

**Preparing Students to Succeed in  
the World that Awaits Them:**

**Secondary Transition in  
Massachusetts**

**MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF  
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY  
EDUCATION**



If you don't know where you're going,  
you might not get there.

-- Yogi Berra



# Five Big Ideas

1. Our goal as a state is to prepare all students for success after high school.
2. The student is at the center of an interconnected whole-school and community system.
3. The student's vision/postsecondary goals drive the transition process.
4. Transition assessments answer fundamental questions that indicate the way forward.
5. Transition is a developmental and sequential process.



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# Success After High School

- ★ All students deserve a world-class education that prepares them for success after high school.
- ★ Academic proficiency is no longer enough to ensure this.
- ★ Students also need to be proficient in the knowledge and skills required to navigate the workplace and function as contributing citizens.



# Purposes of IDEA

...to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free and appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and **prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living....**

20 USC §1400(d)(1)(A)



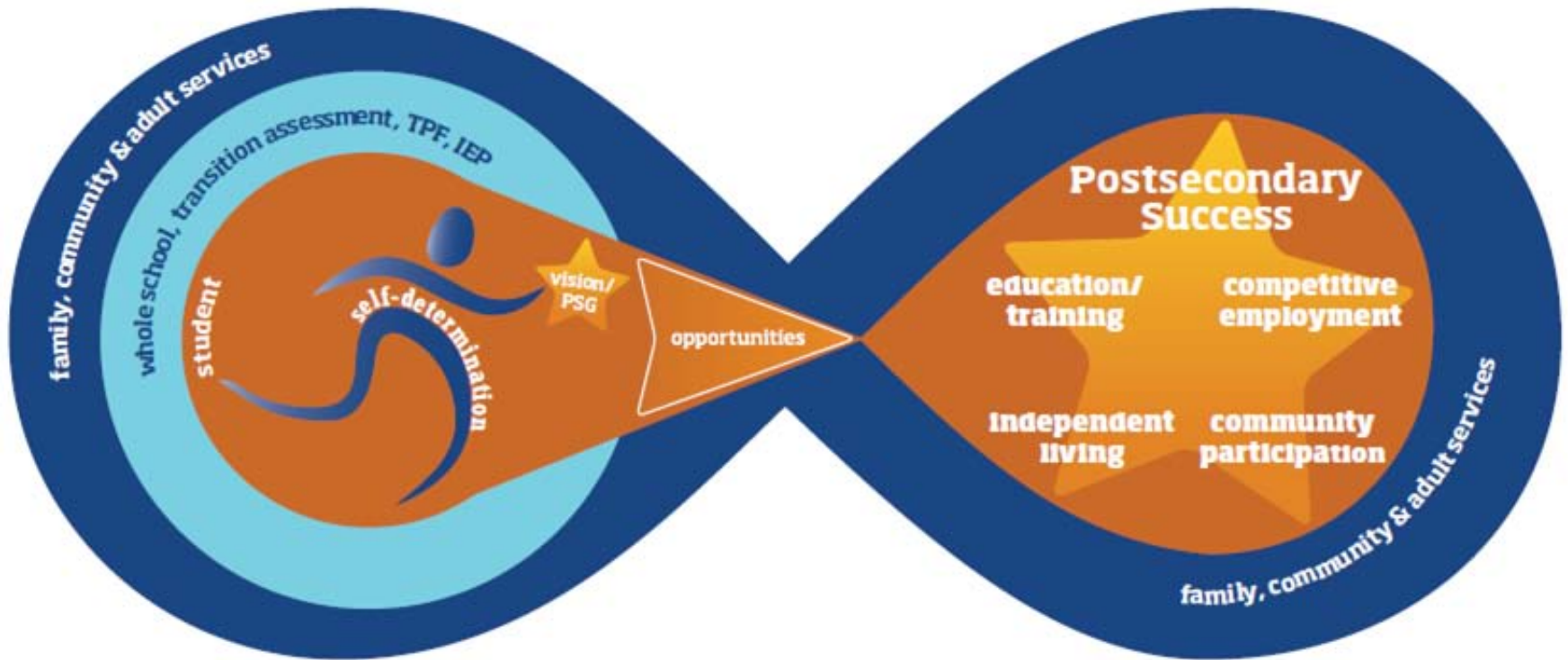


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# Massachusetts Student-Driven Secondary Transition Model



