

Increasing Efficiencies in Idaho's Parole Process

Follow-up Report
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Executive Summary

Increasing Efficiencies in Idaho's Parole Process Follow-up Report

In our 2010 report on Idaho's parole process, we made 26 recommendations to help improve efficiencies. We directed recommendations to the Commission of Pardons and Parole, the Department of Correction (IDOC), the Legislature, and the Governor. The recommendations focused on improvements in communication, training, policy, and data management. In this follow-up review, we found that the commission and IDOC have begun the process of implementing many of our recommendations. Because some of the recommendations are designed for long-term change, full implementation may take a year or longer to complete.

The commission implemented or addressed five recommendations, two are in process, and five are not implemented. Commission officials worked with hearing officers to update their manual, to standardize reports for commissioners, and to streamline the investigation process. Commission officials also reviewed computer training skills for staff and reviewed the distribution of ancillary duties. The commission does not intend to implement two of our recommendations: (1) to formally incorporate assessments through the use of a checklist, and (2) commissioner consideration of options that allow the executive director more time to manage the daily operations of the commission.

IDOC implemented two recommendations, four are in process, and one recommendation remains not implemented. IDOC standardized how staff enter offender information and drafted a new policy to standardize the parole plan investigation process. IDOC continues to track Pathways data, but it needs more time to analyze long-term programming trends.

In addition to recommendations addressed specifically to the commission or IDOC, four recommendations required joint effort. All four joint recommendations are in process. We encourage continued collaboration between the two entities to both formalize procedures and increase efficiencies throughout the parole process.

Three of our recommendations to the Legislature and Governor are in process or not implemented.

Acknowledgments

We appreciate the cooperation and assistance of the Commission of Pardons and Parole, the Department of Correction, legislative Budget and Policy Analysis, and the Division of Human Resources.

Hannah Crumrine, Maureen Brewer, and Amy Lorenzo of the Office of Performance Evaluations conducted the follow-up review.

Dr. Kathleen Sullivan, former professor and director of the Center for Education Research and Evaluation at the University of Mississippi, conducted the quality control review.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Background

In February 2010, we released the report *Increasing Efficiencies in Idaho's Parole Process* in response to legislative interest in learning more about Idaho's parole process. We conducted our evaluation within the statutory framework outlined in two sections of Idaho Code:

- Idaho Code § 19-2513 outlines the Unified Sentencing Act, which requires felony offenders to serve a fixed amount of incarceration time
- Idaho Code § 20-223 gives parole commissioners full discretion to grant or deny parole to offenders once they have served their fixed time

The Idaho Commission of Pardons and Parole and the Idaho Department of Correction (IDOC) work together to meet public safety needs, move offenders through the correctional system, and prepare offenders for eventual release.¹ The offender plays a pivotal role in securing his or her timely release. Exhibit 1.1 is a general overview of Idaho's parole process.

Department of Correction

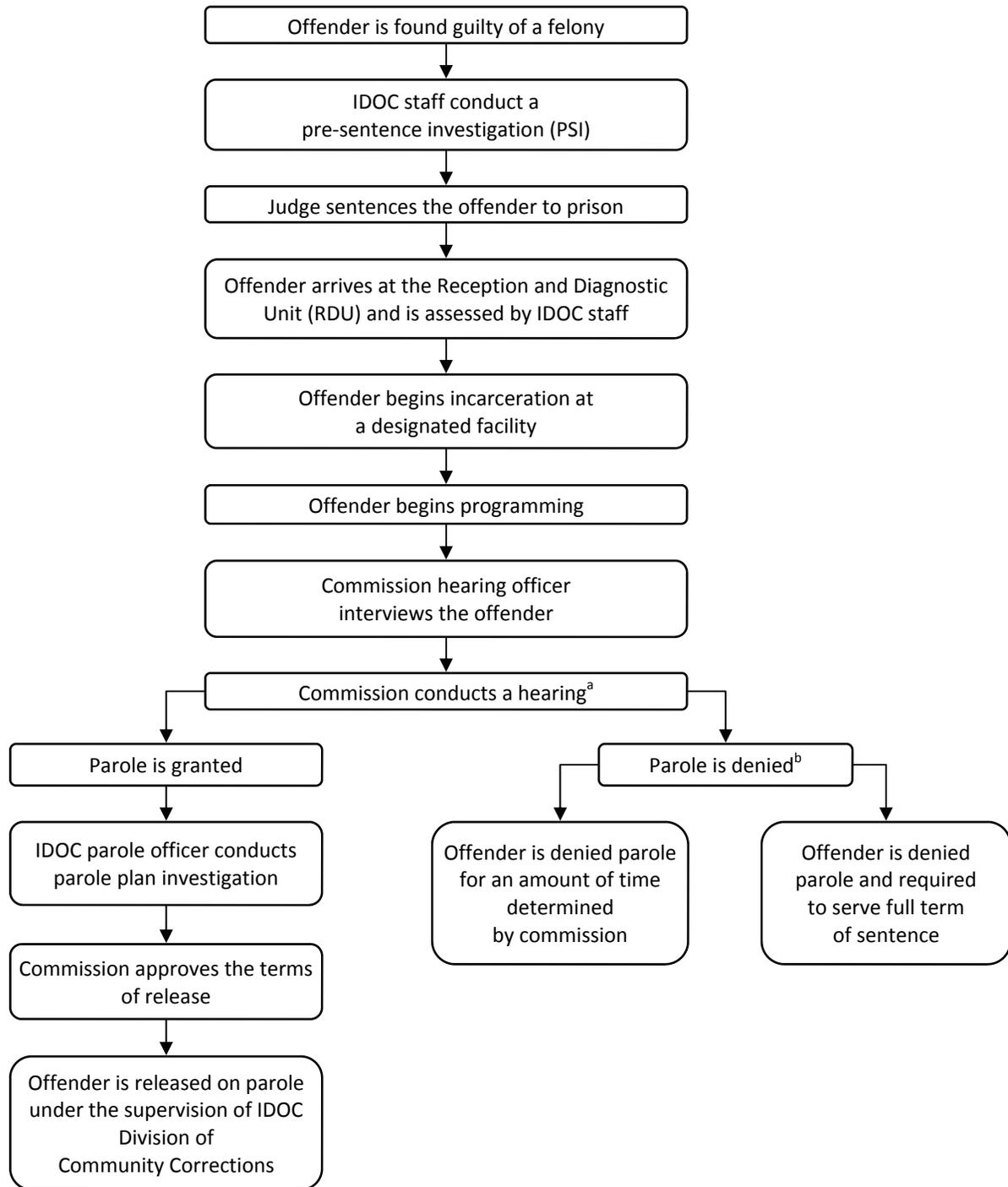
IDOC is responsible for the care and custody of offenders after they have been sentenced to incarceration by the courts. Although the commission determines whether offenders can be released on parole, IDOC prepares the offender for release through education and treatment during incarceration. If an offender is granted parole, IDOC continues to plan for the offender's reentry into the community by developing, investigating, and approving parole plans.

Commission of Pardons and Parole

The commission is statutorily within IDOC but operates as an independent agency. Parole release decisions are made by five part-time commissioners

¹ Most offenders who enter Idaho's correctional system are released back into the community.

Exhibit 1.1 General Parole Process



Source: Interviews with Department of Correction staff and Commission of Pardons and Parole staff.

^a Some cases are decided in executive session without the offender present.

^b Offenders have the option to appeal the commission's decision by submitting a progress report no sooner than 6 months after the commission's decision and once every 12 months thereafter.

appointed by the Governor. Hearing officers provide the commissioners with detailed case information for offenders who have a scheduled parole hearing or an executive session review. At an offender's parole hearing, commissioners have the discretion to grant or deny parole.²

Understanding Idaho's Parole Process

Idaho's parole process involves three key steps:

- Preparing for the parole hearing
- Conducting hearings and preparing for release
- Community supervision

Preparing for the Parole Hearing

IDOC transports offenders from county jails to prison to begin incarceration. It also provides offenders with rehabilitative services and opportunities through a programming model called Pathways for Success. The model places offenders in a specific program pathway as identified by IDOC staff through standardized assessments.³ Program enrollment is typically scheduled to ensure an offender completes programming before his or her parole eligibility date.

The commission schedules hearings for offenders who are eligible for parole and conducts offender investigations. The commission generally schedules a parole hearing six months before an offender's parole eligibility date. Hearing officers conduct an investigation approximately three months before the offender's hearing date. Commissioners examine the hearing officer's report detailing the results of the investigation in preparation for the parole hearing.

Conducting Hearings and Preparing for Release

Commissioners use hearing officer reports to help guide their decision whether to grant parole. A report highlights the facts of the crime, the offender's incarceration behavior, and the programming information. Commissioners are given complete discretion to grant or deny parole and may assign additional programming to be completed before an offender's release or while he or she remains under community supervision.

² Commissioners also have authority to grant pardons and commutations, revoke parole, and review appeals.

³ The Idaho State Judiciary uses the results of IDOC's assessments to make sentencing determinations, and the commission uses them to help make parole release decisions.

After the parole hearing, IDOC continues to assist offenders with the reentry process in three major areas:

- Education and Treatment staff work with the commission to address programming requirements specified at the hearing
- Case managers ensure that offenders enroll in all remaining education and treatment programs and help each offender develop a parole plan
- Parole officers investigate and approve each parole plan before an offender can be released into the community

Community Supervision

Once released on parole, an offender remains under the supervision of IDOC but completes the rest of his or her sentence in the community. While in the community, the offender must abide by the requirements outlined by the commission and his or her parole officer.

If an offender is accused of violating a condition of parole, the commission relies on IDOC parole officers to report the allegation and other parole-related issues as part of the parole violation process. IDOC staff and commission staff are involved in multiple steps of this process. IDOC conducts the initial investigation, and the commission has final authority to revoke or reinstate parole.

Status of Recommendations

In 2010, we made 26 recommendations to help increase efficiencies in Idaho's parole process. Because IDOC and the commission work closely to move offenders through the parole process and achieve timely parole releases, we addressed four recommendations jointly to the agencies. The remaining 22 recommendations were directed to the following entities:

- Twelve recommendations to the commission
- Seven recommendations to IDOC
- Two recommendations to the Legislature
- One recommendation to the Governor

Chapter 2 details specific findings from the original report and provides a description of the status of each recommendation. The recommendation statuses are listed as not implemented, in process, addressed, or implemented.

- Not implemented: the agency has not begun to measurably address the recommendation's intent
- In process: the agency has begun to measurably address the recommendation's intent
- Addressed: the agency has taken an approach that diverged from the recommendation but has still met the recommendation's intent
- Implemented: the agency has measurably met the recommendation's intent

Since the release of our original report, both IDOC and the commission have begun the implementation of many of our recommendations. We found that IDOC and the commission implemented or addressed a total of seven recommendations. Ten recommendations are in progress and six are not implemented.

Some of our recommendations are designed for long-term change and may take a year or more to fully implement. Likewise, some of our recommendations require joint efforts or agency collaboration to accomplish implementation.

Much has been done on the part of IDOC and the commission. We look forward to their continued efforts to increase efficiencies in the parole process through the implementation of our recommendations.

Chapter 2

Recommendations

Preparing for the Parole Hearing

Recommendation 3.1

Background

Our original report found that rehabilitation is not clearly defined in statute. Idaho Code § 20-241A includes rehabilitation as a required provision of management for those offenders housed or supervised outside of a facility other than an Idaho prison, but that definition does not apply to offenders housed in an Idaho prison. Although not explicitly mandated in statute, IDOC interprets Idaho Code § 20-101 and § 20-209 as legislative directives to provide offenders with rehabilitative services and opportunities.

Intent

A clear, comprehensive definition of rehabilitation will assist IDOC in meeting its goal of standardized programming through Pathways for Success.

Recommendation numbers are from the original report.

Recommendation: The Legislature should consider modifying Idaho Code § 20-101 and § 20-209 to include the definition of rehabilitation as currently provided in Idaho Code § 20-241A(1). This definition should be clarified to also apply to offenders in direct custody of the Department of Correction. The definition of rehabilitation could be expanded to include providing educational and therapeutic programs for substance abusers, mentally ill offenders, sex offenders, and those in need of basic and vocational education.

Status

Senate Bill 1030 more clearly defines rehabilitation. As of February 21, 2011, the bill had passed the Senate and the House of Representatives.

This recommendation is **in process**.

Recommendation 3.2

Background

In 2010, IDOC officials said they used a variety of factors to determine when an offender will move from county jail to prison. The reasons for offender movement included county jail requests, the type of sentence, and the offender's medical needs; however, an offender's parole eligibility date was not among those factors considered.¹

Intent

Moving offenders in a timely manner and taking into consideration the length of an offender's sentence will reduce the number of new offenders who enter prison already eligible for parole.

Recommendation: The Department of Correction should develop specific criteria for moving offenders from county jails into the prison system by formalizing its use of parole eligibility dates in determining how offenders are prioritized for movement.

Status

In a memo dated December 22, 2010, IDOC listed their offender movement priorities. The memo shows that IDOC continues to use a similar set of factors to prioritize offender movement. However, officials report that they consider parole eligibility dates after they have met the other transfer priorities.

Capacity issues limit the use of parole eligibility dates as a priority for offender movement out of county jail. However, to help achieve timely releases from prison, IDOC should specifically identify an offender's parole eligibility date as a criterion for movement if and when capacity allows.

This recommendation is **not implemented**.

Recommendation 3.3

Background

IDOC uses a spreadsheet, called the Program Exception List, to track offenders who do not meet the criteria for program enrollment and therefore need a program exception request. However, staff were not analyzing the frequency, reasons, or long-term programming trends associated with the exception requests.

¹ Because of the short sentence length, an offender who has been sentenced to retained jurisdiction (generally referred to as a rider) takes immediate priority for transport to prison.

Intent

Tracking trends in offender programming exceptions will allow IDOC to make necessary changes to Pathways for Success to meet the rehabilitative needs of all offenders.

Recommendation: The Department of Correction should monthly track the frequency, reasons, and long-term trends associated with exceptions made to offenders' assigned pathway. The Department of Correction should review these exceptions to identify potential areas that could enhance or modify Pathways for Success.

