EVOLUTION OF PRE-EMPLOYMENT TRANSITION SERVICES AND INTERNAL CONTROL IN WEST VIRGINIA

West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services (WVDRS)

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WVDRS Mission Statement

Together, we enable and empower individuals with disabilities to work and to live independently by providing individualized services to consumers and employers.

Presentation Purpose/Outline

- Delineate the evolution of Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) provision and internal control since the passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) in 2014.

- Describe key Pre-ETS activities conducted by WVDRS to meet the WIOA mandate.

- Highlight examples of WVDRS practices that conform to the U.S. Government Accountability Office's "Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government."
  - aka "The Green Book"

- Demonstrate the utility of components from the Green Book as they apply to phases of the WVDRS Pre-ETS provision cycle.

Pre-Employment Transition Services

- Mandated by WIOA

- Minimum 15% reservation of federal funds

- Designed to promote career exploration, workplace understanding, and self-advocacy among students with disabilities.

- WIOA Sec. 402 (b)(5) / Rehab Act Sec. 2 (b)(5)
  - "…to ensure, to the greatest extent possible, that youth with disabilities and students with disabilities who are transitioning from receipt of special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.) and receipt of services under section 504 of this Act have opportunities for postsecondary success."

Required Activities

- Job exploration counseling;

- Work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school or after school opportunities, or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships), that is provided in an integrated environment to the maximum extent possible;

- Counseling on opportunities for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education;

- Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living; and

- Instruction in self-advocacy, which may include peer mentoring.

Coordination Activities

- Attending individualized education program (IEP) 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;

- Work with schools, including those carrying out activities under section 614(d)(1)(A)(i)(VIII) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1414(d)(1)(A)(i)(VIII)), to coordinate and ensure the provision of pre-employment transition services under this section; and

- When invited, attend person-centered planning meetings for individuals receiving services under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.).

Authorized Activities

- Implementing effective strategies to increase the likelihood of independent living and inclusion in communities and competitive integrated workplaces;

- Developing and improving strategies for individuals with intellectual disabilities and individuals with significant disabilities to live independently, participate in postsecondary education experiences, and obtain and retain competitive integrated employment;

- Providing instruction to vocational rehabilitation counselors, school transition personnel, and other persons supporting students with disabilities;

- Disseminating information about innovative, effective, and efficient approaches to achieve the goals of this section;

- Coordinating activities with transition services provided by local educational agencies under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.);

- Applying evidence-based findings to improve policy, procedure, practice, and the preparation of personnel, in order to better achieve the goals of this section;

- Developing model transition demonstration projects;

- Establishing or supporting multistate or regional partnerships involving States, local educational agencies, designated State units, developmental disability agencies, private businesses, or other participants to achieve the goals of this section; and

- Disseminating information and strategies to improve the transition to postsecondary activities of individuals who are members of traditionally unserved populations.

Evolution of Pre-ETS Implementation

- WIOA Legislation – The Early Years

- Federal Regulations

- Updates and Guidance

Legislation – The Early Years (July 22, 2014)

- From the funds reserved under section 110(d)…
  - (d)(1) From any State allotment under subsection (a) for a fiscal year (FY)**, the State shall reserve not less than 15 percent** of the allotted funds for the provision of pre-employment transition services.
  - (2) Such reserved funds shall not be used to pay for the administrative costs of providing pre-employment transition services.

…and any funds made available from State, local, or private funding sources, each State shall ensure that the designated State unit, **in collaboration with the local educational agencies** involved, shall **provide, or arrange for the provision** of, pre-employment transition services for **all students with disabilities in need of such services** who are **eligible or potentially eligible** for services under this title.

Legislation (cont'd.)

- The State plan shall…. **include an assessment of the needs of individuals with disabilities for transition services and pre-employment transition services**, and the extent to which such services provided under this Act are coordinated with transition services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq.) in order to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities.

**So…using 15% of your allotment, collaborate with education to provide Pre-ETS to eligible and potentially eligible students with disabilities, based on assessed need.
  - This never went away, but was later clarified.

WVDRS' Pre-ETS Goal

Meet the legislative requirement to make Pre-ETS available to <u>ALL</u> students with disabilities in need of such services in the state!

Federal Regulations (June 30, 2016)

- §361.48 (a) Pre-employment transition services.
  - (1) Availability of services. Pre-employment transition services must be made available Statewide to all students with disabilities, **regardless of whether the student has applied or been determined eligible** for vocational rehabilitation services.
  - (2) Required activities. **The designated State unit must provide** the following pre-employment transition services:

- Also, §361.5 (c)(51) clarified what a "student with a disability" is:
  - Individual with a disability in a secondary, postsecondary, or other recognized education program, up to age 21 (or lower) and eligible for IDEA or 504 services.

Updates and Guidance

- Workforce Innovation and Technical Assistance Center (WINTAC)
  - Pre-ETS Time Allocation Guide (7/20/17)
    - Can use travel time!
  - Required and Coordination Activities Set-Aside Determination (8/8/18)

- Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA)
  - New FY 2015 Grant Award Notification Attachments Webinar (10/7/14)
    - 15% requirement does not apply to the non-Federal share
    - Fee-for-service Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) contracts do not need to be disaggregated to determine admin costs.
  - Technical Assistance Circular (TAC) 15-02 (8/17/15)
    - RSA recommended that vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies revise formal interagency agreements with State Education Agencies (SEAs) and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) to address coordination of the provision of Pre-ETS and the responsibilities of each agency in providing or paying for transition services, including Pre-ETS.
  - Pre-ETS Fiscal FAQ (4/13/16)
    - Funds reserved for Pre-ETS can be carried over to the subsequent FY.

WVDRS AND PRE-ETS

Dedication to
Youth with Disabilities

- WVDRS has a long history of successfully serving youth with disabilities, even prior to Pre-ETS.

- High percentage of served individuals have been youth.

Percent Transition Age Served – The percent served that were age 14-24 at application [FY 2008 – 2014; Program Year (PY) 2017]

