Quick Reference Guide:

Tips for Developing a Quality and Compliant Transition IEP

Wayne RESA   Kent ISD
Larry Stemple   Chuck Saur
Special Education Consultant   Transition Coordinator

(Used with permission 5/07)

The Student – Perspective Agenda

What: We should assure that the IEPT meeting has value for our students and families and assure it is not centered on filling out forms; the transition-focused IEP should be aligned with the student's vision for post-school life.

Do This: Propose to the IEPT members that an agenda can be used to structure the discussion at the meeting, and provide a means to develop relevant information. The IEP forms are used for developing and documenting the student's IEP-specified supports.

The Agenda:

1. What is my vision for *my life* when I am done with school?
- Where/how am I going to live?
- What job or career am I going to have?
- How will I become part of my community?
- Will I need additional school or training?

2. Where am I now, *relative to my vision of my life* after I leave school?
- What are my strengths related to my post-school vision?
- How are my current academics going?
- How are my functional/vocational skills?
- Do I have the accommodations I need?
- How can I make my vision of post-school life clearer?

3. What Course of Study should I take in school that will move me closer to *my vision?*
- Are my school programs aligned with my vision of my post-school life?
- Do my IEP goals help me reach my vision?
- Do we know what Transition Services will help me reach my vision?
- Have we identified the point I leave school?
- ***How will we know I am ready?***

1. Developing the Student's Vision for Post-School life:

This is the first step toward understanding the interests and preferences of the student. Using the IEP agenda can assist the IEP Team in developing a clear view of the student's direction. The intent here is to achieve some stability in the student's direction, rather than specify unmanageable details.

To consider the student's long range interests and preferences for discussion and documentation, focus on these four areas:

> Adult Living / Daily Living Skills
> Career
> Community Involvement
> Post-Secondary Education / Training

Remember:

The student's *interests* are future-oriented activities or areas that particularly capture the student's attention.

The student's *preferences* are what the student would choose, given a range of choices.

The *post-secondary vision* is a starting point for determining present level functioning.

Do This: Start getting answers to the agenda questions prior to the IEPT meeting, using career development activities, academic records, exploration, and ESTR-J or ESTR III and continue to update the information needed to develop the student's IEP.

2. Writing Present Level Statements (PLAAFP)

What: The description of the starting point for instruction is now called the Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP), and clearly provides a direction to include transition areas in the assessment of the student's present level of performance, together with academic achievement. But we need to make sure that the present level is calibrated toward assessing "where the student is functioning" relative to "where they want to go" identified in his or her post-school vision. More PLAAFP discussion follows.

Remember: Strengths and concerns in functional areas can be assessed using the ESTR-J or ESTR-III (or similar), and citing that data for the student meets the requirement for data citation!

Choose several ESTR-identified areas of functioning to work on for each student, based on his/her vision.

Do This: Get to know the student, and his/her "inner movie" of the vision of post-school life, then document that vision in the IEP, within the four areas of function listed there. Remember that a unclear or missing vision is OK, but should trigger some exploratory activities to allow the student to develop a rational vision for life. The next step is to choose and implement adequate assessment and data to determine their readiness (or PLAAFP) to achieve his/her vision.

Points to Consider in PLAAFP Development:

- Start with the student's vision.
- Address current functioning in the area of difficulty using current assessment data, observation and classroom performance data.
- Identify academic/educational needs and strengths.
- Describe performance in areas of education that are affected by the disability.
- Use data to support the need for supplementary aids/services.
- Address functional performance and areas of need using transition assessment data (ESTR, etc.)
- Accurately describe performance in areas affected, including academic and non-academic.
- There should be a direct relationship between evaluation information ad PLAAFP statements.
- Use objective terms that are measurable, to the extent possible.
- Where scores are used, ensure that they are self-explanatory or an explanation is included.

Potential strengths / concerns / need areas to consider:

- Health consideration
- Communication
- Motor
- Social or emotional
- Assistive devices
- Academic
- Accommodations / Modifications
- Least Restrictive Environment
- Recreation & Leisure
- Community Participation
- Adult Living
- Career and Employment
- Post-Secondary Training or Learning
- Mobility
- Work experience
- Critical thinking / problem solving

Tools for assessing areas of current function:

- Criterion referenced test (measured against defined and objective criteria)
- Standardized achievement test
- Curriculum based assessment
- Diagnostic test
- Outside evaluator results
- Transition assessment (ESTR-J and ESTR-III)
- Medical / Health information
- Behavior Intervention Plan results
- Most recent state or district wide assessment results
- Grades and comments from report cards
- Progress Reports on previous goals and objectives
- General curriculum progress
- Classroom performance
- Systematic observations of student behavior
- Attendance records
- Disciplinary records

Sample Strength Statements:

- Demonstrates organization in work behavior.
- Completes tasks within allotted time.
- Initiates interaction with adults and peers.
- Takes part in extra-curricular activities.
- Communicates personal information.
- Understands savings accounts.
- Demonstrates good attendance.
- Understands factors which influence job retention, dismissal, and promotion.
- Responds appropriately to authority figures.
- Responds to verbal correction.
- Adapts to changes in routine or schedule.
- Makes effort to do his/her best.

