

## **10.0 INTERAGENCY AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

Interagency relations refer to the development and implementation of a coordinated, multi-disciplinary, interagency, intervention services system for children and students with disabilities and their families. The IEP team and the county representative must develop an interagency plan of care for an eligible child or student and the child or student's family for the purpose of coordinating services required under the IEP, or IFSP, with county services. The coordination of services system extends to students with disabilities residing in county jails, juvenile facilities, and adult correctional facilities. Minnesota law specifically requires that each eligible child or student have access to an interagency intervention service system that coordinates services and programs; an Individual Interagency intervention Plan (IIIP) be developed for each eligible child or student and their family; and a governing board, such as the Interagency Early Intervention Committee (IEIC) develop an interagency agreement or joint powers agreement outlining the responsibilities for the development and implementation for the coordinated system. A district, group of districts, or special education cooperative, in cooperation with the county or counties in which the district or cooperative is located, must also establish a community transition interagency committee (CTIC) for youth with disabilities.

### **10.0 Interagency Standards**

#### **10.0.01 Interagency Plan of Care**

##### **Legal Citations**

If at the time of initial referral for an educational assessment, or a reassessment, the district determines that a child with disabilities who is age 3 through 21 may be eligible for interagency services, the district may request that the county of residence provide a representative to the initial assessment or reassessment team meeting or the first individual education plan team meeting following the assessment or reassessment. The district may request to have a county representative attend other individual education plan team meetings when it is necessary to facilitate coordination between district and county provided services. Upon request from a district, the resident county shall provide a representative to assist the individual education plan team in determining the child's eligibility for existing health, mental health, or other support services administered or provided by the county. The individual education plan team and the county representative must develop an interagency plan of care for an eligible child and the child's family to coordinate services required under the child's individual education plan with county services. The interagency plan of care must include appropriate family information with the consent of the family, a description of how services will be coordinated between the district and county, a description of service coordinator responsibilities and services, and a description of activities for obtaining third-party payment for eligible services, including medical assistance payments. Any state, county, or city government agency responsible for providing services or resources to students with disabilities under this

section is subject to the same dispute resolution systems as local school districts, and all such agencies must comply with corrective action requirements that ensue from these systems.

*Minn. Stat. 125A.10*

## **10.0.02 Establishing Responsibility for Services**

### **Interagency Agreement or Other Mechanism for Interagency Coordination**

The member districts of the SNWSEC along with the counties of Sherburne and Wright, in which the member districts reside, have developed Interagency Agreements in compliance with federal and state requirements. Each Interagency Early Intervention Committee (IEIC) is under the umbrella of each counties Children's Collaborative and as such is a part of each county collaborative governance agreement.

### **Agency Financial Responsibility**

#### **Legal Citations**

The agreement or mechanism must include the following: An identification of or a method for defining, the financial responsibility of each agency for providing services to ensure FAPE to children with disabilities. The financial responsibility of each noneducational public agency, including the State Medicaid agency and other public insurers of children with disabilities, must precede the financial responsibility of district or the State agency responsible for developing the child's IEP.

*34 C.F.R. 300.154a)(1)*

Each agencies financial responsibilities as well as the procedures and policies that identify each agencies responsibilities are outlined in the governance agreement of each County Collaborative.

The agencies agree that if any agency fails to perform any of the duties outlined in the collaborative agreement, including failure to make payment to the Integrated Fund within 30 days of the established payment date, the Governing board may terminate this agreement.

### **Interagency Disputes**

Contracts between the Collaborative and service providers must include dispute resolution provisions whenever feasible. In the event of a disagreement between two or more Parties to this Agreement, Parties agree to abide by the following dispute resolution protocol:

1. Step One: The grieving Parties will attempt to work out the dispute through formal communication.
2. Step Two: The grieving Parties will notify members of the Governing Board in writing of the nature of the dispute and request the Board to hear the dispute at its next regular meeting and seek resolution at the meeting.

3. Step Three: If resolution is not achieved at the meeting described in Step Two, the Board shall take the matter under advisement and, at its following regular meeting, recommend a resolution to the grieving Parties, who must decide whether to accept the recommendation.
4. Step Four: The grieving Parties will submit the dispute to mediation by a neutral third party. The Governing Board will be a separate party to the mediation. The cost of mediation shall be equally distributed among grieving Parties.
5. Step Five: The grieving Parties will submit the dispute to binding arbitration. The cost of arbitration shall be equally distributed among grieving Parties.
6. Step Six: Upon resolution of the dispute, a joint communication will be issued to all affected Parties.

### **Obligations of Non-Educational Public Agencies Providing Services**

If any public agency other than the school district is obligated or responsible to provide or pay for any services that are also considered special education or related services (such as, but not limited to, assistive technology devices, assistive technology services, related services, supplementary aids and services and transition services) that are necessary for ensuring FAPE to children with disabilities, that agency must fulfill that obligation or responsibility either directly or through a contract or other arrangement. The agency may not disqualify an eligible service for Medicaid reimbursement because that service is provided in a school context.

### **Reimbursement of Educational Agency**

If a public agency other than the school district fails to provide or pay for the special education and related services described in 34 C.F.R. 300.154(b)(1)(i) & (ii) the district must provide or pay for these services to the child in a timely manner. The district is authorized to claim reimbursement for the services from the noneducational public agency that failed to provide or pay for these services and that agency must reimburse the district as agreed to in the interagency agreement for that county.

## **10.01 Early Childhood Intervention System**

### **Legal Citations**

It is the policy of the state to develop and implement comprehensive, coordinated, multidisciplinary interagency programs of early intervention services for children with disabilities and their families.

*Minn. Stat. 125A.26*

### **10.01.01 Local Primary Agency**

The local primary agency for schools within the SNWSEC is the SNWSEC Sherburne and Wright counties. The local primary agency must:

- A. administer funds received through the annual fund request;

- B. provide oversight for data collection efforts;
- C. facilitate completion of interagency early intervention duties;
- D. request mediation from the state lead agency, if necessary;
- E. request assistance from the state lead agency when disputes between agencies cannot be resolved within 20 calendar day; and
- F. receive written requests from parents for matters that may be resolved through due process hearings.

