State Jail Evaluation Summary Report Lychner State Jail

October 2000

Introduction

State Jail felony facilities were created in 1993 to house offenders convicted of certain felony offenses. The premise behind the concept was to provide low risk/high need offenders with a degree of rehabilitative programming in a community-based incarcerative setting. Since the State Jail Division (SJD) was established, several reviews have been com-The Criminal Justice Policy Council has completed two reviews, which provide a broad overview of the implementation status of the facilities in concert with state law. Additionally, the Research, Evaluation and Development (RED) Unit began a review of the State Jail system beginning in January 2000.

The RED Unit review has been divided into two phases. The focus of Phase I was to provide administrators with a general assessment of the SJD operations and the division's ability to use information to engage in informed decision making. Phase II, which is the focus of this brief, is designed to evaluate specific state jail facility's program/facility utilization and operations. The project scope and research methodology is defined in a brief entitled "State Jail Review Methodology Brief", published by the RED Unit.

Individual reports will be prepared for 16 of the 17 state jail facilities. A review was not conducted at the Travis County Correctional Facility due to recent major program shifts. Also, a comprehensive report that consolidates utilization and operations of all facilities will be available. This report is organized into three major sections: facility utilization, facility operations and program utilization and operations. The Appendix of this report provides additional details regarding survey results.

Lychner State Jail

The Lychner State Jail is a 2,144-bed facility for males located in Humble, Harris County, Texas. The facility has been operational since July 1995 and is managed by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice State Jail Division (TDCJ-SJD). The Lychner State Jail is one of two state jail facilities for males in Harris County. The other facility is the Kegans State Jail in downtown Houston, Texas, which is a 667-bed facility. These two facilities work cooperatively to manage the Harris County male confinee population. The Kegans facility is used to house lower risk offenders, while high risk offenders and offenders with special needs are housed at the Lychner facility.

The two facilities also share management staff. For example, there is one Warden for both facilities, and most of the support service areas (e.g., kitchen and maintenance) and program areas have the same shared managers. The Gist State Jail in Jefferson County serves Harris County confinees when Kegans and Lychner are at capacity. In addition, the Plane State Jail serves female confinees from Harris County. The Plane State Jail is a 2,144-bed facility located in Dayton, Texas near Harris County.

Facility Utilization State law provides for the State Jail Division, with the approval of the Texas Board of Criminal Justice, to designate one or more of its facilities as a substance abuse felony punishment facility, or use to house offenders eligible for confinement in a transfer facility. The Lychner facility is used to house only confinees. The overall utilization rate is 97%.

Offender demographic and offense information is presented in Chart 1. The information reflects offenders that were in the state jail on August 31, 2000.

Variable	Confinee Population
Average Age	32.4
Race: White Black Hispanic Other	18.8% 57.8% 22.5% .8%
Current Offense:	
Substance Abuse	63.4%
Property	32.7%
Against a Person	<1%
Other	4%

- Possession accounted for 44% of the confinee substance abuse offenses.
- The major property offense categories for confinees were theft, forgery, burglary and unlawful use of a motor vehicle.
- The category "Against a Person" includes offenses such as assault, kidnapping, murder, sexual assault and robbery.
- The category "Other" includes offenses such as failure to register as a sex offender, weapons offenses, evading arrest, escape, bail jumping and perjury.

Chart 1: Demographic and Offense Profile Data

The majority (83%) of the confinees in the state jail are there as a result of a direct sentence. Most (17%) of the others are revocations. Only three confinees were in the state jail serving up-front time. The average length of stay is eleven months, and the mode is six months. The majority (95%) of the confinees in the state jail are from Harris County.

Facility Operations Information reported in this section is reflective of analyses of survey data and personal interviews with both staff and offenders, which focus on facility operational issues. The staff survey was based in part on the Prison Social Climate Survey developed by the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Additional survey questions for staff and dfenders were based on surveys developed in a National Institute of Correctionssupported research project on Audits of Popular Direct-Supervision Jails (NIC-013633, 1996). The responses to the survey questions were converted to a standard scale from 0 - 4. Using this scale, lower scores represent negative responses, and higher scores represent positive responses. Responses of "Don't Know" were coded as missing data and are not included in the scale responses. During a site visit conducted August 20-21, 2000 by the RED Unit review team, 32 staff members and nine confinees were interviewed and administered the survey. In addition, 569 confinees completed the self-report surveys, yielding a response rate of 26%.

