



Transition Perspectives

College Day Event: Creating the Experience



The Transition Perspectives Program

About

The Transitions Perspective Program was created by the staff at the Center for Inclusive Transition, Education and Employment (CITEE), founded at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater and now at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. This program was developed as a deliverable for CITEE's grant involvement with the Waisman Centers [WI Integrated Transition Planning Project](#), as a way to introduce the topics of transition, college, and career awareness to 8th graders in Southeastern Wisconsin school districts. Significant research shows that middle school students – especially those who are most marginalized - who participate in career exploration activities prior to entering high school:

- have higher graduation rates,
- learn valuable skills that will help them find a job,
- and start high school feeling better prepared to focus on their career interests and skill-building and, subsequently, with less stress about their future ([American Student Assistance](#), 2021).

Program Goal

The primary goal for the Transition Perspectives Program was to expose students with disabilities to a college campus and new career interests.

Students with disabilities are less likely to be considered for post-secondary education and intentional or expansive career development (Newman, et al., 2011). Intentional or expansive career development is the support to youth such that they have a good understanding of their strengths, aptitudes, and interests, which can then inform their choices of careers to explore. And then that exploration isn't just in front of a screen, its actually through informational interviews, job shadows, and other similar activities. The goal of all of that being that the youth and the adults who support them are better able to align the high school experience towards post-secondary transition plan goals that are meaningful to the student.

Program Components

- Pre/Post classroom activities (Educator & Student/Family Packets)
- A College Day Event, including
 - College student peer mentors talk to students about their career exploration experience and the college to career connection
 - Career Interests Tour led by the college student peer mentors
 - Campus department staff talk about the variety of careers represented by their departments (Health Center, Child Care Center, Art & Theater Departments, etc)
 - Students also get an opportunity to tour a college campus environment including residence halls, a dorm room and a discussion on independent living
 - End of day fun with student athletes in the Recreation Center.
- Collaboration with partners
 - School districts and their educators
 - Campus Departments
 - College Student Peer Mentors

The Educator Role

Educators played a vital role in the Transition Perspectives Program. Program staff collaborated with the educators to:

- Coordinate field trip permissions and transportation
- Complete the pre/post event classroom activities
 - At the bare minimum, teachers were required to have students complete the [Career Interests Poll](#) so that the students could be placed in the appropriate group for the Career Interests Tour and so program staff could better coordinate tour logistics
- Supervise and provide guidance and interventions to students to support participation and access to learning
- Complete program evaluation

Without the collaboration and support of the school districts and their educators, this program would not have been the successful event it's been.

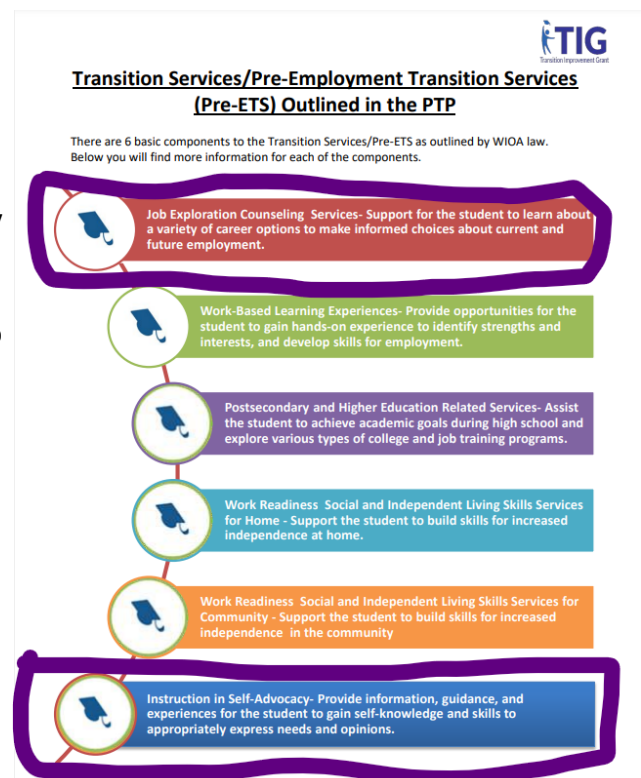
Career Exploration Lessons to Prepare Student Participation in the College Day Event

Educator and Student/Family packets were created that included an assortment of career exploration, self-advocacy, and mental health awareness activities ready for educators to implement in their classrooms and students to take home to work on with their families.

To create these lessons, program staff discussed our approach with former special education teachers. The feedback we received about the lessons was to incorporate content that teachers are required to cover.

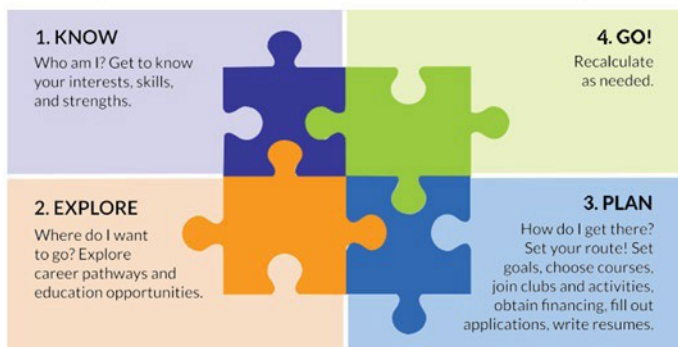
With the understanding that students' first Postsecondary Transition Plan (PTP) needs to be completed before they transition to high school, and CITEE staff expertise in employment for people with disabilities, it made sense to focus on the pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS) section of the PTP (Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2021).

The Pre-ETS section includes both job exploration and self-advocacy. Additionally, since the WI Integrated Transition Planning Project required integration of the topic of health, a short lesson on mental health was included related to handling stress (there were additional opportunities to discuss health aspects throughout the day's activities as well).



One of the resources found on the DPI website was a [document on academic career planning lessons](#) which was put together by some educators from CESAs 6, 7, and 9. Transition Perspectives used the 8th grade lessons from this document as the template for our pre/post lessons. Most of these lessons were focused on [Xello](#).

