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

**December 13, 2021**

**Google Meet & Conference Call**

**Council Members**

Secretary Tiffany Robinson, Secretary Robert Green, Jack Weber, Danielle Cox, Yariela Kerr-Donovan, Deborah Grinnage-Pulley, Secretary James Fielder, Antoine Payne, Michele Savage, Michael DiGiacomo, Sarah Sheppard

**Staff and Guests**

Kenneth Jessup, Kimberly Stewart, Janell Johnson, Jamaal Ferguson, Andre James, Charles Hunt, Dylan M. McDonough, Ellen Bredt, Ellie Marts, Dr. Erica DuBose, Francisco J. Vega, June C. Brittingham, Laura Martin, Leza Griffith, Lonnie Lewis, Marshel M. Lawrence, Matthew McKinney, Peggy Stanford, Dr. Ri-chard McCarthy, Tracy D. Queen, Dowan Reaves, Samuel Adams, Dr. Jack Cunning, Patrick Hruz, James E. Rzepkowski, Erin Roth, Leza Griffith, Katherine Lander, Dr. Tamara Barron

**Absent**

Jennifer Gauthier, David McGlone

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Maryland Department of Labor (MD Labor) Secretary Tiffany P. Robinson called the meeting to order at 10:03 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.

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

Secretary Robert Green welcomed all attendees and thanked them for coming together for this meeting. Secretary Green updated the attendees on the current Covid-19 protocol and steps being taken to vaccinate and treat incarcerated individuals and staff. He noted that the positivity rate amongst incarcerated individuals remains lower than the public rates due to the fact that it is a closed system and encouraged the exercise of caution moving forward with the recent surges in Covid-19 cases. Secretary Green also took the time to thank MD Labor for their work in making a tablet application possible without the loss of grant funds.

**Updates from Secretary Robinson**

Secretary Robinson thanked Secretary Green and the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) for their partnership on the tablet program. She also announced that MD Labor has just received a $326,500 grant from the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention Youth and Victim Services for additional tablets from APDS, many of which are going to be dedicated to transitional education classrooms. Secretary Robinson thanked everyone who contributed to the application and stated that she will be at the Board of Public Works in January to modify the contract to add those tablets. She also announced that MD Labor is working with partners such as labor unions and training providers on a new federal grant application for $25 million to make Maryland the premier training destination on the mid-Atlantic coast for offshore wind, and if the grant is received she projects that jobs, targeted at returning citizens, will become available starting in 2024. Finally, Secretary Robinson shared that 7 new reentry navigators are being recruited for Howard, Carroll, Baltimore County, Southern Maryland, Upper Shore, Montgomery, and Susquehanna so that every Local Area in Maryland will have access to a reentry navigator.

**Approval of Minutes**

A motion to approve the September 13, 2021, minutes was made and seconded. Secretary Robert Green motioned to adopt it, and it was seconded by Jack Weber. The minutes were approved at 10:11 a.m.

**Approval of 2022 Meeting Dates**

Danielle Cox announced the official Correctional Education Council meeting dates for 2022 including March 14th, June 13th, September 12th, and December 12th. Jack Weber motioned to approve the dates as presented and it was seconded by Secretary Robert Green. The meeting dates were voted on by the council and approved at 10:13 a.m. with no opposition. Whether or not the meetings will take place in an in-person, virtual, or hybrid setting will be decided on at a later date.

**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, Special Education, Career and Technical Education (CTE), and transitional programming.