Year	WVDRS	Natl. Avg.
2008	54.9%	32.9%
2009	49.5%	33.3%
2010	42.7%	34.6%
2011	39.0%	34.6%
2012	32.8%	35.2%
2013	28.4%	36.1%
2014	38.5%	29.8%
PY 2017	73.1%	49.0%
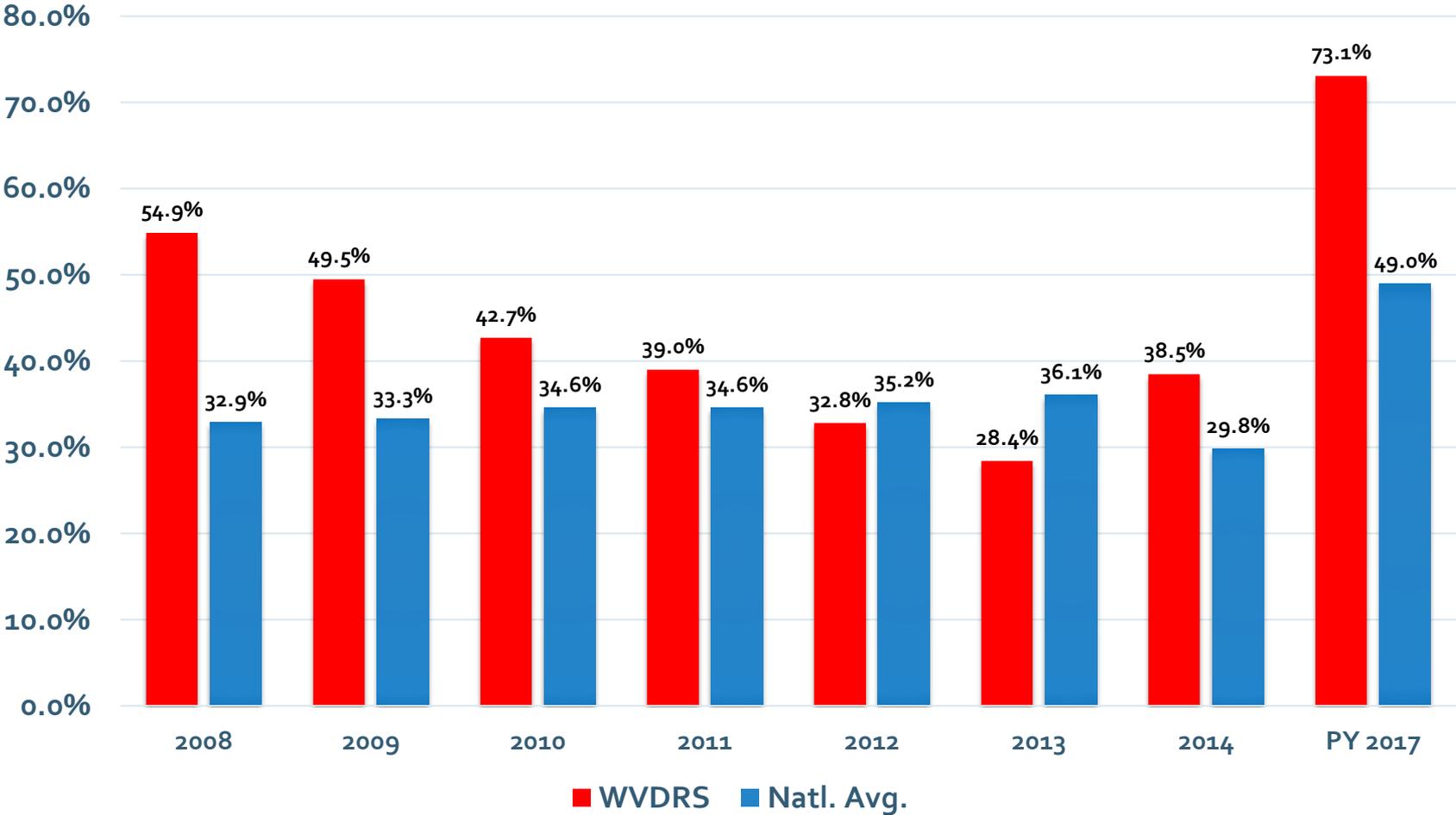
Pre-ETS Activities in WV

- With the WIOA-based mandate, WVDRS has implemented successful Pre-ETS initiatives to serve students with disabilities across all 55 counties in WV.

  - Pathways to the Future website (PathwaysWV.org)
    - Banners in high schools promoting website
  - Summer Pre-ETS Initiatives
    - Career Exploration Opportunity (CEO) Summits
    - Work Exploration Programs
    - STEM Activities (BIKISI – Build it, Keep it, Share it)
    - Instruction in Self-Advocacy Classes – hosted by Centers for Independent Living (CILs) and other providers
  - Statewide coordination with Education

Pathways to the Future Website

- Provides self-service, on-demand Pre-ETS

- Resources for students, parents, and teachers

- Students can access tools for:
  o Career Planning
  o Education Planning
  o Independent Living
  o Self-Determination/Self-Advocacy
  o Work-Based Learning

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Pathways to the Future

www.pathwayswv.org/index.php

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PATHWAYS to the FUTURE
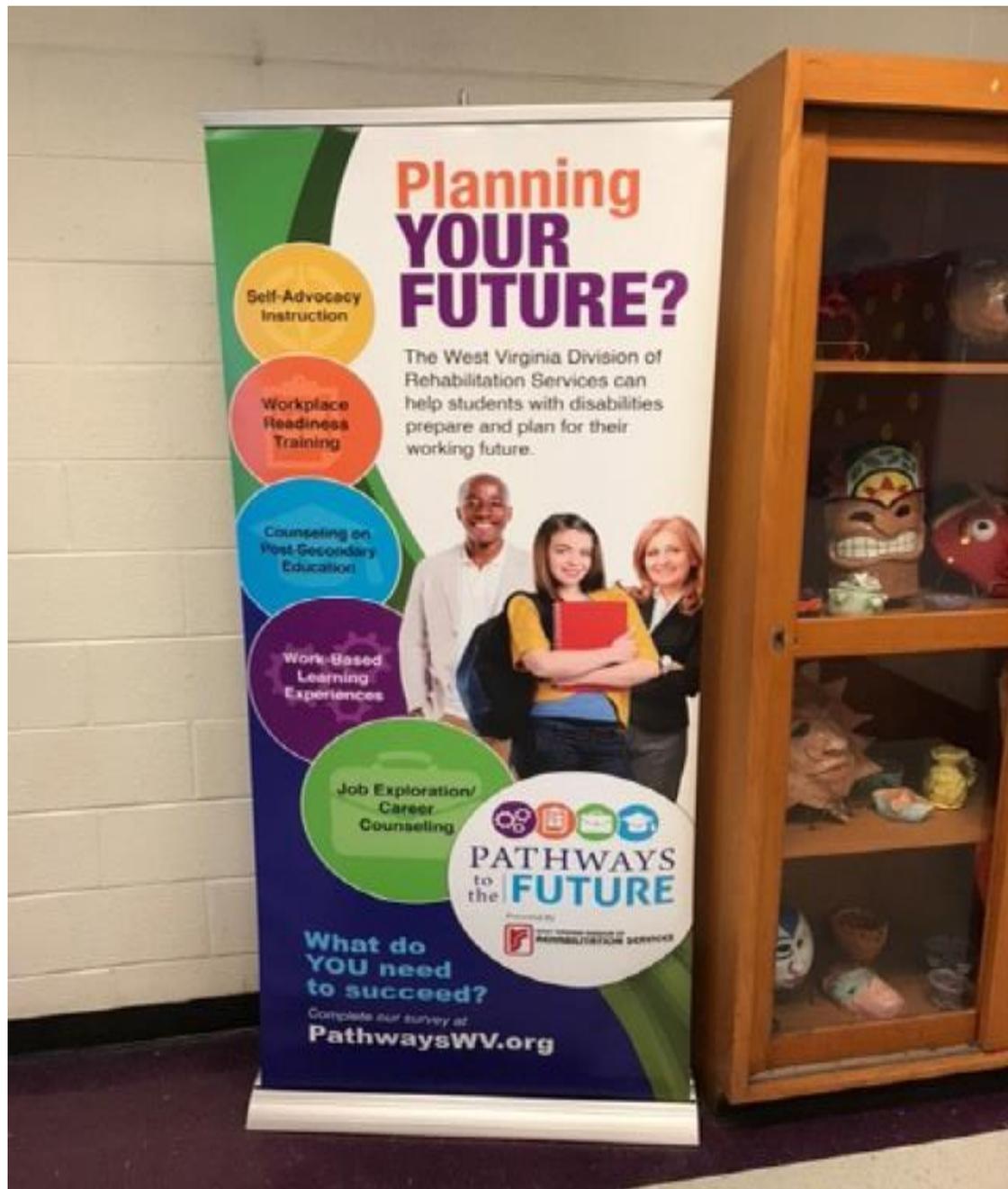
My Pathways Navigator
Create Account | Login

HOME   STUDENTS▾   PARENTS▾   PROVIDERS / TEACHERS▾   PARTNERS▾   EMPLOYERS▾   RESOURCES   MEDIA▾

Your Future Begins NOW

Welcome to Pathways to the Future! This site is a collection of resources, tools and people to help students with disabilities, through the journey from youth to adulthood.

