



**Pennsylvania  
Bureau of Special Education  
and Office of Vocational  
Rehabilitation  
Memorandum of  
Understanding**

**Unpacking the MOU**  
April 8, 2021

# Today's Presenters

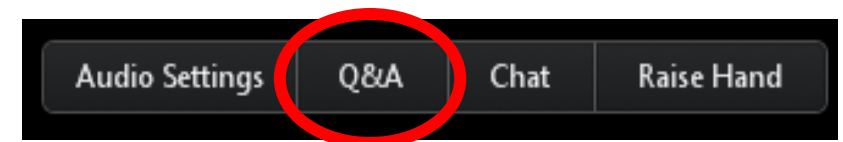
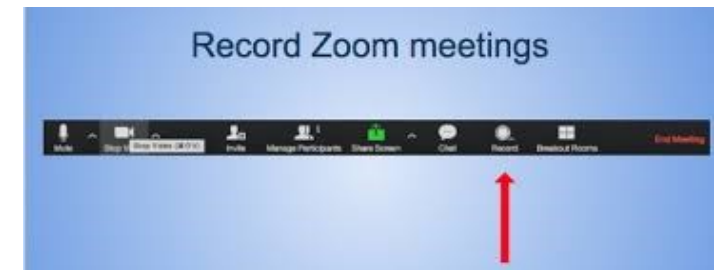
- Shannon Austin and Kim Robinson (OVR)
- Carole Clancy (BSE)
- Everett Deibler and Lilly Sellers (PYLN)
- Melissa Diehl and Michael Stoehr (NTACT:C)
- Cindy Duch (PEAL)
- Jacki Lyster and Hillary Mangis (PaTTAN)

# Today's Agenda

- Interagency Collaboration – A National Perspective
- Interagency Collaboration - Student and Family Perspective
- Interagency Collaboration – A Pennsylvania Perspective
- Strategies and Effective Practices That Promote Interagency Collaboration

# Resources and Recording Webinar

- The PowerPoint and related materials are available at [www.pattan.net](http://www.pattan.net)
- Today's session is being recorded and will be available at [www.pattan.net](http://www.pattan.net)
- Please post any questions you may have in the Q & A box in Zoom. Questions will be collected, reviewed, and addressed during one of our future webinars and/or in a future resource document



Poll Question

Who is participating today?

Interagency  
Collaboration  
A National  
Perspective

Melissa Diehl

Michael Stoehr

**NTACT**  
THE **COLLABORATIVE**  
*Improving Opportunities & Outcomes*

# Interagency Cooperative Agreement



# Background

- State VR agencies have been required to enter into formal agreements with State educational agencies (SEAs) since the 1997 final regulations implementing the 1992 amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- The agreements are focused on coordination of VR services with special education services to make a seamless transition from educational services to VR services.



## Formal Interagency Agreement Between Education and VR A Requirement in Both Laws

- Both the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by WIOA (Rehabilitation Act), require State Education Agencies (SEAs) and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies to plan and coordinate transition services, as well as pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities through a formal interagency agreement.
- See Section 612(a)(12) of the IDEA and Section 101(a)(11)(D) of the Rehabilitation Act); Sections 113 and 511 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Final Regulations: State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program; State Supported Employment Services Program; Limitations on Use of Subminimum Wage

# Framework

---

Purpose

---

Minimum Required Components

---

Procedures to Resolve Disputes\*

---

Identify Parties to the Agreement

---

Signed by Authorized Officials

---

Dated, and Reviewed/Updated Regularly

---

\*Not required under the Rehabilitation Act, but also is not prohibited

# Purpose of the MOU

To facilitate and coordinate the smooth transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including the receipt of pre-employment transition services, transition services, and other VR services.

To serve as a mechanism for VR agencies, SEAs and, as appropriate, LEAs to clearly specify the plans, policies, and procedures for coordinating services to facilitate the transition of students.

Clarifying partner roles, responsibilities and processes used to provide transition services to students with disabilities;

Avoiding duplication of services;

# Minimum Required Components

Pre-employment transition services;

Consultation and technical assistance;

Transition planning;

Roles and Responsibilities, along with financial responsibilities;

Outreach to and identification of students with disabilities;

Coordination to satisfy documentation requirements under Section 511 of the Rehabilitation Act for students seeking subminimum wage employment; and an

Assurance neither SEA nor LEA will enter into an arrangement with section 14(c) certificate holder under which a youth with a disability is compensated at a subminimum wage.

