DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 475 503   EC 309 513

AUTHOR   Kochhar-Bryant, Carol, Ed.; Bassett, Diane S., Ed.
TITLE   Aligning Transition and Standards-Based Education: Issues and
                Strategies.
INSTITUTION   Council for Exceptional Children, Arlington, VA.
ISBN   ISBN-0-86586-970-7
PUB DATE   2002-00-00
NOTE   208p.
AVAILABLE FROM Council for Exceptional Children, 1110 N. Glebe Rd.,
                Arlington, VA 22201-5704 (Order no. P5526: nonmembers $34.95,
                members $24.95). Tel: 888-232-7733 (Toll Free); Fax: 703-264-
                9494; e-mail: service@cec.sped.org; Web site:
                http://www.cec.sped.org.
PUB TYPE   Books (010) -- Collected Works - General (020)
EDRS PRICE   EDRS Price MF01/PC09 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS   *Academic Standards; Change Strategies; *Disabilities;
                *Education Work Relationship; *Educational Change;
                Individualized Education Programs; *Individualized Transition
                Plans; *Models; Planning; Program Development; Secondary
                Education; Student Educational Objectives; Transitional
                Programs

ABSTRACT
                Eleven papers address issues in the alignment of standards-
based education and individualized transition planning and service
development for students with disabilities including differences in
assumptions and principles, the transition planning model as a framework for
achieving this alignment, and educational practices resulting from this
alignment. Individual papers are: (1) "Challenge and Promise in Aligning
Transition and Standards-Based Education" (Carol A. Kochhar-Bryant and Dianne
S. Bassett); (2) "Transition and Access to the General Education
Curriculum" (Michael L. Wehmeyer); (3) "Standards, Transition, Postsecondary
Goals, and the Individualized Education Program: One State's Efforts at
Integration" (Patricia Longo); (4) "Using Applied Academics To Enhance the
Transition Process in Standards-Based Education" (James R. Patton and Audrey
Trainor); (5) "Using School-to-Career Strategies, Workplace Competencies, and
Industry Skill Standards To Enhance the Transition Process in Standards-Based
Education" (Jane M. Williams); (6) "Traditional and Alternative Assessments
within the Transition Process and Standards-Based Education" (Martha L.
Thurlow and others); (7) "Cultural Considerations in the Transition Process
and Standards-Based Education" (Sharon deFur and Brenda Toler Williams); (8)
"The Role of Families of Adolescents with Disabilities in Standards-Based
Educational Reform and Transition" (Mary E. Morningstar); (9) "Pathways to
Successful Transition for Youths with Disabilities" (Gary Greene); (10)
"Transition of Students with Disabilities from High School to Postsecondary
Education: The Perfect Example" (James E. Martin and others); and (11)
"Future Directions for Transition and Standards-Based Education" (Diane S.
Bassett and Carol A. Kochhar-Bryant). (Individual papers contain references.)
(DB)

Aligning Transition and Standards-Based Education:

Issues and Strategies

Carol A. Kochhar-Bryant and Diane S. Bassett, Editors

Aligning Transition and Standards-Based Education

Aligning Transition and Standards-Based Education

Issues and Strategies

Carol A. Kochhar-Bryant
and
Diane S. Bassett
EDITORS

Contents

Preface

Over the past few decades, career development and transition services have been central in federal education initiatives to improve secondary and postsecondary outcomes for youths with disabilities. Sizeable investments have been made by federal and state governments to expand the capacity of state and local education agencies to develop transition service systems. But the movement to expand career development and transition services faces a much greater challenge as general education reforms place increasing emphasis on students' academic performance. As a result, schools are placing less emphasis on career-vocational development, community-based learning opportunities, and transition services, which represent the most appropriate educational choices for many youths. Standards-based educational systems with high-stakes testing present challenges to the individualized education and transition planning for students required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA). Innovative approaches to aligning these two educational approaches are needed.

Implementing transition services within a standards-based education framework presents a conceptual and practical challenge for educators, many of whom see the principles and goals as mutually exclusive. Yet IDEA 1997 emphasized both transition services *and* access to the general education curriculum. This dual emphasis placed expectations on state and local education agencies to seek practical solutions for aligning the systems. This requirement logically holds education agencies responsible for ensuring appropriate transition planning through the individualized education program (IEP), secondary education curriculum accommodations and redesign, and interagency coordination to help students and families achieve postsecondary goals.

To address this challenge, educators are asking new questions about the relationship between transition and standards-based education. Is transition supposed to "fit" into the standards-based reform movement, or do standards-based educational practices fit within the broader career development and transition framework for students with disabilities? To what extent do schools have the responsibility for preparing youths for careers if they are not bound for postsecondary education after graduation? How can transition be operationalized for students who are in inclusive middle or secondary classrooms and who will be expected to pass high school exit exams? Many educators believe that we can design education that is based on both common standards and the right of students with disabilities to individualized and appropriate education and transition planning.

Two years ago, we discussed with the board of the Council for Exceptional Children's Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT) the need to begin a dialog about the relationship between standards-

8

based educational reforms and transition service development, with a focus on several broad questions:

- How do standards-based education and transition services differ in their assumptions and principles, and why are these differences important?
- How can standards-based education and transition services be bridged or aligned?
- How can the transition planning model serve as a comprehensive framework for achieving this alignment?
- How are schools and school systems working to align these two educational models?
- What do the practices resulting from this alignment look like?

This book is designed to help educators and related service personnel to

1. Understand the different principles and assumptions that undergird both transition services and standards-based education.
2. Appreciate the issues and barriers surrounding the implementation of both models.
3. Learn about emerging and tested strategies and techniques for aligning the two educational service models.
4. Consider how the transition model serves as a unifying framework for creating bridges between them.

The introductory chapter, by Carol Kochhar-Bryant and Diane Bassett, compares the principles and assumptions that undergird both transition services and standards-based education, discusses issues and tensions surrounding the alignment of the two educational service models, and examines transition as a unifying framework for creating bridges between them. The chapters that follow are designed to describe how such alignment is occurring in actual practice in school and community systems. They provide examples of practices and models for bridging standards-based education and transition services.

Chapter 2, by Michael Wehmeyer, examines the question of what constitutes access to that curriculum, how we achieve it, and how we ensure that the skills and abilities emphasized in transition services are incorporated into the general education curriculum. Chapter 3, by Pat Longo, addresses two additional questions: Why have standards-based education and transition services remained separate? How can IEP goals and objectives be aligned with priority curriculum standards to assist in making curriculum more relevant and useful to students as they transition to life after school? Chapter 4, by Jim Patton and Audrey Trainor, defines and examines the role of applied academics in the educational world of standards and access to the general education curriculum. It addresses the need for curricular review and innovation, particularly at the secondary level, and examines the curricular, instructional, and evaluative implications of applied academics within the demands of current policy and practice.

Chapter 5, by Jane Williams, highlights the role that school-to-careers strategies, academic content standards, workplace competencies, and industry

skill standards have all played in standards-based education initiatives for students transitioning to adult life, with a review of the status of their implementation in the states. Chapter 6, by Martha Thurlow, Sandra Thompson, and David Johnson, addresses traditional and alternative assessments, the relationship of the transition process to standards-based assessment, and the role of the IEP in decisions about students' participation in assessments. Chapter 7, by Sharon DeFur and Brenda Williams, examines the impacts of cultural diversity on transition implementation and explores the role of standards-based reform in bridging the cultural divide.

Chapter 8, by Mary Morningstar, explores the role of parents and families in secondary school programs in the era of standards-based education. It provides an overview of research related to parent involvement, benefits and barriers to family–school collaboration during transition planning and services, and impacts of standards-based education reform on families and youths. Strategies, resources, and information for involving parents are also provided. Chapter 9, by Gary Greene, discusses the issue of increased high school graduation requirements for all youths as a result of standards-based education and its impact on students with disabilities. The chapter presents a unique model containing four potential transition pathways into, through, and beyond high school for youths with disabilities. Chapter 10, by Jim Martin, Jamie Van Dycke, Lori Peterson, and Robert Walden, shows how deliberate planning and instruction must occur for successful transition from high school to postsecondary education. Nine factors associated with successful transition from secondary to postsecondary education are described. Finally, Chapter 11, by Diane Bassett and Carol Kochhar-Bryant, provides a window to the future by exploring emerging trends and directions for transition and standards-based education.

The principles and goals of standards-based education and individualized transition planning are not mutually exclusive, but their alignment requires the best of our thinking and our commitment. Transition is not just a program or a project or a set of activities that has a beginning and an end. It is a vision and a goal for unfolding the fullest potential of each individual, and it represents a systematic framework for planning to fulfill that potential. It is hoped that readers will expand the dialog about these issues with others who are concerned with the successful passage of youths with disabilities from school to adult life.

Carol A. Kochhar-Bryant
Diane S. Bassett

1

Challenge and Promise in Aligning Transition and Standards-Based Education

Carol A. Kochhar-Bryant

Diane S. Bassett

Introduction to the Challenge

Over the past half-century, career development and transition systems have been enduring concepts and instruments of federal policy for improving secondary and postsecondary outcomes for youths with disabilities. More important, the philosophical and conceptual frameworks of career development and transition have provided schools with practical models for creating a spectrum of appropriate educational options for youths with different needs. Over the past few decades, the federal government has recognized that when school systems provide educational options for young people with disabilities and other special learning needs, their outcomes improve. Therefore, the U.S. Department of Education has expanded efforts to identify effective transition practices and increase the capacity of states to develop transition service systems.

Transition services and supports were expected to prepare youths with disabilities for adult life in a variety of domains including academic, social, career-vocational, and independent living. Many national and state initiatives, however, have not fulfilled expectations of improved postsecondary outcomes. While recent federal and state educational reforms and a stronger economy have led to increasing employment rates and postsecondary enrollments for youths in general, limited outcomes have been achieved by young adults with disabilities as they make the transition to postsecondary settings and adult life (American Youth Policy Forum [AYPF] & Center on Education Policy, 2002; Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Halpern, 1990; Johnson, McGrew, Bloomberg, Bruininks, & Lin, 1997; Mack & Wiltrout, 1999; National Center for Secondary Education and Transition [NCSET], 2001); National Center on Educational

Outcomes [NCEO], 2002; U.S. Department of Education, 2000). A major barrier to improving outcomes for youths is the struggle states are experiencing with implementing federal transition requirements.

The challenge to expand transition services has become even more complex as general education reforms have placed increasing emphasis on academic performance for students, diminishing emphasis on career-vocational development and community-based learning. Standards-based educational systems with high-stakes testing present challenges to both the individualized education and individualized transition planning models required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA). Creative new approaches to blending the standards-based and individualized education approaches must be found. This chapter compares the principles and assumptions that underly both transition services and standards-based education, discusses issues and tensions surrounding the alignment of the two educational service models, and discusses transition as a unifying framework for creating bridges between them.

National Investment in Transition Service Development in the States

In the past 2 decades, transition services across the nation have been expanding and improving because of legislation and federal initiatives designed to create state and local capacity to develop them. These initiatives include the following:

- Public Law 98-199, an amendment to the Education for All Handicapped Children Act enacted in 1983, provided secondary education and transition services for youths ages 12 to 22 years, as well as funds for research and training in transition.
- IDEA 1990 included transition services within the definition of special education services and required local educational agencies or districts to provide such transition services for all students with disabilities.
- In 1991, the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) authorized 5-year State Systems for Transition Services Grants to promote state-wide system change to improve school-to-work transition services.
- IDEA 1997 strengthened transition requirements and mandated interagency coordination.
- Under the Clinton administration, a President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities was established. Under the Bush Administration, the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) was established in the Department of Labor to improve access for adults with disabilities to employment services through the one-stop system and to dramatically increase the employment rate of people with disabilities. This office subsumed the President's Committee in an effort to reduce duplication and enhance coordination of federal employment programs for people with disabilities.

- In 1998, State Improvement Grants were made available to states on a competitive basis, and states were encouraged to include transition services as a priority area for service improvement.

- The Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 (TWWIIA) was developed through a coordinated effort between the Clinton administration, Congress, and the disability community. TWWIIA was designed to provide better health care options for people with disabilities who work, extend Medicare coverage for people on disability insurance who return to work, and enhance employment-related services.

- In 1999, President Clinton signed an Executive Order ensuring that individuals with psychiatric disabilities are given the same hiring opportunities as people with significant physical disabilities or mental retardation.

- The Social Security Administration, through the State Partner Initiative, is working under cooperative agreements with 12 states to help them develop innovative and integrated statewide programs of services and supports for their residents with disabilities that will increase job opportunities and decrease dependence on benefits, including Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

Despite these initiatives, outcomes for youths with disabilities, such as graduation, employment and postsecondary education enrollment, remain far below those of their peers without disabilities (U.S. Department of Education, 2002). Policymakers are asking what more can be done to improve outcomes. In the 1990s, educational reforms to improve educational outcomes for all children and youths were leveraged chiefly through enhanced accountability for student outcomes, school improvement, and personnel performance (McDonnel, McLaughlin, & Morison, 1997). Two fundamental changes have taken place as a result of this demand for educational reform: (1) attention has shifted to educational outcomes rather than inputs, and (2) political systems have become far more active in evaluating the performance of students and schools. As Secretary of Education Richard Riley (1997) commented in his address during the signing of IDEA 1997, "There has been literally a sea change in attitude. And at the very core of this sea change is the growing recognition that expectations matter a great deal." These changes have influenced schools to focus more heavily on outcome indicators such as attendance, dropout rates, and successful instructional programs, measured against specific standards and accountability requirements.

Emphasis on Results, Standards, and Outcomes in Federal Policy: Impacts on Education and Transition

Educators, policymakers, and the general public have been concerned about the effectiveness of public education programs, as well as how well they provide equitable opportunities for all children and youths. A similar emphasis on

results, standards, and outcomes in transition service delivery presents some interesting parallels.

Improving the Effectiveness of Government Programs

Concerned over waste and inefficiency in federal programs and insufficient attention to program performance and results, Congress passed the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) in 1993. Federal managers, including those in the Department of Education, had been seriously disadvantaged in their efforts to improve the effectiveness of their programs because they could not define program goals and measure program performance. The purposes of GPRA were to (a) improve program performance by setting program goals, measuring program performance against those goals, and reporting publicly on progress and (b) systematically hold federal agencies accountable for achieving program results. Federal managers are required to submit 5-year strategic plans that include general goals and objectives, including outcome-related goals and objectives, for the major functions and operations of the agency (U.S. Department of Education, 2001).

For example, in the Department of Education's strategic plan (2002), Goal 1 is aimed at helping all students reach challenging academic standards so that they are prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment. For the U.S. Office of Special Education, the broad goal related to the general cluster of secondary transition (based on IDEA 1997) is as follows: All youths with disabilities, beginning at age 14 and younger when appropriate, receive individualized, coordinated transition services, designed with an outcome-oriented process that promotes movement from school to postschool activities. GPRA indicators (i.e., that which can be observed) under this objective address student participation in appropriate transition planning, individualized education programs (IEPs) beginning at age 14 that include statements of transition service needs that focus on the students' course of study, rate of graduation with regular diploma, dropout rate, and participation in postschool activities such as employment and postsecondary education (U.S. Department of Education, 1999; 2002).

National Education Legislation Focus on Performance and Results

During the 1980s and 1990s, educational improvement legislation, including the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1994 (ESEA), the School to Work Opportunities Act of 1993, the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998, and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, were enacted to promote comprehensive strategies for improving public school programs for all students (NCSET, 2001). The ESEA of 1994 encouraged the states to adopt two types of voluntary standards: (1) content standards, which identify what students are to learn in one subject (P.L.103-227, §3(4) and (2) performance standards, which state the quality of the performance considered satisfactory (§3(9)). When ESEA was reauthorized in 2001 as the No Child Left Behind Act (ESEA 2001), it contained a new focus on standards, requiring states and districts to develop challenging state academic content standards, state assessments, and new curriculum standards. The focus on curriculum standards also

led to the development of so-called high-stakes exit exams for students preparing for graduation.

Trend Toward High-Stakes Testing

In recent years, the popularity of high-stakes testing in public schools is climbing. States and local districts are increasing their graduation requirements to include more rigorous coursework and tests to demonstrate knowledge and skills needed after high school (Education Commission of the States [ECS], 2000a; National Governors Association, 2002; NCEO, 2002; Thompson & Thurlow, 2001). Since the spring of 2002, a total of 26 states have required students to pass a high school exit exam to receive a diploma (3 of these do allow for waivers). Another 8 states plan to adopt exit examinations within the next 3 years. Tests are considered to be high stakes when results of the testing have important consequences for students, personnel, or schools (ECS, 2000b; Manzo, 1999). For example, student graduation and promotion, staff incentives, and allocation of school resources are often based on testing results. Many other states use tests to make other types of high-stakes decisions, such as whether a student is eligible for scholarships, advanced placement, and honors classes. Approximately 13 states use standardized tests to determine whether a student should be promoted or retained. Some states have proposed using test results to determine eligibility for state universities or even employment (ECS, 2000b).

Several graduation requirements present barriers for students with disabilities. For example, states and districts have created a spectrum of diplomas as alternatives to the standard diploma, including certificates of completion, certificates of attendance, and others. It is not clear how these alternatives are affecting postschool outcomes for students with disabilities. Furthermore, according to NCEO (2002), many states and districts now set benchmarks to ensure that students are at appropriate points along the pathway to receiving a standard high school diploma. NCEO outlined the concerns as follows:

> Concerns about social promotion are bound to affect students whose learning is challenged by disabilities. Several states and districts have either enacted, or are considering, policies that prohibit the promotion of students from one grade to the next unless they have demonstrated their knowledge and skills through adequate performance on an assessment. Thus, despite warnings from various groups that high stakes assessments should not be used for students until the system has been held accountable for having adequate programs for all students, the use of high stakes assessments for students is increasing. This increase in assessments that determine whether a student moves from one grade to the next or leaves high school with a standard diploma creates significant challenges for students with disabilities, their families, and the educators who work with them. Increasing rates of students dropping out of school is just one of many possible results of these policies. However, the research is not yet conclusive on the effects of using

assessments to impose high stakes consequences on students with disabilities. (p. 1)

High-stakes tests, which have been given the least attention in the litera-ture, are those that determine a student's progress through and out of school. Further research on the effects of these state and local assessment policies and their postschool impacts on youths with disabilities clearly are needed.

Protecting the Interests of Students with Disabilities

In response to the new emphasis in the ESEA 2001 on standards and increased performance expectations for students, the Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (2001) offered "Principles for the Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act," which included the following:

> All students with disabilities must be included in all state and dis-
> trict-wide assessments of student progress as required by the
> Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation
> Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.
> Assessments of student performance must be developmentally
> appropriate, and appropriate accommodations must be provided.
> Moreover, ESEA 2001 should incorporate the IDEA 1997 policy that
> requires schools to provide accommodations for participation in
> general assessments as well as alternative assessments for students
> whose disabilities prohibit them from participating in such assess-
> ments, in accordance with the student's individualized education
> plan (IEP). (p. 1)

Therefore, a third set of standards has been recommended to those implement-ing IDEA and ESEA. In addition to content standards and performance stan-dards are *opportunity standards*, which identify the opportunities that students need if they are to accomplish the performance standards (Glatthorn & Craft-Tripp, 2000). Examples of opportunities that are needed by students with dis-abilities include a planned program, individualized instruction, grouping that does not stigmatize them, a responsive curriculum, and adequate time for learning. These opportunity standards represent a *model for accountability* to ensure that students with disabilities have access to the general education cur-riculum. These will be discussed further later in the chapter.

Aligning Standards-Based Education with Transition

Implementing transition programs within a standards-based education frame-work presents a conceptual and practical challenge for educators, many of whom see the principles and goals as mutually exclusive. To align special edu-cation programs with general education reforms and improve postsecondary outcomes, IDEA 1997 added new requirements that were designed to ensure that youths have greater access to the secondary education curriculum and standardized assessments. Yet IDEA 1997 emphasized both transition services and access to the general education curriculum. This emphasis, therefore, *placed expectations on state and local education agencies to seek practical solutions for*

aligning secondary education and transition systems (Greene & Kochhar, in press; Kochhar, West, & Taymans, 2000). The requirement logically holds education agencies responsible for providing appropriate transition planning through the IEP, secondary education curriculum accommodations and redesign, and inter-agency coordination to help students and families achieve postsecondary goals.

Many experts agree that it is possible to design education that is based on both common standards and the right of students with disabilities to an individualized education and transition planning. The transition model is instrumental as a comprehensive, foundational framework for (a) ensuring effective alignment between standards-based secondary education and transition services, and (b) guiding decision making among students, families, and professionals for postsecondary planning. The following sections discuss issues and barriers related to bridging standards-based education and transition.

Issues in Aligning Transition and Standards-Based Education

Creating bridges between standards-based secondary education and individualized transition services is a complex conceptual and organizational challenge. The following barriers reflect a few of the struggles faced by those who implement education and transition reforms.

Issue 1: Uniform Learning Standards and Individualized Education Present Different Principles and Policies

For more than two decades, the primary policy tool for improving transition and postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities has been the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and its provisions for appropriate education and protection of individual rights. Standards-based education has introduced a fundamentally different set of policies and practices that are based on uniform learning standards within a standards-based curriculum. The students' mastery of the curriculum content is measured by standardized tests or assessments. Standards-based education is based on the assumption that common standards for all students are a catalyst for improved educational outcomes and serve as a basis for what should be taught and for measuring what students should be expected to know (McDonnel et al., 1997). It is also based on the assumptions that content and performance standards can be defined clearly and precisely, student performance can be measured validly and reliably, and accountability is ensured through public reporting of aggregate data on student performance.

In contrast to the assumptions of common performance standards, transition services are guided by the special education framework. This framework defines the rights of students with disabilities to a free and appropriate education and specifies the responsibilities of school systems to accommodate their individual needs (McDonnel et al., 1997). Transition services rely on a *private process*—the IEP and transition plan centered on the needs of the individual student—and students' individual rights are enforced through a set of procedural safeguards. Also in contrast to the focus on academic outcomes that are

the hallmark of standards-based education, the transition service framework for students with disabilities encompasses a broader range of educational outcomes for these students. Critics of standards-based education for all students claim that states have crafted standards that are too narrow and do not allow educators to include nonacademic learning objectives such as those that address social and behavioral skills, career and vocational development, physical and health development, and functional skills.

IDEA 1997 emphasized the importance of an equitable accountability system and required states to include students with disabilities in general state- and district-wide assessments and school improvement efforts. States are now required to revise their state improvement plans to establish goals for the performance of children with disabilities and assess their progress toward achieving those goals. They must establish indicators such as student participation in assessments, dropout rates, graduation rates, and guidelines for alternate assessment of children with disabilities. However, IDEA also protects the child's right to appropriate and individualized means to achieving common standards and goals, including related services and nonacademic goals. The challenge for educators is to align standards-based education policies with those under IDEA, which are based on individual rights and individualized educational processes.

Issue 2: Ambiguity in the Meaning of "All Students Can Learn to a High Standard"

Educators and policymakers do not yet agree on what "all students can learn to a high standard" really means. At the elementary school level, the general curriculum is relatively easy to define, but as students progress through middle school and high school, defining the general curriculum becomes more difficult. There is a shift from learning basic skills to using those skills to acquire new content knowledge (Eisenman & Wilson, 2000). Acquiring secondary-level content along with peers who do not have disabilities is difficult for many students with disabilities because their basic academic skills may be far below grade level. Eisenman (2000) has further pointed out that the traditional college preparatory curriculum found in most high schools is not designed for the majority of students who choose to enter the workforce directly from high school. Many states are rapidly developing policies for standards-based reform and high-stakes testing based on assumptions that require further validation, particularly for students with disabilities and those who are linguistically diverse (i.e., English is not their primary language). The federal mandate to bridge special and general education requires education agencies to create curriculum options that are different from the traditional college preparation curriculum.

Issue 3: Uncertainty About the Impacts of High-Stakes Testing

The effects of standards-based reforms and high-stakes testing on students with disabilities are only beginning to be examined systematically. There is a great deal of uncertainty about the impact of high-stakes testing on students with disabilities in the general secondary education curriculum. Parents of students who are facing new high-stakes tests are seeking curriculum options,

greater support, and earlier transition planning (AYPF, 2002; Kochhar, 1999). Proponents of standards-based education argue that participation in a standards-based curriculum means upgraded expectations and opportunities, improved teaching and learning, and improved postschool outcomes (McDonnel et al., 1997). The assumption underlying standards-based reform is that creating rigorous learning standards within the curriculum will refocus teaching and learning on a common understanding of what schools expect students to know and be able to do upon graduation. These curriculum frameworks provide the foundation for new statewide assessments (National Association of State Boards of Education [NASBE], 1996).

Critical observers of standards-based education have raised many concerns about students with disabilities and other special learning needs. Education quality requires accountability, and special education is no exception. As Secretary of Education Rodney Paige (2002) commented on the reauthorization of ESEA in a statement before the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions:

> While we have seen significant improvements in services to students with disabilities and their families, we have a long road to travel before we reach the goal of No Child Left Behind. Although about 6 of every 10 American students with disabilities graduate with a regular high school diploma, in some states the graduation rate is fewer than one in four. That rate defies the promise of the IDEA and it must be addressed. The data get worse when we disaggregate by race. Fewer than half of African-American children with disabilities leave school with diplomas. (p. 1)

Some of the specific issues of concern that have been raised by educators and parents about standards-based education include the following:

1. Curriculum content standards do not reflect the learning needs of students with disabilities and focus too heavily on academic outcomes to the exclusion of other important domains (e.g., functional skills, social adjustment, health). If we don't count transition outcomes, transition won't count.
2. Testing does not include multiple assessments and formats, but relies on single standardized tests.
3. Test scores are not included in aggregate district scores.
4. Individualized education programs do not specify inclusion in more rigorous courses.
5. There is a lack of clarity about the role of the IEP in high-stakes assessment.

Many parents and educators are concerned that standards-based reforms, including high-stakes assessments for students with disabilities, will result in (a) more segregation between general and special education; (b) an increase in tracking (i.e., general track, college prep, honors, basic and special education) and reduced access to high-level curriculum for students with disabilities; (c)

fewer students with disabilities achieving a regular high school diploma, limiting their career choices; and (d) an increase in rates of dropout, suspensions, expulsions, alternative school placements, and absenteeism (Cavanaugh, 2002; Deshler, Ellis, & Lenz, 1996; Eisenman & Wilson, 2000; NCEO, 1999b; Sabornie & DeBettencourt, 1997).

An additional concern is that only about 10% of current state frameworks for curriculum standards show clear linkages between the curriculum framework and the actual assessment of what students know and can do (NCEO, 1999a). For example, in Oregon, approximately 95% of students with disabilities failed a recent round of testing (Oregon Department of Education, 2000). Often tests are hastily or poorly devised, with insufficient attention given to the groundwork necessary to develop a technically sound assessment. The tests often have questionable validity for students with disabilities, and most states have not given sufficient consideration to either appropriate accommodations or alternative assessments for students with disabilities (Cavanaugh, 2002; Healy, 2002). In addition, because implementation of the high-stakes tests is frequently rushed, students are not given enough time to prepare (Consortium on Inclusive Schooling Practices, 1998; Darling-Hammond, 2001; NCEO, 1999a). Wide variations exist, since each state has a different approach to testing and is in a state of development and change (Thurlow, House, Boys, Scott, & Ysseldyke, 2000).

There is also a growing concern among states that high-stakes accountability systems based on single testing events present major educational challenges for schools. Consequences are directed at schools and students, and in the most severe cases result in the loss of accreditation for a given school or graduation for an individual student. Schools may be unwilling to house classes of students with significant disabilities if having a large number of students in the alternate assessment lowers the accountability index rating for that site. Who, then, is accountable for these students? The system-level and student-level effects of testing policies and practices must be scrutinized particularly for their differential effects on students with disabilities, students with limited English proficiency (LEP), and other populations with special learning needs (Langenfeld, Thurlow, & Scott, 1997; Olson & Goldstein, 1997).

Issue 4: Potential Link Between High-Stakes Assessments and Dropout

Between 1990 and 1998, the percentage of students who dropped out of high school increased slightly for all students and for students from low-income families (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2002). Many stakeholders have already expressed concern that increased performance standards and high-stakes assessments may result in fewer students with disabilities being integrated into general education and consequently an increase in dropout rates (Academy for Educational Development [AED], 1999; Cavanaugh, 2002). State reports indicate that the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education curriculum is markedly lower in the secondary grades (U.S. Department of Education, 2000). Several states have discrepancies between students with and without disabilities in pass rates on high school exit exams, and states are observing an increase in the dropout rate occurring in

10th and 11th grades as a result of these exams (AED, 1999; Alabama State Improvement Grant, 1999; Cavanaugh, 2002; Hawaii State Improvement Grant, 1999; Vaishnav, 2002; Virginia State Improvement Grant, 1999).

As states implement more rigorous content in the core secondary curriculum and strengthen basic skills exit exams, they anticipate that more students with disabilities will be unable to complete a high school diploma and may be left with no viable exit options. State leaders are reassessing the need for stronger support systems and curriculum options, such as career-technical education, to ensure participation and progress in the secondary curriculum.

Issue 5: Decline of Career-Technical Education and the School-to-Careers Movement

IDEA 1997 promotes access to the general education curriculum, which includes general vocational-technical education. Educators and parents are concerned about the declining availability of career-vocational education and school-to-work program options (AYPF, 2002; Kazis & Pennington, 1999; Lynch, 1998). A shift in political support for the school-to-career movement has been attributed to (a) the model's complexity and ambition and (b) the isolation of the school-to-career movement from the standards-driven reform movement in schools. Although the school-to-career model also strives for high expectations and academic standards, the two movements evolved separately and school-to-career reforms were kept separate from standards-based reforms in most states (Kazis & Pennington, 1999).

According to the California Coalition for Construction in the Classroom (Kollars, 2002), the state of vocational education is in decline. Across California the demise of vocational education has come about because schools were being pressured to do a better job of preparing students for college (Kollars, 2002). However, educational leaders in California and many other states are reconsidering the need for more options for secondary youths. There is a renewed commitment between career education supporters and standards-based education proponents to examine the appropriate role of career and community-based education in the K–12 curriculum and the preparation of youths for transition to postsecondary settings.

Issue 6: Role of IEP and Transition Teams in Decisions About Student Participation in Assessments

The IEP defines the extent of a student's participation in the general education curriculum and in standardized assessments. State data reveal that as a result of tensions between state and local control, there are wide variations in the form of the IEP and therefore great difficulty in collecting data on how IEP teams make decisions about students' participation in standardized assessments (Kochhar, 1999). Thurlow, Thompson, and Johnson (see Chapter 6) reviewed IEP forms for all 50 states and found that transition plans were often separate from the educational goals section, thus compounding the confusion that teachers have in reconciling academic program standards to the transition process. Furthermore, several states reported that school personnel receive inadequate preparation to facilitate participation in standardized assessments

and accommodations that students need to progress in the general education curriculum, achieve IEP goals, and graduate with a standard diploma (AED, 1999).

Issue 7. New Myths Arising from Confusion About Transition Requirements

Over the past two decades, efforts to implement the federal transition requirements have been impeded by confusion and uncertainty about what is expected. As a result, progress in implementing transition has ranged from minimal compliance to outright neglect of the mandate. Minimal technical compliance with IDEA has not resulted in sufficient effectiveness in programming to improve postsecondary outcomes for youths. A unified vision of middle school and secondary school transition planning and postschool outcomes is needed (Clark & Kolstoe, 1995; Grigal, Test, Beattie, & Wood, 1997; National Council on Disability, 2000; Thompson, Fulk, & Piercy, 2000; Wehman, 1998).

Educators are asking new questions about the relationship between transition and standards-based education. Is transition supposed to fit into the standards-based reform movement, or do standards-based educational practices fit within the broader career development and transition framework for students with disabilities? To what extent do schools have the responsibility for preparing youths for careers if they are not bound for postsecondary education after graduation? How can transition be operationalized for students who are in inclusive middle school or secondary school classrooms?

A recent Peer Information Sheet published by the Federation for Children with Special Needs, Inc. (FCSN, 1999) provides an example of misperception about the role of transition for youths with disabilities. According to FCSN, while the concept of transition for students with disabilities is a positive one, transition practices can limit opportunities to achieve high standards set for students and limit the participation of students with disabilities in the general education curriculum and standards. The FCSN paper reflects additional misperceptions about transition in the following claims:

1. Many high school students with disabilities are not included in the typical school experience such as regular classes, extracurricular activities, and graduation planning, which can help them develop goals for the future. Since they spend less time in the school building with their peers and more time in the community, they are prevented from taking a full schedule of regular education classes and are isolated from their non-disabled peers.

2. Traditional transition processes perpetuate the notion that "specially trained and paid personnel" are the only ones who can support students in school, home, or community.

3. The transition system implies a separate post-school planning process in which students with disabilities work with special educators to develop *transition* plans (ITPs), while students without disabilities work with guidance counselors to develop *graduation* plans. With two separate systems, it will become virtually

22

impossible to appropriately include students with disabilities in standards-based education reform. Transition planning has frequently been used to steer students away from the regular education curriculum, toward developing goals which are not focused on meeting high academic standards and graduation with a regular high school diploma.

4. "Transition" must fit into our notion about quality inclusive education for all students. Schools truly committed to appropriately including children with disabilities reject the notion of separate planning strategies for students with disabilities (FCSN, 1999).

The "separate planning strategies" mentioned in the FCSN paper refers to the transition component of the IEP, which is perceived as a separate process between special and general education students. These arguments illustrate a misunderstanding about transition systems and "one-size-fits-all" conceptual thinking. It also demonstrates a lack of awareness about the potential benefits of aligning transition and standards-based educational systems. First, transition research has demonstrated that students in successful transition and school-to-work programs are *highly integrated with their peers without disabilities* in both school and community activities. Second, transition personnel are more likely to be teachers, counselors, or coordinators who serve *both students with and those without disabilities*. Third, the IDEA transition requirements emphasize transition practices that maximize students' integration with their peers without disabilities. A core principle for secondary school students with disabilities is that their *IEPs must reflect the general education curriculum and standards*, as well as participation in standardized assessments.

These misperceptions about transition illustrate the tensions that have arisen between the goals of individualized educational planning and the common standards movement, and the challenge in aligning these systems. As one parent put it, "I don't want to have to choose between general education advantages OR the transition curriculum. I want it all" (personal communication, October 10, 2001). Transition as required by IDEA 1997 represents a spectrum of choices or pathways for youths who have separate and individual needs.

Comparing the Principles of Transition and Standards-Based Education: Blending Standards, Opportunities, and Outcomes

As mentioned earlier, the primary policy tool for improving transition and postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities has been the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and its provisions for appropriate education and protection of individual rights. Standards-based education has introduced a fundamentally different set of policies based on the assumption that common standards that apply to all students are a catalyst for improved educational outcomes, serving as a basis for what should be taught and measuring what students should be expected to know (McDonnel et al., 1997).

Transition services include activities that promote the movement of a student from school to postschool activities, which may include participation in

secondary curriculum, postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. In contrast to the assumption of common performance standards, transition services are guided by the special education framework, which defines the rights of students with disabilities to a free and appropriate education and specifies the responsibilities of school systems to accommodate their individual needs.

Also in contrast to the focus on academic outcomes that are the hallmark of standards-based education, the transition service framework for students with disabilities includes a broad range of educational outcomes. For example, Thurlow, Elliott, and Ysseldyke (1997) and Ysseldyke, Thurlow, Kozleski, and Reschly (1998) clustered outcomes into eight domains, including presence and participation, accommodation and adaptation, physical health, responsibility and independence, contribution and citizenship, academic and functional literacy, personal and social adjustment, and satisfaction. The foundation for transition is laid during the elementary and middle school years and is guided by the broad concept of career development and transition to postsecondary life. Individualized transition planning should begin no later than age 14, and *every year thereafter* the IEP must reflect the individual student's needs—taking into account the student's preferences and interests—and must include a statement of the student's transition service needs in his or her course of study. At age 16, specific transition services are provided to the student and a statement of interagency responsibilities or needed linkages is included. As required by IDEA 1997, the IEPs of students with disabilities attending high school *must reflect the general education curriculum and standards*. Table 1.1 presents a comparison of the principles for transition with those for standards-based education.

Schooling based on common standards and the right of students with disabilities to an individually appropriate education are not inherently inconsistent as policy ideals (Glatthorn & Craft-Tripp, 2000; McDonnel et al., 1997). However, they represent very different ideals, policy strategies, and institutional arrangements that have important implications when applied to the requirements of youth transition. A primary responsibility and challenge for educators under IDEA 1997, ESEA 2001, and the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act of 1998 is to reconcile these assumptions. This means aligning the apparent inconsistencies in curriculum objectives, including alignment of academic and vocational objectives, community-based and classroom-based educational experiences, and responsiveness to the individual needs of students for educational support and accommodations. The following sections discuss the relationship and potential alignment of these two sets of assumptions.

Transition as a Unifying Framework for Blending Standards and Opportunities

As mentioned previously, the IDEA 1997 requirements for access to general education imply that state and local education agencies are responsible and accountable for aligning secondary education and transition systems to improve outcomes for youths. Academic standards, coupled with the develop-

TABLE 1.1
Comparison of the Principles for Transition and Standards-Based Education

Transition Principles	Standards-Based Education Principles
1. The foundations for transition should be laid during the elementary and middle school years, guided by the broad concept of career development.	1. Common standards that apply to all students are a catalyst for improved educational outcomes—serving as a basis for what should be taught and measuring what students should be expected to know (McDonnel et al., 1997).
2. A broad range of educational outcomes for students with disabilities include eight domains: presence and participation, accommodation and adaptation, physical health, responsibility and independence, contribution and citizenship, academic and functional literacy, personal and social adjustment, and satisfaction (Ysseldyke, Krentz, Elliott, Thurlow, Erickson, & Moore, 1998).	
3. The special education framework defines the rights of students with disabilities to a free and appropriate education and specifies the responsibilities of school systems to accommodate their individual needs.	2. Academic and basic literacy outcomes are central, and there are shared curricular values. Accountability is ensured through public reporting of aggregate data on student performance.
4. Students' individual rights are enforced through a set of procedural safeguards. The process relies on a private process—the IEP—centered on the individual student. Transition planning should begin no later than age 14, and students should be encouraged, to the full extent of their capabilities, to assume a maximum amount of responsibility for such planning (Halpern, 1994, p. 117).	3. Content and performance standards can be defined clearly and precisely.
5. Transition means a coordinated set of activities aimed at a specific student outcome (e.g., employment, referral to rehabilitation services, enrollment in college) (IDEA 1997). The coordinated set of activities must (a) be based on the individual student's needs, (b) take into account the student's preferences and interests, and (c) include needed activities in the areas of instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and other postschool adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation.	4. Student performance can be measured validly and reliably. Instruction consistent with the standards can be implemented in individual schools and classrooms.
6. Transition includes activities that promote the movement of a student from school to postschool activities, which may include postsecondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation.	5. Increased standards will yield several results for students with disabilities: a. The number of low-track English, math, and science classes will decrease. b. More students will enroll in college preparatory classes.
7. Beginning when the student is *age 14 and every year thereafter,* the IEP must reflect the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, and must include a statement of the student's transition service needs in his or her courses of study; at age 16, specific transition services must be provided to the student, and a statement of interagency responsibilities or any needed linkages.	c. Tracking will be eliminated. d. Inclusion into general education will be promoted.

25

TABLE 1.1 - Continued

Transition Principles	Standards-Based Education Principles
8. The IEPs of students with disabilities attending high school *must reflect the general education curriculum and standards.*	e. There will be broader options and improved transition outcomes for youth (Jorgensen, 1998).
9. Transition supports the individual's change in status from student to adult roles in the community, including employment, participating in postsecondary education, maintaining a home, becoming appropriately involved in the community, and experiencing satisfactory personal and social relationships.	6. Creating rigorous learning standards within the curriculum will refocus teaching and learning on a common understanding of what schools expect students to know and be able to do.
10. The process of enhancing transition involves the participation and coordination of school programs, adult agency services, and natural supports within the community.	
11. For students whose primary option is to enter the workforce after school, the curriculum is focused on career-vocational and functional skills and includes community-based instruction and vocational assessment.	

ing system of occupational skill standards, which specify the skills necessary in broadly defined occupational clusters, can provide clear goals for all students in regard to the knowledge and skills necessary for postsecondary education or employment.

The construct of *opportunity standards*, introduced earlier, is an important element in a framework for aligning standards-based education and the provision of individualized and appropriate transition planning. Glatthorn and Craft-Tripp (2000) synthesized the various opportunities that a local school needs to provide for helping students achieve the performance standards now required of all students. The opportunities needed by students with disabilities to participate in general education classrooms include a planned program, an IEP, individualized instruction, grouping that does not stigmatize them, a responsive curriculum, adequate time for learning, extended school year programming, positive behavioral interventions, responsiveness to their native language, access to technology, valid assessment, and transition services. These authors concluded that setting educational goals for many students with disabilities means looking beyond academic goals to a broader set of outcomes. As others have suggested previously (Halpern, 1994; Patton & Dunn, 1998; Polloway, Patton, Smith, & Roderique, 1991; Tashie & Jorgensen, 2001), a focus on a broad set of outcomes means that curricula for some students with disabilities, particularly at the secondary level, include nonacademic components and emphasis on the transition to work and other aspects of adult life. A combined standards- and opportunities-based education system is needed that addresses

1. Increased standards for all students included in the general education curriculum.
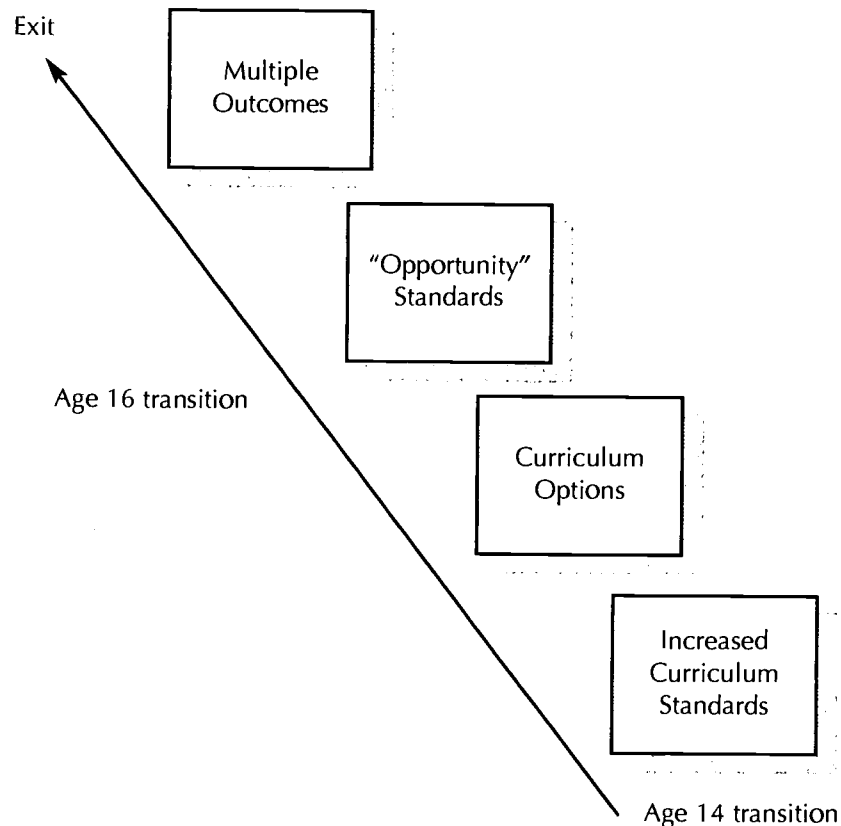
FIGURE 1.1
Aligning the System

2. Curriculum options or pathways that blend academic, career-technical, and community-based learning components.

3. Multiple outcome measures in multiple domains applicable for all students, not just those with disabilities.

4. Appropriate aids and supports (i.e., opportunities) that help students to participate in the general secondary curriculum.

Transition planning, the foundational concept, integrates these four building blocks of individualized education—curriculum standards, outcomes in multiple domains, opportunity standards, and curriculum options (see Figure 1.1). Under IDEA 1997, *transition* is a term used for the systematic passage or "bridge" between school and adult life for students with disabilities. However, many local education agencies express confusion over the interpretation of transition language in the law, viewing transition as redundant paperwork added to the IEP (AED, 1999; Storm, O'Leary, & Williams, 2000).

The systematic, cumulative, and long-range nature of the transition planning and decision-making process is not made explicit in IDEA statutory language and not well implemented in the states. IDEA 1997 amendments redefined transition services as a coordinated *set of activities* aimed at a specific student outcome (e.g., employment, referral to rehabilitation services, enrollment in college)—activities that promote the movement of a student from

school to postschool activities, which may include postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. The coordinated set of activities must (a) be based on the individual student's needs, (b) take into account the student's preferences and interests, and (c) include needed activities in the areas of instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and other postschool adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation. The word *coordinated* is the only reference—and an oblique one—to a systematic approach to transition. Transition viewed as a systematic, individualized process that incorporates a coordinated set of activities:

1. Is a continuous process from age 14, through transition from middle school and through high school.

2. Incorporates a coordination strategy that provides continuity of planning and links each student with a transition coordinator, counselor, or ombudsman.

3. Is a long-range planning and decision-making framework for students and families that addresses a variety of domains of education and life preparation.

4. Addresses curriculum options, including participation in the general education curriculum, career-technical, community-based learning, nonacademic learning activities, and standardized assessments.

5. Considers students' anticipated long-range outcomes.

6. Incorporates related and supportive services (i.e., opportunities) identified by students, parents, and professionals.

7. Incorporates the coordination of appropriate adult service agencies, particularly rehabilitation, health and mental health agencies, and postsecondary institutions.

Transition planning is foundational for the IEP planning process. Long-term transition planning provides an overarching framework that guides the development of the IEP and provides continuity in the process (see Figure 1.2).

 Transition is a framework for decision making about the immediate and long-term future of the student. It is a blueprint for direction setting and for constructing a plan aimed at the high school exit goals that are most appropriate for the individual. The transition plan is vital to accessing and progressing in the secondary education curriculum because it defines specific needs for students at age 14 and specific services at age 16 in regard to the secondary curriculum and associated assessments, related services, and supports. Findings from a study of 35 State Improvement Plans indicate that states are attempting to align secondary standards-based reforms with transition service options (Kochhar, 1999). In their State Improvement Plans, many states have established goals and strategies for expanding secondary career-technical education options and use of community-based instruction in local districts.

Transition Planning/IEP
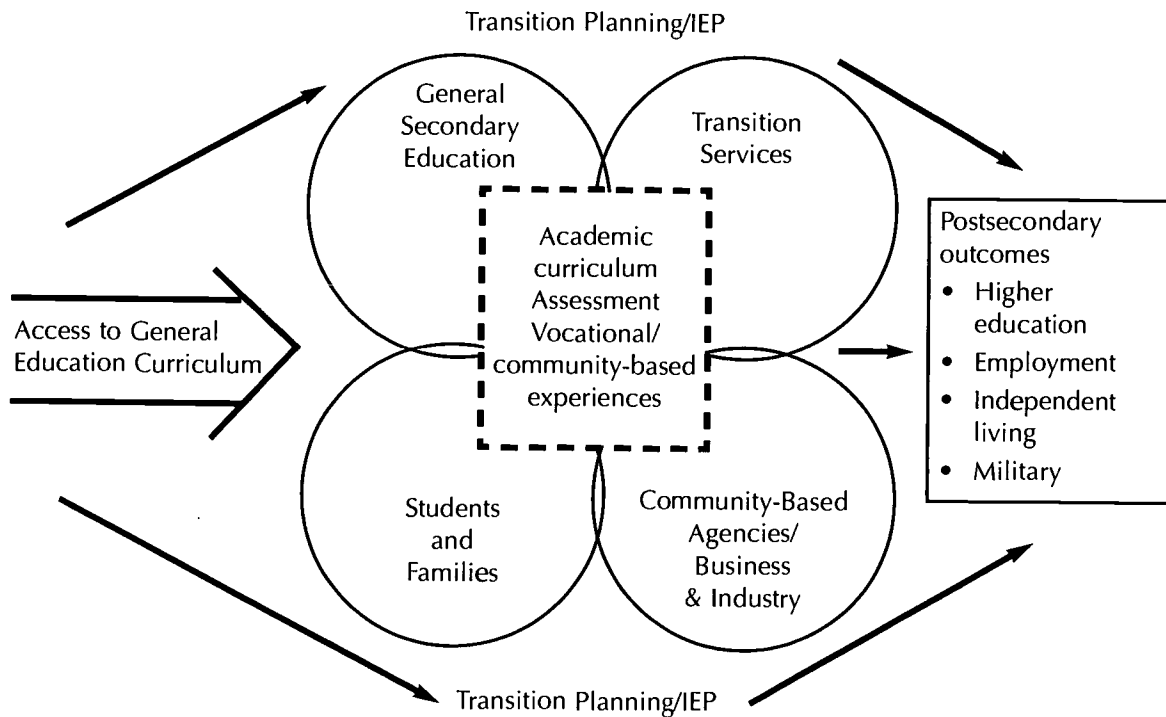
FIGURE 1.2
A Coordinated, Systematic Approach to Transition Planning and the IEP

Conclusion

According to the National Council on Disabilities (2000), what we ask students to learn, how we ask them to learn it, and how they are tested should correspond to the ways in which they will demonstrate proficiency on the job, in lifelong education activities, in their families, and in the community. High schools should position every graduate to successfully begin the next major steps in his or her life, whether going to a university, entering a community college, or beginning a job or career with a future.

This is an era of great experimentation in education and employment preparation that will profoundly affect the lives of youths with disabilities well into this new century. IDEA 1997 promoted access to the general education curriculum, participation in standardized assessments, and transition supports. These requirements hold state and local education agencies accountable for aligning secondary education and transition systems in order to improve outcomes for youths. The principles and goals of standards-based education and individualized transition planning are not mutually exclusive, but their alignment requires the best of our thinking and our commitment.

Transition is not just a program or a project or a set of activities that has a beginning and an end. It is a vision and a goal for unfolding the fullest possible potential of the individual and a systematic framework for planning to fulfill that potential. Investment in effective secondary education and transition

systems that lead to improved postsecondary outcomes for youths is a measure of our nation's commitment to full participation of all youths in the progress of the nation.

References

Academy for Educational Development. (1999). *Synthesis of state needs and barriers to systemic reform in the 1998 Special Education State Improvement Grants*. Washington, DC: Author.

Alabama State Improvement Grant. (1999). Montgomery: Alabama State Department of Education.

American Youth Policy Forum and the Center on Education Policy. (2002). *Twenty-five years of educating children with disabilities*. Washington DC: Author.

Blackorby, J., & Wagner, M. (1996). Longitudinal post-school outcomes of youth with disabilities: Findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Study. *Exceptional Children 62*, 399–413.

Cavanaugh, S. (2002). Exit-exam trend prompts scrutiny of consequences. *Education Week, 22*(1) pp. 1, 18, 19.

Clark, G., & Kolstoe, O. (1995). *Career development and transition education for adolescents with disabilities* (2nd ed.) Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities. (2001). *CCD Education Task Force endorses helping children succeed by fully funding IDEA act*. Washington, DC: Author.

Consortium on Inclusive Schooling Practices. (1998) *Including students with disabilities in accountability systems* (Issue Brief No. 3(2)). Alexandria, VA: Author.

Darling-Hammond, L. (2001, June). *Impact of state policies on the development of a quality teacher workforce*. Keynote speech presented at the National Symposium: Policy and Practice to Ensure High Quality Teachers for Children and Youth with Disabilities, Washington, DC.

Deshler, D., Ellis, E., & Lenz, B. (1996). *Teaching adolescents with learning disabilities* (2nd ed.). Denver: Love.

Education Commission of the States. (2000a). *Designing and implementing standards-based accountability systems*. Denver: Author.

Education Commission of the States. (2000b). *States conducting student competency testing for high school graduation (exit exams)*. Denver: Author.

Eisenman, L. (2000). Characteristics and effects of integrated academic and occupational curricula for students with disabilities: A literature review. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 23*, 105–119.

Eisenman, L., & Wilson, D. (2000). Making the link: Implementing integrated curricula for all. *Journal for Vocational Special Needs Education, 22*(3), 38–48.

Federation for Children with Special Needs, Inc. (1999). *School-to-Work Opportunities Act: A source for quality transition programs*. (PEER Information Brief). Boston: Author.

Glatthorn, A., & Craft-Tripp, M. (2000). *Standards-based learning for students with disabilities*. Larchmont, NY: Eye on Education.

Greene, G., & Kochhar, C. (in press). *Pathways to successful transition for youth with disabilities*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall.

Government Performance and Results Act of 1993. P.L.103-62. U.S. Congress.

Grigal, M., Test, D., Beattie, J., & Wood, W. (1997). An evaluation of transition components of individualized education programs. *Exceptional Children, 63*, 357–372.

Halpern, A. (1994). The transition of youth with disabilities to adult life: A position statement of the Division on Career Development and Transition, the Council for Exceptional Children. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 17*, 115–124.

Halpern, R. (1990) Community-based early intervention. In S. J. Meisels & J. P Shonkoff (Eds.), *Handbook of early childhood intervention* (pp. 469–498). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Hawaii State Improvement Grant. (1999). Honolulu: Hawaii Department of Education.

Healy, S. (2002). *Impact of assessment accommodations on students with disabilities.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, The George Washington University, Washington, DC.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997, P.L. 105-17, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq.

Johnson, D. R., McGrew, K., Bloomberg, L., Bruininks, R. H., & Lin, H. C. (1997). Results of a national follow-up study of young adults with severe disabilities. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 8*, 119–133.

Jorgensen, C. (1998). Restructuring high school for all students: Taking inclusion to the next level. Baltimore: Brookes.

Kazis, R, .& Pennington, H. (1999, June 4). What is next for school-to-career. *Forum Brief* (funded by the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Boston, MA). Boston: Jobs for the Future.

Kochhar, C. (1999). *Synthesis of state needs and barriers to systemic reform in the 1998 Special Education State Improvement Grants.* Washington, DC: Academy for Educational Development.

Kochhar, C., West, L., & Taymans, J. (2000). *Successful inclusion: Practical strategies for a shared responsibility.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall.

Kollars, D. (2002, February 28). Education extra: Back on the job track: Area schools revive, retool career classes. *Sacramento Bee*, p. 1–2.

Langenfeld, K., Thurlow, M., & Scott, D. (1997). *High stakes testing for students: Unanswered questions and implications for students with disabilities* (Synthesis Report No. 26). Minneapolis: National Center on Educational Outcomes.

Lynch, R. (1998, June). Vocational teacher education in U.S. colleges and universities, and its responsiveness to the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1990. *The Quality of Vocational Education.*

Mack, M., & Wiltrout, D. (1999). *Standards-based educational reform: A strategy to improve educational outcomes for all learners.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, National Transition Network.

Manzo, K. (1999). Record number of states commit to NAEP. *2001 Editorial Projects in Education, 19*(6), 19. Available: http://www.edweek.org/info-epe/staff/kmanzo.htm

McDonnel, L. M., McLaughlin, M. J., & Morison, P. (1997). *Educating one and all: Students with disabilities and standards-based reform.* Washington DC: National Academy Press.

National Association of State Boards of Education. (1996). *What will it take? Standards-based education reform for ALL students.* Alexandria, VA: Author.

National Center on Educational Outcomes. (1999a). *1999 state special education outcomes: A report on state activities at the end of the century.* Minneapolis: Author.

National Center on Educational Outcomes. (1999b). *Forum on alternate assessment and "gray area" assessment.* Minneapolis: Author.

National Center on Educational Outcomes. (2000). *IEPs and standards: What they say for students with Disabilities* (Tech. Rep. No. 5). Minneapolis: Author.

