Secondary Transition 101: What Families Need to Know

Transition From School to Adult Life
The Arc of Massachusetts
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Disability exists only in the gap between the individual’s personal competence and the demands of the environment.

If we can close that gap, disability becomes irrelevant.

-- Dr. Michael Wehmeyer, University of Kansas
What is Secondary Transition?

a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that is 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, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation.

-- IDEA 2004: 34 CFR 300.43, Transition Services
Today’s Handouts

- PowerPoint
- IDEA Regulations Handout
- MA Student-Driven Secondary Transition Model
- MA Definition of College and Career Readiness and Civic Preparation
- Components of Self-Determination
- Transition Planning Form
- Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2013-1: Postsecondary Goals and Annual IEP Goals in the Transition Planning Process
- Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2014-4: Transition Assessment in the Secondary Transition Planning Process
- Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2016-2: Promoting Student Self-Determination to Improve Student Outcomes
- Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2017-1: Characteristics of High Quality Secondary Transition Services
- Arc Timeline
Why Secondary Transition?
Massachusetts State Goal

To prepare all students for success after high school

SUCCESS AFTER HIGH SCHOOL
Purposes of IDEA

...to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free and appropriate public education 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)
College and Career Readiness and Civic Preparation Definition

Some attributes of personal, social, workplace readiness:

- Ability to direct and evaluate one’s own learning
- Be aware of and have the confidence to access resources to support learning in multiple contexts
- Ability to interact with co-workers, individually and in teams
- Motivation and initiative-taking
- Flexibility
- Discipline
- Self advocacy
- Responsibility

http://www.doe.mass.edu/ccr/definition.pdf

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
What is Self-Determination?

★ “a combination of skills, knowledge, and beliefs that enable a person to engage in goal-directed, self-regulated, autonomous behavior. As such, self-determination includes an understanding of one's strengths and limitations, together with a belief of oneself as capable and effective.”

★ Students who are self-determined are “causal agents in their own lives.”

- Field, Martin, Miller, Ward, & Wehmeyer
Dignity of Risk

★ A person who is self-determined is one who has been afforded the respect that accompanies personhood, including the right to try and fail.

★ Without the opportunity to experience both the positive and negative consequences of their decisions, young people have difficulty understanding the connection between their choices and the full range of possible outcomes.

★ Learning to say “no” and having the expectation that “no” will be respected is an important leadership and safety skill.
An All-Student Perspective

★ What experiences would a student without disabilities be expected to have?

★ These set the standard for the kinds of experiences that students with disabilities can have, with greater or lesser levels of support, based on each student’s individual needs, strengths, interests, and preferences.
Families play a powerful role in their children’s education!
Families Can Provide Experiences and Make Community Connections

- Families live in the community, whereas teachers may not. Explore the community and to pay attention to what sparks your children’s interest. It’s okay to try and fail, and try again.

- Employment opportunities can arise when you get to know businesses on Main Street.

- Experiences can be free: empty the dishwasher, cook dinner, help set up a neighbor’s party, volunteer at the Food Pantry or community garden, walk dogs, etc.

- You can promote your child’s skill development in different environments, with different people beyond your family circle.
Everyone experiences transitions from one stage of life to the next; this is part of being alive. Parents want their children to have this normal experience. With every transition, something is ending and there is excitement and fear about what is beginning.

Even when students and families desire changes, they can still experience stress. This stress is also part of transition. Students and families need to become knowledgeable about the many factors which contribute to a successful entry and adjustment to adult life.
State Requirement: By Age 14

★ Student is invited to the IEP meeting as a full member of the Team.

★ Beginning at age 14, and continuing annually, the Team considers:
  ★ student’s needs, strengths, preferences, interests
  ★ student’s desired outcomes for post-secondary education/training, employment, and adult living.

www.doe.mass.edu/sped/28MR/28m9.pdf

Start early!
By age 14 & older: Developmental Suggestions

★ Can your child describe:
  ★ his/her strengths?
  ★ his/her learning style?
  ★ how his/her disability affects his/her learning, social experiences, and community participation?
  ★ his/her vision for the future?

★ What can your child do independently? Does your child know how to make and keep friends? Can your child get themselves ready for the day? Can your child be flexible with changes in routine?

★ Has your child received instruction and/or engaged in role play to enable him/her to actively participate in/lead the IEP meeting?
Vision is Essential

Experience has taught me that you cannot value dreams according to the odds of their coming true. Their real value is in stirring within us the will to aspire.

