

**Interagency Council of Brevard  
Meeting Minutes  
September 12, 2012**

**Attendance:** Donald Blair, Jennifer Duros, Sherrie Fries, Jack Giordano, Robert Gramolini, Danielle Jones, Kathy Lowe, Heather Mack, Karen Orosz, Cathy Osaisai, Laura Pichardo, Lisa Rogers, Mariann Sampieri, Lynda Schuchert, Jennifer Secor, Linda Seegraves, Patty Smith, Nancy Taback, Heather Theobald, Cindy Wickham, Maryjane Wysocki.

**Remote Participants:** N/A

Meeting was held at Brevard Achievement Center in Rockledge.

Minutes were taken by Danielle Jones.

**Welcome and Introduction:** Lynda Schuchert opened the meeting followed by introductions. Thank you award presented to Danielle Jones for service as council secretary from 2010 through 2012.

**Mission Statement:** Jennifer Duros read the mission statement as discussed at PATH meeting in February. It is thought that the group will read the statement at the beginning of each meeting in order to remember the goals of our group.

**Review of Minutes:** Danielle reviewed August meeting minutes as taken by Jennifer Duros. Minutes were approved by Jennifer Secor and seconded by Heather Mack, all were in agreement.

**Treasurer's Report:** Kathy provided the financial report stating that based on Project 10 monies received, we were able to update the spectrum booklets and 800 copies are being printed for \$636.50. These will be dispersed at 10/06/12 and 11/16/12 Exceptional Education meetings to parents. Additionally, ICB labels were made to attach to the back of the ICB member's respective agency business cards and are available for use now. Total cost for labels was \$35 and current total in account is \$2460.25.

**Chamber Update:** Heather Theobald noted that there is a change as Brevard Workforce (BWF) is no longer able to fund the annual Chamber membership for ICB this year, although a reason was not provided. The stickers that Kathy discussed were not printed with BWF logo/information and the membership has not been paid yet. She suggested that we can go back to the original list of individual members to chip in (on record with ICB Secretary) and it was proposed for members to bring their donations to the October 2012 meeting.

Kathy reported that Wal-Mart gave LEAP monies and the mission is to get the name out there. She stated that she will check into utilizing some of the monies to cover the annual Chamber membership and getting reimbursed by Brevard Schools Foundation, since ICB

plans to attend under the concept of getting people with disabilities hired into the workforce. After discussion, Linda Seegraves approved this as Plan B and Cindy Wickham seconded, all were in agreement. Kathy reported that she would need to obtain an invoice from the Chamber in order to request the funds.

As Plan C, Maryjane volunteered to front the monies and have the group as a whole (ICB members) pay her back from the initial list. Idea was rejected as Plan B was already agreed upon.

### **Quarterly Presentation**

**Host Presentation:** Jennifer Secor noted that Don Hendricks initially planned to give the presentation as the program administrator; he will be on leave of absence until October 2012 due to health issues. Jennifer went on to say that there have been major changes to the Work Incentives Planning and Assistance (WIPA) Program through Brevard Achievement Center since it started eight years ago. BAC has a contract to provide WIPA services in 13 counties, but an end date was provided for the funding through the Social Security Administration (SSA) of June 30, 2012. Congress did not refinance the program and BAC was left scrambling to find funding as SSA was not able to set up the funding that quickly.

At the time, the State of Florida realized the value of WIPA services to clients as a whole and agreed to fund the services for Vocational Rehabilitation clients, until SSA is able to refinance the program. Jennifer noted that there is additional State funding for APD and APD eligible to provide WIPA services in Brevard County only.

Don Hendricks is the contact person and provides referrals to CWICs (Certified Work Incentives Coordinators). She noted that all of the CWICs have over six years of experience and are very knowledgeable. In order to utilize services, the referral has to be a VR client and the VR Counselor will put in the request for WIPA services.

Lastly, Jennifer noted that BAC initially provided WIPA services to 13 counties in our region, but has also agreed to cover an additional 13 counties in the Florida panhandle for VR clients. Any general questions regarding benefits can be referred to a staff member at 1-800-772-1213 and there is no need for a full plan to be completed. Maryjane added a second contact number for a work incentives liaison who knows both SSI and SSDI and her name is Lisa Payne. Lisa can be reached at 866-837-2079 ext 15747.

