

# Transition to Post-Secondary Education: Instruction Beyond Traditional Twelfth Grade



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***The Arc***<sup>®</sup>  
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# Congress's Goal for the IDEA

*...to prepare students with disabilities for further education, employment and independent living.*

# What is Transition Planning?



- Coordinated set of activities
- Results-oriented process
- Focused on improving academic and functional achievement
- Facilitate movement from school to post-school activities
- Based on individual needs, taking into account strengths, preferences and interests

# Transition Planning: Age 14 and younger



- Statement of needs, strengths, interests, preference
- Course of study & related strategies/activities
- Consultation from other agencies and linkages to post secondary resources
- Student invited to IEP meeting
- Outside agency invited to IEP meeting (with parental consent)

# Course of Study Considerations

Some course selection factors may limit postsecondary education options, such as:

## NEGATIVE:

- Waiving foreign language classes
- Placement in Honors or AP Classes (*special education and accommodations must be made available to otherwise capable students who wish to participate in Honors or AP classes!*)
- Taking courses on pass/fail basis

## POSITIVE:

- Taking lower level courses to achieve higher grades
- Taking specialized classes needed or helpful for particular postsecondary goal (e.g., taking auto shop class if planning on pursuing certification course as auto mechanic)

# Transition Planning: Age 16 and older

- Age-appropriate transition assessments
- Measurable post-secondary goals
- Statement of Transition Services



# What are Transition Services?

## Mandatory Services

- Instruction
- Related services
- **Community experiences**
- The development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives

## Optional Services

- Acquisition of daily living skills
- Provision of a functional vocational evaluation



# Transition Plans for Higher Ed-Bound Students Must Address All Areas of Need

## Examples of Skills Needed for Higher Education

- Academic
- Communication
- Social skills
- Behavior
- Self advocacy skills
- Attention/Concentration
- Executive functioning skills
- Activities of Daily Living
- Money handling
- Independent living
- Transportation
- ETC.



# Tips for Making Graduation Decisions

- Make sure IEP clearly spells out graduation criteria
- Begin discussing graduation criteria no later than age 16
- Consider delaying graduation if non-academic skills (behavior, social skills, independent living skills, etc.) are not yet established
- If student will complete typical graduation requirements before mastering non-academic skills, request that student's graduation be based upon Alternative Proficiencies that include non-academic skills
- In the event of a dispute, "stay put" can be invoked to continue services



# REMEMBER

- Graduation is the ULTIMATE change in placement.
  - “Stay Put” is an effective tool you may need if the District is trying to graduate your child.
- Accepting a diploma ends your child’s entitlement to a public education.
- A student going beyond traditional 12<sup>th</sup> grade can participate in all graduation related activities...but you should NOT be accepting a diploma.
  - Often, schools give a certificate of attendance instead of a diploma at the graduation ceremony.



# New Jersey Statewide Testing Accommodations

- Accommodations are available on PARCC or other Statewide testing based upon individual need
- IEP team decides upon whether and what accommodations are needed
- NJ Department of Education has published list of acceptable accommodations.
  - Under State law, these are the ONLY accommodations that can be given
  - State law conflicts with Federal law (Section 504 and ADA), in that Federal law requires that *any* reasonable accommodation must be provided if needed and if does not give student advantage over others with respect to skill being measured
  - Disputes are infrequent because State list is fairly comprehensive

# Common Statewide Testing Accommodations

## Setting Accommodations

- Administering the assessment individually in a separate room, small group, at home, in hospital, etc.
- Preferential seating, such as away from distractions or in the front of the room near the examiner or proctor
- Providing special lighting

## Scheduling Accommodations

- Adding time **as needed** (*prior rule of only 50% additional time allowed no longer in effect*)
- Providing frequent breaks
- Terminating a section of the test when a student has indicated that he/she has completed all the items he/she can – score is based on items actually completed

## Test Materials Modifications

- Administering the large-print version of the test
- Administering the Braille version of the test

## Test Procedure Modifications

- 1. Administration modifications
  - a. reading directions aloud
  - b. reading test items aloud (except reading passages in ELA) aloud or sign is permitted to have a test booklet assigned to him/her for this task
  - c. providing and ensuring that amplification (hearing aid and/or FM system) is in working order
  - d. repeating, clarifying, or rewording directions ONLY
  - g. using an examiner who is familiar with the student
  - h. providing manipulatives for math items e.g., number line, counting chips, abacus (for NJ ASK 3-8 ONLY)
  - i. using calculators
- 2. Response modifications
  - a. having an examiner record the student's identification information on the test booklet and/or answer folder
  - b. dictating oral responses to a scribe (examiner or proctor who writes from dictation)
  - c. recording responses on a word processor (all editorial functions MUST be disabled)
  - f. providing an augmentative communication device
  - g. using a larger diameter or modified special grip # 2 pencil
  - h. having examiner mark answers in test booklet
  - i. allowing separate additional continuation pages for writing tasks



