

# YOUTH CORRECTIONAL CENTER EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMING: MARMOT SCHOOL

A central focus of activity at the North Dakota Youth Correctional Center is educational programming. The junior high and high school is approved and accredited by the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction. In addition, the school has earned the highest level of accreditation recognized by the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement.

Educational staff can potentially work with any school district of an incoming student to gather the necessary information for student school admission. The following reflects a typical student profile upon admission:

## Student Profile at Admission

- ❖ Students arrive on average 2.8 grades behind their age group.
- ❖ Approximately 39.5% of students have special education needs, compared to just under 13% statewide. In addition, 16% of students have more than one disability (WDIS).
- ❖ Students often have attended several different schools and experienced several out-of-home placements before arrival

Schedules are designed for each student utilizing transcripts from all schools the youth has attended, in addition to a review of the academic battery of tests given to all intake students.

Scheduling options include:

- Regular Education Required Courses
- Elective Courses (including STEM classes)
- Special Education
- Career and Technical Education
- General Education Development (GED)
- Credit Recovery Curriculum and Instruction
- Career Development Courses
- Work Experience

## Education Enhancement

Efforts have been made to enhance educational opportunities. These efforts have included implementing a program termed "Read Right."

The **Read Right Program** employs the constructivist theory within a concise reading module to be implemented within the program. YCC has a certified on-site trainer as well as three on-site tutors within this program. The program has demonstrated a high success rate of 61% graduating of the 525 students that have participated in the program thus far. The GATES MacGinite comprehension testing of completers have shown 98 % growth in reading—testing 3+ grades higher. Student surveys show 95% reporting an improved attitude toward school. The Read Right program averages 3.4 hours/grade level gained compared to 14.9 hours/grade level gained nationally. In other words, ND YCC students gain a grade level of reading comprehension four times faster than the national average.

## Education Programming Accomplishments

Enrichment activities are encouraged for the development of well-rounded students. These activities range from Veteran's Day Awareness to Cultural Sharing Week.

A career development class was created to give students the opportunity to learn in detail about the world of work, to understand their interests, values, and aptitudes in relation to the world of work, and to gain the skills necessary to effectively search for and apply for employment.

A Student Assistant Team (SAT), made up of education and other campus professionals, combine efforts bi-monthly to design strategies to best educate students struggling with a myriad of mental health, physical, behavioral, and/or academic issues. SAT was developed as a response to educational research supporting the effectiveness of the Response to Intervention approach.

In 2010, a student's art submission was the national winner for the CJCA (Council of Juvenile Correctional Administrators) contest for the annual directory cover.

Two STEM courses were designed for both middle school and high school students which are taught cooperatively with a math and science instructor. The acronym STEM stands for science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. The STEM fields are those academic and professional disciplines that fall under the umbrella areas represented by the acronym. According to both the United States National Research Council and the National Science Foundation, the fields are collectively considered core technological underpinnings of an advanced society. In many forums (including political/governmental and academic) the strength of the STEM workforce is viewed as an indicator of a nation's ability to sustain itself.

## Academic Success

The Staff are committed to improving each student's academic success. Each student receives a course of study which meets his/her needs. Students can range in age from 12-20 years old.

- 578 youth were served during the 2009-10 school year.
- 417 youth were served during the 2010-11 school year.

Graduation culminates each school year in May. Families are invited to attend this celebration with their children who are sometimes the first in their family to graduate.

- In 2009-10, 12 students achieved Marmot School diplomas; an additional 12 students successfully completed GEDs.
- In 2010-11, 8 students achieved Marmot School diplomas; an additional 33 students successfully completed GEDs.

At times, there are circumstances that arise which halts youth completion of a high school education or GED through YCC due to eligibility regulations for foster care placement.

*"The North Dakota Youth Correctional Center received high ratings in their recent AdvancEd/NCA CASI visitation. The school received the highest rating (highly functional) on all seven of the AdvancEd Accreditation standards. While many schools receive high rankings, the achievement of the highest ranking in all seven standards indicates a commitment to quality and alignment throughout the educational system. The high level of functioning enhances both student achievement and organizational effectiveness. The staff of NDYCC should be commended for their work in serving their student population."*

*Dr. Angie Koppang,  
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