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

**November 13, 2023**

**In Person Meeting & Zoom Webinar**

**Council Members**

Secretary Carolyn Scruggs, Co Chair, Deputy Secretary Jason Perkins-Cohen, Co Chair,, Jack Weber, Jennfier Gauthier, Dr.Ruschelle Rueben, Theresa Shank,Sarah Sheppard, Mary Gable,

**Staff and Guests**

Brittney Hansen, Casey Tifenwerth, Danielle Cox, Deron Crawford, Diana Dabbs, Donna Rojas, Dwayne Lovett, Elizabeth Marts, Ellen Bredt, Dr. Erica Dubose, Erin Roth, Janay Harris, Janell Johnson, Julia Givens, June Brittingham, Kari Pompilli, Katharine Lander, Kenneth Jessup, Leza Griffith,Laura Matin,Lloyd Day, Logan Dean, Marsha Briley, Mary Keller, Patrick Hruz, Peggy Stanford, Richard Chambers, Robin Conley, Shannice Anderson, Shea Zwerver, Dr. Tamara Barron, Terende Thomas, Theodore Hunter, Tricia Hopkins,Trish Gordon

**Absent**

Mary Ann Thompson, Rachel Stephens Parker

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Maryland Department of Labor (Labor) Deputy Secretary, Jason Perkins-Cohen called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. A quorum was reached.

**Welcome**

Labor Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen welcomed attendees to the meeting and thanked everyone for taking time out of their busy schedules to participate. He went on to thank everyone for the important and hard work that they do every day to help Maryland’s incarcerated individuals and returning citizens.

**Updates from MD Labor (Deputy Secretary Jason Perkins-Cohen)**

Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen acknowledged that this is the first CEC meeting that he has been able to attend and expressed that he is thankful to be part of this group. In light of all the transitional changes that occurred this year, Deputy Secretary Perkin Cohen stressed the importance of establishing goals for the Council as well as a timeline and steps on how to accomplish those objectives. He spoke about resources, and the need to determine how staff time should be allocated in order to maximize efficiency and accomplish Council, Agency and State goals and how the Council meetings can serve as an opportunity to gauge progress on the council's goals moving forward.

Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen thanked Secretary Carolyn Scruggs and her team for being such great partners in this work and invited her to speak on behalf of DSPCS.

**Updates from DPSCS (Secretary Carolyn Scruggs)**

Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) Secretary Scruggs echoed Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen’s sentiment and expressed her gratitude for the amazing working relationship that Labor and DPSCS have established. Secretary Scruggs mentioned that her top priority is serving Maryland’s returning citizens and staying true to Governor Moore’s mission to “leave no one behind”. She shared that data analysts are maintaining and continuously updating the DPSCS website dashboard that displays all updated DPSCS’s Community Releases, including what individuals are being released, and what counties those individuals are being released to. Secretary Scruggs emphasized her desire to work with Labor to ensure that individuals who receive skills training behind the fence, are connected to related employment opportunities upon their release. She mentioned that one of DPSCS’ biggest issues currently is that there are many individuals that are receiving training and obtaining diplomas and certificates behind the fence, however, upon release they are unable to find related employment opportunities.

Building on Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen’s suggestions from earlier, Secretary Scruggs stated that this should be a primary objective of the CEC, to fill the gap between skilled-returning citizens and quality employment.

She stated that she would like the CEC to establish a mission and several objectives to accomplish by next year.

Secretary Scruggs drew attention to pre-trial individuals in Baltimore City that are sentenced to 18 months or less and would like to get them more involved in skills training and academic programs.

She also shared that there will be a Maryland Correctional Institution- Women (MCIW) Graduation next month and 9 women will graduate with their GEDs.

**Introductions**

Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen invited attendees in person and online to introduce themselves.

**Approval of Minutes**

A motion to approve the March 13, 2023, minutes was made and seconded. Jack Weber motioned to adopt it and it was seconded by Ruschelle Reuben. The minutes were approved at 10:16 a.m.

**Overview of CEC Statutes (Director Rushelle Reuben)**

Reuschelle Reuben, Director of Correctional Education (CE) at MD Labor shared a Powerpoint presentation and provided an overview of the statutes governing the Correctional Education Council (CEC).

* Ms.Reuben included a link to the full text of the statute governing the Correctional Education Council (CEC) and provided a brief overview of the statute.
  + The Council Shall:
    - Actively advocate and promote the interests of educational programs and workforce skills training opportunities in correctional institutions.
    - Seek to ensure that a quality education, equal educational opportunity, and workforce skills training are available to all inmates (incarcerated individuals) at correctional institutions.
    - Review the educational and workforce skills training programs at correctional institutions to ensure that the unique educational and training needs of the populations of the correctional institutions are being satisfactorily met.
      * The Council shall include in its review the following:
        + Curriculum guides
        + Courses of study
        + Resource materials
        + Textbooks
        + Supplementary readers
        + Materials of instruction
        + Visual and auditory aids
        + Supplies
        + Teacher performance
        + Other teaching aids
* Ms.Reuben opened the floor for Dr.Erica Dubose, Correctional Education Transitions Coordinator at MD LABOR to share updates regarding the CEC Annual Report.

