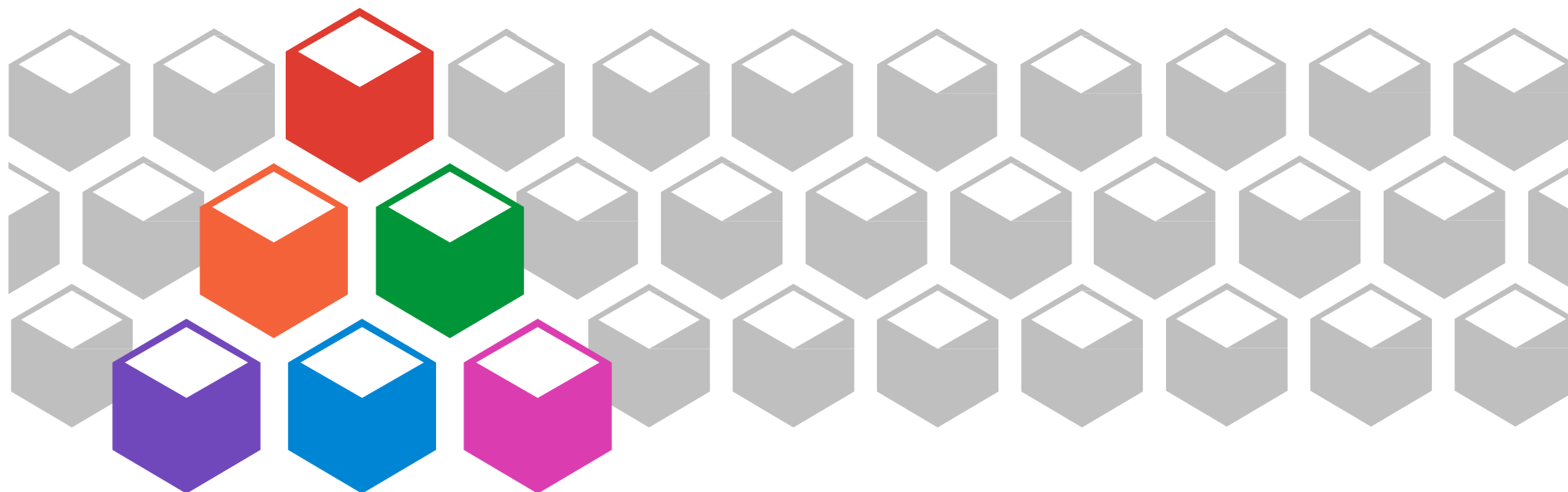


# TAXONOMY FOR TRANSITION PROGRAMMING 2.0

A Model for Planning, Organizing, and Evaluating Transition Education, Services, and Programs



Paula D. Kohler, Ph.D., June E. Gothberg, Ph.D.,  
Catherine Fowler, Ph.D., Jennifer Coyle, Ed.D.

Western Michigan University

## TAXONOMY FOR TRANSITION PROGRAMMING 2.0

Paula D. Kohler, June E. Gothberg, Catherine Fowler, and Jennifer Coyle

Cite this work as follows:

Kohler, P. D., Gothberg, J. E., Fowler, C., and Coyle, J. (2016). *Taxonomy for transition programming 2.0: A model for planning, organizing, and evaluating transition education, services, and programs*. Western Michigan University. Available at [www.transitionta.org](http://www.transitionta.org).

