

TRANSITION BULLETIN - WINTER ISSUE

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

MRS and MTSA Collaborative Projects – Year 4

The MRS/MTSA Collaborative is entering into the fourth year of continuation. Since conception, this innovative approach has resulted in a fund source for fifteen Pre-Employment Transition Projects (PETS). Michigan PETS Students are those with Disabilities, age 14-26, and enrolled in secondary education prior to school exit.

This year the MTSA board approved a very generous donation to MRS. After MRS was able to draw down the federal matching funds, there was enough funding for five new Pre-Employment Transition Services, one in each of the MTSA Regions. Each project was allowed a maximum of \$30,000 to implement their concept.

This year a total of seven proposals were submitted for the five awards. Region 1 did not submit a proposal, region 2 had two competing projects, region 3 had four submissions, region 4 did not submit a proposal, and region 5 had one proposal. Because two regions did not submit proposals, two wild card proposal were allowed. The neutral view team collectively agreed that the quality of the proposals was extremely high, making the ranking of these proposals very challenging this year. After much discussion, the following communities received funds to implement their PETS projects:

Region 2 - Ingham ISD and Lansing District MRS Office:

Need:

Ingham County has established a summer paid classroom and work-based learning credit-recovery experience for ten students in their junior year; it is called Be Your Own CEO. Although the program enjoyed some success, two service gaps have been identified. There was no in-depth discussion about nonacademic (hands-on) post-secondary training opportunities that could lead toward higher paying jobs for the students. The challenge was the opportunity for a second work experience that would serve to strengthen students' vocational development and intentional choices.

Work-Based Learning Project Description:

This project will build on Be Your Own CEO 1 and provide the missing components. Students will learn about opportunities and resources for postsecondary training options. They will also receive a second work-based learning experience reinforcing the tenants of intentional transition and informed choice. Students will participate in a focused review of their career assessments, gain information about postsecondary education, gain an additional work-based learning experience, and participate in a review of employer expectations/job search and self-advocacy. Topics to be covered include academic training vs. vocational training, financial aid, and transition needs from high school to post-secondary.

Goals:

- 10 students served
- Job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on opportunities for post secondary education programs, workplace readiness training and instruction on self-advocacy will be provided
- 7 students will achieve competitive employment

Region 3 - Allegan AESA and MRS West Central District Office**Need:**

Students with IEPs do not share the same success in CTE programs as their nondisabled peers. A high contributor to lack of success is when students' skills and abilities do not align with the program. Student enrollment and selection of CTE programs must comply with ADA, IDEA and section 504 of the rehabilitation act. CTE programs must maintain a high level of performance to prepare students for employment in high skill, high demand occupations. An assessment component that aligns students' skills and abilities with CTE programs will help to increase the success of students.

Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) Program Description:

Students that are on track to participate in CTE programming during their junior and senior year will participate in a CTE ready vocational assessment to determine skills, abilities, vocational attitudes, and career interests at least one year prior to CTE enrollment. In addition, students will participate in a Career Exploration Workshop where students will use the results of their interest testing to access the Occupational Network (ONET) website. This will allow them opportunities for occupational exploration, job matching, and give them access to the Michigan Department of Labor website to identify high growth jobs in individual economic forecast regions.

Goals:

- 32 students will be served
- Vocational Assessment, Vocational Counseling and Guidance will be provided.
- 32 students will become competitively employed

Region 3 - Hillsdale ISD and MRS Ann Arbor District Office**Need:**

Hillsdale County does not currently offer any pre-employment skills training to students with disabilities. Special Education students are less likely than their peers to complete CTE programs. Providing career prep intervention, prior to students beginning CTE programs in 11th grade may help to close this gap.

Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) Program Description:

This project will provide 16 students with a ½ day Vocational Skills Course which will be offered in conjunction with the Hillsdale Area Career Center and Jackson College.

Key elements of the program include individualized employability instruction, quality job applications, interview skills, resume development, grooming and hygiene instruction, and benefits counseling. Students rotate between Jackson community college and the Career Center where they will learn about 2-3 programs of the student's choice and learn the program requirements and the basic skills needed for success. The "Skills to Pay the Bills" and the "Bring You're A Game to Work" curriculums will be taught. After completing a vocational assessment, students will participate in 3 job shadows. This class is offered for elective credit if the local school allows.

