



TRANSITION AHEAD

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

Dear Friends in Education:

So, how do we know students are prepared?

As we all settle in to another fall, and another semester, we should be asking a couple questions about our educational programs across our good State. First, are we doing what's necessary to prepare each of our students to belong and succeed in their chosen community? Our students are working hard to get through school...ready to move outside the school walls and into adult life. Does this semester's work contribute incrementally towards that success?

Second, when your students look beyond those walls of school, will their community be prepared to support them when they leave us? Working hard is not enough for some students with disabilities. They will need targeted supports to help them achieve postsecondary success. Are these supports available, and are we contributing to the critical connection of these supports for your students?

Remember, if we are not contributing to the success of students, we are taking away from that success. There is no middle ground.

The third question is, "How would we know?" We all need to help answer that one. Let's make sure we are looking!

Thanks for all you do for our kids.

-Chuck Saur,
Michigan Transition Outcomes Project (MI-TOP)
Michigan Department of 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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Compliance Corner: Off to College (OTC)

Get on the road to your future! Off to College began its second year Tuesday, September 10 at Lake Michigan College. We now have two Cohorts of students attending this year – current juniors and sophomores. The seminar topic for the evening was the OTC contract and how to find scholarship information. Sara Bates, Berrien RESA Consultant, reviewed the OTC contract with the students adding the importance of academic and communication skills. Last year a parent requested how to find out information about college scholarships so we wanted to address that need right away this year. Melinda Grashuis, Lakeshore High School counselor shared many ways to research for college scholarships to help pay for college expenses, discussed college admissions essay and the importance of students advocating for themselves. Also, in September the OTC students attended the Lake Michigan College Fair to meet with over 60 universities, technical schools and the armed forces. We will meet again November 12 at LMC to learn about College Behavior Code and Internet Safety.

Learnport: Flexible, Convenient, Free

The Michigan Department of Education and Michigan LearnPort, a free online professional development portal for the K-12 community, are partnering to help special education teachers in the state meet IEP requirements. Two courses are already up and going: Assessing for Transition, Transition Planning Made Easier and another course is expected to be released in October 2013. What you need to do is to log on to Michigan LearnPort at www.learnport.org. To find and launch the course, search the catalog for "transition."

A Look Down the Road: Transition Planning

The Berrien County Transition Task Force held its fall Luncheon on September 19. Chuck Saur, the Director of the Michigan Transition Outcomes Project, was our keynote speaker. He talked about the three questions which guide transition planning:

- Are we doing what’s necessary to prepare students to belong and succeed in their community?
- Is the community prepared to support them to belong and succeed in the community?
- How would we know?

He illustrated his talk with the story of his own son’s journey to his new job and apartment living. Capping the afternoon was an interactive panel discussion featuring area agencies and school Transition programs.

During this school year, we will again be engaged in helping students find the answers to those three questions. There are new Student Profile and Summary of Performance forms to help students prepare for their Transition IEP meetings. The first and second cohorts of Off to College are meeting each month in seminars at Lake Michigan College. Niles has launched its second year of Transition Club, and Watervliet is planning a Transition Club of its own. Twenty-seven teachers and paraprofessionals were trained as Employment Specialists the last week of August during in-service days. This will support students in finding and benefiting from work experiences while still in school. All of these programs and projects have one thing in common, they require us all to work together and pull together for the benefit of students.

“This time, like all times, is a very good one, if we but know what to do with it”.
~Ralph Waldo Emerson

Click It! Free Career Exploration and Workforce Preparation Resources

Through Michigan State University Extension, 4-H Youth Development provides a variety of on-line resources for youth, families and the community related to career exploration and workforce preparation topics. They actually have a team of staff across the state of Michigan that specialize in creating educational tools and programs such as: identifying your skills, building resumes and portfolios, career exploration, interview skills, teamwork in the workplace, starting your own business and money management. Check out www.4h.msue.msu.edu and click on the “programs” tab. From there, you may visit our careers, entrepreneurship or money management pages and download our resources.

For more information or questions regarding career exploration and workforce preparation programs offered through 4-H Youth Development, contact:

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Discover What our Youth Have to Offer Submitted by Kathy Hickok, Berrien RESA ASD Consultant

Under the direction of the Statewide Autism Resources and Training (START) group, teams across Michigan are participating in a project called Building Your Future (BYF). The BYF project is an individualized approach to employment planning and job development focused on matching a young adult’s strengths, interests and conditions to the identified needs of an employer, resulting in a business relationship that benefits both.

There are two primary components that make up the BYF project. The first, V3 Discovery, is a transition assessment associated with the principles of person-centered planning, choice and self-determination and leading to the realization of a Post-Secondary Vision, a Vocational Profile and a Visual Resume. The second, Customized Employment, is a flexible and mutually acceptable employment agreement between a job candidate and employer that is based on the findings of the V3 Discovery process.

In future editions of Transition Ahead, we will look more closely at the ten steps to V3 Discovery and at Berrien County’s involvement in the BYF project.

Until next time...



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

Welcome back to another school year! I hope to continue sharing some assistive technology “tidbits” that may be of interest to you and helpful for your students.

Recently, I attended a technology conference where I became more aware of the many features of Google’s Chrome Browser. There are many apps and extensions that can be downloaded for this browser to help students with learning challenges. Many of these are free and a great place to start to look for and research these is in the Chrome AT Toolbox at www.chrometoolbox.com. It is organized by the type of task such as reading, math, etc. or learner profiles.

For example, Select and Speak and SpeakIt! are two text readers that could be useful for students who struggle to read web pages. VideoNot.es is an app that splits the screen to let you watch a YouTube or Khan Academy video on one side, and take notes on the other side. Those notes are then saved to your Google Drive.

Is the article your student reading too long and involved? Use the extension TLDR to shorten the article by 25, 50, or 75 percent and have it read aloud by one of the previously mentioned text readers.

If you want to block banners, pop-ups and advertisements on the web pages you view, then download the extension Adblock Plus. It definitely works!!

Hurry and go to the Chrome Web Store to check these out and perhaps discover some new apps and extensions on your own.



Follow me on Twitter® now @RosanneBurden as I try to “tweet” something new in the area of technology that I’ve found at least once per week.

