

**REENTRY ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 28, 2015**

Attendees Present:

Secretary James Le Blanc, Dept. of Public Safety & Corrections, Chairman
Assistant Secretary Rhett Covington, Dept. of Public Safety & Corrections,
Designee for Secretary Le Blanc, LA DPS&C
Senator Elbert Guillory, State Senate
Sue Austin, Designee for Secretary Kathy Kliebert, LA DHH (Teleconference)
Louis Reine, AFL-CIO
Dr. Jenee Slocum, Designee for Executive Director Curt Eysink, Workforce
Commission
Joseph Ardoin, LA State Bldg. Const. Trade Council
Dale Leblanc, Association of Builders & Contractors
David Helveston, Designee for Dr. Monty Sullivan, LA Community & Technical
College System

Absent:

Representative Steven Pylant, House of Representatives
Mike Cazes, LA Sheriff's Association
James Landry, LA Association of Business & Industry

Others:

District Attorney Hillar Moore, East Baton Rouge Parish
Michael Dupre, Senator Guillory's Chief of Staff
Elizabeth Keenan, LPH1
Alexandra Priebe, LPH1
Attorney Keith Nordyke
Judge Scott Schlegel, Division "D" (Telephone Conference)

Dept. of Public Safety & Corrections Headquarters Staff:

Tammy Jetson, Office of Offender Reentry
Rita Thomas, Office of Offender Reentry

Meeting called to order at 9:35 a.m. by Assistant Secretary Rhett Covington

Approval of Minutes

- Motion made by Louis Reine to approve the minutes from July 10, 2014 board meeting

- Seconded by Senator Elbert Guillory

Opening Remarks from Secretary Le Blanc

- Secretary Le Blanc listed the Reentry Advisory Council Membership (RAC) Structure
 - Thirteen (13) member Council
 - Secretary of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections
 - Executive Director of Workforce Commission
 - Secretary of the Department of Health and Hospital
 - Secretary of the Department of Children and Family Services
 - President of the Louisiana Technical and Community College
 - The Senate and House of Representatives
 - Louisiana Sheriff's Association
 - LABE
 - AFL-CIO
 - Louisiana State Building Construction Trade Council
 - Louisiana Chaplain's Association
- Secretary Le Blanc invited the Justice Reinvestment Oversight Committee (part of the Sentencing Commission) to be an advisory member of the Board
- Drafting legislation to add new membership that will include
 - Louisiana District Attorney's Association
 - Louisiana Public Defender's Association
 - Member of the Pardon/Parole Board
 - Judges (Association & Supreme Court)
- Current Resolution House #82 was passed last year
- Establish Louisiana Justice Reinvestment Task Force
 - Consist of fourteen (14) members
 - Secretary of the Department of Corrections Chairperson of the Committee
 - Governor or his designee
 - Chief Justice or designee
 - Speaker of the House of Representatives or his designee
 - Speaker Pro Tem or his designee

- Chairman of the House of Criminal Justice or his designee
 - President of the Senate or his designee
 - President Pro Tem or his designee
 - Chairman of the Senate on Criminal Justice or his designee
 - President of the Louisiana Sheriff's Association
 - President of the Louisiana District Attorney's Association
 - District Court Judge designated by Chief Justice
 - State Public Defender's Association
 - Chairman of the Louisiana Sentencing Commission
- Seven (7) members on this Taskforce is on this Council
 - Mission of the taskforce will overlap with RAC
 - Having those seven (7) members on each Board to avoid duplication of efforts
 - Identify areas in which improved collaboration and coordination of programs and activities will result in increased effectiveness
 - Conduct a review of existing policies and practices and make specific recommendations to the legislature for systemic improvement
 - Taskforce can't meet until March, 2016
 - Taskforce make recommendations then dissolves after the 2017 legislative session
 - Funding for the JRI Taskforce is through PEW and the state
 - Legislative Session will be about the Budget (Fiscal only Legislative Session)
 - Secretary Le Blanc and Rhett Covington attended a Reentry Symposium in Colorado
 - Forty-two (42) states were represented
 - Two (2) day meeting
 - Stacey Falgout in the medical department presented a program on how we deal with medical offenders while incarcerated in our system and when they are discharged
 - Reentry efforts are being regionalized - Rhett Covington will be Louisiana's contact person for the regional efforts in the South Central Region (Texas, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Arkansas and New Mexico)

