

Maryland State Rehabilitation Council  
Legislative Event  
Annapolis, Maryland  
February 5, 2008

**Members – Present**

Larry Abramson  
Tom Barkley  
John Brennan  
Robert Burns  
Charles Crawford  
Niles Ellingson  
Beth Lash  
Carol Lewis  
Kali Mallik  
Jerry Pantaleo  
Josie Thomas

**Guests – Present**

Yvonne Kranitz, DORS Regional  
Director  
Debra Luecking, TransCen  
Dr. Kunirum Osia, DORS  
Kim Owens, DORS OBVS Counselor  
Brenda Riedl, DORS Staff Specialist,  
Transitioning

**Members Unable to Attend**

Andrea Buonincontro  
Joyce Callahan  
Tim Daly  
Ross Edwards  
Mary Manzoni  
Anne Rea  
Michael Shaw  
Alfred Sonnenstrahl  
Terri Uttermohlen  
Jennifer Whitcomb

**Support Staff-Present**

Polly Huston  
Donna Lippa

**DORS Liaison Staff – Present**

Jean Jackson  
Donna Lettow  
Kathi Santora  
Sue Schaffer

**Introduction, Council Recognition and Approval of Minutes**

In the absence of the Chair, Vice Chairperson Kali Mallik welcomed members and guests to the meeting. Minutes of the 14 November 2007 meeting were approved as written.

**Maryland Seamless Transition Collaborative (Brenda Riedl, DORS Staff Specialist, Transitioning and Debra Luecking, TransCen)**

Mr. Burns announced that Maryland has received a 5-year grant of 2.9 million from the US Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration. Maryland was one of six states under a competitive grant process to receive this grant. Maryland's proposal was the highest rated of all. A key feature of Maryland's Transition Collaborative is a public/private partnership between DORS and TransCen, Inc. The Collaborative will focus on evidence based transition practices, including paid work experiences, that TransCen has field tested in Charles County working with individuals with development disabilities. Through this grant, the Collaborative will expand evidence based transition practices to broader populations, rolling out to at least seven other LEAs and making sub-grants to those LEAs over the next five years. Over 400 students with disabilities will be served directly.

Berenda Riedl stated that a key feature of the project model is that all of the youth will have an opportunity for paid employment and have as many work experiences throughout the project as possible. Studies have shown that, if students have the opportunity to participate in paid work experiences; it is the strongest predictor of post-secondary success. An expected project outcome is serving approximately 400 students directly, promoting a seamless transition to post-school employment and/or postsecondary education.

An RFP for local sites was circulated December 3, 2007. On December 14, 2007 there was an interested parties meeting at the Workforce & Technology Center. Two grants will be awarded the first year. The first year will be for planning and the second year implementation. Each site will receive \$75,000 for each year of the two year period. There will be eight sites up and running by the end of the project. Charles County will serve as the model site. The key components of the transition model are:

- Individualized, student-driven transition planning and services.
- Family support and participation
- Array of individualized work experiences during secondary education years
- Interagency braided resources based on the participating student's Individual Transition Plan
- Paid employment experience and linked to a community service provider or postsecondary education at the point of transition
- State and local systems changes related to policies, procedures and practice

Debra Luecking distributed a student services flow chart for direct services through the Maryland Seamless Transition Collaborative. The student services flow chart will be as follows:

- Enroll the student in the program in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade (3 years prior to exit)
- DORS Counselor assigned to each student and opens case in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade (2 years prior to exit)
- Paid employment prior to exit with linkages to CRPs and DDA for ongoing supports or linkages to postsecondary education/trades training and campus disability support services in place in 12<sup>th</sup> grade (1 year prior to exit)
- Post school follow-up – (2 years beyond high school)

Kali Mallik asked what happens to a student who is not DDA or DORS eligible.

Ms.Luecking stated that the student population that typically goes into this approach is significantly, or most significantly, disabled so they would qualify or be eligible for DORS services.

### **Chairperson's Report**

Vice-Chairperson Kali Mallik presented the following report:

- Multi-Regional Spring SRC Forum – RSA has requested that the Directors of the RRCEPs create and convene three SRC Training Forums across the country. The SRC forum for the Eastern/Southern US will be held May 14-16, 2008 in Orlando, Florida. The funding from RSA will pay for all associated costs of

participation for the SRC Chair from each state VR agency. These forums will be designed to:

1. Demonstrate and orient SRCs to the operational features of the new web-based SRC online training tutorial;
  2. Develop additional capacity for SRCs to carry out their mandated responsibilities; and
  3. Provide forums for exchanging information and effective practices.
- House Bill 280/Senate Bill 314 – Tax Credit for Qualifying Employees with Disabilities-Sunset Extension – extends by three (3) years termination provisions and dates of applicability for specified tax credits for employers that hire qualifying individuals with disabilities. Mr. Mallik stated that DORS and the SRC are presenting testimony in support of this legislation. The hearings are scheduled for February 6, 2008.
  - Mr. Mallik reported that Representative John Sarbanes and Senator Barbara Mikulski have responded to the Councils letters regarding funding priorities for fiscal year 2009.
  - SRC waiting list initiative at the November 2007 Statewide Transition Conference – The SRC had a booth at the Statewide Transitioning Conference in November and SRC members Beth Lash and Carol Lewis spent two days talking to individuals about the DORS budget issues and waiting list. Approximately 80 people signed up to receive information about how to contact their legislators in support of additional funding for DORS. Donna Lippa forwarded this information electronically to those individuals.
  - Larry Abramson reported on the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC). Mr. Abramson stated that the Council is in support of the concepts of a national body, but due to financial restraints, will not be able to formally join due to associated financial requirements. A letter has been developed by the Chair and Vice Chair to forward to the Chairperson of NCSRC.

