

Indeterminate Sentence Review Board 2009-2011 Biennial Strategic Plan: Performance Report for FY 2009

The Indeterminate Sentence Review Board (ISRB) adopted the 2009-2011 Strategic Plan in May, 2008. We figured considerable water would go under the bridge before we actually reached FY 2011. We would update the Plan to keep it current. Monthly review by the Board helped to keep on top of progress made related to objectives. In addition, staff action planning groups took stock of what we did during FY 2009. They then suggested adjustments for FY 2010. The Strategic Plan Update for FY 2010 is available at the ISRB website, www.srb.wa.gov.

We have been guided by the Strategies set out in this document, as well as Performance Measures included in the Strategic Plan itself. That Plan, as well as descriptions of our offender populations and activities, is also available at www.srb.wa.gov. This report focuses mainly on progress made in meeting objectives.

Goal A: Continue assessment of workload and work processes to promote timely and well informed decisions.

Objective 1: Increase timeliness of the publication of prison hearing decisions.

- Strategies:
- a. Get the panel recommendation to records staff within one week of the hearing.
 - b. Get the transcribe draft decision back to the full board within two weeks of receiving the panel recommendation.
 - c. Get full board final decision within two weeks of receiving the draft.
 - d. Finish decision processing within one week of receiving the final decision.

This set of strategies, and monitoring systems set up to track progress, proved very effective. We reduced the length of time between hearings and the Board making a decision.

TIME BETWEEN HEARING DATE AND DECISION MADE		
<i>From the perspective of when the decision was made</i>		
DECISION MONTH	NUMBER DECIDED	DAYS TO DECISION
JUL 08	15	45.4
AUG 08	30	39.9
SEP 08	43	42.1
OCT 08	19	28.7
NOV 08	14	32.3
DEC 09	9	30.0'
JAN 09	19	30.8
FEB 09	34	25.3
MAR 09	38	25.1
APR 09	14	24.9
MAY 09	29	17.9
JUN 09	26	27.0'

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Objective 2: [Reduce the number of continued prison hearings.](#)

- Strategies:
- a. Staff and board members work together to anticipate problems prior to the hearing.
 - b. Staff documents the time offenders have spent on hearing packet review.
 - c. Allow CCB offenders nearing Sex Offender Treatment Program (SOTP) completion to sign a waiver, to postpone the hearing until finishing treatment.
 - d. Work with DOC to resolve issues that contribute to continuances or hearing reschedules.

Early in the Fiscal Year, it was decided that the Board would not pursue having CCB offenders sign SOTP waivers. The remaining strategies, and the rescheduling of more hearings prior to the hearing date, were effective in reducing the number of continued hearings. In Fiscal Year 2007, approximately 24 percent of hearings were continued. In Fiscal Year 2008, continued hearings dropped to 21 percent. For Fiscal Year 2009, there were 12 percent. We are now below the target of 18 percent continued.

MONTH	CONTINUED HEARINGS IN FY 2009		
	SCHEDULED	NUMBER	%
	NUMBER	CONTINUED	CONTINUED
JUL 08	31	3	9.7
AUG 08	23	1	4.3
SEP 08	31	4	12.9
OCT 08	18	3	16.7
NOV 08	20	5	25.0
DEC 08	24	8	33.3
JAN 09	32	4	12.5
FEB 09	27	0	0.0
MAR 09	26	2	7.7
APR 09	22	3	13.6
MAY 09	34	2	5.9
JUN 09	32	3	9.4
TOTAL	320	38	11.9

Objective 3: [Reduce the time between release decisions being published and actual release.](#)

- Strategies:
- a. Apply the principles of “best practices” when setting release conditions.
 - b. Work with Department of Corrections (DOC) to make sure we understand their guidelines and due dates for processing release plans.
 - c. Work with community stakeholders to understand their policies and practices related to releasing offenders and to make sure we have a mutual understanding of release processes, our expectations for offenders, and resources they can provide.
 - d. Continue routine check on cases waiting for Board Approved Plans.
 - e. Increase the information we provide to partners and stakeholders about the impacts of keeping offenders beyond earliest possible/earned release date (ERD).

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Strategies b and d were the major focus of ISRB efforts during Fiscal Year 2009. The ISRB set up a pilot process of holding hearings a month or so early for select offenders. It is still too early to see what impact this might have on timely release. State fiscal woes and DOC efforts to free up bed space by decreasing the number of offenders held beyond the ERD has contributed to progress toward reducing times to release.

