

2 The basics

Roles

 Print Desk Aid

Many people can play a role in supporting a student with a disability on their transition journey.

In our unique roles, we share the core belief that the appropriate supports can help everyone succeed in independent living, competitive employment, and postsecondary education or training. We also share a commitment to using person-centered practices to help people make informed choices.

Below you'll find an overview of the various roles and responsibilities that could be on a student's support team, including the person, family members and support professionals.

In each of our roles, it's important to partner across the system to get results.

Learn more about partnering across schools and VRS by watching this [video](#) (03:49) or reading [Career supports for students with disabilities: A partnership guide for VRS and education](#).



The student

Driving the transition plan

The student drives transition planning and supports. They may rely on [Skip to content](#) members to explain services, processes and options — but the student is the decision maker. If the student is a minor or under 18, the family or guardian must also be involved in these decisions.

The student:

- **Communicates interests and chooses supports.** The student shares their goals and describes what help they would like to reach those goals. To make informed decisions, the student must understand their options and weigh the risks and rewards of those options. Keeping in mind that informed decisions are bound by available services and program rules.
- **Engages in transition planning.** The student must be engaged in setting goals within their personal learning plan, Individualized Education Program (IEP) and/or other agency plans.
- **Participates in services and activities.** The student is an active partner in planning, participating in services and following up on next steps to help reach their transition goals.
- **Communicates with team members.** The student can create a [My Vault](#) account to store and share relevant documents with their transition support team. This helps support professionals coordinate and deliver services that meet the student's needs.

If the student chooses not to create a [My Vault](#) account, transition support team members must help the student get and share their information in another way. An appropriate release of information is required for team members to directly share the student's information with each other.

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Family members, guardians and advocates

Supporting the decision-making process

Family members, guardians and other people who help are critical for the student's transition success. The student is the decision maker. Still, they may rely on close contacts — like family members, guardians or friends — to help them make decisions. These close contacts help the student make their own decisions, rather than making decisions for them.

Family members, guardians and other people who help can:

- **Help the student make decisions.** Close contacts can help the student make decisions, like which services the student receives and who is on their support team. These close contacts can also help communicate questions or concerns to the support team and ensure the student's voice is heard during the process.
- **Participate in meetings.** The student may ask family members and others close to them to participate in planning meetings. Guardians are expected to attend planning meetings.
- **Provide signatures for minors or those under guardianship.** Guardians provide approvals and signatures for any planned services. Guardians are expected to attend planning meetings.
- **Rally supports.** Close contacts can identify, activate and engage informal supports, like arranging a neighbor to drive the student to work or finding a friend to help practice riding the bus. These close contacts can also make sure other activities, services and supports wrap around the student's transition planning and process.
- **Plan logistics.** Close contacts can help the person think through decisions like transportation, schedules and the impact of independent living, employment, and postsecondary education and training on other daily activities.

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School staff

Introducing the skills needed to be successful

School staff, such as teachers, special education case managers, work-based learning coordinators, and school counselors, help students plan and prepare for future success. This includes thinking about postsecondary education or training, employment, independent living, and learning the skills needed to succeed.

School staff:

- **Help students maintain planning documents.** Personal learning plans, Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and 504 plans outline the student's educational goals and transition plan plus strategies to reach those goals.
- **Organize IEP meetings.** IEP meetings are required at least once a year to coordinate the student's educational goals and transition plan. The student's waiver case manager, VRS/SSB staff, parents or guardians, and any other people the student chooses are invited to the meetings, with the required IEP team members (youth, parent/guardian, admin designee, school case manager, and general education teacher).
- **Support transition planning.** This includes incorporating postsecondary education/training, employment, access to general education curricula (including expanded core) and independent living into the student's transition plan and identifying interests and goals.
- **Guide work experiences and career and technical education.** School staff can identify work experiences to support the student's employment interests as well as connect the student with relevant career and technical education resources.
- **Collaborate with other professionals.** During transition planning, school staff communicate regularly with waiver case managers and VRS/SSB staff. They may also participate in or provide information for VRS/SSB planning meetings. To help facilitate communication and collaboration, school staff should help the student use [My Vault](#) to store and share information.

