



**MINUTES**  
**STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL**  
**April 3, 2014**  
**Jackson Center for Independent Living, Jackson, TN**

**SRC Members Present:**

Rozann Downing, Marianne Dale, Robert Leonard, Sharon Bryant, Norris Branick, Mary Little, Jean Saulsberry, Derek Flake, John Harris, Thomas DePauw, Tricia Griggs

**SRC Members Absent:**

Steve Sparks, Michael McGrath, Samantha Moreno, Yolanda Shields

**DSU Present:**

Assistant Commissioner Cherrell Campbell-Street, Deidra Sawyer, Denise Ragland, Connie Phillips, Janie Hadley, Sam Cole (VR Liaison)

**Guests:**

Beth James, Cynthia Cooper, Anita Dunbar, 2 interpreters

**Welcome/Introductions:**

The Rehabilitation Council (SRC) meeting was called to order by the SRC Chair, Rozann Downing. Around the table introductions were made by all in attendance.

**Review and Approval of Minutes:**

The Minutes of the January 9, 2014 meeting were presented to the SRC. Derek Flake made a motion to accept the minutes as presented. Tricia Griggs made the second to the motion. The motion carried.

**Agenda:**

Rozann requested to add discussion about the 4.2(c) to the agenda.

**4.2(c) Discussion:**

Discussion of proposed changes to be made to the 4.2(c) in progress included going over the changes suggested by Tricia Griggs in an email sent to Rozann. The council agreed with these changes. Tricia also mentioned that changes need to be made for financial eligibility levels. Cherrell said that was not easy because of Tennessee rules concerning financial eligibility and that it could take as much as 8 to 10 months to change the rule.

### **Client Satisfaction Survey:**

Kevin Walker was invited to attend and report on the Client Satisfaction Survey. In his absence, Mary Little, chair of the CSNAC, gave a brief report. She said there were organizational things commented on that were confusing and cleared up based on SRC suggestions. They also added CAP at each level in there. She said the second draft looked totally different from the first one. Cherrell reported for Kevin that they are using the Survey Monkey for surveys at different points in service and are using telephone surveys. They are also making sure the staff are trained on telephone survey taking. She also said it has not been finalized yet and some changes can still be made.

### **Public Comments:**

Tom commented as a member of the public that he had recently had trouble after applying for Social Security for his daughter. They required her to be tested although she had been tested numerous times and the reports had been faxed to them. They kept getting notifications that she needed more testing. His concern is for parents of children with disabilities who are trying to navigate the system. He says being persistent pays off but a lot of parents take no for an answer and that's the end of it.

Rozann announced that the Disability MegaConference is coming up in May and wanted everyone to be aware of that. She also noted that Michael and John are going to Bethesda, Maryland to attend the NCSRC conference in a few days.

Derek followed through with a suggestion from the last SRC meeting to invite people to put their public comments in email form to be read at the meetings if they could not attend in person. He read several emails pertaining to VR and they are attached to these minutes.

### **Client Assistance Program (CAP) Report:**

Tricia is the CAP representative on the SRC. She explained what the Client Assistance Program is about. The CAP program is a federally mandated program through the Disability Law and Advocacy Center (DLAC), a legal based advocacy organization that assists people with disabilities. She emphasized that the Client Assistance Program is in place to assist with any issues with any programs funded by the Rehab Act, including VR and CILs.

### **TSW Report:**

The Transition School to Work contracts update was given by Janie Hadley.

- They have identified some of the same problems that have been discussed (such as transportation)
- They plan to start at a younger age as a resource for them
- Asset Development for youth such as learning how to get out of debt and/or stay out of debt, etc.
- VR is trying to get the word out to schools and parents about VR services
- There are 3 analysts across the state, one in each region to explain how going to work affects their Social Security benefits
- The TSW contract with school must be VR related and is in addition to what the school can provide
- Each school has access to a VR counselor for transition services

### **DRS Report:**

Assistant Commissioner Cherrell Campbell-Street discussed the Transition to Work contracts. She stated that all 95 counties have access to VR services. The TSW contracts would provide school systems with new and innovative services above what is ordinarily offered. She discussed the "menu of service" format of the contracts and that the program has interviewed a candidate for the position of Statewide Transition Director. She also stated the program is looking forward to serving students with disabilities at an earlier age.

The Assistant Commissioner also discussed the importance of the SRC reviewing the Workforce Investment Act Reauthorization Bill. She stated there are many items that are very relevant to the VR program. She stated it is very important that the SRC familiarize itself with it on a comprehensive level. She commended participation with the development of the State Plan.

**DRS/SRC Financial Report:**

A financial report was on the agenda and again no financial report was given. Deidra Sawyers gave a brief report for VR Director Yvoncha Lewis-Brown.

**Membership Report:**

The membership report was given by Samuel Cole and is attached to these minutes.