Status

The process described in our original report continues to be IDOC's primary method for tracking program exception requests. IDOC officials report that they have added the reasons for the exception request to the Program Exception List. Additionally, IDOC staff track the facility from which the case manager made the exception request. IDOC has not been able to analyze long-term trends associated with program exception requests, but officials report that once they have a full year of data, a long-term analysis can begin.

This recommendation is **in process**.

Recommendation 3.4

Background

Our initial review of the hearing officer desk manual found that it was outdated and did little to address some of the most basic elements of hearing officer job duties such as providing guidance for conducting investigations, which is a central job duty of hearing officers.

Intent

An updated, comprehensive desk manual will provide hearing officers with the most current tools and resources available to effectively perform their job duties.

Recommendation: The Commission of Pardons and Parole should update its hearing officer desk manual to include information about conducting hearing officer interviews, gathering inmate information using the Department of Correction's computer system, and using and interpreting assessment tools in making recommendations to commissioners.

Status

The commission has updated its hearing officer manual. According to the hearing officer supervisor, all hearing officers reviewed the manual and four new hearing officers received training using the updated manual. We found the

manual comprehensively addresses the elements of hearing officer duties, but it does not provide guidance on using and interpreting assessment tools when formulating recommendations.²

This recommendation is **implemented**. However, the commission should consider adding more specific information about the use and interpretation of assessments when formulating recommendations, which will create consistency among hearing officer reports.

Recommendation 3.5

Background

In 2010, we found the reports that hearing officers submitted to commissioners were not standardized. Additionally, interviews with hearing officers revealed that they did not consistently use the same criteria to formulate recommendations to grant or deny parole. Three commissioners indicated that hearing officer reports were helpful but could be further streamlined and standardized.

Intent

Standardized hearing officer reports will ensure that commissioners receive comprehensive and consistently formatted information on all offenders prior to the parole hearing.

Recommendation: The Commission of Pardons and Parole should further streamline and standardize its hearing officer reports to provide commissioners with the most consistent information about each offender. The commission may wish to consider developing a template as part of their module within the Department of Correction's computer system.

Status

The commission has updated the template of its hearing officer report. Additionally, the updated hearing officer desk manual dedicates nearly 20 pages of instructions on how to write the report according to the template. To ensure compliance with the template, the hearing officer supervisor created an auditing process to track trends or inconsistencies. Although subtle variations from the template occurred in some of the reports we reviewed, we consider the commission's development of a report template and a procedure for auditing officers' adherence to the template to be positive steps in standardizing the report preparation process.

This recommendation is **implemented**.

² The commission is also updating its manual specific to violation hearing officers, which should be finalized in the fall.

Recommendations 3.6

Background

In our original report, we identified instances of inaccurate, incorrectly entered, or incomplete offender information. For example, staff stored much of the offender information in a category labeled “other” instead of using a subcategory defined by specific criteria. At the time, IDOC officials said they were aware of data entry and storage issues for offender information but anticipated that updates to the computer system would resolve some of those issues.

Intent

Updated, accurate offender information that is easy to access will provide both IDOC staff and commission staff with the most relevant and current information.

Recommendation: As part of the Department of Correction’s strategic goal to update its computer system and provide easy access to offender data, it should standardize how staff enter information about each offender’s pathway, goals, and any programming issues into its computer system.

Status

IDOC has updated a module within its computer system that holds the Offender Management Plan. The module now uses dropdown menus that auto-populate the appropriate field for the offender’s specific pathway, but it also allows staff some discretion to enter additional comments. IDOC officials report that the new Education, Treatment, and Reentry Academy includes a section on standardized data entry in IDOC’s computer system.

This recommendation is **implemented**. IDOC should consider continued review of fields that allow staff to enter additional comments and evaluate whether further changes should be made to the Offender Management Plan module.

Recommendation 3.7

Background

In our original report, we identified instances of inaccurate, incorrectly entered, or incomplete offender information. At the time, IDOC officials said they were aware of data entry and storage issues for offender information but anticipated that updates to the computer system would resolve some of those issues.

Intent

Updated, accurate offender information that is easy to access will provide both IDOC staff and commission staff with the most relevant and current information.

Recommendation: As the Department of Correction updates its computer system, it should, at least semi-annually, review how offender information is being entered to determine whether some of this information could be categorized and stored using a more standardized approach.

Status

As evidenced by IDOC's work on the Offender Management Plan module, improvements have been made to the data entry of offender information. Officials report that they have a submission method for issues that require development, enhancement, or repair of a component of the computer system. Officials also note that they categorize submissions about the computer system to identify whether an issue is a computer system problem or related to something else, such as a business process or an end user practice.

IDOC has not conducted a formal review of how offender information is stored nor do they have a review scheduled. Although IDOC's computer system is not fully implemented, IDOC should semi-annually conduct systemwide reviews to assess whether the system is capturing accurate and complete offender information.

This recommendation is **in process**.

Conducting Hearings and Preparing for Release

Recommendation 4.1

Background

Our original report found that by using the information available to them, commissioners may require an offender to complete a program that does not align with the case plan already established by IDOC staff. The case plan outlines individual assessment scores and specific evidence-based criteria for the placement of each education or treatment program. We also found that the release delay was significantly longer for offenders who started core programming after the hearing than those who started core programming before the hearing.³

Intent

Providing hearing officers and commissioners with an Idaho-specific checklist to aid in the decision-making process will ensure that decisions are based on specific, standardized criteria but still allow for individual discretion.

³ There are several reasons why an offender may not enroll in programming until after his or her hearing. Programming added by commissioners is one reason.

Recommendation: The Commission of Pardons and Parole should formally incorporate the use of assessments in both its programming and parole release decisions through the use of an Idaho-specific checklist. In addition to assessments, this checklist could include the consideration of criteria currently listed in Administrative Rules.

Status

The commission is aware that other states have chosen to incorporate a checklist, but says it does not find a checklist necessary to follow or use when making parole release decisions. Instead, the commission tells us that the criteria outlined in administrative rule are built into the hearing officer report, making the relevant information available to commissioners and the use of a checklist redundant. Our review of the hearing officer report template found that the criteria are included in the report. However, the commission has not developed a procedure or policy outlining how the criteria could be considered when making parole release decisions.

This recommendation is **not implemented**. The commission should consider adding information to the draft commissioner manual (discussed in recommendation 4.2) about how to apply the criteria found in the hearing officer report when making parole release decisions.

Recommendation 4.2

Background

In 2010, we found that commissioner attendance at national trainings had been eliminated due to a lack of funding and that commissioners generally participated in informal trainings. However, several commissioners indicated that more training would be beneficial.

Intent

Providing current and future commissioners with additional training tools, including an Idaho-specific parole training manual, will enhance their ability to perform their job duties and ensure that all commissioners are operating within similar parameters when making decisions.

Recommendation: The Commission of Pardons and Parole should develop a formal training procedure, including a training manual, to assist commissioners. The manual could include language regarding the Commission of Pardons and Parole's commitment to public safety and offender management, the Department of Correction's approach to programming, the assessments used to help determine programming decisions, and the risk assessment tools commissioners could apply in making parole decisions.

Status

The commission is developing a commissioner specific manual, which includes comprehensive information about offender management, IDOC programming and assessments, and language about the commission's commitment to public safety. The draft does not address how commissioners apply the information in the parole decision-making process.

