

# Guidelines for Aligning High School & Beyond Plans (HSBP) and IEP Transition Plans



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## Preface

The High School & Beyond Plan (HSBP) revolves around three questions: Who am I?, What can I become?, and How do I become that? The HSBP helps students get the most out of high school and think about their future. Students work with school counselors and advisors to create their own individual plan, the "personalized pathway", throughout high school and revise their plan annually to accommodate changing interests or postsecondary goals on what they expect to do the year following graduation from high school. The postsecondary aspirations may include pathways for application to four-year colleges or universities, two-year community or technical colleges, apprenticeship programs, industry standard certificate programs, military training, or on-the-job training.

An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written statement for a student eligible for special education that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with state and federal laws. The IEP guides a student's learning while in special education. It describes the amount of time that a student will spend receiving special education, any related services a student will receive, and the academic/behavioral goals and expectations for the year.

The HSBP, a Washington State graduation requirement, and the IEP, a federal requirement, both support a student's smooth transition from school to adult life. IEPs should be developed to align with HSBPs developed by students, so that a comprehensive plan is in place that addresses the student's needs and meets all federal, state, and local requirements.

The purpose of this document is to provide general information and guidelines to P-12 educators, staff, and administrators for developing and aligning the HSBP and the IEP, including suggestions for minimizing duplication. This guide addresses the following topics to facilitate a student's seamless transition from school to postsecondary activities:

- Transition planning, opportunities, and programs;
- Transition services and requirements;
- Education and employment options for students with disabilities after leaving secondary school;
- Supporting decisions made by students with disabilities;
- HSBP and IEP examples, flow charts of and data related to the transition process, and
- Resources (e.g., scholarships) and a glossary of key terms used in both the HSBP and IEP transition planning processes.

The various topics are organized into appendices to allow the reader to access and use information specific to local needs.

For students with disabilities to successfully prepare to transition to adult life, they must be provided with the information, services, and supports needed to ensure that they can achieve their goals. The [Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction \(OSPI\)](#), the [State Board of Education \(SBE\)](#), and the [Washington Student Achievement Council \(WSAC\)](#) are pleased to provide this guide to advance efforts to ensure that all students, including students with

disabilities, are equipped with skills and knowledge to engage in the 21st Century workforce. In doing so, these agencies recognize the importance of collaborative partnerships in writing this guide to help educators, in collaboration with families, assist students with disabilities in developing and pursuing their goals for adult life.

We hope this guide will also help students with disabilities and their families to better understand how the OSPI, districts, agencies, and other organizations collaborate to facilitate improved outcomes for students with disabilities. If you have questions or suggestions about this HSBP and IEP transition planning resource guide, please submit them to [speced@k12.wa.us](mailto:speced@k12.wa.us).

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# Guidelines for Aligning High School & Beyond Plans (HSBP) and IEP Transition Plans

## Introduction

The world has changed tremendously for students with disabilities over the past several decades. Laws are now in place to make college and careers more accessible, and the public's understanding of disabilities has evolved. Yet, many students with disabilities still experience a difficult transition to postsecondary options. While most students struggle to adjust to college and career environments, this transition is often more difficult for students with disabilities, as they must navigate this transition and new environment without many of the supports made available to them during their P-12 public school educational experience.

Employment is critically important to one's sense of identity and perceived success in society. Most people enter the workforce at some point in their lives, as employment creates opportunities for both economic and social mobility.<sup>1</sup> Access to employment is a particularly important issue for individuals with disabilities who have historically experienced significant barriers to employment and high rates of underemployment.<sup>2</sup> It is also at the heart of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), whose purpose is, "to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and **prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living.**"<sup>3</sup>

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that individuals with disabilities are among the least represented demographic groups in the labor force.<sup>4</sup> The participation rate for people with a disability was 17.8 percent compared to 63.6 percent for people without a disability. Furthermore, young adults with disabilities ages 16 to 19 are an exceptionally disadvantaged group when it comes to employment outcomes, experiencing an unemployment rate of 42 percent, nearly double that of 26 percent experienced by their same age peers without a disability. Therefore, persistent disparities in employment outcomes for young adults with disabilities have reinforced the need for special educators to better understand and address barriers that prevent successful transitions for adolescents with disabilities.

Data from US Department of Education indicates that the vast majority of students (approximately 90 percent) who receive special education services under the Individuals with

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<sup>1</sup> Borjas, G. (2010). Labor economics (5th ed.). Maidenhead, UK: McGraw-Hill.

<sup>2</sup> Sharf, R. (2010). Applying career development theory to counseling (5th ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole Cengage Learning.

<sup>3</sup> [20 U.S.C.§1400\(d\)\(1\)\(A\)](#).

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Labor (2013). [Persons with disability: Labor force characteristics](#).

Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) have identified disabilities that are not cognitive disabilities.<sup>5</sup> This indicates that these students have average or above average intelligence (IQs), and their disability affects their educational experience in other ways. For example, their disabilities may be speech and language impairments, vision and hearing issues, autism, behavior and emotional disabilities, learning disabilities, or other health impairments. When these students are provided with the appropriate instruction and support, up to 90 percent can meet the same academic standards as their non-disabled peers, graduating on-time with their four-year cohort group, and fully prepared to tackle college or a career.<sup>6</sup> Yet, just 64.6 percent of students with disabilities in the U.S. graduated on time in 2015, well below the 83 percent four-year rate for students overall. In Washington State, the 2017 four-year graduation rate for students with disabilities was 59.4 percent compared to 79.3 percent for all students<sup>7</sup>.

