

TRANSITION

Summary of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance

Background

Many students with disabilities graduate from high school and attempt to transition to adult life without the documentation they need to access appropriate adult services in a timely manner. They may or may not have been significantly involved in their transition assessment and understand the full implications of the vocational evaluation and work experiences they had. Consequently, these students face the difficult task of navigating through the complex systems of adult service providers.

In response to these problems, the reauthorization in 2004 of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) required that local school districts provide a Summary of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (SAAFP) to students with disabilities who are exiting secondary school. The SAAFP contains a summary of the student's academic and functional performance, as well as recommendations on how to assist the student in meeting postsecondary goals. The language as stated in IDEA 04 regarding the SAAFP is cited below:

For a child whose eligibility under special education terminates due to graduation from secondary school with a regular diploma, or due to exceeding the age of eligibility, the local education agency shall provide the child with a summary of the child's academic achievement and functional performance, which shall include recommendations on how to assist the child in meeting the child's postsecondary goals.

300.305 (e)(2)(3)

Rationale

Special and regular education professionals accumulate a wealth of information regarding their students, including: life goals, preferences and interests, functional and academic strengths and needs, needed accommodations, strategies for success, etc. In the past, much of this information simply was not used, or was not presented in a useful and current format for use in the adult world.

We know best practices illustrate that the completion of the SAAFP is not the beginning of a student's post-school transition planning, but the culmination of a thoughtful and comprehensive transition plan that was initiated in the later stages of a student's middle school career or at the latest, the early stages of high school.

There are a number of reasons why the summary of performance report is a good idea. For one thing, it can provide a type of summative evaluation that should lead to better transition planning. This should result in increased family, school, and community dialogue that will provide greater continuity in obtaining transition services for students with disabilities. This will help close the gaps that might currently exist in the planning and implementation process. The SAAFP is most useful when linked with the IEP process, and the student has the opportunity to actively participate in the development of the SAAFP.

Usefulness

By providing recommendations on how to assist the student in meeting his or her postsecondary goals, the SAAFP report can also serve as a "bridge" that addresses the next steps necessary to complete the transition process that has been ongoing for several years. It should clearly state to students what they need to do to continue to work toward realizing their goals after their high school program has ended.

The SAAFP report should lead educators in preparing students with disabilities to become self-advocates. The SAAFP serves as a means to transfer the responsibilities of securing employment, training, or education,

living arrangements, and support services to the student, because the student will need to be prepared to assume these responsibilities.

The SAAFP should be based upon age-appropriate transition assessments and be completed over time with the student. The SAAFP then becomes a valuable teaching tool. Starting in the freshmen year, students with disabilities could begin creating as part of their transition portfolio a working document that they will continue to build on all through high school. This could be further streamlined if the SAAFP is part of a general education initiative or part of a portfolio development.

A Student's Document

Because the SAAFP provides the student with information about his or her present level of performance at the first year of life after high school, developing the SAAFP as part of an integrated and deliberate portfolio process could teach some students the skills they need to update a less formal version of the document periodically beyond high school. The SAAFP should:

- Be useful and relevant
- Summarize individual student abilities, skills, needs, and limitations
- Provide recommendations to support successful transition to adult living, learning, and working
- Be completed during the final year of a student's high school education
- Include input from a number of individuals including the student, parent, special education teacher, regular education teacher, school psychologist, related services personnel or agency representatives
- Be designed to assist the student in identifying supports in postsecondary settings, the workplace, and the community
- Help the student better understand the impact of his/her disability and articulate individual strengths and needs as well as supports that would be helpful in post-school life