



Transition Bulletin - Spring Issue

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

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Michigan Plans for a Collaborative Spring Transition Institute

Michigan Transition Outcomes Project (MI-TOP), Career and Technical Education (CTE), the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons (BSBP), and Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) are working together to create the **MI-TOP Spring Transition Institute – *Strengthening Interagency Collaboration and Systems Alignment.***

The two day Institute will take place on June 16 – 17, 2015 at the Crowne Plaza, 925 South Creyts Road, Lansing, MI 48917.

The outcome for the Institute is that participants will be able to improve interagency transition supports across special education, career and technical education, and vocational rehabilitation through an enhanced understanding of:

1. Special education, career and technical education, and vocational rehabilitation laws that impact services and collaboration across agencies;
2. Each other’s systems (i.e., entrance requirements, planning processes, continuum of placement options, services, roles); and
3. Practices for strengthening interagency collaboration and systems alignment so that students can maximize options to improve employment outcomes.

For MRS staff, this institute is taking the place of the MRS Summer Transition Training that in the past has been offered in August. For this year, all MRS resources that were allocated toward the MRS Summer Transition Training have been redirected toward the provision of the MI-TOP Spring Transition Institute.

This training opportunity is timely given the passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) that was passed last summer. WIOA increases the role of vocational rehabilitation in the Transition of Students with Disabilities from secondary education into competitive integrated employment and promotes collaboration and alignment of vocational rehabilitation, education, and all the workforce programs.

David Hoff, Program Director, Institute for Community Inclusion, School for Global Inclusion and Social Development, from UMass Boston will present on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Jennifer Segal, Esquire, Brustein & Manasevit, PLLC, from Washington, D.C. will present on Interagency Intersections across Federal Requirements.

MRS staff can register for the Institute by contacting Cynthia Wright at wrightc1@michigan.gov.

MCTI Adds OSHA Certification Program for Students

By Sue Zwylghuizen, Vocational Rehabilitation Manager at MCTI

Last fall, Michigan Career and Technical Institute (MCTI) started a pilot program that students can participate in during the Step Up remediation program that allows students to gain an OSHA 10 General Industry or Construction Industry Certifications while improving their reading



skills. This relevant online training program provides an opportunity for entry level workers to learn recognition, avoidance, abatement, and prevention of safety and health hazards in workplaces in general or construction industry.



Students who complete this program are not only more knowledgeable about workplace hazards, their rights, and employer responsibilities, but also have an opportunity to develop teamwork, problem-solving, and study and test taking skills. This results in students that are well-rounded and safe before they enter training programs at MCTI and ultimately the workforce. All program related fees are covered by MCTI.

Here are the outcomes so far:

- 32 Step Up students have enrolled in the OSHA 10 General Industry or Construction Industry training
- 29 students earned the certification
- Average hours to complete: 14 hours
- Average final test score: 83%
- 2 of the students left MCTI after Step-up and 37 continued on in an MCTI training program

All of the students who completed the training will have the certification for their resume--no matter when they leave MCTI

One more reason to send someone to MCTI for vocational training! Thanks for your support!

Serving on the MTSA Board: My Experience from a Vocational Rehabilitation Perspective

By Jennifer Hirst, MRS Rehabilitation Counselor

Hello, my name is Jennifer Hirst. I have been with Michigan Rehabilitation Services for six years with a primary caseload of Transition students in Calhoun County out of the Southwest MRS District. Working with young adults with barriers and assisting them in their transition to become successful independent adults is a joy!



After I attended the MTSA conference in Frankenmuth for four years, I was approached by a Transition Coordinator in my district who was serving on the Michigan Transition Services Association (MTSA) Board asked me to run for a board position. Having a partnership with my Intermediate School District (ISD), and trusting the move, I gracefully agreed to run for the secretary position. During the 2014 MTSA Conference I was elected to serve a two year term.

Let me tell you, it is exciting and nerve wracking at the same time! I feel pretty comfortable with directing and assisting students with disabilities. As for being on a board, having secretarial duties, and meeting other people across the state; well, that has been an eye opener! I am starting my second year armed with experience and knowledge, hoping it will go a little smoother than the first.



In my tenure as Board Secretary, I have learned that MTSA is not just about the annual conference; it is about making sure students' Transition services needs are being met across the state. MTSA meets monthly to discuss a number of Transition needs and services. Serving on the board has enhanced my perspective in the Transition world. It is rewarding to come together and discuss the main goal - students. There are definitely a lot of new acronyms to

learn! A great deal of planning, worthwhile conversations, and brainstorming occurs monthly at the table with all parties involved. We use the time to prepare for the annual conference in March, plan regional meetings, address concerns, and collaborate with other agencies and liaisons that bring information and increase awareness about specific Transition focus areas. Being the secretary, I am responsible for gathering notes and keeping minutes on the topics discussed during the meetings. Being organized and having your head in the game is a must!



As Vocational Counselors, we assess and identify barriers with the end result being employment. Being involved in MTSA has also opened my eyes regarding how the educational system works for students. My hope is that the input of a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor adds a deepened collaborative awareness to the group. MTSA and MRS work really hard at making a collaborative effort and partnership to assist students with disabilities to achieve their post-secondary goals. Ideally, this impact is realized throughout the state.

Each collaborator brings with them a unique perspective; rehab-minded goals and objectives, education-minded goals and objectives, and the students...well, they just want to get through school. It is worth every second of effort to come together with the end result in mind; make sure that statewide we are braiding services; play to one another's strengths; and ensure the best possible outcomes for our customers!

