

Autism Commission
Employment and 14-22 year old Sub-Committee Meeting
March 1, 2017, 11:00p.m. –1:00 p.m.
500 Harrison Avenue

Present: Carolyn Kain, Dianne Lescinkas, Amy Weinstock, Julia Landau, Michael Plansky, Maura Sullivan, Ilyse Levine, Madeline Wenzel, Kathleen Kelly, Sowmya Sundarajan, Roberta Lewonis, Carly Sebastian, Lea Hill, Diane Bohannon, Brittney Collins, Margaret Van Gelder, Michael Weiner, Jennifer Stewart, Mike Mayes, Todd Garvin.

Remote access: Elana Aubrey, David Tack and Madeline Wenzel,

Carolyn Kain stated that the meeting was subject to the Open Meeting Law and that the Sub-Committee members present would need to vote to approve the remote participation of some members because of their geographic location, whenever any members were utilizing video and/or tele-conferencing. Remote access was approved unanimously.

Carolyn Kain introduced Mike Mayes as the newest member of this sub-committee.

Presentation by Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission (MRC)

Presenters: Jennifer Stewart, Kathleen Kelly and Sowmaya Sundarajan.

Jennifer Stewart led the presentation that reviewed the work of MRC for individuals with ASD and other disabilities. This sub-committee had requested this presentation to gain a better understanding of the work done by MRC in relation to employment support . The PowerPoint presentation highlighted the following (also see attached):

- An individual does not need an IEP to qualify for services under MRC
- Many clients are jointly served by DDS
- You do not need a 688 referral to connect to MRC
- Serves as early as age 16
- DDS and MRC are working in collaboration with an interagency agreement for long term support for individuals
- Focus on the Pre-ETS service prior to accessing adult services
- WIOA and 15% that is available for high schools
- Pre-ET vendors – MRC will refer students to receive the services through the vendor
- MRC representatives will work 7.5 hours in each high school in the district

Other topics discussed around MRC and their services:

- MRC and the Federation have a new contract to support families develop a future plan
- MRC vendors include: CVS, Triangle, JVS etc.

- Getting connected with MRC – it's a referral process and starts with pre-ETS
- Statewide Benefit Counselors to help individuals/families understand benefits like SSI
- Currently, there is a focus group working on marketing materials to better outreach to families around MRC services

Professional Development – MRC

- There will be 2 trainings for MRC staff on working with families and presented by the Federation
- MRC counselor training on Autism
- MRC is developing their own training and building more of a network within MRC

Questions by this sub-committee around MRC and their services

Pre-ETs services tailored to meet the unique needs of ASD individuals – Jennifer Stewart will think about this and look at the data around ASD and MRC.

- Individuals may require extended support
- Can particular services be added to the vendors
- The need for some individuals to be connected longer to MRC
- Do vendors require additional training around ASD as well as the employer training

Ms. Wenzel from JVS responded that their organization requires 1.) training provided to the employee (internship included with training), 2.) work with the employer around placement and 3.) provide on-going job support– providing all 3 is imperative and they find their ASD population has been successful with this model.

Could we think about:

- Technical Assistance to pre-ET vendors
- Sharing models that work with other pre-ET vendors
- Rethink the 90 day model of closure and the definition of success around employment

It was mentioned that 80% of the vendors are also DDS vendors and there may be a way to work on a strategy with the vendors. There is a MOA between DDS and MRC and DDS is aware of the need for ongoing support with job coaching – it is happening as part of the Individual Supportive Employment Model and DDS.

Ms. Stewart also discussed the RFR that goes out to vendors – MRC received an additional \$1million for vendors bringing the total to \$2million. Ms. Stewart will send the RFR link to Ms. Kain and she will send it to the sub-committee.

Ms. Stewart shared data around ASD and MRC:

- 85 individuals with ASD closed out their case after 90 days this year
- 4000 active cases (total) for ages 16-22

- 1000 are ASD (of the 4000 cases)
- Since December, the numbers of new cases have risen by 250

The next meetings for this sub-committee were scheduled for April 5th and May 3rd from 11:00-1:00pm at 500 Harrison Ave.

The meeting adjourned at 1:05pm.