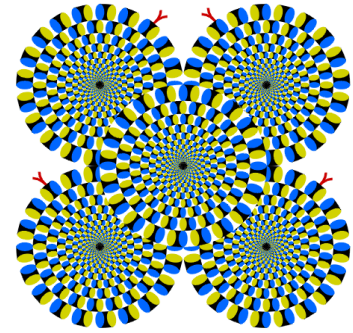


project10 transition
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Transition Wheel



Topic: Indicator 13 – Writing Postsecondary Goals

Description/Relevance

Postsecondary goals for education and training, employment, and, if applicable, independent living, are the cornerstone of the individual educational plan (IEP) for students 16 and older. Postsecondary goals must be specific, measurable, reviewed annually, updated as required, and based on information from age-appropriate transition assessments. As Yogi Berra once said, “If you don’t know where you’re going, you’ll wind up somewhere else.”

Writing postsecondary goals can be challenging. Students may have difficulty envisioning life after high school; identifying their strengths, needs, and interests; or translating their interests or expectations into goals that are specific and measurable. Teachers, transition staff, and IEP teams will need to respect the hopes, aspirations, and dreams of students and families and ensure that postsecondary goals are reasonable and achievable.

History/Legal Basis

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires each state to submit a State Performance Plan (SPP) detailing how it plans to meet the requirements of Part B, the education of children with disabilities ages 3 through 21. The SPP is updated annually via the Annual Performance Report (APR) that describes progress or slippage in meeting the rigorous targets established in the SPP, revisions to state targets, improvement activities, timelines, resources, and justifications for any revisions. Performance and compliance targets in the SPP and APR are established for 20 indicators, of which four (1, 2, 13, and 14) focus on secondary transition.

As defined in the regulations for the IDEA, Indicator 13 measures the

...percent of youth with IEPs [Individual Educational Plans] aged 16 and above with an IEP that includes appropriate measurable postsecondary goals that are annually updated and based upon an age appropriate transition assessment, transition services, including courses of study, that will reasonably enable the student to meet those postsecondary goals, and annual IEP goals related to the student’s transition services needs. There also must be evidence that the student was invited to the IEP Team meeting where transition

services are to be discussed and evidence that, if appropriate, a representative of any participating agency was invited to the IEP Team meeting with the prior consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority (20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B)).

According to the *Florida ESE Compliance Manual* (2012, p. 50), student input as well as his or her strengths, preferences, and interests must be considered when developing measurable postsecondary goals. Documentation of IEP meetings, student or family conferences, interest inventories, career exploration activities, vocational interest and aptitude inventories, situational assessments, and input from other personnel associated with the student is required as appropriate.

The Compliance Manual also states that

“...the areas of training and education can reasonably be interpreted as overlapping in certain instances. In determining whether postsecondary goals in the areas of training and education overlap, the IEP Team must consider the unique needs of each individual student with a disability, in light of his or her plans after leaving high school. **If the IEP Team determines that separate postsecondary goals in the areas of training and education would not result in the need for distinct skills for the student after leaving high school, the IEP Team can combine the training and education goals...** However, **the guidance...is not intended to prohibit the IEP Team from developing separate postsecondary goals in the areas related to training and education in a student’s IEP, if deemed appropriate by the IEP Team,** in light of the student’s postsecondary plans. On the other hand, because employment is a distinct activity from the areas related to training and education, **each student’s IEP must include a separate postsecondary goal in the area of employment. A student’s IEP must include a separate postsecondary goal in the area of independent living skills, where appropriate**” (2012, p. 53).

Florida Guidance on Writing Postsecondary Goals

Under federal and Florida law, IEPs for students 16 and older must include appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to education, training, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills (34 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] §300.320(b)(1); Rule 6A-6.03028(3)(h)10a, Florida Administrative Code [F.A.C.]

The time to start developing postsecondary goals related to the postschool areas of education and training, employment, and, as needed, independent living skills, is *before* the student’s 16th birthday.

