



DYS Workforce Development: *Staff Education, Enrichment & Empowerment*

Hello!



*Commissioner
Peter Forbes*

In this issue, you'll discover some of our agency's workforce development efforts and initiatives--a few of which may be as new to you as they were to me!

When I started working at DYS we had a basic training strategy and that was about it. We didn't have a range of professional development opportunities. There was no annual recert. Mostly we received on the job training.

Fortunately, we've come a long way since then. In the past decade, we've invested substantial resources into Workforce Development. You're about to discover how our investment appears to be yielding tangible returns.

But first: We know that when staff feel safe, youth feel safe and respond accordingly.

Workforce Development is about building workplaces that are safer, more cohesive, supportive, respectful, and positive. That's not a destination; it's more like a journey.

So, we've set out to learn more about issues of race, ethnicity, and gender identity. We value the diversity of our co-workers, youth and their families.

We're being more intentional about finding ways to recognize exemplary performance by staff across the agency. We want you to know that doing more in this area is a priority for us.

While we've made progress in training, workforce development and staff recognition, I understand we have a ways to go.

Because Workforce Development affects each of us and the safety of youth in our care, please consider joining our Workforce Development efforts. This newsletter shares plenty of ways you can get involved.

Sincerely,

In This Issue:

- [DYS Data Matters](#)
- [2018 Youth Arts Showcase](#)
- [Discover What's New on Pulse!](#)

Mark Your Calendars:

- **June 14:** Northeast Region Graduation Ceremony
- **June 18:** Southeast Region "Excellence in Education" Day
- **June 20:** Central Region Graduation Ceremony

Quick links:

- [DYS Homepage](#)
- [DYS on Twitter](#)
- [DYS on Instagram](#)

Workforce Development at DYS: Origins and Evolution

Quick Read:

For the past decade, DYS' Workforce Planning and Development Work Group has sought to develop an organizational culture in which employees at all levels are respected and valued, which is consistent with how staff are expected to treat youth. Workforce development also seeks to provide better outcomes for youth in our care by recruiting, developing, retaining and supporting a professional workforce. In this article, you'll discover how DYS' workforce development efforts have evolved since inception in 2007.

At its core, workforce planning and development will help DYS achieve its mission by having the right people, with the right skills, in the right place, at the right time.



Operationally and historically for our agency, this means identifying the gaps between our workforce of today and the workforce we need in the future to continue to advance positive outcomes for youth.

Just one year following its inception in 2007 by former Commissioner Jane Tewksbury, the DYS Workforce Planning and Development Initiative established competency models for the Group Worker and the Case Worker Classification

Series (who represent the majority of our agency's workforce).

Prior to identifying the competencies (or the knowledge, skills, behaviors, personal attributes or other characteristics associated with or predictive of superior job performance), DYS hiring and supervision practices varied from region to region and program to program.

Therefore, key priorities of the Workforce Planning and Development included establishing competency models, standardizing hiring and supervision practices across the agency, advancing key HR functions (such as recruitment and retention), training and professional development, and performance management.

Work In Progress

From September 2007 through December 2010, DYS received technical assistance to help the agency embark on a comprehensive and strategic approach to strengthen and support our workforce through workforce planning and development.

A grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Human Services Workforce Initiative (HSWI) provided financial support. During the project's first two years, Cornerstones4Kids administered the grant; CPS Human Resource Services and the Crime and Justice Institute provided the technical assistance.

DYS representation in this initiative included direct care employees and managers from all regions, as well as the Unions and HR.

Frank discussions during the first year of DYS' Workforce Development Initiative helped generate a 2007-2010 Workforce Plan. The plan detailed goals, objectives and outcome measures, developed a robust communication strategy that included town hall meetings, leadership briefings, FAQs, fact sheets, and posters; and shared information about the process by posting workforce planning documents and updates on the agency's Intranet.

Among the deliverables that can be traced back to DYS' Workforce Development Initiative are pre-employment screening and strength-based supervision.

In ten years, DYS' workforce development efforts have broadened in scope and impact, reflects Marie-Elena Edwards, who has ably guided the Work Group since 2007.

"While we're doing some of the same things, our work has expanded and evolved. Take BBI (Behavior Based Interviewing), for example," says Mrs. Edwards. adding: "BBI was a change from traditional technical skills interviews."



