

Correctional Education Council (CEC) Board Meeting Minutes
July 22, 2024
In Person Meeting & Zoom Webinar

Council Members

Secretary Carolyn J. Scruggs, Co-Chair, Deputy Secretary Jason Perkins-Cohen, Jack Weber, Jennifer Gauthier, Ruschelle Reuben, Theresa M. Shank, Sarah Sheppard, Trish Gordon-McCown, Monica Thomas, Dr. Sylvia Lawson

Staff and Guests

Renard E. Brooks, Brittney Hansen, Casey Tiefenwerth, Danielle Cox, Deron Crawford, Diana Dabbs, Donna Rojas, Dwayne Lovett, Elizabeth Marts, Ellen Berdt, Dr. Erica DuBose, Janay Harris, Janell Johnson, Julia Givens, June Brittingham, Kari Pompilid, Katharine Lander, Kenneth Jessup, Leza Griffith, Laura Martin, Lloyd Day, Logan Dean, Marsha Briley, Mary Keller, Patrick Hruz, Peggy Stanford, Richard Chambers, Robin Conley, Shannice Anderson, Shea Zwerver, Dr. Tamara Barron, Terende Thomas, Theodore Hunter, Tricia Hopkins, Nancy Banwait, Benjamin Mourad, Dr. Sanjay Rai,

Absent

Rachael Stephens Parker

Maryland Department of Labor (Labor) Deputy Secretary, Jason Perkins-Cohen called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. A quorum was reached.

Welcome Remarks from MD Labor (Deputy Secretary Jason Perkins-Cohen)

Labor Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen welcomed attendees to the meeting. He said that a lot of progress was made at the last meeting and shared that he's looking forward to seeing what can be accomplished during this meeting and moving forward.

Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen invited Deputy Secretary Brooks to say a few words on behalf of the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) given that Secretary Scruggs was unable to attend the beginning of the meeting.

Welcoming Remarks from DPSCS (Secretary Carolyn J. Scruggs)

Deputy Secretary Brooks wished everyone a good morning and thanked them for their attendance and participation. He said that he is proud of the work that the Council has accomplished through the Subcommittees and looks forward to strengthening the partnership between the two departments and advancing correctional education in Maryland.

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the March 25, 2024 CEC minutes was made and seconded. Deputy Secretary Brooks motioned to adopt the minutes and it was seconded by Ms.Rueben. The minutes were unanimously approved at 10:07 a.m.

Action Items (DPSCS)

Danielle Cox, Director of Education at DPSCS, provided updates on action items from the last CEC meeting on March 25, 2024.

Updates on MTC Transfer to DPSCS

- Ms.Cox shared that they are still in the process of trying to transfer the education department at MTC to Baltimore City Public Schools (BCPS), where labor provides Special Education (SPED) programming in the library.
- She added that the Commissioner is still having conversations with BCPS and that, unfortunately, an agreement won't be in place for this upcoming school year but will soon be established.
- Ms.Rueben stated that she was recently in contact with the principal at MTC and shared that they were inquiring about services beyond special education. Ms.Rueben requested some clarity on this.
 - Ms.Cox said that BCPS would take over SPED and Adult Basic Education (ABE) at MTC. She said that GED services are currently being provided by Baltimore City Community College (BCCC) and will continue to be provided by BCCC.
 - Secretary Scruggs joined the meeting at 10:11 a.m. She responded to the conversation clarifying that DPSCS had a meeting with the Union. She said that the Union had concerns that there are eligible individuals within the general population that could receive GED or high school diploma services, however, Labor only had the ability (based on resources and staffing) to service those individuals that had SPED needs.
 - She said that one potential solution could be to outsource the GED and highschool diploma programming for these individuals to BCCC if Labor does not have the staff and resources to accommodate them.
 - **Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen requested that at the next meeting, Danielle provides the Council with any updates on if and when BCCC would be able to take this on.**

Updates on DPSCS Tablets Supporting an Education Platform

- Ms.Cox explained that DPSCS has recently been in conversation with their current tablet-vendor and discovered that the vendor already works with an entity that provides an education suite for tablets. Ms. Cox said that the education suite was put on the DPSCS tablets that are kept in the housing units for free. She shared that the suite is a high-quality educational platform that will especially serve to help those incarcerated individuals (IIs) with lower levels of educational proficiency. She added that this platform could also be especially useful to those IIs preparing for a test, or those on a waitlist to get into an educational program.

