

# Indiana BRS Authorized Activities for Pre-ETS

## Pre-ETS Needs Assessment Report

August 20, 2024



**PUBLIC**  
CONSULTING GROUP

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# 1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Indiana Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services (DDRS) is the agency tasked with supporting a wide variety of Hoosiers with disabilities to create a vision for their future that uses paid and natural supports to build on—and enhance—their personal strengths and assets. In 2022 DDRS issued a request for proposals (RFP) for a needs assessment study to understand the current state of Pre-ETS in Indiana, identify any gaps in service, and provide recommendations for service improvement. DDRS contracted with PCG-Indiana, Inc. (PCG) to perform this work.

TABLE 1: PRE-ETS REQUIREMENTS

Pre-ETS Requirements
1. Students aged 14 to 22 in Indiana
2. Students are eligible for:
2a. Special education, or
2b. Related services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IEP, 504 plan), or
2c. Is a student with a disability for purposes of Section 504
Pre-ETS has traditionally been provided to eligible students at a school-based or provider setting. Indiana provides a number of different kinds of Pre-ETS programs that address the five Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) areas below:
A. Job exploration counseling
B. Work-based learning experiences
C. Counseling on postsecondary opportunities
D. Workplace readiness training
E. Instruction in self-advocacy

In this needs assessment PCG reviewed Pre-ETS data to determine Pre-ETS participant demographic and regional participation trends, including race, ethnicity, and disability to determine the current “as is” state of services.

The assessment also sought to gather perspectives from a robust stakeholder engagement strategy that included deployment of a statewide survey, focus groups, and interviews. This outreach to target Pre-ETS populations – including individual youth and students receiving services, parents and caregivers, IN youth vocational rehabilitation counselors (YVRC), educators and service providers – provided us with the qualitative data we needed to understand needs and preferences pertaining to Pre-ETS, the barriers to receiving and implementing these services, and stakeholders’ knowledge of the Pre-ETS and employment services available to them.

Broadly speaking, this assessment finds that while BRS and its partners provide quality Pre-ETS in a way that is relevant to students, our findings provide an opportunity for improvement. We have provided a full discussion of the data analysis and results in this report. Notable findings include the following highlights:

## 1.1 PRE-ETS PROGRAM STRENGTHS

The qualitative and quantitative data collected by PCG indicates there are pockets of excellence in Pre-ETS programming in Indiana. Strengths identified by survey respondents and focus group participants include:

- **Communication** – Providers are largely satisfied with the communications they receive from educators and Youth Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors (YVRC).
- **Ease of enrollment** – Many caregivers do not experience significant barriers to enrolling their child/children into Pre-ETS.
- **Educator support** – Providers who have strong educator support to help with recruitment and data sharing (most recent IEP and psychological evaluation) exhibit higher student involvement in Pre-ETS.

- **Engagement of students with high support needs** – Providers indicated that students with high support needs or significant disabilities are in self-contained classrooms that have flexible schedules that allow them to participate in Pre-ETS activities.
- **Schools offer space** – According to providers and educators, when the school offers designated space to the career coach, Pre-ETS activities are more accessible to students.

## 1.2 NOTABLE PRE-ETS BARRIERS

PCG's quantitative and qualitative data also identified challenges in Pre-ETS programs. Below are barriers that were consistently identified:

- **Lack of Pre-ETS program knowledge and materials** – Provider and family surveys and parent focus group results indicate that the lack of Pre-ETS knowledge is a significant barrier to enrolling students into the program. The parent focus groups shared that they do not fully understand the benefits of the Pre-ETS program. Educators echoed the lack of recruitment materials that parents and students can understand or convey the benefits of Pre-ETS. The teacher focus group shared they have created their own materials to share with families.
- **Difficulty referring Pre-ETS students to traditional VR** – Survey results from multiple stakeholders indicate a lack of clarity surrounding who is responsible for referring Pre-ETS students to traditional VR programming. The parents shared that the entire process including a referral to traditional VR was confusing and seemed very chaotic.
- **Diploma track Pre-ETS student engagement is low** – Provider survey results indicate the primary reason Pre-ETS students are most frequently not available is that diploma-track students cannot be taken out of class. The parent focus group confirmed their reluctance to have their children taken out of class. Parents shared that their preference would be for Pre-ETS to be offered during fall and summer breaks.
- **Provider capacity to serve students** – During the provider and educator post-survey focus groups and interviews we learned that providers do not have the staff coverage to serve all schools in their areas. With frequent turnover, providers often experience gaps in coverage and as a result, students do not receive any services. The teachers concluded that the lack of consistent and knowledgeable staff creates multiple barriers, from teacher referrals to students' participation in "worthwhile activities".

## 1.3 RECOMMENDATIONS AND A CALL TO ACTION

In response to the findings identified within this report, PCG developed the following recommendations and associated "call to action" to indicate where BRS could take important steps to address the needs of Pre-ETS students. We have outlined these recommendations in detail in Section 5 Recommendations and summarized them below.

**TABLE 2: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CALL-TO-ACTION**

	Recommendation	Call to Action
5.1	<p><b><i>Improve Communication and Coordination Across Partners</i></b></p> <p>Stakeholder engagement and assessment findings highlight a general need to enhance and improve Pre-ETS education and outreach materials and processes. There is confusion on roles and responsibilities across providers, school staff, and Youth VRCs. BRS has the opportunity to improve coordination across all partners to make the system more effective.</p>	<p>5.1.1 <b>Develop and disseminate relevant and accessible materials.</b> Develop Indiana-branded Pre-ETS education and outreach multimedia materials and a companion distribution plan to meet the needs of all audiences.</p> <p>5.1.2 <b>Improve coordination practices.</b> Use multiple tiers of support to improve coordination practices.</p> <p>5.1.3 <b>Use Pre-ETS Subcommittee of the Transition Advisory Council to address challenges and identify solutions.</b> Work with the Pre-ETS Subcommittee of the Transition Advisory Council to determine the best approach to implementing the suggested recommendations and provide feedback on the impact of activities.</p> <p>5.1.4 <b>Improve data collection and data storage practices.</b> BRS should continue to standardize and refine data collection practices in the Pre-ETS portal to facilitate data movement between processes.</p>
5.2	<p><b><i>Document and Disseminate Best Practices</i></b></p> <p>Focus group and survey results demonstrate that there are pockets of excellence in Pre-ETS programming and service delivery. The assessment process also revealed there are opportunities to improve the quantity and quality of services being provided.</p>	<p><b>Use the Level Up infrastructure to document and disseminate successful Pre-ETS administrative practices to improve the quantity and quality of services.</b> PCG, under BRS guidance, will use the tiered technical assistance approach to help Indiana practitioners in building capacity through universal (statewide training and resource dissemination), targeted (Communities of Practice), and intensive (coaching) training and technical assistance.</p>
5.3	<p><b><i>Fill Identified Gaps</i></b></p> <p>Focus group and survey results indicate that providers would benefit from using standardized curriculum, that there is a lack of clarity on who is responsible for actually referring Pre-ETS students to traditional VR, and that there are multiple barriers to enrolling diploma track students into Pre-ETS.</p>	<p>5.3.1 <b>Identify and disseminate standard curriculum for implementation.</b> Under BRS guidance, stakeholders would help review, select, and disseminate standard curricula for providers to use leveraging the Level Up infrastructure.</p> <p>5.3.2 <b>Increase dual enrollment and referrals to the traditional VR program.</b> BRS should develop training on dual enrollment of Pre-ETS into traditional VR services for various stakeholders, including students and their families, educators, providers, YVRC and traditional VRC.</p>

	Recommendation	Call to Action
		<b>5.3.3 Increase engagement of diploma track students.</b> PCG will research best practices for increasing diploma-track student participation in Pre-ETS on the state and national level. Potential strategies include program design changes to make Pre-ETS more inclusive, increasing outreach and training to students and families, and sharing best practices with stakeholders via technical assistance and coaching.

While this Needs Assessment identified many program strengths, there is room to increase access to Pre-ETS by clarifying roles and responsibilities, increasing program knowledge through better outreach materials, implementing best practices to streamline enrollment, and collaborating closely with the Transition Advisory Council, its Pre-ETS Subcommittee, and other stakeholders. These improvements will help students obtain personal employment experience and build relationships to set themselves up for success after graduation. As BRS looks toward the future, there is an opportunity to capitalize on strengths and use existing resources and relationships to build a better tomorrow for students with disabilities.

## 2 INTRODUCTION

The Indiana Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services (DDRS), Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS), Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is responsible for administering the Indiana Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) program. PCG-Indiana, Inc. (PCG) is working with BRS on a comprehensive approach to improving Pre-ETS throughout the state. This project has various components including this Pre-ETS needs assessment, Pre-ETS training and technical assistance, a Pre-ETS coaching network, and replication of successful Pre-ETS programs.

By conducting a needs assessment, BRS seeks to better understand the gaps and service needs identified by stakeholders and current recipients of Pre-ETS. PCG has carefully and rigorously identified both gaps and needs and provided recommendations that build on strengths and address areas for improvement.

### 2.1 ACRONYMS AND GLOSSARY

The following terms are used throughout this document. The full meaning of each of these commonly used acronyms is provided here for reader ease of reference.

**TABLE 3: GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

Acronym	Description
BRS	Indiana Bureau of Rehabilitation Services
CSNA	Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment
CtlC	Charting the LifeCourse
DDRS	Indiana Division of Disability and Rehabilitative Services
DOE	Department of Education
PCG	PCG-Indiana, Inc.
Pre-ETS	Pre-Employment Transition Services
RSA	Rehabilitation Services Administration
VR	Vocational Rehabilitation
WIOA	Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
YVRC	Youth Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

### 2.2 BACKGROUND

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) amended the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to require Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies to set aside federal funds for the statewide provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to “students with disabilities who are eligible or potentially eligible for VR services.” A student with a disability is an individual with a disability in a secondary, postsecondary, or other recognized education program who:

- Is between the ages of 14 and 22 years old; and
- Is eligible for, and receiving, special education or related services under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IEP, 504 plan); or
- Is a student with a disability for the purposes of Section 504.

There are five required Pre-ETS activities and four Pre-ETS coordination activities. The five required Pre-ETS activities are:



- Job exploration counseling
- Work-based learning experiences
- Counseling on postsecondary opportunities
- Workplace readiness training
- Instruction in self-advocacy

The four Pre-ETS coordination activities are:

- Attending individualized education program meetings for students with disabilities, when invited;
- Working with the local workforce development boards, one-stop centers, and employers to develop work opportunities for students with disabilities, including internships, summer employment and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year, and apprenticeships;
- Working with schools, including those carrying out activities under section 614(d) of the IDEA, to coordinate and ensure the provision of pre-employment transition services, and
- Attending person-centered planning meetings for individuals receiving services under title XIX of the Social Security Act, when invited (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.).

## 2.3 PURPOSE

Under BRS' direction, PCG conducted a needs assessment of Pre-ETS students to complement and complete what is already documented about the needs of students with disabilities in Indiana's Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA). While the CSNA characterizes the needs of students and youth, the level of stakeholder engagement through the CSNA survey, focus groups, and interviews is limited by the scope and budget set by the State. To complement that process, IN BRS contracted with PCG to execute enhanced stakeholder engagement activities (Figure 1: Study Process) to provide a more extensive, deeper understanding of the training that could be offered to providers, students and families, and professionals.

**FIGURE 1: STUDY PROCESS**



PCG will use the results of this needs assessment to identify potential training topics and technical assistance. BRS will review and approve the training infrastructure and prioritize training topics prior to PCG delivery. Based on prioritized topics, PCG will deliver technical assistance in a tiered model that provides differentiated support based on the needs of the learner.

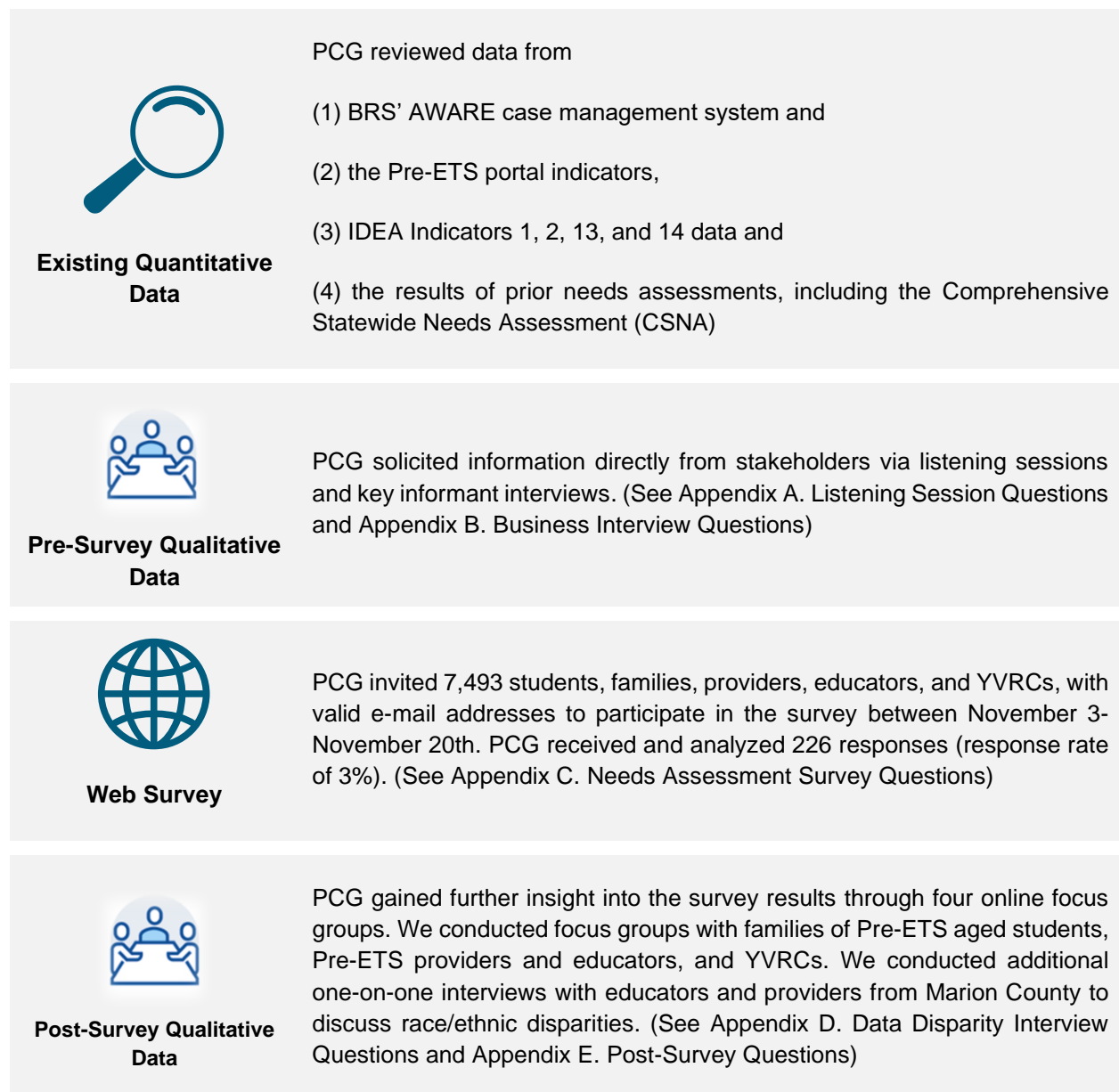
### 3 METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

We collected information two ways. First, we collected and analyzed quantitative data from BRS. Second, we engaged BRS stakeholders via a statewide, web-based survey, focus groups, and key informant interviews (See Figure 2).

