



Jefferson Independent School District
Special Services
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TRANSITION PLANNING STUDENT / PARENT PACKET

Middle School / Jr. High School
Grades 6 – 8

“Preparing to Move to High School”

"MOVING TO HIGH SCHOOL"

**Transition Service Needs
Middle School/Junior High**

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"THINGS YOU CAN DO NOW"

- 1. Begin to think seriously about what you enjoy doing. Find out what jobs are available in the field of your interest.**
- 2. Look seriously at what your high school offers in elective courses to try out for free the career interest area.**
- 3. Don't take electives that are easy just to get a credit – chances are these offer no opportunity to explore requirements for your future.**
- 4. Understand that the next 4 years will either OPEN or CLOSE doors for you!**

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INTRODUCTION TO TRANSITION SERVICES PLANNING

As a student leaves middle school/junior high school programs, federal laws require STUDENTS who receive services under IDEA (Special Education) and their PARENTS participate in transition services needs planning activities designed to prepare for exit from high school. These activities are designed to focus on the student's course of study for the remaining years until graduation from high school. The opportunity to make best use of both time and money in the future begins NOW!

Through graduation you will be provided with information that is grade and age specific to assure successful transition from high school with "no surprises." These introductory materials are arranged to assist in understanding the process of transition planning and give background for the systematic approach to this very important year by year preparation to leave high school.

Requirements of IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)

The IDEA federal laws initiated in the 1990-1991 school year, have fluctuated between starting this transition planning process at age 14 (the year in which the student turns 14, actually meaning age 13) **OR** at age 16 (the year in which they student turns 16, meaning age 15). However, the federal law does allow states to choose earlier ages as a starting point, but NOT a later age.

Currently, the federal law requires age 16 as the starting age, meaning age 15. This should generally occur at grades 8-10, depending on severity of disability and the students IEP (Individual Education Program) decisions on campus placement and designated program of services.

The State of Texas, starting with the 2011-2012 school year, has selected age 14, meaning age 13, as the starting point for students receiving IDEA (Special Education) services to participate in Transition Planning activities. This should generally occur at grades 6-8.

TRANSITION SERVICES AT THE ARD / IEP MEETING
ARD-(Admission, Review, Dismissal); IEP- (Individual Education Program)

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--
 - (a) instruction;
 - (b) related services;
 - (c) community experiences;
 - (d) the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives; and
 - (e) if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.

The student and parent will be invited by the district to attend the meeting where transition services are discussed and every following year until graduation from high school is achieved. Documentation of participation by the student, if NOT in attendance at the ARD/IEP meeting, is required to ensure the students strengths, preferences and interests were considered. The student's ability to advocate for his/her future goals is a critical part of developing a realistic plan of action.

Self Advocacy is Critical

Self advocacy is the ability to ask for what you need, when you need it, and is the reason why the student's participation produces desired outcomes. A student who can communicate the help they need to the IEP members is more likely to take advantage of the services provided, and thus successfully accomplish the career, training and independent living options they have chosen.

Knowing your Disability

An important starting point for every student is to know why they are involved in this process. Understanding their strengths and knowing how to accommodate for areas of weakness is empowering. Every student eligible for IDEA special education services will have transition planning as a part of the IEP. The student should participate and take advantage of this process.

- A student must have a disability, that has been identified through gathering data, the FIE (Full and Individual Evaluation). This FIE is reviewed annually to assure that the student qualifies to continue to receive special education services under IDEA law.
- Having a disability under IDEA law does not mean the student has no abilities. It means some areas of school may be difficult for them. The student must have an educational need as part of the criteria for eligibility to receive special education services.
- When an educational need is discovered, and IDEA law applies, the student and parent MUST learn how this will impact education, training, employment and independent living choices in the future. This is the role of the IEP committee, and is why the student

and parent must participate fully to select modifications, accommodations and support services that lead to obtaining the desired outcome.

THE LAWS CHANGE AT GRADUATION FROM HIGH SCHOOL

When a student graduates, all protections and services under IDEA **stop!** This does not mean that help goes away! It can continue in adult life, however the student will be required to provide documentation regarding his/her disability and request the services needed. Your IEP and FIE provide the starting point to APPLY for future assistance. YOU are responsible for applying and identifying why you need the requested assistance (not the colleges, jr. colleges, technical/trade schools, employers, businesses, housing/independent living providers or service agencies). If your student cannot self advocate, apply and ask for assistance needed, chances of obtaining the help needed is minimal at best. This is why you and your student's participation in transition planning activities is crucial to success!

