Transition Competencies
for Preservice Special Education Programs

In order to support positive transition outcomes for youth in NH, it is imperative that we address critical transition knowledge and skills at both the inservice and preservice levels (Morningstar, 2013). According to Benitez, Morningstar, and Frey (2009), secondary special educators reported that they often lack foundational knowledge and skills in transition and career development planning and programming, affecting their ability to plan for individual student transitions (Benitez, Morningstar, Frey 2009). To this end, the NH Department of Education, Office of Special Education Next Steps New Hampshire (NSNH) project developed a set of core competencies to enhance special education teacher candidate knowledge and skills about transition. The *Next Steps NH Transition Competencies for Preservice Special Education Programs* (2014) includes a set of six transition core competencies and 31 corresponding key elements to guide knowledge and skill development of special education teacher candidates. The standards are not required for state certification, but are intended to enhance curriculum efforts by providing a set of important transition skills and knowledge for beginning special educators.

The competencies are framed by the *Taxonomy for Transition Programming* (Kohler, 1996) so that competency development is addressed in a larger context of established transition program improvement areas. The NSNH project also utilizes the *Taxonomy* to frame transition professional development in NH high schools.

Development of Competencies

The Council for Exceptional Children's *Advanced Special Education Transition Specialist Standards* (2013) was used as the primary guide for the development of the competencies. These statements were adapted for preservice special education. Additionally, the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (2011) identified key transition competencies for secondary special educators in *What Secondary Special Education Teachers Need to Know.* These national competencies were cross-referenced and verified with the *NH Transition Competencies for Preservice Special Education Programs*. The competencies and key elements were developed by the

The contents of these materials were developed under a grant from the US Department of Education, H323A120003. However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the US Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government. Project Officer, Corinne Weidenthal.

Next Steps NH Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) subgroup and reviewed by the NSNH Leadership Team. Special education faculty at Keene State College, Keene, NH, also reviewed these standards for use and applicability.

We provide a reference to the Council for Exceptional Education's *Special Educator Initial Preparation Standards* (2012) for each key element. These standards are widely accepted as the framework for preparing special education teachers.

This is an evolving document, and we hope to engage in further revision and validation. Please contact Steve Bigaj at sbigaj@keene.edu with feedback and questions.

Taxonomy Areas and Competencies

A. Taxonomy Area: Student-Focused Planning
Competency A1: Use information from a variety of transition assessments to inform student-centered transition and career development planning.
Competency A2: Develop student-centered transition IEPs that ensure student voice in goals, processes, and outcomes.
B. Taxonomy Area: Student Development
Competency B: Design student-centered curriculum, instruction, assessments, related activities, and accommodations that will facilitate the movement toward identified post-secondary goals.
C. Taxonomy Area: Interagency Collaboration
Competency C: Collaborate with stakeholders to insure and increase effective transition services, activities, supports, and outcomes for individuals with disabilities and their families.
D. Taxonomy Area: Family Involvement
Competency D: Actively involve all families with sensitivity and responsiveness to the family's cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic makeup throughout the transition decision-making and implementation process.
E. Taxonomy Area: Program Structures
Competency E: Knowledge of program structures that use evidence-informed practices and research to establish effective programs and services.

A. Student-Focused Planning

Student-focused planning competencies support the development of practices that use assessment information and facilitate students' self-determination to develop individual education programs based on students' post-school goals.

