

Howard County Commission for Transitioning Students with Disabilities
Meeting Minutes
May 9, 2019

Attendees:

Missie Baxter, Beth Benevides, Stephanie Chapple, Stephanie Discepolo, Sharonda Ebanks, Karen Gerald, Colette Jackson, Kathy Land, Erica Lewis, Seth Masley, Judi Olinger, Laura Parsons, Susan Potts, Dawson Robertson, Meghan Smallwood, Kaya Swann, Brian Welsh

Guests: Alex Alvarenga (Humanim), Naysha Conway (Humanim), Natalie Dohner (Project SEARCH), Veronique Gugliucciello (MSDE/JHU CTE), Doris Jacobs (Humanim), Heather Peart (DORS), Tanisha Robertson (DORS), Mike Shin (Project SEARCH), Mark Trexler (MSDE/JHU CTE)

Absent:

Patrick Boxall, Katie Collins-Ihrke, Michelle Henry, Kathy McSweeney, Dianne Nagle, Cindy Parr, Kelly Ruby, Jemira Sarratt, Ann Scholz

Meeting called to order at 8:40am

Welcome and Introductions

Guests from JHU Center for Technology Education were welcomed. Members were thanked for their input on the Commission's annual report. Members were invited to review the Transition Presentation for Parents and provide input by May 17, 2019. (PDF attached)

Approval of Minutes

Judi Olinger made a motion to approve the March 9, 2019, meeting minutes. Laura Parsons seconded the motion. Minutes were approved unanimously.

HCPSS Update: High Schools and Transitioning Students with Disabilities

M. Baxter and D. Robertson provided a brief update on the MSDE transition grant. Melanie Hood Wilson has been hired as consultant for the grant. She and Stephanie Hays (OMHS) will write curriculum to teach self-advocacy skills, and to support Career and Community Exploration. Student-led IEP meetings will be encouraged. Updates on the grant objectives will be provided at future meetings.

Office of Children and Families Update

K. Swann hopes to meet with a representative of the County Executive's office to discuss appointments to the Commission. The Commission's annual report will be forwarded to the County Executive and County Council.

The Department of Community Resources is recruiting 25-30 students to volunteer during the summer for a two-week internship (July 8-19). Student4Service volunteers will earn up to 32 service hours. All students are welcome to apply, including students

with disabilities. B. Benevides asked that students with disabilities be considered, including those who may need to bring a job coach or support staff. Showing the diversity and capabilities of our students in employment is a key value of the Commission.

Digital Portfolio Presentation: Mike Shin, Project SEARCH intern

M. Shin presented his digital portfolio, using the MSDE/JHU CTE online tool. The portfolio includes four main sections: profile (interests), education, work experience and preferences, and life (skills, self-care needs, technology needs, etc.). Students can decide which sections to include when sharing their portfolio with different audiences.

N. Dohner noted that all 12 Project SEARCH interns have created digital portfolios to assist them in job searches or adult services as they exit the school system.

The link for more information on the digital portfolio is:

<http://olms.cte.jhu.edu/olms2/MarylandTransitionDigitalPortfolio>

The link for the “Portfolio Structure and Age Mapping” table, which outlines the portfolio tasks within each category, is:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/15w2GrxKKZv2fiicOCJ53VXGzenjBn4CT/view>

For students who do not yet have access to this online tool, transition teachers have PowerPoint templates that can be used to create a digital portfolio. M. Baxter said it is the expectation that transition teachers will share these with students, families, and case managers. B. Benevides expressed concern that this expectation may be unrealized at certain schools, and asked if it could be a required agenda item in the annual IEP meeting/transition discussion to ensure all families know that such a tool exists and may access it.

Workgroup Reports

The Education workgroup did not submit a report. A. Scholz absent.

The Community workgroup discussed connecting with the Deaf community—students are looking to socialize with peers. Workgroup will also pursue possibility of partnership or activities with Best Buddies Maryland, specifically the Citizen Buddy program for adults and Best Buddies Jobs. B. Benevides to invite Best Buddies Maryland to present to the Commission. The Transition Outreach Partnership recently hosted a youth event at Roots Studios. Focused on technology apps, advocating during the IEP process, education options after high school.

