beds are scarce. Prisons with SNY allow inmates who have legitimate safety concerns to serve their sentences with less fear of being injured or retaliated against by other inmates. Because these inmates must wait in segregated housing until a permanent

² Because of their crimes, notoriety, or gang affiliations, inmates placed on sensitive needs yards cannot mix with general population inmates.

SNY bed can be located, the waiting period tends to increase the ASU average length of stay.

- Finally, SAC receives a large number of inmates from other institutions while they await court trials, medical treatment, and Board of Parole Hearings. Many of these inmates are gang members awaiting trial or are temporarily housed at SAC with only a partial inmate file that does not identify the risks for placing them with other inmates. In order to maintain safety and security, these inmates must wait in ASU until their cases are resolved, find housing at another institution, or until SAC employees receive the complete inmate file and can make a housing assignment outside of ASU. These issues tend to increase the average length of stay in the prison’s ASU.

Chart 2:



Source: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, COMPSTAT ending April 30, 2009, California State Prison, Sacramento. Unaudited data.

Warden Walker said that SAC has recently transferred many long term ASU inmates to other institutions who were at SAC for medical treatment, SNY and SHU transfers. He also mentioned that SAC has recently started moving many of its validated gang members from ASU to SHUs around the state. According to Warden Walker, the recent movement from ASU to permanent housing has significantly decreased the average length of inmate stay in ASU. To verify the warden’s statement, we checked the July 2009 department data and confirmed that the average ASU length of stay decreased from 181 days in April 2009 to 114 days per month in July 2009.

Overall Safety and Security

Many employees said they feel secure or had no issues with Warden Walker and his policies regarding safety and security even though they work at a maximum security prison. As previously mentioned, 85 percent of all survey respondents gave favorable responses with regard to Safety and Security. For example, one employee said she was apprehensive about working at a prison and was ready to leave SAC but Warden Walker was able to ease her fears. According to the employee, the warden personally talked with her and arranged a tour around the institution so she could observe SAC's security precautions and procedures. It was the Warden's concern for her and his dedication to safety and security that encouraged her to stay.

However, some employees told us the large volume of inmate transports outside of the institution coupled with the amount of contraband cell phones smuggled into the institution cause them great concern for the possibility of inmate escapes. The OIG also recognized this concern in its May 2009 special report that states cell phone usage between inmates poses a safety concern for staff, inmates and the public. The report further stated that inmate access to cell phones facilitates their ability to communicate amongst themselves and associates outside of prison, to plan prison assaults, plot prison escapes, and orchestrate other illegal activities. An example at SAC illustrates this point. We were told that an inmate found out the location of his medical appointment before leaving the institution. This information coupled with fact that his inmate associates were later found in possession of cell phones may have allowed the inmate to plan an escape. Fortunately, SAC custody employees discovered this problem and diverted the inmate to an alternate location.

Because SAC is a multi-mission institution with a large medical and mental health inmate population, the amount of weekly transports is high. One associate warden estimated that SAC makes an average of 150 scheduled transports weekly plus emergency and other unscheduled transports. A correctional captain commented, "The amount of transports just increases our chances of something happening, especially when inmates have access to cell phones." When we asked the warden about the cell phone and transportation issues, he stated that he cannot do much about the volume of transports given the mission of SAC. However, Walker said that he educates and trains his transportation employees during on-the-job training with more experienced staff and through block training as much as possible. The warden is also currently trying to reduce the number of cell phones and amount of contraband that enter the prison through a strict enforcement of bag and ID checking procedures for all employees at the entrance gate.

Additional employee interviews revealed that the warden submitted an operational plan to the department to initiate the department's cell phone and contraband reduction procedure called Operation Disconnect. Once authorized by the department, select department employees including the warden, stopped and searched all people entering controlled areas of the institution while looking for cell phones, drugs, and other contraband. The warden told us that he wants to continue randomly searching all people

entering the institution to encourage all employees to follow the law and department policies about cell phones and other contraband.

