

Transition Bulletin – Summer Issue To Coordinate... To Enhance... To Serve... Through Communication

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Michigan Signs ‘Super’ MOU to Support Transition to Competitive Integrated Employment

On June 21, 2016, representatives from six state agencies and the Lt. Governor of Michigan, Brian Calley, gathered in Flint, Michigan to sign a ‘Super’ MOU, which involved Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (signatories included the Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Administration, and Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS), the Workforce Development Agency, the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs on behalf of the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons. Michigan Department of Education and, the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council.

The framework was laid for the memorandum over two years of Office of Disability Employment Policy/ Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program (ODEP/EFSLMP) work. In year one, Subject Matter Expert David Hoff provided a thorough review of all existing memorandums between the various agencies, and identified what was needed to bring the existing memorandums into compliance with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Year one also brought the partners together, where, over time, they laid a foundation of teamwork and trust. In year two, Subject Matter Expert Richard Luecking facilitated the drafting of the super MOU, in a way that would meet the needs of the various agencies, and most importantly, the requirements of WIOA. Core team members met twice a month for the past 18 months, which laid the foundation for the MOU. The partners made a commitment to the work of the grant and are regular and active participants.

Dr. Yasmina Bouraoui, Michigan State Team lead from the Developmental Disabilities Council, stated that, “The core team members were committed to getting the MOU signed, and had the influence and trust of their superiors.” She went on to say, “The ODEP/EFSLMP project has elevated the state team to a place of visibility and credibility within the various state systems. The memorandum is designed to further increase the number of students and youth with disabilities transitioning from school to employment, as well as post-secondary education intended to lead to employment. The MOU is the frame work for the work that will occur in local communities.”

The representatives were gathered as part of Lt. Gov. Brian Calley and Supreme Court Justice Richard Bernstein's "Hidden Talent" workshop in Flint as part of their efforts to highlight the need to hire people with disabilities. The workshop provided employers the opportunity to learn from businesses already hiring individuals with disabilities, learn about available resources as well as strategies for accommodations and inclusion in the workplace.



DarKen Photography Photograph Pictured (Left to Right):

Stephanie Comai, Michigan Talent and Economic Development; Lisa Kisiel, Bureau of Services for Blind Persons; Suzanne Howell, Michigan Rehabilitation Services; Shelly Edgerton, Michigan Department Licensing and Regulatory Affairs; Lieutenant Governor Brian Calley; Vendella M. Collins, Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council; Lynda Zeller, Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities Administration; and Jane Reagan, Michigan Department of Education.

The Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act Regulations are Released

Nearly two years in the making, the final regulations of the landmark Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA) are now available and can be viewed at: [WIOA Final Regulations](#)

Improvements and expansion in vocational rehabilitation services to Students with Disabilities are a major focus of the act and will result in earlier involvement with youth, increased numbers of students serviced, increased collaboration with education, set aside funds for Supported Employment for youth, and the provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services.

Pre-Employment Transition Services include:

- (1) Job exploration counseling;
- (2) Work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school or after school opportunities, or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships), that is provided in an integrate environment to the maximum extent possible;
- (3) Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;
- (4) Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living; and
- (5) Instruction in self-advocacy, which may include peer mentoring.

After considering many comments regarding the provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services and the 15% requirement of the total federal vocational rehabilitation allotment for these services, WIOA expanded the population of individuals to receive these services to include not only Students with Disabilities in secondary education, but also some students with disabilities in postsecondary education. This change allows to students with disabilities in postsecondary education to benefit from developmental opportunities that promote the attainment of competitive integrated employment and it is felt that the expansion to this population meets the intent of the act.

MRS has taken many steps to align with the new law and will now take additional steps to comply with the final regulations. This is a period of unprecedented change and excitement in how vocational rehabilitation services are provided to young people.

Project SEARCH Training - Teaching and Coaching for Success

On June 29 and 30 at the Midland Educational Service Agency, Susie Rutkowski from Project SEARCH presented robust training called, "Teaching and Coaching for Success" to Project SEARCH teams from across Michigan.