**Guest Presentation:** Maryjane Wysocki is a CWIC, but reports that she does not utilize the skills on a daily basis. She provided a Power Point presentation on “How to Get a Job and Keep Your Government Benefits”. Highlights are included below:

- Maryjane started by reviewing a couple of the common acronyms utilized while receiving WIPA services to include SSA, SSI, SSDI as well as FBR (Federal Benefit Rate) and SGA (Substantial Gainful Activity). She reported that the FBR is the highest amount of money that a recipient can receive from SSI per month,

which is \$698 in 2012. She noted that this figure is changed annually and is typically posted in late October for the new calendar year. For initial eligibility, Maryjane reported that SGA is the amount that a recipient cannot exceed in the previous 12-month period for both SSI and SSD. SGA is \$1010 in 2012.

- Overview
  - ❖ SSDI (Title II) is Social Security Disability Insurance and dates back to 1935 after World War I. She explained that we took care of the veterans and then the government realized help was needed for all in order to take care of workers and their families when a worker became ill or injured.
    - In this, a student with a diagnosed disability prior to age of 22 can file for SSA benefits under their parent's social security number if their parent is retired, disabled or deceased. This is called the childhood disability beneficiary (CDB), formerly known as Disabled Adult Child (DAC).
    - FICA (Federal Insurance Contributions Act) is 7.65% of your gross pay and covers SSDI and Medicare. Both the employer and employee pay this amount to FICAA. If an individual is self-employed they pay both portions, amounting to 15.30%."
  - ❖ SSI (Title XVI) is Supplemental Security Income and was signed into law by Richard Nixon in 1974 based on a person's disability and need. It comes from the recipients need for additional assistance and is paid out of the taxes that citizens pay.
    - SSI looks at an individual's financial resources as it is a form of welfare.
    - SSI differs from state to state.

\*\*Maryjane explained that SSI and SSDI run totally separate from each other and one does not know what the other does.

- Work Incentives Comparison
  - ❖ Student Earned Income Exclusion
    - SSI will "overlook" earned income up to a certain amount (currently \$1700/month, max \$6840/year) for students under age of 22 that are regularly attending school or plan to return to school in the new semester
    - Allows students to gain experience to put on their resume
    - Need proof of attending school for at least one month in the quarter and pay stubs showing amount of earned income on a monthly basis.

- ❖ 1619 (b)
  - Shows how much a SSI recipient can earn annually in gross wages before they are in jeopardy of losing their Medicaid coverage (\$30,259 in 2012)
  - Higher wages, lowers the monthly SSI monies until there is no cash payment
  - Cannot lose SSI due to work
  
- ❖ Impairment Related Work Expenses (IRWE)
  - Reviews the out of pocket expenses that support a person's disability which allows them to earn an income (transportation, medication, medical devices, personal care attendants)
  - Regardless if the items are also needed for non-work activities (for example, medicine)
  - All expenses must be disability related
  - Claim items by sending in receipts and SSA makes the final decision
  
- ❖ Plan for Achieving Self-Support (PASS)
  - Eight-page plan written and submitted to SSA that will allow recipient to save monies to cover a specific expense in excess of allowable SSI resource limits (\$2000 for individual and \$3000 for couples in 2012, subject to change annually) for approved purposes
  - SSI overlooks monies in the benefit calculation, allowing them to retain more of their income.
  - Plan must first be approved through SSA and any monies withdrawn without permission will put the beneficiary into a repayment situation since the SSI benefit was calculated based on saving these monies for the approved purpose.
  - Recipient can contact PASS CADRE in Atlanta for permission to use saved monies for something other than original intent
  - There are currently 45 PASS plans in the State of Florida
  - Typically savings for 18 months and must be reported quarterly, but have known them to actually last 3-7 years.
  - PASS CADRE will be in Ft. Pierce on September 26, 2012, contact Sheila Wilson at [Sheila\\_Wilson@apd.state.fl.us](mailto:Sheila_Wilson@apd.state.fl.us) if interested.
  
- ❖ Section 301(For adults who have been deemed medically recovered through a Continuing Disability Review)
  - SSA will allow for a recipient to continue in school if already enrolled in a VR-approved program or while participating in an IEP so that they can complete their education/training.
  - Recipient will still receive full SSA benefits as the goal is for them to become a taxpaying citizen

- Recipient will need to be enrolled in the program prior to their medical review or this is not a valid option

Maryjane reported that she is able to provide this presentation in a full 2-day seminar down to a 1/2 hr program if your agency has 8 people available to attend.