The information we gathered from our analysis provided critical insight into the “as-is” or current state of Pre-ETS, specifically communication and collaboration, service delivery and implementation, documentation and materials, and other topics. PCG worked closely with BRS to identify target populations, implement outreach strategies, and develop survey, focus group, and interview questions.

Using this approach, PCG analyzed and assessed the state of Indiana Pre-ETS to provide meaningful, achievable recommendations for BRS to consider.

**FIGURE 2: NEEDS ASSESSMENT DATA COLLECTION METHODS**



### 3.1 DATA ANALYSIS

PCG requested relevant, existing data to establish a baseline for analysis. Our team worked with BRS to gather and analyze data from existing sources, including BRS' AWARE case management system and the Pre-ETS portal, IDEA Indicators 1, 2, 13, and 14 data, and results of prior needs assessments, including the CSNA.

PCG analyzed the above data using appropriate statistical methodology to establish our understanding of Pre-ETS, and identify other potential correlations from additional data sources. PCG drafted an internal summary that outlined recommendations and potential next steps, including drafting and administering a statewide survey, and conducting focus groups and interviews.

#### **Data Set**

We extracted Pre-ETS participant data from two BRS case management and data warehousing systems and merged them into a single file for comprehensive analysis. The first system, the Pre-ETS Client Portal contains information about students who are enrolled in Indiana's Pre-ETS program. This includes frequency and amount of Pre-ETS activities provided with BRS funding, participants' county of residence, the school district in which they are enrolled, intake and case closure dates, and certain demographic details such as age. The Pre-ETS portal data set contained 16,363 uniquely identified records.

We extracted the second data set from IN BRS' AWARE case management system. This limited extract contained demographic information for individuals enrolled in VR services, including racial, ethnic, and age data, and did not include information on specific services utilized. This contained information on 29,900 uniquely identified records.

Using a crosswalk of unique identifiers provided by BRS, PCG merged these two files into a single, cohesive data set. All (100%) of Pre-ETS portal records matched to records in the AWARE case management data. This resulted in a set of 17 (<0.1%) Pre-ETS portal data records matching to two or more records in the AWARE case management data set. In these instances, we selected the record with the largest number of complete fields for inclusion in the final data. In cases where all duplicative matches contained equal amounts of data, we selected a record at random. We also selected at random a group of 20 records to confirm validity using birth date, the only field appearing in both data sets. All 20 records contained the same birth date information.

The above data analysis resulted in a final dataset of 16,345 unique records of individuals using Indiana Pre-ETS from October 21, 2016, through June 20, 2023.

#### **Comparison Data**

PCG used Indiana state population data for comparison purposes to better understand potential needs within the service population. This data primarily comes from the American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2017-2021) for the state of Indiana. Our analysis focused on the population of Indiana residents aged 14 to 24 who had any type of disability. We obtained data from the FTP extract except for data requiring geographic analysis, which we took from the pre-generated ACS tables provided by the [US Census Bureau's Look Up Tool](#). This resulted in small differences in the total number of individuals represented.

We obtained school enrollment data from a publicly available source [Fiscal Year 2023 Enrollment Data](#) provided by the Indiana Department of Education.

## **Data Transformations**

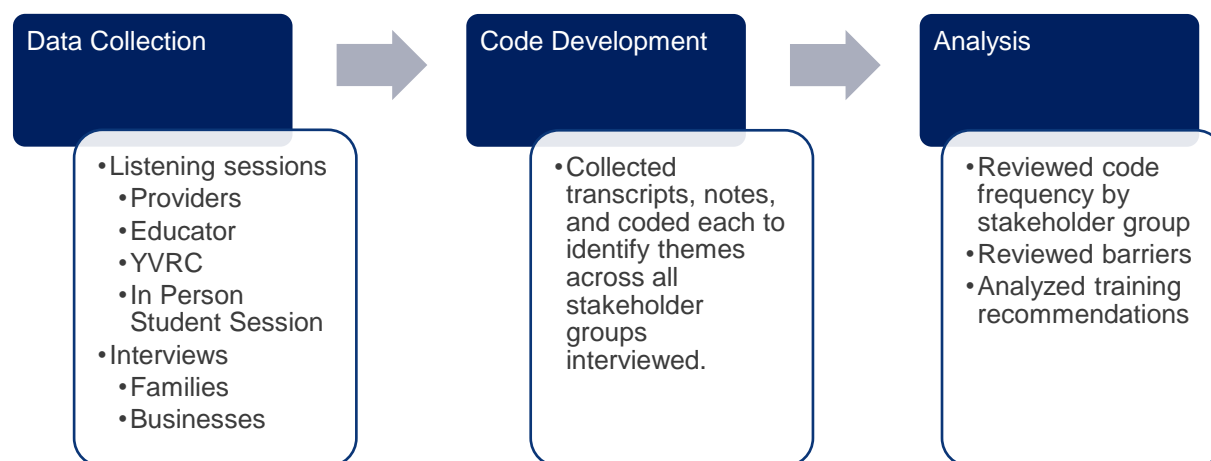
PCG undertook several data transformations so we could conduct meaningful comparisons to population data. We recoded school at intake to school district according to IN DOE data. We used birth dates to calculate age at the time of analysis (September 2023).

Race and ethnicity data required the most transformation as the data provided by IN BRS to PCG, which are designed to provide data suitable to Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) requirements, differ meaningfully from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) standard definitions used in the American Community Survey (ACS). PCG took steps to reconcile these two differing practices to support a more robust analysis. Due to RSA data requirements, IN BRS maintains several groups which do not appear under OMB standard definitions. As such, racial and ethnic data presented in this report has been recategorized to better align with national standard measurements. This includes collapsing race and Hispanic ethnicity into a single categorization. For the purpose of this analysis, we recoded to 'White' all individuals classified in IN BRS' data as 'Middle Eastern', 'Hispanic or Latino'. Because OMB's definitions are less specific than the ones used by BRS, PCG used OMB's definitions (assuming people to a less-specific categorization). Additionally, we created a new Hispanic ethnicity variable for those with 'Hispanic or Latino' listed in the Ethnic\_Group\_Desc field (we considered all other entries in the Ethnic\_Group\_Desc column to be non-Hispanic). This was done as BRS' data combines race and ethnic data in the Ethnic\_Group\_Desc column whereas OMB understands race and ethnicity as distinct concepts which are measured separately. Finally, we note that the data provided to PCG does not allow for capture of multi-racial identities. This is important to note because of its impact on analysis – neither method of record is 'superior' in a meaningful way. Conclusions taken from this data are best used when supported by other analysis.

PCG attempted to categorize individuals in the provided BRS data by disability, using information on disability using the disability information field provided. Data record prior to system improvements was often not descriptive or suitable for the intended purposes of this analysis. For example, 2,061 records were listed as 'Student has an IEP or 504 plan' while other records state specific diagnoses or degrees of severity. As such, these cases could not meaningfully be grouped with the resources allocated to this process. As a significant portion of records could not be used, disability type was not considered for analysis in this report. BRS has since updated this field to provide more meaningful and consistent data which aligns with disability categories as defined by IDEA.

## **3.2 PRE- SURVEY STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

PCG sought information directly from stakeholders via listening sessions and key informant interviews to develop an accurate picture of current needs. PCG analyzed each meeting transcript using a series of codes developed through the observation of themes across interviews and stakeholder groups.

**FIGURE 3: METHODOLOGY FOR COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF PRE-SURVEY STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK**

PCG developed listening session and interview questions in collaboration with IN BRS. Questions were designed to gather information from various stakeholders (students and their family members, businesses, educators, providers, and YVRC) about their Pre-ETS and traditional VR experiences, highlighting successes, challenges, and training recommendations that would complement existing information about stakeholder experience.

PCG scheduled listening sessions and shared them widely to reach a robust number of participants. We also scheduled individualized key informant interviews and received feedback via e-mail submissions. We reviewed all information gathered during the initial listening session phase, identified common themes, and assigned a unique code to each theme. We also coded each transcript and e-mail response to identify common themes across stakeholder groups.

We presented our initial analysis and findings to IN BRS on October 17, 2023, to stakeholders at the Transition Advisory Council Meeting on October 19, 2023, and the Pre-ETS Provider Meeting on October 31, 2023. We used information and findings from the interviews and listening sessions to inform the development of our Needs Assessment Survey released on November 3.

### ***Participation***

We offered stakeholders various methods of feedback to allow flexibility and maximize participation. PCG conducted focus groups, individual interviews, and solicited e-mail feedback to gather qualitative information.

Table 4 outlines participation by stakeholder group and feedback type.

**TABLE 4: LISTENING SESSION PARTICIPATION**

Population Type	Group Listening Session	Key Informant Interviews	Email	Total Participants
Businesses	0	4	2	6
Educators	11	0	1	12

Family	0	1	1	2
Providers and Advocates	37	0	0	37
Students	3	0	0	3
Youth VRCs	7	0	0	7
<b>Overall</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>67</b>

PCG reached out to 18 businesses, interviewed four of these businesses, and received e-mail responses to the interview questions from two of these businesses. PCG conducted all interviews virtually. PCG conducted virtual listening sessions for educators, providers, advocates, and YVRCs in September 2023. We held all listening sessions virtually using either Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

PCG scheduled a virtual listening session for individuals and families. Though the listening session information was widely shared, we did not have any attendees. In lieu of that listening session, PCG conducted further outreach to identify individuals and families we could interview using the questions we had prepared for the listening session. First, we reached out to those who had registered for the listening session but chose not to attend. Next, we reached out to educators and our other connections from our previous Pre-ETS work in Indiana to see if they could identify individuals or families who had an interest in participating in an interview. We held one virtual interview via Zoom and received one e-mail response to our interview questions.

PCG held an in-person listening session in Bloomington, Indiana with students receiving Pre-ETS through Community Transitions, a transition program for students that attend Monroe County Schools.

### **Code Development and Analysis**

The information PCG gathered through focus groups, interviews, and e-mails helped us to develop codes (themes) for analysis. Table 5: Codes Identified for Analysis of Listening Sessions

Table 5 presents the stakeholder group codes and the activity codes that were identified. We used an additional code called “Recommendations” to quickly highlight priority training topics identified by stakeholders.

**TABLE 5: CODES IDENTIFIED FOR ANALYSIS OF LISTENING SESSIONS**

<b>Stakeholder Group Code</b>	<b>Activity Codes</b>
Business	Barriers
Educator	Collaboration
Family	Communication
Provider	Documentation
Student	Implementation of Core Services
VR staff	Materials
Youth Counselor	Training

PCG conducted three levels of qualitative analysis on information gathered through listening sessions, individual interviews, and emails. These included:

- Calculated code frequency by stakeholder group to identify codes with a higher frequency across discussions.
- Reviewed barriers to identify areas for recommendations.
- Analyzed training recommendations shared by stakeholders to identify training needs.

### 3.3 STATEWIDE SURVEY

PCG, in conjunction with Indiana VR, developed and implemented the Indiana Pre-ETS Statewide Survey. We designed the survey instrument to better understand Pre-ETS students' needs and preferences, barriers to receiving and implementing Pre-ETS activities, and individuals' knowledge of the Pre-ETS and employment services available to them. We designed specific survey questions for each set of participants (youth and students receiving services, their parents and caregivers, YVRCs, educators, and Pre-ETS provider staff) based on their role in the Pre-ETS employment process. Completion time varied based on the respondent's specific question path, as demonstrated in the table below.

**TABLE 6: SURVEY PARTICIPATION**

Population	Average Time to Complete	Total Number of Questions	Number of Responses
Youth and Students	5 mins	16	31
Parents and Caregivers	6 mins	22	109
IN YVRC Staff	6 mins	25	3
Educators	14 mins	19	38
Provider Staff	16 mins	42	45

We developed the survey using Qualtrics survey software and hosted it entirely online. IN BRS and PCG staff rigorously tested the survey to ensure functionality and the highest possible degree of accessibility for the visually impaired or those using assistive technology.

PCG distributed the survey to youth and students for whom IN VR provided an email address. These individuals received a trackable survey link. Survey recipients included individuals who are current Pre-ETS participants, individuals with closed Pre-ETS cases, and individuals with an e-mail address but no eligibility finding or services. The survey allowed proxy responses (i.e., responses by a parent, spouse, or caretaker familiar with the targeted respondent's situation and concerns).

We provided an anonymous link to the survey instrument for all other populations. This link allowed them to share the survey with other potential respondents from their social or professional networks. We used this respondent-driven sampling methodology because we had no identifying or contact information for these individuals.

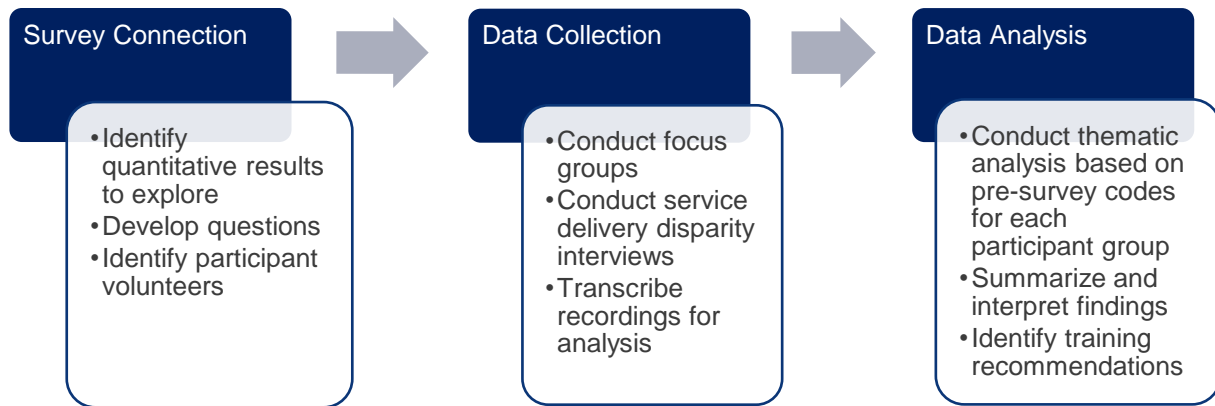
The survey data is unweighted and therefore reflects the responses and experiences of the individuals who took part in the survey. It may not be representative of the entire state for any of the populations measured. To avoid providing an inaccurate sense of confidence or representation, PCG has not calculated variance statistics or performed any statistical significance tests. Additionally, we have displayed only results for questions with 20 or more respondents to protect respondent confidentiality.

PCG utilized Microsoft Excel to analyze the results of the survey. To improve accuracy, PCG removed participants with a total duration of 60 seconds or less from the dataset. In addition, we also removed survey participants who did not respond to the first question asking to identify their stakeholder group.

