IDEA SECONDARY TRANSITION

In the back of a parent's mind throughout the school years, is the question, "What will be next for my child after high school?" A roadmap has been put in place by law to initiate and guide the timely preparation of the student to successfully move into adult life.

THE IEP AND TRANSITION

An IEP addresses a student's unique educational needs and related services. It's also used to assist with the transition, the process for preparing a student for further education, employment, and independent living. Areas of adult living to be considered include:

- Post-secondary education
- Vocational education
- Integrated employment
- Continuing education
- Adult education
- Adult services
- Independent living
- Community participation

This is NOT an exhaustive list. Other relevant services must be considered and provided. For example, financial planning, which includes exploration of financial resources, economic assistance programs, housing, personal income, and applicable asset restrictions.

IEP teams are required to include transition planning in the IEP that's in effect when the student turns 16; however, transition planning can be addressed before that deadline if a student's needs are more significant or if deemed appropriate by the IEP team. It is recommended that the student's IEP team first introduce transition as part of the IEP team discussion and meeting process in grade eight (ages 13-14).

POST-SECONDARY SUPPORTS

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

The state Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Office has the responsibility to be actively involved in the transition planning process with schools and the actual provision of transition services for students with disabilities.

VR should be involved in the transition process from the start, in order to meet their requirements of conducting outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who may need transition services. This includes informing students with disabilities about the purpose of the VR program, the application procedures, the eligibility requirements, and the scope of services that may be available, so that a student and their family may make an informed choice. VR staff should also be included as IEP team members and actively participate in transition planning with school personnel that facilitates the development of the transition plan included in the IEP or the 504 Plan.

P&A DISABILITY RIGHTS NORTH DAKOTA

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(701) 328-2950
ND Relay 711 TTY www.ndpanda.org
panda_intake@nd.gov

WHEN A STUDENT TURNS 18

For all students, including students who have a disability, 18 is the age of majority at which time they assume legal decision-making authority relative to all aspects of their life, including educational placement, educational records, evaluations, and programming. The law requires that beginning no later than one year before the student reaches age 18, the IEP must include a statement that the student has been informed of those rights that will or may transfer to the student upon reaching the age of majority. Discussions with the student at this time may include, as appropriate, arrangements such as supported decision-making or a general or limited guardianship.

PLANNING

The student needs to be the focus of the transition planning process. The student's strengths, preferences, and interests are central to transition services included in the IEP. A robust transition plan will empower students to be the driving decision maker. Areas to be addressed through the transition process includes (not an exhaustive list):

- Instruction
- Related services
- Community experiences
- Development of employment objectives
- Post-school adult living objectives
- Acquisition of daily living skills
- A functional vocational evaluation.

A **FREE** app called Transition-ND has been developed by Protection and Advocacy to help teachers, parents and IEP team members engage students in the transition planning process. It was developed to ask simple questions of students so that they can provide more detailed input regarding their IEP transition plan. It takes only about fifteen minutes to complete and produces an individualized draft transition document.

A student's draft transition plan should then guide the IEP team to develop strategies and action steps to ensure progress and implementation of the transition plan throughout the student's final years of school.

RESOURCES

- **ND Department of Public Instruction** - www.nd.gov/dpi/education-programs/special-education
- **Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)** - www.nd.gov/dpi/what-transition
- **ND Department of Human Services – Division of Vocational Rehabilitation** - https://www.hhs.nd.gov/vr/student-services

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