

Adult Basic Education and General Education Development Program Study Findings: FY2020 Releases

Prepared by the Research - Evaluation Unit
May 2025



VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Presentation Outline

- Overview of the General Education Development Program (GED®) Adult Basic Education Program (ABE)
 - ABE levels and how they relate to employability
- Characteristics of academic program participants and non-participants
- ABE program participants
 - Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) Scores
 - Score improvements
 - Recidivism rates by ABE levels
- GED® program participants
 - Testing results
 - Recidivism rates for GED® earners
 - Program participants versus comparison groups
- Employment statistics and outcomes
- Comparison to FY2018 Education Evaluation
- Summary

General Education Development Program (GED®)

- Purpose: Provide individuals who have not graduated from high school the opportunity to demonstrate attainment of necessary skills and earn an HSE credential
 - A meta-analysis (Stickle, B., Schuster, S.S., 2023) shows that attainment of a GED® while incarcerated has a positive impact on three-year recidivism rates
 - Resulting in increased employment, increased earnings, and higher education opportunities compared to those who did not earn a GED® while incarcerated
 - Meeting minimum proficiency requirements
- GED® Tests
 - Test version evolution
 - 1978 & 1988: Tests = writing, social studies, science, interpreting literature and the arts, math
 - 2002: Tests = reading, writing, science, social studies, math; informed by Bloom's Taxonomy;* paper and pencil
 - 2014: Tests = language, science, social studies, math; informed by Webb's Depth of Knowledge,** Common Core State Standards,† and College and Career Readiness Standards; computer-based

Notes:

* A hierarchical framework used by educators to distinguish different levels of cognition.

** A framework for measuring levels of knowledge demonstrated on assessments.

† Standards for what students are supposed to learn from kindergarten through high school.

Sources: Stickle, B., Schuster, S.S. (2023). Are Schools in Prison Worth It? The Effects and Economic Returns of Prison Education. *Am J Crim Just* 48, 1263–1294. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12103-023-09747-3>; GED Test Comparison: https://ged.com/score_scale/

Adult Basic Education Program (ABE)

- Purpose: To provide instruction with the goal of improving basic and specific skills necessary to function adequately in society
 - Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE)*
 - Aligned to the National College and Career Readiness Standards
 - Measures and assesses student achievement levels in reading, math, and language arts
 - First step in determining the educational path of students and also aids in determining eligibility for GED® and Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs
 - After initial assessment, students are re-tested throughout their incarceration to determine gains until they reach GED® eligibility
 - TABE Battery Average: average of the reading and math tests and used as the measure of student achievement in this study
 - Education Functioning Levels are determined via TABE scale scores
 - TABE Initial Participation (required, as of 2007)
 - Special Education eligible inmates and Hispanic inmates to be deported upon release have other educational requirements and opportunities**

Notes:

* Only the Battery Averages for TABE 9/10 were examined for this study.

** [VADOC Operating Procedure 601.5](#).

Adult Basic Education Program (ABE): Education Functioning Levels

ABE I

- Grade Equivalent: 0 to 1.9
- Little ability to read or provide basic information
- **Basic entry level jobs:** no written communication or technical knowledge

ABE II

- Grade Equivalent: 2 to 3.9
- Able to read and provide simple information
- **Entry level jobs:** minimal literacy skills

ABE III

- Grade Equivalent: 4 to 5.9
- Able to handle basic reading, writing, and computation
- **Entry level jobs:** basic literacy and computation skills

Adult Basic Education Program (ABE): Education Functioning Levels

ABE IV

- Grade Equivalent: 6 to 8.9
- Can handle basic life skills, read simple material, and follow multistep diagrams
- **Jobs:** able to follow written instructions and diagrams; can use basic software and technology

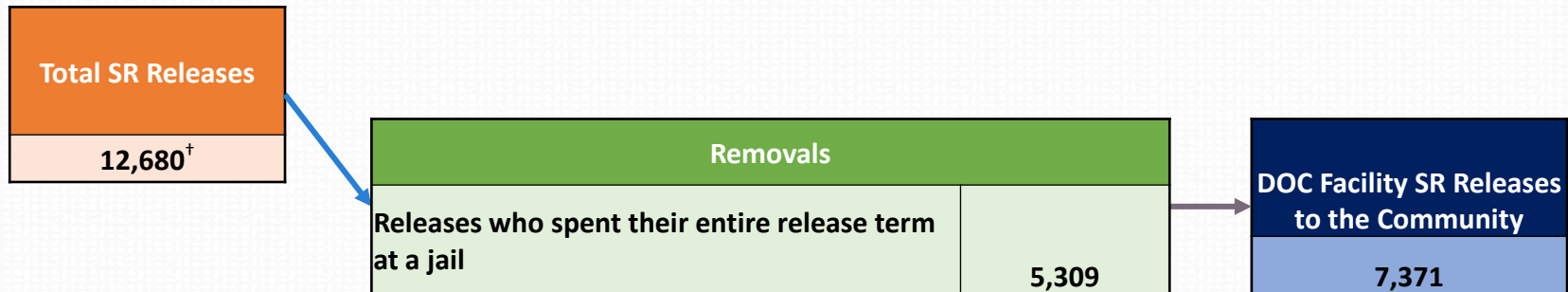
ABE V

- Grade Equivalent: 9 to 10.9
- Able to read most documents and follow multistep directions and diagrams
- **Jobs:** can interpret information from multiple sources; proficient in using computers and technology

ABE VI

- Grade Equivalent: 11 to 12
- Able to read and interpret technical information as well as complex materials
- **Jobs:** can function in situations that involve higher order thinking; proficient with computers; can learn new software and technology

FY2020 State Responsible (SR) Releases from DOC Facilities: Correctional Education Program Eligible



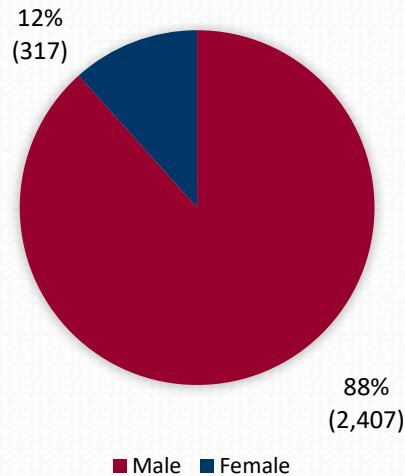
- FY2020 SR Releases included **12,680** inmates
- After reviewing the overall release group, **5,309** inmates were removed due to them spending their entire release term in a local/regional jail
- The resulting group used for analysis has **7,371** inmates
 - 342 (5%) were released early due to COVID early release

Note:

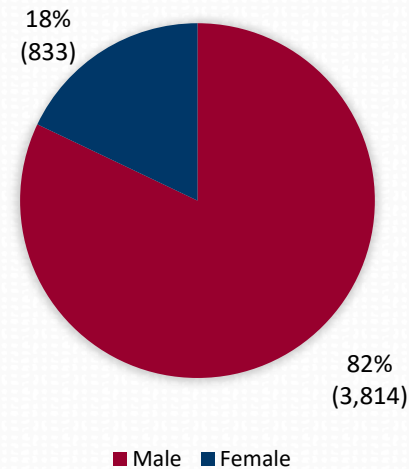
[†]Deaths in Custody (n=104) were already removed from the original release file. One inmate who escaped from a local/regional jail prior to transfer to a DOC facility was excluded from the analysis.

Characteristics of Academic Program Participants* (N=2,724) vs. Non-Participants† (N = 4,647): Gender

Academic Program Participants: Gender



Program Non-Participants: Gender



- There was a larger proportion of females in the non-participant group (18%) than the participant group (12%)

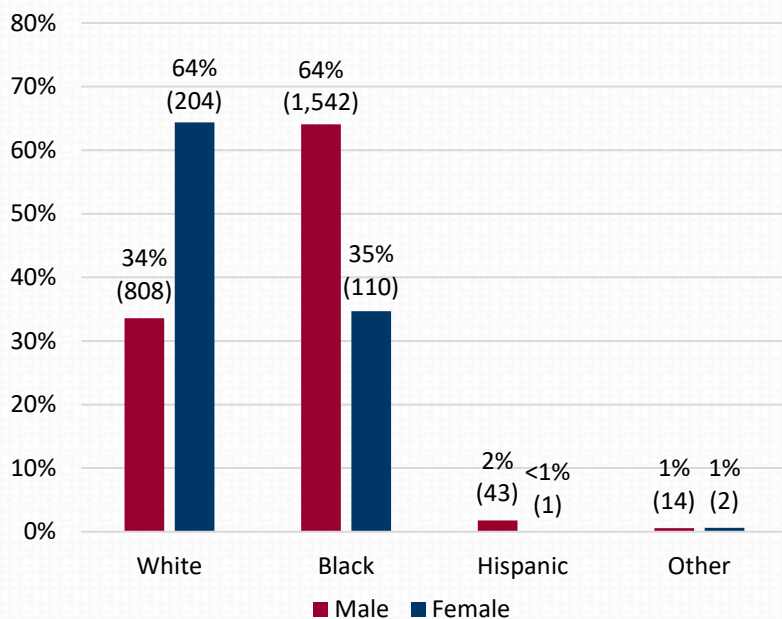
Notes:

* Academic correctional program participants include inmates that had taken a GED exam or a TABE exam during the release term of incarceration.

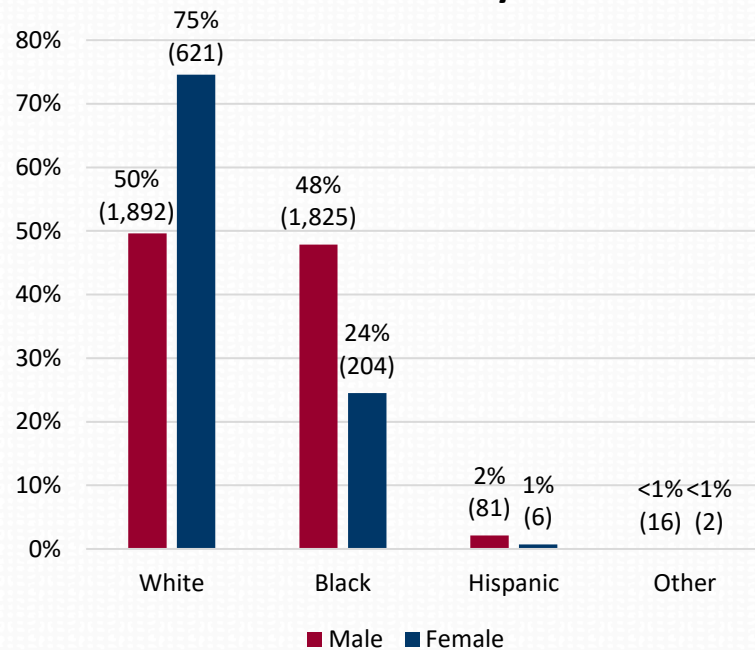
† Non-participants are inmates that did not take a TABE or GED test during the release term of incarceration. Of the 4,647 academic program non-participants, 70% (n=3,273) had an HSD/GED or partial GED prior to the start of the release term of incarceration, 8% (n=370) had non-verified education levels, 9% (n=409) were TABE exempt for being Social Security eligible or having a DOC LOS of less than 12 month, and 13% (595) were TABE eligible but did not participate in TABE or GED testing.