This poses the question, *Why are expectations repeatedly lowered for this population based on having been identified as having a disability and/or eligible for special education services?* One of the main purposes for the establishment of IDEA was to provide access and supports to students with disabilities to be successful in school and prepared for further education, employment, and independent living. Expectations play a critical role with regard to not only school achievement but also success in employment and postsecondary educational settings. Furthermore, low expectations are often cited as significant barriers to academic and career achievement for students with disabilities.<sup>8</sup> For example, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that attitudinal barriers of faculty and support service providers in postsecondary educational settings have been shown to inhibit the performance of students with disabilities.<sup>9</sup> In contrast, setting high expectations for students with disabilities promotes successful postsecondary transition. Research has also demonstrated that students with disabilities do better when they are held to high expectations and have access to the general education curriculum.<sup>10</sup>

High expectations inform effective transition planning that leads to positive post-school results. To set high expectations and foster successful post-school outcomes for students with disabilities, all individuals concerned with their education should:

- Establish a school-wide culture of high expectations;
- Provide students with disabilities access to rigorous coursework;

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<sup>5</sup> National Center for Education Statistics. (May 2017). [The condition of education: children and youth with disabilities](#). ED: Institute of Educational Services.

<sup>6</sup> Hechinger Report. [Willing, able and forgotten: How high schools fail special ed students \(2017\)](#). A series of nine reports published between November 2, 2017 and December 16, 2017.

<sup>7</sup> OSPI (2018). [Report to the Legislature: Graduation and Dropout Statistics](#).

<sup>8</sup> 2018 [DO-IT. Creating an inclusive career development program](#). University of Washington (UW), Seattle, WA.

<sup>9</sup> United States Government Accountability Office. (2009). [Higher education and disability: Education needs a coordinated approach to improve its assistance to schools in supporting students](#). Washington, D.C.: US Government Accountability Office.

<sup>10</sup> [Section 601\(c\)\(14\) of the IDEA](#).

- Ensure students with disabilities have IEP goals that are aligned with the challenging academic content standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled and ensure that students with disabilities receive the specialized instruction, related services and other supports they need to meaningfully access, be involved, and make progress in the general education curriculum;
- Provide students with disabilities the opportunity to access College and Career Ready Standards and assessments; and
- Ensure educators have the tools and resources necessary to support student success<sup>11</sup>.

## Graduation

While the process of earning a diploma and participating in the high school graduation ceremony may be clear for some students, the multiple pathways and options for students with disabilities served under an IEP may be confusing. Additionally, in 2019, the Washington State Legislature passed [House Bill \(HB\) 1599](#), which expanded graduation pathways beyond the state assessment. The purpose of this section is to provide to families, students, school staff, IEP teams, and others a brief overview of graduation requirements and options.

According to Washington statute [RCW 28A.230.090 \(1\)](#), “The purpose of a high school diploma is to declare that a student is ready for success in postsecondary education, gainful employment and citizenship, and is equipped with the skills to be a lifelong learner.” This statute and the new requirements outlined in [HB 1599](#) are the basis for Washington’s policy of awarding the same diploma for all students, which means that all students meet the same broad components of the state’s graduation requirements, including:

- 1) satisfy the graduation requirements established by the SBE and any graduation requirements established by the applicable public high school or school district
- 2) satisfy the [credit requirements for graduation](#);
- 3) demonstrate career and college readiness through completion of the [High School and Beyond Plan \(HSBP\)](#)
- 4) meet the requirements of at least one of [eight authorized graduation pathway options](#). A student may choose to pursue more than one pathway option, but any option used by a student to demonstrate career and college readiness must align with the student's HSBP.

These requirements apply to all Washington students, regardless of disability or English language acquisition status. Washington has one diploma that meets the federal requirements of a “regular high school diploma” and offers multiple pathways to achievement.

Within this broad framework, Washington also has policies designed to create flexibility for individual students, including students with disabilities, to meet these requirements. According to [WAC 180-51-115](#), districts must have a board approved policy and procedures for granting a diploma to a student with disabilities that does not deny the student the opportunity to earn a

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<sup>11</sup> Information and strategies regarding how to improve the learning of all students, please visit the ED’s [SWIFT Schools](#).

high school diploma solely because of the student’s disability and that provides for meeting “the unique limitations of each student”.

For a student receiving special education services, it is the responsibility of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team to determine when the student has met state and local graduation requirements. Federal and state regulations do not compel a school district to graduate a student with a disability who has met a district’s determined requirements for the award of a regular high school diploma if the IEP team agrees to continue the student’s secondary education. If the IEP team determines and documents that the student has not met these graduation requirements, the student is still entitled to a free appropriate public education (FAPE) and can continue to be claimed for basic and special education apportionment.

### **High School and Beyond Plan Graduation Requirements<sup>12</sup>**

Washington state law ([HB 2224](#) and [HB 1599](#)) establishes that **all students develop and complete** a HSBP as one part of their graduation requirements and details the essential requirements and implications.

As of the 2017-18 school year, an HSBP must be initiated for each student during the seventh or eighth grade. In preparation for initiating that plan, each student is administered a career interest and skills inventory. The HSBP is then updated to reflect high school assessment results in [RCW 28A.655.070\(3\)\(b\)](#) and to review transcripts, assess progress toward identified goals, and be revised as necessary for changing interests, goals, and needs. The resulting plan identifies available interventions and academic support, courses, or both, that are designed for students who are not on track to graduate, to enable them to fulfill high school graduation requirements. Additionally, each student’s HSBP is updated to inform junior year course taking. This creates a pause point between the sophomore and junior year where students are able to make choices around the pathways they’d like to pursue and provides a natural point to evaluate and improve alignment between IEPs and HSBP for students receiving special education.

A HSBP must meet the following requirements<sup>13</sup> and include the following components:

#### **Requirements:**

- Initiated in 7th or 8th grade for all students
- Provided to students’ parents or guardians in the top two non-English languages spoken by students in the school district
- Updated each year to reflect high school assessments, review of transcripts, and assess progress toward identified goals
- Update for each student who has not earned a score of level 3 or level 4 on the middle school mathematics assessment by ninth grade, to ensure that the student takes a mathematics course in both ninth and tenth grades and to include career and technical equivalencies in mathematics as applicable

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<sup>12</sup> See OSPI’s [High School & Beyond Planning webpage](#) for additional information and resources.

