A photograph of a male teacher with a beard and a young Black male student in a library. The teacher is pointing at a book held by the student. They are both looking at the book with interest. The background shows bookshelves filled with books.

# ALABAMA SPECIAL EDUCATION PARTICIPANT'S ENGAGEMENT GUIDE

Session 1: Implement an Effective  
Transition Framework

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## Introduction

### Pre-Assignment (Slide 9)

Take a few minutes to read pages 30–46 of “[The 2020 Youth Transition Report: Outcomes for Youth and Young Adults with Disabilities](#),” noting the Alabama data specifically. Record your thoughts with corresponding discussion questions in this Engagement Guide on page 13.

### Pre-Assignment (Slide 19)

1. Read each law within the Laws That Help Define Transition document of this Engagement Guide on pages 15-20.
2. Record your takeaways/thoughts in the KWL chart provided in this Engagement Guide on page 20.

# Session 1: Implement an Effective Transition Framework

## Session Objectives (Slide 3)

- Research and explore transition and postsecondary outcomes.
- Understand the legal requirements for transition service language in the IEP.
- Increase knowledge about state and federal compliance monitoring of transition language in the IEP.
- Make the connection between compliance monitoring and outcomes.
- Examine practices for working with culturally and linguistically diverse families.
- Understand how to develop relevant, compliant transition plans.

## Engagement Tools (Slide 5)



**Engagement  
Guide**



**Discussion**



**Online Activity**

## Share a Celebration (Slide 7)

Think of a transition success story. In the Mentimeter, share two or three factors that made it a success. Think about . . .

Please go to [www.mentimeter.com](http://www.mentimeter.com) and enter the code: 3338 0429

After you enter the code, you will be able to access the activity.

You may also scan the QR code:



- What transition supports and services provided successful opportunities for this student?

- Who was instrumental in the success of this student and why?

- How did you amplify lessons learned with this student in your program? What did you adjust to support other students' success?

### Self-Assessment (Slide 8)

1. Take a few minutes to independently complete the Transition Self-Assessment, pages 6–11, by rating your knowledge on a scale of 1–4.
2. Be prepared to discuss with the large group. Use the guiding questions to formulate your thoughts.

### Guiding Questions

- Which areas did you rate with 4s and why?

- Which areas need your priority (rated with 1s and 2s), and why?

- What barriers are present? Outline realistic steps the planning team can take to move forward with “look-fors.”



Elements	My Knowledge or Skill Level (Rating 0–4)	Evidence/Current Practices	Planning Implications
<p>The elements were developed in the context of established transition program improvement areas from the original <i>Taxonomy for Transition Programming</i> (Kohler, 1996; Kohler &amp; Field, 2003), later updated to reflect the revised <i>Taxonomy 2.0</i> (Kohler et al., 2016) and Alabama Transition Standards.</p>	<p>1 – I am not familiar with this topic/task.</p> <p>2 – I have limited knowledge of this topic/task.</p> <p>3 – I have some knowledge of this topic/task and partially implement this topic/task.</p> <p>4 – I am confident in my knowledge and implementation of this topic/task.</p>	<p>In this box, write about current practices and their underlying evidence. Be as specific as possible in the evidence you provide, using experiences you have had in your role.</p>	<p>Describe next steps: How could this action work? What barriers are present? Outline realistic actions the planning team can take to move forward on the “look-for.”</p>
<p>I can identify and describe a variety of formal and informal age-appropriate transition assessments used to identify students’ strengths, preferences, interests, and needs critical to transition planning.</p>			
<p>I regularly conduct transition assessments and adapt them to individual student needs.</p>			
<p>I engage students in the transition assessment process so that data gathering is done in collaboration with the student.</p>			

Elements	My Knowledge or Skill Level (Rating 0–4)	Evidence/Current Practices	Planning Implications
I communicate the results of transition assessment information so they are understood by students, families, and professionals.			
I demonstrate knowledge of how to incorporate state and federal transition requirements into an IEP.			
I write measurable postsecondary goals that reflect student voice and are based on age-appropriate transition assessments.			
I design transition services to reasonably enable students to meet their measurable postsecondary goals.			
I write measurable annual goals and objectives related to a student's transition needs.			
I demonstrate knowledge and use of strategies to empower students to have a voice in their IEP.			
I demonstrate knowledge and use of self-determination and self-advocacy strategies and curriculum.			

Elements	My Knowledge or Skill Level (Rating 0–4)	Evidence/Current Practices	Planning Implications
I explain how to prepare students to participate in a range of postsecondary options, including postsecondary education and training, employment, independent living, and community engagement.			
I demonstrate knowledge and use of evidence-based transition instruction, curricular resources, and practices.			
I demonstrate knowledge and use of work-based learning experiences.			
I demonstrate knowledge and use of assistive technologies to support a student’s transition to postsecondary education and training, employment, independent living, and community engagement.			
I demonstrate knowledge and use of curricular resources and instructional activities that educators can use to support transition planning in general education settings.			



Elements	My Knowledge or Skill Level (Rating 0–4)	Evidence/Current Practices	Planning Implications
I can describe the range of transition resources available in the school and the community.			
I can describe the roles and responsibilities of educators, employers, and other service providers in a variety of settings related to transition planning and programming.			
I demonstrate knowledge of strategies used to prepare meeting participants and facilitate transition planning before, during, and after IEP meetings.			
I exhibit knowledge of strategies that facilitate collaboration among transition stakeholders.			
I can describe the processes for students to engage with postsecondary education and community services.			
I can describe ways to collaborate with general education teachers to integrate transition concepts into academic courses and activities.			

