

TRANSITION AHEAD

Volume 1, Issue 4
May-June 2011



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

Dear Friends in Education:

It's hard to believe we are wrapping up yet another busy school year. I wish to commend teachers and staff for the excellent job you have done in supporting students in transition from high school to adult life. Each student is unique in their strengths and needs, and their transition plans reflect their individuality. This year, we have had our own transition to the new IEP program; illuminate. There have been a few growing pains along with the triumphs, and we thank you for your perseverance and patience.

A few updates: The Transition file review for SPPB13 is in process right now. Transition coordinators have scheduled individual time for each local school district to complete the mandated process. This year, the file review has been made a part of the Continuous Improvement Monitoring System (CIMS). The Transition coordinators will also assist you in filing the contact data for students who are "leavers" at this time for SPPB14. This way, both indicators can be taken care of at the same time.

As we wind up the school year, I hope you take some time to reflect on your successes, plan for an exciting next year, and enjoy a restful summer.

-Stephanie Mack, Berrien RESA Director of Special Education

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To receive "Transition Ahead" electronically, please visit www.berrienresa.org and visit the Communication page. Additional newsletters are also available.

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Cruise Control: Using Assistive Technology

Submitted by Berrien RESA Assistive Technology Specialist, Rosanne Burden

For students with reading difficulties, accessing text is a critical factor in their success in high school or college. In my last article, we talked about text readers. Today, I want to share some specific alternative resources for textbooks, required reading for classes, or just leisure reading.

Two important resources are Bookshare (www.bookshare.org) and LearningAlly (www.LearningAlly.org) which was formerly Reading for the Blind and Dyslexic. The membership for either one of these is free, but you must have a documented print disability, such as a learning disability, visual impairment, or other physical disability that limits the applicant's use of standard print. Students can apply for individual memberships if they are still attending high school or have graduated. If the IEP states that there is a reading/print disability you should be able to qualify for either service. The websites give information on who the certifying professional can be in order to qualify for membership. Bookshare and LearningAlly offer their books in what is called "Daisy" format. They both have free text readers for the computer that can be downloaded to work with their books. With these text readers you will see the text and hear the audio spoken as you read. Currently there is an iPad/iPod® App that works with the LearningAlly books and Bookshare will have a READ2GO App available soon to read their books on Apple's devices. These two resources are your best bets for finding textbooks but also have best sellers and other trade books.

If you have a Kindle, books can be read aloud to you on the device if the publisher agrees to enable the text to speech feature. When you go to purchase a book on the Kindle, it will tell you if that feature is enabled for that particular book.

Another possible resource for books in strictly an audio format is www.audible.com. They don't have specific textbooks but mostly best sellers, classics, and other fiction and non-fiction books. These work with iPods/iPhones/iPads®, Android phones, and Blackberry. The intro price is \$7.49 per month for three months which will give you one audiobook per month. After the trial period the price is \$14.95 per month.

Look at the technology you own currently and see what may be available to work with it. It is just a matter of doing a little research to see what is offered at any given time. Also, you need to consider if you only want an audio version of the book or do you want to see the text as it is read as with Bookshare and LearningAlly. Find what you are comfortable with and hopefully it will lead to school success for you!

A Look Down the Road

Submitted by Tami Jackson, Director of Gateway Services

Gateway Services is all about making a difference in people's lives. We enable people with disabilities and other barriers to achieve their potential through therapeutic services, vocational opportunities, training, community life skills and other supports. Our main focus is to increase the level of independence and overall quality of life for anyone we work with.

Gateway Services is a private not-for-profit community rehabilitation organization providing habilitation and rehabilitation services to children, teens, adults and their families. Gateway provides a variety of services for transition-age people including **respite services** (services that temporarily relieve the primary care giver) and **community living supports** (supports used to increase or maintain personal self-sufficiency). Community living support services include:

- Money management
- Socialization and relationship building
- Community activities (concerts, events in the park, volunteering)

Gateway also offers **skill building assistance** which consists of activities to increase economic self-sufficiency and/ or to engage in meaningful activities.

Our **supported employment services** provide integrated work settings where the participant works alongside people who do not have disabilities. Service includes:

- Job development
- Job coaching
- Consumer- run businesses

Step=Up is an acronym which stands for: Skills Training and Employment Preparation = Unlimited Potential. It is a five week program consisting of:

- Vocational evaluation (written and hands on evaluation of abilities, aptitudes, and interests)
- Soft skills (Training on attitude, attendance, appearance, employer expectations)
- OJE (On-the-job evaluation)

The **Job Certification Program** assists participants to become more employable. Gateway has partnered with Thayer, Inc. and Berrien Springs Public Schools to provide:

- Vocational Evaluations
- Hazardous Material Handling, Blood borne Pathogens, Safety Equipment, and Soft Skills Training
- Work Experience Includes: Restroom cleaning, Office Procedures, Hard Floor Care, and Carpet Cleaning

Paper and Cardboard Recycling and Secure Document Destruction is another program we offer. Arrangements can be made for pick-ups of recycling materials at your location

Gateway also provides assistance with vocational training, services and supports to companies and organizations to help them meet their bottom-line needs. We have a wide range of workers available to help with organization's **production needs**. Our workers can supplement your current work force. These tasks include:

- Collating and Mailings
- Manufacturing re-work
- Packaging of all types
- Part Inspection
- Product assembly
- Janitorial cleaning

Gateway is very excited about the relationship created with Berrien RESA. Due to the creative thinking shared by both organizations, we are able to open many opportunities for the clients we serve. If you would like additional information regarding the services we provide, please contact us at (269) 471-2897 extension 13.

Click It! Helpful Websites

If you find yourself thinking about transition and how to increase opportunities for students to discover and discuss transition, check-out the following websites:

- www.youthhood.org – An interactive website for youth to use to start thinking about what they want to do with the rest of their lives.
- <http://www.waisman.wisc.edu/hrtw/yfs.pdf> - Youth Fact Sheets are a series of 6 fact sheets developed and edited by youth with special health care needs that address post-secondary education, getting supports in the workplace and how to self-advocate.
- http://www.communityinclusion.org/article.php?article_id=54&type=topic&id=11 – This is a student's career development guide to help young people with disabilities make satisfying job choices.
- <http://thinkcollege.net/> - This website is designed for students with disabilities, families and professionals to encourage a discussion of post-secondary options.
- Information for this article was obtained from the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities website: www.nichcy.org.



Compliance Corner

A last word on Transition File Review (SPPB13):

File reviews are being completed by the Transition Coordinators and SEDAC staff. Caseload teachers, whenever possible are participating. A compliant Transition Plan includes all items on the SPPB13 checklist. The checklist was given out at the beginning of the year in the local trainings and can be found at http://www.berrienresa.org/downloads/_acct_/00/00/01/94/spp_13_checklist_20101112_085954_16.pdf. We suggest you keep it handy when writing the Transition Plan, and take the checklist to the IEP, as a final reminder to make sure all the elements necessary are in place.

A reminder about the one-year-out follow-up survey (SPPB14):

The local school district is responsible for submitting contact data for any "leavers" (any student graduating or dropping out during the school year). The state is asking for the primary contact data, as well as one or more alternate contacts for each student.