



correctional *Newsfront*

Educating Inmates in the PA DOC

By Susan McNaughton

Approximately 12,000 individuals are admitted to the state prison system each year. Of those, DOC testing shows that 50 percent read at less than a 6th grade level.

Because education is important in the fight against crime – the more an individual is educated, the less likely they are to commit crimes – the DOC is committed to educating inmates.

Back in the mid 1990s, the goal was to have our inmates reading and functioning at a 5th grade level. That goal was increased to the 8th grade level in the early 2000s. Yet again, around 2004, the bar was raised to the GED level.

And in addition to educating inmates, the department wanted also to provide inmates with job skills that they could learn while in prison and take with them upon release from prison. Ninety percent of the DOC's population will one day go home. Providing inmates with education and job skills provides the offenders a better chance at a successful reentry into society after release from prison.

How does the DOC determine an inmate's education level?

Upon reception to the DOC, female inmates are sent to SCI Muncy in Lycoming County, and male inmates are sent to SCI Camp Hill in Cumberland County.

During the diagnostic and classification process, which lasts several weeks, a variety of testing is conducted. Inmates are assessed physically, medically, emotionally, based upon their crime and sentence and educationally.

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Specific to education, in 2002, the DOC began using the TABE (test of adult basic education) with all inmates entering the system.

TABE is a system where the inmate sits down, one-on-one, with a computer and answers a variety of test questions to determine the reading and math abilities of the individual inmate. This information is then used by DOC staff to set an individual educational plan for the inmate to

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Secretary Wetzel Talks About...

Education in Prison

For decades, corrections experts have talked about how the more educated someone is, the less likely that person is to commit crimes.

Also for decades, this agency has provided a variety of educational and vocational programs to inmates ... all done with the purpose of making offenders less likely to commit new crimes once released from prison.

Our programs also teach inmates basic work skills that, combined with education, will help them upon release from prison to find and keep life sustaining jobs.

As a result of all of our efforts, we hope to make individuals who during incarceration are tax burdens into tax payers.

This special issue of "Correctional Newsfront" will educate the reader about the variety of education programs we offer inmates.

Increasing offenders' education level is a matter of public safety. We all are working toward a goal of less crime.

I hope you find this issue informative and will take a few minutes to recognize that the state prison system is about more than just warehousing offenders ... it's about changing criminal ways of thinking and providing skills to offenders to help them succeed upon release from prison.



John Wetzel, Secretary

Newsfront

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complete during his/her incarceration. Only corrections staff, and in particular education staff, have access to the information gleaned from the TABE testing.

Also through this DCC process, staff determines where an inmate will be housed. While inmates enter the system through Camp Hill and Muncy, they may not remain there.

Female inmates can be housed at Muncy, Cambridge Springs or the Quehanna Boot Camp. Male inmates can be housed at any of the state's 25 male prisons. Of course, not every prison offers every educational program. That wouldn't be a good use of taxpayer money. So, placement takes into consideration each inmate's educational needs.



Which facilities offer education programs, and what programs do they offer?

Adult basic education classes are provided at SCIs Albion, Cambridge Springs, Camp Hill, Chester, Cresson, Dallas, Fayette, Forest, Frackville, Graterford, Greene, Greensburg, Houtzdale, Huntingdon, Laurel Highlands, Mahanoy, Mercer, Muncy, Pittsburgh, Quehanna, Retreat, Rockview, Smithfield, Somerset and Waymart.

Other education programs offered throughout the prison system include: Pre-GED instruction in language arts and math; GED instruction in language arts, science, social studies and math; English as a Second Language; Act 143 Victim Awareness; Title 1 and life skills. In addition, pre-voc and Money Smart programs that provide guidance in employability, consumer economics, citizenship, community resources and wellness education are provided. Some facilities offer post secondary diploma courses through on-site instruction by local colleges.

Is it true the DOC mandates a GED?

As of July 2004, any inmate committed to the DOC who does not have a GED or high school diploma is mandated to attend academic programming. An inmate may opt out of the program only if supported by the teacher, school principal and education and after meeting the minimum requirements. The minimum

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requirements are:

- for an adult offender — having been enrolled in a minimum of one class per day and attend a minimum of 300 hours.
- for a youthful offender – having been enrolled in a half-day of classes and attend a minimum of 600 hours and reach the age of 21 before given the option of opting out.

What about inmates who are under 18, how is their education handled by the DOC?

Acts 15 of 1999 and 35 of 2001 dictate that the DOC offer a Commonwealth Secondary Diploma Program (CSDP) to school age inmates with PA School Code certified educational personnel. The department has coordinated with the Pennsylvania Department of Education to develop an "Alternative Education Program" containing curriculum and graduation requirements that set high standards similar to those offered by one of the 501 school districts. Graduation requirements will be 21 credits to include a graduation project

2010 DOC Educational/Vocational Statistics

1,515 inmates passed the GED
 216 inmates obtained their CSD
 114 inmates passed the Auto Trades Program
 70 inmates passed the Barber Program
 979 inmates passed the Building Trades Program
 142 inmates passed the CAD Program
 300 inmates passed the Electrical Trade Program
 243 inmates passed the HVAC Program
 205 inmates passed the Fiber Optics Program
 309 inmates completed the OSHA Safety Course

The initial program began in 2003 at four institutions – Coal Township, Houtzdale, Muncy and Pine Grove. Inmates desiring to participate in the program have to demonstrate readiness on entry tests or their Individual Education Plan (IEP).

