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

**March 8, 2021**

**Conference Call**

**Council Members**

David McGlone, Secretary Robert Green, Deborah Grinnage-Pulley, Secretary Kelly Schulz, Michael DiGiacomo, Michele Savage, Antoine Payne, Jack Weber, Yariela Kerr-Donovan, Jennifer Gauither and Danielle Cox

**Staff and Guests**

Donna Rojas, Dr. Kathleen White, Jack Cunning, Tamara Barron, Erica Dubose, Patrick Hruz, James Rzepkowski, Lloyd Day, Ellen Bredt, James Grossman, Sandy Graham, Natalie Clements, Erin Roth, Lauren Gilwee, Grace Kelly, Dylan McDonough, Mary Keller, Katharine Lander, Jack Bentley, Peggy Stanford, Matthew McKinney, Ja’Ken Caston, Cynthia Blackwell, Leann Lorenz, Chris Hadfield, Dr. Richard McCarthy, Nicole Cameron, June Brittingham, Marshel Pollock-Lawrence, Deron Crawford, Jarah Hall, Tricia Hopkins

**Absent**

Secretary James Fielder and

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Deputy Secretary David McGlone of the Maryland Department of Labor (MD Labor), called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. A quorum was reached.

**Welcome**

Deputy Secretary McGlone welcomed attendees to the meeting and thanked everyone for taking time out of their busy schedules to participate.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the December 14, 2020 meeting were approved.

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

Secretary Robert Green welcomed all attendees and thanked them for coming together on this work. The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) is laser focused on COVID-19 testing and vaccinations to get students and staff back into the classroom. The 65 and older population has already been vaccinated.

DPSCS is also doubling down on their reentry efforts, advocating reentry for all and exploring how to reach into communities (e.g. home detention) in new and innovative ways.

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

Deputy Secretary McGlone thanked everyone for working together to open schools back up and shared that the West is slated to open on March 29th. MD Labor’s COVID-19 Layoff Aversion Fund was a success and the Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning (DWDAL) granted a total of $31 million ($10 million in round one and $21 million in round two) to small businesses across the state. MD Labor is in the final stages of the Request for Proposal (RFP) for inmate tablets.

Congress is set to pass new Unemployment Insurance (UI) laws, extending benefits through September. MD Labor’s Division of UI is pivoting from debit cards to traditional direct deposit and this is set to roll out in April. Finally, the RELIEF Act passed and gives some relief for unemployment, tax benefits, and more.

**Correctional Education Updates**

Danielle Cox, Director of Correctional Education (CE) at MD Labor’s 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 have candidates identified and are waiting for DPSCS background checks to be completed:
  + Associate Librarian at the Maryland Correctional Training Center (MCTC);
  + Special Education teacher at North Branch Correctional Institution (NBCI);
  + Special Education teacher at Western Correctional Institution (WCI);
  + Librarian at Eastern Correctional Institution - West (ECI-West);
  + Librarian at Roxbury Correctional Institution (RCI);
  + Librarian at Maryland Correctional Institution - Hagerstown (MCI-H); and,
  + Barbering instructor at Occupational Skills Training Center (OSTC).
* The Adult Basic Education (ABE) Teacher position at RCI has an interview scheduled for this week.
* A School Psychologist position at Head Quarters has been posted and CE is waiting for a list of candidates to be provided by Human Resources.
* The following positions are posted:
  + Plumbing Instructor at MCTC;
  + Warehousing Instructor at OSTC; and,
  + Advanced Professional Certificate (APC) Teacher at Jessup Correctional Institution (JCI).
* An Office Technology Instructor position at RCI was just released by the Department of Budget Management (DBM) and needs to be posted.
* The following positions need to be posted once they are approved for release by DBM:
  + Principal at Maryland Correctional Institution for Women (MCI-W);
  + ABE Teacher at Baltimore City Correctional Center (BCCC);
  + ABE Teacher at WCI;
  + ABE Teacher at ECI-W;
  + APC Teacher Supervisor at Patuxent Institution (PATX);
  + APC Teacher Lead at JCI;
  + APC Teacher Lead at MCTC; and,
  + Plumbing instructor at WCI.
* There are 14 vacant positions at the present time, none of which will impede the return to in class instruction.