Adult education programs include Adult Basic Education, Adult High School, English for Speakers of Other Languages, General Educational Development (GED) test preparation, Applied Academics for Adult Education (formerly Vocational Preparatory Instruction), and Adult General Education for Adults with Disabilities.

Colleges and universities provide higher education programs that offer programs leading to undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. The Florida College System (also known as Florida colleges) includes 28 public colleges and community colleges. The State University System consists of 11 public universities located throughout the state.

Workforce education may consist of a continuing workforce education course or a program of study leading to an occupational completion point in a career and technical postsecondary center and a career certificate or an applied technology diploma (ATD), or enrollment in a community college leading to a certificate or two-year degree—an associate of applied science (A.A.S.) degree or associate of science (A.S.) degree.

Training is defined as participation in an employment-training program, such as those offered through the Workforce Investment Act, Job Corps, and AmeriCorps; or individualized (one-on-one) training provided by the employer, an agency, or service provider.

Employment is defined as “competitive” if the job is performed on a full- or part-time basis in an integrated setting and the employee is compensated at or above the minimum wage. Supported employment is competitive work that takes place in integrated work settings for individuals with the most significant disabilities for whom competitive employment has not traditionally occurred, or for whom competitive employment has been interrupted or intermittent as a result of a significant disability. Supported employment incorporates ongoing supports and assistance based on the individual’s needs. Wages for persons in both integrated and supported employment must be in accordance with the minimum rates of the Fair Labor Standards Act (<http://www.dol.gov/whd/flsa/index.htm>).

Independent living includes life skills in the following domains: leisure/recreation, maintenance of home and personal care, and community participation. Independent living refers to residential services, such as supported living, group homes, foster homes, adult congregate living facilities, in-home supports, and respite care. It also refers to managing activities of daily living. Community participation refers to recreation and leisure activities in the community as well as participation in civic organizations, volunteer work, and religious groups.

Writing Quality Measurable Postsecondary Goals

Measurable postsecondary goals articulate what the student plans to achieve after high school and are based on data gathered over time from age-appropriate transition assessments that reflect the student’s needs, strengths, preferences, and interests. The assessment data may be described in the student’s present level statements in the IEP.

The postsecondary goal must be stated in measurable terms so it can be counted or observed directly. The result must be intended to occur after the student graduates from high school. A measurable postsecondary goal contains three components:

- Target date or timeline (e.g., within six months following graduation from high school)
- Behavior (e.g., the student will obtain employment in a part-time job)

- Conditions, if appropriate (e.g., with the assistance of Vocational Rehabilitation)

Postsecondary goals should reflect a result or an outcome, not an activity. The goal must be intended to occur after the student graduates from high school. For example, the goal should state that the student will obtain an associate of arts degree, not apply for college.

Goals should include a specific time frame so that it is clear when the outcome is expected to occur. The goals should include a target, such as within six months following graduation or by August 2015.

Postsecondary goals must be reviewed annually to ensure that they continue to be appropriate and accurate. The goals need not be revised. The student's progress on annual goals and transition services will provide data the team can use to determine if postsecondary goals should be revised. Postsecondary goals address Education, Training, Employment, and, as appropriate, Independent Living (FDOE, 2011b).

Source: Beech, M. (2012). *Developing quality Individual Educational Plans: A guide for instructional personnel and families*. (3rd edition.) Tallahassee, FL: Florida Department of Education, Division of Public Schools, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, pages 59–61. Available at <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/pdf/QualityIEPs.pdf>.

Additional Examples of Measurable Postsecondary Goals

Education and Training Goals

Some education goals are straightforward. For example, LaToya plans to attend the 12-week Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program at the local community college. If she graduates from high school in June 2014, an acceptable education goal would be:

- In August 2014, LaToya will enroll in the Certified Nursing Assistant program at Excelsior Community College.

