



The Future Starts Now: Preparing for Secondary Transition in Middle School

This training was developed by the Project 10 Transition Education Network, a discretionary project funded by the Florida Department of Education, Division of Public Schools, Bureau of Exceptional Student Education (BEE), through federal assistance under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Part B.

Objectives

After this training, participants will be able to:

- Identify resources related to secondary transition
- Understand the components of the Transition Individual Educational Plan (TIEP)
- Describe activities and strategies to help support students as they enter and attend and exit middle school.
- Envision middle school as a launching point for secondary transition – preparing students for adult life.



Middle School Resources

There are many resources related to Secondary Transition. Today's presentation will focus on a few resources which focus on Middle School Transition:

- Project 10 Publications webpage: <http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=77#NS138>
 - *Middle School Transition Trail Map for Families*
 - *Resources and References for the Middle School Transition Trail Map for Families*
 - *Benchmarks for Middle School Transition Planning*

- Project 10, and other discretionary projects, are available to provide training and support to school districts and stakeholders, including parents/families: <http://www.fl DOE.org/core/fileparse.php/7567/urlt/IDEADisGrantProDesc.pdf>



Transition from Elementary to Middle School

- The shift from elementary to middle school is a critical transition for students.
- Most students will have to learn how to navigate a larger campus and will change classrooms for each period.
- Elementary and middle schools will work together to share information with students and families. Often a representative from the middle school will attend the student's final IEP meeting at his/her elementary school.
- Students and families also have responsibilities to help ensure a successful transition to middle school.



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Supporting Elementary to Middle School Student and Family Transition Activities

The following are activities practices recommended for students and their families to support a successful elementary to middle school transition:

- Participate in the final IEP meeting for 5th grade.
- Visit the new middle/junior high school on 6th Grade Transition Night; or ask if a separate visit can be scheduled.
- Become familiar with the website of the new middle/junior high school.
- Participate in the first IEP meeting for 6th grade.
- Express any concerns/questions regarding the transition to middle school.

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Middle School Course Requirements

- Three middle school or higher* courses in English language arts
- Three middle school or higher* courses in mathematics
- Three middle school or higher* courses in science
- Three middle school or higher* courses in social studies. One of the social studies courses must be Civics, which has a required End-of-Course [EOC] exam. The IEP team may consider waiving the results of the EOC if it cannot accurately measure the student's abilities.

***May include High School courses for credit- the Trail Map includes a discussion of Pros & Cons**

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Middle School Course Requirements

- Physical education is required one semester each year for students in grades 6-8 (requirement may be waived).
- One course in Career and Education Planning that results in an academic and career plan (to be completed in 6th, 7th or 8th grade) Section 1003.4156, Florida Statutes (FS).

More information regarding the Career and Education Planning course requirement may be found on the Florida Department of Education's (FDOE) website:

<https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7531/urllt/approved-courses.pdf>.

FDOE's College and Career Planning web page:
<https://www.fldoe.org/academics/college-career-planning/>



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Consider High School Programs when Planning Middle School Courses

Many school districts offer specific high school programs such as career academies and magnet programs. The following are some considerations to keep in mind:

- Some specific programs have an application process and deadlines (as early as January).
- Some programs may be competitive and have eligibility requirements, and/or require auditions or submission of a portfolio.
- Middle School IEP teams should take into consideration the student's educational and career goals when discussing options for high school and plan accordingly.

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Middle School Transition Fundamentals

Individual Educational Plan (IEP)

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Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) and Transition IEPs (TIEPs)

- IEPs are guiding documents for academic planning that support students with disabilities throughout the K-12 educational system.
- Each student's IEP is unique and is based on the student's individual needs. Exceptional Student Education (ESE) services and supports are identified to assist students with disabilities to be successful in school.
- IEPs are developed as a team, including the student and parents, school district representatives, other service providers and individuals who know the student well.
- During the student's 7th grade year or when the student attains the age of 12, whichever occurs first, new transition-related requirements are added to the IEP.



Transition IEP Components: Beginning At Age 12 or During 7th Grade (whichever occurs first)

- Parent notification that the purpose of the meeting will include **identifying** needed transition services.
- The student must be invited to the IEP meeting.
- Age-appropriate transition assessments indicating the student's strengths, preferences and interests are documented.
- **Discuss** measurable postsecondary goals based on age-appropriate transition assessment in the following areas:
 - Education and/or training
 - Employment/Career
 - Independent Living (when appropriate)



Transition IEP Components: Beginning At Age 12 or During 7th Grade (whichever occurs first)

- **Discuss** the graduation pathways and the diploma designations.
- Begin identifying transition services needs of students.
- Document the need for self-determination and self-advocacy instruction.