**Annual Report Update (Transition Coordinator Dr.EricaDubose)**

Dr.Dubose explained that the Annual Report serves as a snapshot of the progress made over the past year and provided an update.

* 225 individuals earned a high school diploma (HSD);
* 927 Adult Skills Certificates were earned;
* 72 English as a Second Language Certificates were earned;
* 371 Occupational Certificates were earned;
* 896 Industry Recognized Credentials were earned; and
* 1,529 Transition Certificates were issued to students.

In addition to the diplomas and certificates that were earned, Dr.Dubose shared a few more updates related to the Annual Report.

* She reported that there are continued successful partnerships with EARN grantee partners such as Vehicles for Change and Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC).
* Correctional Education continues to improve its gains and services provided to the incarcerated individuals.
* The report also highlights recent legislation that affects incarcerated individuals, the work of our CE libraries in providing reading and research materials and our collaboration with the Reentry Navigators.
* The annual report is currently in the approval process. As of right now the Department anticipates that it will be ready for its members to read and vote on at the next quarterly meeting in December.

**The State of Correctional Education (Director Ruschelle Reuben)**

Director Ruschelle Reuben opened the floor for Correctional Education (CE) staff to share updates concerning Academic Programming, Special Education, Career and Technical Education (CTE), and Transitional Programming.

First, Ms.Reuben invited Academic Coordinator, Patrick Hruz, to share updates.

**Academic Updates (Patrick Hruz)**

Patrick Hruz, Academic Coordinator of Correctional Education (CE) at MD Labor’s

DWDAL, reported on academic updates.

To begin, Mr.Hruz stated that the goal of the Academic Program is to provide incarcerated students with the skills and knowledge they need to pass the GED and earn the Maryland High School diploma. He said that, as the State recovers from the pandemic, there have been some exciting gains made, he went on to share some updated figures.

* In FY23 the Academic program exceeded the state projected completions. Mr.Hruz explained that the State provides all Maryland adult education programs with state projected completion gains percentages expectations for each level. These completion gains were exceeded by Correctional Education in FY23 by 14% - 22% in the various levels for an average of 16%.
* Students in the ESL program also exceeded the state projected completion gains by an average of 18% per level.
* In FY23, 225 students passed the GED test and earned a Maryland High School Diploma.
* Mr.Hruz acknowledged that there are a number of goals for FY24 , but took the time to highlight a couple of goals that are specific to the Academic Program to gauge progress based on the Quarter One statistics (July, August and September).
  + Enrollment is a top priority in aiming to increase the total number of individuals served.
    - Average monthly enrollment over the first quarter was an increase of about 100 students across all programs.
      * Off to a good start but still working to circumvent some of the barriers to ensure that the maximum number of individuals are being served.
  + 66 GEDs were earned so far in Quarter 1 of FY24. This figure represents a 9% increase from FY23 Q1 to FY24 Q1. Mr.Hruz said it is important to note that there is a historical trend where GED completions increase during the last half of the fiscal year, therefore, he said that the 9% in quarter 1 is likely to grow even more.
* Deputy Secretary Perkins Cohen took the time to acknowledge the good work that Pat and his team have done to achieve these impressive figures.

**Special Education (Kathrine Lander)**

Katherine Lander, Special Education Coordinator for CE at Labor, reported on Special Education (SPED) updates.

