Bridging the Gap Between Eighth and Ninth Grades: Effective Middle School Transition Planning and High School Preparation

OSSE Secondary Transition Institute   June 9, 2017

Christie Weaver-Harris and Chloe Woodward-Magrane

- Introduction to Secondary Transition Planning
- Best Practices for Middle Schools
- Using Data to Support the Transition to High School
  - Bridge to High School Data Exchange
  - Early Access to Students with Disabilities Data Application
- Questions and Discussion

Introduction to Secondary Transition Planning

Secondary Transition Planning: Current Legal Requirements

- The first IEP in effect after a child with a disability reaches 16 years of age must include transition assessments and services, including:
  - Appropriate measurable postsecondary goals
  - A statement of inter-agency responsibilities; and
  - If the IEP team determines that transition services are not needed, the IEP must include a statement to that effect and the basis upon which the determination was made.
- Anticipated that age of secondary transition planning will lower to 14 on July 1, 2018.

5-E DCMR §3009

- Required IEP Team Members
  - The student (5-E DCMR §3003.4(a)(1), (b))
  - Representative of other agencies likely responsible for providing or paying for transition services (5-E DCMR §3003.4(a)(2), (c))
- Parent Participation (5-E DCMR §3003.6(d)-(e))
  - Meeting invitation must state:
    - A purpose of the meeting is to determine transition services;
    - The student will be invited; and
    - Other agencies that will be invited.

Transition Services--include:

(a) A coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability, designed within an outcome-oriented process, that promote movement from school to post-school activities including:

> (1) Post-secondary education;
>
> (2) Vocational training;
>
> (3) Integrated employment, including supported employment;
>
> (4) Continuing and adult education;
>
> (5) Adult services;
>
> (6) Independent living; or
>
> (7) Community participation.

(b) Activities based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's preferences and interests including:

> (1) Instruction, related services, community experiences, development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives;
>
> (2) Acquisition of daily living skills, if appropriate; and
>
> (3) Functional vocational evaluation, if appropriate.

Transition services for children with disabilities may be special education, if provided as specially designed instruction, or related services, if required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education.   5-E DCMR §3001

- Describe what student wants to achieve after high school in the following areas:
  - Education
  - Training
  - Employment
  - Independent living (when appropriate)
- Must be measurable
- Based on age-appropriate transition assessment data

34 CFR §300.320(b)(1)

- IEP Team must determine a student's course of study and develop a graduation plan during eighth grade.

  - Reviewed and updated annually.

- Course of study: a description of the coursework necessary to prepare the student for post-school activities.

  - Improve the academic and functional achievement of the student to facilitate advancement from secondary to post-school life;

  - Align with transition goals; and

  - Align with academic requirements for a high school diploma or IEP Certificate of Completion.

5 D.C.M.R. §2203.1; OSSE's Secondary Transition Policy

- Ensures student will gain knowledge and skills to qualify for and successfully complete at least one of the following pathways:
  - Two or four year postsecondary education program
  - Technical/vocational program
  - Apprenticeship
  - Or on-the-job training that results in a postsecondary credential (e.g., certificate, license, Associates, or Bachelor's degree)
- Diploma vs. "non-diploma" track.
  - What is an IEP Certificate of Completion?

The LEA must:

- Provide written notice to parents that the student has been placed on a non-diploma course of study;

- Provide understandable information on the differences between a diploma and non-diploma course of study;

- Obtain written acknowledgement that the parent has been informed and understands the student is on a non-diploma course of study; and

- Ensure the IEP contains a statement describing why the high school diploma is not appropriate for the student and that the parent and student were fully informed about decision.

OSSE's Secondary Transition Policy

Middle School Transition Best Practices

- Treat high school transition as part of postsecondary transition.
  - Consider student concerns, needs, and goals related to 8th-to-9th grade transition and success in high school.
  - Ensure the student understands and is prepared for high school rules, expectations, and processes.
- Make it relevant.
  - Discuss with the student the importance of planning for postsecondary life, and how transition to high school is the first step.
- Take a whole-student approach.
  - Consider what supports may be needed for a successful academic, emotional, behavioral, and social transition to high school.