4 Stages to Successful Academic and Career Planning (ACP)



Not all of the school districts had access to Xello, so we needed to find some similar resources that covered the same topics:

[Know & Explore](#).

The final version of the pre/post lessons are in Appendix B. However, if [Xello](#) is already being used, lessons can be integrated into this curriculum. Students retain access to Xello as they move through their education and can add their personal email address prior to leaving high school for continued access.

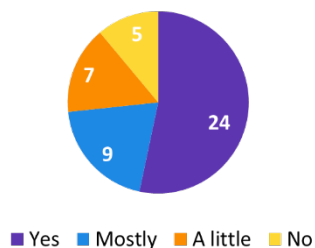
Feedback received from teachers is that they don't have time to do these lessons. It's important to note that the lessons don't have to be done all at one time. For the purpose of the College day event, it was strongly advised for students to complete lessons 1 & 2 so they could decide which career interest area they wanted to be in for the tour on campus. Collaboration is encouraged with the university to see if there are opportunities for peer mentor students who are studying special education to assist in the classroom with lessons.

Feedback from teachers included:

- Great way to meet younger student's PTPs!
- All teachers noted that they would bring students if it was offered again
- Some of the students had never left their city

Student feedback included:

I saw something at UW-W that I might want to do when I finish high school.



Something I learned ...

College seems a lot better than I thought.

...there are a lot of opportunities.

There are jobs I didn't know about.

Go to college, it's cool

College Day Toolkit

This toolkit can support development of the College Day Experience. This first page includes some initial steps. An example Educator Packet follows then some additional tools in the appendices. For more information, please contact Beth John at johnea@uwm.edu.

First Steps to Pilot Your College Day Event

Assess Readiness

- Are you, your school team, and your students ready for this? Complete the readiness rubric in Appendix A.
 - If not, what initial steps can you take to get ready? For example, can you begin having discussions about this with your supervisor or other teachers? Consider initial steps while reading this document.
- What policies and procedures may need to be adjusted to be able to do this? Think: start and end times, lunch, volunteers, prep time, etc.

Decide on Which Elements to Keep

While this program included several elements, it may be more manageable to begin by implementing some of the lessons in Appendix A or simply schedule a campus tour. Take into consideration school and team capacity, and decide what makes sense for now. Additional elements can be added in as there is more energy and buy-in.

Find Your Champions & Partners

- Are there any other teachers or other colleagues at your school that are likely champions or partners? Also, check-in with your school guidance counselor, and whoever is responsible for the Academic and Career Plans (ACP) at your school.
- Are there any administrators at your school or district that would be champions?
- Which universities/colleges are nearest to your school? Who do you know at those universities/colleges? If you don't know anyone directly, check your contacts for folks who may be able to do a warm introduction to Admissions and/or the disability services office staff at those universities/colleges.
- Develop and practice your "elevator pitch": why should they be interested in this? What part can they play, and what will they get out of it?

Decide On A Date

- Think through when it makes sense to complete the pre/post work and the College Day event such that it will best serve to support the student's development of their PTP.
- Look at relevant calendars to determine the best timing
 - Your personal calendar: when will you be at your best to lead this?
 - School calendar: factor in breaks, parent-teacher conferences, etc.
 - The target university/college calendar: factor in their breaks, similar programs, etc. October worked well for this project and timed right before a Friday off.

Outline Your Program

- Draft a program outline/overview prior to the first meeting with your team.
- Keep in mind the goal for the students - exposure to college and careers.

Meet with your team

- Go over your draft outline with your team to co-design more of the details with their feedback.
- Decide on roles for the different elements: who will lead which pieces?

Educator Packet for College Day Event

[brackets are definitions/suggestions/instructions]

Overview of program [use this section to provide a brief overview of what you plan to offer and why]

Example:

The Transitions Perspective Program, was created by the staff at the Center for Inclusive Transition, Education and Employment at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, now at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, in partnership with the Waisman Center [WI Integrated Transition Planning Project](#). This program is an opportunity to introduce the topics of transition, college, and career awareness to 8th graders in Southeastern Wisconsin school districts. Significant [research](#) shows that middle school students – especially those who are most marginalized - who participate in career exploration activities *prior* to entering high school:

- have higher graduation rates,
- learn valuable skills that will help them find a job,
- and start high school feeling better prepared to focus on their career interests and skill-building and, subsequently, with less stress about their future (American Student Assistance, 2021).

The main event for this program is a day at the [name of college/university] [date] the agenda for which is outlined below.

Event Day Agenda [here is where you would provide a brief overview agenda]

Example:

Thursday, October 19th, 2023 10 am-2 pm

10:00-10:30 am	Arrival to Campus
10:30-10:35 am	Check-in, Welcome & Overview of Activities
10:35-11:10 am	Speed Networking with UWW Student Peer Mentors
11:10-11:40 am	Lunch
12:30-1:30 pm	Career Interests & Residence Hall Tour
1:30-2:00 pm	Final Thoughts & Takeaways (incl. a snack & some fun!)
2:00-2:30 pm	Arrival of busses to return to school

Pre-Event Checklist [what you want teachers to have completed prior to going to the event]

Example:

- ☐ Students have completed the Career Interests Poll: [Career Interests Poll](#)
- ☐ Chaperones/staff appropriate for the number of students participating are arranged.
- ☐ Permission forms for all students have been completed and signed electronically. For parents who do not use technology, completed and signed forms are sent to [name & email for them to send to].
- ☐ Transportation has been arranged.
- ☐ Transportation quote has been sent to [name of person to send to if being reimbursed].
- ☐ Drop-off/Parking maps have been provided to the bus driver.
- ☐ Changes to the estimated time of arrival has been emailed to [name & email].

