

Cross Agency Collaboration that Promotes Business Partnership and Enhances Work Experience for Students with Disabilities

CSAVR Fall 2019 Conference

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Presenters

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Welcome

- Brief Overview from TA Centers Perspective
- Texas and Vermont will share their strategies:
 - for expanding programs and partnerships that drive and support cross system collaboration and innovation around work experiences
 - on how VR and Education can partner with business to meet their workforce needs and prepare and engage students with disabilities for CIE.
 - for what worked, lessons learned, and next steps moving forward
- Highlight any tools/resources/checklists that have been effective to use in implementation



What TA Centers Have Learned From States

1. Work based learning experiences are most effective when **developed in coordination** with one or more of the other four required pre-employment transition services.
2. Meaningful work experiences are typically developed around a career pathway and provide **opportunities for students to stack or layer skills**.
3. Successful collaboration promotes business partnership when employers understand how providing a work opportunity for students with disabilities can help meet current workforce needs, a better prepared future workforce, and improved community engagement.
4. Cross-agency collaboration is most effective when it is **out-come driven**.
5. States are still young in evaluating and determining what the data is telling us – much of our data is anecdotal (share Blake's story)

Blake's Story (Welder)

- **First Step – Pre-ETS:** Through job exploration counseling Blake learned he is really interested in hands-on manufacturing types of jobs like welding, the pay seems pretty good, he likes the work environment because you can move around a lot and work with your hands, there is a high demand for welders nationally, and there are three shops in his hometown that hire welders.
- Blake doesn't want to go to college, but is open to the idea of more training after HS if it helps him get a better job and make more money. Blake has a learning disability in math and reading, but welding requires he master certain math skills, and he cannot pass the reading required to get into the welding program through the local CTE program.
- One of the VR business specialists reached out to the local welding shops and helped Blake set up some informational interviews with welders in all three shops. Through WBLE activities, Blake was able to job-shadow a welder in two of those businesses, and participate in a paid work experience for six weeks over the summer at one of the businesses that rented U-Hauls, and hired welders to fix broken hitches, etc.

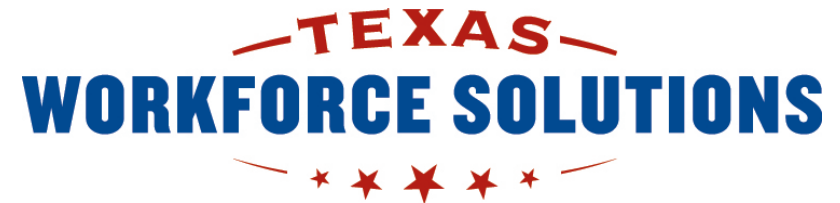
Blake's Story (Welder) continued



- Blake choose the manufacturing career pathway so that he could become a certified welder.
- Blake only had to get certified in two basic types of welds to perform the job tasks required for the position at Simmons U-Haul Company, and they wanted to hire him.
- VR coordinated services with Blake's HS, goals and objectives were written into his IEP that focused on learning those math skills needed to perform the job tasks, and the CTE instructor agreed to teach Blake skills required to become certified welder in two areas.
- Blake graduated HS, worked at Simmons U-Haul for a year, and then started an apprenticeship program in welding.⁶



SUMMER EARN AND LEARN (SEAL)



Vocational Rehabilitation Program Transfer

- On September 1, 2016, the VR program was transferred from legacy Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) to the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) as mandated by SB 208, 84th Texas Legislature (2015).
- In addition, the two designated state units (DSUs) Blind Services and General Rehabilitation Services were mandated to combine into one DSU by October 1, 2017.
- Lastly, the Legislature directed TWC to integrate local VR offices into local Workforce Solutions Offices (aka workforce centers).

TWC Organizational Structure

- Three Governor-appointed Commissioners representing the Public, Labor, and Employers provide policy direction and oversight.
- The TWC Executive Director oversees agency operations and directs staff.
- The Workforce Development Division oversees programs administered by the 28 workforce Boards.
- The Vocational Rehabilitation Division administers the VR, OIB and Randolph Shepard programs.
- Other TWC divisions include Unemployment Insurance, Child Care, Civil Rights, Operational Insight, and multiple administrative divisions.

