

Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services
602 S. Lawrence Street - Montgomery, Alabama
Thursday, March 5, 2020
10:00 AM – 12:00 Noon

AGENDA

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| 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 Dec. 6, 2019 meeting | Eddie Williams |
| Executive Leadership Team: Welcome/Introductions | Eddie Williams Jane Elizabeth Burdeshaw, Commissioner |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ashley Hamlett, General Counsel, Legal Office• Jill West, Governmental Relations Manager, Office of Communication and Information | |
| <i>New Business:</i> | Eddie Williams |
| Children's Rehabilitation Service (CRS) Presentation | Cathy Caldwell, CRS Assistant Commissioner |
| Board Member Questions and Division Updates | Executive Leadership Team |
| Commissioner's Comments & Legislative Update | Jane Elizabeth Burdeshaw |
| <i>Announcements:</i> | |
| Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services upcoming meetings for 2020: Note: <i>Board meetings will be held on Thursdays instead of Fridays.</i> | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thursday, June 11, 2020 – 10:00 a.m., Opelika, ADRS Office, Conference Room• 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 |

....enabling Alabama's children and adults with disabilities to achieve their maximum potential.

Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services

Minutes

March 5, 2020

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

Mrs. Betsy Prince, Alabama's Early Intervention System, Director, opened the board meeting with prayer.

Verification of Quorum

Board members present: Mr. Eddie Williams, board chair; Mrs. Penny Foster, board vice-chair; Ms. Michelle Glaze, Mrs. Leah Patterson Lust; Mr. Mitch Strickland, and Mr. Jimmie Varnado. A quorum was declared.

Mr. Williams reported that Mr. Charles Wilkinson had a scheduling conflict and was unable to attend the meeting.

Verification of the Open Meeting Act Notice

Mrs. Karen Freeman verified that the Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services meeting for March 5, 2020, was successfully posted on the Alabama secretary of state's website on Jan. 14, 2020.

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 Dec. 6, 2019 Meeting

The minutes from the Dec. 6, 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 by unanimous consent.

Executive Leadership Team: Welcome/Introductions

Ashley Hamlett, General Counsel

On behalf of the Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services, Mr. Williams, board chair, and Commissioner Burdeshaw welcomed Mrs. Ashley Hamlett and Mrs. Jill West to the board meeting.

Commissioner Burdeshaw reported Mrs. Hamlett is the new General Counsel and Assistant Attorney General. She joined the department on Feb. 18, 2020 after completing her work with the Alabama State Board of Medical Examiners.

Mrs. Hamlett's work history includes: the State Department of Education (when ADRS was still a division of this department), the Department of Public Health, State Personnel as a Governmental Hearing Officer, and Jones Law School as Legal Writing Director and Assistant Professor. She graduated with her Juris Doctorate from the University of Alabama Law School and with a bachelor's in Journalism from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Jill West, Governmental Relations Manager

In addition, Commissioner Burdeshaw reported Mrs. Jill West is the new Governmental Relations Manager. She will serve as Director of the Office of Communications and Information and the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services' Legislative Liaison.

Mrs. West joined the department on Feb. 3, 2020 after completing her work as Outreach Director with the Alabama Partnership for Children (APC). She received her bachelor's degree in Journalism from Auburn University, with minors in Psychology and Elementary Education. Prior to working with APC, Mrs. West worked as the Communications Director for A+ Education Partnership, the Chief Development Officer for the United Methodist Children's Home, and the Public Relations Director for the Montgomery Housing Authority. In 2006, Mrs. West was commissioned by Rutgers University and the Public Housing Authorities Directors Association to develop a 6-hour public relations course for housing authority leaders, which she still teaches upon request.

New Business

Children's Rehabilitation Service Presentation

Mrs. Cathy Caldwell, Assistant Commissioner, Children's Rehabilitation Service (CRS) provided an overview of CRS, Alabama's Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) Program.

CRS receives its operational funds through the federal Maternal and Child Health Bureau Title V Block Grant, the Alabama Legislature and Medicaid/private insurance reimbursements and contributions.

