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

**September 13, 2021**

**Google Meet & Conference Call**

**Council Members**

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

**Staff and Guests**

James E. Rzepkowski, Erin Roth, Cameron Hightower, Charles Hunt, Cynthia Blackwell, Deron Crawford, Donna M. Rojas, Dylan M. McDonough, Ellen Bredt, Dr. Erica DuBose, Francisco J. Vega, Dr. Jack Cunning, Jack R. Bentley, Jack Weber, Dr. Ja’Ken Caston, Jama Acuff, , James Grossman, Janell Johnson, Jarah J. Hall, Julie Brophy, June C. Brittingham, Katharine Lander, Kimberly Stewart, Lauren E. Gilwee, Leza Griffith, Lloyd Day, Marsha Briley, Marshel M. Lawrence, Mary C. Keller, Matthew McKinney, Melissa P. Murphy, Nancy Banwait, Natalie Clements, Nicole  Cameron, Patrick Hruz, Peggy Stanford, Dr. Ri-chard McCarthy, Dr .Tamara L. Barron, Tricia Hopkins, Wesley Wilson, Sarah Sheppard, and Michael DiGiacomo.

**Absent**

Secretary James Fielder

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Maryland Department of Labor (MD Labor) Secretary Tiffany P. Robinson called the meeting to order at 10:01 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 June 14, 2021, minutes was made and seconded. Danielle Cox motioned to adopt it and it was seconded by Yariela Kerr-Donovan. The minutes were approved at 10:14 a.m.

**Updates from Secretary Robinson**

Secretary Robinson highlighted that Maryland gained 65,900 jobs in 2021 and that the unemployment rate has decreased to 5.9%. She thanked all members of the MD Labor Team for their role in achieving this milestone.

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

Secretary Robert Green welcomed all attendees and thanked them for coming together for this work. Secretary Green updated attendees on additional Covid-19 steps being taken to get students back into the classroom. He thanked Labor for all their hard work in getting students back into the classroom and training programs.

**Updates from Danielle Cox on Proposed Amendments-Danielle**

**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
* The following position have been filled since our last CEC meeting in June:
  + Special Education teacher at MCI-J
  + ABE teacher at MCTC
  + ABE teacher at ECI-W
  + Office technology teacher at MCI-H
* The following positions have candidates identified and are waiting for DPSCS background checks to be completed:
* School Psychologist at HQ
* ABE teacher at WCI
* Special Education teacher at MTC
* The following position has an interview scheduled for this week (September 15, 2021):
* ABE Teacher at PATX
* The following position has interviews scheduled for next week (September 20 - 24, 2021)
* Office Technology instructor at MCI-J
* The following positions are posted at present:
* ABE teacher at PATX
* Warehousing instructor at OSTC
* Plumbing instructor at WCI
* Electrical instructor at MCTC
* There are six vacant positions at the present time.

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

●       Dr. Erica DuBose, Transition Coordinator of CE at MD Labor’s DWDAL, reported on transition updates.

* Transportation Update:Employment plays a vital role in helping returning citizens successfully transition back into their communities. Unfortunately, jobseekers newly released from incarceration who lack transportation face an additional barrier to employment beyond their justice system involvement. MD Labor’s Correctional Education staff conducted research to find solutions to the transportation issue and have identified several programs that address this significant employment barrier.  Lyft’s Job Access Program began in 2019 to provide individuals with rides to job interviews, job training, and the first three weeks of employment through to receipt of their first paycheck. Lyft has partnered with national and local agencies (such as [Goodwill](https://www.goodwillches.org/) and [United Way](https://www.unitedway.org/the-latest/press/united-way-launches-ride-united)) that are dedicated to workforce development in order to deliver free and/or discounted rides. Lyft has committed $50 million dollars. The American Justice ReEntry & Rehabilitation, [America Works of Maryland Inc.](https://americaworks.com/), [Chrysalis House Women’s Treatment Center](https://www.chrysalishouses.org/), [Community Action Council](https://cac-hc.org/), [HOPE Baltimore](https://www.hopebaltimore.com/), [Marian House](https://www.marianhouse.org/), [The Freedom Center](https://www.thefreedomcenter.com/) and [Work for Success](https://www.catholiccharities-md.org/services/work4success/) have pledged to continue in this work. MD Labor reached out to [Uber](https://www.uber.com/) regarding their transportation [program pilot](https://azgovernor.gov/governor/news/2017/11/arizona-partners-uber-second-chance-rides-program), run in partnership with Arizona Corrections. Unfortunately, Uber is not accepting any requests for partnerships and/or sponsorships currently. Uber representatives encouraged MD Labor to continue to check with them for future opportunities. Additionally, many smaller, local organizations that offered transportation prior to the COVID-19 pandemic stopped offering assistance. We will continue to maintain contact with these organizations for future opportunities.
* Technology: 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. We are working with DPSCS IT to continue figuring out the issues that are causing testing not to be completed; however, once we came up with a solution DPSCS IT was going to take it back to their supervisors because approval to move forward would be needed.
* Vacancies: 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.
* Navigators: 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 are being phased back in.

