

Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)
State Rehabilitation Council Executive Committee
June 10, 2024
Approved Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Frederick Foard (virtual), Joliefawn Liddell, Madeline Nunnally, and Justin Spurlock.

Members Absent: None.

Others Present: Christopher Martin, SRC Member; Travis Staton, SRC Member; Brandy Schantz, SRC Member; Ryan Mauzy, SRC Member; Marco Callender, SRC Member; Catherine Harrison, DARS; Barbara Burkett, DARS; Meghan Cox, DARS; Elizabeth Patacca, DARS; Lisa Robertson, DARS; Wil Barber, DARS; Liz Leitch, ASL Interpreter; Carrie Humphrey, ASL Interpreter.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 9:36 a.m.

Introduction of Members: Spurlock called the meeting to order. All members and others present introduced themselves.

Approval of remote participation for Frederick Foard: No objections. Foard attending remotely from Pennsylvania due to personal matter.

Approval of meeting agenda: No changes. Agenda approved by unanimous consensus.

Approval of March meeting minutes: No changes. March meeting minutes approved by unanimous consensus.

Matters of Public Comment: There were no public comments received.

Discussion: Cox provided an update on SRC membership, and previewed items of note on the full Council agenda.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:46 a.m.

Meeting Handouts:

1. Proposed Meeting Agenda
2. Draft Executive Committee Meeting Minutes from March 11, 2024

Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)
State Rehabilitation Council Quarterly Meeting
June 10, 2024
Draft Meeting Minutes

Members Present: Marco Callender, Frederick Foard (virtual), Heidi Lawyer, Joliefawn Liddell, Christopher Martin, Ryan Mauzy, Talisha McAuley-Davis, Marianne Moore, Madeline Nunnally, Brandy Schantz, Justin Spurlock, Travis Staton, and Nick Zweerink.

Members Absent: Becky Alwood, Commissioner Kathy Hayfield, and Ken Jessup.

Others Present: Dale Batten, DARS; Catherine Harrison, DARS; Julie Jacobs, DARS; Donna Bonessi, DARS; David Leon, DARS; Alison Shaner, DARS; Lisa Robertson, DARS; Barbara Burkett, DARS; Wil Barber, DARS; Devin Bowers, DARS; Meghan Cox, DARS; Elizabeth Patacca, DARS; Carrie Humphrey, ASL Interpreter; Liz Leitch; ASL Interpreter.

Call to Order: The meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m.

Introduction of Members: Spurlock called the meeting to order. All members and others present introduced themselves.

Approval of remote participation for Frederick Foard: No objections. Foard attending remotely from Pennsylvania due to personal matter.

Approval of meeting agenda: Board staff (Cox) proposed addition of Annual Report Committee consideration to Chairperson's Report. Motion to approve the amended agenda presented by Lawyer, seconded by Foard, and passed by voice vote.

Approval of March meeting minutes: No changes. March meeting minutes approved by unanimous consensus.

Matters of Public Comment: There were no public comments received.

Chairperson's Report: The Chair welcomed new SRC members and provided a report from the Executive Committee meeting.

The Chair asked for Nominating Committee volunteers. Schantz and Staton volunteered to serve.

A brief overview of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) was provided and the Chair asked for CSNA Committee volunteers. Callender, Lawyer, and Schantz volunteered to serve.

After explaining that two of the three current members of the Annual Report Committee have terms expiring before the Committee will have completed its work on the Annual Report, the Chair asked for one additional Annual Report Committee volunteer. Martin volunteered to serve.

DRS Division Report

DRS Deputy Commissioner, Dale Batten, welcomed new and returning SRC members and provided an overview of the agency's Division of Rehabilitative Services.

Julie Jacobs, FRS Director, provided an overview of Field Rehabilitative Services and delivered a related presentation with updates that was provided in advance to Council members and included among the meeting materials. Batten discussed DARS' negotiated WIOA performance measures for PY2024 and PY2025.

David Leon, Director of Workforce Programs, provided an update on Pathways grant activities and delivered a related presentation. The presentation was provided to Council members after the meeting and will be retained among meeting materials.

Donna Bonessi, Director of Employment and Special Programs, reviewed Pre-ETS set aside requirements, and provided an update on the Pre-ETS Corrective Action Plan. She reviewed specific actions including the shift to unbraided/specialty caseload counselors, training on accurate timekeeping, onboarding more providers, focusing on VR flexibilities, counselor retention, and the related partnership with VCU.

Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center Report

Alison Shaner, Director of Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center, provided an overview of the facility and its services, and delivered a related presentation included among the meeting materials. Shaner provided updates on programs, staff development, customer/client feedback, and ongoing collaborations.

Policy Division Update

Catherine Harrison, Director of the Division of Policy and Legislative Affairs, provided updates on the General Assembly's recent budget passage, the status of proposed amendments to VR regulations, and forthcoming proposed VR Manual changes.