Composite scores for each major section of the survey were computed by averaging all of the responses in each major area into one score. The computed score is an overall facility rating of all staff and offender survey questions. Composite ratings were also computed for facility operations, facility health, and programming. Charts 2 and 3 provide the composite scores for each of the major areas and the sub-sections that fall into each grouping. The Appendix provides the responses for all of the questions included in the survey.

Overall Facility Rating The overall facility rating for Lychner State Jail is average at 2.294, and the offender rating is low at 1.536. The staff rated programming the most positive, followed by facility health and facility operations. More detailed information on programming is provided later in this report. Following are more detailed highlights on the facility operations. Again, the Appendix provides the responses for all of the questions included in the survey.

Staff Survey	Security Staff	Support Service Staff	Program Staff	All Staff
OVERALL RATING				2.294
Facility Operations				2.003
Safety	1.57	1.72	1.83	1.68
Security	1.66	1.68	2.03	1.76
Service Quality	2.37	2.82	2.78	2.61
Facility Health				2.233
Commitment to Institution	1.71	1.63	1.96	1.75
Job Satisfaction	2.36	2.88	2.97	2.67
Stress	2.57	2.42	2.35	2.47
Management	1.99	2.27	1.84	2.04
Programming				2.889
Program Access	2.62	2.99	3.19	2.88
Program Quality	2.77	2.96	2.99	2.88

Chart 2: Facility Operations Composite Score Summary

Facility Operations

The following are results from *facility staff members* when questioned about the facility safety, security and service quality.

- Facility operations was the lowest rated composite area.
- All staff members feel unsafe, and security staff rated safety the lowest.
- Sexual assaults rarely occur but fights between offenders occur often.
- The doors/locks were rated in "poor" working condition by staff members.
- All service areas were rated as "moderate" to "good".
- Staff rated risk management and human resources the highest.
- Staff rated maintenance the lowest.

The following are results from *confinees* when questioned about the facility safety, security and service quality.

- Confinees gave facility operations a "poor" rating.
- Safety received the highest rating and service quality received the lowest.
- In general, confinees indicated that they rarely feel safe in this facility.
- Confinees do not feel that the staff treats them with respect.
- Confinees do not believe they are getting the programming they need.
- Service quality was rated as "very poor" to "poor".

Offender Survey	Confinees
OVERALL RATING	1.536
Facility Operations	1.445
Safety	1.73
Facility Environment	1.40
Service Quality	1.21
Programming	1.673
Program Participation	1.60
Program Quality	1.76

Chart 3: Facility Operations Composite Score Summary

Facility Health

The following are results from facility staff members when questioned about their commitment to the institution, job satisfaction, stress levels, and management.

- The overall facility health was rated as "moderate".
- Job satisfaction was the highest rated area within facility health.
- Commitment to the institution was the lowest rated area, and staff members disagree that this is one of the best facilities in TDCJ.
- All staff members reported moderate stress levels, with security staff having the highest stress levels.
- The composite score for management was rated as moderate.
- Staff members did not feel that employees were treated consistently, and would not recommend this facility to a friend looking for a job.
- Fair pay was rated poorly.
- The highest rated item was the employee's understanding of policies and procedures.

Programming

The following are results from *facility staff members* when questioned about program access and quality for the confinees.

- Programming was the highest rated composite area. It was rated as "good".
- Staff members rated programming access and quality the same.
- Education and substance abuse treatment received the highest ratings for offender access.
- Staff members gave chaplaincy and community work projects the highest ratings for quality.
- Recreation received the lowest rating for both access and quality.

The following are results from *confinees* when questioned about program access and quality.

- Confinees rated program participation and quality as "poor".
- Confinees rated their participation in Project RIO and community work projects the lowest. The library

- received the highest rating for participation.
- Confinees rated the quality of all programs as moderate, except for recreation, which was "very poor".
- Chaplaincy received the highest quality rating.

Program Utilization and Operations

Texas Government Code Annotated, Article 507.001(b) states that the State Jail Division and the Community Justice Assistance Division shall develop and implement programs in state jail facilities, to include: education, rehabilitation, work and recreation. The law further requires the agency's administrative divisions to consult with the local Community Supervision and Corrections Departments (CSCDs) to maximize resources. Based on interview responses from facility management, he mission of the State Jail is to break the cycle of criminal behavior and transition offenders back into the community. Management indicated that the program has been fairly stable since it opened.

The Harris County CSCD Director spoke favorably of the facility and is very involved with facility operations and programming. There are two full-time CSCD Community Supervision Officers assigned at the Kegans State Jail. The positions are paid by TDCJ through a contract with the CSCD. The CSCD is actively involved in Transition Partners Group, which assists offenders with reentry after release from the state jail. The Officers also serve confinees at Lychner State Jail.

