

Improving Transition Outcomes

An Innovative State Alignment Grant for Improving Transition Outcomes
for Youth with Disabilities Through the Use of Intermediaries

Henry County Transition Partners Prototype

Improving Transition Outcomes with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Governance Group partners Department for the Blind, Department of Education, Department of Human Services, Division of Persons with Disabilities, Governor's Developmental Disabilities Council, and Workforce Development, proudly shares highlights from the Henry County Transition Partners prototype.

The Transition Partners prototype is one of three community demonstrations implementing strategies to improve transition outcomes for youth with disabilities ages 14-24. Each prototype tests, adjusts and perfects strategies to meet the needs of youth, families, educators, employers and the larger community. Preparation for, securing, and maintaining employment are among the prototype outcome measures. Soliciting input from those "on the front lines" is a hallmark of Transition Partners.

Identifying what is and isn't facilitating transition from secondary education to post-secondary education and/or employment for youth with disabilities was the first priority. Team members conducted multiple focus groups and individual interviews to gather the perspective of educators, family members and youth. Voices of youth with disabilities included those currently attending, graduated from, or dropped out of traditional or alternative high school.

Educators expressed the need for more information on adult services and supports. Family member frustrations included not knowing what services are available, what should be in place prior to graduation, and general dissatisfaction. Youth cited the lack of transportation, child care, and community connections among their barriers to successful transition. Youth were aware of only those services they had used, said school is sometimes unpleasant, and that dropping out solves nothing.

Noteworthy outcomes from the focus groups and interviews include community brainstorming sessions specific to transition for youth with disabilities. One in particular, the community-wide "Sharing Key Discoveries" forum netted thirty-three active participants, including four school



Iowa Department
for the Blind

Iowa Department
of Education

Iowa Department
of Human Services

Iowa Division
of Persons with
Disabilities

Iowa Vocational
Rehabilitation
Services

Iowa Governor's
Developmental
Disabilities Council

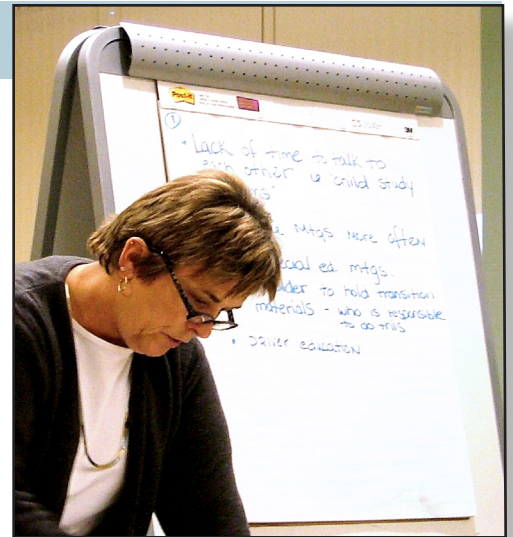
Iowa Workforce
Development

Continued...

administrators, five employers, law enforcement and parents, working together to resolve the identified barriers to transition. Transition Status Teams and a Transition Guide specific to Henry County are tangible results from "Sharing Key Discoveries;" strengthened community collaboration is one of the intangible results.

The Transition Status Teams bring local service providers such as Area Education Agency 16, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and Southeast Iowa Community College together with teachers to explore solutions to transition issues. Other participating partners are the Central Point of Coordination for Henry County and Iowa Workforce Development. A participating teacher describes the Transition Status Team meetings as "*phenomenal*." Others echo her stating that "these meetings are extremely valuable and worth every minute." The Henry County Transition Guide, titled "Activities and Services for Effective Transition for Henry County Youth with Disabilities" is specific to youth in 8th Grade, as a Freshman, Sophomore, Junior and Senior in High School.

The Transition Partners team includes youth and young adults with disabilities, parents, Area Education Agency 16, Department of Human Services, Evert Conner Center for Independent Living, Henry County Central Point of Coordination, Henry County Extension, Healthy Henry County Communities, Iowa Workforce Development, Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Mt. Pleasant Community Schools, New London School District, Southeastern Community College, WACO Schools, Winfield-Mt. Union Community School, and Young House Family Services.



The State of Iowa Improving Transition Outcomes grant project administered by Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services with funding through the US Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy provides funding for Transition Partners. Prototype replication is encouraged and tools to assist with replication are under production.

ITO-IVRS
510 E. 12th St.
Des Moines, IA 50319
515-281-0275
www.iowaemploymentpartners.com



This document was developed by Improving Transition Outcomes with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services, funded by a grant/contract/cooperative agreement from the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy #E-9-4-3-0093. The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Labor. Nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply the endorsement by the U.S. Department of Labor.