



ALABAMA COMMISSION ON THE EVALUATION OF SERVICES

Meeting Minutes

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Date and Location

The Alabama Commission on the Evaluation of Services met on September 16, 2024, at 10:00 a.m. in room 825 of the Alabama State House, 11 S. Union Street, Montgomery, AL.

Attendance

Member	Present	Teleconference	Absent
Chairman Orr	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vice-Chair Filmore	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Albritton	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Allred	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Carlton	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Coleman-Madison	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Green	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Gray	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Sawyer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Sells	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner White	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Whitt	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Poole, <i>ex officio</i> (Finance Director)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Commissioner Fulford, <i>ex officio</i> (LSA Fiscal Division Deputy Director)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



A lawful quorum of voting members was present to conduct business.

Notice of Meeting:

Sufficient notice of the meeting was posted on August 16, 2024, to the Secretary of State's Open Meeting Act Posting Board.

Approval of Minutes:

Approval of the minutes of the previous meeting on April 2, 2024.

A motion was made by Vice-Chair Filmore to adopt the minutes as written. Commissioner Sells seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously with all those present voting.

Reports and Presentation:

Correctional Officer Recruitment & Retention Study – Patrick Dean

Questions and Answers provided following the presentation:

Chairman Orr questioned the decline in turnover rates after FY18 noted on slide 6 of the presentation. He noted that a recruitment and retention bill was passed just prior to the turnover rates starting to increase. He further questioned if the increased turnover, post passage of the bonus program, was related to COVID. Vice-Chair Filmore also noted the increased and asked if it was COVID related.

Assistant Director Dean responded to the questions and statements citing the peak decline during FY19. He also noted that the staff compared similar turnover analysis with other state law enforcement positions and said they experience similar decreases in turnover prior to COVID. He also mentioned that the referenced turnover was annualized, but the staff also conducted monthly turnover calculations to control for seasonality and outliers.

Vice-Chair Filmore was grateful for the presentation and appreciated the staff's work. She also acknowledged the efforts of all parties working to improve correctional officer staffing. She agrees that the efforts would need to be reevaluated based on compensation changes in approximately two to three years. Vice-Chair Filmore added the Department of Corrections and Governor Ivey have shown an increased passion toward making sure corrections workers are appreciated. She stated the prisons are understaffed and overcrowded. She went on to say the governor and the legislature are supportive of the Department of Corrections and applauded them for having better turnover than other surrounding southern states, speaking volumes for the efforts that have been ongoing.

Chairman Orr seconded the comments by Vice-Chair Filmore adding appreciation for the general fund budget chairs and the governors' actions over the past several years to address issues within the Department of Corrections. There have been many meetings about corrections and turnover. The state is also dealing with turnover in the private sector and compensation has been increased to reduce turnover. It can be dangerous in the correctional arena to have inexperienced employees, etc. Thank you to Governor Ivey.

Chairman Orr asked about looking across state lines. Are other states doing anything innovative or different that we should be looking at? Anything that we could emulate or consider?

Assistant Director Dean responded that throughout the evaluation and multiple interviews, we realized other states were starting to copy what we were doing in Alabama. A few states were looking at bonus programs and they were engaging with our Department of Corrections. Missouri and Florida enacted compensation changes two years ago after the worst turnover in years noting changes in turnover after implementation. Most states are experiencing turnover ranging from 60% to as much as 100%. In Tennessee, where they have some private facilities operated by private providers, they are experiencing turnover that is worse than the state facilities. The staff spent a lot of time researching this topic but did not find anything rooted in evidence that would support additional changes.

Chairman Orr asked if there was anything we could do proactively to address our compensation model, or does it appear we are in a sweet spot with current compensation.



Assistant Director Dean responded that we could potentially be in a sweet spot but would caution against doing anything that would oversaturate the compensation model. The staff attempted to identify the drivers of retention and recruitment through surveys; however, the response rate was poor and primarily from the supervisor level. Hiring has picked up within the Department of Corrections post study period, but we would need 2-3 years of data. However, we also do not want it to be undersaturated.