Your future begins now! It's never too early to start planning for your future and exploring pre-employment transition services. Click on the icons below to explore jobs and careers, education/training after high school, independent living skills, and partners and programs to help you along the way.

Summer Pre-ETS Initiatives

- Focused activities during the summer to provide Pre-ETS through CRPs, Employers, or other partners.
  - Career Exploration Opportunity (CEO) Summits
  - Work Exploration Programs
  - STEM Activities (BIKISI – Build it, Keep it, Share it)
  - Instruction in Self-Advocacy Classes

- Pre- and Post-Testing to students to assess effectiveness of activities.

CEO Summits

- Week-long Summit, during the summer, for students with disabilities to learn about:
  o Career Pathways
  o Completing job applications
  o Interviewing
  o Self-advocacy
  o and more…

- Students receive a stipend for attendance ($15/hr.)

- Program has grown dramatically since beginning in June 2016.

CEO Summit Expansion

- 2016 – 7 Summits

- 2017 – 10 Summits

- 2018 – 11 Summits

- 2019 – **50+ Summits**

- This explosion of growth occurred thanks to the assistance of our CRPs.

- CRPs across WV are able to provide local/regional-tailored Career Exploration, as well as Workplace Readiness Training, Counseling on Post-Secondary Education opportunities, and Self-Advocacy.

Work Exploration Programs

- Work-Based Learning Experiences provided during the summer by CRPs across the state.
  - Provides the student with real-world work experience, in an integrated job site.
  - Up to 80 work hours, over 2 – 4 weeks
  - Students earn no less than minimum wage.
  - Paid CRPs to arrange and monitor experience, as well as pay students.

- Work Experience Program
  - Up to 480 work hours
  - Coordinated by counselor, student, and employer
  - WVDRS reimburses employer, who pays prevailing and not less than minimum wage.

- POWER Program – Job Shadowing

STEM
(BIKISI – Build It, Keep It, Share It)

- Through a one-week training, students receive the knowledge, tools, and components they need to build a computer.

- At the end of the training, they take the knowledge – and the computer – home with them.

- Designed to develop student interest in the sciences through computers
  - In-demand job sectors
  - High-paying jobs

Instruction in Self-Advocacy (ISA) Classes

- In previous years, ISA had been the least provided Pre-ETS activity in WV, according to CSNA.
  o Not provided by schools

- To fill this service gap, WVDRS collaborated with CILs, CRPs, and other providers, who hosted classes to provide the service.

- Activities and lessons on:
  o the history of the disability movement;
  o understanding rights, responsibilities and individual education plans;
  o developing confidence and communication skills; and
  o evaluating future needs and plans.

Statewide Coordination with Education

- WVDRS has a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with each county's Board of Education (LEA), as well as with the State's Department of Education (WVDE; SEA), which is also signed by the WV Office of Special Education.

- WVDRS has presence in all WV high schools, across all 55 counties, as well as liaisons with post-secondary institutions statewide.

- WVDRS has also started coordination with middle schools to provide outreach and Pre-ETS provision to 8th grade students with disabilities.
  - WVDRS and Education blended resources to develop and distribute outreach materials.
  - WVDRS counselors will be going to WV middle schools in Spring 2020 to conduct outreach and provide instruction in self-advocacy.

- Education changed policy to match age range for students with disabilities

- IEPs now include options for Pre-ETS

Statewide Coordination with Education

- WVDRS hosted joint training conference with Special Education (SE) teachers, State-level staff, and VR Counselors.

- Pathways website
  - Banners in schools
  - SE teachers trained on Pathways website instruction
  - SE teachers cover Pathways website with students

- Students receive informational workbooks on Pre-ETS
  - SE teachers provide instruction on workbooks

INTERNAL CONTROL

Internal Control/Green Book

- Criteria for designing, implementing, and operating an effective internal control system are outlined in the U.S. Government Accountability Office's "Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government."
  - aka "The Green Book"

- This presentation focuses on the five components of internal control:
  - Control Environment
  - Risk Assessment
  - Control Activities
  - Information and Communication
  - Monitoring
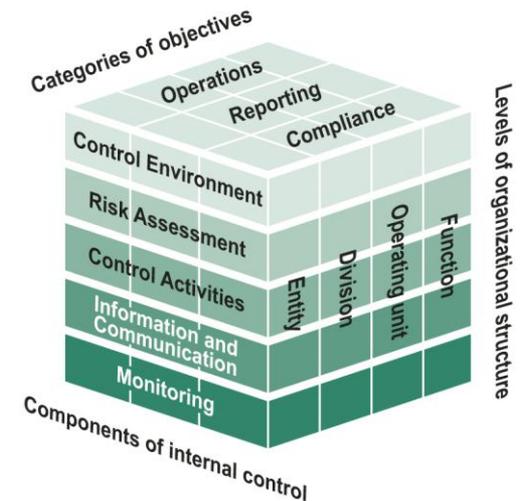
Sources: COSO and GAO. | GAO-14-704G

*Each of these components contain 2-5 principles; 17 total

Control Environment Principles (from The Green Book)

1. The oversight body and management should demonstrate a commitment to integrity and ethical values.

2. The oversight body should oversee the entity's internal control system.

3. Management should establish an organizational structure, assign responsibility, and delegate authority to achieve the entity's objectives.

4. Management should demonstrate a commitment to recruit, develop, and retain competent individuals.

5. Management should evaluate performance and hold individuals accountable for their internal control responsibilities.

Control Environment – WVDRS Examples

- WVDRS employees sign code of conduct statements and confidentiality agreements upon hire.

- WVDRS uses a multi-tier approach to review activities. State Plan and Program Evaluation (SPPE) Unit reviews internal control policies and documents created by other units.

- WVDRS has established units that manage CRP activity, employer services, and specialties in the field (e.g., education, sensory impairments).

- WVDRS continues to ONLY hire individuals with Master's degrees as Rehabilitation Counselors. Management staff have many years of experience and expertise in VR.

- Quality Assurance (QA) unit reviews counselor casework regularly. All WVDRS employees are evaluated annually on their work performances.

Risk Assessment Principles (from The Green Book)

6. Management should define objectives clearly to enable the identification of risks and define risk tolerances.

7. Management should identify, analyze, and respond to risks related to achieving the defined objectives.

8. Management should consider the potential for fraud when identifying, analyzing, and responding to risks.

9. Management should identify, analyze, and respond to significant changes that could impact the internal control system.

Risk Assessment – WVDRS Examples

- For Pre-ETS, WIOA establishes objective – Spend at least 15% on allowable services (required, authorized, and coordination) solely to students with disabilities.