What's Next

Because our agency's leadership understands that quality workforce development isn't top-down, staff participation in workforce planning and development is voluntary and not driven solely by Central Office.

"Workforce development involves everybody," says Deputy Commissioner Margaret Chow-Menzer. "We bring in expertise as necessary. It's vital to our agency's success that staff at all levels engage in workforce development and help address issues or concerns that directly and daily impact our workforce."

Below this article you'll find specific opportunities to join a Workforce Development Subcommittee or--if you prefer--simply and confidentially share your ideas, input or suggestions with supervisors.

"We don't call workforce development a project because a project has a definite beginning and an end," says Mrs. Edwards. "We call it an initiative, because it's a work in progress. In DYS, staff recruitment, staff retention, communications, and data collection are all ongoing issues.

"When we started this journey, our mantra was getting the right people, with the right skills, in the right place, at the right time. Today, ten years down the road, we have the same goal; we're just pursuing it in many different ways."

Massachusetts DYS Workforce Planning Goals, 2018-19

- Recruit, develop, retain, and support employees and managers working in the agency's residential programs, community locations and administrative offices
- Develop a focused workforce plan that is integrated with DYS goals and supports successful implementation of employment and professional development practices for all DYS employees
- Have an organizational culture in which employees at all levels are respected and valued in their peer, supervisory and collegial relationships
- Use data that improves our understanding of workforce demographics and facilitates better planning
- Support employees in identification and realization of their professional development goals by establishing a succession planning model
- Promote a safer work environment



Got A Bright Idea to Improve Your Workplace? Let's Hear It.

During your DYS work, you've probably said (or heard) something like, "if someone asked me what I thought about <insert work-related topic here>, I'd tell them..."

Now's your chance to tell them.

The Workforce Planning and Development Work Group seeks staff for several subcommittees whose recommendations can help DYS improve recruitment, retention and advancement of DYS employees.

Get involved as a member of the DYS Safety Committee, DYS Policy Committee, or Staff Appreciation Committee. Contact [Michele Phillips](#) about your interest.

F. Robert Brown Training Center Restructures Basic Training

As of January 2018, DYS Basic Training is two full weeks at the DYS Training Center in Grafton. While Week 1 modules remain the same, Week 2 gets an overhaul. Based on last year's successful pilot, in the revamped Week 2, new employees receive training that fulfills Massachusetts mandates and DYS initiatives.

Week 2 training covers Discrimination & Harassment Prevention, Prevention of Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault & Stalking, Victim Impact & Awareness, Drug & Alcohol Awareness (Part 1), Legal Issues, Report Writing, Diversity, Adolescent Development, Positive Youth Development, Trauma Informed Care, LGBTQI competencies, and practical application.



In 2018, Week 1 will be offered 22 times and Week 2, 11 times. DYS Basic Training includes the same eLearnings that new staff must complete by end of Week 2.

Recognizing the strengths of our adjunct model and expertise within the regions, Adjunct Trainers will provide the remaining modules within the region, keeping staff close to their respective work locations.

Employees have 30 days to complete Week 2 of Basic Training and 90 days from the date of hire to complete New Employee Regional Training. After successfully completing Week 1, Week 2 and all eLearnings, new employees are awarded a Certificate of Graduation.

[Check out Pulse for more training info!](#)

Train at Your Own PACE



All state employees can access PACE, the Commonwealth Training Registration System. After you log in, check out available training courses, find helpful resources in the library, register for classes, view your transcripts, or choose from hundreds of career-enhancing online courses.

Metro University & Urban College Build Staff Bench in Metro Region

Seeking to identify and prepare staff for their Metro-Centric future, the Metro Region recently completed trainings that benefited staff and youth.

Metro University

Conceived by and designed for staff to reduce/eliminate violence against other youth and staff, Metro Region's Metro University pilot drew from a curriculum based on staff interviews conducted by Regional Clinicians in 2016.



Staff identified themes that connected across job titles, such as Mediation, Respect, Communication, Creative Thinking and Leadership.

"We paid a lot of attention to race and ethnicity," explains Laura Prescott, Metro Region's Director of Operations, adding, "This became a major theme in each topic."

Of the dozen participants who started the program in March 2017, nine students representing residential and community staff completed the 10-15 hours of coursework. They were awarded "Metro University" jackets during a Completion Ceremony in June 2017.

