

**Summary of Input and Recommendations of the State
Rehabilitation Council; Response of the Designated State Unit;
and Explanations for Rejection of Input or Recommendations**

**South Dakota's State Rehabilitation Council
for the General Agency
South Dakota Board of Vocational Rehabilitation (Board)**

As reflected in the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation's Annual Report for Fiscal Year 2011:

The State Rehabilitation Council – is established in Section 105 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended (Act) and 34 CFR 361.16-361.17 of its implementing regulations.

The State Rehabilitation Council - known in South Dakota as the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation – gives advice to and works in partnership with the vocational rehabilitation agency in South Dakota - Division of Rehabilitation Services (Division).

The Board of Vocational Rehabilitation plays a significant role in ensuring that the vocational rehabilitation program operates effectively and remains responsive to the needs of those served.

The Board of Vocational Rehabilitation partners with the Division of Rehabilitation Services to develop policies, plan activities, evaluate program effectiveness and carry out other functions related to the vocational rehabilitation program.

The working relationship between the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation and the Division of Rehabilitation Services is a partnership focused on ensuring that individuals with disabilities receive appropriate, timely, and effective vocational rehabilitation services. The Division of Rehabilitation Services has been responsive to inquires from the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation.

The Board of Vocational Rehabilitation met on four different occasions during this reporting period: December 6/7, 2010 in Sioux Falls; March 14/15 2011 in Ft. Pierre; June 14/15, 2011 in Sioux Falls; and September 28/29, 2011 in Pierre. These meetings were open to the public and held in accordance with the Rehabilitation Act and the State's open meeting law, SDCL, 1-25-1.

Summary of Input and Recommendations:

- Several years ago, the chairpersons of the Board of Vocational Rehabilitation, Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired (BSBVI) and Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) determined it was a priority to meet on a regular basis. They have discussed collaborative efforts and specific outcomes including disseminating a joint solicitation for nominations, a joint review committee for the Governor's Awards and National Disability Employment Awareness Month activities.

Division's Response: The Division supports the three councils in coordinating their meetings and coordinated efforts.

- The Chairpersons of the three entities also met periodically to discuss and review the status of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment and updates were provided at meetings. Consultants hired to conduct the study met with the Boards and Council at different stages throughout the study, and provided assistance with developing the goals, priorities and strategies for their respective State Plan documents.

Division's Response: The Division supports the three chairpersons in coordinating their activities and the recommendations on the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment. .

- The BVR, BSVI and SILC also exchange meeting minutes and have standing agenda items at each meeting.

Division's Response: The Division supports the three councils in sharing their meeting minutes.

- The Board hosted their December meeting in Sioux Falls to enable students and others involved with Project SEARCH to share information about the program. The Departments of Labor and Education, Transition Services Liaison Project, Division of Developmental Disabilities, Freedom to Work Project, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and two major hospitals (Sioux Falls Avera McKennan and Aberdeen St. Lukes) are involved in the program, which provides competitive employment and teaches skills in a safe and supported environment. Students receive accommodations, adaptations and on-site job coaching services. Job placement is based upon the student's experiences, strengths and skills. Students spoke to members about their experiences with the program.

Division's Response: The Division supports the VR Boards involvement and input from the Project Search.

- The Sioux Falls meeting included a new member orientation. Four individuals attended the orientation. Content included: overview of the Rehabilitation Act; organizational outline (federal and state agencies and staff); role of the Board as the State Rehabilitation Council and its infrastructure; and an overview of South Dakota Advocacy Services, including the Client Assistance Program.

Division's Response: The Division supports the new member orientation and participates as requested.

- Division staff who participated in the Future's Initiative presented during the meeting. Members learned about various staff activities e.g., attended supervisor's meetings, redesigned the VR brochure and IL assessment, revised mental health and developmental disabilities agreements, and designed career assessment tools and training. Members commended the Division for their vision in implementing this program for succession planning and ultimately strengthening services for consumers.

Division's Response: The Division supports the Futures initiative and sharing this information with the Board.

- The Executive Committee presented the Annual Report in draft format during the meeting. Members were asked to submit edits prior to the end of the month. The report was finalized and submitted to the Governor and RSA Commissioner as well as other interested entities (e.g., Statewide Independent Living Council, Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired).

Division's Response: The Division provided input into the Annual Report as directed by the Board of VR.

- The Boards of Vocational Rehabilitation and Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired and the Divisions of Rehabilitation Services and Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired provided financial assistance to ten communities to host National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM) events. The Board received the evaluations of these events, which provide education to the public regarding the strengths and talents that people with disabilities bring to the workforce. The Board and Division also approved financial assistance to conduct activities in 2011.

Division's Response: The Division supports all the NDEAM events across the state and these events have had positive results in the communities.

- The Consumer Services Committee reported to the Board regarding their work on two draft Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs). The first MOU was with the two vocational rehabilitation agencies and the Division of Developmental Disabilities, which was updated to identify the services provided by each agency, adding descriptors of services and how the divisions can fund services jointly. The second MOU was with the two vocational rehabilitation agencies and the community mental health centers. This MOU focuses on employment and how to best coordinate services to meet the needs of individuals diagnosed with severe mental illness.