- The Department doesn't do enough in learning who has learning disabilities when they become incarcerated in our system; this issue needs to be addressed down the road
- Some states don't allow goodtime until the offender has completed their program
- A good concept that the Department should be looking at implementing
- It will keep the offender doing the right thing on their plan when it's developed
- Many states are going toward internet access for offenders to access education and job search resources
 - Precaution taken to block unauthorized internet access
 - Must be very secure where they can only access what the department allow
 - Access to internet to obtain high school diplomas
 - Georgia converted over to having access to the internet through the charter school and actually funding getting a high school diploma
- Met with John White to discuss Minimum Foundation funds to do a pilot at the Department's Youthful Offender Program at Dixon Correctional Institute
 - Offenders tried as an adult (14 -16 yrs. Old) are housed at Dixon Correctional Institute
- Long term segregation is a big topic across the nation
 - Locking up offenders too long has caused mental health problems
 - Some offenders need to be locked up on a long term basis
 - Segregating an offender to protect staff, offender population and himself
- Other states are using a detailed Transition Document Envelopes that contain the offender's information on the front of the envelope and his ID, social security card, and other pertinent information inside
 - It follows them through wherever they are housed
- Probation and Parole officers should meet with an offender before release so they will be aware of who their P&P agent will be
 - Probation and Parole agent will know who they will be supervising

- Knowing what the issues are with that offender before they are release into their custody
- Peer Monitors are being used in the Mental Health area at Angola
 - They are called Tier Walkers in mental health
 - Possibly have peer monitors do some consulting after being trained
- Need to have a better program that would allow an ex-offender, who is doing well, back into the prison to talk to offenders currently incarcerated to show that they can make it
- Ban the Box is a hot topic
 - Some states just have a question asking if they have been convicted in the last five years
 - Put a timeframe on it so if they get past it, then there would be no need for the box
- Department is looking into creating a Certificate of Rehabilitation to recognize and certify change
- Parole Board and Department looking at transition accountability plan
 - The plan would make sure they are doing what they are supposed to be doing before they get to the Parole Board
 - Conditions of Parole – targeted to recognize strengths, weaknesses and needs
 - Rather than a list of ten (10) things that are printed beforehand on the back of the parole certificate; need to do a better job in customizing these parole certificates
 - Customizing these certificates for when an offender is released, the agent and everybody else would know what his plan is and what he needs to complete
- Transitional housing – some states are doing it for sixty (60) days when an offender is released versus not having housing at all
- More efforts to be made to make sure an offender is getting to the address given
- Use Reentry Council for budgetary justification
- No formal legislation comprised at this point – awaiting new administration
- Current Budget projection is about an eighteen (18) million deficit

- A little on the Sheriff's payment side and some on the department side; a lot underfunded
- Midyear budget will be projected next month
- Sixty-five (65) million deficit for 2015 that has to be fixed
- Possibly a \$250/\$300 million deficit
- Department plan not cutting but getting a supplemental
- Writing a letter on October 1, 2015 to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee and the Division of Administration stating no cuts will be made by the Department
 - Tight line to provide adequate security in the prison
 - Turnover at Angola and Hunt Correctional Center are about 42%
 - Loss 1000 correctional officers within the year to turnovers
 - 62% turnover in the first twelve months
 - Cut 1400 correctional officers in eight (8) years and closed four (4) state prisons with the same prison population

Senator Guillory made his remarks

Reports:

Government Efficiency Management System (GEMS) Implementation

- Received funding to invest in reentry
- Since July, the Department has opened eleven (7) Regional Reentry Programs across the State
- Regional Reentry Programs to reach half (1/2) of the department's offender population in the local jails
- Provide pre-release programming, better residence planning, connection with family and getting closer to home
- Deployed twenty (20) Transitional Specialist in the largest local jails who do risk assessments on the front end for high – moderate risk offenders; cognitive behavioral; thinking for change programs; help with decision making goal setting; anger management; parenting; and preparing them to go to pre-release
 - Transition Specialist do some front end assessment and classification work to make sure the person is in the right location

- Transition Specialist determines if an offender needs to be at Hunt Correctional Center because of a undiagnosed mental health condition
- Transition Specialist make sure an offender is transferred to one of the Regional Reentry programs for pre-release and/or work release if they are compatible/suitable for that program
- Providing logistics in the jails
- Transition Specialist are reaching about 70% of the Department's population in the local jails
- Eight (8) Day Reporting Centers in the largest metropolitan areas
 - Day Reporting Centers serves about 200 offenders a year
 - Day Reporting Centers are not an employment alternative
 - Offenders are sent there because of technical violations, patterns of poor decision making, and unmet needs that the department can't find other entities in the community to handle
 - Objective is to try and prevent that person from going back to prison
 - Last four (4) centers were open in June
- All CTRP programs in the state facilities were reviewed and some were expanded
- Expanding reentry coalitions to new jurisdictions across the state
- Met target goal with GEMS when it comes to rehabilitative programs and the number of credit days that offenders receive for finishing a program
- Department put enough offenders through the programs to save enough money to meet our target that the administration has set for us
- Department moving toward giving credit for completing a case plan (reentry accountability plan) and not a program
 - Avoid offenders just taking a class to receive credits instead of finishing a case plan
 - Providing local offenders with a case plan will be a challenge
 - Lower risk/needs should be in the local jails where they don't need as much attention
- Pilot welding program started at LTCTS working with Webster parish funded by Pell grants

