



2024 Statewide Capacity-Building Conference

Participant Workbook



Center on Disability
& Development
EDUCATION & HUMAN DEVELOPMENT



TEXAS
WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

Table of Contents

Resources for Monday Sessions

What is Self-Determination and Why does it Matter?

Note-Taking Guide 5

Blazing a Trail: The Capacity-Building Project's Collaborative Effort to Expand Pre-ETS Services for Younger Teens

Note-Taking Guide 6

Resources for Tuesday Morning

Assessment and Service Planning for Younger VR Customers

Note-Taking Guide 8

Case Study - Susan 9-10

Disability Categories Under IDEA 11-13

Assessing Student Need 14-18

Next Steps to Independence 19-30

Using Informal Assessments and Data to Determine Job Readiness

Note-Taking Guide 31

Assessments for Transition 32-33

Pre-ETS Sequencing Guide Workplace Readiness Activity 34-37

Job Readiness Checklist 38-39

Sequencing of Skills and Cascading Services

Note-Taking Guide 40

Supporting Students: Balancing Quality Services for All 41

TWC-VR and College Preparation 42

Roles of TWC Transition Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors in Collaboration with Schools: A Panel Discussion

| | |
|-------------------|----|
| Note-Taking Guide | 43 |
|-------------------|----|

Resources for Tuesday Afternoon

Capacity Building for a Stronger Collaboration

| | |
|---|-------|
| Note-Taking Guide | 45 |
| Common VR Forms | 46-47 |
| VR 2002 - Referral Form | 48 |
| Desk Aide: How to Document a Potentially Eligible Case in Rehab Works | 49-52 |
| How to make a referral to TWC | 53-54 |

Resources for Wednesday

Creating a Successful Path: Transition Planning for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students

| | |
|-------------------|----|
| Note-Taking Guide | 56 |
|-------------------|----|

Transition Services Unlocked: Frisco ISD's Collaborative Journey with Project SEARCH -- A Panel Discussion

| | |
|-------------------|----|
| Note-Taking Guide | 57 |
|-------------------|----|

General Resources

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-------|
| TWC-TEA Memorandum of Understanding | 59-66 |
| Regional Focus Group Data Summaries | 67-82 |
| TWC Terms and Acronyms | 83-86 |
| Special Education Terms and Acronyms | 87-88 |
| Stevens Amendment Notice | 89-90 |
| QR Code for Questions | 91 |

Resources for Monday

KEY NOTE

KARRIE A. SHOGREN, PH.D.
&
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STAND OUT PRACTICE:

DATE:

Monday October 7

THINGS TO REMEMBER:

IDEA 1

IDEA 2

IDEA 3

KEY TAKE AWAY:

**Resources
for
Tuesday
Morning**

ASSESSMENT & SERVICE PLANNING FOR YOUNGER VR CUSTOMERS

DATE:

PRESENTER:

SOURCES OF INFORMATION:

THINGS TO REMEMBER- 504

THINGS TO REMEMBER- FIE & IEP

KEY IDEAS: 504

HANDOUT NOTES

HANDOUT NOTES

HOW TO PLAN FOR LONG-TERM

Case Study - Susan

Susan is a 9th grade student at Early College High School. She is 14 years old, a freshman, and lives at home with her mom, brother and two dogs. About 2 years ago, her parents went through a contentious divorce. It has been very hard for Susan, and she often exhibits signs of extreme frustration and anger, sometimes to the point of tears, especially when attempting to complete tasks that are challenging for her. She also worries a lot. Since the divorce, Susan's daily routine has shifted. Her mother, who now works longer hours to support the family, has less time for one-on-one conversations and support.

Since 3rd grade, she has been qualified for Special Education services in the category of Specific Learning Disabilities and OHI. She met the district's criteria for dyslexia but needed more one on one support to learn to read so they placed her in Special Education. She has also been diagnosed with ADHD, inattentive type, so she qualifies as Other Health Impaired for Special Education.

Currently, she has no modifications. However, she has a small group twice a week to practice reading, oral administration of tests, extra help with math, STAAR accommodations, and extra time for assignments.

She is very sweet and well-liked by adults. With her peers, she often struggles because her frustration gets the best of her, and she lashes out. She has been able to maintain two good friendships. Susan's frustration often surfaces in group work or during collaborative activities. For example, in a recent group project, she struggled with communication and became frustrated when tasks were not completed to her satisfaction, leading to a conflict with her group members.

She maintains a B average despite her struggles with the help of a tutor for math and the extra reading help she gets at school.

She has never worked before, or even talked about work. She has wanted to be an astronaut since she was 5. She is fascinated by space and enjoys learning about astronomy but has not yet explored career-related experiences or participated in related extracurricular activities.

Case Study - Susan

What questions would you ask? (reference the handout if needed) What do the answers to those questions tell you about her needs? (it's okay to make up answers as a group to complete this activity)

In terms of Pre-ETS categories, what needs do you see? In what order would you provide those services in order to build skills over time?

Are there other needs you see that are outside of Pre-ETS?

Disability Categories Under IDEA

Disability Definitions: Under IDEA, schools use different eligibility categories than adult service providers. The terms used in IDEA's definition of a child with a disability are defined as follows:

Autism (AU) means a developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Other characteristics often associated with autism are engagement in repetitive activities and stereotyped movements, resistance to environmental change or change in daily routines, and unusual responses to sensory experiences.

- Autism does not apply if a child's educational performance is adversely affected primarily because the child has an emotional disturbance, as defined below.
- A child who manifests the characteristics of autism after age three could be identified as having autism if the criteria listed above are satisfied.

Deaf/Hard of Hearing (DHH) A student who is deaf or hard of hearing is one who has been determined to meet the criteria for deafness or hearing impairment as stated below:

- Deafness means a hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.
- Hearing impairment means an impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child's educational performance but that is not included under the definition of deafness in this section.

Note: IDEA lists deafness and hearing impairment as two separate categories. TEA has combined them under the heading of Deaf/Hard of Hearing in response to requests from the deaf community.

Deaf-Blindness (DB) means concomitant hearing and visual impairments, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness. A student who qualifies as deaf blind:

- meets the eligibility criteria for a student who is deaf or hard of hearing specified above and visual impairment specified below;
- meets the eligibility criteria for a student with a visual impairment and has a suspected hearing loss that cannot be demonstrated conclusively, but a speech/language therapist, a certified speech and language therapist, or a licensed speech-language pathologist indicates there is no speech at an age when speech would normally be expected;

- has documented hearing and visual losses that, if considered individually, may not meet the requirements for a student who is deaf or hard of hearing or for visual impairment, but the combination of such losses adversely affects the student's educational performance; **or**
- has a documented medical diagnosis of a progressive medical condition that will result in concomitant hearing and visual losses that, without special education intervention, will adversely affect the student's educational performance.

Emotional Disturbance (ED) means a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child's educational performance:

- An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.
- An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.
- Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances.
- A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.
- A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

Emotional disturbance includes schizophrenia. The term does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disturbance under one or more of the criteria listed above.

Intellectual Disability (ID) means significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term "intellectual disability" was formerly termed "mental retardation."

Multiple Disabilities (MD) means concomitant impairments (such as intellectual disability-blindness or intellectual disability-orthopedic impairment), the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments. Multiple disabilities do not include deaf-blindness.

Orthopedic Impairment (OI) means a severe orthopedic impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by a congenital anomaly, impairments caused by disease (e.g., poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis), and impairments from other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures or burns that cause contractures).

Other Health Impairment (OHI) means having limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, that—

- Is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart

condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia, and Tourette syndrome; and

- Adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Specific Learning Disability (SLD)

- **General:** Specific learning disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia.
- **Disorders not included:** Specific learning disability does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, of intellectual disability, of emotional disturbance, or of environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage.

Speech or Language Impairment (SI) means a communication disorder, such as stuttering, impaired articulation, a language impairment, or a voice impairment, that adversely affects a child's educational performance.

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) means an acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force, resulting in total or partial functional disability or psychosocial impairment, or both, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. Traumatic brain injury applies to open or closed head injuries resulting in impairments in one or more areas, such as cognition; language; memory; attention; reasoning; abstract thinking; judgment; problem-solving; sensory, perceptual, and motor abilities; psychosocial behavior; physical functions; information processing; and speech. Traumatic brain injury does not apply to brain injuries that are congenital or degenerative, or to brain injuries induced by birth trauma.

Visual Impairment (VI) including blindness means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.

Assessing Student Needs

| Indication of Need | Possible Service Areas |
|--|---|
| <p>Job Exploration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Does the consumer lack ideas when it comes to what type of job they would like to do? ● Do they present a job goal that may not be feasible? ● Does their IEP contain a job goal that may not be feasible? | <p>Job Exploration:</p> <p>You can provide counseling and guidance around:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Labor market information ● Different job options ● Complete interest inventories ● What are their interests? ● If you are questioning their ability level, psychs, neuropsychs, and other medical evaluations can be done once the person has been determined eligible. <p>Services in the work-based learning category can also provide information about what the best job match is for the individual.</p> |
| <p>Self-Advocacy/Social Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consumer never speaks up. ● Body language- doesn't make eye contact, looks down or away consistently. ● Disrespectful to adults and others- how do they interact with you? ● Difficulty making and maintaining friendships. ● Teachers/Parents report defiant, withdrawn, or inappropriate behavior/interactions. | <p>Explore Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Can the school provide the training they need? ● Are other resources available in this area, i.e. IL Centers, CRPs, in-house (job clubs, job readiness seminars) ● If not, would they benefit from contracted Pre-ETS? ● Are there GSTs in your area that might be a good fit? <p>Would improving their skills in this area support them in future work experiences?</p> |
| <p>Work-Based Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Have they worked before? ● If so, did something go wrong? Was it related to another Pre-ETS skill, i.e. social skills, that would need to be worked on first? ● Is there an area of employment they would want to explore/experience? ● Would summer work experience help them develop a concept of work? And possibly build self-esteem and confidence? Help them learn how to successful interact with others in a work environment? | <p>Work-Based Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Would an internship/volunteer position be a possibility, either through a CRP (Work Experience) or as a counselor-directed placement? ● If you think they need it, consider providing Work Experience Coaching under Work Experience. ● Would they benefit from participation in SEAL or PWE? <p>Remember, research shows that work experience while in high school increases the likelihood of success in work after high school.</p> |

Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education:

- Is the consumer considering post-secondary training, or do you think they might need to explore that option?
- Are they unsure of their goal but interested in college?
- Do they understand the difference between expectations and services received under IDEA vs. in a post-secondary setting?
- Understanding what college requires and how it relates to their interests may be helpful to them.
- Are they interested in:
 - Trade or Technical Training
 - Community College
 - Universities (public or private)
 - Military
 - Other post-secondary programs
- Consider tours of local community colleges, trade schools, universities, and Job Corps, as per student's interest

Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education:

Do they need assistance with:

- exploring what programs exist and the requirements for each program.
- applying for accommodations for entrance exams
- completing the application and admissions process
- applying for financial aid (FAFSA) and/or loans, as needed
- accessing accommodations for classes
- finding the appropriate textbooks for their classes
- any other aspects of enrolling/attending post-secondary training.

Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living:

Does the consumer need help in any of the following areas:

- Dress for work.
- Appropriate hygiene
- Time keeping at work (appropriate breaks and lunch)
- Being on time
- Developing a resume
- Interviewing skills
- Decorum at work or other social skill-related
- Generally, has no concept of work.
- Lacks work experience
- Social skills
- Independent Living skills

Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living:

If your consumer lacks work experience, they may also lack a concept of work, i.e. it's not just a place you go hang out for 8 hours/day. You're expected to work for the money you earn, act and dress appropriately (different workplaces have different expectations), what environment is the best fit, organization related to time management, etc.

If they would benefit from some training to help them gain a concept, develop a resume, practice interviewing skills, or develop social skills.

Other considerations:

- You’re working with transition students. If you expect them to act like adults in terms of how they communicate, returning calls, etc., they will probably disappoint you. Lack of response is an opportunity to talk about why responding is important. Be open to texting.
- It is normal for transition-age customers to change their minds. You’re helping them develop their idea of work and their employment goal, as they get more information it will influence those decisions.
- It is okay to try similar services more than once. Customers may benefit from multiple presentations of the same information from more than one provider or teaching modality. Repetition is often needed to master skills related to work.

Hindrance to Employment Chart

This document was developed by TWC to assist VR Counselors in determining the need for services for customers who have never been employed.

| Questions You Might Ask Transition Consumers | *Potential Vocational Impediments |
|---|---|
| <p>Grades</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passing? • Failing? | <p>Grades alone don’t tell you a lot, but along with other information they can give you a good idea of how the person is functioning academically</p> |
| <p>Chores at Home</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do they help with chores at home? | <p>Chores at home teach students essential life skills, like time management, organization, and the importance of helping out at home. These skills are not only useful now but also prepare students for adulthood. When they help with chores, they learn to manage their time better, prioritize tasks, and feel a sense of accomplishment.</p> |
| <p>Social/Behavioral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do they have friends? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Do they get along with them? • Do they interact appropriately with others? • Are they too withdrawn? • Too aggressive? • What do you observe about how they interact with you? • Do they follow directions/respect authority? • Are they involved in extracurricular activities? | <p>The answers to these questions may tell you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If they can’t get along with others at school, they may not be at work either. If their tendency is to be too aggressive or withdrawn when interacting with others, that will probably carry over into the work environment as well. • If they don’t respect authority at school, they may not be able to respect a supervisor at work or receive instructions/direction at work appropriately. • How they interact with you is an indication of how they interact with |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>others, which is an indication of their overall social skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most extra-curricular activities require a certain amount of social interaction. |
| <p>Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do they complete assignments? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o On time? o To the best of their ability? | <p>If they don't complete assignments at all or on time, or they don't complete them well, is it related to their disability? Is it a choice they are making? Do they seem to understand the consequences?</p> <p>Depending on their reasons for not completing assignments, this may be an indicator of how they will complete assignments in the workplace. Do they give up when they don't know the answer or how to complete a task? Do they give a quick, not very thorough answer to the problem? Do they complete the assignments, but their organizational skills are lacking so they don't complete them on time?</p> |
| <p>Disability: ADHD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are their grades? • Are they able to focus at school? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o On meds? Without meds? • Are they having organizational issues? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Is it affecting their ability to complete their work? • Do they do better in some subjects simply because they find them interesting? • Are there any behavioral issues such as hyperactivity in the classroom or boredom that leads to misbehavior? • What accommodations have they received in school? <p>LD</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are their grades? • In what subject(s) are their learning difficulties? • What accommodations have they received in school? | <p>The answers to these questions, for someone with ADHD, will give you some insight into how they function at school. If they have difficulty functioning in the school environment because of challenges with organization, behavioral issues, or because they do not participate/complete work unless they are interested in a subject, they are likely to repeat the same pattern in a work setting. Knowing what academic accommodations, they have received gives you some insight into where their weaknesses lie, both academically and, in some cases, behaviorally.</p> <p>LD- For someone with an LD, it's important to know what type of LD and what areas it affects. Is it related to a task like reading that will affect them with almost any work task or is it specific to math, and therefore it will only affect them at work with those tasks that rely heavily on math skills?</p> |

It is okay to try similar services more than once. Customers may benefit from multiple presentations of the same information from more than one provider or teaching modality. Repetition is often needed to master skills related to work.

