



State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

June 29, 2016

1:00 PM – 2:45 PM

**ACES: Staff Development Building, Hamden, CT
Meeting Minutes**

Attendance:

SRC Members

Present: Tom Boudreau; Marisel DeCordova, Chair; Patrick Melfi (by phone); Gary Prushko; Kate Travis; Kristen Winkle, Secretary

Excused: David Doukas; Jan Hasenjager; Warren Stamp, Bruce Stovall; Joe Wendover;

Absent: David Morgana, Jr.

Volunteers

Present: Lisa Abbey James

Excused: Shannon McCann; Beth Reel; Andrea Richardson

BRS Staff

Present: Evelyn Oliver Knight, Liaison; Kathleen Marchione, Bureau Chief; Myra Scott, Level Up Presenter

Excused: Kerri Fradette

Introductions: Marisel DeCordova, Chair, welcomed everyone, each attendee introduced themselves.

Minutes: May 11, 2016- Kristen Winkle, Approved

Bureau of Rehabilitation Services

55 Farmington Avenue • 12TH FLOOR, HARTFORD, CT 06105

Phone: (860) 424-4844

Information: 1-800-537-2549

TDD: (860) 424-4839

Fax: (860) 424-4850

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Budget: Gary Prushko

Expenses for Marisel's attendance at the national meeting in Bethesda, MD brought the line item for travel over by \$128.44. That amount will be moved from the Training for the SRC Members line item. Budget is fine and in place, the variance is positive.

SRC Leadership: Marisel DeCordova, Chairperson

VR Application Process: Marisel questioned if BRS is required to have clients do a Work Evaluation if they already have years of employment experience. Some states require it. Kathy Marchione confirmed that this isn't a requirement.

- Also, Marisel brought up the concern that the Sign Language Interpreting Program at the Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) for the State would be closing; all staff have been laid off. A 3:15 PM Press Conference was scheduled for today. She noted that these services are used throughout the state. Kathy confirmed that any staff that needs interpreters will be provided interpreters. Also, Kathy said the Commissioner is meeting with the unit today at 2:30 PM; she wasn't able to share other information about it at this time before the Commissioner's meeting.

BRS Update – Kathy Marchione, Bureau Chief (David Doukas)

May VR Report (from D. Johnson): VR Report: (Monthly VR Report available in SRC meeting folder for today). Caseloads are up but, not up as much as they thought with Level Up project. Writing plans for Transition Age Youth are faster than previously reported. BRS is meeting all federal indicators except self-support but, they don't usually meet it. Due to new requirements under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the criteria for evaluating outcomes (statistics) will be changed Sept. 30th.

Update on offices: The New Haven BRS office has moved 370 James Street. Plans for signage are underway; there is a standing floor banner in the window. A couple of offices still need signage and it will be worked on. Middletown office is ordering signage. The Stamford office closed temporarily due to flooding. There have been three locations in the community that have been secured where BRS Counselors are meeting with clients, the Secretary for that BRS office is housed in Bridgeport, they hope to open in the summer. The Windsor office is all set. It was noted that the DSS Torrington office was going to close. BRS plans to keep an office in Torrington even though DSS will not.

Level up numbers: They have been able to use re-allotment money for services. In May, BRS had a retreat and explored ideas for Level Up.

Level Up Presentation – Myra Scott, BRS Consultant

Level UP 2016: The new name for transition (to higher education or work) services is **DORS Level Up**; there are ten Counselors for all of the high schools in Connecticut. It isn't an eligibility program. Level Up students are ages 16 to 21 years old. They want to get students started with plans for work or education before their senior year. They become Youth when at age 22.

There was a two-day Symposium last week that included Level up Counselors. It helped to showcase Level Up and prepped school professionals of services that will be available. It is a shift for what BRS has to provide. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) replaced with the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). Pre-Employment placement services will be in place to teach the skills. WIOA creates a unified workforce program for the students and families to have access. Key stake holders in the community are people that are invested in assisting individuals in school with disabilities. The rehabilitation program provides services to teach students employment skills that they will need for their future. The Symposium was looking at getting everyone shifted and prepared to this school year.

The services are counseling for post-secondary education, job exploration, job counseling, and work-based learning experiences. Tech Act services (access to assistive technology) is woven into Level Up. They are working with the State Department of Education. It is supposed to improve communication and services. Level Up was developed by DORS and supplements Transition Services. Previously, they used to do The Summer Youth Employment Program. Work experiences will be provided. Students will work during and after school for eight weeks and then follow up with BRS about how it went and then they do another eight weeks for the Work Experience, there is no limit for the Work Experiences. Ability and Beyond have one hundred and sixty students through Level Up and it is going well with the employers. This year Level up will have about fifteen hundred students in Level Up for this summer. Working Papers are needed for any student getting their first job when they are sixteen years old.

