Using transitionprogramtool.org for Secondary Education and Transition Services

Introduction and Resources for the Planning Process

A Resource for Local Team Planning
Using transitionprogramtool.org for Improving Secondary Education and Transition Services

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Additional resources are available at:
http://www.transitionta.org

This online strategic planning system, which fosters implementation of evidence-based and promising (EBPPs) transition education and services, was developed in collaboration with Cornell University’s Employment and Disability Institute in the School of Industrial and Labor Relations, with significant contributions from staff at Western Michigan University and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte: June Gothberg, Karen Devries, Jennifer Coyle, and Catherine Fowler.

Bibliography

This planning system pulls strongly from the evaluation literature to guide the self-assessment, planning, and evaluation processes. The following list provides resources from this literature. The EBPP content is based on the Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0, which includes a reference list that represents the literature on which the Taxonomy 2.0 builds.


Welcome to transitionprogramtool.org!

This local program improvement planning system is online at: transitionprogramtool.org. It focuses specifically on assisting local and/or district school teams to review the extent of implementation and effectiveness of transition education and services in their school(s), identify their strengths and needs, and develop an implementation and evaluation plan to address their needs. To foster improvement grounded in evidence-based and promising practices (EBPPs), the planning process uses the Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0 (Kohler, 1996; Kohler, Gothberg, Fowler, & Coyle, 2016) to present transition practices content in five areas: student-focused planning, student development, interagency collaboration, family engagement, and program structure.

In addition, this tool is designed to help you reflect on the program improvement strategies you have used or are using at your school or in your district to facilitate implementation of the EBPPs. Use your SPP/APR Indicator data along with data from evaluation of your program improvement efforts to help guide your planning process. By knowing what works and what doesn’t, you can build on your strengths and avoid ineffective or inefficient strategies.

Regardless of the context for your planning, transitionprogramtool.org provides the following features to guide you and your team through the planning process:

**Dashboard:** The dashboard is your “home base” in transitionprogramtool.org. This page provides an up-to-date summary of where you are in the assessment and planning process. The dashboard is also a place to upload data files and add links to external sites for use in identifying your strengths and needs, access resources, and from where you can download copies of your plans, reports, and underlying data.

**Overview:** The overview provides information regarding the purpose and features of the online system.

**Assessment and Planning:** This component of the system provides three steps that lead you through the following: (1) forming your team, (2) assessing your implementation status and effectiveness, (3) and making a plan, including evaluation elements.

**Reporting:** At different times of the year, access this section to create progress and end-of-the-year reports through which you summarize your implementation progress and achievement of your goals and outcomes.

Whether the focus is on developing a state capacity-building plan or a local district or school improvement plan, this process is team-driven. A team of relevant stakeholders, including educators, related-service providers, and students and their families, is essential for gathering and reviewing current practices and outcomes; and subsequently for using this information to establish goals and related activities.

In addition to working with a team, it is also essential to keep your focus on results. These tools are designed to be used through a continuous improvement process that includes data collection and review, planning, evaluation, and assessment of goal attainment that addresses students' in-school and post-school outcomes.
Transition-Focused Education

This planning tool focuses on assisting local school teams to review and plan their strategies for improving programs within their school or district to implement transition-focused education. Over the past two decades, transition practices research has illustrated 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 of transition-focused education 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.

Transition-focused education is directed toward adult outcomes and consists of academic, career, and extracurricular instruction and activities, delivered through a variety of instructional and transition approaches, and responsive to the local context and students’ learning and support needs. Primary to the concept of transition-focused education is the expectation that all students stay in school, experience academic and social success, and ultimately achieve a quality life, valued within the context of their family, school, and community. Quality of life outcomes include those in four general areas: independent living (home and family), employment (including postsecondary education and training that lead to employment), community citizenship and participation, and leisure and recreation. To prepare students to achieve such outcomes, transition-focused education builds student competence through academic, occupational, and social development. Further, to ensure that all our students can develop and achieve at their greatest potential, transition-focused education provides a variety of instructional pathways that may include few or no specialized supports to extensive applied experiences or supports. This framework of transition-focused education provides a structure for educational planning that is learner-centered, outcome-oriented, and promotes greater involvement and ownership in the decision-making process by key stakeholders, particularly students and their families.

The Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0, represented on the next page, provides concrete practices—identified from effective programs and the research literature—for implementing transition-focused education. As described subsequently, this tool is designed to help you reflect broadly on the status and effectiveness of transition-focused education and services in your school or district. To demonstrate, we provide an example of assessment and planning within the Student-Focused Planning category.
## Dropout Prevention Practices Included within the Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Practices Related to Dropout Prevention</th>
<th>Area(s) of Taxonomy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implement comprehensive diagnostic systems</td>
<td>‣ Student Focused Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Program Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement data tools, such as early warning systems, at the system and student level</td>
<td>‣ Student Focused Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Program Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide personalized instruction and learning</td>
<td>‣ Student Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Student Focused Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Program Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide rigorous and relevant instruction (and tailor the learning environment to the learner’s needs)</td>
<td>‣ Student Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Program Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide academic support</td>
<td>‣ Student Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Program Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide instruction on behavior and social skills</td>
<td>‣ Student Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide a supportive school climate</td>
<td>‣ Program Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connect at-risk youth with a caring adult (either through a formal mentoring program or a less formal arrangement)</td>
<td>‣ Program Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide instruction on occupational skills</td>
<td>‣ Student Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Interagency Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Program Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage family involvement and community supports</td>
<td>‣ Family Involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Interagency Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Program Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach self-determination and self-advocacy skills including student/person-centered planning</td>
<td>‣ Student Focused Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Program Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eliminate practices that push students out of school</td>
<td>‣ Program Structure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help students address problems that interfere with learning</td>
<td>‣ Student Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Family Involvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Interagency Collaboration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Program Structure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## TAXONOMY FOR TRANSITION PROGRAMMING 2.0

### STUDENT-FOCUSED PLANNING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IEP Development</th>
<th>Planning Strategies</th>
<th>Student Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| - Student interests and preferences are documented  
- Progress or attainment of goals is reviewed annually  
- Options identified for each outcome area  
- Postsecondary education or training goals and objectives specified  
- Occupational goals and objectives specified  
- Community-related and residential goals and objectives specified (e.g., voting, driving)  
- Recreation and leisure goals and objectives specified  
- Educational program corresponds to specific goals, including elective courses  
- Pathway to diploma or other exit document identified and aligned with postsecondary goals  
- Goals are measurable  
- Personal needs are addressed in planning (e.g., financial, medical, guardianship)  
- Specific goals and objectives result from student choices  
- Planning process considers integrated developmental and service settings with appropriate supports  
- Responsibility of participants or agencies specified  
- Evaluation of participant fulfillment of responsibilities | - Transition-focused planning begins no later than age 14  
- Cultural and linguistic considerations embedded throughout the planning process  
- Planning team leader identified  
- IEP meeting time and preparation are adequate to conduct planning that engages relevant stakeholders  
- Planning and meeting time and place support student and family engagement  
- Planning process is student-centered planning (e.g., applies person-center planning; MAPS, PATH, PFP)  
- Comprehensive age-appropriate transition assessments are used for transition planning (e.g., achievement, intelligence, behavior, career, aptitude, skills, interests, preferences, readiness)  
- Referral to adult service provider(s) occurs prior to student’s exit from school | - Planning team includes student and family members  
- Students are prepared to actively participate in the IEP development process and meeting  
- Students evaluate their progress on previous IEP goals and objectives  
- Self-determination is facilitated within the planning process  
- Students express their interests, preferences, and limits  
- Planning decisions are driven by students and their families  
- Accommodations are made for communication needs (e.g., interpreters)  
- Students evaluate their participation in the planning process and meeting |
Overview of transitionprogramtool.org

This planning system focuses on assisting teams to review either one, some, or all five categories of practices within the Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0, such as collecting and using transition-related assessment information, improving development of students’ self-determination skills, or creating a positive and supportive school climate within the Student-Focused Planning, Student Development, and Program Structure categories. This effort is aligned with the work in many states to provide a variety of resources to assist districts and local schools to collect and evaluate data that provide specific information about students’ outcomes, including data regarding transition indicators 1, 2, 13, and 14 of the Special Education State Performance Plan (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR). These indicators are described as follows:

**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.

(20 U.S.C. 1416 (a)(3)(A))

**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.

(20 U.S.C. 1416 (a)(3)(A))

**Indicator 13:**
Percent of youth with IEPs aged 16 and above with an IEP that includes appropriate measurable postsecondary goals that are annually updated and based upon an age appropriate transition assessment, transition services, including 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 and evidence that, if appropriate, a representative of any participating agency was invited to the IEP Team meeting with the prior consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority.

(20 U.S.C. 1416 (a)(3)(B))

**Indicator 14:**
Percent of youth who are no longer in secondary school, had IEPs in effect at the time they left school, and were:

A. Enrolled in higher education within one year of leaving high school.
B. Enrolled in higher education or competitively employed within one year of leaving high school.
C. Enrolled in higher education or in some other postsecondary education or training program; or competitively employed or in some other employment within one year of leaving high school.

(20 U.S.C. 1416 (a)(3)(B))
Instructions for Using transitionprogramtool.org

Start at the Dashboard, which will give you an up-to-date summary of where you are in the assessment and planning process: Not started, in progress, or complete. In addition, you can upload data or other files to the Dashboard for use in planning. Download an Excel file of your data or create a pdf file of your plan to save to your computer when you’re finished.

