

CPAC

Nov. 26, 2019

>> BETH: Let's get started. Welcome. I apologize for those technical difficulties. Okay. Thank you so much for your patience, I am sorry for the late start. My name is Beth, the transition coordinator for the Connecticut Parent Advocacy Center. And this is the second webinar in our transition to adult life webinar and Facebook live series.

part one was Transition in the Law and that is available on CPAC's website under online learning opportunities. you can do that at your convenience.

Today we will be talking about transition and the IEP, the individualized education program.

This webinar was not meant to be the be all and end all and every little detail of the IEP, but it will cover the basic pages, the most important pages of the IEP, that is not to say that there are not other pages that include transition planning, but for the paces of a shortened webinar, we picked up the most important pages, once we use the most in the when we send parents to look at the most.

So it will be a brief overview. If you have questions, there is a Q&A section I believe that shows up on your screen. Also, the chat box. And if you are viewing on Facebook live, again I apologize for the delay there as well, and you can type your questions in, last time people ask questions and I did not get to them until after -- there is someone else monitoring Facebook today, so I should be able to get to the questions.

The first part of the webinar, the first 20-30 minutes, I will be going through the IEP document and then I will take questions after. So we went to get through the content of the webinar first. So what I hope you take away is a better understanding of the IEP and how it relates to transition planning.

I always start pretty much every presentation I do, if you were on the Transition webinar you saw this as the first slide as well but I think it is important as we think about students transitioning out of district services into the adult world. I put bold type face on the part of the law that says, "to prepare them for further education, employment and independent living."

This is the whole purpose of the law, the whole purpose of special education and why

we do what we do. Because we are working to prepare students to exit and move on to the adult world, whatever that may look like for that individual student.

Transition planning, as was also mentioned in the last webinar, is done through PPT meeting, planning and placement meeting, also called an IEP meeting. This is really where the IEP is supposed to be put together. That is not saying that it cannot be worked on prior to the PPT meeting, but when we start transition planning, at the PPT or IEP meeting before the students turn 14 or 16, depending on whether they are at a student with autism or not, the majority of the meeting should be done with the PPT meeting. This is where goals and objectives are developed, and at the meeting we agree on these goals and objectives hopefully.

So this is really where the meat of the document should be created. Of course, the student should -- well must be invited to attend, but as much as possible, should be a major driver of goals and objectives. At this point we are looking at where the student is going, where they want to do, not what we want them or think they should do. So they should not only be invited to attend but we hope they have a front, a leading role in the development of the goals and objectives.

So, here is page 4 of the IEP document. So pages, I am just going to flip back and forth for a second. So page 4 and page 5 go to get there. And so they are really the foundational pages of the IEP, and so this is not just for transition planning, this is for any student who has this IEP document, any student receiving special education services, pages four and five are the foundational pages. It is where we gather all the information together about the student's strengths and needs and the impact of the student's disability on their education.

We create goals and objectives and we go from here. So these are the foundational pages.

What should be reported on pages four and five, so they are called the "present levels of academic achievement and functional performance" pages or the PLOP pages, and we should gather together information.

So oftentimes we see the evaluation data is reported on these pages so if there has been this a-- and I should've been of formal evaluation things like IQ, Academic achievement, those should be reported on these pages but if you look at the top of the title-- let me move my cursor up there, you will see the information on the pages should also come from a variety of different places. So it can be classroom performance, it can be observation, it can be the parent/student reports, it can be the teacher reports,

obviously.

And looking at things like balance assessment -- a variety of different places when we talk about transition we have transition assessments which we will touch on a little further into the presentation -- but that should also be a part of present levels of academic achievement and functional performance.

The next part of page 4 you will see parent student input and concerns. Often times when an IEP comes across my desk, I see very little written here. And when we are talking about transition, we really want to think about not only the parents input, but especially the students input, because like I said earlier, if possible, the student should be the driver of the IEP as much as possible.

