

Howard County Commission for Transitioning Students with Disabilities
Meeting Minutes
March 14, 2019

Attendees:

Missie Baxter, Beth Benevides, Patrick Boxall, Karen Gerald, Colette Jackson, Kathy Land, Erica Lewis, Seth Masley, Dianne Nagle, Judi Olinger, Laura Parsons, Susan Potts, Dawson Robertson, Ann Scholz, Meghan Smallwood, Kaya Swann, Janice Yetter

Guests: Naysha Conway (Humanim), Natalie Dohner (Project Search), Doris Jacobs (Humanim), Suzanne Mesol (transition teacher, Wilde Lake High School), Heather Peart (DORS), Tanisha Robertson (DORS), Mike Shin (Project Search)

Absent:

Stephanie Chapple, Katie Collins-Ihrke, Stephanie Discepolo, Michelle Henry, Kathy McSweeney, Lisa Ott, Cindy Parr, Kelly Ruby, Jemira Sarratt, Dana Shourbaji, Brian Welsh

Meeting called to order at 8:30am

Welcome and Introductions

Missie Baxter was welcomed to her first meeting of the Commission in her new position of High School Instructional Facilitator.

Approval of Minutes

Judi Olinger made a motion to approve the January 10, 2019, meeting minutes. Ann Scholz seconded the motion. Minutes were approved unanimously.

Commission's Annual Report

B. Benevides presented a draft of the annual report. She invited input. Several members highlighted transportation as a key need. C. Jackson mentioned that the Paratransit Workgroup remains "on hold" due to the transition in the County Executive office.

L. Parsons also mentioned social opportunities for transitioning youth and young adults with disabilities as an unmet need. Perhaps the Community Workgroup could discuss the possibility of an adult Best Buddies chapter in Howard County—matching HCC students or former HCPSS high school students with young adult/adult buddies.

The annual report will be circulated among the Commission members and forwarded to the County Executive by the end of March.

HCPSS Update: High Schools and Transitioning Students with Disabilities

J. Yetter provided a brief update on the MSDE transition grant. She and D. Robertson met with various consultants and are currently matching selected partners to various proposed projects. Some of the initiatives may begin as early as May or June; most others will begin in the fall.

J. Yetter mentioned that Marcella Franczkowski, Assistant State Superintendent, praised HCPSS for its 8% increase in graduation rates for students with disabilities.

The Department of Special Education is creating a Project Search internship position. There will also be a summer job program for eight students. These students will be supported by a teacher and instructional assistant, and will work in the school system. The participation criteria has not yet been determined, but the positions will be open to students working toward either a certificate or diploma.

M. Baxter has created a Career and Community Exploration (CCE) workgroup to write curriculum and create instructional materials around employment. She highlighted the importance of consistency across schools in terms of resources and opportunities.

Office of Children and Families Update

K. Swann noted the Project Search intern “job fair” was held on February 26 at the county offices in Patuxent Woods.

Workgroup Reports

A. Scholz shared a draft of the “basic” digital portfolio that the Education Workgroup was developing for students who are outside of the current MSDE/JHU “Digital Portfolio” pilot program. The workgroup is interested in creating an in-house model that aligns to the MSDE portfolio and can be used in the short-term for students who are exiting the school system (but who are not in one of the pilot program’s identified schools). Commission members provided input on the structure of the HCPSS model portfolio.

The Employment workgroup has invited members to bring an employer to the April 25, 8:30am, workgroup meeting at Humanim. All commission members are welcome to 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.

B. Benevides suggested moving forward with a sponsored event at the Chamber of Commerce. She will work with J. Olinger and the Employment Workgroup on a Developmental Disabilities Council grant to cover the costs of the event. A luncheon with guest speakers on employment and disabilities, and a facilitated discussion about business needs and opportunities will be planned.

S. Potts noted that the Community Workgroup is considering translation of the faith-based community survey. J. Yetter offered translation assistance from HCPSS.

Member Updates

E. Lewis said the Commission on Disabilities “Report on the Status of People with Disabilities in Howard County” is now closed for public comment and is in the process of being finalized. It will be forwarded shortly to the County Executive. The Commission on Disabilities Provider Committee will present “Respite Care Programs in Howard

County: Understanding the Options” on March 28. The Department of Social Services is now administering a new respite care program.

The Transition Outreach Partnership will offer two events: (1) Youth Event—May 4, a half-day workshop titled “Planning for the Future” will focus on self-advocacy, preparing for employment, independent living, and more; (2) Parent Event—May 18, a half-day workshop titled “Employment is for Everyone” with a keynote by Transcend’s Ann Deschamps, Ed.D., and a panel presentation. The focus will be on resources for employment assistance as well as the IEP process and how to prepare youth for work.

S. Mosley spoke with Francine Trout at the Office of Workforce Development about participating on the Commission. She offered to attend. B. Benevides to follow up with invitation. OWD is an appointed member of the Commission.

D. Jacobs shared that We-Step work program will be expanded to include work or Abracadoodle. Students will be prepping materials for Abracadoodle’s summer art programs.

C. Jackson shared that a subgroup of parents is still meeting with DDA providers to expand services for transitioning youth with medical needs in Howard County. The group recently met with Humanim. DDA is changing its policies to allow agencies to invoice Self-Directed Services (SDS) plans, which allows people and families more flexibility to create a meaningful day.

N. Conway noted the planned expansion of the Oakland Mills High School after school program “Student Career Choices” to Howard High School. This program is for students working toward a certificate. Transportation remains a barrier to expanding the program further.

D. Nagle provided an update on Project Access. The open house in January was attended by about 200; College Fair was attended by 350-400 people. Summer Institute application deadline is May 3 (website has downloadable application) and scholarships are available. It is anticipated that at least 80 students will participate.

J. Olinger shared that Humanim is in the process of a massive strategic plan. If anyone has input, please contact Judi Olinger.

M. Shin shared that he is currently enjoying his new work site at the Department of Inspections, Licensing, and Permits. The Project Search classroom will be relocated to Berger Road on April 23.

Closing

The meeting adjourned at 10:15am.

Remaining 2018-19 Meetings:

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