

Frequently Asked Questions: Post-Secondary Transition

What is Indicator 13?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 requires states to report data annually on 20 indicators related to compliance and performance of students with disabilities. The 13th Indicator relates to transition services for students: "Percent of youth age 16 and above with an individualized education program (IEP) that includes coordinated, measurable, annual IEP goals and transition services that will reasonably enable the student to meet the postsecondary goals" [20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B)]. The National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC) has developed an OSEP-approved checklist to evaluate the transition planning components of the IEP. You can find it at: <http://www.nsttac.org/?FileName=indicator13>.

The Department's Office of Special Education Compliance is monitoring IEPs from school districts to report the state's level of proficiency in meeting Indicator 13. This monitoring is part of each district's cyclical compliance monitoring.

I would like more training or clarification on writing a notice of action.

Do you want information on when to provide prior written notice or how to provide prior written notice? For the "when to" please see the SELS message from Heidi Atkins Lieberman, Assistant Commissioner of Education, from September 17, 2008, located at: <http://www.dese.mo.gov/divspced/LS09.17.08.htm>

For the "how to" (and the "when to") please refer to the Missouri Special Education Compliance Program Review Standards and Indicators. When the standards were revised indicators were added to describe in detail when to provide prior written notice and the required content of the notice. These indicators are embedded in the standards addressing the parts of the special education process requiring prior written notice. For example, when the team decides during the reevaluation process that individual assessment is needed and so consent must be obtained, you would refer to the standards beginning with indicator 200.360 and follow them through indicator 200.420.

You may call a Compliance Supervisor at the Office of Special Education or your local RPDC Compliance Consultant if you need more specific help.

There are many acronyms in special education, but the actual words are not known by everyone - such as IEP (individual education plan), PL (present level), PLAAFP - ?

PLAAFP is the Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance. (IEP is actually "individualized education program.") A list of acronyms can be found on the **Department web site**.

Is there ever a time when consent is not required to conduct a formal assessment?

Whether or not consent is required is determined by whether the assessment is being administered on an individual basis. The type of assessment used does not by itself trigger the need for parental consent. Consent is not required for assessment when the assessment is administered to all students in a class, at a grade level, in a school district building or district-wide unless consent is required for all students participating in the assessment.

When is consent required for transition assessment?

The consent requirements for transition assessment are not any different than the consent requirements for any special education assessment. Please refer to the Missouri Special Education Compliance Program Review Standards and Indicators Manual. Indicator 200.60 specifies the times when consent is not required to collect certain data. 200.60 states that agencies are not required to obtain parental consent for teacher and related service provider observations, for ongoing classroom evaluations, or for administration of or review of the results of adapted or modified assessments that are administered to all children in a class, grade or school.

When is a reevaluation required for transition assessment?

Reevaluation is triggered in the same way for children with transition plans as it is for any child with an IEP. When the IEP team decides that they do not have the appropriate information that they need to write a child's IEP, then a reevaluation should be started for the child. The team then reviews existing data, decides what additional information is needed and how they are going to get it. While reevaluations are required every three years, they can and should be conducted more

often if the IEP team decides that they do not have the appropriate information that they need to write the child's IEP. Please refer to the Missouri Special Education Program Review Standards and Indicators Manual, indicators 200.330 through 200.590, for details about the reevaluation process.

What are the Department's prescribed transition assessments?

The Department has no prescribed transition assessments. We suggest that you start with assessments that are given to all children. Then choose assessments based on the student's strengths, interests, experiences, and needs. Starting with a comprehensive assessment can often help lead to more specific assessments. To learn more about transition assessments, please view the assessment resources on the Missouri online Community of Practice in Transition, www.MissouriTransition.org. The Transition Coalition in collaboration with the Department has also developed a Missouri-specific online training module, Transition Assessment: The Big Picture that can be accessed for free at www.TransitionCoalition.org.

How often should transition assessments be completed? How often can we complete transition assessments?

A student's postsecondary goals have to be based on age-appropriate transition assessment. So you will have to have done some transition assessment before the student turns sixteen and is required to have a transition plan. After that, you should do transition assessment when the team decides it is necessary to get any additional information that they need for transition planning. The IEP team would consider this at least annually during IEP review and revision.

If all freshmen in special education are given the Transition Planning Inventory (TPI) on an individual basis, is parent consent needed?

If the assessment is not given to all children in a classroom as part of a course, or to all children at a grade level or in a certain school building or district-wide, then parental consent is needed as this is considered an individual assessment and would be part of the reevaluation process.

All students complete a transition inventory during the freshman year. Do you need permission to give this same inventory to a student or group of students at the beginning of the sophomore year that were not present when it was given as a freshman?

If the student missed that day, then it could have been administered later during that school year. If the student is a transfer from another district and didn't attend at all last year, then you will need to get consent (through the reevaluation process) if it is being given as an individual assessment – that is, if you are not giving it to every child in that child's class, or grade or building.

As we see, work with, and talk to the students on our caseload through monitoring services and/or during specialized instruction, do we need permission to document this informal interview in which we have discussing interests, preferences, and goals?

No, teachers don't need consent to converse with students about their plans for the future during the course of the school day. Teachers often converse with students about their interests and preferences during the course of the day. This type of conversation does not require consent. You would document it in the same way you document any information regarding IEP development that you want to discuss at the next IEP meeting.

Do you have to obtain parental consent to do informal transition assessment? How is this different from any assessment a classroom teacher does with a class (e.g., FACS - life skills assessments, personal finance - budgeting, money management)?

You need consent to conduct any individual assessment. If the assessment is given to all the kids in a classroom or grade level or building or district-wide, it is not considered an individual assessment. The difference is due to the wording in the Federal Regulations and the comments to the Federal Regulations which specifically exclude assessments that are given to

all children in a class, grade or building (unless consent is required for ALL students) from the consent requirements that are applied to individual assessments.

If our district is giving a battery of informal transition assessment to all 9th graders in special education, and we get written permission from parents, should we only be doing this at 3-year reevaluation time?

