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ABSTRACT

This document summarizes the proceedings of a regional symposium held to discuss issues and develop recommendations regarding strategies for providing a continuum of lifelong learning opportunities for youth and adults with disabilities. Presented first are an overview of the symposium and summaries of the opening roundtable discussion and a session focusing on outcomes of transition planning, lifelong learning, implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and coordination of lifelong learning systems. Presented next are the texts of two papers: "Enhancing Adult Outcomes for People with Disabilities" (Lawrence C. Gloeckler) and "America 2000: An Education Strategy" (Barry Stern). The symposium forum on transitional planning and programming is summarized as are symposium working sessions on the following topics: government's role in building partnerships, lifelong learning and educational strategies for adults with disabilities, personnel preparation and research dissemination, and transitions from school to adult education opportunities. The concluding statements of Michael Vader, Barry Stern, and Lawrence Gloeckler and comments of 16 symposium participants are summarized. Appended are lists of symposium participants, facilitators, recorders, and committee members and the symposium agenda. (MN)

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BUILDING EFFECTIVE PROGRAM LINKAGES

LIFELONG LEARNING FOR YOUTH AND ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES

First Regional Symposium on Building Effective Program Linkages

May 3 ~ 5
1992



Saratoga
New York

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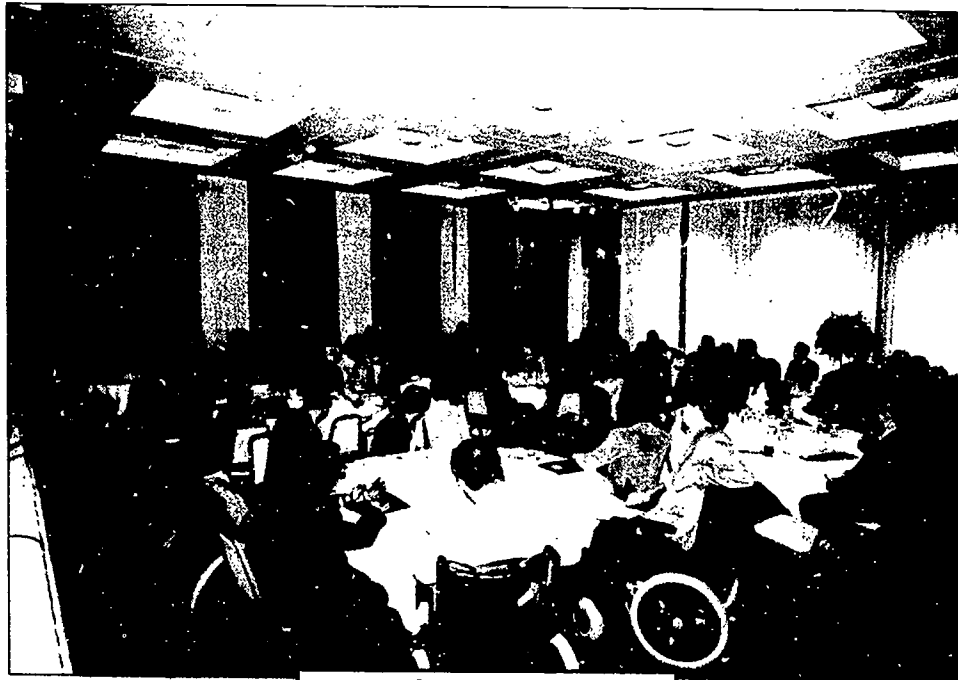
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BUILDING EFFECTIVE
PROGRAM LINKAGES

LIFELONG LEARNING FOR
YOUTH AND ADULTS
WITH DISABILITIES

FIRST REGIONAL SYMPOSIUM
ON
BUILDING EFFECTIVE
PROGRAM LINKAGES

MAY 3-5, 1992
SARATOGA, NEW YORK



Plenary Session

THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES

OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION

IN COLLABORATION WITH

THE NEW YORK STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF VOCATIONAL AND EDUCATION SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

COOPERATING ORGANIZATIONS

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR ADULTS WITH SPECIAL LEARNING NEEDS

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON INDEPENDENT LIVING

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE DIRECTORS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

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LETTER FROM R. DAVILA AND B. BRAND

May 3, 1992

Dear Colleague:

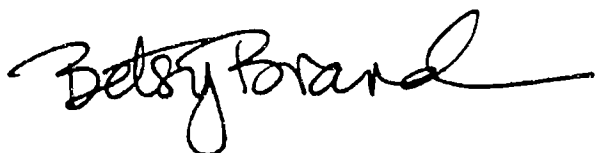
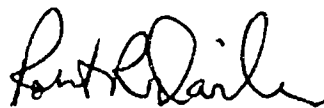
Welcome to the first Regional Symposium, "Building Effective Program Linkages."

We are pleased to co-host this Symposium with the New York State Education Department and appreciate the involvement of the National Association for Adults with Special Learning Needs, the National Council on Independent Living, and the National Association of State Directors of Special Education. We are especially appreciative of you, who are willingly giving of your expertise, experience, and time.

This historic Symposium is intended to promote interaction and facilitate coordination and collaboration at all levels of federal, state, and local agencies as well as private entities to improve educational programs, services, and opportunities for youth and adults with disabilities.

Your expertise and participation are the key to the success of the Symposium. We look forward to learning and working together to build effective program linkages to further lifelong learning for youth and adults with disabilities

Sincerely,



O V E R V I E W O F S Y M P O S I U M

Individuals concerned with lifelong learning for youth and adults with disabilities came together from the six New England states and New York State for the first regional symposium on "Building Effective Program Linkages" May 3-5, 1992, at the Gideon Putnam Hotel in Saratoga, New York. Participants represented key leaders from special, vocational, adult, and continuing education; vocational rehabilitation; corrections; mental health; mental retardation and developmental disabilities; independent living programs, parents and families as well as business, industry, and labor.

The purpose of the regional symposium was to discuss issues and develop recommendations regarding the various educational needs of youth and adults with disabilities. Specific areas of focus were the development of strategies concerning:

- AMERICA 2000 and related state level efforts that focus on adult literacy and lifelong learning, including basic education and job skills needed for adults with disabilities to enter the nation's work force; and
- transitional services for youth with disabilities through the coordination of secondary and adult service systems.

The symposium followed the first national conference, "Building Effective Program Linkages," held in Washington, D.C., March 11-12, 1991, with recommendations from that meeting serving as the basis for the working groups to develop state and local implementation strategies. Both events were sponsored by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) and the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) of the U.S. Department of Education, with the Saratoga symposium co-sponsored by the Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID) of the New York State Education Department, in cooperation with the National Association of Adults with Special Learning Needs, the National Council on Independent Living, and the National Association of State Directors of Special Education.

OPENING ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION



*"Opening Session"
Sunday night*

Michael Vader
*Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Special Education &
Rehabilitative Services
United States Department of Education*

Barry Stern
*Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Vocational & Adult Education
United States Department of Education*

Lawrence Gloeckler
*Deputy Commissioner
Office of Vocational & Educational Services for
Individuals with Disabilities
New York State Education Department*

Joseph Cretella
*President
National Association for Adults with Special
Learning Needs*

William Schipper
*Executive Director
National Association of State Directors of Special
Education*

Denise Figueroa
*President
National Council on Independent Living*

This opening session provided background information on the building effective linkages initiatives. The coordination policy between the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) and the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) and outcomes of the first conference were discussed. With time allotted for questions and answers. Current directions and the expected outcomes of the working sessions were established.



Mike Vader
OAS/OSERS

Michael Vader, deputy assistant secretary, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), noted that this first regional symposium builds on the experience of the 1991 national conference and is intended to establish a standard for additional regional meetings in various sections of the country. Vader stated that,

“We will have linkages throughout the U.S. with several thousands of individuals forming a national information sharing network. We need new paradigms, new ideas on empowerment of people who can make changes. Our purpose is to begin to bring together all the diverse players with a common interest to exchange information and ideas and to learn from each other. We generally are doing a lot of things right, but we are concerned that we may not be doing the right things. There are 27 million adults in the United States who have disabilities, of whom 63 percent do not have a high school diploma and two-thirds are not employed. It is time to collaborate, coordinate and communicate to improve services and programs.”

(NAASLN), explained that the association was formed to cement linkages for professionals, policy and program planners, and consumers. “We are one association serving all categories of disabilities as an umbrella group to bring lifelong learning to adults with disabilities.”

Barry Stern, deputy assistant secretary, Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE), stressed the need for changing the system for delivering services as economic competition replaces military competition in the world.

