

Virginia State Rehabilitation Council
Meeting Minutes
August 8, 2011

A meeting of the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) was held on August 8, 2011 at DRS Headquarters in Henrico, Virginia.

Members Present: Sandra Cook, Matthew Deans, Daniel DeBoer, Charles Downs, Donna Kay Graff, Shannon McManus Jones, Sarah Liddle, Toney Lineberry, Marianne Moore, James Rothrock (teleconference), and Florence Watt

Members Absent: Gregory Coleman, Stephanie Colorado, and Karen Gregory-Williams

Others Present: Elizabeth Smith, Policy and Planning Director; Scott Fraley, Vocational Rehabilitation Quality Assurance Analyst; Vanessa Rakestraw, Policy Analyst; Barbara Tyson, Staff Support; Doug Powell, Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired SRC Chair; Ernie Steidle, Chief Operating Officer; Barbara Burkett, Lead Analyst; Mable Fleming, Senior Analyst; Matthew Doum, Senior Analyst; AJ Hostetler, Public Relations Director; Mary Nunnally, State Coordinator for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing; Rick Sizemore, WWRC Director; Kathy Hayfield, FRS Director; Rob Froehlich, George Washington University TACE Center (teleconference); Julie Triplett, Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy; Polly Franks Sweeney, Special Advisor to the Governor for Disability Issues; Cat Clough and Bernadette Mayhall, Interpreters; Shantia Myrick, Personal Assistant; and Mark Andrews, Presenter.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 11:15 a.m.

Approval of Minutes: A motion was made, seconded, and passed by unanimous vote to approve the minutes of the May 9, 2011 meeting, as corrected, and noted that the addendum to the minutes includes the submitted SRC Roundtable Reports.

Matters of Public Comment: There were no comments from the public.

Chairperson's Report:

- On behalf of the SRC, Mr. Downs sent a note of condolence to the family of Aileen Colorado.
- Mr. Downs hoped that the members had read the Richmond Times Dispatch article on Commissioner Rothrock and the Progress-Index article on Sandra Cook highlighting her advocacy career and personal achievements. The articles have been posted to DRS' Facebook page.
- The SRC is now a member of the National Coalition of State Rehabilitation Councils (NCSRC), a national advocacy group for the vocational rehabilitation program.
- Mr. Downs congratulated DRS on the successful Employment Summit, held at the Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center. He was particularly impressed with presentations that exhibited collaboration with business partners and Employment

Services Organizations and the information presented by Dr. Sharon Mullins on the Career Readiness Certificate.

- Mr. Downs contacted the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Office regarding the status of the SRC appointments. The appointment delay is due to some appointees not sending in their information in a timely fashion.
- The Region III State Rehabilitation Council Learning Community will meet in Richmond on November 9, 2011. Ms. Cook and the new SRC Vice-Chair will be attending. Mr. Downs suggested that the SRC consider arranging a social gathering to spend time with other SRC members at the meeting.
- Mr. Downs presented the 2011 SRC Chairperson's Leadership Recognition Award to Sandra Cook and Florence Watt. Charles Benagh, Stephanie Colorado, Danny DeBoer, Donna Kay Graff, Marianne Moore, and Florence Watt received certificates in recognition of their years of service on the SRC.
- The 2012 SRC meeting dates are:
 - January 23
 - March 19
 - June 11
 - August 13
 - November 12-13

