



Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council (PaRC)

55 Utley Drive, Camp Hill, PA 17011

Voice: (717) 975-2004 or (888) 250-5175 TTY: (888) 559-2658 Fax: (888) 524-9282

Email: parc@parehabilitationcouncil.org Website: parehabilitationcouncil.org

Transition and Education Committee Meeting Draft Minutes for July 7, 2022 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM

Members Present (P)

Not Present (NP)

Passle Helminski (P)
Sue Soderberg (P)
Lynn Heitz (NP)

Cindy Duch (P)
Julia Grant Barol (P)

Jeanette Alexander (P)
Andrew Pennington (P)

Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Staff Present: Cheryl Novak, Kim Robinson, Melissa Wert-Thrush, Carla Hill, Dawn Sokol, Marci Katona, Tracie Maille, James Whitonis

PaRC Staff Present: Chris Todd

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

CALL TO ORDER

This meeting was conducted through Zoom. Ms. Jeanette Alexander called the meeting to order at 2:00 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:

Welcome new Committee Chair and two new Committee members

- Ms. Jeanette Alexander welcomed new Committee members to the meeting.

Review and Discussion of Transition Customer Satisfaction Surveys and [Act 26 Reports](#), Survey Return Rate

- Ms. Cindy Duch inquired about what analyses and follow up is done with the Act 26 reports once received by OVR and what is done with the reports at the OVR District Offices. Stated that Philadelphia data is very low for Individual Employment Plan (IEP), Transition Status, and Summer jobs compared to other counties and areas around the Commonwealth.
- Ms. Tracie Maille reported that all counties' data is reviewed and compared. Reported delays in reentry to school districts regarding IEP Transitions services, meetings, and staffing concerns. There were 54 job posting made recently to alleviate staffing shortage. Statewide analyses include determining needs and implementation for each County. Recent efforts included a presentation for each District Office to inform staff of various supports available, coordination for IEP meetings and service coordination. Philadelphia is included in the rapid response implementation.
- Ms. Cindy Duch stated the report shows over 11,000 IEP meetings in Montgomery County with staff only attending 24 meetings in the 3rd quarter of 2021-2022.
- Ms. Tracie Maille stated that Norristown is another area where staff is down in numbers and they are currently implementing outreach at those school districts through supply of informational packets, referral and outreach plan, plan to have a counselor meet with each student, and leadership is fully aware of those numbers and are working to improve. Recruitment and Retention work group is meeting today to determine steps that can be taken to improve staffing issues such as allowable incentives at the Federal level, amending the state plan to allow work incentive initiatives, and attending Student Advisory Council meetings for recruitment purposes both in and outside of the Commonwealth.
- Ms. Passle Helminski inquired about responses to the previous meeting questions posed regarding Act 26 and Blind and Visual Services for students. Requested to please share the information about data collection upon its availability.
- Ms. Cheryl Novak stated that those questions were passed on to Ms. Kim Robinson and other OVR staff who have in turn reached out to their data teams to look into ways to collect that data. Agreed to inform upon availability.
- Ms. Sue Soderberg stated that there have been no responses in the Customer Satisfaction Surveys since November 2021.
- Ms. Cheryl Novak recently spoke with the data team and Mr. Ryan Hyde and it was determined that many of the surveys have been going to SPAM folders. Looking into how to remedy that and will resend those surveys.
- Ms. Jeanette Alexander voiced concerns about the ongoing 0% return rate being reported during previous meetings.

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

- Ms. Stacie Andrews reported that Access, Planning and Strategies (APS) Academy program was held for the first time since the pandemic began. APS was held in June with 9 participants who learned about time management and technology for

transition to college and work from High School. October 19 – 21, 2022 HGAC will hold the Career and Transition Fair that will host up to 1000 visitors in-person, that will provide tours and information about Transition programs. HGAC is now available for families to tour and is providing two tours per day. In the process of finalizing a virtual tour, filming will be completed in a few weeks and the tour will be available on the website.

Updates from Bureau of Special Education (BSE)

- Ms. Jeanette Alexander reported that an information discovery grant is available for review on the PATTAN website and is for up to \$45,000 for two years. Transition Conference is being held in State College on August 10 and 11. National Autism Conference is August 1 through 4, 2022 in State College. Special Education Leadership Academy will be held in State College on July 19 - 21, 2022. Focused on Attract, Repair, Retain and are seeking mentors including retired teachers to mentor new BSE staff members.

2022 PA Community of Practice Transition Conference – [Mission Possible: Transitioning to the Future, August 10 -11, 2022](#)

- Ms. Jeanette Alexander inquired if members are interested in attending or had discussion for the upcoming Transition Conference which is listed at \$50 per attendee for virtual and \$110 for in-person attendance.

Schedule Next Quarterly Committee meetings (Fiscal Year 2022-2023) October, January, April

- Ms. Jeanette Alexander requested to send calendar invites for quarterly meetings for October 13, January 12, and April 13, 2022 from 2:00 PM to 3:00 PM.

Public Comment (3 minutes for each attendee)

- Ms. Sylenthia Dent provided public comment and stated that as a parent of a child receiving Transition Services, she would like to inquire about ways to streamline the information available about OVR services. Was not aware of the APS Academy and would have loved to assist her son with being a part of that.
- Ms. Tracie Maille stated that OVR is working to open up better lines of communication with programmatic things that are going on within the divisions within the Bureau of Central Operations. Holding in-service staff trainings to ensure everyone is aware of all programs being offered, holding District Administrator and Assistant Administrator bi-weekly calls to ensure each District is aware of what services are being held, and has continued increased communication in the last two to three months with all of the OVR staff.
- Mr. Andrew Pennington inquired about the Youth Ambassador Program and how many District Offices have provided work experience with the individual. Inquired if data is collected in regard to this program.

- Ms. Tracie Maille stated that there was a slow start within the Intermediate Units (IU) as the program was introduced in the fall but there is now a Vocational Specialist assigned to the Transition Division solely committed to the Youth Ambassador position and is reaching out to all IUs to train staff and also following up with information about the Transition Navigator positions to get each program up and running. There are at least seven IUs interested in these programs at this time. Stated monthly reporting is required for both of these programs.
- Ms. Passle inquired if these programs will be inclusive for people with low vision, blind, deaf, and hard of hearing.
- Ms. Tracie Maille stated that is correct.
- Ms. Cindy Duch thanked Ms. Sylenthia Dent for her time, comments, and providing insight. Inquired about the Early Reach work group and what specifics they were looking for to improve those services.
- Ms. Tracie Maille stated that they are looking for a smaller cohort approach to provide more individualized services to enable providers to make more solid connections with students that will increase outreach and paid work experiences. Also hoping to expand social media presence to provide more announcements of upcoming programs.
- Ms. Sylenthia Dent stated that she was thankful to be in attendance today and will spread the word about the Council and the information provided today about OVR Transition Services.
- Ms. Tracie Maille stated that she appreciates that and moving forward is looking to expand outreach and stronger connections with the Rehab Council with the goals to receive feedback from the Council, State Board, and use that information to enhance services. Will provide today's input to the Communications Team.

Adjourn

Ms. Passle Helminski motioned to adjourn meeting. Ms. Cindy Duch seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned.