

N.J. Commission for the Blind & Visually Impaired State Rehabilitation Council

Meeting Minutes – February 3, 2017
Joseph Kohn Training Center - 130 Livingston Avenue - New Brunswick, NJ

Voting Members Present: Jennifer Armstrong, Rick Fox, Jonathan Goodman, Susan Head, Zoraida Krell, Fran Leibner, Kelly Reymann, Kris Tucker, Fr. James Warnke

Present (pending appointments): Gary Altman, Joan Leonard, William Robinson

Voting Members Absent: Dawn Monaco

Ex Officio Present: Dan Frye, Amanda Gerson, Danielle Licari-Scorzelli

Staff/Members of Public Present: Bernice Davis, Winston Smith, John Walsh

The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a.m., Fr. James Warnke, Chairperson, welcomed everyone. He announced that the meeting was being held in compliance with Section 105 of the Federal Rehabilitation Act 1973, as amended. It is also in compliance with the New Jersey Open Public Meeting Act, NJSA 10:4-6.

Approval of Meeting Minutes:

As a quorum had not been reached at the last few meetings, the following minutes still needed approval. Fr. Jim noted that the by-laws had been reviewed to determine if approval of the minutes could be done via e-mail in the absence of a quorum; however, this would not be an acceptable practice.

A few minor corrections were recommended to the June 3, 2016, meeting minutes. A motion was made by Zoraida Krell to approve as corrected; Fran Leibner seconded the motion. All were in favor; these minutes were approved.

Zoraida Krell made a motion to approve the October 7, 2016, meeting minutes; Rick Fox seconded. All were in favor; these minutes were approved.

Rick Fox made a motion to approve the December 2, 2016, meeting minutes; this motion was seconded by Zoraida Krell. All were in favor; these minutes were approved.

2017 SRC Meeting Schedule:

A motion was made by Rick Fox and seconded by Jonathan Goodman to approve the following schedule of meetings for 2017: February 3, April 21, June 2, October 6, December 1. All were in favor; the schedule was approved.

Appointments/Reappointments: Fr. Jim announced the following appointments/reappointments, and he thanked these members for their service.

- Appointment: Jonathan Goodman, Business, Industry & labor Sector Rep.
- Reappointments: Susan Head, Client Assistance Program Rep. – Disability Rights Rep.
Kelly Anne Reymann, Community Rehabilitation Program Service Provider Rep.

Gary Altman introduced himself to the Council. He is the Acting Executive Director of the State Employment Training Commission (SETC). Under federal workforce laws and a law that exists in the State of NJ, the SETC serves as the State's Workforce Development Commission; providing oversight, and overseeing areas of policy and planning. The SETC works with the various job training programs, primarily those at the Department Of Labor and Workforce Development. Mr. Altman commented that he also works with DVRS, and he is looking forward to working with this SRC as well.

Dr. Bernice Davis, co-leader of the Agency's Communications Team, attended today's meeting to update the Council on communication initiatives at CBVI. As part of the strategic plan, the Team came up with 8 points they felt needed to be enhanced in terms of reaching out to blind and vision impaired communities, and the larger business community.

- 1) Additional tours of JKTC for the public have been arranged. A recommendation was made for the students at JKTC to also take more of a lead in the tours, i.e. explaining the training
- 2) Expanding internships for students. We've had interns in social work and O&Ms. We will be bringing in communication interns through TCNJ within the next month or so. Looking forward to them helping us freshen up our website. They will also be helping us update our outreach materials, brochures, and flyers.
- 3) Developing a speaker's bureau. Currently working on a policy, highlighting guidelines on how to present ourselves, to be attractive and more appealing when we go out into the community.
- 4) Developed a resource guide for the ASPIRE program. (ASPIRE: peer support groups for 55+ living independently in the community)
- 5) CBVI website – plan is to increase accessibility; want to be as consumer friendly as possible. Working closely with DHS. TCNJ will be helping with this project also.
- 6) TCNJ will also be helping to create and edit some of our brochures. (PR portfolio).
- 7) Will be working to create a 10-15 minute overview video of CBVI services to welcome consumers and their families.
- 8) Plan to produce TV and radio Public Service Announcements (PSAs).