Commissioner's Report

- The VR program continues to operate under an Order of Selection with all Priority Categories closed since March, 2011. The waiting list will surpass 2,000 this week. The Virginia Office for Protection and Advocacy (VOPA) sent out a notice encouraging people with disabilities to continue to apply for VR services even though all categories are closed. This was helpful information as new clients benefit from the evaluations and diagnostics that occur during the eligibility process. The VOPA notice suggested that one or more categories may be opened this fall, but no definitive date has been set for the opening of any categories. On August 17, Kathy Hayfield will meet with the Disability Commission to discuss a potential budget amendment that would restore funding for the VR program to the 2008 level.
- In spite of the financial difficulties faced by the VR program, it is expected that the program will meet its target of 4,000 successful employment outcomes this Federal Fiscal Year.
- Joe Ashley has been working to expand the Partnership Plus Program in Virginia, and is working with the Social Security Administration contractor MAXIMUS to host a "Ticket Tour" event at WWRC on September 28, 2011 to help increase the use of Partnership Plus.
- Ms. Hostetler shared a copy of KLEOS, a magazine that is distributed to corporate CEOs, local government, and other officials in the Richmond area. DRS had a feature article in this edition that will be a good marketing tool to businesses in hiring our clients.
- Ms. Hostetler will work with the SRC on their 2011 Annual Report. Volunteers to work on the report are needed. Mr. DeBoer suggested that the report include a 1-2 sentence statement from each SRC member on their experience on the SRC.

- On October 12, 2011 DRS will hold its annual Employer Champions Luncheon at the University of Richmond Jepson Center. SRC members will be invited. Dominion Resources is again supporting the recognition luncheon and the Governor has been invited to attend. The luncheon recognizes employers who have hired persons with disabilities during the past year.
- DRS is collaborating with the University of Richmond and the University of Virginia on a research study, funded by a NIDRR grant, to look at the return on investment of the VR program. It's a longitudinal study that looks at wage earning data of VR consumers and the impact of VR fund allocation towards service provision. Danny DeBoer will continue to serve on the Grant Advisory Committee. It might be possible to include this topic at the SRC's November retreat.
- Mike O'Brien, the VR Director from Oklahoma, has shared information about efforts his VR program is taking to locate clients who left the VR program as non-successful closures to determine their work status and the reasons for their case closure. The Commissioner will be looking at this initiative to see if it would be helpful in Virginia.

Working Lunch: Mark Andrews: Meet Me at the Mountain

Mr. Andrews gave a presentation on his children's book, Meet Me at the Mountain. The book is published in multiple accessible formats and tells the story of six animal friends, each with differing abilities, as they go on an inspiring quest for adventure. Copies may be obtained at: www.mmatm-dvd.com. Net proceeds from the sale are donated to Therapeutic Adventures, Inc., a non-profit 501 (c)(3) charitable organization.

DRS Program Reports:

Budget: Ernie Steidle reported on the status of the budget for State Fiscal Year 2011. The reduction in State General Funds continues to affect our ability to match our Federal VR funds.

WWRC: Rick Sizemore reviewed the highlights of the *WWRC 2011 Annual Report and Blueprint for Direction*. Due to budget issues, WWRC has eliminated some of the services for non-VR clients unless these individuals do not have access to services anywhere else. WWRC continues to maintain a strong 90% rehabilitation rate for training graduates and the Center continues to average about 300 clients per day.

FRS: Kathy Hayfield reported that with the change from five to four regions, the FRS Division Regional Directors and Managers have taken on more responsibility than they previously had. There are now 3 fewer Managers, but there are now Unit Supervisors in six areas of the State to provide more day-to-day support for counselors in the office; these are not new positions. FRS continues to operate on a tight budget, but is still seeing strong outcomes. There are just under 30,000 clients in the program, and 2,124 of these are on the waiting list.

DRS has been working to address the findings from the 2010 RSA Monitoring Report. In September, there will be training on supported employment services, which will include

information on what constitutes an “integrated setting” for purposes of job placement and successful closure. In addition, work continues on the ESO Report Card, which was a recommendation of the SRC. For future SRC meetings, Kathy will request that a Regional Director attend the meeting to talk about services in their region.

Project SEARCH continues to be a very successful program. This year, there were 8 sites with 65 students participating. One-third of the students were hired by the host site, one-third were hired in the community, and one-third are in job search status. New sites in Tazewell and Manassas will be developed this coming year.

Council Roundtable Reports

Written reports will be submitted to Barbara Tyson to include with the meeting minutes.

