

**Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired  
Rehabilitation Council  
397 Azalea Avenue, Richmond, Virginia  
Approved Minutes, Quarterly Meeting  
December 1, 2007**

**Members Present:** Pierre Ames, Patricia Beattie, Frances Daniel, Robin Metcalf, Marianne Moore, Jay Overbey, Doug Powell, Nancy Quisenberry

**Members Absent:** Faye Adams, Mary Chappell, Michael Kasey, Hortense Macon, Guillermo Meneses, Sherri Phillips, Fred Schroeder, Celestine Walker

**Staff Present:** Bob Burton, Deputy Commissioner for Service; Joan Carneal, SRC Staff Support; Susan Payne, VR Program Director; Jim Taylor, Chief Deputy Commissioner

**Guests Present:** Ms. Brunson, Executive Director of ACB, Roy Ward, DRS SRC Representative via teleconference

**Call to Order:** Council Chairperson Ms. Beattie called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m.

**Adoption of Agenda:** A motion was made by Ms. Daniel, seconded by Mr. Powell, and passed by unanimous voice vote that the agenda be adopted as presented.

**Action on Minutes of the Previous Meeting:** A motion was made by Mr. Powell, seconded by Ms. Daniel, and passed by unanimous voice vote that the minutes be adopted as presented.

**Comments from the Public:** No comments received.

**Commissioner's Report:** Mr. Burton stated that Mr. Bowman was called out of town unexpectedly and sends his regrets for not being able to attend the meeting.

- **State Budget:** The agency was instructed to develop a plan to decrease its general fund budget by 5%. Essentially, there will be no layoff or reduction in services; however, six of the seven of the new rehabilitation teacher positions that were given to us by last year's General Assembly and that became effective July 1<sup>st</sup> will not be filled in order to fulfill the 5% reduction.

- Ms. Daniel stated that the press had reported that there may be agency consolidation and inquired as to whether that will happen to DBVI. Mr. Burton stated that he had not heard anything in particular regarding DBVI, but in 1995 DBVI had consolidated the fiscal, human resources and purchasing operations with DRS and that to consolidate further would not result in a sufficient amount savings as the field staff would still be needed.
- A budget amendment was submitted in which DBVI is requesting to transfer \$509,000 to DOE for reimbursements for teachers of the visually impaired. DOE uses a Standards of Quality Formula for calculating teacher salaries where DBVI has a set amount for all teachers of the vision impaired throughout the State. This results in less state support for Teachers of the Visually Impaired as compared to all other Special Education areas. By using the DOE formula, school division would receive greater funding support and this could result in more teachers being hired.
- The Governor will submit his budget requests to the General Assembly on December 17.
- Federal Issues: On November 13, Congress passed a second continuing resolution to keep the government running through December 14. There will be a 1.13% increase in the grant for COLA. It is very doubtful that WIA reauthorization will occur – Title IV of WIA is where VR funds come from. Mr. Suter of CSAVR recently spoke with two Senate staffers regarding WIA and received two very different answers. One stated that a couple of Senators would be pushing WIA this January and the other one said WIA was dead in the water and probably would not be considered until January 2009 with the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress.

### **Subcommittee Reports:**

**Transportation** – Ms. Beattie stated that Ms. Cutchins, who had been chair for the committee, had completed her term at the September meeting. She stated that the Council needed to have a handle on transportation. Members agreed that transportation was the number one problem for blind and vision impaired individuals. Mr. Ames stated that there was too much reliance on social services to provide transportation for consumers and that we should be looking at private/public partnerships. This is an issue that has been discussed for 20 years and nothing has changed. Blind and vision impaired individuals should consider partnering with other staff who have a vested interest in getting to work in a timely fashion. Ms. Beattie requested for volunteers to serve on this subcommittee. After much

discussion, Mr. Ames (chair), Mr. Taylor, Ms. Metcalf and Ms. Quisenberry volunteered to work on the committee and will have a report at the next meeting.

Mr. Burton announced that the GRTC Azalea Connector was still making daily runs to the Azalea complex. Also, the paratransit carrier “CARE” is used on an as-needed basis at \$2.50 per ride. CARE is part of the GRTC paratransit system in the City of Richmond and Henrico.

Mr. Taylor stated that he has represented the agency on the transportation council for coordination of services and they are currently in the public hearing stage.