If the student chooses not to create a [My Vault](#) account, transition support team members must help the student get and share their information in another way. An appropriate release of information is required for team members to directly share the student's information with each other.

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Vocational rehabilitation staff

Providing Pre-Employment Transition Services and other supports

Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) and State Services for the Blind (SSB) staff provide transition and Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) and other supports for students with disabilities.

+ **Accessing VRS services**

VRS serves all types of disabilities. VRS provides two levels of services to students with disabilities:

- Students receiving **introductory career services** are served by Pre-ETS representatives and receive one or more of the five Pre-Employment Transition Services.
- Students receiving **Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) career services** are served by VR counselors and receive Pre-ETS plus other employment services.

Learn more about the two levels of [VRS career services](#) (PDF)

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Two VRS staff are assigned to each school in the state of Minnesota. [Click here](#) to find the VRS staff assigned to a specific school.

+ Accessing SSB services

SSB serves students and adults who are Blind, Low Vision or DeafBlind. SSB's program for students is called Bridge to Success.

Contact Sheila Koenig at Sheila.Koenig@state.mn.us for more information.



Waiver case managers

Assessing needs, creating service plans, offering referrals

Waiver case managers help students identify, access and navigate supports and services. Waiver case managers are responsible for providing the information a student needs to make informed choices about supports and services. This includes social, health, educational, vocational and financial services.

Waiver case managers:

- **Connect the student to services and supports.** Case managers identify the student's needs, help the student understand the services available to help find and keep employment, help the student understand their service provider options, authorize services, and connect the student with their chosen provider(s). Case managers may use local service providers they already know of from their professional experience, or they may use MinnesotaHelp.info to help find service providers.
- **Participate in intake and 45-day meetings for waiver employment services.** To inform service planning and ensure the student's needs are met, case managers are required to participate in intake and 45-day meetings for waiver employment services.
- **Coordinate services.** Case managers ensure that a student's other services — such as transportation or day services — are coordinated with their transition goals and services.
- **Monitor services.** Case managers meet with the student at least twice a year (or more often as needed) to monitor waiver services and review the student's needs and progress toward goals. These meetings may include other support team members, like school staff, VRS/SSB or service providers. For example, school or VRS staff may be invited to participate in a meeting regarding changes in the person's living situation (such as moving to a new house) to make sure other transition services are aligned with the change.
- **Stay informed about VRS and IEP meetings.** Case managers must understand the outcomes of VRS and Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings — ideally participating in the meetings themselves.
 - **VRS employment plan meetings** (which typically include the student, parent or guardian and a VRS counselor) are used to plan for service delivery.
 - **VRS job search placement plan meetings** (which typically include the student, a VRS counselor and a VRS employment service provider) are used to start the job search process.
 - **IEP meetings** (which typically include the student, parent or guardian, school staff and VRS counselor) are used to plan the person's education and transition supports.
- **Collaborate with other professionals.** Case managers coordinate the supports a student needs to be successful in all areas of life, including employment. Key points of collaboration include reviewing items shared through [My Vault](#) or by other transition team members, reviewing regular updates from other team members, and helping the student complete and share their waiver support plan and service authorizations.

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information with each other.

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Transition/Pre-ETS service providers

Providing support to help people engage, plan, find and keep employment

Transition/Pre-ETS service providers may join a student's transition team when extra help is needed to deliver Pre-ETS or employment services.

+ **VRS service providers**

VRS/SSB contracts with Pre-ETS/employment service providers across the state. VRS/SSB staff work with the student (and parents or guardians as applicable) to make informed decisions about which provider will deliver services.

+ **Waiver employment service providers**

For students, waiver employment service providers are primarily used to provide long-term employment supports outside of school hours (evenings, weekends, school breaks).