National Center on Educational Outcomes. (2002). *Graduation requirements for students with disabilities.* Available: http://www.education.umn.edu/NCEO/

National Center for Education Statistics. (1998). Dropout rates in the United States. Based on data from U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Survey, October* (various years).

National Center for Secondary Education and Transition. (2001). *Current challenges facing the future of secondary education and transition services for youth with disabilities in the United States.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.

National Council on Disability. (2000). *Back to school on civil rights.* Washington, DC: Author.

National Governors Association. (2002). *Graduate exit exams.* Washington, DC: NGA Center for Best Practices.

Olson, J., & Goldstein, A. (1997) *The inclusion of students with disabilities and limited English proficient students in large-scale assessments: A summary of recent progress* (NCES 97-482). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

Oregon Department of Education and the Disability Rights Advocates. (2000). *Do no harm: High stakes testing and students with learning disabilities.* (Oregon Blue Ribbon Panel Report). Salem: Author.

Paige, R. (2002, January 15). *Remarks of Secretary Paige on the President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education, before the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions,* Washington, DC.

Patton, J. R., & Dunn, C. (1998). *Transition from school to young adulthood: Basic concepts and recommended practices.* Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

Polloway, E., Patton, J., Smith, J., & Rodrique, T. (1991). Issues in program design for elementary students with mild retardation: Emphasis on curriculum development. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation, 26,* 142–250.

Riley, R.W. (1997, June 4). Remarks at the bill signing ceremony for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Washington, DC.

Sabornie, E., & DeBettencourt, L. (1997). *Teaching students with mild disabilities at the secondary level.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Storm, J., O'Leary, E., & Williams, J. (2000). *The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 transition requirements: A guide for states, districts, schools, universities and families.* Logan: Utah State University, Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center.

Tashie, C., & Jorgensen, C. (2001). *Transition in an era of education reform.* Durham: University of New Hampshire, Institute on Disability.

Thompson, J., Fulk, B., & Piercy, S. (2000). Do individualized transition plans match the post-school projections of students with learning disabilities and their parents? *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 23,* 3–26.

Thompson, S., & Thurlow, M. (2001). *2001 State Special Education Outcomes: A Report on State Activities at the Beginning of a New Decade* (State Rep. 8). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University, National Center of Educational Outcomes, Institute on Community Integration.

Thurlow, M., Elliott, J., & Ysseldyke, J. (1997). *Testing students with disabilities: Practical strategies for complying with district and state assessments.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Thurlow, M., House, A., Boys, C., Scott, D., & Ysseldyke, J. (2000). *State participation and accommodations policies for students with disabilities: 1999 update* (Synthesis Report No. 33). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.

Thurlow, M., Thompson, J., & Johnson, D. (in press). Traditional and alternate assessments within the transition process and standards-based education. In C. Kochhar-Bryant & D. Bassett (Eds.), *Aligning transition and standards-based education: Issues and strategies.* Arlington, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.

U.S. Department of Education. (1999). *U.S. Department of Education's 1999 performance report and 2001 annual plan, Vol. 1. Department-wide objectives and Vol. 2. Individual programs.* Washington, DC: Author.

U.S. Department of Education. (2000). *Twenty-second annual report to Congress on the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.* Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. Department of Education. (2001). *Twenty-third annual report to Congress on the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.* Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

U.S. Department of Education. (2002). *Strategic plan: 2002–2007.* Washington, DC: Author.

Vaishnav, A. (2002, April 26). One in four juniors still failing the MCAS. *Boston Globe,* p. 1.

Virginia State Improvement Grant. (1999). Richmond: Virginia Department of Education.

Wehman, P. (1998). *Developing transition plans.* Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

Ysseldyke, J., Krentz, J., Elliott, J., Thurlow, M., Erickson, R., & Moore, M. (1998). *Outcomes and indicators reports: NCEO framework for educational accountability.* Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University, National Center on Educational Outcomes, Institute on Community Integration.

Ysseldyke, J., Thurlow, M., Kozleski, E., & Reschly, D. (1998). *Accountability for the results of educating students with disabilities: Assessment conference report on the new assessment provisions of the 1997 Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

CAROL A. KOCHHAR-BRYANT has been Professor of Special Education at the George Washington University for 16 years. She teaches graduate courses in legal issues and public policy in secondary education and transition, systemic change and leadership, and interdisciplinary planning and development. She consults with public school districts, state departments of education, and federal and international agencies. She is widely published in areas of disability policy, career-vocational programming and school-to-work transition for special learners, and interagency service coordination. Dr. Kochhar-Bryant is Past President of the Division on Career Development and Transition of the International Council for Exceptional Children.
E-mail: Kochhar@gwu.edu

DIANE S. BASSETT is a Professor of Special Education at the University of Northern Colorado. She has taught general and special education in elementary, secondary, and postsecondary institutions and in both public and private school. Her primary interests include working on behalf of adolescents and adults with disabilities in the areas of transition, self-determination, advocacy, and educational reform.
E-mail: diane.bassett@unco.edu

Transition and Access to the General Education Curriculum

Michael L. Wehmeyer

Chapter 1 discussed the need to align the principles of transition and transition services with the standards-based reform movement and examined underlying principles in standards-based reform efforts. The 1997 amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) included requirements that took the first steps in aligning the special education system with the standards-based reform movement through what are referred to as the "access to the general curriculum" mandates. Fundamentally, if the field of transition is to continue to impact the lives of young people with disabilities, it will need to realign transition services within the context of the general curriculum. This chapter identifies what is meant by the general curriculum and by gaining access to that curriculum, and then explores how to align transition services with the access mandates.

Access to the General Curriculum

Ensuring that students with disabilities have access to the general curriculum was a key feature of the 1997 amendments to IDEA. On June 20, 1995, in testimony before the U.S. House of Representatives, former Secretary of Education Richard Riley made the following comments with regard to the Department of Education's then draft proposal for the reauthorization of IDEA:

> Our second principle is to improve results for students with disabilities through higher expectations and access to the general curriculum. We know that most children work harder and do better when more is expected of them—whether it be in the classroom, doing their homework, or doing the dishes. Disabled students are no different. When we have high expectations for students with disabilities, most can achieve to challenging standards—and all can achieve more than society has historically expected. However, not all schools presently have high expectations for these students, and not

all schools take responsibility for the academic progress of disabled students.

Our proposal would create an improved IEP process focused on educational results. The new IEP would include meaningful annual objectives for the student. Unless the IEP indicates otherwise, it would focus on access to the general curriculum, in which children with disabilities would have the opportunity to meet the same challenging standards as other students.

Secretary Riley's comments show that the purpose of the "access to the general curriculum" language was to ensure that students with disabilities are included in emerging standards-based reform and accountability systems as a means to raise expectations and ensure access to a challenging curriculum. The 1997 amendments to IDEA, as they were eventually passed by Congress, included statutory and regulatory language pertaining to providing such access. Section 300.347(a)(3) in the IDEA requires that the IEP include:

A statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services to be provided to the child, or on behalf of the child, and a statement of the program modifications or supports for school personnel that will be provided for the child

(i)   to advance appropriately toward attaining the annual goals;

(ii)   to be involved and progress in the general curriculum;

(iii) to be educated and participate with disabled and non-disabled children.

These regulations lead to three questions: What is the *general curriculum?* What constitutes *access* to that curriculum? How do we *achieve* access to the general curriculum for students with disabilities?

What Is the General Curriculum?

The answer to the question "What is the general curriculum?" is both simple and complex. It is complex in that defining *curriculum* is a complex and sometimes difficult process. Sands, Kozleski, and French (1999) summarized the literature in curriculum as referring to the following possible meanings:

- A plan for classes offered by a school;
- Materials used to present information to students;
- The subject matter taught to the students;
- The courses offered in a school;
- The planned experiences of the learners under the guidance of the school. (p. 8)

This is not just an intellectual exercise, however, since how we define curriculum impacts how we interpret the IDEA mandates pertaining to access to the general curriculum. For example, the curriculum can be viewed as only the planned, for-

mal aspect of a student's school experience or, more broadly, as the totality of the student's school experiences, both formal and informal components. Doll (1996) illustrated this distinction, noting that:

> Every school has a planned, formal, acknowledged curriculum, and also an unplanned, informal, or hidden one. The planned curriculum embraces content usually categorized within subjects and subject fields. The unplanned curriculum includes such varied experiences or engagements as advancing oneself inconsiderately in the cafeteria line, learning to like history, protecting one's front teeth from being pushed down hard on drinking fountains, finding new ways to beat the system, and resisting pressure to smoke marijuana. (pp. 14–15)

Does the IDEA requirement for access to the general curriculum refer to both the formal and informal aspects of the curriculum? Might schools meet these requirements by focusing strictly on the informal components of the curriculum? The term *access* means different things to different people. Educators working with students with severe, multiple cognitive and developmental disabilities may think of the term *access* in relation to the inclusion movement and interpret access to the general curriculum as referring to serving students with disabilities in the general classroom. Educators who work with young people with sensory disabilities may think of access more in terms of modifying materials so that students who are blind or have hearing impairments can "access" them (e.g., via braille or closed captioning). The IDEA regulations don't provide adequate detail to help answer such questions about access as one might prefer. These regulations simply define the term *general curriculum* as "the same curriculum as for nondisabled children" (Final Federal Regulations Implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 1999, p. 12592). By defining the "general curriculum" as "the same curriculum as for nondisabled children," Congress kept its definition quite broad, clearly intending for the general curriculum to be locally determined.

Formal or Informal Curriculum? There are several reasons to suggest that the language in the IDEA pertaining to access to the general curriculum refers principally to a student's formal curriculum, but that the Department of Education (supported by IDEA) believes that both formal and informal components are important to achieve excellence in education for students with disabilities. First, in addition to emphasizing access to the general curriculum as a means of encouraging *high expectations* for all students with disabilities, the IDEA 1997 amendments and former Secretary Riley also emphasized measures of *accountability* by aligning the IDEA with state and local education improvement efforts—primarily the standards-based reform movement—and by including students with disabilities in state- and district-wide assessments. State and local standards and assessments derived from such standards typically focus on the formal curriculum presented to students, not the informal aspects of the curriculum.

Second, the IDEA clearly establishes the preference that students with disabilities receive their education in the typical classroom. A primary reason

for including students with disabilities in typical classrooms is that through such opportunities they can experience the benefits of the *informal* curriculum and the myriad experiences needed for social competence and community inclusion. Thus, the preference in the IDEA for including students with disabilities in the typical classroom has as one of its core assumptions the importance of gaining access to the informal curriculum. So, while the access to the general curriculum mandate might be more narrowly interpreted as referring to the formal curriculum, it is clear that in the context of the IDEA mandates for involvement in typical educational settings, *educators need to ensure access to both the formal and informal curriculum.*

While not minimizing the importance of *where* a student receives his or her education, the access to the general curriculum mandates refer principally to the *what* of the student's educational program. One cannot interpret the access mandates, therefore, within the narrow definition of providing students access to the place where the general curriculum is used, but instead must include providing access to the curriculum itself. This is supported by the language in the law itself. Although former Secretary Riley and the IDEA regulations use the term "access to the general curriculum," the statutory language in the IDEA does not. Instead, the law states that educational services, supports, modifications, and goals *should ensure that students progress in the general curriculum.* Just as research has shown, over the years, that a student's presence in the classroom does not guarantee that he or she will be meaningfully included (e.g., part of the social network), the field should also note that simply having access to the general curriculum, where access refers to the equal right to receive educational services through the general curriculum, is likely to be insufficient. Individualized education program (IEP) teams are charged with ensuring *progress* in the general curriculum, not just documenting the presence of the curriculum in a student's educational program. It should be evident that the place in which a student with a disability is most likely to gain access to the general curriculum is, in fact, the general classroom.

Finally, it should be noted that the formal general education curriculum in most school districts is determined by state or local standards linked to the standards-based reform movement. As discussed in Chapter 1, a critical step in standards-based school reform efforts is to align curriculum with standards and benchmarks that are challenging. The access to the general curriculum mandates are clearly intended to ensure that students with disabilities are not left out of standards-based reform efforts. The challenge before us is to ensure that the standards that are written and the curriculum that is aligned with those standards allow all students to show progress and gain benefit to the greatest degree possible. A later section of this chapter returns to this issue.

What Is Meant by Access?

Given that the general curriculum refers to the formal curriculum presented to all students in a given district, what does it mean to provide access to such a curriculum? It would seem apparent to any educator who has examined state or local content or performance standards and assessments driven by such standards, or who is familiar with the general curriculum, that there are standards that some students with disabilities simply will not attain, independent

of high or low expectations. Although they vary widely from state to state, such standards often involve learning complex constructs and applying higher-order cognitive skills to difficult content. In some cases, the complexity of the skills required and the difficulty of the content may preclude some students with disabilities from making progress on a particular performance standard. Is it the intent of the federal law that the educational program of a student with disabilities is to be determined in a top-down manner, starting and ending *only* with the general curriculum? For a variety of reasons, the obvious answer to this must be no. First, imposing an externally mandated curriculum on students with disabilities is inconsistent with IDEA requirements for an individualized education program for students with disabilities. Individualization is a hallmark of disability policy in the United States in general (Turnbull & Turnbull, 2000), and a focus on educational supports and services to meet each student's unique educational needs is at the core of IDEA and special education practice.

A student's educational program, then, is intended by federal law to be individually determined based on unique learning needs *as well as* being driven by the locally determined general curriculum. The IDEA regulations address this by noting that IDEA

> requires a description of how a child's involvement in the general curriculum is a statutory requirement and cannot be deleted. The requirement is important because it provides the basis for determining what accommodations the child needs in order to participate in the general curriculum *to the maximum extent appropriate* [emphasis added]. The individualization of the IEP process, together with the new requirements related to the general curriculum should ensure that such involvement and progress is "to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of the child." (Final Regulations Implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 1999, p. 12592)

It is clear that the IDEA intends that an appropriate educational program for students with disabilities will involve the design of an IEP that is derived from the general curriculum to the maximum extent appropriate. What is determined as "appropriate" is, basically, an IEP team decision. Emphasis should be placed as much on the word *maximum* as *appropriate*. The clear mandate is to maximize the student's interaction with the general curriculum.

Gaining Access to the General Curriculum for All Students with Disabilities

What needs to be accomplished to enable school districts and educators to achieve the intent of the IDEA mandates to raise expectations by ensuring that students with disabilities progress in a challenging general curriculum? Wehmeyer, Sands, Knowlton, and Kozleski (2002) identified key components to ensure that students with mental retardation progress in the general cur-

TABLE 2.1
Steps to Gaining Access to the General Curriculum

Action Step	Description
Standard Setting and Curriculum Design	Standards are written as open-ended and the curriculum is planned and designed using principles of universal design that ensure that all students can show progress.
Individualized Educational Planning	The individualized planning process ensures that a student's educational program is designed based on the general curriculum, taking into account unique student learning needs.
School-Wide Materials and Instruction	There is school-wide use of universally designed curricular materials and high-quality instructional methods and strategies that challenge all students.
Partial School and Group Instruction	Groups of students who need more intensive instruction are targeted, and building and classroom instructional decision-making activities focus at the lesson, unit, and classroom levels to ensure that students can progress in the curriculum.
Individualized Interventions	Additional curricular content and instructional strategies are designed and implemented to ensure progress for students with learning needs not met by school-wide efforts or partial school efforts.

riculum, and these components, summarized in Table 2.1, can be generalized to ensure that all students progress.

Figure 2.1 summarizes the key elements of this approach, which involves three levels of action (i.e., planning, curriculum, instruction), three levels of the scope of instruction (i.e., whole school, partial school, individualized), and three levels of curriculum modifications (i.e., adaptation, augmentation, alteration). A brief description of each of the five steps to access follows.

Curriculum Planning and Design

The standards-based reform movement emphasizes the establishment of high standards and the alignment of curriculum and assessment with those standards. Thus, ensuring access to the general curriculum for students with disabilities must begin with the curriculum planning and design process and the development of state and local standards. If students with widely varying skills, backgrounds, knowledge, and customs are to progress in the general curriculum, the standards upon which the curriculum is based, as well as the curriculum itself, must embody the principles of universal design (discussed later) and be written to be open-ended and inclusive, not close-ended. The terms *open-* and *close-ended* refer to "the amount of specificity and direction provided by curriculum standards, benchmarks, goals or objectives at both the building and classroom levels" (Wehmeyer et al., 2002). Close-ended standards are specific and require narrowly defined outcomes or performance indicators, such as "writing a five-page paper on the history of the United States," so that students
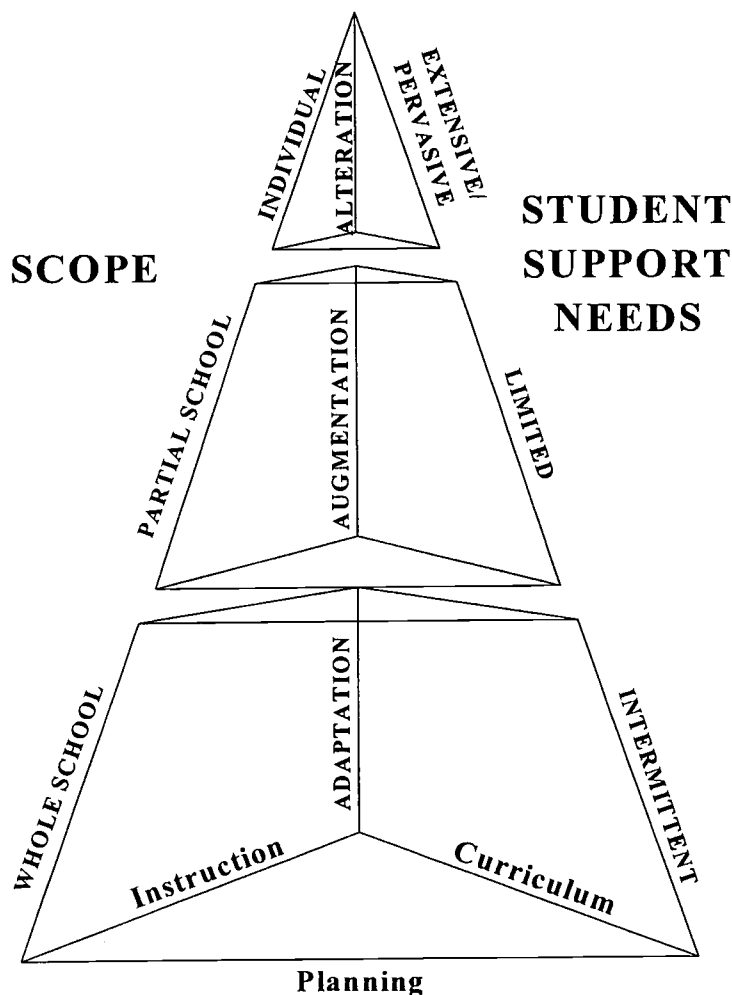
FIGURE 2.1
Multilevel Focus for Gaining Access to the General Curriculum
Note. From Wehmeyer, M. L., Sands, D. J., Knowlton, H. E., & Kozleski, E. B. (2002). *Teaching Students with Mental Retardation: Access to the General Curriculum.* Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes. Reprinted by permission.

who cannot write will be unable to meet the requirement even if they could show evidence of the knowledge about U.S. history being assessed. If, on the other hand, the standard were written so that students could demonstrate knowledge of the history of the United States using other means of expression, it would be an open-ended curriculum target. Open-ended standards do not restrict the ways in which students exhibit knowledge or skills; they focus more on the expectations that students will interact with the content, ask questions, manipulate materials, make observations, and then communicate their knowledge in a variety of ways (e.g., orally, through videotape, through writing and directing a play). Research suggests that open-ended designs allow for greater flexibility as to what topics will be addressed in the classroom and when and how those topics will be addressed (Stainback, Stainback, Stefanich, & Alper, 1996). They are more consistent with universally designed curriculum, ensur-

ing that more students, including students with disabilities, can show progress in the curriculum (Wehmeyer et al., 2002).

Universal Design in Education. One way to ensure progress is to design curricular materials with principles of universal design in mind, as defined by researchers at the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST, 1998–1999):

> The basic premise of universal design for learning is that a curriculum should include alternatives to make it accessible and applicable to students, teachers, and parents with different backgrounds, learning styles, abilities, and disabilities in widely varied learning contexts. The "universal" in universal design does not imply one optimal solution for everyone, but rather it underscores the need for inherently flexible, customizable content, assignments, and activities.

Orkwis and McLane (1998) defined *universal design for learning* as "the design of instructional materials and activities that allows the learning goals to be achievable by individuals with wide differences in their abilities to see, hear, speak, move, read, write, understand English, attend, organize, engage, and remember" (p. 9). The onus is on curriculum planners and designers to employ principles of universal design to ensure that students with a wide range of capacities can access, advance, and succeed in the curriculum.

The principle of universal design emerged initially from architecture and was introduced to ensure that members of certain groups, such as people with disabilities or people who are elderly, have access to the environment. As applied to the built environment, the principle of universal design suggests, quite simply, that all buildings and environments should be accessible to all people (Moon, Hart, Komissar, & Friedlander, 1995). Thus, buildings are designed with adequate ramps, wide enough doors, or accessible restrooms, and products are designed with simple controls and clearly understandable uses. Such application has the side benefit of making the environment or product more accessible to a wide array of people and, in some cases, just plain easier to use. This principle was subsequently applied to the design and development of consumer products and assistive devices with the intent that such products and devices should be accessible to all people.

Given the emphasis of universal design principles on gaining access to environments and products, it seems logical that the same principle be applied to assist in understanding how to gain access to curriculum. Researchers at CAST suggested three essential qualities of universal design for learning: The curriculum is designed to provide (1) multiple representations of content, (2) multiple options for expression and control, and (3) multiple options for engagement and motivation.

1. *Curriculum provides multiple means of representation.* Researchers at CAST (1998–1999) suggested that "universally designed materials accommodate this diversity through alternative representations of key information. Students with different preferences and needs can either select the representational medium most suitable for them, or gather information from a

variety of representational media simultaneously." World Wide Web pages designed to be accessible present an example of using multiple means of representation. One of the benefits of the WWW over traditional mediums is the capacity to use graphic images in a variety of ways, from icons to hyperlinked pictures to streamed video. However, for a person who is blind or visually impaired who is using a text reader to access the site, graphic depictions may make the site and the information contained therein inaccessible. As an alternative, accessible Web sites include text descriptions of images and pictures. Similarly, the design of curricular materials should include multiple representations of important topics, features, or points. Such multiple representations include a variety of methods of presentation of the material based on learner needs and characteristics. Students with mental retardation, for example, need print-based information presented with graphic depictions, free from unnecessary clutter and with key information repeated or highlighted.

2. *Curriculum provides multiple means of expression.* CAST researchers noted that the dominant means of expression used in schools has been written expression. However, there are a variety of student responses that could indicate progress, including "artwork, photography, drama, music, animation, and video" (CAST, 1998–1999), that would enable students to express their ideas and their knowledge. Once again, technology promises to provide avenues for expression that have heretofore been unavailable.

3. *Curriculum provides multiple means of engagement.* Student engagement in learning has long been an indicator of motivation in the classroom. By the utilization of multiple representation and presentation modes—particularly those that involve digital representation of knowledge that are graphically based and incorporate video, audio, and other multimedia components—student engagement, and therefore student motivation, can be enhanced. Universally designed curriculum takes into account individual student interests and preferences and individualizes representation, presentation, and response aspects of the curriculum delivery accordingly. Current technologies allow that level of individualization and thus provide greater flexibility in the ways students can engage in learning (CAST, 1998–1999).

Based on Bowe's (2000) examination of the principles of universal design as applied to education, Lance and Wehmeyer (2001) developed a list of principles for use in evaluating the degree to which instructional materials incorporate principles of universal design (see Table 2.2).

Individualized Educational Planning

The education of students with disabilities has always emphasized the importance of individualized planning, a value that should not be abandoned when focusing on the general curriculum. Figure 2.2 (Wehmeyer, Lattin, & Agran, 2001) presents a decision-making model to ensure that IEP teams begin educational planning with knowledge of the general curriculum (i.e., standards and curriculum) for students who are the same age and grade level as the student

TABLE 2.2
Principles of Universal Design Applied to Education

Principle	Explanation
Equitable Use	Materials can be used by students who speak various languages, address a variety of levels in cognitive taxonomies, provide alternatives that appear equivalent and, thus, do not stigmatize students.
Flexible Use	Materials provide multiple means of representation, presentation and student expression.
Simple and Intuitive Use	Materials are easy to use and avoid unnecessary complexity, directions clear and concise, examples provided.
Perceptible Information	Materials communicate needed information to user independent of ambient conditions or users sensory abilities, essential information highlighted and redundancy included.
Tolerance for Error	Students have ample time to respond, are provided feedback, can undue previous responses, can monitor progress, and are provided adequate practice time.
Low Physical and Cognitive Effort	Materials present information in chunks that can be completed in a reasonable time frame.

Note. From Lance, D., & Wehmeyer, M. L. (2001). *Universal Design Checklist: Pilot Version.* Lawrence: University of Kansas. Reprinted by permission.

for whom the IEP is being designed, as well as information about unique student learning needs (based on input from multiple stakeholders and assessment sources). It may be that some students can progress in portions of the general curriculum without accommodations or curriculum modifications, and therefore that portion of the general curriculum will be the "most appropriate" formal curriculum. It is likely, however, that most students with disabilities will need some accommodations or modifications. To achieve that, the IEP team is first encouraged to consider how assistive technology can accommodate for student limitations and can enable the student to progress without curriculum modifications.

Once assistive technology has been considered, teams consider three levels of curriculum modifications. The first is *curriculum adaptation,* which refers to efforts to adapt the curriculum's presentation and representation or the student's engagement with the curriculum (as discussed previously). A second level of modification is *curriculum augmentation,* whereby additional content is added to the curriculum to enable students to progress. Such efforts typically include teaching students additional learning-to-learn or self-regulation strategies that, in turn, enable them to progress more effectively in the curriculum. Neither of these levels of curriculum modification changes the general curriculum *content.* The third level, *curriculum alteration,* does change the general curriculum to add content specific to students' needs, which might include traditional functional skills or other skills not included in the general curriculum. For many students with disabilities, the third level of curriculum modification is where planning begins, but if students are to benefit from and
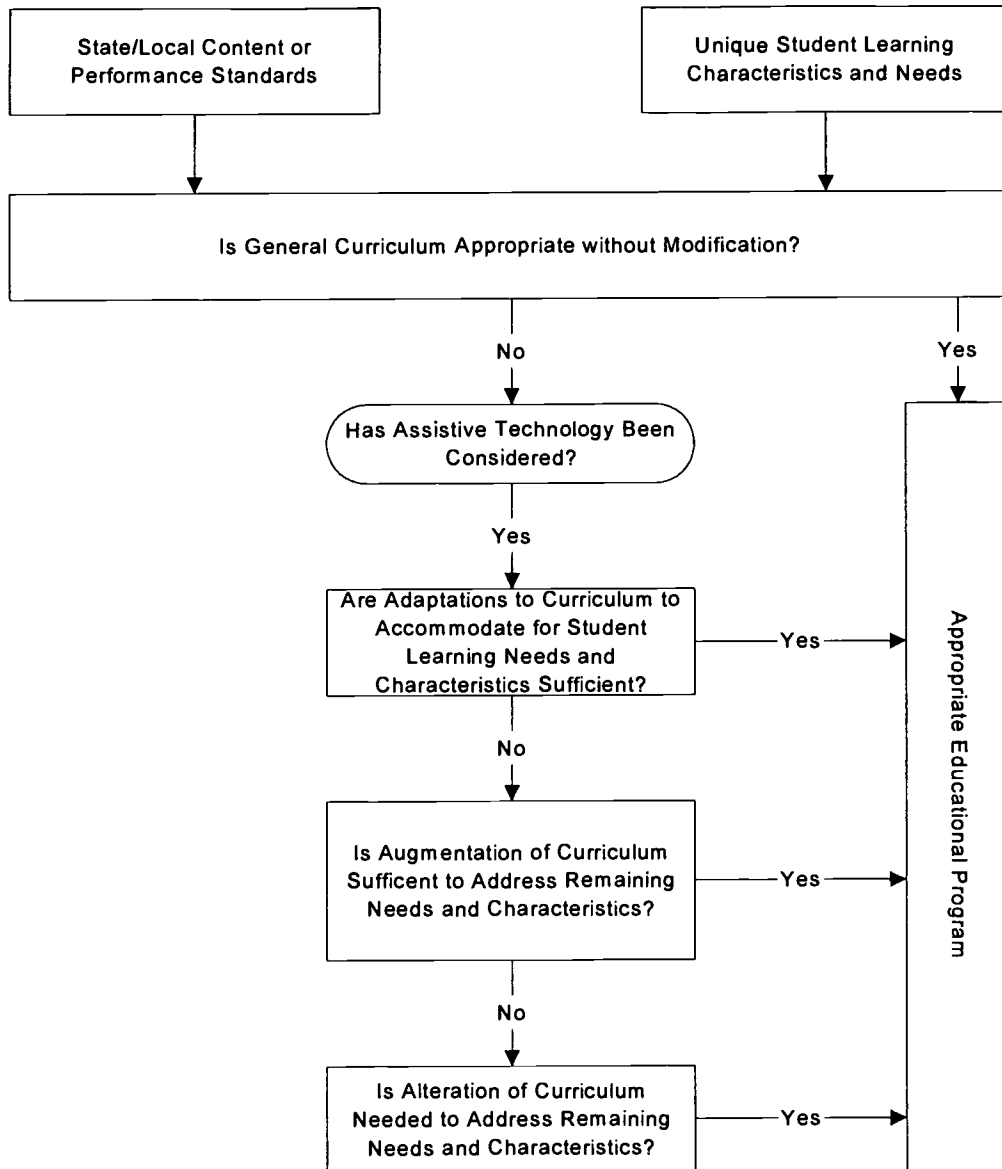
```
┌─────────────────────────┐                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
│    State/Local Content or │                    │   Unique Student Learning │
│   Performance Standards  │                    │  Characteristics and Needs │
└─────────────────────────┘                    └─────────────────────────┘
            │                                                │
            ▼                                                ▼
┌───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│        Is General Curriculum Appropriate without Modification?          │
└───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                        │                                    │
                       No                                   Yes
                        ▼                                    ▼
            ┌───────────────────────┐          ┌─────────────────────────────┐
            │ Has Assistive Technology Been │    │                             │
            │       Considered?     │          │                             │
            └───────────────────────┘          │    Appropriate Educational   │
                        │                       │           Program           │
                       Yes                      │                             │
                        ▼                       │                             │
            ┌───────────────────────┐           │                             │
            │ Are Adaptations to Curriculum to │ │                             │
            │   Accommodate for Student │       │                             │
            │     Learning Needs and │──Yes──►  │                             │
            │ Characteristics Sufficient? │     │                             │
            └───────────────────────┘           │                             │
                        │                       │                             │
                       No                       │                             │
                        ▼                       │                             │
            ┌───────────────────────┐           │                             │
            │  Is Augmentation of Curriculum │  │                             │
            │  Sufficent to Address Remaining │──Yes──►                        │
            │  Needs and Characteristics? │     │                             │
            └───────────────────────┘           │                             │
                        │                       │                             │
                       No                       │                             │
                        ▼                       │                             │
            ┌───────────────────────┐           │                             │
            │   Is Alteration of Curriculum │   │                             │
            │  Needed to Address Remaining │──Yes──►                           │
            │  Needs and Characteristics? │     │                             │
            └───────────────────────┘           └─────────────────────────────┘
```

FIGURE 2.2
An Individualized Education Planning Process Incorporating Both the General Curriculum and Unique Student Needs
Note. From Wehmeyer, M. L., Lattin, D. L., & Agran, M. 2001. Access to the General Education Curriculum for Students with Mental Retardation. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, 36*(4). Reprinted by permission.

progress maximally in the general curriculum, IEP teams need to consider accommodations and curriculum adaptations and augmentations before considering alternative curricula. If the general curriculum is broad enough to cover functional areas, that will limit the need to move to an alternative curriculum.

School-Wide Materials and Instruction. The 1997 amendments to the IDEA emphasized school-wide interventions to provide greater access for all stu-

dents. School-wide interventions are those that are implemented throughout the school campus. Such interventions, when implemented, have the effect of minimizing the need for more individualized interventions. For example, if all students in a school receive instruction using materials designed with principles of universal design in mind, there will not be a need to make individualized adaptations for students with disabilities and all students will benefit from using the materials. The same is true for implementing empirically validated, high-quality instructional strategies. When this happens, all students benefit.

Partial School or Group Instruction. Even when school-wide efforts are in place, there will be students who do not progress without additional supports. The next level of intervention is at the group level, where more targeted interventions are designed and implemented for smaller groups of students. This includes classroom-level instructional decisions that focus on lesson and unit design, as well as specific learning experiences for groups of students, so that all students in the class will progress. To adhere to school behavior rules, for example, ninth-grade students who recently transitioned to high school might need specific opportunities to learn what is expected of them when going from class to class.

Individualized Interventions. For a small group of students, there will be a need to design highly individualized and intensive interventions to enable them to succeed. This is also the group that is likely to need alternative curriculum options. However, these students should also be involved in school-wide interventions and engaged in learning activities driven by the general curriculum.

Transition and Access to the General Curriculum

The previous discussion was not focused exclusively on transition issues because if we are to align transition services with standards-based reform, we must begin with the general curriculum, not just with transition services. To do so, we need to ensure that the skills and abilities emphasized in transition services are, in fact, incorporated into the general curriculum. As such, state and local standards must include transition-related activities that are applicable for all students and not just students with disabilities. Currently, there is considerable variability in the degree to which transition is emphasized in state standards and, perhaps more important, in testing that is aligned with those standards. For example, Figure 2.3 provides a standard from the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (Texas Educational Agency, 2002) related to high school career orientation. It is clear that the "general curriculum" in this instance includes transition-related standards and, as such, transition-related activities can be accomplished easily within the context of the general curriculum.

In addition, there are a number of school reform models that emphasize transition-related components for all students. For example, the U.S. Department of Education's New American High Schools initiative identifies high schools that have undergone reform efforts that ensured student access to

§127.11. Implementation of Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Career Orientation, High School

(a)   General requirements for students in Grades 9–10.

(b)   Introduction. Achieving proficiency in decision making and problem solving is an essential skill for career planning and lifelong learning. Students use self-knowledge, educational, and career information to set and achieve realistic career and educational goals.

(c)   Knowledge and skills.

(1) The student analyzes the effect of personal interest and aptitudes upon educational and career planning. The student is expected to:

(A) complete a formal career interest and aptitude assessment;

(B) match interests and aptitudes to career opportunities; and

(C) begin a personal career portfolio by conducting an in-depth study of the varied aspects of occupations related to the student's interest areas.

(2) The student knows how to locate, analyze, and apply career information. The student is expected to:

(A) access career information using print and on-line resources to complete an educational and/or training plan for a career pathway;

(B) access career information using interviews with business and industry representatives to create a career resource file;

(C) complete career critiques gained through a variety of experiences (for example, shadowing, career study tours, guest speakers, career fairs, videos, CD-ROM, Internet, and simulated work activities); and

(D) use career information to apply entrepreneurial skills by developing a small business plan.

(3) The student knows that many skills are common to a variety of careers and that these skills can be transferred from one career opportunity to another. The student is expected to:

(A) compile a list of transferable skills with a corresponding list of possible career options matching the student's interests and aptitudes to be placed in the personal career portfolio; and

(B) create a presentation portraying transferable skills within the student's interest area.

(4) The student knows the process used to locate and secure employment. The student is expected to:

(A) prepare a Venn diagram comparing and contrasting employment opportunities of our free enterprise system and the economic systems of the international job market;

(B) develop a chart classifying employment opportunities based on educational and training requirements of careers in the student's interest area;

(C) complete a job application form for an employment opportunity in the student's interest area;

(D) develop a resume for an employment opportunity in the student's interest area; and

(E) role-play appropriate interviewing techniques for an employment opportunity in the student's interest area.

continues

FIGURE 2.3
Career Orientation Standards from Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills
Note. From Texas Educational Agency. (2002). Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Career Orientation. *Tex. Admin. Code,* Tit. 19, p. II, Chap. 127 (West 2002). Reprinted by permission.

(5) The student recognizes the impact of career choice on personal lifestyle. The student is expected to:
  (A) prepare a personal budget reflecting lifestyle desires;
  (B) use print or on-line information to determine salaries of at least three career choices in the student's interest area with varying education requirements (for example, no high school diploma, high school diploma, and postsecondary training); and
  (C) select the career most closely matching the student's personal lifestyle budget.

(6) The student knows the process of career planning. The student is expected to:
  (A) list and explain the steps in the decision-making process;
  (B) prepare an oral or written plan describing the specific factors considered in the decision-making process used to solve a simulated career problem;
  (C) identify high school courses related to specific career choices in the student's interest area;
  (D) select high school courses and experiences to develop a graduation plan that leads to a specific career choice in the student's interest area;
  (E) list and explain educational and/or training alternatives after high school for a career choice within the student's interest area; and
  (F) prepare an educational and career plan for an occupation within the student's interest area that begins with entry into high school and continues through a post-secondary educational and/or training program and place this information in the personal career portfolio.

(7) The student knows the importance of productive work habits and attitudes. The student is expected to:
  (A) conduct interviews with a minimum of two employers to determine the importance of work ethics such as dependability, promptness, getting along with others, and honesty;
  (B) list characteristics of an effective team member;
  (C) work on a team to accomplish an assigned task and complete an "effective team member" profile to place in the personal career portfolio; and
  (D) write job scenarios demonstrating positive and negative employee/customer relations.

FIGURE 2.3 - *Continued*

challenging standards and curriculum while also preparing students for career and adulthood by ensuring that they have opportunities to

- Achieve high levels of academic and technical skills.
- Prepare for college and careers.
- Learn in the context of a career major or other career interest.
- Learn by doing—in classrooms, workplaces, or community service.
- Work with teachers in small schools-within-schools.
- Receive extra support from adult mentors.
- Access a wide range of information on careers and postsecondary education and training.
- Use technology to enhance learning.

- Benefit from strong links between high schools and postsecondary institutions.

When transition is an objective for all students in school reform, students with disabilities are better able to access and progress in the general curriculum.

Next Steps in Transition and Access

There are several barriers to addressing transition through the general curriculum that will need to be removed. Perhaps the most significant barrier is the narrowing of the general curriculum that may result from the linkage of high-stakes testing to the curriculum. This topic is discussed elsewhere in this book, but it is worth noting that because most tests reference core academic content areas only, there is the danger that transition and other topics that are represented in the general curriculum, but not on the test, will be ignored. In addition, although many states have standards that address transition-related outcomes, such as the standard identified in Texas, there are other states for which standards are only narrowly defined, again primarily in core academic content areas. It is always the case that students with disabilities can receive transition-related services and instruction via an alternative curriculum that is outside the general curriculum. However, it would be better for students with disabilities if all students had a transition focus in their educational program. It is important that transition specialists and special educators become active in ensuring that standards are open-ended and written so that all students can show progress, and that these standards and the general curriculum derived from them include transition-related activities for all students.

References

Bowe, F. (2000). *Universal design in education: Teaching nontraditional students.* Westport, CT: Greenwood.

Center for Applied Special Technology. (1998–1999). The National Center on Accessing the General Curriculum. Available: http://www.cast.org/initiatives/nationalcenter.html

Doll, R. C. (1996). *Curriculum improvement: Decision making and process* (9th ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Final Federal Regulations Implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Fed. Reg. (Mar. 12, 1999), 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.552(e), pp. 12592, *et. seq.*

Lance, D., & Wehmeyer, M. L. (2001). *Universal design checklist: Pilot version.* Lawrence: University of Kansas, Beach Center on Disability.

Moon, M. S., Hart, D., Komissar, C., & Friedlander, R. (1995). Making sports and recreation activities accessible: Assistive technology and other accommodation strategies. In K. F. Flippo, K. J. Inge, & M. Barcus (Eds.), *Assistive technology: A resource for school, work, and community* (pp. 223–244). Baltimore: Brookes.

Orkwis, R., & McLane, K. (1998, Fall). *A curriculum every student can use: Design principles for student access* ([ERIC/OSEP Topical Brief). Arlington, VA: Council for Exceptional Children. No. ED 423654.

Riley, R. (1995). *Secretary of Education, U.S. Department of Education: Testimony in Hearings Before the Committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities Subcommittee on*

Early Childhood, Youth and Families, House of Representatives, 104th Congress (1995). Available: http://www.ed.gov/speeches/06-1995/idea-1.html

Sands, D. J., Kozleski, E., & French, N. (1999). *Inclusive education in the 21st century.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Stainback, W., Stainback, S., Stefanich, G., & Alper, S. (1996). Learning in inclusive classrooms: What about the curriculum? In S. Stainback & W. Stainback (Eds.), *Inclusion: A guide for educators* (pp. 209–219). Baltimore: Brookes.

Texas Educational Agency, Department of Student Assessment. (2002). Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for Career Orientation. Tex. Admin. Code, Tit. 19, Pt. 2, Chap. 127.

Turnbull, H. R., & Turnbull, A. (2000). *Free appropriate public education: The law and children with disabilities* (6th ed.). Denver: Love.

Wehmeyer, M. L., Lattin, D. L., & Agran, M. (2001). Access to the general curriculum for students with mental retardation. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities, 36*(4).

Wehmeyer, M. L., Sands, D. J., Knowlton, H. E., & Kozleski, E. B. (2002). *Teaching students with mental retardation: Access to the general curriculum.* Baltimore: Brookes.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

MICHAEL L. WEHMEYER is Associate Professor, Department of Special Education, Director, Kansas University Center on Developmental Disabilities, and Associate Director, Beach Center on Disabilities, all at the University of Kansas. His research is in the areas of self-determination, access to the general curriculum for students with severe disabilities, and technology use and intellectual disability.
E-mail: wehmeyer@ku.edu.

3

Standards, Transition, Postsecondary Goals, and the Individualized Education Program: One State's Efforts at Integration

Patricia Longo

The current educational reform efforts that embody standards and accountability for all children poses several challenges for those implementing special education. The contradictions between uniform standards and individualized planning for educational services are highlighted in the process of planning for transition. (Hargreaves, Earl, & Ryan, 1996). Two major initiatives—increased student achievement through standards-based education and better preparation of students for productive adult life—have remained separate and not always equal in value. Moreover, high schools have essentially remained unchanged since the turn of the century (see Cuban, 1984, Goodard, 1984, & Metz, 1988, as cited in Hargreave et al., 1996). According to Cobb and Johnson (1997), little interaction has existed to date between the Transition Systems Change Initiatives and other national efforts of school reform such as Goals 2000 and School-to-Work. If this interaction has not occurred at the national and state levels, it is unlikely that practical applications of it have developed at the local level. Given this lack of integration, there are several challenges for implementing appropriate transition services for youths with disabilities.

The recent focus on accountability for student academic achievement is significantly impacting the time teachers have available to attend to students' future planning needs. They are primarily focused on helping students pass

high school classes and preparing them for high-stakes testing rather than integrating curricula (Ahearn, 2000). How is it possible for teachers to ensure that students demonstrate progress against content standard skills while also . assisting with relevant future planning?

The individualized education program (IEP), in many cases, addresses transition planning as an addendum to the overall planning document. Services are described in vague terms with little meaningful communication, much less collaboration, among schools and community agencies. Learning objectives that might support positive transition outcomes are often abandoned for goals and objectives rooted in the academic arena. Connections between academic and transition outcomes are being lost within the IEP document itself (McAlonan & Longo, 1996). Teachers, parents, and students alike are not able to discern the relationship between a focus on schooling and a focus on the future beyond school (Storms, O'Leary, & Williams, 2000). How can the IEP become a document that is cohesive in planning for both academic and future success?

Curriculum at the high school level continues to be fragmented by disciplines as standards are aligned solely through content classes rather than infused throughout the school experience. State and district standards documents are often voluminous, yet little real alignment has occurred between standards and curriculum. According to Schmoker and Manzano (1999), the standards movement will endure only if we rein in the tendencies to develop extensive state and professional standards documents that result in chaos for teachers. In addition, connections between standards and curriculum have not been well defined. Special education teachers are conducting parallel content classes or acting as tutors in general education classes. How can IEP goals and objectives be aligned with priority standards to assist in making curriculum more relevant and therefore useful to students as they transition to life after school?

This chapter examines these issues and questions and discusses the need for a cohesive and integrated IEP formulated with a clear relationship to accountability and curriculum at the secondary level. The IEP as a curriculum guide and as a body of evidence is examined as it has been integrated in Colorado. The chapter reviews historical factors that have resulted in a fragmented system, explores the relationship of transition skills to academic skills, proposes a possible process for determining IEP goals and objectives that ensure success in standards-based curricula for students receiving special education services, and provides practical examples of alternative demonstrations of achievement. Such goals and demonstrations can assist students in preparing and planning for successful participation in the general education curriculum as well as preparing for transition. It is hoped that teachers will use some of the suggestions and examples as they engage in the conversation of school reform. Without the simultaneous reform of general education at the secondary level and inclusion of students with special education needs, successful transitioning will remain separate from the purpose of school.

Historical Perspective on Reform

Accountability within the educational system is not another theory, program, or fad. It stems from decades of social and political change that have placed economic pressures upon public education to improve standards and outcomes for children. In proposing changes to the very foundation of special education, the IEP, it is helpful to examine the common perspective that has brought the reform of public education and special education to its current place. Both the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA 1997), which mandated transition services for all youths receiving special education services, and standards-based reform legislation (e.g., Colorado's Educational Accountability Act: Legislative Declaration, 1997) were aimed at improving long-range outcomes for students.

Under the original Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142) and the subsequent reauthorization of IDEA 1997, the vehicle for obtaining access to appropriate education and protection for children with disabilities was the IEP. For the first time, children with disabilities had the right to attend public schools. However, accountability for learning was not necessarily expected or secured by IEPs. By the mid-1980s, for example, the apparent gains in access to education were tempered by data on increased rates of failure for children with special needs. The report *A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) highlighted the educational failure of culturally and linguistically diverse students and suggested that schools were creating students who were "effectively disenfranchised" from material rewards and full participation in society (p.15). This failure was due to losing the "war" on ignorance (p. 13). The report suggested that while letting the "disenfranchised" into our public institutions was a morally correct action, it proved to be dangerous for the overall economy by encroaching on the national expectation of educational excellence. Schools were failing children because "all segments" of society must be included in educational reform (pp. 21, 44). The report concluded that school reform must become a community effort; hence, the public debate regarding accountability for improving public education began.

Accountability through the standardized assessment of skills became the focus of education for the 1990s within various school reform initiatives. The underlying expectation was that a standards-based curriculum would produce more positive long-term benefits for students. Benefits such as responsible citizenship, productive membership in the labor force, and the encouragement of life-long learners are all mentioned in most standards-reform initiatives (e.g., Colorado's Educational Accountability Act: Commitment to Equity and Excellence, 1997). In addition, the reauthorization of IDEA in 1997 encourages special educators to find ways to enhance students' participation in the general curriculum and expect improvements in positive long-term outcomes. General education reforms are aimed at the ultimate goal of producing a more informed and productive citizenry. Although these reform initiatives do not overlook the connection between standards-based education and increased positive results

for the community, effort has often been invested in the initial development of content standards with little articulation and implementation of planning for postsecondary goals.

Relationship of Academic and Transition Skills: The Colorado Response

How a system of individualized special education that emerged during the 1970s can be aligned with efforts in the 1980s to reform general education through curriculum standardization is a conundrum for all educators. As recently as 1998, the Colorado Department of Education's *Steps to Creating a Standards-Driven IEP Facilitators Training* (Special Education Unit, 1998) indicated that the IEP in a non-standards-based system was designed to

- Describe an individualized learning plan.
- Remain separate from the core curriculum.
- Provide private accountability to the student and his or her family.
- Protect the rights of the individual student to access a free and appropriate education.

However, in the current standards-based system, the IEP must change its structure and provide

- Individualized learning within the context of a standards-based curriculum for most students with special needs.
- A private accountability system designed to inform parents and a public accountability system designed to inform the community regarding student achievement.
- Protection of a child's rights, such as services to meet the needs of the disability, while measuring immediate and long-range learning outcomes.

Success in school, postsecondary education, or the workplace depends on more than academic success. There are two ways to directly connect transition and academics. One is through the direct teaching of academic skills that foster success in school and in the world of work. The other is through the teaching of academic skills within the context of real-world experience. For example, successful students practice a series of so-called executive, or access, skills (Renzulli, 1995). These skills include the ability to organize information, to communicate information and to advocate for one's own needs—skills that help students access and progress in the general education curriculum. Some students practice these skills intuitively, but others must be explicitly taught and assessed. These skills provide the link between success in school and success in adult life. Employers and educators have identified them as the skills needed in the workplace as well as for meeting academic content standards (McAlonan, Longo, & Hotchkiss, 1998).

Adding context and relevance to academic curricula is another method of connecting transition planning and academics. Teaching academic skills in con-

text promotes student motivation and allows students to make better post-high school choices (see McAlonan, Kennedy, & Avitable, 1999).

Within the IEP, there are two methods of aligning transition skills with academic content standards: (1) infusing key component and access skills into goals and objectives and (2) using transition activities as alternative demonstrations of standards. Both methods put into practice the IDEA mandate to seek better long-range outcomes for students through more rigorous academic standards.

Aligning Transition Skills, Postschool Outcomes, and Academic Content Standards: Processes and Examples

Key Components and Access Skills

The first method of aligning academic content standards and transition skills involves infusing key academic and access skill components into IEP goals and objectives. In Colorado, a process of expanding standards has been developed. By breaking the essential components of standards, called *benchmarks*, into their most essential skill components, it is possible to target the instruction described in the IEP to the critical academic skill a student must learn to advance in his or her proficiency toward a math or literacy standard necessary to achieve postsecondary success. These essential skills have been designated as key components of the benchmarks that lead to achievement of the standards. The process of breaking benchmarks into key components is similar to task analysis, a tool special educators have used effectively for decades to target instruction for students with disabilities. Examples of this process might include the following:

- **Standard:** Writing—The student writes to communicate effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences.
- **Benchmark:** The student generates topics, plans, composes, revises, and edits writing.
- **Key component of the benchmark:** The student expresses ideas using conventional language.

In this example, a student may not be able to have a goal and subsequent objectives based in either the standard or the benchmark because the skills are too complex. However, a goal and accompanying objectives could be written that relate to the key component of expressing ideas using conventional language. An example of the goal and objective based in this key component is shown in Figure 3.1.

The use of goals and objectives that focus on literacy and number sense is important in transition planning on IEPs. Literacy in these two key academic areas is the primary access skill for successful living in our society. Just because a child is age 14 or older is not reason for us to abandon the central focus of his or her educational experience. However, it is unrealistic to assume that a student of that age may have equal facility with all the standards. At this stage it is most important to prioritize the math or language standards that will be
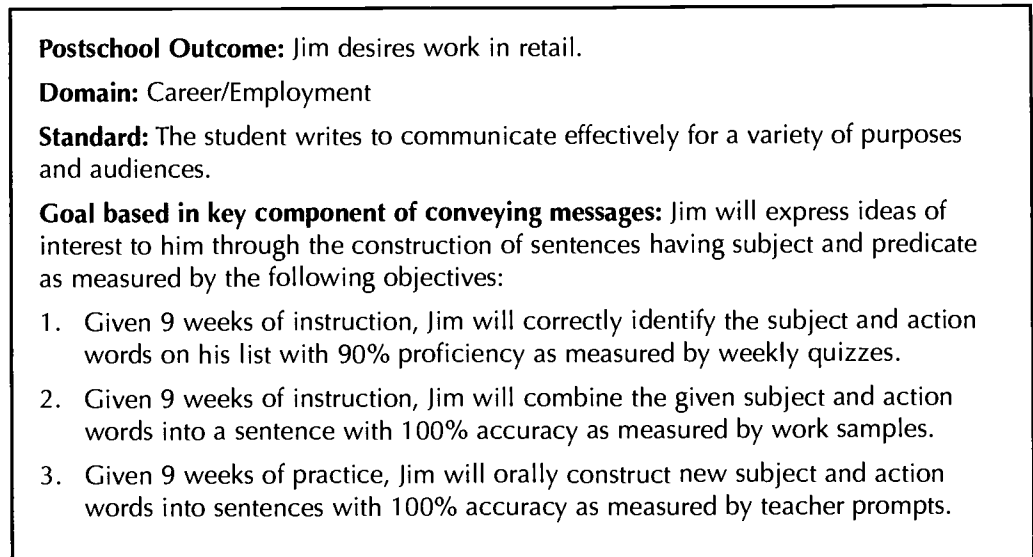

Postschool Outcome: Jim desires work in retail.

Domain: Career/Employment

Standard: The student writes to communicate effectively for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Goal based in key component of conveying messages: Jim will express ideas of interest to him through the construction of sentences having subject and predicate as measured by the following objectives:

1. Given 9 weeks of instruction, Jim will correctly identify the subject and action words on his list with 90% proficiency as measured by weekly quizzes.

2. Given 9 weeks of instruction, Jim will combine the given subject and action words into a sentence with 100% accuracy as measured by work samples.

3. Given 9 weeks of practice, Jim will orally construct new subject and action words into sentences with 100% accuracy as measured by teacher prompts.

FIGURE 3.1
Goal and Objectives for Jim

most helpful to the student as he or she advances toward postschool goals. Hence, a student who desires to pursue college may have a literacy goal and objective that focuses on the standard of conducting research, while a student who desires to work in retail may have a literacy goal and objective that focuses on persuasive speech. Prioritizing these academic standards allows students to participate in the business of school while still preparing for the essential transition to life beyond school. The process used to prioritize these academic standards for students of transition age can easily be remembered by using the RRT questioning line:

1. Is the skill *reasonable* for the student to learn given the level of his or her disability?

2. Is the skill *relevant* to the student given his or her future desired postsecondary outcome?

3. Is there sufficient *time* to reach a level of independence in the skill given the student's age?

By using this process, the IEP team can focus on instruction that will optimize the student's learning of standards while still preparing for transition. According to Schmoker and Manzano (1999), the only possibility of success for the standards movement lies in the ability to prioritize standards.

Academic skills should be measured in the classroom environment as well as in the transitional environment where they will be needed. Through simple data-tracking techniques, a transition coordinator or job coach can measure these skills in a job environment or other community-based environment. In this way, a body of evidence can be collected that ensures the demonstration of the skill both in the classroom and beyond. An example of such a data-tracking technique is shown in Figure 3.2.

Dates Observed	Setting Observed	Level of Prompting Required
	Ruth will use subject and action words in sentences.	
3/26	History class	Physical
3/29	Community job	Natural
3/31	Job application	Verbal

FIGURE 3.2
Data Tracking for Ruth

There are separately identified access skills that are equally important as a child approaches transition from school to adult life. In some states, both educators and business leaders have identified the access skills that are essential to success in school and postsecondary endeavors. The access skills as defined by McAlonan and colleagues (1998) are

- Communication
- Decision making and problem solving
- Organization
- Interpersonal
- Self-advocacy
- Physical
- Technology

Within the communication skill area, the subskills include listening, attending, responding to others, and following directions. Within the area of organization, the subskills include time-management, self-evaluation, using resources, applying study skills, and organizing materials. Within the area of self-advocacy, the subskills express simple feeling states and describe personal learning limitations. As with academic skills, access skills should be prioritized for the older student depending on the potential postsecondary environment the student has identified in his or her transition plan. If the student expresses the desire to go on to college, organization and self-advocacy might be the prioritized access skills for the goals and objectives. If the student is moving into a semi-independent group home, the use of technology for communication might be the prioritized access skill. As with academic standards, an RRT process can be used to prioritize the most critical access skill: Is the skill *reasonable*, is it *relevant*, and is there sufficient *time* to reach some level of independence? Figures 3.3 and 3.4 provide examples of goals and objectives based on access skills. Figure 3.3 shows Candace, a student who is college-bound, and Figure 3.4 introduces Sherry, a student planning to live in a group home.

