



P2P Advisory Council 12.4.24
DRAFT MINUTES

Present In Person: Shannon Tarkowski, Kristin Wagner, Nicole Ditchman, Rickie Lee Benecke (proxy Meri Helbig), David Kurinieć, Ang Wetmore, Aimee Julian, Brittany Boston, Antonio Gomez, Terri Shandrow

Present Virtual: Eun-Jeong Lee, LaMetric Lane, Steven Johnson, Jennifer Foster, Meg Murphy, Sarah Sinner, Beth Bendtsen, Nina Tangman, Susan Schultz (Chapman), Marcus Brown, Ronald Rispoli, Jessica Sipovic, Robyn Lewis, Ali Underwood, Kevin Irvine

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Aimee Julian welcomed the group. Those present introduced themselves. Julian reviewed the agenda and indicated that all meeting materials will be available via the [P2P Website](#). She presented a project description to the group:

- Illinois Pathways to Partnership (IPPP or P2P) is an innovative project aimed to improve transition outcomes, competitive integrated employment (CIE), and independent living for students with disabilities aged 10-24 across Illinois by seamlessly partnering with Vocational Rehabilitation, Centers for Independent Living (CIL), and school districts.

David Kurinieć introduced the project as a four-year endeavor. One year of planning has just been completed; four years remain.

Meri Helbig asked if there would be parents involved in the council. Kuriniec responded that there would be parents and customers but that the parents and customers could not, per regulations, be related.

Advisory Committee Charge Discussion

Julian reviewed the charge of the P2P:

- The P2P will establish an advisory council to guide the project. The Advisory Council will provide input on the development, implementation, and operationalization of partner activities that contribute to the success of project participants.
- The advisory committee will include key personnel from the partners, with at least 10 percent of the committee members being children and youth with disabilities and their support systems

Julian asked those present if any points were missing from this charge. Nicole Ditchman asked to what extent the advisory council evaluates success outcomes. Kuriniec emphasized that part of the grant requirements is to build sustainability. LaMetric Lane asked that expansion of the program be considered. Helbig asked that follow-up be conducted post-grant-cycle.

In summary, the following points were suggested as potential expansions of charges:

- Evaluation
- Sustainability
- Scalability
- Student Follow-up
 - o Establish a timeframe
 - o Determine what data needs tracking
 - o Determine continued support needs

Jennifer Foster asked if there would be committees for the Advisory Council. Julian replied that that hasn't been established yet but that an evaluation group has been established. That evaluation group is technically not a committee.

Julian indicated there would be four meetings per year: two virtual and two-person.

Sharing of Partner Roles

Kurinieć indicated that the project spells out collaborations with school districts and CILs. The roles of CILs will be to develop and deliver the curriculum associated with the project. They will also provide support to students. School districts will provide the pool of students by:

- Hosting events for participants and families
- Gaining consent from potential participants to participate in the project

The Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) provides resources for educators, providers, and families, particularly focusing on caretaker burnout. Those will launch in the spring.

The Illinois Institute for Rehabilitation and Employment Research and the University of Illinois will provide project evaluation and access to resources to CIL staff.

The Illinois Center for Specialized Professional Support (ICSPS) based out of Illinois State University (ISU)

The floor was opened for questions.

Steven Johnson asked what criteria were used to select schools. Lane replied that the criteria were as follows:

- Non-compliant transition plans
- Low graduation rates
- Districts that typically receive less support

Helbig asked how often check-ins would happen to determine success. Julian asked attendees how often they believed was necessary, keeping in mind that data has a lag. Kurinieć added that P2P is trying to incorporate these measurements into already established quarterly reports for CILs. It was determined that Bryan Austin should be allowed time to make a presentation on data needs before making a formal blanket decision.

Review of the Evaluation Plan

Bryan Austin was not in attendance. Eun-Jeong Lee presented on his behalf that the UIUC team set up a monthly meeting and had met twice. They provided an overview. Austin added some psychosocial elements to data collection for qualitative data collection. Lee indicated that she would wait until Austin could present to go into further detail.

