

EXPLORE • ENGAGE • EMPLOY



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MEMO

To: All GVRA Employees

From: Greg Schmieg, Executive Director/ Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency

Subj: Georgia Career Pathways – E<sup>3</sup> (Explore, Engage, Employ)

Date: August 1, 2016

All of us want GVRA to be the very best agency it can be, and we want to continue to serve more and more of our citizens with disabilities, helping them find competitive employment, and living independently. To do this, one of our goals is to focus on serving both students with disabilities and youth with disabilities; and to help them through the transition from school to post-secondary or from school to work. It is my desire that GVRA will offer transition services to every school district in the state of Georgia for both middle school and high school students. One part of GVRA's transition services includes an exciting new opportunity called E<sup>3</sup>: Explore, Engage and Employ.

This year Georgia is one of four states that was awarded a Federal Career Pathways Demonstration grant, whose purpose is to create new ways of allowing middle and high school students with disabilities, as well as youth with disabilities who may have dropped out, greater access to existing and customized pathways in order to learn specific occupational skills, gain real work experience and achieve real jobs and career advancements within their own communities and beyond.

As you may be aware, the Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA) mandates that Georgia's Vocational Rehabilitation program must serve students with disabilities (16 – 22 years old) and youth with disabilities (14 – 24 years old) while reserving at least 15% of its yearly federal allotment for "Pre-Employment Transition Services" targeted to students with disabilities before they complete high school. In collaboration with the Georgia Department of Education, the Poses Family Foundation and many other wonderful strategic partners, GVRA is customizing the landscape of career pathways, occupational clusters, employer relations and transition to postsecondary opportunities for these students while developing a large strategic focus geared toward reaching and engaging youth who have dropped out of school.

Please join me along with Georgia's school district representatives, statewide participating employers, parents and family members, as well as students and youth with disabilities whose lives will be positively impacted in supporting all of GVRA's transition services, especially this exciting new opportunity. We firmly believe that E<sup>3</sup> will initiate positive change in how young Georgians with disabilities successfully obtain competitive gainful employment.

Sincerely,



Gregory A. Schmieg  
Executive Director

## **Creating Access to Career Pathways that Lead to Competitive Jobs: Georgia Career Pathways - E<sup>3</sup> (Explore, Engage, Employ) - Training**

August 2016

Greetings from the U.S. Department of Education to the counselors, staff and partners of the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency!

A critical element of Georgia's new Career Pathways Grant - "E<sup>3</sup>: Explore, Engage, Employ" - involves providing each of you with information and tools that will help in your efforts aimed at guiding Georgia's students and youth with disabilities along their path to specialized, credentialed education and training leading to promising careers in high-quality, high-demand occupations and industries.

Through your active support, E<sup>3</sup> will provide students and youth with disabilities with the resources they need to prepare and sustain their climb through career ladders in fields such as information technology, manufacturing and health care. Examples of such resources might include:

- assistive technology and accommodations
- flexible design of education and training programs
- multiple entry and exit points for students and youth
- comprehensive support services such as benefits planning, educational supports, soft skills training, mentoring and family supports
- comprehensive career development counseling and guidance, including self-exploration, career exploration and career planning
- work-based learning to include apprenticeships, internships, and clinical experiences
- industry and post-secondary tours and job shadowing as well as job fairs and viable transportation options

An undertaking such as this cannot be sustained by GVRA alone, so it is indeed fortunate that several wonderful partners have come on board in support of the E<sup>3</sup> grant. A very diverse array of public and private sector partners has already been secured to fully support this effort including: Georgia Department of Education, Poses Family Foundation, Burton Blatt Institute at Syracuse University and the Southeast ADA, Georgia State University Center for Leadership in Disability, Georgia Workforce Development, and Parent2Parent of Georgia. All of these partners share the E<sup>3</sup> vision and mission in support of each of your efforts to help youth and students with disabilities find the best career path that will lead to a real career while providing an opportunity for independence.

The Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency is committed to sustaining the systems change created by the E<sup>3</sup> program and to spreading its benefits to students and youth with disabilities all over the state of Georgia.

