



## 2021 Scholarship Grant **Kelly Thomas**

Kelly Thomas, a guidance coordinator with Granite State High School, Corrections Special School District, has received a Scholarship Grant in support of her studies at Plymouth State University.

In 2018, Kelly enrolled at Plymouth State University to pursue a Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study (CAGS) for Educational Leadership. She chose this path to help advance the goals of the corrections education program and increase learning opportunities that support successful reentry into the community.

Kelly is the facilitator for a new initiative to bring Universal Design for Learning to Granite State High School's corrections education program. This framework provides teachers with a structure to meet the diverse needs of all students. She seeks to bring this approach "behind the walls" of the prison to offer all students multiple learning modalities to successfully complete their education as part of their rehabilitation. In addition, Kelly manages a postsecondary education program, which residents may choose to pursue. With the Pell Grant anticipated to be reactivated for incarcerated residents for the 2023-2024 school year this program is expected to expand significantly within the next few years. In addition, Ms. Thomas manages the Adult Education and Literacy Grant providing test preparation and basic education skills for the commercial drivers' license (CDL) examination for students who wish to enter the transportation field upon release.

"My long-term goal is to hold a leadership position at Granite State High School. I am specifically interested in the field of Career and Technical Education," Kelly explains. "I would like to expand the program to include pre-apprenticeships, apprenticeships, cross-collaboration with outside employers, and transition to gainful employment or post-secondary education upon a resident's release."

Kelly anticipates completing her studies in May 2021.