Rick asked if the Commission has any plans to start a Facebook page, as so many people get their news and search for everything on Facebook in this day-and-age. Bernice explained that we currently submit postings to the Department of Human Services (DHS) and they decide what they want to post on the DHS Facebook page. Eventually we would like to have a CBVI Facebook page; however, the guidelines and approval process seem to prevent this from moving forward at this time. Bernice commented that DHS understands our goals; we have a liaison with the PR office that we present everything to, and they support as much as they can, but there are no 100% guarantees re the social media piece. They have been pretty good at posting things in the community where there is an opening; i.e. the LEAP program at the libraries is getting a lot of attention at this time. Another question was raised as to whether or not we put pamphlets/literature in optometrists' offices; the idea being that the average person with vision problems would end up there. Bernice commented that we have sent brochures/postcards to optometrist/ophthalmologist offices in the past, and will look at that again; however, it has not been a standard practice of late. We do get some calls for literature and we provide upon request.

Susan noted that the initiatives outlined are quite comprehensive. She asked if the Commission provides any training or information to ophthalmology medical students about CBVI services as part of their medical training. John commented that we have ophthalmology students and other medical professionals come through JKTC tours to inform professionals about the types of services we offer. We also work with Salus University's Optometry Department to make them aware of our services. In addition, we have an Ophthalmologist on our Board of Trustees, Dr. D. Greenfield. He has been a very good ambassador to that community. We are planning to talk to Dr. Greenfield about how we can use him to do a professional outreach (doctor to doctor) to get the message out about CBVI.

Bernice provided Council members with her contact information in case they had any follow-up questions or recommendations. She thanked the members for their support with CBVI's strategic plan. Fr. Jim noted that if there is anything the SRC can do to formally or informally assist, to please let him know. Dan thanked and acknowledged Bernice for facilitating the comprehensive communication strategy being launched in 2017. He noted that he is optimistic that by year's end CBVI's footprint is going to be significantly larger than it is today in terms of public understanding that we exist. He noted he is particularly excited about the prospect of developing an orientation video and other PSAs. He noted the firm commitment by this administration in making sure information about the Commission is transparent and readily available in multi-media fashion.

State/Federal Update:

Dan welcomed the newest members of the SRC. He shared the following information:

- On January 17, two chapters of our Admin Code, NJAC 10:92, governing blindness education, and NJAC 10:97, governing the terms over the BENJ program, were published in the NJ Register. They are open and available for comment until March 18. Dan noted that comments should be directed to his office. Both codes contain a significant number of substantive amendments; the amendments have been developed in concert with the stakeholders who have a direct interest in these programs. Dan noted that if members have occasion to review them, he thinks they will agree that the changes, inherent in the rules that have been published, are going to lead the agency toward positive changes in both the blindness education and BENJ programs. This version of 10:92 now reflects most of the changes that the Education Reform Taskforce recommended. Among the changes are directives that our teachers are much more involved in the development of the IEP process; that students may have access to any type of educational services, braille or otherwise, no matter what level of service they are involved in. Dan explained that we are gradually moving away from the "level" system; those levels remain in the rule this time around, only because they have to be a way of funding the program. However, we will publish, later in the spring, the new tier system; none of the tiers will limit any of the services; it's simply based on the quantity of service, not the type of service. The big change in 10:97, in addition to some corrections in language, is that we've added a new sub-chapter, allowing us to cultivate relationships with private industry. Dan noted he is optimistic we will be establishing our first private location, at a facility with the NY bank of Mellon.
- 2017 project: the Commission is updating and refreshing all of our internal staff policies (circulars). There are circulars on virtually every aspect of employee engagement. All 30+ existing circulars will be reviewed, updated, and refreshed so that by the end of the year we will have a current set of internal regulatory policies. Uniformity is important for an organization as large as ours; so there is clarity in practice and clarity in how we stand and what we believe.

