



Transition Bulletin - Winter Issue

To Coordinate... To Enhance... To Serve...Through Communication

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MRS and MTSA Partner for the Second Year to Enhance Work-Based Learning

By Cynthia Wright, MRS Consultant

For the second consecutive year, Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) and the Michigan Transition Services Association (MTSA) have come together to create specific fund sources for work-based learning for students with disabilities in secondary education. This program, called the MRS and MTSA Collaborative Project, aims to establish and strengthen collaborative relationships between MTSA and MRS, increasing employment outcomes for MRS eligible Transition students.

The project aims to increase:

- ◆ Number of students being served using project funds
- ◆ Number of work-based learning opportunities
- ◆ Specific transition services that are provided
- ◆ Number of students competitively employed

This year, the MTSA board voted to increase the donation to \$25,000, allowing MRS to draw down \$67,593 in federal matching funds. Therefore, the total budget for the MTSA/MRS Collaborative Project is \$92,593. Because of the increased financial commitment from MTSA, the number of projects has increased from two last year to three this year. Each project will be funded at **\$30,864.33**.

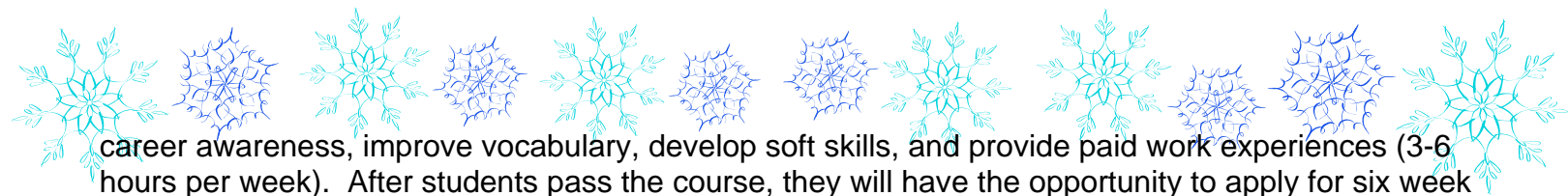
Last year's projects are still being implemented in the Kent ISD/Grand Rapids District Office and the Hillsdale ISD/Ann Arbor District Office. The projects will continue through the remainder of this year and the employment outcomes are being tracked closely.

This year, eight teams submitted proposals from all around the state. The proposals were reviewed and ranked by a Neutral Review Team including four individuals, two with an educational perspective and two with a vocational rehabilitation perspective. After the projects were ranked, MRS conducted a technical review of the proposals. The three top ranked proposals passed the technical review with some minor tweaking resulting in three work-based learning programs that will begin implementation this January 2014. Following is a brief description of the projects that will be funded:

Washtenaw ISD/MRS Ann Arbor District Office

This project focuses on increasing the likelihood of success in school and in the world of work in three high schools in Washtenaw County among low income and minority special education students. The high schools where the program will be implemented are Ypsilanti Community High School (Ypsilanti Community Schools), Roberto Clemente High School (Ann Arbor Public Schools) and Ann Arbor Technological High School (Ann Arbor Public Schools).

First of all, students will participate in a course that qualifies as an elective according to Michigan Merit Curriculum standards. This course will increase student engagement and resiliency, increase



career awareness, improve vocabulary, develop soft skills, and provide paid work experiences (3-6 hours per week). After students pass the course, they will have the opportunity to apply for six week paid internships in the summer.

In addition to the course and internships, students will be provided wrap around services and mentoring to diminish barriers, enhance skill development, and increase family communication. This mentoring will be provided by college students from Eastern Michigan University. Students that have successfully gone through the class and internship may have the opportunity to increase their leadership skills by serving as project mentors to new students to the program.

Oakland ISD/MRS Oakland District Office (MERIT)

Madison Employment Readiness & Independence Training (MERIT) is a comprehensive school-to-work transition program that will be implemented at Madison High School in Madison Heights. This school was selected because there are limited resources to provide work-based learning opportunities for students. In this school, 11.2% of the students have a disability and 92% of the school population is economically disadvantaged.

MERIT starts with a classroom component including personal exploration, career exploration, soft skills training, team building activities, job seeking skills training, self-advocacy, job retention skills, and budgeting training.

A “hands-on” community-based assessment will be provided to evaluate students at real work sites. An individually selected internship will be provided that matches the student’s areas of interest, and encourages students to begin considering life from a “world of work” perspective. Students will participate in different jobs at each site.

Students will utilize tablet computers to maximize communication with parents, compel interest in the program, and assist with retention and supervision via “virtual job coaching”. In the summer, students will participate in paid four-week internships for 20-hours per week.

