

**Board of Vocational Rehabilitation
September 14 – 15, 2017**

Ramkota Hotel, Pierre, South Dakota

Members Present: Eric Weiss, Chuck Quinn, Beth Schiltz, Jolleen Laverdure, Lisa Sanderson, Kristi Eisenbraun, Kendra Gottsleben, Kim Hoberg, Joe Vetch, Colleen Moran, Brad Konechne, Patty Kuglitsch and Bill McEntaffer. **Members absent:** Cole Uecker and Peter Bullene. **Others present:** Mitchell Close, DRS Program Specialist and Shelly Pfaff, BVR Staff. Interpreters: Julie Paluch and Rick Norris.

NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION: The first hour of the meeting was focused on providing new members with some introductory information on the Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitation Services, Role of the State Rehabilitation Council (Board of Vocational Rehabilitation or BVR) and some of the workings of the BVR. Eric Weiss, Division of Rehabilitation Services Director, used a PowerPoint presentation to provide a department overview, summary of division programs and services and role of the BVR. BVR staff provided some basic information related to the BVR new member manual, committees, board/commission portal and reimbursement procedures.

After a fifteen-minute break, the full BVR gathered, and the meeting began.

OPENING ACTIONS: Patty Kuglitsch, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at approximately 2:20 pm and invited everyone to introduce themselves and share a summer highlight. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** Patty asked if there were any changes to the agenda; hearing none; **MOTION MADE (M) TO APPROVE THE AGENDA AS DISSEMINATED, SECONDED (S) AND CARRIED (C).** **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Patty asking for any changes to the June meeting minutes; hearing none a **MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES – MSC.** Next, she brought forward the August Executive Committee minutes. Again, hearing no call for changes; **MOTION TO APPROVE THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AUGUST MEETING MINUTES – MSC.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Lisa Sanderson, SD Parent Connection, shared three items. The first was a handout on “Lunch and Learn Sessions” being sponsored by Parent Connection and the USD Center for Disabilities. The second item was promoting the “8th Annual South Dakota Gathering” on September 19th and 20th at Cedar Shore Resort in Acoma. The final item was a brochure on “Person-Centered Transition Assessment. Staff will scan these items and send them to all BVR members. Patty Kuglitsch shared that the SD School for the Deaf will be hosting a Carnival the

evening of October 26th. It will be an opportunity for deaf children to socialize and have fun with their peers.

PUBLIC COMMENT: There were none.

DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS: Eric began his comments by thanking all for their participation, both in the new member orientation and in this portion of the meeting. **PERSONNEL UPDATES:** He then moved on to recognize Kim Hoiberg for her 10 years of service with the State of South Dakota by reading a letter from DHS Secretary Pearson and presenting Kim with a 10-year pin. Members acknowledged their appreciation of Kim's service by applause. Eric then spoke of the retirement in July of Janet Ball. Janet had been with state government for over 28 years – 17 which were with DRS, working with services and programs for people who are deaf and with training activities for division staff. He announced that Katie Gran was promoted to program specialist, and she is filling the position vacated by Janet's retirement. She has been with the Division since 2008, and she will continue to be working out of Sioux Falls. **BUDGET UPDATES:** Pre-Employment Transition Services – Eric explained that since FY15, VR agencies are required to spend 15% of their funding on pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities. These pre-employment services include job exploration, work based learning experiences, counseling on opportunities for enrollment in transition or post-secondary programs, workplace readiness training and instruction in self-advocacy. The 15% is calculated by state, and a state with 2 vocational rehabilitation agencies, like South Dakota, must look at the entire funding coming to the state. SD met this requirement in FY16. Some types of activities in our state that fall under this requirement are activities of the Transition Services Liaison Project, Project Skills, VR counselor time working with students and the summer initiative focusing on pre-employment transition services. Expenditures – The Division has seen a significant increase in applicants over the past couple of years, and this has results in a big impact on expenditures. Eric explained how the Ticket to Work program, designed to provide beneficiaries with greater choice, has provided the beneficiaries with new options, as well as provided the Division with an avenue for generating revenue to provide VR services. DRS has earned revenue through this avenue that has supplemented their budget and kept them out of some of the financial issues that other states have experienced when an increase in applicants has occurred. Budget Request – Eric spoke of how every year the state develops its budget. The process involves each department developing a budget request internally, and then it moves into the larger state budget process. DRS has historically requested general funds (state funds) to match anticipated VR funds (federal funds). For the past few years, they have not asked for additional general funds, because the amount they presently have in the budget are sufficient to match the federal grant. They do request spending authority for "other funds" at times. Re-

