Arkansas State Rehabilitation Council
Quarterly Meeting Minutes
March 21, 2019

Attendees:
Council Members: Christopher Paslay, Chair; David Maples, Co-Chair; Craig Reinhardt; Lisa S. Johnson (for) Matt Sewell; Keith Vire, PhD; Dani Fields (for) Tom Masseau; Robert Fagan; Addie Edwards; Wesley Eddington; Alan McClain, ARS Commissioner.

ARS Staff: ARS Deputy Commissioner, Joe Baxter; Dr. Charisse Childers, Director, DCE/ARS; Carl Daughtery; Chip McAfee; Robert Trevino; Otis Dixon; Rodney Chandler; Lynn Franquemont; Charles Lyford; Jonathan Bibb; James McCune; Nathan Winter; Judy Smith; Jim Moreland; Lisa Kelley; Gay Washington; Christy Lamas; Rick Anderson; Freddie Harshaw; Bernice Gunter.

Guest(s): Nathan McClain, Debbie Eddington, Thomas Nichols, Lyric Washington, Shai Washington.

Call to Order:
State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) Chair, Christopher Paslay, declared a quorum and called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Mr. Paslay welcomed all present.

Approval of Minutes:
At the request of Mr. Paslay, council members reviewed the minutes of the most recent meeting. A motion to approve the minutes as presented was made and seconded. The motion passed.

Comments from Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (ARS) Commissioner – Alan McClain:
Commissioner McClain welcomed council members and thanked them for their continued commitment to assist ARS in addressing the needs of those the agency serves. As part of his comments he provided SRC members with a legislative update. He reported that HB1763, a bill to Create the Transformation and Efficiencies Act of 2019 would reduce the number of agency heads that report directly to the Governor from over 40 to 15. He communicated an expectation that the bill would pass and become law and expressed the opinion that its enactment would not interfere with ARS’s day-to-day operations. He also reported that ARS’s appropriation bill (HB1149 and now Act 121) had been passed by both houses and signed by Governor Hutchinson. Commissioner McClain reported that on the national level this year is the 100th year of the public vocational rehabilitation program. He indicated that the Council of State Administrators for Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) would be supporting various activities in celebration of this milestone. The Commissioner concluded his comments by informing the Council that the comprehensive statewide needs assessment should be completed by the end of the month.

Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities – Eric Munson, Executive Director: Mr. Munson distributed a handout and also presented a video for the Council’s review. Mr. Munson informed SRC members that the Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities Arkansas is under the Department of Finance and Administration. Mr. Munson informed SRC members of his Council’s goals to include: 1) People with developmental disabilities and their families will be active in advocacy activities that improve their lives, and the lives of others and the service system; 2) People with developmental disabilities and their families will have increased access to community supports and services, and 3) The Council will
collaborate with state agencies and community programs to improve competitive, integrated employment of Arkansans with developmental disabilities. He indicated that his Council envisions a world where everyone has an equal and real opportunity to lead a meaningful and productive life, promoting inclusion, integration, and independence for Arkansans with intellectual and developmental disabilities in all facets of community life. Mr. Munson informed the Council of projects his program is engaged including; the Independence Project (Access Group, Inc.), the Provider Transformation Project (DHS-DDS, ARS, and 16 provider organizations), and the State Agency as a Model Employer program (Multi-Agency Collaboration). Mr. Munson indicated that provider participation in his Council’s trainings and employment initiatives had resulted in over 150 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities reported as achieving employment in their communities. Mr. Munson informed SRC members that his Council signed on as the state sponsor for the FY2019 Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program Core State Team which works to increase community-based, integrated employment opportunities for individuals with significant disabilities. After much discussion Mr. Munson thanked everyone for their support.

Mock Interview, Success Story – Chip McAfee, Director of Communications: Mr. McAfee interviewed Nathan McClain (former Project Search participant) to give the Council an opportunity to hear a success story live and in-person. Mr. McAfee stated that reading a story or watching a video was good but when the person whose life has been changed as a result of receiving ARS services is right in front of you telling his story creates an entirely different perspective. Mr. McClain told SRC members about his journey through Project Search and everything he gained from the experience. Following the interview he answered questions from the Council members.