The Transition Services Checklist is a helpful resource:
<http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=77#NS138>



Beginning during the student's seventh grade year or when the student reaches the age of 12, whichever occurs first

- Information and referral forms, links, and contacts, must be provided to the students and families at IEP meetings regarding:
 - The school district's high school-level transition services, career and technical education, and collegiate programs available to students with disabilities and how to access these programs.
 - School-based transition programs
 - Information regarding programs and services available through:

Florida's Center for Students with Unique Abilities (FCSUA)	Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR/VR)	Division of Blind Services (DBS)
Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD)		Florida Centers for Independent Living (CILS)

- There are a variety of ways to fulfill this requirement.
- Individualize to meet the student/family need.

Transition IEP Components: Beginning at Age 14 or to be in Place and Operational on the First Day of High School

- Beginning no later than the first IEP to be in effect on the first day the student enters high school, attains the age of 14, or when determined appropriate by the parent and IEP team, whichever occurs first, **the IEP must include** the following and must be updated annually:
 - A statement of intent to pursue a standard high school diploma and pursue a scholar and/or merit diploma designation.



Transition IEP Components: Beginning at Age 14 or to be in Place and Operational on the First Day of High School

Continued –

- A statement must document discussion of the process for a student to defer.
- A statement of intent to receive a standard high school diploma before the student attains the age of 22 and a description of how the student will fully meet the requirements.
- The IEP must also specify the outcomes and additional benefits expected by the parent and the IEP team at the time of the student's graduation.



Transition IEP Components: Beginning at Age 14 or to be in Place and Operational on the First Day of High School

- A statement of appropriate measurable long-term postsecondary education and career goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to:
 - Training/Education
 - Employment
 - Career
 - Independent living skills (if appropriate)
- Transition services, including pre-employment transition services and courses of study needed to assist the student in reaching his/her postsecondary goals.
- Representatives of any agency likely to provide or pay for transition services **must be invited to the IEP meeting with prior written consent.**



Transition Components in the IEP

- For the IEP in effect at the beginning of the school year the student is expected to graduate, the statement must include a signed statement by the parent, guardian, or the student, if the student has reached the age of majority and rights have transferred to the student, indicating:
 - The process for deferment is understood.
 - Whether the student will defer the receipt of his/her standard high school diploma.



Middle School Transition Fundamentals

Accommodations and Modifications



Accommodations and Modifications

Accommodations

- Accommodations are made to the **WAY** students learn and **HOW** they are tested.
- Examples:
 - Provide a graphic organizer
 - Provide visual representations of mathematical processes
 - Text-to-speech software

Modifications

- Modifications are made to **WHAT** students are expected to learn.
- Process to determine modifications:
 - Check the student's IEP to see if the student has a significant cognitive disability and is working on access points. If so, the access point standards will guide modifications.
 - If the student is not working on access points, teachers will engage in systematic problem solving with the team to intensify the instruction or intervention to meet the student's needs.

Accommodations: Assisting Students with Disabilities
<http://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7690/url0/0070069-accomm-educator.pdf>



Accommodations - Considerations

- Students' needs may change from the elementary school to the middle school environment; however, middle school personnel will ensure accommodations that were provided in elementary school will be considered as the student transitions to middle school.
- Students may need to practice self-determination and self-advocacy skills to ensure that their accommodations are in place/implemented. The practice of self-determination is helpful after exiting the K-12 system and throughout life.
- Parents will also need to be aware of the accommodations that are being provided to their youth in order to consult with school personnel if needed.



Modifications through Access Points



- What are access points?
 - Access points are academic expectations written specifically for students with significant cognitive disabilities.
 - As part of the Florida Standards, access points reflect the essence or core intent of the standards that apply to all students in the same grade, but at reduced levels of complexity.
 - All students should be academically challenged and taught to high standards.



