

Transition Times

This issue

OUR
JOURNEY
OF
CONTINUOUS
IMPROVEMENT

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Model Transition Program of GST BOCES

Working with high school students with disabilities to improve vocational rehabilitation with a grant from the New York State Education Department in partnership with the University of Buffalo, Cornell University, and VESID (Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities).



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Winter Transition Conference 2008

Hildreth Rose, Transition Specialist

Three hundred and fifty people from all over New York State converged on the RIT Inn and Conference Center December 9-11, 2008 to attend the Winter Transition conference



Sponsored by Cornell University, University of Buffalo, Western and Midwest Regional Special Education Training Resource Center SETRC and the Midwest Transition Coordination Sites TCS. The audience was varied with representation of adult agencies, VESID, SEQA, school district personal, students and parents. Consultants from Illinois, Colorado and New York City came to present information and discuss one issue- Transitioning our Youth. The program opened Tuesday night with a delicious dinner and time to network with presenters and fellow colleagues. Wednesday morning, Doris Jamison, NYSED opened up the conference with, **Transition as Rocket Science**, as she provided the attendees with some thoughtful facts and many issues to consider as we all strive for improved results. The luncheon keynote, **School Reform Initiatives: A Catalyst for Partnerships -Ensuring Access and Opportunities for All students** was delivered by Jay T. Engelin, National Association of Secondary Principals.

He provided an informed and thoughtful look at school reform citing both shocking statistics as well as clearly defined steps to reform and the promotion of a culture of continuous improvement. The evening ended with an awards dinner, "Honoring our Parents". Lynn Russo, Transition Specialist of Eastern Suffolk BOCES, Jeanne Ricigliano, Parent Partner of Mid West TCS and Susan Barlow, Executive Director of Parent Network of Western NY were recognized for their dedication and commitment to serving our most valuable and vulnerable resource- our youth. Thursday served as the conclusion to this exciting event. We had over 30 concurrent sessions throughout the event with final keynote a panel discussion made up of TCS Director, Sue Locke Scott, Edward Placke, NYSED, VESID and two state MTP coordinators Sean O'Grady and Edward Hall. This esteemed panel was moderated by Therese Zona, Cornell University. The variety of presenters, the rich content of topics and the accommodations all combined to make this a very successful experience.



We have made conference materials available for you at www.modeltransitionprogram.com and we encourage you to plan on attending the Transition Conference 2009!

MTP-UB Offers First Teleconference Training

Diane Vigrass, University at Buffalo

The Model Transition Program-University at Buffalo has successfully delivered its first trainings via teleconference. *"Mentoring Youth in Transition"* was the topic presented by Diane Vigrass (Senior Trainer) with technical assistance from Shanny Lim (IT Specialist), both from the MTP-UB. Over 35 participants from other MTP projects across NYS "attended" the training in the comfort of their own classrooms or offices.

A teleconference is a telephone meeting with desk top sharing among two or more participants in various locations via the phone line and internet. The training is both auditory (using your telephone) as well as visual since the participants also see the facilitator's desktop computer. A teleconference usually one hour in length, is an ...continued

MTP-UB Offers First Teleconference Training, continued

overview of a full training and can be used in the following ways:

- By a program coordinator--to preview a training before scheduling a live training for an MTP audience
- By all--to begin an understanding of the highlights of a topic in preparation for more training or research

Although a live training is more personal and can offer discussion opportunities, the benefits of an MTP-UB teleconference can overshadow the disadvantages. For example, if a region is snowbound in the winter months, travel to training sites may be impractical. Some adult learners prefer the "no-frills, just the facts" kind of training. Finally, the condensed version of a training that a teleconference offers may be just enough for some participants to kick-start a new program or teaching strategy, whetting the appetite for a little more.

As always, MTP-UB is eager to meet your training needs. If you would like to participate in teleconference training, contact Diane Marshall (607-215-2385) to offer your topic suggestions.

Broad Horizon Work Study Program Expands

Tom Bevilacqua and Brook Heichel, GST BOCES

Students in the Broad Horizon Program are learning a lesson in entrepreneurship. With assistance from the MTP grant and in collaboration with the Broad Horizon Work Study Program, students will open up a Food Co-op.

In preparation for opening this business, students sent out a questionnaire to determine what types of food staff would be interested in purchasing. They then developed a list of desired products. A food distributor shared product availability and costs. Equipment including a small freezer, scales, bags and gloves were purchased for the business.