And so, what can be written here? So, things that work, the things that do not work, if there are strategies that are not reported in other places in the IEP, you could perhaps add something like that here. There might not be things that the parent or student or the teacher or the seem to know about that students so we might have tried things that did not work in the past.

There may be things that a parent or student are asking for that are not resolved in one particular PPT meeting, and so that would be important to add. The student or parent may write a statement about their dreams, their hopes for the future. And add this to the parent/student input and concerns. And if it does not fit into the section it can be added to the IEP document as well.

So that is the first part. And then as you look down into the second part, you will see page 4, generally deals with the academic parts of a person's education, the students education, so you see the language arts, the math and other academic and nonacademic areas.

So information in the areas is briefly describing the current performance so this section generally has things like test scores, IQ scores, academic achievement scores.

And then the next, we list areas of strength for the student. So this is important because when we look at ways to support this person, we can use strengths to help support a person in the area of concerns and needs. So strengths, what do they do really well? We can also use strengths to really help a person know that they have these positive areas and things they are successful at.

And then concerns and needs column. Anything in these specific areas of language

arts, math, other nonacademic areas that are concerns or needs, information that comes out of the testing or one of these places listed above. And then the impact of the disability on the students involvement in education.

And then page 5 is generally the more functional areas. So that is not to say all of these things do not impact the academic areas, because clearly they do. When you look at things like behavior, social, emotional communication. Vocational transitional and all of those areas listed on page 5. These are the areas we may talk about when speaking of functional performance.

Same thing here listing current performance, based on evaluations, assessments and things like that. And then listing students strengths, listing concerns and needs, and the impact of the disability on education.

So as we look at these pages to help drive transition planning, a couple of things to note that I see frequently. one is that I do not always see all of the information that would be helpful pulled from evaluations and put on this page for a variety of different reasons.

So it is helpful when you look at pages four and five, to also have evaluation data, assessments and things like that, so that you can have a better understanding of the students' needs.

And this concerns and needs column is really what drives the goals and objectives, so that is not just for transition planning, that is for all students with an IEP. We look at those concerns and needs to help look at the different areas that we need to address them to help this person to transition successfully to the adult world.

I mentioned transition assessment, this is different than formal evaluations. So the transition task force came up with this definition 2008. I am not sure that it is being changed. We are actually working on a new transition task force and assessment manual and there's a new transition manual coming out very, very soon.

But for now, transition assessment is an ongoing process of gathering information -- and we highlight, ongoing, because it is not just a one and done type assessment. So this helps us, the student, and the support people, the professionals and family members, to help the student to plan for their life in the future, whatever that may be.

So, we look at these assessments. And typically, where you would go to see if anything, any assessments have been completed, is page 6, the transition planning

page. We will get to that in a minute.

We want the transition assessments to be current. So hopefully we have some that are completed within the previous year. For a student who is new to transition planning that would not perhaps have happened yet although it may have. But there is not an expectation to have that there when we are just starting transition planning. So we use these assessments to help us write goals and objectives and post school outcome statements. So POGS is post school outcome statements.

If you see page 6 number three, is the transition planning and so pages four and five is the present levels of performance. So we can use several different assessments and we should use several different assessments to gather information as the student processes through high school and transition.

The transition assessments can look like the following. They can be interviews, they can be vocational evaluations, inventories, they can be job shadowing experiences or situational assessments. They can be taking a student out into the community, as simple as that, and assessing how things go with different experiences in the community. And they can be volunteer and paid work. One of the challenges we frequently see with transition assessments is these types of assessments, these very informal assessments do not always translate to adult services. So adult services looks at more of a formal assessment process and they do not always accept these more informal assessments. And I can be a bit of a gap in between high school and adult services. But just to know that it can be a very informal process and that does meet the districts requirements under the law.

