

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:

As the 2011 calendar year draws to a close, seniors in high school are busy planning for life after graduation. This is a busy time for teachers as well as counselors, as they support and inspire their students to their highest potential. Recently, a parent shared how proud she was that her adult child, who had benefitted from quality transition, was now ready to step out into the world independent of family. The effort you make for students with disabilities is very important.

The staff of Berrien RESA congratulate you on your great work, and stand ready to support your efforts. Feel free to look for resources/materials on our www.berrienresa.org website, and as always, our Transition staff are at your disposal. Happy Holidays and continued success in the second semester.

-Stephanie Mack
Director of Special Education for Berrien Regional Education Service Agency

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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.



Cruise Control: Using Assistive Technology

Submitted by Berrien RESA Assistive Technology Specialist, Rosanne Burden

There are some terrific, free study tools available on the web and for many of our portable devices such as the iPad®, iPhone®, and Android platforms.

No more using 3 X 5 index cards when you can make flashcards of your own using Quizlet™ at www.quizlet.com. Quizlet is the largest flash cards and study games website, with over 7 million free sets of flashcards covering almost any class you have at school. It's a great place to memorize vocabulary, study online and make flashcards that are exactly what you need to study for that big test or next week's quiz. With so many pre-made flashcards available, this site can be a real time saver. On the website there are four modes for working with the flashcards which are flashcard, speller, learn and test. Each mode lets you work with the flashcard in a little bit different way. The best part is that there are over 50 apps for your iPhone®, iPad®, or Android device that you can download and have your flashcards with you wherever you go. One that I like and have used on my iPad® is called Flashcards Deluxe and sells for \$3.99. The cards you create can contain pictures and audio if you choose and the app takes you directly to the Quizlet

library to download "stacks" of pre-made cards to your device. The app can keep track of what cards you get right or wrong so that you know what you really need to study. Check out Quizlet and prepare yourself to get and "A" on that next test!

If you haven't been to Khan Academy at www.khanacademy.org or Hippocampus at www.hippocampus.org, you need to check them out. Khan Academy has a library of over 2,700 videos to help you learn anything from simple math to algebra, physics, or history to name a few. The explanations are easy to follow and informative. It will definitely help you with that algebra problem you might be stuck on. The goal of Hippocampus is to provide high-quality, multimedia content on general education subjects to high school and college students free of charge. They cover a variety of subject areas such as American government, calculus, physics, and U.S. History to name a few. If you need some visuals and good, clear explanations to help you understand the subject matter, then these are both top quality web sites that you'll want to explore.

Seven Excuses Not to Go to College...And Why They're Lame From The College Board (2011)

Think college is for other kids, and not for you? Wrong. Don't give up on applying to college before you take a good look at it.

1. **I can't go to college – nobody in my family has ever gone.** In every family, someone has to be first. Why not you? True, being first can be hard. For instance, you may have to explain to the family why college is important to you. On the other hand, being first is likely to be a source of pride, for you and for your family.
2. **I've been in school for 12 years. That's enough! I just want a good job.** Give college a chance. It's not like high school or junior high. For one thing, in college you pick a major – a subject area you want to learn about. As for that good job – the best jobs and the best salaries go to college grads.
3. **I can't go to college because I can't afford it.** Most students get financial aid to help pay for college, and most aid is based on need. This means that the less money you have, the more aid you might get.
4. **I can't go because I don't know how to apply or where I want to go.** Tell your high school counselors you want to go to college fairs, where colleges introduce themselves to students. Ask them how to write to schools for information. Try to visit colleges that interest you. Keep at it. After a while, you'll get a feel for differences among colleges, and start to know what you want.
5. **I can't go to college – I don't know what I want to do with my life.** Join the crowd. Thousands of college freshman haven't decided on a major or on a career. That's how college helps. It exposes you to all sorts of subjects you've never heard of before. College is a great place to learn more about careers you'll love for life.
6. **I can't go to college, because I just won't fit in.** Not so. Most colleges have students from many backgrounds. Homesick? Need a hand? Look for people with your interests or your background in the African-American club, on the soccer field, or in a Korean study group. Remember, college is a great place to meet new kinds of people with different lifestyles. And the more people you understand and feel comfortable with, the better prepared you'll be for the world after college.
7. **College is too hard for me.** Not you, too! Most students worry about being good enough for college, so you're not alone. One idea: In high school, don't just study – learn how to study. Most good students have strategies for studying. Once you learn how to study, chances are you'll do fine. Still need help? Professors are really helpful, and so are tutors.

Click It!



Berrien RESA Transition web page is full of resources to help students prepare for college: <http://www.berrienresa.org/specialeducation/transitionplanning/transitionresources/>

Career Cruising (www.careercruising.com) is a comprehensive web-based career exploration and EDP program used in over 9,000 schools nationwide, adopted by almost all Berrien County middle and high schools. It is aligned with the ASCA National Model Career Development standards (competencies and indicators). Students will be working with Career Cruising from middle school through high school and can take along the resources they collected and documents they created after high school.

Career Forward <http://nroc.careerforward.org/> is a self-contained online learning course that may be used in companion with a variety of online career planning tools to provide students with the opportunity to assess their career interests, explore career options and create an educational development plan. This is another tool to use to help students focus on their future and get motivated.

Check out colleges online!

- www.actstudent.org – Find ACT test information
- www.collegeboard.com – College planning and college search online information
- www.trade-schools.net – Guide to trade schools, colleges and universities in the US.

Scholarships/Financial Aid:

- www.fafsa.ed.gov – Free Application for Federal Student Aid must be completed and submitted by March 1, 2012.
- www.michigan.gov/osg - The Tuition Incentive Program (TIP) is an incentive program that encourages eligible students to complete high school by providing tuition assistance for the first two years of college or beyond. Eligible students are identified by DHS as having met the Medicaid eligibility requirement and can be identified as early as sixth grade. After being identified, the Office of Scholarships and Grants (OSG) will send the student an acceptance form. The student must complete the acceptance form and return it to OSG before graduation from high school. The student will then receive an "eligibility letter" from OSG.
- www.michigan.gov/mistudentaid
- www.scholarships.com
- www.fastweb.com

A Look Down the Road

Submitted by Angelica Gallegos, Educational Coordinator for the Education Opportunity Center

The Educational Opportunity Center (EOC) provides counseling and information on college admissions to qualified adults who want to enter or continue a program of postsecondary education. An important objective of the program is to counsel participants on financial aid options, to assist in the applications process, and to increase the number of adults who enroll in postsecondary institutions. This is a federally-funded program that is free of charge and is not specific to any particular college; we are housed at Lake Michigan College, but we can help students with the admissions and financial aid process to any school of their choice.

Eligibility – can be any of the following or any combination of the following:

- 18 Years of age and older, a US citizen or permanent resident
- First generation, meaning that custodial parents did not complete a college degree program
- Low income
- Resident of Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren counties in Michigan or St. Joseph & La Porte counties in Indiana

Services:

- Information about, and referrals to Adult Education programs
- GED and college admissions, placement test tutoring
- Career information, assessment, and advising
- Mentoring and tutoring services for Adult Education students
- Financial aid and scholarship information and application completion assistance, including the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) completion

Our first meeting with interested individuals usually occurs in a group setting, but any follow-up work with the program can happen on a one-on-one basis at our offices at Lake Michigan College in Benton Harbor or another location that is convenient to the participant. We are structured to be fairly flexible as we want to ensure that our participants have a rewarding and successful experience with the EOC.

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