

**Maryland State Rehabilitation Council
Workforce & Technology Center
May 5, 2010**

Members – Present

Michael Bullis
Robert Burns
Charles Crawford
Laurie Elinoff
Paulette Epps
Daniel Frye
Beth Lash
Carol Lewis
Kali Mallik
Anne Rea
Mary Jo Verdery, representing Jennifer
Whitcomb

DORS Liaison Staff Present

Donna Lettow
Kathi Santora
Sue Schaffer
Jean Jackson

Guests

Stan Catherman, DDS, ELI Participant
Diane Stashik, DDS, ELI Participant
Ron Winter, DORS Director of Field Services

Recognitions and Approval of Minutes

Dan Frye, Vice Chair, welcomed members and guests to the meeting. Dan Frye began by acknowledging Bob Burns, on behalf of the Council, for his years of work and service for citizens in Maryland. The Council recognizes Bob's commitment to the disability community, devotion to seamless administration of the Maryland public VR program and his career for the State of Maryland. Dan Frye stated that the Council would like to commission a plaque to be posted somewhere at the Workforce & Technology Center acknowledging his years of service. Laurie Elinoff also wrote and sang a song about Bob which the Council participated in. Thank you Bob and we will miss you!

Bob Burns also recognized Kathi Santora, who will also retire June 1st after a long and successful career with DORS. Bob and the Council thanked Kathi for her work with the Council and DORS.

Minutes from the February 2, 2010 meeting were approved as written.

Members Unable to Attend

Thomas Barkley
Timothy Daly
Ross Edwards
Mary Manzoni
Eric Seleznow
Michael Shaw
Alfred Sonnenstrahl
Josie Thomas
Michael Whitehill

Support Staff Present

Polly Huston
Donna Lippa

2010 Comprehensive Statewide Assessment of the Rehabilitation and Career Needs of Individuals with Disabilities Executive Summary (Beth Lash and Dan Frye)

Beth Lash stated that the Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services, along with the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council, continually assesses the rehabilitation and career needs of Maryland citizens with disabilities, as part of its state and strategic planning process. Dan Frye and Beth served on the Needs Assessment Committee on behalf of the Council.

Recommendations from the focus areas of the Needs Assessment were:

- Federal Funding – The overriding vocational rehabilitation services need of individuals with disabilities residing in Maryland is equitable distribution of federal VR funds. Continuation of historical underfunding of Maryland VR in relations to other states will make it very difficult to implement changes that could result in many more individuals with disabilities achieving employment.
- Provide staff development for DORS staff and community partners.
- Consider new positions/realignment of staff to meet needs of special populations, including Blind and Deaf/Blind; 504 Transitioning Students; Autism Spectrum disorders; Deaf and Hard of Hearing.
- Enhance relationships with community partners.
- Expand services offered by WTC and community programs for special populations.
- Continue outreach to minorities.
- Develop an implementation plan for DORS support of the Governor's statewide initiative Skills2Compete including consideration of agency post-secondary policy related to provision of computers, tutoring and part-time attendance.
- Explore outreach to veteran's organizations.
- Enhance the capacity and expertise of community rehabilitation programs.

Action: Polly Huston announced that the complete 2010 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment has been posted on the DORS website at www.dors.state.md.us .

Council Direction and Leadership with Transition of State Director (Bob Burns)

Bob Burns began by stating that he has meet with Dr. Grasmick and has suggested to her that she replace him with someone from the Agency. Dr. Grasmick was accepting of this recommendation, but has made no commitment. The Agency is in a good place fiscally for this transition of Directors. The Maryland VR program and the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council are seen as a national leader. Bob Burns stressed the importance

of continuing the SRC Executive Retreat for the new Director will need and want this activity.

Action: Dan Frye recommends that the Council state in the minutes that they are interested in working with, and being an active partner in, the selection process of the next Director, and that the SRC is prepared to be a support and resource to Dr. Grasmick and that we would entertain the opportunity to share our perspectives through the Chair and Vice Chair. Mike Bullis stated that the SRC send Dr. Grasmick a letter from the Council stating this. Kali Mallik will draft a letter to Dr. Grasmick on behalf of the Council.

Issues – Impact – Expectations

Reauthorization of WIA/Rehabilitation Act – Bob Burns stated that there is no clear timeframe for reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act. The Senate has convened a workgroup that has identified a number of policy issues that we would like to see incorporated in WIA. Some of those issues are controversial. The issues around the Rehab Title IV continue not to fit in the controversial bag of issues. One of the issues that had been moving forward was to move RSA out of the Department of Education into Labor. There was a strong consensus by state agencies that that was not a good move.