This recommendation is **in process**.

Recommendation 4.3

Background

In 2010, we found that neither IDOC nor the commission was tracking the frequency, reasons, and outcomes associated with adding programming requirements at the parole hearing.

Intent

Tracking commissioner-required programming as Pathways for Success continues to evolve will allow IDOC and the commission to identify deficiencies in the new programming model that may have not otherwise been discovered until an offender's parole hearing.

Recommendation: The Department of Correction and the Commission of Pardons and Parole should collaborate to track the frequency, reasons, and outcome associated with the assignment of additional programming at parole hearings. The Department of Correction and the Commission of Pardons and Parole should review this information quarterly to ensure both parties have a clear understanding of the Department of Correction's objectives and the Commission of Pardons and Parole's pre-release requirements.

Status

The commission's executive director and IDOC officials have stated that, at least anecdotally, they have noticed a decrease in commissioner-added programming requirements at the parole hearing since the establishment of Pathways for Success. Additionally, IDOC officials intend to compare the success rate of each pathway in two to three years once they have collected adequate data.

IDOC officials also state that they would not make changes to a pathway based on trends in commissioner-added programming. Officials report that Pathways for Success is grounded in clinical evidence and the design of a pathway is based on that evidence. Because IDOC's focus on clinical evidence may differ from the commission's focus on public safety, IDOC's programming objectives may

not always align with the commission's pre-release requirements. Nonetheless, IDOC and the commission should still monitor trends in added programming to understand those differences.

This recommendation is **in process**.

Recommendation 4.4

Background

At the parole hearing, commissioners have the discretion to add programming beyond the requirements of IDOC. Added programming is one of the reasons an offender may not have enrolled in required programming until after his or her parole hearing. Our analysis found that offenders who begin programming after their parole hearing are more likely to experience release delays.

Intent

A closer alignment of commission release requirements and IDOC programming requirements through joint training will help reduce the number of offenders who begin programming after their parole hearing.

Recommendation. The Department of Correction and the Commission of Pardons and Parole should formalize programming-related training between case managers and hearing officers. This training could include information about Pathways for Success, assessments used to determine programming, and the eligibility criteria for each program.

Status

IDOC officials report that they invite commission staff to all scheduled trainings. The commission's executive director reports that commission hearing officers will attend sections of the upcoming case manager academy. IDOC and commission staff attended some joint trainings last year, and they are currently working on a timeframe for additional joint training. Officials from both IDOC and the commission state that they will continue to work toward developing more joint training.

IDOC officials say that training on programming is usually scheduled as issues arise. The commission echoes this approach by selecting training topics after an issue has surfaced. However, to meet the intent of our recommendation, IDOC and the commission need to take a proactive approach to training. For example, IDOC and the commission could formalize their efforts by including a list of the necessary or relevant training in staff manuals.

This recommendation is **in process**.

Recommendation 4.5

Background

Our original report found that IDOC and the commission did not have policies to ensure an ongoing dialogue between their staff. During our study, IDOC was in the process of updating its offender management policy to include guidelines on how and when case managers should communicate with commission hearing officers and other IDOC staff.

Intent

Reciprocal communication between IDOC staff and commission staff throughout each offender's incarceration will help prepare offenders for parole hearings and reentry into the community.

Recommendation: The Department of Correction and the Commission of Pardons and Parole should develop communication tools that outline the points throughout an offender's incarceration at which case managers, hearing officers, and parole officers should collaborate in determining an offender's readiness for his or her parole hearing and eventual release.

Status

IDOC has implemented its new offender management policy and revised its standard operating procedure for case management requirements. IDOC officials state that the department is also developing a case management manual to provide additional detail, including specifics about communication responsibilities.

The commission's new hearing officer manual contains specific points in the parole process where communication between commission staff and IDOC staff should occur. The commission's executive director reports that she has initiated conversations with IDOC officials to re-establish a communication process that, to date, has been followed inconsistently.

Although case managers and hearing officers are now given more direction about communication points, parole officers have not received any new or formalized tools to foster better communication. IDOC should continue developing and formalizing resources for all staff.

This recommendation is **in process**.

Recommendation 4.6

Background

We found that IDOC had no department-wide policy to guide parole officers in conducting parole plan investigations. Instead, each district could modify the process to suit its individual needs and preferences.

Intent

Ensuring that all parole plan investigations are conducted in a similar manner will help streamline the investigation process throughout the state.

Recommendation. The Department of Correction should evaluate parole plan investigations by conducting a study over several months and evaluating the options for some standardization of the process. Once complete, the Department of Correction should then develop a policy to guide officers in conducting investigations.

Status

To address this issue, IDOC officials spoke with district managers and developed a new procedure outlining the requirements for parole plan investigations. The procedure is currently in draft form, but IDOC officials report that it should be given final review at a meeting of the Standard Operating Procedures Review Committee and implemented in the next several months.

This recommendation is **implemented** pending final approval of the new procedure.

Recommendation 4.7

Background

The overall parole plan process begins with the initial parole plan development and concludes with an approval signature from the commission's executive director. We analyzed a segment of this process: the timeframe between the date a parole plan was submitted to a district for investigation and the date the plan was approved by a parole officer. We found that this segment of the process was taking longer to complete. In 2007, the process took an average of 26 days to complete. By 2009, the process was taking an average of 42 days.⁴

Intent

A better understanding of the factors related to the parole plan process taking longer will allow IDOC to review those factors and look for ways to increase efficiencies.

⁴ Our analysis used data from both IDOC and the commission.

Recommendation. As the Department of Correction implements its new computer system, it should further evaluate the parole plan process by tracking the timeframes surrounding plan development and submissions.

Status

IDOC officials report that a web-based computer program is being developed and will undergo testing. The program will eventually allow for automated tracking of the parole plan process. Appendix A provides additional information about this recommendation.

This recommendation is **in process**.

Community Supervision

Recommendation 5.1

Background

The Department of Correction has little control over which offenders are paroled to each district, making staffing needs difficult to accurately predict. In 2010, we found that the parole officer workload was increasing faster than staffing allocations in some districts.

Intent

Regularly reviewing the location of offenders under community supervision throughout the state will allow IDOC to adjust staffing allocations and better manage caseloads.

Recommendation. The Department of Correction should formalize its efforts to regularly review staffing allocations and trends in offender releases, including the districts that offenders parole to and the level of supervision these offenders require. At least annually, the Department of Correction should monitor staffing allocations to identify any trends and consider reallocating staff among its districts to better align with shifts in community supervision demands.

Status

IDOC officials state that staffing allocations are reviewed after a new vacancy. As a result of a review in September 2010, IDOC decided to move an officer position from one district to another to reflect changes in offender location. However, IDOC officials report that this position is being held vacant and has not yet moved because of a lack of funding. Despite whether IDOC has the ability to fill current vacancies, we recommend officials continue monitoring

trends in offender releases to improve the alignment between staffing allocations and community supervision demands.

This recommendation is **in process**.

Recommendation 5.2

Background

Our original report illustrated the main steps of Idaho's parole violation process. Although it complies with federal law, we found that Idaho's violation process is complex and affects the workload of IDOC staff and commission staff.

