Roles and Functions of the Correctional System

**Course**  
Principles of LPSCS

**Unit IV**  
Corrections

**Essential Question**  
What is the role and function of the correctional system in society?

**TEKS**  
§130.292(c) (10)(A)(B)(C)(D)(E)(F)

**Prior Student Learning**  
none

**Estimated Time**  
3 hours

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**Rationale**  
The correctional system in the United States plays a key role in society. It is important to understand what careers are available, their required duties, and the differences between the types of correctional systems. It is also imperative that we address the rights of those confined within the correctional system.

**Objectives**  
The student will be able to:

1. Explain what career opportunities are available in the correctional system, including probation and parole.
2. Explain the duties and responsibilities of correctional officers.
3. Outline the history of prisons in the U.S.
4. Explain the differences between jails and prisons.
5. Identify the levels of security in prisons and jails.
6. Explain the constitutional rights of inmates in prisons and jails.

**Engage**  
Career Exploration. Allow the students to research careers in corrections within their geographical area, including information about hiring guidelines, job duties, and salaries. The students should report their findings to the class. They can then compare and contrast correctional careers, and discuss the differences between jails and prisons. The Discussion and/or Presentation Rubrics may be used for assessment.

**Key Points**

I. Correctional Careers and Duties – there are many career options available to individuals seeking careers within the correctional system. Job duties, hiring requirements, and salaries vary by employer.
   A. Probation or Parole Officer – counsel, monitor, and evaluate the progress of offenders to determine whether they are abiding by the court’s expectations of them, and whether they will be eventually released from supervision
      1. Probation – an alternative to incarceration
      2. Parole – a supervised release from incarceration before the expiration of the sentence
         a. **District Parole Officers** – supervise offenders who have been released on parole, or mandatory supervision, to complete their sentences while living in Texas communities
         b. **Institutional Parole Officers** – physically assigned to Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) units. They interview incarcerated offenders in TDCJ Units, federal correctional institutions, contracted facilities, and county...
jails statewide to prepare Parole Case Summaries.
B. Correctional Officers – primarily responsible for the safety and security of the unit and the offenders within the unit
C. Jailers/Detention Officers – similar to correctional officers, usually work in pretrial detention facilities
D. Juvenile Detention Officers – similar to correctional officers with a specialization in juvenile offenders
E. Federal Correctional Officers – similar to correctional officers with a specialization in the federal correctional system
F. Warden – the chief administrator of a prison

II. Four Early Prison Systems
A. Early Jail conditions were primitive and inhumane
   1. Sixteen people in a 12-foot by 12-foot cell
   2. Prisoners provided their own food and medical needs
   3. Could buy alcohol, food, privileges, and cell space
   4. Indigents had to work for their keep
   5. Men, women, and children all housed together
   6. Sick and healthy housed together
   7. No heat, no plumbing, and no adequate sleeping or living space
   8. Many deaths from sickness and starvation
B. Walnut Street Jail
   1. 1790 law passed by Pennsylvania legislature
      a. Humane physical facilities
      b. Adequate food and water at public expense
      c. Separation of men, women, and children
      d. Prohibition on “buying” better treatment
      e. Debtors and mentally ill separated from criminal population
      f. Orphans were moved to separate buildings
   2. Prison Life
      a. Prisoners worked but were paid for labor
      b. Earn early release for good behavior
      c. Attempted to rehabilitate prisoners
      d. Became overcrowded
      e. Conditions deteriorated and costs skyrocketed
      f. Prison failed at rehabilitation
C. Eastern State Penitentiary
   1. Built in 1892
   2. Cost $500,000 to house 250 prisoners
   3. The most expensive building in the new world
   4. First in the country to have flush toilets and heat
   5. Designed as a penitentiary, not jail or prison
      a. Penitentiary – a correctional institution based on the concept that inmates could change their criminality through reflection and penitence
      b. It had individual cells, and the prisoners had to become proficient with a skill for use after release
   6. Expected to read the Bible when not working or exercising
   7. Use of the “silent system”
8. Maximum security, walled, self-contained
9. Cells 12’ x 7.5’ with had a window
10. Working, exercising, eating, and sleeping all performed in the prisoner’s cell

D. The Auburn System
1. Built in 1816, walled, maximum security
2. Cells 7’x 4’, 7’ high, back to back, 5 tiers located in the center of the building inside “cell blocks”
3. Cells poorly lit, no fresh air
4. Inmates moved to other locations in the unit for work, exercise, and eating
5. Silent system used but hard to enforce
6. Corporal punishment used for violations
7. Marched from place to place
8. Short haircuts
9. Distinctive uniforms
10. First use of solitary confinement
11. Prison industries (the prison was self-sufficient)
12. Prototype American prison

