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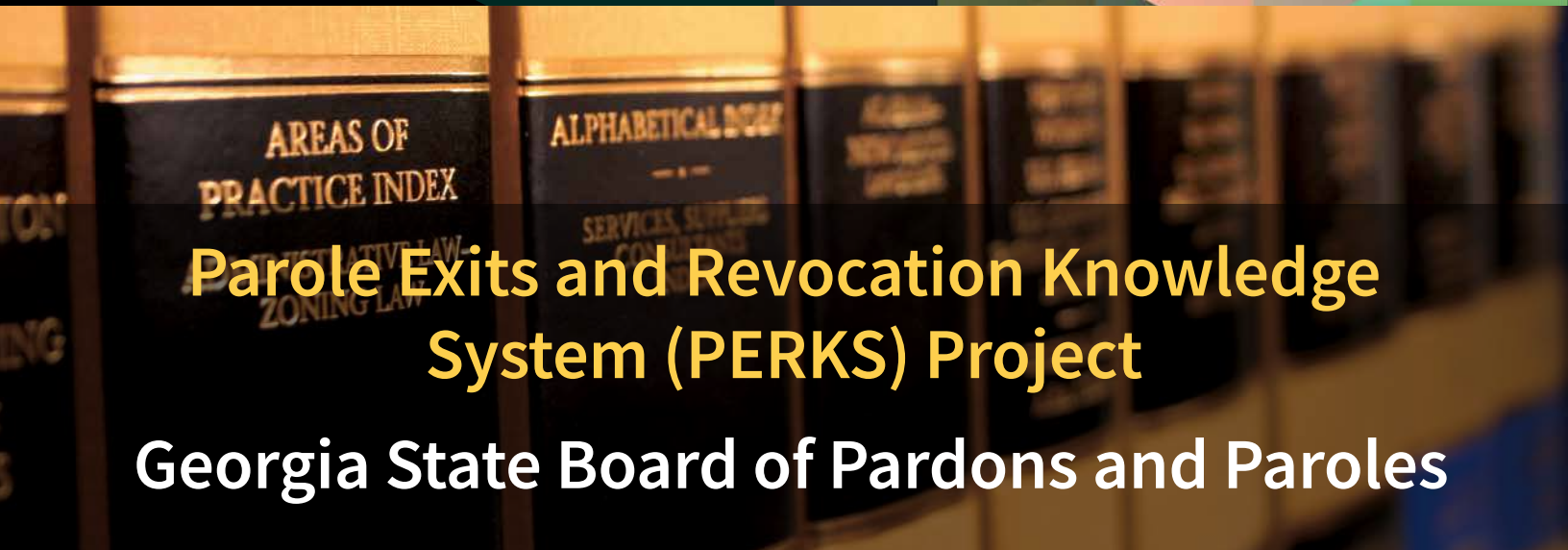
**PAROLE EXITS AND
REVOCAION KNOWLEDGE
SYSTEM (PERKS) PROJECT:**

**Georgia State Board of
Pardons and Paroles**

Technical Assistance Report



ROBINA INSTITUTE
OF CRIMINAL LAW AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE



Parole Exits and Revocation Knowledge System (PERKS) Project

Georgia State Board of Pardons and Paroles

Technical Assistance Report

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ABOUT THE PAROLE RELEASE AND REVOCATION PROJECT

The Parole Release and Revocation Project of the Robina Institute of Criminal Law and Criminal Justice is committed to engaging releasing authorities in both indeterminate and determinate sentencing states in examining all aspects of the discretionary parole release and post-release violations process. A central goal of this project is to contribute to the enhancement of decision-making at every stage. To accomplish this goal, the Parole Release and Revocation Project partners with select jurisdictions on issues related to parole release decision-making; researches and publishes legal and statutory state parole profiles; and publishes survey and other findings focusing on releasing authorities.



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PROJECT BACKGROUND

In 2017, the Georgia State Board of Pardons and Paroles (the Board) responded to a request for proposals by the Robina Institute of Criminal Law and Criminal Justice (the Robina Institute) with a research project focused on reviewing and improving its management of parole violations. The Board sought specific assistance on how they could incorporate evidence-based practices to inform its decision-making protocol. During FY 2015, the Board revoked 2,655 parolees of which only 8% were for technical violations, however, only 10% or 261 of those revocations occurred via a final hearing (Watts et al., 2017). The remaining cases “waived”, admitting to their violation behavior (Watts et al., 2017). Within this context, the Board sought a review of its revocation process and the best practices used in other states alongside other pertinent research to identify opportunities for reducing re-incarcerations and increasing successful parole completions.

This report presents the findings of the Parole Exits and Revocation Knowledge System (PERKS) Project. What follows includes, but is not limited to, a consideration of the following: a) a review of existing practices of states that are using structured revocation decision-making models, b) an assessment of enhanced risk, need, and responsivity tools to consider what personal and social capital or crime desistance variables would improve post-prison decision making by the Board, and c) a summary of suggested modifications of relevant policies and procedures.

It is important to begin by noting that the Robina Institute partnered with the Board and a PERKS Project steering committee to accomplish the project’s overall goals. The steering committee included representatives from the agencies impacting the revocation process, namely, from the Board and the Department of Community Supervision (DCS). See Appendix 1 for a listing of the committee’s membership.

Overview of the Board and Parole Supervision in Georgia

In Georgia, the Board is the sole authority to release inmates to parole and revoke parole.¹ The Board’s five members serve staggered seven year terms. They are appointed by the Governor and subject to confirmation by the Senate (Watts et al., 2017). The parole agency is managed by an executive director and deputy executive director who oversee support operations, field services, clemency and victim services. In total, the agency has 186 staff. This includes eight district operations managers who aid in the revocation process.

Approximately two years ago responsibility for supervising individuals on parole was transferred to the DCS. As of July 1, 2015, the DCS began supervising individuals on parole with officers who had a mixed caseload of parole and probation cases. While guided by the DCS’ policies for supervision, individuals on parole are subject to the Board’s policies when a violation results in the filing of a delinquent report. Most often, the Board’s formal involvement begins when the supervising officer requests a warrant from the Board.

The Parole Violation and Revocation Process

Prior to release from incarceration, releasing authorities require that supervisees agree to adhere to conditions of community supervision. Georgia statute requires that the Board adopt rules containing the conditions with which individuals under parole supervision must comply (Watts et al., 2017). While the Board sets the conditions, the DCS provides the direct supervision that monitors parolees' compliance with their conditions. When an individual fails to comply with their conditions or is arrested for a new offense, the supervising officer may file a delinquent report and may request a warrant. Parole violations are categorized as either a technical violation (failure to comply with a standard parole condition, an instruction by a community supervision officer, or special condition by the Board) or a new offense (an arrest or a "warrant" for a new misdemeanor or felony offense that occurred during the period of supervision).

Most often, supervision officers handle noncompliance and more minor violations with intermediate sanctions authorized by the DCS. By the time a parolee reaches a hearing for a revocation, the supervising officer has attempted to exhaust the sanctions they are authorized to use. In some cases the violation is serious enough and/or a public safety threat to the community, in which case other sanctions are not severe enough and revocation should be considered. For those individuals in Georgia who have their parole revoked and are returned to prison, they wait six to 12 months before the Board reconsiders them for release into the community once again.

When an individual commits either a technical violation or a new offense and the supervision officer requests a warrant, the officer may request an expedited warrant or they can request the warrant through a delinquent report. Sometimes this process is triggered by a notification that an individual they are supervising has been arrested, which then requires the supervision officer to file a delinquent report and request a warrant from the Board to hold the offender in custody until the appropriate level of sanctioning can be determined. Even though the individual may be in custody, the officer needs to request a warrant to retain the person in custody so that the individual does not post bond and

return to the community. Upon arrest, a delinquent report must be filed within a specified time frame to initiate the violations process. The Board has directed the district operations managers to issue warrants for a felony arrest; however, other violations require a Board member's review before a warrant is issued.

