

Maryland State Rehabilitation Council Workshop Notes

May 8, 2024

Members Present:

Katherine Jones – Chair
Jody Boone
Kristen Patterson
Marla Friedman

Members Unable to Attend:

Ronza M. Othman
Rosa Raez
Marlo Lemon
Melissa Blubaugh
Penny Reeder
Cory Richo

DORS liaisons to Council:

Toni March, Director OBVS
Wanda Peele, Business Services
Patrick Peto, Program Manager Policy, and planning DORS
Kim Schultz, DORS — Public Affairs
Marla Friedman, CAP Director
Tom Liniak
Beth Lash

Support Staff for the Council:

Erica Kneessi
Sherri Alban

Guest

Christina Nixon

Welcome: Katherine Jones

Katherine Jones welcomed everyone and opened the meeting. Ms. Jones will be the Acting Volunteer Chair while she is awaiting re-appointment.

Approval of Minutes:

The February minutes will be viewed as the SRC February workshop minutes.

Public Comment: No public comment

Jody Boone, Acting Assistant State Superintendent

- Dr. Carrie Wright has been appointed for a 4-year term as MSDE Superintendent of Schools, beginning July 1,2024.
- The new State of Maryland Telework Policy is now posted on the Department of Budget and Management website, along with updated FAQs. The policy takes effect 5/15/24; staff whose positions are approved for telework are permitted to telework 2 days per week.

Maryland Pathways to Partnership Initiative (MPPI) – RSA Disability Innovation Fund (DIF) Grant Update:

This is a 5-year grant, awarded to DORS by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). The partners are 4 local education agencies (Allegany, Caroline, Charles, and Washington Counties), 4 centers for independent living (BACIL, Resources for Independence, and SMCIL), University of Maryland CTCL, Independence Now, MSDE DEI/SES, Abt Associates, The Parents' Place of Maryland, and the Maryland Department of Disabilities.

There will be a slight delay with issuing the grant awards to the Local Education Agencies since Frederick County is no longer able to participate in the MPPI. Washington County Public Schools are replacing Frederick County Public Schools.

HB 1163 Takes effect July1,2024:

This bill authorizes the Governor to include in the annual budget bill an increase in the general fund appropriation to ensure that the state share of funding under the Federal Rehabilitation Act for the Division of Rehabilitation services within the Maryland State Department of Education is met.

HB60 – Disability Definition has passed.

Bill was Introduced by Delegate Guyton to change the definition of disability to match how the disability community defines individuals with a disability and matches the federal legislation.

Individual & Community Liaison Program Manager:

Interviews for this new position will be on May 30th & 31st. This position will be a Program Manager position and will work with Individuals, CRPs, and Advocacy organizations, helping consumers to identify resources and to address consumer and stakeholder concerns.

This position will also require collecting data, keeping a record of complaints and accolades that we receive, looking for patterns and working with Quality assurance to make sure we are delivering service to everyone in our communities.

Kimberlee Schultz, Director Office of Public Affairs

OBVS Video update:

DORS has been working on a series of videos with Maryland public television. The most recent video completed was the General introduction to the Office of Blindness and vision services starring Christina Nixon and Brian Haas.

The next video we will be working on will be: "What to expect next."

All videos will be available in five languages.

Patrick Peto, Program Manager for Quality Assurance, Policy & Planning

Waiting list data

- 1941 individuals on the waitlist
 - 256 from 2021
 - 522 from 2022
 - 879 from 2023
 - 284 from 2024

- Total Individuals under 21 on that list:
 - 87 from 2021
 - 187 from 2022
 - 309 from 2023
 - 105 from 2024:

2021 & 2022 will be completed by the end of this year.

Performance Measures

We are servicing more people and providing more services in vocational training:

- 3rd Qrt. 2022 - servicing 12123 participants
- 3rd Qtr. 2023 servicing 12670 participants

Pre-ETs:

- 3rd Qtr. 2022 -4924 Students
- 3rd Qtr. 2023 –6560 Students

Policy Updates:

Closure Policy-

- Updated to better align with Federal Regulations
- Extended the stable date from 90 days to 6 months.

