



# FOCUS on Results

Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services

September 2008

Accountability

Assessment

Curriculum &amp; Instruction

Dispute Resolution

Early Childhood

IEPs &amp; IFSPs

Personnel

State &amp; Federal Policy

Transition

Other

This **FOCUS on Results** document serves as a quick reference guide for developing a quality and compliant transition Individualized Education Program (IEP) that focuses on the whole student. Transition requires a whole-student approach to planning with coordinated supports allowing students to develop and achieve their post-school goals and receive a quality education. A quality education prepares each student to meet adult challenges and engage in the community.

## Quick Reference Guide: Tips for Developing a Quality and Compliant Transition Individualized Education Program (IEP)

by Larry Stemple and Chuck Saur

A student who reaches age 16 is considered a transition-aged youth who is entitled to have transition-related needs assessed and addressed in his or her Individualized Education Program (IEP). The services and supports that help the student achieve his or her adult-life vision are collectively called transition services. The transition services provided by the school are generally considered the student's course(s) of study.

According to the Michigan Transition Services Association (MTSA) and the Michigan Transition Outcomes Project Core Planning Team (MI-TOP CPT), a quality education assists each student in developing a post-school vision and a pathway to obtain that vision. Effective planning and coordinated implementation are critical for successfully transitioning each student through school to adulthood. Effective transition IEPs include the following components:

- **Student Strengths**—Planning should be grounded in the student's strengths, needs, preferences, and interests.
- **Self-Advocacy**—Planning should empower every student and family

to develop goals for adult life and to develop a plan to get there.

- **High Expectations**—Planning should include designs that implement a school experience that ensures each student gains the skills and competencies needed to achieve his or her desired post-school goals and meets or exceeds the academic standards of the *Michigan Merit Curriculum* (MMC).
- **Supportive Relationships**—Planning should identify and facilitate the linkage for each student and family to needed post-school services, supports, or programs before the student exits school.

The shared challenge for all educators is to keep students engaged in meaningful, coordinated educational experiences so they will stay in school and be prepared for postsecondary education, employment, and independent living. This issue of *FOCUS on Results* serves as a quick reference guide for developing a quality and compliant transition IEP that focuses on the whole student. Transition requires a whole-student approach to planning with coordinated supports that allow students to develop and achieve their post-school goals and receive a quality



## State Board of Education

Kathleen N. Straus, *President*  
John C. Austin, *Vice President*  
Carolyn L. Curtin, *Secretary*  
Marianne Yared McGuire,  
*Treasurer*  
Nancy Danhof, *NASBE Delegate*  
Elizabeth W. Bauer  
Reginald M. Turner  
Casandra E. Ulbrich

### Ex-Officio

Jennifer M. Granholm,  
*Governor*  
Michael P. Flanagan,  
*Superintendent of  
Public Instruction*



*FOCUS on Results* is produced and distributed through an IDEA Mandated Activities Project for an Education Information Network, known as the Center for Educational Networking, awarded by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Education and no endorsement is inferred. This document is in the public domain and may be copied for further distribution when proper credit is given. For more information or inquiries about this project, contact the Michigan Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services, P.O. Box 30008, Lansing, MI 48909.



2007/08, Volume #6, Issue #3  
Packet #12, Article 2

education. A quality education prepares each student to meet adult challenges and engage in the community.

The following steps outline specific areas to consider when developing a student-focused transition IEP that is both meaningful and compliant.

## The Student Perspective

- Ensure that the IEP team meeting has value for students and families, and ensure that it is not centered around filling out forms. The transition-focused IEP should be aligned with the student's vision for post-school life.
- Propose to the IEP team members that an agenda be used to structure the meeting discussion to provide a means for relevant information to develop. IEP forms are used to assist in the development process and to document a student's IEP-specified supports.
- Be sure to invite, with consent, any outside agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services.

## The Agenda

When planning a meeting, begin with a clearly defined agenda. The following are examples of some questions the student can address with guidance and support from the IEP team.

