

Rehabilitation Council of Texas (RCT)
April 25 & 26, 2016
Criss Cole Rehabilitation Center
Austin, Texas

Meeting Minutes

Present:

Martha Garber, Chair, Coppell
Joyce Taylor, Vice-Chair, Houston
Matt Berend, Abilene
Jim Brocato, Beaumont
Neva Fairchild, Carrollton
JoAnne Fluke, Lumberton
Casey Hertel, Abilene
Bruce Hooper, San Antonio
Paul Hunt, Austin
Susie May, Austin
Troy Myree, Houston
Karen Stanfill, Houston
Crystal Stark, College Station
Joe Tims, Justin
Cheryl Fuller, Austin
Scott Bowman, Austin

Absent:

Rene Gonzalez, McAllen
Mark Schroeder, Grand Prairie

DARS Reps:

David Norman, DRS Liaison
Ron Ayer, DBS Liaison
Shiloh Gonzalez, DARS Liaison

DARS Staff:

Jeff Kaufmann, Carline Geiger, Cassie Fisher, Melinda Paniniski,
Christy Lerche, Belinda Salazar, Nelva Sneed, Martha Bagley,
Michelle McCall, Kevin Marke

Guests:

Kaki Leyens (TWIC), Steven Aleman (Disability Rights Texas),
Jason Vaden TWC, Karen Latta (TWC)

Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Martha Garber, Chair. Each member introduced themselves.

Mission Statement

- Martha Garber read the RCT Mission statement.

Committee Meetings

- The following committees met with their members: Policy, Procedures and Personnel Development, Membership and Education, and Consumer Satisfaction and Needs Assessment.

RCT Committee Reports

Consumer Satisfaction & Needs Assessment Committee, chair Joe Tims –

- David Norman reported on the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment for 2015, Cultivating Successful Transitions,
 - This report was emailed to all council members the week of April 18-22, 2016.
 - The report is a needs assessment of youth and students with disabilities in Texas.
 - DRS will be seeking guidance from RCT and Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) as to how to move forward with the needs assessment.

Policy, Procedure & Personnel Development Committee, chair Karen Stanfill –

- Jason Vaden with TWC Policies attended the meeting.
- Policy changes for DRS and DBS will continue until July 2016. Policy changes will be halted at that time to prepare for transition to TWC.
- DARS Policy and the RCT Policy, Procedure & Personnel Development Committee have a scheduled conference call on Tuesdays 3:00 pm. This is to discuss any new changes in policies
- We would like to make a **recommendation** that the state continue to require a Master's degree for Rehabilitation Counselors. We are continuing to research to provide evidence that this is needed and is money well spent.
- We talked about taking a look at the Standards for providers. To see if this is something that the council should review. The council currently does not review this manual.
- All changes to the manuals are posted on the DARS website and available for 30 days for public comment. This will give the RCT the opportunity to look at changes at the back end of the process.

Education & Membership Committee Joyce Delores Taylor reported for Mark Schroeder (absent), Chair –

- Mike Morath is the new TEA Commissioner. He will be appointing five new deputy commissioners by September 2016.
- Jim Brocato will continue to keep communications open between RCT and CILs. This was mentioned as RCT will transition to TWC and CILs will transition under HHSC.
- RCT has one vacancy for Business, Industry and Labor Representative. We are waiting until November to fill this position.

Planning and Review Committee Martha Garber reported for Dr. Rene Gonzalez (absent), Chair

- Combined State Plan update
 - Submitted on April 1, 2016
 - Currently under review
 - Amendments will take affect at the beginning of the fiscal year to change the designated state agency from DARS to TWC.
- David Norman gave an overview of DRS Quarterly Report.
- Ron Ayer gave an overview of the DBS Quarterly Report.
- There was a lot of discussion about the meaning of goals, measures, standards and indicators and how to read these reports.
- The goals, measures, standards and indicators will all change with WIOA.

Action: Ron Ayer and David Norman will work together to insure that the DRS and DBS quarterly caseload reports are titles the same for consistency and clarity.

Action: Ron Ayer and David Norman will work on creating the DRS and DBS Reports so that they are easier to understand when using a screen reader.

Public Comment

- Steve Aleman, Attorney Disability Rights Texas Spoke about the Legislative oversight hearing on March 31, 2016.
 - The main topic was HHSC organization chart.
 - Attention was also given to the TWC Report given by Larry Temple, TWC Executive Director
 - . The main focus of the transition committee's attention to the TWC Report was focused on the topic of pre-employment transition services and the use of the set aside of federal VR dollars and utilization for these funds that are associated with this.
- No other public comments.