The delinquent report is a crucial link within the Board's revocation process, as it provides information on the violation and background on the case. The district operations managers spend a substantial amount of time in the field training supervision officers on the delinquent report and the related parole process. It is important for the report to include information pertaining to the parole violation(s) so the district operations manager can ensure that the Board member who conducts the final hearing is prepared to make an informed decision about how to handle the violation(s).² Once the officer completes the delinquent report as well as their own investigative case review, the chief or assistant chief in their field office reviews the report and approves it. The district operations managers rely heavily on the delinquent report in order to assess the violation and recommend a response aligned with the Board's goals and philosophy.

Another important part of the violations and revocation process is the role of hearing waivers. A majority of individuals bypass the final hearing process by signing a waiver. Before the violation(s) are heard at a final hearing, however, there are other steps that occur leading up to that point. Once the officer files a delinquent report seeking a revocation, the supervising officer must deliver a written notice of the allegations and date of the preliminary hearing to the individual who is detained on the violation. Before a preliminary hearing is held, a waiver is provided to the individual that permits them to waive the hearing process, thereby allowing them to move forward with the revocation process.

There are different waivers someone can sign when they have a parole violation. They can sign a standard waiver in which the individual waives the final hearing and admits guilt to the violation. They can also sign a detention/transitional center waiver, where the individual admits guilt to some or all alleged violations and their revocation is held in abeyance pending successful completion of programming in a secure facility. Or, the individual can sign a nolo contendere waiver,

not pleading guilty, nor denying the charges, renounce their rights and agree to revocation of parole. Those parolees that decide to waive the final hearing and move forward with the revocation will be considered for re-release at six months as long as they are not convicted of a new offense. If they do not waive and move to the final hearing, they will not be considered for re-release until 12 months later.

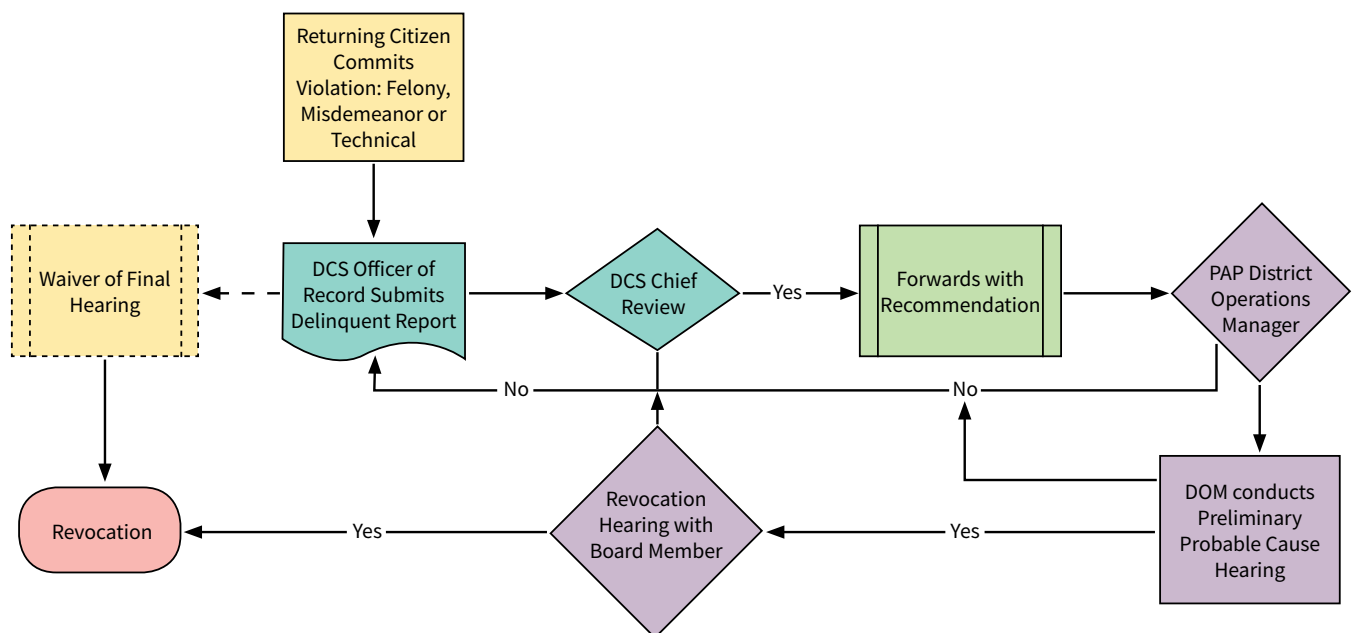
When someone declines to waive, they receive a notice for their final hearing and the parolee is transported to the Georgia Diagnostic and Classification Prison in Jackson, Georgia. It is there that they participate in their final hearing in person or by teleconference with a Board member. An individual can request for an attorney to represent them at the hearing. If they cannot afford one, they may request that the Board appoint legal counsel. The final hearing is attended by the accused, the supervising officer, a district operations manager, the deputy director of field services, a Board member and, if applicable, witnesses. During the hearing, the Board member reviews each of the counts for the violation and hears the supervising officer's testimony regarding supervision events, including previous sanctions imposed and the violation(s). The accused can remain silent or make a statement and question

witnesses. At the conclusion, the Board member informs the parolee of the recommendation s/he will make to the Board by reviewing each count of the parole violation and the ruling. After the hearing, the Board member shares her/his recommendation to the remaining members who vote on a final decision. The Board is required to deliver a written statement to the parolee providing the reasons for the revocation once the Board makes the final determination (Watts et al., 2017).

Figure 1.1 represents the parole violation process in Georgia. As demonstrated below, once the supervision officer submits a delinquent report, the process becomes a matter of Board decision-making. The district operations managers have a significant role, which includes reviewing the violation(s), discussing intermediate sanctions with supervision staff, and preparing the case for a final hearing with a Board member should that be warranted. They ensure the information the Board member will need to make a decision is in the delinquent report, and then by available at the hearing. The district operations manager is an essential conduit among the officers in the field because they communicate what is expected by the Board to supervision officers and they share supervision information to the Board members.

Figure 1.1: Flow Chart of Parole Violations and Revocations

PAROLE VIOLATION AND REVOCATION PROCESS



METHODS

This section reviews the research methodologies used for the qualitative and quantitative analyses. Included is an overview of how interviews were conducted, the data analysis techniques employed, and other approaches used to assist the Board in the review of their practices to support the recommendations for improving their parole revocation process.

Role of the PERKS Steering Committee

A steering committee of representatives from the Board and the DCS who are involved in the revocation process provided insight and guidance on the scope, research design, and recommendations of the project. The steering committee consisted of six staff from the Board and DCS (Appendix 1). The steering committee met with project staff in the fall of 2017 to receive input on the scope of the project. During the winter of 2017, the committee met to review the findings from the qualitative interviews conducted as part of the project, which helped guide further development of the research and analysis conducted for the project. The preliminary results of the findings for the study were presented to the steering committee in April 2018 for input to ensure the findings were represented accurately and the recommendations were feasible for the Board to consider.

Review of Policies and Other Supporting Documents

Robina Institute staff and other members of the PERKS team reviewed a range of policies and procedures from the Board and DCS. The documents provided a legal framework and understanding of current policy on parole practices and policies in Georgia. Part of this review focused on specific documents such as the different waivers used by the Board and the risk assessment utilized to determine the appropriate level of parole supervision. Relevant DCS policies were reviewed including: Preliminary Hearings for Parole Offenders (Policy Number 4.102), Revocation Hearings (Policy Number 4.103), Sanctions and Incentives (Policy Number 4.108),

although this last policy is currently under revision as part of another project for DCS. Another important document was the template for the delinquent report that the district operations managers use for training purposes with supervision officers. Lastly, the Board's Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2016 was reviewed.