Characteristics of Academic Program Participants* (N=2,724) vs. Non-Participants† (N = 4,647): Race/Ethnicity

**Academic Program Participants:
Race and Ethnicity**



Program Non-Participants: Race and Ethnicity



- Of the FY2020 DOC facility releases, 54% of males were Black and 72% of females were White
- The largest percentage of male program participants were Black (64%), while there was a comparable percentage of male program non-participants who were White (50%) or Black (48%)
- Almost two-thirds of female participants (64%) and three-quarters of female non-participants (75%) were White

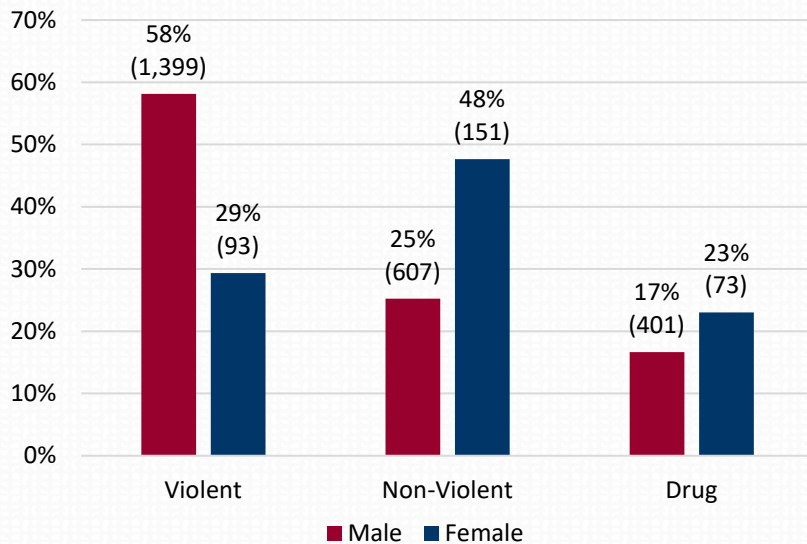
Notes:

* Academic correctional program participants include inmates that had taken a GED exam or a TABE exam during the release term of incarceration.

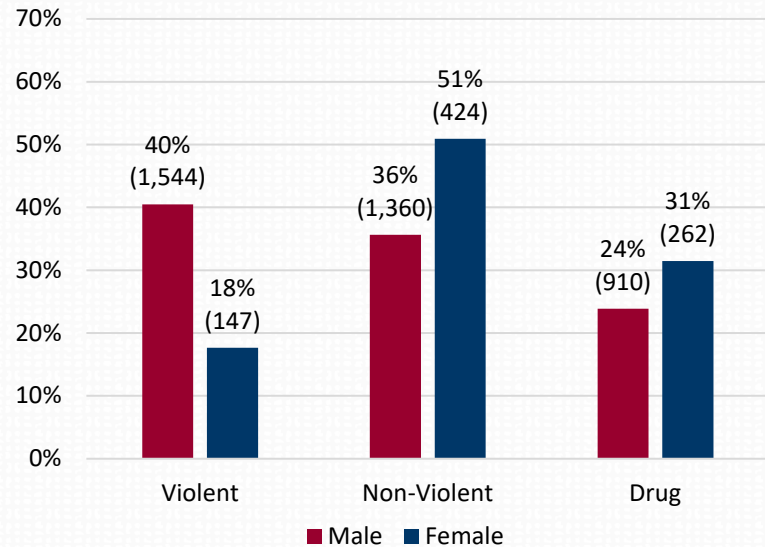
† Non-participants are inmates that did not take a TABE or GED test during the release term of incarceration. Of the 4,647 academic program non-participants, 70% (n=3,273) had an HSD/GED or partial GED prior to the start of the release term of incarceration, 8% (n=370) had non-verified education levels, 9% (n=409) were TABE exempt for being Social Security eligible or having a DOC LOS of less than 12 month, and 13% (595) were TABE eligible but did not participate in TABE or GED testing.

Characteristics of Academic Program Participants* (N=2,724) vs. Non-Participants† (N = 4,647): Crime Type

**Academic Program Participants:
Crime Type**



**Program Non-Participants: Crime
Type**



- Of the FY2020 DOC facility releases, 47% of males committed a violent offense and 50% of females committed a non-violent offense
- The largest percentage of male participants and non-participants committed a violent offense (58% and 40%, respectively)
- The largest percentage of female participants and non-participants committed a non-violent offense (48% and 51%, respectively)

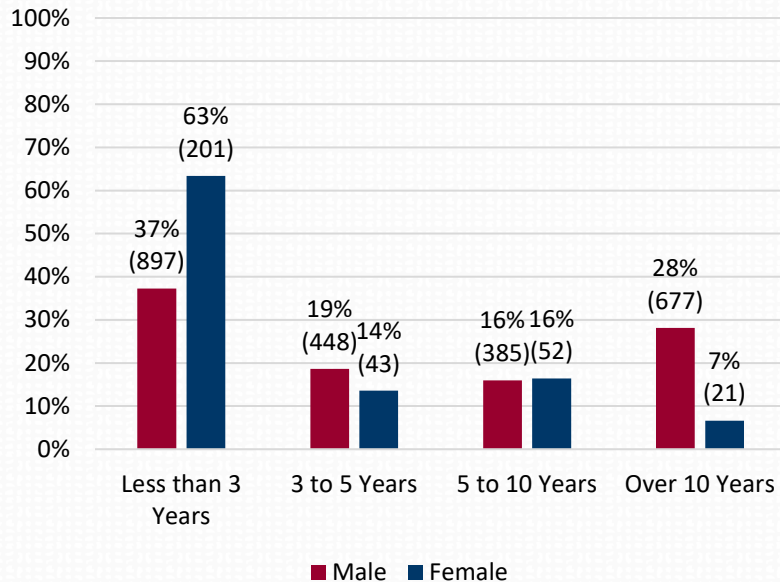
Notes:

* Academic correctional program participants include inmates that had taken a GED exam or a TABE exam during the release term of incarceration.

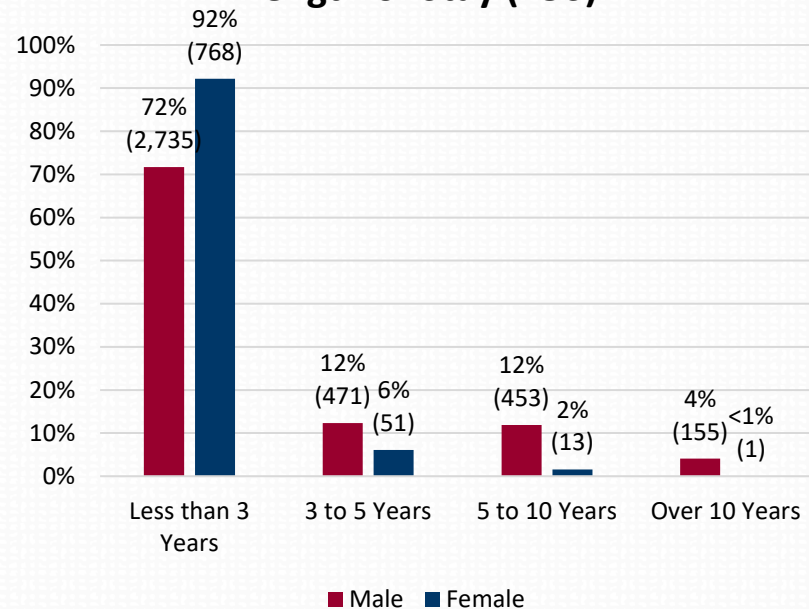
† Non-participants are inmates that did not take a TABE or GED test during the release term of incarceration. Of the 4,647 academic program non-participants, 70% (n=3,273) had an HSD/GED or partial GED prior to the start of the release term of incarceration, 8% (n=370) had non-verified education levels, 9% (n=409) were TABE exempt for being Social Security eligible or having a DOC LOS of less than 12 month, and 13% (595) were TABE eligible but did not participate in TABE or GED testing.

Characteristics of Academic Program Participants* (N=2,724) vs. Non-Participants† (N = 4,647): DOC Length of Stay

**Academic Program Participants:
DOC Length of Stay (LOS)**



**Program Non-Participants: DOC
Length of Stay (LOS)**



- DOC Length of Stay (LOS) is the total amount of time spent in DOC facilities
- The largest percentage of male participants and non-participants had a length of stay of less than three years (37% and 72%, respectively)
- The largest percentage of female participants and non-participants had a length of stay of less than three years (63% and 92%, respectively)

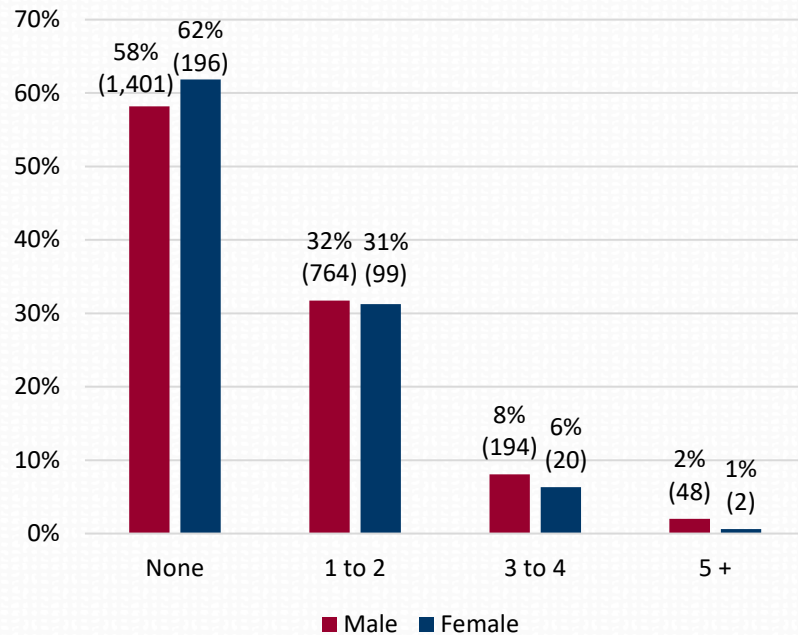
Notes:

* Academic correctional program participants include inmates that had taken a GED exam or a TABE exam during the release term of incarceration.