Metro University is replicable in DYS regions, says Prescott: "It's a bottom-up effort, not a top-down edict, and it starts by asking your staff what they need to do their jobs better. Our staff wanted to reduce violence. Topics will probably be different in other regions depending on what staff identifies."

The data thus far appears to indicate that Metro University pedagogy may be reducing violence, says Prescott: "Overall violence is trending down, and we believe the Metro University program is a contributing factor."

Urban College

In February, with extensive staff support, Metro became the first DYS region to pilot an in-person Urban College class: PRO 101 HSA Professional Development Seminar I. Taught by Adjunct Professor Charlie Virga in MYSC's Loughran Library, the three-credit course enrolled three students from Suffolk Detention and Metro Pre-Trial Detention.

While the original goal was to offer college credit to DYS youth, the idea to include staff germinated during course planning. Says Prescott: "Staff are in the room anyway, why not use them?" Two Group Workers participated; Prescott is coordinating with AFSCME to qualify Urban College as a Professional Development credential.

Urban College works, in part, because of staff involvement: The pilot was supported by Regional Director Daniel O'Sullivan, Shift Supervisors Edwin Centelo and Prince Wilkerson, Program Director Paula Gately, Teaching Coordinator Erin O'Connor-Silverman, Asst Program Director Grace Velasquez, Learning Coach Mike Lin-Mruk and Regional Education Coordinator Renee Heywood.

WATCH: [Renee Heywood Discusses Urban College](#)



Unions Advance Workforce Development

AFSCME Council 93, Local 1368 represents more than 430 group youth workers employed by DYS to work directly with youth in the state operated programs. Group Workers comprise 85% of the staffing in a secure program.

Members and Stewards of [A.F.S.C.M.E. Local 1368](#) are eligible for various educational opportunities. Members can access higher education opportunities within the Department of Youth Services; Stewards can participate in leadership, dispute resolution and financial training through various agencies.

Through A.F.S.C.M.E. International, *any* A.F.S.C.M.E. member can get a free Associates degree through Eastern Gateway Community College (go to [afscme.org](#) and look for the free college benefit).

Another benefit for which Local 1368 members and their families are eligible is Council 93's Memorial Scholarship. Available to any member of A.F.S.C.M.E. Council 93 (to which Local 1368 belongs), currently three Scholarships of \$1,000 each are available to members and their family.

Additionally, A.F.S.C.M.E. Local 1368 members belong to S.U.M.M.U.P., a collection of all the Health and Human Services Locals in Massachusetts. S.U.M.M.U.P. offers an additional two Scholarships of \$500/year for a Local Member and two Scholarships for \$500 each for the child of a Local Member.

For Union Stewards, S.U.M.M.U.P. holds training weekends and seminars to help Stewards protect the collective bargaining rights of Union members. Trainings range from financial standards code to grievance resolution all designed to improve employee awareness and performance. ([Daniel Morse](#), President of S.U.M.M.U.P. & President AFSCME Local 1368)

Lynda.com

More than 6,000 classes on business, technology, and PC skills are available to SEIU Local 509, Unit 2 - AFSCME SEIU Local 888, NAGE, and MOSES employees through Lynda.com. Note that active licenses acquired last year through this program will be automatically renewed. To register for a Lynda.com license:

- SEIU Local 509, Unit 2 - AFSCME SEIU Local 888, & NAGE

- MOSES: The distribution of licenses for MOSES members is being coordinated by the bargaining unit.

Healthcare Professional courses

SEIU Local 509 members can access free online training for healthcare professionals at PESI, Inc. To access and "purchase" free course(s), [email to request the promo code](#) needed to "purchase" classes at PESI, Inc. Limited purchases are available, so please "purchase" courses only when you're ready to begin that training. When all the courses have been "purchased", the library will close.

Advanced Technology courses

NAGE members can access on-demand, online advanced technology classes through A Cloud Guru. Topics include cloud computing, Azure, Salesforce, and Amazon Web Services. EOTSS is coordinating the distribution of A Cloud Guru licenses.

Reimbursements

Various licenses, courses, and certifications are available for reimbursement. More info: [Training and Career Ladder Program website](#)

Staff Engagement Spurs Organizational Changes

Safety Task Force Report & Recommendations

Established in fall 2016 with the representatives from AFSCME Local 1368, Massachusetts legislators, field experts and leaders from EOHHS agencies, DYS' Safety Task Force recently released a report that comprehensively reviews the agency's policies, practices, data, outcomes, and plans to improve safety in DYS secure programs.