* There are currently 12 Special Education Programs in 12 of Correctional Education’s schools across the state.
* During FY23 each of the 12 programs were staffed with a highly qualified teacher that was certified in SPED, who worked to ensure that students ages 18 to 21 received the Special Education services outlined in their Individual Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan.
  + Ms.Lander noted that this is the first year that the SPED Program has been fully staffed since she started in her position four years ago.
* Ms.Lander provided some background information and updates on the individuals who are served through the SPED Program.
  + The following is a breakdown of the 70 students with an IEP sampled from July 20, 2023:
    - * 28 had a diagnosis of Other Health Impairment (OHI)
      * 23 had a diagnosis of Emotional Disability (ED)
      * 10 had a diagnosis of Specific Learning Disability (SLD)
      * 5 had a diagnosis of Intellectual Disability (ID),
      * 3 had a diagnosis of Multiple Disabilities (MD)
      * 1 had a diagnosis of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
      * 7 students had a 504 Plan.
    - Ms.Lander went on to explain that the IEP team places the students in their Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), which could have included the General Education Adult Basic Education class (ABE), SPED ABE class, or a combination of both in order to help them achieve their High School Diploma (HSD).
      * Ms.Lander also noted that the SPED Program does provide services (proxy work and direct instruction) for students that are placed on segregation.
  + Ms.Lander shared some program success from the past year, FY23.
    - 12 students earned their HSD, and approximately 50 students earned 1 or more Adult Skills Certificate (ASC) in pursuit of their HSD.
    - 75 students had updated Psychological and Educational Assessments, 25 students had Speech Assessments, and approximately 150 IEP meetings were conducted to ensure IEPs contained relevant and current data and services.
      * Ms.Lander noted that approximately 90% of students entering the SPED program have outdated Psychological, Educational and Speech Assessments, so this is very important and a big accomplishment.
    - SPED Data Manager and IEP Specialist, Cliff Nolan, aggregated, analyzed, and visually represented student’s TABE score data from Feb. 14, 2019 through Feb. 14, 2023 to identify trends and determine the effect of school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic on academic progress.
      * Ms.Lander said that this data is available to share in future meetings or other settings.
    - FY22 grant funding was spent on classroom resources, Study Buddy devices, professional development, staffing, and the Offender Workforce Development Specialist (OWDS) training that allowed 8 CE employees to be certified.
      * FY23 funds are expected to be used for the same purposes
* Secretary Scruggs asked Ms.Lander what the total enrollment was for all 12 SPED programs across the state and if there is a waiting list for individuals wanting to enroll in SPED programs.
  + Ms.Lander thanked Secretary Scruggs for her questions and said that typically there are on average around 70-100 students enrolled in SPED at any given time and there is no waitlist. She said that all students are immediately enrolled.
* Secretary Scruggs asked if the referral to SPED comes from the case manager or if it comes from intake into the facility.
  + A referral could come from one of two places:
    - the DPSCS case manager, or
    - If an individual is under 21 and does not self-identify as requiring SPED services, they will have an intake interview with a CE staff member to confirm that they do not require SPED services.
* Secretary Scruggs raised a concern that a portion of “emerging adults” are not being served that could benefit from SPED services and posed the question to the Council of how to identify and reach those individuals.
  + Ms.Lander mentioned the fact that services legally end at the age of 21 but agreed with Secretary Scruggs in that there is certainly a population above the age of 21 that could benefit from SPED services.
    - Secretary Scruggs spoke about Juvenile Justice and those juveniles who have been charged as adults. She said that many of those individuals face the similar challenges to SPED students and she said that she thinks, specifically with regard to this population, there is a portion of people that are being overlooked that could greatly benefit from these services.
      * Secretary Scruggs said that she and Ms.Cox will do some research with Case Management to determine what the justice-involved juvenile population looks like and how many individuals could benefit from SPED services that are not currently enrolled.
* Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen recognized that 70 individuals are currently being served through the SPED program and asked Ms.Lander how many students the program could be serving hypothetically with given the current resources?
* Jack Weber stated that Special Education is an area of passion for him. He stated that the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) is supposed to provide approximately $15,000 per SPED student. Given the 70 students currently being served, MSDE is supposedly providing $1,050,000. He said that he is unsure if MSDE is providing those funds.
  + Ms.Lander said that in her budget students approximately $3,000 is being allocated from MSDE for each SPED student.
  + Jack stated that SPED programming has historically been underfunded.
* Ms.Lander noted that the number of enrolled SPED students has been low and agrees that more research is necessary in order to identify the gaps in service. She did mention, however, that some students do decline services.
  + Secretary Scruggs asked how it is documented when a student declines services.
  + Ms.Lander responded by saying there are multiple forms that the individual must sign in addition to a number of meetings they must participate in with the principle and CE staff to explain everything about the process and the services they are declining.
* Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen summarized the group's thoughts and acknowledged that the Council has posed two questions that no one currently has an answer to. **The following action items will be researched and addressed in the next meeting**

1. **What is the capacity of the SPED Program (based on current allocation of resources)?**
2. **What is the current per-pupil funding allocation for the SPED Program and is there a legal requirement for MSDE to provide funding for SPED students?**

* Erin Roth, Assistant Secretary for the Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning at MD Labor, acknowledged that the recent conversation has revolved around Special Education and challenged the group to think about the waitlist for the broader CE population.
* Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen asked what happens when an individual has an IEP and ages out of the program (older than 21).
  + Ms.Lander responded to the Deputy Secretary’s question. She said that there is an exit meeting for all individuals that age out of the program where they are informed of what will happen next, how to transition into Adult Basic Education (ABE) classes, how to utilize their IEP to receive supports and accommodations, how to receive accommodations for the GED test etc. She also noted that the special educators do a good job of checking in on individuals while they’re in school and make sure that they are still receiving their necessary support.
  + One thing that Ms.Lander would like to see happen more effectively is notifying the transition and occupation teachers that they are receiving a former special education student.
  + Assistant Attorney General, Leza Griffith, clarified that an individual must be enrolled in the special education program if they require special ed services, if a student ages out of the program they are no longer considered to be SPED students. If an individual older than 21 would like to receive SPED services they can use their IEP to request accommodations.
  + Secretary Scruggs shared her concerns about the issue of confusing mental illness and learning disabilities. She said that some individuals are misplaced in certain programs or provided the wrong services due to the issue of referrals that were originally inaccurate.
  + Danielle Cox sent a message in the virtual meeting chat:
    - “If there are SPED students, services are required to be provided. If there are more than 15 or so students in a specific facility, DPSCS works with Labor to transfer them to a facility with lower numbers”.
    - Ms.Cox also emphasized the need to educate case managers and psychologists on SPED services.

