

Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services
602 S. Lawrence Street - Montgomery, Alabama

Friday, December 6, 2019

10:00 AM – 12:00 Noon

AGENDA

Call to Order	Eddie Williams, Chair
Prayer	
Verification of Quorum	Karen Freeman
Verification of Open Meeting Act Notice	Eddie Williams
Approval of Agenda	Eddie Williams
Approval of Minutes for the Sept. 13, 2019 meeting	Eddie Williams
Executive Leadership Team Recognition	Eddie Williams Jane Elizabeth Burdeshaw, Commissioner
• Stephen K. Simpson, Staff Attorney, Legal Office	
<i>New Business:</i>	Eddie Williams
• Approval - ADRS 2019 Annual Report	Eddie Williams
• Video Presentation	Office of Communications & Information Staff
Board Member Questions and Division Updates	Executive Leadership Team
Commissioner's Comments & Legislative Request	Jane Elizabeth Burdeshaw
<i>Announcements:</i>	
Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services newly <u>proposed</u> meetings for 2020: <i>Board meetings will be held on Thursdays instead of Fridays</i>	
• Thursday, March 5, 2020 – 10:00 a.m. , Montgomery/State Office, Large Conference Room	
• Thursday, June 11, 2020 – 10:00 a.m. , Location: TBD	
• Thursday, Sept. 17, 2020 – 10:00 a.m. , Montgomery/State Office, Large Conference Room	
• Thursday, Dec. 3, 2020 – 10:00 a.m. , Montgomery/State Office, Large Conference Room	
Board Business/Discussion	Eddie Williams
Adjourn	Eddie Williams

Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services

Minutes

Dec. 6, 2019

Call to Order

Mr. Eddie Williams, board chair, called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. in the large conference room at the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) State Office in Montgomery.

Prayer

Dr. Graham Sisson (Governor's Office on Disability), opened the board meeting with prayer.

Verification of Quorum

Board members present: Mr. Eddie Williams, board chair; Mrs. Penny Foster, board vice-chair; Mrs. Leah Patterson Lust; Mr. Jimmie Varnado; and Mr. Charles Wilkinson. A quorum was declared.

Mr. Williams reported that Ms. Michelle Glaze was out of town and Mr. Mitch Strickland was not feeling well.

Verification of the Open Meeting Act Notice

Mrs. Karen Freeman verified that the Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services meeting for Dec. 6, 2019, was successfully posted on the Alabama secretary of state's website on Jan. 22, 2019.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Williams asked for a motion to approve the agenda. The motion to approve the agenda was made by Mr. Varnado and seconded by Mr. Wilkinson. The agenda was approved unanimously.

Approval of Minutes for Sept. 13, 2019 Meeting

The minutes from the Sept. 13, 2019, meeting were mailed prior to the board meeting. Mr. Williams stated that if there were no corrections, the minutes would stand approved as presented. The minutes were approved unanimously by board members present.

Executive Leadership Team Recognition

Stephen K. Simpson, attorney, ADRS Legal office

On behalf of the Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services, Mr. Williams, board chair, presented Mr. Stephen K. Simpson with a certificate of appreciation from Gov. Kay Ivey in recognition of Mr. Simpson's retirement after 31 years of service to the State of Alabama, effective Jan. 1, 2020. Mr. Williams thanked Mr. Simpson for his loyal and dedicated service to the citizens of the state. On behalf of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) Executive Leadership Team,

Commissioner Burdeshaw expressed her appreciation for Mr. Simpson's faithful service to ADRS and its mission. Mr. Simpson's knowledge and leadership have established a firm foundation for ADRS' strong legal standards and principles. As legal counsel for the department, Mr. Simpson was always guided by his commitment to our mission and genuine care and concern for Alabamians with disabilities.

Mr. Simpson thanked everyone and stated he enjoyed his career at ADRS.