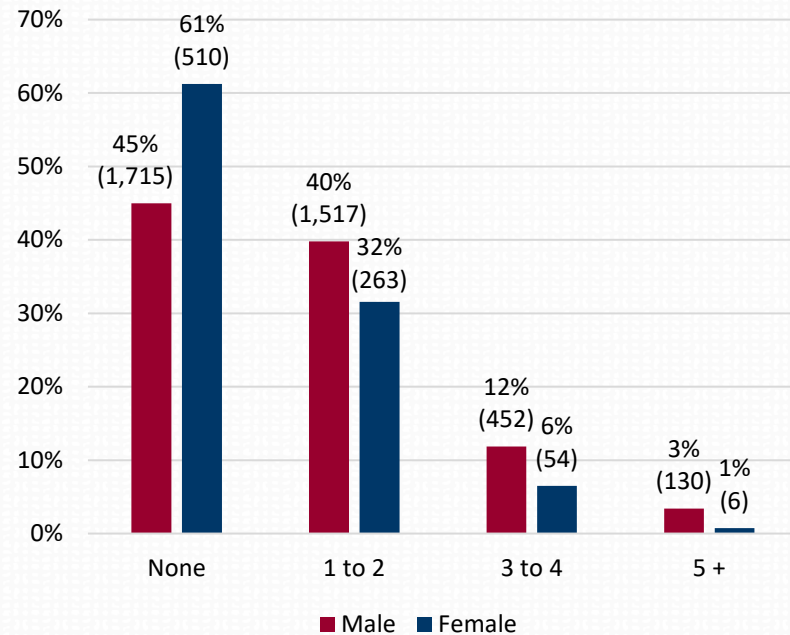
† Non-participants are inmates that did not take a TABE or GED test during the release term of incarceration. Of the 4,647 academic program non-participants, 70% (n=3,273) had an HSD/GED or partial GED prior to the start of the release term of incarceration, 8% (n=370) had non-verified education levels, 9% (n=409) were TABE exempt for being Social Security eligible or having a DOC LOS of less than 12 month, and 13% (595) were TABE eligible but did not participate in TABE or GED testing.

Characteristics of Academic Program Participants* (N=2,724) vs. Non-Participants† (N = 4,647): Prior State Responsible Terms

**Academic Program Participants:
Prior State Responsible (SR) Terms**



**Program Non-Participants: Prior
State Responsible (SR) Terms**



- Almost three-fifths of male participants (58%) and almost one-half of male non-participants (45%) had no prior SR terms
- Most female participants and non-participants had no prior SR terms (62% and 61%, respectively)

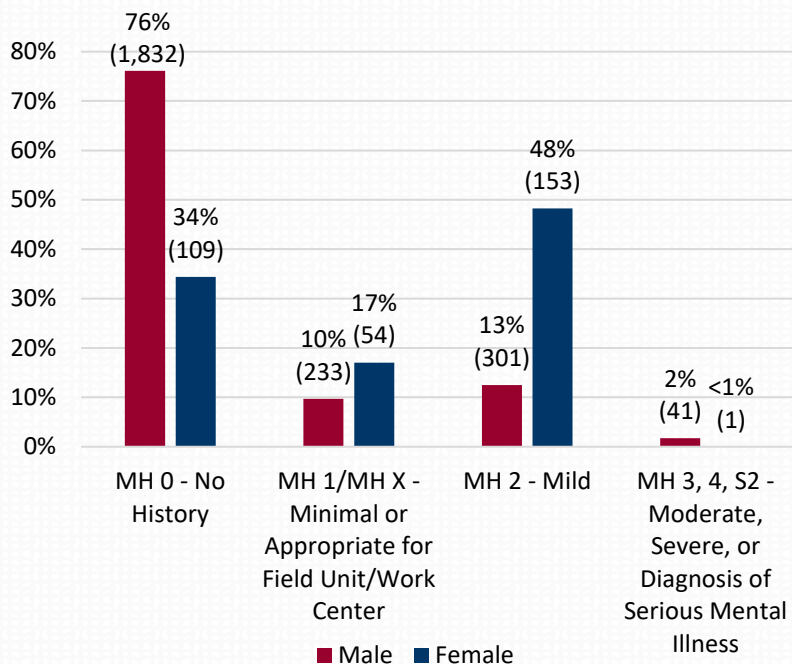
Notes:

* Academic correctional program participants include inmates that had taken a GED exam or a TABE exam during the release term of incarceration.

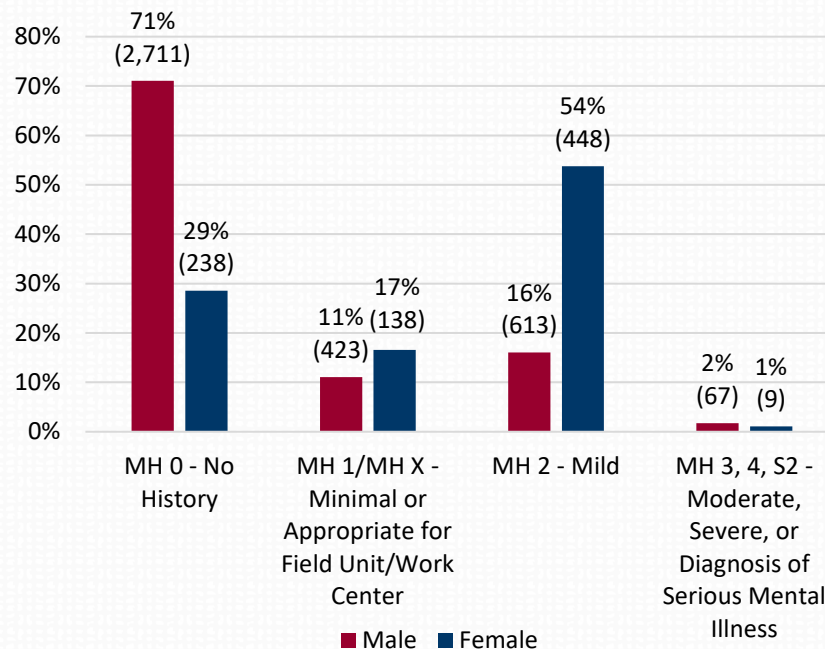
† Non-participants are inmates that did not take a TABE or GED test during the release term of incarceration. Of the 4,647 academic program non-participants, 70% (n=3,273) had an HSD/GED or partial GED prior to the start of the release term of incarceration, 8% (n=370) had non-verified education levels, 9% (n=409) were TABE exempt for being Social Security eligible or having a DOC LOS of less than 12 month, and 13% (595) were TABE eligible but did not participate in TABE or GED testing.

Characteristics of Academic Program Participants* (N=2,724) vs. Non-Participants† (N = 4,647): Mental Health Impairment

**Academic Program Participants:
Mental Health Impairment**



**Program Non-Participants: Mental
Health Impairment**



- Of the FY2020 DOC facility releases, 73% of males had no mental health impairment history (MH 0) and 52% of females had mild levels of mental health impairment (MH 2)
- Almost three-quarters of male participants (76%) and non-participants (71%) had no evidence of mental health impairment (MH 0)
- Almost one-half of female participants (48%) and over one-half of female non-participants (54%) had mild levels of impairment (MH 2)

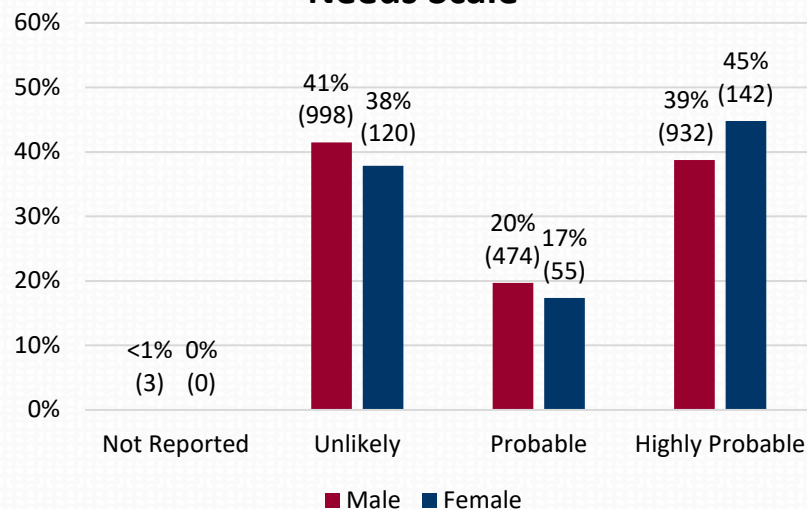
Notes:

* Academic correctional program participants include inmates that had taken a GED exam or a TABE exam during the release term of incarceration.

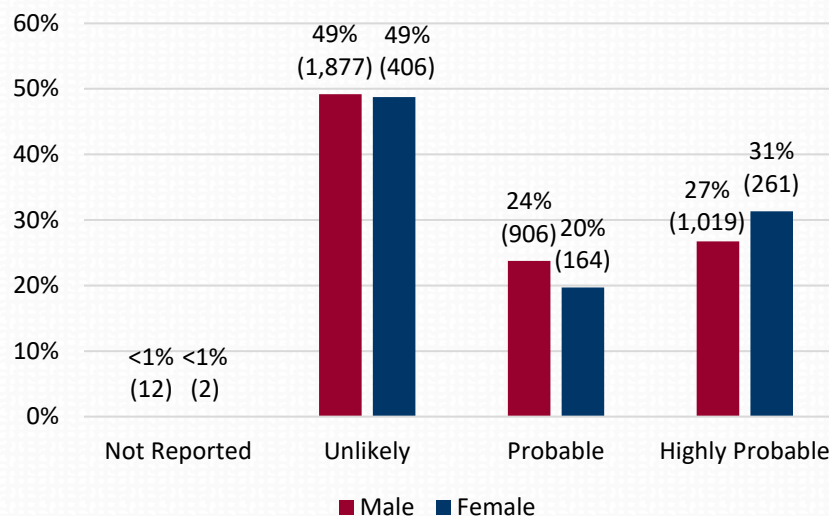
† Non-participants are inmates that did not take a TABE or GED test during the release term of incarceration. Of the 4,647 academic program non-participants, 70% (n=3,273) had an HSD/GED or partial GED prior to the start of the release term of incarceration, 8% (n=370) had non-verified education levels, 9% (n=409) were TABE exempt for being Social Security eligible or having a DOC LOS of less than 12 month, and 13% (595) were TABE eligible but did not participate in TABE or GED testing.