And then we want to look at as many areas as possible. And so not all of these areas may be appropriate for each student. But these are the areas in our transition assessment manual that we are working on revising, really taking a look at what do we need to assess, what assessments are available to look at all these different areas? We've added technology so in the old manual we did not have technology, and we are adding technology at this point because it is such a major part of all of our lives, that we really need to take a look and see what can be a support to the student with a disability.

And then this is page 6, the transition planning page. So, number one is either it is appropriate to be planning for transition or not. And so you should see one of those boxes or the other checked. Two is, was the student invited to attend the PPT meeting? And did the student attend? So they have to be invited. So 2a, should always be yes but they do not have to attend. I hope they do attend but they do not have to attend. And so that may be yes or no.

And then, how did we collect the students preferences and interests? Did we do personal interviews, did we talk to them, did they make comments at the meeting? Some students do a whole presentation at the meeting and some students run the meeting. So that would be a way we are looking at their preferences and interests.

And then a little summary of what their preferences and interests are as they relate to transition planning. And then number three is where the assessments would be reported. So this is what we were just talking about.

So one of the things to note is the assessments should be over and above what all students receive. And so all students typically have some sort of career, like a career cluster or some sort of career assessment, interest inventories, things like that are typically given to all high school students.

So if appropriate, students that have IEP's should participate in all those assessments as well. And in addition students with an IEP should be given assessments that are over and above what all students receive.

So we are really digging a little deeper with students with disabilities and we are really looking at preferences, interests, strengths, needs, at a much deeper level so that we can support them in obtaining the skills that they need to transition to adult life.

And then four is agency participation. Were any outside agencies invited? Did they attend and have they agreed to provide or pay for any services?

Many years ago, some of the colleges had staff that could attend PPT meetings for at least a year or two the student exited district services and that's because of capacity issues and not having many staff members and having more people in the caseloads, generally we do not see agency staff attending unless it is right towards the end, and there are exceptions to that, but I just do not want people to be surprised that we are talking about agency staff but they may or may not be attending.

5 a b and c are known as PSOGS-- and we look at those areas. If you remember the very first slide about the purpose of the law, we are looking at the area of postsecondary education and training, the area of employment and the area of independent living skills.

So I have another slide about post school outcomes statements, I won't talk a whole lot about them at this moment.

Then we need to think about the course of study needed to assist the child in obtaining their transition goals and objectives. And so this is one of the reasons why we suggest and we encourage families to request transition planning at the age of 14 instead of the age of 16. And if you remember, if you participated in the first webinar, if appropriate, we can start transition planning at an earlier age than 16. And so the reason we want to think about this is because generally students are in eighth grade transitioning to high school when they are 14, around the age of 14. We really want to think about what course of study is important for this person. What classes they need to take, what classes -- we might think about some exemptions from students for his particular classes but if we are thinking far enough into the future when we are making these decisions, we are being very thoughtful about how they will impact this person as they exit high school or transition out into the adult world.

And then age of majority, transfer of rights, when a student turns 18, the rights will transfer to them. More about that in the part one webinar. We talk about how to work with that.

The summary of performance, which I will also touch on at the end.

So that is page 6, the transition planning page. So a little bit about this post school outcomes statements. I had pointed out number 5 a, b and c, that is where the post school outcomes statements will be written in. So students must have two, at least two postschool outcome statements. So it is a requirement to have one in the area of postsecondary education and employment and required to have one in the area of employment.

And then independent living is the third area. And that is if it is appropriate for the student.

So for each postschool outcome goal statement, so if we have two or three, there must be at least one measurable annual goal and objective page. So page 7. So one page 7 must align with the postschool outcome goal statement.

So here is page 7. It is the regular measurable annual goal and objectives page that students have had the entire career that they have had in IEP. And if you look up at the top you will see the check boxes. And so how do I know if I have a goal page aligning with my post school outcome goal? I look up at the top. I see, okay, postsecondary education and training. So at least one of these pages should have that box checked. And then employment. So at least one page with employment check.

