

Competitive Employment Project – Southwest Minnesota

The Southwest/West Central Service Cooperative, in collaboration with numerous partners in southwest MN, received a competitive transition grant for the purpose of improving interagency planning and capacity building to improve employment and work-experience outcomes for youth with disabilities. The partnership includes representatives from the SW/WC Service Coop, local school districts, Minnesota West Carl-Perkins, local Workforce Center partners (SW MN PIC, Rehabilitation Services and Business Service staff) and Minnesota Department of Education. The funded amount of the grant is \$23,675.00

The project has five (5) primary goals including:

- 1. To establish a Southwest Minnesota Transition Improvement Partnership to build capacity for effective transition planning, including the improvement in work-based learning opportunities.**
- 2. To provide professional staff development for educators and agency staff so they might expand and improve the quality of work-based learning experiences for students with disabilities.**
- 3. To explore a regional work-based learning model that would allow several small rural schools to share a licensed work-experience coordinator for students with disabilities.**
- 4. To increase the number of students with disabilities who are placed in work experience opportunities and competitive employment with renewable energy and high tech manufacturing businesses.**
- 5. To improve the regional career assessment and exploration experience for students by adding an Independent Living Skills component to Project Discovery.**

Measurable Outcomes & Benefits:

- The Southwest Minnesota Regional Transition Improvement Partnership met 4 times during the first year of the grant. A prioritized list of activities was established based on the needs of students in the region. The www.c3online.org website has been updated to accurately reflect the transition resource map for the region. (Status – Achieved)
- At least four members of the regional partnership will be trained using the “Guideposts for Success” materials. 100 educators and agency staff will receive work-based learning best practices training and information about transition resources for their community and the region.
- A baseline will be established for the number of work-based learning programs in the region and the number of students with disabilities served by those programs.
- Two new career exploration units will be developed in renewable energy/high tech manufacturing with at least 10 students using the newly developed units. A comprehensive list of regional employers will be developed. 10 students will be placed in work experience and/or competitive employment situations in a renewable energy or high tech manufacturing business.
- An independent living skills assessment process using valid instruments is developed. Ten students will participate in the assessment process.
- A Career Development & Work-Based Learning Conference will be sponsored by the partnership in Fall 2010 (Flyer for conference scheduled for October 5, 2010 is attached).

Leveraging Funds: In addition to the grant funds, the partners have provided significant in-kind contributions to assure that the goals are achieved. The in-kind includes, but not limited to: staff time, meeting space and materials.

Replication: Although this project is specifically designed to serve students with disabilities, the design of the project is such that it can be easily duplicated and used to provide expanded services to the entire student bodies at the local districts, ALC’s and throughout the state.

Service Region: The geographic area covered by the project is an 18 county area (12,500 square miles) including 59 Public Schools, 14 Non-Public and Charter Schools and encompasses districts in both WSA 5 & 6.

The Southwest and West Central Minnesota
**Career Development &
Work-based Learning
Conference**

October 5, 2010
Redwood Falls
Community Center
901 East Cook Street
Redwood Falls, MN

AUDIENCE: School Counselors, Work-based Learning Instructors, Special Education Teachers, Career and Technical Education Teachers, Agency Staff, Career Course Instructors and Individuals that are interested in helping youth transition to adulthood.



Curtis Richards
Keynote Speaker

Curtis Richards is Director of the Center for Workforce Development at the Institute for Educational Leadership in Washington, D.C. Richards serves as the lead technical assistance provider for the National Collaborative on Workforce & Disability for Youth. His keynote address, "**Transition Comes of Age**" will discuss the "Guideposts for Success", which were identified by the NCWD/Youth to assist all youth to navigate the road to work, further education and independent living. It will discuss nationwide efforts to organize around these "Guideposts", and the means for blending and braiding resources across systems to foster effective youth transition.

SESSION TOPICS:

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| ■ Soft-Skills | ■ Minnesota Work-Based Learning Licensure |
| ■ Job Shadowing | ■ Independent Living Skills Assessment |
| ■ Resume Writing | ■ Career Counseling with Diverse Populations |
| ■ Internships | ■ Hot Jobs and On-line Resources |
| ■ Entrepreneurship | ■ Minnesota Work-based Learning Requirements |
| ■ Job Seeking Skills | ■ And more..... |

REGISTRATION:

On-line registration will be open beginning May 17, 2010 at www.swsc.org

Early-Bird \$20 (By 9/20/10) Final \$35 (By 9/27/10)

Registration includes **Lunch** and **5.0 CEUs**

Contact Laurie at 507-537-2270 or Laurie.VanWatermeulen@swsc.org

PARTNERS: SW/WC Service Cooperative, Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Minnesota West Carl Perkins Consortium, Member School Districts, and a Capacity Building Grant through the Minnesota Department of Education