STUDENT AND YOUTH TRANSITION PANEL DISCUSSION

- The panel was introduced and gave a brief description of their job.

- The panel included: Carline Geiger DRS, Erin Wilder DRS, Kevin Marke DBS, Melinda Paniniski, Jason Vaden TWC, Reagan Miller TWC, Scott Bowman DBS, Cheryl Fuller DRS
- The DARS panel provided a PowerPoint presentation and discussed implementing the law, legislation, pre-employment transition services (Pre – ETS) and sunset recommendation. They allowed the RCT to ask questions and discuss these topics.
 - Federal Law, workforce innovation and opportunity act (WIOA)
 - Final regulations are expected in June of 2016. They will include responses to all comments that were made during the Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM).
 - State Law, Sunset Committee,
 - DARS VR programs will transfer from DARS to Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) September 1, 2016.
 - TWC will partner with Texas Education Agency (TEA) to develop a mechanism to target the schools with the highest needs for VR services for students.
 - DARS, TEA and TWC have been discussing a development of a memorandum of understanding.
 - DARS and TWC will develop policies to ensure it provides a consistent minimum level of service.
 - There will be a policy that will explain preferred age for first contact. We are focusing on changing this to 15 years old.
 - We are looking at the standards for assigning transition counselors to schools with coordination between the counselors and the schools.
 - The last publication for policy changes prior to transition to TWC will be July 1, 2016.
- TWC
 - Title 1 and Title IV, in school youth age 14-12 and out of school youth (anyone not attending school) age 16-24.
 - WIOA requires 75% of expenditures for Title 1 be focused on out of school youth vs before it was only 30%.
 - The Commission has dedicated youth resources to funding career fairs
 - Funding of \$600,000 had been approved for the School for the Deaf to set up dual credit opportunities. TWC is also engaging with the school for the Blind for the same type of dual credit funding.
- DRS Pre-ETS Funds
 - Pre-ETS funds some of the funds for FY15 will carry over to FY16. We expect this to continue for FY16 funds to roll over to FY17. This will continue until FY19. We are hoping in FY19 we will not have to carry over Pre-ETS funds.

- Erin Wilder spoke about engaging families and students earlier to increase the successful transition to post-secondary and the workforce.
 - First will be to focus and expand summer youth employment programs for individuals with disabilities by partnering with local workforce development boards, schools, and other community organizations to design and implement work-based learning programs to meet the needs of the students and employers.
 - Second is to engage students and families to begin transition planning in middle school. This would begin in eighth grade. We will partner with up to six large ISDs to have 13 transition nights, focus on preparing students and their families for life after high school.
 - Third is to develop and implement transition academies. This is a broad term for a sequence of Pre-ETS services that are provided during the school year and possibly year-round.
- Statewide Needs Assessment – Carline Geiger
 - Carline gave an overview of the Statewide Needs Assessment to help new RCT Members understand.
 - This is a requirement and must be conducted at least every three years.
 - DARS completed a Statewide needs assessment in 2014 and 2015.
- **RCT Comment:**
 - The importance of self-advocacy was stressed.
 - It is important to reach out to rural area and assure that everyone is getting the same service.

DBS and DRS Assistant Commissioner Report

Scott Bowman DBS Assistant Commissioner provided the following updates:

- Combined State Plan
 - Once the plan is approved by the Department of Labor and the Department of Education it will go into effect on July 1, 2016.
 - DARS is continuing to work with TWC to make the amendment to change the DSA from DARS to TWC effective September 1, 2016
- DBS RCT Report
 - Mr. Bowman mentioned that there were negative numbers and that is typical for third quarter. In the past DBS still met their goal with a surge in the fourth quarter. He expects the same thing to occur this year.

Cheryl Fuller DRS Assistant Commissioner provided the following updates:

- DRS Report
 - Mrs. Fuller provided an overview of the DRS AC Report. This report is provided in your packet. The report provides 15 data measures and DRS is exceeding all but two of these measures.

- These two measures just barely missed. They are the ratio of average hourly earnings and the percentage increase in those that are self-supporting at closure based on what the consumer has reported.
 - Council of State Administrators for Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) Spring conference
 - The RSA is focused on trying to better understand the employer's needs and the needs of VR programs to partner with businesses. They are holding four business round tables for information gathering.
 - The first round table was with Federal Government and focused specifically around federal contractors and subcontractors.
 - The second round table is in health care.
 - The third round table will be in finance.
 - The fourth round table will be in IT.
 - They were optimistic that the WIOA regulations will be final in June 3016.
- RSA is developing a policy directive that will identify all guidance that will be retired and what will remain effect due to WIOA.