- John, Amanda, and Dan will be going to the spring conferences of the CSAVR and the NCSAB; these are the 2 trade organizations that represent VR agencies across the country. Dan noted that at the fall conference for NCSAB he was privileged to be elected the national president-elect. The responsibility that comes to the president-elect is that he is charged with managing the content for the agenda for the NCSAB conferences this spring and fall. Presuming he remains in this position by the end of the year, he will assume the presidency of NCSAB next year. He commented that it is his hope it is a feather in the cap of this State, to have a leader from NJ playing a part at the national level of VR policy.
- The agency is modifying 10:95 (VR policies) to reflect WIOA changes.
- Other internal changes being made to reflect compliance with WIOA:
 - ✓ Moving a VR supervisor to a single position where she will be responsible for administering the provisions of Section 511, which place limitations on who can be placed into sub-minimum wage employment. Section 511 imposes a number of barriers that make it difficult for our community to be placed in sheltered, segregated, non-competitive employment. Part of our job is to be engaged with those few in that environment and to work with those who aspire to be in that environment, to make sure they know there are other alternatives before they go in that direction. We are going to then hire another rehab counselor/supervisor to help run the VR programs.
 - ✓ Business Relations Unit (BRU): the new legislation requires that we not only have a relationship with our disabled customers looking for work, but that we cultivate a relationship with business. We have hired a manager, supervisor, and 2 BR specialists, to interact with business, to help blind/vision impaired/deaf blind find work, and also to answer businesses questions about our particular disability, so we are more welcomed when we interact with a given business and they are more inclined to think of us as potential candidates for employment when that opportunity comes along. It is the philosophy of this Agency, and my directive, that it is clear that business, while important, is the secondary customer and our principle customer continues to be the people that we were charged to support. We are working in consultation with the ICI at the University of Boston Mass; they are helping us, through technical assistance, to make sure the BRU has policies and the like, to make it a strong, distinct unit within the Agency.
- With regard to the decision to eliminate the Welcome & Evaluation (WE) Team, Dan noted he continues to believe that the WE Team remains a model for high quality service. He also commented that if we are going to be a leader in VR, sometimes we have to take risky innovative chances that may not always succeed. Given that we cannot, at present, succeed with the WE team, we have made arrangements to extract the best of what we gathered from that pilot experience, so the best of the WE team idea is preserved, while we work on determining whether or not we can resurrect the WE team in its fullest, robust fashion.
- We are making a number of strategic hires within the agency, all of which are committed to making sure that blindness education, VR and IL, continue to be the core of what we do. We will be hiring 2 assistant education supervisors within the next 3 months. Will also be hiring 2 master teachers; this is a teacher who may not carry a caseload, but will work with teachers that are dealing with particularly challenging cases and try to come up with ideal solutions that allow the teacher to move ahead in cases where conventional approaches have not worked.

We are also in the midst of looking for 6-8 O&M instructors. This agency accepts O&M candidates who have both the conventional academy certification and the NOMC certification (National Orientation and Mobility Certification). We are interviewing a couple of NOMC candidates within the next few weeks. We are also going to be looking at bringing on someone to work with us in policy development; to deepen our bench in terms of policy work. Rick endorsed the hiring of additional O&M instructors; he stressed the importance of O&M instruction, and noted the positive affect it had in his life.

- Making progress in terms of the organization's growth toward the way we provide training of our own staff. This spring we will be introducing a VR 101 program for all VR counselors, managers, and supervisors, so we get back to the elementary essence of what VR is supposed to do; how it is supposed to be the golden key to liberty that unlocks dreams for blind people who want to go to work. Another training initiative is that we'll be working with Dr. E. Bell from Louisiana Tech University, to ensure all our teachers are given a comprehensive training to prepare them to take the national braille literacy exam. This is different from becoming an NLS certified transcriber and proof-reader; it is a comprehensive test to make sure staff have good braille skills. Making sure that test opportunity is also provided to our home instructors.
- The agency is working hard to reach out to other organizations/partners to honor the rules of WIOA. We are required under new federal law to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a variety of organizations, including the Department of Education (DOE), Medicaid, and the like. During the next year we will be investigating and exploring the development of creating those required inner-agency MOUs to try and help further integrate VR into the broader American Workforce System. This will be helpful in making sure we are compliant and we have broadened our capacity to give people access to things that they may not have had before. For instance, if we have a relationship with Medicaid, we may be able to broaden the services that are provided under our SSP program for our deaf blind students. If we have an MOU with DOE, we are thinking of inaugurating a self-advocacy course for every disabled student in the state that turns 14, as a pre-requisite to getting services from VR both at the Commission and in the general agency; doing this in collaboration with the both VR agencies and the DOE. It's those kinds of things that will enhance our ability to provide programs that will come from this work on MOUs.
- With regard to discussion at the last SRC meeting of developing a legislative and advocacy sub-committee, Dan commented that he thinks it is an important role, given all of the things happening at the federal level. He noted that it will be incumbent for him to give the SRC information about what is happening, but would leave it up to the Council to determine how to act at either the state or federal level. Having a strong legislative and advocacy sub-committee could be very useful when advocating for resources or the like.
- The leadership team spent time this month in collaboration with representatives from Libera and Alliance; we have formally initiated Phase 2 of our migration of case management software from our existing system to the Alliance Aware product. The migration stage is where we identify our information, figure out how it is different from the format that the Alliance product offers, create a differences list, and do a number of other things to make sure there is a seamless transfer of information so no one outside knows that there is a case management migration occurring. This phase will continue until the end of May. Then, it will be up to us to

