

Correctional Education Council (CEC) Board Meeting Minutes
October 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, Dr. Kathleen M. Jordan-D'Ambrisi, Sarah Sheppard, Trish Gordon-McCown, Monica Thomas, Rachael Stephens Parker

Staff and Guests

John Feaster, Katharine Lander, Stacey Hoffman, Stacey Royal, Benjamin Mourad, Patrick Hruz, Dr. Tamara Barron, Dr. Frances Tracey-Mumford, Leza Griffith, Jay Miller, Tracy Queen, Lloyd Day, Peggy Stanford, Casey Tiefenwerth, Brittney Hansen, Mary Keller, Deron Crawford, Janell Johnson, Laura Martin, Ellen Bredt, Shakera Lambert, Francisco Vega, Alyssa Webster, Henry Franklin Jr., Peggy Dall'Acqua, Shea Zwerver, Amy Sines, Robin Conley, Diane Dabbs, Cynthia Blackwell, Lyndsay Silva

Absent

Jennifer Gauthier, Monica Thomas, Trish McCown (Lyndsay Silva attended as a designee)

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

Approval of Minutes

A motion to approve the July 22, 2024 CEC minutes was made and seconded. Business Representative Jack Weber motioned to adopt the minutes and it was seconded by Rachael Parker. The minutes were unanimously approved at 10:03 a.m.

Action Items: Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS)

Frances Tracey-Mumford, representing Danielle Cox, Director of Education at DPSCS, provided updates on action items from the last CEC meeting on July 22, 2024.

Baltimore County Public Schools (BCPC) Programming at Metropolitan Transition Center (MTC): No changes will occur before the next fiscal year. Currently, adult basic education classes are provided to detainees at Pretrial, excluding special education students. This program has been in place since 2023 and will continue through the next fiscal year. A waiting list for participants is managed by the DPSCS case management team.

Student Pay Rate Increases: The topic of student pay rate increases is under review by a committee but has been put on hold for now. No immediate changes are expected.

Data for Segregated Population and Additional Spaces for Teaching: Currently, there's a 6-day waiting period mandate after segregation, though in practice, the delay has often exceeded this period. DPSCS takes

the stance that there should be no mandatory delay for returning to education. Further discussions are planned to address these issues.

180-Day List: The 180 day list has been shared with Labor and is operational.

Data: The memorandum of understanding between DPSCS and the Maryland Longitudinal Data System Center (MLDS) has been completed.

Action Item: For the issues that are currently pending, including the student pay, MTC programming, and the mandatory waiting period following segregation, DPSCS will provide an update if there is any support the CEC can provide in the December meeting.

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.

MLDS Research: MLDS is being utilized to gather outcome data on formerly incarcerated individuals, particularly focusing on labor market and recidivism outcomes. John Feaster explained MLDS' role as a data hub connecting correctional, educational, and wage records. Jason further clarified that MLDS is governed by an independent board and provides research and data analysis for the entire state. Members of the committee were encouraged to ask questions or provide suggestions on any topic of further research interest. Currently, no additional topics were requested.

Revisiting Shutdown Data (Visit to Roxbury Correctional Institute (RCI)): A recent visit to the RCI facility on October 4th revealed significant staffing shortages impacting the ability to keep educational posts open, with safety and security as the primary concerns. The facility's students are housed in one unit, leading to a full shutdown of education when that unit is locked down for events such as searches. Labor made a proposal to distribute students across units to prevent complete school closures during unit lockdowns. The warden appeared to be receptive to this proposal. The facility was also receptive to ideas like scheduling regular "post-collapsed" days to concentrate resources. New academy classes have been introduced by DPSCS to increase hiring and alleviate staff shortages.

Action Item: Labor to coordinate with DPSCS to schedule visits to MCTC and WCI.

Action Item: Labor to provide bulleted summary of RCI visit

Proposal of One School to Pilot Segregation Teacher: The committee proposed gathering baseline data on segregation experiences for both special and general education students before a recommendation of a pilot segregation teacher could be made

Action item: DPSCS to provide segregation data for all students.