<sup>13</sup> Per [RCW 28A.230.090](#), any decision about whether a student has met the HSBP requirement is made locally by districts.

- Revised as necessary for changing interests, goals, and needs, and to identify the available interventions and academic support, and/or courses.
- Effective 2020-2021 school year, each district must ensure that an electronic HSBP platform is available to all students who are obligated to have an HSBP

### Components

- Identification of career goals, aided by a skills and career interest inventory assessment
- Identification of educational goals for graduation and beyond
- Four-year plan for course-taking plan that fulfills state and local graduation requirements and aligns with the student's career and educational goals with and individualized Personal Pathways<sup>14</sup> which must include information about
  - **Dual credit programs** (AP, IB, Cambridge, Running Start, College in the High School, CTE Dual Credit [Tech Prep])
  - **College Bound Scholarship Program**
- Resume or activity by the end of the 12th grade that provides a written compilation any activities/athletics, leadership opportunities, work experience, or community service that can be used for writing personal statements, application essays, or scholarship applications
- List of any certificates of course completion for Career and Technical Education equivalency courses completed by a student.
- For students who have not met standard on state assessment, interventions and academic support, courses, or both, that enable students to meet the high school graduation requirements, must be a part of this plan

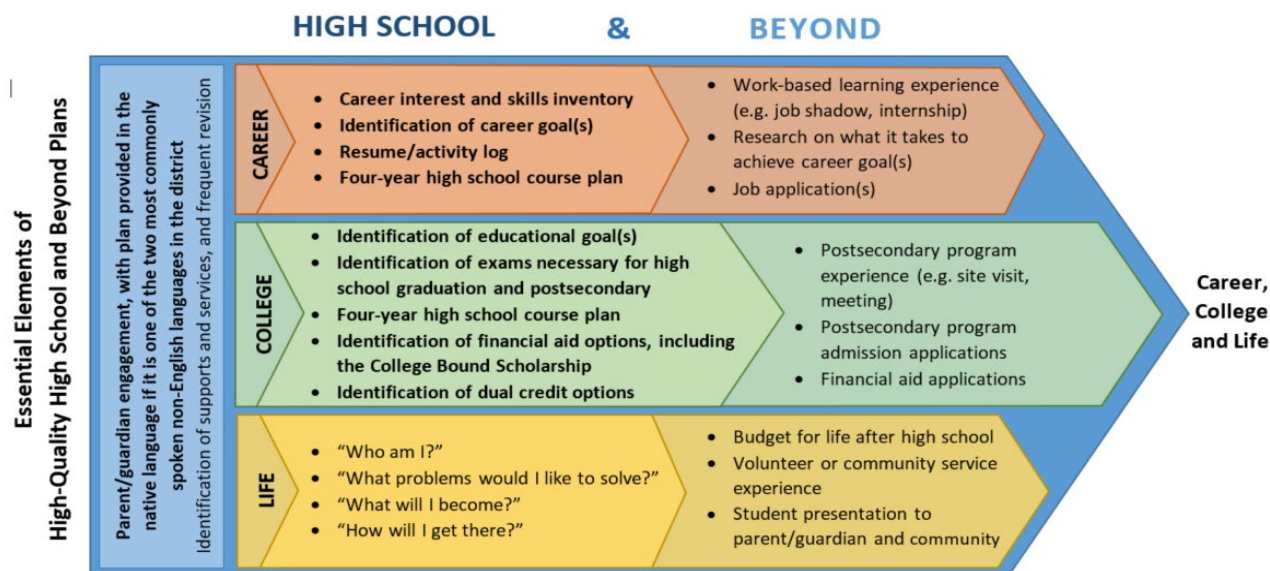
In addition to the minimum HSBP requirements, the State Board of Education has identified elements for a high-quality high-school and beyond plan that exceeds the minimum requirements. Figure A depicts both required elements and high-quality elements. The required career, college, and life elements are in the left column (e.g., career interest and skills inventory) and the high-quality elements (e.g., work-based learning experience) are listed in the right column.

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<sup>14</sup> WAC 180-51-068 defines "Personalized Pathway" as a locally determine body of coursework identified in a student's High School and Beyond Plan that is deemed necessary to attain the postsecondary career or educational goals chosen by the student. "Personalized Pathway Requirement" is up to three course credits chosen by a student that are included in a student's Personalized Pathway and prepare the student to meet specific postsecondary career or educational goals. Personalized Pathway Requirement credits may replace two world language credits, and/or one of two arts credits. The Personalized Pathway is not a specific pathway of courses outlined in a document but is individual to each student. The Personalized Pathway Requirement should not be confused with career pathways or the 16 career clusters, but students need to use these pathways to make their educational plans to graduate and their postsecondary plans after for high school.



