

Pennsylvania Department of Corrections

Quehanna Motivational Boot Camp Performance Analysis and Evaluation

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Overview

This report evaluates the performance of the Quehanna Boot Camp, for the period 1998 through 2007. The performance of the Boot Camp is examined against the program goals established by Act 215 of 1990 as amended by Act 86 of 1996 and the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (PADOC). This report presents original data about Boot Camp participants and graduates including programmatic achievements as well as detectable changes in criminal sentiments, hostile thinking, and risk for reoffending.

Highlights

- The Boot Camp graduated 3,816 inmates between 1998 and 2006, achieving a graduation rate of 88 percent.
- From 2000 to 2006, the average recidivism rate (re-incarceration rate) for Boot Camp graduates at six months, one year, and three years post-release, is lower than the average Department-wide rate for all paroled inmates (7.9 vs. 17.7 percent; 19.5 vs. 31.7 percent; and 42.0 vs. 55.8 percent, respectively).
- Over the period of 2000-2006, 63.9 percent of the Quehanna graduates who returned to state custody were returned for technical violations of parole, 29.6 percent returned for new crimes. The status of the remaining 6.4 percent of returnees is still pending.
- Pre and post assessment scores from 2006 and 2007 graduates indicated that medium or high risk offenders, overall, showed the most improvement for reducing their risk for reoffending, decreasing their level of criminal sentiment and thinking, and lowering their level of hostility.
- TABE scores showed a reduction in reading skill (-.36) and an increase in math skill (+.57) for 2006 graduates. Boot Camp graduates in 2007 showed an average increase in both reading (+1.37) and math (+1.71) aptitude.
- In 2006, 59 percent of the inmates who tested for their GED at Quehanna passed (vs. 65 percent for the general prison population), while 2007 graduates had a passing rate of 57 percent (vs. 70 percent for the rest of the DOC).
- In 2006, no positive random drug tests were reported, and there was only one positive result in 2007.
- There were 5 inmate-on-inmate assaults/fights in 2006. In 2007, there were 16 inmate-on-inmate assaults/fights and 1 inmate-on-staff assault.

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Goals of Quehanna Boot Camp

The operations and programming of the Boot Camp are guided by the following objectives, established by Act 215 of 1990 as amended by Act 86 of 1996:

To protect the health and safety of the Commonwealth by providing a program which will reduce recidivism and promote characteristics of good citizenship among eligible inmates.

To divert inmates who ordinarily would be sentenced to traditional forms of confinement under the custody of the department to motivational boot camps.

To provide discipline and structure to the lives of eligible inmates and to promote these qualities in the post release behavior of eligible inmates.

In addition to the objectives established by the legislature, the Department of Corrections has identified the following goals for the Boot Camp:

- To reduce costs associated with traditional incarceration and reduce overcrowding.
- To treat and rehabilitate non-violent inmates.

Admission Criteria

Inmates are admitted to the Boot Camp through a multi-stage selection process. First, inmates must meet the criteria established by Act 215 of 1990 as amended by Act 86 of 1996:

Under age 35.

Minimum sentence of 2 years or less.

Maximum sentence of 5 years or less or minimum sentence of 3 years or less and within 2 years of minimum.

Not convicted of: murder, voluntary manslaughter, rape, drug delivery resulting in death, kidnapping, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, sexual assault, aggravated indecent assault, arson, burglary, robbery, robbery of a motor vehicle or drug trafficking.

No active detainers for other crimes.

No deadly weapon enhancement.

In addition, inmates must be recommended for the Boot Camp by the sentencing judge.

Recommended inmates are screened further by the Department of Corrections, before final admission decisions are made by the department. Frequent reasons for rejecting an inmate include a discovery of detainers and medical reasons.

Finally, inmates must be willing to enter the Boot Camp.