RFQ: They contract out with a community rehabilitation provider (CRP) and they collaborate with school districts. They aren't replacing or duplicating services (BRS). Students have to go through the school system to get involved with Level Up. They need to have a State ID, Social Security number and a birth certificate. A school transcript allows for students to get a State ID at the DMV. Career Assessment Services for Level Up is a building block to think about job exploration and the next step, ways to get more information about the job, CRP can assess with support. This becomes their transition portfolio; this can be integrated into their 504/IEP Plan. The tools for the services can be adjusted to accommodate individuals.

Self-determination and the transition is an opportunity to take it to another level to look at self-advocacy, some parents don't know how to advocate and some are good advocates. Students create their own goal, teaching Young Adults to make choices, improve outcomes. There are 169 towns in Connecticut. Each counselor serves as the liaison to 22-25 public schools; Magnet and Private schools are not included. Flyers were given to all meeting attendees; these included a Job Training and Job Coach Training through CREC. The trainings are being offered and funded from Level Up to train and/or offer training to school systems. An Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is important to develop goals to assist with supports fading out and is designed for students to meet the expectations. Also, a Mobile Tech as AT free training for professionals that works with the population has been planned. The trainings are proposals from the recent BRS Retreat to explore how to meet WIOA's required services. Businesses connect with the students, with the desire to give back to the schools. Many different businesses have participated in Level Up, the buy-in is free, supervised labor for the summer that could be a hire in the future. There isn't a requirement for Transition Services; it is to get them started for Level Up. Once they close a case they have to monitor it for 90 days. Thomas Boudreau mentioned how the Department of Special Education uses the student's Social Security number to track student activity. Level UP/WIOA is going to have to monitor the information from the student, i.e. education, training and jobs down the road. Level Up: Save the Date: AT (Assistive Technology) Camp, August 7 – 12, 2016 and other upcoming programs for individuals, Self-Advocacy and Youth Leadership Forum, all of this information is on the website. Connecticut Prep-Rally Tour and Job Clubs are happening. The Counselors have personalized sticky notes

with their contact information on it and picture. ASD & Latino Services will be providing programs; brochure is in English and Spanish.

SRC Update – Evelyn Oliver Knight, Liaison

- SRC 2015 Annual Report: SRC Annual Report completed: she gave out copies of it to meeting attendees today. It has been posted on state website; the state library has requested copies.
- Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA): Meeting: July 27th, 2016, 1 P, Location TBD. The company for services reached out to Evelyn, they do charge a fee. Dave will provide some funding and said to begin planning.

Committee Reports

- **Business Partnership- Kate Travis, Chair:** Postcards with the QR code to hand out, contact Mark Henry for approval. Goal date to complete and move forward would be for Oct. MH Awareness, Disability Mentoring Day. She looked at Sonic Print and Vista Print. Joe Wendover and Mark Henry met and discussed ideas about the Business Advisory Council. Myra mentioned that BRS is partnering with CTBLN for Disability Mentoring Day.
- **Consumer Satisfaction- Vacant, Chair:** No news to report.
- **Intercouncil/Nominations – Vacant, Chair:** Lisa Abbey James (SILC), Shannon McCann (CRP), Andrea Richardson (disability advocacy group) and Beth Reel (CT Parent Advocacy Center), applications have been sent to the governor. The packet also requested that be appointed to a second term. As David Morgana is no longer on the SILC, he is being nominated as a consumer.
Evelyn has contacted the Workforce Investment Board to see if someone will fill this required seat on the SRC. Amy presented this at the last meeting, there were two people interested, Evelyn followed up with the individuals about SRC, one withdrew their name, the other hasn't responded yet. SRC is trying to fill our vacant spots, down to ten members. We are looking to keep our categories filled. Tom Boudreau mentioned two people from the Education Steering Committee.

- **Legislation, Policy & Planning – Tom Boudreau, Chair:** They didn't meet. Autism is moving to DSS, instead of DDS.

Consumer Issues:

Expungement Process: Kristen linked a client to the Pardon Program in Norwich, CT; the cost is about \$400.00 to assist with the process. The Pardon Process recommended for us to contact BRS for services and assistance with the cost. BRS said that they aren't able to pay for the service, and mentioned DSS as a possibility for assistance with payment for the service. Myra shared Holly Heaven's name as a BRS counselor in Bridgeport who had information about this process.

DDS: Kate: She talked about the Impact of WIOA and DDS and how they are going to be providing a new transitional service while they are waiting on BRS. This is so that they could be referred to subminimum employment, only if consumers were deemed non-competitive for employment. Unsure about work experience wage. Current Grads (300 DDS this year, next year crucial year) are getting one day funded July-August, three days September through January and five days funded after January. Those who have aged out of the system have lack of supports are limited because of the state's budget.

Next Meeting: September 14, 2016, BRS New Haven Office,
James Street, 3rd Floor, Suite 306.
When you get off the elevator, DORS is listed on the wall roster. Go towards the left.

Meeting was closed at 2:45 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Kristen L. Winkle – SRC Secretary