

State Rehabilitation Council (SRC)

February 24, 2015

9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Utah State Board of Education

Main Conference Room

Conference calls: 1-877-820-7831 269450#

Next Meeting: Wednesday, March 30, 2016

PRESENT:	Kelly Boehmer	Sharon Brand	Kent McGregor
	Sandy Terry	Melissa Freigang	Rob Ferris
	James Harvey	Rylee Williams	Evelyn Owen
	Susan Loving	Helen Post	Ken Gourdin
	Mark Turley		
PHONE:	Tammy Wood	Paula Seanez	
EXCUSED:	Jan Carter		
USOR Staff:	Darin Brush	Stacey Cummings	Aaron Thompson
	Gordon Swensen	Lynn Nelsen	
GUESTS:	Sharon Cook	Mike Brooks	
INTERPRETERS:	Interpreters		

WELCOME/MISSION STATEMENT

Kent McGregor, Chair, welcomed Council members and called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m. The Mission Statement was read by Ken Gourdin. Kent requested any amendments or corrections to the January 2016 minutes as presented to the Council. Several corrections were mentioned and amendments made. Motion was made by Sharon Brand to approve the minutes as amended. Motion seconded by Melissa Freigang. All were in favor, none opposed. Ron Campbell has submitted his resignation to the Council effective immediately. The Council will draft a letter of appreciation to him. New Council member Mark Turley was introduced.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR UPDATE

DARIN BRUSH

It's easy to lose sight of the all the good progress at USOR amongst the audit and the potential transitions. USOR is pleased that the Legislature has been sympathetic to the reform work underway and it would appear that most of our building block requests should be funded. It was also recommended by legislators that a half million dollars be restored to the DSBVI restricted fund. House Bill 325 sponsored by Representative Thurston, moves USOR in total to Workforce Services as a new division, including keeping the name, on October 1st 2016. Darin stated that he has found Representative Thurston committed to the best possible outcome and very collaborative. The bill would make Darin a Director of the division (USOR), and the four divisions we currently have would become programs under DWS. Our VR grant and programs have to contain certain elements required by the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). Stacey has been working with the bill's sponsor to communicate the RSA's recommendations.

The number one goal through the transition is continuity of service to our clients. Number two is easing the impact on our employees so they can continue to deliver those services. The bill has passed out of the House Public Education Committee. Darin met with Jon Pierpont yesterday and DWS is working to understand the issues around the transition. If Vocational Rehabilitation client service expenses are accrued while we're at USOE, they have to be paid out of USOE. Once we're at DWS, accrued expenses will be paid out of DWS.

DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

AARON THOMPSON

In previous SRC meetings we talked about the maintenance of effort (MOE) penalty that USOR owes of approximately \$5 million. At the start of state year 2017 on July 1st, our budget is going to be approximately \$32 million. In state year 2016 it was around \$36 million. We're looking at approximately fifteen FTE reductions and most of them have already taken place, but we are also reducing two in the Benefits Planning office (UWIPS), and two Choose to Work (CTW) specialists. We're working with DWS to make sure we continue to provide Choose to Work services. All our benefits planners were in time limited positions. We have other grants that support UWIPS, and DWS also funds some CTW Specialists. We've moved away from benefits planners being funded by the Social Security Administration (SSA) as part of the cost reimbursement from the SSA. Reimbursement claims dropped to around \$500,000 two years ago, and rebounded up to around \$800,000 last year. We have been careful to make sure we are abiding by laws, and that we aren't cutting services to clients. We are continuing to apply for additional SSA grants, one of which provides benefits counseling services to youth who receive SSI. We need to have strong quality assurance measures for benefits planners providing counseling to SSI/SSDI recipients. Susan asked if the move to DWS has any funding provided from the legislature or will it come from the existing USOR budget? We will create a transition plan, but there are still a lot of unanswered questions. There's nothing in our budget to help fund the move to DWS. When the MOE penalty hits we will structure our budget around the penalty and balance it with administrative costs and client service costs. Our fiscal directors are identifying areas of cost and expenses that we expect to incur over the next two years.

