

# A+ Success Story



## Educational Opportunity Comes to Duchesne County Jail

### Inmates Reenter Productive Society with High School Diplomas

**D**uchesne County Jail is about 100 miles east of Provo in an area of rural Utah almost completely surrounded by national forest, an area rich in scenic wilderness, oil, and Ute tribal culture. The area is also a regional center for higher education: Union High School, the Uintah Basin Applied Technology College, and the Roosevelt Regional Campus of Utah State University offer a broad range of educational opportunities to most of Duchesne County's residents.

However, bringing educational opportunity to the residents of the Duchesne County Jail calls for a distinctive approach. "We are an adult correctional facility," says Cynthia Wardle, the Jail's administrative assistant. "We can house up to 160 inmates who serve both state and county sentences."

High school completion is the focus of educational efforts in the Duchesne County Jail. The Duchesne County program is, in turn, a component of Utah's statewide program for education in its correctional facilities. In accordance with state guidelines, the Duchesne program delivers its courses with the *A+nyWhere Learning System*® (*A+LS*™) courseware.

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– CYNTHIA WARDLE, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Wardle describes the jail's somewhat unusual system setup: "We run *A+LS* on a server in the jail itself and make workstations available to the inmates at scheduled times. Every three months, our IT people carry the server to the administration building and update the system over the Internet. The *A+LS* tech support staff has been very helpful and the system has been wonderful. Wardle notes that the high school is affiliated with the Duchesne County School District. The awarding of credits and diplomas is overseen by the principal of Union High School in Roosevelt."

#### At a Glance

**School Location:** Duchesne, UT

**Challenge:** Create a successful, flexible, and secure graduation program for incarcerated adults

**Solution:** Custom server-based implementation of the *A+nyWhere Learning System* that complies with the jail's rigid computer restrictions

**Result:** A specialized graduation program aligned to Utah state standards that resulted in 24 inmates receiving diplomas since 2008

#### No Prom

Duchesne County Jail is clearly not a typical high school. "There are restrictions," says Wardle. "For example, our students are not permitted to have maps. And, for security reasons, they are not allowed access to the Internet." Despite the operational constraints, the Duchesne County program represents an open door in terms of educational opportunity. "Any inmate who does not have a high school diploma is eligible," says Wardle. "An inmate who wants to enter the program just submits a request."

The *A+LS* curriculum, which offers complete, regularly updated coverage of the four core subjects—language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies—is specifically aligned to Utah's state standards at the high school level, as it is to the standards in all 50 states. This alignment can be confirmed down to the

individual lesson level by teachers and administrators using the system's own reporting capabilities.

Essentially, the high school program in the Duchesne County Jail is a specialized form of credit recovery and adult education. "Right now," says Wardle, "we have six inmates taking courses in the high school program." Completing high school may not be easy for these students. Educational risks have become actualities, often reinforced by long-term patterns of failure that must be reversed. But the potential benefits are significant—for the students and for society. Even a small number of inmates avoiding recidivism can mean a great deal.

Ronda Crook is the teaching assistant in the Duchesne County Jail. "Many of my students are between 40 and 60 years old," says Crook. "And many of them haven't done anything like high school coursework for a long time. But, for some, their lives have made them wiser. And they have a strong desire to learn."

This is where the technology can make a difference. *A+LS* courseware, developed by The American Education Corporation, employs a research-validated methodology of Assess (determine the student's placement), Prescribe (define an individualized learning path), Instruct, and Report (measure achievement against accepted standards). During instruction, *A+LS* gains the student's attention, supplies cues, prompts relevant knowledge, and progresses step-by-step through topics. Learning proceeds incrementally, establishing a pattern of accomplishment.



In the hands of a skilled teacher, *A+LS* is a powerful, flexible mentoring tool. "Since April 2008, when I began working in the program, we've graduated 17 inmates in the 2008-09 school year and we are currently at 7 graduates for 2009-10," says Wardle. "Each year we have a little graduation ceremony. The graduates can invite three people to come to the jail. Usually, it's family. The two or three graduates with the highest grades speak. Just staff, the graduates, and the people they invite are there. It's a big deal for them and for us, because there are some guys in this program that—on the outside—might not have the incentive to go back to high school and get their diplomas."

The ultimate objective of the high school program in the Duchesne County Jail is to prepare inmates to lead productive lives. "That's our main goal," says Wardle, "to give them the ability to step out of our facility and back into society successfully."

## About The American Education Corporation (AEC)

Early recognition of the national trend in school accountability, combined with an understanding of the impact of the Internet on education, has allowed AEC to become an industry leader in e-learning solutions. Few education companies offer the systemized combination of formative assessment, proven instruction, alignment to standards, and data management and reporting capabilities of AEC's comprehensive courseware and learning management system.

The *A+nyWhere Learning System*<sup>®</sup> (*A+LS*<sup>™</sup>) software program is an e-learning solution ideal for schools searching for more efficient ways to improve their instructional processes. The *A+LS* courseware program consists of an award-winning instructional management system supported by significant core curriculum content for grades K-12 and adult learners delivered through a local area network (LAN), a wide area network (WAN), or the Internet. The research-based curriculum content is in the subject areas of Reading, Mathematics, Language Arts, Science, Writing, and Social Sciences. This curriculum is linked to state standards and combined with valuable formative assessment tests designed to guide instruction throughout the school year — as well as give school administrators the data they need to ensure maximum student performance.

**Would you like to learn more about the *A+nyWhere Learning System*?**

**Give us a call at 800.222.2811 to arrange a custom product demonstration with your local licensed product reseller or check us out on the web at [www.amered.com](http://www.amered.com)**

***A+* Success Story Union High School Adult Education Program • Duchesne, Utah**