Category 2: Inmate Programming

Research shows that inmate programs can reduce the likelihood that offenders will commit new crimes and return to prison. In fact, a 2006 Washington State Institute for Public Policy study of adult

basic and vocational education programs found that such programs reduce inmate recidivism by an average of 5.1 percent and 12.6 percent, respectively.³ The department recognizes these benefits and provides academic and vocational training and a number of self-help and self improvement services, including substance abuse programs to inmates. An added benefit is that programming provides inmates a more structured day and less idle time. As a general rule, inmates with a structured day tend to be easier to manage. As a result, the institution’s safety and security can be affected by the amount of available inmate programming.

Table 3: Inmate Programming – Employee Survey Results

Respondents	Positive	Negative
Custody	79%	21%
Health Care	86%	14%
Admin, Plant Operations, and Other	73%	27%
Weighted Average	79%	21%

Source: OIG survey of SAC employees. See Appendix for details.

Overall, as shown in Table 3 above, 79 percent of all respondents gave favorable ratings to questions related to inmate programming. Analysis of the information gathered from departmental statistics, employee survey results, and employee interviews, revealed one area for more detailed comment: Inmate Program Attendance.

Inmate Program Attendance

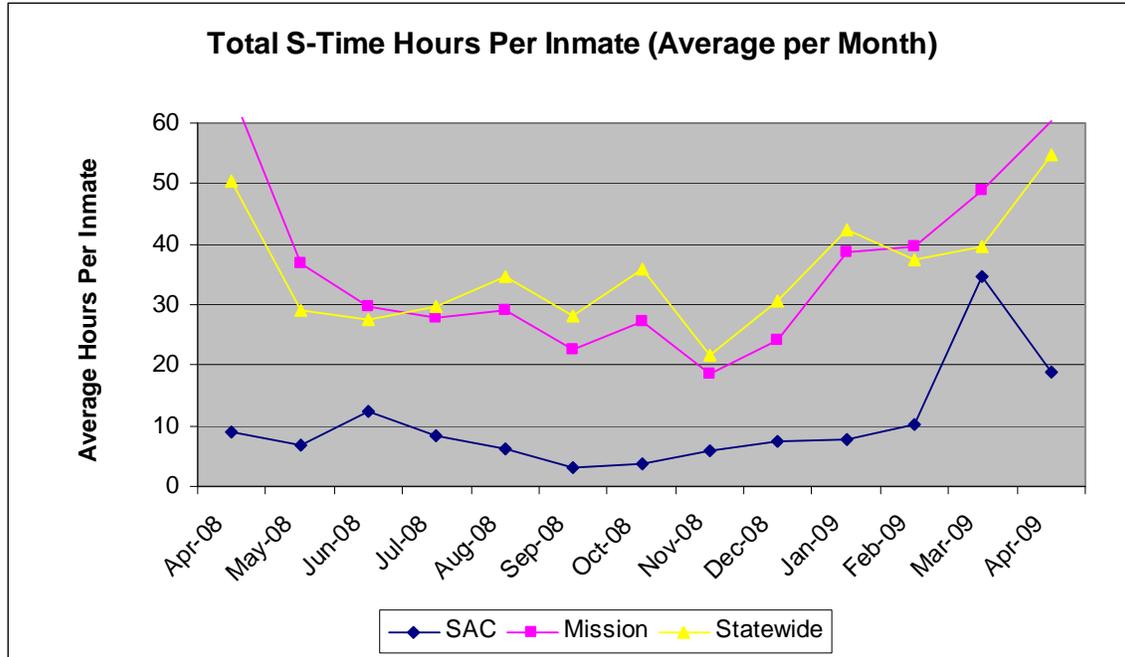
The department establishes the amount of time that assigned inmates must attend academic and vocational training classes each day. As a result, each institution can be evaluated as to how effectively it complies with school-day attendance requirements because administrators must track inmate class absences. The department refers to absences caused by circumstances beyond the inmate’s control as “S-time.” Such absences may result from security-related needs such as lockdowns, modified programming, investigations, and inmate medical appointments. Education-related absences, such as teachers calling in sick also contribute to S-time. Institutions with high or increasing patterns of S-time indicate that prison management may be ineffectively using their academic and vocational programs.