**When all is said and done, the most important reason for the success of E<sup>3</sup> will be you! Thank you!**

Felipe Lulli,  
Rehabilitation Services Administration, U.S. Department of Education

## Grant Summary

### **E<sup>3</sup>: Explore, Engage, Employ** **Georgia Career Pathways to Work**

**Grant Period: October 1, 2015 through to September 30, 2020**

#### **Purpose:**

- Engage employers to aid in the process of customizing and making existing career pathways accessible for students with disabilities and developing alternative community-based career pathways for youth with disabilities who are out of school.
- Engage families to increase youth participation.
- Engage youth and students with disabilities by utilizing social media strategies regarding careers.
- Engage strategic partners, such as GaDOE, GaDEC and the Division of Workforce Development, TCSG, USG, Georgia State University Center for Leadership and Disability, the Burton Blatt Institute, the Poses Family Foundation and other state and community partners to customize the landscape of career pathways for Georgia's youth and students with disabilities.

#### **Target Population:**

The Georgia Pathways to Work will focus on Georgia's youth and students with disabilities, ages 14-24, who may or may not be eligible for Vocational Rehabilitation services, and who are currently in school or out-of-school.

**Individuals to be served:** 3,000 youth and students over 5 years

#### **Project Goals:**

1. **Increase the number of customized career pathways** in occupational clusters, aligned with real jobs in the community, available to youth and students with disabilities ages 14-22 that lead to competitive integrated employment.
2. **Increase the number of youth who achieve competitive integrated employment** within occupational clusters through existing, customized/alternative career pathways.
3. **Increase the average weekly wage and employer benefits** of participation in each occupational cluster through successful completion of career pathways, customized and/or alternative career pathways.



## E<sup>3</sup> Model

The current E<sup>3</sup> model was developed by the E<sup>3</sup> Project Operators (E<sup>3</sup>PO). It is constructed as a flexible process which will continue to be refined and updated as needed.

### EXPLORE

Purpose: allow students and youth to begin exploring the world of work and possible career goals.

- E<sup>3</sup> Video Series
- E<sup>3</sup> App
- Career Exploration Assessments
- Career Highlights
- Employable “Soft” Skills Training
- Vision Boards
- Support System Engagement

### ENGAGE

Purpose: allow students to participate in the world of work and possible careers.

- Self-Advocacy
- E<sup>3</sup> Club
- Assistive Technology
- Confirming Pathway/Career Choice
- Business Relations
- Life Knowledge

### EMPLOY

Purpose: 1) assisting individuals become employed, and 2) supporting the individual once employment is obtained.

#### Phase 1

- Resume Support
- Job Fairs
- Transportation
- Educate Employers
- Employer Incentives
- Professional Development
- Job Placement
- Supported Employment
- Customized Employment
- Self-Employment

#### Phase 2

- Accommodations
- Continuing Education
- Employment Incentives
- Career Advancement
- Follow Up Services

## **Background on E<sup>3</sup> Grant**

GVRA was awarded \$4.7 million by the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) to improve employment opportunities for students and youth with disabilities. Georgia's Career Pathways to Work: Explore, Engage and Employ (E<sup>3</sup>) is a partnership with Georgia Department of Education, Poses Family Foundation, Georgia State University Center for Leadership in Disability, Burton Blatt Institute at Syracuse University and the Southeast ADA, Parent to Parent of Georgia and Georgia Workforce Development. E<sup>3</sup> is designed to connect real people to real jobs that fill a real need for employers.

E<sup>3</sup> will work with GaDOE identified career pathways by tailoring them to a variety of work opportunities available in the communities. The program will engage employers and employ social media strategies to connect youth across Georgia and the nation. The program impact is to change how organizations support independence, employment and career advancement of students and youth with disabilities. The initial roll out will take place in five school districts in Georgia including the Atlanta Area School for the Deaf and Decatur, Hall, Paulding, and Troup Counties. In addition, Georgia Academy for the Blind and Georgia School for the Deaf will be included in this initial roll out (please see appendices for selected data regarding these districts).