## **10.01.02 Responsibilities of County Boards and School Boards**

### **Legal Citations**

#### **Coordination of Services**

It is the joint responsibility of county boards and school boards to coordinate, provide, and pay for appropriate services, and to facilitate payment for services from public and private sources. Appropriate services for children must be determined in consultation with parents, physicians, and other educational, medical, health, and human services providers. The services provided must in conformity with an IFSP for each eligible infant and toddler from birth through age two and its family, or an individual education plan (IEP) or individual family service plan (IFSP) for each eligible child ages three through four.

*Minn. 125A.29(a)*

#### **Appropriate Services**

Appropriate services include family education and counseling, home visits, occupational and physical therapy, speech pathology, audiology, psychological services, special instruction, nursing, respite, nutrition, assistive technology, transportation and related costs, social work, vision services, case management including service coordination, medical services for diagnostic and evaluation purposes, early identification, and screening, assessment, and health services necessary to enable children with disabilities to benefit from early intervention services.

*Minn. Stat. 125A.29(b)*

#### **Responsibility for Services/Procedural Safeguards**

This section applies to school and county boards for children from birth through age two who are eligible for Part H, Public Law Number 102-19, and their families.

A parent has the right to:

1. inspect and review early intervention records;
2. prior to written notice of a proposed action in the parents' native language unless it is clearly not feasible to do so;
3. give consent to any proposed action;
4. selectively accept or decline any early intervention service; and
5. resolve issues regarding the identification, evaluation, or placement of the child, or the provision of appropriate early intervention services to the child and the child's family through an impartial due process hearing.

If the child's parent is not available, the child has the right to have a surrogate parent appointed by the district. Please contact your special education director for information on surrogate appointments.

If at the time of initial referral for an educational assessment, or a reassessment, the district determines that a child with disabilities who is age 3 through 21 may be eligible for interagency services, the district may request that the county of residence provide a representative to the initial assessment or reassessment team meeting or the first individual education plan team meeting following the assessment or reassessment. The district may request to have a county representative attend other individual education plan team meetings when it is necessary to facilitate coordination between district and county provided services. Upon request from a district, the resident county shall provide a representative to assist the individual education plan team in determining the child's eligibility for existing health, mental health, or other support services administered or provided by the county. The individual education plan team and the county representative must develop an interagency plan of care for an eligible child and the child's family to coordinate services required under the child's individual education plan with county services. The interagency plan of care must include appropriate family information with the consent of the family, a description of how services will be coordinated between the district and county, a description of service coordinator responsibilities and services, and a description of activities for obtaining third-party payment for eligible services, including medical assistance payments. Any state, county, or city government agency responsible for providing services or resources to students with disabilities under this section is subject to the same dispute resolution systems as local school districts, and all such agencies must comply with corrective action requirements that ensue from these systems.

*MN Stat. 125A.10*

### **10.01.03 Coordination of Early Intervention Services**

The school districts and county boards of Sherburne and Wright Counties have developed interagency agreements that establish agency responsibilities that assure early intervention services are coordinated, provided, paid for. These agreements are a part of each county collaborative governance agreement.

### **10.01.04 Local Interagency Agreements**

School boards of the four member districts of the SNWSEC and the county board of Sherburne and Wright Counties have entered into agreements to cooperatively serve and provide funding for children with disabilities, under age five, and their families within their specified geographic area. These agreements are a part of each county collaborative governance agreement.

## 10.02 INTERAGENCY COMMITTEES

### 10.02.1 Local Interagency Early Intervention Committee (IEIC), IEIC Membership, IEIC Responsibilities

#### Legal Citations

A school district, group of districts, or special education cooperative, in cooperative with the health and human service agencies located in the county or counties in which the district or cooperative is located, must establish and interagency early intervention committee for children with disabilities under age five and their families and for children with disabilities ages three to 22. Committees must include representatives of local and regional health, education, and county human service agencies, county boards, school boards, early childhood family education programs, parents of young children with disabilities under age 12, current service providers, and may also include representatives from other private or public agencies and school nurses. The committee must elect a chair from among its members and shall meet at least quarterly.

*MN. Stat. 125A.30(a)*

The SNWSEC, in cooperation with the health and human service agencies located in the two counties in which the cooperative is located, have established interagency early intervention committees for children with disabilities under the age of five and their families. . Parent participation is provided through community council membership or as a representative of the collaborative team.

The local committee shall also:

1. participate in needs assessments and program planning activities conducted by local social service, health, and education agencies for young children with disabilities and their families; and
2. review and comment on the early intervention section of the total special education system for the district, the county social service plan, the section or sections of the community health services plan that address needs of and service activities targeted to children with special health care needs, and the section of the maternal and child health special project grants that address needs of and service activities targeted to children with chronic illness and disabilities.

*Minn. Stat. 125A.30(b)*

### 10.02.02 Community Transition Interagency Committee (CTIC), CTIC Membership, CTIC Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the Community Transition Interagency Committee (CTIC) are under the umbrella of the school responsibilities. All duties and responsibilities are carried out within the collaborative process with adult service providers, Vocational Rehab Services, county social services and local businesses.

## **10.03 Disciplinary Records and Interaction with Law Enforcement**

### **10.03.01 Transmission of Discipline Records**

#### **Legal Citations**

The State may require that a public agency include in the records of a child with a disability a statement of any current or previous disciplinary action that has been taken against the child and transmit the statement to the same extent that the disciplinary information is included in, and transmitted with, the student records of nondisabled children.

The statement may include a description of any behavior engaged in by the child that required disciplinary action, a description of the disciplinary action taken, and any other information that is relevant to the safety of the child and other individuals involved with the child.

If the State adopts such a policy, and the child transfers from one school to another, the transmission of any of the child's records must include both the child's current IEP and any statement of current or previous disciplinary action that has been taken against the child.

*34 C.F.R. 300.229*

### **10.03.02 Referral to an Action by Law Enforcement and Judicial Authorities**

#### **Legal Citations**

Nothing in this part prohibits an agency from reporting a crime committed by a child with a disability to appropriate authorities or prevents State law enforcement and judicial authorities from exercising their responsibilities with regard to the application of Federal and State law to crimes committed by a child with a disability.

