

Equal Justice Initiative

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://eji.org/news/alabama-prisons-get-more-federal-stimulus-than-schools/>

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12.23.10

As a result of mass incarceration in Alabama, money that would otherwise be available for education is being used to pay for the states increasing prison population. According to the Mobile Press-Register, the Alabama Department of Corrections is the biggest recipient of federal education stimulus dollars in the state, receiving \$118 million from the U.S. Department of Education since 2009.

Alabama spent a large part of the federal education dollars it received to help fund its overcrowded prison system, which currently incarcerates more people than ever before. Using education dollars, Alabama spent \$4,500 per prisoner on guards and inmate oversight, which is four times greater than the amount spent per student for kids in kindergarten through 12th grade.

The Department of Corrections received the education stimulus money while the states school systems are experiencing cuts in funding. Mobile and Baldwin County schools alone have laid off more than 1,000 teachers and staff and cut programs for students. Schools are expecting more hardships in the current economic climate.

Inadequately funded and poorly performing schools have an impact on the size of the prison population. Studies have shown that students who drop out of school are more likely to go to prison than students who succeed in school. As one school superintendent argued, If we couldve had that \$118 million, we couldve given the prisons less business.

The Department of Corrections was the only non-education agency to receive any education stimulus funding in Alabama.

Tags:

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Mobile Press-Register

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