

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

**Attendees:**

Rob Baynard, Beth Benevides, Patrick Boxall, Stephanie Chapple, Katie Collins-Ihrke, Stephanie Discepolo, Karen Gerald (for Wanda Hutchinson), Michelle Henry, Keri Hyde, Colette Jackson, Kathy Land, Kathy McSweeney, Dianne Nagle, Judi Olinger, Cindy Parr, Laura Parsons, Susan Potts, Dawson Robertson, Ann Scholz, Clara Scholz, Brian Welsh

**Guests:** Elizabeth Burrage (Project Search), Naysha Conway (Humanim), Linda Schnapp (HCC), Kelsey Wilson (intern, HCRP)

**Absent:**

Chris Glover, Erica Lewis, Lisa Ott, Sharon Plump, Kelly Ruby, Jemira Sarratt, Terri Savage, Dana Shourbaji, Stephanie Wallace, Janice Yetter

Meeting called to order at 8:35am

**Welcome and Introductions**

**Approval of Minutes**

Katie Collins-Ihrke made a motion to approve the January 11, 2018, meeting minutes. Ann Scholz seconded the motion. Minutes were approved unanimously.

**Discussion of County Resolution 23-2018**

County Council members Calvin Ball and Jennifer Terrasa introduced a resolution requesting that the Commission on Disability Issues study Howard County's ability to provide services to the county's residents with disabilities in the areas of education, peer relationships, employment, transportation, and housing. CR 23-2018 requests that the CDI submit a report and recommendations by October 1, 2018. The legislation was passed on March 5, 2018.

Commission members discussed the resolution and noted concerns with the areas to be addressed. Education may overwhelm all other areas. Adult day services is not mentioned as an area of concern, yet availability of services in the county is a significant issue.

The Commission for Transitioning Students is named in the legislation; the CDI is to consult with the commission. B. Benevides will keep all members informed as this study progresses and it is clearer how the study will be conducted.

**Office of Children and Families Update**

K. Hyde provided updates. The office is tracking many bills currently in the legislature involving children and families. The traumatic brain injury screening bill (HB1533) submitted by Del. Flanagan was discussed. This bill would require screening as part of

the initial evaluation for IEP services. She invited input from commission members. B. Benevides noted that she supports the screening as students with traumatic brain injury are under-reported and often misclassified as students with emotional or other disabilities. The screening would be included in the battery of assessments given to a student during initial educational evaluation.

K. Hyde recently met with Lori Scott of the Special Education Community Advisory Committee. Ann Scholz is a board member of SECAC and shares information between the commission and SECAC.

### **Commission Priorities**

B. Benevides shared progress on the 2017 priorities identified by the Commission. She invited members to add other notes, accomplishments, and/or additional work efforts. A portion of the May meeting will be devoted to a discussion of 2018-19 priorities. R. Baynard suggested the commission narrow its focus on some of the goals.

### **Workgroup Reports**

**Education:** A. Scholz shared that the first two Transition Journey: Parent to Parent Meetings were well attended. Parents are most interested in checklists or roadmaps for the transition years. Next meeting is March 28 (last Wednesday of the month) at the Roger Carter Center. Commission members are encouraged to attend to hear directly from parents about concerns, interests, etc.

The workgroup will use the MSDE Transition Guide as a basis for developing checklists. Additional information and detail will be included for parents (website links, definitions, agency descriptions, etc.).

B. Benevides requested that these checklists be shared with all commission members so that input may be provided by agency representatives, providers, and parents, in addition to school personnel.

D. Robertson and J. Yetter are still working on videos for the website about the various HCPSS work programs. Project Search has been completed. Community Connections is next. Then, work/study, enclave, ARL, etc. D. Robertson is also following up with the videographer on the business owner interviews completed in 2016.

One-page flyers for each program are complete and under review by the high school leadership team.

D. Robertson is working with transition teachers to create one, common transition presentation for transition teachers and ITLs. The goal is to have this ready for the new school year.

**Employment:** R. Baynard provided an update on the workgroup's tour of the ARL. Members were very impressed with all that ARL has to offer. S. Discepolo shared that

there are two special educators and two paraeducators on staff at the ARL to support students receiving special education services and make necessary modifications.