**Transition - Ms. Moore**

**Tri State Grant** – On November 5 and 6 the Tri State Grant partners met in Richmond with the four national centers to discuss activities to be supported by the grant.

Grant Action Steps:

1. State Cross-Agency Data Sharing

NPSO will take the lead to assist DE, PA, and VA in research, planning, and development of a cross-agency data sharing system. NPSO will contact staff from the Florida Department of Education and will arrange for a series of three videoconferences to be scheduled January – April 2008. The topics of these sessions will include:

- Common Data Elements
- Legalities
- Technology Issues

The Tri-State Grant Partners will meet at the NSTTAC May 7-9 2008, Annual Secondary Transition State Planning Institute to further develop our individual state plans related to the cross-agency data sharing system.

2. Collaborative Technical Assistance Linking SPP Indicators 1, 2, 13, 14

National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC), National Post Secondary Outcomes Center (NPSO), and National Dropout Prevention Center-Students with Disabilities (NDOPC-SD) will coordinate a meeting between the Tri-State Grant Partners and Members of the Mid-Atlantic Transition Leadership Council (representatives from George Washington University, The District of Columbia DOE and VR, Maryland DOE and VR, and West Virginia DOE and VR) on March 4, 2008 at the Patton Center in King of Prussia, PA. During this session the critical interrelationships between the four SPP Indicators and the use of data to foster improvement will be addressed.

### 3. Review and Improvement of Shared Communication

National Association State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) will coordinate efforts to revise the [www.sharedwork.org](http://www.sharedwork.org) site to increase functionality and usage among all stakeholder groups. As part of this process a youth and family focus group will be formed to provide direct input for the website redesign. The family and youth pages on the national and individual state pages will be reviewed and revised. Web design features such as a search feature, discussion threads, etc. will be explored.

### 4. Youth and Young Adult Leadership Development and Information Sharing

Youth from the DE, PA, and VA Youth Leadership Networks will work collaboratively in developing strategies and materials for year-round youth engagement.

NSTTAC will assist the youth leadership networks in developing and implementing a survey of state and national youth developed materials based on effective secondary transition planning.

Youth from the DE, PA, and VA Youth Leadership Networks will attend each state's secondary transition conference to provide support in the development and implementation of youth engagement activities.

The following strategies will be utilized to ensure communication and networking between the three youth leadership networks:

- Monthly conference calls
- Face-to-face meetings at each state's transition conference

VA – March 17-19, DE – May 1-2, PA – July 23-25

#### 5. Parent Training Initiatives Research, Development and Implementation of Family Resources

Parent Training Initiatives from DE, PA, and VA, will work collaboratively to share current resources and further develop strategies and materials for families and caregivers related to secondary transition SSP indicators.

The following strategies will be utilized to ensure communication, networking and material development between the three states:

- Conference calls
- Face-to-face meetings - to be determined

#### **The Documentation Summit**

The summit was held on November 8, 2007. Colleges, universities, and agency representatives from DBVI, VDOE, and VDRS attended. The topic centered on the various assessments and documents required for students to receive accommodations at the post secondary education level. There is no uniformity to the requirements. LEAs are not required to provide assessments for eligibility purposes for other agencies. Proceeding papers will be written and distributed. A team will be present at the VA Transition Forum as well as the national AHEAD (Higher Ed) conference in 2008. Another meeting will be planned to continue the discussion.

Ms. Moore asked if members wanted information regarding college programs across the State. Members responded that they would appreciate the information, and Ms. Moore will send that information to Ms. Carneal to share with members.

Ms. Payne stated that the RSA required MOUs between public vocational rehabilitation agencies and colleges are more concrete than the documentation and reports discussed in report on the “Documentation Summit.”

Ms. Payne stated that revisions to referral process in the transition section of the VR manual include an information letter that goes to parents from the VR director that introduces DBVI VR services. Within ten working days, a VR counselor in the home community will make contact with the parents and student.

Mr. Ames stated that PEATC had received a grant to resurrect the Next Steps to Transition series (train-the-trainer) which includes eight training modules for parents and students on how to access transition services. He will send more information to Ms. Carneal to share with members.

Ms. Beattie discussed The Workforce Alliance activities and stated that members could get more detailed information at their Web site at [www.skills2compete.org](http://www.skills2compete.org).

