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

**June 14, 2021**

**Google Meet & Conference Call**

**Council Members**

Secretary Tiffany Robinson, David McGlone, Secretary Robert Green, Secretary Karen Salmon, Deborah Grinnage-Pulley, Secretary Kelly Schulz, Sarah Sheppard, Secretary James Fielder, Michael DiGiacomo, Kip Kunsman, Michele Savage, Jack Weber, Yariela Kerr-Donovan, Antoine Payne, Jennifer Gauither, and Danielle Cox

**Staff and Guests**

Donna Rojas, Dr. Kathleen White, Jack Cunning, Patrick Hruz, James Rzepkowski, Lloyd Day, Ellen Bredt, Sandy Graham, Natalie Clements, Erin Roth, Grace Kelly, Dylan McDonough, Jack Bentley, Matthew McKinney, Ja’Ken Caston, Cynthia Blackwell, Leann Lorenz, Dr. Richard McCarthy, Nicole Cameron, June Brittingham, Marshel Pollock-Lawrence, Jarah Hall, Tricia Hopkins, Charles Hunt, Leza Griffith, Kari Pompilii, Janell Johnson, Francisco Vega, Angela Keith, Calvin Hawkes, Melissa Murphy, Halle Gordon, Angela Keith, Ashley Sharp, Kenneth Jessup, Tracy Queen, Kenneth Sigman, Andrea King-Wessels

**Absent**

None.

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Maryland Department of Labor (MD Labor) Secretary Tiffany P. Robinson called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. A quorum was reached.

**Welcome**

MD Labor Secretary Robinson welcomed attendees to the meeting and thanked everyone for taking time out of their busy schedules to participate.

**Approval of Minutes**

A motion to approve the March 8, 2021 minutes was made and seconded. The minutes were approved.

**Updates from DPSCS (Secretary Robert Green)**

Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) Secretary Robert Green welcomed the group and shared that DPSCS is being very deliberate in their work. They have 10 COVID-19 cases in the system and a zero percent positivity rate over the last week. DPSCS Assistant Secretary Carolyn Scruggs, has been a champion in supporting the Department as the senior manager of COVID-19 recovery. DPSCS is pleased to welcome teachers back to facilities.

**Updates from MD Labor (David McGlone)**

MD Labor Deputy Secretary David McGlone thanked the group for their hard work and resiliency. Staff stepped up to find creative ways to deliver instruction despite the pandemic, while still prioritizing health protocols. Although there are still challenges, schools are reopening. Of the 19 schools, 16 have students in for instruction.

**Vote on Draft Regulations**

Senate Bill 86, which passed in the 2021 legislative session, will raise the mandatory school requirement for non-exempt inmates from 120 to 240 days (will be implemented on Oct 1st, 2021). Regulations were amended to reflect this change.

The Correctional Education Council (CEC) voted on the amendments. The motion was passed and seconded. The amendments to the 09.37.02 Correctional Institutions Mandatory Educational and Workforce Skills Training Program regulations were approved unanimously.

**Correctional Education Updates**

Danielle Cox, Director of Correctional Education (CE) at MD Labor’s Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL), opened the floor for staff to share CE updates concerning staff vacancies, GED numbers, Career and Technical Education (CTE), and transitional programming.

**Staff Vacancies (Dr. Jack Cunning)**

* Jack Cunning, Field Director of CE at MD Labor’s DWDAL, reported on the current CE vacancies.
* The following positions were filled since the March CEC meeting:
  + Librarian at Maryland Correctional Institution Hagerstown (MCI-H);
  + Librarian at Roxbury Correctional Institution (RCI);
  + Barbering Instructor at Occupational Skills Training Center (OSTC);
  + Associate Librarian at Maryland Correctional Training Center (MCTC);
  + Adult Basic Education (ABE) Teacher at RCI;
  + Special Education Teacher at Western Correctional Institution (WCI);
  + Librarian at Eastern Correctional Institution West (ECI-West);
  + ABE Teacher at Jessup Correctional Institution (JCI);
  + Special Education Teacher at JCI;
  + Plumbing Instructor at MCTC;
  + Computer Technology Instructor at MCI-H;
  + ABE Teacher at JCI; and
  + ABE Teacher at ECI-West.
* The following positions are waiting for DPSCS background checks:
  + Principal at Maryland Correctional Institution for Women (MCI-W); and
  + ABE Teacher at MCTC.
* The following positions are posted at the present time:
  + Warehousing Instructor at OSTC;
  + ABE Teacher at Patuxent (PATX); and,
  + Plumbing Instructor at WCI.
* The following position is waiting for the Department of Budget Management (DBM) for reclassification to post:
  + School Psychologist at Headquarters.
* The following positions are waiting on the approval for release by DBM:
  + Electrical Instructor at MCTC; and,
  + Special Education Teacher at Maryland Correctional Institution Jessup (MCI-J).
* There are currently six vacant positions in CE, and two more are anticipated come July 1st, 2021.

