

Barnstorming Pre-ETS: Providing Pre-Employment Transition Services in Rural Communities

NTACT:C Capacity Building Institute, May 17th, 2023

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<https://cdd.tamu.edu/education/igrow-project>



I GENERATE RURAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORK

iGROW
I GENERATE RURAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WORK



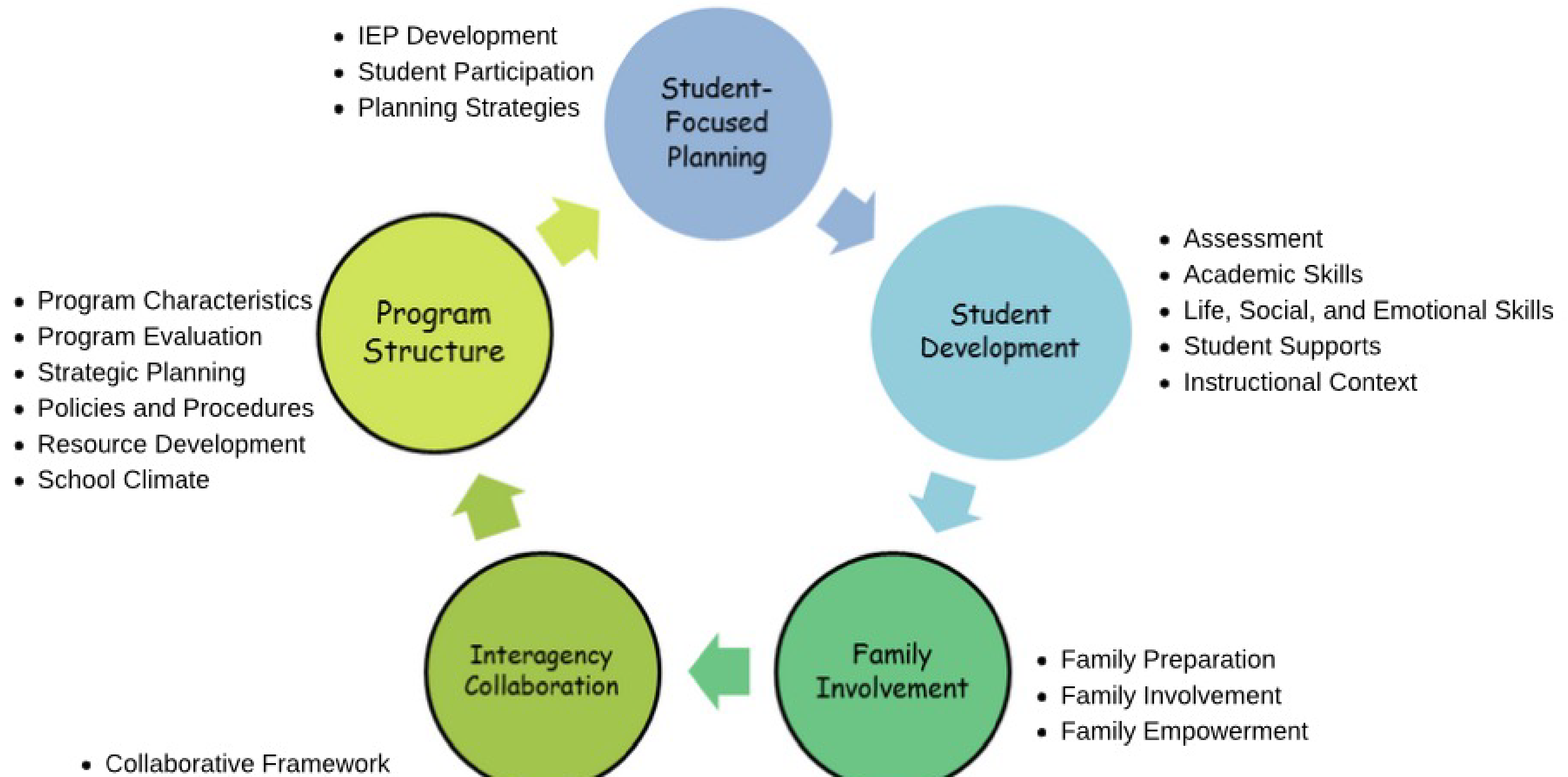
This project is supported in part by Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) of the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) with a contract totaling \$6,272,000 to the Center on Disability and Development at Texas A&M University.

The contents are those of the project and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement, by TWC, VR, or the Texas Government.

5 Primary Practice Categories

Taxonomy of Transition Programming

Kohler, Gothberg, Fowler, Coyle, 2016





Funded by
TWC

Partnership

Funded by the Texas Workforce
Commission Vocational
Rehabilitation



iGROW

Purpose

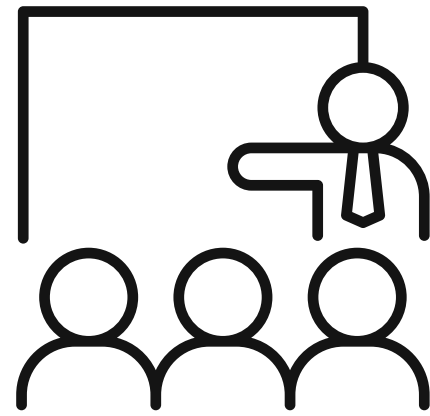
iGROW is a four-year (plus an optional prep semester), pre-employment and leadership-training program in partnership with TWC's Vocational Rehabilitation Program, for up to 20 students with disabilities per year who are currently enrolled in middle school and high school (ages 14-22).

The purpose of the program is to provide a training environment to support students gain the necessary skills and experiences in work readiness in order to successfully transition into postsecondary education and/or competitive integrated employment.

This is based on the student's plan for their lives!
(the "i" in iGROW!)

8th Grade Prep Semester

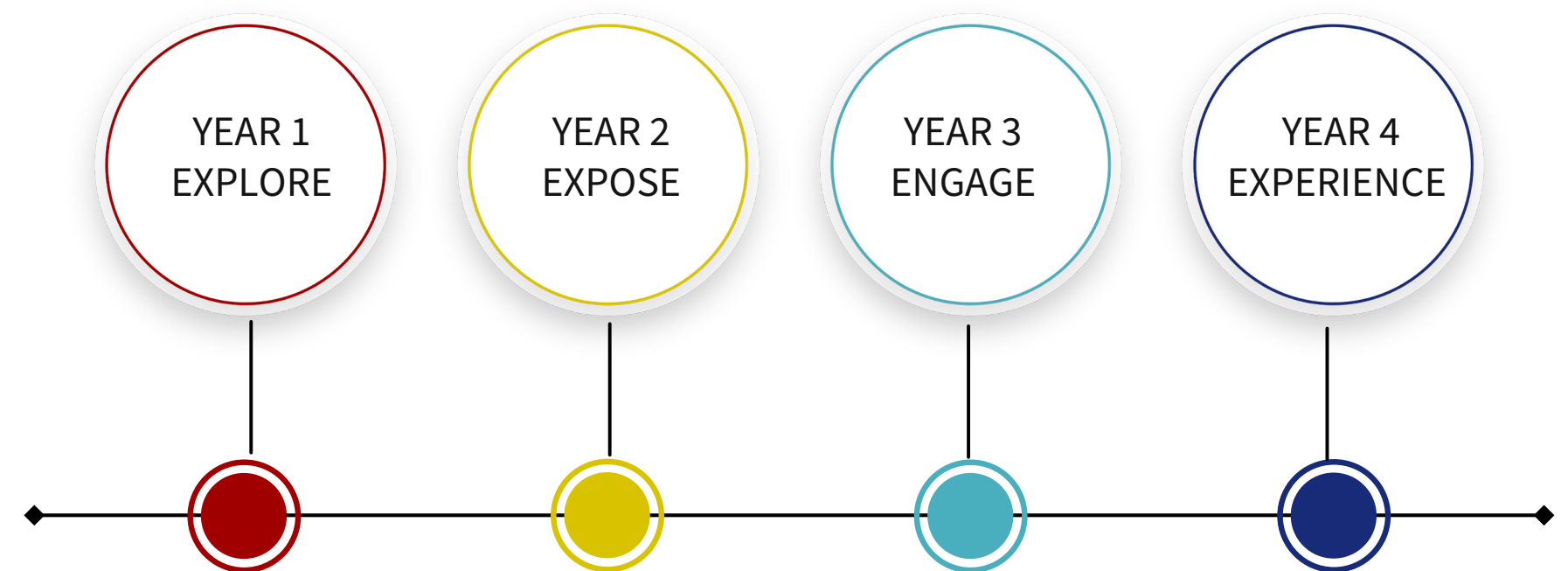
(Spring of 8th Grade Year)



- Introduction to Employment Skills (Curriculum)
- Introduction to Person-Centered Planning
- Explore skills, likes/dislikes, and careers
- Plan for high school (support in choosing endorsement)
- Introduction to Vocational Rehabilitation
- Optional: Summer Work Experiences (based on VR Recommendations)
 - Volunteering
 - Job Shadowing
 - Work-based Experiences

High School 4 year model

Multi-Tier Transition-Focused
Support Model



Program Structure

Connecting & Supporting Transition Activities as a Team

- Project Advisory Council (PAC)
 - School Board Members
 - Local Employers
 - Parents
 - City Council Members
 - Economic Development Board Members
- Student invitations to participate happens as a team. Led by School Lead (admin) and VR Counselor.
- Ongoing program evaluation
- Monthly strategic planning team meetings between ISDs, Schools, VR, and TAMU
- Professional Development
 - Regional/Statewide Transition Conferences
 - Person-Centered Thinking Training
 - Pre-Employment Transition Curriculum Training
 - Potentially Eligible/Full Services

Student-Focused Development

Pre-ETS Categories



01

Workplace Readiness Training

soft skills, social, and independent living skills training

02

Self-Advocacy Instruction

fostering self determination, advocating for needs/accommodations, peer mentoring

03

Career Exploration

counseling and guidance around career paths, exploring labor market information, interest inventories

04


Counseling on Postsecondary Education Opportunities

exploring options, applying for financial aid, accessing accommodations, expectations of college-level courses

05

Work-Based Learning

paid work experiences, informational interviews, volunteer work, job shadowing



How do we implement pre -employment transition services in iGROW?

- Pre-Employment Skills Training (NextUp Transition) taught by teachers during school (16+ lessons/year)
- Person -Centered Planning for employment and postsecondary education during school
- Exploring, exposure to, and connection with local (& beyond!) employers
- Work -based learning opportunities in student's communities (PWE; SEAL, etc)
- Connecting student with VR Counselor and other local resources (learning to advocate!)
- Exploring colleges and technical programs related to career choice
- Summer leadership, Career/College Exploration Camps

*Based on VR Counselor recommendation and input from the iGROW program staff, teachers, school contacts, student, and family members, student

Data Collection

Fall & Spring Semester Assessments

- Student demographics
- Pre-ETS Progress Report
- Person-Centered Plan for Employment
- NextUP Curriculum Assessments
 - Pre-Employment Skills
 - Independent Living
 - Self-Determination/Self-Advocacy
 - Professionalism Activities/Assessments
 - Career Exploration
- Hours of instruction/training
- Hours parent/community training + topics
- Hours transition planning (school and VR counselor)
- VR Counselor one-on-one meetings and feedback

