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Issue No. 2

# CEA National News & Notes

A Message from CEA President Andrea Buttross

## Dear CEA Members,

I want to extend my heartfelt thank you to everyone who attended and contributed to the success of our recent CEA Forum in Omaha, Nebraska. Your presence, participation, and passion made it an inspiring event filled with collaboration, new ideas, and powerful reminders of why our work in education in corrections matters so deeply. From impactful sessions on reentry and adult education to discussions on leadership and post-secondary programming, it's clear that we are continuing to sow the seeds of success in every corner of our field.


Looking ahead, I'm excited to invite you to the upcoming 79th CEA International Conference & Training Event, taking place August 10–13, 2025, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. This year's theme, "Paving the Bridge to Success," reflects our continued commitment to building pathways that connect education, opportunity, and reentry success for justice-involved individuals.

This conference will offer robust professional development, networking with colleagues, and fresh resources to support your work in the field. Whether you're focused on adult education, post-secondary programs, leadership, or career and technical training, you'll find sessions designed to inform, empower, and inspire. I encourage you to make plans now to attend and be part of this important event. Let's continue building bridges and transforming lives together.

With gratitude and excitement for what's ahead,

*Andrea*

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79th CEA INTERNATIONAL  
CONFERENCE & TRAINING EVENT

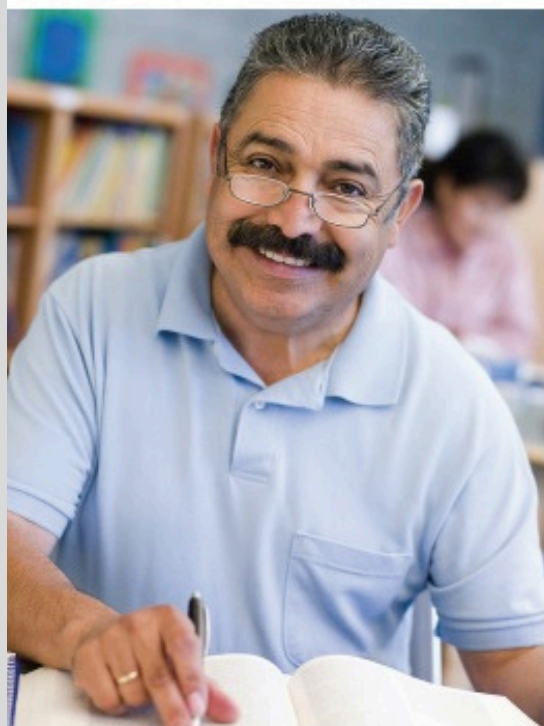
**CEA**  
**Paving the**  
**Bridge**  
**to Success**

August 10-13, 2025  
Sheraton Pittsburgh Hotel at Station Square  
300 W. Station Square Drive  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

**Correctional Education**  
**Association**



## ONLINE DEGREE PROGRAMS For Formerly Incarcerated Persons



Ashland University believes in the power of a second chance. We've offered higher education programs to justice-involved individuals since 1964. We also want to help people who were formerly incarcerated complete a degree, to help them create a pathway to a brighter future.

### PROGRAMS

AU offers associate degrees in business and general studies, along with five bachelor's degrees:

- Business Administration
- Communication Studies
- Interdisciplinary Studies
- Multidisciplinary Studies
- Organizational Leadership & Development

### SUPPORT

We provide extra support for these students, from FAFSA assistance to orientation, advising and success coaching to help them succeed.



## REACH OUT TODAY

If you'd like to recommend individuals for this program, please contact Chris Schwan in Admissions at 419-207-4580 or [cschwan@ashland.edu](mailto:cschwan@ashland.edu)

# PITTSBURGH

## AUGUST 2025



### Call for Workshop Proposals

CEA is seeking workshop proposals for its 79<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference and Training Event. Presentations are 60 minutes in length. Presenters are responsible for all handouts. Proposal submissions are due by May 30<sup>th</sup> and notifications of acceptance will be made by June 13<sup>th</sup>. Proposals can be submitted [here](#).



