



FOCUS on Results

Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services

October 2011

In FOCUS*Transition Coordinators*

"The only thing that is constant is change," wrote the Greek philosopher Heraclitus in 500 B.C. As humans who have transitioned from the atomic age to the space age and on to the rapidly evolving digital age in our own lifetimes, we know that is true. Change is the human condition, and though often for the better, it is rarely easy—just think back to the last time you started a new job or tried to program a new device.

No change is more difficult, or important, than the transition from school to adult life, whether it happens at age 18, age 26, or somewhere in between.

This **FOCUS on Results** document looks at the work of the transition coordinator and his or her role in helping students with disabilities move successfully from special education supports and services to the next phase of life.

This **FOCUS on Results** document includes:

- A description of the role and requirements of a transition coordinator. **Page 1**
- Interviews with transition coordinators from around the state. **Page 3**

This **FOCUS on Results** document addresses:

Transition

Assisting Youth From High School to Postsecondary Goals

Transition Coordinators Bring Diverse Skills and Creative Solutions to Transition Challenges

The transition of youth with disabilities first became a national priority in the early 1980s under the leadership of Madeleine Will—former assistant secretary for the U.S. Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) and an advocate who has led efforts to establish services for individuals with disabilities for more than three decades. Describing transition as "a bridge between the security and structure offered by the school and the risks of life," the OSERS model focused solely on employment as a postsecondary outcome and geared all transition services and experiences toward preparing and placing youth in jobs.

The following decade brought, of course, change. The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) of 1990 first mandated transition services, but it was the reauthorization of the IDEA in 1997 that truly broadened the definition of transition to include such outcomes as postsecondary education, independent living, and community participation, in addition to employment.

With a new century came still more adjustments to the rules governing transition. The most recent version of the law, IDEA 2004, mandates that transition planning must be in effect and

documented in the individualized education program (IEP) by age 16, taking into account the student's strengths and interests. To meet this requirement, transition planning must begin at an earlier age. The IEP should include appropriate, measurable postsecondary goals and a description of the transition services needed to reach those goals (see Glossary on page 12).

When transition plans are discussed, transition-aged students must be specifically invited to attend their IEP meetings; an invitation must also be extended to any public agency likely to be responsible for providing or paying for transition services. IDEA 2004 also required states to develop a six-year State Performance Plan (SPP) followed by an Annual Performance Report (APR) to evaluate the state's progress toward implementing the IDEA mandates. The federal government's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) identified various aspects of special education to monitor in the SPP and the APR, called indicators. There are 20 indicators in Part B of IDEA that cover K-12 education.

Michigan's transition-related indicators require school districts to collect data on the percent of

State Performance Plan Indicator 13

For an IEP to comply with SPP Indicator 13, each of the following conditions must be met:

1. The student must be invited to the IEP.
2. Postsecondary vision (goals)—including employment, further education, and independent living—are identified, measurable, and updated annually.
3. The IEP identifies
 - a) academic achievement,
 - b) functional performance, and
 - c) transition-related needs.
4. The IEP identifies transition services that align with the student's goals.
5. Any agency likely to provide and/or pay for transition services must be invited to the IEP.
6. At least one measurable annual IEP goal is identified.



youth with IEPs that meet specific requirements (see sidebar on SPP Indicator 13) and on the percent of youth with IEPs who are employed and/or enrolled in postsecondary education within one year of leaving high school (see sidebar on SPP indicator 14).

Coordinate: “To Harmonize in a Common Action or Effort”

As stated in the IDEA 2004, the basis of the transition process is planning for and providing “a coordinated set of activities,” leading to postsecondary outcomes appropriate for and desired by the student and his or her family. This set of activities may require an extensive array of processes and programs over a course of years involving the student, parents, school staff, and a variety of agencies. Transition coordinators are instrumental in helping these activities work in harmony, both at the district level and on a personal level for each individual student.

Each intermediate school district (ISD) in Michigan has a designated transition coordinator. These ISD transition coordinators are supported, in part, by funds designated by the Michigan Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Early Intervention Services (MDE, OSE-EIS) to support transition under the secondary *Transition Coordination Grant*.

All ISD transition coordinators must have approval as required by the *Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education* (MARSE). They must have a degree in special education or a field related to transition of youth with disabilities. He or she has also been involved in transition-

related services or teaching for at least three years prior to taking the job. Download the MARSE from www.cenmi.org for more information about approval requirements.

