



# TRANSITION AHEAD

Volume 6, Issue 2  
January-February 2016

*A newsletter  
for teachers and administrators involved  
in the special education transition process.*

Dear Friends in Education,

I recently took a tour of the Cook Nuclear Plant and it was a cool experience. The security was impressive, but I was most struck by the level of training that someone receives before being able to operate a nuclear reactor. It takes two and a half to three years to complete the training and pass all the tests to be certified to operate a reactor. The most fascinating fact: you only need a high school diploma to get started - and if you have a college degree, you still have to go through the same training.

It is a good reminder that certification, approvals, and specific training is as much a part of our world as it was 20 years ago. It is the skills that one can master which make for a successful work career and a meaningful contribution to society.

Eric Hoppstock, Ed.S.  
Berrien RESA  
*Assistant Superintendent/Chief Academic Officer*

## Contact Information:

Berrien Regional Education  
Service Agency  
P.O. Box 364  
711 St. Joseph Ave.  
Berrien Springs, MI  
49103-1583  
(269) 471-7725  
[www.berrienresa.org](http://www.berrienresa.org)

Assistant Superintendent/  
Chief Academic Officer,  
**Eric Hoppstock**  
[eric.hoppstock@berrienresa.org](mailto:eric.hoppstock@berrienresa.org)

Supervisor of Ancillary Services,  
**Craig Blasko**  
[craig.blasko@berrienresa.org](mailto:craig.blasko@berrienresa.org)

Transition Coordinators:  
**Sandy Asmus**  
[sandra.asmus@berrienresa.org](mailto:sandra.asmus@berrienresa.org)  
**Cathy Klaer**  
[cathy.klaer@berrienresa.org](mailto:cathy.klaer@berrienresa.org)  
**Craig Kuhn**  
[craig.kuhn@berrienresa.org](mailto:craig.kuhn@berrienresa.org)

Transition Secretary  
**Susan Roth**  
[susan.roth@berrienresa.org](mailto:susan.roth@berrienresa.org)

The views and perspectives shared in "Transition Ahead" do not necessarily reflect those of the Berrien Regional Education Service Agency, affiliated schools, staff or board members.

To receive "Transition Ahead" electronically, please visit [www.berrienresa.org](http://www.berrienresa.org) and visit the Communication page. Additional newsletters are also available.

*Berrien RESA complies with all federal and state laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination, and with all requirements and regulations of the United States Department of Education and the Michigan State Department of Education.*

## Compliance Corner: Transition IEPs SPP B13 Compliance

At the time of publication, transition coordinators will have conducted workshops in all local districts covering the information for Transition IEP compliance, and presented the information to the diagnostic staff at Berrien RESA. I'm sure we all remember last year's confusion regarding compliance for Indicator 13. Starting with this school year, any IEP found out of compliance with B13 will require a Corrective Action Plan (CAP) to be written by the local district. Our goal is to have 100% compliance, and thus no district in Berrien County charged with writing a CAP. Remember, your transition coordinator is willing to also doublecheck any IEPs in question.

To further support this effort, all the handout materials used in the workshop will be uploaded onto our website at [berrienresa.org/educationservices/specialed/transitionplanning](http://berrienresa.org/educationservices/specialed/transitionplanning).

In summary:

- Follow the DoubleCheck List to spot any omissions.
- The cut off date for correcting IEPs is **March 1st, 2016.**
- The criteria for B13 is 100%, so any errors will result in a CAP.
- Guidance documents are on the Berrien RESA website.

## Cruise Control

Since the State of Michigan has increased the graduation requirements for students on the diploma path, we have recognized a band of students, who at one time could have possibly graduated, simply can not achieve this status now, due to the higher level of learning needed to received a diploma. Because of this, over the past four years, a group of teachers and SEDAC representatives from local districts have been working on creating a countywide plan that helps students prepare for meaningful employment. This project is in its first year of implementation as the “Certificate of Employability.” From the beginning, this group has been made up of dedicated teachers and staff from local districts who have helped shape and mold the Certificate of Employability into a teacher-friendly and useful tool to improve student outcomes.

