

## Effective Investments in Public Safety: Education

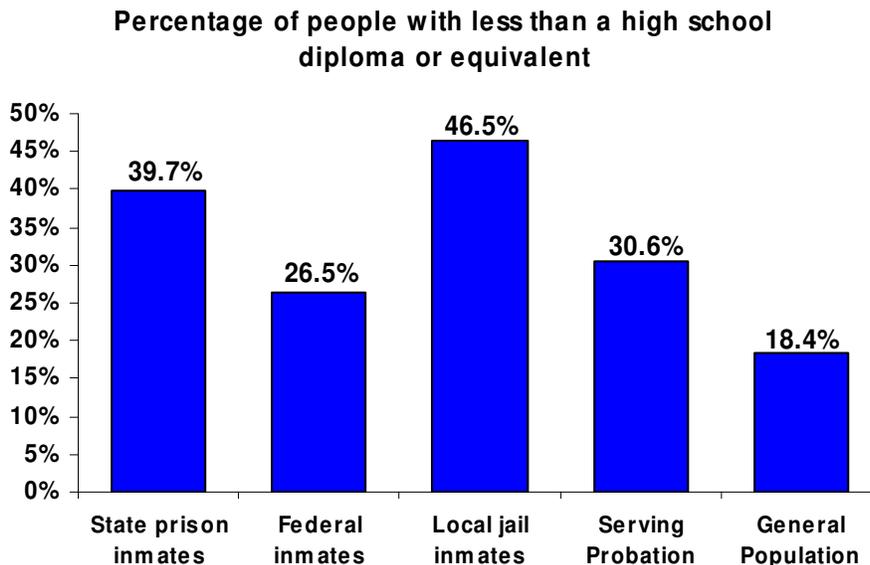
*“Reforming the nation’s high schools could potentially increase the number of graduates and, as a result, significantly reduce the nation’s crime-related costs and add billions of dollars to the economy through the additional wages they would earn.” Alliance for Excellent Education<sup>1</sup>*

**Background:** Educational attainment, in itself, does not predetermine whether an individual will engage in crime. However, there is evidence that suggests that education and graduation rates may relate to crime rates, and this new research comes at a time when education programs are receiving less and less funding, and more money is being spent to incarceration—a public safety policy that has not been proven to lower crime rates. Data from numerous sources, including the Bureau of Justice Statistics, show that those people with the least education are often the ones who end up committing crimes and being imprisoned. Funding for more education services rather than corrections would have a significant positive effect on public safety.

### People with little schooling are overrepresented in the criminal justice system

While having little schooling does not predetermine that someone will engage in crime and end up in the prison system, 1 in 10 young (age 22-30) white high school drop outs were in prison or jail in 1999, and among white men in their early thirties (age 30-34), 13 percent of high school drop outs had prison records by 1999. In 1999, an astonishing 52 percent of African American male high school dropouts had prison records by their early thirties (age 30-34).<sup>2</sup>

**Correctional populations report lower educational attainment than do those in the general population.**



Source: Harlow, C.W. 2003. “Education and Correctional Populations.” Bureau of Justice Statistics.  
[www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/ecp.pdf](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/ecp.pdf)

<sup>1</sup> Alliance for Excellent Education. 2006. “Saving Futures, Saving Dollars.” Issue Brief. Online:  
[www.all4ed.org/publications/savingfutures.pdf](http://www.all4ed.org/publications/savingfutures.pdf)

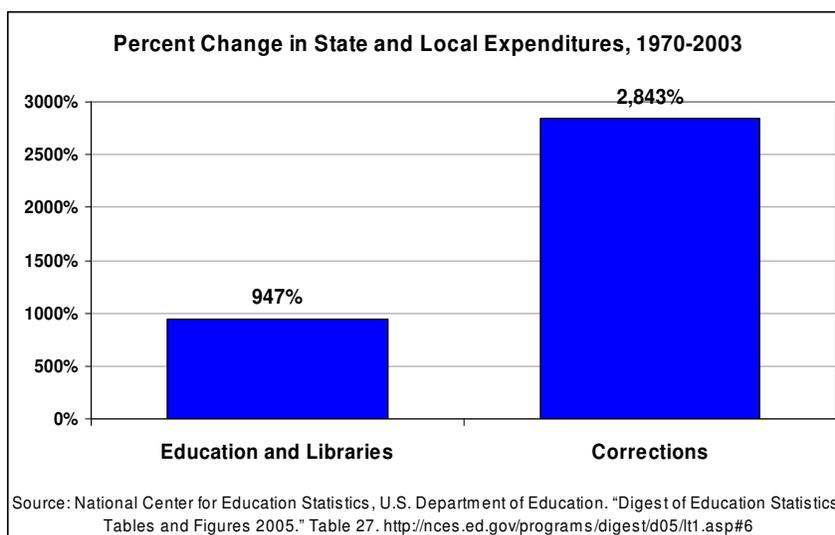
<sup>2</sup> Bruce Western, Vincent Schiraldi & Jason Ziedenberg. 2003. Education and Incarceration. Washington, D.C.: Justice Policy Institute. [www.justicepolicy.org](http://www.justicepolicy.org)

