June 2010

Preparation for Postsecondary Life for Students with Disabilities

by Kimberly Moherek Sopko, Ed.D.

INTRODUCTION

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), most recently reauthorized in 2004, requires the inclusion of transition services[1] in an individualized education program (IEP) for students with disabilities by the time they reach their 16th birthday, or earlier if determined appropriate by the IEP team. The IEP must include "(1) appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment and, where appropriate, independent living skills; and (2) the transition services (including courses of study) needed to assist the child in reaching those goals" [34 CFR §300.320(b)]. The intent is to design a plan to meet students' unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment and independent living. Services under IDEA are available for eligible students through 21 years of age in most states. Once the student is no longer eligible for IDEA services, he or she must rely on the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation[2] (VR), Department for Developmental Disabilities (DD), Career and Technical Education (CTE), disability services at institutions of higher education (IHE) or other community agencies for continued employment preparation and/or supports.

The purpose of this document is to identify collaborative strategies states have implemented to address the needs of students with disabilities whose IEP transition services specify postsecondary career and technical education, vocational rehabilitation and/or immediate employment upon departure from secondary school.

---

[1] See IDEA Regulations 34 C.F.R. §300.43(a) "The term "transition services" means a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that (1) is designed to be within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment); continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation; (2) is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests; and includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation."

[2] States use different department names such as Department or Office of Rehabilitative Services or Department of Vocational Rehabilitation and will be referred to in this document as Vocational Rehabilitation (VR).

BACKGROUND

Transition from secondary school into postsecondary educational settings, VR, CTE and employment can be challenging, especially for students with disabilities. Over time, there have been numerous policies and programs to support the integration of individuals with disabilities into the community but more support and programs may still be needed. Research from the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2)[3] shows that 45% of students with disabilities pursue postsecondary education. They are more likely to enroll in two-year or community colleges than in vocational, business, or technical schools or 4-year colleges or universities. This research also shows that within four years of leaving high school, 72% of students with disabilities have held an average of two to three jobs, 58% work full time at their current or most recent job and 53% have quit a job. Additionally, students with disabilities have lived independently (25%) or semi-independently (6%) in the four years since leaving high school. Data from the U.S. 2008 Disability Status Report[4] inform us that individuals with disabilities are 39.5% of the working age population (ages 21-64 years) currently employed and 25.4% work full-time, full year. Therefore, it is important to consider what states are doing to support students with disabilities as they transition and prepare for postsecondary life.

METHODOLOGY

Project Forum collaborated with staff from the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC), Post-School Outcomes Center (PSO), IDEA Partnership, Council of State Administrators for Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR), the HEATH Resource Center, and Collaborative Vocational Evaluation Training Program to identify states and interviewees for this document. Collaborators identified states and recommended individuals to interview based on the following criteria:

- The state has strong collaboration between secondary education, career/technical education, vocational rehabilitation and other agencies.
- The state applies evidence-based best practices in transition and/or postsecondary services.
- The state has high quality program(s) or plans for a high quality program that can be replicated by other states.
- The program is implemented statewide or in at least five various localities.

Project Forum invited several individuals familiar with state- and local-level postsecondary programs that support students with disabilities from eight states (*Alabama, California, New Hampshire, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia*, and *Wisconsin*) to participate in the interviews. The directors of special education of these eight states were informed of the scheduled interviews and invited to share information. A list of individuals who participated in the interviews from January through March 2010 is provided in Appendix A.

Project Forum at the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) conducted this survey and produced this document as part of its collaborative agreement with the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

---

[3] The NLTS2 report is available at http://ies.ed.gov/ncser/pdf/20093017.pdf.
[4] Report is available at http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/edi/disabilitystatistics/StatusReports/2008-PDF/2008-StatusReport_US.pdf?CFID=33065200&CFTOKEN=85068352&jsessionid=f030d08d8882e8b487cc64363c23781be1b3.

