Region Highlights

- Transition personnel are largely collaborative and supportive, though with limited resources
- Utilizes the limited resources available in the area for transition planning
- Schools are providing opportunities for TWC personnel to connect with students, parents, and teachers (e.g., Parent/Teacher Nights, Career Day)
- Vocational Adjustment Coordinator (VAC) is supportive with a game plan that includes collaboration, and communication using texts/emails for contacting parents
- Charter school developed checklists to use during the ARD meetings

Challenges

School Level Roles and Responsibilities

- According to focus group participants, transition was difficult to define
- Schools are underprepared and do not have the necessary paperwork ready for other agencies to work with their students
- There is a relational disconnect between some schools and TWC/VRS counselors (e.g., “up in arms”)
- School staff unclear about which students are eligible for TWC/VRS services
- Parents are hesitant to follow through and does not provide the necessary paperwork for services

TVRC/VRC Roles and Responsibilities

- Definition of “potentially eligible” is currently unclear, and there are no examples
- Within the rural communities, TVRCs are not able to use their technology due to no Wifi
- Counselors are urged to “hurry up” and submit necessary paperwork to receive services. Paperwork is submitted and then the counselor waits and hope that the request will be approved (lots of approvers, processes change month to month)
- Poor quality diagnostic evaluations from the rural school districts and oftentimes the diagnoses are the same with no supporting evidence
- School districts not aware of MOU

Working with Parents

- Parents’ citizenship status makes it hard for the family to have access to resources
- Some parents do not have a sense of urgency to discuss/plan for their students’ transition
- Stigma about TVS (students, parents, employers hear about bad experiences from others)
- Office environment (cubicles) is not conducive to support confidentiality, so clients are apprehensive in disclosing information
- Parents’ perceptions of professionals makes it difficult to provide services

Working with Students

- TWC/VRS counselors not part of voting committee in the student’s ARD meetings and are discouraged from talking
- During the ARD meetings, unrealistic goals are chosen, but the student’s disability is not discussed (e.g., student doesn’t know about his/her disability)
- Students don’t believe they have a disability because of “passing their classes”, but are unaware that classes are modified. TWC/VRS counselor’s job is to discuss student’s disability
- Programs for students are “at bare minimum” and have room for growth to be more beneficial for students
- There are limited diagnostic/vocational assessments completed for students within the school districts
- There are perceived limited career opportunities available for special education students (e.g., “5 F’s: food, filth, flowers, factories, filing”)
Who is in your team?

- TWC
  - Counselors
  - Contracted workforce staff
  - State specialists
  - Vocation navigators
- ISD’s
  - Local transition teams
  - Transition coordinator
  - Educational diagnosticians
- Job coaches
- Vocational adjustment coordinator

Supporting Organizations and Agencies

- Agency
  - Social Security (Supplemental Security Insurance (SSI))
  - Health and Human Services (CLASS: Community Living Assistance and Support Services)
- Education
  - El Paso Community College
  - University of Texas in El Paso (UTEP)
  - Adult Literacy Center
  - Children’s Disabilities Information Coalition (CDIC)
- Preparing for Adulthood and Work
  - Job Corps
  - PRIDE Industries
  - Imagine Enterprises
- Community Supports and Solutions
  - Goodwill Industries
  - El Paso Community Foundation
  - VOLAR Center for Independent Living (e.g., El Paso del Norte Youth Leadership Forum)
- Family Support
  - Project AMISTAD
  - Transportation
    - Local metro/bus system
    - Sun Metro
    - Paratransit
    - Teaching students how to use Uber and Lyft in case of emergency
  - Group housing (limited)
- Health Resources
  - El Paso del Norte Health Foundation (e.g., Children’s Development Center)
  - Emergence Health Network
- Professional Relationships
  - Employment service providers
  - Apprenticeship providers

- Case manager
- Project SEARCH
- Job Core
- Project HIRE
- UTEP Center for Disabilities
- El Paso Community College (EPCC)
- AROS/College advisors
- Transition networks (agencies, community partners)
- State network
- AmeriGroup
- Texas Workforce Commission (e.g., vocational rehabilitation)
- Education Service Center Region 19
- 211 services
- Parent Education Network (PEN)
  - Project (e.g., federally funded Parent Training and Information Center)
- El Paso Project HIGHER
- Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL)
- Project SEARCH
- Community Work Incentive Coordinators (CWICs)