

Options for Tomorrow

Transition planning for the future ...
produced by the Anchorage School District STeP Center
and the Secondary Special Education Department

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In This Issue

**About this
Publication, pg. 1**

**Things to Do NOW
for
Transition, pg.2**

**Online
Study Skills
Information,
pg. 3**

**Transition Tips,
pg. 3**

**The Top Four
Websites You
Should Be
Checking, pg. 4**

**Scholarship Watch,
pg. 5**

**Government and
Community
Resources, pg. 5**

**New to Middle
School?, pg 5**

**What's Hot on the
Web?, pg. 6**

About This Publication

This monthly publication is a collaborative effort of the Anchorage School District Secondary Special Education Department and the STeP Center. It is designed to provide information for transition planning for all students, parents and teachers! Since transition planning begins at age 14, articles are included to address the middle school age as well as high school issues. As transition planning is a team process, information about governmental and community resources will be included.

Information about postsecondary employment and educational opportunities is essential for transition planning teams. The editorial committee will monitor publications on these topics and include them as frequently as possible. This effort will hopefully link young adults, parents and teachers in Alaska to many of the national resources on transition topics.

Any agency or community resource, teacher or parent who wishes to contribute information, knowledge and experience to the planning committee can contact Eudora Fraczek at 742-3872 or step@asdk12.org.



To Order this Free Newsletter!

Any parent, teacher, agency representative or student who wishes to receive this newsletter can email us at step@asdk12.org or call 742-3872. All email addresses will be used for this newsletter subscription only and will be held confidential.



Things to Do NOW to prepare for Transition!

Middle School

At the beginning of the year, find out what kind of Vision you have for your future by taking an Interest Inventory. Your vision can change from year to year, so your class schedule might need to be changed to meet that vision.

Know where you want to be in a year by becoming a working member of your IEP team. As a team member you will understand the goals that are set for you. You can start by looking at your current IEP with your teachers and parents. You will want to focus on understanding how each section influences your future.

Finally, get to know yourself a little better! By exploring your personal strengths and needs, you can become a better student. Consider taking a Learning Style inventory. A Learning Styles Inventory can help you understand the way you learn best and how you deal with ideas and day-to-day situations in your life. An inventory can be found on the ASD website at: <http://www.asdk12.org/depts/sped/study.asp#learning>.



High School

High school students should understand the transition planning process so that they can be vital and participating members of the transition planning team!

A good resource for teens and parents to begin learning more about transition planning is a digest from the ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education entitled "Designing IEP Transition Plans".

This digest describes the process for designing quality IEP transition plans. Here's some helpful hints:

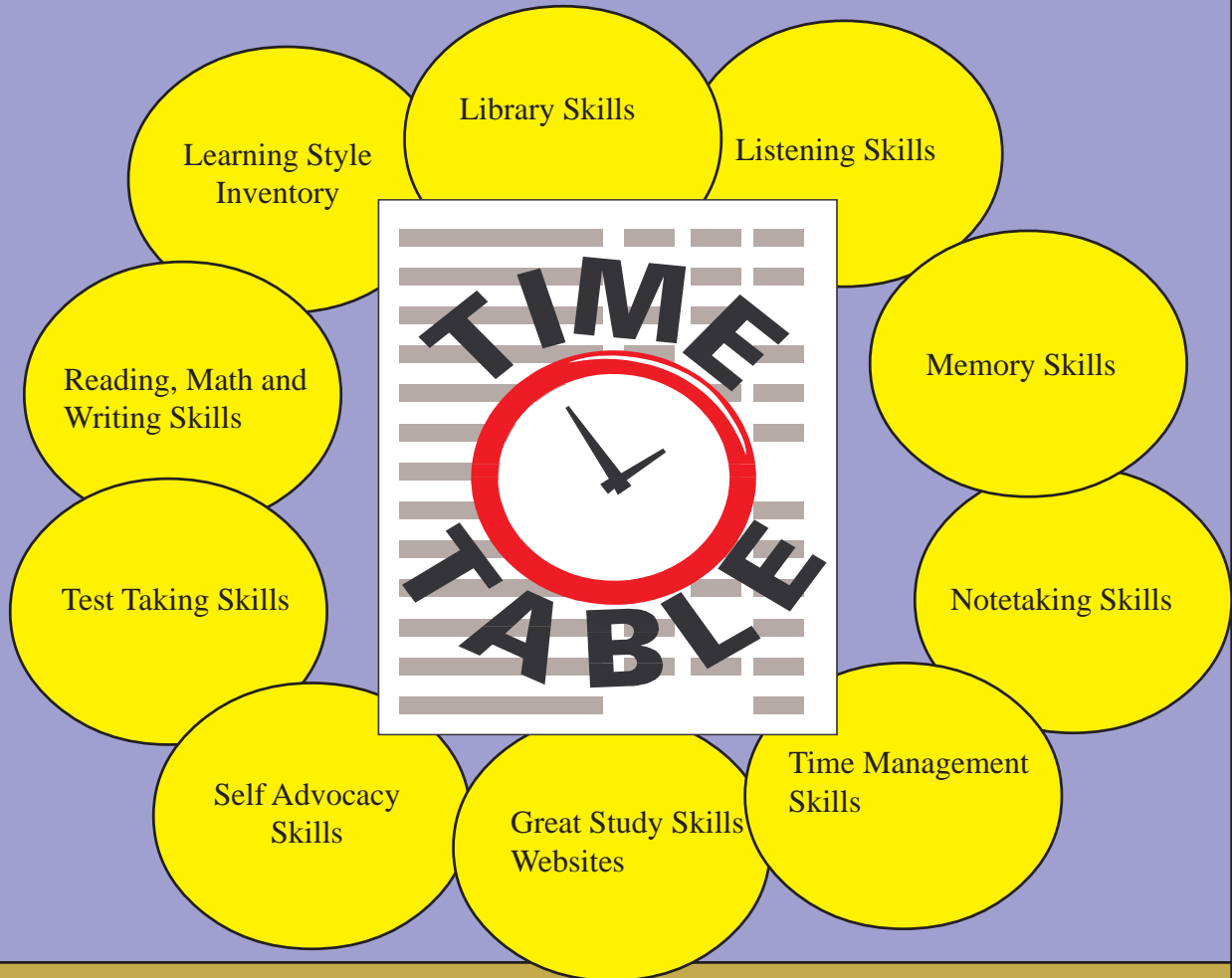
- * Take a long range approach to transition planning.
- * Develop a comprehensive transition plan.
- * Involve the right team members in transition planning.
- * Remember that transition planning is an ongoing process.