**Resource Plan Discussion:**

Rozann noted that the meeting dates need to be changed before the resource plan will be signed by her. Cherrell stated that she has already signed it.

**New Business and Wrap Up:**

The next meeting date and location was discussed. It was decided that we will have our annual training in Murfreesboro on July 30, 2014 with regular quarterly meeting on July 31. Motion to accept these dates was made by Jean Saulsberry and the second was made by John Harris. The motion passed.

Motion to adjourn was made by Jean Saulsberry and the second was made by Bob Leonard. The meeting was adjourned.

These minutes respectfully submitted by Marianne Dale, SRC Secretary.

  
Marianne Dale

## Derek Flake

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**From:** Cozy Sykes <csykes@heavymachinesinc.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 1, 2014 2:32 PM  
**To:** derek.flake@tnstep.org  
**Subject:** VR Services Public Comments

**Categories:** Important

My son Andrew receives assistance from Tennessee Vo-Tech. I would like to express my gratitude for all their help. Because of their assistant, he is able to attend college. I have only praise for the organization.

Thanks,

Mr. Cozy Sykes

Cozy Sykes  
IT Manager  
Office: 901-260-2268  
Fax: 901-260-2276



## Derek Flake

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**From:** E H MATTHEWS <rinematt@bellsouth.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 31, 2014 8:08 PM  
**To:** derek.flake@tnstep.org  
**Subject:** VR Services Public Comments

**Categories:** Important

I use to receive a check once a year for my son (Joshua) for being on the waiting list and it stopped about three years ago.

Ms Dee Matthews

## Derek Flake

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**From:** Martine Hobson <mhobson584@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 1, 2014 8:55 AM  
**To:** derek.flake@tnstep.org  
**Subject:** VR Services Public Comments

**Categories:** Important

They are too slow. We open our case and then wait months before we hear anything. It doesn't function very well unless you call them constantly.

Martine Hobson  
Executive Director  
Down Syndrome Association of Memphis & the Mid-South

901.262.0473 cell  
901.853.1118 office  
901.737.2881 home  
901.297.4140 fax

## Derek Flake

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**From:** LAVERNE HINES <mrslaverne@msn.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 1, 2014 6:29 PM  
**To:** derek.flake@tnstep.org  
**Subject:** FW: VR

**Categories:** Important

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**From:** [mrslaverne@msn.com](mailto:mrslaverne@msn.com)  
**To:** [dereke.flake@tnstep.org](mailto:dereke.flake@tnstep.org)  
**Subject:** VR  
**Date:** Wed, 2 Apr 2014 00:26:40 +0100

Mr. Flake,

I am not sure that my comments will be of any help, my daughter is 32 years old. That being said, my first contact with VR was when my daughter graduated from high school. Prior to that I had had no contact with any state agency, all services received by my daughter were paid for by me. That was 12 years ago; I still find myself in the same position I was in when I first started the process.

We have had 5 counselors, and I have had face to face contact with 2. Whenever I raise questions or ask for information, they send us to another counselor, and we have to wait until she can schedule a meeting. Phone calls are never returned. I have more success with e-mails, but not a lot.

It took 2 years before we received any help from VR. I contacted the office of Congressman Cohen and after that contact they enrolled my daughter in TRC. She stayed almost a year and a half, and got some training in janitorial services. After she left TRC, we were on our own. I found her a job, that she kept for 4 years.

She developed additional medical problems; had to stop her employment, a year after she stop working I applied to VR for help in finding her a new job or some additional job training. Around 10 months later, we were approved to receive help from VR. That was 4 almost 5 years ago. No phone calls were returned, no meeting were scheduled, no information was shared. Each effort I made to get someone to help her was met with veiled threats that my daughter would be dropped by VR; or the counselor would make the statement that if I was not happy I was free to go elsewhere. I would, if I knew where to go. Asking for information, and information only is almost as bad as making a complaint.

I found a GED/Job-training program for my daughter at the ARC. She has been attending for over 2 years ago. I have met with a VR counselor maybe 3 times since she has been at the ARC. In October of last year, a parent informed me that VR gives MATA bus passes to clients that do job training or GED training.

I was paying \$7 per day for her to ride MATA PLUS 4 days a week, when I asked her counselor, she said yes but it was my responsibility to say I needed a pass.

How do I ask for something that I do not know is even possible??? She has received the card since November of 2013. I send the counselor an e-mail 2 weeks before the card expires, and if we are lucky we get the paperwork to take to the MATA station 7 to 10 days after the card expires. I sent an e-mail on 3/10/2014, follow up e-mail 3/18/2014, and today 4/1/2014, still no paperwork to renew bus pass, and sent another e-mail this afternoon.

There are many problems with VR, I have a lot more stories, all negative.