New Services:

Adult Learning Experience –

- Help adults gain valuable experience in their chosen field.
- This is a 12-week program.
- \$15 per hour wage.

Toni March, Director of the Office for Blindness & Vision Services

- OBVS has a new deaf/blind specialist and we are happy to have him aboard. Dr. Leo Yates has a lot of knowledge about the Deaf Blind and has worked with our consumers in a variety of capacities over the past several years.
- Currently Blind Services is working on getting summer programs up in running, students under plan and Authorizations done.
- **Maryland School for the Blind summer program -**
 - 4 weeks
 - Includes a work component as well as a residential/overnight component.
 - Work Readiness and Independent Living Skills
- **BISM summer program –**
 - 4 weeks
 - Includes a work component and a college component.
 - Will take place on a college campus.
 - Residential
 - Disability skills training
 - There will be a 1-day program called College Exploration for those who cannot attend the 4-week program.

Tom Liniak, WTC Director

Over the last 7 months we have been working on our program offerings:

- All our training programs have a work experience component on site.

- We are improving each of the programs and increasing the number of businesses where we have the worksites.
- We are adding employer partners that are also using the on internships as an alternative interview pathway as well as training and training site.
- Added CommuniCare Healthcare services to our training programs, they are statewide. Interns from our first cohorts are being interviewed for positions with them in Prince Georges County and Baltimore.
- Sodexo has a new training program called Sodexo works. We have been accepted into that program where we will be able to do internships and train to hire. They are in Baltimore and across the state.
- The National Restaurant Association, Education Foundation has selected us to be a primary partner in their Restaurant Readiness program
 - Will be receiving a National Curriculum
 - Connections to State Restaurant Association members who can provide us with training sites and primary hiring pathways.
- Our potential partnership with Under Armor Warehouse training has been put on delay due to the Bridge Collapse
- Expanding our CVS programs by bringing in additional employers.
- In a verbal agreement with Warwick College in Salisbury, MD to do a training program. Hope to have it finalized in writing within the next month or so.
- Starting a pilot Autism Job Club program in Columbia, MD that combines Employment Services and Autism Services
 - It will include a Employment readiness component and Soft Skills component.
- A new Pilot program at WTC is being developed – Functional workplace and cognitive memory skills
- Expanded our Pathways support program for students with Autism to six community colleges and working on adding more across the state.
- V Camp program, Virtual College Autism mentoring program- we are seeing an increasing number of students in four-year colleges in Maryland and beyond
- We have three people working in conjunction with Howard County Community College in an IT Apprenticeship program with ATT in Cyber Security that culminates in a job and high-level security clearance.

Overall, we are expanding geographically and programmatically, increasing trainings in the industries that we are in, increasing opportunities and placements.

Committees:

Policy & Quality Assurance- Patrick Peto N/A

Blindness and Vision Services – Penny Reader N/A

Membership – Vacant N/A

Employment/Career Development – Wanda Peele N/A

Strategic Planning- NA

Council sharing

Jody Boone – Beth Lash, DORS VR Director and I are Planning to bring up the need for board members at our next CRP Advisory meeting.

If anyone has any ideas on recruiting new members for the SRC please contact Jody Boone or Kathrine Jones.

Katherine Jones –

As a new member when we had the face-to-face meetings, it was helpful to be able to speak with DORS, committee members and other community partners. If we could do a combined retreat and orientation to welcome new members and those interested in becoming a member it would allow us the opportunity to share and communicate in person.

Katherine Jones –

My Agency along with Wicomico County Public Schools in partnership with Kennedy Krieger Institute are looking at the possibility of creating a MANSEF school here in Wicomico County servicing Summerset, Wicomico, Worchester, and Dorchester County schools. We are hopeful to have a transition program in place this fall and to have a school up and running next school year

There are sixty MANSEF schools in Maryland and only one on the lower eastern shore and that is Benedictine.

This school is needed on the eastern shore, particularly to address the emotional, behavioral, and mental needs of our students.

Adjournment

Respectfully Submitted,

Sherri Alban

MSRC Staff Support