



# TRANSITION AHEAD

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

Dear Friends in Education:

I'm not a loyal fan of the variety television show *America's Got Talent* but I watch it occasionally. In case you've never seen it, it is a talent search that showcases performers from across the country that are all vying for their chances to perform on stage hoping to win America's hearts- and the \$1 million prize. Judges decide which acts are entertaining enough to perform on television. As the competition progresses, people register their votes for their favorites until a grand prize winner is chosen. Great Britain has a similar television show called *Britain's Got Talent*. In a recent search of an inspirational videos on YouTube, I came across a 2009 audition from an unknown singer named Susan Boyle who performed the song, "I Dreamed a Dream" from *Les Miserables*. I'll bet I've watched it 20 times. Susan Boyle was an unassuming middle-aged woman who had a dream of being a professional singer but had never been given a chance to perform on a national stage. After just one performance on that show, she handily convinced the judges that she was a legitimate performer and later went on to become an internationally-known singer who has now sold millions of albums.

I'm often inspired by our transition students and the challenges that they overcome on a daily basis in order to be successful. It only takes one opportunity and one person to believe in them. Who will be the next person to give a transition student a chance for success? What dream will they realize? I can't wait to see their story on a future YouTube video.

-Kevin M. Ivers, Ph.D.  
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## Compliance Corner: Transition Assessments

What is Transition Assessment, and why do we do them? Secondary Transition Assessment is an on-going process which yields information about the student, and serves as the basis for long-range, post-secondary goals. Federal special education law (IDEA) requires "appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and where appropriate, independent living skills" (300.320[b][1]). In Berrien County, we most often start with one of the Enderle – Severson Transition Rating Scales (ESTR-J, ESTR-III, Estr-S). These survey-type scales rate the student's present skills in 5 major areas which are close to the four areas for which we write Transition goals in the Transition Plan. We start with a broad survey, but the ESTR does not yield all the individual data that may be needed for the student. For a more complete picture, other data sources are needed, such as paper and pencil tests, structured student and family interviews, community or work-based assessments, learning style evaluations, and more formal intelligence, aptitude and interest tests. Many of these tests are administered as part of every student's career planning program, and using the information as part of the Transition assessment is just a matter of gathering the data that another colleague has completed. All this information can be used to paint a clear picture of where the student is (present level), where they want to go (long-range after school goals), and what they still need to do to get there (Transition Plan activities).

Here are some resources to help further clarify the Transition assessment process:

[100 Free Transition Related Assessments](#)  
[Assessing for Transition](#)  
[Transition Assessment Toolkit](#)

## A Look Down the Road: Certificate of Completion Continued

We appreciate the efforts of the teachers and SEDAC members who generously gave their time and effort to create new guidelines for the Certificate of Completion program. It is a huge undertaking and the process is not yet complete.

The crosswalk continues -- the Common Core Essential Elements (CCEE) learning targets have been identified for high school math and language arts. The CEC’s Life Centered Career Education (LCCE) curriculum has been matched with the CCEE. Teachers can use these resources as a foundation for the certificate of completion program. It was determined that life and vocational skills should be the basis for the four years of reading, writing and math skills students will take to earn a certificate of completion. And Community and work experiences are a significant component to a certificate of completion program.

The goal of these meetings is to create a common guideline for certificate of completion programs, add meaning to certificates of completion and create a dialogue with parents and business to describe what a certificate of completion is and how it differs from a high school diploma and from certificate of attendance.

### Click It!

We wanted to share a website from Maria Peak, Transition Region 2 from our Transition Winter 2013 newsletter. Check this out ... [Do2learn](#) provides thousands of pages of social skills and behavioral regulation activities and guidance, communication cards, academic material and transition guides for employment and life skills.

To make the experience as pleasant and easy as possible, they display no ads nor require that you login to access the website. There are two sections you just can’t miss:

1. The “Social Skills Toolbox” has information on improving communication skills, improving social behavior and graphic organizer/tools. Each section has 8-10 subsections with free downloads, student worksheets, handouts and other great information.
2. “Job TIPS” has resources on determining interests, finding a job, getting a job and keeping a job. In the determining interests section, “The Social Skills Assessment” is a free 31 question assessment to look at social skills needed for the workplace. Other topics on the Do2Learn website are: disability information, academics, behavior management, picture cards and resources. It is always exciting when you find that a website that has great information is easy to use, and has information that can get right into the hands of your students. Check it out!

### Off to College!

*Your chances of success in any undertaking can always be measured by your belief in yourself. –Robert Collier*

Off to College will soon complete their first year of seminars. Students are working on individual student contracts and personal goals to help focus on their future goals. Students are learning to advocate for their needs and find out resources that available to them after graduation. It has been a very productive year with speakers, monthly assignments, career exploration, career pathways, technology, college career night, personal reflection and working on academic success while still in high school. Everyone is looking forward to returning next school year and feel they have learned a lot about focusing on life after high school while attending monthly seminars at Lake Michigan College.

We are currently in the process of identifying current freshman in the County who will be nominated to attend Off to College seminars next year during their sophomore year. Next year will have two cohorts (sophomores/juniors) attending monthly seminars the second Tuesday of every month.



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

Many students and teachers are now using Google Documents as it is such an easy way to share resources and work on projects together. If you are using the Google Chrome browser there are extensions, which are like mini applications, that can be downloaded to enhance the use of Google Docs to those students who need extra support. One such extension that can be very helpful is called Read&Write for Google Docs. This adds many of the popular support features of Read&Write GOLD, a popular software suite of study tools, to Google documents including:

- Ability to have document read aloud with highlighting
- Talking Dictionary
- Picture Dictionary
- Vocabulary Tool
- Study Skills tools to capture Google highlights

Again, this only works within the Google Chrome browser and you must go to the “Chrome web store” where it can be downloaded for free.

I recently came across this website during a “surfing expedition”. It is [www.educatorstechnology.com](http://www.educatorstechnology.com) and it is officially known as Educational Technology and Mobile Learning. Categories of interest include Teacher Web Tools, Google Tools for Teachers, Educational iPad® Apps (numerous subcategories here!), 21st Century Teaching Resources and Educational Social Networking. There are many great “best of lists” and teacher guides on a variety of topics. This will help any educator that is looking to better integrate technology into his/her teaching. Take a look and I’m sure you’ll discover something new!