The State Jail Unit Monthly Report for the months of January, February and March 2000 were obtained by the RED Unit and analyzed to determine utilization rates. Due to numerous documented data integrity issues, the only programs for which estimates for program utilization could be computed are the education and substance abuse programs. However, it should be noted that the facility does offer work and recreation programming for offenders as required by state law. Program information will be categorized according to state statute.

Education The education programming track at the Lychner State Jail is provided by the Windham School District, and is coordinated by the Principal. The structure of programming is divided into three components:

education classes, supplemental skills and vocational training. Confinees are eligible to participate in any or all of the programs.

Due to the manner in which data was reported in the Unit Monthly Report, utilization rates could not be determined for two of the three education areas. Following are ratios for how average class participation was divided between the two offender populations. Based on their level of need (e.g., GED, illiteracy), offenders are placed in education classes. Program placement estimates indicate that confinees occupy an average 84% of available slots.

Another type of educational programming available to the offenders is Supplemental Skills Programming. These programs focus on providing basic life skills training and cognitive intervention. Placement into this program is dictated by the offender's need and whether or not it is mandated by a parole vote requiring program completion for certain offenders prior to The Windham release on parole. program, CHANGES, fulfills this requirement. Program placement estimates indicate that confinees occupy an average 88% of available slots.

The third type of available offender programming is vocational programming, which focuses on providing offenders with job skills. Program participation is based on individual needs as defined in the Individual Treatment Plan, completion of the educational and life skills requirements and sentence time remaining at the facility. Vocational program areas include construction, carpentry and custodial technician skills. Program placement estimates indicate that confinees occupy an average 71% of available slots.

Rehabilitation Two types rehabilitative programming are offered at the facility: substance abuse treatment and Chaplaincy. Three substance abuse treatment modalities are offered at the facility: a modified therapeutic community, substance abuse education, and support groups. The 216-bed modified state iail therapeutic community is always operated at capacity. It is only available for confinees, and consists of three phases. While in the program, offenders participate in orientation, cognitive skills classes, and encounter and process groups. Staff members also provide 10 hours of pre-treatment and 26 hours of substance abuse education. Alcoholics/Narcotics Anonymous meetings and other support groups are also available for confinees on a weekly basis.

The unit has two full-time Chaplains and utilizes over 300 volunteers monthly. All programming is voluntary and includes life skills classes, mentoring programs, family programs and growth groups. The mentoring programs and spiritual growth groups are held weekly. Four life skills programs are held annually. The one major challenge for the Chaplain is having available space to hold the sessions and worship services. Space is very limited.

Work The information for this activity was self-reported by the facility staff members. At the time of the review, the state jail was working five squads with an average of 12 confinees Monday through Friday. The work program is available for confinees who are low-risk, meet medical criteria, have clear disciplinary records, and who have met all of their academic critera. Although eligibility criteria is high, there is a large pool of offenders and enough community work projects to keep the work crews busy. More squads could be worked if an adequate amount of staff members were available.

Confinees are assigned work duties inside the facility. Assignments are made based on the offender's custody status and programming obligations. Even with work and programming, confinees felt that there is not enough to do to keep them busy. When staff members were asked if confinees have enough to do to keep busy, 76% of the staff said no.

Project RIO, which is a work transition program for reintegrating offenders back into the community, is a standard program in all state-operated state jails. The program is only available for confinees and primarily consists of getting confinees "paper-ready" for work (e.g., acquiring a Social Security card if needed), and providing them with job referrals prior to their departure.

The Community Supervision Officers (CSOs) interview all offenders that enter the facility. Upon their exit from the program, offenders are connected with a Transition Partners are a network of individuals who

meet on a regular basis with state jail staff members, with the shared goal of reintegrating offenders. The Unit staff members maintain a list of over 20 groups, including the Construction Work Force, Attorney General's Office, United States Department of Housing, Texas Rehabilitation Commission, and Houston Aftercare.

Recreation The recreation program is managed by a Recreation Supervisor, and is available to all confinees on a daily basis.

Summary
The survey ratings for this facility are average. Overall, staff members and offenders rated programming the highest, and facility operations the lowest. Offender access to education received an "excellent" rating by staff members. The lowest rated areas by staff members were their displeasure with their current rate of pay and the quality of maintenance.

One of the biggest issues noted by the facility staff during interviews was staff turnover and quality. Management expressed frustration at the quality of staff that are being assigned to the facility. Also, management is constantly dealing with obtaining and retaining quality employees.

