

# **Interagency Transition Council for Youth with Disabilities**

## **Annual Report 2013**

**Catherine A. Raggio, Secretary  
Maryland Department of Disabilities  
Co-Chair**

**Tom Barkley  
Designee of the Assistant State Superintendent  
Maryland State Department of Education  
Division of Special Education/ Early Intervention Services  
Co-Chair**

## **Background**

On August 7, 2007, Governor Martin O'Malley signed Executive Order 01.01.2007.13 that reconstituted the Governor's Interagency Transition Council for Youth with Disabilities (IATC). The original Council was constituted on December 7, 2000 to improve the post-school outcomes of youth with disabilities in Maryland.

The primary responsibility of the reconstituted IATC is to annually review, revise, and update the Interagency State Plan for Transitioning Youth with Disabilities to ensure effective interagency planning and delivery of services for secondary students with disabilities. Additional responsibilities of the IATC include identifying and reporting activities of each partner that impact the delivery, quality, and availability of transition services. The IATC also serves in an advisory capacity to all transition related federal grants and disseminates information concerning the goals and activities of the Interagency State Plan for Transitioning Youth with Disabilities.

The IATC met five times during the reporting period: November 5, 2012; February 4, 2013; April 15, 2013; June 10, 2013; and August 12, 2013.

## **IATC Strategic Planning**

In April 2013, the IATC approved edits to its strategic plan. The three goals were revised to incorporate training options within postsecondary education and to provide additional information and support to families during the transition process. The three goals now comprising the strategic plan are:

1. Every student with a disability will exit secondary school prepared for employment.
2. Every student with a disability will exit secondary school aware of postsecondary education and training program options.
3. Every student with a disability and their family will have information and support to successfully navigate the transition process.

The IATC members will continue to measure these goals annually. Multiple years of data for a majority of the strategies included within each goal and reported to the IATC reflective of comparative trends.

This data includes employment and postsecondary education data from the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR); Maryland State Department of Education's Division of Career and College Readiness (DCCR), Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) and Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services (DSE/EIS); Mental Hygiene Administration (MHA); and the Maryland Seamless Transition Collaborative (MSTC) project. Data on the development of postsecondary education and employment goals was also collected from MSDE-DSE/EIS<sup>i</sup> for students receiving special education services prior to exiting secondary school.

Among this year's data, highlights included:

- 99% of students with disabilities participating in Career and Technology Education (CTE) programs graduated high school
- The percentage of youth ages 14-21 that were enrolled in educational programming through a Workforce Investment Act training program (and not enrolled in postsecondary education or employed at time of registration) who obtained employment, enrolled in postsecondary education or joined the military increased from 72% in 2011 to 74% in 2012.
- 288 students participated in youth summer employment and 712 transition age youth had paid employment through the MSDE-Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS)

- 625 transitioning youth and young adults ages 16-25 received supported employment services through the DHMH-Mental Hygiene Administration

### **Annual Maryland Transition Conference**

The 2012 Maryland Transition Conference titled, *Transition Outcomes: From High School to Life Long Learning* was held on Saturday, November 17, 2012 at the Comfort Inn and Conference Center in Bowie, Maryland. The event marked a significant change in the format from previous years where the event was targeted to professionals working with transition age youth with disabilities. The new format was directed to youth with disabilities and their families and held on the weekend to accommodate families' schedules. While professionals were invited to attend, all content was designed and presented for a youth and family audience. In total, over 160 participants attended the event.

Among the 15 breakout sessions, all included information on at least one of the following topics:

- Transition Planning and Coordination
- Employment
- Postsecondary Education
- Independent Living Skills
- Advocacy

In addition, two of the sessions were convened as focus groups for parents and guardians of youth and young adults with intellectual disabilities. The focus groups were facilitated by a parent/professional and designed to gather information from parents on the transition planning process and allow participants the opportunity to provide feedback on their experiences. Following the conference, a report summarizing the focus groups was generated and shared with the IATC (Attachment B). Among the feedback included from parents were:

- There is too much information from multiple agencies/sources which is confusing.
- Need a transition flowchart.
- Need individualized supports for employment.
- There are inconsistencies in the knowledge that school personnel have regarding transition planning.