*Additional questions might be appropriate depending on the individual. Answers may indicate different vocational impediments for different people, depending on their circumstances.

Birth–Age 3

Next Steps to Independence: Skills and Strategies

Legend: C=Complete; P=In Progress; N=Not Needed

Directions: The Next Steps checklist lets educators, families, and students monitor continued progress on skills needed for future success. The legend indicates three levels (complete, in progress, and not needed). The reviewer will mark the box indicating the child’s current performance level. Notice the two important resources on the second page. Educators and families can support children with **Teaching and Learning Strategies** in all four categories under the corresponding area. Also, complete the **Important Action Steps for Families** as appropriate.

| Choice Making & Decision Making | Goal Setting & Independence | Self-Management & Self-Awareness | Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy |
|--|---|--|---|
| <p>Child can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> make choices between two items. indicate preferred toys through gesture, gaze, or voice. demonstrate beginning choice-making ability. make choices without complaining when they do not get their way. | <p>Child can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> assist with putting items away (e.g., dirty clothes and toys). wash and dry hands with visuals or prompts. follow 1-2 step directions. demonstrate independence (e.g., I can do it myself). put on pants and shoes with minimal assistance. share a desire to accomplish a task (e.g., build tower, make simple snack). ask for help when needed. use words or gesture to meet needs. express the need to use the restroom and gain independence in toileting. | <p>Child can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> express likes and dislikes for toys and food. follow simple routines (e.g., bedtime, bathtime). express frustration and disappointment. demonstrate object permanence (i.e., understand things they cannot see still exist). | <p>Child can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> communicate wants and needs using words, gestures, or voice in a variety of settings (e.g., with peers, with adults, in large and small groups). engage in back and forth conversations (can include babbling). |
| | | | <p><i>Continue to the next page.</i></p> |

Birth–Age 3

Next Steps to Independence: Skills and Strategies continued

Important Action Steps for Families

- Put your child’s name on interest lists for Medicaid waiver programs as soon as disability is identified. Call 1-877-438-5658 for more information. If your child is already on the interest lists for Medicaid waivers, check their status each year (checking around their birthday is an excellent way to remember to do this).
- Explore services available for children with disabilities, such as the Medically Dependent Children Program (MDCP). Call 2-1-1 or visit www.211.org to find out what is available in your community.

Teaching and Learning Strategies

Choice Making & Decision Making

- Establish predictable routines.
- Limit choices to reduce frustration.
- Offer choices given two options.
- Create an organized play area to reduce over-stimulation.
- Acknowledge child’s choice when using their style of communication (e.g., eye gaze, gestures, voice).

Goal Setting & Independence

- Encourage requests for help.
- Break down tasks into small steps to build independence.
- Encourage expression of preferences and desires.
- Model how to accomplish goals.
- Encourage independence by allowing mistakes and self-correction.
- Help child set small goals (e.g., put a puzzle together, build a tower with blocks).
- Encourage attempting unfamiliar tasks.

Self-Management & Self-Awareness

- Encourage trying different activities, foods, toys, etc.
- Teach calming and breathing strategies.
- Encourage expressing emotions appropriately.
- Reward/reinforce desired behaviors.
- Acknowledge feelings and emotions (e.g., “You’re feeling sad/happy/excited right now.”)
- Encourage independent expression of likes and dislikes.

Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy

- Allow child to try and solve problems independently (e.g., building blocks, playing with toys).
- Place toys slightly out of reach to promote independence.

Continue to next age/grade band, but keep this record and continue to update.

Age 3–5 (Inc. Kindergarten)

Next Steps to Independence: Skills and Strategies

Legend: C=Complete; P=In Progress; N=Not Needed

Directions: The Next Steps checklist lets educators, families, and students monitor continued progress on skills needed for future success. The legend indicates three levels (complete, in progress, and not needed). The reviewer will mark the box indicating the child’s current performance level. Notice the two important resources on the second page. Educators and families can support children with **Teaching and Learning Strategies** in all four categories under the corresponding area. Also, complete the **Important Action Steps for Families** as appropriate.

| Choice Making & Decision Making | Goal Setting & Independence | Self-Management & Self-Awareness | Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| <p>Child can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> enjoy playing with other children rather than alone. engage in beginning negotiation skills with peers and adults. begin to develop ability to solve own minor problems. express strong preference (e.g., toys, food, friends). make choices between three or four items, preferred and non-preferred. | <p>Child can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> establish short term goals to accomplish small, preferred tasks with adult assistance. complete self-help skills (e.g., toileting, brushing teeth, bathing) with increasing independence. choose weather-appropriate clothing and dress accordingly. | <p>Child can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> express likes and dislikes (e.g., food, activities, toys). persist without getting frustrated when unable to complete certain tasks. request help when needed. make friends and has a best friend(s). | <p>Child can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> engage in role playing. request preferred items and identify non-preferred items. take the lead in play activities with confidence. negotiate to get desired activities and items at beginning level. cooperate with adult-supported conflict resolution. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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Continue to the next page.

Age 3–5 (Inc. Kindergarten)

Next Steps to Independence: Skills and Strategies continued

Important Action Steps for Families

- Put your child’s name on interest lists for Medicaid waiver programs as soon as disability is identified. Call 1-877-438-5658 for more information. If your child is already on the interest list(s) for Medicaid waivers, check their status each year (checking around their birthday is an excellent way to remember to do this).
- Explore services available for children with disabilities, such as the Medically Dependent Children Program (MDCP). Call 2-1-1 or visit www.211.org to find out what is available in your community.

Teaching and Learning Strategies

Choice Making & Decision Making

- Provide choices in food, materials, and activities.
- Use visuals to support choice-making.
- Model how to make choices by providing a variety of learning centers and activities.
- Discuss how to make appropriate decisions when given options.
- Model and role-play how to ask for help.
- Discuss the positive and negative consequences of making decisions.
- Provide opportunities for independence (e.g., encourage and support child to do for themselves some of the tasks you are currently doing for them).

Goal Setting & Independence

- Use a daily schedule and mark off items as they are completed.
- Break down activities into smaller steps and check off steps as they are completed.
- Support child in becoming independent with self-care activities at school and home.
- Provide visuals to encourage independent clean up after play.
- Model how to accomplish goals.

Self-Management & Self-Awareness

- Discuss individual strengths and weaknesses, focusing on abilities.
- Provide opportunities to focus on individual strengths.
- Teach strategies to help child manage their own feelings and behavior.

Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy

- Assist child with expressing preferences and ordering their own meals.
- Allow child to lead activities (e.g., modeling, role playing, play activities).
- Give child responsibilities (e.g., taking care of a pet, cleaning, classroom jobs).
- Reward and reinforce desired behaviors.
- Use books, social stories, and narratives to teach about emotions.

Continue to next age/grade band, but keep this record and continue to update.

Elementary School (Grades 1–5)

Next Steps to Independence: Skills and Strategies

Legend: C=Complete; P=In Progress; N=Not Needed

Directions: The Next Steps checklist lets educators, families, and students monitor continued progress on skills needed for future success. The legend indicates three levels (complete, in progress, and not needed). The reviewer will mark the box indicating the child’s current performance level. Notice the two important resources on the second page. Educators and families can support children with **Teaching and Learning Strategies** in all four categories under the corresponding area. Also, complete the **Important Action Steps for Families** as appropriate.

| Choice Making & Decision Making | Goal Setting & Independence | Self-Management & Self-Awareness | Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|---|---|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|---|---|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|---|---|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| <p>Child can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate knowledge of decision-making (e.g., identify safe and unsafe situations, generate multiple solutions to social issues, identify consequences of decisions). take the time to think about choices before making a decision. demonstrate a sense of self and show empathy (e.g., use safe spaces in the classroom and at home, and recognize others’ emotions). make choices and decisions related to safety concerns with guidance. | <p>Child can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> keep up with and take care of personal belongings. manage their self-care and dress independently. plan for daily tasks and begin to display time management skills. demonstrate preferences for friends or activities at a beginning level. set short term goals and take steps to accomplish them with support. | <p>Child can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> engage in calming strategies when stressed or upset. identify and show awareness of their areas of struggle and obtain assistance independently. complete activities and assignments independently. initiate friendships independently. | <p>Child can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> role-play leadership roles (e.g., play the teacher). take the initiative to start familiar and unfamiliar tasks. demonstrate persistence when an activity becomes challenging. negotiate with teachers, peers, and family members. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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Continue to the next page.

Elementary School (Grades 1–5)

Next Steps to Independence: Skills and Strategies continued

Important Action Steps for Families

- Put your child's name on interest lists for Medicaid waiver programs as soon as disability is identified by calling 1-877-438-5658. If your child is already on the interest list(s) for Medicaid waivers, check their status each year (checking around their birthday is an excellent way to remember to do this).
- Explore services available for children with disabilities, such as the Medically Dependent Children Program (MDCP). Call 2-1-1 or visit www.211.org to find out what is available in your community.
- Collaborate with your child's teacher to develop the individualized education program (IEP). Communicate your child's strengths and interests.
- Begin talking with your child's teacher and your child about them participating in their admission, review and dismissal (ARD) committee meeting. Resources for elementary students and families can be found at imdetermined.org.

Teaching and Learning Strategies

Choice Making & Decision Making

- Create boundaries for choice making and decision making.
- Use a daily schedule and mark off items as they are completed.
- Model and role-play decision-making, including consequences.
- Explore and discuss potential career choices.
- Use career terminology for helper charts in the classroom and home setting.

Goal Setting & Independence

- Use a daily schedule and mark off items as they are completed.
- Assist with creating weekly goals and tracking progress toward completion.
- Allow child to vote on home activities and recreational trips.
- Encourage child to make choices throughout the day.

Self-Management & Self-Awareness

- Reward/reinforce desired behaviors.
- Teach strategies to help child manage their own feelings and behavior.
- Use self-evaluation checklists and forms to help child self-reflect.
- Teach time-management strategies.
- Role-play coping strategies paired with different emotions.
- Create connections between scenarios and different ways to feel.
- Model appropriate emotions for different situations.

Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy

- Engage in volunteer activities together.
- Encourage ordering their own food at a restaurant.
- Start a savings account and teach them about money.
- Have child participate in their ARD committee meeting, as appropriate.
- Assist child in identifying and expressing their needed academic supports.

Continue to next age/grade band, but keep this record and continue to update.

Middle School (Grades 6–8)

Next Steps to Independence: Skills and Strategies

Legend: C=Complete; P=In Progress; N=Not Needed

Directions: The Next Steps checklist lets educators, families, and students monitor continued progress on skills needed for future success. The legend indicates three levels (complete, in progress, and not needed). The reviewer will mark the box indicating the child's current performance level. Notice the two important resources on the second page. Educators and families can support children with **Teaching and Learning Strategies** in all four categories under the corresponding area. Also, complete the **Important Action Steps for Families** as appropriate.

| Choice Making & Decision Making | Goal Setting & Independence | Self-Management & Self-Awareness | Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy |
|---|--|---|--|
| <p>Child can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrate self-determination skills (e.g., select courses, volunteer in the community, negotiate with friends and family). select or give input on elective courses based on personal preferences. participate in admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee meetings (e.g., make introductions, discuss accommodations, talk about future classes). participate in clubs and sports. | <p>Child can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> give input on their individualized education program (IEP) goals. give input on their IEP accommodations and modifications. give input on their postsecondary goals. choose weather-appropriate clothes and dress independently. prepare to participate in a student-led ARD committee meeting. | <p>Child can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> maintain good attendance. take medication on their own or with minimal support. keep a preferred planner to manage school and extracurricular work. appropriately interact with peers in social situations, structured and unstructured. effectively use behavior strategies to be successful in a variety of situations and environments. identify peer pressure and strategies to avoid it. demonstrate awareness of their disability and can name it. | <p>Child can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> exhibit self-determination skills (e.g., problem solving, setting long-term and short-term goals, advocating for their needs). participate in their ARD committee meetings. participate in career exploration classes. assist in creating their course of study. answer "what if" questions. select elective courses independently based on personal preference. |
| <p><i>Continue to the next page.</i></p> | | | |

Middle School (Grades 6–8)

Next Steps to Independence: Skills and Strategies continued

Important Action Steps for Families

- Collaborate with your child’s teacher to develop the IEP. Communicate your child’s strengths and interests.
- Put your child’s name on interest lists for Medicaid waiver programs as soon as disability is identified by calling 1-877-438-5658. If your child is already on the interest list(s) for Medicaid waivers, check their status each year (checking around their birthday is an excellent way to remember to do this).
- Support your child in participating in their ARD committee discussions about planning for the future and consider the link to transition planning (e.g., introduction, sharing about themselves, reviewing transition and postsecondary goals).
- Explore services available for children with disabilities, such as the Medically Dependent Children Program (MDCP). Call 2-1-1 or visit www.211.org to find out what is available in your community.

Note for middle school students & families:
See the [Texas Transition and Employment Guide](#) for more detailed information on transition.

Teaching and Learning Strategies



Choice Making & Decision Making

- Assist child with choosing elective courses.
- Provide child with opportunities to choose accommodations for classes.
- Provide child with a list of chores to do at home.
- Support child in describing their accommodations.
- Assist child in explaining how their accommodations support their learning.



Goal Setting & Independence

- Support child in the use of checklists to monitor self-help skills.
- Encourage child to participate in developing their IEP goals.
- Develop and track weekly or monthly classroom or home goals with child.
- Encourage child to attend and actively participate in their ARD committee meetings.
- Teach child what to do in an emergency (e.g. fire, accident, bad weather) and practice these routines until the child can respond to emergencies independently.



