

**Advisory Committee for the Blind of Pennsylvania
Quarterly Meeting Agenda**

PaTTAN Harrisburg Office, Cambria Room
6340 Flank Dr., Harrisburg, PA 17112-2764
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**September 21, 2015
9:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

8:30 AM Networking and Coffee

9:00 AM Welcome and Opening Remarks
Joseph Drenth, Chair

Called to order by Chair Joe Drenth at 9: 10 a.m.

Introductions

Joe Drenth
Dave DeNotaris
Arnold Bowser
Carlton Anne Cook Walker
Dr. Marianne Boltz
Donna Reinaker
Pat Hozella, Dept. of Education
Fran DOE
Ruth Lotz
Stan Swaintek
Shelly Faust-Jones
Susan Neff
Doug Williams, PaTTAN
Chris Churney, PaTTAN
Carol Bowser

9:05 AM Executive Director Report
David De Notaris, Executive Director, OVR

Privilege to be here

Appreciate the Department of Education's partnership to create and sustain the Summer Academy program

Starting next year, working on a Summer Academy for other disability groups
Penn State Harrisburg for deaf students

Looking forward to continuing the partnership in the future

At BBVS, in the middle of, and hopefully near the end of, a budget impasse
Have been O.K. because of Federal monies

But CILs and PABs are 100% state-funded, and they have not been able to submit invoices to BBVS since July 1 – 11 weeks

Many came to Summer Academy's Career Day

So grateful for sharing of expertise

Dr. Boltz came on a Sunday morning – gave a great presentation to help the students understand and explain their visual impairments

Planning for National Disability Awareness Month activities in October

Each regional office will have an activity

On October 17 in Pittsburgh, a STEM event at Carnegie Mellon University

Google will participate

3D maps

October 15: White Cane Safety Day at the State Capitol

October 29, 6-9 p.m., at the Penn State Hershey Medical Center, a Project Search event – career options in the medical field (OVR, but BBVS students would also be invited)

Final stages of interviews for the Director of BBVS

Hope to wrap up in the next few weeks or month

Working on filling the Director position

Coordinator of BEP has taken another position

Her boss is doing the job now

In the process of interviewing

Great program at the Overbrook School for the Blind

Stan Swaintek will discuss more

Workforce Innovations Opportunity Act (WIOA) has been taking a lot of time

Directs investment of 15% of federal dollars into pre-employment transition services – for high school

Studies show that high school employment is positively correlated with post-secondary employment

Working on Invitations for Bid

Focus on high school students: 14-21

Also involves helping individuals out of sheltered workshops/ subminimum wage jobs

Largest expenditure is the Summer Academy – interested in duplicating it for other disability groups

Great OVR meeting in Erie

Board members invited elected officials to the meeting

BBVS Advisory Committee members encouraged to invite elected officials

Stan Swaintek will cover staffing in his report

Want to continue to be creative the create opportunities for the customers we serve

Joe: How many are homemaker positions?

Stan: BBVS goal was 76, made that in June, still have more in the program.

Serving and closing about 100 people per year.

OVRs does not serve homemaker goals.

Joe: How does WIOA affect this?

Stan: Actually, many homemakers now considering VR goals. WIOA does not allow us to claim homemaker as a successful closure, but it does not prohibit them.

Looking at other ways to fund it – including state monies.

We will not allow these folks to go unserved.

David: Program Revision Request (PRR)

Submitted one for an additional \$500,000 for adults (homemakers)

Time needs to be spent improving individuals' self-confidence – maybe they will go back to work

Another PRR submitted for funds for the Independent Living Older Blind (ILOB) program

Needs are outpacing our resources

\$4 million this year

Partially funded by SS reimbursement dollars

Concern that these may drop with pre-employment transition services

Another PRR to develop additional Summer Academies

University of Scranton interested in developing one for students with Autism

Donna: Do we have numbers of blind/VI seniors living at home versus at a facility?

Susan: Estimated that 8% of older people are blind. Will look at numbers in home or in a facility

Shelly: Serves are different if in own home versus in a facility (work with staff)

Stan: Dr. Boltz made a presentation regarding this matter

There are studies out there.

David: Meeting with Dept. of Human Services regarding their customers with intellectual disabilities, as well as with Deputy Secretary of Long-Term Living

Very interested in the SSP programs for individuals with deaf-blindness

Asked Marsha to update on this program

Marsha: Moving closer and closer to having long-term funding in the form of a waiver

Working on writing a proposal to the state regarding this matter

Have been Program Director for a few months now, program continues to grow!

As of the end of August, have used a total of 311 hours for 79 assignments – 39 deaf-blind clients, including one who is Amish

September is getting busier

Will be attending many outreach events

Shelly: Please explain some of the assignments that individuals are requesting.

