

Virginia State Rehabilitation Council
DRAFT Meeting Minutes
January 24, 2011

A meeting of the Virginia State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) was held on January 24, 2011 at the DRS Headquarters Building in Richmond, Virginia.

Members Present: Charles Benagh (teleconference), Sandra Cook, Matthew Deans, Daniel DeBoer, Charles Downs, Donna Kay Graff, Sarah Liddle, Toney Lineberry, Marianne Moore, James Rothrock, Karen Gregory-Williams, Florence Watt

Members Absent: Gregory Coleman, Stephanie Colorado, Shannon McManus Jones

Others Present: Elizabeth Smith, Policy and Planning Director; Scott Fraley, Vocational Rehabilitation Quality Assurance Analyst; Vanessa Rakestraw, Policy Analyst; Barbara Tyson, Staff Support; Doug Powell, Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired SRC Chair; Ernie Steidle, Chief Operating Officer; Nick Whiting, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor; Larry Overbay, Southwest Regional Manager; Rick Sizemore, Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center Director; Rachael Bear, Assistant Attorney General; Polly Sweeney, Special Advisor to the Governor on Disability Issues; Cat Clough and Bernadette Mayhall, Interpreters; Lessie Judkins, Personal Assistant to Sandra Cook

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m.

Approval of Minutes: A motion was made, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote to approve the minutes of the November 16, 2010 meeting and noted that the addendum to the minutes includes the Roundtable Reports of the SRC members.

Mr. Downs announced that he had received a written request from Chuck Benagh to participate by teleconference because of a medical condition/disability that prevented his attendance in person.

Matters of Public Comment: There were no comments from the public.

Chairperson's Report:

- Kathy Maybee has resigned from the SRC as she is moving to Florida.
- The Rehabilitation Services Administration has selected "Understanding the Impact of Health Care Reform on the Employment and Independence of Individuals with Disabilities" as the topic for the 37th Institute on Rehabilitation Issues.
- The March 14, 2011 SRC meeting will be held at the Sheraton Norfolk Waterside, 777 Waterside Drive, Norfolk, Virginia 23510. Ms. Tyson will register members and make hotel reservations for the members attending the Transition Forum which will begin at 1:00 pm on Monday, March 14th and conclude on Wednesday, March 17th at 12:00 noon. The Transition Forum Website will be available

around mid-February for attendees to review the sessions being offered. Lynnae Ruttledge, Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration, will be the opening speaker.

SRC Educational Program: The Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI) and the DBVI SRC

Mr. Powell provided an overview of the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired, including information on consumers served by the department, services provided by the Library for the Blind and Vision Impaired, the Virginia Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired, the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Act, and the Randolph Sheppard Act. He also provided information on the activities of the DBVI SRC.

Mr. Downs received the following volunteers to present an educational program at the upcoming 2011 SRC meetings:

- Marianne Moore – Department of Education - May 9th meeting
- Donna Kay Graff with Mary Nunnally, DRS Statewide Coordinator for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing - August 8th meeting
- Matthew Deans - Day in the Life of a DRS Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor – November 14th meeting

Commissioner's Report

- Commissioner Rothrock recognized Nick Whited, Substance Abuse Counselor in the Pounding Mill Office, and Larry Overbay, Regional Director for the Southwest Region, for their accomplishments in serving our VR consumers. Since 2008, Mr. Whited has assisted 177 consumers in becoming successfully employed. Seventy-two of these successful employment closures occurred in FFY 2010, making Mr. Whited the counselor with the highest number of successful closures for the year. All of these clients were closed in competitive employment with average hourly earnings of \$9.97. During FFY 2010, the Southwest Region had 656 successful employment outcomes and was the only Region to surpass their goal. They also had the highest rehabilitation rate of all the regions, with a competitive employment rate of 93%, and average hourly earnings of \$9.39. The SRC applauded the accomplishments of Mr. Whited and the Southwest Region.
- The Commissioner briefed the SRC on legislation before the 2011 General Assembly affecting DRS and people with disabilities. He also provided information on the Governor's proposed budget and budget amendments that have been offered to restore previous budget reductions and enhance funding for the VR program. Ms. Smith will forward the list of bills and budget amendments to the SRC members. The Commissioner stated that agency management is looking at strategies to continue to support the large number of consumers in the system. Efforts are being made to try to keep all Order of Selection categories open by

looking at administrative and personnel savings. The Commissioner is working to education House Appropriations and Senate Finance staff regarding the agency's need for additional State money for VR match.