**Consumer Satisfaction Surveys** – Ms. Moore stated that the subcommittee with Ms. Macon, Ms. Payne, and Mr. Granger had not had an opportunity to meet over the last quarter. Ms. Payne stated that she had requested surveys from other states to compare. She will share this information with the subcommittee when they meet. Recommended changes will be completed in time to be included in the new survey which begins on July 1, 2008. Mr. Taylor stated that upon the request of Mr. Powell, the report for the five-year comparison had been completed and he will forward it to members for their review as well as a copy of the current survey.

#### **Information for New Consumers - Ms. Payne**

- Ms. Beattie stated that the focus needs to be on ensuring that counselors are indeed providing information to new consumers regarding their rights, informed choices, etc. Mr. Powell and Ms. Quisenberry will work together to review and determine whether this information is being provided to new consumers.
- Chapter I Agency Referral Policies and Procedures  
For new referrals in the phone interview, explain DBVI services, confidentiality policy, rights of appeal, rights to a fair hearing, and the civil rights policy. In addition, explain those services available from outside resources. Referrals will be made to other community resources as appropriate. Resources may include, but are not limited to: Public/private organizations, other governmental agencies, Health, human service facilities, professional organizations
- Chapter II Status 02 and 06 and Appendix Q
  - Review of VR information provided on initial interview:
  - Cassette Tape – Overview of Services
  - Voter Registration Form

- Rights and Responsibilities
- Civil Rights, Confidentiality, Administrative Review, Mediation, Client Assistance Program
- Consumer Organizations
- Chapter III Status 10 and Appendix K  
During plan development the counselor provides information regarding informed choice. Also provide referral resources at this time.
- Chapter IV Planning for Services  
Rights and responsibilities, including how the plan can be developed with the VR counselor who works for DBVI or other entity, by themselves, or with other support.

### **Coordination with DRS SRC – Ms. Beattie**

#### **Official DRS SRC Representative:**

- At the September 15 meeting, the Council voted to have an official representative attend the DRS SRC meetings and share information (both general and legislative) that was of interest to both SRCs. Travel to attend those meetings will be covered by the agency, since the representative will be on official SRC business.
- Ms. Metcalf volunteered to be the official DRS SRC representative for the remainder of this federal fiscal year. The schedule for SRC meetings at DRS will be forwarded to Ms. Metcalf.

#### **Update on Regional Offices: - Mr. Burton**

- John Hall, who was employed as the coordinator of mobility services at MAB-McKay Rehab Center, began employment on November 26 in the Bristol office as an O&M specialist.
- There is one VR counselor vacancy in the Fairfax office, and we have received permission to fill that position.
- Martha Macias, who has a Masters in VR Counseling from San Francisco University, began employment on November 1 in the Norfolk office as a VR counselor. Second interviews have been scheduled next week for the 2<sup>nd</sup> vacant VR counselor position in the Norfolk office. The Norfolk office has completed their move after many challenges
- The Richmond regional office is fully staffed at this time.
- There is one rehabilitation teacher vacancy in the Roanoke office, and we have received permission to fill that position.

- Linda Youngblood began employment as a rehabilitation teacher on November 13 in the Staunton office.
- At the Rehab Center for the Blind there are two O&M specialist positions vacant. As of January 2, the assistant director for instruction position will be vacant as a result of the retirement of Gail Kinder who had been on the VRCBVI staff for almost 37 years. There are also two VR counselor positions vacant at the Center.
- At Headquarters we will be closing recruitment for the deafblind program director soon and interviews will be scheduled in the near future.
- Renovation of the dorms is moving forward and currently scheduled to be completed by the end of July 2008. There are currently twenty students staying at the Extended Stay America hotel that we are using to house students during the dormitory renovation. That is the reason we were not able to put Council members in that facility for this meeting. The good news is that attendance has not significantly decreased because of the construction.

#### **VR Program Update - Ms. Payne**

- **Annual Report**

The report was forwarded to members prior to the meeting for their review. The SRC is required to submit an Annual Report to the Governor and the commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration which is due by December 31 of each year for the preceding federal year. It was requested that if there were any suggestions regarding revisions to the report that are not provided during the meeting they need to be sent to Jim the following Monday or Tuesday.

Ms. Beattie stated that information about the needs assessment conducted by MSU should be included in the 2008 Annual Report with more specific information regarding the roles of the Council and some of the things accomplished by the Council should be addressed in that report. As requested by Council members, Ms. Payne will include initiation of a small committee structure and list of committees as well as the average age of consumers receiving services in the 2007 report. The Council approved the Annual Report with the inclusion of requested information.