Segregation Updates: CE Special Education Coordinator Katharine Lander presented findings on the conditions of segregation environments in each facility, emphasizing the barriers to providing effective education due to restrictive conditions, security policies, and limited space. She highlighted issues such as long stays in segregation for some students, which complicates regular testing and instruction. Facilities differ in the environments they provide, with some students kept in small restrictive booths, limiting the feasibility of conducting educational sessions. Additionally, the lack of

regular GED testing for special education students in segregation hinders progress tracking, as they remain enrolled in GED programs without completing necessary assessments. Jason identified that long stays and a small total number of special ed students sent to segregation may inflate the averages due to outliers.

Action item: Review the median segregation length as opposed to the average segregation length.

At 10:40am at this point in the meeting, Secretary Scruggs disconnected due to technical difficulties and a quorum was lost.

CEC Subcommittee Reporting

Data Subcommittee: Ruschelle provided an update on the sub committee's ongoing projects, emphasizing progress on the MLDS data and introducing a newly developed recidivism dashboard created in collaboration with Jay Miller (DPSCS) and Benjamin Mourad (Labor). This dashboard is designed to analyze recidivism trends, with further insights expected at future meetings.

They introduced an "II Snapshot," aimed at providing a comprehensive overview of the educational journey for incarcerated individuals from sentencing to re-entry. The presentation, led by academic coordinator Patrick Hruz, covered the incarcerated individual's educational pathway from enrollment to GED completion, occupational programs, and reentry services. It detailed the extensive process, including pre and post testing, career interest surveys through O-Net, challenges due to limited seats, and adherence to strict Federal and State requirements. Post-GED opportunities were also outlined, including Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs and transitional courses that help build skills for reentry.

Action Item: Jason suggested refining this educational journey with a possible timeline view to illustrate average durations for each stage. CE will also send a copy of the presentation to the entire committee

Re-Entry Subcommittee:

1. **Job Fairs and Employer Partnerships:** The subcommittee organized a job fair at the Enoch Library, attracting many returning citizens. Plans are underway for another job fair at OSTC in downtown Baltimore. These fairs aim to connect returning citizens with hiring employers and training programs. They also focus on building partnerships between employers and trades programs within correctional facilities, ensuring the skills training provided to inmates matches what is expected and needed in the labor market.
2. **Collaborations with Community Programs:** Partnerships or professional advisory committees (PACs) with organizations such as Vehicles for Change, JumpStart, and Civic Works offer specialized training in areas like automotive, construction, and renewable energy, fostering apprenticeship pathways and skills relevant to current industry standards.
3. **Media Outreach:** A Public Service Announcement (PSA) was developed to promote the skills and motivation of returning citizens, encouraging employers to hire them. The PSA, vetted for content and permissions, is planned for free distribution to media channels, and if

additional grant funding is received, it may be used in paid advertising campaigns. Jason requested that an employer perspective is also added to the PSA such as a quote

Action Item: Inclusion of text quotes/feedback from employers expressing positive experiences. Shae offered to give a quote for the PSA from Flagger Force.

4. **Reentry Navigator and Specialist Roles:** The Department of Labor's reentry navigators and DPSCS's reentry specialists play key roles in supporting returning citizens. Navigators primarily focus on job services outreach and supportive resources, while specialists coordinate comprehensive reentry plans, including housing, mental health services, and employment guidance. These roles overlap in providing continuity of support before and after release.
5. **Future Initiatives:** There is a proposal for individualized employment plans to be created for each inmate to streamline their post-release employment process, alongside continued refinement of collaborative efforts between the Department of Labor and DPSCS to ensure smooth transitions for individuals re-entering society.

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

Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen noted that Secretary Scruggs never returned after a tech issue and thanked everyone for their attendance and participation.

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

Jack Weber motioned to adjourn the meeting, Ruschelle seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 11:48 p.m.

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