

THE COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA



Department of Correctional
Education

“Fighting Crime Through Education”

What is the Problem?

- Of the 600,000 inmates released on parole in 2000, two-thirds were rearrested within 3 years of leaving prison and almost half were re-incarcerated.

The source of this fact is: State and Federal Prisoners Returning to the Community: Findings from Bureau of Justice Statistics

- In the U.S, only 51% of prisoners completed high school or its equivalent compared with 76% of the general population.

What is the Problem?

- As of December 31, 2001, there were an estimated 5.6 million adults who had served time in either a State or Federal prison, including former and current inmates.
- Nearly two-thirds of the 3.8 million increase between 1974 and 2001 occurred due to an increase in first ever incarceration rates.

What is the Solution?

- A recent U.S. Dept. of Education study showed a **29% reduction** in reincarceration for participants in state correctional education programs.
- Correctional education programs have been shown to not only improve the opportunities upon release but also enhance inmate management during incarceration.

Impact of Reduced Recidivism

- Reducing recidivism significantly reduces the costs of policing and prosecution as well as incarceration.
- Reduced recidivism translates into fewer victims, lower healthcare costs, insurance claims and other associated victim costs.
- The most likely indirect benefits to society are:
 - Breaking the cycle of generation to generation crime, and
 - Decreasing fear of crime and crime-avoidance behavior.

WHAT IS DCE?

- The Virginia General Assembly statutorily designated the Department of Correctional Education as a local education agency (LEA). As an LEA the DCE operates in accordance with policies set forth by the Board of Correctional Education.
- DCE complies with the Standards of Accreditation (SOA), Standards of Quality (SOQ), and Standards of Learning (SOL), as established by the Virginia Board of Education in each of the juvenile facilities.
- Its adult schools offer academic programs, including a functional literacy program, adult basic education, preGED and GED classes, and a limited number of postsecondary programs as well as a wide array of career and technical programs and specialized programs, such as Productive Citizenship (life skills), and parenting programs.



- The  motto: *"Fighting Crime through Education"*

MISSION & VISION

Mission

To provide quality educational programs that enable incarcerated youth and adults to become responsible, productive, tax-paying members of their communities

Vision

Through educational excellence, we transform the lives of our students

AGENCY VALUES

Accountability

- Take responsibility for our actions and results

Commitment to Excellence

- Cultivate a positive and caring environment; embrace opportunities for continuous improvement

Integrity

- Adhere to a professional code of ethics and follow established policies and procedures

Safety

- Promote a healthy and secure environment in which stakeholders can work and learn

Stakeholder Focused

- Solicit, listen, and respond to expectations and concerns

PURPOSE of CORRECTIONAL EDUCATION

The goal of correctional education is geared toward helping individuals realize their potential and become productive members of society.

- ❖ We provide educational services to develop basic literacy.
- ❖ We focus on instruction that will enhance each student's employment potential and life skills.
- ❖ We assist in transitioning student into the job market and into their communities.



Agency Goals

GOAL #1

Increase the level of educational gains and achievements of our students

Focuses on instructional outcomes for student

GOAL #2 Increase the workforce preparedness of our students for the 21st century

Focuses on educational content of the DCE programs

GOAL #3

Recruit & retain a highly qualified workforce and promote a high performing agency

Focuses on efficient and effective utilization of DCE's human & fiscal resources

GOAL #4

Improve community reintegration and reduce recidivism

The main purpose of DCE is to promote public safety through the provision of quality educational services that lead to productive, crime-free citizens. This goal focuses on the purpose through exemplary programming

DCE Programs in Adult Facilities:

- Adult Basic Education
- General Education Development (GED)
- English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) – 4 Pilot Sites
- Plaza Comunitarias – Two Sites
- Vocational Training (36 trades)
- Apprenticeship (29 trade areas)
- Productive Citizenship (Release Prep. & Employability Skills)
- College (federally funded)
- Parenting Education – 5 sites

Adult Academic Programs

- Inmates may continue in the adult education program to earn their GED.
- The current functional literacy program or adult basic education requires that functionally illiterate inmates attain a literacy level of 8th grade. Effective 7/1/07 the literacy level required will be raised to a GED.

In '05-06:

983 GEDs Awarded – An **80.7%** passing rate compared to a 67.8% pass rate for the State.

817 Functional Literacy Program Completers

Adult Academic Programs

- Through a federal grant DCE has established four ESOL pilot sites. In only a few months a significant number of the participants have progressed at least one or more levels. The program is currently being expanded to at least three other sites.
- Through an agreement with the Mexican government DCE has two Spanish literacy programs (Plaza Comunitarias) that teach adult basic education in Spanish. The target audience for these programs are Hispanic inmates with detainer orders who will be deported upon release.