Kathy noted that she thinks Maryjane's presentation should be highlighted at a transition fair as this is relevant to the group. Discussions to resume at later date.

**Group Discussion:** Kathy noted that in conversations with Trish, who is working under Sue Carver, they would like to plan three transition fairs for the end of January 2013: North, Central and South Brevard. ICB is requested to be present and the fair will be held at a local high school. Kathy was looking for planning information details. She also reported that she would like to have Maryjane as the keynote speaker for her SSA presentation: SSA Work Incentives, for those already receiving benefits (noted must be marketed correctly as proposed by Don Blair.) She discussed coming up with flyers and programs to disperse to parents and teachers.

Group noted that although Central region is typically empty at these presentations, ICB will host transition fairs in North, Central and South Brevard. It is requested for the fairs to be spaced out over a few weeks as opposed to all being scheduled in one week. It was agreed for the fairs to be scheduled from 4-6:30pm to enable teachers and parents alike to attend, with the keynote presentation at 5:30pm.

Kathy noted that she would like for refreshments (to include pizza and drinks) to be served. Sherrie Fries agreed to work on food donations as it was discussed that ICB monies cannot be used for food purchases.

**Proposal for ICB Members:** Reviewed Articles presented at August meeting and chair/co-chair meeting regarding the direction of ICB, discussed for changes to be made to By-Laws. Votes were taken on each article.

Review of five categories:

- Student Focused Planning
- Student Development
- Interagency Collaboration
- Program Structure
- Family Involvement

**Article I: Organization Name and Background:**

Add: *Since 2008-2009, the Interagency Council's mission has been supported by Project 10: Transition Education Network (<http://www.project10.info/>).*

First: Nancy Taback Second: Linda Seegraves

**Article II: Purposes**

Change section from 5 to 3 purposes to make more concrete as Kathy noted that tracking is one at the state level to show the groups progress. Will now read:

1. *To create a forum for regularly sharing and disseminating information about respective agencies in order to enhance client services and outcomes in the community.*
2. *To enhance individual success by achieving appropriate measurable postsecondary goals in education (instruction) and/or training, employment and independent living skills.*
3. *To promote active participation within ICB sponsored activities (such as Transition Fairs, Job Fairs, and/or other community events) for the successful transition of individuals with disabilities.*

*These four indicators in the State Performance Plan (FL DOE) should guide the activities of the ICB:*

*Indicator 1: Graduation Rate (District data)*

*Indicator 2: Dropout Rate (District data)*

*Indicator 13: Postsecondary Goals (LEA Profile data- [www.fldoe.org/ese/pd/2012LEA/brevard.pdf](http://www.fldoe.org/ese/pd/2012LEA/brevard.pdf))*

*Indicator 14: Postsecondary Outcomes (FETPIP data- Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program- [www.fldoe.org/fetpip/](http://www.fldoe.org/fetpip/))*

Linda Seegraves questioned about how ICB has affected the ICB dropout rates and Heather Mack responded that we hold transition fairs, discuss work incentives, provide resources and the spectrum guide to provide students with focus about staying in school. Don Blair asked if we are being judged/evaluated on the criteria or if they are simply guidelines. It was noted that ICB is being tracked on who is working, their postsecondary education up to two years after graduation. It was also stressed that funding is determined by what is best for the district and what directly affects the students by proving that there is a need for continued services. Maryjane explained that we use the information to guide the group, but Linda stated that our group has nothing to measure it by like Heather does since she sees all of the other ICB's. Heather noted that our group meets regularly, comes together on focus, has regular attendance, moves forward with products and information and involves networking with other agencies.

First: Jennifer Duros Second: Robert Gramolini, all approved.