Our analysis of survey responses, interviews and department data in Chart 3 found the average S-time at SAC was well below both the statewide and mission specific averages. When we inquired about the low S-time, custody employees from various areas told us that the warden works hard to get inmates to education and other programming activities

³ Washington State Institute for Public Policy, “Evidence-Based Adult Corrections Programs: What Works and What Does Not,” January 2006.

by stressing the importance of inmate programming with his captains and lieutenants. One lieutenant commented that the warden holds his supervisors accountable for getting the inmates to their programming activities on time.

Chart 3:



Source: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, COMPSTAT ending April 30, 2009, California State Prison, Sacramento. Unaudited data.

Category 3: Business Operations

An institution’s business operations include budget planning and control, personnel administration, accounting and procurement services, employee training and development, and facility maintenance and operations. It is important for the warden to be knowledgeable in these areas to effectively perform his duties.

Table 4: Business Operations – Employee Survey Results

Respondents	Positive	Negative
Custody	79%	21%
Health Care	69%	31%
Admin, Plant Operations, and Other	76%	24%
Weighted Average	76%	24%

Source: OIG survey of SAC employees. See Appendix for details.

As shown in Table 4, 76 percent of the prison employees had positive responses about the institution’s business operations. Analyzing the information gathered from the department’s data, employee survey responses, and employee interviews uncovered four areas we discussed with the warden and other management team members: Overtime Usage, Budget and Staffing, Plant Operations and Maintenance, and Personnel and Hiring.

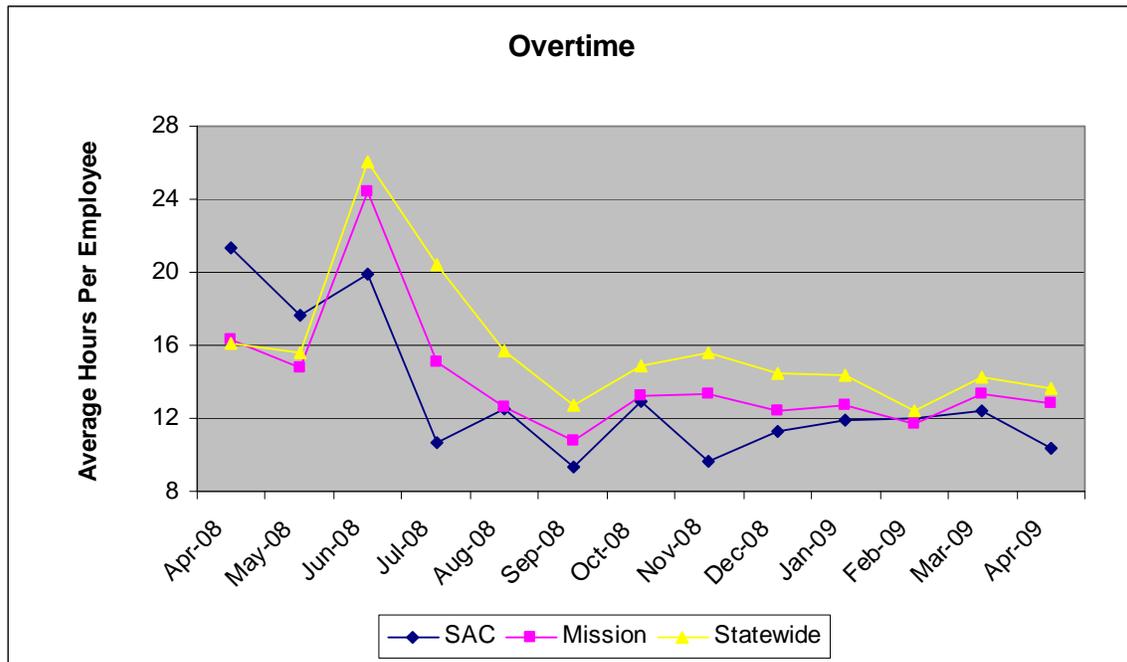
Overtime Usage

The control of overtime is one indicator of a warden's ability to manage an institution's overall operations because it requires the warden to ensure that good budgeting, planning, and personnel administration practices are in place. To assess SAC's overtime usage, we compared its overtime statistics to both the statewide average for all prisons, as well as the average for the other prisons with a similar high security mission.

As displayed in Chart 4, with the exception of April and May 2008, overtime usage at SAC has been either at or below the average overtime for statewide and mission specific institutions. This is a strong indication that the warden is actively dealing with overtime issues. In fact, the business services associate warden told us that the April and May 2009 overtime resulted from a high number of vacant positions that necessitated the use of overtime to provide sufficient coverage.

