



Virginia Board for People with Disabilities

Assessment of Virginia's **PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES (PRE-ETS)**

Helping students with disabilities
prepare for work



PURPOSE OF THIS ASSESSMENT

We looked at barriers that make it hard for students to get Pre-ETS and ways to remove those barriers.

What is Pre-ETS?

Pre-ETS are services that help students with disabilities explore careers and prepare for work.

Services can include:

- Job exploration counseling
- Work-based learning (such as internships or job shadowing)
- Counseling on educational and training options
- Workplace readiness training
- Instruction in self-advocacy (knowing and asking for what you need)

Who Can Get Pre-ETS?

Students who are at least 14 years old and:

- Get special education services and have an Individualized Education Program (IEP), or
- Have a 504 plan, or
- Have a documented disability that affects learning or work preparation

Key Findings and Recommendations

1. Families Need Clear Information



Families often do not know about Pre-ETS or how to get them.

Recommendations:

- Give parents clear, easy-to-understand information early.
- Develop a marketing plan to share information widely and build trust with families.

2. Accountability is Lacking



There is no system to make sure all eligible students get Pre-ETS. Partnerships between agencies are not consistent.

Recommendations:

- The Virginia Departments for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) and Education (VDOE) should create a clear plan with performance goals, regular progress checks, program evaluation and stakeholder engagement.
- Share data on who gets services and how effective they are.

3. School Staff Need Training



Many teachers and staff do not know about Pre-ETS or their role in supporting students.

Recommendations:

- Fund a full-time Transition Coordinator in every high school.
- Provide comprehensive training for all transition coordinators.
- Consider creating a Transition Specialist teaching endorsement in Virginia.

4. Collaboration is Key



Better results come when schools, agencies and community partners work together.

Recommendations:

- DARS and VDOE should work with VCU's Center for Transition Innovation and others to build a strong statewide network.
- Offer regular chances for shared learning, resources and technical help.

5. Access to Services Must Improve



Barriers include a lack of awareness, limited resources and scheduling issues.

Recommendations:

- Offer flexible options: in-person, virtual, group and one-on-one.
- Include career exploration in high-growth industries.
- Create inclusive, student-led enterprises within schools.
- Include Pre-ETS in summer or extended school year programs.

6. Start Career Planning Early



Early discussions help families prepare for the future.

Recommendations:

- Give schools guidance to start career exploration in IEP meetings as early as elementary school.