Important phone numbers on Event Day:

[this should be your second in command, not you, and any other important numbers]

[you may also want to include the campus map, the directions to and from the event location, and any other instructions]

Pre-Event Preparation for the Career Interests Tour

[strongly suggested *minimum* pre-event classroom activities]

Career Interest Areas

Career Interest Areas were inspired by [Holland's \(1997\) Occupational Themes](#) and Griffin & Hammis (2007) [Developing Vocational Themes](#) from the Customized Employment literature.

This intentional grouping allows various college campus departments to come together into companionable, broader categories that highlight the different types of skill sets that align with those themes.

- *Head Career Interest*: careers or jobs that are about organizing, thinking, and/or problem-solving, etc. Mostly use their brains/heads at their jobs. Examples: technology, office work, lawyer, health technologist, videographer, scientist.
- *Hands Career Interest*: careers or jobs that are physical, hands-on, active, etc. Mostly use their hands or bodies at their jobs. Examples: plumber, firefighter, auto mechanic, athlete, landscaping, theater set builder, artist.
- *Heart Career Interest*: careers or jobs that are social, helping, or caring, etc. Mostly use their hearts at their jobs. Examples: teacher, nurse, counselor, childcare, veterinary technician, event/camp planner.

For the Career Interests Tour, students will be placed in groups based on the above Career Interest Areas (Head, Heart, Hands).

Optional, Suggested Learning Activities Overview

The activities on the next page are aligned with the fulfillment of [WI Department of Public Instruction \(DPI\) Transition Services](#) for Postsecondary Transition Planning (PTP) and will be helpful in preparing students for the day. These lessons also complement and build on each other. At a minimum, Lessons 1 and 2 should be completed prior to attending the event to prepare for the Career Interests Tour. The rest can be completed before or after.

The One-Page Summary should be completed after all the other lessons have been completed as an artifact for the students' portfolio they can take with them to high school.

All lesson worksheets are included in this packet, in Appendix B.

Specific Activity	Materials	Fulfills DPI Transition Requirement	Resource (where materials came from or were inspired by)
Lesson 1: You Do You!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You Do You instructions & worksheets Meant to be done both in and outside of school, with family and friends input. 	<p><i>Job Exploration Counseling Services</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine student's skills and strengths related to work. <p><i>Instruction in Self-Advocacy</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and discuss strengths, challenges, and support needs in community, college, and employment areas with student. 	Adapted from Speak Up Guide
Lesson 2: Career Exploration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideally, use both If short on time, use the inventory to determine which group for the Career Interests Tour 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career Clusters Interests Survey Lesson 2 Instructions & Worksheets 	<p><i>Job Exploration Counseling Services</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support student to explore career interests (Academic Career Planning (ACP)) Help student gather information about colleges and/or job training programs. 	From South Dakota Dept. of Labor & Regulation Adapted from Wisconsin ACP Lessons
Lesson 3: Self-Advocacy – Speak Up for Yourself! Lesson 4: Mental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speak Up For Yourself lesson & worksheets Mental Health activity worksheets 	<p><i>Instruction in Self-Advocacy</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teach student the skills to speak up for her/himself at school, work, and in the community. Support student to learn to keep her/himself mentally healthy. 	A New Way of Thinking Nemours KidsHealth
One-Page Summary Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Activity Instructions & Template Completed 'You Do You!' Worksheets Lesson 2 activity results 		Adapted from Think College Transition: Customized Employment

Event Day Evaluation Survey

We ask that each educator complete the event evaluation survey after the event. The survey can be completed by following the link below [provide link as suggested below], or from the email that will be sent at the conclusion of the event.

[evaluations will really help you to improve future events, this is where you might include an online link. An example evaluation is in Appendix D.]

Example text to explain the procedure:

Time will be set aside after the Career Interests Tour for the students to have some water, a cookie and complete the student evaluation of the day. We will provide both a QR code for them to do that on their phones and also paper copies if they don't have a phone or prefer to do by paper.

Acknowledgments

[a list of all the people that helped make the event happen, including the educators and the college/university staff]

Example:

We would like to thank the following for their contributions to this project:

- Milwaukee School District Transition Specialist: Anthony Morgan (Starms)
- Elkhorn School District Transition Specialists: Jon Lyga, Danielle Schumer (Elkhorn Area Middle School)
- Palmyra-Eagle School District Special Educator: Amanda Fischer
- Dr. James Collins, Director of UW-W LIFE Program, Associate Professor, COEPS
- Sara Athorp, Program Coordinator, Uw-W LIFE Program
- UW-Whitewater Student Peer Mentors with and without disabilities
- Debbie Reuter, Director, UW-W Center for Students with Disabilities
- Giorgianne Maziarka, Program Manager and Thomas Hamilton, Outreach Specialist, UW-W Employment Connections
- UW-Whitewater Department Leads participating in the Career Interests Tour:
 - Julie Martindale & Veronica Warren, Health & Counseling Services
 - Chelsea Newman, Children's Center
 - Wesley Enterline, Facilities Planning & Maintenance
- UW-Whitewater CITEE Staff: Beth John (campus connections and partnering, decision-making, peer mentor component coordination, event planning and support), Brenda Johansen (all things evaluation, materials editing, event support), Justin Tobin (recruiting, event support), Kristen Malach (materials editing, event support), Jessica Smith (administrative leadership and support), Heather Lee (administrative & budgeting/ financial support), Carole Carlson (project coordinator).

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For more information on how you might start a program like Transition Perspectives at your school or local university or college, please contact Beth John at johnea@uwm.edu.