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

Jack Cunning, Field Director of CE at MD Labor’s DWDAL

* The following position have been filled since the last CEC meeting on September 13:
  + Special Education teacher at Maryland Correctional Institute- Jessup (MCI-J)
  + Adult Basic Education (ABE) teacher at Maryland Correctional Training Center (MCTC)
  + Office Technology Instructor (OTI) at Maryland Correctional Institution- Hagerstown (MCI-H)
  + ABE teacher Eastern Correctional Institute West
  + ABE teacher Western Correctional Institution (WCI)
  + Office Technology Instructor at MCT-J
  + Plumbing Instructor at WCI
* The following positions have candidates identified and are waiting for DPSCS background checks to be completed:
  + ABE teacher at Patuxent (interview was held December 3rd)
* The following positions are posted at the present time:
  + Warehousing Instructor at Occupational Skills Training Center
  + School Psychologist at Headquarters
  + Electrical Instructor at MCTC
  + Special Education teacher at Jessup Correctional Institution
  + Special Education teacher at Maryland Correctional Training Center
  + Graphic arts instructor at Western Correctional Institution
  + Librarian at Maryland Correctional Institution- Jessup
  + Principal at Maryland Correctional Institution- Hagerstown
  + Office Secretary 3 position at Roxbury Correctional Institution
* There are a total of 9 vacant positions at the present time.

**Academic Updates (Patrick Hruz)**

Patrick Hruz, Academic Coordinator of Correctional Education at MD Labor’s DWDAL,

reported on academic updates.

* The tablet program has been successfully rolled out to the first group which includes 8 schools. The rollout included:
  + A full day of training for the principals and teachers using the tablets conducted via Google Meets by American Prison Data Systems (APDS).
  + An additional half day of in-person training once the tablets were delivered to allow for individuals to navigate the tablets in hand.
  + Schools have received the updated Student User Agreement, Daily Sign Out Log, and the Implementation and Usage Guidelines.
  + Schools in Group 1 have their allocated seat licenses for the various tablet programs and have either begun or completed this set up of student accounts.
  + Classroom use is beginning for Group 1.
* Integrated Education and Training (IET) Pilot Program Updates:
  + The IET program at MCTC Hill partnered Hagerstown Community College is wrapping up the semester this week and will resume in January.
    - They will offer 2 courses in addition to the GED preparation course as part of the IET program.
    - Patrick Hruz also shared a number of highlights from the program including:
      * 8 students earned forklift certifications in early November,
      * A reentry navigator James Grossman visited in late November, and
      * A mock interview workshop is planned for January 25, 2022.
  + MCIW Hospitality IET will begin December 14, 2022.
* Academic Progress Data
  + As of today, December 13, 2022, 73 students have earned their GED despite the limited access to students and face to face instruction due to complications presented by the pandemic.
  + The correctional education pass rate for the GED rests at 72% which is 3% higher than the National Average of 69%.
  + 12% of students scored within the college-ready range and 4% of students scored within the college credit range.
  + ECIE, MCIJ, WCI, Dorsey Run, and Patuxent all have GED pass rates above 80%.

**Special Education (Kathrine Lander)**

Katherine Lander, Special Education Coordinator CE at MD Labor’s DWDAL, reported on Special Education updates.

* The pay has been increased for the part time psychologist at Anne Arundel County Community College, and they are holding an interview for a second position this week.
* The Study Buddy devices (hand held devices with cartridges that provide complimentary classroom instruction, explanations, and quizzes primarily for Math and ELA) have been purchased for two schools: In the upcoming month, they will be purchased to serve students statewide, who are performing on the Lowest TABE level.
* Katherine Lander thanked the MTC CE and DPSCS team for their efforts in holding evening IEP meetings which modeled how these evening IEP meetings can be implemented in other facilities in the upcoming year.
* Katherine Lander attended the Maryland Assessment Group (MAG) Conference in Ocean City in November where they held sessions on Social Emotional Learning and Root Cause analysis.
* In February 2022, Katherine Lander will be holding an intensive 2-day professional development for the state's special educators. The purpose of this training is to build unity, review announcements by MSDE, allow them to present PowerPoints they designed during the pandemic, and bring in guest speakers on topics the special educators can relate to.

**Occupational Updates (Dr. Tamara Barron)**

Dr. Tamara Barron, Occupational Coordinator for CE at MD Labor’s DWDAL, reported on Career and Technology Education (CTE) updates.