Goals:

- 16 students will be served
- Assessment, Job Readiness, Job Search Assistance, Transportation Services and Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling and Guidance.
- 10 students will become competitively employed

Region 3 - Newago RESA and MRS West Central District Office**Need:**

Newaygo County typically ranks around 7th out of over 50 ISDs/RESAs regarding the rate of poverty as defined by students receiving free or reduced lunch. This means there are only 6 ISDs/RESAs across the state with higher poverty rates than Newaygo County. One of the many factors that contribute to this high rate of poverty is lack of post-secondary education/training opportunities and employment available; this is partially due to the fact that Newaygo County is mostly rural.

Pre-Employment Transition Services (PETS) Project Description:

The project will provide intensive, collaborative, highly coordinated PETS to five juniors who are at risk of not obtaining competitive employment after leaving high school in Newaygo County: Fremont, Hesperia, Newaygo, Grant, and White Cloud. These students are social security recipients who desire to obtain employment that allows them to live free of social security supports. The students will receive assessment: vocational evaluation, benefits counseling, labor market surveys, digital footprint results, and job readiness training including interest inventory, job interest exploration, and soft skills development. In addition, job search assistance, maintenance, work clothes, gas money, vocational rehabilitation counseling, and guidance and job placement will also be provided.



Goals:

- 5 students will be served
- 35 PETS will be provided
- 80%

Region 5 - Marquette/Alger RESA, Copper Country ISD, Menominee County ISD and MRS Marquette District Office

Need:

Students with disabilities, particularly those with the most significant disabilities face difficulties accessing the workforce development system. There continues to be an unyielding dilemma facing youth with disabilities in the achievement of employment. Despite supportive legislation (e.g., the IDEA, ADA and the Rehab Act) as well as many identified effective practices, many youths with a disability experience insufficient opportunities to obtain competitive employment with opportunities for career growth. One key factor in achieving positive post-school outcomes is the ability of students to advocate for themselves.

Work-Based Learning Project Description:

This program utilizes a "Train the Trainer" approach where students with a disability (SWD) gain the necessary skills to effectively mentor 8th grade students in developing self-determination and soft skills. They will participate in a 25 hour self-determination workshop that develops leadership skills necessary for these "Student Leaders" to mentor younger SWD. The student leaders conduct 5 Self-Determination Trainings for their mentees. Student Learners will maintain a journal and a post program survey will be conducted. After completing all responsibilities as a mentor, students receive a financial completion award.

Goals:

- 12 students will be served
- 1 day Self-Determination Trainer workshop, 2 day regional workshop, a Spring Workshop Series and a Mentor Power Point Presentation will be provided

Michigan Career and Technical Institute 2014-2015 Annual Report

Results confirm an outstanding 2014-15 school year. We continue to meet or exceed all of our performance standards. Highlighted accomplishments are:

First of all, MCTI continued to maintain **High Standards of Excellence** with:

- 84% Placement Rate - *Employment stats are based on 13-14 graduates*
- 95% Retention Rate
- 84% Employment Retention Rate

Secondly, MCTI again out performed our established **Record Setting Performance** from last year in the following areas:

- Highest percentage of Graduates Employed in Trade* (84% - up 3% from last year)
- Lowest average cost per student (\$8,861 – a decrease of \$297 from last year)
- Highest Number of Students Served (1,110 – an increase of 40 from last year)

Innovation and Expansion: MCTI continued its highly successful C.N.A. program for DHHS participants in Benton Harbor and Detroit. Partnering with Benton Harbor and Detroit MRS, DHHS, WDA, Kinexus Michigan Works!, the Resource Network in Detroit, and Bay Bluff in Spring Harbor. MCTI again demonstrated solid effectiveness in reaching individuals with multiple barriers disconnected from the workforce development system. During the 14-15 school year, MCTI trained 60 C.N.A. students through this community expansion program (Benton Harbor 25, Detroit 24, and Spring Harbor 11).

MCTI has continued to expand our PERT program serving 133 students this past summer.

Accreditation: MCTI obtain accreditation status with the Council on Occupational Education (COE). This accreditation is for six years, the longest period of accreditation COE grants educational institutions.