### **Positions**

#### **Employer Engagement Liaison**

The Employer Engagement Liaison (EEL) will collaborate with participating school districts and serve as the point of contact for coordination with employers to obtain third party agreements, analyze input and develop business engagement strategies to serve students and youth with disabilities.

#### **Social Media Technologist**

The Social Media Technologist (SMT) will increase awareness of E<sup>3</sup> on key social sites such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, blogs and on a dedicated E<sup>3</sup> website. The SMT will develop online content that generates awareness and will create videos and apps to highlight the E<sup>3</sup> program to teachers, students, and employers.

#### **Career Pathways Specialist(s)**

The Career Pathways Specialist (CPS) will be the designated Vocational Rehabilitation subject matter expert(s) for a specific career cluster. The CPS will provide critical technical assistance to the Vocational Rehabilitation Program Transition Counselors, local school educators, and employers specifically in the area of youth and career pathways.

## GVRA E<sup>3</sup> Partners

This effort aimed at customizing the landscape of career pathways for Georgia's youth and students with disabilities would not be possible without the support of our partners. Below is a brief description of each.

**Poses Family Foundation (PFF)** - a New York City - based philanthropic foundation that puts its greatest focus on learning and attention issues.

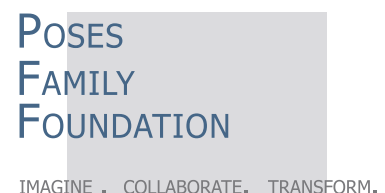
**Burton Blatt Institute (BBI)** - based in Syracuse university and internationally know for its efforts to advance civic, economic, and social participation of people with disabilities.

**Georgia State University - Center for leadership in Disability (CLD)** - the mission of CLD is to translate research into sustainable community practices that contribute to independent, self-determined, inclusive, and productive lives for people with disabilities and their families.

**Department of Economic Development Workforce Development (GDEcD, WD)** - While GDEcD, WD's primary responsibility is managing the Workforce investment Act under the leadership of the Georgia Workforce Investment Board, WD is focused on the broader mission of ensuring that education and training in Georgia is geared toward in-demand jobs.

**Parent 2 Parent (P2P)** - a statewide non-profit that serves as the Parent Training Information Center, hosts a special needs database and provides information and referrals for parents of children with disabilities.

**Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE)** - The Georgia Department of Education oversees public education throughout the state and federal money appropriated for the education is properly allocated to local school systems. The department also informs parents, teachers, government officials and the media of education related news.





## Priorities for E<sup>3</sup>: Explore, Engage, Employ Evaluation Plan

**Goal 1** – Increase the number of customized career pathways in occupational clusters, aligned with real jobs in the community, available to (and accessible by) youth and students with disabilities ages 14-24 that lead to competitive integrated employment.

### Objectives

- Reduce dropout rate of students with disabilities by 25% over grant period in participating E<sup>3</sup> schools
- Increase graduation rate of students with disabilities by 25% over the grant period in participating E<sup>3</sup> schools
- Increase number of customized school-based career pathways by over 50% over grant period
- Increase number of alternative career pathways by over 50 % over grant period
- Increase number of career pathways in state workforce initiatives designed for youth and students with disabilities by 50 % over grant period

**Goal 2** – Increase the number of youth who achieve competitive integrated employment within occupational clusters through existing, customized/alternative career pathways.

### Objectives

- Identify and collect initial baseline and periodic employment data for youth with disabilities
- Provide skill development training to 3,000+ students and youth with disabilities in the area of gaining employment.
- Improve levels of self-advocacy and self-determination among young people who participate in E<sup>3</sup>.
- Increase employers' awareness of the occupational strengths individuals with disabilities bring to the workplace.
- Improve employers' attitudes towards hiring individuals with disabilities.
- Provide quarterly training series for parents of E<sup>3</sup> students focused on supporting their young persons' employment.
- Increase the number of vocational and career-readiness goals in student IEPs/ITPs in participating E<sup>3</sup> districts.

**Goal 3** – E<sup>3</sup> participants will encounter increases in average weekly wages and employer benefits in each career pathway, when compared to those who did not participate in E<sup>3</sup>.