Commissioner Green stated that he did not see where retirement was considered in our analysis and questioned whether it was or was not. He asked if retirement might have an effect on the turnover results. He continued to discuss concerns about losing correctional officers to local governments opting for Tier I retirement benefits and that this was a concern when Tier II was implemented.

Assistant Director Dean responded that retirement trends were buried in the data and methodologies. Overall, we looked for statistically significant trends in voluntary resignations, retirements, and dismissals.

Commissioner Green asked if the voluntary terminations included correctional officers that left for a local entity because of the retirement package.

Assistant Director Dean answered that the analysis did not specifically look into that specific cause, but it is certainly something we can look at in the future. Most situations encountered would count as resignations not dismissals or retirement.

Commissioner Fulford added that the retirements should be captured but he did not think we thought to ask if they left work for X place. It would be a bigger question down the road and something the staff should consider looking at. His general concern or statement would be where we stand from a correctional officer point of view versus law enforcement. Similar type of employee and, if not salary, what is the reason they want to work for one or the other. We do not want to move the issue from one area and to another.

Old Business:

None

New Business:

FY25 Work Plan

Director Morgan explained the process for developing the annual work plan and covered the top three priorities based on member feedback. The top four priorities were Crisis Division Centers, Charter Schools, Pardon and Paroles Electronic Monitoring Program and Teacher Chronic Absenteeism.

Chairman Orr asked if the staff looked into any organizational documentation on Charter Schools to determine reporting requirements. Vice-Chair Filmore added that if not it is necessary.

Assistant Director Dean commented that the staff has looked into the topic in the past but has not done so since the most recent charter school legislation passed. He also noted the need to have pre and post charter school enrollment data and the approach for analysis would need to be at a granular level.

Commissioner Carlton commented that the charter school evaluation would be timely. The Charter School Commission was recently pulled out of the state department of education. She added the charter schools would likely want to participate and cooperate with the evaluation. They should also have data pre and post enrollment. For those reasons she does not believe it should be removed from the work plan priorities but pursued. Commissioner Fulford agreed and said it would be easy to gauge what information is readily available.

Director Morgan continued the discussion on the work plan noting that several changes have taken place since the formation of the work plan topics, therefore some of the topics could be removed. For example, the Office of Apprenticeship and the STEM Council have experienced significant changes that would need to be implemented prior



to an evaluation taking place. In addition, some topics did not receive a lot of interest but could be accomplished in shorter periods of time.

Commissioner Carlton commented and asked if topics not meeting the top four rankings could be accomplished in a shorter period of time through a white paper or policy spotlight. She was particularly interested in a number of the work plan areas this year and would like to see some smaller projects accomplished that could help the governor as she crafts the budget.

Commissioner Fulford added to Commissioner Carlton's comments noting the literacy act continues to be appropriated a large amount of money and the program continues to grow. We want to make sure it is accomplishing what was intended to accomplish.

Director Morgan acknowledged the comments and requests from Commissioner Carlton and Fulford adding the staff is capable of working on smaller projects while also working on larger projects that take more time and often have down time allowing for agencies and programs to gather needed information. He mentioned three programs in general; Higher Education, Retain Alabama, and the Literacy Act.

Chairman Orr raised a question to the body asking if everyone agreed to the top four priorities. Director Morgan requested that the members look at the top two first and focus on the second two later in the year or the next year. This would also include some of the smaller projects being completed throughout the next fiscal year.

Commissioner Sells made a motion to approve the work plan. Vice-Chair Filmore seconded the motion. There being no objections, the motion passed unanimously with all those present voting.

Director Morgan presented the FY25 proposed budget as well as the FY26 budget request noting the request would be level funding.

There were no questions on the proposed budgets. Vice-Chair Filmore made a motion to approve the budgets as proposed and Commissioner Whitt seconded the motion. There being no objections, the motion passed unanimously with all those present voting.

Director Morgan made two announcements. The first commented on the first audit of the examiners of public accounts returned zero findings. The second acknowledged the staff's hard work and received national recognition. The staff was recently awarded the excellence in research methods by the national society of program evaluators. ACES was one of three awardees in 2024. Chairman Orr congratulated the award and said moving forward it was important that the work be held to the highest standards.

Adjournment:

There being no further business, at 10:46 a.m. Chairman Orr moved the meeting be adjourned.