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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 New Resources for a New School Year.

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A New School Year Brings New Challenges AND New Opportunities

The COVID-19 pandemic has introduced many new challenges into all our lives. From our workplace to our home space, from physically traveling to our neighborhood grocery store to digitally traveling for meetings and social activities, nearly everything is different. For schools this fall, we see opening in physical buildings, on-line and in a hybrid combination of the two. While schools continue to encounter problems to solve and glitches to fix, they are to be recognized for their ingenuity and innovation in providing educational opportunities to students during such a perplexing time.

Meeting the educational needs of students with disabilities through online learning has traditionally posed challenges. The Director of Innovation for the National Center for Learning Disabilities, Ace Parsi, stated, "In times of chaos, when things are upside down, the people who are going to get left behind are the people who faced those same institutional biases" (as cited in Samuels, 2020, p.1). During the COVID-19 pandemic, student populations that are already at a disadvantage could see their disadvantage increase.

The COVID-19 Education Coalition, "a coalition of groups representing students with disabilities, English-language learners, students of color and others, has created a rubric entitled, 'Questions for Proactive and Equitable Educational Implementation', that covers four essential components: access, capacity, opportunities, and outcomes" (Samuels, 2020, p.1). The document is a series of rubrics, with one focused on students with disabilities. See the four questions in the following graphic that can assist educators to assess equity and inclusion for students with disabilities during this ever changing time. The COVID-19 impact on schools can be an opportunity to address these educational equity issues for students with disabilities in a way that will impact the quality of their education now and in the future.

Questions for Proactive and Equitable Educational Implementation

Specific Student Group: Students with Disabilities

Four Equity and Inclusion Factors	Most Important Question Relating to this Group
1. Access	Are we ensuring that accessibility is guaranteed in the procurement of materials (print and digital) and technologies, enabling students with disabilities to access curricula with assistive technology?
2. Capacity	Do we have personnel and guidelines in place to ensure that students' IEPs and 504 plans are appropriately reviewed, revised and updated in partnership with parents and guardians, as scheduled during the coming year, whether remote or in-person?
3. Opportunity	Are our general education, special education, assistive technology, and education technology staff prepared to collaborate to ensure that every learner with a disability continues to learn and make progress in the least restrictive environment, regardless of the potential fluidity of where teaching and learning happen?
4. Outcome	How are data being collected to determine if the outcomes for students with IEPs and 504 plans are proportionate to those without?
Four Equity Themes All School Leaders Should Address http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/District_Dossier/2020/08/four_equity_themes_for_school_leaders.html Rubric - https://f.hubspotusercontent40.net/hubfs/1818747/Questions-for-Proactive-and-Equitable-Educational-Implementation.08122020.pdf	

Starting Early: Transition During the Middle School Years

The transition from middle school to high school has been identified as a critical crossroad on the way to high school graduation for both students with and without disabilities. Grossman and Cooney (2009) reviewed literature on the transition from middle school to high school and is summarized as follows:

- Due to the increased size of student population in high school, ninth grade students are
 - more likely to feel disengaged by the larger school campus and buildings;
 - less likely to find a niche for social interaction;
 - less likely to form a bond with their high school teachers; and
 - more likely to feel that their high school teachers are not concerned about how well they do in school.
- Students are moving from the top of the middle school hierarchy to the bottom of the social ladder in high school which causes students to experience problems adjusting.
- Students who drop out of high school typically have a deep decline in their grades during ninth grade that make recovering their graduation pathway very difficult.
- The workload for students in the ninth grade is heavier and more complex while

the pressure to make good grades is more intense.

Easing the transition to high school can be assisted during middle school in the following ways:

- Boost students' confidence in their academic abilities;
- Provide opportunities for students to advance their life skills such as time-management, problem-solving, coping mechanisms, and social skills; and
- Provide information that relieves student anxiety and worry about the transition (Grossman and Cooney, 2009).

Systemically, school districts monitor student data to identify behaviors that might signal a student is at risk. Typically, variables that are monitored include attendance, behavior and course performance. The data is analyzed monthly or quarterly. Frequent monitoring makes it possible to identify students who need assistance more quickly. According to the National High School Center at the American Institutes for Research, middle schools can sharpen their early warning systems by doing the following:

- Monitor students who are participating in interventions to ensure the students' at-risk behaviors are declining;
- Identify student needs that are not being met to ensure that the interventions are being effectively delivered and achieving the anticipated outcomes;
- Identify new interventions to meet students' needs when current interventions are not effective;
- Examine the overall effectiveness of interventions to determine which interventions are most successful;
- Communicate with families about improvements and declines to gain insight about why a particular intervention may or may not be working (Therriault, O'Cummings, Heppen, Yerhot, Scala & Perry, 2013, p. 26).