The inmates' records are requested from the Record Center to document academic credits. Interested inmates are then counseled as to establishing a plan to obtain his/her Commonwealth Diploma. The department has designated Coal Township, Dallas, Forest, Houtzdale, Muncy, Pine Grove, Retreat, and Somerset as Commonwealth Secondary Diploma Program institutions.

Academic teachers, counselors and principals at the Commonwealth Secondary Diploma Program institutions are required to gain and maintain state certification from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE).

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How are special education inmates handled?

Special education classes are provided at SCIs Camp Hill, Coal Township, Forest, Houtzdale, Muncy, Pine Grove, Quehanna, Retreat and Somerset and at SCI Dallas later this fiscal year.

As of October 2011, the DOC reports that 284 inmates were enrolled in special education classes.

Each special education teaching position has an average of 20 students depending on the individual student's disability. An itinerant support caseload is 50 students and a supplemental support caseload is 20 students. Since our teachers have mixed categories these numbers fluctuate to accommodate the support each individual student needs. As a result caseload is calculated and monitored each month to ensure the number of students in each support category keeps us in compliance with PDE regulations.

How does the DOC track inmate educational achievements

Beginning in 2006, the DOC converted all hand written educational records into a computerized system in an effort to streamline and enhance operations. Because information is now accessible by computer, the need to ship hard copies of inmate education records across the system as inmates are transferred, has been eliminated.

The system tracks cumulative total hours of academic and vocational instruction, whether a GED is mandated for the inmate, and grade equivalents for reading, math and language. Information is entered into the system so staff can see progress in these areas over time. It also tracks information on courses in which the inmate is currently enrolled, classes that the inmate has dropped or been removed from (for perhaps lack of attendance) as well as completed courses. Teachers also can make notes in the system about the inmate's participation in class and attitude.

This system also tracks vocational programming and tracks completion and awarding of certifications.

Tell us about vocational course offerings:

Air conditioning and refrigeration:
Camp Hill, Chester, Coal Township,
Fayette, Forest, Graterford, Greene,
Pine Grove, Rockview and Somerset

Auto Body Repair: Albion, Cresson and
Retreat



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Auto Mechanics/Technology: Coal Township, Cresson, Forest, Greensburg, Huntingdon, Mahanoy and Mercer.

Building Trades: Albion, Coal Township, Dallas, Forest, Greene, Greensburg, Houtzdale, Huntingdon, Mercer, Pine Grove, Smithfield and Somerset.

Business Education: Albion, Chester, Cresson, Dallas, Fayette, Forest, Frackville, Graterford, Greene, Huntingdon, Laurel Highlands, Mahanoy, Muncy, Pine Grove, Retreat, Rockview, Smithfield, Somerset and Waymart.

Custodial Maintenance: Albion, Cambridge Springs, Cresson, Forest, Frackville, Houtzdale, Mahanoy, Mercer, Muncy, Pine Grove, Pittsburgh, Smithfield and Somerset.

Carpentry: Chester, Fayette, Graterford, Greensburg, Huntingdon, Mahanoy, Somerset and Waymart.

Com Art/Printing/Photography: Camp Hill, Dallas, Huntingdon and Waymart.

Computer Repair/Technology: Albion and Dallas.

Drafting/Computer Aided: Coal Township, Fayette, Forest, Houtzdale, Mahanoy, Muncy, Pine Grove and Somerset.

Electricity (Electrician): Forest, Houtzdale, Mercer, Pittsburgh and Rockview.

Electronics: Coal Township, Frackville, Graterford, Greensburg, Houtzdale, Laurel Highlands and Mahanoy.

Home Economics: Muncy.

Horticulture/Landscaping: Dallas, Graterford and Muncy.

Machine Shop: Muncy.

Masonry: Forest and Rockview.

Optical Assistant: Cambridge Springs.



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Restaurant Trades: Graterford and Waymart.

Small Gas Engine Repair: Cresson.

Upholstery/Furniture: Coal Township and Muncy.

Warehouse Operations: Albion, Graterford, Houtzdale, Huntingdon and Mahanoy.

Welding: Dallas, Fayette and Rockview.

Depending upon the course taken and the location of the course, the following certifications may be achieved:

- Air Conditioning Contractors of America (ACCA)
- American Board of Opticianry
- American Drafters Designers Association (ADDA)
- American Welding Society
- Apprenticeship
- Automotive Service Excellence (ASE)
- Certified Braille Transcribers through Library of Congress
- Certified Master Shingler
- Cooper Bussman Electrical Safety
- EPA Section 608/609/610/410 Technician Certification
- Eastern Forklift Company Certification
- Electronics Technicians Association (ETA)
- Engine and Equipment Training Council (EETC)
- Environmental Protection Agency Refrigerant Handling (EPA)
- Federal Communications Commission (FCC)
- Graphic Arts Technical Foundation (GATF)
- International Computer Driving License (ICDL)
- Material Handling Industry of America (MHIA)
- Mobile Air Conditioning Society (MACS)
- National Center for Construction Ed & Research (NCCER)
- National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI)
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
- Serve Safe Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point and Serving Safe Food Certification Course (HACCP)
- State Licensure
- Technical Publishing Company (TPC), Telemedia Corporated
- University/College Voc Certificate



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What about the Barber Schools?