K-12 General Special Education Transition Competencies and Key Elements	CEC Standards: Initial Level, Special Educator Preparation	CEC Advanced Special Education Transition Specialist Cross-Reference	NSTTAC: What Special Education Teachers Need to Know Cross-Reference
A1. Use information from a variety of transition assessments to inform student-centered transition and career development planning.	Assessment		1M3; 1M4 3-6M7; 3-6M9
Key Elements			
A1.1 Understand a variety of formal and informal transition assessments and procedures used to identify students strengths, preferences, interests, and needs critical to transition outcomes (postsecondary education, employment, independent living).	Assessment	Assessment K1.1	1M3; 1M4; 3-6M7; 3-6M9
A1.2 Conduct informal transition assessments and modify to meet individual student needs.	Assessment	Assessment S1.2	1M4; 1M1C
A1.3 Communicate transition assessment information so that the results are understood by students, families, and professionals.	Assessment	Assessment S1.3	3-6M9
A2. Develop student-centered transition IEPs that ensure student voice in goals, processes, and outcomes.		Programs, services, and outcomes	1M1
Key Elements			
A2.1 Write measurable postsecondary goals that reflect student interests and preferences.	Instructional Planning and Strategies	Programs, Services, and Outcomes	1M1F
A2.2 Write measurable annual goals and objectives related to measurable postsecondary goals.	Instructional Planning and Strategies	Programs, Services, and Outcomes S3.1	1M1F
A2.3 Design transition services and course of study to achieve postsecondary goals and objectives.	Instructional Planning and Strategies	Programs, Services, and Outcomes S3.2	1M1D 1M1F
A2.4 Align instructional activities and related activities with postsecondary goals and objectives.	Instructional Planning and Strategies	Programs, Services, and Outcomes S3.3	3-6M3 3-6M7
A2.5 Knowledge of the importance and elements of a student-centered summary of performance.	Instructional Planning and Strategies	Collaboration S7.10	
A2.6 Knowledge of state and federal transition requirements and how to incorporate them into an IEP.	Instructional Planning and Strategies		

B. Student Development

Student development competencies support the development of practices that emphasize life, employment, and occupational skill development through school-based and work-based learning experiences. Student assessment and accommodations provide a fundamental basis for student development resulting in successful transitions.

K-12 General Special Education Transition Competencies and Key Elements	CEC Standards: Initial Level, Special Educator Preparation	CEC Advanced Special Education Transition Specialist Cross-Reference	NSTTAC: What Special Education Teachers Need to Know Cross-Reference
B. Design student-centered curriculum, instruction, assessments, related activities, and accommodations that will facilitate the movement toward identified post-secondary goals.	Instructional Planning and Strategies		1M1D; 1M1F 3-6M3
Key Elements			
B1. Knowledge of a range of post-school options (i.e., employment, postsecondary education, and independent living) to inform student-centered transition and career development planning.	Instructional Planning and Strategies	Programs, services, and outcomes K3.6	
B2. Knowledge of evidence-informed instruction, curricular resources, and practices (including Extended Learning Opportunities, ELOs) regarding transition to post-school settings.	Curricular Content Knowledge	Curricular Content Knowledge K2.1	3-6M2; 3-6M3
B3. Knowledge of augmentative and alternative communication systems and a variety of assistive technologies that support transition and career development for individuals with disabilities.	Instructional Planning and Strategies	Curricular Content Knowledge S2.2	3-6M8; 1Y8
B4. Knowledge of curricular resources and instructional activities that educators can use to connect general education course content to an individual's postsecondary goals.	Instructional Planning and Strategies	Programs, services, and outcomes S2.1	3-6M2
B5. Teach self-advocacy and self-determination skills to facilitate students' understanding of their strengths and challenges.	Instructional Planning and Strategies	Curricular Content Knowledge S2.3	3-6M8
B6. Articulate the importance and impact of a variety of work-based learning experiences including ELOs.	Instructional Planning and Strategies	Programs, Services, and Outcomes	

C. Interagency Collaboration

Collaboration competencies facilitate the involvement of school personnel, community businesses, organizations, and agencies in all aspects of transition-focused education.

K-12 General Special Education Transition Competencies and Key Elements	CEC Standards: Initial Level, Special Educator Preparation	CEC Advanced Special Education Transition Specialist Cross-Reference	NSTTAC: What Special Education Teachers Need to Know Cross-Reference
C. Collaborate with stakeholders to insure and increase effective transition services, activities, supports, and outcomes for individuals with disabilities and their families.	Collaboration		
Key Elements			
C1. Knowledge of roles and responsibilities of educators, employers, and other service providers in a variety of settings related to postsecondary outcomes.	Collaboration	Collaboration K7.2	1Y5
C2. Articulate strategies that facilitate collaboration among transition stakeholders.	Collaboration	Collaboration K7.1	
C3. Advocate for integrating transition content within general academic courses for individual students.	Curricular Content Knowledge	Curricular Content Knowledge S2.1	3-6M2
C4. Knowledge of how to connect students to internal school resources (e.g., technical education, school counseling) and community resources (e.g., vocational rehabilitation, mental health).	Instructional Planning and Strategies	Collaboration	
C5. Knowledge of how to prepare the student, family, agency representatives, and other IEP team members for the transition planning process.	Professional Learning and Ethical Practice	Leadership and Policy S5.5	1Y7
C6. Knowledge of how to coordinate and facilitate transition planning during and after IEP meetings.	Professional Learning and Ethical Practice	Leadership and Policy S5.6	
C7. Understand the student/family referral process for postsecondary and community services.	Collaboration	Collaboration S7.7	
C8. Develop and maintain professional ethics in working with students, families, school personnel, community, and agency personnel.	Professional Learning and Ethical Practice	Professional and Ethical Practice S6.1	

D. Family Involvement

Family involvement competencies support parent and family participation in planning and delivering education and transition services. Family-focused training and family empowerment activities increase the ability of family members to work effectively with educators and other service providers.