“We will not have unlimited dollars and we cannot be content doing things the same old way. The real challenge is whether we all can work with each other to empower people and enable adults with disabilities to become employable and contributing citizens.”



Larry Gloeckler
Assistant Commissioner
New York

William Schipper, executive director of the National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE), offered his organization's resources to assist in building linkages, citing the governmental relations unit and communications programs including SpecialNet, and Counterpoint, a quarterly publication on best practices and resources that goes to 120,000 educators; and a new series of half-hour cable TV programs to be produced by the America's Disability Channel identifying problems and effective programs. He also suggested that each state education agency and the Regional Resource Centers promote similar meetings in the regions and states to identify problems and solutions.



Denise Figuera - NICD
Mike Ward



Jay Cretella
NAASLN

La rence Gloeckler, deputy commissioner of the Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID), described his newly organized office which represents traditional education grades through higher education, cultural education, and the professions. "The ability to link services and use all program areas for people with disabilities represents a direction for the country as we make our learning systems accessible to people with special learning needs. He stressed that the effort is to influence all groups to work together through coordination, not control.

Denise Figueroa, director of the Resource Center for Independent Living in New York, and President of the National Council on Independent Living, described independent living and offered the services of independent centers to assist in mentoring programs and technical assistance for people of all ages.

"Integration doesn't happen until people with disabilities are included in the decision making. There is tremendous potential today but unless there is a change in the educational system there will not be enough qualified persons for the future employment opportunities. We represent a resource you need to link up with."

ENHANCING ADULT OUTCOMES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

This session focused on the outcomes of transition planning, lifelong learning, the implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and coordination of lifelong learning systems.

At the start of the first full day of meetings, the group was welcomed by Dr. Thomas Sobol, Ph.D., commissioner of education of the New York State Education Department. He stated: "All people must have educational opportunities to secure entitlement and have maximum opportunities to work, live and pursue lifelong learning within their community. We have to be sure our existing programs work, adapt and create new ones so people can move from one level of the education system to another. We have learned that we cannot do this alone. We must work together more closely than ever before to bridge the gap between the systems and make the best use of scarce resources."



*Dr. Thomas Sobol
Commissioner
New York*

Sobol explained how the new VESID unit was working in and out of the Education Department to link services, eliminate duplication and respond more effectively to the needs of persons with disabilities. Programs he cited included enabling high school students to participate in college preparation programs on college campuses; setting up a state transition clearinghouse with a toll-free number; increasing accessibility to services with streamlined eligibility determination and referral, including a single one-page interagency referral form for use by all state agencies.

Following Commissioner Sobol, Michael Vader said that the conference is in the same spirit as New York's model strategy for improving education, "of fostering, collaboration, empowerment, and accountability to improve educational experiences and outcomes, as well as the overall quality of life and opportunities for persons with disabilities." He called for the following steps:

- Maximize the use of existing resources and mutually involve professionals, service providers, consumers, community leaders, parents -- everyone.
- Find better ways to leverage our limited funds and collaboratively strategize priorities and collaborate together to implement effective and efficient efforts.
- Support excellent model initiatives and programs and develop new paradigms.
- Work together, coordinate and share our experiences and resources in order to build effective linkages at all levels.

"If we continue to think like we thought, we will continue to get what we got. That is no longer good enough. It is clear that we have so much to offer each other that together we can make a difference."

“ ENHANCING ADULT OUTCOMES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ”

Lawrence C. Gloeckler
Deputy Commissioner
Office of Vocational & Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities
New York State Education Department

Deputy Commissioner Lawrence C. Gloeckler welcomed participants to the symposium: “We are truly honored as a state to host this first of several regional symposia to bring together the systems that comprise lifelong learning. We use the term lifelong learning now, but it is really only in the last few years that we have realized its importance. Before that, each system operated in isolation, doing its own thing and proud of its accomplishments. I think we are all proud of what we have accomplished, but when you add up the successes, we do not exhibit the collective success that we need.”



Larry Gloeckler

Lawrence Gloeckler explained that individual accomplishments do not necessarily lead to the outcomes that we hope to encourage. “A child and his or her family may have had a wonderful preschool experience and great family involvement. That child may have received all of the appropriate special education services and completed the goals in his or her IEP by graduation. The young adult may have entered the adult service system, receiving support services and job training. More than likely, however, this person may not be working as an adult. If he or she were working, there would be little chance of career growth, the person would remain dependent on the family or an agency for housing, and participate very little in the community.”

outcomes. “The statistics are generally poor, and, very importantly, these individuals are less likely to be covered by employer-provided health care.”

Unemployment rates for people with disabilities were used as an illustrative example of the current lack of adult

“Our common goals are to promote independence or help people obtain independence, to help people live fully and participate in this community, and to help people gain meaningful employment. Our goals should not be only to complete school, to complete the training program, or to obtain a degree. If you look at schools, higher education, adult and continuing education, vocational rehabilitation, occupational education, virtually any service agency we know of, they have those outcomes as a goal.”

Deputy Commissioner Gloeckler described efforts of the New York State Education Department’s Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID) to increase access of all people with disabilities to the educational system and to coordinate lifelong educational services for persons with disabilities. The theme of these efforts is collaboration both internally and externally. He described the work of the New York State Interagency Council, which includes Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, Mental Health, Substance Abuse, Social Services, Veterans’ Affairs, and other agencies concerned about assisting people with disabilities to eliminate duplication of paperwork and streamline the evaluation and referral systems for vocational and related services.

On the intra-agency side, he discussed initiatives to open up all the segments of the education system for people with disabilities. "One of the major roles in the education system is to develop and maintain appropriate skills in a highly competitive national and global economy. Education supplies the human resources to the economy providing individuals the opportunity to achieve economic self-sufficiency. In order for individuals with disabilities to be independent within our communities, they must be able to participate successfully in the work force."

"So what do we do? Everyone has been working hard and is committed to their efforts. Programs have been improving. Rights have been increasingly clarified for individuals with disabilities, but we have yet to achieve what we wish to achieve. I heard a speech not long ago where somebody was saying, 'All means all.' We must make sure that we mean all students. Then, when we mention programs, we should add a new phrase -- everything means everything -- and everything should be accessible to everybody. Yes, we will need special programs, but the special program should be chosen because of need and choice, not because of a disability."

In New York State, the Board of Regents adopted ten policies on linking services for individuals with disabilities. Each policy was adopted with an outcome statement to ensure that the focus of our efforts would be on the benefits for students and adults rather than the process. Lawrence Gloeckler, highlighted a few of the policies, stated:

- All necessary steps are taken to ensure that individuals with the appropriate expertise are included in our Committee on Special Education (CSE) planning team. CSEs in New York are the multidisciplinary teams that evaluate children. You might say, 'Wasn't that always the case?' In the past, qualified individuals came from within the school. Now qualified individuals include experts from vocational rehabilitation, higher education, industry and business, and other areas outside the school.
- The first thing people say is how am I going to go to all these meetings. Maybe attending meetings is not always necessary, but the information and expertise must be shared as part of the decision-making process. School officials, and I consider myself one, are in many cases the least informed about the likelihood of adult success and program needs. We continue, however, to place that decision-making responsibility on them. This needs to be a partnership, a collaborative decision.
- A clearinghouse mechanism will be established to provide information to parents and students on the wide range of programs and services available to such students and their families. We will be able to dial a toll-free number in New York and find out what kind of services and programs might be available to the young person transitioning out of school.
- An appropriate vocational assessment will be required for all secondary students. The vocational assessments will need to be different than they have been in the past. In addition, a transitional planning component will be added to the IEP.
- Local interagency councils will be established throughout New York State to help with transition. We will provide the leadership and assistance to local people who are doing things in a coordinated fashion.
- We are working with universities and colleges to enhance the availability and quality of supplemental services on campuses, and we are going to be working with providers of adult and continuing education to train staff, modify curriculum, and identify students who have not been previously identified as in need of special services.

"These are just some of the areas we are changing and expanding to ensure lifelong learning for adults with disabilities. You will notice that we are not only focusing on outreach and secondary school programs, but the entire system."

"If you look at the whole system, it is clear that there are boundaries, with stops and starts. For people, it should be a seamless system. Our model depicts what the system will ultimately look like. You will notice that Cultural Education is a part of the lifelong learning system, and people with disabilities will have opportunities to benefit from all educational programs."

To discuss the outcomes we are trying to accomplish, Mr. Gloeckler used the common theme of increasing integrated opportunities for people with disabilities. "The goal of integration is to assist individuals to function independently in society, to participate fully in the community, to be meaningfully employed and productive members of society. The goal is not just to integrate people."

