

Archived Information

ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS OF THE STATE TRANSITION GRANTS

A 5-year cooperative agreement was awarded to the National Transition Network to evaluate and document the approaches and outcomes of the State educational agency/vocational rehabilitation grants. The purposes of the cooperative agreement are to develop, implement, and improve systems that provide transition services for youth with disabilities. This Appendix contains information about the activities developed in selected States to improve transition services.

ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS OF THE TRANSITION SYSTEMS CHANGE INITIATIVE

A 5-year cooperative agreement was awarded to the National Transition Network (NTN) to evaluate and document the approaches and outcomes of projects jointly awarded to State education and vocational rehabilitation agencies. The purposes of the cooperative agreements were to develop, implement, and improve systems that provide transition services for youth with disabilities. This Appendix contains information regarding the effect of State project activities.

Overview of the Transition Systems Change Program

In FY 1991, OSERS authorized, under section 626(e) of IDEA, a special grants program specifically intended to make available, on a competitive basis, one-time, 5-year grants to individual States for the purpose of establishing responsive State systems that address the school-to-work transition needs of youth with disabilities. These State-level projects are cooperative efforts, jointly undertaken by State education and vocational rehabilitation agencies.

Beginning in 1991, the systems change program enabled States and localities to begin implementation of the transition service requirements of IDEA. Although the final regulations did not receive approval until late 1992, the State grants program was instrumental in supporting early implementation efforts in those States initially funded in 1991. Since that time, projects in 45 States and the District of Columbia have served as an important base of support for State educational agencies (SEAs), in partnership with other State and local agencies, in increasing the capacity of States to improve the postschool outcomes and community adjustment of youth with disabilities.

As authorized under section 626(e) of IDEA, the State Systems for Transition Services for Youth with Disabilities Program is intended to address the goals described below.

- Develop effective strategies and procedures for implementing the new transition service requirements contained within Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990.
- Increase the availability, access, and quality of transition assistance through the development and improvement of policies, procedures, systems, and other mechanisms for youth with disabilities and families.

- Improve the ability of professionals, parents, and advocates to work with youth with disabilities in ways that promote the understanding of and the capability to successfully make the transition from school to adult life.
- Improve working relationships and collaboration among those who are, or should be, involved in the delivery of transition services, in order to identify and achieve consensus on the general nature and specific application of transition services to meet the needs of youth with disabilities.
- Create an incentive for accessing and using the existing expertise and resources, or developing expertise and resources, in programs, projects, and activities related to transition.

Although these goals constitute the scope and focus of the State projects, the actual objectives and activities vary considerably across projects. Some States, for example, have focused on training at the local level, while others have focused on regional demonstration sites. The variety of approaches utilized by States, as well as their diverse geographic, political, and experiential positions complicated the task of designing an evaluation approach that would describe and assess the effect of the entire initiative. Standardized collection of a small number of quantitative variables across all the States was not possible, nor would it have been meaningful. The evaluation was designed, therefore, to identify how system change occurred in a State over time, taking into account the unique context of States, as well as the specific strategies used to promote change. Data were collected through interviews with project directors, focus group meetings with personnel from exiting States, and review of existing documents. In addition, surveys were completed by project directors regarding their projects' involvement with parents and the School-to-Work Initiative.

The NTN is currently analyzing the evaluation data in terms of effective change strategies and their impact. Preliminary evaluation of the State projects, however, has identified seven initial influences of the systems change projects. The initial impacts of the systems change projects are:

1. Increased numbers of State, regional, and local transition teams
2. Increased responsiveness of interagency mechanisms
3. Established and improved existing State policies and procedures

4. Increased availability, access, and quality of transition assistance for youth with disabilities
5. Expanded involvement of youth with disabilities and their parents in the transition process
6. Increased participation of State systems change projects in State school-to-work initiatives and other education reform efforts
7. Increased availability and access to information on transition policies, programs, and practices

Further discussion of these areas and examples of the scope and type of impact now occurring within States are provided below.

1. *Increased Numbers of State, Regional, and Local Transition Teams*

Every State has firmly established transition teams at the State, regional, and/or local levels. These teams are composed of a variety of stakeholders, including students, families, and representatives from educational, vocational rehabilitation, and other adult or community agencies. Each of the 12 States that exited in FY 1996 and those that will exit in FY 1997 indicated that all or a portion of the teams would continue to meet past project funding. These teams have provided a vehicle for organizing, promoting, and changing the transition services provided at State, regional, and local levels.

