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Transition Goals for Youth with Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Problems: Parent and Student Knowledge

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Transition goals for youth with social, emotional, and behavioral problems: Parent and student knowledge

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ABSTRACT

Transition planning is a mandated component of individualized education plans (IEPs) designed to ensure successful transition to adult life for students with disabilities. Students with social, emotional, and behavioral (SEB) needs experience poor post-school outcomes, suggesting a need for more effective transition planning. This study evaluated student and parent knowledge of employment and training goals in IEPs and the match between goals and student future planning. Ninety-three high school students and parents reported their IEP participation and knowledge of goals and responses were compared to goals in their IEPs. Results indicated that students and parents had limited knowledge of goals and a low match between the goals and student's future plans. Transition goals were frequently broad in relation to student specific future plans, potentially indicating a lack of student input and consideration of student interests and preferences in transition planning. Recommendations are discussed to help teachers, parents, and students increase meaningful involvement in the transition planning process.

KEYWORDS

EBD; IEP; goals; secondary; transition

Youth with social, emotional, and behavioral (SEB) problems experience dismal post-school outcomes in education and employment (Newman et al., 2011). Utilizing the data set from the National Longitudinal Transition Study—2, Newman and colleagues (2011) found that students identified with emotional disturbance (ED) had the fourth lowest enrollment (10.8%) in four-year colleges and two-year community colleges (37.7%), in comparison to individuals from all 13 special education disability categories. In addition, students with behavioral challenges have one of the lowest employments rates (Zigmond, 2006) and the second highest rate of involuntary termination from employment (24.9%) compared to all students in K–12 served by special education. Not surprisingly, students with SEB needs report significantly lower satisfaction with their quality of life compared to individuals without disabilities (Sacks & Kern, 2008).

To proactively address these poor outcomes and plan for successful transition to adulthood, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA, 2004) mandates that students who receive special education services must have postsecondary plans outlined in their Individualized Education Program (IEP) by the age of 16 years. IEPs must contain "appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age appropriate transition assessment related to training, education, employment, and where appropriate, independent skills" (20 U.S.C. §614(d)(1) (A)(i)(VIII)). The employment goal is intended to identify the job the student will do after graduation in order to guide services in high school needed to reach this goal. Similarly, the training/education goal is intended to identify postsecondary education and training the student will attend in order to guide services in high school. To provide needed information in developing these goals, the transition assessment is designed to reveal student strengths, needs, preferences, and interests and should be the foundation for the postsecondary goals. Although students between the ages of 14 and 16 might have ever-evolving plans or no plans at all for their future, IDEIA mandates that student preferences and interests should be the foundation of their transition plan and that their plans for after high school should guide their course of study and transition services (Martin, Marshall, & Bale, 2004). To

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emphasize the importance of these transition components of the IEP and assure that states meet these mandates, Indicator 13 requires each state to develop and submit State Performance Plans (SPP) and Annual Performance Reports (APR). These reports address state compliance with the transition planning requirements, including those for postsecondary goals and student involvement.

Results of research consistently have indicated that although students with disabilities and their parents attend IEP meetings in which transition is discussed a majority of the time, neither perceives that their input was considered when developing the students' postsecondary goals. Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Javitz, and Valdes (2012) asked a large sample of parents and students with disabilities if they were present at the IEP meeting and if they provided input. The researchers found that, although 87.1% of parents and 82.9% of students reported attending IEP meetings, less than half reported providing input. Similarly, Landmark, Zhang, and Montoya (2007) interviewed parents of 19 high school students with disabilities to determine the parents' perceptions of their children's transition plans. Over half of the parents stated that they knew nothing or little about his/her child's transition plan. These results are discouraging and indicate that over half of parents in the studies did not perceive that educators considered their input during transition planning; however, the studies only reflect self-reported perceptions.

To evaluate the extent to which IEPs are compliant with transition requirements, including evidence that parents' and students' input was considered when developing IEP goals, Landmark and Zhang (2013) reviewed IEPs for 212 students with intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, and emotional disabilities. The authors scored questions regarding parent and student participation and contribution dichotomously as yes or no. Their findings were a bit more encouraging, with 71.1% of IEPs with evidence of "family involvement" and 65.1% with evidence that the parent contributed to the development of the transition components of the IEP. The authors indicated that they considered evidence other than simply attending the meeting, which might explain the higher percentages. It is not clear, however, what evidence reflected contribution.

