



ATS staff takes time out from their tour of the newest Project Search® site at Arkansas Children's Hospital.

Arkansas Transition Services Newsletter Winter 2016

Assessment Highlight: Work Activities Matcher

by Jennifer Williams

We often find that students are unsure of the type of work in which he or she would like to pursue after high school. The Work Activities Matcher (WAM) helps a student discover potential jobs or careers based on his or her preferences. On the WAM students are asked to rate several work activities by circling "enjoy", "don't mind", or "don't enjoy". After the rating, the student or teacher will score the responses in each of the following work activity categories: Learning and Analyzing, Identifying and Monitoring, Communicating and Influencing, Handling, Moving, and Operating, Managing, Supervising, and Teaching, and Repairing and Maintaining. The scores are placed in color coded boxes that correspond to each of the categories. The student and teacher then look at the highest three scores with the higher scores typically indicating the type of work in which an individual prefers. There are several jobs listed under each category to help the student begin

considering further career exploration and preparation. The WAM is only one of many assessments that could be useful in transition planning and to help a student start considering options for his or her future. Don't forget to visit our website for other assessment links and information. Contact the Transition Consultant in your area if you have any questions about the Work Activities Matcher or to request a free sample go to: <http://jist.emcp.com/work-activities-matcher.html>.



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Are Your Transition Plans Compliant?

Transition File & Summary of Performance Reviews

by Karen Randolph

Two of the best ways to see if your school or district is in compliance in Transition is to get trained by your Transition Consultant and to request a Transition File and SOP Review. Your Transition Consultant, through your invitation, will review the transition plan and other parts of the IEP relevant to transition in a proactive effort to ensure compliance. This process typically includes at least two IEP transition folders from each teacher who works with students who have a transition plan. There is an Indicator 13 checklist developed by the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC) that contains eight points that must be considered to be compliant in meeting the federal guidelines. We also add a few points to ensure compliance with the Arkansas regulations. We review the files and answer the checklist questions, "yes" or "no." If any of these questions are marked as no, your school/ district is considered out of compliance. These issues can affect the schools/districts transition services. After our findings from the file review, we can make recommendations to help get the transition plans into compliance and improve the plans and the outcomes for students. The eight points are as follows:

- Are there appropriate measurable postsecondary goals that cover education or training, employment, and, as needed, independent living??
- Are the postsecondary goals updated annually?
- Are postsecondary goals based on age appropriate transition assessments?
- Are there Transition Services in the IEP that will enable the student to meet the postsecondary goal?
- Is there a course of study that will enable the student to meet the postsecondary goal?
- Is there an annual IEP goal related to the student's Transition Services?
- Was the student invited to the IEP meeting?
- If appropriate was an agency representative invited to the IEP meeting with prior consent?

Additional items we look for are:

- The Student Profile Summary statement
- Signatures on the Transfer of Rights and Guardianship statements
- And if appropriate for students who have exited, a completed Summary of Performance

Please invite your Transition Consultant to review a sample of your schools/districts transition plans in order to ensure that the plans meet all federal and state guidelines. A detailed report will be emailed to your LEA on compliance issues related to Transition. This report will indicate specific transition training areas recommended for your school/district. If you have any questions regarding transition file and SOP reviews, please contact your local transition consultant. You may reach us at our website arkansastransition.com, meet your consultants.

Upcoming events

Cadre

February 23-24

Freshman Fifteen

June 13

College Bound Arkansas

June 14-16

AITP Summer Connections

July 20

Another Exciting Opportunity brought to you by AITP/ARMEA

July 2016

ATS Transition Summit

October 19-20

*We will be announcing
Summer Training
dates/locations soon!*

**Be on the lookout for
registration coming soon for
these exciting events:**

www.arkansastransition.com

Each newsletter we will alternate putting the spotlight on an exceptional district or an exceptional student in transition. If you would like to submit one of these please let us know! Our next newsletter deadline is April 15.

Making Connections

by Bonnie Boaz

It's that time of year again! Transition Fairs have already been happening, but we are slowly getting more dates from districts that know the benefits of providing agency connections to staff, students and families!