Adult Academic Programs

- The Career Readiness Certificate program was part of Governor Mark Warner's [Education for a Lifetime](#) initiative and continues under Governor Tim Kaine.
- Oversight of the CRC is the responsibility of the Commissioner of the VEC;
- administration of the CRC is handled by the [Virginia Community College System](#)
- The Career Readiness Certificate is a portable skills credential, assuring employers that a job applicant actually has the basic skills they seek.

Adult Academic Programs

- Virginia's Career Readiness Certificate helps employers by certifying that a recipient possesses core skills in
 - ✓ reading for information
 - ✓ locating information,
 - ✓ and applied math—
- skills that are required by at least 85% of all jobs profiled by ACT Workkeys in the country.

Virginia's Career Readiness Certificate

3 Levels

- *Bronze* core employability skills for approximately 30% of available jobs
- *Silver* approximately 65%
- *Gold* approximately 85%.

Adult Academic Programs

Over 5,200 Virginia workers have earned their CRCs
in the last three years

DCE added over 1000 to that figure within one year!

Tested 12/01/05 thru 11/30/06:

# Tested	1197	
# Scored	1161	
# CRCs earned	1075	(92.6%)
GOLD	154	(13.3%)
SILVER	613	(52.8%)
BRONZE	308	(26.5%)
No Certificate	86	(7.4%)

Special Education Services in Adult Facilities

- Twenty-five percent (25%) of the offenders entering the DOC system test at or below the 4th grade literacy level.
- Special education services are available to those inmates under the age of 22 that have an identified disability:
 - 37% Serious Emotionally Disturbed
 - 43% Specific Learning Disabled
 - 3% Other Health Impairment

Special Education Services in Adult Facilities

- After the age of 22, an individual is no longer entitled to special education services.
- During 2007 Session of the General Assembly HB 2625 (Reid) was passed. The bill provides that the Superintendent of the Department of Correctional Education, in cooperation with the Department of Corrections, shall create a system for identifying prisoners with learning disabilities. DCE does not have the resources of an educational psychologist to do the requisite diagnostic testing on adults over the age of 21.

Special Education Services in Adult Facilities

- As an initial response to HB 2625, DCE has conducted a simple screening to identify inmates that may potentially have a specific learning disability.
- To date, we have screened approximately 1445 inmates and 721 have been identified as potentially having a learning disability.
- We will need additional resources in order to do the testing required for a definitive diagnosis.

Special Education Services in Adult Facilities

- DCE Response to Meeting the Needs of Adult Inmates with Disabilities:
 - All adult academic teachers have been provided training in instructional strategies for working with persons with learning disabilities.
 - In order to seek accommodations for GED testing we have administered one set of Tests for Adult Basic Education (TABE) untimed and given another TABE test with the time requirements. If there is a significant discrepancy, we use this to seek additional time on the GED test administration.

DCE Vocational Training Programs

- Auto Body Repair
- Automotive Service & Technology
- Barbering
- Building Maintenance/Repair
- Building Trades
- Business Software Applications
- Cabinet Making
- Canine Handling
- Carpentry (Construction)
- Commercial Foods (Hotel, Restaurant, Baking)
- Communications Art & Design; Graphic Illustration
- Communication Art & Design; Computer Graphics
- Computer Literacy
- Computer Systems Technology
- Consumer Electronics
- Cosmetology
- Custodial Maintenance/Sanitation
- Digital Imaging and Print Production
- Drafting/CAD
- Electricity
- Floor Covering
- Graphic Communication & Print Production
- Horticulture - Greenhouse/Nursery Production & Management
- Horticulture – Landscaping Design & Maintenance
- HVAC/Refrigeration Installation Service & Repair
- Industrial Maintenance
- Introduction to Computers
- Masonry
- Optical Technology
- Painting & Drywall
- Pipefitting
- Plumbing
- Roofing & Siding
- Sheet Metal
- Small Engine Repair
- Upholstery – Furniture & Automotive
- Water/ Wastewater Treatment
- Welding (MIG, TIG, Arc)

Vocational Program Achievement FY05-06

Adult Students:

- 5,739 students enrolled in Vocational Programs
- 687 students enrolled in Apprenticeship Programs
- **1,791 Vocational Program Completions!**
- **88 Apprenticeship Completions!**



