

# **Interagency Transition Council for Youth with Disabilities**

## **Annual Report 2014**

**Suzanne R. Page  
Assistant State Superintendent  
Maryland State Department of Education  
Division of Rehabilitation Services  
Co-Chair**

**George P. Failla, Jr., Acting Secretary  
Maryland Department of Disabilities  
Co-Chair**

## **Background**

The Interagency Transition Council for Youth with Disabilities was first created on December 7, 2000 to improve the postsecondary outcomes of youths with disabilities in Maryland. It was reconstituted on August 7, 2007, when Governor Martin O'Malley signed Executive Order 01.01.2007.13.

The primary responsibility of the IATC is to review, revise, and update annually the Interagency State Plan for Transitioning Youth with Disabilities to ensure effective interagency planning and delivery of services for secondary students with disabilities. Additionally, the IATC is tasked with identifying and reporting activities of each partner that impact the delivery, quality, and availability of transition services. The IATC also serves in an advisory capacity to all transition--related federal grants and disseminates information concerning the goals and activities of the Interagency State Plan for Transitioning Youth with Disabilities.

The IATC met five times during the reporting period: October 7, 2013; December 2, 2013; March 31, 2014; June 2, 2014; and August 11, 2014.

## **IATC Membership Changes**

During the 2014 reporting period, two new co-chairs were named: Suzanne R. Page, Assistant State Superintendent Division of Rehabilitation Services, and George P. Failla, Jr., Acting Secretary of the Maryland Department of Disabilities. Two new members filling prior agency vacancies have been added. At the end of 2013, all at-large membership terms expired; three at-large members were reappointed and three new at-large members were appointed in 2014.

## **IATC Strategic Planning**

The IATC continued to work on the goals outlined in its Strategic Plan (last revised April 2013). The three major goals comprising the strategic plan are:

1. Every student with a disability will exit secondary school prepared for employment.
2. Every student with a disability will exit secondary school aware of postsecondary education and training program options.
3. Every student with a disability and their family will have information and support to successfully navigate the transition process.

The IATC members will continue to measure these goals annually. Member agencies contributed data on employment and postsecondary education outcomes; these contributing agencies include the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR); Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Career and College Readiness (DCCR), Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) and Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services (DSE/EIS); Behavioral Health Administration (BHA- formerly Mental Hygiene Administration); and Department of Juvenile Services (DJS).

During the reporting year, the IATC's participating agencies achieved the following:

- In the Class of 2013, 97.43% of the students with a disability that were Center for Technology and Education concentrators graduated high school.
- The percentage of youth ages 14-21 that were enrolled in educational programming through a Workforce Investment Act training program (and not enrolled in postsecondary education or employed at time of registration) who obtained employment, enrolled in postsecondary education or joined the military increased from 74% in 2012 to 77% in 2013. During FFY 2013 DLLR also partnered with DORS to provide paid summer employment opportunities for youth with disabilities in seven Local Workforce Investment Areas throughout the state. These summer employment programs also include job readiness and financial literacy training for the youth.
- 242 students participated in youth summer employment and 780 transition-aged youth had paid employment through the MSDE-Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) during FY 2013.
- 687 transitioning youth and young adults ages 16-25 received supported employment services through the DHMH-Behavioral Health Administration.
- In FY 2014, DDA served 622 transition-aged youth through the Governor's Transitioning Youth Initiative.

### **Annual Maryland Transition Conference**

The 2013 Maryland Transition Conference titled, *Oh, the Places You'll Go!: 2013 Transition Conference* was held on Saturday, November 16, 2013 at the Comfort Inn and Conference Center in Bowie, Maryland. The conference built on the success of the previous year's format by continuing to tailor the event towards an audience of youth with disabilities and their families. While professionals were invited to attend, all content was designed and presented for a youth and family audience. The event was held on the weekend to accommodate families' schedules. In total, over 220 participants attended the event, a 37% increase from the previous year's conference.

Among the 12 breakout sessions, all included information on the following topics:

- Transition Planning and Coordination
- Employment
- Postsecondary Education
- Independent Living Skills
- Advocacy

In addition, one of the sessions was a focus group for parents and guardians of youth and young adults with intellectual disabilities. The focus groups were facilitated by a parent/professional and designed to allow participants the opportunity to provide feedback on their experiences. During the session, parents observed that;

- The agencies serving transitioning youth need to explain their services, eligibility, and application process in clear language
- The family experience with Resource Coordination (offered as part of most waiver programs) has changed since the regulations were changed
- The best way to share information with families is through the schools
- The students would benefit from more hand-on job exploration opportunities and vocational programs

When conference attendees were surveyed, 96.6.% of respondents rated the conference's usefulness as between a 4 and 5 on a 5-point scale. The average rating was 4.7, indicating participants found the conference to be very useful.