There is no context outside of the reevaluation process for getting consent for evaluation. If these assessments aren't done as part of a class curriculum or for all the students at a grade level, they should be done in the context of a reevaluation. You don't have to wait for the triennial if the team thinks it needs the information now for transition planning. See also question B3.

If you give a transition inventory to your entire special education class, do you have to get parental permission? You are not singling out one student.

If you are giving it to all students in a class (as part of the class curriculum) you would not need parental consent.

For the three year reevaluation, do I need to use a formal assessment for transition or will the informal classroom assessments that I use with my whole class be sufficient?

This is a team decision and should be made individually based on the needs of the child. When the IEP team reviews existing data as part of the reevaluation, the team will document what data they already have for the area of transition planning and then decide if they need additional data for transition planning purposes. The team may decide that they don't need more information to write appropriate postsecondary goals and determine appropriate transition services or they may decide that information gained through assessment (formal or informal) is needed.

What methods of gathering information qualify as age-appropriate transition assessment but would NOT require consent?

When you are not obtaining information directly from the student, then consent is not required. Examples of such assessment may include:

Parent interviews

Teacher surveys

Behavior Observations

Situational Assessments

Observational Rating Scales

Curriculum-Based Assessments

Observational Checklists

Person-Centered Planning

Environmental Assessments

Functional Behavior Assessment

For more information on these transition assessment methods, please watch the presentation by Dr. Gary Clark on informal transition assessments <http://transitionresponse.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/2011-11-14-Expe...>

Is parental consent needed when a teacher completes a survey or checklists about a student?

If the student does not participate in the assessment, it would fall under the category of an observation and consent would not be required.

If I am using transition assessment for all of the children in a class because it is part of the course curriculum, do I have to use the same assessment for each of the children or can I modify an assessment or chose an alternate assessment?

Teachers have discretion to modify assessments or chose alternate assessments so that appropriate assessments are being used to meet the objectives of the course curriculum. Let the IEP be your guide. Use modifications that are consistent with those provided for any other kind of assessment.

How should the postsecondary goals be worded?

Because the postsecondary goals are the student's goals, the best practice is to word them in the first person. For example, "After graduation, I will complete a degree in early childhood education." It is also acceptable to use third person, "After graduation, Joey will earn a welding certificate through coursework at a vocational-technical school." For younger students, this specificity may be difficult to obtain. If a student wants to attend college but is unsure of a major, the postsecondary goal might state, "Upon completion of high school, I will enroll in courses at a community college." There are also students who do not plan to pursue postsecondary education. An appropriate goal in postsecondary education/training might state, "After graduation, Tara will complete on-the-job training to expand her duties at the local grocery store to include cash register and deli positions."

How do we know when it is not appropriate to include a postsecondary goal for independent living?

Postsecondary goals are required for the areas of Employment and Education or Training and, when appropriate, Independent Living. Independent living includes the skills and knowledge an individual needs to direct his or her life at home and in the community. Transition assessments for independent living could address: (a) home living, (b) household & money management, (c) transportation, (d) community involvement, (e) sexual awareness, and (f) self-advocacy.

The Department has provided the Independent Living Postsecondary Goals Worksheet to help IEP teams decide if a postsecondary goal is needed in the area of independent living. This form can be found [here](#).

After the IEP team discusses the student's transition assessment information, the team can decide if it is appropriate for a student to have a postsecondary Independent Living Goal. If the team decides it is not appropriate for the student to have a postsecondary goal for Independent Living, the implication is that student doesn't need any transition services to reach his or her desired level of independence. If this is the case, then the section for Independent Living on Form C of the State Sample IEP should indicate that the team decided that it is not appropriate for the child to have a postsecondary goal for independent living. The student's file must include evidence that this decision was based on the results of age-appropriate transition assessment.

On the IEP, how do I document that postsecondary goals are based on age-appropriate transition assessments?

The results of transition assessments can be listed in the Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance. You may also consider including the information with the postsecondary goal such as, "In an interview with Joey on October 3, 2007, he stated that after graduation he will earn a welding certificate through coursework at a vocational-technical school." Or, you can keep documentation of age-appropriate transition assessment in the student's educational record. If you do not document use of age-appropriate transition assessment in the IEP, make sure to include it with any IEPs that you send to the Department as part of your special education self-assessment during your MSIP review year. Make sure there is evidence of age-appropriate transition assessment for all postsecondary goal domain areas including independent living.

Most students have a goal to live independently in an apartment. They usually live at home for a few years and move out when they earn enough money. Is it okay to write, "Within three years after graduation, the student will live independently?"

Yes, it's okay to write a postsecondary goal that will take a few years after graduation to achieve. Many times a student's employment goal won't be achieved until his/her education/training goal is obtained. If the student's goal is to live independently immediately after graduation, it is also okay to write that. Schools will be held accountable for providing the services that the IEP team has determined are necessary to reasonably enable a child to meet his or her postsecondary

goals. Schools will not be responsible for the child meeting the postsecondary goal or meeting the postsecondary goal within a certain timeframe. The first thing the team should do is decide whether it is appropriate for the student to have an independent living postsecondary goal. You can use the Independent Living Postsecondary Goal Worksheet to help the team decide. It can be found **here**. If the team decides that an Independent Living postsecondary goal is appropriate then they should provide services to get the child ready to live independently whether they think the child will move out right away or not.

If independent living is not a necessary postsecondary goal, how is that documented?

The best practice is to include a statement describing why the team decided an independent living postsecondary goal is not appropriate. For example, "Based on the results of the Independent Living Postsecondary Goal Worksheet and student and parent interviews, the team decided that including a goal for independent living is not appropriate."

Are terms such as "will explore" or "plans" acceptable in a postsecondary goal?

If the "exploring" and "planning" are happening in high school then it is not a measurable postsecondary goal. The expectation is that the goal is describing what the student will do after high school. This may seem semantic, but think about it in the context of measuring a goal. If you use a phrase like "wants to" then you are measuring the child's desire to do something after high school. Do they still have that desire? Measuring that can be a tricky proposition. When you use the word "will" you are measuring concrete results. The child either did it or did not do it after graduation. "Will" is measurable.