Self-Management & Self-Awareness

- Encourage child to use a planner or calendar.
- Help child prepare to participate in their ARD committee meeting.
- Help child articulate how medication makes their body and emotions feel.
- Encourage child to consider others’ points of view.
- Prepare child to provide information about how they learn best at their ARD committee meeting.



Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy

- Assist child with asking for help.
- Encourage child to ask questions when they don’t understand.
- Help child develop different techniques to ask for help.
- Help child discover and articulate their disability-related strengths and weaknesses.
- Teach child how to describe their disability.

Continue to next age/grade band, but keep this record and continue to update.



High School (Grades 9–12)

Next Steps to Independence: Skills and Strategies

Legend: C=Complete; P=In Progress; N=Not Needed

Directions: The Next Steps checklist lets educators, families, and students monitor continued progress on skills needed for future success. The legend indicates three levels (complete, in progress, and not needed). The reviewer will mark the box indicating the child's current performance level. Notice the two important resources on the second page. Educators and families can support children with **Teaching and Learning Strategies** in all four categories under the corresponding area. Also, complete the **Important Action Steps for Families** as appropriate.

| Choice Making & Decision Making | Goal Setting & Independence | Self-Management & Self-Awareness | Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy |
|---|---|---|---|
| <p>Child can:</p> <p>demonstrate self-determination skills (e.g., select courses, apply for jobs and colleges, negotiate with friends and family).</p> <p>assist in developing their individualized education plan (IEP) goals with their case manager.</p> <p>give input on appropriate accommodations and modifications.</p> <p>participate in career exploration.</p> <p>attend a college day visit or career fair, on or off campus.</p> <p>demonstrate understanding of transfer of rights.</p> <p>demonstrate understanding of guardianship alternatives and supported decision-making.</p> | <p>Child can:</p> <p>meet with their counselor to discuss their course of study.</p> <p>secure and maintain a part-time job.</p> <p>apply for college, trade school, or other postsecondary options.</p> <p>express where they want to live after high school.</p> <p>conduct a student-led admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee meeting.</p> | <p>Child can:</p> <p>take their medication independently or with minimal assistance.</p> <p>keep a preferred planner to manage school, extracurricular work, and personal obligations.</p> <p>appropriately interact with peers in a variety of situations.</p> <p>effectively use behavior strategies to be successful in a variety of situations and environments.</p> <p>identify peer pressure and strategies to avoid it.</p> <p>overcome obstacles when things become difficult.</p> | <p>Child can:</p> <p>demonstrate the ability to reason (e.g., make educated guesses, decide between two desired choices).</p> <p>understand consequences of their actions, positive and negative.</p> <p>participate in their ARD committee meetings (e.g., create presentations, read from a script, lead the meeting, discuss plans for the future).</p> <p>assist in developing their postsecondary goals.</p> <p>identify their disability and advocate for their unique needs in a variety of situations.</p> |
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Continue to the next page.

High School (Grades 9–12)

Next Steps to Independence: Skills and Strategies continued

Important Action Steps for Families

- Put your child's name on interest lists for Medicaid waiver programs as soon as disability is identified by calling 1-877-438-5658. If your child is already on the interest list(s) for Medicaid waivers, check their status each year (checking around their birthday is an excellent way to remember to do this).
- Talk with your child's doctors, insurance company, and/or benefits provider about what will change when your child turns 18.
- Before graduation, work with your child's teachers to develop the Summary of Performance (SOP).
- Ask your child's Transition Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor (TVRC) or your child's ARD committee about Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) opportunities.
- Have your child reapply or apply for Supplemental Security Income (SSI) at 18 based on their income, not the family's income. If your child is receiving SSI, ask your child's TVRC about work incentive programs to ensure they keep their benefits while earning income.
- Assist your child in researching entrance requirements and cost for any postsecondary education programs they may be interested in.
- Prior to your child turning age 17, review the information the school shares about the transfer of rights at age 18.
- Your child's graduating year, complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or Texas Application for State Financial Aid (TASFA) with help from the school counselor, or sign an opt-out form if you choose not to complete or submit these applications.
- Work with your child's academic counselor to request needed accommodations on college entrance exams.
- Help your child contact the disability services office at college of interest to find out about supports they offer.
- Before your child's 18th birthday, decide what, if any, supports your child will need to make legal, financial, and medical decisions.

Teaching and Learning Strategies

Choice Making & Decision Making

- Assist with choosing elective courses and the program of study for graduation.
- Provide opportunities to choose accommodations and supports for each class.
- Provide a list of clubs or activities for child to participate in before or after school.
- Encourage child to provide information at their IEP meeting regarding how they learn best, and their likes dislikes, and dreams.
- Support the student-led IEP, with the child as an active member of the ARD committee.

Goal Setting & Independence

- Talk about the transfer of rights.
- Encourage child to create academic and personal goals.
- Develop and track weekly or monthly classroom or home goals with child.

Self-Management & Self-Awareness

- Encourage child to use a planner or calendar.
- Help child develop strategies to handle emotions.
- Help child articulate how medication makes their body and emotions feel.
- Help child define what success means to them.

Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy

- Assist child with asking for help.
- Encourage child to ask questions when they don't understand.
- Help child develop different techniques to ask for help.
- Help child discover and articulate their disability-related strengths and weaknesses.
- Support the student-led IEP, with the child as an active member of the ARD committee.

Note for high school students & families:
See the [Texas Transition and Employment Guide](#) for more detailed information on transition.

Continue to next age/grade band, but keep this record and continue to update.

18+ (Ages 18–22)

Next Steps to Independence: Skills and Strategies

Legend: C=Complete; P=In Progress; N=Not Needed

Directions: The Next Steps checklist lets educators, families, and students monitor continued progress on skills needed for future success. The legend indicates three levels (complete, in progress, and not needed). The reviewer will mark the box indicating the young adult's current performance level. Notice the two important resources on the second page. Educators and families can support young adults with **Teaching and Learning Strategies** in all four categories under the corresponding area. Also, complete the **Important Action Steps for Families** as appropriate.

| Choice Making & Decision Making | Goal Setting & Independence | Self-Management & Self-Awareness | Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy |
|---|---|--|---|
| <p>Young adult can:</p> <p>secure and maintain a part-time or full-time job.</p> <p>demonstrate self-help skills in multiple settings.</p> <p>demonstrate independent living skills and follow a daily routine.</p> <p>access community services when they graduate high school.</p> <p>express preferences for guardianship alternatives such as supported decision making and power of attorney.</p> <p>be supported by their family member or other person as their legal guardian.</p> | <p>Young adult can:</p> <p>make decisions about their young adult living accommodations (e.g., where they will live, who they will live with, how they will pay rent).</p> <p>participate in continued education and training after graduating high school.</p> <p>demonstrate independent transportation skills.</p> <p>participate in community recreation and leisure opportunities.</p> | <p>Young adult can:</p> <p>demonstrate transferable employability skills (e.g., critical thinking skills, leadership skills, communication skills, ability to work on a team).</p> <p>refill prescriptions at the pharmacy independently or with minimal assistance.</p> <p>follow a daily routine using calendar and schedule.</p> <p>appropriately interact with peers in a variety of situations.</p> <p>maintain attendance based on the schedule set in their individualized education program (IEP) or by their employer.</p> <p>effectively use behavior strategies to be successful in a variety of situations and environments.</p> <p>identify peer pressure and strategies to avoid it.</p> <p>identify their disability and advocate for their unique needs in a variety of situations.</p> <p>overcome obstacles when things become difficult.</p> | <p>Young adult can:</p> <p>make decisions by themselves as well as identify a trusted adult when they need assistance.</p> |
| <p>C <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>C <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>C <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>C <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>C <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>C <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>C <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/></p> | <p>C <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>C <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>C <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>C <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>C <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>C <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>C <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/></p> | <p>C <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>C <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>C <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>C <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>C <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>C <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>C <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>C <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>C <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/></p> | <p>C <input type="checkbox"/> P <input type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/></p> |

Continue to the next page.

18+ (Ages 18–22)





Next Steps to Independence: Skills and Strategies continued

Important Action Steps for Families

- If your young adult is on the interest list(s) for Medicaid waivers, assist them in checking their status each year by calling 1-877-438-5658 (checking around their birthday is an excellent way to remember to do this).
- Ensure that your young adult is participating in their ARD committee discussions about futures planning.
- Work with your young adult’s teachers to develop the Summary of Performance (SOP) prior to graduation.
- When your young adult turns 18, assist them in registering to vote if they want to participate in elections. If your young adult is male, you may also assist them in registering for a Selective Service (there are limited exemptions for men who meet the criteria for some medical conditions).
- Make sure your young adult is a registered consumer with any appropriate outside or state agency (e.g., Texas Workforce Commission-VR).

Note for young adults age 18 and over and families:
See the [Texas Transition and Employment Guide](#) for more detailed information on transition.

Teaching and Learning Strategies

-  **Choice Making & Decision Making**
 - Provide opportunities to choose accommodations and supports for program activities.
 - Provide a list of transition-related community activities for the young adult to participate in outside of school.
 - Support the student-led IEP with the young adult as an active member of the admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee.
-  **Goal Setting & Independence**
 - Encourage the young adult to create academic and personal goals.
 - Develop and track weekly or monthly school or home goals with the young adult.
 - Help the young adult understand adult rights and responsibilities.
-  **Self-Management & Self-Awareness**
 - Encourage the young adult to use a planner or calendar.
 - Help the young adult develop strategies to handle emotions.
 - Help the young adult articulate how medication makes their body and emotions feel.
 - Support the young adult in assuming adult rights and responsibilities.
-  **Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy**
 - Assist the young adult with asking for help.
 - Encourage the young adult to ask questions when they don’t understand.
 - Help the young adult develop different techniques to ask for help.
 - Help the young adult discover and articulate their disability-related strengths and weaknesses.
 - Support the student-led IEP with the young adult as an active member of the ARD committee.

USING INFORMAL ASSESSMENTS AND DATA TO DETERMINE JOB READINESS

IDENTIFYING JOB READINESS
SKILLS

WHAT IS JOB READINESS

EMPLOYMENT GOALS AND TRANSITION PLANS

ROLE OF INFORMAL ASSESSMENTS

APPLYING ASSESSMENT RESULTS

NOTES

Transition Assessment Tools

| Areas Assessed | Assessment | Notes |
|-----------------------------|--|--|
| AT | WATI Assessment Package, Competency Self-Rating, and Transition Portfolios | Free downloads from Wisconsin Assistive Technology Initiative |
| Post-Secondary AT Readiness | QIAT-PS Student Self-Evaluation Matrix | Free online self-assessment to measure readiness to access AT after graduation |
| AT | Self-Determination and AT Goal Setting Worksheet Assistive Technology Protocol for Transition | Free downloadable checklist from educationtechpoints.org Free download |
| Comprehensive | Transition Planning Inventory-3rd Edition (TPI-3) | Available for purchase at proedinc.com |
| | Transition Assessment and Goal Generator (TAGG) | Available for purchase from hawthorne-ed.com |
| | Transition Behavior Scale-3 | Available for purchase from proedinc.com |
| | BRIGANCE Transition Skills Inventory, 2nd Edition Person-Centered Planning | Available for purchase at curriculumassociates.com |
| | Transition Rating Scale 3.0 (formerly the ESTR-S) | Free person-centered planning tools online at https://www.lifecoursetools.com/ |
| | Transition Rating Scale 2.0 (formerly the ESTR-III) | Designed for students with pervasive and long-term needs for support. Available for purchase from estr.net |
| | Transition Rating Scale 1.0 (formerly the ESTR-J) | Designed for students with moderate to significant needs for support. Available for purchase from estr.net |
| | Life Skills Inventory | Designed for students with mild disabilities. Available for purchase from estr.net Free Download Measures 15 domains of independent living and employability skills |
| Career Exploration | O*NET Interest Profiler | Free download or web-based versions measuring students' interest in realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional careers. |
| | Career Onestop Skills Matcher | Free online self-assessment from onetcenter.org |
| | O*Net Work Importance Locator | Free download. Measures students' need for achievement, independence, recognition, relationships, support, and working conditions in the workplace. |
| | Texas Career Check | Includes knowledge and skill areas for each occupation. Free online. |
| | Texas Reality Check | Free interactive site that allows students to compare incomes for various occupations with living expenses in their local area. https://texasrealitycheck.com/ |
| | Career Clusters Student Interest Survey | Free downloadable PDFs |
| | Reading Free Vocational Interest Inventory, 3rd Edition (RFVII-3) | Available for purchase from proedinc.com |
| | My Next Move | Free online career exploration at http://www.mynextmove.org/explore/ip |

Transition Assessment Tools

| Areas Assessed | Assessment | Notes |
|----------------------|---|---|
| Employability Skills | Barriers to Employment Success Inventory Employability Life Skills Assessment | Self-scoring tool that measures 5 categories: personal and financial; emotional and physical; career decision-making and planning; job seeking and knowledge; and training and education. Available for purchase from impactpublications.com Free download available from ocali.org |
| Independent Living | Casey Life Skills Toolkit Washington State Life Skills Inventory Independent Living Skills Assessment Tool PEATC Life Skills Checklist | Available free online at www.casey.org Free PDF Free at peatc.org |
| Motivation | Student Engagement Instrument (Engage SEI) | Measures student engagement. Good for discouraged learners, dropout prevention, and students with behavioral issues at school. Available free from the University of Minnesota. |
| Self Determination | AIR Self-Determination Checklist ARC Self-Determination Checklist ChoiceMaker Self-Determination Assessment Personal Preference Indicators PERC Self-Advocacy Checklist | Student, educator, and parent forms in English, Spanish, and French. Available free on the Zarrow Institute's site. Free online from the Zarrow Institute Free online from the Zarrow Institute. Planning guide for students with more significant disabilities. |
| College Readiness | Landmark Guide to Assessing College Readiness | Informal checklist available free from Indiana University Free download from Landmark University |

WORKPLACE READINESS TRAINING

Category: Communication

Skill Topic: Using informed decision making to identify and communicate employment goals