- SPPE unit identifies compliance risks from the top-down and from the bottom-up.
  - Top-down: Annual Pre-ETS budget allocation; Development and selection of services; Statewide coverage of Pre-ETS
  - Bottom-up: Education level/age of student; Validation of Pre-ETS service and recording; Pre-ETS case management

Information and Decision Flows for Determination of Pre-ETS
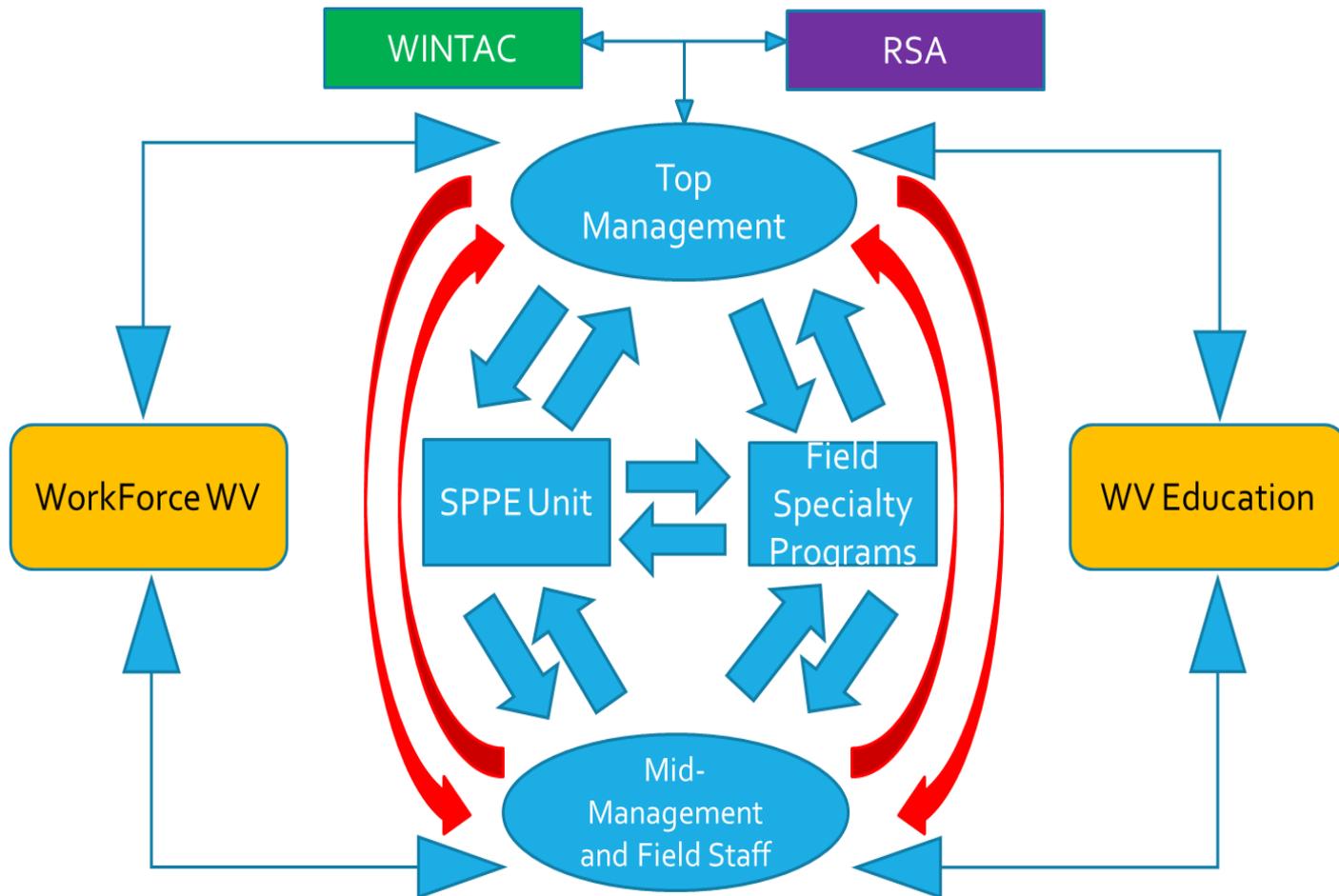
Risk Assessment – WVDRS Examples (cont'd.)

- WVDRS administration emphasizes supporting documentation to counselors. QA unit examines counselor casework to ensure supporting documentation exists.

- Pre-ETS is a significant change from the past (prior to WIOA). Will likely continue to change.
  o Funding changes
  o Changes in service population (potentially eligible/students)
  o How to deal with reduced funds and growth in student population? What is the most effective/efficient way to provide Pre-ETS to students with disabilities
    - WV activities:
      o Pathways website
      o WVDRS-led CEO Summits
      o CRP-led CEO Summits
      o Education teaches Pathways website

Control Activities Principles (from The Green Book)

10. Management should design control activities to achieve objectives and respond to risks.

11. Management should design the entity's information system and related control activities to achieve objectives and respond to risks.

12. Management should implement control activities through policies.

Control Activities – WVDRS Examples

- IT unit has several programmatic mechanisms in place within iECM to ensure that errant data in connection to provision of Pre-ETS are minimized or prevented.
  - Age
  - Enrollment
  - Time since last school or case update
  - Certain service codes are prevented if not eligible for that service
    - Potentially eligible students can ONLY receive Pre-ETS
    - Non-students CANNOT receive Pre-ETS

- Service authorizations made by counselors are reviewed by procurement office prior to payment to assure costs are allowable.
  - Default to 110 funds if all Pre-ETS conditions are not met.

- QA and SPPE staff periodically review counselor case files to ensure that services authorized are justified and allowable.

Information and Communication Principles (from The Green Book)

13. Management should use quality information to achieve the entity's objectives.

14. Management should internally communicate the necessary quality information to achieve the entity's objectives.

15. Management should externally communicate the necessary quality information to achieve the entity's objectives.

Information and Communication – WVDRS Examples

- Fiscal Reporting informs management how much money is spent on which services, who receives them, and where.
  - Allows for future planning

- Executive Management Group (EMG) weekly meetings, Mid-management and field supervisor meetings, conferences and trainings with WVDRS staff.

- Programmatic information and Pre-ETS data are shared with agency staff, Education staff, CRPs, State Rehabilitation Council, Statewide Independent living Council, and other stakeholders.

Monitoring Principles (from The Green Book)

16. Management should establish and operate monitoring activities to monitor the internal control system and evaluate the results.

17. Management should remediate identified internal control deficiencies on a timely basis.

Monitoring – WVDRS Examples

- WVDRS activities (including Pre-ETS) are monitored by numerous units: EMG, QA, Fiscal, SPPE, IT, State Auditors, etc. SPPE and IT staff routinely conduct data checks in iECM to validate data collection processes. Corrections to the system are made as quickly as possible.

- EMG meetings lead to remediation plans/actions for recognized deficiencies in the delivery of services.

Internal Control for Pre-ETS

- While implementing Pre-ETS, VR agencies need internal control policies and procedures to ensure:

  o Proper handling of funds while achieving WIOA objectives for Pre-ETS

  o Safeguarding the validity/reliability of reporting

  o Compliance with applicable laws and regulations

Internal Control
for WVDRS Pre-ETS

- Steps in WVDRS' annual Pre-ETS provision cycle include:

  1) Reservation of Pre-ETS funds
  2) Determination of need for Required/Coordination activities statewide
  3) Assessment of need for each required activity
  4) Determination of Pre-ETS service gaps
  5) Service provision
  6) Evaluation of service provision

1) Reservation of Pre-ETS Funds

- <u>Control Environment</u> – Assignment given to the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) to draw funds from G5 system and reserve Pre-ETS funds.