Industry Based Certifications = Employer Recognized Credentials

- Automotive Service Excellence
- Greenhouse Operators Certification Program
- A+ Certification (Computer Repair)
- Net+ Certification (Computer Repair)
- Barbering License
- Cosmetology License
- Water Treatment Plant Operator (Va. License)
- Waste Water Treatment Plant Operator (Va. License)
- Fluid Power Society Master Mechanic
- Fluid Power Society Specialist
- Vickers Electro-Hydraulic Systems Training Program
- INVEST
- Optician - American Board of Opticianry
- EPA Refrigeration Universal 608 Certification
- OSHA Construction Safety Training – 10 hr. & 30 Hour
- ServSafe Manager Certification
- American Drafting and Design Association (ADDA) Certification
- Outdoor Power Equipment and Engine Service Association – Small Engine Repair Certification



Specialized Programs

DCE has three major specialized programs in the adult facilities:

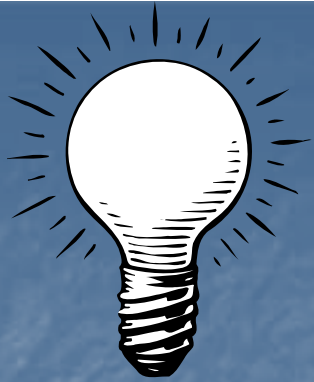
- Productive Citizenship (Release Prep. & Employability Skills)
- Parenting Programs
- College Coursework through a federal grant program



DCE College Programs

- 17 Adult Correctional Facilities - 567 Student Participants
- 2 Juvenile Correctional Centers – 62 Student Participants
- 7 Virginia Community Colleges provide on-site courses
- 100% Federally Funded - U. S. Department of Education
Youth – Title I Part D (15% dedicated to transition)
Adults – Incarcerated Youth Offender Grant (CFDA 84.331A)
- Post-Release Outcomes Study by Virginia Tech (2006)
determined that inmates who participated in college:
 - > Maintain Higher Grade Point Averages
 - > More frequently enroll in college after release
 - > Had significantly lower recidivism rates
 - > Had higher post-release earnings





Strategies to Expand DCE College Program Availability:

- **Increase College Funding**
 - > Explore private foundation funding for scholarships
 - > Encourage restoration of Pell Grant eligibility for inmates
 - > Consider supporting enrollment through state funding sources

- **Expand College Programming through Technology**
 - > Explore videoconferencing as course delivery method (SB 953 – passed '07 GA Session)
 - > Explore restricted Internet access to online higher education courses by incarcerated persons (HB 2041 – passed '07 GA Session)
 - > Investigate tuition cost reduction if courses offered through videoconferencing/restricted (reduced tuition would stretch federal grant funds so more students can be served)





DCE Parenting Programs

- ~50,000 Virginia children under age 18 have a parent (or parents) in state prison
- DCE Parenting Program's focus is to improve the lives of these children by teaching parenting skills to their incarcerated mothers and fathers
- “Moms, Inc.” & “Dads Inc.” curricula taught at 7 correctional institutions
- One Parenting Program Coordinator mentors three VCU graduate student interns, & a few Transition Specialists teach Parenting part time (in addition to teaching Productive Citizenship).

Strategies to Expand Parenting Programs

Increase Funding

- > Explore private foundation funding
- > Consider supporting parenting education through State funding sources



Productive Citizenship Program



- Teaches critical transition education to offenders preparing for their release from incarceration, affording them the skills and knowledge that will enhance their chances of making a successful transition to their communities
- *Productive Citizenship* offered by DCE in 27 correctional facilities
- Of the 9,000+ inmates released from Virginia prisons each year, about ½ have the opportunity to participate (due to staffing limitations)



Strategies to Expand Productive Citizenship Programs

- Fund additional DCE Transition Specialist positions
- Recruit additional instructors from community agencies & volunteers to increase the number of classes offered



DCE Programs in Juvenile Correctional Facilities

- DCE has one Reception and Diagnostic Center and 8 Schools. We serve both middle and high school students as well as students that have earned a high school diploma or a GED.
- DCE offers a full array of curricula in accordance with the Standards of Accreditation. We also have GED classes and a limited number of postsecondary education programs. Both special education and gifted programs are available as well.

Juvenile Academic Programs

- The four core content areas are taught at each of the schools:
 - English 7 - 12
 - Math 7-8, Algebra and Geometry
 - Life Science, Physical Science, Earth Science, Biology and Chemistry
 - Social Studies 7-8, World History, Va. and U.S. History, World Geography, and Government
- Remediation in math and reading are offered as well as art, Spanish, and Physical education.

