

GV TRANSITIONS

Future Mapping: Strategies For Success In The Great Valley School District and Beyond

Volume II, Issue 1

Fall 2002

GV Transitions A Newsletter For Parents of Secondary Students With Disabilities In Grades Six Through Twelve

We are pleased to present you with the second issue of *GV Transitions*. Our publication is designed to serve parents, students, and teachers. Our goal is to provide information and resources in support of students as they progress from middle school to high school and on to the post-secondary environment of their choice.

In review, transition is a *process* -- a partnership involving parents, school, and community working together in support of the career and educational development, and / or community life planning for students with disabilities. Transition strategies will differ from student to student based upon individual needs and preferences. The transition process begins at age 14 and continues through graduation from high school. Specifically, transition is: "A coordinated set of activities for a student that:

- *Is designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post-school activities. Post-school activities may include post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment, continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, and community participation.*
- *Is based on the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests.*
- *May include instruction, related services, community experience, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and when appropriate, the acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation."*

Transition and IDEA Legislation ... It's The Law!

The Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) drives transition planning. The legislation provides students with opportunities to look to the future -- to be involved in planning their own education, to be heard, to voice their interests, preferences, and concerns, and to share in making decisions that directly affect them. At age 14, the IEP contains a "statement of transition service needs." This statement focuses on the students' program of study to determine if courses are in line with post-secondary goals. At age 16, the IEP includes a "statement of transition service." The IEP team looks at services and strategies delivered in a wide range of areas, which may include: academic instruction and support, career awareness, and awareness of post-secondary training opportunities.

Transition in the school is student focused. This means that "active and engaged" student participation in the transition processes beginning in the middle school is essential. Students should be active participants in the IEP process and are strongly encouraged to attend their IEP meetings. Each student's IEP should be driven by the identification of *valued* and *attainable* post-secondary goals."

"... For better or worse, our future will be determined in large part by our dreams and by the struggle to make them real."

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

Students: Participating In The Development Of Your IEP ... Why It Is So Important

“When you begin to plan for what you want to do when you graduate from high school, it is very important for you to participate in our Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) meeting.” (In the GVSD we hope that students will begin to be a part of the process at age 14 or sooner if the IEP team feels it is appropriate.)

“No matter when you, your parents, and team feel it is appropriate for you to identify your transition needs, like choosing a course of study, you have a lot to offer in the planning process. Listed below are just a few reasons why it is important for you to attend your IEP meetings and to actively participate.”

- ❑ “You can learn more about your abilities and tell the others at the meeting about the skills you feel you have.
- ❑ You can learn how to talk about and explain the nature of your disability.
- ❑ You can learn about accommodations that will help you to be successful in your classroom work and when you are taking tests.
- ❑ You can have the opportunity to tell the IEP team about your interests and what you want to do when you graduate.
- ❑ Participating in this meeting will help you learn how to speak for yourself and it will help you to think and make decisions about what you want to do after school.
- ❑ You will have the opportunity to see why it is important to select certain courses and how those courses will offer you the information and skills that you will need to be a success in your desired post school activities.”

Source: “Helping Students Develop Their IEP’s” published by the National Information Center For Children and Youth With Disabilities. 4/19/02

www.nichey.org/pubs/stuguide/ta2book.html

**“Nothing About Me ...
Without Me!”**

Websites Of Interest ...

- ❑ **Coordinated Campaign For Learning Disabilities**: An organization supported by the Emily Hall Tremaine Foundation which funds innovative projects that foster the success of individuals with learning disabilities. The foundation works to increase public awareness of learning disabilities and provides practical information and resources. Download a copy of “*Taking The First Step: A Guide For Parents Of Children With Learning Disabilities*”

www.aboutld.org

- ❑ **The International Dyslexia Association (IDA)**: An international organization offering information, referral, and other services for people with dyslexia and related difficulties in learning to read and write.

**www.interdys.org
(800) ABCD123**

- ❑ **Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA)**: A parent-driven national organization offering support groups and information to help families dealing with learning disabilities.