1. What is my vision for my life when I am done with school?
  - Where/how am I going to live?
  - What job or career am I going to have?
  - How will I become part of the community?
  - Will I need additional school or training?
  - What are the specific requirements to achieve my postsecondary goals?
2. Where am I now relative to my vision of my life after I leave school?
  - How are my current academic skills?
  - How are my functional (including vocational) skills?

- Do I have and use the accommodations I need?
- Have the accommodations from my previous IEP been helpful?
- How can I make my vision of postsecondary life clearer?

### 3. How will I achieve my postsecondary vision?

- What do I need to learn to reach my vision?
- What course(s) of study should I take in school that will move me closer to my vision? Where can I learn about this?
- What credits do I need?
- Will I need a diploma to achieve my vision?
- What skills do I need to reach my vision, according to the assessment I've taken?
- Are my course(s) of study [school classes/programs listed in my Educational Development Plan (EDP)] aligned with my vision of my postsecondary life?

- What other (i.e., transition) services will help me reach my vision? Am I connected with people/agencies who can help me reach my vision?
- Has the point when I will be ready to leave school been identified?

### 4. What will I learn this year that will move me toward my vision?

- Is my EDP up to date and reflective of what I need this year?
- What are my annual goals/objectives, and will they help me reach my vision?

## Developing a Vision for Post-School Life

Helping a student to develop a vision for post-school life is the first step toward understanding the interests and preferences of the student. Using an IEP agenda can assist the team in supporting and guiding the student in the most appropriate direction. The intent is to assist the student in achieving stability in his or her chosen direction, rather than

specifying many unrelated details. When assisting the student in developing long-range interests and preferences for discussion and documentation, it is helpful to focus on these four areas:

- Adult living/daily living skills.
- Career.
- Community involvement.
- Postsecondary education/training.

Remember to consider the areas that particularly capture the student's attention when thinking about future-oriented activities. The student's preferences should be narrowed from a wide range of choices to a specific few. The postsecondary vision is a starting point for determining the student's present level of functioning and developing IEP specified supports.

Talk to the student about the agenda questions prior to the IEP team meeting, using career development activities such as an EDP, academic records, exploration, and transition assessment [such as the Enderle-Severson Transition Rating (ESTR) or similar], and continue to update the information that will be valuable for developing a quality postsecondary IEP.

## Writing Present Level Statements

The starting point for the development of the IEP is called the Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP). The PLAAFP should consider academic achievement and the transition areas in the assessment of the student's performance. Be sure that the present level identifies where the student is functioning as it relates to where he or she wants to go (as identified in the student's post-school vision).

Transition assessment, whether formal or informal, should be an ongoing process of gathering and using information about the student in the four basic transition areas—adult/daily living, career, community, and postsecondary education/training (see boxed item on page 7). This information can help with identifying such things as the student's vision, course of study, annual goals, school services, programs,

accommodations, transition activities, and services.

Remember that a "don't know," an inability to communicate his or her vision, or a seeming misalignment with the student's capabilities are all okay. These situations should trigger exploratory activities designed to assist the student in developing and/or refining his or her vision. Appropriate assessments can assist in gathering the information needed to help determine the student's readiness to develop and achieve his or her vision.

## Points to Consider in PLAAFP Development

- Start with the student's vision. Use relevant information in the EDP, person-centered planning, and any other documents that might help determine the picture of post-school life.
- Address current functioning in the area of difficulty using current assessment data, observation, and classroom performance data.
- Identify academic/educational needs and all relevant strengths (include student's course of study, participation in the MMC with a diploma, or if the student will work toward goal completion).
- Describe performance in areas of education that are affected by the disability.
- Use data to support the need for supplementary aids/services.
- Address functional performance and areas of need using transition assessment data.
- Accurately describe performance in areas affected, including academic and non-academic.
- Establish a direct relationship between evaluation information and PLAAFP statements.
- Use objective terms that are measurable, to the extent possible.
- Where scores are used, ensure they are self-explanatory or an explanation is included.