contact the Office of Information Technology and Treasury to get permission to contract for Phase 3, which is the implementation process. Ultimately, we anticipate having this migration managed within 18-24 months. We have 10,000 new live cases/yr. and an archive of hundreds of thousands. We also want to make sure that the new system we are creating is better than the current one we have.

- EDGE: 2 tracks running this year; those from last year and the new 9th graders. The program continues to run with a broadened staff (3), and an increased number of paid mentors (16 or so). Dan noted he will be spending much of tomorrow speaking to parents about living as a blind child and adult and managing to achieve a measure of comfort and success in life. He noted that we try to cater to both consumers and parents in this important program. Jonathan commented that the parents and students both get a lot out of this wonderful program.
- Dawn Apgar resigned from the Department of Human Services (DHS) in late January; Dan report that his new supervisor is Doris Windle, Assistant to the Commissioner. He and Doris are cultivating a new relationship; they will be working closely together. They are currently working on issues with 10:99, which deals with the Commodities and Services Council and the State Legislation, which does allow for some services to be provided by this central non-profit agency inside the State. Dan commented that Doris may want to attend one of the SRC meetings at some point. If that should occur, he will give the Council sufficient notice.

Vocational Rehabilitation Unit Report – WE – YES Program Updates:

John reported:

- The new 511 regulations within WIOA are essentially around anyone that is in sub-minimum wage work and currently working in a sheltered workshop. There are approximately 30 facilities throughout the state. The VR agency is obligated to follow up with those individuals who have disabilities and provide them with 2 core services: comprehensive career counseling and general information referral services. We do the initial outreach to all the facilities; let them know who our contact person is. We already have collaborative agreements with DVR services; if their staff identifies someone in their outreach that is blind/vision impaired/deaf blind, they will refer them over to us and we will do the counseling and guidance; informational referral services. We are required to get this up/running quickly. Those that went into sheltered employment as of 7/22/16 have to be seen twice before July, 2017. The good news is that we don't have many clients that go into sheltered employment. John commented that we had set up arrangements that any counselor referring one of our consumers for sheltered employment would have to go through him first, before they were approved to go into sheltered employment. This gave John a chance to review those cases. In the last year there have been a handful of individuals seeking sheltered sub-minimum wage work. Of all the cases we approved, it was clear that the individual and their family did not want to pursue competitive integrated employment, even as much as we tried to promote it. However, we will always leave the door open. Fr. Jim commented that some people will never be in competitive employment and they need this kind of program; this doesn't mean the philosophy is wrong, it just means that competitive means competitive. John noted that one of the core principles of the rehab act is informed choice. He feels it's our responsibility to lay out the choices and what those choices mean. Under the law we also have to refer them to ensure they get that service, even though we get a negative closure; we are measured on our performance for employment outcomes. The number of individuals that decide to do that are very small. Fr. Jim commented that this philosophy is a reaction against incorrect and arbitrary decision making.