BUILDING EFFECTIVE PROGRAM LINKAGES

Lawrence Gloeckler discussed that we need to:

- begin work experiences while in school, making better use of time for students who stay in school, and require rehabilitation and education programs to work together effectively;
- encourage role models among our teachers and administrators;
- link up independent living services and schools;
- redesign assessments in the latter part of the school years to coordinate with assessments needed in the adult service area;
- ensure accessible and appropriate opportunities for postsecondary education; and
- use the school as the common community site where integration and accessibility are found in programs offered during the day and evening.

“Even when we work toward each of these, it is not enough. When the community becomes aware of the importance of people with disabilities, both socially and economically, then they will transform the systems. This is already happening. We need to harness our resources to be in a position to help, not just to command, not just to expect, not just to mandate, but to be partners in the endeavor.”

“We just signed a historic agreement with the Office of Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities (OMRDD). I am thrilled that our two agencies are coming together to serve the people for whom we are both collectively responsible. We are looking at cooperatively using school space for OMRDD services such as family support services, after-school programs and recreation. We are going to work with adult and continuing education programs and OMRDD to enhance lifelong learning for persons with developmental disabilities.”

“We are working with business and industry to develop new agreements. One agreement, for instance, is with the Greater New York Automobile Dealers Association. They have agreed to hire people with disabilities. We will support them in doing that. We will help train people to meet their needs, and we will assist them in identifying qualified individuals.”

“We are also establishing agreements with major state and national corporations, such as Pepsico. Right now, we have 10 such corporate agreements, including the AFL-CIO in New York State. We are the first state to have an agreement with a major union. They are helping us identify ways to promote persons with disabilities being hired under union contracts. We are helping them reach out to their membership to provide information and support on services they and members of their families can get from us.”

In conclusion, Mr. Gloeckler urged the participants to work together to ensure employment, lifelong learning, and community living outcomes for people with disabilities. “Our common goals can be better achieved collectively than separately. We are trying to do our job better, to coordinate what we do and how we do it, and partnerships are so much better than isolated efforts. We need your leadership and your high energy, as well as new ways of doing business.”

“So we continue the discussion that started a little over a year ago, hopefully getting closer and closer to resolving the tough problems that we face and the issues that are ahead of us. As we continue to move on these issues from the abstract theory to the evaluation of progress, I look forward to continued collaborative efforts, such as this one, to share and learn from each other.”

A M E R I C A 2 0 0 0 A N E D U C A T I O N S T R A T E G Y

Barry Stern, Ph.D.
*Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Vocational and Adult Education
United States Department of Education*

This luncheon session addressed education reform and its impact on lifelong learning for youth and adults with disabilities.

Barry Stern, Ph.D., presented the President's strategy to improve the nation's education system through the vehicle of AMERICA 2000. He concentrated on how AMERICA 2000 relates to the education of students with disabilities and what those present could do to increase the awareness of the need for cooperation among programs.



*Barry Stern
OVAE*

"AMERICA 2000 hopes to improve and renew schools by changing the structural relationships of how communities and parents relate to the schools, how schools are governed and financed, how educational personnel -- teachers and administrators -- relate to students and to each other, how business and industry can cooperate with schools, and how schools are held accountable for producing competent citizens and workers."

Dr. Stern stressed that AMERICA 2000 is a national strategy, not a federal program. "It honors local control, relies on local initiative, affirms states and localities as the senior partners in paying for education and recognizes the private sector as a vital partner as well."

He explained that the strategy is composed of four key elements or tracks:

Track I - to make today's schools better and more accountable by establishing world class standards in the five core subjects; a voluntary system of national examinations to assess competence in these subjects; school report cards, more school choice; more parent involvement, school site management; and Governors academies for teachers and school leaders.

Track II - for communities to totally restructure a new generation of schools creating whole new ways by which schools manage, reward, and finance learning.

Track IV - creating communities where learning can happen through families, churches, neighborhood associations, community organizations and local business.

Track III - (Stern put this one last and concentrated on it) -- for yesterday's students and today's work force, those outside the traditional education system, but who need to increase or upgrade their skills.

"Since 85 percent of the work force of the year 2000 is currently working, these workers -- us -- will need to become more productive and efficient in order to ensure that the United States will have an internationally competitive labor force as we enter the 21st century."

Dr. Stern explained that Track III calls for developing a system of private sector and industry specific skill standards built around core proficiencies and accompanied by skill certificates, and the establishment of skill clinics to assess and refer workers or students to an education or training program that addresses their individual skill requirements or interests. He said, "The Department of Education has been working closely with the Department of Labor to establish a framework for developing a national system of skill standards, and has held five public hearings to get input on standards."

Relating AMERICA 2000 to the symposium, Dr. Stern pointed out that there are 27 million American adults with disabilities, that 40 percent have not completed high school, and 66 percent are not working. "We are here to challenge ourselves to begin at all levels, Federal, state and local, to build effective program linkages between adult and vocational education, special education and rehabilitative services, corrections and the private sector so that all Americans will be able to participate fully in our society. We need to establish a coordinated system of lifelong learning for adults with disabilities."

Dr. Stern noted that there are barriers that must be overcome including how federal and state agencies deliver services to adults and youth with disabilities. "They have engaged in minimal coordination and collaboration resulting in duplicative programs and gaps in service to this population."

He explained that this first regional symposium continues the theme and goal of the March 1991 national conference. "We are now ready to continue this dialogue and to listen to your concerns and problems. What we expect from you, as the experts, are your solutions and recommendations to accomplish our goal of lifelong learning for adults with disabilities. We realize that this is a complex task, but we must begin now."

Dr. Stern also reported that a major result from the 1991 conference was the signing of a Coordination Policy Statement between the Office of Vocational and Adult Education and the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. "This was a major step forward to build effective program linkages at the federal level. It would be our hope that this policy statement may serve as a model for you at the state and local levels."

Other examples of change taking place in the country as a result of the 1991 Coordination Conference were cited. These included the Literacy Letter, a comprehensive newsletter disseminated in Indiana, which has led to an increasing awareness of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the need to coordinate programs and services.

Dr. Stern also thanked the organizations that joined to support the symposium: the National Council on Independent Living; the National Association for Adults with Special Learning Needs; and, the National Association for State Directors of Special Education. "These two organizations are in the forefront in leading the country in efforts to improve programs for youth and adults with disabilities. I want to congratulate Denise Figueroa, Jay Cretella and Bill Schipper for their leadership. And without the commitment and support of Larry Gloeckler and his staff at the New York State Department of Education, this symposium could not have been held."

In conclusion, Dr. Stern listed some things attendees could do to promote the AMERICA 2000 education strategy and the Americans with Disabilities Act:

- Promote the development of local work education councils. These were active in the 1970s with local business and education leaders promoting effective cooperation in the areas of education, training, and services. "AMERICA 2000 offers the perfect opportunity to reactivate this type of cooperative effort."
- Get involved in your communities to promote the national education goals, or perhaps the development of a new American school, which could develop significant programs for students with disabilities.
- Work to set up community-based skill clinics. They could be aligned with clinics already established by private or public enterprises.

"AMERICA 2000 gives us all a chance to contribute to restructuring American education, including education for students with disabilities. No group is better positioned to lead this restructuring than you. To restructure you must reach out -- get involved. We have for the first time national goals and a strategy to reach them. Now is when the real work begins. Only you and your states and your communities can make it happen."

TRANSITIONAL PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

INTRODUCTIONS

Michael Ward, Ph.D.
Chief
Secondary Education/Transition Branch
Office of Special Education Programs
United States Department of Education

PANEL MODERATOR

Judith Schrag, Ph.D.
Director
Office of Special Education Programs
United States Department of Education

STATE PANELISTS

Wendy Allen
Technical Assistance Coordinator
Committee on Transition
University of Southern Maine

Theresa Whelley
Technical Preparation for Students with Disabilities
New Hampshire Technical College

William Sugarman
Training & Evaluation Specialist
University of Vermont

Edmund Cortez
Assistant Commissioner
Office of Vocational & Educational Services for
Individuals with Disabilities
New York State Education Department

SUMMARY

Thomas Wermuth
Director of Education & Technical Assistance
Transition Research Institute
University of Illinois at Urbana

This forum discussed the implementation of transitional services as described in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Implications for lifelong learning and the coordination of systems to accomplish employment outcomes for youth with disabilities were highlighted with a focus on specific systems issues as discussed by various states.

Michael Ward, Ph.D., chief, Secondary Education and Transitional Services Branch of Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), led the discussion on the implementation of transition, planning and programming. He explained that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides for demonstration projects to improve transitional services for youth with disabilities.

