



## Lafayette City-Parish President's Awareness Committee for Citizens with Disabilities

Monday, July 8, 2013

Meeting Minutes

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**Board Members Present:** Debbie Aymond, Kenneth Carmouche, Chad Romero, Donielle Watkins  
**Guests in Attendance:** Bart Thibodeaux, Sherry Moore, Zelig Guidry, Kerry Malbrough  
**Staff in Attendance:** Carlee Alm-LaBar, Becky Perret

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**1. Debbie Aymond called the meeting to order.**

**2. Debbie introduced the guest speaker, Bart Thibodeaux with Lafayette Parish School System and Sherry Moore with Louisiana Rehabilitation Services.**

- Bart has been in Lafayette Parish for four years (came from a neighboring district). The goal of his position is to get students ready for community life (post-secondary education).
- Any school district will have 10-12% of student body classified as disabled. Lafayette-30,000 students, under 3,000 designated as disabled (per IEPs.) Lafayette slightly lower than average.
- Focus on transition activities as part of his conversation today.
- Age 21 is the cutoff for services (or achieving high school diploma). Age 22 is when adult agencies can take over. LPSS tries to work with the adult agencies to make the transition as smooth as possible.
- They work to place students in a lot of different potential work environments. Soft skills are challenging, for example demeanor, where to take a break, etc. They do not try to "lock in" to a particular job too early.
- Inclusion model, self-advocates for students. Encourage students to stand up for themselves.
- System (school) is obligated to find those with disabilities and help them; however, once they leave LPSS, the obligation is often on the student/adult. So they try to encourage those behaviors that will benefit the students in the long term.
- Sherry Moore attends all the IEP meetings for those students transitioning out (for LRS- adult services). They have to be made eligible based on their disability. Sherry verifies status as those leave high school and transition into adult services. They can provide some vocational assessment, job placement, supported employment, and other services.
- They have a "Core Team" (of various agencies) puts on Agency Resource Fair annually and does trainings and work closely together.
- The school system has arranged training for the teachers and other staff so that LRS, OCDD, and the WIB can discuss available services. (This year's are July 31, August 1, August 2).
- LPSS also works to help parents navigate the system. For example, giving parents advanced warning about OCDD's 7 year (approximately) waiting list.
- Around 8th grade, they often begin to focus on the career. They begin making sure the students participate in the meetings with parents and LPSS representatives.
- Match assessments with potential career interests as they work to place in jobs.
- The committee discussed some things they have seen in their respective roles. Transition varies from parish to parish. Debbie stated we are lucky in Lafayette to have a strong core team. She and Sherry recently spoke at statewide meeting because of so much going on in

Lafayette. Collaboration makes it happen and is strong in Lafayette. The committee shared that the transition time when child becomes 18 years old changes everything. Bart's role is to bring parents and others to table with the right people to inform them of changes.

- There is a problem getting parents to events and that is why they are having the Fair for teachers, counselors, parents, etc. Elementary teachers need to know about SSI, etc. There are many misconceptions, and people need to know how going to work may affect their benefits.
- Will do Fairs for students, parents – some parents can't take off work in middle of day to attend.

#### **4. Minutes**

- There was a quorum present and a motion was made by Donielle Watkins, seconded by Chad Romero, and unanimously adopted to approve the minutes of the May and June, 2013 meetings.

#### **5. Correspondence**

- There was no correspondence to discuss.

#### **6. Old Business**

- The Chairman distributed flyers (see attached) for the 2013 Job Fair, which will be held on October 2, 2013 at the Heymann Center, from 9:00 a.m.- noon. Due to limited funds, there will be no employer breakfasts or lunches this year. There will also be a Resource Fair sponsored by the Autism Society, and an interpreter will be present. There will also be an e-application room available to apply online for jobs, work on resumes, etc.
- The Job Fair Committee has been meeting regularly and anyone is welcome to attend. The next meeting will be held on July 18th at 10:00 a.m. at the LRS Office. The information will be going out to the public soon.

#### **7. New Business**

- Kenneth Carmouche has arranged the speaker for the August meeting. The speaker will be Joseph Baudoin, a counselor with the VA Clinic in Lafayette. Mr. Baudoin has counseled thousands of vets and been very successful in helping them.

#### **8. Comments from the Public**

- There were no comments from the public.

#### **9. Next Meeting**

- The next meeting of the President's Awareness Committee for Citizens with Disabilities is scheduled for August 12, 2013 at 11:30 a.m. in the Council Briefing Room on the first floor of City Hall.