Barber schools are located at SCIs Albion, Camp Hill, Chester, Coal Township, Cresson, Dallas, Graterford, Greene, Houtzdale, Huntingdon, Mahanoy, Retreat, Rockview and Waymart and are staffed with a licensed barber-instructor. The instructor is required to instruct in both practical and theory portions of the barber program to prepare inmates for their state board examination.

Female inmates learn in cosmetology schools/shops, of which there are two.

To enter the barber school, inmates must meet minimum requirements including having a high school diploma or GED, be misconduct free for at least six months, cannot be serving a sex offense. They also must have a minimum of three years or less until their release from prison. Inmates must attend and maintain satisfactory progress for 1,250 hours. Upon completion of the hours they are eligible to take the state board exam for licensure as a barber/cosmetologist.

In 2009, both the male and female programs had remarkable success during the license testing, with barber test takers achieving 95 percent pass rate and cosmetologist test takers achieving 100 percent success.



More about GEDs

By Lawrence Beatty, Division Chief
Bureau of Correction Education

More than 39 million adult Americans lack high school credentials, and that number continues to grow at an alarming rate. Earning \$7,000 less each year than those with high school credentials, these adults and their families will endure a lifetime of hardship. The government and concerned foundations cannot address this problem alone. It must be a national effort to give adults a second chance at earning their high school credential and pursuing further education and earning a sustaining wage.

The Department of Corrections' Bureau of Corrections Education is surely stepping up to the task and taking this issue serious. We start with ensuring our teachers are hired with the necessary credentials to tackle such an arduous task. The Bureau then supports them with continuous professional development training to keep them current with the most up-to-date teaching skills. With a shrinking budget we continue to find bargaining power to purchase the best and most efficient curriculum material to meet their educational needs. With all this effort by the Bureau, the work has paid off in a very successful way. Since tracking the corrections education GED statistics for 10 years, the figures have shown that the GED success rate has maintained a step above our community counterparts. Our pass rate has been rated several percentage points above the overall pass rate for the entire state of Pennsylvania and has proudly kept pace with the national rate as well. In 2008, the DOC pass rate was 74 percent, while the state rate was 70 percent. During 2009, DOC rated a 68 percent, while PA provided a 65 percent rate. Our training efforts were really evident in 2010 when DOC came in forth with a 74 percent pass rate, compared to the PA pass rate of 64 percent. This is truly evidence of support from the top down. The administration support at each state prison has been there to ensure the test sessions are timely and secure. The education staff has prepared eligible students to ensure their success. The Bureau of Correction Education monitors each test as well as the results of each examiner to give oversight and direction to maintain the quality testing program that has been documented.

There is another side of GED testing that many may not understand or even imagine, and that is the political venue. President Obama recently asserted the need to graduate more high school students and to support their transition to postsecondary education or career training programs. His stated goal is that by 2020, America will once again have the world's highest proportion of college graduates in the world. All educational organizations and providers must enhance the way they do business in order to meet the president's ambitious goals. Corrections Education is already taking necessary steps. Building on the goals of the GED 21st Century Initiative, we will partner with publishers who will combine their collective expertise and resources to develop the new GED test materials with Common Core State Standards, which will assure colleges and prospective employers that our incarcerated adults who have passed the GED tests are prepared to compete and succeed in a global economy.

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Renewable Energy and a Green Environment in the DOC

By Steven Davy, Director
Bureau of Correction Education

As global energy consumption increases rapidly and the environmental impact of construction becomes more obvious, the new movement called green building is gaining momentum. Green building refers to building in a more energy-efficient and environmentally friendly way. It underscores the importance of sustainability, or resource-efficient methods, of construction.

The Bureau of Correction Education has directed vocational program emphasis to green building and renewable energy, such as solar and wind, through the acquisition of a Solar/Wind Energy Training System.

The Bureau purchased Lab-Volt's 46120, which is capable of training users in photovoltaic, small wind and solar-wind hybrid electrical systems. The trainers are located in SCIs Camp Hill and Mahanoy.

The United States is now the fourth largest solar photovoltaic market in the world, and wind is the fastest growing energy source in the United States. Inmates completing the curriculum may seek certification through the Electronic Technician Association (ETA) and National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER). If the pilot programs prove productive and successful, the Bureau will seek expansion of the program as funding becomes available.

The DOC has eight vocational instructors certified with NCCER in "Building Green"/Your Role in the Green Environment. James Boyer, Daniel Fedak, Martin Heffron, John Hetrick, Mark Learn, John Mingle, Werner Ullrich and Richard Zimmerman completed certification by enrolling and passing the NCCER written examination under the auspices of the accredited training sponsor, the DOC and has received nationally recognized credentials to conduct Your Role in the Green Environment training for inmates who can subsequently receive credentials by successfully completing the course.

What is Photovoltaics?

Photovoltaics (PV) is a method of generating electrical power by converting solar radiation into direct current electricity using semiconductors that exhibit the photovoltaic effect. Photovoltaic power generation employs solar panels composed of a number of solar cells containing a photovoltaic material. Materials presently used for photovoltaics include monocrystalline silicon, polycrystalline silicon, amorphous silicon, cadmium telluride, and copper indium gallium selenide/sulfide. Due to the growing demand for renewable energy sources, the manufacturing of solar cells and photovoltaic arrays has advanced considerably in recent years.

