274 Professional Development & Networking

Promoting Student Self-Determination to Improve Student Outcomes

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Welcome!

★ **Tools and support** for districts and schools aligned with the 274 grant priorities

★ **Focus on what works!**
  ★ Evidence-based best practice
  ★ Highlight great practice in Massachusetts

★ **Opportunity to:**
  ★ Foster relationships/sharing between districts and schools with similar initiatives and challenges
  ★ Network with peers in similar roles
  ★ Introduce and connect with SEPP/ESE staff

*ESE is dedicated to helping educators improve their practice through participation in High Quality Professional Development (HQPD).*
Our State Goal

To prepare all students for success after high school
College and Career Readiness Definition

Some attributes of personal, social, workplace readiness:

★ Ability to direct and evaluate one’s own learning
★ Be aware of and have the confidence to access resources to support learning in multiple contexts
★ Ability to interact with co-workers, individually and in teams
★ Motivation and initiative-taking
★ Flexibility
★ Discipline
★ Self advocacy
★ Responsibility

What is Self-Determination?

★ “a combination of skills, knowledge, and beliefs that enable a person to engage in goal-directed, self-regulated, autonomous behavior. As such, self-determination includes an understanding of one's strengths and limitations, together with a belief of oneself as capable and effective.”

★ Students who are self-determined are “causal agents in their own lives.”
Students who are self-determined know themselves, know how to interact effectively with others, and know how to purposefully set goals and attain them.
Students who feel empowered to express their preferences, who feel their voice is heard, and who understand themselves to be causal agents in their own lives, are students who are forward-looking and engaged.
Massachusetts Student-Driven Secondary Transition Model

Postsecondary Success
- Education/Training
- Competitive Employment
- Independent Living
- Community Participation

family, community & adult services

whole school, transition assessment, TPF, IEP

student

self-determination

vision/PSG

opportunities
Components of Self-Determination

- **Internal Locus of Control:** the belief that I – and not some external factor(s) – have control over outcomes that are important to my life

- **Self-Efficacy:** the conviction that I can successfully execute whatever behavior is required to produce a given outcome

- **Choice- and Decision-Making:** acquiring needed information and choosing among two or more known options

- **Problem-Solving:** overcoming challenges to achieve a solution when the solution is not initially obvious

- **Goal-Setting and Attainment:** deciding what I want, determining how I am going to accomplish what I want, implementing and adjusting my strategy, and then measuring success

- **Self-Regulation:** observing, evaluating, and rewarding myself; monitoring my own actions and others’ response to my actions

- **Self-Advocacy:** being able to speak and act effectively on my own behalf, in order to obtain what I need and want

- **Self-Awareness and Self-Knowledge:** knowing my own strengths, weaknesses, abilities, and limitations, and knowing how to use these to beneficially influence my life
Dignity of Risk

★ A person who is self-determined is one who has been afforded the respect that accompanies personhood, including the right to try and fail.

★ Without the opportunity to experience both the positive and negative consequences of their decisions, young people have difficulty understanding the connection between their choices and the full range of possible outcomes.
An All-Student Perspective

- What experiences would a student without disabilities be expected to have?
- These set the standard for the kinds of experiences that students with disabilities can have, with greater or lesser levels of support, based on each student’s individual needs, strengths, interests, and preferences.
The Importance of Mentors

★ Part of understanding one’s own need for assistance can be understanding the value of choosing and learning from a mentor.

★ Educators and families can help young people to develop the skills to seek out, evaluate, and rely on trustworthy sources of support.

★ The lifelong benefits of acquiring these skills can extend into adulthood in educational, employment, community, and family settings.
Whole-School Approaches

- Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Curricula
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- Individual Learning Plans (ILP)
- Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan
- AIR Self-Determination Scale
- ARC Self-Determination Scale
Student Involvement in the IEP Process

From a young age:

★ Attend all or part of the IEP meeting to voice their strengths, interests, needs, and hopes for the future.

★ What do they do well?

★ What do they have trouble with?

★ What do they enjoy?

★ What might help them to learn?

★ What would they like to be able to do by the end of this year?

★ In five years?
Student-Directed IEPs

- Inviting other members of the team in advance
- Introducing everyone at the table
- Explaining the purpose of the meeting
- Reviewing and evaluating their own accomplishments over the past year, using materials prepared by the student in advance (e.g., Power Points, pictures, videos, portfolios, graphs, lists, etc.)
- Leading the discussion of the Transition Planning Form (TPF), including postsecondary goals, disability-related needs, and action plan
- Proposing annual goals
- Discussing service delivery and placement
- Evaluating the meeting and their own participation
Preparing Transition-Aged Students to Lead

- Understanding themselves
- Understanding IEP development and Team processes
- Understanding relevant special education and disabilities rights law
- Learning how to run a meeting
- Experience practicing leadership skills
Summary of Performance

- Required by IDEA, 34 CFR § 300.305(e)(3)
- Summary of the student’s academic achievement and functional performance
- Recommendations on how to assist the student to meet her postsecondary goals.
Disability Disclosure

★ Throughout adulthood, public and private life
  ★ Yes or no?
  ★ How much, and to whom?
★ Working through the issues:

*The 411 on Disability Disclosure*,

http://www.ncwd-youth.info/411-on-disability-disclosure
Families: Key Partners

Families’ business and recreation networks in the local community can be leveraged to provide multiple real-world chances to practice self-determination skills:

- From yes-no choices to complex ethical problems
- From chores at home to paid employment in the community

Families also have deep knowledge of their children that spans many years, and they can provide vital insights into the student’s developmental trajectory, strengths, needs, and ambitions.
Conflict Between Families and Students

- Sometimes when discussing the future, students and parents disagree.
- Important to listen carefully to both the student and the family, seeking a thorough understanding of their intentions, values, hopes, and expectations as a family system.
- Deference is always given to the student’s voice during the transition years, when students are aged 14-22.
- If – as is most often the case - students are their own guardians once they have reached the age of majority, their voice takes precedence over that of the family.
Behavior As Communication

Since the first steps in the process of learning to self-advocate sometimes look like “bad behavior,” educators and families can discover and acknowledge the intention behind the behavior and then help the student to shape it into more appropriate and effective forms.
Families support their children with enormous love and energy. One challenge educators and students may experience in communicating with families around self-determination may be that part of parental love which wants to keep children safe.
Culturally Different Expectations

Cultural Reciprocity:

- Increasing mutual understanding via a two-way process in which students and families share their cultural norms and expectations with school professionals, and school professionals share theirs with families and students.

- School professionals examine their values and assumptions, listen to families and students with greater understanding, and respectfully exchange information.
Promoting Positive Outcomes

Together, educators, students, and families can partner to support the development of student self-determination skills in order to promote positive postsecondary outcomes.
Thank You for Coming!

★ You will receive an email
★ Evaluation
★ Request for your suggestions
  - our improvement cycle!
★ Presentations posted to the web,
  www.doe.mass.edu/sped

We value your participation in today's professional development and look forward to hearing from you.