### Register to Attend

Registration for the conference is now open and can be done [online](#). Hotel rooms are reserved at the Pittsburgh Sheraton and available on a first-come, first-served basis. Room rates are guaranteed until July 10<sup>th</sup>.



### Become a CEA Auditor

Auditor training will be available at the 79<sup>th</sup> CEA International and Training Event. If you are interested in becoming an accredited CEA auditor then register [online](#). Applicants should have a minimum of five years correctional education experience. Applications are due by June 11<sup>th</sup>.

# Educators **AT WORK**



## **CEA Forum 2025 : A Huge Success!**

By Michelle Pfaff, Region IV Director

Educators, administrators, and other professionals dedicated to correctional education gathered in Omaha from April 26th to 29th, 2025, for the Correctional Education Association (CEA) 2025 Forum. Hosted by Region IV at the DoubleTree by Hilton Omaha Downtown, the event served as a platform for sharing expertise, exploring innovative practices, and strengthening the network of those committed to providing quality education within correctional settings.



The Forum aimed to bring together passionate individuals from across the nation to learn from one another, discuss pressing challenges, and celebrate successes in the field. And it did not disappoint! The agenda was packed with opportunities for professional development, including workshops, presentations, and networking sessions in several tracks including youthful learners, adult education, CTE, Post Secondary, career readiness, and Re-entry.

Between the Pre-conference activities, including the wonderful surrounding area of downtown Omaha and checking out the zoo, the President's Reception kicked off the conference. Monday evening's Mix and Mingle brought a lot of fun and laughter. All keynotes during the meals were engaging and inspiring to hear. The Forum featured excellent exhibition displays showcasing resources and services relevant to correctional education. The silent auction was a success and raised \$692.00! Thank you to everyone who participated in the bidding.



The CEA 2025 Forum in Omaha underscored the critical importance of education as a transformative tool within the correctional system. By bringing together dedicated professionals, we further the mission of providing educational opportunities leading to positive change and successful reintegration for incarcerated individuals. Thank you to all that attended, and I hope to see you in Pittsburgh!



# Agent of Change

*This article is from The CEO magazine and available online by clicking [here](#)*

The corrections sector has long been associated with brutality and coldness. This chill is starting to thaw thanks to the empathetic work being done across the United States. One champion of change within corrections is Beth Skinner, Director of the Iowa Department of Corrections, who says anyone can change.

Beth Skinner's favorite superhero is Superman.

"He's been my role model my entire life," she says. "Truth, justice and the American way, ever since I was a little girl."

As a child growing up in Strongsville, Ohio, Skinner would perk up when driving past police stations.

"I'd say, 'Gosh, I really want to be a police officer.' And my dad would say, 'Well, girls can't be police officers.' I said, 'Don't tell me what I can or cannot do.'"



Accepting the challenge, Skinner set her sights on a career in law enforcement. Today, she's Director of the Iowa Department of Corrections, a role that would make even the Last Son of Krypton proud.

"Superman is about making the community safe, but he's also about treating people fairly and respectfully," she says.

"That's always been my thing. I'm committed, but very compassionate as well."

## **Empathy for others**

Skinner felt like an underdog throughout her education, an experience that has shaped her worldview and her career.

"I think the people in our system have similar stories, and so I see them as potential for change and second chances. That's how it all fits together for me."

The point where the dream of becoming a police officer segued into corrections came during college, when Skinner took on an internship in probation parole.

“It really fit my values as a human,” she says. “I want everyone to be successful and live happy, fulfilling lives, and that includes people who make mistakes.”

Today, Skinner’s role as Department of Corrections Director involves a balance of security and treatment. This approach has led to an increase of people successfully completing supervision over the last three years.

