

# Massachusetts Department of Correction Division of Inmate Training and Education Historical Overview Brief

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## **Introduction:**

The mission of the Division of Inmate Training and Education (DITE) is to prepare inmates for successful reentry by providing a comprehensive academic, vocational, and technology program continuum that is responsive to the individual risk and need of each inmate. The ultimate goal is to support successful inmate reentry which has been shown to significantly contribute toward a decrease in recidivism and thus increase public safety. According to a study by the Rand Corporation, inmates who participated in educational programs were 43% less likely to recidivate. A report by the Pew-MacArthur Foundation *Results First Initiative*, (2014) concludes that those who participated in education saw a 19.2% reduction in crime.

The MADOC has a proven track record of successfully competing for and being awarded state and federal grant funding. Historically, the agency has been awarded the Adult Basic Education (ABE) grant by the state's Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and has been administered through their division of Adult and Community Learning Services (ACLS). Also, on the federal level, the agency has received Perkins funding which provides programming that focuses on career and technical skills. In addition, the agency has been awarded several Second Chance Act grants. Currently, the MADOC partners with Mount Wachusett Community College to implement the Second Chance Pell Initiative which allows for incarcerated students to enroll in a two year certification program.

Recently, sweeping changes have been implemented at the federal and state levels that require significant shifts in the focus of the Division of Inmate Training and Education. First, and most significantly, the federal reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was passed in July 2016. It is important to note the emphasis on strengthening education and skills in the areas of college and career readiness for incarcerated individuals as indicated in Title II of the WIOA legislation (WIOA 2016). The DITE provides access to educational services that prepare inmates for employment in a competitive job market, post-secondary education, economic self-sufficiency, family roles, and responsible citizenship upon release. As evidenced by the WIOA legislation and Massachusetts Combined State Plan the high school equivalency credential is no longer sufficient in preparing students to be college and career ready.

The implementation of the comprehensive college and career readiness standards emphasizes lifelong learning and employment skills. The mission of the agency and the Division's strategic goals have been re-designed to place greater emphasis on the broader role of education. This role must include vocational training, post-secondary opportunities, and career counseling as necessary tools to reducing recidivism and enhancing public safety.

As a result, the MADOC has developed, expanded, and strengthened partnerships with DESE, the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development (EOLWD), post-secondary institutions of higher learning in both public and private settings, employers, and nationally recognized vocational accreditation organizations. By utilizing best practices in instruction, standardized curriculum, and aligned assessments, the Department seeks to address a primary factor in contributing to the chances of successful reintegration by the inmate into the family, community, and workforce.



- Cost-effective resource management
- Professional culture

The purpose of the assessment was to examine programmatic strengths, identify deficiencies and areas for improvement, and to develop strategic priorities informed by those findings. The information below includes a list of actions and improvements that have been implemented. These actions were guided by the results of the needs assessment, organized to support the Division's mission, and designed to expand evidenced-based practices in correctional education within the MADOC.

### **Programming**

- Expanding to a full calendar school year for academic, vocational, and technology programs and developing three different models for providing education across all security levels to include full schools, partial schools, and facilitated education.
- Evaluating the viability of each vocational program as it pertains to the population served and relocating vocational programs to more optimal locations, as necessary.
- Standardizing minimum instructional hours and class size to create ideal conditions for promoting student progress.
- Expanding current vocational programming to provide programs that result in an industry recognized credential and that create viable career pathways for offenders.
- Creating a new vocational education model for the Automotive Program that is similar to the model used in vocational technical high schools by combining theory and practice.

### **Partnerships**

- Collaborating with Central Transportation Unit to provide a comprehensive Automotive Program that incorporates educational theory and practical application.
- Collaborating with Mount Wachusett Community College to provide post-secondary education (Small Business Certificate) through a federal Second Chance Pell Initiative at MCI-Shirley and North Central Correctional Institute (NCCI) - Gardner.
- Collaborating with the Bard Prison Initiative to introduce a partnership with Emerson College to provide post-secondary education at MCI-Concord.
- Collaborating with Bridgewater State University, Framingham State University, Tufts University, and MIT to provide post-secondary education through the Inside/Out model at Old Colony Correctional Center (OCCC), MCI-Framingham, South Middlesex Correctional Center (SMCC), MCI-Shirley, and MCI-Norfolk.
- Serving on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's State ABE Advisory Council to further increase cross-secretariat collaboration.
- Serving on the Association of State and Federal Directors of Corrections Education Council to increase cross-state collaborations.
- Collaborating with OSHA to train eight staff members to become OSHA instructors resulting in an increase in the number of students who were able to receive OSHA training and the elimination of contractor services.
- Expanding the cross-cabinet collaboration to include the Office of Labor and Workforce Development.
- Initiating partnerships with Goodwill and Metro Southeast Career Centers.

### **Staffing**

- Reinstating Head Teachers to provide full time supervision at each school and creating standards for optimal staffing levels for each type of school within the agency.
- Utilizing one school principal to oversee all Head Teachers for the purpose of providing consistent direction of school leadership.
- Expanding the services provided by full time school staff to minimize contract spending.
- Reorganizing central office roles and responsibilities for the purpose of creating a team of specialized staff with diverse expertise in both corrections and education.
- Creating a Vocational Supervisor position to coordinate and assist in developing and overseeing curriculum, assessments, and job readiness.

- Creating College and Career Coordinator positions to consult with students regarding career pathways and to advise in post-secondary education programming.
- Creating a Career Education Facilitator position to provide continuity between educational programming and employment by acting as a liaison to the Career Center.
- Reorganizing the “Computer Teacher” positions into “Technology Instructors” in order to expand current programming to include more specialized technology courses that provide a career pathway for offenders.

### **Staff Professional Development**

- Requiring all academic staff to take “Building a Solid Foundation” to address deficits in teaching conceptual mathematics and adopting the “Understanding by Design” model for standards-based lesson design.
- Creating a school year plan for professional development for academic, vocational, and technology staff that includes common planning.
- Introducing a summer professional development model that includes a convocation, orientation, and targeted professional development that focuses on setting annual goals, initiating the school improvement process, reviewing policies and procedures, and providing opportunities for internal and external stakeholders to update the education staff.
- Creating a summer Leadership Institute for all site supervisors in order to provide support and training on leadership issues, trends in correctional education, and facilitate the school improvement process.
- Providing English as a Second Language training to academic teachers for the purpose of increasing pedagogical knowledge and to satisfy teacher recertification requirements.
- Adopting “The Skillful Teacher” as a framework for teaching and learning.

### **Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment**

- Centralizing education intake testing for the male population to provide timely assessments for determining individual education needs prior to initial classification.
- Aligning the academic curriculum with The College and Career Readiness Standards by creating curriculum maps and student progress reports to monitor proficiency and growth of appropriate learning standards.
- Creating course descriptions to clearly articulate the goals and expectations of each vocational and technology program, while reviewing all vocational programs to ensure that the curriculum is aligned with community standards as well as the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Vocational Education.
- Analyzing labor trends as they relate to our vocational programs to ensure they provide inmates with viable options for employment in a competitive job market and lead to certifications and/or credentials that are recognized by the industry.
- Revamping basic computer skills courses to include current technology skills and to provide the skills and required certificates to pursue technology-related careers.
- Introducing computer-based credential testing.
- Developing a short term education program (Career 101) that focuses on employment readiness and supports academic remediation for students who are near their release.

### **Data and Accountability**

- Developing a regular schedule for auditing enrollment, class size, and waitlists.
- Creating an Inmate Management System/Case Plan standard operating procedure to provide all education staff with direction on tasks associated with accurate and appropriate data entry that will result in information that can be easily queried.
- Creating site-based budgets to provide school leadership with the opportunity to make decisions regarding programmatic expenditures that support their school initiatives and improvement plans.
- Introducing the School Improvement Process- a collaborative process for identifying school-based goals, an action plan for achieving the recognized goals, and progress-monitoring to benchmark goal attainment.

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