Intent

An updated review of the violation process will preserve the authority of commissioners to make revocation determinations and may help to reduce the incarceration costs for offenders whose parole is ultimately reinstated.

Recommendation: The Department of Correction and the Commission of Pardons and Parole should work with the Office of the Attorney General to review the violation process by evaluating each step of the process and to clarify the role of the Department of Correction staff and the Commission of Pardons and Parole staff in determining how violation decisions are made. If necessary, the Commission of Pardons and Parole should then amend its rules to more accurately reflect the process associated with violations and revocations.

Status

Officials from IDOC and the commission have discussed this recommendation during a joint strategic planning session, but officials from IDOC, the commission, and the Attorney General's Office have not met collectively to review the process in such a way that clarifies the roles of commission staff and IDOC staff. Commission officials report that they are working with IDOC and the Attorney General's Office to develop a training that addresses the violation process.

This recommendation is **in process**.

Commission Operations

Recommendation 6.1

Background

Our original report illustrated the statutory link between the commission and IDOC—commission operations are discussed in a section of code

related to the Board of Correction. In 2010 and previous years, the commission was appropriated funds through IDOC's annual appropriation bill. We found that this statutory framework does not reflect the independent operations of the commission.

Intent

The creation of the commission as a state agency will help ensure accountability and transparency of operations.

Recommendation: The Legislature should review the current statutory framework of the commission and evaluate whether the commission should be designated as a fully independent state agency.

Status

The commission has received its own agency code and its own appropriation bill. According to Legislative Services staff, these changes have made the commission fiscally independent of IDOC, but the two entities are still linked in Idaho Code. Updating the statutory framework to reflect current operations will help clarify the commission's roles and responsibilities as well as its relationship with IDOC and the Board of Correction.

This recommendation is **in process**.

Recommendation 6.2

Background

The commission operates without any formal policies and its reliance on IDOC policies contradicts its independent role. The commission also relies on IDOC business administration and human resources policies, which were not written to meet the specific needs of the commission.

Intent

A commission-specific policy and procedure manual will ensure all staff have a clear understanding of the commission's requirements and expectations.

Recommendation. The Commission of Pardons and Parole should develop its own policy and procedure manual. The commission should also ensure that all existing and future staff have a clear understanding of the office policies and procedures by providing an orientation of the new material.

Status

The commission would like to develop its own policy and procedure manual but cites a lack of time and available staff to begin the process. Alternatively, the commission formally contracted with IDOC in July 2010 to provide support

services ranging from payroll and personnel processing and monitoring to policy and procedure guidance. Although the now formalized contractual relationship with IDOC to provide these services may offer staff a clearer understanding of requirements and expectations, IDOC policies are not tailored to meet the specific needs of a small agency like the commission.

This recommendation is **not implemented**.

Recommendation 6.3

Background

The commission had a broad mission statement but lacked measurable goals and had not drafted or reported on specific performance measurements for the past three years. Even though IDOC has a strategic plan with performance goals, the goals do not address the commission.

Intent

Well-defined, measurable goals will allow both staff and the commissioners to work within a common framework and provide the commission with transparency and accountability in its operations.

Recommendation: The Commission of Pardons and Parole should develop clearly defined goals. As part of this development process, the commission should review its mission statement and ensure its goals can provide measureable outcomes in a reasonable timeframe. The commission should review its goals annually to ensure they align with the commission's desired outcomes.

Status

The commission has said that it understands the importance of this recommendation but has been unable to work on its implementation, citing a lack of available staff. The hearing officer supervisor told us that informal conversations about a review of the mission have taken place among management, and the commission plans to work on the recommendation in the next year.

This recommendation is **not implemented**.

Recommendation 6.4

Background

Our original report found that the commission was not measuring hearing officer workload. In 2008, an independent consultant found that officers substantially over reported the time needed to complete their monthly

duties and recommended that the commission further investigate the discrepancies. At the time of our 2010 report release, the commission had not followed up on the recommendation or finalized the consultant's study.

Intent

Understanding the workload issues of staff will allow commission management to make adjustments as necessary and find specific opportunities to increase efficiencies.

Recommendation: The Commission of Pardons and Parole should follow up on the findings of the 2008 consultant study to better understand the length of time associated with various components of the hearing officer investigation process.

Status

The commission said it did not receive the information it hoped to gain from the 2008 consultant study and found the study difficult to use because of the findings. According to the hearing officer supervisor, the commission would like to conduct a follow-up study but does not have the financial resources within its budget.

This recommendation is **not implemented**.

Workload: The amount of work required to address assigned cases. Measuring workload requires an assessment of (1) factors that impact the time it takes to work cases, and (2) the time staff spend on activities not directly related to their case responsibilities.

Recommendation 6.5

Background

Hearing officers were required to submit individual caseload reports to the hearing officer supervisor on a monthly basis; however, the hearing officer supervisor confirmed that the caseload reports were not analyzed or summarized to assess officer workload. We found that the reports lacked certain elements necessary to determine workload and may not be the best use of officer time.

Intent

Understanding the workload issues of staff will allow commission management to make adjustments as necessary and find specific opportunities to increase efficiencies.

Recommendation: The hearing officer supervisor should evaluate and expand the types of information officers are required to submit to more accurately reflect workload issues, to regularly review the monthly reports that officers submit, to summarize those findings, and to analyze the information to identify trends in caseload or time management.

Status

Since the release of our original report, the hearing officer supervisor holds weekly meetings with a hearing officer assigned to schedule caseloads. From these meetings, schedules have been adjusted to evenly distribute caseloads among officers. Additionally, the commission is in the process of implementing video hearings to help decrease officer workload.

The hearing officer supervisor continues to use the same caseload reports we reviewed during the original evaluation. The hearing officer assigned to schedule caseloads uses a similar report to track caseload. However, to meet the intent of the recommendation, the commission should summarize or analyze the reports to identify trends in caseload or time management. This analysis will help the commission better understand the amount of work required to complete assigned cases and potentially redistribute staff assignments using workload rather than caseload.

This recommendation is **in process**.

Caseload: The number of cases staff are assigned in a given time period. Caseloads can be measured by individual staff, by the specific type of case, or by the total caseload of staff as a whole.

Recommendation 6.6

Background

We interviewed hearing officers about their workload in any given week. Most hearing officers had been unable to quantify how they spent their time on various tasks during a typical 40-hour work week. Our analysis of those interviews found that 50 percent of officers thought report writing consumed most of their weekly workload.

Intent

Understanding the workload issues of staff will allow commission management to make adjustments as necessary and find specific opportunities to increase efficiencies.

Recommendation: In partnership with hearing officers, the hearing officer supervisor should identify ways to assist officers in streamlining the investigation process.

Status

The hearing officer supervisor has worked with officers to update their desk manual to better outline duties and responsibilities. The monthly hearing officer meeting has been redesigned to address problems, resolutions, and training. The hearing officer supervisor also meets with IDOC officials to discuss various issues affecting hearing officer duties. Additionally, the commission is working on implementing video hearings as mentioned in the discussion of recommendation 6.5.

This recommendation is **implemented**.