Cynthia C. Pitts, paralegal, ADRS Legal office

On behalf of the Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services, Mr. Williams, board chair, presented Mrs. Cindy Pitts with a certificate of appreciation from Gov. Kay Ivey in recognition of Mrs. Pitts' retirement after 30 years of service to the state of Alabama, effective Jan. 1, 2020. Mr. Williams thanked Ms. Pitts for her loyal and dedicated service to the citizens of the state. On behalf of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) Executive Leadership Team, Commissioner Burdeshaw expressed her appreciation to Mrs. Pitts as paralegal to the legal counsel for the department. Mrs. Pitts has shown passion, heart, and steadfast commitment to our mission and genuine care and concern for Alabamians with disabilities.

Mrs. Pitts thanked everyone and stated she enjoyed her career at ADRS.

Commissioner Burdeshaw announced that a retirement reception honoring Mr. Simpson and Mrs. Pitts will be held on Thursday, Dec. 19, 2019 at 1:00 p.m. in the large conference room at the State Office in Montgomery.

New Business

Together Success, the 2019 Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services Annual Report

Mr. Williams moved that the board approve and adopt the 2019 Annual Report submitted and to authorize the staff of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services' Office of Communication and Information to make any necessary minor text and design changes prior to its publication. Mr. Varnado seconded the motion. The 2019 Annual Report was approved and adopted unanimously.

Kathleen McGehee, director, Office of Communications and Information (OCI)

On behalf of the Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services, Mr. Williams expressed appreciation to Ms. McGehee, director, Office of Communications and Information (OCI), and OCI staff for the great publication.

On behalf of the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) Executive Leadership Team, Commissioner Burdeshaw expressed her appreciation to Ms. McGehee in recognition of her

retirement after 20 years of loyal service to ADRS, effective Jan. 1, 2020. Ms. McGehee's experience and expertise will be missed.

Mr. Rick Couch, public information specialist, and Mr. Paul Dunbar, audiovisual specialist, provided a video presentation highlighting a consumer success story, Diyari Askew of Chambers County. Diyari has arthrogryposis, which makes it difficult for her to use her hands. Her dream was to be able to feed herself and do her schoolwork. Through feeding clinics, her mother, Ms. Cassie Laird, said she is now able to use a spoon on her own. Diyari can also now hold a pencil or pen to complete her schoolwork. Ms. Laird said they have benefited greatly from Children's Rehabilitation Services.

Mr. Varnado highlighted one annual report story with a connection to Youth Leadership Forum (YLF). Logan Horton, a native of Grove Hill, stood out because he was a recipient of Vocational Rehabilitation Services who attended YLF after his junior year at Clarke County High School. Logan said that YLF was the reason he decided to attend college, and he is now in his first year as a middle school history teacher at Chickasaw High School. Mr. Varnado found a quote from Logan especially inspiring. Logan said when addressing his students, "I want them to understand the importance of being a good person and a kind person. I think at the end of the day, all you are is how you treat someone else who can do nothing for you."

Board Member Questions and Division Updates

The Executive Leadership Team members were provided an opportunity to give updates to their written reports.

Mrs. Cathy Caldwell introduced Ms. Stacey Neumann, maternal and child health coordinator. Ms. Neumann joined the Children's Rehabilitation Service (CRS) State Office staff effective Oct. 1, 2019. As maternal and child health coordinator, Ms. Neumann will prepare and submit the children and youth special health care needs portion of the annual application and report for Maternal and Child Health Block Grant. She will also serve as team leader for the CoIIN project. Additionally, Ms. Neumann will lead CRS quality assurance/quality improvement initiatives.

Statement of Economic Interests

Mr. Simpson provided a reminder that the Statement of Economic Interests should be completed and filed with the Alabama Ethics Commission no later than Tuesday, April 30, 2020, for calendar year 2019. The Statement of Economic Interests form may be completed by visiting www.ethics.alabama.gov. Specific instructions for completing the form are available on the website, if needed. Please note the Alabama Ethics Commission could assess fines against non-filers and late filers.

Commissioner's Comments

Commissioner Burdeshaw introduced Mrs. Shay Cannon as the new chief financial officer (CFO) for Finance & Purchasing. Mrs. Cannon was serving as assistant CFO to Suzette Taylor prior to her retirement.

Commissioner Burdeshaw introduced Mrs. April Turner as the new director for the State Head Injury Program. Mrs. Turner will serve in the position held by Mrs. Maria Crowley prior to her retirement.

Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Monitoring Report

Commissioner Burdeshaw reported that she received the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Monitoring report based on RSA's on-site visit on July 23-27, 2018. The purpose of the monitoring was to assess the performance of the Vocational Rehabilitation Service (VRS) and Supported Employment programs and to identify strategies and corrective actions to improve program and fiscal performance. The monitoring period covered 2015, 2016, and part of 2017. This was the best monitoring report that ADRS has received in a long time. Commissioner Burdeshaw has been working closely with VRS leadership to respond to the monitoring report within the 20-business day timeframe.

Early Intervention: Giving Children A Strong Start

Commissioner Burdeshaw reported Alabama's Early Intervention System (AEIS) is an entitlement program and a division of Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS). AEIS continues to grow and requires support for infants and toddlers birth to age 3 with disabilities/developmental delays and their families. The Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services approved the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) Operations Plan for FY 2019-2020 during the September 2019 board meeting. ADRS conducted internal budget hearings for FY 2021 with each division of the department. It was determined that AEIS is still in need of additional state funds, despite the substantial increase provided by the Alabama Legislature during the last legislative session. While ADRS greatly appreciated the support through FY 2020 appropriations, the program continues to grow at an average rate 349 additional children per year. The cost to serve 349 children for one year is \$1,666,824, so ADRS is requesting that additional funding in FY 2021.

Commissioner Burdeshaw and Mrs. Shay Cannon recently met with Mr. Kelly Butler, Finance Director, and other finance department representatives on Dec. 5, 2019 to express appreciation for last year's support for AEIS and to request additional state funds for FY 2021.

The Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services offered their support and encouraged Commissioner Burdeshaw to move forward with the additional request of \$1,666,824 of AEIS state funds.

Executive Order: State of Alabama, "Model Employer"

Commissioner Burdeshaw reported that she has been working closely with Dr. Graham Sisson (Governor's Office on Disability), the Governor's Office, and State Personnel Department about the possibility of Gov. Ivey signing an executive order making the State of Alabama a "Model Employer." Other states have recently passed similar measures encouraging their state governments to proactively work to hire and retain employees with disabilities. We will continue to promote this idea and provide research and assistance to the governor's staff as needed. As a result of the discussion, the Governor's Office is forming a task force dedicated to investigating better policy on the inclusion

of persons with disabilities in the workplace. Commissioner Burdeshaw and Dr. Sisson will be a part of this group.

Legislative Request: Alabama Work Opportunity Tax Credit

Commissioner Burdeshaw requested permission from the Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services to pursue an Alabama Work Opportunity Tax Credit. She had recently been encouraged to do so by the State Rehabilitation Council, the Alabama Workforce Council, and other disability advocacy groups. Like the executive order, this type of legislation has recently passed in other states. It would be in addition to the federal work opportunity tax credit. Mr. Williams moved that the Board approve and adopt the legislative measure presented by Commissioner Burdeshaw for an Alabama Work Opportunity Tax Credit for employers who hire qualified individuals with disabilities. Mr. Charles Wilkinson seconded the motion and the motion was approved unanimously. Commissioner Burdeshaw will draft a bill, pursue sponsorship in the Alabama House and Senate, and promote the passage of legislation.

Announcements

Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services meetings for 2020 will be held on Thursdays instead of Fridays.

- Thursday, March 5, 2020 – 10:00 a.m., Montgomery/State Office, Large Conference Rm.
- Thursday, June 11, 2020 – 10:00 a.m., Opelika, ADRS Office, Conference Rm.
- Thursday, Sept. 17, 2020 – 10:00 a.m., Montgomery/State Office, Large Conference Rm.
- Thursday, Dec. 3, 2020 – 10:00 a.m., Montgomery/State Office, Large Conference Rm.

The next quarterly board meeting will be Thursday, March 5, 2020, at 10:00 a.m. in the large conference room at the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services office in Montgomery.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:01 a.m.

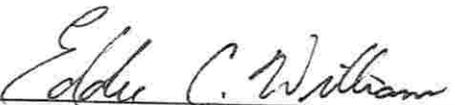
Minutes were taken by Karen Freeman.

Respectfully submitted:



Jane E. Burdeshaw, Commissioner

Approved:



Eddie Williams, Chair