Because of the need to support the transition experience of middle school students, Project 10, in collaboration with the State Secondary Transition Interagency Committee (SSTIC), designed a new resource to benefit middle school transition planning - *Middle School Transition Trail Map for Families*. This short guide assists families and other transition stakeholders to identify ways to support youth as they transition to and from middle school.

Middle School Transition Trail Map for Families

project10 transition
education network

Trail Marker 1

Preparing for the Journey: Transition Activities from Elementary School to Middle School

This short guide is designed to help families and their students with disabilities from 5th to 9th grade. Middle School (MS) grades differ from school district to school district and the MS experience will differ depending on the types of programming and resources available. For example, school districts may identify MS as 6th-8th, 7th-9th and some may identify 5th grade as a part of MS. Students may also be attending a school with students in grades K through eight (8) or a center school. Students enter MS from elementary school and exit middle school to high school. Middle School is where most students become teenagers.

Meet Ethan, Mia, Zoey and Levi. These students will be our guides on the MS trail and help us to clearly see the challenges and potential solutions they face as they transition through the MS. The students' MS stories will be told throughout the trail map and will be shaded in light blue. Their stories shine light on MS transition planning for your youth.

Ethan (5th grade)



Mia (6th grade)



Zoey (7th grade)



Levi (8th grade)











Benchmarks for Middle School Transition Planning, a collaboration between Project 10 and SSTIC's Family Involvement Subcommittee, is a companion resource to the Middle School Transition Trail Map for Families. It is designed to support families as they support their middle school students by helping them to accomplish benchmarks that are related to the predictors of post-school outcomes. The predictors indicate the evidence-based experiences that help students successfully transition to adult life.

The *Middle School Transition Trail Map for Families*, along with the Supplemental Resources and References for the Middle School Transition Trail Map and the *Benchmarks for Middle School Transition Planning* can be found on [Project 10's Publications page](#).

Benchmarks for Middle School Transition Planning

Families may help their youth with transition by becoming aware of predictors and benchmarks that support movement from middle school to high school and beyond. With awareness, families can seek and provide opportunities to participate in these activities. See the predictors of post-school outcomes legend below, for a list of the predictors, their icons and descriptions. *The Middle School Transition Trail Map*, a guide to help families navigate the transition to and from middle school is a companion resource you may find helpful. It is available at <http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=77#NS138>. For additional information, please connect with your district's exceptional student education (ESE) representative.

(This resource was adapted from the Oklahoma Transition Council resource, *Timeline for Transition Activities* - <http://www.ou.edu/content/education/centers-and-partnerships/arrow/timeline-of-transition-activities.html>.)

Legend – Predictors of Post-School Outcomes (Note: the numbers are correlated with the benchmarks by the icon; the numbers do not reflect level of importance)	
	1. Career Awareness is learning about opportunities, education and skills needed to choose a career that matches one's strengths and interests.
	2. Community Experiences are activities that occur outside of the school, supported with in-class teaching, where students apply academic, social and/or general work behaviors and skills.
	3. Exit Exam Requirements/High School Diploma – Exit Exams are standardized state tests that measure skill levels in content areas, such as Algebra or English that students must pass in order to earn a high school diploma. Diploma status is achieved by completing the requirements of the state awarding the diploma, including the completion of courses needed to fulfill the student's selected graduation pathway, such as the 24-credit, 18-credit and merit or scholar designation.
	4. Goal-Setting – Students who take part in goal-setting are more likely to be found employed after high school. Students who want to attend a college or university are more likely to be engaged in postsecondary education.
	5. Inclusion in General Education requires students with disabilities to have access to general education curriculum and participate in general education classes with peers without disabilities.
	6. Interagency Collaboration is a clear, purposeful and carefully designed process that promotes collaboration across agencies and programs to support outcomes for youth.
	7. Occupational Courses are individual courses that support career awareness, allow students to explore different career pathways and develop job skills through experience and teaching focused on their selected employment goals.
	8. Paid Employment/Work Experiences – Work experiences are activities that place students in a genuine workplace and may include: work sampling, job shadowing, internships, apprenticeships and paid employment. Paid employment can include existing standard jobs in a company/organization or customized work assignments negotiated with the employer, but these activities always feature competitive pay (minimum wage or higher) paid directly to the student by the employer.

Indicator 13 Secondary Transition IEP Compliance Self-Assessment: Sharpening the Focus

Indicator 13 - Training on Secondary Transition IEP Compliance Self-Assessment is a newly developed training by Project 10 to align with the State Performance Plan (SPP) 13 Indicator and the T16 Protocol. The training includes an introduction to new Indicator 13 Checklists that have been developed to assist districts to accurately assess IEP compliance based on each of the standards in the T16 Protocol. The training includes group activities that will give participants an opportunity to use the comprehensive Indicator 13 Checklist, which includes both federal and state requirements, to assess the compliance of a new sample IEP. Reviewing the sample IEP in the context of compliance will help to strengthen transition planning and IEP writing skills.

