

Regional Community, Agency, and School Alliance (RCASA) Minutes- January 22, 2021

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. Presentations:

Liz Loughran-Amorese
Transition Specialist
West Regional Partnership Center
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Liz discussed the various aspects of the career development process when planning for career readiness for students with disabilities. She described this process which starts early for students and continues through graduation. This is a process that is evolving while we continue to learn about our students. As teachers and staff, we are gathering information as a discovery process, collecting this information to assist students to be more prepared for employment. Liz spoke about how students need exposure to different experiences at school to see what may spark their interest.

Liz spoke about the various stages of career development process:

1. **Career Awareness Stage** which is self-assessment that takes place in elementary/middle school. In this stage, students explore concepts of self which includes interests, strengths/abilities, motivations, values and goals. Students also explore concepts of work which includes the value of work, skills needed such as academic, personal and technology.
2. **Career Exploration Stage** which occurs in middle and high school. This stage involves aligning strengths and interests with career fields, searching occupations and their requirements, education levels, job outlook and salaries. Informational interviews, work environments and job shadowing would also be included.
3. **Career Development and Application stage** takes place during high school. Students will develop and apply skills in specific careers. Students will work on goal setting and involvement at internship and work experiences, career technical education, career academics and courses. Students will develop an educational plan to address skills needed and experiences for specific career goals.
4. **Career Preparation and Obtainment Stage** which takes place during high school and post-secondary. During this stage, students work on developing a plan of action. Students would participate in paid internships or apprenticeships, and research prospective employers. Students would continue working on job search skills, networking, resume writing, interviewing, and through accepting a job.

Liz spoke about how to select an assessment for career development. Liz mentioned this process could start by figuring out what you already know about your student through their IEP, previous assessments and experiences. What stage is your student in and what information do you want to capture? It is best to utilize an assessment that could get to that best source of information. Liz mentioned that best outcomes would be thorough utilizing strength based assessments.

Liz discussed working with students who may have unrealistic career goals and discussed dream adjusting verses dream crushing. In these situations, figure out why a student may have a specific goal. As an example, Liz spoke about one her students who wanted to be a doctor. After she explored further to why he had this goal, she found out that he wanted to wear a white lab coat and carry a briefcase to work. She was able to place her student in a work setting which was a good fit for him. He could also wear a lab coat and carry a briefcase to work.

Liz also spoke about a good resource, National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT). This resource provides a toolkit to implement transition services to improve post school employment for students with disabilities. For more information:

www.transitionta.org

Debbie Branch
Transition Specialist
Orleans Niagara BOCES
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Debbie coordinates the job coaching program for high school students at Orleans Niagara BOCES and component districts. She spoke today about the value and overview of what school job coaching can provide high school students. She discussed different aspects of what goes into setting up a productive school internship. This includes valuing your relationships with your employers, and having clear expectations between student, employer, school and family. Debbie discussed the job coaching program through O/N BOCES, and how their internships are treated as if they were actual jobs. This includes importance of attendance, students being prepared for work, day off requests, and uniforms.

She also discussed some additional points of supportive job coaching, such as utilizing your student's team at school. She mentioned the importance of proactive communication with teachers and school staff. Teachers and school staff can support in their lesson plans and classes what a student may be struggling with at their internship site.

Debbie also described fading in a workplace and best practices for your student to be working independently at the internship site.

Additionally, she discussed best practices in transition planning for students into appropriate adult services: ACCES-VR, ETP Program, or pre-vocational program. She spoke about the importance of accurately documenting your student's abilities in their exit summary. Reflecting realistic skill levels is important because this information will determine if your student will be approved into an OPWDD program.

Also, she discussed the benefit of students exiting school with an employer information sheet, resume, and to have discussion with your students regarding job references.

If your district is interested in more information regarding O/N BOCES job coaching program, contact Krista Macomber at 778-6469, or email: kmacomber@onboces.org. Or contact Debbie Branch at 731-6800 ext 3718.

Sarah Wolf

Senior VR Counselor Transition/Youth Services

ACCES-VR

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Sarah spoke today regarding PRE-ETS programs offered through ACCES-VR for ages 14- 21 for students with disabilities. Services PRE-ETS can provide:

1. Job exploration counseling which can discuss career options, learn about in demand jobs, complete interest inventories, conduct informational interviews.
2. Work-based learning students can participate in work site tours and job shadowing experiences at community work settings. Learn the importance of networking.
3. Students will understand post-secondary opportunities including college and university and other adult learning options.
4. Assistance with the college admission process, financial aid, and disability related services.
5. Provide work readiness training to understand appropriate work behaviors and demonstrate the ability to meet employer expectations. Participation in mock interviews, can complete both paper and electronic applications, develop resumes, demonstrate knowledge of impact of personal social media profile, and continue to explore networking.

If you have any questions regarding ACCES-VR or Pre-ETS program, contact Sarah Wolf.

Eileen Corcoran
Vocational Evaluator
Arc of Genesee Orleans
ecorcoran@arcgo.org

Eileen is a vocational evaluator from ARC of Genesee Orleans and she spoke about the process of what goes into a vocational evaluation through ACCES-VR.

The process starts with an ACCES-VR referral to the ARC. After receiving the referral, Eileen will meet student and family for an intake meeting. She can be flexible and meet for an intake session on Zoom. During the intake session, she will decide what kind of resources she will use for the student's assessment. They use a holistic approach during the evaluation process, and they can meet at school for the assessment or utilize employer sites out in the community.

Eileen gave an overview of types of evaluations they utilize through a vocational assessments:

- Standardized Testing- McCarron- Dial and WOWI World of Work Inventory, each assessments have different attributes.
- PMT Perceptual Motor Task which is an assessment of individual learning style designed to assess fundamental information-processing skills which are essential for human learning and performance.
- McCarron-Dial- which provides a great deal of data. Identify relative strengths and needs up to five areas of functioning:
 - Verbal-Cognitive Language, Learning Ability and Achievement
 - Sensory Perceiving and Experiencing the Environment
 - Motor Muscle Strength, Speed and Accuracy of Movement, Balance and Coordination
 - Emotional Response to interpersonal and environmental stress
 - Integration –Coping Adaptive Behavior
- World of Work Inventory (WOWI) which combines career interests, work styles and aptitudes and achievements in one assessment. Career recommendations link to O Net Online, My Next Move, and Career One Stop

Eileen also discussed community based assessments, which are “hands on” assessments they can provide.

- Situational Assessment
- Community Based Work Assessments
- Post-Secondary Counseling Students

- Job Exploration for Students
- Self-Advocacy for Employment
- Self-Advocacy for Students
- Work Readiness- 3 phases

Eileen spoke about other resources available: JAN Job Accommodation Network

<http://askjan.org/>

WINTAC- Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center: <http://www.wintac.org>

O*NET- Occupational Network Online: <https://www.onetonline.org/>

ARC of Genesee Orleans offers a full line of OPWDD programs as well. For more information, call 585-589-4456 or website: arcgo.org

Kelly Anstey- Associate Executive Director of Day Services

Melissa Cotter, Director of Vocational

Eileen Corcoran – Vocational Evaluator

Jerry Pasnik- Employment Specialist

Next meeting: March 26, 2021

Topic: Post-Secondary Options for SWD: Adult service providers and educational options.