Committee Reports:

Internal Affairs: The Committee reviewed the contract renewals for the two DRS Hearing Officers. A motion was made by Matthew Deans, seconded by Danny DeBoer, and unanimously approved to recommend that DRS renew the Hearing Officer contracts for another year.

Mable Fleming reviewed the results of the 2010 VR Consumer Satisfaction Survey Report. Ms. Fleming will provide the Internal Affairs Committee Chair with follow-up information regarding paid service breakdown for consumers who are very dissatisfied with their involvement. In addition, she eventually will be doing an assessment of consumers who are very satisfied with their involvement in their program, and will include in this a review of case notes to determine the level of consumer contact by the counselor.

Liz Smith updated the Committee on the status of the Corrective Action Plan for the 2010 RSA Monitoring Report. RSA has approved the Corrective Action Plan and all corrective actions have either already occurred or will be completed by January, 2012.

External Affairs: Liz Smith provided an update on the 2012 General Assembly. All State agencies must submit their legislative proposals by the end of this week. The Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services is proposing to change the term *mental retardation* to *intellectual disability* in its Code sections. DRS is requesting support from the SRC on a proposal to eliminate *local interagency service teams* (§51.5-5.01) from the Code. These teams were a recommendation of the Beyer Commission back in 1992 and have never functioned. They are no longer relevant or necessary to the function of government or the provision of comprehensive services for Virginians with physical or sensory disabilities as these responsibilities are being carried out without this Code provision. A motion was made by Florence Watt, seconded by Tony Lineberry, and unanimously approved to provide a letter of support to DRS for its proposal to eliminate §51.5-5.01 from the Code.

Barbara Burkett provided an update on the status of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment. There were 282 responses from the DRS/WWRC staff survey. The preliminary results show the same trends as the last assessment in that staff view job placement and guidance and counseling as the most important services for consumers. They view lack of jobs and lack of job skills in consumers as the reasons why consumers are not employed. The stakeholder survey is in process and responses received to date indicate that the services of the Employment Services Organizations need to be enhanced. With the receipt of the Virginia Board for People with Disabilities' *Assessment of the Disability Service System in Virginia*, the literature review for the comprehensive needs assessment will be completed by Dr. Rakestraw.

Shannon McManus Jones will work on the 2011 SRC Annual Report; Charlie Downs will assist her. Additional volunteers are needed to help with this report as the External Affairs Committee has lost most of its members through attrition.

Danny DeBoer and Florence Watt, outgoing External Affairs Committee members, plan to continue to make contacts in order to get new members appointed to the SRC.

Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program Overview

As continuing education for the SRC members, Mary Nunnally made a presentation on the history and services provided by the Deaf and Hard of Hearing program at DRS. She also discussed the collaborative efforts of DRS and other state agencies and organizations in enhancing services for the deaf and hard of hearing. Ms. Nunnally has taken on the responsibility of serving as the coordinator of deaf and hard of hearing services at WWRC.

Unfinished Business:

Rob Froehlich discussed the agenda for the November 14 SRC Retreat. The members suggested the following possible agenda items: return on investment presentation, best practices from other SRCs and the IRI publication on the role and responsibilities of SRCs, roles of members and committee, committee planning, and VR program evaluation. Mr. Deans offered to do a presentation on "a day in the life of a VR counselor".

Mr. DeBoer's report on the Return on Investment Grant was handled during the Commissioner's Report.

New Business

Donna Kay Graff expressed concern that only one deaf and hard of hearing person is serving on the SRC. Ms. Smith encouraged Ms. Graff to notify interested individuals who are deaf or hard hearing to apply to the Secretary of the Commonwealth for appointment.

On July 22, 2011, Sandra Cook attended the Brain Injury Report Out Day which was held at the Cultural Arts Center in Glen Allen. The purpose of this event was to provide state agencies an opportunity to report on the services they provide to Virginians with brain injury and to share their successes and challenges. Senators Northam and Puller were recognized at the event.

