

Cooperation and Coordination with Other Agencies and Other Entities

Coordination with Education Officials

Current Success with Transition Services for Students with Disabilities

The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS or Division) has been a leader in innovative transition services for students with disabilities. The focal point of this the success in transition services is the partnership between the DRS and the Office of Special Education in co-funding the Transition Services Liaison Project. This project initiates the following successful transition activities:

Transition Services Liaison Project: TSLP provides technical assistance and training to students with disabilities, families, local education agencies and adult service agencies to promote the movement from school to post-school activities. There are three Transition Liaisons and a Transition Services Liaison Project Coordinator to provide these activities. TSLP manages the transition programs listed below.

Project Skills: Project Skills is a paid work experience program for high school students with disabilities in South Dakota. The program is a cooperative arrangement between the state vocational rehabilitation agencies and the local school districts and provides students the opportunity to learn different skills in a variety of job placements, with the assistance of a job coach. Project Skills helps to build the student's work history, references and help them move into different and better jobs as they mature and are ready to take on new challenges.

Youth Leadership Forum: YLF is a unique career and leadership training program for high school juniors and seniors to learn more about self advocacy skills and disability awareness. Students with disabilities cultivate leadership, citizenship, and social skills as a result of participating in this annual five-day event. The YLF is implemented at the state level by the Governor's Advisory Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, and other state and local partners.

Catch the Wave: A one-day conference designed specifically for high school students who have a disability and are considering post-secondary education (either college or technical institutes). Students learn about preparing for college life, securing appropriate accommodations, and developing self-advocacy and communication skills.

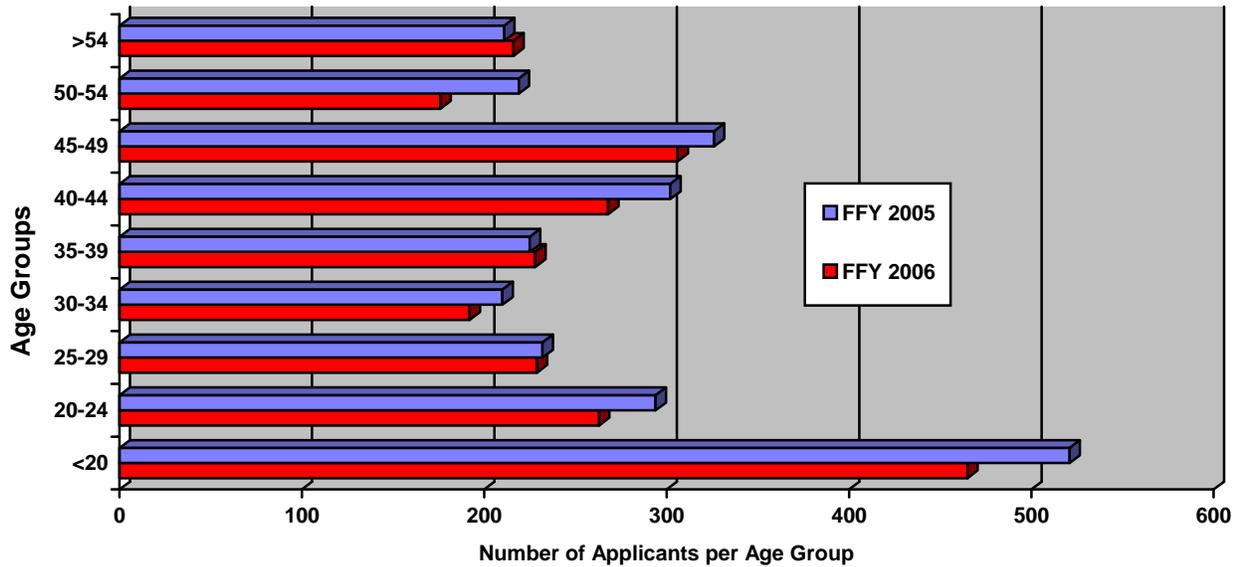
Regional Transition Forums: These forums are informal and interactive meetings for providers of services, transition-age students with disabilities, as well as consumers and family members.

