

Draft Minutes
SRC POLICY AND PROCEDURES COMMITTEE
Thursday, May 7, 2020
10:00 AM – 11:30 AM
Teleconference +1 (802) 828-7667, 771893542#

Meeting called by:

Sherrie Brunelle, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

Members Present:

- Helena Kehne (via Skype)
- Kristen Carpentier (via Skype)
- Patricia Wehman (via Skype)
- Sherrie Brunelle (via Skype)

Members Absent:

- Deborah Tucker Boyce

SRC Liaison:

- James Smith (via Skype)

SRC Coordinator:

- Kate Larose (via Skype)

Interpreters:

- Joan Pellerin (via Skype)
- Kristal Haynes (via Skype)

Speakers or Presenters:

- Bill Hudson (via Skype)
- Donna Curtin (via Skype)

Guests:

None

1) Introductions (Sherrie Brunelle)

Discussion:

Those in attendance went around the table and introduced themselves.

Conclusions:

Thanks to everyone!

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

None

2) Approval of Agenda (Sherrie Brunelle)

Discussion:

Sherrie asked for any proposed additions or changes to the agenda. There were none. No further discussion. All approved. Vote unanimous 3-0-0

Conclusions:

Motion passes: today's agenda accepted.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

None

3) Open for Public Comment (Sherrie Brunelle)

Discussion:

No one from the public was present.

Conclusions:

n/a

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

None

4) Approval of Minutes for March 5, 2019 (Sherrie Brunelle)

Discussion:

Sherrie asked for any proposed changes or amendments to the March 5, 2020 minutes. There were none. Helena moved to approve the minutes and it was seconded. No discussion. All approved. Vote unanimous 3-0-0

Conclusions:

March 5, 2020 minutes were approved.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

Upload approved minutes to the SRC website, **Kate Larose**, 5/12/2020

5) Chapter 313: Audiology Services and Hearing Aids (Group)

Discussion:

Bill provided an overview of audiology services. Bill was requested to participate as a result of a discussion held at the October 2019 annual retreat. The minutes from that meeting state as follows:

Chapter 313, Audiology Services and Hearing Aids. The Hearing Aids Chapter will be reviewed again as a result of Maria Burt's recent discussion with an audiologist who wants specifics about eligibility. The State's Hearing Aid Contract will be changing as well so all these pieces should be brought together

Kristen shared an August 2016 email with the group from Maria Burt pertaining to this topic.

Bill lost internet connection and was unable to continue participating in the meeting. It was decided to invite him to our next meeting.

Conclusions:

See above

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Invite Bill and Donna to the September meeting, **Kate Larose**, 5/12/2020

6) Report Out: PSE Working Group (Group)

Discussion:

James reported the following:

The working group, consisting of James, Liz Harrington, Betsy Choquette, Jeanne Boucher, and Tara Howe, has met once and James wanted to share the current thinking in order to get reactions to their work thus far. They had two overarching goals in mind when revising:

- Putting a greater emphasis on credential training (*e.g.*, CDL, LNA, apprentice programs) than was in the older version. By way of comparison, the last version only included a few paragraphs on training vs. 10 pages of PSE which seemed out of balance with what consumers want.
- Wanted clarity on when VR will support PSE, especially for transition aged youth. Some schools and some parents have viewed VR as just another form of financial aid and may not have been truly engaging with VR supports. We wanted much clearer criteria for when and how we will support PSE as part of an IPE.

Helena asked how students and parents are made aware of the services that VR offers. Sherrie shared that in her experience she has found that community partners do not fully understand the work of VR and she has seen community partners explain VR as a place to go get money for things. She shared that, in clarifying this chapter in tandem with additional outreach to community partners, she thinks it will help to better educate people about to scope of VR services and supports. Sherrie suggested that an FAQ or other handouts might be useful. She said the outline is helpful and this will be a valuable resource to advocates and counselors.

James said that the organization used to follow the form of definitions, general policy, then specific policy. They decided to reorder this to emphasize industry recognized credentials and training first. They wanted to make it clear that it was not about operational detail, but about intent. Counselors are now being asked to consider for every consumer if there is career potential and how can they might help consumers move to the next level and which type of assessments might help

consumers think beyond jobs they've had in the past. Consumer choice is still the priority and deciding factor but they want to open up career options and choices for people. Staff on the team pointed out that, for some people, getting an industry recognized credential is relatively inexpensive, and certainly less expensive than a post-secondary degree. It also includes on the job training (OJT) agreements, where an employer is willing to train a consumer, and VR agrees to subsidize the training cost. Apprenticeships are an option that VR has not used much in the past but they will now be focusing on creating 200 apprenticeships for VR consumers over the next four years. In apprenticeships, people are paid a wage during training and as they hit training milestones the pay goes up. Approximately 94% of those in apprenticeships are working in that field a year later and \$70k a year is the average wage nationally. The consumer needs to be engaged in their plan for us to support PSE and we need folks to show that they are engaged in counseling, assistive technology, progressive employment, etc. We started thinking about a means test to support this, but do not think there is any stomach for this so we likely won't go there. This is very much a working draft so not everything will make it to the final version.