Solar photovoltaics is growing rapidly, albeit from a small base, to a total global capacity of 40,000 MW at the end of 2010. More than 100 countries use solar PV. Installations may be ground-mounted (and sometimes integrated with farming and grazing) or built into the roof or walls of a building (building-integrated photovoltaics).

Driven by advances in technology and increases in manufacturing scale and sophistication, the cost of photovoltaics has declined steadily since the first solar cells were manufactured. Net metering and financial incentives, such as preferential feed-in tariffs for solar-generated electricity, have supported solar PV installations in many countries.

Source: Wikipedia.com

Highlights of the Various DOC Educational & Vocational Programs

Camp Hill's Victim Awareness Course

The education departments across the state prison system have been tasked with presenting Act 143 Victim Awareness class to all inmates convicted of a crime of violence since 1999. The law requires the completion of the program in order to be paroled.

The curriculum is strictly educational in its approach and thus is an excellent match for the education department to present. It is short - 10 to 12 hours of instruction - compared to many other more intensive programs. Because it is so short, it makes it possible for SCI Camp Hill's education department to deliver this program to inmates as they are processed through the prison's diagnostic and classification center.

Since January 2000, SCI Camp Hill has had more than 24,000 inmates complete the program, which is an excellent starting program for inmates. The course educates inmates on the effects of crime, and other programs follow up with more specific and intense types of programming.

Here's what some inmates had to say about the course:

"Thank you for offering me the Victim Awareness Class. I learned a lot and was shown to look at my crime from the victim's side. I realize now that the victim suffers long after an act of violence is committed. Sometimes they never recover financially, emotionally, mentally and physically from an act of violence. I have never looked at it from the victims side. I do now and my heart goes out to victims of crime."

Ken M.

"This class made me think of not only the person I conspired to rob, but his wife and children. For the first time in my life I feel remorseful for victimizing not only another individual, but his whole family."

Gregory B.

"I want to thank you for helping me realize how one-track minded I've been when it comes to my decisions in my life. I realize that every choice I make from here on out will have some kind of affect on my life, but others as well."

Dennis K.

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Chester Has Outstanding Instructors

According to School Principal Leslie DiFrank, SCI Chester has the good fortune of having not just one but two outstanding vocational instructors.

Donnell Jones, our HVAC instructor, began his career with the DOC in December 2005. From the time that he completed his NCCER certification, Jones has been offering his students an opportunity to enhance their chances of employment through this skilled educational program. He has earned the respect of his fellow instructors and students alike. His enthusiasm and dedication have served both his students and the institution well. He has been a role model in the classroom as he continued his education and attained his Vocational I certificate.

Melvin Young, our carpentry instructor, began his career with the Department of Corrections as a carpentry trade instructor in 2005, and approximately one year later accepted the position of carpentry instructor. Young brings energy and commitment to every lesson he teaches, and it is evident when observers enter his classroom. He also provides his students with the opportunity to achieve NCCER certification as well as national recognition from OSHA and the Vinyl Siding Institute. He has served on several committees in the institution and this year participated in a local "Career Day" program in which he shared employment opportunities with area students.

Both Jones and Young are among SCI Chester's finest and have become one of the high points of our institutional tours for guests. We are fortunate to have both of these outstanding instructors offering vocational classes in the Education Department at SCI Chester.

Optical Program Sees Success at Cambridge Springs

The Correctional Industry at SCI Cambridge Springs is unique and like no other in the country. At Cambridge Springs, inmates are given the opportunity to learn a new trade that will take them as far as they want to go. It all starts with the opportunity to learn basic optics through the education department.

The course runs for six months where the theory of optics, as well as the practical aspects of the trade, is taught. The inmates are tested



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throughout the course to measure their knowledge and skills obtained. After the six month long course, each inmate has an opportunity to be employed by the Correctional Industries Optical Lab. If selected, they have the chance to work in the lab for two years.

In the optical lab they are given the chance to learn accounting, data entry, inventory tracking, shipping and receiving. The inmates are taught how to perform maintenance and repairs on the equipment they use and they trouble shoot potential problems to come up with answers and solutions. They are taught how to make adjustments, read prescription forms, write up orders and sell those much needed extras for eyeglasses. The inmates are introduced to Medicare codes for billing as well as the forms used by various insurance companies. This program introduces and prepares inmates for all jobs related to the optical field.

Inmates are kept up-to-date with the latest technology and medical procedures. They also have the opportunity, once a year, to become a certified optician. The American Board of Opticianry (ABO) comes to Cambridge Springs and administers a two-hour test for those who wish to become certified in the field. The test cost is \$150 and is paid for by the inmate taking the test. Study groups are formed to prepare them for the test. Once confirmation is received on the students that have passed the test, Correctional Industries will refund the \$150 for those who work for them in the lab. This gives those who take the test a little incentive and reward for their hard work. The ABO certificate will give the inmates an advantage when they are released and looking for employment. The certificate is renewable every three years after completing twelve hours of continual education.