### 3.4 POST-SURVEY FOCUS GROUPS AND INTERVIEWS

After completing survey data analysis, PCG moved into a second qualitative data collection phase consisting of following up with focus group participants to get their perspective on the survey results. We asked participants to (a) interpret survey data from their perspectives, (b) provide insights into why survey respondents answered questions the way they did, and (c) offer recommendations for Pre-ETS going forward. Figure 4: Post-Survey Qualitative Method below depicts post-survey activities.



**FIGURE 4: POST-SURVEY QUALITATIVE METHOD**


### ***Survey Connection***

PCG conducted preliminary survey data analysis to identify topics to discuss with focus groups and interview participants. For each stakeholder group, PCG identified survey results that met any one of the following criteria (a) skewed to one primary response, (b) incongruent results between stakeholder groups, or (c) multiple potential interpretations of results. Using these criteria, PCG identified up to six survey results to explore with each focus group. From there, we developed and received VR approval for semi-structured focus group interview questions. (See Appendix E. Post-Survey Questions)

We identified focus group and interview participants using a convenience sample of survey respondents. The final survey question asked for volunteers to participate in a 30-minute focus group to review survey results. We invited each person who volunteered on the survey to participate. To address the Pre-ETS disparity in Marion County, PCG solicited additional focus group and interview respondents based on staff's professional networks. We conducted one-on-one interviews with individuals who were unable to join one of the focus group sessions. (See Appendix D. Data Disparity Interview Questions).

### ***Data Collection***

PCG had two types of focus groups; the first discussed racial/ethnic disparities in Pre-ETS enrollment and the second reviewed the survey results. No one attended the disparity focus groups; therefore, interviews were conducted with two educators and one provider. Each interview lasted 30 minutes.

PCG scheduled 30-minute focus groups with each stakeholder group from November 27<sup>th</sup> to December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2023. We held virtual focus groups and interviews using Zoom. PCG followed our standard focus group protocols of recording and taking notes during each session. We created transcriptions using either Zoom or NVIVO qualitative software. Table 7 Focus Group Participation shows number of focus group attendees and questions by population. Unfortunately, none of the families who participated in the focus groups had children who participated in Pre-ETS activities; however, their children were ages 14-22 and were not offered Pre-ETS.

**TABLE 7 FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPATION**

Population	Number of Focus Group Attendees	Number of Questions
Parents of Pre-ETS aged children	5	5
Provider Staff	6	7



Population	Number of Focus Group Attendees	Number of Questions
Educators	2	4
IN YVRC	10	4

## **Data Analysis**

PCG conducted thematic analysis for the racial/ethnic disparity and the overall survey separately. The findings from each group are discussed below:

### **Service Delivery Disparity**

After conducting quantitative data analysis PCG identified a racial and geographic Pre-ETS delivery disparity in Marion County. PCG used thematic analysis of the interview transcripts. We used Excel to code the 2-hours of data. We identified three themes: disparity causes, referral barriers, and recommendations. Additional information regarding this disparity is available in Section 4.2.

### **Survey**

PCG conducted thematic analysis of focus group transcripts using the thematic codes developed during the pre-survey. We used Excel for coding since the 4-hours of data was straightforward and codes were previously identified. The codes used for thematic analysis were the same as those used for the listening session: strengths/barriers, collaboration, communication, documentation/materials, and implementation of core services. The qualitative findings are integrated within Sections 4.3 – 4.5 to provide an additional perspective of the survey results.

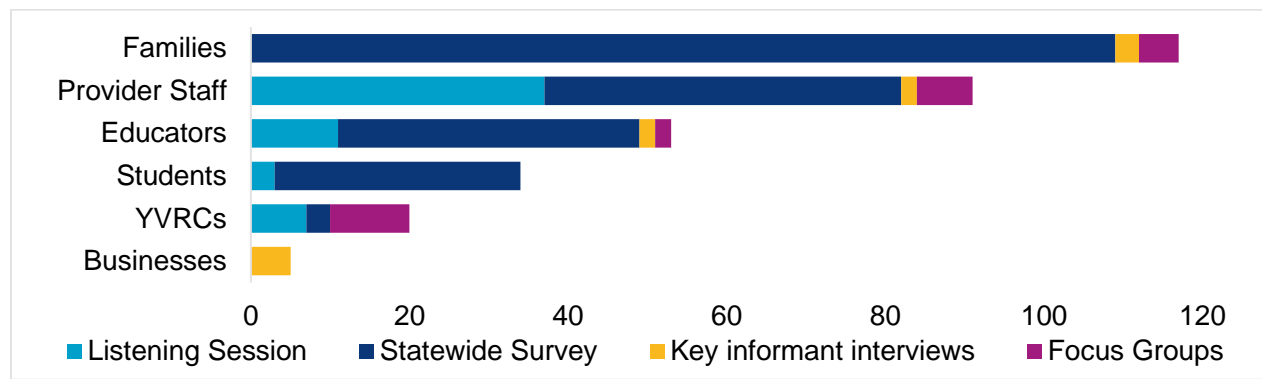
## 4 WHAT WE LEARNED

Within this section, we have compiled the findings from our multiple data collection methods. These findings are the basis for our recommendations and action items in Section 5.

### 4.1 STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Across all engagement modalities, families and caregivers had the highest level of engagement, while YVRCs had the lowest (businesses were only involved in the key informant interviews). However, it is noted that there are a much smaller number of YVRCs compared to other populations. Thus, the response rate of this group is still meaningful. Figure 5: Study Participation by Respondent Group and Participation Avenue shows the study participation by respondent group. This section displays results from each of these data collection sessions.

FIGURE 5: STUDY PARTICIPATION BY RESPONDENT GROUP AND PARTICIPATION AVENUE



### 4.2 SERVICE DELIVERY DISPARITY

PCG performed an analysis of the characteristics of individuals in the IN Pre-ETS portal, comparing them to the population of Indiana youth aged 14 to 24 with any disability included in the American Community Survey 2017-2021. It is important to note that although this analysis used data from the whole Pre-ETS portal population (from 2016 to 2022), the trends presented in this section hold true for all specific time spans we analyzed. We used the complete population to demonstrate consistency.

We analyzed the population distribution of individuals receiving Pre-ETS in the IN Pre-ETS portal database. We then compared this data to the actual population of that group within Indiana. While IN VR cannot provide services to every potentially eligible individual, the population rate represents what we would expect to see if barriers to access were distributed at random. Large differences suggest the presence of some specific barrier(s) preventing the group in question from accessing services, implying a lack of equity.

When compared to the Indiana data on 14- to 24-year-olds with a disability, the racial composition of the population in the IN Pre-ETS portal shows meaningful differences as seen in

Table 8: Population by Race. Individuals in the Portal are much more likely to consider themselves White than the general population. However, some of this discrepancy may be due to differences in categorization and data storage because Indiana's Portal does not give individuals the option to choose 'Other Race' or select multiple races. While this may mitigate the difference somewhat- some of the individuals who in the ACS are considered 'Other' or 'Multiracial' would likely consider themselves White under Indiana's schema- it is very unlikely that this explains the entire gap.

**TABLE 8: POPULATION BY RACE**

	IN Pre-ETS		IN Population	
	Count	%	Count	%
American Indian	98	0.6%	413	0.5%
Asian	191	1.2%	1,104	1.4%
Black or African American	2,054	12.6%	10,520	13.3%
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	41	0.3%	89	0.1%
White	13,718	83.9%	58,594	74.2%
Some Other Race	N/A	N/A	1,830	2.3%
Two or More Races	N/A	N/A	6,435	8.1%
Unknown	243	1.5%	N/A	N/A

The extent of this difference becomes clear when we simplify categories. In Table 8 Table 9 below, we combined all non-White racial groups and compared it to individuals who reported their race as White alone and individuals who reported any other race or combination of races. Results display a clear disparity – non-white individuals are notably less likely to receive Pre-ETS in Indiana if their presence in the Pre-ETS portal is an accurate representation of the population receiving services.

**TABLE 9: POPULATION BY RACE (DICHOTOMOUS)**

	IN Pre-ETS		IN Population	
	Count	%	Count	%
White Alone	13,718	83.9%	58,594	74.2%
Other Than White	2,384	14.7%	20,391	25.7%
Unknown	243	1.5%	N/A	N/A

While this racial disparity is important to recognize, the data did not provide us with enough detail on why it occurred and how it could be rectified. PCG continued to analyze data to better understand the factors driving this disparity. In the United States race and geographic distribution are often closely associated. For example, according to the US Census Bureau, Marion County, Indiana, is about 51.8%<sup>1</sup> non-Hispanic White, compared to 77.0%<sup>2</sup> of the state as whole. Considering that Marion County accounts for about 14% of Indiana's population, it is possible that geographic disparity is a major driver of an observed difference in enrollment by race.

Similarly, Indiana's Pre-ETS population showed a notable gap after we analyzed the geographic distribution of enrolled individuals. As highlighted in the table below, residents of Marion County (Region 3) contain the highest concentration of non-Hispanic, non-White residents in the state, are much less likely to be receiving Pre-ETS than their peers in other regions of the state.

**TABLE 10: POPULATION BY REGION**

	IN Pre-ETS		IN Population	
	Count	%	Count	%
Region 1	4,349	26.6%	17,074	23.6%
Region 2	3,711	22.7%	15,580	21.6%
Region 3	2,767	16.9%	19,998	27.7%
Region 4	2,683	16.4%	10,421	14.4%
Region 5	2,829	17.3%	9,164	12.7%
Outside of IN	6	0.0%	N/A	N/A

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/marioncountyindiana>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/IN/PST045222>

After further data analysis, it becomes clear that this service disparity is largely driven by a lack of enrolled youth and students almost exclusively in Marion County. Table 11 shows the six counties with the widest gap between service and actual population, by percent. Marion County has a gap that is more than five times the gap in the next largest county, and greater than the other five counties combined. This makes clear the gap in services provided to youth and students in Marion County vs. other counties. Considering the racial demographics of the State of Indiana as previously described, it seems likely that this under provision of services in Marion County contributes to regional and racial disparity in service provision.

**TABLE 11: POPULATION BY COUNTY (LARGEST POPULATION DELTA)**

County	Region	IN Pre-ETS		IN Population		Delta
		Count	%	Count	%	
Marion	3	1,246	7.6%	11,916	16.5%	-8.9%
Lake	1	748	4.6%	4,501	6.2%	-1.7%
Hamilton	3	375	2.3%	2,843	3.9%	-1.6%
Allen	2	790	4.8%	4,530	6.3%	-1.4%
Delaware	2	262	1.6%	1,983	2.7%	-1.1%
Madison	2	191	1.2%	1,654	2.3%	-1.1%

PCG's qualitative findings provided additional insight into these service delivery discrepancies. The provider shared three factors impacting the number of diverse students in Pre-ETS in Marion County. First, the Indianapolis Public School District (IPS) provides extensive transition services through an outside contractor. Therefore, those schools have chosen not to participate in Pre-ETS because it would mean supplanting existing school services. Second, many larger schools with more diverse populations have made few referrals and have not helped the provider coordinate Pre-ETS activities with students. Without the support of the high school teachers, the provider has had difficulty enrolling students and providing services and, in some instances, the provider has discontinued Pre-ETS in those schools due to the limited number of referrals. The third factor influencing racial disparity may be a data entry error. The career coach may not enter race because it is not included in the IEP.

The qualitative findings from educator interviews identified different causes for this disparity. First, many students are of mixed race and therefore the VR racial categories did not reflect racial/ethnic diversity. Second, educators believe the lack of provider capacity to serve many students hinders the diversity of students served. Although the schools have students who need the services, the provider does not have the capacity to serve them. The educators interviewed believed the provider prioritized getting the students' intakes completed. One educator commented that the provider does not offer any services during the school year beyond resume writing and interviewing skills.

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*Educators recommended that more career coaches be hired to work with the large high schools so services could be offered to more students and that community-based activities could be implemented.*

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The interviewed educators believed the early implementation of Pre-ETS was more successful when more students were being served. Since that time, the turnover of staff and the quality of staff have caused challenges. Educators recommended that more career coaches be hired to work with the large high schools so services could be offered to more students and that community-based activities could be implemented. The educators also recommend that Pre-ETS small group activities be implemented in their school. By working with the school to adjust student schedules, they could create opportunities for most students to receive services.

### 4.3 COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

With multiple stakeholders involved in the well-being of students in the Pre-ETS program, strong communication and collaboration are required between students, families, educators, providers and YVRCs. This includes information sharing across platforms and allowing providers flexibility and autonomy working with schools, students, and families to ensure the best possible outcome for each student. We identified nine attributes that define successful collaborations in our results from our initial stakeholder listening sessions as outlined below:

1. **Partners are present:** Educators expressed a desire to see provider attendance at, and involvement in, conferences, parent meetings, IEP meetings, and job fairs. Educators also reported the benefits to VRCs being present on the high school campus. Businesses echoed the sentiment by indicating they benefit from provider support at the job site.
2. **Communication is frequent, timely, consistent, goal-oriented, and solution focused:** One of the greatest barriers to collaboration was a lack of consistent communication. Without one person identified to initiate and maintain communication between Pre-ETS and VR staff, educators, families, and students, the purpose and outcomes of Pre-ETS are unknown or vague to students/families and educators. Stakeholder suggestions to improve provider communication included:
  - a. Round table discussions with school leaders at all levels
  - b. Agreed-upon expectations
  - c. Consistent schedules
  - d. Plan to solve identified barriers and challenges
3. **Schools provide designated space and access to students during the school day:** Providers have categorized Pre-ETS programs as “more successful” where they have a confidential and consistent meeting space to work with students. Group Pre-ETS activities have also been “more successful” when providers have been given a specific class period to work with students such as resource period or segregated classroom period.
4. **Providers are knowledgeable and have experience in community resources and services post high school:** Educators report that effective collaboration connects students to resources that address their various needs. Providers must know and understand these resources to help students.
5. **Schools should help to bridge the communication gap between parents and students and Youth VRCs by helping with communication, scheduling, and information dissemination:** Parents’ lack of communication and follow-up poses a barrier that educators can help resolve.
6. **All team members understand all roles and responsibilities:** Educators, providers and businesses all agreed that clearly defined roles and responsibilities helped promote collaboration. Businesses further explained that providers must achieve a fine balance when working with students. Providers must be able to scaffold experiences for young people and gradually release responsibility to promote student growth and workplace independence. All stakeholders agreed that further role clarification and training in those responsibilities will help them understand how each other’s roles and responsibilities fit into the transition process.
7. **Information is shared across all partners to align goals, develop plans, and maximize everyone’s efforts:** Educators’ and providers’ documentation contain rich information to help students explore careers. Stakeholders agreed that more widely sharing information would help align program goals to successful student outcomes.
8. **Providers have the autonomy and flexibility to work with schools, students, and families both in and outside of school:** Given the challenges of scheduling appointments with students during

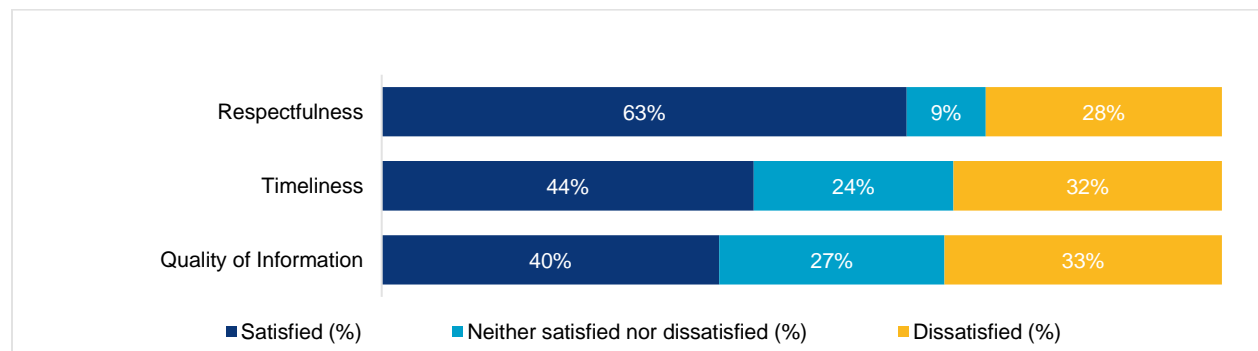
school hours, educators, providers, and YVRCs all expressed the need for providers who are willing and able to meet with students outside of regular school hours.