2. *Increased Responsiveness of Interagency Mechanisms*

A major emphasis in each of the State systems change projects has been the improvement of transition programs and services statewide through high levels of interagency coordination and collaboration. Outreach to other agencies, systems, and initiatives has been a critical component of each project. While the actual form and levels of communication vary by entity and State, it is clear that contacts have been established with agencies such as vocational rehabilitation, school-to-work, one-stop shops, adult education, and work force development. Interagency agreements and relationships have been developed, expanded, and refined at the State, regional, or community levels, as well as within local schools.

The application process itself contributed to increased collaboration within the States. To be eligible to receive a systems change project, a joint application must be submitted by the State educational and State vocational rehabilitation agency.

This is the only grant program made available through OSERS that requires a joint application submission between two independent agencies. This has resulted in strengthening the connection between special education and vocational rehabilitation agencies in the planning and delivery of school and postschool services. Overall, SEAs were the receiving agents for 57 percent of the State projects. The majority of the remaining projects were awarded to vocational rehabilitation agencies.

3. *Established and Improved Existing State Policies and Procedures*

The impact of the increased numbers and responsiveness of State, regional, and local teams and interagency efforts is evidenced by shared responsibility for planning and the delivery of transition services, cofunded and cosponsored programs among agencies, and formal and informal policy formulation. The nature of these policies and procedures varies considerably across States, ranging from graduation and curriculum options to State licensure and eligibility criteria for services. For example, in one State, the Division of Developmental Disabilities lowered the age for eligibility of services from 21 to 17. Many States developed a memorandum of agreement with local special education directors to match State and local funds to the Federal vocational rehabilitation formula. This has allowed these States to maximize aid available from the Federal-State rehabilitation program. Another State established a memorandum of agreement among the SEA, Department of Human Services (MR Division), and the State vocational rehabilitation program that makes providing students ages 18-22 with Medicaid services a priority. State vocational rehabilitation direct service funds are thus matched with Medicaid funds to provide for a variety of essential transition services. As a result of this agreement, students with severe disabilities have available to them job coaches and other services upon graduation, thus minimizing the waiting list for services.

4. *Increased Availability, Access, and Quality of Transition Assistance for Youth with Disabilities*

Each State systems change project has implemented State, regional, and local approaches to improving the availability, access, and quality of transition assistance for youth with disabilities. These efforts have resulted in a multitude of services, including increased staff, improved staff skills, increased use of person-centered planning adapted to meet needs of individuals, recruitment and retention of youth with disabilities in postsecondary education, volunteer training teams, topical forms, and activities related to multicultural issues.

Professional development activities have occurred at the continuing education as well as preservice levels. To date, thousands of administrators, professionals, parents, and students have received training through these systems change projects. Continuing education efforts have emphasized the cross-training of professionals to promote collaborative interagency approaches when addressing the transition service needs of youth with disabilities. General education high school teachers and staff have also been included in these training initiatives. Training topics have included the infusion of transition in IEPs, interagency teaming, self-determination, and a wide variety of other issues.

To a more limited extent, systems change projects have also collaborated in the development of university courses on transition. These courses have been included within preservice training programs that prepare special education, vocational education, and vocational rehabilitation professionals. In several States, teacher certification and licensing standards are being addressed. Training is also provided to parents and students, usually orchestrated through parent centers.

State projects have allocated a portion of their funds to support regional and local demonstration sites. To date, over 1,000 sites have been funded to develop, refine, and implement transition strategies. Some examples of the use of these funds include the development of a school-to-work transition program for incarcerated juveniles and young adults, establishment of programs for secondary students ages 18-22 on postsecondary campuses, and increased participation of centers for independent living in transition planning and preparation.

5. *Expanded Involvement of Youth with Disabilities and their Parents in the Transition Process*

It is clear from the data that parents and students are more involved in transition planning, implementation, and systems change than ever before. The amount and type of involvement, however, vary considerably across and within States. Some States have seen increased requests for services, others have increased parent and student attendance at workshops, and all States have observed some increase in student presence and participation at their planning meetings. The majority of the State project directors, however, have observed that these changes are just beginning to occur.

Participation in individual transition planning meetings has been increased through parent training regarding the transition components of IDEA, team building, and the use of person-centered planning as a means for students, parents, and professionals to establish more meaningful transition plans and to

increase self-determination skills of students. Every State has provided strategies and related training to students, parents, and professionals on ways to increase the self-determination of youth with disabilities.