On behalf of the Nominating Committee, Danny DeBoer announced that Sandra Cook was being nominated for the 2012 SRC Chair and Toney Lineberry as the Vice Chair. A motion was made by Danny DeBoer, seconded by Florence Watt, and unanimously passed to elect Sandra Cook as Chair and Toney Lineberry as Vice-Chair of the SRC for 2012.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:00 p.m.

ROUND TABLE REPORTS

State Rehabilitation Council, Roundtable Report Assistive Technology Advisory Council Meeting from June 9, 2011 Submitted by: Matthew Deans

Commissioner's Update:

One of the things Commissioner Rothrock has been working on is a new website for community living with accessibility, affordable housing, with an accessible location (sidewalks, etc), transportation, using available assistive technology (AT) and support systems for greater independence. The website for Virginia's Blueprint for Livable Communities is www.vadrs.org/vblc.

Assistive Technology (AT) Director's Update

Ms. Hayfield discussed the current DRS fiscal environment and implications for client service delivery. DRS is serving the current clients determined eligible in all categories; new service applicants are placed on lists that will allow them to receive services as funding becomes available at a future time.

The VATS initiative entitled the Virginia Reuse Network was affected by an 11% cut from the primary funding source, the Commonwealth Neurotrauma Initiative (CNI). It was noted that CNI funding for the reuse program grant ends next year (7/1/2012). VATS needs to secure funding for the continued operation of the reuse program. The FREE Foundation will also be seeking funding through the General Assembly for this program. Ms. Hayfield requested the Council to please keep VATS informed if they know of any grant opportunities to keep these programs going.

Robert Krollman stated that the VATS contract with the ADA Resource Center, Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center (DBTAC), will end this year for the

program focused on “AT @ Work”, and the future contract will focus on “Emergency Preparedness and AT” with a connection to AT Reuse. Mr. Krollman requested from the Council a plan for sustainability of the new DBTAC contract in order to provide a potential avenue for funding for the AT Reuse Program.

Barclay Shepard stated the Pass It on Center is working on a Memorandum of Understanding with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to focus on being prepared for an emergency disaster so that FEMA would know who they could contact. There is a need to look at the whole state and how we can partner with other agencies and coordinate services. Mr. Shepard is scheduled to attend a Summit in September with FEMA Region III.

Ms Hayfield discussed “AT follows the Student” progress and asked the Council to consider how we should proceed as a resolution did not make it through the General Assembly last year.

Woodrow Wilson Rehabilitation Center (WWRC):

Kelly Lum gave an update on WWRC activities. The therapy department is reprioritizing their program due to budget and staff reductions. They are still providing AT services for both DRS clients and non-client services, particularly in the area of seating and mobility. In the area of AT, the WWRC Blueprint has largely remained the same. They are focusing on transition-age students and continue to look at AT resources across the state. The Driver’s Training Program will serve clients already in the program and in the future will only serve DRS clients.

NewWell Fund:

Joseph Wallace, Ph.D., Director, NewWell Fund, reported the NewWell Fund has been awarded a \$50,000 grant from the Richmond Eye & Ear Foundation Fund, a component fund of The Community Foundation. The purpose of this grant is to provide vision and hearing equipment to individuals with disabilities who otherwise could not afford these devices in the Cities of Richmond, Colonial Heights, Hopewell and Petersburg and the Counties of Chesterfield, Hanover, Henrico, Goochland, Powhatan, New Kent, Charles City, Lancaster, Northumberland, Richmond and Westmoreland. Grant applications will be available on the NewWell Fund website at www.newwellfund.org or by calling 804-662-7021.

The NWF has submitted a grant proposal for \$25,000 to the Sheltering Arms Fund and is still pursuing legislation to restore funding to the Consumer Service Fund.