There will always be a variety of formats for these events, but one type of format is growing more popular: the break-out session format. These types allow students and parents to choose and attend a particular session that is of interest to them. This might be a session on proper dress for the workforce or learning how to advocate for oneself. Some sessions might be specific to a program an agency has to offer. This type of format can allow students to get more information and ask questions based on that information. It can also allow attendees to move around and stay engaged and interested instead of the more traditional format of speakers discussing services and programs to the general audience. There is no right or wrong way to provide information to students and families, but we MUST provide it somehow!

Many districts have experienced the benefits of establishing a committee to plan and host the fair. Quite often, that committee includes students! This is a great way to engage your students and hear important input from them about information they need to know or agencies to include in the event. It's also a great way to encourage leadership skills, work ethic, and self-confidence. Think about how they could be involved: creating invitations/flyers, making weekly announcements prior to the event, contacting agencies, acquiring door prizes, greeting attendees, escorting presenters/attendees, helping with set-up and tear-down—there are so many possibilities to include students! When students are informed and can prepare in advance they will get much more from the event. I have attended two fairs this school year, both were successful and both utilized students in the preparation of the event and at the event. Both events also used the break-out session format, included tools from the Transition Fair Toolkit, had agency exhibitors, and were held

in the fall of 2015.

There are many samples of invitations, planning outlines, evaluations, presentation formats, etc., in the Transition Fair Toolkit which is on our website: <http://www.arkansastransition.com/images/transition%20ofair%20toolkit.pdf>

If you are thinking about planning a transition fair in your district, we can help! Probably the most important piece of advice we can offer is to give your team plenty of time to plan for the event—you want it to be successful! Don't set a date until you decide the audience, the format, the information that is needed, and look at calendars!

If your team is planning a transition fair in the near future, please answer the questions on this survey so we can post them on our website (https://drive.google.com/open?id=1f_gMTtwK2nNS7zyHXTBjVvqdGw67jl7ZtuJBnSbXUkK4)! Arkansas Transition Services consultants are eager to help you with the event, so contact us today and we will help you get started! Make those connections!

The Freshman Fifteen

The Freshmen Fifteen is a one day introduction to college life for (50) 2016-2017 entering 9th grade students with disabilities, either with a 504 plan or an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), and their chaperone(s). It will help prepare these students for the possibility of attending College Bound Arkansas, a summer camp for entering juniors, seniors, and college freshmen with disabilities who are considering college after high school. It will definitely touch on FIFTEEN important topics for high school freshmen to consider if they are thinking about going to college! They will learn and enjoy hearing why college could be an appropriate option, campus supports, how to talk to professors, and get a tour of the beautiful UCA campus. They will also meet a lot of new friends who are thinking about going to college. Let your students and parents know about this day when they can come and spend the day with staff at the University of Central Arkansas and Arkansas Transition Services to see if they would like to be a part of the college life! Visit our website (www.arkansastransition.com) for more information – online registration will be available soon!



A Final Tool to Give Your Students: *The Summary of Performance*

by Bonnie Boaz

Although it's been around since 2005 when a group of professionals including secondary and post-secondary educators, rehabilitation counselors, advocates, and parents met and developed it, the Summary of Performance is sometimes thought of as a "new" tool. It might be a bit more accurate to say it is sometimes considered a "forgotten" tool. The key word here is, "tool."

IDEA states a comprehensive evaluation "shall not be required before the termination of a child's eligibility under this part due to graduation from secondary school with a regular diploma." It does call for a Summary of Performance – "a local education agency shall 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." You have probably seen these statements if you have attended our trainings or been on our website. Let us explain in simpler terms:

Think about the supports your students currently get in school and how they help their performance. Think about the length of some students' IEPs. After the student leaves school, they will be under Section 504/ADA law which mandates equal access to "otherwise qualified" individuals with disabilities (civil rights statute). The student (adult now) must self-advocate and must self-identify with appropriate documentation. The IEP is not sufficient documentation to qualify for post-secondary accommodations and services. AND the IEP can be a bit overwhelming for those who are not familiar with it,

