



Prison Education Delivery Reform Commission Meeting Minutes

May 14, 2026 | 10am-11am

Attendance: Dr. Stephen Steurer, Pat Hruz, Dr. Emily Hainze, Dr. Andrea Cantora, Jocelyn Nolasco, Ainsley Moench, Dr. Tim Stock, Lucy Steinitz, Zakiya Lee, Tanja Murphy, Mary Gable, Dr. Judith Lichtenberg, Ramieka Robinson

I. Welcome

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

II. Approval of Minutes

The March and April meeting minutes were approved.

III. Overview of Commission Bylaws

Ainsley Moench proposed adopting formal bylaws to provide procedural structure for the commission through 2029. The bylaws, modelled after other Commission bylaws, outline powers such as holding meetings, requesting data, and performing site visits. It introduces a process for member resignation and removal, creates a vice chairperson role, and updates the annual report submission deadline to June 1st to better align with the legislative calendar.

Dr. Stephen Steurer agreed that a June report date would better align with the legislative calendar. He suggested creating a September report for 2026.

Jocelyn Nolasco recommended presenting directly to legislative chairs and using the interim to educate legislators about the Commission's achievements rather than waiting until the session.

Dr. Stephen Steurer confirmed the Commission would engage with delegate members at the next meeting to discuss previous sessions and future strategy.

Dr. Tim Stock requested clarification regarding Article 2 of the bylaws, which prohibits Advisory Stakeholder Group members from voting or participating in meetings where votes are

held. Ainsley Moench and Stephen Steurer clarified that while Stakeholders generally participate in meetings, voting sessions (often occurring once or twice a year) are restricted to Commission members. Mary Gable and Dr. Judith Lichtenberg offered that the Advisory Stakeholder Group members should still be allowed to participate in voting meetings. Ainsley Moench confirmed she would reword the Article to ensure that Stakeholder group members' voices were heard and valued.

IV. Recommendation Finalizing for Stakeholder Workgroup Plans

Dr. Stephen Steurer noted that individual work groups will begin refining their recommendations for the next annual report.

V. Possible Next Commission Meeting Planning with Delegates

Dr. Andrea Cantora provided an update on two bills introduced during the last session: House Bill 1311, regarding access to state financial aid for incarcerated students, and House Bill 1313, regarding tuition waivers. House Bill 1311 passed the House but did not advance further, potentially due to the absence of a companion Senate bill, while House Bill 1313 did not progress. Dr. Stephen Steurer mentioned that several states have state money appropriated specifically for higher education in prison programs.

Jocelyn Nolasco noted that House Bill 1313 had a significant cost attached to the bill, which is most likely why it did not pass. Additionally, the Commission should advocate on the Senate side for the bills to increase knowledge about the subject. As 2026 is an election year, there will be many representative and committee changes to be aware of.

Dr. Stephen Steurer also mentioned ongoing discussions regarding book donations to libraries, which will be revisited after Lucy Steinitz returns from volunteer work in Zimbabwe in July.

Dr. Judith Lichtenberg expressed concern regarding a three-day facility lockdown at the Jessup Correctional Institution during Officer Appreciation Week, which prevented students from attending classes. Dr. Tim Stock confirmed that similar issues occurred at other facilities, noting the broader impact on education.

Ramieka Robinson proposed that the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DPSCS) assign dedicated education officers to facilities to ensure continuity of education during staff shortages and appreciation events.

Dr. Andrea Cantora suggested that the commission develop broad, core recommendations that impact all educational programming across the state, rather than keeping them separate by group, as the issue of lockdowns affects every program.

Tanja Murphy discussed the necessity of addressing staffing shortages, especially with events that have advance notice and can be planned around.

Dr. Tim Stock suggested potential partnerships with universities to create recruitment pipelines for corrections officers.

Pat Hruz confirmed that educational classes were cancelled for three to five days in all institutions due to Officer Appreciation Week, which affects educational outcomes. He expressed that the Department of Labor would like to be included in conversations around working with officer shortages.

The meeting adjourned at 11:02am.