

NYSCB State Rehabilitation Council

Hilton Garden Inn, Troy NY

June 20th & June 21st Meeting Minutes

SRC Attendees- Cliff Perez, Chris Kchao, Meghan Parker, Don McManus, Maria Mucaria, Debbie Fiderer, Theresa Drum, Sandra Cote, Darla Miller, Alan Gallagher, & Erica Molina (on phone)

NYCB attendees- Brian Daniels, Peter Herrig, Lauren Corp, Julie Hovey, Tracy Breslin, & Colleen Ruck

Introduction of SRC members, NYSCB liaisons & Approval of March 2019 Meeting Minutes, Chair's Comments-Meghan Parker, Chair: Chair Parker started the meeting by reviewing the March minutes. Cliff Perez made a motion to accept the minutes and Maria Mucaria seconded. The SRC voted and the minutes were passed. The presentation scheduled for yesterday was cancelled. The speaker was calling from Japan. The presentation will either be rescheduled and/or be provided via email. The SRC used the time to discuss the TASC project.

NYSCB updates & Preferred Source Program Strategic Planning- Brian S. Daniels, Associate Commissioner of NYSCB: Effective July 1, all VR programs will once again be under still to be determined federal standards and indicators and we are expecting goals related to them as well. We are planning for 2 statewide open forum phone calls in August to solicit information on our new Combined State Plan to be effective next July. As of this meeting we have not yet received our draft Monitoring report from the Rehabilitation Services Administration. There has still not been a date set for when the Monitoring report from RSA will be issued to NYSCB. NYSCB continues to look for employment opportunities statewide including in and around the Greater Elmira and Watertown areas. The American Council of the Blind (ACB) national convention will convene in Rochester in July. The commission for the Blind has been invited to present at 2 sessions.

The American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) sponsored an employment summit in New York City in May. Companies such as Google, Amazon, Walmart, Bank of America, JP Morgan Chase, PNC, and International fragrances and Flavors were in attendance and left with "a commitment to hire". Important takeaways included the role of unconscious bias in hiring decisions.

There have been no new appointments to the Council since last meeting. There are currently 6 vacancies. As the 20th anniversary of the Olmstead decision approaches, the Most Integrated Setting Coordinating Council (MISCC) will soon resume its meetings. In the fall, it was reported that the Preferred Source Program (PSP) will solicit input from the SRC to help inform the latest update to their 3-year strategic plan.

Legislative Priorities for National Federation of the Blind (NFB) & American Council of the Blind (ACB)- Mike Robinson, NFB President & Meghan Parker, Chair: Mike Robinson discussed NFB's priorities: Nationally, NFB is Access Technology Affordability Act (ATAA). It establishes a refundable tax credit for blind Americans in the amount of \$2,000 to be used over a three-year period to offset the cost of access technology. Greater Accessibility and Independence through Nonvisual Access Technology Act (GAIN) require Home use of medical devices, home appliances, and fitness equipment be accessible. There is currently no sponsor. Disability Employment Act (DEA) would review the Ability 1 program and how they may handle sheltered workshops. NFB would like to expand bidding opportunities, ensure that workers earn at least the prevailing wage. Better integrate with the Randolph-Sheppard Program, eliminate the conflicts of interest and lack of accountability in the current program. Transformation to Competitive Employment Act (TCE) would eliminate 14c's exemption for people with disabilities and people will make minimum wage. See the NFB National website <https://nfb.org/programs-services/advocacy/legislative-agenda>.

NFBNY priorities: Accessible Electronic Information Act would allow funding for NFB's Newline program to be through the same means as relay service. It would grow subscribers & newspapers; Blind Persons Right to Parent Act: Blindness cannot be used against parents in a divorce; Request for proposals for state contracts purchasing- accessibility must be

included in the initial process. Working with group on a state version of the federal act DEA: would eliminate 14C's and subminimum wage.

Chair Parker discussed ACB priorities: Trying to get licensure for O&M Specialists and Vision Rehabilitation Therapists (VRT) and it is difficult to recruit highly skilled people. Many people losing their vision are not aware of certain services provided to them. Also, trying to help doctors make referrals so people can get services more quickly. Two election bills: simply mandate that sample ballots be available on-line and be fully accessible; absentee ballots veterans can print them out and send them via mail. Fully independent and private way to vote instead of going to a place to vote. Expand access paratransit service past the ADA minimums. Requires accessible buses to be available within a service area measuring one and a half miles from any bus line of the authority or its subsidiaries.

Public Comment: Maria Mucaria provided public comment. She stated that there could be jobs behind the camera in the movie business. Erica Molina noted that she believes physical access is difficult.

Pre-College Program 2019- Lauren Corp, Associate VRC: There are two Pre-College programs this summer: Manhattanville College in Purchase, that Visions staff will oversee and the other is at Lemoyne College in Syracuse, overseen by staff from Aurora. There is room for approximately 25 students at Manhattanville and 20 at Lemoyne. It is a 4-week program starting on Saturday, July 6th and ending Friday, August 2nd. Currently, there are 14 students signed up for Manhattanville and 8 for Lemoyne. The purpose of the pre-college program is to assist participants in refining their academic, social and independent living skills before commencing to full time college studies.