The examples shown in the figures are certainly appropriate for students who are older and of transition age, but they can also be used effectively with younger students as long-range planning necessary for successful transitions

Postschool Outcome: Candace desires postsecondary education training to match career goal.

Domains: Career/Employment and Postsecondary Education

Access Skill—Communication: Verbal responding and interacting with others.

Annual Goal based in access skill of responding to others:

Candace will demonstrate verbal initiation and response behaviors that will be helpful in postsecondary education as measured by the following objectives:

1. Given communication opportunities in class and in the community, Candace will ask questions regarding her career interests as measured by teacher observations and self-report to her guidance counselor.

2. Given communication opportunities in class and during visitations to three college campuses, Candace will compose and ask three to five questions regarding admittance to the college as measured by her log of responses and self-report to the guidance counselor.

3. Given communication opportunities in class and in the community, Candace will evidence appropriate verbal and nonverbal responses as measured by three videotaped mock interviews analyzed by her guidance counselor and Candace.

Candace may also need support in the area of organizational skills.

Postschool Outcome: Candace wishes to go to college.

Domain: Postsecondary Education

Access Skill: Organization (time management)

Annual Goal based on access skill of task organization for time management:

Candace will organize information to better complete assignments as measured by the following objectives:

1. Given verbal cues with concrete assignments, Candace will identify the components of each assignment and determine how to complete the assignment in a timely and sequential manner with 90% accuracy as measured by teacher review and student self-evaluation.

2. Given assignments that require verbal detail, Candace will orally state the steps of the assignment and verbalize tasks for completion as measured by teacher review and student self-evaluation.

3. Given assignments with specific dates for completion, Candace will use internal verbal cues and her day-planner to organize completion of assignment with 100% accuracy as measured by the grade-book record and student self-evaluation.

FIGURE 3.3
Goals and Objectives for Candace

begins. As with the examples, a simple data-tracking technique should be used with access skills in all environments to ensure that the student is not only learning the skill, but also effectively generalizing the skill across many environments.
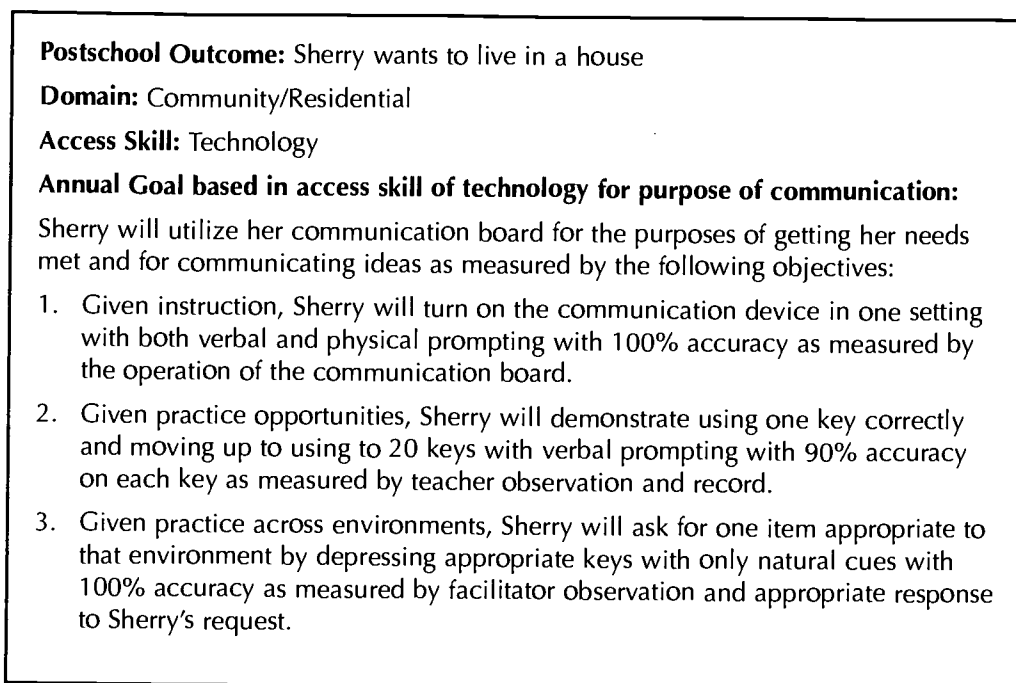
Postschool Outcome: Sherry wants to live in a house

Domain: Community/Residential

Access Skill: Technology

Annual Goal based in access skill of technology for purpose of communication:

Sherry will utilize her communication board for the purposes of getting her needs met and for communicating ideas as measured by the following objectives:

1. Given instruction, Sherry will turn on the communication device in one setting with both verbal and physical prompting with 100% accuracy as measured by the operation of the communication board.

2. Given practice opportunities, Sherry will demonstrate using one key correctly and moving up to using to 20 keys with verbal prompting with 90% accuracy on each key as measured by teacher observation and record.

3. Given practice across environments, Sherry will ask for one item appropriate to that environment by depressing appropriate keys with only natural cues with 100% accuracy as measured by facilitator observation and appropriate response to Sherry's request.

FIGURE 3.4
Goals and Objectives for Sherry

Transition Activities As Alternative Demonstrations of Standards

The second method of combining standards and transition within the IEP is the use of transition activities as alternative demonstrations of standards. In his address to the Colorado Assessment Conference, James Ysseldyke (1998), of the National Center on Educational Outcomes, suggested that providing a range of demonstrations for content standards is the best method for including students with special education needs in a standards-based system. This would include measuring students' performance using assessments based on standards through their IEPs or by tracking their personal best performances. Writing transition assessments as applied demonstrations of any content standard allows for both of these criteria. Applied demonstration sets the measurement of the standard not in a point-in-time test, but in the ongoing demonstration of the skill in context. Therefore, applied demonstration places the measurement within a range of proficiency and also encourages the student to demonstrate his or her best performance across a range of settings. Transition demonstrations could be written into the IEP as alternatives to large-scale assessment. Some examples of the standard-in-context are shown in Figures 3.5, 3.6, and 3.7.

The key component/access skill method is a way to prepare students for transition using generalized academic and access skills. In the second method of using transition activity as a demonstration of standards, the transition assessment activities are aligned directly with specific academic content areas and serve as alternative assessments in academic content classes. For example,

Content Area: Language Arts

Domain: Career

National Language Standard: Student will demonstrate listening and speaking skills to effectively communicate.

Authentic activity based in transition used to demonstrate the standard:

Using appropriate listening and speaking techniques, Johnny will communicate with community members to refine job acquisition skills.

1. Given a variety of scenarios, Johnny will role-play three listening techniques with 100% accuracy as measured by teacher checklist and student self-evaluation.

2. Given three different mock situations, Johnny will role-play three speaking techniques with 100% accuracy as measured by teacher observation and student self-evaluation.

3. Johnny will successfully develop and conduct one interview with a local employer as measured by employer feedback, teacher observation, and student self-report.

4. Johnny will participate in one simulated and one authentic job interview using listening and speaking skills as measured by employer feedback, teacher observation, and student self-evaluation.

Note: Johnny's effectiveness with listening and speaking can be graded using a rubric for each set of skills.

FIGURE 3.5
Transition Demonstrations for Johnny

instead of taking the test in math class on balancing equations, Michael (Figure 3.7) would demonstrate his understanding of this standard by consistently balancing his monthly budget. While both methods can be used to combine transition and standards in the IEP for any age student, the more specific alternative demonstration seems imperative as students become adolescents and transition is more imminent. With a bit of creativity on the part of the special education teacher, the actual demonstration can be crafted to meet the specific transition service need of the student while still assessing the student's grasp of the standard.

Future Implications

Combining transition and standards within the IEP can address the challenges posed by teachers with regard to time for purposeful standards-based instruction and relevant curricula. The integration of standards and transition within the IEP will better prepare students and also has implications for change within the educational system.

Placing the demonstration of standards in context allows teachers to focus on identified content standards while still preparing students with the

Content Area: Geography

Domains: Career, Residential

National Geography Standard: Student will describe and interpret physical and human processes that shape landscapes.

Authentic transition activity used to demonstrate the standard:

Using information about physical and human movement effects on employment and housing, Susan will select those options that promote her personal preferences for employment and independent living.

1. Using the telephone book, the newspaper, or the Internet, Susan will list five to ten housing options and five employment options available in her urban community as measured by her list and self-report to her career teacher.

2. Using the telephone book, the newspaper, or the Internet, Susan will list five to ten housing options and five employment options available in a nearby rural community as measured by her list and self-report to her career teacher.

3. Using the telephone book, the newspaper, or the Internet, Susan will list three housing options and three employment assistance resources available in urban and rural areas closest to her as measured by her list and self-report to her career teacher.

4. Given her completed research, Susan will select three living and vocational options based on personal preferences including environment, landscape, and opportunity as measured by a written report and oral presentation to her career class.

Note: Susan's skills in using the information about physical and human movement can be graded using a rubric.

FIGURE 3.6
Transition Demonstrations for Susan

skills they will need for postsecondary life. One implication of this process is that classroom learning must extend beyond the boundaries of the classroom. Community partnerships must be developed so that curriculum can become fluid and generalized across settings and students can understand the ultimate purpose of their academic learning. To optimize this process, local education agencies must hire personnel to serve as transition coordinators. Ideally, each high school should designate a certified position with the purpose of developing community learning environments and assisting teachers to develop demonstrations of standards in those environments.

It is possible for teachers to construct real demonstrations of standards-based skills while also assisting students to conduct relevant future planning. For this to occur at the high school level, special education teachers must abandon the practice of providing a parallel, tutorial-based curriculum to support the general curriculum. Special education teachers must focus their instruction on the prioritized literacy and numeric standard skills for students in special education and construct methods for these skills to be practiced across content areas. In addition, special education teachers must continue to focus on collaboration with general education teachers to develop assessments in other core

---

Content Area: Math

Domain: Daily Living Skills

National Math Standard: Student will represent situations that involve variable quantities with expression equations, inequalities, and matrices.

Authentic activity based in transition used to demonstrate the standard:

Given information about budgeting format, Michael will construct a variety of mathematical expressions to assist in understanding disparities between his desired lifestyle and projected income.

1. Given records from Public Service, Michael will design a graph showing differences in public service bill over one year's time with 100% accuracy as measured by his math teacher.

2. Given approximations of income and expenses, Michael will develop an equation or matrix depicting projected income and projected expenses as measured by his math teacher and student self-report.

3. Given his budget and matrix, Michael will compute the differences in income and expenditures with 100% accuracy as measured by his math teacher and oral report on how to reconcile the two sets of numbers.

FIGURE 3.7
Transition Demonstrations for Michael

content areas that allow students to pursue experiences related to their future goals.

The IEP can become a more cohesive document for planning for academic and transition success by following a process of prioritization based in identified literacy, numeric, and access skills. This implies that special educators must shift the focus of assessment. While it is still important to uncover the needs related to the disability, it is equally important to assess student competency. This includes opportunities for students to show what they do well. To determine whether growth in academics is occurring, it is important to develop simple data-tracking techniques that can be used across the curriculum and settings to track how well the student is generalizing the academic skill into all environments.

Implications for Reform

The goal of integrating standards and transition provides the opportunity to maintain rigor in the curriculum while promoting relevance and student commitment to completion of the high school program. The final goal of any educational system must be to foster belief in the inherent competence of each student. While accountability for academic excellence is critical, so is a student's intrinsic belief in his or her unique skills and talents. Combining the practices of transition with academic achievement will connect common standards with individual learning. It can provide the benchmarks by which to develop satisfied and successful adults.

References

Ahearn, E. (2000). *Increasing the participation of special needs students in NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress).* (Project Forum No. PFR-040). Alexandria, VA: National Association of State Directors of Special Education.

Cobb, B., & Johnson, D. R. (1997). The statewide systems change initiative as a federal policy mechanism for promoting educational reform. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 20,* 179–190.

Education for All Handicapped Children Act, 6 U.S.C. 94-42 et. seq. (1975).

Educational Accountability Act: Commitment to Equity and Excellence. (Colorado Revised Statutes) L. 22-53-403 (1997).

Educational Accountability Act: Legislative Declaration. (Colorado Revised Statutes) L. 22-7-401 (1997).

Hargreaves, A., Earl, L., & Ryan, J. (1996). *Schooling for change: Reinventing education for early adolescents.* Washington DC: Falmer.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 1400 et. seq. (1997).

McAlonan, S., Kennedy, S., & Avitable, N. (1999). *What works! Colorado High School senior survey.* Denver: Colorado School to Career Partnership.

McAlonan, S., & Longo, P. (1996). *A maze to AMAZE: Transition planning for youth with disabilities.* Denver: Colorado Department of Education.

McAlonan, S., Longo, P., & Hotchkiss, H. (1998). *Making standards work! A teachers guide to integrating academic content standards and assessments with workplace competencies and school to career activities.* Denver: Colorado Department of Education.

National Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983). *A nation at risk: The imperative for educational reform. An open letter to the American people. A report to the nation and the Secretary of Education.* (Department of Education No. 065-000-00177-2). Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Renzulli, J. (1995). *Building a bridge between gifted education and total school improvement* (Talent Development. Series 9502). Storrs: The University of Connecticut, National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented.

Schmoker, M., & Manzano, R. J. (1999). Realizing the promise of standards-based education. *Educational Leadership, 56*(6), 17.

Special Education Unit. (1998). *Steps to creating a standards-driven IEP facilitators training.* Denver: Colorado Department of Education.

Storms, J., O'Leary, E., & Williams, J. (2000). *The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 transition requirements: A guide for states, districts, schools, universities, and families.* Eugene: University of Oregon, Western Regional Resource Center.

Ysseldyke, J. (1998, June). *The participation of students with disabilities in large-scale testing programs.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Council of Chief State School Officers, Colorado Springs, CO.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

PATRICIA LONGO is currently a Regional Director of Instructional Support Services in Douglas County School District in Colorado. She has responsibility for a variety of program areas including transition at the high school and post-secondary levels. In Douglas County, she has promoted the integration of transition and academic standards within the individualized education program and the application of that model to learning in context. Previously, she was a Senior Consultant at the Colorado Department of Education in the area of Transition and Secondary Services. The alignment of transition with standards and assessment was a primary focus of her work at the state level.
E-mail: Pat_Longo@cudenver.edu

4

Using Applied Academics to Enhance Curricular Reform in Secondary Education

James R. Patton

Audrey Trainor

In a relatively short time, the scenario for special education has changed significantly. The 1997 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 1997) created a number of noteworthy changes in the way students with disabilities should be taught. One of the most significant emphases that emerged from IDEA 1997 was the focus on students' access to the general education curriculum. This facet of the law has had major implications for curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Another key change that special education professionals must respond to is the increased attention and emphasis given to curriculum standards. Nearly all states now have standards to ensure that students develop a common set of knowledge and skills. In some cases these state standards are broad-based statements, and in others they are more specific and are organized by levels of schooling.

The changes in IDEA and the zeitgeist of the standards-based movement have created confusion for teachers and students as well. Special education teachers have been thrown into the world of standards, general education curriculum, and high-stakes assessment in ways that were unanticipated. It should be noted that these trends have occurred with little attention from teacher preparation institutions or inservice training systems. The seeming competing interests of access to the general education curriculum and the individualized needs of students for career preparation and functional skills is puzzling to many teachers. In reference to students with more significant disabilities, Ford, Davern, and Schnorr (2001) remarked that "today very little curriculum guidance is available to teachers of learners with significant disabilities in general classes" (p. 216). This state of confusion is likely to decrease

with time as more clarity is brought to this issue and more usable information becomes available.

Students, too, have been subjected to this new world order. It is not clear yet how the reforms will affect students with disabilities. As Bottge and Yehle (1999) noted, "Caught in a web of new standards and assessment are students who have disabilities, many of whom were not successful in school before the push for higher standards and graduation tests" (p. 23).

For those of us who have long been advocating for the curricular and instructional inclusion of real-life content areas (i.e., applied academics) for students with disabilities, the new standards-based reforms have been confusing as well. At first, great concern arose about the possibility that important real-life skills would be neglected in a wholesale fashion (worst-case scenario) or at least to some notable extent (more optimistic scenario). It is unclear how curricular reforms in the states will impact students with disabilities, but encouragement can be found in the new changes if we think logically and creatively. Regardless of our perspective, we must make changes in the way we think and act.

This chapter examines the role that applied academics has in an educational world of standards and access to the general education curriculum. Specifically, the chapter provides a backdrop and rationale for applied academics and discusses the need for curricular review and innovation, particularly at the secondary level. In addition, we look at the curricular, instructional, and evaluative implications of applied academics for current policy and practice. Finally, we consider selected issues that must be addressed if attention is to be given to real-world content and skill development.

Concept of Applied Academics

The concept of applied academics is both intuitive and vague. For this reason, it is important to define this term, identify other terms that are similar in intent and often used interchangeably with it, and provide a rationale for their importance. In essence, this section will answer the following questions: What are applied academics? What are some other terms used to describe them? What do they look like? Why are they important?

What Are Applied Academics?

A universally accepted definition of *applied academics* does not exist. Moreover, a host of terms such as *functional skills, functional academic skills, functional literacy, life skills, independent living skills, daily living skills, "adaptability" skills* (Mithaug, Martin, & Agran, 1987), *real-life skills,* and *survival skills* can be found in the professional literature (see Cronin, 1996). These terms all have a common theme: a description of a set of competencies that contribute to a person's success in preparing for the challenges of adulthood (Cronin, 1996). However, these terms also imply different notions of competence. Certain terms, such as *life skills,* cover a broader set of competencies that are needed to meet the demands of everyday life than does a term such as *applied academics.*

The definition of applied academics that is used in this chapter is a simple one. It refers to those skills and bodies of knowledge typically associated

with core academic content areas that are applied to real-life contexts and situations. The fundamental thread is that these skills reflect a strong linkage between core academic areas (i.e., language arts/English, mathematics, science, social studies) and real-life applications. Table 4.1 depicts this relationship by showing core secondary-level subject area competencies and real-world applications. As can be seen in the matrix (Table 4.1), applied academic skills are intricately tied to what we would call skills needed for everyday living.

Why Are Applied Academics Important?

Applied academic skills have both long-term and short-term importance. On a long-term basis, these skills, as already noted, are crucial to successful adult functioning in today's society. On a more immediate basis, the skills have pedagogical value that benefits students.

Long-Term Importance. To be successful in today's world, adults must be proficient in a number of areas. Extensive coverage of this topic can be found elsewhere (Brolin, 1995; Cronin & Patton, 1993; Sitlington, Clark, & Kolstoe, 2000). The major theme that is emphasized in the literature is that individuals must acquire the knowledge and skills across a number of domains associated with everyday adult life.

An idea closely related to applied academics is that students should be prepared to be lifelong learners, an outcome valued by educators, parents, and the lay public (Marzano & Kendall, 1998). Breivik and Senn (1998) presented an impressive case for ensuring that students become lifelong learners. Their main point was that everyone must become information literate. To do so, adults will need an intact set of academic-based skills to handle the "overwhelming flood of information that daily bombards them" (p. 15). They described the information-literate individual in the following fashion:

> The information-literate person, therefore, has mastered the abilities to locate, organize, evaluate, and communicate information. The information-literate person is thus empowered for effective decision-making, for freedom of choice, and for participation in a democratic society. (p. 21)

Breivik and Senn stressed that students must learn how to apply the skills just noted in a variety of information sources (e.g., books, magazines, newspapers, the Internet).

Another example that clearly illustrates the need for competence in the area of applied academics is the foundation skills and basic competency areas identified by the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) report (Secretary's Commission, 1991). The foundation skills (i.e., reading, thinking, personal qualities) and basic competencies (i.e., resources, interpersonal, information, systems, technology) represent general agreement on the essential skills needed in the workplace (see Figure 4.1). These skills provide an obvious example of essential academic skills required in the applied setting of the workplace.

TABLE 4.1
Secondary Matrix, Relationship of Scholastic/Social Skills to Adult Domains

	Employment/ Education	Home and Family	Leisure Pursuits	Community Involvement	Emotional Physical Health	Personal Responsibility/ Relationships
Reading	reading classified ads for jobs	interpreting bills	locating and understanding movie information in a newspaper	following directions on on tax forms	comprehending directions on medication	reading letters from friends
Writing	writing a letter of application for a job	writing checks	writing for information on a city to visit	filling in a voter registration form	filling in your medical history on forms	sending thank-you notes
Listening	understanding oral directions of a procedure change	comprehending oral directions about making dinner	listening for forecast to plan outdoor activity	understanding campaign ads	attending lectures on stress	taking turns in a conversation
Speaking	asking your boss for a raise	discussing morning routines with family	inquiring about tickets for a concert	stating your opinion at the school board meeting	describing symptoms to a doctor	giving feedback to a friend about the purchase of a compact disc
Math Applications	understanding difference between net and gross pay	computing the cost of doing laundry in a laundromat versus at home	calculating the cost of a dinner out versus eating at home	obtaining information for a building permit	using a thermometer	planning the costs of a date
Problem Solving	settling a dispute with a co-worker	deciding how much to budget for rent	role-playing appropriate behaviors for various places	knowing what to do if you are the victim of fraud	selecting a doctor	deciding how to ask someone for a date
Survival Skills	using a prepared career planning packet	listing emergency phone numbers	using a shopping center directory	marking a calendar for important dates (e.g., recycling, garbage collection)	using a system to remember to take vitamins	developing a system to remember birthdays
Personal/ Social	applying appropriate interview skills	helping a child with homework	knowing the rules of a neighborhood pool	locating self-improvement classes	getting a yearly physical exam	discussing how to negotiate a price at a flea market

Note. From Cronin, M. E., & Patton, J. R., (1993). *Life Skills Instruction for All Students with Special Needs: A Practical Guide for Integrating Real-Life Content into the Curriculum.* Austin, TX: Pro-Ed. Reprinted by permission.

Short-Term Importance. Providing instruction that is relevant to the lives of students with disabilities is a goal worth achieving. One of the most saleable features of applied academics is the fact that it can make instruction more meaningful and relevant to students. Referring to the area of mathematics, Patton, Cronin, Bassett, and Koppel (1997) provided a strong rationale for incorporating applied academics into the instructional routine:

> [D]irect application of life skills instruction [applied academics] can help foster student motivation and subsequent comprehension of mathematical concepts, computation, and application . . . in addition to providing relevance and opportunities for real-life applications, life skills instruction in mathematics [applied academics] also bridges the gap between theory and practice . . . it places math into the real world of students' lives. (p. 183)

The points noted by Patton and colleagues have particular importance at the secondary level and are reflected in the following relationship: As the scope and conceptual complexity of subject matter increases at the secondary level, so do the academic challenges that students with disabilities will inevitably face. Curricular and instructional implications of including applied academics in the educational programs of students with disabilities will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

Need for Curriculum Review and Innovation at the Secondary Level

To understand where applied academics fits into the educational puzzle, we must understand the key factors that have an impact on the educational programs of students with disabilities. This section will examine various trends in secondary special education, the new provisions of IDEA, and the relationship of applied academics to academic standards. The last topic in this section addresses the need to retain flexibility in programs for students with disabilities.

Current Scenario

The current status of inclusion of students with disabilities in secondary education is best described as "difficult to tell for sure." The National Longitudinal Transition Study (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996), conducted in the late 1980s, provided some sense of how things were going. The fact that a second longitudinal study is under way provides hope that more information will be available from which some answers will emerge. The National Center on Secondary Education and Transition will also generate useful information about this topic.

In summarizing the findings of a number of research studies, Nolet and McLaughlin (2000) commented that "what we do know is that secondary students with disabilities take fewer courses and more vocational courses than their non-disabled peers and have higher failure rates and slightly lower grades than their peers" (p. 9). We also know that students with disabilities do not demonstrate adequate functional abilities, as reported by their parents

A Three-Part Foundation

Basic Skills: Reads, writes, performs arithmetic and mathematical operations, listens and speaks

A. *Reading*—Locates, understands, and interprets information in prose and in documents such as manuals, graphs, and schedules

B. *Writing*—Communicates thoughts, ideas, information, and messages in writing and creates documents such as letters, directions, manuals, reports, graphs, and flow charts

C. *Arithmetic/Mathematics*—Performs basic computations and approaches practical problems by choosing appropriately from a variety of mathematical techniques

D. *Listening*—Receives, attends to, interprets, and responds to verbal messages and other cues

E. *Speaking*—Organizes ideas and communicates orally

Thinking Skills: Thinks creatively, makes decisions, solves problems, visualizes, knows how to learn, and reasons

A. *Creative Thinking*—Generates new ideas

B. *Decision Making*—Specifies goals and constraints, generates alternatives, considers risks, and evaluates and chooses best alternative

C. *Problem Solving*—Recognizes problems and devises and implements plan of action

D. *Seeing Things in the Mind's Eye*—Organizes and processes symbols, pictures, graphs, objects, and other information

E. *Knowing How to Learn*—Uses efficient learning techniques to acquire and apply new knowledge and skills

F. *Reasoning*—Discovers a role or principles underlying the relationship between two or more objects and applies it when solving a problem

Personal Qualities: Displays responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, and integrity and honesty

A. *Responsibility*—Exerts a high level of effort and perseveres toward goal attainment

B. *Self-Esteem*—Believes in own self-worth and maintains a positive view of self

C. *Sociability*—Demonstrates understanding, friendliness, adaptability, empathy, and politeness in group settings

D. *Self-Management*—Assesses self accurately, sets personal goals, monitors progress, and exhibits self-control

E. *Integrity/Honesty*—Chooses ethical courses of action

FIGURE 4.1
Foundation Skills and Basic Competency Areas Identified by the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS)

(Wagner, Blackorby, Cameto, Hebbeler, & Newman, 1993). Table 4.2 shows the percentage of parents who indicated that their son or daughter displayed high self-care skills, high functional mental skills, or high community living skills across different categories of disability.

We also know that there is a range of program orientations at the secondary level. Figure 4.2 lists the various program options that are typically available at the secondary level. Recent emphasis has been placed on providing appropriate special education and related services in settings that allow the best access to the general education curriculum. However, a majority of students with disabilities still receive much of their education in settings other than the general education classroom.

Five Competencies

Resources: Identifies, organizes, plans, and allocates resources

A. *Time*—Selects goal-relevant activities, ranks them, allocates time, and prepares and follows schedules

B. *Money*—Uses or prepares budgets, makes forecasts, keeps records, and makes adjustments to meet objectives

C. *Material and Facilities*—Acquires, stores, allocates, and uses materials or space efficiently

D. *Human Resources*—Assesses skills and distributes work accordingly, evaluates performance and provides feedback

Interpersonal: Works with others

A. *Participates as Member of a Team*—Contributes to group effort

B. *Teachers Others New Skills*

C. *Serves Clients/Customers*—Works to satisfy customer's expectations

D. *Exercises Leadership*—Communicates ideas to justify position, persuades and convinces others, responsibly challenges existing procedures and policies

E. *Negotiates*—Works toward agreements involving exchange of resources, resolves divergent interests

F. *Works with Diversity*—Works well with men and women from diverse backgrounds

Information: Acquires and uses information

A. *Acquires and Evaluates Information*

B. *Organizes and Maintains Information*

C. *Interprets and Communicates Information*

D. *Uses Computers to Process Information*

Systems: Understands complex interrelationships

A. *Understands Systems*—Knows how social, organizational, and technological systems work and operates effectively with them

B. *Monitors and Corrects Performance*—Distinguishes trends, predicts impacts on system operations, diagnoses systems' performance and corrects malfunctions

C. *Improves or Designs Systems*—Suggests modifications to existing systems and develops new or alternative systems to improve performance

Technology: Works with a variety of technologies

A. *Selects Technology*—Chooses procedures, tools or equipment, including computers and related technologies

B. *Applies Technology to Task*—Understands overall intent and proper procedures for setup and operation of equipment

C. *Maintains and Troubleshoots Equipment*—Prevents, identifies, or solves problems with equipment, including computers and other technologies

---

FIGURE 4.1 - *Continued*

Note. From *What Work Requires of Schools: A SCANS Report for America 2000* (pp. 12, 16) by Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, 1991, Springfield, VA: National Technical Information Service, Operations Division. NTIS Number: P892-148711.

Impact of IDEA 1997 and the Standards Movement

Two events in recent years have had a profound effect on special education at the secondary level: the reauthorization of IDEA and the impact of the standards movement. Without question other events are noteworthy; however, these two factors have changed the ways educators perform their appointed duties.

IDEA 1997 Provisions. A number of new provisions were included in the 1997 amendments to IDEA, with some of the most notable changes affecting the

TABLE 4.2
Functional Abilities by Disability Category

Disability Category	Percentage of Youth with Parents Reporting:		
	High Self-Care Skills[a]	*High Functional Mental Skills[b]*	*High Community Living Skills[c]*
All conditions	86.4	56.9	61.4
Learning disabled	95.5	66.0	74.2
Emotionally disturbed	94.1	65.3	66.9
Speech impaired	91.8	68.9	67.3
Mentally retarded	67.4	32.5	29.4
Visually impaired	51.6	31.8	41.2
Deaf	88.4	44.3	43.4
Hard of hearing	92.3	60.7	45.8
Orthopedically impaired	42.3	50.5	32.5
Other health impaired	65.3	57.3	41.2
Multiply handicapped	34.5	12.8	21.3
Deaf/blind	21.0	6.8	12.3

[a]Skills include dressing oneself, feeding oneself, and getting around outside the home. Scale ranges from 3 to 12. High is 12.
[b]Skills include counting change, reading common signs, telling time on an analog clock, and looking up telephone numbers and using the phone. Scale ranges from 4 to 16. High is 15 or 16.
[c]Skills include using public transportation, buying clothes, arranging a trip out of town, and using community resources such as a swimming pool and/or library. Scale ranges from 4 to 18. High is 15 or 16.

Note. From *The Transition Experiences of Young People with Disabilities: A Summary of Findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Study of Special Education Students* (pp. 2–13), by M. Wagner, J. Blackorby, R. Cameto, K. Hebbeler, and L. Newman, 1993, Menlo Park, CA: SRI International. Copyright 1993 by SRI International. Reprinted with permission.

individualized education program (IEP). Certain key components now mandated in the IEP include

- A statement of the child's present levels of educational performance (including how the child's disability affects his or her involvement and progress in the general education curriculum).

- Measurable annual goals. (The goals must enable the child to be involved in and progress in the general education curriculum while at the same time meeting each of the child's other unique educational needs.)

- An explanation of the extent, if any, to which the child will not participate with the children without disabilities in general education classes and activities.

- A statement of any individual modifications in the administration of state or district assessments of student achievement.
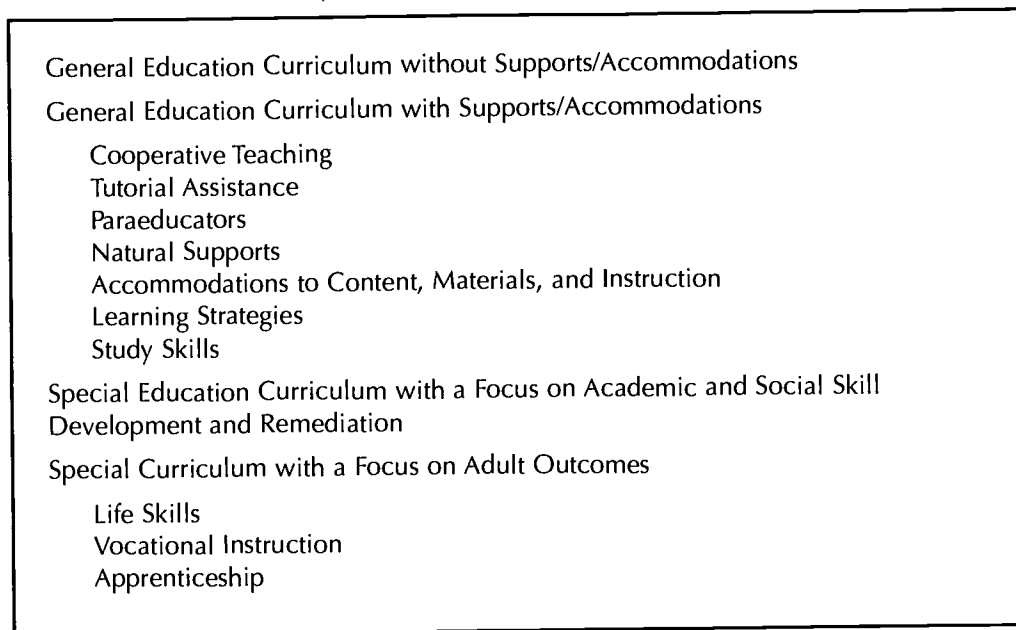
General Education Curriculum without Supports/Accommodations

General Education Curriculum with Supports/Accommodations

    Cooperative Teaching
    Tutorial Assistance
    Paraeducators
    Natural Supports
    Accommodations to Content, Materials, and Instruction
    Learning Strategies
    Study Skills

Special Education Curriculum with a Focus on Academic and Social Skill
Development and Remediation

Special Curriculum with a Focus on Adult Outcomes

    Life Skills
    Vocational Instruction
    Apprenticeship

FIGURE 4.2
Program Options at the Secondary Level

The mandate to provide access to the general education curriculum for students with disabilities creates some potential dilemmas for special education professionals. First and foremost, defining and agreeing upon a general education curriculum is elusive at best (Hirsch, 1997; Nolet & McLaughlin, 2000). Marzano and Kendall (1998) pointed out that even if some type of general curriculum could be identified and codified, the fact remains that "what is written in curriculum guides is not necessarily what happens in the classroom" (p. 7). Nevertheless, the intent of the amendments to IDEA is to ensure that students with disabilities have the same opportunities to learn what their peers without disabilities are learning.

Standards Movement. A driving force associated with the general education curriculum is the development of content and performance standards. According to Hogan (2000) it is fairly safe to say that standards have been developed, in most states, "with the purpose of ensuring that all students can demonstrate the knowledge and skills necessary to read, write, compute, problem solve, think critically, apply technology, and communicate across subject areas" (p. 55). In general, this intent does not conflict with the stated purposes of applied academics.

The nature, specificity, and application of standards vary greatly from state to state (McLauglin, Nolet, Rhim, & Henderson, 1999). All states have developed standards in the core subject areas of language arts/English, mathematics, science, and social studies. Many states have also developed standards for other subject areas. For example, in Texas, standards are divided into two types: so-called foundation subjects (i.e., the core subjects noted earlier) and enrichment subjects (i.e., foreign languages, health, physical education, fine

arts, agricultural science, economics, technology education, technology applications, business education, career orientation, marketing education, home economics education). An important point, which should not be lost, is that the high-stakes tests that students have to take at various times throughout their school careers typically assess only the core subject areas.

Content and performance standards can be divided into three categories, according to McTighe and Ferrara (1998). The three categories represent different emphases and outcomes and are very much part of applied academics:

- Declarative knowledge (facts, concepts, principles, generalizations);
- Procedural knowledge (skills, processes, strategies);
- Attitudes, values, or habits of mind (appreciation, disposition to act). (p. 9)

As a starting point, as emphasized in IDEA, students with disabilities need to meet the same standards as their peers without disabilities. However, as Hock (2000) pointed out, the IEP should be based on the individual needs of the student. As a result, priorities need to be established, based on an individual's curricular and instructional needs. With this in mind, Hock recommended using the RRT rule that was originally developed in Colorado. This rule provides a method for determining the sequence for addressing standards. The key questions that guide the decision as to which standards need to be addressed first are: (1) Is it *relevant?* (2) Is it *reasonable?* and (3) Is there enough *time?*
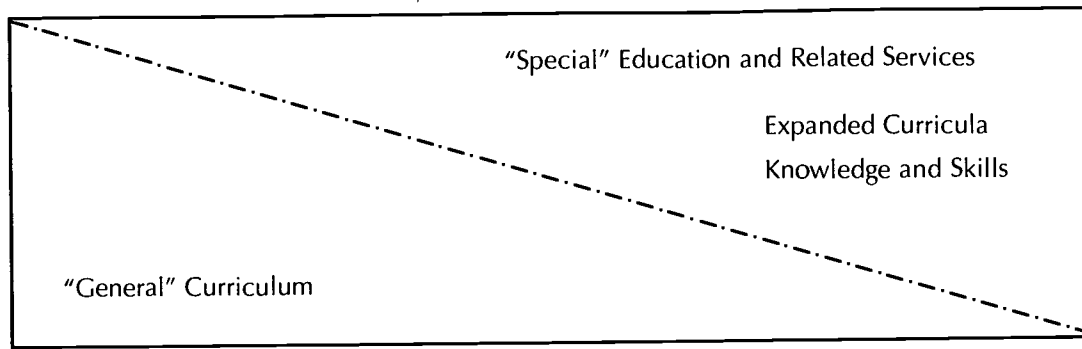
When we examine standards closely for their applied value, as we will do later in the chapter, we find that the relationship between standards and applied academics can vary widely.

- In many instances, standards relate directly to real-world application.
- In other instances, we can see only indirect relevance of standards to real-world applications.
- In certain instances, the relevance of a standard to real-world situations is more removed.

As we will see, it is often fairly easy to find ways to relate applied academics to existing standards. Once they realize this, teachers can feel much better about living and working in a world of standards and the general education curriculum.

Need for Flexibility (Options)

Given the varying levels of need demonstrated by the population of students in special education, certain options become valuable choices for delivering appropriate services. Three particular areas seem to warrant consideration in terms of having options from which to choose to best provide effective educational programs. The first area centers on various ways students with disabilities can engage the general education curriculum. The second area involves the availability of a range of curricular options that are available to all students.

"Special" Education and Related Services

Expanded Curricula
Knowledge and Skills

"General" Curriculum

No Accommodations or Modifications	Accommodations	Modifications	Alternate
No changes in • content • performance expectations • sequence and timelines • instruction	*No changes to:* • content • performance expectations *Changes to:* • sequence and timelines • instruction	*Changes in some or all of:* • content areas • performance expectations • sequence and timelines • instruction	• individualized curriculum goals • separate functional curriculum

FIGURE 4.3
Special Education and the General Curriculum

Note. From Nolet, V., & McLaughlin, M. J. (2000) *Accessing the General Curriculum: Including Students with Disabilities in Standards-Based Reform*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. Reprinted by permission.

Continuum for Engaging the General Education Curriculum. As Nolet and McLaughlin (2000) remarked, "the goals of the general curriculum will be different for different individuals or groups" (p. 27). On a more cautionary note, many general education curricula may not be broad enough (i.e., include coverage of important real-life skills) to address the individual needs of students (National Center on Secondary Education and Transition [NCSET], 2001b).

One way to conceptualize how students with varying needs can access the general education curriculum is to consider levels of access. A model developed by Nolet and McLaughlin (2000) that depicts this type of system is shown in Figure 4.3. The model presents a continuum of options for accessing the general curriculum, with an overriding assumption that students with disabilities will be taught the same curriculum their nondisabled peers are taught. However, this system allows for the individual needs of students by considering accommodations, modifications, and alternate content when appropriate.

In the levels of access schemata, many opportunities exist for teaching applied academics. Obviously, many applied topics can be addressed in an expanded curricular structure that is functional in nature. The "accommodations" and "modifications" options imply changes in instruction. One type of instructional change that should be considered for students with disabilities involves finding ways to make the content more meaningful, relevant, and

therefore understandable. This outcome can be achieved by introducing lessons that feature content that is applied in the real world in which students currently live or will likely participate in the future. This outcome can also be achieved through the enrichment of the content covered in the "no accommodations or modifications" option.

Curricular Options for All Students. The Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT) of the Council for Exceptional Children, in a position paper on life skills instruction, underscored the importance of teaching life skills to all students with disabilities (Clark, Field, Patton, Brolin, & Sitlington, 1994). In this paper, DCDT supported the idea that "a life skills instruction approach should be a part of (i.e., included within existing coursework) or a recognized and approved option (i.e., alternative coursework) to every school curriculum for all students at all grade levels" (p. 126). A critical point is that this type of curriculum should be available to a range of students for whom some aspects of the general education curriculum are less appropriate.

In light of the significant events of recent times (i.e., IDEA reauthorization, standards movement) another way of considering curricular options at the secondary level might be more useful. The National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET), in a discussion paper entitled "Current Challenges Facing the Future of Secondary Education and Transition for Youth with Disabilities in the United States," suggested that high schools should offer the following additional curricular options for all students: community-based work experience; vocational education; dropout reentry programs; independent living skills programs; tech prep programs; service learning opportunities; and early postsecondary education experiences (NCSET, 2001a).

The major themes associated with providing options—whether these options relate to the general education curriculum or to other curricular/programmatic options—include the following:

- Opportunities exist within most settings for covering important real-life topics.
- Curricular attention and instructional time dedicated to applied topics can be beneficial to a wide range of students—some of whom are identified as needing special education and/or related services.

Curricular, Instructional, and Evaluative Implications of Applied Academics

This section provides specific examples of how applied academics fit into the existing curricular and standards-based structure of schools. Specifically, attention will be directed to the curricular (i.e., content), instructional, and evaluative issues of teaching applied academics.

Curricular Implications

In addition to understanding what is meant by the term *curriculum* (i.e., the planned and guided learning experiences under the direction of the school,

TABLE 4.3
Types of Curricula

	Terminology		
Curricular Outcome	Nolet & McLaughlin (2000)	Hoover & Patton (1997)	Patton (2001)
Official/adopted	Intended curriculum	Explicit curriculum	
Curriculum that is actually covered	Taught curriculum	Hidden curriculum	
Curriculum that students actually learn	Learned curriculum		
Curriculum that is not covered		Absent curriculum	
Curriculum that is added to the official/ adopted curriculum			Enrichment curriculum

school district, or state department of education), educators must also be cognizant of the different types of curricula that exist. Taxonomies of ways to represent these different types of curricula have emerged. Table 4.3 shows the similarities and differences among three conceptualizations.

An important point that was made previously is that what happens in the classroom (i.e., the taught curriculum) is not necessarily what is represented in the official documents of the school (i.e., the intended or explicit curriculum) (Marzano & Kendall, 1998). Thus, it is worth noting that content that is in addition to that specified in the intended curriculum is often covered in classroom lessons. In this chapter we will refer to this content as *enrichment* curriculum. Accordingly, decisions are made not to cover some intended curriculum (i.e., absent curriculum). Eisner (1985) remarked that what educators choose to exclude or not teach may be just as important as what they elect to teach in their classrooms.

What is occurring in schools today is that more attention is given to the intended or explicit curriculum that is driven by standards in the core subject areas. This has occurred primarily because the high-stakes tests focus on these areas. As a result, more than ever before the danger exists that important real-life topics may be excluded intentionally in order to ensure that core subject area content is mastered.

The attractive feature of teaching applied academics is that these topics are typically extensions of the core standards on which teachers are focusing. Often the stated standard has immediate functional value. In many instances, the standard can easily be related to a functional, applied competency. After examining many state standards, we have developed the following system for analyzing standards in terms of their relationship to applied academics. The system is basically an attempt to rate the functional value of standards. How

TABLE 4.4
Relationship of Standards to Functional Outcomes

Degree of Relationship	Explanation
Direct	The standard has immediate functional value.
Indirect	The standard includes elements that have functional value.
Distant	The standard is remotely associated with competencies of functional value.

well a standard relates to functional outcomes is indicated by one of three degrees of relationship: direct, indirect, or distant. A brief description of each of these dimensions is provided in Table 4.4.

To understand what we mean by the concept of degree of relationship, we have created Table 4.5. This table contains an extensive list of standards selected from several different states and provides a number of clear examples of the functional value of content and performance standards. The more functional value that characterizes a given standard, the easier it becomes to dedicate instructional time to this topic. However, educators must be aware that most standards do provide opportunities for creating real-world applications.

It is our opinion that the content that is actually covered in classrooms (i.e., taught or hidden curriculum) should include additional topics of an applied nature (i.e, enrichment curriculum). Many academic topics that have meaningful and functional application in a person's everyday life (e.g., reading, mathematics, problem-solving skills or using public transportation) must be considered (Clark et al., 1994).

Instructional Implications

Ensuring that applied academics are covered properly is dependent on teachers' ability to translate the standards into real-world applications. However, as Bottge and Yehle (1999) pointed out, translating standards into meaningful instruction requires that we explore how the standards are applied in real-life situations. Special education teachers not only need to become familiar with the standards that are operative in their respective states, they also must be versatile enough to be able to make seemingly nonfunctional standards or content more relevant to the real world.

A wealth of innovative techniques have been developed and promoted for making existing content more relevant to the real world. Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde (1998) noted that most standards documents recommend that teachers "make it real" by involving students in a variety of authentic experiences that use real-world materials and situations. They provided a helpful list of authentic experiences both inside and outside of school (see Figure 4.4).

Another technique for covering applied topics within the context of the "taught" curriculum is infusion. The infusion technique capitalizes on stimulus points within existing instructional materials that provide the opportunity to cover important functional, applied topics (Patton, Cronin, & Wood, 1999). Reflective of the "enrichment" curriculum notion, infusion is an add-on

TABLE 4.5
Example of Standards Related to Functional Outcomes

Degree of Relationship	Source of Standard	Standard/Student Expectations	Performance Outcomes
Direct	Texas: Mathematics/ Middle School/Grade 6	Underlying processes and mathematical tools. The student applies Grade 6 mathematics to solve problems connected to everyday experiences, investigations in other disciplines, and activities in and outside of school.	Determine amount of paint needed to paint a room, as a part of a house improvement project.
	North Carolina: Technology/English/ Grades 9–12	Use electronic resources for research.	Use Internet browser to locate several types of sources on a topic of choice.
	New Jersey: Mathematics Core Curriculum Standards/ Grades 9–12	Use measurement appropriately in other subject areas and career-based contexts.	Maintain a portfolio of occupations that require extensive use of measurement skills; include interviews of professionals.
	New Jersey: Science Core Curriculum Standards/ Grades 9–12	Use computer spreadsheet, graphing, and database programs to assist in quantitative analysis.	Collect and organize data from school sports teams in terms of wins and losses. Analyze according to sport, team membership, and location of event.
	North Carolina: Social Studies/World Cultures/ Grade 10	Engage in cross-cultural comparisons of such phenomena as religion, education, and language.	Create a "World Atlas" of countries and cultures represented by the family histories of class members. Interview members of each group and include a visitor's guide of "Dos and Don'ts."
Indirect	Texas: English, Language Arts, Reading/High School/ English I	Reading/word identification/vocabulary development. The student uses a variety of strategies to read unfamiliar words and to build vocabulary.	Introduce occupational vocabulary that is essential in the job acquisition process.
	Texas: Science/Grade 8	Science concepts. The student knows that substances have chemical and physical properties.	Change a solid to a liquid during a cooking activity.

continues

TABLE 4.5 - *Continued*

Degree of Relationship	Source of Standard	Standard/Student Expectations	Performance Outcomes
Indirect (continued)	North Carolina: Algebra/ High School	Use matrices to display and interpret data.	Create and maintain a matrix of grades received on homework assignments, tests, and projects.
	Hawaii: Language Arts/ Grade Cluster 9–12	Use reading strategies appropriate to text and purpose (e.g., annotating, quoting, alluding to text, rethinking initial responses).	Participate in seminar discussion on a text, using page and line references to substantiate opinion.
	New Jersey: Social Studies/Grades 9–12	Analyze the balance between the rights and responsibilities of citizens, and apply analysis to understanding issues facing society in NJ and USA.	Write a persuasive essay or engage in formal debate regarding the importance of the First Amendment and the need to protect citizens from acts of terrorism.
Distant	Texas: Social Studies/ High School/United States History Studies Since Reconstruction	Government: The student understands the changing relationships among the three branches of the federal government.	Find out which representatives from home area hold offices in the three branches of government.
	North Carolina: English I/ Grade 12	The learner will deepen understanding of British literature through exploration and extended engagement.	Identify themes commonly found in Shakespeare's dramas in contemporary film.
	Hawaii: Science/Grade Cluster 9–12	Describe and explain properties of elements and their relationship in the periodic table.	Analyze the elements contained in common substances such as salt and water.
	New Jersey: Language Arts Core Curriculum Standards Grades 9–12	Understand the range of literary forms and content that elicit aesthetic response.	Keep a journal of movies, books, and songs that illustrate literary forms; provide a personal response or critique for each entry.
	North Carolina: Geometry/High School	Identify, name, and draw sets of points, such as line, ray, segment, and plane.	Create a "Geometry Dictionary" and post on line as a reference tool for fellow students.

Inside School	Beyond School
• Let kids in on curriculum planning, choosing topics and readings, making schedules, keeping records.	• Give homework assignments that require interaction with family and community.
• Develop broad, interdisciplinary, thematic units based on student concerns.	• Share student work through parent and community newsletters, displays, and events.
• Use tangible, tactile materials, artifacts, and live demonstrations where possible.	• Display student artwork or research projects in off-campus settings.
• Favor learn-by-doing over learn-by-sitting-there-quietly-and-listening.	• Plan regular field trips and attend arts performances that support the curriculum.
• Follow news and current events, connecting them with curriculum.	• Visit, study, and investigate local government, services, and businesses.
• Include activities that connect with students' multiple intelligences and cognitive styles.	• Get involved in community issues: recycling, safety, programs for kids.
• Let students subdivide content, form groups, and conduct team projects.	• Launch family and community history projects.
• Assign real, whole books, rather than synthetic texts created by basal publishers.	• Join in a community beautification or art project.
• Use primary source documents, not just textbooks, to teach history, science, etc.	• Take children on outdoor education, wilderness, ecology, and adventure programs.
• Invite in speakers, experts, and interview subjects from the community.	• In conjunction with integrative units, have fact-finding tours; students take notes, make observations, or conduct interviews.
• Bring in parents to give presentations, conference with kids, create materials.	• Conduct survey or opinion research, by mail or in person.
• Mix children through multiage grouping, cross-age projects, buddy programs, and mainstreamed special education.	• Develop volunteer relationships with local agencies, nursing homes, and hospitals.
• Schedule time in flexible blocks that match the curriculum.	• For older students, create regular student service or work internships.
• Stress student goal setting and self-assessment.	• Support student service clubs and groups that reach out to the community.
• Have frequent performances, fairs, and exhibitions, inviting parent and community audiences.	• Invite students to suggest, plan, and evaluate outreach projects.

FIGURE 4.4
Making Learning Authentic
Note. From Zemelman, S., Daniels, H., & Hyde, A. (1998). *Best Practice: New Standards for Teaching and Learning in America's Schools* (2nd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heineman. Reprinted by permission.

process; however, the teacher can regulate content coverage. The attractive feature of this technique is that it allows for quick "bursts" on topics that arise through the coverage of core subject areas.

Without question, many curricula such as service learning and work-based learning situations create wonderful opportunities for enhancing applied academic skills. Coordination between teachers increases the probability that what is learned approaches what is taught.

Evaluative Implications

The fundamental issue related to assessing applied academics focuses on the need to use a variety of sources, preferably performance-based techniques whenever possible. A major consideration is the proper matching of the skill learned or knowledge acquired with a reasonable and appropriate assessment.

It should be noted that traditional techniques such as pencil and paper evaluations can be appropriate in certain situations, particularly when facts and concepts are involved. For instance, a measure such as the Life-Centered Career Education: Competency Assessment Knowledge Battery (Brolin, 1992) is an example of an assessment that involves a traditional stimulus/response format (i.e., printed, multiple-choice questions), yet yields useful information about what a student knows on a number of functional dimensions.

A more appealing technique for evaluating student progress in applied areas is the use of performance-based measures—the more authentic, the better. Table 4.6 lists six performance-based examples, across a variety of functional domains, for assessing whether a student has acquired requisite competence.

Final Thoughts

Nolet and McLaughlin (2000) captured the essence of what makes a competent special education teacher today:

> Good special education teachers make those decisions [about what to teach and what not to teach] based on a sound knowledge of the subject matter, the demands or expectations of the standards and state and district assessments, each student's level of performance, knowledge of how students learn different types of material, and the conditions that support learning. (p. 111)

While a considerable amount of confusion still exists regarding many of the new trends in the field of education in general and in special education in particular, there is reason to be optimistic. Clearly, teachers who are concerned about doing the best possible job to prepare students for life after high school can become frustrated with the host of competing pressures. Trying to achieve the proper balance among standards-based practices, the demands imposed by IDEA to ensure access to the general education curriculum, and the need to address individualized instruction is not and will not be easy. Having the right attitude, confidence, and tools will help.

References

Blackorby, J., & Wagner, M. (1996). Longitudinal postschool outcomes of youth with disabilities: Findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Study. *Exceptional Children, 62,* 399–413.

Bottge, B. A., & Yehle, A. K. (1999). Making standards-based instruction meaningful for all. *The Journal for Vocational Special Needs Education, 22*(1), 23–32.

TABLE 4.6
Performance-Based Measurement Procedures by Adult Domains

	Simple Goal	Related Test Item Materials	Measurement Procedures
Employment/ Education	Given a local newspaper's classified ads, the student will locate 3 entry-level jobs appropriate for their skills level and interest with 100% accuracy.	local news-paper classified ads	Provide the classified section of the local newspaper. Direct the student to locate 3 job openings appropriate to their skills and interest; score performance if student locates 3 job openings of appropriate skill and interest level.
Home and Family	Given $10 and 7 items selected at a grocery store for purchase, the student will total the cost of all items and determine if $10 will cover the cost with 100% accuracy.	7 grocery store items	Randomly select items from from grocery store shelves. Present the student with items and a small hand calculator; provide directions; score performance if student cor-rectly determines that $10 will cover the cost of all 7 items.
Leisure Pursuits	Given a local weather broadcast on radio or TV, the student will determine if an outdoor activity is appropriate with 100% accuracy.	radio or TV	Provide the student a radio or TV to listen for a weather broadcast; direct student to listen for the weather forecast to see if they should plan an outdoor activity; score perform-ance if student makes an appropriate decision based on outdoor activity and current weather conditions.
Community Involvement	Given a pencil and blank local voter registration card, the student will complete the form with 100% accuracy.	local voter registration form	Provide the student with a blank voter registration form; direct student to fill out form com-pletely; score performance if student fills in all blanks correctly.
Physical/ Emotional Health	Given a local phone book and the direction to find the phone number of the poison control center, the student will locate and write down the number and tape it to the phone with 100% accuracy.	phone book, tape, pencil, paper, telephone	Provide the student with a local phone book with the directions to find the number of the poison control center; write it down and tape on phone; score performance if student finds either the local poison control number and/or the national 800 number, correctly writes the number on the paper and tapes it to phone.
Personal Responsibility and Relationships	Given stationery, envelope, pen, and a stamp, the student will write an appropriate thank-you note for a gift, including address, with 100% accuracy.	stationery, envelope, pen, stamp	Provide student with stationery, envelope, pen, and stamp; direct student to write an appro-priate thank-you note for a gift they have received, including addressing the envelope; score performance if student writes an appropriate note, including all essential elements such as date, salutation, mention of gift, appreciation for gift, closing, their name, and envelope addressed correctly.

Note. From Cronin, M. E., & Patton, J. R., (1993). *Life Skills Instruction for All Students with Special Needs: A Practical Guide for Integrating Real-Life Content into the Curriculum.* Austin, TX: Pro-Ed. Reprinted by permission.

Breivik, P. S., & Senn, J. A. (1998). *Information literacy: Educating children for the 21st century.* Washington, DC: National Education Association.

Brolin, D. E. (1992). *Life Centered Career Education (LCCE) Knowledge and Performance Batteries.* Arlington, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.

Brolin, D. E. (1995). *Career education: A functional life skills approach* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall.