The Center for Educational Networking (CEN) is a statewide education information network that produces and disseminates publications and documents related to the education of students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).

**Larry Stemple is a Special Education Consultant for Wayne RESA. Contact him at 33500 Van Born Rd., Wayne, MI 48184, (734) 334-1541 or [stempll@resa.net](mailto:stempll@resa.net).**

**Chuck Saur is the Co-Director for Secondary Redesign and Transition at the Michigan Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services. Contact him at (517) 373-7062 or [saurc@michigan.gov](mailto:saurc@michigan.gov).**



2007/08, Volume #6, Issue #3  
Packet #12, Article 2

## Key Points About Transition and IDEA 2004

The following list of transition planning requirements is based on the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) of 2004. The specific section reference numbers of the law are provided.

1. Transition services are designed to be within a results-oriented process that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities. (602)
2. To the extent appropriate, with the consent of the parents or a child who has reached the age of majority, in implementing the requirements of paragraph (b)(1) [meaning the transition participants of the team] of this section, the public agency must invite a representative of any participating agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services. §300.321(b)(3) IEP Team.
3. The transition process is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests. (602)
4. It includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives. In some cases, it also includes the acquisition of daily living skills and a functional vocational evaluation. (602)
5. For a child whose eligibility for school is ending due to graduation or age, a local education agency (LEA) shall provide the child with a summary of the child's academic achievement and functional performance, which shall include recommendations on how to assist the child in meeting the child's postsecondary goals. This is known as a summary of performance. (614)
6. Transition planning should begin not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child is 16, and updated annually thereafter. (614)
7. There should be appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills. (614)
8. There should be a description of the transition services (including courses of study) needed to assist the child in reaching those goals. (614)
9. Also, beginning not later than one year before the child reaches the age of majority under state law, a statement that the child has been informed of the child's rights under this title, if any, that will transfer to the child on reaching the age of majority under section 615(m). (614)
10. There should be a statement of measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals, designed to (614):
  - (aa) meet the child's needs that result from the child's disability to enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum; and
  - (bb) meet each of the child's other educational needs that result from the child's disability.

**(continued on page 5)**



## Strengths, Concerns, and Considerations

Consider the student's potential, and any areas of concern, where additional supports might be needed.

- Health.
- Motor skills.
- Assistive device needs.
- Specific accommodations and modifications.
- Inclusion in the least restrictive environment (LRE).
- Recreation and leisure interests.
- Community participation.
- Career and employment interests.
- Work experience.
- Postsecondary training or learning.
- Critical thinking/problem solving.
- Communication.
- Social or emotional strengths and weaknesses.
- Academic proficiency.
- Development of adult living skills.
- Mobility concerns.

## Key Points About Transition and IDEA 2004

*(continued from page 4)*

11. In addition, there should be a description of how the child's progress toward meeting the annual goals will be measured and when periodic reports on the progress the child is making toward meeting the annual goals (such as through the use of quarterly or other periodic reports, concurrent with the issuance of report card) will be provided. (614)
12. Under Section 616 of IDEA 2004, all states are directed to develop a State Performance Plan (SPP) (Section 616 of IDEA 2004) to evaluate the state's efforts to implement the requirements and purposes of IDEA priorities and describe how the state will improve such implementation. Michigan has developed a plan that includes 20 indicators in this process. Four of the indicators are of great importance for improving transition planning and subsequent post-school outcomes for students.
  - **Indicator 1:** Percent of youth with IEPs graduating from high school with a regular diploma compared to percent of all youth in the state graduating with a regular diploma.
  - **Indicator 2:** Percent of youth with IEPs dropping out of high school compared to the percent of all youth in the state dropping out of high school.
  - **Indicator 13:** Percent of youth aged 16 and above with an IEP that includes coordinated, measurable, annual IEP goals, and transition services that will reasonably enable the student to meet the postsecondary goals.
  - **Indicator 14:** Percent of youth who had IEPs who are no longer in secondary school and who have been competitively employed and/or enrolled in some type of postsecondary school within one year of leaving high school.

