Next Steps NH Series

Course 3

Engaging Students and Families in Transition Assessment and Student Led IEP Process

Tips, Strategies and Tools

Making the Most of a G2M

• Muting & unmuting
• Using chat function
• Group activities
• Webcams

Learning Objectives

• Identify reasons for lack of engagement
• Identify key strategies for increasing engagement with student and families in meetings
• Identify key strategies for piloting Student Led IEPs
• Learn about the “the Checklist” as a tool for reflection

NSNH Essentials

Next Steps NH offers training and coaching on embedding evidence-informed transition practices in schools 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.

Training introduces and illustrates the practice.

Coaching supports putting the training to use.
Transition practices include:

- Enhanced transition planning, activities & opportunities, including RENEW
- Best practice Extended Learning Opportunities (ELOs)
- High level family-school engagement

Evidence shows that embedding new practices requires multi-stage implementation.

NSNH Essentials

Implementing practices with fidelity is a primary focus. The use of planning tools ensures fidelity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not In Place</th>
<th>Partially In Place</th>
<th>In Place</th>
<th>Critical Component of Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A4: Students are prepared to participate and do participate meaningfully in the development of their post school goals and plans to achieve those goals, and in any relevant meetings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A7: When a student has an IEP, there is evidence of ongoing, age-appropriate transition assessment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When implemented with fidelity these practices will increase the graduation rates of students with disabilities and students at-risk of dropping out and prepare them for college, career and adult life.

**NSNH Essentials**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not In Place</th>
<th>Partially In Place</th>
<th>In Place</th>
<th>Critical Component of Practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Families and school staff engage in regular two-way meaningful communication throughout the transition process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>School staff support student success by actively engaging families in decision-making through student assessments (including age-appropriate transition assessment, service delivery and program evaluation) to assist in successful transition planning.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Putting the Pieces Together**

1. **EXPLORATION**
   - Introductory trainings and mapping current practices

2. **INSTALLATION**
   - Developing action plan
   - Piloting self-determination practices, like student-led IEP and/or new transition assessment methods.

3. **INITIAL IMPLEMENTATION**
   - Identifying & addressing challenges
   - Scaling up

4. **FULL IMPLEMENTATION**
   - Ensuring processes & procedures in place
   - Recalibrating systems to accommodate & support new initiatives

**SUSTAINABILITY**

- Program Structures
- Resources, Ongoing Training and Coaching, Procedures, Oversight

**Agenda**

- Why Engagement Matters
- Strategies for Engagement
- Quick Tips and Hints for Transition Assessment and Piloting Student-Led IEP Meetings
- High Quality Family and Student Engagement Implementation and Coaching Using the NSNH Checklist

**Materials for Today**

- Slides
- Course 3 Action Planning Worksheet
- Transition Assessment Tips & Hints
- Student Led IEP Tips & Hints
- DCDT Student Involvement in IEP
- Next Steps NH Checklist
Why does engagement matter?

When schools, families and community members work together to support learning, children do better in school, stay in school longer and like school more.

– NH Connections/Parent Information Center, What’s in it for Me? Tip Sheet

Getting Comfortable with the Discomfort

THEN WHY CAN IT SEEM SO HARD SOMETIMES?

Family Factors:

- Real world implications of child with disability not reaching typical milestones
- Where and how are they going to live, work, play
- Fragmented service delivery system
- Changing role
  - Self-advocacy
  - Differences of opinion
- There own frustrations with their education and/or employment past and present

For a seed to achieve its greatest expression, it must come completely undone. The shell cracks, its insides come out and everything changes. To someone who doesn’t understand growth, it would look like complete destruction.

– Cynthia Cocelli
**Family Feelings**

- Shock ↓
- Depression ↓
- Denial ↓
- Guilt ↓
- Shame ↓

**Acceptance**

- Hope ↑
- Bargaining ↑
- Anger ↑
- Panic ↑

**→ Isolation →**

**Understanding Family Challenges**

- Family structure
- Stressors of juggling family/work life
- Conflicts due to missed work time
- Conflicts due to personal educational experiences
- Stresses from poverty, poor housing, nutrition
- Issues related to behavioral and medical concerns
- Diversity challenges

**Student Factors:**

- The unknown “Real World”
- Asserting themselves as adults
- The everyday drama and trauma of high school
- Dramatic physical, emotional and hormonal changes
- Family challenges

**School Factors:**

What are your challenges to engaging students and families?
Strategies for Increasing Parent and Student Engagement

- Help them be prepared
- Effective communication
- Avoid jargon, lingo & acronyms

Helping Parents Be Prepared

- Middle to High School transition meetings
- Individual and group parent education and training
- Resources on Nextsteps-nh.org
  - Everything Transition
    - Communication Processes
  - Tools for Family Involvement

“All great changes are preceded by chaos.”
Deepak Chopra
Helping Students Be Prepared

• Student Led IEP resources
  – Whose Future Is it
  – MEI Curriculum
• NSNH Student Trainings
• Integrating into planning processes

Family/Professional Partnerships

- Communication
- Professional Competence
- Respect
- Commitment
- Equality
- Trust

Effective Communication

Includes

• Good listening skills
• Observing body language
• Interpreting the message
• Controlling your emotions
• Considering your response
• Delivering the message
• Follow-up


EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION: LISTENING SKILLS
Listening - The Most Important Part of Effective Communication

- Following the thoughts and feelings of others to understand what they are saying from their perspective, frame of reference, or point of view
- Focus on maintaining dignity & respect for all participants

Checking for Understand: Listening Skills Tips

- Paraphrase
- Repeat
- Probe
- Clarify
- Remember

JARGON, LINGO AND ACRONYM ACTIVITY

- Reflect on the activities and group discussions from Courses 162, and your Next Steps NH Leadership Team discussions.
- What needs have been identified related to Parent and Student Preparation for meetings, Effective Communication by staff. Use of Acronyms, Lingo and Jargon by staff?
- What are your priorities? What’s in process?

ACTIVITY
Purpose of Transition Assessment

- Make informed choices
- Take charge of the transition process
- Understand the skills needed for post-school environments

Getting Started with Transition Assessment

- What are you standard procedures for transition assessments?
  - Examples:
    - career exploration
    - student vision
  - Tiered and timeline approaches

Getting Started with Transition Assessment

- Strategies, Tips and Hints for Keeping students and families engaged when:
  - Gathering assessment data
  - Performing informal transition assessments:
    - Discussing needs for more assessments
Family Engagement and Transition Assessment

- Making sure parents have the information to have informed discussion
  - Differences between earlier IEP development and Transition IEP development
  - How do you make sure parents have information about:
    - Process
    - Options
  - Shared Decision-making

Self-Determination Defined

A combination of skills, knowledge, and beliefs that enable a person to engage in goal-directed, self-regulated, autonomous behavior.

An understanding of one’s strengths and limitations together with a belief in oneself as capable and effective are essential to self-determination.

When acting on the basis of these skills and attitudes, individuals have greater ability to take control of their lives and assume the role of successful adults in our society.

Four Approaches for Promoting SD in Students

1. Use student-driven IEP and transition planning.
2. Directly teaching skills or enhancing knowledge
3. Embedding instruction into the general curriculum
4. Use Person-Centered Planning
Getting Started with Student-Led IEPs

- Standard procedures for Student-Led IEPs?
- Examples
- Quick Tips to Get Started

Other Logistics:

- Meeting Environment
  - Privacy, space
- Length of meeting and time
  - avoid allowing people who need to leave early to interrupt the agenda.
- One tool for team member orientation

Student Led IEP & Parent Engagement

- Prepare the parent; describe that you’re doing this to promote self-determination
- If parents will hear very unexpected info (eg significant change in goals), prep them.
- Ask the parent to please try to:
  - Let the student speak first. Silence is ok.
  - Talk directly to the student.
  - Ask questions.
  - Talk about concerns.
EVALUATING YOUR ENGAGEMENT SKILLS

The Checklist

Next Steps Checklist

- Practice Topic: Engagement Strategies
- Recommendations for use:
  - Use as a PD tool (peer-to-peer)
  - Use as a reflection tool (individually)
  - Consider video or observation
  - Develop a “coaching plan” (for more info: http://www.tadnet.org/pages/789#)

Participatory Adult Learning Strategy

NEXT STEPS WITH STUDENT LED IEP AND TRANSITION ASSESSMENT
Ideas for Application

• Use Quick Tips and Hints sheets to get started
• Map transition assessments and develop procedures
• Discuss your districts needs with your RI. Is additional, individualized Next Steps coaching available?
• Use the Checklist to provide peer-to-peer support and develop a “coaching plan”

Ideas for Application (cont.)

• Engage key administrators in discussions about Program Structure needs (procedures, resources, on going coaching)
• Offer training on being effective team members, communication skills and other resources on nextstep-nh.org
• Share information with parents about your transition procedures

ACTIVITY: Action Planning

• What priorities did you identify in the previous activity?
• Are there tools, resources and recommendations you heard about today that address your priorities?
• What unmet needs do you have? What do you need for support/resources?
• What will you focus on? By when?

Next Steps NH Transition Resource Portal

Today’s training materials will be available at: www.nextsteps-nh.org
Thank You!

The contents of this presentation 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.

This product is public domain. Authorization to reproduce it in whole or in part is granted. While permission to reprint is not necessary, the citation should be: NH State Personnel Development Grant – Next Steps NH (2012-2017). New Hampshire Department of Education, Concord.