To combat high overtime, SAC obtained approval to move employees who are not working because of long term sick and disability leave out of their budgeted positions. This allowed SAC to fill the vacancies with new personnel and reduce the need for overtime.

Chart 4:



Source: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, COMPSTAT ending April 30, 2009, California State Prison, Sacramento. Unaudited data.

Budget and Staffing



Figure 2 – Temporary Repairs on a Refrigerator

During surveys and interviews, state budget concerns surfaced as an issue at SAC. Specifically, SAC employees were very concerned about the state budget crisis and employee furlough program. Several management employees said that furloughs are causing employees to leave the department and seek employment in other agencies. Warden Walker said that retaining employees is a challenge. He also said that he is very open with all SAC employees and has talked with department management about possible solutions to the layoffs and furlough issues. Warden

Walker has hired some limited term positions to replace employees that have left because of the state budget and furlough issues.

Other employees expressed concern that the state budget cuts caused SAC to make do with temporary repair solutions. For example, instead of replacing the original 23-year-old refrigerators, employees make “band aid” repairs to equipment. These repairs and custom made parts are temporary (Figure 2) and often fail after a short period requiring more repair.



Figure 3 – Water Leakage and Rust Inside of a Refrigerator

According to one correctional food supervisor, repairs to broken door handles, walls, and water leaks rarely last (Figure 3). Some refrigerator units cannot be repaired at all because food keeps spoiling under the damp conditions and water leaks continue to foul light fixtures and create electrical hazards. Although budget problems are mostly outside of the warden’s control, some employees commended the warden and his management team for making things work in such tight fiscal times.

With regard to equipment, Warden Walker said that sometimes the department approves replacement equipment or repairs but does not always have enough money for all needed repairs.

Plant Operations and Maintenance

Eighty-five percent of employees responding to our survey feel favorable about plant operations and its ability to meet their needs. As we assessed plant operations and maintenance issues during our fieldwork, SAC employees told us that whenever a major maintenance problem occurs, plant operations is always quick to fix the problem. One employee said that sometimes minor work orders and repairs take a while to complete, but plant operations employees eventually fix the problem. When we asked Warden Walker about maintenance issues, he said that he actively selects the most critical projects to fix first. For example, food services notified the warden that some of their food chillers were inoperable. To address the critical issue, the warden and his business services team worked together to find money in the budget to purchase three new machines.

Some employees we interviewed, including the warden, an associate warden, and custody employees, commented that the steam piping (Figure 4) for building heat and cooking is in poor condition. The plant operations manager told us plant operations employees are doing all they can to fix and repair the leaking and corroded areas of piping. Apparently, when the institution was built, the department did not install a piping system with the proper anti-corrosion engineering. As a result, for at least 10 years the prison has experienced worsening degradation of the piping.

Warden Walker commented that he is aggressively seeking a department resolution to the steam piping and other maintenance issues. The warden also mentioned that the department has SAC on schedule for a major capital outlay project to fix the above issues but as of September 2, 2009 has received no additional funding.



Figure 4 – Section of Above Ground Steam Piping

We discovered an additional plant operations issue when some employees we surveyed commented that they do not receive safety training or that safety is not a priority in the warehouse. Although the employees' safety concerns were non-specific,

when we asked the warden and business services associate warden, they said that safety and training is always a top priority for plant operations employees and inmates. The business services associate warden also mentioned that employees receive block training, on-the-job training, job specific and detailed training, including the injury illness prevention program. To assess employee comments about training and safety, we reviewed safety training logs and sign in sheets for the warehouse employees. We found that the logs and sign in sheets documented that employees attended training on topics including standard operating procedures, swine-flu outbreak, material safety data sheet, as well as numerous general meetings and classes.

Personnel and Hiring

One interviewee and two employee survey respondents expressed concerns about the warden’s hiring practices. The interviewee commented that it would be nice to have a more ethnically diverse group of management employees. However, the interviewee admitted that SAC employees do not know the ethnicity and qualifications of the candidates. When we spoke to the warden about this concern, he said that he did not have enough ethnically diverse and qualified candidates to obtain the diversification he was trying to achieve. The warden also said that he advertised management positions as required but finds it hard to find management with high security and inmate mental health experience. Furthermore, we reviewed a list of the last sixteen people that the warden hired or promoted. We found the hires to be of various ethnic groups, and it appeared the warden had not favored any particular group.