Appendix A

Readiness Assessment

Adapted from: <https://www.mcrel.org/competency-based-education-assessing-your-schools-readiness-for-change/>

Capacity	Considerations to Assess Readiness			
	Educators (teachers, paraeducators)	Students/Families	School	District
Human	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of importance of career exploration and college to career awareness for intermediate students • Program knowledge, including curriculum • Self-efficacy/confidence • Motivation/willingness • Ability to persuade others • Collaboration skills • Networking skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of importance of career exploration and college to career awareness for intermediate students • Motivation/willingness • Accommodation needs, including dietary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of importance of career exploration and college to career awareness for intermediate students • Program knowledge, including curriculum • Motivation/willingness • School culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of importance of career exploration and college to career awareness for intermediate students • Program knowledge, including curriculum • Motivation/willingness
Resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time availability • Staffing availability • Social/community capital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family support for completion of homework • Social/community capital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation needs • Colleges/University partnerships • Social/community capital • Technology 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transportation needs • Colleges/University partnerships • Social/community capital • Technology
Organizational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of the systems involved • Ability to work within those systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PTP/ACP progress and goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Schedule • Communication systems/protocols • Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for staff • Adequate staffing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Schedule • Communication systems/protocols • Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for staff • Adequate staffing
Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of policies involved • Influence level for any changes needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permission slips • Photo release 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies that may support or hinder the values or logistics of the program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policies that may support or hinder the values or logistics of the program

Appendix B: Pre/Post Classroom Activities/Lessons

Please do not feel confined to using these lessons. If your school district already uses a particular career exploration curriculum, you should use that instead to prepare students to participate in the Career Interests Tour.

For more information on how these activities/lessons were developed, please review pages 3-4. For further guidance on how you might integrate these into your curriculum, please contact Beth John at johnea@uwm.edu.

Lesson 1: Strengths, Skills & Challenges: You Do You!

Lesson Activity

Lesson Targets

- I know my strengths, skills and challenges.
- I know some strategies that can help me with my challenges.
- I have a list of people and resources that I can go to for support and that will encourage me to use my strengths, skills and strategies when I am experiencing a challenge.

Teacher Directions

This lesson activity is intended to support the student to develop their one-pager (another lesson activity) as well as to advocate for their support needs. Please encourage them to work together with their friends, family and other trusted adults to complete the activities. The last page includes additional, in-class activity ideas that can be done in groups or as individual students.

Student Directions

1. Complete pages 2-5. Use page 6 to help you, as well as asking your friends and family what they think the answers are.
2. Use page 7 to politely ask at least 2 adults that know you well and that you trust and respect but are not your family members or teachers to provide you some feedback on your strengths, skills and challenges. Use that information as well to add to pages 2-5.
3. When you are all done with pages 2-5, look all of them over again and talk about them with your family, your best friend and your teacher. Ask for their thoughts and add those thoughts to any of the pages.
4. Keep these pages somewhere you will remember so you can use them to develop your one-pager summary that you can use to give to people to let them learn more about you or remember you after meeting you.

Personal Strengths



Name: _____

Date: _____

Directions: Put a check (✓) next to any sentence that describes you. When you've finished put a star (*) next to the 3 sentences that best describe you.

___ I'm reliable.

___ I'm polite.

___ I'm friendly.

___ I'm honest.

___ I try to follow instructions.

___ I'm hard-working.

___ I work well on a team.

___ I'm usually on time.

___ I work well independently.

___ I'm proud of myself.

___ I like to keep things neat and organized.

___ I'm musical

___ I stick with things until they are finished.

___ I'm focused.

___ I am good at problem-solving

___ I'm a good student.

___ I ask others for help when I need it

___ I'm artistic.

___ I have good common sense.

___ I'm creative.

___ I'm energetic.

___ I'm good with words.

___ I'm a good listener.

___ I'm good with my hands.

Use this space to write down your other strengths. For ideas, take a look at the strength examples on page 6.

Skills



Name: _____

Date: _____

Directions: Put a check (✓) next to any sentence that describes you. When you've finished put a star (*) next to the 3 things you do best.

I'm good at:

___ Taking care of others

___ Art

___ Organizing things

___ Sports

___ Making change

___ Music

___ Using a computer

___ Teaching things

___ Operating machines or tools

___ Cleaning

___ Reading

___ Fixing things

___ Writing

___ Critical thinking

___ Math

___ Problem solving

___ Science

___ Public speaking

___ Social Studies

___ Communication

Use this space to list other things you do well. For ideas, take a look at the skill examples on page 6.

You Do “You”!



Name: _____

Date: _____

Directions: List 15 things that make you “you”. You must have 15 items on your list! Ask your friends for help! You might want to think about:

- Your very best strengths (the 3 you starred on page 2, plus any others)
- Things you know how to do well (your abilities/skills - including the 3 you starred on page 3)
- Things you enjoy doing
- Things you have done of which you are proud
- Your talents
- Important things you have learned
- Positive things about your personality

1. _____

9. _____

2. _____

10. _____

3. _____

11. _____

4. _____

12. _____

5. _____

13. _____

6. _____

14. _____

7. _____

15. _____

8. _____

Exploring My Challenges

My Challenges	When do they usually occur and how does it affect me?	What helps when I am experiencing this challenge?	Who can I go to for support or what resource can I use?

Example Strengths, Skills and Challenges

Strengths & Skills		Challenges
<u>Intellectual Abilities</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing • Reading • Mathematics • Foreign language skills • Problem solving • Planning • Memory 	<u>Interpersonal Abilities</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressing feelings • Standing up for yourself • Seeing where help is needed • Persuasiveness • Comforting others <u>Specific skills & talents</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music • Cooking • Sewing • Organizing • Cleaning • Gardening • Using technology • Photography • Building things • Art • Chess • Auto mechanics 	<u>Social</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relating to others • Introducing yourself • Carrying on a conversation • Listening to others • Helping others • Sharing feelings • Being dependable • Standing up for yourself • Seeing others' perspective • Asking for help <u>Physical</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobility • Not over-doing • Personal hygiene • Sticking to medical schedule <u>Personal Development</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling confident • Taking care of yourself • Setting realistic goals • Being yourself • Taking risks • Accepting yourself • Forgiving yourself
<u>Physical Abilities</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stamina/endurance • Upper/lower body strength • Flexibility • Eye-hand coordination • Overall coordination of body • Balance • Dexterity (skillful with hands) 		
<u>Personal Qualities</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honest • Dependable • Responsible • Gentle • Kind • Confident 		

Getting Feedback About Strengths & Challenges

Date: _____

Dear _____ ,

In order to know how I can contribute to my local community, I would like to develop a list of my strengths and abilities in all areas of my life. Because you know me well, I would like to have your help to complete the project. Would you please answer the following questions about me?