**Academic Updates (Patrick Hruz)**

●    Patrick Hruz, Academic Coordinator of CE at MD Labor’s DWDAL, reported on academic updates.

* Patrick Hruz provided and update on the Inmate Tablets for Correctional Education. On July 28, 2021, the RFP approved by Board of Public Works (BPW). This was followed by Kick-Off Meetings held with American Prison Data Systems (APDS). Labor is currently conducting site level cellular connectivity which will help us determine the need of cellular extenders in the facilities. We are exploring this process and preparing for a potential service provider. The first group of new student tablets will be disseminated to MCTC to begin using for a couple of weeks as a test run/troubleshooting period before they are distributed to all schools.
* The Integration Education and Training (IET) Program in Correctional and Reentry Education program has begun at The Hill (MCTC). Hagerstown Community College instructor is present (Mr. Ed Bass) along with our CE ABE Teacher (Ms. Sarah Ambeault). Laptops with the program curriculum are being prepared as we speak – DPSCS, HCC, and CE are all on board with the process for the laptops. Books and workbooks, tools and equipment, are all on the way for the manufacturing program. Currently students are working on the introductory phase of the program and their academic course work. He will be visiting the program this afternoon, with a representative from HCC to greet the students to provide an overview of the program and meet with the teachers. MCI-W – will begin at the beginning of October.
* Additionally, needed materials for the hospitality program have been ordered and are on the way. Overall, MD Labor continues to receive support from the Technical Assistance Team at OCTAE – 3 levels of meetings/training:  State Lead, Site Leads, and Instructors.
* Professional Development Annual plan(s) have been developed and implementation is beginning (major areas of focus):
* Tablets will be a major focus of our training FY22.
* Digital Literacy.
* IET training for the teams involved.
* Maryland CE Instructional Framework for Teaching and Learning – Teacher Observation Tool(s) – PD both for teachers and for principals.

**Special Education (Kathrine Lander)**

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

* She thanked DPSCS and school principals for their teamwork during school closures and the reopening of schools as you collaborated to allow SPED teachers hold Individual Education Plans (IEP) virtually and in-person.  Each meeting took plenty of coordination.  Since school closures on March 13, 2020, the following meetings were held statewide to promote compliance and implementation:
* Students who Aged out of SPED June 30, 2020, and needed Compensatory Service considered: 27 meetings
* Students who Aged out of SPED June 30, 2021, and needed Compensatory Service considered: 21 meetings
* In regard to FY21 students enrolled, 10 Annual IEP meetings were held and 17 Reevaluation IEP meetings were held to request updated formal testing.
* In TOTAL, 75 IEP meetings were held during the pandemic.
* She reported that FY20 grant spending continues to take place. TVs & DVD players have been purchased for every Employment Readiness Workshop teacher & for SPED/General Education teachers to share.
* With regards to IEP related service providers, currently, we have 1 outstanding Psychologist & 1 outstanding Speech Pathologist through AACC.
* Professional Development will continue for SPED staff. The SPED Department was able to pay for 5 staff members to attend COABE this year. Professional Development sessions on Cultural Competency also were conducted. ‘The Master Plan’: a school-wide reading, packet, and writing project is being utilized for students at Patuxent. Training for Formal and Informal Assessments, Comprehensive WIIIP Report ([WJ-IV Interpretation & Instructional Interventions Program](https://paa.com.au/product/wiiip/)) online program, Speech & Psychological assessments, and Great Leaps: Improves Reading Fluency have also been conducted by the SPED Coordinator and several staff members.