Overall, previously reviewed literature targeted mixed samples, thus no definitive answers can be drawn about students with SEB needs. Given the dire outcomes these students have once they transition into adult life, we need to focus on what specifically could make their transition more successful. As a result, the purpose of this study is to move knowledge in the field one step further and add a focus on transition plans for youth with SEB challenges. We moved a step beyond IEP review and parent perception and investigated the amount of evidence of parent and student knowledge and/or meaningful participation in IEP meetings, specific to postsecondary goals, and the relationship between the goals and students' stated preferences and interests, as indicated by their plans for the future.

Thus, the aims of the current study were to determine (a) the degree of participation, via attendance in IEP meetings in which transition was discussed; (b) the degree of match between (1) student and parent self-reported knowledge of transition goals and goals described in the student's current IEP and (2) student and parent self-reported plans for the future and goals described in the student IEP. Toward these aims, we answered the following research questions:

1. To what extent were students knowledgeable about employment and training goals described in their IEP?
2. To what extent were parents knowledgeable about employment and training goals described in their adolescent's IEP?
3. To what extent was there agreement between goals described in the IEP and student- and parent-reported postsecondary plans?
4. To what extent was there agreement between the student- and parent-reported postsecondary plans?

Method

Participants

Ninety-three high school students and their parents participated in the current study. The parents and students were participants in a larger study conducted by the *Center for Adolescent Research in Schools—CARS (*Kern, Evans, & Lewis, 2011*)*. CARS was a national center funded by the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) to develop and evaluate a multicomponent intervention package designed to improve outcomes for high school students with severe social, emotional, and behavioral problems. Participants in the larger study were from 54 high schools across five states

Table 1. Student demographics.

Demographics	*n*	%
Primary disability category		
Emotional disturbance	22	24.73
Specific learning disability	43	46.20
Other health impairment	24	24.70
Other (e.g., visual impairment)	4	4.30
Ethnicity		
Caucasian	55	59.14
African American	32	34.41
Hispanic/Latino	4	4.30
Caucasian and Native American	1	1.08
Native American	1	1.08
Gender		
Male	69	74.19
Female	24	25.81

(Kansas, Missouri, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and South Carolina). Participants experienced significant SEB impairments as demonstrated by parent and teacher ratings on measures of behavior, anxiety, and depression. For more information regarding the CARS study, see Kern et al. (2015). Participants from the larger sample were included in the current study if they met all of the following criteria: (a) the student was of transition age (i.e. 14–18); (b) the student had a recent IEP on file; and (c) both the student and parent completed the *CARS Transition Survey (CTS)*. Survey and IEP data were collected at the end of the 2012–2013 school year. This resulted in a total of 93 eligible students served by special education in the categories of emotional disturbance ($n = 22$), learning disabilities ($n = 43$), other health impairment ($n = 24$), and other ($n = 4$) in addition to social, emotional, or behavioral challenges. Demographic data for the included students and parents are presented in Tables 1 and 2.

Measures

The two measures used in this study were student and parent interviews. The surveys used in the interviews were developed by the CARS research team to expand our understanding of student and parent engagement in the IEP process. The *CARS Transition Survey—Student Version (CTS-S)* and the corresponding parent version, *CARS Transition Survey—Parent Version (CTS-P),* include six items each. Those items consist of three dichotomous (yes/no) responses that allowed for entering qualitative data if the student or parent responded "yes" (e.g., "Were you able to attend your [son/daughter's] last IEP team meeting"), and three short answers (e.g., "Briefly state your [son/daughter's] IEP goal for employment after high school").

Table 2. Parent demographics.

