# project10 transition education network

**PROJECT 10 TOPICAL BRIEFS** are published on a bi-monthly basis. Each issue focuses on a specific topic or theme, highlighting current and upcoming information and events related to secondary transition. This month the Topical Brief is focused on **College, Career and Life Ready.**

✉ Send to a Colleague

Stories

- **Flip the Script on College, Career and Life Readiness**

- **Nationally Identified Issues Surrounding College, Career and Life Readiness**

- **Moving Your Numbers is Not Just About Numbers**

- **Moving Your Numbers; Four Underlying Assumptions**

- **Moving Your Numbers Resources; Boosting Your Numbers and Preparing Your Students**

**Resources**

**Upcoming Events**

**Upcoming Webinars**

**References**

• IN THIS
ISSUE

# Flip the Script on College, Career and Life Readiness

### College, Career and Life Ready: How Do YOU Define It?
Transition stakeholders are aware of the need for students with disabilities to be college, career and life ready, but do we have shared understanding of that term? There may be more than one way to describe college, career and life ready, but a sturdy definition lies within the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*. Let's review this familiar legislation and engage in some script flipping.

### How does the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) describe college, career and life ready?
IDEA describes college, career and life ready as the facilitation of a student'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" (34 CFR 300.43 (a)). When a student is ready for these post-school activities, they are college, career and life ready.

### What process is indicated in legislation for helping students to become college, career and life ready?
The approach includes "a coordinated set of activities" which are delivered through "a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability"(34 CFR 300.43 (a)). In a very real sense, the purpose of all education is college, career and life readiness.

### So college, career and life readiness means the same thing for all students?
Yes, in the sense that all students should be prepared to move forward into post-school activities and life after high school, but not all paths to post-school life will be identical. In the same way that students without disabilities have an endlessly different array of strengths and needs, so do students with disabilities. Writing for the College, Career Readiness and Success (CCRS) Center, Brand and Valent (2013) explain, "although students with disabilities are often discussed as a single subgroup, it is important to note that this heterogeneity may contribute to different, personally valued outcomes for individual students with varying disabilities, strengths, postsecondary goals, and career aspirations" (p. 4). All students, both with and without disabilities, can be encouraged and supported to set challenging goals for post-school life and meet them.

### What happens when students are not ready for college, career or life after high school?
While the IDEA legislation represents a wide range of readiness for life after high school that includes a variety of levels of educational, employment and independent living/community participation possibilities, when students are not ready to transition to post-school life, the results are distressing. When students are not able to envision a pathway to adult life, they sometimes disengage with school, drop out of high school and/or do not earn a high school diploma. Students who do not earn a high school diploma are less prepared to move forward into adult life after high school and face challenges, such as the following:

- Inability to access postsecondary education or training
- Inability to find a job
- Inability to keep a job
- Inability to breakout of low-wage jobs
- Inability to live independently
- Homelessness

- Early parenthood
- Loneliness
- Engagement in criminal activity (Osgood, Foster, & Courtney, 2010)

**Where can we find help with improving our ability to prepare students for college, career and life?**
This Topical Brief will share some critical issues to consider, as well as strategies and resources that can support your district as you strengthen your capacity to support students as they transition to life after high school.

## Nationally Identified Issues and Strategies Surrounding College, Career and Life Readiness

The College and Career Readiness and Success Center (CCRS Center) exists to support college and career readiness for all students. The CCRS Center has aptly identified the need to ensure that students with disabilities are included in the efforts to prepare all students for college, career and life after high school. A selection of critical issues and corresponding actions addressed by the CCRS Center in the issue brief entitled, *Improving College and Career Readiness for Students with Disabilities*, includes the following:

**Critical Issue:** Developing the full potential of students with disabilities is sometimes hindered due to preconceived ideas about limitations associated with particular disabilities.
    **Action:** Improve understanding across the system that students with disabilities are capable of success at the secondary, postsecondary and/or training, and career levels. Holding high expectations for students with disabilities and providing the learning supports needed for success will promote college, career and life readiness.
**Critical Issue:** Using assessment data as a tool for full-circle evaluation and improvement of teaching and learning is needed at the classroom, school, district and state level.
    **Action:** States and districts can provide support through resources, training and technical assistance to ensure data informs instruction and improves student learning outcomes. Florida's use of strategies from *Moving Your Numbers* is relevant here and will be discussed in the next story.
**Critical Issue:** Interpersonal and intrapersonal skills; social and emotional learning skills; problem-solving skills and employability skills contribute to achieving positive post-school outcomes. However, some of these skills may not be systematically taught and assessed in school. It is particularly important to teach and assess these skills, especially when they are included in the student's Individual Educational Plan (IEP).
    **Action:** Explore options to develop instruction and assessment for multiple types of knowledge and skills that are relevant to student success in life.
**Critical Issue:** Multiple pathways to college, training and career are needed. Students with disabilities need flexible learning opportunities at the secondary level that lead to varied types of post-school education options.
    **Action:** According to the CCRS Center (2013),
        *State policymakers should encourage districts and high schools to continue increasing implementation of these flexible and varied pathways to graduation by drawing upon community partners, like employers and community colleges, to help make school more relevant and engaging. Internships, work experiences, cooperative education, and service learning are all strategies that engage youth and help them make connections between their studies and future goals* (p. 17).
    CTE programs are also identified as an important expansion in learning opportunities that bring together theory and practice by connecting academic experiences directly with work experiences.
**Critical Issue:** Deeper connections need to be developed between students with disabilities and the agencies and organizations that provide needed support services.
    **Action:** Districts can develop strong partnerships with agencies and organizations to identify and create a shared vision. This common vision can be supported through cooperative policies and agreements that facilitate students receiving the supports they need to be college, career and life ready.

Suggested strategies for improving college, career and life readiness for students with disabilities found in the CCRS Center issue brief, include the following:

- Define college and career readiness
- Set high expectations, aspirations and clear goals
- Improve use of diagnostic assessments and data to inform instruction
- Develop the capacity of educators to use rigorous research-based instructional practices
- Develop and assess multiple types of knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors important to life success
- Improve access to guidance, counseling and transition services
- Create transparent high school diploma options
- Create multiple pathways to college and careers
- Improve alignment of K-12 and postsecondary education
- Deepen connections among K-12 and other systems that provide supports to students with disabilities

Students with disabilities in Florida are graduating from high school at higher rates than ever before and achievement gaps between students with disabilities and students without disabilities are narrowing. Continued efforts to further improve graduation rates are in motion. At the same time, a stronger and wider bridge is needed for students with disabilities to connect high school graduation with college, career and life.

## *Moving Your Numbers* is Not Just About Numbers

The *Moving Your Numbers* project, including the Six Key Practices, is sponsored by the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) and provides leadership on designing and building educational assessments and accountability systems. The project's goal is to assist educational stakeholders to monitor and improve educational outcomes for all students including English Language Learners (ELLs) and students with disabilities.

The *Moving Your Numbers* project clearly states a focus on assessment and accountability systems, but developing quality assessment practices and structuring a systems-approach to district-wide problem-solving are not ends in themselves. The primary aim is for students to reap the benefits of fine-tuned educational practices in the form of student outcomes, such as high school graduation, postsecondary education and/or training, employment and independent living. The primary aim is for students to graduate from high school ready for college, career and life.

As the *Moving Your Numbers* project and its partners promote capacity building for school leaders and the improvement of educational outcomes, a recurring theme emerges in their work. NCEO Director, Martha Thurlow, makes this observation,

> *"It has become more and more apparent that the best strategy for improving educational outcomes for students with disabilities is to focus more attention and resources on improving instructional practices in the regular classroom for all students. . . There are certain practices that, when coupled with hard work, dedication and the absolute refusal to give up on any child, have contributed to the districts' ability to move their numbers on behalf of all children"* (Telfer, 2011, p. 3).

> Determination,
> energy and
> courage appear
> spontaneously when
> we care deeply
> about something.
>
> ~ Margaret Wheatley

Working to improve outcomes for students with disabilities requires a gritty, "can-do-it" mindset that acts on the assumption that constructive, forward-looking beliefs and actions are enormously influential in the lives of students. In other words, the folks that are most successful at helping students to be successful are those who are confident that their work makes a difference and believe in their students' ability to achieve.

## *Moving Your Numbers*: Four Underlying Assumptions

In addition to the *Moving Your Numbers, Six Key Practices*, the project has also identified four underlying assumptions which, "challenge presumptions that still too often persist today and that limit opportunities to learn for students with disabilities" (Telfer, 2011, p. 4). As your school district members simultaneously and collaboratively use the *Six Key Practices* to assess and monitor student and district performance, it is also important to build unity on the four underlying assumptions. These assumptions are foundational beliefs that support the *Six Key Practices*.