“You have to have both in order to be successful, and that’s what I love about it,” she says. “You have the social work side and the criminology side as well, both of which I studied. You can’t go too heavy on one side or the other if you want the best outcomes.”

Since ascending to the role in 2019, Skinner has built a team that tirelessly works towards that outcome.

“What drives us is people and relationships and bettering people,” she says. “I’ve created a team where people feel empowered, where they can be the best they can be. That’s the stuff that gets me up every day.”

### **Meeting challenges**

Despite Skinner’s keen motivation, there are challenges within the industry. Across the United States, prisons are faced with significant staffing and retention issues.

“We’ve seen a major decrease in applicants over the last few years, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic,” Skinner says. “So if we want to be competitive with the private sector, we have to increase wages.”

It’s a discussion Skinner regularly takes directly to the Governor’s team, legislators and key stakeholders. At the moment, the starting wage for correctional officers is set to rise to US\$24 per hour, which is an increase of around 20 percent.

“The other major challenge is making sure staff have the tools they need to be successful in supporting their role,” she says. “So we’ve done a lot of work around training, professional development and creating career pathways to retain our people.”

It’s a critical pursuit. The suicide rate among correctional staff is high.

“Historically, corrections hasn’t been big on wellness, but we know people have trauma. It’s important we take care of our staff, so we’ve developed a strategic wellness plan with the National Institute of Corrections to ensure they can go home and lead healthy lives,” Skinner explains.



## **Changing the culture**

At the heart of this agenda of change is a very deliberate cultural transformation.

“When you talk about corrections, culture isn’t a word you hear very often,” Skinner says.

“But in Iowa, we want to speak that language. We want to develop cultural attributes like flexibility, innovation, courage, trust and professional development, and feedback has told us our people want the same.”

The next three-to-five years will, she says, be a time of ensuring staff feel supported and heard, and have the training they need to be successful.

“It’s a unique opportunity we have to really examine all of our practices, values and attitudes across the organization, as well as our ability to collaborate and communicate,” Skinner adds. “Both community-based corrections and prisons have unique cultures, and by utilizing the culture attributes, we are building a foundation for organizational success.”

To that end, the Department rolled out a staff survey in 2023, and the feedback presented the hierarchical Department of Corrections with some hard truths. Skinner says that the survey presents the Department with opportunity to be a learning organization.

“We can get better as leaders, as an agency,” she says. “It was a risk worth taking, and now we’re moving forward with that plan, I’m hearing people are feeling more comfortable talking about what’s on their minds. It’s made us stronger and more committed to engagement with our staff.”

The Iowa Department of Corrections provides a similarly supportive post-prison support system for released inmates. Much of that support comes from nonprofits, local agencies, state resources, educational institutions and volunteers, all mutually beneficial partnerships.

“They provide apprenticeship programs, work skills, high school education,” she says.

“We work with nonprofits for housing, volunteers that help develop prosocial behaviors, the National Alliance on Mental Illness for mental health hygiene and state agencies for workforce development and the Department of Transportation.

“The Department of Corrections staff also provide cognitive interventions onsite – it’s strategies like this that contribute to our success as a department.”

These are proven strategies to improve the lives of inmates and staff alike, practices Skinner says criminal justice agencies must get better at implementing.

“The thing that holds a lot of people back in this industry is the fear of making a wrong decision,” she says. “What we know is that we can learn from the impact of our decisions and use this information as opportunity for change. “If you don’t think that, you’re in the wrong business. Be real, be you and people will follow you.”

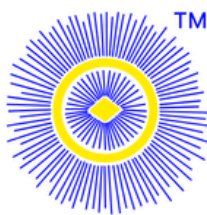
# WE'RE HIRING!



The Windham School District of Texas is hiring a Department Director of Instruction. The job description and application directions are available [here](#). Windham School District has additional postings for correctional educators as well. Postings can be found [here](#).