DAY TWO

Welcome and Introductions

Meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Martha Garber-Chair. Each member introduced themselves

DARS Commissioner Update

DARS Commissioner Veronda L. Durden provided these updates:

- Commissioner Durden spoke about change
 - Changes for WIOA
 - WIOA requires 15% of the federal portion of the VR basic grant allotment be used for pre-employment services for students with disabilities.
 - DARS is working in coordination with our partner agencies, independent school districts and employers for success in serving our students.
 - DARS appreciates the partnership and support with TEA and they are working together to update the current letter of agreement and identify other way to improve coordination.
 - Commissioner Durden will continue to work with Assistant Commissioners Fuller and Bowman to implement the progress in WIOA in general and Pre-ETS requirements to fully ensure expenditure of funds are met and to ensure that we are providing services that meet the needs of our students with disabilities.
 - Changes for DARS transformation
 - HHSC – The following services will move to HHSC on September 1, 2016 the blind children's vocational discovery and development program, early child intervention, autism, deaf and hard of hearing, comprehensive rehabilitation services, Disability Determination Services and independent living.
 - DARS leadership as well as our staff at various levels are working closely with the HHSC transformation office to ensure that the transfer of these programs are done in the most efficient way and also with the goal of minimizing and impact to our consumers while improving access to services and support.
 - DARS continues to work collaboratively with TWC to ensure an orderly and effective transfer of the vocational rehabilitation program as required by Senate Bill 208.
 - Commissioner Durden thanked the RCT for their continued support.
 - Opened the floor for questions.

TWC Director Update

Executive Director Larry Temple was out of town for Legislative Hearings. Report was given by Regan Miller Division Director

- Ms. Miller gave a summary of transition of VR programs from DARS to TWC. Updates are posted to the TWC website.
- TWC has been working with DARS and HHSC to hire five new purchasers that will be trained and will transition to TWC on September 1, 2016
- TWC has been working with DARS to insure all purchasing contracts are in place to transfer to TWC on September 1, 2016.
- TWC has hired someone to work specifically on leases and co- locations.
- WIOA- TWC is working on the first amendment to the to the state plan to add requirements that were not in place when the state plan was submitted. Next we will work on a modification to change the DSA from DARS to TWC.
- A Public meeting is planned for January to discuss the combination of the two DSU to one.
- TWC has a workgroup that has made a recommendation that for every 20 computers at least one will have full accessibility programs. The programs must be current version or within the last two releases.
- TWC is also looking at the accessibility of the physical locations and their relation to bus routes and public transportation to insure this is available.

LIAISON REPORTS

The following people presented reports or briefings from their agency and reports were emailed to council members prior to this meeting and included in their binders:

TWIC - *Joyce Taylor presented the report included in your binder.*

- Joyce gave an overview of TWIC for the new members.
- TWIC last meeting was on February 5, 2016
- The meeting started with a discussion for members on an approach for implementing strategic system initiatives to support the new workforce system strategic plan in order to address three core competencies: customer service and satisfaction, data driven program improvement, and continuous improvement and innovation that must be developed across all elements of the workforce system.
- During the meeting, the council approved the fiscal year 2017 apprenticeship recommendations. As part of the recommendations the chair also recommended that they contact or arrange apprenticeship training program for fiscal year 2017 be set at a rate not to exceed \$4 per contact hour.
- Also, five percent of available funds are used to fund new or established apprenticeship programs that did not receive chapter 133 education code

funds in fiscal year 2016 and that 8,000 of the fiscal year 2017 appropriation be set aside for apprenticeship instructor training.

- The council also reviewed the statutory requirements for the combined State Plan, which we are responsible for and the four core programs prior to endorsing the Texas combined State Plan under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.
- We also heard briefings on the report on middle STEM -- middle skill STEM occupations and represented industry based certifications. A project management approach for system strategic initiatives. A proposal new evaluation framework and Texas skills standards based recognized programs.

CAP Council – *Karen Stanfill presented the report included in your binder.*

- Karen Stanfill gave an overview of Client Assistance Program (CAP)
- At the request of CAP DRS is revisiting their policy regarding the eligibility for services. It states that you need 30 days of sobriety unless you're receiving social security.
- CAP requested that DRS provide more guidance and training for staff on how to complete an individualized plan for employment (IPE) to improve consistency.
- Karen Stanfill talked about revisiting informed choice as it is one of the lowest areas scored on the client satisfaction survey for DRS.
- They are talking with DRS about sheltered workshops and having to go to VR to be eligible to continue working in a sheltered workshop.
- For DBS there are concerns about JAWS not working on Mac computers. There is a program that can be purchased by MAC to run JAWS and DBS is looking into that.