FINDINGS

Policy

The states selected for this interview generally closely align to the IDEA requirements without extending their policies beyond what the federal statute requires. However five states (*NH*, *PA*, *RI*, *VA*, *WI*) indicated that their state policy requires transition planning to begin at age 14 years rather than age 16 as required by federal law. Some states reported that their VR, CTE, and workforce departments have their own policies and some of those policies may extend beyond IDEA requirements. A few states identified other policies that effect this population of students:

- *New Hampshire* raised its compulsory school attendance law from 16 to 18 years of age.
- *New Hampshire's* governor has set a goal of zero dropouts by 2012.
- *Virginia's* state board of education adopted academic and career plans for all students beginning in seventh grade.
- *Virginia* and *Rhode Island* adopted a secondary transition IEP.[5]
- *Virginia* has interagency agreements that stipulate how the agencies interact and serve youth. Additionally, each local education agency (LEA) and local rehabilitation office articulates a cooperative agreement that specifies how they will work together.
- Beginning in 2011, *Virginia* will offer two technical diplomas.
- *Oregon* and *Wisconsin* have interagency agreements that serve as a policy on how education and rehabilitation agencies will work together.
- *Alabama* offers an occupational diploma.[6]
- *Pennsylvania* requires the utilization of career and work standards for all students K-12 and has mandated the use of a portfolio for all students beginning in the 8th grade.
- *Pennsylvania* requires all LEAs to have a designated transition coordinator on staff.

Most interviewees indicated that LEAs in their states are welcome to expand requirements beyond the state minimum requirements. Links to some state policies are provided in Appendix B.

Definition of Competitive Employment

States typically use the definition of competitive employment provided in the Rehabilitation Act and Indicator 14[7]:

"Competitive employment means work—(i) in the competitive labor market that is performed on a full-time or part-time basis in an integrated setting; and (ii) for which an individual is compensated at or above the minimum wage, but not less than the customary wage and level of benefits paid by the employer for the same or similar work performed by individuals who are not disabled [34 CFR §361.5(b)(11)].

---

[5] A template for these secondary transition IEPs is available at http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/iep_instruct_svcs/iep/forms/sample_transition_iep_form.doc and http://www.ritap.org/iep.
[6] This is a high school diploma option designed to prepare students with disabilities for competitive employment.
[7] Indicator 14 is an annual performance review compliance monitoring measurement for states to evaluate how they meet the desired outcomes of IDEA. The indicator is provided in Appendix C.

Wisconsin's definition of competitive employment includes "full-time basis as 35 hours per week, in an integrated setting at which an individual is compensated at or above minimum wage and not less than customary wage"; and *California's definition* includes "20 hours per week and 90 days on a job", which mirrors Indicator 14.

VR and CTE Entry Requirements

Once a student with disabilities is no longer eligible for IDEA services, he or she often relies on VR or CTE for continued employment preparation and/or supports. Entry requirements for VR and CTE vary by programs, but typically are tied to student transition plans and the types of coursework the student plans to take (e.g. if pursuing robotics, the student will need algebra as an entry requirement). A very high percentage of students applying for VR in *Rhode Island* is accepted. *Pennsylvania* reported that planning for transition when a student is 14 years old helps ensure services and programs are available for those students when needed. *Oregon's* entry requirements are described in an interagency agreement between the state education agency (SEA) and VR so both departments can clearly understand the requirements for their various programs. *California, Oregon, Virginia and Wisconsin* had to implement an "order of selection[8]" process due to the fiscal crisis in their states and served those with greater need first. However, *Virginia* has lifted its order of selection and all categories are now open.

Collaboration to Support Preparation for Postsecondary Life for Students with Disabilities

All interviewees recognize the importance of collaboration to support the transition of students with disabilities into postsecondary training or the workforce. Collaboration may occur through cooperative agreements that include regular interagency meetings, training and technical assistance or specific transition programs or activities. Pennsylvania has a Secondary Transition Memorandum of Understanding between the departments of Education, Labor, Health, and Welfare and a designated interagency state leadership team. Five states (*CA, NH, PA, VA, WI*) currently have Transition Communities of Practice (CoPs) that often contribute to and/or strengthen collaborative efforts and minimize duplication of efforts. *Rhode Island* is currently developing its CoP. Some states also report local or regional transition councils. All interviewees reported that interagency collaboration has occurred in their states, often with meetings held at least quarterly, and all hold an annual interagency statewide transition conference. Interviewees in five states (*AL, CA, NH, OR, VA*) identified specific collaborative efforts with IHEs. In three states, the location of offices often contributed to collaborative efforts. For example, *Virginia's* workforce offices are located on community college campuses, *Oregon's* career and technical education offices are housed in the same building as the department of education and *Rhode Island's* regional vocational assessment centers and regional transition centers are housed in the same location.

---

[8] An order of selection process means individuals with the most significant needs will be selected first to receive services and those with less significant needs may not receive services due to current financial restraints on programs.

