

**Correctional Education Council (CEC) Board Meeting Minutes**  
**December 2, 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, Mary Ann Thompson, Rachael Stephens Parker

**Staff and Guests**

John Feaster, Renard Brooks, Danielle Cox, Katharine Lander, Stacey Hoffman, Stacey Royal, Benjamin Mourad, Patrick Hruz, Dr. Tamara Barron, Dr. Frances Tracey-Mumford, Jay Miller, 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, Amy Sines, Andre James, Ainsley Moench, Kari Pompili, Velma Honaker, Mary Gable, Shayla Senn

**Absent**

Rachel Stephens Parker

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

**Approval of Minutes**

A motion to approve the October 22, 2024 CEC minutes was made and seconded. Business Representative Jack Weber motioned to adopt the minutes and it was seconded by Ruschelle Reuben. The minutes were unanimously approved at 10:11 a.m.

**Action Items (MD Labor)**

Ruschelle Reuben, Director of Correctional Education at MD Labor, provided updates on the action items from the last CEC meeting on October 22, 2024.

*Past/Upcoming Shutdown Tours:* MD Labor and DPSCS have collaborated on recent and upcoming facility tours to address site shutdowns. Tours have been completed at RCI and MCTC (on 11/22), with a WCI tour scheduled for 12/9. This partnership has enabled better coordination on logistics and timing. In response to past discussions, key highlights from these tours were documented for visibility. Efforts are focused on sites most affected by shutdowns, including MCTC, WCI, RCI, and NBCI.

*Snapshot Timeline:* A refined snapshot timeline has been added to illustrate the trajectory of an incarcerated individual from enrollment to GED completion and eventual transition into a reentry program. This timeline outlines the various stages, including enrollment, instructional phases, and

testing, with estimated timeframes ranging from one to 30 days over several months, depending on institutional factors such as mandatory enrollment status, waitlist availability, and space constraints. The update also includes key influencing factors and has been reformatted into PowerPoint for better accessibility, as requested.

*PSA Edit:* The PSA draft has been updated to include a clear call to action and designated points of contact, following feedback from the previous meeting. On December 5th, a follow-up interview with Vehicles for Change will take place, highlighting opportunities for returning citizens seeking employment.

### **Strategies to Improve Outcomes at Schools with High Shutdowns**

MD Labor has implemented a robust professional learning cycle for teachers, ensuring that instructional staff use available time for development and strategic planning. Additionally, regional professional learning programs and monthly systems meetings have been reinstated to improve instructional strategies and address gaps caused by shutdowns. DPSCS is exploring increased use of tablets with educational content, along with other creative solutions such as leveraging past initiatives like RCI Live, which allowed remote teaching via television screens.

A key priority moving forward is ensuring that students who are ready for GED testing can test without waiting for school to be open. Students ready to test will be shared with DPSCS leadership to prioritize test scheduling and explore alternative testing times, such as weekends or modified movement periods. Additionally, a new DPSCS Field Coordinator, starting January 8, will serve as a liaison to streamline communication and scheduling efforts.

**Action Item:** A tracking system will be implemented to provide DPSCS and MD Labor with monthly data on the number of students prepared for GED testing at each institution.

### **CEC Subcommittee Reporting**

*Data Subcommittee:* The presentation of MLDS data has been postponed to the next meeting, where it will be reviewed alongside a new initiative from the data subcommittee. This initiative includes developing a dashboard focused on recidivism and an II snapshot overview that can be used to track academic and occupational data points. The snapshot will provide a comprehensive view of each individual's progress within the program. The goal is to enhance data accessibility and storytelling for better program evaluation, with an update expected at the next meeting.

*Academic Program Overview:* A comprehensive review of GED academic data is being conducted through regular meetings with schools to ensure a data-driven approach to student readiness and help teachers refine strategies to improve success rates. Principals actively track student progress using internal boards, while deeper data analysis now includes score trends, content area performance, and comparisons between GED Ready test scores and actual GED outcomes. The goal is to prevent premature testing while fostering open, candid discussions on best practices, student support, and overall program effectiveness.

*Occupational Program Overview:* Occupational program completions remain behind target, with a goal of 500 completions for the year, though progress is being made despite ongoing shutdown-related disruptions. Discussions with the Maryland State Department of

Education (MSDE) are underway to reassess the 600-hour requirement, exploring whether students who meet course competencies can earn certifications without being held back by strict hourly mandates. Additionally, efforts are being made to align workforce development skills with employer needs, ensuring students are prepared for post-release employment. Three regional professional development sessions are scheduled to enhance instructional effectiveness, while reentry and apprenticeship navigators are being integrated into classrooms to guide students in planning for employment opportunities after release. Updates on potential policy changes and further improvements are expected at the next CEC meeting.

#### *Re-Entry Subcommittee:*

The Re-Entry Subcommittee is actively working on refining roles, strengthening partnerships, and expanding employment opportunities for returning citizens. A joint meeting is being scheduled to clarify the roles of Reentry Specialists and Reentry Navigators to minimize overlap and improve service coordination.

Resource fairs continue to be a valuable tool for connecting individuals with employment and reentry support. However, due to high demand, space limitations have led to some organizations being turned away. To address this, the subcommittee is exploring a rotation system to ensure all necessary providers can participate over time. A recent resource and reentry fair at Roxbury Correctional Institution was highly successful, allowing labor representatives and employers to share opportunities with incarcerated individuals preparing for release.

On the employment front, efforts are underway to strengthen manufacturing sector partnerships following a recent employer tour at OSTC, with ongoing discussions about structuring hiring pathways. A January employment and resource fair at OSTC is in the planning stages, with additional fairs being considered at venues like War Memorial and Enoch Pratt.

Further, the subcommittee is exploring work release opportunities, particularly in manufacturing, for individuals currently placed in minimum and pre-release programs. Secretary Scruggs emphasized the importance of transitioning these individuals into industries aligned with their training rather than limiting them to fast-food roles.

A key initiative involves an MOU with the Maryland Vehicle Administration (MVA) to facilitate CDL licensing for returning citizens. Secretary Scruggs offered to escalate discussions with MVA leadership to ensure the program moves forward efficiently.

#### **CEC Annual Report**

A draft of the annual report has been shared, and DPSCS has requested additional time for review and amendments. To streamline the process, a smaller working group will review and finalize revisions before the full committee conducts a final review. A 30-45 minute virtual meeting will be scheduled in mid-to-late December to formally approve the report before the year ends.

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

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

Jack Weber motioned to adjourn the meeting, Secretary Scruggs seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 11:12 a.m.

The next regular meeting of the CEC will be on Wednesday, March 26, 2025.