- Use a variety of data sources to your advantage.
  - Consider high school readiness assessments.
  - Student and parent input.
  - State-level data systems:
    - SEDS Secondary Transition Planning Report;
    - Bridges to High School Data Exchange; and
    - Early Access to Students with Disabilities Data Application.
- Focus on annual transition goals.
  - Consider what skills and knowledge the student already possesses that support postsecondary goals.
  - Describe skills and knowledge the student must attain this academic year to progress towards achieving postsecondary goals.

Best Practices for Middle School Transition: Annual vs. Postsecondary Goals

Annual Goals	Postsecondary Goals
• Short-term	• Long-term
• Occurs during high school	• Occurs after graduation from high school
• Determined by the IEP Team	• Determined by the student
• Designed to be measured at least quarterly	• Initially stated in broad terms, becoming more specific and refined each year
• Stated in specific terms	• Must be related to student's strengths, interests, and preferences and aligned with transition assessments
• Must be related to postsecondary goals, present levels of performance, and transition activities	

- Self-determination
  - Evaluate how disability impacts daily life.
  - Describe needed accommodations and how they help.
  - Participate in IEP by discussing likes, dislikes, preferences and dreams.
  - Participate in assessments and understand how the results relate to transition plan.
- Postsecondary education and training
  - Demonstrate time management and organizational skills.
  - Discuss the requirements of high school and options for course of study.
  - Explore the acceptance requirements for postsecondary schools.
  - Understand what areas of needed support (e.g., assistive technology).
  - Understand actions and consequences.

From Tri-State Transition Slide Guide (DE Dept. of Education, PA Dept. of Education, and VA Dept. of Education)

- Employment
  - Describe employability skills.
  - Explore career and technical education course and program options.
  - Begin developing career portfolio.
  - Engage in community service or volunteering.
- Independent living skills
  - State your health care and medication needs.
  - Participate in extracurricular and community activities.
  - Establish healthy relationships with peers, friends, or mentors.
  - Learn about resources in community.
  - Understand health/medical needs.

From Tri-State Transition Slide Guide (DE Dept. of Education, PA Dept. of Education, and VA Dept. of Education)

Bridge to High School Data Exchange

- Collaborative effort between OSSE, Raise DC, and LEAs, OSSE facilitates an early exchange of key student data from middle to high schools.
  - Data points shared include: student demographics, attendance, EL status, primary disability category, end-of-year Math and ELA course and grades, optional anecdotal information on student strengths
  - For 2017, adding chronic absenteeism and interim assessments (MAP, A Net, iReady)
- Piloted in 2016 with 11 LEAs and data for 2,000+ students (700 students across LEAs)

- In 2017, 91 percent of eligible middle and high schools participating

- Updates include adding interim assessment information and getting information to high schools sooner

- Developing a process for participating middle schools to receive information about student enrollment and performance in high school

  – Mid-year and end-of-year Math and ELA course information

  – Promotion status

  – Credits accrued

- Network exploring additional opportunities for middle/high school connections – "Kid Talks" pilot

- Gives LEAs timely and appropriate access to information for students with disabilities starting in May, including those who will be newly enrolling in the LEA for the 2017-18 school year.

  - Available in Qlik Sense to LEA Data Managers and Special Education Points of Contact (SE POCs).

- Updated daily and reflects changes in enrollment.

- Provides student demographic information from SLED as well as comprehensive data points in SEDS including:

  - Primary disability category
  - Eligibility start and end dates
  - IEP start and end dates
  - Special education level
  - Weekly service hours
  - Assistive technology

  - Related services: setting, time, frequency
  - Least restrictive environment
  - Dedicated aide and hours
  - Transportation eligibility and mode
  - ESY eligibility

- Guide meaningful discussions around needs and preparedness.

- Compare staffing levels with student needs.

- Determine additional staff training needs.

- Plan for dedicated aide allocations.

- Review student information to determine classroom and cohort assignments.

- Prepare to complete transportation requests.

- Develop a calendar of meetings.

- Coordinate records transfers with sending schools.

- Establish relationships with parents.

- Regularly destroy exported data to protect student privacy.

Q&A

Contact Information

Christie Weaver-Harris

Policy Manager

Division of Elementary, Secondary, and Specialized Education

Email: Christie.Weaver-Harris@dc.gov

Phone: (202) 741-0470

Chloe Woodward-Magrane

Division of Postsecondary & Career Education

Email: Chloe.Woodward-Magrane@dc.gov

Phone: (202) 304-2213

Thank you!