

Secondary Transitional Experience Program (STEP) – Informational Brief for School Administrators

1. Why STEP is a valuable program for schools:

STEP, a program approved by ISBE and provided by the DHS Division of Rehabilitation Services (DHS/DRS) helps schools provide mandated transition services, such as:

- Built-in linkage to DHS/DRS, an agency that can assist students who have disabilities, with their post-school employment and career development goals.
- Provides work experiences that coincide with post-secondary employment goals; can include paid employment or internships.
- Promotes the provision of the following Pre-employment Transition Services (per WIOA - the Workforce Innovation and Improvement Act): a. Job Exploration Counseling, b. Workplace Readiness Training, c. Counseling on Post-Secondary Education, d. Instruction in Self-Advocacy, and e. Work-Based Learning Experiences.
- Allows students to gain school credit towards graduation, while gaining hands-on work experience, with as-needed support services.
- Research shows that students with disabilities who are able to gain employment in high school are much more likely to maintain employment as adults.

2. What administrators can do to make STEP work well for students and their school:

The following support activities have been shown to lead to high-quality STEP services:

- Provide classes for students enrolled in STEP, to teach the career and pre-employment transition skills outlined in WIOA (see bullet point 1c above) for youth with disabilities who receive vocational rehabilitation services.
- Provide adequate classroom release time for teachers assigned to STEP, so that students receive needed assistance in finding and keeping good jobs/work experiences, and to promote good relations with local businesses.
- Provide student transportation assistance, as feasible, to allow for varied work experiences throughout the local business community.
- Plan for the training of Teaching Assistants who may need to serve as Job Coaches for those students who need 1:1 assistance for part or all of their on-the-job training activities (training often provided by the area STEP coordinator.)