

California Rehabilitation Oversight Board Minutes
April 8, 2015 Meeting

The California Rehabilitation Oversight Board (C-ROB) met in open session at 9:30 a.m. on April 8, 2015, at the California State University Modoc Hall, Willow Suites, 3000 University Drive East, Sacramento, California.

Board Members present: **Robert Barton**, Inspector General (Chairman); **William Arroyo, M.D.**, Regional Medical Director, Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health; **Jeff Beard**, Secretary, Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR); **Debra Jones**, Dean, Career Education Practices, Workforce and Economic Development, California Community Colleges (Designee for Brice Harris, Chancellor, California Community Colleges); **George Maynard**, Deputy Director, Hospital Strategic Planning and Implementation (Designee for Cliff Allenby, Director (A), California Department of State Hospitals); **Brenda Grealish**, Division Chief, Division of Mental Health Care Services, Department of Health Care Services); **Susan Turner**, Professor, University of California, Irvine (President of the University of California appointee); **Catherine Peacock**, Education Programs Consultant, Adult Education Office, (Designee for Tom Torlakson, Superintendent of Public Instruction); and **Darren Thompson**, Sheriff, County of San Benito (Governor Appointee).

Board Members absent: **Jennie Singer**, Professor, California State University, Sacramento (Chancellor of California State University appointee).

Office of the Inspector General staff: Misty Polasik, C-ROB Executive Director; James C. Spurling, Counsel to the Board; and Linda Whitney, Board Secretary.

Presenters:

CDCR:

Rodger Meier
Andrea Thorpe
Dr. Brantley Choate
Ralph Diaz
Connie Gipson
Jane Soria
Landon Bravo
Kathleen Allison

Insight:

Sonja Shah
Billie Mizell

California Volunteers:

Karen Baker

Public Comments:

David Bruyett
Danielle Ball
Debi Faucette
MaryAnn Ellis-Jammal
Gayle Brown

Margaret Lirones
Stephanie Giles
Robert Oldfield
Diane Johnson
Matthew Coughlin

Item 1. Call to order.

Chairman Barton called the meeting to order at 9:36 a.m.

Item 2. Introduction and establish quorum.

Chairman Barton introduced the Office of the Inspector General staff participating in the meeting, introduced the new designee for Tom Torlakson, Catherine Peacock, and asked Board Members to introduce themselves. A quorum was established. The Chairman announced that Wendy Still has retired and he thanked her for her contributions to the board and her many years of state service.

Item 3. Review agenda.

There were no comments concerning the agenda.

Item 4. Review and approve minutes from the September 10, 2014 board meeting.

The minutes were approved without any changes. William Arroyo made a motion to approve the minutes, and Debra Jones seconded the motion. Susan Turner, Catherine Peacock and Jeff Beard abstained from voting while George Maynard, Darren Thompson and Brenda Grealish voted to approve the minutes.

Item 5. Executive Director updates.

Ms. Polasik stated that the board had received new correspondence since the last meeting. She briefly reviewed the letters received since the last C-ROB meeting.

Item 6. CDCR, Division of Rehabilitative Programs.

Electronic GED update: Andrea Thorpe and Dr. Brantley Choate reported on the status of the electronic GED. Dr. Choate stated that institutions have been using electronic tests since January 2015 and that textbooks have been purchased for the classrooms. CDCR is currently working with the GED website to obtain additional materials and teachers have obtained training. Choate reported that San Quentin has established volunteer GED prep groups.

Choate stated that paper tests will be provided for anyone who is unable to take the test electronically. They are still using paper pre-tests until they are able to roll out the electronic version, which they plan to do by the end of summer.

In-prison library services update: Choate reported that there are currently 15 senior librarian vacancies and 11 librarian vacancies. CDCR's recruitment efforts include advertising on multiple library sites, having a booth at the June Library Association Conference, and coordinating with workforce planning. CDCR is also addressing the issue of retention by having a new employee orientation, assigning mentors, providing professional development training, and attending conferences/networks. Choate stated that retention is a big issue which affects morale. Currently, librarians, in comparison with other positions requiring less education, are not compensated as much. Choate also mentioned that SB 343 will increase the scope of the library.

Overview of the inmate assignment process: Rodger Meier and Ralph Diaz reported in this process. Meier stated that each inmate is assessed at reception and within ten days at the facility. Counselors pre-assess inmates according to their TABE score to assess vocational and programming needs. Daily reports of utilization are sent to the Office of Correctional Education each month so that needs, challenges and logistics can be addressed. Meier also reported that they are reviewing waiting lists to address teacher assignments.

Meier also stated that since CTE certificates only last a few years before expiring, they are of no benefit to the inmate if they are obtained too early during incarceration. Annual reviews of the classification process, inmate assignments and possible program changes are providing valuable information to address improvement.

