**Correctional Education Council (CEC) Board Meeting Minutes**

**March 25, 2024**

**In Person Meeting & Zoom Webinar**

**Council Members**

Secretary Carolyn J. Scruggs, Co-Chair, Deputy Secretary Jason Perkins-Cohen, Jack Weber, Jennfier 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

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Maryland Department of Labor (Labor) Deputy Secretary, Jason Perkins-Cohen called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m. A quorum was reached.

**Updates from DPSCS (Secretary Carolyn J. Scruggs)**

Secretary Carolyn J. Scruggs provided a welcome and thanks to all in attendance.

**Updates from MD Labor (Deputy Secretary Jason Perkins-Cohen)**

Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen informed everyone that the legislative session is coming to a close in the next couple weeks and shared that the number of correctional education bills being considered by the general assembly reminds him just how important this work is Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen decided to first address agenda items that do not require a Council vote until a quorum was reached

**Data Sub-Committee Updates *(Ruschelle Rueben, Patrick Hruz, and Dr.Tamara Barron)***

Ruschelle Reuben, Director of Correctional Education, welcomed everyone and provided a quick overview of what is to be covered in the Data Sub-Committee update.

***Current Progress***

Mrs. Reuben shared that since the last CEC meeting in December, the Data Sub-Committee has met three times and has made some solid progress towards their goals.

Mrs.Reuben also shared that in working with MLDS, they were able to identify a disconnect between Correctional Education (CE) and the Offender Case Management System (OCMS) and that the CE team and their partners at DPSCS and MLDS are currently working to resolve this issue.

Mrs. Reuben also shared that the Sub-Committee is working diligently to determine the effect of CE programming on recidivism. She went on to say that they have acquired some quality data and that they hope to share some of their findings at the next Council meeting.

Rachel Stevens Parker, Executive Director of the Governor’s Workforce Development Board (GWDB) joined the meeting at 10:17 and a quorum was reached.

Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen shared with the Council that the Secretary of Labor, Portia Wu, is now the Board Chair for MLDS and that MLDS is working on collecting data that could be used to inform and evaluate the outcome of services administered through CE programming.

Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen requested that the Council vote on the minutes from previous CEC meetings as well as make a motion to approve new Council members.

**Approval of New Council Members**

A motion to approve Dr.Sanjay K. Rai, Secretary of Higher Education, as a member of the CEC was made and seconded.

**Approval of Minutes**

A motion to approve the December 7, 2023, minutes as well as the minutes from the special CEC meeting on December 19, 2023, was made and seconded.

**Action Items (Correctional Education Coordinators)**

Katharine Lander, the Special Education (SPED) Coordinator, provided updates on the SPED program and shared progress on action items that came out of the previous CEC meeting.

Under 22 List - Enrollment: SPED

* 1,153 CE Adult Basic Education (ABE) students (as of 1/1/2023)
* Of the 1,153 ABE students, 162 students are 21yrs or younger (14.1% enrolled)
* Of the 162, 64 students have an IEP (39.5 % of ABE students 21yrs or younger)
* Only eligible Incarcerated Individuals (IIs) (per the under 22 list) are reviewed for SPED (390 individuals)

**Labor CE staff and DPSCS staff will meet on April 19, 2024 to discuss the Metropolitan Transition Center (MTC) MOU concerns regarding data sharing.**

Stacey Hoffman, Deputy Director of Correctional Education, provided updates on an action item that came out of the last CE meeting regarding the extension of school hours.

During the last meeting, the Council discussed exploring ways to make correctional education more accessible and reduce the size of the waitlist. During this discussion, Secretary Scruggs suggested the possibility of hiring contractual teachers to educate students on segregation.

Mrs. Hoffman presented a thorough breakdown of the financial costs if they were to hire contractual teachers to educate students while they are on segregation.

Staffing costs (1 teacher per site):

* $37,579 per site per year x 15 sites = $563,685

Supplies/Equipment costs:

* $12,928 for classroom supplies + $8,428 for TABE testing materials = $12,928 (per year/per site) x 15 sites = $64,640.

The total estimated cost for hiring contractual teachers to educate students during their time on segregation (at all 15 institutions) would be approx. $628,325.

**The Council decided to pilot the implementation of segregation educators in 2 of the 15 institutions as that may be a more realistic starting point given budgetary concerns. CE staff will connect with DPSCS staff to look into the specific financial needs for those 2 institutions (WCI and NBCI).**

During the last meeting Secretary Scruggs also asked the CE team to look into the possibility of offering night classes and/or offering classes on the weekend to expand CE access. Ms.Hoffman explored this possibility and provided an update for the Council.

ABE Programming on Evening/Weekends:

Staffing costs (3 contractual teachers per site, 15 sites, 4hrs at $24.98/hr):

* + $1,352,700 for all 15 sites each year

Supplies/Equipment costs:

* + TABE testing materials, TABE software licenses, GED Ready Vouchers, GED tests and additional classroom supplies and materials
  + $452,295 for all 15 sites each year ($30,153 per site/yr)

Occupational Programming on Evening/Weekends:

Mrs .Hoffman and Dr.Barron said that hiring contractual teachers would be very difficult for occupational programming due to certification requirements, grant assurances and security concerns.