The Employment workgroup met in April to brainstorm with employers on how to expand opportunities for transitioning youth and meet the needs of businesses. Takeaways from the discussion: business owners think about risk and reward, keeping people for long-term, and fear of failure and failed investment of training time; stop “selling” people with disabilities and start asking what employers need help with;

problem-solve for employers by matching employee to their needs. The group returned to the conversation of whether the county could create a “match.com” type of website where employers who are interested in diversifying workforce and hiring people with disabilities could list jobs and/or find people with disabilities who are looking for jobs.

D. Jacobs shared the “framework for client placement and stability” used in the Student to Employment Program (STEP). The next meeting of the workgroup is September 19, 8:30am-10:30am, at Humanim. Anyone attending is asked to invite an employer/business community representative.

B. Benevides and J. Olinger shared that they had participated in a conference call with Leonardo McClarty, CEO of the Chamber of Commerce, and Jade Gingrich from Maryland Department of Disabilities. Some ideas were to further explore the Chamber’s Young Professional Network, the Society of Human Resources Managers (SHRM), and the Emerging Leaders group of Leadership Howard County. B. Benevides, J. Olinger, and N. Conway to meet to discuss next steps.

Member Updates

S. Discepolo shared information on Apprenticeship Maryland. All 13 students currently enrolled will have full-time employment upon graduation. Humanim will be offering a new apprenticeship program where students can gain Direct Service Professional certification and full-time employment upon exiting high school.

S. Chapple noted there will be a new administrator of the Office of Human Rights named in the weeks ahead. During the month of May, there are several Asian America Pacific Heritage Month activities scheduled.

M. Smallwood highlighted the Transition Fair for parents and students with more complex needs, which will be held on May 20, 10am-2pm at Cedar Lane School.

N. Dohner invited members to attend the June 7th graduation of Project SEARCH. This year, one of the interns has been invited to speak about the internship experience. Applications are now being reviewed for next year’s class. Some parents have expressed concern that their children are not eligible for Project SEARCH due to the Vocational Rehabilitation eligibility requirements. It was suggested that DORS explain the difference between eligibility for Work Based Learning Experiences (WBLE) and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). The Sprout Film Festival will be held June 29 at 1:00pm at HCC. Tickets are available at ColumbiaFestival.org.

T. Robinson mentioned that there has been a rate change for the Work Based Learning Experience (WBLE) and now some WBLEs are paid. Students are also able to participate in 4-8 week WBLEs.

D. Jacobs shared that there was a WE STEP celebration at the Y for the seven students completing the program. An information session on the program will be held May 23. This program is only open to Homewood students.

N. Conway shared that the Student Career Choices program has expanded from one site (Oakland Mills High School) to two next year (adding Howard High School). Up to eight students may participate at each site. Humanim is also supporting students in an 8-week summer program at the hospital, college, and in the community. DORS selects the 25 students who participate.

E. Lewis said the Commission on Disabilities is hoping to meet with the County Executive and members of the County Council to discuss recommendations included in the “Report on the Status of People with Disabilities in Howard County” and next steps. The Commission on Disabilities Provider Committee and the Transition Outreach Partnership will co-sponsor a “Respite Care Programs in Howard County: Understanding the Options” presentation on June 12. This is a repeat session of the March 28 respite presentation.

The Transition Outreach Partnership will offer a Parent Event—May 18, half-day workshop titled “Employment is for Everyone” with a keynote by Transcend’s Ann Deschamps, Ed.D., and panel presentations. The focus will be on resources for employment assistance as well as the IEP process and how to prepare youth for work.

S. Potts shared that director John Byrd is retiring in June. Recreation and Parks is preparing for summer programs.

Closing

The meeting adjourned at 10:30am.

2019-20 Meetings:

September 12, 2019 – 8:30-10:30am (Roger Carter Community Center)

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

January 9, 2020 – 8:30-10:30am (Roger Carter Community Center)

March 12, 2020 – 8:30-10:30am (Roger Carter Community Center)

May 14, 2020 – 8:30-10:30am (Roger Carter Community Center)