9. **Parents and students submit paperwork:** Parental engagement and follow-through with documentation was cited as a great barrier by both educators and providers. Because some students are not of legal age to sign documents, it is imperative that parents complete and sign all documents to ensure services provision.

### **Students/Families and Staff**

All groups of stakeholders agree on the importance of communication and collaboration. Our survey revealed that varying groups who participated rated communication with other stakeholders quite differently. 63% of students/families who took the survey noted that they are satisfied with the respectfulness of their providers/career coaches, though they were not as satisfied with the timeliness (44%) and quality (40%) of information shared with them. An average of 20% of students and families who completed the survey were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with their communication with providers/career coaches, while an average of 31% were dissatisfied (Figure 6).

**FIGURE 6: FAMILY/STUDENT COMMUNICATION SATISFACTION WITH PROVIDER/CAREER COACH**



Family members who participated in the survey cited school staff (43%) and VR/YVRC counselors (19%) as the first people they most often talked to about Pre-ETS. For the 43% who cited school staff, special education teachers/teacher of record and transition coordinator were the top two selected as primary contact.

As previously mentioned, none of the family focus group participants had children who participated in Pre-ETS. Therefore, they were only able to discuss their perspectives on the 32% timeliness dissatisfaction. All six attendees agreed that Pre-ETS activities were never discussed with them or presented as a potential service by the provider, educator, or VR staff. They only learned about Pre-ETS after their children exited high school. None of the children from these families had received Pre-ETS, but they all would have if they had known about the services.

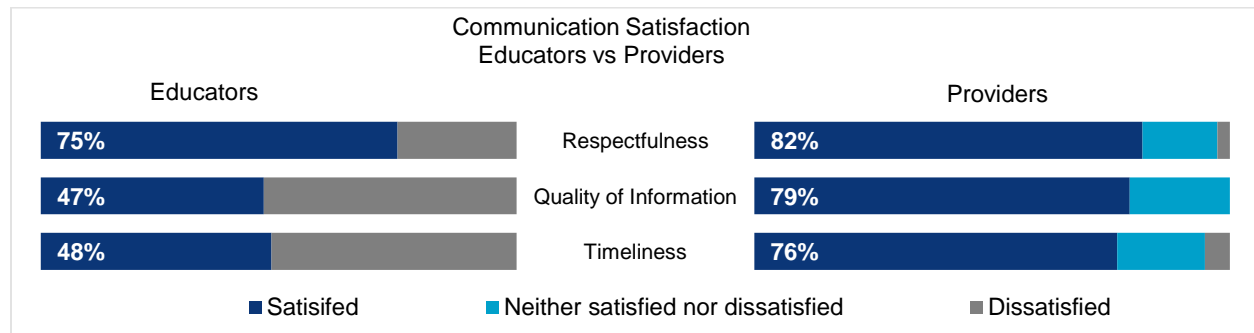
### **Providers and Educators**

Pre-ETS providers who participated in survey also cited the career coach/instructor (53%) and Pre-ETS coordinators (32%) as their top primary contacts for school staff. When providers were asked about their communication with educators, a majority (79%) indicated that respectfulness, quality of information shared, and timeliness were all satisfactory. No providers were dissatisfied with the quality of information shared with them by educators, while a handful (8%) indicated some level of dissatisfaction with educators' respectfulness and timeliness of communication (Figure 7).

Conversely, when educators were asked about their provider communication satisfaction, a slight majority of educators (53%) were dissatisfied with the quality of information shared by providers, and the timeliness

of that information. However, 75% of educators indicated that provider respectfulness was the most satisfying aspect of their communication (Figure 7).

**FIGURE 7: COMMUNICATION SATISFACTION - EDUCATORS VS. PROVIDERS**



Many educator and provider focus group attendees also agreed with these findings. Educators attributed communication satisfaction discrepancies to providers' lack of quality information and timeliness. For example, educators had to create their own Pre-ETS fact sheets to simplify Pre-ETS information shared with students and parents. Other educators were frustrated that providers do not notify them of Pre-ETS staff changes, and they were frequently uncertain as to what staff were providing Pre-ETS.

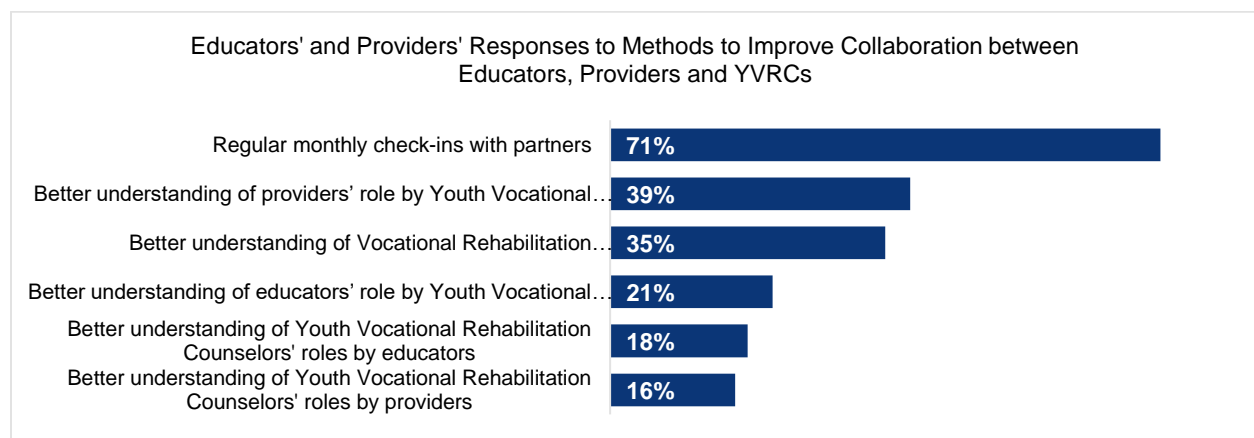
### ***Providers and YVRCs***

Given the frequent communication between providers and YVRCs, most providers who took the survey (67%) indicated they were satisfied with YVRCs' communication timeliness, quality of information shared, and respectfulness. An average of 16% disagreed, stating that they were dissatisfied with YVRC communication.

### ***Educators, Providers and YVRCs***

Collaboration between educator, provider, and YVRC stakeholders is essential for the provision of effective service delivery. Educators and providers who participated in the survey were asked about methods to improve collaboration between educators, providers and YVRCs. Most respondents (71%) selected monthly check-ins as the most appreciated method to improve collaboration. Educators and providers also indicated that YVRCs would benefit from a clearer understanding of the provider's role, and a better understanding of YVRCs' own roles amongst themselves (Figure 8).

**FIGURE 8: METHODS TO IMPROVE COLLABORATION BETWEEN EDUCATORS, PROVIDERS, AND YVRCs**





During the provider and educator focus groups, we learned communication strengths were grounded in long-term relationships between specific staff who have collaborated on many transition services during their careers. These groups cited monthly meetings and weekly informal communications as contributing to their satisfaction. Providers identified help coordinating and facilitating meetings and conducting joint VR101 training as positive outcomes of their relationship. Educators also shared that teachers prioritized provider communication if school administrations voiced a strong commitment to Pre-ETS.

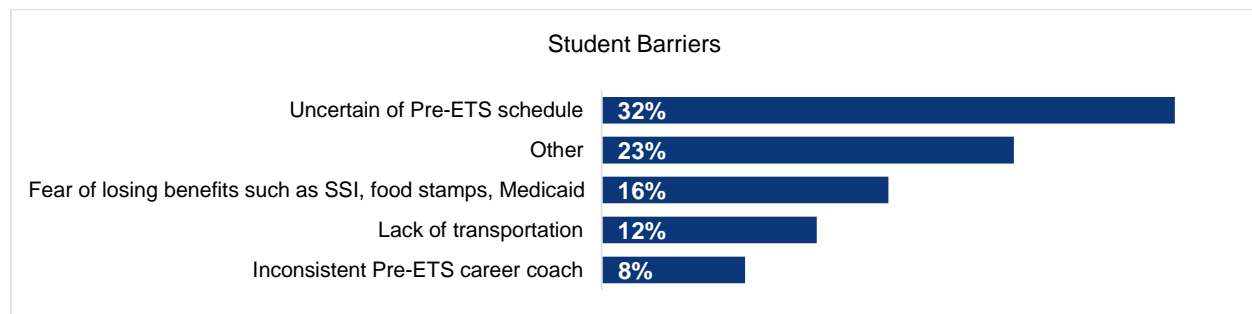
#### 4.4 BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTING CORE SERVICES

##### **Overall Barriers**

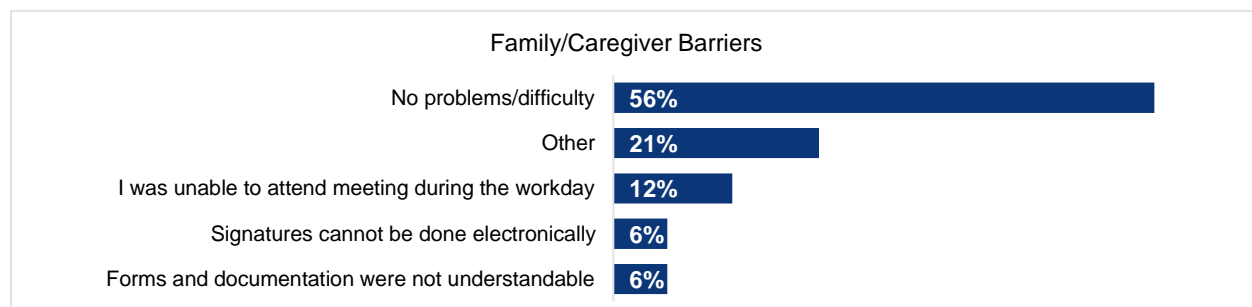
Stakeholder listening session feedback revealed systemic issues with logistics as the main barrier to implementation of core services. Providers report a lack of student meeting space, and conflicts with scheduling and meeting coordination. Educators shared a need for consistency when working with providers as a root barrier to core services implementation. Educators felt that provider presence on campus was inconsistent, or at times scarce, given the lack of providers in a service area. High turnover was attributed as a challenge for implementation, communication, and collaboration given the time required to build trust and rapport with students and school personnel. Both educators and providers expressed a lack of understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities. Lastly, students' lack of interest and readiness to participate was also cited as a barrier to implementation of core services.

In the Pre-ETS survey, students and families were asked about the barriers to enrolling and/or participating in Pre-ETS. More than half of students and families (56%) who took the survey indicated they had no issues. Amongst the remaining half, some students (32%) cited uncertainty about Pre-ETS schedules while some family members (12%) indicated that they were unable to attend meetings during the workday. A few parents (6%) mentioned paperwork issues, including that signatures could not be completed electronically (Figures 9 and 10). Some family members who noted 'Other', voiced concerns regarding a lack of communication made by staff regarding Pre-ETS activities. One participant mentioned that the "Pre-ETS position in their district is vacant". One student said that Pre-ETS is not available in their community, so they are required to travel to other areas to participate in services.

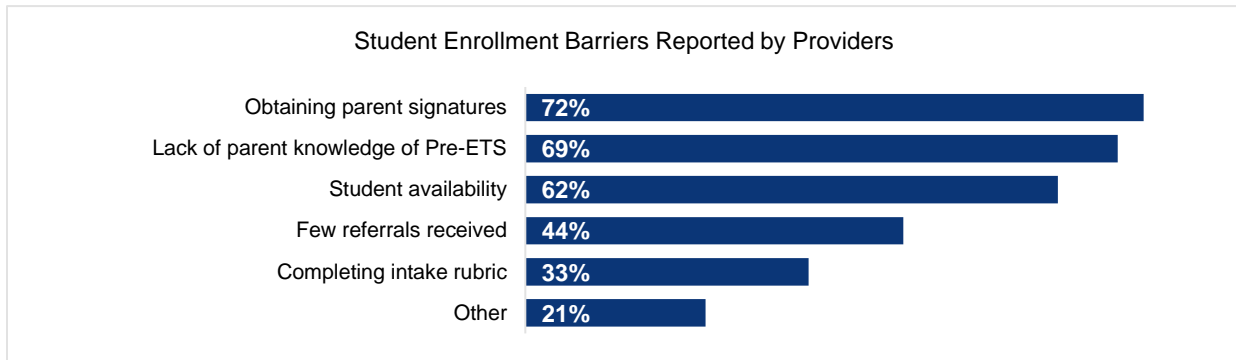
**FIGURE 9: STUDENT BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATING IN PRE-ETS**



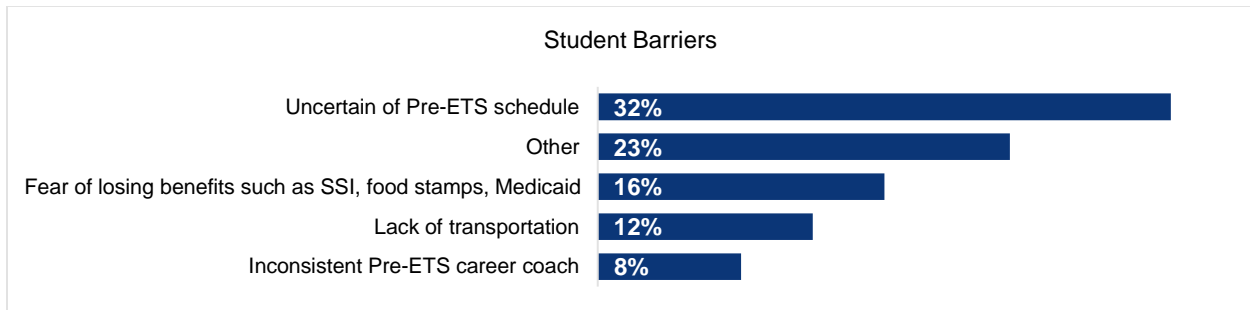
**FIGURE 10: FAMILY/CAREGIVER BARRIERS TO ENROLLING OR PARTICIPATING IN PRE-ETS**





