

issue brief

Does Service Collaboration Enhance Seamless Transition Outcomes?

The hallmark practices associated with effective school to work transition for students with disabilities include: 1) student centered planning; 2) youth empowerment; 3) individualized career/work experiences; 4) paid employment; 5) family support and participation; and 6) interagency collaboration and service coordination (National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability/Youth, 2005; National Council on Disability, 2008).

authors

Ellen Fabian
Debra Martin Luecking

While the first five practices have received significant attention in the empirical literature and moderate support in outcome studies (Test et al., 2009), interagency collaboration and service coordination, while widely endorsed, have been neglected in the research literature (U.S. Government Accounting Office, 2008; National Council on Disability, 2008), even though collaboration is statutorily required in authorizing legislation (IDEIA, 2004; WIA, 1998) and is the first step in system reform. Collaboration in transition has been the focus of recent federal initiatives, but surprisingly little is known regarding its measurement and effect on student outcomes except through anecdotal reports (e.g., Luecking & Certo, 2003).

In 2007, the Maryland Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) received a transition model demonstration grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)

to create, implement, and evaluate a state-wide best practice transition model called the Maryland Seamless Transition Collaborative (MSTC). One of the innovative features of the MSTC model is its focus on interagency collaboration in school to work transition. The MSTC Project promotes functional collaborative linkages among schools, the vocational rehabilitation agency, and an array of community services to build more effective systems for serving youth as they make the transition from school to adult life. As part of this RSA model demonstration project, MSTC project staff seek to learn how the systematic delivery of the model and its collaborative teaming are implemented and sustained at the local level and how effective collaboration is in achieving desirable post-secondary outcomes for participating youth. This Brief will describe the collaborative approach in the MSTC model, how service collaboration is being defined and measured, and some of the outcomes we hope to achieve.