Marsha: Doctor's appointments, community events (meetings); Bingo Night, Longwood Gardens, Amusement parks, Going to Hershey to make their own chocolate bar

Already have Christmas shopping requests
An have an SSP AND an interpreter, especially for medical or legal needs

Marsha: Interested in Summer Academy for people with multiple disabilities

David: Many things going on in BBVS and OVR

We hope that the Governor's proposed budget (that has an additional \$5 million – which will allow us to draw down an additional \$18 million) will go through

Thanked Advisory Committee members for their support

9:30 AM **BBVS Reports**
VR Program - Stan Swaintek

For the first time in a number of years, will be fully staffed at the management level across all 6 offices very soon (when ADA in Wilkes-Barre position becomes filled)

Don't think we will make our VR goal this year

But happy to announce that the Philly office will meet its goal for the first time in many years

Harrisburg and Erie are behind

Some experienced folks have moved up, there were also staff performance issues that took a good bit of time to resolve

First O&M intern will be starting in the Harrisburg office on October 5

Look a good bit of time to get this done

If we hire individuals who are cross-certified, may use them for either position (in the past, not allowed to do this)

Overbrook Transitional program (TVI)

12 students, not all from Overbrook

This year, expanded to a 3 week program

On the third week, each student had at least 20 hours of competitive full-minimum wage employment (paid by Overbrook for administrative reasons)

Hope to expand what we do with Overbrook

Looking at replicating a BVRS model

Career development resource sharing – providing staff to the center – we pay 80% through Federal match

Would like to add an employment component to Overbrook's independent living program

Now assigning a brand new counselor to Overbrook

Overbrook will provide an office, etc.

Looking at a "Summer Academy Lite" program for middle schoolers

Were looking at doing it for a week – perhaps the week before Summer Academy

Dr. Boltz great to get kids involved in these services at younger ages

Doug Williams: Echoing need to get the kids in earlier

Dr. Boltz: Boss has offered the department to help with the Summer Academy program

Arnold: What about the visually impaired in the Western part of Pennsylvania?

David: Students from throughout Pennsylvania are invited to participate at the Overbrook program

Need only be a BBVS customer

Stan: Also, students eligible for BOTH the Summer Academy and TVI programs – some have attended both

Also, camps with PABs throughout the state

Joe: As a Board, definitely in favor of these new programs

Marianne: Summer Academy for college-bound. TVI is focused on employment –

Stan: But independent living skills and technology are replicated at the TVI program

Shelly: Rather than a dorm, set up in an apartment – settings are strategically different

Encourage students to go to both programs

David: Wanted to make sure we had two separate tracks

Also, a lot of the Overbrook kids have multiple impairments and would benefit from supported employment

Summer Academy &
Special Programs - Shelly Faust-Jones

Shelly: Everything has been said

Doug and Susan out together a wonderful presentation:

Parent and RA and student comments read aloud

And an article in the PSU Alumni magazine and a video

Want to start a Summer Academy Alumni group

Thanked Doug Williams for his service to the Summer Academy

There the entire time and expertise in AT & O&M

PaTTAN working on a marketing tool

Susan: Doug also an expert at the high ropes course

Doug: Not as young as I used to be

Longest 3 weeks – 16 hours days

But it's inspiring to see what the Summer Academy did and the growth of the students during that time

Carlton: Blind RAs? Yes – this year, 5 were, and 2 of them were RA Directors (leadership position)

ILOB Program - Susan Neff

Currently working on revision ILOB Handbook

To improve efficiency

Clarify expectations – teach rather than just buying equipment

Beginning buying items in bulk

Working with LIFE program to coordinate care plans

Tomorrow, with Shelly and Donna, in the falls prevention event at the State Capitol

Planning a White Cane Safety Day at the Capitol on October 15

Last week, participated in a monitoring visit at Deaf-Blind services and provided technical assistance were needed

Break at 10:38 a.m.

Back at 10:50 a.m.

Unified English Braille and the Nemeth Code for Math and Science

Carlton Walker

Carlton: UEB versus Nemeth presentation

Motion by Carlton, seconded by Joe to have the Advisory Committee follow Bana's guidelines

David: Who is BANA?

Doug: 18 cells

Shelly: Kutztown teaching only UEB – will be teaching "all UEB"

Doug: U.S. is only country using Nemeth

All UEB

Or

Nemeth with UEB

Shelly: Employment issues abroad

UEB limits ambiguity issues

Pat: What are other states doing?

Voted tabled till next meeting

David: Very concerned that colleges are not following BANA's advice

Next Committee meeting in Harrisburg – Central Office
November 17

ACBP Business

Joseph Drenth, Chair
Conference Call in October – new Committee members needed

Public Comment: None

David: If doing another Blindness Awareness Event next year, need to start soon

Marsha: Inviting folks to call her to do presentations

Shelly: Invite educational people to take advantage of what Marsha is saying (though students cannot take advantage until age 18)
Parents and educators need to know about these
Students need to be self-directed

Joe: Thanked all in attendance

Arnold moved to adjourn, and Carlton seconded – unanimous

12:00 PM Adjourn