



State Rehabilitation Council

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

State Rehabilitation Council Meeting

ZOOM Meeting

Lincoln, NE

May 12, 2020

Draft 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: Lonnie Berger, Jerry Bryan, Michael Bursaw, Lindy Foley, Gayle Hahn, Theresa Hayes, Deanna Henke, Susan Madsen, Tobias Orr, Diane Owen-Downs, Sandy Peterson Carley Weyers

MEMBERS ABSENT: Crystal Booker, Christine Gaspari, John McNally, Jonathan Moeller, Vicki Newman, David Scott, Adriana Springer, Cassidy Wall, Camie West

VR STAFF PRESENT: Sarah Chapin, Angela Fujan, Brigid Griffin, Ashley Hernandez, Mary Matusiak, Victoria Rasmussen

VISITORS: Margie Propp, Ben Sparks

The meeting of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) commenced at 10:05 a.m. public notification of this meeting was made on the Nebraska Department of Education website.

PUBLIC COMMENT/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sandy Peterson ask for public comment from members.

Dea Henke shared SILC will be participating in Giving Tuesday.

No additional public comment was shared.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Lonnie Berger moved and Susan Madsen seconded the motion to approve the agenda as submitted. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 11, 2020 MINUTES

Gayle Hahn moved and Michael Bursaw seconded a motion to approve the February 11, 2020 meeting minutes as submitted. There were no objections to the motion. **The motion carried by unanimous consent.**

SRC MEMBERSHIP

Sandy Peterson reported Alice Senseney has retired and is being replaced on the council by NDE Special Education Representative, Theresa Hayes. Theresa Hayes introduced herself to the council

and shared her work background particularly related to transition services. Members introduced themselves to Theresa.

FOLLOW UP OF LAST MEETINGS ACTION ITEMS

Council Membership

Angela Fujan reported four council members have terms ending and have been contacted to see if they would like to continue with a second term. Gayle Hahn reported she would like to continue for a second term. Diane Owen-Downs reported she would like to continue with a second term. Angela shared council president, Sandy Peterson's second term will be ending and discussion of electing a new council president will occur during the August council meeting. Angela shared members can refer individuals for council membership and to keep in mind that at least 51% of the council needs to be composed of individuals with disabilities. Lonnie Berger shared he does have an individual he mentioned at the February meeting who is interested and he would like to bring him to the next meeting to see if the council would be a good fit for him. Members agreed support for Chase to attend the next in-person meeting and pursue membership if he would agree. Sarah Chapin shared she will be making a Facebook post for individuals who have received VR services to follow the link to apply to be a SRC member.

Review Senator Outreach Event

Sarah Chapin reported she felt the event was successful and comfortable. Sarah shared due to Capitol construction and scheduling conflicts there were a few challenges in reaching all senators. Sandy Peterson discussed her experience trying to distribute materials to senators on the 11th floor, stating she was able to leave some materials with senators' staff members. Sandy shared she likes this form of outreach stating it's a great way to thank them and share some of what VR and SRC does. Sarah Chapin agreed it was a successful way to do outreach making members more comfortable and a way to share a great message, leading with a thank you.

MEMBER FEEDBACK ON VR

Sandy Peterson asked council members if any feedback was brought to council members.

Sandy Peterson shared she believes based on processes during the Covid-19 pandemic she thinks there will be a rise in CAP cases; sharing she has worked with individuals in her office with struggles that she has referred. Sandy discussed, as the transition coordinator at PTI, she has received tons of calls from concerned parents about lack of services or IEP lack of follow-through with all the process and procedure changes in this pandemic. Sandy shared she finds different school districts handling this situation very differently and she appreciates the support of VR and other resources at this time. Sandy discussed Project SEARCH as an example where students were unable to complete their program due to closings from Covid-19. Lindy Foley asked who Sandy has been hearing most from whether it has been students or adults. Sandy shared to her knowledge they have only had one adult conversation sharing overall it has been conversations about the puzzle of special education and VR for students and families.