**Correctional Practices that Work!**

**Documented in CEA Journal Article!**



## **Progoff<sup>TM</sup> Methodology** **for Offender Rehabilitation** Using the *Intensive Journal*<sup>TM</sup> Method

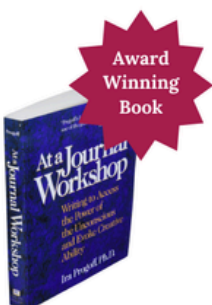
**Reentry officer Harvey Shrum, EdD  
documented many benefits:**

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- Ability to deal with painful emotional issues;
- Lower recidivism.

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- Become immersed in their self-development process;
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- Find answers for themselves. One inmate stated:

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Click [here](#) for more information about the Progoff Methodology

your 2025 CEA

# *election winners!*

Please join us in congratulating the winners of the 2025 CEA Elections.  
Their leadership will undoubtedly benefit our members.



**Terri Fazio**  
President-elect &  
Region 1 Deputy Director



**Tracie Hightower**  
Vice President



**Denise Justice**  
Treasurer



**Amy Biggs**  
Region 3 Director



**Charles Bell**  
Region 5 Director



**Robert Holtz**  
Region 7 Director



**Charles Buchal**  
Region 1 Treasurer



**Kammy Hoover**  
Region 1 Secretary



**Allan Berkheimer**  
PA Chapter President-elect





**Cynthia Lupold**  
PA State Representative



**Crystal Gearhart**  
PA State Representative



**Meghan Crowley**  
MA Chapter President



**Alvin Herron**  
NJ Chapter President



**Maureen Whelan**  
Region 2 Secretary



**Joyce Walker**  
DC Representative



**David Webb**  
Region 3 Treasurer



**Rebel Bolton**  
Region 3 Secretary



**Nick Kelnhofer**  
Region 5 Assistant Director



**Debbie Faubus**  
Region 5 Secretary



**Kristen Morgan**  
Region 6 Assistant Director  
over Professional Development



**Hayley Speiser**  
Region 6 Treasurer



**Jon Reed**  
Region 8 Assistant  
Director

Election Winners Not Pictured:

**Darrell Miller**, DE Representative  
**Jeremy Vogel**, Region 3 Assistant Director  
**Meghan Fester**, Region 5 Treasurer



# The Journal of Correctional Education Moves to e-Journal Format

*By John Dowdell, JCE Editor*

The Journal of Correctional Education (JCE) continues to be the leading academic publication in the field of education in corrections. As a publication of the Correctional Education Association (CEA), the JCE is a conduit of research and best practice for education for justice-involved individuals. JCE staff strive to review and publish research for practitioners and policymakers in the field, and toward this end, the JCE will be transitioning to an e-Journal format beginning with the September 2025 issue. JCE Editor John Dowdell stated, "We are pleased to announce the transition of the JCE to an electronic publication format. This may enable greater reach of the publication to members and researchers and continue to position the Journal as the foremost publication in the profession."

CEA Executive Director, Peggy Kaiser said, "The JCE will be available to CEA members in the CEA membership portal. Researchers will still be able to access the JCE via online research indices." Click [here](#) to access the instructions on how to login to the membership portal.

The JCE is also in need of Editorial Board members and invite individuals to apply. Candidates should have significant records of academic publication. If interested, submit a letter of interest and vitae to [\*\*David Webb, Technical Editor\*\*](#).

For questions, comments, contributions, sponsorships, and more

# Contact the CEA

**Want to connect with your CEA representatives? Then click the envelope to your right to find contact information for our current board members.**

**Board members are always excited to hear from you.**



CEA News and Notes is published quarterly with issues being distributed to all members in February, May, September, and December. All issues are posted on the [CEA website](#).

Articles are always encouraged and should generally be 500 words or less. All contributions are subject to editing for space and clarity. Contributions should be sent to [Peggy Kaiser](#).

CEA News and Notes accepts full and half-page advertisements. For deadlines and advertising rates, please contact [Peggy Kaiser](#) or [Kiara Graham](#).