I think the workers need more job training, a seamless transition from high school to job training is what most parents want. Access to information, the ability to express our concerns without being afraid of your child being dropped from the program. We have to make life decision's for our children and we need information for the long term. I don't know if that is something VR can offer, but they are the first link in the chain, they should be able to direct us to the proper place.

All I want is information, and I have not been able to find anyone to help me and I have been asking for 12 years. I hope that the parents of children coming out of the school system now do not have to share my experience. I also hope that what your organization is doing will help me help my daughter.

Peace

LaVerne Hines

Brandye McEntee (daughter)

## Derek Flake

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**From:** Joe Butler <jdbjeb45@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 1, 2014 6:32 PM  
**To:** derek.flake@tnstep.org  
**Subject:** Opinion about voc. rehab.

**Categories:** Important

This is our opinion about Vocational Rehab

Based on our experience with our daughter and how they have handled things I don't have very much confidence in the voc. rehab. office that would serve my son who was with STEPs organization for a number of years, who did great job for him and I don't think that he would be where he is now if it wasn't for the STEP people.

Right now one of the teacher's at the high school that he is attending is trying, in our opinion, to get him out of school earlier than the law says that he can stay till. We are not sure why. If it is just that they don't want to deal with him any more or what? We have not been told a reason why. We just feel this way after hearing him come out of school, almost each and every day, and saying that so and so said that voc. rehab. is a great organization, it will help you, and why don't you get your mother to contact them and set up a case with them. We believe that it may be due to the fact that he was diagnosed as being mildly mentally retarded. That is one reason why he doesn't understand why they keep telling him about it and why we are so displeased with them. As stated earlier in the e-mail we don't have much confidence in this, at least the Paris office, organization.

This part here is our daughter's opinion, since she has dealt with vocational rehabilitation, for her schooling at University of Tennessee at Martin.

My name is Diedrie Butler. I really disliked what has happened over the past five years with the office out of Paris Tennessee. It is not the people that is the problem it is basically the system and how some things have been handled. When I was in my senior year at high school they came to the school and asked what disabilities that I had. I told the person who came everything that I had and they said that some of those things would definitely cover me and that I should be tested for dyslexia. I was sent to testing in Jackson, what he found was sent to my caseworker, and then I waited. Not long before I started my first semester I became worried that the money wouldn't be there to pay since I was told my disabilities would definitely open a case and that they would pay for part of my tuition. I called and was informed by the caseworker that my file had been closed because she was told that I didn't have dyslexia because I could read beyond what he considered was appropriate pretty for someone with dyslexia and for my age. I then asked her if they would cover me with my other disabilities. She asked what they were and told her that I have scoliosis, leg length discrepancy, asthma, and hypoglycemia. She then said that she didn't or forgot that I had those problems and to be able to get help with them and get it on time I had to go to her office and fill out all the paper work that I filled out the first time that I saw her/or other person at the high school. Then the same caseworker lost my paperwork to get help. She then called me back later saying that she had just misplaced them at the front of my folder. She quit without sending me a letter informing me that I would have a new caseworker.

Those are just the problems that I had with that caseworker. I had asked several times for my case to be

transferred to the office in Union City for several reasons. The first is that for most of the week the people who cover Weakley county are from the Paris office and I can not see them face to face except for one day a week at Dresden. They said that I could call them and ask them if we could meet but I felt it would be easier not only on myself but on the caseworker as well if they had transferred my case like I had asked. The caseworkers in the Paris office have to see to the students from three different counties, Carroll, Henry and Weakley county. The only people, that I am aware of, that the Union city office has to cover are the people in Obion county. Union city is the next town over and are very close and someone is there all the time and I wouldn't necessarily have to schedule an appointment with my caseworker. The head of staff at the Union city office said that he understood why I would have liked my case to have been transferred and gave me the name and number of the person that I had to contact to ask. I called and he replied that I couldn't transfer because I lived in Weakley county not Obion. I repeatedly asked for my case to be transferred and was told the same thing each time. After the last time that I tried to get it transferred one of the people at the Union city office said that it shouldn't have mattered where I lived that when a client, which is what I was considered as, asked for their case to be transferred that it should have been transferred because that is what I had asked for. I believe that I have had so many caseworkers, I am on number three now, due to the fact that they cover three counties and the case load is too much for one person to handle by themselves.

CAP Report for FY 2013

Note: The following numbers do not reflect the total number of individuals we assisted with VR related issues. Many people who receive VR services receive SSA benefits and many of them were served under the Professional Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security (PABSS) grant.

Total I/R calls: 75 (We had the same number for calls about the Rehabilitation Act as other information and 1 about the ADA.

CAP staff trained 559 individuals.

Served 61 new clients in 2013 added to hold over of 14 for total of 75.

Carryover to 2014 = 8.