Characteristics of Academic Program Participants* (N=2,724) vs. Non-Participants† (N = 4,647): COMPAS Vocational and Education Needs Scale^{††}

**Academic Program Participants:
COMPAS Vocational and Education
Needs Scale**



**Program Non-Participants: COMPAS
Vocational and Education Needs Scale**



- Of the FY2020 DOC facility releases, 46% of males and females scored 'Unlikely' on the COMPAS Vocational and Education Needs Scale
- Almost three-fifths of male participants (59%) and one-half of male non-participants (51%) scored 'Probable' or 'Highly Probable' on the COMPAS Vocational and Education Needs Scale
- Over three-fifths of female participants (62%) and one-half of female non-participants (51%) scored 'Probable' or 'Highly Probable' on the COMPAS Vocational and Education Needs Scale

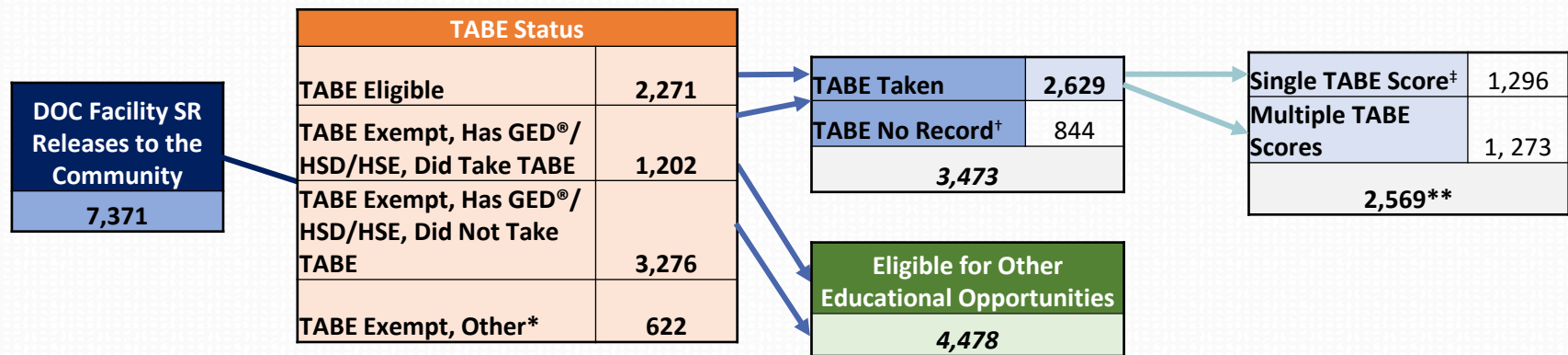
Notes:

* Academic correctional program participants include inmates that had taken a GED exam or a TABE exam during the release term of incarceration.

† Non-participants are inmates that did not take a TABE or GED test during the release term of incarceration. Of the 4,647 academic program non-participants, 70% (n=3,273) had an HSD/GED or partial GED prior to the start of the release term of incarceration, 8% (n=370) had non-verified education levels, 9% (n=409) were TABE exempt for being Social Security eligible or having a DOC LOS of less than 12 month, and 13% (595) were TABE eligible but did not participate in TABE or GED testing.

†† The initial COMPAS Vocational and Education Needs Scale scores during the current release term of incarceration were examined.

FY2020 State Responsible (SR) Releases from DOC Facilities: Adult Basic Education Status



- FY2020 SR Releases from DOC facilities included **7,371** inmates
- **3,898** TABE Exempt inmates did not participate in TABE testing
- The resulting group used for analysis has **3,473** inmates
 - 2,569 of these individuals have taken the TABE and 98% (2,569) have received a Battery Average score

Notes:

* Individuals with: DOC Length of Stays (LOS) of less than 1 year; social security eligibility, or a hospital location.

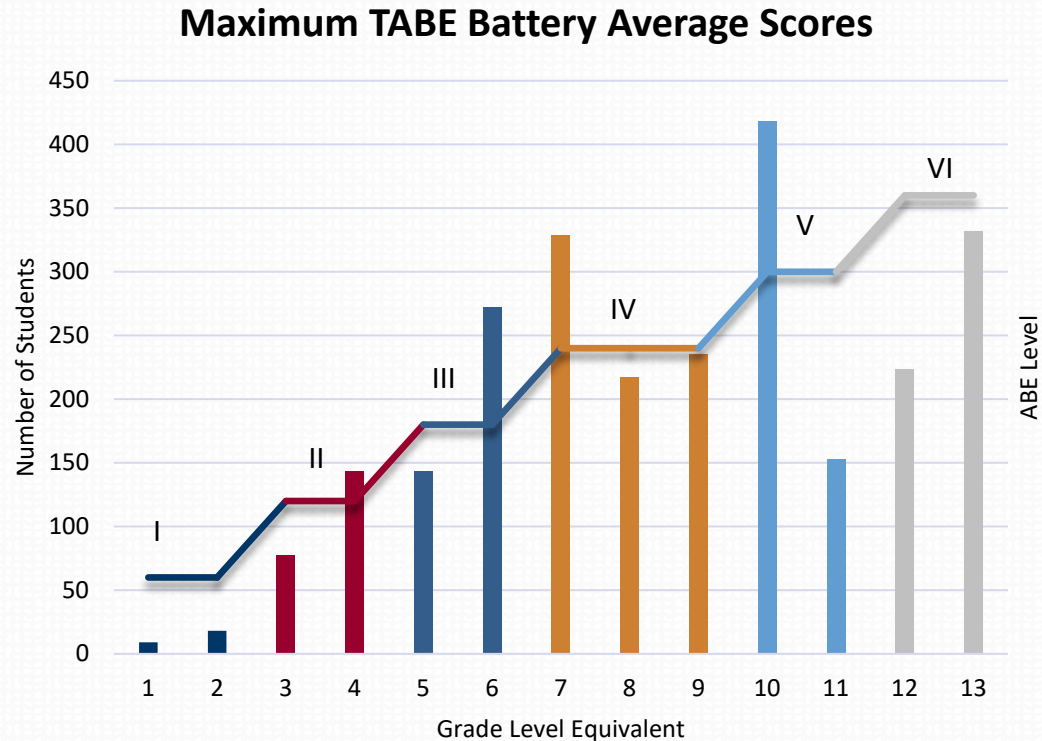
† Lack of TABE scores may be due to: data conversion issues during 2012 transition from DCE to DOC (1,208 had NCC Dates before 12/31/11); education taken prior to DCE data system; TABE administered during jail stay, but information not provided to DOC after transfer; or refusals to participate.

‡ Individuals may have been fast-tracked into more advanced education opportunities but cannot confirm due to transition.

** 60 took the TABE test but had missing TABE Battery Average scores due to only taking the TABE 11/12, which doesn't have a Battery Average.

Adult Basic Education Profile: TABE Scores

Grade Level Equivalent†	TABE Takers
0 to 1.9	27 (1%)
2 to 3.9	220 (9%)
4 to 5.9	415 (16%)
6 to 8.9	781 (30%)
9 to 10.9	571 (22%)
11 to 12.9	555 (22%)



- Over one-half of the inmates (53%) who took the TABE test and had valid scores (n=2,569*) scored a Battery Average at or above 8th grade level (ABE Levels: partial IV through VI)
- More than one-quarter (26%) of the release group had a battery average below the 6th grade level (ABE Levels: III and below)

Notes:

* 60 took the TABE test but had missing TABE Battery Average scores due to only taking the TABE 11/12, which doesn't have a Battery Average.

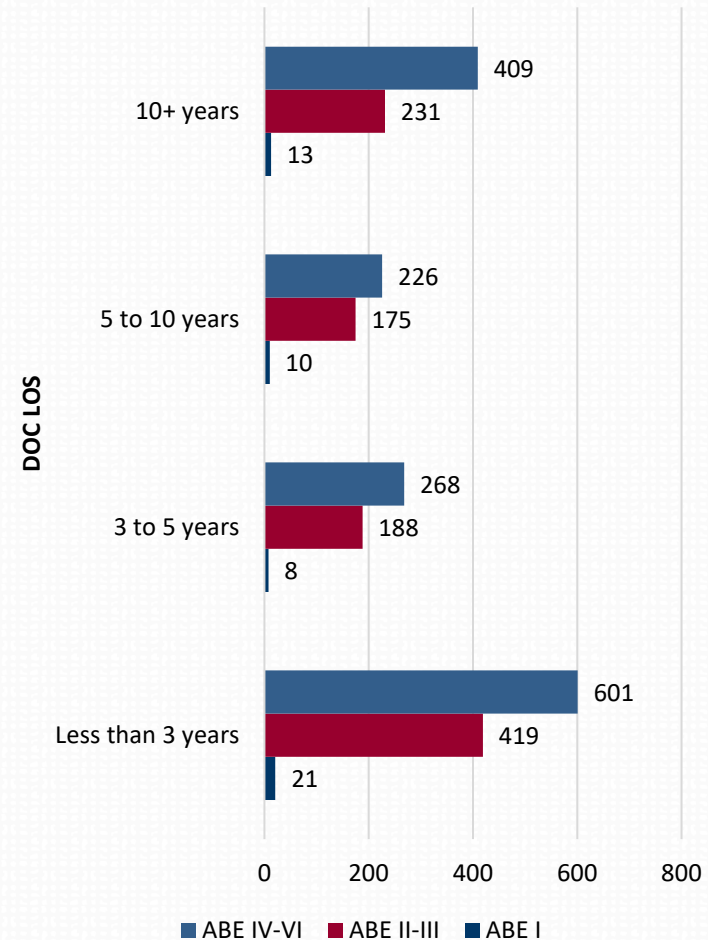
† Grade Equivalent score indicates the level (school year and month) at which a student performed in a given subject area.