The success of this program is immeasurable. Several inmates have been released and now work for major companies throughout Pennsylvania. The facility is constantly reminded about the quality work that is done on the inside from those in the private sector.

The Correctional Industries Optical Lab currently employs 17 inmates with a waiting list of three to four times that. Two years passes by quickly with a lot of inmates begging to stay. For a few of the inmates, this is their first real job. Fourteen to fifteen thousand pair of glasses are produced a year with plans to expand the shop in order to accept additional work. Many inmate workers have goals and desires of opening up their own shop one day, while others look forward to continue employment in the field when they leave the facility. Whatever road the inmates decide to travel in this expanding field, it will be because of the beneficial program offered behind the prison walls of SCI Cambridge Springs.

Helping the Visually Impaired to Read

The SCI Cambridge Springs Braille program continues to provide services for the visually handicapped throughout the state of Pennsylvania. Since the time when the Braille program began at the facility 16 years ago, the workers and students or "Braillemates" have amassed a library of 1,500 books.

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They provide material for visually impaired elementary and high school students in Pennsylvania via the intermediate units and they also provide Braille work for college students, private organizations and municipal

Educational Statistics from SCI Coal Township

96 inmates passed the GED
 46 inmates obtained their CSD
 19 inmates passed the Auto Trades Program
 8 inmates passed the Barber Program
 16 inmates passed the Building Trades Program
 12 inmates passed the CAD Program
 4 inmates passed the Electrical Trade Program
 26 inmates passed the HVAC and are licensed to recover refrigerant
 25 inmates passed the upholstery program
 1 inmate obtained his associates degree

organizations in the state. One example of a recent order was the completion of bus schedules for the Erie Transit Authority. This provided material for the visually impaired in the city of Erie and Erie County.

The 10 workers and students that are enrolled in the Braille program at the facility gain certification through the Library of Congress and work under the direction of the National Federation of the Blind and the Keystone Blind Association. In addition, the local Lions Club has served as a valuable partner over the years by providing assistance with equipment and material.

GED Pass Rate Improves

"As an educator it is rewarding to see how the Education Department at SCI Cresson has assisted many inmates in obtaining their GED and vocational certifications," said SCI Cresson's School Principal AnnMarie Flick. "While I only have been at SCI Cresson for three years, the GED pass rate has grown from 69 percent of inmates passing the GED test to the current 86 percent pass rate."

Flick says that the prison implemented GED seminars, in which inmates participate in an intensive workshop in each GED test subject area prior to the actual GED test. The prison also recently added a new seminar on "Test Taking Strategies and Dealing with Test Anxiety," which is expected to prevent inmates from failing the test and having to retake it.

"I have heard from several released inmates who have shared with me a job success story," Flick said.

She shared one particular success story at the prison's last graduation. It was of a particularly difficult 38 year old inmate student that tended to have a very negative attitude when he was in education classes. His teachers did not feel he was ready to take the GED test, but he requested to speak with Flick. During a lengthy meeting with Flick, the inmate explained why he was so negative and why it was so important for him to get his GED. Education staff decided to let him take the Pre-GED test, which he passed and

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then went on to take the actual GED test. He passed every subject but math. His attitude changed in school; he was much more positive and put more effort into studying. He took the math portion again, but failed it a second time. He was released from the institution, but six months later called to report he had taken the test again in his community and passed.

“He wanted to thank me for giving him the opportunity to take the GED and also requested that I thank his former teachers for helping him with his education.” Flick said.

Green Training at SCI Forest

In addition to all of the academic and vocational classes at SCI Forest, the prison also offers training and certification in three other areas: Green training, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) certification and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) certification.

Green Training involves learning all aspects of constructing an environmentally-friendly building, from the site, materials, waste and energy. In the past nearly two years, 70 inmates have received this certification. OSHA has been taught at SCI Forest for four years. The program, which is sponsored by West Virginia University, teaches inmates how to recognize hazards and work safely in both construction and general industry environments. So far, 110 inmates have received this certificate. EPA certifies inmates to recover, reclaim, recycle and handle refrigerants that are harmful to the environment. Sponsored by Ferris State University, to date, 100 EPS certifications have been given to inmates at SCI Forest.

Overview of SCI Fayette’s Education Department

Educational programming includes individualized and group academic instruction focused on GED achievement and vocational courses in HVAC, CAD, carpentry, business and welding.

SCI Fayette has six academic instructors and five vocational instructors. Last year SCI Fayette had a GED passing rate of 82 percent. In the last three years, SCI Fayette tested 206 inmates with 160 passing for a passing rate of 78 percent.

Each vocational program offered is directly associated with a national accrediting body specific to the trade. This allows the program graduates to continue their development in the trade upon release back to society.

SCI Fayette has two academic computer labs (PLATO) which students use at least one day a week to supplement their normal classroom instruction.

The prison has participated in the fiber optics program with considerable success. This is one of the most requested programs by the inmates. Over the last three years we have had approximately 115 inmates complete the program.

To assist the inmates in bettering their test scores and understanding, we incorporated a math refresher program for those who those who have had difficulty passing the GED test in this area. We also have a block tutoring program where students can get additional help, on the block, by trained tutors.

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Graterford Partners with Villanova University

Perhaps the most unique of all of the programs offered at SCI Graterford is the partnership with Villanova University. This program offers qualified inmates with the opportunity to obtain a two or four year degree in General Studies or Liberal Arts. This program is offered in the fall and spring of each year and is filled to capacity each time. Professors from Villanova come to the prison once a week and teach their respective courses that include math, English, writing, history, and others. The most positive aspect of this program is that for inmates who are released prior to the completion of their degree, they may attend Villanova University to finish their degree, as long as they meet the requirements established by the university.

A graduation ceremony is held once each year to honor all graduates for that year. It is a pleasure watching students and teachers beam with pride on graduation day. Students can be seen marching tall with a sense of accomplishment in their gold and green caps and gowns. For many this is the first time they have ever received such accolades.

Houtzdale Principal Shares Thoughts on Education While in Prison

Cynthia Kechisen, school principal at SCI Houtzdale, writes:

"It is sometimes hard for society, as a whole, to understand what truly occurs inside a prison. Families and friends do know, understand, and unfortunately, must accept the fate of those incarcerated. Citizens often are surprised to learn there are teachers who not only work in a prison but make it a career. Over the last 15-20 years statistics have proven that more and more inmates come to prison with little to no education, whether it is a high school diploma, GED or vocational trade. Therefore the need for well trained, competent educators is paramount.

The mission of those who diligently work with this ever growing population believe they are the last hope for inmates who have either fallen through the cracks of traditional schooling and did not understand or see the benefits of completing their education. Educators have patience and methodological, tactile and auditory training. These skills greatly enhance the overall success for both youthful offenders and adults. But these services offer so much more.

Educators model the drive needed to succeed. Cognitive restructuring becomes more evident through the determination, structure and encouragement day in and day out within the classroom setting. These simple achievements open many doors for the student who wants to learn, therefore, intrinsic motivation begins for both the teacher and student. From these intangible accomplishments earning a Commonwealth Secondary diploma or a GED are the springboard to entering and completing a trade based vocational program.

So many students believe employers will not hire them once released back into society. Vocational programs must continue to stay abreast of industry requirements offering nationally recognized certifications, but most importantly, ongoing trade based teacher training. Students desire trainings in areas that best guarantee them not only an interview

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but an opportunity to be hired. Yes, those who have been incarcerated have paid their debt to society, but they truly want to give back to their community. This continuum of learning helps to piece the puzzle together solidifying a better family unit and a sense of accomplishment.

Correctional education is a valued component to lessening recidivism. Agencies such as, but not limited to, Parole, Labor and Industry and the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation continue to support one another's impact on an inmate's future. By demonstrating collaboration during and after incarceration only enhances a positive long lived outcome. Inmates, as well as educators, embrace a silent sense of pride and the joy through the small accomplishments achieved in the classroom. Education, academically and vocationally, plays an important role in changing a person's life. "

The Gift of Reading

When it comes to success stories, SCI Houtzdale's ABE Teacher James Davis said that one story that comes to mind involves an inmate from Jamaica.

"This particular student could not read or write when he came to my class several years ago," Davis recalls. "I remember him asking my tutor and myself to help him read letters that he received and to fill out his commissary request."

Davis said he and the tutor started the student on Hooked on Phonics teaching him the sound of letters.

"Everyday this student would come to class hungry to learn more," Davis said. "Many hours of hard work with his tutor and I went into helping this student learn how to read." Davis said that within a few months the student was reading letters from home and was glowing with pride as he showed Davis he could read.

"He eventually learned to write his own letters as well and is no longer dependent on others to help him," Davis said. "This is what makes my job worth while -- when I see one of my students come so far in their educational journey. A man for 30 some years couldn't read or write and now he has the tools to do so thanks to the educational programs provided to him while incarcerated."

Changes in CAD

When asked to describe the changes in his prison's computer aided drafting program, SCI Houtzdale teacher William Shimmel explained that the program changed from a general computer aided drafting program to one that prepares students, if they choose, to become certified drafters through the American Design Drafting Association.

Shimmel raises the case of an inmate who completed the program and then paroled from prison. He continued his education earning an associate degree at a community college. Upon graduation he was promoted to a manager's position for a company he had been employed with during his schooling. Shimmel said that inmate credits the prison as key pieces in his life improvements.

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After completing the CAD program, inmates are qualified for entry level CAD operator positions and positions in the architectural and building construction fields.

Mahanoy's Pre-Voced Class

SCI Mahanoy's GED Instructor Daniel Snyder says education comes in many forms.

"Correction education has evolved from just academics to include educational classes that enable inmates to make better life choices and set short and long term goals," Snyder said.



Snyder teaches a pre-vocational class that covers topics ranging from emotional intelligence to resume writing. He said many students enter the class with a "Why do I need this?" attitude to one of "Can I take this class again?"

He says he tries to give inmates the skills, values and attitudes they will need to be successful and productive upon release from prison, and that his class is meant to instill in them a work ethic and positive attitude with a mingling of social skills.

"I have nothing but positive reviews from the 500 plus students who have come through my class over the years, and I think that is evidence by a low drop out rate," Snyder said.

Electronics Classes Abuzz at SCI Mahanoy

Michael Jacobs is the vocational electronics teacher at SCI Mahanoy. He teaches the basic electronics course that is approved through the DOC and the Electronics Technicians Association (ETA), the largest electronics certification association in North America.