**www.LDAAmerica.org
(888) 300-6710**

- ❑ **National Center For Learning Disabilities (NCLD)**: A national organization that develops and delivers research-based programs for teachers and parents, shapes public policy, and maintains an online database of learning disabilities resources.

www.LD.org

- ❑ **Schwab Learning**: An online guide to the landscape of learning disabilities developed by the Charles and Helen Schwab Foundation especially for parents of children who are newly identified with a learning disability.

www.schwablearning.org

- ❑ **National Attention Deficit Disorder Association**: National organization supporting families and offering resources and other service for students and families dealing with Attention Deficit Disorder.

www.add.org

- **Kids Camps. Com:** “The Internet’s most comprehensive directory of camps and summer experiences.” Includes special needs camps in Canada and the U.S.A.

www.kidscamps.com

- **LD OnLine:** An online resource offering news about learning disabilities.

www.ldonline.org

- **PHEAA Mentor:** A website helping students plan for higher education. The site provides information to help students meet their academic, career planning, and financial aid needs.

www.pheaammentor.org
www.aesmentor.org

Additional Educational Websites

www.pheaa.org
www.nacac.com
www.papsa.org
www.fastweb.com
www.petersons.com
www.collegeboard.org
www.campuschamps.com
www.onlinecollegefair.com
www.youcandealwithit.com
www.collegeswantyou.com

Relevant Resources ... Fast Facts!

There are many resources available to parents and students with disabilities as they make the transition from the GVSD to a variety of post-secondary environments. Through *GV Transitions*, we will report on a variety of opportunities for your consideration. The resources are presented with the knowledge that the GVSD serves families whose students possess widely differing challenges and abilities. At the same time, we do not wish to “limit” in any way the possibilities for future growth and success.

Office Of Vocational Rehabilitation: Employment Services For Persons With Disabilities

The Pennsylvania Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) serves “persons with impairments that present a substantial impediment to employment. Services are provided to individuals who can benefit from and who need services to prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain

employment.” OVR services address individuals challenged by a number physical or mental impairments including but not limited to: learning disabilities, muscular disease, speech impairment, skeletal and joint disease, and developmental disabilities. In general, OVR services are accessed upon graduation from high school, but contacts with OVR may begin as early as a student’s sophomore or junior year in high school.

The office serving GVSD is located at 1062 East Lancaster Avenue, Rosemont, PA 19010. The Great Valley School District contact is Ms. Gail Warner-Lidondici (610) 430-4365 or 1-866-288-4586 (gwarnerlid@state.pa.us)

The Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services

The Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services (BBVS) offers specialized services and rehabilitative programs to help blind or visually impaired persons work and maintain independent lives. For more information contact the Philadelphia District Office, Room 206, State Office Building, 1400 Spring Garden Street, Philadelphia, PA 19310-4064 or Toll Free 1-866-631-3892.

Going Places

Going Places is a nationally recognized early awareness program for middle school students sponsored by the Pennsylvania Higher Education Assistance Agency and used to promote the importance of post-secondary education. The initiative provides free resources for schools, parents, and students including the opportunity to receive ongoing information about college and career planning, and financial aid. For a copy of the Going Places newsletter for parents and student activity book email: goingplaces@pheaa.org

Cecil E. Tate Scholarship

Sponsored by the Chester County Intermediate Unit in memory of Cecil E. Tate, the scholarship is awarded to “deserving special education seniors enrolled in either IU or district-run classes, regardless of exceptionality.” The scholarship deadline is April 2003. Contact the GVHS Counseling Department for an application. Note: References and a transcript are required – see your high school counselor!

“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.”

Eleanor Roosevelt

Right To Education Task Force

The Right To Education Taskforce meets monthly at the Chester County Intermediate Unit. The task force was set up to “assist in improving education for all school-age persons with varying exceptionalities” including: learning disabilities, physical handicaps, mental retardation, emotional difficulties, and hearing, visual, speech, and language impairment. For information call: (610) 524-5048.

Free And Low Cost Opportunities For Physical Activity In Chester County

The Chester County Health Department has published a brochure titled *Choose A Heart-Healthy P.A.L. Physically Active Lifestyle – A User’s Guide to Free and Low-Cost Physical Activity Opportunities In Chester County*. The publication is a resource, which may be utilized during the transition IEP process when considering community / recreation / and leisure strategies. For a copy please contact the CC Health Department or email amorris@gvgsd.org

Transition: The Bridge To Adult Life – A Guide For Parents

Published by the Parent Education Network, *Transition: The Bridge To Adult Living – A Guide For Parents* is an excellent resource developed as a reference and workbook to alert parents to the need for early planning in preparing for the role that education and other systems play in transitioning students from school to post-secondary environments. The resource may be obtained by contacting PEN 1-800-522-5827 or 2107 Industrial Highway, York, Pennsylvania 17402 or by emailing: pen@parentdnet.org

ALERT...