Brigid Griffin shared they completed the yearly survey with teachers and administrators and received a great response with 361 respondents. 98.3% of respondents said they were satisfied with services. 93% also reported they were very satisfied with communication. Brigid shared some schools did express some dissatisfaction and office directors will be following-up in those cases. Brigid shared there was a lot of appreciation expressed regarding VR counselor input particularly in IEP meetings. Brigid discussed a plus going forward school staff has become much more comfortable meeting virtually for IEP meetings which will allow more participation from VR counselors in the future. Brigid discussed the increased integration of VR staff at school events and

its benefits. Brigid shared job exploration counseling is highly valued by school staff. Brigid discussed overall VR is very pleased with the survey results. Brigid shared in the future they want to be sure to also survey clients and their parents. Sandy Peterson discussed she is thrilled with these outcomes. Brigid shared Sarah Chapin has done an excellent job compiling the results stating they will be shared with council members via email. Sarah Chapin shared she was very pleased with the number of responses to this survey and she could really see the deepening of partnerships via this survey.

No additional feedback was shared.

MEMBER FEEDBACK ON WRITTEN REPORTS

Members were asked for feedback on the written reports provided from ATP, NSILC, NYLC and the Client Assistance Program.

Jerry Bryan reviewed highlights from the CAP report. Jerry reported this past quarter there was only one complaint from an individual who felt VR was not finding him employment quick enough. Jerry discussed this individual was on SSI which slows progress to do a benefits analysis, sharing there was also an issue with the guardian whom was slightly resistant about the process which also slowed the process of finding employment. Jerry shared in conclusion of the case they determined VR was doing the best they could and was following appropriate actions but then the guardian determined to close the case to maintain the client's SSI benefits.

Dea Henke shared SILC sent out a few surveys specifically related to Covid-19 asking individuals if their needs were being met and if they are able to access the services they need. Dea reported they received several responses and they were able to connect some individuals with needed resources. Dea reported SILC Give to Lincoln funds will be used to provide masks and hand sanitizers to SILC consumers.

No additional feedback was provided.

DIRECTORS REPORT

Lindy Foley delivered the VR Director's report. Lindy discussed a lot of changes have occurred over the last couple months.

Lindy shared field office updates with the council. Lindy reported team tours were conducted virtually. She reported two months ago VR pulled together the continuity of operations planning team and that team was able to convene and put together a plan for field offices and the state office to work virtually and serve clients virtually. This leadership team meets approximately twice a week with office managers in order to stay on the same page. Lindy stated as of March 19th offices were closed to the public with a few office staff still reporting while the largest number were reporting remotely. Lindy reported from the end of March to the present the large majority of staff are continuing working remotely. Lindy shared when the decision to close offices to the public was made that included specific messaging to be provided to all active clients and students sharing what they could expect from their VR specialists. Lindy shared staff continue in the remote work environment and they have worked out some technological bumps along the way in order to be as responsive as possible and having needed technology available to staff. Lindy shared they continue to ask and assess, how are staff getting the work done? Are clients' needs being met? and overall, the answers have been, yes. Lindy shared there have not been any major disruptions in work flow. Lindy shared staff and clients are utilizing Zoom and WebEx as well as Facetime. Lindy shared the leadership team has been looking into policy implications. They have been creating more efficiencies such as with electronic signatures discussing some clients have technology available but others still need hard copy options available due to technology access availability. Lindy shared she

has been more than impressed with staff and their ability to quickly adapt and meet clients' needs and shift as needed.

Lindy discussed VR at the state level. Lindy shared to receive positive feedback even in these times such as from the teaching staff surveys has been incredible. Diane Owen-Downs shared administratively VR has done a terrific job providing and making sure staff have everything they need to work remotely. Lindy shared at the state level there has been a lot of coordination with other agencies such as Special Education in the Department of Education creating a disability advocacy group. Lindy shared they are striving to remain proactive versus reactive which is creating success and maintaining the ability to deliver effective services. Lindy shared there is a lot of work with partners including calls with behavioral health, developmental disabilities and their waiver work. Lindy shared in the midst of all of this Nebraska VR submitted the WIOA state plan on April 1st. Lindy shared VR is monitoring numbers and they anticipate although they are seeing some declines, they will again spike upward as businesses begin re-opening. Lindy reported they have been able to pull individuals off the wait-list and they are working to move individuals as much as they can. 100 individuals were pulled off the wait-list in April and another 200 were be pulled off the wait-list as of this week.