*Source:*

*The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act: A Comparison of P.L. 105-17 (IDEA '97) to H.R. 1350 as passed by Congress on November 19, 2004. Published by the National Association of State Directors of Special Education, Inc. November 2004. [www.nasdse.org](http://www.nasdse.org).*



2007/08, Volume #6, Issue #3  
Packet #12, Article 2



## Tools for Assessing Areas of Current Function

- Criterion-referenced test (measured against defined and objective criteria).
- Standardized achievement test.
- Curriculum-based assessment.
- Diagnostic test.
- Outside evaluator results.
- Transition assessment (formal or informal).
- Medical/health information.
- Behavior intervention plan results.
- Most recent state- or district-wide assessment results.
- Grades and comments from report cards.
- Progress reports on previous goals and objectives.
- General curriculum progress.
- Classroom performance.
- Systematic observations of student behavior.
- Attendance records.
- Disciplinary records.

## Sample Strength Statements

- Demonstrates organization in work behavior.
- Completes tasks within allotted time.
- Initiates interaction with adults and peers.
- Takes part in extra-curricular activities.
- Communicates personal information.
- Understands bank accounts.
- Demonstrates good attendance.
- Understands factors that influence job retention, dismissal, and promotion.

- Responds appropriately to authority figures.
- Responds to verbal correction.
- Adapts to change in routine or schedule.
- Makes effort to do his or her best.

## Sample Concern Statements

- Has difficulty adjusting to changes in routine.
- Struggles with making appropriate decisions regarding work-related tasks.
- Does not initiate involvement in recreation/leisure activities.
- Unable to complete job application form independently.
- Does not maintain appropriate work habits when supervisor is not present.
- Negatively responds to verbal correction.
- Exhibits difficulty with fine motor skills.
- Needs to learn how to access community resources.
- Needs to improve understanding of community signs.

## Sample Portions of PLAAFP Statements

- *Based on the ESTR-J and teacher observations, Sally is able to deposit and withdraw money from the bank. She does not participate in the following money management tasks: managing checkbook/savings account, paying bills on time, making large purchases, or performing simple budgeting. This impacts her ability to independently manage her money and pay her monthly bills, which could also lead to bouncing checks and an insufficient bank account.*
- *Based on the ESTR-J, Joe has exhibited excellent attendance and demonstrates skills related to school citizenship. Joe lacks the knowledge to access various resources for assistance with job searches. He does not understand the factors that influence job retention, dismissal, and*



*promotion. He needs to improve the quality of filling out job application forms. This impacts his ability to attain and maintain a job within his interest level.*

### **PLAAFP Checklist**

- Does the PLAAFP address all areas affected by the student's disability?
- Is the PLAAFP stated in terms that are understandable, specific, measurable, and objective?
- Does the PLAAFP describe current academic and functional performance?
- Have transition assessment results been included (information found in the EDP can be used but should not be stapled to the IEP)?
- Does the PLAAFP describe how the student's disability affects his or her performance in the general curriculum?
- Are the present levels understandable, so that goals, services, assessments, LRE, etc. may easily be developed?

- Does the PLAAFP provide a "snapshot" of the student?
- Does the PLAAFP provide baseline information for each need?
- Does the PLAAFP use information from a variety of sources in a comprehensive statement?
- Would anyone be able to begin instruction or intervention?

### **Determining Student's Course of Study, Transition Activities, and Services**

After identifying a need area in the PLAAFP, there needs to be a distinction between a learning related need (typically met within the student's course of study) or a planning/ community service/activity-related need. To make a decision about the type of support the student is provided, use the following decision steps:

- A. Is the need identified in the PLAAFP a learning-related need? If "yes," is the need covered in the student's general or special education studies? Are

## **What are the types of Transition Assessment?**

**Transition assessments can be formal or informal.**

**Formal assessment** typically involves using a standardized procedure for administering, scoring, and interpreting an assessment. By clearly defining how an assessment is administered and scored, this allows a student's score to be interpreted relative to other students (i.e., norms), although not all standardized assessments are norm-referenced.