**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.

* All Correctional Education’s CTE (Career and Technology Education) classes are up and running under a limited capacity due to COVID safety protocols. All CTE teachers have received their TVs (acquired through the Perkins grant) to support instruction, however the DVD players are on backorder per the vendor. The teachers are awaiting their new laptops (acquired through the Labor Wish List funds) which will support instruction. For FY22, CE received funding through a competitive grant from the Opioid Operational Command Center (OOCC) to continue the CPRS (Certified Peer Recovery Specialist) Training Program at MCIW for Women and will expand to include the Dorsey Run Pre-Release Correctional Facility for men in Jessup, MD.
* The CTE team is excited to be a part of the IET project:
* Location # 1: MCIW: Academics and Hospitality
* Location #2: MCTC/The Hill: Academics and HCC: Certified Production Tech
* Dr. Barron provided Perkins Grant updates. Perkins FY21 grant funds were full exhausted. The Perkins FY22 allotment for Adult Correctional Education in the amount of $295, 817 to support CTE training programs behind the fence was approved. This includes a one-time increase of $80,734 above FY21’s award of $215,083. These funds are designated to support new teacher training, the upgrading of training equipment, the acquisition of instructional materials, and participation in professional development opportunities.
* National Certification Updates were provided for FY22. 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. All CE teachers have been trained on how to operate the new Registry and Testing systems. Credits have been purchased for students to test for the Auto and Construction trades. ASE and NCCER Proctors have been trained on how to operate the various 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 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 HQ to identify secure locations for the testing centers/pods within each institution. CE is working with the DPSCS IT team to pilot testing at OSTC in Baltimore, MD. Once testing is up and running at OSTC, additional limited internet computers will be delivered to the other schools and testing will begin.
* Additionally, 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 FY22. Correctional Education will be participating in the upcoming DPSCS ReEntry Fair at BCCC on Thursday, September 30, 2021.

**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.

**Eastern Region/Libraries (June Brittingham)**

* **CE Libraries** are fully staffed.  We are in need of some part-time evening librarians in the Jessup Region. A bulletin has gone out to the public libraries trying to recruit.  CE has reached out to AACC to discuss their recruiting efforts. MCTC and RCI librarians are working with Jim Boden to test the new circulation system that is being developed for CE libraries.  We hope to be using it by the end of the year when the libraries become fully wired. Most of the libraries are taking part in Maryland Humanities’ One Maryland One Book program this fall.  This year’s book is a collection of poetry titled:   *The Book of Delights: Essays* by Ross Gay and it will be used in book discussions in most of the institution libraries.
* June Brittingham also met with Ricky Budoy and Louise Dodson from MCE regarding the LexisNexis EHD’s. We have verified the count and accounted for all of the LexisNexis EHD’s being used in our Ce Libraries.
* Enoch Pratt’s SLRC (Special Libraries Resource Center) has sent out their Fall Training schedule and we are sending our four new librarians to virtually attend some of those Training Modules. These are free to the library community, and we are appreciative that SLRC includes CE Libraries in that partnership.
* Academic, CTE and Transitional services are taking place in person at all three locations per HU and by Proxy on off days.  TABE testing was completed the first of July with in-person classes beginning immediately after. The GED labs are up and running again with a new GED Proctor.  She was hired in July and is very capable. ECIE has completed all mandatory DPSCS Training for 2021.  ECIW is very close to full completion of training. Our Navigator has resumed visitation to all three institutions on the Eastern Shore and is doing an excellent job. She has also given a couple of presentations to the ECIE and ECIA ERW (Employment Readiness) classes. We are working with WorWic Community College to recruit applicants to fill positions for TABE Tester, JSTP and PC Instructor.
* ECIE Occupational instructors were trained recently by Dr. Barron in online registration of students in preparation for the roll out of online testing for the NCCER certification program.

**Western Region (Deron Crawford)**

* All schools are starting to see the benefit of students physically in classes and as of today we are happy to report 13 GED’s. Schools are at different stages of the TABE testing process but all are reporting ASC level gains for many students.
* The IET program has started at EHU/HED with the first class being taught August 30th.  The ten students are very eager to learn and the HCC and CE instructors have developed a good working relationship and have embraced the concept.
* The partnership between HCC, DPSCS and our correctional education team are working very well together as we assemble the many pieces to this IET class.

**Central Region– Dr. Ri-Chard McCarthy**

●       All academic, occupational, and transitional classes are up and running. Library has opened to patrons with even time slots for all buildings and shop workers. Some classes are on a rotating schedule depending on class size. We are excited to start up our second CPRS cohort with DPSCS and MDH. We are still searching for a Barbering/Stylist instructor with AACC.

* Dr. McCarthy also reported that EPRU is fully closed, CMCF academics has 12 in class and two are one test from passing the GED. The Life Skills teacher is in the fingerprinting stage (AACC). DRCF Academics are going strong (32 assigned) and they had their first GED in 20 months last week and have 3 more very close. The ERW and Life Skills classes are both going well, and we are closing in on the third round of certificates. Lastly, library services are running normal at DRCF and CMCF.
* In Baltimore, MTC is down 1 academic teacher, BCCC school is down 1 academic teacher, BCCC has 2 GED's for the month of August, and OSTC has a vacant warehouse instructor position
* JCI implemented an A Day/B Day schedule for the beginning literacy, low intermediate and some high Intermediate classes.  However, GED students come every day because we were given a larger classroom to accommodate them and since then we have earned "3" GED this fiscal year with the addition of a new GED Teacher. MD Labor also hired a TABE Tester who will begin the middle of September and conducted interviews for a full time Special Education Teacher.