- There was follow-up discussion regarding the need to differentiate the Labor tablets from the DPSCS tablets.

Updates on Placing Occupational Students in Preferred Jobs on Compound Upon Completion and Recertification

- DPSCS is still talking to case management
 - The current issue of discussion is whether or not IIs with certifications should be paid at the same rate as individuals that do not have those certifications.
- There is a committee within DPSCS that is tasked with looking at, analyzing, and discussing the wages/pay for each and every occupation available to IIs within the facilities. They will work to help determine if wages need to be raised and how to approach rising wages for occupations.

Secretary Scruggs quickly shared that DPSCS had a restructuring and that the Commissioner of Corrections and the Commissioner of Pre-trial will now report directly to Secretary Scruggs instead of reporting to Deputy Secretary Brooks.

Update on Playing the Entrepreneurship Video in Housing Units or on Tablets

- Ms.Cox shared that the Entrepreneurship video has finally been approved on all levels and the vendor has uploaded it onto the tablets for IIs.

Action Items (MD Labor)

Ruschelle Rueben, Director of Correctional Education at MD Labor, provided updates on the action items from the last CEC meeting on March 25, 2024.

Updates on Segregation, Night and Evening School Pilot

- Director Rueben said that at the last meeting there was a request for CE staff to look into whether it would be possible to provide instructional services to IIs on segregation through night/evening school.
 - She said that in looking at the shared budget between Labor and DPSCS and DPSCS' spending plan there is about \$2M available. She said that a large portion of the total \$2M (\$1.1M) goes towards supplementing the contractual staffing in each of the institutions.
 - She went on to break down the cost of segregation teachers continuing education while students are assigned.
 - (15 CE sites) X (1 Segregation Teacher per site) X (6 hrs per day/30hrs a week/ 46 weeks per year) X (\$24.98 standard hourly rate + 9% fringe benefits) = \$37,579.00 for 1 site/yr and \$563,685.00 for all 15 sites/yr
 - Ms.Rueben also broke down the cost of supplies for teachers to continue education while students are assigned to segregation.

- (15 sites) X (\$4,500 for classroom supplies per year/per site + \$8,428 for TABE testing materials per year/per site)= \$12,928.00 per year/per site and \$64,640.00 for all 15 sites per year
- Finally, Ms.Rueben said that the total cost (both supplies and staffing) of implementing night/evening school for those assigned to segregation would amount to around \$628,325.000 per year for all 15 sites per year.
- There was follow up discussion and questions regarding whether it would be possible to lower the total cost of continuing education or individuals on segregation by administering some of the instruction through the tablets rather than in-person with an instructor all the time.
- Ms.Cox also suggested potentially hiring “regional” teachers instead of a teacher for each institution to lower the total cost of implementation.
- **Ms.Rueben said in order to accurately calculate all of the options and the associated costs, she would need to know how many individuals are assigned segregation on average.**
 - **Secretary Scruggs said Ms.Cox will provide that information to Director Reuben and CE staff.**
 - Once provided with that data, Ms.Rueben said that she can put together a more accurate and realistic proposal for staffing/supplies and provide some potential outcomes of providing this instruction to those on segregation.
 - **For the next CEC meeting, Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen requested that Ms.Lander provide data on the number of SPED students in segregation and how much time they missed over the past couple years.**
 - **Ms.Cox will ensure that DPSCS has the authority to allow IIs released from segregation to immediately rejoin classes once their segregation time is up. Currently there is a 6-day waiting period in between the time that a student is released from segregation and the time that they are allowed to re-join educational classes. Ms.Cox will check to make sure that the waiting period is not mandated by statute and will provide an update at the next meeting.**
- **Before the next CEC meeting Labor and DPSCS will work together to establish a more concrete and realistic proposal for continuing education for students on segregation.**

Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen welcomed Amanda Dennison, the new legal counsel for the CEC moving forward.