Sherrie asked about OJT and apprenticeships and if there are WIOA or DOL definitions for these types of training. James said that there are, and apprenticeships are very well regulated which requires identification of an employer sponsored program, the entity that will perform the training, and it also needs to be approved by a state apprenticeship approval board through DOL. Sherrie asked about joint funding possibilities. James said that this currently happens with blended funding through VR, DOL, and other sources.

James said that they also want to flesh out progressive education and training as so many consumers have negative experiences with school or classroom settings or held negative self-perceptions where they feel like it is not a possibility for themselves. For example if there is a training program they want to encourage someone to think about, they might start by encouraging them to take a first step by visiting the campus or interviewing a student in the program as gradual ways to start thinking about these opportunities. They have heard from many VR counselors that this has been helpful for consumers-especially youth- who might have initially thought they would work at a grocery store but then, through this process, were able to identify and obtain longer term goals like working in the healthcare field.

Sherrie asked about the charter group headed by Bill Sugarman referenced in the document. James said the focus is on operationalizing progressive education and naming the structures we need to put in place to make it easy, as well as the steps counselors can offer. Kristen shared examples of recent work they have been doing on wages and cutting career pathways to higher wages in fields in which consumers are already working.

Section four is operational guidance and it will be fleshed out more fully. It focuses on local training opportunities and assessment and includes the default assumption that appropriate training will be identified in house or done by community partners. We do not want to exclude our supportive employment consumers from these options, and we have partnerships with VSAC, VDOL, and others to blend funding streams. We are also finalizing spending guidelines, especially when it comes to ancillary supports. For example, under what circumstances do we provide maintenance funding to cover childcare or rent costs. So it will include two sets of spending guidelines, one to cover the training itself, and one for ancillary supports. Sherrie said that the clearly defining ancillary supports will be helpful.

The next section focuses on OJT agreements and when it is appropriate as we do not want to subsidize employers for hiring someone they would have hired anyways. Recording measurable skills gains will also be important for this and other sections. There are some unusual situations where we might support consumers in out of state programs and we want to outline how we can have them engage in VR if they are out of state. We are also looking at additional guidance regarding if VR should support online programs. We are also wondering when, if ever, we include post-graduate level programs. Sherrie asked if we are in correspondence with other states. James said that we are in continual conversation with other New England states and they are almost all more generous in paying tuition than VT. (For example, CT will pay the state community college rate.) The blind programs tend to be more generous and most pay through graduate education. Sherrie shared that from the CAP perspective she hears that other states are doing this more frequently than VT, but she also wonders how many additional supports they might have in those states such as a VSAC. James shared that half of Vermont students that go into PSE programs don't complete and they often are left with debt and wonders if PSE is over emphasized in our society. Helena shared that she often sees this happen and wonders if this policy guidance could help identify consumers who are passionate about PSE but do not have access to all the services they would need.

Conclusions:

A final draft will be complete by July 1st.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Include PSE update on next agenda, **Kate Larose**.
- Invite Sherrie to the next PSE working group meeting, **James Smith**.

7) Other Business (Chair)

A. Agenda Setting – September 3, 2020

Discussion:

Agenda items for the next meeting to include:

- Bill Hudson and audiology
- PSE working group update and final draft
- Self-employment working group update
- Rehab technology- Bill and Assistive Technology project
- Transportation
- Maintenance
- Review spending guidelines survey data

Conclusions:

- Kate will touch base with Sherrie and James to prioritize the above list for the next meeting in September.
- James will loop back to self-employment this summer and reach out to Sherrie.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Invite Sherrie to the next self-employment meeting, **James Smith**, 7/15/2020
- Present proposed agenda, **Kate Larose**, 8/24/2020

8) Adjournment (Sherrie Brunelle)

Sherrie called the meeting adjourned at 11:28 a.m.

Action Items, Person Responsible, Deadline:

- Draft minutes uploaded to SRC website, **Kate Larose**, 5/12/2020
- Draft minutes emailed to Committee members, **Kate Larose**, 5/12/2020
- Minutes approved, **Committee**, 9/3/2020
- Approved minutes uploaded to website, **Kate Larose**, 9/8/2020