Category 4: Employee-Management Relations

“Successful leaders invite communication, listen well, and prove themselves trustworthy by exhibiting rational, caring, and

Table 5: Employee-Management Relations – Employee Survey Results

Respondents	Positive	Negative
Custody	78%	22%
Health Care	87%	13%
Admin, Plant Operations, and Other	78%	22%
Weighted Average	80%	20%

Source: OIG survey of SAC employees. See Appendix for details.

predictable behavior in their interpersonal relationships.”⁴ The warden’s ability to communicate plays an important role in employee relations and is vital in implementing the department’s vision and mission at the institution level. Not only must the warden interact with employees at all levels and communicate instructions and directions clearly and effectively, but the warden must also communicate effectively with departmental headquarters, as well as the surrounding community.

As shown in Table 5 above, 80 percent of the prison employees had positive opinions about various areas related to employee-management relations. Although the opinions of employees and other stakeholders provide one measure of the warden’s employee-management relations, another measure can be found in the number of grievances filed by the institution’s employees. Analysis of employees’ responses to our surveys,

⁴ *Correctional Leadership Competencies for the 21st Century*, U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections (December 2006).

interviews with the warden's management team and other employees, and statistics on employee grievances identified three topics for further consideration: Institutional Communication, Employee Grievances, and Survey and Interview Comments.

Institutional Communication

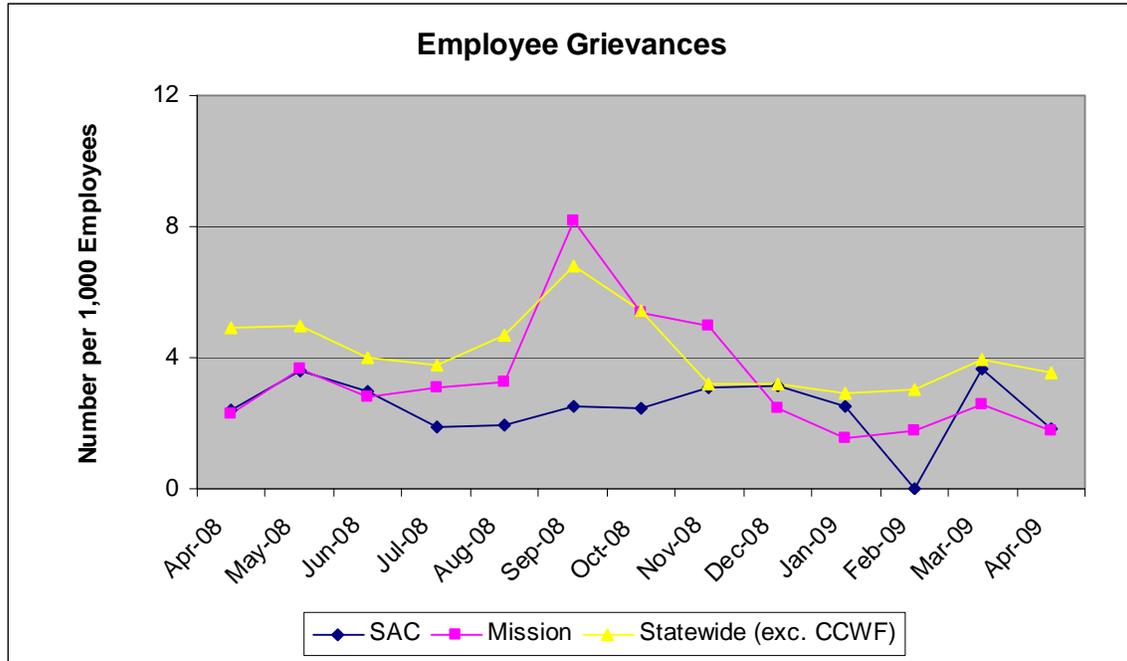
Eighty percent of the employee survey respondents gave Warden Walker an overall positive rating. Many interviewees stated the warden is very visible and routinely talks to inmates. Other interviewees said that the warden has a true open door policy. One correctional officer said, "Jimmy's biggest accomplishment is that he brings everybody together and has a true open door policy. I know I can go and tell him my issues any time I need."