**Informal assessment** procedures are less structured and do not allow comparison with other students. However, because informal procedures allow assessment of student performance over time, they are useful in designing and evaluating the effects of instructional interventions. In addition, informal assessment includes data to be collected from a variety of individuals (e.g., parents, teachers, employers) using a variety of non-standardized methods.

*Source: National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center, [www.nsttac.org/?FileName=dcdt\\_factsheet](http://www.nsttac.org/?FileName=dcdt_factsheet)*



## **FOCUS on Results** Is Available Online

Now you can save time, and help Michigan save money, by reading *FOCUS on Results*—and all Center for Educational Networking (CEN) publications—in electronic format.

If you have access to the Web and would like to receive email updates when new issues of *FOCUS on Results* are available, send a request to [info@cenmi.org](mailto:info@cenmi.org) or visit [www.cenmi.org](http://www.cenmi.org) and click on "Services" then "Subscribe to Publications."

Visit [www.cenmi.org](http://www.cenmi.org) often and learn about news and events of interest to the special education community.



there supports needed by the student to ensure achievement?

Document "yes" answers for a learning need or support in the IEP using a goals page, within supplementary aids and supports or in a related services areas page (follow procedures for writing goals, etc.).

- B. Is the need identified in the PLAAFP a planning/community service or activity-related need?

If "yes," document the needed activity or service in the transition service/activity section of the IEP form. Be sure that any student-initiated activity is adequately supported and monitored. IDEA requires any agency likely to provide or pay for transition services to be invited to the IEP team meeting. If they do not attend, the school must take steps to provide information on that option for services.

## **Suggestions for Preparing to Transition From School to Work and/or Independent Living**

### **Getting Ready for Employment**

- Compile a job application form with references without assistance.
- Complete or update the EDP and related career-development activities.
- Conduct two practice interviews based on what you know about potential employers and listen to the constructive criticism.
- Prepare a resume and cover letter using a software program.
- Learn necessary Internet job searching skills to access Internet listed jobs, career information, and specific labor market information.

### **Daily Living Skills**

- Create a monthly expense sheet and a budget.
- Take an advanced cooking class to learn the importance of nutrition and to practice food preparation skills.
- Prepare nutritional meals at home.

### **Employment**

- Job shadow.
- Continue part-time work (after school, weekends) and identify a full-time position for the summer.

### **Academic Pursuit**

- Follow the general education curriculum (MMC) and earn credits toward graduation. Access special support for transition related issues.
- Take courses to learn a skilled trade after graduation from high school.

### **Community**

- Visit community agencies to develop an understanding of the location of services and their functions.
- Encourage families to support student participation in the community.
- Seek and identify three extra-curricular activities in which to participate at school or within the community. Participate in at least one of the identified activities.

### **Bring It All Together**

For graduating students or students reaching age 26:

- Ensure the student has a current IEP until graduation date.
- Schedule an exit interview with the student and review his or her Summary of Performance (SOP) form.
- During the exit interview, gather contact information for State Performance Plan (SPP) Indicator 14 purposes. See Figure 1 on page 9 for a suggested format.

### **IEP Checklist**

The following list, when completed, will help ensure you are creating a transition IEP and meeting compliance requirements.

