



## Virginia's Collaborative Model for Pre-ETS

The following outline presents best practices designed to strengthen the partnership between schools, DARS, families, students, and Pre-ETS providers. These best practices are organized according to the key components of the Local School Division and DARS Cooperative Agreement. They are not necessarily in chronological order. For each task, specify who is responsible, the timeline for completion, and provide a monthly status update. Key roles and responsibilities may vary depending on division size and staff available. The plan is flexible and can be adjusted to meet the goals and needs of all key stakeholders. This tool should be implemented over time, reflecting the current partnership and needs identified by both the school division and DARS.

### Model Best Practices

#### Interagency Planning between DARS and the School Division

Task	Individual(s) Responsible	Target Date(s)	Status Update
<b>Designate a point of contact within the division</b> to serve as the liaison for coordinating an annual meeting, sharing updates to high school staff, and working closely to enhance collaboration with DARS Counselors and Transition Representatives. Ideally, this person could be the division transition specialist, special education coordinator, or special education director. For the purpose of this document this point of contact will be referred to as the "Division Transition Coordinator."			
<b>Confirm the designated DARS Counselor(s)</b> for each high school (Division Transition Coordinator) and reach out to express a commitment to collaboration and partnership.			

Task	Individual(s) Responsible	Target Date(s)	Status Update
<p><b>Schedule an Annual Partnership Roles Review Meeting</b> (Division Transition Coordinator) between School Transition Representative, DARS Counselors, and DARS Office Manager prior to the start of each school year (recommend 2-3 hours). During this meeting, review the Local School Division and DARS Cooperative Agreement. Assess the strengths and areas for improvement in the partnership between DARS and the division. Also, develop an action plan to enhance collaboration and services.</p>			
<p><b>Share the outcomes of the Annual Partnership Review Meeting</b> (Division Transition Coordinator, School Transition Representative, and DARS Office Manager) with special education leadership, school administration, and DARS district leadership to reinforce the cooperative agreement and importance of scheduling space and access to the internet.</p>			
<p><b>Review the Local School Division and DARS Cooperative Agreement</b> (Division Transition Coordinator and DARS Office Manager) every three years to assess if revisions are needed. Signatures from the SPED Director and DARS District Director are required for revisions and when the document is renewed.</p>			
<p><b>Schedule a SPED department meeting</b> (School Transition Representative, Division Transition Coordinator, DARS Counselor, and DARS Office Manager) at each high school during teacher work week or within the first month of school. Review the roles and expectations outlined in the Local School Division Cooperative Agreement and plan Pre-ETS activities for the year. The activities will be added to the monthly themes calendar. Ensure that the 504 Coordinator, school counselors, administration, and Pre-ETS provider are invited to this meeting.</p>			

Task	Individual(s) Responsible	Target Date(s)	Status Update
<p><b>Distribute and communicate details</b> (School Transition Representative and DARS Counselor) about monthly Pre-ETS activities to educators, students, and families. This includes sharing the calendar of events, flyers, emails, newsletters, and posting information on the website and social media platforms.</p>			
<p><b>Finalize the DARS Counselor's school schedule and identify a location for meeting students</b> (School Transition Representative and DARS Counselor). Coordinate to establish a recurring monthly meeting date/time to discuss student services, progress, next steps and review referrals for DARS services.</p>			
<p><b>Create and share</b> (School Transition Representative and DARS Counselor) a monthly calendar of Pre-ETS activities, developed in partnership with the school, DARS Counselor, and Pre-ETS provider. While planning these activities, refer to the Sequencing Guide and Monthly Pre-ETS Activities Guide to ensure themes and activities are aligned with the student's current needs, and previous Pre-ETS training. Share the calendar with students and families early in the school year.</p>			

### Coordinate Regular Meetings and Communications

Task	Individual(s) Responsible	Target Date(s)	Status Update
<b>Share the DARS school visits schedule</b> and meeting location (School Transition Representative) with administration, school counselors, 504 coordinator, SPED staff, and any other relevant stakeholders. If possible, post their schedule on the door of their meeting location.			
<b>Arrange for the DARS Counselor</b> (School Transition Representative) to join a SPED department meeting early in the second semester to discuss upcoming Pre-ETS activities planned for the summer. Assist staff with identifying appropriate candidates and the referral process.			

### Inform Students and Families of Pre-ETS and VR services available through DARS starting at age 14

Task	Individual(s) Responsible	Target Date(s)	Status Update
<b>Introduce DARS services</b> (Case Managers or DARS Counselor) at every IEP meeting for students 14 and above. Begin with probing questions to the IEP team to determine if Pre-ETS are needed and if so, share the Pre-ETS Fast Fact and the referral with family.  <a href="#">Script for Introducing Pre-ETS</a>			
<b>Schedule a meeting</b> (Division Transition Coordinator) with the Parent Resource Center annually to introduce DARS services, discuss referral process, calendar of Pre-ETS activities, and disseminate Pre-ETS and VR flyers to families.			