Clark, G. M., Field, S., Patton, J. R., Brolin, D. E., & Sitlington, P. L. (1994). Life skills instruction: A necessary component for all students with disabilities. A position statement of the Division on *Career Development and Transition. Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 17,* 125–134.

Cronin, M. E. (1996). Life skills curricula for students with learning disabilities: A review of the literature. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 29,* 53–68.

Cronin, M. E., & Patton, J. R. (1993). *Life skills instruction for all students with special needs: A practical guide for integrating real-life content into the curriculum.* Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

Eisner, E. W. (1985). *The educational imagination.* New York: Macmillan.

Ford, A., Davern, L., & Schnorr, R. (2001). Learners with significant disabilities. *Remedial and Special Education, 22,* 214–222.

Hirsch, E. D. (1996). *The schools we need and why we don't have them.* New York: Anchor Books/Doubleday.

Hock, M. (2000). Standards, assessments, and teacher education programs: Planning for success in the general education curriculum. In R. A. Villa & J. S. Thousand (Eds.), *Restructuring for caring and effective education* (pp. 208–241). Baltimore: Brookes.

Hogan, K. M. (2000). Educational reform in Texas. In A. A. Glatthorn & J. Fontana (Eds.), *Coping with standards, tests, and accountability: Voices from the classroom* (pp. 51–62). Washington, DC: National Education Association.

Marzano, R. J., & Kendall, J. S. (1998). *Implementing standards-based education.* Washington, DC: National Education Association.

McLaughlin, M. J., Nolet, V., Rhim, L. M., & Henderson, K. (1999). Integrating standards: Including all students. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 31*(3), 66–71.

McTighe, J., & Ferrara, S. (1998). *Assessing learning in the classroom.* Washington, DC: National Education Association.

Mithaug, D., Martin, J. E., & Agran, M. (1987). Adaptability instruction: The goal of transition programming. *Exceptional Children, 53,* 500–505.

National Center on Secondary Education and Transition. (2001a). Current challenges facing the future of secondary education and transition services for youth with disabilities in the United States. *Proceedings of the National Capacity Building Institute: Transition, secondary education reform, and access to the general education curriculum.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration (UAP).

National Center on Secondary Education and Transition. (2001b). Students with disabilities' access to participation in and progress in the general education curriculum. *Proceedings of the National Capacity Building Institute: Transition, secondary education reform, and access to the general education curriculum.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration (UAP).

Nolet, V., & McLaughlin, M. J. (2000). *Accessing the general curriculum: Including students with disabilities in standards-based reform.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Patton, J. R., Cronin, M. E., Bassett, D. S., & Koppel, A. E. (1997). A life skills approach to mathematics education: Preparing students with learning disabilities for the real-life math demands of adulthood. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 30,* 178–187.

Patton, J. R., Cronin, M. E., & Wood, S. (1999). *Infusing real-life topics into existing curricula at the elementary, middle, and high school levels: Recommended procedures and instructional examples.* Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, U. S. Department of Labor. (1991). *What work requires of schools: A SCANS report for America 2000.* Washington, DC: U. S. Government Printing Office.

Sitlington, P. L., Clark, G. M., & Kolstoe, O. P. (2000). *Transition education and services for adolescents with disabilities* (3rd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Wagner, M., Blackorby, J., Cameto, R., Hebbeler, K., & Newman, L. (1993). *The transition experiences of young people with disabilities: A summary of findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Study of special education students.* Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.

Zemelman, S., Daniels, H., & Hyde, A. (1998). *Best practice: New standards for teaching and learning in America's schools* (2nd ed.). Portsmouth, NH: Heineman.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

JAMES R. PATTON is currently an Adjunct Associate Professor at the University of Texas in Austin. He received his master's degree and doctorate from the University of Virginia. He has worked with students with special needs at the elementary, secondary, and postsecondary levels. His professional interests include transition assessment, teaching students in inclusive settings, and legal issues.

E-mail: jrpatton@onr.com

AUDREY TRAINOR is a former high school special education teacher from North Carolina who is currently completing requirements for a Ph.D. in Multicultural Special Education at the University of Texas, Austin. Her research interests include postsecondary transition for students with learning disabilities, multicultural teacher preparation, and parent participation in the special education process.

5

Using School-to-Career Strategies, Workplace Competencies, and Industry Skill Standards to Enhance the Transition Process in Standards-Based Education

Jane M. Williams

Ensuring that all students, including those with disabilities, are prepared to enter the workforce equipped with the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to engage in meaningful employment is one of the fundamental outcomes promised by the standards-based education movement. Over the past 2 decades, educators, parents, policymakers, and business representatives have challenged schools to provide educational programming that includes school-to-career activities coupled with mastery of high academic standards, workplace competencies, and industry skill standards. This chapter highlights the role that school-to-careers strategies, workplace competencies, and industry skill standards, have played in the standards-based education initiative for students transitioning from the secondary school setting to the world of postsecondary education and work. The status of implementation of these strategies in the states is also discussed.

The Call for School-to-Careers Activities and Standards-Based Education

For the past 20 years, there have been numerous demands that all students graduating from high school possess the academic knowledge and workplace skills and competencies needed to be successful in the ever-changing, demanding workplace (Barth, Haycock, Huang, & Richardson, 2001; Marzano, Kendall, & Cicchinelli, 1999; National Center on Education and the Economy, 1990; National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Public Agenda, 2001; Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills, 1991). One of the first calls for rigorous standards to ensure workplace competitiveness, *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), concluded that high school graduates were "ready neither for college nor for work" (p. 12) and recommended vocational education as one way to advance a student's "personal, educational, and occupational goals" (p. 26). More recently, results of a study prepared for the National Commission on the High School Senior Year concluded that "to have any chance of success in postsecondary education—or, for that matter, in the world of work—high school students must regularly engage in rigorous, intellectually challenging work" (Barth et al., 2001, p. 10).

Responses to the Call for Rigorous Academic, Workplace, and Industry Skill Standards

The first legislative response for blending rigorous academic and vocational standards was the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-392). The Perkins Act required states to develop a set of core standards and performance measures for each of their vocational education programs and to integrate vocational skills and competencies with academic standards (Cobb & Neubert, 1998). During the same year, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was passed, requiring that the individualized education programs (IEPs) of all students, beginning no later than age 16 and earlier, if appropriate, contain statements of needed transition services. IDEA required that each student's statement of needed transition services be based on the student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, and include instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and other postschool adult learning objectives, and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation. The statement must also include any interagency linkages or responsibilities (Assistance to States for the Education of Children with Disabilities Program and Preschool Grants, 1992).

In 1991, the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) outlined a framework of skills and competencies needed by all workers in the 21st century. The two-part framework of foundation skills and competencies has become the basis of most school-to-careers programs. Viewed as "soft" or "generic" workplace competencies (Ananda, Rabinowitz, Carlos, & Yamashiro, 1995), the SCANS competencies continue to be supported as critical to ensuring workplace competence (Hartoonian & Van Scotter, 1996;

The Three-Part Foundation

- *Basic Skills*—reads, writes, performs arithmetic and mathematical operations, listens, and speaks. Includes reading; writing; arithmetic and mathematics; listening; and speaking.

- *Thinking Skills*—thinks creatively, makes decisions, solves problems, visualizes, knows how to learn, and reasons. Includes creative thinking; decision-making; problem-solving; seeing things in the mind's eye; knowing how to learn; and reasoning.

- *Personal Qualities*—displays responsibility, self-esteem, sociability, self-management, and integrity/honesty.

The Five Competencies

- *Resources*—identifies, organizes, plans, and allocates resources. Includes time; money; materials and facilities; and human resources.

- *Interpersonal*—works with others. Includes competencies such as participates as a member of a team; teaches others new skills; serves clients/customers; exercises leadership; negotiates; and works with diversity.

- *Information*—acquires and uses information. Includes competencies such as acquires and evaluates information; organizes and maintains information; interprets and communicates information; and uses computers to process information.

- *Systems*—understands complex interrelationships. Includes competencies such as understands systems; monitors and corrects performance; and improves or designs systems.

- *Technology*—works with a variety of technology. Includes competencies such as selects technology; applies technology to task; and maintains and troubleshoots equipment.

FIGURE 5.1
Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) Competencies

Note. From *What Work Requires of Schools: A SCANS Report for America 2000.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor.

Wircenski, 2000). Figure 5.1 lists the SCANS skills and competencies needed by competent, capable, successful workers.

In 1994, two major pieces of legislation established the current standards-based education movement: the Goals 2000: Educate America Act (P.L. 103-227) and The School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 (P.L. 103-329). Both laws specifically addressed the need for academic standards, as well as the need for educational programs that targeted the preparation of *all* students for the workplace.

Two purposes of Goals 2000 were to improve the "quality of learning and teaching in the classroom and in the workplace" (§ 2(2)) and to stimulate the "development and adoption of a voluntary system of skill standards and certification to serve as a cornerstone of the national strategy to enhance workforce skills" (§ 2(7)). The Act required states to develop academic standards to ensure that students are "prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and

productive employment" (§102(3)). Title V of Goals 2000, the National Skill Standards Act of 1994, created the National Skill Standards Board. The Board's charge was to identify broad clusters of major occupations related to one or · more industries in the United States and develop a set of voluntary skill standards that specifies the knowledge and skills needed in each occupational cluster or industry. Legislators anticipated that the skill standards would be used by educators, employers, students, and labor organizations as benchmarks for entry-level positions within specific industries. They also hoped to facilitate linkages among other workforce development initiatives such as school-to-work transition, secondary and postsecondary vocational-technical education, and job training programs (Goals 2000, § 502(3)(K)).

The School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 (STWOA) codified the work that began in 1971 when Sidney Marland, then U.S. Commissioner of Education, introduced the term *career education* (Brolin, 1996). *School-to-work*, or *school-to-careers*, is now recognized as an umbrella term that includes all career-related education, such as career awareness and exploration activities, technical preparation, cooperative education, and vocational education (Association for Career and Technical Education, 2000). The STWOA was the perfect complement to the transition service provisions of IDEA and the initiatives of Goals 2000. Its purpose was to "facilitate the creation of a universal, high-quality school-to-work transition system that enables youths . . . to identify and navigate paths to productive and progressively more rewarding roles in the workplace" (§ 3(a)(2)). The Act was envisioned as a systems-change vehicle for creating radical changes in educational programming by providing integrated academic and vocational school-based learning, work-based learning, and connecting activities. The National School to Work Office provided 39 states with one-time, 5-year grants to develop comprehensive, systemic school-to-work programs for all students. Figure 5.2 lists selected activities of each of the three components of the STWOA.

The School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994 expired on October 1, 2001. However, three current pieces of legislation continue to provide statutory authority for states to implement programs to prepare students for employment and postsecondary education: P.L. 105-17, The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA 1997); P.L. 105-332, The Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act of 1998 (Perkins III); and P.L. 105-220, The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA).

IDEA 1997 emphasizes improving results for children with disabilities, since preparing students with disabilities for "employment and independent living" is one of its purposes (Assistance to States for the Education of Children with Disabilities and the Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities, 1999, § 300.1(a)). IDEA 1997 strengthened the responsibilities of states to ensure that transition is provided to students with disabilities, adding the requirement that a statement of transition service needs focusing on the student's courses of study (e.g., participation in advanced placement courses, vocational education program) must be included in the student's IEP no later than age 14 (Assistance to States for the Education of Children with Disabilities and the Early Intervention Program for Infants and Toddlers with Disabilities, 1999, § 300.347(b)(1)). Several additional provisions have reinforced the relationship between IDEA, the STWOA, Perkins III, and WIA.

School-Based Learning Component

- Career awareness and career exploration and counseling, not later than the 7th grade.

- Initial selection of a career major, not later than the 11th grade.

- An educational program of integrated instruction of academic and vocational learning, including career academies, cooperative education programs, and tech-prep programs.

- Regularly scheduled evaluations of a student's academic progress, workplace knowledge, goals, and the need for additional learning opportunities to master core academic and vocational skills.

- Procedures to facilitate student entry into additional training or postsecondary education.

Work-Based Learning Component

- Work experience, including paid work experience, job shadowing, school-sponsored enterprises, apprenticeships, or on-the-job training.

- A planned program of job training and work experiences relevant to the career major of the student that led to the award of skill certificates.

- Workplace mentoring.

- Instruction in general workplace competencies and aspects of specific industries.

Connecting Activities Component

- Matching students with the work-based learning opportunities of employers.

- School-site mentors as liaisons among student, employer, school, and community.

- Technical assistance and services to employers and school personnel to integrate academic and occupational learning.

FIGURE 5.2
School-to-Work Opportunities Act Basic Program Components

Note. From The School-to-Work Opportunities Act of 1994, 108 U.S.C.A., 568 *et seq.*

These include the statement of needed transition services and the inclusion of rehabilitation counseling services that target career development, employment preparation, achieving independence, and integration in the workplace and community as a related service.

Perkins III, the major federal funding source for career and technical education programs, requires that participants in vocational-technical courses of study (including students with disabilities) meet rigorous academic, vocational, and technical standards (Association for Career and Technical Education, 2000). Career and technical education meshes the so-called generic or soft workplace competencies of higher-order reasoning, problem-solving, work attitudes, and general employability skills with academic content knowledge and occupation-specific or industry skills (American Vocational Association, 1998).

The WIA provides significant positive implications for transitioning youth. This Act consolidates a number of workforce development funding streams, eliminates economic disadvantage as an eligibility criterion, and provides a constellation of services to youths, beginning at age 14, and adults (Kaufman & Wills, 1999; Wonacott, 2000). The WIA requires all youth programs to make available 10 critical program elements, including tutoring, study skills, and instruction leading to completion of secondary school; summer employment opportunities that are directly linked to academic and occupational learning; paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing; occupational skill training; adult mentoring; and comprehensive guidance and counseling (Employment and Training Administration, 1998). The One-Stop Delivery System, or One-Stop Shops, provide an extensive array of core, intensive, and training services. As outlined in Figure 5.3, for youths with disabilities and the service providers committed to ensuring the attainment of integrated academic and workplace competencies, these centers provide myriad useful services (National Transition Network, 2001; The Workforce Investment Act of 1998).

Research to Practice: Using Academic, Workplace, and Industry Skill Standards to Improve Transition Results for Students

At present, 49 states have developed academic content standards in core academic areas (Edwards, 1999). Many professional organizations have also developed content-related standards that serve as guidelines to states, among them the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM), National Council for the Social Studies, National Research Council (science), National Council of Teachers of English, and International Reading Association (National School to Work Office, 1997). To date, 17 states have developed specific workplace competency standards. Some states, such as Arizona, California, New Mexico, and New York, have developed a separate set of career readiness, career preparation, or workplace competencies, while other states (e.g., Colorado, Massachusetts, New Jersey) have overlaid the workplace competencies upon the state's academic learning standards. For states that developed separate workplace standards, the influence of the SCANS competencies is evident, and the workplace standards generally involve core academic standards in reading and mathematics. (For a review of state standards, go to http://www.education-world.com/standards/state/index.shtml.) A compendium of state accountability strategies prepared by the U.S. Department of Education's Career and Technical Education Center outlines many exciting state initiatives that link academic, workplace, and industry-based standards (Rahn, O'Driscoll, & Hudecki, 1999).

Many state and local education agencies have actively embraced the development of workplace competencies through a broad complement of career development activities. Dykeman, Herr, Ingram, Wood, Charles, and Pehrsson (2001) identified 44 types of career development interventions, grouping these interventions into four major types: introductory, advising, curriculum-based, and work-based. Career days and career fairs fall within the

---

Services Available to Youth (Ages 14–21) and Adults (Age 18 and Older)

- Local and national job announcements and resource libraries for career research.

- Computers, copiers, and fax machines for creating and sending résumés.

- Telephone and electronic (computer) linkages to employers and websites.

- Assessment tools to measure skills, interests, and academic levels.

- Vocational counseling, job placement assistance, job search, and retention workshops.

Services Available to Adults (Age 18 and Older)

Core Services

- Initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes, abilities, and supportive service needs.

- Financial aid assistance for training and educational programs.

Intensive Services

- Comprehensive assessment of skill levels and service needs, group and individual counseling, career planning, and case management.

- Short-term prevocational skills including communication and interviewing skills, punctuality, professional conduct, and other "soft skills."

Training Services

- Job readiness training, on-the-job training, entrepreneurial training, adult education and literacy activities, and cooperative education programs.

- Customized training conducted with a commitment by an employer or group of employers to employ an individual upon successful completion of the training.

FIGURE 5.3
Services Provided by One-Stop Delivery Centers
Note. From the Workforce Investment Act 0f 1998, 29 U.S.C.A. 701 *et seq.*

category of introductory activities; career pathways, clusters, or majors fall within advising interventions. Career academies, career and technical education (CTE) courses, and technical preparation programs fall within curriculum-based interventions; apprenticeships, job shadowing, and internships are considered work-based interventions.

Research is beginning to indicate that school-to-careers activities in the advising area are improving results for students, including those with disabilities. Career pathways, or clusters, focus on entry-level through professional-level occupations within a broad industry area (Mooney, 1997). The U.S. Department of Education has identified 16 broad cluster areas (U.S. Department of Education, 2001a). For example, Arizona has identified six career pathways and support programs aligned with these pathways in many of Arizona's elementary and secondary schools (Arizona Department of Education, n.d.). Arizona has also leveraged its STWOA implementation funds into programs that are showing improved attendance, reduced dropout rates,

and increased academic achievement for all students, including those with dis-abilities (Arizona Department of Commerce, 1998).

Curriculum-based interventions are also beginning to yield positive out-comes for students. Studies have consistently reported that students (including those with disabilities) who complete career and technology courses are more likely to earn higher wages and postsecondary degrees than students who did not participate in vocational courses (Association for Career and Technical Education, 2000; Perez-Rivas, 2001; U.S. Department of Education, 1994; Wagner & Blackorby, 1996). Both large-scale federally funded studies, the National Assessment of Vocational Education and the National Longitudinal Transition Study, are being replicated (SRI International, 2000; Stasz, 1999). In addition, recent studies indicate that students enrolled in career academies experience low dropout rates, improved attendance, and increased academic course taking, school engagement, on-time graduation, and preparation for postsecondary education and workplace involvement (Kemple & Snipes, 2000). Career academies provide integrated academic and occupation-related course requirements in a school-within-a-school framework and provide work-based opportunities for students through collaborative partnerships with local businesses (Kerka, 2000).

National Initiatives That Combine Academic and Vocational Standards

Four national initiatives, New American High Schools, High Schools That Work, the Vocational-Technical Education Consortium of the States (V-TECS), and Building Linkages, are showing impressive results as school-to-careers models. Programs affiliated with these initiatives are preparing students to transition from school to the workplace or postsecondary education having mastered workplace competencies as well as academic and industry skill standards.

New American High Schools are innovative and comprehensive magnet, pilot, and redesigned vocational-technical high schools. First recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Vocational and Adult Education, in 1996, there are now 59 New American High Schools in 24 states. These schools are generating higher attendance rates, lower dropout rates, and higher post-secondary attendance rates than most high schools by providing opportunities for applied learning of academic and vocational-technical curriculum and link-ages with the business community (Gehring, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 2001b). One New American High School that exemplifies the school-to-work initiative for all students is the William H. Turner Technical Arts High School in Miami, Florida (Bartholomay & Wallace, 2001). Turner Tech is organized into seven career academies, and students earn both a high school diploma and an industry certificate (Institute on Community Integration, 2001).

High Schools That Work, operated by the Southern Regional Education Board, is a large-scale effort to combine rigorous academic and vocational stan-dards for all students (Koki, 1998). At present, 19 states have implemented pro-grams in their local high schools that practice the 10 principles upon which High Schools That Work are based, with a major focus on project-based learn-

ing and scenarios designed to enhance student engagement and learning (Jobs for the Future, 2000; Southern Regional Education Board, 2000). Current research indicates that the high academic expectations and integration of academic, workplace, and vocational learning activities are resulting in increased student achievement in core academic areas and career and technical fields (Bottoms, 2001).

V-TECS, a consortium of 21 states and agencies, has developed industry-validated skill standards for five occupational areas: administrative support; business finance; business management; family and consumer sciences education; and heating, air-conditioning, and refrigeration (Vocational-Technical Education Consortium of the States, 2001). In collaboration with business, V-TECS provides assistance to states to develop career pathways and academic standards aligned with industry-based standards. Arizona is one of the member states providing career and technical education courses aligned with the V-TECS career clusters, as well as industry-based programs for hospitality services and culinary arts. The results appear to be consistent for all students.

Building Linkages is a major initiative of the National Skill Standards Board (NSSB). Since 1996, the Building Linkages project has engaged 29 states in three national skill consortia to design industry skill standards for four economic sectors: health sciences, manufacturing, retail and wholesale trades, and financial services (Hudis, 2000). During the past 2 years, the Board has identified industry skill standards in the four sectors, and continues its work to identify, adopt, assess, and certify industry skill standards in 15 broad areas that complement states' academic and workplace standards (*The NSSB*, 2001). The Board's immediate goals include completing a best practices document with strategies and activities for all learners, implementing a nationwide train-the-trainers program, and designing portable certificates of competencies for the health care industry (American Youth Policy Forum and Center for Workforce Development, 2000).

The programs supported by these national initiatives combine school-based instruction linked to academic, workplace, and industry standards with work-based experiences. These collaborative school- and work-based experiences require solid partnerships with businesses to enable job shadowing, paid and unpaid work experiences, internships, and apprenticeships. Many are documenting improved results for transitioning youths. One major multistate program, "Bridges . . . from School to Work," funded by the Marriott Foundation for People with Disabilities, has shown that paid internships during the last year of high school for students with disabilities frequently lead to offers of paid employment upon graduation from high school (Tilson, Luecking, & West, 1996). Similarly, other successful school-to-careers programs with strong work-based components for all students are resulting in the promised outcomes of standards-based education (*Doing Whatever It Takes*, 2000; Spera & Williams, 2000; Sword, 1999). These programs validate the strong leadership and key role that business is playing in ensuring preparation of students for the workplace (National Alliance of Business, 2000; National Employer Leadership Council, 2000).

As illustrated by the sample educational program in the profile of "Carlos: Planning for the Future" (Figure 5.4), students with disabilities across the country are actively participating in educational programs such as those

Carlos is a 10th-grader enrolled in Desert Landscape High School. Carlos, a young man with a learning disability in written language, has identified his postschool goal as securing a position as the chief financial officer in a large brokerage house. Therefore, postsecondary education in a 4-year university will be his next step after high school.

To accomplish his goal, Carlos is enrolled in the Academy of Finance at Desert Landscape. He works as part of a team on his assignments, addressing skills in the interpersonal competency area articulated by the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS). All assignments include contextual learning activities such as projects, case studies, simulations, and role-plays. Students graduate from Desert Landscape with a standard high school diploma and a portable industry skill certificate after mastering the required coursework, passing the state proficiency examination, and completing a capstone project.

Carlos's statement of transition service needs reflects the core academic courses planned for each year, as well as electives selected to be meaningful to his long-term goal. Carlos's electives are accounting, economics, psychology, business law, computer science, and golf. Carlos is enrolled in a careers class, a social studies elective that addresses the SCANS thinking and personal competencies. The course provides extensive career awareness and exploration activities through print material and software such as O*Net. Selected activities from his careers class are included on his individualized education program (IEP) under employment and other adult living objectives.

The content of Carlos's courses aligns with the state's academic and workplace standards and the industry skill standards identified by the National Skill Standards Board and the Vocational-Technical Education Consortium of the States (V-TECS). Goals, objectives, and competencies are recorded on his statement of needed transition services in the area of instruction. Next year, his IEP will include activities designed to prepare him for the Scholastic Aptitude Test and apply to college, as well as to contact personnel from the Disability Resource Center from the local university.

Carlos's statement of needed transition services in the area of community experiences reflects the work-based component of his educational program. During ninth grade, Carlos completed a volunteer experience at a local bank; this year he is engaged in a job-shadowing experience in the accounting office of a major department store. He is scheduled to complete an unpaid internship with an auditor in a major multinational corporation next year. His goal is to participate in a paid internship during the summer between his junior and senior year with a brokerage house, leading to a paid work experience during his senior year. Carlos works with a job coach from the school who serves as a liaison with his work supervisor. The job coach also provides 30 minutes per week of rehabilitation counseling to Carlos. This comprehensive guidance and counseling enhances the career development and employment preparation provided during his careers class and includes visits to, and services from, the local One-Stop Shop.

The opportunity to engage in contextual educational activities at school and in the community have provided Carlos with a reason to stay in school. He is committed to his program, believing that a high school diploma and a portable industry skill certificate in finance will be his calling card to future employment and independent living.

FIGURE 5.4
Carlos: Planning for the Future

described in this chapter. Through rigorous academic preparation, coupled with workplace learning, students are successfully engaging in meaningful contextual learning (i.e., learning in real-world settings) in high school programs that prepare them for employment, further education, and independent living.

Conclusion

A review of the literature, legislation, and program investments over the past decade clearly indicates that the alignment of academic, workplace, and industry skill standards for all students, including those with disabilities, is a national initiative that has made great strides. Our continuing challenge is to ensure that all of the school-to-careers programmatic options available through national, state, and local partnerships are considered during the design and implementation of each student's statement of transition service needs on the IEP. By capitalizing on the spectrum of available programs, strategies, and linkages, we can produce a new generation prepared for employment, postsecondary education, and independent living upon transitioning from high school.

References

American Vocational Association. (1998). *The official guide to the Perkins Act of 1998.* Alexandria, VA: Author.

American Youth Policy Forum and Center for Workforce Development. (2000, June). *Looking forward: School-to-work principles and strategies for sustainability.* Washington, DC: Author. Available: http://www.aypf.org/publications/aypf_looking.htm.

Ananda, S., M., Rabinowitz, S. N., Carlos, L., & Yamashiro, K. (1995). *Skills for tomorrow's workforce* (Policy Brief No. 22). San Francisco: Far West Educational Laboratory.

Arizona Department of Commerce. (1998, July). *Good news facts and figures about Arizona school to work.* Phoenix, AZ: Author.

Arizona Department of Education.(n.d.). *What are career pathways?* Phoenix, AZ: Author.

Assistance to states for the education of children with disabilities program and preschool grants; Final rule, 34 C. F. R. § § 300 and 301. (1992).

Assistance to states for the education of children with disabilities and the early intervention program for infants and toddlers with disabilities; Final regulations, 34 C.F. R. Parts 300 and 303. (1999).

Association for Career and Technical Education. (2000). *Frequently asked questions about career and technical education.* Alexandria, VA: Author. Available: http://www.acteonline.org/faqs/faqs.html.

Barth, P., Haycock, K., Huang, S., & Richardson, A. (2001). *Youth at the crossroads: Facing high school and beyond. Are today's students ready?* Prepared for the National Commission on the High School Senior Year by The Education Trust, Inc., Washington, DC.

Bartholomay, T., & Wallace, T. (2001). *William H. Turner Technical Arts High School: A case study in leadership.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Beacons of Excellence Project, Institute on Community Integration.

Bottoms, G. (2001). *Putting lessons learned to work: Improving the achievement of vocational students* (Research Brief). Atlanta, GA: Southern Regional Education Board.

Available: http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/publications/briefs/lessons_learned.asp.

Brolin, D. E. (1996). Reflections on the beginning . . . and future directions! *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 19*(2), 93–100.

Cobb, R. B., & Neubert, D. A. (1998). Vocational education: Emerging vocationalism. In F. R. Rusch & J.G. Chadsey, *Beyond high school: Transition from school to work* (pp. 101–126). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Doing whatever it takes. (2000, September). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration, All Means All School-to-Work Project.

Dykeman, C., Herr, E. L., Ingram, M., Wood, C., Charles, S., & Pehrsson, D. (2001). *The taxonomy of career development interventions that occur in America's secondary schools.* (Draft). St. Paul: University of Minnesota, National Research Council for Career and Technical Education.

Edwards, V. (Ed.). (1999). Quality counts '99: Rewarding results, punishing failure. *Education Week, 18*(17), 1–206.

Employment and Training Administration. (1998). *Implementing the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.* Washington, DC: Author. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED427177)

Gehring, J. (2000, June 21). Career-prep high schools let students get their feet wet. *Education Week, 19*(41), 8. Available: http://www.edweek.org/ew/ewstory.cfm?slug=41new.h19.

Goals 2000: Educate America Act, P. L. 103-227, Title 20, U.S.C. 5810 et seq.

Hartoonian, M., & Van Scotter, R. (1996). School-to-work: A model for learning a living. *Phi Delta Kappan, 77,* 555–560.

Hudis, P. M. (2000). *Building linkages: Making integrated standards work for education and industry.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. Available: http://www.ed.gov/pubs/edpubs/html.

Institute on Community Integration. (2001). *Schools identified: William H. Turner Technical Arts High School.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Beacons of Excellence Project, Institute on Community Integration.

Jobs for the Future. (2000). *Using real-world projects to help students meet high standards in education and the workplace.* Boston: Author. Available: http://www.stw.ed.gov/Database/Subject2.cfm?RECNO=5616.

Kaufman, B. A., & Wills, J. L. (1999). *User's guide to the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Career and Technical Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED435808)

Kemple, J. J., & Snipes, J. C. (2000, February). *Career academies: Impacts on students' engagement and performance in high school. Executive summary.* New York: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation. Available: http://www.mdrc.org/Reports2000/CareerAcademies/CA-EXSum-2-4-00.htm.

Kerka, S. (2000). *Career academies, in brief: Fast facts for policy and practice, No. 1.* Columbus, OH: National Dissemination Center for Career and Technical Education. Available: http://www.nccte.com/publictions/infosynthesis/in-brief01-career academies.pdf.

Koki, S. (1998). *Integrating academic standards and workplace skill standards for a unified system.* Honolulu: Pacific Resources for Education and Learning. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED425326)

Marzano, R. J., Kendall, J. S., & Cicchinelli, L. F. (1999, January). *What Americans believe students should know: A survey of U.S. adults.* Aurora, CO: Mid-Continent Regional Educational Laboratory.

Mooney, M. (1997), Career pathways. *Alliance, 2*(1), 7–8. Champaign, IL: National Transition Alliance. Available: http://www.dssc.org/nta/html/index-_2.htm.

National Alliance of Business. (2000). *Youth learning linkages (School-to-careers).* Washington, DC: Author. Available: http://www.nab.com/content/education-improvement/schooltocareer/indesx.htm.

National Center on Education and the Economy. (1990). *America's choice: High skills or low wages! The report of the Commission on the Skills of the American Workforce.* Rochester, NY: Author. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED323297)

National Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983). *A nation at risk.* Washington, DC: Author.

National Employer Leadership Council. (2000). School-to-careers impact on the knowledge supply chain. *The Employer Focus, 1*(5), 3. Available: http://www.nelc.org/resources.

National School to Work Office. (1997). *Academic standards and school-to-work* (Resource Bulletin). Washington, DC: Author. Available: http://www.stw.ed.gov/factsht/bul0197c.htn.

National Transition Network. (2001, January) *Workforce centers. One-stop workforce centers and transition-age youth with disabilities* (Parent Brief.) Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration, National Transition Network.

The NSSB: A brief description. (2001). Washington, DC: Author. Available: http://www.nssb.org/briefdecription.htm

Perez-Rivas, M. (2001, January 18). Montgomery career classes are paying off, report finds. *The Washington Post,* B1.

Public Agenda. (2001). *Reality check 2001.* New York: Author. Available: http://www.publicagenda.org/specials/rc2001/reality.htm.

Rahn, M. L., O'Driscoll, P., & Hudecki, P. (1999). *Taking off: Sharing state-level accountability strategies. Using academic and vocational accountability strategies to improve student achievement.* Berkeley, CA: National Center for Research in Vocational Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED431138)

The School to Work Opportunities Act of 1994, 108 U.S.C.A., 568 et seq. (West, 1994). Available: http://www.stw.ed.gov/factsht/act.htm.

Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS). (1991). *What work requires of schools: A SCANS report for America 2000.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor.

Spera, V., & Williams, A. (2000, September). *Employer involvement* (Resource Bulletin). Washington, DC: National Transition Alliance for Youth with Disabilities. Available: http://www.dssc.org/nta/html/index_2.htm.

Southern Regional Education Board. (2000). *High schools that work: Key practices.* Atlanta, GA: Author. Available: http://www.sreb.org/programs/hstw/background/keypractices.asp.

SRI International. (2000). *NLTS2 home and news.* Ravensworth, CA: Author. Available: http://www.sri.com/nlts2/.

Stasz, C. (1999). *Accessing the quality of vocational education in high schools.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education. Available: http://www.ed.gov/offices/OUS/PES/NAVE/stasz.html.

Sword, C. (1999, September). *Tools for the future: Building effective school-to-work partnerships with employers to benefit all youth including youth with disabilities* (Workshop Report). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration, National Transition Network. Available: http://www.ici2.umn. edu/ntn.

Tilson, G. P., Luecking, R., & West, L. L. (1996). The employer partnership in transition for youth with disabilities. *The Journal of Vocational Special Needs Education, 18*(3), 88–92.

U.S. Department of Education. (1994). *National assessment of vocational education. Final report to Congress, Volume I. Summary and recommendations.* Washington, DC: Author.

U.S. Department of Education. (2001a). *Career clusters.* Washington, DC: Author. Available: http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/clusters/index.html.

U.S. Department of Education. (2001b). *New American High Schools: Frequently asked questions.* Washington, DC: Author. Available: http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/ · nahs/nahsfaq.html.

Vocational-Technical Education Consortium of the States (V-TECHS). (2001). *Skill standards.* Decatur, GA: Author. Available: http://www.v-tecs.org/products.htm.

Wagner, M. M., & Blackorby, J. (1996). Transition from high school to work or college: How special education students fare. *The Future of Children, 6*(1), 103–120.

Wircenski, M. (2000, March 8). *Preparing all students for the global workforce.* Paper presented at the Utah Statewide Transition Conference, Provo, UT.

Wonacott, M. E. (2000). *The Workforce Investment Act and CTE* (In Brief: Fast Facts for Policy and Practice, No. 6). Columbus, OH: National Dissemination Center for Career and Technical Education. Available: http://www.nccte.com/publictions/infosynthesis/in-brief06-workforceinvestmentact.pdf.

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998, 29 U.S.C.A., 701 et seq. (West, 1998). Available: http://www/usworkforce.org/wia.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

JANE M. WILLIAMS is currently on the faculty of the Special Education Department at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Prior to joining the faculty at UNLV, she served on the faculty at Arizona State University West and as an Education Specialist-Expert, Transition Services, and the Associate Division Director, Secondary, Transition, and Postsecondary Team, at the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education. Based on her 19 years of public school teaching and administrative experiences, primarily at the secondary level, she focuses her teaching, service, and research activities on the areas of transition services, adaptations and accommodations, and personnel preparation of teachers and administrators.

6

Traditional and Alternative Assessments Within the Transition Process and Standards-Based Education

Martha L. Thurlow

Sandra J. Thompson

David R. Johnson

State assessments are important elements of standards-based education. As is emphasized throughout this book, all students are expected to work toward high standards. States and districts measure how well students are doing through assessments that are aligned to standards. One common method of state- and district-wide assessment is testing, referred to in this context as *large-scale assessment*. Based on assessment results, schools work to improve curriculum and instruction so that all students can succeed both in school and in the important transition to their adult lives.

There are several important reasons why all students need to be included in assessment and accountability systems (Thurlow, Elliott, & Ysseldyke, 1998):

- To promote high expectations.
- To provide an accurate picture of education.
- To allow all students to benefit from reforms.
- To enable accurate comparisons to be made.
- To avoid unintended consequences of exclusion.
- To meet legal requirements.

There are two primary laws that talk about the participation of students with disabilities in state- and district-wide assessments. In 1994 and 2001,

Congress reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA). These reauthorizations, called the Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) of 1994 and the No Child Left Behind Act, respectively, required that students with disabilities meet the same challenging standards for student achievement as those expected of other students. Title I of ESEA addresses standards specifically. Title I, Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged, provides supplemental federal funding for improving student achievement in high-poverty schools. It provides extra academic support and learning opportunities for children who are furthest from meeting state standards. Title I requires states to implement annual reading and math assessments in grades 3 through 6 by the year 2005–2006, and it requires that all students make adequate yearly progress. Data must be recorded by race, poverty level, English language learners, and disability. In order to measure how well students served by Title I are doing, student progress toward standards is measured through an assessment system that is aligned to the standards. Title I expects all students to be held to these standards, and the progress of all students must be measured by these assessments and reported to the public. The 1997 amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 1997) focus state and district attention on the challenges of full participation of students with disabilities in assessment systems. IDEA 1997 emerged from the results of at least two decades of research, demonstration, and practice that have suggested that in schools where students are expected to succeed, students do succeed. This chapter addresses traditional and alternative assessments, the role of the individualized education program (IEP) in the participation decision-making process, and the relationship of the transition process to standards-based assessment.

Assessment Options and Decisions

Even though all students are part of a state's assessment system that is aligned to standards, it is not possible to assess all students in exactly the same way. Sometimes individual students need unique approaches to assessment to show what they know and are able to do. For example, a student who has difficulty reading due to a specific learning disability may need the accommodation of having the instructions repeated, or perhaps extended time, to show what he or she knows and is able to do. For that student, taking the general assessment without accommodations may measure the effects of the learning disability rather than the student's skills and understanding. But with appropriate accommodations, it is expected that the student can respond to test items and be measured against the standards expected of all students. A student who is not able to participate at all in general state assessments, even with accommodations, needs an opportunity to show what he or she knows through an *alternate assessment*. By law and in practice, states and districts have defined the following options as the ways students can participate in the assessment system:

- Participation in general assessments.
- Participation in general assessments with accommodations.
- Participation in alternate assessments.

TABLE 6.1
Three Kinds of Assessment Participation for Students with Disabilities:
Estimated Participation Rates

Type of Participation	Percentage of All Students at the Grade Level Assessed	Percentage of Students with Disabilities at the Grade Level Assessed
General Assessment	80%–95%	40%–75%
General Assessment with Accommodations	3%–7%	30%–70%
Alternate Assessment	.5%–2%	5%–20%

Note. From Ysseldyke, J., Thurlow, M., McGrew, K., & Shriner, J. (1994). *Recommendations for Making Decisions About the Participation of Students with Disabilities in Statewide Assessment.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes. Reprinted by permission.

Final regulations for the 1997 amendments to IDEA (P.L. 105-17) address this expectation for participation of students with disabilities:

> The IDEA Amendments of 1997 require that all students with disabilities be included in general State and district-wide assessment programs, with appropriate accommodations, where necessary. In some cases, alternate assessments may be necessary, depending on the needs of the student, and not the category or severity of the student's disability. (IDEA, Content of IEP, Discussion, pp. 12593–12594)

Some states have additional options, such as participation in some type of modified test. Other states allow some students to take tests designed for students at lower grade levels. This practice is generally known as out-of-level testing and has become quite controversial (Thompson, Quenemoen, Thurlow, & Ysseldyke, 2001; Thurlow, Elliott, & Ysseldyke, 1999).

Percentages are often given to show approximately how many students are expected to participate in different ways within a state or district. For example, about 85% of students with disabilities have relatively mild or moderate disabilities and can participate in state and district large-scale assessments, either with or without accommodations (Ysseldyke, Thurlow, McGrew, & Shriner, 1994). These percentages are useful not to provide caps or cutoff points, but to give states and districts an idea about the rates they might expect (see Table 6.1). Decisionmakers should start from the premise that most students with disabilities are expected to participate in general assessments rather than in alternate assessments.

Role of the IEP Team

The IEP team must determine whether a student with disabilities receiving special education services will participate in assessments with or without accommodations or will participate in alternate assessments. This is an important responsibility that involves more than just making a simple check on an IEP
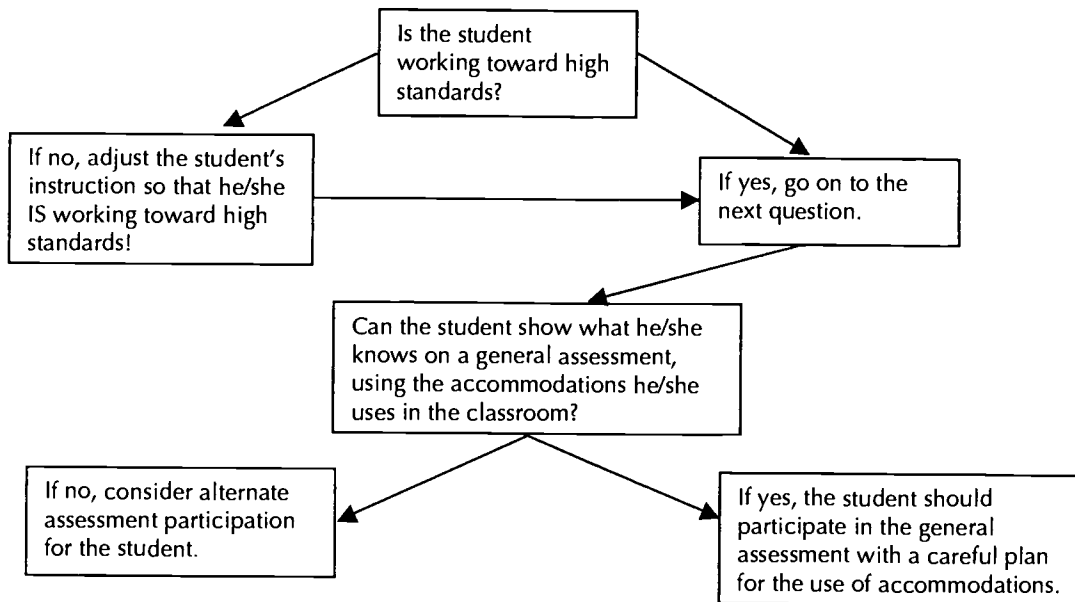
```
                    ┌─────────────────┐
                    │ Is the student  │
                    │ working toward high │
                    │ standards?      │
                    └─────────────────┘
        ┌───────────────────┐          ┌──────────────────┐
        │ If no, adjust the student's │  │ If yes, go on to the │
        │ instruction so that he/she │──│ next question.   │
        │ IS working toward high │      └──────────────────┘
        │ standards!        │
        └───────────────────┘
              ┌──────────────────────────┐
              │ Can the student show what he/she │
              │ knows on a general assessment,   │
              │ using the accommodations he/she  │
              │ uses in the classroom?           │
              └──────────────────────────┘
    ┌──────────────────┐              ┌──────────────────────┐
    │ If no, consider alternate │      │ If yes, the student should │
    │ assessment participation │      │ participate in the general │
    │ for the student.  │              │ assessment with a careful plan │
    └──────────────────┘              │ for the use of accommodations. │
                                      └──────────────────────┘
```

FIGURE 6.1
Participation Decision-Making Process
Note. From Thompson, S. J., Quenemoen, R. F., Thurlow, M. L., & Ysseldyke, J. E. (2001). *Alternate Assessments for Students with Disabilities.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. Reprinted by permission.

form. All IEP team members need to be clear about the fact that they are not to consider *whether* a student will participate in assessments, but *how* that participation might take place. Each IEP team member needs enough information about assessment participation options to be able to make informed decisions with a student. IEP teams need time to make thoughtful decisions. We recently heard a special education teacher lament, "Our IEP meetings are only 20 minutes long. By the time we finish the introductions our time is nearly up and we don't have time to make thoughtful decisions!" Good decision-making tools are not useful without time to think through decisions.

Participation in Assessments and the Decision-Making Process

Some state assessment participation guidelines maintain that students who are not working toward district or state standards should not participate in general district or state assessments and are likely candidates for alternate assessments. As we learn more about how all students can work toward the same standards, participation decisions will no longer be based on such statements as "Student is not working toward state standards" or "Student has a different curriculum." We believe that every student has a right to and can work toward high educational standards. Students may be showing what they have learned in different ways, and they may be working on different skills at different levels of competence, but the standards should provide the target toward which all students progress. Figure 6.1 illustrates a model of a decision-making process that is used by several states.

___ Student participates in regular testing conditions with no accommodations.

___ Student participates with accommodations as documented on the attached Checklist.

___ Student participates in the Alternate Assessment. The Eligibility Guidelines form is attached.

FIGURE 6.2
Excerpt from a State IEP Form That Clearly States Participation Options

Documenting Assessment Participation Decisions on IEPs

At present, 41 states have sample, recommended, or required IEP forms (Thompson, Thurlow, Quenemoen, Esler, & Whetstone, 2001). States with no forms either provide instructions for IEP development or are in the process of developing or revising forms. About one half of the states with IEP forms describe at least three options for assessment participation. Documenting assessment participation on a student's IEP varies from state to state, depending on the IEP form used by the state. Figure 6.2 shows an excerpt from a state's form that allows IEP teams to check how a student will participate in assessments. This form would be easy to complete for a team that was familiar with the decision-making process described earlier, but it might be more difficult for a team that did not have good information about participation options.

The assessment components of some state IEP forms are less clear. It is important to make assessment participation decisions as a team and then find a way to document those decisions on the form, rather than to use a form to make decisions. Figure 6.3 provides an example of a form that is less clear in its options and neglects to mention an alternate assessment as one option for participation.

Relationship of the Transition Process to Standards-Based Assessment

We have heard people say, "Well, now that we have standards and assessments, I guess we can't do transition planning any more!" They wonder how they can add yet another thing. It is unfortunate that developing IEPs, helping

___ Yes, the student will participate and no adaptations (accommodations or modifications) are needed.

___ Yes, the student will participate with adaptations (accommodations or modifications).

___ No, the student will not participate.

FIGURE 6.3
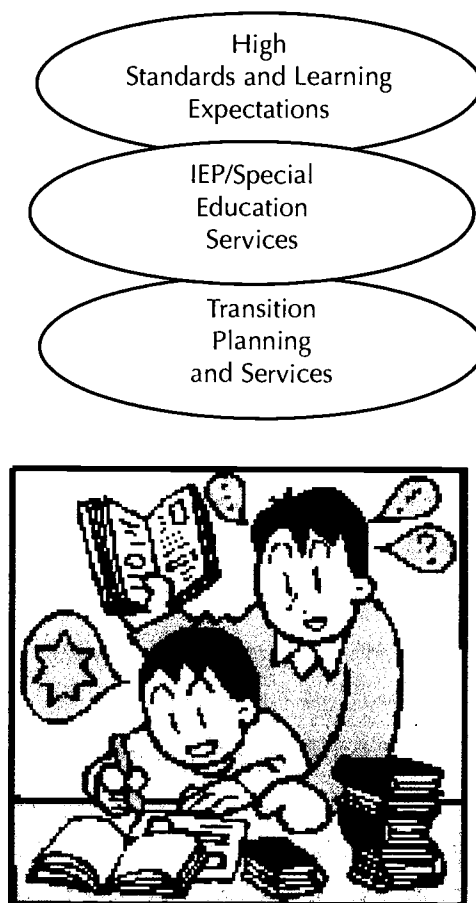**Excerpt from a State IEP Form That Is Unclear About Assessment Participation Options**

FIGURE 6.4
Separate Initiatives Piled on Teachers and Students

students prepare for the transition from school to their adult lives, and assessing progress toward standards were all mandated at different times. Because they are separate initiatives, their development usually takes place in separate units within state departments of education and school districts, with training, instructions, and record-keeping documents that are mutually exclusive. State agencies and large school districts might have different specialists in charge of each area—people who do not even know each other, much less work together. In a recent review of IEP formats from all 50 states, we found that transition plans were often completely separate from the section on educational goals. No wonder so many teachers believe that these are all separate initiatives that have been piled on top of them and their students, as illustrated in Figure 6.4.

It is time to expand what we know about building down-to-earth, common-sense, transition-focused educational plans with students with disabilities to planning that incorporates the best of a state's and district's educational standards, measured through state assessment systems. What does transition planning have to do with state assessments? The purpose of state assessments is to get a picture of how well students are progressing toward standards through all of their educational opportunities. *Since state assessments primarily*
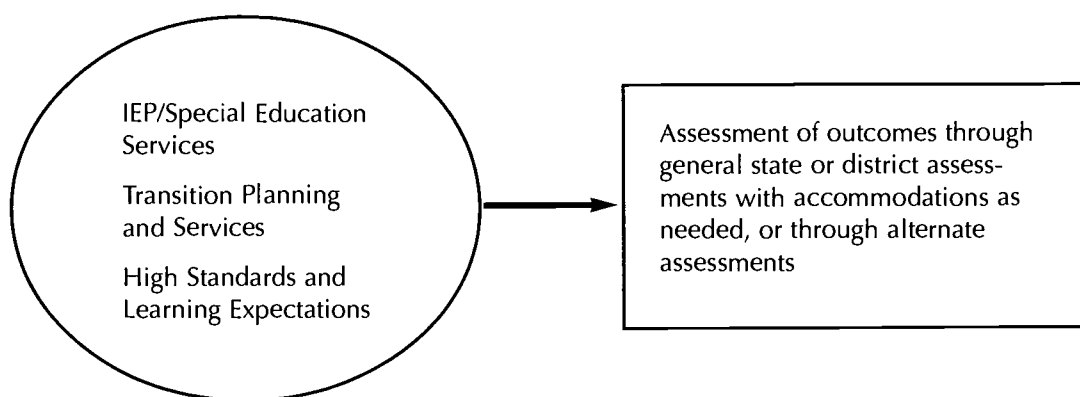
FIGURE 6.5
Connecting Special Education Services, Transition, and Standards to Assessment
Note. From Thompson, S. J., Quenemoen, R. F., Thurlow, M. L., & Ysseldyke, J. E. (2001). *Alternate Assessments for Students with Disabilities.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. Reprinted by permission.

assess progress toward standards, and since progress toward standards is addressed on IEPs, and since IEPs for older students become transition plans, it all fits together. Figure 6.5 shows this connection.

Transition and Participation in Assessments with Accommodations

Assessment accommodations were defined by Schulte, Elliott, and Kratochwill (2000) as "any change in an assessment that is intended to maintain or facilitate the measurement goals of the assessment so scores from the accommodated test measure the same attributes as scores from the unaccommodated test" (p. 2). Researchers have argued that accommodations should raise or "boost" the performance of students who need them and not affect the performance of students who do not need them (Fuchs, Fuchs, Eaton, Hamlett, & Karns, 2000; Tindal, Helwig, & Hollenbeck, 1999).

Currently, every state has a policy governing the use of accommodations on large-scale assessments (Thurlow, House, Boys, Scott, & Ysseldyke, 2000). These policies vary widely across states, with a great range in both the number of students using accommodations and the variety of accommodations selected (Thompson & Thurlow, 1999). The specific accommodations listed by states have continued to increase over time.

As in transition planning, it is important to focus on the role of the student in the selection and use of assessment accommodations. The actual use of assessment accommodations is greatly dependent on each student and what he or she is comfortable using. It is not enough to have students simply attend their IEP meetings and listen to others make decisions about them; teachers and parents need to take an active role in preparing students for their participation in state and district assessments. Some students have had limited experience in expressing personal preferences and advocating for themselves. Speaking out about their preferences, particularly in the presence of authority figures, may be a new role for students, one for which they need guidance and

feedback. Winnelle Carpenter, a self-advocate and accommodations consultant from Minnesota, described the process of self-advocacy as follows:

> For students with disabilities to self-advocate effectively, they must understand their specific disability; learn their strengths and challenges; identify factors that are interfering with their performance, learning, and employment; and develop compensations, accommodations and coping skills to help them succeed. In addition, through careful guidance, these same students must learn how to apply this knowledge effectively when making decisions, negotiating and speaking up on their own behalf (Carpenter, 1998, p. iv).

The goal is for students to assume control, with appropriate levels of support, over their assessment participation and to select and use accommodations that are most helpful to them on assessments, throughout their daily lives, and in their plans for a successful transition to adult life.

We interviewed nearly 100 high school students with disabilities about their participation in a large-scale state test that they must pass to graduate from high school (Thompson, Thurlow, & Walz, 2001). We wanted to know whether they had participated in the state-wide assessments and if they knew whether they had passed. We also asked the students what accommodations they used on the state test and in their daily classes, and what accommodations they thought might be most helpful to them in their future adult lives. We found that most students knew whether they had participated in testing and how well they did on the tests. About 75% of the students said that they had used accommodations on the tests. Older students were more likely to use assessment accommodations than younger students, and the majority of students used three or fewer accommodations. Extended time, testing in a separate room in a small group, having directions repeated, and reviewing test directions in advance were the accommodations used most often.

Several of the accommodations students used for assessments were also used in daily classroom activities. These most commonly included extended time, working in a small group or in a separate room, having tests read aloud, and having directions repeated. Additional classroom accommodations identified by students that would not be conducive to assessment situations included books on tape, reduced reading, having a notetaker, and copying notes and/or directions from a chalkboard or overheads. One student said, "Sit by a smart person," and there were similar comments in favor of "study buddies" and other cooperative learning strategies.

When asked what accommodations students thought would be most helpful for them in the future, about one third of them did not know or thought they probably would not need accommodations in the future. Some students responded that in the future they planned to use the same accommodations that they were currently using on assessments and in the classroom. Students identified a variety of additional accommodations and learning strategies that they planned to use in their future adult lives, including asking for directions to be written down or given orally, simplifying and repeating directions, demonstrating what is expected, getting a notetaker in college, asking for notes

to be written on a chalkboard, overhead, or handout sheets, taping lectures and instructions, and breaking tasks into smaller parts.

The purpose of using accommodations is to give students an opportunity to show what they know and can do without the effects of a disability. This purpose goes beyond assessments and classroom activities to each student's postschool education, career, and community life. *By the time students are juniors and seniors, they should be well aware of what helps them learn and what helps level the playing field.* They should have several discussions about how to continue to use their knowledge and skills as they make the transition to their adult lives.

Transition and Alternate Assessment Participation

Participation in state and district standards and assessments does not mean that students have to remain in academic classrooms during the entire school day. Teachers who have been working for years at building functional, age-appropriate, community-based education services for students with severe disabilities are afraid that they have to give it all up now and put these students into general education classrooms to work on academic standards. Students should not be trading work sites for work sheets; the work site becomes the classroom—giving students opportunities to work toward high educational standards across many settings while learning skills that will truly benefit them in their future adult lives.

Many states have expanded their content standards to include functional skills, known in different states as basic, access, essential, or fundamental skills. These skills are aligned with high standards and, as we will show in the examples that follow, can lead students toward independence in their future adult lives. Nearly all state alternate assessments assess the same standards as general assessments—either by expanding state standards, linking a set of functional skills back to standards, or assessing standards plus an additional set of functional skills (Thompson & Thurlow, 2001). Some states assess particular skills as indicators of progress toward standards. Other states offer examples of skills or performance indicators that IEP teams can choose from to assess progress toward standards on an alternate assessment.

Selecting performance indicators that are clearly aligned with standards is critical to the inclusion of alternate assessment participants in standards-based reform. For example, one state has the following geometry standard: "The student will apply the properties of geometric shapes and spatial sense to connect geometry with problem-solving situations." There are several skills or performance indicators an alternate assessment participant could master to show progress toward this standard. Here are a few:

- Touch a switch to turn on a stereo.
- Open a can using an electric can opener.
- Stock shelves at a grocery store.
- Indicate when a cup is full or empty.
- Determine whether a personal wheelchair will fit through a space.
- Recognize/identify safety symbols.

Some educators may question whether these skills sufficiently represent "properties of geometric shapes and spatial sense," and some may see these connections as quite a "stretch." However, just as these connections to real life are considered best practice for students with significant disabilities, similar connections could be considered best practice in general education as a baseline for applied skills for all learners. The bottom line is that all students can gain to some degree from an understanding of geometric shapes and spatial sense to solve problems, achieve independence, and make contributions in their home, workplace, and community.