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

Dr. Tamara Barron, Occupational Coordinator for CE at MD Labor’s DWDAL, reported

on CTE updates.

* Dr.Barron opened by sharing some quick facts regarding the occupational training program in the state's prisons.
  + For FY24, CE is offering 24 different occupational programs, with 43 instructors, across 10 prisons.
  + It's not just about training as an occupational priority is to offer national certifications and or industry recognized credentials for each trade.
  + The Joint Skills Training Partnership (JSTP) Program (a joint program that offers on the job training through a partnership between Labor and DPSCS) is offered across the state as well as in conjunction with Maryland Correctional Enterprises (MCE).
  + Perkins funding comes from MSDE through the U.S. Department of Education to support CE programs and it is the primary funding source for occupational programs
    - Funding covers items such as the upgrading of equipment to meet industry demands, professional development for CE staff, as well as instructional materials, and tools and equipment to ensure that students are released from prison prepared to secure a career in their chosen field.
    - The program also receives earmark funds- the wishlist occupational funds through Labor.
* Dr.Barron went on to share some program successes with the Council.
  + The Correctional Education Program is working to rebuild and strengthen programming given considerable challenges that came along with the COVID 19 pandemic. Despite those challenges we had had a number of recent program successes.
    - For FY23, CE had 371 Occupational completions (an increase from 229 in FY22) and 896 National Certificates/Industry recognized credentials earned (increase from 476 in FY22)
    - As of Friday, November 3, 2023, CE has 132 Occupational completions and 417 National Certificates/Industry recognized credentials earned.
    - The goal for FY24 is that CE will have 650 Occupational completions and 915 National Certificates/Industry recognized credentials earned and Dr.Barron remarked that CE is off to a great start.
  + Dr.Barron said that all of these successes are possible because of the collaborative efforts between Labor and DSPCS. She extended a special note of gratitude to DPSCS Chief of Information Technology, Stanley Lofton, and his team for their collaborative work with various Labor and CE leaders to ensure that Occupational testing could be expanded securely when all 3rd party vendors transitioned to online testing. Dr.Barron said that without their support and guidance, it would not be possible to offer Industry recognized Credentials (IRCs) to students. She said that the team has been working towards these outcomes weekly over the past several years and she is very grateful for the support and is looking forward to ensuring that every trade offers an IRC! Dr.Barron also took the time to thank Secretary Scruggs for ensuring that all of the Occupational Testing Labs have brand new computers to test on.
* Dr.Barron then transitioned to share a few updates regarding special programming.
  + The first program that she spoke of is the United States EDA (Economic Development Administration) Offshore Wind Grant.
    - Labor secured a $23M grant from the US Department of Commerce to launch the Maryland Works for Wind Program (MWW) .
    - The project includes training for offshore wind careers in manufacturing, transportation and logistics, and the skilled trades
    - Labor included CE within the grant ($750k) to complement existing training efforts with:
      * 6 Heavy Equipment Operator (HEO) Training Simulators
      * 6 Welding Training Simulators
        + The equipment should arrive very soon!
      * They will be going to: Eastern Correctional Institution- East (ECIE), Maryland Correctional Institution- Hagerstown (MCIH), Maryland Correctional Training Center (MCTC), Occupational Skills Training Center (OSTC), Roxbury Correctional Institution (RCI), and Western Correctional Institution (WCI).
      * These schools/institutions were selected because of the geographic location of the facility. They are located around contraction trade training programs and related career opportunities will be available in this area.
        + These training programs will be available to incarcerated individuals upon their release.
        + Some of the schools also host CE’s Automotive Technology and/or Warehouse Distribution and Logistic program so MWW will be a nice addition to the current program offerings.
  + Dr.Barron then transitioned into speaking about the Certified Peer Recovery Specialist Program (CPRS).
    - This program is another collaborative effort between both DPSCS and Labor and it is growing and thriving! It is funded by the Maryland Opioid Operational Command Center. The program trains students to become CPRSs, individuals who use their lived experience in recovery to help others along in their recovery journey. CPRSs receive formal training to both facilitate support groups and work one-on-one with individuals who are either seeking or maintaining recovery from serious mental health issues, substance use disorders, or co-occurring behavioral health concerns.
      * Students earn hours by providing services to other incarcerated individuals at their respective institutions
      * Dr.Barron proudly shared that 17 Jessup Correctional Institution (JCI) graduates passed their exam with a 100% pass rate. Dr.Barron took the time to recognize how incredible that is and mentioned that those are some of the best outcomes among those tested across the state.
        + The team is currently in the process of preparing for additional students to take their certification exam at other institutions.
      * Funding for FY24 will allow for expansion to North Branch Correctional Institution (NBCI) and Patuxent Institution (PATX).
      * Funding will also support additional training for students at existing institutions Maryland Correctional Institution- Women (MCIW), Dorsey Run Correctional Facility (DRCF), Jessup Correctional Institution (JCI), Maryland Correctional Institution- Jessup (MCIJ), WCI, ECI-E, Eastern Correctional Institution-West (ECI-W), and MCTC)
      * Students who pass their exam will have the opportunity to use their skills in a paid work assignment in the future.
    - Dr.Barron extended a special note of thanks to Mary Keller and Casey Tiefenwerth from the Division of Workforce Development and Adult Learning at MD Labor who are truly at the core of this program. She said that as a team, (with herself, Mary, Casey, Danielle Cox, and others from DPSCS Headquarters and the institutions) they have grown this innovative program to become a 600 hour Occupational Training Program.
    - Dr.Barron went on to say that with Mary and Casey’s leadership, this opportunity grew from one institution, to two, three prior to COVID, and now exists in 10 institutions for FY24.
      * Dr.Barron directly thanked Mary for her leadership with the grant, and Casey for her leadership with monitoring all of the students’ hours, and working collaboratively with “the Board” as well as with the Registered Peer Supervisors (RPSs).
      * Finally Dr.Barron extended her thanks to Danielle Cox (as well as others from DPSCS headquarters) for working to develop the multidisciplinary teams behind the fence so that the program runs seamlessly at each institution.
    - Secretary Scruggs added that of the 17 graduates, 3 individuals have returned to the community and are currently employed as Peer Recovery Specialists. Some graduates have even visited JCI to speak to the incarcerated individuals there to encourage them to join the program.
    - Secretary Scruggs also added that DPSCS is working with DBM to figure out how to hire individuals with lived experience.
    - Secretary Scruggs commended Labor for their work on the CPRS program as it has made significant impacts among the JCI population and other institutions across the state. She said that she hopes to see similar outcomes for the Offshore Wind program.
    - Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen echoed the Secretary’s remarks. He shared that he had the opportunity to visit one of the institutions and heard a presentation from one of the peer recovery specialists. He said as much as he appreciates data, it was extremely valuable to hear directly from a peer recovery specialist. He said that while he was there he could tell how excited and motivated everyone was by this program and felt the cultural shift. Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen said that he left the institution feeling motivated and wanting to really highlight and bolster the success of the CPRS program.
    - Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen noted that there is a vacant spot on the Council for an individual with lived experience.
      * Secretary Scruggs shared that they have a committee of individuals with lived experience that may be useful in identifying someone.
      * Assistant Secretary Roth added that the Council should strive to never let the position remain vacant. She also shared that she believes there have been recommendations sent to the Governor’s office.
  + Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen asked Dr.Barron if they have ever hit the target goal of 650 Occupational completions and if so when?
    - Dr.Barron will look into this and provide an answer to the Deputy Secretary’s question at the next meeting.
  + Assistant Secretary Roth mentioned that an update on the Maryland Longitudinal Data System maypossibly be available for the next CEC meeting. She shared that Labor is really looking into a way to figure out how individuals are doing once they graduate from these programs and receive IRCs.

