

The Fairfield County Transition Initiative

Local Interagency Agreement

I. Statement of Need

Local Education Agencies (LEAs)/school districts in Fairfield county, the Southeast Area Office of the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission (ORSC), the Fairfield County Board of Developmental Disabilities (FCBDD), and other community agency partners are clarifying their relationship in order to establish a common understanding regarding of their roles, policies, and procedures related to providing transition services and supports for students with disabilities transitioning from secondary school to adulthood.

In Fairfield County there are over 3,038 students, age 3-21 with disabilities, of which approximately 1,174 are secondary aged students with disabilities who are of transition age. Federal and state regulations ensure that these students are provided a free, appropriate public education while of school age, thus entitling them to the necessary services and supports while in school and identified under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004). As these students transition from school and enter adulthood, a variety of services are also available to them from agencies such as the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission (ORSC), The Fairfield County Board of Developmental Disabilities (FCBDD), the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services (ODJFS), the Social Security Administration (SSA), and the Southeastern Ohio Center for Independent Living (SOCIL). Additional students may have a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), have strived to mainstream into life as typical teenagers and are not receiving special education services yet will require assistance from community agencies upon exiting the school system. Services and eligibility requirements for those services vary from agency to agency, making it difficult for students and their families to make a smooth transition from secondary school to adulthood.

To assist students, their parents, and the various stakeholders in Fairfield County in understanding their roles and responsibilities in relation to the provision of transition services, this Local Interagency Agreement constitutes a formal commitment from all local community partners that seek to improve communication, coordination and services for students with disabilities transitioning from school to adulthood.

II. Purpose

The purpose of this county-wide interagency agreement is to improve the coordination of services for students with disabilities transitioning from education to adulthood.

III. Authority and Scope

Transition services are mandated under IDEA Section 300.154(a) (B), under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended Section 101(a) (11) (D), and under the Ohio Department of Education's State Operation Standards, 3301-51-07 H)(2)..

IV. Mandated Transition Services

IDEA and the Rehabilitation Act defines **transition services** as a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that is designed to be within a result-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the student's movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated

employment (including supported employment), continuing adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation.

Transition services are based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's strengths, preferences, and interests, and include:

- (i) Instruction;
- (ii) Related services;
- (iii) Community experiences;
- (iv) The development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives; and
- (v) If appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and provision of a functional vocational evaluation.

Transition services for students with disabilities may be special education, if provided as specially designed instruction, or a related service, if required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education (Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1401(34))

Transition services: Beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the student turns 16, or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP team, and updated annually, thereafter, the IEP must include:

1. Appropriate measureable postsecondary goals based upon age appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills; and
2. The transition services (including courses of study) needed to assist the student in reaching those goals.

The Rehabilitation Act further states that transition services must promote or facilitate the achievement of the *employment* outcome identified in the student's Individualized Plan for *Employment* (IPE).

Ohio Department of Education IEP Transition Component Minimum Requirements:

I. Minimum requirements for secondary transition in the IEP that takes effect when the student turns age 14 (state operating standards, 3301-51-07, (H) (2), pg. 127): "For each child with a disability, beginning at age fourteen (or younger, if determined appropriate by the IEP team), the IEP shall include a statement, updated annually, of the transition service needs of the child under the applicable components of the child's IEP that focuses on the child's courses of study (such as participation in advanced-placement courses or a vocational education program)."

II. Minimum requirements for secondary transition in the IEP takes effect when the student turns 16 (Federal Register, Vol. 71, No. 156, Sec. 300.43, Transition Services, and Sec. 300.320 (b) Transition Services, p. 46788):

1. Appropriate, measureable, postsecondary goals related to training, education, employment, and where appropriate, independent living.
2. Evidence of Age Appropriate Transition Assessments .
3. A list of the Transition Services needed to assist the child in reaching those goals
4. A description of the high school courses of study for the child.
5. Specific IEP goals that enable the child to meet the postsecondary goals,
6. And linkages to other agencies, if appropriate.