Summer Assessments

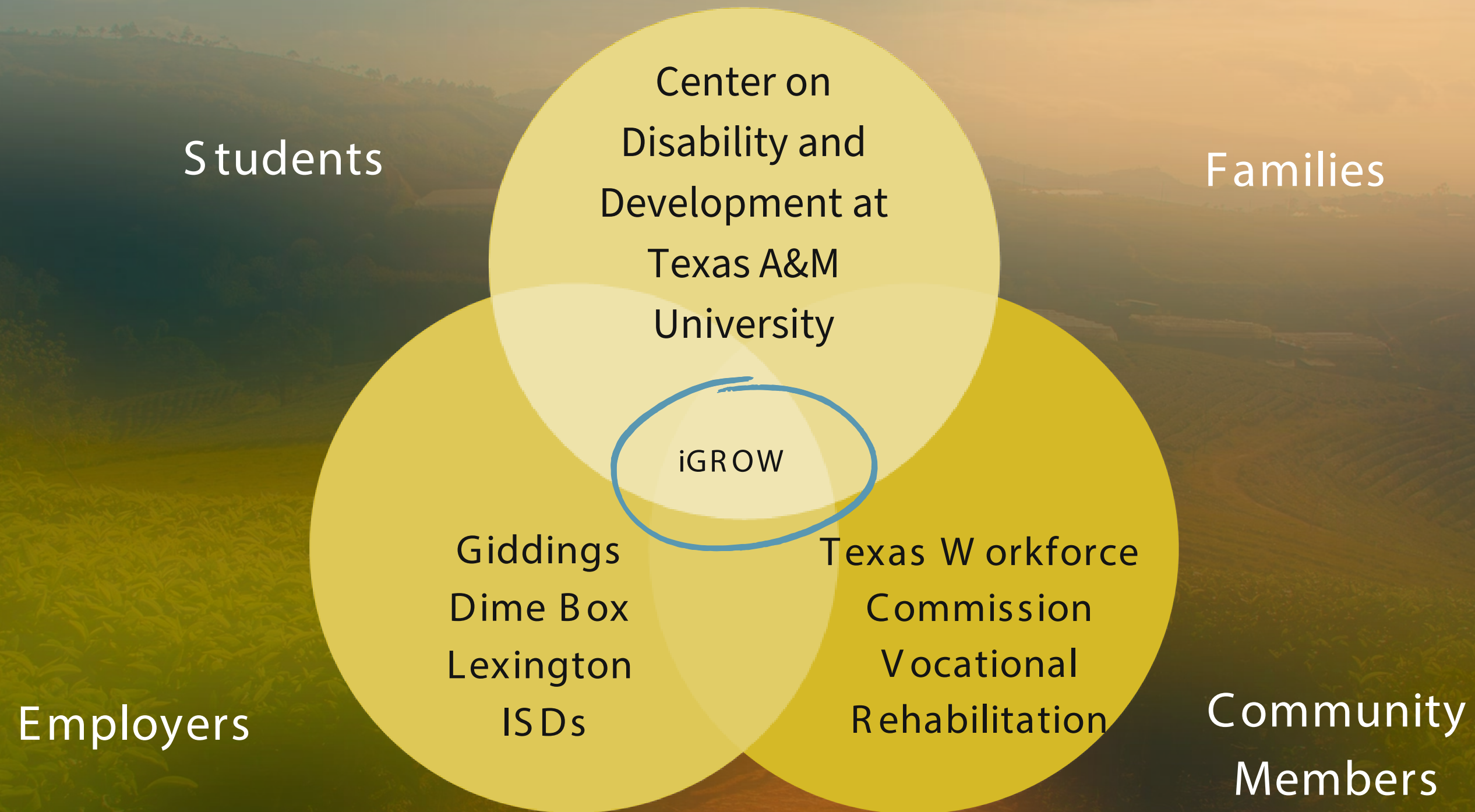
- Pre-ETS Progress Report
- Hours work-based learning
- Number of employers
- Employer feedback
- Student satisfaction survey
- Student weekly assessments
- Transition Educator feedback/data collected
- VR Counselor one-on-one meetings and feedback
- Summer camp feedback

Families and the community participate too!



- Connecting with local/virtual businesses and community leaders to learn more about what employment looks like in the respective county/area,
- Parent and community training related to services and ways parents can support their children to obtain employment
- Project Advisory Committee: local business owners, parents, school board members, and community members

PROGRAM COLLABORATION



iGROW

Texas A&M Leadership Team



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iGROW

Texas Workforce Commission Vocational Rehabilitation Team Leadership



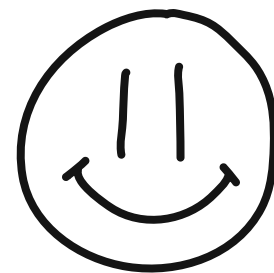
TeShawn Ferguson
VR Supervisor,
Rural Capital Area/
Brazos Valley Unit 3-1



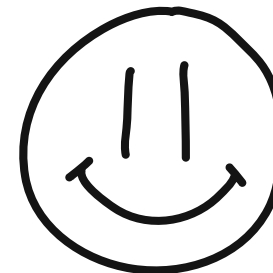
Leslie Abbott
VR Manager,
Region 3



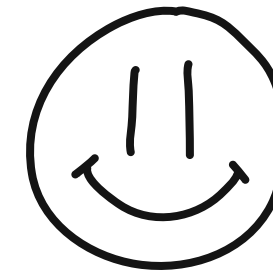
Laura Villarreal
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VR Counselor,
Region 3
(Lexington)



Ashley Harris
VR Counselor,
Region 3
(Dime Box)



Michelle Dodson
VR Counselor,
Region 3
(Giddings)

Project Advisory Committee
(Community Members & Parents)

iGROW Program Coordinator

iGROW Vocation Rehabilitation
Counselor/Contact

iGROW Vocation Rehabilitation
Counselor/Contact

CAMPUS TEAM

CAMPUS TEAM

iGROW Lead
(Admin-level
School employee)

