



Prison Reform Advisory Board Recommendations

October 23, 2019

Background

- ▶ **The Board was formed in 2018 by DPS Secretary Erik A. Hooks.**
- ▶ **The Board is charged with advising the DPS Secretary on policies, programs and services to improve the safety and security of the state's prison system.**
- ▶ **The Board is comprised predominantly of corrections professionals from the state and federal prison systems and led by a retired US Army major general.**
- ▶ **The Board met nine times since March 2018.**

Recommendations

- ▶ **Development process:**
 - **Information presented during meetings**
 - **Review of previous reform reports**
 - **Interaction with facility staff**
 - **Two work sessions to discuss specific items**
 - **Knowledge and expertise of Board members**

Hiring, Training and Retention of Employees

- ▶ **Develop and seek legislative funding for a comprehensive compensation plan for staff that includes step increases.**
- ▶ **Enhance benefits for Corrections staff commensurate with sworn law enforcement officers.**
- ▶ **Establish an Adult Correction and Juvenile Justice training academy to promote consistent training and to allow ACJJ to manage its dedicated training capacity.**

Hiring, Training and Retention of Employees

- ▶ **Modify the hiring process and timing of Basic Correctional Officer Training to bring new certified staff onboard quicker.**
- ▶ **Mandate supervisory training within a specified time period set by DPS management.**
- ▶ **Develop specific training for various levels of supervisors, especially wardens and deputy wardens, based on competencies and skill gaps identified in the Career Pathways Initiative.**
- ▶ **Implement a referral bonus for current employees who refer applicants hired into difficult-to-fill positions.**

Hiring, Training and Retention of Employees

- ▶ **Develop online cross-discipline training to promote inter-agency knowledge and awareness of career paths.**
- ▶ **Establish clear onboarding standards and expectations for all disciplines.**
- ▶ **Develop a recruitment and retention plan for each facility and provide specific resources for employee retention.**
- ▶ **Enact key performance indicators tied to recruitment activities.**

Hiring, Training and Retention of Employees

- ▶ **Conduct climate or employee engagement surveys at all facilities.**
- ▶ **Increase educational assistance funds and prioritize use of funds for difficult-to-fill positions.**
- ▶ **Develop a strategic plan to reduce temporary contract nurses, reduce time to hire medical staff and provide incentives, such as student loan repayment, to attract health services employees.**

Improve Safety and Security

- ▶ **Continue development of comprehensive contraband detection and deterrence strategies.**
- ▶ **Purchase and install body scanners and prioritize their placement in facilities based on physical plant and infrastructure restraints.**
- ▶ **Hire an independent corrections intelligence specialist to evaluate the current organizational structure to assess its effectiveness and make recommendations for any necessary changes.**
- ▶ **Conduct a comprehensive assessment of facility physical plants and infrastructure to develop a strategic plan for facility management and staffing.**

Improve Safety and Security

- ▶ **Prioritize request for funds to install air conditioning to improve the productivity and well-being of staff as well as improve the health and safety of an aging offender population.**
- ▶ **Afford all staff an opportunity to have a stab resistant vest issued to them.**
- ▶ **Implement backup tool control system to provide resiliency and ensure safety.**
- ▶ **Utilize an assessment instrument to benchmark performance for critical incident management and institute continuous improvement strategies.**

Other Recommendations

- ▶ Request that the General Assembly appropriate funds to eliminate Prisons' structural budget deficit and provide a line-item budget that reflects true operating needs and costs.
- ▶ Establish a schedule to fully implement email accounts for correctional officers.
- ▶ Promote Prisons' facilities and the corrections profession through additional community outreach, speaking engagements, and other public relations opportunities.

Other Recommendations

- ▶ Continue efforts to improve treatment and care of offenders who have mental illness.
- ▶ Re-commit and re-focus efforts regarding programming for offenders.
- ▶ Affirm process for development and review of policies, standard operating procedures (SOPs) and post orders to ensure consistent implementation of directives.



Closing Remarks/Questions

For more information, visit the Prison Reform page
on the DPS website: www.ncdps.gov