* FY21 Updates:
  + Correctional Education’s CTE classes continue to run following ongoing COVID safety protocols. They are very excited to continue to be up and running!
  + All CTE teachers have received their TVs and DVD players (acquired through the Perkins grant) to support instruction. Previously the DVD players were on backorder per the vendor.
  + CE staff are working with DoIT to provide the new laptops that were purchased for CTE teachers (that were acquired through the MD Labor Wish List funds). These will also support instruction.
  + CE’s CTE Programs received special Perkins funding awarded to state institution facilities in the amount of $50,000 from MSDE. These were leftover funds from Juvenile Services (as they transition to the Department of Juvenile Services) and will be used to support the upgrade of servers, technology adapters, new software licenses, and equipment that needed to be replaced across all of the CTE training Programs with the exception of the CPRS Program.
  + The CTE team is excited to be a part of the IET project as already mentioned by the Academic Coordinator:
    - Location # 1: MCIW: Academics and Hospitality and
    - Location #2: MCTC/The Hill: Academics and HCC: Certified Production Tech.
* Perkins Grant Updates:
  + Teachers & principals are working on spending Perkins FY22 grant funds on instructional materials and tools & equipment.
* National Certification Updates:
  + For FY 22, Correctional Education will continue the expansion of 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.
  + CTE teachers and Lead Teachers are working on registering construction trades online testing administration which is over half of CE’s training programs. They are working on familiarizing themselves with the Registry and Testing systems.
  + MD Labor Correctional Education staff (Dr. Barron, Dr. DuBose, Danielle Cox, Jim Boden, and principals) continue to work with the DPSCS IT Team to facilitate online testing for national certification.
  + Currently, only OSTC is able to test online and with one student at a time. That requires the DPSCS HQ Firewall Team to open the testing sites behind the scenes.
  + MD Labor HQ staff and DPSCS IT Leadership met on Friday, December 10, 2021 and DPSCS IT reported that they are waiting on a new Firewall System to be purchased.
* Additional Updates:
  + The JSTP Program (on-the-job-training) continues to operate despite COVID limitations.
  + Dr. Barron is working with Dr. DuBose to plan professional development for the Spring of FY22.
  + The joint Cemetery Restoration (P.R.I.N.C.E.) Project team has met several times since our last convening to discuss ways to convert the cemetery restoration project into a pilot training program for pre-release eligible incarcerated individuals.
  + MD Labor staff has developed a sample budget, a recruitment flyer, and a course outline to assist with further preparation.
  + MD Labor staff is also collaborating with Kimberly Stewart, DPSCS HQ – Programs, Treatment & ReEntry Services and Captain Evans (Work Release), to iron out the proposed details for the pilot to take place at the Hill (Pre-Release) in Hagerstown, MD.
  + At the next CEC Meeting the Division of Occupational and Professional Licensing is planning to share more details regarding the program goals and objectives as well the timeline.
  + Various Correctional Education staff members will be participating in the upcoming DPSCS ReEntry Fair at BCCC on Thursday, December 16, 2021.
  + Finally, Dr. Barron has submitted a brief budget proposal to purchase new training equipment (construction related training simulators, Heavy Trucks/Diesel Equipment Trainers and CDL Licensure prep simulators) to be included in the EDA Good Jobs Challenge Grant. Deputy Assistant Secretary Erin Roth will be able to share more information regarding the grant and proposed project.

**Federal Grant Updates (Erin Roth)**

Erin Roth, Deputy Assistant Secretary for MD Labor’s DWDAL reported on the new “Good Jobs Challenge” federal grant.