Use the navigation tabs on each side of the blue bar to place your working space on the left, center, or right on your monitor. This provides more room to place and view the various examples provided in each section.
Use the **Overview** tab to provide an orientation to your team about the basis for the planning system and some of its functions.
Use **Tab 1—Enter Date & Team** to name your plan and to **identify team members** and their roles. In the future, this information will be pre-loaded into your planning file so adding and deleting members is easy to do.
Use Tab 2—Assess Status, to reflect on the degree to which you are implementing the practices described. Use the space provided to describe your findings in each area. To assist with this reflection, we provide a set of questions and indicators that focus on each Taxonomy area. These questions are designed to help you go beyond simple “yes” or “no” answers as you reflect on implementation and identify evidence that supports your reflection. Evaluation findings and data you have collected regarding the SPP indicators will help you identify implementation levels, as well as effectiveness. As you reflect on levels of implementation, also consider the availability and quality of your data.

Next, consider your findings to summarize your current strengths regarding the transition practices, as well as needs for improvement. Then indicate those areas for which you want to develop a plan.
Use **Tab 3—Make a Plan** to develop a program improvement plan that addresses the transition education and service needs you identified. Each of the practice areas for which you identified “develop plan” will load automatically in **Tab 3**.
Make a Plan consists of two steps. In Step 3a, identify your goals and the improvement strategies you will use to achieve the goals. Use the detailed instructions to get in-depth information and examples about each strategy. Also use the “View” links in each planning component to view sample goals and specific strategies to build capacity in your state or district to implement the practices. In developing your plans, be specific.
In Step 3b, your goals and program improvement strategies from Step 3a will load for each area of planning. **Evidence-based practices** and **predictors** of post-school success examples are provided based on the Taxonomy category and goals on which the plan is focused. Use this information to help guide your planning. Aligned with the logic model process, each plan consists of the following elements: **Tasks, Outputs, Expected Outcomes, Indicators, and Data Sources**. To begin, identify **specific tasks, responsibility, and the time frame** for implementing your plan. Click **save all** after entering tasks. This example includes the following:

- **Taxonomy area is Student Development**
- **The goal is to increase student occupational skills and behaviors**
- **The improvement strategies are collaborations and partnerships and curricula or materials**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date: 05/07/2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taxonomy Area: Student Development Benchmarks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal: Increase student occupational skills and behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvement Strategy: Collaborations and partnerships, Curricula or materials, Events, Policies or procedures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Evidence Based Practices**
- Academic Skills
- Functional Life Skills
- Banking Skills
- Community Integration Skills
- Food Preparation and Cooling Skills
- Grocery Shopping Skills
- Home Maintenance Skills
- Laundry Tasks
- Leisure Skills
- Safety Skills
- Counting Money
- Increased Finance Skills
- Purchasing Skills
- Self Determination
- Goal Attainment
- Social Skills
- Communication Skills
- Employment Skills
- Job Specific Skills
- Completing a Job Application
- Transportation Training

**Predictors of Post-School Success**
- Career Awareness
- Occupational Course
- Paid Employment/ Work Experience
- Vocational Education
- Exit Exam Requirements/ High School Diploma Status
- Inclusion in General Education
- Program of Study
- Self-Advocacy/Self-Determination
- Self-Care/ Independent Living Skills
- Social Skills
- Transition Program
- Travel Skills
- Youth Autonomy/Decision Making
- Goal Setting

**Task Examples**
- Host a transition institute to foster strategic planning to improve student development practices
- Identify schools with the lowest academic achievement for students with disabilities
- Provide intensive technical assistance to lowest performing schools
- Provide on-going coaching for specific improvement activities
- Collect baseline (pre and post) data on students’ acquisition of self-determination skills, work skills, life skills, social skills, etc.
- Pilot the NTACT Risk Calculator with target districts
- Create a cross-agency statewide longitudinal data dashboard to include all relevant transition education and services data
- Partner with community agencies to provide transition services
- Implement the NTACT Predictor Self-Assessment with pilot districts
- Collect and analyze pre and post data on students’ performance in work experiences
- Amend state policies that restrict access for students with disabilities to participate in co-curricular, extracurricular, community activities and events
- Identify new business partners
- Develop state endorsed work-based education curriculum
- Develop accommodations needs assessment
Continue in Step 3b to identify the **output** – or products to be produced. In working toward a goal, the goal-related tasks typically result in the production of specific products or other outputs. These outputs are important in increasing the likelihood of goal achievement. Outputs might include a new curriculum (materials), new IEP meeting protocol (procedure), or a new way of documenting student assessment information for use in the IEP (procedure). Outputs should be directly associated with the specified goal and essential for goal achievement. Click **save all** after entries.