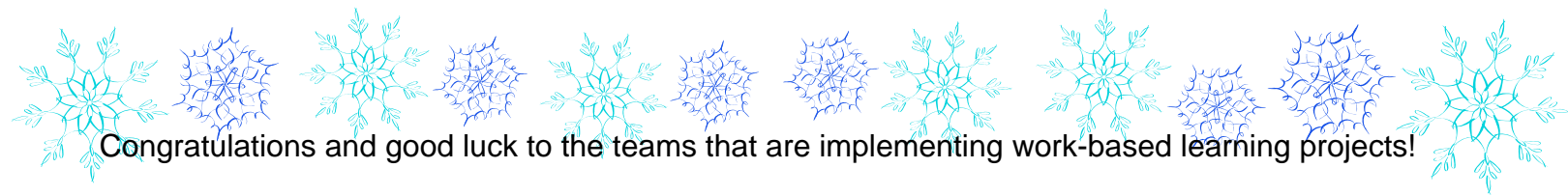
After the class, community-based assessment and internship, students that are ready for competitive employment may be placed on a job. Job retention services will be provided for students that obtain employment.

COOR (Roscommon) ISD/MRS Northern District Office

This project targets Roscommon High School, Houghton Lake High School and Ogemaw Heights High School, which are located in the two counties in Michigan with the highest unemployment rate. As a result, new relationships with the business community need to be developed to provide students with work experience and career opportunities.

This project will use the funds to increase capacity of services available to students to reach into the business community to create student opportunities for career exploration, work experience and the obtainment of employment. Students will select three career areas of interest and will participate in behind-the-scenes work site tours based on these preferences. Students will then participate in two six-week work experiences. With help from the Rotary Club, an after school job club will be established to help students enhance soft-skills, create resumes, practice interviewing, identify job leads and obtain employment.

All three projects will be presented at the Michigan Transition Services Association Transition Conference in Frankenmuth, Michigan, between March 12 -14 and at the MRS Summer Transition Training, the date of which is to be determined.



MRS Helps Students at a Detroit School Cope with Winter Weather

By Thelma Clark, Site Manager, Detroit Renaissance District-Grand River Office

It was a cold December and children at a Detroit school are warmer thanks to the generosity of the DHS MRS Detroit Renaissance District-Grand River office. Dr. Thelma Staley Clark, Site Manager of the office, and her staff donated hats, gloves and coats to the Thomas A. Edison Elementary School next to their office.

Principal Marcus Davenport and Assistant Principal Curtis Dunlap expressed gratitude for the donations. "This is truly a blessing. The coats, gloves and hats are high-quality items. A lot of thought went into selecting the items and this speaks volume to the heart and integrity of Michigan Rehabilitation Services," Davenport said.



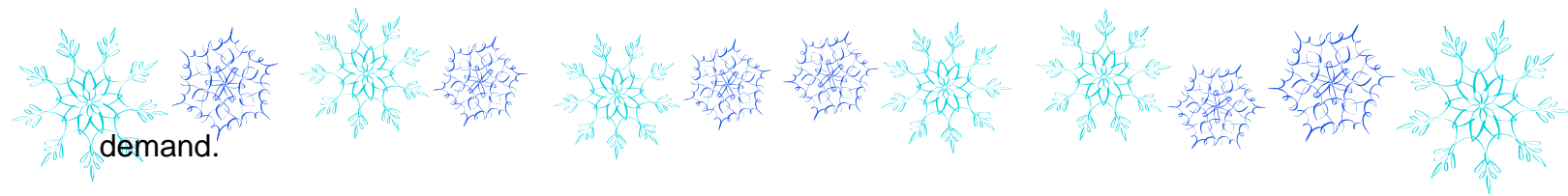
Detroit Renaissance District-Grand River office employees from left to right are Deborah Bradley, Donna Watkins, Linda Williams, Cynthia Walker, Augustine Dupas, Lisa Davis, Alvin Brewer, Karla McDonald, Ethel Thomas, Annie Walls, Andre Nevils, Laurretta Ferguson, Dr. Thelma Staley Clark.

MCTI Cabinetmaking/Millwork Program – One of the Most Advanced in the Nation

By Sue Zwyghuizen, Vocational Rehabilitation Manager at MCTI

Michigan Career and Technical Institute (MCTI) Cabinetmaking/Millwork Program recently partnered with major woodworking equipment manufacturers and software providers to become the Midwest Advanced Woodworking Technology Center, the first of three in the United States. MCTI's program provides the only industrial woodworking training in Michigan and is considered the most technically advanced in the nation. The program was also the first site in Michigan certifying Woodworking National Skill Standards.

Michigan has one of the largest woodworking economies in the country with five of the top ten firms in the nation based in the state. Over 6% of all manufacturing jobs in Michigan are woodworking-related. As technology has advanced, the demand for highly qualified workers has increased in



Workers with woodworking skills will have employment opportunities in Michigan, especially west Michigan. The United States Department of Labor projects excellent opportunities for highly skilled woodworkers over the next five years, especially those with technical skills and computer numeric control (CNC) knowledge. Industry estimates show 70% of the current workforce is over 50 years old and as these workers age and retire, the industry will need new highly skilled workers. Also, the trade is gender neutral with an estimated 60% of the workforce being women. Historically, enrollment in the program at MCTI has been predominantly male; however, the vast majority of the females graduating from the program have gone off to good careers in the trade.

