



A story of collaboration. . .

- Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- Lane Independent Living Alliance: LIFE Program
- Oregon School for the Deaf
- Willamette Educational Service District

- **Keys to Collaborative Partnership in Youth Transition**

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Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation



**In the Beginning:
The Traditional Transition Model**

- **January:** Seniors and final year transition students receive orientation to OVRS services and begin intake appointments
- **March/April:** students in OVRS system and eligible
- **April/May:** Career exploration starts, plan development begins
- **June:** Graduation..... just as services are beginning, students return home and many are lost

MAKING THE CONNECTION



Oregon Transition: The Big Picture



- WIOA and increased emphasis on Transition-July 2014
- Lawsuit Settlement – Lane vs Brown (2015 – 2016) mandates emphasis on transition
- National Employment First – emphasis on transition
- PepNet 2 – Four year grant promoting development of statewide plans to support youth with hearing loss in successful transition

Oregon’s Response to Transition Needs



- Oregon’s long term commitment to Youth – Youth Transition Program (YTP) – partnerships VR and Education since 1990.
- Project Access Program and Curriculum
- National Employment First –State and Regional Employment First collaborative teams in place
- PepNet Statewide Team – Collaborative Teams with emphasis on Deaf and Hard of Hearing Youth

Oregon’s Response to Transition Needs



- Response to Lawsuit Settlement
- MOU – Education, Vocational Rehabilitation and Development Disabilities mandated to partner.
- Sheltered workshops no longer an option
- Increased emphasis on community placement at minimum wage
- Team collaboration – education, VR and DD Services

Oregon's Response to Transition Needs



- **Response to WIOA Youth Transition Emphasis**
- **Increased number of YTP sites – currently serving 112 districts - 2/3rds of districts in state.**
- **Oregon Department of Education – Development of Network of Transition Network Facilitators throughout the state to facilitate development of local transition partnerships (8 regions)**
- **ODDS – Network of Employment Specialists (5)**

The Story of a Unique Collaborative Relationship



South Salem OVRs
 Oregon School for the Deaf
 LIFE Program - Lane Independent Living Alliance
 Willamette Education Service District

In Collaboration With:



- **Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation:**
- **Kathryn Eckert-Mason, MS Deaf and Hard of Hearing Counselor Specialist and PepNet State Team Member**
- **Rhonda Meidinger, Branch Manager, S. Salem OVRs**




 **In Collaboration With:**

Lane Independent Living Alliance, LIFE Program

- **Becky Emmert, MS CRC, LIFE Program Lead, Job Developer, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist and PepNet State Team Member**
- **Miranda Featherstone, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Specialist and PepNet State Team Member**




 **In Collaboration With:**

Oregon School for the Deaf

- **Dr. Sharla Jones PhD, Director and PepNet State Team Member**
- **Matt Boyd, Principal and PepNet State Team Member**
- **Katie Heise, Adult Transition Teacher**




 **In Collaboration With:**

Willamette Educational Services District

- **Eleni Boston, Coordinator and PepNet State Team Member**
- **Linda North, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Teacher,**
- **Tobi Masei, Deaf and Hard of Hearing Teacher and PepNet State Team Member**




MAKING THE CONNECTION



Models Considered:



- **PEPNET Transition Summit spring 2011** – models reviewed – various nationwide transition programs for Deaf Youth
- **Project Access** – on campus model - modified curriculum (language level issues)
- **YTP Model** – OSD not eligible for YTP grant
- **Need:** Culturally competent model delivered and staff fluent in ASL and part of the Deaf Community

Pepnet Transition Summit

- **Pepnet Mission** – Advancing educational opportunities for people who are Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- **Summit:** May 2nd – May 4th, 2011
- **Collaboration:** Representatives attending from VR, school districts, Schools for the Deaf, various service providers
- **Mutual Goal:** Improve transition services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students – creation a transition vision

PN2 Summit and Statewide Plan

- OSEP Funded 3 Year Project / State plans for all 50 States
- 3 Summits (2014, 2015, 2016) – Development and Implementation of a Statewide Plan for Oregon
- Local Collaboration: Representatives attending from VR, school districts, Schools for the Deaf, various service providers – 4 Organized Networking Events.
- Mutual Goal: Improve transition services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing students – creation a transition vision



In the Beginning: The Traditional Transition Model

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Issues Identified

- Across the nation Deaf and hard of hearing students are graduating without the academic and functional skills needed for employment success.
- Inconsistency in transition services: across the country, students began accessing adult services at different ages and involve different services.
- Often transition services are not offered until students are Seniors or in their last year of transition programs.