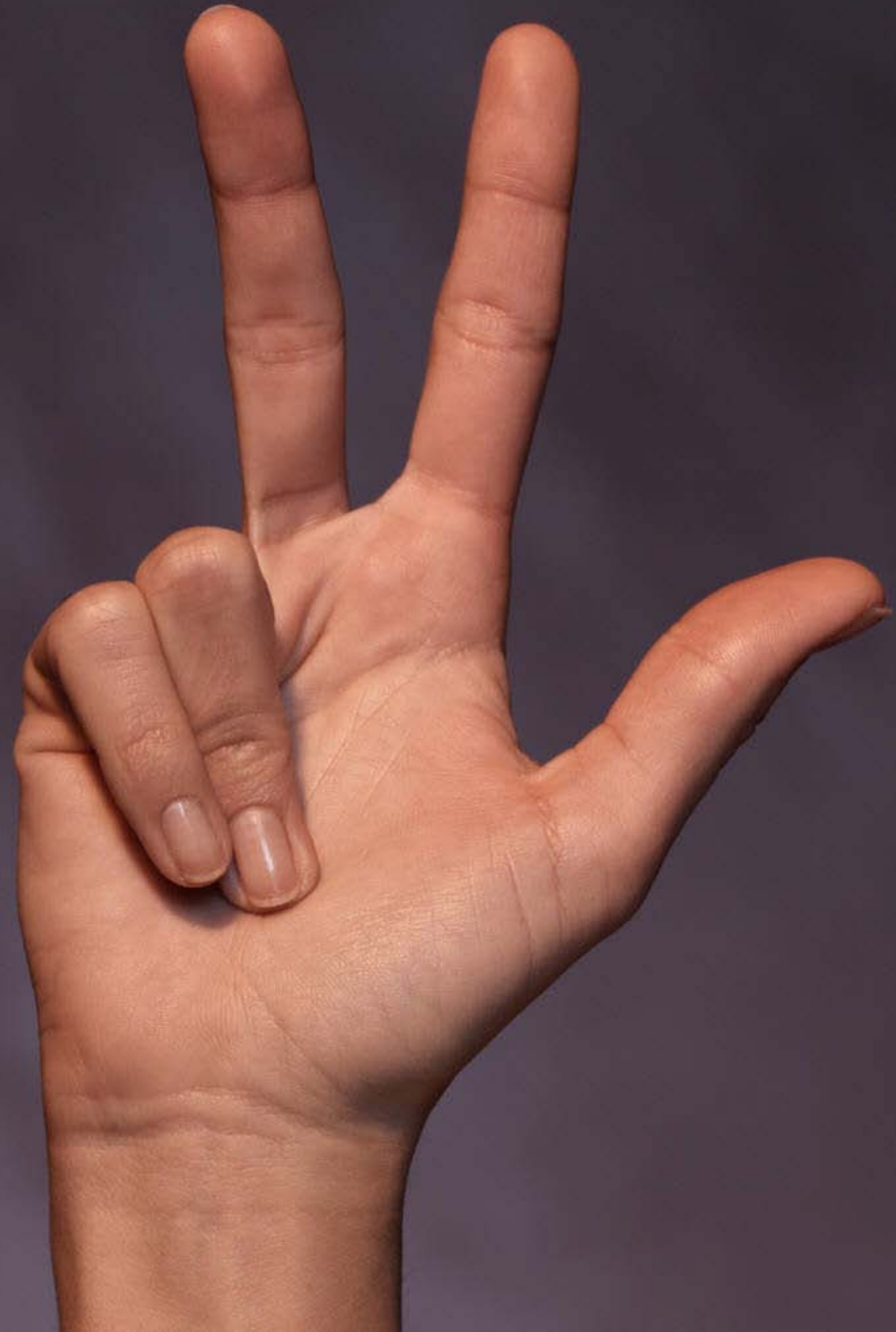


# Much More Than Special Education

- ★ Alternative Education Pathways
- ★ Collaborations with Adult Service Agencies
- ★ Early College/Dual Enrollment/Inclusive Concurrent Enrollment
- ★ Family-School Engagement
- ★ General Education
- ★ MassCore
- ★ Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Curricula
- ★ Guidance/Massachusetts Model for School Counseling
- ★ High School Graduation Initiative
- ★ Independent Living Centers
- ★ Local Employers
- ★ Non-profits and recreational & cultural organizations
- ★ One-Stop Career Centers
- ★ Professional Development and In-District Structures for Collaboration
- ★ School to Career Connecting Activities and other Employment Initiatives
- ★ Workforce Investment Boards
- ★ Etc.



