



# Pennsylvania Rehabilitation Council (PaRC)

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## Transition and Education Committee Meeting Minutes March 4, 2025, from 2:30 PM to 3:30 PM

### Members Present (P)

### Not Present (NP)

Julia Barol (P)

Andrew Pennington (P)

Sylenthia Dent-Siebenlist (P)

Cindy Duch (P)

Michelle Mitchell (P)

Kara Donatucci Pham (P)

William Paz De Melo (NP)

**Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) Staff Present:** Chris Harbert, Kim Robinson, Krista Sloan, Jill Moriconi, Chris Zakraysek, Jim Whitonis, Lenny Stinson

**Guests Present:** Tim Krushinski, Bureau of Special Education, Kathy Walton, Riverview Intermediate Unit #6, Max Rosario, Berks County Youth Ambassador Program

**PaRC Staff Present:** Chris Todd, Michelle Gerrick

### CALL TO ORDER

This meeting was conducted through Zoom. Ms. Julia Barol called the meeting to order at 2:30 PM after quorum was established.

### ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions.

### APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA AND PAST MINUTES

***MOTION was made by Ms. Sylenthia Dent-Siebenlist for approval of the agenda and past meeting minutes. Ms. Kara Donatucci Pham seconded the motion. All were in favor.***

### DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION ITEMS

#### Committee Chair and Vice Chair for FY 2025-2026

- Mr. Andrew Pennington nominated Ms. Julia Barol for Committee Chair for Fiscal Year 2025-2026. Ms. Barol accepted the nomination and there were no additional

nominations. Mr. Pennington nominated Ms. Sylenthia Dent-Siebenlist for Committee Vice Chair for Fiscal Year 2025-2026. Ms. Dent-Siebenlist accepted the nomination and there were no additional nominations.

***MOTION was made by Mr. Andrew Pennington to approve Ms. Julia Barol as Committee Chair for Fiscal Year 2025-2026. Ms. Michelle Mitchel seconded the motion. All were in favor.***

***MOTION was made by Mr. Andrew Pennington to approve Ms. Sylenthia Dent-Siebenlist as Committee Vice Chair for Fiscal Year 2025-2026. Ms. Michelle Mitchel seconded the motion. All were in favor.***

### **Annual Review of Committee Goals**

- Members agreed to revise Goal #1 to reflect the name change for the Transition Conference held each July. The new name of the conference is the Bridging Knowledge to Know-How Conference. Members held discussion regarding the OVR Customer Satisfaction Transition Surveys and agreed to change Goal #4 Step 3 to Review and improve upon quantitative data, qualitative data, and comments provided by the OVR Customer Satisfaction Surveys of Transition and Act 26 Reports.

***MOTION was made by Mr. Andrew Pennington to approve the revised Committee goals for Fiscal Year 2025-2026. Ms. Cindy Duch seconded the motion. All were in favor.***

### **OVR updates**

#### **Pre-Employment Transition Services Youth Ambassador Program**

- Ms. Kim Robinson, OVR reported on their re-prioritization plan, Pre Employment to Transition Services (Pre ETS) staff training series, Summer Program budgets and planning, strategies to reduce spending, Early Reach program, collaborative efforts with CTI at HGAC and cyber school students, Pre ETS outreach efforts, projects with the juvenile justice program, Project SEARCH sites and meetings, and the Pathways to Partnership grant statistics.
- Ms. Krista Sloan reported on the OVR Youth Ambassador (YA) programs. YAs continue to engage in various Pre ETS and Transition activities including strengthening self-advocacy and disability awareness. Mr. Lenny Stinson and Mr. Max Rosario, Youth Ambassador Program of Berks County reported on YA activities including meetings, speaking engagements, and outreach held with the Boys and Girls Club, City Life Ministry, Berks County Transition Council, Youth Engagement Committee, Transition Expo, PA Youth Leadership Network, and local High Schools.
- Ms. Kathy Walton, Riverview Intermediate Unit #6 reported on the YA program activities of Mr. Jason Sampson which includes presentation about self-advocacy and disability awareness, attendance of secondary transition coordinator meetings,

CART webinars, CORE for Youth events, preparation for Virtual Reality goggles for mock interviews and resource day, various STEM related opportunities, and outreach events.

### **Updates from the Commonwealth Technical Institute at Hiram G Andrews Center (CTI at HGAC)**

- Ms. Jill Moriconi provided updates on the Commonwealth Technical Institute at Hiram G Andrews Center (CTI at HGAC) including student enrollment, programs and service areas, Childhood Education program, Welding Technology program, OVR Spring Staff Engagement Experience, field trip for culinary students at the Governor's Mansion, CART advocacy series, job shadowing day, Annual Autism Appreciation Walk, Accessibility Awareness and Advocacy Fair, graduation class events, recruitment event with the Office of Administration and Penn DOT, and accreditation visit. CTI anticipates that there will be approximately 90 graduates for the current semester.

### **Work Experience for High School Students with Disabilities Act (Act 26) Report**

- Members shared concerns regarding Act 26 Report data especially for the Philadelphia area. Ms. Kim Robinson, OVR reported that she and her team are reviewing data from the last 6 quarters grouped by District Office to identify counties with a significant difference between students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and the number of IEP meetings attended by the District Office to provide targeted technical assistance for those District Offices that have been identified.
- Ms. Cindy Duch explained that these concerns have been shared over the period of several years and that the previously planned changes within the Philadelphia District Office have not yet occurred and inquired if those planned changes are still in place. Members explained that it would be beneficial to invite OVR staff from the Philadelphia District Office to attend a committee meeting. Members shared the importance of holding discussion to identify ways to improve upon the number of students being served and supports being provided within the Philadelphia area.

### **Updates from the Bureau of Special Education**

- Mr. Tim Krushinski, Bureau of Special Education (BSE) provided report regarding an audit by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) which will include fiscal management, monitoring of LEAs and schools, compliance requirements, technical assistance, professional development, and data from the state performance plan. Mr. Krushinski provided information about continued efforts of their Attract-Prepare-Retain (APR) priority.

### **Conference Information**

**[Bridging Knowledge to Know-How: July 28-31, 2025 Uniting Pennsylvania's educators, community partners, families, and youth to explore insights and tools that bridge knowledge and practical application.](#)**

- Members reviewed the conference information and agreed there will be Council representation at the event.

## **Adjourn**

***MOTION was made by Ms. Sylenthia Dent-Siebenlist to adjourn. Ms. Michelle Mitchell seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned.***