Reasons for closing case:

41% All issues resolved in individuals's favor

5% For some issues resolved

9% We agreed that VR decision was appropriate.

Appeals were unsuccessful = 0.

13% of individuals would not cooperate with us to resolve their issues.

6 switched to pabss funding.

Results obtained for clients:

36% Controlling law/policy explained

21% IPE developed/implemented

4% We expedited eligibility determination.

We helped someone complete their application and one participate in an evaluation.

We had one individual stop pursuing resolution because they became employed.

We assisted 3 people be reassigned to a new counselor.

Age of individuals served:

77% of working age...

22 - 40 = 30

41 – 64 = 28

17%; We had 13 21 and under and only 4 in retirement age. 5%

Gender: Female 40 and Male 35.

Ethnicity:

37% African/American

59% White

No American Indians, Alaskan natives, Hawaiian or Pacific islanders or multiracial

3% Asian

Disability types:

28% Specific learning disabilities

21% Mental illness

13% Neurological disorders

11% Physical orthopedic

We assisted one person who was totally blind; 3 individuals who had a visual disability; 2 people who are deaf; 3 people who are hard of hearing; 1 person who was deaf-blind.

Types of clients:

89% Most of our clients were existing clients of the VR program

11% Assistance rendered to applicants of the VR program.

We did not serve anyone receiving IL services or any other rehab program.

Problem areas:

48% Conflict about services to be provided

21% IPE development/implementation

16% Application process

15% Communication problems with counselor

Types of CAP services provided (primary)

44%; 33 for advisory/interpretational and for negotiation. 2 for information/referral. 0 for all others including appeals informal and formal.

During FY 2013 Disability Law & Advocacy Center of Tennessee (DLAC) staff conducted 14 trainings around topics including the CAP program, VR services, self-advocacy and transition. These trainings were attended by approximately 559 individuals. DLAC CAP staff also engaged in a total of 72 outreaches which were designed to provide information about DLAC's employment-related work, including CAP, to individuals and organizations likely to have contact with potential CAP clients, such as VR personnel in 23 offices, Corporate Connections personnel who provide employment services to Tennessee businesses to assist in their recruiting, hiring and retaining individuals served by VR, job placement vendors, Disability Resource Coordinators with the Tennessee Department of Labor who are funded under the Disability Employment Initiative grant to assist Tennesseans with disabilities in finding jobs and post-secondary student disability coordinators. Additionally, DLAC disseminated at least 8,757 print materials containing CAP information to individuals during FY 2013.

Outreach to unserved and underserved communities:

During FY 2013, DLAC continued its efforts to provide information and resources to minority communities. This year fifteen (15) outreaches were conducted directly to members of ethnic minorities, including refugee populations. These activities were complemented by ongoing collaborations with partner organizations that included Spanish radio interviews and systemic advocacy to address specific language barriers.

DLAC is a part of the Multicultural Alliance on Disability (MAD), which is a group of community agencies serving people with disabilities and/or Refugees and Immigrants. MAD identified several barriers affecting service delivery to people with disabilities from other cultures. (TennCare, MTA paratransit, etc.)

DLAC continues to be an active partner with Camino Seguro (Pathfinder), a bilingual search engine Hispanic families can use to access information about disability resources available to them. Visits to the Camino Seguro online database continue to hold steady at approximately 2,300.

DLAC also participated in Encuentro Latino, a group of service providers that share information to better reach the Latino population in Middle Tennessee. DLAC continued to share information with this group about services it provides, particularly to the extent those services would enhance the partners' service delivery.

In another collaborative effort, DLAC partnered with VKC to develop a multicultural program segment for WLLC-LP Ch. 42 Nashville, "Habriendo Puertas (Opening Doors)." Each segment was comprised of two-15 minute interviews in Spanish focusing on disability related topics (e.g., Autism, Down syndrome, Bullying, SSI, IDEIA, and VR) and services provided by agencies

featured on the show. As part of this, DLAC was able to air a 30-second PSA. In total 18 interviews were conducted. Each interview is formatted to be aired jointly or independently. The interviews are available to each participating agency to use in their individual media/outreach efforts to the Hispanic community.

Outreached to 14 VR offices, 3 job placement vendors and other service providers,

Project Homeless Connect

Operation stand down

A service provider for troubled female youth (ages 13-17).

## **SRC MEMBERSHIP REPORT**

**April 3, 2014**

### **Upcoming vacancies for which nominations will be needed: (within 4 mos.):**

(09/30/12-09/30/15) Disability Advocacy

#### **Nominations pending:**

Nominations pending in Governor's office:

Tracy Smith (09/30/12-09/30/15) Disability Advocacy

Nominations pending in Commissioner's office:

- NONE

Nominations pending on Denise's desk:

- NONE

### **Appointments made since last Council meeting (or within last 4 mos):**

- NONE