How do you address transition when a student changes his or her postsecondary goals as a senior?

Schools will be held accountable for providing the services that the team has determined are necessary to prepare the child to meet the child's postsecondary goals. If the child changes his or her mind, the team should react by reviewing the IEP and then deciding if any IEP revisions are needed. If the team decides that it needs to revise the IEP, then it should determine what services are needed and provide them in the time they have left before graduation.

How do you address transition when the student is unmotivated and has no career/employment postsecondary goals - no idea what they want to do after high school?

It sounds like the student might benefit from self-determination training. The Transition Coalition in collaboration with the Department has developed a Missouri-specific online training module, The Essentials of Self-Determination that can be accessed for free at **www.TransitionCoalition.org**. Additional resources are available on the Missouri Community of Practice, **www.MissouriTransition.org**. You can also get the family involved, talk with friends, use transition assessment, and do the best you can to teach the child employment and self-determination skills that will benefit them after they leave high school. You have to have a transition plan.

Is the school district held responsible if the child does not obtain employment in a certain area where they have training within high school?

The school is not held responsible if the student does not obtain employment after high school. They are held responsible for creating and implementing a plan that will lead toward the student's post school goals. School districts do have to report exit data for State Performance Plan Indicator 14. They have to report how many graduates were contacted and how many are employed or continuing their educations and how many were engaged in other activities. Performance on this indicator is reported to the public.

If a certain post-secondary school is named on the transition plan but the student is not accepted will the public school be held responsible?

It is recommended that a specific post-secondary school not be named in the IEP. The local school district is typically not held responsible if the student does not gain admission as long as there has been a coordinated set of activities during school to help the student move toward the goal of attending college.

It seems like everything is geared to LD and when you work with low EMH and non-verbal students you are very limited. Just knowing what the student wants to do after high school is a challenge. I feel like these students are overlooked.

For students with more significant disabilities, it's important to assess their preferences and interests and include them in IEP planning. Postsecondary goals can be based on these preferences. A newly released IEP example on the Missouri Transition Community of Practice, www.MissouriTransition.org, provides examples for a student with a more significant disability.

When using the Department's model form C, does there have to be a service listed under school, student, and parent to be in compliance?

No, minimum compliance requires that at least one service be listed under each postsecondary goal. If only one service is listed, this is typically listed as the school's responsibility.

If sections don't apply on the transition page, can they be left blank (i.e., outside agency)?

You can write "NA" or "referral to an outside agency is not appropriate" in that section. Best practice is to note why a section is left blank.

Can the 4-year plan be attached to the IEP and used for the course of study?

Yes, a 4-year plan can be attached to the IEP, and the course of study can state, "See 4-year plan." It is important that the 4-year plan include a detailed list of courses, including specific courses that will help the student reach his/her postsecondary goals. If the courses are not uniquely titled (e.g. Algebra I is a unique title, but Math or Life Skills is not), then additional information on the course content should be included either in the 4-year plan or in the course of study section on Form C.

On a 4-year plan, if the student is in 9th grade, do all 4 years have to be filled out?

Yes, the coursework for the student's current grade as well as the anticipated coursework through the student's anticipated exit year should be listed. Here is what the Missouri Special Education Compliance Program Review Standards & Indicators say:

200.800.f. The transition services include courses of study that focus on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child to facilitate their movement from school to post-school. 200.800.f.(1) The course of study (or courses) listed align with the student's identified postsecondary goal(s).

200.800.f.(2) The courses of study are multi-year description of coursework from the student's current grade to anticipated exit year that is designed to help achieve the student's desired post-school goal(s).

Do we have to list past coursework taken (if not attaching a 4-year plan) if they are an upper classman?

No, refer to standard cited above. You are required to list classes being taken in the current school year through the anticipated exit year.

Can the multi-year course of study be one "plan" that is not categorized under "education/training," "employment," and "independent living"?

When using the Department's model Form C, you can either use the spaces provided on Form C and group courses under the postsecondary goal they support OR you can attach a four-year plan. You do not have to identify the courses that are related to each postsecondary goal, but it should be clear that there are courses related to each postsecondary goal. The IEP team may choose to identify the courses related to each postsecondary goal to ensure that all postsecondary goals are being addressed.

Is it acceptable to list Life Skills Math for each year on the 4-year plan?

If a course does not have a course curriculum, knowledge, performance, or alternate standards associated with it, it is recommended that the course of study list the standards that will be covered during each academic year. This will help ensure that the student continues to move toward his/her postsecondary goals.

Do courses that the student is taking during the present IEP year that relate to a postsecondary goal need to be highlighted if using a 4-year plan?

No, courses on a 4-year plan do not have to be highlighted, but the plan should identify which year the courses will be taken. If the IEP team chooses to do this through highlighting or color-coding, that is fine.

On the 4 year plan do you need to specify which classes will be co-taught or special education classes, etc.?

No. You can, but it is not a requirement for the transition plan. This information is found on the service summary page of the IEP.

How do you determine if a student will graduate by completing required courses or by completing IEP goals?

How a student with a disability earns credits towards graduation is an IEP team decision that should be made on an individual basis for each child. When a child graduates by meeting IEP goals the child earns a regular diploma and is not counted a dropout.

The following is from the Graduation Handbook for Missouri Public Schools published by the Department (found on the Department's web site http://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/Graduation_Handbook_2010.pdf)

SPECIAL POLICY CONSIDERATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES UNDER IDEA

Each school district must provide a free, appropriate public education for students with disabilities until they are graduated with a regular diploma or attain the age of 21 years. Local school boards must establish policies and guidelines that ensure that students with disabilities have the opportunity to earn credits toward graduation in a nondiscriminatory manner and within the spirit and intent of that requirement. Provisions include:

Any specific graduation requirement may be waived for a disabled student if recommended by the IEP Committee.

Students with disabilities receive grades and have credit transcribed in the same manner as all other students when they complete the same courses as other students.

Students with disabilities who complete regular courses modified as indicated in their IEPs to accommodate their disabilities will receive grades and have credit transcribed in that same manner as students who complete the same courses without modification; however, the fact that the courses were modified may be noted on the transcripts.