Systematic Review of Other States' Violation Policies

Legal research was conducted related to other states' parole violation policies utilizing primarily law databases, such as Westlaw, and official parole board/correctional websites in each jurisdiction. Some of the information was previously gathered for the Robina Institute's ongoing project, Profiles in Parole Release and Revocation (see endnote 1). Other sources of information relied on in producing these profiles included correspondence with legal experts and practitioners who were able to provide certain materials not available online.³

Observation of Final Hearings for Parole Revocation

In October 2017, research and PERKS project staff observed several final hearings to learn firsthand about the process for revocation and the mechanics of decision-making. The results are not presented in this report, but aid in the interpretation of the research findings and shaping recommendations in the report.

Interviews and Qualitative Data

The Robina Institute staff interviewed key decision-makers in the violations process for parolees. In October 2017, a researcher from the Robina Institute led interviews with district operations managers using a series of questions focused on learning more about their role in violations and issues impacting revocations and waivers (see Appendix 2 for questions). Eight district operations

managers were interviewed individually allowing them to speak candidly about their views and perceptions of parole policies and practices, with a focus on parole violations. These interviews were recorded and transcribed, and later analyzed with Nvivo software to review the interviews for themes and content in a systematic way.

In early 2018, two Robina Institute staff and one parole agency staff interviewed each of the five Board members individually to ask about their role and perspectives regarding violations, waivers, and supervision of parolees (see Appendix 3 for questions). These interviews were also recorded, but not transcribed and analyzed with Nvivo, since these interviews were fewer and shorter in length. All three individuals present for the Board interviews met after they were conducted to review common themes and came to consensus on the major themes and findings.

Finally, three DCS staff located in separate field supervision offices were interviewed to provide perspective on how practices and policies in the field impacted the violation process for parolees before they waived their hearing or attended a hearing for revocation with the Board. These interviews are not presented in the report, but provide helpful context for interpretation of the findings.

Data Analysis Techniques

The project examined data on a subset of the parole supervision population who had a delinquent report filed between January 1 and March 31, 2016. This sample was used to explore the characteristics of individuals who have a delinquent report submitted for a parole violation(s) and examine outcomes after the report is submitted. The data was extracted in February 2018, which created a follow-up period of approximately two years between when the delinquent report was filed and when the outcome measures were pulled. The outcome measures include rearrest and current status on parole (i.e. active, discharged, or revoked).

While the sample provides insight regarding the characteristics of parolees who violate their conditions of parole, there are limitations to this data. One limitation is that the information system housing parole data is unable to connect violations filed by the DCS' officers directly to some of the Board actions. For example, it is not possible to connect the outcome of a delinquent report, such as whether or not the Board decided to revoke parole, based on a specific violation. Relatedly, parole risk scores are available for parole intake and through various increments on supervision, but there is no way to capture a parole risk score at the time a delinquent report was filed or the revocation occurred.

Information on waivers is also unavailable in the data. This prevents an examination of how the characteristics of those parolees who waive their final hearings might be similar to or different from those who do not waive their hearings. The district operations managers track waivers in personal spreadsheets, but that information is not integrated into the information system in a way that allows an analysis of waivers, delinquent reports, and revocations together. Finally, the information system experienced changes in 2010 so that some data elements do not have information prior to 2010. The descriptive statistics presented in the results section identify the missing cases when this occurs.

Due to these limitations, the data analysis is restricted primarily to descriptive statistics. The research questions answered in the data analysis include:

1. What are the individual and supervision characteristics associated with those who receive a delinquent report?
2. What are the long-term outcomes of individuals who receive a delinquent report?

The research questions are answered with descriptive statistics for the study sample and represent the profile of individuals who received a delinquent report during a snapshot in time (January 1 – March 31, 2016).

RESULTS

Violations Policies from Other States

The PERKS project included a review of parole policies used in other states for violations and revocation decisions. A recent survey of releasing authorities found that a majority of agencies reported that they relied on a structured or progressive sanctions grid when responding to parole violations (Ruhland et al., 2016), and as a result, an extensive review was undertaken to locate these policies. Upon review of the community supervision policies gathered from 35 states collected by the Robina Institute, it was concluded that most of the policies provided guidance to officers providing direct supervision, however, very few policies were directed at or informed the responses of parole board members at the revocation stage.⁴ While parole agencies have policies for the revocation process itself, it turns out that few structure violation responses for parole board members at the final hearing stage. Most of the policies discussed herein include sanctions policies that supervision officers use in determining responses to violations *before* a violation reaches the final hearing with a board member.

Unsurprisingly, a range of sanctions policies exist across all of the states that were reviewed. Many outline an explicit set of responses that target specific violations and behaviors, and inform at what point a violation should be referred to the parole agency for a revocation hearing. In some cases, policies outline what specific violations are associated with a revocation, but the grid or matrix either instructs the officer to move the case to the Board for a revocation hearing or a statute specifies that a revocation occur for specified violations.

While a majority of releasing authorities surveyed by Ruhland et al. (2016) responded that they require a risk assessment metric at hearings, the review of violations policies uncovered that few incorporated risk assessment in a way that it was structured into the decision-making protocol. Though many violations policies list specific violations and associate specific severity levels to those violations, risk assessment was

rarely structured into the decision-making grid or matrix as a specific factor that either increased or decreased the response. This is particularly noteworthy for Georgia, since violations heard by Board members primarily involve those considered for revocation.

Besides offense severity, violation severity, and risk assessment, supervision agencies can include other factors when shaping officer responses to a violation.⁵ Some state policies cite treatment or programmatic interventions as an appropriate response to certain violations. Other community supervision departments also include incentives that officers may use to reinforce positive behavior and promote crime desistance, where many of the incentives are non-tangible options for reinforcing positive behavior for compliance or progress toward successful discharge, such as a reduction in reporting frequency or removal of a curfew. Some policies outlined violation responses that considered criminogenic needs, stabilizing and destabilizing factors, responses tied to specific offense types (e.g., sex offenses, domestic violence offenses), and options for overrides. These policies varied in format and structure, such as simple lists of sanctions, grids matching sanctions and violations, in addition to more complex matrices that incorporated multiple factors and violation responses.

Due to the complexity of supervision policies and the nature of the violations process, little research examines the impact of violation grids or matrices on recidivism or supervision outcomes (for an exception, see, for example Martin & Van Dine 2008; and Martin, Van Dine, & Fialkaff 2009). Despite the shortage of research that evaluates the success of these policies, there is a significant body of research that identifies the factors or practices effective at promoting prosocial behavior change with offenders. This includes the importance of using both sanctions *and* incentives to change behavior. Individuals on community supervision who receive not just sanctions for violations, but also incentives to reinforce positive behavior are more likely to succeed on supervision (Bonta & Andrews, 2017; Solomon et al. 2008; Wodahl, Garland, & Colhane, 2011). The

recommended ratio of four incentives to every sanction demonstrates that reinforcing positive behavior is important to promote long-term behavior change for individuals on community supervision (Wodahl, Garland, & Colhane, 2011).

The research also suggests the value of individualizing responses to those subject to supervision since not all sanctions or incentives are meaningful to the same person (Robinson et al., 2015). Another lesson from the research shows that if correctional agencies seek to promote behavior change and recidivism reduction, teaching skills is also important (Bonta & Andrews, 2017). The imposition of sanctions lets the supervisee know what behavior is undesired or unacceptable, but in many instances they need to learn a new skill to replace those they currently use. Other studies suggest that protective factors should be considered and, conversely, progress on crime desistance (Serin et al. 2016). In the research on sanctions specifically, there is evidence supporting the importance of responses that are swift, certain, and fair (Burke, Gelb, & Horowitz 2007; Solomon et al. 2008). A sizeable literature now exists on changing offender behavior, which provides insight into how parole agencies can respond to violations in a manner that will encourage compliance and positive behavior among the individuals they supervise.⁶

This review indicates that few, if any, policies structure decision-making for violations *at the revocation decision stage*. While a growing trend shows some movement towards structuring supervision responses to violations and to some extent, compliance, few policies actually inform such responses once a violation reaches the revocation stage for final consideration by a parole board member. However, the research on “what works” for changing offender behavior can provide insight into policies designed for the final hearing stage.

