Northland
LEARNING CENTER

Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC)

Northland Learning Center

January 17, 2024 ▪ 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm

"Transition Resources: Options After High School"

What is the Northland Learning Center (NLC)?

Special education cooperative is made up of 10 school districts in northeastern MN

- Cook County (Grand Marais)
- International Falls
- Chisholm
- Ely
- Rock Ridge
- Nett Lake
- Mt. Iron/Buhl
- St. Louis County Schools
- Mesabi East
- Northland Learning Center

COOK COUNTY ISD 166
Home of the Vikings

CHISHOLM PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Committed to High Expectations

INTERNATIONAL FALLS
INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 361

ELY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Home of the Timberwolves

ROCK RIDGE

Nett Lake Elementary School
Soaring to Excellence

MOUNTAIN IRON-BUHL PUBLIC SCHOOL

GIANTS
MESABI EAST

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT 2142
ST. LOUIS COUNTY SCHOOLS

Northland Learning Center

Meetings

- The NLC SEAC will meet one - four times per year. The SEAC meetings shall also be accessible remotely via available technology including virtual links and slideshows posted afterward on the NLC website.
- For this school year: 2023-2024, meetings will be held at 3:30 pm in-person and virtually
  - October 16, 2023 was our first meeting for this school year: Slide Show is posted on our website
  - January 17, 2024 (Today) is the final scheduled meeting for this school year
- Agendas will be set by the Director in consultation with committee members.

Transition in the IEP

The purpose of special education is to prepare children to lead "productive and independent adult lives to the maximum extent possible." ~ IDEA 2004(c)(5)(A)

Begin with the end in mind. This idea is at the heart of assisting students in planning for their future. Starting between 7th-9th grade, a student's IEP sets the course for planning for the future. The IEP changes to include long range planning to meet the goals (employment, post-secondary education and training, and independent living) established by the student and family. This process is called "transition planning" which also continues to focus on educational and functional needs.

Transition Planning Process

Where Am I Now?

Identify Strengths, Needs, Interests, & Preferences through Assessment



Where Do I Want to Go?

Post-Secondary Expectations



How Do I Get There?



Annual Goals



Courses of Study, Activities



Supports, Services, Linkages

Ready to Graduate?

What outside agencies will need to be integrated? What skills, opportunities and experiences do they need to demonstrate or participate in prior to graduating? The team should discuss whether the student will be graduating:

- with their same age peers -meaning the student is expected to meet all state standards for graduation with special education support (accommodations and/or modifications).
- by meeting certain IEP goals/objectives-meaning the student may or may not have met the minimum requirements for graduation in their district, but have ongoing transition needs identified in their IEP's, by the IEP team, and based on assessment data.

*Students are able to access 18-22 services in their district or through the BTI Program. The decision may change over time depending on the student's needs, future plans, and readiness to exit their programming.

The age of majority for all students is 18.

For a student receiving special education services, this means they now have legal and educational rights and responsibilities previously held by their parents/guardians. A discussion regarding transfer of student's rights at age of majority should be held prior to the student's 17th birthday. Educationally, students who have reached legal adulthood, have the following rights:

- Receive notice of and attend IEP meetings
- Consent to re-evaluation
- Consent to change in placement
- Request mediation or due process hearing to resolve a dispute regarding their evaluation, identification, eligibility, IEP, educational placement or other issues.

Guardianship Options

There are several options to support your student in making educational and other life decisions. It's important to understand that not all adult children with disabilities will need nor should be under a legal guardianship. There are alternatives to guardianship that help a person make decisions without affecting their independence. These alternatives allow the person to get support for what they need and puts them in control of their lives.

Guardianship: An individual or organization, appointed by the courts, who has legal authority to make personal (guardian) and/or financial (conservator) decisions for an incapacitated person who is unable to provide for their own basic needs or financial management even with support from others and/or technological assistance.