His prison is currently working on an alternative energy course that will be 12 weeks long. It will include photovoltaic and small wind energy installation. ETA offers many certifications in the electronics field. Fiber optics installer, biomedical technician (hospital equipment repair), industrial electronics, federal communications license, certified electronics technicians, as well as basic entry-level electronics certifications are some of the certifications his students have earned through their education and training at SCI Mahanoy.

"I have had several students continue on to earn degrees," Jacobs said.

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Over the last several years at SCI Mahanoy, 155 youthful offenders were certified in fiber optics installation, a nationally recognized certification was offered through Kutztown University. Jacobs said this course prepared inmates to install fiber optic cable as well as splice cable, and it prepared them for entry level positions in a demanding field of electronics by giving them a practical knowledge in information technology.

Jacobs said he recently received word from a former inmate who has completed technical school after his release from prison.

"He graduated with honors," Jacobs said. "He called me the day he graduated, explaining to me how he used the notes he took in my class to help him in tech school." Jacobs said the instructor was so impressed with the former inmate's work in class, that he took him to a local community college and helped him enroll for a degree program in electrical engineering.

"I tell my students that this class is not just about electronics," he said. "It's about life and making a change."

Business As Usual at SCI Mahanoy

SCI Mahanoy's Education Department offers a cluster of business classes in 12-week intervals. The first session is keyboarding, which introduces inmates to the basic use of a personal computer -- inmates do not have access to the Internet while incarcerated. Next, inmates are instructed in word processing where they are taught to create letters, memos and reports. The third session provides an introduction to Access and Excel and teaches inmates how to use spreadsheets.

The fourth, fifth and sixth sessions are offered once a year and include accounting, business English and human relations. The last session explores various job opportunities and how to apply. In this session they create a letter of application, a resume and a follow-up letter. Certification also is offered through International Computer Driving License in word processing, Access, Excel and PowerPoint. ICDL is an internationally recognized area of certification that assures prospective employers that an applicant has proficiency in fundamental personal computer skills.

Technology Helps Educate Inmates

Over the years at SCI Muncy, staff has acquired many new technological devices that enhance the educational program. One is the use of Jeopardy, an interactive game that works on a TV. Using this game, a teacher can program questions that coincide with the curriculum. Staff report that this is an effective tool for working with adults because it is hands on and geared to what they are learning.

Also, many of the teachers at the prison have acquired Smart Boards, which also enhances the curriculum by providing visual aides that allow teachers to reach even more varied learning styles.

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Partnering with a Community College

SCI Pittsburgh, working with the Community College of Allegheny County, provides inmates with an educational literacy project. Two classes of inmates are assigned to read a book over a two-week period. This is followed by a review and discussion and viewing a video about the material they just read. The college provides the copies of the books and the video, and sends professors to the prison to review the book and movie with the inmates. Four different evaluation activities are used with the inmates to determine their views and thoughts about the book. The methods include an essay, poetry, a talk show activity and questions for point/counter point. At the end of the evening with the professors, the two classes of inmates are brought together to discuss their views of the activities.

Academic Enrichment

For inmates at SCI Pittsburgh who have a high school diploma or who achieved their GED, the facility offers a non-credit college level program as part of an Academic Enrichment Certificate program. Various courses ranging from 8 to 12 weeks in length are offered to inmates four times a year. At the end of the program, inmates are given a certificate based upon the number of class hours they completed - 16 hours for an 8 week course or 24 hours for 12 weeks. This fall's courses include topics of notable people in history and contemporary times, theories of personality, world literature and animal law.

"It is believed that the skills inmates learn in this program will help them continue their goals for continued education, as well as personal growth," said SCI Pittsburgh School Principal Dr. Victor T. Zakowski.

Forestry Vocational Program at Rockview

A unique program that has been in operation since 1957 is the Forestry Program at SCI Rockview, which became a 24/7 operation in 1981. Training provided at the Forestry Camp includes heavy equipment training on logging and

SCI Rockview's Education Department

Academic and vocational classes at SCI Rockview serve approximately 700 inmates each day. The prison offers academic classes to inmates of all skill levels including Adult Basic Education for those learning to read, English as a Second Language to teach English language skills and high school level coursework for those working toward earning a GED certificate. Staff administers the GED examination four times a year and test an average of 70 students yearly.

All of Rockview's vocational programs offer nationally recognized, accredited certifications such as NCCER (National Center for Construction Education and Research), ICDL (International Computer Drivers License) and a State Barbers License. Vocational programs offered include masonry, welding, residential electricity, barber training, printmaking and HVAC and refrigeration. The prison graduated 158 students from the vocational certification/barber programs in the 2009-2010 school year. Staff constantly evaluate programs to determine if they provide instruction and skills necessary to meet industry standards to give inmates the best possible chances at becoming employed upon release.

This year the prison added installing artificial stone to the masonry program that already gives hands-on instruction in facing stone, finishing concrete, laying bricks and concrete blocks.

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forestry equipment and heavy equipment such as front end loaders, road graders, tractors and dump trucks. A chainsaw operator course provides instruction in limbing and advanced tree felling. Equipment maintenance and repair is a large part of the program, where inmates learn to care for fleet automobiles, heavy equipment and small-engine equipment.

