



500 North Calvert Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202  
Phone: 410-230-6388  
Fax: 410-333-0853  
[www.dllr.state.md.us](http://www.dllr.state.md.us)

# *Workforce Creation and Adult Education Transition Council*



200 West Baltimore Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21201  
Phone: 410-767-0158  
Fax: 410-333-2099  
[www.marylandpublicschools.org](http://www.marylandpublicschools.org)

## **Comments on the Correctional Education and Re-Entry Work Recommendations**

The following written comments to the CE Work Group Recommendations were emailed at [adulthood@dllr.state.md.us](mailto:adulthood@dllr.state.md.us). They were forwarded to the CE Work Group Subcommittee Chairs met in person to consider them in full, making to the recommendations where feasible.

### **Comments 1:**

CE Recommendation 17, Program Accreditation, item "a" Value of Middle States accreditation for the CE Program is in being able to issue high school diplomas. While CE programs do a good job and our students are proud of their accomplishment in passing the GED Examination to earn a Maryland HS diploma equivalency, I don't believe we want to hand our graduates a document that announces the source of their diploma.

DOC facilities have been undertaking ACA accreditation. WCI, ECI, & RCI have achieved this recognition. An essential component of this undertaking is the approval of the school's operations. A separate system-wide effort as is implied in this recommendation is a duplication of effort that encompasses a considerable expenditure of funds and personnel resources on a consistent basis. As DOC facilities pursue this route, the CE programs will in turn fulfill ACA (i.e., CEA) requirements for accreditation.

CE Recommendation 20, Academic Programs, item "a" In that the new curriculum is being implemented, now is a good time for it to be reviewed relative to the goals and expectations of DLLR.

CE Recommendation 20, Advanced/Post-Secondary Education Programs, item "f" ASC6 is currently beyond the mandated service requirement of CE. The term "free" means what? The purpose of ASC6 is to ensure that those inmates who attain the HS Diploma via examination have the necessary skills to handle college level coursework. For CE to do this, our legal mandate must be expanded. Otherwise, it should be left to the discretion of the community colleges which have provisions to address this need.

CE Recommendation 20, Library Programs, item "d" The statement needs to be reworded as it implies that the CE Libraries are the providers of legal materials. CE Libraries provide reference materials to assist inmates in researching legal documents and assist the DOC in offering a conduit by which the inmate population can access the courts as mandated. We want to remove any notion that CE libraries are "legal libraries."

Funding Group Recommendation 8, Correctional Education Funding, item "c", bullet 2 Use of the term 'salaries' implies use of a PIN. Suggest rewording .e.g., 'Pay for the contractual services of...' to clarify the issue.

### **Comments 2:**

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the CE transitional recommendations. Generally, the recommendations are sound and would improve when funding can be identified .I have one which is not tied to a specific recommendation. I believe the various estimates of the number of inmates needing service are not based on sufficient data. One element in the attempt to identify program need would be an exit survey of offenders nearing release which collected data on educational needs at intake and needs addressed by the time the offender was about to be released. What is the gap between needs and services delivered? Why were the needs not addressed? I don't have much faith in the attempt to determine needs by looking at the overall inmate population (23,000) and the number of inmates served by education at any point in time. In terms of comments on specific CE Recommendations, I offer the following comments:

- # 6- I don't see any reference to the DOC Educational Liaison the one full time position dedicated to interagency coordination between DOC and MSDE (DLLR).
- #4 -7 all programs mandatory- Maryland was an early Mandatory Education state, Is there evidence that the current degree of coercion (with incentives) has not worked and that a different system would be an improvement?,
- #8 incentives for completion (as opposed to the current system of incentives for participation) Incentives for completion would be an improvement unless it replaces incentives for participation. Participation incentives provide a monthly reinforcement for the desired behavior not a future (any possibly unattainable) incentive.
- #20 occupation programs require completion of a number of other programs (including GED) and having 18 mos. left to serve- Do we really want to deny occupation training to everyone who is unable to complete the GED (Special Educ. students, older students who have been Special Education students). You may be excluding a large number of inmates who need occupational training and who just can't complete the long list of prerequisites. Also a number of short-term occupation programs have been offered in pre-release that can be completed in a few months.
- #21- Offer more incentives (DOC) for GED completion- I think the recommendation should include the role of the Parole Commission. Special consideration for parole may be the most powerful incentive to an inmate. I would also expand the incentives from GED to include occupation certificate since the research had established the linkage between vocational completion and post release employment and reduced recidivism. If you would like to discuss any of these comments/recommendation please email or call me at 410.381.8754. My current position is the Director of Re-entry Services for Maryland Correctional Enterprises, my previous CE connection was as the DOC Education Liaison from the transfer of CE from the DOC to MSDE until my retirement 3 years ago.

### **Comments 3:**

Please accept the following comments on several recommendations submitted to the Workforce Creation and Adult Education Transition Council by the Correctional Education Work Group:

1. CE Recommendation #4(c), which reads “Coordinators must continuously identify innovative and quality instructional practices to improve the academic program, occupational program, special education program, library program, transitional/re-entry program services, postsecondary/advanced education program, and the use of instructional technology.”
  - a. Comment: The type of action taken should include policy change also. These responsibilities could be included in the job descriptions of coordinators.
2. CE Recommendation #5, which reads “Develop a joint (between DPSCS and MSDE/DLLR) coordinated and comprehensive plan that details an inmate’s service and program needs from entry into the correctional system to re-entry into the community . . .”
  - a. Comment: The type of action taken includes the creation of an Executive Panel (for joint coordination) comprised of DOC, CE, DPSCS and DLLR officials. A former prisoner and representatives from county-based re-entry offices and community organizations should be included as members of this panel.
3. CE Recommendation # 9(a), which reads “Designate DPSCS as the lead agency for coordination of reentry services provided by the various partners, including significant participation from current and potential employers.”
  - a. Comment: Consider co-designating DPSCS and county-based re-entry offices and/or community-based programs as lead coordinators.
4. CE Recommendation #9(d), which reads “Establish and coordinate services with the Pre-Release System and community-based DPP programs.”
  - a. Comment: Consider adding county-based re-entry office and community programs.
5. CE Recommendation #9(e), which reads “Charge DWD with strengthening the linkages and capacity of educational and training options between CE programs to ensure inmates are prepared to succeed upon re-entry.”
  - a. Comment: Consider including the Department of Parole and Probation that would be responsible for assisting inmates with receiving medications and referrals to drug addiction treatment upon release. A continuum of medical treatment will be crucial to successful employment experiences of former prisoner with medical needs.
6. CE Recommendation #11(b), which reads “Include CE staff and other critical reentry partners in the development/refinement of the case management system (OCMS) . . .”
  - a. Comment: Insert the words “community-based” before reentry. The recommendation should explicitly state that these reentry partners will be in the community.

7. CE Recommendation #15(d), which reads “The Council’s membership composition should be changed to reflect the education and workforce needs of Maryland. Membership of the revised Council should include . . .”
  - a. Comment: Add to the list of membership a representative from MSDE, a former prisoner, and representatives from county-based reentry offices and community programs.