**FIGURE 11: STUDENT ENROLLMENT BARRIERS REPORTED BY PROVIDERS**

In contrast, when asked about the most significant barriers to student enrollment based on their experience with students and families, 72% of Pre-ETS providers who took the survey cited the challenge of obtaining parent signatures. When asked about this issue, Pre-ETS providers cited family disinterest as the main problem with obtaining parent signatures. Some providers who took the survey also noted the lack of urgency with which parents returned forms, and the difficulty of scheduling parents to sign documents in person. Providers also noted student availability (62%), and lack of parent Pre-ETS knowledge (69%) as prominent issues that need to be addressed (See Figure 9: Student Barriers to Participating in Pre-ETS)

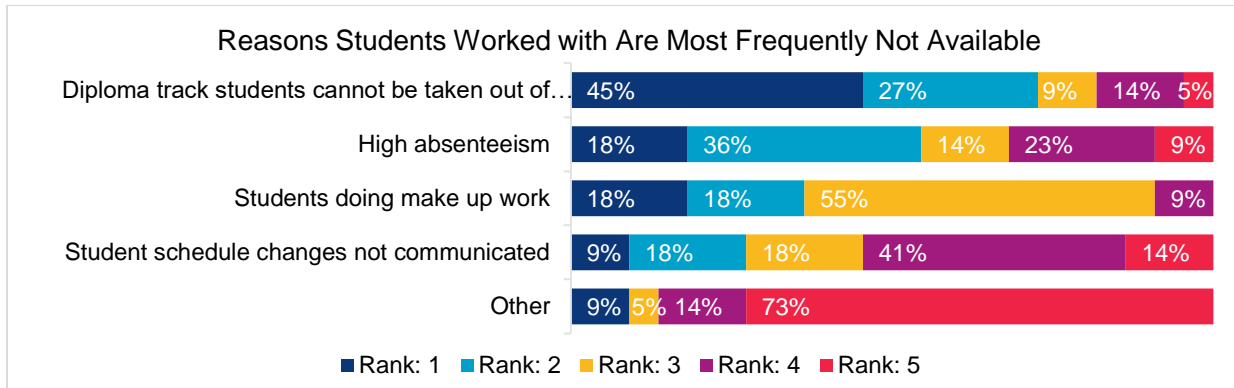
**Figure 10: Family/Caregiver Barriers to Enrolling or Participating in Pre-ETS).**

Although obtaining parent signatures was identified by providers as the primary barrier to Pre-ETS, the educator focus group did not agree. Some educators said that getting parent signatures was not a challenge. Rather than sending documents home for completion, the teachers shared the packet of Pre-ETS information during the IEP meeting. Parents were given time to complete the forms and sign documents electronically prior to leaving the meeting. This practice eliminated the barrier.

### ***Student Availability***

Providers (45%) citing student availability as a barrier selected the inability of diploma track students to be taken out of class as the main reason. Providers also cited high absenteeism and students doing make up work as high-ranking student availability issues (See Figure 12: Reasons Pre-ETS Students are Most Frequently Not Available).

**FIGURE 12: REASONS PRE-ETS STUDENTS ARE MOST FREQUENTLY NOT AVAILABLE**

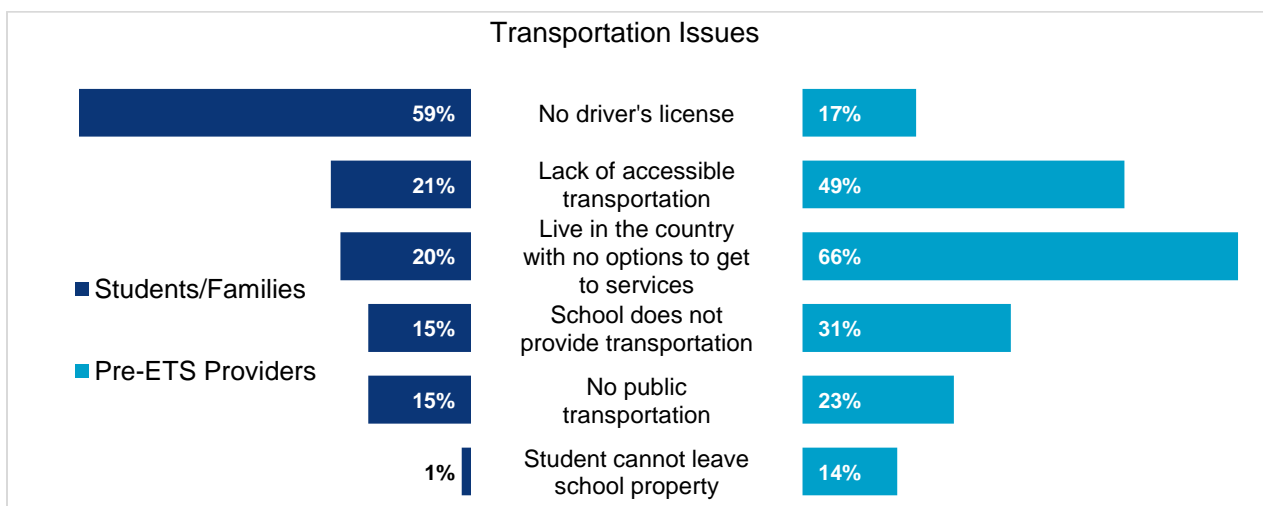


Each focus group had a different explanation for these results. During the student/family focus group, parents indicated they wanted their children to focus on completing their high school diploma requirements rather than participating in Pre-ETS. These parents said that if Pre-ETS had been offered during the summer before senior year, they would have encouraged their children to participate. The educator focus group indicated there were not any diploma track student participation issues. They said getting diploma students out of class for Pre-ETS field trips was not a problem as long as events were not scheduled during a test. Providers indicated that diploma track students do not participate because either (a) they do not know the benefits of Pre-ETS, or (b) there may be a stigma associated with Pre-ETS that prevents college-bound students from participating. The three different perspectives indicate that there are likely multiple factors that are not all acknowledged and/or well-understood across the stakeholder groups.

### Transportation Issues

Often, transportation issues hinder students from participating in Pre-ETS. 12% of students mentioned having this issue. 76% of family members who cited transportation issues said their child did not have a driver's license, 27% said they live in the country and there are no options to get to services, and 25% noted a lack of accessible transportation. Collectively, the top transportation issue cited by students and their families was lack of a student driver's license. In contrast, 66% of Pre-ETS providers listed their top student enrollment issue as students living rural areas with no options to get to services. They also noted a lack of accessible transportation options for students (Figure 13).

**FIGURE 13: TRANSPORTATION ISSUES**



## 4.5 DOCUMENTATION AND MATERIALS

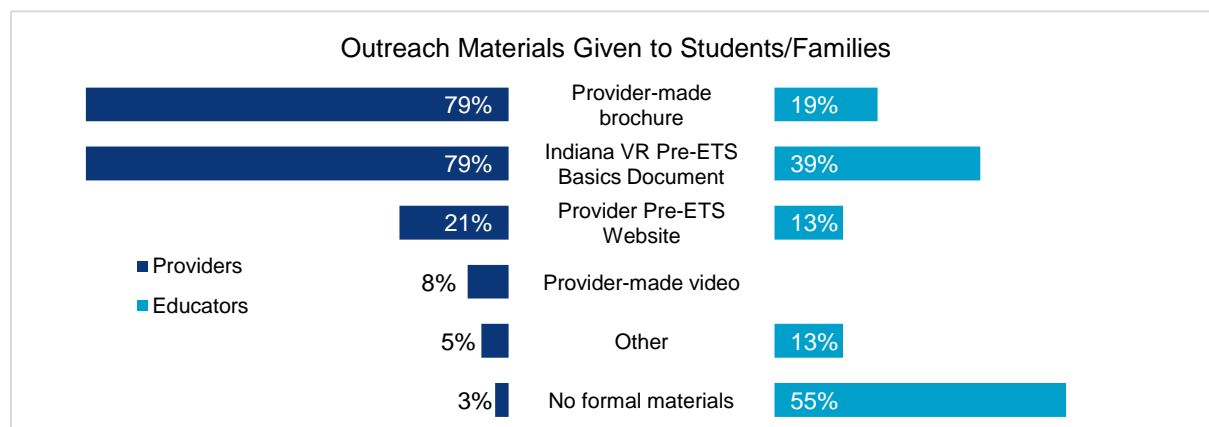
Stakeholders interviewed during the pre-survey listening sessions were asked to provide feedback on Pre-ETS documentation and materials. Feedback that referenced documents used to collaborate and coordinate with VR and schools was coded as ‘documentation’. Stakeholder input on materials used to implement core services and marketing information used to explain Pre-ETS programs was coded as materials.

Providers are required by IN BRS to complete a state-developed rubric prior to delivery of core services to determine required individualized Pre-ETS activities. Providers stated that the rubric was confusing and time-consuming. They also reported that the rubric combined with the additional required Pre-ETS documentation is lengthy and submission timeframe requirements unrealistic. Educators also reported barriers to service delivery when parents delay submitting signed consents.

Stakeholders stated that effective Pre-ETS curriculum materials are applicable to real world context, interactive, adaptable, and employ multiple learning styles. Providers said it is a struggle to find the time and resources to identify and/or develop effective materials. Providers indicated that developing individualized materials that meet students’ varying needs takes time that providers cannot bill.<sup>3</sup> Providers expressed a desire for guidance and recommendations on curriculum scope and sequence. Schools also requested Pre-ETS and VR informational materials to share with students and families when a provider or YVRC is not present to provide information.

Pre-ETS program information is usually supplied by providers to school staff and families, and/or by educators to students and their families. When asked in the survey, providers noted provider-made brochures and the Indiana VR Pre-ETS Basics Document as the two materials they distributed the most to students/families. Conversely, most educators who took the survey said they do not distribute any formal materials to student/families, although a few cited the Indiana VR Pre-ETS Basics Document as their main outreach material. Providers and educators alike rarely make use of videos and the [FSSA Pre-ETS website](#) as resources for students/families. When asked what the most useful standardized outreach materials for students/families would be going forward, both providers and educators chose graphic organizers of processes/services and brochures as the top two materials. Videos were the least opted for material by providers (8%) (See Figure 14: Outreach Materials Provided to Students and Families).

**FIGURE 14: OUTREACH MATERIALS PROVIDED TO STUDENTS AND FAMILIES**



Although professionals completing the survey were not interested in videos, the parent focus group

<sup>3</sup> IN BRS indicates this feedback is generally inconsistent with Pre-ETS policies and suggests the need for additional guidance on the topic.

members all agreed that videos would help them fully understand Pre-ETS. Parents felt that “everything felt chaotic” and that their children’s teachers were not familiar with services. Because the parents had done their own research to learn about services, they said a video would help them understand the purpose and benefits of Pre-ETS better than a written document. One parent recommended using a QR code linked to “a quick video that [shows] this is a hope-filled project that you really want to get on board with.”

The educator focus group said they were assembling Pre-ETS packets and creating their own fact sheets to share with students and families. Others said they wished they had marketing materials because they were providing a verbal explanation of Pre-ETS without any supporting materials.

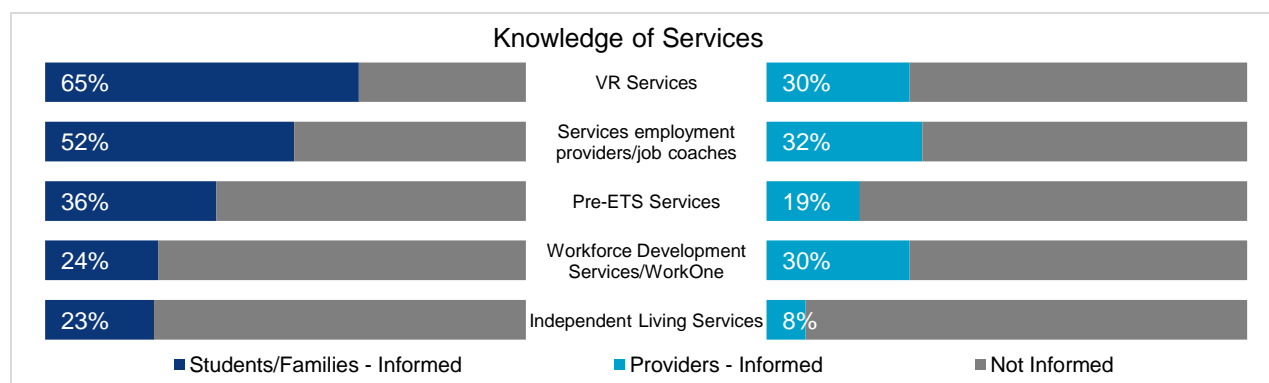
## 4.6 KNOWLEDGE OF SERVICES, ROLES, AND OTHER RESOURCES

Pre-survey stakeholder engagement highlighted the importance of well-defined roles and responsibilities. Educators, providers, and businesses all agreed that clearly defined roles and responsibilities helped promote collaboration. Businesses further explained that providers must achieve a fine balance when working with students. Providers must understand when they need to step back and allow students to grow and assume more responsibility and workplace independence. All stakeholders agreed that further role clarification and training in their responsibilities will help them understand how to engage and support the transition process. Providers said that some educators treat them as paraprofessionals and don’t fully appreciate the provider’s role. All stakeholders stressed the need for additional training on the distinction between the VR and Pre-ETS programs, a description of the services each provides, and guidance on timelines for referral to each program.

### Services

Students and families who participated in the survey had quite a mixed response as to how informed they feel about the various services provided through the Pre-ETS program. When asked about their knowledge levels, students and families felt most informed about VR services (65%) and least informed about Independent Living Services (23%). The Pre-ETS providers had similar responses to this question. When asked about their experience working with students and families, providers’ confidence levels in students’ knowledge of services differed widely from one another. Services from employment providers were noted as the most informed service by providers (32%), while VR services and WorkOne were noted as the second most informed service by providers (30% each). Like students and families, Pre-ETS providers who took the survey felt that students have the least information on Independent Living Services (8%) (Figure 15).

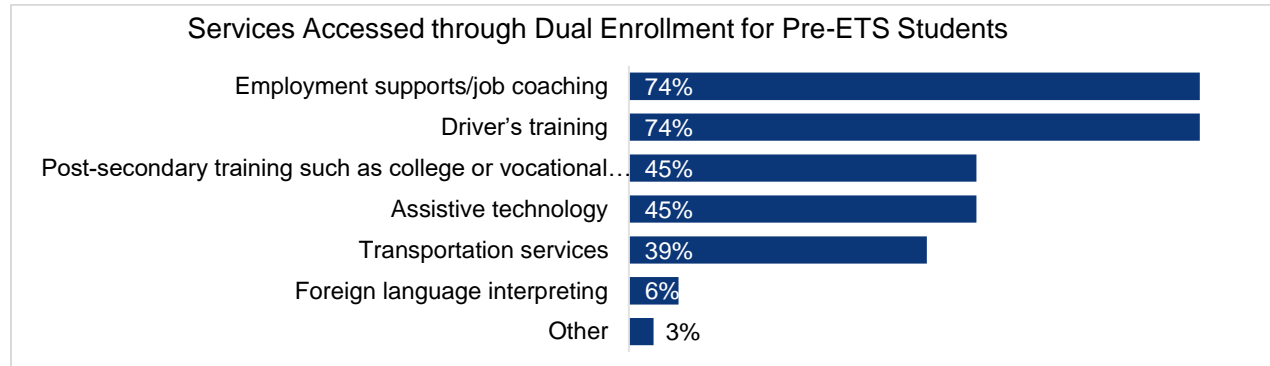
FIGURE 15: KNOWLEDGE OF SERVICES



When asked what they would like to learn more about, family members chose the basics of vocational rehabilitation, assistance with job search, and how work affects benefits (such as social security, food stamps, and Medicaid) as the most beneficial trainings.