**Figure A. Essential Elements of High-Quality HSBP**



Source: The Washington State Board of Education, [High School and Beyond Plan](#)

### IEP Transition Planning Requirements

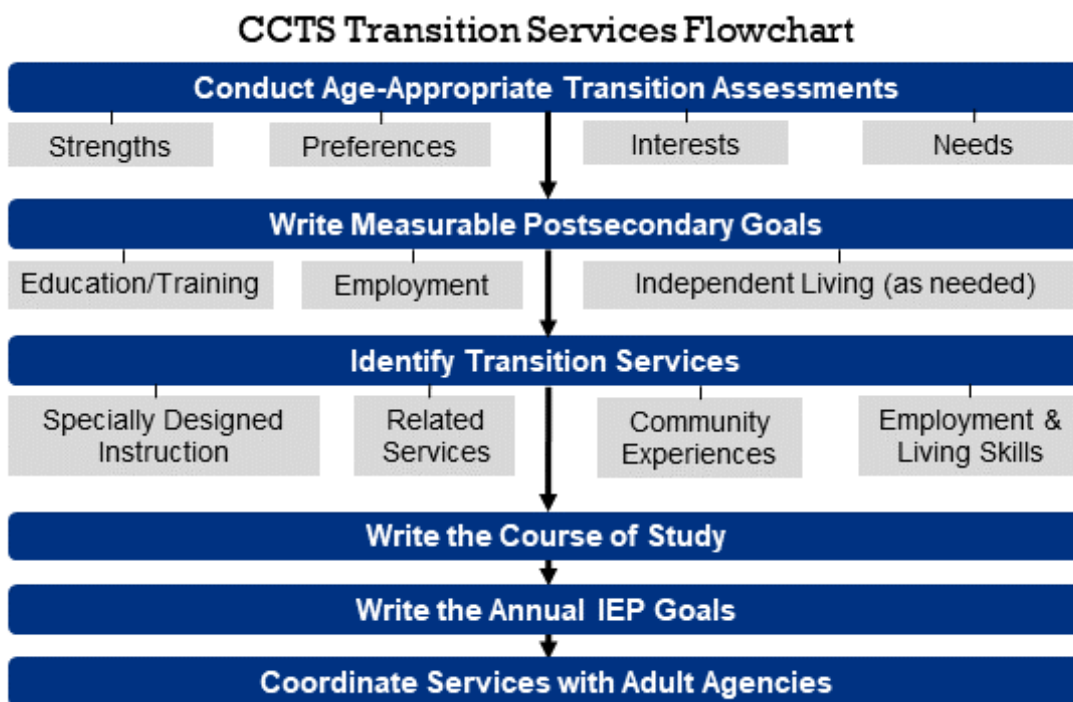
For students eligible for special education and related services, federal<sup>15</sup> and state<sup>16</sup> regulations require that an IEP be developed that specifies how education, related services, and supports will be delivered by the school district to address the unique educational needs of a student with a disability. The IEP is a written document that outlines the student’s present levels of academic and functional performance; annual measurable goals, including how and when progress will be measured; accommodations, and supplemental aids and services; and details the special education and related services the student will receive.

Beginning not later than the first IEP to be in effect when the student turns sixteen, or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP team, the IEP must include a transition plan that includes measurable postsecondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and where appropriate, independent living skills. It also identifies the transition services, including courses of study, needed to assist the student in reaching those postsecondary goals. IEPs with transition planning components should be designed to help a student make a successful transition from school to postsecondary life. Figure B depicts the process for incorporating transition planning components into an IEP. Please note that age-appropriate transition assessments occur prior to development of the IEP. For information on each step outlined in the flowchart, see the [online interactive version](#).

<sup>15</sup> [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. Sec. 1400 et seq.](#)

<sup>16</sup> RCW [28A.155 Special Education](#) and WAC [392-172A Rules for the Provision of Special Education](#)

**Figure B. Transition Services Flowchart**



Source: Johnson, C. (2012). *Transition Services Flow Chart*.

Both HSBPs and IEPs should have a goal of making decisions, such as course choices and assessment options, centered on what is best for the individual student, based on the student’s education, employment, and independent living skill goals for postsecondary success. IEP teams should make decisions annually to develop or refine plans that address individual student needs.

If a student has an IEP, the HSBP must be developed in alignment with their IEP and be completed by the same adults completing HSBPs for students not receiving special education services and their HSBP must be updated in alignment with their school to post school transition plan. If it is decided the student should stay in school an extended time, the extra time should be meaningful and allow the student to continue to develop both additional academic and transition knowledge and skills. District and IEP teams should both work to ensure services are based on individual student needs.

Districts should collect and assess data on student outcomes such as acceptance and retention in postsecondary educational institutions or employment to help identify strengths and areas for improvement in providing quality services to students.

### **Aligning the IEP to Support the HSBP**

The following tables are intended to assist teams in developing and aligning the HSBP and IEP transition plans for each student and to help ensure that the content and goals of the IEP support those of the HSBP. Before transition planning is required in the IEP, students will have

spent two to three years engaged with developing their HSBP to identify and revise postsecondary career and education/training goals. This work will be done based on career interest surveys, defining an associated course of study (course plan) that aligns with career and education/training goals and leads to on-time graduation, and assessing progress toward identified goals.

Table 1 provides a concise summary of the alignment of the required elements of the HSBP and the required components of an IEP that includes transition services. In addition, the table includes high-quality HSBP elements, which are recommended but not required. Districts can also add in any district specific information or requirements associated with each of the elements in the "Additional District Requirement(s)" column.

**Table 1. HSBP and IEP Alignment**

Elements	HSBP	High-Quality HSBP	IEP Transition Components
Grade or age plan(s) will begin	7th or 8th grade	7th grade	Year student turns 16, or younger as determined by the IEP team
Age-Appropriate Transition assessments			✓
Interest Inventory	✓		✓
Career Goals	✓		✓ (employment goal)
Educational goals	✓		✓
Independent living goals			✓ (independent living goal, if appropriate)
Personalized Pathway	✓ (class of 2019+)		
State assessment documentation	✓		✓
Interventions and academic support, if not met standard on state assessment	✓		✓
Identification of assessments necessary to achieve goals (e.g., SAT, ACT, ASVAB, COMPASS)	✓		✓
Transcript and progress review (annually)	✓		✓ (course of study)
Work-based learning experience		✓	strongly encouraged
Volunteer experience		✓	strongly encouraged

Elements	HSBP	High-Quality HSBP	IEP Transition Components
Coordinate services with adult agencies [e.g., Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA), WorkSource, etc.]			✓
Independent living skills (e.g., develop budget after high school)		✓	As determined by student's IEP team
Parent/Guardian involvement and agreement	✓		✓
Activity Log or Resume	✓		
Summary of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance			✓

There is significant overlap between HSBPs and IEP transition plans, as well as areas of difference. Table 2 provides a detailed comparison of the components of each plan. Please note that the list of components for IEPs with transition planning/services does not represent all IEP requirements contained in WAC 392-172A.