Pathways to Careers (PCI)

- PCI is a statewide TWC VR initiative to expand pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) to Texas students with disabilities.
- PCI includes eight strategies:
 1. Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL)
 2. Charting the Course: Planning for Life after High School
 3. Explore science, technology, engineering and math (STEM)!

Pathways to Careers (Cont.)

4. Pre-ETS Tools for Students
5. Pre-ETS Elective Curriculum
6. Capacity Building
7. Advise Texas
8. Student HireAbility Navigators

Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL)

- When: Launched in summer of 2017
- What: Work readiness training, worksite placement, and paid work experience for students with disabilities.
- How: Contracts with each of the 28 workforce Boards
- Funding: VR funds reserved for Pre-ETS
- Role of VR: Coordinate, Recruit, Assist, Support

SEAL Requirements

SEAL participants must meet the following criteria:

- Student with a disability between ages 14-22.
- Enrolled in secondary or postsecondary education.
- May be a VR participant with an IPE or potentially eligible for VR.

Seal Requirements continued

Students must:

- Exhibit behavior that is appropriate for a work setting. If the student has, at times, displayed behaviors that are not work-appropriate, the student should be able to be redirected with minimal intervention.
- Be receptive to counseling and guidance about the importance of appropriate workplace behavior.
- Be motivated to participate in the work-based learning program.

SEAL Program Components

1

Planning, Coordination, Recruitment & Registration

2

Work Readiness Training

3

Worksite Identification & Placement

4

Worksite Monitoring & Reporting

SEAL Program Timeline



SEAL Results



2017

- 2017:
- 1,524 participants
 - 765 worksites

2018

- 2018:
- 2,430 participants
 - 1,052 worksites

2019

- 2019:
- 2,868 participants
 - 1,329 worksites

Examples of SEAL Employers

- CVS
- Crane County Senior Center
- City of Wichita Falls Library
- City of Lubbock
- Anytime Fitness
- Cinemark
- Chick-Fil-A
- Pep Boys
- Great Clips
- Marriott
- MD Anderson
- Sam's Club

SEAL Success Stories

- Kumori Sushi & Teppanyaki
- Trevor- Rockin R River Rides
- Fatima- Pine Tree Preschool

Lessons Learned

- Need sufficient time to launch
- Need for communication between all partners
- Increase collaboration by establishing a joint planning committee at the local level

Lessons Learned

- Sufficient notice for worksite placements
- Allow time to schedule interpreters and job skills trainers
- Allow time for transportation arrangements

Tips for Replication

- Allow a generous planning runway
- Honest conversations early in the planning stage
- Invest in training
- Build capacity



VERMONT TRANSITION SERVICES: COLLABORATING FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

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DIRECTOR

CSAVR ~ October 29, 2019



Objectives of this Session

- Overview of Transition Program and Linking Learning to Careers
- Structure for Defining Roles within Transition Youth Teams
- Collaboration with Schools – Roles and Responsibilities
- Collaboration with Employers and other Community Partners
- Linking Learning to Careers – Enhanced Services including Work-Based Learning





OVERVIEW OF TRANSITION PROGRAM AND LINKING LEARNING TO CAREERS

VT Vocational Rehabilitation Transition Services

Before there was the Linking Learning to Careers Grant... There was Pre-ETS!

Who provides Pre-ETS:

- Fourteen (14) VR Transition Counselors work with secondary students within the schools across the state to provide Pre-ETS services.
- Fourteen (14) VABIR Youth Employment Specialists (YES) staff work in partnership with the Transition Counselors to provide a progression of work experiences and create a link to the business community.
- Partnerships with Vermont Center for Independent Living to provide self-advocacy groups, and Vermont Family Network to assist with family engagement.

