

October 14, 2015

All Staff,

As you are probably aware, we recently requested the American Correctional Association (ACA) to conduct an independent assessment of our prisons. Specifically, we asked ACA to focus on issues related to vacancies, scheduling, incident reporting procedures, as well as an overall assessment of facility operations. ACA assigned a team of veteran correctional professionals to conduct the assessment, and last week a report of their findings was provided to the department. Today, we were given the opportunity to share our response and how we plan to move forward.

In the report, the ACA team readily concluded that our facilities were operationally disciplined, stable, and productive. The team also recognized the professionalism and dedication of our staff which enables the department to achieve its core mission of ensuring public safety.

That report also included two alternative solutions to address concerns regarding staff scheduling and inmate disciplinary categorization. The ACA proposal recommends changing to a 14-day work period and 12-hour shifts within the current FLSA time-keeping system. The department has been considering these changes for some time and is currently vetting to determine the feasibility of such an option. The second recommendation removes injury as a defining term in disciplinary rules and changes several disciplinary offenses. This suggestion is also being reviewed to ensure that any changes made, increase offender accountability, add clarity, and reduces subjectivity. Before any revisions are implemented, we will be talking to you to gather your input as we move this department forward together. We will keep communicating with you as next steps are developed.

It is important that as Correctional Professionals we must continue to seek ways to improve as individuals and as an agency. This requires self-examination and the willingness to allow others to provide their expertise and perspectives on our processes and procedures. The recent ACA assessment and subsequent discussions stand as an example of this department's willingness to be accountable to the citizens of this state, to one another, and others we serve, in order to foster such continuous improvement.

I am appreciative of your hard work, commitment, and dedication to the department and our mission. Without you, this agency could not stand as the premier organization it does today. While there is still work to be done and always improvements to be made, I am proud to lead such a fine group of Correctional Professionals.

Stay safe,



Derrick D. Schofield
Commissioner

DDS