*34 C.F.R.300.535(a)*

If the district is the agency reporting a crime committed by a child with a disability, the district must ensure that copies of the special education and disciplinary records of the child are transmitted for consideration by the appropriate law authorities.

The district reporting a crime may transmit copies of the child's special education and disciplinary records only to the extent that the transmission is permitted by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

*34 C.F.R. 300.535(b)*

## **10.04 Children with Disabilities in Adult Prisons**

### **10.04.01 Exception to Obligation to Provide FAPE**

#### **Legal Citations**

The obligation to make FAPE available to all children with disabilities does not apply with respect to the following:

- A. Children aged 18 through 21 to the extent that State law does not require that special education and related services be provided to students with disabilities who, in the last educational placement prior to their incarceration in an adult correctional facility:
  - 1. Were not actually identified as being a child with a disability; and
  - 2. Did not have an IEP.
- B. The exception to the above section does not apply to children with disabilities, aged 18 through 21 who:
  - 1. Had been identified as a child with a disability and had received services in accordance with an IEP, but who left school prior to their incarceration; or
  - 2. Did not have an IEP in their last educational setting, but who had actually been identified as a child with a disability.

*34 C.F.R. 300.102(a)(2)*

Children with disabilities who are convicted as adults under State law and incarcerated in adults prisons are not required to participate in general assessments or transition planning and transition services when their eligibility under Part B of the Act will end, because of their age, before they will be eligible to be released from prison.

### **10.04.02 Modification of IEP**

When a student with a disability is convicted as an adult and incarcerated in an adult prison, the IEP team may modify the student's IEP or placement if the State has demonstrated a bona fide security or compelling penological interest that cannot otherwise be accommodated.

## **Transition Procedures**

Transition services means a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability that are designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. Transition is based upon the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests and 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.

### **Early Childhood Transition**

The SNWSEC is committed to making transitions for toddlers as smooth as possible. Parents must be prepared for each transition and be provided with the opportunity to visit the various setting options and to have questions answered. Because parents are always key members of their child's team no decision can be made without them.

### **Toddlers Eligible for Preschool Services**

The case manager of a toddler should notify the home district that the toddler will be eligible for preschool special education services. With the approval of the family of the child, the case manager will convene a conference among the agencies involved with the child, the family and the school at least 90 days (and at the discretion of such parties, up to 6 months) before the child turns three years of age to discuss such services that the child may receive.

At this meeting the team should:

- A. review the present level of functioning;
- B. identify areas of need;
- C. write an IEP/IFSP.

### **Toddlers Not Eligible for Preschool Services**

In the case of a child who may not be eligible for such preschool services, and with the approval of the family, the case manager should make reasonable efforts to convene a conference with the school, the family, and providers of other appropriate services for children who are not eligible for preschool special education services to discuss the appropriate services that the child may receive.

At this meeting the team should:

- A. review the child's program options for the period from the child's third birthday through the remainder of the school year; and
- B. establish a transition plan.

### **Documentation**

For students who initially meet the **noncategorical** criteria for Developmental Delay (e.g. 1.5 SD's below the mean in 2 areas) **and** are placed in an ECSE program option with the child's "label" being **ECSE\***, it **is** necessary to meet initial eligibility criteria in a disability category upon transition (e.g. when the child enters kindergarten, when the child turns 7, etc.) from the ECSE program.

For students who initially meet **categorical** criteria (e.g. vision impaired, speech/language impaired, etc.) **and** are placed in an ECSE program option with the child's "label" being **disability specific**, it is **not** necessary to meet initial eligibility criteria in a disability category upon transition (e.g. when the child enters kindergarten, when the child turns age 7, etc.) from the ECSE program.

For students who initially meet **categorical** criteria (e.g. speech impaired, emotional/behavioral disordered, etc.) **and** are placed in an ECSE program option with the child's "label" being **ECSE\***, it is **not** necessary to meet initial eligibility criteria in a disability category upon transition (e.g. when the student enters kindergarten, when the student turns age 7, etc.) from the ECSE program **if**:

**A.** the child's **initial** assessment team summary report indicates in the summary and recommendation section of the report that the child is "eligible" or "qualifies" for early childhood special education services because s/he meets the **categorical criteria** for (i.e.) speech/language impairments. (The documentation required for meeting each of these criteria would be found in the appropriate sections of the assessment team summary report. It would also be appropriate, on the state recommended eligibility determination form, to mark **both** boxes for "early childhood special education" and "speech/language impaired")

**AND**

**B.** the child's assessment team summary report at the time of **transition** indicates that the child continues to be "eligible" or "qualifies" for special education services because the child initially met the categorical criteria for speech/language impairments and has not met his/her IEP goals and objectives. (The documentation required would be found in the appropriate sections of the assessment team summary report. It would be appropriate, on the state recommended eligibility determination form, to mark the box for "speech/language impaired".)

At the time of transition, the student must be formally **dismissed** from ECSE through the *Notice of Special Education Services*. If the student will continue special education services through a categorical placement, simply indicate in the comments section of the *Notice of Special Education Services*, that the dismissal is for Early Childhood Special Education services only.

### **Plan Development**

These procedures have been written to ensure smooth transition planning from one program to another for young children with special needs, parents, teachers, and any other sending and receiving staff in school districts, agencies or programs that provide services to children within the SNWSEC. This process to all transitions that take place (e.g., home based to center or community based program). The ECSE teacher will actively involve parents at all times throughout the transition process.

### **Transition to Kindergarten**

In the fall, parents of children enrolled in ECSE programs who are potentially eligible for kindergarten the following year should be informed about transition at the first IEP or review meeting. The parents should be given the option of visiting a kindergarten classroom within the district of residence, if transition into kindergarten appears likely.

Best practice would suggest that the ECSE teacher should visit the kindergarten setting and observe the routine and expectations for functioning in a kindergarten environment so that transition goals and objectives can be incorporated into the IEP.

The ECSE teacher should send a list of students tentatively transitioning to each elementary principal of the student's school of residence by March 1st to ensure that students are placed on the kindergarten enrollment list. Any support services, transportation requirements and other issues and concerns should be conveyed to the principal to facilitate a smooth transition in the fall. The ECSE teacher should meet with the kindergarten teacher to discuss classroom routines and their impact on the child who is transitioning.