Dr. Ward stated, "Congress was concerned about the need to have better results for students who exit high school. IDEA mandates that all students age 16 and over have transition planning in their IEPs. IDEA created a new discretionary program with one-time five-year cooperative grants to states for transition centers. The purpose of the grants was to increase access through policies, systems, and procedures; improve the capacity of professionals, consumers and parents to work together; strengthen interagency linkages; and provide better leveraging of resources. I am impressed with New York State's efforts to involve consumers in planning and policy making. This is a challenge to all of you to find knowledgeable consumers and involve them in your activities."

Judy Schrag, Ph.D., director, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP), served as panel moderator leading a discussion among panelists from four of the first group of 12 states to receive the IDEA grants. She noted that a second group of 12 states is now being funded.

Dr. Schrag's first question to the panelists was: "What is unique about your program?"

Edmund Cortez, assistant commissioner of VESID, noted that transition services had been put into place years ago in New York by local school districts, parents, and other agencies. Interagency councils were started in the early 1980s as a grassroots movement to coordinate existing services. The state agency in effect pulled together an innovative program through linking services and developing a seamless transition model.

Theresa Whelley from Technical Preparation for Students with Disabilities at New Hampshire Technical College said that local control was at the heart of that state's program. A Systems Change Project at the University Affiliated Program in Durham is building on success working with school districts on restructuring education to include all children. A follow-up project will evaluate outcomes after three years of special education.

William Sugarman, training and evaluation specialist at the University of Vermont, described interagency agreements for effective instructional practices for all students. "We provide training in incredible doses to parents, professionals, and adult educators. The relationships are there and we have a firm foundation from the state director down to students in the schools. We have many informal procedures as well as formal ones; often referral is just a phone call."

Wendy Allen, technical assistance coordinator for the Maine Committee on Transition, explained, "Transition planning is not new in the state but it has been refocused and repackaged. The interagency committee funded 11 local pilot projects and local councils involve parents and students. The strength of the system comes from the grassroots."

Dr. Judy Schrag then asked how the states measure outcomes resulting from the provision of transition services.

William Sugarman said, "One measure is whether all students have transition plans, not only students with disabilities. Vermont provides direct support through transition and parent support specialists and conducts follow-up studies to find out whether solutions were effective and easy to implement, and whether the students got where they wanted to go. Educators interview students who left school to find out what information helped them find a job. This data is then fed back to the schools.

This gives schools an individual pulse on the students, where they end up and whether the outcome was satisfactory for the student. We have interagency advisory boards to support individuals. We are training vocational rehabilitation counselors about transition, and we have family/student support networks. We conducted a statewide assessment of anticipated needs among students who will be graduating in the next three years. Local groups have been identified to follow up with these students. We place heavy emphasis on training and support from the individual to regional to State levels."



Judy Schrag
OSERS/OSEP



Michael Ward
OSERS/OSEP

Theresa Whelley said, "The New Hampshire program has a consortium of state policy administrators. Their Partnerships Program for Persons with Severe Disabilities includes pooled funding of job training and special education funds for local programs at the secondary level to train on site. We are looking at where students are and designing programs for them at the local level.

Dr. Schrag's next question was related to the involvement of students with disabilities in the transition planning process.

"Maine has been exploring what strategies would ensure participation in statewide transition," according to Wendy Allen. "The focus is now student centered with local coordinating councils. We encourage student involvement

in the middle school to understand the process and provide advance planning. We encourage students and teachers to discuss what they want to do before the IEP meeting, and we train students to be advocates. We have self-advocacy groups outside the school system. Students talk to teachers and the community about their problems and the need to be included in the process and to serve as role models for children in elementary school."

William Sugarman added: "Vermont has piloted self-advocacy training in several schools, and now other schools want that common sense curriculum. We promote self-determination by students, we have students teaching students, we provide pre-transition plans meeting in homes, and we have 'mapping' or less formal meetings to chart out the next years of their lives. The Vermont Information and Training Network is a parent support group, and our local and state policy boards will have student participation. There are many advocates in the state who will sit with parents and students in the planning process."

Edmund Cortez explained that New York State feels it is critical for local districts to include students and parents in the local planning process. "We train administrators, superintendents, teachers and transition specialists on strategies. Also we provide training and technical assistance to parents and students. A statewide teleconference for students and parents is scheduled to develop a network of parents and students."

Dr. Judy Schrag asked panelists how they were implementing changes on job training and vocational education, and whether classes were aligned with labor needs and employment opportunities.

Edmund Cortez responded that labor market information is generally located in other agencies, rather than in the schools. "We are working with other agencies that collect this data to give access to educational programs. For example, the Department of Labor has information on job requirements; the Division of Economic Development on industries moving in to New York. We need to pull information together and share it with local school districts. Our Interagency Council for Vocational Rehabilitation and Related Services includes these agencies. We are working to establish technological linkages with the school districts for use in sharing this employment-related data for curriculum development. This will be a key activity through the transition grant. We will ensure that information can be accessed in a coordinated way to enable students to find employment."

Dr. Judy Schrag asked about the relationship between transition programming and continuing adult education.

Responding to this query, Wendy Allen said, "All counselors in Maine are involved in adult education. We emphasize relationships on the local level, involving adult education. Maine has no community college system, so adult education is the place for programming after school. We have linked up adult and vocational education -- job coaching, job clubs, in small but important ways, especially in rural communities."

Theresa Whelley explained that postsecondary technical and community colleges in New Hampshire provide the best experience for most students.



Dr. Schrag next asked about the role of independent living centers in the schools.

Edmund Cortez replied that New York State is committed to the basic principle that the consumer is the key person in all activities and planning. "We believe strongly in partnerships between the education system and Independent Living Centers. It is critical to have their planning strategy and expertise and once the program is in place they are a resource to parents, students, and schools. The independent living system can encourage consumers to work with schools and vocational rehabilitation agencies, and they can provide a system of advocacy that is critical to the process."

Dr. Judy Schrag noted that the greatest interest to the public comment OSEP received was adding

rehabilitation counseling as a related service. She asked, "How will your state address this area?"

Theresa Whelley said New Hampshire is starting to use rehabilitation counselors in planning at an earlier time, age 14-16, and is integrating work related planning with the IEP.

William Sugarman explained that Vermont has rehabilitation counselors in the schools at least two years before graduation, sometimes sooner. "We also have assistive technology staffed by rehabilitation engineers in mobile units to try out equipment and to do assessments. Schools also hire employment training specialists."

CONCLUSION

Thomas Wermuth, Ph.D., director of Evaluation and Technical Assistance at the OSEP-funded Transition Research Institute at the University of Illinois at Urbana summarized the discussion.

Wermuth listed elements of successful practices identified from model transition projects:

- Begin transition as early as possible, even 7th grade.
- Identify a team of school personnel to collaborate not only for individual services but also for services at the community level.
- Include a transition plan in the IEP.
- Focus on integrated employment at an early age (a student who has employment experience in high school is more likely to be successful).
- Focus on community relevant living skills.
- Include employers and employees in the planning process.
- Place students in real jobs with advancement potential.
- Develop an ongoing in-service personnel training program for those working and instructing on transition strategies while in school.
- Evaluate programs and processes and use the information to change and affect outcomes and to entice others to work with you.

SUMMARY OF WORKING SESSIONS

Four working groups met several times during the conference to discuss the next steps at local, state and federal levels based on the results from the initial "Building Effective Program Linkages" conference and on local implementation strategies. The groups developed reports on their discussions with their priorities, strategies, and recommendations. These reports were presented at the final session and are summarized below.

WORKING SESSION I GOVERNMENT'S ROLE IN BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS



OBJECTIVES:

- to identify methods to coordinate program resources and encourage inter- and intra-agency relationships to enhance service delivery to individuals with disabilities at the federal, state and local levels;
- to identify strategies to ensure that state partnerships reflect changes at local levels; and
- to develop strategies to implement recommendations from the initial conference, "Building Effective Program Linkages."

STRATEGIES TO IMPLEMENT OBJECTIVES:

OBJECTIVE:

To identify methods to coordinate program resources and encourage inter- and intra-agency relationships to enhance service delivery to individuals with disabilities at the federal, state, and local levels.

- A. Develop working advisory group at all levels, including but not limited to consumers, business and industry, school personnel, adult service providers, and local government personnel.
- Issue policies at the state and local level that support implementation by local interagency councils.
 - Identify one body (i.e., interagency council) to develop a mission statement and goals for local collaborative efforts.
- B. Put in place a mission statement and an annual plan to facilitate collaborative efforts which use existing systems and resources to provide transition and linkage services locally that empower all, including individuals with disabilities, to choose options for employment, independence, and integration.