Demographics	*n*	%
Parent/guardian role		
Parent	91	97.85
Legal guardian	1	1.08
Missing	1	1.08
Marital status		
Never married	42	45.16
Married	26	27.96
Divorced	14	15.05
Separated	8	8.60
Widowed	3	3.23
Gender		
Female	83	89.25
Male	10	10.75

Procedures

CARS project facilitators interviewed the parents and students at the end of the larger study. The authors coded the completed interviews and corresponding IEPs in the following manner. First, the first author developed a coding document (i.e., Excel spreadsheet) to compare responses reported on student and parent surveys to the actual transition goals reported in the IEP to decide whether the goals listed in IEP and parent and student responses on surveys "matched," "did not match," or "the IEP goal was missing." The coding document included columns for IEP employment goals (from the IEP), IEP training goals (from the IEP), parent responses (from the *CTS-P*), and student responses (from the *CTS-S*). In addition, columns followed the parent and student responses to indicate the match status (yes, no, no IEP goal) between the participant response and the IEP. If no match was recorded between the IEP goals and the student- and parent-reported goals, then a reason for the mismatch was provided (e.g., different answer, goal too broad compared to student specific answer).

Second, four authors calibrated the coding document through two iterations by first coding data for five randomly selected students for a total of twenty participants with 89% agreement on the first trial, followed by a discussion of disagreements, and then coding of five additional randomly selected students resulting in 90% agreement on the second trial. When the practice coding was completed, authors discussed disagreements and, with the assistance of the fifth author, came to a consensus. The remaining data were split between two pairs of authors who independently coded the interviews and IEPs and calculated simple agreement (Hartmann, Barrois, & Wood, 2004) for

100% of coding. Simple agreement (total agreement divided by total agreement plus total disagreement multiplied by 100) was 97%.

Data analyses

To determine the extent to which parents and students were knowledgeable about employment and training goals described in the IEPs, we calculated: (a) the percentage of students and parents who reported they attended the IEP meeting (from survey question 1); (b) whether students and parents reported they knew the employment (survey questions 2 & 3) and training (survey questions 4 & 5) goals included on the IEP; (c) of those who stated they knew the goal, the extent to which there was a match between the student and parent stated employment and training goals and the actual goals listed on the IEP; (d) percentage of various explanations for mismatch (e.g., true disagreement due to different answers, goal too broad); and (e) percentage of missing postsecondary IEP goals. To answer the third research question involving the match between goals described in the IEP and student and parent reported postsecondary plans, we compared: (a) students' and parents' postsecondary plans (from survey question 6) and (b) employment and training postsecondary goals listed in IEP, and we calculated the extent to which a match was found between the students' and parents' stated plans and the postsecondary goals in the IEP. To answer the fourth research question involving the match between student and parent postsecondary plans we compared students' and parents' postsecondary plans (from survey question 6) and then calculated the extent to which a match was found between the students' and parents' stated future plans.

Results

Student and parent awareness of employment and training goals

Of the 93 students and parents included in the study, 73% ($n = 68$) of the students and 82% ($n = 76$) of the parents reported attending the last IEP meeting.

Student awareness of employment goals

Ninety-three students responded to employment goal questions 2 and 3. Twelve IEPs (13%) did not include employment goals. Results are presented in Table 3. Of those 93 students, 59% ($n = 55$) reported knowing the IEP employment goal. However, when asked to state his/her employment goal, only 33% ($n = 18$) of students who stated they knew the IEP goal ($n = 55$) provided responses that matched the goals listed in the IEPs. Forty-five percent ($n = 25$) of the responses did not match the goals listed in the IEPs for various reasons (see Table 4). Of those 25 responses, 13 were different than the goal listed in the IEP. Ten included goals that were broader than the student's response, two included goals stated by the student that were broader than the goal on the IEP. For example, an IEP goal of "the student is interested in seeking competitive employment" was broader than the student response of "small gas engine repair." An IEP goal of "student will be gainfully employed in an environmental field" was more specific than the student response of "get a job."

Table 3. Student and parent knowledge of employment and training goals.

	Student				Parent			
	Employment		Training		Employment		Training	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Survey response matched goal	18	33	20	38	16	29	19	37
No goal	12	22	8	15	12	22	8	15
Survey response did not match goal	25	45	24	46	28	50	25	48

Note. Percent was calculated by dividing *n* by total number who reported knowing IEP goal.