We are balancing out the internal restructuring with the new positions that we've created. Policy requirements, developing new programs and response to audits made it necessary to hire someone with direct oversight of policy and procedure. The person selected for the Policy Coordinator position is Emily Stirling, currently a Field Service Director with VR. She will begin in mid-March. We will redistribute her responsibilities to our existing team of Field Service Directors at the Home Office. The Client Services Director was rolled into the Director of Rehabilitation Services. On January 22nd we opened up the second category of the OOS wait list for people with Significant Disabilities (SD). Our goal is to release 200 clients a week for eight weeks so approximately 1500 people will be activated and will be developing a plan for employment. We're currently in week five and almost 1000 individuals have been activated. After releasing the first group of 1500 we'll evaluate the costs of providing services to individuals in each service category. We're tracking historical information on the percentage of eligible individuals that move on to develop a plan for employment in VR. This has been approximately 68% to 70% over the last two years. Complicating factors include being on the wait list, and referrals to other services. We're also tracking when expenditures hit their highest point, which tend to be either when plans are developed or when providing restoration services. The MSD category is still open so no one is going on the wait list in that category. Currently there are about 2300 people in the SD category, dating back to March of 2015. In regards to the third category of Disabled (D) there are 900 individuals on the wait list making it the smallest of the three categories. If there is a financial shortfall while on OOS, VR would still have the option of closing a category. During the 90-day follow up phone call, we see if clients are still interested, or if there are any other referral services that can be utilized. When a client is activated we send a letter instructing them to contact their counselor. Counselors provide follow up calls, emails and are very active in approaching clients. DWS has regular meetings across the state and are serving some clients on the wait list in their training programs. USOR staff have created their own referral and resource sheets to give to clients with specific and targeted information. They monitor to see if a potential client was able to access the resources and referrals that were made earlier. Sharon's company uses targeted email on a regular basis when they furlough people so they know they haven't been forgotten. VR contact emails might include information on PWDNET and the ASAP process.

We have submitted our state plan for public comment. We've held five town hall meetings, two in Salt Lake, one each in Price, St. George, Ogden, and a final one in Orem. The largest turnout has been in Price. Once the plan is finalized sub-committees will define, tailor and implement strategies. It has been a good opportunity to collaborate with other states. RSA is setting up collaborative learning conferences among other state VR agencies starting in July, August and also in October, to get direct guidance and feedback. This is something we're already doing within regions. Utah falls in region eight and we work in collaboration with Colorado, South Dakota, North Dakota, Wyoming, and Montana. Our regional meeting will be held in June in North Dakota. We're finalizing our Pre-Employment Transition Services proposal and are trying to get that out before the end of March. The proposal defines PETS services by category, ranging from job/career exploration, to work-based learning, peer mentoring, and counseling for youth.

PRESENTATION- SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT

SHARON COOK

Sharon is the Program Manager for Supported Employment (SE) with the Department of Health and Human Services. Their newest model is Individual Placement and Support (IPS). The Utah

Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH) provides oversight to 13 mental health authorities from Logan to St. George. They perform annual site reviews and provide technical assistance and training to local authorities. They apply many evidence-based programs which are listed on their website at dsamh.utah.gov. Evidence-based practices provide guidance over the Division at a national level. Evidence-based practices are consistently effective at helping people with mental illness achieve their desired employment goals. The evidence-based practices were established by different investigators who achieved similar outcomes based on decades of research.

Basic principles of Supported Employment (SE) and the IPS model are consumer choice, competitive employment, and rapid job search. Our Utah ambassador is Tricia Jones-Parkin of the Division of Services of People with Disabilities (DSPD). SE mirrors what's in WIOA and the Unified State Plan. Rachel Anderson is VR's SE coordinator for the state. In 2012, 80.7% of people with mental illness in the state of Utah were unemployed but 60% wanted to work. Work is a typical role for people in our society and aids in recovery. The poverty level of people with mental illness is correlated with employment rates. Research shows that people with mental illness who work have decreased levels of marginalization, poverty, and an increased sense of purpose, increased self-esteem, and improved social acceptance.

IPS has had 22 trials from Dartmouth that started in the 90's and has been researched for two decades with positive outcomes. 56% of people using IPS vs. controls (other types of SE) are still competitively employed. IPS has zero exclusion, and anybody with a desire to work can work. We don't have a time restriction and we will help clients work through their recovery. IPS is integrated with treatment, and our employment specialists participate in clinicians' mental health team meetings. This ensures good communication between counselors and clinicians. Employment specialists help with rapid job search within 30 days. There is not much pre-vocational work/evaluation/testing. One of the components of IPS is benefits planning and we coordinate with UWIPS at VR. Around one year, we see if the client still needs support or not. Partnering with other agencies is encouraged. The IPS Fidelity scale can be found at dartmouthips.org. IPS provides increased income, better control of symptoms, reduction of co-occurring disorders and reduction of mental health services. It was found that unemployment is more stressful than the stresses of work. The IPS model is supported by a five-year grant and we are also present in the rural areas of the state. We have a Supported Employment Coordinating Committee with representatives from USOR, DWS, USOE, DSPD, and other Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRP's). The IPS plan is rolling out statewide and an amendment is being made to the VR policy and procedure manual regarding this. Finally, we want to emphasize that competitive, integrated and meaningful employment is the goal of Supported Employment/IPS services.