At the systems change level, participation has varied considerably. In a joint survey of directors of Parent Training and Information Centers (PTI) and transition systems change projects in 34 States, data revealed that the most frequent activities across the States in which parents participate were to identify transition information and training needs (98 percent) and to provide transition-related training to parents (93 percent). Eighty-three percent of the PTI directors indicated that parents in their State served as members on transition boards and committees. Participation in the other activities was increased if the PTI had a subcontract from the State systems change project. Those with subcontracts were significantly more likely ($p < 0.05$) to provide input regarding transition needs, develop transition-related training for youth, and implement transition-related training for professionals than those PTIs without subcontracts.

6. *Increased Participation of State Systems Change Projects in State School-to-Work Initiatives and Other Education Reform Efforts*

Systems change initiatives have been used by the Federal government for over a decade to promote change in policy, service delivery, and practice in special education and rehabilitation. These prior efforts were evident in many of the transition systems change projects through their use of established interagency networks, training models, and effective practices generated through previous and/or concurrent supported employment and severe disabilities systems change projects.

Over the past few years, however, the school-to-work initiative has emerged as an essential mechanism for linking transition issues with the broader context of school reform, applied learning and economic development. While the political currency of transition as it relates to students with disabilities has declined in visibility, transition and postschool outcomes for all students have become important themes in education. Most of the coordinators of the transition systems change States report that they have been actively working to ensure that the needs of individuals with disabilities are represented in all aspects of the school-to-work initiative. Seventy-six percent of the project directors serve as members of school-to-work interagency committees and boards. Over half of the State project directors have reviewed applications for funding under the school-to-work program (58 percent) or provided technical assistance to local and regional partnerships (55 percent). School-to-work personnel have also participated in

transition systems change projects as members of committees or boards (73 percent) or as a provider of technical assistance (64 percent).

7. Increased Availability and Access to Information on Transition Policies, Programs, and Practices

Individual State projects, the NTN, and the collaborating parent centers have all contributed to the base of information now available concerning transition policies, programs, and practices. Each actively disseminates this information within its State, as well as nationally. Materials are developed specifically for Federal and State agency staff; for educators, rehabilitation counselors and other professionals; for students with disabilities; and for parents. This has included a wide array of print and media resources. Other information dissemination strategies include teleconferences, production of directories that promote networking among States, and an annual project directors meeting. Many of these activities are coordinated with the National Transition Alliance and the five Regional Resource Centers (RRCs) and the Federal Resource Center. Publications include:

Policy Updates

- *IDEA: Its Impact on Transition Regulations (Winter 1993)*. This publication presents the regulatory language of the Act and describes potential implications for youth with disabilities making the transition from school to adult life in four areas--notification, participation in meetings, content of the IEP, and agency responsibility.
- *1992 Rehabilitation Act Amendments: New Requirements for Transition (Spring 1993)*. This update discusses the purpose and philosophy of the amendments, eligibility requirements, planning and providing transition services, the Individualized Written Rehabilitation Program (IWRP), interagency collaboration, requirements, and State rehabilitation advisory councils.
- *Job Training Reform Amendments of 1992: Expanded Opportunities for Youth and Adults with Disabilities (Spring 1993)*. This publication presents key aspects of the law and interim final regulations that have potential implications for transition services nationally. Topics discussed include:
 - Participant eligibility.

- Criteria established for hard-to-serve individuals.
 - Training and employment programs addressing transition.
 - Interagency coordination.
 - PIC membership.
 - JTPA accountability to youth and adults with disabilities.
 - State-by-State participation rates of youth and adults with disabilities in JTPA programs.
 - Strategies for increasing participation among youth and adults with disabilities.
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- *1992 Carl Perkins Act Final Regulations: Provisions for Youth with Disabilities in Vocational Education (Fall 1993)*. This publication presents regulatory language associated with key provisions within the Act, along with several concerns that have been raised regarding those provisions.

 - *Supplemental Security Income Program: Benefits for Individuals Making the Transition from School to Adult Life (Spring 1994)*. This report provides an overview of SSI as it applies to youth with disabilities at the time of their transition from high school.

 - *Youth with Disabilities and the School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 (Summer 1994)*. This update presents the key aspects of the statutory language and describes its potential implications for youth with disabilities as served under the Part B provisions of IDEA.

 - *Goals 2000: Educate America Act: Implications for Youth with Disabilities as They Transition From School to Work and Adult Life (Summer 1994)*. This publication familiarizes readers with specific provisions of the law that directly influence the experiences of high school-age students with disabilities as they prepare for the transition from school to work and adult life.

