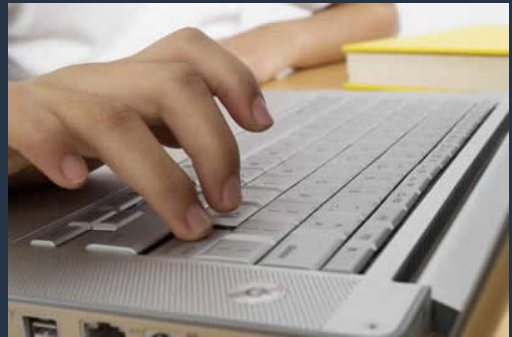


PROJECT 10 TOPICAL BRIEFS are published on a bi-monthly basis. Each issue focuses on a specific topic or theme, highlighting current and upcoming information and events related to secondary transition. This month the Topical Brief is focused on Work-Based Learning Experiences (WBLEs) at a Distance.



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## Stories

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## Work-Based Learning Experiences (WBLEs): What and Why

**What:** The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth defines work-based learning experiences (WBLEs) as paid or unpaid opportunities for students to learn and practice work skills and prepare for success in a future career. WBLEs can take many forms, including site visits, job shadowing, part-time jobs, service projects, volunteer work, internships and apprenticeships. Florida's Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) described On-the-Job Training (OJT)/WBLEs as follows:

- "Are a pre-employment transition service (Pre-ETS)
- Are conducted in a real work environment in the community
- Are driven by hands-on learning
- Can be paid or unpaid
- Require direct employer or community involvement to be successful" (Boyer-Rutherford & Valdivieso, 2020, slide 5).

The role of the schools' Employment Specialists supply the following services to students participating in WBLEs:

- "Career/interest assessments
- Worksite analysis
- Worksite development
- Employer assistance
- Learning and preparation activities
- Worksite selection
- Accommodations
- Hands-on learning
- Ongoing supports" (Boyer-Rutherford & Valdivieso, 2020, slide 7).

**Why:** WBLEs provide benefits to students and communities.

"Work-based learning experiences help students develop important soft skills, expand their professional networks, and better assess their own capacity for and interest in a given career. . . Through these experiences, students prepare for their transitions from school to adulthood and become better able to make informed decisions about integrated, competitive employment that lines up with their interests and goals" (Wissel, Tulikangus & Guy, 2019, p. 1).

**Benefits of WBLEs for students. WBLEs. . .**

- Foster self and career exploration.
- Provide opportunities for students to better assess their own capacity for and interest in a given career.
- Assist students to make connections between the classroom and real-world learning. Work-based learning links what students learn in school to the skills and knowledge needed for real-world careers.
- Lower student dropout rates. Many students drop out of high school and college programs in part because they are unable to see any connection between what they are learning and what they may one day be doing professionally. They ask, "Why do I have to learn this?" By linking student learning to career pathways, work-based learning programs can lower the dropout rate.
- Improve student ownership. Work-based learning programs help students identify career interests and skills by providing connections to industry professionals and opportunities to see options first hand.
- Increase the development of critical skills. Work-based learning programs

provide the opportunity for students to develop necessary workplace skills, such as creative problem solving; enthusiasm and attitude; conflict resolution; communication; and teamwork.

- Expand students' professional networks.
- Help students to become better informed about how to make decisions before accepting a job offer.

(Federal Partners in Transition, 2015; Rogers-Chapman & Darling Hammond, 2013; Wissel, Tulikangus & Guy, 2019).

### Benefits of WBLEs for communities. WBLEs. . .

- Make education more relevant. Student engagement is increased which increases high school completion.
- Allow employers to access a pool of skilled workers, which reduces training costs and improves employee retention.
- Assist transition specialists and employers to recognize their responsibility to help the students become oriented to the work place and provide the students with clear, detailed and repeated directions to teach the skills needed for successful job performance.
- Assist state agencies to meet the transition requirements of federal and state laws.
- Strengthen community partnerships through collaboration with state VR agencies, schools, worksites, businesses, families and community organizations (Federal Partners in Transition, 2015).

Please note: During this time, when access to community worksites may be severely limited, some of the Employment Specialists services can still be provided in a face-to-face setting at school or in an online setting. More information on this topic will follow later in this Topical Brief.