Student awareness of training goals

Ninety-three students responded to training goal questions 4 and 5. Results are presented in Table 3. Eight IEPs (9%) did not include training goals. Of those 93 students, 56% ($n = 52$) reported knowing the IEP training goal. When asked to state his/her training goal, 38% ($n = 20$) of students who stated they knew

Table 4. Explanation for student/parent incompatible responses.

	Student				Parent			
	Employment		Training		Employment		Training	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Different	13	52	11	46	16	57	14	56
Goal was broader than student/parent response	10	40	2	8	8	29	3	12
Parent/student response was broader than goal	2	8	11	46	4	14	8	32

Note. The percent is calculated by dividing the number of responses that fit the category by the number that did not match IEP goals.

the IEP goal provided responses that matched the goals listed in the IEP. Of the 46% ($n = 24$) that did not match, 11 were truly different, two included goals that were broader than student responses, and 11 included goals stated by the student that were broader than the goal on the IEP. For example, an IEP training goal of "the student will receive on-the-job training in order to work in transportation as a truck driver" is more specific than a student response of "go to job corps." For example, an IEP goal of "the student will attend a two- or four-year college" was broader than a student response of "electrical technician."

Parent awareness of employment goals

Ninety-three parents answered the employment goal questions 2 and 3. Twelve IEPs (13%) did not include employment goals. Results are presented in Table 3. Of those 93 parents, 60% ($n = 56$) stated knowing the IEP employment goal. When asked to state his/her child's employment goals, only 29% ($n = 16$) of parent responses matched the IEP goal, while 50% ($n = 28$) did not match what was written in the IEP for various reasons (see Table 4). Of those 28 that did not match, 16 were truly different, eight included goals that were broader than student responses, and four included goals stated by the student that were broader than the goal on the IEP. An IEP goal of "the student will pursue full-time competitive employment" was broader than a parent response of "to get an internship or apprenticeship working in the electrical field." An IEP of "student will attend college to study business management and upon completing college the student will work in the men's fashion business" was more specific than a parent response of "go to college."

Parent awareness of training goals

Ninety-three parents responded to training goal questions 4 and 5. Results are presented in Table 3. Of those 93 parents, 56% ($n = 52$) reported knowing the IEP training goal. Eight IEPs (8.6%) did not include training goals. When asked to state his/her child's training goal, 37% ($n = 19$) of parent responses matched the IEP goal and 48% ($n = 25$) did not match what was written as the IEP goal for various reasons (see Table 4). Of those 25 that did not match, 14 were different, three included goals that were broader than parent responses, and eight included goals stated by the parent that were broader than the goal on the IEP. For example, the IEP goal of "the student will acquire the skills to successfully transition to a two- or four-year college" was broader than the parent response of "the student will go to school to become a law enforcement officer."

Agreement between student and parent post-high school plans and postsecondary goals

Ninety-three students responded to question 6 regarding future plans. Results are presented in Table 5. Of those 93 students, 90% ($n = 84$) stated having plans for after high school. Five IEPs (6%) did not include both employment and training goals. Of those who stated having plans for after high school, 38% ($n = 32$) of student responses matched the IEP goal and 56% ($n = 47$) did not match the IEP goal for various reasons (see Table 6). Of those 47 that did not match, 23 were different, six included goals that were broader than student responses, and 18 included goals stated by the student that were broader than the goal on the IEP. For example, a goal of "the student will attend postsecondary education or training" was broader than a student response of "going to college for music." A student response of "go to college to get a degree and start my life" was broader than an IEP goal of "the student will attend a four-year college to study marine biology."

Ninety-three parents responded to question 6 regarding his/her child's future goals. Results are presented in Table 5. Of those 93 parents, 52% ($n = 48$) reported knowing his/her child's future goals. Of the 48 parents who reported knowing his/her child's plans, 38% ($n = 18$) of parent responses matched the IEP goals and 52% ($n = 25$) did not match the IEP goal for various reasons (see Table 6). Of those 25 that did not match, 18 were different, three included goals that were broader than student responses, and four included goals stated by the student that were broader than the goal on the IEP. An IEP goal of "the student will receive on-the-job training or attend a two-year college" was broader than a parent response of "go to a [name of university] while working."

Table 5. Agreement between student/parent stated plans for the future and postsecondary goals.

	Student		Parent	
	n	%	*n*	%
Reported future plans	84	100	48	72
Future plans matched goal	32	38	18	48
No goals	5	6	5	6
Future plans did not match goal	47	56	25	52

Table 6. Explanation for incompatible responses between IEP goals and future plans.

	Student		Parent	
	n	%	*n*	%
Different	23	49	18	72
Goal is too broad	6	13	3	12
Student/parent response is too broad	18	38	4	16

Note. The percent of the remaining categories is calculated by dividing the number of responses that fit the category by the number who reported knowing IEP goal.

Agreement between student and parent of post-high school plans

Ninety-three students and parents responded to question 6 regarding the student's future goals. Of those 93 respondents, 90% of students ($n = 84$) stated having plans for after high school and 52% of parents ($n = 48$) reported knowing their child's future plans. This resulted in 39 paired responses that could be compared and a total of 21 responses that matched and 18 that did not match between parents and students.

Discussion

Meaningful involvement of students with SEB needs and their parents in transition planning is one critical component of addressing the continuously poor postsecondary outcomes experienced by these students. This is the first study to our knowledge to evaluate parent and student involvement in transition planning beyond review of IEPs for students with SEB challenges. Specifically, we measured parent and student knowledge of postsecondary training and education goals described in IEPs, the concordance of parent- and student-reported knowledge of the goals and actual IEP goals and future plans, and the agreement between student- and parent-stated plans for the adolescent's future. Overall, results indicate limited knowledge of training and employment goals, as well as excessive incongruence between student future plans and goals, suggesting limited student and parent involvement in the development and implementation of the IEP. In addition, identified mismatch between student and parent future plans suggests a further disconnect contributing to lack of cohesive planning. In the following sections, we discuss our findings in relation to the previous literature and best practice.

Results of the current study indicated that a majority of students (73%) and parents (82%) reported attending IEP meetings and between 50% and 60% indicated knowledge of the employment and training goals in the students' IEPs. These results are similar to Landmark and Zhang (2013) who found that 65.1% of parents contributed to the development of postsecondary goals. However, when we matched the goals that students and parents reported to the goals described in the IEPs, only approximately 29% to 38% of those who reported knowing the goals reported accurately. Furthermore, 13% of IEPs were missing employment and 9% were missing training goals, indicating that meaningful transition planning might not have ever been initiated. The incongruent results between student/parent-reported goals and listed IEP goals were due to three reasons: (a) responses that were different than the listed IEP goal; (b) employment goals that lacked specificity; and (c) vague student responses. These results further imply a lack of sustained effort to plan meaningfully for students' successful transition. In addition, almost half of the student and parent responses regarding future plans did not match, adding to the lack of congruence and communication between significant parties involved in transition planning.

These findings reveal two main issues that must be addressed. First, it is clear that our results support prior findings by Lane and Carter (2006) and Wagner et al. (2012) that, although we as a field appear to have increased parent and student attendance at IEP meetings, we have not sufficiently addressed the importance of student and parent input in the decision-making process. This lack of meaningful participation might be explained by parents' passive participation (Lane & Carter, 2006) or unreceptiveness to the school's input due to a history of negative school-related experiences, for example, suspension or expulsion (Wagner et al., 2012). Although the current survey and research questions do not address level of participation and did not verify the actual presence or absence of the students and parents, a meaningful number of students and parents reported not being at the IEP meeting. Legal mandates require transition goals to be developed based on students' strengths, needs, preferences, and interests, with student and parent input. Although it is possible that parents and students attended the IEP meeting and did not remember the goals written, it is doubtful that a match would not have occurred if the IEP goal reflected student and parent plans for the future, or if the goals

were actively implemented in school. It is concerning that so many students and parents were unaware of the goals and this lack of awareness indicates a lack of active implementation and follow-up.