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Priority for Student or Group:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> High</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Medium</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Low</p> | |
| <p>Skill Building Activities (The student can...)</p> | <p>Student Progress (The student's progress is _____)</p> |
| <p>1. Explain their motivation to develop skills needed to enter the workplace</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Minimal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Developing <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory</p> |
| <p>2. Make informed decisions about possible career or job options based on interests, skills, and abilities</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Minimal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Developing <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory</p> |
| <p>3. Identify skills needed to meet independent living goals</p> | <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minimal <input type="checkbox"/> Developing <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory</p> |
| <p>4. Identify skills needed to meet career or job goals</p> | <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minimal <input type="checkbox"/> Developing <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory</p> |
| <p>Notes Robin is beginning to express why she wants to learn about job skills and make her own choices about her future, but she does not yet see the connection between her goals and the specific skills she needs to reach those goals.</p> | <p>The student demonstrates proficiency:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> |

WORKPLACE READINESS TRAINING

Category: Communication

Skill Topic: Developing effective communication skills

| <p>Priority for Student or Group:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low | <p>Skill Building Activities (The student can...)</p> | <p>Student Progress (The student's progress is _____)</p> |
|---|--|--|
| | <p>1. Understand the difference between communication in professional and casual situations</p> | <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minimal <input type="checkbox"/> Developing <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory</p> |
| | <p>2. Identify ways to demonstrate effective communication skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Active listening b. Body language c. Asking questions for clarification d. Timely response e. Communication with visuals f. Technology-assisted communication | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Minimal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Developing <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory</p> |
| | <p>3. Demonstrate enthusiasm and motivation when taking on new work tasks</p> | <p><input type="checkbox"/> Minimal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Developing <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory</p> |
| | <p>4. Explain how both personal hygiene and professional dress communicate professionalism</p> | <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minimal <input type="checkbox"/> Developing <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory</p> |

WORKPLACE READINESS TRAINING

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>5. Demonstrate business-appropriate written and/or verbal communication:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Writing emails b. Leaving voicemails c. Virtual meetings d. Using visual aids e. Social media f. Cell phone etiquette | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minimal <input type="checkbox"/> Developing <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory |
| <p>6. Identify appropriate cell phone use in the workplace</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Minimal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Developing <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory |
| <p>7. Explain the impact social media can have on employment</p> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minimal <input type="checkbox"/> Developing <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory |
| <p>Notes Robin has difficulty reading social situations and understanding how her behavior, communication, and appearance should change depending on the setting or situation.</p> | |

Category: Communication

Skill Topic: Working knowledge of teamwork, problem-solving skills, and conflict resolution

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Priority for Student or Group:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> High <input type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low | |
| <p>Skill Building Activities (The student can...)</p> | <p>Student Progress (The student's progress is _____)</p> |

WORKPLACE READINESS TRAINING

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. Identify the many different positions, roles, and responsibilities in a workplace:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Manager b. Supervisor c. Team lead d. Team member | <input type="checkbox"/> Minimal <input type="checkbox"/> Developing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory |
| <p>2. Determine when working as a team or collaborating with others is more effective than working independently</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Minimal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Developing <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory |
| <p>3. Identify personal strategies for accepting feedback and constructive criticism</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Minimal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Developing <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory |
| <p>4. Identify potential problems that may occur in the workplace and practice coming up with solutions for the problems</p> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Minimal <input type="checkbox"/> Developing <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory |
| <p>5. Identify positive strategies for conflict resolution with coworkers through role-play or practice scenarios</p> | <input type="checkbox"/> Minimal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Developing <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfactory |
| <p>Notes Robin's teachers report that she has difficulty working in groups. Compromising and accepting others' input are challenging for her. She is often surprised when her words or actions cause conflict in working groups, but she is able to use role-play or social scenarios to gain insight into what happens and why.</p> | <p>The student demonstrates proficiency:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No |

Job Readiness Checklist

This assessment was developed for Texas A&M University's Work-Based Learning Project, funded and supported by the Texas Workforce Commission. Because it is based on TWC's Pre-ETS Progress Report (VR 1823), it is designed to support service coordination with VR Counselors.

Student Name: _____

Assessment Date: _____

| Employability Skills | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 = unable to perform skill / refuses 2 = requires close supervision/frequent prompting 3 = requires moderate supervision/occasional redirection 4 = uses visual supports, task lists, scripts, or other accommodations to perform the skill 5 = performs the skill independently | | | | | |
| Follows arrival and departure procedures | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Follows safety protocols | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Maintains a clean workspace | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Initiates familiar tasks | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Completes familiar tasks | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Operates familiar equipment | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Maintains an acceptable work pace | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Seeks assistance when needed | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Seeks clarification when needed | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Checks work for quality/accuracy | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Sets workplace goals | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Self-monitors progress on goals | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Total: | | | | | |

| Workplace Readiness | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 = Poor 2 = Marginal 3 = Good 4 = Very Good 5 = Excellent | | | | | |
| Ability to acquire new job skills | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Accuracy of work | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Accepts constructive feedback | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Adapts to changes in environment/routine | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Professional appearance/hygiene | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Communication with familiar peers/adults | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Communication with unfamiliar peers/adults | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Cooperativeness | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Initiative | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Motivation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Attendance | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Punctuality | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Notes:

SEQUENCING OF SKILLS AND CASCADING SERVICES

RESOURCES

SKILL SEQUENCING

PRE-ETS SEQUENCING

HOW CAN CASCADING SERVICES IMPROVE STUDENT OUTCOMES

WHERE CAN I START?

WHAT TO DO NEXT?

LONG-TERM PLAN?

Supporting Students: Balancing Quality Services for All

Introduction:

Providing equitable support to students is essential to ensure that students with disabilities receive the necessary support, especially when aiming to include younger students in transition planning. This guide will help educators strategize and overcome challenges to provide equitable services.

Age-Related Considerations and Strategies:

| Real-World Issue | Impact on Support Strategies | Possible Solutions |
|---|---|--|
| Varying Levels of Student Maturity | Younger students may require more individualized attention and different support strategies than their older peers. | Tiered Approach: Implement a multi-tiered support system, offering more intensive interventions for younger or less mature students. Provide group-based learning opportunities for older students to develop mentorship skills. |
| Limited Time and Resources | Educators often face constraints, making it challenging to cater to individual needs. | Prioritize and Delegate: Prioritize students with the most urgent needs first. Delegate tasks to paraprofessionals to conduct initial assessments or provide basic skill-building activities. Utilize small-group interventions for students with similar goals. |
| Family Involvement and Consent | Obtaining parental consent and collaboration can be more difficult for younger students. | Family Engagement: Educate and involve families early in the process. Provide resources and workshops to empower parents/guardians to support their child's transition. Ensure regular communication to address any concerns and gain insight. |
| IEP Meetings | Managing IEP meetings and goal setting for a wide age range can be complex. | Structured IEP Process: Use a structured IEP meeting agenda, ensuring all necessary parties are involved. For younger students, focus on foundational skill development and social-emotional goals. For older students, emphasize vocational exploration and self-advocacy. |
| Transition Assessment Variety | Assessing a diverse group of students requires a range of age-appropriate tools. | Assessment Toolkit: Create a comprehensive toolkit with various assessment methods. Include direct observations, student interviews, rating scales, and performance-based assessments suitable for different age groups. Adapt and modify assessments to suit individual needs. |

Tips for Effective Support:

- Regularly review and update student data to make informed decisions.
- Provide staff with training on age-appropriate practices and strategies.
- Foster a collaborative environment where educators can share ideas and resources.
- Be flexible and adapt your approach as students' needs evolve.

Note: Supporting students with varying needs is an ongoing process that demands continuous evaluation and adaptation. By being proactive and considerate of age-related factors, educators can effectively provide quality services to all students, preparing them for successful transitions.

TWC-VR and College Preparation

Myth: TWC-VR provides college scholarships

Truth: TWC-VR can help pay for college if the individual meets the eligibility criteria to receive services, college is a reasonable and necessary part of preparing them for work (and their specific work goal), and they are functioning at an appropriate level to successfully complete college courses. The money does not have to be paid back.

To be eligible for TWC-VR services, a person has to meet the following criteria:

- Have a physical or mental impairment
 - The impairment must constitute a substantial impediment to employment;
 - The individual must require VR services to prepare for, enter, engage in, retain, or advance in competitive integrated employment consistent with the individual's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice and
 - The individual must be capable of achieving an employment goal.
-

Appropriateness for college is most often determined by reviewing testing/records from the school, as well as any testing we have done for eligibility.

The Texas Success Initiative can also be a good indicator of how appropriate college classes are for an individual. We can only pay for 2 semesters of developmental courses.

Once it has been determined that TWC-VR will sponsor someone for college, the following is required:

- They go to school full time, usually a minimum of 12 semester hours
 - They apply for the Pell Grant- any money received is then applied toward tuition and books before TWC-VR payment.
 - They maintain at least a 2.0 GPA
-

What can the schools do to prepare students for TWC-VR-sponsored college courses:

- **Early referral** - allow time for adequate relationship building between the student and the counselor, and give the counselor plenty of time for planning with the student which helps them determine together what the most appropriate route to the goal is.
- **Updated testing** - when possible, send students to us with current testing. The student disability offices at most colleges require this to provide accommodations and TWC-VR cannot purchase testing solely for their purposes. It also helps streamline our eligibility process.
- **Realistic Planning** - It is understandable that parents and students would want to have a college experience, especially when that's what most of their peers are doing. However, not every student is appropriate for college. It sets a student up for disappointment and possible unnecessary failures when they are continually told they can achieve a degree, but they aren't really capable. It can also undermine the relationship with the counselor when they have been told for years that they can go to college and the counselor cannot justify sponsoring them because they aren't strong enough academically.
- **Specialized postsecondary programs**, like those designed for people with Intellectual Disabilities are considered on an individual basis.

**Roles of TWC Transition Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors
in Collaboration with Schools:
A Panel Discussion**

Key Concepts:

New Information:

Plans to Implement:

**Resources
for
Tuesday
Afternoon**

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR A STRONGER COLLABORATION: REGIONAL BREAKOUT

REGIONAL AND STATE CONTACTS

IMPORTANCE OF COLLABORATION

Contacting VR

PRE-ETS SERVICES

SUPPLEMENTING VS. SUPPLANING

POTENTIALLY ELIGIBLE STUDENTS AND PRE-ETS

VR ELIGIBILITY

VR TIMELINE

Common VR Forms

These forms are used by VR Counselors and Transition VR Counselors to collect information, determine customer's needs, and plan services. ***The VR2002 Referral Form is the only form school personnel can complete.**

| Release Form | When is form used? | Does the form expire? |
|---|---|---|
| VR5060 Permission to Collect Information | <p>A customer authorizes VR to collect information or records from an individual or entity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A customer completes an application and: • An individual at a 14c is interested in applying for VR services, • VR is requesting records or information, or • VR discloses records to a juvenile service provider. | <p>The release is valid for 365 days from the date signed, or until the date when Customer/Applicant ceases to be a VR Applicant or Customer.</p> |
| VR5061 Notice and Consent for Disclosure of Personal Information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A customer acknowledges that VR may need to disclose personal information or records to other organizations for purposes directly connected with the administration of their VR services. • At application and initial contact without case assignment for potentially eligible. • A customer's file contains alcohol and drug abuse patient records. | <p>No expiration</p> |
| *VR2002 Referral Form | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Referral Form • Does not require signature • Completed by school personnel | <p>No expiration</p> |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p>VR1820 Request to Receive Pre-ETS</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request for Pre-ETS services only • Can serve as a referral form. • Must be filled out prior to receipt of any Pre-Employment Transition Services. • Parent signature needed if Customer is a minor. | <p>No expiration</p> |
| <p>VR 1487 Designation of Representative</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A customer designates a person to act as their representative as specified on the release. • When a customer who is over 18 years of age and does not have a court appointed guardian. | <p>Designation is effective upon delivery to Customer. It continues in effect until the date the applicant, customer, or representative informs counselor in writing that it is no longer in effect.</p> |
| <p>VR1517-2 Authorization for Release of Confidential Customer Records and Information</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A customer authorizes VR to release confidential records and information to a person(s) or entity. • A customer with no guardian would like for a person that he chooses to be present during appointments with the VR counselor. • A transition student would like his counselor to discuss his specific accommodation needs with potential employers. | <p>The release is valid until revoked by the customer or until the date when the customer ceases to be a VR applicant or customer, whichever date occurs earlier.</p> |
| <p>VR 5063 Permission to Collect and Notice to Disclose - National Student Clearinghouse</p> | <p>The purpose of the VR5063 is to document a customer’s consent to exchange information with National Student Clearinghouse, a source that houses post-secondary student data. The credential information received from National Student Clearinghouse may be used to satisfy reporting and documentation requirements for federal performance measures related to credential attainment.</p> | <p>Valid until revoked by Customer in writing, or remains valid for a period of 2 years after case is closed for collection of school records and grades.</p> |



Texas Workforce Commission
Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Referral Form

| | | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|----------|---------------|
| Date of Referral: | Referred to: | | |
| Referred by: | Referral Source Phone: | | |
| Reason for Referral: | | | |
| Customer: | | Case ID: | |
| Address: | | City: | |
| County: | | State: | ZIP: |
| Date of Birth: | Age: | | Phone: () |
| Contact: | Contact Phone: | | |
| Reported Disability: | | | |
| Other Disabilities (secondary): | | | |
| Education: | | | |
| Services Requesting: | | | |
| Vocational Interest: | | | |
| Comments: | | | |

How to Document a Potentially Eligible (PE) Case Desk Reference

General Guidance

When working with a Potentially Eligible student, it is important to document the case accurately in RHW case notes, adhering to [Vocational Rehabilitation Services Manual, Part C, Chapter 8.1; read Procedures B. SWD Documentation Requirements](#). The documentation helps track the student's journey, the services provided, and the outcomes achieved. The TVRC or VR counselor assigned to the case is responsible for entering comprehensive case notes in RHW.

Essential Documentation

Case notes should include detailed information on the following aspects:

- **Disability Description:** Document the disability, functional limitations, and any counselor observations.
- **Student's Perspective:** Record the disability from the student's point of view.
- **Pre-ETS Services:** Include details on the Pre-ETS arranged, purchased, or provided by the VR counselor.
- **Service Justification:** For any purchased service, provide a case note that outlines the planned services, the type of Pre-ETS, and the rationale behind them.
- **Skills and Progress:** Note the skills gained and any other progress made by the student as a result of Pre-ETS.

Each step in the process should be documented, including:

- Completion and signing of the VR 1820 Request to Receive Pre-ETS form.
- Meetings with the student, parents, or school staff for relevant case information.
- Proof of disability documentation.
- Updates on Pre-ETS activities related to services arranged, provided, or purchased.
- Progress related to Pre-ETS activities.
- Updates on the status of Pre-ETS activities (e.g., when an activity is completed).

