**State of California**

**Health and Human Services Agency**

**Department of Rehabilitation**

**DHHAC meeting notes**

**Thursday 06/15/23**

**DOR Central Office, 721 Capitol Mall, Room 301, Sacramento, CA 95814, with virtual participation via Zoom.**

**In-attendance:**

DHHAC Members (virtual), Callie Frye (DHHAC Chair), Toni Chapman, Frank Lester, Hugh Lafler, Michelle Bronson

DOR staff (in-person): Sue Pelbath, Deputy Director, Specialized Services Division, Michael Thomas, Assistant Deputy Director, Specialized Services Division, Craig Rubenstein, Program Manager DHHS, Jennifer Wilbon, Advisory Committee Analyst

DOR ASL interpreters (virtual): Judy Sophn, Shelley M.

DOR ASL interpreters (in-person): Steven Jablonski-Plescia

DOR staff (virtual): Tiffany Barlow, Program Coordinator DHHS, Marnee Wafer-Hoecker, Angelica Martinez

**Item 1: Welcome and Introductions**

Callie Frye (DHHAC Chair) reviewed DHHAC rules. Callie welcomed attendees, conducted roll call, and established a quorum.

**Item 2: Public Comment**

Callie asked public members if there were any issues or concerns to address that were not on the agenda.

No public comment made.

## **Item 3: Update Regarding the March 16, 2023, Meeting Minutes**

## **(1:25 – 1:30 p.m.)**

Jennifer Wilbon, Advisory Committee Analyst, Specialized Services Division: Questions/comments regarding the March 16, 2023, meeting minutes. Minutes from the last meeting approved. There were no questions or concerns.

## **Item 4: Introduction and Updates**

## **(1:30 – 2:00 p.m.)**

Victor Duron, Chief Deputy Director, Executive Division. Victor provided federal, legislative, and department updates. Some highlights are as follows:

* Victor shared his background and experience.
* Acknowledgments to members and staff.
* Important events occurring during the month of June.
* Federal Senate updates were provided.
* DOR executive team went to DC in April.
* More states are doing a better job at student services.
* There are currently 49 vocational rehabilitation programs in the nation.
* Went over the technical assistance areas needed in California.
* Although California is experiencing a budget deficit, the department is in a strong financial position.
* Efforts made around diversity, equity, inclusion, and access were discussed. Also shared and discussed serving individuals with disabilities within communities and subcommunities.
* Subminimum wage comes to an end by 2025.
* Discussed engagement with the behavioral health system.
* Discussed student services, partnering with different organizations, and discussed employment outcomes.
* Discussed grants and initiatives.
* Funding ends for the TBI program next year.
* Went over recent changes in leadership.
* Discussed intervention, priorities, partnering with organizations serving youth; working on engaging justice involved youth and youth in the foster care system.

Committee members comments and questions

* What type of system does the department feel will benefit DOR consumers?
* Regarding employment services, the number of consumers coming into the department has dropped, what has caused this? How do we get the numbers up?

## **Item 5: Pathway to a High School Diploma (AB 181 and SB 154)**

## **(2:15 – 3:30 p.m.)**

Nick Wavrin, Education Programs Consultant, California Department of Education, Special Education Division. Nick shared some of the following highlights:

* Students with exceptional needs enter high school, complete their coursework of study, and complete high school with a certificate of completion.
* There are alternate pathways to a high school diploma.
* Discussion of the impact/disadvantages of not having a high school diploma.
* Students need to be prepared for competitive integrated employment.
* Senate Bill 639 eliminates subminimum wage, will eliminate individuals with disabilities to be paid less.
* There are separate pathways to a high school diploma for students with disabilities, including one newly defined diploma pathway.
* Senate Bill 74, The Budget Act of 2020, authorized the alternative pathways to a high school workgroup to meet for the examination of existing and potential additional pathways to a high school diploma for students with disabilities.
* Discussed the three proposed pathways to a high school diploma.
* California education code section 51225.31 went into effect 06/30/22. Students with exceptional needs can graduate from high school through a newly defined diploma pathway by meeting certain criteria.
* Senate Bill 154, Budget Act of 2022, focuses on those who are not eligible for the California Alternate Assessment and may benefit from

demonstrating completion of the state graduation requirements through alternate means.

* The IEP team is to notify students about the program before they are in grade 10.
* A student cannot go back and retroactively get a diploma.
* Differences between local and state requirements were shared with included examples.
* The receipt of a diploma ends special education services for a student/ends FAPE.
* Individuals that qualify under deaf and hard of hearing will qualify under the first pathway.

Committee members comments and questions

* Does the alternate pathway to a high school diploma start for individuals as a freshman?
* If a student already earned a certificate of completion, can they go back to get a high school diploma?
* What are the differences between local and state requirements?
* Are transitional services included in this program?
* Are the number of deaf and hard of hearing teachers increasing or decreasing?

Public members comments and questions

* Deaf and hard of hearing students, where do they fall into the alternate pathways program, which pathway do they fall under?

## **Item 6: Proposed DHHAC Bylaws**

## **(3:30 – 3:45 p.m.)**

Members did not receive the updated bylaws. Discussion regarding the bylaws will be continued at the next DHHAC meeting.

## **Item 7: Identification of Future Agenda Items**

## **(3:45 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.)**

DHHAC members discussed possible agenda items and logistics for future meetings.

## Department comments and questions

* Discussion of Bylaws and how Bylaws guide the committee.
* Aware of the needs regarding the Internet and will contact ITSD when there are more adjustments that need to be done.
* The committee can discuss whether they think RCD’s should be members.
* Advisory committees are designed to come to the department with advice and recommendations, so in general, DOR staff is not on the committee. It is ok to collaborate; however, if a DOR staff is on the committee, the bylaws will have to be significantly changed to include a DOR employee.

Committee members comments and questions

* How is the department increasing referrals through the state of California?
* Would like to request a presentation from OJT about employment services.
* Inquired to see if RCD’s can be members or allow them time to share and talk at meetings.
* Is it a conflict of interest if an RCD is a committee member?

Public members comments and questions

* RCD’s have issues that they would like to address and discuss and would like to have the opportunity to speak or become a member on the advisory committee.
* Believe it to beneficial for an RCD to participate in the committee.

## **\*Adjourn (4:00 p.m.)**