With one foot firmly planted in the school system, the transition coordinator reaches out to form and/or maintain connections with the many state and local agencies that provide services for students with disabilities. Ideally, these agencies will collaborate with schools and each other to serve the vocational goals and postsecondary living needs of all students in the ISD. Often, transition coordinators work creatively with agencies and their ISD to develop innovative programs tailored to serve their particular populations.

ISD transition coordinators are also responsible for the implementation of the *Transition Coordination Grant*, which includes analyzing and utilizing data to plan for improvement.

Some of the data used for improvement planning comes from SPP transition Indicators 13 and 14 and as well as SPP Indicators 1 (Graduation), 2 (Dropout), 5 (Educational Environments), and 8 (Facilitated Parent Involvement). Each spring, districts are provided with a random sampling list of IEPs to review for compliance with SPP Indicator 13. ISD transition coordinators are responsible for the coordination of the IEP reviews, data collection, and reporting. Data is entered via the Continuous Improvement and Monitoring System (CIMS). Since SPP Indicator 13 is a compliance indicator, the state must meet 100 percent to be in compliance. For SPP Indicator 14, ISD transition coordinators are responsible for the coordination of

the collection of exiting students' contact information for use in an MDE survey—administered by Wayne State University's Center for Urban Studies—on postsecondary outcomes.

ISD transition coordinators play a key role in ensuring that local districts and staff are aware of educational responsibilities in providing transition services, and, perhaps most fundamentally, serve as a support and resource for students with IEPs. Most transition coordinators do not have a caseload but instead attend IEPs by invitation from special education teachers, parents, or local directors.

Just as the Upper Peninsula's rolling Copper Country differs from the farmlands of Ionia County and the populous streets of Wayne County, there are many combinations and variations within this position. Some counties have a full-time ISD-level coordinator directly serving the local districts. Larger counties may have transition specialists or contacts at the local level (in addition to the ISD coordinators), many of whom have other responsibilities. Some have teachers who serve as the transition specialists or contacts at the local school level. There are a variety of approaches for meeting the transition needs of students.

Meet Some of Michigan's Dedicated Transition Coordinators

Maria Peak, Eaton ISD: Supporting a Comprehensive Approach for Transition to Adult Life

Maria Peak is one busy person. As the sole transition coordinator for Eaton Intermediate School District (ISD), she serves students in five local districts and may attend up to 200 IEPs each year. "I think my record is 27 in one day," she smiles. Peak, who has a special education degree in cognitive impairments with additional certification for early childhood, has held her position since 1995 when her title was Work-Study Coordinator, and she dealt mainly with job training and placement.

The focus of her work broadened after the IDEA 1997 revisions. "We opened up to looking at all the domain areas. Instead of just focusing on employment, we began looking at adult living, at further education—at the whole person, the whole life. And it's so much for the better. I've found that if we don't address those other areas, the employment piece often

doesn't come together, because multiple issues in the students' lives must be considered."

Although young adult transition centers now exist in many communities, this wasn't the case early in Peak's career. "I saw this gaping hole," she says. "We needed something between high school and the 'real world' because some of our students needed a year or two of additional supports. They needed adult living skills—how to do a budget, how to find housing, how to use public transportation, how to get a driver's license."

So Peak and her former special education director secured funding for a storefront in downtown Charlotte, where students ages 18 to 26 with IEPs could get help and instruction in the practical areas of life. After 15 years, the program continues to provide transition supports and services to young adults throughout the county. One thing Peak stresses for teachers and the rest of the transition team is to let the student take an early lead in his

State Performance Plan Indicator 14

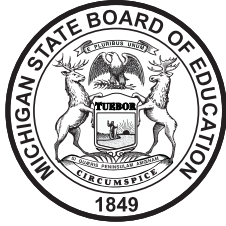
SPP Indicator 14 measures the percentage of students who are no longer in secondary school, had IEPs in effect at the time they left school, and are classified as one of the following:

1. Enrolled in higher education within one year of leaving high school.
2. Enrolled in higher education or competitively employed within one year of leaving high school.
3. Enrolled in higher education or some other postsecondary education training program; or competitively employed or in some other employment within one year of leaving high school.