Again, we provide **specific examples** to assist with your planning. As illustrated here and on the following pages, click on the **example links** and drag the box to the side of the planning frame to view the examples as you work.
Next, identify the **expected outcomes** for each goal; for each outcome, specify the indicators and data sources you will use to evaluate your program improvement plan and achievement of your expected outcomes. This section further defines these elements and provides examples of each. Click **save all** after entries.
The final step in completing a plan for each goal is to identify the additional **stakeholders**, **resources**, and **technical assistance** you may need to implement the plan and achieve your goals. After adding this information (if relevant), click the button **to save and go to Step 3a** to plan the details for achieving your next goal.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4. Additional Stakeholders</th>
<th>Do you need additional stakeholders to assist with implementation or to approve this goal?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Yes</strong>  <strong>No</strong>  <strong>State professional development provider, state data analyst support</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5. Additional Resources</th>
<th>Do you need additional resources to implement this plan?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Yes</strong>  <strong>No</strong>  <strong>Funds to bring participants to workshops, curriculum resources.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6. Technical Assistance Needs</th>
<th>Do you need additional technical assistance to implement this plan?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Yes</strong>  <strong>No</strong>  <strong>Information from TA center about other states who have implemented similar initiatives</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Student-Focused Planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflective Questions</th>
<th>Suggested Indicators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.1</strong> To what extent are postsecondary goals:</td>
<td>% of IEPs with measurable postsecondary goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- measureable?</td>
<td>% of IEPs that have postsecondary goals reviewed annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- reviewed annually?</td>
<td>% of postsecondary goals written as an outcome that will occur after the student leaves high school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• written as an outcome that will occur after the student leaves high school?</td>
<td>% of IEPs that include postsecondary goals in all three areas of:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To what extent do transition IEPs include postsecondary goals in the areas of:</td>
<td>- education and training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- education and training?</td>
<td>- employment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- employment?</td>
<td>- independent living</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- independent living?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.2</strong> To what extent are annual goals:</td>
<td>% of IEPs with measurable annual goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- measureable?</td>
<td>% of IEPs that have annual goals reviewed annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- reviewed annually?</td>
<td>% of goals and objectives that were the result of student choices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To what extent are specific goals and objectives the result of student choices?</td>
<td># or % of annual goals clearly linked to the student’s postsecondary goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To what extent are annuals goals clearly linked to the student’s postsecondary goals?</td>
<td># or % of annual goals clearly linked to industry standards for student’s postsecondary goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To what extent are annual goals linked to industry standards for the student’s stated postsecondary goals?</td>
<td># or % of annual goals implemented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To what extent are the goals and objectives identified in students’ educational programs (including transition services) implemented and evaluated?</td>
<td># or % of annual goals evaluated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1.3</strong> To what extent are transition services individualized and reflective of the experiences, services, and skills needed for a student’s specific postsecondary goals?</td>
<td># or % of students whose transition services align with postsecondary goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To what extent are referrals to adult service providers occurring prior to student’s exit from school?</td>
<td>% of students referred to adult services prior to exit from school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does the student have an IPE prior to exit from school?</td>
<td>% of students with an IPE in place prior to exit from school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To what extent does the student’s EDP, IEP, and IPE align?</td>
<td>% alignment between student’s EDP, IEP, and IPE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To what extent and how are the responsibilities assigned through the IEP and IPE process review?</td>
<td># or % of services that are (a) delivered or (b) undelivered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To what extent are identified services (a) delivered or (b) undelivered?</td>
<td>Y/N education and agency procedures are in place to address discrepancies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• What education and agency procedures are used to address discrepancies between services promised and services provided?</td>
<td>% of discrepancies in service delivery addressed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1.4 | To what extent are age appropriate transition assessments:  
- comprehensive (e.g., academic, cognitive, career interest and aptitude, functional, adaptive behavior and independent living, and self-determination skills assessment information)?  
- gathered through career awareness, exploration, and on-the-job training activities?  
- used to identify student’ preferences, interests, choices, and needs as they relate to current and postsecondary education, employment, and independent living goals?  
- reflected in the students’ present level of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP)?  
- To what extent do relevant stakeholders (i.e., family members, general education teachers, special education teachers, graduation coaches, school counselors, community services providers, related service providers, employers, and students) engage in the transition assessment process?  
- To what extent do students and families learn about transition assessment results prior to the IEP and IPE meetings? | % of IEPs and IPEs that document transition assessment in the domains of academic, cognitive, career interest and aptitude, functional, adaptive behavior and independent living, and self-determination skills assessment information  
% of IEPs and IPEs that document transition assessment gathered through career awareness, exploration, and on-the-job training activities  
# or % of students whose preferences, interests, choices, and needs were identified using transition assessments  
# or % of students whose present level of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP) reflect transition-related assessments  
# or % of relevant stakeholders that participate in the transition assessment process  
# or % of students that report learning their transition assessment results prior to the IEP and IPE meetings |
|---|---|---|
| 1.5 | To what extent:  
- is transition-focused planning started by age 14?  
- are responsibilities of partners and agencies specified and evaluated?  
- are cultural and linguistic considerations embedded throughout the planning process?  
- is planning time adequate to engage all stakeholders?  
- are the planning meeting time and place scheduled in order to engage all relevant stakeholders?  
- are processes, time, and place supportive of family engagement?  
- does the transition planning process consider integrated developmental and service settings with appropriate supports?  
- are student’s personal needs addressed in planning (e.g., financial, medical, guardianship, etc.)? | % of responses positively indicating that all responsibilities of partners and agencies are specified and evaluated  
% of responses positively indicating that cultural and linguistic considerations are embedded throughout the planning process  
# or % of stakeholders reporting adequate engagement in the planning process  
# or % of family members reporting appropriate engagement  
% of responses positively indicating that the transition planning process considers integrated developmental and service settings with appropriate supports  
Y/N student’s personal needs are addressed in planning |
| 1.6 | To what extent:  
- is planning student-centered (e.g., applies person-center planning; MAPS, PATH, PFP)?  
- are students prepared to actively participate in the transition planning process?  
- does the student facilitate the IEP meeting?  
- do students drive decisions?  
- do students evaluate their progress on IEP and IPE goals?  
- do students evaluate their participation in the transition planning process and IEP and IPE meeting? | # or % of students that have the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to participate in the transition planning process  
# or % of IEP and IPE meetings that are student-facilitated  
# or % of decisions that are driven by students  
# or % of students that evaluate their progress on IEP and IPE goals  
Y/N students evaluate their participation in the transition planning process |
| 1.7 | • To what extent does student educational program correspond to specific post-school goals?  
• To what extent does the program or course of study align with the student’s pathway to graduation?  
• To what extent do students, families, teachers, and others understand the requirements for a standard, state-sanctioned diploma or other exit documents?  
• To what extent do students and their families understand the positive and negative aspects of a selected graduation pathway? | • # or % student educational program that correspond with specific post-school goals  
• # or % of programs or courses of study that align with the student’s pathway to graduation  
• % of responses positively indicating that students, families, teachers, and others understand the requirements for a standard, state-sanctioned diploma or other exit documents  
• % of responses positively indicating that students and their families understand the positive and negative aspects of a selected graduation pathway |
Strategies to Improve Secondary Education and Transition Services

