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Correctional Education Association - Wisconsin

Executive Summary of GED Survey Released

CEA Executive Director Steve Steurer has made available a two page summary of the GED 2014 Correctional Education National Survey that was conducted by CEA and GED Testing Service in late 2011 and early 2012. The results were summarized and presented in a workshop at the CEA Leadership Forum in Columbia, Maryland on April 1, 2012.

A CEA GED Super Committee composed of several members of the Council of Directors of Correctional Education led by Chairperson Susan Lockwood as well as certain large jail education program directors, the federal Bureau of Prisons and Corrections Corporation of America have been working diligently to bring important issues of GED Testing Service for resolution. Nicole Chestang, Executive Vice President of GED Testing Service, has met with Steve and laid out a design for future GED webinars and training.

In addition, CEA and GED Testing Service will pull together key correctional and adult education trainers in Washington, DC to design a complete GED 2014 training package for teachers and administrators of adult education programs in the free community as well as in adult and juvenile facilities. They hope to announce more about the training opportunities at the webinar and in subsequent emails.

Steve said, “Given all that is going on with computer-based GED testing, CEA plans to be there for you from today and into 2014 as the new GED test is implemented. Please feel free to contact me or Susan Lockwood as we move forward.”

Executive Summary of GED Survey for Correctional Education - April 1, 2012

In 2010, at least 75,000 individuals, about 10 percent of annual testing volume, tested in correctional settings. Research has clearly indicated the impact of GED testing and other educational programs on recidivism reduction (*Three State Recidivism and Education as a Crime Control Program*). The reasons for maintaining and growing the numbers of successful incarcerated GED students are clear: GED preparation and testing greatly improve the chances of formerly incarcerated individuals of

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obtaining employment and access to further education upon release.

In December 2011, GED Testing Service achieved a significant milestone in its history — the first GED tests on computer were delivered to test-takers in Georgia. And on January 2, 2014, GED Testing Service will make history with the launch of a new GED assessment system, ending more than 70 years of paper-based testing.

The advent of a new delivery system — GED testing on computer, also known as computer-based testing (CBT) — represents a change in the way the GED testing program is managed. For corrections, the implications are particularly profound.

Last summer, Correctional Education Association leadership approached GED Testing Service about surveying corrections professionals to obtain a fuller picture of corrections’ readiness for computer-based testing. About the same time, GED Testing Service began grappling with its need for deep understanding of and knowledge about correctional environments. The question that was uppermost for both organizations: With twenty-one months remaining, what would it take to get corrections, like their mainstream counterparts, ready for GED testing on computer?

The high level themes outlined below were used to organize the survey’s preliminary findings. Both CEA and GED Testing Service think the survey results could be used to 1) facilitate broader communication within and outside of corrections; 2) advocate for financial support; 3) prepare the correctional education community for 2014; and 4) provide CEA and GED Testing Service with critical knowledge to more effectively interact with this important audience.

The Major Issues

Four major issues as well as two imperatives that have significant organizational implications emerged from survey respondents’ answers:

- 1) The impact of security considerations and policy change in corrections;
- 2) Concerns about the implementation timeframes for GED testing on computer;
- 3) Staffing impacts and testing needs;
- 4) Cost impacts of CBT for correctional education;
- 5) The need for ongoing and comprehensive outreach to the correctional world as a counterpart to

Executive Officers		<p>The CEA-W News Review is published by the members of the Correctional Education Association-Wisconsin Chapter. The opinions herein are entirely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the executive officers, the Department of Corrections, or the body as a whole.</p> <p>It is our hope that this newsletter will be used to communicate information concerning activities, special events, new directions and policies of CEA-W and DOC.</p> <p>Articles for publication may be submitted to the CEA-W News Review Editor Jerry Bednarowski at: W6443 Old Highway Road Menasha, WI 54952 920-734-5902 jerrybednarowski@new.rr.com</p>
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- its own political and budget challenges; and
- 6) The need to develop productive partnerships with a variety of stakeholders including the US Departments of Education and Justice as well as other professional associations like the American Correctional Association and the Association of State Correctional Administrators.

Survey Says!