- <u>Risk Assessment</u> – Pre-ETS funds might not be reserved appropriately.

- <u>Control Activities</u> – WVDRS budgets the 15% requirement into the State's wvOASIS ledger system. Expenditures that qualify for the Earmarking requirement are coded in wvOASIS. All reports must be approved by appropriate levels of management.

- <u>Information and Communication</u> – Management reviews Earmarking results for each award during the SF-425 reporting process.

- <u>Monitoring</u> – wvOASIS system can be reviewed by management at any point in time.

2) Determination of Need for Required and Coordination Activities Statewide

- <u>Control Environment</u> – Agency adheres to WIOA mandate of ensuring provision of required and coordination activities prior to conducting authorized activities.

- <u>Risk Assessment</u> – Defined objective of accurate count of students with disabilities (SWDs) that need Pre-ETS; identified risk of misinformation

- <u>Control Activities</u> – Developed method of determination based on approved method from WINTAC

- <u>Information and Communication</u> - received data on SWD headcount from WVDE; compared to previous year's data; calculation was checked by multiple staff for accuracy. Results shared with Director and Chief Financial Officer (CFO).

- <u>Monitoring</u> – Agency evaluates method of determination using year-end data (projection vs. actual)

3) Assessment of Need for Each Required Activity

- Control Environment – Agency must assess need for Pre-ETS as part of its Comprehensive Statewide Need Assessment (CSNA).

- Risk Assessment – There is risk of incomplete data; the needs of some SWDs might remain unknown.

- Control Activities - Agency surveys field staff and high school officials statewide.

- Information and Communication – Responses submitted by field staff to Administration. Responses used as part of CSNA.

- Monitoring – Some schools did not respond or refused to. More time is needed to ensure wider base of responses.

4) Determination of Pre-ETS Service Gaps

- <u>Control Environment</u> – WVDRS goal is to make Pre-ETS available to ALL students with disabilities in need of such services statewide.

- <u>Risk Assessment</u> – VR agencies lack fiscal/human resources to determine all of the Pre-ETS needs/gaps in all areas of the state. Schools may also lack capability to provide Pre-ETS, even if they say they do.

- <u>Control Activities</u> - Banners posted in most WV high schools, referring students to Pathways website, where needs can be reported in a survey.
  - For each required activity:
    - Is this something that would help you?
    - Is this something you have done or are doing?
    - Is this something your school offers?

- <u>Information and Communication</u> – Survey data are collected electronically and automatically stored in a database.

- <u>Monitoring</u> – SPPE staff monitors survey data regularly to determine whether changes to the survey are needed.

5) Service Provision

- <u>Control Environment</u> - WVDRS goal is to make Pre-ETS available to ALL students with disabilities in need of such services statewide.

- <u>Risk Assessment</u> - VR agencies lack fiscal/human resources to provide intensive Pre-ETS to all students. Provision must also be in accordance with law...need, not greed.

- <u>Control Activities</u> - VR Counselors provide direct services; Self-service Pre-ETS via Pathways site; fee-for-service contracts with CRPs; Special Education joint training conference; Coordination of Pre-ETS with the SEA

- <u>Information and Communication</u> – Counselors document service provision in iECM; Pathways usage is monitored; CRPs provide reports regarding service provision; WVDRS meets with Education to discuss Pre-ETS.

- <u>Monitoring</u> – QA and SPPE staff monitor counselor documentation and CRP reports and provide documentation guidance as needed. IT unit is able to make changes to iECM data collection mechanism if necessary; School and WVDRS counselors stay abreast of Pre-ETS activities in their respective areas.

6) Evaluation of Service Provision

- Control Environment – WVDRS intends to effectively and efficiently make Pre-ETS of high quality available to students with disabilities needing these services.

- Risk Assessment – Students may receive ineffective, low quality Pre-ETS. Delivery of Pre-ETS may be imbalanced across state.

- Control Activities - Students given pre- and post-tests for CEO Summits. Examination of Pre-ETS service distribution.

- Information and Communication – Pre- and post-tests shared with SPPE; Counselors communicate with students regarding service provision and document in case notes; Discussions on Pre-ETS at various levels of WVDRS; Evaluation reports submitted to EMG.

- Monitoring – Administration staff (especially SPPE) evaluate pre- and post-tests to determine whether students receive quality service; will revise tests as needed. Reporting of deficiencies in Pre-ETS service type and location for improvement and adjustment in the following year's service pattern.

GRAPHICAL DISPLAY OF PRE-ETS MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND ASSESSMENT

WV Counties and WVDRS Districts
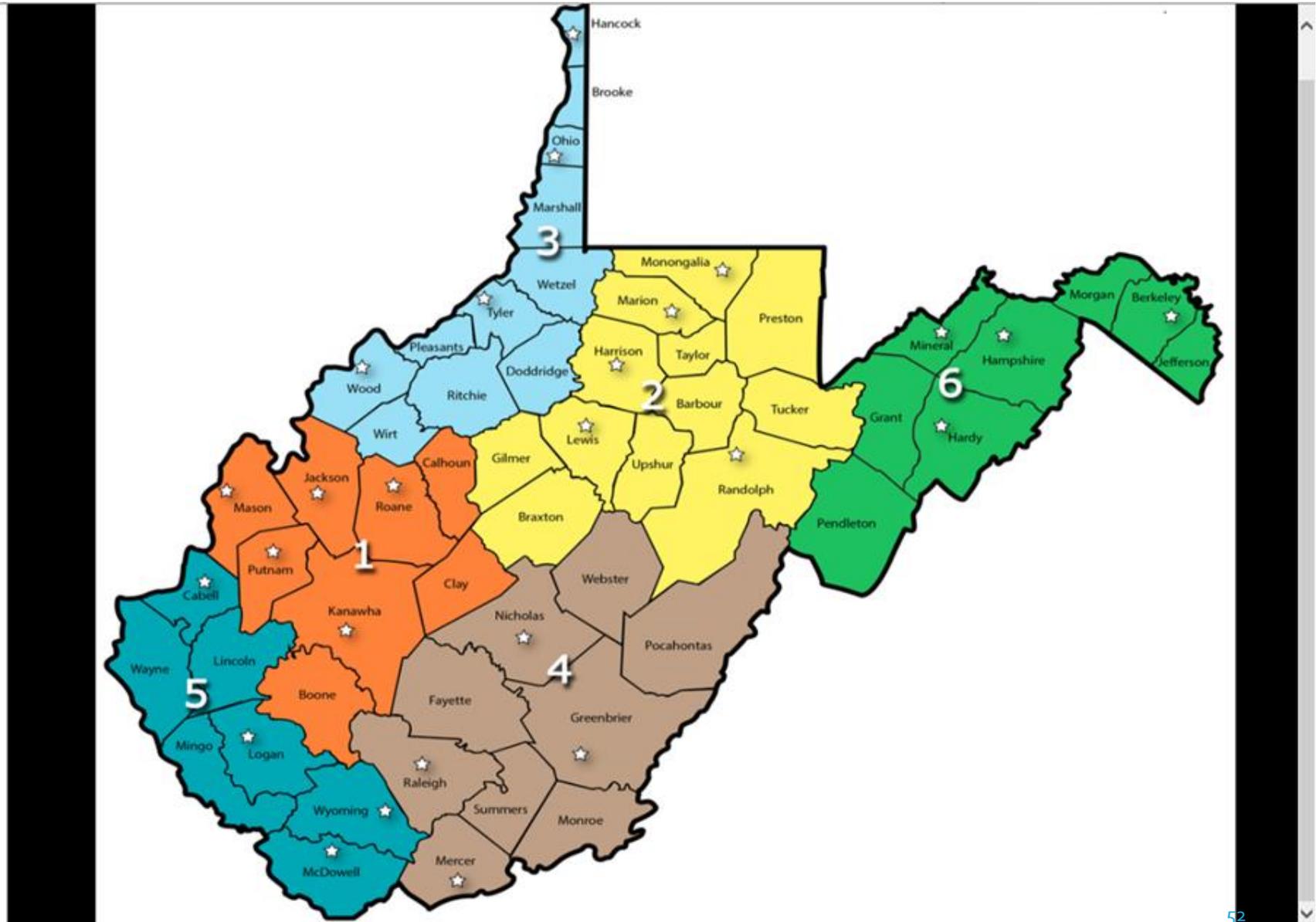
In-House Services (Pre-ETS) – PY 2019