PRN *No Report from PRN*

TEA Council – *Susan May presented the report included in your binder*

- TEA is working with TWC and DARS on the MOU. A draft has been sent up the agency chains waiting for approval.
- Texas Transition Conference was held in Dallas on February 18-19. Next year it will be in Houston on February 22-24.
- On March 1 DARS will come to TEA to present TETN. All twenty services of TEA will participate via webinar.
- TEA's transition network is located at service center 11 in Fort Worth. They are working on the legislative requirements for transition and employment guide and the designees based at each of the 1200 school districts. These should be rolled out in the fall.
- TEA continues to work with DARS, DRS and DBS on discussing of transition to TWC concerning WIOA.

SILC -State Independent Living Council – Jim Brocato presented the report included in your binder

- In April 3-5 SILC held the Texas State Independent Living Conference. This is a statewide event that took place in San Antonio. The theme was Innovate, Connect, Collaborate and Create. There was a great turn out of over 200 attendees. Two RCT members presented, Karen Stanfill and JoAnne Fluke. Next conference will be either at the end of February or first of March 2017 in Austin TX.
- SILC currently has four projects funded by DARS and Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities (TCDD).
 - First is the SILC Conference being held on February or March 2017 in Austin TX.
 - Second SILC is currently working on their state plan for independent living (SPIL). This is due June 30, 2016. A SPIL public hearing was held the first night of our conference on April the 3rd. The hearing was attended by over 70 stakeholders and featured public comment and live polling.
 - Third The health and fitness project called Get Fit, work and play. This focuses on youth with disabilities and helping them to learn and remain active and practice healthy living.
 - 4th Texas SILC Transportation Quarterly Report, some of our community involvement initiatives included in January SILC staff attended the DARS focus group meeting to discuss the transition of ILS services to the CILs.
- In January SILC issued a summary of the discussion that was attributed to the IL network.
- In February SILC staff submitted public comment on proposed section 351.801 regarding the SILC as happen HHSC advisory committee to ensure that the rule did not conflict with Federal law.
- February SILC staff met with Karen Lata with TWC to provide an update on the CIL network. Discussion included TWC's contract with HHSC to provide vocational rehab services and discuss details of the transition.
- February SILC staff attended a follow-up DARS focus group meeting to also discuss transition of the funding to the CILs.
- As well as SILC staff attended a DARS stakeholder meeting in San Antonio where consumers provided feedback on transition.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Reviewed the April To-Do List
 - Executive Committee
 - CARRY FORWARD: Review Strategic Planning

- CARRY FORWARD: Invite Dr. Suzanna Hupp Associate Commissioner for Veteran's Affairs at HHSC to speak at July RCT meeting.
- ON-GOING: IRI Book Review - Review a chapter each meeting
- Planning and Review Committee
 - ON-GOING: Review the combined state plan
- Consumer Satisfaction Committee
 - ON-GOING: Continue to review consumer satisfaction results, emphasizing transition services
- Membership and Education Committee
 - ON-GOING: Continue to work with Governor's Office on appointing new members.
- Policy Procedures and Personnel Development
 - ON-GOING: Review the training provided to DARS and IHO.
 - CARRY FORWARD: Follow up on DARS policy on developing vocational goals
 - ON GOING: Review impartial hearing results
 - ON GOING: Continue to review all policy manual revisions
 - **Karen will clarify the training request for hearing officers**
- RCT Coordinator
 - ON-GOING: Prepare meeting documents in accessible format. Create folders corresponding to the tabs. Add name of document to footer to help identify document.
 - CARRIED FORWARD: Prepare a letter for recruitment.

NEW BUSINESS:

- January 25-26, 2016 RCT Minutes – Jim Brocato made a motion to revise and change the date on page three from January fifth to February fifth with that acceptance he made a motion to approve the minutes with the change. Casey Hertel seconded. Minutes approved unanimously.
- RCT Coordinator – New To Do
 - Identify documents in binder with footer so speaker can identify document by file name.
- Mark Schroeder – New To Do
 - Work with Melinda Paniniski DARS to obtain contact information for business recruits.
 - Send Request for nominations for RCT Chair and Vice Chair to be voted on at July meeting.

RCT Coordinator Report:

- Budget Update – Lisa Godwin noted that the budget is a little tight but feels that we will not go over budget. Budget has been updated through April 15, 2016.
- Next meeting will be in July 18-19, 2016.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 pm, April 25, 2016.