To review the full document on transition planning, go to: <http://ericec.org/digests/e598.html>.



Online Study Skills Information

The Anchorage School District has an extensive study skills website available for teacher, student and parent use. Located at: <http://www.asdk12.org/depts/sped/study.asp>, this websection is designed to assist students, teachers and parents in finding Internet study skills resources. Here are the major topic areas:



Transition Tips



Students with disabilities who are self-determined are more likely to succeed as adults, and efforts to build self-determination skills are integrated into the practices of schools that provide high-quality transition programs. However, promoting self-determination should not begin in high school. Students in elementary and middle school need to receive such instruction as well.

For more information, try the publication "**Promoting the Self-determination of Students with Severe Disabilities**". This digest addresses several barriers to promoting the self-determination of students with severe disabilities. The article can be found on the ERIC website at: <http://ericec.org/digests/e633.html>.

The Top Four Websites You Should Know!

Please consider this a map for families and educators trying to assist a young person with transition questions!



National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET)

<http://www.ncset.org/>

The National Center on Secondary Education and Transition seeks to increase the capacity of national, state and local agencies and organizations to improve secondary education and transition results for youth with disabilities and their families.

Association on Higher Education And Disability

<http://www.ahead.org/>

The Association on Higher Education And Disability (AHEAD) is an international, multicultural organization of professionals committed to full participation in higher education for persons with disabilities.

The Association is a vital resource, promoting excellence through education, communication, and training.



HEATH Resource Center

<http://www.heath.gwu.edu/index.html>

Information exchange about educational support services, policies, and procedures at postsecondary learning institutions.

Students.gov

<http://www.students.gov/STUGOVWebApp/index.jsp>

This websection is a comprehensive information portal providing answers to your questions on education, careers, government and more.



Scholarship Watch

This newsletter article is dedicated to helping parents and students who are planning to graduate high school and enter a postsecondary educational institution. Here are two excellent resources to review!



A very thorough guide for families to use as a beginning point is the University of Washington “**College Funding Strategies for Students with Disabilities**”. Located at: <http://www.washington.edu/doit/Brochures/Academics/financial-aid.html>, this resource is both extensive and very easy to use!

Every year **Heath Resource Center** puts out a popular resource guide on financial aid for students with disabilities. For this year’s edition, check out: <http://www.heath.gwu.edu/index.html>. The guide describes federal financial aid programs, state vocational rehabilitation services, and regional and local sources.

Government and Community Resources

This newsletter article is designed to introduce families and educators to government and community resources that can assist them in transition planning for students with special needs. Two resources will be highlighted each month.

The **Office of Public Advocacy** provides crucial information for families about guardianship and conservatorship. Many publications are located right on their website at: <http://www.state.ak.us/guardianship/guardianship.shtml>. The OPA also offers free classes on the topic.

The **Division of Vocational Rehabilitation** will help a student plan to get to work! This is called an Individualized Employment Plan or IPE. No two people have the same plan because everyone had different needs. Students can receive help writing their IPEs from their DVR counselor. For more information about IPE’s, go to: <http://www.labor.state.ak.us/dvr/temp/YourPlanForGettingToWork.pdf>.

Nine Star Enterprises is an organization dedicated to developing Alaska's workforce through quality education surrounding literacy, job readiness and professional development. Working with children, adults and senior citizens, Nine Star extends opportunities for the Anchorage community to excel and grow. Nine Star programs focus on literacy, job readiness and professional development. These programs equip clients with the skills necessary to find a job, keep a job and advance on the job. To learn more, go to: <http://www.ninestar.com/>.



New to Middle School?

Every year families prepare for their older elementary students to move on to middle school. Here is a great listing of ideas for ways parents can ease this huge transition!

- Understand expectations.
- Know consequences of inappropriate behavior.
- Diversity is celebrated.
- Visit the school and meet the staff.
- Orient the student to the new building.
- Plan the student's day to include locker access issues.
- Discuss and understand the bus route.
- Support the student by becoming involved at the school.
- Access computerized systems routinely.
- Designate a consistent homework time.
- Contact the school when problems arise.
- Notify the nurse of medical situations.
- Arrange for lunch each day.



What's Hot on the Web!

Here are a few publications about transition that might be of use to you -- these focus on the fact that transition planning is truly a team effort!



The Family as a Critical Partner in the Achievement of a Successful Employment Outcome

<http://www.pacer.org/tatra/critpart.htm>

This new PACER publication explores how the family can be a critical partner in the achievement of successful employment outcomes for individuals receiving vocational rehabilitation services.

Transition Planning – A Team Effort

<http://www.nichcy.org/pubs/transum/ts10txt.htm>

This Transition Summary provides ideas and information on how students, families, school personnel, service providers, and others can work together to help students make a smooth transition. In particular, this document focuses on creative transition planning and services that use all the resources that exist in communities, not just the agencies that have traditionally been involved.