



## **Leon County's Transition Services Integration Model: A Guide for Collaboration Project FINAL Evaluation Report June, 2007 • Dale DiLeo**

### Executive Summary

This project is a demonstration of the Transition Services Integration Model (TSIM), in place in the Leon County School System in Tallahassee, Florida. It is attempting to develop a seamless transition from school to adult life for 12 local youth with various disabilities who need continuing employment and community participation support. The project is pilot program characterized by shared responsibilities from multiple state agencies. It will try to unify three service systems (local education authority, vocational rehabilitation and developmental disabilities program) that are equally but independently responsible for transition. At the point of transition, or the final year that a youth with a significant disability is in a public school, resources are pooled into an integrated customized employment process.

Overall, the project has established within one year a good foundation for quality transition services for the small number of students in the pilot. During this evaluation, six students became employed of the 12 students in the project, or 50% of the total students served. The total average hourly wage for project participants is \$6.98. The average number of hours or work weekly per student is 19.

The project has solved or negotiated several obstacles in state bureaucracy for school to work. The school needs to further enhance individualized career exploration, assessment and training in community settings in the customized employment process. Career development and exploration should also begin at an earlier age and not just as students are about to age out of school. There also needs to be enhanced marketing and a greater relationship with the local business community.

## **Leon County's Transition Services Integration Model: A Guide for Collaboration Project FINAL Evaluation Report**

In our busy society, we expect people to be productive, get paid what they are worth, and make their own way. Work is the means to do this. It is also a way to achieve status, self-esteem, and accomplishment.

Yet for many individuals with disabilities, work is not an option. According to the US Bureau of the Census and various national surveys, unemployment rates for persons with disabilities are four to five times higher than for individuals without disabilities, and even greater for those with severe disabilities. Unemployment takes its toll in many ways. Not having a job impacts reputation, limits leisure and recreational opportunities, restricts consumer spending for a better lifestyle, and it confines relationships to a small circle of family and friends.

Preparing students with disabilities for the workforce requires comprehensive career development during the school years and planning with key stakeholders for post-school. However, most U.S. high schools emphasize academics or training based on fixed curricula, which often overshadows attention to actual individualized workforce readiness. Due to delayed and inefficient interagency collaboration and planning, many students face interrupted support for their careers at the time of transition.

This project is a demonstration of the Transition Services Integration Model (TSIM), in place in the Leon County School System in Tallahassee, Florida. It is attempting to develop a seamless transition from school to adult life for 12 local youth with various disabilities who need continuing employment and community participation support. The project is pilot program characterized by shared responsibilities from multiple state agencies. It will try to unify three service systems (local education authority, vocational rehabilitation and developmental disabilities program) that are equally but independently responsible for transition. At the point of transition, or the final year that a youth with a significant disability is in a public school, resources are pooled into an integrated customized employment process.

According to the project design, as new policies and approaches develop, the students will have real jobs in the community prior to graduation, spend non-work time in integrated environments with non-disabled peers, and, through collaborative funding, have the same job coaches and the same agency supporting these activities when they exit the public school system

### **Evaluation Methodology**

This external evaluation was contracted to Dale DiLeo, author of this report. Over the course of a year, he reviewed process oriented actions, such as steps taken in regard to career planning, job development, job site training, support policies, family/consumer education, transition planning, funding, work incentives, collaborative planning, and other areas necessary for project development. The evaluation also assessed and summarized regular submissions by project staff of employment outcomes, including job placement types, hours, wages, longevity, level of support, time spent, level of integration and other pertinent measures.

This report is the final report of activities to date in the project. These findings are the result of materials review, communications with stakeholders, and two site visits to the Lively Technical Center in Tallahassee, program location for the TSIM project.

### **Evaluation Findings**

#### *Summary*

*Overall, the project has established within one year a good foundation for quality transition services for the small number of students in the pilot. The project needs to establish earlier transition activities for students aged 14 – 18, and continue to work on greater individualization and community-based vocational training and career development.*

*At the time of this evaluation, six students became employed of the 12 students in*

*the project, or 50% of the total students served. The total average hourly wage for project participants currently employed is \$6.98. The average number of hours or work weekly per student is 19.*

#### *Start-up Activities*

1. Targeted 12 students projected to exit in next two years and identified services for which students are eligible. (See table.)