Foundation for Rehabilitation Equipment and Endowment (FREE Foundation):

Barclay Shepard provided a report from the FREE Foundation. FREE received \$65,000 worth of durable medical equipment from Physicians for Peace which is largest single equipment donation ever given to FREE. The FREE Foundation served 153 individuals during January-March, 2011. The FREE Foundation has students serve as volunteers and is working with the American Red Cross to set up loan closets for the Richmond Chapter and the upcoming Hampton Roads Chapter scheduled to open in the fall. A new sanitation unit (Hubscrub) was received at the FREE-Winchester location and FREE is in

the process of hiring a part-time technician at the Richmond Chapter. The FREE Foundation has submitted a grant proposal to the Sheltering Arms Fund. The FREE Foundation and VATS will continue to look for funding options due to the CNI grant ending in FY 2012.

Advisory Council Member Reports:

Tony Gentry, Ph.D., OTR/L, reported a success story regarding a 14 year-old student in Fairfax. The student worked on a project with the iPod Touch. The student accumulated data on the people who most needed this type of equipment and could not afford to purchase it. The student conducted fund raising to purchase this equipment and gave the equipment to those identified as having the greatest need.

Peggy Fields, Ph.D., Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired, reported that the six regional labs in the state were provided new computers and equipment was updated with current and popular AT devices.

Next ATAC Meeting:

The next ATAC Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 15, 2011, at the DRS Central Office in Richmond.

State Rehabilitation Council, Roundtable Report

Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired SRC Meeting on June 11, 2011

Submitted by: Danny DeBoer

- Doug Powell was re-elected Chair and Melanie Brunson was elected Vice Chair for the upcoming term of the DBVI SRC.
- Commissioner Hopkins reported that the DBVI is pretty much on track financially for the upcoming fiscal year. The DBVI has funds remaining as the 2012 fiscal year approaches and is focused on ensuring that the Vocational Rehabilitation program can sufficiently remain financially stable. With another quarter remaining on the federal grant, the Commissioner Hopkins explained that the DBVI is far removed from the position it was in a few years ago when adequate funds lacked and the authorization for new services was prohibited due to the aforementioned.
- Commissioner Hopkins thanked the council for their patience as they await the appointments of new SRC members. The Secretaries' office has yet to provide any new information on those anticipated appointments. Surprise, surprise.
- The RSA Monitoring Report was released earlier this year and a final response was submitted and posted on the RSA website.
- There is some concern within the Council of the Governor's intention to privatize vending in Virginia rest stops. Rest stop vending is a major source of revenue for DBVI. The DBVI is designated as the vocational rehabilitation agency for Virginia to train and license individuals who are blind to operate businesses on federal property. The DOT has told DBVI's revenues will not suffer as a result of these issues. The Code of Virginia requires the Vocational Rehabilitation Program to use funds generated from those programs to pay for health insurance for participants in the program. The amount of revenue is generated by the

amount of support individuals give to those vending facilities along the highway and goes directly into the program. The projected amount for this fiscal year is about \$900,000 dollars or so.

- Standards and Indicators Quarterly Update: At the end of March 2011, the 2nd quarter of the federal fiscal year we had 52 successful placements and closures as opposed to 50 the previous year. Of all closed cases that received service, the ratio with an employment outcome was 50 percent, which was an improvement over the previous year which was 43.9 percent. Of the closed cases in which the percentage has a wage greater than or equal to minimal wage, the percentage was 92.3, as opposed to 90 percent the previous year. Of those individuals who were successful closures that have a significant disability, 100 percent of our closures have a significant disability which surpasses the minimum percentage of 89 percent. The ratio of wages compared to the overall state average wage is .85 as opposed to the previous year which was .68 and higher than federal minimum standard of .59.
- The DBVI facility renovations were previously on schedule until an architectural glitch was discovered; however the completion date will hopefully remain the same which is February 2012.
- The DBVI State Plan has been reviewed by the writing committee and is ready for submission. The Council unanimously approved the State Plan
- Doug Powell reported the “I’m Determined” program sponsored by DBVI & DOE is used to help kids learn how to conduct their own individual and education program needs. Essentially, young men and woman are given the opportunity to take control of their own education programs, similar to an IEP.