- When asked to identify major hurdles to the successful implementation of CBT, 91% of survey respondents reported institutional security with 59% citing policy. Respondents identified lack of Internet access (53%) and cost (47%) as additional hurdles.
- The survey results indicate that most education administrators assume potential conflict between CBT and institutional needs. Change to established systems and technology typically occurs slowly and cautiously. CBT implementation may face challenges from these dynamics.
- Fully 60% of the respondents reported that computer-based testing is already used in other educational programs. These programs range from Microsoft Certifications to an array of vocational programs/certificates offered through correctional education.
- Not surprisingly, the prohibition regarding Internet access appears pretty universal...but there are some small pockets where this is changing.
- There seems to be confusion about the 2014 GED assessment and Internet: By the way, CBT is not online testing — it is testing on computer that is virtually identical to the other computer-based programs or technology that many in corrections already utilize.
- The majority of state directors, facility directors and jail directors report that readiness for implementation is more than one year away. Corrections IT professionals offer a different perspective: The majority of these respondents indicated that they could be ready for implementation within six months.
- In response to a hypothetical CBT implementation at a correctional facility, the majority of state directors of correctional education (58%) responded that they believed that CBT would increase the number of students to be served. Nearly half (49%) also believed that CBT would increase the number of students passing the GED test. These responses appear to validate one of the benefits of CBT — “just-in-time” testing.
- Staffing impact and testing needs emerged as an area of significant uncertainty. State and jail directors reported an expected increase in staffing. Both indicated they anticipated needing additional staff and increased staffing costs in order to implement CBT.

Implications

- Clearly demonstrated need for more education and dialogue with corrections audiences — by those inside corrections and outside as well
- Clarify more broadly and deeply: CBT ≠ Internet testing
- Distinguish policy from practice particularly as it relates to computer (*not* Internet) access, testing, and policies, etc.

Begin planning for change now by accessing the following websites:

<http://www.pearsonvue.com/pvtc/> Select “government” for specifications regarding corrections
<http://www.GEDtestingservice.com>

The GED 2014 survey was conducted in late 2011 and early 2012 via a national email campaign to directors of correctional education programs in juvenile facilities, state prisons and large jails using a Zommerang format. It was conducted by John Dowdell of Ashland University and Steve Steurer of CEA in close cooperation with Daphne Atkinson of the GED Testing Service.

Watch for: CEA-Wisconsin Creativity Contest rules and entry form in the September/October issue of this newsletter

Joanne Curry Will Serve as an Inspiration



Joanne Curry's co-workers and correctional education family are saddened by her passing on June 9 after a battle with cancer. Joanne will be greatly missed for her devotion to her students and kindness and friendship. She will continue to serve as an inspiration for everyone she touched.

She had been at Redgranite Correctional Institution (RGCI) as a vocational teacher since 2008 after joining state service and the DOC in 2001.

Tributes for Joanne have come from her friends and co-workers, as well as her students.

RGCI teacher Jim Abig writes, "I first met Joanne about 10 years ago at a training session at the Oshkosh Training Center. When I walked outside on a break, I walked over toward the Fox River, and noticed that Joanne was fishing. I asked her if she came here to go fishing or for training. She stated that she came to go fishing, and that the training was incidental."

When Joanne transferred to RGCI, it was almost immediately apparent that she was a great teacher. She willingly took on teaching "English as a Second Language" and a college class. She cared deeply about her students, and wanted them all to succeed. She would drop what she was doing to help any student who requested or needed her assistance. In fact, after she got sick and was undergoing chemotherapy, she came to work on days that she was feeling very poorly in order to ensure that her college class students were able to successfully complete the course.

Joanne has been an inspiration to me, and I am proud to have been able to call her a colleague and a friend." Wendy Monfils, a Financial Program Supervisor at RGCI, says that while Joanne battled her disease, she made a commitment to her students to help them finish what they had started together. She completed chemotherapy last December, but two months later had to go back for additional treatment. While undergoing her second round of chemotherapy, Monfils says Joanne's dedication to her students and their education was "nothing short of spectacular."

Joanne increased the frequency of how often the class met so they could cover the materials faster based on the uncertainty of her health. Even while experiencing significant discomfort and severe side effects from her treatment, Joanne continued teaching to finish her part of the vocational class. Joanne taught Fox Valley Technical College's Microsoft Office software program, which is one of three educational components inmates can receive technical college credits for upon completion. Joanne also taught English as a Second Language.

Wendy says Joanne was extremely committed to educating inmates and felt very strongly about not letting them down since the majority had experienced a great deal of that in their lives. Joanne took great pride in her profession and believed education can be a key for change and positively impact a person's life. Her positive attitude and commitment to her students made her a role model for all of them.