NTACT’s online planning tool is designed to lead your team through an empowerment process in which you review your data, reflect on your performance, develop plans for program improvement, and assess your outcomes. This page provides detailed information for implementing NTACT’s capacity building model at the local level. With this information you can develop substantive plans to improve secondary education and transition services for youth with disabilities.

Goals

A fundamental component of any good plan is the goals on which the plan is focused. The goals in your team planning tool provide the foundation for your capacity building and program improvement activities. Goals must be succinctly articulated and aimed at ultimately producing a benefit for students. Good goals have the following characteristics:

- They are presented in action terms
- They are focused on outcomes rather than process
- They state what you intend to accomplish, not what you intend to “do”.

Improvement Strategies

The NTACT model for extending transition research to practice within a state focuses on two important components: increasing local capacity and facilitating implementation of evidence-based practices. Aligned with typical state agency functions, the NTACT model includes activities in four primary, but integrated areas designed to foster increased capacity and facilitate implementation of evidence-based practices: data-based decision-making at state and local levels, professional development, technical assistance, and policy analysis and change.

For a local setting, the focus switches from building capacity to making program improvements that include support for and implementation of evidence-based practices. NTACT identified four primary strategies that assist with implementation of evidence-based practices in the Taxonomy of Transition Programming 2.0:

- Develop and/or expand collaborations and partnerships
- Develop and/or revise curricula or materials
- Implement and/or change events
- Develop and/or change policies or procedures

In this section, we provide definitions, key characteristics, and reflective questions to help you identify the strategies to include in your improvement plan.
### Develop and/or Expand Collaborations and Partnerships

**Definition**
- Collaborations and partnerships are developed or expanded with businesses, families, service providers, and other educators. These key partnerships provide a mechanism through which you establish school and community teams, provide a context to assist students and their families, form alliances and other relationships through which to access resources, and cooperate to solve issues and remove barriers to student success.

**Key Characteristics**
- Collaborations and partnerships create learning opportunities for students, families, and other important audiences.
- Collaborations and partnerships support and influence programmatic changes to implement evidence-based practices and effective transition services.
- Data from a variety of educational and adult service systems are aligned to produce a comprehensive picture of education and service provision and their outcomes (e.g., rehabilitation, career and technical education, mental health).
- Results from state performance and compliance data are compiled and communicated to a variety of audiences through relevant and appropriate media.
- Results from referral databases, stakeholder-specific presentations, and events are compiled and communicated to a variety of audiences through relevant and appropriate media.

