

California Rehabilitation Oversight Board Minutes September 8, 2010 Meeting

The California Rehabilitation Oversight Board (C-ROB) met in open session at 1:30 p.m. on September 8, 2010, at the Tsakopoulos Galleria Library, East Room, 828 I Street, Sacramento, California.

Board members: Present at the meeting was David Shaw, Inspector General (Chairman); Matt Cate, Secretary, Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR); Debra Jones, Administrator, Adult Education Programs (Designee for Jack O'Connell, Superintendent of Public Instruction); José Millan, Vice Chancellor, California Community Colleges (Designee for Jack Scott, Chancellor, California Community Colleges); Renée Zito, Director, State Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs; Jean Barawed, Assistant Deputy Director, Long Term Care, Department of Mental Health (Designee for Stephen Mayberg, Director); Bruce Bikle, Professor, California State University, Sacramento (Chancellor of California State University appointee); Wendy S. Still, Chief Adult Probation Officer for the City and County of San Francisco (Senate Committee on Rules appointee); and William Arroyo, Regional Medical Director, Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (Speaker of the Assembly appointee). Absent from the meeting was Susan Turner, Professor, University of California, Irvine (President of the University of California appointee) and Gary Stanton, Sheriff, Solano County (Governor appointee).

Office of the Inspector General staff: Barbara Sheldon, Chief Counsel; Laura Hill, C-ROB Executive Director; Ann Bordenkircher, C-ROB Secretary, and Celeste Olson, Executive Assistant.

CDCR Presenters: Elizabeth Siggins, Chief Deputy Secretary, Adult Programs; Cynthia Florez-DeLyon, Director, Division of Adult Rehabilitative Programs; Robert Ambroselli, Director, Division of Adult Parole Operations; Steve Chapman, Assistant Secretary, Office of Research; Sol Irving, Correctional Counselor III, California State Prison, Solano; Kathy Bibb, Correctional Counselor III, Valley State Prison for Women.

Public Comments: David Warren, Lobbyist, Taxpayers for Improving Public Safety (TiPS); John Kern, SEIU/Institutional Teacher; Cindy Greer, Institutional Teacher; and Hellan Roth Dowden, SEIU (also on behalf of Steven Bowen, Institutional Teacher).

Item 1. Call to Order.

Chairman Shaw called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

Item 2. Introductions and Establish Quorum.

The Chairman introduced Office of the Inspector General staff participating in the meeting, and at the Chairman's request, board members introduced themselves. Chairman Shaw had the pleasure of publicly thanking retired board member, Loren Buddress, who served as chief probation officer in San Mateo County for many years. Chief Buddress was presented with a Senate Rules Committee Resolution signed by Senate pro Tempore Darrell Steinberg, and a resolution from the board.

Chief Buddress stated that it had been an incredible honor and privilege to have worked with the C-ROB members.

Item 3. Review Agenda.

Chairman Shaw stated the primary purpose of the board meeting was to have a discussion and board decision on the September 15, 2010 draft C-ROB report.

Item 4. Review and Approval of the March 3, 2010 minutes.

Upon motion made and duly seconded, the minutes of the July 14, 2010 C-ROB meeting were approved.

Item 5. Executive Director updates.

Ms. Hill briefly discussed the report writing committee meeting held July 28, 2010 to frame the September 15 report and to address information needed from CDCR. Written questions to the department were grouped into eight areas: educational programming, substance abuse programming, performance indicators for educational and substance abuse programming, PIA, vocational programming, operations case management, and out-of-state facilities. Ms. Hill stated that information gathered from CDCR, five institutional visits, and informal discussions with teachers, substance abuse staff, and custody staff was included in the final report.

During a visit to CSP-Solano, Ms. Hill attended a presentation given by lifers on a unique mentoring program within the Solano substance abuse program. Ms. Hill requested that Sol Irving, Correctional Counselor III, CSP-Solano, who manages the Substance Abuse Program (SAP), address the board and provide details about the program. Mr. Irving said after much discussion with Headquarters, it was decided to use inmates as coaches and/or mentors in providing treatment in such areas as substance abuse and relapse prevention. The idea was set in motion for training lifers or long-term inmates to be coaches to those that had a history of substance abuse. A parallel process was used to train these inmates in counseling skills, but staff also had to deal with the issues that might get in the way of them being effective counselors. Mr. Irving said that CDCR chose Options of Recovery out of Berkeley and brought in some of the best trainers in the United States, which included training by the U.S. Navy.

Mr. Irving presented a video on the Solano Offender Mentor Certification Program.¹ The certification program requires a four-month training and 4,000-hours of practice. Mr. Irving indicated that approximately eight to ten of the lifer mentors have received parole dates in the last six months. Two program graduates spoke to the board.

Lindsey Bolar said he has been out of prison for seven months and is successfully working for Options Recovery Services. He shared some examples of how he has been able to mentor young men. Mr. Bolar stated he has been clean ten years and is pleased to give back and dedicate his life in service to the community. He expressed that through the training he received in this CDCR certification program, he has been able to find his worth and value as well as the confidence to apply what he learned.