1. In your opinion, what are my abilities, skills, and talents?

2. In your opinion, what are my greatest strengths?

3. In your opinion, what are the areas I need to work on?

4. If an employer were to ask me the following question, how do you think I should answer?
--- "Why should I hire you?"

I need this returned to me by. Thank you very much for your help!

Sincerely,

Additional Strengths & Challenges Activities

Objective: Students will explore how the different challenges they have might affect certain activities or areas of life.

Activity A:

Everyone deals with problems and challenges in different ways. The following activity will give students an opportunity to look at a variety of solutions to the same problem.

Ask students to consider the following scene and answer the questions. You are being sent to live on a deserted island for one week.

1. What things would you need to take with you in order to survive on the island?
2. What things would you want to take to entertain yourself?
3. What would you take to make you feel safe?

Set up the scenario, making up a description of the island. Give students examples of things in each category (survival needs, entertainment, safety and security); i.e., water, a portable radio, best friend. They may choose to bring a person with them.

When students have completed their lists, have them take turns sharing the items they identified. List their responses on the board in the three categories. If an item is listed by more than one student, put a check mark after the items each time it is mentioned.

When all answers are shared, discuss the areas that were identified that were common to everyone and those that are unique needs to individual students. Make a point that we all have common needs but we also have needs that are unique to us as individuals.

Activity B:

Facilitate a discussion of how students cope with their disabilities or other challenges. Ask each student to give an example of something he/she does to compensate. Ask them to share their strategies with the class. Help them to see that they all have many strategies that they use each day to compensate or to work around the difficulties that their challenges present.

Adapted from: Ohio Self Determination Association. (2017). Speak Up Guide - Chapter 1: Knowing Yourself. Pages 8-17. Retrieved: March 2022 from Project Stir Training: <https://www.osdaohio.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/chapter1.pdf>

Lesson 2: Career Exploration Lesson Plan

OBJECTIVE:

Students will research career fields of interest and explore requirements for each.

ASSESSMENT: Students will be able to

- describe the relationship between career paths and earning income
- explain the various types of education/training required for careers of interest
- identify current activities that can help build skills needed for careers they are interested in for the future

VOCABULARY:

1. Job
2. Career
3. Salary
4. Income
5. Degree
6. Licenses
7. Certifications

MATERIALS:

- My Favorite Subjects Worksheet (Page 2)
- Career Exploration Worksheet (Page 3)

RESOURCES:

- <https://www.mynextmove.org/>
use the “Search Careers by Keywords” to research their career interests from the My Favorite Subjects worksheet.

ACTIVITIES:

- **Introduction** – The primary way that people earn income is through their jobs.
- **Jobs vs. Careers** – A job allows you to make money, but careers allow you to pursue more long-term goals and develop your skills in a field of your choice.
- **Brainstorm** – As a class, create a diverse list of popular career fields. Group similar jobs together in same career field.
- **Teach:** Many careers require training and/or specific degrees, licenses, or certifications in order to a job in that career field (Examples: registered nurses, CPA, lawyer, teacher, business owner). Subjects students are interested in now and courses taken in high school can influence their career choices in the future.
- **Independent/Partner Activity and Research** – Students complete the My Favorite Subjects Worksheet. Students choose 2-3 careers of interest and research – use worksheet below as guideline and website above as resource.

EXTENSION:

- Teach how skills discovered from this research may be developed during their high school courses and extracurriculars.
- [Introduce the idea of developing goals for the transition IEP](#) based on the results from this research.

Inspired and adapted from:

Aprill, L., Brown, J., & Waldron-Kuhn, M. (2021). Wisconsin Academic and Career Planning Lessons. Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Retrieved from https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/acp/pdf/2020_11_23_Wisconsin_ACP_Lessons_1.pdf

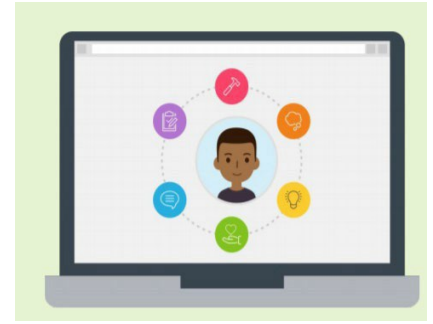
BizWorld. (2022). Career Exploration Lesson Plan. Free Financial Literacy Resources. Oakland, CA. Retrieved March 2022, from Biz World: https://bizworld.org/files/galleries/Career_Exploration_Lesson_Plan.pdf

My Favorite Subjects/Classes

When you begin thinking about a career you might pursue after high school, you can begin to narrow your options by exploring classes or subject areas you like learning about in school.

Use the following link to help you explore how your favorite classes/subjects can turn into potential careers choices:

<https://www.careers.govt.nz/tools/subject-matcher/>



List three of your favorite classes or subjects you like learning about in school	List three reasons why you like that class and/or subject in school	List 1-3 careers that match up with my interest in that class or subject

Optional discussion prompts:

Why is it important to explore the school subjects that you are interested in and see how the classes you take in school link with potential careers?

Think of the careers your family members have, what subjects do you think they liked in school that lead them to these career choices?

Career Exploration Worksheet (Grades 6-8)

Name of career: _____

Description & Responsibilities: _____

What are some skills required for this career? What are some important characteristics for people in this career to have?

What degrees, licenses, or certifications are required for this career?

What is the average salary for someone in this career field?:

1. National average: _____ 2. Local average: _____

How do additional degrees or qualifications impact salaries in this field?

What are some activities or extracurriculars that you are involved with or interested in that might help build skills needed for this career?

Reflect: Are you interested in pursuing this career? Why or why not?

Lesson 3: Speak Up for Yourself!

Lesson Targets:

- Students are able to define self-advocacy.
- Students can give an example of speaking up for themselves.
- Students can name at least 3 people in their lives that will support them with their transition goals including self-advocacy.
- With continued practice, students will be able to productively advocate for the supports they need to be successful with their transition to high school.