Quehanna Boot Camp Reporting

The reader will notice that this issue of the Quehanna Motivational Boot Camp Performance Analysis and Evaluation report covers activity at the Boot Camp for a two year period (2006 and 2007), as opposed to a one year period as with past reports. Prior to 2005, the PADOE and the Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing (PCS) each issued an annual Boot Camp report, pursuant to the requirements of Act 215 of 1990 which created the Boot Camp. Act 112 of 2004 created the State Intermediate Punishment (SIP) program and also established a new reporting schedule for the Boot Camp and SIP programs. Under Act 112, annual Boot Camp and SIP program reports now alternate between the PADOE and the PCS. In even-numbered years (e.g. 2008), the PADOE is responsible for issuing a Boot Camp report, with the PCS issuing an SIP report. In odd-numbered years, the PADOE issues the SIP report, while the PCS issues the Boot Camp report. Thus, the Boot Camp report presented below is the first to fully follow this new reporting schedule.

Quehanna Population

Table 1 presents an overview of the Quehanna Boot Camp population, from 1998 through 2007. This data is shown for entry cohorts, in other words, for all inmates who entered the Boot Camp in a given year. Due to rolling admissions, not all inmates who enter in a given year will be released that year.

Table 1: Overview of Quehanna Boot Camp Population: 1998-2007

Variable	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Total Admissions	374	423	516	471	513	637	486	465	468	469
Male	363	405	500	450	496	618	472	451	456	457
Female	11	18	16	21	17	19	14	14	12	12
Black	200	212	298	236	256	327	230	219	247	266
White	121	155	147	154	154	207	163	168	136	140
Hispanic	53	54	71	81	102	97	91	75	83	61
Other	0	2	0	0	1	6	2	3	2	2
Total Graduates	328	355	444	414	476	575	432	398	394	N/A
Graduation Rates	88%	84%	86%	88%	93%	90%	89%	86%	84%	N/A
Total Withdrawals	46	68	72	57	37	62	54	67	74	N/A
Withdrawal Rate	12%	16%	14%	12%	7%	10%	11%	14%	16%	N/A

The typical Boot Camp inmate is a single male under the age of 25, committed from an urban county. Throughout the history of the Boot Camp, approximately 60 percent of the inmates sent there have been convicted of narcotics possession or drug related offenses. Property offenses (e.g. theft and burglary) account for another 20 percent of inmates.

Quehanna Boot Camp at Work - A Look At Outcomes

Motivational boot camps such as Quehanna have come under a great deal of scrutiny over the past several years. As with all correctional programs, the central question asked about boot camps is: Do they work? There have been numerous evaluations of boot camps nationwide including the works of Doris MacKenzie and Megan Kurlychek. The findings of these evaluations are mixed. Some studies find that boot camps are successful at rehabilitating inmates convicted of less serious offenses. Other studies find that boot camp graduates actually do worse than similar groups of inmates who served their time inside a traditional prison.

Much of the confusion surrounding the effectiveness of boot camps stems from disagreements and uncertainties about how to define "effectiveness". Traditionally, the effectiveness of correctional programs has been tied to recidivism rates. Programs are often judged successful to the extent that their participants have no further contact with the criminal justice system after release from incarceration. Complications arise, however, in how to measure contact with the criminal justice system. There is no commonly accepted system for defining and calculating recidivism. Some jurisdictions use re-arrest, others re-incarceration, some use both. Some jurisdictions exclude technical parole violations from consideration, others include everything. These discrepancies make it difficult to rely upon recidivism as a universal measure to assess program outcome. To address these inconsistencies, the Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA) developed standard guidelines for how to measure recidivism. These changes will be adopted by many jurisdictions and will allow for more meaningful comparisons of recidivism nationally.

Perhaps more importantly, recidivism is a product of a complex interplay of individual and social forces. Recidivism must be viewed in the broader context of the social, economic and community

conditions into which the inmate is released. Correctional treatment programs may not be able to control completely for all of these contextual factors that contribute to the success or failure of released inmates. As such, it is important to assess programs against a wider variety of indicators, such as cost savings, public safety while incarcerated, and intermediate achievements (educational progress) that can contribute to a reduction in recidivism.

While these definitional and methodological issues plague most efforts at program evaluation, they pose particular problems for the study of boot camps. Boot camps typically have control over inmates for only a short time (in the case of Quehanna, six months). Boot camps have a very limited amount of time to produce long-term, measurable changes in young inmates who have little previous experience with a structured and disciplined lifestyle. Finally, expectations for boot camps are high; they were established to divert selected young inmates from more serious trouble.