Students with disabilities who meet the goals and objectives of their IEPs, as measured by the evaluation procedures and criteria specified in the IEPs, will have credit transcribed in accordance with the state definition of units of credit.

All students with disabilities who meet state and local graduation requirements by taking and passing regular courses without modification; taking and passing regular courses with modification; or successfully achieving IEP goals and objectives shall be graduated and receive regular high school diplomas.

Students with disabilities who reach age 21, or otherwise terminate their education, and who have met the district's attendance requirements but who have not completed the requirements for graduation, receive a certificate of attendance.

The Department was provided guidance about what kind of information can be included on the transcript of a student with a disability. According to the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), transcripts may not contain information disclosing students' disabilities but can indicate that the student took classes with a modified or alternate education curriculum.

Where can I find guidelines from the Department for students graduating through the IEP to be sure we meet state requirements?

Please refer to the Graduation Handbook for Missouri Public Schools. You can find it [here](#).

What documentation does a district need to support graduation of a child when the IEP team has determined that the child should graduate by meeting IEP goals?

The IEP team must consider at the annual IEP review before the child turns 16, and any subsequent IEP review, how the child is going to meet graduation requirements. This should be at the center of transition planning for the child. The Department's model IEP Form C includes a place to document the IEP team's decision about how the child will meet graduation requirements. It should indicate that the child is going to graduate by meeting IEP goals. The model form also includes a place to document the anticipated month and year of graduation. Recording this information in the IEP will help the IEP team, including the child and the parents, be aware of the plan and timeline for graduation.

As the anticipated month and year of graduation draws near, IEP team members who are responsible for implementing IEP goals and providing transition services should take stock of the child's progress towards the goals. They should be doing this as part of their routine reporting of progress towards IEP goals, at the frequency described in the IEP, and parents should be provided a copy of these progress reports. If any team members, including the parent and the student, have concerns that a student will not meet any particular IEP goal, that a transition services has not been provided, or that the child is not ready to graduate even if the goal is met, that team member may request the team reconvene. The IEP team would then consider whether goals should be revised and whether the anticipated month and year of graduation should be changed.

If goals are met and no team members ask to reconvene the IEP team to revise goals or change the anticipated date of graduation, then the student will be graduated according to the IEP. A notice of action for graduation would be provided no less than ten days prior to graduation, without exception. The notice of action for graduation is required to include certain information. The notice must describe the proposed action, such as, "The student will graduate resulting in a change in placement and eligibility because graduation ends a student's right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE)." The notice of action for graduation must also include a description of other options considered and why they were rejected, such as, "Continuing to provide FAPE through an IEP was considered but that option was rejected because the team decided the child would graduate by meeting IEP goals and the goals have been met." The notice of action for graduation must also include a description of the information used as the basis for the action. It would be appropriate to list the transition plan, progress reporting and all other information considered to make the decision to graduate the student because goals have been met. When a student with a disability graduates by meeting IEP goals a regular diploma is awarded.

What should be included in the Summary of Performance?

The Summary of Performance (SOP) is a provision of IDEA that requires the local education agency to provide a summary of the child's academic achievement and functional performance for all students with IEPs exiting school with a standard diploma or exceeding the age of eligibility (21) for FAPE. The summary should include recommendations on how to assist the student in meeting his/her postsecondary goals. Refer to the Special Education Compliance Standards and Indicators 200.1320.a. The Department has developed a sample SOP form that can be downloaded at <http://www.dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/se-com-SOP.doc>

Do you give the Summary of Performance to the student or the parents?

Refer to the Special Education Compliance Standards and Indicators 200.1320.b. It says "student" in the standards, and most of the time you will provide it to a student who has reached the age of majority, but there will be exceptions to this rule. If a child graduates with a regular diploma before the age of 18 the SOP would have to be provided to the parents because the child is not yet his or her own educational decision maker. If parents have obtained legal guardianship for a child through a court of competent jurisdiction so that they retain educational decision making rights after the child turns 18, then the SOP would have to be provided to the parents. It is recommended that you encourage the student to share the SOP information with parents/guardians who will be assisting in the transition process. Students should also understand how the information can be used to access services and accommodation in postsecondary settings.

When do we give the Summary of Performance to the student?

The summary must be provided to the student not more than 60 days before or 30 days after the child is graduating with a regular diploma or turning 21. Refer to the Special Education Compliance Standards and Indicators 200.1320.a and 200.1320.c or 200.1320.d.

What if the school sent the student the Summary of Performance 30 days before graduation and then the student failed to graduate?

As far as compliance is concerned, the school would just have to provide the summary again (updated, of course) when the child actually graduates. If a student is on the cusp, it might be easier for the school to wait until graduation is official to provide the SOP rather than possibly having to provide and then update the SOP if the student takes longer to graduate than expected.

Where can I find guidance on completing the summary of performance?

An example Summary of Performance is provided on the Missouri Best Practices in Transition Planning online learning module located on the Transition Coalition website, www.TransitionCoalition.org.

Two case studies, each with a sample summary of performance, can be found on the Missouri Community of Practice, www.MissouriTransition.org.

When writing SMART IEP goals, is it assumed that the timeline for completion will be by the end of the IEP cycle?

You can specify a duration for an annual measurable goal that is different from the annual dates of the IEP, but typically the duration coincides with the annual IEP dates. That is the “attainable” part of SMART goals. You should make sure that your annual goals meet all the criteria outlined in the Missouri Special Education Compliance Program Review Standards and Indicators, see Indicator 200.810.

Does the baseline of each annual IEP goal need to be documented?

Baseline is not a requirement for annual measurable IEP goals, but best practice is to document the student’s current performance (baseline). It can be included in the Present Levels, in the annual goal comments section, or in the annual goal itself.

If a student is only being serviced in co-teaching classes, no resource (study skills), how is that shown on placement?

Specialized instruction provided in a co-teaching classroom is not considered time removed from general education. 100% in general education is in the “inside regular education at least 80% of time” placement category.

