



TO: The Honorable Members of the Board of Regents

FROM: Ceylane Meyers-Ruff *Ceylane Meyers-Ruff*

SUBJECT: Appointments to the New York State Rehabilitation Council

DATE: November 30, 2023

Authorization(s): *Betty M...*

SUMMARY

Issue for Decision (Consent)

The New York State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) has six vacancies. ACCES-VR is seeking the review and approval by the Board of Regents of the proposed six appointees for membership on the SRC.

Reason for Consideration

The Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires the Board of Regents to appoint members to the New York State Rehabilitation Council (SRC).

Proposed Handling

This item will come before the Full Board for action at its December 2023 meeting.

Procedural History

As vacancies occur on the SRC, the Board of Regents approves recommendations to fill such vacancies.

Background Information

Information on the proposed appointees (Attachment A) and a list of current members (Attachment B) are attached.

Related Regent's Items

November 2022: [Appointments to the New York State Rehabilitation Council](https://www.regents.nysed.gov/sites/regents/files/1122brca1.pdf)
(<https://www.regents.nysed.gov/sites/regents/files/1122brca1.pdf>)

Recommendation

It is recommended the Board of Regents take the following action:

VOTED: Marilee Boylan, Meesha Johnson, Kenneth Klassert, Mary Lafrance, Tonia Weichmann, and Stephanie Woodward be appointed to a three-year term beginning January 1, 2024, and ending December 31, 2026.

Timetable for Implementation

Upon approval by the Board of Regents of the recommended candidates, appointments will be effective January 1, 2024.

New York State Rehabilitation Council
(New appointment for term January 1, 2024 to December 31, 2026)

Representative of an Institute of Higher Education

Marilee Boylan
Director of Employment Programs—Strong Center for Developmental Disabilities
(UCEDD)

- NY State Coordinator of Project SEARCH
- NY State Legislative and Policy systems advocacy to increase competitive integrated employment outcomes for people with I/DD.
- Engage with employment stakeholders and community members to advance employment initiatives for individuals with I/DD across the state of NY.
- Director of a 3-year grant to create an apprenticeship pipeline program for young adults with I/DD in the manufacturing industry.
- Targeting grant opportunities to inspire systems change and increase employment outcomes throughout the state of NY.

Representative of a Current or Former Applicant for, or Recipient of, Vocational Rehabilitation Services

Meesha Johnson
Program Director—Blossom Sustainable Development

- Establish agency Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs)
- Organize community events to educate the public about drug/substance misuse.
- Document agency grant progress by crafting mid- and end-year reports.
- Interfaces with Suffolk County and NY State mental/behavioral health stakeholders.

Representative of Business, Industry, and Labor

Kenneth Klassert
Disability Resource Coordinator—Suffolk County Department of Labor

- Interview customers to determine employment services needs.
- Create and present employment workshops
- Assess and refer customers for vocational training, to prospective employers, and for disability support services.
- Develop and maintain professional contacts with local businesses, to provide job opportunities and contacts to customers.
- Insure the One-Stop centers are accessible for all customers who identify as having a disability.
- Provide benefits and ticket to work counseling to social security disability recipients as a Certified Work Incentive Coordinator.

Representative of American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Service Projects

Mary LaFrance

AIVRS Project Director—Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe, Community and Family Services

- Serves as Program Manager for the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Program, supervising an administrative assistant and three vocational rehabilitation counselors.
- Provides program oversight and grant compliance with Code of Federal Regulations.
- Responsible for preparing grants and ensuring grant objectives are met.
- Maintains relationships with State, Tribal, and community partners in the mission of assisting Native Americans with disabilities prepare for, engage in, and maintain competitive employment.
- Manages program budget and all expenditures.