STUDENT ID	DOB	EXCEP	YR GRAD	Gender
860-065-061 (EB)	6/15/85	C,D,E	04/05	F
923-816-997 (SC)	12/18/1987	B,F,G	05/06	F
913-116-280 (WF)	8/5/85	B	04/05	M
910-615-878 (SH)	09/28/1987	A,G	05/06	F
915-011-379 (SH2)	01/03/1985	A,J	05/06	M
915-110-568 (DJ)	6/10/86	G,F,C	04/05	M
930-045-264 (SL)	2/15/85	J	03/04	M
900-045-096 (KO)	11/06/1985	A	05/06	F
913-116-200 (MP)	05/24/1986	B	05/06	F
894-216-489 (RP)	10/08/1984	B,F	04/05	F
100-001-588 (LR)	9/12/87	C	05/06	F
880-065-127	10/10/86	B, F	04/05	F

P Autistic	C Orthopedically Impaired
H Deaf or Hard of Hearing	V Other Health Impaired
O Dual-Sensory Impaired	E Physical Therapy
A Educable Mentally Handicapped	N Profoundly Mentally Handicapped
J Emotionally Handicapped	Q Severely Emotionally Disturbed
U Established Conditions (Age: 0-2)	K Specific Learning Disabled
L Gifted	F Speech Impaired
M Hospital/Homebound	B Trainable Mentally Handicapped
G Language Impaired Occupational	S Traumatic Brain Injured
D Therapy	I Visually Impaired

2. Identified and hired a school-based teacher (Sue Wilson) responsible for instruction, IEP and activities with adult agencies. Sue has an enormous amount of energy and a strong commitment to the project and her students.

3. Identified Personnel Development Services as the adult service provider that will support students in their jobs in the community. Personnel Development Services is a “dba” name for Arc of Madison-Jefferson Counties. The agency is a non-profit organization whose mission is “to assist persons with disabilities to live and work within their communities consistent with their interests, dignity and self respect.” It has strong leadership and a strong commitment to integrated employment.

The agency is contracted by the school district to provide two job coaches, Lisa Pellino and Tim Wescoat, who monitor each job support, troubleshoot, and facilitate training and support for the students. They also are targeted to be responsible for job development for the remaining students in the project. Both appear to have excellent relationships with the employers they are working with and the students they serve.

4. Developed a home location for the project, the Lively Technical Center, Bldg. 10, Rm. 212/212A. The site consists of two classrooms, computers with Internet access, and some small meeting rooms and offices. The Lively Center serves approximately 4,500 non-disabled adult students annually. Working with regional and local business and industry, the Center offers competency-based education and job training designed to meet the changing and varied needs of the workplace. The Center serves a diverse student population, and emphasis is placed on intensive, hands-on training and job placement.



Lively Technical Center

5. Identified and worked on transportation challenges and solutions. As students are accessing their jobs and non-paid job experiences, transportation issues are arising. The project is exploring and using a variety of

solutions thus far, including the local bus system, Dial-A-Ride, and other options.

6. Developed a training in-service program on principles of customized employment utilizing The Rural Institute at the University of Montana. The training consultants, lead by Ellen Condon, made 3 visits of 3 days each over a period of 9 months. The training team assigned homework for each training session in order to have planning teams continue vocational discovery activities and begin writing vocational profiles. The evaluator contacted the trainers over the course of the project, and they reported that the training team is “very positive and energetic... It was great to also see other agencies, family members, students, VR and DD representatives in training along with the Lively team.”

7. Developed an ongoing TSIM Project Advisory Committee. Membership is listed below:

Adams, Janet	DOE Exceptional Education
Albee, Amy	DOE Community Colleges
Austin, Judy	VR
Barnard, Jim	Leon County Schools
Bivens, Al	Personnel Dev. Services
Black, JB	APD
Brantley, Shelly	APD
Byrd, Cynthia	Leon County Schools
Collinsworth, Kristy	APD Support Coord.
Douglas, Cathleen	Leon County Schools
Dunbar, Susan	Parent
Eric Swanigan	Leon County Schools
Fennell, Ruhnetta	VR
Hall, Verdell	Leon County Schools
Harrison, Bruce	Leon County Schools
Heron, Chris	Leon County Schools
Jones, Valerie	APD Support Coord
Keen, Cat	Able Trust
McFarlan, Cleon	Leon County Schools
McNish, Bobbye	Leon County Schools
Moley Bostick	APD Support Coord.
Palmer, Bill	VR
Pellino, Lisa	Personnel Dev. Services
Penn-Williams, Alex	Interagency Programs
Persons, Lewis	Workforce Plus
Phillips, Janice	APD Support Coord.
Piccolo, Lynn	VR
Pons, Joe	Leon County Schools
Ressler, Tim	Personnel Dev. Services
Silveria, Jane	DOE Workforce Educ.

