RESOURCES MEMO #ED2
Date: June 11, 2003
RE: Transition Planning to Adult Life

TRANSITION TO ADULT LIFE: A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

The transition IEP process
The transition IEP is a plan for adulthood. It is a plan to prepare students to work, live and participate in their community. This plan for adulthood provides the framework to ensure that schools are preparing students for what they want to do after they leave school. In order to increase the likelihood of post-school success, this plan for adulthood needs to designate and link the student to any anticipated needed post-school services, programs and supports before the student leaves the school setting.

Required and Suggested Members of Transition IEP Teams
- Student (Required to be invited)
- Parent(s)/Guardian (Required to be invited at a mutually convenient time)
- Advocate knowledgeable about student or expert on disability
- Community Agency Transition Representative
- School Staff
- Special Education Teacher(s) (Required)
- Representative of the school qualified to provide or supervise special education and authorized to commit the resources of the district - (required)
- Regular education teacher of the child (required)
- Guidance Counselor *** (Essential)
- Vocational Education Teacher

Suggest Members of Transition IEP Team (as appropriate):
- Vocational Education Administrator
- Speech/Language Therapist
- Physical and/or Occupational Therapist (essential if functional vocational education is a consideration)
- Psychologist
- Social Worker
- Designated Vocational Instructor
- Orientation and Mobility Specialist
- Interpreter
- Aide
- Nurse
- Program Support Teacher

A Suggested Process for Transition Planning

**Before the IEP meeting**

- Assist students and families to determine needs, preferences, and interests related to life after high school.
- Teach student to actively participate in the IEP meeting.
- Assess student needs, preferences and interests.
- Formally invite the student to participate in the IEP process and meeting.
- Provide written notice of the IEP meeting to parents, students, and outside agencies.
- If the student chooses not to attend the IEP meeting, use other means to gather information about his or her needs, interests, and preferences.
- If an invited agency chooses not to attend the IEP meeting, use other means to ensure they participate in the planning of transition services. Document these efforts and include them in the IEP.

**During the IEP meeting**

- Conduct the IEP meeting to actively involve the student and family or better yet, teach the student to conduct his/her own meeting.
- Review the student's present levels of performance, needs, interests and preferences, and, if available, results of functional vocational evaluations in order to guide the development of the following:
  
  - an outcome-oriented post-school vision statement;
  - a statement of needed transition services;
  - coordinated activities in related services, instruction, community experiences, employment and other post-school living objectives needed to achieve the post-school outcomes;
• daily living skills activities and a functional vocational evaluation, if needed;

• annual goals and objectives for coordinated activities that are the responsibility of the school;

• procedures for evaluating the accomplishments of the objectives;

• procedures for periodically informing parents of progress toward goals; and

• identification of agency responsibilities and linkages in delivering the services.

After the IEP meeting
- Provide the instruction, related services, experiences, and services outlined in the IEP.
- Conduct evaluation of the objectives per the IEP to determine if the transition services are appropriate, and provided as planned.
- Communicate progress frequently to parents and all involved staff and agencies.
- Reconvene the IEP team to plan alternative strategies if the transition services are not appropriate or provided as planned.

(Adapted from Incorporating Transition into the IEP: Manual and Resource Guide, written by Lizanne De Stefano and Deborah Winking under contract to the Illinois State Board of Education; and Re-Conceptualizing IEPs to Include Transition Services, written by Ed O'Leary, Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center.)

What is transition planning?
The 1997 amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) states that students with disabilities are to be prepared for employment and independent living. IDEA also requires coordinated and documented planning. Early and meaningful transition planning, which actively involves students and their families, has a positive influence on students' post-school success and independence.

The IEP (Individual Education Program) team must think and plan several years ahead of the student's transition from school to the adult community. IDEA requires that the IEP team carefully consider post-school goals when the student is about to enter high school at age 14.

Beginning at age 16 (or younger, if appropriate) a statement of transition services needed by the student must be included in the IEP. High school experiences, both academic and social, greatly influence future options for all students. For adolescents with disabilities, these experiences are pivotal. Decisions about any transition service needs or a student's course of study should be grounded in the
answers to the following questions:

* What are his/her dreams?
* His/her vision for life as an adult?
* What are his/her strengths?
* How will he/she use them to build success during high school?
* Will he/she seek a regular high school diploma requiring a prescribed course of study with possible accompanying proficiency tests?
* Will he/she work toward a vocational completion certificate?
* Does he/she have a career interest now? If not, when and how can the team help her discover his/her interests and preferences?
* Does this team believe that he/she will remain in public school through the maximum age of eligibility? If so, what age-appropriate experiences may be available after 18?
* What skills need to be developed or improved to help her make progress toward her goals?
* Are there any at-risk behaviors that might interfere with his success during high school?
* In what school and community activities will he/she participate?
* What does the team believe his/her high school course of study will look like?
* What transition services, supports and accommodations does he/she need for success in high school?

Discussing and answering these questions will meet the intent of the IDEA regulations. All IEP decisions should be made in the context of how that decision may affect the student's future school or post-school experiences.

**Developing a Comprehensive Plan**

Section 300.29 of the IDEA regulations defines transition service as a coordinated set of activities for a student with a disability that is designed within an outcome-oriented process, that promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation.

Transition services are based on the individual student's needs and takes into account the student's preferences and interests.

[511 IAC 7-28-3] Sec. 3. (A) "Based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests."

[511 IAC 7-28-3] Sec. 3. (B) "Include the following: (i) Instruction."
(ii) Related services.
(iii) Community experiences.
(iv) The development of employment and other postsecondary school adult living objectives.
(v) Where appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and a functional vocational evaluation."