- John commented that the 511 regulations mainly impact our counselors. Administration decided we didn't want to add an additional responsibility on to our VR counselors; that's why the decision was made to have one of our administrators take on that role (she is also a counselor by training) to do this outreach tool of the facilities; this way our counselors can focus on competitive integrated employment. For those individuals who are interested, who want to come back into our system, we'll get them referred over, and then we can look at some of our projects around supported and customized employment that may be able to meet those needs. The last piece of this regulation has to do with youth with disabilities, and those facilities that have those 14C certificates, to pay subminimum wages. They are very in-tune, that anyone referred to them under the age of 25, they are not even accepting them into the program, unless certain things are documented that the VR agency performed. For example, did they get transition services while they were in school; do we have any documentation about the pre-employment transition services that were offered or given to them; did they go through an eligibility determination for vocational rehabilitation, and if they were found ineligible, why; if they were found eligible and we began a plan of services, how come we weren't successful on that. So we need to provide that documentation to the student and family, and we also need to present it to the actual 14C facility before they can be considered for sub-minimum wage work. John noted that he is only aware of 1 individual now interested in seeking that type of employment and we are working with the family to say – look at all we can offer you in VR before you make that decision. Again, it's an informed choice issue and we'll make sure we are in compliance with the law to ensure if somebody wants to go to that facility, we provide that documentation.
- John commented that the Agency continues to have collaborations with various partners; one of the partners we are looking at now is Rutgers University. Rutgers is the only university in NJ that offers a Master's degree in rehab counseling. That program has been very successful; over 90% of our counselors have a Master's degree and meet the credentials for the certified rehab national certification. We are now looking at other creative, collaborative things we can do with Rutgers. Meeting with leadership (Ken Gill and Janice Oursler) to talk about points of collaboration. They approached us to see if we would help them with a field initiated study and for them to seek a grant through the US Department of Education. Focusing on providing pre-employment transition services, particularly around social skills, training, and self-advocacy; training for students 14 – 21. They asked us if we would be willing to collaborate on that, and we agreed. We provided letter supports and will see if we can roll out some of their social skills training with our consumers to see if there is any efficacy in methods around that; we hope to do more of that type of work. This is the Rutgers School of Health Related Professions, which came out of UMDNJ; when they went away it morphed into the Rutgers program; actually in their medical program.
- Business Relations Unit (BRU): Amanda Gerson and Caroline Ziemiak, who oversees the BRU, are going to Nashville next week to be a part of a learning collaborative. ICC at U Mass Boston is the national technical assistance center helping VR agencies develop BRUs and advising how to interact with the business community. So this is a chance for Amanda and Caroline to meet with other state agencies and learn about some of their practices. We found these learning collaboratives to be a very effective way to get best practices and evidence based practices that we can bring back to NJ; not just copy it, but learn what is successful and put our specific NJ spin on it. We are excited to see what additional information they come back with. We've already done some job fairs, reverse job fairs; there have been different outreaches. We are now having BR specialist huddles with VR counselors, to discuss what's going on. We are moving forward with bringing Salesforce on as our main focus of tracking

business; it's a very effective tool for the business community; we know that DOL is looking at this program as well. Salesforce is a commercial piece of software that is used generally in the sales and business community. It's a contact manager – if we're reaching out to a certain company, we'll get a contact piece; we'll have a list of all the core people we are interacting with, and who from our team is interacting with that same team; how it's going; is this a hot prospect/mediocre/cold – really looking at a sales model of how we outreach. The other piece is that we need to track how we interface with business and those performance metrics are different than what our performance metrics are for serving consumers. Salesforce will also help us track those; the level of engagement; maybe we have questions around disability and accommodation.

- Youth Employment Solutions (YES) – John reported that Kelly and her team are now developing an infrastructure to add additional supports to the Work Skill Prep (WSP) program for students who have graduated from HS and want to look for competitive, integrated employment. Kelly commented that the YES specialist is going out to meet with students in their homes to get them to do discovery activities and then be that support/liaison, as VRCs can't do it all; job coaches can't do it all. Some staff that work with the students have been there for all 10-12 years; they already know the students, so they are able to get back in touch with them, and this has proven to be positive. Community Options contacted us to see if we could do some training – all of their job coaches were asking for assistance. So Kelly asked Danielle to help her, and a training was held last Friday to meet the needs of the 11 members of this Supported Employment Agency. Job coaches, employment specialists, and supervisors attended the training. Danielle Sweeney, the Technical Assistance Specialist for the YES program, worked with us to provide context, as well as techniques and approaches that have been successful when supporting consumers to fulfill their work responsibilities. During the training staff participated in discovery activities, lecture, simulated activities, and discussion, where frequently asked questions were addressed. An evaluation was done at the end, and the majority did ask for follow up. Danielle noted that it went really well; she commented that an important piece was that we were careful to keep reiterating that they were great at what they did as being supported employment specialists/job coaches; that they don't have to be extreme experts in vision directly. They seemed happy to get the training. We also let them know to stay in touch with the VR counselor who referred them; shouldn't all be on them; if the client had a goal that maybe seemed a little, not so achievable, to make sure the VR counselor is aware of what the student is asking for; don't put all the pressure on themselves. John commented that he appreciates Kelly and Danielle going that extra mile. He noted that we're hoping the YES program works with individual students, but also hoping to develop budding professionals within supported employment, that they are going to be eager to say – we want to partner with the Commission because the Commission is there to provide us with supports and we're both going to get successful closures out of this. We know there are a lot of other agencies we need to reach as well, so we will continue to do that.
- Another collaborative project from the strategic work teams was that we wanted to develop a career exploration center in our Newark Service Center. The counselors came up with this idea and it is of value for those consumers who want to come into Newark and be part of structured activities, action oriented. It will be a tool to get consumers ready for launching out into a career; preparing for an interview; how do you talk about accommodations; “elevator speech” ready. The counselors worked collaboratively, and we also had an O&M instructor take a lead role in this as well. They put together a nice curriculum that was also reviewed by our partners at ICI. A storage room was cleaned out; walls were painted; and we put computers in there. Work-stations are being set up to run groups. The counselors came up