Some Pre-ETS students are dually enrolled in both Pre-ETS and Vocational Rehabilitation, to meet all their needs. When asked about which dual enrollment services students are accessing, providers noted employment supports/job coaching and driver's training as the top two most frequently accessed services (74% each). Foreign language interpreting was noted as the least accessed service through dual enrollment (Figure 16).

**FIGURE 16: SERVICES ACCESSED THROUGH DUAL ENROLLMENT FOR PRE-ETS STUDENTS**



Given the wide range of Pre-ETS core services, Pre-ETS providers who took the survey were asked to rank core service curriculum from most to least needed. Respondents ranked workplace readiness training and job exploration counseling as most needed, and counseling for post-secondary programs for certificate/degree seeking students as least needed. The provider focus group gave two explanations for this finding. First, the majority of their Pre-ETS students are in self-contained classrooms focused on employment and other transition services rather than postsecondary education. Second, few of their students were on the diploma track, and they said that non-diploma track students do not need the post-secondary education information.

## Roles

Because there are many unique roles in the Pre-ETS programs, it is imperative that each stakeholder is aware of their own duties and responsibilities, and those of their colleagues and other stakeholders. When providers were asked how they felt about YVRCs' knowledge of their Pre-ETS roles, 61% indicated they were satisfied with their knowledge. When providers were asked about their own knowledge of YVRCs roles and responsibilities, this percentage decreased to 53%. These results suggest that a better understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities would be helpful between these two stakeholder groups to promote better communication and cohesion.

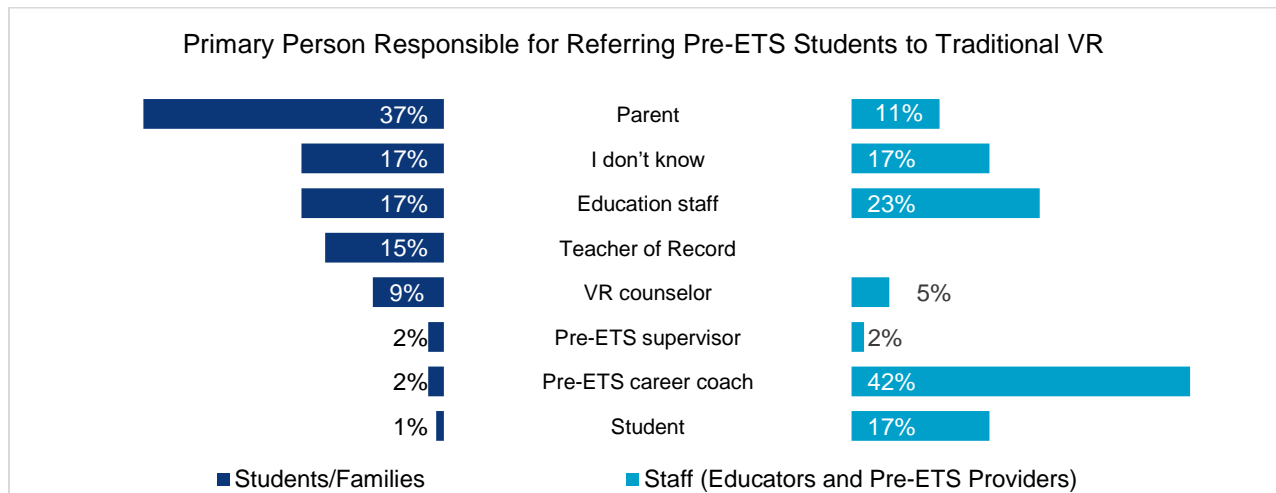
Although parents were not asked to rate provider or YVRC knowledge, they shared their frustrations during their focus group. The parent group agreed that more consistency is needed statewide on provider and VR roles and responsibilities. One parent stated, "I think every district is just doing their own thing and winging it. Nobody knows what the others are doing."

***"...there is a lack of clear understanding of the primary person responsible for referring Pre-ETS students to traditional VR."***

According to the survey results, there is a lack of clear understanding of the primary person responsible for referring Pre-ETS students to traditional VR. When asked about this, the top three responses from students and parents were 'Parent' (37%), followed by 'Education staff' (17%), and 'I don't know' (also 17%). When

asked the same question, the top three responses from educators and Pre-ETS providers were 'Pre-ETS career coach' (42%), 'Education staff' (23%), and 'I don't know'/'Student' (17% each).<sup>4</sup>

**FIGURE 17: PRIMARY PERSON RESPONSIBLE FOR REFERRING PRE-ETS STUDENTS TO TRADITIONAL VR**



<sup>4</sup> IN BRS indicates that the primary person responsible for referring Pre-ETS students to traditional VR can vary depending on the individual student's situation, their school, and other circumstances. This variance may explain the disparate responses to this question. Future efforts to clarify this issue will be focused on ensuring that various stakeholders are aware of who is able to make a referral to VR and how to do so.

## 5 RECOMMENDATIONS

This section leverages analysis to identify and outline opportunities to improve the quality and quantity of Pre-ETS offered throughout Indiana. These recommendations prioritize change in several key areas: communication and coordination, documenting and disseminating best practices, and filling identified gaps. These recommendations are detailed below.

### 5.1 IMPROVE COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION ACROSS PARTNERS

#### 5.1.1 *Develop and Disseminate Relevant and Accessible Materials*

Across all stakeholder engagement, assessment findings highlight a general need to enhance and improve education and outreach materials and processes:

- **Educators** reported a lack of access to formal Pre-ETS materials.
- **Providers** reported that existing materials do not meet their needs to effectively communicate with students and their families.
- **Students and families** are more familiar with VR than Pre-ETS. Of note, none of the families who participated in the focus groups had children who participated in Pre-ETS. While participants had children ages 14-22; they reported being unaware of, and subsequently not offered, Pre-ETS.

These results indicate the need to develop and disseminate engaging and comprehensive materials that providers and educators find useful themselves, and feel are worth sharing with their students and families. While educators and providers reported preferring print materials, families providing feedback preferred videos. To meet the needs of all audiences, **PCG recommends developing Indiana-branded Pre-ETS Education and Outreach multimedia materials and an accompanying distribution plan.** Based on stakeholder feedback, PCG recommends developing printed materials for distribution at meetings, comparable digital materials, and short video(s) providing similar information. Across media, PCG recommends the development of content using plain language and visual supports as well as pictures and visuals that diverse audiences can identify with.

#### 5.1.2 *Improve Coordination Practices*

Needs assessment results indicate that there is confusion amongst providers and school staff of the roles and responsibilities of providers, school staff, and Youth VRC's. While all partners are at the table, there is an opportunity to improve coordination across partners to make the system more effective:

- **Build on what works.** Assessment results identified 9 factors supporting effective and successful services. These practices should be explored alongside evidence-based practices to solidify findings and identify any additional opportunities for improvement. (Review 9 factors at Communication and Collaboration.)
- **Provide universal and targeted training on effective coordination between transition partners.** Leveraging practices we know work, PCG recommends
  - Conducting statewide training for YVRC's, school staff, and providers to share new, standardized communication tools, information about roles and responsibilities, and successful practices. The training can also be an opportunity to roll out additional, more intensive opportunities as defined below.
  - Developing and implementing a Community of Practice for all partners to attend that can provide structured learning opportunities where partners learn best practices together and learn how to effectively implement them together.
- **Use coaching to resolve challenging situations.** To support and improve specific situations of challenges in coordination, PCG recommends leveraging coaching to provide auxiliary support to practitioners and establish effective practices.



**In summary, PCG recommends using multiple tiers of support to improve coordination practices.**

### ***5.1.3 Use the Pre-ETS Subcommittee of the Transition Advisory Council to Address Challenges and Identify Solutions***

In this report PCG has identified various recommendations that BRS could implement through stakeholder involvement, such as educating individuals and families to increase participation and facilitate the enrollment process, clarifying who is responsible for enrolling Pre-ETS students into traditional VR, and increasing student and family knowledge of the difference between Pre-ETS and traditional VR services. **PCG recommends working with the Pre-ETS Subcommittee of the Transition Advisory Council to determine the best approach to implementing the suggested recommendations and provide feedback on the impact of activities.**

### ***5.1.4 Improve Data Collection and Data Storage Practices***

While conducting research using IN BRS' data, multiple transformations and mergers were necessary to understand the Pre-ETS population. Our primary challenge was merging the Pre-ETS portal data with other IN BRS case management data.

As PCG used historical data to perform our analysis, a second challenge was that some fields, such as disability type, were historically documented as open text and historic fields were not updated to newer data collection practices. Because open text creates an opportunity for data collection and entry practices to vary between staff, it limits the data's utility. In the past few years BRS has worked to minimize the use of these open text fields. For example, disability type now has a drop-down menu with the option to "choose all that apply." BRS continues to refine this list (e.g., replacing the choice of "Other" with something more descriptive). This could be further improved by altering the method of data storage. In the extract provided to PCG, disability type was provided as a single string field with each selection present. This could be improved by storing this variable as a set of binary yes/no variables in which each variable records the presence or absence of a specific category of disability.

**PCG recommends that BRS continue to standardize and refine data collection practices in the Pre-ETS portal to facilitate data movement between processes. For example, BRS has implemented standardized a list of potential disability categories in the Pre-ETS portal that they continue to improve upon, in order to minimize the use of open text fields. Further, IN VR may consider improving the method of storage of some information such as stated disability**

## **5.2 Document and Disseminate Best Practices**

Focus groups and survey results demonstrate that there are pockets of excellence in Pre-ETS programming and service delivery. The assessment process also revealed there are considerable opportunities to improve the quantity and quality of services being provided. **PCG recommends using the infrastructure of the Level Up project to document and disseminate successful practices related to both the administration of Pre-ETS and the quantity, and quality of services.** Using the tiered technical assistance approach available, PCG can support Indiana practitioners in building capacity through universal (statewide training and resource dissemination), targeted (Communities of Practice), and intensive (coaching) training and technical assistance. Under BRS guidance, PCG will work to prioritize and map training topics in alignment with identified priorities and needs.

## **5.3 FILL IDENTIFIED GAPS**

### ***5.3.1 Identify and Disseminate Standard Curriculum for Implementation***

Across assessment results and the subsequent analysis, stakeholders indicate that providers would benefit from using standardized curriculum. At the national level, there are a number of available curricula that could be leveraged by Indiana practitioners to deliver required services. **PCG recommends that under**



**BRS guidance, stakeholders support reviewing, selecting, and disseminating standard curricula for providers to use.** Leveraging the infrastructure developed through Level Up, BRS has the opportunity to get feedback from key stakeholders including school personnel, providers, and YVRC's. Selected training could be vetted through the subcommittee of the Transition Advisory Council and piloted through a Community of Practice. Results and feedback from these two groups could assist in modifying the approach BRS wishes to take in statewide implementation.

### ***5.3.2 Increase Dual Enrollment and Referrals to the Traditional VR Program***

Survey results indicate that there is a lack of clarity on who is responsible for actually referring Pre-ETS students to traditional VR. When asked, the top three responses from students and parents were 'Parent,' followed by 'Education staff,' and 'I don't know.' When asked the same question, the top three responses from educators and Pre-ETS providers were 'Pre-ETS career coach,' 'Education staff,' and 'I don't know' / 'Student.' Given the response variation across stakeholders, it is clear that clarifying this Pre-ETS responsibility—and working to reduce barriers— would benefit all stakeholders.

**PCG recommends that BRS develop training on dual enrollment of Pre-ETS into traditional VR services for various stakeholders, including students and their families, educators, providers, YVRC and traditional VRC.** Training should cover topics such as the relationship between Pre-ETS and traditional VR, the benefits of the different services, the roles and responsibilities of transition stakeholders, identification of collateral information, and example timelines (referral and application through services) and processes for VR referrals. There are multiple services that Pre-ETS cannot fund, such as assistive technology, job coaching, transportation, postsecondary training, and more. Students may need these services in order to participate in Pre-ETS. Training can provide all partners with an understanding of the pros and cons of dual enrollment, explain how to identify students who may need traditional VR early in the Pre-ETS process, and strengthen students' transition from school to competitive integrated employment.

### ***5.3.3 Increase Engagement of Diploma Track Students***

In the survey, providers who cited student availability as a barrier to implementing Pre-ETS also selected the inability of diploma track students to be taken out of class as the most significant barrier. In post-survey focus groups, PCG asked about diploma track student availability and heard three different perspectives from parents, educators, and providers. Parents indicated that they wanted their children to focus on completing their high school diploma requirements rather than participating in Pre-ETS. They preferred that their children participate in Pre-ETS during summer breaks. Educators indicated there were no diploma track student participation issues. And providers indicated that diploma track students do not participate because either (a) they do not know the Pre-ETS benefits, or (b) there may be a stigma that prevents college-bound students from participating in Pre-ETS. These varying perspectives indicate that there are likely multiple factors across different stakeholder groups that are not well-understood and / or acknowledged.

PCG will research best practices for increasing diploma-track student participation in the Pre-ETS program on both the state and national level. We will then make recommendations for increasing diploma-track student participation in Pre-ETS. Strategies may include implementing program design changes to make the Pre-ETS program more inclusive, increasing outreach and training to diploma-track students and families, and sharing best practices with stakeholders through technical assistance and coaching. **PCG recommends working with BRS to increase engagement of diploma track students through the Pre-ETS program.**

There are several different opportunities to expand engagement. On the national level, PCG will search for successful diploma-track models from sources such as the NTACT Capacity Building Institute and annual Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT) conference. PCG can also work with BRS to increase diploma-track student participation in Pre-ETS through expanded education and outreach, training

providers and YVRCs through Communities of Practice, training students/family members on VR and benefits, and providing coaching to individual practitioners.

## 6 CONCLUSION

Needs assessment data and analyses indicate that IN BRS and its partners provide quality Pre-ETS in a way that is relevant to many students. While the services delivered are generally perceived as positive, there is room for improvement (e.g., in how diploma track students and their parents understand and value Pre-ETS). There are opportunities to increase student access to—and involvement in—the Pre-ETS program by revising existing outreach materials, creating new outreach materials, expanding training and technical assistance (e.g., for dual enrollment of Pre-ETS students into traditional VR), and working with the Pre-ETS Subcommittee of the Transition Advisory Council to identify and implement other best practices. BRS can further strengthen the program by expanding state-led business engagement, strengthening self-advocacy, and finding ways to streamline the enrollment process. As IN BRS looks toward the future, they have an opportunity to capitalize on their strengths and use their resources and relationships to build a better tomorrow for students with disabilities.