**Transitional Updates (Dr. Erica DuBose)**

* Dr. Erica DuBose, Transition Coordinator for CE at MD Labor’s DWDAL, reported on transitional updates.
* Teachers are receiving the last of the orders placed for instructional materials purchased with the Neglected & Delinquent grant.
* CE continues to work with DPSCS staff on technology needs and toward a solution for students’ needs, such as access to websites like the Maryland Workforce Exchange and 211. Space has been identified for additional computers and technology upgrades.
* Dr. DuBose continues to work with Greater Baltimore Urban League to pilot their training program. Over three years, the program will serve 300 citizens from Baltimore City, and Baltimore, Frederick, and Montgomery Counties.
* The CE Transition program lost several teachers over the past year and Dr. DuBose has been working with the community colleges to ensure that vacancies are posted and job descriptions are updated. Interviews are being conducted to fill vacancies across the state.
* Collectively, CE is working to ensure that each student has an opportunity to complete an O\*NET assessment as a part of their educational experience. O\*NETs are no longer limited to transition students, but are now a key component of students' Student Career and Learning Plan (SCALP).
* The CE Transition program is working with Director of Workforce Development Lloyd Day and his team to develop a schedule for the Reentry Navigators to return to the classrooms to meet with transition students. They will be phased back in around September.
* Dr. DuBose continues to work with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) as a member of the Transition Assessment workgroup. This group is assembling information that will benefit both the under 21 students and transition population across the state and is identifying and implementing new resources that will be beneficial to students.

**Academic Updates (Patrick Hruz)**

* Patrick Hruz, Academic Coordinator of CE at MD Labor’s DWDAL, reported on academic updates.
* The request for proposal (RFP) for inmate tablets is on the agenda for the July 7, 2021 Board of Public Works meeting for approval.
* All CE principals, teachers, librarians, administrative support, GED Examiners, Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) Testers, and all other staff members are back to school and hard at work. Due to COVID-19 restrictions and social distancing, class sizes are still limited, so schools have created a schedule that rotates students into the school for face-to-face instruction. On the days students are not physically in the classroom, asynchronous learning takes place in the housing units through the use of learning packets. Most schools have moved forward with face-to-face instruction with the exception of PATX, ECI-East, and ECI-West.
* Schools are focused on TABE post-testing as the fiscal year (FY) closes and CE must meet post-testing requirements. All schools have either started post-testing or have post-testing scheduled for the upcoming weeks. Post-testing will take place in all of the schools.
* CE was selected by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) to participate in a technical assistance (TA) initiative from spring 2021 to spring 2022. The purpose of the initiative is to help correctional education programs develop and implement Integrated Education and Training (IET) programs. IET is a service approach that provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement. MD Labor will be developing IET programs in both MCTC and MCI-West.
* Staff have been participating in professional development (PD) including:
  + Coalition On Adult Basic Education (COABE)’s Virtual Conference in March;
  + A full day of PD activities in April consisting of:
    - Unpacking the proposed draft of the Maryland CE’s Instructional Framework for Teaching and Learning;
    - “Understanding Racial Disparities in Baltimore: A Framework for Empathy;” and
    - Student Learning Styles and Instructional Adaptations;
  + Maryland Association for Adult Community and Continuing Education (MACCEE) Conference in May.

**Special Education (Kathrine Lander)**

* There were 50 Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings held virtually since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.
* Psychology and speech pathology services will be conducted.
* FY 2022 grants will fund related service providers (including psychology & speech pathology)
  + A Data Manager and Program Manager will be hired.
  + Study buddies for math and English will be purchased.