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

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

* Dr.Dubose began by highlighting the purpose of the Transition Department: to assist incarcerated individuals with learning and applying the soft skills needed to gain and maintain employment as well as assisting them in procuring resources needed to be successful post-release.
  + Also assist with transition plans for our under 21 students.
* Additionally CE staff works very closely with the Reentry navigators to ensure that students have an opportunity to connect with them prior to release.
* The transition program is the proverbial last stop for students in CE before they are released to our communities.
* During FY23, transition students earned a total of 1529 certificates.
  + Thus far, 247 certificates have been issued this year in one of the following areas:
    - Employment Readiness Workshop
    - Transition Planning
    - Life Skills
    - Intro to Computers
    - Basic Keyboarding
    - Workshop Participation
    - Personal and Career Exploration
    - Success at Work
    - Reentry and Employment Resources
* Dr.Dubose presented a bar graph demonstrating course completion in each of the courses offered this past year across all subjects.
  + There are several courses with low numbers of certificates earned. Dr.Dubose explained that this is due to staffing shortages.
  + Dr.Dubose explained that she has been working with Ms.Janelle Johnson, the Reentry Navigator for Baltimore City, to conduct Reentry Workshops for students who have been impacted by the shortage and are unable to enroll in a transition course. Ms. Johnson is masterful with encouraging the incarcerated individuals and providing them with gentle guidance and concrete information to help propel them to their goals.
* Moving forward, Dr.Dubose stated that CE is looking forward to introducing the revamped Entrepreneurship Academy, Success at Work, and Parenting curriculum to students once instructors are in place.
* Secretary Scruggs asked when staffing will be available for the Entrepreneurship program?
  + Dr.Dubose said that they are currently working on that and they recently submitted the request to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM). In the interim, she said there is a workbook form and students can go through at their own pace.
    - Secretary Scruggs asked if this is a program that can be started without staff.
      * Dr.Dubose clarified that the original goal was to make some of the activities self-paced so that, in the case of another shutdown or lack of an instructor, students would still be able to participate and learn, however, the program is not set up in a way that it can be completely individual without an instructor.
* Secretary Scruggs stated that there is money left in the Labor budget and was wondering if that money could be used to staff the transition program. Ms.Cox will look into this.
* Jack Weber asked if the Barbering program is still up and running.
  + Dr.Barron confirmed that this program is on-going and that it currently exists in 3 of the institutions.
    - Mr.Weber noted that the Barbering Program would work really well in conjunction with the Entrepreneurship Program. Individuals can receive their license and then learn how to run their own businesses with that new skill set.
      * Dr.Barron explained that there is a module within the Barbering program that touches on Entrepreneurship and how to use a barbering license to become an entrepreneur.
        + Dr.Barron said that there is a workforce development unit in every standardized curriculum that discusses the entrepreneurial aspect for each trade (not just Barbering)
* Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen identified an action items for the group:
  + Develop a “Plan B” for Entrepreneurship program funding.
* Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen asked if the courses were self paced and how long does it take for someone to complete it.
  + Dr.Dubose answered 4-6 weeks
* Assistant Secretary Roth asked how many staff are currently providing transition services across the state.
  + Dr.Dubose responded, saying that there 9 transition staff located throughout the state.
* In the Zoom chat, someone asked about the staffing capacity for the Transition program and what is being done to address the shortage
  + Dr.Dubose said that her team has requested additional staffing from DBM and are waiting on their response
  + Ms.Reuben added that the CE team will take a look at the budget that is shared with DSPCS and see if there is any funding available for staffing.
* Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen agreed that additional staffing would be fantastic, however, he expressed his concern about filling the positions that are currently vacant before asking for more. He asked Lloyd Day, Director of Workforce Development at Labor, if there is any more from a workforce development standpoint that Labor can be doing to assist in filling those positions.
  + Mr.Day responded that they can do recruitments, host job fairs, and utilize the navigators.
  + Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen suggested discussing the aforementioned item in the next meeting. Provided there is still a staffing shortage in the Transition Program by the next meeting, he would like to further discuss what more Labor can be doing to recruit for and fill those vacant positions.
* Dr.Dubose closed by handing it off to Mr. Lloyd Day and Ms. Janelle Johnson and to explain to the council how CE students and incarcerated individuals are preparing for release and connected to employment and training opportunities.

**Re-entry/ Recidivism Update (Director Lloyd Day & Re-entry Navigator Janelle Johnson)**

Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen opened the floor for Mr.Day and Ms. Johnson to share updates regarding re-entry and recidivism across the state.