The Bureau of Justice Statistics found that 47 percent of drug offenders (selling or using illegal drugs) in state prisons in 1997 had not graduated from high school or passed the GED.<sup>3</sup> In addition, 4 in 10 inmates convicted of violent or property crimes had not finished high school or its equivalent.

### **Education is a protective factor against juvenile delinquency and recidivism**

According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the U.S. Justice Department's juvenile justice branch, education and employment can relate to delinquency: "connectedness to school and/or work also was related to juveniles' self-reported law-violating behavior. Juveniles who were neither in school or working had a significantly greater risk of engaging in a wide range of problem behaviors."<sup>4</sup> Providing education services as part of the re-entry process for youth, as well as adults, could greatly reduce the recidivism rates of released offenders, thus increasing public safety.

### **Increases in government spending are more focused on corrections than on education**



In fiscal year 2004, federal, state and local government spending for police protection, corrections and judicial and legal activities—totaling \$193 billion—increased 4 percent from the previous year.<sup>5</sup>

### **The President recently proposed decreasing funding for the Department of Education while increasing spending for the federal prison system**

For fiscal year 2007, President Bush requested \$54.4 billion in discretionary spending for the Department of Education, a 4.8 percent decrease from 2005.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, the Office of Management and Budget estimates that the Department of Justice will spend \$4.96 billion on the federal prison system in Fiscal Year 2007, a 4.2 percent increase from 2005.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Harlow, C.W. 2003. "Education and Correctional Populations." Bureau of Justice Statistics.

<http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/ecp.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 2006 National Report. Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice. <http://ojjdp.ncjrs.org/ojstatbb/nr2006/downloads/NR2006.pdf> p.14

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. "Direct Expenditure by Level of Government, 1982-2004."

Online at: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/glance/tables/expgovtab.htm>

<sup>6</sup> Office of Management and Budget. "Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2007." Section on Department of Education. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2007/pdf/budget/education.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Office of Management and Budget. "Budget of the United States Government, Fiscal Year 2007." Section on Department of Justice. <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2007/budget.html>

## **Increasing graduation rates has been shown to promote public safety**

A study reported in the *American Economic Review* on the effects of education on crime found that a one year increase in the average year of schooling completed reduces violent crime by almost 30 percent, motor vehicle theft by 20 percent, arson by 13 percent and burglary and larceny by about 6 percent.<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, these same researchers concluded that “A 1-percent increase in the high school completion rate of all men ages 20-60 would save the United States as much as **\$1.4 billion per year in reduced costs from crime** incurred by victims and society at large.”<sup>9</sup>

The Alliance for Excellent Education reported in 2006 that a 5 percent increase in male high school graduation rates would produce an annual savings of almost \$5 billion in crime-related expenses. Coupled with annual earnings of those who graduated, the U.S. would receive \$7.7 billion in benefits. California itself would receive over \$1 billion in benefits from these increasing graduation rates.<sup>10</sup>

