



Foothills Corrections Sites

Submitted by Anthony Jenkins, Regional Coordinator for Corrections, Melissa Griffin, Regional Director for Workforce Development, and Corrections Site Directors Dr. Quincy Wallace, MeQuanta McCord, and Jon Lundy

Foothills prides itself—rightly—on its commitment to meeting students where they are and providing hope and support to all those who want to succeed and turn their lives around. Nowhere is that more evident than in the three current Foothills Corrections sites—Lee Arrendale, Burruss and Phillips—where some amazing work is going on, as demonstrated by the fact that nearly 450 Foothills Corrections students have graduated since our school was founded.

Foothills Regional Coordinator for Corrections, Anthony Jenkins, spoke of the unique challenges and triumphs faced by Foothills corrections staff:

“Because of security reasons, our students are not able to access all of the available technology that Foothills offers. Even with those limitations, our students are still successful.

“All Foothills sites take students where they are—however that is truly the case in Corrections. Students can be removed from formal schooling for years and then come to Foothills.

“We partner with the Georgia Department of Corrections, so they are in control of the surroundings. Our staff make constant adjustments according to whatever happens at the facility.

“I want to praise our staff members. They go into a totally different environment and work with the students with passion and dedication. They accept the students no matter their background, they challenge them and lay out what their expectations are, and then they work with students to reach those expectations and goals.”



Message from the Superintendent

We are proud to have the Georgia Department of Corrections as one of our partners, and we truly appreciate this opportunity to work together. We are able to support our three Corrections sites in many ways: we staff the Foothills program, as well as provide quality curriculum and assessment tools. When the inmates graduate from high school and exit Corrections, they don't come back. They are able to go on and start new lives with a high school diploma, which allows them to get jobs and go on to college, the military, and other positive options—all of which enable them to become contributing citizens to our communities. Word has gotten out far and wide about the value of what we can offer, and there is always a waiting list of prisoners who are eager to get into Foothills and turn their lives around.—**Sherrie**

In This Issue

- **Foothills Corrections Sites: Turning Lives Around**
- **Message from the Superintendent**

Regional Director for Workforce Development Melissa Griffin, who has recently begun working with Foothills Corrections again, adds that “While access to certain parts of the curriculum can be a challenge, credit attainment is a strength, and Corrections-based students earn a high school diploma just like any other high school student.”

Burruss Site Director MeQuanta McCord notes that “Working in corrections definitely exposes you to the struggles and vulnerabilities of those who are incarcerated. Corrections can be a challenging environment with high levels of stress and unpredictability. Many students in corrections facilities have experienced trauma, abuse, or neglect, which can impact their behavior and learning abilities. Working with these students has taught me the importance of empathy, understanding, and recognizing the underlying factors contributing to their circumstances. Working in this field has helped me to develop resilience and the ability to adapt to difficult situations.

“One success story from Burruss involves the rehabilitation and reintegration of an inmate who successfully turned his life around after graduating from Foothills. He went on to earn several certifications through a technical college. He also used his knowledge from our Financial Literacy course to purchase his first house.”

Dr. Quincy Wallace, Site Director at Phillips, points out that “Recidivism rates among inmates are greatly reduced by educational attainment. One of the best moments we experience is calling home when one of our students has met all of their credit requirements for high a school diploma. Nothing is more fulfilling than hearing the excitement of loved ones and seeing the big smiles on students' faces during the phone call. Over the years, I have witnessed multiple students obtain their high school diplomas, and some enter college to earn their degrees at Georgia State University.



“The biggest life lesson I have learned as a Site Director at Phillips Prison is the past must remain in the past. When we onboard new students, we tell them in their orientation that our staff is going to treat them like a scholar. We are not judging their painful past, but instead, we are supporting their academic future. Our students must feel safe and cared for in our unique setting in order to learn just like any other student. We have been told by numerous officers that they are amazed at how unusually well-behaved our students are while they are with us. To get respect, you must earn it, and we earn the respect of our students by building positive relationships that promote academic achievement.”

Continued next page...



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The Foothills Vision

Foothills Regional High School strives to be an accessible, high-quality high school option that is flexible and responsive to the needs of the People of Georgia and its communities.

Lee Arrendale site director, Jon Lundy, added these thoughts about his work with Corrections:

“Unique Challenges:

Obviously, Google cannot answer questions for us in the Corrections setting. We must use the “old school” methods such as encyclopedias, dictionaries, textbooks, globes, and posters. This, in a way, helps our teachers become better at their subject matter, not being able to focus on a specific topic (i.e., Biology) but having a wide array of knowledge of all classes (i.e., Physical Science, Environmental Science, Earth Systems etc.).



“Successes:

Being able to see the students’ faces as they comprehend a tough subject enabling them to pass post-tests, thus passing classes, is always a joy. Seeing the students make an exceptional grade on EOCs, validating that they can be successful, especially in the environment they are in. Of course, when we see the students’ faces at graduation, with their cap and gown on, a smile on their face, one cannot help but be proud of those students.

“Life Lessons:

Never judge a book by its cover, never believe what you hear until you talk with that person. Having worked for Foothills for 9 years, I have seen many students come through the school. I have heard many stories and have witnessed what a positive role model can provide for these students. Having heard from several students once they have been released, they feel they can better their lives and not get caught up “in the cycle”. They see there are opportunities out there for them if they are willing to pursue those opportunities.”

Thank you to all of our Foothills Corrections Site Directors:

Burruss:

MeQuanta McCord
Lakeisha Walker

Lee Arrendale:

Jamie Free
Jon Lundy

Phillips:

Neal Auer
Quincy Wallace

McRae (opening still pending):

Willie Batts
William Bell



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