

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Special Education Directors/Contacts and Middle, Junior High, and High School Principals

**FROM:** Misty Kimbrough, Assistant State Superintendent

**DATE:** January 29, 2008

**SUBJECT:** Secondary Transition Planning for Young Adults with Significant Disabilities

As you are aware, secondary transition planning is a requirement in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) 2004 for all young adults with disabilities beginning at age 16. In Oklahoma, secondary transition planning must be in place by age 14. Last spring you received a memorandum outlining guidelines for developing postsecondary goals as well as for obtaining written parental consent for other agencies to attend individualized education program (IEP) meetings. Every student on an IEP at age 14 must have postsecondary goals written in the areas of **education/training, employment, and independent living skills** (*as needed*). At that time, we had little information about how to do secondary transition planning for young adults with significant disabilities given the IDEA 2004 regulations and new student requirements.

A group of individuals with significant disabilities, their caregivers, educators, and other service providers convened in August 2007 to discuss these issues and to develop guidance for those serving individuals with significant disabilities. The spectrum comprising young adults with significant disabilities is broad. It includes, but is not limited to, those individuals with multiple disabilities, healthcare needs, and Autism Spectrum Disorders. The following clarification is provided to help special education teachers and other providers in three ways: 1) ensure that young adults with significant disabilities have effective secondary transition plans and services; 2) ensure that these plans and services are appropriate to meet their needs; and 3) ensure that the plans and services comply with federal regulations. Three scenarios with sample postsecondary goals are provided as examples, but are not intended for direct application to a specific young adult or for exact replication.

### Questions to Consider

1. Can the young adult express his or her interests? If not, obtain as much information from parents and caregivers as possible to develop the transition plan.
2. What are special health care needs that must be addressed?
3. Describe needs or challenges that will prevent the young adult from working outside of the home?
4. Who can provide the education/training activities to assist the young adult?
5. What can the young adult accomplish without assistance?
6. What else could the young adult accomplish if assistance were provided by a job coach, habilitation training specialist (HTS), or other caregiver?

### **Scenario 1**

Jane Dole has cerebral palsy, poor fine motor skills, uses a power chair for mobility, and requires full-time assistance for daily personal needs. She is quite verbal and can be easily understood. Jane enjoys interacting with children, especially babies. She would love to get married and have a family. Through interviews and other types of transition assessment, Jane expressed her desire to work with children.

#### **Postsecondary Goals**

**Education/Training:** *“Jane will audit child care/early childhood classes at the local CareerTech Center with a full-time HTS.”*

**Employment:** *“With the assistance of a full-time HTS, Jane will job shadow in three child care/daycare programs.”*

**Independent Living—Short-term:** *“Jane will live in a group home and utilize public transportation to participate in her classes and job shadowing activities.”*

**Independent Living—Long-term:** *“Jane will get married, have children, and live in Oklahoma.”*

#### ***Clarification***

In Scenario 1, Jane may obtain a pass/fail grade for the course(s) taken at the CareerTech as she will not be able to complete all of the required activities at the level of her nondisabled peers; however, she is accessing the same information and being exposed to the same settings as the other participants to enable her to properly interact with children. Although Jane may not earn an hourly wage for her job shadowing experiences, she is still accomplishing something she set out to do in terms of employment.

### **Scenario 2**

John Deer is a 21-year-old who has severe intellectual disability, is blind, and exhibits self-stimulatory behavior. John loves balloons and the squeaking sounds they make when they are inflated and touched, or rubbed. Due to John’s significant health care needs, he lives with his parents and has a part-time assistant who comes to his home to help with daily personal needs. John likes traveling in a vehicle. He wants to earn his own money so he does not have to rely so heavily on his parents. John’s expressive verbal skills are low, so it is difficult to obtain information from John. Therefore, discussions with his parents revealed John’s love of balloons, car travel, and desire to earn money.

#### **Postsecondary Goals**

**Education/Training:** *“John will participate in on-the-job training at flower shops or Party Galaxy to learn how to properly inflate balloons.”*

**Employment:** *“With the assistance of a job coach, John will develop a home-based balloon business.”*

**Independent Living:** *“While living at home with his parents, John will maintain a checkbook and pay for his purchases with the assistance of his parent(s) or assistant.”*

### ***Clarification***

In Scenario 2, John will participate in the development and operation of a home-based balloon business. He will not be able to do this on his own, and he will require the assistance of his parent(s) and assistant to deliver his product. There are a number of activities in which John could participate during high school (as annual transition goals) to help prepare for his home business. The example of a home business could be applied to many areas of interest for youth who have significant disability or health care issues. For example, young adults may have interests or preferences to bake or create jewelry. Those could all be developed into home businesses (i.e., baking dog biscuits for resale at local veterinary offices, or assembling jewelry to sell at local craft shows).

### **Scenario 3**

Phil Pickens is a young man who has cerebral palsy, uses an augmentative/alternative communication (AAC) device to communicate, and requires support and assistance for all daily care and mobility activities. Phil’s family supports his move into his own apartment, but they are worried about consistency of care for Phil, especially in terms of medical follow up. Phil has plans to go to college, but wants to try living on his own for a bit after graduation from high school, before he applies to college. Phil’s family wants to renovate their home to allow Phil private space and access. They want him to be able to handle his own health, medical, and safety needs. Phil will likely live in this adapted home when he goes to college. Phil currently has support through Developmental Disabilities Services Division (DDSD) for in-home support and job coaching.

### **Postsecondary Goals**

**Education/Training:** *“With help from his DDSD habilitation training specialist and his family, Phil will learn how to utilize community supports so that he is able to interview, hire, and fire his own personal assistant as well as access community services when necessary.”* Phil will become involved with the Partners and Policy classes run through the Oklahoma Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities in order to develop stronger self-advocacy skills. His HTS will provide support during these classes.

**Employment:** *“Phil eventually wants to be a writer, and plans to do this free-lance from his home.”*

**Independent Living:** *“Phil will live independently in his own apartment, direct his own supports, schedule medical appointments, acquire various types of insurance, and access services in his community, such as local food delivery.”*

### ***Clarification***

In Scenario 3, Phil may also identify supports that he needs so that he can properly identify the type of individual who will be able to best assist him with his endeavors. Phil can work on developing a list of roles of his support staff as well as interview questions to utilize when hiring that individual.

### **Additional Information**

There are a number of resources available to IEP teams and adults with disabilities to assist in planning for the future. A few are listed below.

- <[www.join.ok.gov](http://www.join.ok.gov)>
- <[www.disabilityisnatural.com](http://www.disabilityisnatural.com)>
- Department of Rehabilitation Services
- Developmental Disabilities Services Division
- 2-1-1 (Telephone number that is local in every Oklahoma community)
- Partners in Policy, Oklahoma Planning Council for Developmental Disabilities.

For more information about secondary transition planning, please contact Ms. Kim Nickerson, Associate State Director, by telephone at (405) 521-4876, or by e-mail at <[Kim\\_Nickerson@sde.state.ok.us](mailto:Kim_Nickerson@sde.state.ok.us)>. Information about secondary transition is also available on our Web site at <[www.sde.state.ok.us](http://www.sde.state.ok.us)> on the Special Education Services link.

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cc: IDEA Part B Advisory Panel  
Teacher Preparation Programs  
Oklahoma Transition Council  
Regional Accreditation Officers  
Middle School, Junior High School, and High School Counselors