Do co-taught classes need to have minutes on the service summary page and do you show that on placement?

When a child with a disability is in a co-taught classroom because the IEP team decided that it is the appropriate place for the child to receive special education services (not just by chance through scheduling) then the service summary page should list the amount of specialized instruction to be provided in that setting. When the special education service is provided in the general education setting it does not count as time removed from general education. Make sure to list the location of the service as, “general education.”

How do you document paraprofessional support on the service summary page?

The IEP should list the amount of time including frequency, location and duration that the IEP team determined this service is needed for the child as a supplementary aid and service. That would include services from a one-on-one paraprofessional the team has determined necessary and could include time from a paraprofessional that also works with other students in the class if the team determined that dedicated time was needed for that paraprofessional to work with this child (individually or in a group) for a particular amount of time daily, weekly etc. to address the annual goals. If a paraprofessional is working in a classroom and a child with an IEP gains incidental benefit from this, it would not be reflected on the IEP. The key factor is whether the team determined that paraprofessional services were necessary, and for what period of time, to implement this IEP and that amount of time would need to be dedicated to working with the child as indicated in accordance with the IEP.

What are appropriate postsecondary education and employment goals for a student who wants to become a teacher?

You could write two separate postsecondary goals for education/training and employment, or you could write a combination postsecondary goal and list it for both postsecondary goals: After graduation, Sue will complete college, earn a teaching certificate and become employed as a teacher.

Postsecondary goals are required for both education and employment. In some scenarios, it makes sense, but in others it may not. For example: Johnny plans to go into the military, and he wants a military career. What would his goals be?

His employment postsecondary goal could state: After graduation from high school and qualifying for admittance, Johnny will enlist in the military. (This is an appropriate employment aspiration.) His postsecondary education/training postsecondary goal could state: After graduation from high school and qualifying for admittance, Johnny will complete basic training in the military.

What are appropriate postsecondary education/training and employment goals for a student who will go to work on the family farm upon graduation?

Employment: After graduation, 'student' will work full-time on his family's farm.

Training: After graduation, 'student' will participate in on-the-job training on the family farm to learn [independent operation of a combine, buying and selling crops, etc.]. When writing transition services, this would be a good opportunity to help the child explore the training/education options in the community that are available to him or her.

How do you write a postsecondary goal when the student's dream is unattainable or unreasonable?

Involving a student in the IEP process and interpreting transition assessment can often help the student identify attainable postsecondary goals. Sometimes the IEP team also has to think creatively as they strive to include postsecondary goals that take into consideration the student's desires and write a meaningful transition plan that will prepare the student for life after high school.

The following is a goal from the Department's example IEP for "Katie," a mild MR student: Upon graduation from high school, I (Katie) will take a first aid class at the community college and continue on-the-job training.

Katie's transition plan shows that she will attend college, but she is a senior and has not been taking college preparatory courses. This IEP identifies creative thinking in creating a plan that leads Katie toward her postsecondary goal but does so in a realistic manner.

Dr. Ed O'Leary, who is a leader in the field of postsecondary transition training, recommends that the IEP team should follow-up with a line of questions when they believe the student's postsecondary goal is unreasonable. Use the "wh" questions:

Why do you want to do that? Where do you want to be? What do you like about that job? A student who wants to be a veterinarian probably doesn't want to complete seven or eight years of college. He or she may enjoy working with animals and knows that is what a veterinarian does. When that student learns about all the other occupations in the area of animal care, he or she is likely to find one that is a better fit.

What is Indicator 13?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004 requires states to report data annually on 20 indicators related to compliance and performance of students with disabilities. The 13th Indicator relates to transition services for students: "Percent of youth age 16 and above with an individualized education program (IEP) that includes coordinated, measurable, annual IEP goals and transition services that will reasonably enable the student to meet the postsecondary goals" [20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B)]. The National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC) has developed an OSEP-approved checklist to evaluate the transition planning components of the IEP. You can find it at: <http://www.nsttac.org/?FileName=indicator13>.

The Department's Office of Special Education Compliance is monitoring IEPs from school districts to report the state's level of proficiency in meeting Indicator 13. This monitoring is part of each district's cyclical compliance monitoring.

How do I learn more about the state sample IEP form and Form C?

The state sample IEP is available at dese.mo.gov/divspeced/Compliance/IEP/Index.html. An online Ask the Expert event from February 2008 is archived on the Missouri Community of Practice web site. Sample completed IEP forms with Form C are also available on the Community of Practice. missouritransition.org/moodle/. The Transition Coalition in collaboration with the Department has also developed a Missouri-specific online training module, Best Practices in Transition, that can be accessed for free at www.transitioncoalition.org

Another great training resource available to Missouri school districts is the RPDC. Transition Consultants can provide training for many transition topics. Contact your local RPDC.

Also available is the Office of Special Education Webstream Training Series Fall 2007. The Webstream for postsecondary transition is available at: <http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced/Webindexpostsec.html>. There is also a list of resources at this site including handouts and web links.

When is consent required for transition assessment?

The consent requirements for transition assessment are not any different than the consent requirements for any special education assessment. Please refer to the Missouri Special Education Compliance Program Review Standards and Indicators Manual. Indicator 200.60 specifies the times when consent is not required to collect certain data. 200.60 states that agencies are not required to obtain parental consent for teacher and related service provider observations, for ongoing classroom evaluations, or for administration of or review of the results of adapted or modified assessments that are administered to all children in a class, grade or school.

Is there ever a time when consent is not required to conduct a formal assessment?

Whether or not consent is required is determined by whether the assessment is being administered on an individual basis. The type of assessment used does not by itself trigger the need for parental consent. Consent is not required for assessment when the assessment is administered to all students in a class, at a grade level, in a school district building or district-wide unless consent is required for all students participating in the assessment.

What are the Department's prescribed transition assessments?