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

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

●   Marshel Pollock Lawrence is currently assisting 26 Returning Citizens of which half of them are Home Detention and the others have been released. Clients have been more in need of mental health facilities prior to receiving job readiness/career counseling/resume assistance. She has three clients that have been accepted into Apprenticeship (Plumbing) and 6 Clients are waiting for MVA appointments. Documentation prior to release has been an issue, Returning Citizens from Out of State have had a harder longer journey to get identity verification.

Fortunately, many of the Returning Citizens have had their High School Equivalency Diploma and some have had certifications which made for an easier transition into programs like Living Classrooms, Civic Works, Goodwill Industries and Vehicles for Change. One Returning Citizen has applied for VFC at the Greenmount location, and she is awaiting an update. She reported that overall, things are getting back to normal, and employers are reaching out for employees that are qualified for positions. There were vacancies in waste management, landscaping, and forklift operating positions have been filled by Returning Citizens. She is meeting with Employers as a Business Services Representative to develop a business relationship to advocate for my Returning Citizens, which in the past has successfully opened doors for employment opportunities

●   Ellen Bredt Since the last CEC Meeting (which was June 14):

* New AJC customer contacts: 10 \*\* (as of September 10):
* Total Home Detention contacts made: 19
* Total inmates served, from MCIW, JCI, DRCF, and MCIJ: 93 inmates (6 were veterans)
* 20 were away over 15 years (one is a Juvenile Lifer)
* 30 interested in apprenticeships
* Combined total of contacts: 122
* Number of (confirmed) job placements: 9 \*\*
* Referred for WIOA training: 2
* Referred to service organizations (AACCAA, ICC, AACPD): 4

●   Ellen was invited to speak at the DPSCS Social Services’ Reentry meetings, DORS and Anne Arundel Health (ICC Program). Ellen met with Kristi Simon of Central MD Chambers of Commerce, and she connected her with a restaurant group in Howard and Anne Arundel that seeks employees, open to hiring returning citizens. She will be recommending AJC resources including returning citizen talent pools to member companies. She just built a job listing site for their member companies. She thanked the DPSCS Reentry & Transition Services for supplying her with a list of inmates to be released within four months.

●   Jarah Hall reported since her return to ECI, she has assisted 79 inmates and assisted 14 returning citizens in the community, with 5 have reported gaining employment. The weekly job resource and job fair information were sent out via email lists along with monthly letters to inmates preparing for release. She has met with case management and social services behind the fence to share information about our program so they can refer as well. She has shared resources with the Librarians and ERW instructions to share with inmates and will be joining the ERW classes soon. She keeps in weekly contact with Ms. Keisha Whittington, the DPSCS Regional Reentry & Transition Service Specialist and with Ms. Alicia Dennis (Business Solutions).

**Community Partner Updates Enoch Pratt Free Library)**

●   Chief, Central Library of the Enoch Pratt Free Library- Wesley Wilson and Julie Brophy of Baltimore County Public Library joined the meeting and presented information on the Entrepreneur Academy. Baltimore County Public Library (BCPL) and Baltimore City’s Enoch Pratt Free Library (EPFL) joined forces to launch Entrepreneur Academy, a free series of classes offering a wide range of topics for people who have an entrepreneurial streak. The program’s creation was both the outcome of the two library systems investigating ways to collaborate and the result of community feedback. The seven-week program offers weekly classes which are offered twice, once in the evening at the county library and once in the morning at the city library, to allow participants flexibility in attending. Initially, most of the sessions will be run by the libraries’ main partners: the [Small Business Administration](https://www.sba.gov/offices/district/md/baltimore), the [Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation](http://www.dllr.state.md.us/), the [Maryland Small Business Development Center](http://www.mdsbdc.umd.edu/), and the [CASH Campaign of Maryland](http://cashmd.org/). The partners are volunteering their time and expertise, meaning that not only is the academy free for participants, it’s also low-cost for the libraries. The sessions are designed to educate future business owners about being involved in getting a business off the ground. Sessions on market research, business strategy, tools, library and external resources, how to research your target market and competition, business finances and taxes, bookkeeping, marketing and social media, branding will be covered. The lessons will be on a DVD’s provided to the facilities.

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

* Jack Weber, CEO at Uptown Press, reported on Employer Engagement Committee updates. He discussed the need for additional housing and job opportunities for returning citizens and will introduce additional ideas at the next Employer Engagement Meeting.

**Concluding Remarks**

●       Secretary Green thanked the group for an informative meeting. He shared that he is supportive of the agenda in every area and the incredible amount of data that was shared on community outreach across the state.

●       He will continue to reach out with US Wind and Mr. Nick Arnold to assist with the Return-to-work program in increasing job opportunities in warehouse jobs and packaging.

●       Secretary Robinson adjourned the meeting at 11:55 a.m.

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

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