**Reflective Questions**
- What are the current collaborations and partnerships present in your context?
- Who is responsible for creating new connections?
- Who is responsible for drafting memoranda of understanding (MOUs)?
- What are the best formats and/or media for conveying information to your various audiences?
- How are results of other data sources (e.g., employment data from DOL, case closure data from DVR, service access data from DD/MH) compiled and shared with stakeholders to help guide program improvements?
- How are different stakeholders invited to student transition planning meetings and/or community transition team meetings?
- Who are the additional stakeholders needed to fill in the gaps evident in your current transition education and service programs?
- What types of data are collected to evaluate effectiveness of collaborations?
- How are these data analyzed and used to make improvements?

### Develop and/or Revise Curricula or Materials

**Definition**
- Curricula and other transition-related materials are developed or revised to incorporate evidence-based practices, implement changes to programs or classes to improve transition planning and skill development, and to improve evaluation of practices and programs.

**Key Characteristics**
- Curricula and materials support implementation of evidence-based practices and transition education and services.
- Curricula and materials generate data and information to be used for assessing student achievement, strengths, and needs on which transition planning can be based.
- Curricula and materials generate data and information for making programmatic changes.
- Professional development and/or technical assistance is provided to support changes or implementation of curricula and/or materials.
- Data are collected and analyzed to evaluate outcomes and make improvements.
- Curricula and materials are sensitive to the different cultural and linguistic differences in your community.

**Reflective Questions**
- What curricula and/or materials are currently used to build students’ academic and transition knowledge and skills?
- Are these materials supported with evidence of effectiveness with your specific student populations?
Using transitionprogramtool.org for Secondary Education and Transition Services • Introduction and Resources

Using transitionprogramtool.org for Secondary Education and Transition Services • Introduction and Resources

Who creates or identifies the materials needed?

What systems are in place to evaluate the effectiveness of the curricula?

How are new materials or curricula chosen or developed?

How are new materials or curricula rolled out for implementation?

How are educators and other relevant stakeholders prepared to use new materials and or curricula?

How are new materials and curricula screened to assure they are sensitive to cultural differences and avoid gender and/or disability bias?

Are education, service, and other transition-related materials available in different languages to meet the needs of your community?

Are data currently being collected regarding curricula effectiveness? If not, what kind of system will be created to facilitate the collection, use, and analysis of these data?

Implement and/or Change Events

Definition

Events (e.g., transition fairs, parent nights, planning meetings) are implemented or changed to incorporate evidence-based practices, provide learning opportunities for different audiences, and create opportunities for data collection and analysis of their effectiveness.

Key Characteristics

Events are created, conducted, and/or expanded to provide students and other stakeholders occasions to gather relevant information regarding education and employment opportunities and transition services.

Data are collected from events to inform future events, and to identify additional needs.

Learning opportunities are provided through school-based and community-based events to gather assessment information, support IEP goals, foster information collection, and generalize learning outcomes to community settings.

Reflective Questions

What events are currently happening in your school?

Are these events effective? How do you know?

How are event needs identified?

Who is responsible for creating events?

How is data collection set up?

Who analyzes event data?

How are opportunities to participate in transition-related events communicated to target audiences?

Who provides the resources needed to conduct transition-related events?

Develop and/or Change Procedures or Policies

Definition

Policies that influence implementation of evidence-based transition education and services are reviewed, changed, and/or developed to promote implementation at the local level.

Key Characteristics

A context for analysis of local policy regarding implementation of effective transition education and services is established (e.g., a local interagency transition coordinating council).

Local policies within education and service systems facilitate implementation of effective transition education and services.

Local policies across education and service systems facilitate implementation of effective transition education and services.

A variety of policy instruments are used to facilitate and promote implementation of effective transition education and services:

- Mandates
- Inducements
- Capacity building
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflective Questions</th>
<th>System change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The impact of various policy instruments on implementation of effective transition education and services is evaluated and used to plan further improvements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- What structure is used to routinely identify and address policy issues?
- Do local policies across systems facilitate implementation of evidence- and research-based practices?
- Do agency policies exist that serve as barriers to implementation? Which policies are problematic?
- Do policies at the local level promote or inhibit collaborative service delivery? How?
- Are a variety of policy instruments used to facilitate and promote implementation of (a) student-focused planning practices, (b) practices that promote college and career readiness of students, (c) family engagement, and (d) interagency collaboration? Which policies?
  - Mandates
  - Inducements
  - Capacity building
  - System change
- Have these policies produced the intended results or outcomes?
Example: A Plan to Improve Student-Focused Planning Practices