The Department has no prescribed transition assessments. We suggest that you start with assessments that are given to all children. Then choose assessments based on the student's strengths, interests, experiences, and needs. Starting with a comprehensive assessment can often help lead to more specific assessments. To learn more about transition assessments, please view the assessment resources on the Missouri online Community of Practice in Transition, www.MissouriTransition.org. The Transition Coalition in collaboration with the Department has also developed a Missouri-specific online training module, Transition Assessment: The Big Picture that can be accessed for free at www.TransitionCoalition.org.

How often should transition assessments be completed? How often can we complete transition assessments?

A student's postsecondary goals have to be based on age-appropriate transition assessment. So you will have to have done some transition assessment before the student turns sixteen and is required to have a transition plan. After that, you should do transition assessment when the team decides it is necessary to get any additional information that they need for transition planning. The IEP team would consider this at least annually during IEP review and revision.

As we see, work with, and talk to the students on our caseload through monitoring services and/or during specialized instruction, do we need permission to document this informal interview in which we have discussing interests, preferences, and goals?

No, teachers don't need consent to converse with students about their plans for the future during the course of the school day. Teachers often converse with students about their interests and preferences during the course of the day. This type of conversation does not require consent. You would document it in the same way you document any information regarding IEP development that you want to discuss at the next IEP meeting.

Do you have to obtain parental consent to do informal transition assessment? How is this different from any assessment a classroom teacher does with a class (e.g., FACS - life skills assessments, personal finance - budgeting, money management)?

You need consent to conduct any individual assessment. If the assessment is given to all the kids in a classroom or grade level or building or district-wide, it is not considered an individual assessment. The difference is due to the wording in the Federal Regulations and the comments to the Federal Regulations which specifically exclude assessments that are given to all children in a class, grade or building (unless consent is required for ALL students) from the consent requirements that are applied to individual assessments.

What methods of gathering information qualify as age-appropriate transition assessment but would NOT require consent?

When you are not obtaining information directly from the student, then consent is not required. Examples of such assessment may include:

Parent interviews

Teacher surveys

Behavior Observations

Situational Assessments

Observational Rating Scales

Curriculum-Based Assessments

Observational Checklists

Person-Centered Planning

Environmental Assessments

Functional Behavior Assessment

For more information on these transition assessment methods, please watch the presentation by Dr. Gary Clark on informal transition assessments <http://itcnew.idahotc.com/st/training/cec/player.html>

Is parental consent needed when a teacher completes a survey or checklists about a student?

If the student does not participate in the assessment, it would fall under the category of an observation and consent would not be required.

If I am using transition assessment for all of the children in a class because it is part of the course curriculum, do I have to use the same assessment for each of the children or can I modify an assessment or chose an alternate assessment?

Teachers have discretion to modify assessments or chose alternate assessments so that appropriate assessments are being used to meet the objectives of the course curriculum. Let the IEP be your guide. Use modifications that are consistent with those provided for any other kind of assessment

How should the postsecondary goals be worded?

Because the postsecondary goals are the student's goals, the best practice is to word them in the first person. For example, "After graduation, I will complete a degree in early childhood education." It is also acceptable to use third person, "After graduation, Joey will earn a welding certificate through coursework at a vocational-technical school." For younger students, this specificity may be difficult to obtain. If a student wants to attend college but is unsure of a major, the postsecondary goal might state, "Upon completion of high school, I will enroll in courses at a community college." There are also students who do not plan to pursue postsecondary education. An appropriate goal in postsecondary education/training might state, "After graduation, Tara will complete on-the-job training to expand her duties at the local grocery store to include cash register and deli positions."

How do we know when it is not appropriate to include a postsecondary goal for independent living?

Postsecondary goals are required for the areas of Employment and Education or Training and, when appropriate, Independent Living. Independent living includes the skills and knowledge an individual needs to direct his or her life at home and in the community. Transition assessments for independent living could address: (a) home living, (b) household & money management, (c) transportation, (d) community involvement, (e) sexual awareness, and (f) self-advocacy.

The Department has provided the Independent Living Postsecondary Goals Worksheet to help IEP teams decide if a postsecondary goal is needed in the area of independent living. This form can be found at: http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced/Compliance/MOSample_Forms/Index.html.

After the IEP team discusses the student's transition assessment information, the team can decide if it is appropriate for a student to have a postsecondary Independent Living Goal. If the team decides it is not appropriate for the student to have a postsecondary goal for Independent Living, the implication is that student doesn't need any transition services to reach his or her desired level of independence. If this is the case, then the section for Independent Living on Form C of the State Sample IEP should indicate that the team decided that it is not appropriate for the child to have a postsecondary goal for independent living. The student's file must include evidence that this decision was based on the results of age-appropriate transition assessment.

Most students have a goal to live independently in an apartment. They usually live at home for a few years and move out when they earn enough money. Is it okay to write, "Within three years after graduation, the student will live independently?"

Yes, it's okay to write a postsecondary goal that will take a few years after graduation to achieve. Many times a student's employment goal won't be achieved until his/her education/training goal is obtained. If the student's goal is to live independently immediately after graduation, it is also okay to write that. Schools will be held accountable for providing the services that the IEP team has determined are necessary to reasonably enable a child to meet his or her postsecondary goals. Schools will not be responsible for the child meeting the postsecondary goal or meeting the postsecondary goal within a certain timeframe. The first thing the team should do is decide whether it is appropriate for the student to have an independent living postsecondary goal. You can use the Independent Living Postsecondary Goal Worksheet to help the team decide. It can be found

at: http://dese.mo.gov/divspeced/Compliance/MOSample_Forms/documents/PTGoals.... If the team decides that an Independent Living postsecondary goal is appropriate then they should provide services to get the child ready to live independently whether they think the child will move out right away or not.

If independent living is not a necessary postsecondary goal, how is that documented?

The best practice is to include a statement describing why the team decided an independent living postsecondary goal is not appropriate. For example, "Based on the results of the Independent Living Postsecondary Goal Worksheet and student and parent interviews, the team decided that including a goal for independent living is not appropriate."

Are terms such as "will explore" or "plans" acceptable in a postsecondary goal?

