

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE
Pursuant to P.A. 188 of 2010
Section 909
GED Certification Rates

Sec. 909. As a condition of expending funds appropriated for academic/vocational programs under part 1, the department shall by January 31, 2011 provide a plan to contract with intermediate school districts for GED and high school diploma programs at correctional facilities to the members of the senate and house appropriations committees, the senate and house fiscal agencies, and the state budget director. The plan shall include detailed information on the development of the curriculum, how the program will be administered, how the program will improve employability, and how the program will be evaluated.

During the 2008-09 fiscal year, the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) Education team worked with representatives from the Department of Education (MDOE) and the Department of Energy, Labor, and Economic Growth (DELEG) to pursue an alternative delivery of educational programming within its correctional facilities. A high school diploma program was implemented at several facilities and the results of this were not favorable. The only public school DELEG was able to award grant funding to was the Fulton School District located in Gratiot County. Additionally, MDOE's representatives concluded there was not a need for their direct involvement in providing prisoner programming. Therefore, further involvement was not warranted.

Providing diplomas is not the norm for intermediate school districts in Michigan and are not staffed in a manner that they can step in and provide GED or high school completion programming in MDOC prisons. In order to comply with this section, an intermediate school district will have to pull from currently limited resources to add additional staff to meet these needs. Additionally, it must be noted that the Michigan Merit requirements will further challenge the resources of intermediate school districts and impede any cost effectiveness or feasibility of providing prisoners diplomas.

Currently MDOC Education contracts with the Chelsea Public Schools to provide GED testing services at one correctional facility. To date, the cost benefit of this continues to be under review by DELEG including a review of 107 grant funds used by Chelsea to "off set" costs.

Alternative program delivery plans include an education and technical training program that incorporates a work week requirement that simulates a 40 hour work week. In addition, access to post-secondary education through program articulation and reasonable delivery methods are being explored.