Time Required for GED® Readiness

- Approximate time to GED readiness:
 - Non-Readers move to ABE III = 5 years
 - ABE II/III to GED® Testing = 3-5 years
 - ABE IV/V/VI to GED® Testing = usually less than 3 years
- In the current study group of TABE takers (n=2,569*), 41% had a Length of Stay (LOS) less than 3 years,† regardless of their initial ABE Level

DOC LOS	TABE Takers
Less than 3 years	1,041 (41%)
3 to 5 years	464 (18%)
5 to 10 years	411 (16%)
10+ years	653 (25%)

Initial ABE Level By DOC Length of Stay (LOS)



Notes:

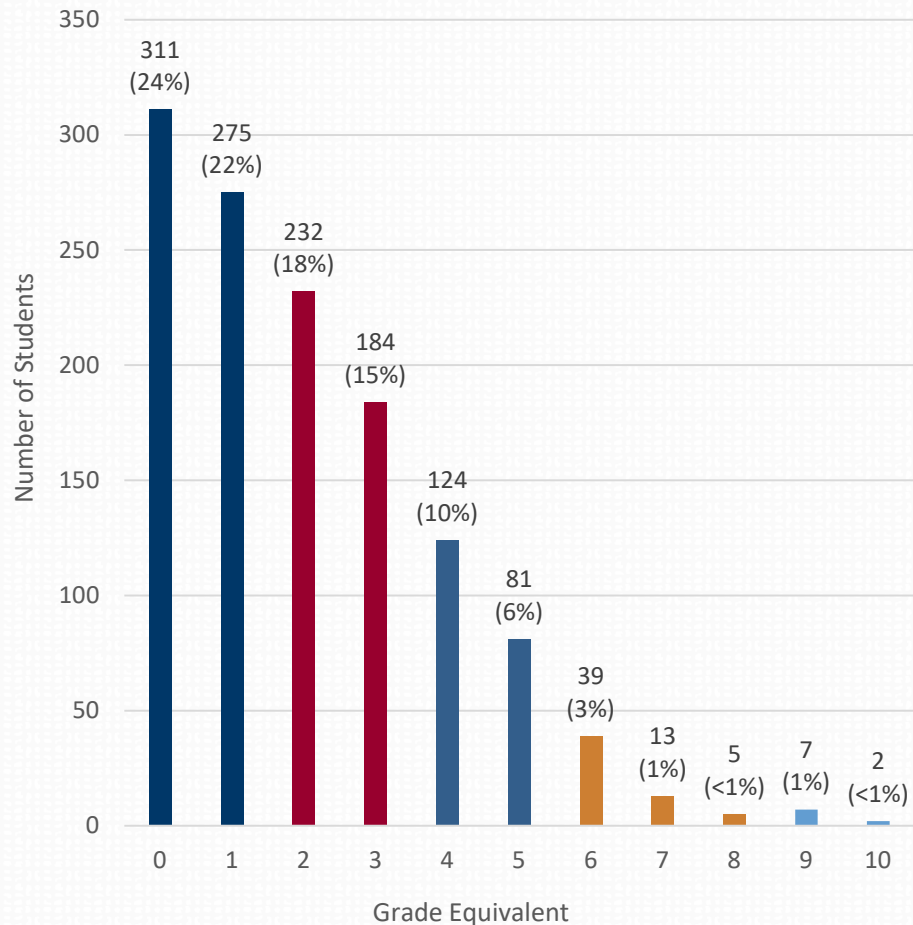
* 60 took the TABE test but had missing TABE Battery Average scores due to only taking the TABE 11/12, which doesn't have a Battery Average.

† Although sentences are all one year or more, pre-sentence jail credits and time to entry into a DOC facility may impact the amount of time available to provide educational services.

Change in TABE Scores Trend

- Analysis limited to those with multiple TABE Battery Average scores (1,273)
 - Gains were calculated between the initial and maximum TABE battery average scores for students
- Slightly over three-quarters (76%) of inmates' TABE battery average scores improved by at least one grade equivalent level
 - Gains:
 - 1-2 GE: 507 (40%)
 - 3-4 GE: 308 (24%)
 - 5+ GE: 147 (12%)
- The average grade level improvement was **2.1 GE** (median = 2.0 GE)

Gains in TABE Battery Average Scores by Grade Equivalents



Change in ABE Levels^{††}

Initial ABE Level vs. Highest ABE Level (Prior to Release*)									
		ABE Level from Highest Battery Average Score						Students with Gains	Total
		ABE I	ABE II	ABE III	ABE IV	ASE V	ASE VI	N (%)	
ABE Level from Initial Battery Average Score	ABE I	2	12	5	5	2	1	25 (93%)	27
	ABE II		77	78	48	17	9	152 (66%)	229
	ABE III			119	208	97	16	321 (73%)	440
	ABE IV				193	175	79	254 (57%)	447
	ABE V					43	44	44 (51%)	87
	ABE VI						43		43
Total		2	89	202	454	334	192	796 (65%) [†]	1,273

- The data above show several instances of ABE Level improvement between the inmates' initial TABE Battery Average scores and their highest Battery Average scores (prior to release)
 - 65% (796 of 1,230)[†] of eligible students showed gains in their ABE Levels
 - For example, ABE I (little or no ability to read basic signs or maps) moving to ABE II (able to read simple directions, signs and maps) have already improved the 12 individuals' ability to function in society
- Although inmates may not spend enough time in a VADOC facility to obtain a GED prior to release, any increase in their education level would improve their functionality in society^{††}

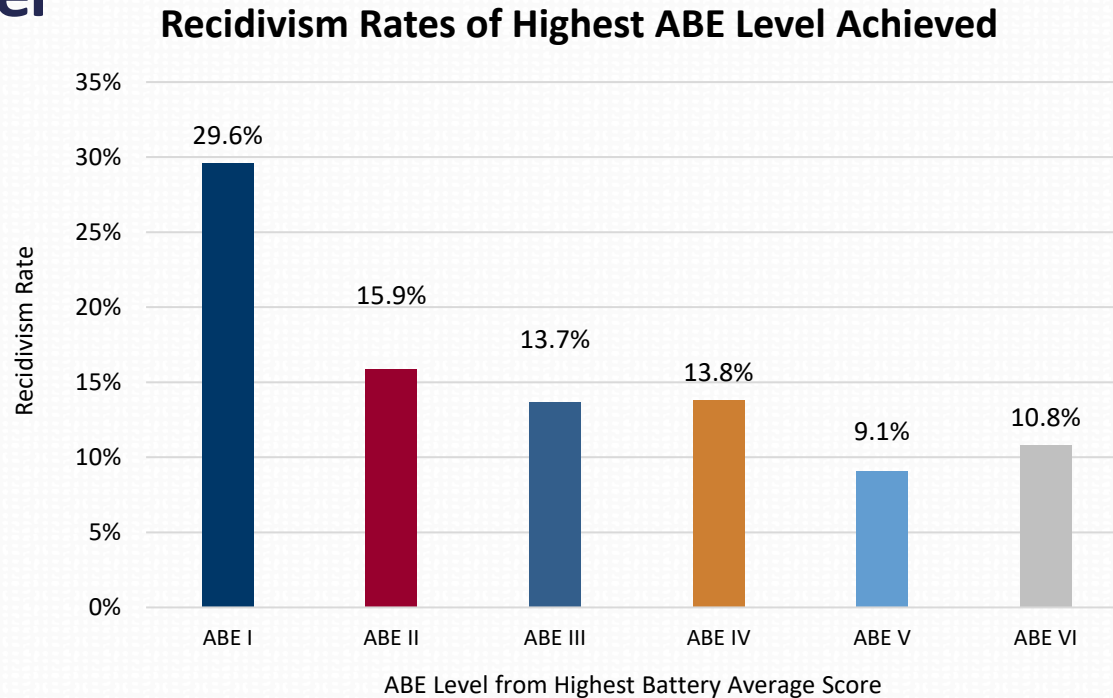
Notes:

* Exams taken during the Current Term are those that fall between the New Court Commitment Date and the Release Date.

† Individuals at initial ABE Level VI were not counted since they would not be able to gain any additional levels (n=43).

†† For more details on how ABE levels translate to function levels, see slides [five](#) and [six](#).

Overall Recidivism[†] Rates Three Years After Release by ABE Level^{††}



- Inmates with an ABE level of I had a significantly higher recidivism rate than inmates with an ABE level of II, III, or IV.* Inmates with an ABE level of II, III, or IV had significantly higher recidivism rates than those with an ABE level of V or VI**
- Inmates who reached an ABE level of VI had a recidivism rate five percentage points lower than inmates who reached an ABE level of II and three percentage points lower than inmates who reached an ABE level of III or IV
- Since all eligible inmates are required to participate, a matched comparison group is not possible for inmates who participate in TABE testing

Note:

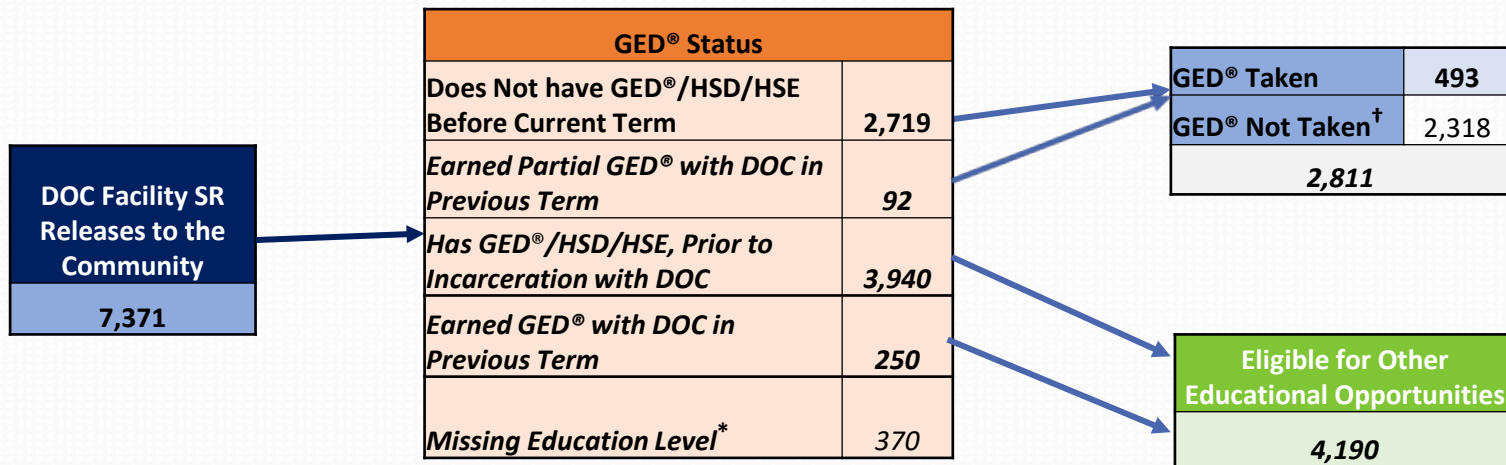
[†] Recidivism for this study is defined as a new state responsible term of re-incarceration occurring within three years of an individual's release.