Elements	My Knowledge or Skill Level (Rating 0–4)	Evidence/Current Practices	Planning Implications
I demonstrate professional ethics in collaborating with students, families, school personnel, community, and agency personnel.			
I can explain the significance of family engagement throughout the transition planning process and the connection to increased student success.			
I identify family cultural and environmental factors that might impact transition planning.			
I provide support necessary for families to communicate effectively and work collaboratively with school and agency personnel.			
I identify resources to help families understand transition-related education services, IDEA, and potential support networks and services.			
I identify evidenced-based transition practices, programs, and services that produce successful postsecondary outcomes.			

Elements	My Knowledge or Skill Level (Rating 0–4)	Evidence/Current Practices	Planning Implications
I summarize major elements of transition-related laws and policies.			
I can explain the importance and identify elements of a student-centered summary of performance.			
I describe a range of secondary program options that support a student’s transition interests and needs.			
I identify organizations, resources, and publications relevant to transition planning and programming.			

## Key Research Data Facts (Slides 9–11)

- **Disability Rates:** Cognitive difficulty is the largest self-reported category of disability through Census, and that rate is 69.8% of youth with disabilities nationally.
- **High School Completion:** There is a significant gap in high school completion when comparing students with and without disabilities, with the largest gap at more than 23%.
- **College Enrollment:** Young adults ages 18–24 with disabilities in the United States have a college enrollment rate of 26.8%, whereas the national average is 43.5% for young adults without disabilities.
- **College Completion:** Degree completion varies among the states by 14%, from the highest to lowest rates of attaining a bachelor’s degree. When considering the gap between those college students with and without disabilities, the national average was 7.4%.
- **Employment:** Nationally, youth with disabilities (ages 14–24) are almost 17% less likely to be employed than their peers without disabilities. Part- or full-time employment, participation in internships and apprenticeships, and other work-based learning opportunities offer youth and young adults with disabilities an entry into employment and self-sufficiency.
- **Opportunity Youth:** Opportunity youth and young adults are commonly defined as those ages 14–24 who are neither in school nor employed. Opportunity youth with disabilities represent 20.2% of the national population compared to only 5.7% of opportunity youth without disabilities.
- **Poverty:** Youth and young adults with disabilities are also more likely to live in poverty than their peers without disabilities.

Source: Data from [“The 2020 Youth Transition Report: Outcomes for Youth and Young Adults with Disabilities.”](#)

## Key Findings in Data (Slide 12)

- The data confirmed that the gap between youth and young adults (ages 14–24) with and without disabilities remains significant despite decades of federal and state legislation intended to improve education and employment opportunities.
- Among all youth and young adults, 6.2% have disabilities, and they are less likely than their peers without disabilities to complete high school, enter and complete college, enter the workforce, and attain financial success.
- Patterns of youth and young adults with disabilities that are unemployed or not in the labor force mirror those for working age adults with disabilities (ages 25–64).
- As they age, young people with disabilities will face continued barriers to employment success, leading to increasingly high rates of unemployment and disconnection from the labor force.

## Looking at Alabama Data (Slides 15–16)

Take a few minutes to review the information you read from pages 30–46 of “[The 2020 Youth Transition Report: Outcomes for Youth and Young Adults with Disabilities](#),” noting the Alabama data specifically.

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You may also scan the QR code:

After you enter the code, you will be able to access the activity.



In our large group, we will discuss the following questions:

1. What do you notice in the data? What is positive? Where do you see the challenges?

2. Did any of the highlights about postsecondary enrollment, persistence, or completion surprise you? Provide examples.

3. Do you see a clear connection between students’ postsecondary outcomes and your work? If so, how? If not, could you change that?

4. Who is impacted the most and why?

## Key Components of the Law (Slides 17–18)

- **A coordinated set of activities.** IDEA defines *transition services* as a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that is designed to be within a results-oriented process that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child’s movement from school to postsecondary activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation.
- **Statement of transition services.** Beginning the year a student turns 16 (or earlier if appropriate) or enters 9th grade, the IEP must identify the transition services needed for that student and the person(s)/agency(ies) involved with the student to ensure goal completion.
- **Student’s participation in the transition process.** The student should state his or her goals and the services needed to meet the goals. The process is all about the student.
- **Timeline for developing transition plans.** A transition plan within the IEP is developed annually.
- **Transition assessments.** These encompass the ongoing process of collecting data on the individual’s needs, preferences, and interests relating to the demands of current and future working, educational, living, and personal and social environments.
- **Postsecondary Goal Categories.** The Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) has divided the postsecondary goals into three categories: postsecondary education/training, employment/occupation/career, and community/independent living.
- **Measurable Postsecondary Goals.** Help students learn about themselves to be better prepared to participate actively in their career development. The course of study = the study plan for high school completion.



## Laws That Help Define Transition (Slide 19)

Read each law within the Laws That Help Define Transition document.

Law	Description
<p>Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act or IDEA 2004</p>	<p>In 1990, amendments reauthorized Public Law 94-142—originally enacted in 1975—under a new public law number, Public Law 101-476. This reauthorization also changed the name of the original act to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, now commonly referred to as IDEA. In 2004, IDEA was again amended and became the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act—Public Law 108-446.</p> <p>This act ensures that all children with disabilities have available to them a free, appropriate, public education that includes special education (individually designed instruction) through the individualized education program (IEP), in the least restrictive environment, and related services to meet their unique needs.</p> <p>The six principles of IDEA '97 are key to understanding the intent and spirit of the law. These include the following.</p> <p><b>Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE):</b> FAPE means special education and related services are available to eligible children with disabilities age 3 to 22 and are to be provided at no cost to the parents. The provision of FAPE differs for each child, but the principle is the same. FAPE applies to all children with disabilities, including those who have been suspended or expelled from school.</p> <p><b>Appropriate Evaluation:</b> Appropriate evaluation is used to gather accurate information—to determine eligibility and continued eligibility—and identify the student’s strengths and educational needs. An individualized education program (IEP) is then designed to respond to the student’s needs.</p> <p><b>Individualized Education Program (IEP):</b> The IEP is a legally binding, written document that outlines the special education program services and related services based on the child’s educational needs.</p> <p><b>Least Restrictive Environment (LRE):</b> LRE is the environment where the student can receive an appropriate education designed to meet their special education needs, while still being educated with nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate.</p> <p><b>Parent and Student Participation in Decision-Making:</b> IDEA requires that parents must be given the opportunity to play a central role in the planning and decision-making of their child’s education. Parents must have the</p>

Law	Description
	<p>opportunity to participate in meetings regarding identification, evaluation, educational placement, and the provision of FAPE to the student. Student rights and participation are expanded and encouraged, particularly when addressing transition planning.</p> <p><b>Procedural Due Process:</b> Procedural due process refers to the safeguards designed to protect the rights of the parents and their child with a disability and give families and schools a mechanism for resolving disputes.</p>
Family Education Rights and Privacy Education Act (FERPA)	<p>The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that affords parents the right to have access to their child’s education records, the right to seek to have the records amended, and the right to have some control over the disclosure of personally identifiable information from the education records. When a student turns 18 years old, or enters a postsecondary institution at any age, the rights under FERPA transfer from the parents to the student (“eligible student”). The FERPA statute is found at 20 U.S.C. § 1232g, and the FERPA regulations are found at 34 CFR Part 99.</p>
Rehabilitation Act of 1973	<p>In 1992, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was amended significantly, and on March 13, 1997, Final Rule amendments to regulations governing the State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services Program became effective. The act shows changes in the way Americans see people with disabilities. Historically, having a disability has been seen as a medical problem to be “fixed.” Attitudes are changing; people are starting to understand that individuals with disabilities are capable of participating in all of life’s growth experiences and responsibilities.</p> <p>The act assumes that people can benefit from vocational rehabilitation (VR) services regardless of the severity of their disability, if given appropriate services and support. The burden of proof that a person with a disability cannot work is placed on the VR agency.</p> <p>This Rehabilitation Act uses the same definition of <i>transition</i> as the IDEA in an effort to encourage collaboration between education and rehabilitation. There are three major areas of emphasis dealing directly with transition in the act. It:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Uses the same definition of transition as IDEA.</li> <li>▪ Reduces the gaps of services and barriers for consumers moving from public school systems to VR.</li> </ul>

Law	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Requires that VR and education work together to fund and train young adults with disabilities to prepare them for meaningful employment.</li> </ul> <p>There are key areas specific to transition discussed in the law, namely, the following.</p> <p><b>Eligibility:</b> The act specifically states that existing documentation from education agencies should be used whenever possible as evidence that there is a mental or physical disability.</p> <p><b>Assessment:</b> The rehab agency is to use documentation from other agencies, including education agencies, in the development of the individualized plan for employment (IPE).</p> <p><b>Career Development:</b> The act supports the development of a career as opposed to the emphasis on the attainment of a single job. This emphasis will allow more support of consumers in postsecondary programs, including colleges and universities.</p> <p><b>Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE):</b> To support coordination and collaboration, the IPE can be developed before a student leaves school to ensure no break in service. This also allows the rapid, efficient, and appropriate determination of eligibility before exiting school.</p> <p><b>Funding:</b> The act requires the Department of Rehabilitation and Department of Education to develop agreements that include clarification of funding (who pays for what).</p> <p><b>Section 504: Anti-Discrimination:</b> The act contains provisions to safeguard the rights of people with disabilities. It gives them protection against discrimination in all programs receiving federal money as well as protection from discrimination by federal agencies or contractors.</p>
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act— An Anti-Discrimination Law	Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a national law that protects qualified individuals from discrimination based on their disability. The nondiscrimination requirements of the law apply to employers and organizations that receive financial assistance from any federal department or agency, including the US Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). These organizations and employers include many hospitals, nursing homes, mental health centers, and human service programs. Section 504 forbids organizations and employers from excluding or denying individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to receive program

Law	Description
	benefits and services. It defines the rights of individuals with disabilities to participate in, and have access to, program benefits and services.
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	<p>The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), Public Law 101-336, is a federal law signed by President Bush in 1990. Its purpose is to provide clear and enforceable standards addressing discrimination against individuals with disabilities and to help them join the mainstream of American life. The ADA prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Employment</li> <li>▪ Transportation</li> <li>▪ Public accommodations</li> <li>▪ Communications and activities of state and local government, including colleges and universities</li> </ul> <p>The ADA requires educational institutions to make programs and facilities accessible to students with a variety of disabilities. In addition, schools cannot have discriminatory policies and practices. The ADA also requires employers, employment agencies, and labor organizations to provide nondiscriminatory application procedures, qualification standards, and selection criteria, and reasonable accommodations for limitations of a qualified applicant or employee unless to do so would cause the business undue hardship.</p> <p>Examples of accommodations are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Modifying training materials (large print, Braille, audio cassette, etc.)</li> <li>▪ Modifying work schedules, such as allowing a person to reduce work hours or lengthen the workday to include rest periods</li> <li>▪ Providing auxiliary aids and services, such as interpreters, assistive listening systems, readers, materials in Braille, and speech synthesizers</li> </ul> <p>The ADA requires that students be educated about their legal rights and that employers be aware of the requirements of the law.</p>

Law	Description
Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act	This act (Public Law 101-392) is a federal law designed to develop the academic vocational and technical skills of secondary and postsecondary students who elect to enroll in vocational and technical education (formerly applied technology) programs. This law provides services and assistance to students from special populations.
Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)	FLSA is a federal law that establishes minimum wage, overtime pay eligibility, recordkeeping, and child labor standards affecting full-time and part-time workers in the private sector and in federal, state, and local governments.
School-to-Work Opportunities Act	This law promotes school and business partnerships to facilitate transition and develop a highly skilled workforce and includes students with disabilities but provides noncategorical protection. It also calls for the involvement of disability-related organizations and service providers. It contains a vision of opportunities available to all students. A combination of federal and state implementation grants was funded to coordinate with the business community to provide an integration of school-based and work-based learning.
Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999	<p>On December 17, 1999, President Bill Clinton signed the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 (Public Law 106-170). The legislation, known as TWWIIA, increased the options for individuals with disabilities who wished to return to work by establishing the Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program.</p> <p>TWWIIA has four purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To provide health care and employment preparation and placement services to individuals with disabilities that will enable those individuals to reduce their dependency on cash benefit programs.</li> <li>▪ To encourage states to adopt the option of allowing individuals with disabilities to purchase Medicaid coverage that is necessary to enable such individuals to maintain employment.</li> <li>▪ To provide individuals with disabilities the option of maintaining Medicare coverage while working.</li> </ul>

Law	Description
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To establish a return-to-work ticket program that will allow individuals with disabilities to seek the services necessary to obtain and retain employment and reduce their dependency on cash benefit programs.</li> </ul> <p>The Ticket to Work program expands access to vocational rehabilitation (VR), employment, and other support services that are necessary for regaining, obtaining, or maintaining employment for beneficiaries of Social Security Administration (SSA) disability programs, Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI), and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) by increasing access to health care coverage and establishing other initiatives in support of TWWIA employment objectives.</p>

### Reflection

Directions: After reading through the laws, think about what you learned in terms of a "KWL" chart. Fill out the KWL chart with 'K,' what you know, 'W,' what you want to understand, and 'L,' what you learned.

K (Know)	W (Want to Know)	L (Learned)



## Transition Framework (Slides 20–21)

1. Take a few moments to read through your group’s assigned pages of the Transition Framework (Appendix A, pages 22–34)

Group 1: Read pages 23–27 (read through #5 **Academic, Vocational, Occupational Education and Preparation**).

Group 2: Read pages 27–31 (start at #6 **Supporting Parental Involvement and Expectations** up to Transition IEP).

Group 3: Read pages 31-34 (start at **Transition IEP**)

2. Reflect on the key points, and record your thoughts in the following 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 Transition Framework Reflection.
3. Discuss your reflections on the transition framework with your group in your Zoom breakout room.

### 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 Transition Framework Reflection

<b>5</b>	<b>Summarize your section of the framework in five bullet points.</b>	
<b>4</b>	<b>List four new pieces of information you learned from your section of the framework.</b>	
<b>3</b>	<b>Outline three new things you will implement from your section of the framework.</b>	
<b>2</b>	<b>Pinpoint two components of your</b>	

	<b>section of the framework you will need support with.</b>	
<b>1</b>	<b>Identify one question you have after reviewing your section of the framework.</b>	

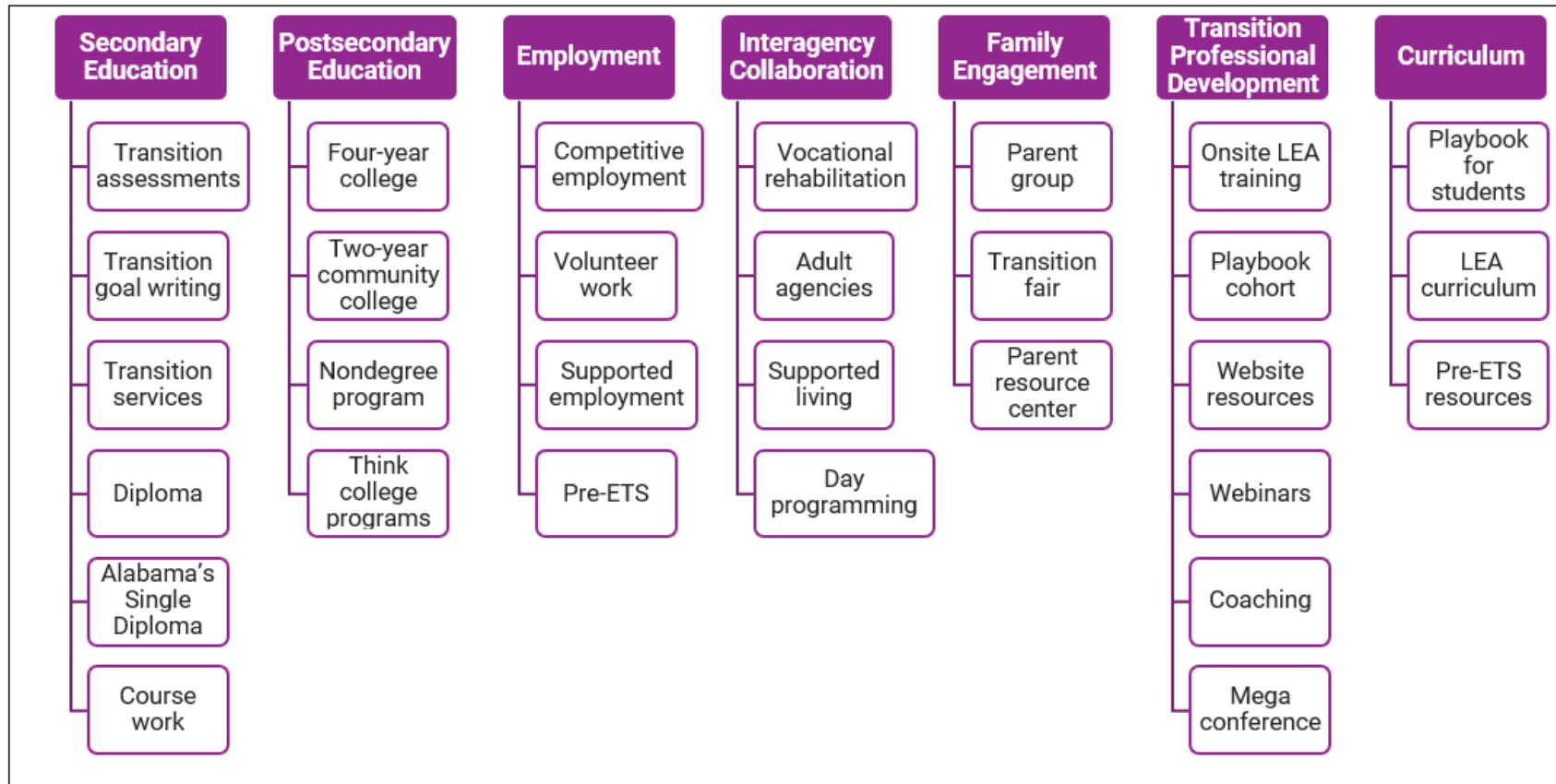
## Wrap-Up (Slide 23)

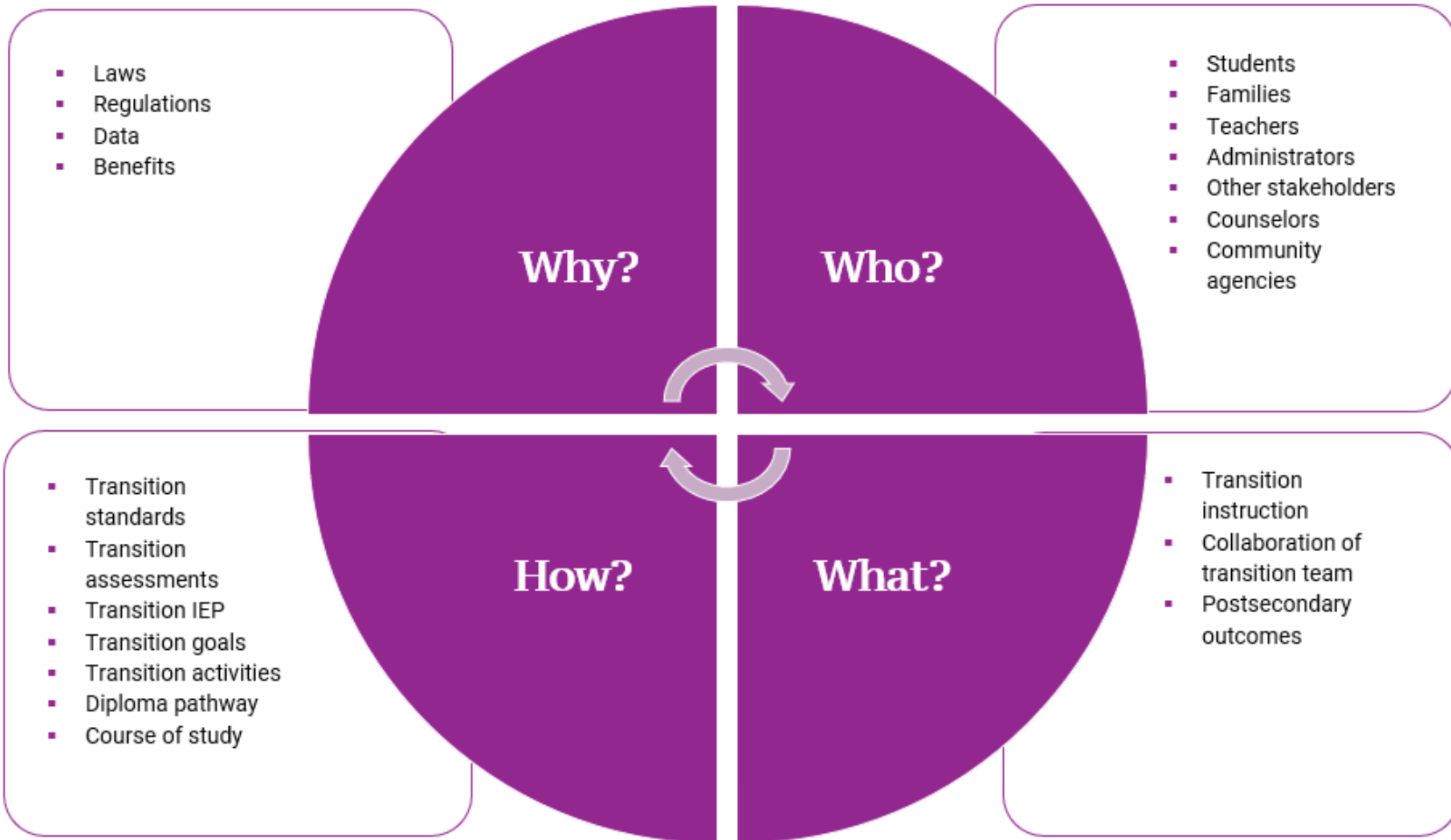
Thank you for your time today! Please complete the Exit Slip for attendance and feedback on the session.

Link to Exit Slip: <https://forms.office.com/r/hSfxFTpCsr?origin=lprLink>



## Appendix A: Transition Framework





## Why Is Transition Planning So Important?

- To support students and families in preparing for desired long-term outcomes (independent living, employment, education/training).
- To assist students in making the connection between what is happening now (high school) and where the student would like to go (postsecondary goals).
- To create a coordinated set of activities and services that will help students and families make informed decisions about the future.

### The Law: IDEA

- IDEA 2004 defines *transition services* as follows: As used in this part [34 CFR part B], transition services means a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that is designed within a results-oriented process that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to postschool activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation.
  - Transition services is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's preferences and interests, and includes the following:
    - Instruction
    - Related services
    - Community experiences
    - The development of employment and other postschool adult living objectives
    - If appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and provision of a functional vocational evaluation
- Transition services for children with disabilities may be special education, if provided as specially designed instruction, or a related service, if required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education [34CFR 300.29].

### Alabama Law

- The Alabama Administrative Code (AAC 290-8-9.00(24)) states the following:
  - Transition services means a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that:
    - Is designed to be within a results-oriented process, focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to postschool activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation.
    - Is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests, and includes: i) instruction; ii) related services; iii) community experiences; iv) the development of employment and

other postschool adult living objectives; and v) if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and provision of a functional vocational evaluation.

- Transition: Beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the student is 16, or earlier if appropriate, and updated annually thereafter. For all students entering ninth grade regardless of their age, transition must be addressed.
- Transition services for children with disabilities may be special education, if provided as specially designed instruction, or a related service, if required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education.

## The Data

Findings: Evidence Based Predictors for Postschool Success Employment First

### Evidence Based Predictors:

#### 1. Collaborative Networks for Student Support

- Students who received assistance from three to six community-based agencies (as compared to students with assistance from zero to two agencies) were more likely to be engaged in postschool employment or education.
- Interagency collaboration and coordination, which is a clear, purposeful, and carefully designed process, promotes cross-agency, cross-program, and cross-disciplinary collaborative efforts leading to tangible transition outcomes for youth.
- Students with support from a self-family-friend network to find a job were more likely to be engaged in postschool employment.
- Students with formal or informal mentors had higher self-esteem and were more likely to be employed during high school.
- Students with informal mentors were more likely to have greater academic success.
- Students who had support from informal (family/friends) or formal (vocational rehabilitation service) mentors were more likely to work in community-based work settings.

#### 2. Individualized Career Development

- Students in the School to Work Transition Program (Oregon) who exited school with high career awareness and high job search skills were more likely to be engaged in postschool employment or education.
- Students who participated in the Youth Transition Program (Oregon) with four or more transition goals met were more likely to be engaged in postschool employment or education.
- Students who had measurable postsecondary goals on their IEP were more likely to participate in work experience and have successful VR referrals in school.
- Students with vocational goals written in their IEP goals were more likely to engage in employment.
- Students with high occupational guidance and preparation were more likely to work in community-based work.



### **3. Authentic Community-Based Work Experience**

- Youth who:
  - Participated in the Youth Transition Program (Oregon) with two or more paid jobs during high school were more likely to be engaged in postschool employment or education.
  - Had a year-round paid job for one full year during high school were five times more likely to be engaged in postschool employment and education.
  - Worked for pay during high school were more likely to be living independently and more likely to be engaged in postschool employment.
  - Had a job at the time of high school exit were 5.1 times more likely to be engaged in postschool employment.
  - Had paid work experience were more likely to have employment in the first two years after graduation.

### **4. Affective Needs**

- Students with high peer social skills were 3.5 times more likely to obtain postsecondary employment:
  - Students with high social skills (based on teacher ratings from the Life Centered Career Education rating scales) were more likely to have higher quality of life and be engaged in postschool employment.
  - Students with severe disabilities who are perceived to have less difficulty related to communication and self-care skills were more likely to have paid employment.
  - High social skills in high school were a significant predictor of students' capacity to perform self-determination behaviors and opportunities to engage in self-determined behavior in school.

### **5. Academic, Vocational, Occupational Education and Preparation**

- Students who participated in:
  - Vocational education were two times more likely to be engaged in full-time postschool employment.
  - Work study were two times more likely to be engaged in full-time postschool employment.
  - School sponsored work were more likely to have employment after high school.
  - A targeted School to Work program the last year of high school and completed an internship were four times more likely to be employed.
  - Career skill assessment, jobs skills training and internship, tech-prep, or entrepreneurship programs were more likely to engage in paid employment.
  - School-based programs that included career majors, cooperative education, school-sponsored enterprise, and technical preparation were 1.2 times more likely to be engaged in postschool employment.
  - Vocational goals written in their IEP goals were more likely to engage in employment.

### **6. Supporting Parental Involvement and Expectations**

- Youth with one or more parents who participated (as measured by the percentage) in more IEP meetings during the 11th and 12th grade year were more likely to be engaged in postschool employment:

- Youth who had parents with high expectations were more likely to be engaged in postsecondary employment.
- Youth who had support from a self-family-friend network to find a job were more likely to be engaged in postschool employment.
- Youth with positive perceptions of career skills parents taught them had greater postsecondary self-determination skills.
- Youth with positive perceptions of independent living skills parents taught them had greater postsecondary self-determination skills as measured by the Psychological Empowerment subscale of the ARC's Self-Determination scale.
- Youth who spent more time per week with friends during school were more likely to experience a higher quality of life.
- Youth with positive perceptions of their parents' involvement in the IEP meeting (e.g., were active participants, provided some input, attended meetings but did not actively participate) had higher postsecondary self-determination skills as measured by the Psychological Empowerment subscale of the ARC's Self-Determination scale.

#### **7. Self-Determination, Independent Living Skills Instruction, and Skill Building**

- Youth with:
  - High self-care skills were more likely to be engaged in postschool education, employment, and independent living.
  - High daily living skills (based on teacher and student ratings from the Life Centered Career Education rating scales) were more likely to have higher QOL and be engaged in postschool employment.
  - Higher self-determination skills were more likely to be engaged in postschool employment.
  - Strength-based adaptive behavior skills were more likely to be engaged in postschool independent living.

#### **8. Inclusive Practices and Programs**

- Youth who took more hours of academic and occupational courses and spent more time in regular education were more likely to be engaged in postschool employment:
  - Youth who participated in community-based training that involved instruction in non-school natural environments focused on development of social skills, domestic skills, accessing public transportation, and on-the-job training were more likely to be engaged in postschool employment.
  - Youth who had the highest degree of integration with age-appropriate peers were more likely to engage in postschool employment.
  - Youth who were integrated into a regular school setting for most of their schooling were more likely to be engaged in postschool employment.
  - Youth who spent more hours in regular education courses were more likely to be living independently.
  - Youth who had teachers who expected them to be employed were more likely to participate in summer employment activities.

## Benefits of Successful Transitions

A successful transition process is the result of comprehensive team planning that is driven by the dreams, desires, and abilities of youth. A transition plan provides a systematic plan for preparing an individual to live, work, and play in the community, as fully and independently as possible with a quality of life with which they are satisfied.

### An Effective Transition Planning Process

- Provides awareness to students, families, educators, and community and adult service providers about each system's and person's roles and responsibilities.
- Facilitates communication between schools, families, and community and adult service providers about students and their support needs.
- Develops a planning process that identifies a structured path for students to pursue from school to adulthood.
- Assists in aligning the school curriculum to include applied academics, career development, and daily living skills that are embedded into the course of study.
- Utilizes assessment information across agencies to create effective plans that are consistent across all services.
- Establishes a consistent referral system so students can more easily access agency supports.
- Effectively coordinates services between the school and other agencies, leading to a successful transition.
- Successfully utilizes the available resources across agencies.
- Creates networking opportunities and expertise across agencies.
- Provides a support system for professionals, families, and students.

## Who Needs to Be Involved in Transition Planning?

Transition planning involves a collaborative team of people working together from different parts of the student's school and community life. The specific needs of the student for postsecondary services should determine who is invited to the IEP transition planning meeting. It is imperative that students be connected to the general education curriculum as well as various adult agencies and organizations, such as mental health agencies, vocational rehabilitation, community colleges, housing, and employment and training agencies.

### Participants

- Student
- Parents/families
- Teachers—general education and special education
- School administrator
- School counselor
- Community agencies—vocational rehabilitation, adult agencies, higher education program representatives, mental health counselors

## How Is the Transition Process Implemented?

### Transition Standards

- Transition standards have been developed to provide a common and shared framework to help school systems and communities identify what youth need in order to achieve successful participation in postsecondary education and training, community involvement, meaningful employment, and adult life.
- The transition standards are divided into four strands: Academics/Training (AT), Occupations/Careers (OC), Personal/Social (PS), and Daily Living (DL).
  - The Academics/Training strand will provide a framework for preparing students to enter, progress through, and complete postsecondary education or training. Focus is given to the process needed to identify and enter postsecondary education or training programs as well as the supports that might be needed for successful completion.
  - The Occupations/Careers strand will outline a career planning process, identify the benefits of employment, and help the student to develop career-related skills that facilitate each individual's potential for economic, social, and personal postschool fulfillment. This instructional component provides the student with the opportunity to apply knowledge of career-related skills in work-based learning experiences.
  - The Personal/Social strand addresses the personal management and social interaction skills that students need to become integrated community members. The skills and knowledge of interests and abilities needed for success in diverse social and personal situations will be addressed in this strand. These standards also address an individual's ability to define, articulate, and achieve goals based on a foundation of knowledge and self-worth. The focus of this strand is for students to learn to develop appropriate personal and social skills so they may assertively state their needs, wants, and desires and act upon them for the attainment of personal goals that impact their future.
  - The Daily Living strand will enable students to acquire the skills needed for an integrated postsecondary community life. The standards within this strand address the skills necessary for students to successfully engage in daily living activities in the home, the workplace, and the general community.

### Transition Assessments

Data collected from transition assessments may include findings from formal or informal assessments and should be documented in the IEP. This information should be utilized to develop goals and objectives and identify other agencies that will provide support and services to the student as they transition into adulthood. Accommodations needed in postsecondary education and employment can also be determined from the data gleaned from these assessments.

The transition assessment process should focus on deciding what type of assessment data to collect, who will collect the data, and how the results will be used.

Formal assessments may include personality or preference tests, career development measures, adaptive behavior and independent living assessments, measures of self-determination, achievement tests, intelligence tests, aptitude tests, and on-the-job or training evaluations.

### **Examples of Formal Assessments**

- Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)
- Brigance Transition Skills Inventory
- Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children
- The Vineland-II
- Woodcock Johnson Test of Achievement
- ACT Plan (grade 10)
- Reading Free Vocational Interest Inventory
- Enderle-Severson Transition Rating Scales (ESTR-R and ESTR-III)

Informal assessments may include interviews and surveys, behavior observation forms, rating scales, situational assessments, interest inventories, anecdotal records, preference assessments, curriculum-based assessments, and checklists.

### **Examples of Informal Assessments**

- Behavior checklists
- Transition planning inventory
- Curriculum-based assessments
- Situational assessments
- Interest inventories
- Environmental/ecological checklists
- Job tryouts
- Interviews and surveys

Assessments should be an individualized process designed to answer three broad questions about a person. This information is used to develop a long-range vocational plan.

- Where is the individual presently?
- Where is the individual going?
- How do we get the individual there?

### **Transition IEP**

Beginning at the age of 15 in middle school but not entering high school, or younger when appropriate, but no later than the beginning of the ninth grade, the focus of the IEP should be framed around the individual student's identified long-range, postschool outcomes. Strengths and needs of the student, decisions about course selection, and participation in standards should be considered in relation to the desired postschool outcomes. Emphasis is placed on the need to develop a coordinated set of strategies that links the student with appropriate general education and community and adult agency services.

### **Six Essential Steps to Take When Creating a Transition Plan for Your Student's IEP:**

1. Conduct transition assessments (formal and/or informal) to identify your student's:
  - Strengths (talents/skills)
  - Interests (desired career/line of work)
  - Preferences (desired work/school or living environment)
  - Needs (accommodations, modifications, and other support(s) to minimize limitations resulting from a disability)
2. Develop appropriate and measurable postsecondary goals based on transition assessments data related to:
  - Education/training (required goals area)
  - Employment (required goal area)
  - Independent living (required if determined appropriate by the IEP team)
3. Identify individualized transition services in the areas related to supporting your student's achievement of postsecondary goals and/or, meeting graduation requirements. Some key example areas to consider are:
  - Instruction
  - Related services
  - Community experiences
  - Development of adult living objectives
4. Write a relevant course of study that takes into consideration what types of classes your student should plan to take during the remainder of their time in the school to support their identified postsecondary goals.
5. Coordinate services with adult service agencies that your student might utilize after they are no longer eligible for education services.
6. Write IEP goals to support the postsecondary goals identified for your student.

### **Transition Goals**

- Identify postsecondary goals in the areas of employment/occupational/career, postsecondary education/training, and community/independent living skills based on age-appropriate transition assessment data, taking into account the student's needs, strengths, preferences, and interests and utilizing the Alabama Standards.
- Postschool considerations and postsecondary goals: Indicate the student's identified outcome for each domain in measurable terms.
- Postsecondary education/training: The student will attend University of AL; the student will participate in an auto body program at the community college; the student will attend an apprenticeship program in building trades; the student will participate in on-the-job training.
- Employment/occupational/career: The student will be licensed as a registered nurse; the student will be employed as an auto body specialist; the student will work in competitive/supported employment in food service.
- Community/independent living: The student will live in the dormitory at CSU and budget money independently; the student will live in their own apartment and use public transportation independently; the student will live in their own residence with assisted-living support in cooking and money skills.

## Transition Activities

- Transition activities must list specific steps the student must take to achieve his/her Measurable Annual Postsecondary Transition Goal. A minimum of two transition activities must be written to address each of the measurable annual transition goals in the areas of postsecondary education/training, employment/occupation/career, and community/independent living.
- A ninth-grade student should be able to demonstrate needs/wants in relation to a projected or current income (TS.DL9.1.B).
- In 10th grade, the student should be able to progress identifying various methods of paying for items (e.g., cash, check, money order (TS.DL10.1.B)).
- In eleventh grade, the student would ideally create a budget according to their daily living needs (e.g., food, clothing, housing, transportation (TS.DL11.1.B)).
- In twelfth grade, the student should be able to actively engage in the management and maintenance of their personal budget (TS.DL12.1.B).

## Diploma Pathway

- Graduation/program completion: Identify the projected date (month and year) that the student is anticipated to graduate or otherwise complete a secondary education program. Specify the date of program completion/graduation.
- Selected pathway to the Alabama high school diploma:
  - General Education Pathway (intended to prepare the student for college and a career)
  - Essentials Pathway (intended to prepare the student for a career/competitive employment)
  - Alternate Achievement Standards Pathway (AAS) (intended to prepare the student for supported/competitive employment)

## Course of Study

### Planned Course of Study

This is the class schedule. It must be multi-year (through year of exit), specific and individualized, and directly linked to the student's postsecondary goals. "Will meet graduation requirements" is not an example of specific, individualized, and linked to postsecondary goals. The concept is to think about, plan for, and ensure that all courses and educational experiences offered to the student will help them achieve their desired postschool goals or outcomes to develop a road map for this student. Examples include listing courses by grade, in narrative forms that may include skills to be taught, or attaching a four-year plan that has been developed for the student as part of a general education, school to career, planning process that will reasonably enable the student to meet their postsecondary goals.

## Example of a Course of Study with Specific Classes Listed

- Grade 9: English 9, World History, Biology, Beginning Kinesiology, Geometry, Health Education,
- Grade 10: English 10, Algebra 1, Intro. Physical Science, Geography, United States History I, Elective
- Grade 11: English 11, Algebra 2, United States History II, Science, Career Preparedness
- Grade 12: English 12, Government, Economics, Career & Technical Education, Science, Elective

## What Does Transition Look Like?

### Transition Instruction

- The use of curriculums that include academic and functional skills, sequenced across grade levels, ensures logical movement from one level to another.
- Vocational opportunities may include training and work experience options based on availability in each school and community based on student interests.
- Training in community-based settings includes instruction in job skills and interpersonal skills.
- Students have opportunities to participate with disabled and non-disabled peers.
- Parents are given information about community agencies and are encouraged to work with their children on life and work skills to prepare them for employability and independent living.
- LEAs provide support for community-based instruction, coordination of services with community agencies, and appropriate work experience and job training.

### Collaboration of Transition Team

Schools, families, and communities must work together to offer effective educational experiences so students with disabilities:

- Achieve appropriate participation and progress in the general curriculum.
- Attain improved academic results.
- Are prepared for postsecondary education, employment, and independent living.

### Postsecondary Outcomes

Students are given the opportunity to participate in a quality transition program that affords them the opportunity to become as independent as possible with a quality of life with which they are satisfied.