Students can enroll in the Cabinet/Millwork program every ten weeks. The program offers multiple certificate options, flexibility and marketability. Cabinetmaking/Millwork students receive extensive training in computer aided design/computer aided machining (CAD/CAM) and CNC operation. These skills are in high demand and are expected to increase even more in the future.

The average entry level salary for MCTI Cabinetmaking/Millwork graduates for the past five years is \$10.57 per hour. Placement of graduates is consistently near 90%. The placement rate for graduates in 2012 – 2013 was 100%. This is an excellent opportunity for MRS customers who are interested in the woodworking trade!

MCTI is Accepting Referrals to the Summer PERT Program

By Sue Zwyghuizen, Vocational Rehabilitation Manager at MCTI

The Postsecondary Education Rehabilitation and Transition (PERT) Program is a one week comprehensive assessment in a semi-structured residential environment at MCTI on Pine Lake in Plainwell, Michigan. The campus of MCTI offers a variety of amenities, all encompassed in one building for easy accessibility. Students reside in dormitories while participating in the program.

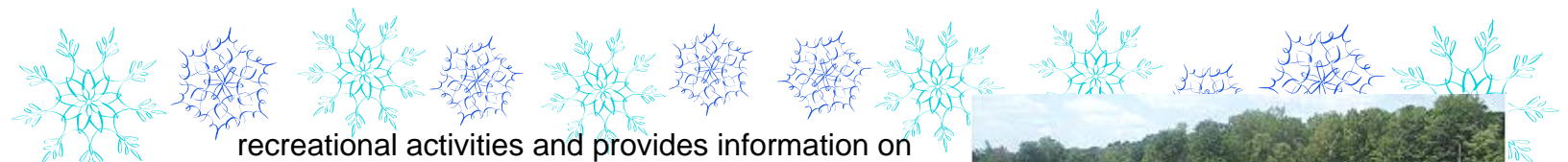
The program assists students to transition successfully from high school to post-secondary options by helping them answer these questions:

- ◆ What are my abilities and aptitudes?
- ◆ What are my interests and what types of jobs might I enjoy doing?
- ◆ What skills do I need to become employed?
- ◆ What skills do I need to concentrate on improving during my Senior year?
- ◆ What do I need to learn to live on my own?



The comprehensive assessment includes the following components:

- ◆ **Vocational Assessment** allowing students to explore career areas of interest through “hands-on” situational/work assessments, aptitude testing, learning style evaluations, and WorkKeys.
- ◆ **Independent Living Skills Assessment** evaluating student’s current knowledge and skills for living independently.
- ◆ **Residential/Leisure Skills Assessment** promoting student exploration of residential and



recreational activities and provides information on leisure and social skills development through participation in structured activities and dormitory supported living.

PERT specifics:

- ◆ Students should be at least age 16 (Juniors going to be Seniors or just graduated)
- ◆ Age 20 years and younger (21 and over can be referred to the Career Assessment Services (CAS))
- ◆ Open with MRS
- ◆ Cost is \$500 per student
- ◆ Two Sessions will be offered: Weeks of July 20 and July 27
- ◆ Registration will be on Sunday and the program ends on Friday @ noon



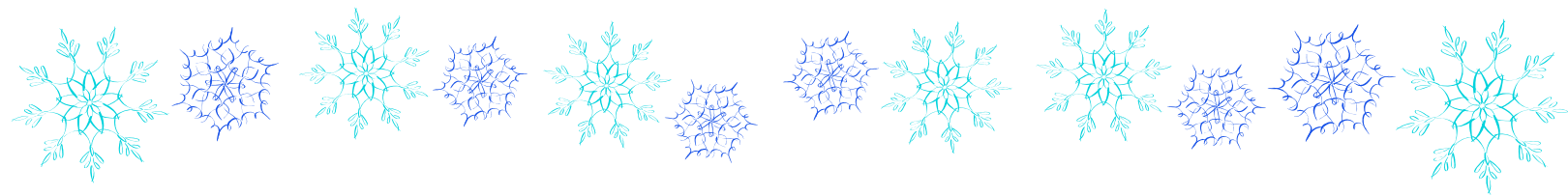
Required documentation:

- ◆ Complete a Service Authorization
- ◆ Cover Memo
- ◆ Student Referral Form
- ◆ Participant Application
- ◆ General Medical Form
- ◆ Health History Form
- ◆ Updated Clinical Psychological Evaluation is available



All forms are available on E-Learn (MRS Programs/MCTI/PERT)! To access PERT hard copy brochures please contact Terry Haughn @ MCTI.

Questions??? Call MCTI Admissions @ 269-664-9587 or 269-664-9223 if you have any questions.



SAVE THE DATE

MTSA Transition Conference

Bavarian Inn

1 Covered Bridge Lane

Frankenmuth, MI 48734

Wednesday-Friday, March 12-14, 2014

PLEASE FORWARD OR PRINT TRANSITION BULLETIN

E-mail your contributions or ideas and subscription requests for "Transition Bulletin" to Cynthia Wright wrightc1@michigan.gov or call 517-241-3957

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