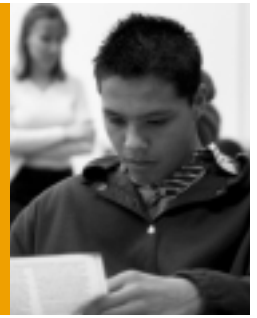


Oregon Youth Correctional Facility Implements PLATO Instructional Solutions Courseware



The pursuit of excellence is not limited to traditional schools in traditional settings. Excellence is achieved by setting high standards and creating high expectations for all students and faculty. This is the reality at William P. Lord High School, in the MacLaren Youth Correctional Facility, a part of the Willamette Education Service District (WESD) in Salem, Oregon. The school was the recipient of the prestigious Austin McCormick Award for Best Practices in Correctional Education.

With a unique combination of dedicated staff, uncommon leadership and excellent use of instructional resources and technologies – including PLATO Learning – William P. Lord High School has created a rich learning environment for students who traditionally have had little past success in learning.

On September 1, 1998, the Willamette Education Service District (WESD) contracted for the management of the educational program services offered at William P. Lord High School at the MacLaren Youth Correctional Facility. At that time, approximately four hundred adjudicated youth ranging in age from fifteen to twenty-five were being served through the high school program. The Northwest Association of Colleges, Universities, and High Schools accredited the school.

Vocational classes were offered in the building trades and horticulture science. Graduates were allowed to continue attending either standard classes of interest or participation in one of the vocational areas. Special education services were also offered.

Issues and challenges

Passage of Oregon's Measure 11, calling for mandatory sentence length and treatment, presented a challenge to MacLaren and William P. Lord High School to significantly alter programs to accommodate an older, longer incarcerated population with very different needs.

This new measure, in combination with expanding requirements for state and correctional education assessments, the emergence of new educational technology tools, and performance based standards required by the state correctional authority, drove a radical transformation of the school.

The first step in the redesign of the overall program was to create a new Philosophy Statement followed by a revised Mission Statement. This guided the establishment of a series of goals and objectives that shaped all aspects of the effort.

William P. Lord High School set six major goals in the 2000-01 academic year. All six of them are now a reality. Under the leadership of Cheryl Bower, Principal, staff have worked cooperatively and productively to transform Lord High School into a learning institution focused on student success and future growth.

PLATO Learning played a significant role across the campus in the education of William P. Lord HS youth. PLATO Instructional Solutions courseware is aligned to the learning objectives at all levels of instruction, supporting the goals of the school and its programs. Teachers play an active role in assigning learning paths for their students, thus ensuring that their experience is focused on their needs and their goals.

PLATO Learning implementations

- *Supporting Teaching and Learning*
Students who test below 8th grade level in reading or math are "double blocked" into two classes with the appropriate teacher – one period in the math or reading class, the 2nd block is in the PLATO Learning lab for skill building. Students enjoy the PLATO Learning lab and relate well to the techniques and strategies used

to teach and re-teach the learning goals. This allows the teacher to individualize each student's learning goals and also to easily track their progress.

- *Special Education*
PLATO Learning's teaching technologies are very useful to special education teachers as IEP learning goals are identified. PLATO Assessment Solutions enable the teachers to access regular reports regarding their students' progress.
- *Youth in Transition*
PLATO Learning supports continuous learning for youth who have come into the school mid-quarter or who leave to move to other facilities as they complete their sentence.

The educational program continues to be in transition, to better serve the student population's needs in the professional/technical/post secondary arenas. Students attending school are now receiving a comprehensive education with a strong emphasis on career related learning and post secondary opportunities that will provide successful transition back into their respective communities.