Summer Institute: The Summer Institute is a statewide training opportunity for Special Education teachers who are assisting students in the transition process. It is held for one week in the summer and offers training in areas of IDIEA, introducing self determination curriculum and other assessment materials, and IEP planning. Teachers receive graduate credit for the class and gain knowledge from Disability Services Coordinators from post secondary schools, vocational rehabilitation staff, Transition Liaisons, community mental health agencies and independent living services staff.

Increased referrals of students with disabilities.

The South Dakota Division of Rehabilitation Services is making great strides in getting referrals to serve students with disabilities at an earlier age. The Division has developed a brochure specifically for the

transition process and has promoted referrals from school systems at an earlier age. The following graph shows that the age group of under 20 years old is the largest referral group. .



Plans, Policies and Procedures for coordination with Education Officials to facilitate transition services for students with disabilities

The Division continues to explore and expand transition services available to students with disabilities. The quality, as well as the quantity of services have increased over the last years and will continue to do so. The Division is committed to provide quality services in order to provide smooth and thorough transitions into the adult world. Key activities to implement this commitment include:

- * Special education staff and staff from the school districts are invited to attend DRS training.
- * Transition training will continue to the Local Education Agencies, students, parents and the VR Offices
- * Office of Special Education is a member of the State Rehabilitation Council.
- * Division of Rehabilitation Services has representation on the Advisory Council for the Office of Special Education.
- * Division continues to co-fund the Transition Services Liaison Project with the Office of Special Education.
- * The Department of Human Services, the Department of Education and Cultural Affairs, the Department of Labor and the Department of Social Services have implemented a cooperative agreement concerning Transition Services for Youth with Disabilities. The agreement presents a common policy and conceptual framework for addressing interagency transition planning at the local

level, thus insuring that youth with disabilities have access to the services and resources needed to enter adult life (and the world of work) successfully.

- * Continue the “Youth Leadership Forum” to provide leadership training for students with disabilities.
- * Continue funding Project Skills which provides work experience for students with disabilities.
- * Continue funding the Summer Institute which provides transition training for teachers.
- * Continue providing Catch the Waive activities which provides students with disabilities an opportunity to experience a post secondary program
- * Continue to conduct the Transition Regional Forums which provides transition partners the opportunity to meet and discuss coordination of services.

Development and Approval of an IPE before leaving school

The Division is making great efforts to assure that students with disabilities access the vocational rehabilitation program and develop their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) before they complete high school. Following are some of these activities:

- * Division VR Counselors contact school counselors and 504 coordinators on a regular basis in an attempt to identify and meet with students.
- * Division VR Counselors inform school staff what services are available to students with disabilities and eligibility requirements. VR Counselors then follow up on referral in a timely fashion in order to determine eligibility prior to graduation.
- * Division VR Counselors and other Division staff will attend interagency meetings in order to inform other service organizations about Rehabilitation Services and obtain referrals of these students.
- * The Division will continue funding Project Skills to include serving students with disabilities who are not receiving special education services.

Interagency Agreement

The South Dakota Cooperative Agreement Concerning Transition Services for Youth With Disabilities, was revised on January 2005. This agreement includes the following South Dakota entities: Office of Special Education, Division of Workforce and Career Preparation, Division of Mental Health, Division of Developmental Disabilities, Division of Rehabilitation Services, Division of Service to the Blind and Visually Impaired, Department of Labor and Department of Social Services.

The agreement identifies each agency’s roles and responsibilities including:

- * Consultation and technical assistance to assist in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including vocation rehabilitation services;
- * Transition planning by personnel of the Division of Rehabilitation Services and school district personnel;
- * Roles and responsibilities of each agency including State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;
- * Financial responsibilities; and
- * Procedures for outreach and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.