





THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK / ALBANY, NY 12234

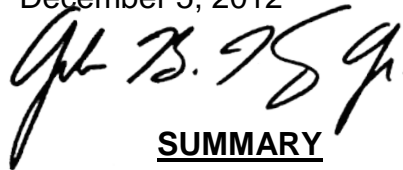
**TO:** Adult Career and Continuing Education Services  
(ACCES) Committee  
P-12 Education Committee

**FROM:** Kevin G. Smith   
Ken Slentz 

**SUBJECT:** Youth with Disabilities: Transition to Employment and a  
Positive Future

**DATE:** December 5, 2012

**AUTHORIZATION(S):**

  
**SUMMARY**

Issue for Discussion

Understanding the role of youth and their families in establishing connections to people, organizations and businesses within the community is fundamental to successful transition to work for all youth, including youth with disabilities.

Proposed Handling

At the December 10, 2012 meeting, the ACCES/P-12 Joint Committee will have a panel discussion about the role of youth and families in making the transition from school to employment through their connections with community networks. Panel members include:

- **Jackson Aarons** lives with his family in Troy, NY. He graduated Lansingburgh High School in June 2012. He earned honor roll in many quarters of his special education classes. Jackson is a thoughtful and kind young man that is well liked. While in high school, Jackson participated in a transition program through a partnership of The Arc of Rensselaer County (The Arc) and the Lansingburgh School District. Since graduation, Jackson continues to be served by The Arc through supported employment and service coordination. Jackson has been employed at the Bloomingrove Veterinary Hospital since July 2012.

- **Todd Irby-Ranniar** is a 2005 graduate of the Manhattan Occupational Training Center. That September Todd began working as a mail clerk at Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Hamilton, a large law firm headquartered in midtown Manhattan. Today, Todd remains a valued member of the Paul, Weiss team and is known throughout the firm for his can-do attitude. In his spare time, Todd enjoys spending time with family and friends, as well as playing sports.
- Family representatives - Ms. Michelle Bulson and Mrs. Linda Irby-Ranniar.
- Community program representative – Fredda Rosen, Executive Director JobPath

### Background Information

The Commissioner and the Board of Regents recognize that effective transition from secondary education to employment for youth with disabilities engages youth and their families with people, organizations and businesses in the community who can support the individual in achieving their employment goal.

Essential actions for effective transition to employment include:

- Leadership at the state, regional and local levels that commits resources, builds capacity and fosters collaboration for transition from secondary education to employment;
- Student participation in career development activities and work experiences while still in school; and
- Early referral to eligibility-based resources, like ACCES-VR and OPWDD, prior to school exit and making solid connections to community organizations, such as independent living centers, community rehabilitation programs, and businesses.

ACCES-VR, in collaboration with P-12 Education’s Office of Special Education, has taken the following steps to improve transition outcomes for youth with disabilities:

- ACCES-VR District Managers, at the invitation of the Transition Specialists from the Regional Special Education-Technical Assistance and Support Centers (RSE-TASCs), are providing overviews of ACCES-VR services at regional meetings of Committee on Special Education (CSE) chairpersons. To date, ten presentations have occurred, 22 are scheduled and there are five pending. The RSE-TASC Transition Specialists and ACCES-VR District Managers provided technical assistance to districts as needed. In many areas, these sessions are building on existing relationships between ACCES-VR and school districts.
- ACCES-VR has defined a set of new services, called youth employment services, which will increase ACCES-VR’s capacity to provide youth with work-based learning and paid work experiences. ACCES has initiated the procurement process to include these and other core rehabilitation services in its next round for contracts in Fall 2013.

- ACCES-VR and P-12 Education's Office of Special Education continue to collaborate with the University of Rochester Strong Center for Developmental Disabilities in the Transition Systems Change Grant from the United State Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. As the grant begins its second year, the Steering Committee, which, in addition to ACCES-VR and the Office of Special Education, includes the Office of Persons with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD) and the Developmental Disabilities Planning Council (DDPC), are developing a job readiness curriculum and planning to initiate regional demonstration projects.

In examining the State's role in promoting and supporting effective transition to employment, critical questions include:

- What values and principles should guide the policies and practices related to transition for school to employment?
- What actions are necessary to engage students and their families more directly in the transition process, particularly in securing opportunities for career development activities while still in school?
- What is the role of the district in creating the structure and practices for effective transition leading to employment outcomes?
- How can local communities, including students and parents, achieve better coordination between their districts and the community organizations, State agencies and businesses that are resources for person-centered planning related to current and future employment?
- What practices can ACCES-VR put in place or build upon to better facilitate the transition from school to work?

As the Board of Regents begin to consider these and other key questions, the ACCES/P12 Joint Regents Committee and ACCES has assembled this panel of youth and their family members who have life experience with transition from school to employment and can offer perspectives that will enrich this important dialogue.