Shannon Tarkowski added that the evaluation group kept a close count on how many people were informed of this project. Julian added that it is more difficult to get the word out in the central and southern parts of the state.

Beth Bendtsen indicated that, in meetings, the group had suggested gathering the following data in quarterly reports required from CILs:

- Number of students enrolled
- Number of contacts with employers
- DRS cases opened
- Number of students who have obtained employment or post-secondary education (PSE)
- Increased student awareness in core curriculum areas

They would add some qualitative questions to this data.

Update on the Progress of the Curriculum

Kuriniiec indicated that a curriculum draft had been presented to UIUC and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). The deadline for the draft is December 6, 2024. Once the state receives it upon that deadline, they will review it and provide feedback. From there, it will be submitted to RSA and the clearing house. Once it is submitted, it can be moved into schools.

Helbig expressed concern that the final result will not look professional and that the material may not pass accessibility checks. Kuriniiec replied that a professional-looking textbook was not their primary concern. They do, however, care that it looks consistent. There are, however, experts on P2P who are professionals in curriculum-building and will lend their eyes to copy editing. Additionally, RSA and the national clearinghouse have accessibility checks built in.

Nicole Ditchman asked how often the program will be revised. Kuriniiec replied that adjustments would be made for the second year at the end of the first year.

Meg Murphy presented the draft of marketing materials, which outline the training that will be available.

The first section is Participatory Program Development and Evaluation PPDE Training:

- Session 1: Building Trust and Effective Stakeholder Partnerships

- Session 2: Best Practices
- Session 3: Utilizing Evaluation Results to Improve Programming for Transition-Age Youth

The second section is Wellness Strategies to Promote Service Excellence Among Youth Service Providers:

- Session 1: Reducing Compassion Fatigue and Burnout with Self-Care
- Session 2: Connecting Personal Values to Promote Meaningful Work
- Session 3: Tapping into Personal Strengths to Promote Student Outcomes
- Session 4: Building a Sense of Community

The third section is Family Empowerment:

- Session 1: Family Engagement in Services
- Promoting Self-Determination in Youth with Disabilities
- Self-Care for Caregivers

Beth Bendtsen asked if the flyers were ready. Ditchman replied that they still need to be reviewed by the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) for accessibility.

Lunch

Members broke for lunch at 11:45 am and returned at 12:30 pm.

DISCUSSION: What happens to the students after curriculum implementation?

Bendtsen indicated that some one-on-one contact regarding career exploration will need to occur once they transition from secondary/postsecondary to the workforce. Other areas, such as independent skill-building opportunities, would need to be assessed. She lastly recommended teaching financial literacy.

Shannon Tarkowski added that self-management of schedule is needed. She asked what would happen in the program with students who are out of the program and are in the same classroom as those who have just started the program, as generally, those students get a repeat of the program.

Julian asked if there was a part of the program that teaches students how to interact with postsecondary instructors and how to seek out services in that environment. Bendtsen indicated that self-advocacy and communication are built into the lessons, but they are at a high level. One-on-one additional activities are needed.

Tarkowski added that they need to instruct participants on the differences between accommodations in the workplace and postsecondary.

Bendtsen asked if internships count as CIE. Kuriniec indicated that he did not believe so. Wagner added that those could be classified as work-based learning (WBL) but not CIE.

Kuriniec asked the participants' parents present how often they would like to receive data. Foster indicated quarterly. Robyn Lewis indicated that, as a former teacher, it would be fantastic if there were some way to integrate this data into quarterly Individualized Education Program (IEP) progress reports or grade cards. It could support IEP documentation so that it is gathered more regularly than yearly.

Tarkowski indicated that she has an Excel chart to track what lessons sync up with what service. She keeps that chart synced with her attendance chart. Kuriniec asked her to share the file with P2P, and she agreed.

