Using the Texas Achievement Plan within the Transition/Individualized Education Plan – A CTSP Roadmap for Educators

Hi, my name is Dr. Lakshmi Mahadevan, and I’m program coordinator for the Career and Technical Special Populations Training and Resource Education Center at Texas AgriLife Extension Service. Welcome to this webinar on CTSP resources that you can utilize for customizing the Texas Achievement Plan, or THE TAP, for your students with disabilities.

AchieveTexas aims to have every eighth grader in Texas create a TAP. The TAP is an educational plan suggesting the high school courses a student should take to prepare successfully for graduation and transition into a profession or post-secondary educational experience. The chief goal of THE TAP is for every student to choose a cluster program of study and adjust it as he or she changes direction as a result of career exploration experiences promoted through AchieveTexas.

The TAP is created in conjunction with parents/guardians, counselors, and teachers and should be reviewed at least once each year with the view that students will be free to change their path at any time. Schools that require graduation plans for students can use the TAP as an improved version of the existing plan.

The TAP can be customized very effectively to fit into the Transition/Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for students with disabilities, beginning in eighth grade. Essentially the TAP can be a guide in the development of the student’s transition plan that IDEA mandates be in place by the age of 16. How can this be done? First, consult the AchieveTexas website, which provides a Counselor’s Guide consisting of seven easy steps to implement the TAP. Second, access the CTSP resources that enable you to incorporate the TAP goals within an eligible student’s transition plan/IEP. The seven steps are as follows:

1. Prepare your students in advance by equipping them with the appropriate resources to begin their personalized program of study. Appropriate resources include the 16 AchieveTexas in Action cluster guides, online career assessments, IOSCAR, and O*NET.
   - A link to each of these resources is on our website at http://ctsp.tamu.edu/videos/videos07/toolbox/career%20guidance/index.php.
   - We also provide a video with instructions to create an individualized career assessment for students with disabilities. It is available at http://ctsp.tamu.edu/videos/videos07/Assessment/Windows_Media/1_006.wmv. In addition, we have created a customizable one-page career assessment instrument that can be used with small or large groups of students at http://ctsp.tamu.edu/videos/videos07/toolbox/career%20guidance/CACE_Survey.doc.

2. Help students choose a cluster. By allowing students choose a cluster first, you take away the intimidation that comes with the process of picking a career goal. The cluster choice enables students to explore the various career options available.
   - The CTSP library stocks DVDs on all 16 career clusters that allow students and teachers to explore careers. In addition, the CTSP website provides a link to America’s Career InfoNet that houses online videos describing careers within each cluster. Reassure parents and
students that their TAP will be reviewed each year so the path can be changed at any time when necessary.

3. Use the AchieveTexas website to help students pick a program of study (POS). Each POS is designed to meet the State-recommended high school graduation requirements.
   - To individualize the POS, the CTSP Center recommends the use of tools such as the Program Inventory, Basic Skills Inventory, and Comprehensive Skills Inventory. These tools enable CTE instructors to design curriculum modifications and IEP goals/objectives within the prescribed recommendations of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills and AchieveTexas.

4. Aid students to identify a career goal. Communicate to students that setting a goal will enable them to work towards a tangible result that makes school more relevant. Use this opportunity to launch a realistic discussion about the educational preparation, work experience, talent, and commitment required for their goals to be achieved.

   The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act requires that by the age of 16 every student’s IEP must contain a statement of transition. The transition statement must identify: (1) measurable post-secondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment, and if appropriate independent living skills; and (2) the transition services and the course of study needed to assist the student to reach those post-secondary goals.

   - The CTSP Center provides CTE teachers with three modules addressing transition. The first is focused on transition assessment and valuation methods necessary for high-quality, individualized education planning and classroom evaluation accommodations for students with disabilities. The second addresses career guidance for students with disabilities, and the third details best practices for CTE instructors participating in transition ARD meetings. All three modules provide you with tools to start the career discussion with students, identify a career goal, and implement a career development plan.

5. Help students set a post-secondary goal. Students who state a goal are motivated to reach it. Starting college or a career should be an option made available to everyone. Students should be allowed flexibility in choosing a goal, such as attending a four-year university or two-year college, joining the military, entering an apprenticeship, or starting employment. CTE instructors helping a student decide on a post-secondary goal will also aid them to comply with an IDEA-related transition data-reporting requirement, otherwise known as Indicator 13. Indicator 13 specifically addresses:
   - measurable post-secondary goals in education and/or training,
   - employment opportunities,
   - measurable annual IEP goals that accurately reflect post-secondary goals, and
   - students’ courses of study related directly to their post-secondary goals.

   CTE instructors are in a position to report to Indicator 13 because teachers provide relevant programs of study, co-op placements, work-study programs, and certification opportunities to students with special needs. To learn more about Indicator 13 and your role in the process, please go to our webcast and external links page at [http://ctsp.tamu.edu](http://ctsp.tamu.edu).

6. Assist students with designing a course schedule. Focus on selecting academics and electives within a cluster and POS whenever possible. Students may opt for sports, band, choir, art, and other electives.
• To comply with the Perkins law, CTE instructors must ensure that all students from special populations are able to access CTE courses. Therefore, use your CTSP tools to recommend individualized course schedules. Keeping in mind curriculum modifications, write IEP goals based on TEKS; and ensure that members on the ARD committee are aware of your sequence of courses, including any pre-requisite requirements.

7. Encourage extended learning activities. A comprehensive TAP allows students to choose activities including clubs, community service projects, and paid and unpaid career learning experiences.

• CTE instructors can work in conjunction with transition specialists and vocational adjustment coordinators, and partner with external entities such as business and industry and community agencies to create opportunities for extended learning activities for their students with disabilities. Typical CTE-related activities would include co-op placements, work-study programs, and certification exams. On an IEP, these activities would also count toward transition activities on Indicator 13. The CTSP website houses a module on building successful partnerships and a webcast on CTE Advisory Committees, which can be a forum for involving community partners.

To access the tools, modules, and resources on this webcast, please go to [http://ctsp.tamu.edu/resources.php](http://ctsp.tamu.edu/resources.php).