allotment – Eric shared how there are times when some states relinquish federal funds that are unspent, and those funds then become available for re-allotment to other states. In the past, DRS has requested some of those funds, and it has currently requested \$500,000. With the occurrence of the significant natural disasters in Texas and Florida, it's possible that there may not be any funds available this year if they are redirected to address issues in these locations, which has happened in past years.

VR Faces – This is the reporting system used to gather required data for the Rehabilitation Services Administration 911 report. Due to required changes to the report, this has taken on a new level of administrative burden due to the scope of data required and the frequency of reporting. The data is gathered on open cases and closures. Alternative Financing Program for Assistive Technology – Eric reported that Black Hills Special Services Cooperative has been awarded funding for this program in the amount of \$664,670 to establish a revolving loan fund. BHSSC will partner with the West River Business Service Center to administer the program. It is expected that the program will help bridge the gap between conventional funding sources and the assistive technology needs of individuals with disabilities in South Dakota. It will take some time to get the program and related processes in place. HB1006 – Eric provided a brief overview of changes resulting from the passage of this bill impacting the workings of this board and others under state government e.g., publishing of public notices, voting when meetings are held via electronic means.

Patty thanked Eric for his report. Prior to taking a break, Patty brought forward that the BVR had received a notice of renewal of their membership with the South Dakota Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities. She encouraged members to become members. **MOTION TO RENEW THE BVR MEMBERSHIP WITH SDCCD - MSC.** A short break was taken at this time.

Eric introduced Wendy Parent-Johnson, Executive Director of the USD Center for Disabilities, and Wendy presented on “supported employment” for the remainder of the afternoon (see attachment for her presentation).

THE WORLD OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT: The key components of her presentation were: (a) overview of supported employment, (b) what does this mean for service delivery, (c) intersection of VR and DDD services, (d) VR and Center partnership to expand supported employment, (e) national supported employment perspective, and (f) discussion of needs and strategies in SD. Some critical points made were that supported employment has a “presumption of work – focus on solutions;” the question shifts from “can this individual work” to “what is the best job match for this person?” Wendy spoke about supported employment being competitive employment in an integrated work setting. It is for individuals with significant disabilities with no employment history or intermittent history, and who need long term

support. Wendy addressed moving the conversation from one of a person being job ready to getting to know the person – their environments, routines, supports, passions, likes and dislikes. She continued by talking about moving from looking at job openings to job matches by getting to know the business community – what are their needs, visit their places of business, make the business case for hiring an individual. She went on to talk about moving from placement to training and support, as well as customizing the placement process. She also explained the various activities that South Dakota has undertaken in an effort to strengthen and build supported employment options for people and the number and quality of providers of these services. Many of these activities have been a partnership between DRS and the Center for Disabilities. Wendy’s presentation led to significant dialogue on just what is supported employment, how it differs from other employment support services and when it is most appropriate to seek these services. There was conversation about family struggles encountered with young people transitioning from school to adulthood who seek employment time and again and are unsuccessful in their career search efforts. What can be done? Is supported employment a possibility for these individuals? Patty did not want to cut off the dialogue, yet the meeting had gone to 5:30. She thanked Wendy for her presentation. The presentation will be emailed to staff and made available to BVR members and the public via the boards/commissions portal.

Patty asked for a **MOTION TO ADJOURN FOR THE DAY – MSC.**

Patty called the meeting back to order the morning of September 15th at 8:15 am. She again invited people to introduce themselves. Eric introduced the first presenter – Mitchell Close, VR Program Specialist.

TRANSITION SERVICES AND DRS – A DEEP DIVE: At the last meeting a request had been made to provide more data on the services provided to youth with disabilities by the Division. Mitchell made a presentation on this topic (see attached). He started by defining “youth with disabilities” and exploring the basic demographics of gender, location and primary impairment. Youth with disabilities had a significantly higher rate of cognitive impairments than the adults with disabilities. He went on to share historical data of the number of youth who have applied for services over the past ten years, followed by closures – type and reason, age at application, case length, services provided, employment category and consumer satisfaction. For all of the closure data, other than age at application, he showed comparisons between students with disabilities and adults with disabilities. His presentation ended with counselor feedback he sought. He received feedback from 34 counselors on three questions: (1) what particular barriers or challenges do you observe when working with youth with disabilities seeking employment; (2) what assets do youth with

disabilities have that other age groups may not; and (3) do you have any other comments regarding youth with disabilities that you've noticed during your work with them. Again, some significant dialogue followed Mitchell's presentation around the value and effectiveness of transition services. Patty thanked Mitchell for his presentation.

ABILITY FOR HIRE ANALYTICS: Kim Hoberg, DHS Business Specialist, provided this report as the result of a request at the last meeting. She shared a brief history of the creation and evolution of the "Ability for Hire" campaign including Governor Daugaard's involvement, contracting with Epicocity – a marketing/advertising company, and the campaign goal of increasing employment for individuals with disabilities in South Dakota. Kim provided a handout which showed a variety of different website analytics e.g., number of sessions during a specified timeframe, number of visitors/users – both new and returning, visitor demographics, how visitors learned about the site, which pages of the website visitors viewed most often. Kim also provided some analytics on the Ability for Hire Facebook page. She explained that they typically post new information on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The handout included information such as demographics of visitors, and top locations where visitors reside.

VR INITIATIVES: Kim Hoberg provided the update on DRS VR initiatives. 2017 Summer Initiatives – DRS and the Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired provided funding of two initiatives. The first initiative was relevant to Pre-Employment Transition Services for Students with Disabilities. The second initiative provided Employer Based Work Experience for Vocational Rehabilitation Clients. The Pre-Employment Transition Services initiative focused on workplace readiness training to develop social skills, independent living skills, self-advocacy skills and to learn about vocational rehabilitation services and other programs available to assist individuals with disabilities. The participants were students with disabilities enrolled in a secondary school, and they were not required to be VR clients but may potentially be eligible for VR services. The activities of this initiative had to be held in accessible community locations. The second initiative provided VR clients with information, job shadowing and job experience opportunities. It included classroom training on how to search for jobs, completing applications, interviewing for jobs and maintaining employment. Again, these activities had to be held in accessible community locations. Kim provided a handout that provided specific information on both initiatives e.g., locations, dates, schools or businesses involved, # of participants (see attached). Project Skills/Employment Skills Initiative with State Government – The Governor is calling for state government to be a model employer for employing people with disabilities. In support of that goal, DHS/DRS continues to work to expand Project Skills within state government. They are also working to expand a similar work