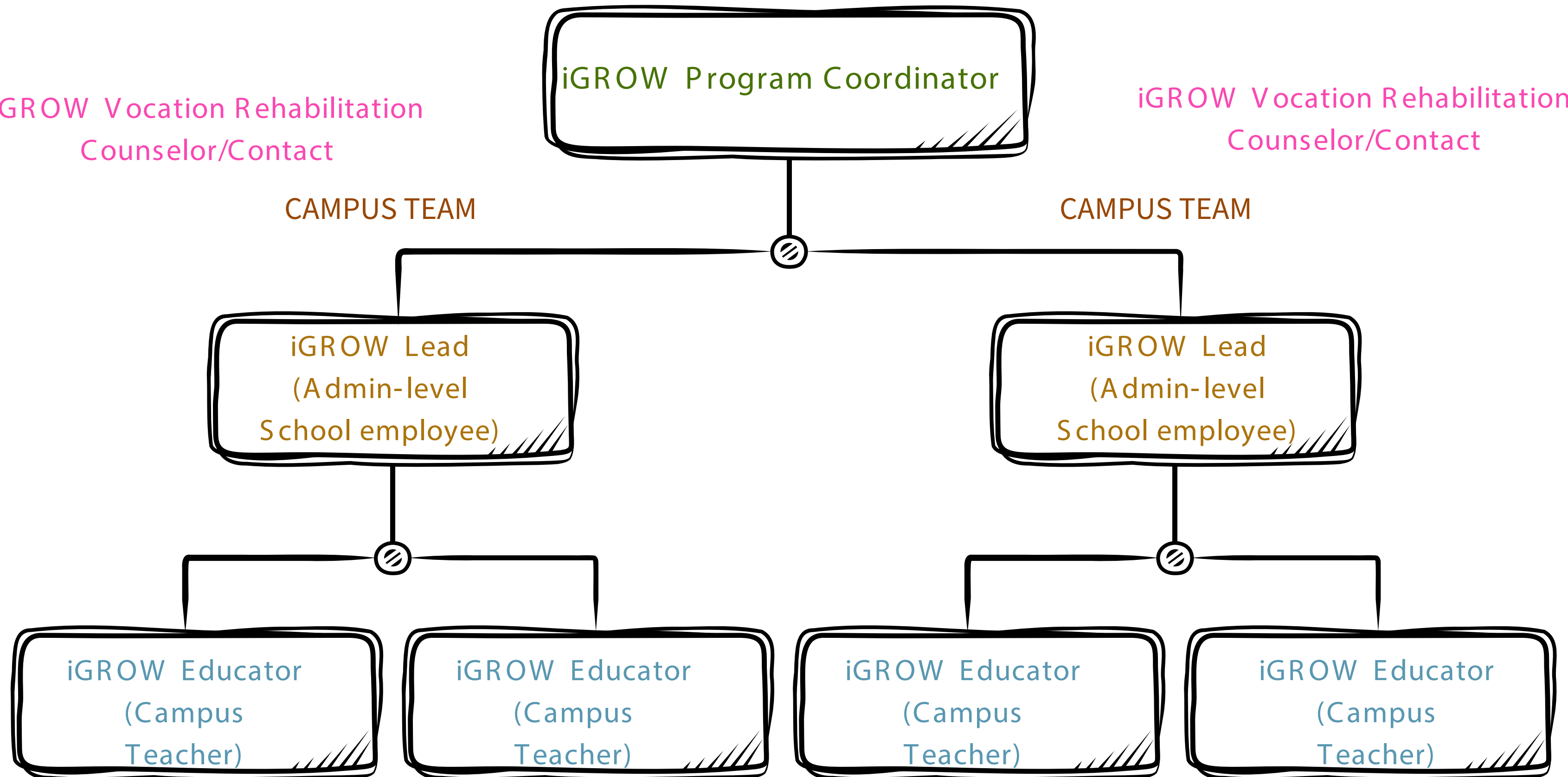
iGROW Lead
(Admin-level
School employee)

iGROW Educator
(Campus
Teacher)

iGROW Educator
(Campus
Teacher)

iGROW Educator
(Campus
Teacher)

iGROW Educator
(Campus
Teacher)



iGROW Campus Team

Each campus identifies at least one school lead and one educator.

The VR Counselor has already been working with the school campus



VR Counselor

- Provides an opportunity to participate in iGROW
- Connects you with the most appropriate supports and services related to employment and postsecondary education.
- Connection between school, work, postsecondary education, and community living
- Supports students to move from potentially eligible to receiving full services

iGROW School Lead

- Main Point of contact
- Invites students to participate in iGROW
- Supports students connection to TAMU and Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)
- Supports location/day/time of training
- Facilitates/Organizes PCP activities
- Supports parent training
- Supports paperwork collection and submission to VR Counselor as needed

iGROW School Educator

- Teaches the Pre-Employment Skills Curriculum! (NextUp Transition)
- Facilitates PCP Activities (with school lead)
- Supports with data collection (weekly) and submits at end of each semester

Let's
talk
impact

41 STUDENTS

PARTICIPATED IN IGROW
FROM SPRING 2022 - SPRING
2023. THEY RANGED IN AGE
FROM 14-18!



IGROW SCHOOLS

4

2 MIDDLE SCHOOLS
2 HIGH SCHOOLS



13 LESSONS
COMPLETED FALL
2022

10 CURRICULUM LESSONS AND
3 PCP LESSONS WERE
COMPLETED IN THE FALL 2022
SEMESTER



PARENT, TEACHER,
& COMMUNITY
TRAININGS

10

PERSON-CENTERED
PLANNING, ADVISORY
COMMITTEE TRAINING,
TRANSITION INFORMATION,
VR PROCESS



YEAR 1

Spring 2022 (19 students)

10- Fourteen year olds

2- Fifteen year olds

3- Sixteen year olds

4- Seventeen year olds

Fall 2022 (20 students)

6 - Fourteen year olds

12- Fifteen year olds

2 - Sixteen year olds

Spring 2023 (29 students)

13 - Fourteen year olds (Prep + Cohort 1)

12 - Fifteen year olds

2- Sixteen year olds

14 students
PARTICIPATED IN SUMMER
WORK-BASED LEARNING
EXPERIENCE WITH LOCAL
BUSINESSES



12 local
businesses
PROVIDED A LOCAL
WORK-BASED LEARNING
EXPERIENCE FOR THE
IGROW STUDENTS.