## Vocational Rehabilitation's Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) in the COVID-19 Health Crisis

Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) recently issued guidance regarding virtual service delivery in the COVID-19 Pandemic. As such, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) has updated its related guidance to staff. To enable continued service delivery, VR has allowed for service providers to deliver any service that can reasonably be facilitated remotely in a virtual setting. While VR is offering flexibility during this time, VR is still ensuring providers are submitting quality deliverables that meet the student's needs and goals. If you have any questions about VR's Pre-ETS or Transition Services, please contact [\[email protected\]](#).



**Vocational Rehabilitation**

\*The full RSA Guidance document can be found on RSA's website [here](#).

## Virtual Delivery Options for Pre-ETS:

- **Career Camp**
  - Presently being offered Virtually, In-Person, and Hybrid models whenever school is out for three or more days in a row.
- **Self-Advocacy Training**
  - Hour requirements remains the same for each course.
  - Students have the option to receive in person (following CDC guidelines) or virtual training.
  - Group or one-on-one training are acceptable options for virtual training.
  - All previously indicated deliverables are still required.
- **Work-Based Learning Experience (WBLE) / On-the-Job Training (OJT)**
  - VR Counselors are being flexible in approving time frame extensions, making sure to document situation and student (and/or guardian) input and decisions related to OJT.
  - Students are encouraged to follow CDC guidelines for In-Person work experiences.
  - Virtual work experiences are allowable only when the following criteria are met:
    - The company presently offers virtual or telework positions
    - The job position is available to any employee to be done virtually or via telework
    - Work experience can be documented and reported
    - Appropriate accommodations are available to be provided virtually
- **Work Readiness Training**
  - The twenty (20) hour requirement has not been waived.
  - If a student began training in a face to face setting, and decides to continue in a virtual classroom or postpone services until a later date, this is acceptable.
  - In lieu of signatures, e-mail confirmation from the Student can be used for each day a virtual training session takes place.
- **Youth Peer Mentoring:**
  - Mentoring services included with Youth Peer Mentoring have been approved to be provided virtually where appropriate.

## Checking the Pulse of Online Learning During the COVID-19 Atmosphere

An October 2020 survey of 800 middle and high school students reports that students want more time with their teachers. While 80% of the students surveyed reported that they are doing well or okay, 20% of the students say that they are struggling. The top four things the students think would be most helpful are heavily focused on additional contact with their teachers. The list includes the following:

- More interaction between teachers and students
- Additional tutoring to help them catch up and stay on track



- Faster grading and feedback from teachers
- More one-on-one time with teachers (Schwartz, 2020).

On the other side of the equation, teachers appear to be thinking similarly. In a recent blog post in Greater Good Magazine, [How Teachers Can Help Students with Special Needs Navigate Distance Learning](#), the writer, Rebecca Branstetter, was describing an experience she had while participating in an online forum discussion with school psychologists and teacher leaders. When she asked her colleagues which strategies were working well for teaching students with special needs online, she got no responses. Then she switched her question. She asked, "How can educators increase engagement for kids with special needs online right now?" The responses began to pour in with creative ideas about how to engage with students online. Branstetter (2020) realized, "You can't teach to a child who isn't engaged at all...because learning is not a place. It's a relationship" (paras. 7-9).

Branstetter shared the following three recommendations to ramp up student engagement online:

1. **Connection is Protection.** Previous experiences of stressful events in schools have demonstrated that students recover and perform better academically when they have their social-emotional needs met. Branstetter stated, "Connection fuels engagement - both in person and online" (2020, para. 10). Ideas for building relationships online come from Tom Berger's, article for Edutopia, [How to Maslow Before Bloom, All Day Long](#) and include:
  - Admit students into the virtual classroom one at a time and greet them individually.
  - Use a 5x5 strategy - Use your technology of choice, invest 25 minutes speaking with five students for five minutes.
  - Use a 'question of the day' to create community chat that involves all the students in the classroom.
2. **Get Creative with Accommodations and Supports.** Teachers find that it is a challenge to provide the scaffolded support and frequent check-ins that they provide in the face-to-face setting. Two ideas to get students the support they need are as follows:
  - Use small break-out rooms in online learning to allow students to work together to provide assistance and encouragement.
  - Use [Universal Design for Learning](#) principles to engage all learners - providing multiple means of engagement, representation and expression.
  - Record your own videos and/or use produced videos. Remember these tips from [School Virtually](#) for using video wisely:
    - "Cue the learner. Use text, symbols, images, audio, or similar items to highlight important information.
    - Less is more! Chunk your information. By creating shorter videos, you can target specific goals.
    - Apply that green thumb and weed! Eliminate extra information or content that does not contribute to your learning goals.
    - Maximize words with pictures. By combining images and audio that represent your learning goals, we make learning more efficient" (Smith, 2020, para. 5).
3. **Teachers Need Connection, Too.** It's important for teachers to be aware that they can get support through collaborating with other team members such as school psychologists, school counselors, other members of the exceptional student education (ESE) team, fellow ESE teachers and statewide discretionary projects. Teachers are energized to support students when they are also receiving support and encouragement from their team.

