



National Association of State Directors of Special Education, Inc.

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March 15, 2007

Edwin Powell
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Room 5038
Potomac Center Plaza
Washington, DC 20202-2550

Dear Mr. Powell:

The National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) thanks OSERS for this opportunity to provide comments on the proposed priority, "Improving the Postsecondary and Employment Outcomes of Youth With Disabilities" that was published in the Federal Register on February 15, 2007. This proposed priority would provide Transition model demonstration projects administered by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA).

NASDSE's members, the state directors of special education, have long been concerned with the need to focus on improving postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities through better transition practices. NASDSE work on transition activities reflects this concern. NASDSE has been part of several transition projects funded by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) including the National Transition Alliance (University of Illinois), the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (University of Minnesota) and the Transition Coalition (University of Kansas). In addition, NASDSE's IDEA Partnership and its precursor, the Policymaker Partnership, established a Community of Practice on Transition as its first Community of Practice. NASDSE staff also played a key role in the development of the *National Standards & Quality Indicators: transition toolkit for systems improvement* that were published by National Alliance for Secondary Education and Transition that was coordinated by NCSET.

NASDSE is delighted that the OSERS has developed this priority that focuses on the development of collaborative transition practices. We are pleased to see this funding opportunity to support Transition in vocational rehabilitation with collaboration with special education and other stakeholders. Our work with the Transition Community of Practice has demonstrated that such an approach is one of the most promising practices to bring together stakeholders to ensure successful post-school outcomes for all students with disabilities. In light of the focus on academic achievement by the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), this proposed priority provides an excellent counterpart to focus on all students with disabilities, including those who may not be going on to postsecondary education.

We concur with the proposed makeup of the state interagency transition taskforce as proposed and are pleased that the participation of youth is mandatory. In the last two

years, NASDSE has made a commitment to ensuring the participation of youth in meetings that we convene and have been extremely impressed by the thoughtful views that they have shared with others. Further, by bringing together both special education and vocational rehabilitation, the two agencies that must share the lead in moving this initiative forward, NASDSE believes that we can make great progress in improving transition coordination for young adults.

NASDSE looks forward to working with OSERS as this priority is implemented.

Please feel free to contact me at bill.east@nasdse.org, (703) 519-3800, ext. 322 if you have any questions regarding these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill East".

Bill East, Ed.D.
Executive Director