In-House Workplace Readiness Training – PY 2019
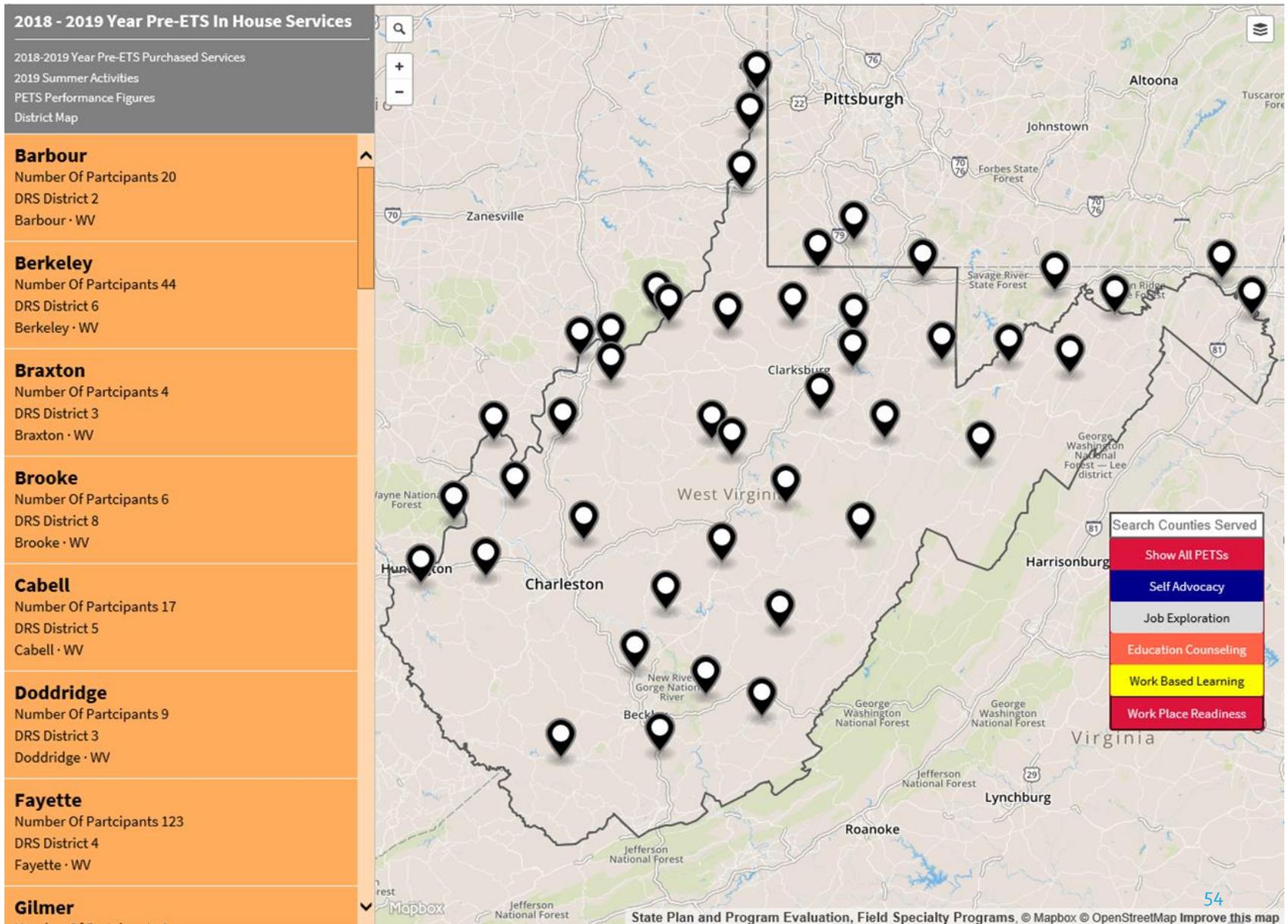
In-House Work-Based Learning Experiences – PY 2019