Kim wants to participate in STING RAY (Students Transitioning Into the Next Generation Recognizing Achievement for Youth) a Transition Program for Students with Intellectual Disabilities (TPSID) at the University of South Florida–St. Petersburg (USFSP). Kim has participated in STING RAY while being served under Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and has not completed the program yet. As STING RAY also serves students after FAPE, if Kim graduates in June 2014 with a Special Diploma, an acceptable education goal would be:

- In September 2014, Kim will enroll as an adult in the STING RAY program at USFSP.

John graduated with a Special Diploma at age 22 in 2012 and is continuing in a career and technical school for training in welding. As John has exited the public school system and is no longer eligible for FAPE, an acceptable education goal would be:

- By June 2014, John will complete the career and technical program in welding at Acme Career and Technical Institute.

Alexa will exit the public school system in May 2014 and plans to go directly to work for a bakery. An acceptable education goal would be:

- Beginning in June 2014, Alexa will participate in all training programs offered by her employer related to food handling, safety, cake decorating, and other related skills.

Manuel will exit the public school system in June 2014 and will go to work for his uncle's company, Custom Carpentry, Inc. His uncle registers all new hires in an apprenticeship program recognized by the Department of Labor. An acceptable education goal would be:

- In September 2014, Manuel will enroll in carpentry apprenticeship classes operated by the local builders and contractors association.

Employment Goals

An acceptable employment goal for Latoya, who expects to complete the 12-week CNA program at Excelsior Community College at the end of October 2014, would be:

- No later than December 2014, LaToya will be employed full-time at a local nursing home or hospital.

Kim, the student participating in STING RAY program, wants to work with children and babies, so an acceptable employment goal for her would be:

- No later than September 2015, Kim will be employed as an aide with a local child care provider.

An acceptable employment goal for John, the future welder, will depend on when he becomes employed. If he becomes employed *before* he exits the school system and FAPE, an acceptable employment goal would be:

- Upon exiting ABC High School, John will continue his employment with Acme Welding.

If John is not employed when he exits the public school system and is no longer eligible for FAPE, an acceptable employment goal would be:

- John will be employed by a welding company within six weeks of completing the basic welding program at Acme Career and Technical Institute.

An acceptable employment goal for Alexa, who plans to go to work for a bakery immediately after graduating in May 2014 would be:

- Alexa will be employed at a bakery no later than June 2014.

An acceptable employment goal for Manuel, who will go to work for his uncle's contracting firm upon graduation, would be:

- In July 2014, Manuel will begin working as a carpentry apprentice for Custom Carpentry, Inc.

Independent Living Goals

Postsecondary goals for independent living are not appropriate for all students. When the students in the previous examples consulted with their families, teachers, school transition staff, and IEP teams, all agreed that an independent living goal was not appropriate—except for Kim.

An acceptable independent living goal for Kim would be:

- After successfully completing the components of the STING RAY curriculum for independent living, Kim will transition into an apartment with a roommate in September 2015.

Additional examples of independent living goals are including in the following section.

Students with Significant Disabilities

Section 7(21)(A) of The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended defines an “individual with a significant disability” as an individual “who has a severe physical or mental impairment which seriously limits one or more functional capacities (such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, interpersonal skills, work tolerance, or work skills) in terms of an employment outcome;” and/or “who has one or more physical or mental disabilities resulting from amputation, arthritis, autism, blindness, burn injury, cancer, cerebral palsy, cystic fibrosis, deafness, head injury, heart disease, hemiplegia, hemophilia, respiratory or pulmonary dysfunction, mental retardation, mental illness, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, musculo-skeletal disorders, neurological disorders (including stroke and epilepsy), paraplegia, quadriplegia, and other spinal cord conditions, sickle cell anemia, specific learning disability, end-stage renal disease, or another disability or combination of disabilities determined on the basis of an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of paragraph (2) to cause comparable substantial functional limitation.”

A comprehensive transition assessment process for determining strengths, preferences, and interests is especially important when writing postsecondary goals for students with significant disabilities. The student and IEP team may identify assessments in the educational, vocational, psychological, and medical domains that may include teacher and family observations, independent living assessments, situational work assessments, behavioral testing, person-centered planning approaches, the Discovery process, and others.