Local District Transition Coordinators

Many local districts have employees working full or part time who focus on transition services. These transition coordinators meet the unique needs of the local district and work in conjunction with the ISD transition coordinator. The secondary transition coordinator rule in the MARSE that is applied for determining ISD transition coordinators may also be applied to individuals at the local level.





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or her own self-determination development. "I tell them that if they start the meeting off with the question, 'What do you want to do?,' the whole tone of the meeting changes. Instead of focusing on paperwork, we're providing the student and parents with the information they really want."

Peak, who received the C. David Anderson Award from the Michigan Transition Services Association (MTSA) in 2010 for excellence in transition leadership, loves her wide-ranging responsibilities, especially working directly with students and making connections within the community. "My eyes and ears are open all the time. I compulsively pick up brochures wherever I go, looking for new programs, resources, and ideas that will benefit our students."

Juli Lepley, Ottawa Area ISD: Bringing New Ideas to the Transition Community

"To get the word out about transition services, we stage the 'Road Show,' where members from a panel of agency representatives from our Transition Council give short presentations on their organizations," says Juli Lepley, transition coordinator for Ottawa Area ISD. "Sometimes we bring the Road Show to parents' nights at the high schools, and it's also gone to Grand Valley State University for the students graduating with special education degrees. Parents, students, and professors all love it, and this is information everyone should have—not just transition professionals."

Lepley is a strong believer in teamwork and relies on volunteers from the area's Focus Team to write up transition procedures and provide input on transition assessments. The Focus Team is comprised of 30 local transition specialists, most of whom are full-time teachers who have been selected by the local educational agencies' special education directors. She notes that the Focus

Team was instrumental in calling for an alternative to the Enderle-Severson Transition Rating Scales currently used, the ESTR-J and ESTR-III assessments, when those tools proved inappropriate for the lowest functioning students. As a result, the ESTR-S was developed and piloted with her groups.

"Enabling the people on our team to step up and be involved is something I'm proud of," says Lepley. "It was empowering for our team to advocate for that change."

Steve Hamilton, Kent ISD: Finding Employment Through Collaboration

Kent County ISD encompasses Grand Rapids and 19 other school districts. Like everywhere else in Michigan, finding competitive employment is a challenge, especially for individuals with disabilities.

According to Hamilton, Kent is one of the first counties in Michigan to be involved with Project Search. This national initiative provides students with various disabilities total immersion in a health care or business setting during their last year of high school. "It's a collaboration between the ISD, Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS), a local school district, and a community agency sponsor," says Hamilton. "Here in Grand Rapids, Hope Network sponsors about a dozen students who are placed either with Spectrum Health or with Fifth-Third Financial Center for three 13-week rotations."

Students spend their mornings in on-site classrooms learning soft skills and life skills while earning credit toward their diploma. Afternoons are spent on the job, supported by an MRS job coach. "Students come out job-ready, with a diploma and experience. Often they're hired by one of their host sites; if not, MRS will pick them up and do job development for them," says Hamilton. "It's one of the nicest collaborative projects I've seen."

Lois Weber, Copper Country ISD: Creating a Sense of Community Across Great Distances to Support Transition

Stationed way up in Hancock on the Keweenaw Peninsula, Lois Weber is the ISD transition coordinator for the tri-county area known as Copper Country ISD. "I do a lot of driving," she laughs, routinely traveling the 75-mile round trip to L'Anse and Baraga County to the south. Trained as an occupational therapist, Weber relishes her role in creating collaborations that address all aspects of a student's future. "Occupational therapy [OT] deals with everyday living and helping people become independent, so this is a good fit."

Weber is particularly enthusiastic about Students Training On Mentoring Peers (S.T.O.M.P.), a program started by her predecessor in collaboration with Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS). "Back in 1999, middle school special education students said they'd like to hear from older students with disabilities—how they were managing high school and planning for their futures—so this mentoring program was born," says Weber. Once a month, 30 to 40 student volunteers from all 13 high schools in the ISD meet in Hancock for a two-hour training session. These training sessions, designed by Weber and her MRS partner Kathy Flagstadt, cover topics such as the importance of attending IEPs, how to deal with teasing or bullying, and how to set achievable goals, as well as tips on mentoring younger students. A community speaker or S.T.O.M.P. member is often featured, and students enjoy a pizza lunch.