Summary of Interviews with the District Operations Managers

The Robina Institute staff conducted interviews with eight district operations managers in October 2017. The district operations managers are crucial to the parole violations process since they serve as the liaisons between the DCS and the Board for matters related to

parole supervision. They are particularly critical for this project because of their role in training supervision officers on parole-related matters and navigating cases through the violations process after an arrest and/or receipt of a delinquent report. The district operations manager ensures that the Board members have relevant information for decision-making at the revocation hearing and for other decisions concerning violations.

To better understand their work, the district operations managers were asked a range of open-ended questions that focused on their roles and perspectives, especially regarding violations, waivers, and final hearings. The results of these interviews are summarized in this section.

Prior Experience: On average, the district operations managers had served in their role for three and a half years and reported a variety of experiences that prepared them for their current role. Their prior positions included substantial supervision experience in the field such as holding the positions of assistant chief and chief of a field office, and as probation and parole officers. This field experience was helpful in their position.

Roles and Responsibilities: District operations managers described their duties and responsibilities as a liaison between supervision officers and the Board. Even before a case reaches the level of an official request to move forward with the violation process, the district operations managers often staff cases with supervision officers by advising them on what the Board is looking for in managing parolee noncompliance and supervision.

The district operations managers likewise are frequently troubleshooting cases before an official report is filed with the Board. In addition, they train and offer expertise regarding parole specific issues to officers in the field. District operations managers travel to field offices to train supervision officers directly on parole policies and procedures with a special emphasis on delinquent reports, waivers, and other violation components. They also track warrants and delinquent reports to ensure deadlines are met by supervision officers and ensure that required materials are prepared sufficiently for waivers or hearings with Board members. The training and assistance that the district operations managers provide are vital because many

of the supervision officers are more familiar with probation practices, while others are new to the DCS and lack prior parole experience.

A selection of quotes from the interviews are provided below summarizing the roles and responsibilities of the district operations managers. Their comments show that they provide both parole expertise to supervision officers and oversee the violations process. One district operations manager stated it in this way:

“I think my main role is to give guidance to the officers in the field regarding the sanctioning process, which ultimately leads to the revocation process.”

Another district operations manager acknowledged a similar role, but explained it within the context of changes that occurred when the supervision of parolees became a responsibility housed under the DCS two years ago:

“My role, I think, over the years has changed somewhat. It used to be we managed the process of the warrants and violations, and now our role as district operations managers now has evolved into a teaching position, and trying to bring officers up to speed with the expectations that the parole board has on how folks are being supervised in the field.”

And finally, another district operations manager described it as:

“I’m basically a liaison between the board members and then the Department of Community Supervision, who actually supervises the parolees for the parole board.”

The district operations managers serve as a crucial component in the violations process as the intermediary between supervision officers and Board members. They communicate Board expectations to supervision officers in the field so that Board members have the necessary information to make an informed decision about violations. The interviews with them demonstrate that their main responsibility is representing the Board to field staff.

Primary Factors Considered at Hearings: The district operations managers help prepare cases for the final revocation hearing, and as such, were asked about the factors they perceived the Board to consider at a final hearing. Several factors considered by the Board members were mentioned fairly consistently during the interviews. The most commonly cited and heavily weighted factor is the violation type or severity, which includes whether or not the charge was violent and/or if the violation was due to an arrest for a new felony. This was cited as important as these cases may qualify not only for an automatic revocation, but also because these violations are discussed in terms of the concern for public safety.

The district operations managers also collected information on a variety of other factors because various Board members referred to them in their revocation decisions. These items included: the original conviction sentence, the parolee’s history and performance on supervision, time left on supervision, the number of supervising officer changes, the mental health information such as diagnosis and assessment scores, IQ score, Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) scores, criminal history (including prior arrests, prior incarcerations in prison, prior convictions), the number and results of urinalyses, and employment status. Most of these factors were mentioned consistently across all interviews. Even more, the district operations managers believed they were important considerations for the Board in making a revocation decision.

Risk Assessment at the Violation Stage: The district operations managers were asked how risk assessment was used in decision-making for violations. Most did not reference a risk assessment level or score in decision-making, nor did they include them regularly in reports for Board members. Offenders’ risk assessment scores can be included in hearing reports or be made available at the hearing as it is accessible in the computer system, but it is not one of the main factors considered during the revocation process. However, instead of risk assessment, it appears that supervision level is the factor that is provided or considered more often.

Other Outcomes from Revocation Hearings: The district operations managers reported that not all hearings result in revocation. Other outcomes include electronic monitoring, increased supervision, referral to outpatient treatment, the imposition of a new condition(s) of parole, or a short-term incarceration that is not a full revocation. The latter may involve residential substance abuse treatment or other programming in a secure facility or a parole detention center. At times, parolees are returned to supervision, but this is rare.

Most district operations managers reported that by the time a parolee reaches a hearing most alternative sanction options have been exhausted by the supervision officer and it is time for a more significant response from the Board. They were asked in what percentage of cases where a delinquent report was filed they agreed with the supervising officer's recommendation, in which they reported congruence in the range of 65 – 90% and agreed on average 80% of the time.

Recommendations to Improve the Responses to Violations: The district operations managers were asked what suggestions they had to improve the violations policies, practices, and processes. Most of their recommendations focused on improving the tracking of supervision and violations data. Overall, they desired greater automated information on delinquent reports, hearings, and more detail on supervision such as contacts and sanctions. Additionally, district operations managers believed that building alerts into the information system would help improve the timeliness of important documents, such as filing delinquent reports and the accompanying incident report(s).

One of the most common recommendations centered on the quality of training for supervision officers on parole-specific aspects of the job. The district operations managers believe more frequent training on parole practices and more in-depth training during new officer training could help prepare supervision officers regarding the nuances associated with parole supervision. It is especially important for officers to understand what is required of them at the final hearing and what information about the parolee's supervision is important for the Board when they consider a revocation for someone. Other suggestions were to implement

incentives or policies that reduce turnover in some of the field offices thereby resulting in better rapport between officers and parolees. This is especially challenging during hearings when an officer does not convey a complete summary of the parolee's supervision performance because either the information system or the new supervising officer does not have the full picture. Finally, the district operations managers also thought structured and targeted communications between the DCS and the Board would improve the violations process.

Challenges in Supervision in the Field: The district operations managers identified challenges that arise in the field that result from two separate agencies involved in managing parolees. Since the merger of probation and parole supervision, they acknowledged a reduction in their original frustrations as the agencies went through the "growing pains". However, some areas remain problematic. One issue is that many officers are unfamiliar with parole procedures when it is time to file a delinquent report.

Overall, the district operations managers expressed few frustrations in their role. Their main source of irritation arose from the general lack of familiarity with parole policies, practices, and procedures among supervision officers. While most believe supervision officers make efforts to learn about parole, the relative infrequency in which officers engage in parole procedures often makes it more difficult to retain the required details. For example, many of the general areas in which supervision officers struggled with learning parole-specific practices revolved around waivers, delinquent report content, preparation for testimony at Board revocation hearings, and documentation for parole-specific aspects of supervision.

The district operations managers dedicate a significant amount of time addressing these issues by going out to field offices and conducting trainings on parole procedures. They also field phone calls and staff cases to address parole issues, as well as review documentation. In addition, some expressed concern that assistant chiefs or chiefs in field offices are less familiar with parole practices, which is problematic since those managers are responsible for reviewing and approving

parole documentation before it is sent to the Board. And while supervision officers have significantly fewer parolees on their caseloads, parole specific components are not emphasized enough in offices or in training for new officers.

The district operations managers cited some specific issues in which unfamiliarity with parole negatively impacts the parole process. They noted, for instance, the timeliness of parole paperwork, such as the tardy submission of a delinquent report after a warrant is issued. Another issue is the variation among officers in supervision philosophy or orientation. When these are coupled with incomplete information, district operations managers have a difficult time piecing together the parolee's supervision behavior and/or events pertinent to the hearing.

