

Secondary Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities

Secondary transition planning is when school staff work with students, families, and other partners to discuss what students want to do after high school and how to get there.



Schools develop Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for students with disabilities to ensure they receive the support they need.

Families can permit schools and vocational rehabilitation agencies to work together to help students with disabilities get pre-employment services.



Vocational rehabilitation agencies provide individualized services to students with disabilities and other populations to prepare for and engage in employment.






Secondary transition planning prepares students for **college**, **careers**, and active **community** participation.

Two laws support secondary transition planning for students with IEPs.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

IDEA focuses on educational services and supports that help students successfully transition to college, employment, independent living, and/or community participation.

Under IDEA, schools:






-  Engage students in transition planning starting no later than age 16.
-  Share information and work with families, students, and vocational rehabilitation agencies to determine the services required to help the student achieve post-high school goals.
-  Develop secondary transition plans within the IEPs to help students with disabilities reach their post-high school goals.

Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA)

WIOA focuses on employment supports that promote students' successful transition to college, employment, independent living, and/or community participation.

Under WIOA, vocational rehabilitation agencies:

- Partner with schools to support transition planning for students with disabilities at least 14 years old.
- Offer five pre-employment transition services for students ages 14-21:

-  Workplace readiness training
-  Self-advocacy instruction
-  Work-based learning experiences
-  Job exploration
-  Postsecondary education counseling

Schools should support students with disabilities early and often.

As part of their IEP process, more than 30 states begin transition planning and services much sooner than the required age of 16 so students can prepare for high school and beyond. Maryland, for example, starts with students who are age 14.

An IEP is a student-centered document that includes the transition section, and uses assessment data and information from the family and student to identify and monitor progress toward the student's postsecondary goals in education, employment, and independent living. These goals are put into a secondary transition plan within the IEP and reviewed by the IEP team every year.



Family members are active participants and responsible for applying for pre-employment transition services and/or vocational rehabilitation services.

Vocational rehabilitation agency representatives might also participate if families give them permission.

Students are invited and encouraged to lead IEP meetings when secondary transition services and post-school goals are discussed.



Other supporting staff, such as representatives from the state agency for intellectual/developmental disabilities, student mentors, and/or other post-school providers can be invited to attend.




School staff facilitate a coordinated set of activities among the IEP team. Activities are results oriented and student centered.

Are you a family member of a student with a disability in Maryland and not sure where to start? These resources can help!

- Maryland PROMISE Transition Resource Guide: <https://mdtransitions.org/transition-guide/>
- The Parents' Place of Maryland: <https://www.ppmmd.org/>

National resources:

- Transition Guide to Postsecondary Education and Employment for Students and Youth with Disabilities: <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/files/postsecondary-transition-guide-august-2020.pdf>
- Find Your Parent Center: <https://www.parentcenterhub.org/find-your-center/>

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