* Lloyd Day, Director for the Office of Workforce Development introduced himself and began his presentation
* The Department was awarded a $3.9M National Dislocated Worker Grant (QUEST DWG).
  + 3 of the 4 participating Local Areas are focusing on returning citizens (Baltimore City, Montgomery County and Anne Arundel County are focusing on returning citizens, Western Maryland is focusing on trade)
    - under the grant they will be doing career guidance and development, training, and a huge focus on support services (childcare, transportation, financial assistance with clothing, job equipment, training equipment, etc)
      * Assistant Secretary Roth added that the Department secured between $5,00 and $10,00 per participant to ensure that participants are sufficiently financially supported to overcome their barrier to employment.
    - goal is 190 returning citizens served over 3 yr grant period
      * 90 Baltimore City resident
      * 50 Anne Arundel residents
      * 50 Montgomery Residents
    - all local areas have their funding so programming is occurring now.
    - under this grant, returning citizens are to be considered dislocated workers
    - Mr.Day is hopeful that they will have some data points to provide by the next meeting.
  + Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen asked Mr.Day to explain to the group what a National Dislocated Worker Grant is.
    - Mr.Day explained that a National Dislocated Worker Grant targets participants that are long-term employed or collecting UI benefits.
  + Secretary Scruggs asked Mr.Day how the Local Areas will identify who they serve.
    - Mr.Day explained that they will use the re-entry navigators to connect returning citizens to the opportunity. They will also identify potential participants through referrals, the Local Areas connection to local institutions and detention centers and through regular foot traffic at the AJC.
  + Assistant Secretary Roth added that Governor Moore issued a press release about this grant last week and assigned Labor the task of circulating that link to the CEC.
  + Secretary Scruggs mentioned that DPSCS has a population of returning citizens in Baltimore City that would greatly benefit from the services made available through this grant and asked Mr.Day if there is any way that those individuals could be targeted.
    - Danielle Cox will meet with Jay Miller to identify the specific individuals on the dashboard and will send Mr.Day that list. He will pass that information along to the local grantees and navigators.
  + Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen reiterated that he wants the CEC meetings to consist of on-going conversations. He said in order to do that the council members need to lock down action items and maintain a system of accountability.
    - He went on to identify an action item for the group. He said that since the QUEST DWG program is so new there are a number of details that still need to be figured out.For the next meeting he said that Labor will provide an update on the grant program and also discuss how certain individuals can be connected to these opportunities.
* Mr.Day then shared some statistics demonstrating the value of AJC services to returning citizens.
  + - Labor Exchange PY23 Q1-Overall *(all individuals that come into a AJC to receive basic career services)*
      * Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit = 60%
        + *Employment Rate 2nd Quarter after exit means that the individual secured employment after exit from the program (90 days)*
      * Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit= 60%
        + *Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit means that the individual is still employed after the 4th quarter.*
      * Median Earnings = $6,200
        + *What those individuals earned while they were employed during those quarters.*
  + Labor Exchange PY23 Q1-Re-Entry *(all returning citizens that come into an AJC to receive career services)*
    - Employment Rate 2nd Quarter After Exit = 61.5%
    - Employment Rate 4th Quarter After Exit = 60.5%
    - Median Earnings = $7,006
  + Mr.Day concluded by saying that returning citizens seem to be more successful in securing employment with the assistance of AJC staff.
    - Mr.Day also explained that he brought this data to the CEC for the first time as the re-entry staff just began entering information into the Maryland Workforce Exchange (MWE) and the data team is now able to provide Mr.Day with a quarterly report of outcomes.
  + Mr.Weber asked Mr.Day about the median earnings. He said that in looking at the numbers Mr.Day presented, he asked if those individuals were making less than $15/hour.
    - Mr.Day said that those figures represent the median earnings, therefore, about half of the individuals are making less than $15 and half of them are making more.
    - Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen remarked that there is good news and bad news displayed in the data that Llloyd shared.