This example illustrates the content of an improvement plan focused on increasing student engagement in their IEP development. The plan identifies specific goal-related tasks, the person(s) responsible for the task, and the timeframe for implementation. As illustrated, a good plan also includes relevant (a) outputs or products to be produced, (b) anticipated or expected outcomes, (c) indicators that will determine whether the outcomes were achieved, and (d) data sources by which evidence will be collected. As a resource, use the checklist on the next page to help you clarify your goals, tasks, outputs, and anticipated outcomes. If you need to include additional stakeholders in your plan and/or need technical assistance to implement your plan, indicate in the space provided. This example combines Steps 3a and 3b from the online system to help save space in this document. Although the format is somewhat different, the content is basically the same.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CAPACITY BUILDING FOCUS AREA</th>
<th>Student-Focused Planning</th>
<th>Student Development</th>
<th>Interagency Collaboration</th>
<th>Family Engagement</th>
<th>Program Structures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goal: Increase use of transition assessments to develop post-school goals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Improvement Strategies (select all that apply)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Collaboration and partnerships</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Curricula or materials</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Events</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Policies or procedures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TASKS</th>
<th>PERSON</th>
<th>COMPLETION DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conduct the &quot;NTACT Survey of Transition Assessment Planning Practices&quot; as a pre-test to determine what teachers are currently using by grade level</td>
<td>Rosie Parker and Lisa Liu</td>
<td>8/20/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify what transition assessments are available in the district</td>
<td>Rosie Parker and Charles Tremont</td>
<td>9/24/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create a committee to review survey data, list of transition assessments, and create a scope and sequence by grade level for grades 8-12</td>
<td>Rosie Parker</td>
<td>10/1/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Host committee meeting(s)</td>
<td>Rosie Parker</td>
<td>10/8/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create scope and sequence of age appropriate transition assessments by grade level</td>
<td>Rosie Parker and committee</td>
<td>11/28/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create materials for professional development for case managers to implementing the scope and sequence</td>
<td>Rosie Parker and Charles Tremont</td>
<td>12/18/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct professional development and video record for later use</td>
<td>Rosie Parker and Charles Tremont</td>
<td>1/9/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case managers implement scope and sequence for Spring IEPs</td>
<td>Rosie Parker and Lisa Liu</td>
<td>4/22/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct the &quot;NTACT Survey of Transition Assessment Planning Practices&quot; as a post-test</td>
<td>Rosie Parker and Lisa Liu</td>
<td>5/8/15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess Spring IEPs to determine to monitor the use of transition assessments</td>
<td>Rosie Parker and Indicator data lead</td>
<td>6/5/15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Outputs/Products**
- "NTACT Survey of Transition Assessment Planning Practices" and survey report
- List of Transition Assessment
- Invitations to join the committee
- Work plan, agendas, handouts including the "NTACT Transition Assessment Toolkit"
- ABC School District Scope and Sequence of Transition Assessments Grades 8-12
- Handouts and materials
- Presentation, handouts, website with access to PD videos and materials
- List of Spring IEPs, completed transition assessments
- "NTACT Survey of Transition Assessment Planning Practices" and survey report
- Monitoring report

**Expected Outcomes**
- Increased case manager knowledge and skills to implement age appropriate transition assessments
- Increased # of transition assessments used in IEPs for grades 8-12

**Indicators**
- # of case managers that score higher on the transition assessment survey post-test
- # of case managers that increase the number any type of transition assessments used in IEPs
- # of IEPs with evidence of assessments used
- Average number of assessments used in sample of IEPs

**Data Sources**
- "NTACT Survey of Transition Assessment Planning Practices" pre-test and post-tests
- IEP documents
- Student IEPs and local Indicator 13 results
- Student IEPs grades 8-12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you need additional stakeholders to assist with implementation or to approve this goal?</td>
<td>☑️</td>
<td>☐️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you need additional resources to implement this plan?</td>
<td>☑️</td>
<td>☐️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you need additional technical assistance to implement this plan?</td>
<td>☑️</td>
<td>☐️</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Technical Assistance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entire transition team, school leadership</td>
<td>Extra planning time prior to semester start</td>
<td>System for using assessments Assessment examples with timeline</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Checklist for Identifying and Evaluating Program Goals, Tasks, Outputs, and Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Area</th>
<th>Considerations and Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goals</strong></td>
<td>‣ Be specific.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Identify what you are trying to accomplish.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Think in terms of outcomes rather than process or products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‣ Is the goal achievable within the specified timeframe?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>› Is the goal measurable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>› Is the goal within the scope of your control?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>› Is the goal action-oriented?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>› Is the goal realistic?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tasks</strong></td>
<td>‣ Is the task action-oriented?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>› Will the activity move you toward your goal?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>› Is the task theoretically-based?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>› Is the task do-able with available resources?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outputs/Products</strong></td>
<td>‣ Think in terms of “product” — something that will be produced?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>› Is the “product” producible with the available resources?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>› Will the outputs move you toward your goal?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expected Outcomes</strong></td>
<td>‣ Think in terms of impact—what do you expect to happen as a result of your tasks and outputs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>› Is the expected outcome specific?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>› Is the expected outcome meaningful?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>› Is the expected outcome measurable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indicators</strong></td>
<td>‣ Are specific indicators needed or required by specific audiences (e.g., Feds, state, etc.?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>› What information do you need to answer the important evaluation question(s)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>› Is the indicator specific?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>› Is the indicator measurable?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>› Is the indicator meaningful?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>› Is the indicator short or long-term (need both)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>› Is the indicator possible with available resources?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data Sources</strong></td>
<td>‣ Are information sources identified?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>› Available from existing sources?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>› New sources must be developed?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>› What methods will you use to collect information?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>› Must information be collected about all students?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>› Can sampling methods be used?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>› Who will collect the information?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>› Do arrangements need to be made for data collection?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>› Do data collection instruments need to be developed?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Example: Evidence-Based Practices, Predictors, and Planning Components for Improving Student-Focused Planning

