



National Association of State Directors of Special Education, Inc.

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January 19, 2010

Re: Comments on Proposed Collection of Information
National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR)
Disability and Rehabilitation Research Projects and Centers Program
Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers (RRTCs)
Individual Level Characteristics Related to Employment Among Individuals with
Disabilities

Attention: Donna Nangle
U.S. Department of Education

Dear Ms. Nangle:

The National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE), the national association that represents the state directors of special education in the states, the federal territories, the Bureau of Indian Education, the Department of Defense Education Agency and the Freely Associated States, appreciates this opportunity to submit written comments on the above referenced notice of proposed priority published in the Federal Register on December 18, 2009.

NASDSE appreciates the proposed priority, specifically that the National Institute on Disability and Research (NIDRR) create a Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) to investigate individual-level characteristics among individuals with disabilities. NASDSE applauds the three foci of the proposed priority (a) "a synthesis of available knowledge about employment disparities among subpopulations of individuals with disabilities," (b) "new knowledge about individual-level characteristics that are most strongly associated with employment-related variables among individuals with disabilities" and (c) "new knowledge of the employment experiences of individuals who are at risk of poor employment activities."

However, NASDSE urges the Department to add one additional focus to this priority: new knowledge about best practices for successful transitions from school to employment for individuals with disabilities. As the Department is no doubt aware, only 43% of individuals with disabilities are employed immediately following high school. There is a critical need to further investigate practices that are most promising for transitioning youth with disabilities into post school employment. Adding this additional focus would give NIDRR an opportunity to coordinate with both the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), both of which have responsibility for helping to transition youth with disabilities once they have left high school.

Again, NASDSE thanks you for this opportunity to comment. Please feel free to contact me at (703) 519-3800, ext. 322 or at bill.east@nasdse.org or NASDSE's director of government relations, Nancy Reder at (703) 519-3800, ext. 334 or at nancy.reder@nasdse.org if you have any questions regarding these comments.

Sincerely,

Bill East

Bill East, Ed.D.
Executive Director