



TRANSITION AHEAD

Volume 4, Issue 2
December-January 2014

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

Dear Friends in Education:

If you look up the word "strategic" in the dictionary you will find the concept of important or essential in relation to a plan of action. Our mission statement talks about supporting our school community with respect and compassion through quality programs, leadership and dedicated partnerships. Our strategic plan is about an essential plan of action to reach or deliver our mission. Our strategic goals at the Berrien RESA:

1. Berrien RESA will improve student achievement by 5%.
2. All Berrien RESA programs/services will improve student outcomes.
3. All families will be involved in meaningful partnerships with their school/program.
4. Berrien RESA will have quality, respectful partnerships with all constituents toward improving student outcomes.
5. Berrien RESA will improve the work environment for all employees.

During the 2013-14 school year we are targeting improved literacy and student engagement outcomes. To begin measuring our progress we have identified areas in which data will be collected:

1. Percentage of students starting kindergarten "ready to go."
2. Percentage of students proficient in reading by the end of third grade.
3. Attendance rates for students.
4. ACT college ready scores.
5. Student engagement.

It is our goal to improve the data collected from each of the areas listed and to be assured that the improvement was due to our efforts.

-Eric Hoppstock
Asst. Superintendent and Chief Academic Officer

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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 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: Summary of Performance (SOP)

As you know, if you have seniors on your caseload, a Summary of Performance (SOP) Statement is required to be given to the student before graduation or leaving public education. The guidelines for this document are few:

- 1) State the student's current level of functioning
- 2) List the student's future goals
- 3) What accommodations might help the student achieve the goals

Berrien RESA has developed an on-line format for the SOP. You can find it on the Berrien RESA website, under Special Education, Transition Planning. The SOP form and directions for using the form are on the left-hand bar.

There is also a new form: "Annual Transition Summary, Student Perspective" found in the same place on the website. This form is for use with students starting in the 7th the student voice his/her needs, goals, strengths, and interests during the IEPT meeting. It can also serve as framework and history of the student's transition planning. If utilized over the years, it becomes an extremely helpful tool in writing the SOP when the student graduates.

We encourage you to look up these forms and contact your Transition Coordinator with any questions.

www.berrienresa.org

(District letterhead)

ANNUAL TRANSITION SUMMARY – A Student's Perspective
(Grades 7 - 12)

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____ Date: _____

Reflecting upon my current strengths, needs, skills, and abilities will allow me to prepare for my future (college, work, a training program) and adult life...

A. Currently, my areas of strength include the following:

| | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Follows Schedule / Directions | <input type="checkbox"/> On Time | <input type="checkbox"/> Manages Time Well |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Organizes Work Space | <input type="checkbox"/> Social Skills | <input type="checkbox"/> Organizes Appointments |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seeks Clarification/Help | <input type="checkbox"/> Works Well in Group | <input type="checkbox"/> Takes Initiative |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Follows Set Schedule | <input type="checkbox"/> Respects Confidentiality | <input type="checkbox"/> Trustworthy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Works Well Alone | <input type="checkbox"/> Dependable | <input type="checkbox"/> Can Identify Strengths/Needs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communicates Clearly | <input type="checkbox"/> Flexible | |

B. My current needs affect my schoolwork/school activities (i.e. grades, relationships, assignments, projects, communication, time on tests, mobility, extra-curricular activities) in the following ways:

C. Current accommodations/modifications/supports that I've used to help me succeed in school (i.e. aids, adaptive equipment, physical accommodations, other services) include:

D. After graduation, my plans include:

1. Education/Training
2. Adult Living
3. Community Involvement
4. Career/Employment

Cruise Control: School to Work - In-District Placement

In-district placement can be thought of as “in building” placement. If you currently have students doing unpaid work experience within the school building, you need to know what paperwork goes with that.

As quoted by Heraclitus, “The only constant in life is change.” The good thing for us, is that this current change makes it easier for us! We all know that the hardest part of finalizing a school-to-work placement is getting the liability and workers compensation numbers from a job-site. We now do not need to add those numbers or “Employer’s Information” to our in-district (part of the school facilities) training agreement.

- This new form takes the place of the Training Agreement, and can be found at the following link: <http://berrienresa.org/specialeducation/transitionplanning/school-to-work-forms/>.
- As always, we still need the “Training Plan,” “Safety Check-List,” and “30 Day Evaluation” to go along with our new training agreement.
- We still need to have a copy of the student’s transition plan attached to the packet. The job placement should align with an activity from the transition plan.
- If you have any questions regarding any of the school-to-work paperwork... new or old, please contact your Transition Coordinator for assistance.