Joanne finished her last vocational class at RGCI on April 24th. Five days later she was placed in the hospital and two weeks later entered hospice care where she died on June 9. Friends say her dedication

to educating inmates and her attitude was “astounding” given her own health situation. They say Joanne’s selflessness and dedication to others should be an inspiration to us all.

RGCI teacher Mike Senn gave one of his students an assignment to write about his favorite teacher. He thought the inmate would write about a teacher he had in grade school but the inmate turned in the following essay:

“The first reason Ms. Curry is my favorite teacher is because she loves to help her students with any problem they have with work. If I got stuck on a problem or something, she would stop whatever she was doing to help me. She helps students understand the problem and how to solve it.

The second reason why Ms. Curry is my favorite teacher is that when I felt like quitting, she motivated me. When I felt like quitting school, she motivated me. She motivates her students by talking with them and making them laugh about schoolwork. After she joked around, she always told me that I needed my education, and if I wanted to become something, I have to complete school.

My final reason that Ms. Curry is my favorite teacher is because she always gave me extra work. She stayed on my tail to get an assignment completed. Every time I completed an assignment, she always had more work for me to do. She told me that the only reason she does that is because she loves to exercise my brain. Ms. Curry knew that the extra work would exercise my brain, and I would learn more, and faster.

Helping me with my work, motivating me, and giving me extra work are all the things that I needed. Ms. Curry gave me those things.”

Ann Egan says, “Joanne Curry had a natural zest for life. Her dedication as a teacher, friend, colleague, animal lover/rescuer, serious photographer, and fisherwoman complimented her well. In spite of serious health issues, she continued to strive to complete her responsibilities for her students. Her most important statement when she first learned about her cancer was, ‘I promised my students that I would be back.’ She never gave up that hope to be able to keep the promise.

Joanne's positive attitude and commitment to her students made her a role model for everyone at Redgranite Correctional Institution. She always saw the best in the worst and added a little humor along the way. I have been honored to be her friend and colleague, and I will continue to pray for her family. Joanne Curry was an awesome lady!”

Your Chance to Join the CEA-W Board

Two members of the CEA-W Board have resigned their positions. Maximum/Minimum Security Representative Dave Chapman has retired and Juvenile Representative Janell Lathrop has left state service. The CEA-W Board wishes to thank Dave and Janell for their past year of service.

With Mary Stierna assuming the President’s office, former President Margaret Done has been appointed to fill the Maximum/Minimum Security Representative position. This leaves the offices of President-Elect and Juvenile Representative vacant. If you are interested in learning more about the duties of these positions or submitting your name for consideration, email mary.stierna@wisconsin.gov.

Mark Your Calendar

Wisconsin GED/HSED & Adult Literacy Conference
Radisson Paper Valley Hotel, Appleton, Wisconsin
November 13-15, 2012

Guide Helps Offenders Transition

Because the Wisconsin Resource Center (WRC) treats individuals with severe and persistent mental health needs, when they are released to the community, their dependence on resources for support is often great. As a special education teacher working at WRC, Nikki Cerney found that the students under 22 that required IEPs often were being released to homes that were located all over the state and community transitional contacts and resources were scarce. Since Nikki was working on her master's degree at the time, she integrated the creation of a guide to provide resources to the students with SPED needs into her graduate school project.

The result of hundreds of hours of checking leads, compiling information and editing was the Wisconsin Resource Center's Transitional Guide. The Transition Guide is 60 pages of descriptions of resources and contact information. Included are resources in the areas of Education, Employment, Health Care, Clothing, Food, Housing, Identification and Important Documents, Transportation, and Community Support Systems. The resources are grouped by area of the state.

The Transition Guide is meant to assist offenders in their quest to establish themselves back into the community. Nikki's advice to her students is to use whatever resources you are eligible for until you are in a place to do it for yourself. As Thomas Jefferson said, "Pride costs more than hunger, thirst, and cold."

Initially the resource guide was intended for these SPED students who were nearing release, but Nikki also found it to be of value to her Alternative to Revocation group. The Pre-Release units and many of the social workers at WRC also use to guide. Many other inmates who heard about the guide from other offenders often stop by or write Nikki to request a guide.

Nikki began assembling the Transition Guide by searching the internet for resources in various cities throughout Wisconsin based upon requests of offenders soon leaving for a particular area. She found county websites to be helpful and also searched for food pantries, DVR, DWD, ex-offender support, churches, etc. The 2-1-1 Network and the county websites as well as NAMI are Nikki's recommendations for first searches. Since Nikki continues to get requests for specific areas of Wisconsin, her Transition Guide continues to expand.