Ms. Beattie stated that she and Mr. Powell currently participates in bi-monthly teleconference calls with the National Collation of SRC. Mr. Powell requested that this information should be shared in the report. Ms. Payne will also include this information in the Annual Report. Ms. Beattie



will check to see if there is a limit to members' participation on the teleconference call. She stated that when she attended the CSAVR SRC, there was a concern that participation was very low. She stated that she would request copies of other satisfaction surveys and share them with the subcommittee. She reported that there would be a training Web site, including eight modules which should be completed by May 2008. There is supposed to be funding available for the SRC chairperson to attend a conference in Orlando, Florida. She will share more information as she receives it.

Mr. Taylor stated that the agency could fund teleconference calls for SRC issues, if necessary.

- **VR Outcomes for FY 2007**

Although we report on numbers, those numbers really are people. The total of 197 individuals obtained or maintained employment, including 162 competitively employed, 24 self-employed, one Randolph-Sheppard vendor, five homemakers, one unpaid family worker, and four folks in supported employment. The average earnings at application was \$232; at closure \$401. Average hourly wage was \$12.91 for all earners. The average cost per consumer was \$7,861. The average age is 47. The average caseload size is 46.

- **VR Staff Meeting**

The meeting was conducted in November at the LRC and included regional office managers, VR counselors, VRCBVI counselors, vocational evaluators, director, and assistant director. HQ staff included commissioner, chief deputy, chief deputy commissioner for services, VR unit staff, and VR director. The meeting focused primarily on the Randolph Sheppard program, transition services, and vocational evaluations at VRCBVI. We went to the Healthy Way Café for lunch, visited the BOB training site and the café at VDOT. Ms. Beattie suggested that we have a representative from BOB come and give a report to the Council at one of our future meetings. Upon the request of Ms. Beattie, Ms. Payne will forward general information regarding the Randolph-Sheppard program to members.

- **Report on Public Meetings**

There was a total of five formal meetings scheduled across the State, including Roanoke, Richmond, Arlington, Bristol, and Norfolk. No one

attended the meeting in Bristol. Two written comments were also received. Formal meetings resulted in approximately 47 comments. An informal session was held during the summer with transition aged students; their comments will be included. Approximately 100 people participated statewide. Ms. Payne is in the process of preparing responses now to be published by early January.

#### **Liaison from DRS SRC – Roy Ward**

- Conveyed information to the DRS SRC at their last meeting. They are looking forward to working with DBVI SRC and they accepted DBVI's proposal and willingness to work together to strengthen the efforts and productivity of both Councils.
- With the General Assembly coming up, it is a great opportunity to get involved, as appropriate, in legislative matters which effect the population of both Councils. DRS SRC will be conducting a meeting in January in order to get the early General Assembly report on legislation which will be of interest and concern of the Council.
- DBVI SRC has the same opportunity to speak on behalf of the consumers. We have the opportunity to do so and combine forces and to persuade the General Assembly members in the direction that we think are in our own best interest.
- Suggested DBVI SRC to have a legislative committee and work on behalf of the DBVI Council and decide what action and direction you want to take along with ours for our own mutual benefit. This would be another very productive way for the coordination, cooperation, and communication to go forward.

Report/Discussion during Lunch

**Update** – Jim Taylor

#### **FOIA Update/Clarification:**

The new section of FOIA - 2.2-3708.1 (July 1, 2007) will apply for future SRC meetings.

In considering requests by members to be allowed to actively participate by phone in meetings, the following guidelines will apply:

1. A member who cannot attend the meeting due to an emergency or a temporary or permanent disability which would prevent the individual from traveling may request to participate by speaker phone.
2. Such request must be left up to a majority vote of the SRC quorum assembled at the central meeting location to allow the member to participate by speaker phone.
3. The SRC must record the vote in the minutes and include the reason for their action, and the remote location from where the member will be participating.
4. Active participation via speaker phone by a member is limited each calendar year to two meetings or 25 percent of the meetings, whichever is fewer. The 25% requirement will apply to the DBVI SRC - allowing one meeting per calendar year.