-- U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor
The Transition Planning Form (TPF)

- **Flexible brainstorming tool**
- **Guides and documents** the team’s Transition planning discussion.
- Informs IEP development
- Provides an action plan to be implemented by student, family, community members, whole school, adult agencies, etc.
- A state-mandated form that must be maintained with the IEP but is not part of the IEP. *Nothing on the TPF is mandated to occur.*
Student Vision = Postsecondary Goals

★ Postsecondary Goals = goals that a student hopes to achieve after leaving secondary school (i.e., high school).

★ A truly individualized process uses postsecondary goals as the foundation for the development of the IEP.

How Many? What Kind?

Each student's TPF and IEP vision statement should **explicitly** include at least*:

1. One measurable postsecondary goal in the area of **education/training**;
2. One measurable postsecondary goal in the area of **employment**;
3. If appropriate, one measurable postsecondary goal in the area of **independent living**.

*34 CFR 300.320(b)(1)
What if my child has no idea what s/he wants to do?

★ Young people may not have a clear vision of their future. Start the conversation. Provide experiences over time which can help your child discern what he/she wants.

★ Have conversations at home and in the community about your child’s dreams, strengths, interests, and challenges.

★ You and your educator-partners can talk with your child about vision in many contexts, over time. Avoid introducing the vision discussion at the IEP table, when your child may feel overwhelmed.

★ All young people can communicate. Ensure that your child’s expressed preferences and interests are explored and incorporated into the vision.
The Vision Conversation: Portfolio Development

★ A 3-ring binder with magazine pictures, resumes, letters – or online/electronic
★ Have student gather information/images/videos/sounds of meaningful things in his/her life:
  ★ Movies, music
  ★ Sports/sports figures
  ★ Places you live or visit
★ Experiences the student has had, e.g. paid work, volunteering, leadership, clubs, community organizations.
  ★ Resumes
  ★ Awards
  ★ Certificates
★ Vacations
★ Birthdays and special occasions
★ Hobbies
★ Service Projects
★ Extracurricular participation
★ Letters of recommendation, etc.
What if my child knows exactly what s/he wants to do, but I think it’s unrealistic?

城乡居民参与

Respect your child’s vision.

See the vision as the start of a wonderful conversation.

Identify the skills required by the vision and provide opportunities to develop those skills, at home and in the community. Talk with your child’s teachers about how the school can help to develop needed skills.

Brainstorm and collaborate with educators and community members to provide related employment opportunities/experiences, including informational interviews, job shadowing, job carving, time-limited internships, competitive integrated employment.
To improve communication and understanding, it can be helpful to share your cultural background and perspective with other members of the IEP team.
In What Order?

★ The Team discusses and completes the TPF **before** completing the IEP form.

★ The **student’s** vision statement/postsecondary goals from the TPF is transferred directly to the Vision statement on the IEP. (The rest of the Team may add their thoughts to the Vision statement when it is on the IEP, if desired.)

★ The student’s disability-related needs from the TPF are used to inform annual goal development on the IEP. An annual IEP goal should focus on building skills that will make the biggest difference to the student **during that school year.** Each year’s annual goals build skills, year over year, that will promote the realization of the student’s vision/postsecondary goals.

★ Elements from the Action Plan *may* be included in the IEP, if the school district is responsible for them.
Individualized Education Program (IEP)

- A legal document spelling out what the district will do.
- A roadmap for the student to achieve his/her vision through specially designed instruction, related services.
Using the Vision to Develop Annual IEP Goals

The team refers to the student's vision/postsecondary goals and asks:

★ What skills, strengths, interests, personal attributes, and accomplishments does the student currently have that will contribute to his/her postsecondary success?

★ What skills and strengths will the student need to acquire in order to achieve his/her desired postsecondary outcomes?
But how does the Team answer these questions?

Answer:

Transition Assessments!
★ Discern the student’s vision
★ Illuminate the student’s needs, strengths, preferences, interests
★ Measure progress
Age Appropriate Transition Assessment
What Are Transition Assessments?

An ongoing process of collecting data on the individual's needs, strengths, preferences, and interests as they relate to the demands of current and future working, educational, living, and personal and social environments. Formal and informal assessment data serve as the common thread in the transition process and form the basis for defining goals and services to be included in the IEP.