Discover What Our Youth Have to Offer-Part Two

In the October edition of Transition Ahead, we introduced the START Building Your Future (BYF) project. To recap, the V3 Discovery portion of BYF begins in the schools, where educators partner with parents and families, same-age peers, business leaders and community support personnel to develop the Three Vs – Vision, Vocational Profile, and Visual Resume with each participating student. The Three Vs are not discoveries made overnight. Teams involved in the process follow a ten-step checklist to completion. In this edition, we will take a closer look at the first four steps.

Step 1 – Establish Student and Team:

During this step a student is invited to participate. Once the invitation is accepted, the student and/or a parent/guardian sign a Release of Information. This will allow the school to begin the assessment and to speak to personnel at community employment and independent living agencies about eligibility for support services outside and beyond school (into adulthood). Finally, a Discovery Team is established and meeting dates and agendas are set.

Step 2 – Conduct Records Review:

Step two involves a thorough look at all school records. Teams review files teasing out information that paints a picture of the student’s interests, aptitudes, goals for the future, supports and services and medical history. This information will be summarized in the Vocational Profile under the heading: Conditions under which the student is at his/her best.

Step 3 – Train the Team and Establish Outcomes:

To fully understand the Discovery & Customized Employment process, teams need training. Teams are given access to the Griffin & Hammis online courses (www.griffinhammis.com/training.asp), as well as Autism Internet Modules (AIM) on Customized Employment and The Employee with Autism (www.autisminetnetmodules.org). Additionally, teams review the Michigan Transition Outcomes Project (MI-TOP) Leapornt Modules Assessing for Transition and Transition Planning Made Easier.

Step4 – Plan and Conduct Interviews and Surveys:

Teams create a list of individuals who know the student best (family, peers, neighbors, teachers, etc.) and use the V3 Discovery Interview and Survey Tools to interview each. Surveys may be substituted if individuals find it difficult to free time to participate in an interview, but interviews are preferred.

Steps five through seven will follow.



Cruise Control: Using Assistive Technology Submitted by Berrien RESA Assistive Technology Specialist, Rosanne Burden

In the Fall Transition Newsletter, I wrote about Google’s Chrome Browser and some of the study tools that are available at www.chrometoolbox.com. Now I would like to bring to your attention the Research tool that you will find when you are in a Google Document.

Look for the Research tool under the “Tools” heading that you see in the menu bar at the top of your document. This will pop up a search box on the right hand side of your page where you can do a search directly from there. You can look for images, quotes, articles and easily make the citations that you need and never have to leave your document. For some additional information on this go to Susan Oxnevad’s informative blog at <http://susanoxnevad.blogspot.com/> and click “Google Docs for Learning” and then “Tech Tip Tutorials”. She has numerous articles and great information on her blog, so be sure to check it out!

When students are doing research have them try another search engine such as www.findingdulcinea.com or www.sweetsearch.com. Their mission is to present only high-quality, credible websites and help you sift through the “junk” to get to the websites you really need to do reliable research. Another search engine worth checking out is www.refseek.com which aims to make academic information more easily accessible without commercial advertising. We all love our Google Search engine because it so readily available, but it’s good to encourage our students (and ourselves!) to step outside of our comfort zones once in awhile.

While you are waiting for the next Transition Newsletter, follow me on Twitter @RosanneBurden for new ideas and resources!

Caution Ahead: Off to College Highlights from November’s OTC Seminar:

“Listen to your gut and if it doesn’t feel right then maybe it’s not the right thing to do!”, Kelly Laesch, Berrien County Crime Prevention Coordinator shared this with the OTC students during the November seminar, to be aware of their surroundings at all times. If they didn’t feel safe, to always seek out help from their RA (Resident Assistant) or their college security officers. She talked about drinking, drugs, bullying, internet safety, sexting, choosing their friends wisely, and avoiding mistakes that may affect their future. She shared with parents about drug use, illegal activities in student “dorms” and if their child didn’t want to stay in their room to ask questions and find out what’s going on.

Highlights from December’s OTC Seminar:

What does Lake Michigan College, M-TEC have to offer? David Blumberg shared information about the programs offered and specific information about each programs specific requirement. He discussed the reasons to further your education beyond high school and to continue learning throughout life. He discussed internships and apprenticeship programs with businesses locally and how to make you employable in this currently competitive environment.

Want to hear ideas for writing essays for college applications, scholarships or grants? Felicia Rivers, College Advisor; Michigan College Advising Corps shared basic expectations of an essay and some important, specific requirements needed for your college essay. She gave examples of three main types of essay questions the students would likely see and how to approach each question. The OTC students asked many questions and related to the stories she shared with the group.