

# Employing Youth with Disabilities:

Key Activities that Lead to Student  
Success

# Building Opportunities for Learning and Transition Success (BOLTS)

- BOLTS was the name given to the Oxford School District's Transition Program which focused on the employment of students with disabilities.
- Grant funding provided by the Mississippi Council of Developmental Disabilities (MSCDD) to focus on the area of employment
- During the grant period, October 1, 2012-September 30, 2015 Oxford transition program activities were developed and implemented to prepare youth for employment and life after high school.

# ”How to Manual” Develop and Implement Transition Program

The purpose of this project activity is to write and share how the Oxford School District’s BOLTS project created and offered a series of transition services and supports to better prepare and facilitate students’ successful transition from school to post-secondary activities (employment, community participation, adult living outcomes, and development of leisure activities).

# BOLTS "How to Manual"

This "**How to Manual**" describes each of the program components and activities in detail. Again, the purpose of this manual is to provide school systems and their personnel on how to set up, enhance, replicate, and maintain quality transition services for their students with developmental disabilities as they prepare to exit school and enter adult life. This manual will provide the information and planning tools to use in order to assess the needs of their students, the resources available in their local communities, ideas to navigate the challenges many school districts encounter as they take steps to prepare, locate jobs, and maintain competitive employment of their students.

# BOLTS “How to Manual”

It must be mentioned that the detailed description of the program components (academic studies, 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Advisement Process, school-based work training, social skills training, peer mentoring, school-based jobs, job development services, job/employment placement, on-the-job support, soft skill awareness and training, and many other components are available to all students with developmental disabilities on an individualized basis.

Student involvement in transition activities are determined upon individual student need. All students do not need all of the available services and activities that are available.

# Oxford Transition Program Components

Planning is the key to student success as each student moves through school.

Transition Services is a required area to address through the IEP beginning at age 14 years.

IEP teams need to consider the needs of the student when determining when to begin thinking about transition. The type and severity of the disability should be a consideration as to when to begin some transition-related skill development (i.e. social skills, self-awareness, strengths and challenges, interests ....)

# How to start?

- ❑ Know the needs of your students
- ❑ Know your community
- ❑ Know what you currently have available and are providing,
- ❑ What are we currently doing good?
- ❑ Identify ways to make services better and improved in regards to student outcomes
- ❑ Short term action
- ❑ Long term action



# Common barriers that exist which create underemployment.

- Lack of jobs available in the community
- Transportation
- Understanding in regards to SSI and Medicaid benefits
- Information about transition, transition services, post-school outcomes, and availability of resources.
  - School personnel
  - Parents
  - Community
  - Students



# Conduct an transition program assessment

- Identify and form a **School Transition Team** to include:
  - Special Education Administrator (District Level Personnel),
  - Special Education Teacher(s),
  - Student(s),
  - Parent(s),
  - Behavior Personnel (Behavior Specialist, Behavior Technician (if you have one employed),
  - Transition Specialist (if you have one employed)
  - MDRS Transition Specialist (Assigned to the school and employed by the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services)
  - Others (i.e. Career Technical Personnel)
  - Representative from middle or junior high school Special Education personnel

# Identify Transition Services and Supports

## Current Program Activities:

1. List
2. List
3. List
4. List
5. List
6. list

## Needed Program Activities (based on student needs)

1. List
2. List
3. List
4. List
5. List

# Form a Community Transition Team

- School Representation
- Local Government Representation
- Student(s)
- Parent(s)
- Local Business Representative(s)
- Transportation Providers (if any)
- Community Service Organizations
- Others ?????

# Purpose of a Community Transition Team

- Identify needs regarding employment,
- Identify areas/services currently available,
- Identify barriers,
- Develop an action plan to address identified barriers

# School Transition Team: Function

1. Identify team membership
2. State the purpose of the team
3. Meet regularly (1 x per month)
4. Select a team leader
5. Plan and have an agenda
6. Notekeeper
7. Assign tasks to be completed
8. Accountability



# Planning for High School

## Eighth Grade Advisement Session

- What is the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Advisement Session activity?
- Who participates in the advisement session?
- When does this session need to take place/occur?

# Oxford Transition Program Components

## Academic Components

- Reading/Language Arts
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies/Histories
- Health
- Fine Arts
- Physical Education
- Technology
- Electives per student choice

# Oxford Transition Program Components

## Employment Training Components

- Instruction on Work-related Skills (Smart Work Ethics)
- School-Based Work Training (SBWT)
- School-Based Job Shadowing/Sampling
- Community-Based Employment Training (CBET)
- Community-Based Job Shadowing/Sampling
- Competitive Employment Placement
- Supportive Employment Placement
- Customized Employment Placement (Job Carving)



# Employment Development and Competitive Employment

- BOLTS (Building Opportunities for Learning and Transition Success) an employment grant through the Mississippi Developmental Disabilities Council (MSCDD)
- Employment Development and Competitive Employment
- Transition Specialist through a joint agreement between Mississippi Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Oxford School District

# Oxford Transition Program Components

## Other Essential Program Components

- Social Skills Training/Groups
- Peer Mentoring Opportunities
- Self-Advocacy Training
- School Transition Team
- Community Transition Team
- Parent Training Opportunities
- Community Linkages

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