**Table 2. Comparison of HSBP and IEP Components**

HSBP (Required elements for all students)	Additional Elements for High-Quality HSBP (Recommended)	IEPs with Transition Planning
Purpose: A plan outlining how the student will meet high school graduation requirements and what the student will do following high school. The HSBP starts in middle school and is revised annually. It should include classes needed to support a pathway to post-secondary education, such as a two-year or four-year college, technical college, apprenticeship program, certificate program, the workforce or military training. ( <a href="#">ESHB 2224</a> ) <a href="#">RCW 28A.230.090</a>		Purpose: A coordinated set of activities designed within a results-oriented process focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the student to facilitate a smooth transition from P-12 education to post-secondary activities, including post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment, supported employment, continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation ( <a href="#">WAC 392-172A-01190</a> )
Developed in the 7th or 8th Grade, as determined by the school district.		Developed the year student turns 16, or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP team
Career interest inventory initiated for each student by 7th or 8th Grade as determined by the school district		Age-appropriate transition assessments administered to identify student needs, strengths, preferences, and interests
8th graders not yet earning at least Level 3 on the mathematics and/or ELA state assessments must have a <a href="#">Student Learning Plan</a> before entering 9th grade		

HSBP (Required elements for all students)	Additional Elements for High-Quality HSBP (Recommended)	IEPs with Transition Planning
8th graders not yet earning at least Level 3 on the mathematics state assessment must take math in 9th and 10th grades		
Informed by a skills and career interest inventory assessment identify a career goal	Identify personal goals	Based on age-appropriate transition assessments, the IEP team identifies post-secondary goals related to education/training, employment, and, if appropriate, independent living.
Identifies educational goals. Must also inform about dual credit programs and opportunities as well as the <a href="#">College Bound Scholarship</a> .	Complete career-related documents	Based on individual needs, strengths, preferences, and interests, identify transition services (e.g., community experiences), development of employment and other post-secondary adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and a functional vocational evaluation.
Four-year course-taking plan that fulfills state and local graduation requirements and aligns with the student’s career and educational goals and individualized Personalized Pathway Requirement for students in Class of 2019 and beyond	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participate in postsecondary program experience (e.g., site visit, virtual tour, meet with representative).</li> <li>• Develop practical skills for life after high school.</li> <li>• Participate in volunteer service/community service.</li> </ul>	Outline/description of the course of study to assist student in reaching postsecondary goals. Annual academic and functional IEP goals, to meet needs that result from the disability to enable the student to be involved and make progress in the general education curriculum.
For students who have not met standard on a state assessment by the end of 11th grade, Interventions, academic supports, and courses that enable student to meet the high school graduation requirements		
Update HSBP to reflect state assessment results	Exams required to meet graduation, post-secondary program admissions, and post-secondary program placement requirements	IEP team determines type of assessment and administrative modifications and accommodations necessary for (a) statewide assessment accountability

HSBP (Required elements for all students)	Additional Elements for High-Quality HSBP (Recommended)	IEPs with Transition Planning
Review grades/transcript and student progress, to support and address identified goals or changing student interests or needs.		Reviewed not less than annually to consider lack of expected progress toward annual IEP goals or in general education curriculum; results of any reevaluations; information provided to/by parents; student's anticipated needs; or other matters.
Resume or Activity Log by end of 12th grade that provides a written compilation of student's education, any work experience, and any community service and how the school district has recognized the community service and any CTE Certificates or other awards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participation in volunteer/community service.</li> <li>• Participation in work-based learning opportunity (e.g., job shadow, internship) to develop self-advocacy and other employment skills</li> </ul>	District provides Summary of Performance for student graduating or exceeding age eligibility, including summary of academic achievement/functional performance, to help establish eligibility for post-secondary accommodations/supports & make recommendations to assist student in post-secondary transition to higher education, training, and/or employment
Encourage and involve parents and guardians in the process of developing and updating the student's HSBP. State law requires that the plan must be provided in the parents' or guardians' native language if it is one of the two most commonly spoken non-English languages in the district.		<p>IEP participants must include parents or guardians. The student must be invited when the purpose of the IEP meeting considers postsecondary goals or transition services. If the student does not attend, the district must take steps to ensure the student's preferences and interests are considered.</p> <p>Parent participation requires the school district take any action necessary to ensure the parent understands the IEP meeting proceedings, including arranging for an interpreter for parents with deafness or whose native language is other than English.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete post-secondary program/college applications.</li> <li>• Participation in volunteer/ community service.</li> <li>• Participate in work-based learning opportunity to develop self-advocacy and other employment skills.</li> </ul>	Coordinate services with adult agencies to extent appropriate or required, invite to the IEP meeting representatives of any agencies likely to provide or pay for transition services, with parent or adult student written consent. IEP team must reconvene if a participating agency is unable to provide transition services described in the IEP.