^{††} For more details on how ABE levels translate to function levels, see slides [five](#) and [six](#).

* Chi-Square test was significant ($p < 0.05$).

** Chi-Square test was significant ($p = 0.001$).

FY2020 State Responsible (SR) Releases from DOC Facilities: GED® Status



- **4,190** inmates had their GED®/HSD/HSE either prior to incarceration or earned it during a previous term
- The resulting group used for analysis has **2,811** inmates
 - 18% (493) were determined to have reached GED® readiness criteria and participated in GED® testing

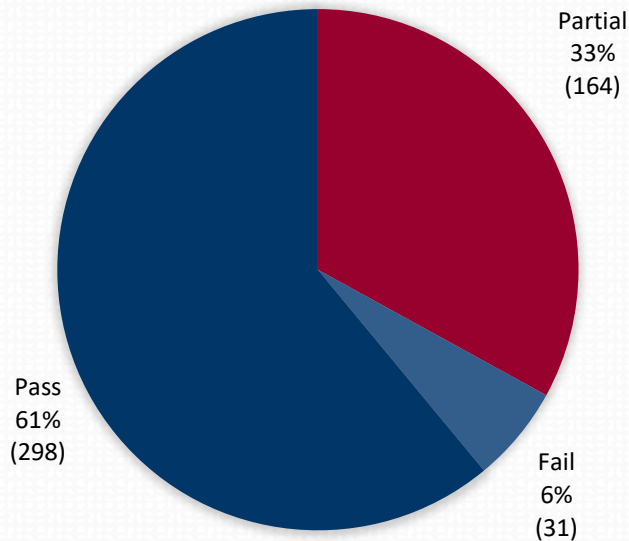
Notes:

* Missing education information may be due to data conversion issues during 2012 transition from DCE to DOC or that education was taken prior to DCE data system.

† The Correctional Education group determines when inmates have met GED® readiness criteria, so these individuals may not have shown enough improvement to meet the necessary ABE level to qualify for GED® testing.

GED® Testing Results for Current Term

Current Term GED Testing



	Partial*	Fail*	Pass*	Total
Male	144 (32%)	30 (7%)	282 (62%)	456
Female	20 (54%)	1 (3%)	16 (43%)	37
Total	164 (33%)	31 (6%)	298 (61%)	493

- GED® testing group: 92% (456) were male versus 8% (37) female
- Of those who took all subject tests (329), 91% (298) passed
 - When passing rates were examined by gender, females had a higher rate of passing (94%) than males (90%)

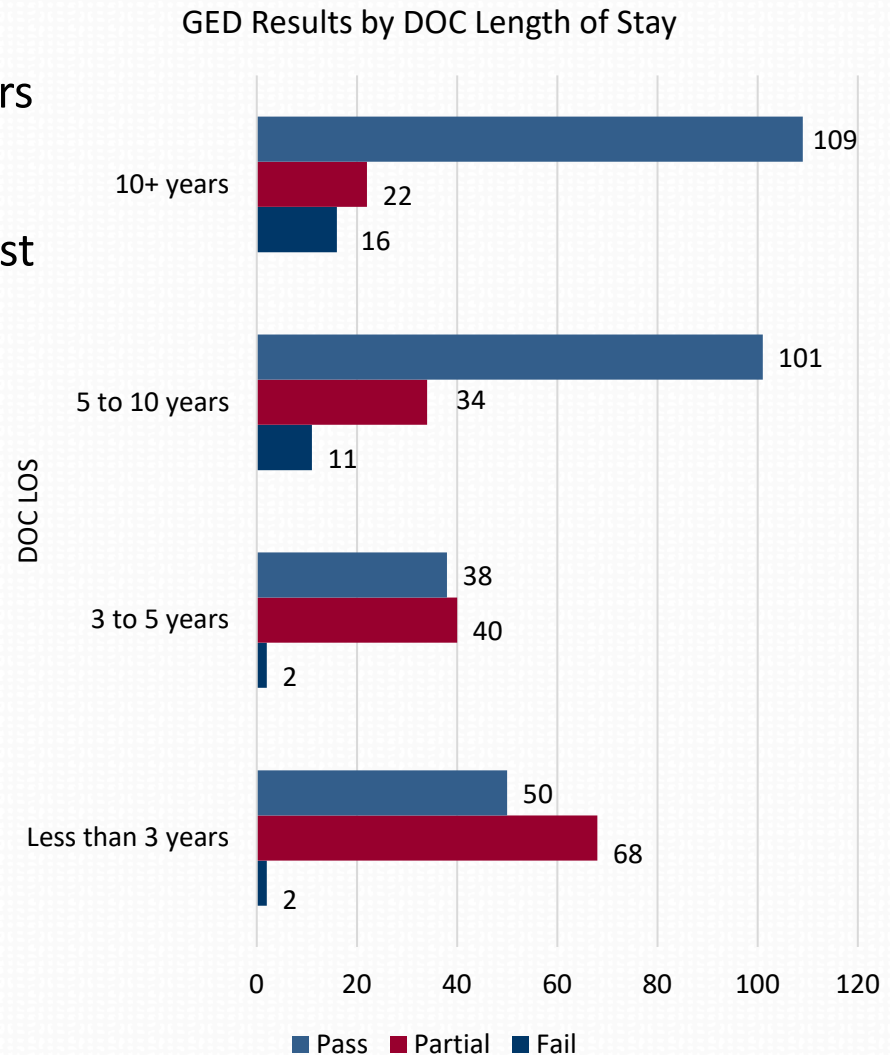
Note:

* Inmates in the 'Pass' column have passed all GED® exams and obtained a GED®. Inmates in the 'Partial' column have taken at least one subject exam but have not taken all exams in all subjects. Inmates in the 'Fail' column have taken all subject exams but have failed to pass at least one of them.

GED® Testing Results and LOS for Current Term

- In the current study group of GED® takers, 76% had an LOS of three years or greater, regardless of their GED® testing results
- GED® passing rates* were the highest for inmates with an LOS of less than three years (96%) and lowest for inmates with an LOS of 10 years or greater (87%):
 - Less than 3 years: 96%
 - 3 to 5 years: 95%
 - 5 to 10 years: 90%
 - 10+ years: 87%

DOC LOS	GED® Takers
Less than 3 years	120 (24%)
3 to 5 years	80 (16%)
5 to 10 years	146 (30%)
10+ years	147 (30%)



Note:

* GED passing rates were calculated using only those who had taken all subject tests and, as a result, exclude those with a 'Partial' GED.

Overall Recidivism[†] Rates Three Years After Release for GED Earners

Correctional Education Status for Current Term	N	Recidivism Rate
Overall GED Earners:*		
Male	282	11.7%
Female	16	0.0%
<i>Overall</i>	<i>298</i>	<i>11.1%</i>

- Overall recidivism rates for GED earners was 11.1%
- Female GED earners had a lower recidivism rate than male GED earners (0.0% and 11.7%, respectively). The recidivism rate for female GED earners should be interpreted with caution due to the small number of earners

Note:

[†] Recidivism for this study is defined as a new state responsible term of re-incarceration occurring within three years of an individual's release.

Case-Control Matching Process

- In order to match inmates that earned a GED with a comparison group with similar characteristics, case-control matching is used
 - The comparison group contained SR releases without a verified high school diploma or GED
- The existing study group is matched with a case-control created comparison group with user-defined tolerances for each matching variable
- The variables the study and comparison group were matched on include:
 - Gender
 - Age at release (± 1 year)
 - Crime type
 - Number of prior SR terms (± 1 SR term)
 - History of testing positive for opioids and/or cocaine
 - Mental health status
 - Confirmed gang status at release
- The matches between the study and comparison groups are random and are as close to a randomized control trial as possible
- Individuals in the study group that are unable to be matched with the comparison group are removed from the study
 - 26 inmates who passed a GED exam were removed
- Outcomes of the comparison are analyzed for significant group differences

Recidivism[†] Rates Three Years after Release: Matched^{*} GED Earners and Comparison Groups – GED

Correctional Education Status for Current Term	N	GED Earners	Comparison
GED Earners:[‡]			
Male	263	12.2%	12.5%
Female	9	0.0%	11.1%
<i>Overall</i>	<i>272</i>	<i>11.8%</i>	<i>12.5%</i>

- The comparison group had higher recidivism rates than GED earners for male, female, and overall GED earners. However, the differences were not significant

Notes:

[†] Recidivism for this study is defined as a new state responsible term of re-incarceration occurring within three years of an individual's release.

^{*} Case and Comparison individuals were matched on the following: gender, age at release (± 1 yr.), crime type, prior SR terms (± 1 SR term), DOC history of testing positive for opioids and/or cocaine, mental health status, and confirmed gang status.

[‡] 26 GED Earner cases have been removed due to difficulty in identifying an appropriate match.

Overview of Employment Statistics and Outcomes

- All employing units that are subject to the taxing provisions of the unemployment compensation laws are required to report wages to the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC)
 - Typically required if a company has: one or more employees who work a portion of a day in twenty different weeks of a calendar year OR a total gross payroll for any calendar quarter of \$1,500 or more
- Wages are reported quarterly
 - Wages are defined as: wages, salary, commissions, tips, annual bonuses, severance pay, and back pay
- Important to note that only Virginia employers who reported wages are included in the data set
 - Under the table pay/freelance work was not included
 - Employment records from outside of Virginia are not included

Note:

<https://www.vec.virginia.gov/employers/>

Overall Employment Rates Three Years After Release: ABE Levels¹

FY2020 Employment Rates By ABE Level		
ABE Level	N	Employment Rate
ABE I	27	59%
ABE II	220	49%
ABE III	415	65%
ABE IV	781	67%
ABE V	571	67%
ABE VI	555	68%

- FY2020 SR releases with an ABE level of six were more likely to be employed (68%) at some point during the three-year follow-up period² after release than inmates of any other ABE level
- Inmates who reached at least an ABE level of three (ABE level III through VI) had an employment rate of 67%

Notes:

- For more details on how ABE levels translate to function levels, see slides [five](#) and [six](#).