- Prior to the IEP meeting, consent is obtained from the parents or the student who has reached the age of majority, to invite any participating





- agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services.
- Post-school vision is identified and documented.
- The student's course of study has been identified as it relates to his or her post-school vision.
- Transition assessment results are included.
- Student strengths are identified and documented.
- Student interests are identified (activities/areas in which the student shows an interest).
- Student preferences are identified (what the student would choose).
- Student needs are identified (learning and/or supports that the student requires to be successful in the general education curriculum and achieving postsecondary goals).
- Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (baseline data from age appropriate assessments related to training, education, employment, and, if appropriate, independent living skills).
- Documentation that the student's vision of where he or she wants to go

**Figure 1**

**Student Post-School Contact Form**

**Student Name:**

**Date:**

During the next year, you may receive a short survey in the mail. This survey is a part of our effort to assess how well you were prepared for your post-school life. Since your address may be different than where you currently live, we would like to keep two contacts in your file. Please list people who will know where you may be living in a year and may be able to forward the survey to you. Please fill out the following form, and return it to your teacher. Thank you for your help.

**Contact #1**

Name: Relationship to You:

Street Address:

City: State: Zip:

Phone: Email:

**Contact #2**

Name: Relationship to You:

Street Address:

City: State: Zip:

Phone: Email:

**Keep a copy of this form in the student file.**

**Statement of Compliance with Federal Law**

The Michigan Department of Education complies with all Federal laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination and with all requirements and regulations of the U.S. Department of Education.

**Compliance with Title IX**

What Title IX is: Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is the landmark federal law that bans sex discrimination in schools, whether it is in curricular, extra-curricular or athletic activities.

Title IX states: "No person in the U.S. shall, on the basis of sex be excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal aid."

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) is in compliance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, 20 U.S.C. 1681 et seq. (Title IX), and its implementing regulation, at 34 C.F.R. Part 106, which prohibits discrimination based on sex. The MDE, as a recipient of federal financial assistance from the United States Department of Education (USD OE), is subject to the provisions of Title IX. MDE does not discriminate based on gender in employment or in any educational program or activity that it operates.

The designated individual at the Michigan Department of Education for inquiries and complaints regarding Title IX is:

Roberta E. Stanley, Director, Office of Administrative Law and Federal Relations, Michigan Department of Education, Hannah Building, 608 West Allegan, P.O. Box 30008, Lansing, Michigan 48909, Phone: (517) 335-0436, Email: stanleyr@michigan.gov.



is aligned with assessments, PLAAFP, goals, course of study, transition activities, and services.

- Student annual goals are measurable and are related to training, education, employment, or daily living. Annual goal(s) support the student's eventual attainment of his or her postsecondary vision (e.g., a reading goal that will eventually allow the student to be able to read a technical manual).
- Anticipated graduation or exit date is specified.
- The IEP is conducted on an annual basis.
- The student's age of majority is considered and documented.
- Description of how the student's progress toward annual goals will be measured and when periodic reports on annual goal progress will be provided.
- The IEP invitation to parents is attached to the student's IEP.
- All goal pages are attached to the student's IEP.

## RESOURCES

### Michigan Transition Resources

[www.cenmi.org/tspmi](http://www.cenmi.org/tspmi)

### Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)

[www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep/index.html](http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/osep/index.html)

### Michigan Transition Services Association

[www.michigantsa.com](http://www.michigantsa.com)

### National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC)

[www.nsttac.org](http://www.nsttac.org)

## Michigan Education Web Sites

### Michigan Department of Education

[www.michigan.gov/mde](http://www.michigan.gov/mde)

### Michigan Department of Education (MDE)

### Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services (OSE/EIS)

[www.michigan.gov/ose-eis](http://www.michigan.gov/ose-eis)

### Center for Educational Networking (CEN)

[www.cenmi.org](http://www.cenmi.org)

This document was printed 17,500 times at a per piece cost of \$0.153 cents.

If you need assistance making this publication accessible for a person with a visual impairment, please contact the Center for Educational Networking (CEN) at (800) 593-9146.

Download copies of *FOCUS on Results* at [www.cenmi.org/Products.asp](http://www.cenmi.org/Products.asp).

For more information or inquiries about this document, contact the Center for Educational Networking, Eaton Intermediate School District, 1790 E. Packard Hwy., Charlotte, MI 48813.



2007/08, Volume #6, Issue #3  
Packet #12, Article 2