Avoid Using the Following Case Notes

To ensure clarity and efficiency, avoid using the following types of case notes for Potentially Eligible cases:

- **Diagnostic Interview:** This case note is used during the VR application process. Instead of a Diagnostic Interview case note, use a Contact case note.
- **Eligibility:** This case note is used specifically for VR eligibility.
- **Comprehensive Assessment:** This case note is used specifically during the VR IPE development process.

- **Counseling and Guidance:** This case note is not approved by RSA for potentially eligible customers. Instead of a Counseling and Guidance case note, use a Contact case note.

Document PE Process Using Case Notes and Pre-ETS Activities

Use the following case note types and enter Pre-ETS activities to ensure detailed and effective documentation:

1. **Enter Case Note: Contact**
 - **2nd Line:** VR 1820 Form
 - **Detail:** Record the date when the VR 1820 Request to Receive Pre-ETS form was completed and signed by the relevant parties. Include any observations noted when form is completed and/or signed. Note: If a VR2002 Referral form is received, document the receipt of the referral form in a contact case note as well (2nd Line: VR2002 Referral form).
2. **Enter Case Note: Records and Report (or) Assessment and Planning**
 - **2nd Line:** Proof of Disability
 - **Detail:** Document the proof of disability and enrollment in an education program, including any supporting documents such as:
 - A signed statement from a school professional indicating the student's disability and school enrollment status. See the [Disability Verification Letter](#) on the [Transition intranet page](#).
 - Copies of IEPs or 504 Plan, SSA beneficiary award letters, school psychological assessments, or other formal documentation.
 - Summarize counselor observations, review of school records, and any statements from education staff related to the disability.
3. **Enter Case Note: Contact**
 - **2nd Line:** Disability Information
 - **Detail:** Capture the student's perspective on their disability. Include:
 - A summary of how the student describes their disability.
 - Any specific challenges or barriers the student identifies.
 - How the disability affects their academic and daily activities.
4. **Enter Case Note: Contact**
 - **2nd Line:** Obtained Releases
 - **Detail:** Note any release forms obtained and their purposes:
 - **VR5061 Notice and Consent for Disclosure of Personal Information** (required) - Document the date and method of obtaining this consent.
 - **VR1517-2 Authorization for Release of Confidential Customer Records and Information for Parents** (if the

student is not a minor) - Include details on obtaining this authorization.

- **VR1517-2 Authorization for Release of Confidential Customer Records and Information for School** (recommended) - Note the details of this authorization and its purpose.
- **VR5060 Permission to Collect Information** (required if school records are requested) - Record the request details and any responses received.
- **VR 1487 Designation of Representative** (required when a customer designates a person to act as their representative as specified on the release; used when the customer is over 18 years of age and does not have a court appointed guardian) - Include details regarding the need for the form.

5. **Enter Case Note: Service Justification (if Pre-ETS is purchased)**

- **2nd Line:** Approved Pre-ETS Service
 - **Detail:** Justify the approval of specific Pre-ETS services. Include:
 - The type of Pre-ETS service approved (e.g., Contracted Pre-ETS, Stem Camp, SEAL).
 - The rationale for selecting this service and how it aligns with the student's goals.

6. **Enter Case Note: Contact (if Pre-ETS is arranged or provided)**

- **2nd Line:** Arranged or Provided Pre-ETS Service
 - **Detail:** Document information related to the arranged or provided including:
 - The type of Pre-ETS service arranged or provided (e.g., Career Exploration or Counseling on Post-Secondary Opportunities).
 - The rationale for selecting this service and how it aligns with the student's goals.

7. **Enter Pre-ETS Activity in RHW for any arranged, provided or purchased Pre-ETS**

- Enter the associated Pre-ETS Activity information in RHW including description, type of Pre-ETS, start and end date, status, and services provided category. You will be prompted to enter a case note to describe Pre-ETS activity information. See [Capturing Pre-ETS Activity in RehabWorks Desk Reference](#) on the [Transition intranet page](#) for more information.

8. **Enter Case Note: Contact**

- **2nd Line:** Progress or Outcomes
 - **Detail:** Document the student's progress and outcomes achieved through Pre-ETS. Include:
 - Specific skills gained and how they contribute to the student's transition goals.
 - Any measurable improvements or achievements related to Pre-ETS activities.

- A summary of overall progress and how it impacts the student's future plans.

By following these detailed guidelines, counselors can ensure comprehensive and effective documentation for Potentially Eligible cases, facilitating better service delivery and tracking.

How to make a referral to TWC

Online

- If there is no other way for a student or referring party to get in touch with VR staff, there is the option for an online referral.
- Before taking advantage of this option, it should be noted that the customer's information is being put into the system and then transferred until it is with the correct staff person to handle the case.
- This process may take much longer than a traditional referral, due to the referral coming through a different channel of communication.

Direct VR Staff Contact

- Call VR Inquiries at (512) 936-6400
- [VR Office Locator](#) – contact an office near you
- Email vr.office.locator@twc.texas.gov with your name, phone and address
- Engage with your local Regional Transition Program Specialist to find appropriate counselor.



Start My VR

[Start My VR](#) – online self-referral



How to Make a Student Referral

- School staff have the **option** to submit a VR 2002 Referral Form for each student referral. No signatures are required for this form.
- In addition, school staff also have the **option** to submit school records and reports upon signed release from student/guardian.
- School staff and VR counselor set up a meeting to discuss student referrals, pertinent information is obtained to start the understanding of student's needs.
- Appropriate Referrals:
 - SPED Students
 - 504 Students
 - 18+ Students
 - CTE (Career and Technical Education) Students
- Students who have not disclosed their disability, but Teachers/Nurses see needs on campus.
- Counselor should contact student and parent to determine appropriate services. Information is obtained to further understand the student's needs and explain the purpose of the VR program.
- Depending on the type of appropriate services, VR Counselors will follow the Potentially Eligible Process or the VR Application Process, by placing the student in Initial Contact with Case Assignment on the corresponding caseload.
- If the student will go through the Potentially Eligible process, a VR 1820 can be submitted. Only one VR 1820 form is necessary for the life of the case.
- If the student will go through the VR Application process, an application appointment is scheduled within 30 days.

**Resources
for
Wednesday
Morning**

Creating a Successful Path: Transition Planning for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students

Note Taking Guide

Misunderstandings That Need Clarification:

- Bilingualism and students with disabilities
- Instruction and services for emergent bilingual students with disabilities
- Family perception of their child being bilingual

The Relationship Building between Professionals and the Home:

- Parent Engagement
- Cultural Considerations
- Cultural Diversity

Transition Services:

- Transition Planning
- High School to Adult Life

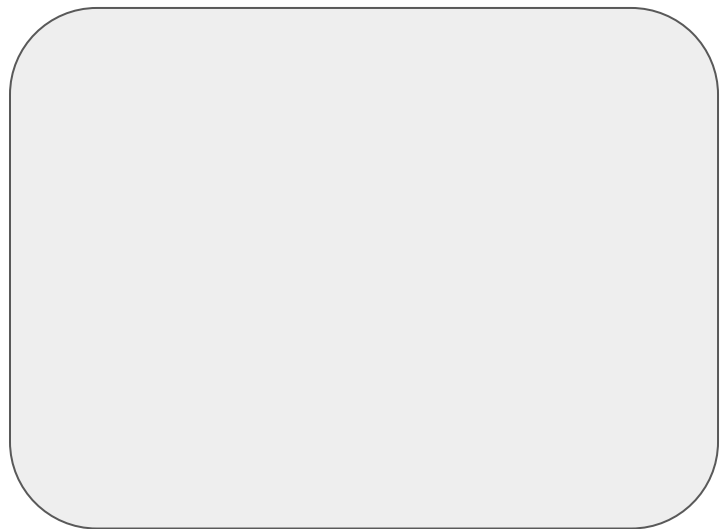

One step at a time, even small ones, can make a difference. What steps can you implement?

Frisco ISD Panel Discussion

How I'll Use this
Information to Serve
Students:

Key Collaborators:

Key Takeaways:

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General Resources



Memorandum of Understanding Between Texas Workforce Commission And Texas Education Agency

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), herein referenced as "Agreement", is entered into by and between the Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), hereinafter referred to individually as "Party" and collectively as the "Parties," pursuant to the authority granted and in compliance with the passage of Senate Bill 208 (SB 208) of the 84th Legislature, Regular Session (2015), and codified in the Texas Labor Code §352.108, that requires an Agreement between the Parties to provide Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) transition services to students with disabilities to assist them to enter competitive integrated employment.

SECTION 1 - PURPOSE

The Parties enter into this Agreement to promote collaboration in the delivery of VR transition services, including pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS), for students with disabilities transitioning from secondary school to post-secondary education programs and to competitive integrated employment. The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehabilitation Act), as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as amended, and Texas Labor Code §352.108, all require the Parties to have a formal mechanism in place to ensure coordination with respect to the provision of VR and IDEA transition services that are needed to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to students with disabilities and to ultimately transition students with disabilities to competitive integrated employment. This Agreement seeks to:

- 1.1 Increase coordination between the Parties and local education agencies (LEAs) to identify and prepare students with disabilities to move to post-secondary education and/or competitive integrated employment, as required by 29 U.S.C. §721(a)(1)(D) and Texas Labor Code Chapter 352.
- 1.2 Improve transition planning by VR staff and LEAs for students with disabilities to facilitate the development and implementation of the individualized education program (IEP) required by 20 U.S.C. §1414(d).
- 1.3 Establish and periodically update a mechanism to identify the areas of the state with the greatest needs for VR transition services for students with disabilities as required by Texas Labor Code §352.108(b).
- 1.4 Institute mechanisms to ensure VR staff can attend Admission, Review, and Dismissal (ARD) committee meetings when invited and as appropriate, as required in 29 U.S.C. §733(d).
- 1.5 Provide information about each Party's roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, and determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services, as required by 29 U.S.C. §721(a)(1)(D)(iii).

- 1.6 Strengthen relationships between TEA, TWC, Education Service Centers (ESCs), LEAs, higher education entities, and businesses to facilitate successful outcomes for students with disabilities.

SECTION 2 - Definitions for Purposes of this Agreement:

- 2.1 §504 (29 U.S.C. §794): The section of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, that seeks to eliminate discrimination associated with individuals with a disability, by any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance, including public schools. Specifically, 29 U.S.C. §794 requires schools to provide students with disabilities appropriate educational services designed to meet the individual needs of such students to the same extent as the needs of students without disabilities are met.
- 2.2 Admission, Review and Dismissal (ARD) Committee: Term used in Texas, in accordance with 19 TAC §89.1050, for the group of individuals who, among other things, develop, review, and revise an IEP for a student with a disability. Also known in federal law as an IEP team, as defined in 20 U.S.C §1414(d)(1)(B).
- 2.3 Competitive Integrated Employment: As defined in 29 U.S.C. §705(5), employment for an individual with a disability that is, among other things, compensated at a rate not lower than the minimum wage and is customary for the occupation and where the individual interacts with other persons without disabilities.
- 2.4 Education Service Center (ESC): As defined in 20 U.S.C. § 1401(5) and Texas Education Code §8.001, *et. seq.*, a regional public multiservice agency authorized by state law to develop, manage, and provide services or programs to school districts, and recognized as an administrative agency for purposes of the provision of special education and related services provided within the state's public elementary and secondary schools.
- 2.5 Graduation: For purposes of this Agreement, graduation is the fulfillment of the academic requirements and actual exit from the high school.
- 2.6 Individualized Education Program (IEP): As defined in 20 U.S.C. §1414(d)(1)(A), a written statement of the educational program required by IDEA for a student with a disability designed to meet the student's individual needs. The IEP has two general purposes: to set appropriate, measurable goals for the student and to describe the specialized instruction and services the LEA will provide for the student. The IEP is developed, reviewed, and revised by the student's ARD committee under the procedures set forth in IDEA. The IEP must be reviewed periodically, but not less than annually, and revised, as appropriate.
- 2.7 Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE): The IPE is required by the Rehabilitation Act, and is the roadmap developed jointly by the student and the VR counselor to help the student with a disability reach a specific competitive, integrated employment goal. As a part of developing the IPE, the VR counselor provides information, so the student thoroughly understands his or her disability and vocational goals; and knows the available rehabilitation services and the implications for vocational decision-making to allow for an informed choice in accordance with 29 U.S.C §§721(a)(9) and 722(b).
- 2.8 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): The federal act codified at 20 U.S.C. §1400 *et seq.* designed to ensure that all students with disabilities have available to them a FAPE that provides special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and to prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living.
- 2.9 Local Education Agency (LEA): As defined in 20 U.S.C. §1401(19), a public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a state for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a state, or for a combination of school districts or counties

recognized in a state as an administrative agency for its public elementary schools or secondary schools.

- 2.10 Potentially Eligible: Students with disabilities, as defined in 29 U.S.C. §705(37), who have not yet applied or been made eligible for VR, who may access VR Pre-ETS,
- 2.11 Student with a Disability: Under IDEA, a student with a disability is a student who has been evaluated according to IDEA requirements as having one or more disabilities enumerated in IDEA and who, because of that disability, needs special education and related services. Under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, a student with a disability who is eligible for VR Services is 14 to 22 years of age, and is less than 22 years of age as of September 1 of a given year and:
 - a) is eligible for and receives special education and related services under IDEA in an eligible education program and otherwise meets the eligibility criteria for VR services, or
 - b) is an individual with a disability for purposes of §504, and is in a secondary, postsecondary, or other recognized education program and otherwise meets the eligibility criteria for VR services. The applicable definition will be determined on a case-by-case basis for each student.
- 2.12 Texas Education Agency (TEA): The state educational agency authorized by Texas Education Code § 7.002 as the agency primarily responsible for the state supervision of public elementary and secondary schools.
- 2.13 Texas Workforce Commission (TWC): The state agency designated to administer the VR program as defined in the Texas Labor Code §301.001(a).
- 2.14 Vocational Rehabilitation (VR): The federal program which promotes, assesses, plans, develops and provides services for individuals with disabilities, consistent with their strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice, so they may prepare for and engage in gainful employment, as required by the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. §723).
- 2.15 VR Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS): Services provided through a subset of VR transition services, in partnership with LEAs, to help students, and potentially eligible students, with disabilities develop skills leading to success in employment and independent living after high school. Pre-ETS are defined and authorized in accordance with 29 U.S.C. §733.
- 2.16 VR Transition Services: A subset of VR services provided to students with disabilities to assist the students in making the transition from secondary school to postsecondary education programs or competitive integrated employment as defined in 29 U.S.C. §723(15) and the Texas Labor Code §352.10S(a).
- 2.17 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA): Reauthorizes the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, that establishes VR (29 U.S.C. §701 et seq.) and creates the Pre-ETS set-aside (29 U.S.C. §730(d)).