A guardian has 7 basic powers including:

determining where the person lives, their needs for shelter, nutrition and access to service – including academic and vocational services, providing clothing and furniture, providing necessary access to medical or other professional care, approval or withholding of contracts, supervisory authority, and helping to accessing government benefits.

Even with a court-appointed guardian, people with disabilities have civil and constitutional rights. These rights can be found in the Bill of Rights. It includes everything from the right to be treated with dignity and respect, to the right to privacy, to the right to get married and have children.

Limited guardianship: The guardian has only a few select powers necessary to support the person and all other decisions are those of the individual.

Alternatives to guardianship:

- Health Care Directive guides a person to make decisions about what they would like their health care to look like in the event they cannot make their own decisions.
- Banking tools such as automatic bill pay, direct deposit and joint accounts to make sure bills are paid.
- Representative payee to manage governmental income benefits (ie: SSI)
- Power of Attorney can be used to appoint someone to help them make certain decisions such as health care, financial or other general decisions.
- Supplemental/special needs trust/ABLE accounts are all tools to help people save money without it affecting their eligibility for government benefits.
- Releases of information allow a designated person to have discussions with health care, mental health, county and government entities.

Supported decision making: A Person-Centered approach to decision making that recognizes that all people need at least occasional help to make decisions. It empowers the person to make decisions with the support of trusted family members, friends and/or professionals.

Resources to learn more:

National Resource Center for Supported Decision Making (http://supporteddecisionmaking.org/)

Arc MN Guide to Guardianship (https://arcminnesota.org/resource/arc-guide-to-guardianship)

I have decided to pursue guardianship. What are the next steps?

- Go to your local county courthouse to request paperwork.
- File paperwork 6 months prior to the person's 18th birthday.
    - The person will be served paperwork to inform them that a guardianship petition has been filed.

Educational Services Beyond Grade 12

For students who will access 18-22 District or BTI Educational Programs:

Students who have earned the minimum graduation requirements may participate in a "social graduation" if the family wishes, but will not attain their high school diploma until they either age out of their programming or meet their goals. Social graduation allows students who will continue to receive services the opportunity to participate in the traditional graduation ceremony with their peers.

Bridge to Independence (BTI) Ages 18-22 Transition Program

Bridge to Independence (BTI) is a secondary special education program for adult students ages 18-22 in northeastern Minnesota. The BTI program offers a focus on the acquisition of skills in the areas of post-secondary education and training, employment and vocational skills, community participation, independent living skills, and recreation and leisure activities. The BTI program is designed to provide students with the greatest opportunities for an independent and fulfilling future.

Bridge to Independence is a secondary special education program designed for students who:

- Are 18-22 years old
- Have a variety of disabilities
- Have a current IEP
- Have significant transition needs
- Do not have a high school diploma

Case managers should facilitate a conversation with the team regarding consideration of during the 11th grade year. During 12th Grade, case managers should invite a BTI representative to the IEP team meeting to assist with goal setting and future planning. Student and parent visits to BTI are arranged to assist with decision making.

A student's IEP team, including the student and parent, determines if transition services beyond high school are necessary and appropriate. Based on the student's needs, as determined by the most recent evaluation and IEP, the team will consider and make a recommendation for transition services when appropriate or necessary.

Instruction at BTI will look quite different from the high school experience. Learning at BTI takes place in a kitchen, social skills space set up to feel like a gathering place in a home, or vocational space. The community also serves as a learning environment whenever possible to provide authentic learning and support generalization of skills.

Social Worker Support

A county social worker can help people access, coordinate and monitor needed services as they relate to the person's assessed needs and preferences- regardless of funding sources.

This may include:

- Exploring options for services and securing funding
- Coordinating with service providers and making referrals
- Attending IEP meetings to help plan for the student's future and advocate for the student
- Offering guidance on supported decision making and guardianship options
- Assisting with applying for SSI and county benefits
- Exploring vocational, post-secondary options along with Vocational Rehab
- Exploring housing, rec/leisure activities, helping to access services to increase independent living skills

To Apply for a County Social Worker

When should I apply? It is best to apply by age 14 when schools are starting the transition process. If the student has a developmental/intellectual disability, this process can begin in early childhood.