¹ Inmates' maximum TABE scores during the current release term of incarceration were used to calculate ABE levels.

² Follow-up period was from the quarter/year the inmate was released through 12 additional quarters or through the quarter/year that the inmate recidivated.

Employment Statistics by ABE Level¹

FY2020 Employment Statistics by ABE Level								
	Quarterly Wages		Time to Employment		Percent of Eligible Quarters Employed		Number of Employers	
ABE Level	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median	Mean	Median
ABE I (N=16)*	\$3,059.68	\$2,113.14	1.4 Quarters	1.0 Quarter	43%	35%	4.2	2.5
ABE II (N=107)	\$6,038.95	\$3,864.75	1.8 Quarters	1.0 Quarter	47%	38%	2.8	2.0
ABE III (N=268)	\$4,269.96	\$3,329.07	2.1 Quarters	1.0 Quarter	48%	46%	3.3	3.0
ABE IV (N=523)	\$5,253.03	\$4,650.00	1.7 Quarters	1.0 Quarter	55%	54%	3.3	2.0
ABE V (N=384)	\$5,749.86	\$4,952.69	1.6 Quarters	1.0 Quarter	57%	54%	3.5	3.0
ABE VI (N=378)	\$6,413.15	\$5,796.64	1.6 Quarters	1.0 Quarter	57%	62%	3.1	2.0

- On average, FY2020 SR releases with an ABE level of six had the highest quarterly wages during the follow-up period²
- Those with an ABE level of one had the shortest time to employment (1.4 quarters) while at liberty*
- Those with an ABE level of five or six had the highest percent of quarters employed after release (57%)

Notes:

- For more details on how ABE levels translate to function levels, see slides [five](#) and [six](#).

¹ Inmates' maximum TABE scores during the current release term of incarceration were used to calculate ABE levels.

² Follow-up period was from the quarter/year the inmate was released through 12 additional quarters or through the quarter/year that the inmate recidivated.

* Results should be interpreted with caution due to the small numbers.

Three-Year Employment Rates for SR Releases from DOC Facilities

FY2020 SR Releases From DOC Facilities: Employment Rates				
		All FY2020 SR Releases	Overall GED Earners	Non-Completers/ Non-Earners [†]
Males	N	6,221	282	4,792
	Employment Rate	63%	67%	62%
Females	N	1,150	16	924
	Employment Rate	68%*	88%	65%*
Overall	N	7,371	298	5,716
	Employment Rate	64%	68%	62%

- Employment was defined as having any wages reported during the three-year follow-up period¹
- FY2020 SR releases who earned a GED had higher employment rates than all FY2020 SR Releases and releases who did not complete any correctional education
- Overall female FY2020 SR releases and female releases who did not complete a CTE course or earn a GED had a significantly higher employment rate than male overall FY2020 SR releases and male releases who did not complete a CTE course or earn a GED

Notes:

* Chi-Square Test was significant ($p < 0.05$).

[†] Releases in the Non-Completers/Non-Earners group are releases who did not complete a CTE course or earn a GED.

¹ Follow-up period was from the quarter/year the inmate was released through 12 additional quarters or through the quarter/year that the inmate recidivated.

Recidivism Rates[†] By Employment Status Three Years After Release

FY2020 SR Releases From DOC Facilities: Recidivism Rates				
		All FY2020 SR Releases	Overall GED Earners	Non-Completers/Non-Earners [‡]
Employed	N	4,724	204	3,551
	Recidivism Rate	13.0%*	8.3%**	14.1%*
Unemployed	N	2,647	94	2,165
	Recidivism Rate	18.7%	17.0%	20.3%
Overall	N	7,371	298	5,716
	Recidivism Rate	15.0%	11.1%	16.5%

- Overall FY2020 SR releases, GED earners, and those who didn't complete a CTE course or earn a GED and who were employed during the follow-up period¹ had significantly lower recidivism rates than those who were unemployed
- Those who earned a GED and were employed during the follow-up period had the lowest recidivism rate (8.3%)

Notes:

* Chi-Square Test was significant (p < 0.001).

** Chi-Square Test was significant (p < 0.05).

[†] Recidivism for this study is defined as a new state responsible term of re-incarceration occurring within three years of an individual's release.

[‡] Releases in the Non-Completers/Non-Earners group are releases who did not complete a CTE course or earn a GED.

¹ Follow-up period was from the quarter/year the inmate was released through 12 additional quarters or through the quarter/year that the inmate recidivated.

Employment Statistics¹

FY2020 Employment Statistics		
	GED Earners (N=204)	Non-Completers/ Non-Earners (N=3,551)*
Quarterly Wages		
Mean	\$5,806.52	\$5,230.41
Median	\$5,124.25	\$4,226.42
Time to Employment		
Mean	1.4 Quarters	1.9 Quarters
Median	1.0 Quarter	1.0 Quarter
Percent of Eligible Quarters Employed		
Mean	58%	50%
Median	62%	46%
Number of Employers		
Mean	3.7	3.2
Median	3.0	2.0

- GED earners had higher average quarterly wages, shorter average time to employment, and a higher percent of eligible quarters employed than releases who did not complete a CTE course or earn a GED

Notes:

*Releases in the Non-Completers/Non-Earners group are releases who did not complete a CTE course or earn a GED.

¹ Follow-up period was from the quarter/year the inmate was released through 12 additional quarters or through the quarter/year that the inmate recidivated.

Employment Rates Three Years After Release: Matched[‡] GED Earners and Comparison Group

FY2020 SR Releases: Employment Rate By Gender			
Correctional Education Status for Current Term	N	GED Earners	Comparison
GED			
Male	263	66%*	56%
Female	9	78%	44%
Overall	272	67%*	55%

- The GED earner group, except for female GED earners, had significantly higher employment rates during the follow-up period¹ than the comparison group

Notes:

* Chi-Square Test was significant ($p < 0.05$).

[‡] The GED Earners were matched on the following: gender, age at release (± 1 yrs.), crime type, prior SR terms (± 1 SR term), mental health status, confirmed gang status at release, and history of testing positive for opioids and/or cocaine.

¹ Follow-up period was from the quarter/year the inmate was released through 12 additional quarters or through the quarter/year that the inmate recidivated.

GED Employment Statistics¹

FY2020 Employment Statistics: GED		
	GED Earners (N=181)	Comparison (N=150)
Quarterly Wages		
Mean	\$6,002.96*	\$5,223.54
Median	\$5,328.00	\$4,330.96
Time to Employment		
Mean	1.4 Quarters	1.9 Quarters
Median	1.0 Quarter	1.0 Quarter
Percent of Eligible Quarters Employed		
Mean	59%	54%
Median	63%	54%
Number of Employers		
Mean	3.6	3.4
Median	3.0	3.0

- On average, GED earners earned significantly more money per quarter than the comparison group
- On average, GED earners gained employment faster after release than the comparison group (1.4 quarters and 1.9 quarters, respectively)
- GED earners, on average, were employed for a higher percent of quarters after release than the comparison group (59% and 54%, respectively)
- GED earners averaged slightly more different employers than the comparison group (3.6 and 3.4, respectively) during the follow-up period

Notes:

* T-test was significant ($p < 0.001$).

¹ Follow-up period was from the quarter/year the inmate was released through 12 additional quarters or through the quarter/year that the inmate recidivated.

Annual Employment Rate: GED

FY2020 SR Releases: Annual Employment Rates of GED Earners and Comparison Group				
	Year One	Year Two	Year Three	All
GED Earners	28.1%	29.6%	30.4%	17.5%
Comparison	18.7%	20.6%	21.2%	8.1%
Difference	9.4%	9.0%	9.2%	9.4%

- Annual employment rate¹ is the rate at which an individual was employed all four quarters of the year
- The largest differences in employment rate during the follow-up period² occurred during year one and overall (9.4%)

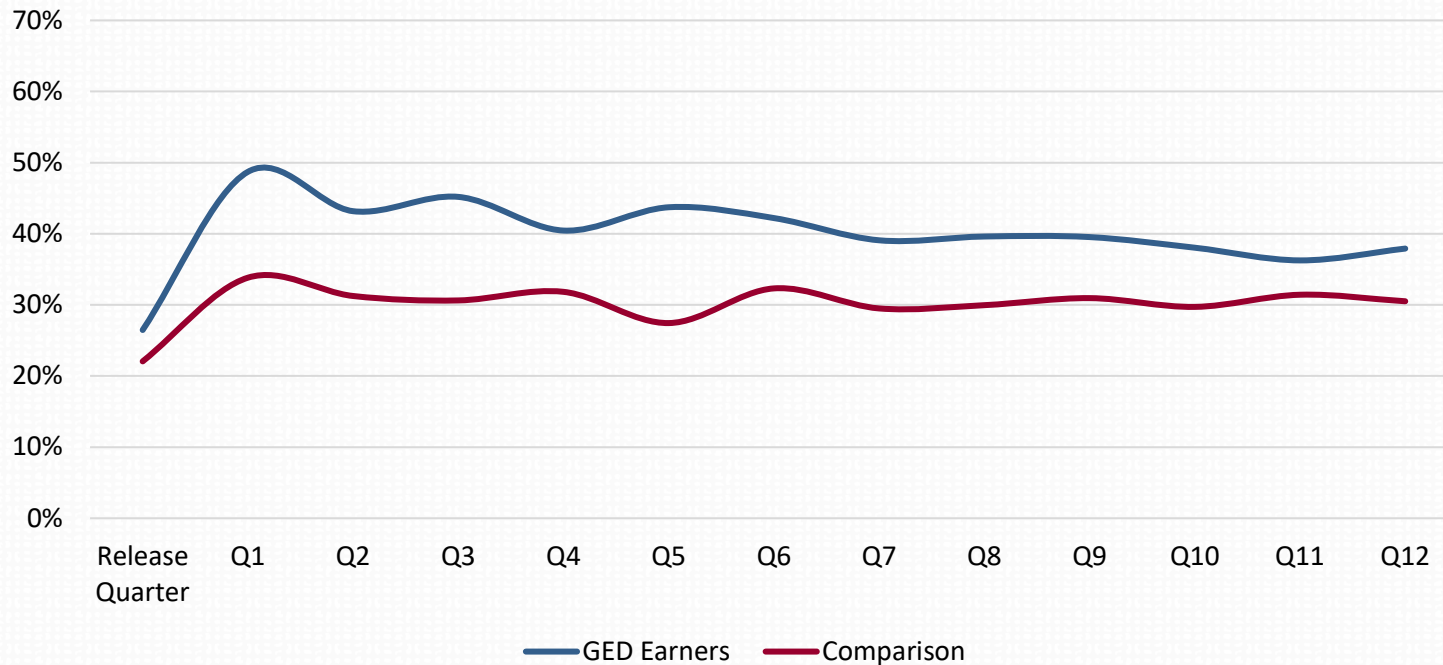
Notes:

¹ Number of releases with wages reported in all four quarters of a year out of the total number of releases that were at liberty to work all four quarters of that year. Year One represents the first four quarters post-release, Year Two represents quarters five through eight post-release, and Year Three represents quarters nine through twelve post release.

