Transition Communities of Practice: Strengthening and Expanding Local Interagency Transition Coordinating Councils and Teams – Phase II

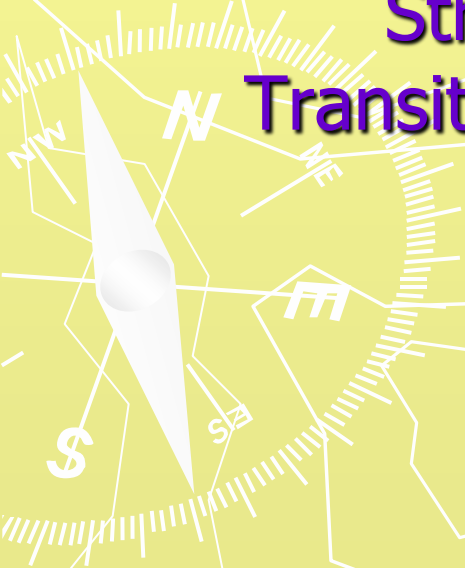"Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success."

Henry Ford

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Interagency Team Response to Outcomes of Phase I Training

Strengthening and Expanding Local Transition Coordinating Councils and Teams

MOU Actions to Support LTCC's & Teams

► *Membership*

- LTCC Surveys
- LTCC Directory
- Expanding Membership on State MOU Interagency Team

► *Capacity Building*

- Transition Portfolio Assessment Strategies Training & Financial Support
- Non-traditional Cross-system Team Funding Strategies
- Expanded Cross-system Learning Opportunities
- Policy & Practice
- Recognition of LTCC's & Team's Activities, Products, & Projects: Expanding Community of Practice Opportunities

Strengthening and Expanding Local Transition Coordinating Councils and Teams

Membership
Organizational Structure
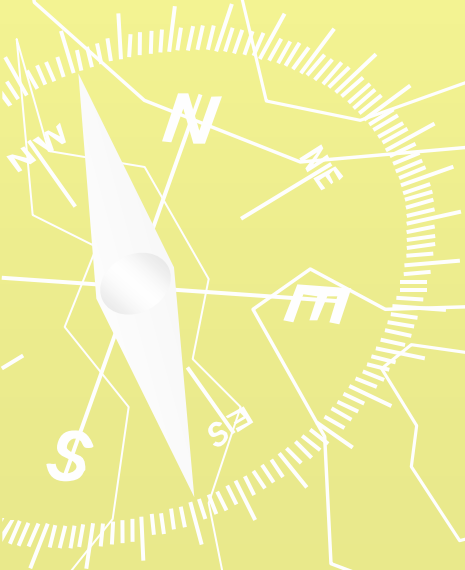
Meeting the Membership Challenge

► Ensuring representativeness and effectiveness of members is challenging. Facilitating ownership of the transition process and outcome among cross-disciplinary participants was an effective incentive. Early decision making and goal setting by consensus – ensured that all parties contributed and became a foundation for their involvement.   (Blalock, G., 1996)

► When you begin to link student needs to potential organizations and solutions, membership is unlimited! (Kester, J., 2004)

Learn through Current Research

► *Food for Thought: Quality Indicators of Exemplary Transition Programs*

- Transition planning
- Family involvement
- Student involvement
- Curriculum and instruction
- Inclusion in school
- Adult services and community involvement
- Interagency collaboration
- Local interagency transition planning councils

Expanding Horizons

Learning through current research and literature review.

Community-Level Transition Teams

► Range of transition services required by youth reaches beyond what a school can do alone – e.g. postsecondary education, career direction, live independently, social support networks, transportation – requires cooperation and support from many sources in addition to the schools. (Blalock, G., 1996)

► "Community-level transition teams are shown to be critical support vehicles for helping communities improve their transition programs for youth and adults with learning or other disabilities." (Blalock, G., 1996, p. 148)

Purpose

► "Transition teams can be a strong force within the community.