Sorrell, Donni	VR
Stephens, Sharon	APD
Taylor, Doyin	Leon County Schools
Thomas, Kim	Interagency Programs
Wescoat, Tim	Personnel Dev. Services
Wilson, Sue	Leon County Schools

8. Worked to develop family understanding and support of transition and the project goals. A one-page flyer was developed and mailed out to families of project participants. This was followed with an informational open house held on May 2, 2006. Two PowerPoint presentations were developed to explain the project goals – one targeted to students and one to families.

9. Identified personnel linkages with state agencies responsible for funding transition:

- a. VR coordinator/liaison (Donni Sorrell)
- b. APD coordinator/liaison (JB Black)
- c. Area APD Supervisor (Sharon Stephens)
- d. Area APD liaison (Valerie Jones)
- e. Local VR Supervisor (Judy Austin)
- f. Local VR Counselors (Lynn Picolo and Rhunetta Fennel)

Also, representatives from various agencies have been assigned to IEP teams as appropriate timed over three “waves” of placements.

- a. Student Case Specialist
- b. PDS Job Coach
- c. VR Counselor APD
- d. Support Coordinator
- e. Supported Living Coach

10. Identified a hybrid funding model which must be multi-authorized to receive funding from school district, APD, and VR. (See next page).

11. Explored additional services through WIA funds to eligible students through a meeting with Lewis Persons on November 14, 2006.



*Initial Job Placements*

During this report, six of the twelve students (50%) had secured employment.

**Student: SH**

Start Date: August 1, 2006  
 Employer: Cici's Pizza  
 Position: Assistant  
 Wage: \$6.67 per hour  
 Hours: Fri-Sun. Fri 6PM-11PM; Sat. & Sun. 11AM-6PM  
 Benefits: No

**Student: DJ**

Start Date: August, 2006  
 Employer: Chiles High School  
 Position: Teacher's Aide  
 Wage: \$8.53  
 Hours: M-F 1-4 PM  
 Benefits: No  
 Career Exploration Site: Media Center, Lively Technical Center  
 Job Exploration: Television Production

**Student: KD**

Start Date: November 1, 2006  
 Employer: Office of the Governor, State of Florida  
 Position: Shredder, Legal Department  
 Wage: \$8.00 per hour  
 Hours: 20  
 Benefits: No  
 (TERMINATED at end of Administration)

Start Date: November 6, 2006  
 Employer: Everheart Day Care  
 Position: Childcare Aide  
 Wage: \$8.00 per hour  
 Hours: 15  
 Benefits: No

**Student: RP**

Start Date: August 28, 2006  
 Employer: Woman's World Fitness Center  
 Position: Custodial  
 Wage: \$6.67 per hour  
 Hours: 15  
 Benefits: No

**Student: WF**

Start Date: February 8, 2007  
 Employer: Florida State Suwannee Dining Room  
 Position: Assistant  
 Wage: \$6.67 per hour  
 Hours: 40

Benefits: No

**Student: SH2**

Start Date: December 13, 2006  
 Employer:  
 Position: Room Cleaner  
 Wage: \$6.67 per hour  
 Hours: 15  
 Benefits: No

*Career Exploration Sites*

The remaining six students are engaged in outside-the-classroom career exploration through non-paid job exposure.

**Student: SC**

Registration/Student Services, Lively Technical Center  
 2 days 1-2 hrs as needed or able  
 Job Exploration: Clerical

**Student: ML**

Site: Goodwill Store  
 Tuesday 9AM-11AM  
 Job Exploration: Retail

**Student: MP**

Lively Technical Center Cafeteria  
 Mon., Wed., Thur. 12:30- 1:30  
 Job Exploration: Food Services

**Student: JS**

Site: YMCA  
 Job Exploration: Child Care

**Student: EB**

Student Services, Lively Technical Center  
 2 Days 1-2 hrs as needed or able  
 Job Exploration: Clerical

