

TRANSITION GUIDE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES AND THEIR PARENTS

Strengthening post-secondary opportunities for students with disabilities begins with transition planning. Across the country, post-secondary outcomes for students with disabilities lag those of their peers without disabilities. Post-secondary transitions are also below average for young people with disabilities and individuals with disabilities have lower rates of employment, college enrollment and college completion.

Revisions to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA 2004) mandated that schools: a) prepare students for adult employment, post-secondary education, independent living, and community participation, and b) describe the transition services needed to assist the student in their individualized education program (IEP).

Transition planning should begin when students are 14 years of age or even earlier. Effective July 1, 2019, the first IEP after a student has reached 14 years of age must include secondary transition services (WVDE/BOE Policy 2419).

The purpose of the *Transition Guide for Students with Disabilities and their Parents* is to help students and their families explore options and make decisions about the future. The toolkit's sections begin at the middle school level and are divided into the following categories:

- **CAREER EXPLORATION** provides descriptions of the Career and Technical Education career clusters and career pathways and how to explore various careers beginning in the sixth grade.
- **EDUCATION AND TRAINING** presents the many options available for students to continue their education after high school graduation.
- **INDEPENDENT LIVING** covers topics, skills, and information about personal finances and money management, health, benefits, housing, transportation, personal needs, and community participation.
- **SELF-DETERMINATION/RESPONSIBILITY** includes the skills, knowledge, and beliefs that will allow students to make informed choices and accept the consequences/responsibilities that result from those decisions.
- **PARTNERS** are represented by the West Virginia Division of Rehabilitation Services, WorkForce West Virginia, and the West Virginia Department of Education. A description of services offered and the application process for each agency is outlined.
- **GLOSSARY** includes a summary of transition and post-secondary terminology.

The Transition Guide can be used by school districts, agencies, students, and families to establish activities and linkages on the IEP, identify what is needed for attaining post-secondary outcomes, and designate the lead party/agency responsible for those services. Areas to be addressed on the IEP include:

- Workplace readiness training/instruction/education
- Employment
- Counseling for transition and post-secondary program/vocational aptitude/interest assessment
- Self-advocacy training/independent living/mobility
- Job exploration/career awareness/work-based learning
- Agency referral/application

