Community of Practice in Transitions: Secondary to Post Secondary

WYSAC Conference
June 1 – 3, 2014
Introductions

- Mary Beth Basye; Post-High Coordinator
  Lincoln County School District #2
- Ken Hoff; Executive Director
  Wyoming Independent Living Rehabilitation
- Nancy Johnson; Special Education Coordinator
  Natrona County School District #1
- Deborah Simon; Transition Consultant
  Workforce Services, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Brent Heuer; Disability Services Counselor
  Casper College
Background

- February 2013 10 CoP members facilitated by WIND staff convened
- Members, school districts, adult community programs, DVR, independent living programs, and WDE personnel
- Members develop best practices recommendations for successful transitions
- Issues identified were:
  - prioritize and categorize stakeholders
  - lack of student focus
  - lack of integrated approach
  - lack of knowledge of transitions
Background

• Researched best practices
• June 2013: survey for school districts
  – Forwarded to all Special Ed Directors via email and postal service
  – Provided at the Leadership Conference in Riverton
• July 2013: Meeting with WDE
• January 2014: Transition Guidance Document to WDE
Overarching Themes and Areas of CoP Membership Research

• Developing self-determination and advocacy skills
• Focusing on transition planning; building skills and planning for services needed beyond high school
• Building the services network relationships to support service provision
Researchers have identified a number of “best practices” in transition planning (Cobb & Alwell, 2009; Kohler & Field, 2003; Test, Fowler et al., 2009). These include:

- Active student involvement in all aspects of the transition planning process including assessment and goal development;
- Active family participation in transition planning;
- Vocational training;
- Strategies and activities that increase career awareness and maturity.
- Paid employment or work experiences while still in high school;
- Interagency collaboration;
- Identification of skills (vocational, academic, social, etc.) that the student will need and instruction in those skills;
- Specific instruction in self-determination and self-advocacy skills;
- Inclusion in regular classrooms;
- Identification of assistive technology that can be used as the student transitions to employment or postsecondary education; and
- For those going on to postsecondary education – addressing how the student will obtain organizational support, social supports, and academic accommodations.
Transition Survey to School Districts Summary (July 2013)

Theme 1: Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy
- Data indicates majority of districts/teachers are addressing self-determination and self-advocacy through a variety of activities and/or school programs. No specific curriculum

Theme 2: Communication and Training
- Overall communication with students good to very good
- Lack of communication and training for parents about the difference between the student’s IEP-504-ADA
- Need for more communication and training for school staff about transition assessments and transition activities and strategies (the need for resources)
Survey Results (continued)

• Need for more discussion about the student’s self-determination and self-advocacy with the adult/outside agency
• Communication with students, parents and school staff take place during the IEP meeting (yearly) as well as a variety of other locations (indicating multiple meetings may take place)
• Adult/outside agency communication happens through email or phone (highest %, next is at the IEP meeting)
• Need for training between the adult/outside agency and the school district

**Theme 3: Agency Connections**
• Lack of Social Security agency resource for students
• A variety of ways are used to connect agencies with the student and parent
Three identified focuses of need

• Students with disabilities must develop self-determination and self-advocacy skills to be successful in the adult world.

• Transition planning must be focused on skill building and linked to necessary adult services to meet the needs of individuals in the adult world.

• Education and adult service providers must participate in a meaningful partnership to provide a network of appropriate services and ensure successful transition for students to the adult world.
Community of Practice in Transition: Secondary to Postsecondary

Recommendations and best practices for successful student transition

Report to Wyoming Department of Education

January 2014

Authored by: Members of the 2013 Community of Practice in Transition: Secondary to Post Secondary

University of Wyoming

Wyoming Institute for Disabilities

Community of Practice
Wyoming Department of Education (WDE)

- Staff a full time Transition Coordinator position at WDE.
- Staff a Web-Master position to update/maintain web page.
- Define “Highly qualified Transition Coordinator/Teacher.”
- Establish expectations for high quality Transition IEPs and fidelity implementation of these IEPs.
- Development of longitudinal data collection for determining quality outcomes for transitioned students.
- Ensure 504 student access to appropriate community adult services.
- Refocus special education to address broad based skill development and experiential learning opportunities in preparation for adult life.
- Share this guidance document and responsibility with other education leaders and with related service agencies.
Agency Partnerships

- Implement service provision using the Community Wraparound Model
- Collect longitudinal data across public school, post secondary education, career training, and adult service providers
- Streamline service needs evaluations and application processes to allow multiple agency usage
- Provide routine training and information about services provided by agency partners and service providers to all
- Continue Community of Practice groups to support implementation of long term goals and policy recommendations
LEA/School District Level

• Invest in and train highly qualified transition coordinators/transition teachers.
• Utilize self-determination and self-advocacy programming designed to provide valid evidence of progress in skill development from an early age through completion of public education.
• Provide routine and continuous training on transition needs and resources to educators at all levels from school boards and school administration to para-educators and parents.
• Develop and implement documented agreements between schools and adult service providers.
• Recommend transition planning for students earlier than age 16 as appropriate.
LEA/School District Level

- Develop policy and practices that include and value student/family/community input in recognition of cultural diversity.
- Develop policy and practices that place high value on adult living and career readiness skill development for students with disabilities.
- Promote district wide practices that support experiential learning, and understanding of the critical role that experiential learning plays in skill development.
- Establish community wide, measurable, opportunity for experiential learning for students with disabilities.
- Emphasize development and implementation of high quality transition IEPs to reflect individualized student needs and appropriate service implementation.
Parents/Family

- Establish opportunities for all parents and those of culturally diverse backgrounds to form positive parent supports in the community.
- Develop and support opportunities for experiential, community based learning and living for people with disabilities.
- Participate in continuous training on transition needs and resources available in the community.
- Place emphasis on development of self-determination, adult living skills and career readiness in the education of students with disabilities.
- Establish appropriate expectations for your child and his or her future as adults early in life.
Project Eye-to-Eye

- Eye-to-Eye pairs students with learning disabilities and ADHD with high school and college students
- Arts-based curriculum; mentors help mentees to value their own unique minds by building their self-esteem and giving them the skills to become self-advocates
- Wyoming is the first state to begin a Chapter at a local Community College - Casper College
WDE Wyoming Instructional Network
Web-site Recommendations

http://wyominginstructionalnetwork.com

• Video service learning project
  – Rock Springs High School
  – Five different video presentations
• Wisconsin Statewide Transition Improvement site:  http://www.wsti.org/
• University of Wyoming
  Wyoming Institute for Disabilities (WIND)
  ✓ CoP Transition Teams (3) info & Guidance Documents
  www.uwyo.edu/wind/cop
Expanding the CoP Transitions

- Community Colleges
- Governor’s Council on Developmental Disabilities
- WY Department of Health, Developmental Disabilities Division
- WY Dept. of Health, Mental Health Division
- Parent Information Center
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Think College Wyoming, WIND
Community Collaboration

• Transition fairs
  – High schools
  – Colleges
  – Community Agencies

• Outreach in schools

• Community colleges attending high school student IEP/higher ed. transition meetings
Panel/Participant Discussion

• Expanding the CoP Transition to colleges?
• What are students with disabilities lacking when they transition to college?
• Who are students transitioning to college with disabilities?
  – 504 students
  – Students with developmental disabilities
  – Students with learning disabilities
  – Students with mental health disabilities
• How to maximize collaboration?
  – High schools
  – Colleges
  – Community agencies
• How to develop a multi-agency longitudinal data collection system for transition results?
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Thank you

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