



Mohammed Choudhury  
State Superintendent of Schools

For Immediate Release:

CONTACT: Lora Rakowski, 410-767-0486  
[lora.rakowski@maryland.gov](mailto:lora.rakowski@maryland.gov)

## **MSDE DORS Establishes Partnership with the University of Maryland College of Education to Expand Access to Career Planning and Exploration Services for Students with Different Abilities**

### ***An Innovative Two-Year Grant Will Improve Engagement, Information Gathering and Case Processing***

**BALTIMORE, MD (July 28, 2022)** – The Maryland State Department of Education’s Division of Rehabilitation Services (MSDE DORS) is pleased to announce the award of a two-year \$1.6 million grant to the University of Maryland College of Education to study methods for improving MSDE DORS’ Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) program. The Pre-ETS works together with students, families and partner organizations to prepare students for employment and promote successful transition from school to adult life. Research has shown that early access to career planning and exploration increases the likelihood that students will exit school more prepared and confident of their career interests and the skills they will need for employment after school.

“Partnerships like this are critical to creating inclusive organizations and companies,” said University of Maryland President Darryll Pines. “Individuals with different abilities can contribute to the workforce in a variety of ways, and tapping into the College of Education’s expertise in this way marks a significant step forward.”

“I am proud of CTCI’s leadership and innovative scholarship supporting workforce development for students with disabilities,” added Kimberly Griffin, Dean of the University of Maryland College of Education. “This work is a core part of our College’s commitment to promoting equity in education and society, and we are excited about the opportunity to work and learn alongside our MSDE partners.”

“The opportunity to work in partnership with the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) showcases Maryland’s collaborative resolve to affect policies and processes that aim to improve services for students with disabilities and their lives after exiting school,” said Christy H. Stuart, director, CTCI.

“The Maryland State Department of Education is committed to ensuring a bright future for every child and supporting full community participation for individuals with disabilities. We are looking forward to collaborating with the University of Maryland College’s Center for Transition and Career Innovation of Education as we seek and implement evidence-based practices to enhance employment transition services for Maryland students,” said Maryland State Superintendent of Schools Mohammed Choudhury. “This partnership will enable us to explore best-in-class strategies to effectively reach, engage and better serve our students, parents and local education agencies. The focus of this program is to establish a model for assessing and delivering comprehensive services that prepare our students for success.”

As part of the grant, the College's Center for Transition and Career Innovation will study the effectiveness of current Pre-ETS case management methods with the goal of developing new practices to improve information delivery and communication to parents and school systems. These new practices will focus on improving outreach and information gathering methodology. Finally, the study will recommend a Pre-ETS funding model that will enable MSDE DORS to sustain the new management approaches. Funding for this initiative will come from a portion of MSDE's Elementary, Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds.

To be eligible for Pre-ETS a student must be between the ages of 14 through the age of 21 and receive educational services through an Individualized Education Program (IEP), a 504 plan, or for a documented disability. This requires coordination and collaboration between Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and DORS at the state level and the local level in order for students to maximize these opportunities and for families to be better informed and serve as a partner in the transition process.

**About MSDE Division of Rehabilitation Services:**

The MSDE Division of Rehabilitation Services offers programs and services that help people with disabilities go to work. For more information, visit [dors.maryland.gov](http://dors.maryland.gov).

**About The Center for Transition and Career Innovation (CTCI):**

The University of Maryland College of Education's Center for Transition and Career Innovation serves as a resource to scholars, policymakers, and practitioners. The Center has been engaged in multiple projects of national significance, which include randomized controlled trials, evaluations of existing services, professional learning opportunities, and participation in conferences, symposiums, and summits. Through state and national partnerships, the Center continues to build a comprehensive repository of transition services data on students with disabilities to generate recommendations for system reform to improve post-school outcomes for students with disabilities.

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