Assessing boot camps is inherently problematic. There does not appear to be "one best way" to evaluate them. Accordingly, the evaluation presented in this report is tied to the goals established by Act 215 and by the PADOA. This report examines multiple outcome indicators for the Quehanna Boot Camp: recidivism rates, graduation rates, programmatic achievements, pre and post assessment scores, randomized drug testing, and security. The importance of using multiple outcome measures to assess the effectiveness of public programs is noted by widely respected experts on program evaluation such as Peter Rossi and Howard Freeman.

Recidivism

The PADOE defines recidivism as return to state custody for any reason. Table 2 shows recidivism rates for Boot Camp graduates for the years 2000 through 2006. These rates are shown for graduate cohorts for each year (i.e. for all inmates graduating from Quehanna during each year, although some will have entered in the previous year). These calculations exclude inmates dismissed from Quehanna.

Cohort (n)	6 month	1 Year	3 Years
2000			
Boot Camp Graduates (n=409)	7.8%	19.6%	41.3%
DOC Paroled Population (n=8,645)	17.3%	30.6%	54.5%
2001			
Boot Camp Graduates (n=403)	8.2%	17.9%	39.2%
DOC Paroled Population (n=8,474)	19.3%	33.2%	55.9%
2002			
Boot Camp Graduates (n=459)	10.7%	23.7%	45.3%
DOC Paroled Population (n=8,426)	18.5%	32.5%	55.3%
2003			
Boot Camp Graduates (n=540)	10.0%	22.6%	44.1%
DOC Paroled Population (n=10,468)	17.5%	32.4%	56.20%
2004			
Boot Camp Graduates (n=497)	6.2%	19.7%	40.4%
DOC Paroled Population (n=11,225)	17.8%	32.2%	57.3%
2005			
Boot Camp Graduates (n=428)	7.0%	19.4%	N/A
DOC Paroled Population (n=11,170)	18.2%	32.3%	N/A
2006			
Boot Camp Graduates (n=336)	5.4%	13.7%	N/A
DOC Paroled Population (n=11,126)	15.4%	28.4%	N/A
Overall			
Boot Camp Graduates (n=3,072)	7.9%	19.5%	42.0%
DOC Paroled Population (n=69,534)	17.7%	31.7%	55.8%
<p>Note: Shown for all releases in a given year (release cohorts). Recidivism numbers for the Boot Camp are calculated slightly different than for the DCC as a whole. Note: The figures in Table 2 may have been changed from previous years' reports due to changes in the status of Parole Violator's Pending and other updated data.</p>			

Table 2 also shows recidivism rates for all DOC inmates released to parole supervision for basic comparative purposes. Since all graduates from the Boot Camp are released onto parole, recidivism rates for the Boot Camp are compared to recidivism rates for only those DOC releases who are paroled, in order to form a more accurate comparison group. However, the general parolee population is still not the ideal comparison group because Quehanna inmates are younger and typically convicted of less serious offenses. Also, recidivism numbers for the Boot Camp are calculated slightly different than for the Department as a whole (see footnote on Table 2).

The data indicates that the six month recidivism rates for Boot Camp graduates are relatively low, averaging 7.9 percent from 2000 to 2006. By comparison, the six month rate for the Department's parole releases as a whole over the same time period averaged 17.7 percent. At one year post-release, the average recidivism rates from 2000 to 2006 for Boot Camp graduates was 19.5 percent, compared to 31.7 percent for the Departments' parole releases as a whole. The three year rate for the Boot Camp over the period 2000 through 2004 averaged 42.0 percent, compared to 55.8 percent for the Departments' parole releases as a whole.

For the most part, the Department has seen recidivism rates at the Boot Camp fall fairly consistently over the past several years. This finding seems to indicate that the Boot Camp is having a longer lasting impact on parole success. Recidivism reductions are discussed in the context of programmatic changes at the Boot Camp in later sections of this report.