* In 2024-2026 the new offshore wind industry in Maryland will create thousands of jobs and the Maryland workforce system has taken it upon themselves to ensure that individuals are trained in these desired skills now.
* The offshore wind industry will be primarily interested in employing mid to high skilled workers manufacturing, transportation, logistics, etc.
* There is an opportunity to work with returning citizens that are already enrolled in our skilled trades pre-apprenticeship programs to help them develop the entry level skills now so that when they are released they can compete for high-paying jobs in the industry.
* The Baltimore Area Tradepoint Atlantic as well as the Eastern Shore (primarily Ocean City) will be a major hub for job opportunities in the near future.
* Maryland DWDAL is looking to apply for a bold federal grant opportunity from the US Department of Commerce known as the Good Job Challenge.
* Erin Roth requested a formal motion to approve drafting a letter of support from the Correctional Education Council.
* Secretary Robinson motioned to approve the drafting of a formal letter of support from the Correctional Education Council for the Good Job Challenge grant. Secretary Green seconded this motion of approval.

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

* Dr. Erica DuBose, Transition Coordinator of CE at MD Labor’s DWDAL, reported on transition updates.
* Students and Certificates: All Correctional Education’s Transition classes are up and running under a limited capacity due to Covid-19 safety protocols. There is a current class average of between 5-10 students and as of October 30, 2021, 209 certificates have been earned for FY22. This is a marked improvement from this time last year. Dr. DuBose thanked the principals and teachers for moving these students towards completion.
* Technology: CE continues to work with DPSCS staff on technology needs and upgrades. Currently, the computers that are needed are not all up and running; however, CE is hopeful that DPSCS will continue to work towards a resolution to ensure that our returning citizens have access they need to vital sites such as the Maryland Workforce Exchange (MWE) and 211.
* Vacancies: The transition department has filled two vacancies since the last quarterly meeting on September 13, 2021, one position being located in the central region and the other in the eastern region. Those teachers have completed the onboarding process and are actively teaching transition courses.
* Navigators: The CE Transition Program would like to thank the Navigators as they continue to do phenomenal work on behalf of Maryland’s returning citizens. They have been in the facilities meeting with students as they are preparing for release.
* Professional Development: Dr. Barron and Dr. DuBose are working together with the new Professional Development Support person, Marnetta Sanders, to plan professional development sessions for FY22.
* MCE Cares Partnership: The CE Transition Program met with Ashley Lohr and her team to partner with MCE Cares to allow MCE workers to take parenting classes with our transition students. They will be integrated into upcoming classes to collaborate on parenting and relationship building for MCE workers at MCIW. The first group of students will begin in January.
* Curriculum Updates: The CE Transition Program is currently Updating the Intro to Computers and Keyboarding Syllabus and are in the final editing and proofing stages. The program plans to have it uploaded in the next few weeks. This will be the last update on this curriculum until classrooms are outfitted with the next Windows OS.
* At the last meeting, representatives from Enoch Pratt Free Libraries and Baltimore County Public Library provided information about the entrepreneurship class that the CE Transition program will be partnering with them to offer. Dr. DuBose completed the audit of the class in November, the process of taking their curriculum and editing it for our Transition Students has begun. They are planning for a February 2022 introduction into several pre-release classes.
* Spending: The CE Transition program is continuing to spend down funds and each school has completed ordering materials for FY22 Dr. DuBose thanked the principals for being diligent in adhering to the timeline to getting everything ordered and delivered to the institutions.
* CEC Meetings: Dr. DuBose announced that she is constantly looking out for innovative programs that can benefit the students in the CE transition program and encouraged individuals to reach out if they know of an organization that works with returning citizens and would like to see them highlighted during one of the CEC meetings.

**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.

**Western Region (Peggy Stanford)**

* MCTC is back to classes 5 day a week.
* 11 students have received their GEDs.
* MCIH has a new acting principal, Ms. Martin.
* 2 students at RCI have received their GED; however, this institution is short staffed resulting in a struggle to hold classes and programs.