Representative of a Parent Training and Information Center

Tonia Weichmann

Transition Coordinator/Trainer—Parent Network of Western New York

- Educate families on special education laws and post-secondary specific information.
- Serve individuals with disabilities by connecting them to supports, empowering them to self-advocate, and providing access to resources.
- Work with students to develop skills needed to attend college and/or enter the workforce.
- Engage in grant writing and reporting, curriculum development and implementation, and staff development regarding best practices.
- Adult Career and Continuing Education Services (ACCES-VR) Orientation Facilitator
- Provide support to families and individuals in the Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD)
- Collaborate with local agencies, school districts, and state systems to develop and implement programs for individuals with disabilities.

Representative of the Statewide Independent Living Council (ILC)

Stephanie Woodward

Executive Director—Disability EmpowerHer Network

- Co-founded Disability EmpowHer Network, an organization that connects, motivates, and guides disabled girls and women to grow, learn, and develop to their highest potential and have the confidence to lead.
- Responsible for driving organizational growth; program idea realized as a fully operational nonprofit with an operating budget of \$150,000+, staff members, and four successful national programs.

- Assisted disabled women in finding employment, connected girls with disabilities with successful disabled women mentors, and enrolled young women with disabilities in a leadership development program.

New York State Rehabilitation Council
Current Members (Effective November 1, 2023)

Naomi Brickel, representing Community Rehabilitation Service Providers
Valhalla, NY

Sebastian Chittilappilly, representing Disability Advocacy Group
Bronx, NY

Joseph Delgado, Chair, representing Disability Advocacy Group
Holtsville, NY

Maryann Donnelly-Sigona, representing Disability Advocacy Group
Peekskill, NY

Devin Fernandez, representing Business, Industry, and Labor
West Islip, NY

Alan Gallagher, representing the New York State Department of Labor (DOL) State
Workforce Investment Board
Albany, NY

Valerie Gambino-Carelli, representing Business, Industry, and Labor
Kingston, NY

Nancy Grant, representing Community Rehabilitation Service Provider,
Canandaigua, NY

Jenny Hutkowski, representing Parent Training and Information Center
Rochester, NY

Talanda Jackson-Franklin, representing Business, Industry, and Labor
New York, NY

Dawn Kallenberg, representing the State Education Agency responsible for the Public
Education of Student with Disabilities who are eligible to receive services
Abany, NY

Anthony Morano, representing Community Rehabilitation Service Providers
Syracuse, NY

Hillary Nichols, representing Community Rehabilitation Service Providers
Kingston, NY

Evelyn Pugh, representing Parent Training and Information Center
Brooklyn, NY

Tonya Robinson-Mayer, representing High School Transition Programs
Plattsburgh, NY

Brenda Shannon, representing the Client Assistance Program (CAP)
Albany, NY

Robert Statham, representing Disability Advocacy Group- A Cross-section of
Individuals
Rochester, NY

Toni Sullivan, representing Community Rehabilitation Service Providers
Getzville, NY

Jeffrey Tamburo, representing Business, Industry, and Labor
Ithaca, NY

Non-Voting Members, Ex-Officio Members, and State Partners

Ceylane Meyers-Ruff, representing the New York State Education Department – Office
of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services (ACCES)

Linda Schramm, representing the New York State Education Department – Office of
Adult Career and Continuing Education Services (ACCES)

Pam Brehm-Bisaillon, representing the New York State Education Department –
Office of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services- Vocational Rehabilitation
(ACCES- VR)

Lorie Boyd, representing the New York State Education Department – Office of Adult
Career and Continuing Education Services- Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES- VR)

Jumoke Branco, representing the New York State Education Department – Office of
Adult Career and Continuing Education Services- Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-
VR)

Melinda Dolezal, representing the New York State Justice Center for the Protection of
People with Special Needs

Michelle Harap, representing the New York State Education Department – Office of
Adult Career and Continuing Education Services- Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-
VR)

Peter Herrig, representing the New York State Commission for the Blind (NYCB)

Julia Kelly, representing the New York State Office for People with Developmental
Disabilities (OPWDD)

Caitlin Ohlson, representing the New York State Education Department – Office of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services- Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR)

Andrew Sink, representation the New York State Office of Mental Health (OMH)

Julianne Venneman, representing the New York State Education Department – Office of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services- Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR)