

# Regional Community, Agency, and School Alliance (RCASA)

## Minutes- September 19, 2018

### 1. Welcome and Introductions

### 2. Presentation:

**ACCES-VR updates**

**Sarah Wolf- ACCES-VR**

**Office: 716-848-8054, [Sarah.Wolf@nysed.gov](mailto:Sarah.Wolf@nysed.gov)**

Sarah introduced new ACCES-VR counselors: Nicole Cousins will be covering Starpoint, Wilson, Newfane and Barker; Chad Nordin will be covering Niagara Falls, Niagara Wheatfield; Amanda Wylucki will be covering Lockport, Niagara Academy and N. Tonawanda. Phillip Ruska will be Lew-Port's ACCES-VR counselor.

Sarah spoke about ACCES-VR updates and services.

Sarah spoke about a new transition service, **Pre- Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)**, which will address career development needs of students with disabilities (ages 16-21). Pre-ETS will replace Youth Employment Services (YES), and this service will meet WIOA requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation. Through this service, ACCES-VR can provide services during the day during school hours, but they cannot duplicate services already provided. For example: An ACCES-VR vendor could come in during a student's study hall for work readiness skills such as instruction in self-advocacy for employment, empowerment, job and career exploration and work-based learning experiences.

School districts continue to be responsible for transition planning and educational services. Pre-ETS is recommended to begin with students at age 16.

**Coaching and Communication Supports for Post- Secondary Education and Coaching** is available to help new students enrolled in postsecondary education, training programs, or employed in competitive employment.

Some examples of this service may include campus orientations to assist students to navigate the campus when starting school. Assistance with the admission/financial aid process, support and coaching to address adequate coping strategies and problem solving skills. This support would be time limited.

ACCES-VR will also offer Work Based Learning supports at a limited basis. (Not 1:1 coaching). Supports would include where to punch in, who's the boss, educational coaching, help to navigate the workplace. This would be time limited support.

New grant will be coming out: Pre Employment in Transitional Services for Students with Disabilities. This would include services for students ages 14+.

**Request:** The goal for ACCES-VR participants is to “obtain a job”. This is a process that may take a while depending on how long a student is in school and possibly a student may go through graduate school. ACCES-VR will now be getting credit for skills progression. To assist with this, ACCES-VR is asking that school transcripts go to ACCES-VR counselors for 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders.

Sarah does not want this to add more to anyone's work load. She is hoping that the student can go to their guidance office and request a copy of their transcript for their ACCES-VR counselors. Sarah stated that school transcripts are not required for the application process.

**OPWDD**

**Stephanie McLean Beathley**

**Front Door Training Facilitator/ Transition Coordinator**

**Office: (716) 608-2732, [stephanie.e.mclean-beathley@opwdd.ny.gov](mailto:stephanie.e.mclean-beathley@opwdd.ny.gov)**

Stephanie gave updates on Care Coordination. As of July 1, 2018, Medicaid Service Coordinators are now Care Managers and Care Coordinators depending on which Care Coordination they work for. There are two Care Coordination organizations in this region- Person Centered Services and Prime Care.

- If someone is new to eligibility with OPWDD, they still need to authorize this service through the Front Door.
- There are now tiers that an individual is assigned: Tier 1 – which is for individuals with the least needs; up to tier 4- which is for individuals with more medical and chronic conditions.

The Front Door Session schedule is out for Oct through December. Stephanie suggests that people sign up as quickly as possible if they need a session.

**Kristin Garrasi is the Care Management Coordinator for OPWDD. She can be reached at 608-2733 or [Kristen.r.garrasi@opwdd.ny.gov](mailto:Kristen.r.garrasi@opwdd.ny.gov) .**

Stephanie said that Transition starts the first week of October with little changes to what is required.

For home schooled students- OPWDD is requiring quarterly reports and any other information such as services the student is receiving, such as PT. OPWDD is requiring this information now due to a significant number of home schooled students receiving transition services.

OPWDD will start taking information for transitioning students that are OPWDD eligible, even if they are not receiving services after graduating from high school.

OPWDD wants to track any OPWDD eligible students and their status, in case they would like services at a later time.

**Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS)**  
**Division Juvenile Justice & Opportunities for Youth (DJJOY)**  
**Patricia Anderson and Daniel Smith**  
**Daniel Smith Intake Specialist**  
**Office: 716-847-3316, [Daniel.Smith@ocfs.ny.gov](mailto:Daniel.Smith@ocfs.ny.gov)**

Daniel Smith spoke about the DJJOY department at the Office of Children and Family Services. This agency is responsible for supervision of court placed youth. They support and monitor facility-based operations and programs, detention and community based services.

OCFS is responsible for the supervision and management of twelve facilities, located from Rochester to Brooklyn. Their facilities are non-secure, limited secure and secure facilities.

OCFS placement process:

- Youth is arrested.
- Youth is adjudicated in court and placed with OCFS.
- Youth is placed in a residential facility.
- Youth receives trauma informed treatment, health services and educational and vocational services.
- After completion of program, youth returns to community with aftercare services.