Another major topic discussed during interviews was the offender management issues confinees present. The lack of "good time" coupled with limited administrative segregation housing has left management in a difficult situation in controlling offender behavior. The structure of the law which does not allow for good-time credit to be either given or taken limits sanctions or incentives that can be imposed on the confinee population. The confinees feel that they can do or not do whatever they want because they know that the date of their release will not change. These are not issues unique to the Lychner State Jail, but are system wide.

Management expressed an interest in enhancing building design for security and administering program needs. The concern is that the facility has a large confinee population near an urban area, and no surrounding property to be able to use for work. In summary, it appears that facility staff members are managing a problematic confinee population with the resources they have.

APPENDIX

FACILITY OPERATIONS

Staff Survey Questions						/e M	loderate	Pos	sitive
Safety	Security Staff	Support Service Staff	Program Staff	All Staff	0	1	2	3	4
I feel safe in this jail.	1.93	2.40	2.38	2.19			✓		
All officers feel safe in all parts of the unit.	.86	1.22	1.33	1.07		✓			
Do you have concerns with confinees and ID offenders in the same facility?	3.00	2.60	1.50	2.27			✓		
How often are there threats of violence?	1.50	1.78	1.50	1.59			✓		
How often do sexual assaults occur?	3.00	2.75	2.17	2.73				✓	
How often do fights between offenders occur?	.64	.89	.86	.77		✓			
How often do other acts of aggression occur between offenders (chunking, shoving)?	.93	.89	.71	.87		✓			
How often do fights occur between offenders and staff at the unit?	1.86	1.80	2.00	1.87			✓		
How often do other acts of aggression occur between offenders and staff?	1.36	1.60	1.57	1.48		✓			
How often are weapons found during shakedowns?	2.14	1.67	1.83	1.93			✓		
Security									
Building is designed for effective surveillance.	2.14	1.40	1.88	1.84			✓		
This is a very secure facility.	1.64	1.90	2.00	1.81			✓		
Jail fences, walls, towers, alarms are secure.	1.93	2.30	2.63	2.22			✓		
Doors and locks are in good working condition.	.93	.89	1.71	1.10		✓			

FACILITY OPERATIONS

Confinee Survey Questions		Negativ	ve N	Moderate	Po	sitive
Safety	All Confinees	0	1	2	3	4
I feel safe in this jail.	1.52			✓		
Officers feel safe in the housing unit.	2.34			✓		
Do you have any concerns with confinees and transfer offenders in the same facility?	2.24			✓		
Do you feel offenders need weapons to defend themselves?	2.65				✓	
How often are there threats of violence?	1.28		✓			
How often do sexual assaults occur?	2.68				✓	
How often do fights between offenders occur?	1.04		✓			
How often do other acts of aggression occur between offenders (chunking, shoving)?	.98		✓			
How often do fights between offenders and staff occur?	2.08			✓		
How often do other acts of aggression occur between offenders and staff (chunking, shoving)?	1.08		✓			
Facility Environment						
I am getting the programming I need.	1.44		✓			
The programming I am getting will help me when I get out.	1.61			✓		
I like the program staff.	1.55			✓		
Security staff treats me with respect.	.85		✓			
ID offenders generally have things to do to keep busy.	1.64			✓		
Confinees generally have things to do to keep busy.	1.30		✓			

FACILITY OPERATIONS

Staff and Offender Survey Questions					Negativ	/e	Moderate	Po	sitive
Service Quality — Institutional	Security/ Program Staff	Support Service Staff	Confinees	All Staff	0	1	2	3	4
Reception and orientation	2.84	3.22	1.54	2.96				✓	
Classification	2.89	3.10	1.49	2.97				✓	
Food Services	2.95	3.40	.89	3.10				✓	
Sanitation	1.67	1.70	.83	1.68			✓		
Health Care	2.00	2.50	1.00	2.17			✓		
Laundry	1.85	2.70	.99	2.13			✓		
Maintenance	.95	1.67	1.30	1.17			✓		
Human Resources	3.24	3.67	N/A	3.37					✓
Risk Management	3.19	3.44	1.16	3.27				✓	
Operational Reviews	2.90	2.67	1.16	2.83				✓	
Offender Disciplinary	2.57	2.78	1.31	2.63				✓	
Offender Grievance	2.14	2.63	.78	2.28			✓		
In-Service Training (provided at unit)	2.79	3.20	N/A	2.93				✓	
Commissary	2.95	3.20	1.86	3.03				✓	