757 hours worked
NEARLY 760 HOURS WERE
SPENT ON THE JOB THIS
SUMMER WITHIN THE 5-WEEK
WORK-BASED LEARNING
EXPERIENCE



paychecks earned
\$7,570
THE STUDENTS EARNED
OVER \$7,500 THIS SUMMER!



Summer Work- Based Learning

SEAL (2022) || PWE (2023)

REIS Elevator Services
Giddings Veterinary Clinic
Lopez Auto Clinic
The Grapevine Boutique
Pieratts's Pharmacy
Goodson's Lumber
Carmine Feed & Fertilizer
Grimm Feeds
Constant Current Electrical Services
Lexington Animal Clinic
Sweets by Liz
Lexington Feed and Farm
Downhome Ranch

How has iGROW impacted my role as a professional?



VR Manager ”

- Implementation of Pre-ETS with students ages 14-16
- Inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities, ADHD, and Dyslexia
- Systemic Outcomes: Coordinating services and training with schools and community members consistently and frequently



ISD Transition Coordinator ”

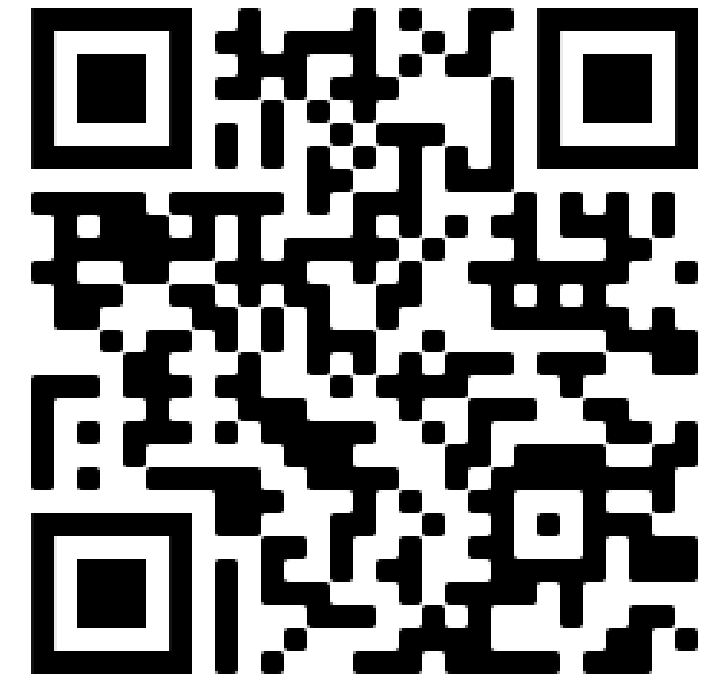
- Student-Centered Planning
- Data to inform IEP Transition Goals
- Systemic Outcomes: Informs TEA cyclical reviews and provides teachers with additional training to meet the needs to students with disabilities to develop and obtain their employment goals



Middle School Counselor ”

- Inclusion in student's transition planning historically left to the IEP team (counselor was not included)
- Systemic Outcomes: Addressing pre-employment skills training that was previously not available in school curriculum.
- Connection with VR that wasn't there before

Questions?



Thank you!

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Sonoran Center and Vocational Rehabilitation Partnership



COLLEGE OF MEDICINE TUCSON

Sonoran Center for
Excellence in Disabilities

Welcome & Introductions



COLLEGE OF MEDICINE TUCSON
Sonoran Center for
Excellence in Disabilities

Discussion topics

- Pre-Employment Transition Services Overview
- Discuss Pre-ETS Project
- Baboquivari
- Virtual Experiences
- Navajo Nation

Pre-ETS General Overview

Pre Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) are five employment related services to help youth with a disability in an education program ages 14-22 to develop a career pathway and help facilitate an individual's transition from school to work.

Vocational Rehabilitation provides the funding for the service so there is no cost to the school or student/family and may be provided by:

- VR Counselors
- 22 Contracted providers depending on their geographic area that are listed in a Contractor Directory.
- The Sonoran Center for Excellence in Disabilities to rural areas and underserved populations

Collaboration between schools and Vocational Rehabilitation to incorporate Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) as part of a student's transition plan can enhance secondary transition planning school efforts and expand opportunities for students with disabilities to likely increase postsecondary success.

“Positive Pre-ETS Experiences”

“Students start learning about what they need to have a successful transition [to adulthood].”

“...[Pre-ETS] creates excitement for their future...”

“[They] have been excited about the program...”