6th / 7th GRADE

It seems like a long way off, but you are now in the process of preparing for high school, and eventual graduation. These upcoming years can be as complicated or as simple as you make it... as it is up to YOU to choose the effort needed to reach goals you select for yourself. As staff, our goal is not to tell you what to do with the rest of your life, but to provide information to assist with selection of real action needed on your part.

Step 1. - Start thinking of career / job goals. People will begin asking you, "What are you going to be when you grow up?" Some students have thought about this, some maybe not. It's okay either way, but it is now time to begin gathering information.

Step 2. - Review the resources that are available?

Texas CARES <http://www.lmci.state.tx.us/shared/cares.asp>

Texas CARES (Career Alternatives Resource Evaluation System) is a multi-media career information system designed for individuals to explore different careers and related educational opportunities in Texas and around the country. One of the easiest and best websites to navigate for parents and students to research career possibilities and much, much more.

A free career information hotline: 1-800-822-PLAN (7526) - Monday-Friday 8:00 - 5:00
This is a recording. So listen carefully, speak clearly and follow all instructions. You may ask for up to three careers to be researched. The information will be mailed.

Achieve Texas – Career and Technology (CTE) <http://www.achievetexas.org/> **Achieve Texas** is a new education initiative and redesigns the way career and technical education is organized in Texas. The system is designed to help students (and their parents) make wise education choices. It is based on the belief that the curricula of the 21st century should combine *rigorous* academics with *relevant* career education. This initiative moves from 6 program areas to the 16 federally defined Career Clusters of the States' Career Clusters initiative (www.careerclusters.org) as the foundation for restructuring how schools arrange their instructional programs. A Career Cluster is a grouping of occupations and broad industries based on commonalities.

Career Clusters: Do all 16 clusters have to be implemented in every school?

www.onetonline.org or www.twc.state.tx.us

No, local districts are free to choose which clusters to implement based on the needs of the students, community, and local economy. Currently, the Texas Administrative Code §74.3 Description of a Required Secondary Curriculum states that a district must provide career and technical education courses selected from at least three of the eight (sixteen) career and technical areas (clusters) taught on a campus in the school district with provisions for contracting for additional offerings with programs or institutions as may be practical.

Each Career Cluster represents a distinct grouping of occupations and industries based on the knowledge and skills they require. The 16 Career Clusters and related Career Pathways provide an important organizing tool for schools to develop more effective programs of study (POS) and curriculum.

- **Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources**
The production, processing, marketing, distribution, financing, and development of agricultural commodities and resources including food, fiber, wood products, natural resources, horticulture, and other plant and animal products/resources.
- **Architecture & Construction**
Careers in designing, planning, managing, building and maintaining the built environment.
- **Arts, Audio/Video Technology & Communications**
Designing, producing, exhibiting, performing, writing, and publishing multimedia content including visual and performing arts and design, journalism, and entertainment services.
- **Business Management & Administration**
Careers in planning, organizing, directing and evaluating business functions essential to efficient and productive business operations.
- **Education & Training**
Planning, managing and providing education and training services, and related learning support services such as administration, teaching/training, administrative support, and professional support services.
- **Finance**
Planning and related services for financial and investment planning, banking, insurance, and business financial management.
- **Government & Public Administration**
Planning and executing government functions at the local, state and federal levels, including governance, national security, foreign service, planning, revenue and taxation, and regulations.
- **Health Science**
Planning, managing, and providing therapeutic services, diagnostic services, health informatics, support services, and biotechnology research and development.
- **Hospitality & Tourism**
Preparing individuals for employment in career pathways that relate to families and human needs such as restaurant and food/beverage services, lodging, travel and tourism, recreation, amusement and attractions.
- **Human Services**
Preparing individuals for employment in career pathways that relate to families and

human needs such as counseling and mental health services, family and community services, personal care, and consumer services.

- **Information Technology**

Building linkages in IT occupations for entry level, technical, and professional careers related to the design, development, support and management of hardware, software, multimedia and systems integration services.