Programs to Support Preparation for Postsecondary Life for Students with Disabilities

Many programs have developed through collaborative efforts in the states interviewed and often involve the SEA and VR, but it is also common to find an IHE involved. Table 1 summarizes some of the available programs by state.

Table 1. Programs to support postsecondary life for students with disabilities

Program	Description	State
A Chance to Experience Success	Collaborative effort between VR and Keene State College that provides a two-week summer-on-campus program at Keene State College with activities focused on employment, postsecondary education, independent living and community involvement to better inform students' transition plans.	*NH*
Achievement in Dropout Prevention and Excellence (APEX II)	State program that strategically combines three school improvement strategies: Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), an intensive individualized school-to-career service for at-risk students known as Rehabilitation, Empowerment, Natural Supports, Education and Work (RENEW), and Student Leadership teams who work with PBIS universal teams to assess and improve school climate, safety and learning.	*NH*
Auburn Transition Leadership Institute[9]	Partnership between Auburn University, the *Alabama* SEA and VR designed to help high school students with disabilities develop self-assurance and determination, set appropriate goals and improve quality of life.	*AL*
Pennsylvania Youth Leadership Network[10]	Group of young adults with disabilities who want to make a difference in the lives of youth in Pennsylvania. The mission of the PYLN is to develop the self-determination, empowerment and leadership of youth that promotes successful post-school outcomes in the areas of education, employment, independent living, and health and wellness among youth and young adults throughout Pennsylvania. The PYLN is supported by the *PA* state leadership team and through private and public grant funding.	*PA*

---

[9] Information is available at http://education.auburn.edu/outreach/tli.html.
[10] More information is available at http://www.pyln.org.

Project ACCESS	A federally funded program directed by the University of Oregon that enables younger students to build transition skills and access VR services.	*OR*
Project PAS (Promoting Academic Success)[11]	Successful partnership with VR, community colleges and local school districts to provide college orientation courses for youth and young adults across the Commonwealth.	*PA*
Project Search	Collaborative program where LEAs work with local hospitals and/or local county governments to employ individuals with disabilities. VR provides job coaching and the LEA dedicates to the program an onsite teacher who coordinates the project in the employment settings.	*CA, PA, VA*
Regional Career Education Partnership[12]	Networking program that provides webinars and best practices toolkits and supports students with disabilities who drop-out of high school and those re-entering state agencies' services.	*PA*
Regional Vocational Assessment Centers	Cooperative agreement between *Rhode Island's* SEA and Office of Rehabilitation Services resulted in five regional vocational assessment centers which provide up to 230 students with VR funded vocational evaluations per year while the students are enrolled in high school.	*RI*
Secondary Transition Priority Project	Statewide technical assistance network funded by SEA providing transition specialists to work with LEAs, Summaries of Performance (SOPs), agencies, parents and students.	*VA*
Start on Success Program[13]	Program in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh that provides classes on job readiness, internships, finding apartments and independent living skills.	*PA*

---

[11] More information is available at http://sharedwork.org/16809/files/1463.
[12] More information is available at http://parcep.ning.com/.
[13] More information on the Start on Success Program is available at http://www.cisphl.org/our_programs/sos/start_on_success.htm.

Secondary Transition Priority Project	Statewide technical assistance network funded by the *Virginia* SEA to provide transition specialists to work with LEAs, other agencies parents and students.	*VA*
Statewide Transition Initiative[14]	Collaborative project designed to meet the needs of LEAs in understanding and implementing IDEA transition requirements and best practices in transition.	*WI*
Transition Academies	Cooperatively funded service by *Rhode Island's* SEA (seed grant), IHEs, LEAs and Office of Rehabilitation Services to provide students who need transition services beyond the typical four years of high school. Transition academies operate on three college campuses with a focus on career and functional life skill development.	*RI*
Transition Partnership Project	Collaborative effort between VR and LEAs to provide employment training, life skills training and job placement services. It is a 'follow-on' program of Workability I (see below) to follow students who exit special education services.	*CA*
Workability I[15]	State program that prepares students with disabilities for transition and provides comprehensive pre-employment skills training, employment placement and follow-up for high school students receiving special education services.	*CA*
Youth Leadership Forum[16] and I'm Determined[17] program	Programs supported by Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD), the *Virginia* SEA and Board for People with Disabilities to provide youth with instruction and opportunities to practice self-determination skills, including advocacy and leadership. VCU Rehabilitation Research and Training Center developed a website[18] that focuses on college students developing self-determination skills.	*VA*