with a plan: all VR counselors will be invited to show them the curriculum; then ask for volunteers to run a group for a particular week, month. We want all counselors involved. We don't want it to be a social group; we want it to be a group where you're coming into work to get ready to go out into the workforce. Kick-off scheduled for March 8; more to follow. If successful piloting in Newark, then we'll take it to other offices and have a place for individuals to come in and do some of this work. Rick commented that he is more than enthusiastic about a career center; he offered to help this project in any way he could.

- Eagleton Assistive Technology survey: The SRC had shown an interest in learning about how the consumers of the agency are satisfied with the training they receive around information and assistive technology. So the agency submitted a request for bids and selected the Eagleton Center at Rutgers University to develop a satisfaction survey instrument that we could send out to everyone that received assistive technology training through our contract with Advancing Opportunities. There were logistical items that blocked us moving forward; it was a slow start. However, all of the problems have been resolved, and we are now under contract with Eagleton. They created an instrument, which the Evaluation sub-committee reviewed and gave us feedback, which we shared with Eagleton. We are now at the point that the survey instrument is being reviewed by their independent board; then we should be ready to go on that. We will be doing an individualized letter to every consumer that gets this survey; it'll be in print and also in braille. We are hopeful to have some results to share by the 4/21 meeting. John thanked the SRC sub-committee for their help with this assistive technology survey.
- Under WIOA we are required to do a comprehensive statewide needs assessment every 3 years. John noted that we will need the Council's help with assessment activities. Another piece is to utilize the resources at San Diego State University to help gather data; part of the data collection around a needs assessment is not only around those we are currently serving, but those we could potentially serve. They will look at our past performance as a VR agency, to give us some perspective of where we are in the model. Also looking at having another town hall meeting; last time it was held at TCNJ; Kelly and the former chairperson took a leadership role around that to develop questions; to facilitate the town-hall meeting. We had over 120 participants that day. We facilitated transportation; we had lunch; we had sign-language interpreters; we had computer aid and real time transcription; we had a lot of accessibility set up. We also sent out the questions we were going to ask prior to the event, so participants knew the areas we would address. Kelly and Nicole facilitated the meeting and the staff of the Commission listened. We believe it was a very successful day, and we pulled a lot of data from that event. The EDGE, ASPIRE, and the LEAP programs, a lot of that came out of feedback we received from the town hall meeting. So if we're going to plan another one, we need to start planning soon. Kelly commented that late June would be better, if the event is to be held at TCNJ; she offered to look into available dates. Fr. Jim commented he would be happy to work on this event, if he is available on the chosen date. John noted that the town hall questions will be developed prior to the next SRC meeting. Council members will be sent the questions from the last event to review; any questions they can recommend will be e-mailed to Chris Cooper prior to the next SRC meeting; she will compile everyone's recommendations. Then, the Council can review/approve all of the questions at the next SRC meeting. A mass e-mail blast and notification to consumer groups to announce the event and provide attendees with the questions will be done. A question was raised as to what age group these questions would pertain to; John noted it is a fairly broad range; it is around VR, but we send to everyone, even if someone is getting education services, or even if they are a senior. We put it out across the board in order to get feedback on what we can do better.