#### **Director's Report** (Robert Burns)

- FY 2009 Above-the-Mark Budget Report – Mr. Burns reported that the State Board of Education presented a 4.1 million dollar request for additional funding for DORS to the Governor. The Governor has funded 2.3 million of this allowance. The goal with this additional money will be to eliminate at least one half of the 4,500 waiting list over the next year. The Department's budget hearings are scheduled for February 28<sup>th</sup> and March 5<sup>th</sup>. The Division is very appreciative of the Governor's support, especially during a time of fiscal challenges for the state.
- DORS Waiting List – Individuals who are categorized as "most significant" will now expect up to a 9 month wait and "significant" will most likely take up to 18 months before services can be initiated.

- Case Service Expenditures for the year are very strong. When a commitment is made on an IPE, DORS will honor that commitment. We see fluctuations in our case service encumbrance's level mainly at the beginning of college semesters.
- Outreach Strategy – Employed Individuals with Disabilities (EID) Program) Medicaid Buy-In) – DORS is working closely with the Maryland Department of Disability. The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene are considering regulation changes that will permit more people to access the Medicaid buy-in. The regulations, as they are written now, are very restrictive in that you need to have a decision by the Social Security Administration to be determined eligible. A change has been proposed that will allow DORS, through our Disability Determination Services, to make a non-social security eligibility decision, but using their criteria. It will broaden access to EID for a number of people. DORS is working with Michael Dalto, MDOD, and interns working in this program to connect with our local offices so it becomes the customary way of doing business.

DORS commitment on these two areas is (1) assisting with the marketing and outreach and (2) setting up a separate adjudication process at DDS to process the non-Social Security claims as soon as the regulation is finalized.

- Governor's Interagency Transition Council – An Executive Order of Governor O'Malley has re-established the Governor's Interagency Council for Youth with Disabilities. Cathy Raggio, Secretary, MD Department of Disabilities, and Robert Burns, Assistant State Superintendent in Rehabilitation Services, have been appointed co-chairs of this Council. The Council has 2 areas of focus: (1) advisory role for Maryland Seamless Transition Collaborative and (2) development of a statewide transitioning strategic plan.
- MSRC Bylaw Proposed Committee Restructure – A recommendation was made at the MSRC meeting in November 2007 related to the following committee restructuring bylaw change:

The proposed MSRC committee structure took four previous committees (Policy and State Plan Development; Resources and Program Planning; Public Relations and Quality Assurance; Membership) and reconstituted to three committees. Employment and Career Development and Blindness and Vision Services Committee will continue without modification at this time. The proposed three committees would be Policy and Planning Committee; Public Relations and Quality Assurance; and Membership and Resources.

**Action: Due to lack of quorum at this meeting, the Council will vote on the committee restructuring proposal bylaw change at the next meeting in May 2008. Council member Jerry Pantaleo suggested that items which need a Council vote be done at the beginning of each meeting since many times members must leave before the meeting has adjourned.**

### **Discussion on Visits with Legislators**

- Tom Barkley – Delegate Dave Rudolph wanted to know how many State VR agencies were stand alone, part of labor departments, part of education departments.
- Beth Lash and Jerry Pantaleo – Were asked by one of their legislators whether the adult services program, currently under the Maryland State Department of Education, that the Governor is proposing to move to the Department of Labor are part of the Division of Rehabilitation Services.
- Sue Schaffer – Was asked by a delegate why DORS was under the Maryland State Department of Education.

Mr. Burns stated that the key issues when asked this question in the future are that DORS (1) is funded by the US Department of Education and (2) transitioning, and our emphasis on aligning our agency and resources around young people with disabilities transitioning from public education.

- Niles Ellingson stated that it would be a good idea to have committee assignments of the legislators being visited available on the hand-outs.
- Sue Schaffer – stated that it would be a good idea to know which legislators are sponsoring the bills that the Council is supporting.
- Kali Mallik – legislators were very interested in getting people employed. Consideration should be given to focus more on this when the literature is developed.
- Charles Crawford and Kathi Santora – Explained what DORS is currently doing related to outreach to Latinos. Kathi Santora will send the delegates that she and Charles visited the links to our DORS Spanish information on the website as well as brochures.

### **Adjournment**

The MSRC meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m. The next meeting of the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council will be Wednesday, May 21, 2008, 4:30 – 7:00 p.m., Workforce & Technology Center, Baltimore, Maryland.

Respectfully submitted,  
Donna M. Lippa, MSRC Staff Support