

# **Back to School RI: Guidance for Supporting Differently Abled Students in Secondary Transition**

**SY20-21**



**RIDE** Rhode Island  
Department  
of Education

## RI Secondary Transition Services—Tips for Reopening September 2020

Federal requirements and timelines under the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) have not been waived, including the secondary transition requirements. For students ages 14 through 22, the IEP team remains responsible for the development, implementation, and evaluation of the secondary transition plan.

In the climate of COVID-19, school districts will need to determine how they will continue to provide high quality Transition Services within a variety of models, including in-person, hybrid, and distance learning.

To provide continuity of learning during this time, a student's IEP, including the secondary transition plan, may need to be amended. The student's individual secondary transition services/activities must be implemented to the greatest extent possible through all models of instruction.

In these unique circumstances, IEP teams should think about what can be done to meet the overarching purpose for the transition services/activities even if specific activities may not be implemented due to public health and safety requirements. Special educators should work collaboratively with general educators, parents, and students to identify transition services/activities while keeping in mind that the goal with all students is to develop skills they can use in the community, future education, training and workplace settings after graduation.

### *Considerations before School Reopens*

- Review transition services in student's IEP to determine if any potential amendments/modifications will be necessary to support student's post school goals.
- Establish additional supports for students and staff for implementation of transition services (additional or specialized personnel, equipment, alternative locations, etc.).
- Identify if professional development/technical assistance for staff is necessary regarding the provision of Secondary Transition services.
- Determine the continuity of transition instruction delivered through in-person, hybrid & distance model (strategies provided below).
- Connect with the student and family regarding transition services that may have been identified on student's IEP that may need to be modified (i.e., In-Person college/training visits).



- Develop plans for in-person community-based instruction with the student/parent/job coach, etc. to ensure agreement with the continuation of this instruction while planning for necessary health and safety protocols.
- Identify staff responsible for making sure that students who are exiting school this year have been connected with appropriate agencies as identified in their Transition Plan.
- Assess and support the student’s ability to adhere to all current safety protocols prior to their return to community settings.
- Contact previous work-based learning sites, internships, community job exploration sites to determine if they are prepared and willing to have students return. If not, discuss alternatives to remotely expose students to the work site and its tasks, and create a plan to revisit in-person activities at a later date.

### Considerations Once School Reopens

#### *In-person Model*

Although in-person participation in Transition Services, specifically community-based programming, may be limited at this time, schools and districts should make best efforts to develop plans collaboratively with community-based service providers, business partners, adult service agencies, parents/guardians, and students in order for students to access as much transition programming as possible. Current health and safety requirements must remain a priority when making decisions as to the extent that transition services are able to be accessed in community-based settings; however, it is highly recommended that in-person transition services resume as soon as it is safe to do so with the proper health and safety measures in place.

- Review transition services on student’s IEP to determine potential amendments/modifications necessary to support student’s post school goals.
- Provide training for any staff that have new/different assignments (job coaching/development).
- Determine Transition Assessments to be conducted in person and those that could be conducted virtually.
- Identify, prioritize and plan the transition activities that are most effectively delivered in-person.
- Determine where in-person Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) can take place. These services can be provided to students with IEPs or 504 plans who have been determined eligible or are potentially eligible for vocational rehabilitative services with the RI Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS). Pre-ETS services include five focus areas: (1) Job Exploration Counseling, (2) Work-Based Learning, (3) Counseling Opportunities for Enrollment in Comprehensive Transition or Postsecondary Educational Programs, (4) Workplace Readiness Training and (5) Self- Advocacy.

- Determine any modifications for career preparatory activities/programs (i.e. school based enterprise, school store, in school vocational classes, etc.).
- Communicate with adult service agencies and determine if in-person meetings may take place with students and if virtual meeting will sufficiently substitute.

### *Hybrid Model*

- Determine how you might engage retention of information while students are in distance learning (i.e. invite guest speakers to provide career specific examples to illustrate course content; design assignments to be flexible and allow students to pursue interests).
- Identify the transition activities that may be conducted virtually (transition assessment, job shadow, career exploration activities) to supplement in-person instruction.
- Identify supports (material, technology, information) the parent and student need, and potential barriers to success in the distance learning environment.
- Encourage special educators to participate in professional development and training through the Regional Transition Centers (RTCs) and Teachers of Life Skills Network (TLS) in order to share strategies for effective transition programming.
- Communicate with ORS counselor & Division of Developmental Disabilities social worker (as appropriate) about student hybrid schedule and availability to meet with counselors or social workers.
- All secondary transition services/activities must continue to be monitored and progress reported in alignment with IEP goal progress reporting. Communication with the student and family is key for progress monitoring.

### *Distance Learning Model*

- Review transition services on student's IEP to determine any potential amendments/modifications necessary to support student's post school goals.
- Utilize online transition assessments to further identify student strengths, needs, preferences & interests.
- Connect with Regional Transition Coordinator for resources to support delivery of virtual transition services.
- Connect with Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) counselor regarding virtual Pre-ETS opportunities and necessary referrals.
- Utilize trainings through the TLS Network and Regional Transition Advisory Committees to support continued virtual instruction.
- Work closely with parents to be aware of student progress and opportunities to extend transition learning objectives through home and the community.
- Listen to students and parents--acknowledge their feedback and concerns and make adjustments to the plans as necessary.