- Develop alternative pathways to lifelong learning that are valued, that are open to all, and that are reflective of local priorities, needs, and values.
 - Reduce categorical funding mechanisms in favor of increased local control and management of funding streams. Categorical funding fosters parallelism and non-collaboration.
 - Increase consumer involvement in decision making through the development of a voucher system. This voucher system could be implemented in such a way as to place full control of funding resources in the hands of individual consumers, or could involve limited vouchering, with local service delivery systems sharing resources and decision-making authority with individual consumers.
 - Local interagency councils, interacting with state and federal councils, should be developed. At the state and federal levels, generalized standards and outcomes are defined. Specific objectives and anticipated outcomes are developed in a detailed way at the local level.
 - Outcomes should be evaluated with consumer participation annually. The needs of the consumer are paramount.
- C. Utilize current legislation more effectively and amend legislation as needed to ensure a system that is consumer driven, outcome based, and nonrestrictive at all levels, federal, state and local.
- Federal mandates for interagency collaboration exist within several statutes: Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technology Education Act, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Developmental Disabilities Councils legislation, and Part B and Part H of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

OBJECTIVE:

To identify strategies to ensure that state partnerships reflect changes at local levels.

- A. Ensure that there is a local consortium in place to provide collaborative efforts to meet the needs of all individuals (including adults with disabilities) for employment, independence, and integration.
- Consumer participation in the evaluation of programs assists in determining outcomes.
 - Include an independent advocate, not employed by schools, on the local consortium. The Independent Living Centers could fill this role.
 - Provide recognition for outstanding achievements, through certificates, publications, grants, and citations.
- B. Publicize cost benefits of providing services.
- Develop a marketing plan utilizing cost-benefit analysis. This should be a statewide initiative customized at the local level.
 - Success stories should be shared with funding sources and the public at large.
 - Public access TV should be utilized.
 - Journal and newsletter articles should be written to emphasize the need for developing partnerships.
 - Existing data bases should be utilized for information and referral services.

OBJECTIVE:

To develop strategies to implement recommendations from the initial conference, "Building Effective Program Linkages."

- There is a need for Statewide Interagency Councils to convene. The state organizations need to engage in introspection, to find concurrence among themselves with goals. A system must be built based on abilities, not disabilities.
- A fluid relationship should exist among agencies to allow easy access to services across all agencies.
- The Statewide Advisory Council should develop an annual plan that assesses existing systems and resources to provide transitional and linkage services locally. This will empower all individuals with disabilities to choose options for employment, independence, and integration.

NEXT STEPS:

1. Regional conferences should be held across the nation.
2. These regional networks should be continued to identify common issues, concerns, goals, and objectives.

WORKING SESSION II
LIFELONG LEARNING:
EDUCATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES



OBJECTIVES:

- Develop measurable performance outcomes for youth and adult learners with disabilities.
- Determine strategies to reform existing systems for the development and coordination of lifelong learning.
- Develop strategies to include the learner with disabilities in planning and decision making.
- Develop strategies to implement the recommendations from the initial conference, "Building Effective Program Linkages."

STRATEGIES TO IMPLEMENT OBJECTIVES:

The group did not prioritize the objectives, believing they are all important. Because of time constraints, they consider their report to be a preliminary one, and they included summaries from their subgroups to provide a better reflection of recommendations of the whole group. Recommendations include:



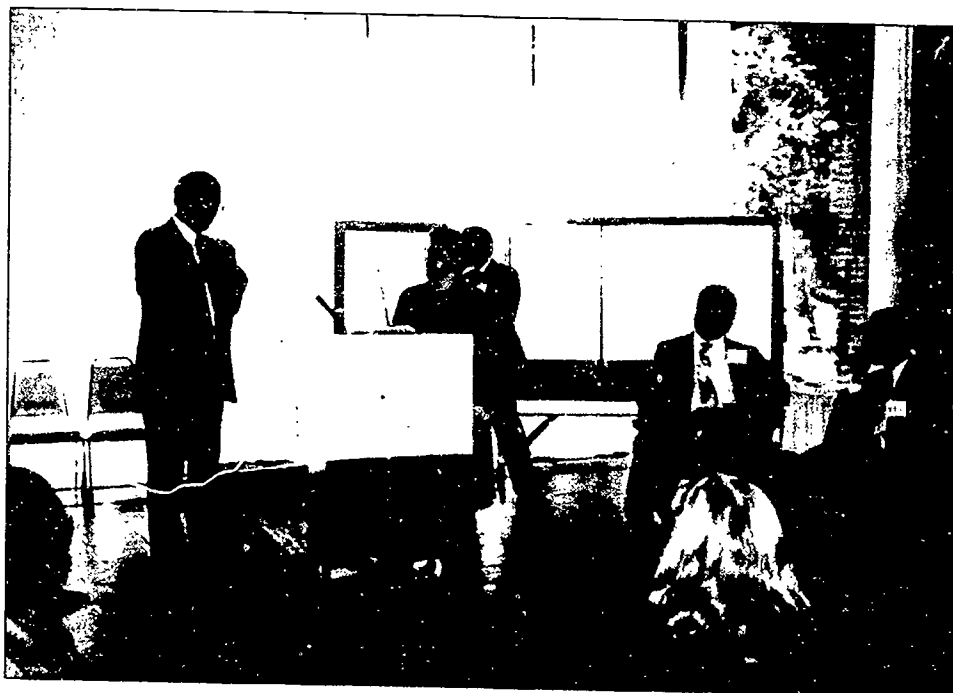
- Develop measurable performance outcomes from the goals of the consumers, learners, and interagency teams and base these upon data derived from standardized and/or nonstandardized measures. Goals should be collaborative, flexible, and modifiable. Portfolio assessment measures should be utilized.
- Teach service providers to recognize the unique learning styles and abilities of consumers and help consumers choose appropriate educational/vocational programs.
- Teach self-advocacy to consumers.
- Develop a system by creating an interagency council that meets regularly and is an active participant with consumers, teachers, counselors, and others. Responsibilities of the council would include:
 - to develop a menu of services,
 - to investigate the degree of accessibility of existing services,
 - to ensure participation of consumers and advocates.
- Improve linkage of comprehensive evaluation by a multidisciplinary team to include consumers and advocates and those involved with providing education, health, and psychosocial services.
- Develop diagnostic and teaching strategies for specific difficulties such as dyslexia and sensorially impaired based upon best practices in the field.
- Integrate technology into educational approaches.
- Use alternative formats, such as assistive listening devices and enlarged print in providing services.

Additional discussion and recommendations made by the subgroups included:

- Consumer of the services should be involved in policy, planning, personnel decisions, operations, and other aspects of the delivery of services.
- Funding should be more broad based in delivery, and the consumer should be a part of the partnership in determining the directions of the funding.

- Recognizing the unique developmental learning styles and abilities as well as the effect of social, cultural, physical, and psychological influences, new and creative educational approaches should be developed to mainstream people with different learning needs into educational models that maximize learning potential.
- Reform existing systems by creating an interdisciplinary team:
 - One person/agency should coordinate and be able to screen learner's initial needs.
 - All team members need to know each other's roles and services through in-service training and interagency visits.
 - Improve quality and avoid duplication of assessment.
 - Team selection driven by mutually stated needs (learner/professionals) (reading/math, vocational skills, life skills, specific disability experts, human service agencies, education providers).
 - Team must interact on a regularly scheduled basis.
- Tremendous inefficiency of service delivery due to fragmentation and overlapping of service providers will be reduced only when service providers have a strong incentive, i.e., money. A portion of funds distributed by major federal programs should be given to an Interagency Disability Services Council:
 - Council would prepare a menu of nonduplicative funded programs within the service area.
 - Case managers would take referrals and link clients to menu services and would be coordinator of case management team for each person with disabilities.
 - Focus of case manager activity could be "AMERICA 2000 Skill Clinic."
- To include the learner with disabilities in planning and decision making, the education and human service field should become consumer driven (not program, funding, or budget); shift from teacher to facilitator role in the process; train agency personnel to adjust to this role shift, and mandate or provide for consumer input on agency service boards, advisory panels, task forces, and so forth:
 - Make a major public relations effort to publicize Independent Living Centers.
 - Have a single point of entry into the human service system where service information is accumulated and compiled for dissemination.
 - Provide incentives to publishers to develop materials in alternative formats (large print, computer disk, Braille, video/audio books)
 - Provide a referral advocate with funding attached to ensure smooth transition.
 - Provide computer literacy. Technology can be the great equalizer. Tie in with university, library and/or hospital computer system.