Accommodations and Modifications - Resources

- Access Project: Providing Resources that Facilitate the Teaching & Learning of Access Points
<https://www.accessstofls.org/>
- Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology (FAAST)
[https://nrd.gov/resource/detail/12738305/Florida+Alliance+for+Assistive+Services+&+Technology+\(FAAST\)](https://nrd.gov/resource/detail/12738305/Florida+Alliance+for+Assistive+Services+&+Technology+(FAAST))
- Florida Diagnostic & Learning Resources System (FDLRS) Technology
<https://www.fdlrs.org/>
- Technology Learning Connection (TLC) Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS)
<https://www.tlc-mtss.com/>



Middle School Transition Fundamentals

Self-Determination Skills



Self-Determination Skills



Self-determination skills are also critical for transition, and it is never too early to start. Self-determination can be described as:

- Knowing and believing in yourself.
- Knowing what you want your future to be and how to make plans to achieve this future.
- Knowing what supports you need to take control of your life.

(How Self-Determined Are You?, 2016, p.1)



Core Components of Self-Determination



(Virginia Department of Education, 2016)

Florida Requirement to Consider Need for Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy Instruction Earlier

- To ensure quality planning for a successful transition of a student with a disability to postsecondary education and career opportunities, an IEP team shall begin the process of, and develop an IEP for, identifying the need for transition services during the student's 7th grade year, or when the student attains the age of 12, for his or her postsecondary goals and career goals to be identified and in place when he or she attains the age of 14 or in place and operational on the first day of high school, whichever occurs first.
- Consideration of the student's need for instruction in the area of self-determination and self-advocacy to assist the student's active and effective participation in an IEP meeting.
(S. 1003.5716 (1)(a), F.S.)

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Building Self-Determination Skills at School

It is critical for students to build and exercise self-determination in the school setting.

Teach self-determination and self-advocacy in the context of:

- Encouraging students to describe their academic needs and request accommodations.
- Expressing preferences for the future in regard to education, employment and independent living.
- Setting short-term and long-term goals.
- Choosing extra-curricular activities.



Building Self-Determination Skills at Home

There are activities that families can do outside of the school to help youth to increase their self-determination skills, such as:

- ❑ Create a variety of opportunities that encourage students to discover likes and dislikes, and strengths and challenges.
- ❑ Provide opportunities to make choices (e.g. clothing, hair style, music, recreation, etc.).
- ❑ Model and describe the self-determination skills that you use regularly.
- ❑ Teach goal setting.
- ❑ Encourage and support the student to practice respectfully speaking up for his/her point of view at home.



Self-Determination Resources

- ❑ Center for Self-Determination
<http://www.self-determination.com/>
- ❑ Chart Your Own Future: How Your IEP Can Help
<http://www.pacer.org/parent/php/PHP-c.113.pdf>
- ❑ I'm Determined
<http://www.imdetermined.org/>
- ❑ Project 10 Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy Guide
http://project10.info/Documents/SD-SA_Guide_Final_for_Printing.pdf
- ❑ Project 10, Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy Web page
<http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=185>
- ❑ Zarrow Center for Learning Enrichment
<https://www.ou.edu/education/centers-and-partnerships/zarrow>



Middle School Transition Fundamentals

Supporting Student Success



The A-B-C's Supporting Student Success

Schools monitor student data to identify when students may need intervention/support. The main data areas are sometimes referred to as the "A-B-C's", which represent:

- ☐ Attendance - tardies, skipped classes, missed school days, etc.
- ☐ Behavior - some behaviors may result in disciplinary actions, such as detentions, in-school or out-of-school suspensions, etc.
- ☐ Course Performance - includes the students' course grades and results of statewide testing.

Families can have a HUGE impact on all three of these areas!



Executive Functioning Skills

Executive Functioning (EF) includes an important set of skills which help support student success (for all students), including setting and achieving goals. Below are some examples of executive functioning skills:

- ☐ Following schedules and time management
- ☐ Appropriate behavior in the classroom and community settings
- ☐ Planning for homework and short/long-term project completion
- ☐ Organizing tasks and remembering details (including what items to bring)

Check out the **Executive Functioning App Matrix**:
<http://online.anyflip.com/xbjb/eppj/mobile/index.html#p=3>



Middle School Transition Fundamentals

High School Preparation & Career and Education Planning



High School Graduation Options

Standard Graduation Pathways

- ❑ 24-credit, 2.0 GPA required for graduation
 - Standard (available to all students)
 - Standard via Access Courses
 - Standard via Employment and Academic-Based Courses
 - See the Graduation Pathways Chart at <http://project10.info/IDPage.php?ID=77>
- ❑ 18-credit, Academically Challenging Curriculum to Enhance Learning (ACCEL)
- ❑ Career and Technical Education (CTE) Graduation Pathway
- ❑ International program options
 - International Baccalaureate (IB)
 - Advanced International Certificate of Education (AICE)