Item 7. CDCR, Office of Policy Standardization.

Drug interdiction status update: Connie Gipson reported that the funding obtained from the legislature has provided for the implementation of drug interdiction programs in 11 facilities. CDCR is using ION scanners, passive canine searches and swabs to detect contraband. Currently visitors and staff are chosen to be scanned by a randomizing machine to avoid any appearance of discrimination. If you are scanned and test positive, you have the chance to wash and be re-scanned. Visitors who refuse scanning can still have a non-contact visit. Staff cannot refuse to be scanned. Gipson stated they will be looking at the impact on the number of Rules Violation Reports and Use of Force Incidents, how many visitors refuse, reduction of drugs and refusal of entry to those testing positive.

Volunteer access in prison: Jane Soria, Landon Bravo and Kathleen Allison reported on volunteer services. Ms. Soria reported that they are looking to standardize the pieces of volunteering by providing a handbook, and annual standardized training, Staff have proposed three modules for training: self-guided study, in-service training, and institution overview. The process will address state-wide DOM training and then site specific training.

Item 8. California Volunteers.

Karen Baker reported that California Volunteers currently has 41 grants acting like a foundation and 3000 AmeriCorps members volunteering in non-profits across the state. They have received five years of funding to help improve the non-profits, and are researching the impact of volunteers in volunteer programming but not the impact of volunteers on paid programming. Ms. Baker stated that it is especially hard to get volunteers to the remote prisons, so they are looking to have the AmeriCorps supplement. Ms. Baker likened the CDCR volunteers to Parks and Recreation docents.

Item 9. Insight Prison Project.

Sonja Shah and Billie Mizell reported that the program works with victims and inmates through the restorative justice program. The project is a 52 week curriculum. Shah stated that research shows that childhood trauma leads to poor attachments causing self-harm and harm to others. The inmates are taught to have empathy, build capacity for self-reflection and de-escalation, while rebuilding connections with family.

Ms. Shah also stated that many inmates who participated in the program return to volunteer for and consult with Insight to make program improvements. When the program begins at a new facility, inmate leaders are chosen to be in the first group so they can encourage other inmates to help build the program. Insight has collected data on the program and is currently looking to obtain funding so they can report the findings.

Item 10. C-ROB field visit update.

Ms. Polasik reviewed the challenges and successes seen during the institutional visits completed so far this year. She stated that re-assessing students still remains difficult, as do library vacancies, but overall, the culture is becoming more positive and procurement has shown improvement.

Bob complimented the department on their rehabilitation efforts and reviewed some of their recent efforts in the community and to help boost employment after release.

Item 11. Future board meeting schedule.

Ms. Polasik confirmed the date for the last board meeting of 2015: September 2, 2015. The Report Writing Subcommittee Meeting was confirmed for August 6, 2015.

Item 12. Future agenda items.

Ms. Polasik asked the board if there were any future agenda items on which they would like to have presentations and reviewed the future agenda item list.

Item 13. Public comment.

David Bruyett expressed his concern with the screening procedures. He feels the procedure will deter visitors and results in denied visits. He also expressed concerns of what would be done with any positive test information and if it would negatively impact inmate or visitor records.

Danielle Ball, a librarian at CMC, stated that her library is a center for learning. They offer poetry workshops and classic book reading programs. She stated that morale and poor compensation negatively affects library success.

Debi Faucette, from the GED testing service in Louisiana, offered that she was available to provide additional information or clarification regarding the electronic GED process. She stated that the new GED better matches the standards of graduating high school seniors and better prepares inmates for entry into the workforce after release.

Mary-Ann Jammal shared a story of the warden testing positive twice during a demonstration of the new screening process. She also stated that this is proof the process is inaccurate.

Gayle Brown agreed with Ms. Jammal and requested that CDCR provide a brochure or have posters regarding scanning information for those entering institutions. She stated that visitors are being penalized at future visits for having positive tests from the screening and inmates are not allowed to wash their hands after one positive test.

Margaret Lirones stated that there is great potential for the libraries in the prisons if CDCR could only address the vacancies and implement a plan for improvement.

Stephanie Giles stated that librarians are not considered faculty or part of the education department but professional development has grown and is making strides.

Robert Oldfield stated that many inmates use his library to help with college and literacy programs which improves the culture of the yard.

Diane Johnson stated that she really likes to help the inmates with research and that she feels there should be many more applicants for each of the vacancies.

Matthew Coughlin was encouraged to hear the library will be used as a rehabilitation hub where inmates have access to rehabilitation.

Item 14. Adjournment.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:02 p.m.

C-ROB Secretary

Dated

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