# Work-Based Learning Experiences (WBLEs): A Collection of Ideas

Project 10 is sharing this compilation of WBLE ideas and strategies that could be used while access to the community or possibly the classroom is limited in the table found [here](#).

Please note: This is not intended to supply federal, state or legal guidance.

Activities Related to Work-Based Learning Experiences			
Related Area	Suggestions	Resources	Resource Links
Career Exploration	Use the videos from CareerOneStop to explore hundreds of different careers.	CareerOneStop	<a href="https://www.careeronestop.org/Videos/CareerVideos/career-videos.aspx">https://www.careeronestop.org/Videos/CareerVideos/career-videos.aspx</a>
	Use the videos from Roadtrip Nation to introduce students to a multitude of jobs. Allow students to also explore videos that interest them individually.	Roadtrip Nation	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/c/roadtripnation/videos">https://www.youtube.com/c/roadtripnation/videos</a>
	Give students an opportunity to take some career interest inventories to determine potential WBLEs.	My Next Move - O*NET Interest Profiler	<a href="https://www.mynextmove.org/explore/ip">https://www.mynextmove.org/explore/ip</a>
	Use the AG Explorer's virtual field trips to help students explore careers in agriculture.	AG Explore – Virtual Field Trip	<a href="https://agexplorer.com/virtual-field-trip">https://agexplorer.com/virtual-field-trip</a>
	Use the ExploreWork introductory lessons on career planning.	ExploreWork – Career Planning Introduction (4 lessons)	<a href="https://explorework.com/topics/career-planning-intro/">https://explorework.com/topics/career-planning-intro/</a>
	Use the ExploreWork lessons on Work Experiences.	ExploreWork – Your First Work Experiences	<a href="https://explorework.com/topics/work-experiences/">https://explorework.com/topics/work-experiences/</a>
	Use these 50 Videos for Career Path Exploration.	KQED	<a href="https://www.kqed.org/education/18675/50-videos-for-career-path-explorations">https://www.kqed.org/education/18675/50-videos-for-career-path-explorations</a>
Job Preferences	Explore career interests with students. Browse careers by industry and explore various job descriptions.	My Next Move – What Do You Want to Do for a Living?	<a href="https://www.mynextmove.org/">https://www.mynextmove.org/</a>
	Use Oklahoma's Career Cluster Survey to help students identify their top three career clusters of interest.	Career Cluster Survey	<a href="https://www.okcareertech.org/educators/career-clusters/about-career-clusters/career-cluster-resources/CareerClusterSurvey.pdf">https://www.okcareertech.org/educators/career-clusters/about-career-clusters/career-cluster-resources/CareerClusterSurvey.pdf</a>

(Stoehr, M. J. & Simmons, B. K., 2020; SEPSEA Webinar, 2020).