CRS is a statewide organization of skilled professionals providing quality medical, rehabilitative, coordination and educational support services to children with special health care needs from birth to age 21 and their families at home, school, and in the community. In addition, CRS provides disability services, expertise, and adaptive technology to and for local school systems, assisting teachers, school nurses and other staff in the education of children with disabilities. The CRS Hemophilia Program serves Alabama's children and adults with this life-threatening blood disorder. Every county in Alabama is served through a network of 14 community-based offices.

Board Member Questions and Division Updates

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

Statement of Economic Interests

Mrs. Hamlett offered a gentle reminder that the Statement of Economic Interests should be completed and filed with the Alabama Ethics Commission no later than Thursday, 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.

Commissioner's Comments & Legislative Update

Penny P. Foster, Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services, Vice-Chair

Commissioner Burdeshaw reported that Gov. Ivey recently approved the request to reappoint Mrs. Penny Foster to the Alabama Board of Rehabilitation Services for another term, effective Oct. 1, 2020. This appointment is subject to Senate confirmation. The Alabama Senate confirmation hearing is scheduled for Wednesday, March 11, 2020. Upon Senate confirmation, Mrs. Foster will serve as a representative of the Third Congressional District and the term of service will expire Sept. 30, 2027.

ADRS Budget Requests for FY 2021

Commissioner Burdeshaw reported during the past few months, ADRS has begun to prepare for the legislative session, meeting with the Governor's office and appointees, and meeting with the Education Trust Fund (ETF) committee chairs about the ADRS budget request. The finance director and the executive budget office were provided detailed information about the request and both shared optimistic news about the overall health of the ETF and General Fund budgets. As a result of these meetings, ADRS recently learned that the Governor's budget mirrored the ADRS request, which included a \$1,666,824.00 increase in Alabama's Early Intervention System line item. In addition, there were funds added to cover a cost-of-living increase for those employees whose salaries are funded by state funds. The current message for the Alabama Legislature is to keep the funding level recommended by the Governor. Commissioner Burdeshaw recently met with Senator Arthur Orr and Representative Bill Poole (ETF budget chairs) about the request. Both responded well to the discussion. Rep. Poole requested utilization rates by county and that information was provided.

Potential Executive Order: State of Alabama, 'Model Employer'

Commissioner Burdeshaw and Dr. Graham Sisson (Governor's Office on Disability) have continued conversations with the Governor's Office and the State Personnel Department about the possibility of an executive order making the State of Alabama a 'Model Employer'. During these conversations, the State Personnel Department raised concerns about the Executive Office (EO) as it was originally written. Commissioner Burdeshaw and Dr. Sisson reached out to national leaders with SEED (State Exchange on Employment and Disability) about additional resources that might be used to address these concerns. They are working through the information and will continue discussions and advocacy.

Potential Legislation: State Work Opportunity Tax Credit

Commissioner Burdeshaw has been working with the State of Alabama, Department of Revenue for several weeks fine-tuning a bill related to an Alabama specific Work Opportunity Tax Credit that would incentivize private employers who hire and retain workers with disabilities by creating an income tax credit. As the last revisions were made, it was discovered that only persons served by Vocational Rehabilitation Services would be counted as "qualifying" individuals. The intent was to create a broader based tax incentive that would account for a larger number of qualifying individuals. Commissioner Burdeshaw and the Governor's Office on Disability hope to collaborate with the Department of Veteran Affairs and the Social Security Administration to discuss ways that data sharing might capture the populations they serve.

2020 Census

Commissioner Burdeshaw reported the federal 2020 Census will officially kick-off with campaigns around the state on April 1. The need to have all Alabamians counted is vitally important to the department and the families that ADRS serves. If everyone is not counted, Alabama stands to lose federal funding and potentially a congressional seat. Two populations who were under-counted during the last Census were children birth to five and individuals with disabilities. For this reason, ADRS is partnering on two federal grants aimed at counting these populations.

Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Monitoring Report (Update)

Commissioner Burdeshaw reported that ADRS submitted responses to the RSA monitoring report, which included the required corrective action plans. All monitoring reports and plans will be available to the public through RSA.

Announcements

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

- *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, June 11, 2020, at 10:00 a.m. in the conference room at the Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services office in Opelika.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:09 a.m.

Minutes were taken by Karen Freeman.

Respectfully submitted:



Jane E. Burdeshaw, Commissioner

Approved:



Eddie Williams, Chair