

Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services

Secondary Transition Services: Planning, Documentation, and Implementation

The reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 ensures that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education (FAPE) that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment and independent living [20 USC §1400 (d)(1)(A); 34 CFR §300.1(a)]. Developing and executing a meaningful transition plan is required to ensure that students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are prepared for post-high school challenges they will encounter.

Transition planning for a student with a disability requires the development of a coordinated set of activities:

1. Designed to be within a results oriented process which focuses on improving the student's academic and functional achievement, and thereby facilitating student's movement from school to post-school activities. These activities may include postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation; and
2. Based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's strengths, preferences, and interests. A transition plan will address instruction, related services, community experience, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives. Where appropriate, the plan will include acquisition of daily living skills and provision of a functional vocational evaluation.

Transition services for students with disabilities may be special education, if provided as specially designed instruction, or a related service, if required to assist a student with a disability to benefit from special education.

[20 USC §1401(34); 34 C.F.R. §300.43; COMAR 13A.05.01.03B(80)]

1. When does transition planning begin for students with disabilities?

A student's IEP must include transition services beginning no later than the first IEP to be in effect when a student turns 14 years old. The IEP should include transition services for students younger than 14, if appropriate. The transition plan must be updated annually, consistent with Education Article, §21-305, Annotated Code of Maryland. The student's IEP shall include a Transition Plan which contains:

- i. Transition services, including course of study needed to assist the student reach those goals;
- ii. Appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based on age-appropriate transition assessments related, as appropriate, to training, education, employment, and independent living; and
- iii. A statement of needed transition services the student needs before the student leaves the secondary school setting, including, where appropriate, a statement of the public agency's responsibilities or linkages, and the participating agency's responsibilities or linkages, or both, setting.

[Education Article §21-305, Annotated Code of Maryland; COMAR 13A.05.01.09A(3)(a)]

2. Who should be invited to the IEP team meeting if a purpose of the meeting will be the consideration of the postsecondary goals and the transition services needed to assist the student in reaching those goals?

The school must invite local school system personnel and the parents. In addition, the school must:

- Invite the student. If the student does not attend the IEP team meeting, the school must take other steps to ensure that the student's preferences and interests are considered. The student should be encouraged to participate in the IEP meeting and the local school should make provisions and accommodations for the student to provide input during the meeting at which point postsecondary goals and transition services are discussed.
- When the student is age 16 and with the consent of the parents, or with the consent of a student who has reached the age of majority, invite a representative of any participating agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services. Each time local school system/public agency (LSS/PA) personnel want to invite an agency representative to a student's IEP team meeting, the LSS/PA must seek and receive consent prior to inviting such a representative.

These consents must be obtained before each meeting, as confidential information about the child is always shared. Furthermore, being as the discussions held at each meeting are not the same each may require different or additional participants. An invitation to the representative of the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE), Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) can be sent without obtaining consent.

[34 CFR §300.321(b); COMAR 13A.05.01.07A(3-5)]

3. What is a measurable postsecondary goal?

A measurable postsecondary goal is an *outcome* that occurs *after* the person has left high school. It is not a process that occurs after a student leaves school. It is measurable if it is stated in a manner that can be counted as occurring or not occurring. Statements that indicate what a student “*will*” do indicate measurable postsecondary goals. Statements that indicate that a student “*plans to*” or “*hopes to*” or “*will investigate*” **do not** indicate measurable postsecondary goals.

Examples:

Employment

- Student will be employed in the field of health care.
- Student will be employed in the retail field with support.

Education or Training

- Student will attend college to complete a course of study that prepares her for employment in the field of health care.
- Student will participate in a supported employment training program.

Independent Living

- Student will continue to live at home while participating in a travel training program provided by (name of agency).

Non-Examples:

Employment

- Student plans to enter employment in the field of health care.
- Student hopes to be employed in the retail field with support after exiting school.

Education or Training

- Student will apply to college and plans to major in health care.
- Student would like to be in a supported employment training program after she leaves school.

Independent Living

- Student would like to learn how to use public transportation.

4. When a measurable postsecondary goal occurs after the student has left public school, is the school liable if the student does not meet the stated goals?

No. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 **DOES NOT** hold LSSs/PAs accountable for the student’s attainment of postsecondary goals. The stated measurable postsecondary goals are required components of transition planning. There are numerous mediating factors that positively or negatively affect an adult’s acquisition of goals for which a school could not be held accountable. The purpose of the legislation is that a student’s education program supports their desired goals for education/training, employment, and independent living, if appropriate, beyond secondary school. For more information, visit the National Secondary

Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC) website. NSTTAC is funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). NSTTAC provided technical assistance on the IDEA 2004 requirement pertaining to transition planning and documentation. The website address is www.nsttac.org

5. What are transition services and activities?

“Transition services” are a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability that are:

- Designed to be within a results oriented process, focusing on improving the academic and functional achievement to facilitate the student’s movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation; and
- Based on the individual student’s needs, taking into account the student’s strengths, preferences, and interests, and may include but is not limited to:
 - (i) Instruction;
 - (ii) Related Services;
 - (iii) Community experience;
 - (iv) Travel training
 - (v) The development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives;
 - (vi) If appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and provision of a functional vocational evaluation.

6. Should a student have separate annual transition goals?

No. Each annual goal is to address the student’s unique needs that require specialized instruction and related services in order to enable the student to attain his/her identified education/training, employment, and if appropriate, independent living postsecondary goals/outcomes.

7. Where is transition addressed in a student’s IEP?

Within the Maryland Statewide IEP form and format, the components of Secondary Transition are located in Section II – Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (age-appropriate transition assessment), pages 5-6, Section III – Special Considerations and Accommodations, pages 18-20, Section IV – Goals, page 21, and Section V – Services, pages 22-24. The considerations to be addressed include the following:

Page 5-6

- Age-appropriate transition assessment(s). Reference should be made to these pages for assessment scores that are needed as part of a transition assessment.

Page 18

- Student preferences and interests
- Date of student interview
- Postsecondary Goals (Outcomes) – Annually, there is a required minimum of two post secondary goals. One of the two goals must address training or education and the second

- goal must address employment.
- Course of Study
- Projected Date of Exit
- Projected Category of Exit
- Agency Linkages/Referral
- Transfer of Rights, as applicable

Page 19

- Transition Services/Activities – A coordinated set of activities that is designed to facilitate the student’s movement from school to post-secondary activities to address, as appropriate: academic; employment training; activities of daily living; independent living; and transportation.

Page 20

- Anticipated Services for Transition – Services the IEP team anticipates that the student will need within one year of exiting school.

Page 21

- IEP Goal(s) for the special education and/or related services to address the student’s needs, that focus on improving academic and functional achievement that is linked to the student’s desired postsecondary goals (outcomes) and course of study.

Pages 22 – 24

- Special Education Services (Page 22)
- Related Services (Page 23)
- Career and Technology Services (Page 24)

The Maryland Statewide IEP Process Guide includes extensive information on what data is to be included for each field within the Statewide IEP regarding secondary transition.

8. When are students linked to participating agencies for the purpose of determining eligibility?

The initial linkage is done by providing the student and parent with a copy of the “Transition Planning Guide”. This guide is to be provided at each IEP team meeting where Transition is discussed. The parent and student are asked to sign for their receipt of the Guide (page 24). The receipt must be filed in the student’s special education folder.

Students should be linked to the appropriate agency or program of individual student choice, taking into account individual preferences, circumstances, and IEP transition goals, as well as the agency’s referral protocols.

The Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) requests that students be referred to that agency during the spring of the school year prior to the student’s last year in school. The referral may be made at some other time based on local interagency agreement.

- The Developmental Disabilities Administration requests that students be referred to that agency during the school year in which the student turns 14 years of age. This is for the

purpose of determining eligibility for the Governor's Transition Initiative.

- The Mental Hygiene Administration requests that students be referred to that agency prior to the student exiting school.

9. What must be included within a student's IEP for compliance purposes?

Each student's IEP, beginning at age 14 and annually thereafter, must include documentation of the following:

- Appropriate measurable postsecondary goals in employment, education/training, and independent living, if appropriate;
- Evidence of age-appropriate transition assessment. Evidence must include testing scores and summary of recommendations;
- Transition services;
- Courses of study, that will reasonably enable the student to meet those postsecondary goals; and
- Annual IEP goals related to the student's transition services needs.
- There also must be evidence that:
 - The student was invited to the IEP Team meeting where transition services are to be discussed;
 - The parent, or the student who has reached the age of majority, provided consent to invite a representative of any participating agency, if appropriate, and was invited to the IEP team meeting; and
 - The representative of any participating agency was invited to the IEP team meeting following receipt of consent to invite.

[20 USC §1416(a)(3)(B)]

10. Where may students, parents, and school personnel find additional technical assistance related to secondary transition?

The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has funded the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC) to provide assistance in the area of transition planning. The website address for NSTTAC is www.nsttac.org

For more information, call 410-767-0858

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