We have been asked the question, "What about a student with severe support needs who is simply learning to chew and swallow food? That certainly couldn't be related to an academic standard." Well, let's think about that for a minute. What choices are involved in eating a meal? Making choices requires communication skills, whether to request a particular drink, choose between two vegetables, or spit out an undesired item. Is the student learning to use any assistive technology for eating? Many states have standards in tools and technology that a student might be working toward. By thinking through what *success* means for each student, the connection between content standards and the learning that students need to be successful is clarified. Figure 6.6 shows an example of one student's transition goals that are aligned with standards and can be assessed through an alternate assessment.

There are several strategies that can be used to show progress toward state or local content standards through alternate assessments. Each state has selected its own approach (Thompson & Thurlow, 2001). Most states compile data at multiple points over an extended period of time—usually most of a school year—using a variety of assessment strategies. More than half of the states organize the data collected for a student's alternate assessment into some type of portfolio, while others summarize the results on a checklist or rating scale. Regardless of the data-collection method used, there are typically three types of alternate assessment strategies: observation, recollection (through interviews, surveys, or rating scales), or record review (Salvia & Ysseldyke, 2001). These strategies are useful with any student, but they are especially effective with students who are unable to show what they know and can do through traditional paper and pencil formats.

Implications of State Assessments for Graduation Requirements and Transition Plans

We have addressed some of the positive results of the participation of students with disabilities in large-scale assessments—namely, the use of accommodations gives students opportunities to practice selecting, advocating for, and using accommodations that can be useful to them throughout their lives in home, school, work, and community settings. Participation in alternate assessments helps guide students' education toward high standards and achieving goals for transition, thereby also enhancing their chances for success in their adult lives.

What we have not discussed so far are some of the negative implications that may result from assessment participation in some states. For example, 20

Jeremy is 19 years old and assigned to 11th grade. Jeremy communicates with gestures and facial expressions. He does not have any intelligible speech. He is about 4 feet tall and gets around by walking, but his legs are badly bowed, so his gait is uneven and he doesn't move very quickly. Jeremy also enjoys everyday adult routines. He starts his day with his feet up, having a cup of coffee and looking at the newspaper. He recognizes pictures of sports figures and ads for his favorite restaurants. Jeremy knows that money is a good thing and likes to have some in his wallet (which he always carries in his back pocket). He has learned what a quarter looks like and can put change in machines to buy coffee and a newspaper.

Jeremy is receiving vocational training as a housekeeper at a hotel. He uses picture cards to guide him through his tasks, with a job coach from school and other hotel employees to help creatively figure out how to get through daily challenges. He is a great cleaner and would like to work in a hotel (a fancy one!) as an adult. His team has decided that he can use a reading standard to help him work toward this goal, so that he can follow pictorial directions and work more independently.

> *State Reading Standard:* Students read a variety of materials, applying strategies appropriate to various situations.
> *Jeremy's Goal:* Follow directions in pictorial format.

One of the ways Jeremy can go about maintaining contact with his friends in the future is through e-mail. He can work on e-mail through his state's writing standard.

> *State Writing Standard:* Students write for a variety of purposes and audiences.
> *Jeremy's Goal:* Create and send messages, such as greeting cards, pictures, and jokes, using electronic mail.

As an adult recreational activity, Jeremy's foster family would like him to attend community events with them and with his friends and relatives. This goal is aligned to the listening standard.

> *State Listening Standard:* Students listen for a variety of purposes.
> *Jeremy's Goal:* Attend appropriately during large-group activities.

Jeremy's foster family wants him to have some independent communication skills as he goes about his work, home, and community life as an adult. Jeremy has been working on using an augmentative communication device. This skill is aligned with his state's speaking standard.

> *State Speaking Standard:* Students speak for a variety of purposes and audiences.
> *Jeremy's Goal:* Communicate through the use of an augmentative communication device.

FIGURE 6.6
Jeremy's Standards-Based Transition Goals
Note. Adapted from Thompson, S. J., Quenemoen, R. F., Thurlow, M. L., & Ysseldyke, J. E. (2001). *Alternate Assessments for Students with Disabilities.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. Reprinted by permission.

states currently use their large-scale assessments as a requirement for gradua-
tion from high school (Guy, Shin, Lee, & Thurlow, 1999). Students who do not
reach a certain score or performance level, or who participate in alternate
assessments, may not be eligible for a regular high school diploma. In some
states, these students would receive a so-called special education diploma, or
some type of certificate of attendance or completion. This may have implica-
tions for college entrance or potential employment. In the lower grades, not
reaching a certain score on grade-level benchmark assessments may mean that
students have to repeat a grade or attend summer school (Quenemoen, Lehr,
Thurlow, Thompson, & Bolt, 2000). Each state's requirements are different, but
generally the stakes for receipt of a high school diploma are increasing. *It is
important for students to understand the purpose of each assessment they take and the
consequences of the scores.*

Only a few states have alternative methods for receiving a diploma for
students who do not pass a test (Thurlow & Esler, 2000). On the other hand, we
have learned that students with disabilities overall are performing better on
state assessments than originally thought. For example, in the State of New
York, more students with disabilities passed the Regents Exams in 2001 than
had even participated in the exams in previous years (New York State
Education Department, 2001). It is clear that it is not appropriate to give up
higher standards and large-scale assessments because of fears about conse-
quences that may have a negative effect on their future adult lives. Providing
transition and other experiences that support students in their push toward
higher standards is a critical component in ensuring that positive effects are
maximized (Thurlow & Johnson, 2000). Effective transition planning can help
to mediate between the emphasis on high standards and the need to address
postschool goals.

Conclusion

We recognize that many states have gone all out to improve the passing rates
of students on state- and district-level tests and have created strategies and
supports to help students meet other requirements for graduation. Strategies
have included specialized tutoring and instruction during the school day and
after school, weekend and summer tutoring programs, and use of accommo-
dations and other support services. In addition, as suggested in this chapter, we
need to explore, document, and broadly share information about the use of
multiple sources of information on student knowledge and skills as a way for
some students to show that they have met state and district assessment and
graduation requirements. This is particularly important at the high school
level, when passing state or district tests becomes a high-stakes criterion for
graduation. High schools, however, offer significant levels of flexibility and
choice over curricular options. This flexibility in the curriculum, which engages
students in both classroom and community-based learning environments,
needs to be fully utilized as a means of allowing students to demonstrate their
performance and mastery of state-required skills. To accomplish this, we need
additional strategies that document and assess the skills students actually
develop in relation to each learning environment.

References

Carpenter, W. (1998). Become your own expert! A self-advocacy curriculum for secondary school-age students with learning disabilities. In Michael Wehmeyer & Deanna Sands (Eds.), *Making it happen: Student involvement in education planning, decision making and instruction*. Baltimore: Brookes.

Fuchs, L. S., Fuchs, D., Eaton, S. B., Hamlett, C., & Karns, K. (2000). Supplementing teacher judgments about test accommodations with objective data sources. *School Psychology Review, 29*(1), 65–85.

Guy, B., Shin, H., Lee, S. Y., & Thurlow M. L. (1999). *State graduation requirements for students with and without disabilities* (Tech. Rep. No. 24). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997, 20 U.S.C. § 1400 et seq.

New York State Education Department. (2001). *Report to the Board of Regents on special education data*. Albany: Office of Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities.

Quenemoen, R. F., Lehr, C. A., Thurlow, M. L., Thompson, S. J., & Bolt, S. (2000). *Social promotion and students with disabilities: Issues and challenges in developing state policies* (Synthesis Rep. No. 34). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.

Salvia, J., & Ysseldyke, J. (2001). *Assessment* (8th ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Schulte, A., Elliott, S., & Kratochwill, T. (2000). Effects of testing accommodations on standardized mathematics test scores: An experimental analysis of the performances of students with and without disabilities. *School Psychology Review, 30*, 527–548.

Thompson, S. J., Quenemoen, R. F., Thurlow, M. L., & Ysseldyke, J. E. (2001). *Alternate assessments for students with disabilities*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Thompson, S. J. & Thurlow, M. L. (1999). *1999 state special education outcomes: A report on state activities at the end of the century*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.

Thompson, S. J. & Thurlow, M. L. (2001). *2001 state special education outcomes: A report on activities at the beginning of a new decade*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.

Thompson, S. J., Thurlow, M. L., Quenemoen, R. F., Esler, A., & Whetstone, P. (2001). *Addressing standards and assessments on the IEP* (Synthesis Rep. No. 38). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.

Thompson, S. J., Thurlow, M. L., & Walz, L. (2001). *Student perspectives on the use of accommodations on large-scale assessments* (Minnesota Rep. No. 35). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.

Thurlow, M. L., Elliott, J. L., & Ysseldyke, J. E. (1998). *Testing students with disabilities: Practical strategies for complying with district and state requirements*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Thurlow, M. L., Elliott, J. L., & Ysseldyke, J. E. (1999). *Out-of-level testing: Pros and cons* (Policy Directions No. 9). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.

Thurlow, M. L., & Esler, A. (2000). *Appeals processes for students who fail graduation exams: How do they apply to students with disabilities?* (Synthesis Rep. No. 36). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.

Thurlow, M. L., House, A., Boys, C., Scott, D., & Ysseldyke, J. (2000). *State participation and accommodation policies for students with disabilities: 1999 update* (Synthesis Rep. No. 33). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.

Thurlow, M. L., & Johnson, D. R. (2000). High stakes testing of students with disabili-ties. *Journal of Teacher Education, 51,* 305–314.

Tindal, G., Helwig, R., & Hollenbeck, K. (1999). An update on test accommodations: Perspectives of practice to policy. *Journal of Special Education Leadership, 12*(2), 11–20.

Ysseldyke, J., Thurlow, M., McGrew, K., & Shriner, J. (1994). *Recommendations for making decisions about the participation of students with disabilities in statewide assessment pro-grams: A report on a working conference to develop guidelines for statewide assessments and students with disabilities* (Synthesis Rep. No. 15). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

MARTHA L. THURLOW is Director of the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) at the University of Minnesota. In this position, she addresses the implications of contemporary U.S. policy and practice for stu-dents with disabilities and English Language Learners, including national and statewide assessment policies and practices, standards-setting efforts, and graduation requirements. She has conducted research for the past 30 years in a variety of areas, including assessment and decision making, learning disabili-ties, early childhood education, dropout prevention, effective classroom instruction, and integration of students with disabilities in general education settings. Dr. Thurlow has published extensively on all of these topics. She also is a co-editor of *Exceptional Children,* the research journal of the Council for Exceptional Children, and associate editor on numerous other journals.

SANDRA J. THOMPSON serves as a Research Associate at the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) at the University of Minnesota, where she is responsible for a number of research activities that document the participation and performance of students with disabilities in state and district standards and assessments. Dr. Thompson has an extensive background in preparing stu-dents with disabilities for successful adult lives, spending 10 years with Minnesota's department of education as a Transition Specialist and 10 years as a high school special education teacher.

DAVID R. JOHNSON is Director of the Institute on Community Integration (a University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities, Education, Research and Service) and Professor in the Department of Educational Policy and Administration, College of Education and Human Development, at the University of Minnesota. Dr. Johnson is also Director of the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition of the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. His research interests include investiga-tions of the postschool outcomes and status of young adults with disabilities, evaluations concerning access and participation of young adults with disabili-ties in postsecondary education programs, studies on systems change, cost-benefit analysis, and other policy-related research. Dr. Johnson has published numerous journal articles, book chapters, research monographs, and technical reports and products on topics concerning secondary school education, special education, rehabilitation, transition, and school-to-work.

Cultural Considerations in the Transition Process and Standards-Based Education

Sharon deFur

Brenda Toler Williams

The 15-member Anywhere School District Interagency Transition Planning Council for Youth and Young Adults with Disabilities anxiously awaits the parents who have requested to speak at the Council's quarterly meeting. This is the first time such a contingent has requested an open forum with the team. The signatures to the letter received by the Chair reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of families who have increasingly become a part of the fabric of this suburban school community, with 40% of the population identifying themselves as being from non-White backgrounds in the last census. As the school population has changed, the team members have attempted to reflect cultural sensitivity by appointing one professional from a culturally and/or linguistically diverse group to their ranks, but they have implicitly agreed that standards-based reform and the pressure of increased accountability make it impossible to devote too much attention to diversity issues.

The parents arrive and begin to share with Council members their experiences in transition planning meetings. According to the parents, they believe that there are lower expectations for students of color as transition plans are developed, and that as a result an increasing number of culturally and linguistically diverse students are dropping out or exiting the district without proper preparation for postschool success. The families believe that the professionals are often biased in how they counsel students to be "realistic" in exploring career opportunities. Statements such as "Going to that college is not realistic for you" may demonstrate culturally biased assumptions regarding long-term goals. These parents interpret the prevailing professional mindset to be that students with disabilities require more time and resources, and that students who are culturally and linguistically diverse are just "double trouble." Students are reportedly becoming discouraged and alienated from school. The spokesperson for the group summarizes the problems for the Council: "We believe that this increased emphasis on standards and testing is causing the district to lose

sight of the needs of our children and that the current planning for life after school does not respond to individual needs. We want to know what you are going to do about our concerns."

What steps should the Transition Planning Council take to respond to these concerns?

The 2000 United States Census data confirm the shifting demographics from primarily Anglo-American with an African-American minority to increasing numbers of families of Latino origin from across the world and families from Asia and the Pacific Rim with varied ethnic and cultural backgrounds (Hodgkinson, 2000). Immigration from Eastern Europe, South America, and Africa also continues to change the face of the United States. Like the fictitious Anywhere School District Interagency Transition Planning Council, in the next 2 decades many communities will experience a shift to a multiethnic and mixed-race population. In contrast, most educators and service providers do not reflect these demographics which presents special challenges for the educational and transition planning process.

Different values, attitudes, and priorities develop within different cultural contexts. For example, not all cultures share a focus on preparing for the future; in fact this is a minority view among the world's 6 billion humans (Hofstede, 1980; Samovar, 1999). The typical U.S. citizen assumes equality among individuals and expects eye contact and self-assurance, but this assumption conflicts with many cultural traditions. Our American work ethic puts a high premium on the extrinsic notion of "doing things" or "being pragmatic" at the expense of the intrinsic "being and becoming" (Lindsey, Robbins, & Terrell, 1999). The interpretation of disability and its relationship to individual strengths and needs also varies with cultural orientation. *These cultural issues are important because the very conversation that transition service providers seek to have about futures planning, self-determination, strengths and needs, and productive adult lives may contradict the expectations and experience of families with whom we wish to partner.* Families and service providers exist within their own ecological contexts, with differing economic means, family systems, heritage, and education. All of these factors create potential occasions for *cultural collisions, or misunderstandings.*

When families, educators, and community service providers interact, as occurs during the transition process, each brings a different level of awareness, competence, or confidence in what is about to transpire. The professional comes to this relationship with a cognitive awareness of the family's culture or context that may range from being highly aware, or competent in the culture, to having low awareness that often translates to low tolerance for the cultural differences. At the same time, the family enters the relationship with an understanding of the special education or adult service system that ranges from strong to very weak. Regardless of cultural background, a family with a strong understanding of the system comes to the relationship with a different position of power than a family with a weak understanding. High levels of cultural competence on the part of professionals and high system awareness on the part of families represents the optimal power equalizer—a goal toward which professionals and families should strive. Low cultural awareness and low system awareness encourage the unilateral *power of position* on the part of educators or

agency service providers, whereas *power sharing* is essential to developing collaborative partnerships. Respecting and understanding one another's cultural context is one step toward achieving a power-sharing status for families and service providers (deFur, Todd-Allen, & Getzel, 2001).

In reality, each of us is ethnocentric; that is, we see and interpret interactions and take action based on our personal cultural experiences. Strength exists within this diversity of thought and opinions, but so does the potential for conflict and misunderstanding, since most people have limited direct experiences with people from different cultures and family contexts. Developing cultural competence requires that service providers examine their own values, beliefs, and attitudes and develop the skills of suspending judgment and respecting the diversity of the families with whom they work. This is a necessary prerequisite to establishing a level of trust in the family–service provider partnership. This chapter examines the impacts of cultural orientation on transition service implementation and explores the role of standards-based reform in bridging the cultural divide.

Cultural Orientation and Transition Planning

Educator Cultural Competence

The individualized education program and individual transition plan (IEP/ITP) required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) creates a framework for educators to collaborate with students and their families to prepare the students for successful employment and independent living. Planning for transition is a complex task because goals are set that are to be achieved over several years. In addition, adolescents are in a period of rapid development, and their abilities, interests, and motivations change rapidly. At the same time, employment opportunities and the culture of the workplace are also changing due to economic conditions and shifting population demographics. Adding to this complexity is the fact that *concepts of success and the dreams that families hold for their children are interwoven with cultural perspectives.*

Lynch and Hanson (1998) suggested that cultural beliefs affect practice and that although there are no right or wrong cultural beliefs, these differences must be acknowledged. Educators need to develop cultural competence to work effectively with families from diverse backgrounds. Lynch and Hanson further noted that cultural self-awareness is the bridge to learning about other cultures. "It is not possible to be truly sensitive to someone else's culture until one is sensitive to one's own culture and the impact that cultural customs, values, beliefs, and behaviors have on practice" (p. 55).

Lindsey, Robins, and Terrell (1999) defined cultural competence as

> interacting with other cultural groups using five essential elements of cultural proficiency as the standard for individual behavior and school practices: (1) acceptance and respect for difference; (2) ongoing assessment of one's own and the organization's culture; (3) attention to the dynamics of difference; (4) continuous expansion of cultural knowledge and resources; and (5) the adaptation of one's values and behaviors and the organization's policies and practices. (p. 31)

A.   Acceptance and respect for difference

1.   Recognize difference as diversity rather than as inappropriate responses to the environment.

2.   Accept that each culture finds some values and behaviors more important than others.

3.   Demonstrate sensitivity to circumstances (personal biases, stages of ethnic identity, socio-political influences, etc.) which may indicate that others have a need to talk about concerns with people of their own race or culture.

B.   Ongoing assessment of one's own and the organization's culture

1.   Move from being culturally unaware to being aware and sensitive to own cultural heritage and to valuing and respecting differences.

2.   Understand own values and biases and how they affect people of color.

3.   Realize that other's actions may be misjudged on the basis of learned expectations.

C.   Attention to the dynamics of difference

1.   Demonstrate effective strategies for resolving conflict among people whose cultural background and values may differ from own.

2.   Understand institutional barriers which prevent minorities from having equal access to positions of power and authority within organizations.

3.   Understand how historical distrust affects present-day interactions.

D.   Continuous expansion of cultural knowledge and resources

1.   Integrate into professional development activities information and skills that enable all to interact effectively in a variety of cross-cultural situations.

2.   Possess specific knowledge and information about the particular groups represented in and served by the organization.

3.   Understand origins of stereotypes and prejudices.

E.   Adaptation of one's values and behaviors and the organization's policies and practices

1.   Change the way things are done to acknowledge the differences that are present in the staff, students, families, and community.

2.   Exercise institutional interventions on behalf of students and families when required.

3.   Develop skills for cross-cultural communication increasing ability to receive verbal and nonverbal messages accurately and "appropriately."

FIGURE 7.1
Essential Elements for Cultural Competence
Note. Adapted from Lindsey, R., Robins, K., & Terrell, R. (1999). *Cultural Proficiency: A Manual for School Leaders* (p. 39). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press. Reprinted by permission.

Figure 7.1 further explains each of these elements. Numerous resources are available to assist individual and organizational development of cultural competence.

Cultural Continua

From a workplace perspective, Carr-Ruffino (2000) has stated that culture is "the collective programming of individuals' minds that determines how a group of individuals perceives reality" (p. 31). She has suggested that leaders who want to deal effectively with workers who come from various "realities," must understand their cultures and the cultures of others. Simons, Vazquez, and Harris (1993) have provided a definition of culture that is useful as educators seek to understand the values, behavioral traits, and priorities as well as the organizations and work habits of a specific group of people:

> Culture is a way of life. It is developed and communicated by a group of people, consciously or unconsciously, to subsequent generations. It consists of ideas, habits, attitudes, customs, and traditions that help to create standards for people to coexist. It makes a group of people unique. (p.16)

Lists of contrasting values and beliefs have often been presented as a way of illustrating cultural differences. However, such lists can lead to misinterpretation and stereotyping. Simons, Vazquez, and Harris have developed a model that classifies cultures, subcultures, groups, and individuals along a continuum from "more tightly woven" to "more loosely knit" and tells about the kinds of thinking and behavior that is characteristic of where an individual or group might fall on the continuum.

Lynch and Hanson (1998) and Carr-Ruffino (2000) support the use of such a model and have suggested that instead of contrasting values and beliefs, educators should consider value sets that are *common across cultures and view each as a continuum*. Age, education, socioeconomic status, friends, family members, life experience, place in the family life cycle, and many other variables can influence a person's position on the continuum at any given time. Although some cultures may be closer to one end of the continuum, individuals within the culture will represent the entire spectrum. Similarly, members of the same family may be at different points on the continuum. Figure 7.2 presents examples of some of the cultural continua that are most likely to emerge when working with families of adolescents on transition issues.

Likewise, as reform initiatives are developed and stakeholder input is desired it is helpful for educators to be aware of where individuals are on these cultural continua. When communication is not going well or the family's and transition professionals' goals appear to be in conflict, it is often because those involved are making different assumptions or are operating from a different position on one of the cultural continua (Lynch & Hanson, 1998).

Cultural Continua Related to Transition Planning and Reform

The value sets shown in Figure 7.2 are discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

Family Networks. Lynch and Hanson (1998) suggested that while large families with extended kinship networks may provide support for family members, such networks can also exert pressure on family members that prevents their development. For example, an elder sibling may be expected to contribute to
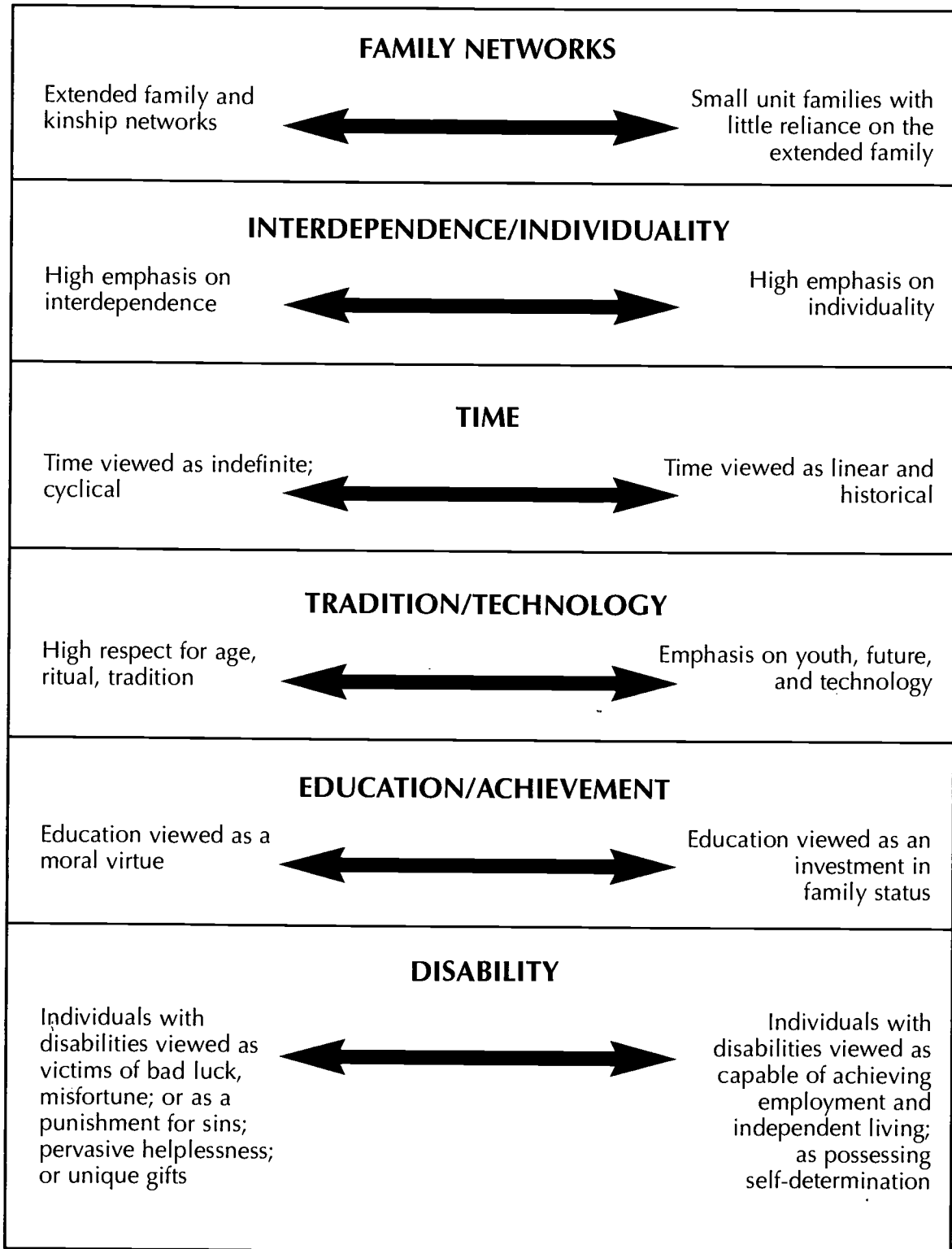
FAMILY NETWORKS

Extended family and
kinship networks

⟷

Small unit families with
little reliance on the
extended family

INTERDEPENDENCE/INDIVIDUALITY

High emphasis on
interdependence

⟷

High emphasis on
individuality

TIME

Time viewed as indefinite;
cyclical

⟷

Time viewed as linear and
historical

TRADITION/TECHNOLOGY

High respect for age,
ritual, tradition

⟷

Emphasis on youth, future,
and technology

EDUCATION/ACHIEVEMENT

Education viewed as a
moral virtue

⟷

Education viewed as an
investment in
family status

DISABILITY

Individuals with
disabilities viewed as
victims of bad luck,
misfortune; or as a
punishment for sins;
pervasive helplessness;
or unique gifts

⟷

Individuals with
disabilities viewed as
capable of achieving
employment and
independent living;
as possessing
self-determination

FIGURE 7.2
Cultural Continua of Selected Variables Related to Planning for Transition and Reform

the family income in order to send younger siblings to college, forgoing his or her own long-range plans. By contrast, smaller families and single-parent families may have more independence in decision making but fewer sources of support. Transition planners can benefit from recognizing where they personally fall on the family constellation continuum and by understanding where each adolescent and family with whom they will be working falls. This requires accurate information and dialog about family structures.

Interdependence/Individuality. Individuality, the explicit expression of self, is a value that some families prize highly (Lynch & Hanson, 1998). However, in other families interdependence is the primary value, and contributing to the functioning of the family as a whole is far more important than expressing one's individuality. In fact, to become fully independent is viewed as selfish and rejecting of the family. In situations like this, transition goals for independence may be inconsistent with the family's desire for interdependence. Educators must help the family understand how individuality can be nurtured and family interdependence maintained.

Time. Time is a concept that is viewed differently across cultures. Resolving differences on this continuum is sometimes challenging. Many families believe that the amount of time needed for an interaction should not be limited. This often conflicts with professionals who have measured out a specific amount of time for an interaction. Even punctuality, when perceived to be an indication of how much value one places on a meeting, can be misinterpreted. Likewise, families whose beliefs emphasize the here and now might experience difficulty thinking 6 or 7 years into a young person's future. Thus, sensitivity to differences in values related to time is imperative.

Tradition/Technology. The United States is known for pursuing "the new and improved" and building for the future. By contrast, many people from other parts of the world who are well-represented in our current demographics, place great importance on the past. The ritual and tradition of ancestors form a solid basis for contemporary life. As a result, the latest technology or the newest approach to teaching may be regarded with disinterest or suspicion. Rather than assuming ignorance or uncooperativeness, educators need to learn about families' beliefs and the wisdom they are using to make decisions.

Education/Achievement. Beliefs and values associated with education and development of job skills also vary along a cultural continuum. These may range from viewing education as a moral virtue to seeing it as necessary for upward mobility and career development in order to improve family status. Given the cultural history of the struggle for access and equality in education and the workplace for some populations, families may be reluctant to pursue plans that appear unrealistic to them. Employing so-called *cultural brokers*, or individuals from within the culture who have overcome education and employment barriers, is often a useful strategy to give families hope for a brighter future for their youngsters.

Disability. How families tend to perceive the family member with a disability also varies across cultures. Families at some points along the continuum will view the disability as pervasive, something that cannot be overcome or compensated for. Some family members may see the manifestation of the disability as punishment for past sins and accept it in that context. Others have the perspective that disability is part of a normal order. Still others may view disability as situational and environmental, and that proper education and rehabilitation can result in productive employment and higher levels of independence.

While there are certainly other dimensions of culture that impact transition planning and school reform, an understanding of those discussed here should facilitate improved communications and interactions with families and community stakeholders. The next section addresses how reform initiatives can further assist in bridging the cultural divide experienced by many families in educational interactions.

School-Based Education Reform and Transition Services

The 1997 Amendments to IDEA (IDEA 1997) introduced several themes that could be interpreted as contradictory. On the one hand, IDEA underscores the importance of transition planning and services and identifies one essential purpose as the responsibility to prepare students with disabilities to live and work independently. At the same time, the legislation emphasizes participation in the general curriculum and mandates participation in state and district testing—components of standards-based education reform. The goal of current legislation is to ensure that students with disabilities have access to challenging curriculum and that their educational programs are based on high expectations that acknowledge each student's potential and ultimate contribution to society. Specifically, IDEA 1997 is intended to better align special education programs and policies with the national school improvement effort referred to as *standards-based education reform* (Burrello, Lashley, & Beatty, 2001; Nolet & McLaughlin, 2000).

Standards-based education reform is a policy response to the dissatisfaction with the performance of schools in the United States that has been growing in both the private and public sectors for a number of years (Nolet & McLaughlin, 2000). However, research has found that imposing higher content and performance standards coupled with high-stakes accountability measures actually leads to increased failure and dropout rates (Heubert & Hauser, 1999; Olson, 2000). A review of past efforts to raise standards gives credence to the fear that diploma graduation rates will decrease for students with disabilities who are held to these higher standards (Geenen &Ysseldyke, 1997; McDonnell, McLaughlin, & Morison, 1997; Ysseldyke & Thurlow, 1998). Youths with disabilities and those who are from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds seem to experience these unintended negative consequences at even higher rates than their nondisabled or majority peers. Numerous systemic factors perpetuate a cycle of failure for these students.

The introduction of standards-based education reform and accompanying high-stakes assessment has challenged the school-to-work and transition education community. Much debate has evolved regarding which of these education efforts would result in the best outcomes for adolescents and young adults with disabilities. Yet, undeniably, standards-based education reform and transition planning are interrelated, each having the goal of improving postschool outcomes for students. Depending on one's philosophy, these initiatives have even been interpreted as mutually incompatible. In reality, however, decision making about either one of these educational efforts influences decision making about the other. Figure 7.3 illustrates this interrelatedness. Interestingly, both standards-based education reform and transition services are the result of data that show that adolescents and young adults, particularly those with disabilities, are ill prepared for postsecondary education or employment. The debate over which initiative is best escalates when considerations of cultural and linguistic diversity are added, since students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds often experience poorer school and postschool success. Unfortunately, dialogue regarding cultural considerations has, for the most part, been swept under the carpet in this debate due to either ignorance of their importance or fear of the sensitivity of the conversation that might follow.

To ignore cultural considerations when planning transitions is akin to giving directions to someone who is about to travel when the advisor has no map and no experience in that city. The chances are that the savvy traveler will not listen and the novice traveler will get lost. Neither of these is consistent with the intentions of transition planning. Likewise, to ignore cultural considerations in implementing standards-based reform is equally reckless, particularly when most of the "reformers" and their educational decisions and policies reflect the majority culture.

Special Education as a Response to Diversity

Disability and Cultural Difference

Special education was created to respond to the unmet needs of students with disabilities. Although significant progress has been made over the past 30 years, special education has also often been used as a place for students whose learning needs and behaviors clash with school expectations. As a result, many students from ethnically diverse backgrounds have been steered into the special education system inappropriately. According to Grossman (1995), many students are placed in special education not because of true disabilities, but because culturally based social and academic expectations and behaviors differ from those of the dominant school culture. Latino Americans, African Americans, and American Indians are overrepresented in programs for students with disabilities. When low socioeconomic status and gender are added to ethnicity, the likelihood of culturally and linguistically diverse students being placed in special education programs is even higher (Sands, Kozleski, & French, 2000). For example, the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report
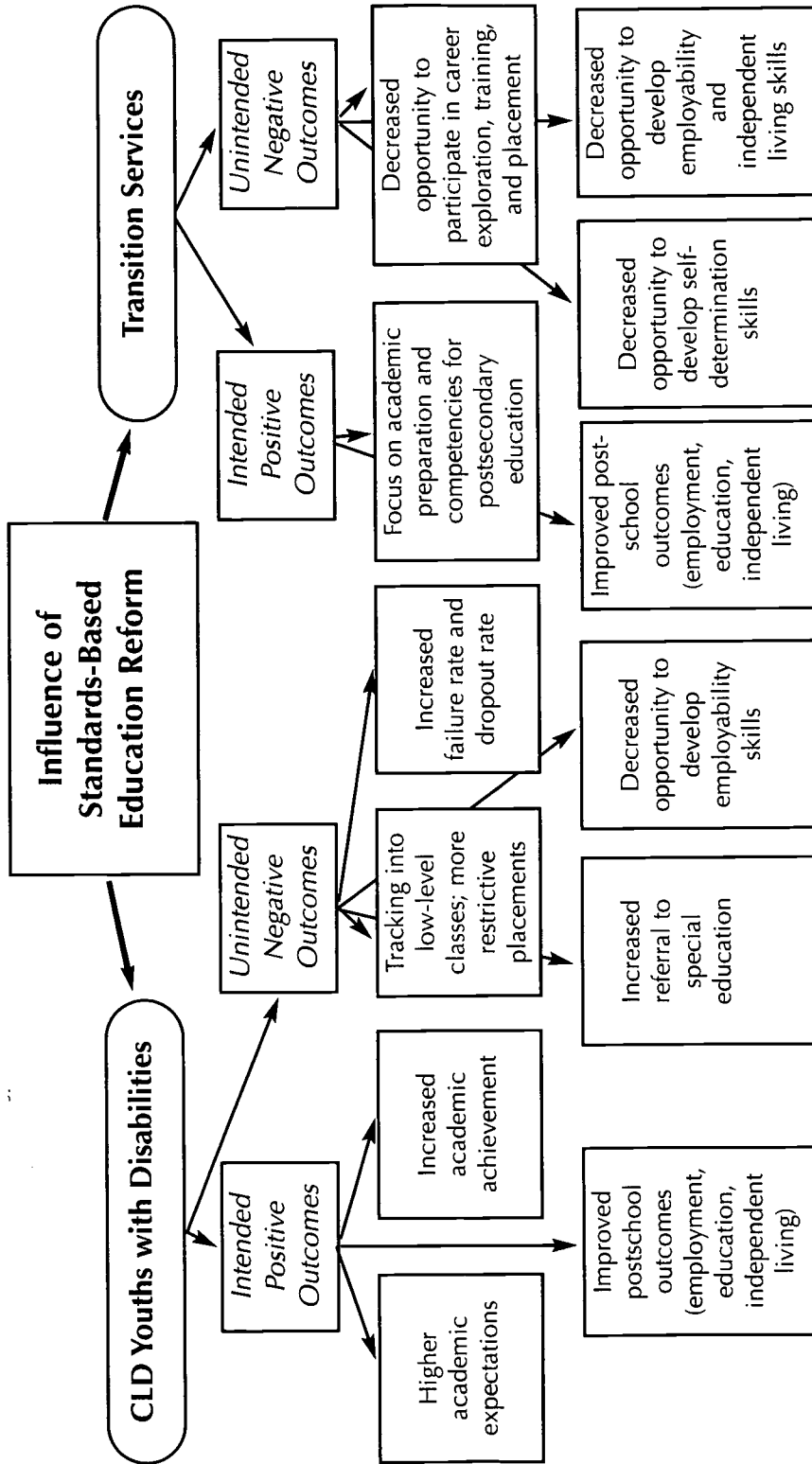
FIGURE 7.3
Influence of Standards-Based Reform on Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Youth with Disabilities and Transition

Minority Children in Gifted and Special Education, released on January 16, 2002, emphasizes poverty over ethnic bias as the reason children from diverse backgrounds are overidentified for special education and underidentified for gifted and talented programs. Other studies, such as the recent Harvard Civil Rights Project (2002), contend that it is equally important to recognize that bias influences how educators and psychologists perceive and assess children from diverse cultures. It is important to determine the role of bias, along with poverty, in the misidentification of children from diverse cultures.

The problem of overidentification of students of color and students from families of low socioeconomic status for special education services is a serious issue because participation in special education is correlated with increased underemployment and a large, unskilled labor market comprised of these populations. The issue of disproportional placement of culturally and linguistically diverse students in special education programs has relevance for each of the elements of standards-based education reform: curriculum standards, assessment, and accountability. Moreover, there are implications that emerge from these discussions that have particular application to the transition planning process that is required by IDEA.

Educational reformers need to ensure that a broad array of academic needs and cultural considerations of students receiving services from special education programs are considered in educational reforms, particularly for those who are multiply impacted As illustrated in Figure 7.4, students who are concomitantly impacted by challenges associated with disability, poverty, family contexts, and cultural and linguistic diversity (traditionally viewed as "minority" social status) experience cumulative and profound adverse effects from these influences on their learning and educational success (Williams & DeSander, 1999). The IEP/ITP planning process offers opportunities to address these needs through intra- and interagency collaboration that avoids fragmented and duplicated service delivery.

Role of Standards-Based Reform in Bridging the Cultural Divide

Content and Performance Standards

The promise of common content standards and performance standards includes raised expectations that in turn engender increased academic achievement. This promise applies to all students, including students with disabilities and students who are from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds. *Interestingly, the intended positive outcomes of standards-based education reform parallel the intended outcomes of transition planning: improved postschool outcomes in employment, education, and independent living.* Policymakers recognize that academic competence is paramount to full participation in the changing workplace. Employers seek employees with a strong work ethic who have the social skills to work with colleagues and the public (Minskoff & Demoss, 1994).

Research has demonstrated that students with disabilities who complete high school, have higher academic skills, and participate primarily in the general education curriculum achieve a more positive postschool status (Benz, Yovanoff, & Doren, 1997; U.S. Department of Education, 2000). One could
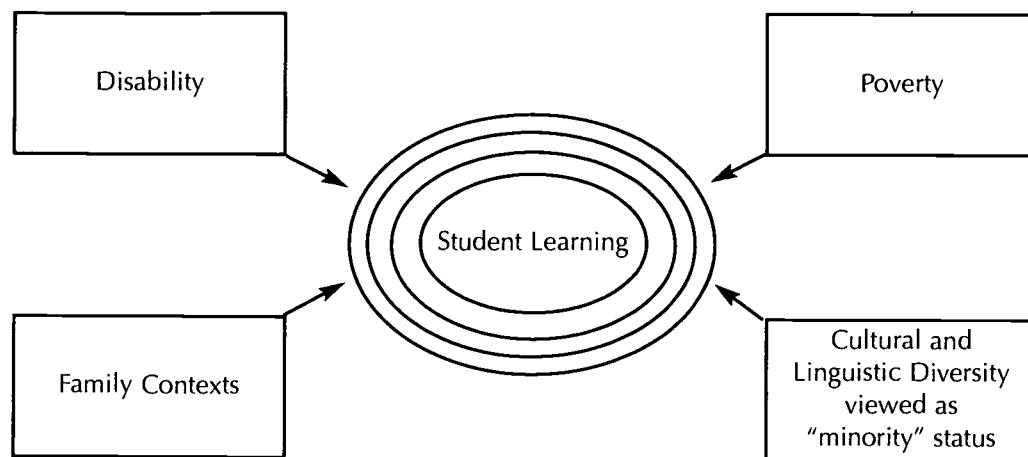
```
┌─────────────────┐                              ┌─────────────────┐
│                 │                              │                 │
│   Disability    │                              │     Poverty     │
│                 │                              │                 │
└─────────────────┘                              └─────────────────┘

                        Student Learning

┌─────────────────┐                              ┌─────────────────┐
│                 │                              │  Cultural and   │
│ Family Contexts │                              │ Linguistic      │
│                 │                              │ Diversity       │
└─────────────────┘                              │ viewed as       │
                                                 │ "minority" status│
                                                 └─────────────────┘
```

FIGURE 7.4
Factors That Affect Student Learning

argue that these findings lend support for promoting high content and performance standards for all students. However, achieving this promise demands that all children and youths be provided with world-class curricula and instruction. Mere access to an education—which is what civil rights legislation has guaranteed—is insufficient to level the playing field for classes of citizens who have been denied access and opportunity for extended periods of time. Culturally and linguistically diverse students with disabilities represent a class of citizens who have experienced multiple forms of limited access and opportunity and, by some arguments, continue to do so.

The National Research Council (NRC; Heubert & Hauser, 1999) identified an ongoing implicit practice of tracking that occurs in high schools across the country. Low-track classes fail to provide students with a high-quality curriculum and often are staffed with less effective teachers (Heubert & Hauser, 1999; Sanders, 2001). Programs for students with mild disabilities are often seen as a form of tracking and as offering a watered-down curriculum. Students of color are disproportionately overrepresented in classes for students with mental retardation or for students with emotional disabilities. Moreover, the NRC cited studies that substantiate an ongoing practice of counselors and administrators differentially placing students of color in lower track classes than their White or Asian counterparts who often also received lower test scores. Sadly, the NRC reported that "placement differences by race and class seem to occur whether test scores, counselor or teacher recommendations, or student and parent choices are the basis for the placement" (p.106). These low-expectations placements do not enable students to catch up, but serve to push them further behind. Therefore the promise of raised expectations and increased academic achievement is thwarted by systemic discriminatory practices based on race and class.

Accountability

Accountability, a key component of standards-based education reform, should serve as the watchdog that protects the underclass. The Individuals with

Disabilities Education Act requires school divisions and states to report assessment outcomes for students with disabilities by race and ethnicity. Such data analysis should prompt educators to examine what is needed systemically to improve outcomes for these students who have traditionally experienced the greatest degree of academic failure. To date, more emphasis has been placed on student accountability than on system accountability.

For example, "stop social promotion" has been a demand of the public and many educational pundits and has been integrated into the conversation regarding accountability systems. Grade retention becomes the arguable and simple alternative to social promotion. Unfortunately, simple solutions rarely address complex problems. Research has consistently shown little value in grade retention and found a high correlation between grade retention and school dropout. The NRC (Heubert & Hauser, 1999) cited a 70% likelihood of dropping out of school for students who were currently repeating a grade. A disproportionate number of culturally and linguistically diverse children and youths are retained after the age of 9. In addition, retention in one or more grades is common among students with disabilities, particularly culturally and linguistically diverse students with disabilities. Consequently, the rhetoric to stop social promotion, coupled with standards-based education reform policies may, in fact, serve to restrict attempts to create educational programs designed to increase individual achievement of these students. This contradicts the intent of IDEA and the IEP transition policy.

Assessment

High-stakes testing also represents a student-level accountability measure; increasingly, states are adding a high-stakes testing requirement as a barrier to receiving a standard diploma. According to the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS), national demographics and testing accountability measures pair up to create a disproportionate failure rate for African Americans and Hispanic Americans being held to high-stakes testing standards (Heubert & Hauser, 1999). Furthermore, the NELS found that high-stakes tests in eighth grade were highly correlated with increased dropout rates. Failure to complete high school or receive a diploma results in diminished employment options, decreased adult stability, and lowered civic participation (Heubert & Hauser, 1999). Again, culturally and linguistically diverse students with disabilities emerge as the most likely to experience these unintended consequences.

Standards-based education reformers have paid little attention to the assessment of students' readiness for adult living and employment, key elements of the IDEA transition initiative. Few states address standards related to adult living and employment, nor do they have any system of assessment or evaluation relating to long-term transition goals (see Williams, Chapter 5 in this book). Transition-related standards have not emerged as a benchmark for graduation, with the exception of some systems of alternate assessment intended only for a small percentage of the special education population. Students with disabilities, in particular, culturally and linguistically diverse students, often demonstrate their skills best through authentic assessment practices that allow for performance assessments. For many of these students

and their families, work experience and vocational education represent a key to postschool success. The narrowly defined standards-based education reform agenda potentially limits the options that all students have in choosing secondary school experiences that could lead to productive and independent adult lives.

Implications for Transition Planning to Improve Workplace Status

The intended outcomes from the provision of transition services for youths with disabilities parallel the intended outcomes for standards-based education reform, that of improving the postschool status of students with disabilities. The IDEA requirement of creating a statement of transition service needs focusing on a course of study beginning no later than age 14 challenges the IEP team to create the educational environment that will allow the student to accomplish his or her postschool education and employment goals. This moment in the transition planning process creates an opportunity to implement interventions for a 14 year old that could ameliorate school dropout. So far, IEP teams are not recognizing the importance of the dialog and discussion that need to occur. Given the statistics on risk factors related to students with disabilities from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, this component in the transition planning process is increasingly critical.

It is important for IEP transition planners to be aware of the red flags that signal an unintended secondary path for culturally and linguistically diverse youths with disabilities. These red flags include (a) placement in low-level track classes; (b) biased assumptions regarding long-term goals based on disability and cultural background; (c) patterns of retention; (d) truancy and alienation from school; and (e) a trend toward decreased support services at a time when more intensive remedial efforts are often warranted. Likewise, occupational goals and preparation standards should be high and consistent with labor demands for the area where the student intends to live upon completing his or her education.

Families are key partners in developing effective transition plans. *Students' needs, interests, and preferences—the required basis for transition plans— are inextricably tied to family social and cultural needs, interests, and preferences.* Yet, the evidence of successful transitions often translates to individual achievements, a value that may conflict with the norms of those cultures that value collective and community outcomes more than individual outcomes. For example, school-based IEP/ITP teams may experience conflict when promoting student independence when the family's cultural belief system about their adolescent child's future decision making differs. In reality, to experience economic and social success, students with disabilities from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds will need to possess the academic and social skills and understanding that are consistent with the mainstream culture of American society. These skills are critical for success in the multiple cultures in which these individuals will live, work, and play. It is essential that transition planners respect the culture of the family and assist culturally and linguistically diverse students with disabilities to use their beliefs and culture as strengths

for productive citizenship. Establishing positive relationships with these students' families prior to critical transition decision-making junctures will promote honest and frank dialog regarding how best to achieve the students' long-term transition goals (deFur, Todd-Allen, & Getzel, 2001).

Strategic Actions for Bridging the Cultural Divide

An inherent philosophical conflict exists between a system of standards that provides a means by which to separate individuals into "those who can" and "those who cannot" and the principle that disability does not diminish the right of individuals to participate in or contribute to society. As states revise their systems of standards and create alternatives for demonstrating students' skills, they must take cultural factors into consideration. The current systems of standards being developed in the states allow little room for students to demonstrate their skills for participating in, or contributing to, society. These restricted views of success may magnify the classism, racism, or "ablism" that exist as an undercurrent in our society. From a transition and cultural competence perspective, how can diversity be embraced when the social organization values only one set of standards? Examples of student performances that demonstrate standards while incorporating culture might include the following:

- Oral presentations in the home language and translated into English by the student.
- Demonstration of mathematics skills using alternative devices such as an abacus.
- Incorporation of traditional stories, songs, and dances into a history exhibit.
- Exhibition of weather patterns through traditional skills passed down through Native American culture.

Futurists predict that social and intellectual capital will become the primary economic value in 21st-century society (Marx, 2001). Standards that enable students to develop their knowledge skills, including skills of how to access and use knowledge, must be present. Most states have attempted to create such an essential and factual knowledge-based standard, in spite of the fact that information now doubles every few years. Now, equal attention must be devoted to developing the social capital whereby citizens of the future will have the skills to collaborate with one another to access the breadth and depth of available information. As the nation becomes increasingly diverse, professionals need to develop an understanding of cultural differences and an appreciation for learning from one another.

Education must hold itself accountable for creating an environment that maximizes the abilities of all students. Ideally, education should be expected to develop the individual talents and abilities of every student and ensure progress toward achieving individual standards that have been agreed upon. For students with disabilities, especially culturally and linguistically diverse students who are most at risk, this means assuming policies and practices that

maximize student achievement, rather than simply promoting access to free and appropriate education as the only benchmark of inclusive practices.

Accountability and standards that target effective and meaningful instruction do play a critical role in making the systemic changes needed to establish a performance-based environment for culturally and linguistically diverse students with disabilities. These high standards must apply to a range of quality-of-life outcomes that are congruent both with a student's needs to compete in this country's workforce and the cultural context of that student's everyday life. If the purpose of our schooling is to prepare students to live and work as citizens of this country to the best of their ability, then educational standards must address competencies beyond academic skills. Education must educate beyond the classroom into the community, and it must be designed to provide the support needed to reach these high levels of learning. There is a need to move beyond rhetoric to strategic action that will further the goals of transition and school-based educational reform. Table 7.1 lists recommendations for accomplishing these goals.

After hearing the parents' concerns, the members of the Anywhere School District Interagency Transition Planning Council looked around at each other and acknowledged the cultural divide that was present in this school policy advisory group. At a follow-up meeting held the following week, they looked at the district follow-up data, school completion data, suspension/expulsion data, state assessment findings, and transition service IEP recommendations and analyzed these data for evidence that might dispel the parents' perceptions. The data convinced the Council that they needed to take actions to counter the alarming findings. They recognized that systemic changes begin with policy analysis and development, capacity building comes with ongoing training, and accountability becomes the norm with a system of ongoing review and evaluation. The Council made the following recommendations:

- *Anywhere School District will develop an ongoing professional development plan for all school and adult agency personnel that will facilitate an understanding of the importance of cultural considerations in planning for the future with students and families.*

- *The Anywhere School District Interagency Transition Planning Council will expand or change representation on the Council to reflect the demographics of the school's special education population.*

- *Anywhere School District will develop a strategic plan, in concert with the community, to implement effective instructional alternatives and supports for students with disabilities who are culturally and linguistically diverse in an effort to facilitate meeting state and local standards.*

- *Anywhere School District will establish a Community and Family Advisory Committee to serve as a community liaison to the school board that can also keep the Transition Planning Council aware of emerging issues related to the evolving community demographics.*

- *The Anywhere School District Interagency Transition Planning Council will annually review outcome data relating to postschool success and prepare a report with recommendations to the school board and other adult agency governing bodies.*

TABLE 7.1
Recommendations for Integrating Standards-Based Education and Transition with Cultural Competence

Teacher-Directed	*System-Directed*
1. Cultural competence must be acknowledged and promoted as an essential skill for all educators and transition planning professionals. This should be evident in professional development planning.	1. The initial dialog on reform of a school or schools must consider impacts on all student categories at the onset.
2. Teachers should be explicitly trained in elements of cultural awareness and competence specific to the community in which they teach.	2. The role of partnerships with families, agencies, the community, and businesses in support of transition and education reform must be made tangible; measurable family and interagency collaboration goals need to be clearly defined.
3. Teachers should engage in ongoing partnerships and communication with families regarding sensitivity and awareness of culturally based issues.	3. The school environment must promote flexibility and adaptability (Nolet & McLaughlin, 2000). Transition planning should consider how to adapt the physical environment, instructional materials, and evaluation procedures to ensure success for students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.
4. Teachers should remain flexible, tolerant, and adaptable when working with diverse families and students.	
5. Teachers should conduct both formative and summative evaluations of the impact of standards-based education on culturally and linguistically diverse students. Appropriate modifications and accommodations must be addressed as ongoing considerations.	4. National, state, and local policy makers should regularly and publicly examine the unintended consequences of standards-based education reform on full access to an appropriate education, including transition planning, for culturally and linguistically diverse students with disabilities. Secondary transition experiences, including participation in the general curriculum for these students, are impacted by decisions made beginning with the students' entry into special education. These experiences may be thwarted by a failure to adequately address academic and social instructional needs throughout a student's school career. Policies must be implemented that prevent school failure for these students.
6. Teachers should have a broad working knowledge of appropriate community agencies and supports for culturally and linguistically diverse students.	
7. Teachers should have a broad working knowledge of existing policies and practices within the standards-based system.	

The Council thanked the parents for bringing these issues to their attention and decided to have an opportunity at each of their meetings for public comment regarding transition planning and services for youths and young adults with disabilities in the Anywhere School District community. The parents left the meeting and began discussing how to get more employers involved in creating job opportunities that offered job advancement for their young adult children with disabilities once they completed their education. Perhaps they will be back at the next meeting to continue to help bridge the cultural divide.

References

Benz, M. R., Yovanoff, P, & Doren, B. (1997). School to work components that predict postschool success for students with and without disabilities. *Exceptional Children, 63*, 151–166.

Burrello, L., Lashley, C., & Beatty, E. (2001). *Educating all students together: How school leaders create unified systems.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Carr-Ruffino, N. (2000). *Managing diversity: People skills for a multicultural workplace* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Thomson Executive Press.

DeFur, S., Todd-Allen, M., & Getzel, E. (2002). Parent participation in the transition planning process. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 24*(1), 19–36.

Geenen, K., & Ysseldyke, J. (1997). Educational standards and students with disabilities. *The Educational Forum, 61*, 220–229.

Grossman, H. (1995). *Special education in a diverse society.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Harvard Civil Rights Project. (2002). Minority children in special and gifted education. Washington, DC: National Academy Press

Heubert, J. P., & Hauser, R. M. (Eds.) and the National Research Council. (1999). *High stakes: Testing for tracking, promotion, and graduation.* Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Hodgkinson, H. (2000). *Secondary schools in the new millennium: Demographic certainties, social realities.* Washington, DC: National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Hofstede, G. (1980). *Culture's consequences: International differences in word-related values.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Lindsey, R., Robins, K., & Terrell, R. (1999). *Cultural proficiency: A manual for school leaders.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Lynch,E., & Hanson, M. (1998). *Developing cross-cultural competence: A guide for working with children and their families.* Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

Marx, G. (2001). Education children for tomorrow's world. *The Futurist, 35*(2), 43–48.

McDonnell, L. M., McLaughlin, M. J., & Morison, P. (Eds). (1997). *Educating one and all: Students with disabilities and standards-based reform.* Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Minskoff, E. H, & Demoss, S. (1994). Workplace social skills and individuals with learning disabilities. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 4*, 113–121.

National Academy of Sciences. (2002, January 16). *Minority children in gifted and special education.* Washington, DC: Author.

Nolet, V., & McLaughlin, M. J. (2000). *Accessing the general curriculum: Including students with disabilities in standards-based reform.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Olson, L. (2000, March 29). Study links dropout rate with course requirements. *Education Week, 19*, p. 6.

Samovar, L. A. (Ed.), & Porter, R. E. (1999). *Intercultural communication: A reader.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Sanders, W. (2001, June 29). *Value added assessment and research.* Paper presented at the What Matters Most conference of the William and Mary School Leadership Institute, Williamsburg, VA.

Sands, D., Kozleski, E., & French, N. (2000). *Inclusive education for the 21st century.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Simons, G., Vazquez, C., & Harris, P. (1993). *Transcultural leadership: Empowering the diverse workforce.* Houston: Gulf.

U.S. Department of Education. (2000). *Twenty-second annual report to Congress on the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.* Washington, DC: Author.

Williams, B., & DeSander, M. (1999). The impact of incongruent federal statutes on homeless and other special-needs students. *Journal for a Just and Caring Education, 5*(1), 34–60.