Teacher Guidance on Use:

This material can be used in a number of ways depending on the needs of your students. These are all just suggestions. One suggestion is to set aside a portion of the day dedicated to self-advocacy lessons. Then you can start with the introduction and use the content from that section to teach, ending the lesson with part or all of the discussion questions/practice opportunities.

Alternatively, you can assign the different sections to be read by the students prior to class and they can teach back their sections to each other. Then you can facilitate a discussion about the different sections and/or give a writing assignment.

A New Way of Thinking resource for you

This lesson packet is adapted from: Gilles, S., Jenson, S., & Nelson, T. (2013). A New Way of Thinking. Pages 63-66. Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Retrieved March 2022 from <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sped/pdf/tran-new-way-of-thinking.pdf>

There is a lot more material in this resource that will be useful for your students as they are transitioning, especially the materials on automatic negative thoughts (ANTs).

Speak Up for Yourself!

Introduction:

This chapter was created by youth with experience in self-advocacy. The purpose of this chapter is to give the youth you are working with an overview of what self-advocacy is and how to begin to advocate for themselves.

What is advocacy and how do you advocate for yourself?

Self-determination is a mix of skills you will use throughout your life which include your personal beliefs and values and skills that empower you to make choices and take control of your life according to your own interests, needs, and abilities.

Self-advocacy is the process of speaking for yourself and using knowledge of your rights, wishes, needs, and strengths.

The common thread is knowing yourself and gaining empowerment through this knowledge. When working on self-determination and self-advocacy skills, you should think about the following:

- Knowing your strengths (in and out of school)
- Knowing the areas you need to work on (in and out of school)
- Knowing your interests (in and out of school)
- Knowing what kinds of support you might need and who could provide that support
- Making your own choices and decisions
- Knowing your rights and responsibilities
- Planning for your future

If you're a person with a disability, you can live an independent productive life, but you will find yourself in situations that may hinder your independence. Society's stereotypes are among the barriers you will face. However, you can do something about it. You can take a stand and let your voice be heard. You can be an agent of change, either as an individual or as part of a larger group.

The youth of today believe that one of the most important parts of becoming independent is learning how to advocate for what you want. If you advocate for yourself, you are speaking up for what you want, and not letting other people speak for you. Too many times young people allow other people (usually adults) to make decisions for them. While advice and assistance from adults is a good thing, your future is your decision.

Discussion Questions:

- What are some ways that you speak up for yourself now?
- Talk about a time when you wanted to make your own decision about something but instead an adult made that decision for you.
- What decisions can you make for yourself now? With another student, practice asking to make your own choice about something.

The 4 Keys to Being a Good Self-Advocate

1. Research

In order to tell people what you want, you need to know what is out there. What are your options? What do you have to do to get the things you want? It is up to you to do your homework about things like colleges, accommodations, and places you can go to get the things you need (e.g., Division of Vocational Rehabilitation [DVR]). You need to investigate and learn the pros and cons of any decision so you are able to make an educated decision.

2. Communication

Learning how to communicate with people is key to advocating for your needs.

- Be polite. Manners go a long way. Do not yell, BUT DON'T LET PEOPLE WALK ALL OVER YOU. (Don't forget to smile!)
- Be confident. You need to know what you want to say! (You did research; know what you're talking about)
- Be heard. It is your life. Make your feelings known. People can't read your mind.

3. Compromise

While the decisions that are being made are about you, it is important to be open-minded about other people's advice and ideas. Make sure that you are realistic about your goals (example: if you are not a good athlete, wanting to be in the NBA is probably not a good career goal).

4. Teamwork

You have a great number of people you can count on for good advice. Know who the people are who you can count on. Let the professionals (teachers, coaches, counselors, etc) do their jobs, and let your parents be your parents. Let your friends be your friends. They all have an important role in your transition process. Listen to their advice but always understand...ITS ALL ABOUT YOU!

Discussion Questions/Practice Opportunities:

1. What will you research first? Second?
2. When we are just learning about self-advocacy, it can be hard to know how to communicate about it. Think about some things that might make it hard and what can help you. Share your thoughts with another student.
3. Everyone has to make compromises sometimes. What have you had to be open-minded about recently? What helped or made it harder to compromise?
4. Who can you count on? Why are you able to count on them - in other words, how do they make you feel when you go to them with a problem or for some support?

Self-advocacy DOs and DON'Ts

Advocacy is not always easy; in fact, it rarely is. Advocacy takes time, knowledge, and dedication. Often when we have to advocate, we may be in positions where we are upset, angry, and “caught in the heat of the moment.”

Although these moments may seem the right time to advocate, it is often better to wait and become more informed before advocating. Below is a list of things that should and should not be done when advocating. Advocacy is a skill that takes practice. The more you practice advocacy, the better you will get.

DOs	DON'Ts
Be polite	Yell or demand
Ask questions	Keep your thoughts or questions to yourself
Know your information	Come to a meeting unprepared
Keep a record of important papers, phone numbers and names. Be organized.	Lose your records, phone numbers, names of people who helped and hindered you
Send thank you notes and show your appreciation	Be ungrateful for people's time and effort
Give your contact information and also remember to get theirs too!	Don't network
Be confident	Be a push-over or arrogant (overconfident)

Discussion Questions:

- Have you done one of the "don'ts"? How can you do better next time? Or what support do you need to help you to do better?
- Why is it important to do these "dos"?
- What are some ways that you can practice speaking up for yourself at home or at school?
- Do a role play between students using a don't and a do.

How to Find Supports

There are some important things to remember when trying to locate supportive people to aid you throughout your transition process:

1. Almost anyone can be a source of support: parents, teachers, friends, guidance counselors, coaches, church leaders, etc.
2. A supportive person needs to be someone who believes in you and your abilities. He or she is someone who can help you generate new ideas about your transition-related goals.
3. It is important to first consider the supports you may already have in your life. These could be friends, family, teachers, and many other people who believe in your abilities and want to see you do well.

