

TIG TIMES

Transition Improvement Grant

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Increasing Post School Outcomes in Wisconsin

A message from Pam Jensen, TIG Project Coordinator

While I know it is the end of the year, and some of you are “tapped out” and ready for summer vacation, I encourage you to read the June TIG Times. The Transition Improvement Grant aligns with agenda 2017’s “Every child a graduate, college and career ready,” specific to students with disabilities. In 2015, TIG began working with school districts through coaching and technical assistance measures as part of a broader statewide effort to improve Wisconsin post-school outcome results. Highlights from the districts that participated are featured in this Enews along with other great information. Continue to read as you learn about the activities and highlights of a few of the districts that participated in this important transition work. If you and your district are interested in receiving transitional coaching and technical assistance in the 2016-2017 school year, please contact Pam Jensen at pamj@witig.org or your regional TIG Coordinator.

School District of Beloit

Contributed by: Brian Kenney, TIG Southern Regional Coordinator

During the 2014-2015 school year, the Beloit School District agreed to partner with the Transition Improvement Grant to improve post school outcomes for students with more significant disabilities. The Community-Based Integrated Employment project began by creating a team of educators, parent representatives, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, Rock County Health and Human Services, and numerous other transition partners and agencies. The focus of the group was identified by completing the Transition Improvement Plan and prioritizing the activities that were selected. The team is finalizing year 2 activities and has made great gains in the area of transition for all students with disabilities. Below is a bulleted list of some of the accomplishments that Beloit is very proud of related to this work. It is exciting to see the progress this team has made and to have a plan to keep this work and the progress of Beloit students moving forward.

- Community Conversation in both 2015 and again in 2016
- Business tours to 3 local businesses within Beloit – 2016
- Increased referrals to DVR and increased total number of IPE’s and placements in general
- Increased student employment opportunities in



- the community
- Provided opportunities for College tours
- Outlined a plan for Transition Assessment across grades 6-12
- Two Parent Transition Nights for students and parents in grades 8-12
- Increased information sharing about the ADRC and adult agencies
- Increased attendance at TIG related events by both Beloit staff and agencies as part of the team
- Selected as a PROJECT Search site for the spring of 2016 and will be preparing for this project with additional school districts and Rock County transition stakeholders.

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A group photo of various businesses, agencies from Rock County and several students and staff from the Beloit School District





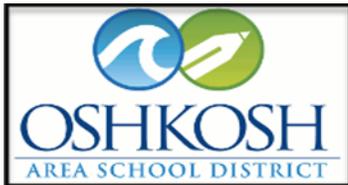
School District of New Berlin

Contributed by: Jen Bourget, TIG Urban Transition Coordinator

During the 2014-2015 school year, the New Berlin School District agreed to partner with the Transition Improvement Grant to improve post school outcomes for students with more significant disabilities. The Community-Based Integrated Employment project began by creating a team of educators, parent representatives, DVR, Waukesha County Health and Human Services, and Goodwill. The focus of the team was identified by completing the Transition Improvement Plan and prioritizing the activities that were selected. The team is wrapping up year 2 of this work and has made great gains in the area of

transition for all students with disabilities. Below is a bulleted list of some of the accomplishments of doing this work. It is exciting to see the progress this team has made and to have a plan to keep this work and the progress of New Berlin students moving forward.

- Community Conversation about Community Employment for SwD - May 2015
- Job Readiness Bootcamp – June 2015
- Revamped Co-Taught Employability Course – Summer 2015
- Increased student employment opportunities in the community
- Provided opportunities for College and Business Tours
- Outlined a plan for Transition Assessment across grades 6-12
- Parent Transition Night for students and parents in grades 4-8 – March 2016
- Increased referrals to DVR for students with more significant needs
- Increased information sharing about the ADRC and adult agencies
- Presentation to District Leadership Team to connect Academic and Career Plans to transition work
- Mock Interviews at both high schools – May 2016



Oshkosh Area School District

Contributed by: LaNae Jabas, TIG Central Regional Coordinator

In December 2014, a dedicated group of transition stakeholders, within the Oshkosh Area School District (OASD) and surrounding area, committed to a project offered by the Transition Improvement Grant (TIG) and Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI); to improve post school employment outcomes for student with disabilities. The team's goal of transitioning more youth with disabilities to competitive, integrated employment, served as the catalyst that created momentum for supporting positive systems change. Here are some of the amazing career/employment opportunities and outcomes generated for students throughout the 2015 / 2016 school year.