      * The good news is that reentry outcomes are greater than the outcomes for the regular population served through the state’s AJCs.
      * The bad news is that it doesn’t appear the wages are very high for returning citizens. Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen, however, cautioned that council in that the data presented is only representative of a single quarter and that it doesn't show the full picture of earnings for all individuals.
        + With that being said, Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen said that the team should strive to have median earnings reached closer to $10,000.
* Mr.Day introduced Ms.Janelle Johnson, MD Labor Reentry Navigator for Baltimore City, to provide further updates on re-entry and recidivism.
* Ms.Johnson began by providing the group with a general description of what a re-entry navigator is and what they do.
  + Reentry navigators are a team of employment specialists that are located within the AJC across the state. They connected justice-involved job seekers to training and employment opportunities.
    - Ms.Johnson said that in addition to meeting with jobseekers in the AJCs, reentry navigators also meet with individuals in state correctional facilities prior to their release.
* Ms.Johsnon shared navigator statistics with the group:
  + She explained that the following data is gathered by each reentry navigator, combined, and provided to the Director of Workforce Development. The following data is from the period of April - October 2023:
    - Behind Fence Contacts - 1,727
    - Job Readiness Workshops- 258
    - Outreach Visits to Correctional Facilities - 225
    - Federal Bonding Letter Issued - 106
    - Home Detention Contacts - 33
    - Employment Placements- 91
    - Referred to Training in AJC - 189
    - Served Overall - 3855
    - Employer Outreach Contracts - 530
* Ms.Johnson went on to share a number of customer success stories submitted by the state’s Reentry Navigators.
  + Ms.Johnson read a success story out of Baltimore City.
    - Mr. Hinnant returned home after ten years of incarceration. He expressed interest in CDL training but did not have a driver’s license. Navigator reviewed the online practice test for learner's permit and took the test to get a passing practice score. Mr. Hinnant successfully passed his class C license exam, as well as his class A learner’s permit and began a Class A CDL registered apprenticeship with Chaney Enterprises in September.
  + Ms.Johnson read a success story submitted by Ms.Ellen Bredt out of Anne Arundel County.
    - Mr. Johnson trained at Dorsey Run as a Peer Recovery Specialist. His goal was to complete his certification after returning home. He visited the American Job Center in Linthicum, where we worked to identify openings and prepare applications. In August the county health department offered him a Peer Support job as well as support in certifying. The Health Dept has offered to present to future peers in Jessup on how to be successful in the role.
  + Ms.Johnson read a success story submitted by Ms.Diane Dabbs out of Howard/Carroll County.
    - Mr. Redfear sought assistance at the American Job Center and worked with navigator Diane Dabbs and received career development counseling, resume assistance, bonding letters, and interview preparation. He was referred to the Success In Style Clothing Program, which provided him with attire for an interview. He is currently employed at Columbia Association using his skill and knowledge in carpentry. He has been able to purchase a new vehicle, paid off outstanding debts, and has big plans for his future.
  + Ms.Johnson read a success story submitted by Ms.Tawanda Redding out of the lower shore
    - Mr. Fitchett was employed by Perdue in Salisbury MD and was frustrated with his current line of work. He was seeking a career in the truck driving industry. After completing Ms. Redding’s Reentry Workshops, the process of getting Mr. Fitchett into the CDL program began. Mr. Fitchett completed his DOT Physical, obtained his CDL Learners permit, and was referred to WIOA for training. Mr. Fitchett entered training in June 2023 and in August 2023 he successfully obtained his CDL A Class license. He is currently employed with Harkins Concrete Construction.
  + Ms.Johnson highlighted that each of the individuals mentioned in the success stories obtained full-time employment demonstrating how valuable the collaboration of services between DPSCS and Labor really are. By working together to identify and provide the needed resources, whether directory or indirectly, staff has been successful in connecting them to full time employment and eliminating significant personal barriers. She commended any and all individuals involved in this work from social workers, to reentry navigators, to CE staff and DPSCS case managers.
* Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen noted that at a future CEC meeting he would like to hear more about how the work of the reentry navigators aligns with workforce development being done on a local level at the AJC.