Spring IEP meetings, reviews and/or home visits should be held during March in order to continue transition planning. Staff from community based programs such as Head Start or Learning Readiness should be invited to attend the meeting of ECSE children who are involved in or being served through community based programs, since they will have useful information about the needs of the child. If possible, this meeting should be held in the resident school district in order to facilitate participation of the kindergarten teacher and other staff. Expectations for kindergarten such as classroom interactions and routine should be reviewed and a plan developed to smooth the transition. The team should discuss who the IEP manager/service provider(s) will be. Any assessments needed for the student's transition should be planned at this time and conducted as early as possible so that the Assessment Summary meeting and staffing can be completed by May 15th.

### **Secondary Transition Procedures**

Every district shall ensure that all students with disabilities are provided the special instruction and services which are appropriate to their needs. The student's needs and the special education instruction and services to be provided shall be agreed upon through the development of an individual education plan. The plan shall address the student's need to develop skills to live and work as independently as possible within the community. By grade 9 or age 14, the plan shall address the student's needs for transition from secondary services to post secondary education and training, employment, community participation, recreation and leisure, and home living. The plan must include a statement of the needed transition services, including a statement of the interagency responsibilities or linkages or both before secondary services are concluded. (M.S. 120.17 Subd.3a)

By grade nine or age 14, the IEP plan shall address the pupil's needs for transition from secondary services to post-secondary education and training, employment, and community living.

For each pupil, the district shall conduct a multidisciplinary assessment of secondary transition needs and plan appropriate services to meet the pupil's transition needs. Areas of assessment and planning must be relevant to the pupil's needs and may include work, recreation and leisure, home living, community participation, and post secondary training and learning opportunities. To appropriately assess and plan for a pupil's secondary transition, additional IEP team members may be necessary and may include vocational education staff members and other community agency representatives as appropriate.

Secondary transition assessment results must be documented as part of an assessment summary. Current and secondary transition needs, goals, and instructional and related services to meet the pupil's secondary transition needs must be considered by the team with annual needs, goals, objectives, and services documented on the pupil's IEP.

Transition planning must go beyond preparing for the world of work to include a full spectrum of independent living activities within the community. Although work preparation is important, the ability to develop recreation and leisure skills, manage a budget, take part in community activities, develop friendships, plan for personal health care, etc., is of equal importance for a quality adult life.

### **IEP/Transition Planning Team**

All students with IEP's who have reached grade 9 or age 14 must have an IEP that focuses on transition. Individuals who can assist and support students in their adult lives are invited to join the existing IEP team to plan for the future. When selecting people to assist students with their plans for the future, the team should first consider the types of services and supports the student may need to meet his or her adult goals.

A student's IEP/transition planning team should be put together by the IEP manager in consultation with the student and family. The student and parent(s) may identify key individuals that are already involved in their lives, such as a relative, county case manager, mental health counselor, or parole officer. Students and their parents should be given information about available post-school services and community resources so that they can make informed decisions about the individuals they want on the team.

### **Non-School Participants**

When inviting non-school participants to the IEP/transition planning meeting, the IEP manager should clearly explain why the person is being invited and what role the person is expected to assume at the meeting. For example, a person may be invited to provide information about services, or to negotiate shared service provision. When choosing new members for the team, consider inviting representatives from agencies who might be valuable in supporting a student in attaining his or her anticipated post-school outcomes.

In general, involvement of non-school participants should be requested at least **two years** before the student will leave high school. If the IEP manager is in doubt about when to

invite a non-school service provider, contact the provider to discuss the request for involvement.

### **Essential Members of an IEP/transition Planning Team**

In order to ensure compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), certain members must be **present** at the IEP/transition planning meeting. In addition, certain individuals must be **invited** to attend; other may be included as appropriate. The following team members **must be present**:

- A. **An administrator or designee.** The administrator may be the school principal or director of special education; an administrative designee may be a special educator authorized by the principal to commit district resources. When a student's parents reside in a district **other** than the providing district, an administrator or designee from the resident district **must** be invited to the meeting. The resident district may appoint a member of the providing district as its administrative designee.
- B. **The student's regular education teacher.** An appropriate regular classroom teacher must be present even when the student has no regular education placement.
- C. **A special education teacher.** A teacher holding the license of the student's primary disability.

The following individuals **must be invited**:

- A. **The student** must be invited to the planning meeting. Students should always be involved in their transition planning and **encouraged** to attend their own meetings.
- B. **One or both parents** must also be invited to any meeting where transition services will be discussed, and they must be informed that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss transition planning.
- C. **A member of the assessment team** must be invited. This may be the student's teacher, a representative of the district, or some other person who is knowledgeable about the assessment procedures used with the student.

The following individuals **may** be invited to attend, as appropriate:

- A. **Related service providers** such as an occupational therapist, physical therapist, audiologist, psychologist, adaptive physical education, doctor or nurse, rehabilitation counselor, or social worker.
- B. **Representatives of non-school agencies** such as a Division of Rehabilitation Services counselor, county case manager, health care provider, residential service provider, supported employment service provider, community leisure service provider, or post-secondary education support service facilitator.
- C. **Other individuals** at the discretion of the parents(s) and student. Parents and students need to be informed of their right to bring anyone of their own choosing to the meeting.
- D. **Representatives from an outside district, agency or school** when the Assessment Team Summary Report recommends placement options outside the resident district.

## **Roles of IEP/Transition Planning Team Members**

### **Student**

Involving students in making decisions about their own lives is extremely important. It is not enough to a student simply attend the meeting. Individuals who are active participants in the planning of their future are more likely to be committed to reaching their goals. All students regardless of their disability should be encouraged to advocate for themselves. Some students have had limited experience in expressing personal preferences and advocating for themselves. Teachers and parents can help prepare students to participate in the meeting by talking about the meeting's purpose, describing what goes on and who typically attends, and discussing transition issues before and after the meeting occurs.