## **Transitioning Youth Website**

As reported in previous years, the Maryland Transitioning Youth Website ([www.mdtransition.org](http://www.mdtransition.org)) was launched on October 1, 2010, as a project of the IATC with support from MDOD. The website is designed for youth with disabilities and their families and serves as a portal to existing State agency sites while also providing information not found on existing Maryland websites. Sections of the website include:

- The Transition Planning Process
- College
- Employment Services
- Health Care
- Transportation
- Upcoming Events and Announcements
- Upcoming Transition Conference

IATC members, along with private organizations continue to link to the website and announcements and event notices are posted on the accompanying Facebook site. The IATC also began sharing information about transition-related news and events using Twitter.

The IATC also releases an electronic newsletter that highlights transition planning topics, programs and upcoming event. During the reporting period, the distribution of the newsletter increased from quarterly to every other month. In addition to sharing resources, the newsletter included peer advice from youth with disabilities who have been through the transition process.

## **Maryland PROMISE Grant**

In October 2013, Maryland received one of five federal grants from the U.S. Department of Education awarded to implement the Promoting the Readiness for Minors in Supplemental Security Income (PROMISE) Program. Maryland received a five-year \$31,190,076.00 research grant to study the impact of providing additional supports to transition-aged youth receiving Supplemental Security Income. Over 2,000 Maryland youth receiving SSI and their families will be recruited for the project, half of whom will receive intensive interventions to increase the educational and employment outcomes of both the youth and their families. These interventions focus on the development of Family and Youth Plans, and the provision of individualized services and supports, including coordinated assertive community-based case management, benefits counseling and financial education, and unpaid and paid work experiences for the youth.

For the period of April through August 30, 2014, the following services have been provided:

- Total Service Notes Completed: 1670
- Total Face to Face Services: 1253
- Employment Services: 205
- Job Seeker Services: 45
- Education Related Services: 32
- Paid Work Experiences: 3
- Unpaid Work Experiences: 6
- Employer Outreach Services: 40

## **Additional Highlights**

### ***Education***

- The 2013-2014 school year marked the second year of the SUCCESS program at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC), Maryland's first four-year postsecondary education program for young adults with intellectual disabilities. The SUCCESS program is coordinated by UMBC's Shriver Center and consists of numerous inclusive courses and campus-based internships designed to develop students' independence, problem solving and employment skills. With support from MDOD, DDA, DORS and community partners, nine new students will join the current 13 students in pursuing their goals for furthering their education and gaining independent and employment skills.
- On May 2, 2014, Baltimore City Public Schools hosted a Spring Transition Fair. The event was supported by funding from MHEC through MDOD and was attended by over 387 high school students, parents, educators and other professionals.
- Project Access, a Howard Community College program which transitions high school students with disabilities to the postsecondary level, completed its 17<sup>th</sup> annual Summer Institute. This year 75 students participated in its summer institute. Half of these students are going to college. Twenty-one students who have attended Project Access in the past have graduated from Howard County Community College.
- House Bill 1006 (2014), signed by the Governor, continued the work being done by the Task Force to Study the Impact of Expanding Credit and Noncredit Courses for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. The task force includes several members of the IATC and is studying the development of additional postsecondary programs designed to provide meaningful vocational training to students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The Task Force will make recommendations to the Governor on expanding credit and noncredit course offerings at public institutions of higher education in the state by January 1, 2016.

### ***Employment***

- DDA continues to support a seamless transition for Maryland's youth with disabilities. DDA, in collaboration with DORS, works to promote the understanding that all students with disabilities can work and contribute to Maryland's future after leaving school. DDA continues to receive national technical assistance from the State Employment Leadership Network, a collaborative that includes the National Association for State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services and the Institute for Community Inclusion, UMASS/Boston, as they move forward in becoming an Employment First state. In October 2013, DDA began the Employment Outcomes Data project that reported on the employment status and other day activities for all people in DDA-funded services, including transitioning youth. In FY 2014, DDA served a total of 634 transitioning youth. Among those 634 youth, 368 of the youth chose day services and 230 chose supportive employment. In addition, 14 chose individualized support services and 23 chose self-directed services.
- DORS' Project Search, a business-led school-to-work program that takes place entirely at the workplace, expanded this past year to both the Smithsonian and the BWI Hilton. There are

eight programs currently operating in Maryland with a ninth program starting in the Fall 2014 as Project Search expands into Howard County.

- The DORS Pathways Program, an educational support program for students in postsecondary education with an Autism Spectrum Disorder diagnosis, expanded to Howard Community College this past year in addition to all three Community College of Baltimore County sites. There are plans for future expansion into Montgomery College.
- In FY 2014, 44 individuals with disabilities participated in the DORS/DBM QUEST Internship program, four of whom were transition-aged youth.

