

## Empowering Transitions: The Role of Transition Education Center (TEC)

In the journey from school life to community integration, the Transition Education Center stands as a beacon of support for students with and without disabilities. At the core of the Transition Education Center lies our mission, deeply ingrained in every facet of our operations. Our commitment to honoring students' unique abilities and aspirations, fostering safe and inclusive environments, and promoting collaborative partnerships permeates every program and interaction.

Rooted in the legislative framework of Minnesota, the first three TEC programs prepare students with disabilities to progress and move from school life to community.

1. **Transition Plus** caters to young adults aged 18-22, focusing on post-secondary opportunities, employment, and independent living. Its tailored curriculum and work-based learning opportunities are delivered by dedicated educators, paraeducators, and job-coaches. Transition Plus equips students with essential life skills while fostering personal growth.
2. **TAPP** provides a structured environment for students with social-emotional barriers, offering a path to graduation through functional academics and the development of employment skills. With small class sizes and individualized support, TAPP nurtures a sense of belonging and academic achievement.
3. **Project SEARCH**, a year-long internship program, bridges the gap between school and competitive integrated employment for students with disabilities. Partnering with Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare in St. Paul, this initiative offers real-world work experiences across various hospital departments, empowering interns to become valued members of the workforce.

The fourth TEC program supports the district's *Student Discipline Practices and Positive Behavior Supports*, where student discipline practices are built on positive educator-student relationships and responsive to individual student needs.

4. **AWARE** steps in to support general education and special education students in grades 6-12, offering a structured setting intended to teach responsibility and motivate students to learn and grow from a disciplinary situation. AWARE further assists students with academic completion and provides restorative education opportunities. Through restorative approaches and service learning, students develop critical thinking skills and learn to navigate challenges constructively.

At the heart of the Transition Education Center lies a commitment to student success and community integration. The dedicated staff in these programs are committed to empowering individuals with the skills needed for post-school success. Through personalized support, experiential learning, and collaborative partnerships, the Transition Education Center not only prepares students for the future but also fosters a culture of inclusivity and empowerment.

As students transition back to their home schools or into the community, they carry with them the skills, confidence, and resilience cultivated within the walls of the Transition Education Center, poised to embrace the opportunities that lie ahead.