Positive Highlights

- Joint support of implementing Pre- ETS opportunities for students
- Online Pre-ETS such as "Digitability"
- Increasing efforts to build rapport
- Development of work-based learning activities
- Districts and VR are working to help VRCs meet with families and students before attending ARD meetings
- Working on social-emotional development early leads to earlier employability
- Life skills/ employability skills camps for 14-15 year-olds can make them more successful in SEAL or paid work experience

Common Themes

Collaboration Between School Districts and VR

Challenges:

- Limited knowledge of each other's systems and jargon
- Staff turnover results in varying skill levels, limited relationships
- Need a process to determine when to involve VR based upon student needs
- Lack of communication between schools, VR, and providers
- Some districts don't allow VR to provide services on campus, but the campus staff isn't addressing Pre-ETS skill areas

Opportunities:

- Include VR in professional development in August, PLCs, campus staff meetings
- Training on each other's systems, jargon, timelines, and services
- Meet to plan service coordination and define roles, the set up a VR calendar for campuses
- Inform each other when staff turnover happens
- Full-day campus "blitzes" allow VRCs to meet with more students
- Consistent VR procedures across offices would lead to more uniform services

Working with Parents

Challenges:

- Resist employment because they fear losing benefits or don't see the students as employable
- Some have unrealistic expectations for employment/postsecondary education
- Misinformation regarding services
- Transportation is not available
- Disability, education level, and cultural or language barriers may complicate access to services
- TWC presentations aren't engaging and are too technical for parents

Opportunities:

- Plan and hold join transition events for families
- Provide joint parent training sessions
    - Transportation safety
    - TWC services and community resources
    - Guardianship and alternatives

- o Benefit management training with SMURFs
- o Accommodations in the workplace and post-secondary education
- o Disability fact sheets with disability-specific resources
- o Transition fairs and recurring evening meetings

Working with Students
Challenges:
- Maturity level: 14-16 year-olds aren't thinking about employment or careers
- Lack of career exploration leads to limited or unrealistic career goals
- Need to explain individual accommodations and educational plans to the students
- Need to begin disability awareness to decrease stigma and increase acceptance of services
- Students have to take the job that is available to them rather than a job in which they are interested
- Need age-appropriate, hands-on training materials

Opportunities:
- Pair online Pre-ETS like Digitability with in-person, interactive lessons
- Work-based learning helps prepare students for paid work
- Building relationships with CTE improves access and increases pre employment training
- Student needs are being identified. Need to increase outreach to homeschoolers

Collaboration with CTE and General Education
Challenges:
- Difficulty accessing CTE courses and pathways, especially those with certifications
- Working around students' schedules and finding space to meet or provide services
- Lack of understanding of accommodations for students in CTE

Opportunities:
- CTE course moving into middle school
- Hands-on CTE courses are more accessible and teachers are supportive
- Educating teachers and counselors will increase service access for 504 students

Coordination of Services Beyond the LEA-VR Team
Challenges:
- Lack of employment resources and ideas for this age group (especially in rural areas)
- Providers want to concentrate on more profitable services (VAT vs. SEAL)
- Quality of services varies from one provider to another
- CRPs don't follow procedures and then expect VRCs to fix the paperwork
- Need to improve communication between SEAL, VRC, and educators to increase enrollment and support student success

Opportunities:
- Involve VR earlier for students who may need SEAL, etc.
- Connect with Hireability Navigators to build community relationships and understand the local job market
- Develop service providers in rural areas