Employee Grievances

All employees have the right to express their grievances through an established departmental procedure. The employee grievance process is one way employees have to file complaints against the employee investigation and discipline process. The grievance process can also be used to file complaints regarding general work place disputes. When we reviewed the grievance statistics in Chart 5, we noticed that grievance levels during the period of April 1, 2008 to April 30, 2009 were either at or below statewide and mission specific institutions.

We asked the warden to explain why grievances were low. He commented that the SAC culture is to know and expect difficult situations with maximum security inmates. The warden also attributed the low grievances with how SAC slowly increased the medical and mental health mission. This enabled employees to get accustomed to dealing with the most violent and mentally disordered inmates.

Chart 5:



Source: California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, COMPSTAT ending April 30, 2009, California State Prison, Sacramento. Unaudited data.

Survey and Interview Comments

Employees commented mostly about the warden walking about the institution and communicating with employees face to face. One survey respondent said that on “Bring your kids to work day,” the children listed Warden Walker as one of the most favorite things about the day.

In addition, department officials and SAC managers rated Walker favorably on his management skills and qualities. We surveyed eight department officials and 23 SAC managers and asked them to consider the warden’s performance in six management

Table 6: Rating of Warden’s Management Skills and Qualities

Category	Rating
Personal Characteristics/Traits	Outstanding
Relationships with Others	Very Good
Leadership	Outstanding
Communication	Very Good
Decision Making	Outstanding
Organization/Planning	Outstanding

Source: *OIG survey of CDCR and SAC management.*

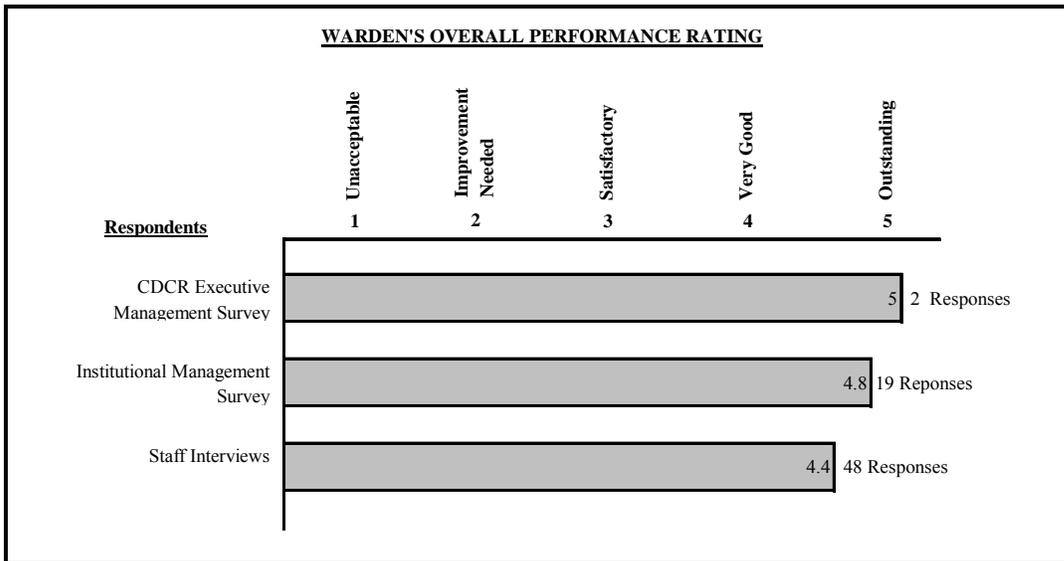
skills and qualities and rate his performance as either unacceptable, improvement needed, satisfactory, very good, or outstanding. As shown in Table 6, the survey respondents indicated that Warden Walker is performing at an outstanding level in most management categories. The results of this survey are consistent with many comments we received from employees during our site visit.

Overall Summary

The employee survey asked respondents to rate the warden’s overall performance from outstanding to unacceptable. Of the respondents that provided either a positive or a negative opinion, 82 percent rated the warden either very good or outstanding. The remaining 18 percent rated the warden as either “improvement needed” or “unacceptable.”