PRESENTATION - AWARE

MIKE BROOKS

Mike Brooks is the system administrator for AWARE, and presented an update on the new AWARE case management system. His presentation displayed how VR tracks individuals and schools. He also showed the Council what type of features AWARE offers that IRIS did not. The employer module lets us track where people are employed and AWARE can do this in a standardized way. Our Business Relations group has full control over which employers are put into the system so we can accurately trace who's being employed and where. The AWARE report

module has a number of preprogrammed reports for counselors' use. The participant module contains the client data. There is an "activity due" feature that aides counselors in staying on top of their caseload. Social Security numbers must be verified before a counselor can move a case forward, and we also verify that the client is a citizen or has a green card prior to eligibility. There is an education section on the intake page where we track schools to see if a school is being underserved. USOE has a directory of all schools in all districts in the state, including charter schools and Susan will send the link to Mike to update the tracking feature in AWARE. In the clients' intake section, there is a place to report if the client is involved with other agencies and a place to record SSA benefits and changes in status.

Another feature in AWARE that we didn't have in IRIS is a priority calculation that is important in assigning categories under OOS. The priority calculation is based on what the counselor enters. Another feature is supervisory control so a supervisor can look at a case and assist in decision making if a counselor is struggling. Being able to modify form letters in AWARE is a powerful tool to support the individualized approach to client service. Accessibility and compliance with JAWS has been successful and is an improvement over IRIS for non-sighted users. Once a client is found eligible the counselor has 90 days to get into plan, and the "activity-due" tool lets the counselor know the date it needs to be done as well as the action that needs to take place.

The next step in moving a case forward is plan development. The client's employment goal is the first thing we add as well as what steps are needed to reach that goal; then services are planned out. AWARE requires a financial needs assessment to see if a client has any contribution. The supervisor has to approve an authorization before it's sent to the vendor. We have added an automatic accumulator for authorizations so we can calculate how much was spent on a particular service. If a service isn't included in the plan, AWARE restricts doing an authorization for that service. If an authorization requires a certain level of approval (high level purchase) AWARE will require that approval before issuing the authorization to the vendor. The dashboard features a business analytics tool and displays information based on data pulled out of AWARE. Another report tracked is the number of clients per zip code per district. We're constantly fine tuning the AWARE system to meet the needs of the counselors and are soliciting feedback from them. Rylee said using AWARE has helped improve case management especially with streamlined case notes.

OPEN DISCUSSION

KENT MCGREGOR

It is time to nominate new members to the Council. An ad hoc nominating committee needs to be appointed consisting of at least three but no more than seven members. They will obtain nominations from the council, staff, and community rehabilitation programs. The ad hoc committee will review and prioritize recommendations and present the names to the Council. The names will then be sent to Board of Education. Under education, the members of SRC are appointed by the board but under DWS would they be appointed by the governor? Stacey expects that the appointments will be done with approval from the Executive Director of the governing department. In the future that would be the Executive Director of DWS. We should proceed with submitting names to the Board of Education as long as we're here. We need the SRC fully staffed. The Vice-Chair of SRC becomes the Chair of the nominating committee. Kent turned the meeting over to Vice-Chair Melissa who asked for volunteers for the ad hoc

nominating committee. Kelly Boehmer, Rob Ferris and Susan Loving volunteered for the committee. The nominating committee will solicit names of people interested in serving on the council, and will interview those interested. The finalists' names will be submitted to the Council. A motion will then be made to move the names through to the state Board of Education. New members will be informed by letter.

Susan said she'd like to see a complete break out of Consumer Satisfaction Survey results, and Kent requested this in braille. Summer response rates were much lower than the other quarters, but we continue to have a pretty good response rate. The cost of mailing the pens with the first mailing is too much, since we have to buy pens and pay extra postage to accommodate the pen. Management is also talking about making this an electronic survey. We could send clients a link to a survey, or put it in our AWARE system. This is something to be looked at in future meetings. We'd need to determine sample size and who we are going to survey, but the sheer amount of money to send the pen is cost prohibitive and will be discontinued.

We're up for another CAP presentation from the Disability Law Center. Helen said that we need to realize some clients feel high levels of concern over the move to DWS resulting from personal experience with DWS. How much autonomy will the USOR have once the move is made? Can we really advocate and take care of VR?

Kent opened the meeting for agency reports. DSBVI is having discussions about the trust fund and are encouraged to hear Darin's comments about funding the DSBVI trust. Evelyn said that CAP cases are down. Paula said the request for proposals for American Indian VR programs is out through the RSA. The due date is April 26th, 2016. The application kits are on the RSA web site. The Navajo Nation is submitting a new application for funding and wants to finalize the memorandums of understanding with the new administration at USOR. Rob said USILC is continuing to work on their state plan. Lester Ruesch, Vice Chair of USILC and former SRC Council member, resigned from USILC last week. Helen said on March 1st the Utah Parent Center is having training around guardianship issues. On April 16th, 2016 they will be offering a Spanish speaking family conference for the entire day. They will have exhibits and folks there to benefit Spanish families. Please see the Parent Center list serve to receive notifications as they come out. Kelly said the DSDHH is trying to stay with USOR with the understanding that they'll become a program under DWS. They also want to change the name from Division of Services for Deaf & Hard of Hearing (DSDHH) to Services to Deaf and Hearing Impaired.

Meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m. Next meeting is the 30th of March, 2016.
Minutes submitted by Lynn Nelsen.