**Career and Technical Education (CTE) Updates (Dr. Tamara Barron)**

* Dr. Tamara Barron, Occupational Coordinator for CE at MD Labor’s DWDAL, reported on CTE updates.
* Dr. Barron was absent due to her involvement in a week-long re-accreditation process with the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) to maintain CE’s national accreditation for construction trades training programs.
* All of CE’s CTE classes are back up and running; however, they are operating under limited capacity due to COVID-19 restrictions.
* Teachers and principals are working to test and finalize training for students that still remain in institutions and are very close to completing their training programs. A number of student trainees were released during COVID-19 and any completed modules are entered into the appropriate system so that students receive credit for training completed at the time of their release.
* CTE teachers are eagerly awaiting the delivery of TV and DVD players (acquired through the Perkins grant), as well as new laptops (acquired through Labor Wish List funds).
* Perkins FY 2021 grant funds were fully exhausted and Dr. Barron is working with the Finance Department to reconcile the budget and to prepare the end of year report for FY 2021.
* CE received the FY 2022 allotment for Adult CE in the amount of $295,817 to support CTE training programs behind the fence. This includes a one-time increase of $80,734 above FY 2021’s award of $215,083. These funds will support new teacher training, the upgrading of training equipment, the acquisition of instructional materials, and participation in PD opportunities.
* For FY 2022, CE will continue to expand national certification opportunities for students, update training equipment when possible, enhance training opportunities for both staff and students, and work towards strengthening on-the-job training experiences behind the fence. Teachers continue to participate in training so that they are prepared to implement national certification testing.
* MD Labor CE staff continue to work with Dr. Kathleen White, as well as the DPSCS IT Team, to upgrade technology behind the fence, ensuring that national certification testing can be facilitated through a secure internet connection. CE principals have worked with MD Labor Headquarters to identify secure locations for testing centers/pods within each institution. CE will begin piloting national certification testing at OSTC by July 1, 2021, and will subsequently expand to other institutions based on the prioritized list. All third party certification vendors will offer online testing administration only effective August 1, 2021.
* The Joint Skills Training Program (JSTP) continues to run successfully despite COVID-19 limitations.
* In April, the CTE and Transition team hosted PD for teachers. Teachers appreciated the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues across the state and enjoyed sharing new ideas and best practices.

**Correctional Education System Update (Danielle Cox)**

* Danielle Cox, Director of CE for MD Labor’s DWDAL did not have any specific CE system updates.

**Regional Principal Updates**

Danielle Cox opened the floor for regional principals to provide updates. The CEC features different principals each meeting to share updates from their facilities.

**Libraries (June Brittingham)**

* Four new librarians were hired, so CE facility libraries are now fully staffed. There are meetings to introduce all the librarians, as well as trainings.
* Work is being done to update the library policy manual.
* Librarians continue to provide legal reference services, as well as assist teachers by sending packets and returning work.
* Extra LEXISNEXIS is going to certain facilities, and they are looking to purchase four new subscriptions.
* The JCI library worked with nonprofit, Unprison Project, which provides free eyeglasses. They are looking to expand this to other facilities.

**Western Region (Jack Bentley)**

* Jack Bentley, Principal in the Western Region, reported updates for the Western Region.
* Occupational classes have begun again.
* Currently the region is focused on post testing and finishing FY 2021.
* Students are completing and passing GED tests.
* Teachers continue to give work even when there is not face to face instruction.
* The Western region will begin pretesting in August.

**Central Region (Dr. Ja’Ken Caston)**

* Dr. Ja’Ken Caston, Principal in the Central Region, reported updates for the Central Region.
* Maryland Correctional Institute Jessup (MCIJ) has been open since June 1st, though they are having some issues with GED testing.
* Dorsey Run Correctional Facility’s GED lab is functioning and eight men are ready to test.
* OSTC and Baltimore City Correctional Center (BCCC) will have new programs and classes in July 2021 including, Barbering, Flagging, GED tutoring, and construction math.
* Central Maryland Correctional Facility (CMCF) has its education up and running. Testing is completed. The library is being moved.
* JCI has resumed correctional education with social distancing guidelines. School for MCIW has resumed as well.

**Eastern Region (Melissa Murphy)**

* Melissa Murphy, Principal in the Eastern Region, reported updates for the Eastern Region.
* ECI- East and ECI-W are working to fill roles such as Employment Readiness Workshop (ERW) teacher and GED Tester.
* There is no in-person instruction yet, but ECI-East has been using videos.
* TABE testing is almost complete.
* All staff have completed the mandatory DPSCS training for 2020 and are working on the training for 2021.