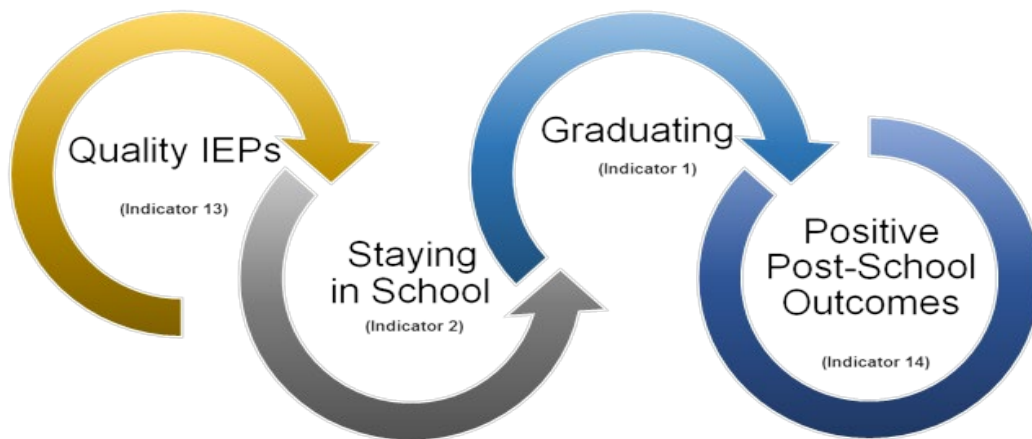
This foundational information should be used to inform a student's IEP once it includes transition services and should be (1) included in the student's present levels of performance (or in another appropriate section of the IEP) and (2) taken into consideration when developing the student's IEP goals and necessary special education and related services. For example, the IEP team may:

- base the student's measurable postsecondary employment, education/training, and/or independent living goals on those in the student's HSBP;
- incorporate results of the student's career interest survey(s) and other relevant evaluation information into the age-appropriate transition assessment section of the IEP pieces of information/data; and/or
- attach the student's HSBP course plan or incorporate the information into the course of study in the IEP.

### Effective Research-based Transition Practices

Over the past three decades, research on transition practices continues to demonstrate that post-school outcomes of students with disabilities improve when educators, families, students, community members, agencies and organizations work together to implement a broad array of transition planning practices. Four measures are considered critical for achieving and improving post-school outcomes: quality IEPs, dropout rates, graduation rates, and post-school outcomes (e.g., higher education, competitive employment, or engagement in other education/training or employment). Figure C shows the interrelationship between these four factors.

**Figure C. Critical Interrelationship for Achieving Post-school Outcomes**



Source: Center for Change in Transition Services (2017). [Writing effective transition plans](#), page 5. Graphic modified by CCTS from Kohler, Gothberg, and Hill. (2009). NSTTAC Evaluation Toolkit. National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC): Western Michigan University.

Such quality transition planning is the foundation of successful educational programs for students who receive special education services. This includes identifying strategies for keeping students engaged with school, though the implementation and integration of meaningful

transition services. These efforts increase the likelihood that students with disabilities will graduate and experience positive post-school outcomes and is in keeping with [OSPI's vision](#): **"The goal of Washington's public education system is to prepare every student who walks through our school doors for postsecondary pathways, careers, and civic engagement."** The impact of transition-focused education is greatly enhanced when service systems and programs connect and support the implementation and application of such learning.

Research has identified research-based, evidence-based, and promising practices that lead to positive outcomes in education, employment, and independent living for student with disabilities. The National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT) has identified 20 evidence-based predictors<sup>17 18</sup> of postsecondary employment, education, and independent living success from correlational research<sup>19</sup> to determine in-school secondary transition program practices that are linked to positive post-school outcomes for students with disabilities. Operational definitions and program characteristics for each predictor of postsecondary success have also been developed<sup>20</sup> that can be used to (1) evaluate and improve transition services and (2) ensure that a student's program includes evidence-based transition program practices. The operational definitions and program characteristics for the 20 predictors can be found in the [Predictor Implementation School/District Self-Assessment](#)<sup>21</sup>.

Table 3 below summarizes the list of the 20 predictors. Teachers, students, and all members of IEP teams should focus on ensuring factors and skills correlated with post-secondary education enrollment for students with disabilities are at the core of a student's educational program. Each of the practices below have been correlated with predictors of success and evidence-based practices for secondary transition. The five highlighted program characteristics listed in ***bold, italicized*** type have been shown to have the greatest influence on achieving positive post-school outcomes in all three areas (education/training, employment, and independent living) according to the research. Readers should note that most of the research- and evidenced-based predictors in Table 3 below are also identified as high-quality HSBP elements in Figure A on

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<sup>17</sup> Test, D. W., Mazzotti, V. L., Mustian, A. L., Fowler, C. H., Kortering, L. J., & Kohler, P. H. (2009). Evidence-based secondary transition predictors for improving post-school outcomes for students with disabilities. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, 32, 160-181. doi: 10.1177/0885728809346960

<sup>18</sup> Mazzotti, V.L., Rowe, D.R., Sinclair, J., Poppen, M., Woods, W.E., & Shearer, M.L. (2015). Predictors of post-school success: A systematic review of NLTS2 Secondary analyses. *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals*.

<sup>19</sup> Correlational research is a scientific study in which a researcher investigates associations between variables and none of the variables are manipulated. The goal of correlational research is to find out whether one or more variables can predict other variables. Definition retrieved from [psychologyandsociety.com correlational study webpage](http://psychologyandsociety.com/correlational-study-webpage).

<sup>20</sup> Rowe, D.A., Alverson, C.T., Unruh, D.K., Fowler, C.H., Kellems, R., & Test, D.W. (2013). A Delphi Study to operationalize evidence-based predictors in secondary transition. *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals*, 38, 113-126.

<sup>21</sup> National Technical Assistance Center on Transition. (2015). [Predictor Implementation School/District Self-Assessment](#).



page 5. The ✓ means correlational evidence exists; an empty box means no correlational research has been found to date<sup>22</sup>.