<b>Rates on Crime Reduction and Earnings</b>			
<b>State</b>	<b>Annual Crime-Related Savings</b>	<b>Additional Annual Earnings</b>	<b>Total Benefit to State Economy</b>
Alabama	\$82,114,178	\$42,695,448	\$124,809,626
Alaska	\$10,385,910	\$8,229,446	\$18,615,356
Arizona	\$130,548,518	\$53,146,250	\$183,694,768
Arkansas	\$52,527,329	\$24,825,605	\$77,352,934
California	\$752,933,848	\$352,182,007	\$1,105,115,855
Colorado	\$49,051,830	\$42,954,144	\$92,005,974
Connecticut	\$31,624,059	\$31,692,936	\$63,316,995
Delaware	\$9,923,632	\$7,271,214	\$17,194,846
District of Columbia	\$66,503,310	\$3,237,663	\$69,740,973
Florida	\$332,386,028	\$174,243,833	\$506,629,861
Georgia	\$185,633,644	\$90,744,324	\$276,377,968
Hawaii	\$6,835,886	\$11,203,133	\$18,039,020
Idaho	\$7,374,662	\$13,817,814	\$21,192,476
Illinois	\$263,078,679	\$115,756,032	\$378,834,711
Indiana	\$95,731,795	\$56,133,136	\$151,864,932
Iowa	\$17,544,077	\$26,798,824	\$44,342,901
Kansas	\$36,327,968	\$26,397,581	\$62,725,549
Kentucky	\$50,190,235	\$37,221,909	\$87,412,144
Louisiana	\$164,467,403	\$39,778,515	\$204,245,917
Maine	\$3,046,026	\$11,679,610	\$14,725,636
Maryland	\$160,557,762	\$50,869,458	\$211,427,220
Massachusetts	\$59,187,389	\$55,535,231	\$114,722,620
Michigan	\$175,304,759	\$105,034,655	\$280,339,414
Minnesota	\$30,608,540	\$47,171,157	\$77,779,698
Mississippi	\$66,976,174	\$26,274,832	\$93,251,006
Missouri	\$95,613,931	\$51,781,495	\$147,395,426
Montana	\$10,637,756	\$8,967,258	\$19,605,015
Nebraska	\$16,519,921	\$16,469,451	\$32,989,371
Nevada	\$55,973,838	\$22,464,341	\$78,438,180
New Hampshire	\$3,397,405	\$12,032,017	\$15,429,423
New Jersey	\$120,008,948	\$69,283,091	\$189,292,039

<sup>8</sup>Serious violent crime includes murder and aggravated assault. Lochner, L. and Moretti, E. (2004). “The Effect of Education on Crime: Evidence from Prison Inmates, Arrests, and Self-Reports.” *The American Economic Review*.

<sup>9</sup>Lochner, L. and Moretti, E. (2004). P. 183-184.

<sup>10</sup>Alliance for Excellent Education. 2006. “Saving Futures, Saving Dollars.” Issue Brief. Online: [www.all4ed.org/publications/savingfutures.pdf](http://www.all4ed.org/publications/savingfutures.pdf)

<b>State</b>	<b>Annual Crime-Related Savings</b>	<b>Additional Annual Earnings</b>	<b>Total Benefit to State Economy</b>
New Mexico	\$37,905,377	\$19,840,422	\$57,745,799
New York	\$286,896,473	\$170,426,743	\$457,323,216
North Carolina	\$151,947,826	\$80,880,868	\$232,828,694
North Dakota	2,480,026	\$6,408,013	\$8,888,039
Ohio	\$126,369,800	\$106,527,438	\$232,897,238
Oklahoma	\$63,248,994	\$33,164,601	\$96,413,595
Oregon	\$21,053,644	\$30,029,888	\$51,083,532
Pennsylvania	\$182,071,834	\$106,127,515	\$288,199,349
Rhode Island	5,946,578	\$9,485,971	\$15,432,549
South Carolina	\$105,184,170	\$45,366,883	\$150,551,053
South Dakota	\$1,636,287	\$7,048,154	\$8,684,441
Tennessee	\$132,841,628	\$50,196,980	\$183,038,608
Texas	\$428,340,492	\$263,016,258	\$691,356,750
Utah	\$15,180,026	\$24,155,106	\$39,335,132
Vermont	\$3,518,159	\$5,783,710	\$9,301,869
Virginia	\$109,091,336	\$70,200,407	\$179,291,743
Washington	\$50,235,943	\$60,499,296	\$110,735,239
West Virginia	\$19,811,155	\$15,995,614	\$35,806,769
Wisconsin	\$47,775,714	\$53,395,707	\$101,171,421
Wyoming	\$4,467,005	\$5,081,534	\$9,548,539
<b>United States</b>	<b>\$4,939,017,909</b>	<b>\$2,799,523,519</b>	<b>\$7,738,541,428</b>

Source: Alliance for Excellent Education. 2006. "Saving Futures, Saving Dollars." Issue Brief.