How do I apply? Everyone requesting county services needs to have a MNChoices assessment completed. This is a comprehensive assessment and support planning tool that is used to determine eligibility for services.

To request a MnChoices assessment, contact the local county health and human services department where you reside. You will need supporting documentation such as a school assessment or psychological assessment completed within the last year.

Driver's License

Getting a driver's license seems like a rite of passage towards independence for many teens. How does a parent know their child is ready to drive? This is an important question whether the individual is typically developing or has special needs. Attaining a driver's license is very individualized to the needs of the person driving. Being an independent and skilled driver with a disability is often possible. Knowing yourself, understanding and respecting your goals and limitations are the keys to creating an independent driver.

Accommodations can range from adaptive devices for those with physical impairments to more time to get settled and comfortable for those with driving anxieties or "invisible disabilities," such as high functioning autism or a nonverbal learning disorder.

Accommodations for Written Exam (Permit)

Every state handles accommodations differently, so contacting your DMV and asking what accommodations you may be eligible for based on your disability and documentation is highly encouraged.

Typical testing accommodations for paper-based or computer based tests may include:

- Access to auditory format (text to speech or a reader)
- Extra time to complete
- Private, distraction free room
- A scribe
- Breaks if needed

Study Tips and Resources:

- Read through MN Driver's Manual. A manual can be requested on audio CD if needed. You can find helpful information on MN DMV, (https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/dvs/Pages/default.aspx).
- Minnesota Easy-to-Read Driver's Manual created by MN Driver and Traffic Safety Education Association (MDTSEA) (http://www.mdtsea.net/easyread.html).
- Practice driver's quiz and street sign matching (https://www.quia.com/de/mnmain.html)
- MN Permit Practice Test (http://driving-tests.org/minnesota/minnesota-permit-practice-test)

**Remember, you can take the permit test twice, without any charge. If you fail twice, the 3rd time you go in you will need to pay a $10 test fee, and continue to pay each time until you pass. You can only take the test once per day.

Federal Financial Assistance

The Social Security Administration has a federal program that provides support for people with disabilities called Supplemental Security Income (SSI). SSI is available to anyone who qualifies with a disability or is over the age of 65. If your young adult qualified for SSI as a child, they would need to re-qualify as an adult when they reach 18. Qualifications as an adult are based on different financial and disability criteria than as a child.

Applications for this resource should be made as soon as it has been determined they will be needed. To find out more information, go to the Social Security website:

Go to: https://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-11011 in order to learn about what you need to know about your SSI when you turn 18.

Resources for Assistance with Fed. Aid

Disability Specialists: Disability Specialists strive to make the Social Security Disability application as simple and straightforward as possible. Disability Specialists are paid only if you obtain benefits. If you don't get benefits, you pay nothing. If you receive benefits, they get a percentage of the past due benefits paid to them by the Social Security Administration. For every case, nothing is taken from your monthly benefit check and you have no upfront costs. Please call us toll-free at 1-800-642-6393 to request an intake interview.

Disability Benefits 101: Offers tools and information on employment, health coverage, and benefits, including how work and benefits go together, https://mn.db101.org

Employment & Career Planning Resources

MN State CareerWise: Provides information on Minnesota careers, education, jobs, and self-employment (https://careerwise.minnstate.edu/).

National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth: Works to ensure that transition age youth are provided full access to high-quality services in integrated settings to gain education, employment, and independent living skills. Also offers a range of technical assistance services (http://www.ncwd-youth.info/).

Employment & Career Planning Resources

Job Accommodation Network: Offers free, expert, and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations and disability employment issues. Consultants offer one-on-one guidance on workplace accommodations, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and related legislation, and self-employment and entrepreneurship options for people with disabilities.

Assistance is available both over the phone and online.