If for any reason you do not already have some sort of support system in place, there are a lot of places where you can look for supportive people. Perhaps you have a parent or guardian who can help you discover your abilities and aid in the transition process. You may have a teacher or counselor who might have some new ideas about your goals and how you can accomplish them.

Finding support may be as easy as talking to your parent or guardian, or it may require a little more thought and work. No matter what your situation, however, there are always people out there who will believe in you and help you through the transition process. Sometimes it's just a matter of knowing where to look.

Discussion Questions/Practice Opportunities:

- Sometimes its hard to ask someone for support. What are some ways to make it easier (do it at the right time, get to know them first, talk to a friend about it first, etc)?
- Why is it important to pick the right people to support you?
- What are some things to watch for so that you don't pick the wrong people to support you?
- Have students role play asking someone for support or for them to be on their support team.

List of Supporters

Directions: Develop a list of supports you have in your life. This can include parents, teachers, friends, guidance counselors, church leaders, coaches, etc.

Name	Best way to contact this individual
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	

Your First Self-Advocacy Conversations with Your Supporters

After you complete your list, talk to your supporters about what you have learned so far about yourself and how they can best support you. Take as much time as you need to do this so that you both feel comfortable.

Maybe the first conversation is just about what you learned about yourself. Answer and use the questions below to assist you with your conversations.

1. What areas do you need support in (ex: social/communication skills, problem solving, etc)?
2. How will you explain your challenges or support needs to others?
3. What feedback have you received from supporters?
4. List steps you plan to take in order to speak up for yourself or use self-advocacy skills.

Practice possible scenarios and role-play what may happen. For example, what could you say if you want to go to college? What if your parents or teachers tell you that is not possible?

Adapted from: Gilles, S., Jenson, S., & Nelson, T. (2013). A New Way of Thinking. Pages 63-66. Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. Retrieved March 2022 from <https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sped/pdf/tran-new-way-of-thinking.pdf>

Lesson 4: Mental Health

Lesson Targets

- Students can describe what stress feels like and give an example of how it feels like for them.
- Students can define stress and what can cause stress to occur.
- Students can identify ways to fight stress and decide on strategies that will work for them.

Teacher Instructions:

- Depending on your students, either use the information below to teach them about stress, or have them read the material.
- Ask them to pair up and talk about what they think stress is, what causes stress for them and how they might experience stress - how it feels in their body when they feel stress.
- Ask them to come up with at least two strategies that will work for them when they feel stress.
- Support the students to complete the Destress Yourself worksheet

Stress

Have you ever felt sick to your stomach during a test? Have you had days when you were so loaded down with homework that you had trouble sleeping? Have you ever been so worried about something that you ended up with a terrible headache?

If so, then you know what it's like to feel stress. You've probably heard people say, "Wow, I'm really stressed out" or "This is making me totally stressed." Maybe you hear adults say those kinds of things all the time. But kids have lots of things going on in their lives that can cause stress, too.

What Is Stress?

Stress is what you feel when you are worried or uncomfortable about something. This worry in your mind can make your body feel bad. You may feel angry, frustrated, scared, or afraid — which can give you a stomachache or a headache.

When you're stressed you may not feel like sleeping or eating, or you might sleep or eat too much. You also may feel cranky or have trouble paying attention at school and remembering things at home.

What Causes Stress?

Plenty of things can cause stress in a kid's life, and there are such things as good stress and bad stress. Good or normal stress might show up when you're called on in class or when you have to give a report.

Have you ever gotten butterflies in your stomach or sweaty hands? Those can be signs of good stress — the kind of stress that can help you to get things done. For example, you may do a better job on your book report if the anxiety inspires you to prepare well before you have to read it to the class.

But bad stress can happen if the stressful feelings keep going over time. You may not feel well if your parents are fighting, if a family member is sick, if you're having problems at school, or if you're going through anything else that makes you upset every day. That kind of stress isn't going to help you, and it can actually make you sick.

Five Steps for Fighting Stress

Everybody gets stressed from time to time. Different people feel stress in different ways. Some ways of dealing with stress — like screaming, hitting someone, or punching a wall — don't solve much. But other ways, like talking to someone you trust, can start you on the road to solving your problem or at least feeling better.

Try taking these five steps the next time you are stressed:

1. Get support. When you need help, reach out to the people who care about you. Talk to a trusted adult, such as a parent, other relative, a school counselor, or a coach. And don't forget about your friends. They might be worried about the same test or have had similar problems, such as dealing with a divorce or the death of a beloved pet.
2. Don't freak out! It's easy to let your feelings go wild when you're upset. Notice your feelings, and name them — for example, "I am so angry!" And say or think about why you feel that way. Then, find a way to calm down and get past the upset feelings and find a way to express them. Do breathing exercises, listen to music, write in a journal, play with a pet, go for a walk or a bike ride, or do whatever helps you shift to a better mood.
3. Don't take it out on yourself. Sometimes when kids are stressed and upset they take it out on themselves. Oh, dear, that's not a good idea. Remember that there are always people to help you. Don't take it out on yourself. Be kind to yourself and ask for the helping hand or pat on the back that you need — and deserve — to get you through the tough situation you're facing.
4. Try to solve the problem. After you're calm and you have support from adults and friends, it's time to get down to business. You need to figure out what the problem is. Even if you can't solve all of it, maybe you can begin by solving a piece of it.
5. Be positive — most stress is temporary. It may not seem like it when you're in the middle a stressful situation, but stress does go away, often when you figure out the problem and start working on solving it.

These five steps aren't magic — and you might have to do some steps more than once, but they **do** work. And if you can stay positive as you make your way through a tough time, you'll help yourself feel better even faster. Ah . . . it feels so good when the stress is gone.

DESTRESS YOURSELF!

What is stress?

What causes you stress?

From what you learned about stress, what will you do to help yourself when you feel stressed out?