TIMES BETWEEN HEARING AND EXIT FROM PRISON, BY CALENDAR YEAR			
CALENDAR YEAR	Number of	Average Time	Range of Times
RELEASES	CCB Releases	from Hearing to	from Hearing to
		Release (months)	Release (months)
2003	3	4.6	2.0 - 7.1
2004	7	5.5	1.9 - 13.0
2005	12	6.8	1.4 - 19.6
2006	35	8.3	1.9 - 20.0
2007	34	6.2	2.3 - 18.9
2008	48	8.6	2.5 - 26.9
2009	39	6.6	1.2 - 22.1
thru June 2009			

Objective 4: [Increase information about offender’s post-prison behavior.](#)

- Strategies:
- a. Continue doing Six-Month Reviews of offenders on supervision.
 - b. Process supervision violations in an effective and efficient manner.

The information from a year’s worth of six-month reviews was presented to the Board. This performance measurement briefing paper was posted on the ISRB website. The number of CCB supervision violations has been building slowly. The Board will soon be receiving routine reports on violation numbers, types, and dispositions. Data collected on CCB violations has been useful in work with the Sex Offender Policy Board Benchmarks subcommittee.

Goal B: Enhanced communication and relations with partners and stakeholders.

Objective 1: [Increase the availability of information on the agency website.](#)

- Strategies:
- a. Post Board Meeting Minutes to agency website.
 - b. Create and add Public Disclosure Request Form/Release to agency website.
 - c. Create and add Attorney Contract/Payment forms to agency website.
 - d. Create and add links to other sites related to the Board’s work.

This set of strategies, and additional activities directed at enhancing and maintaining the agency website, proved very effective for increasing the availability of information about the Board and our functions.

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Objective 2: Increase the knowledge of partners and stakeholders about the rules, procedures and activities of the ISRB.

- Strategies:
- a. Complete CCB Rules (WAC) and post on website along with PRE Rules (WAC).
 - b. Complete Victim Rules (WAC) and post on website.
 - c. Work with DOC to develop curriculum to provide ongoing quarterly training in facilities and in the field.
 - d. Coordinate with stakeholder organizations to take advantage of opportunities for making public presentations.

Agency rules (WAC) related to the two separate groups of offenders under our jurisdiction, as well as those related to victims, were drafted, reviewed, adopted, and posted on the ISRB website.

During the past two years, the ISRB has made a vigorous effort to provide outreach to DOC staff who works with offenders under our jurisdiction. Training efforts included outreach to DOC facilities staff, records staff and DOC community corrections officers. In addition, the ISRB provided training to prosecuting attorneys who work with victims. Throughout the past two years, Board members and staff significantly increased and took advantage of opportunities to hold both formal and informal conversations with many partners. Unfortunately, opportunities to make public presentations did not happen as we had anticipated.

Objective 3: Increase opportunities for dialogue with major partners to reduce conflicting policies and procedures, make efficient use of state resources, and ensure memoranda of understanding are implemented as intended.

- Strategies:
- a. Hold routine policy and issue discussion meetings between ISRB and DOC leadership.
 - b. Establish mechanisms for maintaining routine contact with DOC operations staff.
 - c. Establish an agreed upon working relationship with the Sex Offender Policy Board.

Board Members have, since the fall of 2008, had quarterly meetings with DOC Executive Management staff. These discussions have served as a forum to raise concerns regarding DOC and ISRB policies. DOC's Offender Programs Administrator and the ISRB's Executive Director communicate between quarterly meetings to try to resolve issues or, at least, define them more completely. Lists of DOC personnel in key operations positions are maintained on the ISRB Intranet. The Board Chair is a member of the Sex Offender Policy Board and a number of subcommittees. The ISRB Data, Planning and Research Administrator is also a member of a Sex Offender Policy Board subcommittee. In addition, Board members attend Sex Offender Policy Board meetings on occasion,

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Objective 4: [Increase outreach efforts to victims and victim stakeholder groups.](#)

- Strategies:
- a. Set-up files for each victim(s) of cases under Board jurisdiction.
 - b. Provide services to victims, as they have cases set up, as hearings are held, and as decisions are made.
 - c. Use suggestions from victim services recipients for improving notification and assistance.
 - d. Use a variety of methods to provide victim relations and outreach.

