



- Developing an Educational Development Plan (EDP)
- Assessing the student's interests and abilities that relate to identified goals
- Determining course of study, experiences, services, and/or programs to prepare the student to reach those goals
- Determining the student's anticipated adult service needs
- Linking the student and parent with potential adult services

## GENERAL

### Q. What are transition services for students with disabilities?

- A. Transition services are defined as a coordinated set of activities for students with disabilities that are focused on improving academic and functional achievement to facilitate their movement to post-school settings/activities (i.e. post-secondary education, vocational training, community participation, independent living, etc.).

### Q. What is transition planning?

- A. Transition planning is a process that may include the following:
- Identifying the student's post-high school goals

### Q. When does transition planning occur?

- A. Transition planning becomes a part of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process at age 16, or younger if appropriate. Transition planning focuses on the student's course of study. Planning may begin during middle school when the initial high school guidance plan is developed. Parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student participate in the annual review and all transition related discussions and decisions.

## DIPLOMA/CERTIFICATE

### Q. When might a district award a transition certificate?

- A. Any student with special needs who does not meet the requirements for a diploma, but meets the following standards, will earn a certificate if he/she:

## DECISION MAKING

### Q. Do all students with disabilities have the option to earn a transition certificate?

- A. Yes. Any student in special education, regardless of disability, can earn a transition certificate. The decision to pursue the certificate is made by the IEP team when determining course of study.

### Q. What should the IEP team consider when determining whether a student should pursue a certificate rather than a diploma?

- A. Because each student with a disability is treated as an individual, there are no absolutes for decision making. IEP team considerations need to include realistic exit outcomes for each student. Discussion points might include:
- The goals to prepare this student for post-secondary life
  - Whether the student's abilities align with his/her goals

- Courses, programs, and activities that will assist the student to reach his/her goals
- Other academic/performance data (i.e. assessment- Michigan Merit Exam or MI-Access; student's performance within the Michigan Merit Curriculum; student's ability to meet course objectives with accommodations and individualized goal-setting, etc.)

### Q. When should the IEP team discuss the transition certificate option?

- A. At the very latest, discussion should begin during the middle school years and occur at least annually. At the secondary level, transition planning becomes the heart of the IEP, driving all decisions about programming, services, and educational outcomes for students with disabilities.

- Is enrolled in an education program for at least four years beyond grade eight.
- Is determined by the IEP team to have developed the skills necessary to access appropriate post-school activities/resources.

**Q. What does the certificate look like?**

- A. The certificate looks like a diploma, with appropriate wording changes. (see page 3 for samples)

**Q. Will a student receiving a transition certificate have access to the same graduation activities?**

- A. Yes. Students receiving a transition certificate are eligible to participate in graduation activities to the same extent as their peers who receive a diploma.

## TRANSITION ACTIVITIES

**Q. How will the transition activities for a student receiving a certificate be designed and developed?**

- A. The IEP team should ensure that students are prepared to transition to post-secondary life, determining the student's transition activities based on his/her post-

secondary goals, educational progress, assessment information, IEP goals and objectives, and appropriate career plans identified via the EDP.

**Q. What are the academic requirements of a transition certificate?**

- A. The student's certificate program is likely to include courses in English, reading, math, science, and social studies with emphasis on functional objectives, and career exploration. However, specific academic requirements are determined by each local district's Board of Education, as they will be awarding transition certificates.

**Q. What if a student who is working toward a diploma is unable to meet the criteria for reasons related to his/her disability? Can the IEP team decide to change his/her course of study to a transition certificate?**

- A. Yes. As the date of anticipated graduation nears, the IEP team must determine the following:
- Should the student continue to pursue a diploma or is a certificate more appropriate?
  - Can the student earn the necessary credits with an additional semester or year?
  - Has the student met the criteria to earn a certificate?

## POST-GRADUATION OPTIONS

**Q. What additional options are available to students who received a transition certificate?**

- A. Students may:
- Enroll in a General Education Development (GED) program
  - Participate in high school completion classes through an Adult Education Program
  - Attend a career and technical institute (i.e. Michigan Career & Technical Institute)
  - Take classes at a community college
  - Take online courses under the seat-time waiver option (according to district guidelines)

**Q. Can students who graduated with a certificate apply to college?**

- A. Yes. Students who graduate with a certificate may apply for admission to any community college. Michigan community colleges offer a wide variety of credit and



noncredit courses. To enroll in credit-bearing courses, students are required to take placement exams, such as the Compass, to provide evidence of ability to profit from college instruction. Students not meeting minimum scores on assessment tests may be required to enroll in noncredit developmental courses until they are reassessed for placement in credit-bearing courses. Students should contact the admissions office of the college for specific school requirements.

## Q. What are Adult Transition Services?

A. Livingston Educational Service Agency offers a program called Adult Transition Services for some students who earned a transition certificate from their local school district (Note: Students who earn a diploma are not eligible for this program). Programming is designed to support students' efforts to develop the functional skills needed to live, work, and access their community, as independently as possible. Emphasis is placed on learning practical skills and providing community-based opportunities to develop a sustainable schedule of activities consistent with the individual's abilities, interests, and preferences. Students continue to have an IEP with goals and objectives developed using a person centered planning process. Students are eligible for services until the age of 26 or until supports are no longer required.

## Q. Who can help with planning after a student leaves high school?

A. There are two main community resources that may provide support for students to make post-high school plans:

- Michigan Rehabilitation Services (MRS) can help develop vocational plans. A MRS counselor, after determining eligibility for services, can help develop a plan that may include training, continued schooling, and/or job placement.
- Michigan Works is a local agency that provides supports for adults looking for training, retraining and help in securing employment.

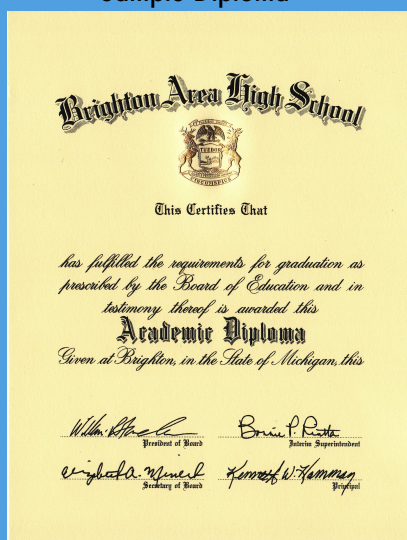
## Q. Will potential employers hire students who have earned a certificate rather than a diploma?

A. Employers want workers who are reliable, can get along with others, and demonstrate good work habits. Employers realize that persons with varying degrees of academic skills can be valuable and effective employees.

## Q. How should students complete application questions about high school graduation?

A. Both students who earn a diploma and those who earn a certificate answer "yes" when asked if they completed high school. Most applications do not ask whether a student earned a certificate or a diploma. If asked specifically, students who earned a certificate should indicate they completed an approved high school program of studies earning a certificate.

Sample Diploma



Sample Certificate

