Arkansas State Rehabilitation Council
Quarterly Meeting Minutes
September 19, 2019

Attendees:
Council Members: Christopher Paslay, Chair; David Maples, Co-Chair; Craig Reinhardt; Kesha Pilot; Keith Vire, PhD; Tom Masseau; Addie Edwards; Wesley Eddington; Kelley Sharp; Kimberly Clayborn; Jonathan Taylor; Matt Sewell; Alan McClain, ARS Commissioner.

ARS Staff Carl Daughtery; Chip McAfee; Robert Trevino; Otis Dixon; Rodney Chandler; Charles Lyford; Jonathan Bibb; James McCune; Judy Smith; Jim Moreland; Robert Trevino; Lisa Kelley; Deandriea Bass-Carrigan; Gaye Jones-Washington; Carrie Woodall; Yvonne Roland; Christy Lamas; Andrea Gillian; Kimberley Baker; Freddie Harshaw; Bernice Gunter.

Guest(s): Eric Treat, Bonnie Boaz, Andre Slay

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. New SRC members were given the opportunity to introduce themselves.

Approval of Minutes:
At the request of Mr. Paslay, SRC 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 partner with ARS to address the needs of those the agency serves. As part of his comments he reported that ARS Central Office would be moving to the Riverdale area in Little Rock with an anticipated move date of October 31st. He indicated the next scheduled meeting of the SRC would most likely be at ARS’s new location. Commissioner McClain reported that as a result of state government transformation several other agencies would be moving into the building where ARS would be housed. He informed Council members that ARS is now a part of the Division of Workforce Services within the Department of Commerce.

Current State Plan Update – Charles Lyford:
Mr. Lyford informed Council members that as a result of state agency transformation and the decision to no longer provide residential services at the Arkansas Career Training Institute (ACTI), ARS was required to revise its existing state plan. He informed the Council that a copy of the state plan with required changes had been sent to members prior to the meeting. He provided an overview of changes answering any questions related to the requirement for change. Following additional discussion, a motion to accept the changes was made and seconded. The motion passed.

Update Regarding ACTI Conversion: Jonathan Bibb & Alan McClain: Commissioner McClain provided Council members an overview of what led to the decision to convert ACTI to a nonresidential facility. Mr. Bibb continued the conversation by providing Council members information regarding what was occurring at ACTI at present. He stated that as a result of conversion of ACTI to its new model, a
decision was made to have instructors occupy the majority of staff. He indicated that even with ACTI’s instructor’s advanced skill sets, certain types of training and services provided were either eliminated or reduced. Mr. Bibb reported that the Cosmetology and the Pharmacy Tech programs were eliminated as remaining staff could not meet all licensing requirements. He indicated that instructors were exploring ways to shorten the length of training for other training programs. Mr. Bibb informed Council members of the great success ACTI was experiencing with Pre-Employment Transition Services. Mr. Bibb stated that ACTI was partnering with school work programs at various high schools in the Hot Springs area with these students currently making up the majority of individuals being trained on campus. He indicated that these students spend one-half day at ACTI receiving career and technical training and return to their local high school for academics. Mr. Bibb also provided the Council and update on the Pre-Apprenticeship training program. There was much discussion.

2020 State Plan- Alan McClain: Commissioner McClain informed the Council that the Rehabilitation Act, as Amended requires the SRC and the state vocational rehabilitation agency to jointly develop goals and priorities for the state plan. He indicated that a copy of proposed goals and priorities were provided to the Council in advance of the meeting. He related that the proposed goals and priorities were developed based on a review of the most recent comprehensive statewide needs assessment and an internal review of agency policies and practices. Commissioner McClain communicated that the purpose of Arkansas Rehabilitation Services is to assist Arkansans with disabilities in achieving competitive integrated employment. He related that he felt it important that the SRC and the agency jointly review the proposed goals and priorities. Following discussion, a motion was made and seconded to accept the goals and priorities as presented. The motion passed.

Agency Updates:

Access & Accommodations- Yvonne Rowland: Ms. Rowland provided the Council an update on Access and Accommodations’ Assistive Technology at Work (AT@Work) and Stay-at-Work/Return-to-Work (SAW/RTW) programs. She provided an overview of each program’s purpose, types of services provided, and number of clients served.

Field Services – Carl Daughtery & Christy Lamas: Mr. Daughtery introduced Mr. Andre Slay, a former ARS client. Mr. Slay shared his journey and accomplishments as a client with him now being a pilot with United Airlines. Mr. Daughtery informed the Council of recent changes in Field Services that include going from 10 Districts to 9 Regions. He introduced new Regional Managers Andrea Gilliam in Region V and Kimberley Baker in Region VI. Mr. Daughtery informed the Council that Field Services was currently serving 14,969 clients and provided a breakdown on client case status. He reported there being 93 Field Services Counselors across the state with an average caseload of about 160. Ms. Lamas updated Council members regarding Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS). She provided information regarding the Professional Advisor Learning (PAL) series that will be starting in January 2020. Ms. Lamas indicated that one of their goals for Pre-ETS was for students to transition into regular VR clients who are provided those services needed that result in competitive integrated employment. She informed the Council that to date 738 students had gone from Pre-ETS to VR. She communicated the hope that the number would increase as monitoring occurs. She also provided information regarding a red carpet event associated with the Inclusion Film Camp.

Business Engagement- Rodney Chandler: Mr. Chandler updated the Council on the Disability: IN conference he attended also with SRC member, Jon Taylor and Eric Munson, Executive Director of the Arkansas Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities. Mr. Taylor reported on his experiences at the conference.

Announcements
Chip McAfee, Director of Communications, provided the Council information regarding this year’s Disability Employment Awareness Month celebration. He indicated a kickoff celebration would be held October 1, 2019 at the Arkansas State Capitol. A copy of a flyer was distributed to Council members for review. He also informed the Council of different events that would be occurring during the month of October in celebration of Disability Employment Awareness Month.

Chair Christopher Paslay informed the Council that the next scheduled SRC meeting would be December 19, 2019.

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