



Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South • PO Box 94987 • Lincoln, NE 68509

**State Rehabilitation Council Meeting
Vocational Rehabilitation Office
August 13, 2013**

Meeting Minutes

Public notice of upcoming meetings will be available on the Department of Education website under "Master Calendar" at least 5 days prior to each meeting.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Barb Benes, Jaime Galloway, Sue Gieschen, Gayle Hahn, April Isaacs, Seamus Kelly, Tim Kolb, Leslie Novacek, Kipp Ransom, Vicki Rasmussen, Mark Schultz, Joni Thomas

MEMBERS ABSENT: Mitch Arnold, Sharon Bloechle, Robert Danner, Sherri Kelley, Vicki Newman

VR STAFF PRESENT: Angela Fujan

PRESENTERS: Jen Papproth, Lincoln VR Office; Scottsbluff VR Office by video-conference

The meeting of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) commenced at 10:00 a.m. Public notification of this meeting was made on the Nebraska Department of Education web site.

PUBLIC COMMENT/ANNOUNCEMENTS

No public comment was given.

The meeting was an open meeting and the Open Meetings Law was posted on the back table.

Mark Schultz awarded a notebook to Mitch Arnold and Sue Gieschen for their great service to VR and the SRC. Both of them have completed six years of service to the Council.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Seamus Kelly moved and Kipp Ransom seconded a motion to approve the agenda as submitted. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

APPROVAL OF MAY 14, 2013 MINUTES

Jaime Galloway moved and April Isaacs seconded a motion to approve the May 14, 2013 meeting minutes as submitted. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent**

MEETING DATES

Proposed meeting dates were shared and the location was discussed. Vicki Rasmussen moved and Barb Benes seconded a motion to approve the meeting dates of February 11, 2013; May 13, 2014; August 12, 2014;

and October 14, 2014. The Lincoln VR Office will be used as the meeting site. If it becomes too crowded, the location can be moved back to the Center For People In Need. There were no objections to the motion.

The motion carried by unanimous consent

ELECTION OF NEW OFFICERS

Sue Gieschen led the nomination process for new SRC officers for the upcoming year.

Nominations for Vice-Chair: Joni Thomas was nominated and she accepted.

Nominations for Chair: Kipp Ransom was nominated and he accepted. Seamus Kelly was nominated but did not accept.

Nominations for Executive Committee: April Isaacs, Barb Benes, and Jaime Galloway were nominated and each accepted.

All nominees were appointed by unanimous consent.

MARKETING UPDATE

Sara Chapin and Sandy Ham shared the marketing plan for VR. The television spots that have been scheduled were shared. Television, radio, newspaper and bus advertising are all planned and some have begun. The television ad was shown. All new letterhead, forms, business cards, building signs, etc., have been made to coincide with the new branding. Discussion was had around the photos being used and how difficult it is to find all the diversity you want in one shot. Mark suggested that the SRC receive the internal newsletter.

SRC MISSION STATEMENT

The proposed SRC Mission Statement will be emailed to the members. Six versions have been offered up and the membership needs to vote on a final version.

RSA SUMMARY

Joni Thomas provided a summary from the Rehabilitation Services Administration meeting that she attended as the Nebraska SRC representative. She said that it was a very organized conference and was very informative. She learned that the SRC has its own statute and there are regulations on how it is formed, etc. There was much discussion around transition students and that education is where it all begins. VR intends to play a role in that process. There is training available through the federal office for SRC members. The roll of the SRC is to bring knowledge from the business and consumer side to VR and guide them on how they serve.

FED EX DAYS

Angela Fujan explained that Fed Ex Days is a time out from regular activities to allow employees time to brainstorm, address problems or be creative on new ideas. After a day of brainstorming, each team presents their idea to the entire state staff. Fed Ex Days are held once a year.

Jen Papproth from the Lincoln office shared the idea created by her team. The Lincoln Office idea centers on volunteering in the community. In their model, VR staff and clients would volunteer together. It would allow a time for the client to job shadow and the VR staff person to mentor. VR staff could learn a lot about their clients during this process. After the event, discussion would be held with the client to get their reaction to their experience. The idea is being considered by Mark Schultz. The main obstacle is that they want to hold the event during staff work hours so they are not really “volunteering”. Tax-payer dollars are providing the salary of someone who is not performing their job duties during those hours.