## Announcements



### A Dynamic Trio of New Tools to Assist with Writing Compliant Individual Educational Plans (IEPs)

Three products have been developed this year to support district personnel as they write IEPs and complete the [Compliance Self-Assessment 2020-21 SPP 13 - Secondary Transition Age 16 \(T16\)](#). These products are as follows:

1. The newest of these products is the [Indicator 13 Toolkit: Writing Compliant Transition Individual Educational Plans \(TIEPs\)](#). This toolkit includes relevant legislative information, General Narrative Compliance Guidance, information on transition models, transition information from the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT) and other states and five IEP tip sheets.
2. The [Florida Indicator 13 Checklist C - All Federal and State Requirements](#) came out in the fall of 2020 and provides a step-by-step process for assessing IEPs for federal and state compliance.
3. The [Transition Individual Educational Plan \(TIEP\) Compliance Self-Assessment Training](#) is based on the T16 Protocol and the Florida Indicator

13 Checklist C. Participants will be lead through a careful examination of the compliance requirements. Guiding questions and activities will assist participants to use the T16 Protocol and the Florida Indicator 13 Checklist to accurately assess IEPs for federal and state compliance. Request training [here](#).

Request training and/or technical assistance from your Project 10 Regional Transition Representative (RTR) on all of these products [here](#).

## Resources

### [Pathways to Employment: A Guide to Work Experiences](#)

A guide to a variety of work experiences that includes descriptions, examples and job coach roles.

### [Transition Tennessee](#)

Transition Tennessee is an online "blueprint" for professional development and resources on preparing students with disabilities for life after high school. (This is a new website and is still being developed.) The site is organized into three sections to provide knowledge, resources, and best practices based on your role. The focus of the Educator and Provider section equips professionals serving youth with disabilities. Each features courses with free video modules, downloadable resources, webcasts and information about upcoming conferences and trainings. The upcoming Student section will guide students through Pre-ETS lessons which students can complete on their own or with guidance.

### [Vocational Rehabilitation \(VR\) - Transition Youth](#)

VR Transition Youth Services help students with disabilities train for a job, continue their education, or find a job after high school. Under this program, every youth will have the opportunity to participate in sponsored career counseling, work readiness training, and fully integrated work experiences in the community. All students, ages 14-21, with disabilities should be encouraged to apply for VR services, including pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS). Pre-ETS are available to students with disabilities without requiring that they apply for, or be determined eligible for, these services.

### [Work-Based Learning Measures Series](#)

Assists districts and schools to measure and document employability skills and other career-ready knowledge students obtain from work-based learning experiences.

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Branstetter, R. (2020). *How teachers can help students with special needs navigate distance learning*. Retrieved from <https://greatergood.berkeley.edu>

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Wissel, S., Tulikangas, R., & Guy, B. (2019). *Why are work-based learning experiences valuable?* Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED598323.pdf>

## Upcoming Events

### 28th Annual Statewide Centers for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD) Conference

The annual autism conference presented by CARD is the largest autism-related conference in the state of Florida, and is rapidly gaining recognition throughout other states and countries. This conference will be held virtually and will feature 60 sessions linking autism research and interventions for professionals and parents of individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and related disabilities.

**Dates/Times:** January 15-17, 2021 8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Click [here](#) to register.



### Project 10: Transition Education Network 2021 Virtual Winter Institute

You will not want to miss this one-day virtual event when all of the regions will come together for a unique day of presentations, discussions and activities. Topics will include virtual transition services, agency engagement in transition planning and updates from leading transition stakeholders across the state. The day will also include breakout sessions to discuss local concerns and enjoy some activities guaranteed to brighten your perspective.

**Date/Time:** January 26, 2021 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Click [here](#) to register.

### Save the Date: Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Programs College Showcase

The Virtual College Showcase will consist of video recordings from Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Programs (FPCTP) from around the state, as well as having virtual meeting rooms to speak with many of the program representatives. This event is free and open to all young adults with an intellectual disability, families, K12 staff and agency staff who are interested in learning more about approved inclusive higher education opportunities across Florida.

**Date/Time:** January 27, 2021 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.

Click [here](#) for more information.



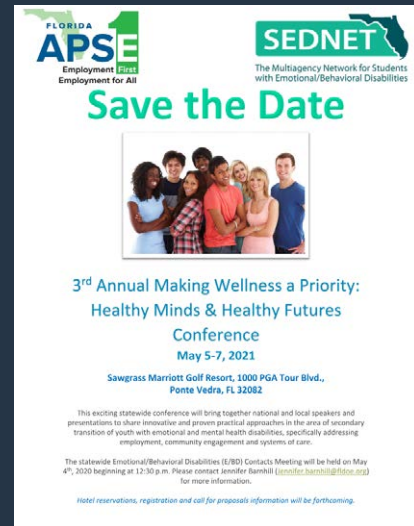
## 3rd Annual Making Wellness a Priority: Healthy Minds & Healthy Futures Conference

This exciting statewide conference will bring together national and local speakers and presentations to share innovative and proven practical approaches in the area of secondary transition of youth with emotional and mental health disabilities, specifically addressing employment, community engagement and systems of care.