**The student's  
vision/  
postsecondary  
goals drive the  
transition  
process.**





# Vision is Essential

Experience has taught me that you cannot value dreams according to the odds of their coming true. Their real value is in stirring within us the will to aspire.

-- U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor



# Student Vision = Postsecondary Goals

- ★ Postsecondary Goals = goals that a **student** hopes to achieve **after leaving secondary school (i.e., high school)**.
- ★ A truly individualized process uses postsecondary goals as the foundation for the development of the IEP.

Technical Assistance Advisory SPED 2013-1: *Postsecondary Goals and Annual IEP Goals in the Transition Planning Process*, [www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/13\\_1ta.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/13_1ta.html)



# How Many? What Kind?

Each student's TPF and IEP vision statement should **explicitly** include at least\*:

1. One measurable postsecondary goal in the area of **education/ training**;
2. One measurable postsecondary goal in the area of **employment**;
3. If appropriate, one measurable postsecondary goal in the area of **independent living**.

\*34 CFR 300.320(b)(1)



# What if the student has no idea what s/he wants to do?

- ★ Young students may not have a clear vision of their future. Start the conversation. Provide experiences over time which can help students discern what they want.
- ★ All school professionals can talk with students about vision in many contexts, over time. Avoid introducing the vision discussion at the IEP table, when students may feel overwhelmed.
- ★ Engage families, encourage conversations at home and in the community.
- ★ All students can communicate. Ensure that their expressed preferences and interests are explored and incorporated into the vision.



# What if the student knows exactly what s/he wants to do, but I think it's unrealistic?

- ★ Respect the student's vision.
- ★ Identify the skills required by the vision and provide opportunities to develop those skills.
- ★ Brainstorm and provide related employment opportunities/experiences, including informational interviews, job shadowing, job carving, time-limited internships.







**Transition  
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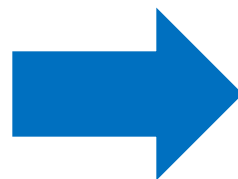
# What Are Transition Assessments?

An **ongoing process** of collecting data on **the individual's needs, strengths, preferences, and interests** as they relate to the demands of **current and future working, educational, living, and personal and social environments**. Formal and informal assessment data serve as the common thread in the transition process and **form the basis for defining goals and services** to be included in the IEP.

-- Adapted from Sitlington, Neubert, & LeConte, 1997; p. 70-71



- ★ Discern the student's vision
- ★ Illuminate the student's needs, strengths, preferences, interests
- ★ Measure progress



# What Questions Need to be Considered?

- ★ Who am I?
- ★ What are my unique talents? What am I good at?
- ★ What do I like? What am I interested in?
- ★ What do I want in life, now and in the future?
- ★ What are some of life's demands that I can meet now?
- ★ What are the main barriers to getting what I want from school and my community?
- ★ What are my options in the school and community for preparing me for what I want to do, now and in the future?

Adapted from: National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (2013). *Age Appropriate Transition Assessment Toolkit Third Edition*. University of North Carolina at Charlotte, A. R. Walker, L. J. Kortering, C. H. Fowler, D. Rowe, & L. Bethune.



# Guidelines for Developing an Assessment Process

## **As much as possible, assessment methods should:**

- ★ produce outcomes that contribute to ongoing development, planning, and implementation of "next steps" in the individual's transition process;
- ★ be varied and include a sequence of activities that sample an individual's behavior and skills over time;
- ★ incorporate accommodations or assistive technology that will allow an individual to demonstrate his or her abilities and potential;
- ★ in the case of employment and independent living, occur in environments that resemble actual vocational training, employment, independent living, or community environments.

## **As much as possible, assessment data should:**

- ★ be verified by more than one method and by more than one person;
- ★ be reported in a way that is clearly understood and actionable by individuals with disabilities, their families, and other transition team members.

From: Sitlington, P. L., Neubert, D. A., & Leconte, P. J. (1997). Transition assessment: The position of the Division on Career Development and Transition. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 20, 69-79.



**Transition is a  
developmental  
and  
sequential  
process.**





# Federal and State Requirements

## AGE 14

- ★ Student is invited to the IEP meeting as a full member of the Team.
- ★ Beginning at age 14, **and continuing annually**, the Team considers:
  - ★ student's needs, strengths, preferences, interests
  - ★ student's desired outcomes for post-secondary education/training, employment, and adult living.