Contact: (800) 526-7234 (Voice)
(877)781-9403 (TTY)

Post-Secondary Education/Training

Technical & Community Colleges: provide specialized training in a specific career field, trade, or profession, which can include computer technology, business administration, culinary arts, electronics, medical assistance, legal assisting, automotive technology, and cosmetology. Programs can take anywhere from less than two years up to four years to complete and typically award a certificate, diploma, or associate's degree. Associate's degree options include an Associate of Arts, an Associate of Science, and an Associate of Applied Science. Different technical programs have different standards for entrance such as the ACCUPLACER which assess reading, writing and math abilities.

Post-Secondary Education/Training

Apprenticeships: Offers a career pathway that provides employment as you learn on the job. People who successfully complete a program become journey level workers. Apprentices are guaranteed a wage as they progress. Employers generally bear the costs of the program. Apprentices may begin at 16 years of age, but the minimum age for most is 18.

To find out more information about regional apprenticeship programs:

www.218trades.com

**It is highly encouraged that a person attains their driver's license prior to applying for an apprenticeship program.

Post-Secondary Education/Training

4-Year Colleges/Universities: Colleges are often smaller institutions that emphasize undergraduate education in a broad range of academic areas. Universities are typically larger institutions that offer a variety of both undergraduate and graduate degree programs. Admission is stricter and varies slightly compared to 2 year colleges. Most times, they are looking for a student who graduated in the top half of their class or earned a specific score on the American College Test (ACT) or Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT). Students considering a 4-year college are encouraged to take the required classes dictated by their school district/state.

College Disability Coordinator

Students with a disability who wish to seek post-secondary schooling are responsible for requesting services from the campus disability coordinator. Colleges do not provide accommodations until they are requested. Planning ahead is critical to ensure the proper delivery of services. It is recommended that the student meet with the disability coordinator to discuss services received in the past and the procedures for setting current services. Most colleges or institutions require documentation of a disability, which can be in the form of high school special education evaluation or IEP, psychological evaluations, and/or medical documentation. Disability coordinators will then design and implement accommodation plans to meet the individual needs of the student. It is important to understand, it is the student's responsibility to inform their disability coordinator of upcoming assessments that require accommodations in order to ensure class/instructor timelines and expectations are met.

Accommodations in College

Each accommodation plan is arranged on a case-by-case basis. Though services vary between institutions, they may include the following:

Note takers, Early registration, Test Accommodations, Scribes, Materials in Alternate formats, Sign Language Interpreters, Assistive Technology, Orientation to the Building

For more information regarding successfully preparing students with disabilities for the postsecondary environment, learning about self advocacy, timelines, disability disclosure, accommodations, etc., go to:
(http://www.southcentral.edu/images/departments/ASC/documents/Post_Secondary_Resource_Guide_2015b.pdf)

NLC Transition Talks @ 12 & PACER Resource

The Northland Learning Center Website includes a Section:

Transition Talks @ 12

that goes over many of these subjects in greater detail.

*It can also be found under "Student & Family Resources" at the very bottom

PACER Transition Planning Guide

Deaf/Hard of Hearing Resource

https://mnemploymentcenter.org/ Also, there is a new Deaf Voc Rehab counselor who provides services to D/HH people in NE MN who communicate in ASL and prefer a VRS counselor who uses ASL. Her name is Kristy Ramos.

Please Welcome:

Lora Pershern
Vocational Rehabilitation Pre-ETS Representative
Department of Employment and Economic Development
Vocational Rehabilitation Services
3920 13th Ave E, Hibbing MN 55746
Cell: 218.929.9988
Fax: 218.262.7316
CareerForceMN.com | Twitter | Facebook

Examples of things going well?

Areas of Improvement needed across the schools?

How to increase membership?

Please fill out the NLC SEAC Meeting Feedback Form

- We want to hear from you!

Thank you for taking the time to attend the SEAC meeting.
We hope to see you again!

Resource availability to parents/staff

- Handouts on the back table
- For virtual copies email Hannah Helander: hhelander@northlandsped.org
- Applicable resources will be posted on the NLC website