Impact of Federal Funding Formula on MSDE/DORS (GAO Report) and next steps - Bob stated that he has spoken to Senator Mikulski's staff person Mario Cardona, legislative assistant for the Senator. The funding formula and the GAO report were new to him, but he appeared very interested in reading the report and working with us to move the issue forward with the Senator. Our goal should be to illustrate the impact of the funding problem for MD; waiting lists, delays in access to services, negative impact on school-to-career services, etc. The timing of the GAO report and reauthorization being close together is clearly an advantage.

Election of Officers

Nominations were presented that the current Chair, Kali Mallik, and Vice Chair, Dan Frye, be reappointed. There were no other nominations brought to the floor, thus Kali Mallik and Dan Frye were re-nominated for the 2010-2011 calendar year.

Summary of MSRC/DORS Public Meetings/ Public Comment and Recommendations (State Plan Attachment) for DORS Beth Lash, Chair Policy and Planning Committee

Recommendations from the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council:

The Council continues to recommend that DORS review methodology of satisfaction surveys, and explore web-based surveys. Consider strategies to expand sample size and reach underrepresented groups. Explore Web-based surveys and other alternative response methods.

DORS Response: DORS agrees that we will continue to review all available options for obtaining accurate and reliable feedback on consumer satisfaction. DORS will include

satisfaction surveys as we plan for an updated DORS website, as increased functionality would enhance the agency's ability to use web-based surveying.

The Council sincerely appreciates that, to follow-up on an issue post-secondary education issued identified in the Council's State Plan attachment last year, Community College students with disabilities was included as a priority population for study in the triennial needs assessment. The Council recommends that DORS emphasize the Counselor's role in working with college Disability Support services offices, and also developing appropriate individualized college supports. Also, DORS should explore policy change related to college student non-adaptive computer needs.

DORS Response: DORS Annual Program Plan for 2011 includes statewide training on the Counselor role, including in working with individuals in post-secondary education. The agency will explore costs and benefits of provision of non-adaptive computers to students in post-secondary education as a support for their rehabilitation program.

The Council sincerely appreciates that, to follow-up on an issue identified in the Council's State Plan attachment last year, non-special education students with disabilities were included as a priority group for study in the triennial needs assessment. In light of the assessment results, the Council recommends that DORS should develop and implement various outreach and liaison strategies to more fully engage this underserved transitioning student population.

DORS Response: DORS will provide outreach to Local Education Agency 504 Coordinators, Guidance Counselors and School Nurses to assure that secondary students with 504 plans and serious health conditions, and their families, are aware of transition services available through DORS.

The Council recommends exploring the enhancement of agency relationships with the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) at the State and local levels, as the DDA further develops their Employment First initiative. This should include an exploration of programmatic barriers to success, and cross-agency training needs.

DORS Response: DORS will continue to work with DDA as they implement Employment First and take every opportunity to develop a more effective partnership to benefit individuals with developmental disabilities.

The Council recommends a cross-discipline focus on planning and furthering liaison relationships at the local level, to enhance achievements relative to the specific populations. Liaison relationships relative to the following offices and organizations should be a priority: Hispanic, Asian, and other multicultural organizations; college Disability Support Services (DSS) offices; Veteran's organizations; DDA and related offices; One-Stops; and school offices related to the transition of non-special education students with disabilities.

DORS Response: The agency agrees that effective liaison relationships with a wide array of community partners are key to enhancing services and outcomes for consumers. DORS will review and revise, as needed, liaison relationships with community partners.

In response to last year's Council recommendations, we sincerely appreciate DORS exploration of potential innovative transportation solutions to address consumer employment needs. DORS should consider developing a formal referral relationship with Vehicles for Change in order to facilitate individualized transportation solutions for maintaining employment.

DORS Response: The agency agrees with the continuing concern about adequacy of transportation for individuals with disabilities in Maryland and plans to finalize an agreement with Vehicles for Change by the beginning of FY 2011.

In last year's state Plan attachment, the Council had identified job skills training for non-college bound students as an issue. The Council is very pleased that Maryland's Governor has included DORS consumers in its planning for the State's Skills2Compete initiative. The Council would very much like to be an active consultant and participant when DORS develops strategies and programs to this initiative. DORS should continue to work with the Governor's Workforce Investment Board (GWIB) on the development of targeted strategies and measurable outcomes related to this "middle-skill" training and employment initiative, to respond both to DORS consumer and Maryland workforce needs. Specific strategies might include program development at the Workforce and Technology Center (WTC), staff training, and furthering relationships with community training providers.