Some students may benefit from rehearsing certain parts of the meeting, such as how to greet team members or the way to express preferences or suggest alternatives. The ultimate goal is for students to assume control, with appropriate levels of support, over their education and transition and identify and manage its various components.

The role of students in developing their IEP/transition plan includes:

- A. providing information about their future adult goals to the team;
- B. determining their strengths and challenges and communicating them to the team;
- C. expressing a desire for certain program components;
- D. contributing information about their preferences; and
- E. collaborating in the decision-making process.

### **Family members**

One of the most important responsibilities of parents is to prepare their children to be independent and successful adults regardless of their child's abilities. Because students with disabilities are likely to encounter a variety of obstacles, transition to life as an adult may have to be more carefully planned. Families bring a wealth of information about their son/daughter that is critical to effective transition planning. The following is a list of ways the family members can assist in the development of transition plans:

- A. Sharing information about "what has worked" for their sons and daughters, family strengths and resources, incentives that school cannot offer, and most importantly, sharing their "dream" of the future for their child;
- B. Becoming informed about quality transition planning and services in the community that can assist and support their child in achieving success as an adult;
- C. Assisting in the implementation of identified transition activities;
- D. Assigning specific duties to the child around the home; emphasizing good grooming, physical fitness, and social and communication skills;
- E. Making sure that the intentions of agreements and collaborative efforts between various agencies are fully met;
- F. Providing an assessment of their child's skills outside of the school environment;

- G. Actively supporting efforts to provide training in a variety of community settings and sharing contacts to assist in securing training sites; and
- H. Providing a variety of community experiences for their child.

### **Educators and other school personnel**

Educators prepare students for adult life. The role of educators and related service personnel includes:

- A. Informing students and family members about transition planning;
- B. Preparing students by teaching skills that can be used in work, living, and leisure activities outside of school;
- C. Assisting students in the selection of accommodations and assistive technology that may increase independence or participation in activities;
- D. Coordinating IEP/transition planning and assessment, as well as the delivery of both direct and indirect services as designed by the team;
- E. Educating families about support alternatives available in the community;
- F. Involving students and family members in the design and implementation of a written, formal transition plan;
- G. Incorporating modifications used in the classroom into the transition planning process (e.g., testing considerations, physical accommodations, or taped texts); and
- H. Encouraging family members to allow students to practice making choices and to follow through on decisions.

### **Community Service Providers**

Community service providers provide an important link to community resources and can assist in accessing services. They are responsible for working with the students and parents to achieve work, residential, social, and leisure goals both before and after graduation.

### **Transition Planning**

Transition planning is an ongoing process which takes place in a systematic progression throughout the student's secondary school years. In planning for the future, the team should consider the student's entire family and the support they can provide in the process. Sometimes the needs of different family members are in conflict with one another. There may also be times when family members disagree about what they believe is right for the person with the disability. Nevertheless, involvement by family members is important.

Reaching consensus can take a lot of time and discussion, which are reasons why it is important to start transition planning at age 14. The most important task is to come to a clear understanding of the student's desires and then to build on that annually. **Don't start over every year.** The real art of good transition planning is to build and refine the plan throughout each year of a student's high school career.

The transition plan should:

- A. Represent programming and future opportunities in four major areas:
  1. community living skills;
  2. social/leisure skills;
  3. residential living; and
  4. vocational competence.
- B. Contain precise objectives, training activities, materials and resources, and evaluation strategies that are individualized;
- C. Have the involvement and input of parents/guardians and student;
- D. Include the input of educators and adult service providers who will be involved in providing future services;
- E. Include related professionals and evaluators to present information on how to ease the transition from school to work and community living;
- F. Include provisions for training in the actual future environments that the student will experience upon leaving school; and
- G. Be longitudinal in nature and place priorities on the goals that will be needed for the student to function successfully in post school environments.

### **Transition Areas to Assess**

Five transition areas must be assessed and annually addressed in the IEP/transition planning process for all Minnesota students with special education needs age 14 years and older. These transition areas are:

1. **Home Living:** developing necessary skills to live as independently as possible
2. **Recreation and Leisure:** knowing about and experiencing social and free time activities;
  - a) Develop an array of specific and affordable recreation and leisure skills.
  - b) Develop spectator or audience member skills.
  - c) Identify activities through community education classes.
  - d) Identify acceptable dress behavior for a variety of situations.
  - e) Arrange social activities.
  - f) Establish exercise routines.
  - g) Identify possible social supports through family and community (church, clubs, etc.).
3. **Community Participation:** accessing community resources including people, places, and activities in the community;
  - a) Develop shopping skills
  - b) Assess vulnerability status
  - c) Open and learn to use a bank account
  - d) Register for military selective service
  - e) Register to vote and vote in a local precinct
  - f) Learn to schedule appointments
  - g) Learn to order and dine at restaurants
  - h) Access/Medical Services
4. **Jobs and Job Training:** developing employment skills; and

- a) Participate in work responsibilities (chores) at home.
  - b) Visit possible employment sites and "shadow" employees.
  - c) Become aware of career opportunities and interest.
  - d) Receive vocational training within the community.
  - e) Develop interpersonal skills necessary to maintain employment.
  - f) Participate in summer employment.
  - g) Identify people and agencies that can assist in job search.
  - h) Apply for support from the Division of Rehabilitation Services.
  - i) Identify and check eligibility requirement for other job supports.
  - j) Identify and apply for day training and habilitation services.
  - k) Identify and arrange for transportation to and from work.
5. **Postsecondary Education and Training:** developing skills to access life-long learning opportunities.
- a) Identify personal learning styles.
  - b) Become aware of career interests and options.
  - c) Become aware of post-secondary enrollment options.
  - d) Visit post-secondary institutions.
  - e) Register and take college entrance exams.
  - f) Develop a resume and request letter of recommendation.
  - g) Identify and apply to post-secondary institutions.
  - h) Identify supports needed at post-secondary sites.
  - i) Identify and check eligibility requirements for adult support.
  - j) Check courses and credits toward high school graduation.
  - k) Apply for financial aid, scholarships, etc.
  - l) Arrange for transportation and housing, if necessary.