An average of 77 letters per month was sent to victims or survivors. Statements to the Board were received from 20 to 23 percent of the offenders with hearings each month. Since October 2008, 356 victim files have been converted to paperless. Victim and survivors now receive 90 day advance notice of offender hearings. Numerous impediments were encountered during the development of a process to eliminate a backlog of notification to victims and survivors at the time offenders entered prison. As a result, this project was discontinued. Implementation of a dedicated 800 line for victim services has allowed greater access for victims throughout the state. A procedure for victims and survivors to attend offender hearings within institutions has been developed. The Victim Services WAC development and passage has been completed. A policy for Victim Notification is undergoing discussions.

CALENDAR YEAR	2009 VICTIM SERVICES ACTIVITY				Percent of Hearing With Victim Input
	# Letters	# Phone	# Emails	#Statements	
January	101	52	32	12	23.07%
February	68	37	17	3	22.20%
March	82	65	28	7	22.22%
April	57	29	15	7	20.00%
May	56	22	14	2	21.87%
June	96	39	23	4	20.00%

Goal C: Enhanced the capacity to engage in evidence-based decision-making.

Objective 1: [Increase efforts to learn about and adopt evidence-based practices.](#)

- Strategies:
- a. Give Board Members opportunities to acquire knowledge, skills, and abilities related to evidence-based practices.
 - b. Build on the agency's performance measurement system to provide information about evidence used for release decisions.
 - c. Improve the ability to share DOC assessment tools, offender plans, and other systems and information for effective offender re-entry.

This set of strategies was established in anticipation of receiving funds to help carry out activities related to them. Because those funds were not available, progress toward this objective has been limited. Individual ISRB employees have participated in training sessions, workgroups, and meetings where they have learned more about evidence-based practices. Further work needs to be done to systematically increase knowledge or adopt practices agency-wide.

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Goal D: Assure the capacity, efficiency and safety of our workforce.

Objective 1: [Maintain agency hardware and software, consistent with DOC and Department of Information Services \(DIS\) standards.](#)

- Strategies:
- a. Keep agency equipment up-to-date, secure and functional.
 - b. Keep Information Technology (IT) staff current on standards, emerging technologies and trends.
 - c. Keep all staff informed of IT standards.

This set of strategies, and the pro-active nature of our IT Department, proved effective for maintaining, and in a number of areas enhancing, agency and hardware and software.

Objective 2: [Increase staff effective use of technology.](#)

- Strategies:
- a. Give staff training on how to improve operations of the technology now in use.
 - b. Give staff information on ways to use technology to do their job(s) more easily and effectively.

This set of strategies proved effective for increasing staff use of technology. The agency shift from paper to electronic offender-files is complete. Staff is now in the process of building on experience and sharing techniques for improvements whenever they can.

Objective 3: [Integrate workload assessment results with work-process improvements.](#)

- Strategies:
- a. Have process improvement teams look at major work processes.
 - b. Fill staff positions in a timely manner.

There was one major process improvement initiative work on in FY 2009, centered on the Board's review and approval or denial of Offender Release Plans. Several other processes were investigated and improvements made. Chief among these was the Board's Administrative Progress Reviews, which are no longer being routinely done. Due to state budget constraints filling staff positions in a timely manner was moot. We did, however, take advantage of college interns and temporary positions to mitigate some workload issues.

Objective 4: [Policies and procedures in place so staff understands expectations.](#)

- Strategies:
- a. Write staff evaluations (EDPP) to appropriately reflect job expectations.
 - b. Assure that required agency policies are in place.
 - c. Assure that staff have read and understand policies.
 - d. Update the agency Records Retention Schedule: keep documents in accord with the schedule.

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In 2008, all evaluations were completed on time. Unfortunately, in 2009 evaluations were completed only for staff who requested them. Considerably more human resource policies were passed in the last two years and a handful of policies were updated after legislative changes. Policies are available to all employees during the drafting and review process, as well as after passage. The agency now has an up-to-date records retention schedule with new schedules having been approved by the State Records Committee. Obsolete schedules have been rescinded. All employees received personalized training on how to maintain their records and set up filing systems to help them comply with the new records retention schedule.

Objective 5: [Maintain agency safety committee and plan in compliance with Labor and Industries and Occupational Safety and Health Administration requirements.](#)

Strategies: a. Hold monthly safety committee meetings to discuss safety issues and resolve problems.

 b. Continue to implement and update the agency Safety Action Plan.

This set of strategies, and staff willingness to view safety as an integral part of agency operations, kept us accident and injury free for another year. They even provided a smile or two.

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