² Follow-up period was from the quarter/year the inmate was released through 12 additional quarters or through the quarter/year that the inmate recidivated.

Quarterly Employment Rate:¹ GED

FY2020 SR Releases Employment Rate by Quarter After Release:
GED

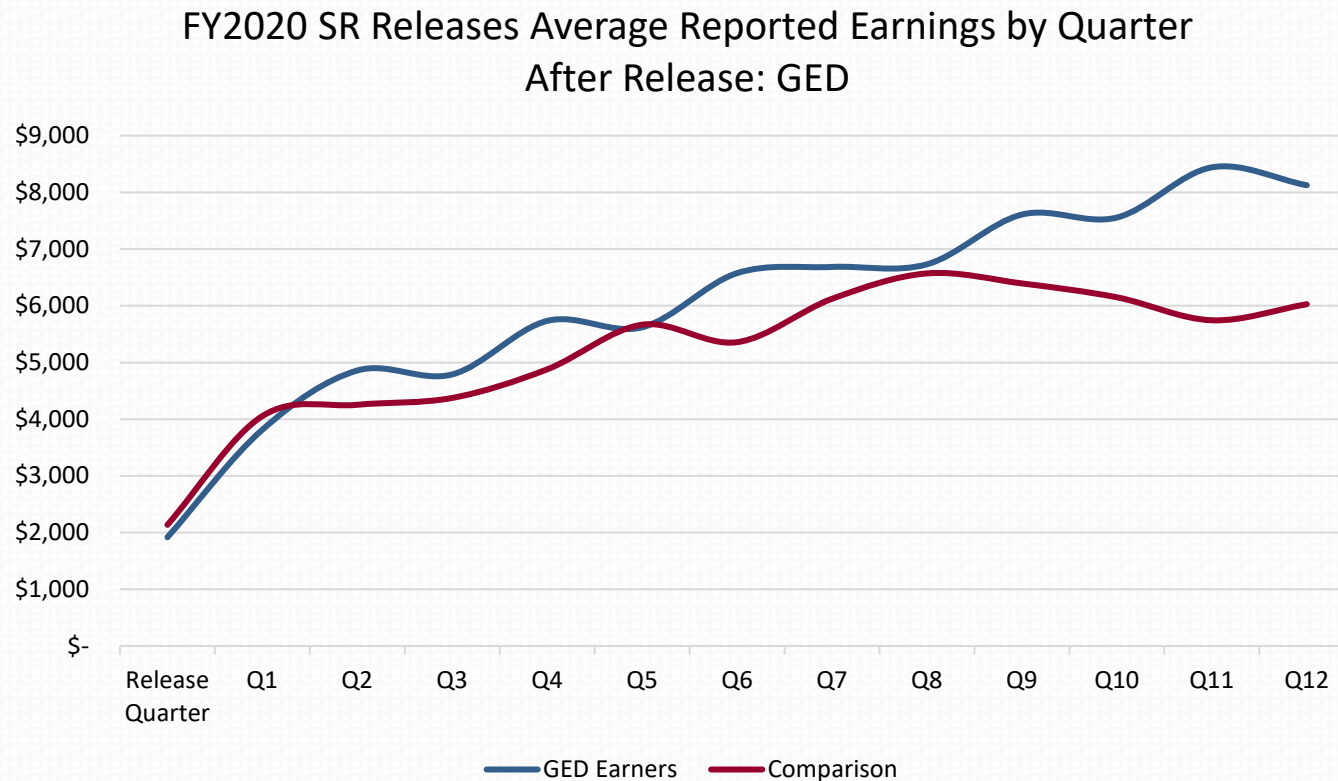


- Quarterly employment rate was higher in every quarter after release, including the release quarter, for GED earners

Note:

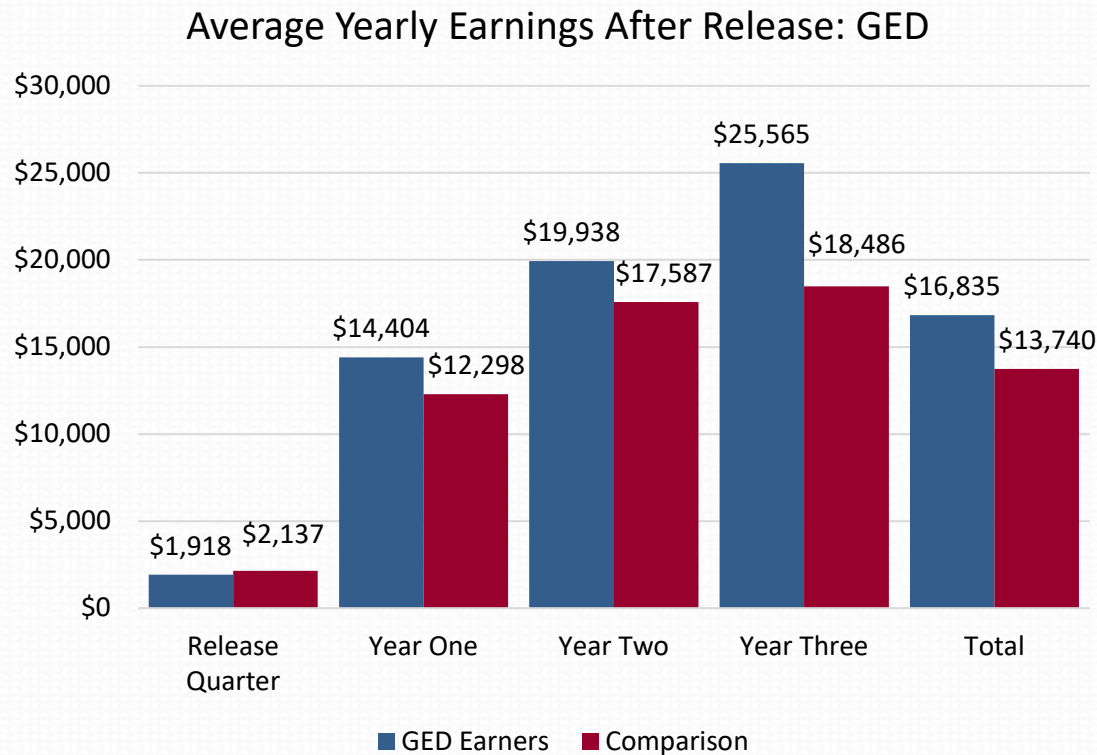
¹ Number of releases with wages reported during a quarter out of the total number of releases that were at liberty to work.

Average Reported Quarterly Earnings: GED



- GED earners had higher average quarterly earnings in the majority of quarters (77%) during the follow-up period
- The largest differences in average quarterly earnings can be seen in year three (Q9 through Q12)

Average Reported Yearly Earnings: GED



- GED earners' yearly average wages were higher than the comparison group every year after the release quarter
 - This difference was statistically significant only in the third year and overall after release¹
- The comparison group had higher average wages in their release quarter

Note:

¹ Year 3, $p < 0.01$; Total, $p < 0.01$.

Recidivism and Employment Rate Comparison of FY2020 and FY2018 Releases

Current Study (FY2020 Releases)

	Full Release Group (n = 7,371)	GED® Completers (n = 298)
Recidivism	15.0%	11.1%
Employment	64%	68%

Previous Study (FY2018 Releases)

	Full Release Group (n = 7,018)	GED® Completers (n = 390)
Recidivism	18.2%	16.9%
Employment	64%	74%

- The overall recidivism rate for FY2020 was 3.2 percentage points lower than FY2018 VADOC facility releases
- Inmates released from a VADOC facility in FY2020 who earned a GED had a lower recidivism rate (11.1%) than their FY2018 counterparts (16.9%)
- GED earners had lower recidivism rates and higher employment rates than VADOC facility releases for FY2018 and FY2020

Summary of Academic Education Information

- Despite having greater number of inmates earning a GED (210), those with a DOC LOS of five years or more had a lower rate of passing all four GED subject tests than those with a DOC LOS of less than five years
 - GED® Pass: <5 years = 96% versus 5+ years = 89%
- Overall, male, and female GED earners had lower recidivism rates than the comparison group
- FY2020 SR releases who earned a GED had a much lower recidivism rate than FY2018 SR releases who earned a GED (11.1% and 16.9%, respectively)
- Recidivism rates trended down with higher ABE levels
 - Inmates with an ABE level of I had a significantly higher recidivism rate. Inmates with an ABE level of II, III, or IV had significantly higher recidivism rates than those with an ABE level of V or VI
- 65% of students with initial ABE Levels of less than VI and who had taken more than one TABE (n=1,230) improved by at least one ABE level
- Even small levels of improvement can increase an individual's ability to function in the community

Summary of Employment Statistics and Outcomes

- Inmates who earned a GED had higher employment rates than the overall FY2020 release cohort
- FY2020 SR releases who earned a GED had higher average quarterly wages and were employed for a greater percent of eligible quarters than releases who did not complete a CTE course or earn a GED
- All employed FY2020 SR releases had lower recidivism rates than those who did not find employment after release
- GED earners had higher average yearly wages than the comparison group for all three years after release
- Improvements in ABE levels can be impactful
 - Past ABE II, as ABE levels increased, average quarterly earnings increased
 - As ABE levels increased, the percent of quarters employed also increased
 - FY2020 SR releases with an ABE level of six earned more per quarter, on average, than any other ABE level
- Higher employment rates and wages may contribute to the lower recidivism rates of GED earners and releases with higher ABE levels

Contacts

- Contact Information:
 - Research Unit
 - Research Director: Tama Celi, Ph.D.
 - tama.celi@vadoc.virginia.gov
 - Evaluation Unit Manager: Brittney Via, M.A.
 - brittney.via@vadoc.virginia.gov
 - Senior Research Analyst: Dakota Contois
 - dakota.contois@vadoc.virginia.gov