Recommendation 6.7

Background

In the absence of available staff because of budget holdbacks, administrative staff were given additional duties, leaving them with less time to complete their original job duties. During interviews with commission staff, one-third of administrative staff told us that efficiencies at the commission could be improved with the addition of more administrative staff or better delegation of tasks. Nearly half of hearing officers mentioned that the working environment for administrative staff needed improvement.

Intent

Understanding the workload issues of staff will allow commission management to make adjustments as necessary and find specific opportunities to increase efficiencies.

Recommendation: Given the increase of duties to existing staff, the executive director should review the distribution of new duties to minimize the impact on staff's ability to complete their previously assigned duties.

Status

According to the executive director, staff furloughs were delayed by leaving an administrative position vacant. Staff have both volunteered and been asked to fulfill some of these duties left by the vacancy. Management monitors the additional work and relieves staff if they are no longer able to perform the additional duties. A recent part-time hire has helped alleviate some duties that had previously been assigned to other staff.

This recommendation is **implemented**. The commission should continually review the distribution of ancillary duties until staff vacancies are filled.

Recommendation 6.8

Background

Commission staff had not been using certain technology to maximize resources. During our initial study, the executive director told us she would like to incorporate more advanced technology in the daily operations but needed guidance. Through our observations of meetings and analysis of commission data, we found that commission staff, including the executive director, may not be using their time efficiently in maintaining and analyzing data.

Intent

Maximizing technology will allow the commission to improve processes and reduce staff workload.

Recommendation: The Commission of Pardons and Parole should develop its internal technology capacity, providing staff a better understanding of how additional technology could streamline processes, reduce duplication of efforts, and increase efficiencies. This development may include basic training in word processing and data management for all staff and targeted training for those staff with additional technology-related duties. As part of this training, the commission should also consider whether more elements of its data should be maintained through its Correctional Integrated System (CIS) module.

Status

In 2010, the commission surveyed all staff about their computer skills to identify areas for further technology training. The commission found that most staff lacked knowledge of more advanced computer skills. According to the executive director, staff were retrained on computer systems that maintain offender information including CIS.

The commission indicates that it does not want to maintain additional elements of data, such as hearing officer reports, through its CIS module at this time. The executive director is concerned that, until fully implemented, CIS lacks a confidential mechanism that meets the commission's needs.

This recommendation is **addressed**. The commission should consider maintaining more data through its CIS module once the system is fully functional.

Recommendation 6.9

Background

Our original report concluded that the executive director's attendance at parole hearings required her to be out of the office for significant periods of time. At the request of the commissioners, the executive director generally attends every parole hearing to read commissioner decisions to offenders and advise the commissioners on rules and laws. The executive director is also responsible for the day-to-day management of the commission but has delegated many of these duties to the hearing officer supervisor. Despite this delegation of duties, several commission staff commented that the executive director is sometimes too busy with other tasks when asked to provide staff with necessary feedback.

Intent

Dedicating sufficient time to managing the daily operations of the commission will provide the executive director with opportunities to create policies and procedures, formalize training opportunities, and effectively lead commission staff.

Recommendation: The commissioners should consider options to allow the executive director more time to manage the daily operations of the commission, including developing policies and procedures, creating training guidelines for commissioners, and building on the capacity of existing commission staff.

Status

Commissioners and the executive director prefer that the executive director attend parole hearings and do not see a need to change the current system. The commission states that the executive director must attend hearings to advise commissioners about policies, statute, and due process, and to track issues for discussion with IDOC staff.

This recommendation is **not implemented**.

Recommendation 6.10

Background

As part of our original methodology, we interviewed commission staff about the parole process. During those interviews, some staff expressed serious concerns about the treatment of staff. Although outside our initial study objectives, government auditing standards required us to report on issues that significantly affected our evaluation. Additionally, we found that the commission lacked a formal grievance process for staff to safely voice opinions or concerns.

Intent

Providing staff with a formal mechanism to raise concerns, make suggestions, and provide feedback will improve management practices and improve the working relationship between staff and management.

Recommendation: As the appointing authority, the Office of the Governor should ensure that the executive director of the Commission of Pardons and Parole establish a formal, commission-specific communication and grievance process to improve the working relationship between management and staff and ensure all staff are treated fairly.

Status

As discussed under recommendation 6.2, the commission currently uses IDOC policies and procedures and relies on IDOC staff to provide human resource services. Although not specific to the commission, IDOC's grievance policy is in accordance with the state Division of Human Resources and provides commission staff with formal guidance in the absence of a commission-specific policy. Additional efforts taken by the commission to address these issues are outlined in appendix A.

The Division of Human Resources interviewed commission staff on a volunteer basis after the release of our original report. In a letter dated July 9, 2010, to the Governor, the division identifies personnel concerns similar to those we learned about during our initial evaluation. The letter did not mention any efforts by the commission to develop a grievance process and offered general suggestions for improvement rather than specific recommendations to remedy problems (see appendix B).

We recognize the efforts of the Governor and the Division of Human Resources to improve the working environment at the commission. Nevertheless, the commission, a small agency with a unique, high-stakes decision-making function, should develop a grievance policy tailored to its own administrative structure and processes.

This recommendation is **not implemented**.

Appendix A

Agency Comments



IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

*“Protecting Idaho through Safety, Accountability, Partnerships
and Opportunities for Offender Change”*

C. L. “Butch” Otter
Governor

Brent D. Reinke
Director

IDOC Response to OPE Follow-up Report February 14, 2011

In the February 2010 OPE Evaluation Report, *Increasing Efficiencies in Idaho's Parole Process*, the report contends that the parole plan process is taking longer to complete. The report states on page 33: “When looking at the overall parole plan process, which includes the initial parole plan development, our analysis found that the average time taken to complete the process has increased in the last three years from 26 days in 2007 to 42 days in 2009.”

Year	Days to Complete
2007	26
2008	33
2009	42

In the OPE follow-up draft report, recommendation 4.7 reiterates this contention. On page 12 of the draft report it states, “Our original report found that the parole plan process is taking longer to complete. In 2007, the process took an average of 26 days to complete. By 2009, the process was taking an average of 42 days.” In reviewing both reports, IDOC could find no documentation or data to support this contention.

For approximately 10 years, IDOC has submitted and tracked parole plans via our Reflections Database. Once a parole plan is submitted by a case manager, a supervisor in the respective district has one week to assign the plan to a parole officer. The parole officer then has two weeks from assignment to complete the investigation. If the parole officer fails to complete the plan within two weeks, a past due notice is automatically generated to the IDOC parole coordinator for review. In summary, the majority of parole plans take less than three weeks from submission to investigate for approval/denial.

As for how long it takes for a case manager to develop a plan prior to submission, there is no way to track this information via Reflections. Parole plans can be created and updated in the Reflections system at any time during an offender’s incarceration. This is good case management and allows a newly assigned case manager to track a potential release option. However, these plans remain a “work in progress” until a parole date is secured and housing options are finalized. In short, it is not possible to track time frames for parole plan development based on Reflections data.

Though the IDOC does not agree with the premise that parole plans are taking longer to complete, we do agree with the status update for recommendation 4.7, which states, “IDOC officials report that a web-based computer program is being developed and will undergo testing. The program will eventually allow for automated tracking of the parole plan process. This recommendation is in process.”