- Lynnae Ruttledge, RSA Commissioner, and Steve Wooderson, Executive Director of the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation, would like to meet with the SRC at their March meeting.
- There is collaboration occurring among the Area Agencies on Aging and the Centers for Independent Living to help individuals with disabilities leave institutions and remain in the community.

Council Roundtable and Working Lunch

The Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired and the Department of Education reports were discussed. The DOE was submitted in writing and is attached. Mr. Powell will send the DBVI SRC Annual Report to Ms. Tyson to distribute to SRC.

DRS Program Reports

Budget

Ernie Steidle reported on the status of the budget for State Fiscal Year 2011 and provided members with a detailed budget breakdown.

Field Rehabilitation Services

Kathy Hayfield provided an introduction on her past experience with DRS before becoming promoted to the Field Rehabilitation Services Director. She reviewed the FRS performance for the current Federal Fiscal Year, which is showing a positive trend.

Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center

Rick Sizemore thanked members for their endorsement of the WWRC Blueprint III; a copy will be distributed at the March meeting. Renovations to the dining hall have been completed. There will be a ribbon cutting ceremony on February 18th and SRC members are invited. The renovations to Barrett Hall will begin within the next 30 days. Mr. Sizemore requested that any member who is not receiving the WWRC *Centerline* publication and would like to contact him. He mentioned the name change feasibility study that was being conducted. Mr. Downs and Mr. Lineberry spoke in favor of keeping the name as Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center.

Committee Reports

Internal Affairs

Employment Support Organizations Subcommittee will ask Donna Bonessi, Employment Support Services Program Coordinator, to attend the May meeting to discuss the progress on the Employment and to then give the committee an update on the progress on the development of the Employment Services Organization report card.

Susan Gaillard, DRS Training Coordinator, gave an overview of the VR In-Service Training Grant training plan. DRS received two awards from the Rehabilitative Services Administration to fund training for the next five years. Ms. Gaillard described how the funds have been spent since FFY 2010 and the proposed training topics through FFY 2015, to include the rehabilitation of specific disability groups (i.e. individuals with traumatic brain injury and Autism Spectrum disorder), new counselor skills, and fundamentals of field management.

External Affairs

Mr. DeBoer, Chair, explained that the External Affairs Committee is now operating under the four subcommittees: legislative, comprehensive needs assessment, SRC annual report, and outreach.

The SRC website, which falls under the Outreach Subcommittee, is now live and is waiting for the DRS website to update. On the bottom of the website page will be space for client success stories. In addition, a page on the Roy J. Ward Awards and a list of previous winners will be included. The External Committee is looking for a SRC member to continue to maintain the website after Mr. DeBoer's term expires.

Nominations for the Roy J. Ward SRC Employee Leadership Award are due March 1, 2011. The External Committee will review the nominations at the March meeting and the awards will be presented at the May meeting.

The SRC Annual Report has been completed. Members are to send the report to their respective legislators with a cover letter that emphasizes the need to prioritize human services in Virginia. Members with disabilities may want to tell their personal stories. Sandra Cook and Florence Watt will ensure that the report goes to the Chair of the Senate and House Finance Committees. This will require a quick turnaround due to the General Assembly schedule.

Members are encouraged to nominate potential new members. Three current members will be rotating off and one member has resigned. Members whose terms are up and who are eligible for reappointment need to submit requests for reappointment.

The Triennial Comprehensive Needs Survey is underway. Surveys have already been sent to DRS staff persons and 265 completed surveys have been returned. The next stage of surveys will be sent to stakeholders.

Unfinished Business

Chet Avery Internship Program Update – Chuck Benagh explained the program and will send the materials to Ms. Tyson to distribute to members.

NIDRR Grant on Return on Investment – Danny DeBoer reported on the first meeting of the Advisory Council on the Return on Investment Federal Grant received by the University of Richmond. It was an organizational meeting, looking at outcomes over five years, and the impact of vocational rehabilitation on employment, etc.