One of the major problems with any comprehensive Guide is keeping the information current. Nikki is working with Sue Kastensen of Fair Shake to have her list of resources included on the Fair Shake website. The Fair Shake website has a system for periodically checking listings to insure they are current.

Nikki has shared her Transition Guide with staff from a few state institutions and is willing to provide advice for others wishing to develop their own guides. You may contact Nikki for an electronic copy of the Transition Guide or for her guidance on developing your own at nikki.cerney@wisconsin.gov.

Fair Shake Expands Its Website

Since its founding in 2008, Fair Shake's innovative website has focused on successful prisoner reentry. Using an interactive blend of electronic tools, reentry awareness, and community building, all stakeholders are encouraged to participate in the reintegration of recently released offenders into society.

In Fair Shake's most recent newsletter, Website Administrator Alex Wikstrom announced new additions and improvements to the website. Fair Shake is dedicated to making their information easy to find and their tools easy to use. These changes are steps to achieving their goal.

Recently the Fair Shake website has focused on post-incarceration employment and has greatly improved its Employers' page and Employment page (for job-seekers). They've also posted an example of a personal web page so everyone can see how this valuable tool can support applicants.

Fair Shake's Media Center, which offers an array of reentry stories and social justice considerations, is now up and running. It has video and audio recordings as well as print publications. Reentry and other criminal justice news are posted on the bottom of the home page, and also on the news page.

As for outreach events, Fair Shake founder and Director, Sue Kastensen conducted a workshop at the Correctional Education Association International Conference in St. Paul and spoke with the Wisconsin Restorative Justice Coalition earlier this month. Fair Shake is looking forward to continued opportunities to introduce their tools to reentry professionals.

Fair Shake is a completely community supported 501(c)(3) organization. If you are interested in supporting their efforts, visit their website to how see you can automatically help Fair Shake when you make your Amazon purchases through the Fair Shake website. There is also a PayPal link, should you wish to make a direct donation.

To find out more, visit Fair Shake's website at www.fairshake.net or contact Alex Wikstrom at alex@fairshake.net.

Careers Conference - Call for Proposals

January 29-30, 2013

Pre-conference January 28, 2013

The Madison Concourse Hotel

Madison, Wisconsin

The Careers Conference 2013 is now accepting proposals for concurrent, roundtable, and showcase sessions. Share your experience and expertise. The Careers Conference 2013 connects practitioners from across the country with information about practices, strategies, programs, and best practices on all aspects of career development and career education.

Proposals are encouraged in these areas:

- Advising and Counseling
- Career Assessments
- Career and Labor Market Information
- Career and Tech Education
- Career Clusters and Pathways
- Diverse Populations
- Education Reform Issues and 21st Century Skills
- Employability and Job Seeking
- Professional Development
- Resources and Tools
- School-to-Work

Benefits of Presenting:

- Share your expertise with others
- Receive recognition for your work or program
- Make a positive contribution to the field of career development
- Make contacts with leaders in your field
- Get feedback on your program or topic
- Interact with colleagues and peers
- Play a key role in a leading national conference
- Get discounted presenter conference registration fees
- Build your professional portfolio

Deadline for Proposals: September 7, 2012

For more information or to submit a proposal, go to: www.cew.wisc.edu/careersconf/call-for-proposals.aspx.

To join CEA go to: www.ceanational.org

President's Message

It was a hot one! I'm not just talking about the weather in July, either. The CEA-W Training Day held in May was a huge success. A variety of participants from different service areas mixed with an array of topics presented relevant to correctional education, equals a successful day. Plus, it was wonderful to be able to honor our Teacher of the Year, Laurie Crescio. Attendees were overwhelmingly positive in their evaluations of all aspects of the day. I know I left with many great ideas and free website resources to supplement my curriculum. Thank you to all the attendees, vendors and presenters for making this a great day. Be thinking ahead to what you would like to present next year!

We are running our CEA-Wisconsin Creativity Contest in the fall this year. Contest rules and an entry form will be in the September/October issue of this newsletter. Entries will be due in December. We are looking for members to join our judging team. If you are interested, please send me an email, mary.stierna@wisconsin.gov.

Stay cool, and enjoy the rest of the summer!

Mary

Learn All About CEA-Wisconsin at:
www.ceawisconsin.org

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