



# Top 5 Things for Educators to Know about VR

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TEXAS A&M CAPACITY BUILDING REGION 4 CONFERENCE

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LONGVIEW, TX



# Presenters

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# Agenda

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- Background Info about WIOA
- Top 5 Things for Educators to Know about VR:
  1. What is Pre-ETS?
  2. Difference Between Potentially Eligible and VR Eligibility
  3. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): TWC and TEA
  4. Supplementing vs. Supplanting
  5. Appropriate Referrals & How to Make a Referral
- Time for Q&A and Discussion about Success Stories



# Background Info:

## Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

WIOA, passed in July 2014, introduced new requirements for Vocational Rehabilitation programs.

### Key terms:

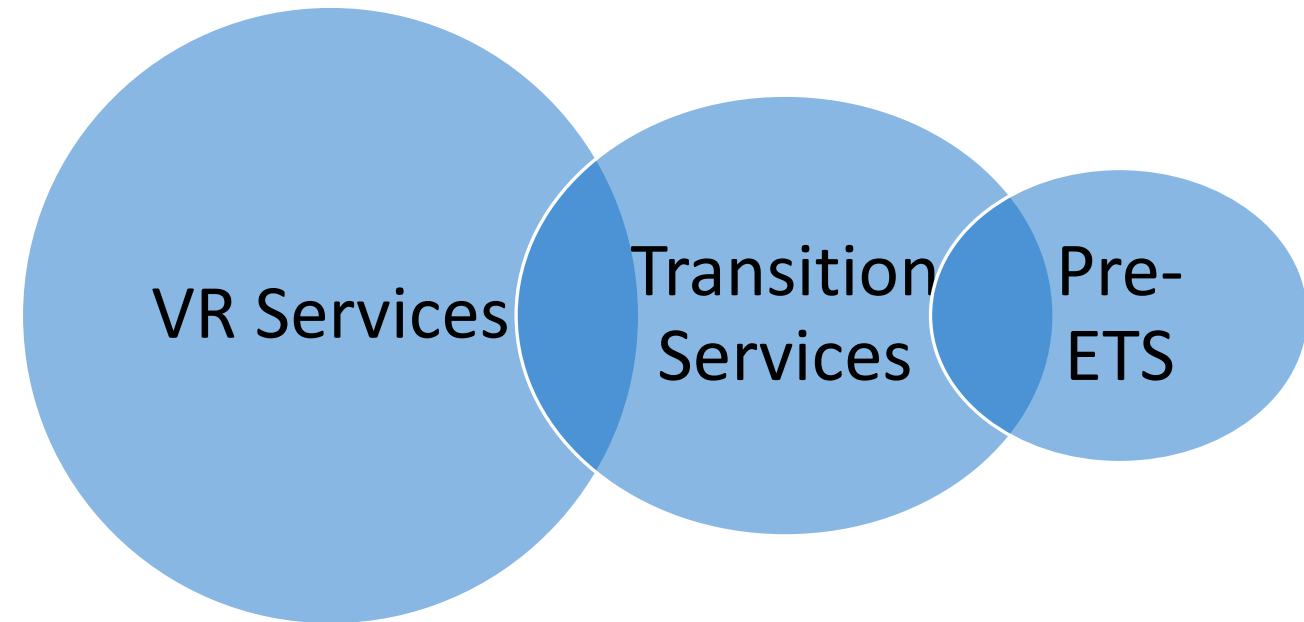
- **Student with a disability:** an individual, age 14-22, who has a disability and is enrolled in high school or a recognized post-secondary program.
- **Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS):** services provided to students with disabilities while in high school to better prepare them for employment, independent living, and social skills.
- **Potentially Eligible:** An alternate to VR eligibility that is intended to make Pre-ETS more easily available for students with a disabilities.



# Transition Services

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Transition Services  
are a subset of VR  
Services and Pre-ETS  
are a subset of  
Transition Services.



# Pre-ETS

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In most cases, the services provided to students with disabilities fall into one of these 5 Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) categories:

1. Career Exploration
2. Work-Based Learning
3. Counseling on Post-Secondary Opportunities
4. Job Readiness
5. Self-Advocacy

Note: Multiple services are available for each of these categories.