- **Law, Public Safety, Corrections & Security**

Planning, managing, and providing legal, public safety, protective services and homeland security, including professional and technical support services.

- **Manufacturing**

Planning, managing and performing the processing of materials into intermediate or final products and related professional and technical support activities such as production planning and control, maintenance and manufacturing/process engineering.

- **Marketing**

Planning, managing, and performing marketing activities to reach organizational objectives such as brand management, professional sales, merchandising, marketing communications and market research.

- **Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics**

Planning, managing, and providing scientific research and professional and technical services (e.g., physical science, social science, engineering) including laboratory and testing services, and research and development services.

- **Transportation, Distribution & Logistics**

The planning, management, and movement of people, materials, and goods by road, pipeline, air, rail and water and related professional and technical support services such as transportation infrastructure planning and management, logistics services, mobile equipment and facility maintenance.

O*NET (Occupational Information Network) www.online.onetcenter.org

Also available in schools and libraries, O*NET provides full information on occupations, including compensation, employment prospects, and skill matching for students. Information on compensation is available on a state-by-state basis.

By doing this you will find out:

- Training and education needed for each job;
- Earnings for each job;
- Expected job prospects;
- What workers do on the job; the critical job requirements (must be both willing and able); and
- Working conditions.

STEPS TO YOUR CAREER PATHWAY

- __1. Determine What You Like (Interests) and What You Are Good At (Abilities) - You will spend many years working and hopefully this will be in a career you ENJOY and are GOOD AT doing! Just getting up every day to earn a paycheck will get old.
- __2. Research Careers - This packet contains both phone and internet resources to get started.
- __3. Try Out Jobs Early - This helps gain experience in the world of work. It's also helpful with decision making later on. It's just as important to find out what you don't want to do, as it is to find out what you do want for a career!
- __4. Develop Basic Computer Skills - Most all occupations now require some skill in this area.
- __5. Learn How to Seek Employment - Develop a resume of all work experiences, paid or volunteer because you will likely try out several different jobs before you find the one that's right for you.
- __6. Plan the Career - Great opportunities exist in many sought after occupations that don't require a college degree. The U.S. Department of Labor statistics indicate that over 80% (8 out of 10) of the jobs in the country require a license or certification, not a four year degree!
- __7. Don't Waste Time or Money - Get started in high school where training is free and it provides the opportunity to also earn credit for graduation.
- __8. Finish High School – This opens the door for ALL options. Most high school graduates make at least \$250,000 (1/4 million dollars) MORE over the life of working than those who don't! College degree or not, most options for employment and education /training are minimal without a High school diploma.
- __9. Continuing Education - This may be required as you move through your work career to be considered for new openings or advancement.

*** If you are planning on attempting to continue with Athletics in College, the NCAA Clearinghouse requirements MUST BE MET! No Exceptions!! This refers to grade point average, core courses (no resource), and SAT/ ACT scores to receive a scholarship. See your Coach or Counselor for details. *All applications must now be completed online! NCAA Clearinghouse Web Site: www.ncaaclearinghouse.net**

AT THE 8TH GRADE ANNUAL ARD/IEP MEETING THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES WILL OCCUR:

1. Interests/preferences discussed regarding exit from school and transition service needs continues. Determine student's participation in the general curriculum and appropriate modifications or accommodations, methods of instruction and materials.
2. A 4-year Plan of Courses is developed. The transcript (also called the AAR-Academic Achievement Record) will be reviewed annually to determine needed adjustments to coursework to achieve a diploma.
3. * **Very Important:** Based on the 4-year Plan course outline, a graduation option page is completed that will be reviewed annually and changed/updated as needed. Pay particular attention to this page as it will discuss the student graduating by taking required courses. Starting 2014-2015 new HB5 in effect. *(See below for graduation requirements chart.*

Beginning 2014-2015 School Year, graduation options for all Incoming 9 th graders and beyond:	
Foundation	Distinguished
4 credits English	4 credits English
3 credits Math	4 credits Math
3 credits Science	4 credits Science
3 credits Social Studies	3 credits Social Studies
1 credit PE	1 credit PE
1 credit Fine Arts	1 credit Fine Arts
2 credits language other than English (can be computer programming)	2 credits language other than English (can be computer programming)
	Plus one Endorsement