If the "exploring" and "planning" are happening in high school then it is not a measurable postsecondary goal. The expectation is that the goal is describing what the student will do after high school. This may seem semantic, but think about it in the context of measuring a goal. If you use a phrase like "wants to" then you are measuring the child's desire to do something after high school. Do they still have that desire? Measuring that can be a tricky proposition. When you use the word "will" you are measuring concrete results. The child either did it or did not do it after graduation. "Will" is measurable.

How do you address transition when a student changes his or her postsecondary goals as a senior?

Schools will be held accountable for providing the services that the team has determined are necessary to prepare the child to meet the child's postsecondary goals. If the child changes his or her mind, the team should react by reviewing the IEP and then deciding if any IEP revisions are needed. If the team decides that it needs to revise the IEP, then it should determine what services are needed and provide them in the time they have left before graduation.

How do you address transition when the student is unmotivated and has no career/employment postsecondary goals - no idea what they want to do after high school?

It sounds like the student might benefit from self-determination training. The Transition Coalition in collaboration with the Department has developed a Missouri-specific online training module, The Essentials of Self-Determination that can be accessed for free at www.TransitionCoalition.org. Additional resources are available on the Missouri Community of Practice, www.MissouriTransition.org. You can also get the family involved, talk with friends, use transition assessment, and do the best you can to teach the child employment and self-determination skills that will benefit them after they leave high school. You have to have a transition plan.

Is the school district held responsible if the child does not obtain employment in a certain area where they have training within high school?

The school is not held responsible if the student does not obtain employment after high school. They are held responsible for creating and implementing a plan that will lead toward the student's post school goals. School districts do have to report exit data for State Performance Plan Indicator 14. They have to report how many graduates were contacted and how many are employed or continuing their educations and how many were engaged in other activities. Performance on this indicator is reported to the public.

If a certain post-secondary school is named on the transition plan but the student is not accepted will the public school be held responsible?

It is recommended that a specific post-secondary school not be named in the IEP. The local school district is typically not held responsible if the student does not gain admission as long as there has been a coordinated set of activities during school to help the student move toward the goal of attending college.

It seems like everything is geared to LD and when you work with low EMH and non-verbal students you are very limited. Just knowing what the student wants to do after high school is a challenge. I feel like these students are overlooked.

For students with more significant disabilities, it's important to assess their preferences and interests and include them in IEP planning. Postsecondary goals can be based on these preferences. A newly released IEP example on the Missouri Transition Community of Practice, www.MissouriTransition.org, provides examples for a student with a more significant disability.

When using the Department's model form C, does there have to be a service listed under school, student, and parent to be in compliance?

No, minimum compliance requires that at least one service be listed under each postsecondary goal. If only one service is listed, this is typically listed as the school's responsibility.

If sections don't apply on the transition page, can they be left blank (i.e., outside agency)?

You can write "NA" or "referral to an outside agency is not appropriate" in that section. Best practice is to note why a section is left blank.

On a 4-year plan, if the student is in 9th grade, do all 4 years have to be filled out?

Yes, the coursework for the student's current grade as well as the anticipated coursework through the student's anticipated exit year should be listed. Here is what the Missouri Special Education Compliance Program Review Standards & Indicators say:

200.800.f. The transition services include courses of study that focus on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child to facilitate their movement from school to post-school. 200.800.f.(1) The course of study (or courses) listed align with the student's identified postsecondary goal(s).

200.800.f.(2) The courses of study are multi-year description of coursework from the student's current grade to anticipated exit year that is designed to help achieve the student's desired post-school goal(s).

Do we have to list past coursework taken (if not attaching a 4-year plan) if they are an upper classman?

No. You are required to list classes being taken in the current school year through the anticipated exit year.

Can the multi-year course of study be one “plan” that is not categorized under “education/training,” “employment,” and “independent living”?

When using the Department's model Form C, you can either use the spaces provided on Form C and group courses under the postsecondary goal they support OR you can attach a four-year plan. You do not have to identify the courses that are related to each postsecondary goal, but it should be clear that there are courses related to each postsecondary goal. The IEP team may choose to identify the courses related to each postsecondary goal to ensure that all postsecondary goals are being addressed.

Is it acceptable to list Life Skills Math for each year on the 4-year plan?

If a course does not have a course curriculum, knowledge, performance, or alternate standards associated with it, it is recommended that the course of study list the standards that will be covered during each academic year. This will help ensure that the student continues to move toward his/her postsecondary goals.

What documentation does a district need to support graduation of a child when the IEP team has determined that the child should graduate by meeting IEP goals?

The IEP team must consider at the annual IEP review before the child turns 16, and any subsequent IEP review, how the child is going to meet graduation requirements. This should be at the center of transition planning for the child. The Department's model IEP Form C includes a place to document the IEP team's decision about how the child will meet graduation requirements. It should indicate that the child is going to graduate by meeting IEP goals. The model form also includes a place to document the anticipated month and year of graduation. Recording this information in the IEP will help the IEP team, including the child and the parents, be aware of the plan and timeline for graduation.

As the anticipated month and year of graduation draws near, IEP team members who are responsible for implementing IEP goals and providing transition services should take stock of the child's progress towards the goals. They should be doing this as part of their routine reporting of progress towards IEP goals, at the frequency described in the IEP, and parents should be provided a copy of these progress reports. If any team members, including the parent and the student, have concerns that a student will not meet any particular IEP goal, that a transition services has not been provided, or that the child is not ready to graduate even if the goal is met, that team member may request the team reconvene. The IEP team would then consider whether goals should be revised and whether the anticipated month and year of graduation should be changed.

If goals are met and no team members ask to reconvene the IEP team to revise goals or change the anticipated date of graduation, then the student will be graduated according to the IEP. A notice of action for graduation would be provided no less than ten days prior to graduation, without exception. The notice of action for graduation is required to include certain information. The notice must describe the proposed action, such as, "The student will graduate resulting in a change in placement and eligibility because graduation ends a student's right to a free appropriate public education (FAPE)." The notice of action for graduation must also include a description of other options considered and why they were rejected, such as, "Continuing to provide FAPE through an IEP was considered but that option was rejected because the team decided the child would graduate by meeting IEP goals and the goals have been met." The notice of action for graduation must also include a description of the information used as the basis for the action. It would be appropriate to list the transition plan, progress reporting and all other information considered to make the decision to graduate the student because goals have been met. When a student with a disability graduates by meeting IEP goals a regular diploma is awarded.