---

[14] Information is available at http://www.wsti.org.
[15] Information is available at http://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/sr/wrkabltyI.asp.
[16] More information about the Youth Leadership Forum is available at http://www.vaboard.org/YLF.htm .
[17] I'm Determined is a project developed and sponsored by the Virginia Department of Education's Training and Technical Assistance Centers, focused on providing direct instruction, models, and opportunities to practice skills associated with self-determined behavior beginning at the elementary level and continuing through a student's educational career with information available at http://www.imdetermined.org.
[18] The website is http://www.going-to-college.org

Youth Transition Program[19]	A statewide model between the SEA, VR, local schools and the University of Oregon designed to prepare students with disabilities for employment or career related post secondary education or training. This program is recognized as a best practice program by the Association of Maternal and Child Health programs.[20]	*OR*

Apprenticeship and Job-Readiness Programs

All those interviewed reported apprenticeship programs exist in their states, are usually locally-driven and are used to varying degrees. *Pennsylvania* reported the economy has negatively impacted apprenticeship programs, while *Wisconsin* reported its apprenticeship programs are strong.

Many states report on-the-job training and/or cooperative programs include community-based instruction. Some of the programs not only address job readiness, but also independent living and career exploration.

Support for Returning Students

Most states are flexible and offer alternative pathways to encourage students who dropout to return to school. *Virginia* requires LEAs with corrective action plans to find those who have dropped out and offer them an alternative path back to school. Examples of these paths include virtual schools, online training, General Educational Development (GED) courses at either the high school or community college, combined programs that lead to a high school diploma and associate's degree (AA), evening courses and/or child care. Some states have programs that support these students such as the Regional Career Educational Partnership (*PA*) and Transition Partnership Project (*CA)*; or have designed dropout prevention plans that involve communication with a variety of agencies (*NH*). The compulsory attendance law in *New Hampshire* also helps reduce the dropout rate since students are required to remain in school until 18 years of age.

Out-of-Home Placements

States generally offer some type of "re-entry" program for students placed in juvenile justice programs and *Wisconsin* developed a guide for transitioning back to school from such programs. However, in *California*, re-entry is particularly challenging because many of the juvenile justice campuses are in secluded rural environments far from students' home communities rather than in the urban environment from which many students come. *Virginia* has developed a re-enrollment policy. Others reported that there are alternative learning programs that are locally driven to support these students.

---

[19] Information is available at http://www.ytporegon.org.
[20] Information available at http://www.amchp.org/AboutAMCHP/Newsletters/Pulse/February2010/Pages/Recognition.aspx.

Funding of Programs

Some of the collaborative programs in states are jointly funded by SEAs, VR, labor and/or workforce programs. Most programs are supported through federal funds from IDEA, Medicaid Infrastructure Grants[21] and/or the Rehabilitation Services Administration and SEAs and/or VR or local funds. Some programs are also supported by funds from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation, Carl Perkins grants and/or local business partners.

Staff

In seven of the interviewed states there is no singular staff person in the SEA who focuses solely on transition for students with disabilities; however, the interviewees report there is often a person in VR who focuses on transition. *Virginia* has a lead transition person at the SEA. Transition coordinators may exist in other departments such as the Department of Corrections (*VA*), Health (*PA, RI, WI*), Labor (*PA*), and/or the Department of Welfare (*PA*).

The roles and responsibility of staff vary from serving as transition coordinators in general or for specific populations (students who drop out of high school, individuals with autism, students at-risk for failure) to a focus on alternative diploma options and programs, collecting data for Indicators 13 and 14, serving as trainers or technical assistance providers, managing grant funds and/or engaging in interagency collaboration.

Task Forces/Teams

Interviewees in most states reported at least one type of task force or team existed specific to postsecondary opportunities for students with disabilities. Several also reported local transition councils or teams exist in their state. *Pennsylvania* has a network of 82 local transition coordinating councils throughout the state. *Alabama* is currently training some of its local transition teams. Examples of task forces or teams include the Higher Education Leadership Partners and Collaborative for College (Think College) (*VA),* the Regional Career Educational Partnership for Dropouts (*PA*), Improving Special Education Services group (*CA*), the Cooperative Program Advisory Council (*CA*), the Parent Information Network (*RI*), Integrated Employment Task Force (*WI*) and ad-hoc committees appointed by the State Advisory Council for Special Education (*OR*).