Members discussed the need to increase awareness of the ARL among parents with students with disabilities, including those working toward a certificate. Currently, there are many misperceptions about who attends ARL. Message needs to be that ARL is an option for all students to consider. K. Hyde suggested using advocacy groups and parents to spread the word that ARL is for students pursuing a diploma or certificate.

The education workgroup will prepare a one-page flyer on the ARL to be included in the continuum of options.

P. Boxall proposed that HCPSS consider adding ARL sampling or summer camp opportunity to ESY. This could be a valuable alternative to traditional ESY.

P. Boxall questioned whether ARL could create credentials for students with disabilities who participate in courses (outside of the national certifications earned). This would add to the student's employment skills portfolio.

R. Baynard shared updates from Sharon Plump (DORS). S. Plump will be holding agency linkage meetings to discuss Pre-Employment and Transition Services (Pre-ETS) and coordinate services among agencies. She wants to encourage better coordination across providers so that they can provide a full range of services to students.

All referrals and applications—including those for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders—are now being reviewed by Jackee Myers and Tanisha Robinson.

Members discussed the difficulty of getting DORS services to students after school. It was noted that other counties use afterschool activity buses for this purpose. There is provider buy-in. The school system has to buy-in to the importance of the Pre-ETS services.

S. Plump is creating a brochure to describe all available Pre-ETS services. The brochure will be ready for fall distribution. It will be program/season specific—featuring more details on each of the specific programs offered (similar to a college catalog).

S. Plump is meeting with HCPSS transition teachers on April 20. DORS and providers will present.

C. Parr updated the commission on Project Search and the hiring of interns by the county government. To date, only 2 of the 36 interns have been hired by the county (less than 1%). The national model sets a goal of 75%. C. Parr has requested a meeting with the County Executive to review this data. The Howard County Project Search model is different than other models given that the host business is a county government and not a traditional business partner. It was also noted that the agreement to bring Project Search to the county government was signed by former County Executive Ken Ulman.

N. Conway shared that Howard County General Hospital generally hires a few Start on Success interns after they complete their job development program at the hospital. She will provide hiring data at the May meeting.

**Community:** K. Collins-Ihrke is planning to meet with the Office of Community Resources to discuss faith-based communities and how they may offer community-based support to people with disabilities.

S. Potts shared that the Department of Recreation and Parks is collaborating with Accessible Resources for Independence to offer parent talks while teens and young adults are participating in social programs (dances) offered monthly at the Bain Center. K. Hyde suggested the Office of Children and Families may be able to offset some of the costs for these parent talks. S. Potts will follow up with K. Hyde.

### **Member Updates**

S. Chappel shared that Human Rights Day at the Legislature will take place on March 13. The Human Rights Commission will meet with Superintendent Martirano and Kevin Gilbert (HCPSS Director Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) in May to hear more about the school system's vision and goals around equity and diversity.

The school system is holding two parent/community town hall meetings to gather input on equity, diversity and inclusion. March 14 (7pm, Wilde Lake High School) and March 17 (8:30am, Long Reach High School).

<https://www.hcpss.org/news-posts/2018/03/hcpss-parent-community-groups-to-discuss-equitable-and-effective-discipline-practices-at-march-14-march-17-events/>

S. Potts shared that Rec and Parks has received many requests for social programs. The cooking skills classes are very well attended. Several daytime programs have been added to address the needs of adults who are self-directing services, yet the classes are not filled. People seem to want programs after 3:30pm.

The Transition Symposium will take place on March 24 at Cedar Lane School and Lime Kiln Middle. There will be tracks for educators, parents, and students. Social work CEUs will also be offered.

C. Parr is hosting the Arc's Chocolate Ball on March 10. 400+ guests are expected.

L. Parsons and Howard High School are hosting the Best Buddies Ball on March 24.

D. Nagle shared that the Project Access Open House was a success. Applications will be accepted through May. Project Access now has a new, easy to navigate website with an online application, videos about the program, and course outline. She has requested a meeting with Kelly Ruby, HCPSS Counseling Office, to present information about Project Access to all high school counselors. Counselors should be sharing information about Project Access at all 504 meetings.

C. Scholz provided an update on her Project Search internship. She was employee of the month in February and will work in her final rotation at the Ellicott City 50+ Center. She proudly shared that she has been accepted to Penn State Harrisburg.

**Closing**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40am.

**Future Meetings:**

May 10, 2018 (8:30-10:30am) – Roger Carter Community Center