One of the district operations managers said the biggest challenge of two separate agencies overseeing individuals on parole supervision was that:

"We (district operations managers) can advise them (officers) on what the guidelines are, and what the requirements are, but we can't directly tell them how to do their job."

Differences in Parole and Probation Practices: The district operations managers were asked how supervision practices and policies can differ between parole and probation supervision, since some challenges in working with officers are unrelated to having two separate agencies, but rather supervising a mixture of people on probation and/or parole. Many of the district operations managers perceived that a barrier in learning parole supervision comes from the infrequency in which supervision officers deal with parole specific aspects of the process. Supervision officers often have a small proportion of parolees on their caseload compared to the larger number of probationers. Another difference is associated with the fact that more detailed information is needed on parole cases. This is a challenge when cases are presented at hearings because probation cases require less input from the supervision officer and more from the district attorney.

Nonetheless, the district operations managers are sympathetic to the challenges faced by officers in the field. They suggested that parole supervision might afford more flexibility since they can work with officers on special conditions for parolees rather than going through a judge. Related, the district operations managers thought that parole might provide more consistency in supervision expectations since there is less variation across Board members as opposed to differences between a much larger cluster of judges and circuits across the state. Finally, they perceived parolees to be a more risky population to work with than probationers.

One district operations manager pointed out:

"Every last one of them (judicial districts) are different, so you're dealing with multiple judges, multiple district attorneys, you're dealing with multiple court rooms. So you're dealing with a whole set of different people and stakeholders that want things done their way and differently. The parole board has a little bit more simpler guidelines and the steps to go forward in a revocation process."

And another one stated:

"I think the DCS officers fail to understand a lot of times that there is a difference between offenders, and the fact that one went to prison, and one just took a plea out of a county jail and got out. I don't think they understand the speed in which and severity in which some of these parolees can reoffend, and need to be removed from society."

Needs of parolees: When asked about the types of needs that parolees have the district operations managers identified the areas of mental health, employment, motivation, and substance abuse. Yet, as was reported in the previous section, they believe that at times supervision officers underestimate the unique aspects of risk that face parolees upon release from prison.

Parole Specific Training for the Field: Perhaps not surprisingly, many of the suggestions focused on training recommendations for supervision officers on parole specific components of their work. The district operations managers thought that providing more training

for assistant chiefs and other supervisors could improve the violations process because this group of staff in the field is responsible for signing off and providing guidance on parole issues for supervision officers. This aspect of the supervisors' role makes them especially instrumental in ensuring cases are prepared for violation hearings according to parole requirements.

The district operations managers believe it would help to increase cross-training opportunities, whether during basic training for new hires or as on-going training for supervision officers. Additionally, it was suggested that more consistency in training content on parole topics would make it easier for supervision officers. Finally, the district operations managers identified specific training areas they believed would help supervision officers: emphasizing information needed in delinquent reports, practicing testimony on violations at hearings, and explaining the waivers of hearings to parolees clearly, especially in regards to parole-specific requirements.

Waivers: The district operations managers were asked about the use of waivers and about what appears to be a high rate of individuals waiving their hearings for revocation. They reported that the seemingly frequent reliance on waivers could be that by the time the officer requests a hearing, the parolee knows that their supervision officer has tried and exhausted all other sanctions and options to keep them in the community, and it is up to the Board to revoke or find an alternative serious, elevated response. At times, parolees may not waive their hearing because they want to go in front of the Board to make the case that their supervision officer did not give them enough chances or do not understand other options that may be available. However, many district operations managers believe some parolees will always refuse to sign documentation (for either the preliminary or final hearing) and some just want their chance in front of the Board. Several perceive confusion among some of the supervision officers about the waiver process and the consequences of waiving because the officers do not have to do so very often. Other district operations managers commented that there is a motivation to waive, assuming that the parolee is not convicted of a new offense, as parolees understand they will be considered for re-release at six months as opposed to 12 months (unless specified differently by the Board).

Other: The district operations managers made other comments that arose frequently, yet do not fit the themes indicated in this report. Of particular note, they referenced the significant support received from their supervisors and peers. They also mentioned Board members' frequent agreement with the recommendations made at hearings.

Summary of Interviews with the Board Members

Robina Institute staff interviewed all five Parole Board members in January 2018 to ascertain their perspectives on the violations process. The Parole Board members are the critical decision-makers at the point of revocation because they hold hearings for those individuals who have not waived their final hearing and they vote whether or not to revoke parole. The main findings for the interviews with the Board members are presented in this section.

Final hearings vary due to Board member preferences for the information most relevant to their decision-making. While some aspects of the final hearing are consistent across Board members, such as the formal procedures establishing the hearing format, each Board member has a particular way of conducting hearings. Some request a full report of the parolee on supervision before the final hearing, while others prefer to receive all information during the hearing or request information on the violation and the case history after the testimony. However, all Board members consider similar factors with the most common consideration public safety relative to the parolee's admitted guilt or innocence concerning the violation, alongside the offense severity associated with the violation. Other factors that are considered include: the parolee's attitude, the supervision provided to the individual (e.g., reporting, other sanctions, performance), sentence length/supervision length (e.g., time left on supervision), and treatment history. Overall, the district operations managers prepare cases for hearings based on Board member preferences. They also ensure that the information included in hearings is specific to the factors that a Board member emphasizes at the hearing.

The Board members have a positive relationship with the district operations managers and rely on them considerably when conducting final hearings. The relationships between the district operations managers and Board members are positive. The Board members frequently referenced how they rely on the district operations managers in the violations process.

Inconsistency exists in the information reviewed by Board members for voting on the final hearing decisions. Because of variation in what information Board members require at hearings, they do not receive consistent information and/or review the materials or associated details similarly. There appears to be some discrepancies in what information is available for the vote on final revocations as a Board.

Risk assessment is not considered in the hearing process, although the members emphasize public safety in making revocation decisions. Risk assessment scores or risk levels are not used in decision-making regarding violations and revocations for parole. Board members focus on guilt regarding the violation and the severity of the violation offense.

The quality and content of supervision for parolees is significant to Board members when they make violation decisions. Most Board members, especially at the final hearing, want to know about the quality of the supervision of the parolee – did they receive contacts from the officer, how are they being supervised, and other such issues. Overall, Board members see an improvement in communication concerning supervision policies and practices since the probation and parole supervision merger, but there still appears to be some uncertainty among Board members regarding various aspects of parole supervision. One Board member suggested the respective agencies identify “shared expectations” regarding parole supervision. However, Board members also acknowledged that the DCS’ officers are the experts in supervision. They want to rely on the officers to supervise parolees effectively in the field.

Board members are not familiar with the waiver process and relied on supervision officers to fulfill these duties and the district operations managers to oversee them. Some Board members observe confusion around the waiver process and its consequences. They noted the appearance of some parolees at the release stage who were unclear on what would occur after they had signed a waiver (i.e., the expectation that they will be considered for release sooner). The volume of waivers and the confusion surrounding them may raise issues of fairness and due process.

Data Analysis

The sample created for this project included a group of individuals who had at least one delinquent report filed between January, 1 and March 31, 2016. For some individuals in the sample, they had more than one report filed in which case any other information related to future delinquent reports was not included.

The first set of descriptive statistics examines the following research question: *What are the individual and supervision characteristics associated with those who receive a delinquent report?*

Although the average number of such reports was 1.9 per person, almost half of the sample had only one delinquent report filed during the three month study period. Most individuals started parole 15.4 months prior to 2016, when the criterion delinquent report was filed. The longest time someone started parole until a report was filed was 60 months and the shortest period was less than a month. Table 1 presents the data discussed here.

Table 1. Number of Delinquent Reports Filed for Parolee and Time on Supervision Before Filing for Sample		
Number of delinquent reports	Range: 1 - 9	Average: 1.9
		Mode: 1
Time on supervision before receiving report	Range: 0 - 60.0 months	Average: 15.4 months

Table 2 presents information on the demographics of the sample. The average age of individuals was 36.7 years old at the time the delinquent report was filed. Most individuals who had a report are male with 91.2% (3,407), while only 8.8% (328) are female. 55.4% (2,070) are black and 42.8% (1,598) are white, with only 1.8% falling into other or unknown categories. Finally, the number of residence changes recorded while on supervision at the time of the delinquent report, on average, is 3.3, prior to the filing of the report. Given the wide distribution of residence changes the most frequent number is reported, which was one, yet it ranged from 1 to 27 changes.