November 19, 2010 SRC Region III Meeting - Charlie Downs reported that he, Liz Smith, Sandra Cook, and Doug Powell attended the meeting. Topics included annual report, needs assessment, and recruitment and retention. There will be two meetings per year – the April 9th meeting will be held in Bethesda and the November 9th meeting will be hosted in Richmond.

November 9, 2011 SRC Region III Meeting – Will be held in Richmond.

New Business

WWRC Land Transfer

Rachel Baer, Assistant Attorney General, explained that in 1972 a small piece of property (less than an acre) at WWRC was deeded to the Virginia Board of Vocational Rehabilitation. With the abolishment of the Board and the assumption of the legal responsibilities of the Board by the SRC, the property belongs to the SRC. Due to an easement issue with Augusta County regarding the management of water lines, the Commissioner will be asking the Governor for permission to provide the easement to Augusta County. A motion was made, seconded, and passed unanimously to authorize Commissioner Rothrock to act on behalf of the SRC in getting the Governor's approval for the easement. Ms. Baer will provide additional guidance to the SRC at their March meeting.

SRC By-Laws Change – The SRC members were provided, with the meeting agenda, two proposed changes to the SRC By-Laws: changing a quorum to a simple majority and allowing SRC members to continue to serve on the SRC until official notification has been received from the Governor's Office regarding the members' successor. The vote on these changes will occur at the March, 2011 meeting.

Disabled Parking Rights in the City of Alexandria – Chuck Benagh informed the SRC that the City of Alexandria is proposing to revoke the right given by the Commonwealth of Virginia to all persons with disabilities displaying a valid accessible parking placard or plate to park in any legal parking space for up to four hours without cost or other restriction within the City. It was decided that Mr. Benagh would provide the members with information should anyone have a personal interest in providing a comment to the Alexandria City Council.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.



Youth and Parent Summits

The summits were held November 15 and 16 in Staunton, Virginia. Over 160 parents and youth attended. Guest speakers included Rob Langston, Miss Virginia, and Brent Leake. All three speakers highlighted the partnership between youth and parents as a key to their successes. Next year's summits will be held in Charlottesville, November 6th-8th.

Virginia Transition Forum

The Waterside Marriott is full! We are expecting around 800 participants, and there are over 100 concurrent sessions. The program will be assembled the week of January 24. Youth and parents will be presenting at the Forum. Youth have provided 5 proposals and the parent provided three. Additionally youth will present during lunch.

Education Reform Initiatives:

Performance Pay Incentive and Tax Credits

A performance pay incentive pilot program will provide competitive grants for school divisions identified as hard-to-staff. The pilot models will award performance pay incentives of up to \$5,000 to teachers in these schools. This proposal was part of the budget amendments submitted by the Governor in December. The Governor also announced legislation which will establish a tax credit for companies donating to nonprofit organizations that provide scholarships to help lower income students attend nonpublic schools.

High Performing Schools

728 schools and nine school divisions earned 2011 Virginia Index of Performance (VIP) awards for advanced learning and achievement. The incentive program, which was created by the Board of Education in 2007, recognizes schools and divisions that achieve excellence goals and far exceed minimum state and federal accountability standards. The awards are based on student achievement and other performance indicators during 2009-2010 – include:

110 Virginia schools that earned the Governor's Award for Educational Excellence;

- Eight school divisions and 323 schools that earned the Board of Education Excellence Award;
- One school division and 289 schools earned the Board of Education Competence to Excellence Award; and
- Six schools that earned the Board of Education Rising Star Award.

“These recognitions complement the commonwealth’s accountability program by recognizing performance that far exceeds minimum state and federal standards,” said Superintendent of Public Instruction Patricia I. Wright.

For the list of divisions go to:

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/news/news_releases/2011/jan20.shtml

Special Education’s State Performance Plan / Annual Performance Report
Stakeholder groups met in December to review data and provide input into the next SPP/APR due to the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) February 2. There are 20 indicators including those that relate to secondary transition. The report should be available to the public in May/June. School Divisions are gearing up for another round of data collection. For more information, please visit: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/reports_plans_stats/index.shtml

Melissa Smith

The Virginia Department of Education’s Division of Special Education and Student Services lost a colleague and friend in December. Melissa provided technical assistance to school divisions, State Operated Programs (including WWRC) and VDOE staff on local Annual Plans, the complaint process, and legal aspects of implementing IDEA 2004.