E. Southern Penal System
1. Convict lease system was implemented after the end of slavery
2. Construction work, factory work, agricultural work
3. Very poor work and living conditions
4. Worked 12-15 hours a day
5. Often lived in cages, and discipline was brutal
6. Origin of “chain gangs”
7. The 1930 Prison Farm System replaced the lease system
8. Inmate labor used to sustain prisons and other profit industries
9. Used prisoners as guards and supervisors to cut costs
10. Arkansas and Texas brought about U.S. Supreme Court decisions on the 8th amendment

III. Jails – short-term, multipurpose holding facilities that serve as the gateway for the criminal justice system

A. Jails house different types of offenders
1. Defendants awaiting trial
2. Defendants convicted of misdemeanors
3. The mentally ill, pending movement to a health facility
4. Local, state, and federal prisoners
5. Adults
6. Juveniles
7. Absconders
8. Witnesses
9. Awaiting trial or transport
10. Convicted prisoners
11. Adults of both genders

B. Punishment ranges for jail
1. Class A Misdemeanor – up to 2 years and $4,000 fine
2. Class B Misdemeanor – up to 180 days and $2,000 fine
3. Class C Misdemeanor – up to $500 fine

C. County Jails
1. Over 3,300 local/county jails
2. Vary in size from less than 50 to more than 7,000 inmates
3. The population has more than doubled since 1983
4. Very few municipal jails

IV. Prisons – correctional institutions for prisoners convicted of felonies
A. Extended sentences
B. Inmates separated by sex
C. Architecture reflective of gender bias
D. Punishment ranges for prison
1. State Jail Felony – 180 days to 2 years, $10,000 fine
2. 3rd degree Felony – 2 to 10 years, $10,000 fine
3. 2nd degree Felony – 2 to 20 years, $10,000 fine
4. 1st degree Felony – 2 to 99 years, $10,000 fine
5. Capital Felony – life without parole, or death
E. Security levels
1. Minimum – few physical barriers to escape and lots of programs for offenders
2. Medium – self-contained, walled fortresses that offer vocational, education, and rehabilitation for offenders
3. Maximum – dangerous or violent offenders are housed in a self-contained, fortress-like facility
4. Administrative segregation (solitary confinement) – offenders are kept in single cells 23 hours a day
F. Private jails and prisons
1. For-profit facilities run by private security companies
2. Contracted by counties at lower cost
3. Fewer programs or opportunities for offenders
4. Less training and lower pay – the conditions are often below state standards
5. Escapes and assaults carry smaller penalties

V. Constitutional rights
A. Retain all the rights of “free” citizens
B. Three government interests, however, justify curtailing offenders’ rights:
1. Maintaining internal order and discipline
2. Securing the institution against unauthorized access or escape
3. Rehabilitating offenders
C. Types of cases filed
1. Habeus Corpus – a single offender files suit for unlawful imprisonment based on a violation of constitutional rights
2. Section 1983 – a class action suit based on unfavorable prison conditions and seeking monetary damages. The judgment affects all offenders.
D. Bill of Rights
1. First Amendment
a. Freedom of speech  
b. Freedom of religion  
c. Freedom of press  
d. Freedom of assembly  
e. Freedom to petition government for redress of grievances

2. Fourth Amendment – protects against unreasonable search and seizure

3. Fifth Amendment  
a. Right to jury  
b. Protects against double jeopardy  
c. Protects against self-incrimination  
d. Prohibits the taking of life, liberty, or property without due process  
e. Prevents the taking of private property without just compensation

4. Sixth Amendment  
a. Public and speedy trial  
b. Impartial jury  
c. Informed of nature and causation against you  
d. Confront witnesses  
e. Compulsory process for obtaining witnesses  
f. Right to an attorney

5. Eighth Amendment  
a. Protects against unreasonable bail  
b. Prohibits cruel and unusual punishment

6. Fourteenth Amendment  
a. Privileges and immunities  
b. Right to due process  
c. Right to equal protection under law

VI. Case Law  
A. Turner v. Safely – the most important prison law case ever decided on by the Supreme Court. This case established that penal institutions could limit offender correspondence for the overall safety of the institution, but could not limit the scope under which the marriage of an offender could occur.

Activities  
1. Case Law Activity. The students will read Turner v. Safely and answer the fundamental questions addressed to better understand the ruling of the court. Discuss the answers as a group. Have the students argue the facts of the case, for and against. Use the Case Law Activity Handout for the activity and the Case Law Activity Handout Key for assessment.

2. Who Wants to Be a Zillionaire? Divide the students into teams. Each team will take turns answering questions, either as individuals or as a team. Assign a student to keep score. Read each question and its possible answers. Give the answering student or team a designated amount of time to answer the question. You may allow the opposite team to answer if the