ABE/GED/SPED

Meeting Minutes

March 7, 2025
10am-11am

Virtual Meeting

Attendees: Ainsley Moench, Alyssa Fieo, Anne Bocchini Pack, Christian Gant, Danielle Cox, Jamel Freeman, John Feaster III, Stephen Steurer

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Dr. Stephen Steurer started the meeting at 10:00am. He asked John Feaster III to invite an academic coordinator, career technology coordinator, special education coordinator, principal, or teacher to meetings to provide a perspective from the front lines. John Feaster III said he could help with that.

Dr. Stephen Steurer also announced he would like to send a letter to John Feaster III, Alyssa Fio, Mary Gable, Danielle Cox, and Ruschelle Reuben about the special education questions Alyssa Fieo had about correctional education. Alyssa Fieo commented that if she was looking at a program, these are the types of questions that she would want to know to evaluate if special education students are being served.

Dr. Stephen Steurer said that perhaps one of the recommendations the Commission makes is to let special education students obtain a high school diploma rather than a GED. In the past, there were many reports, policies, and procedures surrounding special education students. Alyssa Fieo recommended that the group reach out to the assistant superintendent for special education for more information. Dr. Stephen Steurer said the questions will be added to the letter as well as a request for more data/

Anne Bocchini Pack asked John Feaster III what he believes are the easy fixes for correctional education. John Feaster III replied that he would like to focus on the time incarcerated students spend in the classroom, which would get people off of the wait list. Dr. Stephen Steurer said the Commission asked for data on school closures and how many hours a student goes to school each day. John Feaster III replied that if you could extend the time-in-chair to six hours a day, that would reduce the number of time someone is in a program. However, there are significant school closures.

Dr. Stephen Steurer replied that in the past, teachers commented that six hours in-chair was too much, but three hours was a perfect amount of time to go. However, that depended on programs occurring daily.

John Feaster III agreed, and pointed out that if you were to decrease the amount of school closures, it would have a double positive effect, as learning needs to be consistent. He also asked if the Commission would be doing classroom evaluations and evaluating the quality of the education.

Dr. Stephen Steurer said one of the questions he has is how much professional development teachers are getting. He also asked about special education teachers, as they have to practice different modalities. He announced that he would be gone from the 13th to the 28th.

Jamel Freeman brought up that there are lots of barriers for incarcerated individuals accessing education. For example, individuals with distribution charges are barred from obtaining the Pell Grant. The group should also look at barriers to employment that exist on the legislative level, such as certain restrictions in licensing.

Dr. Stephen Steurer said that some of the recommendations that the Commission makes will be legislative, but some of the problems are on a federal level.

Jamel Freeman talked about the importance of involving individuals with lived experience in discussions. Dr. Stephen Steurer thanked Jamel Freeman for his contributions to the Commission.

Ainsley Moench announced that the next meeting is scheduled for April 11th at 10am. Christian Gant asked if an agenda will be provided beforehand, and Ainsley Moench said she would provide it.

The meeting adjourned at 10:27am.