**Student: LR**

Goodwill Industries  
 Tuesday 9AM-11AM  
 Job Exploration: Retail

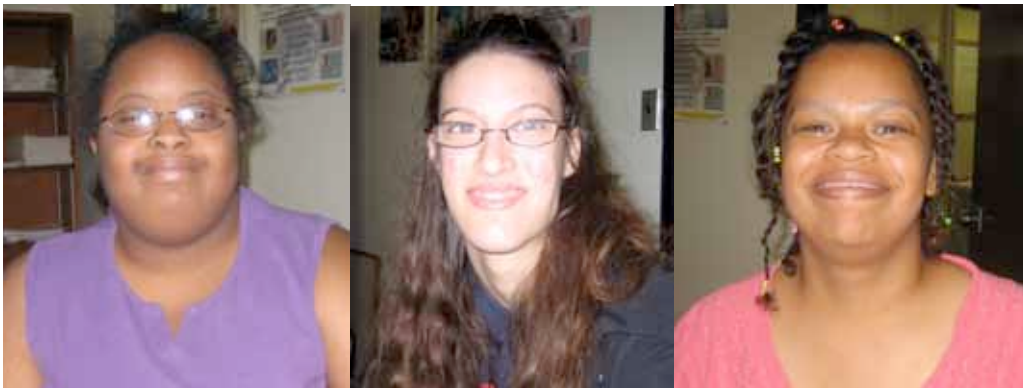
The employment staff from Personnel Development Services, Lisa Pellino and Tim Wescoat, who monitor each job support, troubleshoot, and facilitate training and support for the students, also ranked their assessment of the student's job satisfaction, level of integration, and level of support needed as follows:

Student ID:	SH	DJ	KD	RP	EB	SC	WF	SH2	ML	MP	LR	JS	TOTAL
<b>Level of Job Satisfaction (1-5)</b>	5	5	5	5			4	1					3.67
<b>Level of Integration (1-5)</b>	5	4	5	5			4	5					4.67
<b>Level of Support (1-5)</b>	5	1	3	4			5	4					3.67

In addition, the job coaches also assessed various evaluative employment and transition categories for all students as follows:

Student ID:	SH	DJ	KD	RP	EB	SC	WF	SH2	ML	MP	LR	JS	TOTAL
<b>Meeting Transition Plan Goals (1-5)</b>	3	4	3	4	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3.25
<b>Job Exposure Sites</b>	1	2	4	3	2	4	1	3	1	2	2	3	2.33
<b>Level of Interest (1-5)</b>	5	4	3.5	5	5	5	4	3	5	3	3	3	4.04
<b># Hours per week</b>	0	15	30	15	9	30	40	45	3	15	36	43	25.3
<b># Interviews</b>	1	0	4	1	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0.83

#### *Student Interviews*





### *Job Satisfaction*

Four employed students were interviewed in person. Results of the interviews are summarized below:

Is the money you earn from your job:

more than enough for you?	
enough?	100%
not enough?	

Since you have worked here, do you:

Expect a raise sometime	75%
think you won't ever get a raise	25%
have already received a raise	

Do you feel that you and your boss get along:

great?	100%
O.K.?	
not very well?	

When you have a question or problem about your job:

can you easily ask your boss for help?	75%
can you sometimes go to your boss for help?	25%
do you have to find someone else to help you out?	

Do you feel that you and your coworkers get along:

great?	50%
O.K.?	50%
not very well?	

Do your coworkers treat you:

well, the same as everyone else?	75%
----------------------------------	-----

OK, but somewhat differently than other employees?	25%
very differently from other employees?	

How do you feel when you are at work?

I feel lonely at work.	
I'm happy because I can see my friends.	75%
I feel OK at work, nothing special.	25%

Do you feel that your job is

a lot of fun.	50%
sometimes boring and sometimes fun.	50%
boring most of the time.	

Do you enjoy the kind of work you do?

I like my job duties a lot.	75%
my job duties are O.K.	25%
I don't like my job duties.	

How easy is it to get to your job?

Very easy no problem at all.	100%
I sometimes miss work because of transportation.	
I worry a lot about transportation problems.	

Do you like your job?

yes.	75%
no.	
sometimes, its O.K.	25%

Do you feel that you are getting paid:

as much money as you had expected?	75%
more or as much money then you would like?	25%
less money than you would like?	

During your work day, do you:

work with coworkers as much as you would like?	75%
wish you could work together more than you do?	25%
want to work together less often than you do?	

Which of these statements says how you feel about your job?

This is the best job I could get.	50%
This job is OK for now.	50%
I wish I could have a different job.	

Would you say that your job is teaching you how to do new things?

I am learning as many new things as I would like.	50%
I would like to be able to learn more new things.	50%
I wish I did not have to learn as many new things.	

How do you like the number of hours you work?

