



College, Career and Life Readiness

A Step by Step Guide for Driving Change in Transition Practices using Tools and Resources developed under Next Steps NH

For an interactive version, visit:
nextsteps-nh.org/toolkit-driving-change/



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Drive Schoolwide Change: The Art and Science of Implementation

Step 1: Designate a Transition Leader

Step 2: Form a Leadership Team

Step 3: Look at your data

Step 4: Evaluate your transition-focused practices

Step 5: Decide priorities, brainstorm and research solutions

Step 6: Create your action plan and get started

Step 7: Review progress, reflect, and start again

Step 1: Designate a Transition Leader

The Transition Team Leader oversees the ongoing work of a Transition Leadership Team.

Characteristics of successful Transition Team Leaders include:

Must have:

- Able to dedicate 10-15 hours per month
- Knowledge of school and departmental procedures and decision-making processes
- Ability to facilitate meetings of peers
- Some knowledge of transition requirements in special education

Desirable:

- Knowledge of adult services for individuals with disabilities including:
 - Employment
 - Community Mental Health
 - Area Agencies (developmental disability system)
 - Benefits
- Knowledge of Extended Learning Opportunities
- Skill with parent, family, student engagement
- Skill with transition planning, including Indicator 13 and 14 knowledge

The Transition Team Leader is a member of the School Leadership Team, and coordinates internal activities such as setting up and facilitating meetings, and monitoring progress of team action plans.

Key Question: Who from your high school could fulfill the role of Transition Team Leader?

Name	
Position	
Name	
Position	

Step 2: Form a Leadership Team and establish Your Vision, Mission and Principles

Leadership Team

Your Transition **Leadership Team** will meet regularly to address the comprehensive transition program elements specific to students with disabilities and students at risk of dropping out of school. This team can be an already existing team, but should include membership from:

- Administration (Principal, Assistant Principal, Special Education Director)
- Transition Leader
- Special Education
- Guidance
- Certified Educator
- Community Partner
- Student(s)
- Parent(s)

List the members of your project leadership team and their role:

Name	Role
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	

[Vision, Mission and Principles](#)

A strong team is committed to a shared vision, mission and a set of principles.

Vision: What will it look like in five years? Be brief!

Example: Next Steps NH Project Vision: All students successfully transition to postsecondary education or training, employment and community living.

Mission: How will we achieve the vision? Here's a suggested format: *The mission of (team) is to provide (what) to (whom) in order to (what?).* Mission is about how you will achieve the vision, NOT the specific things you plan to do. Don't include activities.

Example: *The mission of Next Steps NH is to provide professional development and coaching to selected New Hampshire high schools to implement evidence-informed transition planning practices in order to increase the graduation rate of students with disabilities and students at risk of dropping out and prepare them for college, career and adult life.*

Principles: These are "We believe" statements that state the project's philosophical underpinnings.

Example: Next Steps Project Principles. We believe:

- The student is at the center of transition planning, and the student drives the plan.
- All students must have access to the opportunity to prepare for postsecondary education, employment and independent living.
- All students must have access to personalized learning strategies.
- Everyone benefits when families actively engage as partners in transition planning.
- All educators, including Institutions of Higher Education faculty, need to work together to improve transition outcomes for NH youth.
- Positive working relationships with open communication and dialogue are foundational to the transition planning process.
- Transition practices must be school-wide, evidence-informed, systematic, and sustainable.
- All project activities must align with these values.

Key Questions:

- 1. Do you have a team that makes sure all youth with disabilities and youth at risk are involved in all the activities needed for successful transition?**
- 2. Are you working under a vision and mission statement that commits you to successful transition of youth with disabilities or youth at risk?**

Step 3: Look at your transition-related data.

1. What publicly available transition-related data exists for your district?

NH District and School Data Profiles and Data Reports

http://education.nh.gov/instruction/special_ed/data_profiles/index.htm

<http://www.education.nh.gov/data/index.htm#dr>

2. What internal data do you have?

Here are examples of places you might find transition-related data in addition to what is regularly reported:

- Department standards for:
 - Writing Indicator 13 compliant IEPs
 - Age Appropriate Transition Assessments
 - Summary of Performance
 - Level of student and family involvement in the IEP and transition process
 - Outside agency involvement in the IEP/transition process
- Existing transition and ELO policies and procedures
- Numbers of students identified as at-risk
- Behavior data
- Suspension data
- Attendance data

Key Questions:

- 1. What data do you want to see improve?**
- 2. How will you know you have made progress towards your vision or mission?**
- 3. Do you need different data? What will you put in your action plan about gathering data to track your progress?**

Step 4: Evaluate your transition-focused practices

Fidelity tools describe best practices and help you figure out where you are compared to those practices. The following tools serve as needs assessments AND tools to track progress over time.