 - *Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act Amendments of 1994: Its Impact on Transition Services (Fall 1994)*. Expanded community-based services, supported employment, improved service coordination, and case management strategies and advocating for a full range of family supports and services are important components of the national movement to improve transition services for youth with disabilities. This update describes these components and how systems change projects may use each to further the goal of improving transition services for youth with disabilities.

- *Higher Education Amendments of 1992: Provisions for Youth with Disabilities in Higher Education (Summer 1995).* This update presents and briefly discusses the implications of provisions of the Act relating to youth with disabilities transitioning from secondary to postsecondary education, high school teachers and support services staff who want to improve their skills in preparing and counseling youth with disabilities for the transition to higher education, as well as provisions for higher education faculty and administrators who serve youth with disabilities in higher education settings.

Parent Briefs

- *Transition Requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (Winter 1993).* This four-part publication for parents and consumers summarizes the transition requirements of the IDEA.

Number 1: Transition Services: What Does it Mean?
Number 2: Student Participation at IEP Meetings
Number 3: Transition Planning: What Are the Ages?
Number 4: Students and the Graduation Dilemma

- *Vocational Rehabilitation Programs (Winter 1996).* This two-part publication for consumers and parents describes VR programs and services available for transitioning students with disabilities.

Part 1: Information on Vocational Rehabilitation Programs:
Rehabilitation Services Available for Youth with Disabilities

Part 2: Information on Vocational Rehabilitation Appeals Procedure:
Did You Know You Have the Right to Appeal Any Decision Made by
Vocational Rehabilitation?

- *Transition Planning for Success in Adult Life (Winter 1996).* This brief provides information on transition planning, services, and activities; it also includes a Transition Checklist that can be used in developing the transition plan.

Network News

This is the newsletter of the National Transition Network through which information on the activities, accomplishments, and impacts of State transition projects is communicated. *Network News* also summarizes NTN activities and

features examples of State-level implementation activities and outcomes and effective/exemplary program and practices information.

Lead Articles:

- *School-to-Work Policy for All American Youth (Fall 1993)*. Excerpts of testimony of David Johnson, NTN Director, before the Senate Subcommittee on Labor and Human Resources in support of the School-to-Work Opportunities Act.
- *Outcome-Oriented Program Evaluation (Winter 1994)*. Edited excerpt from Outcome Assessment in Special Education: Lessons Learned, by Lizanne DeStefano and Mary Wagner.
- *Clinton Signs School-to-Work Opportunities Act (Summer 1994)*. Remarks by President Clinton at the signing of the Act.
- *Health Care Reform: Its Impact on Persons with Disabilities (Fall 1994)*. A look into the debate on health care reform as it applies to the quality of life for people with disabilities.
- *State Transition Systems Change Projects Are Making an Impact (Summer/Fall 1995)*. Impacts of the transitions systems change projects as identified in a preliminary evaluation.
- *Parents and Transition Systems Change (Winter 1995-96)*. Summarizes the results of survey conducted by NTN of project directors and directors of the PTIs in 30 States with systems change grants to determine level of parental participation in transition systems change activities.

Reports

- *Meeting the Needs of Youth with Disabilities: Handbook for Implementing Community-based Vocational Education Programs According to the Fair Labor Standards Act (January 1994)*. Co-produced with the Study Group, Germantown, MD, this report provides guidance to schools operating CBVE programs and encourages the adoption of CBVE programs by schools not presently using this approach. (Note: To order this publication, please send check or purchase order in the amount of \$8.00 to Fawn Miliken, 209 Education Building, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, CO 80523 (303) 491-1843.)

- *Including Students with Disabilities in School-to-Work Opportunities (1995)*. Prepared in collaboration with the Council of Chief State School Officers, Washington, DC, this report provides guidance to States developing transition systems in response to the School to Work Opportunities Act (STWOA) to ensure that these systems benefit students with disabilities. It focuses on the inclusion of students with disabilities in the STWOA and the lessons learned in designing transition programs for students with disabilities under IDEA for consideration by decision makers implementing school-to-work programs. (Note: Available from Resource Center on Educational Equity, Council of Chief State School Officers, One Massachusetts Avenue NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC 20001.)

- *Inclusion of Transition-Age Students with Disabilities in Large-Scale Assessments (July 1995)*. This report provides a brief description of the functions of large-scale assessments and examines existing and developing policies as they pertain to transition-age youth with disabilities.

