



PRESS RELEASE

August 25, 2025

Surry County Launches GED Education Pilot at Detention Center in New Partnership

Dobson, NC – The Surry County Office of Substance Abuse Recovery (SCOSAR) is proud to announce the launch of an innovative partnership between the Surry County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) and Surry Community College (SCC). Together, the agencies have introduced a pilot GED Educational Services Program at the Surry County Detention Center, officially launched on August 20, 2025.

North Carolina General Education Diploma (GED) classes are offered through the state's community college system. Covering four core subjects—Reasoning Through Language Arts, Social Studies, Science and Mathematical Reasoning—these classes give participants a structured pathway to achieve educational goals while in custody.

Surry County Sheriff Steve Hiatt shared that: *"I appreciate the continued partnership that we have with SCC and SCOSAR and the educational opportunities that they provide. I am especially proud of this GED program for inmates. I look forward to celebrating the achievements of these individuals."*

This initiative is part of the ongoing Surry Transition Project (STP), which provides recovery-focused and rehabilitative opportunities to individuals who are incarcerated.

Chairman Mark Marion, Surry County Board of County Commissioners stated that: *"This pilot program is a powerful example of what can be achieved when we come together with a shared vision for change. By bringing GED education into the Surry County Detention Center, we are not only investing in individual futures—we are strengthening our entire community. Education is a cornerstone of rehabilitation and this initiative reflects our commitment to second chances, public safety and long-term recovery. I commend the*

Surry County Sheriff's Office, Surry Community College and SCOSAR for their leadership and collaboration in making this vision a reality."

At the Surry County Detention Center, detainees will attend weekly classes taught by Surry Community College instructors in collaboration with SCOSAR staff. In addition to classroom learning, participants will complete 10 hours of independent study each week, returning to class to review their progress and receive guidance.

"The launch of GED services inside our Detention Center is more than an educational program—it's a statement about the importance of partnership, recovery and a balance of criminal justice and rehabilitative services," said Jamie Edwards, Director of SCOSAR and the Surry Transition Project. *"Education provides hope, confidence and a sense of purpose. It is a core component of a healthy recovery process and can help address the factors that place individuals at risk for continued criminal justice involvement. We are proud to partner with Surry Community College and continue supporting Sheriff Steve Hiatt's efforts to provide rehabilitative and recovery-focused services for our community."*

The GED pilot program highlights Surry County's commitment to helping individuals build a better future, both inside and outside of the justice system. By combining education, recovery services and community support, the County is working to break cycles of addiction and incarceration and to create opportunities for second chances.

SCC President Dr. David Shockley stated that: *"Surry Community College is grateful for the opportunity to provide High School Equivalency and Career Readiness instruction in partnership with the Surry County Detention Center and Surry County Office of Substance Abuse Recovery (SCOSAR) Recovery to Work (RTW) program. Providing a clear pathway for academic and career achievement is critical for the future success of incarcerated individuals. Ms. Jennifer Pardue and the entire College and Career Readiness Department will provide the quality instruction that will exceed all expectations for success."*

The Surry Transition Project (STP) is a community-based initiative designed to support individuals as they move from incarceration back into everyday life. With a focus on treatment, recovery, education and community reintegration, STP reflects Surry County's belief that with the right support, individuals can improve their lives and contribute positively to society.

**Surry County Detention Center
Surry Transition Project GED Kick Off**



Front Row:

Surry County Sheriff Steve Hiatt, SCC Instructor Cherie Cooke,
SCOSAR Recovery to Work Advisor Emily Venable-Schiff,
SCC Director of College and Career Readiness and HRD Jennifer Pardue and
SCC President Dr. David Shockley.

Back Row:

Chairman Mark Marion of the Surry County Board of Commissioners,
SCDC Chief Jail Administrator Tony Holyfield, SCDC Sergeant Mickey Estes,
SCDC Lieutenant Randy Jenkins and SCOSAR Director Jamie Edwards.