Updates on the CE FY24 Data Report: CE Staffing Update

- Ms.Rueben said that CE had 26 vacancies at the start of FY 24 and was successful in filling all of those positions. She said that at the end of FY24 there were 5 vacancies that are currently in the process of being filled.

Updates on the Second Chance Hiring Fair

- Dr.Dubose said that in February she informed the Council about a Second Chance Hiring Fair sponsored by MOED, Dr.DuBose and Dr.Barron. She said that there was a great turnout (on February 14, 2024) and it was very successful, with 74 individuals being hired as a direct result of participation in the event.

Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen requested that LABOR and DPSCS discuss the roles, responsibilities and coordination of Reentry Navigators during the next meeting.

- **It was requested that Lloyd Day, Director of Workforce Development at LABOR and Ellen Rappaport, Director of Reentry Services at DPSCS are included in the meeting.**

CE FY24 End of Year Program Highlights(*Patrick Hruz, Patrick Hruz, Katherine Lander, and Dr.Tamara Barron*)

The Correctional Education Coordinators at MD Labor shared some program highlights from CE FY24.

Academic Program:

- Mr.Hruz presented data on academic programming from this fiscal year (FY24). He stated that during FY24 the GED pass rate was 86% (compared to a national pass rate of 75%, and well above the Maryland average GED pass rate).
- He directed the Council to a chart within the powerpoint regarding Measurable Skills Gains (MSGs) and pointed out that the current percentage of MSGs (as of the end of Q3 FY24) is 44%, exceeding the projected average percentage of 35%.
 - He explained that these figures represent the percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving documented academic, technical, or occupational credentials or employment.He added that expects the percentage of MSGs to increase throughout the remainder of FY24.
- Mr.Hruz advanced to a powerpoint slide displaying a chart that shows the increase in GEDs earned by IIs in Maryland from FY22 to FY24.
 - He pointed out that the number of GEDs has increased over time with 171 GEDs being earned by IIs in MD in 2022, 238 being earned in 2023 (18% increase) and 264 earned thus far in FY24 (10% increase from last year). He went on to explain that one

reason why the number of earned GEDs isn't higher is because some schools, namely the biggest school of all of the facilities- MCTC, wasn't able to administer the GED test in the months of April, May, or June due to shutdowns and closures that occurred on scheduled testing days.

- **Deputy Secretary Brooks requested that Mr.Hruz gather and present the dates when the facilities were shut down and the reasoning that was provided so that DPSCS can ensure that they are making every effort possible to support the earning of GEDs in Maryland's correctional facilities.**
 - Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen asked Mr.Hruz how the number of GEDs earned during the years displayed on the chart (FY22-FY24) compared to the number of GEDs earned in pre-pandemic years.
 - Mr.Hruz said that the numbers are still comparatively low to the number of GEDs earned in the years prior to the pandemic.
 - Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen asked what factors have contributed to the decrease in GEDs earned.
 - Mr.Hruz listed off a couple of factors that could be limiting the number of GEDs earned.
 - Seat Capacity
 - Prison Population
 - **Ms.Rueben said that the CE Coordinators will work to analyze the data that they have and provide an overview of the primary limiting factors for the number of GEDs earned behind the fence.**
 - Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen stressed the need to collect data on outcomes such as recidivism rate, employment rates, etc.
 - Ms.Reuben shared that there has recently been some hesitation from MLDS in terms of collecting and sharing data surrounding IIs. She said that MDLS would like Labor and DPSCS to each send their data to them separately so that they can compile it and share the findings. Ms.Rueben added that CE staff currently has some preliminary data but needs more specific and accurate data to be able to draw conclusions and address the limiting factors.
 - Ms.Cox added that she's recently heard from Assistant Secretary Guarino that she and Assistant Secretary Roth have had conversations in response to the

complications with receiving data from MLDS and they have brainstormed alternatives to data sharing through MLDS, such as creating a Data Dashboard to post on the Departments' websites

