Preparing Students with Disabilities for Post-Secondary Education and Employment

Marcia L. Montague, Ph.D.
Patricia S. Lynch, Ph.D.
Lindsey Aldridge

Texas A&M University
Bryan ISD GEAR UP

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Session Purpose

Over the past four years, Bryan ISD GEAR UP personnel have employed numerous strategies to prepare students with disabilities for post-secondary education.

These strategies will be shared with attendees.
What We Know from NAEP Data

• Over the past 10 years—
  8% increase in 4th grade reading
  6% increase in 8th grade math
  10% increase in graduation rates
  38% increase in post-secondary enrollment
  13% increase in four-year college enrollment

60% of SWDs are in general education classrooms at least 80% of the day
95% of SWDs spend some time in the general education setting

Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress
Educational Settings of SWD

Percentage of SWD Spending 80% or More of School Day in General Education Classroom

Initial Steps

• Become knowledgeable about students with disabilities and the special education system
  – Get to know your district’s Director of Special Education
  – Communicate with Special Education Teachers / Case managers / Department Heads

• Get to know your students
  – What services are they receiving?
  – What are their goals?

• Get to know the parents
Question

• How many categories of disability are there under IDEA?
  – A) 15
  – B) 10
  – C) 13
  – D) 5
IDEIA lists 13 different disability categories

Students who meet the criteria for IDEIA are entitled to:

• A “free, appropriate, public education” FAPE
• In the “least restrictive environment”
• An Individualized Education Program (IEP)

1. Autism
2. Deaf-blindness
3. Development delay
4. Emotional disturbance
5. Hearing impairment, including deafness
6. Intellectual disability
7. Multiple disabilities
8. Orthopedic impairment
9. Other health impairment, including ADHD
10. Specific learning disability
11. Speech or language impairment
12. Traumatic brain injury
13. Visual impairment, including blindness
Can you answer the following questions?

- How many students in your cohort are being served under Special Education or Section 504?

- How are your students with disabilities achieving?
  - Dropout Rates?
Needs of Students with Disabilities

• Post-secondary outcomes for students with disabilities are considerably poorer than outcomes for the general population partially because students with disabilities have more risk factors. (Wagner, et. al., 2005).

• According to a report published by NCES (2008), only 57% of students who are served by special education graduate high school with diplomas and only 27% of these youth are enrolled in post-secondary education, compared to 68% of the general student population.
Role of GEAR UP for Students with Disabilities

• Understanding the educational supports needed by students with disabilities is critical in order to help student transition and succeed in postsecondary programs.

• It is crucial for GEAR UP personnel to align programs and interventions with the needs of students.

• For example, a student with an intellectual disability will need different services than a student with a learning disability.
Graduation Plans with Students with Disabilities

• Our GEAR UP program has done individual graduation plans with each student in our cohort. This fully included all students with disabilities.

• Modifications were necessary, but these students can still be included and supported in their pursuit of post-secondary education.

• They have many options, college access programs, technical or trade schools, community college, or even universities.
Postsecondary Options

• Four-year college
• Community College
• Vocational-technical college
• Community–based transition programs
• Postsecondary models for students with intellectual disabilities
  – Mixed Hybrid Model
  – Substantially Separate Model
  – Inclusive Individual Support
  – http://www.thinkcollege.net/
What can GEAR UP do improve the post-secondary outcomes for students with disabilities?

• Offer professional development for educators
  • Possible topics:
    – Training on Self-Determination
    – Increasing student learning expectations
  • Create Partnerships with Local Community Organizations
  • Offer Parent Trainings
  • Connect parents and students with DARS
What can GEAR UP do improve the post-secondary outcomes for students with disabilities?

- Offer Student Trainings
  - Self-Determination
  - Self-Advocacy Skills
  - Employability Skills
  - Goal Setting
- Offer mentoring services
- Summer opportunities
- College Tours
- Bring motivation speakers
Self-Determination

• Self-determination is defined as:
  “acting as the primary causal agent in one’s life and making choices and decisions free from undue external influences or interference” (Wehmeyer, 1996).

• Self-determination skills enable students with disability to assume greater responsibility and control of their lives
Self-Determination

- Self-advocacy
- Self-efficacy
- Decision-making
- Goal setting
- Self-evaluation
- Communication skills
- Self-awareness
Self-Determination

• Students who are self-determined have better postsecondary outcomes
  – Establish realistic goal for postsecondary outcome
  – Direct the course of their education
  – Are more aware of their disabilities and needed accommodations
  – Develop an internal locus of control
  – Learn self-advocacy skills
5-day Summer Academy Focused on Employability Skills

Goals of the summer program:
- Increase students’ knowledge about employability
- Increase students’ skills in goal setting
- Prepare students to apply for summer jobs
- Enhance students’ social skills

Through a series of lesson plans and activities, students:
- Identified their personal strengths and weaknesses
- Created a resume, researched jobs and applied for jobs
- Participated in mock interviews
- Learned professionalism behaviors
- Learned food preparation skills

GEAR UP in collaboration with BVCIL will offer a week long summer academy to GEAR UP students (class of 2014). This event is FREE and has a limited number of spaces available. Please call 979-458-4225 to reserve your spot today!

What can you expect during the academy?
- Daily lessons on topics in employability, goal setting and professionalism
- Arts Crafts
- Cooking session for lunch every day

June 4 - 8, 2012
Time: 9:00 am to 2:00 pm

GEAR UP
Brazos Valley Center for Independent Living

Texas A&M University
Weekly Series on areas of need for students in life skills

Series 1: Money Management
• Students learned to write checks
• Practiced giving change
• Saving strategies

Series 2: Employability Skills
• Students learned professionalism behaviors
• Students created resumes
• Student established employment goals

Employability Training with BVCIL
Tuesday, March 27th, 2012  
Tuesday, April 3rd, 2012  
Tuesday, April 10th, 2012  
Tuesday, April 17th, 2012  
Tuesday, April 24th, 2012

Time: 3:45 to 5PM
We are meeting at the SILVER CAMPUS’ main office at 3:45 PM
  • We will walk together to BVCIL (1869 Briar Crest)
  • Snacks will be provided!

Questions? Call us @ 979-209-2627 or stop by our office (Room 1208)
Self-Advocacy Skill Training

Self-advocacy refers to the ability effectively communicate one’s abilities and needs to others in order to obtain appropriate resources and positive outcomes.

- Students learned to identify their learning strengths and needs,
- Students learned strategies for problem solving
- Student practiced using their assertive skills as a way to advocate for themselves.
- Students participated in a mock- IEP meeting.
Parent Workshops

• Introduction to Special Education Services
• Post-Secondary Options
• Disability Services at Institutions of Higher Education
• Provide information about summer enrichment opportunities
  – http://gearup.cehd.tamu.edu/PDF%20files/Summerprogram%202012.pdf
Professional Development for Educators

• Offer professional development sessions for teachers, staff, administrators, etc. at the schools. Areas of focus can include:
  – Holding high expectations for all students
  – Post-secondary options for students with disabilities
  – Self-determination and self-advocacy
Questions? Comments?

• Contact us:
  
  • Marcia Montague  
    mmontague@tamu.edu
  
  • Patricia Lynch  
    pslynch@tamu.edu
  
  • Lindsey Aldridge  
    lindsey_317@neo.tamu.edu
Access this Presentation and Additional Resources

• [http://gearup.cehd.tamu.edu](http://gearup.cehd.tamu.edu)