Website Created To Gather Comments From Teachers, Parents, and Others Regarding The Reauthorization of I.D.E.A.

The reauthorization of I.D.E.A. (Individuals With Disabilities Education Act) is scheduled for this year, but in fact, may not be realized until next year. Individuals who would like to provide feedback and / or opinions on reforms needed to improve I.D.E.A. legislation may submit testimony through the following website:

<http://edworkforce.house.gov/issues/107th/education/idea/ideacomments/index.htm>

GVSD Transition Initiatives Developed For Students, Parents, and Staff

During the 2001 – 2002 school year a number of new initiatives were developed to support students in the transition process. Among the new initiatives were:

- ❑ **Graduate Follow-up Survey**: A one, three, and five year Transition Follow-up Survey was designed. The results of these annual surveys will assist the GVSD in developing and enhancing programs to address the transition needs of students.
- ❑ **Transition Matrix**: A comprehensive document was developed for teachers, parents, and students to assess future planning strategies available in the GVSD and the community. The matrix will support the development of transition goals for students in grades 6 – 12. It may also serve as the basis of an educational portfolio for all students. Please contact Mrs. Anne Morris, Transition Coordinator (amorris@gvgsd.org) for a copy of the matrix.
- ❑ **Future Planning Inventory**: Students in grades 10 and 11 completed a Future Planning Inventory. The inventory was helpful in developing the IEP transition goals for each student. This year students in the entire 10th grade will be taking the SDS (Self Directed Search) through the GVHS Counseling Department. Juniors will complete a Future Planning Inventory in small group post-secondary planning workshops conducted by Mrs. Morris.
- ❑ **Career and Educational Data Collection Tool**: This resource was developed for use during interviews with students scheduled for initial evaluations. The instrument serves to assess career and educational interests and preferences and serves as a basis for the development of Transition IEP goals.
- ❑ **PA Career Link Partnership / Workshop**: A partnership was formed with the Chester County Career Link office. Through the partnership, a special workshop “*Pennsylvania Career Link: Preparing For The Future*” was offered to students in 7th Grade and to students in grades 9-12. This year the workshop will be presented to students in grades 7, 9, and 11. www.pacareerlink.state.pa.us
- ❑ **Annual Career Assessments**: Students in grades 6 through 9 participated in career assessments designed to assist in the career decision-making process. Students in grade 9 were offered the COPS (Career Occupational Preference System) while sixth graders took the COPS II. Eighth graders had the opportunity to take the SOAR Assessment and seventh graders the computer-aided Career-Scope System. The SOAR and Career Scope were generously donated through the Assessment Centers of the Centers For Arts and Technology.

Building Your Child's Future Together

When planning a career with your child, consider the following:

- Work situations and skills needed for employment are constantly changing.
- Almost half of the working population expects to change jobs in the next three years.
- Retraining and upgrading skills will be a requirement for maintaining employment.
- Two-thirds of the jobs created today will require education beyond high school.

The worker of tomorrow must be able to work as a team member, communicate, solve problems, use technologies, adapt to change, and be drug-free. Career development is a lifelong process.

THE MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT

Development Traits:

- ✓ Is undergoing dramatic physical changes.
- ✓ Is sensitive and has need for approval.
- ✓ Tries to build a unique identity apart from parents' influence.
- ✓ Wants more independence.
- ✓ Is curious but not ready for planning.
- ✓ Expresses feelings more openly.

Career Needs

- ✓ Demonstrate effective skills in working with others.
- ✓ Show an appreciation for the similarities and differences among people.
- ✓ Describe individual skills and aptitudes required to fulfill roles.
- ✓ Identify strategies for managing personal finances.
- ✓ Describe skills needed in a variety of occupations.
- ✓ Demonstrate skills needed to obtain and keep a job.