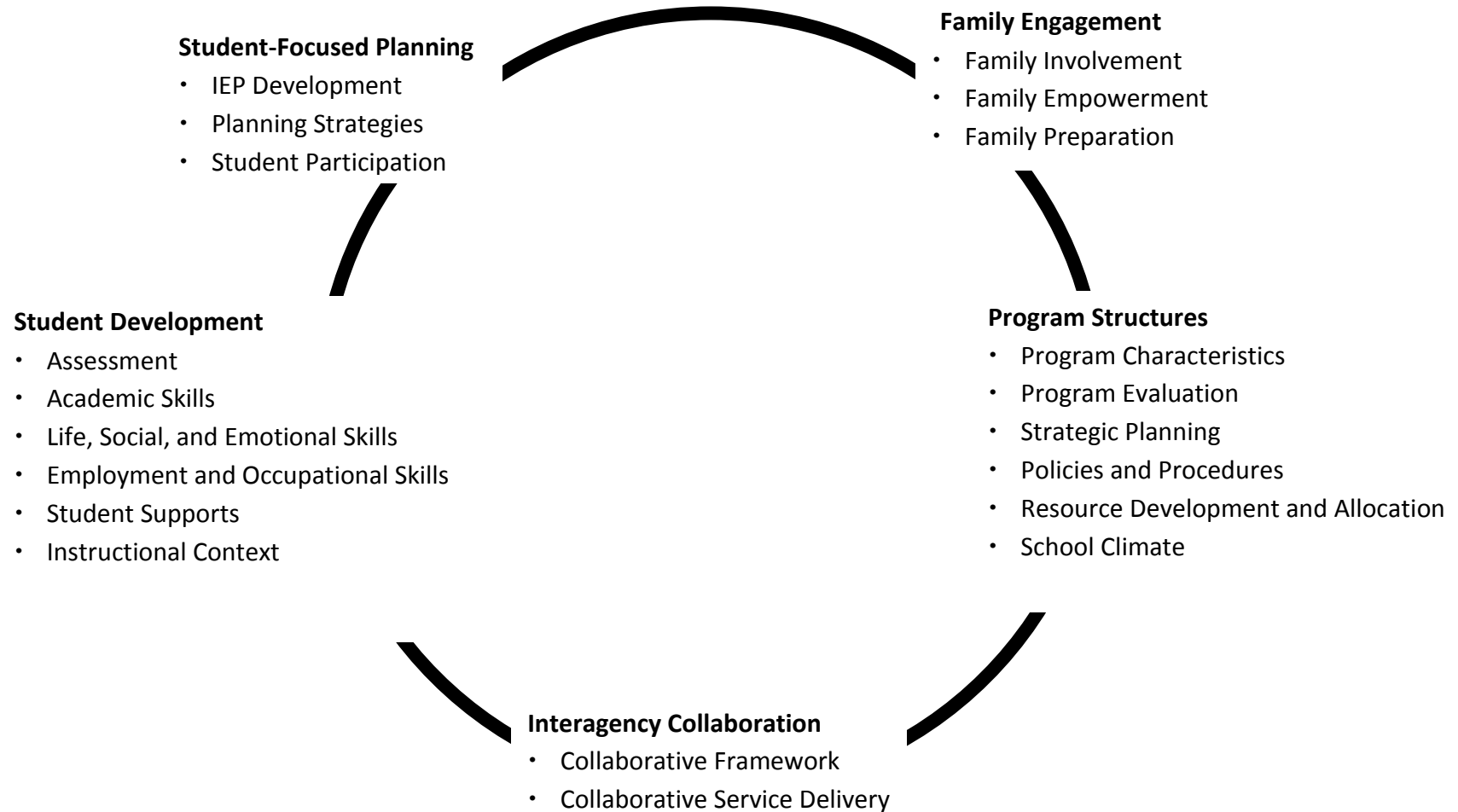
Additional resources are available at: [www.transitionta.org](http://www.transitionta.org) and from the first author at Western Michigan University, 3530 Sangren Hall, Kalamazoo MI 49008-5259, (269) 387-6181.

Over the past three decades, transition practices research has demonstrated that post-school outcomes of students with disabilities improve when educators, families, students, and community members and organizations work together to implement a broad perspective of transition planning, more appropriately referred to as transition-focused education. In general, this concept represents the perspective that “transition planning” is the fundamental basis of education that guides development of students’ educational programs – including strategies that keep them in school – rather than an “add-on” activity for students with disabilities when they turn age 14 or 16. The impact of transition-focused education is greatly enhanced when service systems and programs connect and support the implementation and application of such learning. The *Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0* (Kohler, Gothberg, Fowler, and Coyle, 2016) builds upon the earlier *Taxonomy for Transition Programming* (Kohler, 1996) and provides concrete practices—identified from effective programs and the research literature—for implementing transition-focused education.

As indicated in the references at the end of this document, the *Taxonomy 2.0* brings in the latest literature regarding predictors of post-school success, strategies to increase graduation and reduce dropout, school climate, and vocational rehabilitation services focused on fostering successful transition of youth with disabilities in college and careers. The model continues with five primary practice categories: Student-Focused Planning, Student Development, Interagency Collaboration, Family Engagement, and Program Structure. It includes additional practices in the areas of student supports and the instructional context within Student Development, as well as school climate in Program Structure. Within Family Engagement, a focus on cultural relevancy, empowerment, and family preparation are emphasized. Across categories, collaboration with service agencies, especially vocational rehabilitation, emphasize the importance of such connections prior to and during school and post-school transitions.