In addition to our review of the four key areas identified above, our assessment of the warden’s performance also included an overall performance rating. We based the rating on survey responses from department officials, SAC managers, and from interviews we conducted with SAC employees during our site visit. As shown in Chart 6 below, those individuals rated Warden Walker’s overall performance between “outstanding” and “very good”.

Chart 6:



Source: CDCR and SAC management survey results and SAC employee interviews.

Although only two people from the department’s executive management team responded to our inquiries regarding the warden’s performance both indicated that the warden is doing an outstanding job. In addition, almost all of the 19 persons responding to our institutional management survey gave the warden a rating of outstanding. Finally, of the 48 interviews we conducted with employees, the average warden rating response was between very good and outstanding.

In conclusion, according to the institution’s employees, and CDCR management, Warden Walker is doing a very good to outstanding job at managing the prison’s operations. More importantly, 78 percent of interviewees responding to our questions about the warden’s effect on operations said that SAC’s operations have improved since Walker took over the administration.

Appendix

Results from our survey of institution employees

To prepare for the site visit of SAC, we randomly selected 262 of the institution’s employees and sent them a survey. The survey provides information about employees’ perception of the warden’s overall performance plus information about specific operational areas at the prison—Safety and Security, Inmate Programming, Business Operations, and Employee-Management Relations. Ninety-five SAC employees responded to our survey—a 36 percent response rate. To simplify the analysis of the survey results, we grouped survey respondents by category and identified response trends. We did not, however, ask for the employee’s name as we wanted their responses to be anonymous.

Specifically, we grouped the respondents into three employment categories: Custody, Health Care, and Other (which include employees in education, plant operations, administration, and clerical positions.) Then, to identify strong trends or patterns, we classified the responses to questions as either positive or negative. For example, if the respondent ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’ with the question, we classified it as positive. If the respondent ‘disagreed’ or ‘strongly disagreed’ with the question, we classified it as negative. Passive responses were not included. If employees responded that they were ‘neutral’ or responded ‘unknown’, we excluded their response.

Results are reported in the table on the following page.

Appendix: Compilation of Institutional Employee Survey Responses - California State Prison, Sacramento