WORKING SESSION III
PERSONNEL PREPARATION AND RESEARCH DISSEMINATION



OBJECTIVES:

- To develop strategies to ensure the preparation of personnel who are qualified to teach adults with disabilities and youth with disabilities in transition.
- To identify methods to recruit students and personnel into fields providing these services to individuals with disabilities.
- To develop strategies to implement recommendations from the initial conference, "Building Effective Program Linkages."

STRATEGIES TO IMPLEMENT OBJECTIVE:

OBJECTIVE:

To develop strategies to ensure the preparation of personnel who are qualified to teach adults with disabilities and youth with disabilities in transition.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Public Policy Direction and Guidelines

Consumer involvement is a key to improving services and a necessity in ensuring proper preparation of all personnel.

Interdisciplinary collaboration is a key to ensuring proper preparation of personnel. Specific recommendations include:

- Develop across-the-board professional guidelines for acceptance of cross-training continuing education credits for all disciplines (related to disability).

- Establish allowance for acceptance of elective course work within degree programs from other disability related disciplines.
- See that all postsecondary curricula provide an introductory class that includes and infuses through all class work:



- knowledge of disabilities,
 - knowledge of minorities/culturally diverse students,
 - appropriate etiquette to communicate with any individual with or without a disability,
 - technology and its application to meeting the needs of all citizens,
 - understanding of human potential (learning theory).
- Provide for the preparation of secondary school personnel in the new role(s) to be assumed by schools in vocational planning and assessment.
 - Develop "quality management" policies that encourage and value training of exchange opportunities for employees in settings that value employees with disabilities, i.e. independent living centers:
 - continuing certification, and
 - in-service staff training and development.

OBJECTIVE:

To identify methods to recruit students and personnel into fields providing these services to individuals with disabilities.

The following are recruitment and retention recommendations:

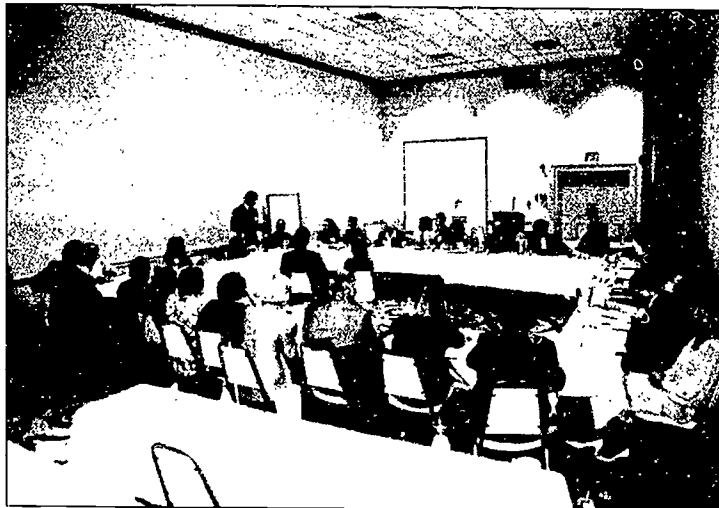
- Expand all grants and stipend programs to states to allow preservice training programs to provide economic and other resources to students during training phases.
- Develop more accessible career ladder opportunities within employment sites.
- Industry marketing and strategizing using the current work force through development of paraprofessional positions, and expand collaborative relationships with education or other appropriate community resources through "certificate programs," ensuring that already valued employees are used to increase their knowledge base of disability and diversity.
- Target youth-focused recreational and social organizations to include community service in the disability arena in order to develop early proactive attitudinal sensitivity toward persons with disabilities.

For youth in transition:

- Develop mentoring adult and peer networking programs.

- Use "assessment creativity" -- employing traditional, situational, and nontraditional means of assessment -- to facilitate transition of youths into appropriate programming.
- Develop field experience for secondary level students to provide relevant work experiences.

RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING RESEARCH:



- Review current literature related to defining parameters of what constitutes a model for support and accommodative services in a postsecondary setting.
 - Submittal to a national conference of "state of the art" programs currently up and running that have successfully met the needs of students with disabilities, with supporting data on entry and exit statistics. From these submittals develop technical assistance manuals of "800" numbers to provide assistance.
 - Consider longitudinal studies related to factors involved in career selection (i.e., reasons for retention and for leaving).
- Develop research on ways to expand access to current practices in testing and to analyze ways to improve accessibility (i.e., GED, SAT, etc.) including use of technology, analyzing essential function of testing and its application.
 - Develop criteria to evaluate existing models in postsecondary settings for support and accommodation services, programs, and curricula, and share information on these evaluation results.
 - Recommend to the U.S. Department of Education that research and demonstration projects be funded, under NIDRR Innovation Grants and other appropriate entities:
 - Identify public secondary and postsecondary education opportunities and apprenticeship programs in/local industry in specific communities.
 - Identify local community resources that can provide information and support services to instructors in these identified programs on access, accommodation, and technology.
 - Increase access to educational opportunities and increase the instructors and students knowledge of the community support resources available to them. Funded projects should include a strong dissemination and community education component.

WORKING SESSION IV

TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO ADULT EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES



OBJECTIVES:

- To identify methods and strategies to ensure that transition planning results in adult outcomes for youth with disabilities, including employment, community living, postsecondary education, and access to adult services.
- To develop methods to coordinate service delivery systems and resources for the provision of transition services to youth with disabilities during their secondary school program.

IDENTIFIED ISSUES:

- Services are program or system driven, not consumer driven.
- Funding mechanisms support programs and systems, not individual needs.
- Lack of consistent eligibility guidelines across programs.
- Lack of adequate advocacy services.
- Service delivery is based on eligibility, not need.
- A need for greater inclusion in schools and communities.
- A need for flexible systems and dynamic transition plans that change according to consumer need.
- Lack of entitlement from school to adult services.
- Need to improve consumer/parent ability for informed decision making.

B U I L D I N G E F F E C T I V E P R O G R A M L I N K A G E S

- Lack of community ownership for people with disabilities.
- The school curriculum needs to be broadened and focused on development of self-esteem, not on weaknesses; it should include community experiences and the development of decision-making skills, self-advocacy, and futures planning skills.
- Need for authentic/functional assessments that lead to outcome-based, individualized services.
- Need for individual plans for all students.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Develop consumer-driven services.
- Develop consumer capacity for informed choice throughout service delivery systems.
- Make funding contingent on consumer/parent participation as well as inter- and intra-agency collaboration.
- Review Department of Labor regulations that impact on transition planning.
- Develop meaningful evaluation of services by primary/secondary consumers, based upon consumer satisfaction and program effectiveness.
- Develop or improve professional training requirements including continuing education, cross-discipline training, and real life experiences.
- Encourage coordination between secondary and postsecondary education and adult education and business regarding expected outcomes and competencies.
- Change name of Rehabilitation to Habilitation.
- Resources, including funding, should follow people, not programs.
- Drop all references to Special Education/Vocational Education and change to education; include in education all students with special needs.
- Training should be labor market related.
- Develop creative use of nontraditional services in implementing Americans with Disabilities Act.
- There is a need for complementary legislation for IDEA with Vocational Rehabilitation and all other relevant federal legislation.

ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN:

- Include in subsequent symposia consumers who have recently left school.
- Recommend priorities for reauthorization of the Rehabilitation Act including definition for transition services.
- Include transition planning as part of the next OSERS conference.

CONCLUDING STATEMENTS



Barry Stern, Larry Gloeckler, and Michael Vader at the closing session.

Following the presentation of recommendations by each working session, Michael Vader, Barry Stern, and Lawrence Gloeckler shared concluding statements with the participants.

Michael Vader stated that he was better informed and more aware as a result of the conference. He expressed appreciation to Barry Stern for his support, to Bill Langner as the catalyst, to Lawrence Gloeckler, who is doing innovative and creative things in New York State that will have an impact on others, and to Debra Colley of VESID who pulled everything together.

"I appreciate your sharing your expertise. We will finalize the proceedings and send them to programs and decision makers in the region, the Department of Education, and around the country, and we will use that as the base for moving to the next regional conference. It will be a building process. We will keep you as part of the network. You will get updates on our progress. I encourage you to keep up with the efforts and build on this experience. If you were not sure about lifelong learning and the benefits of linkages before I am sure you are now. Let's keep building linkages."

Barry Stern praised what he termed "a wonderful collaboration," starting with the March 1991 national conference. "The level of commitment is extraordinary. I am pleased to meet with people who really care -- now you need to extend that to your community. My major impression is that this year the level of conversation is more sophisticated and more aware and focused. There is outstanding leadership in this region; the rest of the country can learn from you.