The program was designed specifically for juniors who will be seniors in the fall and seniors who will be attending college in the fall. Attendance for this program is strongly recommended for anyone who plans to attend college using NYSCB sponsorship. All reports from the program will be forwarded to the participant's counselor and plans may be made for additional coursework during senior year if one or two areas need improvement.

Two classes will be offered during the program: a non-credit, Intro to College Life course and an online Developmental Writing/Technology Seminar. The non-credit Introduction to College Life will be conducted by college staff. It covers areas such as: the development of note taking skills; working with the disability office; learning self-advocacy skills; study and communication skills; time and stress management skills; identifying important resources on campus and other college life related topics. The Developmental Writing/Technology Seminar will have students participate in online webinars with required weekly web-based reading and assigned projects. The class focuses on internet skills and tools, as well as organizational strategies to prepare for class. Students will also participate in skill building writing exercises. The class will be taught live, via distance learning using fully accessible teleconferencing systems and web-based materials. Students will meet virtually with peer role models.

BEP will do a presentation while O & M, and socialization skills are a large part of the program as well.

NYSCB Quality Assurance Update- Julie Hovey, Associate VRC- In 2018, nine agencies were reviewed: Association for the Visually Impaired (AVI), Glens Falls Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (GFAB), Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CABVI), Western New York Center for the Visually Impaired (WNYCVI), Chautauqua Blind Association (CBA), North Country Association for the Visually Impaired (NCAVI), Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired/Goodwill (ABVI), Association for Vision Rehabilitation and Employment (AVRE) & Olmsted Center to Sight. The reviews included CSC and placement services. The Quality Assurance team's goal was to see all agencies by December 2018 and complete the contract cycle. Since January 2019, two agencies have been reviewed-Catholic Guild for the Blind (CGB) and Center for Assistive Technology. The third is scheduled for July.

Also, we have 2 new agencies providing comprehensive services: Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired of Northern NY (ABVINNY) and Alphasointe. NYSCB will be meeting with them to discuss QA.

As planned, in January 2019, we began ATC services. We will plan on completing CSC/Placement along with ATC at each agency.

There are 3 parts to every review: Off-site electronic review, face to face visit with agency to interview staff and review any additional information. Consumer satisfaction surveys are done via telephone. The report cards and performance are on our website.

TASC Update-Meghan Parker, Chair & SRC: Chair Parker reported that there about 8 volunteers to test the TASC, many from ACB volunteered. Volunteers began with the application process and it is not accessible. It was a PDF that was not fillable. One volunteer made it through the entire process and is signed up to take the TASC in braille this summer. Chair Parker has written a letter to Kevin Smith of ACCES-VR to inform him of all the experiences relating to the TASC and has yet to receive a response. Chris Kchao suggested the SRC revisit this issue with Data Recognition Corporation (DRC). Also, to audit the online test and accessibility, with Meghan contacting Office of the State Comptroller (OSC),

Committee Reports:

Transition: Chris Kchao reported that they discussed Family & Community Engagement Centers (FACEC) and the issues of transition counselors attending.

Policy & Accessibility: Cliff Perez reported that Laura Murphy from NYSCB home office discussed making the intake process more accessible by July 1st. Forms will start to be recorded. There is a need for more individuals to join the Policy and Accessibility committee. It was also brought up to add Emergency Preparedness under accessibility.

Workforce Development: Debbie Fiderer discussed supported employment. NYSCB is providing training for all NYSCB staff about supported employment- background, steps to make a referral with provider agencies and how to identify the extended services funding source. Half of district office are done. Career centers are also trying to increase the ability to provide services to job seekers who are blind. Two-thirds of the career centers have equipment. Both NYSCB and Access VR engaging at career centers. WIOA requirements and business engagement data?

Home Office updates-Peter Herrig AVRC: The Albany, Syracuse, and White Plains District offices have completed Supported Employment Training. All training for all offices should be complete by August 8th. Cornell Diversity Partners training will be taking place in our district offices as well. Placement contracts are currently in the internal clearance process. Comprehensive Services contract (CSC) started on 1/1/19. The Vocational Rehabilitation Manual is currently in Legal and Public Information Office (PIO) and needs to go through these channels to be approved.

Executive Board Update-Tracy Breslin: E-Scooter legislation update- Was passed and signed by the Governor. E-scooters are silent and go up to 20 mph. It needs to be advocated locally to not be allowed on sidewalks, they block sidewalks.

Agency Updates from Members: Debbie Fiderer gave an update on HKSB. They have a new CEO, Kim Zimmer. She has a background in the vision loss community and employment services. Her start date is in July. Also, the computer center at Baruch is being moved to HKSB. Theresa Drum let the SRC know that the federally funded parent centers in New York will continue. Early childhood centers will be closing and starting with the "F.A.C.E.S" program. Meghan Parker updated the group on ACB and the national convention in Rochester, July 5th-July 13th. Also, there is a New York Association on Independent Living (NYAIL) conference in September.

Action Items, & Deliberation and Discussion, Wrap-up & Agenda planning for September meeting & Adjourn –SRC: Possibly have Louise Werner and/or Carrie Laney to come back for presentations. Motion to adjourn: Cliff Perez, Maria Mucaria seconds. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Summited by,

NYSCB staff