

## **Attachment 4.8(b)(2) – Coordination with Education Officials**

The Division is an organizational unit of and works with the Public Education Department to facilitate the transition of students who are receiving special education services from the provision of a free appropriate public education under the responsibility of an educational agency. The Division also works with local education agencies to coordinate student referrals to the Division field offices and provide for eligibility determination of the student for vocational rehabilitation services and the development and approval of the Individual Plan for Employment before the student leaves the school setting. Fortunately, the Division does not currently operate under an order of selection, thus all students with disabilities interested in pursuing employment are able to apply for vocational rehabilitation services.

The Individual Plan for Employment must, at a minimum, identify the long-term vocational rehabilitation goal, intermediate vocational rehabilitation objectives, and goals and objectives related to enabling students with disabilities to live independently. These vocational rehabilitation goals and objectives are to be consistent with the student's individual education plan. The Division makes every effort to develop and implement the transition student's Individual Plan for Employment prior to leaving high school.

The Division's role and responsibilities are defined by a formal plan developed by the Public Education Department and, as appropriate, enters into memoranda of agreement with local educational agencies responsible for the free appropriate public education of students with disabilities receiving special education services.

The memorandum of understanding with the Public Education Department serves to facilitate the integration and coordination of services to eligible secondary education students in providing a continuum of services that will meet the needs of all Individuals with Disabilities Education Act eligible students. The integrated continuum of services is to be flexible enough to meet the needs of all IDEA eligible students to qualify for DVR services within the available resources, maximize opportunity for students and eliminate limitations and obstacles. The MOU further outlines:

- A. Assure that all students with disabilities as defined by the IDEA and its implementing regulations receive appropriate services;
- B. Coordinate services to students with disabilities so as to maximize learner outcomes and provide for a successful transition to appropriate employment as specified in student Individualized Education Programs (IEPs);
- C. Formalize referral procedures with appropriate agency(ies) to ensure students with disabilities are provided with opportunities for services;
- D. Coordinate services delivery and follow-up/along with the education/rehabilitation services continuum;
- E. Establish joint trainings to provide staff development and other training activities for Local Educational Agency (LEA) transition specialists and other individuals involved in transition planning.

The agreements with individual Local Education Agencies identify:

- 1) Policies, practices, and procedures that can be coordinated between the agencies, including definitions, eligibility criteria for vocational rehabilitation services, policies and procedures for making referrals, procedures for outreach students receiving special education services and in need of transition service, practices and procedures also address time-frames for evaluation and follow-up with students;
- 2) The roles of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;
- 3) Procedures for providing training, consultation, and technical assistance to assist staff of State and local educational agencies as to the availability, benefits of, and eligibility criteria for vocational rehabilitation services;
- 4) Available resources, including sources of funds for the development and expansion of services;
- 5) The financial responsibility of each agency in providing services to students with disabilities who are receiving special education services consistent with State law;
- 6) Procedures for resolving disputes between the agencies that are parties to the agreement; and
- 7) All other components necessary to ensure meaningful cooperation among agencies, including procedures to facilitate the development of local teams to coordinate the provision of services to students with disabilities, sharing data, and coordinating joint training of staff providing transition services.

Currently, Cooperative Agreements are in place between the Division and the following local education agencies:

Albuquerque Public Schools  
Belen Public Schools  
Carlsbad Municipal Schools  
Cobre Consolidated Schools  
Deming Public Schools  
Gadsden Independent Schools  
High Plan Regional Center Cooperative  
Las Cruces Public Schools  
Lea Regional Center Cooperative  
Los Lunas Public Schools  
Northeast Regional Center Cooperative  
Region IX Center Cooperative  
Roswell Independent Schools  
Silver Consolidated Schools

The Division works with local education agencies throughout New Mexico to provide school-to-work transition and maintains a School-to-Work Transition Specialist position in Albuquerque. In addition, the Division maintains three specialized caseloads in the state located in Albuquerque in Bernalillo County, Las Cruces in Dona Ana County, and Santa Fe in Santa Fe County providing services only to transition students. Division counseling staff and rehabilitation technicians are deployed on a regional basis. Area Division program managers and local counseling staff work with local education agencies to ensure that students with disabilities are

afforded the opportunity to apply for vocational rehabilitation services. Referrals are made at the local level from local education agencies or schools to the Division's field offices.

High School-age Hispanic and American Indian youth with disabilities benefit from mentorship services to help them identify and work toward future professional goals. Mentoring Diverse Abilities encourages and assists students from Bernalillo High School, Gadsden School District and Tohajiilee Schools through mentoring, paid work experience, introduction to post-secondary educational opportunities, youth leadership training, parent education, job development and job coaching