Table 2: Description of Demographics for Individuals Who Had a Delinquent Report Filed January – March 2016		
Age*	Range: 17 – 78 years	Average: 36.7 years
		Mode: 36 years
	Number of Parolees	Percentage
Gender	Range: 0 – 60.0 months	Average: 15.4 months
Female	328	8.8%
Male	3,407	91.2%
Race & Ethnicity		
Black	2,070	55.4%
White	1,598	42.8%
Other or Unknown	67	1.8%
Number of Residence Changes ^a	Range: 1 - 27	Average: 3.3
		Mode: 1
Total	3,735	100.0%

*Age and number of residence changes is provided at the time the delinquent report was filed for the individual on parole.

Table 3 describes the supervision characteristics of the sample. Given the large number of circuits in Georgia, only the top five circuits who processed the most delinquent reports during the sample period are presented in the table. Most of the reports were processed in the Atlanta circuit with 268 filed, or 7.2% of the total filed during the study. The remaining circuits in order of the most delinquent reports filed include: Eastern (158; 4.2%), Stone Mountain (150; 4.0%), Coweta (147; 3.9%), and Cobb (141; 3.8%).

The supervision level of the sample is as follows: 1,541 (41.3%) are at a standard supervision level, then the next highest group is 30.0% (1,122) who are supervised at the high supervision level, followed by 974 (26.1%) on specialized, and the remaining 2.6% (98) on the contact supervision level. Interestingly, similar proportions of parolees on standard (41.3%) and high levels of supervision (30.0%) received a delinquent report. One may assume that a higher risk/supervision level population would be more likely to have reports filed. However, given this sample is only a snapshot in time, no conclusions can be drawn from this finding at this time.

Table 3: Supervision Characteristics of Individuals Who Had a Delinquent Report Filed January – March 2016		
	Frequency	Percentage
5 Largest Amount of DR's by Circuit		
Atlanta	268	7.2%
Eastern	158	4.2%
Stone Mountain	150	4.0%
Coweta	147	3.9%
Cobb	141	3.8%
<i>Total from Top 5 Circuits</i>	<i>864</i>	<i>23.1%</i>
Supervision Level*		
Contact	98	2.6%
High	1,122	30.0%
Specialized	974	26.1%
Standard	1,541	41.3%
Total in Sample	3,735	100.0%

*Supervision level is provided at the time the delinquent report was filed for the individual on parole.

The next set of descriptive statistics in Table 4 reviews trends related to the risk score of the individuals in the sample. The risk scores analyzed for this study are from the risk assessment instrument, the Georgia Parolee Arrest Risk Instrument – Generation 2 (GPARI – 2). The GPARI-2 is a validated risk assessment tool that includes 10 items producing a total risk score ranging from 1 – 10. It is an automated, actuarial risk assessment updated daily based on supervision information entered by community supervision officers into the case management system. The assessment results are used to assign individuals to either standard or high supervision levels.

Due to limitations of the data, the analysis was unable to associate the risk score at the time of the delinquent report, therefore the risk assessment analysis presented provides an overall picture of risk changes from the onset of parole to when the data was pulled in February 2018 or when the individual was discharged from parole. The intake risk level of individuals who had a delinquent report filed during the study period were mostly high risk with almost half of the sample scoring a seven or higher. However, two years later a noticeable decline in risk occurred with only 29.5% of the sample scoring a seven or higher on the risk assessment. This suggests that as individuals progress on supervision their risk scores decrease even if they received a delinquent report at some point in their supervision.

To understand how risk changes over time for this sample, an average change in risk score was calculated by subtracting the most recent risk assessment score from the score at intake to parole supervision. The most recent risk assessment score was either the risk score collected approximately two years from the time the criterion delinquent report was filed (e.g., when the data was extracted in February 2018) or the last risk score at the time of successful discharge from parole. Due to data limitations, there is no way to calculate an average risk change from the date the report was filed and two years out. On average the risk score for those in the sample was 1.9 points lower than their risk score at intake. In terms of overall change in risk, parolees in the sample ranged from increasing 9 points to decreasing 9 points in their risk score. Despite having a delinquent report filed, these individuals had a lower risk to reoffend two years after the criterion delinquent report was filed.

Table 4: Parole Risk Scores at Intake, 3 Months, 6 Months, and Most Recent

Risk Score	At Intake		3 Months from Intake		6 Months from Intake		Most Recent	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
1	103	2.8	48	1.3	65	1.7	644	17.2
2	77	2.1	102	2.7	160	4.3	434	11.6
3	205	5.5	232	6.2	262	7.0	360	9.6
4	301	8.1	337	9.0	415	11.1	337	9.0
5	409	11.1	423	11.3	449	12.0	339	9.1
6	491	13.1	470	12.6	439	11.8	307	8.2
7	564	15.1	479	12.8	472	12.6	318	8.5
8	508	13.6	515	13.8	466	12.5	311	8.3
9	449	12.0	465	12.4	410	11.0	254	6.8
10	378	10.1	421	11.3	356	9.5	220	5.9
Missing	250	6.7	243	6.5	241	6.5	211	5.6
Total	3,735	100.0	3,735	100.0	3,735	100.0	3,735	100.0

Table 5 presents different measures of criminal history for the sample. The top three most serious conviction offenses were burglary 12.3% (460), aggravated assault 7.0% (260), and theft by taking 4.4% (163). Next are the number of prior incarcerations, prior arrests, and prior convictions. Both the averages and the modes are provided since the distribution of these variables are skewed. The mode is provided to demonstrate the most common number in the sample for prior incarcerations, prior arrests, and prior convictions. The range demonstrates the lowest and highest value for each of the measures for priors. On average, the sample had 2.5 incarcerations (1 was most common; range 1 - 14), 15.1 prior arrests (10 was most common; range 1 - 114), and 5.0 prior convictions (3 was most common; range 1 - 37).

Table 5: Criminal History Information on Parolees in the Sample

Top three most serious offenses of conviction	Frequencies	Percentage
Burglary	460	12.3%
Aggravated assault	260	7.0%
Theft by taking	163	4.4%
Prior incarcerations	Range: 1 - 14	Average: 2.5
		Mode: 1
Prior arrests	Range: 1 - 114	Average: 15.1
		Mode: 10
Prior convictions	Range: 1 - 114	Average: 5.0
		Mode: 3

The next set of descriptive statistics answers the following research question: *What are the long-term outcomes of individuals who receive a delinquent report?*

Table 6 provides information on the outcome measures of interest for this sample. The rearrest and discharge status refer to outcomes that occurred since the delinquent report was filed but, it does not mean the outcome is directly associated with the criterion report that was filed between January 1 – March 30, 2016. In other words, the revocations listed may or may not be a result of the delinquent report filed during the study period and could be the result of a subsequent report. The rearrest information is measured by: 1) number of rearrests and 2) rearrested as “yes” or “no”. The number of rearrests averaged 1.5 with 0 being the most common number of rearrests. The number of rearrests ranged from 0 - 14. When rearrest was measured as either those who had any rearrests (yes) or those who had no rearrests, 35.3% of the sample had not been rearrested at the time the data was pulled. Finally, the data demonstrates that two years after the delinquent report was filed, 52.0% (1,942) of the sample was still on parole, while 7.1% (265) were discharged and 40.9% (1,528) were revoked. Discharge means those individuals who successfully completed supervision or were marked as discharged but had died.

