

VIRGINIA STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL FOR THE BLIND AND VISION IMPAIRED (SRC)

Quarterly Meeting

Draft Minutes

August 14, 2026

The Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired (DBVI)

397 Azalea Avenue, Richmond, VA 23227 and via Zoom

SRC Members in Attendance

- **Amaan Karim**, Richmond, Business/Labor/Industry Representative (virtual)
- **Beth Klein**, Stafford, Representative of the Client Assistance Program (CAP)
- **Christine Appert**, Charlottesville, Current/Former Recipient of Rehabilitation Services
- **Heidi Lawyer**, Henrico, Representative of Parent Training & Information Center (PEATC)
- **Jeffrey Sluss**, Salem, Workforce Council Representative
- **Kendall Morris**, Mechanicsville, Business/Labor/Industry Representative
- **Lasonya Jackson**, Crozet, Rep. of a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Ex-Officio Member
- **Mark Roane**, Richmond, Current/Former Recipient of Rehabilitation Services
- **Rebecca Ceja**, Richmond, Representative of the Virginia Department of Education
- **Rick Mitchell**, Richmond, Commissioner, DBVI, Ex-Officio Member
- **Susan Bowmaster**, Annadale, Representative of a Disability Advocacy Group (virtual)

SRC Members Not Able to Attend

- **Chanthen Nene**, Manassas, Rep. of an Applicant or Recipient of Rehabilitation Services
- **John Leopold**, Richmond, Business/Labor/Industry Representative

DBVI Staff Present

- **Ashley West**, Public Events Coordinator
- **Caroline McKoy**, Pre-Employment Transition Specialist
- **Cassie Wiltse**, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
- **Gary Joyce**, Pre-Employment Transition Specialist & Business Relations Specialist
- **Kathy Malone**, Bristol, Deputy Commissioner of Services (virtual)
- **Madeline Nunnally**, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
- **Maggie Mills**, Executive Assistant to Commissioner Mitchell
- **Megan Hall**, Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Workforce Services (virtual)
- **Rachel Dancy**, Executive Assistant, Commissioner's Office – Recorder of Minutes
- **Tish Harris**, Student Team and Career Pathway Coordinator
- **William Sutton**, Pre-Employment Transition Specialist

ASL Interpreters

- **Elaine Hernandez**
- **Katherine Malady**

Call to Order / Welcome and Introductions

Vice-Chair Appert called the meeting to order. Ms. Rachel Dancy conducted roll call. A quorum was not met.

Adoption Agenda

Agenda accepted by consent. Approval of previous minutes is postponed until November 2026 meeting.

Public Comment

None.

Commissioner's Report – Rick Mitchell

Written report provided. Additional comments are as follows:

- RSA program is moving to Health and Human Services; timeline unknown.
- DBVI has not been monitored since 2009 because of strong reporting.
- DBVI will not be monitored in 2027 or 2028; earliest possible monitoring is federal year 2029.

Deputy Commissioner's Report – Deputy Commissioner for Services Kathy Malone

Written report provided. Updates to Regional Office Staffing are as follows:

- Bristol Fully Staffed
- Fairfax Filling a VR Counselor position
- Norfolk Fully Staffed
- Richmond Fully Staffed
- Roanoke Fully Staffed
- Staunton Recruiting for Wage ASL Interpreter
- Headquarters Recruiting for Wage Procurement Buyer
- Business Relations Fully Staffed
- VRCBVI Recruiting Assistive Technology Instructor, O&M Instructor
- LRC Recruiting for Operations Manager

VR Program Update – Megan Hall

Written report provided. Additional comments are as follows:

- Summer programs were successful, including Cyberspace, Cyber Warriors, and JMU.
- Upcoming events: Liberty University tour, Careers in Action weekend.
- DBVI and DARS developing shared-case training for counselors.
- Work underway on preparing youth who "age out" at 22.
- New Senior Policy Analyst staff member named Zeke Hampton joined DBVI.
- Federal updates may change VR guidance; more information pending.

Old and New Business

Annual Report Review Committee – Vice Chair Christine Appert

- Volunteers of the council were requested to help draft the annual report.
- Goal: Finish by Thanksgiving and submit in early December.
- Ms. Kendall Morris and Mr. Jeff Sluss volunteered.

Nominating Committee – Vice Chair Christine Appert

- Elections for chair and vice chair will occur in November.
- Ms. Sue Bowmaster and Mr. Mark Roane volunteered to serve on the nominating committee.

Term Expiration Reminders ending 9/29/26 – Vice Chair Christine Appert

- Several members reapplied for new terms and waiting for re-appointment.
- Council acknowledged the passing of former member Gerald Meredith.

Current vacant seats – Vice Chair Christine Appert

Council acknowledged the current vacancies:

- Community Rehabilitation Program
- Disability Advocacy Group
- Parent/Guardian with Disability
- Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) Representative
 - SILC Representative, David Minor, has applied for this seat.

Update on Combined State Plan Updates and Approval Process – Megan Hall

- Every four years, the team fully updates the state plan goals. Every two years, they review the goals to see if changes are needed. This year, the goals were still relevant, so no revisions were necessary.
- DBVI and DARS worked together on the first draft of the combined state plan.
- Two weeks ago, all revisions were officially approved, and DBVI's section of the combined state plan is now complete.
- A copy will be shared once the final plan is released.

Third Quota Data Review Process – Megan Hall

- Each quarter, the agency receives a dashboard from RSA showing results from the previous quarter. The dashboard usually shows positive remarks and good service delivery.
- All data is pulled automatically from AWARE and RSA dashboard data issue caused by glitches in the process with earnings reporting.
- The team is working with RSA and the company that built AWARE to fix the problem and pulling the correct information and setting a new date to resubmit the data.
- The corrected data for 84 cases should be submitted within the next few days.

VR Presentation – Caroline McCoy, Gary Joyce, Tish Harris, William Sutton

- Pre-ETs Team presented and shared statistics, data, and programs highlights from the year.
- Student programs continue to grow, including Sound Foundations, summer internships, Cyberspace, mentoring programs, and college readiness activities.
- Strong results in measurable skill gains and credential attainment.
- Highlights included videos of student achievements, parent feedback, and partnership updates.
- Members praised the team for high-quality work and impact.

Adjourn

All were in favor and the meeting was adjourned.

Next SRC Quarterly Meeting will be held virtually on November 6, 2026.