**Table 3. List of Predictors by Outcome Area**

Predictors/Outcomes	Education	Employment	Independent
Career Awareness: Learning about opportunities, education, and skills needed for a variety of occupational pathways to choose a career that matches one's strength and interests.	✓	✓	
Community Experiences: Activities outside the school setting and are supported by in-class instruction where students apply academic, social, and general work behaviors and skills.		✓	
Exit Exam Requirements/High School Diploma: Passing content area state tests with specified levels of proficiency to obtain a high school diploma. Diploma status is achieved by meeting state and district graduation requirements.		✓	
Goal Setting: Participation in Individualized Education Program (IEP) prevocational/vocational goal-setting and having a postsecondary goal focused on attending a postsecondary college or university.	✓	✓	
<b><i>Inclusion in General Education: Access to general education classes/curriculum and engaged in classes with non-disabled peers.</i></b>	✓	✓	✓
Interagency Collaboration: Intentional process that promotes cross agency and program collaborative efforts leading to tangible transition outcomes for youth.	✓	✓	
Occupational Courses: Individual courses supporting career awareness, exploring various career pathways, developing specific occupational skills through instruction and experiences focused on their desired employment goals [e.g., Career-Technical Education (CTE) classes]	✓	✓	
<b><i>Paid Employment/Work Experience: An activity placing student in a workplace that can include work sampling, job shadowing, paid employment, internships, and apprenticeships. Paid employment can include existing standard jobs in a company, organization, or customized work assignments negotiated with the employer. Activities always feature competitive pay (e.g., minimum wage) paid directly to the student by the employer.</i></b>	✓	✓	✓
<b><i>Parent Expectations: Parent expectations that the student attends postsecondary education, obtain paid employment, and/or be self-supporting resulted in students more likely to be engaged in postsecondary employment and education and/or have more social interactions.</i></b>	✓	✓	✓

<sup>22</sup> National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (2015). [Predictors correlated with post-school outcome areas.](#)

Predictors/Outcomes	Education	Employment	Independent Living
Parental Involvement: Parents/family/other adults are active, knowledgeable participants in all aspects of transition planning (e.g., decision-making, providing support, attending meetings, and advocating for their student).		✓	
Program of Study: Individualized set of courses, experiences, and curriculum designed to develop student academic and functional achievement to support the attainment of students' desired postsecondary goals.		✓	
Self-Advocacy/Self-Determination: Ability to make choices, solve problems, set goals, and evaluate options, state goals, take initiative to reach one's goals, and accept consequences of one's actions.	✓	✓	
<b>Self-Care/Independent Living/Self-Sufficiency: Skills necessary for management of one's personal self-care and daily independent living, including the personal management skills needed to interact with others, daily living skills, financial management skills, and the self-management of healthcare/wellness needs.</b>	✓	✓	✓
Social Skills: Behaviors and attitudes that focus on communication and collaboration (e.g., social conventions, social problem-solving when engaged in a social interaction, body language, speaking, listening, responding, verbal and written communication).	✓	✓	
<b>Student Support: Network of family, friends, educators, and agencies that provide services and resources in multiple environments to prepare student to obtain transition and post-secondary goals aligned with their strengths, preferences, interests, and needs.</b>	✓	✓	✓
Transition Programming: Program that prepares students to move from secondary settings (e.g., middle school/high school) to adult-life, utilizing comprehensive transition planning and education that creates individualized opportunities, services, and supports to help students achieve their postsecondary goals in education/training, employment, and independent living.	✓	✓	
Travel Skills: Ability to travel independently outside the home (e.g., school, local store, neighbor's house).		✓	
Vocational Education: Sequence of courses that prepares students for a specific job or career at various levels from trade or craft positions to technical, business, or professional careers.	✓	✓	
Work Study: Paid or unpaid sequence of work experience and work skills instruction and experiences designed to develop students' work attitudes and general work behaviors by providing mutually supportive and integrated academic and vocational instruction.		✓	
Youth Autonomy/Decision-Making: Ability to make choices, solve problems, set goals, make long-range plans, evaluate options, and follow directions.	✓	✓	

In the *Predictor Implementation School/District Self-Assessment*, NTACT notes that the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) recommends considering the impact of each predictor or program characteristic on students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and that the use of mainstream, value-based approaches may not serve the needs of all students. Those working with students from communal and interdependent cultural backgrounds may need to adjust a student's skill acquisition trajectory of when students acquire individual and independent transitional strategies and skills. Educational equity requires that every student be provided with the support and resources they need to be successful in life.

## **Organization of This Resource**

The remainder of this document includes appendices with information on transition-focused topics as described below.

### **Appendix A: The Transition Team - Members and Roles**

No one individual or agency can provide comprehensive transition planning for a student. Transition planning is a collaborative activity that requires the collective effort and commitment of all key stakeholders in a student's life. As the HSBP and IEP transition planning teams form, it is critical that each member know why they are serving on the team and their role in assisting the student to identify and plan for their future goals. Students benefit when each team member asks:

- What information can I provide?
- What predictions can I make?
- What questions can I raise for others to consider?
- What resources, services, supports, can I make available to assist in the implementation of the student's transition plan?

Appendix A contains more complete descriptions of possible roles for general and special education teachers, families, students, school counselors, psychologists, related service staff, employers, agency service providers, and the community.

### **Appendix B: Sample HSPB and IEP (Under Development)**

Appendix B provides sample 7th – 12th grade HSBPs and IEPs for fictitious students. The samples are intended to provide ideas for reducing possible duplication of efforts between these two complementary processes.

### **Appendix C: High School Education and Training Opportunities**

It is critical that a student begin preparations for adult life well before the time they leave high school. Members of the student's HSBP and IEP team must be well informed about the student's strengths, preferences, interests, and needs, as well as available services early so that they can encourage the student's active participation in all transition planning and decision making.

Appendix C highlights educational opportunities, credentials, and employment strategies designed to prepare students with disabilities for a meaningful postsecondary education and/or thriving career. Included are examples of career interest and other age-appropriate transition assessments, programs, activities, and exit options that may be available as teams work with students, families, and agencies to develop HSBPs and IEPs that support students for the transition to adult life. Some of the opportunities, programs, and strategies discussed in Appendix C involve partnerships between high schools, colleges, vocational rehabilitation agencies, employers, regional workforce development boards, social service agencies, students, and their families. It is essential that students with disabilities, along with family members and professional support staff, examine numerous and challenging programs to prepare students for their desired postsecondary goals.