Summary of Performance (SOP)

LEAs are required by IDEA to provide an SOP[22] to students with disabilities upon their graduation with a high school diploma or when they exit school due to exceeding the age eligibility for IDEA services. The SOP includes a summary of a student's academic achievement and functional performance and recommendations on how to assist the child in meeting postsecondary goals.

Interviewees indicated that their states have provided additional guidance to LEAs regarding what to include in the SOP (*AL, PA, RI, VA, WI*) and encouraged LEAs to decide what works

---

[21] Medicaid Infrastructure Grants provide monies to states to develop state infrastructures to support working individuals with disabilities. As of 2009, 41 states and the District of Columbia were participating in this program.
[22] See IDEA Regulations 34 C.F.R. §300.305(e)(3): "For a child whose eligibility terminates under circumstances described in paragraph (e)(2) of this section, a public agency must provide the child with a summary of the child's academic achievement and functional performance, which shall include recommendations on how to assist the child in meeting the child's postsecondary goals."

best for their schools and community (*RI, VA*). Some interviewees reported that the SOP is not a highly recognized document across agencies and students are not sure of its value or purpose (*CA, NH, VA*). *Wisconsin* is moving toward a student-directed SOP and helping students learn how to use them. Two states encourage the use of portfolios to provide supplemental information to the SOP form (*PA, VA*) and two states are working with IHEs or a consortium to identify the most useful information for SOPs and determine the effectiveness of them (*RI, VA*). *Rhode Island* is reviewing an SOP computer program for possible statewide use, and *Pennsylvania* is reviewing portfolio requirements as an SOP in order to better align with CTE.

Transition Plans and Employment Connection

States strive to connect transition plans to employment or community resources that support employment by focusing on transition goals identified in students' IEPs, students' interests and available resources. Linkages with community resources vary by LEA but often include collaboration with VR, the Department of Mental Health, adult education centers and/or employers. *New Hampshire* reported that the linkages work better if a school has an identified transition coordinator because they usually have established community partnerships. *Rhode Island* staff complete a vocational assessment for all students when they are 16 years old and may integrate that information into transition plans.

Professional Development

All eight states interviewed offer an annual transition conference and opportunities for face-to-face meetings or training workshops. Five states offer on-line training (*AL, CA, PA, RI, VA*). *New Hampshire* provides web-based follow up and *Wisconsin* uses Internet television (I-TV) for training purposes. In addition, *Wisconsin* has developed a Transition Action Guide.[23] Oregon offers training resources through the Transition Community Network located at Western Oregon University, Teaching Research Institute.[24] Four states also have regional training meetings available (*AL, OR, PA, WI*). In *California*, VR has a robust website with a variety of trainers addressing a variety of postsecondary life topics. In *Alabama*, Auburn University works collaboratively with other agencies to provide ongoing online and regional training.[25]

Training topics may include information about working with specific populations, IEPs and person centered planning, transition assessment, available services, PBIS, community-based instruction, best practices, IDEA Indicator 13, SOPs, resources and tools for VR counselors and/or policy development across agencies.

Professional development may be offered by the SEA, VR, regional centers, IHEs, training and technical assistance centers or through a collaboration among these agencies. Training is not always required for transition specialists; however in some states, professional education credits must be earned for VR counselors to maintain licensure or certification.

---

[23] The guide is available at http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/pdf_files/tag.pdf.
[24] Information is available at http://www.tcntransition.org/.
[25] More information is available at https://fp.auburn.edu/institute/TNT/TNT_home.asp.

Family Involvement

Interviewees in the smaller states (*NH, RI*) reported the existence of strong parent information centers or networks. All states indicated that parents are involved on various committees, councils, stakeholders groups and/or CoPs either at the state or local level. Some additional state specific activities that support family involvement are:

- *Alabama* has a young adult in transition peer group that provides training on IEPs and transition planning. These youth also help train professionals at conferences and are developing an online module on transition.[26]

- *California* reported that students are encouraged to make their own decisions at age 18 so the involvement of parents is usually less at that point.

- *New Hampshire's* Parent Information Center in collaboration with the *NH* SEA developed the Life After High School Toolkit[27] and provides training to parents, educators and community personnel on the resources available to meaningfully involve families in the secondary transition process.

