

IDEA requires that the school district invite the student with a disability to attend his or her IEP meeting if the purpose of the meeting will be the consideration of the post-secondary goals for the student and the transition services needed to assist the student in reaching those goals.

Transition planning is about the student's movement from high school to post-school life. It is based on the student's plans for the future. The student may need preparation and practice in participating in the IEP meeting. The needs and desires of the student and family are the core of the planning process, therefore the student's input is essential.

- ◇ Student input provided indirectly based on a questionnaire or survey,
- ◇ Reluctant participant (avoids conversation or responds only to direct questions).
- ◇ Student input provided directly by computer or electronic device.
- ◇ Self-advocate (practices self-advocacy skills).
- ◇ Leader (demonstrates leadership skills in the IEP).

When the student was invited but did not attend the IEP Team meeting the school district must take other steps to ensure that the student's preferences and interests are considered.

### Student Behaviors Associated with Post-School Employment and Education

- Strengths/Limitations:** Able to express and describe personal strengths and limitations; assistance needs
- Disability Awareness:** Ability to describe disability and accommodation needs.
- Persistence:** Ability to work toward goal until it is accomplished or after facing adversity
- Interaction with others:** Ability to maintain friendships; work collaboratively with small groups, or teams
- Goal Setting:** Able to understand importance of setting goals; set post-school goals that match interests
- Employment:** Ability to express desire to work, demonstrate job readiness, complete training, get a job
- Student involvement in IEP:** Discuss goals with IEP team & actively lead the IEP

*Source:* Transition Education Fast Facts, Council for Exceptional Children (2013)



## Student Participation in the IEP

**Self-Advocacy** is understanding your strengths and needs, identifying your personal goals, knowing your legal rights and responsibilities, and communicating these to others.



**Employ Self-Advocacy strategies to prepare students to participate actively in the IEP.**



- **Inventory your strengths**—areas to improve or learn, goals and choices for learning, or needed accommodations. Students complete an inventory sheet they can use at the IEP meetings.
- **Provide inventory information**—use inventory, portfolio, presentation video, etc.
- **Listen and respond**—learn the proper times to listen and respond.
- **Ask questions**—teach students to ask questions when they don't understand something.
- **State your goals**—students list the goals they would like to see in their IEP.
- Use the IEP as an opportunity to develop self-advocacy and leadership skills.

**Self Determination** is the ability to make choices, solve problems, set goals, evaluate options, take initiative to reach one's goals, and accept consequences of one's actions

### Characteristics of Self-Determined People



- Awareness of personal preferences, interests, strengths and limitations.
- Have the ability to identify wants and needs.
- Make choices based on preferences, interests, wants and needs.
- Ability to consider a variety of options and anticipate consequences for their decisions.
- Ability to evaluate decisions based on the outcomes of previous decisions and revise future decisions accordingly.
- Ability to set goals and work towards them.
- Problem solving skills.
- Striving for independence while recognizing interdependence with others.
- Self-advocacy skills.
- Independent performance skills and ability to adjust performance.
- Persistence.
- Ability to assume responsibility for actions and decisions.
- Self confidence.



Source: Field, S., Martin, J., Miller, R., Ward, M., & Wehmeyer, M. (1998). *A Practical Guide for Teaching Self-Determination*, Reston, VA: Council for Exceptional Children

### TIPS

#### There are four ways students can be involved in the IEP process:

1. Planning the IEP includes laying the foundation for the meeting by identifying strengths, needs, establishing goals, considering options and preparing resources to use at the IEP meeting.
2. Drafting the IEP provides practice in **self-advocacy skills** - includes having students write a draft of their IEP that reflects their strengths and needs as well as interests and preferences.
3. Participating in the IEP Meeting: Demonstrate self-advocacy skills. Student has the opportunity to share interests, preferences and needs as well as participate in the process of developing the transition plan.
4. Leading the IEP: Student has the opportunity to demonstrate self-advocacy and leadership skills.
5. Implementing the IEP: Evaluate their own progress toward achieving goals.