Lisa Robertson, DARS Policy Analyst, provided a brief update on the Combined State Plan. DARS received feedback from RSA on May 28 and has submitted responses. Additional updates will be provided to the Council when available.

Elizabeth Patacca, VR Appeals Coordinator, provided an overview and update on DARS Fair Hearing Officers. Patacca presented information on the status of the current contracts. The contracts of Sarah Freeman and Carl Schmidt are eligible for a final renewal and will expire 9/30/2025. The contract of Rhonda Mitchell is eligible for its first renewal and her full contract will expire 9/30/2028. Motion to renew all contracts presented by Liddell, seconded by Lawyer, and passed by voice vote.

Consumer Satisfaction Survey Update

Barbara Burkett provided a brief overview of the Consumer Satisfaction Survey and asked for the Council to staff a committee to review current content and processes as relate to administration of the survey. The Chair asked for Consumer Satisfaction Survey volunteers. Foard, Liddell, and Mauzy volunteered to serve. Wil Barber, a new DARS Analytics staff member, was introduced to the Council and will be a primary point of contact for the survey.

Member Reports

- Madeline Nunnally: Ongoing advocacy work, also reported on professional work at DBVI.
- Joliefawn Liddell: dLCV is seeking public input on its services and Council members will be provided the information for that; dLCV's annual disability rights summit is scheduled to be held on Thursday, October 10, 2024.
- Marco Callender: YMCA wrapped up school year and pivoting to summer programming, continuing to work with local school districts.
- Ryan Mauzy: HCA piloting a young stroke program that he sees the potential for collaboration with DARS regarding.
- Chris Martin: Commended DARS' recent ESO training and emphasized the importance of ongoing cultivation of the relationship between agency and service providers.
- Travis Staton: Was glad to have had DARS staff tour the Workforce and Child Development Hub under construction in Abingdon, VA.
- Frederick Foard: Spoke on having submitted his application for reappointment and time in service to Council.
- Becky Alwood (update provided via email, read by Cox): "Sheltering Arms Institute inpatient rehabilitation is thrilled to have a DARS representative come to the Institute and meet our patients in person for an introduction. Our colleagues report having a great experience with Talisha from DARS. The need for DARS has significantly increased since SAI initiated an internal process for referrals from our 8 outpatient locations throughout the greater Richmond area. We hope we can add on a second DARS person resulting in 2 visits a month. That would greatly impact the quality of connections. We truly value the role DARS plays in each client's journey."
- Heidi Lawyer: PEATC continues to provide ongoing training for parents, students and professionals. PEATC provided training on competitive integrated employment to DARS counselors, to parents of students with disabilities, and to students with disabilities. PEATC's Board voted in two new board members at its June 6 meeting, who represent vocational rehabilitation/employment. One is a DARS employee, and one works with The Choice Group, an Employment Service Organization. PEATC also provided training to students with disabilities on the vocational rehabilitation system under WAZE to adulthood grant from RSA. June session of Transition University for families and professionals serving students in transition opened up last week and will remain open for 5 weeks. Planning for Parent Youth Empowerment Summit (PYE) that will be held on September 9. Just had a Latino Summit this past Saturday which was presented entirely in Spanish. Working on Squared Away virtual summit for military families who have children with disabilities who are stationed in Virginia or moving to Virginia and need information about navigating special education and other related services in Virginia and learning what is unique to Virginia. Currently working with the legislative Commission on Youth to help them hold listening sessions on the special

education dispute resolution system. Pursuant to HB 1089 in most recent General Assembly session, PEATC will receive funding to provide support in each of the 8 VDOE Superintendent's regions to families, work with school family liaisons, and report on trends to the VDOE Special Education Parent Ombudsman-- it will be a major priority over the next few months to get this new program going and staffed.

- Marianne Moore: Continued partnership with DARS and school divisions on Start on Success and Project SEARCH. DARS staff are involved with DOE State Improvement Plan and serve on teams in response to the JLARC study. Attended EPIC and Employment 1st meetings. Disseminated information regarding these programs and training on the DARS Customized Integrated Employment initiatives. Discussed DOE initiative surrounding credit accommodations. VDOE attended the NTACT:C Capacity Building Conference along with DARS and are beginning to develop new plans in the coming year. Continue to work with WWRC as they implement programs that not only address employment but also living in the community of choice. Currently surveying youth who exited secondary education, one year prior to the collection; survey and data allows DOE to review with others and address concerns. Happy to be able to work with Matt Luther, Patty Hodges, and Stephanie Carter; WWRC has also been a great partner and always responsive when a youth, school, or family is in need of assistance.

Matters of Public Comment: There were no public comments received. Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:09 p.m.

The next meeting will take place on August 12, 2024 at the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services Central Office in Henrico.

Meeting Handouts:

1. Proposed Meeting Agenda
2. Draft Meeting Minutes from March 11 Meeting
3. Updated SRC Member List
4. Overview of Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment
5. FRS Updates Presentation
6. Pathways Grant Updates Presentation
7. WWRC Updates Presentation
8. Fair Hearing Officer Presentation