V Transition Quality Indicators

The Ohio Department of Education has developed a document called *Bridges to Adulthood: Transition Quality Indicators for Students with Disabilities in Ohio's Secondary Schools*. This document is designed to assist school district and community partners with improving secondary transition quality and services, and to increase successful post-school engagement rates in the areas of working, learning, and living for students with disabilities in Ohio. This self-assessment guide has grouped the Transition Quality Indicators in five major sections aligned with the Taxonomy for Transition Programming (Kohler, 1996): Student Focused Planning, Student Development, Family Involvement, Interagency Collaboration and Program Structure. This Local Interagency Agreement proposes the use of this document as a tool that LEAs and other agencies in Fairfield County will use to assess and improve the quality and legal compliance of the individualized education program (IEP), secondary transition planning, services and outcomes. Each participating school district will commit to using this self-assessment, and will work with the State Support Team, Region 11 and other entities identified in this local agreement to develop coordinated efforts and/or strategies for continuous improvement of transition services in Fairfield County.

VI Overview of Transition Services

The transition process for students in Ohio begins at the age of 14, and continues until the student exits the school system. The process includes the following steps:

- A discussion about future planning needs that address student and family needs, preferences and interests for a vision of immediate and post secondary life plans. The student begins to identify his/her vision of what he/she would like to do as an adult in regards to education/training, employment and independent living. Younger students develop a general statement while older students develop a more specific statement of their perceived future. These statements appear on the student's IEP.
- Present levels of academic achievement and functional performance are identified. The student's team members conduct formal and informal assessments that identify baseline information about how the student is performing at the time that the IEP is developed, and identify where the student is functioning in relationship to what the student plans to do after finishing high school. Team members also identify specific student strengths, weaknesses or challenges.
- Age appropriate transition assessments are used for developing the post-school goals, the courses of study and specific transition services that the student will receive. This assessment data forms the basis for defining goals and services to be included on the student's IEP.
- The student, parents and IEP team members identify measurable post-secondary goals. Goals are based upon age appropriate transition assessments related to employment, education/training and where needed, independent living skills. Post-secondary goals should also be related to the student's future planning statement, and answer the question "What will the student do after high school?"
- The proposed course of study is determined and addresses the immediate post-school goals for the student. The proposed course of study reflects a direct relationship between the student's educational experiences in high school and the student's desired measurable post-secondary goals, and identifies the necessary coursework needed for the student to successfully reach the stated goals. The proposed course of study typically includes regular education courses, advanced placement courses, specially designed instruction, and community and employment experiences.
- Measurable, annual IEP goals are then established that support the student in meeting the post-secondary goals. The measurable annual goals are designed to meet the student's needs that result from the student's disability, and enable the student to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum.

- Transition services and activities are then identified and reflect strategies and activities needed to assist the student in reaching the post-secondary goals. They may include instructional activities, community experiences, employment-related activities, adult living and post school activities, daily living activities and other related services, such as mental health counseling, speech/language, OT, PT, etc. Transition services must be a coordinated set of activities or strategies that need to happen that will assist the student in achieving the desired measurable post-school goals. Students, family members, appropriate adult services agencies or programs and school personnel may be responsible for providing the activities listed on the student's IEP, and for meeting the timelines for delivery of these services.
- IEP teams review/revise these services and activities annually.

VII. 2010-2012 Goals

1. To comply with federal mandates under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended, and the state mandates under the Ohio Department of Education state operating standards, ORC 3301-51-07.
2. To collaborate as partners in developing, sharing and disseminating resources and implementing quality transition services.
3. To provide information on transition services to students and their parents so they will be able to participate fully in transition planning, and
4. To provide clarification of roles and responsibilities of staff within school districts, ORSC, FCBMRDD, and other community agencies who provide services and supports regarding students with disabilities, who have identified long term needs in employment, adult day service programs, and independent living.