Lindy reported regarding VR at the national level. Lindy discussed the draft letter which was reviewed by council members via email and was submitted; sharing her appreciation for the council's support. Lindy shared they are grateful to have a very involved and active CSAVR with participation in regular calls and national connectedness to share and learn from other states which has been very helpful. Lindy reported VR continues to be engaged with INTAC & WINTAC.

Questions- Dea Henke asked how many individuals remain on the waitlist. Lindy reported as of mid-April, Priority Group One has 1,554 individuals, 813 in Group Two, and 367 individuals in Priority Group Three. VR has removed 1,970 individuals from the waitlist since entering order of selection. Angela Fujan clarified individuals are pulled from the waitlist in order of priority group and date applications were received. Lindy Foley shared the funding increase will be received for state match reallocation and VR is now at the place of rebuilding capacity. Lindy shared they have currently hired about 10 new staff who are being onboarded.

Lindy will be sharing via email a report recently submitted to Congress, the State Rehabilitation Report, since the enactment of WIOA which shows themes and data trends over the last several years. Lindy shared this report is an interesting read and gives an overview of the implications from WIOA.

Lindy shared in regards to the WIOA state plan, submitted April 1st, the VR section of the plan contains a lot of information sharing the most important part of the plan are the five state goals. Lindy reviewed the five goals and how the SRC committees can think about how their role fits into these goals.

Goal 1: Increase the number of individuals who exit VR supported employment with competitive integrated employment.

Goal 2: Increase the number of students/interns completing Project SEARCH and obtaining competitive integrated employment.

Goal 3: Improve quality and consistency of supported employment services through the development and implementation of best practices for service providers.

Goal 4: Improve communication with clients, businesses, stakeholders, service providers, core partner programs, SRC, educators, and staff members.

Goal 5: Develop cultural competencies to ensure equitable access to Nebraska VR services.

Lindy shared staff is working on creating specific strategies for these five goals which the council will review and provide input on at the August council meeting.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Members broke into committee groups for discussion and then reported back to the entire council.

Client Services Committee

Jerry Bryan reported the committee reviewed the client satisfaction survey results from the past quarter. 93% of respondents replied they were still employed and 93% reported their needs were met in employment. Jerry discussed of the 7% of respondents who are no longer employed, 57% of those respondents reported they were laid off, 28% responded they were fired and 14% quit. Members discussed the additional data from the survey results.

Employer Services Committee

Tobias Orr shared the committee discussed an update on Project SEARCH sites as well as what is happening with Business Account Managers. Michael Bursaw shared nominations for business recognitions will be sent out in May and due the end of June for review in July. Mary Matusiak shared virtual tours are occurring with businesses to continue connectivity and outreach. Michael shared online self-paced training tutorials are being looked into for possible development.

Transition Services Committee

Carly Weyers reported the committee reviewed the school surveys. This summer there will not be work-based learning due to Covid-19. Carly shared they discussed ideas how to continue Project SEARCH opportunities when students cannot be in the workplace. Carly shared they discussed regional programs and hopefully approval of its grant soon. Theresa Hayes discussed the post school survey which is beginning now is sent out to students a year after they have graduated to see where they are at. Theresa discussed sometimes receiving responses to this survey can be challenging and trying to locate these students post-graduation is sometimes difficult. Theresa shared they are adding a web-linked way to respond to the survey to hopefully increase responses. Theresa shared the summer transition program grants had to unfortunately be canceled in-person due to Covid-19 but now they are considering the potential of funding some of these projects virtually. Theresa discussed secondary transition projects stating the five regions will be able to hire a part-time transition counselor as part of those grants to offer more consistency and communication.

NEXT MEETING

August 11, 2020

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 12:40 p.m.

ACTION ITEMS:

- Council Membership
- Executive Committee Elections