



New Hampshire Department of Corrections

For Immediate Release

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State Prisons Hold Graduations for Thirty Resident Graduates of Granite State High School.

Concord and Berlin, NH – The New Hampshire Department of Corrections recently hosted three graduations at each of the three correctional facilities to honor the residents who earned their high school diplomas while incarcerated. Granite State High School is part of a special school district within the NH Department of Corrections established by NH Law under an interagency agreement with the Department of Education. Certified educators spent semester after semester enriching the lives of residents by providing basic high school classes, such as English, math, and science, as well as other specialized course offerings.

Donning traditional caps and gowns, thirty incarcerated men and women received their high school diplomas and were congratulated by Senators Lou D'Allesandro and Becky Whitley, New Hampshire Department of Corrections officials, Department of Education Commissioner Edelblut and invited families and friends. The feeling of accomplishment expressed by the graduates was palpable as families and friends listened to the speeches, looking proudly on their graduate. This moment has now propelled them to continue their education by enrolling in college level classes in pursuit of an associate or bachelor's degree, especially given the new opportunities under the Second Chance Pell Grant and the department's collaboration with White Mountain Community College and NH Technical Institute.

“Education is not only beneficial for everyone, but critical to those incarcerated as a primary intervention to reduce recidivism. Research has shown repeatedly that providing education to those incarcerated reduces their likelihood of returning significantly.” said Department of Corrections Commissioner Helen Hanks. “I am proud of all our graduates who persevered through to graduation. Watching their self-esteem build and the proud expressions as they were handed their diplomas is one of the most rewarding events in our system. Education is a proven instrument that aids in reducing recidivism and guiding people to fulfilling and viable employment post release.”

During the ceremony, several graduates spoke about their individual struggles and journeys. Each graduate's words were heartfelt and powerful, and many spoke about what the program means to them personally.

Under the newly re-named Division of Rehabilitative Services, formerly known as Community Corrections, the Division provides education, vocational training, skills, recreation, and personal development opportunities which encourage positive work habits, promote positive social behaviors, and prepares offenders for re-entry to the community.

“It has been my pleasure to watch these residents grow and expand their knowledge in achieving their personal goals,” said Laura Hardwick, Director of Education for Granite State High School. “The students

were vested in learning and committed to crossing that finish line.”

Graduations are typically held annually, although there was an interruption in celebrations during the COVID-19 pandemic. The next graduation is scheduled for Summer 2023.



Steven Letourneau (at podium), Department of Corrections Granite State High School Teacher, welcomes graduates and guests.



Graduates at the New Hampshire Correctional Facility for Women participate in procession to Pomp and Circumstance.

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