SECTION 3 -AUTHORITY

This Agreement is entered into pursuant to the authority granted and in compliance with the following legal provisions:

- 3.1 34 CFR Part 361 and 34 CFR Part 397
- 3.2 29 U.S.C §701 et seq.
- 3.3 Texas Education Code, Chapter 7 *et seq.*
- 3.4 Texas Labor Code, Chapter 301 *et. seq.* and §§ 301.061, 302.002(c) and 352;
- 3.5 Texas Human Resources Code, Chapter 11I *et. seq.* and § 11I.052;

- 3.6 Office of Management and Budget Uniform Guidance, as codified in 2 C.F.R. Part 200;
- 3.7 20 U.S.C. §1400 *et seq.*, 34 CFR Part 300; and
- 3.8 20 U.S.C. §1232(g), 34 CFR Part 99.

SECTION 4 - RECITALS

The Parties have authority to enter into this Agreement:

- 4.1 For implementation and continuity of services to their respective and common students;
- 4.2 To meet the requirements of Texas Labor Code §352.108 and provide quality services to students with disabilities by improving coordination between VR staff and LEAs; and
- 4.3 To meet the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. §794).

SECTION 5-DURATION OF THE AGREEMENT

This Agreement will take effect *September 1, 2022* or upon the last date of signature, whichever occurs last (the "Effective Date"), and will terminate *August 31, 2027*.

SECTION 6- STATEMENT OF SERVICES TO BE PERFORMED

- 6.1. For VR transition services, TWC will:
 - 6.1.1 Contact and work with TEA to develop a mechanism to identify areas of the state with the greatest needs for transition services for students with disabilities and discuss local strategies for coordination between VR counselors and schools in accordance with Texas Labor Code §352.108(b) and (d)(5).
 - 6.1.2 On or before September 1st of each year, TWC will review the data provided by TEA, and using a mechanism developed by TWC, identify needed changes to VR counselor assignments, identify gaps in best practices, and make appropriate changes to improve service delivery (Texas Labor Code §352.108(c)).
 - 6.1.3 Contact and establish a relationship with school district or shared service arrangement staff (e.g., Transition and Employment Designee (TED)) involved in the process of providing transition services to students (Texas Labor Code §352.108(d)(4)).
 - 6.1.4 On or before October 1 of each year, provide a list of names of VR counselors and their high school liaison assignments to TEA. TWC will assign VR counselors to schools in a way that ensures consistency among the regions (Texas Labor Code §352.108(d)(3)).
 - 6.1.5 Provide effective VR practices, provision of Pre-ETS, and other technical assistance to VR counselors, school staff and ESC staff who are working with TWC as part of the transition services provided to students with disabilities.
 - 6.1.6 Coordinate with schools to provide outreach to students with disabilities and students who are potentially eligible VR customers, regardless of whether an application for services has been submitted (29 U.S.C. §733(d)(3) and 29 U.S.C. §721(a)(1)(D)). Outreach to these students should occur as soon as possible in the transition process (approximately three years before graduation/exit or earlier) as appropriate for the individual. Outreach must include, at a minimum, a description of the purpose of the VR program, eligibility requirements, application procedures, and scope of services that may be provided to students who are eligible for VR services as defined in 2.14 and 2.15 (Texas Labor Code §352.108(d)(1) and (2)).
 - 6.1.7 Use existing school assessment information to the extent possible to determine

- eligibility for VR services and obtain new assessments as necessary (29 U.S.C. §721(a)(1)(D)(iii)).
- 6.1.8 Work with the local workforce development boards, one-stop centers, and employers to develop work opportunities for students with disabilities, including internships, summer employment and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year, and apprenticeships (29 U.S.C §733(d)(2)).
 - 6.1.8 Coordinate VR services, as defined in 2.14 and 2.1.5, with activities being provided by LEAs under IDEA including services included in an IEP (see 20 U.S.C. §1414(d)) to ensure the coordinated provision of pre-employment and other transition services (29 U.S.C. §733(d)(3)).
 - 6.1.9 Coordinate and participate, in person or electronically, in ARD committee meetings for students and youth with disabilities, when appropriate and in accordance with the TEA requirements in this Agreement (29 U.S.C. §733(d)(1)).
- 6.2 As set forth in Section 6.5 of this Agreement, the Texas Education Agency (TEA) will annually provide TWC with:
- 6.2.1 A list of Texas public high schools including the contact persons (e.g., Transition and Employment Designee (TED), needed for collaboration between VR and the LEAs. The list of TEDs can be accessed at Texas Education Directory ([AskTED](#)).
 - 6.2.2 Aggregate data for students with disabilities with an IEP or a Section 504 plan, when Section 504 information is available:
 - 6.2.2.1 Age (determined by the Parties),
 - 6.2.2.2 County district number (CON),
 - 6.2.2.3 Education service center,
 - 6.2.2.4 Campus,
 - 6.2.2.5 Grade level, and
 - 6.2.2.6 Primary, secondary, and tertiary disability.
 - 6.2.3 Information, unless available online, regarding school district resources for special education, including:
 - 6.2.3.1 Personnel by district and
 - 6.2.3.2 Federal and State funding by district.
 - 6.2.4 Data will be made available to TWC on or before May 1 of each year .
- 6.3 Neither TEA nor LEAs will, in accordance with 34 CFR §§ 397.31 and 361.22(b)(6) enter into a contract or other arrangement with an entity, as defined in 34 CFR § 397.5(d), for the purpose of operating a program under which a youth with a disability is engaged in work compensated at a subminimum wage.
- 6.4 TEA will inform LEAs and ESCs of the Agreement between TWC and TEA regarding VR transition services and encourage LEAs:
- 6.4.1 To assist VR counselors in obtaining relevant educational records, in compliance with Section 6.5 of this Agreement, to determine whether a particular student is eligible for VR services;
 - 6.4.2 To seek guidance and technical assistance, which may be provided using alternative means for ARD committee meeting participation, from TWC personnel to assist LEAs in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR and VR transition services. This consultation and assistance is provided to assist in meeting the goal that a VR counselor will initiate contact with a student approximately three years before the student is expected to graduate from high school.

- 6.4.3 To obtain all necessary IDEA consent documentation prior to the ARD committee meeting to which a VR counselor is invited;
- 6.4.4 To provide 30 days' notice, when possible, to invite a VR counselor to attend an ARD committee meeting;
- 6.4.5 To refer the student to a VR counselor prior to the ARD committee meeting to allow the counseling relationship to develop;
- 6.4.6 To communicate with a VR counselor, when appropriate, to determine necessary participation in the ARD committee process, specific to that student.
- 6.5 TEA and TWC will:
 - 6.5.1 Comply with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, IDEA and other laws pertaining to student confidentiality by exchanging and maintaining necessary confidential student information in accordance with these laws and regulations.
 - 6.5.2 Collaborate to develop a mechanism to identify the areas of the state with the greatest need and target resources for transition services for students with disabilities, as required by Texas Labor Code §352.
 - 6.5.3 Work together to encourage community and work experiences that provide the opportunity for students with disabilities to participate in skill development in community settings including establishing summer work activities, transition academy programs and other innovative programming.
 - 6.5.4 Work together to promote networking and collaboration among families, schools, community agencies and employers, and work together to establish relationships.
 - 6.5.5 Provide consultation and technical assistance to LEA and VR personnel that facilitate completion of IEPs and IPEs prior to the student's exit from school.
 - 6.5.6 Support continued collaboration among the entities previously described in this Agreement to facilitate VR transition and Pre-ETS, identify mutually served students, reach these students as early as possible during the transition planning process, and track student outcomes.
 - 6.5.7 Disseminate this Agreement and other relevant guidance and information to LEAs, ESCs and VR counselors.
 - 6.5.8 Provide guidance in accordance with 34 CFR §361.22(b)(3) to LEAs and VR personnel to clarify the funding source to be used in paying for an item or service that a student with a disability may need.
 - 6.5.9 Coordinate to provide necessary guidance to satisfy the Rehabilitation Act requirements regarding students and youths with disabilities who are seeking subminimum wage employment.

SECTION 7- ALLOCATION OF COSTS

The Parties to this Agreement assume full responsibility for their respective costs associated with the performance of their respective activities described in this Agreement and as contained in their authorizing statutes. In no event, except as may be provided in a supplemental Agreement, will any Party be obligated to pay or reimburse any expense incurred by another Party under this Agreement.

SECTION 8 - EFFECTS OF THE AGREEMENT

- 8.1 This Agreement is an internal government agreement between the Parties and is not intended to confer any right upon any private person.

- 8.2 Nothing in this Agreement limits, supersedes, or otherwise affects either Party's normal operations or decisions in carrying out its statutory duties. This Agreement does not limit either Party from participating in similar activities or arrangements with other parties.
- 8.3 This Agreement does not authorize the expenditure or reimbursement of any funds. Nothing in this agreement obligates either Party to expend any appropriations or enter into any contract or other obligations.

SECTION 9. CHANGES AND AMENDMENTS

- 9.1 The Parties understand that each will fulfill its responsibilities under this Agreement in accordance with the provisions of existing law and regulation, including confidentiality, which govern their activities. Nothing in the Agreement is intended to negate or otherwise render ineffective any such provisions or operating procedures.
- 9.2 If, at any time, either Party is unable to perform its functions under this Agreement consistent with such Party's statutory and regulatory mandates, the affected Party will provide written notice to the other Party within twenty (20) business days to establish a date for resolution of issues.
- 9.3 This Agreement may be amended at any time by the mutual written consent of both Parties.
- 9.4 This Agreement may be terminated by either Party upon sixty (60) days written notice to the other Party.
- 9.5 For the resolution of disputes arising over issues addressed in this Agreement, the Parties agree that attempts to resolve disputes between LEAs and local VR representatives should first be made at the local level. If resolution cannot be reached at the local level, the parties will refer the issues to TWC or TEA personnel designated to resolve the dispute. If a resolution cannot be reached, each Party agrees to resolve the dispute in accordance with established agency policies and procedures.

SECTION 10 - NOTICES

All notices or communications to either Party by the other will be in writing and be hand delivered or sent by U.S. registered or certified mail, postage prepaid, addressed to such Party at the following respective address for each and will be deemed given on the date so delivered or so deposited in the mail.

| TWC | TEA |
|---|---|
| Edward Serna, Executive Director Texas Workforce Commission 101 E. 15 th Street Austin, Texas 78778 Tel: 512-463-0735 | Mike Morath Commissioner of Education Texas Education Agency 1701 North Congress Avenue Austin, Texas 78701 Tel: 512-463-8985 E-mail: commissioner@tea.texas.gov |

| | |
|--|--|
| cc: Les Trobman General Counsel Texas Workforce Commission 101 E. 15 th Street, Room 608 Austin, Texas 78778-0001 Tel: 512-463-7903 Email:Les.Trobman@twc.texas.gov | |
|--|--|



Each Party may change the address for notice in this section by giving notice of the address change as provided in this section as soon as practicable following the change but no later than ten (10) calendar days of such change.

SECTION 11- SECURITY

The Parties agree to maintain the systems and information contained in each Party's systems as confidential and to work together to ensure the joint security of the connected systems and data they access, store, process, and transmit. Each Party certifies that its respective system is designed, managed, and operated in compliance with all relevant federal laws, regulations, and policies and to maintain such compliance.

By signature below, the individuals signing this MOU on behalf of a Party represent that they have the authority, or have been delegated the authority, to do so.

For the faithful execution of the terms of this MOU, the Parties hereto, in their capacities as stated, affix their signatures and bind themselves. For the convenience of the Parties, signatures may be on separate pages.

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| Texas Workforce Commission | | Texas Education Agency |
|  | |  |
| Signature | | Signature |
| Print Name: Edward Serna | | Print Name: |
| | | Commissioner of Education |
| Title: Executive Director | | Title: |
| 7/5/2022 | | 7/15/2022 |
| Date: | | Date: |

Capacity Building Focus Group Data TWC Region 1: West Texas

Positive Highlights

- Teachers and paraprofessionals working in SEAL and other summer programs
- Start My VR is helpful
- Charting the Course and ONET
- OnCourse, Middle Galaxy, and Texas Reality Check are engaging
- Co-teaching Pre-ETS skills with certified teachers and CRPs
- Districts and VR are co-hosting transition nights for students and parents
- El Paso ISD is developing student vision statements in first ARD and revising annually

Common Themes

Collaboration Between School Districts and VR

Challenges:

- Limited knowledge of each other's systems and jargon
- Staff turnover results in varying skill levels, limited relationships
- Need a process to determine when to involve VR based upon student needs

Opportunities:

- Include VR in professional development in August, PLCs, campus staff meetings
- Training on each other's systems, jargon, timelines, and services
- Meet to plan service coordination and define roles
- Formal testing during high school instead of relying on REEDs
- Get consent and provide student information to VR or hold a joint staffing prior to ARD
- Provide time and space for VR to work with students on campus
- Inform each other when staff turnover happens

Working with Parents

Challenges:

- Resist employment because they fear losing benefits or don't see the students as employable
- Some have unrealistic expectations for employment/postsecondary education
- Parents don't understand how services and accommodations change after graduation
- Immigrant families fear accessing services due to legal status
- Disability, education level, and cultural or language barriers may complicate access to services
- TWC presentations aren't engaging and are too technical for parents

Opportunities:

- Begin parent training sooner, including sharing clear information about the disability and the student's performance levels
- Provide joint parent training sessions

- o TWC services and community resources
- o Guardianship and alternatives
- o Accommodations in the workplace and post-secondary education
- o Disability fact sheets with disability-specific resources
- o Transition fairs and recurring evening meetings

Working with Younger Teens

Challenges:

- Maturity level: 14-16 year-olds aren't thinking about employment or careers
- Limited or unrealistic career goals: need career exploration
- Limited understanding of their disabilities and accommodations
- Transportation
- Child labor laws limit options for this age group
- Presentations aren't engaging and are too technical for students
- Need high-quality, engaging Pre-ETS curricula
- Need to educate students about their disabilities and use clear language
- Meetings are too rushed for students and parents to understand the plan &/or the disability

Opportunities:

- After-school services, community-based career exploration
- Training in independent living skills and social skills, including parent training
- Provide group training & services during lunch if the topic isn't confidential
- Training in self-advocacy and student-led ARDs
- Use paid work experience as an incentive to gain student buy-in & develop employability skills
- Visual resumes or resumes with embedded videos of students working
- Share Pre-ETS skill checklists, etc., with teachers to help schools scaffold instruction. (TWC form 1404, Leander ISD form available from ESC13)

Collaboration with CTE and General Education

Challenges:

- Difficulty accessing CTE courses and pathways, especially those with certifications
- Working around students' schedules and finding space to meet or provide services

Opportunities:

- Fewer barriers to CTE inclusion in rural districts
- Hands-on CTE courses are more accessible and teachers are supportive

Coordination of Services Beyond the LEA-VR Team

Challenges:

- Lack of providers in some areas
- Providers want to concentrate on more profitable services (VAT vs. SEAL)

Opportunities:

- Clarifying the role of Hireability Navigators can improve outcomes
- Involve VR earlier for students who may need SEAL, etc.