- Ms. Rueben shared that she recently became aware that LABOR had previously been sharing a data file containing raw and sometimes inaccurate data that is not always representative of the situation with DPSCS. She said that they have a plan in place to continue sharing the same data in a report where the data is more accurate, concise, relevant and organized.
 - Deputy Assistant Secretary Feaster assured DPSCS that the data is nearly finalized and the report will be shared with DPSCS very soon. He said that there was only a 2-week delay to implement the new process of providing a summarized report instead of raw data points.
- **At the next meeting DPSCS and LABOR will provide an update on the progress of data sharing through MLDS.**

Special Education Program:

- Ms. Lander presented two graphs displaying the progress of compliant IEPs over the past year (May 23'-May 24') and shared some conclusions with the Council.
 - The graphs show that there was a 21% increase in compliant Annual IEPs and a 23% increase in Re-evaluation IEPs from May 1, 2023 to May 1, 2024.
 - 79% total compliance rate
 - Ms. Lander said the observed increase is due to the hiring and onboarding of 2 new psychologists (1 full-time, 1 part-time) and the hiring of new SPED program staff (now have no vacancies for SPED) over the last year.
 - Ms. Lander explained some factors that may influence the compliance rate and may explain why the compliance rate isn't at 100%.
 - segregation impacts a scheduled SPED meeting
 - transfers impact scheduled SPED meeting
 - Ms. Lander also shared that 10 students with SPED services earned their GED, and 141 students with an IEP or 504 Plan were served by the SPED department during FY24.

Transition Program:

- Dr.DuBose presented some data in the form of a chart on the transition program. She stated that during FY24, the Transition Program issued 749 Certificates of Completion in various courses and workshops. She added that the number of completions is impressive, especially considering the staffing shortages within the Transition program over the last year.
- She gave a shout out to the 5 instructors and the Reentry Navigators across the State who all contributed and assisted in achieving 749 completions.
 - Dr.Dubose said that there are new allocations for this upcoming year and she is hoping to fill Transition positions (including Transition Specialist) and expand Transition programming.
- Finally, Dr.DuBose said that there are 100 outstanding certifications pending from students in SPED and explained that there are so many outstanding certificates due to the fact that there is no Transition Specialist right now. Dr.DuBose said that she is working with Ms.Lander and other partners to ensure those certifications are completed and delivered to the students.
- **Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen, again, stressed the need to obtain outcomes. He recommended that CE staff compare the outcomes (employment, recidivism etc.) of the 749 individuals who received certificates through the Transition program to those who were released and did not receive transition services.**

Occupational Program:

- Dr.Barron presented data on the number of Occupational certificates from FY21 through FY24 and drew some conclusions for the Council.
 - The CTE Program collaborated with Labor DoIT and DPSCS HQ staff to build new Occupational testing labs and upgrade existing ones- increasing IRC testing for CTE students. (MCIW's lab will go live in FY25).
 - The CTE program worked with various stakeholders to ensure all Construction trades students earned an OSHA 10 credential as part of their training.
 - The CTE program secured approval for CE to count CTE students' asynchronous work towards their training hours (up to 10%), accommodating DPSCS shutdowns.
 - The CTE Program developed pilot programs to offer OSHA 10 training to former CTE graduates in the JSTP Program and expanded this opportunity to other trades.
- Dr.Barron also presented data on the number of Industry Recognized Credentials (IRCs) earned from FY21 through FY24 and drew some conclusions for the Council.
 - Dr.Barron shared that 1,313 IRCs (Core certifications, ASEs, Trades, OSDHA, etc.) were earned by CE students in FY24- setting a new record!
 - Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen requested that Dr.Barron share the number of specific IRCs that were earned.
 - CE successfully increased the online Industry Recognized Credentials (IRC) for II's to help ensure that our graduates are competitive when seeking employment opportunities upon release.