- Committed to having a full-time Transition Coordinator position
- Project Grill, an integrated co-curricular manufacturing program offered in part-

nership with the OASD - Technical Education program, Oshkosh Cooperation and Johnsonville Brat Company.

- Increased communication and collaboration with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), Aging & Disability Resource Center (ADRC), Institutes of Higher Education (IHE) and other local outside agencies.
- Increased parent engagement through partnering with local CCoT's to host events such as IEP/PTP Trainings, Transition Fairs, and Meet & Greets.
- Hosted Community Conversations which resulted in an increase of integrated employment opportunities for OASD students.
- OASD Partnered with Mercy Medical Center and Goodwill to develop a New Project SEARCH site set to launch in the fall of 2016-2017 at Mercy Medical Center.
- Conduct in-house Indicator #14 Post School Outcomes Survey
- Dual Credit and Youth Options opportunities offered in conjunction with Fox Valley Technical College
- Youth Transition Conference: 450 students attended the student lead conference.



Community Conversation



Project SEARCH—Assessment Day



Youth Transition Conference

Eau Claire Area School District

Contributed by: Brenda Swoboda, TIG Southern Regional Coordinator

LIFE
WITHOUT LIMITS
18-21 Year Old Program



EAU CLAIRE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

The Eau Claire Area School District (ECASD) embarked on a project in December 2014 to increase employment outcomes for youth with disabilities in partnership with the Transition Improvement Grant (TIG) and the Department of Public Instruction (DPI). A

committed group of school and local agency members came together to start a discussion on how to best increase employment outcomes for all youth with disabilities. The time to plan and put collective ideas together put into motion some great new programs for the Eau Claire Area School District! Check out their progress below:

- Starting with the 2016-17 school year, the ECASD begins a full community integrated 18-21 year old program called **Life Without Limits**. Students will all work with the same Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) counselor and the program will utilize one job development vendor for work based learning and experiences (unless families have previously

chosen a vendor during the application process).

- **Project SEARCH - Mayo Clinic Health System** will begin implementation the fall of the 2016-17 school year. This is a 9 month total immersion into a large business which provides training and education leading to integrated and competitive employment. Project SEARCH is based on a collaboration that includes Mayo Clinic Health System, ECASD, DVR, Career Development Center (CDC), ContinuUs, IRIS and a Family Liaison. It's been a busy year of planning, marketing the program, and building relationships to make sure all parties, most importantly the youth, begin a successful path to employment. 11 interns from the ECASD and surrounding school districts have been selected, including several 21+ young adults.
- Life Without Limits and Project SEARCH – Mayo Clinic Health System participants will be provided the opportunity for transportation training (using public transportation, accessing transportation through various agencies) the summer of 2016.
- The ECASD, DVR, Workforce Resources, CDC and local agencies are at the

table talking about creating programming to increase employment outcomes and sharing valuable resources. This includes developing a research-informed and practitioner-approved mentorship program for younger high school students who experience emotional/behavioral barriers.

- A Community Conversation was held with more than 70 community members to start the conversation on how to move community-based integrated employment forward for ALL students.
- The school is connecting with more employers in the area to learn about what they do and how students might be an employment fit by participating in business tours.
- There has been increased student engagement with local agencies.
- A resource directory was created to share with families to connect them to the appropriate adult agencies in the Eau Claire area.
- Students are having more discussions about an independent life and taking more ownership in transition planning.
- ECASD increased their response rate on the Post School Outcomes (PSO) survey by becoming trained to complete the student interviews through the district.

Sheboygan Area School District

Contributed by: Jenney Jacobs, TIG Post School Outcomes Outreach Coordinator



SHEBOYGAN
AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Sheboygan Area School District joined the Community Based Integrated Employ-

ment project at the beginning of the 2015-2016 school year. A school team of special education staff from across the district completed a Transition Improvement Plan (TIP) in early November with the goals established in the TIP guiding many transition activities throughout the school year. The TIP helped increase transition awareness with district administrators and gave the special education staff areas of focus.

