

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



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MEMORANDUM

TO: Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Area Directors
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Area Supervisors
Exceptional Student Education Directors

FROM: Bill Palmer, Director
Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Bambi J. Lockman, LL.D., Chief
Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services

DATE: October 6, 2011

SUBJECT: Florida's Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID)

The University of South Florida St. Petersburg was one of 27 recipients of the U. S. Department of Education, Office of Postsecondary Education, Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities into Higher Education (TPSID) grants in 2010. These programs are authorized by the Higher Education Opportunities Act (HEOA) enacted on August 14, 2008. The Florida funded project, known as the Florida Consortium is designed to improve the quality and depth of existing postsecondary education programs. The Florida Consortium will also foster greater access for students with intellectual disabilities to Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) by helping to develop new programs across the state of Florida.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEES) are committed to ensuring the success of Florida's Comprehensive Transition and Postsecondary Programs for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID). DVR and BEES sought guidance from Lynnae Rutledge, Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) Commissioner, and Alexa Posney, Assistant Secretary for Special Education and

Rehabilitative Services, regarding DVR's ability to expend funds in support of Florida's TPSID programs. On March 21, 2011, DVR and BEESS received written confirmation from the Commissioner that DVR is able to expend funds for Florida's TPSID programs while remaining in compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and regulations at 34 CFR 361.48. This memorandum is intended to clarify the roles and responsibilities of each partner in the implementation of Florida's TPSIDs as delineated below.

- DVR will identify and commit at least two counselors in each of the six DVR areas to receive training from the BEESS discretionary project, Project 10: Transition Education Network, the DVR Transition Administrator and/or the Florida Consortium. The training will include information regarding benefits to consumers who participate in the campus programs and services that may be provided within the DVR process. Referrals to DVR for students planning to apply to these programs would initially be handled by these counselors, which will expedite eligibility determination and development of an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), due to their familiarity with the program.
- DVR counselors will participate in future training coordinated by Project 10, the DVR Transition Administrator and/or the Florida Consortium when approved by both partners.
- BEESS and/or Project 10 will encourage each Local Education Agency (LEA) to identify potential students who are likely candidates for TPSID programs based on the student's transition assessment and measurable postsecondary goals beginning at age 16. BEESS and/or Project 10 will provide direction to the LEA regarding referrals for those students considering application to a TPSID.
- Referral to the DVR counselors identified for each area should be made at least two years prior to the student's exit from high school for future students. This will expedite students' access to DVR services if they submit an application and are accepted into a TPSID program closer to the age of 18 or beyond.
- DVR counselors will process DVR applications and determine eligibility for students likely to apply to a TPSID program. DVR counselors will review all appropriate options, including TPSID programs, during IPE development
- DVR counselors are required to evaluate the availability of comparable services before expending agency funds. The authorization of Purchased Services for eligible DVR consumers will be made on an individual basis, consistent with each student's IPE. DVR Purchased Services may include program and/or course tuition, books, supplies, maintenance, on-the-job training, placement, and support services.

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For further information or assistance, please contact:

- Kirk Hall, DVR Transition Administrator, (850) 245-3360 or Kirk.Hall@vr.fldoe.org, or
- Sheila Gritz, Program Specialist, BEESS, (850) 245-0478 or Sheila.Gritz@fldoe.org.

BJL:BP:sdg:kgh

cc: Mary Jane Tappen, Deputy Chancellor, Curriculum, Instruction, and Student Services
District Transition Contact Persons
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Project 10: Transition Education Network Staff
Kirk Hall, DVR Transition Administrator
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