



CPSD
Real lives. Real work.

Collaboration
to Promote
Self-Determination

June 15, 2015

Janet LaBreck
Commissioner
Rehabilitation Services Administration
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue SW., Room 5086
Potomac Center Plaza (PCP), Washington, DC 20202-2800

Dear Commissioner LaBreck

The undersigned members of the Collaboration to Promote Self-Determination (CPSD) are pleased to provide the attached comments on the proposed regulations for Title IV of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act.

CPSD is a national, family-driven and consumer-led advocacy network of 18 national organizations. We focus on high-impact public policy and systems reform to improve the employment and socio-economic outcomes of citizens with intellectual and developmental disabilities promoting the effective transition of students with developmental disabilities into adulthood by preparing them to obtain optimal outcomes in education, employment, economic advancement, and independent living.

As detailed in the attached comments, CPSD is pleased to see in these proposed regulations the high degree of emphasis on the responsibility of the public Vocational Rehabilitation system to assist individuals with even the most significant disabilities to become successfully employed. We also would like to applaud the enhanced definition of competitive integrated employment in the proposed regulations, with its clear expectation of employment in typical workplaces in the community where individuals with disabilities work side-by-side with those without disabilities. We also appreciate the clear message within the regulations that emphasizes the important role that the public Vocational Rehabilitation system plays in working with youth with disabilities to enter career paths that result in good jobs at good wages.

While there are many strengths within these regulations, we have also indicated a number of concerns, including the following:

- The regulations for implementation of Section 511 of WIOA intended to limit the use of subminimum wage, are extremely problematic, in particular the wide degree of discretion given to the public VR system, in terms of who these regulations apply to. This level of

discretion could result in Section 511 having little if any impact, and is not all in keeping with the much more encompassing scope of Section 511 intended by Congress. We have provided a number of suggestions for a much more pro-active approach for abiding by the requirements of Section 511.

- While we are pleased to see the increased role of public VR within Pre-Employment Transition Services, we have a number of concerns with this section. Specifically, we are concerned about the possibility that Pre-Employment Transition Services will result in a focus on “readiness-type” activities. These activities are of little benefit and create another needless hurdle for young people with disabilities to enter employment. We would prefer a focus on the best job readiness program there is – actual experience in real work places that reflect the features of employment outcomes under the definition of Competitive Integrated Employment. We have suggested changes in language to ensure this is the emphasis of Pre-Employment Transition Services.

To quote from the explanatory section of the proposed regulations: “The foundation of the VR program is the principle that individuals with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities, are capable of achieving high quality, competitive integrated employment when provided the necessary skills and supports.” We feel our proposed changes to the regulations will ensure that the VR program follows through on this commitment.

Thank you for your full consideration of our comments.

Association of People Supporting Employment First
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Autism Society
Autistic Self Advocacy Network
Council of Parent Attorneys and Advocates, Inc.
Institute for Educational Leadership
National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services
National Disability Institute
National Disability Rights Network
National Down Syndrome Congress
National Down Syndrome Society
National Fragile X Foundation
National Organization on Disability
Quality Trust
Service Employees International Union
TASH