Ysseldyke, J. E., & Thurlow, M. L. (1998, April). *Accountability for the results of educating students with disabilities.* National Center for Educational Outcomes Assessment Conference Report. Available: www.coled.umn.edu/nceo

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

SHARON DEFUR is an Associate Professor of Special Education and Area Coordinator of Curriculum and Instruction in the School of Education at the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia. Prior to joining the faculty at William and Mary, Dr. deFur served as the Coordinator of Transition Services for the State of Virginia and she is a Past President of the CEC Division on Career Development and Transition. Her research interests include topics related to youths and young adults with disabilities and their successful transition from school to postschool environments, as well as the evaluation of effective personnel preparation initiatives.
E-Mail: shdefu@wm.edu

BRENDA TOLER WILLIAMS is an Associate Professor and Area Coordinator, Educational Policy, Planning and Leadership, in the School of Education, the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia. She has an extensive background in special education administration and university teaching. Her research involves examination of the roles and responsibilities of educational leaders in serving students who are at risk for school failure due to factors such as homelessness, disabilities, cultural or linguistic differences, or poverty.

8

The Role of Families of Adolescents with Disabilities in Standards-Based Educational Reform and Transition

Mary E. Morningstar

> I believe in all of our kids. I believe in what they can give this country. I'm looking out for my son's needs and I want certain things to happen in his life. But I also know that in order for him to be successful, other children need to be successful too. We're all in this together. (McLaughlin, Henderson, & Rhim, 1998)

Research examining the involvement of parents in general and special education appears to reach similar conclusions in both cases. That is, students, schools, families, and communities do better when families are partners with schools (Epstein, 1995; Halpern, Doren ,& Benz, 1993; Jesse, n.d.; Kohler, 1998; Pleet, Ripley, & McKelvey-Chik, 2000). Over the years, family involvement in schools has involved a dynamic exchange of roles, responsibilities, and perspectives that is gearing up for greater changes as we move forward with standards-based educational reform. The reality of today's political, educational, and societal pressures on public education has shifted the context within which parents of youths with disabilities must try to make sound educational decisions.

Federal and state standards-based reform policies such as Goals 2000: Educate America Act (P.L. 103-227) and the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (P.L. 107-40) represent responses to the public outcry for proof that educational outcomes for students, *including students with disabilities*, were improving

(Hanley-Maxwell, Phelps, Braden & Warren, n.d.; Morningstar, Kleinhammer-Trammill & Lattin, 1999). The central tenets of standards-based education—focusing on high expectations and holding schools accountable for student outcomes—has carried over into special education policies and practices (Buswell & Shaffner, 1999; McDonnel, McLaughlin, & Morison, 1997). Within the special education community, it is being argued that high expectations and standards for all students and the individualization of goals and instruction can be "complementary rather than conflictive" (Smith, Stodden, James, Fisher, & Pumpian, 1999. p. 134). This view promotes the stance that achieving the necessary balance between excellence and equity, particularly as it relates to youths with disabilities during transition, is achievable (Fried & Jorgensen, 1998; Sailor, in press; West, Leconte, King, Taymans, & Kochhar-Bryant, 2000).

This is the current environment within which families of youths with disabilities must now maneuver. Parents' role in educational decision making is at a critical juncture, particularly as it relates to accommodations and modifications for their children. Parent advocates are pressing for families of children with disabilities to become actively and genuinely involved in the standards-based reform efforts, understanding the importance of having these families and disability advocates take part in school restructuring (Buswell & Schaffner, 1999). For families, the added responsibilities imposed on them to make decisions that have such long-term consequences for their child adds another layer of "conceptual ambiguity." How can we balance excellence for all with individualized attention for those who need it (McDonnel et al., 1997, p. 2)?

This chapter focuses on the role of parents and families of youths with disabilities in secondary school programs in·the era of standards-based education (SBE). This is accomplished first by providing an overview of research related to parental involvement in secondary schools, including the benefits and barriers to parent–school collaboration during transition planning and services. The impact of standards-based educational reform on families and youths with disabilities is also discussed. Finally, strategies, resources, and information for involving parents in standards-based education and school reform are provided.

Parental Involvement in Schools

Defining parental involvement in schools seems most often to depend upon whose shoes you are standing in. Family members and educators often have differing perceptions of what is the best way for parents to be involved with schools. For example, teachers may define parental involvement as helping children with homework, while parents may see a role that includes being active decision makers in the school (Jesse, n.d.). However, research regarding parental involvement in general, and as it pertains to family members of children and youths with disabilities in particular, identify similar types of roles parents often want to or are forced to play in schools (Baker, 1997; Epstein, 1995; Pleet et al., 2000; Turnbull & Turnbull, 2000).

Parental involvement is as varied as the families and schools in each neighborhood and community. However, Joyce Epstein's seminal research on parental involvement is most often cited as the framework for describing the

---

CASE STUDY
Will Andrew Graduate?

Andrew is a hard-working 18-year-old young man with autism who attends a high school in Indiana. He receives assistance from the special education teacher in the resource room for extra help with math and English. Because Andrew and his family have high expectations for his academic achievement, with the help of the resource room staff and the classroom accommodations listed in his individualized education program (IEP) Andrew has thus far participated successfully in general education classes and is completing Indiana's "Core 40" program. This program requires students to take certain classes that add up to 40 course credits in order to graduate with a standard diploma. Although there are other options for an Indiana diploma, Andrew and his family felt that this program would best prepare him for his future. His dream is to go to college like his sister, Jenny, and eventually work at a natural history museum.

Lately, his mother, Michelle, has been concerned that Andrew will not reach his dreams for the future because the first step on this journey is that Andrew receive a high school diploma. For Andrew to receive a diploma like everyone else, he must not only maintain a grade point average of a C or better in all of his classes, but now must also pass the state's high-stakes graduation exit exam, I-STEP+. Although he is allowed to take the exam five times, Andrew took a practice test last spring and failed. This concerns both Andrew and Michelle. Michelle does not feel she knows all of the possible options that could be available to Andrew during the exam. She feels that on some days she knows more about what is required than his special education teachers. In fact, when I-STEP+ was started, she found out about it from the newspaper and her neighbors, rather than from the high school or the teachers. She has repeatedly expressed the concern that there was not enough planning during his IEP meeting last spring, and now it is getting close to time to take the test for real. Michelle thinks if she knew where to find more information she might be able to advocate for more specific exam accommodations for Andrew.

Note. From Nelson, L. G. L. (2001) *The Different Sides to High Stakes Testing.* Unpublished manuscript, The University of Kansas, Lawrence.

roles that parents play in school and is the basis for the National PTA framework for parent–school collaboration (National PTA, n.d.). Epstein's research has resulted in six types of parent roles: (a) being an effective parent; (b) establishing effective home–school communication; (c) volunteering at school; (d) supporting learning at home; (e) being partners in school governance and decision making; and (f) collaborating with the school and community (Epstein, 1995). More recently, these six types have undergone a process of redefinition, with particular emphasis being placed on addressing ongoing challenges that must be met in order to involve all families (National Network of Partnership Schools, 2000). A critical challenge is to involve parents who are often considered hard to reach—families with language barriers, with low socioeconomic status, living in inner-city areas, and with little formal education (White-Clark & Decker, 1996).

Parents of children with disabilities have taken an almost identical path as their counterparts whose children do not have disabilities. Their involvement in schools, however, is best understood within the historical context that has surrounded and, indeed, impinged upon families with children with disabilities (Turnbull & Turnbull, 2000). Despite clear mandates in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) for family involvement and equal participation, parents and professionals often experience difficulty in achieving cooperative working relationships, and families' views typically are not well represented (Goldberg & Kuriloff, 1991; Stineman, Morningstar, Bishop, & Turnbull, 1993; Todis & Singer, 1991). Too often, parents are relegated to the role of passive participants, particularly during transition planning (Gallivan-Fenlon, 1994; Hanley-Maxwell, Pogoloff, & Whitney-Thompson, 1998; Irvin, Thornin, & Singer, 1993; McNair & Rusch, 1991). This is particularly true when transition planning involves families from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, those who have low socioeconomic status, those with limited education, and those for whom English is their second language (Harry, Rueda, & Kalyanpur, 1999; Wehmeyer, Morningstar, & Husted, 1999).

Benefits of Parental Involvement

What families do on a day-to-day basis has a strong influence over student achievement and school success, regardless of the income or educational levels of the parents (Barton & Coley 1992; Liontos, 1992). When parents are involved in schools, students achieve more, exhibit more positive attitudes and behavior, have higher graduation rates, and are less likely to fall behind in schoolwork. If parents remain involved throughout high school, students make better transitions, maintain the quality of their work, and develop realistic plans for their future (Baker, 1997). As children get older, research related to the impact of home–school partnerships on the school success of adolescents is less clear (Ngeow, 1999). However, studies show a strong relationship between family involvement in school and increased school attendance of adolescents, lower dropout rates, higher assessment scores, improved student attitudes toward school, higher graduation rates, and greater enrollment in higher education (Catsambis & Garland, 1997). Without a doubt, to effect long-lasting gains for students, parent involvement programs must be well planned, inclusive, and comprehensive. In fact, programs that are designed to involve parents in full partnerships often result in long-term positive outcomes for children from diverse cultural backgrounds (Baker, 1997; Sanders, 1997; Sanders, Epstein, & Connors-Tadros, 1999).

Influence of Family Involvement on Youths with Disabilities

During the transition from school to adult life, families have proven to be an essential element in the success of students with disabilities (Kohler, 1993; McNair & Rusch, 1991; Morningstar, Turnbull, & Turnbull, 1995; Wehman, 2001). Once a student leaves school, the primary means of support, guidance, and advocacy often becomes the family. In fact, family involvement has been identified as one of the few empirically substantiated determinants of success during transition (Kohler, 1993). Compelling new data are starting to emerge

---

CASE STUDY

Andrew's mother and father, Michele and Richard, have felt that since Andrew start-ed at the high school they have not had the same level of connection with his school program and experiences. The last few IEP meetings have included discus-sions about transition, but they sense that the special education teachers really don't think Andrew will achieve his goals. The more they try to communicate and support Andrew in his vision for his future, the more resistant the teachers seem. At the last meeting, Andrew's dad felt like he had to "get in a few faces" to get the accommo-dations they thought Andrew needed. His mother tried to smooth things over. She didn't want the school perceiving them as overly demanding parents. She's been warned by her friend from the autism support group who had a son at the high school a few years back that if they asked for too much they would be labeled as having a "reputation for trouble." Their main connection for information about what's happening at the high school is their oldest daughter, Jenny, who graduated last year. Also, Michelle's sister has a son there who is just a year behind Andrew. They often share information about what's happening in school, especially now that everyone seems so uptight about improving the school's test scores. They know that more and more families are seeking accommodations.

---

indicating that students with disabilities who were rated as having high parental involvement were more likely to achieve positive adult outcomes (Pleet et al., 2000; Wagner, Blackorby, Cameto, Hebbeler, & Newman, 1993).

The benefits of active family involvement during transition are evident in many areas of a young person's life. To begin with, research indicates that if families are involved during transition planning, then the overall quality of the transition plan is improved (McNair & Rusch, 1991). A growing body of research attests to the importance of family involvement as a critical factor in achievement of postschool outcomes such as employment, postsecondary edu-cation, and living and participating in the community (Halpern et al., 1993; Heal & Rusch, 1995; Kohler, 1998; Kohler & Chapman, 1999; Morningstar, 1997; Rusch & Millar, 1998). In fact, youths with disabilities have described the pos-itive impact their families have played in ensuring successful adult lives after high school (Morningstar et al., 1995). Clearly, the more involved families are in the lives of their young adults with disabilities, the more successful out-comes are achieved and maintained.

Barriers to Parental Involvement in Schools

If family involvement is so important, why isn't more of it happening? From the parents' point of view, barriers to family involvement include limited time, uncertainty about their roles in schools, cultural barriers, and lack of a sup-portive school environment (Baker, 1997; U.S. Department of Education, 1994). Table 8.1 summarizes the barriers to parental involvement.

TABLE 8.1
Barriers to Parental Involvement

Barriers	What Research Has Shown
Time Constraints • Both parents working • Latchkey children • Teachers strapped for time	– There has been a rise in two-breadwinner families, one-parent families, and the need for family members to hold more than one job. – A total of 66% of employed parents with children under 18 say they do not have enough time for their children (Families and Work Institute, 1994). – Often, children are left at home alone and unsupervised after school. – Working parents have limited time for household duties. – Teachers are strapped for time. Although some would like to make home visits to families or talk more with students' parents, many teachers are parents themselves with similar time constraints.
Uncertainty of Role Among Parents and Teachers • Parents unsure of role • Parents unprepared for roles • Parents want guidance from school • Teachers feel unprepared to work with families	– Many parents are unsure how to help their children learn (National Commission on Children 1991). – Some are simply not prepared to be parents. The number of teenage parents has risen dramatically in recent years (Snyder & Fromboluti 1993). – Parents may have had bad experiences with school and are reluctant to return to school, or they feel intimidated and unsure about the value of their contributions compared with those of a teacher. – Many parents say they would be willing to spend more time on homework or other learning activities with their children if teachers gave them more guidance (Epstein 1987; Henderson, Marburger, & Ooms 1986). – Teachers also need guidance. Very few states require extensive coursework or inservice training in working with families (Radcliffe, Malone, & Nathan 1994). Few teacher preparation programs address techniques for communicating with families. – Many teachers and school staff simply do not know how to involve parents in their children's learning.
Cultural Barriers • Language difficulties • Low-income families are undereducated • Conflicting values with school • Negative school experiences	– Language barriers may be a special problem for low-income families who have little or no education themselves. – Since the 1980s, the number of poor Hispanic and Asian immigrant children has increased dramatically (Morra 1994). – Families have different cultural values associated with schools, teaching, and their own role in their children's education. – Family members who speak English but have little education often have difficulty in communicating with schools because their life experiences and perspectives are so different (Comer 1988; Moles 1993).

continues

TABLE 8.1 - *Continued*

Barriers	*What Research Has Shown*
Lack of a Supportive Environment • single-parent families on the increase • effects of poverty and erosion of neighborhoods and communities • unclear, conflicting or missing school policies reflecting parental involvement • employer inflexibility	− More parents face the difficult task of raising their children alone, and more children than at any time since 1965 live in poverty (Children's Defense Fund 1994). − Low-income parents have less contact with schools than do their better-off counterparts (Moles 1993). They need support from all sectors of the community if they are to become more involved in their children's education. − Schools need to establish clear policies on family involvement and reach out to all parents on a continuing basis, providing personal contact, literature and classes on parenting, literacy training, and parental resource centers. − Religious and civic organizations need to encourage parents to guide the growth of their children. Communities also must work with families to make the streets safe for children and provide constructive after-school and summer experiences. − Employers need to be supportive of their employees who are parents, allowing more flexibility in work schedules as well as more options for part-time employment.

Note. From *Strong Families, Strong Schools.* (1994). U.S. Department of Education. [online]. Available: http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu/families/strong/key_research.html.

Barriers at the Secondary School Level

As children move through the middle school years and into high school, not only does parental involvement decrease, but the nature of this interaction changes drastically (Catsambis & Garland, 1997). For example, Epstein and Lee (1995) determined that during the middle school years and into high school, families report possessing little information about school programs, very poor communication with the schools, and minimal contact. In effect, as students enter the secondary years, families often become isolated and disconnected from the school community (Catsambis & Garland, 1997). Caplan, Hall, Lubin, and Fleming (1997) have reported several barriers to involvement at the secondary level, including the desire among adolescents for more autonomy, the fact that families live farther from high schools, and the fact that the complex and impersonal nature of secondary schools does not allow for ease of communication with teachers. In addition, these researchers noted that parents are rarely encouraged and supported by high schools to discuss with their teenage children issues such as school coursework, important school decisions, or plans for the future. In fact, they indicated that there may even be a correlation between low parent involvement and dropout rates. Students who dropped out reported that their parents rarely attended school events or helped with homework and were more likely to respond to poor grades with punishment.

Barriers to Parents of Youths with Disabilities During Transition

Several factors, individually and collectively, have been identified as creating barriers to family–professional collaboration during transition. Factors such as professional and family misperceptions, limited and conflicting expectations, lack of opportunity, and stress during transition are listed in Table 8.2 along with potential remedies (Morningstar et al., 1999).

Addressing the needs of culturally diverse families and students during transition requires professionals to reexamine their assumptions about transition services, how to plan for the future, and expectations for adult outcomes (Harry & Kalyanpur, 1994). What often emerges is a clash between professional expectations for adult outcomes (e.g., working in the community, living independently) and how the family views the future, thereby leading to an undermining of the family's trust in schools (Harry, Allen, & McLaughlin, 1995). Once a pattern of family mistrust and professional misperception is established, it is hard to break, especially since few educators have had any formal training in working with families, particularly those from multicultural backgrounds (Harry, Grenot-Scheyer, Smith-Lewis, Park, Xin, & Schwartz, 1995). The good news is that researchers and practitioners have begun to develop strategies to promote a posture of cultural reciprocity for ensuring that cultural diversity is honored and respected and at the same time guaranteeing that students with disabilities are being provided with effective transition planning and services (Kalyanpur & Harry, 1999; Harry, Kalyanpur, & Day, 1999).

Building meaningful involvement of families requires that schools invite their support and involvement at different stages during the transition process. In a research report, Sanders and colleagues (1999) were interested in determining whether it is possible to increase parental involvement at the secondary level for all parents, including those from low-income and culturally and linguistically diverse families. They concluded that when high schools develop partnership programs that include opportunities for different types of parental involvement (i.e., Epstein's Six Types described earlier), families respond favorably. Their research indicated that family attitudes toward school are positively influenced by comprehensive parental involvement programs and that school programs can influence and increase parental involvement. This research is just beginning to be translated into the field of transition, and the initial results are encouraging (Pleet et al., 2000).

Certainly it is important to consider the impact of secondary school reform and transition upon the family as a whole rather than just focusing on the needs of the student. Viewing the family as a system allows professionals to keep in mind how pressure imposed on any one member affects the family as a whole (Turnbull & Turnbull, 1996). In addition, educators must develop ways to listen and engage families (Hanley-Maxwell et al., 1998). Too often, professionals in their role as "experts" act without considering or including feedback from families. Inviting the involvement of family members must take into account more than just inclusion at school meetings. Educators can facilitate family involvement during transition by (a) asking families how they want to be involved and respecting this expressed level of involvement; (b) creating comprehensive school programs that incorporate the role of families; (c) viewing extended family members as potential contributors; and

TABLE 8.2
Barriers to and Strategies for Family Involvement in Transition Planning

Barriers to Family Involvement	Strategies to Increase Family Involvement
Professional and Family Misperceptions Professionals often characterize families as either uninvolved or overly involved in the transition planning process. Parents often give professionals a free hand in transition planning. Highly involved parents often develop a reputation as being difficult. For families, misperceptions may range from distrust or and lack of honesty with professionals about the family's needs to an overreliance on professionals to solve all the problems.	**Redefine Roles** Old assumptions about roles and expectations must change. Professionals should consider the family's views and encourage participation at a level that meets the family's needs. Professionals must move from the role of "expert" to one of "partner." In turn, families need to move from the passive "recipient" role to one in which they are supported to be active in the decision-making process. The family's knowledge and experiences should be acknowledged and utilized throughout the transition planning.
Limited and Conflicting Expectations Parental interactions with professionals during transition are often viewed as stressful and negative. The expectations parents hold regarding their child's future can cause barriers during transition planning. On the one hand, some families hold limited expectations for their adolescents with disabilities, perhaps due in part to the limited opportunities and services available. On the other hand, families who want a future for their son or daughter that is different from what is currently offered by service providers may be in conflict with professionals or viewed as having unrealistic expectations when planning for these future adult outcomes.	**Provide Information Early and Throughout Transition Planning** To reduce stress and uncertainty during transition, families need information about the adult services available in their community. Information should be presented in a way that families can understand, especially about the eligibility requirements of each agency. Families may need to hear the same information more than once from people they know and trust, so communicating with families should begin early and continue throughout the transition years. A successful method of conveying information is to establish parent-to-parent connections so that families get information from other families.
Lack of Opportunity Families report being left out of transition planning irrespective of their desire to be more involved. Typically, when transition planning occurs, it is at a time and place convenient to school professionals, often conflicting with parental work schedules. In addition, family members do not always receive accurate and comprehensive information about the transition planning process. These families are at a distinct disadvantage when involved in planning meetings simply because they lack information.	**Create New Opportunities to Collaborate** To effectively meet the needs of students and families, school professionals must reexamine how transition meetings operate. The most effective elements from person-centered planning and self-determination models should be included in transition individualized education program (IEP) meetings. The IEP meetings must ensure the active participation of students and families and support the development of self-determination in transition planning and implementation.

continues

TABLE 8.2 - *Continued*

Barriers to Family Involvement	Strategies to Increase Family Involvement
Stress During Transition	**Develop New Skills**
Adolescence is a time of stress for all families, but especially for families with young adults with disabilities. Unique concerns of families during transition include (a) anxiety over the impending end to the security of mandated educational services, (b) uncertainty regarding the availability and eligibility requirements of community services, and (c) a lack of clarity about the changes in adult roles and responsibilities for their adult child with disabilities.	Taking control of the planning process is an important aspect of transition. Students and families often talk about how transition continues long after school services end. Many students and families will continue to be involved in individualized planning meetings as a part of adult service systems. Therefore, it makes sense that schools develop processes by which families and young adults with disabilities can develop the skills necessary to actively participate as an equally contributing member of their IEP (and future individualized planning) meetings.

Note. Adapted from "Using successful models of student-centered transition planning and services for adolescents with disabilities," by M. E. Morningstar, P. J. Kleinhammer-Tramill, & D. L. Lattin (1999). *Focus on Exceptional Children, 31*(9), 1–19. Reprinted by permission.

(d) helping families and students to connect with needed community services (Wehmeyer et al., 1999).

Standards-Based Educational Reform and Families: Multiple Challenges

As discussed earlier in this chapter, the topic of school reform has commanded considerable attention over the past 20 years, the last 10 of which have brought an increased focus on two major elements of reform: standards and accountability. This process has, in effect, caused many educators, family members, researchers, and policymakers to "rethink their educational and management practices" if students are to have a real chance to excel (Hansel, 2000, p. 1).

Probably the biggest challenge facing current school reform efforts is the underlying question "How can schools create comprehensive, coherent educational programs and meet diverse, individual learning needs?" ("Meeting all Students' Learning Needs," 2001, p. 1). One response has been the formation of the U.S. Department of Education's Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) program in 1997. CSRD awards funds to local schools with large numbers of students from low-income backgrounds to promote school-wide improvement plans. There are specific core elements that must be included in a CSRD school reform plan; one of the nine elements is increasing parental involvement. To date, more than 2,000 local schools have received funding from CSRD and numerous models of school reform have been established. Yet, there remains an overall lack of commitment among local schools and national reform models to enhance parental involvement. In fact, the National PTA revealed that of the 12 most popular school reform models, none had significant parental involvement components or encompassed more than

---

CASE STUDY

Even attending transition meetings at school is hard for Andrew's dad, Richard. He dropped out of school when his mother died in order to help his father with the family plumbing business. He wasn't too upset, really, since he never liked school. He always felt that in his school, the teachers were only interested in those kids who were going to college, you know, the ones from the good side of town. So school left him with a bad taste in his mouth. He prefers to let his wife go alone, and only when she is really worried about a specific meeting will he attend. He doesn't want his kids to have the same experiences as him. That's why he is pushing for all of his kids to go on for more education, if they want to, including Andrew. The only one at school who seems to understand is the guy who is supposed to make sure that this thing called "transition" happens for Andrew. He even came over to their house last summer before school started to talk with them about Andrew's dreams for the future. Yeah, that's where this crazy idea about going to the University came from. But as long as Andrew is happy then he can go along with it.

---

one of the six National PTA standards for parental involvement (DiNatale, 2001).

Why is it so difficult to enhance parental involvement within standards-based educational reform, particularly at the secondary level? A major problem is that parents have been disengaged from the entire discourse around standards-based education reform. This may be due in part to the complexity of the issues surrounding standards-based education. Educators and school administrators, especially special education teachers who are often left out of the planning process, may struggle in fully understanding the intricacies of standards-based education and therefore may not feel confident in discussing the issues with outside community groups and particularly with families (Johnson & Rusch, 1993; McLaughlin, Henderson, & Rhim, 1998).

Parental Backlash to High-Stakes Assessment

Parents who have refused to have their children participate in state-wide assessments have been described as "unlikely revolutionaries . . . who are leading a rebellion against the drive for more and tougher standardized assessment tests" ("In N.Y., Putting Down Their Pencils," 2001, p. A01). It has been reported that over 60% of eighth-graders from Scarsdale Middle School, New York, boycotted the state-mandated tests. Parental rebellion against standardized testing is growing, and not just in wealthy suburban communities. Boycotts have occurred in other communities in New York, as well as in New York City, where 35 alternative public high schools are fighting the new state requirement tying graduation to high-stakes tests. Additional states in which parents and students alike are refusing to participate in state-required testing include Michigan, California, Maryland, Virginia, and Massachusetts.

Parental backlash is not confined to suburban communities. In fact, the Family Involvement Network of Educators (FINE) described how African American and Latino families from the Boston Public Schools are organizing

against Massachusetts' battery of high-stakes tests. Larry Ward, the founder of the Coalition for Authentic Reform in Education (CARE) started holding "house parties" to bring the issues of high-stakes testing to African American and Latino communities. Because of differing cultural viewpoints, this often proved challenging. However, the ultimate consequences facing families from culturally and linguistically diverse and low-income communities brought the two groups together: "Not until families see results, realize their kids will not pass and many of their hopes for the future will be dashed if it depends on this single test, does change start to happen" ("Parent Perspective," p. 3).

Lack of Engagement of Parents of Students with Disabilities

Parental reaction to testing includes parents of students with disabilities. Data from the most recent National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) survey of state directors of special education regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in assessment and accountability systems hints at such negative parental reactions (Thompson & Thurlow, 2001). While the overall report indicated several encouraging trends, the data related to parents of youths with disabilities was mixed.

Only a small number of states indicated that a positive outcome of participation in standards, assessments, and accountability was high levels of awareness by parents about standards, assessments, and accommodations as well as increased expectations for students. Perhaps the most compelling data reported from this survey were that policies in 12 states allowed *parental refusal* as a reason for students with disabilities to be excused from assessment participation and 10 states allowed *student absenteeism*. While it is not clear from the data how many students with disabilities are excluded for these reasons, a comment from one director is cause for concern: "'In theory,' no one is excused, but 'in reality' there are students who are absent and do not make up the test" (Thompson & Thurlow, 2001, p. 8).

Additional concerns raised by parents include feeling disenfranchised and distrustful of the experiences students with disabilities are having in schools. The end result is that parents may have difficulty in understanding and may not consider inclusion in school reform efforts a priority (Buswell & Schaffner, 1999; Thurlow, Elliott, & Ysseldyke, 1998). Just like their counterparts in general education, parents of students with disabilities often feel excluded from educational decisions because they may be perceived as not knowledgeable of the issues and lacking any power over funding streams (Buswell & Schaffner, 1999). However, it is critical for parents to understand the importance of standards-based reform and the roles they can play in ensuring that all students are involved (Vohs, Landau, & Romano, 1999). Ways to provide information and support will be discussed later in this chapter.

Conflicting Expectations: Individual Needs Versus One Curriculum for All

All families are experiencing a new set of ground rules regarding the educational environment within which they now find themselves. However, the

issues related to individualized rights and protections under IDEA add complexity to how students with disabilities fit into school reform and the role that parents must play with regard to making decisions about student participation in accountability measures (Buswell & Schaffner, 1999; McDonnel et al., 1997; McLaughlin et al., 1998). Some parents and special educators are fearful that students with disabilities will lose the special rights and safeguards to which they are entitled under IDEA. Parents and teachers may not fully understand the importance of the present shift in policies from IEP compliance to student accountability. Parents and other IEP team members will need support to convert from thinking solely about the needs of a single child to understanding the new constraints influencing schools. In other words, parents must now consider their child's access to the general curriculum, how such access impacts his or her needs pertaining to progress in this curriculum, and his or her inclusion in state and district accountability systems (Vohs & Landau, 1999).

Understanding the role that parents of children with disabilities will play in the new environment of special education and standards-based education must take into account their unique roles as advocates, decision makers, and monitors of their child's educational program (McDonnel et al., 1997). The new set of responsibilities and decisions about standards-based education may pose a significant barrier to parental involvement, especially for culturally and linguistically diverse families and those from low-income backgrounds. The complexity of these new decisions will most certainly place even greater demands on all parents in terms of decision making, participation, and information and training needs (Buswell & Schaffer, 1999; McDonnel et al., 1997; Vohs et al., 1999).

Closing the Gaps

A recent report of an Office of Special Education Programs-sponsored panel of experts identified the gaps in current practices related to standards-based reform and students with disabilities, including barriers to families and students (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). The gaps that most directly relate to families are shown in Table 8.3.

There is a new sense of urgency to bring parents up to speed on the critical issues of standards-based education and the new challenges that it brings to families and youths with disabilities. Regulatory language promoting student inclusion in standards, assessments, and accountability systems will only go so far to remedy the poor academic and postschool outcomes that have persisted for youths with disabilities and their families. Given the variety of parental responses to the more controversial elements of standards-based education such as high-stakes testing, it is even more urgent that families receive the kind of information and assistance that will most benefit their decisions. The IEP team, and parents in particular, will need to balance individualization of student programs with these new demands. It is fair to say that the best solutions have yet to be discovered and will not be until families have an equal place at the school reform table—at national, state, and local levels.

TABLE 8.3
Gaps in the Implementation of Standards-Based Reform for Families

Identified Gap	Description
1. Lack of communication across multiple systems	Currently, there is no clear-cut system for communicating among general education, special education, and parents about the issues regarding academic standards and how they apply to students with disabilities, and how best to measure student outcomes.
2. Attitudinal barriers to inclusion of students with disabilities in accountability systems	Due in part to lack of information about the role and authority of the IEP [individualized education program] team to determine appropriate accommodations, the special education system is often viewed as rigid, inflexible, and overly legalistic, and therefore, separate from general education.
3. Lack of understanding of accountability systems	In practice, teachers, parents and students do not see the alignment between standards, assessment measures, and curriculum and instructional strategies. This is due in part to [the fact that] teachers (especially special education teachers) do not have a good grasp of how standards-based reform all fits together.
4. Few organized efforts to inform the public	The media tend to report only negative information and test scores, rather than broad descriptions of SBR. There is a lack of understanding of what standards are, their purpose, and how to gauge outcomes and achievement. The general public does not understand how students with disabilities fit within the accountability process.
5. Parents feel disenfranchised from special education and school systems in general	Parents who have had negative interactions with schools are often distrustful of the experiences students with disabilities are having in schools as they relate to SBR. This is particularly problematic among disadvantaged and minority families and communities.
6. Information about successful models of participation not reaching the general public	Information about participation of students with disabilities in SBR is not reaching families, special education, and the general public. This is due in part to the limited information provided and disseminated by national training and information (e.g., Parent Training Information Centers, Regional Resource Centers, etc.).

Note. From *Record of the Expert Strategy Panel on Standards-Based Reform and Students with Disabilities,* U.S. Department of Education (2001, April 13). Washington, DC: Office of Special Education Programs.

Family Involvement in Standards-Based Education

Why should families of youths with disabilities be a part of standards-based education? The answer to this becomes a matter of perspective. The shorter and narrower response is, Because it's the law. The 1997 Amendments to IDEA put students with disabilities squarely in the middle of standards-based education reform. Regardless of state and district policies, whether a student with disabilities will be included in standards-based education, to what degree this inclusion will be, and the level and type of accommodations or modifications hinges almost entirely upon the individual decisions made by each IEP team. As members of the IEP team, families must make informed decisions about

their child's inclusion in state and district standards, assessment, and account-ability systems, and perhaps more critically, they must clearly understand the consequences of such decisions.

Focusing only on compliance with the law, however, will not achieve the intended outcomes of IDEA—that is, the transition to postsecondary educa-tion, employment, and living and participating in the community. A broader response to this question, then, becomes this: Families need to be involved in standards-based education to keep the focus on better outcomes for all stu-dents. Because schools can no longer do the job alone, they have a powerful incentive to engage families in improving student achievement. In fact, a clear response to this question is: "No longer is it acceptable to blame students, their families, and poor neighborhoods for low scores—schools must accept the responsibility to educate all children" (Henderson & Raimondo, 2001, p. 2). Equally important to families is ensuring that students with disabilities are included in not only the academic curriculum, but also the informal curriculum and the culture of school life, particularly at the secondary level (Ryndak, Downing, Jaqueline, & Morrison, 1995; Tashie, Malloy, & Lichtenstein, 1999). Students with disabilities need both sets of interactions, skills, and relation-ships to be fully prepared for adult life (Colley & Jamison, 1998;. Mooney & Phelps, n.d.).

The problem for families involved in educational decision making for stu-dents with disabilities is that there is a dichotomy between the broader vision for schools and communities and the more circumscribed (and often unwant-ed) role of enforcing compliance with the law. Proponents advocating for including students with disabilities in standards-based education have argued that the old way of developing IEP goals (i.e., focusing only on the needs of the youth with disabilities in isolation from the general curriculum) is not syn-chronized with the content and performance standards embodied in the com-mon curriculum (Hanley-Maxwell et al., n.d; West et al., 2000). Indeed, the Committee on Goals 2000 and the Inclusion of Students with Disabilities was very clear about this dilemma for parents. Their report insisted that to partici-pate meaningfully, parents would need in-depth knowledge of the various aspects of standards-based education (McDonnel et al., 1997).

Information Resources

The added responsibilities and burdens of gaining the knowledge and skills needed to make effective decisions in this new era of school reform and stan-dards-based education may seem overwhelming. However, we are starting to see a growth in easy-to-use information and resources available for teachers and parents. The materials developed thus far that meet this need for informa-tion, while small in number, are specifically designed to be "usable to the extreme" (Thurlow et al., 1998, p. v). Probably the most current and compre-hensive source for information directly targeting family members of children and youths with disabilities is Parents Engaged in Education Reform (PEER), a project of the Federation for Children with Special Needs. Of the resources available from PEER, the most straightforward and easy to use are the Parent Information Briefs and the PEER Fact Sheets. These include a topical series on

how families of children with disabilities can become involved in standards-based reform efforts.

While the PEER materials and others like them are a step in the right direction, these products appear to be geared toward a group of families who are well educated and familiar with how to participate in policy development and advocacy groups. We have yet to see reliable and socially validated resources geared toward the large percentage of families who have neither the skills to be involved nor the desire to focus on advocating beyond the immediate and direct needs of their children with disabilities. Families from culturally and linguistically diverse and low-income communities and families who have other, more pressing, needs must be supported in other ways. It is imperative that teachers and other support personnel (e.g., social workers, transition coordinators, guidance counselors) be knowledgeable about the reform efforts taking place in schools and be able to communicate these efforts to the families of youths with disabilities.

Unlocking Parent Potential to Address Transition and Self-Determination: Where Do We Start?

There are some specific roles that families can play related to their responsibilities on the IEP team. First, families can help to analyze and direct the results from standards-based assessments into strategic future goals. This may include focusing on their children's mastery of content and performance standards as these reflect transition goals and objectives. As we have seen throughout this chapter, families bring unique perspectives and priorities to the table. They can offer insights about their children related to assessment results as well as about transition goals. In fact, a second and critical role for families is to ensure a balance between transition outcomes and standards-based education. In other words, families can balance the individual needs of their children with the collective need to have their children included in reform efforts. This will most certainly involve participating in decisions about which accommodations will be needed for their children to be included in state and district assessments. It may also involve making decisions about the consequences of choosing alternative approaches and modifications to their children's mastery of content and performance standards, particularly if high-stakes testing is involved. In the context of self-determination, families and students ultimately are the ones to decide about opting out of high-stakes testing, and they must fully understand the ramifications of such decisions.

How do educators help to facilitate this new level of involvement and self-determination of families in standards-based education? First and foremost, they need to educate families about content and performance standards and how their children can master these standards. This requires special education staff to be involved in all aspects of standards-based education, including the processes schools use to make decisions about test results and aligning standards with curriculum, instruction, and assessment approaches. A critical role that special educators can play is to encourage schools to develop authentic assessment approaches that include alternative means of mastery of content

---

CASE STUDY

Last week, Andrew and his mother met with the transition coordinator and one of the resource room teachers. The teachers had just been to a workshop and learned about some new strategies for taking the exit exam. They offered to meet with Andrew and his mom to work through some of their concerns and to help them better understand the testing process. The teachers explained to them about the different types of assessment accommodations like having Andrew take the test in a nice quiet place so that he won't be so distracted. Michelle knew that this would work well, since he uses this strategy already in some of his classes when he has to take tests. They also shared information about other types of accommodations and had Andrew and Michelle fill out a checklist about different testing requirements, such as the setting, timing, scheduling, presentation, and testing responses and how these might relate to Andrew. It really helped to do this, because they discovered that some of the possible accommodations hadn't been used with Andrew when he took and failed the practice I-STEP+. At the end of this meeting, the group realized that in order for Andrew to be allowed to use these accommodations, they would have to reconvene the IEP team in order to include these in Andrew's IEP. This process really helped Andrew and his family in relieving some of the pressures they were feeling. Now the family could focus on the next phase of Andrew's life, first a job for this summer and then looking for the right college that will be able to support Andrew. They even gave Michelle a sheet with a few suggestions for how she and the rest of the family can help Andrew prepare for the I-STEP+. In fact, Michelle is thinking this would be a good thing for Jenny to help out with, since she is home on break.

---

standards, such as student projects, portfolios, and presentations. Families of youths with disabilities can and should be involved in this process, particularly if they are members of site-based management teams. Therefore, a second role for special educators is to advocate that families of students with disabilities be involved and included on such state, district, and local decision-making teams.

Transition educators must also support families to be involved as equal members of the IEP team. Team members must encourage families to voice their opinions regarding which accommodations to use with their children for specific standards and assessments. This may also include working with families to translate their children's results from standards-based assessment measures into reasonable transition goals. This may prove more difficult than teams may anticipate, since research indicates that there is a paucity of policy, guidance, and oversight of IEP teams about how to make decisions about accommodations (McLaughlin et al., 1998).

One excellent source for providing both teachers and families with easy-to-use information specifically about assessment issues is *Testing Students with Disabilities: Practical Strategies for Complying with District and State Requirements* (Thurlow et al., 1998). This manual offers a multitude of strategies and planning forms for teachers to use with families during the IEP planning process to ensure that families are familiar with the critical issues related to large-scale

- Review an old version of the assessment.
- Seek out review books or other materials.
- Quiz each other on the content of the assessment.
- Inventory your child's testwiseness—how to take the test. Find out what test-related problem-solving skills your child has or lacks. For example, what does your child do if he or she becomes stuck or confused on the test? Know how to calculate the amount of time to spend on each section of a timed test (if applicable).
- Show your child how to mentally prepare for the assessment by verbally or cognitively coaching oneself (e.g., "You know you can do this—you have worked hard" or "I know I can pass this test because I have worked hard preparing for it").
- Discuss the importance of getting plenty of sleep or proper nutrition the day before and morning of the assessment.
- Discuss any concerns your child may have over the test.
- Make sure your child is aware of any accommodations allowed for the test and is prepared to advocate for them on the day of the assessment, if needed.

FIGURE 8.1
Ways in Which the Home Environment Can Contribute to Successful Assessment Experiences

Note. From *Testing Students with Disabilities: Practical Strategies for Complying with District and State Requirements* by M. L Thurlow, J. L. Elliott, & J. E. Ysseldyke, 1998. p. 177. Copyright 1998 by Corwin Press, Inc. Reprinted by permission.

assessments and accountability systems and are comfortable making decisions regarding this issue. One chapter is devoted to involving parents in testing decisions. It includes fact sheets about testing and accommodations, questions parents should ask about their child's educational goals, and several excellent forms for determining appropriate testing accommodations.

On a more personal level, teachers can work with families to prepare their children for assessments. Certainly, if families are interested in the role of supporting learning at home, then they can be involved in coaching their children through practice tests or encouraging them to study at home. Not every family will want to be involved at this level. However, teachers can provide basic information about the tests and how families can encourage emotional support for their children in the days leading up to the test. Sending home suggestions for test day, such as getting a good night's sleep and making sure their children eat a good breakfast, may be just as important a role for families. Figure 8.1 includes suggestions by Thurlow and colleagues (1998) on ways in which the home environment can contribute to successful assessment experiences.

Finally, for educators, it is important to remember to stay personal and recognize that you have two roles. One of them is to personally communicate and support the student and his or her family members; the other is to function as a potential change agent and advocate for transition outcomes within the overall standards-based reform efforts taking place in your school, district, and state. These two roles are not mutually exclusive.

Conclusion

The importance of family involvement in improving schools has not gone unnoticed among researchers and policymakers, especially for low-achieving and low-income schools. Researchers and professionals interested in high-quality schools understand the critical role families can and should play. In fact, family involvement is one of the best long-term investments a family can make (Urban Education Web, 2002). Advocates for strong family–school partnerships for youths with disabilities would concur that

> probably there is no other action teachers [and schools] can take as powerful and educationally effective as creating successful alliances with families. It is as simple as that: effective transition programs must have meaningful, active, and equal family involvement. For students with disabilities, it is an investment that ensures a future of opportunities. (Wehmeyer et al., 1999, pp. 44–45).

Research over the past three decades and the increased emphasis at the federal level to develop models of school reform involving families has led the way for families of children with disabilities. Now is the time to learn from what has worked and to become a part of school reform efforts in which the focus is on all students' achieving high expectations. Figure 8.2 offers a list of resources and Web sites offering information, guidance, and support to families involved in school reform.

Families have always wanted one thing for their children with disabilities: to ensure that they leave school prepared to become a part of the adult community to which they aspire, including postsecondary education, employment, and living and participating in the community. This goal is no different from what all families want, and if we are to truly transform schools, it is time for families to come together to ensure that comprehensive school reform—including a focus on outcomes, standards, and accountability—meets the needs of *all* students, their families, and the community.

Having said all of this, it is appropriate to add a word of caution using the old adage of not throwing out the baby with the bath water. Standards-based education is a reality that includes students with disabilities. However, that does not mean that we should throw out all of the research showing the importance of effective and systematic educational programming and transition-related decision making for youths to prepare them for life after high school. Ultimately, families will not stand for this abrupt change in direction if it exclusively focuses on academics. Certainly, we could effectively argue that academic standards alone will not suffice for any student. However, we need to listen closely to Halpern's message of "catching the wave" of school reform (Halpern, 1999). As it pertains to families, the wave has already started with the research and practices begun around family–school partnerships for school reform. Perhaps it is time we joined in. Right now special education in general and families of youths with disabilities in particular are essentially left out, and changes are happening that significantly impact them. We can no longer remain separate from the rest of the school and society. While the current wave of reform may not always take families of youths with disabilities in the direc-

---

Resources for Family–School–Community Partnerships

1. *Urban Education Web* (http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu/). UEweb offers manuals, brief articles, annotated bibliographies, reviews and summaries of outstanding publications, and conference announcements in urban education. Resource section on urban families and education. See for example, *Strong Families, Strong Schools* (http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu/families/strong/).

2. *National Network of Partnership Schools* (http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/default.htm). Established by researchers at Johns Hopkins University, NNPS brings together schools, districts, and states that are committed to developing and maintaining comprehensive programs of school–family–community partnerships. Site offers information, publications, Web links.

3. *Hard to Reach Families* (http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu/families/hard_to_reach/). Offers lessons to be learned that could help other parents and educators achieve educational improvement through planned and purposeful parent involvement.

4. *Family and Community Involvement* (http://www.mcrel.org/toolkit/res/stake.pdf). Resource brochure on ways to facilitate parental involvement in schools.

5. *National Parent Information Network* (http://npin.org/). Online resource providing access to research-based information about the process of parenting, and about family involvement in education. The Virtual Library links users to a variety of resources related to parenting.

6. *Center for Education Reform* (http://edreform.com/). The CER Web site offers information to parents, teachers and policymakers related to education improvement initiative. CER advocates for school choice, charter schools, high standards, and high-stakes assessment. Parent Power is an easy-to-read resource for parents on issues related to working with schools.

7. *Annenberg Institute on School Reform* (http://www.annenberginstitute.org/) at Brown University. Offers information about the conditions and outcomes of schooling in America, especially in urban communities and in schools serving disadvantaged children.

8. *How Can I Be Involved in My Child's Education?* (http://npin.org/library/pre1998/n00359/n00359.html). Easy to read resource for parents on roles and strategies for getting involved in schools.

9. *National PTA* (http://www.pta.org/). Online resource and links related to parent–school partnerships. The Standards of Parent Involvement Programs can be found on this site. Also, several self-assessments for schools and parents to complete (see http://www.pta.org/parentinvolvement/standards/pdf/stndeng.pdf).

10. *Partnership for Family Involvement in Education* (http://pfie.ed.gov/). Sponsored by the U.S. Dept. of Education, this site offers a multitude of resources and links to both national and state models. See 7 Tips for Building Partnerships for easy-to-read suggestions (http://pfie.ed.gov/seventbuilding_partnership.htm).

continues

FIGURE 8.2
Resources and Web Sites for Family Involvement and Standards-Based Education

11. *National Clearinghouse for Comprehensive School Reform* (http://www. goodschools.gwu.edu/). Offers extensive resources, models, links, and publications regarding all aspects of comprehensive school reform, including family partnerships.

12. *Checklists for Improving Parent Involvement.* Easy-to-use checklists for family and educators to promote parental involvement in schools. Several are worthy of noting:

    • *Checklist for Improving Parental Involvement* (http://www.mcrel.org/ products/noteworthy/noteworthy/cheklist.html)

    • *Recommendations for Parent Involvement* (http://eric-web.tc.columbia. edu/families/NCJW_child/recommendations.html/parents)

13. *Community/Family Involvement Resources* (http://www.mcrel.org/resources/ links/family.asp). Offers a range of resources, products, and research briefs regarding community and parental involvement in schools.

14. *Pathways: Parent and Family Involvement* (http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/ pa0cont.htm). NCREL offers a variety of materials, links, and other resources related to school improvement in general and this section on parent and family involvement in school reform.

15. *Putting the Pieces Together: Comprehensive School-linked Strategies for Families and Children* (http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/envrnmnt/ css/ppt/putting.htm). Excellent resource reviewing the research on school-linked services and provides suggestions for ways to increase parent participation.

16. *Harvard Family Research Project* (http://gseweb.harvard.edu/hfrp/). Offers a wide variety of resources and publications online and for sale. *The Family Involvement Network of Educators* is a special project of HFRP that supports schools to enhance parent involvement.

17. *How Parents Can Support Learning* (http://www.asbj.com/2001/09/0901/cover-story.html). Cover story of the *American Journal of School Boards*. Offers basic overview of parental involvement strategies.

Resources for Families of Children and Youths with Disabilities

1. *National Parent Network on Disability* (http://www.npnd.org/main.htm). Dedicated to empowering parents, NPND offers up-to-date information on the activities of the three branches of government that affect individuals with disabilities and their families.

2. *National Institute for Urban School Improvement* (http://www.edc.org/urban/). Focuses on inclusive education for students with disabilities in urban settings. Links school reform issues to special education.

3. *MCREL Policy Brief on School Reform and Students with Disabilities* (http://www.mcrel.org/products/standards/disabilities.pdf). Offers information and resources related to the issues and potential strategies for including students with disabilities in school reform efforts.

4. *Parents Engaged in Educational Reform* (http://www.fcsn.org/peer/home.htm). The PEER Web site offers information and resources directed toward parents of children with disabilities and their inclusion in standards-based educational reform.

FIGURE 8.2 - *Continued*

tions they anticipated, their input is critical. Offering this input may require families to shed some of the legalistic armor they often wear and work alongside all families and professionals who advocate for better outcomes for all students.

References

Baker, A. J. L. (1997). Improving parent involvement programs and practices: A qualitative study of parent perceptions. *The School Community Journal, 7*(1), 9–35.

Barton P. E., & Coley R. J. (1992). *America's smallest school: The family* (Policy Information Report). Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service, Policy Information Center.

Buswell B., & Shaffner, B. (1999). Parent participation crucial to school reform. *PEER Information Brief*, pp. 1–7. Retrieved March 20, 2002 from http://fcsn.org/peer/ess/pdf/parentib.pdf

Caplan, J., Hall, G., Lubin, S., & Fleming, Q. Literature review of school–family partnerships. (1997). [online]. Available: http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/pidata/pi0ltrev.htm

Catsambis S., & Garland, J. E. (1997). *Parental involvement in students' education during middle school and high school.* (Report No. 18). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, Center for Research on Education of Students Placed at Risk. Retrieved March 20, 2002 from http://www.csos.jhu.edu/crespar/Reports/report18.pdf

Colley, D. A., & Jamison, D. (1998). Post school results for youth with disabilities: Key indicators and policy implications. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 21*, 145–160.

Comer, J. P. (1988). Educating poor minority children. *Scientific American, 259*(5), 42–48.

DiNatale, L. (2001). *An update on how the National-Standards for Parent/Family Involvement programs have been implemented across the nation.* Retrieved January 1, 2001, from http://www.pta.org/parentinvolvement/standards/natstand_jan01.asp

Epstein, J. (1987). Toward a theory of family-school connections: Teacher practices and parent involvement. In K. Hurrelmann, F. Kaufmann, & F. Losel (Eds.), *Social interventions: Potential and constraints* (pp. 121–135). New York: Walter de Gryter.

Epstein, J. L. (1995). School/family/community partnerships: Caring for the children we share. *Phi Delta Kappan, 76*, 701–712.

Epstein J. L., & Lee, S. (1995). National patterns of school and family connections in the middle grades. In B. A. Ryan & G. R. Adams (Eds.), *The family-school connection: Theory, research and practice* (pp. 108–154). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Families and Work Institute. (1994). *Employers, families and education: Facilitating family involvement in learning.* New York: Author.

Fried, R. L., & Jorgensen, C. M. (1998). Equity and excellence: Finding common ground between inclusive education and school reform. In C. M. Jorgensen (Ed.), *Restructuring high schools for all students: Taking inclusion to the next level* (pp. 15–28). Baltimore: Brookes.

Gallivan-Fenlon, A. (1994). "Their senior year." Family and service provider perspectives on the transition from school to adult life for young adults with disabilities. *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Disabilities, 19*, 11–23.

Goals 2000: Educate America Act, P.L. 103-227, Title 20, U.S.C. 5810 *et seq.*

Goldberg, S. S., & Kuriloff, P. J. (1991). Evaluating the fairness of special education hearings. *Exceptional Children, 57*, 546–555.

Halpern, A. S. (1999, June). *Transition: Is it time for another rebottling?* Paper presented at the 1999 Annual OSEP Project Directors' Meeting, Washington, DC. Retrieved April 26, 2001, from http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/sped/tri/halpern99.htm

Halpern, A., Doren, B., & Benz, M. (1993). Job experiences of students with disabilities during their last two years in school. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 16,* 63–74.

Hanley-Maxwell, C., Phelps, L. A., Braden, J., & Warren, V. (n.d.). Schools of authentic and inclusive learning. *Research Institute on Secondary Education Reform for Youth with Disabilities Brief, 1,* 1–10.

Hanley-Maxwell, C., Pogoloff, S. M., & Whitney-Thomas, J. (1998). Families: The heart of transition. In F. Rusch & J. Chadsey (Eds.), *Beyond high school: Transition from school to work* (pp. 234–264). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Hansel, L. (2000). *Unlocking the 9 components of CSRD.* Retrieved July 12, 2001, from http://www.goodschools.gwu.edu/pubs/csrd9.pfd

Harry, B., Allen, N., & McLaughlin, M. J. (1995). Communication versus compliance: African American parents' involvement in special education. *Exceptional Children, 61,* 364–377.

Harry, B., Grenot-Scheyer, M., Smith-Lewis, M., Park, H., Xin, F., & Schwartz, I. (1995). Developing culturally inclusive services for individuals with severe disabilities. *Journal for Persons with Severe Handicaps, 20,* 99–109.

Harry, B., & Kalyanpur, M. (1994). Cultural underpinnings of special education: Implications for professional interactions with culturally diverse families. *Disabilities & Society, 9,* 145–165.

Harry, B., Kalyanpur, M., & Day, M. (1999). *Building cultural reciprocity with families: Case studies in special education.* Baltimore: Brookes.

Harry, B., Rueda, R., & Kalyanpur, M. (1999). Cultural reciprocity in sociocultural perspective: Adapting the normalization principle for family collaboration. *Exceptional Children, 66,* 123–136.

Heal, L. W., & Rusch, F. R. (1995). Predicting employment for students who leave special education high school programs. *Exceptional Children, 61,* 472–487.

Henderson, A. T., Marburger, C. L., & Ooms, T. (1986). *Beyond the bake sale: An educator's guide to working with parents.* Columbia, MD: National Committee for Citizens in Education.

Henderson, A. T., & Raimondo, B. N. (2001). Unlocking parent potential [Electronic version]. *Principal Leadership, 2.* Available: http://www.nassp.org/news/pl_prnt_ptntl.html

In N.Y., putting down their pencils. (2001, May 18). *The Washington Post,* p. A01. Retrieved May 17, 2001, from http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&node=digest&contentid=A42373-2001May17

Irvin, L. K., Thornin, E., & Singer, G. H. S. (1993). Family-related roles and considerations: Transition to adulthood by youth with developmental disabilities. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 3,* 38–46.

Jesse, D. (n.d.). *Increasing parental involvement: A key to student achievement.* Retrieved October 5, 2001, from http://www.mcrel.org/products/noteworthy/noteworthy/danj.asp

Johnson, J. R., & Rusch, F. R. (1993). Educational reform and special education: Foundations for a national research agenda focused upon secondary education. In P. D. Kohler (Ed.), *Transition from school to adult life: Foundations, best practices, and research directions* (pp. 1–29). (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED358608)

Kalyanpur, M., & Harry, B. (1999). *Culture and special education: Building reciprocal family–professional relationships.* Baltimore: Brookes.

Kohler, P. (1993). Best practices in transition: Substantiated or implied? *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 16,* 107–121.

Kohler, P. (1998). Implementing a transition perspective of education: A comprehensive approach to planning and delivering secondary education and transition servic-

es. In F. R. Rusch & J. G. Chadsey (Eds.), *Beyond high school: Transition from school to work* (pp.179–205). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Kohler, P., & Chapman, S. (1999). *Literature review on school-to-work transition*. Urbana-Champaign: University of Illinois, Transition Research Institute. Retrieved September 7, 2000, from http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/sped/tri/stwpurpose.htm

Liontos, L. B. (1992). *At-risk families & schools: Becoming partners*. Eugene, OR: ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 342055)

McDonnell, L. M., McLaughlin, M. J., & Morison, P. (1997). *Educating one and all: Students with disabilities and standards-based reform*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

McLaughlin, M. J., Henderson, K., & Rhim, L. M. (1998). *Snapshots of reform: How five local districts are interpreting standards-based reform for students with disabilities*. Alexandria, VA: Center for Policy Research on the Impact of General and Special Education Reform.

McNair J., & Rusch, F. (1991). Parent involvement in transition programs. *Mental Retardation, 29*, 93–101.

Meeting all students' learning needs. (2001). *Bookmarks, 2*(8). Retrieved July 1, 2001, from http://www.goodschools.gwu.edu/pubs/book/jul01/html

Moles, O. C. (1993). Collaboration between schools and disadvantaged parents: Obstacles and openings. In N. Chavkin (Ed.), *Families and schools in a pluralistic society*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Mooney, M., & Phelps, L.A. (n.d). Life after high school: Which postschool outcomes matter for students with and without disabilities in restructured high schools? [Electronic version]. *Research Institute on Secondary Education Reform for Youth with Disabilities Brief, 4*, 1–7. Available: http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/riser/Brief%204.pdf

Morningstar, M. E. (1997). Critical issues in career development and employment practices for adolescents with disabilities. *Remedial and Special Education, 18*, 307–320.