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Scholar and Merit Diploma Designations

Scholar Diploma Designation

- In addition to meeting the 24-credit standard high school diploma requirements, a student must
- Earn 1 credit in Algebra II (must pass EOC);
 - Pass the Geometry EOC;
 - Earn 1 credit in statistics or an equally rigorous mathematics course;
 - Pass the Biology I EOC;
 - Earn 1 credit in chemistry or physics;
 - Earn 1 credit in a course equally rigorous to chemistry or physics;
 - Pass the U.S. History EOC;
 - Earn 2 credits in the same world language; and
 - Earn at least 1 credit in AP, IB, AICE or a dual enrollment course.

A student is exempt from the Biology I or U.S. History assessment if the student is enrolled in an AP, IB or AICE Biology I or U.S. History course and the student

- Takes the respective AP, IB or AICE assessment; and
- Earns the minimum score to earn college credit.

Merit Diploma Designation

- Meet the standard high school diploma requirements
- Attain one or more industry specifications from the list established (per section 1003.492, Florida Statutes).

Academic Advisement Flyer—What Students and Parents Need to Know
<https://www.fldoe.org/core/fileparse.php/7764/urlt/StandardDiplomaRequirements.pdf>



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Deferment Information

A student with a disability may only defer receipt of a standard diploma if:

- ❑ IEP team prescribes transition planning, transition services or related services through age 21 and
- ❑ Student will be enrolled in one of the following:
 - Accelerated College Credit instruction
 - Industry Certification—college credit
 - Early College Programs (Senate Bill 52)
 - Courses for scholar designation
 - Structured work-study, internship, or pre-apprenticeship program

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Deferment of the Standard Diploma

Section 1003.5716, Florida Statutes

- At age 14 or the first IEP to be operational and in effect when the student enters high school:
 - The statement must document a discussion of the deferral process to ensure the family and the student understand the process.
- For the IEP in effect at the beginning of the school year the student is expected to graduate:
 - There must be a signed statement by the parents or the student who is 18 and has received the transfer of rights. This statement will state the following:
 - The deferral process has been understood.
 - Whether the student chooses to defer the receipt of his/her standard diploma.

Rule 6A-1.09963, F.A.C.

- The IEP team must review the benefits of deferring the standard high school diploma, including continuation of educational and related services, and describe to the parent and the student all services and program options available to students who defer. This discussion must be included in the IEP.
- School districts must inform the parent and the student the year in which the student is expected to meet graduation requirements, that failure to defer receipt of a standard high school diploma after all requirements are met releases the school district from the obligation to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE). This communication must state that the deadline for acceptance or deferral of the diploma is May 15 of the year in which the student is expected to meet graduation requirements, and that failure to attend a graduation ceremony does not constitute a deferral.

The Deferral Timeline and Florida Legislation

Beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the student enters high school, attains the age of 14, or when determined appropriate by the parent and IEP team, whichever occurs first.

Section 1003.5716, F.S.

- A statement must document discussion of the process for a student with a disability who meets the requirements for a standard high school diploma to defer the receipt of such diploma pursuant to s. 1003.4282(9)(c).

Section 1003.5716, F.S. & Rule 6A-1.09963, F.A.C.

For the IEP in effect prior to the beginning of the school year the student is expected to meet graduation requirements

- There must be a signed statement by the parents or the student who is 18 and has received the transfer of rights. This statement will include the following:
 - The deferral process has been understood.
 - Whether the student chooses to defer the receipt of his/her standard diploma.

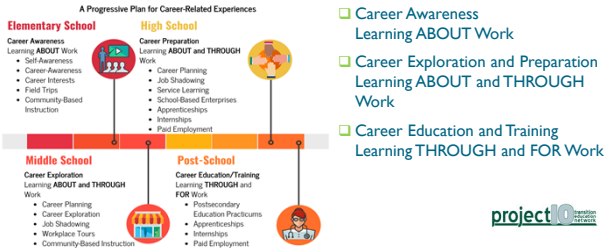
Rule 6A-1.09963, F.A.C.

By May 15 of the year the student is earning his/her standard diploma

- School districts must inform the parent and the student that failure to defer receipt of a standard high school diploma after all requirements are met releases the school district from the obligation to provide FAPE. This communication must state that the deadline for acceptance or deferral of the diploma is May 15 of the year in which the student is expected to meet graduation requirements, and that failure to attend a graduation ceremony does not constitute a deferral.