Finally, we acknowledge Drs. Matthew Klare and David Test at the University of North Carolina Charlotte and Karen Devries at Western Michigan University for their contributions to this work.

## TAXONOMY FOR TRANSITION PROGRAMMING 2.0



# TAXONOMY FOR TRANSITION PROGRAMMING 2.0



STUDENT  
DEVELOPMENT

INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

FAMILY  
ENGAGEMENT

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

## STUDENT-FOCUSED PLANNING

IEP Development	Planning Strategies	Student Participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Student interests and preferences are documented</li> <li>› Progress or attainment of goals is reviewed annually</li> <li>› Options identified for each outcome area</li> <li>› Postsecondary education or training goals and objectives specified</li> <li>› Occupational goals and objectives specified</li> <li>› Community-related and residential goals and objectives specified (e.g., voting, driving)</li> <li>› Recreation and leisure goals and objectives specified</li> <li>› Educational program corresponds to specific goals, including elective courses</li> <li>› Pathway to diploma or other exit document identified and aligned with postsecondary goals</li> <li>› Goals are measurable</li> <li>› Personal needs are addressed in planning (e.g., financial, medical, guardianship)</li> <li>› Specific goals and objectives result from student choices</li> <li>› Planning process considers integrated developmental and service settings with appropriate supports</li> <li>› Responsibility of participants or agencies specified</li> <li>› Evaluation of participant fulfillment of responsibilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Transition-focused planning begins no later than age 14</li> <li>› Cultural and linguistic considerations embedded throughout the planning process</li> <li>› Planning team leader identified</li> <li>› IEP meeting time and preparation are adequate to conduct planning that engages relevant stakeholders</li> <li>› Planning and meeting time and place support student and family engagement</li> <li>› Planning process is student-centered planning (e.g., applies person-center planning; MAPS, PATH, PFP)</li> <li>› Comprehensive age-appropriate transition assessments are used for transition planning (e.g., achievement, intelligence, behavior, career, aptitude, skills, interests, preferences, readiness)</li> <li>› Referral to adult service provider(s) occurs prior to student's exit from school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Planning team includes student and family members</li> <li>› Students are prepared to actively participate in the IEP development process and meeting</li> <li>› Students evaluate their progress on previous IEP goals and objectives</li> <li>› Self-determination is facilitated within the planning process</li> <li>› Students express their interests, preferences, and limits</li> <li>› Planning decisions are driven by students and their families</li> <li>› Accommodations are made for communication needs (e.g., interpreters)</li> <li>› Students evaluate their participation in the planning process and meeting</li> </ul>

# TAXONOMY FOR TRANSITION PROGRAMMING 2.0

STUDENT-FOCUSED PLANNING

INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

FAMILY  
ENGAGEMENT

PROGRAM STRUCTURE



## STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

Assessment	Academic Skills	Life, Social, and Emotional Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▸ Formative assessment data drive academic instruction</li> <li>▸ Career interest and aptitude assessments are used to inform curricular and instructional decisions</li> <li>▸ Accommodations on assessment or alternate assessments are provided as needed</li> <li>▸ Assessment results are shared regularly with students and used to assist in overcoming deficiencies as they are identified</li> <li>▸ Remediation and multiple testing opportunities offered for high stakes testing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▸ Courses and curricula prepare students for college and careers</li> <li>▸ Students understand by 9<sup>th</sup> grade what constitutes college-ready curriculum</li> <li>▸ Academic skills development (e.g., decoding, comprehension, computation, interpretation, etc.)</li> <li>▸ Academic strategies development (e.g., learning strategies, study skills, and test-taking skills, etc.)</li> <li>▸ Academic behaviors development (e.g., going to class, participation, organization, doing homework, studying, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▸ Self-determination skills development (e.g., goal setting, decision making, problem solving, self-advocacy, etc.)</li> <li>▸ Independent living skills development (e.g., financial, first aid, safety, cooking, etc.)</li> <li>▸ Interpersonal skills development</li> <li>▸ Leisure skills development</li> <li>▸ Transportation skills development</li> <li>▸ Classroom behavior development</li> <li>▸ Social skills development</li> <li>▸ Youth autonomy fostered and supported</li> </ul>