# Moving Your Numbers

## 4 Underlying Assumptions

**Students receiving exceptional student education services are most successful through inclusive teaching and assessment**

### Assumption #1

Successful outcomes (including college and career readiness) for students receiving special education services requires their inclusion in standards-based reform efforts and their participation in statewide assessment and accountability systems.

### Assumption #2

Improving the educational outcomes of students receiving special education services, as for any other student group, requires a sustained focus on teaching and learning, aligned actions across the district, and continuous monitoring of the degree of implementation of such actions to assess the impact on student learning.

**It's necessary to regularly examine teaching and learning practices to determine effectiveness**

**Consistent and high quality implementation of effective practices is needed**

### Assumption #3

Consistent, high quality implementation of effective practices is a challenge for many districts.

### Assumption #4

Students receiving special education services are as different from each other as the members of any other group; assuming pre-determined levels of achievement based on disability status limits these students' opportunity to learn and diminishes the collective responsibility of adults to provide high quality instruction aligned with grade-level content to these students.

**Each student is unique and needs high quality, grade-level instruction that is unlimited by assumptions based on disability status**

Adapted from *Moving Your Numbers*, National Center on Educational Outcomes

## *Moving Your Numbers* Resources: Boosting Your Numbers and Preparing Your Students

If you've been using the *What Matters Most: Key Practices Guide* you are already acquainted with the six key practices that have been identified by *Moving Your Numbers* as essential practices. One of the remarkable features of these key practices is their

relevance and usefulness in problem-solving across a wide range of issues. In a synthesis of outcomes collected from 10 districts across the country, the six essential practices supported districts as they tackled goals ranging from the integration of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to whole system reform grounded in collaborative learning teams.

The role of the six key practices is to increase the performance of students with disabilities as part of district-wide improvement. The improvement of student performance impacts the quality of post-school student outcomes. These six key practices include the following:

1. Using Data Well
2. Focus Your Goals
3. Select and Implement Shared Instructional Practices
4. Implement Deeply
5. Monitor and Provide Feedback and Support
6. Inquire and Learn

The *What Matters Most: Key Practices Guide* provides a section under each key practice that explains the application for state education agencies (SEAs); districts and their schools; as well as parents and families. In addition, there are individual guides devoted to multiple stakeholders which actively demonstrates the project's belief that the task of improving outcomes for students with disabilities requires a unified team of stakeholders across all levels. You can find all of the *Moving Your Numbers* downloadable resources **here**.

## Resources

**College, Career Readiness and Success (CCRS) Center**
The College and Career Readiness and Success Center (CCRS Center) is dedicated to ensuring all students graduate high school ready for college and career success. In support of this goal, the CCRS Center develops products and resources designed to support all stakeholders in implementing their college and career readiness initiatives.

**Expanding Access and Meeting Employer Needs: More Opportunities for People with Disabilities**
This blog located on the Center for Apprenticeship and Work-Based Learning website discusses the value of Registered Apprenticeship (RA) and other work-based learning experiences (WBLEs).

**Graduating College, Career and Life Ready: Florida's Students with Disabilities**
This presentation from the Florida Department of Education (FDOE), Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS) at the 2018 VISIONS Conference outlines how ultimate goal of the State Systemic Improvement Plan (SSIP) is to prepare graduates for college, career and life.

**How ESSA and IDEA Can Support College and Career Readiness for Students with Disabilities**
This document examines how the federal laws, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), can promote the development of meaningful pathways to postsecondary opportunities by ensuring all students are college and career ready. Examples of model programs are also provided.

**Integrating Work-Based Learning into Your College and Career Readiness System (Archived Webinar)**
This webinar, hosted by the CCRS Center, features presenters from Colorado and Iowa who discuss work-based learning as part of their system wide approach to college and career readiness and describe how they align work-based learning with other education priorities.

**Making My Way through College**
This student guide provides information that is relevant to all students pursuing a college

degree, certificate or other post-school training, with a primary focus on navigating the college experience for students with disabilities.

### Moving Your Numbers
These resources include guides for state education agencies (SEAs), school districts, administrators, teachers, families and service providers. In addition, there are resources that describe the lessons that have been learned by districts who are using the Moving Your Numbers' strategies.