**Purpose (Director Ruschelle Reuben)**

Ruschelle Reuben, Director of Correctional Education at MD Labor spoke about the CEC initial conversations surrounding the Council’s mission and alignment at the beginning of the meeting. She said that this portion of the meeting will function to gather the group’s thoughts and feelings about the future goals of the CEC.

* + Ms.Reuben asked the group to think about 2 or 3 bodies of work for the CEC to focus on in FY24.
    - For those individuals that attended the meeting in person, Ms.Reuben noted that there are pieces of chart paper set up around the room and that CE staff is ready to record any ideas put forth.
    - For those attending online, she encouraged folks to type their ideas in the chat.
    - When everyone was finished brainstorming Ms.Reuben read the suggestions aloud and the group was invited to participate in an “energy vote” to determine the top 2-3 priorities.
      * Once individuals had listed their ideas Ms.Reuben read aloud the concepts that had the most support (the most energy dots).
        + Ms.Reuben stated that the top priority seems to be the Council developing a data-driven tracking system that measures the impact and outcomes of services for justice-involved individuals (are they securing employment in the industries they were trained?).

Ms.Reuben added that this priority could also include developing an individual employment plan for all returning citizens to assist them in making connections upon their release back into the community.

* Ms.Reuben also asked the group to think about how often and when the CEC should meet for FY24 and if the Council should continue to meet quarterly.
  + Secretary Scruggs said that she would prefer to meet quarterly so that the subcommittees have enough time to meet in-between Council meetings.

**Next Steps (Director Ruschelle Reuben)**

Ruschelle Reuben, Director of Correctional Education at MD Labor summarized some next steps for the Council and the Subcommittees.

* Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen asked Ms.Reuben what the next step will be. He asked her generally what will happen with the priorities that the Council identified.
  + Ms.Reuben said that during the next meeting she was planning for the CEC to form the Subcommittees to work intentionally on each of the priorities. She also mentioned that there have been a number of action and agenda items that have come out of this meeting to check back in on for the next meeting.
* Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen asked Ms.Reuben if the Council will continue to meet quarterly.
  + Assistant Attorney General, Leza Griffith noted that the CEC is legally required to meet four times a year.
    - It was confirmed that the group will continue to meet quarterly in FY24.
* Jack Weber mentioned that the CEC Annual Report must be approved before the end of the year. Jack Weber asked for that report to be circulated prior to the next CEC meeting**.**
* Deputy Secretary Perkins-Cohen confirmed and summarized what will be covered in the next CEC meeting.
  + The Council will identify meeting dates for FY24.
  + The Council will form Subcommittees and be assigned a task/priority.
  + The Council will vote on the Minutes from this meeting.
  + The Council will vote on the Annual Report.
  + The Council will follow up on any loose ends from this meeting (any action or agenda items).

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

* Secretary Scruggs thanked the group and said that the meeting was very informative for her. She shared that the American Correctional Association (ACA) Conference will be held at the Gaylord from January 4-7th.
  + Day 1 of Conference is focused on correctional education
  + individuals can get a discounted registration rate since DPSCS is hosting
  + There are a few free spots for Labor that have yet to be filled
  + There will be a lived experience symposium
  + There are currently over 1,000 registrants from other states
  + **Ms. Reuben will coordinate with DSPCS to ensure that Labor is in attendance.**
* Deputy Secretary Perkins Cohen requested a motion to adjourn the meeting.
* Mr. Weber motioned to adjourn the meeting and Deputy Secretary Perkins Cohen adjourned the meeting at 12:00 p.m.

The next meeting of the CEC will be on Monday, December 11, 2023.