**Update SRC Activities:** Mr. Taylor stated that there were funds available in the State plan in the Expansion and Innovation section for SRC of services, lunches, travel, etc. This year the plan identified \$3,000 for new activities related to assistive technology, employment, outreach/public relations, or a new activity/expansion of services. If the funds are not spent, the funds are carried over into case services the next year. Ms. Beattie inquired if regionally-based computer technology came out of those funds? Mr. Taylor responded that they were included in those funds.

**New Council Member Orientation - Mr. Taylor**

- The agency has not received confirmation on new appointments to the Council from the Governor's office but expected them very soon. Announced that orientation for new members would be held on the Friday before the next quarterly meeting.
- Mr. Taylor will work with Ms. Beattie to plan for the orientation training and stated that other SRC members are welcomed to assist. Mr. Powell stated that the training was extremely useful to him. He stated that in the Annual Report, there are actually four councils (DRS SRC, DBVI SRC, DBVI Board, Workforce Investment Council) and would like to see more information about these boards/councils interface with DBVI SRC. Mr. Taylor stated that there should be a member of the State Workforce Investment Council on the DBVI SRC; however, there was a person last year who did not attend meetings. DBVI has had limited success in getting the State Workforce Investment Council to participate. Saturday meetings were not convenient for the last person appointed. Mr. Taylor stated that he will include information about

the four councils in the orientation training in March. Ms. Beattie stated that this information about the councils/boards could be included as a agenda item at one of the SRC meeting.

Mr. Powell inquired as to whether the 5% budget cuts had any impact on VR services. Mr. Taylor responded no because case services are federal rather than state funds.

### **Report Discussion – Ms. Beattie**

- Discussed the CSAVR SRC pre-conference meeting for National Coalition of SRC. There is not much participation from blind councils. The next meeting is in April in Bethesda, but there may still be a ban on out-of-state travel. NCSAB may be interested in having the National Coalition meet at the end of CSAVR before NCSAB. NCSAB will provide some support for teleconferencing. She will see if the National Coalition of SRC is interested in looking at the Consumer Satisfaction Survey. She is also interested in best practices in other states. By the March meeting, she hopes to hear about constitution and bylaws, voting for the National Coalition of SRCs, and how can SRC members vote on issues on behalf of their own councils without knowing what is going to be voted on before the vote is called. One emerging issue is best practices in training for SRCs. There is a SRC training for council chairs and there should be a RCEP funding available if state travel restriction is still in place. After May, there should be training for all appointees to SRCs through the National Coalition. Two teleconferences are scheduled. Mr. Taylor reported that there is a budget for funding teleconferences and DBVI could pay for that, if necessary.

### **Opportunity for Members to take a Couple of Minutes to Provide an Update on Organizations Represented or Other Activities of Interest to the Council (Optional):**

- Mr. Overbey announced that he has been on the VR CBVI Volunteer Council for three years and their mission was to make up short falls to enhance student experiences at the Center. Some of the projects of that Council were the construction of the gazebo, renovation of the kitchen, and a one-day trip to Kings Dominion. He expressed a concern regarding the fitness equipment and stated that they were investigating upgrading that equipment. Mr. Taylor stated the agency may have identified the sum of \$13,000 for upgrading the fitness equipment.

- Ms. Payne reported that the revised proposed VR State regulations have been approved by the Attorney General's office.

**Other Business:**

- Ms. Metcalf announced a meeting of VAAPSE and VAACCESS in a collaborative effort for the General Assembly on January 22, which usually is held at Old City Hall and stated that is a good opportunity to advocate with legislators. She will send details regarding the one-day session to Ms. Carneal to distribute to members.
- Ms. Moore stated that she was still involved with the next round of data collection on the transition plan, post school outcome survey. On February 1 reports will go to the federal government. State educators will receive information early in the year. Ms. Beattie inquired if that will include blind and vision impaired students and drop-outs. Ms. Moore responded that it does include drop-outs, possibly for blind and vision impaired.
- Ms. Brunson, who is the executive director for ACB, announced a vacancy for a development director for ACB who will be housed in Washington, DC. She requested staff to share the announcement with VR counselors as they would like to see a blind or vision impaired individual get the job. Ms. Payne stated that she would share the job announcement with DRS staff as well.

**Adjournment:** There being no other business to come before the Council, it was seconded, moved, and passed by unanimous voice vote that the meeting be adjourned at 12:50 p.m. The next meeting will be held at the DBVI Headquarters Conference Room I/II, 397 Azalea Avenue, on Saturday, March 1, 2008, at 10:00 a.m.