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Commissioner

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
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Rhode Island Department of Elementary & Secondary Education
Employment First Policy

Policy:

It is the policy of the Rhode Island Department of Education to support and promote practices in local education agencies and with partner state agencies that support students with intellectual/developmental disabilities in exiting the public education system to post-secondary education, training and/or work in integrated settings.

Supporting Regulations:

In accordance with the Rhode Island Board of Education Regulations Governing the Education of Children with Disabilities (2013), local education agencies must provide transition planning and services for students with disabilities through the Individualized Education Program (IBP) as defined:

Transition services. For a child with a disability, beginning at age fourteen (14), or younger if determined appropriate by the IBP Team, and updated annually, thereafter, the IEP must include:

- . Appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age appropriate transition assessments related to training education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills; and
- . The transition services (including courses of study) needed to assist the child in reaching those goals.

The Regulations further define Transition Services as:

- . A coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that is designed to be within a results oriented process that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation ;
- . Is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences and interests; and Includes:
 - o Instruction;
 - o Related services;
 - o Community experiences;
 - o The development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives; and

- If appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and provision of functional vocational evaluation.
- Transition services for children with disabilities may be special education, if provided as specially designed instruction, or related services, if required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education. [300.43 (a) and (b)]

RIDE Commitments in Implementation of the Employment First Policy:

Upon adoption of the Employment First policy RIDE commits to the following efforts to support this policy:

. Through interagency agreements, RIDE will collaborate with other state agencies as needed to support implementation of the Employment First Policy.

. RIDE shall promote the involvement and use of career planning teams for students with intellectual/developmental disabilities in the development of transition plans and the IEP process, to include:

- The composition of career planning teams that include a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor, qualified school transition specialist, qualified state agency representative(s) and the eligible student and family/guardian.
- The use of Career Development Plans to be developed in conjunction with the IEP process through person centered planning techniques such as MAPS, Discovery, Path, etc.
- The Career Development Plan and process will be consistent and respectful of the students' academic goals and access to instruction the student requires and chooses to achieve the highest level of academic achievement.

. RIDE shall promote meaningful work opportunities for students with intellectual/developmental disabilities prior to exit from high school.

. RIDE shall communicate to local education agencies a prohibition of providing vocational assessments of transition-age youth in segregated work settings (i.e. sheltered workshops and day activity centers).

. RIDE will continue to share information about supported employment and integrated day services with transition-age students with intellectual/developmental disabilities and their parents.

. In collaboration with other state agencies and stake holders, RIDE shall provide and support technical assistance and professional development to implement the Employment First Policy.

This policy is effective September 16, 2014.



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