### ***Behavioral Health and Health Services***

- Maryland Healthy Transitions Initiative (HTI) is in its fifth year of providing comprehensive services for transition-aged youth with mental health and co-occurring disorders, and facilitating supports to their families in Washington and Frederick counties. Although the project, funded for five years by Substance Abuse Mental Health Systems Administration (SAMHSA), is completing its final year of federal funding, HTI will continue to create developmentally appropriate and effective youth-guided local systems of care to decrease youth contact with the juvenile and criminal justice systems and improve outcomes in the areas of education, employment, housing, and community connectedness. The project, which served 70 youth in Frederick and Washington Counties during fiscal year 2013, integrates traditional and nontraditional supports, and has developed and/or enhanced transition related collaboration (including youth and family representation) in the state of Maryland. The University of Maryland School of Medicine Department of Psychiatry, Evidence Based Practice Center will continue to collaborate with BHA to facilitate expansion of the HTI model and service provision methodology to other regions throughout the state.

### ***Services for Youth in Out-of-Home Placements***

- DJS has continued its collaboration with MSDE's Juvenile Services Education (JSE) program following MSDE's July 1, 2013 complete assumption of educational responsibilities for detained and committed youth residing in DJS facilities. The JSE program provides instruction in core content based on the Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS), offers GED preparation programs, and affords students opportunities to earn industry certification in preparation for transition from high school to the workforce.
- Youth residing at DJS' youth centers have access to Career and Technology and vocational programming on-site, including traditional building trades and an Aquaculture Technician training program. Youth may also be eligible to earn college credit by participating in the Garrett College program, which affords youth the opportunity to be simultaneously enrolled in high school classes and introductory college courses through the Garrett College of Maryland.
- DJS is also developing a comprehensive reentry strategic plan. This plan utilized multi-disciplinary staff at various levels within the agency and developed goals, objectives, and strategies in the following critical reentry domains: (1) public safety; (2) housing; (3) education, vocation, and employment; (4) family and life skills; (5) somatic and behavioral health; (6) interests and recreation; and (7) financial obligations.

## ***Self-Advocacy***

- In June of 2014, the Maryland Youth Leadership Forum (YLF), a project led by Independence Now and supported by several IATC members, invited 30 youth with a range of disabilities from eight counties to three day-long events held at Montgomery College and Towson University. The goal of the annual program is to raise self-awareness for youth with disabilities and show available community resources to create independent, productive and successful lives for themselves. This is done through five training modules: The Principles of Leadership, The Experience of Disability, Technology and Resources to Reach My Goals, Living on my Own and Reaching My Career Goals, and Leading in My Community.

## **Proposed Activities for 2014-2015**

- Collaborate with MSDE to update its Transitioning Youth Handbook, which will incorporate the Transition Flow Chart.
- Develop webinar series for professionals working with transition aged youth.
- Further develop recommendations and implementation for improving transition services for youth with disabilities in the foster care system.
- Provide support to local jurisdictions in the creation of local transition councils.
- Conduct a survey with local school systems on dual enrollment programs for students with disabilities.
- Provide expertise to the Task Force to Study the Impact of Expanding Credit and Noncredit Courses for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.
- Support the continuing implementation of the federal PROMISE grant.
- Host *Paving the Way: Annual Transition Conference* scheduled for November 15, 2014.
- Continue to promote and expand the *Transitioning Youth Website*.
- Continue to distribute the *Transitioning Youth Newsletter* and expand listserv.
- Identify additional opportunities to gather input from youth with disabilities.

# INTERAGENCY TRANSITION COUNCIL FOR YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

## Membership List 2014 Reporting Period

**George P. Failla, Jr.** Acting Secretary, Maryland Department of Disabilities, *Co-Chair*  
**Suzanne R. Page**, Assistant State Superintendent for Rehabilitation Services, *Co-Chair*

*Appointed by Governor to 3-year terms: Joanna Falcone; Jeanne Furman; Catherine E. Lyle; Shelly McLaughlin, Linda Schnapp, Ph.D.; Sarah Sorensen. Terms expire 2016.*

*Student representative appointed by Governor: one vacancy*

*Representing State Dept. of Education: Suzanne R. Page*, Assistant State Superintendent for Rehabilitation Services; **Paul E. Dunford**, designee of Assistant State Superintendent for Special Education & Early Intervention Services; **Mary L. O'Connor**, designee of Assistant State Superintendent for Career & College Readiness; **Richard D. Scott**, designee of Assistant State Superintendent for Student & School Services; **Adele W. Connolly; Joyce Serio**; one vacancy.

*Representing Dept. of Health & Mental Hygiene: Danielle Lyons*, designee of Director, Developmental Disabilities Administration; **Mona Figueroa**, designee of Director, Behavioral Health Administration.

*Representing Dept. of Human Resources: Carlton Fonville*

*Representing Dept. of Juvenile Services: LaSandra Diggs*

*Representing Dept. of Labor, Licensing, & Regulation: Diane N. Pabich;Carolynnette Snowden.*

*Representing Maryland Commission on Disabilities: one vacancy*

*Representing Maryland Higher Education Commission: Glennis Daniels-Bacchus; Amy Kania.*

*Representing Maryland Technology Assistance Program: James D. McCarthy*

*Ex officio: Lillian M. Lowery*, Ed.D., State Superintendent of Schools; **Christina E. Drushel**, designee of Executive Director, Governor's Office for Children.

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