Employment and Occupational Skills	Student Supports	Instructional Context
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Career planning is embedded in or aligned with core academic instruction</li> <li>▶ Career and technical education is provided including entry level and advanced skill completion options</li> <li>▶ Employment seeking skills development</li> <li>▶ Occupation-specific skills development</li> <li>▶ Soft skills development</li> <li>▶ Employment skill development is provided in authentic settings including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- school-based enterprises</li> <li>- on-site structured work experiences</li> <li>- career academies</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Career awareness opportunities provided (e.g., industry tours, guest speakers, career fairs, etc.)</li> <li>▶ Local businesses provide opportunities for work-related experiences (e.g., simulated job interviews, job shadowing, internships, apprenticeships, work-study, long-term employment, etc.)</li> <li>▶ Graduation credit provided for work experiences</li> <li>▶ Paid work experience provided prior to school exit</li> <li>▶ Job placement services provided prior to school exit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Related services are provided (e.g., OT, PT, speech therapy, transportation, assistive technology)</li> <li>▶ Functional communication systems are provided as needed, including augmentative communication or assistive technology</li> <li>▶ Identification and development of environmental adaptations, natural supports, and accommodations needed for success in school and community settings</li> <li>▶ Academic support and enrichment provided to improve academic performance (e.g., test-taking skills, study skills, targeted subject area skills, etc.)</li> <li>▶ Opportunities given for credit recovery and acceleration (e.g., after school, Saturday school, summer enrichment, etc.)</li> <li>▶ Counseling services provided for college and career readiness</li> <li>▶ Adult advocates help students establish attainable academic and behavioral goals with specific benchmarks</li> <li>▶ Adults and peers build and support student's college and career aspirations</li> <li>▶ Information given on postsecondary education supports</li> <li>▶ Students supported to complete critical steps for college entry</li> <li>▶ Students supported through partnerships established with community-based program providers (e.g., social services, welfare, mental health, law enforcement, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Co-curricular activities are used to support student development (e.g., band, forensics, poetry slams, quiz bowl, writing competitions, yearbook, etc.)</li> <li>▶ Extracurricular activities are used to support student development (e.g., clubs, Junior Achievement, Junior ROTC, school or intermural sports, student council, theater, etc.)</li> <li>▶ Community activities are used to support student development (e.g., 4H, church groups, community festivals, community government, scouts, social activism, volunteering, etc.)</li> <li>▶ Service learning used to engage students in their school and community by applying skills to solve real-world problems</li> <li>▶ Education and services are provided in integrated and least restrictive environments with preference given to placement in the general education setting 80% or more of the time, as appropriate</li> <li>▶ Education and instruction are provided in community-based settings</li> <li>▶ Instruction is rigorous and relevant</li> <li>▶ Instruction embeds Universal Design for Learning</li> <li>▶ Student accomplishments are recognized and celebrated</li> </ul>



# TAXONOMY FOR TRANSITION PROGRAMMING 2.0

STUDENT-FOCUSED PLANNING

STUDENT  
DEVELOPMENT

INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

PROGRAM STRUCTURE



## FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

Family Involvement	Family Empowerment	Family Preparation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Families' cultural background and intimate knowledge of and experience with their child informs the IEP</li> <li>▶ Families provide information about their child either orally or in writing</li> <li>▶ Families participate in the entire transition planning process including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- student assessment</li> <li>- evaluation of student's program</li> <li>- IEP and other individual program planning meeting</li> <li>- decision making</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Families participate in service delivery</li> <li>▶ Families participate in natural support network as trainers, mentors, peer advocates, or community liaisons</li> <li>▶ Families participate in program policy development</li> <li>▶ Families concerns and needs are represented in school governance</li> <li>▶ Non-family member interpreters provided</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Transition information provided prior to student's age 14</li> <li>▶ Information provided in their ordinary language and shared in culturally responsive and respectful manner</li> <li>▶ Structured method to identify family needs</li> <li>▶ Pre-IEP planning activities specific to families</li> <li>▶ Child care and respite care provided for transition-related meetings</li> <li>▶ Supports provided for families to engage youth in community experiences</li> <li>▶ Students and families linked with adult service providers during transition planning</li> <li>▶ Students and families are assisted to apply for college</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Family learning and preparation provided for:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- transition-related planning process (e.g., IEP, ITP, IPE)</li> <li>- empowerment strategies</li> <li>- setting high expectation</li> <li>- promoting child's self-determination, with respect for cultural views and values</li> <li>- advocacy</li> <li>- natural supports</li> <li>- agencies and services</li> <li>- facilitating community experiences for youth with disabilities (e.g., safety, transportation, social skills, mobility)</li> <li>- legal issues</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