Conference Conclusions



• **Age of Service Matters:** The older the students are when transition services begin, the less successful the outcomes are.



• **Community Work Experiences are Valuable:** Students who completed work experiences in High School had higher rates of employment upon graduation, often in the same position they completed the experience in.

Conference Conclusions

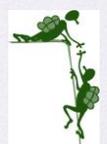
• **Creativity is Key:** Thinking outside the box to address transition needs is a must.



• **Teams are Effective:** No one agency can do it all. Collaboration is needed. (VR, School District, DD Services, Mental Health Services, Work Force, Post Secondary Education, etc.) Active involvement from students and their families increased success.

Conference Conclusions

• **Utilizing Peer Mentors is Effective:** Students who were mentored by successful adults who also experiences disabilities transitioned more effectively.



• **Culturally Competent Services are Key:** Services provided directly in the student's first language increases transition success.

• **High Expectations:** Students will often meet expectations – if the whole team maintains high expectations, success is likely.



Conference Conclusions



• **VR Presence at School Helps:** Programs that included VR staff presence on school campuses had higher transition success rates.



• **Early Intervention is Key:** Recommendation is to start career exploration in 8th or 9th grade and begin transition services in 10th grade.



• **Ultimate Goal:** Transition students will be connected to adult services and enter the workforce or continue in education upon graduation with seamless transition.

The Stars Align for Fall 2011

The Necessary Ingredients:

- **Enthusiasm:** Thinking outside of the box for Transition (South Salem VR Staff)
- **Collaboration:** Oregon School for the Deaf offers VR office space on Campus
- **Manager Support:** – Thank you Rhonda Meidinger
- **Culturally Competent Services:** available in ASL through VR Vendors (LIFE Program)



Our Vision



• **Begin Transition Services Earlier:** VR Intakes Completed by (December/January Year 1, September Year 2, Spring of Junior Year in Year 3)



• **Provide Individualized Services:** Referral to LIFE or Colleen for individualized career exploration services.



• **Provide Group Services:** Bimonthly Job Club sessions to address career exploration and job preparation topics.



The Lofty Goal

Assist All Students to Dream and Achieve
All students in an IPE upon leaving school

Program Highlights

- **VR Presence on Campus / Dedicated office space on campus.**
- **Culturally Competent Services provided in native language (American Sign Language).**
- **Monthly planning meeting with all partners involved including VR, OSD key staff persons, LIFE staff and now attempting to include WESD staff.**
- **Earlier Intervention – Introduction to VR and application end of junior year..... Begin VR Services start of senior year.**
- **Ongoing coordination between OSD and LIFE staff**

Program Highlights

- **Individualized Service Component – Each student referred for 1:1 career exploration services in exploring their unique strengths, interests and options. Where possible we try to identify successful Deaf adults in the community working in the career of stated interest.**
- **The Group Experience: September Career Day, Job Club and Bridge to Success Groups – Two Times / month**
- **Off Campus Work Experience for students in ATP including individualized job coaching and interpreter services where needed (bus skills training, community resources, soft skills for employment success).**

The Specifics: Job Club

- Job Club – Students divided into Education Bound and Employment Bound groups (Bridge to Success and Job Club)
- Similar topics addressed in each group with focus on the unique needs of each group of students
- Monthly Planning Meeting for the purpose of:
 - Review of student progress – concerns and successes
 - Review of coordination needs
 - Review of Job Club topics and planning

The Specifics: Job Club Topics

- Overview of VR System and Process
- Discussion of what VR can and cannot do for consumers
- Importance of choosing a career that fits and guidance on how to do this
- Importance of attendance and participation in VR related activities – students received 1 credit for Job Club
- Addressing Deaf Cultural perspectives of VR and providing ideas for success
- Deaf role models as guest speakers
- Life on SSI vs. the Employed life
- What are accommodations? ADA and How to Request Accommodations
- How to request, find, choose, and use an ASL/English Interpreter
- Self-Advocacy
- Accessing College Disability Services
- Effective Interviewing Skills
- Workplace Culture and Expectations

OSD Job Club – Guest Presenters

Jon Cray
Public Utilities Commission

Juan Brown
Willamette University



Student Composition 2011-2012

- 17 Students (OVRs clients)
- 7 College Bound Students (NTID, SWCID, Chemeketa, Le Cordon Bleu)
- 5 Hands-on-Training, Employment Bound Students
- 5 Students with additional adult services involved (DD Services, OCB etc).
- Mixture of Seniors and Transition Program students