#### **Article VI: Order of Business**

Current proposed changes (to be voted on) read:

Change this section to the following:

1. *Networking: Before the meeting begins*
2. *Business Portion of the Meeting: Includes: Welcome and Introductions, Review of Mission Statement and Purposes, Summary of Minutes and Financial Report (20 minutes)*
3. *Presentation: The host or hostess of the monthly meeting will be responsible for securing someone to speak (30 minutes) on a Topic of Interest (See attachment)*

- voted upon by the membership at the June meeting (the host/hostess' choice), OR they may choose to speak on behalf of their own agency to provide updates.*
4. *Task Force Break-Out Sessions (40 minutes)*
  5. *Task Force Reports (10 minutes)*
  6. *Comments, General Announcements and Next Meeting Announcement (15 minutes)*

*Special timelines to remember:*

**August**—*install officers (every two years- next installation is 2014)*

**September**—*review of task force goal(s), create an action plan to reach the goal(s), and elect a chair and co-chair for the task forces.*

**April**—*election committee appointed (every two years) and evaluate the task force activities for the year.*

**June**—*elect officers (every two years- next election 2014) and update Topics of Interest for presentations for the next year*

Major discussions ensued on this topic to include:

- Changing things up and adding more time to task force break-outs since the group as a whole pretty much knows what everyone one does since most are consistently in attendance.
- As it is currently listed, the group would go back to the way that things were run before PATH meeting in February
- Task force break-outs need more time in order to get things done
- Although this was previous order as written in currently by-laws (1-7), idea was that this would provide us with additional structure
- Questioned how this fits into PATH with quarterly special meetings/topics
- Kathy noted that the group has been in disarray since PATH, which has not helped us. She noted that the group never spent enough time on review.
- Don noted that the host schedule is completed with 4 presentations (green dates) and all were in agreement for this method. Next meetings are for November 2012 with Fair Housing, February 2013at local high school and May 2013 regarding employment. The host would provide the food and place, not the presenter.
- Additional concerns about new people coming to meetings, if only for task force break-outs as they will not know what is happening and may not want to come back. Discussion suggested that we have 70 minute task force meetings on those days with light discussion in the beginning to introduce new people. Additional discussion included 40 minute task force break-outs and 30 minute presentations with the host choosing presentation.
- Discussion tabled at this time

**Article VIII: Task Forces**

Current proposed changes (to be voted on) read:

Change this section to the following:

*The permanent task forces shall be:*

1. *Employment/Job Fair Task Force: this task force will sponsor, organize and conduct at least one Job Fair each school year (beginning with 2013-2014) with the involvement of all ICB agencies.*
2. *Transition Fair Task Force: this task force will sponsor, organize and conduct at least one Transition Fair each year (beginning January/February 2013) with the involvement of all ICB agencies.*

Discussion:

- Maryjane questioned if we want to mandate employment task force to host a job fair yearly. She explained that if it went well, it could be done again, but was it fair to be mandated.
- Jennifer explained that nothing seems to be getting done, besides talk and that everyone in ICB needs to participate in a tangible product as this is the idea of ICB.
- Danielle reported that the issue with employment task force has always been with attendance as the members are not always consistent so we have to explain everything at meetings, so that nothing gets done. It may make it better for the group as a whole if there are only two task forces.
- Jennifer added that temporary task forces (i.e. Chamber of Commerce Task Force) can be implemented, as necessary
- Robert noted that he likes the idea of a presentation for new people since he has not learned much in the few months that he has been in attendance, although there is a lot of back and forth. He thinks that new people coming in should present who they are in the beginning as this is important for networking with them.
- Heather Theobald noted that if the group only broke into task forces, new people may not be as willing to help or learn about ICB as they will be lost.
- Nancy Taback requested for the committee to change Article VI and accept Article VIII.
- Patty Smith states that ICB is a “treasure trove” of information and wanted to know how information is disseminated. She explained that teacher’s priorities are dictated as to what they need and where they need to be. She thinks that the group needs to keep it basic and get it going. We should make it a priority for teachers in “little bits”.
- Maryjane said that this was decided in June and questioned if we would market these ideas. She explained that at the Chamber meetings, they make the intro and a one-minute commercial to share with the group as they may have new information to share.

Vote: Accept Article VIII with adding present presentation to businesses, table discussions for Article VI now.

First: Nancy Taback Second: Robert Gramolini

New Task Force chairs will be selected at the October 2012 meeting,

**Announcements:**

- ❖ Don handed out a flyer about a program that Easter Seals is hosting in October for a special needs planning educational seminar. Event to be held on Monday,



October 29 from 7-9pm at Palm Bay Vocational Services Programs offices for Easter Seals. Presentation given by Mary Anne Ehlert, president and founder of Protected Tomorrows, Inc.

**Next Meeting:** Scheduled for October 10th, hosted by Vocational Rehabilitation at Brevard Workforce in Rockledge and will also be available remotely.