Lots of time and effort went into hosting a Community Conversation in Sheboygan focusing on increasing employment opportunities for youth. Many agencies were represented at this event but the number of employers who attended were low. A former Sheboygan H.S. graduate who worked at the business at which the event was held presented to the group along with the business owner on the positive outcomes from this employment experience.

A major success that followed from the Community Conversation was the ability for a select group from the CBIE team to meet with the head of the Chamber of Commerce in Sheboygan County and explain how the district is seeking to partner with businesses to increase job shadow activities, job tours, trial work experiences, and paid employment job sites for students entering competitive employment. The Chamber head scheduled the Sheboygan Transition Team to present to the full

chamber in early fall of 2016.

Sheboygan School District is fortunate to have a transition coordinator at each of the two high schools and offers the SAIL program which is an apartment based 18-21 transition program for students in the district. A strong relationship with DVR exists and currently DVR meets one day a week at one of the high schools and one day per month at the other based on the student needs of the building. The district also offers a transitions class which is a one to two year work experience program which teaches students employability skills in a variety of in-house and community settings. Students learn how to complete job applications, practice interviewing skills, learn how to navigate the city using the public bus system, and learn how to access appropriate adult agencies for their transition into adult life. The staff report that they are pleased that they were able to participate in this project and the work that they completed as part of the CBIE stipend solidified the importance of individualized transition planning for all students with disabilities.



Community Conversation

Lancaster Community Schools, Potosi School District, and Cassville School District

Contributed by: Brian Kenney, TIG Southern Regional Coordinator



During the 2015-2016 school year, the Cassville, Lancaster & Potosi School Districts agreed to partner with the Transition Improvement Grant to improve post school outcomes for students with more significant disabilities. This is our first opportunity as a grant project to work with multiple school districts on this type of project. The focus of the team was identified by completing the Transition Improvement Plan and prioritizing the activities that were selected by each school district. The team is wrapping up their first year of this work and has made great gains in the area of transition for all students with disabilities. Below is a bulleted list of some of the accomplishments of completing this work. It is exciting to see the progress this team has made as well as progress each school has made and to have a plan to keep this work and the progress of all three school districts and their students moving forward.

- Community Conversation about Community Employment resulting in 2 student jobs (Held in Lancaster) –April 2016
- Staff from all 3 school districts attended

- Self Advocacy training held at CESA 3
- Increased student employment opportunities in the community
- Participation in County Community on Transition (CCoT) meetings has increased for all 3 districts
- Outlined plan for Transition Assessment across grades 6-12
- Parent Transition Night held at Southwest Technical College for students and parents in grades 8-12 – April 2016
- Increased referrals to DVR for students with more significant needs from all 3 school districts
- Increased information sharing about the ADRC and adult agencies



Hayward Community School District

Contributed by: Kathy Tuttle, TIG Northern Regional Coordinator



Last year, the Hayward Community Based Integrated Employment (CBIE) team was created through a stipend opportunity offered by the Transition Improvement Grant. This inter-agency team included the Hayward Special Education Director and teachers, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors from the WI Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Lac Courte Oreilles Vocational Rehabilitation, Ventures Unlimited Inc.; Job Developer, Sawyer County Long Term Support and Community Care of Central Wisconsin. Together they have been working on the goal to increase community based integrated employment for students with significant disabilities in the Hayward School District. It has been a journey of learning, creating and connecting.

The Journey:

- Attended Professional Development that gave the team working knowledge for increasing integrated employment in Hayward
- Monthly meetings with 70% of the core team attending
- Community Conversation in May 2015
- Summer Hours in 2015 to plan for the upcoming school year
- Parent Meeting with local

HIRE LIKE A CANE

Namekagon Transit

- Student training on local Namekagon busses
- Business Tours in Fall of 2015, Winter of 2016 and Spring 2016
- On Site mentoring from Let's Get to Work Grant staff
- Visit to Let's Get to Work School-- Rhinelander
- Parent Night---March 2016
- Creation of individual options for 18-21 students through the IEP process

Reflection on this Journey:

- Stronger team work between school and county services, measured from previous years
- Increased knowledge on what services are available
- Increased comfort level and communication between team members
- Positive thinking relating to placing students into community employment
- Increased parent knowledge on how students will be assisted between school and county services
- Increase on completed DVR applications and IPEs—all targeted students have applied to DVR—4 have or are developing IPEs
- Connections to new businesses through business tours—resulting in increased student awareness and pending work sites

- Parent Night with the result of 2 new DVR applications completed that evening
- Shift in planning for 18-21 year old students from all day at school to braided services
- Monitoring of pre-employment skills from middle school to high school, that was shared with DVR during IEP meetings
- Student headed to first paid work experience by next fall
- Student attending high school next year enrolled in PROMISE
- Sawyer County CCoT has a facilitator set for next year

The Journey Forward:

- Reenergizing of Sawyer CCoT next year
- Another Parent Meeting with Students presenting
- Structuring staffing to support community based work experiences
- Targeted students to be on paid sites before leaving HS
- Younger students having increased work experiences
- Continue braided services
- Continue DVR and LCO VR coming into the HS on a regular basis



Business tour to
Main Street Gourmet Popcorn

Tour of Hayward Library



Tour of local Humane Society

It Takes A Village

Contributed by: LaNae Jabas, TIG Central Regional Coordinator

In September 2013, a team of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction discretionary grant staff met to analysis data regarding reading proficiency for students with disabilities within the CESA 5 region. The discretionary grant team includes; Mary O'Brien (RSN), Cathy Daentl (ECST), Claire Fedderly (CS), LaNae Jabas (TIG), Hector Portillo (WSPEI), Robyn Morris (WSPEI), and Martha DeYoung (YiPPE/PiP). This group teamed up to create community wide literacy event which was held at Rusch Elementary school. Districts were given an opportunity to receive additional support over a course of three years. Two local schools who committed to this work were Rusch Elementary and Wayne E. Bartels Middle School.

Many exciting literacy based opportunities have occurred since the fall of 2013, one being an event that was recently held on May 17, 2016, called Read to Succeed. Knowing that Reading truly does drive achievement, the team took on Dr. Steven Layne's philosophy that, "Kids will read and become engaged in literacy when people who matter share books with them". Evidenced-based research also stresses the importance of community involvement in developing literate youth as it impacts the community on social and economic levels. Based on this research, the team created the following goals:

- Provide a family friendly event that links community members to organizations and businesses in the Portage area, particularly the families with children/youth who are living in poverty and families who have children/youth with disabilities
- Demonstrate the importance of language and literacy skill development to the community's youth, families, and general public by involving area business leaders and community members (It takes a village.....)
- Demonstrate to families/adults how important literacy development is to their child's lifelong wellbeing by having professionals in various jobs articulate how they use reading in their daily work
- Serve as a resource fair for participants so that the overall health and wellbeing of the Portage community members is strengthened

Our team brought together various community business members to read books focusing on their specific career area. This resulted in an increased career awareness and how literacy impacts employment to over 80 youth (pre-K through High School). The event was a success as the goals we set were achieved and varies community members connected with youth at all age levels.

THANK YOU!

The Transition Improvement Grant has had the opportunity to reach thousands of educators, agency professionals, families and youth around the state of Wisconsin. It's been an amazing year to be a part of so many incredible professional development opportunities, Wisconsin Initiatives, student conferences, family transition nights, communities through CCoT's as well as building partnerships and transition resources to improve student outcomes. It validates our continued increase in results through the post school outcomes survey which shows Wisconsin is improving in all areas of transition including employment, post-secondary education and independent living. We thank each and every one of you for providing us this opportunity!

It is the mission of the Transition Improvement Grant to provide professional development to educators, youth, families and transition partners to ensure every child graduates, college and career ready. We will carry on this mission in the 2016-2017 school year. Our hope is to continue to encourage and inspire all of you and the work you have achieved in transition to improve post school outcomes for students with disabilities.

Thank you for being a part of the Transition Improvement Grant. More great things are ahead in the coming years!

Enjoy your summer and all it has to offer.

Visit our website at:
www.WiTIG.org

For information, e-mail info@witig.org or
call (262) 473-1446

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[34 CFR Sec. 75.620]