Massachusetts Autism Commission

14-22 years of age/Employment Subcommittee Meeting

500 Harrison Avenue – Boston, MA

March 10, 2020

10:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Present: Toni Wolf (Co-Chair), Sacha Stadhard (Co-Chair), Dianne Lescinskas, Carolyn Kain, Margaret Van Gelder, Terri Farrell, Michael Stephansky, Lea Hill and Kathleen Kelly

Remote Access: Chris Supple, Amanda Green, Jacob Rotman, Taryn Smith, Heather Donovan, Jeanne Hoerter, Janine Salomon, Maura Sullivan and Greg Rosen

**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 January 14, 2020 were reviewed and were approved unanimously.

**New Member**

Jakob Rotman introduced himself to the members of the subcommittee. He will be joining this group for future meetings.

**MassHire Lowell Career Center Presentation by Heather Donovan, Youth Program Supervisor**

* There are 10 programs. The Youthworks program is year-round (offering summer internships)
* All programs are supported by case workers/staff
* All have access to career readiness curriculum
* Lowell office is serving the highest rate of individuals with disabilities at 11% (7-8% across the state). Individuals self-disclose their disability
* They do not collect data on specific disability (do not have the numbers of ASD, they capture data in broad categories)
* DEI VII – The Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) aims to improve education, training and employment opportunities and outcomes for youth and adults with disabilities who are unemployed, underemployed and/or receiving Social Security disability benefits
* The DEI program will end this month but it was the catalyst to start other programs to improve outcomes and carve a pathway for individuals with disabilities
* Career Centers are run off grants so it comes with challenges: lot of paperwork, co-enrollment is often not possible, misunderstanding of what may happen with benefits, pathways do not always match up with the regional blueprints
* Career Centers successes: a number of young people move into full time careers after participating in Work Experience Programs; young people transition to training programs, strong relationship with a Vocational School allowing for direct referrals
* Pre-ETS Program in Lowell – working with 7 schools but only physically in 5 of the schools and it took a long time to connect with the school for an initial meeting. The goal is to not duplicate what the school is currently doing with their students but compliment the experience. Pre-ETS model has changed and working with cohorts of students, not individuals. They do not attend a students’ IEP meeting but work more on job exploration, workplace readiness, work-based learning experiences, self-advocacy and counseling on post-secondary education or training programs.

*Discussion*

* Technical Advisory from DESE – how get the advisory to providers?
* Are there opportunities in the Career Centers to also provide support/training to employers – CVS is one partner that does this training for employees and has a good understanding of the disability needs
* MRC is partnering with Children’s Hospital and working on ways to find what the employers are looking for to support the individual and what they can do as an employer
* Work Without Limits does work with employers – Commissioner Wolf agreed to reach out and find out more of what they are doing
* Staff at Career Centers – would benefit from training on ASD – in person training would work best. There could also be more of an effort to get the word out to people about the services offered at Mass Hire

**F/U From Last Meeting – Using Data to Forecast Future Needs (attachment**)

The goal of the data is for forecasting and to find out the “need” and move forward with the work, based off the data. DESE provided data – the data team prepared 3 years of data on the level of need and the placement of a student. MRC is in process with collecting data and is looking at the increasing need for ASD individuals. MRC does not currently have Pre ETS data for FY19 but will have data for FY20. Commissioner Wolf suggested putting together a sub-group to look at the data and come back with ideas on how to use this data for recommendations to the Autism Commission for future employment trainings and also for the needs that will come in the future. Look at the models that currently exist, best practices, what is working and what is not working – goal is to better serve this group and all levels of need.

Maura Sullivan, Chris Supple and a Jeanne Hoerter are interested in looking at the data and Jeanne asked if they could include the AFAM data that came from a recent survey by AFAM.

**Next Steps and Future Agenda Items**

* Training for Career Centers – goal for in-person training
* Subgroup data work – set up a timeline for this work
* Webinar training created by this subcommittee – where is it living?

The next meeting of this subcommittee was scheduled for May 19th, 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

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