Certificate of Rehabilitation

- Certificate of Rehabilitation has been used by the sentencing court judges in other states when considering waving specific prohibitions to employment
- Other states have placed that authority with the Parole Board to use the certificate of rehabilitation when considering conditions for parole
- Certificate of Rehabilitation to apply to non-violent, non-sexual offenders
- RAC to consider if they want to work on pursuing legislation in this area and feedback
- This was previously presented to the Sentencing Commission and they want RAC to do some legwork to figure out what we need to do as far as this State goes; is this something that we need to pursue?
- Case plan (Reentry Accountability Plan) should be based on:
 - Sentencing court recommendations
 - The battery of assessments done on an offender when they enter our system that identifies needs
 - The interview with the offender as to what they think needs to happen to them over the course of their incarceration and subsequent parole supervision
 - We want to make sure we have a written plan of action
 - Plan needs to be staggered where the most important things need to happen first
 - We need to look at those things on the front end when building a case plan
 - With the Justice Reinvestment Initiative and Prisoner Reentry Initiative, we are looking at revamping the current ReAP so it “crosses the fence”
 - Presently, our case plan for the prisoners happens while they are incarcerated; when they are released, a new plan is started
 - The ReAP will cross back and forth and also have a report for our community partners so they can know what we are doing and what their piece of the puzzle would be

Justice Reinvestment Initiative Status update

- The Department has partnered with LSU to create a new Risk/Needs Assessment tool
- Risk is defined as a basic risk of a person returning to prison again upon release
- Research has shown that if needs are not addressed, it increases that persons likelihood to return to prison
- Developing a better risk/needs assessment tool to better understand what is the likelihood of the person returning to prison and what we need to do to minimize and mitigate that risk for the person upon their release
- Research shows that if a low risk person is overdosed by putting them through too much rehabilitation their risk increases

Keith Nordyke presented the Council with an update on the Maximizing State Reform Grant

- Met with forty-five (45) focus groups
- Data compiled for the risk part of the tool consisted of over 160,000 releases the Department had done between 2005 – 2015
- The Department of Sociology at LSU crunched that data in a computer and came up with a risk model
- The current model used by the Department (LARNA) gives you a bell curve when you distribute the releases
- Problem with the Bell curve is there's a murky middle and you can't determine who is low risk or high risk
- LARNA data was scoring about .62 area under the curve (AUC) (prediction strength)
- The new model that is being created by the Department called "TIGER" is scoring at .76 (133% better than the LARNA)
- 114% better than the LARNA on the first version of the TIGER (.72 AUC)
- Disciplinary reports were added into the data and the score increased two points
- More data to be added in the upcoming weeks
- Contraband and Disobedience are the two disciplinary reports the data shows will affect recidivism

- The Department has been using the TCU tool which is compiled of 196 questions to assess an offenders need
- 11,000 TCU data were analyzed by computer and found 27 questions were predictive of recidivism
- Keeping those 27 questions and creating additional questions to be asked in ten basic need categories based on questions from other similar needs tools in use across the country
- Questions were then vetted in a multi-disciplinary group at Dixon Correctional Institute, which narrowed the questions to 152
- Fourteen questions failed the first test given to about 25-30 offenders at the day reporting center in New Orleans
- Those questions had to be rephrased for the offender's understanding
- Those 152 questions will be tested on 3,000 upcoming releases and recent releases over the next three months
- Once completed, that data will be crunched by the computer to come up with the final needs assessment
- Three months ahead of schedule with the risk/needs side of the tool
- The data shows that cocaine has the highest return of recidivism; marijuana use is the lowest

Louisiana Prisoner Reentry Initiative

- This initiative will be discussed at the next meeting

Statewide Recidivism Reduction Grant status

- The Department applied for a statewide recidivism grant through the Bureau of Justice Assistance for the Department of Justice
- If awarded, we would be granted the planning phase which would help us to update our strategic plan and how we would build local coalition that would be a local version of our own body at the department across the state
- Currently, there is no funding mechanism for those in the State of Louisiana
- The department hasn't received notice yet if we were awarded the grant
- An update will be given at next meeting

RAC Membership and Structure (Legislation Membership)

- Elizabeth Keenan and Alexandra Priebe reported on the Crosswalk of different entities and a RAC Strategic Plan Performance Outcome Overview (See attached)
- Membership to include other sectors so we can avoid duplication of effort in certain areas but have equal representation across the board
- REAL Annual Conference is scheduled for December to be held in New Orleans
- The annual conference will be held in Shreveport next year
- Secretary Le Blanc will submit a package of legislation for RAC to review at the next meeting
- Assistant Secretary Covington will submit legislation for new membership at the next meeting

2016/2017 Meeting Schedule

- Schedule submitted to RAC for review

Other New Business

- No new business

Adjournment

- Motion made by Louis Reine to adjourn the meeting; seconded by Mike Dupree
- Meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.