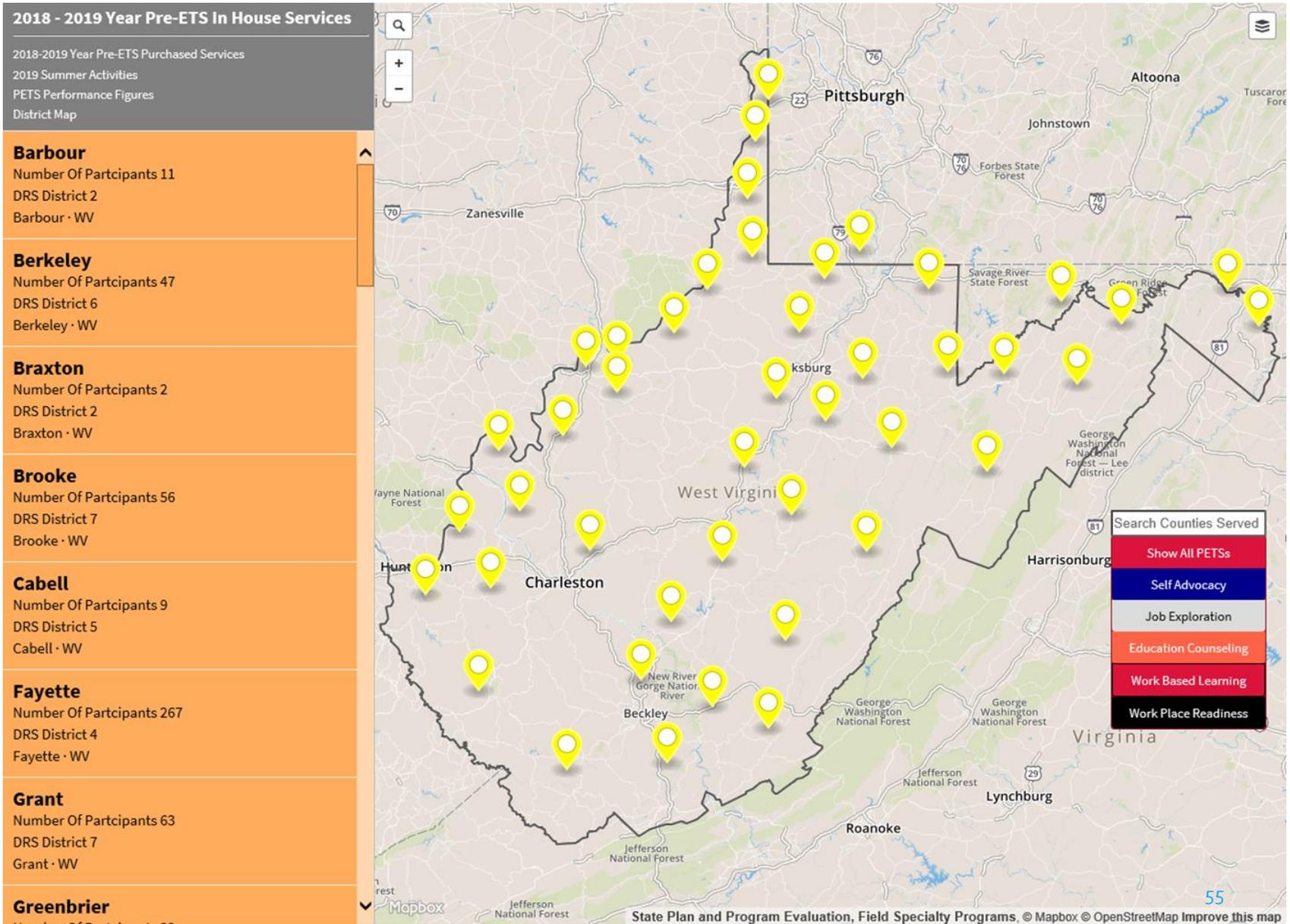
In-House Post-Secondary Counseling – PY 2019
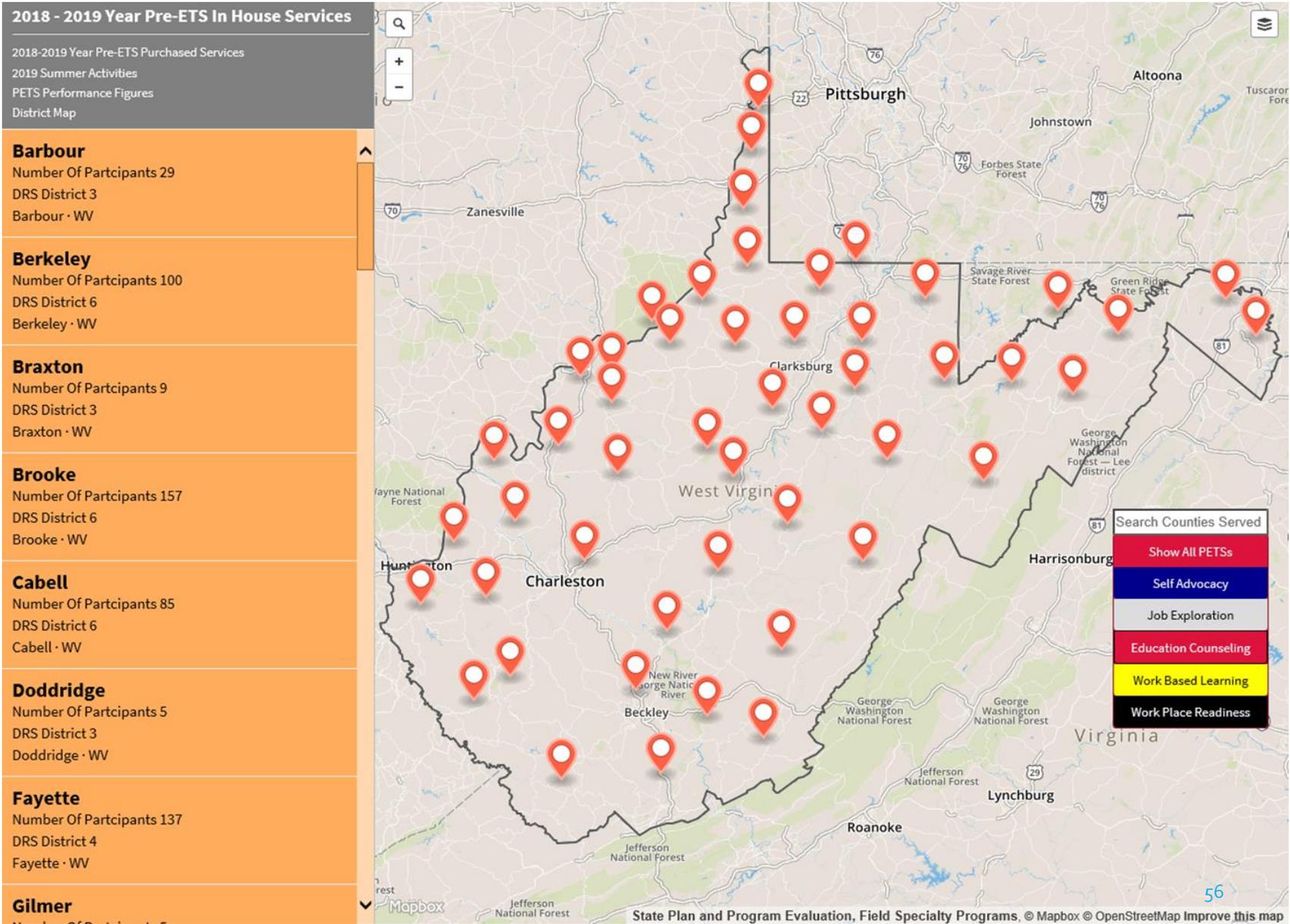
In-House Instruction in Self-Advocacy – PY 2019