The Scottsbluff Office shared that their proposal addresses the lack of individualized training opportunities for the adult and transition population. The strategy is to have the adult evaluator, transition evaluation counselor and placement specialist engage in weekly contacts to better understand employer's needs and to strengthen the collaboration. During the weekly contact they discuss employer needs, OJT, OJE, placement services, career exploration and awareness, transition placement and evaluation services. They propose that VR bring a group of students from the school to the employer's office for their evaluation work and as observation of their interaction. The desired outcome is to develop a more in-depth relationship with their employers. So far, they feel that it's been successful and gives the employer a broader picture of VR services.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Mark Schultz provided a VR Director's Report

- A Workforce Investment Act Reauthorization bill was introduced in the House and passed on to the sub-committee. Reauthorization was passed by the Senate Labor Committee and is ready to be heard on the floor of the Senate. Some compromises were made to come up with the Senate bill. On the federal level, it would take RSA out of the Department of Education and move it to the Department of Labor. It also moves all the Independent Living program pieces from VR to HHS. ATP would stay in the Department of Education therefore, not as closely linked to VR. The message seems to be to focus on kids in school but they are moving VR to the Department of Labor. It's unclear how all of this would play out on the state level if this bill passes.
 - The Counselor position is being changed to allow both Bachelors and Masters positions with degrees in a variety of areas.
 - Supported employment would be extended from 18 to 24 months.
 - Transition services become a priority, with a percentage of funding being required to be used in this area.
 - Creates services to support employers.
 - Mark will share a position paper by email that was written by CSAVR.
- RSA is questioning the federal Corrective Action Plan around the monitoring for Supported Employment Programs. Mark is working with them to make adjustments to the CAP.
- The Innovation and Expansion section was being questioned as no longer being innovative. Therefore, several activities that had been ongoing in this section were deleted. RSA accepted this change.
- The remodeling of the Lincoln office is intended to open up the space and make it friendlier. The Omaha Office needs to be updated and they are awaiting approval. One of the Omaha teams is operating outside of their service area so they are hoping to move them.
- The Certificate Programs are modeled closely after Project SEARCH. Due to the Health Care Act, Hospitals will be penalized for individuals that are readmitted. A certificate program will be offered to train personnel to work at the hospitals and help patients to gain local supports so that they don't need to be readmitted.
- My VR App will allow clients to communicate with staff in a more informal way. Their plan for employment could be accessed and allow email contact with Counselors. Two teams will pilot the Application after it's developed.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Client Services Committee

Joni Thomas reported.

- The Client Services Committee held a Focus Group with individuals who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing on their perceptions of VR. Following the Focus Group two recommendations were made by the Committee and were provided in writing to the SRC. One recommendation was that a Committee be formed to further discuss connecting with the deaf or hard of hearing community.

Kipp Ransom made a motion on behalf of the Client Services Committee that Jaime Galloway serve as the SRC representative at the Committee meeting. Tim Kolb seconded the motion. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

Joni Thomas made a motion on behalf of the Client Services Committee that the recommendations from the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Focus Group and the recommendations from the Latino Focus Group be accepted. The recommendations from both groups were provided to the SRC in writing. Vicki Rasmussen seconded the motion. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

- The VR post-employment survey is conducted by Easter Seals. The responses to the question, “What did VR provide that was most helpful to you?” was broken down into seven categories and results were reported in graph form. This format makes the data much more useful and easy to read. A motion was made by Joni Thomas on behalf of the Client Services Committee and seconded by Tim Kolb that the seven categories be adopted and included in the survey. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**
- Another question on the post-employment survey is, “Does your employment meet your current needs?” If they answer no, more information needs to be gathered and data provided in graph form. A motion was made by Kipp Ransom and seconded by Vicki Rasmussen that the new question be added to the post-employment survey as discussed. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

Employer Services Committee

Sue Gieschen reported.

- October is Employment Awareness for disabilities month and the 20th anniversary of ADA Services. Jim Coyle is developing some way to recognize these events during October.
- There is a push to improve the resumes that are being written for clients by VR staff. All staff are submitting a resume for critique so they can learn how to improve.
- Mark your calendar, National Project SEARCH date is July 21-25, 2014. LPS schools will identify 10 students each year to be Project SEARCH participants, working at Embassy Suites.
- The Entrepreneur of Distinction Awards ceremony went well. Three were awarded as well as an alumni award.
- VR is working hard to develop employer relationships.

Transition Services Committee

Gayle Hahn reported.

- The new transition marketing card is being well received.
- Mark Mason did a presentation at SCC in Hastings.
- Making It Work newsletter is being revised to be more appealing and easy to read.
- The transition video is being revised and put on You Tube so students and parents can access it from home.
- Working with school staff to develop common expectations. Looking for alternate referral sources.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 2:40 p.m.