And then independent living if appropriate.

So, post school outcome goal statements are goals that the student would like to achieve in the future. So this is sort of the target. Where we are going. So if we are -- one of my coworkers uses the idea of going on vacation. So, the postschool outcome goals are the goal of where we are going on vacation, so wherever that is. And then the measurable goals and objectives are what we need to pack in our suitcase in order to be ready for the goal of whatever the vacation is.

And so the measurable annual goals and objectives are what is supporting this post school outcome goal statement. So this is what I just said, the child hopes to achieve after leaving postsecondary school.

And then again page 7, so you can look at the top and see what area each page covers.

And then lastly, the summary of performance. So I want to be clear that the summary of performance is actually not part of the IEP documents. The IEP is a legal document, and the summary of performance I put into this presentation because it makes sense because the summary of performance does not often show up in other places but I just want to be clear that it is not a part of the IEP.

So this will be a document that the student will receive once they exit. So if they age out or receive a diploma, and it outlines what things assisted the student to meet their goals when they were in school. It can assist the student and going on to higher education, training and employment.

And the point of this for a long time was to help a student receive accommodations and modifications in college or university or whatever post-secondary education they chose. And the Department of developmental services and Bureau of rehab services would look at this to see, okay, what worked? What didn't work? What assistive technology did this person use? What accommodations and modifications did they use in high school?

I can tell you now there are many colleges and universities that do not look at the IEP document or the summary of performance. And there are some that do, there are of course exceptions to that. So I don't want to make a blanket statement here. But often times, the school, the colleges and universities in postsecondary programs want actual evaluation so they can see the impact of the students disability to then decide accommodations and modifications.

And so hopefully, if possible and appropriate the student is involved in the creation of the summary of performance, because this will help them have a better understanding of their strengths, of their needs, of the accommodations and modifications that they used and it can be very beneficial to them as they move on to the adult world so they have a better understanding of what they will advocate for as they move on into the adult world.

Last but not least, there is some more information. Some websites that have a lot of information about transition, CPAC's new website. So as you look for information this can be some good places to start.

That is the formal presentation. And so I am going to open it up to questions now.

I don't see any questions in the chat box. Q&A section, I do not see any questions in Q&A. I believe there is also an option to raise your hand.

I am going to unmute you, Irene.

>> IRENE: Can you give us an example of the types of evaluations that a postsecondary school would like to see. But with some examples be?

>> BETH: Some will look at the IEP that will look at the summary of performance. What most places are looking for at this point are those formal evaluations. The IQ test, functional or academic achievements. Those kinds of things. They want to know because they are under the Americans With Disabilities Act, approving accommodations and modifications. So they really need to see a formal documentation it says, yes, this person has a disability and requires these accommodations to be successful.

So we will level the playing field for this person but we want to make sure this person actually has a disability. So one of the reasons why they started doing that is because - I hate to even say this, but it happens where a student actually did not use their accommodations that were in their IEP or on their summary of performance, but then they are asking for in college or even worse, a student did not have any accommodations in high school, but then all of the sudden all these accommodations are showing up on the IEP or summary of performance because the parent and/or student may have pushed for those things, so that the student could have a little step ahead of everybody in college or university or in a post-secondary program.

So that is why many, many colleges have stopped looking at the IEP. And I am sure

there are other reasons but, yes, those more formalized assessments that you would see like an annual evaluation, does that make sense?

>> IRENE: Yes, thank you.

>> BETH: You are welcome. Anybody else? Let me see if there are any questions on Facebook.

Yes, so, the other pages that I just wanted to mention. It was depending on Tom.

>> TOM: Going back to when the outside agencies potentially come to those transition meetings or are involved, who tends to invite them, is that both school district and parent, who tends to have the responsibility there?