[www.doe.mass.edu/sped/28MR/28m9.pdf](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/28MR/28m9.pdf)





# By age 14 & older: Process Check-In Suggestions

- ★ Can the student describe:
  - ★ his/her strengths?
  - ★ his/her learning style?
  - ★ how his/her disability affects his/her learning, social experiences, and community participation?
  - ★ his/her vision for the future?
- ★ What can the student do independently? How independent is student as a learner/with peers in social interactions?
- ★ Has the student received instruction and/or engaged in role play to enable him/her to actively participate in/lead the IEP meeting?



# Federal and State Requirements

## AGE 16

- ★ Possible Chapter 688 referral,  
[www.doe.mass.edu/sped/688](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/688)

## AGE 17

- ★ Discuss/provide written notice:
  - ★ transfer of rights
  - ★ educational decision-making process

Age of Majority Transfer of Rights Advisory  
[www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/11\\_1.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/advisories/11_1.html)



# By age 16/17 & older: Process Check-In Suggestions

- ★ Has disability disclosure been explored?  
(See *The 411 on Disability Disclosure*, [www.ncwd-youth.info/411-on-disability-disclosure](http://www.ncwd-youth.info/411-on-disability-disclosure))
- ★ Can the student:
  - ★ describe important laws that protect his/her rights as a person with a disability?
  - ★ identify academic/social-emotional needs?
  - ★ describe his/her communication style?
  - ★ identify preferred accommodations and assistive technology?
  - ★ ask for necessary support from familiar/unfamiliar people in their environment, e.g., teachers, employers, community members?
  - ★ identify medical/daily living requirements and how to access supports, e.g. doctors, medication?
  - ★ actively participate in/lead his/her own IEP meetings?



# Federal and State Requirements

## AGE 18

- ★ Age of Majority: Transfer of parental rights for most students:

([www.doe.mass.edu/sped/links/transition.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/links/transition.html))

## AGES 18-22

- ★ Chapter 688 referral 2 years prior to exiting school
- ★ Summary of Performance [34 CFR 300.305(e)(3)]

[www.doe.mass.edu/sped/IDEA2004/spr\\_meetings/eval\\_exitsummary.pdf](http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/IDEA2004/spr_meetings/eval_exitsummary.pdf)



# Documenting the Sequential Process



# In What Order?

- ★ The Team discusses and completes the TPF **before** completing the IEP form.
- ★ The **student's** Vision statement from the TPF is transferred directly to the Vision statement on the IEP. (The rest of the Team may add their thoughts to the Vision statement when it is on the IEP, if desired.)



# The Transition Planning Form (TPF)

- ★ Flexible brainstorming tool
- ★ **Guides** and **documents** the team's Transition planning discussion.
- ★ Informs IEP development
- ★ Provides an action plan to be implemented by student, family, community members, whole school, adult agencies, etc.
- ★ A state-mandated form that must be maintained with the IEP but is not part of the IEP. *Nothing on the TPF is mandated to occur.*





# IEP

- ★ A roadmap for the student to achieve his/her vision through specially designed instruction, related services.
- ★ A legal document spelling out what the district will do.



# Developing Annual IEP Goals

The team refers to the student's postsecondary goals and asks:

- ★ What skills, strengths, interests, personal attributes, and accomplishments does the student **currently have** that will contribute to his/her postsecondary success?
- ★ What skills and strengths will the student **need to acquire** in order to achieve his/her desired postsecondary outcomes?



# Possible IEP Goal Focus

- ★ Reading comprehension
- ★ Communication
- ★ Time management
- ★ Self advocacy
- ★ Self-regulation
- ★ Organization
- ★ Independent travel
- ★ Money management
- ★ Interpersonal and social skills
- ★ Career awareness skills
- ★ Mathematics skills
- ★ Fine Motor skills
- ★ Healthcare skills
- ★ Writing skills
- ★ Etc.

**Reminder:**  
**Goals are written to reflect what the student will do, not what service is provided.**



A clear and direct link  
should exist between the student's  
annual IEP goals  
and his/her  
postsecondary goals  
as delineated in the Vision section of  
the TPF and IEP.



- ★ Not every student will follow the same path after high school. For all students, it is our responsibility to prepare them for success, whatever pathway they choose.
- ★ The more students are engaged in planning their own futures, the more promising those futures are likely to be.