## 7 APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A. LISTENING SESSION QUESTIONS

PCG worked collaboratively with IN BRS to develop listening session questions. The questions for each stakeholder group are included below.

#### Youth Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors

- What knowledge do you feel Pre-ETS Instructors should have?
- What are successful ways to implement Pre-ETS with students?
- What are successful ways for Pre-ETS Instructors and schools to work together?
- What are successful ways to educate schools and families about Pre-ETS?
- Do you see Pre-ETS being implemented differently across schools? If so, how?
- What are some successful strategies for YVRCs to support the Pre-ETS program, providers, or schools?
- What are barriers to providing services?

#### Providers and Advocates

- What are the characteristics of a successful Pre-ETS program?
- What are successful strategies for providers to work well with the following groups:
  - Families/students
  - Schools
  - YVRCs
  - VR
- What are barriers to providing Pre-ETS?
- How knowledgeable do you think the following groups are about Pre-ETS and why?
  - Families/Students
  - Schools
  - YVRCs
  - VR
- How do you get information to these groups? Is it working?
  - Families/Students
  - Schools
  - YVRCs
  - VR
- What knowledge and skills do you feel Pre-ETS instructors should have?
- What resources do you utilize to implement Pre-ETS, and what resources do you wish you had?
- How is curriculum developed for Pre-ETS? If not a provider: What is the quality of the curriculum being provided to students?
- When do you make a referral to VR for your students? And how?

#### Youth with Disabilities and Families

- How did you find out about Pre-ETS?
- In what ways do you think the Pre-ETS program is helping you (or your student)?
- What is your favorite Pre-ETS activity?
- What work based learning through Pre-ETS have you or your student participated in? Has this been inside or outside of the school?
- What other Pre-ETS activities have you done outside of the school?
- In what ways has Pre-ETS prepared you (or your student), for adulthood?

- In what other areas do you (or your student), still need help?
- What is your or your child's goal upon leaving high school?
- On a scale of 1-4 (1 being the lowest), how prepared are you (or your student), for leaving high school and moving towards your goals?
- Why do you rate it that way?
- Do you know what services are available to you or your student after high school?
- If so, what are they?
- Are you familiar with Vocational Rehabilitation?
- Do you know how to be referred to VR?
- What barriers do you (or does your student), have participating in Pre-ETS services?

### **Special Education Teachers**

- What are successful ways for Pre-ETS Instructors to work with schools?
- What attributes/areas of knowledge do you feel Pre-ETS Instructors should have?
- What are successful ways to implement Pre-ETS with students?
- On a scale from 1-4 (1 being the lowest) how much do you feel Pre-ETS enhances the student's learning and prepares them for transition from high school?
- Why do you give it the rating you did?
- How is it determined what student enter Pre-ETS?
- What are barriers to implementing Pre-ETS?
- How frequently do you communicate with your career coach/instructor and is it adequate communication?
- Are you knowledgeable about what your students are working on with their Pre-ETS instructor?
- How have Pre-ETS contributed to the transition IEP?

## APPENDIX B. BUSINESS INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### Questions for Employers that work with Pre-ETS

- What activities have you done with Pre-ETS? (guide questions based on this answer)
  - Examples include: work experiences, internships, job shadowing, informational interviews, job tours, assessments.
- How did you learn about Pre-ETS and why did you choose to participate?
- How would you describe your approach to offering work experience opportunities for students? E.g., scoping out assignments, assessing skill and task match, etc.
- What motivated [business name] to create these opportunities for students?
- What are some examples of successful work experience that students have had within your business?
- What challenges or misconceptions have you encountered when providing these opportunities for students?
  - How have you overcome them?
- In what ways have providers prepared and provided support to your business/staff during these opportunities?
  - Was it adequate?
  - What would have been helpful for a more successful/rewarding experience?
- From your perspective, what are specific skills or personal growth aspects that you've noticed students tend to develop during their time with [business name]?
- How do you currently collaborate with schools or providers to tailor the work experience for a quality, customized student experience while also meeting business goals?
- Are there preferred ways that would be more efficient or effective for the business? If yes, what? (e.g., communication, on-the-job supports, etc.)
- What benefit has your employees or business gained from involvement with Pre-ETS students?

### Questions for Employers that work with Vocational Rehabilitation

- How did you become involved with a VR provider (may need to explain further) and why did you choose to participate?
- What employment activities have you participated in with an agency/individual with a disability? (examples include: informational interview, job tour, job shadowing, job assessment, work experience, hired)
- What motivated [business name] to create these opportunities for individuals?
- What are some examples of successful work experience/job placements that individuals with disabilities have had within your business?
- What challenges or misconceptions have you encountered when providing these opportunities?
  - How have you overcome them?
- In what ways have providers or agencies prepared and provided support to your business/staff during these opportunities?
  - Was it adequate? What would have made for a better experience for the participant and business?
- How do you currently collaborate with providers or Vocational Rehabilitation to tailor the work experience to meet the individual's needs and business goals?
  - Are there preferred ways that would be more efficient or effective for the business? If yes, what?
- What would entice a business to consider creating internship opportunities for students with disabilities?

## APPENDIX C. NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY QUESTIONS

### Introduction

Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation and PCG-Indiana, Inc. (PCG) are working together to improve Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) in Indiana. We created this short online survey to hear about the strengths and weaknesses of the services from current or former Pre-ETS students and their families, Pre-ETS providers, school staff, and VR youth counselors.

The survey should take only 8-10 minutes to complete. Your answers are completely anonymous and confidential. If you do not know the answer or have no opinion, you may skip any question.

Please respond to as many questions as possible. If you have questions about this survey or need help completing it, please email [invrpre-etstraining@pcgus.com](mailto:invrpre-etstraining@pcgus.com) or call 317-533-6517.

### Survey Instrument

Gen01 Select the role that best represents you

- Student/former student
- Family member
- Pre-ETS Provider Staff
- Youth Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
- Educator

STU01 How old are you?

STU02 Pre-ETS can occur any time of year and any time of the day. When would you prefer to participate in Pre-ETS activities?

- Fall semester during school day
- Fall semester after school
- Fall Break
- Winter break
- Spring semester during the school day
- Spring semester after school
- Spring break
- Summer break

STU03 What has made it hard for you to do Pre-ETS activities?

- Uncertain of Pre-ETS schedule
- Inconsistent Pre-ETS career coach

Unable to get out of class to attend

Lack of transportation

Fear of losing benefits such as SSI, food stamps, Medicaid

Other \_\_\_\_\_

STU03B Pick the two main causes of your transportation problems.

Lack of accessible transportation

Students cannot leave school property

No Driver's License

School does not provide transportation

I live in the country and there are no options to get into town

Other (6) \_\_\_\_\_

STU04A How much do you and your family know about...

***Pre-ETS services***

A lot

Some

A little

Not much

None

STU04B How much do you and your family know about...

***VR services***

A lot

Some

A little

Not much

None

STU04C How much do you and your family know about...

***The services employment providers/job coaches provide***

A lot



Some  
A little  
Not much  
None

STU04D How much do you and your family know about...

***Workforce Development Services / WorkOne***

A lot  
Some  
A little  
Not much  
None

STU04E How much do you and your family know about...

***Independent Living Center services***

A lot  
Some  
A little  
Not much  
None

STU05A How satisfied are you with communication with the Career Coach you work with?

***Timeliness – Communications are regular and well timed to provide information when it is needed***

Extremely satisfied  
Satisfied  
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied  
Dissatisfied  
Extremely dissatisfied

STU05B How satisfied are you with communication with the Career Coach you work with?

***Quality and detail of information shared***

Extremely satisfied

Satisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Extremely dissatisfied

STU05C How satisfied are you with communication with the Career Coach you work with?

***Respectfulness***

Extremely satisfied

Satisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Extremely dissatisfied

STU06 Who is primarily responsible for referring you to Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VR)?

School staff

Pre-ETS career coach

Pre-ETS supervisor

Youth Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

VR counselor

Parent/Family member

Myself

I don't know

STU07 Do you know if and when you will apply to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)?

Yes

No

I don't know

**End of Section: Student Questions**

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**Start of Section: Family Questions**

Fam01 What is the age of your child?

---

Fam02 Who did you first talk to about Pre-ETS?

- School staff
- Provider staff
- Another parent
- VR Counselor or Youth Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor
- Waiver case manager
- I don't know

Fam02B What school staff did you talk with about Pre-ETS?

- Special education administrator
- High school special education department chair
- Transition Coordinator
- Special education teacher/Teacher of Record
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Fam02C What provider staff did you talk with about Pre-ETS?

- Director of Employment Services
- Pre-ETS Coordinator
- Career Coach
- Employment Specialist/Job Coach
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Fam03A How satisfied are you with communications from the provider about Pre-ETS activities?

***Timeliness*** – *Communications are regular and well timed to provide information when it is needed*

- Extremely satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Extremely dissatisfied
- Not applicable

Fam03B How satisfied are you with communications from the provider about Pre-ETS activities?

***Quality and detail of information shared***

- Extremely satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Extremely dissatisfied
- Not applicable

Fam03C How satisfied are you with communications from the provider about Pre-ETS activities?

***Respectfulness***

- Extremely satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Extremely dissatisfied
- Not applicable

Fam04 Pre-ETS can occur any time of year and any time of the day. Select the time of year that you would prefer your child to participate in Pre-ETS activities. Please note, this question is for information purposes only.

- Fall semester during school day
- Fall semester after school
- Fall break
- Winter break
- Spring semester during the school day
- Spring break
- Summer Break

Fam11 Some people have said that the process for enrolling in Pre-ETS is difficult, what did you find was the most difficult?

- Forms and documentation were not understandable

I was unable to attend meeting during the workday

Signatures cannot be done electronically

No problems/difficulty

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Fam05 Often transportation problems cause students to not participate in Pre-ETS activities. If transportation is challenging, please select the **top two** reasons your child does not have transportation:

Lack of accessible transportation

Student cannot leave school property

No public transportation

School does not provide transportation

My child does not have driver's license

We live in the country and there no options to get to services

Does not apply

### End of Section: Family Questions

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### Start of Section: Communication with Students/Families (Family)

Fam06A How informed are you about...

***Pre-ETS services***

Very informed

Informed

Slightly informed

Not informed

Fam06B How informed are you about...

***Vocational Rehabilitation Services***

Very informed

Informed

Slightly informed

Not informed

Fam06C How informed are you about...

***Employment services/Job coaching available through providers***

Very informed

Informed

Slightly informed

Not informed

Fam06D How informed are you about...

***Workforce Development Services/WorkOne***

Very informed

Informed

Slightly informed

Not informed

Fam06E How informed are you about...

***Independent Living Center services***

Very informed

Informed

Slightly informed

Not informed

Fam07 If you would be interested in learning more about employment services including Pre-ETS, what training would you find beneficial? (*select three*)

Basics of Pre-ETS

Basics of Vocational Rehabilitation

How work effects benefits (such as social security, food stamps, and Medicaid)

Assistance with job search

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Fam08 Who is/was primarily responsible for referring your child to Vocational Rehabilitation services?

Education staff

Pre-ETS career coach

Pre-ETS supervisor

Youth Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

VR counselor

Parent

Student

Teacher of Record

I don't know

Fam09 Is there an agreed upon timeline for your child to be referred to Vocational Rehabilitation for adult services?

Yes

No

I don't know

Fam09a What is the agreed upon timeline for your child to be referred to Vocational Rehabilitation for adult services?

Freshman year

Sophomore year

Junior year

Senior year

Fam10 Will your child apply for Vocational Rehabilitation prior to graduation/exiting high school?

Yes

No

I don't know

**End of Section: Communication with Students/Families (Family)**

---

**Start of Section: Pre-ETS Provider Questions**

Prov1A What Vocational Rehabilitation Region do you provide Pre-ETS activities? (*select all that apply*)

Region 1

Region 2



Region 3

Region 4

Region 5

Prov1B What effective outreach methods have you used to enroll youth who identify as racial or ethnic minorities?

---

Prov1C Do you provide Pre-ETS activities in Lake County?

Yes

No

Prov1D Do you provide Pre-ETS activities in any of these counties? *(select all that apply)*

Allen County

Delaware County

Madison County

None of these

Prov1E Do you provide Pre-ETS activities in either of these counties? *(select all that apply)*

Marion County

Hamilton County

None of these

Prov1E\_A Do you provide Pre-ETS activities in any of the following school corporations? *(select all that apply)*

Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS)?

MSD Lawrence Township

Perry Township

Prov1E\_B Do you provide Pre-ETS activities in the following school districts? *(select all that apply)*

Carmel Clay School

Hamilton Southeastern

Prov1E\_C What effective outreach methods have you used to enroll youth who identify as racial or ethnic minorities?

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### End of Section: Pre-ETS Provider Questions

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### Start of Section: Initial Development of a Partnership with the School

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Prov2 What school staff do you work most closely with when establishing services?

- Special education administrators
- High school special education department chairs
- Transition coordinators
- Special education teachers

Prov3 What is your role at your organization?

- Administration
- Director/Manager of employment services
- Employment team lead
- Pre-ETS coordinator
- Career Coach / Instructor
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Prov9 What provider staff person is the primary contact for school staff?

- Executive Director
- Director of Employment Services
- Employment Team Lead
- Pre-ETS Coordinator
- Career Coach / Instructor
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

Prov4A How satisfied are you with the following aspects of communications from the schools you work with, in general?

***Timeliness*** – *Communications are regular and well timed to provide information when it is needed*

- Extremely satisfied

Satisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Extremely dissatisfied

Prov4B How satisfied are you with the following aspects of communications from the schools you work with, in general?

***Quality and detail of information shared***

Extremely satisfied

Satisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Extremely dissatisfied

Prov4C How satisfied are you with the following aspects of communications from the schools you work with, in general?

***Respectfulness***

Extremely satisfied

Satisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Extremely dissatisfied

Prov5 What outreach materials have you given to **school staff** to market Pre-ETS? (*select all that apply*)

Indiana VR Pre-ETS Basics Document

Provider-made brochure

Provider-made video

Provider Pre-ETS Website

No formal materials

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Prov7 What outreach materials have been given to **students/families** to market Pre-ETS? (*select all that apply*)

Indiana VR Pre-ETS Basics Document

Provider-made brochure

Provider-made video

Provider Pre-ETS Website

No formal materials

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Prov6 If standardized **school** outreach materials were made, what would be the most useful to your agency?

Brochure

Video

Graphic organizer of process/services

Success Stories

FAQ

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Prov8 If standardized **student/family** outreach materials were made, what would be the most useful to your organization?

Brochure

Video

Graphic organizer of process/services

Success Stories

FAQ

Other \_\_\_\_\_

---

End of Section: Initial Development of a Partnership with the School

---

Start of Section: Implementation of Core Services (Provider, YVRC, Educator)

Gen02 Pre-ETS students often have complex schedules. In your experience, which of the following times of year are the most effective periods to deliver services for most students?