>> BETH: Yes, typically, if there has not been any involvement at all, usually what I see is the school district doing that. However, there are definitely times where the parent is inviting agencies in. So if it is the typical DDS, BRS and the schools generally have a connection with them, then it is going to that avenue.

But I have seen in particular recently, there was a student that was getting involved with the Department of mental health and addiction services. The school did not have a connection there. And so the family invited the agency in.

So that is typically -- it really depends but that is generally how it happens, it is generally the school.

>> TOM: Thank you.

>> BETH: So question, if you have a child with high functioning autism who may be academically on par with peers but not -- nowhere near socially ready for adult life how best would you advocate for services from the school as transition -- ?

Yes, that is an extremely common scenario. So a child who has a high functioning autism, does really well academically, is carrying their own academically but is struggling socially and has difficulty navigating social situations. So, that is really where that functional piece comes in.

And so if we are only looking at a child in the academic area than they might look really good and ready to exit and go on to whatever they choose to go on to an adult life. But then we start looking at those functional pieces. And so I am going to back up on

the slides here. So when we are talking about transition assessments we are looking at academics. That is just one bullet point on this list.

So we also need to look at obtaining and maintaining employment. So if we have someone struggling socially that could be definitely a challenge. Postsecondary education/training, so how do they navigate the college campus? Most importantly if they are doing really well academically but cannot speak with an adult that they do not know, how are they going to go to a professor and advocate for their accommodations they need if they are not able to first of all, have an understanding of what they need, and second of all, talk to adults that they do not know? Students, I have heard this a bunch of times also, students do well within the school, people they have known for many years that they see almost every day and they can do a great job with self-advocacy there.

But then you take them out of that comfortable setting where we have a lot of the safety nets, and they do not do quite as well. And so those are important things to look at.

So asking for assessments. The questions were how do advocate for that? Asking for assessments in these areas. Obtaining and maintaining employment. Post-secondary education and training and independent living skills and activities of daily living. Community participation. Health. Self-determination and self-advocacy. Communication. Social skills interpersonal relationships. There are assessments that cover these areas. The basic place to start is the Connecticut Core transition skills.

So I can add that -- when I post the webinar I will add that to the materials that we suggest. The Connecticut Core Transition Skills have several different areas to look at before the student exits, we need to make sure that they -- that we have looked at all these areas and they are prepared in the areas that they need to be prepared in.

In next month's webinar, it is on Guiding Documentation around Transition Planning. And the Connecticut Core Transition Skills will be one of the documents that we highlight. So I hope that answers that person's question. Definitely looking at that functional area, a person's functional achievement.

Anybody else have any questions? Just checking Facebook.

So a couple other pages that guide transition planning to a much lesser extent on the IEP that I just want to mention for you to look at. So the cover page of the IEP will list the reason for the meeting. And when student needs transition planning, transition

planning should be checked on the cover page.

So if you are looking at your child's IEP, you can look there to see if that is in the forefront of planning.

I mentioned accommodations and modifications several times throughout the presentation, and we have page 8, which is the accommodations and modifications page. I can just say quickly that if you have a child that is planning on going off to college, then we should not have come as they are junior, senior year, we should be really be backing off of modifying curriculum and looking at the accommodations that they may receive under the Americans With Disabilities Act. That is a whole other presentation, but it is just something to think about.

And then page 10, is a special factors progress reporting and exit criteria page. And that is a reporting page, but that will give you information about a student exiting and transition planning as well. If you take a look at that page.

So all of the pages of the IEP should support transition planning in different ways. But these are the ones that we really look at the most with families as they call CPAC and ask for help in navigating transition, secondary transition.

I want to thank you all for joining me this morning for this webinar. It should be available in about a week on his CPAC's online learning opportunities section of the website. And if you have questions about anything we talked about today or transition in general, you are welcome to call the office, 860-739-3089.

And you can also email me if you have any questions. My email address is breel@cpacinc.org.

So thank you everyone for joining us today. Have a great day!