## Transition Resources

The following resources are available to assist with transition assessment to determine a student's strengths, needs and interest for their post-school goals.

### *Transition Assessment Resources (In-person, hybrid and remote instruction)*

[O\\*NET Interest Profiler](#) - A self-assessment tool for identifying interests and how they relate to the world of work.

[CareerOneStop: Skills Match](#) - A self-assessment that matches skills to career options.

[The Career Interests Game](#) - A game designed to match interests and skills with careers.

[Work Interest Wizard Test](#) - An in-depth career interest test with up to 150 questions. Over 1000 potential occupation matches.

[Self-Determination Checklist Student Self-Assessment](#) - Helps students see areas they can focus on to improve their transition to life after high school.

[123 Career Test](#) - Career aptitude test that matches career with personality type.

[The Princeton Review Career Quiz](#) - Makes connections from interests and styles to match with occupations.

[Truity Career Interests Test](#) - Matches personality, talents and interests to real-life jobs

### *Career Exploration Resources (In-person, hybrid and remote instruction)*

[RTC Virtual Work Based Learning Resources](#) - Database listing of various resources for virtual work based learning websites and activities.

[Explore Work](#) - Series of lessons and learning activities aimed at career exploration.

[Occupational Outlook Handbook](#) - US Department of Labor website for student led occupation research.

[Virtual Job Shadow](#) - Extensive video bank and virtual career exploration at every level of development. (contact your Regional Transition Coordinator for more information on accessing this resource)

[O\\*Net My Next Move](#) - Browse careers by industry.

[MySkillsMyFuture](#) - Build a bridge to find a career match based on existing job or work experience.

[Youth Rules!](#) - Student-friendly website with resources and tools for students to learn about labor related laws and policies.

[Career One Stop](#) - Explore career opportunities through active participation information gathering.



## ***Provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) during In- Person, Hybrid, & Distance Learning from the Office of Rehabilitation Services***

*The following is a letter from the Office of Rehabilitation Services that explains the provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services for the 2020-2021 school year reprinted here with permission from the Office of Rehabilitation Services.*

The Office of Rehabilitation Services will be offering Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) for the upcoming school year 2020-2021. The provision of Pre-ETS may look different from one district to the next based on the re-opening plan of each school. ORS' goal is to be as flexible as possible working with each district, vendor, student and family to get students back out into the community while following safety guidelines set forth by the Department of Health. ORS has the capacity to provide Pre-ETS in multiple formats: all virtual services (which has been the case for the last six months) and the potential new normal: a combination of virtual/in person services, as it meets the needs of students. ORS Counselors will continue to be available to attend IEP/CDP meetings virtually. ORS is still accepting student referrals for Pre-Employment Transition services for those who have IEPs and 504 plans.

Below are the Pre-Employment Transition Services that we hope to provide for the upcoming 2020-21 school year:

1. **Pre-ETS Virtual Job Exploration/Pre-ETS Job Exploration** This is a service that can be provided virtually and/or in person that can consist of but is not limited to career exploration, interest inventory testing and virtual job shadowing. The in-person portion would consist of a community placement to assess work behaviors and work tolerance. Care is to be taken to include discussions/education about social distancing and Covid-19 Safety precautions.
2. **Pre-ETS Community Based Work Experience** This service occurs in an integrated competitive employment setting to provide vocationally relevant planning information to and for an individual. This includes learning about work habits, work tolerance, interpersonal skills and work behaviors. It is also valuable in providing a glimpse of employment in the field of their interest. It is a 10-day minimum/site for a total of 40 hours/site
3. **Pre-ETS Work Readiness Training** Consists of 9 hours per week for 4 weeks; scheduling of classes is up to the Provider at a minimum of 9 hours per week. All other services similar to non-virtual job prep and should include a resume and interviewing skills as part of reporting. Care is to be taken to include discussion/education about social distancing and Covid-19 Safety precautions.
4. **Virtual Travel Training/ Travel Training** Review travel safety, how to read a bus schedule, YouTube videos on public transportation, social distancing, Covid-19 Safety



precautions. Our standard Travel Training service includes the individual practicing what they have learned navigating and traveling on RIPTA.

5. **Tri-Employment** We will continue to offer this service for the upcoming school year. If necessary, the first 10-week portion of the program can be provided virtually with the hope that by January/February of 2021, we will be able to provide the community-based work experiences portion.
6. **Project Search** We are continuing to move forward with our 3 Project Search Programs. This will be contingent on the capacity of the host business and school districts reopening plan.

**Please contact your ORS Counselor directly for additional information**

### *Additional Information and Resources*

[RIDE's COVID-19 Special Education Resources](#) - offers additional guidance and resources to support special education teachers, families, and students during distance learning.

[Teachers of Life Skills Distance Learning Folder](#) - the Regional Transition Coordinators have created a Google Drive folder which contains national and peer-to-peer resources to support distance learning, specifically for teachers of life skills.

[The Rhode Island Secondary Transition Website](#) - provides educators with transition planning information as well as links to the RI Transition Assessment Matrix.

[The National Technical Assistance Center on Transition](#) – NTACT provides toolkits and resources to assist Local Education Agencies in implementing evidence-based and promising practices in transition. NTACT's [Transition Resources during the COVID-19 Outbreak](#) contains specific resources to assist in providing services in virtual, distanced, and hybrid formats.

