Superintendent’s Memo #225-20


**COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Department of Education**

DATE: August 28, 2020

TO: Division Superintendents

FROM: James F. Lane, Ed.D., Superintendent of Public Instruction

**SUBJECT: Coordinating Services with the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services and Local School Divisions**

As we begin the 2020-2021 school year in unprecedented times, it is essential to acknowledge some key partnerships that must continue in order to implement the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act* (WIOA) and the requirements for secondary transition as defined in the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA 2004) and Section 504 of the *Americans with Disabilities Act* to ensure success for our students with disabilities. The Virginia Department of Education’s (VDOE) Department of Special Education and Student Services (SESS) and the Virginia Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) share responsibility to prepare students with disabilities for successful integrated community employment. Section 113(b) of the *Rehabilitation Act* and 34 CFR 361.48 (a) (2) list the five required pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) that Vocational Rehabilitation agencies, in collaboration with local school divisions, must make available to students with disabilities in need of these services. These services are:

* Job exploration counseling;
* Work-based learning;
* Workplace readiness;
* Counseling on post-secondary training options; and
* Self-advocacy.

DARS can act as a resource to schools when working with transition aged students with disabilities. DARS services may be provided in a variety of methods including in person, remotely, and virtually. In addition, DARS has a strong partnership with Pre-ETS service providers in each region and is able to connect students with providers to receive services that will compliment school programs.

As you plan services for transition-aged students, it is important to determine how you will continue to connect currently enrolled and newly referred students with the services of DARS as well as opportunities for students to connect with the Pre-Employment Transition Service counselors. All schools system in the Commonwealth have had the opportunity to complete a Memorandum of Understanding with DARS, whereby preferences regarding school contact, the referral process, pre-employment transition service delivery to students, collaboration and information exchange were agreed upon. These agreements may be amended in consideration of the division’s return to school plan. DARS recognizes the safety of students and staff is the primary concern. Pre-employment transition providers will comply with all directed health measures and school specific health guidance in place during the school year for in-person contact with students and will implement flexibility to facilitate remote contact with students during the school day when necessary.

Examples of collaborative partnership to support transition planning include:

* Facilitation of student engagement in pre-employment transition services;
* Communicating the process for student engagement with DARS among school staff;
* Alerting DARS of new or updated directed health measures;
* Attendance at IEP meetings (in-person or virtual) with prior consent of the parent and/or eligible student;
* Sharing student/family updated contact information; and
* Providing regular updates about student activities.

The VDOE and DARS look forward to continued collaboration with school divisions in support of secondary transition for students with disabilities. For additional information and assistance, please contact Marianne Moore, Secondary Transition Specialist, at Marianne.Moore@doe.virginia.gov; telephone (804) 225-2700 or Martin Kurylowski, Transition and Education Services Coordinator, at Martin.Kurylowski@dars.virginia.gov; telephone
(703) 227-3529.

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