FACILITY HEALTH

Staff Survey Questions					Negativ	/e M	Moderate	Po	sitive
Commitment to the Institution	Security Staff	Support Service Staff	Program Staff	All Staff	0	1	2	3	4
Based on my experience or what I've heard, this is the best facility in TDCJ.	1.00	1.30	1.50	1.22		✓			
I would rather be at this facility than any other I know about.	1.71	1.70	1.88	1.75			✓		
I would continue to work at this facility.	2.43	1.90	2.50	2.28			✓		
Job Satisfaction									
I am very satisfied with my job.	2.07	2.70	2.25	2.31			✓		
My job is usually interesting to me.	2.86	3.00	3.63	3.09				✓	
My job suits me very well.	2.14	2.90	3.38	2.69				✓	
My job is usually worthwhile.	2.36	2.90	2.63	2.59				✓	
Job Stress									
I have become harsh toward people since taking this job.	2.86	2.20	2.50	2.56				✓	
This job is hardening me emotionally.	2.64	2.10	2.13	2.34			✓		
I'm emotionally drained at the end of the day.	1.86	1.70	1.63	1.75			✓		
I worry that I treat some offenders as impersonal objects.	2.43	3.30	2.88	2.81				✓	
Working with people all day is a strain for me.	3.21	3.20	2.88	3.13				✓	
I'm fatigued when I wake up and have to face another day on the job.	2.43	2.00	2.13	2.22			✓		
Management									
The Mission and Philosophy are clear.	1.79	2.40	2.25	2.09			✓		
I agree with the treatment of offenders here.	2.07	1.90	1.63	1.91			✓		
Treatment of employees is consistent.	1.57	1.90	1.50	1.66			✓		
Formal communication channels help me to perform my job effectively.	2.21	2.90	2.13	2.41			✓		
We have a good communication channel when we have problems.	2.07	2.50	2.00	2.19			✓		
I have the authority I need to accomplish my work objectives.	2.71	3.00	1.63	2.53				\	
Employees are consulted about changes.	2.21	2.50	1.63	2.16			✓		
I have a good understanding of the policies and procedures of this facility.	3.14	3.00	3.13	3.09				✓	
Management is flexible to allow for changes.	2.21	3.00	1.75	2.34			✓		
I would recommend this facility to a friend looking for a job.	1.62	1.60	1.38	1.55			✓		
I am paid fairly for the work I do.	.64	.30	1.25	.69		✓			
In general, this institution is run very well.	1.57	2.20	1.88	1.84			✓		

PROGRAMMING					Negativ	/e M	loderate	Po	sitive
Staff Rating Confinee Program Access	Security Staff	Support Services	Program Staff	All Staff	0	1	2	3	4
Education	3.29	3.56	3.88	3.52					✓
Vocational	2.23	2.30	2.88	2.42			✓		
Life Skills	2.33	2.75	3.63	2.82				✓	
Substance Abuse Treatment	3.36	3.60	3.38	3.44				✓	
Chaplaincy Programs	2.79	3.67	3.63	3.26				✓	
Community Work Projects	2.00	2.20	3.40	2.32			✓		
Project RIO	2.80	3.13	3.13	3.00				✓	
Library	2.86	3.33	2.38	2.87				✓	
Recreation	1.79	2.90	2.43	2.29			✓		
Program Quality									
Education	3.08	3.43	2.75	3.07				✓	
Vocational	2.92	3.33	2.71	2.96				✓	
Life Skills	2.55	3.14	3.14	2.88				✓	
Substance Abuse Treatment	2.93	2.86	2.89	2.90				✓	
Chaplaincy Programs	3.07	3.33	3.25	3.18				✓	
Community Work Projects	3.08	3.50	3.00	3.13				✓	
Project RIO	3.11	2.71	3.00	2.96				✓	
Library	2.62	2.57	2.88	2.68				✓	
Recreation	1.86	2.33	3.00	2.31			✓		
Confinee Rating Confinee Program Participation				Confinees					
Education				2.03			✓		
Vocational	7			1.30		✓			
Life Skills				1.35		✓			
Substance Abuse Treatment	1			1.49		✓			
Chaplaincy Programs	1			1.84			✓		
Community Work Projects	7			.93		✓			
Project RIO	1			1.25		✓			
Library	1			2.06			✓		
Recreation	1			1.88			✓		
Program Quality					•	•			
Education	1			2.07			✓		
Vocational	1			1.62			✓		
Life Skills	7			1.80			✓		
Substance Abuse Treatment	7			1.98			✓		
Chaplaincy Programs	7			2.41			✓		
Community Work Projects	7			1.68			✓		
Project RIO				2.08			✓		
Library				1.82			✓		
Recreation				.58		✓			



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