Second, although best practice indicates that goals should be appropriate and measurable, school-based IEP teams seem to be writing broad employment postsecondary goals even when the student had specific postsecondary plans in mind. Goals that were too broad frequently stated a sentence such as "The student will gain employment," while the student response included greater specificity (e.g., get a job as a nurse). This lack of specificity in the IEP appears to speak to a lack of commitment to adequate transition planning. Postsecondary goals are written as a guide for training that is necessary before the student graduates from high school. For example, if a student plans to work in a vocational field after high school, such as automotive mechanics, then simply writing a goal that the student "will obtain gainful employment" without specifying the type of job and necessary skills needed to obtain that specific job will not be beneficial to the student. Although the quality of the transition goals is beyond the scope of this study, it became a glaring issue when coding the data. This is a unique area of inquiry that needs further study.

This study is not without limitations. First, although the IEPs were diverse and originated from five different states, the relatively small number from each state (i.e., 6–30) limits generalizability of the results. Second, it is possible that parents and students knew the IEP goals, but did not remember them for the survey; however, we contend that if the parents and students had meaningful involvement in the IEP process, and transition would be an active component in the student's instructional program, they would have remembered the goals. Third, it is possible that goals might have changed between the time the IEP was collected by the research staff and parents completed the survey. However, we made ever attempt possible to assure that we had the most current IEP.

In conclusion, our findings suggest that students and parents are attending IEP meetings; however, work is needed to increase the meaningfulness of parent and student participation in relation to postsecondary transition goals and to establish effective methods to teach teams to write effective goals. These strategies have the potential to increase the postsecondary success of youth with EBD, an area in serious need.

Implications for practice

Our findings have many implications for practice. Specifically, procedures that can be implemented throughout the IEP process, from goal development to progress monitoring, can be followed to increase student and parent knowledge of postsecondary training and employment goals. Teachers and other IEP team members need to provide multiple opportunities for students and parents to provide meaningful input into the development of the IEP employment and education goals. Students and parents should leave the meeting with a clear understanding of the adopted goals. In addition, teachers need to ensure that students and parents are continually reminded of those goals through activities leading to mastery. This can be accomplished through the activities described below and depicted in Figure 1.

The first instance in which student and parental involvement can be encouraged is the information-gathering stage before the development of the draft goals. Teams should use tools designed to collect information on student skills and preferences that would generate discussion and help the teams outline

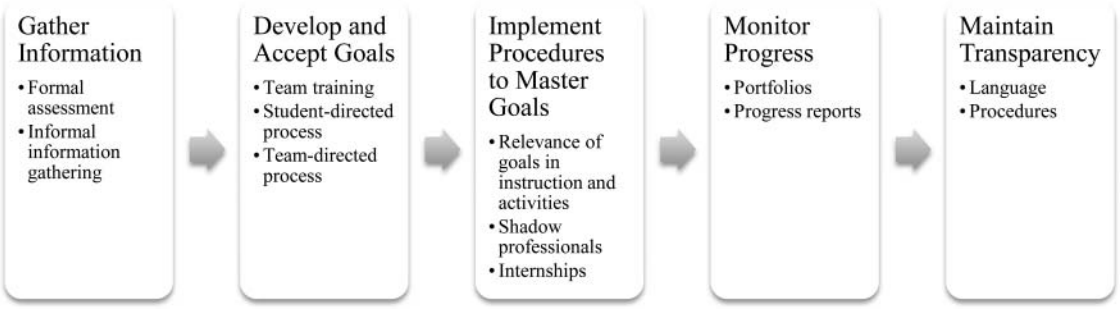

Figure 1. Methods of increasing parent and student meaningful involvement at each stage of the transition process.

a training and career path. There are many examples of tools that teams can use. For example, surveys are available that examine the student's preferred activities, preferred school subjects, and personality traits, and the results are used to match student interests to a career path (e.g., finance, education, manufacturing) that would fit the student's interest and personality. Rating scales and questionnaires that assess student's job readiness in terms of employability skills, such as prosocial behaviors and daily living skills (e.g., Career Portfolio by Sarkees-Wircenski & Wircenski, 1994; Employability/Life Skills Assessment by Weaver & DeLuca) are a quick way to collect teacher, parent, and student feedback on student's preparedness for a job. The National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT) provides guidelines to help schools conduct student-centered transition planning. Readers should refer to the "Age Appropriate Assessment Transition Toolkit" for more examples of assessment tools designed to collect information about students' strengths, weaknesses, preferences and other relevant information.