Pre-Employment Transition Services

VT Vocational Rehabilitation Transition Services (continued)

Local and Statewide Core Transition Teams:

- Twelve (12) local Core Transition Teams facilitate effective partnerships between schools and community partners.
- Annual Interagency Core Teams Collaboration Event pulls together both active members of the teams as well as those interested in learning more for:
 - Professional development
 - Networking
 - Identification of Local Core Transition Team goals for the next year and highlight past year's successes



Linking Learning to Careers

Goal: To develop and implement a model that provides work-based learning experiences and postsecondary access for secondary students and otherwise enhances their progress on a successful career path.

To get there, LLC will deliver:

- Career development support via classroom, small group, & one-on-one services resulting in an individual LLC Plan.
- A continuum of work-based learning experiences.
- Access to postsecondary education, including dual enrollment & more.
- Intensive individualized Assistive Technology support.
- Transportation for WBL, employment, & college activities.

Evaluation design: Randomized control trial recruiting 800 high school students with disabilities in 12 VR district offices statewide – half assigned to ‘core services’, half to ‘enhanced services’.



STRUCTURE FOR DEFINING ROLES INTERNALLY WITHIN TRANSITION YOUTH TEAMS

Structure for Defining Roles Internally within Transition Youth Teams

- Regular statewide meetings to ensure consistent communication with all youth team members:
 - Enrollment
 - Implementation of services
- District Youth Team Meetings supported by managers/supervisors to ensure clear communication and role responsibilities.
- Transition program manual and LLC Implementation Guide utilized internally to define roles, documentation process, and collaboration with schools.
- TransCen fidelity monitoring process supports role clarification.
- Data Collection and Comprehensive evaluation highlights and defines roles and responsibilities – entering information into case management system and RAPTER data management system.
- Internal Transition Charter work provides clarity for staff and supervisors – RACI (Responsibility, Accountability, Consultation, Information) and Process Mapping.

Resource: LLC Roles and Responsibilities Chart



COLLABORATION WITH SCHOOLS – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Regular Communication with Agency of Education Staff

- Consistent meetings occur between VR Transition Program Director and AOE Post-Secondary Transition Coordinator, and LLC Director with AOE Work Based Learning Coordinator.
- Collaboration in Transition-related events, such as Interagency Core Team Collaboration Event and Work-Based Learning Coordinator Series.
- Shared investment supports effective Core Transition Teams across the state.
- Quarterly Agency of Education meetings occur with Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Developmental Disabilities Service Division, Department of Labor, VT Assistive Technology, and Division for the Blind and Visually Impaired– now being expanded to create a Statewide Core Transition Team.

Regular Communication with Local Education Staff

- Transition Youth Teams meet with school staff at the beginning of school year to clarify roles and establish plan for the year around visits, referrals, services, communication plan.
- Collaborative activities occur within the schools- Transition Fairs or Open Houses.
- Groups that occur during the school day are in collaboration with school staff.
- Visits to local VR office at the end of the school year for graduating students are encouraged (can be done in collaboration with Department of Labor and/or Developmental Services).
- Local Core Transition Team meetings clarifies roles of VR and Community Partners.

Resources:

- Start of school year checklists with TransCen (VR and schools documents)
- Best Practice from meetings with TransCen and schools

Why Core Transition Teams ?

- Strategy for Pre-Employment Transition Services accessibility statewide and alignment with Interagency Collaboration;
- Increase capacity at the local level to develop, provide, and manage an effective transition process for students;
- Share resources and information, make connections with providers, and provide training to encourage the use of best practices;
- Provide input and information to local and regional school and policy boards regarding broader transition issues;
- Collectively problem solve transition challenges for students with complex needs; and
- Liaison with the other transition initiatives.

Design of Core Transition Teams

- 12 local teams across the state that align with Vocational Rehabilitation/Agency of Human Services offices
- Monthly, bimonthly, or quarterly meetings, depending upon identified needs of the team
- Representation from (not an exhaustive list):
 - Schools (Special Educators, Work Based Learning Coordinators, 504 Coordinators, School Counselors, Special Education Directors)
 - College programs: Community Colleges, State and Private colleges, Transition College programs (College Steps, THINK College, SUCCEED, Project Search)
 - Designated agencies (both Developmental Services and Mental Health Services) and Specialized Service Agencies
 - Department of Labor
 - Adult Learning
 - Employment partners (VABIR)
 - Vermont Family Network
 - Department of Health- Children with Special Health Needs
 - Any local program that is working with youth!
 - Parents and students (future plan)
- Agency/Organization statewide leaders support and reinforce importance of the local Core Transition Team meetings; Annual Core Team Event is funded at the state level.