I wish I could work more or less hours.	50%
The hours of work here are fine.	50%
I would like to work different hours.	

How do you like the time of day you work?

I wish I could work earlier or later in the day.	
I wish I could work at a different time of day.	
The time of day that I work is fine.	100%

Did you choose this job?

yes	50%
yes, with assistance	50%
no	

Who decided you should work at this job? (Number count, multiple choices OK)

myself	4
my family or friends	1
my job coach/employment specialist	1
my rehabilitation counselor	
my teacher	1
other professionals	

Were you prepared well for this job?

I was properly trained for this job	50%
there were a few more things to know	25%
I was not trained enough	
Unsure	25%

### *Satisfaction with Transition Services*

A total of nine students were interviewed in person, four of whom are currently working. Results of the interviews are summarized below:

Did you learn about the different kinds of jobs that are available:

more than enough for you?	11%
enough?	44%
not enough	44%

Were you well prepared for finding a job:

more than enough for you?	22%
enough?	44%
not enough?	33%

Did you feel like your job wishes were respected?

great?	66%
O.K.?	33%
not very well?	0%

Did you have materials about you to share with people who do the hiring?

I have lots of things ready.	11%
I have a few things I can show.	55%
I have very little I can show about myself.	33%

How do you feel you were trained to be ready for doing a job?

great?	22%
O.K.?	77%
not very well?	0%

#### **Student Comments:**

- Still not sure about what kind of job to get, but they are helping me.
- I want to learn more – I need to learn how to count money.
- Now I can fill out an application.
- I like this program; about finding a job and everything.
- I like the teachers.
- They helped me find a job.
- I need to make some money.
- Got to get out a little bit more than I used to, and now I can go out on my own.
- It's given me an opportunity to see what's available. If I went back to a regular classroom, I wouldn't be happy.
- I want to come back; I like the teachers.
- Hope to get a job this summer.

#### **Parent Comments**

Through phone interviews, parent comments were very favorable in support of the program. Generally, they feel their family members are better prepared for the workplace now, having been in the program.

- It was very good. Helped my daughter tremendously.
- She was very pleased. She is looking forward to getting a job.

#### **Career Development**

The project also accomplished process-oriented activities in vocational curricular instruction, the beginnings of individualized vocational profiling, and the development of a small number of community non-paid work experiences.

Each student in the project has a file and folder with curricular materials related to employment. Each student also keeps a journal of their thoughts about the process or notes of various lessons. This represents a good organizational practice. However, most activities at the start of the year were group oriented. For example, one afternoon's activity is as follows:

*“Have students create a map with signs that would show how to get from Lively to their house*

*or to the State Capitol. They have to make a key or legend with symbols/signs. Also could have them brainstorm with pictures, symbols, words, etc., all the ways they can come up with how male/female bathrooms might be labeled.”*

Initial observations of the class included various career development group activities conducted in the classroom at the Lively Center. One observation was of a role-play for an interview, with students taking turns both as applicants and employers, as pictured below.



Role-playing an interview.

The daily schedule for some students was generally too classroom based, although this improved over the year. This is not unexpected in an initial year of project development. An example of a weekly schedule is the photo below taken in the classroom.

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
Hall	Academy 10:15-11:30 Lively Center Lively Center	Lively Center Lively Center Lively Center	Lively Center Lively Center Lively Center	Lively Center Lively Center Lively Center	Lively Center Lively Center Lively Center
Taylor	Lively Center Lively Center Lively Center	Lively Center Lively Center Lively Center	Lively Center Lively Center Lively Center	Lively Center Lively Center Lively Center	Lively Center Lively Center Lively Center
Coach	Lively Center Lively Center Lively Center	Lively Center Lively Center Lively Center	Lively Center Lively Center Lively Center	Lively Center Lively Center Lively Center	Lively Center Lively Center Lively Center
Sawyer	Academy 10:15-11:30 Lively Center Lively Center	Lively Center Lively Center Lively Center	Lively Center Lively Center Lively Center	Lively Center Lively Center Lively Center	Lively Center Lively Center Lively Center
Lunch Duty	Lively Center Lively Center Lively Center	Lively Center Lively Center Lively Center	Lively Center Lively Center Lively Center	Lively Center Lively Center Lively Center	Lively Center Lively Center Lively Center

Some students have access to the Lively Center training facilities and instruction. I observed two students from the program in a cooking class, and another student in video production. The use of these facilities is an excellent resource for some students and a good benefit from locating this program at the technical center.