Division's Response: The Division incorporated the recommendations from the VR Board on these Memorandums of Understanding.

- Dr. Greg Cooch, Black Hills State University, provided an update on the post high school outcomes study (Office of Special

Education's Indicator 14). Indicator 14 is the percent of youth who had IEP's, no longer in secondary school and who have been competitively employed, enrolled in postsecondary school, or both, within one year of leaving high school. Overall, the data showed that students with disabilities who participated in Catch the Wave, Project Skills, SEARCH or self-advocacy, were:

- 26% more likely to be employed and postsecondary only, or
- 51% more likely to be employed only, or
- 100% more likely or twice as likely to be in post-secondary only.

Post-school success is dependent upon the collaborative efforts of multiple partners: Department of Education, school districts, educational cooperatives, special education teachers, Department of Labor, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, parents and other providers.

Division's Response: The Division is pleased with the results of Indicator 14 as it provides outcome data for the Division's transition programs.

- The Board initiated a joint solicitation of nominations for board and council membership, conducted jointly with Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired and Statewide Independent Living Council following the March meeting. Nomination packets were mailed to over 400 people and organizations across the state. Nominees were submitted to the Governor for review and action and appointments followed.

Division's Response: The Division helps recruit nominees for the various councils.

- The State Plan submission process was discussed, attachments were drafted and posted on the agency's website for additional comment. The Board and Division gather review and analyze information through various means during the reporting period: (e.g., meeting with consumers and family members, joint conversations with other boards/councils, associations, employers,

and human resource managers). Additionally, the State Plan document was presented for final review during the June meeting and the Board approved it for submittal to Rehabilitation Services Administration.

Division's Response: The Division incorporates the recommendations from the VR Board into the State Plans.

- The Board and Division identified representatives to attend the Partners in Policymaking listening and graduation sessions on April 9, 2011 hosted by South Dakota Advocacy Services. Facilitated discussion took place on a variety of issues which impact persons living with a disability (e.g., vocational rehabilitation, independent living, transportation, education, housing and Social Security). Comments were shared with the Board and Division at the June meeting.

Division's Response: The Division supports receiving input from the Partners in Policymaking listening sessions.

- The Board provided financial assistance to support the Governor's Awards ceremony, which recognizes the efforts of individuals, employers, and organizations for their contributions to the employment of persons with disabilities. Other collaborating partners included the Divisions of Rehabilitation Services and Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired, Board of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired and the Department of Human Services.

Division's Response: The Division helps promote nominations for the Governor's awards as these are distinguished awards to businesses, individuals with disabilities and individuals who promote the employment of individuals with disabilities..

- A presentation on the Post High School Vocational Transition Summary was presented. This study was designed to determine the educational and training needs of young South Dakotans with intellectual disabilities considered to have severe or multiple disabilities, which have been on an IEP and do not have the cognitive ability to pass entrance requirements for post-secondary

education. An overall need was identified for a post-secondary program or service beyond what is currently available to provide young adults with significant disabilities to successfully learn job skills that would provide meaningful work. Other findings concluded that programs such as Youth Leadership Forum, Catch the Wave, Project Skills, Project SEARCH and Partners in Policymaking are pivotal elements in helping students become successful. Consensus was that this information should be made available to the public.

Division's Response: The Division supports the Post High School Vocational Transition Study and sharing the results with the VR Board.

- Project SEARCH update included information from vocational rehabilitation staff, educational cooperative staff and a representative from Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center. Items covered: graduation ceremonies of students who participated in the program this past year, available internships, and plans for 2011-12 (e.g., number of students accepted to date, job placement results for students who finished Project SEARCH). Members recognized that it's the combined efforts of the all parties: schools, business community, vocational rehabilitation services, and other providers that results in a win-win situation for all involved.

Division's Response: The Division supports the Project Search initiatives and the results we are seeing from these programs.

- A discussion topic was about how to share information with the public. Areas of discussion included social networking, use of technology, client confidentiality, access issues (i.e., readily accessible information), and social media policies. An additional item was the need for working through the state's Bureau of Information and Telecommunications process to ensure that state guidelines are followed. A motion was made to have technology added as a standing agenda item.

Division's Response: The Division supports the utilization of social media and presents to the VR Board during their quarterly meetings.

- Standing agenda items include employment related initiatives. The Board and Division realize the importance of linkages with the business community and have identified members and staff to work with different projects. Updates included: Employer Resource Network, Project SEARCH, Business Resource Network, and the Freedom to Work Project. In support of these efforts, the Board approved financial support for an employer/human resource community event in Aberdeen. The Business Resource Network (BRN) Director provided information to the Board. Suggestions were made to have the Board and BRN meet in the future to get better acquainted and to get feedback from them on areas such as recruiting, hiring working with people with disabilities, what's working well and areas for improvement.

Division's Response: The Division supports these agenda items and will assist the VR Board in these presentations.

- The Board and Division encouraged members to attend meetings, events or training to enhance the member's ability to understand and meet the diverse needs of individuals with disabilities. Throughout this reporting period, members attended various functions (NDEAM events, employer training sessions, Fall Conference).

Division's Response: The Division promotes these events and trainings with the VR Board members and encourages them to attend when they can.