STATE OF IDAHO

COMMISSION OF PARDONS AND PAROLE

C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER
Governor

Olivia Craven
Executive Director

February 16, 2011

Rakesh Mohan, Director
Office of Performance Evaluations
Joint Legislative Oversight Committee
P.O. Box 83720
Boise, Idaho 83720-0055

RE: Preliminary Draft: Increasing Efficiencies in Idaho's Parole Process Follow-Up

Dear Director Mohan:

I need to point out the reasons my response is late in reaching you. The report is dated 2/7/11 and was hand-delivered to our office on 2/8/11. During this time, I was in hearings in Pocatello and did not return until 2/13/11. Your letter requested that our response be given to you by 2/14/11. As there are many important tasks that must be done following a hearing session, and our JFAC presentation was scheduled for 2/16/11, along with other budgetary issues, it was impossible to review this report in time to meet your 2/14/11 deadline. I do not take anything regarding this process lightly, and it is important that we have time to review and respond appropriately. The report was not sent electronically. I appreciate you have deadlines for your work, and I know how important it is that you have our information timely. However, we are a very small agency with extremely important decisions to make and carry out

I understand that you noted that "no formal response is needed", but it is important that we provide you any comments regarding the information.

I am attaching our response to the Preliminary Draft.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Olivia Craven".

Olivia Craven
Executive Director

CC: Pathways Report: November 15, 2010
Parole Releases Report: May 2010

Increasing Efficiencies in Idaho's Parole Process

Follow-Up Report: February 7, 2011

The following information is our formal response to the draft report submitted by the Office of Performance Evaluations. I understand that no formal response is necessary, but it is important that the Commission address the issues.

CHAPTER 1, INTRODUCTION

Preparing for the Parole Hearing

- Chapter 1, Page 2: *“Program enrollment is typically scheduled to ensure an offender completes programming before his or her parole eligibility date.”* While this is a goal and one that IDOC is working toward, it is not currently operational. I meet with Treatment Services and make certain they have the information we observe at hearings. Please refer to the report I submitted to OPE for the 11/30/10 JLOC meeting regarding Pathways and programming. (Attached “Pathways Report: November 15, 2010)
- Chapter 1, Page 2: I need to point out that there are a number of offenders who are eligible for parole at the time of their commitment, due to having served county jail time and Riders, which, with credit, have served their fixed time before the Commission can process their hearing.

CHAPTER 2, RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 3.4

- Chapter 2, Page 4: OPE notes that this recommendation has been implemented: *“However the commission should consider adding more specific information about the use and interpretation of assessments when formulating recommendations to create consistency among hearing officer reports.”*

This issue has been addressed in many training sessions and during meetings. Each case is different and it is difficult to define any specific issue as an absolute in every case. Hearing officers have been trained in assessment usage and understanding. Every case has its own unique problem areas, which the LSI assessment domains should show. I believe that IDOC is just beginning to write manuals for case managers, parole officers, and PSI writers. I simply want to point out that we have been ahead of the curve in creating desk manuals for all positions at the Commission. In fact, we have contracted in the past to update all manuals. Unfortunately, we had to stop that process due to funding.

The “problem areas” attributable to each offender should be addressed through programming and special conditions set by the Commission. Every case is different and a professional hearing officer, case manager, and parole officer should be able to understand what areas need to be addressed. We will be adding specific language to guide hearing officers in their recommendations.

CONDUCTING HEARINGS AND PREPARING FOR RELEASE

Recommendation 4.1

- Chapter 2, Page 7: As we have advised numerous times, the Commission often has information that an IDOC person conducting an assessment does not. The Commission does not "add" programming that is not consistent with the problems and needs the offender has. Nothing is perfect, and we have explained that issues may not be identified at the time the assessments are done. The Commission has a process we have worked out with IDOC to advise of any issues we have with the assessments and why programming was directed.
- Chapter 2, Page 7: I am in total agreement with OPE regarding the statement: "*We also found that the release delay was significantly longer for offenders who started core programming after the hearing than those who started core programming before the hearing.*" However, I need to point out that this is NOT a Commission responsibility. With the implementation of Pathways for Success, programming is assigned by the Pathway. The Commission follows this Pathway and the attendant programs, and it is a rare occasion that programming is assigned outside of the Pathway. (Please refer to the "Pathways Report: November 15, 2010" and the "Parole Releases: May 2010" report prepared for the 11/30/10 JLOC meeting) These reports show the number of offenders in programming at the time of the hearing and the reasons for "delays" in releases.

Any programming that the Commission may assign outside of the assigned Pathway, is discussed with IDOC, and we have a process for addressing these issues. I make these comments only because the statements appear to attribute offenders not getting into programs to the Commission "adding" programs before their release. While this may occasionally occur, "adding" any programming is only because the specific problem area was not addressed.

The Commission makes their decisions based on many factors. The report outlines everything they need in terms of information and every decision is objective based on the information provided. A checklist might simply set the stage for "canned" decisions. I truly respect the OPE recommendations, but parole decision-making is complicated, and it should be, as we are dealing with people's lives. This is why the reports are so comprehensive.

- Chapter 2, Page 7: The Commissioners have made definitive statements that they understand the criteria outlined in Rule for criteria to be considered, and they have to make decisions that are very complex.

Recommendation 4.4

- Chapter 2, Page 10: While IDOC officials may have advised OPE staff that Commission staff is invited to all scheduled training, I must point out that there has not been training scheduled that we received notice of. Hearing officers will be included in the case managers academy, because we requested it. We do not yet have dates for this training but have been told it is sometime in April 2011.

Training is not necessarily always a stable issue. We have a hearing officer who has volunteered as our "training officer". He tracks training within IDOC and outside of IDOC. I disagree that our training is made "after an issue has already surfaced".

I do not disagree with the recommendation of taking a proactive approach, particularly between the Commission and IDOC staff. We have engaged in training opportunities and have created co-training over the years. There was a time that due to budget constraints, this was reduced or eliminated.

Recommendation 4.5

- Chapter 2, Page 10: As I have previously advised, the Commission and IDOC created a process for communication between hearing officers and case managers many years ago. The process was that the hearing officer sends notice of the scheduled hearing for an offender to the case manager; the case manager advises the offender; and the case manager makes a notation in CIS notes to advise the hearing officer of any issues the case manager would like to make. The case manager was invited to make recommendations. If the hearing officer does not have contact from the case manager, they are to contact the case manager either via phone or email. Commission staff has followed this process. IDOC has recently made it a directive that case managers follow this process.

COMMISSION OPERATIONS

Recommendation 6.4

- Chapter 2, Page 17: *"...According to the hearing officer supervisor, the commission would like to conduct a follow-up study but does not have the financial resources within it budget."* Mr. Greer advised OPE staff that it could be beneficial for an agency to contract a study at some point to assess the overall operation or to evaluate specific areas. If we wanted a consultant to come in, we simply do not have the funding for it at this time.

Recommendation 6.5

- Chapter 2, Page 17: Mr. Greer has advised OPE staff that there are three (3) different ways that he tracks distribution of work and caseloads. The reports provide the information to be able to watch caseloads. Mr. Greer uses these reports to look for trends.