OCFS intake process:

- Youth is placed in OCFS custody.
- An Intake Specialist is assigned.
- Conduct a parent/youth intake interview.
- Obtain legal documentation to case.
- Obtain consents and request education records.
- Complete screens and assessments.

Services in facility:

- Counseling- dialectical behavior therapy, sanctuary psycho-educational groups and substance abuse treatment.
- Education is provided according to NYS Education Department. CSE is available and IEP's can be put into place.
- TASC is available.
- Academic and vocational courses are offered so students can earn credits that can be applied toward their high school diploma when they return to home district. (School is offered all year and summer school). Classes are 12:1:1. Science lab minutes are recorded and are sent back to their school. Most youth need credit recovery when they return back to their school district.
- Health services available seven days per week. Also, dental is available.
- Recreation services- both indoor and outdoor.
- Religious services- Participation is voluntary.
- Vocational opportunities- vary by facility.
- Mental health services are combined through psychologists, social workers and psychiatrists.

OCFS Aftercare is provided by a youth counselor, who works with both youth and their family right from the start during the placement process. The counselor organizes family visits and assists with communication while youth are in placement.

They also assist with transitioning youth back into their communities.

Daniel mentioned that there are tight timelines to obtain information on youth once they are in detention. (There is a two week period that youth are in detention before they go to a residential placement). There are sometimes barriers to obtaining education records. Sometimes school districts do not have an identified point person who can provide information for multiple school placements.

OCFS is not required to have FERBA release to obtain student records. If a school district needs a FERBA signed, let OCFS know as soon as possible.

**Elizabeth Loughran-Amorese, Erie 1 BOCES RSE TASC,  
Office: 716-821-7518, [eloughran-amorese@e1b.org](mailto:eloughran-amorese@e1b.org)  
NYSED Updates:**

Liz discussed updates on Transition Services. She reported that there are unprecedented changes in all systems supporting transition planning. Liz recommended the importance of attending transition meetings.

Liz spoke about the use of transition assessments within school districts, which a student interview is a common at most schools. She mentioned that additional assessments may be needed.

It is important that transition assessments be kept in a certain place at each school district, so there is access to them if needed, especially during the summer.

Liz also reported that there is a shift on how IEP meetings will look like. IEP meetings will be trending to students participating during their IEP meetings. There are already school districts in this area that have student led IEP meetings. Liz stated that there is evidenced based practice that student led IEP's have more successful results.

School districts continue to improve on communicating graduating options with parents. Parent Network has great documents for parents to help explain graduation options.

Liz also discussed Superintendent's Determination as a graduation option. This is an option for students who have passed ELA and Math, and completed CDOS; can be eligible for Superintendent's Determination. (Parents need to request).

If a student exited school without a diploma or CDOS, and is not 21 years of age yet, the student can re-enroll. The student would need an IEP, have to be in coursework and receive services to be eligible for Superintendent's Determination.

Update on Indicator 13 protocols: NYS continues to work on alignment between federal and NYS requirements with Special Education and transition services.

Liz also reported that the Transition Resource Manual is online, and it is free. If you need an assessable format, just let her know.

There will also be a new training offered through RSE-TASC- Supporting Students with Severe Disabilities. (See attached schedule- RSE-TASC Transition Events 2018-19)

### **3. Updates:**

**a. Tonia Weishman- Parent Network** stated that there are many trainings offered for students that are graduating and their parents. Tonia also mentioned that there is an Eligibility Navigator available at Parent Network to assist parents with the OPWDD process. Families can call to start the process. (They need parent permission if an agency contacts Parent Network on the behalf of the family).

Parent Network has a guide up to date with OPWDD updates, in language that everyone can understand. They will email, text or mail any changes.

Tonia spoke about the Aquarium of Niagara First Friday, for families with autism and other special healthcare needs. This is offered at a special discounted rate. (See flyer attached).

**b. Julia Duerr- RSE-TASC** spoke about Career Exploration on Nov. 6, 2018. This is for students with a 504 plan or graduating with a CDOS. The Career Exploration will be located at the Orleans Niagara BOCES Conference Center in Sanborn. Students will be able to utilize their senses to explore careers with different occupations present. Email Julia if interested.

Julia also mentioned in March 28, 2019, they are planning a student mentoring day at Niagara Falls Memorial Center for career exploration. This will include jobs in parking, dietary, maintenance, and not just medical jobs.

**c.** A discussion was held regarding communication with Care Coordinators/Case Managers, since the transition into Care Coordination. Difficulty with obtaining Care Coordination contact information was discussed. Krista Macomber mentioned that questionnaires were sent out to families to request this information at BOCES. Stephanie McLean Beathley (OPWDD), mentioned that she will bring this concern to her workplace meeting. She will mention that a list of Care Coordinator supervisors at each location would be helpful also.

**Next Meeting: November 14, 2018**

**Topic: Exploring CDOS & Employer Expectations**