**Central Region (Edward Schwabeland)**

* The number of tablets available to students and staff at JCI has increased from 13 to 33.
* JCI has also hired a new TAPE tester and has interviewed for a full time special education teacher position.
* The Baltimore city flagging program started at OTC in July of 2022. Pre-release facilities at MCIW are currently trying to implement a flagging program similar to that at OSTC.
* Since the start of the school year:
  + BCCC has graduated 19 students of various trades.
  + 21 students earned their national certification.
  + 51 students earned their flagging certification.
* Reentry navigator, Ellen Bredt, visits Baltimore city prisons monthly to provide assistance with reentry.
* The AVC apprenticeship program visited the students at OSTC in November.
* OSTC selected a candidate for Employment Readiness Workshop instructor and Transition Specialist position and is just waiting on a background check and start date.
* Dr. McCarthy of MCIW reported that it has been a great start to the school year with most classes filled to capacity.
* MCIW is currently recruiting for a TAPE tester and barbering and stylist instructor.
* highlights include:
  + 14 GEDs as a total system,
  + 31 Adult skill certifications, and
  + 51 transition certifications.

**Eastern Region and Library Updates (June Brittingham)**

* 7 GEDs have been received from ECIE and ECIW.
* Jim Boden visited to update computers and the CE database.
* Reentry navigator, Jarah Hall, has accepted a new position; however, they have connected every inmate that is scheduled to be released between now and February with a resource at an AJC.
* Students have received 5 ECL certificates in the month of November.
* ECI and Salisbury University have partnered together to compete in mock Ethics bowls.
* There is one vacancy at MCIJ and 2 librarians from other locations have been stepping in to temporarily fill that vacancy while the position is being filled.
* The American Librarian Association has identified John Mahofski, the librarian at ECI-E as their Librarian of the Year.

**Community Partner Updates**

Marshel Pollock-Lawrence introduced Mr. Jamaal Ferguson, the lead veteran employment resident with Eastern Seals.

* Mr. Ferguson joined Eastern Seals in 2018 and since then has dedicated over 900 hours to improving the lives of individuals in need of employment services.
* He has worked with the DPSCS intensely over the past year and a half helping returning citizens classified as veterans with housing and paths towards employment upon release from incarceration.
* Eastern Seals has been around for over 100 years and although they traditionally worked with disabled youth and senior populations the focus has shifted in recent years to providing assistance for veterans and returning citizens.
* Mr. Ferguson joined the meeting to present on the Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program (HVRP) which serves individuals that meet the following criteria:
  + Have had at least one day of active military service and have been discharged (excluding those individuals with dishonorable discharges) and
  + Meet the criteria for homelessness.
* The HVRP program provides funding for training opportunities and employment services such as resume building, preparing individuals for interviews and assisting in job searches.
* Following a participant’s employment the HVRP program also offers assistance with transportation and providing required tools and equipment.
* Once an individual is identified through an indirect customer referral system as an eligible participant a detailed interview is conducted to discuss the client's expectations upon release from incarceration and develop a plan for the future to accomplish those goals.
* Mr. Ferguson has worked with 25 returning citizens that qualify as homeless veterans that have received appropriate housing and are in good standing with parole and probation officers.
  + For 13 of these individuals, the HVRP is also providing funding for training in areas such as CDL driving, phlebotomy, IT and more.
  + 12 of these individuals have been directly employed.

**Navigator Updates (Marshel Pollock-Lawrence, Ellen Bredt, and Jarah Hall)**

Reentry Navigators Marshel Pollock-Lawrence (Baltimore City), and Ellen Bredt (Anne Arundel) reported on updates and progress.