The foundation for the Certificate of Employability is the Council of Exceptional Children’s (CEC) platform, called “LifeCentered Education” (LCE). This web-based tool helps teachers create lesson plans based on knowledge batteries in the following three areas: Daily Living Skills, Self-Determination/Interpersonal Skills, and Employment Skills. Along with the LCE, students have access to online safety training, and unpaid job placement through School to Career.

The Certificate of Employability program is tracked with a competencies standard rubric with the end goal of having students ready to successfully gain employment. We meet four times a year as a Professional Learning Community (PLC), which allows the teachers and district staff to network, brainstorm, and continually improve the program. While the Certificate of Employability is still in its infancy, we hope the word is beginning to spread and more people within Berrien County will know not only what a Certificate of Employability is, but what it can do for our students!

## Click It!:



### Assistive Technology

*Submitted by Berrien RESA Assistive Technology Specialist, Rosanne Burden*

I have recently discovered a free app called Photomath, which is available for both Apple and Android devices. This is the closest you can get to your very own math tutor. Photomath uses your phone’s camera to scan equations and other math problems and then shows you the answer, along with the steps to get there yourself. The Apple version of the app now lets you manually input equations with the new in-app “math keyboard”. This feature is not yet available for Android. You can look at the specifics of this app on their website: [photomath.net](http://photomath.net). Sorry, it doesn’t do calculus or geometry at the present time, so you might want to keep your human math tutor on call!

If you’re still trying out different to-do lists, you may want to check out [Google Keep](https://www.google.com/keep/). Here’s a list of 10 practical ways that students can use Google Keep:

1. Draw notes.
2. Make to-do lists.
3. Type notes.
4. Color-code and sort notes.
5. Create reminders.
6. Share notes with other students.
7. Share task lists.
8. Record voice notes.
9. Take picture notes.
10. Send notes to Google Docs.

Until next time, follow me on Twitter for more new info

[@RosanneBurden](https://twitter.com/RosanneBurden) or on the embedded Twitter feed featured on Berrien RESA’s website:

[www.berrienresa.org/education-services/specialed/assistive-technology](http://www.berrienresa.org/education-services/specialed/assistive-technology)

## Caution Ahead: Off to College

### Highlights from November’s OTC Seminar:

“Believe in yourself!” That was the message that Dr. Brian Pyles, Berrien RESA Career Technical Education Director gave to the OTC students at November’s monthly seminar. He spoke to the students about planning for a career, and consistently stressed the importance of having a plan, believing in yourself and not allowing anyone to discourage you from realizing your dreams. He captured the attention of all the students by giving a history of his educational career and work journey. As he took the students on his personal journey, he offered a wealth of information that outlined multiple paths for success.

During the evening, Dr. Pyles shared his belief that all students can be successful, and that our assumption that everyone must go to a four-year college to lead a productive and successful life isn’t always correct. He outlined ways to find a satisfying career through industrial certification and/or associate degree programs. He finished the evening with an activity that showed students the steps they would need to take to reach their goals. The students were drawn to Dr. Pyle’s personal journey and his knowledge; and they left that evening believing in themselves!

### Highlights from December’s OTC Seminar:

Chuck Jordan, LMC English Professor, shared expectations for college-level writing. He gave helpful advice to students, such as this insight: read your work aloud to hear what you are trying to say, and to make your writing clear and concise. He also suggested that students read their completed papers from the end to the beginning. This technique “tricks your mind” and makes it easier to spot writing errors.



Students learned that in order to write well, you need to continually read and write, and that you should write as many rough drafts as it takes to make your point clear. Since information writing is often assigned in college, it is important to “think for yourself...”, Chuck said, “...[and] don’t believe everything you hear or read.”

The OTC students asked lots of questions and were encouraged by Chuck’s insistence not to be afraid to ask questions. They will be taking the Compass Writing portion of the class in February.



### Opportunity Ahead: Off to College Recruiting Reminder

Off to College is accepting nominations for its fourth cohort. Please nominate sophomores who are interested in continuing their education after high school - students who are curious, care about their future, work hard and have a positive attitude. OTC applications are due to your high school counselor by **March 11, 2016**. Additional information and nomination/application forms can be found at [berrienresa.org/educationservices/specialed/transitionplanning/off-to-college](http://berrienresa.org/educationservices/specialed/transitionplanning/off-to-college). You can also talk to your district’s transition coordinator for more information.