Transition student working on mixing in the cooking training facilities at Lively.

In addition, the students have all developed individualized resumés. Samples of these follow.

111 Robinson Court Tallahassee, FL		Phone: 904.757.6444 Email: bshockley@lively.com
<b>Brian Shockley</b>		
<b>Objective</b>	To obtain a position in the Culinary Arts Field.	
<b>Education</b>	September 2006-Present Lively Technical Center Tallahassee, FL Culinary Arts Class 2006-2006 Lincoln High Tallahassee, FL Graduated May 2006	
<b>Work experience</b>	March 2006-August 2006 Gold's Gym Tallahassee, FL Maintenance • Clean the workout machines. 2004-2007 Department of Revenue • Serving in the mailroom. 2006-2007 Public Supermarket Tallahassee, FL • Bagged Groceries	
<b>Interests and activities</b>	Playing in bands, watching wrestling, and cooking.	
<b>Volunteer experience</b>	2006-present FHC Services Room of Call Summer 2006 YMC & Youth Center 2005-present Lincoln Track and Field Volunteer	

3113 Roberts Ave. Apt. 207 Tallahassee, Florida 32310 (904) 576-0669 shukura@earthlink.net	
<b>SHUKURA HARRIS</b>	
<b>Objective</b>	To obtain a position in an office setting or retail store.
<b>Education</b>	2002-2006 Seelye High School Tallahassee, FL Graduated May 2006 August 2006-Present Lively Technical Center-Transition Program Tallahassee, FL
<b>Work experience</b>	June 2005-July 2006 National Guard Armory Tallahassee, FL Assisted managers with reading and writing.
<b>Volunteer experience</b>	• 2006: Credit to Citizens Child Care • 2006: English Near Child Care • 2006: America Read Child Care • 2006: Goodhart • 2006: College Inn Hotel • 2006-2007 Lively Registration Office • shopping, singing, collecting, email
<b>Interests and activities</b>	Enjoy being around people, enjoy giving back to the community Member of Tallahassee's Special Olympic Team
<b>References</b>	Available upon request.

### Discovery and Career Planning

Career discovery and profiles were completed for four of the students in the project. The rest are still under development with input from the training consultants from the Rural Institute, who are specifically working with four selected students. According to the training consultants, project staff have grown in “their ability to be more individualized in figuring out each student’s needs and interests.” Below is an excerpt of a sample profile on WF, demonstrating the improved vocational profiling now in evidence for at least a few students.

During high school, WF participated in work enclaves at various business sites. He went to Ross Dept. Store with 2-3 other students. His duties were to strip hangers, sort hangers, sort men's & boys socks. His instructor states that these tasks did not require a high rate of speed to complete, nor was there a quota to be filled. WF responded well to this atmosphere. There was minimal movement, it was indoors and the manager rewarded WF & other students with doughnuts. WF needed no support at this site, he worked independently. The FAMU greenhouse was not a preferred site. WF states that there were bugs, it was too hot, and he did not like pulling weeds and raking. The instructor comments that at this site WF would rather talk, complain, or argue.

WF's instructor says that WF was "fabulous" at the Suwanee Room cafeteria/restaurant on the FSU campus." He was highly motivated each day by having a choice of meals, dessert, and unlimited drinks at work". His responsibilities were sweeping floors, wiping tables, replacing salt & pepper shakers, and throwing out garbage. WF has told Ms. Wilson that he sweeps pretty good and can get a floor clean. The instructor observed that that there was more movement involved at the Suwanee Room, but it was limited to a confine area, the kitchen and dining room. WF did not need support once he understood the tasks and his duties. The instructor noted that the key word is "understood". In high school WF expressed hopes that he would get a paid job at the Suwanee Room. He had a paying job at Winn Dixie. The LITE job coach and his teacher both worked with WF during the training phase. He needed a lot of verbal reminders to move quickly, smile and interact positively with the customers. WF eventually held his own, through a few paychecks. One day WF decided he wasn't being treated fairly. He and the manager had problems getting along. WF's hours were cut and then he became sick. He failed to call in

except for one day, instead of calling each day he was sick, he missed a few days. His hours became less and he never went back.

