

An Act to Ensure Educational Rights are Upheld for Incarcerated Youth – [H.515](#) and [S.1542](#)

(Lead Sponsors: Representatives Keefe and Senator Miranda)

Massachusetts prides itself as having one of the [highest rates](#) of educational quality and education in the nation. However, these rankings hide local and state failures at upholding the educational rights of all children and youth. Unlike teens in the juvenile system, school-aged youth incarcerated in adult correctional facilities do not receive the education that they are entitled to by law. Despite the role of education in [lowering recidivism](#) and helping young people reach their highest potential, only a small fraction of youth aged 18-21 with IEPs receive the special education services. Further, DOC's [waiting list](#) for educational programming is over 3,000 people long.



This bill proposes systemic reforms, modeled after the Department of Youth Services' educational services, to ensure that youth (under age 22) are regularly engaged in education, including high school, special education, higher education, or vocational educational programs:

- Ensures DESE has oversight of DOC's special education programs (as DESE already has oversight of SPED at HOCs, DYS, DPH, DMH).
- Requires that young people at HOCs and DOC are provided educational programming (including special education) for 6 hours a day for high school, vocational or post-secondary.
- Ensures standards for teachers within DOC.
- Strengthens the identification of students with disabilities at HOCs and DOC.
- Ensures class credit toward graduation is possible for high school classes.
- Allows educational programs to count toward good time credits at the highest possible rate.
- Allows incarcerated youth to access early college credit/dual enrollment

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