What should be included in the Summary of Performance?

The Summary of Performance (SOP) is a provision of IDEA that requires the local education agency to provide a summary of the child's academic achievement and functional performance for all students with IEPs exiting school with a standard diploma or exceeding the age of eligibility (21) for FAPE. The summary should include recommendations on how to assist the student in meeting his/her postsecondary goals. Refer to the Special Education Compliance Standards and Indicators 200.1320.a. The Department has developed a sample SOP form that can be downloaded at http://www.dese.mo.gov/divspeced/Compliance/MOSample_Forms/allspecedform....

Do you give the Summary of Performance to the student or the parents?

Refer to the Special Education Compliance Standards and Indicators 200.1320.b. It says "student" in the standards, and most of the time you will provide it to a student who has reached the age of majority, but there will be exceptions to this rule. If a child graduates with a regular diploma before the age of 18 the SOP would have to be provided to the parents because the child is not yet his or her own educational decision maker. If parents have obtained legal guardianship for a child through a court of competent jurisdiction so that they retain educational decision making rights after the child turns 18, then the SOP would have to be provided to the parents. It is recommended that you encourage the student to share the SOP information with parents/guardians who will be assisting in the transition process. Students should also understand how the information can be used to access services and accommodation in postsecondary settings.

When do we give the Summary of Performance to the student?

The summary must be provided to the student not more than 60 days before or 30 days after the child is graduating with a regular diploma or turning 21. Refer to the Special Education Compliance Standards and Indicators 200.1320.a and 200.1320.c or 200.1320.d.

What if the school sent the student the Summary of Performance 30 days before graduation and then the student failed to graduate?

As far as compliance is concerned, the school would just have to provide the summary again (updated, of course) when the child actually graduates. If a student is on the cusp, it might be easier for the school to wait until graduation is official to provide the SOP rather than possibly having to provide and then update the SOP if the student takes longer to graduate than expected.

Where can I find guidance on completing the summary of performance?

An example Summary of Performance is provided on the Missouri Best Practices in Transition Planning online learning module located on the Transition Coalition website, www.TransitionCoalition.org.

Two case studies, each with a sample summary of performance, can be found on the Missouri Community of Practice, www.MissouriTransition.org.

If a student is only being serviced in co-teaching classes, no resource (study skills), how is that shown on placement?

Specialized instruction provided in a co-teaching classroom is not considered time removed from general education. 100% in general education is in the "inside regular education at least 80% of time" placement category.

Do co-taught classes need to have minutes on the service summary page and do you show that on placement?

When a child with a disability is in a co-taught classroom because the IEP team decided that it is the appropriate place for the child to receive special education services (not just by chance through scheduling) then the service summary page should list the amount of specialized instruction to be provided in that setting. When the special education service is provided in the general education setting it does not count as time removed from general education. Make sure to list the location of the service as, "general education."

How do you document paraprofessional support on the service summary page?

The IEP should list the amount of time including frequency, location and duration that the IEP team determined this service is needed for the child as a supplementary aid and service. That would include services from a one-on-one paraprofessional the team has determined necessary and could include time from a paraprofessional that also works with

other students in the class if the team determined that dedicated time was needed for that paraprofessional to work with this child (individually or in a group) for a particular amount of time daily, weekly etc. to address the annual goals. If a paraprofessional is working in a classroom and a child with an IEP gains incidental benefit from this, it would not be reflected on the IEP. The key factor is whether the team determined that paraprofessional services were necessary, and for what period of time, to implement this IEP and that amount of time would need to be dedicated to working with the child as indicated in accordance with the IEP.

Johnny plans to go into the military, and he wants a military career. What would his education/training and employment postsecondary goals be?

His employment postsecondary goal could state: After graduation from high school and qualifying for admittance, Johnny will enlist in the military. (This is an appropriate employment aspiration.) His postsecondary education/training postsecondary goal could state: After graduation from high school and qualifying for admittance, Johnny will complete basic training in the military.

What are appropriate postsecondary education and employment goals for a student who wants to become a teacher?

You could write two separate postsecondary goals for education/training and employment, or you could write a combination postsecondary goal and list it for both postsecondary goals: After graduation, Sue will complete college, earn a teaching certificate and become employed as a teacher.

What are appropriate postsecondary education/training and employment goals for a student who will go to work on the family farm upon graduation?

Employment: After graduation, 'student' will work full-time on his family's farm.

Training: After graduation, 'student' will participate in on-the-job training on the family farm to learn [independent operation of a combine, buying and selling crops, etc.]. When writing transition services, this would be a good opportunity to help the child explore the training/education options in the community that are available to him or her.

How do you write a postsecondary goal when the student's dream is unattainable or unreasonable?

Involving a student in the IEP process and interpreting transition assessment can often help the student identify attainable postsecondary goals. Sometimes the IEP team also has to think creatively as they strive to include postsecondary goals that take into consideration the student's desires and write a meaningful transition plan that will prepare the student for life after high school.

The following is a goal from the Department's example IEP for "Katie," a mild MR student: Upon graduation from high school, I (Katie) will take a first aid class at the community college and continue on-the-job training.

Katie's transition plan shows that she will attend college, but she is a senior and has not been taking college preparatory courses. This IEP identifies creative thinking in creating a plan that leads Katie toward her postsecondary goal but does so in a realistic manner.

Dr. Ed O'Leary, who is a leader in the field of postsecondary transition training, recommends that the IEP team should follow-up with a line of questions when they believe the student's postsecondary goal is unreasonable. Use the "wh" questions:

Why do you want to do that? Where do you want to be? What do you like about that job? A student who wants to be a veterinarian probably doesn't want to complete seven or eight years of college. He or she may enjoy working with animals and knows that is what a veterinarian does. When that student learns about all the other occupations in the area of animal care, he or she is likely to find one that is a better fit.