A conversation about getting inmates back in libraries ensued. DPSCS will talk to the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) about opening according to MDH and Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines.

**Navigator Updates (Marshel Pollock-Lawrence, James Grossman, Ellen Bredt, Sandy Graham, and Jarah Hall)**

* Reentry Navigators Marshel Pollock-Lawrence (Baltimore City), James Grossman (Western Maryland), Ellen Bredt (Anne Arundel), Sandy Graham (Prince George’s County), and Jarah Hall (Lower Shore) reported on updates and progress.
* Marshel Pollock Lawrence is talking to approximately nine clients (and their families) a week. Many families need assistance. Approximately three to four clients are hired a week in landscaping, warehousing, etc. These individuals have all been passing their drug tests. Clients are having ongoing issues with IDs, drivers licenses, and birth certificates.
* James Grossman continues to work with employers and local job fairs.
* Ellen Bredt has 30 new customer contacts, half of which are in her county and half of which are in other counties. She has clients from home detention and has held three virtual meetings in prisons. Bredt met with approximately 30 clients, 24 of which have been confirmed employed. She refers clients to Job Centers, Anne Arundel’s Community Action Agency, and more. Some major employer partners are Canada Dry, Goodwill, McDonalds, Landscaping, etc. Bredt continues to support women at MCIW in the peer recovery program as they transition to jobs.
* One challenge: Individuals released before completing the barbering program struggle to find free training in the community, due to constraints on use of WIOA funds in Anne Arundel county.
* Bredt is active in her community, presenting at Chamber of Commerce meetings, meeting with potential employers such as the Anne Arundel police, and more.
* Sandy Graham assisted 29 clients, most of whom do not have IDs. She helped three individuals access employment and is working to expand apprenticeship opportunities. Many clients cannot find jobs because they are returning citizens and are looking to entrepreneurship as a path.
* Jarah Hall assisted 19 new clients and 11 have found employment. She continues to send monthly letters to inmates and connect with businesses. She stays well connected with community and business services partners.

A few items that came out of the Reentry Navigator report outs include:

* Considering transportation options within returning citizen’s first 30-60 days. Are there opportunities for free bus passes, travel funds, ride sharing, etc?
  + Erica DuBose will look into transportation & Uber business fleet options (what other states are doing with Uber, Lyft, etc.), as well as contact the companies directly. Then MD Labor DWDAL Assistant Secretary James Rzepkowski and/or MD Labor DWDAL Deputy Assistant Secretary Erin Roth may want to message information to the 13 local workforce directors in case the American Rescue Plan Act money could support a project like this.
* DPSCS Secretary Green and MD Labor Secretary Robinson will check with MDH Secretary Shrader to see what can be done to enhance support to returning citizens on vital record access.
* Ellen Bredt, Yariella Kerr-Donovan, and MD Labor Special Grants Administrator Mary Keller will explore whether partnership with the Baltimore Alliance for Careers in Healthcare (BACH) could be established to support the Certified Peer Recovery Specialist (CPRS) students who were released and did not finish their on-the-job training hours in picking up where they left off.
* The idea of holding a Reentry Summit.
* Danielle Cox and Tamara Barron will capture the gap in the Barber/Stylist program that's inhibiting returning citizens from getting jobs in the field and see what can be done about it

**Community Partner Updates (Prince George’s County Council Chair, Calvin S. Hawkins)**

* Prince George’s County Council Chair, Calvin S. Hawkins attended the meeting as a special guest.
* Council Chair Hawkins shared a bit of his story and connection to reentry work, as a former inmate having served 5 years.
* A list is being raised to the county council, with over 50 recommendations - many of which are around reentry: continuing education and workforce development, transition, virtual capabilities in facilities, etc.

**Employer Engagement Committee Updates (Jack Weber)**

* Considerations that were brought forth in the employer engagement update include:
  + Internet connectivity is key because of testing and certification;
  + Hosting active employment fairs in institutions;
  + Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) built a facility in Baltimore and is offering scholarships to apprentices;
  + Many employers in roofing are hiring right now; and
  + The idea of adding a returning citizen to the council.

**Concluding Remarks**

Secretary Robinson thanked the group for an informative meeting. She shared that the Department is “open for business” starting in July. The search for work requirement is back and Centers are opening up. The meeting adjourned.

The next meeting of the CEC will be on Monday, September 13, 2021.

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