

# Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) and the Bureau of Special Education (BSE)

## Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): Overview for Professionals

### What is the purpose of the BSE/OVR MOU?

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Ensure coordination and collaboration between the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) and the Bureau of Special Education (BSE) to support the transition of students with disabilities from high school to post-school employment-related activities and competitive, integrated employment.

- Facilitate and coordinate pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS), transition services, and VR services;
- Create a consistent communication plan to develop policies and procedures;
- Specify the procedures for identification of and outreach to students with disabilities in need of services;
- Coordinate to satisfy the federal documentation requirements set forth in both the Rehabilitation Act as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004); and
- Resolve interagency disputes, including those for reimbursement of services.

### What is included in the MOU?

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#### Consultation and Technical Assistance in Transition Planning

Details how OVR and BSE will collaborate to create and deliver joint trainings between local education agencies (LEAs) and local OVR offices that cover:

- Transition planning (services and activities)
- Pre-employment transition services, and
- Competitive integrated employment

A joint communication and training plan will be developed and shared by July 1 of each year.

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#### Transition Planning

Elaborates on OVR facilitation of individualized education program (IEP) development, IEP invitation procedures, OVR coordination with noneducational agencies, collaboration on community events, and the process of implementing pre-employment transition services.

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#### Procedures for Outreach

Details how OVR will connect with students, family members, and school personnel to communicate OVR's available services, procedures for referral, and determination of eligibility for OVR services.

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#### Roles and Responsibilities

Reviews OVR's responsibilities, which include those related to providing technical assistance and a single point of contact, and the responsibilities of BSE, which include facilitating access to the student's information and school environment and coordinating a network of professionals focused on transition planning.

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#### Financial

Details information on which services will be paid for by the LEA and which will be the responsibility of OVR to ensure school activities are supplemented and not supplanted.

# What This Means for Me

## How are these agencies working together?

Outlines OVR and BSE commitment to communication and collaboration:

- Joint communication plan and trainings
- Guidance tools

## What does this mean for me as an OVR staff member?

Charges OVR with identifying a single point of contact for each LEA and other schools.

Directs LEA and OVR to work together to determine which OVR Pre-ETS are needed by a student on an individual basis.

Outlines expectations for VR staff including:

- Collaboration in community events
- Attendance and consultation for development of IEPs for students with disabilities
- Outreach to employers to promote work based learning experiences

Reinforces OVR's responsibility to determine eligibility and develop Individual Plans for Employment (IPEs) according to federal timeframes and prior to graduation.

Allows provision of supported employment six months prior to exit date or earlier as needed and identified on an IPE.

Outlines ideal timeframes for opening case for students with disabilities - typically two years prior to exit, but can be opened earlier on a case by case basis.

Ensures OVR will determine needs and comparable benefits for assistive technology for post-secondary education and employment purposes for the student, prior to exit from high school.

Directs OVR to maintain documentation and satisfy activities as outlined in Section 511 for students and youth with disabilities.

## What does this mean for me as special educator?

LEAs will continue to provide IDEA transition services.

LEA will share OVR information with students and families/caregivers.

LEA can collaborate with OVR for community transition events (e.g., parent training, transition fair).

LEA will participate in the referral process for Pre-ETS.

LEA and OVR work together to determine which OVR Pre-ETS are needed on an individual basis, that supplement, not supplant IDEA services.

LEAs will send timely invitations to OVR counselors for participation in IEP meetings, when appropriate.

LEAs will not contract with entities providing subminimum wage (SMW).

LEAs understand that OVR has federal guidelines for establishing IPEs; and, they will help families navigate these guidelines.