**Academic Updates (Patrick Hruz)**

* Patrick Hruz, Academic Coordinator of CE at MD Labor’s DWDAL, reported on academic updates.
* The RFP for tablets closed on Tuesday, January 19th and the Evaluation Team is in the process of making a recommendation.
* Teachers continue to provide class work and materials to students via packets distributed to the housing units. CE has increased the level of rigor through asynchronous teaching and learning by expanding the amount of work and hours for students.
* Eastern Correctional Institution - East (ECI-East) used their broadcasting system to provide recorded lessons to the students. CE continues to explore ways to bring the teaching and learning process to life at all facilities. The staff at ECI-East will provide training to teachers and principals across the state so that schools can brainstorm effective delivery of asynchronous teaching.
* In preparation for the return to school, CE has developed a plan for delivering daily instruction to students, regardless of social distancing constraints. Since students will not be able to physically attend school every day due to COVID-19 and social distancing, the plan accounts for face-to-face and asynchronous learning. In the long term, mastering asynchronous learning will benefit CE in the event of any level of school shutdown.
* The draft “Teacher Handbook” is nearly complete thanks to the effort of the CE Headquarters Administrative Team.
  + The team is working on a revised CE Instructional Framework (CEIF) that clearly addresses the expectations for “teaching and learning” within programs. This framework will be developed, principals and teachers will be appropriately trained on it, and it will be ready for successful implementation by July 1st (approximate). The CEIF will be shared with the Correctional Education Council (CEC) at the next meeting.
* There was a full day of professional development (PD) on January 13th which included: Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) Testing and GED Reminders; PD Tracking Form Usage; “Promoting Cultural Intelligence”: Reducing Unconscious Biases; Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Disabilities and Teaching Strategies; and Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Snapshot.
* The PD Tracking Log, which gives teachers access to a google drive folder to track their own PD, was introduced on January 13th. PD activities and participation will be maintained for all statewide training and development, school-based PD, and personal/individual PD.
* Upcoming PD includes:
  + CEIF and related tools and procedures; and,
  + Professional Development Day on April 29th for teachers and principals with a presentation from Dr. Andrew Devos on “Understanding Racial Disparities in Baltimore: A Framework for Empathy.”
* MD Labor’s Adult Education is developing Digital Literacy Training Modules to support the Maryland Digital Literacy Framework and CE’s Dr. Fran Mumford is working in collaboration by leading the investigative element of the framework and exploring the reliability of online sources.

**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.
* CE’s CTE programs continue to experience challenges due to COVID-19. Instruction occurred briefly last September and October prior to the second COVID-19 pause on October 28, 2020.
* While on pause, teachers continue to work on various projects such as:
  + Planning and sending work packets;
  + Recording lessons on a weekly basis to accompany work packets (only at ECI-East);
  + Preparing asynchronous work for students to complete;
  + Participating in virtual PD opportunities;
  + Spending their allotted Perkins funds, as well as Wish List funds on instructional materials and resources to enhance instruction and update textbooks and equipment.
  + Reaching out to various employer partners for feedback regarding training needs of the industry and future employees;
  + Identifying tips to share with students to prepare them for workforce and apprenticeship opportunities.
* For Fiscal Year 2021, CE will expand national certification opportunities for students, update training equipment where possible, enhance training opportunities for both staff and students, and strengthen on-the-job training experiences behind the fence.
* MD Labor CE staff continue to work with Dr. White, as well as the DPSCS IT Team to upgrade technology behind the fence to ensure that national certification testing can be facilitated through a secure internet connection.
  + CE principals are working with MD Labor Head Quarters to identify the most secure and suitable location for the testing centers within respective institutions. Pilot testing will begin at OSTC and subsequently expand to other institutions based on the prioritized list.
* Teachers are acquiring certifications for the programs in which CTE students will test and receive certification so that they understand the process and are aware of test preparation best practices.
* Job Skills Training Program (JSTP) continues to run successfully despite COVID-19 limitations.
  + Barron, along with JSTP Program Assistants and a few school based staff members that support the program, are collaborating to create an interactive JSTP Training Workbook.
* Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) Testing at Vehicles for Change resumed and is now taking place through remote proctoring.
* PD is on-going and includes topics such as: motivating adult learners, cultural competency, and working with diverse learners.