- *Pennsylvania's* four Parent Training and Information Centers (PTICs) have worked collaboratively on a number of statewide and local transition projects including, two series of transition webinars for parents.

- *Pennsylvania* has a Youth Leadership Network[28] that has developed toolkits and webinar series and also provides a yearly parent and youth informational folder[29] to all transition-age students.

- *Virginia's* UCEDD operates a Center for Family Involvement that provides emotional, informational and advocacy support for families through a network of parent navigators housed at regional Family-to-Family Network hubs. Sixty parents were trained in 2009 and 60 more will be trained in 2010.

- *Virginia's* Parent Training and Information Center also provides workshops and online training for families.

- *Virginia* has a self-advocacy website[30], in which students are heavily involved as well as the I'm Determined website[31] that hosts videos and other information for students and families.

- *Virginia* holds both parent and student summits where the participants determine agendas and the Board for People with Disabilities holds an annual youth leadership forum

---

[26] More information is available at https://fp.auburn.edu/institute/_SITE/Outreach/TNT/default.asp.
[27] The toolkit is available at http://www.nhspecialed.org/documents/Transition_Tool_Kit_w_IEP.pdf.
[28] More information is available at http://pyln.pbworks.com/.
[29] An electronic version of is available at http://www.pattan.net/resources/request.aspx?UniqueID=04993.
[30] More information is available at http://www.virginiaselfadvocacy.com and http://www.alife4me.com..
[31] More information is available at http://www.imdetermined.com.

Data

Three states reported that no data are collected beyond the IDEA Indicators 13 and 14 requirements[32] (*AL, NH, RI*). The other five states indicated that they collect data beyond Indicators 13 and 14 (*CA, OR, PA, VA, WI*) and share data across agencies. *Pennsylvania* and *Virginia* indicated they have a system[33] to collect data on all children that may include information on attendance, discipline referrals, postsecondary activities, assessments and more. *Virginia* LEAs are able to view and analyze LEA data directly from the state system. Additional information collected may include parent satisfaction; anecdotal information; quality of life factors; and independent living information such as having a driver's license, managing money, shopping for groceries, participating in recreational activities and/or maintaining a place of residence. *Pennsylvania* and *Wisconsin* use the data to determine priority areas for training and targeting resources. *Oregon* shares information directly with LEAs so they can improve their transition programs. In *California*, students are tracked for two years through Workability I and VR shares of list of students and their employment status with LEAs that participate in the Transition Partnership Program. *Alabama* collected extensive post-school outcome data prior to Indicators 13 and 14 requirements. Information gathered includes 12 quality of life questions. Furthermore, *Alabama* is currently conducting a factor analysis of a post-school outcomes survey.

Barriers

The most common barriers states have faced in implementing programs that support postsecondary life for students with disabilities are funding/resources, time and values/attitudes. The funding barrier is not only about having money, but also understanding how funding systems operate and from which sources funds may be received. State staff also conveyed a concern about commitment to services when there is a lack of funding. A few states reported that some communities still support segregated programs and also struggle with parents who appear to not understand the potential of their children and their abilities to work within their communities. Additional barriers identified include:

- addressing challenges of building relationships and communicating effectively;
- the lack of common identifiers for data collection;
- the location or lack of one-stop centers[34];
- keeping information current and keeping new staff informed;
- finding personnel and job coaches;
- consolidating information about different programs in order to effectively advise students;
- the loss of adult education systems that served as a linkage or stepping stone for students;
- changes made by the federal government once states have established infrastructures; and
- large waiting lists for Medicaid support/waivers.

---

[32] Indicators 13 and 14 are available in Appendix C.
[33] *Pennsylvania's* data system is available at http://penndata.hbg.psu.edu/index.aspx.
[34] One stop centers offer training programs and counseling for workforce entry and may include staff from workforce investment, VRand/or transition specialists.

States use varied strategies to address these barriers. States continue to increase the amount of information provided online for easier access, and some states have added computers to libraries and agency settings to facilitate access to information. Other states have relocated their one-stop centers in order to participate in collaborative, integrated trainings more easily. More states also offer online training for a variety of audiences and some states are showcasing the abilities of people with disabilities to help communities understand how these people can contribute to and participate in the community.

