

MOVING FORWARD

*News and information about the education of special
needs students for teachers and parents*

Spring 2014

TRANSITION II (THE SEQUEL)

In our last newsletter, we talked about transition terms, resources and the importance of teaching students to advocate for themselves. In this second feature, we will highlight motivation, the laws, hot jobs and transition assessments.

The term “transition” means to evolve or shift direction. Do you remember being in high school? Everything that you were accustomed to in your many years of being a student was soon to be ending. If you were like most young people, you were likely scared and confused about what path to take after graduation. This period of time is marked by the time-honored dilemma of being too young to be an adult and too old to be a child.

Getting through that difficult time is typically a struggle, but for children with special needs it can be downright overwhelming. Students with disabilities such as cognitive issues, speech problems, emotional barriers, or physical impairments, need genuine, unconditional sup-



port, both at home and at school. When appropriate, they need to understand how to compensate for their limitations, or find a job that does not highlight their particular area of weakness.

The first step in the process of planning for the transition is an interest and strengths assessment. The assessment is much more involved than “what do you want to do when you grow up?” Key questions help guide students and their families toward realistic employment options. For example: *“Is the amount of pay the most important outcome? Is traveling long distances a problem? What physical and mental skills are necessary to excel in this field?”* The answers to questions like these will provide constructive insights, and illuminate the path that will lead to success.

Transition planning is not really just about teaching students and their families to navigate the pitfalls of pursuing a job after high school. The primary goal is to **empower** them so that they are capable of charting their own course for the future.

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**Being yourself
is not remaining where you are,
or being satisfied with what you are.
It is the point of departure.**

Sydney J. Harris

SCHOOL-BASED TRANSITION TARGETS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS

Direct Instruction

- Social Skills
- Coping Skills and Bully Awareness
- Computer/Assistive Technology Skills
- Safety and Self-Defense
- Functional Academic Skills
- Independent Living Skills
- Community Engagement
- Accessibility Strategies
- Adaptive/Coping Strategies
- Money Skills and Basic Finance
- Conflict Mediation



Related Services

- Counseling Services
- Occupational/physical therapy services to improve/maintain motor skills
- Assistive Technology
- Job Coach
- Language/Speech services to improve communication

Community Experience

- Visit colleges, corporations or workshops
- Volunteering or job shadowing
- Navigating public transportation
- Community-based instruction to apply skills

Bridge to Community Resources

- Apply for college and disability support services
- Refer to Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- Apply for Medicaid Waiver EARLY
- Apply for Social Security work incentives/benefits
- Connect to any support services or agencies relevant to student needs

**WHERE YOUR TALENTS AND THE NEEDS OF THE WORLD CROSS,
THERE LIES YOUR VOCATION.** - Aristotle

10 Fastest GROWING Occupations



SOURCE: United States Department of Labor, January 8, 2014

EDUCATION REQUIREMENT: High School Diploma or Equivalent

PROJECTED NEW JOBS: Increase of 10,000-50,000 jobs between January 2012 and January 2022

AVERAGE SALARY: \$25,000-\$35,000

College isn't for everyone. Check out these minimal schooling, yet decent paying job options...

Billing Clerks

Fitness Instructors

Bus Drivers

Plumber, Electrician Assistants

Community Health Workers

Delivery Services

Customer Service Reps

Office Clerks/Receptionists

Loan Officers

Operators

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR STUDENT TRANSITION PLANS

- Are the goals measurable and appropriate for the student's age and skill level?
- Have one or more assessments been given to help create the transition goals?
- Are the results of each assessment summarized and easy to understand?
- Did the student play a key role in the development of the plan? (Parent input?)
- Does the plan take into account the individual strengths, interests and goals?
- Are the assessments current and do they measure what is needed to create an effective plan?
- Is there documentation of whether or not the student will seek a diploma or a certificate of completion?
- Is there evidence that outside agency representatives were invited to the transition IEP conference when appropriate?