* Note: As a result of HB 901 a new T16 state compliance standard will be added. This standard will require that the individual educational plan (IEP), beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the student reaches the age of 16, or younger if determined appropriate by the parent and the IEP team, must include the following: A statement of appropriate measureable long-term postsecondary education and career goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment and, if appropriate, independent living skills and the transition services, including pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) and courses of study needed to assist the student in reaching those goals.

** Reminder: Students may begin to receive Pre-ETS as early as age 14.

Contact your Regional Transition Representative (RTR) to schedule a training. RTR contact information can be found [here](#).

**Florida Indicator 13 Checklist C – All Federal and State Requirements
Enhanced with Guiding Questions**

Directions: Complete the checklist and use the assessment measure at the end of the checklist to determine compliance. The federally reported requirements are indicated in blue and state requirements in yellow.

1. Is there evidence that the IEP meeting invitation stated that the specified purpose of the meeting was to consider postsecondary goals and transition services and that the student, as well as any agency representatives identified to provide services would be invited?	Y N
Guiding Questions: If all of the guiding questions below are answered <i>YES</i> or <i>NA</i> , then circle <i>Y</i> for the standard, if one or more questions are answered <i>NO</i> , circle <i>N</i> for the standard.	
A. Does the notice indicate that the purpose of the meeting will be consideration of postsecondary goals and transition services?	Y N
B. Does the notice indicate the student will be invited?	Y N
C. Does the notice indicate that a representative from an agency likely to supply transition services will be invited, with the prior consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority? (If the presence of an agency representative was not necessary at this time OR if the parent or student who has reached the age of majority refused to provide consent, select <i>NA</i> .)	Y N NA
2. Was the student invited to attend the IEP team meeting?	Y N
Guiding Questions: If the guiding question below is answered <i>YES</i> , then circle <i>Y</i> for the standard, answered <i>NO</i> , circle <i>N</i> for the standard.	
A. For the current year, is there documented evidence in the IEP that the student was invited to attend the IEP team meeting?	Y N

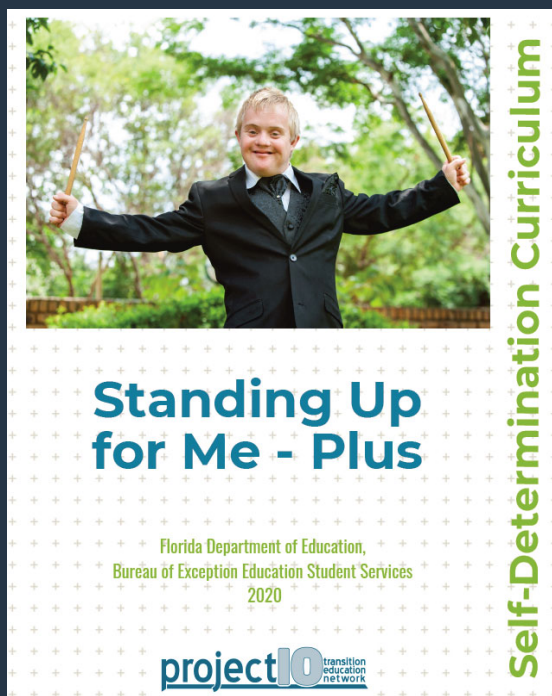
The New Standing Up for Me - Plus: High School Curriculum Available in Draft Form

Standing Up for Me - Plus (SUFM+) is a newly revised version of the original SUFM self-determination curriculum. Currently, the high school section is completed in draft form and is available for district use in the 2020-21 school year. The middle school version is currently in development and the elementary section will be updated in the future as well. The high school curriculum consists of three units, including the following:

- Understanding Me
- Understanding My Individual Educational Plan (IEP)
- Understanding How to Participate In and Lead My IEP

The curriculum includes step-by-step lesson plans, links to videos for use in lessons, student activities for each lesson and directions for making a student portfolio that can be used as resource for students during IEP team meetings and as an assessment tool for teachers.

All those who receive training on the SUFM+ high school curriculum during the 2020-21 school year will have an opportunity to give personal input about the curriculum through a survey that will be sent at the end of the school year.



New Opportunity: Florida College and Career Transition Clubs

The Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities at the University of Central Florida (FCSUA) invites local public and private schools (operating pursuant to s. 1002.42) serving students in grades 9 - 12 to apply for resources to establish a Florida College and Career Transition Club (CCT Club).