Forest projects include timber harvesting, forest road and trail construction and maintenance, sawmill operation and lumber grading, management of invasive plant species, tree planting, removal of hazard trees and storm damage cleanup. Inmates also learn about arboriculture - or tree surgery - and prune and maintain shade and street trees, as well as about tree planting, fertilizing and disease identification. Wildfire suppression training, tree and shrub identification, landscaping and beautification projects also are part of this program.

Libraries Are Busy Places

SCI Smithfield's inmate library falls under the jurisdiction of the Education Department, just as all other state prisons.

This prison's library employs 10 inmates who assist an average of 100 general population inmates who visit the prison daily. In addition to providing services to general population inmates, the library also provides services to inmates in the restricted housing unit and the infirmary. The librarian also oversees small libraries on each inmate housing block.

Each state prison has at least one main general population library. Here inmates read for recreational reasons, study for school classes, are tutored in reading by peer tutors and can research information for their cases in the legal library.



You Teach *WHERE?*

By Tina Runk, Adult Basic Education Teacher
SCI Somerset

A lot of times when I meet someone new they ask what I do for a living.

When I reply that I teach in a state prison for men, they usually ask two more questions:

What do you teach them?

and

Why do you teach there?

I wish I could reply with some lofty goal; like, I always wanted to help those who were less fortunate, or I want to make a difference in other people's lives. Sorry – not me.

The fact is, I sort of bumbled my way into the prison system and here I am.

The surprising thing is – I actually enjoy it. Every once in awhile I sit back and look around my classroom. There, I see my students totally engrossed in their work. Even though there is such a diverse ethnicity, in my room they are all just students. I see them helping each other regardless of their race, gang affiliation, religion or geographical location. This amazes me.

Several months ago, I had an inmate come into the classroom with tears in his eyes – a grown man – because he had passed his GED. He hugged and thanked each of my tutors. He was so elated and is now writing to several colleges in the area trying to decide what he would like to study when he leaves.

Another student is currently enrolled in the Pittsburgh Institute of Culinary Arts. He received his GED here and was assisted in acquiring financial aid. His family was in tears at his GED graduation and couldn't thank us enough. I hear even more success stories from other teachers.

The fact is: sometimes we make lofty goals for ourselves. We plan our lives and decide what we want to do when we grow up. I do not recall ever saying when I was a little girl that I wanted to grow up and teach men who were in prison. So, I am very blessed. With a little help from above, I was forced to take a job in a place I really did not want to go. I came here kicking and screaming that it wasn't fair. I wanted to teach cute little kids who thought I was the best teacher in the world. I wanted to be able to hug the little 'adorables' and pat them on their heads when they did well. But now I agree with the song I have heard on the country radio: *Sometimes I thank God for unanswered prayers*. If I had my way, I would have been somewhere else.

Quotes about Education

"The educated differ from the uneducated as much as the living from the dead."
--Aristotle

"Real education should educate us out of self into something far finer; into a selflessness which links us with all humanity."
--Lady Nancy Astor

"The test and the use of man's education is that he finds pleasure in the exercise of his mind."
--Jacques Martin Barzun

"Education is a progressive discovery of our ignorance."
--William James "Will" Durant

"Only the educated are free."
--Epictetus

"Education's purpose is to replace an empty mind with an open one."
--Malcolm Stevenson Forbes

"He who opens a school door, closes a prison."
--Victor Hugo

"A child miseducated is a child lost."
--John Fitzgerald Kennedy

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."
--Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela

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Our rich heritage of success and knowledgeable staff is a powerful combination that is sure to benefit thousands of our students. We will build on our past experience in adult education by harnessing our resources and adapting to the GED Test 21st Century testing practices. Our incorporation of computer-based testing will be challenging but necessary. Over the past several years the movement has been towards more rigorous national standards and computer given GED examinations. Because of the changing national landscape and the onslaught of technology, the transition in corrections education testing will be exciting. The opportunities for our continued success will be a model example to the Pennsylvania Department of Education GED Testing Service, and the beneficiaries will be our students and their communities.

CEA Accreditation

The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections has sought and achieved accreditation by the Correction Education Association. The DOC is fully accredited by the CEA and strives to maintain that status.

The CEA is a professional organization which offers services to the educators who work within adult correctional and juvenile justice facilities nationwide. Not only is CEA the largest professional organization dedicated to the mission of education within correctional settings, it is also the largest affiliate of the American Correction Association (ACA). Evidence of CEA accreditation is accepted by ACA in lieu of auditing the academic and vocational education programs during the DOC's ACA audits.

In 1988, the CEA introduced the "Standards for Adult and Juvenile Correctional Education Programs." This was the first set of comprehensive standards used to evaluate education within a correctional setting. Over the years, the standards have been updated and are now divided into three criteria's: adult institutions, juvenile institutions and jails & detention centers.

CEA standards used to evaluate our institutions consist of 67 individual standards which are divided into categories of: administration, personnel, students and programs. Of these 67 standards, 24 are required and 43 are non-required. In order to achieve accreditation, an institution must comply with 100 percent of the required standards and 90 percent of the non-required.

There are nine DOC institutions audited yearly by CEA auditors and, as with the ACA, this certification is valid for a period of three years. All institutions audited during the fiscal year of 2010-2011 achieved 100 percent certification of compliancy with the criteria set forth by CEA.