Operational Area/Question	Respondents' Employment Category						Total Responses			
	Custody		Health Care		Other		Pos	(%)	Neg	(%)
<u>Safety and Security</u>										
1. The institution is meeting its safety and security mission.	41	6	23	1	16	3	80	89%	10	11%
2. Employees effectively respond to emergencies.	46	3	23	1	20	0	89	96%	4	4%
3. You are issued or have access to all safety equipment you need.	48	1	21	2	16	6	85	90%	9	10%
4. You receive all required safety training.	43	4	22	2	17	4	82	89%	10	11%
5. The CDC-115 inmate disciplinary process modifies inmate misbehavior.	22	25	15	0	12	6	49	61%	31	39%
6. The CDC-602 inmate appeal process provides inmates an effective method for airing their grievances.	40	8	18	1	17	1	75	88%	10	12%
7. Safety and Security has improved since the warden's appointment.	25	11	11	2	7	2	43	74%	15	26%
Totals	265	58	133	9	105	22	503		89	
<i>Percent of Respondents by Category</i>	82%	18%	94%	6%	83%	17%	85%		15%	
<u>Inmate Programming</u>										
8. The institution is meeting its inmate programming mission.	40	1	13	1	11	2	64	94%	4	6%
9. The inmate assignment process places the right inmate into the right rehabilitative program.	28	13	13	0	9	5	50	74%	18	26%
10. Inmate programming is adequate for the number of inmates at the institution who would benefit from the education or work experience.	32	9	9	4	10	5	51	74%	18	26%
11. Inmate programming has improved since the warden's appointment.	25	10	7	2	6	1	38	75%	13	25%
Totals	125	33	42	7	36	13	203		53	
<i>Percent of Respondents by Category</i>	79%	21%	86%	14%	73%	27%	79%		21%	
<u>Business Operations</u>										
12. Plant operations employees are able to meet maintenance and repair needs in your assigned area.	38	8	18	2	18	3	74	85%	13	15%
13. Your assigned area has enough employees to get all of the required work done.	35	13	11	13	16	6	62	66%	32	34%
14. Your work area operates without waste of resources.	38	10	15	8	17	5	70	75%	23	25%
15. Business operations have improved since the warden's appointment.	22	5	11	2	7	4	40	78%	11	22%
Totals	133	36	55	25	58	18	246		79	
<i>Percent of Respondents by Category</i>	79%	21%	69%	31%	76%	24%	76%		24%	
<u>Employee-Management Relations</u>										
16. The warden is knowledgeable about the day to day operations in your work area.	34	7	16	2	12	4	62	83%	13	17%
17. The warden welcomes feedback, including criticism from employees.	32	11	16	2	14	3	62	79%	16	21%
18. The warden does not abuse his or her power or authority.	35	5	18	0	13	4	66	88%	9	12%
19. The warden works effectively with the local bargaining unit representatives.	23	7	10	0	10	2	43	83%	9	17%
20. The warden is ethical, professional, and motivated.	35	8	20	0	14	3	69	86%	11	14%
21. The warden is in control of the institution.	39	4	21	1	17	3	77	91%	8	9%
22. The management team keeps employees informed about relevant issues.	35	12	17	4	16	4	68	77%	20	23%
23. The employee investigation/disciplinary process is fair, effective, and timely.	28	12	12	4	13	3	53	74%	19	26%
24. The employee grievance process is responsive to employee complaints, is fair in its application, and does not result in retaliation.	27	9	10	5	10	5	47	71%	19	29%
25. Employee-management relations have improved since the warden's appointment.	22	11	4	3	5	4	31	63%	18	37%
Totals	310	86	144	21	124	35	578		142	
<i>Percent of Respondents by Category</i>	78%	22%	87%	13%	78%	22%	80%		20%	
<u>Overall Warden Rating</u>										
26. Considering all institutional challenges, how would you rate the warden's performance?	35	9	19	2	15	4	69	82%	15	18%
<i>Percent of Respondents by Category</i>	80%	20%	90%	10%	79%	21%	82%		18%	

Source: OIG, institutional employee survey results for SAC

Response from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

P.O. Box 942883
Sacramento, CA 94203-0001



December 23, 2009

Mr. David R. Shaw
Inspector General
Office of the Inspector General
P.O. Box 348780
Sacramento, CA 95834-8780

Dear Mr. Shaw:

We are pleased to submit this response to your draft report entitled, *California State Prison, Sacramento's (CSP-SAC) Warden James Walker, One-Year Audit*; and agree with your acknowledgement that Warden James Walker is an effective administrator, responsive to institution problems, and very proactive in addressing issues related to safety and security. Your report's overall assessment of Warden Walker is very good to outstanding, and we agree with this appraisal.

CSP-SAC is a multi-mission institution with a large medical and mental health inmate population, and therefore receives the most violent and unpredictable mental health inmates in California. To address the high number of use of force incidents, Warden Walker increased the number of escort staff for Psychiatric Services Unit inmates. He is committed to ensuring employees receive proper training when dealing with mentally disabled inmates. In addition, we commend Warden Walker for presenting Operation Disconnect to the Department to initiate CDCR's cell phone and contraband reduction procedure. Warden Walker oversees random searches of staff and visitors entering the institution in an effort to encourage employees to follow the law and departmental policies regarding cell phones and other contraband.

In this critical budget atmosphere, Warden Walker proactively deals with overtime issues. He has overcome overtime challenges by moving employees who are off work due to long-term sick and disability leave out of their budgeted positions. This allows CSP-SAC to fill the vacancies with new personnel and reduce the need for overtime.

Warden Walker works hard to get inmates to education and other programming activities and holds his supervisors accountable for getting inmates to their programming activities on time. With his guidance, staff at CSP-SAC understands the importance of inmate programming in reducing recidivism.

Managing a prison is one of the most difficult jobs in the State. We appreciate your recognition of the excellent job Warden Walker does in rising to this challenge. If you should have any questions or concerns, please call my office at (916) 323-6001.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "SK", written over a horizontal line.

SCOTT KERNAN
Undersecretary, Operations

cc: James Walker, Warden, California State Prison, Sacramento