

LexSEPAC Report on Transition to Lexington School Committee

LexSEPAC Transition Subcommittee
November 27, 2012

Background & Findings

LexSEPAC Transition Study

What is “Transition”?

- ▶ “Life is full of transitions, and one of the more remarkable ones occurs when we get ready to leave high school and go out in the world as young adults. When the student has a disability, it’s especially helpful to plan ahead for that transition. In fact, IDEA requires it.”
 - ▶ NICHCY, National Dissemination Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities
 - ▶ <http://nichcy.org/schoolage/transitionadult>
- ▶ In broad terms, transition is a “formal process of cooperative planning that will assist students with disabilities to move from school into the adult world.”
 - ▶ (O’Leary, 2007)

Why is transition important?

- ▶ U.S. unemployment rate for people with disabilities (PWD) > 12% vs. typically developing people (TD) @ 7.6%
 - Cramer, A., IBM Corporation
- ▶ PWD 70-80% higher unemployment than TD; Only 20% able to find and retain postsecondary employment
 - Imperato, A., Office of Senator Tom Harkin
- ▶ When transition planning fails, otherwise employable PWD are faced with a lifetime of guaranteed poverty
 - O'Brien, D., Social Security Administration
- ▶ When transition planning succeeds, the chances of a good quality of life for PWD increases, as proven by evidence-based practices and predictors of postsecondary success
 - NSTTAC, 2009

Lexington SEPAC's response

A Transition Subcommittee of the SEPAC was formed to understand how Lexington students on IEPs & their families perceive their children's transition experience and to advise the LPS School Committee & LPS Administration on the findings through a report that includes:

- ▶ Federal and State Legislation & Case Law on Transition
- ▶ Evidence-based and Best Practices for Transition
- ▶ Transition Needs Assessment Survey

Needs Assessment Survey Purpose

The transition needs assessment survey identified:

1. how parents in Lexington perceive transition assessment, planning and goal setting for their transition age child,
2. how they perceive their own family involvement in the transition process,
3. what current student needs they have identified for their child, and
4. what recommendations can be made to respond to parent feedback

Pilot Survey Responses

- ▶ Total # of students on IEPs between 14 & 22 = 367
- ▶ No list – outreach via snowball “opt in” approach
 - ▶ listserv emails, Facebook postings, school newsletters, etc.
- ▶ Total initial response rate = 94 (26%)
- ▶ Total completion rate = 38 (10%)
 - ▶ 10-20% is a common response; within expected range
 - Constant Contact, 2010; Survey Gizmo, 2010
 - ▶ The item non-response represents those students who are younger and reported a lower level of need
 - ▶ Possible unfamiliarity with TPF; response fatigue; too early for concern

Perceptions of TPF/IEP Process

- ▶ Majority reported being invited to IEP/transition meetings.
- ▶ Most reported having a transition planning form (TPF), but 12 of the 27 students age 14-16 did not perceive having a TPF.
- ▶ All students age 17 and above reported having a TPF.
- ▶ Over half perceived not completing TPF annually since age 14.
- ▶ Over half reported not transferring TPF action plans to IEP.
- ▶ Majority perceived a lack of:
 - ▶ measurable **post secondary goals** based on age appropriate transition assessments,
 - ▶ **transition services** to meet post secondary goals;
 - ▶ annual **goals** related to transition service needs.

Perceptions of Family Involvement

- ▶ **School efforts to partner with families perceived positively:**
 - ▶ Parents are considered equal partners by the team in planning transition
 - ▶ Parents discussed how their child would participate in MCAS assessments
 - ▶ IEP/transition meetings are scheduled at convenient times for families
 - ▶ The child's transition assessments results are written in terms parents can understand.
 - ▶ Parents feel they can disagree with their child's transition program or services without negative consequences
- ▶ **School efforts perceived as needing improvement or lacking:**
 - ▶ Transition-related concerns documented in the IEP and TPF
 - ▶ Information given about agencies that offer student & family support
 - ▶ Parent input sought about child's transition needs
 - ▶ Parent concerns engaged for child's transition to adult services
 - ▶ Help received to play an active role in child's transition
 - ▶ Regular communication received regarding child's progress on transition goals
 - ▶ Training offered to parents about transition issues

Perceptions of Student Needs

- ▶ The top five areas reported as needing assistance were: household management, money management, self advocacy, personal relationships and social skills.
- ▶ Concerns about the future included exploitation, money management, lack of readiness for community living, loneliness and self-advocacy.
- ▶ Top three current priority areas for student needs: postsecondary education, independent living, and community participation.

Recommendation

Joint LPS/LexSEPAC Task Force to Review Transition

LPS/SEPAC Joint Transition Task Force

- ▶ A joint transition task force comprised of LPS administrators and transition-related staff and the Lexington SEPAC Transition Subcommittee will collaborate to address transition protocol, practice, and programming for students with IEPs attending Lexington Public Schools through:
 - ▶ Systematic review of key areas related to transition
 - ▶ Development & implementation of a decisive action plan
 - ▶ Measurement of the results of the task force's actions

Four areas of major focus for review

- ▶ Communication with students and their families
- ▶ Current transition practices in the district
- ▶ Training needs
- ▶ Outreach for Community Partnerships & Collaboration

Communication

- ▶ Review communication between LPS and parents explaining the TPF process and its relationship to the IEP
- ▶ Work with the SEPAC to promote communication about transition with all Lexington families
- ▶ Review family involvement practices in transition planning to strengthen secondary & postsecondary outcomes for students

Current transition practice

- ▶ Transition coordinator
 - ▶ Upon receipt of DESE regulations regarding the creation of a transition coordinator license (due out in late 2012), compare the regulations with current staffing and practice
- ▶ Evidence-based practices & predictors of success
 - ▶ Review NSTTAC EB'd practices & predictors of postsecondary success
 - ▶ Identify EB practices currently being used;
 - ▶ Review others for feasibility

Current transition practice (cont.)

- ▶ **Transition processes**
 - ▶ Review existing transition processes to ensure efficiency & effectiveness
 - ▶ Identify opportunities to streamline & monitor the timeliness of the transition/IEP process
- ▶ **Transition practices by domain:**
 - ▶ Education & training
 - ▶ Employment
 - ▶ Independent living

Training needs

- ▶ Education & Training about Transition Planning & Services for:
 - ▶ Education professionals
 - ▶ Parents
 - ▶ Students
- ▶ Review MA DESE transition technical advisory compared to current district practices
- ▶ Review the protocol & determine staff training needs
- ▶ Work collaboratively with SEPAC to provide transition education to students and their families

Partnership/collaboration

- ▶ Review community opportunities to reach out to local partners while students still in high school in the following areas:
 - ▶ Education: local 2-year community colleges, 4-year colleges &/or universities
 - ▶ Employment: local businesses, agencies & volunteer organizations
 - ▶ Independent living & adult service agencies

Next steps

- ▶ The Joint Transition Task Force will:
 - ▶ Meet every 4-6 weeks through June 2014
 - ▶ Include 8 ongoing members
 - ▶ 4 LPS: Out-of-district, middle school, high school, teacher
 - ▶ 4 LexSEPAC members
 - ▶ Identify what needs to be known
 - ▶ Review current practice
 - ▶ Implement actions to address transition needs
 - ▶ Measure results of LPS/SEPAC joint actions via retooled survey and other methods
 - ▶ Report outcomes to Lexington School Committee and SEPAC

THANK YOU FOR LISTENING!

Questions? Thoughts?