DORS Response: The agency looks forward to being a full partner in the Governor's Skills2Compete program, and will establish an interdisciplinary and interagency committee, including SRC members, to plan for full implementation.

Public meetings, consumer satisfaction surveys and CAP referrals continue to identify job development and placement as an area of need. DORS should continue to strive to increase its capacities and effectiveness in this regard by studying its existing alternative job placement models (OBVS Job Squad, Business Liaisons, WTC, JDPR, etc) in order to identify best practices, to include customized employment, and seek systemic improvements. DORS should also now intensify efforts to develop relationships with employers that are consistent with the Governor's Skills2Compete initiative. DORS should also address this issue in staff training regarding the Counselor's role in the rehabilitation process.

DORS Response: The Employer Services Council and the business liaisons will focus on how to continue to improve job development and placement services in the coming fiscal year.

The Council appreciated the opportunity to be involved in the selection of the Staff Specialist for Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and feels that DORS made an excellent hiring

decision. DORS is commended for filling this and related positions concerning services to the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, including the development of a deaf driver's education program at the Workforce and Technology Center (WTC).

DORS Response: DORS appreciates the support of the Council in the hiring of an effective Staff Specialist for Deaf and Hard of Hearing, and their support in the development of a model plan for deaf and hard of hearing services, including further expansion of services at WTC.

The Council recommends that DORS explore various means to educate employers regarding technology solutions for the employment of individuals who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing, including a possible video.

DORS Response: The Employer Services Council and the business liaisons will consider the most effective means of educating employers about technologies that facilitate employment of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, including possible development of a video.

DORS should consider reviewing Public Information regarding how the full scope of vocational rehabilitation services is communicated to the public, in order to enhance active consumer participation and informed choice in the development of Individualized Plans for Employment (IPE). This should include post-secondary education and training options. DORS should also consider addressing this issue in staff training regarding the Counselor's role in the rehabilitation process.

DORS Response: DORS appreciates the need for consumers to have a full understanding of the services available through the agency and will address the best way to present this information in light of the requirement that services be included on an IPE based on individual need and the approved employment goal.

The Council recommends that DORS consider expansion of the Pathways college support model for individuals with autism, and other community program development needs relative to individuals on the autism spectrum.

DORS Response: DORS is sensitive to the influx of individuals on the autism spectrum and will continue training of staff and program development, including at the WTC, for consumers on the spectrum.

The Council commends Mr. Robert Burns for his service as the Assistant State Superintendent of Rehabilitation Services, and sincerely thanks him for his friendship and partnership over the years. The Council recommends that MSDE strive to appoint a VR Director that is equally as passionate and committed to the spirit of the Rehabilitation Act, most particularly the employment, economic self-sufficiency, and independence of individuals with disabilities.

DORS Response: The agency appreciates and shares the Council's sentiments and also looks forward to the appointment of a State Director with a strong commitment to the Rehabilitation Act and the advancement of employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities in Maryland.

DORS supports these recommendations and continues to be very appreciative of the expertise of the individuals who comprise the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council. Their passion for and commitment to supporting individuals with disabilities is without equal. DORS values their contributions of time and knowledge.

Update – Maryland Statewide Independent Living Council (Laurie Elinoff)

- Laurie Elinoff announced that the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) held public meetings to discuss the State Plan for Independent Living.
- The SILC held a partner retreat which included members of the SILC, representatives from Centers for Independent Living and DORS.
- The SILC had a table at the World of Possibilities Fair.
- The Executive Director of Independence Now, Inc. will be leaving that position which will result in a vacancy at the center.
- RSA is looking at developing two new centers for independent living to serve the areas once served by Making Choices for Independent Living (MCIL) which closed recently.
- The National Council for Independent Living (NCIL) will meet in July. Several representatives from the Maryland SILC will attend.

Chairperson/Vice Chairperson Reports (Kali Mallik and Dan Frye)

- The SRC Chair sent letters of support, on behalf of the Council, for SB 58 (DORS Unpaid Work-Based Learning Experiences) and SB 221 (Disability Employment Tax Credit). Beth Lash, Tandra Hunter-Payne and Mike Whitehill did a wonderful job testifying on behalf of SB 58 and we thank them. Bob Burns stated how important it is for the Council to get out and meet with their delegation and how these visits have such a positive impact on the approval of legislation.
- CSAVR Conference - The National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC) Meeting was held on April 18, 2010 during the CSAVR Conference in Bethesda, Maryland. Dan Frye and Beth Lash participated in the NCSRC Meeting. At the meeting there were speakers who spoke about the role of the SRC in federal legislation and how to work closely with agencies to strengthen role and add influence and value to the work of the Agency. RSA Commissioner Rutledge was present and she affirmed her belief in the role of the SRC as it is envisioned in the Federal Act.