Staffing costs:

* + $39,810.24 per teacher per year
  + $1,552,599.36 per year for all 39 occupational teachers

Patrick Hruz, Academic Coordinator for Correctional Education at MD Labor, provided updates on an action item that came out of the last CE meeting regarding tablet requests.

Mr.Hruz shared that CE staff met with Orijin (the tablet vendor) and it was determined that access to the learning management system could not be shared with outside devices per their corporate charter. As a next step, Mr.Hruz posed a question to DPSCS for consideration:

* What could be available on the DPSCS tablets for teachers to interface with and provide virtual assignments?
  + Ms.Cox explained that there is currently no learning management system on the DPSCS tablets and that if they wanted to add one there would be an additional cost. She also mentioned that they are in the last year of their contract for the DPSCS tablets and it could potentially be a point of discussion and consideration with regard to whichever vendor is used next.

Dr.Erica DuBose, Transition Coordinator for Correctional Education at MD Labor, provided updates on an action item that came out of the last CE meeting.

Dr.Dubose shared that they are getting ready to roll out the Entrepreneurship Academy in the Central Region this upcoming fall and that they are currently working to get the new positions posted. She went on to present a video that she created to stimulate II’s interest in the Entrepreneurship Academy.

Secretary Scruggs asked when the video will be shared with DPSCS so that case management can start determining who is eligible for the program.

Mrs.Reuben said that she will discuss this video when she meets with Jen Schmitt and, at the request of Secretary Scruggs, will inquire about the possibility of putting the new Entrepreneurship Academy video on the DPSCS tablets.

Mr.Jack Weber added that he would be happy to support this effort and offered to share his story and experience to engage more II’s in the Entrepreneurship Program.

**Data Sub-Committee Updates cont.*(Ruschelle Rueben, Patrick Hruz, and Dr.Tamara Barron)***

Ms.Reuben, Mr.Hruz and Dr.Barron continued to share updates from the Data Sub-Committee.

Ms.Reuben said that CE staff is in the process of exploring the option to build out the current data dashboard so that data collection and analysis surrounding CE programming is more efficient and user friendly. She said that the system will hopefully be updated and running by the end of the calendar year.

Academic Program:

Mr.Hruz presented data on Academic programming from 2010 to the present and pointed out that enrollment has steadily declined over the years along with the number of GED’s earned . He concluded that program capacity is one of the leading reasons why the number of GED’s earned by IIs is lower than previous years.

The Council discussed several factors that limit the number of enrolled IIs and the number of GEDs earned behind the fence.

Occupational Program:

Dr.Barron presented quarterly data from FY24 on the number of program completions and Industry Recognized Credentials (IRCs) earned in the Occupational program. She said that, currently, CE is 368 completions away from reaching their FY24 goal (of 650) and only 45 IRCs away from their FY 24 goal (of 915).

To understand the outcomes, Dr.Barron did a deeper dive by looking at data on the number of program competitions as well as the median number of contact hours from FY17-FY24. Dr.Barron pointed out that the data shows that the number of completions decrease as the median number of contact hours increases over time.

**Employment Sub Committee Updates *(Stacey Hoffman, Dr.Erica Dubose, Janell Johnson)***

Deputy Director Stacey Hoffman, Transitions Coordinator Dr.Erica Dubose, and Reentry Navigator Janell Johnson presented updates from the Employment Sub-Committee.

Mrs.Hoffman shared that the Employment Sub-Committee has met 4 times since the last meeting and has developed two tracks; (1) providing II’s additional employment resources and information after release, and (2) raising employer awareness about the benefits of hiring returning citizens. Mrs.Hoffman said that the Sub-Committee has come up with a few way to address the two primary goals

Maryland Second Chance Hiring Symposium

Mrs.Johnson in partnership with other reentry navigators, Baltimore city government and the Mayor’s Office for Employment Development (MOED), have put together a symposium for employers to learn more about the benefits of hiring returning citizens at the Enoch Pratt Library Creative Arts Center (*400 Cathedral Street, Baltimore, MD*) on Tuesday April 2nd from 10 AM to 2 PM and will bring together employers, policymakers, community leaders and individuals with lived experience

Second Chance Hiring Fair

Dr.DuBose shared that on February 14, 2024 she partnered with MOED to host a second chance hiring fair that offered employment opportunities, skills training, and supportive services to returning citizens.

**Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen requested that Dr.DuBose follow up with MOED to see if they can determine how many returning citizens secured employment as a result of attending the event.**

Hire me Website

Mrs.Hoffman said that the Sub-Committee decided that it would be extremely helpful to develop a website that (1) serves as a database for all the resources that can help support returning citizens upon release, and (2) brings awareness and provides information to employers about the reentry process, benefits to hiring returning citizens and testimonials from employers that currently employ formerly incarcerated individuals. She said that they are still working to put the website together and are in the process of collecting resources to include but hope to have it up and running soon.

Secretary Scruggs suggested adding a link to the website and resources on the DPSCS tablets to prepare IIs for reentry.

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

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

The next regular meeting of the CEC will be on Monday, June 24, 2024.