-- Adapted from Sitlington, Neubert, & LeConte, 1997; p. 70-71
A Transition Frame of Mind

Any assessment that is conducted when a student on an IEP is aged 14-22 can be viewed as a transition assessment, because it affords information which can be utilized to discern the student’s vision; understand the student’s needs, strengths, preference, and interests; and measure progress towards the acquisition of skills.
An Individualized, Question-Driven Process

The number and type of assessments which are appropriate to conduct for each student is determined by the number and type of questions about the student for which answers are needed.
What Questions Need to be Considered?

★ **Who is the student?**
  (i.e., what are the student’s needs and strengths)

★ Who does the **student want to be,** or what does the **student want to do?**
  (i.e., what are the student’s preferences and interests)

★ **What is the fit** between the student and the requirements of the educational, employment, and living environments into which the student plans to move when he or she exits high school?
Assessment Data Can Be Collected:

- Across multiple settings
  - School (both academic and “life of the school”)
  - Home
  - Community
  - Workplace

- From a variety of people who know the student well,
  - The student
  - Families
  - Teachers
  - Friends
  - Employers
  - Coaches
  - Agency personnel
  - Etc.

An Ongoing Process Over Time
Families: A Key Role in Assessment

- The more students know, the more they can do. The more they can do, more opportunities are available to them.
- Students need to learn to anticipate and participate in the rhythms of life.
- Families know about their children when they’re with them – but not when their children are NOT with them. Educators know about their students when they’re with them – but not when students are NOT with them.
- Families and educators fill in each other’s blanks.
Any reader of an IEP for a student aged 14-22 should be able to **see a clear linkage** between...

the student's

- **postsecondary goals**
- **transition assessments**
- **annual IEP goals, and**
- **transition services.**
Transition from School to Adult Life - Time Lines

What is transition?

Transition is about planning for life!

The transition your son or daughter will make from school to adult life in the community is a long journey. This journey can be difficult for anyone, but for a child with a disability, determining where to go, the best way to get there, and then completing the journey can be especially challenging. This is why it is so important for you to think, as early as possible, about the important steps your child will need to make and to develop a plan for his/her future.

There are federal and state laws that guide the delivery of transitional educational services to children with disabilities. It is important for parents to understand these laws.

An ongoing process, beginning at age 14
Additional Federal and State Requirements

AGE 16
★ Depending on the anticipated age at exit, possible Chapter 688 referral, www.doe.mass.edu/sped/688

AGE 17
★ Discuss/provide written notice:
  ★ transfer of rights
  ★ educational decision-making process
  
  Administrative Advisory SPED 2011-1: Age of Majority, www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/11_1.html
By age 16/17 & older: Developmental Suggestions

★ Has disability disclosure been explored? (See *The 411 on Disability Disclosure*, [www.ncwd-youth.info/411-on-disability-disclosure](http://www.ncwd-youth.info/411-on-disability-disclosure))

★ Can your child:
  ★ describe important laws that protect his/her rights as a person with a disability?
  ★ identify academic/social-emotional needs?
  ★ describe his/her communication style?
  ★ identify preferred accommodations and assistive technology?
  ★ ask for necessary support from familiar/unfamiliar people in his/her environment, e.g., teachers, employers, community members?
  ★ identify medical/daily living requirements and how to access supports, e.g. doctors, medication?
  ★ actively participate in/lead his/her own IEP meetings?
Additional Federal and State Requirements

AGE 18

★ Age of Majority: Transfer of parental rights for most students:
   *Administrative Advisory SPED 2011-1: Age of Majority,*
   [www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/11_1.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/11_1.html)

AGES 18-22

★ Chapter 688 referral 2 years prior to exiting school, [www.doe.mass.edu/sped/688](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/688)

★ Summary of Performance [34 CFR 300.305(e)(3)]
   [www.doe.mass.edu/sped/IDEA2004/spr_meetings/eval_exitsummary.pdf](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/IDEA2004/spr_meetings/eval_exitsummary.pdf)
Resources

- Family and Student Transition Brochures, [https://fcsn.org/linkcenter/transition-resources/brochures/](https://fcsn.org/linkcenter/transition-resources/brochures/)
- Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2017-1: Characteristics of High Quality Secondary Transition Services, [http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/2017-1ta.pdf](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/2017-1ta.pdf)
- Massachusetts Career Development Education Guide/Glossary, [www.doe.mass.edu/connect/cde.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/connect/cde.html)
- National Technical Assistance Center on Transition, [https://transitionta.org/](https://transitionta.org/)
- National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability, [http://www.ncwd-youth.info/](http://www.ncwd-youth.info/)