Parent Involvement

- ✓ Discuss your child's skills, interests, abilities and goals to help plan for the future.
- ✓ Encourage participation in service-oriented activities in the community.
- ✓ Help children meet a variety of workers by arranging job observations, field trips, or personal interviews.
- ✓ Use guided money management and allow your child to make economic choices.
- ✓ Allow children to work part-time outside the home.

THE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

Development Traits

- ✓ Develops a sense of self-identity.
- ✓ Begins a more prominent and realistic work/career search.
- ✓ Develops a concern with social issues.

- ✓ Matures sexually with physical and emotional changes.
- ✓ Increases independence.

Career Needs

- ✓ Understand how individual personality, abilities, and interests relate to career goals.
- ✓ Understand how education relates to college majors, further training, and/or entry into the job market.
- ✓ Demonstrate transferable skills that can apply to a variety of occupations and changing work requirements.
- ✓ Be able to use a wide variety of career information resources.
- ✓ Show responsible decision-making.

Parent Involvement

- ✓ Help your child make independent decisions.
- ✓ Encourage exploration of all kinds of post-secondary education opportunities.
- ✓ Involve yourself in your child's future planning.
- ✓ Give certain economic responsibilities.
- ✓ Encourage job awareness.
- ✓ Be flexible as the decision-making process evolves.
- ✓ It takes patience and numerous modifications.

Source: The American School Counselor Association
www.schoolcounselor.org

Additional Articles of Interest On The ASCA Website:
Preparing For Middle School
Getting Ready For High School
Teens and Work

Students Transitioning To College

Among the GVSD transition projects initiated last year was an opportunity for parents and students to attend a seminar featuring representatives from the post-secondary community. Included in the discussion were individuals from the offices of services for students with disabilities from West Chester and Widener Universities. The following helpful suggestions for post-secondary bound students with learning disabilities were offered:

- Understand your learning disability and how you learn best before going to college / trade-technical school, etc.
- Develop strong study habits, especially time management skills.
- Have well developed basic skills in grammar and math.
- Build self-confidence by taking on more difficult tasks.
- Try to develop writing skills for taking essay tests.
- Develop self-advocacy skills in order to ask your professors for necessary accommodations.
- Seek help as soon as you are admitted to college.
- Be prepared to study hard and set realistic goals.

(Source: McGuire, 1987)

Eleven Tips to Help Your Child Prepare for Tests

Long Term Strategy

To help children prepare adequately for tests (whether teacher-made or standardized), you can do several things to provide support and create a positive test-taking experience.

1. The best way to prepare for tests is to study, know the work, and take the right courses.
2. If your child is nervous at test time, ask her teacher / counselor for tips on helping her relax.
3. Make sure that your child is in school during the testing sessions. Do not plan any doctor or dental appointments on test dates.
4. Make sure that you are aware of your child's performance and that you can help interpret the results when they become available.
5. Remember to keep well informed about your child's tests. Know how test results are used, and how they will affect your child's placement in school.

6. If there are major differences between standardized test scores and school grades, find out why.

7. Encourage your child to study over a period of time rather than "cram" the night before.

The Day of the Test

8. Encourage your child to listen carefully to all test-taking directions given by the teacher and to ask questions about any directions that are unclear.

9. See that your child gets his/her regular amount of sleep before the tests and is well rested.

10. Make sure that your child eats his/her usual breakfast on the day of the test. Hunger can detract from a good test performance.

11. Encourage your child to do his/her best.

Source: American School Counselor Association: www.schoolcounselor.org
www.myschoolonline.com

“Goals give you more than a reason to get up in the morning; they are an incentive to keep you going all day. Goals tend to tap the deeper resources and draw the best out of life.”

Fastest Growing Occupations ... 2000 – 2010

Have you ever wondered what the “hot” careers of this decade are? Here is a listing of the Fastest Growing Occupations according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (<http://www.bls.gov/emp>). Minimum degree requirements are listed. Key: D (Doctorate 4 Years + Graduate School); M (Masters Degree 4 years + Graduate School); B (Bachelors Degree – 4 years); A (Associate Degree – 2 years); V (Post-Secondary Vocational Education); OJ (On the job training – high school background in related vocational field preferred).