but could better provide services if they had some of the information in it. The SOP, which must be provided to the student in the final year of school, allows that important information to be condensed in an easier to understand format. Imagine a student who would like to apply for services at the post-secondary education level. When they present the SOP, the disability support office personnel can easily identify goals for the student, their current levels of performance in various areas, recommendations for supports that student could benefit from, and their own perspective on their disability and how they used (or didn't use) supports in high school. It only makes sense that it is developed by someone who knows the student and the IEP team should be aware of it, but it is essential that the student is involved in completing the SOP for a couple of reasons: 1) Part 5 of the SOP is based on the student's perspective and input; and 2) if they know and understand the contents of it, they are certainly more likely to use it. Unfortunately, there is not a foolproof way to ensure that after the SOP is completed that a student will keep track of it and offer it to those who could benefit, but the chances of that happening are much higher when they are involved in the process. Post-secondary professionals who have received completed SOPs have told us that they wish they received more because they are helpful and allow them to get the information they need without wasting time sifting through extraneous paperwork.

If you would like more information on the SOP or tools to involve the student during and after completing it, contact your transition consultant.

Paperwork Reduction Taskforce

by Bonnie Boaz

The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) is forming a task force representative of multiple stakeholder groups to convene around the issue of special education paperwork reduction. I have been asked to participate as a member of this task force representing Transition. This is a great opportunity for stakeholders to help identify needed changes in paperwork. It also shows the support that our leadership has for educators in our state and an awareness that the amount of time special education teachers are required to spend on paperwork is an ongoing concern in Arkansas and nationally. The ADE is committed to reviewing special education paperwork to reduce unnecessary items and duplication as much as possible, while maintaining accountability, procedural safeguards, and parental involvement.

Article continued on Page 5.

Paperwork Reduction Taskforce Continued

Key task force activities:

- Review initial LEA special education paperwork survey results including specific comments for streamlining
- Identify additional stakeholder groups to be surveyed
- Review AR special education paperwork required for specific events or conferences
- Crosswalk AR required forms with federal and state regulatory requirements
- Eliminate duplication and unnecessary items and forms
- Identify opportunities to save time (drop downs, etc.)
- Review paperwork requirements from other states

As most of you know, Arkansas Transition Services has been piloting revised transition forms to address some of the above mentioned concerns and to make for more meaningful plans. That process will continue and we will keep you posted on any changes. ATS sees this as a great opportunity to positively impact policy and procedure in our state, which is essential in providing what students need to reach successful outcomes.

Student Spotlight

Amber Chambers

If at first you don't succeed, try, try again

by Lisa Washington



"Implementing transition isn't simply about implementing a plan...it is a tool that is used along the journey of life for a student that is passing through yours."

- Kim Miller, Transitional Coordinator, Texarkana High School

As a senior, Amber Chambers began this year eager to fulfill her transition journey. Her transition plan indicated she was interested in working with small children. Because of this she was selected to job shadow educators on campus whose job description calls for them to do this on a daily basis. Every day, for two hours, Amber is transported to an elementary school for job shadowing and job training.

After three weeks of this training, Amber soon realized that working with small children wasn't exactly what she wanted to do! But instead of taking the "too bad, so sad" attitude, Amber was praised for not only having the awareness but also the boldness to communicate her feelings (self-advocacy skills at work!). Mrs. Miller simply pulled out another transition assessment from her library and began the task of revising her transition plan. Upon interviewing her, it quickly became obvious that Amber had been thinking about a different population of individuals and soon discovered that working with the Senior Citizens was actually her preference.

Mrs. Miller contacted one of the local nursing facilities and Amber was soon job shadowing (with Mrs. Miller providing job supports). Within a week, the director approached Amber and Mrs. Miller about a possible job training opportunity for the position of Weekend Activities Director at the facility.

Fast-forward, Amber has been in her new position since October 2015! Her job duties include visiting the residents, maintain weekly crafts, ensuring the bingo store is open for business and polishing the nails of all the pretty ladies! And to top it off, she has even been offered a full time position when she graduates as the Weekend Activities Director with her own iPad.

This is a great example of "if at first you don't succeed...try, try again".

"Transition is an ever evolving road map; a road map that helps an IEP Committee to carefully guide its voyager into a life of opportunities. Amber has found her opportunity and is making her dreams come true. Not only are her dreams coming true, but the lives of every person she touches are brighter because of it."

--Kim Miller