When graduates of the Boot Camp do return to state incarceration, it is most commonly for repeated technical violations of the terms and conditions of their parole, such as moving from an approved residence without permission. Graduates of the Boot Camp are under Enhanced Parole Supervision, which may partly explain this finding because they are more closely watched and therefore more likely to get caught. Returns to custody for new criminal offenses and convictions are relatively less common. Table 3 shows the reasons for return for Quehanna graduates.

Services and Treatment

The Quehanna Boot Camp is committed to providing needed services and treatment to all of its inmates. The Boot Camp is fully accredited by the American Correctional Association (ACA). ACA's accreditation standards are intended to evaluate a facility's services, programs, and essential operations such as administrative procedures, staff training, the physical plant, safety procedures, security, and sanitation. In August of 2002, the Boot Camp received ACA accreditation, passing 100% of the mandatory standards and 99% of the non-mandatory standards.

Cohort (n)	Number	Percent of Total
2000 (n=169) 3 Year Release Cohort		
Technical Parole Violation	106	62.7%
New Crime	47	27.8%
Other/Pending	16	9.5%
2001 (n=157) 3 Year Release Cohort		
Technical Parole Violation	100	63.7%
New Crime	51	32.5%
Other/Pending	6	3.8%
2002 (n=208) 3 Year Release Cohort		
Technical Parole Violation	136	65.4%
New Crime	60	28.8%
Other/Pending	12	5.8%
2003 (n=237) 3 Year Release Cohort		
Technical Parole Violation	154	65.0%
New Crime	78	32.9%
Other/Pending	5	2.1%
2004 (n=201) 3 Year Release Cohort		
Technical Parole Violation	122	60.7%
New Crime	61	30.3%
Other/Pending	18	9.0%
2005 (n=83) 1 Year Release Cohort		
Technical Parole Violation	59	71.1%
New Crime	20	24.1%
Other/Pending	4	4.8%
2006 (n=46) 1 Year Release Cohort		
Technical Parole Violation	27	58.7%
New Crime	9	19.6%
Other/Pending	10	21.7%
Overall (n=1101)		
Technical Parole Violation	704	63.9%
New Crime	326	29.6%
Other	71	6.4%
Note: n equals the number of graduates from each cohort returning to custody.		
Note: The figures in Table 3 may have changed from previous years' reports due to changes in the status of Parole Violator's Pending, and other updated data.		

The leadership at Boot Camp is now providing direct supervision of treatment groups in order to reinforce the message to inmates that these groups are vital to their success at the Boot Camp. The Drug and Alcohol Treatment Specialists (DATS) continue to develop additional specialized treatment groups and are reducing the size of previously existing treatment groups in order to offer more individualized attention to inmates. Also, the Boot Camp has introduced a new fiber optics vocational training program. In 2007, 80 inmates enrolled in the fiber optics program successfully completed it.

Inmate Assessment Outcomes

Generally, all inmates entering Boot Camp have been administered the Level of Service Inventory-Revised (LSI-R), the Criminal Sentiment Scale-Modified (CSS-M), and/or the Hostile Interpretations Questionnaire (HIQ) during their initial diagnostic and classification assessment upon entry to the DOC, which for males occurs at SCI Camp Hill and for females occurs at SCI Muncy. Inmates' responses on these assessments serve as their pre test scores for risk of reoffending and for treatment needs. Inmates graduating Boot Camp during 2006 and 2007 were re-administered the LSI-R, CSS-M, and HIQ prior to release (post test).

The LSI-R provides an assessment of the risk that an offender will commit additional offenses after release from incarceration. A LSI-R score of 20 and below reflects low levels of risk, 21 to 28 is in the medium range, and 29+ is considered high risk. The CSS-M assesses for anti-social attitudes, values or beliefs. A CSS-M score that is 18 and below reflects low levels of criminal attitude and thinking, 19 through 29 is in the medium range, and 30+ is considered high. The HIQ assesses for hostility in social situations and interactions. A HIQ score that is 55 and below reflects low levels of anti-social hostility, 56 to 72 is in the medium range, and 73+ is considered high.