- Dr.Barron thanked Labor CE, DoIT, and DPSCS Technology committee members for working together through the years to make all of these accomplishments possible.
- Finally, Dr.Barron shared that with the Offshore wind grant, CE has purchased top of the line Lincoln Electric Welding Training Simulators for 6 schools (ECIE, MCIH, MCTC, OSTC, RCI, WCI) and is in the process of working with procurement to acquire Heavy Equipment Operator (HEO) Training simulators for those 6 schools as well.

FY24 Inventory Update (Stacey Hoffman)

Deputy Director of Correctional Education, Stacey Hoffman, provided an update on CE inventory for FY24.

- Ms.Hoffman explained that she was charged with tracking down missing inventory (amounting to \$57,000) from the Department. She said that she has worked with the Principals in the families to track down the missing inventory and reported that now there is under \$20,000 in missing inventory and she said that of the missing \$20,000 in inventory a large portion can be attributed to mis-delivery and similar circumstances.

Employment Sub-Committee Updates (Stacey Hoffman)

Deputy Director Stacy Hoffman, presented updates from the Employment Sub-Committee.

- Ms.Hoffman shared that the Employment Sub-Committee has been working on developing a website, <http://newtest.dllr.state.md.us:8080/ce/hire-initiative.shtml>, designed to provide two different resources (1) targeting returning citizens and (2) targeting employers. The website will aim to provide a plethora of resources in one central location to assist returning citizens in reintegrating into society and also support and provide information to employers about the benefits and value in hiring returning citizens.
 - Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen recommended that the SubCommittee have a group of returning citizens navigate the website prior to it going live on Labor’s website to ensure that it makes sense, and it is both helpful and user-friendly.

Data Sub-Committee: Cancellation Report & Discussion (Ruschelle Rueben)

Director of Correctional Education, Ruschelle Rueben, provided an update on the Data SubCommittee.

- Ms.Rueben presented data on the facilities with the highest cancellation rates (*July 1, 2023 - July 1, 2024*):
 - WCI - 55% (cancelled 136 out of 248 days)
 - RCI - 46% (cancelled 115 out of 248 days)
 - MCTC - 40% (cancelled 98 out of 248 days)
 - MCIH - 27% (cancelled 66 out of 248 days)
 - NBCI - 24% (cancelled 59 out of 248 days)
- Ms.Rueben added some context to the cancellation rates by comparing the number of Labor and DPSCS cancellations at the institutions with the highest cancellation rates (*July 1 - May 1*):
 - WCI: DPSCS has 74 shutdowns recorded while Labor has 97
 - RCI: DPSPS data is currently being processed, Labor has 88 shutdowns recorded

- MCTC: DPSCS has 61 shutdowns recorded while Labor has 74
- MCIH: DPSCS has 61 shutdowns recorded while Labor has 62
- NBCI: DPSCS has 44 shutdowns recorded while Labor has 46
- **Both DPSCS and Labor agreed that it is important to prioritize a discussion between the two departments (including the principals from the facilities with the highest cancellations rates) to discuss and determine why the cancellation rates for some institutions are so high and how to address those factors moving forward.**

Concluding Remarks (Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen & Secretary Scruggs)

Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen and Secretary Scruggs both thanked everyone for their attendance and participation and said that they are looking forward to the next meeting in December.

Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen requested a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Jack Weber motioned to adjourn the meeting, Deputy Secretary Brooks seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 12:03 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the CEC will be on Monday, December 2, 2024.