### **Appendix D: Postsecondary Education and Training Opportunities**

Postsecondary education/training is one of the most important postsecondary goals, and research indicates that it is the most significant goal for most students with disabilities.<sup>23</sup> As students with disabilities transition from secondary school to postsecondary education, training, and employment, they must be prepared academically and financially. Postsecondary education options, with the help of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) program, include two- and four-year colleges and universities, trade and vocational schools, adult education programs, and employment outcomes in competitive integrated employment or supported employment.

Appendix D describes available education and training services and supports for individuals with disabilities. Appendix D also lists services available to students with disabilities at the secondary and postsecondary levels to help them succeed in their postsecondary goals.

### **Appendix E: Postsecondary Employment Options**

For more than two decades, one of the principal goals of disability policy in the United States has been to improve employment opportunities for young people with disabilities as they exit secondary education programs.<sup>24</sup> This is significant, as this has influenced the delivery of special education, vocational rehabilitation, and employment services. As noted in the *Rehabilitation Act*, as amended by the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\)](#), one of the primary purposes of the *Rehabilitation Act* is to maximize opportunities for individuals with disabilities, including individuals with significant disabilities, for competitive integrated employment.

Appendix E describes employment options, services, and supports for individuals with disabilities. The services described in Appendix E are provided at the secondary and postsecondary levels to help students with disabilities succeed in their postsecondary goals.

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<sup>23</sup> Cameto, R., Levine, P., & Wagner, M. (2004). [Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities. A Special Topic Report from the national Longitudinal Transition Study-2](#) (NTS2). Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.

<sup>24</sup> Johnson, D. R. (2009). Foreword. In R. G. Luecking, [The way to work: How to facilitate work experiences for youth in transition](#). Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes.

## **Appendix F: Data-Informed Post School Outcomes**

To better understand the data on post-school outcomes for student with disabilities, and subsequently use the data to improve high school programs and services, districts need to review state and district performance on IDEA Part B Performance and Compliance IPE 1-14. [Appendix F](#) provides information and data on the four transition related indicators: quality IEP content (Indicator 13), graduation rates (Indicator 1), dropout rates (Indicator 2), and students' post-school outcomes in terms of employment and attending post-secondary education (Indicator 14).

## **Appendix G: Transition Planning Checklist for Educators**

[Appendix G](#) contains a *Transition Planning Checklist for Educators* that IEP teams can use to identify general and special education services a student may need to fulfill HSBP and IEP transition planning requirements. The majority of activities listed under "All Students" are based on the [Career Guidance Washington - College and Career Ready Curriculum](#) used by 80 percent<sup>25</sup> of the school districts in Washington State. The curriculum provides a set of lessons for each grade level (grades 6-12) that emphasizes the importance of the HSBP, including the Personalized Pathway Requirement for the 24-Credit Career- and College-Ready Diploma (Class of 2019 and Beyond). All lessons are under copyright by OSPI and available for public use. While the Career Guidance Washington curriculum provides lessons specific to grade levels, the *Checklist for Educators* organizes activities by 7-8, 9-10, and 11-12 grade groupings.

Some activities listed under "Students Eligible for Special Education" for each of the grade groupings are required by state and federal regulations for all eligible students, and others will be based on the needs of individual students. Activities required for all students eligible for special education are noted as "Required". Activities based on unique student needs are noted as "Individualized".

## **Appendix H: Transition Planning Checklist for Students**

[Appendix H](#) contains a *Transition Planning Checklist for Students*, developed to provide students with authentic opportunities for self-determination during the High School and Beyond and IEP transition planning processes. Self-determination is a concept reflecting the belief that all individuals have the right to direct their own lives. Students with self-determination skills have a stronger chance of being successful in making the transition to adulthood, including employment and independence<sup>26</sup>. Starting with the 1990 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (P.L. 101-476), transition services must be based on student needs and take into account student interests and preferences. To accomplish this goal, students must be prepared to participate in planning for their future. A crucial part of the concept of self-determination involves students setting goals for themselves and taking the

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<sup>25</sup> OSPI (2018), [School Counseling and K-12 Supports](#), Olympia, WA.

<sup>26</sup> Solberg, V. S., Howard, K. A., Gresham, S. L., & Carter, E. (2012). [Quality learning experiences, self-determination, and academic success: A path analytic study of youth with disabilities](#). *Career Development and Transition for Exceptional Individuals*, (n/a), 1-12.

initiative to reach these goals. To do this a student must “be in charge” (which is not necessarily the same thing as self-sufficiency or independence), make his or her own choices, learn to solve problems effectively, take control and responsibility for his or her life, and learn to experience and cope with the consequences of making decisions on his or her own. Self-determination also relates to student-informed scheduling where students (and parents) have a say in their school schedule based on their Personalized Pathway in accordance with a meaningful High School & Beyond Plan.

The *Transition Planning Checklists for Educators and Students* are not exhaustive lists of transition services<sup>27</sup>. IEP Teams should continue to identify the academic and functional special education and related services the student needs to successfully transition to postsecondary settings based on the student’s unique needs. IEP teams should also keep in the mind that the timeframe and services the student needs will likely need adjusting over time to meet the individual needs of each student with an IEP at the various grade levels.

## **Appendix I: Resources**

Appendix I includes resources on vetted secondary to postsecondary transition websites, postsecondary scholarships, adult and community agencies, postsecondary education website, and soft skills website.



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<sup>27</sup> Sources for the Activities for Educators included Career Guidance Washington - College and Career Ready, High School Transition Toolkit#, The Checklist for Students was based on the activities in the Checklist for Educators.