

## UCP's Innovative Transition Program:

### *Good for School Districts AND Good for Students of All Abilities*

Competitive employment provides something that is often more needed than a paycheck. It provides a purpose... and the satisfaction that comes with being a contributing member of society. Unfortunately, until now, meaningful employment has been out of reach for many students with special needs. **UCP's Pre-Employment Transition Services (P.E.T.S.) aims to change that reality.**

First introduced in the 2016-17 school year, P.E.T.S. enjoyed a remarkable response from transition coordinators and district officials alike who have long been clamoring for such an offering. **P.E.T.S. offers precisely the type of flexible approach and customized curriculum that meets the needs of students with a wide range of intellectual, emotional, or physical conditions or diagnoses.** And it does it *without even registering a blip on the school district's budget.*

Today, as the new school year approaches, a network of 28 school districts have signed on to offer this innovative pre-employment and life skills-based curriculum throughout their schools. The P.E.T.S. curriculum places a laser-like focus on six core topics that are essential to successfully moving students from school days to pay days:

- Independent living skills training
- Self-advocacy training
- Post-secondary education
- Travel training
- Job shadowing
- Work-based learning experiences

Bottom line: **P.E.T.S. is revolutionizing the way schools look at--and more importantly, deliver--transition training.** The collective impact on students and schools of this first-of-its-kind offering cannot be overstated.

#### **Key benefits to districts:**

- **NO COST** to the district. UCP provides the teachers AND the curriculum.
- **Certified teachers.** ALL with education and/or employment experience.
- **Flexible approach.** Designed to fit the **schools' needs** and **schedule.**

#### **Key benefits to students:**

- **Differentiated instruction.** Adapted to meet students' unique learning styles.
- **Opportunities to make connections that work.** Work-based learning experiences lead to jobs.

UCP's Transition Services were on full display at the recent PA Community on Transition Conference at State College. P.E.T.S. Regional Program Manager Diana Steel, Program Manager Cody Cox, and P.E.T.S. Instructor Rob Hagstrom, delivered a presentation entitled *Pathways to Success: Transitioning into Tomorrow Together*, to a packed room of attendees on the campus of Penn State University. They discussed highlights of the P.E.T.S. program as well as the extraordinary reaction from school districts in the first year offering the program. Transition coordinators from three districts also spoke glowingly about the many benefits to their students who participated.

UCP worked with the PA Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), funder of the P.E.T.S. program, to develop and deliver the program across Pennsylvania. We have recently been invited to expand our service to the Altoona OVR district, which will start with Huntington and State College school districts.

[Learn more.](#)

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