Robert Trevino – Statewide Comprehensive Needs Assessment Update: Mr. Trevino provided the Council an update as to progress for completion of the statewide needs assessment. He indicated that the initial draft of the document had been completed and within the coming weeks the final draft would be released for review. Mr. Trevino introduced Lisa Kelley who works in ARS’s Program Planning, Development and Evaluation (PPD&E) section. She reported her work responsibilities include assisting in the development and submission of the agency’s State Plan as well as federal reporting. She stated that her focus was to make sure correct information is put in the Rehabilitation Service Administration (RSA) reporting system. Ms. Kelley also indicated that her work responsibilities have recently included assisting with the agency’s Strategic Plan with her working with the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner on this activity. She indicated her being responsible to upload information into the document and making it available for anyone who wanted to view it and making necessary updates as changes are made. Mr. Trevino concluded his presentation by reporting that the agency was in the process of upgrading its case management system.

Strategic Plan Update-Lisa Kelley/Deputy Commissioner Joe Baxter: A copy of the Strategic Plan was distributed to the Council for review. As part of her comments Ms. Kelley informed the Council that the first six objectives were tied to WIOA Performance Measures as set by RSA. She reported the plan included activities the agency would undertake to insure the standards set for the agency are met. She related that the 7th and 8th objectives dealt with things we are actually measured on including how we utilize community rehabilitation programs to do supported employment. She indicated the final objective dealt with improving our internal communications. Mr. Baxter stated the Strategic Plan was a vital tool in how business is conducted for our agency. He related that senior managers had helped put together the strategies required to get the outcomes we need. Mr. Baxter also indicated that the Strategic Plan would be updated as necessary. The presentation was concluded with much discussion.

Agency Updates:
Business Engagement – Rodney Chandler: Mr. Chandler informed SRC members that WIOA makes it clear that ARS is required to increase the level of service provided to our business customers including assisting them in finding and maintaining a skilled workforce. He related that one of the things done is to continue to engage employers to help maintain relationships. He informed the Council of a recent activity
in Maumelle that Business Engagement was involved. The event was an Employer Panel Forum with the Chamber of Commerce, Department of Workforce Services, Central Arkansas Planning District, and the Office of Skills and Development being partners in the event. He reported 35 employers were in attendance. Mr. Chandler concluded his presentation by providing the Council an update on Arkansas Disability IN.

Field Services – Carl Daughtery: Mr. Daughtery opened his update by sharing a success story regarding former ARS client, Andrea Slay. Mr. Slay was in a motorcycle accident and following recovery he applied for services and went through evaluation and assessment. Mr. Daughtery indicated that ARS was able to assist Mr. Slay by helping him receive counseling and mental health guidance. He was also referred to the Access and Accommodation program. Mr. Slay had a goal of becoming a pilot. He was able to enroll in the pilot training and did an awesome job. Mr. Daughtery reported Mr. Slay is currently working as a pilot with the Arkansas Forestry Commission where he flies around the State looking out for wildfires or other types of hazards. He is also in a Pilot intern training program. Next, Mr. Daughtery distributed a folder labeled “Flying High” informing the Council of recent goings on in the Field Program. Information provided also included dates/locations of upcoming events with SRC members encouraged to attend. Mr. Daughtery reported that the Field Services program has a goal of 2500 successful closures this year and that to date 854 client have been closed as successfully employed. He reported Field Services is currently serving 14,830 clients with the average Counselor caseload being 164 clients.