Capacity Building Focus Group Data TWC Region 2: North Texas

Positive Highlights

- A variety of CRPs in the region
- Most VR and Schools have positive working relationships
- Utilizing ESCs for trainings
- Team members “willing to go the extra mile” when members are engaged
- Joint support of implementing Pre- ETS opportunities for students
- Utilizing online opportunities for Pre-ETS
- Short camps during school breaks are effective and well-received
- Early ARD participation increases disability awareness and self-determination

Common Themes

Collaboration Between School Districts and VR

Challenges:

- Limited knowledge of each other’s systems and jargon
- Staff turnover results in varying skill levels, limited relationships, and difficulty meeting expectations
- Discrepancies between boards for SEAL and other programs cause inconsistent services within a school district based on where the school is located
- Sharing data collected on students
- Amount/clarity of paperwork
- Work experience placements do not align with post-secondary goals
- CRPs are not following TWC procedures, and schools and CRPs are working around the VRC instead of collaborating
- Negative Pre-ETS experiences or over-promising TWC services can undermine the VRC’s relationships with parents and students.

Opportunities:

- Include VR in professional development in August, PLCs, campus staff meetings
- Training on each other’s systems, jargon, timelines, and services
- Meet to plan service coordination and define roles
- Develop a system of communication in which regular meeting times are set
- Educate teachers and counselors to increase outreach to students with 504 plans

Working with Parents

Challenges:

- Resist employment because they fear losing benefits or don’t see the students as employable
- Some have unrealistic expectations for employment/postsecondary education
- Immigrant families fear accessing services due to legal status
- Disability, education level, and cultural or language barriers may complicate access to services

- Transportation

Opportunities:

- Begin parent training sooner, including sharing clear information about the disability and the student's performance levels
- Provide joint parent training sessions and provide information in smaller chunks
- Parent to parent mentoring
- Connect families with community resources

Working with Younger Teens

Challenges:

- Limited or no interest in employment
- Limited or unrealistic career goals
- Limited understanding of their disabilities and accommodations
- Transportation
- Uninterested in entry level positions; want to start at the top
- Lack of understanding the value of work history, work tolerance, skill building
- Need engaging, activity-based Pre-ETS materials

Opportunities:

- Transition assessments to guide planning
- After-school services, community-based career exploration
- Age-appropriate VAT being developed
- Take advantage of opportunities to have virtual meetings
- Use paid work experience as an incentive to gain student buy-in & develop employability skills
- Using O-Net, virtual job shadow, Nepris, TX Reality Check, etc.
- Increase the frequency of communication, and focus on career exploration, disability awareness, and self-determination at this age

Collaboration with CTE

Challenges:

- Difficulty accessing CTE courses and pathways, especially those with certifications
- Working around students' schedules and finding space to meet or provide services

Opportunities:

- Involve ESC to develop opportunities for special education training for CTE

Coordination of Services Beyond the LEA-VR Team

Challenges:

- Communication between CRP, VR, and schools
- Providers not providing quality services
- Providers want to concentrate on more profitable services

Opportunities:

- Clarifying the role of Hireability Navigators can improve outcomes
- Create uniform expectations for CRP compliance with TWC procedures
- Improve communication between providers, schools, and VR to better evaluate effectiveness

Capacity Building Focus Group Data TWC Region 3: Central Texas

Positive Highlights

- Pre-employment classes and career exploration beginning in middle school
- Strengths-based assessments
- Work-based learning, paid employment, Baylor's camp, and SEAL
- Building connections between schools, VR, and providers
- Transition meetings (outside of ARDS) beginning in 5th grade

Common Themes

Collaboration between VR and LEA

Challenges:

- Poor communication and limited understanding of each other's systems
- Focus is on transitioning students ages 17 and up
- High staff turnover rates with new staff members being judged for prior negative experiences
- High caseloads in both systems
- Duplication of paperwork and too much paperwork
- Difficulty communicating between Google and Microsoft systems
- Stop telling families "They will pay for this" when discussing services
- Need to improve the transition from TVRC to VRC
- Virtual ARDs make it harder to engage and develop relationships

Opportunities:

- Continue to collaborate and share information: start planning before school starts
- Parent and staff information sessions
- Include a trusted school staff member in collaborative meetings with parents and VRC
- Early collaborative planning helps students set realistic employment goals
- Embed Pre-ETS in core classes, CTE courses, or local credit options
- Have teams that work well together share their approaches/systems at the conferences
- Streamlining and standardizing processes and simplifying forms could improve service delivery
- Create a monthly transition newsletter and include elementary and middle schools
- Training on each other's systems and jargon to improve the referral process

Working with Parents

Challenges:

- Lack of transportation
- Lack of vision for the future and limited awareness of adult services
- Need parent-friendly resources and "chunking" of information

- Fear of losing benefits and reluctance to share financial information if undocumented
- Parents with disabilities may struggle to access services
- Parents are focused on graduation and aren't thinking ahead to post-secondary
- Parents don't understand difference between IDEA and ADA

Opportunities:

- Plan early and plan often
- Have initial and follow up sessions to help parents navigate through the process
- Have individual transition meetings and group training sessions. Advertise group sessions and provide food and childcare.
- Provide a checklist of services, timelines, and eligibility criteria
- Develop transition checklists for each age to help parents see the progression from Pre-ETS services to integrated, competitive employment, along with VR's role
- Increase awareness of Start my VR

Working with students

Challenges:

- Apathy, unrealistic career goals, and lack of a vision for life beyond high school
- Lack of mentorship
- Transportation is an issue-Need a way to mass transport students
- SEAL issues in some areas: staff turnover, miscommunication, failing to involve VRCs
- Fitting Pre-ETS into class schedules with so many required courses

Opportunities:

- Begin with the end in mind.
 - Use career exploration tools like Pathful, Texas Career Check, Texas Reality Check, and interest inventories
 - Discuss the qualifications, pay, etc. for the careers that interest the student.
 - Provide realistic guidance without being a "dream crusher"
- Apprenticeship, internships , and other real-world experiences within the school year, rather than only during breaks
- Provide trained peer mentors

Working with CTE and General Education

Challenges:

- Limited collaboration between CTE and SPED
- Case managers and counselors need training

Opportunities:

- Academic and social inclusion increases job readiness
- Drivers education and/or rideshare
- Embed Pre-ETS in core classes and CTE courses
- Add permission to include TVRCs in the endorsement selection process
- Train TVRCs on CTE
- Work on getting certifications so graduates can go directly into the workforce

Coordinating services beyond LEA/VR team

Challenges:

- Only 30 hours of instruction in each Pre-ETS area due to paperwork of potential eligibility
- Limited providers in some communities
- Lack of job coaches (SEAL)
- SEAL needs educators and paras for transition skills and orientation
- Program eligibility needs to be simplified
- Summer camps aren't available to some students because they are not residential.

Opportunities:

- Simplify the application process
- Increase flexibility of programs
- Clarify the role of Hireability Navigators
- Recruit educators and retired educators to work with SEAL and CRPs

Capacity Building Focus Group Data TWC Region 4: East Texas

Positive Highlights

- SEAL is working well in many communities
- Pre-ETS are taught for course credit with CRPs in some districts
- Summer camps, STEM camps, and day camps available for students
- Good relationship between schools and VR
- Virtual ARDs help, especially when documents are signed virtually
- Early training in financial literacy, social skills, soft skills, and career exploration improves outcomes

Common Themes

Collaboration Between School Districts and VR

Challenges:

- Schools and TWC using different platforms for communication Google vs. Microsoft)
- Staff turnover in TWC/VRS and LEA
- Need ongoing continuing education on how TWC/VRS works
- Follow-up after referral and after students apply via Start My VR
- Teachers aren't aware that TWC/VRS referrals may include 504, SPED, and other students with disabilities. This makes it harder for VR to reach students beyond SPED.

Opportunities:

- Increase communication between schools and VR (both ways)
- Invite TVRCs to district inservice every fall
- Create a single release of records (consent form)
- Embed Pre-ETS lessons into CTE and core academic courses
- Starting early increases the likelihood of seamless transition

Working with Parents

Challenges:

- Need parent education
- Fear of losing SSI and Medicaid benefits and fear of disclosing financial information
- Lack of follow through, low turnout at parent meetings
- Unrealistic expectations for the future or lack of expectation for employment

Opportunities:

- Zoom meetings, video conferences, social media outreach, and recorded webinars for parents
- Connecting with VR and service providers at transition fairs and events
- Parents sharing their students' success stories with other parents
- Starting benefits planning early and refresher yearly for parental understanding
- Schools helping coordinate parents' first meeting with VR

Working with Younger Teens

Challenges:

- Lack of transportation and lack of interest in driver's license
- Limited resources, transportation, and job opportunities in rural areas
- Need for social skills and soft skills instruction
- Don't see the value of work
- Limited understanding of their disabilities
- Don't know what they want to do, and don't connect their current actions to their future goals

Opportunities:

- Older students sharing their experiences with younger teens
- This is a good time to teach self-efficacy, self-determination, and goal setting
- Introduction to career fields and possibilities for a brighter future
- Start conversations about disability awareness, disclosure, and self-advocacy early, and include how disability affects the student outside of school

Collaboration with CTE and General Education

Challenges:

- Access to students- schedules are tight and unable to pull them out of class
- Emphasis on certifications or dual credit decreases access to students
- Students with LD aren't being referred to VR because teachers don't see it as a barrier to employment
- Lack of understanding of VR services and eligibility criteria

Opportunities:

- Strengthen working relationships between educators and VR staff
- Potential to increase referrals to VR
- Educating administrators about VR can increase access to CTE and Pre-ETS instruction
- Tying Pre-ETS and VR to CCMR outcomes increases district buy-in

Coordination of Services Beyond the LEA-VR Team

Challenges:

- Providers not following procedures for providing services
- Schools think CRPs are TWC employees, not for-profit subcontractors
- Relationship between school and providers often undermines TVRC's relationship with the school

Opportunities:

- Increasing understanding of the roles and responsibilities of TVRCs, LEAs, and CRP decreases confusion and improves service provision
- Increase pace of service delivery
- Hold collaborative meetings to share information and coordinate services between LEAs, TWC, CRPs, and other community service providers

Capacity Building Focus Group Data TWC Region 5: Gulf Coast

Positive Highlights

- Joint support of implementing Pre- ETS opportunities for students
- Online Pre-ETS such as “Digitability”
- Increasing efforts to build rapport
- Development of work-based learning activities
- Districts and VR are working to help VRCs meet with families and students before attending ARD meetings
- Working on social-emotional development early leads to earlier employability
- Life skills/ employability skills camps for 14-15 year-olds can make them more successful in SEAL or paid work experience

Common Themes

Collaboration Between School Districts and VR

Challenges:

- Limited knowledge of each other’s systems and jargon
- Staff turnover results in varying skill levels, limited relationships
- Need a process to determine when to involve VR based upon student needs
- Lack of communication between schools, VR, and providers
- Some districts don’t allow VR to provide services on campus, but the campus staff isn’t addressing Pre-ETS skill areas

Opportunities:

- Include VR in professional development in August, PLCs, campus staff meetings
- Training on each other’s systems, jargon, timelines, and services
- Meet to plan service coordination and define roles, the set up a VR calendar for campuses
- Inform each other when staff turnover happens
- Full-day campus “blitzes” allow VRCs to meet with more students
- Consistent VR procedures across offices would lead to more uniform services

Working with Parents

Challenges:

- Resist employment because they fear losing benefits or don’t see the students as employable
- Some have unrealistic expectations for employment/postsecondary education
- Misinformation regarding services
- Transportation is not available
- Disability, education level, and cultural or language barriers may complicate access to services

- TWC presentations aren't engaging and are too technical for parents

Opportunities:

- Plan and hold joint transition events for families
- Provide joint parent training sessions
 - Transportation safety
 - TWC services and community resources
 - Guardianship and alternatives
 - Benefit management training with SMURFs
 - Accommodations in the workplace and post-secondary education
 - Disability fact sheets with disability-specific resources
 - Transition fairs and recurring evening meetings

Working with Students

Challenges:

- Maturity level: 14-16 year-olds aren't thinking about employment or careers
- Lack of career exploration leads to limited or unrealistic career goals
- Need to explain individual accommodations and educational plans to the students
- Need to begin disability awareness to decrease stigma and increase acceptance of services
- Students have to take the job that is available to them rather than a job in which they are interested
- Need age-appropriate, hands-on training materials

Opportunities:

- Pair online Pre-ETS like Digitability with in-person, interactive lessons
- Work-based learning helps prepare students for paid work
- Building relationships with CTE improves access and increases pre employment training
- Student needs are being identified. Need to increase outreach to homeschoolers

Collaboration with CTE and General Education

Challenges:

- Difficulty accessing CTE courses and pathways, especially those with certifications
- Working around students' schedules and finding space to meet or provide services
- Lack of understanding of accommodations for students in CTE

Opportunities:

- CTE course moving into middle school
- Hands-on CTE courses are more accessible and teachers are supportive
- Educating teachers and counselors will increase service access for 504 students

Coordination of Services Beyond the LEA-VR Team

Challenges:

- Lack of employment resources and ideas for this age group (especially in rural areas)

- Providers want to concentrate on more profitable services (VAT vs. SEAL)
- Quality of services varies from one provider to another
- CRPs don't follow procedures and then expect VRCs to fix the paperwork
- Need to improve communication between SEAL, VRC, and educators to increase enrollment and support student success

Opportunities:

- Involve VR earlier for students who may need SEAL, etc.
- Connect with Hireability Navigators to build community relationships and understand the local job market
- Develop service providers in rural areas

Capacity Building Focus Group Data TWC Region 6: South Texas

Positive Highlights

- Early career exploration builds excitement for future options like Project SEARCH.
- Administrators with CCMR expertise can be good resources for students.
- One district described their Pathway Academy, which partners with college programs, technical schools, local law enforcement, etc. to create opportunities for students.
- SEAL, summer camps, and district-sponsored summer programs can provide Pre-ETS.
- Meeting with parents before ARDs improves the quality of transition planning.
- Districts are learning how to highlight endorsements that provide Pre-ETS within state-credit classes.
- Focusing on endorsements and lowering dropout rates increases administrative buy-in.
- Districts are starting career fairs in middle school.
- Community Rehabilitation Providers are delivering Pre-ETS within the school day in many districts.
- With funding and resources, SPED teachers can support CTE teachers to increase SPED access to CTE.