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

* Erica DuBose, Transition Coordinator for CE at MD Labor’s DWDAL, reported on transitional updates.
* DuBose is working with teachers and principals to prepare for the return to the classroom. Necessary resources for the transition have been identified and ordered. Teachers have been participating in virtual PD opportunities that focus on diversity, pedagogy, and workforce development.
* CE is working on the Teacher Handbook and observation tools for principals and instructors.
* DPSCS and MD Labor are making progress toward a solution for both transition and occupational students’ technology needs. Students need access to websites and testing platforms. Additionally, MD Labor began conversations with the Department’s IT person, Jim Boden, to discuss additional hardware and software for students.
* DuBose is working with community colleges to ensure that vacancies are posted and job descriptions are updated.
* Cox and Dubose met with the Greater Baltimore Urban League about a grant to benefit returning citizens in Baltimore City and Frederick, Montgomery, and Baltimore Counties. Participants attend occupational training and workplace skills classes, while receiving wrap-around services. After, Cox facilitated a meeting with DPSCS to discuss this opportunity as it could pertain to individuals on home detention. The Director of the Greater Baltimore Urban League attended today’s meeting to talk through this opportunity.
* DuBose, as a member of the Transition Assessment Workgroup, continues to work with the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) to assemble information that will benefit both under 21 students and the transition population across the state.

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

* Danielle Cox, Director of CE for MD Labor’s DWDAL reported on CE system updates.
* Standard operating procedures have been revamped and MD Labor and DPSCS are working to ensure a smooth transition as the Western region returns to classes on March 29th.
* MD Labor is attending the Integrated Education and Training (IET) in Corrections pilot webinar series hosted by MSDE’s Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE). MD Labor is exploring two concept ideas: (1) Students at MCTC with no GED will take occupational training through Hagerstown Community College and come out of the program with a GED and occupational certificate; and, (2) Students at MCI-W will take an entrepreneurship training that leads to a business degree.

**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)**

* Peggy Stanford, Principal in the Western Region, reported updates for the Western Region.
* School will begin on March 29th.
* Work packets are distributed to students on a weekly basis.
* A major PD focus is upgrading teacher’s technology skills.

**Central Region (Dr. Richard McCarthy)**

* Dr. Richard McCarthy, Principal in the Central Region, reported updates for the Central Region.
* Brockbridge Correctional Facility is closed
* Facilities are working to ensure that equipment is effective and capable of the necessary functions to support students, virtually and in-person.
* Staff are getting their vaccines and are prepared for the return to the classroom. In the meantime, they have been sending packets to students.

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

* June Brittingham, Principal in the Eastern Region, reported updates for the Eastern Region.
* Staff participated in PD topics such as: Trauma learning; Brain targeted teaching; and, Yoga and mindfulness and are ready to apply lessons to the classroom. Staff mental health is a major focus right now, so water cooler and coffee chats have been implemented.
* Staff are working with the under 21 population on their IEPs.
* The Eastern Region continues to send packets to students and the ECI-East videos are a great supplement to the packets.
* ECI hired two Employment Readiness Workshop Instructors, a JSTP Associate, and is awaiting a background check on a Transition Specialist.
* Brittingham also provided some quick library updates:
  + Interviews have been held for three positions;
  + All librarians have gone back inside a few days a week as of January 1st to provide LEXUS NEXUS service; and,
  + They are thinking about upgrading LEXUS NEXUS.

**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 – There has been a steady flow of clients employers are hiring. Lawrence is connecting individuals with jobs, UI benefits, opportunities for expungement, and more. Three clients are waiting to hear from Giant, two clients received UI benefits, and two clients have expungement hearings coming up. Warehousing positions are opening up and becoming more flexible. Clients are in need of motivational speaking. Many are interested in opening up their own businesses (e.g. barber shop). A group discussion broke out and CEC members discussed bringing entrepreneurial exploration to IET, licensing issues with opening businesses, and the three Maryland colleges with existing entrepreneurship programs.
* James Grossman – There has been a steady flow of people coming in. Grossman is working with an organization called Heavy Metal Playground to get individuals certifications.
* Ellen Bredt – Bredt saw 21 new customers since the last meeting, half of which came to see her in the last week. There were 19 men, two women, and two individuals behind the fence. She has had 13 job placements at places like TSI, AT&T, Amazon, and grocery stores. Bredt, the community action agency, and Vehicles for Change are working on a reentry program. There is a barber who has a network of shops and is trying to hire reentry citizens. Bredt is working to create career pathways for women in the Peer Recovery program at MCI-W. She is pushing apprenticeship and one individual tested for an electrician spot. DPSCS reentry and transitional specialists and others are amazing partners. Secretary Green passed someone along to a reentry navigator and DPSCS reentry packers include navigator information. Secretary Green emphasized the importance of getting information to the individual and their family. The CEC discussed the possibility of creating a portal, or one place where all information can be stored.
* Sandy Graham – 17 individuals were referred to Graham, two of which were still incarcerated. She has been able to refer many to trainings (e.g. Commercial Driver’s License Training) and is working with a staffing company. Community events that Graham attended include the Reentry Forum, Reentry Advisory Board, Expungement Events, and the Jessup Region Meeting. There is a big push in Prince George’s County for reentry programs. A conversation amongst CEC members began with Secretary Green emphasizing Warehousing, especially Amazon’s focus on returning citizens, as an opportunity. This group needs to engage with Warehousing companies to figure out what they are offering/looking for. Hiring criteria can be a challenge, so talking to these businesses and educating them is key.
* Jarah Hall – There has been a steady flow of clients. 10 new individuals have come in and 11 of her clients reported gaining employment. Purdue is the biggest employer and they will hire sex offenders. Local restaurants, Walmart, and Marshalls are also good employers. Hall sent 100 letters to inmates letting them know about reentry navigators and the American Job Center resources. She also helped create a reentry video that is playing at ECI-East. Hall keeps in contact with the business community and local partners like Goodwill and transitional coordinators.

**Community Partner Updates (Nicole Cameron)**

* Nicole Cameron from the Greater Baltimore Urban League shared the organizations mission of helping disadvantaged Marylanders gain access to equal opportunity in employment, education, health care, housing and the civic arena. They do this through direct services, advocacy, and referrals.
* Cameron emphasized that returning citizens are a target population and presented a grant opportunity to service 300 citizens from Baltimore City, and Baltimore, Frederick, and Montgomery Counties for three years. Participants must be:
  + 18 years or older;
  + Within 6 months of release; and,
  + Not a sexual offender (prostitution is the only allowable sexual offense).
* This is a pilot that will provide soft skills to prepare citizens for reentry, job readiness, financial literacy, and more.
* Areas of focus for the program are Construction, Automotive Services, and IT.
* A major goal is to create a framework for a referral service process.

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

* Jack Weber, CEO at Uptown Press, reported on Employer Engagement Committee updates.
* The future of the economy is going to affect the returning citizen population. Something to keep in mind is that requirements for employers change given the need for new employees and the availability of employees.
* Warehousing and Retail are hiring returning citizens, so business partners needs to continue advocating to get more employers and other industries onboard. Participating employers connecting with others is critical. CEC members discussed the idea of a Warehousing employer (maybe from Amazon) joining the CEC.
* Maryland Correctional Enterprise (MCE)’s [videos](https://www.youtube.com/user/MDDeptPublicSafety/videos) are out and should be shared. MCE is going through some changes and is really focused on “restorative justice.”
* Secretary Green underscored the importance of stakeholders embracing a common dictionary which includes terminology like “returning citizen,” “individual,” and “restorative justice.” Rhetoric is powerful and can make or break someone’s opportunity. “Justice involved” could be misconstrued as an individual currently involved with the system and “Exoffender” is outdated and paints individuals in a negative light. Those engaged in this work should be on the same page.
* Commerce Secretary Kelly Schultz reminded the group that Commerce regional resource groups should be leveraged and Commerce is definitely a partner in this work to add value to conversations moving forward.

**Concluding Remarks**

Secretary Green thanked the group for an informative meeting. Deputy Secretary McGlone asked the group for a motion to close the meeting, to which Secretary Green gave a motion and Jack Weber seconded the motion. Erica DuBose will send calendar invites for upcoming CEC meetings.

The next meeting of the CEC will be on Monday, June 14, 2021.

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