Challenges and Opportunities: Attrition continues to make it difficult for MCTI to maintain our optimum staffing level. Focus will continue to be on increasing staff and financial resources. MCTI will also increase its investment in keeping all training programs current with recommendations from our Occupational Advisory Committees and expand our partnerships with the private sector for jobs-driven training.

MCTI was given the opportunity to put our Pell funds towards program expansion, enhancements, equipment replacements and special projects. We were able to replace many pieces of outdated equipment in our trade areas, dedicate funds for marketing activities through DHHS, and to help support our community expansion projects.

Governor Snyder has allocated \$800K to DHHS for MCTI's Community Expansion Project for FY16. These funds are for Employment and Training Services. The targeted population will be PATH (TANF) participants. The primary training program offered will be the MCTI CNA Program. This Community Expansion Project will be directed by MCTI in partnership with Michigan Works!, Workforce Development Association (WDA), DHHS and MRS.

In closing, I would like to thank my staff, the Pine Lake Fund, and business partners for their dedication and exceptional efforts to serve our customers.

Project SEARCH Expands

Project SEARCH is expanding in Michigan because of the efforts of local communities, state funds that resulted from recommendations from the Mental Health and Wellness Commission that are administered by Michigan Rehabilitation Services and the support of Susie Rutkowski from Project SEARCH, Cincinnati Hospital Medical Center.

Project SEARCH is a business lead program that provides three unpaid internships for Students with Disabilities in a host business during the last year of secondary education. The employment outcome rate for individuals that complete this program is currently at an impressive 73% which is well above the average for Students with Disabilities. At the beginning of this year, there were thirteen PS sites up and running in the state. The fall of 2016 will see the growth of Project SEARCH by up to seven new programs.

Genesee, Ingham, Jackson, Livingston, Midland, Muskegon, and Ottawa Counties are all working to implement Project SEARCH Programs. Recently each of these counties attended a two day In-Depth Project SEARCH Training. Livingston ESA and Midland ESA generously opened their doors to teams so they could work with Susie to develop their programs. After the training, each team left with a better understanding of how to implement Project SEARCH and an action plan to go forward.

Teams that attended came with a wide variety of local stakeholders including MRS counselors, MRS district managers, MRS site managers, BSBP counselors, Transition Coordinators, special education teachers, community mental health providers, ASD teacher consultants, teacher consultants, school psychologists, special education directors, school principals, school superintendents, employment training specialists and business representatives.

Securing a host business is often the most challenging aspect of starting a Project SEARCH program. Many of the teams have host employers on board while others are have tentative commitments or are seeking a host business. The acquisition of a business is essential to program implementation and will likely prevent some programs from implementing this Fall, 2016. It sometimes takes several years to secure a business willing to participate.

When teams are ready to implement, the MRS District Manager from that community, along with all the Project SEARCH partners completes the Project SEARCH Application for New Programs. The applications are processed by MRS Central Office staff. Funds for approved Project SEARCH programming are provided by MRS through the provision of vocational rehabilitation services.

Pictured here is Susie Rutkowski, Project SEARCH Trainer at Livingston ESA presenting to local teams from Genesee, Ingham, Jackson, Livingston, and Ottawa.



Michigan Career and Technical Institute Offers Training for MRS Counselors and School Partners

There are two more dates available this school year (sign-up below) for a training day at Michigan Career and Technical Institute (MCTI) for MRS Transition Counselors and their school partners. The day will be spent getting basic information from Admissions, talking about all the trades, and talking to the instructors to get first-hand information on what is being taught and what employment outcomes are being targeted. The GOAL is to educate school partners in what MCTI offers and what type of students are most successful at MCTI. Forward this email to your partners so they can sign-up via the links below.

The partners can be:

- Special Ed teachers
- Alternative Ed teachers
- Transition Coordinators
- Voc Tech staff
- School Administrators
- Social Workers
- Guidance Counselors
- Any other professional personnel who need to know what MCTI is all about

Click on the link for the date you want to attend. Space is limited so please sign up early.

☐ **Thursday, March 24, 2016 from 9:00am - 3:00pm**

☐ **Thursday, May 12, 2016 from 9:00am - 3:00pm**

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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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