In April, the student volunteers/mentors meet with the region's eighth graders to share their knowledge and experiences, for the benefit of all concerned. "The older students get just as much out of it as the younger ones," Weber remarks. "We had one girl who

wanted to become a nurse, but she stuttered so badly that she avoided social situations. Mentoring others in the S.T.O.M.P. program helped her gain confidence in social settings. She continued to stutter but was able to get out there and achieve her goal—now she's a nurse."

While the vocational and educational domains of postsecondary life demand careful attention and planning, so do the realms of independent and community living. Copper Country's Community Transition Program is a model of learning through active involvement. Serving individuals with cognitive impairment ages 18 to 26, the program was originally housed in the ISD building, where "they did a lot of sit-down, school-type work," says Weber. "But we knew they had to get out in the community and get going." She worked with Karyn Juntunen, the classroom teacher, to create transition activities in which the students access the community, run a greenhouse, work at the Houghton Goodwill Store, and much more.

Another aspect of community living is access to recreation and physical fitness. Taking advantage of the area's natural resources (i.e., plenty of snow!), Weber connected some Michigan Technical Education Center (M-TEC) volunteers with an adaptive cross-country skiing program sponsored by Superior Alliance for Independent Living (S.A.I.L.) for some quality outdoor activity during those long, long U.P. winters.

Bob Avedisian, Detroit Public Schools: Managing a Large Population by Being Proactive

The Wayne Regional Educational Service Agency (RESA) oversees 34 districts and 97 public school academies. Given the number of districts, it is impossible for ISD transition coordinator Larry Stemple to be personally involved with each. As a result, Wayne RESA

Statement of Compliance With Federal Law

The Michigan Department of Education (MDE) complies with all Federal laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination and with all requirements and regulations of the U.S. Department of Education (USED).

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What Title IX is: Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is the landmark federal law that bans sex discrimination in schools, whether it is in curricular, extra-curricular or athletic activities.

Title IX states: "No person in the U.S. shall, on the basis of sex be excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving federal aid."

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Transition Coordinator Competencies

- Knowledge of transition foundations to develop transition education, activities, and services for students, families, and service providers.
- Effective facilitation, coaching, and leadership skills at a group and individual level.
- Ability to engage in collaborative transition service delivery and utilize interagency agreements.
- Ability to facilitate/teach pertinent transition practices (issues) to support special education and agency staff including federal/Michigan law, curriculum/best practice, delivery of transition services, and interagency collaboration.
- An understanding of the outcome measurement and evaluation of transition services.



has several transition specialists at the local level.

Bob Avedisian, who is recognized by the state as a transition coordinator under the MARSE, is one of the high-level transition specialists in Wayne RESA. He oversees the Detroit Public Schools (DPS).

According to Bob Avedisian, transition coordinator, "Success in a large urban school district requires thinking outside the box to the maximum. What works in a smaller district will not work here." Avedisian and three other transition specialists take a highly proactive approach to transition in the 30 high schools and about 50 middle schools they serve. "In Detroit, we start talking transition at the end of seventh grade, regardless of age," says Avedisian, who coordinates transition for DPS under the guidance of his director, Felecia Baker.

"The law allows each local agency to make that call, and we jump on it. We give all middle school special education teachers a handbook on transition and we go in and talk with students about making that connection between the classroom and the adult world. Students begin to see the relevance of what they're learning in school, and that's helping with the dropout rate."

In this urban setting where it may not be practical to bring the students to the agencies, the agencies come to the schools.

"Community Mental Health (CMH) comes in throughout the year and does intakes," says Avedisian. And through a cash-match thanks to increased collaboration with Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS), four blended staff have been hired to bring vocational counseling and related services into the high schools.

Parent education is another key aspect to successful transition. In addition to speaking at Parent Resource Centers in the Detroit area, Avedisian and crew annually

host two district-wide parent workshops, at which agencies present information and answer questions. "We get real good attendance," says Avedisian, "and it happens every time—parents will break down and cry at these meetings when they hear how much help there is out there and how much they might have missed."

With some 1,200 teachers to train in transition compliance, Avedisian and members of his team each pay weekly visits to their assigned high schools. "Every Wednesday is mandatory professional development for the Detroit Public Schools from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. The principals have allowed us to pull out special education staff and we do our training that way. The administration's support of transition has made a big difference; our compliance has been 100 percent for the last few years."