* Marshall Pollock-Lawrence reported that 7 of the returning citizens that she has worked with have secured employment.
* Many returning citizens are interested in entrepreneurship and Ms.Pollock- Lawrence was welcomed as a board member for the Returning Citizens Interested in Entrepreneurial Ventures program at Morgan State University. To participate in this program individuals must meet the following criteria:
  + must be over the age of 18,
  + have access to reliable internet, and
  + must be committed to starting an independent business.
* She attended an entrepreneurship online class on December 13-14.
* Marshel has also been working with the No Struggle No Success program which is a 3-week program that assists individuals with developing a business idea, developing a business ethic, and drafting a business plan.
* There are 6 clients that have recently been released and are interested in pursuing some type of entrepreneurship.
  + Of these 6 individuals Ms. Pollock- Lawrence has sent 3 of them to the Returning Citizens Interested in Entrepreneurial Ventures program at Morgan State University, and the other 3 have been connected with the No Struggle No Success program.
* She is also working with a former returning citizen who was released from incarceration 12 years ago and now owns a chain of barbershops in Baltimore City to coordinate some job opportunities for current returning citizens.
* Marshel Pollock-Lawrence and Ellen Bredt attended a job fair at Volunteers for America and had the opportunity to share information about their programs and recent efforts to assist jobseekers.
* Marshall Pollock-Lawrence and Ellen Bredt will be attending a resource fair at BCCC on December 16, 2021 to share information and resources about the programs and assistance they offer.
* Charles Hunt attended the meeting in place of Reentry Navigator James Grossman to report on updates.
* Since the last CEC meeting James Grossman has been going into the RCI weekly for their workforce development classes.
* Mr. Grossman recently visited MCTC to discuss starting their workforce development classes and following the holidays, plan to arrange a weekly or biweekly schedule based on student availability.
* Grossman set up a job class at the Day Reporting Center in Hagerstown and is currently enrolling phase one students into the MWE system. 7 or the 8 students are currently employed.
* Grossman has worked with 25 individuals: 15 gained employment, 4 were referred to WIOA Title I for additional training.
* Ellen Bredt, Reentry Navigator for Anne Arundel County, informed the committee that Jarah Hall has resigned.
* A cohort of participants from the Anne Arundel County Police Department Reentry Program have been visiting the AJC periodically for assistance with MWE.
* Since the last CEC meeting Ellen Bredt has worked with over 200 inmates at MCIW, JCI, MCIJ, Dorsey Run, and FCI Federal Correctional institution in Cumberland, MD.
  + 7 individuals were veterans.
  + 21 individuals were preparing for hearings under the Juvenile Restoration Act
    - These individuals were incarcerated before the age of 18 for life.
  + 35 women attended info sessions at MCIW on apprenticeships.
  + 8 men at Dorsey run have been working with Ellen Bredt to discuss their individual plans after release. All 8 clients have identified programs to participate in following their release and accepted to take math assessments for placement.
    - 2 individuals have already received their test results indicating where they may need remedial help and will be released within two weeks. These individuals are planning on joining either Iron Workers local 5 or the sheet metal union.
    - 4 clients are still in the process of developing a reentry plan and are due to be released in January.
    - One individual managed to secure employment and is no longer participating in the programs offered.
    - There have been 8 confirmed employees at the AJC.
    - Reentry and transition services have been very supportive by providing continuous lists of individuals that are due to be released within the next 100 days.

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

* Jack Weber, CEO at Uptown Press, reported on Employer Engagement Committee updates. He discussed the connectivity and technical issues within the institutions and potential avenues of addressing these problems. He also introduced a concern regarding work release that was brought to him by Vehicles for Change, Associated Builders and Contractors, and Civic Works. These partners inquired about individuals participating in their programs that are currently out on work release. Additionally, he suggested scheduling a meeting with these partners as well as the employer engagement committee to work through and discuss these concerns.
* Keith Royce, a returning citizen was introduced to the Employer Engagement Committee 2 weeks ago and now serves as a member to provide insight on the post-release process.

**Kimberly Stewart (DPSCS)**

Kimberly Stewart provided additional updates about the work-release program.

* Due to the pandemic the courts have reduced the sentences of many inmates on work release; therefore, the number of inmates in these programs has decreased because they are released to home detention instead of incarceration.
* Currently, there are not enough inmates on work release to be put into these programs. She stated they are potentially looking at individuals in medium security but still can participate in these programs. The policy allows for inmates who are work release eligible to participate in training and interview programs.

**Concluding Remarks**

* Secretary Robinson thanked everyone in attendance for a very successful Correctional Education Council meeting and wished them a Happy Holidays.
* Secretary Robinson adjourned the meeting at 11:54 a.m.

The next meeting of the CEC will be on Monday, March 14, 2022.