



# BARBALUNGA FOR SHERIFF

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“Time For Change – Justice That Works”

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## Quality Review of Berkshire Jail Educational Services Gets Poor Marks

BERKSHIRE COUNTY—Educational services are a key component of any jail’s programming for inmates. But a fiscal year 2020 state Quality Review Report of the Berkshire County Sheriff’s Office, obtained through a public records request, shows the jail’s Adult Community Learning Services are not making the grade in a number of measurements.

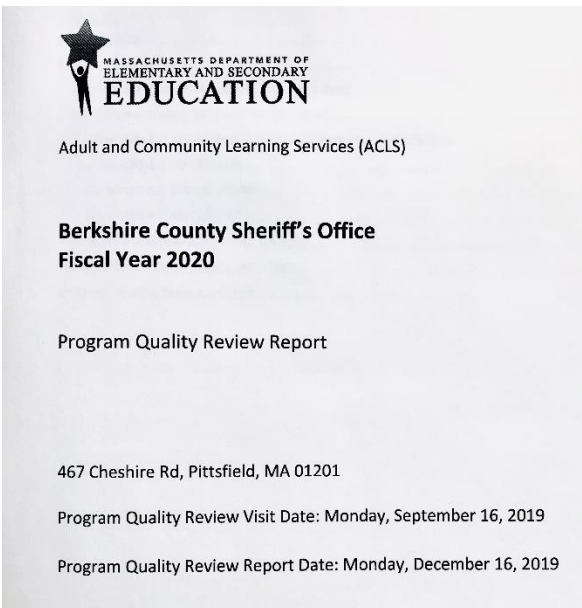
A team of four staff members from The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) rated the quality of the jail’s adult education program based on a set of specific indicators, such as curriculum and instructions, career pathways collaborations, organizational support, and educational leadership. A total of 8 indicators and standards were reviewed, and 75% of the rankings (6 out of 8) were labeled “developing” or “limited evidence.” Only 2 out of 8 factors were labeled as “proficient,” and 0 indicators received the top grade of “exemplary.”

Example of weak scores include:

- **The “Career Pathways” review** found that “staff as a whole did not appear to share a common understanding of their role or the program’s role in collaborating with partners from local education and workforce systems...A

few staff members were somewhat aware of their students’ career pathway interests, but students could not articulate specific ways the program has helped them pursue these options...As a whole, the system lacks a well-developed process to identify and share student’s career pathways...or methods to ensure teachers understand and are supported in carrying out their role and responsibilities.”

- **Curriculum & Instruction:** “The Review Team found mixed evidence that classroom instruction is based on research and evidence-based practices (and) did not observe or hear any evidence that classroom curriculum and instruction are being used to build students’ digital literacy skills to enhance their learning.”
- **Assessment:** “There was little evidence presented to suggest that a formal process exists for administering student assessments...the results of those assessments are not consistently used to inform and modify classroom instruction, to measure academic growth, or to determine appropriately targeted student interventions.”



- **Educational Leadership:** “The Review Team found little evidence that the program has in place a useful and effective classroom observation and feedback process that leads to improved teaching and advising practices...Overall, the program lacks the capacity to collect, analyze and use program and regional data to inform teaching planning and evaluation decisions. The program does not appear to have any formal strategies to gather feedback and recommendations from staff on support of continuous improvement...Education leaders acknowledge this as being an area of weakness and in need of further development.”
- **Digital Literacy:** “Student access to computers is currently limited...Computers are available in classrooms, but internet access is restricted. The Review Team did not observe or hear any evidence that classroom curriculum and instruction is being used to build student’s digital literacy skills to enhance their learning.”
- **Checking for Understanding:** “Checking for Understanding was rated as ‘developing’ in 67% of classrooms. In these classes, elements of checking for understanding were either not observed, or were observed minimally or inconsistently.”

Alf Barbalunga said the Adult and Community Learning Services Quality Review was disappointing in many ways. “There was not a single indicator in this review which rated the Berkshire County Jail as ‘exemplary,’ which means that all indicator and standards reviewed by the state team had either ‘minor concerns’, ‘moderate concerns’, or, as in Digital Literacy, Assessment, and Educational Leadership, ‘significant concerns’ were found. I am concerned that there was no consistent evidence of exemplary educational practices.”

“If I am elected sheriff,” Barbalunga said, “I will not wait until January 4<sup>th</sup> to assess ways in which the Jail’s Adult and Community Learning Services can be made exemplary. There is a lot to be “learned” from this report, and it will be a top priority while I am sheriff to increase digital literacy, improve inmate understanding of their curriculum, and create an effective classroom observation and feedback process. As I have previously stated, I will look to rebalance the jail budget to place a higher priority on educational services for all inmates.”

“I already knew from a budget analysis that the full-time vocational teacher was no longer on payroll, as well as the full-time recreational director, but this is a detailed State critique of what’s missing. These State quality reviews of adult learning are not easily available to the citizens of Berkshire County,” Barbalunga noted. “You have to file a public records request just to view them. It took weeks to receive it, and who knows to ask for them? If elected, I will post such reviews on the Jail’s website, so anyone in Berkshire County can see how we are doing; whether great results, poor results, or somewhere in between.”

To see a complete copy of the FY 2020 Adult & Community Learning Services review, cut and paste this pdf link into your internet browser: [www.barbalunga.com/poor-audits](http://www.barbalunga.com/poor-audits)

The link **also includes** 12 years of repeated violations from the Department of Public Health for poor hot water, sanitation issues, and lack of shower maintenance.

Hot water may have been a safety issue during Covid outbreaks, as hand-washing is essential.

The Sheriff only submitted a bid to fix the showers on June 29, 2022, just in time for election season.

Post A Classified Ad

# Ads for Berkshire County Sheriff's Office in Pittsfield, MA

**INVITATION FOR BIDS Sealed bids are invited for shower stall renovation at the Berkshire County Sheriff's Office, 467 Cheshire Road, Pittsfield, MA. Bid documents, including specifications are available at the Berkshire County Sheriff's Office, 467 Cheshire Road or by email at [kevin.towle@sdb.state.ma.us](mailto:kevin.towle@sdb.state.ma.us). Filed Sub-Bids will be accepted until 2:00 PM on Wednesday, July 13th, 2022, at which time they will be publicly opened. General Bids will be accepted until 2:00 PM on Wednesday, July 28th, 2022, at which time they will be publicly opened. AD# 66918 06/29/2022**



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