Jobs in the Detroit area are particularly hard to come by, but Avedisian remains positive. "We're pushing the blended staff to assist with that. They're developing relationships with employers and working with the Chamber of Commerce and the Michigan Business Leadership Network. It's a challenge, but we're attacking it. We're moving in a good direction."

John Murphy, Charlevoix-Emmet ISD: Focusing on Life Skills to Assist Employability

"My kids used to ask me what I did for a living," says John Murphy, transition coordinator of the Charlevoix-Emmet Intermediate School District (CharEm ISD).

"They thought it was funny when I said that I teach teachers." He elaborates, "I teach teachers with the goal of making systemic changes in school districts so that students with disabilities are ready to exit high school with life skills, employability whenever possible, knowledge of where to get more training if necessary, and lifelong learner attitudes," he says.

Unemployment is rampant in this lovely northern vacationland, among the worst in the state, says Murphy. In an effort to bolster students' opportunities, the district has hired three employment training specialists with a cash-match from Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) to work directly with students on employability skills, taking them to job-shadowing experience and on visits to Michigan Technical Education Centers (M-TEC) and Michigan Works!

Murphy recognizes that employability is only one piece of the postsecondary puzzle. "We're also looking at productive use of time," he says. "No one works every waking hour anyway, so what are we doing with our time? We need recreational and leisure skills, ability to get along with others, the ability to communicate our wants and needs appropriately."

While worthwhile in themselves, leisure and recreational skills can sometimes lead to vocational and educational opportunities. Through Murphy's efforts, the CharEm ISD participates in VSA, The International Organization on Arts and Disability, which coordinates an annual spring arts festival that exposes middle school students to many different types of art. "Most schools are not doing much with art anymore," says Murphy. "At the festival we've got artists giving one-hour classes in painting, sculpture, ukelele playing—you name it. We're building awareness that could lead to lifelong interests and opportunities. Maybe it's working at a craft shop or doing stained glass. We have connected with several community foundations to provide assistance for talented middle and high school artists and musicians." VSA also provides monthly art experiences for students with a cognitive impairment ages 14 to 26 at the Crooked Tree Art Center in Petoskey.

Joe Delegato, Macomb County ISD: Ensuring a Plan and Supports Are in Place

Joe Delegato, transition coordinator of Macomb County ISD, chose special education as a second career ten years ago when the company he had worked for was sold. "It was time to do something from the heart," he says. Delegato works transition at both the macro and micro levels. In addition to serving as ISD transition coordinator for Macomb's 21 school districts, he manages transition and the work-study program at Lutz School in Clinton Township, a center-based program for 18 to 26 year-olds with cognitive impairments.

Lutz School, which won the governor's "Innovators to Watch" award in 1998 for its School-to-Work collaboration with Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS), has a year-round, transition-focused curriculum that follows the real-life work schedule. Many of Lutz's 300 students are involved in some community-based instruction or job experience, and several classes leave the building each day for training at 52 work sites in the area. These include restaurants, retail outlets, churches, and civic organizations. Delegato noted that some of Lutz's community partners include Henry Ford Hospital, Sears, and Firestone.

With an eye toward future placements and employability, Delegato ensures that all work-study students receive specific documentation of the skills they master and attributes they display on the job. "It's not very helpful for the employer to just tell the teacher, 'oh, he's a good worker,'" says Delegato. "In order for MRS or CMH [Community Mental Health] to create a student-centered plan, we need the employer's feedback on measurable skills. It's a little more work for the employer, but it really helps. This information also enables the teacher to write a more meaningful

Transition Coordinator Requirements Under the Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education (MARSE)

a) Must have a bachelor's or graduate degree in special education or a field related to transition of youth with disabilities into adult life roles.

b) A minimum of three years satisfactory teaching experience in special or vocational education at the secondary level, or a minimum of three years employment providing transition-related service to individuals with disabilities between the ages of 13 and 26 years. Transition-related services include vocational rehabilitation, employment, counseling, independent living, and mental health. A person with a master's degree in special education or a field related to the transition of youth with disabilities into adult life roles shall be credited with one year of employment.

c) Approval under competencies and procedures established by the state board of education.

Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education (MARSE)
R 340.1799g(1)



Michigan Transition Outcomes Project Supports Transition

The Michigan Transition Outcomes Project (MI-TOP) facilitates the development of effective systems that support students to achieve postsecondary outcomes and contain measurable student focused planning, student development activities, and continuous family and community involvement.

The project supports the implementation of effective transition practices to ensure all students are prepared for postsecondary education, employment, and independent living.

To learn more, visit <http://mi-top.cenmi.org>.



IEP." Delegato recognizes that many Lutz graduates may not become competitively employed. Nevertheless, "we need to make sure they're not immersed in television. We want them out there doing things they've trained for. They can live a fulfilling life that includes supported employment and engaging in many community activities."

Delegato works hard to ensure that students leave Lutz with a plan and supports. He credits The Arc Michigan for its help in securing Medicaid, social security, and CMH or MRS services for his students. "They've been phenomenal. In fact, all of our agencies are five-star agencies," he says. "One hundred percent of our graduates know where they're going when they leave, and they all have services in place."

Wally Kwik, Washtenaw County ISD: Finding Different Solutions for Different Populations

In terms of variety, Washtenaw County has it all—from large, semi-urban Ann Arbor to the small farming community of Manchester. Wally Kwik leads transition services at the Washtenaw ISD level; the ten local school districts and intermediate school district are served by a transition core team of six educators with a transition "liaison" at each of the 18 public and charter high schools. In addition to his role as Washtenaw's transition coordinator, Kwik is a "blended staff" member with Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) through a cash-match agreement with the Washtenaw ISD. He has found this arrangement to be advantageous. "It's taught me a lot about what kind of work we need to do in schools to connect with adult agencies," says Kwik.

As a blended staff, Kwik serves as a teacher consultant and vocational counselor for students in a number of Washtenaw ISD's young adult programs. One of

these is the Young Adult Project, an innovative program for students ages 18 to 26. "It's an option for individuals who still need help with life and vocation skills but no longer want to be in a classroom situation," says Kwik. "They're living at home and organizing their lives as they wish, with work as the main focus. They meet with teacher consultants/blended staff, along with paraprofessionals, several times a month for support. It gives them a real sense of living in the adult world, dealing with transportation issues, etc. It's a very good fit for some students, and we see this program expanding over the next few years as more students leave school with additional transition needs."

Kwik is enthusiastic about several other initiatives offered by the Washtenaw ISD, including Widening Advancement for Youth in Washtenaw (WAY-Washtenaw). This is a new program that enables high school dropouts, many of whom have IEPs, to complete their education mainly at home via computer and project-based activities. Kwik points out that services can meld together to suit individual needs. "One young lady in the Young Adult Project decided that she wanted to earn her high school diploma, but because of mental health issues she could not be in a classroom situation. She was strong in the arts but struggled with math. The WAY-Washtenaw program is allowing her to work from home and fulfill some requirements using her strengths, such as writing poetry for the language arts credit and approaching geometry through drawing and writing."

Although Kwik and his core team attend many IEP meetings, they simply cannot keep up with all the transition needs of their county's 7,000 special education students. A big part of Kwik's job is to build capacity among the high school liaisons (most of whom are full-time teachers) so they can share information with their colleagues

concerning transition requirements at their home schools. "We're also currently attempting to move transition concepts into the middle schools. It's so important to start transition as early as possible," says Kwik. "Over time through MI-TOP we're gaining skills to fine-tune our services so we can do this even better."

**Krista Krefeld, Lapeer County:
Communicating Through
Creative Events**

Krista Krefeld, transition coordinator of Lapeer County ISD, has the privilege of working transition full time in this county made up of five local school districts. She could not be more enthusiastic about her job, the students she serves, or the support she gets from her community. For the past seven years, Krefeld has coordinated transition at the local level through the Transition Network Team ("TNT—they're dynamite!"), made up of contacts from the county's high schools, middle schools, career-tech, and center-based programs. This team, plus local special education administrators, a variety of community agencies, and representatives from the parent advisory council, comprises the Lapeer County Community Transition Council.