- *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act: Transition Requirements--A Guide for States, Districts, Schools, and Families (January 1996)*. Jointly developed by the Western Regional Resource Center, Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center, and the NTN, the purpose of this publication is to provide guidance to State, district, school personnel, and family organizations as they ensure that the transition requirements of the IDEA are implemented appropriately for youth with disabilities. It addresses all of the transition components in the Federal requirements and provides examples and suggests practices to meet those requirements. (Note: Copies of this publication may be obtained at cost from National Clearinghouse of Rehabilitation, Training Materials, Oklahoma State University, 816 W. 6th Street, Stillwater, OK 74078 (405) 624-7650; (800) 223-5219; Fax (405) 624-0695.)

- *Directory of Transition Resources (June 1996)*. This directory provides a listing and brief description of the transition-related products produced by the State Systems Change Projects on Transition between October 1991 and January 1996. Products include brochures, planning documents, curriculums, videocassettes, and training materials suitable for parents, teachers, administrators, youth with disabilities, and other personnel involved in the provision of transition services.

Status of State Systems Change Projects

To date, 45 States and the District of Columbia have received funding. Twelve of these States completed their 5 years of funding in FY 1995, another 12 are scheduled to complete their funding in FY 1996. A complete listing of these States and primary project contacts is provided below.

Transition Systems Change States Contacts

Initial Project Year: 1991; Exit 1996

(This list contains post-grant contact information.)

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<p>Larry Glantz University of South Maine Muskie School of Public Service PO Box 9300 Portland, ME 04104-9300 207/780-5658 207/780-4417 FAX E-Mail: GLANTZ@USM.MAINE.EDU Internet: http://www.musk.usm.maine/~cdispol/ideas.htm</p>	<p>Donna Suter Utah State Office of Education 250 East 500 South Salt Lake City, UT 84111 801/538-7576 801/538-7991 FAX E-Mail: dsuter@usor.k12.ut.us</p>
<p>Sandy Thompson Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning Interagency Office on Transition Services 656 Capitol Square Building 550 Cedar Street St. Paul, MN 55101 612/296-5660 612/296-3348 FAX E-Mail: sandra.thompson@State.mn.us</p>	<p>Olga Pschorr Supported Employment Project Division of Vocational Rehabilitation 103 South Main Street Waterbury, VT 05671-2303 802/241-2186 802/241-3359 FAX</p> <p>Susan Cano Vermont Department of Education 120 State Street Montpelier, VT 05620 802/828-3130 802/828-3140 FAX</p>

Initial Project Year: 1992; Exit 1997

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<p>Lise Zeig Massachusetts Department of Education Educational Improvement Group School to Employment Cluster 350 Main Street Malden, MA 02148-5023 617/388-3300 617/388-3394 FAX</p>	<p>Jim Rich State of Washington Old Capitol Building, FG-11 PO Box 47200 Olympia, WA 98504-7200 360/753-6733 360/586-0247 FAX</p>
<p>Freda Lee Department of Public Instruction Exceptional Children's Services Division 301 N. Wilmington Street Education Building Raleigh, NC 27601-2825 919/715-2003 919/715-1569 FAX</p>	<p>John Huxley West Virginia Department of Education Adolescent Education 1900 Washington Street East, Building 6 Charleston, WV 25305-0330 304/558-2696 304/558-3741 FAX</p>

Initial Project Year: 1993; Exit 1998

<p>Shirley Chandler Florida's Blueprint for School-to-Community Transition Room 312F Stone Building Center for Policy Studies in Education Florida State University Tallahassee, FL 32306-4070 904/644-9510 904/644-5122 FAX</p>	<p>Bob Haugh New Jersey Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs CN 500 240 West State Street, 14th Floor Trenton, NJ 08625 609/633-6431 609/292-5558 FAX E-Mail: njse@ix.netcom.com(bhaugh)</p>
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Initial Project Year: 1995; Exit 2000

<p>Dennis Snyder Maryland's Transition Initiative Maryland State Department of Education Division of Rehabilitative Services 2301 Argonne Drive Baltimore, MD 21218 410/554-9417 410/554-9412 FAX</p>	<p>Deborah Barnett South Dakota Transition to Adulthood Systems Change Project Department of Education and Cultural Affairs Office of Special Education 700 Governor's Drive Pierre, SD 57501-2291 605/773-3678 605/773-6139 FAX</p>
<p>Robert Runkel Office of Public Instruction Division of Special Education State Capitol, Room 106 Helena, MT 59620-2501 406/444-4429 406/444-3924 FAX</p>	<p>Nan Crawford Tennessee Department of Education Division of Special Education Andrew Jackson Tower, 8th Floor 710 James Robertson Parkway Nashville, TN 37243-0380 615/532-9792 615/532-9412 FAX</p>

Initial Project Year: 1996; Exit 2001

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