Career Counseling and Supports: How Schools and MN VRS Work Together to Help Students Prepare for Employment Success

PACER Inspiring Possibilities Conference
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Secondary Transition Planning

• Is the process of preparing students for life after high school.
• For students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs): includes planning for postsecondary education/training, employment, and independent living.

Secondary Transition Planning (continued)

• Transition age range: 14-21
• IEP must contain specific transition goals, plans and services related to his or her interests and needs.
• Families are a required partner on the IEP team and play a valuable role in helping support youth as they work to fulfill their dreams for adulthood.
• You are helping your child plan for life!
What Does High Quality Transition Planning Look Like?

• Schools are the primary provider of transition services, collaborating with Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) to fill in the gaps. This partnership ultimately increases outcomes.

• Example: A student would like to gain work experience in the area of childcare. The school does not have a relationship with a childcare program. VRS has business relationships and assists in identifying a work site at a childcare center. School and VRS work together to support student.

• IEP updated at least annually. Includes measurable postsecondary goals based on age appropriate transition assessments related to the 3 areas of transition.

• Invite VRS and county case managers to IEP meetings!

Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS)

• State employment services agency that serves people with disabilities

• Division of the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)

• State Services for the Blind (SSB) is a sister agency that serves those who are blind, low vision or DeafBlind

• Partner in the CareerForce system (formerly Minnesota WorkForce Centers)

• 50 CareerForce locations in the state

• VRS serves youth and adults: Any Age 14+!
Services VRS Provides

- Career Counseling
- Job Training
- Job Placement
- Services to Keep a Job
- Pre-Employment Transition Services
- And more!

Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

- Job Exploration Counseling
- Work-Based Learning Experiences
- Postsecondary Education Counseling
- Workplace Readiness Training
- Instruction in Self-Advocacy

Pre-ETS Availability

- Are provided in collaboration between schools and VRS
- Must be made available statewide to all students with disabilities
- Any student with a disability who is age 14-21 can receive Pre-ETS
Who is a “Student with a Disability”?

• Has an IEP (in special education); or
• 504 plan; or
• Other medical/mental health documentation

VRS: Two VRS Staff Assigned to Every School

• VR Counselor and Pre-ETS Representative
  • No wrong door: Send referrals to either staff person
  • Find the staff assigned to your school
  • Or email Alyssa at alyssa.klein@state.mn.us

Steps for Accessing VRS Services

1. Contact one of the VRS staff assigned to the student's school
2. They will set up a meeting to explain services and provide an application packet
   • Ideally the student’s parent(s)/guardian(s) are there
3. VRS verifies student eligibility for services
4. Services begin...
...Services Begin

- Ideally a team meeting is held with student, parent(s)/guardian(s), school staff (i.e. IEP case manager)

- Discuss:
  - Pre-ETS needs and what VRS will provide
  - How services will be coordinated with school services
  - How and when services will be provided
  - How communication will take place
  - Follow-up meetings

VRS Contracts with Community Partners

- Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs)
- Centers for Independent Living (CILs)
- CareerForce Partners

Flyer and Video for Students and Families

Click here for video
Click here for flyer
Adults: Accessing VRS

- Contact the VRS Office nearest to where you live
- [https://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/disabilities/find-vrs/](https://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/disabilities/find-vrs/)

Other Resources: Disability Hub MN

[https://disabilityhubmn.org/for-families](https://disabilityhubmn.org/for-families)

Contact Information

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