- Computer Software Engineer (B)
- Computer Support Specialists (A)
- Network / Computer Systems Administrators (B)
- Systems/Data Communications Analysts (B)
- Desktop Publishers (V)
- Database Administrators (B)
- Personal And Home Care Aids (OJ)
- Computer Systems Analysts (B)
- Medical Assistants (OJ)
- Social And Human Service Assistants (OJ)
- Physicians Assistants (B)
- Medical Records/Health Info. Technicians (A)
- Computer/Information Systems Managers (B + Work Experience)
- Home Health Aids (OJ)
- Physical Therapist Aids (OJ)
- Occupational Therapist Aids (OJ)
- Physical Therapist Assistants (A)
- Audiologists (M)
- Fitness Trainers And Aerobics Instructors (V)
- Computer / Information Scientists - Research (D)
- Veterinary Assistants And Laboratory Animal Caretakers (OJ)
- Occupational Therapist Assistants (A)
- Veterinary Technologists And Technicians (A)
- Speech And Language Pathologists (M)
- Mental Health and Substance Abuse Social Workers (M)
- Dental Assistants (OJ)
- Dental Hygienists (A)
- Special Education Teachers, Preschool, Kindergarten And Elementary School (B)

Ten Ways To Help Your Child Get Organized

Source: The Family Education Network: www.fen.com

Adapted from "Tips for Developing Organizational Skills in Children" Coordinated Campaign For Learning Disabilities.

“Developing good organizational skills is a key ingredient for success in school and in life. Although some people by nature are more organized than others, anyone can put routines and systems in place to help a child *get it together*. Here's a list of strategies that you can use to help your child get -- and keep -- his life under control.

1. **Use checklists.** Help your child get into the habit of keeping a "to-do" list. Use checklists to post assignments, household chores, and reminders about what materials to bring to class. Your child should keep a small pad or notebook dedicated to listing homework assignments. Crossing completed items off the list will give him a sense of accomplishment.
2. **Organize homework assignments.** Before beginning a homework session, encourage your child to number assignments in the order in which they should be done. She should start with one that's not too long or difficult, but avoid saving the longest or hardest assignments for last.
3. **Designate a study space.** Your child should study in the same place every night. This doesn't have to be a bedroom, but it should be a quiet place with few distractions. All school supplies and materials should be nearby. If your young child wants to study with you nearby, too, you'll be better able to monitor his progress and encourage good study habits.
4. **Set a designated study time.** Your child should know that a certain time every day is reserved for studying and doing homework. The best time is usually not right after school -- most children benefit from time to unwind first. Include your child in making this decision. Even if she doesn't have homework, the reserved time should be used to review the day's lessons, read for pleasure, or work on an upcoming project.
5. **Keep organized notebooks.** Help your child keep track of papers by organizing them in a binder or notebook. This will help him review the material for each day's classes and to organize the material later to prepare for tests and quizzes. Use dividers to separate class notes, or color-code notebooks. Separate "to do" and "done" folders help organize worksheets, notices, and items to be signed by parents, as well as provide a central place to store completed assignments.
6. **Conduct a weekly clean up.** Encourage your child to sort through book bags and notebooks on a weekly basis. Old tests and papers should be organized and kept in a separate file at home.
7. **Create a household schedule.** Try to establish and stick to a regular dinnertime and a regular bedtime. This will help your child fall into a pattern at home. Children with a regular bedtime go to school well rested. Try to limit television-watching and computer play to specific periods of time during the day.
8. **Keep a master calendar.** Keep a large, wall-sized calendar for the household that lists the family's commitments, schedules for extracurricular activities, days off from school, and major events at home and at school. Note dates when your child has big exams or due dates for projects. This will help family members keep track of each other's activities and avoid scheduling conflicts.
9. **Prepare for the day ahead.** Before your child goes to bed, he should pack schoolwork and books in a book bag. The next day's clothes should be laid out with shoes, socks, and accessories. This will cut down on morning confusion and allow your child to prepare quickly for the day ahead.
10. **Provide needed support while your child is learning to become more organized.** Help your child develop organizational skills by photocopying checklists and schedules and taping them to the refrigerator. Gently remind her about filling in calendar dates and keeping papers and materials organized. Most important, set a good example.”

***Congratulations To Our
2002 GVSD Graduates!***

“Go Confidently In The Direction Of Your Dreams ...”

Great Valley School District
255 N. Phoenixville Pike
Malvern, PA 19355

**Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
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PAID
FRAZER, PA**

GV Transitions

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