Career Education and Planning – It's Never Too Early to Start!

A Progressive Plan for Career-Related Experiences



- Career Awareness Learning ABOUT Work
- Career Exploration and Preparation Learning ABOUT and THROUGH Work
- Career Education and Training Learning THROUGH and FOR Work

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR/VR) Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

Vocational Rehabilitation Pre-ETS are available to eligible students with disabilities ages 14-21. The following are the five Pre-ETS areas:

1. Job Exploration Counseling
2. Work Readiness Training
3. Work-Based Learning Experiences (WBLEs)
4. Self-Advocacy Training and Peer Mentoring
5. Postsecondary Educational Counseling

VR website, Transition Youth Services:

<https://www.rehabworks.org/student-youth/youth-transition.html>

Pre-ETS Flyer:

https://www.rehabworks.org//_resources/docs/flyers/pre-employment-transition-services.pdf



Considering High School and Career Pathways

Workforce Education System
Pathway to a Career



In middle school, students and families need to start looking at the path to high school and beyond.

- Graduation Pathways
- Diploma Designations
- CAPE Digital Tool Certificates & Industry Certifications
- Career and Technical Education (CTE)
- Magnet Programs and Career Academies
- Extended Transition Programs



Transitioning from Middle School to High School

Supporting a Smooth Transition



Supporting Transition from Middle to High School

The following are recommended activities that will help prepare students for the transition from middle to high school:

- Request/Invite a representative from the student's future high school to attend the student's IEP meeting.
- Student and families should attend any events related to transitioning to high school.
- Students and families can learn more about the high school through the website and schedule a visit to the high school (during after school hours or over the summer).



Supporting Transition from Middle to High School (cont.)

- Identify a point of contact at the school in case help is needed (e.g. school counselor, mentor, teacher, older student, etc.)
- Students and families should attend all Transition IEP meetings; and review information related to:
 - Graduation pathways
 - Diploma designations
 - Course of study



Recap: S 1003.5716, F.S.

□ (2)(c) Beginning not later than the first IEP to be in place and operational on the first day of high school, attains the age of 14 (whichever occurs first), or younger if determined appropriate by the parent and the IEP team, whichever occurs first, the IEP must include measurable long-term postsecondary goals based on *age-appropriate transition assessments* related to:

- Training/Education.
- Employment.
- Career (Florida).
- Independent living, if appropriate.
- Transition Services
- Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS).
- Courses of study to assist these goals.



Measurable Postsecondary Goals

A measurable postsecondary goal may address more than one of the designated areas and **must meet the following requirements:**

- **It must be measurable;** you must be able to "count it" or observe it
- It must be intended to occur **after the student leaves** school
- It must be reviewed **annually**.



Postsecondary Goal Examples

- **Education:**
Within two years of exiting the K-12 system, Jamie will complete the basic course in culinary arts at a Florida state college.
- **Training:**
Immediately upon exiting the K-12 system, Sara will participate in on-the-job training in clothing retail.
- **Employment:**
Within three months of exiting the K-12 system, and earning a standard high school diploma, Frank will be employed at a local hospital.
- **Career:**
Within six months of exiting the K-12 system, Jill will obtain part-time employment in the area of veterinary medicine.
- **Independent Living:**
Within one year after exiting the K-12 system, John will maintain his current bank account and save at least \$50 a month toward college expenses.



Transitioning from Middle School to High School

Final Thoughts



Transition Planning Involves Helping Students Become LIFE Ready!



- The purpose of secondary transition for students with disabilities is to prepare them for the future they want. It's about preparing them to participate in adult life, make positive contributions to their communities, develop a career, maintain a job and live as independently as possible.
- It is never too early to start transition planning, and there are many supports and resources to assist in the journey!



Additional Resources

- Agency for Persons with Disabilities (APD)
<https://apd.myflorida.com/>
- Florida Developmental Disabilities Council Publications
<http://www.fddc.org/publications>
- Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation School to Work Transition Program
<http://www.rehabworks.org/stw.shtml>
- National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth
<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/>
- National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: the Collaborative (NTACT: C)
<https://transitionta.org/>
- Secondary Transition (online module – independent study)
<https://fl-pda.org/>



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Questions, Evaluations, and Thank You!

- Questions, concerns, or recommendations?
- Thank you for your attendance and input today!



- Please complete the online evaluation. Your responses will help us to continue the development of our training skills and identify areas in which you would like to have more information and support.



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