In assessing the learner's present level of performance and future transition needs, consideration should be given to the relationship between transition areas A through E and the learner's skills and abilities in the following areas:

- A. **Communication.** What communication skills does the student have that would allow him/her to interact in a social setting, on the job or training site.
- B. **Emotional.** What are the emotional issues that might impact this learner in going swimming or on a job with a high demand for personal interaction with the general public?
- C. **Academics.** How does the learner presently use his/her math, reading, or other academic skills in each of the five areas?
- D. **Technology.** What is the learner's past use of, present use of, or need for technology, as it applies to the five areas?
- E. **Transportation.** What does the learner presently use, know how to use, and/or need to use in the future?
- F. **Interpersonal/Social.** How does the learner use these skills in each of the five areas? What is needed to develop these skills?
- G. **Medical/Physical.** Are there medical or physical concerns which impact the level of performance in any of the five areas?
- H. **Advocacy/Legal.** What level of ability does the learner need to know his or her rights in each of the five transition areas?

- I. **Learner Preference.** What activities does the learner want to participate in each of the five areas?
- J. **Anticipated Future Environments.** What is the learner's knowledge of and ability to function in the desired future environments for each of the five areas?

### **Transition Assessment Plan**

The following is a suggested plan for assessing students with disabilities throughout their transition years.

- A. By the time a student with an IEP reaches age 14 or grade nine, he or she needs a multidisciplinary assessment of transition needs and a plan for obtaining services to meet those needs. School districts with Carl D. Perkins funding need to begin vocational **awareness** activities for students in 8th grade. This assessment and plan should be updated annually.
- B. **For initial referral, transition assessment cannot occur until signed parent permission is received.** Permission is given when a parent or guardian signs the *Notice of an Educational Assessment/Reassessment Plan*. **For students with an existing IEP, reassessments may begin unless the parent(s) or guardians object in writing within ten school days after receiving the request.** If the team reviews existing data and determines that no further assessment is needed the parent must sign the *Notice of No Additional Information Needed for Reassessment*.
- C. In addition, a letter further explaining transition to parents may be sent with the *Notice of an Educational Assessment/Reassessment Plan* or with the notice of an IEP/transition planning meeting. (see sample letter)
- D. For transition planning, all five areas must be addressed using more than one assessment tool. In many instances, the use of surveys, interview, observations and formal or standardized assessments will provide the most effective transition assessment tools.
- E. In general, a student's IEP Manager will be the primary person to ensure that transition assessment and planning is carried out. Other members of a student's planning team may and should conduct any appropriate assessment to obtain a holistic picture of the person. For some student's with disabilities it may be appropriate to include other agencies (i.e., county social services) as early as age 14 in order to address issues such as guardianship and supported living and work situation planning may begin.

### **Transition Planning Timeline**

#### Grade 8

Each eighth grader with a disability will complete an interest inventory. A *Transition Planning Record* will be started to document the planning process. Eighth grade would also be the year that career exploration would be emphasized using Industrial Tech. and Personal and Family Life Science classes. Efforts should be made for appropriate Senior High School Special Education staff to meet with parents of each student by the end of the school year if your district would have a change in service providers.

### **Area of Instruction**

- A. Teach and reinforce strategies to improve study habits, time management, and general organization skills.
- B. Prepare students for active involvement in their IEP meeting and begin to explore future goals in all transition areas. Teach students to be self-advocates.
- C. Assist students in selecting courses that will allow them to explore career interests and skills through School-to-Work activities.
- D. Teach and reinforce learning strategies in academic areas.
- E. Prepare students to take basic graduation standards test.
- F. Explore the use of a variety of school, home, and community accommodations with students.
- G. Offer opportunities for students to learn about high school courses, activities and services.
- H. Encourage involvement in community organizations, extra-curricular activities and School-to-Work student organizations.
- I. Encourage students to select general education courses that offer service learning opportunities.
- J. Assist students in developing a personal transition file in which to collect important information such as: school and medical records, IEPs, samples of academic work, evaluation information, transcripts and test scores, record of school-based, work-based, and service learning School-to-Work activities.

### Grade 9

Parents will complete transition information questionnaires. Transition goals and objectives are developed in conjunction with the annual review of the student's IEP. Further vocational class options will be emphasized. If the student has a developmental delay as defined by human services, county social services should be provided an opportunity to meet with the parents to discuss issues regarding guardianship, SSI, and supported living and work opportunities.

### **Area of Instruction:**

- A. Assist students in clarifying the exact nature of their disabilities-this could be done by sharing with students their assessment results (interpret as needed so students understand).
- B. Assist students in developing a profile of their own unique strengths and limitations.
- C. Assist students in understanding how their disabilities affect their lives.
- D. Help students understand their legal rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act-especially as related to their legal right to accommodations.
- E. Assist students in selecting and using learning strategies and accommodations that are most effective for them.
- F. Teach students to request appropriate accommodations in school, home, work and community environments.
- G. Assist students in pinpointing specific academic needs and developing goals to address them.

- H. Assist students in refining their future goals in all transition areas and selecting performance measures within graduation standards that will help them successfully meet their goals.
- I. Assist general educators in adapting and modifying graduation standards performance measures to meet unique student goals and needs.
- J. Continue to encourage involvement in community organizations, extra-curricular activities and School-to-Work student organizations.
- K. Continue to assist students in selecting courses that allow them to refine career interests and skills through School-to-Work activities.
- L. Assist students in developing and following through with solutions to academic and social difficulties.
- M. Continue to assist students in collecting resources, organizing, and using their personal transition files.

### Grade 10

Updating of the *Transition Planning Record* and IEP goals and objectives will take place. The student may be provided with an opportunity to attend career fairs or college fairs and tour possible technical or other post secondary facilities and potential job sites.

#### **Area of Instruction:**

- A. Assist students in clarifying the exact nature of their disabilities-this could be done by sharing with students their assessment results (interpret as needed so students understand).
- B. Assist students in developing a profile of their own unique strengths and limitations.
- C. Assist students in understanding how their disabilities affect their lives.
- D. Help students understand their legal rights under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act-especially as related to their legal right to accommodations.
- E. Assist students in selecting and using learning strategies and accommodations that are most effective for them.
- F. Teach students to request appropriate accommodations in school, home, work and community environments.
- G. Assist students in pinpointing specific academic needs and developing goals to address them.
- H. Assist students in refining their future goals in all transition areas and selecting performance measures within graduation standards that will help them successfully meet their goals.
- I. Assist general educators in adapting and modifying graduation standards performance measures to meet unique student goals and needs.
- J. Continue to encourage involvement in community organizations, extra-curricular activities and School-to-Work student organizations.
- K. Continue to assist students in selecting courses that allow them to refine career interests and skills through School-to-Work activities.
- L. Assist students in developing and following through with solutions to academic and social difficulties.

