



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

**TO:** P-12 Education Committee  
Adult Career and Continuing Education Services  
(ACCES) Committee

**FROM:** Ken Slentz  
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**SUBJECT:** Developing a Framework for Effective Transition from  
School to Work: A Follow-Up to June 2011 Presentation  
to the Regents

**DATE:** December 5, 2011

**AUTHORIZATION(S):**

### **SUMMARY**

#### **Issue for Discussion**

The P-12 Office for Special Education (OSE) and the Office of Adult Career and Continuing Education Services - Vocational Rehabilitation (ACCES-VR) each play a significant role for transition planning and services for students with disabilities. The purpose of this item is to update the Board of Regents on the recommendations cited in the June 2011 Regents Report on transition planning and services for students with disabilities.

#### **Reason(s) for Consideration**

For information and discussion and to update the Board of Regents on the actions taken in response to the recommendations cited in the June 2011 Regents Report on transition planning and services for students with disabilities.

#### **Proposed Handling**

This item will come before a joint meeting of the Regents P-12 Education Committee and the ACCES Committee at its December 2011 meeting.

#### **Background Information**

Transition from secondary education to post school career development and employment for youth with disabilities involves multiple tasks and activities that require the cooperation of many committed individuals across youth and adult programs. In June 2011, P-12 OSE and ACCES presented a report on transition services for youth. Included in the report's recommendations and next steps were the need to:

- Strengthen collaborations across SED, schools, stakeholders and community providers;
- Expand options for paid and unpaid work experiences; and
- Advocate for additional resources dedicated to transition services.

The following is an update on the actions taken in response to the recommendations noted in the June 2011 Regents report.

### **Initiatives in Response to Recommendations:**

#### **1. Enhance stronger collaborations among ACCES, P-12 Office of Special Education, schools, Independent Living Centers (ILCs), community-based partner providers and employers to increase the likelihood of work experience and post school employment for youth with disabilities.**

- The Department currently provides funds to support transition specialists in each region of the State. These transition specialists are currently engaged in the continuation or creation of community groups, with the goal of having sustainable partnerships between schools, families and State and community agencies (such as ILCs, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), the Office of Persons with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), local counseling agencies, and location businesses) to increase the potential for student work experience, while the student is in school, and increase referrals to appropriate agencies post-high school.
- VR and OSE participated in the OPWDD successful application for Employment Systems Change grant. This five-year federal grant, recently awarded to the Institute for Innovative Transition at the University of Rochester's Strong Center for Developmental Disabilities, is a statewide demonstration project to advance systems change to expand competitive employment in integrated settings for youth and young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

#### **2. Identify VR staff to work collaboratively with each of the Regional Special Education Technical Assistance and Support Centers (RSE TASCs) Transition Specialists on regional technical assistance planning.**

- The RSE TASCs Transition Specialists are working with identified VR counselors to encourage their participation in community groups (see #1 above).
- Transition Specialists are also partnering with VR district offices to engage in more focused conversations with local Committee on Special Education (CSE) Chairpersons. The VR district office representative will provide general

information about ACCES-VR referral processes, documentation requirements, eligibility determinations and services. This will also foster communication and collaboration among districts and VR district offices. This partnering activity is currently occurring in the Lower Hudson, Mid-South, Mid-West and West regions of the State. If this activity is successful, each RSE-TASC Transition Specialist will be asked to conduct similar meetings either later this year or early next year. Feedback from the first meeting, which took place in the Lower-Hudson region, was very positive.

**3. Work with ILCs to identify staff that can act as liaisons to the regional consortiums that already exist or are under development through the RSE TASC Transition Specialists.**

- ILCs identified by ACCES-VR are invited and encouraged to participate in the community groups (see #1).

**4. Revise Community Work Study Programs with Employers in the Community Policy 1380.00 to promote the active participation of high school students with significant disabilities in paid and unpaid work experiences.**

- ACCES has slated this policy for revision for next Fall 2012/Winter 2013. ACCES is also exploring the development of a new contractual service called "Youth Employment Services" which would allow ACCES-VR the flexibility and dedicated resources to implement employer based training experiences needed to assist students in successfully transitioning to post secondary activities.

**5. Allocate VR staff so as to assure that we have adequate coverage of all school districts across the State. This is essential if we are going to improve our ability to support students in achieving quality employment.**

- ACCES-VR has 325 vocational rehabilitation counselors across the State to cover about 1,700 public and non-public high schools. Currently ACCES counselors have liaison responsibilities for large school districts. In addition, ACCES offices have staff assigned as contacts for school or transition related information.

**6. Advocate for additional resources for transition services with the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Rehabilitation Act and the Workforce Investment Act.**

- Allocations of funds for transition services have been and continue to be included on Regents Legislative Priority Agendas. These include ensuring adequate funding for transition in these reauthorizations; targeting funding to improve postsecondary and career success; improving the school-to-work transition for students with disabilities; and increasing the supply of qualified vocational rehabilitation counselors.

## **7. Include the linkage of VR data as a component of the creation of a P-20 Longitudinal Data System.**

- ACCES has submitted an initial case use scenario and several ACCES-VR staff are now actively engaged with this group.

### Next Steps:

1. Schedule further joint Regents Committee discussions on the topic of transition including a panel presentation focused on effective practices in the field and the intersection of ACCES and P-12 roles in transition planning and services. Include representatives from students and parents, school teachers and administrators, ILCs, RSE TASCs and other. The end result should be the development of strategies that will drive more effective transition planning and services in New York State.
2. Benchmark state and national best practices as we continue to explore ways to improve transition services. At the conclusion of the Model Transition Program (MTP), Cornell University conducted studies to identify essential factors that lead to successful transition. Two studies highlighted key practices that resulted in better post school outcomes: Evaluation of a Multi-Site Transition to Adulthood Programs for Youth with Disabilities; and, Evidence from the New York State Programs on Transition to Adulthood for Youth with Disabilities: Comparative Analysis with National Data. These studies provide a framework for improved transition outcomes.