Massachusetts Autism Commission

14-22 years of age/Employment Subcommittee Meeting

500 Harrison Avenue – Boston, MA

November 13, 2019 - 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.

Present: Toni Wolf (Co-Chair), Dianne Lescinskas, Michael Stephansky and Ilyse Levine

Remote access: Carolyn Kain, Chris Supple, Lea Hill, Janine Salomon, Jeanne Hoerter, Gyasi Burks-Abbott, Terri Farrell and Michele Brait

**Remote Participation**

Commissioner Wolf stated that the meeting was subject to the Open Meeting Law and that the Subcommittee 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 teleconferencing. Remote access was approved unanimously by the subcommittee members present.

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes from the 14-22/Employment meeting on September 5, 2019 were reviewed and with a few minor changes, they were approved unanimously.

**Agenda**

Commissioner Wolf discussed the agenda that she had established for this meeting. The agenda has clear meeting outcomes at the end of each item and she asked if any committee members had additional items to add. There were no additional items.

**Follow Up Steps from Recommendations – How and When and Who**

1. (New Recommendation) DESE will continue to assist the 14-22/Employment Subcommittee in determining the numbers of ASD students with IEP’s calling for an extended school day. The 14-22/Employment Subcommittee will review any available data on extended school day services for individuals with ASD, access to after-school programs by individuals with ASD, and the number of school aged individuals with ASD accessing other out of school time services (DDS/DESE program).

The subcommittee members approved this recommendation and we need to think about *How, When and Who* for this recommendation. Mr. Supple stated that there was a memo prepared by DESE on the issue of extended day and extended year and he will share that memo with the subcommittee members. Ms. Kain commented that she understood that DESE does not collect this data but will consider collecting in the future – there is no current available data. Mr. Supple replied that Russell Johnston, Amanda Green and Catherine Craven have been very helpful and that he will continue to take the lead on this recommendation. There is a possibility that they could start to collect this data by the fall of 2021. If any of the subcommittee members have questions or comments around this recommendation, they should contact Mr. Supple.

1. **Recommendation on Data Requirements from MRC**

In FY19 MRC referred 994 consumers with ASD to its Pre ETS vendors. In terms of race and ethnicity these 994 are broken down as 842 white, 92 African-American, 9 Native American, 37 Asian/Pacific Islander and 65 Hispanic ethnicity .

*Meeting outcome: Are there additional data points for MRC to collect in addition to retention for the New Year.*

Commissioner Wolf said she wasn’t sure if the data that was supplied is what we are looking for and asked if there any other data points that people want to consider – now is the time to adjust the database.

*Data points to consider*

* Employment – full time vs. part time – benefits, no benefits
* Level of education
* Age
* Geographic data
* High school, lab program, technical school, private school day school, residential school
* Pre ETS information – can data capture last year of school – did they become eligible with MRC
* Previous employment? Internship?

Commissioner Wolf will look to add these data points and will follow up with the subcommittee members at the next meeting.

1. **Employment Funding Opportunities at MRC – Next 18 Months**

Meeting Outcome*: List of recommendations to engage stake holders and providers in identify new and existing employment practices for population*

Commissioner Wolf discussed MRC and some additional funding. They are looking at the possibility of doing a pilot project to benefit veterans, homeless and/or ASD population. She asked the subcommittee members for ideas on how to best use this funding and added that it is always a challenge to start something new and for members to think about what already exists that could be improved. The RFR will need to be submitted by December.

* Look at provider data – what can be enhanced
* Transportation – MRC is doing a pilot on the Cape with Lyft – how to support the training of Uber and Lyft drivers
* HMEA model at Horace Mann – could that be expanded
* CVS is looking at expanding employment opportunities – in particular with the ASD population
* College prep programs – Ms. Hill discussed the pilot program though Easter Seals, College Navigation, this is funded by DDS and they are currently serving 20 individuals and supporting them on a college campus. They are looking to fund “next steps” in the program by helping with internships and summer jobs. The pilot is ending June 30th and DDS is looking at an RFR and how to continue to move forward with College Navigation. Ms. Hill said she would be the contact person if this worked out with MRC.
* Other topics included: homeless population – Justice Resource Institute – members leaving and then ending up in shelters – how can they have better outcomes?
* Look at existing programs – boosting what works already and expand to more individuals

1. **Structure of Subcommittee Meeting for New Year**

*Meeting Outcome: Direction and number of meetings per year*

Ms. Kain discussed the Autism Omnibus Law and the regulations as it relates to the work of this subcommittee. The issues are education, employment, employment training, data collection and a plan of action. It was asked that members look at the overview of the statute – our role is to make recommendations, not implementation. Mr. Supple discussed the new recommendation on extended school day and that a plan of action is extended school day for individuals with ASD.

Ms. Solomon would like to see more discussion around education and connection with the schools. Other members discussed transition services and best practices and also how to best educate parents on transition services. The subcommittee does have a recommendation related to transition services, a check list, and will continue to work on the recommendations. Ms. Kain discussed the data collection that had occurred previously with data provided from DESE, DPH and Mass Health on individuals with ASD and that she had shared this information in the past with several subcommittees.

1. **Leadership**

*Meeting Outcome: Identification of C-Chairs*

Discussion around leadership for this subcommittee – Ms. Ursitti is not able to continue as co- chair and it was discussed that it might be a good idea to have a co-chair representing education. Ms. Kain discussed the changes that have occurred with the Autism Commission members and that each subcommittee is currently chaired by a state agency member and an individual that was appointed by the Governor. Ms. Kain said that she has not heard from any Commission members about taking on this role.

* The co-chairs of this subcommittee should represent a state agency (employment focus) and education. There are new commission members and Ms. Kain will discuss membership with the co-chairs.
* Meeting schedule – other subcommittees meet bimonthly and some for 90 minutes
* It was determined that the subcommittee will meet every other month for 2 hours
* There was some discussion on the Project Able Act but more information is needed for the discussion

1. **WorkAbility Legislative Committee**

*Meeting Outcome: Update Information*

Commissioner Wolf discussed a meeting at MRC with Representative Cutler regarding the employability of individuals with disabilities. There was a public hearing that took place that included individuals with disabilities and employers. MRC had asked individuals to testify on the value of employment. Some issues that came up during the testimony included transportation and internships at the State House. Gyasi Burks-Abbott testified at the hearing and will send the testimony to the members of this subcommittee. Commissioner Wolf will follow up on the next steps with WorkAbility and report back to this subcommittee.

**Other business**

The ARC is hosting a Transition Conference at Holy Cross on November 16th.

Project Search – it was asked if MRC could work with Project Search and help it to grow or support internships of 20 hours per week.

**Next Meeting**

January 14, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.