- M. Continue to assist students in collecting resources, organizing, and using their personal transition files.

### Grade 11

Updating of the *Transition Planning Record* and IEP goals and objectives will take place. Each student will have the opportunity to be processed through a vocational aptitude assessment. This data will be reflected in the IEP Present Level of Performance section. During this year the student would be eligible for secondary vocational classes. Vocational work experience programs are available to students beginning at Grade 11.

#### **Area of Instruction:**

- A. Assist students in collecting information about institutions of higher education if post-secondary education is one of their future goals.
- B. Encourage students to contact post-secondary institutions of interest to find out about services offered for students with disabilities.
- C. Continue to develop and refine future adult goals in all transition areas.
- D. Assist students in taking charge of their own transition-focused IEP meetings.
- E. Assist students and families in applying for post-school support services (rehabilitation services, social services, health services, social security, etc.
- F. Support students in continuing to use and improve the skills and learning strategies developed in previous years, such as determining and following through with solutions to academic and social difficulties they encounter in general education settings.
- G. Continue to assist students in selecting performance measures within graduation standards that will help them successfully meet their transition goals. Assist general educators in adapting and modifying performance measures to meet unique student goals and needs.
- H. Continue to encourage involvement in community organizations, extra-curricular activities and School-to-Work student organizations.
- I. Continue to assist students in selecting courses that will allow them to refine career interest and skills through School-to-Work activities.

### Grade 12

The transition process continues as in Grade 11 and will be completed by finalizing the *Transition Planning Record*, providing a list of recommendations for post secondary pursuits and appropriate resources, including names and phone numbers of contact people. An exit interview will be held at the end of the year and the Transitional Planning Record will be given to the student.

#### **Area of Instruction:**

- A. Assist students in collecting information about institutions of higher education if post-secondary education is one of their future goals.
- B. Encourage students to contact post-secondary institutions of interest to find out about services offered for students with disabilities.
- C. Continue to develop and refine future adult goals in all transition areas.
- D. Assist students in taking charge of their own transition-focused IEP meetings.
- E. Assist students and families in applying for post-school support services (rehabilitation services, social services, health services, social security, etc.

- F. Support students in continuing to use and improve the skills and learning strategies developed in previous years, such as determining and following through with solutions to academic and social difficulties they encounter in general education settings.
- G. Continue to assist students in selecting performance measures within graduation standards that will help them successfully meet their transition goals. Assist general educators in adapting and modifying performance measures to meet unique student goals and needs.
- H. Continue to encourage involvement in community organizations, extra-curricular activities and School-to-Work student organizations.
- I. Continue to assist students in selecting courses that will allow them to refine career interest and skills through School-to-Work activities.
- J. Depending on the individual disability, the following are possible options for transition:

**Work-Based Learning Activities**

1. **Work-Site Field Trips:** The elementary-middle school years can be an ideal time for learners to participate in work-site field trips. Work-site field trips are a process where learners take part in employer led tours work work-sites which provide information on work processes and technical skill requirements of different jobs. Learners learn the importance of thinking about career development through the career path stories their tour guides share. The importance of task management skills are also stressed. These short term experiences provide opportunities to explore a wide variety of occupational clusters. Learner involvement in the planning, coordination, and follow-up activities of a work-site visit tend to insure that the experience will have a lasting impact.
2. **Job Shadowing:** Job shadowing is typically a part of career exploration activities that occur late in middle school or early high school. A learner follows an employee at their workplace for a day or two to experience real day-to-day work in the particular occupation or industry. Sometimes learners job shadow in a number of different departments or with different employers to explore different occupations within an industry cluster.

Job shadowing is a short-term, non-paid experience that is intended to help learners explore a range of career objectives and select a career major. The length of the job shadowing experience is based on individual career objectives designed and agreed to by the participating business or industry, learner, teacher, and parent. Job shadowing does not teach the participants specific job skills; however, it can provide activities that increase work-readiness and can influence career pathway selection.

3. **Service Learning:** Service learning is a method of instruction which helps learners understand the needs of their local community while gaining valuable skills which will benefit them as citizens and employees. Community members benefit by having the learners help them meet their local needs. Service learning can be a short term program or a long term adventure. Learners are not employees. Service learning is a valuable

experience for learners of all ages and abilities, and it can take many forms. Learners often receive credit toward high school graduation for their service and the activity they are involved in is closely linked with classroom learning.

Combining service learning and classroom work can produce dramatic improvements in learner's attitudes, motivation and achievement.

Examples of Service Learning include:

- A. Volunteering at a nursing home, humane society, etc.
- B. Sorting food at the food shelf
- C. Cleaning-up a park or river bank
- D. Planting trees for flowers in a park
- E. Assisting other learners as a peer tutor
- F. Painting the community center
- G. Serving as a peer helper
- H. Shelving books at the library
- I. Serving meals to the elderly

### **Community Service Providers**

**Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS):** An individual may be able to get vocation rehabilitation services if he or she has a disability that makes it hard to get training or find a job. To find out if a student is eligible for services, a DRS counselor will look at medical and school records. The student and the DRS counselor will then identify the student's assets and limitations and what support is needed. As part of the student's transition plan, an Individualized Written Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP) will be developed.

DRS provides many services, some of which include:

- A. Assessment to determine individual needs;
- B. Guidance in choosing, preparing for, and finding suitable employment;
- C. Individual vocational counseling during rehabilitation and on the job;
- D. Assistive technology to increase a student's ability to work, such as adapted equipment or work site modifications;
- E. Vocational training after high school to prepare for employment; this may include tuition, fees, books and supplies for education in a college, university, trade school, or on-the-job training;
- F. Assistance with added costs incurred because of rehabilitation plan;
- G. Job placement assistance; and
- H. Job-related tools and licenses for individuals who are ready to go to work.