ENDORSEMENTS	
STEM	Includes courses directly related to: • science, including environmental science; • technology, including computer science; • engineering; • advanced math
Business and Industry	Includes courses directly related to: • database management; • architecture; • information technology; • construction; • communications; • welding; • accounting; • logistics; • finance; • automotive technology; • marketing; • agricultural science; • graphic design; • HVAC
Public Services	Includes courses directly related to: • health sciences and occupations; • law enforcement ; • education and training; • culinary arts and hospitality
Arts and Humanities	Includes courses directly related to: • political science; • English literature; • world languages; • history; • cultural studies; • fine arts
Multidisciplinary Studies	Allows a student to select courses from the curriculum of each endorsement area and earn credits in a variety of advanced courses from multiple content areas sufficient to complete the distinguished level of achievement
	Total Credits with Endorsement - 26
Performance Acknowledgement	For outstanding performance: • in a dual credit course • in bilingualism and biliteracy • on an AP test or IB exam • on the PSAT, the ACT-Plan, the SAT, or the ACT For earning a nationally or internationally recognized business or industry certification or license

- In addition to college admissions, students and parents should be aware that modifications have an impact on NCAA opportunities and scholarships. Students receiving special education services and their parents must follow-up with NCAA and the school guidance counselor concerning specific NCAA procedures to follow regarding the student's status and waivers.
 - Students receiving special education services must maintain a minimum average grade of 70 to pass a course and be awarded credit. Grades should reflect progress toward completion of IEP goals and objectives as well as demonstrated mastery of course content. To promote a successful academic experience for the student, the ARD/IEP committee (which you and the student participate) may choose to modify a course content.
 - www.uhd.edu/admissions/documents/hb3826_faq.pdf and www.ncaa.org
4. An interagency release for transition services (or Consent to Release Information) is provided to allow "outside" agency representatives to be invited to future annual ARD/IEP meetings / transition meetings.
 5. Student and family provided this 8th grade transition service needs packet.

WAYS TO ENTER THE WORLD OF WORK

1. Four Year College - Bachelors Degree or other advanced degrees, Masters, Ph.D., etc. * Needed ONLY if the career choice requires this level of training. (80% of jobs do not require a 4 yr. degree)
2. Two Year Junior College – (largest number of jobs require this level of education/training)
 - a. Associate Degree (Preparation for transfer to four year schools or start work)
 - b. Certifications and Licenses - Preparation to go directly to work (generally at much less cost than a private trade/technical school)
3. Technical School - Licenses and Certifications
Be sure to do your research since these programs receive no state funding. They may charge up to **10 times** as much as the exact same program at a junior college.
4. Apprenticeship - On the job training. U.S. Department of Labor identifies over 700 careers that can be learned on the job.
5. Volunteer or Internship (Job Shadowing) - A way to show an employer your skills without having to pay you the initial training costs.
6. Military - Most branches of the military have over 200 Career Choices and the opportunity to earn money for additional education after discharge.
7. Do Nothing - Not an Option / Road to Ruin

WHAT EMPLOYERS LOOK FOR

1. Attendance! Attendance! Attendance! - employers do not hire people who do not show up!!!
2. Good Scholastic Record - shows you work hard. Low grades can be OK if you offer a reasonable explanation.
3. Personality - Good attitude, poise, self-confidence, outgoing.
4. Having Goals and Objectives - Be motivated, know your interest.
5. Enthusiasm - Be driven, show that you want to work.
6. Showing Interest in the Business - Be interested in the type of job available and get information about company. Prepare for the interview.
7. Ability to Express Yourself - Good speech.
8. Realistic Salary Demands - Be more interested in the opportunity than in the salary. Be willing to start at the bottom.
9. Good Personal Appearance - Dress appropriately and have good personal hygiene.
10. Maturity - Show some evidence of leadership potential and good attendance at work or school.
11. Participating in extracurricular activities – or have reasons for not participating in activities.

LIVING INDEPENDENTLY

Most students do not plan on living at home with their parents for the rest of their lives. Most parents do not plan on this either.

The high school will generally offer elective courses in the following areas to help you prepare to set up your own household in the future.