2011 – 2012 End of Year Report

- 2 - National Technical Institute for the Deaf, Rochester Institute of Technology – Film Production
- 1 - Le Cordon Bleu – Chef training
- 2 - Welding Mentor School
- 1 – Employed at TJ Max – Stock Associate
- 4 - Students returned for ATP (including 1 of the welding students). All participated in Community Based Work Experiences



Student Composition 2012-2013

- 18 Students (OVRs clients) total
- 8 Seniors
 - 1 Standard Diploma – College-bound
 - 6 Modified Diploma – Hands-on-Training / Employment Bound students
 - 1 Certificate of Attainment due to credit issue
- 10 Transition Students (19 – 21)
 - 4 ATP students returning from last year
 - 6 new ATP students

2012-2013 End of Year Report

- 4 students in Plan Status at the end of the school year.
 - College plan – math teacher
 - Employment plans: care giver, retail customer service, welding
- 1 student Returning to ATP – Standard Diploma Goal
- 6 students Returning for Transition Program 18-21
- 4 students aged out with plans in process – completing summer internships in occupations of interest
- 3 Dropped out of services: foster home placement issues, family issues, relocating out of state, etc.

2012 – 2013 End of Year Report

- ATP Work Experience Sites:
 - 1 at OSD museum
 - 3 food services positions
 - 2 activity assistants in assisted living setting
 - 2 shop assistant in tire shop
 - 1 library assistant
 - 3 retail stocking
 - 2 daycare
 - 1 elementary school assistant



2013 Summer Internship

- Special funding from VR obtained to set up 10-week long paid Summer Internships for Deaf Transition Students
 - 7 Students participated
 - 1 Film Production/Editing
 - 3 Food Service
 - 1 Electronic/Computer Recycling
 - 1 Retail Stocking
 - 1 Shop Assistant – Tire Store
 - 1 Caregiving – Assisted Living Facility
 - 1 Garten Services Summer Work Program



2013 Summer Internship

Portland Community College – Food Services

2013 Summer Internship

Sassy Onion Cafe

2014-2015 Student participation

- OSD Seniors - 9
- OSD Transition Students – 17
- WESD Mainstreamed Students – 7
- Highlight..... all of this years' seniors started their application process the end of their junior year and were in the VR system to start services by October!!!! - Beginning to meet this year's juniors.
- Number of students in off campus placements. – The majority of transition students were in an off campus work experience.

You get the picture

- Year by Year our numbers have increase
- With the additional networking through our PepNet Statewide Plan our model now includes Deaf and Hard of Hearing students in various mainstreamed public high school settings including local YTP staff when possible (ADD HERE)
- Additional Partnerships – local Welding School – 6 students in training next year.

Projections for 2016 - 2017

- At Oregon School for the Deaf
- 1 Junior
- 17 Seniors
- 27 Transition Students – Partnership with local Welding Sch.
- Students in Mainstream Settings – 7 different high schools
- Plus recently exited students still on caseload

Reflections on What Has Worked

- **VR Presence on Campus:** Students knew their VR Counselor and would seek out interaction with them. This lead to increased rapport and collaboration during Plan writing.
- **Individual Services:** Students' emotional investment and commitment to their own plans increased with individualized career exploration services from LIFE Staff. The rapport developed improved future services (job preparation/job development).
- **Increased Expectations = Increased Responsibility:** Maintaining schedules, completing tasks, etc. This lead to increased excitement and also served as a test for motivation.
- **Informational Interview/Job Shadow Opportunities:** Students even asked to join each others' experiences
- **Deaf Role Models:** especially alumni of OSD
- **Creative Presentations:** Mix of guest speakers, presentations, activities

Reflections on What Worked Continued

- **Beginning Earlier:** most students had a career goal at the end of the year. Many had completed career exploration and were in plan or ready for plan. (new VR 90 Day to Plan requirement has impacted this).
- **Communication and Collaboration:** with all partners lead to creative solutions to challenges and barriers. Increased collaboration lead to deeper understanding of systems and ability to partner effectively.
- **Outreach and creative inclusion of mainstreamed partners** – Willamette ESD students.