Common Themes

Collaboration Between School Districts and VR

Challenges:

- Limited understanding of each others' roles, systems, and requirements
- Poor communication, planning, and follow-through for ARDs.
- High staff turnover rates and high caseloads in both systems
- Poor communication within both systems
- Referral process is slow
- Fear of "double dipping"
- Confidentiality concerns

Opportunities:

- Increase outreach and referrals for 504 students
- Embed Pre-ETS services in the classroom
- Focus on self-advocacy at this age
- Begin planning and service coordination earlier
- Build in time for VR and teachers to discuss services and clarify students' needs
- Capacity building meetings for TEDs and VRCs at ESCs
- Plan during summer breaks and include VR in back to school professional development
- Provide space for VR at high schools

Working with Parents

Challenges:

- Difficult to get consent for younger teens
- Parents and students don't understand the VR process.
- Parents aren't ready to think about transition, so they don't follow through with referrals.
- Parents don't want students to know they have a disability.
- Fear of losing benefits
- Parents are overwhelmed by information, acronyms, and jargon.

Opportunities:

- Including VR presentations in parent training and career fairs
- Coordinate referral efforts between schools and VR to support students/families.
- Connect parents with SMURFs for benefits counseling.

Working with Younger Teens

Challenges:

- Need age-appropriate presentations and teaching materials
- Limited time in their schedules due to required courses
- Students aren't aware of their disabilities.
- Lack of career goals or unrealistic goals
- Limited awareness of post-secondary options other than four-year degrees
- Limited understanding of their accommodations

Opportunities:

- SEAL and other summer opportunities
- Starting the process sooner helps students clarify their goals.
- Person-centered planning
- Work with counselors to incorporate employability skills in master schedules.
- Clarify services available to potentially eligible students and when to refer to VR.

Collaboration with CTE and General Education

Challenges:

- CTE teachers aren't actively engaged in transition planning.
- Concerns about CTE requirements and certifications can limit access to courses
- CTE teachers need training in working with students with disabilities.

Opportunities:

- CTE and job shadowing opportunities
- Collaborative CTE plans
- Invite stakeholders, including administrators, CTE, and counselors, to collaborate with SPED and VR.

Coordination of Services Beyond the LEA-VR Team

Challenges:

- Providers are confused by forms, contracts, and outside information.

- Requirements, forms, and services change frequently.
- Limited providers in rural areas
- Providers need continuing education, including how to teach this age group.

Opportunities:

- Schools districts serving as SEAL sites
- Teachers working with SEAL and former teachers working as Pre-ETS providers can increase quality of services.
- Providers are able to address barriers to employment such as hygiene, professional attire, and communication skills.
- Career exploration and counseling on post-secondary education opportunities at this age can increase buy-in and can help students see the value of work.

TWC Terms and Acronyms

| | |
|--------|--|
| AAC | Alternative Augmentative Communication |
| AIS | Automated Inquiry System |
| AT | Assistive Technology |
| ATS | Assistive Technology Specialist |
| Boards | Local Workforce Development Boards |
| BRC | Business Relations Coordinator |
| BRT | Business Relations Team |
| BS | Blind Services |
| BSA | Benefits Summary and Analysis |
| BSC | Blind Specialty Caseload |
| BSD | Blind Services Division (legacy division) |
| BSS | Blind Services Support |
| BVI | Blind or Visually Impaired |
| CART | Communication Access Realtime Translation |
| CbH | Communication by Hand |
| CDR | Career Development Resources |
| CID | Case Identification |
| CIS | Communities in Schools |
| COMS | Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist |
| CoP | Community of Practice |
| CRC | Certified Rehabilitation Counselor |
| CRD | Civil Rights Division |
| CRP | Certified Rehabilitation Program |
| CRP | Certified Rehabilitation Provider |
| CUC | College and University Coordinator |
| CWIC | Community Work Incentive Coordinator |
| DBMD | Deaf-blind with Multiple Disabilities |
| DBS | Division for Blind Services (legacy division) |
| DD | Developmental Disability |
| DDS | Disability Determination Services |
| DFPS | Texas Department of Family and Protective Services |
| DFSS | Deafblind Field Support Services |
| DHHS | Deaf and Hard of Hearing Service (VR) |
| DHHS | Department of Health and Human Services |
| DME | Durable Medical Equipment |
| DPS | Deafblind Program Specialist |

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|---------|--|
| DRD | Deputy Regional Directors |
| DRS | Deafness Resource Specialist |
| DSHS | Texas Department of State Health Services |
| DSW | Direct Service Worker (Direct Service Provider) |
| ED | United States Department of Education |
| ESBI | Employment Services for Brain Injury |
| ESP | Employment Services Plan |
| ESP | Employment Services Provider |
| ETPs | Eligible Training Providers |
| ETS | Employment Transition Services |
| FAFSA | Free Application for Federal Student Aid |
| FLSA | Fair Labor Standards Act |
| GST | Group Skills Training |
| IAP | Individualized Adjustment Plan |
| IL | Independent Living |
| ILC | Independent Living Center |
| IPE | Individualized Plan for Employment |
| JAN | Job Accommodation Network (www.askjan.org) |
| JSS | Job Specific Skills |
| LPC | Licensed Professional Counselor |
| LV | Low Vision |
| LWDB | Local Workforce Development Board |
| MOU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| MSG | Measurable Skills Gain |
| NAA | National Apprenticeship Act |
| NTACT:C | National Technical Assistance Center for Transition: the Collaborative |
| MDR | Manifestation Determination Review |
| O*NET | Occupational Information Network |
| ODEP | Office of Disability Employment Policy |
| OJT | On-the-Job Training |
| OSCT | Outreach and Services Coordination Team |
| OSERS | Office of Special Education Rehabilitation Services (part of ED) |
| PETS | Pre-ETS |
| PRE-ETS | Pre-Employment Transition Services |
| PSAT | Personal Social Adjustment Training |
| RA | Rehabilitation Assistant |
| RBSS | Regional Blind Services Specialist |
| RCT | Rehabilitation Council of Texas |

| | |
|---------|---|
| RD | Regional Director |
| RFI | Request for Information |
| RHW | ReHabWorks |
| RPS | Regional Program Specialist |
| RPSS | Regional Program Support Specialist |
| RSA | Rehabilitation Services Administration |
| SA | Service Authorization |
| SE | Supported Employment |
| SEA | Supported Employment Assessment |
| SEAL | Summer Earn and Learn |
| SEIE | Student Earned Income Exclusion |
| SESP | Supported Employment Services Plan |
| SHN | Student Hireability Navigator |
| SME | Subject Matter Expert |
| SMURF | Subject Matter Utilization Resource Facilitator |
| SSA | Social Security Administration |
| SSA/VR | Social Security Administration Vocational Rehabilitation |
| SSDI | Social Security Disability Insurance |
| SSI | Supplemental Security Income |
| SSYEP | Subsidized Summer Youth Employment Program |
| SWEAT | Summer Work Experience in Austin TX |
| TDCJ | Texas Department of Criminal Justice |
| TJJD | Texas Juvenile Justice Department (formerly Texas Youth Commission) |
| TTW | Ticket to Work (Program) |
| TTY | Text telephone or teletypewriter |
| TVRC | Transition Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor |
| TWC | Texas Workforce Commission |
| TWS | Texas Workforce Solutions |
| UNTWISE | University of North Texas' Workplace Inclusion & Sustainable Employment |
| VAC | Vocational Adjustment Coordinator |
| VAT | Vocational Adjustment Training |
| VoIP | Voice over Internet Protocol |
| VR | Vocational Rehabilitation |
| VRC | Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor |
| VRS | Video Relay Service |
| VRT | Vocational Rehabilitation Teacher |
| WIOA | Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act |

| | |
|-------|-----------------------------------|
| WIP | Work Incentive Plan |
| WIT | Work in Texas |
| WoW | World of Work |
| Y-TAC | Youth Technical Assistance Center |

Special Education Terms and Acronyms

| | |
|-------|--|
| AAC | Alternative Augmentative Communication |
| Accom | Classroom Accommodation |
| APE | Adapted Physical Education |
| ARD | Admission, Review, and Dismissal Meeting (This will be called an IEP meeting or IEPT meeting on out of state records.) |
| AT | Assistive Technology |
| BIP | Behavior Intervention Plan |
| CBA | Curriculum-based Assessment |
| CBVI | Community-based Vocational Instruction |
| COOP | Cooperative (cooperative agreement to share SPED services between smaller districts; also known as SSA) |
| CTE | Career and Technical Education |
| DAEP | Disciplinary Alternative Education Program |
| DD | Developmental Delay (This is not a disability category. The related disability category is ID, intellectual disability.) |
| EB | Emergent Bilingual |
| ESC | Educational Service Center |
| ESD | Extended School Day |
| ESY | Extended School Year |
| FAPE | Free and Appropriate Public Education |
| FBA | Functional Behavior Assessment |
| FERPA | Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act |
| FIE | Full and Individual Evaluation |
| FIIE | Full and Individual Initial Evaluation (often shortened to “initial eval.”) |
| FVE | Functional Vocational Evaluation |
| GE | General Education |
| IA | Instructional Assistant |
| IAES | Interim Alternative Educational Setting |
| ICS | In Class Support |
| IDEA | Individuals with Disabilities Education Act |
| IEE | Independent Educational Evaluation |
| IEP | Individualized Education Program |
| ITP | Individualized Transition Plan |
| LEA | Local Education Agency (ISDs and state-chartered charter schools) |

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|-----------|--|
| LPAC | Language Proficiency Assessment Committee |
| LRE | Least Restrictive Environment |
| LSSP | Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (school psychologist) |
| MDR | Manifestation Determination Review |
| MDT | Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team |
| Mod | Modifications to the Curriculum |
| OCR | Office of Civil Rights |
| O&M | Orientation and Mobility |
| OT | Occupational Therapy/Occupational Therapist |
| PGP | Personal Graduation Plan (commonly referred to as a 4 year Plan) |
| PLAAFP | Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance |
| PT | Physical Therapy/Physical Therapist |
| PWN | Prior Written Notice |
| RDSPD | Regional Day School Program for the Deaf |
| REED | Review of Existing Evaluation Data |
| SLP | Speech Language Pathologist |
| SLPA | Speech Language Pathology Assistant |
| SOP | Summary of Performance |
| SP | School Psychologist |
| SSA | Shared Services Arrangement (shared SPED services between smaller districts, also called a COOP) |
| STAAR | State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness |
| STAAR-Alt | STAAR Alternative (state assessment designed for students working on prerequisite skills) |
| TBD | Teacher of Students who are Deafblind |
| TEA | Texas Education Agency |
| TEC | Texas Education Code |
| TED | Transition and Employment Designee |
| TEKS | Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills |
| TODHH | Teacher of Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing |
| TSBVI | Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired |
| TSD | Texas School for the Deaf |
| TVI | Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments |

Stevens Amendment

These activities are financed under the TWC Federal Vocational Rehabilitation grant. For the Federal fiscal year 2024 (October 1, 2023, through September 30, 2024), TWC anticipates expending \$320,291,817 in Federal Vocational Rehabilitation funds. Funds appropriated by the State pay a minimum of 21.3% of the total costs (\$86,686,349) under the Vocational Rehabilitation program. Revised June 2024.

For purposes of the Supported Employment program, the Vocational Rehabilitation agency receives 94.7 percent of its funding through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. For the 2024 Federal fiscal year, the total amount of grant funds awarded are \$1,501,230. The remaining 5.3 percent (\$83,402) are funded by Texas State Appropriations. Revised June 2024.

For purposes of the Independent Living Services for Older Individuals who are Blind program, the Vocational Rehabilitation agency receives 90 percent of its funding through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. For the 2024 Federal fiscal year, the total amount of grant funds awarded are \$2,213,488. The remaining 10 percent (\$245,943) are funded by Texas State Appropriations. Revised June 2024.

Spanish

Estas actividades están financiadas bajo la subvención de Rehabilitación Vocacional Federal de la TWC. Para el año fiscal federal 2023 (octubre 1o, 2023, hasta el 30 de septiembre, 2024), La TWC espera gastar \$320,291,817 en fondos Federales de Rehabilitación Vocacional. Fondos apropiados por el estado para pagar un mínimo de 21.3% del costo total (\$86,686,349) bajo el programa de Rehabilitación Vocacional. Actualizado junio 2024.

Para fines del programa de Empleo Apoyado, la dependencia de Rehabilitación Vocacional recibe el 94.7 por ciento de sus fondos por medio de una subvención del Departamento de Educación de EE.UU. Para el año fiscal federal 2024, la cantidad total de fondos de la subvención concedida es de \$1,501,230. El 5.3

por ciento restante (\$83,402) es subsanado por Apropriaciones del Estado de Texas. Actualizado junio 2024.

Para fines del programa de Servicios de Vida Independiente para Personas Mayores Ciegas, la dependencia de Rehabilitación Vocacional recibe el 90 por ciento de sus fondos por medio de una subvención del Departamento de Educación de EE.UU. Para el año fiscal federal 2024, la cantidad total de fondos de la subvención otorgada es de \$2,213,488. El 10 por ciento restante (\$245,943) está subsanado por Apropriaciones del Estado de Texas. Actualizado junio 2024.

2024 Statewide Capacity Building Conference Questions