Table 6: Rearrest and Discharge Information on Parolees in the Sample		
Number of rearrests since delinquent report filed	Range: 0 - 14	Average: 1.51
		Mode: 0
Rearrested since delinquent report filed	Frequency	Percentage
No	1,320	35.3%
Yes	2,415	64.7%
Discharge status since delinquent report filed*	Range: 1 - 114	Average: 5.0
Still on parole	1,942	52.0%
Discharge	265	7.1%
Revocation	1,528	40.9%

*One limitation in this data is the inability to link a delinquent report to a specific outcome from the Board, such as their decision to revoke that specific violation(s) in the delinquent report. Revocations presented here represent the current status (as of February 2018) of the individual.

Despite having a delinquent report filed, there was a portion of individuals discharged successfully from parole supervision two years after its filing. The Board should explore how data can link individuals with the reports and outcomes to understand what happened on supervision to those who successfully discharged from supervision, which would provide insight into managing offenders more effectively. 64.7% of the group were rearrested within the two years following the report. This recidivism rate can present a baseline for understanding how individuals progress on supervision after the filing of a report, but it should not be used to compare to recidivism rates of other interventions or agencies. After all, this group is comprised of individuals who had a violation and includes many high risk individuals.

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings presented in this section combine the results of the interviews, data analysis, observations, review of prior research on parole, and examination of supervision and parole policies. In addition, the steering committee was especially vital to synthesize and interpret the qualitative and quantitative data collected for this project, which helped summarize the results of the study. The main findings and takeaways are presented below.

Findings

- The district operations managers are crucial in representing the Board and conveying the Board's interest in parole with the DCS' officers. They are the liaison between the Board members and supervision officers.
- Information on supervision progress and performance is critical in district operations managers' and Board members' decision-making. However, there are some challenges in ensuring this information is accessible in the information system and that the relevant information is available for Board members to make decisions about violations. Further, at times there are some difficulties in ensuring that supervision officers provide a thorough account of the information needed by the Board to make decisions about violations in the information system and during the hearing process.
- Public safety is the main consideration the Board focuses on when reviewing violations and holding a final revocation hearing. However, public safety is mainly viewed in terms of the violation(s) and offense severity. The risk assessment is not used in the assessment of public safety.
- The DCS, the district operations managers, and the Board believe that by the time the supervision officer requests a hearing in most cases, other options have been exhausted and a revocation or another serious response is warranted. Yet, this assumption should be reconsidered since there were concerns that supervision information on the parolee, such as a summary of contacts, prior sanctions, and treatment interventions, is not always available or known by the Board. If the supervision officer is unfamiliar with the case and/or the information system does not have a complete summary, the Board may not always have a full picture of supervision as to what other options have been exhausted with the parolee and whether revocation is the next best option.
- The understanding of parole policies and practices varies across supervision officers and there are opportunities for more knowledge transfer pertaining to the Board's operations. Supervision officers may need more structured training on parole when they are first hired and more intensive or more consistent ongoing training related to parole practices. At the time of the report, the district operations managers spent a significant amount of their time training or staffing parole cases to address this gap.
- There are opportunities to improve the type of data collected and made accessible to the district operations managers and the Board. At times, some of the information most relevant to parole decision-making can be either difficult to pull or the detail is not provided consistently. Staff at the Board are eager to develop ways to use the information system more effectively to improve parole decision-making.
- While there are some challenges with a separate agency providing supervision to parolees and a Board overseeing parole requirements, the district operations managers and the Board members are interested in supporting the role of supervision officers and rely on their expertise. There are opportunities to increase the communication and collaboration between both agencies, which is especially crucial in addressing violations. Supervision officers know the parolee best and therefore, respond first with sanctions, rewards, and interventions. In terms of process, the officer initiates the

beginning of the violations continuum and the Board is a separate agency fulfilling the remaining responses on the continuum. DCS sanctions through the final revocation hearings should harmonize and complement each other, as well as consider how they align with the Board's goals in overseeing parolees.

- While interview questions focused on violations and hearings, very little was mentioned about how positive behavior and progress was reinforced or rewarded. At times, treatment and interventions were mentioned but even when asked, most of the focus was on the role of sanctions in changing behavior. This was common for both supervision and the Board.
- Currently, the Board is unable to use data to study the patterns of individuals who waive final hearings in comparison to those who do not waive. Without the data, the Board cannot understand why people may decide to waive nor study how outcomes are better or worse for those who waive. The interviews with the district operations managers suggest that both supervision officers and parolees sometimes express confusion and uncertainty about the waiver process and its potential consequences. Given how often waivers of final hearings occur, it may be timely to address this as a matter of educational instruction and due process (Bashir et al., 2017).
- There is little data to analyze and evaluate on sanctions and violations. For example, this might be a delinquent report that is generated from the case management system that includes information from supervision. Similar data on supervision history, such as sanctions, reporting, treatment, etc., could also be pulled for data metrics to monitor parolees as a population and to review the agency's impact on parole outcomes. Currently, there are no metrics that are collected to test the assumptions surrounding sanctions, nor is there data to explore how the sanctions used by officers and the Board work together to prevent future reoffending and promote successful discharge.

Recommendations

After a review of the research assembled in this study, there are three recommendations that are identified for the parole violations and revocations process in Georgia. These recommendations are informed by the data, both qualitative and quantitative, collected in this project, as well as the review of policies for parole violations in other states.

Recommendation #1:

A review should be undertaken to evaluate the parole revocation process and assess adherence to due process requirements, and, if necessary, adopt appropriate measures to improve alignment to due process considerations. By conducting a formal review, the Board can document its adherence to due process obligations in the parole process and identify ways to improve parolee understanding of complex issues of parole such as the revocation process, the waiver process, and the due process rights to which they are entitled at both preliminary and final revocation hearings. The Board may find there are opportunities to enhance training in these areas. For example, one such area might include increasing the familiarity among officers with parole waivers and preparing supervision officers to explain the parole waivers and the implications of signing the waivers better to the parolees they supervise. This due process review should be led by the Board's legal counsel in collaboration with the DCS. If it is helpful to augment the capacity to conduct this review, consideration might be given to enlisting the assistance of a law clinic.

Recommendation #2:

The Board should examine how risk assessment can be incorporated into parole violation decision-making. Currently, the Board is exploring the development of a violation matrix that includes risk assessment and the two main factors Board members consider at the revocation stage, both public safety and the seriousness of the new offense. Incorporating risk assessment into parole decision-making is aligned with research on working with offenders effectively to reduce reoffending and promote successful discharge from supervision. Within this context, the Board should explore how

other factors may inform parole violation decision-making, including but not limited to: incentives for positive behavior, options for behavioral interventions and treatment, special offenses (e.g., sex offenses, domestic violence offenses), and supporting positive progress in the community and compliance. The Board should collaborate with the DCS to ensure the violation matrix is congruent with the responses used by community supervision officers in the field so that the violation grid represents a continuum of sanctions and incentives. Finally, the Board should develop a plan that includes prioritizing data collection of risk assessment and other factors included in the violation matrix, training staff in how to use the matrix, and pilot testing its implementation to determine empirically the impact on the revocation rates and staff workload.

Recommendation #3:

The Board should initiate a workforce development plan that includes standardized violation data collection of key metrics to inform data-driven violation policies and procedures. The workforce development plan should include staff training, data, and metrics that would aid in the review of the due process and violation matrix recommendations made in this report. The Board should also develop a “what works” training on parole supervision and parole decision-making that would assist district operations managers and Board members in supporting the field staff and the individuals on parole in completing supervision successfully.

CONCLUSION

One year ago, the Georgia State Board of Pardons and Paroles took the initiative to seek assistance from the Robina Institute of Criminal Law and Criminal Justice to examine its violation and revocation process. Since then, the leadership of the Board, members of its executive and central office staff, and field personnel, along with representatives of the DCS, have invested enormous time and resources in collaborating and completing this report. Interviews have been conducted with the Board members and the district operations managers, and information and data have been gathered to better understand the framework and mechanics associated with revocation policies and practices. The findings and recommendations offered are intended to be responsive to the request for assistance. It is recognized that acting on them will require on-going collaboration with other agencies. The Georgia State Board of Pardons and Paroles is uniquely positioned to determine the feasibility and prospects of moving forward relative to its commitment to a reform agenda centering on fairness and effectiveness when dealing with the crucial matter of parolee revocation.