"What is new here is the primacy of the consumer in planning and advisory groups. There is more focus now on what happens to consumers after the services are provided, and consumer control of resources through vouchers and other means. This changes the whole program, with decategorization and more integration.

"The private sector has always talked about the difference between marketing and selling -- you have to have what people want, offer the product, and continue to test. This concept has permeated into the education system.



Conference participants.

“The strategic decision as you argue for better systems is whether the system is for all or only for those with disabilities. We need to be aware of systems that are there already and plug into them, such as computerized career information delivery systems in high schools. If they are helpful, use them.

“There was also more talk this year about outcomes and how to measure them. This is not easy to do. There is a divergence in belief. We need to talk more about what it means and how to do it.

“This is a rare group with a great degree of commitment. Do you care enough to go back and talk to others and give credit? It is more difficult to translate words into actions. I know the people here will do it.”

Lawrence Gloeckler thanked the work groups for their recommendations and their demonstrated commitment throughout the symposium. He added these concluding words:



Barry Stern, Larry Gloeckler, Michael Vader, and Susan Parker reflect on the conference.

“It is amazing how infrequently representatives of the whole system get together. As a result, we do not understand each other’s language and perspective. We need to meet more often to become familiar with the process. Consumers have spoken up here and have made me more aware of issues in daily life. From these recommendations, I will be better in directing public policy. That dialogue must continue throughout the country.”

PARTICIPANT COMMENTS

Ruth Ingram

Ruth Ingram left the Saratoga conference early to fly to Washington where she received a Job Training Partnership Act Presidential Award. She is Project Partnership Coordinator at the New Hampshire Job Training Council, and the award honored this collaborative program of six state agencies and local school districts to train 14-21-year-olds with severe disabilities for employment.



"I see this conference as important to get this linkage across the country. We need to address more regions to make it more effective."

The New Hampshire project enabled students to acquire educational, vocational, and community-based skills, and all the students enrolled are now in work-related activities. All the students had appropriate accessibility to vocational education, community-based instruction and work experience before age 21, and vocational rehabilitation provided input into the IEP process. Replicability is built into the plan, which used financial and technical resources from each of the state agencies.

"The Job Training Council has been a valuable resource to the process, working with special education, vocational rehabilitation and vocational-technical education. It is a good demonstration of how we are using our resources. We are being resourceful and creative. We see the students as part of the community assets."

Calling for more JTC involvement nationwide, Ruth Ingram noted that the project will have to be adapted for larger States, "but it is a solid model to build upon."

Linda Felner

Being a parent of a 25-year-old son with developmental disabilities has been a catalyst for Linda Felner's involvement and advocacy.

"I have always felt if those of us who are intimately involved don't talk about the issues, who will?"

A resident of Mamaroneck, New York, Mrs. Felner started a parent's group 23 years ago, and her advocacy interests led to her appointment to the President's Committee on Mental Retardation (PCMR).

"On PCMR, we share ideas with members representing a variety of States and backgrounds, half parents, half professionals. Our mission is to develop an annual report to inform the President and Health and Human Services Secretary Sullivan what is happening on state and local levels. Being able to participate in this conference has been motivating to me and will enable me to bring information back to the committee on these issues."

PCMR's Subcommittee on Family and Community Services, of which Mrs. Felner is a member, will produce the 1993 report, and it hopes to hold a conference next year on issues of transition for adults with mental retardation and related disabilities.

"Lifelong learning is a central issue affecting these adults. So I hope to bring back ideas to give us direction for our conference."

Jay Cretella

As director of Wallingford Adult Education, Mr. Cretella is president of the National Association for Adults with Special Learning Needs (NAASLN), a new coalition of professionals, advocates, and consumers of lifelong learning for the purpose of educating adults with special learning needs.

"NAASLN is a new organization still in the process of defining itself. We want to be the national association that disseminates information on how to form linkages; we are a resource for consumers and practitioners by identifying programs and policies already in place that are working around the country. It is an all-inclusive group, not by disability category, and includes parents and professionals."

Mary Shinoski

"We can't exist in a vacuum," emphasizes Mary Shinoski, career counseling coordinator at Windham Adult Education in Willimantic, Conn. "I have become more aware here of the need to coordinate services for all disabilities."



The Windham program is one of six regional education service centers in the state. It works with JTPA-eligible individuals age 14 - 21 to help them set educational and employment goals and objectives. It also has a summer youth program sponsored by JTPA with remediation in basic skills in an employability context. The program collaborates with CETO (Coordinated Employment and Training Opportunities), a state-funded project that directs individuals to needed services in the community.

"I have a special education master's and have been aware of adults with learning disabilities but am not so aware of adults with other disabilities. We need to learn their commonalities as well as their differences. We have to understand what it means to work with other disabilities. We talk to adult education teachers to develop disability awareness."

Vikki Rennick

"As a person with a disability, I recognize that it is important to participate in the process of linkages," explains Vikki Rennick from National Independent Living Management Training at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York. "And as a trainer I am concerned about inappropriate styles of learning. Here I have had a chance to learn what is and is not working out there."

The Cornell project provides management training and strategic planning to independent living centers throughout the country, mostly through Rehabilitation Services Administration long-term training grants, many cosponsored with continuing education programs. The project uses team teaching with outside consultants to train management, board members, staff, and financial managers on responsible leadership, fund raising and other topics determined by needs studies.

"We need to have more opportunities like this. Two days is not enough but it is a start. It is really proactive."

Beverly LeConche

Networking at the conference was particularly helpful for Beverly LeConche, education director for the Urban League of Greater Hartford, whose major program is adult education for anyone in the community. Most clients are dropouts, and the courses include GED preparation, adult basic education, and an external diploma program.

"Students have different disabilities, mainly learning disabilities, and one reason I am here is to soak up as much information as I can on learning disabilities. We want to consult on tests for LD and help staff work more effectively with LD students. I have learned we cannot just put on an LD label, some have developmental disabilities and we hadn't focused before on differences."

At the conference, she met, for the first time, people from her own city who work with persons with disabilities.

"Now I hope we can work together. I also talked to someone from another state who works with dyslexic adults. We have students with dyslexia, and it was very helpful to get their experience. The networking has been excellent."

Joan Watkins

"I am encouraged by this meeting," enthused Joan Watkins, executive director of the Parent Network Center in Buffalo. *"This is one of the federally funded state parent training and information centers where parents train parents in planning for providing services to children."*

Everyone on the center's staff is the parent of a child with disabilities. The center puts on workshops and presentations for parents and professionals, and for college undergraduates in special education, and for guidance counselors to present the parent's point of view that parents are experts on their own children.

"We tell parents that we should be thinking about where we want to see our children when they are adults. We were never told to think about that. If you are enlightened enough to say that they will be included in the community, you can steer planning in that direction."

The center also trains parents for self-advocacy and encourages them to make choices for themselves.

"We started from ground zero in planning for transition and got down to it must be consumer centered and driven. That is big and important. If it happens soon, I'll be surprised, but we are thinking right and headed in the right direction."

John Szufnarowski

John Szufnarowski is Regional Administrator Rehabilitation Services Commissioner for Region 1, responsible for administering the Rehabilitation Act in New England with grants for vocational rehabilitation, supported employment and independent living, and special demonstration projects training professionals to provide rehabilitation services.

"This is a very timely and relevant meeting. It is imperative that we make effective use of resources to meet the needs of persons with disabilities and be accountable in terms of using all our resources. We have worked with some other agencies in specific areas but I have never been to a meeting with this scope and broad participation of different disciplines."

Szufnarowski recognized that the sharing of information taking place at the conference cannot be picked up easily just by reading the proceedings afterward.

"I am becoming aware of the interest education has placed on serving people with disabilities, and of how little people know about our programs. We are dealing with funding and compliance issues, and we really need to put time aside for it or it won't happen."

Ruth Gottesman

"This conference gives me new avenues to travel on in quest of obtaining services and meeting people to learn new ideas I can incorporate or learn that ideas I have are similar to other effective programs," says Ruth Gottesman, Ph.D.

Gottesman is director of the Adult Literacy Program for adults with severe reading problems at Rose F. Kennedy Center of Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the Bronx, New York.

"Linkages are very important because life adjustment is much broader than reading the literature. We have to link our services to vocational training or jobs and support services in the community where the individuals and their families are involved."

She pointed out that, for many adults, reading below third grade level is often a neurologically based problem labeled learning disability.

"But I'm not a big label user. Inability to process information is a clearer description; if people understand they are OK in many ways, the label may help them prove to society they are not lazy or crazy."