1. Select a tool (or tools):

If you want to:	Use the:
Implement transition planning activities and opportunities that are embedded in school-wide practices for students in special education and students at-risk.	➔ Transition-Focused Education Framework Fidelity Tool
Implement best practice Extended Learning Opportunities (ELOs) .	➔ ELO Fidelity Tool
Implement high level family-school engagement in transition practices	➔ Transition-Focused Education Framework Fidelity Tool AND follow the <i>Guide to Family Engagement Groups</i>

2. Complete your tool.
 - a. Set aside time to complete the tools. Each will take 2-3 one-hour meetings to complete. Give participants of your leadership Team time to review the document in advance of your meetings.
 - b. At the meetings, read through each critical component as a group. Discuss how that activity occurs in your school and record notes about what is shared.
 - c. By consensus, decide if each critical component is “in place,” “partially in place,” or “not in place.” For example, you may ask one member to propose a rating, then facilitate the agreement, disagreement and further discussion until you reach consensus on a single score.

RENEW is a key component of Next Steps NH but is not included in this handbook. For information about RENEW Implementation, visit:

www.iod.unh.edu/Projects/renew/renew_main.aspx

Key Point: Decisions about what practices to improve and what activities are in place should be made by your full Leadership Team, not one person.

Part 5: Pick priorities; brainstorm and research solutions.

Picking priorities and identifying solutions is both exciting and overwhelming. The process we propose is intended to help keep it manageable, while also ensuring that it represents the combined wisdom of your thoughtfully designed Leadership Team.

1. As a full Leadership Team, pick priorities:
 - a. Look at the items you identify as “not in place” or “partially in place.” What items do you need to deal with first?
 - b. Identify 3-5 high priorities for the coming year. Consider compliance standards, alignment with other initiatives, and availability of critical resources when deciding.
1. Brainstorm and research solutions:
 - a. Some questions to prompt brainstorming:
 - How could this be addressed?
 - What have peers done who have experience with this?
 - What resources (people, tools, funds) do we already have related to this?
 - b. Suggestions for research:
 - Search around the Next Steps website for trainings, tools and resources.
 - What do local, regional and state experts in this topic suggest? Assign members of the leadership team to do some outreach and research if needed.

Key Point: You can’t do everything. You can always add more if you complete your action plan early.

Step 6: Create your action plan.

So, how do you turn all this into an action plan? We can offer you two examples, the Fidelity Tool Results Worksheet and the Action Planning Grid.

- The **Framework Fidelity Tool Results Worksheet** helps you pull related items from different parts of the Framework into one Focus area, and create action steps related to that.

Example: if there several priorities areas that relate to staff and parents understanding what Transition Resources are available, use this worksheet to assemble them under one “Resources” Focus area. Then, this focus area might include action steps like “create a resource document,” “parent training on resources,” and “create procedure for staff related to accessing resources.”

- The **Simple Action Planning Tool** is good if you are really focused on a couple of specific practices.

With either method, consider how much is reasonable in the coming year given other work you have underway. Use the SMART GOAL Strategy. With this, actions should be:

1. **Specific,**
2. **Measurable,**
3. **Achievable**
4. **Realistic**
5. **Timely**

Or more simply “Who is going to do what by when?”

Key Point: This is how something actually gets done. The action plan becomes the Leadership Team’s to-do list. Review it at each meeting.

Step 7: Review, reflect, and start again

Meaningful change happens incrementally and thoughtfully. This step reminds you to take the time to make sure that the good work you are investing so much time in is owned by many. Though it may, at times, seem to take longer, it will create change that lasts!

Throughout the year:

- Meet regularly to review the progress on action steps in between meetings.
- Hold each other accountable, encourage each other to keep going, and be willing to revise the plan when needed.

At the end of the school year:

- Assess what has been completed. CELEBRATE IT!!!!
- Reflect on what worked and what didn't work.
- Set a meeting schedule for the following year, including summer activities if needed
- Start again in the fall!!

Key point: Be sure to give (and take) credit for work accomplished! If you're doing it right, the work is never done. You just get better and better at it.

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