The purpose of the CCT Clubs is to increase awareness of Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program (FPCTP) opportunities and help students with intellectual disabilities prepare for and access those opportunities across Florida. CCT Clubs will be inclusive, with membership adequately representing these three groups:

- (1) students with intellectual disabilities,
- (2) students with disabilities other than intellectual disabilities, and
- (3) students without disabilities.

Club advisors will support students to learn and explore career pathways and postsecondary education options. Students will work together to identify and explore college and career opportunities, engage in mentoring, and participate in events and activities within the school, community and at local IHEs to build college and career transition plans.

FCSUA will provide funds to cover a CCT Club sponsor stipend and club activities. The deadline for New and Renewal applications is September 30, 2020.

Please visit the FCSUA website for additional information and for instructions and application packets (pdf) at https://fcsua.org/K_clubs.php.





FCSUA

**TEACHERS,
YOU ARE
MAKING A
DIFFERENCE!**

Thank you
for sponsoring
Florida
College and Career
Transition Clubs!

Resources

[8 Strategies to Improve Participation in Your Virtual Classroom](#)

Edutopia

[How to Boost Students' Sense of Optimism](#)

Edutopia

[Indicator 13 - Training on Transition IEP Compliance Self-Assessment](#)

Project 10: Transition Education Network. Schedule a training with your Regional Transition Representative (RTR).

[Making the Move from Elementary to Middle or Junior High School: Transition Tips for Parents of Students with Disabilities](#)

PACER's National Parent Center on Transition and Employment

[The Middle School Transition Trail Map for Families, along with the Supplemental Resources and References for the Middle School Transition Trail Map and the Benchmarks for Middle School Transition Planning](#)

Project 10: Transition Education Network

[Standing Up for Me Plus \(SUFM+\)](#)

Project 10: Transition Education Network. Schedule a training with your Regional Transition Representative (RTR).

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Grossman, J. B. & Cooney, S. M. (2009). *Paving the way for success in high school and beyond: The importance of preparing middle school students for the transition to ninth grade*. Public/Private Ventures. <https://www.issueab.org/resource/paving-the-way-for-success-in-high-school-and-beyond-the-importance-of-preparing-middle-school-students-for-the-transition-to-ninth-grade.html>

Samuels, C. (2020, August 21). *Four equity themes all school leaders should address*. Education Week. http://blogs.edweek.org/edweek/District_Dossier/2020/08/four_equity_themes_for_school_leaders.html

Therriault, S. B., O'Cummings, M., Heppen, J., Yerhot, L., Scala, J., & Perry, M. (2013). *Middle grades early warning Intervention monitoring system implementation guide*. National High School Center at the American Institutes for Research. <https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/Middle-Grades-Early-Warning-Intervention-Implementation-Guide-February-2013.pdf>

Upcoming Events

Save The Date: Educational Strategies & Student Engagement Institute (ESSEI)

The 2020 Educational Strategies & Student Engagement Institute (ESSEI) unites professionals from school districts, agencies and other sectors of the community to build knowledge and enhance skills on educational strategies proven to promote student achievement and college and career readiness. Attendees learn, share, network and identify tools to help counter and prevent academic struggles, school disengagement and dropout.

Participate monthly, September through December 2020.

For more information click [here](#).



Upcoming Webinars

Florida Center for Inclusive Communities (FCIC) 2020 Employment Series: Successful Transition from School to Employment

Date/Time: September 16, 2020 5:00 PM

Click [here](#) to register.



Resolving Disagreements Through the Special Education Process

Parents will learn options in resolving disagreements within the special education process along with communication strategies and problem-solving tips.

Date/Time: September 21, 2020 1:00 PM

Click [here](#) to register.

Assistive Technology to Increase Independence for Young Adults with Disabilities

This workshop will explore tools for independence, including devices and apps for time

management, tasks, medications, money, meals, transportation, and communication. Features that support those with vision loss will also be addressed.

Date/Time: September 30, 2020 2:00 PM

Click [here](#) to register.

How Parents Can Effectively Communicate with the IEP Team

Parents will learn to advocate for their child in the special education process and receive tips and tools to become a more effective communicator on their child's IEP team.

Date/Time: October 6, 2020 2:00 PM

Click [here](#) to register.

Using the Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program Planning Tool

Whether you are planning an inclusive Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program that serves students with intellectual disabilities or just seeking to improve your services, this web-based planning system applies a framework for using data to reflect on current practice and outcomes, identify strengths and needs, and subsequently develop a plan to address needs and evaluate intended results.

Date/Time: October 6, 2020 3:00 PM

Click [here](#) to register.

Telehealth: Prepare for Success

Learn how to navigate interactive, virtual doctor visits at this free workshop. Understand the importance of the "3 P's" of Telehealth visits to ensure optimum patient/family and physician communication, effectively address needs, and experience better health outcomes.

Date/Time: October 8, 2020 7:30 PM

Click [here](#) to register.



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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