

Oakland Schools Career Focused Education and Special Education

The role of the Special Education Consultant, Cathy Schmidt, encompasses the work as the ISD Transition Coordinator supported through the Office of Special Education (OSE) Transition Grant. The focus is on compliance and quality transition practices supporting transition from school based services to post-school adult life for all students with an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

The transition language in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires us to support the movement from school to post-school in four areas: education, training, employment, and independent living as applicable.

We are responsible for providing connections and preparation for employment for all students, so it's really not possible to separate out career readiness opportunities for students eligible with a cognitive impairment, although there are some opportunities targeted specifically at students with developmental disabilities (cognitive impairments, intellectual disabilities, autism, cerebral palsy, etc.) The career readiness opportunities would be based on student needs, the student's postsecondary goal (vision) for future career, supporting transition services, etc.

I can share some general practices and opportunities that are available for students, including students with cognitive impairments.

- Work-Based Learning (non-CTE) including in-district, in the community, paid, unpaid, with and without direct job coaching/direct staff supervision
 - May be provided through school services or the district/ISD may contract with a local vocational rehabilitation - employment services provider
- Project SEARCH – is a one-year, transition based, and business-led employment model for students 18-26. The model is designed for students with developmental disabilities, including cognitive impairments. There are over 380 sites in the U.S. and internationally, currently 13 sites in Michigan with up to seven additional sites coming on board in 2016-2017. Based on recommendations from the Health & Wellness Commission Report and the State Plan for Autism, there have been monies designated at the state for expansion of Project SEARCH in Michigan. The employment outcomes for those who complete are 73% nationally; our Michigan outcomes are around 60%, with some sites at 80%-100%. (see attached)

- Interagency Cash Transfer Agreements (ICTA) between vocational rehabilitation – Michigan Rehabilitation Services and Bureau of Services for Blind Persons
 - An ISD or individual district may have an ICTA which supports vocational rehabilitation services (evaluation, soft skills, job training, job development, placement, etc.) for students with an IEP/disability.
 - An example – there is a collaborative initiative between MRS & the Department of Natural Resources (DNR), which is offered in many areas around Michigan.
 - The Michigan Transition Services Association (MTSA) & MRS have had a collaborative partnership for the past few years. MTSA has offered grant dollars, and MRS has matched with federal funds through an ICTA for areas selected through an application process targeted at creative, collaborative and outcome based employment preparation.
- The MI Transition Outcomes Project (MI TOP) has been disbanded and is being redesigned by the Office of Special Education at MDE. The website is terrific & still active for transition in Michigan.
<https://mitransition.org/>
 - The MI TOP Spring 2015 and Fall 2015 Institutes featured interagency collaboration between special education transition, vocational rehabilitation, and CTE
- Oakland Schools – CTE & Special Education have been working collaboratively to address the career readiness vocational options/opportunities in the gap in our county. We have great CTE opportunities and lots of local district work based learning, but we have identified a need to have more robust, vocational training for specific entry level/job readiness. A collaborative work group identified the current state for Oakland County and 16 recommendations to increase vocational- career readiness.
 - Exploring the Practical Assessment Evaluation Systems (PAES) labs for specific job skill & soft skill development
 - Exploring a Career Readiness Center model off of the Kent Transition Center

Thank you to Cathy Schmidt for sharing.
 Special Education Consultant – Transition
 Oakland Schools