# TAXONOMY FOR TRANSITION PROGRAMMING 2.0

STUDENT-FOCUSED PLANNING

STUDENT  
DEVELOPMENT

INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

FAMILY  
ENGAGEMENT



## PROGRAM STRUCTURE

Program Characteristics	Program Evaluation	Strategic Planning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Transitions are addressed across educational levels (preschool - high school) and relevant systems (e.g., mental health, vocational rehabilitation)</li> <li>▶ Program options are flexible to meet individual student needs</li> <li>▶ Programs are outcome-oriented and reflect high expectations for all students</li> <li>▶ Programs rely on a tiered philosophy, viewing general and special education as a unified system offering increasingly intensive support, as needed</li> <li>▶ Programs reflect the community’s cultural, linguistic, and ethnic diversity</li> <li>▶ Students with diverse needs have access to all educational opportunities (academic, college-prep, work-based, extracurricular, etc.)</li> <li>▶ Graduation requirements are clearly defined</li> <li>▶ Parents are given graduation requirements and exit options with future implications prior to 9<sup>th</sup> grade</li> <li>▶ Multiple pathways provided for satisfying standard graduation requirements</li> <li>▶ Every opportunity provided to students to receive a standard diploma until age 21</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Evaluation is part of an ongoing cycle of program development and improvement</li> <li>▶ Clear vision is established for system-wide evaluation and data use</li> <li>▶ Data-driven culture supported at all levels</li> <li>▶ Data systems are used to monitor and to assess progress toward graduation including:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- dropout risk</li> <li>- attendance</li> <li>- behavior</li> <li>- course completion</li> <li>- course performance</li> <li>- social performance</li> <li>- CTE enrollment and completion patterns</li> <li>- office referrals, suspension, expulsion</li> <li>- truancy</li> <li>- retentions</li> <li>- support needs</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Student-level data are reviewed to identify students at risk of dropping out before key grade-level transitions</li> <li>▶ Student withdrawal data are collected and reviewed</li> <li>▶ Post-school data are collected and used for program planning</li> <li>▶ Students and families participate in program evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Strategic planning                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- is conducted on a regular basis</li> <li>- includes multiple stakeholders from relevant education, agency, and community partners</li> <li>- is driven by evidenced-based and promising practices for transition education and services</li> <li>- uses needs assessments to provide the basis for secondary-level education and post-school community programs and services</li> <li>- includes evaluation planning</li> </ul> </li> <li>▶ Strategic planning document is evaluated for technical soundness (measureable goals, sufficient tasks, tangible outputs, anticipated outcomes, sound evaluation, etc.)</li> </ul>

Policies and Procedures	Resource Development and Allocation	School Climate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› Policies and procedures support the implementation of evidence-based and promising practices (EBPP) for transition</li> <li>› Policies and procedures foster a positive school climate</li> <li>› Academic and social performance are monitored</li> <li>› Policies and procedures provide the structure and process for systemic and ongoing program improvement regarding transition education and services</li> <li>› Policies and procedures are aligned with those of other providers as much as possible to address gaps and reduce duplication of transition services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› High quality staff in all instructional, supervisory, and support roles are recruited, hired, and retained</li> <li>› Implementation of evidence-based and promising practices (EBPP) is supported and facilitated through professional development, coaching, and feedback systems</li> <li>› Employee relations services are provided to ensure continuing quality of the workforce and the workplace (e.g., appointment status, benefits, and other transactions for all employees)</li> <li>› Personnel development is provided for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- knowledge and skill development</li> <li>- culturally responsive planning with families</li> <li>- creating a welcoming school climate</li> </ul> </li> <li>› Multiple measures are used when building and implementing administrator and teacher evaluation performance index formulas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>› School climate supports a sense of trust and fairness</li> <li>› School has a clearly defined set of expectations, procedures for teaching expectations, and procedures for encouraging expected and school-appropriate behavior</li> <li>› Programs implemented to improve students' classroom behavior and social skills</li> <li>› Students are provided a personalized learning environment and instructional process</li> <li>› School climate is welcoming to students, families, staff, and other stakeholders</li> <li>› School climate provides a safe and nurturing environment for students and adults to feel connected to the school (safe from physical or emotional harm, respect for diversity, fair and supportive practices)</li> <li>› Environment is culturally responsive to students, families, staff, and other stakeholders</li> <li>› Students' sense of engagement and belonging in school is monitored</li> <li>› Staff and students interact outside the classroom</li> <li>› Adult advocates are assigned to students identified as at risk of dropping out</li> </ul>

## Bibliography

**Note** – the references included here are those from which we drew information to build the *Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0*. The sources used to develop the original *Taxonomy* (Kohler, 1996) are available at <http://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED399722>