Morningstar, M. E., Kleinhammer-Trammill P. J., & Lattin, D. L. (1999). Using successful models of student-centered transition planning and services for adolescents with disabilities. *Focus on Exceptional Children, 31*(9), 1–19.

Morningstar, M. E., Turnbull A. P., & Turnbull, H. R. (1995). What do students with disabilities tell us about the importance of family involvement in transition from school to adult life? *Exceptional Children, 62*, 249–260.

Morra, L. G., (1994, March 16). *School-age children: Poverty and diversity challenge schools nationwide*. Testimony before the Committee on Labor and Human Resources and the Subcommittee on Education, Arts, and Humanities, U.S. Senate. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Accounting Office.

National Commission on Children. (1991). *Speaking of kids: A national survey of children and parents*. Washington, DC: Author.

National Network of Partnership Schools. (2000). *What is a partnership program?* Available: http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/sixtypes.htm.

National PTA. (n.d.). *National standards of parent/family involvement programs*. Retrieved May 14, 2001, from http://www.pta.org/parentinvolvement/standards/index.asp

Ngeow, K. Y. (1999). *Online resources for parent/family involvement* (Digest No. 140). ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading, English, and Communication, National Parent Information Network Virtual Library. Available: http://npin.org/library/2001/n00555/n00555.html

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, P.L. 107-110, 115 Stat 1425. 20 U.S.C. 2301.

Parent perspective. (2001, Summer/Fall). *FINE Forum (2)*. Available: http://gseweb.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/fine/Forum/forum2/parent.html

Pleet, A., Ripley, S., & McKelvey-Chik, L. (2000, April 25). *Partnering with parents of youth with disabilities.* Transcript of conference call presentation, National Transition Alliance. Available: http://www.dssc.org/nta/html/index_2.htm

Radcliffe, B., Malone, M., & Nathan, J. (1994). *Training for parent partnerships: Much more should be done.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, Center for School Change.

Rusch, F. R., & Millar D. M. (1998). Emerging transition best practices. In F. R. Rusch & J. G. Chadsey, (Eds.), *Beyond high school: Transition from school to work* (pp. 36–59). Boston: Wadsworth.

Ryndak, D. L., Downing, J. E., Jaqueline, L. R., & Morrison, A. P. (1995). Parents' perceptions after inclusion of their children with moderate and severe disabilities. *Journal of the Association of Persons with Severe Disabilities, 20,* 147–157.

Sailor, W. (in press). Devolution, school/community/family partnerships, and inclusive education. In W. Sailor (Ed.), *Inclusive education and school/community partnerships.* New York: Teachers College Press.

Sanders, M. G. (1997, May). *Building effective school-family-community partnerships in a large urban school district* (Report No. 13). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, Center for Research on Education of Students Placed at Risk. Available: http://www.csos.jhu.edu/crespar/Reports/report13.pdf

Sanders, M. G., Epstein, J. L., & Connors-Tadros, L. (1999, February). *Family partnerships with high schools: The parents' perspective* (Report No. 32). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, Center for Research on Education of Students Placed at Risk. Available: http://www.csos.jhu.edu/crespar/Reports/report32.pdf

Smith, G., Stodden, R., James, R., Fisher, D., & Pumpian, I. (1999). Facilitating and focusing on whole-school change. In D. Fisher, C. Sax, & I. Pumpian (Eds.), *Inclusive high schools: Learning from contemporary classrooms* (pp. 131–156). Baltimore: Brookes.

Snyder, T. D., & Fromboluti, C. S. (1993). *Youth indicators 1993.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics.

Stineman, R. M., Morningstar, M. E., Bishop, B., & Turnbull, H. R. (1993). Role of families in transition planning for young adults with disabilities: Toward a method of person-centered planning. *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation, 3*(2), 52–61.

Tashie, C., Malloy, J. M., & Lichtenstein, S. J. (1999). Transition or graduation? Supporting all students to plan for the future. In C. J. Jorgensen (Ed.), *Restructuring high schools for all students: Taking inclusion to the next level* (pp. 233–260). Baltimore: Brookes.

Thompson, S., & Thurlow M. (2001). *2001 state special education outcomes: A report on state activities at the beginning of the new decade.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes. Available: http://www.coled.umn.edu/NCEO/OnlinePubs/2001StateReport.html

Thurlow, M. L., Elliott, J. L., & Ysseldyke, J. E. (1998). *Testing students with disabilities: Practical strategies for complying with district and state requirements.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Todis, B., & Singer, G. (1991). Stress and stress management in families with adopted children who have disabilities. *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, 16,* 3–13.

Turnbull A. P., & Turnbull, H. R. (1996). Self-determination within a culturally responsive family systems perspective. In L. E. Powers, G. H. S. Singer, & J. Powers (Eds.), *On the road to autonomy: Promoting self-competence among children and youth with disabilities* (pp. 195–220). Baltimore: Brookes.

Turnbull, A. P., & Turnbull, H. R. (2000). *Families, professionals, and exceptionality: Collaborating for empowerment* (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall.

Urban Education Web. (2002). *Strong families, strong schools*. New York: Columbia Teachers College. Available: http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu/

U.S. Department of Education. (1994). *Strong families, strong schools: Building community partnerships for learning*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved October 7, 2001, from . http://eric-web.t.c.columbia.edu/families/strong/

U.S. Department of Education. (2001, April 13). *Record of the Expert Strategy Panel on Standards-Based Reform and Students with Disabilities*. Washington, DC: Office of Special Education Programs.

Vohs J. R., & Landau, J. K. (1999). IDEA 1997: Improving the education of students with disabilities in an era of education reform. *PEER Information Brief*, pp. 1–11. Available: http://fcsn.org/peer/ess/pdf/ideaib.pdf

Vohs, J. R., Landau, J. K., & Romano, C. A. (1999). Raising standards of learning: Students with disabilities and standards-based education. *PEER Information Brief*, pp. 1–12. Available: http://fcsn.org/peer/ess/pdf/standardsib.pdf

Wagner, M., Blackorby, J., Cameto, R., Hebbeler, K., & Newman, L. (1993). *The transition experiences of young people with disabilities: A summary of findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Study of special education students*. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.

Wehman, P. (2001). *Life beyond the classroom: Transition strategies for young people with disabilities* (3rd ed.). Baltimore: Brookes.

Wehmeyer, M. L., Morningstar, M. E., & Husted, D. (1999). *Family involvement in transition planning and implementation*. Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

West, L., Leconte, P., King, S., Taymans, J., & Kochhar-Bryant, C. (2000). Comprehensive school reform and students with disabilities. *NCCSR Benchmarks* 1(4), 5–11. Retrieved June 6, 2001, from http://www.good-schools.gwu.edu/pubs/bench/benchfall00.pdf

White-Clark, R., & Decker, L. E. (1996). *The "hard-to-reach" parent: Old challenges, new insights*. Retrieved October 9, 2001, from http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu/families/hard_to_reach/chapter5.html#1

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

MARY E. MORNINGSTAR is Adjunct Graduate Faculty in the Department of Special Education at the University of Kansas and Co-Director of the Transition Coalition, a center for transition and secondary school reform designed to maximize professional development in transition at the national, state, and local levels. For the past several years, Dr. Morningstar has co-directed the KU Secondary/Transition Masters Programs, the Transition/Interprofessional Training Project (a project designed to train related services personnel about transition), and the recently funded KU-Transition Leadership Personnel Program, a 4-year doctoral training program designed to promote leadership in secondary school reform and transition policy development.
E-mail: mmorningstar@ku.edu

9

Pathways to Successful Transition for Youths with Disabilities

Gary Greene

The quality of adult life experienced by persons with disabilities has been an important concern in American society for well over 50 years (see review of major federal policy initiatives, legislation, and programs by Neubert, 1997). And yet, despite the best efforts of individuals in numerous fields such as special education, vocational rehabilitation, and vocational special needs education, successful transition into, through, and beyond high school remains an elusive goal for youths with disabilities (see National Longitudinal Transition Study data published by Blackorby & Wagner, 1996).

In response to this problem, the 1997 Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 1997, P.L. 105-17) offered a stronger legislative commitment to the achievement of successful transition of our nation's youths with disabilities. In addition to reauthorizing prior transition requirements in the 1990 IDEA, the 1997 Amendments lowered the age of mandated transition services and planning to age 14 for all youths with disabilities. The 1997 Amendments also included new transition services requirements for 14-year-old youths with disabilities; the individualized education program (IEP) had to include the course of study each student is to pursue in high school. In light of the current national debate over school reform, increased standardized testing, and more rigorous high school graduation requirements, the course-of-study options and outcomes for youths with disabilities becomes an extremely important topic. What pathways into, through, and beyond high school exist for these young people in today's public schools?

This chapter offers a Pathways to Successful Transition model that addresses these concerns. The model is adapted from a chapter appearing in *Pathways to Successful Transition for Youth with Disabilities* by Greene and Kochhar (2003). The chapter begins with a review of sample high school graduation requirements in several states and local school districts in the United States. This is followed by a brief discussion of graduation requirement alternatives for students with disabilities. Finally, a model of pathways to successful transition containing four different high school course-of-study options for

youths with disabilities is presented, including sample case studies and sample IEPs for two of the four pathways.

High School Graduation Requirements

A report by Guy, Shin, Lee, and Thurlow (1999) presented the results of a survey of state high school graduation requirements across the country. Findings indicated that requirements for earning a high school diploma are of three types: (1) earn a certain number of course credits; (2) pass some form of graduation exam; and (3) meet both course credits and graduation exam requirements. With respect to course credits, most public high schools require 4 years of English; 3 years of mathematics; 2 years of science; 3 years of social studies (typically a combination of U.S. history, world history, and world geography); 1 year or more of a second language; and 1 semester of health, physical education, fine arts, careers, technology, and/or other electives. However, Guy and colleagues pointed out that policies for graduation are not the same across the United States, and "unfortunately, the complexity in state policies is multiplied many times over when considering what students with disabilities must do to earn an exit document of one kind or another" (p. 13).

Graduation Requirements for Students with Disabilities

According to a report by the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO, 2001) at the University of Minnesota, the development and adoption of high-stakes assessments for high school graduation are increasing in this country. The use of such assessments as a means to determine whether a student advances from grade level to grade level or completes high school with a standard diploma poses significant challenges to students with disabilities, their families, and the educators who work with them. Although increasing dropout rates are possible as a result of these policies, research to date is inconclusive regarding the consequences of high-stakes assessment for students with disabilities. Alternate assessment was referred to in IDEA 1997, which required states to have alternate assessments for students with disabilities in place by July 1, 2000. A survey completed by NCEO in 2000 yielded two important findings: (1) most states were in the process of developing alternative assessments for students with disabilities and (2) the expected percentage of students unable to participate in general assessments varied considerably in the states ready to make predictions, implying that there were large variations in the rate of alternative assessment participation among students with disabilities.

Given this set of circumstances, many states and local school districts have created a variety of documents or outcome options for students with disabilities at the end of high school, according to the NCEO (2000) and Guy and colleagues (1999). These documents and options include (a) coursework modifications, (b) IEP completion diplomas, (c) certificates of completion, (d) certificates of attendance, (e) special education diplomas, and (f) a host of other documents for students with disabilities. The Pathways to Successful Transition model for youths with disabilities is designed to be used in state and

local school districts that allow flexibility for students with disabilities in meeting graduation requirements.

Pathways to Successful Transition Model

Figure 9.1 presents a three-dimensional model that contains four distinct pathways to successful transition beyond school for youths with disabilities. The unique characteristics of the model are that it (a) is applicable to individuals with a broad range of disabilities, (b) offers course-of-study specifications for youths age 14 who have disabilities, (c) contains IDEA 1997 IEP transition services language requirements for youths age 16 who have disabilities, and (d) outlines transition programming components for each pathway.

Pathways 1 through 4 are shown across the top horizontal axis of the model, designating the various pathways to successful transition for youths with disabilities described in the columns below. Placed along the left vertical axis of the model are the IDEA 1997 required transition services language components of the IEP, with sample IEP transition goals placed in the corresponding columns to the right. Transition programming components and considerations for school and transition services personnel are shown on the right vertical axis of the model; several of these are discussed in this chapter (see Greene & Kochhar, 2003, for a complete discussion).

Beyond Tracking: Ensuring Access to All Pathways

It is important to state that the model should not be interpreted as representing educational tracking for youths with certain types of disabilities, such as mild, moderate, or severe. A noncategorical, individualized approach to transition is imperative for all students with disabilities, with an emphasis on inclusive educational practices, self-advocacy, and access to the general education curriculum, as required by IDEA 1997. All persons with disabilities must be treated individually; however, the model is based on the assumption that transition to a high-quality postsecondary adult life can be conceptualized into four distinct but fluid pathways and that these pathways represent the most typically available options for high school students with disabilities in today's public schools.

Each pathway in the model is available to any youth with a disability, regardless of the severity or categorical description of the disability. *All schools should provide choice and access for youths in special education to any pathway shown in the model.* The degree of support needed to do this, however, may vary, depending on the severity of the individual's disability and the chosen pathway to transition. It is therefore recommended that the youth and his or her family collaborate with the IEP team as early as possible during the school years to determine the most appropriate and desirable pathway, as well as the necessary supports and services for its successful completion. *Although youths with disabilities (and their families) have the option at any time to change transition pathways as they mature and matriculate through their middle school and high school years, it is important to understand the school program and community implications of making such a change (e.g., moving from a certificate-of-completion, community-based instructional pathway to a diploma-based pathway may delay high school com-*

IDEA Transition Services Language Requirements	Pathway 1	Pathway 2	Pathway 3	Pathway 4	Transition Programming Components
Instruction	Fully integrated high school college preparatory curriculum leading to passing of district proficiency exams, graduation requirements, and application requirements for entrance into a 4-year university	Semi-integrated high school curriculum leading to passing, with differential standards applied if necessary, of district proficiency exams, graduation requirements, and all requirements for entrance into a community college or professional vocational school	Semi-integrated high school curriculum leading to passing with differential standards applied, if necessary, of district proficiency exams and graduation requirements or award of a certificate of attendance	Semi-integrated high school instructional program that focuses primarily on daily living skills, community-based instruction, and award a certificate of attendance	Assessment

General education curriculum access and school foundation

Instructional setting |
Community experiences	Function fully independently in the community	Function fully independently in the community	Function semi-independently in the community with necessary supports	Function semi-independently in the community with necessary supports	Related services and supports
Employment and other secondary adult living objectives	Career exploration and paid work experience in high school; full-time competitive career employment with salary and benefits as an adult	Career exploration and paid work experience in high school; full-time competitive career employment with salary and benefits as an adult	Career exploration and paid work experience in high school; integrated paid competitive employment with necessary supports as an adult.	Career exploration and paid work experience in high school; integrated paid competitive employment with necessary supports as an adult	Transition planning considerations
Functional vocational evaluation and daily living skills	Not needed	Not needed	Participate in a functional vocational evaluation that identifies competitive employment skills; obtain daily living skills needed for semi-independent living.	Participate in a functional vocational evaluation that identifies competitive employment skills; obtain daily living skills needed for semi-independent living	Transition culmination considerations

FIGURE 9.1
Pathways to Successful Transition Model

pletion beyond age 18). Hence, transition pathways should be selected carefully and changes approached cautiously, in full collaboration with the IEP team.

A narrative description of the four pathways is provided here, along with sample case examples for each pathway. Sample IEPs containing required transition services language for Pathways 1 and 3 are shown in Figures 9.2 and 9.3.

Pathway 1

> The youth with disabilities will (a) participate in a fully integrated high school college preparatory curriculum and academic instruction leading to passing of district proficiency exams, graduation requirements, and completion of all application requirements for entrance into a 4-year university; (b) participate independently with needed accommodations in state standardized tests; (c) function fully independently in the community; (d) complete career exploration activities and paid work experiences in high school; and (e) eventually obtain a college degree that leads to full-time competitive employment with salary and benefits.

Youths with disabilities pursuing Pathway 1 must have full access to and participate in a college preparatory general education curriculum in middle school and high school if planning to attend a 4-year college or university. In addition, it is important for them to maintain a minimum grade point average of 3.0 or higher. Youths with disabilities in Pathway 1 should be included in general education classrooms to the maximum extent possible, with minimum, if any, enrollment in departmentalized special education college preparatory classes such as special education English, math, social science, and science. Resource specialist (RSP) enrollment for a period a day as an elective is an optional instructional setting to consider for youths with disabilities who can potentially benefit from study skills instruction, self-advocacy instruction, and strategies intervention model instruction. Full community integration and access, as well as integrated career and occupational preparation, are also expected instructional settings for youths with disabilities in Pathway 1.

Youths with disabilities in Pathway 1 can benefit from the following related services and support in preparation for college and a postcollege career.

1. *Study skills and learning strategies instruction* beginning in the seventh grade or no later than the ninth grade.

2. *Exploration of career options* through career-vocational assessment based upon the youth's interests, aptitudes, values, and career area strengths.

3. *Exploration of postsecondary career training options* such as technical schools, community college career training, or 4-year university degree programs.

4. *Self-awareness and -advocacy skills instruction* in the ninth grade for use in general education classrooms. Instruction should include how to ask for reasonable accommodations, such as tape recording lectures, note-taking assistance, extra time for tests, orally administered exams, placing books on tape, and peer tutoring.

5. *Continuation of self-awareness and -advocacy skills instruction* during the 11th grade to prepare for successful postsecondary participation in college and

community, with a focus on locating available resources such as Disabled Student Services and the Department of Rehabilitation.

6. *Development of a personal youth profile and portfolio* for use in the college application process and/or job search.

With respect to related supports, the RSP and other special education personnel should provide collaborative consultation in general education classrooms for youths with disabilities in Pathway 1. This collaboration includes (a) planning the design and delivery of core academic instruction; (b) curriculum modification, adaptations, and accommodations; and (c) team teaching, when possible.

An inclusion facilitator is highly recommended for students with more severe disabilities pursuing Pathway 1. Because this pathway involves an inclusive education in a college preparatory high school program, the inclusion facilitator will need to possess considerable collaborative consultation skill and ability. Youths with more severe disabilities who possess the cognitive and academic capabilities to pursue Pathway 1 will need the support of an inclusion facilitator in areas such as written and oral communication, curriculum modifications, and alternative ways to demonstrate course competency.

Pathway 1 Case Example

Angela is a 15-year-old student with a learning disability participating in a college preparatory program in high school. Her primary academic problems are in reading comprehension and written language. She received pull-out RSP services for up to 50% of her day through middle school. Angela and her parents decided in her eighth-grade year that this would be reduced to only one period a day in high school so that she could participate in a more inclusive college preparatory educational program. The RSP sees Angela for one period a day and provides her with direct instruction in the use of the strategies intervention model, advanced organizers, paraphrasing, and text look-backs to better comprehend what she reads. Angela is also receiving direct instruction in how to construct paragraphs and essays and how to use editing strategies to correct her work. The RSP regularly collaborates with Angela's college preparatory teachers to check assignments, exams, and grades and to offer curriculum and assignment modifications. At this point in her sophomore year, Angela is maintaining a 3.2 GPA. She has visited the career center in her high school and taken career interest surveys that showed she is interested in occupations in the fashion industry. Angela will enroll in a regional occupational training program course in fashion design in her junior year and will eventually be placed in a paid position in a department store at her local mall. The transition portion of her IEP also states that she will enroll in driver's education in the second semester of her sophomore year and obtain her learner's permit, followed by her driver's license when she turns 16. Her community participation transition goal is to be capable of independently transporting herself by car to school, shopping, and recreation and leisure activities.

A sample IEP for a youth with a disability in Pathway 1 is shown in Figure 9.2.

Vision	Career Interests	Strengths
* High school diploma * Attend 4-year university and obtain law or business degree * Play professional sports * Live independently and own a home	* Business * Sports careers * Law	* Good social skills and citizenship * Well liked by others; has many friends * Good athlete * Works hard in school

Present Level of Performance

Academics: Woodcock-Johnson: Broad Reading 6.0, Comprehension 5.8, Word Attack 6.5, Written Language 6.5, Mathematics 11.3. Lawrence requires RSP support to be successful in general education classes in college preparatory high school course of study.

Community: Functions fully independently in community; capable of obtaining driver's license and driving own car for travel within local community.

Employment: Capable of working fully independently in paid competitive employment.

Postsecondary Education and Learning: Capable of participating in postsecondary education at 4-year university or community college.

Recreation and Leisure: Enjoys football, soccer, and baseball and plays on school and community club teams. Goes to movies and mall with friends.

Daily Living Skills: Capable of full independent living, performing necessary daily living skills.

Transition Service Needs

* Lawrence requires academic support from an inclusion facilitator or RSP to be successful in general education academic classes.
* Lawrence needs academic support in reading comprehension, written language, study skills, self-advocacy, and how to ask teachers for reasonable accommodations in general education academic classes.
* Lawrence will need assistance from Disabled Student Services to be successful in academic classes in college.

Needed Transition Services

* *Instruction:* Lawrence will receive instruction in reading comprehension, written language, study skills, and exam preparation.
* *Community:* Lawrence will enroll in driver's education course leading to obtainment of driver's license.
* *Employment:* Lawrence will participate in prevocational training class and business occupations and computer applications course, with special assistance.

Transition Goals

Instruction: Lawrence will (a) participate in a fully integrated high school course of study emphasizing college preparatory instruction, (b) maintain a minimum GPA of 3.00, (c) complete all graduation requirements necessary for obtainment of a diploma and all application requirements for acceptance into a 4-year university, and (d) complete a career occupational training course in business occupations and computer applications.

Community: Lawrence will obtain a driver's license and maintain a safe driving record through graduation from high school.

Employment: Lawrence will (a) complete career awareness activities in high school and select a career occupation of interest, (b) participate in paid competitive part-time employment in his career interest during high school, and (c) pursue postsecondary education and training in his career interest at a 4-year university.

Supplementary and Related Services: Lawrence will maintain a minimum GPA of 3.00 with the help of an inclusion facilitator or RSP in all college preparatory classes in high school and will obtain academic support and assistance from Disabled Student Services at a 4-year university upon graduation.

FIGURE 9.2
Lawrence's IEP: Transition Plan

163

Pathway 2

> The youth with disabilities will (a) participate in a semi-integrated high school instructional program of academic subjects leading to the passing, with differential standards applied if necessary, of district proficiency exams, graduation requirements, and completion of all application requirements for entrance into a 2-year community college or professional vocational school; (b) participate semi-independently with needed accommodations in state standardized tests; (c) function fully independently in the community; and (d) complete career exploration activities and paid work experiences in high school that lead to full-time competitive employment with salary and benefits.

Youths with disabilities pursuing Pathway 2 should access the general education curriculum and focus on meeting high school graduation requirements—with or without application of differential standards—and passing high school proficiency exams and state standardized tests. In addition, an effective Pathway 2 curriculum and school foundation should lead to the development of a personal academic and career/occupational portfolio containing samples of an individual's best work in school subjects and job-related skills. Successful completion of a prevocational training course and occupational training program leading to paid employment in high school and work experience are also effective school foundation components for Pathway 2. Finally, youths with disabilities in Pathway 2 should develop computer literacy skills.

Youths with disabilities in Pathway 2 should have the option of (a) receiving an inclusive education in general education classrooms, with collaborative consultation assistance provided by an RSP or an inclusion facilitator or, for those who desire a smaller class size and more specialized instruction, (b) enrollment in a special day class/departmentalized special education program emphasizing core curriculum academic subjects and related skills such as study skills, self-awareness, self-advocacy, career awareness and exploration, occupational training, and social/interpersonal skills. Community businesses and employment sites are equally important instructional settings for Pathway 2 youths with disabilities, particularly for obtaining paid work experience in high school.

In terms of related services and supports, in Pathway 2 youths with disabilities receiving an inclusive education in middle and high school require the support of an RSP or an inclusion facilitator to be successful in general education classrooms. The related services and support recommendations for Pathway 1 are equally appropriate for Pathway 2 (see previous section recommendations). In addition, time-limited supports such as job development and job coaching may be needed for youths with disabilities in Pathway 2 to obtain and maintain successful paid work experience in high school.

Pathway 2 Case Example
Alejandro is a 16-year-old student who is hard of hearing. He has been in special education since starting school and is proficient in sign language. He was

included in a general education classroom beginning in fourth grade and functioned well with the help of an interpreter and collaborative consultation services provided by a resource specialist to his general education teachers. Peer tutoring and cooperative learning experiences were also highly beneficial to Alejandro in general education classrooms. He is currently in his junior year in high school and functioning around a seventh-grade level in reading, spelling, and writing skills. His strength is in mathematics, with current functioning around a ninth-grade level. Alejandro is included in general education classes in math, science, PE, and electives, but is enrolled in departmentalized special education classes in English and social science, where he is able to obtain more intensified support services and assistance. His goal is to obtain a high school diploma, with differential standards for meeting graduation requirements and an emphasis on career and occupational preparation. He is passing all of his courses and is on target to graduate from high school with a diploma.

Alejandro has a strong interest in automotive technology and wants to work in his father's auto shop business upon graduation from high school and attend community college for advanced preparation in this field. He is currently enrolled in a Level 1 high school elective occupational training course in automotive technology and is provided an interpreter and special tutoring to facilitate his successful inclusion in the class. The high school resource specialist has taught him how to self-advocate successfully, as evidenced by his asking for (a) extra copies of textbooks and automotive technology manuals for use in the resource room, (b) peer assistance in note-taking, and (c) extended time for tests. In addition, he has been placed in a paid internship after school and on weekends in the parts department of a local auto dealership.

A representative from Disabled Student Services (DSS) from the local community college attended Alejandro's recent IEP meeting and offered help in enrolling him in an advanced automotive technology certificate program, academic support, and an interpreter from DSS. Alejandro has a driver's license and will be able to transport himself by car to school and work. He and his parents mutually decided that he would continue to live at home while he attends community college. Eventually, he would like to get an apartment, live independently in the community, and own his own automotive repair business.

Pathway 3

The youth with disabilities will (a) participate in a semi-integrated high school instructional program of academic subjects leading to the passing, with differential standards applied if necessary, of district proficiency exams and graduation requirements or obtainment of a certificate of attendance; (b) participate semi-independently with needed accommodations in state standardized tests; (c) function semi-independently in the community with necessary supports; (d) obtain functional, daily living skills needed for semi-independent living; (e) participate in a functional vocational evaluation that identifies competitive employment skills; and (e) participate in integrated paid competitive employment with necessary supports.

Pathway 3 is most appropriate for youths with disabilities who may require any or all of the following:

1. Extensive modifications in the general education curriculum.
2. The application of differential standards to meet high school graduation requirements.
3. Consideration of a certificate of attendance instead of a diploma upon completion of high school.
4. Special accommodations, modifications, or exclusion from high school proficiency tests required for graduation and other state standardized tests.
5. The choice to remain in school beyond age 18 with participation in a community-based transition class, if offered by the school district.

The most appropriate curriculum for a youth with a disability in Pathway 3 is one that emphasizes functional, life skills, and community-based instruction. The primary goal for the individual in this pathway is to be able to function as independently as possible upon graduation from high school, with community access and mobility, semi-independent living, and participation in paid competitive employment. This type of curriculum may be difficult to offer in a typical high school college preparatory program emphasizing core academic subjects. Access to the general education curriculum, in this instance, will require significant modifications and accommodations to make the curriculum more functional in nature. This is possible with the help of an inclusion facilitator and the provision of other related services and supports.

The Pathway 3 curriculum should include opportunities for development in any or all of the following skills: (a) social and interpersonal, (b) self-awareness and -advocacy, (c) prevocational, (d) independent living, (e) career and occupational, (f) mobility and community, and (g) family life/health education. The *Life Centered Career Education* curriculum (Brolin, 1997) is an excellent resource for providing an effective school foundation to Pathway 3 youths with disabilities.

Youths with disabilities in Pathway 3 should participate in integrated settings to the maximum extent possible to properly prepare them for transition to a high-quality adult life. They should attend school on an integrated campus and participate in as many education and recreation activities as possible with their nondisabled peers. While some advocates argue for full inclusion of *all* youths with disabilities in the general education curriculum, regardless of their disability, the 1997 Amendments to the IDEA supported a continuum-of-service options. Therefore, it is recommended that educational settings, emphasizing functional, life, and career and occupational skills along with community-based instruction, are the best instructional settings for youths with disabilities in Pathway 3. Ultimately, the decision regarding an inclusive education and the degree of integration into general education classes for a Pathway 3 youth with disabilities rests with the individual and his or her family. This decision should be made in collaboration with the IEP team, and the desires of the family and youth should be fully honored and supported.

With regard to related services and support, school personnel should be sensitive to the wishes and desires of the family and youth with a disability and make a concerted effort to meet their transition needs and requests. Those desiring an inclusive education for a Pathway 3 youth with disabilities should be provided the necessary supports, regardless of the level of intensity, for their child to have access to general education classrooms. This may involve providing a full-time inclusion facilitator throughout the day for the youth with a disability. In addition, the primary school and IEP and transition goals (e.g., social, academic, and/or functional) for a youth with a disability receiving an inclusive education need to be clearly articulated for general education teachers. Ongoing collaborative consultation must occur consistently between general and special education personnel, with needed services and support provided to the general education teacher who is instructing a youth with a disability in Pathway 3. Additional possible services and supports for Pathway 3 youth with disabilities in general education or special day class settings include (a) job development and job coaching, (b) mobility instruction, (c) supported living instruction, and (d) adapted PE.

Pathway 3 Case Example
John is a 14-year-old youth with Down syndrome who has been in special education since preschool, primarily educated in a special day classroom. His cognitive abilities are somewhat limited; he possesses understandable speech, listens and understands verbal directions, and has good social skills. He is functioning academically around a second-grade level in most subjects. He needs further instruction in daily living skills, community access and mobility, and employment skills. At his eighth-grade annual IEP meeting, he and his parents were asked to select the course of study they desired for John to pursue in high school. After weighing all of the options, they decided to continue John's placement in a day class that offered community-based instruction, daily living skills instruction, and employability instruction. John would be included in several elective courses in high school that offered reinforcement and instruction in life skills such as home economics, health, and a career exploratory class. John's special day class teacher would offer collaborative consultation to his general education teachers. John's transition goals were to graduate with a certificate of attendance, develop semi-independent daily living skills, obtain paid competitive employment in a career interest area of his choice, and learn to use public transportation for access to employment and the community.

A sample IEP for a youth with a disability in Pathway 3 is presented in Figure 9.3.

Pathway 4

The youth with disabilities will (a) participate in a semi-integrated high school instructional program that focuses primarily on functional, daily living skills, community-based instruction, and obtainment of a certificate of attendance; (b) function semi-independently

Vision	Career Interests	Strengths
* High school diploma or certificate of attendance * Work and live semi-independently in the community	* Animal care * Graphic arts	* Works hard in school * Artistic * Good with animals and pets

Present Level of Performance

Academics: Woodcock-Johnson: Broad Reading 4.5, Comprehension 4.2, Word Attack 4.7, Written Language 4.4, Mathematics 5.3. Current oral and receptive language skills are around 6th-grade level. Jamie requires major modifications in curriculum and support of inclusion facilitator or special day class teacher to be successful in academic classes.

Community: Currently not able to function independently in community.

Employment: Capable of working independently with time limited support in paid competitive employment.

Postsecondary education and learning: Capable of participating in postsecondary occupational training with support.

Daily Living Skills: Currently unable to prepare simple meals, grocery shop, maintain a bank account and budget.

Recreation and Leisure: Enjoys caring for animals, drawing, and listening to music.

Transition Service Needs	Needed Transition Services
* Jamie requires major curriculum modifications and academic support from an inclusion facilitator or special day class teacher to be successful in academic classes. * Jamie needs continued speech and language services to promote improved oral and receptive language development. * Jamie needs instruction in daily living skills and community-based instruction to be able to function semi-independently at home and in the community. * Jamie needs time-limited supports to obtain paid competitive employment.	* *Instruction:* Jamie will receive instruction in (a) academic subjects required for graduation, with the application of differential standards, and (b) daily living skills and community-based instruction. * *Community:* Jamie will participate in a community-based instructional program. * *Employment:* Jamie will participate in pre-vocational training class and occupational training classes in animal care, as well as graphic arts. * *Related Services:* Jamie will continue to receive speech and language therapy throughout high school. * *Daily Living:* Jamie will participate in a daily living skills instructional program in high school.

Transition Goals

Instruction: Jamie will (a) participate in a semi-integrated high school course of study that leads either to the passing, with differential standards applied when necessary, of district proficiency exams and graduation requirements or obtainment of a certificate of attendance; (b) successfully complete a daily living skills and community-based instructional program that promotes semi-independent functioning in the home and community; and (c) complete occupational training courses in animal care or graphic arts.

Community: Jamie will be able to function semi-independently in the community after completing school.

Employment: Jamie will (a) complete career awareness activities in high school and select a career occupation of interest, (b) participate in paid competitive part-time employment in her career interest during high school, and (c) obtain postsecondary occupational training or paid competitive employment in her career interest after completing school.

Supplementary and Related Services: Jamie will receive (a) speech and language services in high school, (b) academic support from an inclusion facilitator or special day class teacher, (c) community-based instructional support, and (d) time-limited supported employment services.

FIGURE 9.3
Jamie's IEP: Transition Plan

168

in the community with necessary supports; (c) obtain daily living
skills needed for semi-independent living; (d) participate in a func-
tional vocational evaluation that identifies competitive employment
skills; and (e) participate in integrated paid competitive employ-
ment with necessary supports.

Pathway 4, compared to Pathways 1 through 3, is designed for youths
with disabilities who require intensive levels of support to function in various
education, community, and employment settings. Pathway 4 emphasizes func-
tional life skills, community-based instruction, preparation for supported
employment and supported living, and the obtainment of a certificate of atten-
dance from high school rather than a high school diploma. The *Life Centered
Career Education* curriculum (Brolin, 1997) is highly recommended for youths
with disabilities in Pathway 4. An effective school foundation for Pathway 4
also includes the promotion of productivity, independence, socialization, the
development of friendships, and participation to the maximum extent possible
in integrated school, community, and employment settings. Pathway 4 should
be offered in the neighborhood school of the youth with a disability, with access
to and participation in general education classrooms as much as possible.
Pathway 4 instructional setting options include (a) full inclusion in a general
education classroom with intensive support; (b) inclusion in a general educa-
tion classroom for a portion of the day, along with RSP or special day class
placement; or (c) full-time placement in a special day class. The most appro-
priate instructional setting depends on the individual's unique needs, IEP goals
and objectives, and the transition priorities expressed by the youth and his or
her family in collaboration with the IEP team.

Note that the choice of an inclusive education may result in less time
available for teaching daily living skills and functional vocational skills and for
community-based instruction because most general education teachers are not
trained to teach these skills. Therefore, the responsibility for modifying the
general education curriculum to include these components will rest mainly
with an inclusion facilitator, special education teacher, or other transition per-
sonnel. For this reason, an instructional setting that focuses on functional and
vocational skills may be the preferred placement option for Pathway 4 youths
with disabilities and their families. More frequent opportunities will be need-
ed for social interaction and friendship development between chronological-
aged peers and Pathway 4 youths with disabilities in special day classes.
Suggested means for accomplishing this include (a) participation in general
education elective classes; (b) participation in integrated community youth
group activities such as sports leagues, recreation classes, clubs, or scouting
groups; and (c) integrated employment opportunities.

A community-based transition classroom for 18- to 22-year-old youths
with disabilities is another instructional setting option to consider for Pathway
4. Some school districts offer this type of transition program to youths with dis-
abilities who decide to remain in school past their 18th birthday. In some
instances, these classrooms are offered on integrated college or community col-
lege campuses or out in the community. Parents may wish to consider an inclu-
sive education for their Pathway 4 youth with disabilities during the middle
and high school years and subsequently enroll the youth in a transition class at

age 18 to focus on functional skills, daily living skills, community-based instruction, and integrated employment skills instruction. This option is currently recommended by The Association for the Severely Handicapped.

Pathway 4 Case Example

Brenda is 14-year-old girl with multiple disabilities, including blindness, limited speech, and very low cognitive functioning. She is about to enter high school, and her parents have been asked at the annual IEP meeting to discuss the information they completed on a Transition Planning Inventory provided by the high school special education department. Brenda's parents would like her to be included in general education classes for a portion of the day in academic subjects that promote student interaction and oral communication, such as drama, science, and health. They have requested assistance from (a) a speech and language therapist for augmentative and facilitated communication, (b) a vision specialist to help modify the general education curriculum in a way that will allow Brenda to participate to the maximum extent possible, and (c) collaborative consultation services of the high school special day class teacher for assistance with curriculum modification. Brenda's parents also want her to participate in community-based instruction and receive a functional vocational evaluation to determine her employability skills. They want Brenda to develop semi-independent living skills, work in the community with ongoing support, and live at home after completing high school.

Conclusion

High school graduation requirements in U.S. public schools have become significantly more rigorous in the past several years, and this is unlikely to change in the near future. The options available to youths with disabilities vary from state to state, but a general education high school diploma, special education high school diploma emphasizing differential standards on an IEP, or certificate of attendance or completion are currently the most common documents being offered. The Pathways to Successful Transition Model for youths with disabilities was developed with these options in mind. It contains four potential pathways to transition that match the needs of most youths with disabilities, ranging from mild–moderate to moderate–severe.

It is important to reiterate that the model does not represent categorical disability group tracking; rather, it is a fluid and dynamic model that allows all youths with disabilities to be treated individually and provided access to any and all pathways to transition. However, it must be acknowledged that youths with disabilities have a limited time in school during their transition years and must take full advantage of the available opportunities to prepare themselves for the future. Hence, it is important for these youths and their families to carefully consider the options available in the various pathways and select the most appropriate pathway to pursue. This, is turn, will determine the types of supports, transition services, and programs that need to be provided. It subsequently becomes the responsibility and legal obligation of transition personnel in schools and adult service agencies to provide these transition services and supports to youths with disabilities as they pursue their pathway to the future.

References

Blackorby, J., & Wagner, M. (1996). Longitudinal postschool outcomes of youth with disabilities: Findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Study. *Exceptional Children, 62,* 399–413.

Brolin, D. (1997). *Life Centered Career Education: A Competency Based Approach* (4th ed.). Arlington, VA: Council for Exceptional Children.

Greene, G., & Kochhar, C. (2003). *Pathways to successful transition for youth with disabilities.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall.

Guy, B., Shin, H., Lee, S., & Thurlow, M. L. (1999). *State graduation requirements for students with and without disabilities* (Tech. Rep. No. 24). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.

National Center on Educational Outcomes. (2000). *Special topic area: Graduation requirements for students with disabilities.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota.

Neubert, D. A. (1997). Time to grow: The history and future of preparing youth for adult roles in society. *Teaching Exceptional Children 29*(5), 5–17.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

GARY GREENE is a Professor of Special Education at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB). He began his career in 1977 as a resource specialist in the public schools in southern California, teaching elementary and middle school students with learning disabilities. He moved to CSULB in 1987 and assumed the role of Coordinator of the Graduate Transition Services Training Program and trained over 100 personnel from a variety of agencies serving the transition needs of youths and adults with disabilities. He continues to teach courses in career guidance and transition for youths with disabilities, as well as special education credential and master's level coursework. He has numerous publications on the topics of transition and methods for teaching students with learning disabilities, and recently published a textbook with co-author Carol Kochar-Bryant entitled *Pathways to Successful Transition for Youth with Disabilities,* published by Merrill/Prentice Hall.

Transition of Students with Disabilities from High School to Postsecondary Education: The Perfect Example

James E. Martin

Jamie L. Van Dycke

Lori Y. Peterson

Robert J. Walden

Rosemary shed new light on the educational needs and obstacles that students with special needs are faced with in college. She is a very strong woman. I am fortunate enough to have Rosemary in two of my classes, having her as a group partner in one. She is so dedicated and focused, more than me I have to admit. Even though at times the proper resources were not readily available to her, she still persevered. Rosemary made me think differently about the transition process—just how important and critical it is. Rosemary is the perfect example of a student who struggled through all her years of school, but was determined to overcome her disability and excel to her fullest potential. Her story makes me feel determined to challenge my students as much as her parents challenged her.

Kari Arreola

A University of Oklahoma senior wrote these words after hearing Rosemary Roberson tell her story of growing up with a learning disability, graduating from high school, and becoming a university student. In the eyes of her university peers, Rosemary is the perfect example of a student with dis-

abilities who has struggled and accomplished her goal of obtaining a university degree. Rosemary overcame many roadblocks to make the successful transition from high school to college. She worked hard, used available supports, and will soon be graduating with a bachelor's degree in special education from The University of Oklahoma. We interviewed Rosemary, her parents, Lee and Paul Roberson of Norman, Oklahoma, and her former high school special education teacher, Ms. Joy Brinckman from West Springfield High School in Springfield, Virginia. Rosemary's story will be infused throughout the sections of this chapter.

Increasing numbers of students with disabilities share the success Rosemary is now experiencing. Yet, many more young people with disabilities could make the transition from high school to postsecondary education, and many more students with disabilities who enter postsecondary education could attain their degrees. Deliberate transition planning and instruction must occur for successful transition from high school to postsecondary education. Standards-based educational practices have the potential to further facilitate transition into postsecondary education. In this chapter we will describe factors associated with successful transition from secondary to postsecondary education that can be infused into standards-based education requirements.

Teacher Beliefs and Actions

Where do teachers begin the transition process for their students with special needs while teaching in accordance with academic standards? After visiting with Ms. Brinckman, Rosemary's high school special education teacher, it was obvious that the starting point of the transition process begins with teachers' attitudes, beliefs, philosophy, and actions. Ms. Brinckman, a master special education teacher for 23 years, has been ahead of the profession in her philosophy and teaching actions. She supported students in meeting the general education requirements by facilitating student self-empowerment. For example in the late 1970s and early 1980s, long before students were required to be included in their individualized education program (IEP) meetings, Ms. Brinckman's students attended and participated in their IEP meetings. Before self-advocacy was discussed as a skill that must be taught to students with disabilities, Ms. Brinckman taught her students to communicate their needs to the general education teachers. This ability to communicate was imperative for her students as they worked to meet their general education requirements. Mrs. Brinckman provided her students with opportunities to learn about their disability and the types of difficulties they encountered by letting them prepare and conduct forum-type presentations in which they discussed their disabilities and what they needed to do to succeed. Her students would talk about the types of difficulties they encountered and how they had learned they could achieve their goals.

Willingness to Interact

Before the transition process begins, Ms. Brinckman develops a student–teacher partnership. She explains to her students that they must communicate,

saying to them: "How can you learn if you do not interact?" Ms. Brinckman immediately sets the tone of expecting learning and improvement, while realizing that each student is at a different level. Her students are taught to respect the rights of others to learn and improve even if they are not quite ready to do so themselves.

Ms. Brinckman has found, like Brower (1992), that "integration exists when students can establish a 'niche' for themselves within the community" (p. 443). When she brings students into the school community she looks for answers to questions such as these:

- How involved and organized are they, and do they understand the operation of the school?
- How well are they oriented to the school, and are they comfortable at figuring out how things work, including general education expectations?
- How developed are their social skills?
- What sense do the students have of how they learn, and can they describe it to someone else?

Once students find their "niche," they are "gently eased into accepting, understanding, and working with . . . (their) difficulty" (Brower, 1992, p. 443).

Self-Identity

Ms. Brinckman teaches her students about the difficulties they experience with academic and life tasks. She avoids categories, boxes, and labels: "I try and convince them that they do not have a tattoo on their forehead, and that their disability is not their identity. Student deficits cannot be ignored, but they must be convinced that it is not an imprint or mark that they cannot escape." She teaches her students that a disability is not a mystery and is nothing to be ashamed of. Any disability can be comprehended and accommodated to permit the student to carry on and begin to learn and grow through the transition process.

Goals

Ms. Brinckman teaches her students to identify goals, wishes, and dreams. "If college is their goal, I try and help them unlock the doors to assist them in accomplishing that goal." The goal of lifelong learning is another idea that she conveys to her students by her own actions and professionalism in the classroom. Rosemary saved the lifelong goals she wrote as a sophomore in 1994 when she was in Ms. Brinckman's class:

- Graduate high school with honors. (She did and was in the top 10% of her graduating class.)
- Attend and complete a degree from a 4-year university. (Now completed.)
- Fully understand my disability so I may be my own self-advocate, and not my parent's responsibility.

Students could easily learn to convert academic standards into their own academic goals. For example, they could use the academic reading and writing

standard "Students write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences" as a guide to achieve the university's public speaking requirement. Similarly, they could relate the academic math standard—"Students will communicate the reasoning used in problem-solving situations"—to budgeting appropriately to meet independent living needs.

Methodology

Special education teachers like Ms. Brinckman use eclectic methodologies in their classrooms. According to Ms. Brinckman:

> If one methodology or a group of methodologies are used with a student they will rebel. The methodology must be flexible to meet the special needs of each student. Set models or detailed program approaches to teaching usually fail to address a specific problem a student is experiencing. If a student is not ready to work on a troublesome area, it is because they have had no prior success with it. When this occurs, the student selects an alternate problem area to begin working on. Working in this area permits the student to experience and enjoy some success before the major area of concern is addressed.

Unbeatable Combination

Nearly 75% of Ms. Brinckman's students continue on to earn a degree or certificate from a postsecondary educational program. When praised for this amazing record, she quickly credits her students, parents, community, and school for her success. She credits Rosemary and her willingness to accept her invitation to learn and succeed. Ms. Brinckman describes Rosemary and her parents as an "unbeatable combination." She also credits her school system, which encourages a philosophy of noncategorical acceptance and high expectations for all students to meet academic standards.

Rosemary Remembers the Beginning

Rosemary described her memories of becoming a special education student, the process she went through, and how she felt:

> When I was first tested, I thought that I was being tested just to get help. I did not know I would be in special education. My parents tell me that I was told, but I must not have heard them. I had been successful with passing grades in middle school in Hawaii, yet I failed miserably when I came to eighth grade in Virginia. I feared failure in high school, yet I did not want to be in special education. My understanding at that time was that special education was just for students who I would see in the cafeteria who ate together and walked down the hall with one teacher in front and one in back. I knew nothing of high-incidence disabilities. I just wanted to "fit in."

So, my attitude as I began high school in special education was both fearful and hesitant and not very conducive to a good start in high school. Thankfully my start was with Ms. Brinckman.

My first impression of Ms. Brinckman was that she was a warm person, yet very professional. The students in her class were from all grade levels including some very popular and cute upper-classmen football players, the senior class vice-president, and a cheerleader, all of whom seemed to have a comfortable, yet respect-ful relationship with her. When I observed their relationship, I asked myself, "Why not me also?" My problem was writing, and Ms. Brinckman did not start by saying, "Let's write a paragraph," but rather, "What are you interested in?" A week or so after the semes-ter began she started to visit with me about where I was and how I was progressing in my various classes. As problems began to appear she always directed me to talk to my regular classroom teacher as well as to her. She was gradually teaching me the importance of self-advocacy without ever confusing me by directly discussing the con-cept and its importance. She gently eased me into accepting, understanding, and working with my writing difficulty.

We all knew that she cared for us and expected us to learn and progress. It was just understood. We also knew that she was always willing to assist us with any problem we encountered. We knew her feelings for us were genuine and not just part of her teacher mode. From her actions we knew that working with us was not a job, but a passion. Her workday always began before school started and often continued after hours, which modeled for us that hard work was not just something she told us to do but it was one of her own principles that she lived by. Next to my parents, who have always inspired me to work hard, my observation of Ms. Brinckman's work habits has been the most influential.

Following are sections of Rosemary's IEP goals, written with Ms. Brinckman, when she was a high school sophomore. Her goals reflect exactly what Rosemary remembers her teacher trying to accomplish.

Annual Goal: Written Expression

• Increase self-advocacy strategies and study skills to increase independent study and maximize achievement using available resources.

Short-Term Objectives

• Rosemary will produce well-supported, documented research papers and projects, which will be monitored in resource conferences.
• Rosemary will use strategies and techniques on a cued and gradually independent basis as monitored in resource class.

Annual Goal: Reading

• Uses a variety of techniques to improve critical reading skills and com-prehension.

Although academic standards were not in place when Rosemary participated in the general education curriculum, these standards easily could have been incorporated into transition-related goals. For example, for the standard "Write and speak for a variety of purposes and audiences," a goal could be that the student will use a variety of writing and speaking modes to express personal needs, preferences, and interests.

Postsecondary Education for Students with Disabilities: The Facts

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) considers transition from high school to postsecondary education as a major outcome for individuals with disabilities (Mull, Sitlington, & Alper, 2001). This outcome expectation aligns perfectly with the purpose of IDEA, which is to prepare students with disabilities "for employment and independent living" (Final Federal Regulations, 1999, p. 12420). From 1985 to 1996, the percentage of all high school graduates attending college increased from 58% to 65% (Immediate Transition from High School to College, 1999). Included within these numbers was a large increase of students with disabilities attending postsecondary educational programs. Thomas (2000) attributed the large increase to the fact that so many more students with disabilities had an IEP.

In 1978, only 2.6% of high school graduates with disabilities participated in postsecondary education (Stodden, 2000). Wagner and colleagues (1991) found that by the late 1980s, 19% of graduates with disabilities participated in postsecondary education. By 1994, almost 45% of individuals with disabilities had either attended some type of postsecondary program or attained a degree (U.S. Department of Education, 1996). Horn, Berktold, and Bobbit (1999) reported that 6% of postsecondary students have a disability. Similar results have come from national surveys of freshmen at 4-year colleges, which have been completed every 2 or 3 years since 1988. The percentage of freshmen reporting a disability has varied slightly across the years: 6.5% in 1988; 7,8% in 1991; 8.2% in 1994; 8.1% in 1996; 7.1% in 1998; and 6% in 2000 (Henderson, 2001). Administrators of postsecondary programs report fewer numbers of students with disabilities because an unknown number of students do not report their disability to campus disability support offices. Using Horn and colleagues' (1999) data, approximately 6% of the students at the 151 major private and public doctorate-granting research universities in the United States would have disabilities. According to Martin and Duncan (2002), the disability support offices at these major universities reported that an average of 2.2% of their students had self-identified. The actual range was from a low of .36% at a private university to a high of 5.1% at a public college.

Several interesting findings emerged from the year 2000 freshman survey (Henderson, 2001). Between 1998 and 2000, the learning disability category became the fastest growing disability at 4-year colleges. By 2000, 40% of freshmen with disabilities reported having a learning disability, compared to only 16% in 1998. In 1998, the most common disability was partially sighted or blind (30%), but in 2000, the most common disability reported was a learning disability. When compared to students without disabilities, students with disabil-

ities are more likely to be male than female and are more likely to be Caucasian than from any other racial or ethnic group. Henderson's (2001) survey revealed many other interesting facts:

- On artistic and creative measures, students with disabilities had higher ratings than students without disabilities.
- Sixty percent of students with and without disabilities considered themselves to be above average in their ability to understand others and their possession of leadership skills.
- Students with disabilities predicted that they would use special college tutoring and remedial services more than students without disabilities.
- Freshmen with and without disabilities chose similar occupational paths.
- Students with disabilities had slightly lower high school grade point averages than students without disabilities.
- Freshmen with disabilities placed a higher priority than their peers without disabilities on social concerns such as promoting racial understanding, environmental efforts, and creative contributions (e.g., writing, performing arts).
- Women with disabilities reported having more health-related disabilities compared to men, who reported having more learning disabilities.
- Women were more likely than men to consider proximity to home as a deciding factor of where to attend college.

Horn and colleagues (1999) undertook the first comprehensive study of students with disabilities attending various types of postsecondary educational programs. They found that:

- Students with disabilities were slightly more likely than their peers without disabilities to attend either public 2-year colleges or other institutions, including vocational schools.
- Students with disabilities were as likely as those without disabilities to participate in cultural, recreational, and athletic activities.
- In the eighth grade, students with disabilities reported having lower postsecondary aspirations than students without disabilities (57% of students with disabilities wanted a bachelor's degree compared to 72% of students without disabilities, and 15% reported no postschool aspirations compared to 8% of students without disabilities).
- The majority of students with disabilities who enrolled in 2-year colleges with the intention of later transferring to a 4-year college did not transfer. These students reduced their chances of obtaining a bachelor's degree by starting at a 2-year college rather than a 4-year college.
- Five years after starting postsecondary education, 51% of students without disabilities had received a degree or certificate, compared to 41% of students with disabilities.
- College graduates with disabilities were as likely to enroll in graduate school as students without disabilities.

- College graduates with disabilities became employed at the same rate, in similar occupations, and with similar salaries as graduates without disabilities.

Rosemary's accomplishments are notable, and they contradict many of the facts just listed. Her drive, excellent transition preparation, and parental support enabled her to transfer—after attending a community college in Virginia for 1 year—to The University of Oklahoma, request services from the university's disability support office, discuss her disability with college professors, and earn a bachelor's degree. Along the way Rosemary did enroll in fewer courses each semester than most students, and it did take her 6 years to finish—just as Ms. Brinckman told her it would.

Steps Before Leaving High School

Entering into a college or other postsecondary education institution is one step in a long series of steps toward postsecondary education success. Assistance and support are often needed for students with disabilities to finish their program and graduate (Brandt & Berry, 1991; Mull et al., 2001; Patton & Dunn, 1998). Given this knowledge, admission into postsecondary education is dependent on students, parents, teachers, and administrators recognizing the steps that must be taken before students with disabilities leave high school (Webb, 2000). Following is a list of recommended steps from both Rosemary and the professional literature:

- Teach students to set a postsecondary goal early and plan the steps needed to meet that goal.
- Ensure that the IEP represents students' interests, strengths, and needs, which includes a course of study so that each student can successfully reach his or her postsecondary goals.
- Teach students to know the academic standards being covered and their progress toward mastering them.
- Facilitate students' choice of a postsecondary program early so they can become familiar with entrance requirements, and determine whether their records meet or exceed the minimum admission requirements.
- Ensure that their senior-year transition plans provide students with copies of current assessment reports that document their disability. Students will need these reports when they contact the disability support offices at postsecondary programs.
- Upon graduation, ensure that students have current documentation of their disability as required by their chosen postsecondary school and that the disability support office receives this documentation before they enroll for classes.
- Develop individual student portfolios that represent each student's knowledge, skills, and successes across academic and social settings.
- Teach students to plan ahead for taking college admission tests and requesting accommodations.

- Provide opportunities for students to practice self-advocacy skills.
- Develop a support system that includes mentors, peers, and family members.
- Encourage students to become familiar with the disability support services offered by their chosen postsecondary school before they apply for admission.
- Teach students about legal rights and responsibilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and included in the Americans with Disability Act and how those differ from IDEA and IEPs.

Individualized Education Program Involvement as a Method to Teach Self-Advocacy

Stodden (2000) considers self-determination a critical set of skills that postsecondary students with disabilities need for a successful educational experience. The Council for Exceptional Children's Division on Career Development and Transition believes that self-determination skills need to be taught to facilitate a successful transition from high school to post-high school life (Field, Martin, Miller, Ward, & Wehmeyer, 1998). Self-determined students understand their disability, know their interests and skills, have a clear vision for the future and can implement a plan to attain goals, can self-advocate, and will develop support to attain the desired goals (Martin, Marshall, & Maxson, 1993).

When students enter postsecondary education they must self-advocate to achieve personal success (Brinckerhoff, 1994; Webb, 2000). Examples of self-advocacy skills that Rosemary uses in the postsecondary setting include:

- Self-identification of disability.
- Self-initiated discussions about accommodations with instructors.
- Self-initiated scheduling of tutoring assistance.
- Identification of crucial content and projects that must be understood and completed.

Because Rosemary had the opportunity to learn and practice these and other self-advocacy skills while in middle and high schools, she was able to generalize them easily to her future educational environments.