	34 CFR§300.154 Methods of ensuring services.	§361.22 Coordination with education officials. (a)Plans, policies, and procedures.
<p><b>Plans, Policies and Procedures</b></p>	<p>(a)The Chief Executive Officer of a State or designee of that officer must ensure that an interagency agreement or other mechanism for interagency coordination is in effect between each non educational public agency described in paragraph (b) of this section and the SEA, in order to ensure that all services described in paragraph (b)(1) of this section that are needed to ensure FAPE are provided, including the provision of these services during the pendency of any dispute under paragraph (a)(3) of this section.</p>	<p>(1) The vocational rehabilitation services portion of the Unified or Combined State Plan must contain plans, policies, and procedures for coordination between the designated State agency and education officials responsible for the public education of students with disabilities that are designed to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from the receipt of educational services, including pre-employment transition services, in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services under the responsibility of the designated State agency.</p> <p>(2) These plans, policies, and procedures in paragraph (a)(1) of this section must provide for the development and approval of an individualized plan for employment in accordance with § 361.45 as early as possible during the transition planning process and not later than the time a student with a disability determined to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services leaves the school setting or, if the designated State unit is operating under an order of selection, before each eligible student with a disability able to be served under the order leaves the school setting.</p>

IDEA →

WIOA →

# Outlines Parameters for Collaboration and Coordination

---



- The formal interagency agreement must have clearly defined parameters for collaborating and coordinating the delivery of pre-employment transition services and transition services and clearly defined responsibilities for each entity.
- Decisions regarding service delivery or financial responsibilities must be made at the State level while developing an interagency agreement and considering the population, available resources, and needs of the students and youth.
- States have maximum flexibility to develop these interagency agreements in a manner that best meets the unique needs and capacities of both the VR agency and the state educational agency.

# Lays Foundation for Successful Collaboration, Including Service Delivery

- Decisions about whether the service:
  - is related to an **employment outcome or educational attainment**,
  - or if it is considered a **special education or related service**,
  - as well as whether the service is one **customarily provided under IDEA or the Rehabilitation Act**
  - are ones that are made at the State and local level by SEA, DSB and LEA personnel.
- The mere fact that some of those transition services typically provided under IDEA are now authorized under the Rehabilitation Act as pre-employment transition services does not mean the school should cease providing them and refer those students to the VR program.
- If any of the five required pre-employment transition services are needed by the student with a disability and are not customary services provided by an LEA, the VR agencies and LEA are urged to collaborate and coordinate the provision of such services.

# Outlines the Financial Responsibilities of VR Agencies and Local Education Agencies (LEAs)

- LEAs are responsible for providing and paying for any transition service that is considered special education or related services necessary for ensuring a free appropriate public education (FAPE) as required under IDEA.
- Nothing under title I of the Rehabilitation Act shall be construed as reducing a LEA's obligation to provide the above-described services under IDEA (see section 101(c) of the Rehabilitation Act and §361.22(c) of the VR regulations).
- Section 113 of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by WIOA, requires VR to provide or arrange for the provision of pre-employment transition services in collaboration with local education agencies. Decisions as to who will be responsible for providing services that are both special education services and vocational rehabilitation services must be made at the State and/or local level as part of this collaborative process and will be further defined in the formal interagency agreement.



# Building Partnerships and Collaboration Between VR and Education



# OSERS 2020 Transition Guidance Letter

- Recognizing that COVID-19 has resulted in students accessing educational services differently than in the past, whether it be virtually, in-person, or a hybrid approach, the importance of the provision of transition and pre-employment transition services has not changed.
- OSERS encourages SEAs, LEAs, schools, and VR agencies to use the flexibility afforded under the IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act to engage in innovative strategies, involving students and youth with disabilities and their families in transition and pre-employment transition services as early as possible.

# Updated OSERS Transition Guide

[Transition Guide to Postsecondary Education and Employment for Students and Youth with Disabilities](#), recently updated and released by OSERS, can provide a better understanding of how these partnerships can facilitate improved outcomes for students and youth with disabilities.

# Effective Collaboration is Outcome Driven

- Collaboration between schools, VR, students, families, employers, provider agencies, and other partners is effective only to the extent it is outcome driven.
- When collaboration is directly focused on outcomes for students and the systems that serve them – rather than merely referring them for a “hand off” to the next responsible party:
  - greater likelihood of higher school completion and employment rates
  - greater likelihood of increased number of students participating in competitive integrated work-based learning experiences prior to HS exit (paid employment)

# Effective Collaboration Leads To Successful “Anecdotal” Outcomes

- Alignment of IEP and IPE goals.
- Increased student led IEP meetings and enhanced self-advocacy skills.
- Increased family engagement in transition planning.
- Increase in students achieving competitive integrated employment after HS.
- Increase in students participating in post-secondary training and education.
- Improved relationships with business community.
- Aligned resources and decreased duplication of service development and delivery.

# Effective Collaboration Leads to Increased Opportunities for Students

- Increased opportunities for students, including students with the most significant disabilities, to practice and improve workplace skills in competitive integrated work settings before HS exit.
- Increased opportunities for students with disabilities to explore post-secondary training options, leading to more meaningful post-secondary employment and training goals in the IEP.

# Effective Collaboration - Successful Outcomes for *Businesses and Employers*

- Meet current workforce needs
- Better prepared future workforce
- Improved community engagement
- The success of linking students with work, and linking student work experience programs with employer partners, is as much about meeting employers' needs as it is about meeting the collective goals set by state agencies (USOR and USBE).
- Unless employers gain from the collaboration, they are not likely to become or stay involved.

