

Howard County Commission for Transitioning Students with Disabilities
Meeting Minutes
January 10, 2019

Attendees:

Beth Benevides, Patrick Boxall, Stephanie Chapple, Colette Jackson, Kathy Land, Seth Masley, Judi Olinger, Laura Parsons, Dawson Robertson, Ann Scholz, Kaya Swann, Janice Yetter

Guests: Naysha Conway (Humanim), Natalie Dohner (Project Search), Heather Peart (DORS), Tanisha Robertson (DORS), Mike Shin (Project Search)

Absent:

Katie Collins-Ihrke, Stephanie Discepolo, Karen Gerald, Michelle Henry, Erica Lewis, Kathy McSweeney, Dianne Nagle, Lisa Ott, Cindy Parr, Susan Potts, Kelly Ruby, Jemira Sarratt, Dana Shourbaji, Meghan Smallwood, Brian Welsh

Meeting called to order at 8:30am

Welcome and Introductions

Congratulations to Katie Collins-Ihrke on the birth of her daughter!
Seth Masley was welcomed as the new Commission representative for DORS.

Approval of Minutes

Colette Jackson made a motion to approve the November 8, 2018, meeting minutes.
Ann Scholz seconded the motion. Minutes were approved unanimously.

HCPSS Update: High Schools and Transitioning Students with Disabilities

Missie Baxter has been promoted from Resource Teacher to Instructional Facilitator for High Schools. She will participate in Commission meetings going forward.

HCPSS has been awarded a grant from MSDE which will focus on transition and employment. J. Yetter and D. Robertson met with various consultants and anticipate applications to subcontract the grant by January 11. The core strategies identified for the grant are: (1) development of a self-advocacy curriculum to be delivered to students in tutorials, ALS, and Community and Career Exploration; (2) professional development for educators on self-advocacy and self-determination; (3) development and implementation of digital portfolios; (4) expansion of transition awareness among students and families; (5) improvement of quality of career exploration; (6) improvement of transition assessments.

J. Yetter clarified that the grant will address the whole range of students—college and career ready students as well as those with the most significant needs. Counselors in schools will need to be involved so that students who are not in tutorials will still benefit from the self-advocacy curriculum. J. Yetter seeks consistency in the offerings and

implementation of these strategies across schools. (Consistency across schools has been a major issue in HCPSS.)

J. Yetter mentioned that her team will develop “look fors” for administrators as they assess transition teachers. Concerns were raised that administrators may or may not truly understand transition activities. Commission members recommended that additional oversight from DSE be considered if possible.

The JHU digital portfolio program will roll out this school year in Community Connections, Project Search, and at Lime Kiln Middle, Reservoir High, and Cedar Lane. Expansion after this year is not yet clear, but D. Robertson does not expect it to be all students or all schools at once.

B. Benevides asked if there were any “basic” digital portfolios that could be used at schools that are not in the JHU pilot. D. Robertson shared that transition teachers have access to numerous digital portfolio templates. Again, not all transition teachers use them as they should. D. Robertson will send the templates to A. Scholz. It was suggested that the Education and Employment Workgroups review the templates and provide feedback. Too few parents know about these portfolios and they are not routinely used across schools.

Presentation: Leonardo McClarty, President and CEO Howard County Chamber of Commerce

With 700 member organizations, the Howard County Chamber is the largest in the Baltimore region. L. McClarty provided information about the Chamber’s committees, programs, and events.

With regard to employment of people with disabilities, L. McClarty mentioned the challenge of getting the message out on capability and what people *can* do. His recommendations for job developers is to be in places where businesses will be—events—and to target specific industries. Rotary Clubs are always looking for speakers. The Chamber website has a job board.

It was recommended that an employment specialist for people with disabilities attend the Society of Human Resources Managers events (B. Benevides, Liz Burrage, and N. Conway attended an event last year). B. Benevides will connect again with the Diversity and Inclusion Chairperson and ask if Judi Olinger/Humanim (a current SHRM member) could join the diversity committee.

With the low unemployment rate, many employers are having a difficult time finding employees. How do we deploy forces to meet workforce needs, since we have workers looking for jobs? P. Boxall suggested that Howard County could be a leader in addressing this business imperative. Promoting the availability of people with disabilities by the Workforce Development Office and DORS is critical.

B. Benevides asked about opportunities at Chamber events to highlight the employability of people with disabilities. Perhaps the Maryland Department of Disabilities could sponsor such an event with Howard County resident and Secretary of Disabilities Carol Beatty keynoting? L. McClarty said there may be an opportunity for this at a member lunch or a special event/topic discussion. Must be focused on Howard County.

Office of Children and Families Update

The marketing department is revising the one-page flyer and printed tablecloth.

K. Swann will assist with moving forward the Commission appointments of Mike Shin and Naysha Conway now that the new County Executive and County Council are in place.

The Commission on Disabilities needs assessment report will be finished by the end of January. The County Executive's Transition Report will be available by the end of January as well.

The Office of Children and Families will host 30-40 student volunteers during the summer. The two-week volunteer positions are open to all high school students. Application is forthcoming.

Workgroup Reports

The Employment workgroup has invited members to bring an employer to the February 21 workgroup meeting at Humanim. All commission members are welcome to join the conversation. The purpose is to hear directly from employers and brainstorm how we can expand opportunities for transitioning youth and meet the needs of businesses.

A. Scholz shared that the Transition Journey: Parent to Parent group continues to meet the last Wednesday of the month. Upcoming topics: DORS (January 30 meeting) and Parent Panel (February meeting).

Member Updates

N. Conway shared that Humanim's Start on Success 16-week program at the hospital will begin February 4.

L. Parsons hosted a Pre-ETS presentation by DORS at Howard High School and a presentation by Jemira Sarratt (Workforce Development) in CRD2 classes at Howard High.

P. Boxall noted that the Transition Outreach Partnership has decided there will not be a one-day Transition Symposium in March. There will be a series of three meetings focused on (1) post-secondary education; (2) community living; and (3) employment. The meetings will take place in March, April and May.

M. Shin shared that he is currently enjoying his new work site at the Rec & Parks Warehouse. He is helping with inventory of all Rec & Parks equipment and is also helping with janitorial duties while there.

N. Dohner provided an update on Project Search, mentioning that the next parent information session is February 6 at Old Cedar Lane, with applications for next year due by March 1. Interns will participate in a “Speak Up, Speak Out” self-advocacy training.

S. Chapple shared information on the work and activities of the Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday Commission. There will be a celebration at 2pm on January 20 at Howard High School, as well as various MLK Day of Service activities with county nonprofits. (see flyers)

Project Access will host an open house on January 26. There is a college fair at HCC on March 2.

Closing

The meeting adjourned at 10:15am.

Remaining 2018-19 Meetings:

March 14, 2019 – 8:30-10:30am (Roger Carter Community Center)

May 9, 2019 – 8:30-10:30am (Roger Carter Community Center)