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APPENDIX 1**GA PERKS Steering Committee Members**

- Harris Childers, Deputy Director Field Services, Department of Community Supervision
- Anita Cloud, Director of Community Affairs, Board of Pardons and Paroles
- Felecia Holloway, Deputy Director of Field Services, Board of Pardons and Paroles
- Rick Jacobs, Director of Field Services, Board of Pardons and Paroles
- Crystal Moon, Senior Hearing Examiner Clemency Division, Board of Pardons and Paroles
- James “Bubba” Williams, Director of Clemency, Board of Pardons and Paroles

APPENDIX 2**District Operations Manager Interview Questions***Intro Questions:*

1. Can you provide an overview of the responsibilities you have in your role?
2. How long have you been in your current position?
3. What is your career background?

Information provided to district operations managers for hearings:

1. Let’s talk about the steps leading up to the preliminary hearing to establish probable cause. How are you notified by supervision officers (and/or the Chief) that you will need to schedule and conduct a preliminary hearing for an individual on parole? What is the process and system in place for this?
 - a. On average, about how long does it take to hold the preliminary hearing once you have received notification?
 - b. What is the length of time outlined in policy in regards to how long the hearing must occur after the parolee is arrested? And, are there challenges in meeting these policy requirements?
 - c. Is there anything regarding this process/system of notification that could improve? (i.e., would notify you more quickly or create more efficiency?)
2. What information do you receive about the parolee before holding their preliminary hearing (i.e., what information is included in the delinquency reports)? Is this information helpful?
 - a. Do you receive information about the parolee’s compliance and noncompliance on supervision? If so, how does this factor into decision making?
 - b. Do you receive risk assessment information? If so, how does this factor into your decision making during the probable cause hearing?
 - c. Do you receive information about programming or treatment? If so, how does this factor into decision making during the probable cause hearing?
3. Is there any information not included in the reports from supervision officers that you think would help you improve your decision making or help you make recommendations regarding your decision to move someone to a final revocation hearing? If so, what is it and how could it help you improve your decision making?

Preliminary hearing stage:

1. Let’s discuss now how often you decide a case should move from a preliminary hearing to a final revocation hearing. How often would you say you agree with the filing by the officer for a preliminary hearing?
2. How satisfied are you with the use of other sanctions before an officer files for a preliminary hearing? Do you think there are many cases moved to the hearing stage too quickly and other lower level sanctions should have been applied to the parolee first?

3. How satisfied are you with the use of treatment or interventions with a parolee before they reach a preliminary hearing? Do you think parolees could receive more treatment or intervention options before reaching the preliminary hearing?
4. What percentage of parolees do you recommend to move to a final hearing for revocation by the board? What reasons would you make the recommendation for a final hearing?
5. What are the specific offenses or violations that might require you in legislation or policy to recommend a final hearing before the board?
6. Outside of certain offenses or violations that require/mandate a revocation, what are the other factors that you consider when recommending the parolee be revoked rather than remain on supervision?
7. Are there certain violations that you might be more likely to recommend a revocation for?
8. Are there other factors you frequently take into account when recommending someone for a final revocation hearing?
9. What percentage of parolees do you recommend to return to supervision? What reasons might they return to supervision rather than move to a revocation hearing?
10. Are there other sanctions or conditions you might recommend once they return to supervision?
11. Are there any requirements around treatment or interventions you might recommend once they are returned to supervision?
12. Are there any considerations towards compliance and positive behavior taken into account?
13. Are there many instances where there is not enough evidence to establish probable cause?
14. What other decisions might you make at this stage? In other words, besides returning someone to supervision or recommending they be revoked, are there other outcomes for a parolee after the preliminary hearing?
15. How often are options, such as a day report center, used? Programming such as RSAT in an institution? Others?

Waivers for preliminary and final hearings:

1. What percentage of parolees do you estimate waive a *preliminary hearing only*? What do you think are the reasons a parolee might waive their *preliminary hearing only*?
2. What percentage of parolees do you estimate waive a *final hearing only*? What do you think are the reasons a parolee might waive their *final hearing only*?
3. What percentage of parolees do you estimate waive both the *preliminary and final hearing*? What do you think are the reasons a parolee might waive both their *preliminary and final hearings*?
4. How well do you think parolees understand the waiver process? Are there any parts of the process you get a lot of questions about from parolees?
5. How well do you think parolees understand the revocation process? Are there any parts of the process you get a lot of questions about from parolees?

Final hearing stage:

1. For those parolees who move to a final revocation hearing, what percentage have their supervision revoked by the Board?
2. For those cases the Board does not decide to revoke, what factors do you think might result in different outcomes from your recommendation?
3. What communication or information do you receive from the Board regarding the cases you move to the final hearing stage?
4. What do you include in your reports for the final hearing?
5. What information do you think is most important to include in the reports for the final hearing with the Board?
6. What do you think the average length of time is between a preliminary revocation hearing and a final revocation hearing?

Other:

1. What kind of data do you track for your position?
 - a. What data do you track about your role (i.e. hearings, recommendations)
 - b. Is there any data you that you would like to see tracked?
2. Do you think supervision officers understand your role? Is there anything you would want them to know or understand more about your job?
3. Do you think the parole board understands your role? Is there anything you would want them to know or understand more about your job?
4. If you could change anything about the revocation process, what might it be?
5. Is there anything else you think we should talk about that we haven't covered yet today?

APPENDIX 3

Board Member Interview Questions

Intro & Background

1. How long have you been a board member?
2. What is your background and prior career experience?

District Operations Managers

1. How do district operations managers assist you in the hearing process? Is there anything more they might do to assist you at a revocation hearing?
2. What is the most important information you review at a revocation hearing? Is there any additional information that, if provided by the DOMS, would assist you in making decisions about revocation?
3. Do you use a risk assessment at the final hearing? Do you use it when you recommend a case for a revocation to the rest of the Board?

General

1. What's working well with the revocation process?
2. What improvements do you think could be made?
3. Are there any improvements you think are needed in the waiver process relative to final revocation hearings?

Endnotes

- ¹ See Alexis Lee Watts et al., *Profiles in Parole Release and Revocation: Georgia* (2016), <https://robinainstitute.umn.edu/publications/profiles-parole-release-and-revocation-georgia> for an overview of parole policies and practices in Georgia. Additional state profiles may be viewed by going to the Robina Institute's website at <http://robinainstitute.umn.edu/areas-expertise/parole-release-revocation>.
- ² The district operations managers provide supervision officers with a template for the delinquent report, which outlines that the report must include information on 1) the arrest, 2) summary of time on supervision, 3) summary of current violation(s), 4) list of parole conditions, and 5) recommendation(s) for the next course of action.
- ³ This project has been spearheaded by Alexis Watts, Research Attorney, at the Robina Institute of Criminal Law and Criminal Justice.
- ⁴ Not all policies reviewed were specific to parole or releasing authorities. Some of the policies that were considered included those governing probation supervision or probation and parole supervision combined.
- ⁵ See Vera Inst. of Justice, Ctr. on Sentencing & Corr., *Memo on Supervision Response Guidelines* (2012), <http://www.appa-net.org/eWeb/Resources/SPSP/State-Response-Guide.pdf>. This resource gives an overview of some of the different formats and components of violation policies used by community supervision agencies.
- ⁶ See Madeline Carter, Nat'l Inst. of Corr., Ctr. for Effective Pub. Policy, *Behavior Management of Justice-Involved Individuals: Contemporary Research and State-of-the-Art Policy and Practice* (2015), <https://info.nicic.gov/nicrp/system/files/029553.pdf>. This report gives an overview and a framework for structured behavior response policies.

The Robina Institute of Criminal Law and Criminal Justice is located at the University of Minnesota Law School. The Robina Institute connects research and education with practice to create transformative change in sentencing laws and correctional policies.

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