► Their primary purpose is to assess how a community's transition services system works and to develop policies and procedures to make this system work better.

► They can identify the best way to meet the needs of youth with disabilities leaving the local schools within their community.

► They can promote actions through school boards and other governmental entities in areas such as policy and funding."

deFur, 2002, p. 17

Today's Climate

► Downsizing of governmental agencies

► Shortage of funds and resources

► Lack of qualified or trained personnel

► Legislative priorities or mandates (e.g. IDEA, Rehabilitation Act, WIA)

► Duplicated services or the need for additional services

► Need to combine specializations to remediate system deficiencies.

Today's Climate

► *Crisis of youth:*

- Drop out rates

- Incarceration

- Poor academic skills

- Lack of education and employment.

- There is a spirit of collaboration in the legislation that ensures equal access to employment and communities.

► Local interagency transition councils suggested as appropriate vehicle for planning and implementing transition services for students with disabilities.

Johnson, L., Zorn, D., Yung Tam, B., LaMontagne, M., Johnson, S., 2003; DeFur, S., 1997; Repetto, J. & Weiss, K., 1997

Impact on Students and Families

History tells us that:

► All too often, youth and parents must start over after the youth leave schools.

- Weak link between youth services and the adult service system.
- Fragmented service delivery system.
- An overlap in service definitions.
- Multiple funding bases.
- Varying models of service delivery.

Impact on Students and Families

► Local interagency coordinating councils have emerged in literature and practice as nucleus of change in communities attempting to work collaborative to serve children with special needs and their families.

► As members of the transition community, it is essential to recognize the urgency to work as a team with mutual interest in and a shared vision of all students to live and work in their community as productive citizens.

Lehman, C., Hewitt, Clark, Bullis, M., Rinkin, J., Castellanos, L., 2002; Wischnowski, M. & McCollum, J., 1995; Repetto, J. & Weiss, K., 1997

Foundation of Interagency Teams

Growing Collaboration:

Seldom can groups of people sit down and say let's collaborate and be successful: collaborative teamwork takes time and ongoing effort. For integrated services, people must network, coordinate, cooperate, and collaborate. These steps recycle as teams work together and new challenges are present.

(DeFur, S., 1997)

Phases of Transition Team Development

► *Networking* – awareness of resources and knowledge of how to access these resources.

► *Service coordination* – people arrange for students with disabilities to receive specific services from different agencies (respective roles and activities).

► *Cooperation* – people look for ways to support and complement one another's transition services.

► *Collaboration* – begins with networking, coordination, and cooperation and then requires team members to share decisions, responsibility, and trust. Invest time and energy to design strategies to carry out plans.

(deFur, 2002)

Characteristics of Interagency Collaboration

► Multidimensional, interactional, and developmental. Time is needed to work successfully to reach outcomes.

► Gaining consensus on a common set of beliefs and goals

► Developing positive relationships between and among the team members and the youth

► Believing in and working to obtain resources in a flexible, individualized and creative way.

(Malloy, J., Cheney, D., Cormier, G., 1998)

Sustaining the Community

► Developing mutually defined goals means examining and reexamining, both formally and informally, what is important to members of the community.

► The early struggle to redefine social roles and purposes in the community is a significant activity that takes time for the participants to understand.

► New mechanisms have to be created for the sharing of power and expertise.

► Welcome diversity: allowing individual goals and choices; recognizing differences between people and their individual talents.

Sustaining the Community

➤ Discourse in the community must be valued and allowed to evolve over time, with enhanced understanding.

➤ The process of developing collaborative communities that support professional development and educational change takes time.

➤ A shared language: looking at the discourse across members of the community.

➤ Teaching practice/practical knowledge.

➤ Focus on effects of implementation on students.

➤ Problem-solving

Sustaining the Community

► Willingness of members to take risks.

► Getting to know each other well, develop trust, discuss problems, engage in problem solving in a larger group.