Home Economics:

- Human Services
- Preparation for Parenting / Child Development
- Independent Family Living
- Child Development
- Life Management
- Food Science/Nutrition/Wellness
- Food Tech/Production

Math:

- Math Models

General Education:

- Economics (Required)

Special Education:

- VAC

- Occupational Preparation

CTE (Career and Technology Education) - courses in various career areas and technology

TEXAS TUITION PROMISE FUND & 529 FUND

www.texastuitionpromisefund.com/

Phone: 1-800-445-GRAD (4723), option 5

Service Center Hours: Monday – Friday, 8 am – 5 pm CST

What it does: Allows a family to purchase a future college education in Texas at today's prices. A prepaid tuition contract can be bought with a lump sum, installment payments or pay as you go. Parents buy tuition units under the plan, with 100 units equal to a year of college, or 30 credit hours. Here's what the various types of tuition units cost based on the current website information (prices are subject to change):

- Type I:** Priced to reflect tuition and fees at the most expensive public four-year universities, including the University of Texas at Austin and Texas A&M University. The current price is \$111.68 per unit, or \$11,168 a year.
- Type II:** Priced at weighted average cost of tuition and fees at all public four-year colleges in Texas. If the school attended has tuition higher than average, the family has to pay the difference. The current price is \$79.70 per unit, or \$7,970 a year.
- Type III:** Prices at weighted average cost of tuition and fees at all public community colleges in Texas. If the school attended has higher tuition than average, the family has to pay the difference. The current price is \$20.54 per unit, or \$2,054 a year.

Source: Texas Comptroller's Office www.texastuitionpromisefund.com

COLLEGE PREPARATION TIMELINE

<u>Grades</u>	<u>Goals and Objectives</u>
6-7	Begin establishing career goals and objectives. This process will be ongoing throughout high school. Consider things you are interested in and things you are good at doing.
8 th	Plan four-year high school academic program. Understand the different graduation options/plans. Parents should attend High School Orientation Meeting in Spring. *Look at elective courses that match interest areas start career research.
9 th	Review college catalogs and begin to match high school courses with admission requirements. Become aware of vocational and career opportunities. Continue to evaluate goals and objectives, career research. Parents should attend meeting in Spring to discuss next year's schedule. Become familiar with requirements of colleges and tech programs that interest you. Become involved and keep a record of school activities. Meet with your counselor to review four-year plans and discuss preliminary college plans. Choose classes carefully for the sophomore year.
10 th	Attend college night in September. Register for and take the PLAN® (ACT's College Readiness Test for 10 th graders). https://www.act.org/plan/ Meet with counselor to analyze PLAN® (pre-ACT) results. Begin to refine college choices and college admission requirements. Review four-year plan and match courses with those required for specific college admission. Investigate the vocational programs available through your local and area schools. Attend Career Night during the spring semester. Parents should attend PLAN® interpretation meeting in January. Parents should attend meeting to discuss junior course selections.
11 th	Conduct a thorough self-evaluation of your abilities, interests, and future goals. Continue to participate in school activities and keep a record for future applications. Attend college night in September. Make a list of college/tech schools that suit your interests, needs, preferences, and abilities. Request catalogs, scholarships, financial aid, and housing information/search on websites. Register and take the PSAT in October. Meet with counselor to analyze PSAT results, receive class rank and match these with colleges on your list. Athletes- Start NCAA Clearinghouse Activities-Paperwork. *online only www.ncaa.org Parents should attend PSAT test interpretation meeting in January. Review four-year plan and match senior courses with those needed for college admission. Attend Career Night during spring semester. Parents should attend meeting to discuss senior course selections. Parent should attend College Planning Seminar in March. * Take SAT/ACT in spring – 4 year colleges only http://sat.collegeboard.org/home or http://www.actstudent.org/ Visit Colleges and Tech schools – complete early applications as needed. www.applytexas.org Apply for any scholarships available to juniors.
12 th	Check to see that all graduation requirements are being met. Attend college night in September. Register for the college entrance examination you need to take, (SAT, ACT, or TSI) especially if you did not take one as a junior. http://sat.collegeboard.org/home or http://www.actstudent.org/ Athletes- Complete NCAA Clearinghouse Registration. * online only www.ncaa.org Finalize college / tech school choices; pay close attention to deadline dates. Give letter of recommendation requests to counselors and teachers at least 3 weeks ahead of deadline dates. Make formal applications to colleges and tech schools. www.applytexas.org Requests the transcripts mailed to the colleges which you have applied. Attend college campus visitation weekends. Apply for college campus based scholarships in the fall. Make dorm reservations as required. Attend financial aid seminar in January. – FAFSA (Pell grant) http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/ Attend Career Night during the spring semester. Apply for financial aid before March 1, if possible. http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/ Apply for local community based scholarships in the spring.