Task	Individual(s) Responsible	Target Date(s)	Status Update
<b>Organize an annual back-to-school night or transition resource fair</b> (Parent Resource Center and Division Transition Coordinator) for students and families. Invite DARS and other service providers to participate in a presentation panel and request that they set up exhibitor tables.			
<b>Present annually to Special Education Advisory Council</b> (Division Transition Coordinator and DARS Counselor) on shared responsibility, the roles of DARS and school in transition, and the process for identifying and referring students to DARS.			

Identify students with disabilities who would benefit from Pre-ETS starting at age 14

Task	Individual(s) Responsible	Target Date(s)	Status Update
<b>Create a Pre-ETS tracking form</b> (Division Transition Coordinator) to be used by the School Transition Representatives and DARS Counselors to maintain current referrals, Pre-ETS activities, and student status with DARS.			
<b>Include the following sections on the Pre-ETS tracking form</b> (School Transition Representative/Division Transition Coordinator and DARS Counselor): organization by grade level/graduation year, student name, date referred, PE or VR status, case manager name, diploma status, comments section to indicate Pre-ETS activities provided, and need for VR referral.			

Task	Individual(s) Responsible	Target Date(s)	Status Update
<b>Schedule a 30-minute meeting</b> (School Transition Representative) with case managers/504 Coordinators who are unfamiliar with DARS and have had few referrals over the years. This should take place within the first 6 weeks of school to review caseloads and identify students eligible for various services (Pre-ETS, VR, PERT, CSB, SSI, waiver, etc.). Add names to the school/division Pre-ETS tracking form.			
<b>Review caseload</b> (Case Manager) when the annual calendar of Pre-ETS is released, identify students who would benefit from the various services offered monthly.			
<b>Send monthly reminders</b> (School Transition Representative) to case managers, 504 coordinators, and school counselors about upcoming Pre-ETS activities. This helps them inform students/families of upcoming activities and provide an opportunity to identify other students who may benefit from the activities and referrals for Pre-ETS or VR.			

### Process for Pre-ETS Consent/VR Referral

Task	Individual(s) Responsible	Target Date(s)	Status Update
<b>Identify a location</b> (School Transition Representative) to house blank Pre-ETS consent and VR referral forms. Inform staff of the location.			
<b>Complete referrals for students in need of Pre-ETS or VR services</b> (case manager, 504 Coordinator, and school counselor) making sure the case manager is informed with documentation requirements and transition planning purposes. Talk with families or CSB case managers to ensure that they have not already initiated the process with DARS.			

Task	Individual(s) Responsible	Target Date(s)	Status Update
<p><b>Designate a staff member</b> (School Transition Representative) to be the contact for collecting and tracking Pre-ETS and VR referrals. Inform this person of the DARS requirements for completed referrals (referral, signed consent and IEP or 504). The designated staff overseeing referrals should enter the student's name and referral date into the Pre-ETS tracking form.</p>			
<p><b>Make a copy</b> (designated staff member selected above) of each referral and give it to the student's case manager or 504 Coordinator. A folder (paper or electronic) should be maintained for the original referrals for the School Transition Representative and DARS Counselor.</p>			
<p><b>Collect the original referrals</b> (School Transition Representative) along with all the supporting documents, and submit them to the DARS Counselor as soon as possible, but no less than monthly.</p>			
<p><b>Review Pre-ETS referrals</b> (DARS Counselor) and contact families to facilitate in-depth discussion of services and answer any questions they may have.</p>			
<p><b>Communicate frequently on referral status and service updates</b> (DARS Counselor and School Transition Representative) should communicate monthly. The School Transition Representative should update the Pre-ETS tracking form and disseminate it to school case managers to ensure that stakeholders are informed about the current status of services.</p>			

## Student Services Planning and Coordination

Task	Individual(s) Responsible	Target Date(s)	Status Update
<b>Send the Consent to Invite Form</b> home to parents of students receiving Pre-ETS or VR services, asking parents to give permission for inviting the DARS Counselor to the IEP meeting.			
<b>Invite the DARS Counselor to IEP meetings</b> (Case Manager) for students receiving or who have received Pre-ETS or VR services at least two weeks in advance. If the DARS Counselor is unable to attend, request a written summary on services provided, data on their impact, and next steps to include in the IEP.			
<b>Review student data</b> (Case Manager) during IEP meetings for students referred or receiving Pre-ETS or VR services. This should include transition assessments, previous transition services, Pre-ETS and VR outcomes, and an overall evaluation of performance and needs.			
<b>Evaluate</b> (Case Manager and DARS Counselor) whether a student will need additional support/services before, during, and after high school to prepare for their career and consider submitting a VR referral.			
<b>Ask the student and family</b> (Case Manager and DARS Counselor) during IEP meetings about activities and resources they are accessing outside of school to prepare for employment, college, training, or independent living. Document these activities in the IEP.			



