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

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PACER Inspiring Possibilities Conference  
October 8, 2021

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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.

**TRANSITION SERVICES FLOW CHART**

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### 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!

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### 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!

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### 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+!**



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**Services VRS Provides**

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



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**Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)**

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



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**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

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**Who is a "Student with a Disability"?**

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



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**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](mailto:alyssa.klein@state.mn.us)

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**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...



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**...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



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**VRS Contracts with Community Partners**

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




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**Flyer and Video for Students and Families**





[mn.gov/deed/vrs-students](#)

[Click here for video](#)  
[Click here for flyer](#)

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### Adults: Accessing VRS

- Contact the VRS Office nearest to where you live
- <https://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/disabilities/find-vrs/>



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### Other Resources: Disability Hub MN



<https://disabilityhubmn.org/for-families>

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### Contact Information

- Alyssa Klein, DEED-VRS Statewide Transition and Pre-ETS Coordinator, [Alyssa.Klein@state.mn.us](mailto:Alyssa.Klein@state.mn.us)
- Lindsey Horowitz, MDE Transition Specialist, [Lindsey.Jo.Horowitz@state.mn.us](mailto:Lindsey.Jo.Horowitz@state.mn.us)



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