AGENCIES

The Texas Education Code, establishes "the respective responsibility of each agency for the provision of the services necessary to prepare student enrolled in special education programs for a successful transition to life outside the public school system." The following state agencies may be contacted to assist in this transition process. "Appropriate circumstances for referring a student, or the student's parents, to a governmental agency for services" will be determined by the ARD/IEP team.

Texas Health & Human Services Commission (New) www.hhsc.state.tx.us/

New oversight responsibilities of all major agency categories:

- **Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)** → a DARS agency counselor is assigned to every high school in Texas! www.dars.state.tx.us/
 - Rehabilitation Services
 - Services for the Blind and Visually Impaired
 - Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
 - Early Childhood Intervention Services
- **Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS)** www.dads.state.tx.us/
 - Intellectual Disability (ID) Services (formerly Mental Retardation Services)
 - State Schools
 - Community Services
 - Community Care Services
 - Nursing Home Services
 - Aging Services
- **Department of State Health Services (DSHS)** www.dshs.state.tx.us/
 - Health Services
 - Mental Health Services
 - State Hospitals
 - Community Services
 - Alcohol and Drug Abuse Services
- **Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)** www.dfps.state.tx.us/
 - Child Protective Services
 - Adult Protective Services
 - Child Care Regulatory Services

All agencies acknowledge that current resources and funding levels are not adequate to meet the needs of students receiving special education services who are moving from school to adult life in Texas. Agencies and concerned citizens must actively pursue federal, state, and local resources.

US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) may assist in determining if your child is eligible for a social security number. For consideration of deferred action for childhood arrivals through the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) you may contact the National Customer Service Center at 1-800-375-5283 or 1-800767-1833 (TDD for the hearing impaired). <http://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian>

Agencies Responsibilities for Transition Services

Receipt of Agency Services by a student is contingent upon determination of **ELIGIBILITY FOR** and **AVAILABILITY OF** that agency's services. Nothing in this part relieves any participating agency, including a state vocational rehabilitation agency, of the responsibility to provide or pay for any transition service that the agency would otherwise provide to students with disabilities who meet the eligibility criteria of that agency.

Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)
(School Program)

Purpose of Transition Planning Services

Transition planning services are provided to eligible students with disabilities through the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program. These services:

- prepare students with disabilities to move from receipt of special education services to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services; and
- help minimize potential delays in service delivery that students may encounter during the transition from school to competitive employment or independence

As a part of DRS (Department of Rehabilitation Services) transition activities, the VR counselor works with students, parents, schools and education personnel to:

- provide transition planning services to students with disabilities and their families during the final two years before the student's anticipated exit from high school;
- complete the individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) before the eligible student leaves high school;
- coordinate transition planning services and activities with the Individualized Education Program (IEP);
- provide appropriate vocational assessments that focus on career interests, aptitudes and abilities based on the student's preferences and capabilities;
- provide transitional employment services to students with disabilities with limited or no work experience; these real world work experiences are intended to enhance occupational awareness and employability skills, e.g.
 - summer job placements,
 - paid work experience,
 - temporary job placements, and/or
 - internship;
- refer students with no impediments to employment to Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) or other community resources; and
- enable students, parents, and education personnel to actively plan for, and assist the transition student to prepare for post high school activities.

Transition Activities

Transition services are a coordinated set of student activities that are designed within an outcome-oriented process that promotes movement from school to post-school activities.

These activities include:

- post-secondary education,
- vocational training,
- integrated employment (included supported employment),
- continuing and adult education,
- adult services,
- independent living or community participation.

The coordinated set of activities is based upon the individual student's needs, taking into account the

student's preferences and interests, and include:

- instruction,
- community experience,
- development of employment objectives,
- development of other post-school adult living objectives, and
- when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills, and functional vocational evaluation.