**Centers for Independent Living:** Independent living is often overlooked in the transition planning process; however, all students need to know how to access support for future living arrangements. Center for Independent Living can assist students in identifying individual goals in a wide variety of areas: socialization, housing, attendant management, financial management, transportation, sexuality, food preparation,

community resources, recreation and leisure activities, health care, peer support, employment and educational opportunities, safety, self-advocacy, and individual rights.

**State Services for the Blind and Visually Handicapped (SSB):** If a student has a visual impairment, with or without additional physical or mental disabilities, the Minnesota State Services for the Blind and Visually Handicapped (SSB) can offer assistance in transition planning. An SSB counselor can be part of a student's transition planning team, and can assist in creating a transition plan. Some of the services available from SSB include:

- A. Adjustment to blindness, including orientation and mobility training and rehabilitation counseling;
- B. Low vision services;
- C. Counseling;
- D. Assistance in finding and keeping a job;
- E. Tools and supplies needed to reach goals;
- F. Telecommunication and sensory aids; and
- G. Vocational training.

**County Social Services:** County social services play a crucial role in assisting individuals in meeting a variety of essential daily needs, such as housing, employment, financial support, health care, and transportation. County case managers are the key to accessing these services and supports. The case manager can determine eligibility for services, help identify which services are needed, seek out appropriate services, and coordinate service delivery. Direction for the case manager's involvement comes from a person's Individual Service Plan (ISP). County social services are available in the categories of developmental disabilities, mental health, hearing impairments, and general assistance. Some of the Services that may be provided by county social services include:

- A. Case management to individuals eligible to receive services such as Intermediate Care Facilities for persons with mental retardation (ICF/MR), home and community-based services, semi-independent living services, day training and habilitation services, employment services and support, and mental health services;
- B. General relief programs, which provide assistance to persons who are needy and temporarily disabled who cannot qualify under the Supplemental Security Income Program (SSI) of the Social Security Administration;
- C. Medical assistance program which seeks to provide medical assistance to individuals who receive payments from any of the various public assistance programs;
- D. A program which provides food stamps for people who qualify under certain income, living arrangement, and maximum resources requirements.

### **IEP/Transition Planning Team Considerations**

A number of tasks and activities occur before, during, and after the IEP/transition planning meeting. In order to collaborate on a successful transition plan, team members will want to keep in mind the following guidelines:

- A. Before an IEP/transition Planning Meeting:
1. The student, parent(s) and IEP manager develop and approve the list of people to invite to the IEP/transition planning team meeting.
  2. All team members should be given reasonable advance notice to participate in the IEP/transition planning meetings.
  3. The student and family member (or school staff on request of the student and/or parents) should invite potential service providers. The invitation should be made far enough in advance so that the provider will have an opportunity to get to know the student before the IEP/transition planning meeting. It is very uncomfortable to be assisted in personal planning by someone you have never met.
  4. Assessment information should be compiled and shared with participants *before the IEP/transition planning meeting*. Planning meetings should not be dominated by a discussion of the student's academic deficits, but rather focused on planning for the student's future. Students can send their assessment information to service providers and home to their parents to give them ample time to prepare for the meeting.
  5. All participants need to know what will take place at the meeting so they know how to prepare.
  6. Students should meet with an instructor or advisor to review their previous goals, interest inventories, and transition surveys so that they are prepared for the meeting. Parent and service provider surveys should also be completed before the meeting.
- B. During an IEP/transition Planning Meeting:
1. Everyone included as a team member should be given an active role in the planning meeting. Team members are not likely to attend many meetings if they do not feel that they have made a valuable contribution.
  2. IEP/transition planning meetings where many people are in attendance are **not** the place to bring up personal issues, such as grooming or showering habits. The meeting should be kept positive so that the student will look forward to the future and to being included in the planning process.
  3. All individual plans for a student (e.g., IEP, IWRP, ISP) could be developed cooperatively at the same meeting to assure that all are working together.
  4. The completion of pre-meeting activities will ensure that the large team meeting can be completed in a reasonable period of time.
- C. After an IEP/transition Planning Meeting:
1. A copy of the completed IEP/transition plan should be made available to the student. For example, students could keep a copy in their own transition file folder and check off objectives as they are completed.
  2. Students and family members should have opportunities to check to see if all responsibilities designated in the IEP/transition plan are being carried out.

## **Social Security Disability Benefits for Youth with Disabilities**

As youth with disabilities prepare to transition from school to adult life they may be eligible to receive benefits provided through the Social Security Administration. School personnel have a responsibility to assist these youth to access the benefits for which they are entitled.

Currently, many children and youth with disabilities are failing to collect benefits for which they are entitled through SSA. Youth with disabilities whose families have limited income and resources may qualify for monthly Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits. For youth with disabilities age 18 and older, eligibility for SSI disability programs depends on the individual's income and is no longer dependent on family income, unless the youth is under 22 and a student regularly attending school or training. Eligible youth may also receive Medicaid, which can help pay their medical expenses. Individuals should apply as soon as possible, since upon being found eligible, the benefits may be paid back to the day of application.

The Social Security Administration has new rules for evaluating disabilities in children and youth which are expected to provide a more equitable assessment of disabilities. The new rules for eligibility provide for individual assessment of each child's ability to function. The child's ability to function is determined by looking at the impact of the impairment on the child's everyday activities. If the child's physical or mental impairment substantially limits his or her ability to function appropriately, independently, and efficiently in an age appropriate manner, the child may be found disabled. Data from school records, i.e., IEP, psychologist report, school medical records, can be used to provide documentation of the disability. Other new childhood disability regulations provide detailed guidelines for evaluating mental disorders in children, and, for the first time, specifically cover psychoactive substance dependence, anxiety disorders, hyperactivity, personality disorders, autism, tic disorders such as Tourette's Syndrome, Downs Syndrome, cystic fibrosis, and anorexia.

Educators and health providers need only have families and individuals contact the local Social Security Administration for program and eligibility information. An application can be completed over the phone in order to facilitate the eligibility process.