Table 4 reports pre and post assessment scores on the LSI-R, CSS-M and HIQ for inmates who graduated Boot Camp from 2006 to 2007. For 2006 Boot Camp graduates, post LSI-R scores showed an average increase of +2.33 points, post CSS-M scores showed an average decrease of -3.45 points, and post HIQ scores also showed an average decrease of -8.05 points. The average change in inmate's responses between the pre and post test on all three assessments was statistically significant. These findings indicate that overall, inmates' level of criminal thinking and hostility decreased after participating in the Boot Camp program, however, their level of risk for reoffending increased.

Inmates who graduated Boot Camp in 2007 reported an average decrease on the post LSI-R of -2.71 points, an average increase on the post CSS-M of +1.60 points, and an average decrease on the post HIQ of -6.06 points. The average change between the pre and post scores on all three assessments was statistically significant. These findings suggest that overall, inmates' risk for reoffending and level of hostility decreased after completing the Boot Camp program, however, their level of criminal thinking and sentiments increased.

A concept that drives much of DOC programming is the risk principle, which states that higher risk offenders will likely re-offend if not treated and that lower risk offenders are not likely to re-offend, even without treatment. Lower risk offenders should receive minimal, if any, intervention because including them in treatment programs may cause more harm than good. Indeed, research indicates that providing high intensity treatment to low risk offenders may increase their risk level by, among other things, extensively exposing them to higher risk offenders who may "contaminate" them with anti-social attitudes, thinking, and behavior.

To further explore the risk principle among Boot Camp graduates, the sample was separated into those who reported low pre scores on the LSI-R, CSS-M, or HIQ versus those who reported medium or high pre scores. Table 4 shows that 2006 Boot Camp graduates who had medium or high pre scores on the CSS-M and HIQ reported statistically significant drops on the post assessment (-6.54 points and -11.12 points, respectively). On the other hand, inmates who scored in the medium or high ranges on the pre LSI-R, on average, reported higher scores on the post assessment (+2.04 points). Additionally, findings showed that inmates who reported low pre scores on the LSI-R, CSS-M, or HIQ, on average, scored higher on all three post assessments (by +2.92 points, +1.89 points, and +1.22 points, respectively).

Findings associated with the risk principle concerning pre and post assessment scores were similar for 2007 Boot Camp graduates. Inmates who reported medium or high pre scores on the LSI-R, CSS-M, or HIQ, reported statistically significantly lower post assessment scores. The average score dropped by -4.97 points, -4.14 points, and -10.43 points, respectively. Inmates who scored in the low range on the LSI-R, CSS-M, or HIQ pre assessment, on average, reported higher scores on the post assessment by +.88 points, +8.33 points, and +3.83 points, respectively.

Overall, these findings lend strong support for the risk principle and DOC policy for targeting medium or high risk inmates only for treatment programs.

Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE)

Like the LSI-R, CSS-M, or HIQ, the TABE is administered to inmates during initial classification (pre test) and re-administered before being released from Boot Camp (post test). The TABE is a widely used measure of educational attainment and includes several sections. In this report, inmate's aptitude or acquired skill in reading and math will be assessed. The score on each section translates into a grade equivalency. For example, a score of 6 on the reading scale would indicate a sixth grade reading level. The difference between pre and post scores indicates the impact of Boot Camp educational programming on the graduates.

The 2006 Boot Camp graduates had a decrease in reading skill of -.36 points and an increase in math skill of +.57 points. These findings suggest that the reading aptitude of Boot Camp inmates who graduated in 2006 dropped, on average, by slightly less half a grade, while their math aptitude increased, on average, by slightly more than half a grade. Neither the change in reading nor math scores between the pre and post assessment were statistically significant. Overall, Boot Camp graduates in 2006 had reading and math levels equivalent to the sixth grade.

The graduating class of 2007 reported an increase in reading skill equivalent to a grade and a half (+1.37), while math skill increased by almost two grades (+1.71). The average change in both reading and math scores between the pre and post assessment were statistically significant. Boot Camp graduates in 2007 had a reading level equivalent to the eighth grade and math level equivalent to the seventh grade.