In addition, information can be gathered from informal conversations with students. It was unsettling to see goals that were different than what the student stated as his plan for the future. This could be accounted for by educator beliefs that students' plans were unrealistic. When discrepancies arise between student strengths and plans for the future, or differences between student and parents' plans are evident, the team should discuss their concerns with the student and parents. This discussion should result in a compromise of goal content. However, educators should be careful when determining what is and is not feasible for students, as the process should not diminish students' confidence in future plans.

After the transition assessment is complete, parents and students should be meaningfully involved in the development of draft transition goals. One option is to have students develop their own goals. The Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction (SDLMI) developed by the Kentucky Youth Advocacy Project (KYAP) provides educators with one model of instruction that would enable students to set goals and problem-solve to achieve those goals in order to accomplish student-directed outcomes. To optimize these outcomes, team members should identify one educator responsible for teaching the students how to participate in the process. Another option is for teams to draft the goals with parent and student input at the meeting. Regardless of which approach teams select, parents and students should provide substantial input.

Once the goals are drafted, they must be formulated into observable and measurable goal statements. Our results indicate this is an area in which IEP teams need training. Goals must be clear and measurable and reflect the students' strengths, needs, preferences, and interests based on transition assessment results. The majority of the goals written in the IEPs that we reviewed were broad and vague. Every IEP should have a level of detail that enables an individual unfamiliar with the student to fully understand the instructional planning and supports needed for the student to succeed (Bugaj, 2000). Typically this training occurs during the preservice phase of educator training; however, we question whether emphasis is placed on academic goals to a degree that transition goals are neglected. An effective model of training is to teach and model the skill and provide follow-up coaching until the team has mastered the skill. Best practice indicates that follow-up procedures would include review of the transition goals with reteaching as needed. In addition, many IEP goals are computer-generated and as such teachers should be taught to carefully select goals or to add goals to the program. Training is not a one-shot event. It should be completed over multiple sessions with many reviews.

The transition process does not stop after the goals have been drafted and accepted. The team must decide which members will be responsible for implementing the goals and the responsible members should build relevance for coursework and collaborate with others. Educators can align daily activities with transition goals through projects, homework, and other tasks. These activities should incorporate both student and parental involvement. When students express an interest in specific careers, teachers and parents can work together to schedule opportunities for the student to shadow individuals in those professions as they go about their daily routines. In addition, students can volunteer or intern in environments in which they hope to work as adults. Educators should collect feedback from both the student and workplace supervisor in terms of students' workplace performance. For example, the Community Based Assessment Questionnaire developed by Pittsburgh Public Schools is a useful tool for collecting workplace

information on the student. The questionnaire identifies discrepancies between expected and delivered performance that the team can then use to better plan what supports the student will need to address the discrepancy and help the student be successful in the current job or a future similar job. These activities provide opportunities for students and parents to understand progress toward the goals and provide input into adapting the goals if needed.

Monitoring progress and notifying parents and students of progress on transition activities designed to increase the likelihood of mastering the goals is a way of promoting student and parent involvement. Progress monitoring can be accomplished through several procedures. Teachers can monitor progress by having students create portfolios that track their preparation for each transition goal. The portfolios can include information from the assessment and community activities described above and can also include research regarding the hoped-for education and/or profession. Throughout this process teachers can emphasize the individualized career and education goals to parents and students. In addition, progress should be reported on transition goals at the same time and in the same manner as progress is reported on academic goals, simultaneously with grade reporting.

Throughout the process, educators must query parent and student perspectives of the transparency of the process. In addition to the process described above, educators must be wary of language and procedures. The importance of using language that parents understand and avoiding unnecessary jargon is strongly emphasized. When special education "language" is necessary, then we should clearly and precisely explain what is meant to parents. In addition, every step of the process should be explained to parents and students and feedback should be requested. Educators must listen to parent and student input and adapt their ways to meaningfully include parent and student input.

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