### Objectives

- Increase full time job opportunities for E<sup>3</sup> participants
- Increase federal job opportunities for E<sup>3</sup> participants
- Increase opportunities for higher paying jobs and advancement opportunities for E<sup>3</sup> participants

## Recommended readings, videos and websites

### E3 presentation with introduction by Greg Schmieg

[https://prezi.com/kvlixvzsd\\_mf/e3-presentation/?utm\\_campaign=share&utm\\_medium=copy](https://prezi.com/kvlixvzsd_mf/e3-presentation/?utm_campaign=share&utm_medium=copy)

### High Demand Career Initiatives

<http://www.georgia.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/HDCI-Report.pdf>

### Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Resources

[http://www.nawb.org/wioa\\_resources.asp](http://www.nawb.org/wioa_resources.asp)

### Poses Family Foundation

<https://www.understood.org/en/about/our-founding-partners/poses-family-foundation>

### Burton Blatt Institute

<http://bbi.syr.edu/about/>

### Georgia State University – Center for Leadership in Disability

<http://disability.publichealth.gsu.edu/>

### Parent 2 Parent of Georgia

<http://p2pga.org>

### The Interviewer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wT9PdS9hPFs>

### Employable Me

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9q241VKHy4g&nohtml5=False>

### The Autistic Me – One Year On

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8j0R-z\\_PeFo&nohtml5=False](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8j0R-z_PeFo&nohtml5=False)

### **Need more information?**

#### **Project contacts:**

Dale Arnold, GVRA Director of Transition Services

Lauri Tuten, GVRA Assistant Director of Transition Services

Rita Young, E<sup>3</sup> Project Manager

For E<sup>3</sup> inquiries, please contact us via email at [e3@ablegeorgia.ga.gov](mailto:e3@ablegeorgia.ga.gov).

## Appendix A

### Atlanta Area School for the Deaf

#### Key staff:

Ms. Vanessa Robisch	Superintendent
Dr. Kenny Moore	Director, Division of State Schools
Ms. Helen Malone	CTAE Coordinator
Ms. Carrie Allen, CRC	Transition Counselor with GVRA
Ms. Patti Lombardi	Family Engagement Coordinator

**School District Size:** District has a total of 172 students.

AASD has grades K-12, so this number includes elementary, middle and high school students.

Number of students receiving special education services: Per Ga DOE FTE count for FY 15 there is a total of 172 students who are receiving services.

District Graduation rate: Information on graduation rate is not available. All students who stay in school receive either a regular education diploma or a transition diploma. Many students remain in high school until the age of 22.

Recent news/ social media articles that highlight district achievements:

<https://community.fema.gov/story/helping-students-visualize-disaster-preparedness>

[http://www.gaspdg.org/sites/www.gaspdg.org/files/final\\_list\\_of\\_schools\\_for\\_2011-12\\_8.28.13.pdf](http://www.gaspdg.org/sites/www.gaspdg.org/files/final_list_of_schools_for_2011-12_8.28.13.pdf)

VR Area Providers/CRP's to provide Transition Services and Pre E.T.S.:

- Another Chance
- GREAT DAY Inc.
- Rocket Science HR
- Vision Rehabilitation Services of Georgia

Additional information – Example Pathways

- Marketing
- Culinary
- Business and Technology
- Audio Visual Technology and Film
- Horticulture

## Appendix B

### Decatur County School District

#### Key staff:

Mr. Timothy Cochran	Superintendent
Ms. April Aldridge	Assistant Superintendent
Dr. Linda Lumpkin	Assistant Superintendent
Dr. Suzi Bonifay	Assistant Superintendent
Ms. Catherine Gossett	Exceptional Education Director
Ms. Sylena Wiggins	Exceptional Education Assistant Director
Ms. Vonda Hubbard	CTAE Director
Ms. Brandi Adams	Pathway Director
Ms. Marilyn Melton	Personalized Learning Community Director
Mr. Tommie Howell	Principal Bainbridge High
Mr. John Wooden	Principal Bainbridge Middle

**School District Size:** District has a total of 5664 students

- 6 Elementary Schools
- 2 Middle Schools
- 1 High School
- 2 Alternative Learning Facilities

Number of students receiving special education services: Per Ga DOE FTE count for FY 15 there is a total of 554 students who are receiving services.