Among the evaluations, over 90% of respondents indicated that all sessions (plenary and breakout) were very high or somewhat high in quality and usefulness. In addition, 98.7% rated the conference as a whole as very high quality and very high usefulness. Due to the overwhelming positive response from attendees and members of the IATC, it was decided that the new format would be adopted for the 2013 conference and beyond.

### **Youth Input**

In the absence of a youth representative appointed to the IATC, the Council has partnered with Independence Now, Inc., the Center for Independent Living serving Montgomery and Prince George's counties, to solicit input from transition age youth disabilities. In this effort, Independence Now, Inc. surveys youth that participate in its annual Youth Leadership Forum held every June. Of the 30 transition age youth who participated in 2013, over 15 percent did not know what transition planning was while another 11.5 percent weren't sure. In addition, only 65 percent indicated that they knew what an IEP was. While both of these findings changed in the positive in the post-forum survey, it indicated the need for additional knowledge building among all youth with disabilities as they access services through an IEP and transition out of high school. In moving forward, the IATC has discussed seeking input from youth from additional organizations as well as formally soliciting feedback from youth attending the Maryland Transition Conference.

## **Maryland Seamless Transition Collaborative (MSTC)**

The Maryland Seamless Transition Collaborative<sup>[1]</sup> (MSTC), administered by the MSDE Division of Rehabilitation Services, ended its five-year grant from the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) on September 30, 2012. Throughout the grant period the Council served as an advisory committee and received updates on this initiative which was designed to improve post school outcomes for students with disabilities through a sequential delivery of specific transition service components beginning in early high school.

By the close of the grant, there were 11 local jurisdictions with MSTC projects: Charles, Anne Arundel, Carroll, Calvert, Washington, St. Mary's, Baltimore, Wicomico, Harford and Somerset counties and Baltimore City. Somerset County was the final jurisdiction to launch a project in October 2011.

Among the outcomes achieved by September 30, 2012:

- 365 active students participated
- 288 participated in summer employment
- 101 informational interviews occurred
- 65 participated in work-site tours
- 37 completed job shadowing
- 84 engaged in job sampling/volunteer opportunities
- 77 completed unpaid internships
- 204 completers of the program (2009-2012)
  - 66 had paid inclusive employment upon exit
  - 46 enrolled in postsecondary education
  - 25 participated in both paid inclusive employment and postsecondary education

In addition, RSA granted Maryland a one-year extension enabling newer sites to continue with their projects. As a result of MSTC, relationships between the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) and school staff have been strengthened. MSTC Project Management Teams have transitioned into Local Transition Councils in many locations. In addition, DORS has seen the benefit of summer youth employment and paid work experiences prior to school exit and has expanded these services to youth beyond the initial grant areas. MSTC also led to the development of a Transition Fee for Service Model incorporating many of the MSTC components. This model is currently being piloted in 3 of our grant areas with potential for statewide replication.

## **Transitioning Youth Website**

As reported in previous years, the Maryland Transitioning Youth Website ([www.mdtransition.org](http://www.mdtransition.org)) was launched on October 1, 2010, as a project of the IATC with support from MDOD. The website is designed for youth with disabilities and their families and serves as a portal to existing State agency sites while also providing information not found on existing Maryland websites. Sections of the website include:

- The Transition Planning Process
- College
- Employment Services
- Health Care
- Transportation
- Fact Sheet Library
- Upcoming Events and Announcements

IATC members, along with private organizations and service locators continue to link to the website and announcements and event notices are posted on the accompanying Facebook site. In addition,

the electronic Quarterly Newsletter that highlights transition planning topics, programs and upcoming event was continued throughout the reporting year.

A webpage for the Maryland Transition Conference is also incorporated onto the site, including information on registering and presentations. Finally, as the website provides information on the IATC including its strategic plan, meeting announcements are now posted in preparation for changes on October 1, 2013 regarding Maryland's Open Meetings Act.