### Pursuit of Equity: Leveraging Career and Technical Education for Students with Disabilities (Archived Webinar)
This webinar, hosted by the CCRS Center, discusses strategies for leveraging career and technical education (CTE) to support career readiness for students with disabilities. Research findings on CTE and its relevance for students with disabilities as well as recommendations for cross-systems collaborations are shared.

## Upcoming Events

**DeafTEC Summer Camp**
The Florida School for the Deaf and the Blind (FSDB) is offering a five-day DeafTEC science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) Summer Camp at its St. Augustine campus. Topics may include photography, digital design, video production, CAD and 3D printing, building construction technologies, robotics, and coding and programming.
**Application Deadline:** May 24, 2019
**Camp Dates:** June 24-28, 2019
**Location:** FSDB, St. Augustine, FL
Click **here** to apply and get more information.

_____
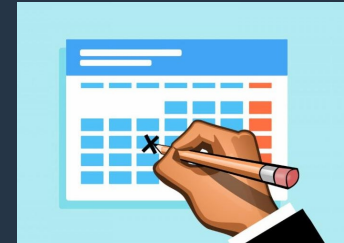
**The 21st Annual Family Café**
**Date:** June 7-9, 2019
**Location:** Orlando Florida
**Description:**The Annual Family Café brings together thousands of individuals with disabilities and their family members for three days of information, training and networking each June. The event features a wide range of individual breakout sessions; an Exhibit Hall with vendors and agencies; and other special events. There is no registration fee for individuals with disabilities and their family members.
Click **here** to register.

_____

**Save the Date: Florida Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE) 2019 Summer Institute**
**Date:** June 10-12, 2019
**Location:** Bonita Springs
**Description:** More information will be forthcoming. To make your hotel reservations at a discounted rate, click **here** or call the hotel at 877-803-7534.

_____

**Save the Date for the Florida Consortium on Inclusive Higher Education (FCIHE) Hartwick Symposium Series 2019: Secondary Symposium**
**Date:** June 11, 2019
**Location:** Orlando, Florida
**Description:** This one-day symposium is designed for secondary teachers, therapists, guidance counselors, transition specialists and administrators who work with students with intellectual disability.

Click **here** for more information.

_____

**The 2019 Florida Youth Leadership Forum (YLF)**
**Date:** July 17-21, 2019
**Location:** Tallahassee, Florida
**Description:** The 2019 Florida YLF is a four-day leadership event that empowers Florida high school students with disabilities ages 16-19 by introducing them to various transition resources and preparing them to enter the workforce or attend college or technical school after graduation.
Click **here** to download the application (Applications after March 1, 2019, may be considered on a space available basis.)
For additional questions, contact Ray Ford at **ray@floridacils.org** or by phone at 850-575-6004.

_____

## References

Brand, B. and Valent, A. (2013). *Improving college and career readiness for students with disabilities.* Retrieved from **https://ccrscenter.org/products-resources/improving-college-and-career-readiness-students-disabilities**

Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) section 300.43. Retrieved from **https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/a/300.43**

Osgood, D. W., Foster, E. M., & M. E. Courtney. (2010).Vulnerable Populations and the Transition to Adulthood. *Future Child, 20*(1), 220-229.

Sanford, C., Newman, L., Wagner, M., Cameto, R., Knokey, A. M., & Shaver, D. (2011). *The Post-High School Outcomes of Young Adults With Disabilities up to 6 Years After High School. Key Findings From the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2)* (NCSER 2011-3004). Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.

Telfer, D. M. (2011). *Moving your numbers: Five districts share how they used assessment and accountability to increase performance for students with disabilities as part of district-wide improvement.* Retrieved from **http://www.movingyournumbers.org/about-us**

**Join Our Mailing List**

**About Project 10 Topical Briefs:**
Project 10 Topical Briefs provide informational summaries and resource links related to secondary transition.

**Have a question?  Want to find or recommend a resource?  Have some great news to share?**
Email us at project10@stpete.usf.edu.

For back issues of Project 10 Topical Briefs, visit our **Topical Briefs** page on the **Project 10** website.

**Project 10: Transition Education Network**
Assists Florida school districts and relevant stakeholders in building capacity to provide secondary transition services to students with disabilities in order to improve their academic success and post-school outcomes.

**Project 10: Transition Education Network**
**University of South Florida St. Petersburg**
Questions or comments?
Email us at project10@stpete.usf.edu.

www.project10.info