- People I can talk to:
 - At school:
 - At home:
 - A friend:
- First thing I will do when I feel stressed:
- If that doesn't work, what else can I do:

What are some things I can do (or not do) to help me not feel stressed out?

Student One-Page Summary

Purpose

The purpose of the one-page summary is to have something more than a business card but less than a resume that students can provide to potential employers, organizations or supporters after meeting with them at job fairs, informational interviews, observational tours, or other types of meetings. This summary can help the employer, organization or supporters to remember the student based on what the student wants them to remember them by, rather than any perceived limitations.

Teacher instructions:

1. Review the example one-page summary for Tavis.
 - a. Tavis is a former student I worked with in a college program in Boston, MA. He had significant developmental challenges, but that is not mentioned in the one-pager.
 - b. Nevertheless, Tavis is very likeable, a hard worker and extremely reliable. This is what needs to be left behind any brief interaction with potential employers, organizations or supporters.
2. Support students to use their results from the career exploration lesson and the You Do You! worksheet to complete their one-page summary, but do not include the challenges. Students can learn to talk about their challenges – and how to best support them - in another activity (self-advocacy). Challenges are best discussed in an in-person meeting after its clear there is an interest in working with the student.
3. Student may need additional supports to think of accomplishments that they have achieved that can be added to the summary. Questions are provided below for them to consider and you may have some others that you think of that can help them.
4. All of the sections can be adapted as needed for what the student would like to include or not.
5. Once they've completed the summary, they should print out some to have handy and keep the document somewhere where they can have easy access to it to print out and use after meetings or events. They should update it yearly and it should be shared with their high school teachers.

Student Instructions:

1. Use your results from the career exploration lesson and the You Do You! worksheet to complete your one-page summary, but do not include the challenges. You can talk about your challenges in person another time if the person you give the summary to reaches out to offer to hire you or to learn more about you. Focus on your strengths and skills instead!
2. You may need some help from your teacher, friends and family to think of accomplishments to add. Here are some questions to ask yourself to help you think of some:
 - a. What are you proud to have done or learned to do?
 - b. Has anyone complimented you on something you did?
 - c. Have you worked through a challenge that was hard to do?
 - d. Have you ever helped someone with something that was hard? What did you do?
3. Once you are done filling it out, besides having your teacher take a look at it for feedback, also ask some friends, family members and other supporters to look at it for feedback and then make any changes you think is needed. Then, save the document somewhere you will remember.

EXAMPLE ONE-PAGE SUMMARY



Tavis Freeman

{email}

{phone number}

College Program Graduate 2019

It is my goal to seek employment in food service. I enjoy cooking for my family and friends and it makes me feel good to be able to care for them that way. I am a hard worker and like helping others. My education has led me to experiences working in recycling and working with children at the community center.

Recent accomplishments:

- Helped produce a video on college programs for people with disabilities
- Completed 2 semesters of college

Volunteer and work experiences:

- Volunteer at Bird Street Community Center in Dorchester for 3 years in their children's program
- Worked at Wentworth Institute in recycling program

Friendly • Honest • Loyal • Hard-working

Template One-Pager

[insert recent nice photo of student]

Name of student

Contact information of student

Expected Graduation date

[Student statement of their career goal, their strengths, what they have learned about their career goal from recent work/volunteer experiences, their values related to their career choice and their hopes for the future in their chosen field.]

Recent work/internship/volunteer accomplishments (bulleted list highlighting places worked, leadership skills, initiative, achieving goals):

- XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
- XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
- XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
- XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

School accomplishments (bulleted list highlighting leadership skills, initiative, achieving goals):

- XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
- XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
- XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
- XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

*1st very best character trait of student * 2nd very best character trait of student * 3rd very best character trait of student*

Example character traits that would be important to employers:

- Reliable
- Dependable
- Friendly/personable
- Honest
- Hard-working
- Organized
- Leadership skills
- Loyal
- Great customer service

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Appendix C

Career Interest Form

For each type of career, mark your interest level. The group you will be placed in for the tour, will be based on your 3 top interest areas.

Types of Careers & Your Interest Level

	No interest	Sort of interested	Interested
Arts & Entertainment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Athletics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Childcare & Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Customer Service & Offi...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health Care & Counseling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Landscaping & Outdoor...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Manufacturing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Restaurant & Retail	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Security & Transportation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trades: Construction, Pl...	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Transition Perspectives Event Evaluation Fall 2023

Start of Block: Participant Type

Q1 Who are you?

- ☐ I am a teacher.
- ☐ I am a student.

End of Block: Participant Type

Start of Block: Students

Q3 I enjoyed my visit to UW-Whitewater.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Mostly
- ☐ A little
- ☐ No

Q4 I saw something at UW-Whitewater that I might want to do when I finish high school.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Mostly
- ☐ A little
- ☐ No

Q5 I think students in 8th grade next year should take this field trip too.

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Mostly
- ☐ A little
- ☐ No

Q6 Something I learned from this field trip was:

Q7 Something I wish had been different about this field trip was:

Q8 Now that you've learned this information about transitions, what will you do next?

End of Block: Students

Start of Block: Educators

Q1 This event was a valuable way to fulfill some required transition activities for my students.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

Q2 This event was a valuable way to get my students thinking about their futures and the possibilities of college and careers.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

Q3 This event was a valuable piece of preparation for my students as they transition to high school.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

Q4 The materials provided ahead of this event were valuable.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

Q5 This event and the associated materials were a valuable way to integrate the transition topics of education, employment, and health (specifically mental health).

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

Q6 This event and the associated materials were a valuable way to begin development of transition IEPs for my students.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

Q7 The materials provided ahead of this event were age- and content-appropriate for my students.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

Q8 If this event is offered annually, I am interested in bringing my students again.

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Strongly agree

Q9 Please rank the important of each item as you would decide whether to participate again in the future.

	Not at all important	Slightly important	Moderately important	Very important	Extremely important
Event date in October	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Amount of pre- event communication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Types of pre- event materials	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Careers highlighted in interests tour	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provision of transportation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provision of lunch	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

End of Block: Educators