Examples of Postsecondary Goals for Students with Significant Disabilities

Quinton has a full-time aide at school, uses a motorized wheelchair as well as a variety of assistive technology devices for studying and communicating, and plans to graduate with a regular high school diploma in June 2015. He is on the waiting list for an accessible apartment. Acceptable education, employment, and independent living goals for Quinton would be:

- In September 2015, Quinton will enroll in the audio-recording program at the local community college.
- No later than May 2016, Quinton will move into paid supported employment.
- No later than August 2015, Quinton will hire a personal assistant and will transition to public transportation.
- No later than July 2016, Quinton will move into a fully accessible apartment with one or more roommates.

Maxine loves to bake cookies and cupcakes and plans to graduate with a special diploma in June 2014 after having participated in a number of courses related to self-employment. Acceptable education, employment, and independent living goals for Maxine would be:

- In August 2014, Maxine will begin auditing the baking program at the local Career and Technical Center.
- By March 2015, with the assistance of her parents, Maxine will open a small home business making cookies and cupcakes.
- Upon receiving her special diploma, Maxine will live at home with her parents and will actively participate in decisions related to her home business, personal finances, living arrangements, health care, and recreational interests.

Note that 1) not all students with significant disabilities have intellectual disabilities, and 2) students may have more than one independent living goal based on their needs and circumstances.

Final Thoughts

- The student's postsecondary goals form the core of secondary and postsecondary planning.
- Postsecondary goals should be specific, measurable, reviewed and/or updated annually, and carefully documented.
- Postsecondary goals should be based on multiple sources of information, including transition assessment results and input from the student, family members, teachers, transition staff, IEP team members, employers, and others who know the student well.
- Postsecondary goals may change over time as the student matures and his or her life experiences expand.

Resources

Indicator 13 Postsecondary Goals – Strategies and Resources

<http://www.project10.info/DetailPage.php?MainPageID=211&PageCategory=State%20Performance%20Plan&PageSubCategory=None>

This page of the Project 10 website contains the definition of Indicator 13, strategies for improvement, national and state resources, and professional development options.

Making the Move to Managing Your Own Personal Assistance Services (PAS)

<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/sites/default/files/pas-toolkit-052610-print-final.pdf>

This publication from the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth describes the difference between personal assistants and job-related assistants; writing a description for a PA; and locating, hiring, and managing a PA. (This large file may take a few minutes to download.)

National Secondary Transition and Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC)

<http://www.nsttac.org>

NSTTAC is the national technical assistance and dissemination center for evidence-based practices, policies, and procedures related to Indicator 13 and writing postsecondary goals.

Exceptional Student Education Compliance Manual (2012–2013)

<http://www.fldoe.org/ese/pdf/m-compli.pdf>

This manual describes monitoring procedures and protocols for conducting required compliance reviews for the Florida Part B State Performance Plan, including optional protocols for districts to use for internal quality assurance activities or professional development. The appendix contains self-assessment protocols for transition indicators 1 (graduation with a standard diploma), 2 (dropout rate for students with disabilities), and 13 (measurable postsecondary goals and transition services). (This large file may take a few minutes to download.)

Developing Quality Individual Educational Plans: A Guide for Instructional Personnel and Families, 3rd edition (2012)

<http://www.fldoe.org/ese/pdf/QualityIEPs.pdf>

This guide supports the development of IEPs that 1) provide clear statements of expected outcomes and special education services and supports to be provided to the student, 2) are in compliance with state and federal law, and 3) reflect the meaningful input of all members of the IEP team.

References

Beech, M. (2012). *Developing quality Individual Educational Plans: A guide for instructional personnel and families*. (3rd ed.) Tallahassee, FL: Florida Department of Education, Division of Public Schools, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services. Available at <http://www.fldoe.org/ese/pdf/QualityIEPs.pdf>

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