# When To Use Potentially Eligible



Use Potentially Eligible for a Younger Student When:

- a) The Student will only need Pre-ETS at this time;
- b) The Student has not expressed interest in applying for VR services;
- c) The Student would like to participate in a Pre-ETS activity in the immediate future; or
- d) The Student is at the beginning of their career exploration with limited experience or knowledge of career interests and would benefit from Pre-ETS at this time.

# When To Take An Application



Take an Application for a Younger Student When:

- a) The Student has a need for additional support services which cannot be provided under potentially eligible, such as transportation, and will need an IPE to participate in Pre-ETS;
- b) The Student has expressed interest in applying for VR services and does not plan to participate in Pre-ETS immediately; or
- c) The Student has identified their Career Pathway of Interest and will benefit from VR services on an IPE.





# VR Eligibility Criteria

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- The customer has a physical **or** mental impairment (first criterion);
- The impairment constitutes or results in a **substantial impediment** to employment (second criterion);
- The customer requires Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services to **prepare for, enter, engage in, or advance in competitive integrated employment** consistent with the customer's strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice (third criterion); and
- **The customer can achieve an employment outcome**, unless pre-eligibility trial work experiences demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence that the customer cannot achieve an employment outcome because of the severity of the customer's disability (fourth criterion).



# Memorandum of Understanding (MOU): TWC and TEA

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The MOU exists to provide a framework for how VR and the schools work together to serve students and it references the LEAs throughout.

Main points:

- Limited data sharing between TEA and TWC.
- Coordination of referrals for students with disabilities.
- Guidance on when to invite VR counselors to ARDs and when to establish an alternative.
- Provision of meaningful VR services for students.
- Confidentiality.
- Fiscal responsibility.

The MOU can be found here: [Secondary Transition Guidance | Texas Education Agency](#)



# Supplementing vs. Supplanting

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- VR will not cover items included on the student's IEP because this is the school's responsibility under IDEA but there are many gray areas to consider
- All of the services VR provides must be reasonable and necessary for the student to reach their employment goal
- When gray areas arise, it is best to meet to discuss the need so the two agencies can partner and pool our resources to assist the student
- Example of gray areas:
  - Work-based learning program – School could not fund the job coaches over the summer



# Appropriate Referrals

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- Special Ed Students
- 504 Students
- 18+ Students
- CTE Students
- Students who have not disclosed their disability, but Teachers see issues in the classroom



# Referral Process

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- How to make a referral
- Critical that you are communicating with your VR Counselor
- School Plan is available to help with coordination of services
- Release forms must be completed for every student.  
Parent/Guardian must sign all release forms if the student is a minor.
- Additional Intake paperwork is required depending on if the customer is Potentially Eligible or going through VR application process



# How to get started...

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- Work with your assigned VR counselor to refer students for services.
  - The counselor will discuss the VR process with students and parents, which includes discussing their options for services (PE or VR Application), determining eligibility and, if eligible, assessment and planning for services.
  - The counselor will schedule appointments at the school, in the Workforce Solutions office, or at other locations to initiate the VR process.
- If you aren't sure who the counselor is, call your nearest Texas Workforce Solutions-Vocational Rehabilitation (TWS-VRS) office or your area's Regional Transition Specialist (contact info on the next slide).
- For a list of TWS-VRS offices, visit: [texasworkforce.org/offices/vr-general-services.html](https://texasworkforce.org/offices/vr-general-services.html)
- For assistance in locating a VR office for vocational rehabilitation services, please email [vr.office.locator@twc.texas.gov](mailto:vr.office.locator@twc.texas.gov) or call (512) 936-6400 to be connected to VR staff.

# Regional Transition Specialists

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# State Office Transition Team

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# Time for Q&A and Discuss Success Stories

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# Top 5 Things for Educators to Know about VR

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CAPACITY BUILDING REGION 6 CONFERENCE

JANUARY 24<sup>TH</sup> AND 25<sup>TH</sup>, 2023

SAN ANTONIO, TX