

Howard County Commission for Transitioning Students with Disabilities
Meeting Minutes
March 9, 2017

Attendees:

William Alexion, Rob Baynard, Beth Benevides, Patrick Boxall, Katie Collins-Ihrke, Stephanie Discepolo, Michelle Henry, Keri Hyde, Colette Jackson, Erica Lewis, Mary Manzoni, Kathy McSweeney, Cindy Parr, Laura Parsons, Marya Pecukonis, Brandee Pigatt, Susan Potts, Dawson Robertson, Jemira Sarratt, Terri Savage, Stephanie Wallace, William Webster, Janice Yetter

Guests:

Naysha Conway (Humanim), Veronica Gugliucciello (JHU Center for Technology in Education), Doris Jacobs (Humanim), Barbara Moyer (Arc of Howard County, Project Search), Christy Stuart (Maryland State Department of Education), and Mark Trexler (JHU Center for Technology in Education)

Absent:

Stephanie Chapple, Kathy Conwell, Kenyatta Cully, Chris Glover, Ananta Hejeebu, Wanda Hutchinson, Kathy Land, Ann Scholz, Dana Shourbaji

Meeting called to order at 8:35am

Welcome and Introductions

Approval of Minutes

K. Collins-Ihrke made a motion to approve the January 12, 2017, meeting minutes.
P. Boxall seconded the motion. Minutes were approved unanimously.

Workgroup Reports

Education: S. Wallace discussed the response to the Parent Questionnaire (which was created last year by the committee in an effort to more concretely involve parents in the transition discussion and to focus earlier on short- and long-term goals). She reported that the group surveyed instructional team leaders on the distribution of the Parent Questionnaire and found that very few Instructional Team Leaders (TLs) sent the questionnaires home. It is not evident that the tool is being used as intended. It was agreed that a different system for distributing the questionnaire throughout the year and on more than one occasion may be necessary. It was also suggested that ITLs be further trained on the importance of this document and how much information can be obtained from families around their transition goals and needs for their students.

Some revisions were also suggested to the questionnaire itself. The workgroup also suggested an online option for parents to complete the survey.

S. Wallace noted that the “extended transition team” pilot program at Hammond and Long Reach High Schools. The teams are documenting how students are being served in all areas of transition. The pilot will be assessed at the end of the year.

P. Boxall asked whether there are any plans to assess the effectiveness of the expanded role of transition teachers to serve all students with IEPs. J. Yetter noted that each transition teacher has about 100 students on his or her caseload, significantly more than previous years. There is interest in knowing whether the engagement with transitioning students is effective given the numbers of students assigned to each transition teacher. It is suggested there be some kind of assessment of this strategy after its first full year of implementation and an evaluation of efficacy.

The group will continue discussing the participation of an HCC representative in transition meetings for students interested in attending HCC.

Employment: The group returned to its discussion of a marketing campaign. K. Hyde will discuss this with the marketing staff of the Department of Community Resources and Services and seek their support. The committee will give input on the content.

The group will explore the annual national campaign around disability employment (October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month). Many materials are readily available from the Office of Disability Employment Policy (US Department of Labor) website. The group will draft a plan of how county government can promote to offices within the county and to businesses outside.

The group requested assistance from the county liaison to contact the Office of Human Resources. Data would be useful on hiring of persons with disabilities, whether there are more positions that could be opened to students exiting with a High School Certificate of Completion (as opposed to a diploma), and whether the federal Schedule A in hiring practices could be replicated at a county level.

The group requested information from HCPSS on the number of students with IEPs and 504s ages 14-21 (transition years) as well as the number of students in high school seeking a diploma versus a certificate of program completion.

The group has begun to identify county departments that currently provide services to transitioning youth, in hopes of great collaboration with the Commission. A member of the Commission attends meetings of the Workforce Development Office. It is hoped that a member of the Commission will be added to the Workforce Development Board.

Community: M. Pecukonis noted several upcoming transition-related workshops for families, with the goal of person-centered planning and building community around transitioning youth. Howard County Outreach Partnership’s annual Transition Symposium (March 18) and Getting Started: Self-Directed Services (April 19 and April 20), as well as a presentation by L. Parsons and K. Collins-Ihrke on self-directed services (March 21).

The workgroup is researching the availability of adult programs for transitioning youth. Many agencies are at, or near, capacity. It is especially challenging for families with transitioning youth with significant medical needs to find services after high school.

M. Pecukonis, C. Jackson, and B. Benevides attended a meeting with Executive Kittleman and his staff in February to discuss these issues. They also discussed the role of Recreation and Parks and whether more options for the broad spectrum of young adults with disabilities could be available through the department (with proper funding and staffing). For individuals and families self-directing services, the need for community programs and activities is especially important. Executive Kittleman asked members of the Commission to research models that currently exist in other counties. M. Pecukonis and C. Jackson have begun this research. M. Manzoni highlighted the importance of the Developmental Disabilities Administration in the equation, as it is the funding source of adult support.

Guest Presentation:

Dr. Christy Stuart, Secondary Transition Specialist, Maryland State Department of Education; and Veronica Gugliucciello and Mark Trexler, JHU Center for Technology in Education

C. Stuart and colleagues updated the Commission on current initiatives at MSDE around transitioning youth. She presented the MSDE Digital Portfolio for students with disabilities and updated the group of the success of the pilot program. Implementation of the Digital Portfolio will begin in late-March. Local school systems will be invited to participate in the roll-out of the program (a portfolio team will be identified and plans will be developed to train school systems on the use of the portfolio). Implementation will be gradual as the MSDE/JHU team wishes to ensure quality.

S. Discepelo expressed interest in the program for a majority of students in the Career Research and Development course. She will follow up with Dr. Stuart.

Member Updates and Calendar Items:

- March 17: Career Research and Development Office, in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce, is offering students in CRD an opportunity to participate in mock interviews and job readiness workshops. There is a need for interviewers. If anyone is interested in volunteering, contact S. Discepelo in the CRD Office or visit pttf.weebly.com.
- March 18: Transition Partnership will host all-day Transition Symposium at Cedar Lane School
- March 20: Inter-Agency Transition Council will host full-day transition conference at Ten Oaks Ballroom. Registration is required through Maryland Department of Disabilities.
- March 29: DDA is hosting a webinar in celebration of Developmental Disabilities Month

- May 6: Department of Special Education will host a special education resource fair. Anyone interested in participating as an exhibitor may contact J. Yetter.

Closing

The meeting was adjourned at 10:33am.

Future Meetings:

May 11, 2017 (8:30-10:30am) – Roger Carter Community Center

September 14, 2017 (8:30-10:30am) – Roger Carter Community Center