experience program for adults with disabilities – Employment Skills – within state government. For FFY17, DRS established a goal of 11 individuals obtaining work experiences in state agencies – a total of twelve are working in state agencies e.g., Bureau of Human Resources, Game, Fish & Parks, Department of Human Services/Department of Labor and Regulation, SD State Historical Society. The FFY18 goal for these same efforts is thirteen (13). Business Specialist Activities – Kim continued by reporting on the types of activities she is typically involved with in her role as a business specialist. She reported on the number of business contacts made, presentations made to groups e.g., Aberdeen Exchange Club. She also shared examples of inquiries received from VR counselors, employers, businesses about topics related to hiring or maintaining employees who live with disability. Kim went on to speak about upcoming presentations at the Bureau of Human Resources’ Leadership Conference, two community NDEAM events, and a webinar hosted by SD Retailers Association. Establishment Grants – Kim reported that DRS has the ability to issue “establishment grants” with nonprofit agencies to establish or expand services for VR clients. These grants can go up to four years, with staffing reimbursement decreases each year. She reported that in January 2015, DRS issued nine grants to community support providers to expand their supported employment programs to assist individuals presently in sheltered employment and students with disabilities to obtain competitive, integrated employment. These agencies are now in their 3rd year, 2nd quarter, of the grants. They have worked with 278 individuals, and 119 have obtained competitive, integrated employment. These grants have created 12 positions, and 34 individuals have been hired for those positions due to staff turnover being a major issue. One grant has discontinued due to difficulty in maintaining staff. Kim continued on by reporting that in January of 2016, DRS issued five establishment grants to community support providers and three to mental health centers to expand their supported employment services to assist individuals in sheltered employment and students with disabilities to obtain competitive, integrated employment. These agencies are in their 2nd year, 2nd quarter, of the grants. They have worked with 94 individuals, and 42 of them have obtained competitive, integrated employment. These eight grants created nine positions, and 26 individuals have been hired for these nine positions, again due to turnover issues. One grant has been discontinued due to their inability to fill their vacant position. Implementation of Section 511 – Subminimum Wage – Kim explained that with the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, VR is required to conduct periodic reviews of individuals with disabilities working and earning less than minimum wage. When this law became effective, South Dakota had 1,000 individuals who fit into this category. As of July 2016, DRS started meeting with these individuals to provide information, career counseling and referral services. These reviews were conducted through contracts with three individuals with vocational rehabilitation counseling experience. Kim provided a handout (see attached) which provided a summary of

reviews completed between 7/1/16 and 6/30/17. Of the total, 916 have had their review; 90 individuals were referred to VR and it is too early to report on the outcome of those referrals; approximately 2/3 of the individuals who had reviews were individuals with legal guardians who expressed concerns about their family member working in the community. In this current year, year 2 of the 511 review process, DRS has sent 14c employers a list of individuals reviewed last year. These employers will hand write any change, as well as provide information on any new employees. This step has been completed with 13 of the 17 agencies. Reviews have begun with four employers; reviews are scheduled for another four agencies; five agencies have discontinued paying subminimum wage employment. Fall Conference – Kim handed out both the “Agenda at a Glance” and the “Registration Packet” for the Fall conference coming up October 2nd – 4th in Pierre. BVR members were again invited to participate, and asked to contact Bernie and Shelly if they are interested in doing so. Currently the expected attendance is 225.

At this time, a fifteen-minute break was taken.

EMPLOYERS AS OUR CUSTOMERS BEST PRACTICES FOR VR: Kim explained that with the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the customers of VR became focused not only on individuals with disabilities. It also is focused on businesses, employers. Consequently, it is important to engage employers and to provide effective employer/business supports, as well as to learn how to communicate “rehabilitation language” into language that businesses will understand. She has drafted “Best Practices for Providing Effective Business Engagement or Employment Supports” (see attached), and she shared and reviewed it at this time. Some key components of the document are: what is business engagement and why is it important; what are some best practices when interacting with businesses; rehabilitation language vs. business language. Members found this resource to be very positive. Eric indicated that it will most likely become part of the counselor manual, since it is guidance for staff as they seek to engage more fully with employers and the business community.

GOVERNOR’S AWARDS UPDATE: BVR Staff, Shelly, provided this report. She explained that the ceremony will occur on October 3rd during the Fall Conference. A press release has gone out announcing the award recipients. They are: Koni Sims/Sioux Falls – Outstanding Citizen with a Disability; Tami Francis/Sioux Falls – Outstanding Employee with a Disability; Pizza Ranch/Spearfish – Outstanding Private Employer (small employer category); County Fair Food Store/Mitchell – Outstanding Private Employer (large employer category); Meri Erickson/Groton – Outstanding Transition Services Award; and Yankton Area Mental Wellness Inc./Yankton – Distinguished Service Award. Members were invited to participate, and if they wish to

do so they were asked to contact Shelly. One member asked if staff would please send the list with contact information to their agency. They send congratulatory letters to recipients each year.

STATEWIDE INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL (SILC) UPDATE: Chuck Quinn serves on the SILC, and he provided this report. He reported on the activities resulting from the June meeting. The SILC had received a response to their report on assistive technology and its impact on people living independently. Key areas of the report were Durable Medical Equipment Recycle & Reuse Program, alternative funding program, remote monitoring systems, TED and TAD programs, development of a new AT logo and involvement of the public utilities commission and status of broadband in the state. The SILC passed a motion to send a copy of the report to DHS Secretary Pearson and to Governor Duggar. Chuck then provided an overview of reports given by the DRS IL program specialist – HMAD, Ramp, IL fund sources, CIL reviews and the contract to provide staff support. He continued to report on the Division of SBVI report which focused on the TAD program, electronic video magnification lease/ loan program and assistive technology access program; followed by the Board of SBVI report that had two major items – transition week hosted at the Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and involving 12 students; and public forums hosted during the NFB convention and another in Kyle. Chuck then reported on contents of the SILC staff report – communication with the Administration for Community Living on underserved/unserved populations and guidance on different approaches to meet those needs; consensus was no further contact would be made with ACL at this time; there was a brief update on CIL staff training and the SILC budget; lastly, a request had been received for funding in support of 2017 NDEAM events and a motion was passed to provide up to \$3,000 in support of these activities. Chuck went on to explain that there were two presentations at this meeting. The first focused on a dialogue on “Emergency Preparedness and People with Disabilities.” He showed a resource that was made available, and he advocated for all to learn more and promote more learning and preparing in this area. The second presentation was on “Public/Rural Transit in SD”, and the benefit of hearing about this regularly since it is a changing landscape and an area of need for those who do not drive, including some people with disabilities. The final item was an update on the SILC workgroup’s activities – Consumer Services, Public Awareness/Outreach, Advocacy/Interagency Collaboration and Assistive Technology/Home Modifications Assistive Devices. The one action item in relation to workgroups was the selection of two Champion of Independent Living Awards recipients. Chuck ended this update by reporting that the SILC’s next meeting will be September 19th in Pierre. Patty thanked Chuck for his report.

NDEAM UPDATE: BVR staff provide this update. Shelly handed out a document (see attached) listing all of the scheduled community events in order by date of occurrence and including copies of posters/flyers for those which we have received. Members were encouraged to participate in events in their communities or nearby communities. If they incur an expense in doing so, they can be reimbursed by contacting BVR staff.

CLOSING ACTIONS: Future Agenda Items – Some thoughts brought forward at this time were finding out what other state rehabilitation councils do for outreach on public vocational rehabilitation services, hosting of community forums, BVR committees – their current composition and focus, ways small businesses/non-profits can be supported in providing auxiliary aids and services that carry cost. Scheduling Next Meeting – Eric suggested the next meeting be held via video-conference. He offered the various DRS office locations as sites, and after being asked if there might be a site at the Center for Disabilities, this was added as a potential site for the meeting. It was suggested it take place the week of December 11th from 1pm to 5pm (CT). Staff will send out a Doodle Poll with those options, and once we've heard from the majority of members we'll determine a date and work on securing sites. Hearing no other business, Patty thanked all for their participation. **MOTION TO ADJOURN – MSC.** Meeting adjourned at 12 noon.