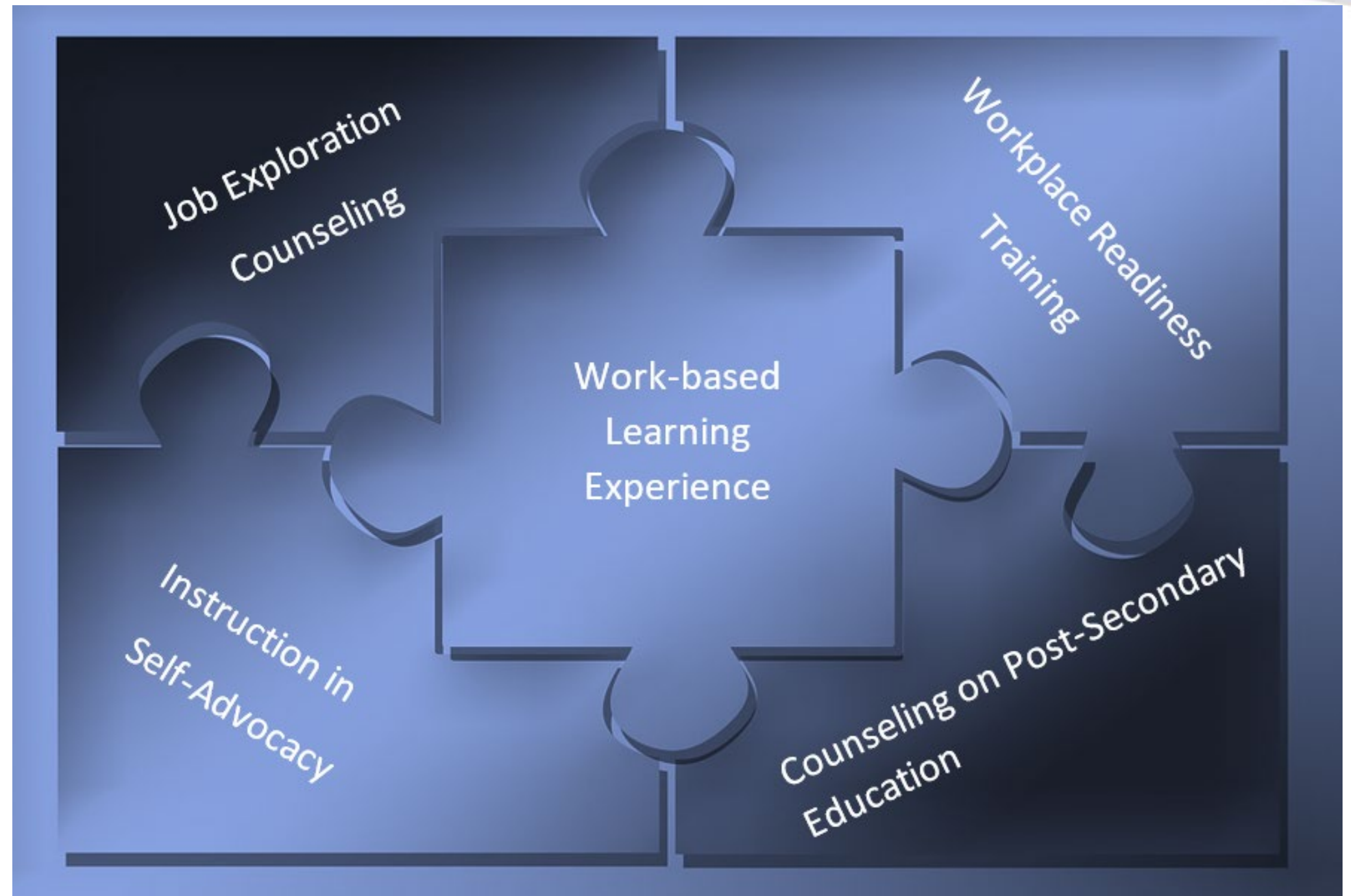
“[Our students] come away feeling that there is a reason for school... [and] a sense of “reality.”

“Through Pre-ETS, many students gain needed assistance and the support to further their education or training path.”

What are Pre-ETS?

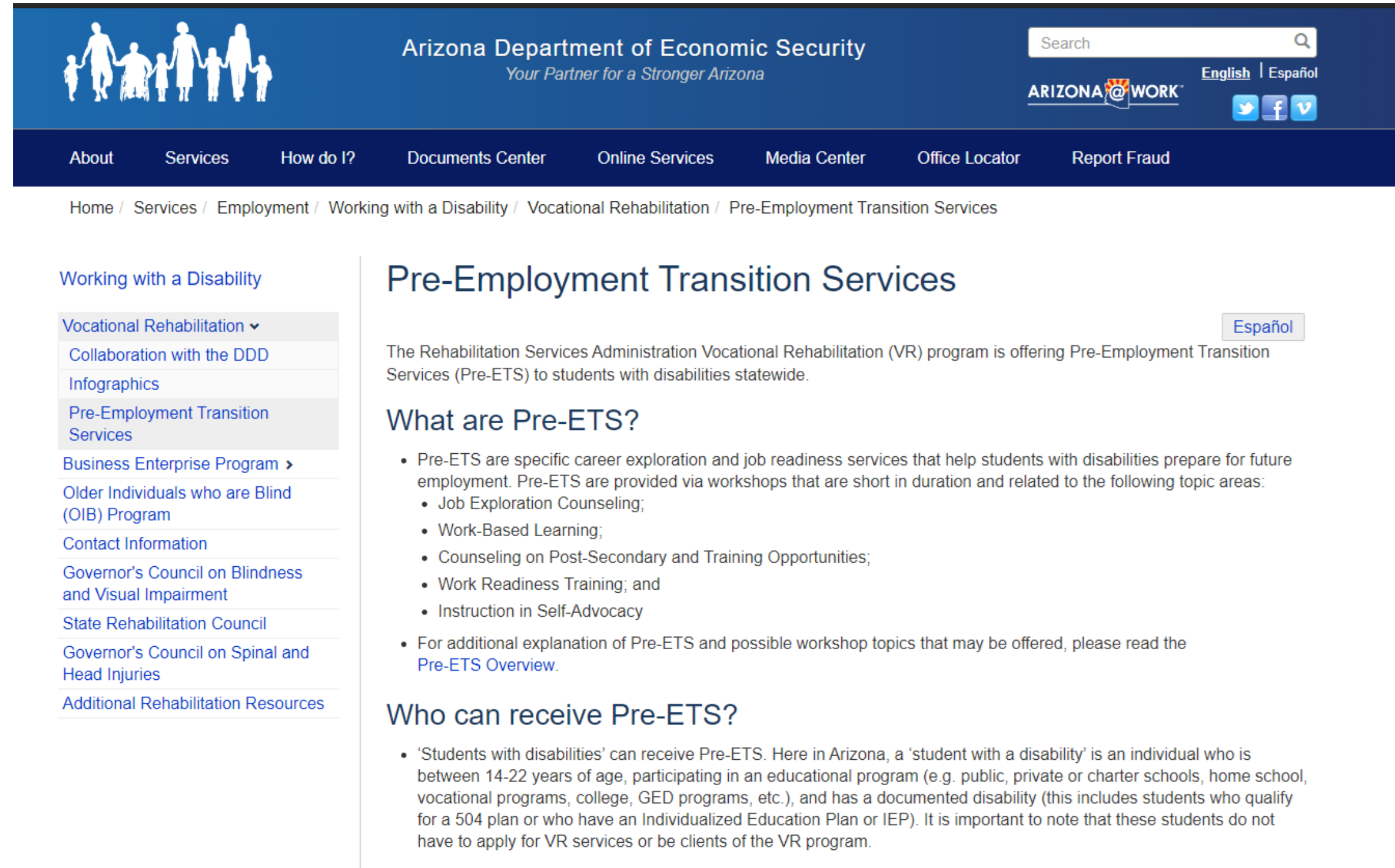
Pre-ETS are five service areas:

- Job Exploration Counseling
- Work-Based Learning Experiences
- Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or post-secondary educational programs at institutes of higher education
- Workplace Readiness Training
- Instruction in Self-Advocacy



How to Access Pre-ETS

Do an internet search using: “Arizona Pre-Employment Transition Services” and look for [DES webpage](#)



The screenshot shows the Arizona Department of Economic Security (DES) website. The header includes the DES logo, the text "Arizona Department of Economic Security" and "Your Partner for a Stronger Arizona", a search bar, and language options for English and Español. A navigation menu lists various services. The breadcrumb trail indicates the path: Home / Services / Employment / Working with a Disability / Vocational Rehabilitation / Pre-Employment Transition Services. A sidebar menu under "Working with a Disability" lists several options, with "Pre-Employment Transition Services" highlighted. The main content area is titled "Pre-Employment Transition Services" and includes a description of the program, a section titled "What are Pre-ETS?" with a bulleted list of services, and a section titled "Who can receive Pre-ETS?" with a bulleted list of eligibility criteria.

Arizona Department of Economic Security
Your Partner for a Stronger Arizona

Search

English | Español

ARIZONA@WORK

About Services How do I? Documents Center Online Services Media Center Office Locator Report Fraud

Home / Services / Employment / Working with a Disability / Vocational Rehabilitation / Pre-Employment Transition Services

Working with a Disability

- Vocational Rehabilitation ▾
- Collaboration with the DDD
- Infographics
- Pre-Employment Transition Services**
- Business Enterprise Program >
- Older Individuals who are Blind (OIB) Program
- Contact Information
- Governor's Council on Blindness and Visual Impairment
- State Rehabilitation Council
- Governor's Council on Spinal and Head Injuries
- Additional Rehabilitation Resources

Pre-Employment Transition Services

[Español](#)

The Rehabilitation Services Administration Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program is offering Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to students with disabilities statewide.

What are Pre-ETS?

- Pre-ETS are specific career exploration and job readiness services that help students with disabilities prepare for future employment. Pre-ETS are provided via workshops that are short in duration and related to the following topic areas:
 - Job Exploration Counseling;
 - Work-Based Learning;
 - Counseling on Post-Secondary and Training Opportunities;
 - Work Readiness Training; and
 - Instruction in Self-Advocacy
- For additional explanation of Pre-ETS and possible workshop topics that may be offered, please read the [Pre-ETS Overview](#).

Who can receive Pre-ETS?

- 'Students with disabilities' can receive Pre-ETS. Here in Arizona, a 'student with a disability' is an individual who is between 14-22 years of age, participating in an educational program (e.g. public, private or charter schools, home school, vocational programs, college, GED programs, etc.), and has a documented disability (this includes students who qualify for a 504 plan or who have an Individualized Education Plan or IEP). It is important to note that these students do not have to apply for VR services or be clients of the VR program.

Considerations

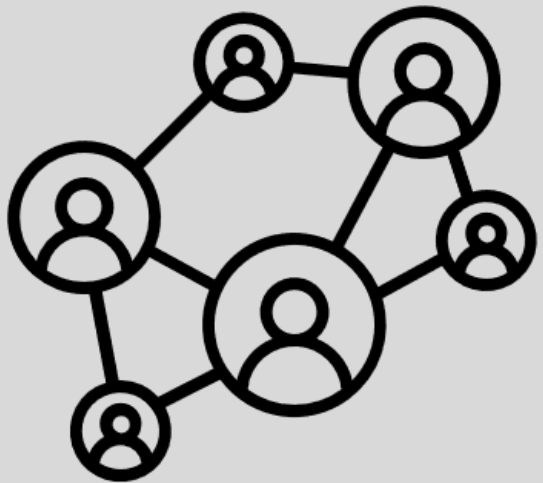
- Vendors can be allowed on school campus.
 - Schools can decide to have vendors on school property during or after the school day.
- Pre-ETS can be provided during school day.
 - Administrators can allow Pre-ETS to be provided during the school day
 - School administrators can determine when the best time(s) to allow Pre-ETS can be provided.
- Schools are critical to supporting the provision of pre-ETS.
 - WIOA does require collaboration with VR to allow students to access Pre-ETS.
- Pre-ETS are not duplicate services of IDEA transition services.
 - Pre-ETS cover a wide multitude of activities related to creating a career pathway which are focused on students developing future employment. It is important to remember that while schools may be doing some of these activities, students may need more to help them discover their future pathway.

