

Howard County Commission for Transitioning Students with Disabilities
Meeting Minutes
November 8, 2018

Attendees:

Rob Baynard, Beth Benevides, Stephanie Chapple, Stephanie Discepolo, Karen Gerald, Colette Jackson, Kathy Land, Seth Masley (DORS), Dianne Nagle, Laura Parsons, Susan Potts, Dawson Robertson, Ann Scholz, Meghan Smallwood, Kaya Swann, Brian Welsh, Janice Yetter

Guests: Naysha Conway (Humanim), Natalie Dohner (Project Search), Doris Jacobs (Humanim), Mike Shin (Project Search), Robert Suggs (parent)

Absent:

Patrick Boxall, Katie Collins-Ihrke, Michelle Henry, Erica Lewis, Kathy McSweeney, Judi Olinger, Lisa Ott, Cindy Parr, Sharon Plump, Kelly Ruby, Jemira Sarratt, Dana Shourbaji

Meeting called to order at 8:30am

Welcome and Introductions

Kaya Swann, the new liaison to the Commission from the Office of Children and Families (OCF), was introduced.

D. Robertson provided feedback on his visit to the Chamber of Commerce at the end of October. Maryland Department of Disabilities shared the Employability video with a small group of Chamber leaders. There was discussion of a Chamber subgroup being organized to focus on disabilities.

N. Conway shared information on similar initiatives in Anne Arundel County with their Chamber of Commerce. B. Benevides will follow up.

Approval of Minutes

Ann Scholz made a motion to approve the September 13, 2018, meeting minutes. Janice Yetter seconded the motion. Minutes were approved unanimously.

HCPSS Update: High Schools and Transitioning Students with Disabilities

J. Yetter shared that several DSE staff members attended the MSDE training on transition. The team is excited about the new focus on data collection and monitoring with regard to IEP transition goals and activities.

Cedar Lane, Reservoir, and Lime Kiln are piloting the new digital portfolio template created by MSDE. The portfolio is meant to capture student progress towards transition goals, as well as student's achievements, skills, interests, and post-secondary plans.

The Transition Specialist at Long Reach HS has partnered with the MVA office to offer students a tour of the MVA. MVA will also administer the learner's permit test at LRHS for interested students. This offering may be available at other schools; administrator's permission is required. D. Robertson will follow up with Transition Specialist at LRHS to coordinate same offering at other high schools.

The Transition Fair / Family Resource Fair was held on October 27 at Cedar Lane School. There were 75 vendors and about 100 visitors. Given the low turnout at such workshops and symposiums, the group discussed (1) promotion and how to make families more aware of such events; (2) whether a central location in the county (and one on the bus transit line) would attract more people—perhaps the community college; and (3) the advantages of having all vendors/exhibitors in one room rather than separated in several rooms. R. Baynard attended the Montgomery County Transition Fair held at Montgomery Community College and reported there were more than 300 people in attendance.

S. Potts shared that the Transition Partnership is meeting to discuss whether there will be a transition symposium/workshop in March, as in years past. Families enjoy the speaker series, but attendance has not increased over the years despite the tremendous amount of effort by the partnership.

Office of Children and Families Update

Kaya Swann invited open communication between the Commission and her office. There are still plans to host a reception for chairs/co-chairs of the various boards and commissions OCF supports, but a date has not been set. Discussed inviting the new county executive to such a gathering.

The marketing department created a one-page flyer and printed tablecloth for the Commission. Feedback from commission members will be consolidated and B. Benevides will share with K. Swann.

A discussion was held about social media and visibility of the commission—how do we let the community know about our work and priorities? The county website is very difficult to navigate and the commission web page is not easy to find.

Commission on Disabilities

B. Benevides shared an updated from M. Henry on the County Resolution to study the effectiveness of county services to people with disabilities. The survey will remain open until November 16 and stakeholder meetings will conclude in early December. The report draft will be finished in early January, with a public hearing scheduled for mid-January.