Michigan Rehabilitation Services Congratulates Communities that are Starting New Project SEARCH Sites

Utilizing funding from the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant, Project SEARCH came to Michigan seven years ago to share the model and the employment success that was achieved for students with the most significant disabilities. Many meetings followed, attended by highly motivated individuals from across the state with the goal to start up sites. Erin Reihle and Susie Rutkowski came to Michigan and encouraged and supported the grass root efforts that were occurring.

The first Project SEARCH site in Michigan was in Grand Rapids, at the Fifth/Third Bank. Several others followed and currently there are eleven sites including:

Kent County

- ◆ Host Businesses: Fifth/Third Bank and Spectrum Health System
- ◆ Partners: MRS Grand Rapids District Office, Grand Rapids Public Schools, and Hope Network

Montcalm County

- ◆ Host Business: Spectrum Health System
- ◆ Partners: MRS West Central District Office, Montcalm ISD, and Mid-Michigan Industries

Bay/Arenac Counties

- ◆ Host Business: Delta College
- ◆ Partners: Bay/Arenac ISD, Do-All Industries, CMH, and MRS

Oakland County

- ◆ Host Businesses: Beaumont Health System, Troy Campus, and Henry Ford West Bloomfield Hospital
- ◆ Partners: MRS Oakland District Office, Troy School District, West Bloomfield School District, and New Horizons





Wayne County:

- ◆ Host Businesses: Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan and DTE Energy
- ◆ Partners: MRS Detroit Renaissance District Office, Detroit Public Schools, ConsumerLink, Bureau of Services for Blind Persons, Services to Enhance Potential, The Guidance Center, Jewish Vocational Services, Judson Center, and Business Leadership Network of Michigan

Kalamazoo County

- ◆ Host Business: Bronson Methodist Hospital
- ◆ Partners: MRS Kalamazoo District Office, Kalamazoo Regional Education Service Agency (RESA), Kalamazoo Community Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, Bureau of Services for Blind Persons, and Disability Network Southwest Michigan

Lenawee County

- ◆ Host Business: Promedica Health System
- ◆ Partners: Ann Arbor District Office, Lenawee ISD, CMH, and Goodwill

Monroe County

- ◆ Host Business: Mercy Memorial Hospital System
- ◆ Partners: MRS Monroe Office, Monroe ISD, Monroe County Mental Health Authority, and Goodwill Industries

For any reader needing a quick Project SEARCH 101, the model was developed at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. In 1996, when Erin Riehle was Director of Cincinnati Children's Emergency Department, Erin felt that, because the hospital served individuals with developmental disabilities, it made sense that they should commit to hiring people in this group so that the workforce reflected the customers that the hospital served. She wondered if it would be possible to train people with developmental disabilities to fill some of the high-turnover, entry level positions in her department, which involved complex and systematic tasks such as stocking supply cabinets. As a starting point, Erin presented her ideas to Susie Rutkowski, who at the time was the special education director at Great Oaks Career Campuses. Erin and Susie formed a partnership that was instantaneous and together they launched Project SEARCH. Susie now works directly for Project SEARCH.

Project SEARCH has grown from one original program site at Cincinnati Children's Hospital to over 350 sites across 46 states and four countries. Project SEARCH's primary objective is to secure competitive employment for people with disabilities.

Project SEARCH is driven by collaborations with the following community partners:

- ◆ Host Business
- ◆ Local School District(s) and/or Educational Organization
- ◆ Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities - Vocational Rehabilitation
- ◆ Community Rehabilitation Partner
- ◆ Long-Term Support Agency/County Board of Developmental Disabilities
- ◆ Families

In 2013, the State of Michigan Mental Health and Wellness Commission published a report that recommended that funding be allocated to MRS to expand Project SEARCH sites in



Michigan. Specifically the report states:

Increase the number of Project SEARCH sites across Michigan. Project SEARCH places young adults with a variety of developmental disabilities as interns in local businesses during their last year of school eligibility. Students spend a minimum of six hours per day on-site at the local business for the entire academic year. Project SEARCH sets a goal for all program sites to strive for 60 percent to 100 percent employment outcomes within their respective program's school calendar year. Increasing the number of Project SEARCH sites across Michigan will provide a greater number of individuals with employment opportunities which can lead to more financial and personal independence, less reliance on safety net programs, and a higher quality of life for our citizens.

As a result of these funds, two communities have developed new Project SEARCH programs to launch this academic year beginning in August 2015. These new sites include:

Calhoun County

- ◆ Business: Duncan Aviation

- ◆ Partners: MRS Battle Creek Office, Calhoun ISD, and Summit Pointe Community Mental

Wayne County

- ◆ Business: DTE Energy

- ◆ Partners: MRS Detroit Renaissance District Office, Detroit Public Schools, ConsumerLink, Bureau of Services for Blind Persons, Services to Enhance Potential, The Guidance Center, Jewish Vocational Services, Judson Center, and Business Leadership Network of Michigan

MRS wishes to express gratitude to Cathy Schmidt, our Michigan Project SEARCH Statewide Coordinator and Special Education Transition Consultant in Oakland County, Susie Rutkowski and Erin Reihle. Thank you so much for all of your support. MRS would also like to extend appreciation to all of the existing sites for their hard work, perseverance and commitment to the Project SEARCH model, as well as congratulate new sites for pulling together in your community to launch new Project SEARCH programs.





PLEASE FORWARD OR PRINT TRANSITION BULLETIN

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