Every artist was once an amateur. -Ralph Waldo Emerson



FREE Online Transition Assessments and Resources



Drive of Your Life Students answer a series of questions about themselves to figure out what careers interest them, and then go on a virtual drive to learn more about each of those careers—all in their own **customized car**.

Indiana Career Connect A place where youth and adults can find job openings, create a resume, explore a career, and research the job market in Indiana.

Transition: It's All About Me! A free, online transition curriculum to help students with disabilities prepare for life after high school.

JobTIPS This website is suitable for delivery by teachers, family members, mentors, and job coaches. It includes ideas for personal appearance, interactions with co-workers, and coping strategies.

Learn More Indiana Many engaging assessment tools and activities can be found here, including career interest inventories, the 4 steps to going to college and much more!

My Next Move Published by the Department of Labor, this is an online career exploration curriculum designed to give students a chance to search by key words, an industry, or by asking questions.

Planning for Your Transition from High School to Adult Life A workbook with activities for students to plan their lives after high school.

Indiana Transition Assessment Matrix This site allows you to explore assessments based on the a transition domain (Employment, Education/Training, or Independent Living), the grade level, and the specific disability of the student. Once you have chosen these three areas, press the **Show Transition Assessments** button, and the system will show you Transition Assessments that meet that specific criteria.

Going to College: A Resource for Teens with Disabilities An interactive site that prepares special needs students for college by exploring who they are. <http://www.going-to-college.org/>

MOTIVATION IS THE GREAT ENERGIZER

Did you ever try to have a meaningful conversation with a teenager about what he or she wants to do when they graduate from high school? Sometimes you get a blank stare, sometimes a grunt and sometimes, if you are lucky, you will get a surprisingly well thought out response.

Doing well in school is an important part of preparing for the future, yet keeping students engaged has never been harder. Teachers now compete with TV, video games, smart phones and computer screens, where there can be bells, whistles, explosions, and music. Children can create a webpage about themselves or meet peers from across the globe—all before lunch time. In comparison, the classroom may seem like a pretty dull, slow-paced place to be.

When you see a student rapidly lose interest in school, educators and parents have to work together to “hook them.” Depending on their interests, it could be sports, a club, the chess team or even just an after school social group. But if you really want to motivate a high school student, help them connect the dots.



The term “connect the dots” means that you may have to spell out the details of the path to their success. It’s like showing them a map that you see in a shopping mall. “**YOU ARE HERE**” and this is the direction that you want to go to get where you want to be. When visually broken down into small steps, the goal itself seems much less overwhelming.

When you find a student’s true passion in life, you will find the key to keeping them involved in school. Without a high school education, many quality jobs will be out of reach. Nothing energizes a young person more than the thought of being well rewarded for hard work, and the prospect of enjoying the comforts that independent living bestows.

When young people’s dreams start becoming a reality, they become much more engaged in the classroom. Their motivation not only increases because they begin to see the value of their education, but more importantly, they see the relevance.



Moving Forward

Written by Barb Butcher

Edited by Susan Quinn
School Psychologists

School City of Hammond

Dr. J. Watkins, Superintendent
Connie Manous, Special Education Director

School Board:

Deborah White
Anna Mamala
George T. Janiec
Cindy Murphy
Marilyn Jones

THE KEY DIFFERENCES IN HIGH SCHOOL VS. COLLEGE DISABILITY LAWS

- ◊ IDEA and Article 7 do not apply to postsecondary education. Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Title II and Section 504 of the Rehab Act of 1973 are the applicable laws, and emphasize **access** to programs and facilities.
- ◊ Students must initiate an educational evaluation, often at their own expense. **There are no IEPs.**
- ◊ Students have the sole responsibility of stepping forward and advocating for documented disability accommodations. **HOW** tests are given can be altered, but generally not the grading, the content or the format.
- ◊ Teachers are **not required** to modify the curriculum or the assignments.

Source: Indiana Protection and Advocacy Services Commission