



**Governor's Advisory Council for Exceptional Citizens (GACEC)**

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**MEMORANDUM**

To: The Honorable Matt Denn, Lt. Governor

From: Wendy Strauss, Executive Director

Re: IEP Task Force

Matt,

I thought I should share some of the items that were discussed during the IEP work group sessions that were a part of the State Transition Task Force for Emerging Adults with Disabilities and Special Health Care Needs last year. I hope that you find this information helpful.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 describes how IEP's should be developed. The IEP team shall consider:

- the child's strengths
- the parents' concerns for enhancing their child's education
- the results of the initial evaluation or most recent evaluation of the child
- the academic, developmental, and functional needs of the child (20 USC§1414(d)(3)(A))

Senate Concurrent Resolution NO. 34 Established a State Transition Task Force for Emerging Adults with Disabilities and Special Health Care Needs. The Task Force created a sub group to examine IEP procedures, and to identify areas for improvement. The following is a list of areas the group felt needed improvement or change.

- The group recommends that it become standard practice for districts to create and distribute and "IEP Meeting Preparation Form" to help students and their parent/caregivers to best prepare for their IEP meetings. The form should be fully accessible. This form should also include information about emergency preparedness for students with special needs.
- The group recommends implementing a Self-Sufficiency/Advocacy Leadership Curriculum utilizing Career Pathways in all Delaware Schools.
- Student-directed IEP meetings to include MAP and Path should be accepted as best practice.
- Work to have school guidance counselors become more involved with their students with disabilities.
- The group recommends that at a minimum a group meeting be held with all of the student's teachers, parents, para professionals including non-core subjects, to ensure that the IEP goals are clear to each teacher. Teachers should, at a minimum, be held responsible for reading and signing an acknowledgment of the IEP upon implementation or within 60 days of renewal. The process should be repeated annually to allow for all of the students teachers to become familiar with the students specific needs.

- The group recommends establishing consistent and accessible, correct, timely information in one place (EG: websites like deldhub.com, the state transition website,) regarding IEPs and resources.
- The group recommends the addition of deldhub.com to the current list of parent resources included in the procedural safeguard booklet given to parents/caregivers at each IEP meeting.
- The group recommends that procedures should be implemented to ensure that districts understand the need to assure that the IEP process is fully understood by both students and parents/caregivers to the best of their ability, pointing out that the decisions made regarding the students IEP today may affect the student's life after the student leaves school.

**The following are a list of recommendations specific to transition IEP's.**

- The group recommends that there be a dedicated transition coordinator in every middle and high school.
- The group recommends that the state standardize the job description of "Transition Coordinator" so that it is uniform statewide.
- The group recommends that research be done to suggest solutions to change the current "culture" regarding transition.
- The group recommends development of a plan or timeline for transition planning that is shared not only with teacher and administrators, but also with parents/caregivers, and students.
- The group recommends that the state work to impress the importance of having transition planning discussions at an early age with parents, students and schools, in an effort to make the practice common place.
- The group recommends implementing a Self-Sufficiency/Advocacy Leadership Curriculum utilizing Career Pathways in all Delaware Schools.
- Student-directed IEP meetings to include MAP and Path should be accepted as best practice.
- The group recommends development of a common vision statement of what transition means.
- The group recommends standardizing and improving credentialing for teachers (special education and regular education) to assure they are sufficiently trained to work effectively with students with disabilities.
- Work to have school guidance counselors become more involved with their students with disabilities.
- The group recommends that more vocational and employment opportunities are discussed during the IEP process/meeting.
- The group recommends Influencing change at the district level to ensure that transition issues are a priority for district administrators.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact the office.

Regards,

Wendy S. Strauss  
Executive Director, GACEC

WSS/sjw