Ditchman asked, regarding students who have completed the curriculum, whose next step is to find a job shadow or internship, and who oversees that change—CILs, schools, or partnerships? Kuriniec replied that DRS will leverage community partnerships and relationships with employers. That is the advantage of the curriculum: those partnerships.

In summary, P2P indicated the following priorities:

- Transition to employment/internship or entry to postsecondary (leverage partnerships)
- Career exploration
- Independent living skill-building
- Financial literacy
- Time management
- Self-advocacy/communication skills
- Services customized to student career needs

Discussion: Identify linkages to job opportunities/internships/apprenticeships and postsecondary education options.

Helbig recommended using chambers of commerce and labor unions, which is common practice in other states.

Meg Murphy recommended that an employer advisory group be created. Julian recommended that questions be prepared for them to react to rather than advisory groups. A focus group could be of more use.

Foster suggested that student services officers be included to get a local perspective.

Wagner suggested directing people to unemployment offices.

Tarkowski wondered if sites such as Manpower, StaffQuick, or Peoplelink would be open to short-term working agreements.

Helbig asked what kind of return on investment (ROI) the program can offer employers.

Bendtsen replied that the ongoing job support has been an item to bring up.

Helbig asked if schools can use STEP funds. Kuriniec indicated that that may be considered double-dipping.

Julian reminded P2P of the allies that they have on the workforce boards. For example, Director Rahnee Patrick and Jennifer Foster are on the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB).

In summary, P2P indicated the following partnerships:

- Chambers of Commerce
- Add employers to the advisory board or a separate subcommittee/focus group
- Disability:IN
- Student Services Officers
- Unions
- Unemployment Hubs (IDES)
- ManPower, StaffQuick, Peoplelink
- Community Connections (churches, caregivers)

*Think about ROI for employers

Discussion: What aspects of the implementation should the Advisory Community be part of?

Julian asked members to consider the following questions:

- Are we just giving input?
- At what point will that input be provided?
- Are we a sounding board that advises the project, or are we just signing off?

Tarkowski added that the following two questions should be considered:

- Are projects scalable?
- Who needs to be working on linkages?

Foster suggested that P2P would oversee:

- Input
- Reviewing evaluations
- Providing recommendations based on data and outcomes

Tarkowski added that P2P should evaluate where marketing is happening. Is something successful in Collinsville but not in Peoria?

In summary, P2P determined the following roles as its function:

- Input
- Reviewing Evaluations
- Data-based recommendations (evaluate regional variances)

Discussion: What aspects of the implementation should the Advisory Committee be part of?

Julian explained that in-person meetings will be longer than virtual meetings. She asked the group what they would like to hear about quarterly and what they would like to deep-dive into once or twice a year.

Wagner indicated that she would like to see quarterly successes and areas of improvement from schools and partners. She further suggested having some feedback at the beginning and end of the year.

Ditchman emphasized that P2P also needs to hear what did not go well. She asked that all numbers be shared beforehand to give time to digest. Julian replied that all numbers will be provided a week ahead of time.

Tarkowski asked that a report on the effects of parental engagement on program success be heard at least yearly.

In summary, P2P established the following reporting needs:

Quarterly:

- Areas for improvement
- Areas of success

Yearly:

- Set expectations at the beginning of the year
- Data will be shared at the end of the year for review one week prior to the meeting
- Student Stories

Council commitments:

For best data reporting at the beginning and end of school years and to align with grant cycles for which activities should end in June, the following meeting cadence was established:

- August (in-person) – August 5 – 10 -2 pm - Ottawa
- November (virtual) – November 18 – 10 -12 pm
- March (virtual) – March 18 – 10-12
- June (in-person) – In person June 24 – 10 – 2 pm - Champaign

Julian will send out a Doodle Poll to establish times and locations prior to the holiday break.

Closing comments

Kurinieć thanked attendees for their participation and robust discussion. Julian opened the floor for further questions. There were none. Kurinieć adjourned the meeting.

At the next meeting, refine the charge and explore the evaluation framework.