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) – Christy Lamas: Ms. Lamas updated the Council on the Pre-ETS Programs. She indicated that Department of Youth Services (DYS) PREP Projects: Restoring Hope is serving 101 students with disabilities within DYS Facilities (Alexander Youth Services – 85 students, Dermott 18-21 years of age – 8 students, and Dermott 14-17 facility that is transitioning to Harrisburg – 8 students). She informed the Council that the Alexander Unit program started in August 2017 and to date serves 85 students. Students have logged 1,163 work readiness hours and 793 WBL hours. There have been 8 graduations, 15 participants have transferred to regular ARS services and 5 with individuals obtaining permanent jobs. Ms. Lamas indicated that the Arkansas Work Initiative Network (AWIN) currently serves 122 students in 76 High Schools across the state. A total of 168 hours are documented with 916 total issues resolved. High School/CRP vendor collaborations are currently serving 112 high schools across the State. A total of 1,050 students are served during the school day. She indicated that 20 vendors are operating in every ARS district. Ms. Lamas informed the Council that performance evaluations for the various programs will begin this summer. Ms. Lamas reported on the Opportunities for Work-based Learning (OWL) programs. She indicated there are 33 contracts being renewed for 2019-2020 cycle with 375 students receiving work experience throughout the state. She reported on an ARS collaboration that is underway with the Career and Technical Education Division working with Jobs for Arkansas Graduates (JAG) students assisting them in the move into adult services to include education and training. Ms. Lamas also provided information on the Inclusion Film Camp that will be held April 29-May 3, 2019 on the campus of Northwest Arkansas Community College with 50 students from around the State participating and the 2019 Youth Leadership Forum that will be held June 23rd – 28th on the campus of Hendrix College with 50 registrants.

ACTI Update – Jonathan Bibb: Mr. Bibb provided council members an update regarding some of the happenings at ACTI. He informed the Council that coming up this summer ACTI was exploring ways to expand pre-employment transition services to students beyond the Transition Employment Program (TEP). He indicated that TEP has grown exponentially from its first year when there were 14 graduates. He reported this year 109 applications were received with 105 individuals selected to attend. He related that TEP students would be provided a great opportunity to see the training provided at ACTI. Mr. Bibb also updated the Council on the Registered Pre-Apprenticeship program with him indicating that pre-apprenticeship training started in 2016. He informed the Council that ACTI was working with the U.S. Department of Labor and partnering with the National Apprenticeship Training Foundation. Following much discussion Mr. Bibb concluded his update.
**Access and Accommodations – Nathan Winter:** Mr. Winter begin his presentation by thanking Mr. Carl Daughtery and Mr. Rodney Chandler for the 134 referrals this past quarter. He informed the Council that 4 of the referrals dealt with Independence Living, 22 were Stay-at-Work/Return-to-Work, and 106 were AT@Work cases. He related this being a 20% increase this year compared to last year.

**Community Service Program Update – Lynn Franquemont:** Ms. Franquemont informed the Council that two new program managers had been recently hired. Ms. Katherine Smith has been hired as Program Manager for the Arkansas Kidney Disease Commission and Mr. Henry Washington as Program Manager for the Alternative Financing Program (AFP) and the Governor’s Commission on People with Disabilities. Ms. Franquemont indicated that the Arkansas Kidney Disease Commission will have its Chain of Life award ceremony on April 3rd with her encouraging members of the Council to attend. She also reported that the Governor’s Commission on People with Disabilities would be meeting on March 28th with her also indicating Council members are welcome to attend.

**Increasing Capabilities Access Network (ICAN) – Rick Anderson:** Mr. Anderson provided the Council information regarding ICAN’s new assistive technology (AT) Mobile Unit. He indicated the purpose of the Unit was to reach Arkansans living in historically underserved geographic regions, to provide a temporary AT program in alternate locations, and hopefully foster new partnerships in underserved areas. He reported that as a result of the Mobile Unit him having a hope of developing more and better permanent partnerships resulting in the provision of better support for assistive technology. He related that the Mobile Unit’s inaugural trip was to attend the Transition Fair in Blytheville. He concluded his presentation by informing Council members that ICAN’s Mobile Unit was on site and available for viewing.

**Announcements**

Chair Christopher Paslay informed the Council that the next scheduled SRC meeting would be June 20, 2019.

**Adjournment**

With no additional business to conduct, the meeting was adjourned.