Juvenile Academic Programs

- Students may pursue one of the following:
 - Advanced studies diploma
 - Standard diploma
 - Modified standard diploma
 - Special diploma
 - GED

Special Education in Juvenile Facilities

- In 2006, on average approximately 45% of the juvenile population had at least one identified disability.
 - 3% Educable Mentally Retarded - 21
 - 49% Serious Emotionally Disturbed - 200
 - 15% Other Health Impairment - 74
 - 26% Specific Learning Disability - 103
 - 3% Multiple Disabilities - 6
 - 1% Traumatic Brain Injury - 1

Special Education in Juvenile Facilities

- The Oak Ridge Juvenile Correctional Center houses 40 male offenders with developmental disabilities and severe behavior disorders. It is the only Juvenile Justice facility dedicated to the care and treatment of mildly to moderately mentally impaired or developmentally delayed juveniles. Students participate in a continuum of both academic and career & technical programs.

Re-Enrollment Procedures for Juvenile Offenders

- The re-enrollment process is the education reentry for juveniles released from DJJ back into the public schools. Re-enrollment plans include:
 - ❖ Student's educational history prior to commitment,
 - ❖ Student's educational history while in DJJ custody,
 - ❖ Student's current status,
 - ❖ Anticipated dates and timelines for scheduled release,
 - ❖ Identification of school placement upon release,
 - ❖ Recommendations for educational program and student supports following re-enrollment, and
 - ❖ Contact information for representatives of DJJ, DCE and the detention home and re-enrollment coordinator.

Career Development Transition Plan

- A Career Development Transition Plan is part of the transition services in juvenile schools. The plan is directed toward:
 - ❖ Demonstrating employability skills through a portfolio with academic, employment and reference materials to be used in acquiring employment.
 - ❖ Developing an understanding of student's educational needs related to their abilities, interests, talents, values, and career goals.
 - ❖ Increasing the student's self-awareness as well as awareness of others and learn appropriate communication skills for the facility, home and the community.

- Formerly incarcerated persons in Virginia pay taxes on \$82 million in annual earnings (source: Virginia Tech 2005 study)

...the skills we teach are valuable!

- Pro-social behavior and a positive work ethic are modeled by teachers and reinforced in DCE classes; these help prepare offenders for post-release life and employment

Challenges and Program Needs

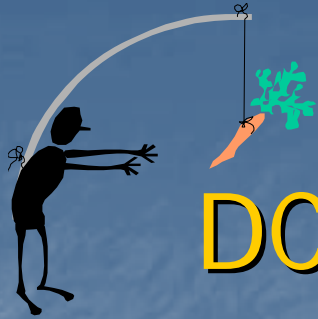
- One of the major challenges facing DCE across our programs is that of teacher retention. Teaching in a correctional environment brings its own special challenges and this is compounded by the fact that the average DCE salary is 6.42% below the statewide teacher salaries.
- DCE exercises a number of creative strategies for teacher recruitment and retention but has not been successful in its request for full funding for parity for our teachers. Parity would greatly enhance our efforts to recruit and retain highly qualified teachers.

Adult Academic Program Challenges

- Identification and training of additional assessors for the Career Readiness Certificate
- CRC follow-up, outreach and collaboration for job development and employment for our population post release
- Increased waiting lists with the higher literacy requirement
- ESOL grant funding ends 7/1/07 with no general fund to continue the program
- Lack of educational diagnostic testing resources to fully implement a system for identification of adults with learning disabilities

Career/Technical Education Program Challenges

- Limited funding to purchase the technology and equipment needed to fully prepare inmates for a changing workforce.
- Limited institutional space for CTE programs and the resulting waiting lists.
- Security regulations, although quite necessary, impact the provision of instruction related to the use of computers and computer technology.



DCE College Program Challenges:

■ Funding Limitations:

- > Inmates became ineligible for Pell Grants in 1994 (Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act)
 - > Federal grants are very limited funding source (USDOE Grant \$432K for FY07)
 - > Extremely limited private scholarship availability (two sites)
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- 12,900 Virginia inmates have H.S. Diplomas or GEDs, yet 95.6% do not have access to college; requests from eligible inmates far surpass current funding availability
 - No access to college for “older” inmates and those with longer sentences due to Federal Grant eligibility criteria (age 25 or younger & within 5 years of release)
 - Few Associates Degrees are being earned (4-5 per year) because Federal “caps” spending to \$1,500 per student annually



Juvenile Program Challenges

- The major challenge facing DCE in the juvenile schools is one of space, particularly in the newer facilities. We have insufficient space to schedule the various classes needed to provide a full continuum of coursework.
- Many of the classes are currently conducted two to a classroom, thereby impacting the delivery of instruction.

Contributors to Presentation

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