K-12 General Special Education Transition Competencies and Key Elements	CEC Standards: Initial Level, Special Educator Preparation	CEC Advanced Special Education Transition Specialist Cross-Reference	NSTTAC: What Special Education Teachers Need to Know Cross-Reference
D. Actively involve all families with sensitivity and responsiveness to each family's cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic makeup throughout the transition decision-making and implementation process.	Collaboration		
Key Elements			
D1. Articulate the significance of family engagement throughout the post-secondary transition planning process and how it relates to increased student success.	Collaboration	Programs, Services, and Outcomes	
D2. Knowledge of the student and family's cultural and environmental context and how it affects behavior and learning.	Collaboration	Programs, Services, and Outcomes K3.7	
D3. Understand the supports necessary for families to communicate effectively and work collaboratively with educational personnel.	Collaboration	Collaboration	
D4. Identify information for families to understand transition related education services, information on IDEA, and potential support networks and services.	Collaboration	Collaboration	

E. Program Structures

Program structure competencies support efficient and effective delivery of transition-focused education and services, including philosophy, planning, policy, evaluation, and human resource development. The structures and attributes of a school provide the framework for a transition perspective.

K-12 General Special Education Transition Competencies and Key Elements	**CEC Standards: Initial Level, Special Educator Preparation**	**CEC Advanced Special Education Transition Specialist Cross-Reference**	**NSTTAC: What Special Education Teachers Need to Know Cross-Reference**
E. Knowledge of program structures that use evidence-informed practices and research to establish effective programs and services.	Professional Learning and Ethical Practice		
Key Elements			
E1. Knowledge of career and technical instructional strategies, models, and curricula.	Professional Learning and Ethical Practice	Programs, Services, and Outcomes K3.5	1M2
E2. Knowledge of transition practices, programs, and services that produce successful post-school outcomes.	Professional Learning and Ethical Practice	Research and Inquiry K4.1	
E3. Knowledge of transition laws and policies (e.g., IDEA, Rehabilitation Act, Fair Labor Standards Act).	Professional Learning and Ethical Practice	Leadership and Policy K5.1	1M2
E4. Knowledge of organizations and publications relevant to the field of secondary special education and transition.	Professional Learning and Ethical Practice	Professional and Ethical Practice K6.3	

References

Benitez, D., Morningstar, M. E., & Frey, B. (2009). Transition service and delivery: A multi-state survey of special education teachers' perceptions of their transition competencies. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 32(1), 6-16.

Council for Exceptional Children. (2012). *CEC initial level special educator preparation standards*. Arlington, VA: Author.

Council for Exceptional Children. (2013). *Specialty set: CEC advanced special education transition specialist*. Arlington, VA: Author.

Kohler, P.D. (1996). *A taxonomy for transition programming: Linking research and practice*. Champaign: Transition Research Institute, University of Illinois.

Morningstar, M.E., & D.T. Frey (2013). Teacher training matters: The results of a multistate survey of secondary special educators regarding transition from school to adulthood. Teacher Education and Special Education, *36*(1), 51-64.

National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (2011). *Tool for what secondary special education teachers need to know*. D. W. Test, O. M. Toms, and L. C. Scroggins.

Next Steps NH Institutions of Higher Education Subgroup

Donna Couture, NH Department of Education, Next Steps NH, Coordinator
Steve Bigaj, Associate Dean, School of Professional and Graduate Studies, Keene State College
Betsy Street, Project Coordinator, Keene State College
Sheila Mahon, Monadnock Development Services
Joanne Malloy, University of New Hampshire, Institute on Disability
Dawn Breault, Transition Specialist, Alvirne High School, Alvirne, NH
Deb Merchant, Associate Professor of Special Education, Keene State College

1/30/2015