We have always had a process whereby hearing officers are assigned to specific institutions. This allows for less travel between the institutions. And, annually, discussion is had with all hearing officers as to changes for officers to go to different institutions. There is a mixture of the types of hearings and crimes at every institution. One cannot necessarily determine that more complex cases will be found at a particular institution. However, the tracking reports allow for the hearing officer supervisor to determine the time frames officers are spending on different cases. Trends need to be watched.

Recommendation 6.8

- Chapter 2, Page 20: This is simply to clarify and correct statements. We did survey staff regarding their computer knowledge.

We have worked with IT to develop databases for which we could maintain information and produce reports, as we are NOT currently able to input additional information in to the CIS modules. I did advise OPE that we will not currently maintain hearing officer reports in CIS until the module is complete. However, we have worked with IT to hire a consultant to create databases for us so that we can get reports for all of the information we track. However, this has not been proceeded upon, but we will be finding a way to get this done.

We have every intention of maintaining good information in the computer system when it is available.

Division of Human Resources Report

I want JLOC to know that staff issues have been dealt with, and I may have a different view of "reported" issues. However, management has dealt with absolutely every issue that was brought up. Following the DHR study, I conducted a lengthy staff meeting to go over every issue, and have had follow up meetings. In light of the DHR report, I will make a few comments:

- The hearing officer supervisor manages the office in the director's absence.
- Management is addressing all recommendations of the DHR report.
- I cannot speak to specific issues as employees must be protected, but every issue is dealt with as it comes up. We are not able to share with employees what may be done with individual employees.
- Staff has always been kept informed of the reasons Commissioners receive their reports in the manner in which they do. Staff has always been listened to regarding suggestions.
- Lunches being delivered for Commissioners at hearings: staff has always been informed that lunches are picked up and delivered solely due to the fact that offenders were caught putting "things" into the food being prepared for the Commissioners. I will not give details here but bringing lunches in for the Commissioners is mandatory. Most restaurants will not deliver to the prison.
- All staff is held to the same working hours. While hearing officers may believe their work could be done with flexible schedules, administrative staff's work does not. Management has made the decision that employees must be treated equally, as the Commission office has to remain open for public hours.
- Every Director has to make decisions that are not popular.

Appendix B

Division of Human Resources Letter



State of Idaho
DIVISION OF HUMAN RESOURCES
Executive Office of the Governor

C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER
Governor
WAYNE HAMMON
Acting Administrator

Idaho Personnel Commission
Mike Brassey, Chair
Pete Black
John Cowden
Clarisse Maxwell
Evan Frasure

DATE: July 9, 2010

TO: Governor C. L. "Butch" Otter

CC: Wayne Hammon, Acting Administrator
Division of Human Resources (DHR)

David Hensley, Deputy Chief of Staff
Office of the Governor

FROM: Dennis Moberly, HR Program Manager, DHR
Vicki Tokita, HR Program Manager, DHR

RE: Commission of Pardons and Parole

Process:

In our introductory statements to staff and Commissioners interviewed, we shared:

- These meetings were not a follow up to OPE's report.
- The Governor was interested in hearing from employees and Commissioners on ideas to streamline processes, thoughts on cost saving measures, or any topics of concern.
- We had no specific questions other than to clarify issues that the individual discussed.
- The report would include general topics or issues that were frequently discussed rather than specific individuals' statements.

Overall Finding:

Director Craven is very knowledgeable and respected by staff. Olivia is viewed as hard working and dedicated; however, her work with the Commission leaves little time to manage the office operations.

Recommendations:

- There is a need for a Deputy Director to handle internal operations and have signature authority to expedite internal operations.
- Create two supervisor or lead worker positions due to the large span of control (18 hearing officers) of the Hearing Officer Manager.
- A work flow analysis of the administrative support staff should be performed to determine if the staffing and reporting relations are appropriate.

Additional Information and Suggestions:

Communication:

While management meets regularly with staff and feels there is an open door policy, many employees do not feel their supervisors are readily available when needed or that concerns expressed are acted on.

Suggestion:

Employees would appreciate additional information on the budget and the impact on staff.

Hearing Officers:

We were impressed with the majority of the Hearing Officers. They appear professional, dedicated to their jobs, and have a good understanding of their role in public safety. However, there appears to be a couple of Hearing Officers that are not held to the same performance standards such as timely reports, hours of work, and maintaining a respectful workplace environment. It is perceived that management knows about these employee issues and does not hold them accountable because of personal relationships.

Suggestion:

Management should communicate clear performance expectations and hold all staff equally accountable.

Administrative Support Staff:

There is a perception that administrative support staff is treated differently from the Hearing Officers. Their roles are unclear and appear to lack supervision.

It is perceived that one support staff member is not performing and the work has been distributed to the Hearing Officers.

There are concerns that support staff does not feel appreciated.

Streamline Processes:

The Commission has automated some parts of their work.

Suggestion:

Employees suggest that other facets of the Commission's work should be evaluated for possible automation which could expedite work processes.

Cost Saving Measures:

The Commission is implementing videoconferencing to cut down on travel costs. Employees use personal cars for Commission business and charge for mileage.

Suggestions:

Employees suggest that the Commission consider using state cars instead of paying mileage for use of personal cars.

While holding hearings at Institutions, Commissioners should consider eating there instead of ordering lunch from a restaurant and having staff deliver the food.

Explore ways to cut down on staff time copying and postage costs when preparing reports for Commission hearings.

Other Employee Suggestions:

While management mandates employees to arrive at 8:00 and leave at 5:00, it appears that not everyone is held to these office hours.

Suggestion:

Employees suggest that Hearing Officers work is conducive to a flexible schedule.

Office of Performance Evaluations Reports, 2008–Present

Publication numbers ending with “F” are follow-up reports of previous evaluations. Publication numbers ending with three letters are federal mandate reviews—the letters indicate the legislative committee that requested the report.

<u>Pub. #</u>	<u>Report Title</u>	<u>Date Released</u>
08-01	Governance of Information Technology and Public Safety Communications	March 2008
08-02F	State Substance Abuse Treatment Efforts	March 2008
08-03F	Virtual School Operations	March 2008
09-01	Public Education Funding in Idaho	January 2009
09-02F	Higher Education Residency Requirements	January 2009
09-03	Idaho Transportation Department Performance Audit	January 2009
09-04	Feasibility of School District Services Consolidation	February 2009
09-05F	School District Administration and Oversight	February 2009
09-06F	Use of Average Daily Attendance in Public Education Funding	February 2009
09-07F	Child Welfare Caseload Management	February 2009
09-08F	Public Education Technology Initiatives	February 2009
09-09F	Management in the Department of Health and Welfare	March 2009
09-10F	Governance of Information Technology and Public Safety Communications	April 2009
10-01	Operational Efficiencies in Idaho’s Prison System	January 2010
10-02	Increasing Efficiencies in Idaho’s Parole Process	February 2010
10-03F	Use of Average Daily Attendance in Public Education	March 2010
10-04	Governance of EMS Agencies in Idaho	November 2010
10-05F	Governance of Information Technology and Public Safety Communications	November 2010
11-01	Distribution and Sale of Liquor in Idaho	January 2011
11-02	Coordination and Delivery of Senior Services in Idaho	February 2011
11-03F	Increasing Efficiencies in Idaho’s Parole Process	February 2011

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