

Rusk County Interagency Agreement

LOCAL COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT AMONG

Bruce School District

Flambeau School District

Ladysmith-Hawkins School District

Weyerhaeuser School District

Center for Independent Living of Western Wisconsin

Rusk County Department of Human Services

Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) #10

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College

Please note: This document acknowledges and supports the correct terminology as “people with disabilities” and “individuals with developmental disabilities” respectively, but have included direct information from laws or regulations which use the former terms, such as the terminology “handicapped” and “developmentally disabled” individuals.

April 2003

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this agreement is to support the transition of students with disabilities from secondary schools to integrated employment, post-secondary education or training and independent living in the community through improved cooperative and collaborative efforts among relevant service providers. A group of representatives from each agency will subsequently be known as the “**Rusk County Transition Advisory Council.**”

The council will work together to provide transition services for students with disabilities (pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), ADA, the Carl Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act, Workforce Investment Act (WIA), School-To Work Opportunities Act, and the Developmental Disabilities Act) while they are enrolled in high school, and prevent interruption of services between the time that a student exits school and when adult services are initiated.

II. TARGET POPULATION

The focus of this agreement is on all students with disabilities, aged 16-21, including those served in special education needing specified transition services for which other community agencies are responsible for providing and/or funding.

III. GOALS

To achieve the stated purpose, the cooperating agencies will work together and/or coordinate activities among all involved segments of the community to accomplish the following goals.

- A. Develop and implement “a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. The coordinated set of activities shall be based upon the individual student’s needs, taking into account the student’s preferences and interests, and shall include instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.” (20 U.S.C. 1401(a)(19))
- B. Students with disabilities and their parents/guardians will be informed of and instructed on self-advocacy skills to elicit their active involvement in planning their high school experience and transition goals through the Individual Education Plan (IEP), Individual Plan for Employment (IPE), and Individual Service Plan (ISP) processes.
- C. Develop an interagency transition procedural flowchart that designates the roles and responsibilities of each cooperating agency in the IEP, referral and transition process, and timelines for action and follow-up.

IV. RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL PARTICIPATING SERVICE AGENCIES

To establish and maintain understandings needed to achieve the purposes of this cooperative effort, the involved agencies agree to:

- A. Designate at least one individual to act as the agency representative on the Rusk County Transition Advisory Council. The designated representative will ensure their agency's "participation" when appropriate in the development of individual transition service recommendations at IEP meetings.
- B. Disseminate a copy of this agreement as well as other pertinent information, and provide training on their contents to all their agency personnel.
- C. Adhere to the requirements set forth in respective federal and state legislation and rules relative to the provision of transition services for students with disabilities (IDEA, ADA, WIA, Rehabilitation Act, Carl Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act, Social Security Act, Developmental Disabilities Act, Subchapter V of Chapter 115, Wis. Stats. etc.).
- D. Comply with the policies and responsibilities identified in the state level Joint Agreement between the Department of Public Instruction/Division for Learning Support: Equity and Advocacy, and the Department of Workforce Development/Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.
- E. Seek constituent feedback from students and other stakeholders.
- F. Enable staff members of cooperating organizations and students/parents/guardians to participate in transition training activities and in-services.
- G. Preserve the confidentiality rights of students/consumers and secure release of information when appropriate.
- H. Exchange student, as well as policy and procedural, information with the IEP committee as requested in the design of transition services.
- I. Meet on a regular basis, as determined by the Rusk County Transition Advisory Council to review the transition process and future service and program needs.
- J. Coordinate job development and placement activities to ensure consistent communication with the business community and avoid duplication of effort.
- K. Annual review of the interagency agreement.
- L. Adhere to Transition Flow Chart (see Appendix A).

V. RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL LOCAL EDUCATION AGENCIES (LEA)

The local education agency will play the lead role in the development and maintenance of the cooperative working relationship among special education, vocational education, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Rusk County Human Services, Wisconsin

Indianhead Technical College, Center for Independent Living, and Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) #10. In addition:

- A. Assume primary responsibility for the development and provision of educational and vocational programs that are consistent with the mandate of a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) in IDEA. These programs will be developed in the IEP based on the students' needs, interests, and abilities, and will:
 - 1. Address vocational skills;
 - 2. Address independent living skills;
 - 3. Provide community experiences;
 - 4. Conduct functional vocational evaluations if appropriate;
 - 5. Address integrated employment skills;
 - 6. Prepare students for continuing and adult education;
 - 7. Provide awareness of adult services and community participation;
 - 8. Support students leaving school in paid, integrated, community employment;
 - 9. Support the occurrence of students leaving school having been accepted into post-secondary education programs;
 - 10. Support the occurrence of students leaving school with specific interagency commitments for the provision of long term support services, including independent living plans; and
 - 11. Maintain documentation in the IEP of student participation in work experiences, independent living skills; and post-secondary education preparation.
- B. Address transition goals in the IEP at least by age 14, and earlier if appropriate, with input from students/parents/guardians. In addition, address transition services at least by age 16, and earlier if appropriate.
- C. When appropriate, invite a representative of any other agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services: for the student to the IEP meeting.
- D. When appropriate, secure written permission from student/parents/guardians to maintain the student's records, transmit information, and forward information to community agencies responsible for transition.
- E. If necessary, compile and make available recent diagnostic/work experience/vocational evaluation information to be use in determining eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services and in vocational planning.
- F. Determine annually, through the IEP team whether a student has met her/his educational goals and objectives and will graduate from high school or will continue to benefit from the education program, with possible collaborative and concurrent adult services up until age 21.
- G. Through the IEP team process, provide annual parent/guardian/student information sessions on transition planning, self-advocacy, community agency services, and related issues and invite adult service agencies to participate in disseminating information on existing program options.

- H. When appropriate, work cooperatively in the development of school supervised school and work-based learning opportunities for students with disabilities.
- I. Make the Point Of Entry Manual (POEM) available for all IEP teams and parents/guardians.

VI. DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (DVR)

REGULATORY BASIS:

The goal of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, as a member of the transition team, is to provide services to plan for long-term vocational rehabilitation goals and objectives, and the intermediate steps and activities needed to reach these goals. This will include the goal of living independently after leaving the school setting.

POLICIES, PRACTICES, AND PROCEDURES:

- A. DVR will assign a liaison counselor to each school district. As a member of the transition team, the assigned VR counselor will visit all schools covered under this agreement a minimum of once per year to inform appropriate school personnel of the goals and objectives of the VR program, to explain eligibility criteria and encourage referrals, and to identify students who may be in need of VR services.
- B. DVR will provide input into specific IEPs as early as appropriate, but no later than one and one-half years prior to the student's school exit. Prior to referral, the student should have been exposed to the concept of the world of work and daily living skills. Communication and a very positive interagency relationship is critical to ensure that the referral is based on the student's readiness and need for services.

Eligibility for VR services will be determined by VR staff and is based on establishing that the individual:

1. Has a physical or mental impairment,
2. As a result of the impairment has a substantial impediment to employment,
3. Can benefit in terms of an employment outcome, and
4. Requires vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain gainful employment.

DVR would like to work with all individuals who have a disability. However, we do not have enough staff or funds to do so.

Therefore, DVR uses a process (Order of Selection) that allows persons with more severe functional limitations to be served before those with less severe limitations. DVR evaluates each eligible applicant to determine the severity of his or her functional limitations. This Order of Selection may indefinitely delay services to some individuals. The Division will notify all eligible persons for whom services will be delayed.

DVR will look at how the following areas affect your ability to work:

1. Getting from one place to another (Mobility)
 2. Talking and listening to others, reading and/or understanding printed materials (Communication)
 3. Taking care of yourself (Self-Care)
 4. Making plans or carrying out your plans (Self-Direction)
 5. Getting along with other people (Interpersonal Skills)
 6. Having the skills to work (Work Skills)
 7. Needing changes at work to do a job (Work Tolerance)
- C. DVR will ensure that eligible and interested students leave the school system with a completed IPE. The VR counselor will continue as part of the Transition Team as long as the student is enrolled in a secondary education program. DVR cannot be the primary responsible entity for the IEP (education plan). DVR will be responsible for the consumer's IPE (individual plan for employment). In the provision of services, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation will make every effort to assist the student in acquiring financial resources for the implementation of the planned services. The source of these funds may be from one of the transition team agencies or through sources of comparable benefits.

If the student is found ineligible for VR services, a written response with the reasons for the decision may be provided to the school.

- D. When the student is an active client, VR will ensure the involvement of a DVR counselor in the IEP committee meeting through attendance, providing written consultation, and/or conversing with the committee via telephone.
- E. DVR will establish transition-related case process time frames to meet the particular needs of students with disabilities.
- F. Provide inservice training to school staff, community agencies, and parents to apprise them of DVR's eligibility and services to facilitate appropriate DVR referrals.
- G. Inform TAC of ongoing changes in DVR and potential effect on referrals.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The VR counselor may provide annual information on students' status and service outcomes. Such information may be part of any transition team survey conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of policies, curriculum, and procedures as an ongoing process to improve these practices.

It is also agreed that the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation will follow confidentiality procedures outlined in the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 as amended, and the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 as amended. It will also follow confidentiality regulations outlined under Section 361.49 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Federal Regulations and Section 47.40 (13) of the Wisconsin Statutes s. HSS 258 Wisconsin Administrative Code.