Task	Individual(s) Responsible	Target Date(s)	Status Update
<p><b>Meet with families</b> (Case Manager and DARS Counselor) during IEP, or in separate, meetings to discuss their roles and responsibilities in the implementation of Pre-ETS while working with the school, DARS, and Pre-ETS providers.</p>			
<p><b>Identify specific activities using Pre-ETS Sequencing Guide</b> (Case Manager and DARS Counselor) to enhance transition services and bring students closer to reaching their postsecondary goals.</p> <p><a href="#">DARS Pre-ETS Sequencing Guide</a></p>			
<p><b>Discuss/consider activities</b> (Case Manager and DARS Counselor) and resources that students can access outside of school, in the community, or through family connections.</p>			
<p><b>Decide who will be responsible</b> for providing the services (school, DARS, or family), document the designation in the IEP, and update the Pre-ETS tracking form to include the new services.</p>			
<p><b>Select students for group services</b> (Division Transition Coordinator and DARS Counselor). While group settings are encouraged, individualized services may be provided based on specific needs of each student by the DARS Counselor.</p>			
<p><b>Discuss and select a Pre-ETS provider(s)</b> (DARS Counselor) to deliver group Pre-ETS.</p>			
<p><b>Meet with Pre-ETS provider</b> (Division Transition Coordinator and DARS Counselor) to determine the group's specific Pre-ETS needs and identify the services to be offered. Discuss the service schedule, activities, and team member roles and responsibilities to ensure all individuals are updated with current processes.</p>			

Task	Individual(s) Responsible	Target Date(s)	Status Update
<b>Designate a point of contact in each school</b> (School Transition Representative) to assist the Pre-ETS provider in securing a meeting space and pulling/locating students for group services.			
<b>Review Pre-ETS provider reports</b> (DARS Counselor and School Transition Representative), discuss outcomes of services, and identify next steps for each student at completion of group service.			
<b>Meet with the student and family</b> (DARS Counselor) to review the Pre-ETS provider report, discuss recommendations, and plan additional services.			

Avoid Duplication of Services

Task	Individual(s) Responsible	Target Date(s)	Status Update
<b>Review new Pre-ETS and VR referrals</b> monthly (School Transition Representative and DARS Counselor). Update the Pre-ETS tracking form to reflect status updates.			
<b>Identify and share available Pre-ETS instruction and services within the school</b> (Division Transition Coordinator). This includes courses, work-based learning activities, interest inventories, college preparation events and activities, self-determination activities, and resources offered through school counseling services.			

## Offer a Continuum of Transition Services

Task	Individual(s) Responsible	Target Date(s)	Status Update
<b>Identify gaps in transition activities</b> (Division Transition Coordinator) in the school's transition activities that could be addressed through Pre-ETS. This may involve reviewing current work-based opportunities, content curricula (including CTE courses), and other relevant activities, such as college and career readiness initiatives.			
<b>Identify and implement transition and Pre-ETS activities</b> (Division Transition Coordinator and DARS Counselor) to implement for each grade level (9th,10th,11th,12th).			
<b>Focus on introducing Pre-ETS opportunities</b> (School Transition Representative) to 9th graders. Begin identifying and offering additional opportunities that are not currently available in the school's courses or programs.			
<b>Provide students with multiple opportunities</b> to explore career interests (Case Manager and DARS Counselor) to discover career interests and set goals for postsecondary success.			
<b>Use the student's strengths and preferences</b> (Case Manager and DARS Counselor) to motivate and engage students in their career development.			
<b>Discuss community resources and opportunities</b> (Case Manager and DARS Counselor) that could support a student's goals and needs (CSB, SSI, CIL, etc.).			
<b>Include employers, career and technical education teachers, and extracurricular sponsors</b> (Division Transition Coordinator) to collaborate and provide feedback on student strengths, interests, and support needs.			

## VR Referral/Collaboration/Communication

Task	Individual(s) Responsible	Target Date(s)	Status Update
<b>Review current Pre-ETS cases</b> (IEP team, School Transition Representative and DARS Counselor) to determine if students need to begin the VR process. Consider both rising juniors and seniors.			
<b>Ensure the DARS Counselor</b> receives the necessary required student records documenting a student's disability (School Transition Representative) along with a signed release of information.			
<b>Assist DARS Counselor</b> (School Transition Representative) in connecting with families and obtaining student's social security number as required by federal VR standards.			
<b>Invite the DARS Counselor</b> to the student's Summary of Performance meeting (Case Manager). Provide at least two-weeks notice. If the DARS Counselor is unable to attend, request a written summary on services provided, data on their impact, and next steps.			
<b>Provide a final or unofficial transcript</b> (Case Manager) for exiting seniors to the DARS Counselor. During the summary of performance meeting make sure DARS is provided with student contact information.			
<b>Schedule an initial VR transition meeting</b> with the student and parent (DARS Counselor) at the VR office before the student exits school.			



More information about DARS can be found at [www.dars.virginia.gov/drs/transitionservices.htm](http://www.dars.virginia.gov/drs/transitionservices.htm) or by calling 804-662-7000.

## **RRTC** Rehabilitation Research and Training Center

The contents were developed under contract (#CTR010677) from the Department for Rehabilitative Services. Virginia Commonwealth University School of Education is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution. If specific accommodations are needed, please contact the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center at [rrtc@vcu.edu](mailto:rrtc@vcu.edu).