Collaboration with Employers and other Community Partners

- Close partnership with the Vermont Association for Business, Industry, and Rehabilitation
- Creative Workforce Solutions– System of sharing and coordinating employer information, resources, and relationships locally
- Progressive Employment:
 - The purpose of Progressive Employment is to provide candidates with opportunities to explore careers, build skills, develop recent work experience, and establish relationships that will help them secure jobs in the community.
 - PE also provides employers with a method to evaluate potential employees in an informal, low risk way.
- Core Transition Teams—Employer panels
- Career/Transition Fairs in collaboration with community partners and employers
- Wide range of Work-Based Learning Opportunities/Integrated Competitive Employment



LINKING LEARNING TO CAREERS – ENHANCED SERVICES INCLUDING WORK-BASED LEARNING

Transition Work-Based Learning Model Demonstrations

- 5-year research project
- Funded by: U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration – Disability Innovation Fund Grants
- Awarded to: California, Massachusetts, Maine, Maryland, Vermont



Linking Learning to Careers– Work Based Learning

LLC delivers a continuum of work-based learning experiences including:

- At least one formally prepared and evaluated job shadow
- At least one formally prepared and evaluated unpaid internship and/or volunteer experience
- At least one employer-paid job in a competitive, integrated setting

Other WBL activities such as career guest speakers, work site visits, and informational interviews are incorporated

Resources:

Unpaid Work Experience Training Plan

Unpaid Work Experience Student Evaluation



Additional Enhanced Services

- Post-secondary Exploration Options - Partnership with Community College of Vermont
 - Introduction to College & Careers
 - Dual Enrollment Courses
 - Contract Courses
- Assistive Technology Supports
 - Two full time LLC AT Specialists
 - Loans and purchases of needed devices
- Transportation to and from WBL and post-secondary activities



Current Status & Interim Outcomes

LLC is designed to achieve these outcomes:

- High school completion
- Competitive, integrated employment
- Postsecondary education and training enrollment
- Confidence and motivation to achieve career goals

Interim Outcomes:

- 802 students enrolled; 413 assigned to treatment (enhanced) group
- 61.2% of enhanced group received at least one long term unpaid WBL or paid employment; 23.1% for control (core) group
- 33.3% enhanced with paid competitive employment; 14.7% for core
- 18.1% enhanced receiving assistive technology supports; .8% for core
- 50.3% enhanced post-secondary exploration; 30.6% for core
- 84.6% enhanced students with open VR case



Additional Resources



Work-based learning programs can help address business demand for workers and workers' skills needs. For small- and mid-sized companies, however, there are often challenges to starting or running these programs. Businesses and communities across the country master these challenges by working together in industry or sector partnerships that bring together multiple employers in a targeted industry with the workforce, education, and human service systems to aggregate skills demands across firms and identify training and employment strategies that meet those shared needs.¹

This brief discusses the important role local, industry-driven partnerships can play to align the workforce, education and human services systems and bring work-based learning to scale. It also highlights four partnerships that have broadened the pipeline of workers with access to work-based learning programs, meeting industry-demand for skilled workers and aligning workforce, education, and human services systems. In addition, the brief offers federal and state recommendations to scale these partnerships across the country.



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 Every worker. Every industry. A strong economy.

INDUSTRY
PARTNERSHIPS
SHOULD BE



ROBUST



INDUSTRY DRIVEN



LOCALLY BASED

Resources

Workforce GPS Resources to Support Work based Learning

<https://www.workforcegps.org/resources/2019/10/02/13/27/Resources-to-Support-Work-Based-Learning>

A Guide to Developing Collaborative School-Community Business Partnerships

https://transitionta.org/sites/default/files/Partnership_Guide.pdf

Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC)

<http://www.wintac.org/>

National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT)

<https://www.transitionta.org/>

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Thank You