► The tolerance of the members for uncertainty and divergent perspectives seems important in creating CoP. If members of the community are unwilling to accept or consider alternative points of view, they silence or marginalize minority perspectives.

(Engler, C., & Tarrant, 1995)

Challenges for Community Teams

► Generic barriers to transition (transportation, access to services, attitudes, economic climate).

► Need for data on these aspects affecting employment, residential, and social outcomes must be gathered and analyzed by team if effective planning is to occur.

► Rural and multicultural issues: transportation, lack of adequate resources.

► Need for a collaborative ethic: Multilevel participation and decision making.

► Evolution of team shift to an outcomes orientation (Blalock, G., 1996)

Challenges for Community Teams

► *Steps to meeting needs of students and families:*

- Family-centered programming, in conjunction with interprofessional preparation. Self-determination of students. (Corrigan, 2000).

As a transition community, it is important to recognize the necessity and the value of working as a team with mutual interest in and a shared vision of all students acquiring the education to live and work in their community as productive citizens.

(DeFur, S., 1997)

Successful Collaboration Does Not Happen by Accident:

Seven essential factors to consider for successful interagency collaborations:

► Commitment

► Communication

► Strong Leadership from Key Decision Makers

► Understanding the Culture of Collaborating Agencies

► Providing Adequate Resources for Collaboration

► Minimizing Turf Issues

► Engaging in Serious Preplanning

Stakeholders' views of factors that impact successful interagency collaboration *Exceptional Children*; Reston; Winter 2003; Lawrence J Johnson; Debbie Zorn; Brian Kai Yung Tam; Maggie LaMontagne; Susan A Johnson

Expanding Horizons

Learning from one another...

LTCC's & teams' activities, products & projects
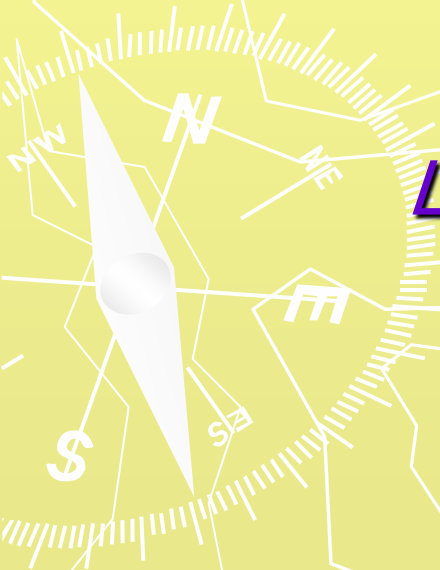
LTCC's & Teams' Activities, Projects & Products

Information Sharing:

➤ Transition Fair

➤ Agency Fair

➤ Resource and Reference Guides

➤ Information Sharing Sessions

➤ Educational Sessions

➤ Brochures

➤ Newsletters

➤ Transition Related Video & CDs (for various audiences: teachers, parents, student, agency staff)

➤ Parent/Student Information Packets

➤ Website

➤ Transition List-Serve

LTCC's & Teams' Activities, Projects & Products

Assessment:

► Assessment Materials

► Student Portfolios

► Community-based Work Assessment

Career Exploration and Employment:

► Job Shadowing

► Employment Mentoring

► Career Exploration Activities

► Service Learning

► Work Experiences – Paid & Unpaid

► Employment Partnerships

► Comprehensive Community-Based Employment Opportunities

LTCC's & Teams' Activities, Projects & Products

Post-Secondary Education & Training:
- ► Fairs
- ► Tour

Student-Focused Interagency Efforts:
- ► Interagency Student Staffings

Community Living:
- ► Community Based Classroom/Apartment Program

LTCC's & Teams' Activities, Projects & Products

Youth Follow-up Surveys:
► Post Graduation Follow-up Surveys
► Student/Parent Surveys
► Graduate Forum

Parent Partnerships:
► Parent Transition Group
► Parent Transition Guide

Recognition Programs:
► Student Achievement Awards
► Transition Teams/Staff