Counselor Responsibilities

Identifying Students

DRS assigns at least one vocational rehabilitation counselor to each:

- Texas school district,
- school district cooperative, and
- individual high school.

VR counselors actively seek and identify students with disabilities who may need rehabilitation services.

These students may be receiving services under Section 504 or the Rehabilitation Act, or enrolled in:

- regular education,
- vocational education,
- special education,
- resource or content master classes,
- career and technology classes (CTE),
- juvenile justice alternative education programs (JJAEP), or
- “at risk” or drop out prevention programs.

An individual who is in special education, or who has received special education services is not automatically eligible for VT services.

Providing Information to Students, Parents, Education Personnel

VR counselors must provide information that describes the:

- purpose of the VR program,
- application processes for VR services,
- eligibility criteria for VR services, and
- scope or services that may be provided to eligible individuals.

The counselor may use “A guide for Applicants” brochure when providing the above information.

VR counselors may provide technical assistance and consultation to assist with the transition planning process. Technical assistance and consultation activities may include but are not limited to:

- purpose of transition planning,
- transition planning process,
- assistance in determining appropriate referrals of students with disabilities to the VR program,
- application process for VR services,
- labor market information (e.g. “Hot Careers in Texas”, <http://www.twc.state.tx.us/careers/hotcareers.html>; “Students Choose Your Occupation” <http://www.cdr.state.tx.us/realitycheck/>)
- disability awareness, and its impact on employment,

- responsibilities of eligible students and education personnel for participation in transition planning,
- career exploration or interest inventories,
- comparable services and benefits (financial aid, work-study programs, on-the-job training, community services and agencies),
- referral to, and information about other agencies or programs (SSI/SSDI, Benefits Planning Assistance and Outreach (BPAO), TWC work initiative/youth training program in local area).

Transition Planning Process

Transition planning

- is a part of the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), and
- documents the plan for achieving successful adult independence.

VR Counselor Role at IEP Meeting

During an IEP meeting, the VR counselor may provide either verbal or written information regarding DRS services and programs. The counselor is authorized to sign the IDP if attending the meeting. DRS is responsible only for those employment-related services that are placed on the eligible student's Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

VR Services for Students with Disabilities

VR services for students with disabilities may be purchased during the student's last two years in high school (two years before the student's anticipated graduation date). VR services may be purchased earlier or later than the student's last two years in high school depending on the circumstances and needs of each individual student.

Usually, the student's last two years in high school begin at age 16; however depending on individual circumstances, the student's last two years can occur at any age between 16 and 21.

VR services must:

- be vocational in nature, and support and lead to the achievement of the employment goal identified on the IPE,
- not be the responsibility of the school district under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act; see School District's Role in Transition Planning; and
- not be readily available from the school district.

The counselor may also purchase only those services necessary for the eligible student with a disability to participate in transitional employment experiences to enhance employment skills and abilities. These services may include but are not limited to

- summer job placements,
- paid work experience,
- temporary job placements, and/or
- internship

Planning for the IPE

VR counselors may begin the transition planning process at age 16 or younger, depending on

- the individual circumstances and needs of the student, and
- need for services to assist the student to transition from school to competitive employment in the community.

The student must be available to participate in the planned services.

The VR counselor

- obtains a copy of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) to assist in transition planning activities;
- develops the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) as early as possible during the transition planning process to minimize potential delay in services; and
- **must** complete the IPE before the eligible student leaves the high school setting.

IPE Considerations for Transition Planning

Topics to consider during the development of the IPE may include but are not limited to:

- career exploration or interest inventories, (use “career exploration tools such as DOL Career One Stop <http://www.careeronestop.org/> , to enhance career counseling, assessment and planning),
- job placement, e.g. volunteer opportunities, summer jobs, intern opportunities,
- employment options, e.g. competitive employment, supported employment,
- transitional employment opportunities in the community to
 - gain marketable skills,
 - establish work history,
 - develop work tolerance, and
 - gain career and occupational knowledge and experience;
- self advocacy and self determination skills,
- previous and current work experience,
- transportation and related issues,
- post secondary education and training opportunities (e.g. community college, university, voc-tech schools, certificate training, on the job training),
- referral to, and information about other agencies/programs (SSI/SSDI, Benefits Planning assistance and Outreach (BPAO), TWC work initiative/youth training program in local area).