General Education Diploma (GED)

All Quehanna inmates who lack high school credentials are prepared for their GED. In 2006, 59 percent of graduates who were tested received their GED. This average is approximately 6 points less than the average pass-fail rate for all other inmates in SCI's throughout the Commonwealth (65 percent). In 2007, 57 percent of graduates who were tested received their GED. This average is approximately 13 points less than the average rate reported by inmates throughout the Commonwealth (70 percent).

Community Work Projects (CWP)

Inmates at Quehanna perform a variety of CWP as part of their rehabilitation. During 2006, these CWP provided a savings of over \$117,000 for state and local governments, as well as non-profit agencies. For 2007, inmate involvement in CWP saved over \$141,000. Quehanna inmates also perform maintenance and other work at the Boot Camp.

Drug Use

Alcohol and other drug (AOD) treatment is also an important part of the Quehanna experience. All inmates assessed with AOD issues are given counseling on a daily basis while at Quehanna. A recent audit of the AOD programs at Quehanna concluded that these programs meet or exceed the AOD treatment standards established by the ACA and the Department of Corrections. These standards include benchmarks regarding assessment, treatment protocols and staffing.

In addition, the Boot Camp has incorporated the DOC's revised AOD policy which eliminates ineffective programs and reinforces evidence based programs such as cognitive behavioral approaches.

Inmates also are tested for drug use regularly before release and while on parole. While at Quehanna, inmates are subjected to a random drug testing process that was implemented for all state prison inmates in the Spring of 1998. In 2006, no Boot Camp inmate turned up positive for illicit drugs, and only one inmate tested positive in 2007. Thus, the Boot Camp has maintained an environment of sobriety for its inmates.

Security

The final measure of Boot Camp performance is security. Aside from its rehabilitative goals, Quehanna is committed to maintaining a safe and secure environment for inmates, staff and the public. Although it is located in a remote area, Quehanna is an open facility. There are no fences or walls separating the camp from the outside world. It is especially encouraging that in the ten years that the camp has operated, only one inmate has walked away from the grounds. This inmate was recaptured within one day, and was sent to a traditional prison to continue his sentence.

Quehanna has a zero tolerance policy for inmate misconduct. There have been no serious disturbances at the camp since its opening. During 2006, a total of 5 inmate-on-inmate assaults and fights were reported, however no inmate-on-staff incidents were reported. During 2007, the total number of inmate-on-inmate assaults and fights was 16 and 1 inmate-on-staff assault was reported. These cases are resolved either through discipline or removal from the camp. When appropriate, new charges also are filed against dismissed inmates. Thus, Quehanna has succeeded in maintaining security.

Table 4: Inmate Assessment Outcomes						
	2006			2007		
	pre	post	diff	pre	post	diff
All Inmates						
LSI-R	22.68	25.01	+2.33***	22.09	19.38	-2.71***
CSS-M	25.39	21.94	-3.45**	22.29	23.90	+1.60*
HIQ	66.26	58.21	-8.05***	65.99	59.93	-6.06***
Medium or High Risk/Need Inmates Only						
LSI-R	25.57	27.61	+2.04***	26.31	21.34	-4.97***
CSS-M	32.73	26.19	-6.54***	31.50	27.36	-4.14***
HIQ	73.18	62.05	-11.12***	74.58	64.15	-10.43***
Low Risk/Need Inmates Only						
LSI-R	16.85	19.77	+2.92***	15.37	16.26	+0.88
CSS-M	12.68	14.57	+1.89*	11.52	19.84	+8.33***
HIQ	45.39	46.61	+1.22	46.55	50.38	+3.83**
TABE						
Reading	6.60	6.24	-0.36	6.80	8.17	+1.37***
Math	5.66	6.23	+0.57	5.82	7.53	+1.71***
GED						
	2006			2007		
	tested	passed	%	tested	passed	%
Boot Camp	75	44	59	104	59	57
State Institutions	1,616	1,045	65	1,769	1,263	70
	2006			2007		
	hours	cost savings		hours	cost savings	
Community Work Project (CWP)	18,020	\$117,302		19,463	\$141,824	
	2006			2007		
Positive Drug Use Incidents	0			1		
Inmate-on-Inmate Assaults/fights	5			16		
Inmate-on-Staff Assaults/fights	0			1		

*p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

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