The IEP process presents an excellent means to teach self-determination skills, especially the skill of self-advocacy (Martin & Marshall, 1995). Moreover, federal special education laws require student participation at their transition IEP meetings when they turn 14. Powers, Turner, Matuszewski, Wilson, and Loesch (1999) have indicated that students need to be systematically taught the skills to become actively involved in their own IEP meeting, and that simply attending the meeting without instruction is insufficient and may cause problems. Two research-validated lesson packages are available to teach IEP involvement and leadership skills: *The Self-Advocacy Strategy* (Van Reusen, Bos, Schumaker, & Deshler, 1994) and *The Self-Directed IEP* (Martin, Marshall, Maxson, & Jerman, 1996).

Rosemary learned how to be an active participant in her own IEP meeting when she was Ms. Brinckman's student at Springfield High School. Ms.

Brinckman had been involving her students in their own IEP meetings since she first began teaching in 1977. She wanted her students at their own IEP meetings to begin to understand how to accomplish goals and to look beyond the present moment. Ms. Brinckman also thought the IEP meeting was an excellent place to begin learning self-advocacy skills, so she encouraged her students to speak up and say what they wanted. Little did Rosemary know how useful these skills would be the next school year.

The Navy transferred Rosemary's father, and she moved with her family to a new school in a different part of Virginia. Her new special education teacher wanted Rosemary to enroll in easier, non-college preparatory classes so that she would maintain a high grade point average. He said these would pre-pare Rosemary for her studies at a junior college or vocational school. Rosemary balked. She knew she wanted to attend The University of Oklahoma, and to do this she needed the college preparatory courses. She demanded the right to attend her next IEP meeting, and her parents supported this request. At the meeting she told the IEP team what she wanted to do after leaving high school and that to accomplish this goal she needed college preparatory cours-es. Rosemary enrolled in the courses and successfully completed them. On another occasion, Rosemary used her self-advocacy skills to lead the students in her biology class on a strike against the horrors of the dissection process.

Self-Awareness of Disability: Knowing Strengths and Weaknesses

Self-determination skills are built on foundations that are laid in early child-hood. As young children build upon the experiences that life brings, they begin to develop a sense of self and pass through a series of developmental stages that ultimately promote the movement from dependence to independence (Field, Hoffman, & Posch, 1997; Thomas & Moloney, 2001). This sense of self is a key feature of self-definition, or identity formation, for adolescents. Through the process of identity formation "adolescents develop a sense of themselves, struggle with their place in the world, and make decisions that may have a pro-found impact on their futures" (Thomas & Moloney, 2001, p. 377). It is this process that paves the way for transition into adulthood.

Adolescents with disabilities travel the path of transition into adulthood in much the same way as their peers without disabilities. However, the pres-ence of a disability often requires additional efforts to facilitate self-awareness and self-respect (Field et al., 1997). Adolescents need opportunities to become successful and learn the self-advocacy and other self-determination skills that promote the process of learning about one's disability and associated strengths, needs, and accommodations.

Rosemary's parents were aware of this need for additional encourage-ment, and they provided Rosemary with opportunities for success early in her life. "To help with her self-esteem, we put Rosemary into Girl Scouts and Tae-kwon-do. She started earning badges and building self-confidence right away," was Rosemary's dad's comment when asked what they had done to encourage a positive self-image for her. To this comment, Rosemary added:

> Oh yeah, and I earned every single badge you could earn. I was determined to be the best at something, and earning badges was

something I could do. Because of my success with the Girl Scouts and Tae-kwon-do, I had more confidence to be a leader in school. For instance, when I was a junior in high school, I was the vice-president of the Animal Rights Organization, and led in several campaigns against cruelty to animals.

We asked Rosemary's parents when they first started talking to her about her disability. Her mother said:

> I recognized Rosemary's struggles very early on. She did things like counting backwards, and never could grasp phonics. I requested testing repeatedly through her early elementary years, but she always just missed qualifying—she fell through the cracks. When she finally did qualify for services in junior high, we were so relieved. But when all these things are going on, how can you not talk about the disability? I just wish we had known sooner so we could have started teaching Rosemary about the accommodations she needed, and about how to focus on strengths instead of weaknesses. But it's hard to teach self-advocacy when all you have is worries and unanswered questions.

Rosemary had strong family support in developing her self-efficacy. When we asked her about the origin of her "being determined to be the best at something," Rosemary said, "My internal drive and determination came from my dad. I mean, that's just the way my dad was. I saw pride and honor in him and in his job in the Navy. I wanted to have that same pride and honor."

Rosemary's father helped her to develop a strong sense of identity, which in turn, helped her to become a self-determined individual. The process of identity formation and self-definition is key to the development of self-determination. Self-determination, in turn, is central in the development of all adolescents, particularly those with disabilities (Field et al., 1997).

Attaining Academic Standards and Transition Goals

Self-determined students and adults are aware of their personal needs, set goals based on these needs, and actively pursue those goals (Martin & Marshall, 1995). Students with disabilities do not learn these skills on their own (Mithaug, Mithaug, Agran, Martin, & Wehmeyer, in press). They must be systematically taught to identify what they are working toward, to set reasonable goals, and to find ways to accomplish those goals. Ms. Brinckman taught Rosemary how to determine her post-high school goals. Once her outcomes were identified, she and Ms. Brinckman established academic and personal goals for each semester.

Facilitating goal attainment for students with disabilities involves teaching a step-by-step process of (1) knowing your standard, (2) evaluating current performance, (3) setting goals and objectives, (4) creating an action plan, and (5) evaluating your progress. Teaching these goal-attainment skills in middle or high school will provide students the opportunity to generalize them from high school into postsecondary educational settings. Two research-validated

instructional tools systematically teach goal attainment: *Steps for Self-Determination* (Field & Hoffman, 1996) and *Take Action: Making Goals Happen* (Huber Marshall et al.,1999). Following is a brief description of the step-by-step goal attainment process:

Knowing Your Standard. When introducing the concept of goal attainment, students must first be taught how to identify the standards or expected level of performance. A standard may be given or self-imposed, depending on the setting or task. Transitioning to postsecondary education requires recognizing numerous standards, such as:

- Personal expectations.
- Academic standards and benchmarks for each specific class.
- Graduation requirements.
- Coursework requirements.
- IEP goals and objectives.
- Family expectations.

Evaluating Current Performance. Before choosing a goal, a need must be determined by assessing or self-evaluating the student's present level of performance and identifying specific standards or expectations. Students must learn to evaluate themselves accurately in order to set reasonable goals. According to Wehmeyer, Agran, and Hughes (1998), when instructing students to self-evaluate, it is important to teach them to:

- Identify the behavior being monitored.
- Use the correct measurement procedure.
- Monitor the presence or absence of the behavior.
- Record or report the findings.
- Compare the findings to a standard or expectation.

Choosing Goals. If the discrepancy between the standard and performance reveals a need for improved performance, then a goal may be chosen to improve performance. Teachers may want to use an available instructional tool to teach this process. *Choosing Education Goals* (Martin, Hughes, Huber Marshall, Jerman, & Maxson, 2000) teaches students to assess their current academic performance, compare their present performance with postschool educational outcomes, and then choose goals to begin the process of self-directed behavior change.

Creating an Action Plan. A seven-part action plan defines the process that students use to attain their goal. Each part of the plan needs to be explicitly taught and demonstrated. A first-person question defines each part of the plan (Huber Marshall et al., 1999):

- Goal—What will I accomplish this week?
- Standard—What will I be satisfied with?

- Motivation—Why do I want to do this?
- Strategy—How will I do this?
- Supports—What help do I need?
- Schedule—When will I do this?
- Feedback—How will I get information on my performance?

Evaluating and Adjusting the Plan. Once the plan for action is in place, ongoing self-evaluation monitors the effectiveness of the plan. Each part of the plan will be evaluated to determine whether the parts were implemented as planned and achieved the desired results. If not, then adjustments will need to be made to one or more of the parts.

Time and Task Management

Rosemary used time and task management skills to support the attainment of her academic and transition goals in high school and college. Many students, with or without a disability, will face similar time and task management challenges as college students (Peniston, 1994). These challenges include:

- Management of complex schedules.
- Class attendance.
- Study habits.
- Assignment completion.
- Socialization.
- Transportation.
- Independent living tasks such as doing laundry and cleaning rooms.
- Making medical appointments and filling prescription medicines.
- Money management, including writing checks and paying bills.

Students with disabilities will have additional issues to overcome, including:

- Accommodations.
- Mobility and access.
- Academic supports.
- Additional studying and assignment time.
- Self-advocacy demands.

The key to success for students is having the organizational, problem-solving, and scholastic strategies to overcome these challenges. Teachers in secondary settings must facilitate awareness, acquisition, and mastery of these strategies before students leave high school. Ms. Brinckman tells most of her students at the beginning of each year that she expects them to enroll in and complete a postsecondary educational program. She spends much of her time with students teaching them the skills to make this happen. With her assistance, students decide their academic and personal goals each quarter, then they jointly develop a remediation plan to accomplish those goals. Ms.

Brinckman also utilizes other strategies, which are suggested in the literature, including the following:

- Reduced use of academic modifications, since no modifications occur in postsecondary educational programs.
- Accommodation awareness and use (Lock & Layton, 2001).
- Goal setting and goal attainment (Huber Marshall et al., 1999).
- Use of daily, weekly, or monthly calendars (Peniston, 1994).
- Use of a "to do" list and task prioritization (Peniston, 1994).
- Developing support networks.
- Self-advocacy for academic concerns (Brinckerhoff, 1994).
- Holding regular parent support group meetings to facilitate understanding of what is needed to transition to postsecondary education.

Family Support and Involvement

Family expectations play a central role in defining and refining the path that individuals with disabilities choose. Research has reported for well over a decade that outcomes for youths with disabilities improve when parents expect their children to succeed and are involved in their schooling and transition planning (Sitlington, Clark, & Kolstoe, 2000). Research has also determined that youths with disabilities are more likely to enroll in college if their parents expect them to attend college (Wagner et al., 1991). Rosemary's parents had high expectations even before she was born. When Rosemary's parents were asked when they first knew that they wanted their daughter to go to college, their answer was "Even before our kids were born, we wanted them to go to college."

Parent involvement in educational planning has been mandated since 1975 with Public Law 94-142, which is the original legislation supporting IDEA. The 1990 reauthorization of IDEA stipulated that educational programs must be developed in collaboration with the desires and interests of the parents. The 1997 reauthorization of IDEA requires parents' participation in all aspects of decision-making on behalf of their child's special education and transition planning. However, parents and families are not always considered when educational programs are designed and implemented (Lovitt & Cushing, 1999), and when they are invited to participate, families often report a perception of "not being valued or listened to" (DeFur, Todd-Allen, & Getzel, 2001, p. 20). Why does this happen? What creates the barriers that lead to these perceptions?

Educators often have certain myths about families that prevent them from treating parents as equal partners. These barrier-building myths include:

- Seeing parents as incapable of being teachers of their children, although in reality, parents are their child's most consistent and long-term teachers.
- Believing parents are too emotionally involved with their child to have objectivity.

- Thinking that parents are unable to understand the complexity of the educational system (Cutler, 1993).

Conversely, parents have identified these barriers to involvement in the educational process:

- Problems dealing with differing opinions.
- Inability to understand the school system.
- Feelings of inferiority.
- Uncertainty about their child's disability (Lovitt & Cushing, 1999).

Both of these lists include the barrier of understanding the complexities of the school system. Indeed, the special education process is a daunting one, especially with the lifelong planning that transition requires.

Did Rosemary's family run into similar barriers, and if so, how did they deal with them? How did the school system respond to Rosemary's disability? In response to a question regarding their high expectations for Rosemary within the school system, Rosemary's father answered: "We lost more faith in the system than in Rosemary. We were told that we'd be lucky just to get her through high school." Rosemary's mother reinforced the finding that feelings of inferiority are a barrier to involvement by stating: "Sometimes I asked myself: Am I the only parent going through this? But then I would talk with Ms. Brinckman, Rosemary's high school teacher, and she would give me hope once again about college for Rosemary." Rosemary's mother went on to say that "I know that we're not going to be there forever for Rosemary, so we want her to have what she needs to be successful." Unfortunately, as mentioned earlier, Rosemary had to move to a different high school when her father got transferred. This school often had differing opinions regarding Rosemary's future. When asked about the postschool guidance she received, Rosemary recalled: "I was told by my high school special education teacher not to take hard classes that would harm my GPA, so I could look good on paper."

Families have a crucial impact on the transition into adulthood for individuals with disabilities. In fact, parental involvement is considered to be one of the most important components in the transition process (Morningstar, Turnbull, & Turnbull, 1995). Often, that parental involvement includes sacrifice on the part of one or both parents. Rosemary's mother chose to make such sacrifices. As Rosemary put it,

> When I was young, my mom quit her job so she could stay at home with me and help me with all my schoolwork, because so many things were a struggle for me. Maybe more importantly, though, she was there for me as a shoulder to cry on, because there was definitely a lot of that. Then later my mom went back to work, just so my parents could afford to pay for the specialized tutoring that I needed to get through high school. My parents have been so great; I couldn't have made it through without them. I will always be appreciative to my mom for her constant support, and to my dad for teaching me about pride and honor.

Attaining Success During the First Semester of Postsecondary Education

The transition to a postsecondary education program represents the end of one phase of life and the beginning of another. A major transition such as this involves three stages of change (Bridges, 1980): (1) the ending of the former way of life; (2) a period of confusion, perhaps distress, excitement, and perhaps longing for the previous life; and (3) the beginning of a new way of life. During the first semester away from high school, students will go through all of these three stages. Students with disabilities will face additional adjustments because they do not have the same supports that they had during high school.

Many students during their first semester find that their social life provides options never before available and, often, freedom of choice never before experienced. Some students let their social life dictate their schedule and give other areas less consideration. Other students miss their high school friends and do not actively seek out a new social life. These students often leave during the semester or do not return for their second semester. A balance must be established among social life, academic performance, support networks, and daily living tasks so that no one area is ignored. The following suggestions can help to establish this balance during the first semester:

Social Life
- Research available organizations to join.
- Seek out campus activities and events that match students' interests.
- Use campus recreational facilities.
- Get to know other students.

Academic Performance
- Contact the disability support office to arrange priority scheduling.
- Contact professors prior to class to begin reading assignments before class and to schedule any supports or needed accommodations.
- Get books and supplies before classes start (you can always return what you don't need).
- Be prepared to take class notes in a way that works best for you. The disability support office may provide notetakers and tape recordings.
- Develop a study schedule and keep to it. It is very easy to procrastinate on completing assignments and taking tests.
- Be prepared to study 2 hours a week for each class credit hour.
- Find a productive location for study. Many students establish a routine of going to the campus library on specific days and at certain times.

Support Network
- Get to know the apartment manager or residential assistant.
- Use campus tutoring support.

187

- Locate and meet your academic advisor. Develop a long-range plan of courses needed to graduate, and find out when these classes will be offered.

Daily Living Tasks

- Establish campus e-mail and Internet accounts as soon as possible, because, more and more often, campus notifications and class assignments are given via the Internet.
- Schedule a weekly time to do laundry.
- Schedule sufficient time to get to each class.
- Schedule meal times. Campus housing does not provide food 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Establish a checking account and learn how to write checks and balance the account.
- Use credit cards wisely.
- If you have an ongoing medical concern, contact your campus or community health providers before you need assistance. Understand your health insurance requirements.

Before Rosemary came to The University of Oklahoma, she developed a plan for how she was going to deal with the various aspects of college life. She wanted to become socially involved in only one campus group. So, after looking at the available sorority and club options, she chose to join a nonresidential service sorority club. Before coming to campus, Rosemary and her parents visited the campus disability support office to secure services. Once Rosemary received her syllabi for all of her classes, she went back to the campus disability support office and scheduled appointments for her time and half-testing accommodations. She moved into an apartment with her sister about a mile away from her parent's house. Rosemary decided early on to go home to do her laundry each week.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined skills that support access to academic standards for students with disabilities as they make the transition from high school to postsecondary education. Students must practice self-advocacy, expect to achieve academic standards and their personal and IEP goals, and ultimately learn to manage the challenging task of completing a postsecondary education program. Gaining knowledge of academic standards and feedback on efforts to achieve them, as well as adjusting support on strategies to obtain the standards, will help students with disabilities develop goal-attainment skills that are useful for postsecondary education. These outcomes are greatly influenced early on by teacher beliefs and actions, as well as family expectations.

Students should remember that success in their first semester in a postsecondary school depends to a great extent on how well they have followed a systematic planning process. Rosemary's story certainly shows that positive outcomes can result when this process is followed. While Rosemary's experi-

ence does not reflect the norm at this time, it is our hope that such stories soon will be common. In the meantime, we believe that Rosemary, her family, and her most supportive teacher serve as an inspiring example of how planning—when combined with high expectations—can lead to rewarding results for students with disabilities.

References

Brandt, M. D., & Berry, J. O. (1991). Transitioning college bound students with LD. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 26,* 297–301.

Bridges, W. (1980). *Transitions: Making sense of life's changes.* Reading, MA: Perseus.

Brinckerhoff, L. C. (1994). Developing effective self-advocacy skills in college-bound students with learning disabilities. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 29,* 229–237.

Brower, A. M. (1992). The "second half" of student integration: The effects of life task predominance on student persistence. *Journal of Higher Education, 63,* 441–462.

Cutler, B. C. (1993). *You, your child, and special education: A guide to making the system work.* Baltimore: Brookes.

DeFur, S. H., Todd-Allen, M., & Getzel, E. E. (2001). Parent participation in the transition planning process. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 24,* 19–36.

Field, S., & Hoffman, A. (1996). *Steps to self-determination.* Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

Field, S., Hoffman, A., & Posch, M. (1997). Self-determination during adolescence: A developmental perspective. *Remedial and Special Education, 18*(5), 285–293.

Field, S., Martin, J., Miller, R., Ward, M., & Wehmeyer, M. (1998). Self-determination for persons with disabilities: A position statement of the Division on Career Development and Transition. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 21,* 113–128.

Final Federal Regulations Implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Fed. Reg. (March 12, 1999), 34 §§ C.F.R. 300.522(e), pp. 12592 *et. seq.*

Henderson, C. (2001). *College freshmen with disabilities: A biennial statistical profile.* Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

Horn, L., Berktold, J., & Bobbit, L. (1999, June). *Students with disabilities in postsecondary education: A profile of preparation, participation, and outcomes* (NCES No. 1999-187). Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Education Statistics.

Huber Marshall, L., Martin, J. E., Maxson, L., Hughes, W., Miller, T. L., McGill, T., & Jerman, P. (1999). *Take action: Making goals happen.* Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

Immediate transition from high school to college. (1999, March). *National Center for Education Statistics, Indicator of the Month* (NCES No.1999-006). Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement.

Lock, R. H., & Layton, C. A. (2001). Succeeding in postsecondary education through self-advocacy. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 34*(2), 66–71.

Lovitt, T. C., & Cushing, S. (1999). Parents of youth with disabilities: Their perceptions of school programs. *Remedial and Special Education, 20*(3), 134–142.

Martin, J. E., & Duncan, B. (2002). *Students with disabilities at America's major research universities.* Manuscript submitted for publication.

Martin, J. E., Hughes, W., Huber Marshall, L., Jerman, P., & Maxson, L. (2000). *Choosing education goals.* Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

Martin, J. E., & Marshall, L. H. (1995). ChoiceMaker: A comprehensive self-determination transition program. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 30*(3),147–156.

Martin, J. E., Marshall, L. H., & Maxson, L. L. (1993). Transition policy: Infusing self-determination and self-advocacy into transition programs. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 16,* 53–61.

Martin, J. E., Marshall, L. H., Maxson, L. L., & Jerman, P. (1996). *The self-directed IEP.* Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

Mithaug, D. E., Mithaug, D., Agran, M., Martin, J. E, & Wehmeyer, M. (in press). *Self-determined learning theory: Predictions, prescriptions, and practice.* Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Morningstar, M. E., Turnbull, A. P., & Turnbull, H. R. (1995). What do students with disabilities tell us about the importance of family involvement in the transition from school to adult life? *Exceptional Children, 63,* 249–260.

Mull, C., Sitlington, P. L., & Alper, S. (2001). Postsecondary education for students with learning disabilities: A synthesis of the literature. *Exceptional Children, 68,* 97–118.

Patton, J. R., & Dunn, C. (1998). *Transition from school to young adulthood: Basic concepts and recommended practices.* Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

Peniston, L. (1994, November). *Strategies on time management for college students with learning disabilities.* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Center for Academic Support Programs, Lubbock, TX. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED376396)

Powers, L. E., Turner, A., Matuszewski, J., Wilson, R., & Loesch, C. (1999). A qualitative analysis of student involvement in transition planning. *Journal of Vocational Special Needs Education, 21*(3), 18–26.

Sitlington, P. L., Clark, G. M., & Kolstoe, O. P. (2000). *Transition education and services for adolescents with disabilities.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Stodden, R. (2000). *Topical review: Postsecondary supports, 5* (Study Area 4a). Honolulu: University of Hawaii, Center of Disability Studies, National Center for the Study of Postsecondary Education Supports.

Thomas, J. W., & Moloney, M. (2001). "Who I am and what I want:" Adolescents' self-definition and struggles. *Exceptional Children, 67,* 375–389.

Thomas, S. B. (2000). College students and disability law. *Journal of Special Education, 33*(4), 248–257.

U. S. Department of Education. (1996). *Eighteenth annual report to Congress on the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.* Washington, DC: Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services.

Van Reusen, A. K., Bos, C. S., Schumaker, J. B., & Deshler, D. D. (1994). *Self-advocacy strategy for education and transition planning.* Lawrence, KS: Edge Enterprises.

Wagner, M., Newman, L., D'Amico, R., Jay, E. D., Nalin, P. B., Marder, C., & Cox, R. (1991). Youth with disabilities: How are they doing? *The first comprehensive report from the National Longitudinal Transition Study of Special Education Students.* Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs.

Webb, K. W. (2000). *Transition to postsecondary education: Strategies for students with disabilities.* Austin, TX: Pro-Ed.

Wehmeyer, M. L., Agran, M., & Hughes, C. (1998). *Teaching self-determination to students with disabilities.* Baltimore: Brookes.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

JAMES E. MARTIN holds the first Zarrow Endowed Chair in Special Education and is Director of the University of Oklahoma's Zarrow Center for Learning Enrichment. He earned his Ph.D. from the University of Illinois in 1983. He taught at the University of Colorado for 16 years from 1984 to 2000. While at Colorado he served as the Special Education Program Coordinator for 10 years and was Director of the Center for Self-Determination. He taught at Eastern Illinois University from 1982 through 1984. Professor Martin's professional interests focus upon the transition of youths with disabilities from high school

into postsecondary education and the workforce and what must be done to facilitate success in high school and postsecondary environments. In particular he is interested in the application of self-determination methodology to educational and workplace settings.

JAMIE L. VAN DYCKE is a doctoral student at the University of Oklahoma and is currently doing research in IEP meeting behaviors, transition into adulthood, and self-determination for individuals with disabilities. Jamie earned a bachelor's degree in Special Education and Elementary Education at Oklahoma Christian University and a master's degree in Special Education at the University of Central Oklahoma. She has been a classroom teacher for students with significant physical disabilities, mild to moderate cognitive disabilities, learning disabilities, and emotional challenges. Jamie worked at the Oklahoma State Department of Education and helped develop policies and procedures regarding transition service delivery for youths with disabilities, as well as designed and implemented a full range of staff development training for transition personnel. Jamie is currently the Vice-President of the Oklahoma Federation of the Council for Exceptional Children and is the Past President of the Oklahoma Division of Career Development and Transition.

LORI Y. PETERSON is a doctoral-level graduate research assistant at the Zarrow Center for Learning Enrichment at the University of Oklahoma. She is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in Special Education at OU. Lori earned her bachelor's degree in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology from the University of Northern Colorado and her master's degree in Special Education from the University of Colorado-Colorado Springs. In Colorado, she taught students with learning, physical, cognitive, and emotional disabilities. Lori has taken an active role in implementing balanced literacy instruction, standards-based education, and inclusive education. In the past 5 years she has served as a consultant for the development of self-determination instructional strategies and curriculum at the University of Colorado-Colorado Springs. Lori is currently serving as the 2002–2004 State Treasurer for the Oklahoma Federation of the Council for Exceptional Children.

ROBERT J. WALDEN is an Assistant Professor in the Special Education Program, Department of Teacher Education, at the University of Nebraska at Kearney. Dr. Walden received his Ph.D. in special education from the University of Oklahoma at Norman. He has taught students with learning disabilities in public schools at both the elementary and secondary levels. His research and other professional interests include goal attainment among college students with disabilities, team teaching at the secondary level, and technology implementation in the schools.
E-mail: waldenrj@unk.edu

11

Future Directions for Transition and Standards-Based Education

Diane S. Bassett

Carol A. Kochhar-Bryant

The education community faces numerous challenges as it seeks to blend the transition process with the directives of standards-based reform. These two efforts share essentially the same purpose—to prepare all youths to enter the community and the workforce with maximum potential and competence. However, the means by which these purposes are achieved spring from divergent sets of assumptions that often are difficult to reconcile.

The tenets that guide the transition process include quality of life (Halpern, 1994; Szymanski, 1994), a sense of self-knowledge and self-advocacy to allow decision-making and dignity of risk (Field, Martin, Miller, Ward, & Wehmeyer, 1998; Halpern, 1993), and access to typical activities shared across a community, such as employment, college or technical training, transportation, recreation, and community participation (Benz, Doren, & Yovanoff, 1997; Sitlington, Clark, & Kolstoe, 2001). The assumption underlying standards-based education is that high expectations for student performance coupled with mastery of academic competencies will naturally produce the next generation of active, productive adults. A major distinction is that while the transition process seeks inclusivity based on the premise that all can uniquely contribute to society, standards-based reform implies that one must ."earn" inclusion into school or society through mastery of content and performance-based standards. Given the apparent dichotomy between these two systems, is it possible to blend them into a coherent framework that will improve postschool outcomes for students?

The contributors to this book have attempted to do just that. By balancing the need for accountability and high standards for all students with opportunities for individualized transition planning and services, they have attempted to provide points of alignment or fusion between the two. Consider the imple-

mentation of universal design qualities infused into curricula (see Wehmeyer, Chapter 2). Properties of universal design were first applied in the community through architectural barrier-free access. Now we see how these same properties can be applied to content mastery. Longo's application of transition-related competencies in a standards-based individualized education program (IEP; see Chapter 3) demonstrates how to create a set of meaningful, measurable, and challenging goals for students. Given these goals, Patton and Trainor (Chapter 4) have extended the notion of applied academics into content-based standards. Thurlow, Thompson, and Johnson (Chapter 6) demonstrate how standardized assessment can draw on transition-based competencies such as advocating for accommodations and demonstrating mastery of a concept through authentic measures. In addition, Williams (Chapter 5) assures us that using school-to-career strategies and frameworks can in fact produce students who achieve the higher academic and vocational skills necessary for future adult life.

Several of the authors have reminded us to take into account family and cultural considerations as we blend standards and transition competencies. Family members can act as important mediators between standardized assessments and the articulation of meaningful future goals (see Morningstar, Chapter 8). Defur and Williams (Chapter 7) challenge us to become culturally competent in our practice and sensitive to the needs of culturally and linguistically diverse students through the lens of transition competencies in a standards-based system.

Finally, several authors have outlined distinct strategies to enable students to graduate and attend postsecondary education. Greene (Chapter 9) offers four pathways that incorporate the requirements of a standards-based system with postschool hopes across a spectrum of disabilities. For students wishing to pursue postsecondary education, Martin, Van Dycke, Peterson, and Walden (Chapter 10) offer specific strategies for students included in the general education curriculum to master the skills needed for further educational opportunities.

Although each chapter presents a unique aspect of transition within a standards-based system, together they illustrate shared themes and practices for achieving alignment. These themes not only drive our philosophy, but also provide a guide for action planning. The themes are not just applicable for students with exceptionalities, but should be incorporated into best practice for all students as they move through school and transition to adulthood. In a system that aligns transition and standards-based education, all students have the right and the potential to

- Achieve high standards appropriate to their abilities and talents.
- Prepare for and assume their roles as capable citizens.
- Exercise choice and self-determination in planning present and future goals.
- Achieve basic literacy and functional skills that can be validly and reliably assessed though a variety of measures.
- Receive an individualized approach to their learning and transition to adult life.

- Master both academic and career-vocational standards.
- Engage in blended academic, career/vocational, and community-based opportunities throughout the school experience.

Need for Systemic Change on Several Levels

This book is intended to provide practitioners with rationale and direction for implementation of the transition process within a standards-based system. Hence, specific strategies have been developed to bridge the two systems. However, it must be acknowledged that the type of systemic change required to blend standards and transition successfully must be employed on a number of levels. First, policy must be established at the *federal level* that supports the blending of the two systems. Second, *school districts* must possess the vision to recognize and implement strategies that foster a flexible yet rigorous application of content standards and assessment while actively promoting community-based involvement and authentic means of assessment. Finally, it is *up to us* as educators, one by one, to understand and balance standards and transition so that students can garner the best from both systems in a seamless manner.

These three levels of systemic change are discussed in the following sections, with examples of each. In addition, recommendations related to each level are provided for practitioners seeking to align the goals of high student achievement with the larger picture of transition to successful adult life.

Challenges at the Federal Level

Policy interventions by the federal government to address persistently poor high school and postschool outcomes have not yielded much progress in the past two decades. This is true despite the fact that problems and barriers to successful transition have been extensively identified and defined. As the educational community requests more funding for transition services from the federal government, answers to some fundamental questions are in order. For example, how can the federal government encourage:

- Replication of the very best programs and practices?
- Integration of transition service delivery and postsecondary outcomes into school accountability systems?
- Partnerships between formal service systems and community-based organizations?
- Coordination by state and local communities to combine what works uniquely with targeted communities and neighborhoods?
- Creation of a useful knowledge base to help practitioners?
- Engagement of parents and students in building transition capacity at state and local levels?

A variety of recent federal programs and initiatives hold out the promise of addressing some of these problems; however, regulations guiding these pro-

grams must provide greater clarity and direction for transition requirements. There are a number of new youth programs and services that have the potential to either support or undermine state and local outcomes. These are introduced in the following sections, with implications for aligning standards-based education and transition.

Federal Programs and Initiatives

Youth Opportunity Movement. The Youth Opportunity Movement is an initiative of the Department of Labor, working through local communities, to build partnerships among government, community, and faith-based organizations; business leaders, and youths. It is a $1 billion initiative that is designed to bridge gaps and break cycles that lead to poverty and despair. In conjunction with the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (P.L. 105-220), the U.S. Department of Labor recently awarded $250 million in grants to 36 Youth Opportunity programs to establish "One-Stop" service centers where young people can access a wide range of services and resources for employment and connection with the community. While the "Yomovement" sounds promising in theory, in practice there are no specific guidelines for the inclusion of youths with disabilities in the 36 communities recently awarded grants.

It is important that the technical assistance provided by this initiative be related specifically to working with youths with disabilities so that greater benefit will accrue to this population. The Youth Opportunity programs can provide additional structure needed to promote the alignment of academic curriculum with community-based employment experiences.

Workforce Investment Act: Youth Councils and One-Stop Centers. The employment and training system is transitioning from the former Job Training Partnership Act to the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The WIA places new emphasis on serving youths within a comprehensive statewide workforce development system by establishing linkages with other agencies in the local area, including summer youth employment. The "One-Stop" centers mentioned in the previous section were developed to bring together employment and training services that work with all people in one place and make it easier for job seekers and employers to use these services. Youths can use One-Stop centers to find information regarding job vacancies, career options, job searches, résumé writing, interviewing techniques, referral to training programs, and unemployment insurance claim processing.

The WIA also promotes transition for youths by facilitating access to employment and community-based employment experiences that can be aligned with school-based academic programs. It is hoped that the WIA will have an impact on the 70% unemployment rate among individuals with disabilities who would like to begin work experience earlier, during summers or during the school year. Collaboration between schools and WIA programs need to be promoted at the local level.

Ticket to Work and the Work Incentives Improvement Act. On December 17, 1999, President Clinton signed the Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act (P.L. 106-170). This law removes several serious barriers to

work faced by individuals with disabilities by providing high-quality, afford-able health insurance for working people with Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and by making it easier for people to choose their own provider of employment services in the private or public sector. Under the Ticket to Work (Self-Sufficiency program), individuals receiving SSI or SSDI benefits may receive a "ticket" or voucher to obtain employment services of their choosing from within employment networks, including Vocational Rehabilitation or other public and private providers. It also allows states to provide two options for health care: to offer Medicaid coverage to those not eligible for SSI (because they make too much money) or to contin-ue to cover those who have lost SSI or SSDI coverage to pay on a sliding scale.

This Act has high potential to benefit youths with disabilities. It not only promises to allow flexibility in potential employment options, but also allows the individual to retain health insurance through Medicaid or other sources while engaging in meaningful career development. Adequate health coverage has long been a barrier to successful transition into employment.

Demonstration Projects to Help Students with Disabilities Access and Complete Postsecondary Education. Research indicates that students with dis-abilities are far less likely than their peers to enroll in postsecondary education. Furthermore, they are more likely to attend 2-year and vocational-technical col-leges than 4-year colleges and universities. To address these issues, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Postsecondary Education provides a dis-cretionary grant program for colleges to increase the number of students with disabilities who wish to pursue a 4-year degree. Grantees in the projects are expected to develop innovative, effective, and efficient teaching methods and strategies to both retain students with disabilities and assist postsecondary fac-ulty and administrators in working with these students. Activities might include customized and general technical assistance workshops, summer insti-tutes, distance learning, training in the use of assistive and educational tech-nology, and synthesizing research related to postsecondary students with disabilities. Collaboration between high schools and demonstration projects such as these could result in innovative preparatory activities or summer insti-tutes to help youths bound for college.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The mandate of tran-sition has been in place since the 1990 enactment of IDEA. However, 44 states are still out of compliance with basic transition requirements, including transi-tion-related goals and objectives on the IEP, linkages to community and adult service agencies, and community-based education. Furthermore, IDEA has mandated greater access to the general education curriculum, regardless of set-ting, and inclusion in mastery-of-content standards and high-stakes assess-ment. Issues in the 1997 reauthorization of the Act (IDEA 1997) have pointed to a strengthening and broadening of the transition mandate as well as continued attention to access to the general education curriculum and subsequent appli-cation of content standards and performance assessments.

While standards-based reforms and accountability requirements under the No Child Left Behind Act will continue to impact the reauthorization of IDEA 1997, there is a renewed concern about the need to strengthen transition

supports and services for youths with disabilities. For example, according to Todd Jones (2002), Executive Director of the President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education, it is likely that requirements for initiating transition services at age 14 will be strengthened in the next reauthorization, which may extend into next year.

Stephanie Lee (2002), Director of the U.S. Office of Special Education, noted slight improvements in graduation and dropout rates across the United States but said that overall rates of postsecondary education and employment continue to be disappointing. She indicated that accountability systems should not reduce the emphasis on areas such as independent living, mobility training, and other important transition services. Recommendations also being considered by Congress in the reauthorization of IDEA 1997 also include greater federal interagency collaboration on employment and higher education.

The No Child Left Behind Act. The No Child Left Behind Act introduced sweeping changes to the educational field. When the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was reauthorized in 2001 as the No Child Left Behind Act, it contained a new focus on standards, requiring states and districts to develop challenging state academic content standards, state assessments, and new curriculum standards. The focus on curriculum standards also led to the development of so-called high-stakes exit exams for students preparing for graduation. States and local districts are increasing their graduation requirements to include more rigorous coursework and tests to demonstrate knowledge and skills needed after high school (National Center on Educational Outcomes [NCEO], 2002). The Act also mandated a fully qualified teacher in every classroom by the 2005–2006 school year. (A fully qualified teacher is one with a bachelor's degree in the particular content or teaching specialization.)

Increased emphasis on more rigorous coursework and graduation requirements, combined with decreased resources to support comprehensive curriculum choices for students, places many students with disabilities at risk for dropping out. Reports from several states confirm such speculations (Heubert, 1999; Orfield & Kornhaber, 2002; "Studies Find," 2002). The 1998 data from 14 states show gaps that remain quite high: Students with disabilities consistently fail state graduation tests at rates 35 to 40 percentage points higher than those of students without disabilities (Ysseldyke et al., 1998). The strongest predictor of whether students will drop out of school is whether they have been retained in grade. The rapid growth of promotion testing, particularly in inner-city schools, is likely to create an increasingly large class of students—disproportionately composed of students with disabilities, African Americans, Latinos, English-language learners, and low socioeconomic status students—who are at increased risk of dropout by virtue of having been retained in grade one or more times (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1999; National Research Council, Heubert, & Hauser, 1999; Hauser, 1999).

Educational leaders also observe that consequences alone will not result in higher achievement if fundamental resources are not available in school districts to provide the necessary supports to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn (American Federation of Teachers, 2001). For example, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) filed a class action suit representing 1,300 students with disabilities in Indiana who are required to pass a new, more

rigorous, exit exam to receive their diplomas. The suit hinges on two legal claims: (1) the state denied the students' due process rights by changing the rules for graduation without providing sufficient time for students with disabilities to learn the material and (2) it did not adequately provide for their special needs as indicated in their IEPs when they took the tests. The lawsuit asserts that if a student's IEP provides for either an exemption from the state test or modifications or adaptations in the testing, the state must honor those conditions (Dunne, 2000).

There appears to be a rising swell of challenges to the high-stakes testing policies being implemented in the states. A transition service framework that includes a comprehensive flexible curriculum with academic, career-vocational, and community-based learning options, as well as ongoing supports and preparation for performance assessments and exit exams, can ensure that the due process provisions are protected.

Challenges for School Districts

School districts are facing enormous challenges. Between increased calls for appropriate education for a diverse population of students with disabilities on one hand, and the push for standards-based curriculum and high-stakes assessment on the other, school districts are being compelled to be all things to all people. Pressures such as decreased state funding and threats of grievances from parents place school districts in a quandary as to what services to provide first. Recently, the overriding emphasis on standards-based reform has propelled districts into a whirlwind to teach basic skill acquisition with the expectation that these skills can be quantifiably assessed through standardized measures. The principles of transition, unfortunately, have taken a back seat to the dictates of state legislatures to increase accountability for academic skills. If we hope to realize the promise of transition for improving postsecondary outcomes, school districts must learn to meld the two systems, not just for students with disabilities, but for all students served. Recommendations for districts to consider include the following:

1. Recognize that a standards-based system and the transition process do not have to be mutually exclusive. Both systems strive ultimately to produce independent and productive adults; the alignment can only enhance student achievement.

2. Move beyond the straightjacket of standardized tests and adapt student performance assessment to include career vocational and community-based learning environments.

3. Integrate transition planning, services, and postsecondary outcomes into new school improvement, accountability, and data systems. If we don't count transition outcomes, transition won't count.

4. Use effective components from the New American High Schools project (1977), which integrate academic and vocational goals and practices. Let's learn from other successes aimed at all students.

5. Ensure that policies that govern the role of the IEP team in determining student access to the general education curriculum is consistent across

schools and curricula. Be consistent in the application of universal design principles, such as teaching concepts using a variety of modalities and techniques.

6. Establish or strengthen partnerships formed in the community. These partnerships may include collaborators from School-to-Work Opportunities Act programs, WIA, NCCB Title I programs, rehabilitation, or employers and institutions dedicated to providing career access to all individuals.

7. Document and share examples of successful transition programs through IDEA (i.e., those that impact student outcomes) at the individual, school, and system levels and share those examples with other educators, students, parents, advocates, and other interested parties. Use Web-based communications networks (community of practitioners) to share successes.

8. Infuse community-based, work, and internship experiences, volunteer opportunities, and service learning throughout the school district's secondary curricula. Challenge students to learn outside the classroom.

9. Develop and implement reasonable transition plans, as guided by IDEA, for all students regardless of the nature and/or extent of their service and support needs. No student should be without a vision of the future and a set of postsecondary goals.

10. Actively resist the temptation to judge IDEA's transition service requirements as strictly technical compliance activities. Use the service requirements and mandated timeframes as benchmarks for student planning, timing of local services, and leveraging of community resources. Capitalize on students' natural transition points to strengthen their ability to create a vision of their future and to shape their postsecondary goals.

11. Provide increased access to relevant assistive technology and telecommunications in schools and other neighborhood centers for youths and young adults with disabilities.

Building effective transition services requires a rededication of local resources, personnel, and community partnerships.

Challenges for Educators

Educating and guiding each student ultimately rests with educators, even though district, state, and federal resources influence the climate that allows for transition planning in a standards-based context. *Educators can blend the two systems into a coherent whole, achieving both flexibility and rigor to deliver a high-quality education crafted to ensure individualized services and successful postschool outcomes.*

For those who believe in the inherent importance of transition-based competencies and skills, it is imperative to continue playing an active and leading role in today's changing schools. Throughout this chapter, we have spoken of the importance of blending the transition process with a standards-based

system. However, if the ultimate outcome for students is their success in adult life, then the opposite is true: *It is actually a standards-based system that should have as its foundation the basic tenets of transition and career development.* The ultimate goal of IDEA is the achievement of postschool goals of students with disabilities throughout all planning and educational opportunities. The transition process, therefore, is not the endpoint of a student's educational history, but the foundation upon which to build a continuity of successful experiences from infancy into adulthood.

The contributors to this book have offered strategies for aligning standards-based reform and transition activities and competencies. Several premises have emerged from a synthesis of these strategies.

Premise 1: Special Educators Must Understand and Be Actively Involved in Standards-Based Reform

All members of the school community must share the responsibility of implementing content standards and high-stakes assessment. Standards must be understood and employed by all teachers, regardless of the degree of student ability they address. When standards were first being developed, few special educators felt it was within their purview to be involved in the process. Today it is conceded that standards must be addressed across all domains, at all ability levels, for all curricula, and for all students. Students can also receive the same accommodations for standardized assessments that they have received throughout their schooling. The principles of universal design can be applied equitably to ensure access to learning.

The key to this knowledge lies in the active involvement of educators, and especially special educators, in understanding and effectively teaching in a standards-based system while also individualizing for their students. It is imperative that educators know the details of content standards and access skills to individualize learning for each student. Likewise, when educators realize that high-stakes assessment can be used as a tool to help school districts discover effective practice, the use of appropriate accommodations and authentic experiences help validate this process. If, however, special educators do not share the responsibility for the delivery and evaluation of standards-based curriculum or assessment, their students may suffer the consequences of passive involvement and lack of awareness. Poor achievement, increased dropout, and subsequent diminished adult outcomes can result. Special educators, therefore, must assume leadership roles to discern how best to align standards and the transition process for the benefit of their students. To do this, educators must:

- Assume an integral role on school-based curriculum and standards committees and school improvement teams.
- Work in partnership with general educators on issues of curriculum and standards and school accountability.
- Have a strong working knowledge of all content standards for the age levels they teach.
- Advocate for transition and career-vocational standards for their districts.

Premise 2: Educators Must Have High Expectations for Their Students

High expectations do not imply just high academic expectations, but rather the surety that all students can lead productive lives. Through the expectation of exemplary and thoughtful performance by each student (depending on strengths and needs), all students can experience success. The challenge for special educators is to recognize that high expectations for students must be paralleled by students' high expectations for themselves. Helping students to realistically appraise and realize their talents and abilities and be able to use these abilities concretely in and out of school will foster academic and transition-related success. Ironically, if educators establish high standards for themselves, their students will follow by example. To establish high standards, educators must:

- Allow students an active role in determining which courses and graduation pathways they wish to pursue.
- Partner with parents and students to determine mutual expectations.
- Allow for failure along with extended time and practice for mastery of content.
- Expect students to state their goals and monitor their progress on goals.
- Be lifelong learners by attending inservice training and pursuing advanced certification and degrees.

Premise 3: Educators Must Know How to Use a Range of Accommodations and Alternative Measures of Performance

Special educators must expand their repertoire of accommodations, teaching strategies, and other learning tools that can be used across a range of student abilities. These accommodations must be appropriate for academic work, workplace settings, and social situations. Accommodations and strategies must be readily accessible and generalizable; that is, students can learn and subsequently use these strategies in other settings regardless of whether a teacher or coach is there for assistance. In the same manner, alternative means of assessment can provide authentic documentation of a student's real skills across a variety of environments and applications. For students involved in the transition process, authentic assessments can represent the means by which to show mastery of content standards, verify what has been learned in multiple ways, and allow students choice in how they represent their knowledge.

It is critical that both educators and students advocate for and utilize accommodations and differential instructional strategies. If the accommodations are not available *and* used, students will continue to perceive lower assessment results as personal inadequacies instead of differences in learning. Hopelessness, apathy, and disengagement in learning can result. At that point, it is difficult to convince a student that the transition process can lead to success if high-stakes assessment reflects only a pattern of academic failure. Educators have the tools to help ameliorate these patterns. They must:

- Use a wide repertoire of instructional strategies and accommodations.
- Work with students to determine the types of accommodations, instructional strategies, and learning tools they require.
- Enlist students to advocate for the accommodations they need, both in school and in the community.
- Work with general educators and employers to ensure that they use accommodations, instructional strategies, and a variety of performance measures.

Premise 4: Educators Should Seek to Provide Curriculum That Is Relevant

One of the most promising practices we can use to blend content standards and transition-related competencies is the use of applied academics as the foundation of a strong curriculum. It is appropriate for school districts to expect access to the general education curriculum. However, it should be noted that access to curriculum does not necessarily imply that the curriculum is effective. Content standards are not curricula; the flexibility to present information relies on the educational judgment and expertise of the educator.

Educators are encouraged to make the curriculum as meaningful as possible. For example, phonemic awareness and skill development can assume new meaning when they are tied to the standard "Students will read and write for a variety of purposes" and students are allowed to actively practice these skills through reading newspapers, the Internet, or job applications. When students understand why they are learning something, they are able to apply the skills much more quickly and willingly. It is up to us as educators to explicitly make the link between content standards and the relevant competencies that the transition process offers.

One way to do this is to employ the "So what?" line of questions. For example, as content standards are being mastered, the educator can ask, "So why is this important for us to learn?" "So what kinds of careers might use these skills or concepts?" "So where in the community could you use this information?" "So how is this information relevant to our lives?" By repeatedly asking versions of these questions, both educators and students can link academics with relevance to real-world skills. To provide relevant curriculum, educators must:

- Develop detailed lesson plans that include the way in which content is tied to standards and transition and workplace competencies.
- Ask the "So what?" questions every day in every lesson taught.
- Use community-based activities, speakers, and information to increase relevance of instruction.
- Provide an array of options for ways in which students can demonstrate competence in content standards (e.g., projects, oral reports, computer-assisted design).

Premise 5: IEPs Can Be Embedded in a Standards-Based System

It is possible to infuse content standards and access skills into IEP development. The two are not mutually exclusive. However, the basic premise behind a standards-driven system parallels that of applied academics: It must provide relevance and meaning to the goals for the student. Educators must learn how to translate content standards and access skills into meaningful goals and objectives that are SMART—that is, specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and tangible. It is a wise teacher who understands that standards are limited only by his or her creativity and flexibility in application.

The ideal, of course, is that by the time students reach the age of 14 all of their IEPs are developed as *transition-based* IEPs. Postschool outcomes are linked with transition-based annual goals, which are translated into distinct, achievable objectives that are met using both academic and transition-related competencies. It is crucial that students play a major role in their IEP development.

IEPs should not be driven by content standards. They should be developed with regard to the individual needs of each student. Content standards can be integrated into a transition-based IEP. To achieve this integration, educators must:

- Develop IEPs with a foundation in transition domains, competencies, and postsecondary goals.
- Actively include parents and students as partners in IEP development.
- Use evaluative criteria that are both measurable and relevant (e.g., Student completes application to a community college with 90% accuracy in grammar and spelling).

Premise 6: Educators Must Include Families in Planning for Students and Be Sensitive to the Cultural Context in Which They Operate

Although IDEA has mandated increased family involvement in IEP development, educators must go beyond what is mandated to the optimal means by which to involve students and their families. The vast majority of students say they rely on their families to provide direction, support, and mentoring toward their future goals. Active partnerships with families allows for mutual education and input regarding the transition process as well as the components of a standards-based system. Families are far more likely to encourage student goals and dreams when they are included in transition planning. They are far more likely to accept and encourage a variety of educational opportunities when they are involved in the selection of these opportunities.

If educators are unaware of the cultural considerations of family involvement, it is their responsibility as professionals to become more sensitized to these issues. Failure to become culturally competent with students and their families results in nonengagement or disengagement from the school as well as miscommunication, and it ultimately weakens educators' role in creating opportunities for students to achieve their postschool goals. To become culturally competent, educators must:

- First, create an opportunity to participate in something out of their cultural comfort zone (e.g.., a cultural celebration, a potluck where the language spoken is different from their own). Educators should be participants, not just organizers, so that they can experience what it is like to be "different" from the culture involved.

- Audiotape themselves at IEP meetings and chart the percentage of time they (or other professionals) speak. If professionals are dominating discussion, they should *be quiet!* It is important to ask more questions, wait for responses, and respond instead of directing the conversation.

- Attend district and university training on developing cultural competence.

- State their ignorance of cultural situations outright and ask for direction.

Premise 7: Students Must Be Actively Involved in Their Own Education and Planning

Student participation in a blended standards-based and transition-related system may prove to be the most important variable for ultimate success. Students have the fundamental right to share their hopes and concerns regarding their own educational journey. They should participate in all IEP-related activities, select those opportunities that enhance their individual strengths, advocate for the accommodations and modifications they require, and expect a variety of educational opportunities. Educators can assist this process by advocating for students and themselves. The more students play an active role in their own education, and the evaluation of that education, the more effective educators can be in delivering relevant, high-quality education to the students they serve. To encourage student involvement, educators must:

- Do nothing—planning, curriculum, or IEP development—without student input.

- Turn evaluation and monitoring of progress over to students as much as is reasonably possible.

- Allow students to fail with the educators' support as a safety net. Ensure students that they can have a safe environment to practice fledgling skills.

- Create a student advisory team to assist educators with curriculum and instructional planning and the development of assessment accommodations.

Conclusion

IDEA 1997 strengthened the alignment of special education with general education reforms to improve postsecondary outcomes. It also added new requirements that were designed to ensure that youths have greater access to the secondary education curriculum and standardized assessments. But it is important to understand that the Act emphasized both transition services and access to the general education curriculum. This dual emphasis means that

state and local education agencies must seek practical solutions for aligning secondary education and transition systems. Education agencies must provide appropriate transition planning through the IEP, secondary education curriculum accommodations and redesign, and interagency coordination to help students and families achieve postsecondary goals.

Accomplishing the goal of alignment has an urgency that is coming to the attention of national and state policymakers as transition outcomes for youths with disabilities continue to worry the nation. There is ample evidence across the nation that when schools have instituted broader curriculum options that blend academic, career-vocational, and community-based learning with ongoing supports for students, student outcomes improve (i.e., decreased dropout, higher rates of regular diploma achievement, higher employment, higher enrollment in postsecondary education, lower involvement in crime).

Implementing transition programs within a standards-based education framework clearly presents a conceptual and practical challenge for educators, parents, and students. We hope that the contributors to this book have shown that the principles and goals are not mutually exclusive. If educators are both thoughtful and creative in their practice and have the commitment and the expertise to link the two systems, tremendous educational opportunities are possible. Students will benefit greatly from the greater expectations that come with mastery of content standards and more rigorous assessments. They will benefit from wider opportunities to link their learning to relevant experiences outside of the classroom and to prepare for the demands of adult life beyond the school. We owe our young people not just a promise, but their nation's commitment to leave no youth behind in the struggle for successful transition to adulthood.

References

American Federation of Teachers. (2001). *Making standards matter 2001: A fifty-state report on efforts to implement a standards-system.* Washington, DC: Author.

Benz, M.R., Doren, B., & Yovanoff, P. (1997). School-to-work components that predict post-school success for students with and without disabilities. *Exceptional Children, 63,* 151–164.

Council of Chief State School Officers. (1999). *Trends in state student assessment programs.* Washington, DC: Author.

Dunne, D. (2000). Are high stakes punishing some students? *Education World* [online]. Accessed July 15, 2002. http://www.educationworld.com/

Field, S., Martin, J., Miller, R., Ward, M., & Wehmeyer, M. (1998). Self-determination for persons with disabilities: A position statement of the Division on Career Development and Transition. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 12,* 113–128.

Final Federal Regulations Implementing the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, Fed. Reg. (March 12, 1999), 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.522(e), pp. 12592 *et seq.*

Halpern, A. S. (1994). The transition of youth with disabilities to adult life: A position statement of the Division on Career Development and Transition, The Council for Exceptional Children. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 17,* 116–124.

Halpern, A. S. (1993). Quality of life as a conceptual framework for evaluating transition outcomes. *Exceptional Children, 59*, 486–498.

Hauser, R. (1999). Should we end social promotion? Truth and consequences. In G. Orfield &. M. Kornhaber (Eds.), *Raising standards or raising barriers? Inequality and high stakes testing in education*. New York: The Century Fund.

Heubert, J., & Hauser, R. (Eds.). (1999). *High stakes testing for tracking, promotion, and graduation*. Washington, DC: National Research Council, National Academy Press.

Jones, T. (2002, July). *Status of transition services in the reauthorization of IDEA.* Speech before the Children's Action Committee Conference, Council for Exceptional Children, Arlington, VA.

Lee, S. (2002, July 8). Speech before the National Summit on Post-Secondary Education, National Center for the Study of Post-Secondary Education and Employment, National Press Club, Washington, DC.

National Center on Educational Outcomes. (2002). *Graduation requirements for students with disabilities. NCEO website.* Minneapolis: Author. Available: http://www.education.umn.edu/NCEO/

National Research Council, Heubert, J., & Hauser, R. (Eds.). (1999). *High stakes: Testing for tracking, promotion, and graduation*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

New American High Schools Project. (1997). *New American High School showcase sites.* St. Paul: University of Minnesota, The National Research Center for Career and Technical Education.

Orfield, G., & Kornhaber, M. (2002). *Raising standards or raising barriers? Inequality and high-stakes testing in public education.* New York: Century Foundation Press.

Sitlington, P. L., Clark, G. M., & Kolstoe, O. P. (2001). *Transition education and services for adolescents with disabilities.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Studies find high stakes tests threaten disadvantaged students in Texas. (2002, January). *Harvard Graduate School of Education News*, pp. 1–2. Boston: Harvard Civil Rights Project, Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Szymanski, E. M. (1994). Transition: Life-span and life-space considerations for empowerment. *Exceptional Children, 60*, 402–410.

Ysseldyke, J. E., Thurlow, M. L., Langenfeld, K. L., Nelson, J. R., Teelucksingh, E., & Seyfarth, A. (1998). *Educational results for students with disabilities: What do the data tell us?* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, National Center on Educational Outcomes.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

DIANE S. BASSETT is a Professor of Special Education at the University of Northern Colorado. She has taught general and special education in elementary, secondary, and postsecondary institutions and in both public and private school. Her primary interests include working on behalf of adolescents and adults with disabilities in the areas of transition, self-determination, advocacy, and educational reform.
E-mail: diane.bassett@unco.edu

CAROL A. KOCHHAR-BRYANT has been Professor of Special Education at the George Washington University for 16 years. She teaches graduate courses in legal issues and public policy in secondary education and transition, systemic change and leadership, and interdisciplinary planning and development.
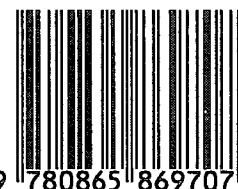
She consults with public school districts, state departments of education, and federal and international agencies. She is widely published in areas of disability policy, career-vocational programming and school-to-work transition for special learners, and interagency service coordination. Dr. Kochhar-Bryant is Past President of the Division on Career Development and Transition of the International Council for Exceptional Children.
E-mail: Kochhar@gwu.edu

Council for
Exceptional
Children

9 780865 869707

208