The business is now ready to start operations. The students created and distributed flyers advertising the food that will be offered for sale. Next they will collect the orders and calculate the prices for each customer. Students looked at pricing based on the wholesale prices and the percentage of profit needed to sustain their business.

The items are ordered and then received and inventoried to ensure accurate distribution. Foods will be sorted, bagged and delivered to customers. Students will also collect money at that time. Students will also assist in the bookkeeping process to keep track of profit and loss. They will also take part in an ongoing assessment of their work and the effectiveness of their business.

The opportunity to develop this student business makes school for our students more exciting, challenging, and creative. It gives them an opportunity to develop and hone many skills that will serve them now and as they move on to more opportunities in the world of work.

Alfred University Committed to Diversity and Inclusive Education

Ann Monroe-Baillargeon Ph.D.
Alfred University, Chair, Division of Education

It was an honor and a pleasure to be part of the Model Transition Program collaboration held at Alfred University on Tuesday December 2, 2008. I am a relatively new faculty member to Alfred University, joining the community just last year. Shortly after joining the faculty, and knowing my commitment to inclusive education, Glenn Niles, Director of Student Services at Arkport Central Schools introduced me to Bonnie Goodwin, the director of the campus...continued

Alfred University Committed to Diversity and Inclusive Education, *continued*

Discovering that AU collaborated with area schools in hosting the GST BOCES ACCESS program confirmed my belief that AU was an institution of higher education committed to diversity and inclusive education. In year one, I initiated assigning a graduate assistant to support students from the ACCESS program wishing peer companionship and university exploration. This was a highly successful program resulting in mutual benefit both to the AU graduate student as well as the AU-ACCESS student. In year two, in addition to assigning a graduate assistant to work with the ACCESS program I have also reminded Bonnie Goodwin that students have an opportunity to audit courses on campus and if AU-ACCESS students were interested in attending any courses I was teaching in order to more fully understand the college class experience they were always welcome. I was thrilled when one student joined our sophomore level course, EDUC 231 Social Foundations in Education. Furthering the conversation, it seemed time to bring together stakeholders across Alfred University and area educators, administrators and guidance counselors to discuss in greater detail, how we might streamline the transition process from High School to College for students with disabilities.

Our event on December 2 sought to achieve this goal.

In the welcoming remarks by Dean Mary McGee it was clearly stated that Alfred University's school of Liberal Arts and Sciences is committed to diversity and inclusion and looks forward to exploring ways in which we might increase student diversity and provide access to college education for those wishing to attend. During the table conversations following dinner, it was clear that individuals representing various High School and University offices learned from each other about what is working presently and what needs to be addressed as we move forth. My only regret was to see the evening come to an end. Those in attendance agreed that this was only the beginning of a very valuable conversation which needs to be sustained through similar events in the upcoming year. My thanks to the Model Transition Program for making the evening possible, it has been a pleasure to collaborate with them, and I look forward to sharing the summary of the evening's conversation and planning for the next steps.

Partnership with Elmira Downtown Development has Blossomed

Katrina Stanton, Capabilities, Inc.



In the spring of 2008 Elmira City School District MTP approached Capabilities, Inc. about developing a paid summer work experience for students. Capabilities staff reached out to Elmira Downtown Development to discuss the idea of contracting with the agency to provide staffing during the weekly Wisner Market. The weekly farmer's market brings more than 1000 people to the downtown park for the afternoon. EDD had a need to have someone available to assist

the 30+ vendors with set up and then to be constantly monitoring the trash cans so they can continually be emptied. Antonio Perry, MTP Facilitator and Shante Johnston Capabilities Employment Specialist worked to identify students who would be appropriate for this type of work. Shante interviewed the students and selected two who would each work a month at the market. The students who worked the market were able to manage the various weather conditions very well. The market operates rain or shine so the students needed to be able to work regardless of weather. The students were very excited to have the opportunity to work. The parent of one student was especially overjoyed by the experience her son received while working at the market. The project was so successful we will plan to provide this experience again in the summer of 2009.