Joan Knight

Among the things Joan Knight discovered at the conference were that performance standards are necessary, that there is new terminology -- for example, guided practice instead of training, and *"the wonderful realization that the region is working toward what I thought I was doing alone."*

Now the head of Knight Education, Inc., working as a private consultant hired by schools and other public agencies to train teachers, Knight was chief of Adult Based Education in the New York City schools for 15 years. She works with dyslexic children and adults to help them decode problems; she also trains teachers on diagnosis, how to spot students with inordinate reading problems, and how to get student support in dealing with the problem.

One project she is working on is to help recovering adult drug addicts in a voluntary treatment center, all dropouts, some former offenders, to raise their reading level so they can get into vocational training and employment. Most come out of special education but were never diagnosed with dyslexia.

"The Private Industry Council hires me, and provides a vocational rehabilitation counselor, and we work with VESID and social workers, and others, to develop individual employment plans. This is a real linkage project."

Debra Hutchins

The conference helped Debra Hutchins learn how to get advocates and consumers more involved on her organization's committees.

She is director of staff development and training for the New York State Association of Rehabilitation Facilities, an umbrella group for all disabilities including deaf, blind, mental retardation, and others.

"I am obviously interested in linkages. My job is to find out where there are training deficits and develop a program to fill training needs."

The association has established a research and training institute focused on training member agencies' staff who are from different disciplines.

"It will be a quantum leap for us to make to involve advocates and consumers in our policy development process. But everyone here thinks it is valuable, so I can pass that along to our staff to go that extra step to incorporate them on our committees."

Paul Randy Walker

"This is one of the few times where the government has modeled coordination instead of just giving us orders to go out and coordinate," declared Paul Randy Walker, director of the Division of Adult and Community Education in the Maine Department of Education.

The conference was entirely useful to the point where it had almost immediate utility for Dr. Walker in terms of enhancing and building his own coordination efforts.

"I knew our Department of Vocational Rehabilitative services existed, but I had never worked with them. The conference introduced us to state and regional people and showed us the way to work with local directors to coordinate and facilitate the Americans with Disabilities Act so we don't all start from scratch."



Dr. Walker also expressed appreciation for the opportunity to learn about what New York State is doing.

"Granted New York is a very big state, but I can apply some of those pieces immediately to my state."

G. Dom Passerelli

"The conference was most beneficial in giving us another slant on the disability issue," stressed G. Dom Passerelli, director of the New Haven Adult Education Center. "We identified stronger needs to address and found there are limited services presently offered by other agencies."

As a result, his center is initiating an educational program for persons with mental retardation, and also is looking at programs for residents in group homes.

"We assumed they were being served by vocational rehabilitation and Easter Seals. But we found they are not getting independent skills training or vocational training, so that is something we can provide."

The New Haven center also is putting together a skills clinic, following the lead of the AMERICA 2000 program, with the Private Industry Council, the city administration and the human resources agency, using some of the concepts garnered from the conference.

Michael Peluso

As Client Assistance Program coordinator at the New York State Commission on Quality of Care, Michael Peluso assists adults in accessing vocational rehabilitation services. His focus at the conference in part was on the potential demand for advocacy services in the transition from school to adult services.

"I was gratified to see that the bureaucracy was responsive to bringing together people with progressive ideas on education. Our group clearly was ready to go to the next level and embrace a philosophy with expectations for education generally. We felt that special education should not be special. There was a real sense of inclusion."

Stressing the need for directing resources to have informed parents and students, he expressed skepticism about implementation *"unless we have an advocacy component on IEP and transitional planning committees. I'm not as optimistic about the results, although I am very encouraged by the dialogue, the exchange and the forward thinking at the conference."*

Harold A. Solan

"I've never been at a conference like this one before, with so many people who are sincerely involved and dedicated," exclaimed Harold A. Solan, Ph.D., professor at the State College of Optometry/SUNY.

"I am especially impressed that the group felt so unthreatened that they were adamant about getting input from consumers. They feel the only way to get consumers to participate is to bring them in at the formation of the program. Also, these are not just professionals saying this is how it should be done. It is truly remarkable."

Dr. Solan left the conference prepared to follow through directly on one resolution which stated that all individuals should receive appropriate visual and auditory screening. He is linking Bill Langner with the American Optometric Association to develop a program to meet uncorrected visual needs that might cause literacy problems.

James Fogarty

Having consumers at the conference to talk about what it's like to go through the system made it especially valuable to James Fogarty, who is director of special education at the Bureau of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) in Suffolk County, New York.

"One of the important things is to put all key players in a room together. Each is doing it a little differently and they start to see a variety of solutions. This is real networking to explore how to implement change."

BOCES has developed a pilot with one school district to bring agencies touching youngsters together on a uniform team with continuity so they don't work at cross purposes.

"We need to break down barriers between departments and not be too territorial. This is even more of a problem when they leave school, compounded by muddled funding for adults education."

Jim Fogarty agreed that the issues raised at the conference *"were right on target,"* but the main concern now is how to implement the recommendations.

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A P P E N D I X I I : A G E N D A

SUNDAY • MAY 3 • 1992

6:30 P.M.

OPENING ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

This opening session will provide background information on the "building effective linkages" initiatives. The coordinated policy statement and summary of the first conference will be discussed with time allotted for questions and answers. Current directions and the expected outcomes of this working session will be established.

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8:00 P.M.

RECEPTION

MONDAY • MAY 4 • 1992

9:00 A.M.

OPENING COMMENTS

Thomas Sobol

Commissioner of Education
New York State Education Department

Michael Vader

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Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
United States Department of Education

9:15 A.M.

ENHANCING ADULT OUTCOMES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

A focus on the outcomes of transition planning, lifelong learning, the implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and coordination of lifelong learning systems to improve job training within the current labor market.

Lawrence Gloeckler

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10:00 A.M.

OUR CHALLENGE

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10:15 A.M.

BREAK

10:30 A.M.

WORKING SESSIONS

Small groups will discuss the next steps at local, state, and federal levels based on (a) the proceedings from the initial "Building Effective Program Linkages" conference and (b) local implementation strategies. Each group will prioritize strategies to implement recommendations in each of the following areas:

- a. Transition from School to Adult Opportunities
- b. Lifelong Learning: Educational Strategies for Adults with Disabilities
- c. Government's Role in Building Partnerships
- d. Personnel Preparation and Research Dissemination

12:00 NOON

LUNCHEON

Paul Randy Walker
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AMERICA 2000

AN EDUCATION STRATEGY

Education reform and its impact on lifelong learning for youth and adults with disabilities.

Barry Stern
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Vocational and Adult Education
United States Department of Education

1:45 P.M.

WORKING SESSIONS

Continued discussion of recommendations and strategies. Each group should complete their dialogue so as to finalize and prioritize recommendations on Tuesday morning. Sessions will end at approximately 5:00 p.m.

3:15 P.M.

BREAK

3:30 P.M.

WORKING SESSIONS

5:30 P.M.

RECEPTION

TUESDAY • MAY 5 • 1992

8:30 A.M.

TRANSITIONAL PLANNING AND PROGRAMMING

A forum to discuss the implementation of transitional services as described in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Implications for lifelong learning and the coordination of systems to accomplish employment outcomes for youth with disabilities will be highlighted with a focus on specific systems issues as discussed by various states.

INTRODUCTIONS:

Michael Ward

Chief
Secondary Education/Transition Branch
Office of Special Education Programs
United States Department of Education

PANEL MODERATOR:

Judith Schrag

Director
Office of Special Education Programs
United States Department of Education

STATE PANELISTS:

Wendy Allen

Technical Assistance Coordinator
Committee on Transition
University of Southern Maine

Patricia Spiller

Transition Consultant
New Hampshire Transition Grant
University of New Hampshire

William Sugarman

Training and Evaluation Specialist
University of Vermont

Edmund Cortez

Assistant Commissioner
Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities
New York State Education Department

SUMMARY:

Thomas Wermuth

Director of Education and Technical Assistance
Transition Research Institute
University of Illinois at Urbana

9:45 A.M.

WORKING SESSIONS - WRAP UP

Each of the working sessions concludes its discussions and finalizes priorities, strategies, and recommendations for next steps.

11:00 A.M.

BREAK

11:15 A.M.

DISCUSSION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Chair of each working session will present a report of recommendations.

12:00 NOON

CONCLUSION AND WRAP UP

Michael Vader

Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
United States Department of Education

Barry Stern

Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Vocational and Adult Education
United States Department of Education

Lawrence Gloeckler

Deputy Commissioner
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