Prison Education Delivery Reform Commission Meeting Minutes

June 5, 2025
10am-11:30am

Virtual Meeting

Attendees: Adam Cummings, Amanda Owens, Ainsley Moench, Dr. Andrea Cantora, Anne Bocchini Pack, Arinze Ifekauche, Del. Cheryl Pasteur, Christian Gant, Danielle Cox, Del. Karen Simpson, Denise Riley, Gordon Pack, Initia Lettau, John Feaster III, John Griffin, Dr. Judith Lichtenberg, Karen Esterque, Del. Karen Simpson, Meredith Conde, Richard Gibson, Riley Donahue, Rose Dailey, Ruschelle Reuben, Dr. Stephen Steurer, Yvonne Briley-Wilson

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I. Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 10:05am.

II. Announcement of Correctional Institution Visits

Ainsley Moench discussed announced scheduled visits to correctional institutions. The Commission was encouraged to sign up to one of three visits: MCTC and RCI on July 14, JCI and MCI-W on July 29th, and ECI-E and ECI-W on July 30th. Danielle Cox reminded everyone to arrive at 9am to get through security and to not plan on bringing anything inside. Del. Karen Simpson asked if any background information was needed to be processed through security, and Danielle Cox responded that she would work with Ainsley Moench to get all required information. Sign-ups were limited to 10 people and a deadline was set.

III. Approval of May meeting minutes

The meeting minutes for May 8th were approved.

IV. Rescheduling of July Meeting

Dr. Stephen Steurer announced that the July meeting would be rescheduled to July 10th to avoid the July 4th holiday.

V. Discussion and Approval of the Interim Report

Dr. Stephen Steurer presented the interim report, noting that after it is approved by the Commission, it still must be reviewed by the Governor's Office before being submitted to the Governor, Speaker of the House, and President of the Senate. He thanked the workgroup chairs for their significant contributions. The report summarized major activities, including seven monthly commission meetings, 14 stakeholder work group meetings, six interviews with state directors of correctional education, a survey to the Correctional Education Association, and data

requests to the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services and Department of Labor. There were no edits on the ABE, GED, or Special Education workgroup section of the report.

Dr. Andrea Cantora gave an overview of the Higher Education workgroup section of the report. The Higher Education workgroup focused on funding, technology, space, incentives, statewide collaboration, and reentry support. Dr. Stephen Steurer commented on how the report also highlights current improvements being made.

Dr. Stephen Steurer gave an overview of the Career Technology and Workforce Development workgroup. The Career Technology and Workforce Development workgroup focused on transitional instruction, data sharing, aligning occupational training to post-release employment outcomes and licensure, and barriers to employment.

Del. Karen Simpson suggested creating a list of careers that prohibit or make it difficult for returning citizens to obtain licensure, to be addressed at either the licensing or legislative level. Dr. Stephen Steurer agreed this would be a crucial next activity.

Dr. Stephen Steurer went over the Commission-wide and future activities section of the report. He asked John Feaster III when they could set up a meeting to discuss the correctional education data system, and John Feaster III replied he would coordinate to set one up.

Del. Cheryl Pasteur highlighted the need for legislation regarding special education compliance, particularly concerning how past records are acquired and assessed, and how needs are met for incarcerated individuals.

Dr. Stephen Steurer, Del. Karen Simpson, and Del. Cheryl Pasteur discussed the best time for the final report to come out to influence possible legislation. They concluded that a November report would be the best time.

The interim report was approved unanimously by Del. Cheryl Pasteur, Amanda Owens, Dr. Andrea Cantora, Christian Gant, Del. Karen Simpson, Gordon Pack, Initia Lettau, Karen Esterque, Meredith Conde, Danielle Cox, John Feaster III, and Dr. Stephen Steurer.

Gordon Pack expressed gratitude for the opportunity to work with diverse individuals on such a crucial topic and commended Dr. Stephen Steurer's leadership. He shared his personal experience of completing college extension credits while incarcerated and having them honored by Morgan State University, emphasizing the importance of this commission's work.

Del. Cheryl Pasteur echoed the gratitude for the collaboration between different stakeholders with different backgrounds, highlighting the importance of the interim report in addressing

existing problems within the system. She emphasized the value of including voices and experiences of returning citizens.

John Feaster III thanked the Commission on behalf of the Department of Labor, and affirmed their commitment to working with the Commission to improve correctional education.

Anne Bocchini Pack talked about her experience writing down the issues she experienced while incarcerated, and how valuable it is to have a group of people working to improve those issues now she is out. She noted that this report gives hope to those who are still inside.

Danielle Cox thanked everyone, especially the returning citizens, for their passionate contributions.

Delegate Karen Simpson reiterated the importance of including the voices of those the commission aims to serve, stating that their experiences are crucial for true systemic improvement.

Karen Esterque echoed that the Commission is giving hope to those who are currently inside that there are advocates for them on the outside.

Stephen Steurer shared his personal journey into correctional education, emphasizing the honor of working with the commission and making a positive impact.

Ainsley Moench thanked everyone for their hard work and contributions to the report.

VI. Adjournment

Dr. Stephen Steurer announced the next meeting will be held on July 10th.
The meeting adjourned at 11:20am.