Communities that were represented have established Project SEARCH programs or are planning to launch this fall or next. Schools present included Montcalm Intermediate School District, Ingham Intermediate School District, Genesee Intermediate School District, Ottawa Area Intermediate School District, Berrien Regional Educational Service Agency, Jackson County Intermediate School District, Midland County Education Services Agency, and Grand Blanc High School. Host businesses participated in the training from Beaumont Hospital, Delta College, Dow and Lakeland Health. Community Rehabilitation Organizations also attended the training from Peckham Vocational Industries, Goodwill, and Hope Network. Both vocational rehabilitation agencies were represented from Michigan Rehabilitation Services and the Bureau of Services for Blind Persons as well as a representative from Riverwood Community Mental Health.

Susie Rutkowski challenged the teams to have high expectations and create high level training, internships, skill acquisition and jobs. Project SEARCH utilizes a Value Driven Approach to employment which focuses on skills versus deficits.

Strategies for developing quality internships to achieve competitive integrated employment were shared including the importance of choosing internships that develop core skills as well as utilizing Vocational Fit Assessment and an Industry Training Matrix.

Systematic instruction and other teaching methods were shared including teaching to an individual's learning style. Creative strategies such as video

observation and a 360 degree evaluation were conveyed. Another area of discussion was about teaching abstract concepts to students as many student with disabilities struggle in this area.

Susie also talked with the teams about the ever important process of fading from intensive job coaching, to less intensive, more check-in coaching.

As a result of the Mental Health and Wellness Report recommending Project SEARCH expansion; Susie's efforts training and supporting teams; and the hard work of local communities, four new Project SEARCH sites will launch this fall including Ottawa County at Spectrum Health in Zeeland, Midland County at Dow, Ingham County at Michigan State University and Berrien County at Lakeland Health bringing the total number of Project SEARCH programs in Michigan to seventeen.



Michigan Career and Technical Institute Offers Training for School Partners

Michigan Career and Technical Institute (MCTI) has completed the 6th session of full-day training for school partners across the State of Michigan! Over 350 school personnel from every ISD have visited the MCTI campus, toured the facilities, received information from admissions, learned about PERT/Career Assessment and Step-up, visited in all the trade programs, and listened and learned from student panels.

Approximately 75% of education staff had never visited MCTI before the training but have been making student referrals to MRS hoping that those student will attend MCTI. The purpose of the training was to provide an informational opportunity for teachers so that they are better informed about the MCTI environment and programs when they are considering students that would thrive in the MCTI program.

The training has been very successful in meeting the goal. MCTI staff feel confident that many more partners now understand what MCTI offers and what students are the best fit for MCTI programs.

Because of the success of last year's training, MCTI has scheduled four training days during the 2016-17 school year for MRS School Partners. The day will be spent getting basic information from Admissions and then spending time in all the trades talking to the instructors, to get first-hand information on what is being taught and what employment outcomes are being targeted. This date is not a tour for prospective students, we have other dates available for those tours.

MRS partners that can benefit from the training:

- Special Ed teachers
- Alternative Ed teachers
- Transition Coordinators
- Vocational Tech staff
- School Administrators
- Social Workers
- Guidance Counselors
- Any other professional personnel who are interested in MCTI

Click on the dates to sign up:

[Thursday, October 6, 2016 from 9:00 am-3:00 pm](#)

[Thursday, December 1, 2016 from 9:00 am-3:00 pm](#)

[Thursday, March 23, 2017 from 9:00 am-3:00 pm](#)

[Thursday, May 11, 2017 from 9:00 am-3:00 pm](#)

MRS Oakland District Office is Honored

The Partnerships for Education Council hosted a celebration breakfast on Wednesday, May 18, to honor several exemplary community partnerships. The Oakland County District of Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) was selected from a nomination process at Southfield public schools to receive the Outstanding Large Business Partner Award for 2016.

The MRS Oakland District, New Horizons and Southfield Schools has partnered together for 10 years, (having an ICTA agreement for many of those years) to provide transition services for high school students with disabilities. In addition to learning about job seeking skills, soft skills and team building, the students also learn life skills including self-advocacy, self-empowerment and gain self-confidence as they move on to employment and in many instances, postsecondary education and training.

Adriza Caesar, who has participated on the team for the last 10 years reports that approximately 300 students have participated in the transition program, which boasts an impressive employment success rate of 85%.

Way to go Adriza and Venita!

Pictured here Adriza Caesar, MRS Counselor and Venita King, MRS District Manager



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Please forward or print the Transition Bulletin

Email your contributions, ideas, or subscription requests for the Transition Bulletin to Cynthia Wright at wrightc1@michigan.gov or call 517-241-3957.