Youth Summit on the Hill

In July, fifteen youth leaders, sponsored through VDOE's I'm Determined project, visited Washington, DC to learn more about leadership and active participation in a democracy from the American Civics Center. They were able to meet with both Senators Webb and Warner. Another highlight of the summit was attending a play written and performed by people with disabilities. The I'm Determined website has a new look, visit the site at www.imdetermined.org

Performance Pay Incentive and Tax Credits

Governor Bob McDonnell announced that teachers in 25 schools across the Commonwealth will participate in performance-pay pilot programs during the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 school years. With participating schools located in 13 of the 132 school districts in the Commonwealth. The participating schools must implement the

performance standards and model teacher-evaluation system approved by the Board of Education in April. The board-recommended systems base 40 percent of a teacher's evaluation on student academic growth. The Virginia Teacher Evaluation Work Group developed and proposed revised *Guidelines for Uniform Performance Standards and Evaluation Criteria for Teachers* and the *Virginia Standards for the Professional Practice of Teachers* for use in this pilot program. Bonuses for exemplary teachers in the state-funded pilots will be paid in the fall of 2012 based on evaluations conducted during 2011-2012. Performance awards for qualifying teachers in schools with federally funded pilots will be made in the fall of 2013 based on evaluations during 2012-2013. For more information visit http://www.doe.virginia.gov/news/news_releases/2011/july21_gov.shtml

Virtual School

Legislation passed by the 2010 General Assembly provides additional opportunities for online learning for Virginia students. The legislation, a component of Governor Bob McDonnell's "Opportunity to Learn" education agenda, allows school divisions to offer online instruction and courses to students across the commonwealth through virtual school programs. In some cases, instruction is offered directly by a school division to students within the district. In others, the instruction is provided by a virtual school program that has been contracted by a school division to provide online educational services. For more information visit the VDOE website at http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/virtual_learning/virtual_schools/parents_students/index.shtml

Special Education's State Performance Plan / Annual Performance Report

The U.S. Department of Education (USED) in June rated Virginia and other states on their implementation of Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The reviews were based on annual special education performance reports for 2009, state performance plans and other publicly reported information and data. USED praised Virginia for its efforts on 12 of 20 indicators related to the state's success in improving the educational outcomes of students with disabilities. Virginia, however, received an overall determination of "needs assistance" based on an indicator related to the review of local policies, procedures and practices in school divisions with significant discrepancies in the discipline on disabled and non-disabled students. For more information, visit http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/reports_plans_stats/index.shtml School divisions have submitted data for the next SPP/APR, with the exception of Indicator #14, the Post School Survey, which is due September 30, 2011.

Virginia Transition Forum

Roanoke, Virginia will be the host site for the Virginia Transition Forum 2012. This year the theme is Technology for Transition: Making the Connection.

Committees have been formed and a kick-off planning meeting is planned for August 1-2. Information about the Forum will be posted at www.virginiatransitionforum.org

Career and College Readiness Initiative

The Virginia College and Career Readiness Initiative is designed to ensure that college and career-ready learning standards in reading, writing and mathematics are taught in every Virginia high school classroom. This initiative will strengthen students' preparation for college and the work force before leaving high school. VDOE leads the initiative, working in close collaboration with leaders in the Virginia Community College System and the State Council of Higher Education. For additional information visit VDOE's website at http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/college_career_readiness/index.shtml

This year the *From Vision to Practice Institute* was focused on Cradle to Career: Pathways for Success and hosted presenters from the Weldon-Cooper Center, NBC Learn, Virginia Career VIEW, Project Search, ACE-IT, and I'm Determined. Ron Clark from the Ron Clark Academy in Atlanta, Karen Pittman, President and CEO of the Forum for Youth Investment, and Rehear Ellis, NBC News Education Correspondent provided keynote addresses.

October is Disability History and Awareness Month!

Submitted by: Marianne Moore