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Additional offenders earn GED

(Pierre, S.D.)- Several former state prison inmates have recently received their General Educational Development (GED) program certificates, thanks in part to changes in the testing and scoring process.

In May 2012, the state Workforce Development Council approved a scoring realignment to the GED test, modifying the passing subtest score minimum requirement from 450 to 410, with a 450 average required amongst the battery of five tests. That change brought South Dakota's requirements in line with 48 other states. Passing scores were also made retroactive to July 1, 2009, making several inmates who had since discharged their prison sentences eligible to receive a GED.

Department of Corrections teachers identified those people who were eligible for their GED credential and began to locate them. Former inmates had to submit the necessary paperwork to request a credential based on the realigned scores.

"We were able to locate six former inmates and help them achieve their goal to complete their GED. We are still working to locate four additional people," said Jennifer Stanwick-Klimek, Associate Warden at the Mike Durfee State Prison in Springfield. "In addition, the scoring realignment allowed many more former inmates to have test scores posted that they can use as they continue to strive toward completing the GED."

Inmates entering the state prison system who lack a high school diploma are required to work toward completing their GED while incarcerated. The South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation provides funding for inmates to receive Adult Education and Literacy classes leading to the GED.

(more)

“The Department of Corrections understands the importance and value of offenders earning their GEDs. Not having a high school education or GED is a stumbling block for post-high school education and employment,” said Secretary of Corrections Denny Kaemingk. “We are very proud of offenders who earn a GED in our facilities and on parole.”

Between July 1, 2011, and June 30, 2012, a total of 167 state prison inmates completed their GEDs while incarcerated. At the end of June 2012, there were another 299 inmates attending GED preparation classes.

Another 150 inmates graduated from their vocational training programs while in prison, earning certificates of completion in areas such as automotive body repair, automotive mechanics, welding, landscape design, construction technology and computer applications.