Raol Villamayor is also working with the Option Recovery Services. He said that the parallel process in the CDCR training program changed so many areas of his life for the good. For one, Mr. Villamayor learned that he was not “doing time” by himself, but that his family also served time as long as he

¹ See CDCR website at: <http://www.youtube.com/CAcorrections#p/c/568AE1C483A924DF/38/I8wW30ZFHv0> to view video.

remained in prison. The mentor program was the avenue for him to give back to a community he helped destroy.

Kathy Bibb, Correctional Counsel III, Valley State Prison for Women (VSPW), began the mentoring program in the women's prison in March. The women went through the 90-day Substance Abuse Program, then spent classroom time with the Department of Navy, followed by four-months' instruction from the University of California, San Diego. Ms. Bibb currently has 17 mentors going through the certification program. Ms. Bibb shared letters from two women, both incarcerated for over 10 years, who felt that their lives have been changed by going through this CDCR mentor program. While commenting that the program can seem overwhelming at times, the lifers said that it offers self-awareness and removes roadblocks that have prevented recovery.

Mr. Irving discussed the 90-day SAP. He explained that after the enactment of AB 900, the institution followed the California Logic Model.² Mr. Irving explained that when an inmate enters the system, they spend a couple of weeks being assessed, partly to determine the severity of the inmate's substance abuse. The inmate is placed on a moderate or high track. They go through a series of evidence-based programs that are extremely intense. Because the classes are over three hours, CDCR offers a morning or afternoon session, with space for 75 inmates per session. The SAP programs now benefit from the inmate mentors; the inmate gets a plan with short-term and long-term goals, with the offer of aftercare when they parole. Currently, Mr. Irving says around 70 percent of inmates are in an aftercare program. CSP-Solano has a waiting list at this time of about 300 inmates who want to get in the certification program.

Ms. Bibb stated that there are some differences in the 90 day-SAP for women. Studies show that females typically have some trauma that brings them to drug use and incarceration and so the programming is trauma-informed. She indicated that female inmates are signing up willingly for this 90-day program, with the last group numbering about 134 inmates.

Mr. Irving and Ms. Bibb took questions from the board on waiting lists, placement of inmates and lifers, data collection and analysis. It was noted by Elizabeth Siggins that the information presented by Mr. Irving and Ms. Bibb relates specifically to Solano and VSPW, which both have high lifer populations and therefore differ from other institutions. Dr. Steve Chapman also spoke to data collection, with substance abuse being the strongest area for programming data.

Item 6. California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation update on parolee services and referral process.

Robert Ambroselli, Director, Division of Adult Parole Operations (DAPO), CDCR, addressed the board on recent changes to parole operations. He expressed early on in his presentation the importance of communicating plans to staff and clearly articulating expectations. Parole Division management is now placing parole information on-line; not only for staff, but also for the public, all of whom can go on-line and read the material for themselves, viewing documents such as the "Five-Year Roadmap."³

Some of DAPO's goals are to protect the community by aligning practices that reduce recidivism and promote a cultural shift with how parole agents perform their duties. Under the new model, average

² See Expert Panel Report, June 2007: http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/news/docs/Expert_Rpt/ExpertPanelRpt_.pdf

³ See <http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Parole/index.html>

caseloads are reduced from 70 parolees for every one parole agent to 48 parolees to every one parole agent. The department is running academies to train cadets on parole functions. Much work is being accomplished in mentoring of parole agents. Mr. Ambroselli said that a new academy graduate will team up with a lead agent and not carry his own caseload for 10 weeks, but instead, observe how the lead agent works cases. Then the lead agent evaluates the new agent's work as he works the cases. Mr. Ambroselli also touched on the establishment of California Parole Apprehension Teams in an effort to lower the parolee-at-large rate. He commented that as of the date of the C-ROB meeting, the department has located 2,561 parolees-at-large. Recent legislation requires enhanced monitoring of gang members utilizing GPS surveillance. The department is working with law enforcement partners in identifying parolees that should be placed on a GPS caseload. The Parole Division is also establishing 1,200 electronic monitoring units to be used as alternate sanctions, which are specifically designed in lieu of returning someone to custody.

Mr. Ambroselli shared that the department is also working on reducing the territorial size of its parole regions. Another component in the new model is the reentry courts for offenders, currently anticipated in seven counties. He said meetings are on-going between DAPO, judges, and the Administrative Office of the Courts. Each county will have at least one parole agent assigned to it who will work with the court and Board of Parole Hearings for offenders who meet the criteria to be placed under the supervision of the court for return to custody determinations.