District Graduation rate is 82% and SWD graduation rate is 28.2%

Recent news/ social media articles that highlight district achievements: N/A

VR Area Providers/CRP's to provide Transition Services and Pre E.T.S.:

- Easter Seals of Southern Georgia
- Goodwill Big Ben
- Wiregrass Rehabilitation Center
- American Works, Inc.

Additional information – Example pathways:

- Air Force
- Animal Science
- Forestry/ Natural Resources
- Plant/Horticulture
- Administrative/ Information Support
- Therapeutic Services- Patient Care
- Therapeutic Services- Allied Health & Medicine
- Construction
- Metals Technology
- Interactive media
- Nutrition & Food Science
- Early Childhood Education
- Teaching as a Profession Education
- Engineering

## Appendix C

### Georgia Academy for the Blind

Georgia Academy for the Blind (GAB) is a state operated residential school located in Macon, Georgia for children who have blindness or visual impairments, including those with additional disabilities. GAB provides instruction for Pre-K through 12th grade.

#### **Key Staff:**

Dr. Kenney Moore – Director, Division of State Schools

Dr. Cindy Gibson –Superintendent

Frank Reynolds- Assistant to Superintendent and Residential Coordinator

Jon Smith – Assistant Principal

Mary Keith- Professional and Learning Services Coordinator

Tyrene Neil – Student Services Coordinator

Dawn Day –Literacy Coordinator

Currently enrolled 97

100% graduation rate

Pathways at GAB are:

- Plant and Floriculture Systems
- Plant and Landscape Systems
- Entrepreneurship
- Business and Technology
- Human Resources and Management
- Food and Nutrition
- Fine Arts
- Foreign Language

VR Providers

- Easter Seals of Dublin – Job Coaching
- Ken Yates – Vocational Evaluation
- John Crawford Orientation and Mobility Instructor
- Trya Hawkins Vision Rehab Therapy

## Appendix D

### Georgia School for the Deaf

#### Key staff:

Ms. Leslie Jackson           Principal  
Dr. Suzanne Arrington       Special Education Director/Student Services Director

**School District Size:** District has a total of 101 students.

Number of students receiving special education services: Per Ga DOE FTE count for FY 15 there is a total of 101 students who are receiving services.

District Graduation rate: Information on graduation rate is not available. All students who stay in school receive either a regular education diploma or a transition diploma.

Recent news/ social media articles that highlight district achievements:

<http://gsdweb.org/>

<http://www.zillow.com/cave-spring-ga/schools/georgia-school-for-the-deaf-169680/>

VR Area Providers/CRP's to provide Transition Services and Pre E.T.S.:

- Parent to Parent
- Georgia Council for the Hearing Impaired (GACHI)
- Goodwill of North Georgia
- Easter Seals of North Georgia

Additional information – Example pathways:

- Basic Agriculture and Horticulture



## Appendix E

### Hall County School District

#### Key staff:

Mr. Will Schofield	Superintendent
Dr. Karla Swafford	Director of Special Education
Ms. Laura Lucas	Assistant Director of Special Education
Mr. Jason Hobbs	Special Education Coordinator
Mr. Jeff Cooper	Principal East Hall High School
Ms. Suzanne Jarrard	Principal Chestatee High School
Mr. David Moody	Principal Lanier Charter Career Academy
Mr. Jamey Moore	Principal North Hall High School
Ms. Angela Shephard	CTI Coordinator Chestatee High school
Ms. Wesley Crow	CTI Coordinator East Hall High School
Ms. Traci Owens	CTI Coordinator North Hall High School
Mr. Scott Crain	Parent Mentor

**School District Size:** District has a total of 29,198 students

20 Elementary Schools

8 Middle Schools

7 High Schools

Number of students receiving special education services: Per Ga DOE FTE count for FY 15 there is a total of 3,409 students who are receiving services.