Services Provided by Sonoran Center

- Develop partnerships with public districts, charters and private schools
- Create new WBLE sites both in the community and virtually with local and remote employers
- Utilize the Sonoran Center to coach schools
 - Help develop business relationships
 - Create a successful WBL model for schools to follow
- Paid summer work experiences



Building Relationships



- Outreach and recruitment
- Visit the local community
- Develop a plan that meets the schools and communities needs – including on campus and off campus experiences
- Communicate regularly



Baboquivari High School

- Began during the pandemic and focused on virtual work experiences
- High vacancy rates with difficulty finding candidates
- Develop on campus experiences to create a pipeline of trained students to fill department vacancies



Window Rock



- Planning phase
- Developing on-campus experiences
- Adding off-campus experiences next school year
- Developing opportunities within own community
- Hiring a local community member for Vocational Specialist role



Work-Based Learning Experience (WBLE)

Experiences for transition-aged youth in underserved and rural populations Through virtual and hands-on experiences.

Number of
partnered
schools:

10

Number of
students
Participating
in WBLE

62

Number of
schools in
planning
process:

5



CLOTHING
BANK



PIMA ANIMAL CARE CENTER



ACE HARDWARE



SONORAN STITCH
FACTORY

Implementation:

- PreETS services
- Soft skills
- Sustainability
- Quality over quantity
- Communication
- Rapport



20 partnerships



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**Sonoran Center for
Excellence in Disabilities**

Virtual Work-Based Learning Experience

Number of
participants:

13

Current # of
partnerships:

6

What is a virtual work experience and why did we develop this model?

- Virtual work was initially developed during the restrictions and lockdowns presented during the pandemic.
- Virtual work provides a work-simulated environment like WBL in a virtual setting.
- Hybrid model.
- Providing an alternative employment opportunity.



BEN'S BELLS (Hybrid)



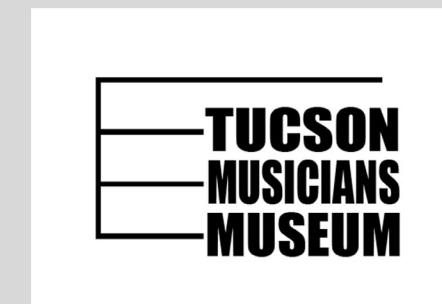
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BE OUTDOORS AZ



FLORA & FOLIAGE




TUCSON MUSICIANS MUSEUM



**ARIZONA WOMEN'S
FOUNDATION**

Resume



10.5
HOURS
WORKED

Work-Based Learning Experience Resume

Students Name


TASKS:
Painting
Kindness Coins
Clocking in and out

STRENGTHS
Friendly demeanor
Hard worker
Detail oriented
Accepts feedback
Polite and helpful
Easy going



WHAT WORKS FOR YOU
Repetitive and Routine tasks
Demonstrating how to do a task by modeling
Seeing the result of your work
Demonstrating how to do a task
Clear expectations and guidelines

NEXT STEPS
1) Participate in other community work experiences to explore other jobs & environments. Learn what works best for you.
2) Practice communicating socially & professionally so you can become more comfortable with it.

Observations
Student, you are a hard working & very friendly worker. I challenge you to continue to participate in volunteer/working opportunities in the community & explore jobs within your interests.



Quotes
"Student is a great peer model." – Rosa Vocational Specialist



TUCSON, AZ

32
Hours
Worked

July 5- July 28th
4767 N 1st Ave, Tucson, AZ
* Dog Training Assistant
* Equipment Cleaning
* Maintain cleanliness of doggy daycare
* Enrichment activities with dogs



What works for you:


- Clear directions
- Hands on activities
- Natural positive feedback

Observations
[redacted] you are a hard worker! You are a fast learner and take initiative when on the job. You have shown that you are very independent and know what needs to be done without assistance. You were always positive and ready work! You have a lot of strengths that can assist you in multiple work environments.

Next Steps:

- *Observe jobs when you are out and about
- *Practice communicating
- *Learn more about your interests



**Work Strengths**

- Following Directions
- Taking Initiative
- Being Observant and Diligent
- Patient and Understanding
- Open to trying new things

Employer Quote:
"[redacted] has been great and is a natural with the dogs. I am impressed!"
-Kari –The Complete Canine



Student Summary

Student Summary

 THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE TUCSON
**Sonoran Center for
Excellence in Disabilities**
1521 E Helen St. | Tucson, AZ 85721

Student information summary:

Student is a very hard worker, he desires to do a good job. He is willing to learn and try new tasks. He is also open to feedback and correction. He is shy at first but with built rapport he will engage. Student thrives off of repetition and modeling of tasks. Student is very creative and works well with tasks that have a flexibility of self expression. Student has also very responsible, he completes his work if he is not able to attend and will notify his staff.

Job aids that best support this student:

- Visual aids ☐
- Visual + Written Aid ☒
- Checklists ☐
- Photos/ Pictorials ☐
- Dialog Reminder/ Written phrases ☐
- Timer/ Clock/ Watch ☐
- Starboard/ Penny board/ Sticker board ☐
- Sign language ☐
- communication Device ☐
- Other ☐

Focus areas for growth

- | | |
|---|---|
| Interpersonal communication <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Taking direction <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Time management <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Self-advocacy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Organization <input type="checkbox"/> | Accepting <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Focus and engagement <input type="checkbox"/> | feedback <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Conflict resolution <input type="checkbox"/> | Customer service <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Adaptability <input type="checkbox"/> | |

Student works best with:

Prompting:

- Minimal prompting ☐
- Moderate prompting ☒
- Frequent prompting ☐

Breaks:

- No breaks ☐
- Occasional breaks ☒
- Frequent breaks ☐

Reminders:

- Little to no reminders ☒
- Minimal reminders ☐
- Frequent reminders ☐

Setting:

- Works best alone ☐
- Limited social interaction ☒
- Social interaction ☐

Level of support:

- Works independently ☒
- Minimal support ☐
- Direct/ High support ☐



This project is funded by Arizona Department of Economic Security to promote the transition of students with disabilities from school to employment through providing a comprehensive spectrum of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS).
(Contract# DS20-003090)



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Excellence in Disabilities**

Questions/Discussion



Thank You!

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Please take a moment to submit your session

Quick Reaction