Lessons Learned



- **Don't Over or Under Estimate:** We overestimated student skill level, knowledge, maturity level and understanding of the importance of transition activities. Through the year adjusted our approach and by the end most students were invested.
- **More Time is Needed:** There is not enough time in the bimonthly sessions to address the topics and skills needed to prepare students for community work experiences and moving forward in transition.
- **Balance is Key:** School and VR Schedules are difficult to balance. Some students were not able to actively participate in Job Club and/or individual services due to academic and extra curricular activities.
- **Transportation is Key:** Initially we set up informational interviews or job shadows and found out students were not able to utilize public transportation independently to attend these opportunities.

Lessons Learned



- **Modified Diploma Issues:** With significantly less students achieving standard diplomas, a new approach for training and employment is needed. Creativity will be key.
- **Change is Slow:** Meeting the goals was more challenging than expected. However, improvement was still seen. Ongoing planning meetings required to readjust our goals and implementation strategies over time.

The Vision Revised!



- **Plan Sooner:** Begin planning in Summer and prepare curriculum and schedule.
- **Complete Intakes Sooner:** Goal to have all seniors and exiting transition students in VR system by September and referred LIFE for individualized services. Complete intakes of Juniors in the Spring.
- **Start Job Club Sooner:** Get Job Club up and running in September. Jump start Job Club with September Career Days.
- **Involve Parents:** "One of the single most influential factors of success in transition is Parental Involvement."

The Vision Revised!

- **OSD: Year 2 -** Moved Adult Transition Program to be co-located next to VR office in the same OSD building.
- **OSD:** More emphasis on employment expectations within transition curriculum. Lots of collaboration with OSD Transition Teacher, Katie.
- **Increased Collaboration:** More discussion between OVRS, job developers, and transition teachers regarding curriculum, student portfolios, scheduling, and events. Include VR staff in Fall IEP's.
- **Increased Technology:** Better computer access and OSD endeavor to use IPADS in classroom education.
- **Increased Community Work Experiences:** Place ALL transition students in community based work experiences in their occupation of interest.

OSD Adult Transition Class



Unique Training Partnership



R&S Welding Mentors, LLC – Salem, OR

VR Office on Campus



Student Posters / Career Day



Transition Roadmap Guide to Success

Eleni Boston, Coordinator
 Willamette Educational Service District
 Kathryn Eckert-Mason, MS,
 DHH Counselor Specialist, Voc. Rehab.
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Identify Key Players

- **Key Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors**
- **Key Educators – Special Education Teachers, Transition Teachers**
- **Key Developmental Disability representatives**
- **Key Vendors with an interest in serving Youth**
- **Parent representatives**

Process

- **Commit to a regular time for meeting –**
- **Monthly vs Quarterly**
- **Develop a suggested agenda**
- **Review Mission of the Group- overall collaboration vs. day to day programmatic needs**
- **Review individual student needs in planning**
- **Re-evaluation and revise team mission**

Identify your Students: Who are they?

- Where are the students?
- How do we identify them?
- IDEA (IEP) and 504
- (Our Deaf and Hard of Hearing students were sometimes a little hard to find).

Where to you begin?

- WIOA and IDEA – Emphasis on the earlier the better.
- Where do you start if just getting started?
- Seniors..... then Transition age – then go back and start working on juniors (end of Junior year?)

Decide on a Do-Able Goal as a Regional Team

- Pick something that is do-able and realistic
- Pie in the Sky is nice as a vision – but keep the action plan and steps realistic.
- Examples:
- Exploring local employers who may be willing to take on student for work experiences.
- Insuring a target number of students have a valued work experience.

It's all about Collaboration

- Challenge to VR Counselors –
- Spend time in the schools
- Get to really know your students
- Get to really know your educators

Challenges to Educators

- Get to know the resources in your area.
- Set up contacts
- Involve parents early on
- Set up regular meetings with VR Counselors to collaborate related to specific student needs.
- Work with students to identify goals and path as per IEP transition plan – identify and invite key outside agencies (VR, DD, Mental Health)

Partnering is Hard Work



Celebrate the success!

Questions/Discussion



Special Thanks / Contact Info

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Resources

- <https://oregoncis.uoregon.edu/home/>
- <http://www.pepnet.org/training/mapit>
- <http://projectaccess.uoregon.edu>
- [http://www.ode.state.or.us/gradelevel/transition/00_2015_oregons_transition_resource_handbook_final_\(9-21-15\)_2434.pdf](http://www.ode.state.or.us/gradelevel/transition/00_2015_oregons_transition_resource_handbook_final_(9-21-15)_2434.pdf)



Resources

- <http://www.pepnet.org/summit/teams/Arizona>
- <http://www.pepnet.org/summit/teams/Oregon>