- Balfanz, R. (2007, August 16). *Locating and transforming the low performing high schools which produce the nation's dropouts*. Center for Social Organization of Schools. Johns Hopkins University. Retrieved from [www.all4ed.org/files/Balfanz.pdf](http://www.all4ed.org/files/Balfanz.pdf)
- Cobb, B., Sample, P., Alwell, M., & Johns, N. (2005). The effects of cognitive-behavioral intervention on dropout for youth with disabilities. *Effective interventions in dropout prevention: A research synthesis*. Clemson, SC: National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities.
- Dary, T. & Pickeral, T. (ed) (2013). School climate: Practices for implementation and sustainability. *A School Climate Practice Brief, Number 1*, New York, NY: National School Climate Center.
- Faircloth, S. C., & Tippeconnic, III, J. W. (2010). *The dropout/graduation rate crisis among American Indian and Alaska Native students: Failure to respond places the future of Native peoples at risk*. Los Angeles, CA: The Civil Rights Project/Proyecto Derechos Civiles at UCLA. Retrieved from [www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu](http://www.civilrightsproject.ucla.edu)
- Fleming, A. R., Del Valle, R., Kim, M., & Leahy, M. J. (2013). Best practice models of effective vocational rehabilitation service delivery in the public rehabilitation program: A review and synthesis of the empirical literature.
- Hamilton, L., Halverson, R., Jackson, S., Mandinach, E., Supovitz, J., & Wayman, J. (2009). *Using student achievement data to support instructional decision making (NCEE 2009-4067)*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications/practiceguides/>.
- Kemple, J. J., & Snipes, J. C. (2000). Career Academies: Impacts on students' engagement and performance in high school. New York, NY: MDRC.
- Kohler, P. D. (1996). *Taxonomy for transition programming*. Champaign: University of Illinois.
- Kohler, P. D., & Field, S. (2003). Transition-focused education: Foundation for the future. *Journal of Special Education*, 37, 174-183.
- Leahy, M. J., Chan, F., Lui, J., Rosenthal, D., Tansey, T., Wehman, P., et al. (2014). An analysis of evidence-based best practices in the public vocational rehabilitation program: Gaps, future directions, and recommended steps to move forward. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, 41, 147-163.

- Morningstar, M., & Mazzotti, V. (2014). *Teacher preparation to deliver evidence-based transition planning and services to youth with disabilities (Document No. IC-1)*. Retrieved from University of Florida, Collaboration for Effective Educator, Development, Accountability, and Reform Center website: <http://cedar.education.ufl.edu/tools/innovation-configurations/>
- Rowe, D. A., Alverson, C. Y., Unruh, D., Fowler, C., Kellems, R., & Test, D. W. (2014). A Delphi study to Operationalize Evidence-based Predictors in Secondary Transition. *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals*.
- Sinclair, M. F., Christenson, S. L., Lehr, C. A., & Anderson, A. R. (2003). Facilitating student engagement: Lessons learned from Check & Connect longitudinal studies. *The California School Psychologist*, 8, 29–41.
- Sinclair, M. F., Christenson, S. L., & Thurlow, M. L. (2005). Promoting school completion of urban secondary youth with emotional or behavioral disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 71(4), 465–482.
- Tierney, W. G., Bailey, T., Constantine, J., Finkelstein, N., & Hurd, N. F. (2009). *Helping students navigate the path to college: What high schools can do: A practice guide (NCEE #2009-4066)*. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications/practiceguides/>.
- Test, D. W., Mazzotti, V. L., Mustian, A. L., Fowler, C. H., Kortering, L. J., & Kohler, P. H. (2009). Evidence-based secondary transition predictors for improving post-school outcomes for students with disabilities. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 32, 160-181.
- Toldson, I. A. (2011). *Breaking barriers 2: Plotting the path away from juvenile detention and toward academic success for school-age African American males*. Washington, DC: Congressional Black Caucus Foundation, Inc.
- Whaley, A. L., & Davis, K. E. (2007). Cultural competence and evidence-based practice in mental health services: A complementary perspective. *American Psychologist*, 62(6), 563–574.
- Wilkins, J., & Huckabee, S. (2014). *A literature map of dropout prevention interventions for students with disabilities*. Clemson, SC: National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities, Clemson University.

**Note** – Support for development of this document was provided in part by the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT), funded by Cooperative Agreement Number H326E140004 with the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS). Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Education or imply endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education.