Each year, Krefeld and the transition council host one or more transition conferences for students, each geared toward a particular audience, such as juniors. Every school district gets a certain number of slots, for a total of 80 to 100 students. "It's run just like a regular conference," says Krefeld, "with a keynote speaker and breakout sessions that deal with everything from college and relationships to employability skills, such as dressing for success."

When asked about other exciting programs she's developed in her county, Krefeld is off and running. She is particularly enthusiastic about the summer

Youth Leadership Training Program that her ISD puts on in collaboration with Blue Water Center for Independent Living. "It's a two-week session held at Mott Community College that's just packed with transition-related learning and activities for youth ages 16 to 19," says Krefeld, who helped design a curriculum that applies to a variety of disabilities. The program covers everything from the importance of being involved in your IEP, to finances, to leadership.

The program also has a strong community service component. "We make fleece blankets to donate to the local domestic violence shelter and help out during Family Fun Day, a county-wide event for young children and their families," says Krefeld. "Our students run games at a booth during the event, and then we work together to clean up the grounds. The program is limited to just 15 students on a first-come, first-serve basis, and we've had great participation. It's fun, but a lot of learning too."

For students just entering high school, Krefeld organizes "Survivor: The Outdoor Adventure" at a nearby Lion's camp. Up to 40 students per day participate in games and challenges, including a low-ropes course, followed up with discussions on the value of overcoming obstacles. "The staff love this because it gives them a great way to get to know their students first thing in the year," says Krefeld. "And the kids are doing lots of great team-building and confidence-building activities to start the year off right."

A wonderful final event for the older students in the center-based program is a collaboration with Community Mental Health (CMH) and Growth and Opportunity, a local agency that employs individuals with disabilities. "This event is different every year," says Krefeld. "It's been a luau, a Mexican fiesta, an 'enchanted



evening,' and this year's theme is 'Springtime in Paris.' It brings together so many agencies and people from the community. In fact, this year students in both general education and those

receiving special education services are helping to plan it. To see those students all dressed up in formal attire with huge smiles on their faces—it's an incredible thrill."

FOCUS Highlights

- A look at the role and requirements of transition coordinators in the state of Michigan and their part in helping students with disabilities successfully move from special education supports and services to postsecondary goals.
- Interviews with transition coordinators from school districts areas around the state.

Glossary of Terms

Functional Achievement: Generally used to refer to activities and skills that are not considered academic or related to a child's academic achievement as measured on statewide achievement tests. Formal transition assessments are primarily designed to measure functional assessment.

Postsecondary Activities: Activities designed to be within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to... post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation.

Supported Employment: Rehabilitation Act Section 7(35) Supported employment states: (A) In general the term "supported employment" means competitive work in integrated work settings, or employment in integrated work settings in which individuals are working toward competitive work, consistent with the strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individuals, for individuals with the most significant disabilities--(i)(I) for whom competitive employment has not traditionally occurred; or (II) for whom competitive employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a significant disability; and (ii) who, because of the nature and severity of their disability, need intensive supported employment services for the period, and any extension, described in paragraph (36)(C) and extended services after the transition described in paragraph (13)(C) in order to perform such work. (B) Certain transitional employment Such term includes transitional employment for persons who are individuals with the most significant disabilities due to mental illness.



Glossary of Terms *Continued*

Transition Services: According to the IDEA as amended in 2004, "The term Transition services means a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that—(A) is designed to be within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation; (B) is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests; and (C) includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional Vocational Evaluation."

Resources

Michigan Administrative Rules for Special Education (MARSE)
www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-6530_6598-132157--,00.html

Michigan Transition Outcomes Project (MI-TOP)
<http://mi-top.cenmi.org>

Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS)
www.michigan.gov/lara/0,1607,7-154-25392---,00.html

Michigan's Special Education Facts
www.cenmi.org/Documents/SpecialEducationFacts.aspx

Michigan Transition Services Association (MTSA)
www.michigantsa.com

Michigan's 2011 *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) Public Reporting for School Districts and Service Areas
www.michigan.gov/mde/0,1607,7-140-6530_6598-256955--,00.html

National Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC)
www.nsttac.org

Wayne RESA's Quick Guide to High School Completion for Students with Disabilities
www.resa.net/services/spedcompliance/guidelinesandpublications/



The Center for Educational Networking (CEN) is a statewide education information network that produces and disseminates publications and documents related to the education of students with individualized education programs (IEPs).

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