Recommendations

Those who were interviewed offered a variety of recommendations to help other states support postsecondary life for students with disabilities. A few common themes emerged:

- Plan early – conduct ongoing, age-appropriate transition assessments and career/vocational assessments with students starting in middle school and update annually. Also expose students to work and career options.
- Collaborate – establish a common vision, good relationships and communication with other agencies and community businesses. Form strong partnerships with VR and IHEs.
- Allow local level flexibility – listen to the community and local businesses and develop supports based on the students' needs as well as community needs while also modeling effective collaboration for local transition teams.

Other recommendations included:
- Provide flexible school hours and multiple, individualized and meaningful pathways to graduation.
- Offer a transition academy system.
- Change the compulsory attendance law.
- Maintain a person-centered focus while engaging students and families.
- Build an infrastructure for self-determination with resources and access.
- Use data to identify what needs to be in place.
- Provide resource guides.
- Train special educators about adult services.
- Ensure administrative buy-in at all levels.
- Acquire money for systems change.

In addition, Table 2 identifies successful practices and/or resources specific to the eight interviewed states that may be useful to other states.

Table 2. Specific state successful practices and resources

State	Practices	Links
Alabama	"Preparing for Life: Transition Planning Guide"	https://docs.alsde.edu/documents/65/Preparing%20For%20Life%20Final%20%20October%202008.pdf
California	Demonstrated outcome measures in interagency agreements; collaboration, commitment and necessary funds	

New Hampshire	Compulsory attendance law changed to age 18; Shared Youth Vision system is a multiagency collaborative system to prepare youth for success	http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/XV/193/193-1.htm http://www.solutionsdesk.ou.edu/collaborative-models-library.html
Oregon	Youth Transition Program; multiagency training; University of Oregon Special Education and Transition (SSET) Research Group has developed multiple model demonstration programs to address transition needs	http://www.ytporegon.org http://sset.uoregon.edu
Pennsylvania	Career and work standards site; Standards Aligned System site; variety of useful information on sharedwork.org website	http://www.pacareerstandards.com http://www.pdesas.org/ www.sharedwork.org/patransition
Rhode Island	Changing the Culture program at University of Rhode Island; regional centers	http://www.uri.edu/disability/ctc/index.html
Virginia	Transition practitioner councils with well established layers at local and state levels; I'm Determined project	http://www.imdetermined.com www.going-to-college.org www.virginiaselfadvocacy.org, www.alife4me
Wisconsin	Opening Doors resource guide; Wisconsin Statewide Transition Initiative	http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/pdf/tranopndrs.pdf http://www.wsti.org

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Students with disabilities can become independent, functional and contributing members of society with transition services that prepare and support them for postsecondary life. The eight states interviewed for this document offer a variety of programs built on collaborative efforts that may serve as models for other states. All communities will benefit from continued attention and focus on postsecondary life for students with disabilities.

APPENDIX A: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Alabama

Karen Rabren, Ph.D.
Auburn University
Transition Leadership Institute
rabreks@mail.auburn.edu

Dan Roth
Education Specialist
Department of Education
droth@alsde.edu

Alicia Hodge
Education Specialist
Alabama State Department of Education
ahodge@alsde.edu

California

Loran F. Vetter, MS
Statewide Coordinator for Education
Programs
Department of Rehabilitation
lvetter@dor.ca.gov

Jeff Riel
Chief
Cooperative Programs and Transition
Services Unit
Department of Rehabilitation
jriel@dor.ca.gov

Lana Fraser
Assistant Deputy Director
Department of Rehabilitation
lfraser@dor.ca.gov

New Hampshire

Tina Greco, MA
Transition Coordinator
Department of Education
Vocational Rehabilitation
TGreco@ed.state.nh.us

Bonnie St. Jean
Administrator
Bureau of Youth Workforce
bst.jean@ed.state.nh.us

Amy Jenks
Grant Coordinator
NH Responds Grant
Bureau of Special Education
ajenks@ed.state.nh.us

Susan Randall
Education Consultant
Dropout Prevention/Alternative Education
Bureau of Special Education
srandall@ed.state.nh.us

McKenzie Harrington
Education Consultant
Bureau of Special Education
mharrington@ed.state.nh.us

Oregon

Lauren Lindstrom, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Director
Secondary Special Education and
Transition Research Group
University of Oregon
lindstrm@uoregon.edu

Jackie Burr
Secondary Transition Specialist
Oregon Department of Education
Office of Student Learning and
Partnerships
jackie.burr@state.or.us

Pennsylvania

Michael Stoehr
Educational Consultant
Pennsylvania Training and Technical
Assistance Network (PaTTAN)
mstoehr@pattan.net

