



Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council

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Transition and Education Committee Meeting Draft Minutes for April 14, 2022 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM

Members Present (P)

Not Present (NP)

Passle Helminski (P)
Sue Soderberg (P)

Cindy Duch (P)

Jeanette Alexander (P)

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Staff Present: Cheryl Novak, Kim Robinson, Melissa Wert-Thrush, Carla Hill, Kaitlin Salvati, Hillary Cook

PaRC Staff Present: Chris Todd

Guests Present: Stacie Andrews, Hiram G. Andrews Center (HGAC)

CALL TO ORDER

This meeting was conducted through Zoom. Ms. Cindy Duch called the meeting to order at 2:03 PM after quorum was established.

ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND PAST MINUTES

Ms. Passle Helminski made a motion to approve today's agenda and the approval of the past meeting minutes. Ms. Sue Soderberg seconded the motion. All were in favor.

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS:

Review / Update Committee Goals and Budget for Fiscal Year 2022-2023

ACTION ITEM: approve Committee Goals and Budget

- Ms. Cindy Duch reviewed and discussed Committee goals and budget shared on the screen. For Goal #1 members were informed that the Transition Conference will be held both in person and virtually. More information can be found about the conference at the following link;
<https://fs25.formsite.com/3fHiZQ/9hyymxkogw/index.html>. For Goal #2 members

have been attending all PA Secondary Transition Community of Practice State Leadership Team meetings and reporting during Committee meetings. Goal #3 the PaRC will need to designate a new representative for Employment 1st Oversight as the current is cycling off from the Council in July 2022. Staff have been informed. For Goal #4 the MOU is ongoing and recommended to continue with working to ensure the PaRC is part of those conversations, add monitor Act 26 reports to part 3 of the goal with recommendation to review comments left on the surveys and follow up with OVR regarding that qualitative data.

Ms. Passle Helminski motioned to approve the Goals and Budget with additions for Fiscal Year 2022-2023. Ms. Sue Soderberg seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Discussion for Committee Membership for FY 2022-2023 3 of the 4 current Committee Member's Terms end in July 2022 Committee Chair for FY 2022-2023

- Ms. Jeanette Alexander was nominated for Chair of the Committee for FY 2022-2023 and accepted the nomination.

Ms. Sue Soderberg motioned to nominate Ms. Jeanette Alexander. Ms. Passle Helminski seconded the motion. All were in favor.

Review and Discussion of Transition Customer Satisfaction Surveys and Act 26 Reports

- Ms. Jeanette Alexander stated that in recent surveys there were zero responses and inquired about OVR's process and outreach regarding the Transition Customer Satisfaction Surveys.
- Ms. Cheryl Novak stated that surveys are requested by email, are provided during transition of services or a case closing, counselors inform customers of upcoming surveys, low response rate has been a long running issue, OVR has discussed internally to improve response rate, and continued to be limited by CWDS and staff resources to contact customers individually.
- Ms. Cindy Duch stated that survey response needs to be made a priority to receive and review information about service needs. Comments left on the surveys are important to continue to review and monitor. Information included in Act 26 reports from Philadelphia is disappointing in regard to needs for employment services and Summer employment.

Updates from OVR / Hiram G. Andrews Center (HGAC)

- Ms. Kim Robinson reported on Summer programs with an estimate of serving 6,000 students with the development of different programs. My Work Initiative is planned for all BVRs Offices, including programs that would serve 4 to 8 students for each office and 391 total students. General Paid Work Experiences will serve approximately 550 students. Professional Connection Experience program will serve 8 offices and serving 364 students. Summer Post-Secondary experience will provide

students the opportunity to be provided services at a college campus and learn skills about post-secondary education with 4 programs serving 105 students. College Resources for Success programs will be provided throughout the Commonwealth providing college work experiences. Youth Ambassador program, first Youth Ambassador will be hosted in Erie, PA. Team Navigator program continues to be developed and has been vetted by several Intermediate Units and BSE. Project Search programs continue to grow with the new Provider Agreement with the goal to provide supported employment contracts and actively searching for employment before leaving school.

- Ms. Cindy Duch inquired about success rate of job placement for Project Search.
- Ms. Melissa Wert-Thrush stated the required placement rate is 70 percent or higher. Reports include the 2020-2021 program year, 21 sites in PA, doesn't recall how many received the award for reaching the 70 percent rate but understands there were quite a few.
- Ms. Passle Helminski inquired if there was a deaf student in Erie, PA this past year receiving services from Project Search. Inquired if OVR is actively recruiting for students with sensory disabilities, deaf, deaf-blind, blind, visually impaired for the Youth Ambassador programs. Inquired about percentage of those with sensory disabilities provided services.
- Ms. Melissa Wert-Thrush stated that there have been students with sensory disabilities provided services within Project Search. The focus has been to serve students with intellectual disabilities and autism but have also provided services for those who are blind and visually impaired. Outreach is provided for all disabilities. Does not have data for percentage of those with sensory disabilities.
- Ms. Kim Robinson stated OVR is actively recruiting for students with sensory disabilities, deaf, deaf-blind, blind, visually impaired for transition related services. CAP representative is also assisting OVR with that process.
- Ms. Stacie Andrews provided HGAC updates. HGAC completed their CARF survey, received written their report, and received their 3-year Certification for Vocational Evaluation Services. Just hosted Autism Walk and Awareness Faire with over 270 participants, provided information about HGAC and OVR services. Hosting in June their Access, Planning, and Strategies Academy (APS). An in person 5-day program for Pre-ETS students. In July HGAC is participating for a Summer Academy for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing that will be cohosted by BVRS, ODHH, HGAC and PaTTAN that will host a maximum of 30 students. The CREATE program that is a 5-day Vocational Evaluation program is being offered virtually because of past issues with COVID restrictions that continues to improve and grow over time.

Updates from Bureau of Special Education – Jeanette Alexander Report from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Annual Conference held in early March 2022

- Ms. Jeanette Alexander stated that the PDE Conference was held in Hershey, PA in early March, hosted more than a total of 1200 participants (in person and virtually). Shared information about the new BSE Bulletin that will serve to provide information to educators and professionals in the education field through out the Commonwealth. Provided the link to attendees to sign up for the monthly Bulletin. PDE continues to focus on the Attract, Prepare, Retain initiative to assist districts

with trainings, workshops, recruitment for BSE/PDE. Encouraged for attendees and others to utilize this resource for outreach.

Schedule Next Quarterly Committee meeting (Fiscal Year 2022-2023)

- Members scheduled the next Quarterly Committee meeting for July 7, 2022 from 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM.

Adjourn

Ms. Jeanette Alexander motioned to adjourn meeting. Ms. Passle Helminski seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned.