

Continuity of Learning for Secondary Transition Guidance and FAQ: Section Topics

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Transition Services During COVID-19

Focusing on postsecondary transition goals included in a student's annual individualized education program (IEP) during this time will maintain the continuity of instruction for students working towards post-school outcomes. All secondary transition services/activities ([34 CFR §300.43](#)) must continue to be monitored through progress reports aligned to a student's IEP goals. During COVID-19-related school interruptions, local education agencies (LEAs) should make reasonable efforts to provide individualized transition support for students with disabilities beginning at age 14 through age 21 in an at-home learning environment. Communication with the parent/guardian and the student is vital for progress monitoring and supporting transition for post-school outcomes.

LEAs should engage parents/guardians and students in discussions about transition activities that will be addressed during this period of extended school closure to identify continued or disrupted transition activities and to plan the delivery of instruction provided by staff, community partners, and/or parents/guardians. Additionally, it is important to communicate how data will be collected and monitored for progress. LEAs should document all transition services/activities provided to students with disabilities and consistently communicate student progress with the student, parents, Vocational Rehabilitation (with consent), and other community partners, as appropriate, during this time. Two key elements to support individual student transition services/activities are student self-advocacy and community partnerships. Activities to support these elements are designed to prepare a student for post-school outcomes (i.e., college, career, community). Both student self-advocacy and community partnerships may need to be reinforced during this unprecedented time through flexible and meaningful opportunities that may include virtual or online learning, remote instruction, and computer-based instruction.

When school resumes, ARD committees should address student-specific needs resulting from the closure. This meeting might include case-by-case discussions of services. ARD committees should address any need for compensatory services related to school closure or an inability to fully implement a student's transition plan after school closures end and/or as annual ARDs are conducted.

Guiding Questions for Secondary Transition Considerations

LEAs should consider the following Information found in the [Texas Transition and Employment Guide](#). This guide supports the implementation of meaningful participation in transition activities that impact positive outcomes for students with disabilities. It may also assist LEAs in prioritizing transition activities during at-home learning.

❑ **Step 1: Review the student's IEP, including annual IEP goals and postsecondary goals and services/activities that support transition.**

This initial step requires a review of the current Transition Plan, including the student's postsecondary goals, transition services/activities, their relation to and impact on annual academic and functional goals, and progress toward the postsecondary goals. A determination must be made about whether the current Transition Plan can be implemented as written in a virtual learning environment or whether any components of the plan need to be carefully documented or formally amended to ensure Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). To make this decision, the student's disability-related needs, current performance, annual IEP goals and objectives, and identified instructional and related services should be considered. A review of additional supports and accommodations is essential, as well as consideration of the support services that were accessible by the student daily when he/she was in the school building and community.

The LEA should document carefully what services were not able to be provided to each individual student. This documentation must be detailed enough to enable the ARD committee to later make determinations regarding what compensatory services need to be provided to individual students.

If the student's current Transition Plan can be implemented as written, proceed to Step 4: Implement the Transition Plan. If adjustments are needed to the Transition Plan to take into account the virtual learning environment, go to Step 2: Update the Transition Plan.

❑ **Step 2: Update the Transition Plan and the supports that will be provided virtually for secondary transition.**

Develop an [emergency contingency plan](#) for transition services, as necessary, for each student's at-home learning plan. As the LEA balances health and safety concerns with educational services, special education staff must be flexible and consider employing a variety of delivery options. Keep in mind that the goal with all students is to develop skills they can use in the community, education, and workplace settings after graduation.

Special educators should work collaboratively with general educators, parents, and students to identify transition services/activities. It is important to clarify and agree on the role of the parents and special educator, being cautious not to place an unnecessary burden on parents. Working closely with parents ensures all parties are able to identify what is and is not working for the student. In addition, clarify the student's role in implementing the transition plan in collaboration with teachers and parents using self-

determination ([19 TAC §89.1055](#)) skills as the framework. Listen to parents and students and acknowledge their feedback throughout the process.

Consider the following questions when updating the Transition Plan.

- What does the ARD committee want to accomplish during virtual learning? Consider the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP) and what that tells the ARD committee about how the student learns best.
- Which services/activities can be implemented in a virtual learning environment? Could some services/activities be implemented safely within the community?
- If the student is already a client of a local adult agency, are there services that may be provided remotely? Which staff members will be responsible for ensuring that students who are exiting are connected to the appropriate agencies documented in the Transition Plan?
- What supports will be needed for transition services/activities, including the course of study needed to reach transition goals through a virtual learning environment?
- What resources (including utilization of staff) will be needed? What technology is available to both the student and service provider?
- Will the methods of instruction be accessible to the student, community partners, and teachers? Consider how the student's accommodations and modifications impact the implementation of transition activities in a virtual learning environment. Help the student identify concerns or barriers to learning at home or in the community.
- Do the student's parents need training or consultation services added to the IEP to assist with implementation?

□ **Step 3: Implement the Transition Plan.**

Implement the secondary transition services/activities during at-home learning instruction as communicated and agreed upon. Remember that transition services/activities occur throughout the IEP year, and frequently all activities are not implemented at one time.

□ **Step 4: Monitor student progress and adjust as necessary.**

- Work with the student to create a student-directed progress monitoring plan with a process that informs the special educator and parent.
- Conduct transition assessments [[19 TAC 89.1055\(l\)\(1\)](#); [34 CFR §300.320\(b\)\(1\)](#)] to determine progress. Compliant transition assessments can be difficult to administer when you are not face-to-face with your students in a classroom setting; however, there are [online alternatives to conducting transition assessments](#).
- Maintain appropriate postsecondary goals for students. This might feel challenging when you are not face-to-face discussing their future hopes and dreams with them in person. Here are a few tips about maintaining appropriate postsecondary goals for your students during COVID-19.
 - Communicate with your students. Use email, cell phone, or an app to have those meaningful discussions. During those communications, talk with students about their plans for post-school

employment, education, and independent living. Ask them if current events have made them rethink their goals or if they remain the same.

- Use an app or program to send a message with questions to multiple students. Ask questions that help students think about their postsecondary goals. [Google Forms](#) is a great way to send information to students and receive replies that are automatically recorded for each individual. [GroupMe](#) is an app that enables participants to have group discussions that do not require sharing cell numbers.
- It is essential to keep students thinking about their future and to help them participate in modified activities, similar to what they were doing before social distancing was put into effect. These activities, when summarized, can be turned into assessment information, and will help students continue to consider their postsecondary goals.

Examples of Transition-Related Activities for At-Home Learning

With students now at home, it can be a challenge to ensure that students still have opportunities to engage in meaningful transition services and activities. Here are some examples of services and activities that students can do during at-home learning.

□ Employment

- Have students complete an [interest survey](#) that identifies career choices you can focus your instruction on when preparing activities to do at home. The survey can be completed at specific intervals to indicate how a student's interest may change over time as he or she completes at-home activities.
- Have a student watch career videos related to their career choice or area of interest at [Dr. Kit](#) or [Career One Step](#). They should then complete and return a form telling you what they like and do not like about the career. Students can also tell you if they have identified a possible new career or confirm their career choice.
- Set up a video connection, like Skype or Zoom, with a student and [share pictures](#) of possible areas of interest or actual careers (e.g., outside, inside, computers, mechanics, office, art, drivers). Have the student indicate if they like or dislike each picture. This can be done via paper-based materials as well for students who do not have internet access.
- Choose activities that focus on “soft” or applied skills, such as teamwork, decision-making, and communication, that will help students become effective employees and managers. [Soft Skills to Pay the Bills](#) provides many activities that can be adapted for at-home learning.
- There are free online trainings, such as [Explore Work](#), that you could assign to the students to help them find out more about who they are and what they are good at. These trainings help students explore their future and uncover jobs they may be interested in.
- Assign the student to [research 3 career options](#) and list a few pros and cons for each. This can be used to focus a student's interest and your instruction on specific industries or types of careers. As

libraries begin to open, this can also be done by checking out books on the student's options or you can provide the student with printed out resources to use in their research.

□ Education and Training

- Ask a student to research three colleges, Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs ([19 TAC 75.1023](#)), or online training programs that provide training related to their postsecondary career goal. The [U.S. Department of Education's College Scorecard](#) is a search feature that provides specific information about colleges a student may be interested in, including their programs, costs, admissions, results, and more. Have students write and submit a short paper explaining what they like and dislike about each program.
- Students who will access training with an adult service provider after leaving high school could connect online or by phone with an agency representative and discuss the programs and supports they provide to young adults and their families. The student can summarize the meeting and send you a report using a tool of their choice.

□ Independent Living Skills

- Have the student film themselves, with family assistance if needed, using a computer camera or cell phone as they carry out an independent living task such as making a bed, preparing a snack, or tying their shoes. Record those abilities on a task analysis or an observational assessment. Practicing the skill can be a service, and the task analysis could be a transition assessment on the next IEP. (A Video Modeling Implementation Guide and resources will be available summer 2020 on the [Texas Transition](#) website.)
- Video modeling can help a student learn independent living skills. Search for video modeling examples on YouTube and share those modeling skills you want the student to practice. Students can easily find video modeling for such things as [washing clothes](#), [making a bed](#), or [washing dishes](#). Individualize these lessons to your student's specific needs.
- Have the student create a budget based on the average salary he or she may receive in the chosen career. The student should include the cost of an apartment, utilities, travel (cost of a car or bus fare), groceries (from a store flyer), and spending money for incidentals. For an inverse activity, have the student visit [Texas Reality Check](#) to show him or her how much living expenses will cost and the amount of money he or she will need to earn to pay for them.
- Assign the student to specific tutorials from the [Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation's Money Smart financial education program](#) if the student needs additional training on personal financial management.
- Give the student a destination (e.g., grocery store, library, job, auto repair shop) and the student will write directions for how he or she will get there. The student should either provide directions to the destination or which bus route he or she will take along with the amount of time needed to arrive at the destination.

- Have the student complete a [Food Management Skill Assessment](#), [Money Quiz](#), or other similar independent living skills assessment, to target skills that he or she needs additional practice in. Many of these resources and associated training presentations can be found at [Project Life](#).

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Should all transition related IEP goals and services/activities be reviewed to support continuity of learning during extended school closures?

Yes. Review all current secondary transition services/activities when planning for continuity of learning. Determinations should be made as to how secondary transition services/activities can continue to be implemented in a virtual learning environment or what changes need to be made to the IEP to modify the services/activities. For example, an in-person college tour could be replaced by a virtual campus tour. It is essential to be flexible and make reasonable efforts to employ a variety of delivery options to provide secondary transition services and activities.

2. Should we continue to report progress on transition related IEP goals and activities?

Yes. During this unprecedented time, transition activities continue to be monitored by a designated staff member and progress reported in alignment with IEP goal progress reporting. Communication with the student and family is vital for progress monitoring. Engage students and parents in a discussion about the transition services/activities that will be addressed during this period of extended school closure—document all services/activities provided and communication with parents during this time.

3. What is your first consideration as you address instruction in the transition portion of the IEP?

As LEA plans for continuity of learning, including secondary transition, they should consider the whole student (preferences, strengths, interests, and postsecondary goals) while reviewing and amending, if appropriate, the secondary transition plan. There should be evidence of alignment or relationship between annual (academic/behavior/communication) goals in the IEP and the transition services/activities in the proposed changes to the transition plan that will be implemented in a virtual learning environment.

4. How should transition services/activities aligned to postsecondary goals be implemented remotely?

Consider the overarching purpose for the transition activity and how it supports progress toward achieving the postsecondary goal. Do not focus on the specific activity or task itself if it cannot be implemented remotely – be flexible. The broad skills the student needs to achieve the postsecondary goals are now the focus. Discuss with the student and family what is most important and what can be

accomplished within a virtual or distance learning environment. Frequent communication with the student and their family will allow you to understand individual circumstances and problem-solve ways in which services/activities can be delivered in a virtual environment.

5. How do we engage and coordinate adult agencies during this unprecedented time?

Consider working with the LEA's Transition and Employment Designee (TED) or campus Transition Specialist to facilitate agency coordination and engagement. Many medical, behavioral health, and other health-related agencies provide critical programs and related services to students with disabilities. We encourage you to work with these agencies to take advantage of services that can be offered for those that elect to continue to provide services during school closures related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

6. How would the progress of transition services/activities be monitored for students without internet access?

Each LEA has identified alternate ways for families without internet access to access learning materials through their *Continuity of Learning Plan*. Refer to the local *Continuity of Learning Plan* to find out how progress for all students is being monitored. Communicate with the parents and students to determine how the transition services/activities will be tracked at home and how progress will be shared (e.g., phone, email). Be sure to document this communication with the parents.

7. What options are available for students who were engaged in Work-Based Learning (WBL) or community programs (ages 18-21) before school closures?

WBLs and other community experiences are intended to allow students to link what they have learned in the classroom to real-world experiences. To accomplish this during extended school-closures will require creativity. Some options for students may include:

- Engage in the phone and email exchanges with host employers around the specific job or more generally about the industry.
- Participate in selected appropriate webinars being conducted by host sites.
- Watch video clips or listen to podcasts about the industry related to the WBL.
- Record video clips explaining what they were learning on the WBL or community experience.
- Develop a home-based project related to their area of interest to share with others.
- Engage in household activities that relate to work experience (e.g., cooking, organizing, budgeting, minor maintenance or repair work, housekeeping, childcare, elder care).

8. What information should be documented in the IEP Agency Linkage section when parental consent to refer a student to or communicate with outside agency representatives, including invitations to participate in ARD committee meetings, is not known due to the inaccessibility of records?

Agency Linkage remains an integral component of the secondary transition process. It is more critical now than ever to connect students to adult agencies such as the Texas Workforce Commission-Vocational Rehabilitation (TWC-VR) Services, Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities (TCDD), Texas Health and Human Services (HHS). Flexible ways to facilitate the process include consistent due diligence to obtain parent consent with documentation of efforts and strategic utilization of staff to obtain documentation.

General Resources for Families and Educators

The [Texas Transition](#) website was designed by TEA's Student-Centered Transitions Network (SCTN) with all your transition needs in mind, whether you are a student with a disability, a parent, or an educator. You will notice different sections of the website devoted to each of these essential stakeholders.

[Texas OnCourse](#) is a state-funded initiative that equips middle and high school students for postgraduation success. The mission is to equip all Texas students for an educational and professional future that unlocks their potential. This website guides educators, students, and their families through the entire process of planning for what happens after high school.

The [National Technical Assistance Center for Transition \(NTACT\)](#) provides state and local education and service providers with a list of transition resources that can be used during COVID-19 school closures. This site also hosts "toolkits" of resources on a variety of topics related to secondary education and services for students with disabilities (e.g., transition assessments, planning resources, transition-focused instructional resources, employment preparation, resources specifically for students with complex support needs).

The [National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth](#) provides resources to support families, youth service professionals, and youth pursuing employment and career exploration. A variety of modes of delivery, ranging from podcasts to self-paced webinars, promote full access to high-quality workforce development services for youth and are available at no cost.

[Pacer's National Parent Center on Transition and Employment](#) provides videos and other resources to support families and students in transition and address the challenges of facilitating the movement to post-school environments, including independent living. There are additional virtual resources aimed at exposure to traditional areas of secondary transition service delivery, such as employment, post-secondary education, community settings, and self-advocacy.



Continuity of Learning for Secondary Transition

(512) 463-9000

disasterinfo@tea.texas.gov

tea.texas.gov/coronavirus

The [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#) provides a COVID-19 resource and information guide in English and Spanish that features FAQs on a variety of topics, from managing anxiety and social isolation to accessing health care and medications.

The [I'm Determined](#) project, a state-directed project funded by the Virginia Department of Education, focuses on providing direct instruction, models, and opportunities to practice skills associated with self-determined behavior. This project facilitates youth, especially those with disabilities to undertake a measure of control in their lives, helping to set and steer the course rather than remaining the silent passenger.