M. Henry also shared that the Commission on Disabilities Awards Ceremony was attended by 100 people. Rylin Rodgers was the keynote speaker, with an inspiring presentation on how common voices influence policy and laws.

Cedar Lane Parent Group

C. Jackson provided an update on her group's efforts to meet with local providers to discuss needs of transitioning youth with nursing/medical needs. The group is open to families outside of Cedar Lane as well (these families may face the same challenges in finding providers to meet their student's needs). C. Jackson to share meeting information with M. Smallwood for further dissemination.

Recreation and Parks is currently offering adult programs during the day, which transitioning youth may find of interest. Transition Specialists and DDA Coordinators of Community Service are not well aware of these program offerings. Perhaps Rec and Parks can send the catalog link to these programs to the service coordinators for further dissemination. All agreed it is important for the DDA coordinators (CCS) to be informed, as they are parent's main contact.

Workgroup Reports

The Community workgroup will be meeting in the month ahead. S. Potts mentioned grant potential for a one-year project focused on youth with spinal cord injuries and wellness.

The Employment workgroup is considering the creation of a list of employers who hire people with disabilities. This would be a collaborative effort, inviting all providers and agencies to share information.

N. Conway reported that feedback on the Pre-ETS service "work-based learning experiences" (WBLEs) has been very positive. S. Masley shared a brochure produced by DORS, which highlights all pre-ETS services and the local providers of each.

The workgroup would appreciate more involvement at meetings from the Office of Workforce Development. OWD is an appointed member of the commission. Co-chairs will follow up.

The Employment workgroup members will each invite an employer to the February workgroup meeting. When the date is set, N. Conway will extend the invitation to all commission members in hope that others will join the conversation. The purpose is to hear directly from employers and brainstorm how we can expand opportunities for transitioning youth and meet the needs of businesses.

The Education workgroup is reviewing graduation/exit activities for all students with a focus on identifying additional activities that apply to students with IEPs. A. Scholz shared that the workgroup will review the Vocation Data & Task Analysis Sheet currently used by transition teachers. With input from the transition teachers, the group will revise the sheet as necessary. The goal is for more consistent data to be collected

during work/study and shared with families. Modules will be developed on self-advocacy skills.

The Transition Journey: Parent to Parent group continues to meet the last Wednesday of the month. Upcoming topics may include DDA, self-advocacy, choosing an adult service provider, parent panel.

Member Updates

S. Discepolo announced that the ARL/Career Academies information session will be held on December 11, 7-9pm. ARL received funding to develop a registered apprenticeship program with Independent Electrical Contractors (IEC) in 2019-20. Next fall, ARL will implement a new career academy (Apprenticeship Maryland). This will be supported by MSDE and DLLR, and will enroll 25-30 students.

N. Conway shared that the afterschool certificate program piloted at Oakland Mills High School, with support from Humanim, has been very successful. Students are learning self-advocacy skills and exploring jobs to prepare for work-based learning experiences (WBLEs). The program is held each day 2:30-4:30pm. Humanim provides transportation home.

J. Yetter shared that HCPSS Department of Human Resources is currently considering internships and paid positions that could be filled by people with disabilities.

K. Gerald noted that the Human Resources Office participated in the HCPSS Career Day, where students shadowed county employees.

M. Shin was named employee of the month for his work at the Elkridge Library. He is very much enjoying his Project Search internship at the library.

N. Dohner provided an update on Project Search, mentioning that the first internship rotation is almost complete. The PS application has been revised. The next parent information session is in February. There will be a workplace safety training for interns in January.

D. Jacobs coordinated the first consumer health fair at Humanim. Consumers were able to receive flu shots, nutrition advice, blood pressure testing, etc.

Closing

The meeting adjourned at 10:32am.

Remaining 2018-19 Meetings:

January 10, 2019 – 8:30-10:30am (Roger Carter Community Center)

March 14, 2019 – 8:30-10:30am (Roger Carter Community Center)

May 9, 2019 – 8:30-10:30am (Roger Carter Community Center)