District Graduation rate is 87.1% and SWD graduation rate is 59.9%

Recent news/ social media articles that highlight district achievements:

<http://goo.gl/8rIJJIC>

<http://www.hallco.org/boe/site/2016-graduates-set-new-scholarship-record/>

<http://www.hallco.org/boe/site/georgia-usda-best-practice-award-winner/>

<http://goo.gl/qlja5O>

VR Area Providers/CRP's to provide Transition Services and Pre E.T.S.:

- Goodwill of North Georgia
- Rehabilitation Industries of Northeast Georgia
- Linda Robinson and Laura Gerks- Vocational Evaluations
- Bobby Dodd
- Randy and Friends

Additional information – Example pathways:

- Agriculture
- Architecture and Construction
- A/V Technology & Film
- Business Management & Administration
- Cosmetology
- Culinary
- Early Childhood Education
- Education & Training
- Engineering

## Appendix F

### Paulding County School District

#### Key staff:

Mr. Cliff Cole	Superintendent
Ms. Michele Sayles	Executive Director of Student Services
Ms. Kristin Pewitt	Transition Coach

**School District Size:** District has a total of 28,722 students

19 Elementary Schools

8 Middle Schools

5 High Schools

Number of students receiving special education services: Per Ga DOE FTE count for FY 15 there is a total of 3,628 students who are receiving services.

District Graduation rate is 79.8% and SWD graduation rate is: 54.9%

Recent news/ social media articles that highlight district achievements:

<http://www.paulding.k12.ga.us/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&DomainID=37&ModuleInstanceID=8&ViewID=047E6BE3-6D87-4130-8424-D8E4E9ED6C2A&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=35449&PageID=67>

VR Area Providers/CRP's to provide Transition Services and Pre E.T.S.:

- Parent to Parent
- Georgia Lion Lighthouse Foundation
- American Medical Equipment
- Paulding Literacy Council

Additional information – Example pathways:

- Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources
- Architecture and Construction
- Arts, A/V Technology & Communication
- Business Management & Administration
- Education and Training
- Human Services
- Health Science
- Marketing

## Appendix G

### Troup County Schools System

#### Key Staff:

Dr. Cole Pugh	Superintendent
Ms. Kitty Crawford	Exceptional Education Director
Dr. LaTanya Barkley	Coordinator of Preschool and Elementary Special Education Programs
Ms. Shari Dillon	Coordinator of Secondary Special Education and Gifted Program
Ms. Dawnyell King	Coordinator of Psychological Services
Ms. Jessica Morman	Coordinator of Special Programs
Ms. Jodi Mazzolini	Parent Mentor
Ms. Vanessa Roberts	Success Coach
Ms. Tamikia Brown	Transition Facilitator

**School District Size:** District has a total of 12,500 students

- 11 Elementary Schools
- 3 Middle Schools
- 3 High Schools
- 1 Alternative School
- 1 College and Career Academy

Number of students receiving special education services: Per Ga DOE FTE count for FY 15 there is a total of 517 students who are receiving services.

District Graduation rate is 77.8% and SWD graduation rate is 36.2%

Recent news/ social media articles that highlight district achievements:

<http://www.troup.k12.ga.us/News/10761#sthash.MNtuZdPF.dpbs>

<http://www.troup.k12.ga.us/Content2/21544>

<http://www.ledger-enquirer.com/news/local/article29127184.html>

<http://explorer.dol.state.ga.us/mis/profiles/Counties/troup.pdf>

VR Area Providers/CRP's to provide Transition Services and Pre E.T.S:

- New Ventures, Inc.
- Achievement Center- Easter Seals
- Tree of Life
- Community Connects

Additional Information- Example Pathways

- Forestry/Wildlife Systems
- Early Childhood Care & Education
- Nutrition and Food Science
- Graphic Design
- Auto Mechanic & Repair
- Business Accounting
- Allied Healthcare
- Introduction to Culinary Arts
- Architecture Drawing & Design
- Fashion and Retail Merchandising
- Web and Digital Design