- Going back to the discussion on the YES program, we want to build the capacity of our community partners; we want to do some type of outreach to those partners that are providing supported employment, customized employment, and other services. To say, what can we do to help you build your capacity; learn more about their kind of organizational needs, etc. John noted he'd like to have a review by the Council before sending something out. May do something more informal; possible something in Survey Monkey; just to gather some information; we may want to do another survey with parents around what can we do to help students right now, 14-21, while they are still in high school to get them ready for adult outcomes. More information to follow on this.

Sub-committee Reports

Evaluation: Rick reported on his committee's review of the Eagleton Assistive Technology survey. This sub-committee's members discussed some of the things that might be improved upon; they had some fundamental concerns. One suggestion was that they thought the survey was too long (45 questions); suggested 25 as a maximum as they felt it was a disincentive for anyone filling it out. They noticed that the questions didn't seem to suggest that the answers should revolve around Advancing Opportunity service, so they recommended somehow either by date(s) or something. They also recommended some areas where the questions might be consolidated; there were 2 or 3 that seemed to say the same thing. They also wanted to make sure the survey was tested for accessibility; there were some tables in the Word version that had to be translated to the web. The questions that involved the actual opinion of how people's experience was in technology were questions 25-33; the sub-committee hoped maybe they could be moved up. Rick commented that he hopes the recommendations were found helpful. John noted his understanding was that some of the feedback items were implemented in the questions; consolidating the number of questions; moving some of the very specific questions from the end to further up. John also noted that we were able to pull out some of those demographic issues that we could just pull from our own data system, instead of asking certain questions. There was a look at accessibility, and changes were made. He thanked this sub-committee for their work; the feedback was very helpful.

Resource: Danielle report that the list continues to be a fluid document; continually needing to be updated. Kelly commented that she will be meeting with the TCNJ intern, and offered to have her look at how to market it to consumers, the public, etc. She can also have her look at it to see how to disseminate the list. Danielle appreciated this offer.

SRC Annual Report: John reported that Bernice is now leading the effort to move our SRC report from the Word document into a high-production, glossy format for distribution; she is working with DHS to finalize this document. We will hopefully have it at the next meeting to hand out to everyone. Fr. Jim suggest, for those that are not bound by agency affiliation, to seriously consider taking several copies of this report, and making specific appointments with state and federal legislators to hand-deliver a copy as part of a brief conversation with them about this agency and what it does, and the support it needs; this is something he is planning to do.

Business Relations (BR): Kelly noted nothing new to report.

Policy Committee: Fr. Jim had nothing to report from this sub-committee.

Susan asked when 10:95 will be ready for review. John commented that we are first updating some of our policies, sub-regulatory documents, because we have to address operational issues. One of the first items he wants to send to the subcommittee are 3 draft policies that have to do with the 511 regulations; how we provide supported employment services, because the rules have changed under WIOA. Then, we also need to update our college services policy every year and we made some significant changes with that. John noted that he, Amanda, and Dan will begin working on 10:95 later in the month. Dan noted his objective is to have 10:95 done for the NJ register by the end of the federal fiscal year (September 30). Once the sub-committee meets to review the draft policies sent to them, John offered to set up a phone conference to go over any questions they may have.

Old Business, New Business, Comments:

- Future agenda items:
 - ✓ For the April meeting - Amanda to provide a little more information on the pre-employment transition services; just how that is being implemented.
 - ✓ Eva Scott has been scheduled to attend the 4/21 meeting. Should have the education admin code approved by then and she can talk more in detail about that.
 - ✓ For the June meeting, a representative from our Project Best program will be in attendance.
 - ✓ Legislative and advocacy sub-committee to be added to the June agenda.

Jennifer commented on the great program her company is involved in with the TCNJ summer program. They do internships with students with vision/hearing impairments. Students work a couple of hours a day; working in the bakery. One individual, in particular, from last semester, is doing a phenomenal job – working at the pizza station, 27 hrs. a week. She noted she is very happy the way the program is going; hands-on experience with management and job coaches. Fr. Jim noted that if there is anything the SRC can do to be supportive of those efforts, to please let us know. John noted that it was Jennifer's intervention that got us our first placement in the YES program; he's quite happy at the job there. John thanked Jennifer.

Adjournment

A motion was made and seconded, to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor, and the meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m. The next SRC meeting is scheduled for Friday, April 21, 2017.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine Cooper, CBVI – Administrative Assistant

cc