



Andy Beshear  
Governor

Jamie Link  
Education & Labor Cabinet Secretary

## **Transition Committee**

### **Minutes**

**September 26, 2024**

9:30am – 10:30am

[Zoom Link](#)

Meeting ID: 833 2501 4487

Passcode: 197266

### **Members Present:**

Jessica Beaven, Chair, Frankie Huffman, Co-Chair, Katie Wolf Whaley, Council Chair, Todd Coffey, and Tal Curry

### **Members Absent**

Diana Merzweiler, Johnny Callebs, and Larry Taylor

### **Staff Present**

Nanci Howard, Vocational Rehabilitation Administrator  
Anu Kumari, Administrative Specialist Senior

### **Welcome**

Chair, Jessica Beaven and Nanci Howard, Administrator, welcomed members and guests to the meeting.

### **Inclusive Workforce Summit/ Announcements**

Administrator, Nanci Howard announced a potential checkout system for council members to borrow outreach equipment for events such as the upcoming Inclusive Workforce Summit. She mentioned having a floor banner, a table banner, a tablecloth, and 300 flyers to distribute at the Inclusive Workforce Summit for Employment First.

### **Success Stories**

Chair, Jessica Beaven, reviewed the meeting agenda, and highlighted the importance of sharing success stories related to Employment First. She emphasized the educational value of these stories. She introduced a success story about a young adult who graduated high school and participated in the Work Readiness Program. The consumer story highlighted the importance of support systems, including her family and with the assistance of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation services that helped her develop essential job duties. Jessica shared another consumer success story who faced significant challenges after losing his job during the pandemic and after being diagnosed with autism. The consumer found support through the Office Vocational Rehabilitation and secured a job at the

local public library. Jessica stated that she has signed releases for the consumers. She emphasized the importance of providing options and career paths for individuals, particularly those who may feel they lack access. She expressed her hope that these stories resonate with others who may know similar individuals, and she noted that both individuals have now successfully transitioned into employment. Co- Chair, Frankie Huffman expressed appreciation for the stories shared and inquired about programs that hire individuals with disabilities, specifically mentioning a hospital program. Frankie sought out suggestions on how to engage businesses in starting similar programs. Chair, Jessica suggested to meet with Frankie and discuss these ideas further.

The Chair of the Employment First Council, Katie Wolf Whaley, suggested a local program called "Project Search", which partners with schools and businesses to support students with disabilities. She noted that while there are existing project search sites in Kentucky, there is potential for more. She highlighted the importance of collaboration between local school systems and businesses to enhance employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

### **Review Of KCTCS Materials**

Chair, Jessica Beaven, led a discussion about partnering with KCTCS and Employment First. She shared April Johnson's presentation, a local KCTCS representative in the local area. Jessica stated April is interested in the Employment First Council would like to assist in improving transition services for students. Jessica said there were 50 students enrolled in disability services at that particular KCTCS location. She emphasized the need for collaboration with the Education and Labor Cabinet, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, and local school systems to ensure that students with disabilities receive the necessary support to transition into employment. Katie Wolf Whaley highlighted the importance of raising awareness about available scholarships and programs. She discussed the underutilization of scholarships and grants available through KCTCS, highlighting that many individuals are unaware of these resources. Jessica mentioned that Employment First outreach be prevalent to ensure students with disabilities can access the supports they need. She emphasized the importance of connecting students with the right resources to help them succeed in their employment goals. Todd Coffey raised a question about the support provided to the 50 students regarding job placement and the transition from education to employment. Chair, Jessica Beaven replied to Todd Coffey and acknowledged the need for clarity on how these students are supported in finding jobs and what percentage of them successfully transition into employment after completing their programs. Discussion continued around the gaps in the support for students with disabilities transitioning from high school to college and into the workforce. She notes that while colleges have disability resource centers, their primary focus is not on job placement. The council's role is to identify barriers and make recommendations to ensure that students with disabilities receive the necessary support for employment. Chair, Jessica Beaven provided updates from Jason Wheatley, He mentioned as working on the Kentucky Transition 360 program, which aims to develop materials related to Employment First. Chair, Jessica encouraged collaboration and sharing of resources to raise awareness about employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities. They express a desire to ensure that teachers and educators are equipped with the knowledge and tools to support students in their transition to employment. Katie Wolf Whaley suggested the need for a comprehensive approach to ensure that all students, including those with disabilities, relate to the appropriate services and resources for employment. She highlighted the importance of understanding the existing programs and how they can be effectively utilized to support students in their transition to the workforce.

### **Discussion on Kentucky Transition 360**

Chair Jessica Beaven, discussed about whether to set up a separate conversation with Jason Wheatley to clarify the purpose and objectives of the Kentucky transition 360 for educators. The committee members feel they need more information on how to represent employment first within this framework before submitting anything. Chair, Jessica Beaven, reflects on the importance of inclusion

in the workforce, sharing stories of individuals who have successfully transitioned into employment. She encouraged committee members to continue to collect stories and consent forms for individuals who have benefited from work-based learning programs. Jessica stated she plans to gather and forward transition stories to Nanci Howard, acknowledging the necessary processes for sharing these stories within the Education and Labor Cabinet. She also emphasized the importance of these narratives in advocating for individuals across the state. Jessica intends to follow up with April Johnson from KCTCS regarding scholarship availability and the number of students served, aiming to strengthen partnerships between the Employment First Council and KCTCS on transition initiatives. Jessica concluded her report by extending an invitation for final comments or questions. She stated she would be in contact with Jason Wheatley in the coming week and expressed gratitude for the collaborative efforts of the committee.

Administrator Nanci Howard highlighted reason for the absence of many attendees, could be attributed to the Kentucky Transition Summit, hosted by the Education and Labor Cabinet, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), on September 25-26, 2024, at the Hilton Garden Inn, 110 Grandstand Dr., Georgetown, KY. The two-day event was primarily aimed at educators. She noted that Jason Wheatley attended the Kentucky Transition Summit, which may explain the low turnout for the committee meeting. She also mentioned that Jonathan White and Jason Wheatley are collaborating, though she is uncertain about the extent of their involvement.

#### **Futures steps:**

- Chair, Jessica Beaven will collaborate with Jason Wheatley.
- Administrator, Nanci Howard will set up a committee meeting to ensure a representative from the Kentucky Department of Education be present to discuss Transition 360.

#### **Adjournment**

Chair, Jessica Beaven thanked everyone and adjourned the meeting.

#### **Next Meeting:**

**Date:** To be determined.

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