Action: Dan Frye stated that NCSRC has developed a Resolution that has been signed and adopted by 33 State Rehabilitation Councils around the country. Dan Frye supports the signing of the Resolution by the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council, but has concerns about a clause in this Resolution. The Resolution allows for participation of NCSRC activities from Council members or staff of Council members. The intention of the Maryland Council should be that we will participate, but we will participate with the Governor Appointed members of the Council only. The SRC will discuss this Resolution at the September 2010 meeting.

Dan Frye further stated that at the CSAVR meeting, Cart Suter, Executive Director, who served in that capacity for nine (9) years will be retiring in December 2010. There has also been embezzlement of CSAVR funds and a forensic audit is being conducted. The CSAVR Administrative Assistant has been identified and has acknowledged her actions.

Action: Mr. Burns stated that the Maryland DORS will not submit next year's dues until such time that we receive a copy of the forensic audit report and a statement of internal controls that CSAVR has instituted to insure that there will not be any misappropriation of Council funds.

Director's Report (Robert Burns)

- State Fiscal 2010 Budget – The state fiscal 2011 budget closed with appropriation of 14.7 million dollars, which is a 1.2 million dollar increase over 2010. The ARRA money and the ability to capture money that other states' cannot match in the reallocation process the Maryland DORS has done very well. One issue that is becoming tough now is that the case loads have grown so large with opening up the waiting list that our capacity issue is not with purchase of services, it is with counselor caseload.
- FY 2012 Over-the-Target Budget Requests – An above-the-mark request has been submitted titled "Fostering Careers for Youth with Disabilities through Business Partnerships." The Department will develop and grow partnerships with businesses across the State to provide paid internships, mentoring opportunities and paid employment that support career development for young persons with significant disabilities.
- DORS Workgroup on "Services to Groups" Grants to CRPs for Transition Services – DORS set up a group around transitioning to do performance based grants to set up projects to CRPs for transition students with the priorities being those LEAs that are participating in the Maryland Seamless Transition Collaboration (MSTC) and students emotionally disturbed. These grants should be in place by September 2010.

Committee Report

- **Policy and Planning Committee, Beth Lash**
Committee Chair, Beth Lash, has already completed her report which is stated above under State Plan Attachment/Public Comment.
- **Public Relations and Quality Assurance Committee, Mary Manzoni**
In Committee Chair Mary Manzoni's absence, Beth Lash reported that the committee met for the purpose of reviewing the consumer satisfaction results and the design of the survey.
- **Membership and Resource Committee, Dan Frye**
The Council will be recognizing two SRC members, Ross Edwards and Michael Shaw, who will have completed 2 full terms on the Council as of the September 2010 meeting. As they have fulfilled term limits, they will not be able to be reappointed.

Mary Manzoni and Jennifer Whitcomb are completing their first full terms on the Council and can be reappointed.

Josie Thomas, Beth Lash, Eric Seleznow and Tom Barkley are completing terms on the Council. Reappointment will be requested as they are specific representatives required under the Rehabilitation Act.

We have received applications for SRC membership for Ari Ne'eman, President, The Autistic Self Advocacy Network and Rashid Reyazuddin who operates a business with the business Enterprise Program for the Blind. We support their candidacy and look forward expediting the appointment process through the Governor's Office

We are looking for up to 3 additional members who are individuals with disabilities, particularly those from minority backgrounds. With the two individuals completing terms, we will no longer have representation from Prince George's County and do not have representation from Harford County or Southern Maryland. Please contact Dan Frye if you know of possible candidates.

- **Employment/Career Development Committee, Robert Burns**
Robert Burns, Committee Chair, reported that the committee met in April 2010 to discuss the realignment of resources at the Workforce & Technology Center related to employment outcomes, training programs, and making the Center more deaf friendly. Another issue that the committee focused on was the federal hiring initiatives and some of the national activities that position Maryland very well over the next year in terms of quality employment outcomes for our consumers.

- Blindness and Vision Services Committee, Mike Bullis
Mike Bullis, Committee Chair, reported that the committee met and discussed the services at the Workforce & Technology Center for the Blind, made recommendations to the Needs Assessment and discussion about BISM.

New Council Business & Adjournment

The MSRC meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m. The next meeting of the Maryland State Rehabilitation Council will be Wednesday, September 22, 2010 at the Workforce & Technology Center in Baltimore, Maryland.

Respectfully submitted.

Donna M. Lippa, MSRC Staff Support