This year in the Transition Program he participated in Disability Mentoring Day. WF was able to job shadow at the Tallahassee Police Department. The policeman he job shadowed with was a DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) officer. WF went with him to a school and was able to talk to the 5<sup>th</sup> graders. WF states he explained to them how important it was to stay off drugs. He also said he was not nervous speaking to them. WF has been able to return to the Suwannee Dining Room this year for work experience and "discovery" information.. The student case specialist states that WF works efficiently and with little instruction. WF is in a familiar environment and working with Ms. Brenda, his supervisor in high school WF states " he handles the dishes, he sets them up for the commercial dishwasher." He separates bowls, plates, silverware and places them in the dishwasher, then turns it on. WF comments that the commercial dishwasher "is no problem." Sometimes he cleans tables. WF explains how he does it- he "begins at the end of the table, wiping up & down, top to bottom, until he gets to the end. " WF states his Grandmother showed him. WF hopes to be hired by the Suwannee Room.

**Ideal Work Conditions:** Indoors, slow paced environment, a setting that is not physically large. A site that will not need WF to move about from one location to another location that are a good distance from one another.. He will need support for reading and telling time. Job coaching at an unfamiliar site and constant follow up.

**Potential Accommodations:** WF will need assistance knowing what time it is and with any necessary reading. If WF is excited or concerned about something, he may talk about it a great deal. WF wears glasses for reading. WF could possibly walk away from a job task he does not like or may not be sure of how to do it. WF may need intervention if there is problems getting along with co-workers or managers. Negotiation may be required around tasks that involve reading, telling time, or money. In addition, negotiation may be necessary around production speed, depending on tasks.

This level of information and person-centeredness far exceeds what has been collected to date. The difficulty has been making changes in their current systems to ensure teachers

provide this level of individualized assessment for everyone. According to the training consultants, most students still participate in the same work experiences as other students, rather than following each individual student's preferences. And most times when students are going out into the community with support staff they do it as a group - more as an "outing" than as a discovery activity that could be used to learn more about an individual student. Much of this information now goes into a portfolio. This is a tool that will be used for job development.

In addition, the project is now participating in the Internship Program of the Business Leadership Network (BLN) of the Big Bend area. The Internship Program is described as a no-risk opportunity for employers to benefit from the untapped source of workers with disabilities and for interns with disabilities to apply knowledge and skills and gain work experience. At the end of the internship program, the BLN reimburses the employer for 100 percent of the base payroll cost of the intern's wages plus 7.65 percent payroll taxes for a maximum of 12 weeks, not exceeding 240 hours. Said one job coach, "The BLN internships are coming in very handy to support placements." (See brochure.)



### ***Interagency Collaboration***

Project collaboration at the state level to support the goals of the pilot was strong. Initially, some concerns were expressed to the evaluator regarding collaboration at the local level. However, there was a significant effort to improve this situation over the last half of the project. Several team members noted that there has been a "great team effort," and relationships between the individuals directly involved are "health and moving forward." Said another team

member: "...weekly meetings (job coaches, TSIM teachers, and VR) are a huge help with everyone being on the same page."

### ***Budget Review of TSIM Costs Beyond Typical Leon County FTE***

Based on expenditures to date, it appears that the annualized direct service costs of the project beyond matching costs and typical FTE budgeted is about \$36,000, not including training, technical assistance, and project evaluation.

	<u>100 days</u>	<u>Annualized</u>	<u>Totals</u>
<i>PDS (Employment Services)</i>			
Staff Labor costs	12,711.60	22,882	
Payroll	1,652.50	2975	
Health insurance/other	2,542.32	4576	
Admin	1,906.74	3433	
	18,813.16	33,866	\$33,866
<i>Leon County School (School Services)**</i>			
Supplies (IDEA funds)	2,000	2,000	\$2,000

\*\* In addition, the total salary plus benefits for each student case specialist runs from \$2500-\$3100 each month.

## **Discussion**

### ***Career Development and Exploration***

The project staff did a commendable job in vocational profiling for WF, going beyond their initial idea of washing dishes as a job and paying attention to what he was saying about his interest in cooking. The Montana consulting staff helped them create a representational portfolio for him that was used in job development—and it appears that the job that was developed will be more challenging for him and incorporate more of his skills and interests than the original idea.

However, according to the training consultants, in this case the job was not "truly customized," as the job opening was in a cafeteria used as a work experience site. In addition, they cautioned that most career development activities for the students still tend to be group oriented. This area, developing greater individualization and customization, will need to be further developed as the project proceeds.

At the same time, the VR counselors have expressed concern over the amount of time "spent behind the scenes" by school staff and the counselors in gathering the required information to truly customize a job. According to VR, at this juncture, 20 to 30 hours of time per student is "a gross underestimate of the real time put forth in assessment."