Mr. Ambroselli talked about the department's supervisor academy which is focused on parole-related matters. The academy was established April 2010, and while designed especially for new supervisors, will eventually encompass all supervisors. He also mentioned that many discussions on data and research has brought together the Parole Division, the Center for Effective Public Policy, and the University of California, Irvine. There will be a pilot program tested in four counties to organize practices and align them with what works in other states. There are multiple phases to the pilot program.

Mr. Ambroselli took questions from the board members related to parolee mental health problems and nonrevocable parole.⁴

Item 7. Board discussion of the September 15, 2010 draft report.

CDCR staff, specifically Elizabeth Siggins, Cynthia Florez-DeLyon, and Steve Chapman discussed various issues contained in the draft C-ROB report with the board members.

Public Comment on Item 7.

David Warren, Lobbyist, Taxpayers for Improving Public Safety (TiPS), stated that in his opinion, California has a Legislature that is unreasonable in its expectations for the CDCR. In commenting on the C-ROB draft report, Mr. Warren stated that the report needs a simple statement directed at the Legislature that it is "paying for a Neon, and you want us to provide you with a Cadillac." Mr. Warren also indicated that he submitted a letter to C-ROB concerning lifers who are denied parole based on *In re Shaputis* and the fact that they did not complete programs. Mr. Warren believes these issues relate directly back to the Legislature, not the department.

⁴ See CDCR website: http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Parole/Non_Revocable_Parole/index.html

John Kern, SEIU/Institutional teacher, presented various comments from SEIU Bargaining Unit 3 members who had read the C-ROB draft report. While he stated that the department would label the comments as anecdotal, he said the teachers consider the issues as real. Areas mentioned related to homework possibly becoming a commodity, teachers who are unable to recognize inmate handwriting as belonging to a particular inmate, number of hours an inmate actually spends in class, the new academic models, and teachers who stay late trying to pull end-of-the-month reports together without computerized automation.

Cindy Greer, SEIU/Institutional teacher, expressed concern that after losing 450 academic teachers, as well as 155 vocational and 100 RPIs, which were bridging instructors, the department is unable to hire needed teaching assistants due to the hard hiring freeze. Ms. Greer said that it takes so long to go through the background process, that often candidates give up and take other positions. Ms. Greer said she is concerned about the learning disabilities among inmates. She does not believe the Adult Division assesses for learning disabilities and agrees with stats from the Department of Justice that say inmates fail because of disabilities.

Helen Roth Dowden, SEIU, read a letter from Steve Bowen, ABE II teacher. Mr. Bowen said his classes run between 55 and 60 students. According to his letter, Mr. Bowen made multiple requests for additional students so his classes would be full, but nothing was done. Mr. Bowen said he is aware of other teachers who also wrote similar letters, to no avail. Mr. Bowen says that the C-ROB draft report references the department stating ABE II inmates receive nine hours of instruction per week. He disagrees with this statement saying that all three ABE classes at his institution offer only three hours of class time per week.

Item 8. Board decision regarding the September 15, 2010 draft report.

After much discussion during the meeting, Ms. Hill, Executive Director, suggested minor edits to the draft report. Upon motion made and seconded, the board approved the September 15, 2010 Biannual Report as amended.

Item 9. Future board meeting schedule.

Upon discussion, the board agreed to future meeting dates of November 10, 2010 (morning); January 12, 2011 (afternoon); and March 3, 2011 (afternoon). The report writing committee scheduled a teleconference for 8:00 a.m. on September 15, 2010.

Item 10. Future agenda items.

Suggested items for future meetings included:

- departmental budget update
- adult programs data presentation
- C-ROB report appendix data updates
- COMPAS data broken down to reflect how many inmates are within so many months of release, so it is known how many program slots are needed before release
- discussion on how the department ensures programs are implemented according to policies and procedures

Item 11. Public comment.

John Kern, SEIU/Institutional teacher, explained a handout to board members entitled “Standardized Tests Administered” covering new models at Calipatria, as it is preparing for a WASC⁵ review.

Cindy Greer, SEIU/Institutional teacher, thanked the board and its Executive Director for preparing the draft report, stating it shows the board cares, as do the teachers. Ms. Greer closed by saying there seems to be a disconnect between management and the field and that many of the staff are disheartened and deflated due to reduced funding. She believes that everyone is on the same side wanting to reduce recidivism, promote public safety, and help inmates turn around their lives. Ms. Greer hopes that leadership councils, both academic and vocational, will be used as tools and that input from these groups will help the board evaluate educational programs.

Item 12. Adjournment.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

C-ROB Secretary

Dated

(These Minutes are posted on the web at www.oig.ca.gov.)

⁵ Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC) is one of six regional associations in the United States that accredit public and private schools, colleges, and universities. WASC accreditation certifies the integrity of the education provided by the 33 schools operated by CDCR and validates the reliability of the GED certificates and vocational program completions awarded to inmate students. By being WASC accredited, the CDCR schools undergo the same regular monitoring and assessment as traditional California public school systems. The WASC committee reviews curriculum, instructional strategy, and student assessment methods at each CDCR school on a six-year cycle.