

Voc Rehab Transition Counseling Initiative February, 2013

Very brief history

- School to Work Initiative (VR Transition Counselors) started about 15 years ago.
- When first started, we were trying to get schools to see that we could be partners: introduce services, support schools to do transition planning.
- 2005-2006 publication of *Nothing But The Best* (best practice guide for Transition Counselors, updated annually).
- 2006-2007 a social security pilot grant that paired a YES with a TC in Bennington and Newport effectively enhanced capacity for TCs, great results!
- 2007 began quarterly meetings with DOE Special Education staff and VR staff (Diane, Renee and Katy).
- 2007 began annual Transition Conference, jointly funded by DOE and VR.
- 2008 development of a flow chart for transition counseling.
- 2009 survey to assess the availability of “youth friendly” Employment Consultant services across the state to support TCs.
- At the 2009-2010 planning retreat, targeted technology as a means of increasing the capacity of the TCs.
- In June 2010 all TCs received laptops and iPhones and began training.
- We now have 17 Transition Counselors (some p/t) and a Senior TC.
- The data shows that since SFY 2005, the transition caseload has more than doubled.
- The pressure on schools has increased: Indicator 13 and 14, stronger emphasis on transition planning from Vermont DOE.

On November 29, 2010, a facilitated discussion happened: How do we address Transition Counselor capacity while at the same time continue to support schools and DOE? It was attended by Diane, Karen Blake-Orne, Voc Rehab Regional Managers, Katy Chaffee (VR Senior Counselor, now retired) and Renee Kievit-Kylar
Generated a list of short term/functional ideas and longer range/big picture ideas

Activities since 2011

Youth Employment Specialist (YES) Project Demonstration sites in Brattleboro, Bennington, Barre and St. Albans:

- YES staff were hired by VABIR, rolled out in January 2012.
- Contracted with TransCen, a national organization to support the project with technical assistance and evaluation.

Created *Guide to Secondary Transition services: Helping Students with Disabilities Move From School to Work* for use by special education staff.

Established a Fall “meet and greet” with special educators at each of the Transition Counselors schools served.

The agenda includes topics such as:

- Introductions and share basic VR info materials

- Reflection on what worked best last year about the Sped – VR relationship; what areas didn't work as well and where you might make changes this year
- Scheduling appointments

Created a student Group Orientation meetings for students as described in the Guide and using the form that verifies student interest in taking the next steps to enroll with VR.

Created a *Capacity Support Plan* for each Transition Counselor

- Annual conversation with every TC and RM and/or senior counselor by office throughout the Fall by conference call.
- Conversations have addressed caseload management topics such as: organization, prioritizing caseload, core team plans, technology, etc.
- The result is to be a *Capacity Support Plan* to be implemented during the coming year that includes specific goals from each TC and a clear support plan from the regional office and the Transition Team.
- Provide ongoing individual support for TCs, Senior Counselors, and Regional Managers

Technology Plan

Ongoing support for use of laptops and iPhones as capacity and counseling tool. Working with Amber Fulcher, AT Director, for support.

Organizational training with Porter Knight

On September 26th, 2011, Porter Knight held a full-day group session with TCs to look at flow of work and general organization. Follow-up from this meeting will be included in each individual/office *Capacity Support Plan*.