2018 - 2019 Year Pre-ETS In House Services

2018-2019 Year Pre-ETS Purchased Services
2019 Summer Activities
PETS Performance Figures
District Map

Barbour
Number Of Partcipants 10
DRS District 2
Barbour · WV

Berkeley
Number Of Partcipants 39
DRS District 6
Berkeley · WV

Braxton
Number Of Partcipants 1
DRS District 2
Braxton · WV

Brooke
Number Of Partcipants 68
DRS District 4
Brooke · WV

Cabell
Number Of Partcipants 38
DRS District 5
Cabell · WV

Doddridge
Number Of Partcipants 3
DRS District 3
Doddridge · WV

Fayette
Number Of Partcipants 169
DRS District 4
Fayette · WV

Grant

Search Counties Served
- Show All PETSs
- Self Advocacy
- Job Exploration
- Education Counseling
- Work Based Learning
- Work Place Readiness

State Plan and Program Evaluation, Field Specialty Programs, © Mapbox © OpenStreetMap Improve this map

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In-House Job Exploration Counseling – PY 2019
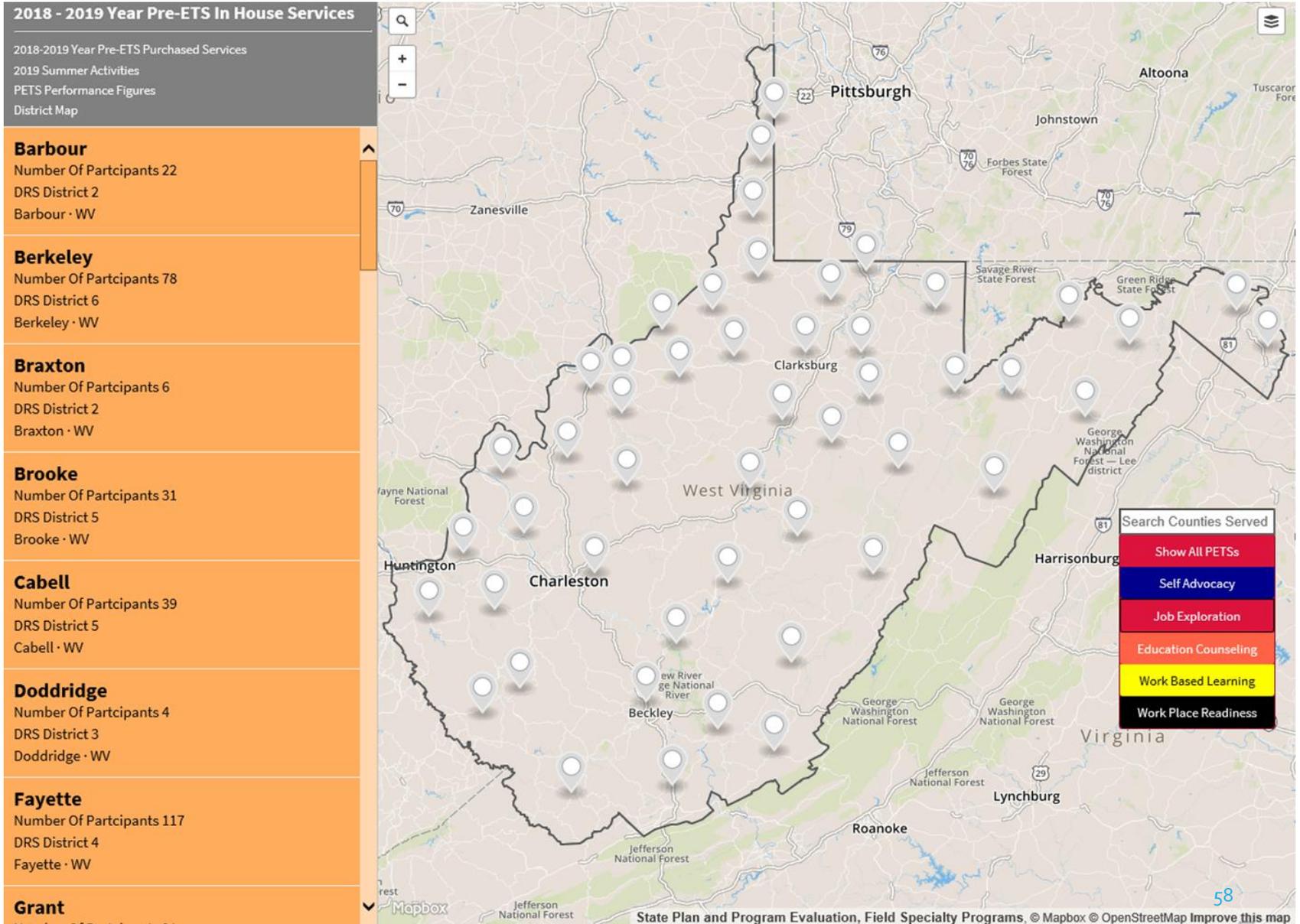
Purchased Services (Pre-ETS) – PY 2019
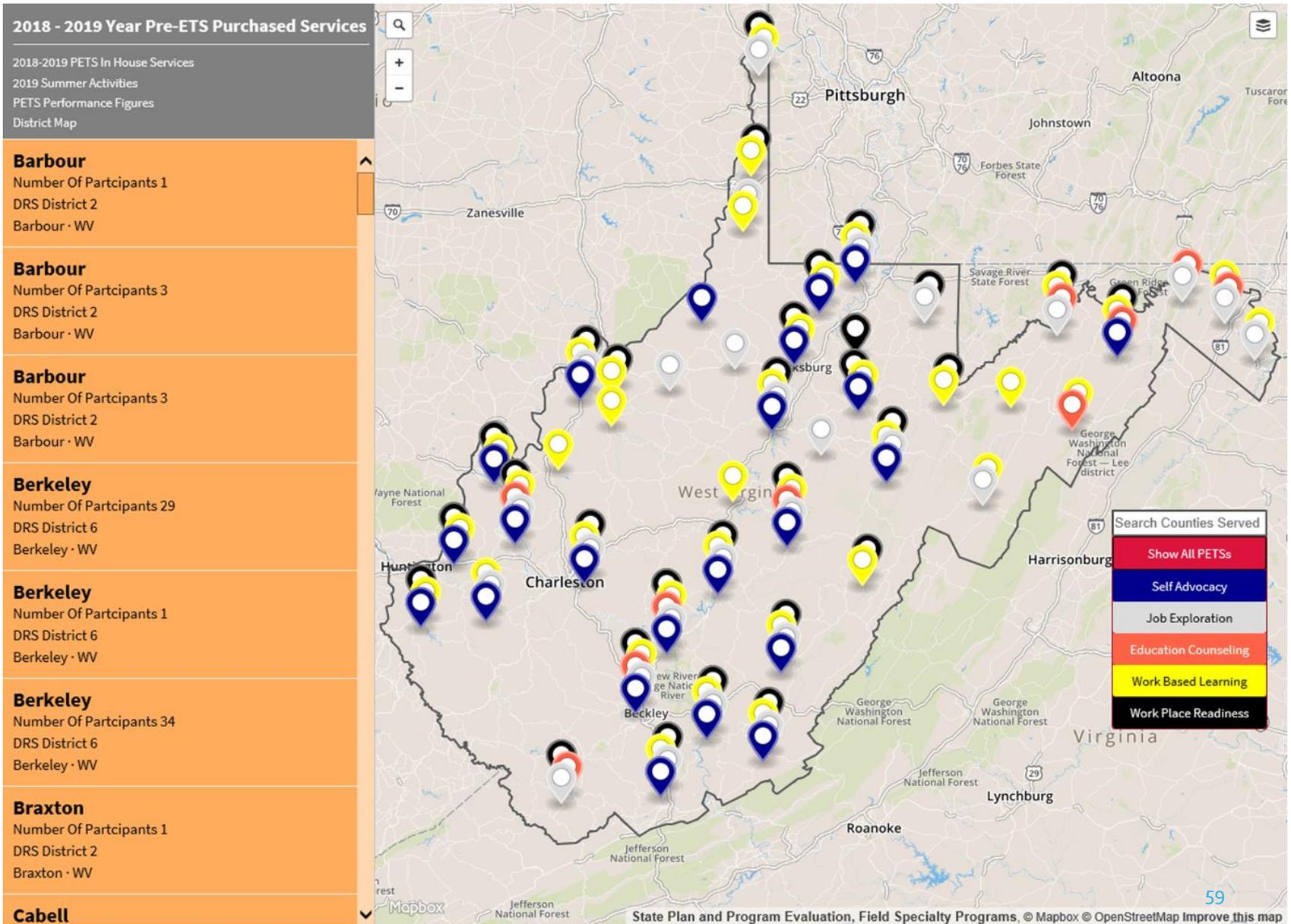
Summary

- Expectations regarding Pre-ETS provision have changed over the last five years.

- State VR agencies must be ready to meet changing demands, both federally and from the students with disabilities they serve.

- Internal control processes should permeate the VR and Pre-ETS provision process.
  - Control Environment
  - Risk Assessment
  - Control Activities
  - Information and Communication
  - Monitoring

Special Thanks

To all the WVDRS staff, Education staff, CRPs, and students with disabilities who make our Pre-ETS success possible!

QUESTIONS
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