Elmira Downtown Development contacted Capabilities in the early fall about another area in which they felt students could assist them. There are a number of flower planters throughout downtown that needed to be cleaned out in preparation for winter. They also had planted some young trees that needed to be watered on a weekly basis. These tasks needed to be completed before the end of November. EDD at this time did not have the financial resources to pay for this service and was looking for individuals who would want to do this on a volunteer basis. We contacted Diane Marshall at the GST BOCES MTP, who connected us with Janet Hayman at Edison High School BOCES who was looking for an unpaid work experience for her students. Three students accompanied Capabilities, Inc. Employment Specialist Jennifer Davis twice a week to the designated downtown Elmira area. The students collected trash, weeded sidewalks and planters, and raked leaves. Jennifer worked to make sure that the students remained focused on the tasks and did not become distracted by the busy environment.

We are looking forward to continuing the partnership with EDD in the spring and summer of 2009.

Preparing Students for Life

Brett Talbot

Arkport Central School, like most small schools, loves its traditions. Preparing students to face the world is the goal of all educators. At Arkport we have designed a course ...*continued*

Preparing Students for Life, *continued*

that attempts to break down the idea of transitioning from a public school environment to the many different post high school life paths. Preparation For Life is a half credit required senior course taught by Mr. William S. Locke, our school Superintendent and myself. It has been taught at Arkport for over 15 years, and has changed according to the needs of the students. The course meets every other day for the entire year. The course is broken down into seven main units: College, The Military, The World of Work, Banking and Money/Owning a Checking Account, Death and Dying, Taxes, and Marriage and Family/Relationships. Each unit varies in length depending on the interest or direction of the course discussion. For Example we start every school year with the College Unit. This takes about eight or nine weeks to cover all the different areas regarding the college process. We discuss how to look for a college, what questions to ask a college representative. What would your college schedule look like and how much time outside of class should you be putting into your schoolwork? Each student then creates his or her own weekly college schedule.

The Banking and Money/Owning a Checking Account unit cover the pitfalls of credit cards and tests the student's skills in balancing a checkbook. Our death and dying unit discusses the death industry and how many decisions need to be made following ones death. All of the students have the opportunity to tour the Dagon Funeral Home in Hornell and interact with a Funeral Director. All of the students receive their "final exam/project" assignment the first day of class.

They must find someone who is currently performing the job they hope to do in the future. They must interview this person with outlined questions I provide. The student must then schedule a time for this person to come into our class and talk about their career.

We have had brain surgeons, business people, educators, and tattoo artists just to name a few. Students have earned internships and made fantastic contacts from this project. It has also shown many students that the job they hope to have isn't exactly what the imagined.

Each year around the Holidays and again at the very end of the school year we organize a "Senior Feat". The idea is for the students to prepare a unique holiday dish to share in a family style setting with their peers. I usually cook a turkey and a ham, or we order Stems Chicken, and have a fun sit-down meal together as a class. We have been fortunate to do this for the past seven years.

The title of this course is very auspicious, but we hope to try and open students eyes to the many possibilities life can offer. We have had many past students come back and refer to a specific topic or a unit that helped them in their lives. They seem to appreciate the tradition that PFL stands for.

Students Develop Soft Skills

by Kori Colegrove

This fall, the students in the Everyday Living Life Skills class at Haverling High School, had three opportunities to enhance their job related social skills. Two service coordinators from Steuben Placement Services came in to teach the students three important lessons that dealt with the social aspect of gaining and maintaining employment.

The first session dealt with how important hygiene is in your everyday life. Each student received a kit that included shampoo, shaving cream, toothpaste, toothbrushes, deodorant, and much more. They were involved in activities where they learned how important hygiene is. These activities would help promote students in maintaining a healthy hygiene routine.

During the second session, the students discussed self-image and self-esteem. This program not only helped students understand why it is important to have a high self image, but more importantly, how to do things that make you feel good about yourself.

Accountability was the topic for the last session, as the students had to make choices, and accept the consequences that came with those choices. They obtained firsthand experience about what it was like to do something right or wrong, and to be held accountable.

Overall, the students learned a great deal of material and had fun doing it. A big thank you goes out to MTP for funding such a wonderful tool to use in the classroom and also to Steuben Placement Services for coming out and implementing the sessions.

VESID 101

Laurie Crooker, MTP Facilitator

On November 18, 2008, an informational evening session on MTP and VESID services took place in Bath. Diane Marshall, MTP Transition Coordinator and Kathy Clark, VESID Counselor presented to parents, students, educators, and administrators on services that students may be eligible for and benefit from in regard to obtaining employment or attending college. Parents were given packets of information and were also able to engage in discussion and have questions answered regarding the VESID process. Despite the winter weather, this event was well attended. I would like to thank everyone for working together and making this event a success.