# Accommodations on High Stakes Testing

- Students with disabilities are entitled to accommodations on high-stakes tests such as the SAT or the ACT
- Whether accommodations are granted depends upon the testing administrator (College Board for SAT, ACT for ACT), *not* the IEP team
- Approval is not automatic even for students with severe disabilities
- Lists of common accommodations may be provided, but *any* reasonable accommodation must be provided if needed and if does not give student advantage over others with respect to skill being measured
- *Most common means of securing accommodations is to allow designated school district staff make request- it is then staff's responsibility to ensure that all requirements are satisfied*



# Common Accommodations on High Stakes Testing

- Extended time
- Administration in separate room or small group
- Computer use for essays
- Extra and extended breaks
- Reading of testing instruction and materials by proctor
- Use of scribe for recording answers
- Four-function calculator
- Refer to list of State accommodations for other examples



# Securing Accommodations on High Stakes Testing

- Parents or school staff may submit request for accommodations – use of school staff is *highly* recommended
- Deadlines for requesting accommodations may be as early as two months before test administration, so *start early!*
- Documentation is *always* required. Documentation must meet following criteria:
  - The diagnosis is clearly stated.
  - Information is current.
  - Educational, developmental, and medical history is presented.
  - The diagnosis is supported.
  - The functional limitation is described.
  - Recommended accommodations are justified.
  - Evaluators' professional credentials are established.

Specific documentation requirements vary by disability



# Common Forms of Documentation Required for Accommodations on SAT for ADHD and Autism

- Educational/psychological evaluation no more than 5 years old (3 years preferable and *required* for ACT); medical evaluations no more than one year old (evaluations can be requested from school district in year of testing as part of transition plan)
- Diagnosis and reference to DSM 5 must be stated and supported clearly in report, using nationally-normed or common diagnostic tests whenever possible
- Report must include relevant history; very helpful to include history of prior need for accommodations
- Functional limitations must be clearly stated- i.e., does student work more slowly? Is easily distracted?
- Recommended accommodations justified- i.e., “Due to distractibility, student must be tested in separate, quiet setting”
- Professional Credentials must be listed

Teacher input very helpful



# Use of Prior School Documentation to Secure Accommodations on High Stakes Testing

- Documentation to support requests for accommodations can and should wherever possible include documentation of student's prior need for and use of accommodations
- Therefore, it is important to begin thinking about what accommodations may be needed at least a year or two before the testing year
- Sources of documentation can include IEPs, evaluations, teacher surveys, records of testing or other measures of performance with and without accommodations for comparison
- School district must provide "Summary of Performance" in year of graduation if student is graduating before the age of 21. This must include "a summary of his or her academic achievement and functional performance, including recommendations on how to assist the child in meeting postsecondary goals" and "essential accommodations" used to help improve functioning in those areas.

# Establishing Linkages with Post-Secondary Agencies



- Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS)
- Medicaid
- Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

# Selecting and Applying to College or Other Post-Secondary Institution

- Begin exploring possible post-secondary institutions early
- Consider whether student would be better served in specialized school for students with disabilities (such as Landmark College for Learning Disabilities & ADHD) or general education school
- Virtually all post-secondary institutions now have Offices of Disability Services or similar systems to support students with disabilities – these should be screened and thoroughly researched
- Research the overall attitude of the institution towards students with disabilities
- Resources for information about particular schools:
  - [collegexpress.com](http://collegexpress.com) (has section devoted to Learning Disabilities)
  - [bestcollegesonline.com](http://bestcollegesonline.com) (same)
  - [Thinkcollege.net](http://Thinkcollege.net) (intellectual disabilities)
  - [collegeautismspectrum.com](http://collegeautismspectrum.com) (Autism)
  - *Decide whether or not to disclose disability before admission*

# Transitional College Programs

- Some two- and four year colleges are making efforts to include students with all types of disabilities by offering transition programs located on campuses. Local examples include The College of New Jersey and East Stroudsburg University.
- These programs can be provided by the school district **before** graduation as part of a transition program as community-based instruction (“CBI”)
- Some include residential component in which independent living skills are taught



# Rights of Students with Disabilities in Post-Secondary Education



- Students do *not* receive IEPs in college!
- Rights after graduation come from Section 504 and ADA
- Students are entitled to be free from discrimination on basis of disabilities
- In many cases, this requires that “reasonable accommodations” must be provided. These can be similar to the types of accommodations provided in elementary and secondary education – extended time on tests, preferential seating, use of calculators, etc.
- *Burden is on student to document disability and request accommodations*
- Needed accommodations must be provided at no charge to student or parents

# Age 18...

- Guardianship considerations
- Other legal strategies to provide varying levels of support and protection
- Assets and earnings
- Apply to Medicaid & SSI



# Thank you!

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