**Dates:** May 5-7, 2021

**Location:** Sawgrass Marriott Golf Resort, Ponte Vedra, FL

Registration and hotel reservation information will be forthcoming.



## Upcoming Webinars

### Fridays with FDLRS: Components of a Quality IEP

From comprehensive present levels of performance to measurable goals and objectives this session will examine all components of a quality IEP which are necessary for successful instruction and learning. Questions for parents to ask during their child's IEP meeting will also be explored.

**Date/Time:** January 15, 2021 11:30 a.m.

Click [here](#) to register.



### Workplace Accommodations for Transition Age Youth

This PACER webinar will focus on workplace accommodations, including what counts as an accommodation, how to ask for one, when an employer can ask for more information and what to do if an employer says no.

**Date/Time:** January 20, 2021 6:30 p.m.

Click [here](#) to register.

### Ways to Help Your Teen Stay Organized

Do you know a teen who struggles with keeping track of their schoolwork, managing their time, staying on-task? These are called "executive functioning" skills. Learn about technologies that can help middle and secondary students (grades 7th - 12th) develop these skills. This Zoom Webinar is designed for families and professionals and will address skills for all students, including those with disabilities.

**Date/Time:** January 28, 2021 2:00 p.m.

Click [here](#) to register.

### Educating your Child with Mental Health Needs: Special Education and Distance Learning

This workshop focuses on the challenges students with mental health needs may experience with distance learning, including hybrid models, and offers strategies for using the IEP to provide support and instruction.

**Date/Time:** February 9, 2021 6:30 p.m.

Click [here](#) to register.

### How Parents Can Effectively Communicate with the IEP Team

Are you effective when advocating for your child at IEP team meetings? Are you

able to ask clarifying questions or speak up if you disagree with what the school is proposing? This interactive workshop will help parents build more effective communication skills with their child's IEP team.

Date/Time: February 11, 2021 1:00 p.m.

Click [here](#) to register.

### College-based Transition Services Affinity Group meeting

This group meets to support its members whose work involves supporting transition-aged students with intellectual or developmental disabilities who include, or who would like to include, college in their transition services. The meeting in February will feature invited speaker, Russ Thelin, who will discuss the role of vocational rehabilitation services in college-based transition service

Date/Time: February 11, 2021 2:00 p.m.

Click [here](#) to register.

### Fridays with FDLRS: Transition for Secondary

The session will be conducted by an expert from Project10 and will focus on transition in the secondary environment. Important topics such as age of majority and post secondary activities will be explored in addition to the elements of a quality Transition IEP.

Date/Time: February 19, 2021 11:30 a.m.

Click [here](#) to register.

### Speaker Series on Inclusive Postsecondary Education Options for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities in Florida: Developing transition related Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) for students with Intellectual Development Disability (IDD) preparing for college

Date/Time: February 22, 2021 3:00 p.m.

Click [here](#) to register.

### Housing: Starting the Journey : How do we start? (Step 1)

Help your son or daughter get started with their vision for community living, housing, and services. An overview of housing and service options will be provided. Registration recommended for all three workshops in this [Housing: Starting the Journey series](#).

Date/Time: February 22, 2021 6:30 PM

Click [here](#) to register.



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#### About Project 10 Topical Briefs:

Project 10 Topical Briefs provide informational summaries and resource links related to secondary transition.

Have a question? Want to find or recommend a resource? Have some great news to share? Email us at [\[email protected\]](#).

For back issues of Project 10 Topical Briefs, visit our [Topical Briefs](#) page on the [Project 10](#) website.

### Project 10: Transition Education Network

Assists Florida school districts and relevant stakeholders in building capacity to provide secondary transition services to students with disabilities in order to improve their academic success and post-school outcomes.

Project 10: Transition Education Network

University of South Florida St. Petersburg

Questions or comments?

Email us at [\[email protected\]](#).

[www.project10.info](http://www.project10.info)