Sample Concern Statements:

- Has difficulty adjusting to changes in routine.
- Struggles with making appropriate decisions regarding work related tasks.
- Does not initiate involvement in rec / leisure activities.
- Unable to complete job application form independently.
- Does not maintain appropriate work habits when supervisor is not present.
- Negatively responds to verbal correction.
- Exhibits difficulty with fine motor skills.
- Needs to learn how to access community resources.
- Needs to improve understanding of community signs.

Sample Portions of Present Level (PLAAFP) Statements:

- Based on the ESTR J and teacher observations, STUDENT is able to deposit and withdraw money from the bank. She does not participate in the following money management tasks: managing checkbook/savings account, paying bills on time, making large purchases, performing simple budgeting. This impacts her ability to independently manage her money and pay her monthly bills which could also lead to bouncing checks and an insufficient bank account.

- Based on the ESTR J, STUDENT has exhibited excellent attendance and demonstrates skills related to school citizenship. STUDENT lacks the knowledge to access various resources for assistance with job searches. He does not understand the factors that influence job retention, dismissal and promotion. He needs to improve the quality of filling out job application forms. This impacts his ability to attain and maintain a job within his interest level.

Present Level (PLAAFP) Checklist:

☐ Does the PLAAFP address all areas affected by the student's disability?

☐ Is the PLAAFP stated in terms that are understandable, specific, measurable and objective?

☐ Does the PLAAFP describe current performance?

☐ Have transition assessment results been included?

☐ Does the PLAAFP describe how the student's disability affects the child's performance in the general curriculum?

☐ Are the present levels understandable, so that goals, services, assessments, LRE, etc. may easily be developed?

☐ Does the PLAAFP provide a "snapshot" of the student?

☐ Does the PLAAFP provide baseline information for each need?

☐ Does the PLAAFP use information from a variety of sources in a comprehensive statement?

☐ Would anyone be able to begin instruction or intervention based on the information presented?

3. Determining Student's Course of Study, Transition Activities and Services:

What: A student who reaches age 16 is considered a "transition aged youth" who is entitled to have transition-related needs assessed and addressed in their IEP. Information that is provided that helps the student achieve the adult-life vision is collectively called "transition services."   Those transition services that are provided by the school are generally considered the student's "course of study".

Do This: After identifying a need area in the PLAAFP, there needs to be a distinction between two categories of need: Does the student have a learning need (typically met within the student's course of study), or a planning / community service / activity-related need? We can make a decision about what type of support the student is provided by using the following decision steps:

> **A.** Is the need identified in the PLAAFP a learning-oriented need?
>
> **If yes, ask:**
>
> Is the need covered in the student's general or special education studies? Are there supports needed by the student to assure achievement?
>
> Document 'yes' answers for a learning need or support in the IEP using the goals page, supplementary aids and supports page, or in related service areas.
>
> **B.** Is the need identified in the PLAAFP a planning / community service or activity-oriented need?
>
> **If yes…**
>
> Document the needed activity or service in the transition service/activity section of the IEP form. Be sure that any student initiated activity is adequately supported and monitored.

Sample Transition Activities

1. Getting Ready for Employment
   - Compile a job application form with references without assistance.
   - Conduct 2 practice interviews with potential employers and listen to the constructive criticism.
   - Prepare a resume and cover letter using a software program.
   - Learn necessary internet job searching skills to access internet listed jobs, career information and specific labor market information.

2. Daily Living Skills
   - Create a monthly expense sheet and a budget to match.
   - Take a more advanced cooking class to learn the importance of nutrition and to practice food preparation skills.
   - Prepare nutritional meals at home.

3. Employment
   - Job shadow with a electrician.
   - Continue part-time work (after school, weekends) and identify a full-time position for the summer.

4. Instruction
   - Follow the general education curriculum and earn credits toward graduation. Access special support for transition related issues.
   - Take electronic courses to become an electrician after graduation from high school.

5. Community
   - Visit community agencies to develop an understanding of the location of services and their functions.
   - Parents will provide opportunity to participate in the community.
   - Seek and identify 3 extra-curricular activities at school or within the community to participate in.
   - Participate in at least 1 of these 3 activities: (list)

IEP CHECKLIST: Here's a handy list of items that, when included, will help assure you are on the right track.

☐ Post school vision identified and documented.

☐ Transition assessment (ESTR) results included.

☐ Strengths identified and documented.

☐ Preferences identified – What would student choose?

☐ Interests identified – Activities/areas in which student shows an interest.

☐ Needs identified – learning and/or supports that a student requires to be successful in G.E. curriculum and achieving post-secondary goals.

☐ Academic Achievement and Functional Performance – Baseline data from age appropriate assessments related to training, education, employment, and if appropriate, independent living skills.

☐ Alignment of vision *(where student wants to go)*, WITH the assessments and PLAAFP *(where the student is)*, AND the goals, course of study, transition activities and services *(how the student will get there).*

☐ Goals are measurable and related to training, education, employment, and, where appropriate independent living skills.

☐ Anticipated graduation or exit date is specified.

☐ IEPs conducted on an annual basis.

☐ Age of majority considered and documented.

☐ Description of how child's progress toward annual goals will be measured and when periodic reports on annual goal progress will be provided.

☐ IEP invitation attached to IEP

☐ All goals pages attached

☐ Other stuff