| Evidence-Based Practices | › Student knowledge of Transition Planning  
| Interactions  
| Student participation in the IEP Meeting |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Predictors of Post-School Success | › Student support  
| Transition program |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|

| Example Goal Starters | › We will increase Indicator 13 compliance to 100% ...  
| Interactions  
| We will increase youth involvement in their IEP and IPE ...  
| We will increase student self-advocacy during transition planning...  
| We will increase cultural and linguistic consideration embedded in the transition planning process...  
| We will ensure students are prepared to actively participate in their IEP... |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|

| Task Examples | › Review the current IEP and IPE planning processes  
| Interactions  
| Review SPP/APR Indicator 13, 14, and rehabilitation data to identify gaps in the IEP and IPE transition planning components  
| Use an IEP and IPE document that emphasizes student participation in the IEP and IPE meeting  
| Provide staff professional development to:  
| Increase student participation  
| Improve Indicator 13 compliance  
| Improve successful case closures  
| Address cultural and linguistic diversity  
| Develop guides to assist with implementing student-centered planning  
| Create cross-agency policies that address roles and responsibilities for transition service provision  
| Create cross-agency guidelines, documents, and tools to better align IEPs with IPEs  
| Review policies or procedures that inhibit or impede student-focused planning practices, including student involvement  
| Develop new comprehensive age appropriate transition assessment guidelines  
| Implement a broader range of transition assessment instruments  
| Develop scope and sequence for implementing transition assessments  
| Develop new course of study guidelines  
| Develop practice opportunities for skill development |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|

| Output/Product Examples | › Report on IEP and IPE planning processes  
| Interactions  
| Report on gaps in the IEP and IPE transition planning components  
| New IEP and IPE planning forms  
| Professional development agenda, handouts, site, certificate, evaluation, etc.  
| Guide to implementing students-centered planning  
| Updated cross-agency policies  
| Updated guidelines  
| Family and/or student planning guide  
| Assessment instruments  
| Scope and sequence  
| New course of study guidelines |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
**Outcome Examples**

- Increased Indicator 13 compliance
- Increased youth attendance at IEP meetings
- Increased youth participation in the transition planning process
- Increased youth self-advocacy and self-determination during transition planning
- Increased coordination of transition activities and services
- Increased number of goals identified by youth
- Increased percent of youth that evaluate their progress in meeting IEP and IPE goals
- Increased youth participation in the transition planning process and IEP and IPE meetings
- Increased alignment between IEPs and IPEs
- Increased use of comprehensive age appropriate assessments
- Increased postsecondary goals formed from assessment information
- Increased stakeholder participation for transition planning
- Increased stakeholder satisfaction in the transition planning process
- Increased alignment of program or course of study with the exit requirements associated with the selected graduation pathway
- Increase in transition services delivered as planned

**Indicator Examples**

- % of compliance IEPs
- % of student attendance at IEP meeting
- # or % of youth that participated in their IEP and IPE meeting
- # or % of IEP and IPE meetings that are youth-facilitated
- # or % of youth demonstrating increased self-advocacy/self-determination during transition planning
- % of stakeholders reporting an increased coordination of transition activities and services
- # or % of relevant stakeholders that participate in the transition assessment process
- # of coordination of transition activities and services
- % of youth that identified their goals
- % of youth that evaluated their progress
- Y/N students evaluate their participation in the transition planning process
- # or % of IEPs and IPEs that align
- # and type of transition assessments reported per IEP and IPE
- % of IEPs and IPEs that document transition assessment in the domains of academic, cognitive, career interest and aptitude, functional, adaptive behavior and independent living, and self-determination skills assessment information
- % of IEPs and IPEs that document transition assessment gathered through career awareness, exploration, and on-the-job training activities
- # or % of postsecondary goals formed from transition assessment data
- # or % of stakeholders participating in the transition planning process
- % of stakeholders that reported satisfaction with the transition planning process
- % of IEPs showing alignment between the program or course of study and the selected graduation pathway
- # or % of students whose transition services align with postsecondary goals
- # or % of services that are (a) delivered or (b) undelivered
- % of discrepancies in service delivery addressed
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Source Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- IEPs and IPEs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- SPP/APR report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Student records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Client records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Student artifacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Evaluation data (i.e., surveys, interviews, focus groups, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Pre/post test results</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>