Fall Semester during the school day

Fall Semester after the school day  
Fall Break  
Winter Break  
Spring Semester during the school day  
Spring Semester after the school day  
Spring Break  
Summer Break

---

**End of Section: Implementation of Core Services (Provider, YVRC, Educator)**

---

**Start of Section: Implementation of Core Services (Provider)**

Prov16 From your experience, what have been the biggest hurdles to enrolling students into Pre-ETS?  
*Please select the three you consider most important.*

Few referrals received  
Obtaining parent signatures  
Student availability  
Lack of parent/family knowledge of Pre-ETS  
Completing intake rubric  
Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Prov16B Why are few referrals received?

Students not interested  
School staff does not have time to refer  
Families not interested  
Fear of losing benefits  
Stigma  
Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Prov16C Why are parent signatures difficult to get?

Students not interested  
School staff does not have time to refer

Families not interested

Fear of losing benefits

Stigma

Other (Please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Prov16D Rank the reasons students you work with are most frequently not available, with the first being the most common reason and the last being the least common reason. *(click on each reason and drag up or down to reorder)*

- \_\_\_\_\_ High absenteeism from school
- \_\_\_\_\_ Diploma track students cannot be taken out of class
- \_\_\_\_\_ Students are doing make-up work due to missing assignments
- \_\_\_\_\_ Students' schedule changes are not communicated to provider
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other (Please specify)

Prov16E Rank in order from the most needed to least needed curriculum for CORE service delivery - 1 being the most needed to 6 being the least needed. *(click on each reason and drag up or down to reorder)*

- \_\_\_\_\_ Job exploration counseling
- \_\_\_\_\_ Workplace readiness training
- \_\_\_\_\_ Work-based learning experiences
- \_\_\_\_\_ Counseling on post secondary programs for students with IDD
- \_\_\_\_\_ Counseling for post secondary programs for certificate/degree seeking students
- \_\_\_\_\_ Self-advocacy skills

Prov17 Many providers have indicated that available transportation limits students' participation in Pre-ETS. From your experience, transportation problems are caused most commonly caused by *(select two)*:

- Lack of accessible transportation
- Students cannot leave school property
- No public transportation
- School does not provide transportation
- Students do not have driver's license
- Rural students do not have transportation options

**End of Section: Implementation of Core Services (Provider)**

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## Start of Section: Communication with Students/Families (General)

Gen12A From your experience **working** with students and families, how well informed are families and students about...

### ***Pre-Employment Transition Services***

Very informed

Informed

Slightly informed

Not informed

Gen12B From your experience **working** with students and families, how well informed are families and students about...

### ***Vocational Rehabilitation Services (Traditional)***

Very informed

Informed

Slightly informed

Not informed

Gen12C From your experience **working** with students and families, how well informed are families and students about...

### ***Employment services/Job coaching available through providers***

Very informed

Informed

Slightly informed

Not informed

Gen12D From your experience **working** with students and families, how well informed are families and students about...

### ***Workforce Development Services/WorkOne***

Very informed

Informed

Slightly informed



Not informed

Gen12E From your experience **working** with students and families, how well informed are families and students about...

***Independent Living Center services***

Very informed

Informed

Slightly informed

Not informed

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End of Section: Communication with Students/Families (General)

Start of Section: Communication with Students/Families (Providers)

Prov12 In what ways are you communicating students' Pre-ETS participation to families?

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End of Section: Communication with Students/Families (Providers)

Start of Section: YVRC Communication and Collaboration

Prov13A How satisfied are you with communications with **Youth Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors** you work with?

***Timeliness*** - *Communications are regular and well timed to provide information when it is needed*

Very satisfied

Satisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Very dissatisfied

Prov13B How satisfied are you with communications with **Youth Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors** you work with?

***Quality and detail of information***

Very satisfied

Satisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Very dissatisfied

Prov13C How satisfied are you with communications with **Youth Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors** you work with?

***Respectfulness***

Very satisfied

Satisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Very dissatisfied

Prov14 From your experiences working with Youth Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, how satisfied are you with their knowledge of Pre-ETS providers' roles and responsibilities?

Very satisfied

Satisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Very dissatisfied

Prov15 How satisfied are you with your own knowledge of Youth Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors' roles and responsibilities?

Very satisfied

Satisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Very dissatisfied

**End of Section: YVRC Communication and Collaboration**

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**Start of Section: Youth VR Counselor Questions**

YVRC1 As a Youth Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, who is your primary provider contact?

Executive Director

Director of Employment Services

Director of Pre-ETS/ Pre-ETS Program Manager

Career Coach

YVRC2A How satisfied are you with communications from your providers' contacts?

***Timeliness*** - *Communications are regular and well-timed to provide information when it is needed*

Extremely satisfied

Satisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Extremely dissatisfied

YVRC2B How satisfied are you with communications from your providers' contacts?

***Quality and detail of information shared***

Extremely satisfied

Satisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Extremely dissatisfied

YVRC2C How satisfied are you with communications from your providers' contacts?

***Respectfulness***

Extremely satisfied

Satisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Extremely dissatisfied

YVRC2D Please describe any additional feedback you have about communications from your providers' contacts.

---

YVRC3 What outreach materials do you frequently share with parents and students about Pre-ETS?  
(Select all that apply)

Indiana VR Pre-ETS Basics

Provider-made brochures

Provider-made video

Provider Pre-ETS Website

No formal materials

Other \_\_\_\_\_

YVRC4 If standardized Pre-ETS student/parent outreach materials were made, what would be the most useful?

Brochure

Video

Graphic organizer of process/services

Success Stories

FAQ

Other \_\_\_\_\_

#### End of Section: Youth VR Counselor Questions

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#### Start of Section: Implementation of Core Services (YVRC)

YVRC5 Based on your experience as a Youth Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, what training would be beneficial for educators? (select three)

Differences between Pre-ETS and VR

Roles and Responsibilities of Career Coaches & Youth Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors

VR Services

Pre-ETS referral process

Collaboration with VR and other transition stakeholders

YVRC6 From your experience working with career coaches, what training would be beneficial for them? (select three)

Differences between Pre-ETS and VR

General understanding of VR processes

Understanding of local community resources

Communication skills (such as networking, building rapport, customer service, etc.)

Understanding of other funding sources (such as BDDS, Social Security, Medicaid Waivers)

Other \_\_\_\_\_

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### End of Section: Implementation of Core Services (YVRC)

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### Start of Section: YVRC Communication and Collaboration

YVRC7 From your experiences working with providers, how satisfied are you with their knowledge of Youth Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors' roles and responsibilities?

Very satisfied

Satisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Very dissatisfied

YVRC8 How satisfied are you with your knowledge of Youth Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors' roles and responsibilities?

Very satisfied

Satisfied

Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied

Dissatisfied

Very dissatisfied

YVRC9 In what ways do you think Youth Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors should be assisting Pre-ETS providers in communicating with students and families?

\_\_\_\_\_

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### End of Section: YVRC Communication and Collaboration

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### Start of Section: Educator Questions

Edu01 What is your role as an educator?

Special education administrator (19)

High school special education department chair (20)

Transition coordinator (21)

Special education teacher (22)

Other (23) \_\_\_\_\_

Edu02 What provider staff is your primary Pre-ETS contact?

Executive Director

Director of Employment Services

Pre-ETS Coordinator

Career Coach

Edu03A How satisfied are you with communications from the provider?

***Timeliness*** - Communications are regular and well timed to provide information when it is needed

Extremely satisfied

Satisfied

Dissatisfied

Extremely dissatisfied

Edu03B How satisfied are you with communications from the provider?

***Quality and detail of information shared***

Extremely satisfied

Satisfied

Dissatisfied

Extremely dissatisfied

Edu03C How satisfied are you with communications from the provider?

***Respectfulness***

Extremely satisfied

Satisfied

Dissatisfied

Extremely dissatisfied

Edu04 What outreach materials have you been given to share with students/parents about Pre-ETS?  
(select all that apply)

Indiana VR Pre-ETS Basics Document

Provider-made VR Pre-ETS brochure

Provider-made video

Provider Pre-ETS Website

No formal materials

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Edu05 If standardized Pre-ETS outreach materials were made, what would be the most useful to students/families?

Brochure

Video

Graphic organizer of process/services

Success Stories

FAQ

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Gen13 Some students may be dually enrolled in both Pre-ETS and Vocational Rehabilitation to meet all of their needs. What services are students accessing through dual enrollment for Pre-ETS students?  
(select all that apply)

Driver's training

Employment supports/job coaching

Assistive technology

Post-secondary training such as college or vocational training

Foreign language interpreting

Transportation services

Other \_\_\_\_\_

Gen14 Who is primarily responsible for referring Pre-ETS students to Vocational Rehabilitation for adult services?

Student/Family

School staff

Pre-ETS career coach

Pre-ETS supervisor

Youth Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

I do not know

Gen15 Is there an agreed upon referral timeline for Pre-ETS students to Vocational Rehabilitation for adult services?

Yes

No

I don't know

Gen16 What barriers do you encounter when referring Pre-ETS students to Vocational Rehabilitation prior to exiting high school?

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#### End of Section: VR Enrollment (Traditional)

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#### Start of Section: General Questions

Gen10 What are the **top two** methods that could improve collaboration between educators, providers and Youth Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors? (*select two*)

Better understanding of Youth Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors' roles by educators

Better understanding of educators' role by Youth Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors

Better understanding of Youth Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors' roles by providers

Better understanding of providers' role by Youth Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors

Better understanding of Youth Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors' roles by VR Counselors

Better understanding of Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors' role by Youth Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor

Regular monthly check-ins with partners

Gen11 We need your help! We will be discussing these survey results with a focus group to hear to their perspectives of the results. **Would you be willing to join a short 30-minute conversation with us?** If yes, please provide your name and email address below and one of our staff will reach out to you.

First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_



## APPENDIX D. DATA DISPARITY INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### Provider Questions

PCG conducted data analysis of students with disabilities receiving Pre-ETS in Indiana. As a part of that analysis, we identified that there was a service disparity between white and non-white students. We believe that this gap is largely driven by the gap in services provided to students in Marion County, as Marion County is the most diverse county in Indiana. We have set up this interview to gather more information from Pre-ETS providers about our findings.

- Do these findings ring true based on your experience providing Pre-ETS? Please explain.
  - How would you explain this disparity? (slide 7 of PPT)
  - What ideas do you have for mitigating this situation?
- Do you have any barriers to providing Pre-ETS in Marion County? Is it easier to work with certain schools versus others?
  - Why is that? What makes some schools easier to work with than others?
  - Please describe a school that they would be happy to work with or a school where you would face some obstacles
- How are students identified for Pre-ETS?
  - Can you discuss any challenges related to enrolling people of diverse backgrounds or students that are low income?
  - Are you aware of any service barriers for students potentially eligible to receive Pre-ETS? Examples include: Pre-ETS provider staff capacity, transportation barriers, etc.
- Are there other resources that students use for after school vocational skill building?

### Educator Questions

PCG conducted data analysis of students with disabilities receiving Pre-ETS in Indiana. As a part of that analysis, we identified that there was a service disparity between white and non-white students. We believe that this gap is largely driven by the gap in services provided to students in Marion County, as Marion County is the most diverse county in Indiana. We have set up this meeting to gather more information from educators involved in Pre-ETS about our findings.

- Do these findings ring true based on your experience supporting Pre-ETS? Please explain.
  - How would you explain this disparity? (slide 7 of PPT)
  - What ideas do you have for mitigating this situation?
- Are there providers that are easier to work with and others that are more challenging to work with?
  - Why is that? What makes some provider easier to work with than others?
  - Please describe a provider that you would be happy to work with or a provider where you would face some obstacles
- How are students identified for Pre-ETS?
  - Can you discuss any challenges related to enrolling students of diverse backgrounds or students that are low income?
  - Are you aware of any service barriers for students potentially eligible to receive Pre-ETS? Examples include: Pre-ETS provider staff capacity, transportation barriers, etc.
- Are there other resources that your students use for after school vocational skill building?

## APPENDIX E. POST-SURVEY QUESTIONS

### Focus Group Questions

#### Provider

- We have learned through our survey that frequently diploma track students are not able to participate in Pre-ETS. Please tell us about how you have successfully engaged diploma track students in Pre-ETS activities.
- As you can see from this graph, we have different preferences of when Pre-ETS activities are provided. Families have identified summer as their preferred time while providers showed fall semester. How do you interpret this finding? Why do you think providers believe that fall semester is the preferable time to provide services?
- Our survey asked providers to rank the priority of curriculum being provided during Pre-ETS. Materials on counseling for post-secondary programs was not ranked as a priority by any provider. Why do you think this is the response? Why do you think it is not viewed as important as the other Pre-ETS activities?
- Providers indicate that the lack of transportation is an issue for rural students. Have providers been accessing traditional VR for driver's training? Have providers collaborated with waiver funds to support students' transportation needs? What other transportation services have you used to support rural students?
- Our survey results are mixed with regards to who is responsible for referring Pre-ETS students to traditional VR. From your perspective, why do you think it is unclear who is responsible for referrals? In what ways do you think we could create a consistent referral process?
- As you can see from our survey results, there is not a clear understanding of when that referral should occur. From your perspective, why do you think that is not clear? What would you recommend to improve everyone's understanding of this process?
- Your Pre-ETS partners indicated they would like monthly check-ins related to Pre-ETS programming. Do you agree? Why or why not?

#### Educator

- As you can see on this graph, the majority of educators responding to the Pre-ETS survey indicated they have not been given information to share with students and families. Do you think this is valid and why? What materials would be helpful for you? What type of materials do you think would be most engaging for students and families?
- We have learned through our survey that frequently diploma track students are not able to participate in Pre-ETS. What are your recommendations for successfully engaging diploma-track students in Pre-ETS activities? How does diploma track student availability for Pre-ETS differ from non-diploma track students?
- These survey results outline the challenges that students and families experience while participating in Pre-ETS. Do you agree with the results? What additional challenges do you see that prevent a student from being enrolled or participating in Pre-ETS?
- As you can see from our survey results, there is not a clear understanding of who is referring Pre-ETS students to traditional VR and when that referral should occur. From your perspective, why do you think this is inconsistent? What would you recommend to improve the consistency of this process?

### **Student and Family**

- Are there any diploma track students in attendance? Can you tell us a bit about your experience participating in Pre-ETS and how being diploma track affects your ability to participate?
- As you can see from this graph, students and families have identified school breaks and summer as their preferred time. Why do you think that is the best time to have Pre-ETS? What is your experience? Do you mostly use it during the summer time while you are out of school or during the school year?
- As you can see from our survey results, there is not a clear understanding of who is referring Pre-ETS students to traditional VR and when that referral should occur. From your perspective, why do you think that is not clear? What would you recommend to improve everyone's understanding of this process?
- As you can see from our survey results, there is not a clear understanding of when that referral should occur. From your perspective, why do you think that is not clear? What would you recommend to improve everyone's understanding of this process?
- What would you tell other people that is important to know about Pre-ETS? What do you wish you had known when you started the program?

### **Youth Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor**

- Can you tell me about your communication with providers? What is going well and what is challenging?
- Can you tell me about your communication with educators? What is going well and what is challenging?
- What types of training would be most beneficial for providers?
- What types of training would be most beneficial for educators?
- How would you explain your role to educators and providers?
- Based on your experience, what could strengthen the collaboration between providers, educators, and YVRCs to implement Pre-ETS? What are collaboration challenges?