VII. WISCONSIN INDIANHEAD TECHNICAL COLLEGE (WITC)

The WITC will:

- A. Designate at least one individual to act as the college representative on the Rusk County Transition Advisory Council.
- B. Provide the Rusk County Transition Advisory Council and parents/students/guardians with WITC programs, WITC program prerequisites, services for students with disabilities, admissions process, entrance requirements, Tech Prep programs, Compulsory School Attendance Options, Youth Apprenticeship Programs, and other information pertinent to students with disabilities needing transition services.
- C. Collaborate with secondary schools to provide informational sessions and inservice training to secondary staff, parents and community agency people with relevant issues regarding WITC role in the education and training programs for people with disabilities.
- D. Provide informational meetings and campus experiences for parents, students with disabilities, community-based agencies, and high school staff to inform them of WITC programs, services, and expectations.
- E. Provide input to the IEP committee for those students who are exploring WITC programs and could benefit from transition services.
- F. Assist in locating financial aid resources for eligible students.
- G. Participate in the development of the IEP and the individual student contract for those high school students with disabilities attending the WITC as part of their high school program under the Compulsory School Attendance Law.
- H. Provide reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Carl Perkins Vocational Act, Applied Technology Act, 504, and ADA in the areas of recruitment, enrollment, and support services to students with disabilities. WITC will ensure that reasonable accommodations are provided to students who provide documentation of their disability to WITC.

VIII. RUSK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

The Rusk County Department of Human Services will:

- A. Participate in any informational forums designed to inform students, families, and schools of programs and services administered by the Department.
- B. Assist students, families, and school personnel in locating possible resources for students of any age.
- C. Attend, when invited, the IEP meeting for students who are at least 16 years of age, expected to exit the school system within two years, and who are expected, because

of a disability, to require vocational or day services, independent living skills training, supported employment, psychiatric or psychological care or counseling, residential or other care typically provided by the Department. The primary purpose of this involvement will be to become familiar with the student's needs, in order to appropriately begin planning for future service needs. Funding of services will be based on availability of funding.

- D. When appropriate an assessment will be completed and a case manager will be assigned to work with the student, family, and school personnel to jointly develop a transition plan for the student. The plan will consider appropriate community resources available for integrated living and working opportunities, and will be designed to assist the student and the family to achieve a smooth transition from school to post-school life, whatever that may involve.

IX. CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING FOR WESTERN WISCONSIN (CILWW)

The goal of the Center for Independent Living as a member of the Rusk County Transition Advisory Council is to provide quality, consumer driven independent living services to interested students, family members, schools, and other agencies through advocacy, information and referral, peer support, and independent living skills training.

A representative of the CILWW will:

- A. Actively participate on the county transition advisory council.
- B. Promote the independent living philosophy throughout all planning activities.
- C. Attend IEP meetings, as invited by the student or parent/guardian, for the purpose of advocating for requested accommodations, assisting the family and student in understanding their rights and responsibilities during the IEP process, providing information on possible services and resources available, and providing any other information or assistance needed.
- D. Provide updated information to the council regarding the ADA and potential changes in legislation affecting people with disabilities of any age.
- E. Provide assistance to all students and/or parents/guardians referred for independent living services by participating schools and agencies.

X. COOPERATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICE AGENCY #10

Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) #10 will:

- A. Designate at least one individual to serve as the agency representative on the Rusk County Transition Advisory Council.
- B. Provide the Rusk County Transition Advisory Council with pertinent transition-related information.

- C. Collaborate with local schools to provide information and in-service training to secondary staff, students, parent/guardian and community agency representatives.
- D. Assist in developing linkages among the local districts and community agencies.
- E. Serve as consultant to IEP teams regarding transition issues, when appropriate.

XI. IMPLEMENTATION AND MODIFICATION OF THIS AGREEMENT

This agreement is effective April 2003, and shall remain in effect until modified or terminated as stated below:

- A. Regardless of perceived need, agency representatives will review this agreement annually, prior to January 1, and sign off on a new signature page each year.

Signature Page

Bruce School District – Debra Brown, District Administrator

Flambeau School District – William Pfalzgraf, District Administrator

Ladysmith-Hawkins School District – Roy Jonjak, District Administrator

Ladysmith-Hawkins School District – Kurt Lindau, Director of Special Education

Weyerhaeuser School District – Barbara Lorkowski, District Administrator

Center for Independent Living for Western Wisconsin – Tim Sheehan, Director

Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) #10 – Terry J. Olson, Administrator

Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) #10 – Gregory S. Dietz, Director of Special Education

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation – Michael Schroeder

Rusk County Department of Human Services – Gary Rivers, Director

Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College – Mimi Crandell