VIII 2010-2012 Special Projects

1. Based upon the results of the LEA Needs Assessment (*Bridges to Adulthood* document), school districts in collaboration with the State Support Team, Region 11 and local community partners, will develop and disseminate cross training materials and resources describing the service delivery system available to students with disabilities as they transition from secondary school to adulthood.
2. To develop, conduct and analyze a needs assessment survey, targeting students, parents, and teachers who will identify needed post secondary supports (students/parents) and materials and resources that are needed in order to assist students while in school.

IX. Participating Agency Commitments

- Identify key staff who will consistently participate in task force activities by attending meetings every other month and sharing information from those meetings with appropriate staff, agency-wide.
- Share and update demographic information needed for outreach activities, as authorized by agency rules, regulations and laws governing disclosure of information.
- Respond promptly to requests for information/referrals from partner agencies in a timely fashion.
- Participate in cross-training events that will assist students, families and agencies in understanding the roles and responsibilities of each participating agency.
- School districts: Convene a team of key staff that will conduct a district-wide needs assessment by using the ODE *Bridges to Adulthood* document.
 - i. Develop an action plan based on the results of the needs assessment.
 - ii. Share the results of the needs assessment action plan with the task force members for training and information sharing.

- Commit available resources (in-kind and/or monetary) towards the completion of special projects and for the accomplishment of 2010-2012 goals.

X. Terms of Agreement

The terms of this inter agency agreement between local school districts in Fairfield County, the Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission (ORSC), The Fairfield County Board of Developmental Disabilities (FCBDD), the Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services (ODJFS), the Social Security Administration (SSA), and the Southeastern Ohio Center for Independent Living (SOCIL) shall begin on the signature date and will continue for two years at which time a new agreement will be written that identifies new goals and projects.

XI. Resolution of Conflicts

For the resolution of disputes arising over issues addressed in this agreement, all parties will utilize the appropriate steps and methods as described herein. Attempts will be made to resolve the issue at the lowest level of disagreement. Informal resolution will be the first step in dealing with any disagreements relative to this agreement. The materials presented will include: the regulation or requirement related to the dispute; the specific issue needing resolution; the prior steps taken to resolve the issue and any additional information that may be relevant to the dispute. Utilizing the information presented, a good faith effort will be made to reach a mutually satisfactory solution. Efforts must be made at each level for resolution in a timely manner.

XII. Termination of Participating/Commitment

In the event that an agency is unable to continue participation or commitment to any project or activity listed in this agreement, notification shall be made to the Fairfield County Transition Task Force.

XIII. Signatures: All signatures are on file at the FCBDD.

_____	_____
Mike Johnsen, Superintendent; Amanda-Clearcreek School District	Date
_____	_____
Richard Spindler, Superintendent; Berne Union Local Schools	Date
_____	_____
Roger Mace, Superintendent; Bloom-Carroll School District	Date
_____	_____
Larry Miller, Superintendent; Fairfield County Educational Service Center	Date
_____	_____
Jim Herd, Superintendent; Fairfield Union Local Schools	Date
_____	_____
Denise Callihan, Superintendent; Lancaster City Schools	Date

Paul Mathews, Superintendent; Liberty Union-Thurston Local Schools	Date
Karen Mantia, Superintendent; Pickerington Local Schools	Date
Ron Thornton, Superintendent; Walnut Township Local Schools	Date
Bonnie Hopkins, Superintendent; Eastland-Fairfield Career Technical Center	Date
Rose Reed, Area Manager; Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission	Date
John Pekar, Superintendent; Fairfield County Board of Developmental Disabilities	Date
Orman Hall, Executive Director, Fairfield County Alcohol, Drug and Mental Health Board	Date
Becky Edwards, Director; Fairfield County Family, Adult and Children First Council	Date
Michael Orlando, County Director; Ohio Jobs and Family Services	Date
Peter Gerds, District Manager; Lancaster Social Security Office	Date
Pam Patula, Director; Southeastern Ohio Center for Independent Living Center	Date
Rhonda Dickson, Assistant Superintendent, Educational Service Center of Central Ohio	Date