# Poll Question

I have experienced effective interagency collaboration for secondary transition age students with disabilities in Pennsylvania...

Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Usually, Always



Interagency  
Collaboration  
A Student  
and Family  
Perspective

Everett Deibler and  
Lilly Sellers (PYLN)

Cindy Duch (PEAL)

Youth &  
Family  
Discussion  
Question 1

What has been your past or current experience with OVR and Education?

Why is collaboration between OVR and Education Important?

# Youth & Family Discussion Question 2

How do you think this MOU rollout will help students with disabilities successfully transition to adult life?

What makes this MOU different than all the past coordination activities that have happened in Pennsylvania?

Interagency  
Collaboration  
A  
Pennsylvania  
Perspective

Carole Clancy (BSE)

Shannon Austin (OVR)

# Participant Dialogue



So far, what are you excited about?

(type in the chat or raise hand and unmute)

Strategies and  
Effective  
Practices That  
Promote  
Interagency  
Collaboration

Jacki Lyster (PaTTAN)  
Hillary Mangis (PaTTAN)

Kim Robinson (OVR)

# Discussion Question 1

Is the collaboration between education (PDE/BSE/PaTTAN) and OVR new?

SLT/COP → Transition Coordinating Councils/Employment Coalitions  
Transition Conference  
Secondarytransition.org  
Webinar series  
Experience the Employment Connection  
Collaborative data sharing practices

## Discussion Question 2

How does the MOU change the collaboration that has already been occurring?

- Provides clarity and structure to the collaboration
- Calls for creation of joint training and resources to support the field
- Regularly updated
- Procedures for how to collaborate



# Discussion Question 3

How will educators and OVR counselors/staff benefit from the MOU?

## Toolkit Resources

- Glossary of terms
- Resources for youth and families
- Inviting OVR to the IEP
- Collaborating with OVR
- Transition Services Crosswalk

**Clarity of roles and responsibilities and streamlines training across agencies**

# What resources exist to help with interagency collaboration?



## ***Using Interagency Collaboration to Increase Opportunities for Competitive, Integrated Employment for Students and Youth with Disabilities***

### **What is the level of evidence?**

This practice was identified by Rehabilitation Research & Training Center for Evidence-Based Practice in Vocational Rehabilitation (RRTC-EBP VR), and has been labeled by NTACT as a Research-Based Practice. *More information on NTACT's process for identifying effective practices is available here: [NTACT's Effective Practices](#).*

### **What is the practice?**

Benefits of interagency collaboration include the pooling of funding sources, sharing of staff knowledge and expertise, and coordination of services to consumers. Interagency collaboration

Competitive Integrated Employment Toolkit- 2017 – updated 2019

### **Section III: Interagency Collaboration**

#### **At a Glance:**

Developing effective cross-agency collaboration implementation of evidenced based practices requires building partnership at the state, local and student level. Section III provides information on effective practices within interagency collaboration. Resources are provided to assist in building cross-agency teams as well as provide strategies to enhance current collaborative efforts. These resources are designed to assist team in evaluation, planning, and implementation of transition services. Resources could be incorporated into professional development or cross-agency trainings to build capacity, common understanding, and knowledge of staff working with students.

#### **Why is interagency Collaboration Important for improving post-school outcomes?**

It has long been held that collaboration among professionals and service systems is an important component of effective initiatives and programs that support the transition of students with disabilities from school to work and adult life (Wehman, 2013). In fact, collaboration among professionals and programs is often necessary for students and students who are touched by many

Coming Soon!!!  
PASecondaryTransition.com

# Upcoming Webinars in this Series

**April 21, 2021 (9:00 AM – 11:00 AM)**

## **Engaging Stakeholders**

During this session, presenters will share strategies for engaging stakeholders in the transition planning process. Information regarding strategies for IEP participation, including family engagement, student-led IEPs, and agency involvement will be presented. Resources for including OVR in the IEP planning process and planning for transition services will be discussed.

**May 13, 2021 (9:00 AM – 11:00 AM)**

## **Strategies for Aligning Efforts**

During this session, participants will learn strategies to align efforts utilizing the PA Career Education and Work Standards and Pre-Employment Transition Services (PreETS) with IDEA transition requirements.

# Save the Date

2021 PA Community of Practice Transition Virtual Conference

Navigating the Future: A Lifetime Trip

August 11-12, 2021

Oh Yes! IT'S  
**FREE**



# Participant Dialogue



Based upon today's presentation, what is one thing that you will do differently tomorrow?

(type in the chat or raise hand and unmute)

Thank You for  
Your  
Participation

Please complete the following  
evaluation for Act 48 and CRCC  
credits:

[Survey Link](#)

# Pennsylvania Bureau of Special Education and Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

## Memorandum of Understanding