The Task Force met nine times over 12 months, generating a report on youth and staff safety in DYS. Submitted to HHS Secretary Marylou Sudders in February 2018, the report offers recommendations (see below) to make DYS programs safer for youth and staff while maintaining the positive development and rehabilitation of youth in those settings.

Staffing:

- * Develop and implement more strategies for retaining group workers including offering a more realistic preview at time of hire; efforts to improve work/life balance; attention to the adequacy of staffing when unplanned events occur; and a plan to invest in the direct care workforce including more opportunities for career development and promotion.
- * Provide more on the job training, coaching, and mentoring with a focus on developing and enhancing situational awareness, defensive disengagement, de-escalation and mediation skills.
- * Provide more formal supervisory training for newly hired group worker supervisors, group worker administrators, assistant program directors and program directors.

Expectations and Consistent Messaging:



- * Improve communications with residential staff to ensure practices in the programs are aligned with DYS policies and expectations as articulated by agency leadership, particularly DYS Policy #0303.01(a), Involuntary Room Confinement.

Residential Programming and Youth Engagement:

- * Develop and implement more strategies to enhance programming and youth engagement, particularly during second shift (5 - 9 pm) when there are typically more incidents of assaults in the residential programs.
- * Strengthen and enhance behavior management and supports used in residential programs.

Incident Responses and Outcomes:

- * Establish standards and guidelines for incidents requiring investigations by the DYS Investigations Unit.
- * Educate staff on the requirements of and differences between DCF 51A investigations, Department of Early Education and Care (DEEC) investigations, DYS internal reviews, and

DYS investigations.

* Educate staff on the policies and procedures for reporting, investigating and filing criminal reports when staff are assaulted on the job and available employee support services.

"These recommendations will require substantive action by everyone in DHS," explains Commissioner Forbes. "While they don't represent all potential actions, we believe they are sound, practical next steps to increase safety in our secure residential programs."

[Read the recommendations!](#)

Safety Committee:

The members of DHS' Safety Committee focus on conceiving, refining and strengthening policies and procedures that relate to the safety of all DHS employees and youth in our care. With representation from all regions and classifications, the Safety Committee seeks to reduce incidents of assault and implement "best practices" in staff safety.

Policy Steering Committee:

DHS' Policy Steering Committee includes representatives from all regions, unions, residential and community operations and other staff as needed on a *ad hoc* basis. The committee operates according to DHS [Policy 01.01.01\(b\), "Policy Administration"](#); committee members systematically review and approve all DHS policies. The work of this committee penetrates most of our activities, providing valuable insight--and unique access--to influential DHS staff and leadership.

DYS Data Matters:

DYS Workers' Compensation Claims Frequency



Over the course of the past four years, working at DHS appears to be getting safer--a trend we aspire to continue by bringing together staff at all levels to strengthen our safety culture. Post ERIP (6/30/2015), From FY16-18, NOI (Notice of Injury) and LT (Lost Time) claims have declined significantly.

NOTES:

- FY18 claims counts use 10 months of actual claims (July 17 - April 18) to estimate claims counts for 12 mos.
- NOI claims are all reported workplace injuries that may or may not result in time lost from work.
- LT claims are reported workplace injuries that resulted in five or more days lost from work.

6th Annual DYS Statewide Youth Arts Showcase Recap

More than 300 arts advocates and supporters filled WGBH Studios for our 6th Annual Youth Arts Showcase on May 15th. Attendees browsed 275 original works of art from youth and cheered enthusiastically for youth performances that included dance, songs, spoken poetry and more. Thanks to all who made this event possible: Volunteers, Arts Educators, Community Staff Members, Group Workers, Departmental Chaperones, and more.

After the performances, Katie Cohn, Assistant Director of Educational Services, shared her thoughts about why the Showcase is so special. [WATCH: "30 Seconds with... Katie Cohn."](#)



Save the Date!
2018 Commissioner's & Performance Recognition Awards
September 28; 12:30 - 4 PM (Metro Region)

Keep Your Fingers on The Pulse:

- Latest DYS news
- Videos of your DYS peers & colleagues ("30 Seconds with...")



- News and photos of Regional events
- Complete your profile (get endorsed for your skills!)
- Links to JJEMS, Jasper, PACE, SSTA and more