

FAQ – Project Search: Measurable Skill Gains (MSG)

Many State VR agencies support students with disabilities in Project Search. Because Project Search varies from State to State, this FAQ addresses topics State VR agencies should consider as they determine whether or not activities through Project Search can be reported as various types of MSGs. An MSG can be reported for participants who are enrolled in an education or training program that leads to a postsecondary credential or employment and MSGs require source documentation when VR agencies report them on the RSA-911.

A participant is a reportable individual who has applied and been determined eligible for VR services, has an approved and signed Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE), and has begun to receive services under the IPE. If the student has not applied for VR services, been determined eligible, completed the IPE, and begun to receive services, they are not a participant. Potentially eligible students with disabilities participating in Project Search, who earn grades/credits for WBLEs, are not eligible to earn MSGs because they are not participants.

The following are things to consider when determining if a student’s participation in Project Search meets these requirements.

MSG: Secondary or Postsecondary Transcript/Report Card

Secondary Education

1. Can a Work-Based Learning Experience (WBLE) through Project Search count as an MSG: Secondary or Postsecondary Transcript/Report Card for a participant pursuing a secondary school credential?
 - a. If a student/participant is engaged in a Project Search WBLE that results in passing grades or earned credits toward the secondary diploma (the recognized credential), then this may count as an MSG: Secondary Transcript/Report Card. The Project Search WBLE grades or credits would need to be reflected on the transcript or report card. It would not be acceptable for a Project Search progress note to be used as supporting documentation for this type of MSG.
 - b. The Project Search WBLE would not count as an MSG: Secondary or Postsecondary Transcript/Report Card if the student is NOT working toward a secondary diploma (the recognized credential), but is pursuing a Special Education Certificate of Completion.
2. Can a Project Search WBLE count as an MSG: Secondary or Postsecondary Transcript/Report Card if some of the activities under Project Search are being provided as a pre-employment transition service to a student with disability, who is also considered a participant, using the reserve funds?

- a. As long as the student with a disability is completing a Project Search WBLE that results in passing grades or earned credits toward the secondary diploma, then this could be reported as this type of MSG, while also being reported as a pre-employment transition service. However, if the Project Search WBLE does not result in passing grades or credits toward the secondary diploma, then the Project Search WBLE may only count as a pre-employment transition service, not an MSG, depending upon the structure of the Project Search services and program. It is important to review these on a case-by-case basis.

Postsecondary Education

1. Can a Project Search WBLE count as an MSG: Secondary or Postsecondary Transcript/Report Card for a participant pursuing a postsecondary credential?
 - a. If the student/participant is engaged in a Project Search WBLE that results in passing grades or earned credits toward the postsecondary education training program (e.g., an undergraduate degree), then this may count as an MSG for the postsecondary transcript/report card. The Project Search WBLE grades or credits would need to be reflected on the transcript. It would not be acceptable for a Project Search progress note to be used as supporting documentation for this type of MSG at the postsecondary level.

MSG: Satisfactory or Better Progress Towards Established Milestones

1. Can a Project Search WBLE count as an MSG: Satisfactory or Better Progress Towards Established Milestones?
 - a. If a student/participant is engaged in a Project Search WBLE, as a VR service intended to help the student reach his or her Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) goal, then VR agencies may report this type of MSG. For example, a student's IPE goal is listed as a hospital patient transporter and the student is engaged in a Project Search WBLE to train in this employment setting. Because this student is engaged in this training to learn the skills necessary for this specific employment (similar to an On-the-Job-Training (OJT)) and the substantive skills gained are verified by the employer (e.g., through Project Search progress reports), this would be sufficient documentation as an MSG: Satisfactory or Better Progress Towards Established Milestones.

- b. If a student is engaged in a Project Search WBLE to learn basic work skills or experience a variety of employment settings and the WBLE is not directly related to the IPE goal, then this would not count toward an MSG: Satisfactory or Better Progress Towards Established Milestones. In other words, the WBLE must provide industry/occupational training required for the IPE goal.
- c. VR agencies should have written policies and procedures for documenting substantive skills gained during Project Search WBLEs that are necessary to support the student/participant in reaching the IPE job goal, as well as when and how to document this in the case file.

RSA-911 Reporting of Student/Participant MSGs

Similar to all services reported in the RSA-911, a recognized education or training program needs to be included on the IPE in order to document the credential attainment and MSG. This includes both secondary (e.g., secondary school diploma, recognized equivalent) and postsecondary. This will show that the student/participant and VR agency are working together to complete secondary education.

- 1. To ensure accuracy in student/participant MSGs and inclusion in performance data, the following Data Elements (DE) and reporting conditions need to be met:
 - a. Participants are individuals whose service records meet the following conditions:
 - i. DE 7: Date of Application is not blank;
 - ii. DE 38: Date of Eligibility Determination is not blank;
 - iii. DE 48: Date of Most Recent IPE or Amendment is not blank;
 - iv. DE 127: Start Date of Initial VR Service on or after IPE is not blank; and
 - v. DE 353: Date of Exit is blank.
 - vi. All participants MUST be reported on each quarterly RSA-911 submission, regardless of whether or not any information in their service record has changed.
 - b. For the student/participant to be included in the denominator for the MSG calculation, the VR agency must report the enrollment date in DE 85: Date Enrolled During Program Participation in an Education or Training Program Leading to a Recognized Postsecondary Credential or Employment.
 - c. Each MSG must be reported in the quarter that it was achieved, not when the VR agency received supporting documentation. MSGs must be documented using a specific DE and have supporting documentation to validate the data:

- i. [RSA-911 \(PD-16-04\)](#) – Current through June 30, 2020:
 - DE 343: Measurable Skill Gain: Educational Functional Level (EFL)
 - DE 344: Measurable Skill Gain: Secondary
 - DE 345: Measurable Skill Gain: Postsecondary Transcript/Report Card
 - DE 346: Measurable Skill Gain: Training Milestone
 - DE 347: Measurable Skill Gain: Skills Progression
- ii. [RSA-911 \(PD-19-03\)](#) – Effective July 1, 2020:
 - DE 343: Measurable Skill Gain: Educational Functional Level (EFL)
 - DE 344: Measurable Skill Gain: Secondary (e.g., secondary school diploma, recognized equivalent)
 - DE 345: Measurable Skill Gain: Secondary or Postsecondary Transcript/Report Card
 - DE 346: Measurable Skill Gain: Training Milestone
 - DE 347: Measurable Skill Gain: Skills Progression