

Howard County Commission for Transitioning Students with Disabilities
Meeting Minutes
January 9, 2020

Attendees:

Missie Baxter, Beth Benevides, Alexandra Berry, Patrick Boxall, Ernestine Bridges, Katie Collins-Ihrke, Michelle Henry, Colette Jackson, Kathy Land, Dianne Nagle, Judi Olinger, Cindy Parr, Laura Parsons, Susan Potts, Dawson Robertson, Ann Scholz, Kaya Swann, Brian Welsh, Janice Yetter

Guests: Doris Jacobs (Humanim), Audrey Sellers (Accessible Resources for Independence)

Absent:

Naysha Conway (Humanim), Stephanie Discepolo, Erica Lewis, Kathy McSweeney, Heather Peart, Kelly Ruby, Jemira Sarratt, Meghan Smallwood

Meeting called to order at 8:45am

Welcome and Introductions

Approval of Minutes

Katie Collins-Ihrke made a motion to approve the November 14, 2019, meeting minutes as amended. Judi Olinger seconded the motion. Minutes were approved unanimously.

HCPSS Update: High Schools and Transitioning Students with Disabilities

Eighty high school students with disabilities toured HCC and learned about programs and services. A visit to CCBC is planned for students in the spring. Meanwhile, M. Baxter and D. Robertson will be meeting with CCBC to learn about their programs and certification courses.

M. Baxter presented to school counselors on how to effectively assist students taking the alternate assessment and how to support students outside of the IEP process. CCE teachers and paraprofessionals received professional development training by Humanim employment specialists. Finally, all students exiting this year without a diploma will receive a complete digital portfolio.

J. Yetter noted that transition teachers provide DORS Pre-Employment Training Service (Pre-ETS) to all students with a 504. K. Collins-Ihrke noted the gap in getting transition information to 504 students. J. Yetter suggested announcements be sent to Ann Scholz and the Special Education Community Advisory Committee (SECAC) for posting.

Presentation—Kathy Land, Service Coordination

Commission members learned of the DDA Eligibility Process. The presentation would be useful for transition teachers to share with families. (PPT attached and available from Kathy Land or Dawson Robertson)

It was noted that a main barrier to enrolling exiting students is actually gaining access to them in the early transition years. If they are not currently in the DDA system as “future need,” the application process takes longer. K. Land noted that Howard County students placed in nonpublic schools are often behind in the eligibility process. M. Baxter shared that the Central Education Placement Team has recently been trained on DDA and transition services. Middle school teachers will be trained next year so that they may also begin the referral process for their students turning age 14.

Office of Children and Families Update

K. Swann updated members on the open seats/appointments: business member and parent member. Press releases from the County Executive’s office are necessary to advertise the openings. K. Swann will provide. It was suggested that the press releases be forward to A. Scholz (Family Support and Resource Center) and SECAC for posting.

Workgroup Reports

The **Community** workgroup will reach out to local health office to discuss DDA services and provide information that may be passed along to families visiting the office. HCRP will host the Best Buddies (Citizens Program) Ball in March at the Gary Arthur Community Center.

The **Education** workgroup has completed its goals and new recommendations are being forwarded to Missie Baxter for completion by HCPSS under the MSDE grant. The Transition Journey: Parent to Parent Meeting on January 30, 2020, will provide information on the Maryland ABLE account.

The **Employment** workgroup met in December and created a survey for 15 identified employers about the experience of hiring people with disabilities. Leatrice Fant is the new DORS Pre-ETS and Vocational Rehabilitation counselor.

Member Updates

K. Collins-Ihrke (Accessible Resources for Independence) shared that ARI has received a grant from the Horizon Foundation to create a suicide prevention program for youth with disabilities. ARI will work with the Center for Disabilities in New York and the University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) in Ohio to create a curriculum. ARI will provide the half-day training. Several additional youth trainings have been planned for the winter/spring including self-defense and safety (Feb); relationships (Feb); and technology (March).

M. Henry asked whether the Commission had entertained a needs assessment or study similar to the Commission on Disabilities. B. Benevides noted that the most recent strategic plan was developed in 2016. Each year, workgroups have set their priorities based on Commission meetings, discussions, and ongoing input from parents and youth. B. Benevides will discuss further at the March 2020 meeting.

The Loan Closet hosted a grand re-opening, with expanded services and items for children. It is now connected to MTAP. Donations of items for children and adults with disabilities are welcomed.

P. Boxall shared that the Howard County Autism Society received a \$10,000 Innovation Grant from the Howard County government to pilot a supported employment model for people with Autism Spectrum Disorder who do not qualify for DORS or DDA services.

A. Berry shared that she is working at the senior center next to the Miller Library. She is responsible for creating trivia games for program participants.

D. Nagle advertised the Project Access Open House on February 1, 2020. (flyer attached) The College Fair for Students with Disabilities will be held on March 7, 2020, at HCC. Thirty colleges from around the region will be on-site to share information about their programs and disability supports available. (The fair is open to anyone.)

D. Robertson advertised the Transition Fair at Cedar Lane on March 30, 2020. He also noted a new HCPSS partnership with Biggs and Featherbell Soaps, which recently opened in Howard County.

B. Benevides shared updates from Natalie Dohner on Project SEARCH. Second Rotation Internships began the week of January 6, 2020. PS Interns are working in the following departments: Finance; Inspections, Licenses, and Permits; County Council; Elkridge Library; Food Bank; ADA Office; Human Rights; Central Fleet—Ridge Road; Rec and Parks—Meadowbrook Athletic Complex and HCRP Warehouse; Circuit Court; and the Howard County Autism Society. In addition, PS interns recently received a self-advocacy training, “Speak Up, Speak Out,” by ARI.

Closing

The meeting adjourned at 10:30am.

2019-20 Meetings:

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

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