Four student case specialists are now each assigned a portion of the twelve students. This was done for more effective documentation and VR funding. According to the teacher, the situation "has enabled us to provide more individualized attention to the students, such as meeting their goals and needs, be it employment training, placement, IEP goals, or community experience needs."

Two of the student case specialists are now assigned to work with the vocational students and their instructors, two days a week in classes and meeting with the instructors. Afternoons will be used for tutoring as needed. The other two specialists are "comfortable within the business community" and have demonstrated interest and ability in job development and placement. All four are job coaching as needed.

### **Marketing and Job Development, Job Placement, and Job Support**

The school transition program currently has no active marketing plan and until now, has relied on PDS to develop jobs. PDS is contracted to conduct the job search, placement and support activities. The role of the two student case specialists in job development with PDS needs to be developed such that there is coordination of efforts.

### **Interagency Collaboration**

Leadership at the state level continues to be very supportive of the project goals and collaborating through the Advisory process.

At the local level, there has been considerable improvement in collaboration across the various programs involved, including the school, vocational rehabilitation, and the employment providers. Last reporting period, project staff reported some confusion and "mixed signals" regarding the eligibility and funding process for employment. Now, there was universal agreement that collaboration was excellent. The team meets on every Wednesdays. This time has proved to be very valuable and keeps everyone on the same page and helps keep loose ends to a minimum. Said one partner, "I have enjoyed the collaboration with VR, Leon County Schools and the Agency for Persons with Disabilities who have all partnered together in seeing this project start and continue for the next several years. Your fellow trainers for the program have been more than responsive to our needs and concerns."

## Recommendations

### *Summary*

The project has succeeded admirably in many respects to build a transition process into a school program. It has solved or negotiated several obstacles in state bureaucracy for school to work. The school needs to further enhance individualized career exploration, assessment and training in community settings in the customized employment process. Career development and exploration should also begin at an earlier age and not just as students are about to age out of school. There also needs to be enhanced marketing and a greater relationship with the local business community. Specific project recommendations are provided below:

1. Develop relationships with more community employers, as well developing a job exploration bank of the widest range of job types possible, where careers can be explored and/or shadowed or vocational assessments be conducted. These specific work-based learning experiences should be part of individuals' IEP/transition plans and connected to their interests and preferences.

Also, in light of the added role of the student case specialists in this area, it is recommended that a marketing plan be developed that will coordinate all aspects of each staff while in the business community.

2. The Fair Labor Standards Act, administered by the US Department of Labor, has criteria established in Supreme Court cases to distinguish non-paid instructional work experiences from paid employment as it relates to students in education programs such as this project. Transition specialists and supported employment professionals involved in developing jobs and work experiences for people with disabilities must understand this distinction to prevent providing employment-related instruction without pay when payment may be required. Project staff have become much more aware of the regulations involved with FLSA by the end of the year than earlier in the project. It is recommended that this material be incorporated into the program through future in-service or program guide material.

3. Initiate a business advisory council consisting of local employers who can advise the project

staff on marketing, relationship development with business, needed vocational skills, interviewing, and other factors.

4. Enhance the career development training component with more individualized instruction.

5. When utilizing role-playing for interviewing or social skill development, try to encourage realistic scenarios.

6. As students go through the discovery process, they are developing a career portfolio. The portfolios were completed for four students, and are still under development for other students. This is an ongoing process, and will need to be incorporated into the schedule in the next year.

7. According to the consulting trainers, vocational profiles will need to be more comprehensive as the project develops.

8. In addition to the admirable state leadership collaboration that has already been achieved, interagency collaboration at the local level will need to maintain a focus on any specific obstacles to eligibility, funding or service delivery. Note that significant progress has been made in this area. Project collaboration at the local level is now reported as good to excellent by all parties.

9. Given the statewide importance of the project to demonstrate the efficacy and viability of transition services during school years, including career exploration, career development and job placement, results of this project should be disseminated widely. It is recommended that a PowerPoint presentation be prepared for conference and mini-sessions for parents, students, and transition personnel.

10. Finally, with the complexity of transition and the need for new and more enhanced skills for teachers and paraprofessional, as well as other stakeholders such as Community Rehabilitation providers, support coordinators, and VR staff, it is recommended that a training curriculum be developed that will cover the needed steps for career exploration and development. It should also include basic marketing, job development, and on-the-job support procedures, as well as rights, roles and responsibilities in transition to employment.