*in*Forum

Rhode Island

Therese Curran
Director of Transition & Vocational Services
West Bay Educational Collaborative
curranwbc@aol.com

David Sienko
Education Specialist/State Transition Coordinator
Department of Education
David.sienko@ride.ri.gov

Virginia

Marianne Moore
State Transition Coordinator
Department of Education
Marianne.moore@doe.virginia.gov

Elizabeth E. Getzel
Director of Postsecondary Education Initiatives
Rehabilitation Research and Training Center
Virginia Commonwealth University
lgetzel@vcu.edu

Katherine M. Wittig
Transition Program Specialist
Training and Technical Assistance Center
Virginia Commonwealth University
kmwittig@vcu.edu

Dana Yarborough
Parent/Program Leader
Family & Individual Involvement and Support
Projects Partnership for People with Disabilities
dvyarbrough@vcu.edu

Wisconsin

Tom Heffron
Education Director
Disability Services/Financial Aid
Wisconsin Technical College System
tom.heffron@wtcsystem.edu

Steve Gilles
WI Dept. of Public Instruction
Transition State Director
Steve.gilles@dpi.state.wi.us

Lori Turim
CESA#1
Transition Coordinator
lturim@cesa1.k12.wi.us

Linda Maitrejean
Director
Wisconsin Statewide Transition Initiative and Wisconsin Transition Conference
lindam@cesa11.k12.wi.us

Jen Ledin
CESA #12
Transition Coordinator
jenniferm@cesa12.k12.wi.us

APPENDIX B: SELECTED STATE POLICY WEBSITE LINKS

Alabama
https://docs.alsde.edu/documents/65/-0%20AAC%20Chapter%20290%208%209%20(5-14-2009).pdf

New Hampshire
http://www.education.nh.gov/instruction/special_ed/documents/nhrules_child_disab.pdf NH Rules for the Education of Children with Disabilities
http://www.education.nh.gov/legislation/documents/306_adopted.pdf provides the minimal standards for public school approval

Oregon
http://www.ode.state.or.us/search/results/?id=266

Pennsylvania
www.pde.state.pa.us

Rhode Island
http://www.ride.ri.gov/Special_Populations/Programs_Services/Secondary_Transition/Secondary%20Transition%20Services.aspx State Department of education site
www.ritap.org/MyTransition Student site

Wisconsin
http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/pdf_files/dpi_interagency_agreement.pdf to review interagency agreement
http://www.dpi.wi.gov/sped/transition.html to support seamless transition services
http://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/tran.htm more transition resources

APPENDIX C: IDEA INDICATORS

Indicator 13:

"Percent of youth with IEPs age 16 and above with an IEP that includes appropriate measurable postsecondary goals that are annually updated and based upon an age appropriate transition assessment, transition services, including courses of study, that will reasonably enable the student to meet those postsecondary goals, and annual IEP goals related to the student's transition services needs. There also must be evidence that the student was invited to the IEP team meeting where transition services are to be discussed, and evidence that, if appropriate, a representative of any participating agency was invited to the IEP team meeting with the prior consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority." (20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B)

Indicator 14:

"Percent of youth who had IEPs, are no longer in secondary school and who have been competitively employed, enrolled in some type of postsecondary school, or both, within one year of leaving high school." (20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

RESOURCES

Erickson, W. Lee, C., & von Schrader, S. (2009). *2008 Disability Status Report: the United States.* Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Disability Demographics and Statistics. Available at http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/edi/disabilitystatistics/StatusReports/2008-PDF/2008-StatusReport_US.pdf?CFID=33065200&CFTOKEN=85068352&jsessionid=f030d08d8882e8b487cc64363c23781be1b3

Newman, L., Wagner, M., Cameto, R., Knokey, A.-M. (2009). *The Post-High School Outcomes of Youth With Disabilities up to 4 Years After High School. A Report From the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2)* (NCSER 2009-3017). Menlo Park, CA: SRI International. Available at http://ies.ed.gov/ncser/pdf/20093017.pdf

This document, along with many other Forum publications, can be downloaded from the Project Forum at NASDSE website:

http://www.projectforum.org

To order a hard copy of this document or any other Forum publications, please contact Nancy Tucker at
NASDSE, 1800 Diagonal Road, Suite 320, Alexandria, VA 22314
Ph: 703-519-3800 ext. 326 or Email: nancy.tucker@nasde.org