### **Local Transition Councils**

Through the MSTC initiatives, many local jurisdictions have made the decision to continue their collaboration beyond the grant period and have transitioned their project management teams into local transition councils. In supporting these local councils, the IATC began collecting information from various locals to assess what next steps were needed. This began in October 2011 at the annual Maryland Transition Conference where there was a breakout session for professionals and three local jurisdictions presented on the structure and purpose of their councils. As additional councils were created in 2012, including Howard County that did not have a previous MSTC project, the IATC invited three locals to present: Carroll and Howard counties and Baltimore City. Since then, the IATC has explored ways to promote the creation of additional councils and is currently gathering information from DORS to confirm which MSTC Project Management Teams have continued their work through transition councils.

### **Additional Highlights**

- The 2013-2014 school year marked the second year of the SUCCESS program at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC). With support from MDOD, DDA, DORS and community partners, 8 new students will join the 6 students who piloted the program in 2012. The four-year postsecondary education program for young adults with intellectual disabilities is coordinated by UMBC's Shriver Center and consists of numerous inclusive courses and campus based internships designed to develop students' independence, problem solving and employment skills.
- In June of 2013, the Maryland Youth Leadership Forum (YLF), a project led by Independence Now and supported by several IATC members, invited 30 youth with a range of disabilities from 6 local jurisdictions to a four day/three night event held at Towson University. The goal of the annual program is to raise self-awareness for youth with disabilities and show available community resources to create independent, productive and successful lives for themselves. This is done through five training modules: The Principles of Leadership, The Experience of Disability, Technology and Resources to Reach My Goals, Living on my Own and Reaching My Career Goals, and Leading in My Community.
- On March 16, 2013 Baltimore City Public Schools hosted a Summit for Students with Learning Disabilities Interested in Attending College at Forest Park High School. The event was supported by funding from MHEC through MDOD and was attended by over 46 high school students with LD, parents, educators and community activists and included a motivational presentation by a successful college graduate with LD, LeDerrick Horne, a presentation on Financial Aid for students with disabilities by Isaiah Ellis of MHEC and a presentation by Stefan Charles-Pierre on Disability Support Services from Baltimore City Community College.
- Project Access, a Howard Community College program which transitions high school students with disabilities to the postsecondary level, completed its seventeenth annual Summer Institute. On August 2, 2013, the program honored 84 high school students for their completion of the Summer Institute's requirements and 3 former Project Access students gave motivational presentations

- In response to recent guidance from the Association on Higher Education and Disability (AHEAD) regarding documentation for determination accommodations, Maryland's postsecondary education institutions will begin including the IEP and revised Exit Document beginning in the 2013-2014 school year. In rare circumstances where additional information is needed to assess students' needs, further testing will still be required.
- In the summer of 2013, MDOD and Towson University's Disability Support Services office designed and disseminated a survey to members of the Maryland Association on Higher Education and Disability (MD AHEAD) to learn more about the experiences of students with autism in higher education. Of the 17 responses from both two and four-year colleges and universities, disability support services (DSS) professionals indicated that while over two-thirds of students with autism request accommodations through DSS offices prior to the school year, approximately one-quarter drop out of college.
- Several IATC members participated in a Federal Partners in Transition initiative in May, 2013. The project examined the impact of existing federal legislation and regulations on the successful transition of youth with disabilities from school to work. MDOD provided comments related to State Performance Plan Indicator 14, 504 Plans and the gap of services for youth with developmental disabilities who exit school prior to age 21. DORS, OGPShCN and the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council also participated.
- The Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) continues to support a seamless transition for Maryland's youth with disabilities. The DDA, along with a collaboration with the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS), work together to promote the initiative that all students with disabilities can work and contribute to Maryland's future after leaving school. The DDA continues to receive national technical assistance from the State Employment Leadership Network, a collaborative that includes the National Association for State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services and the Institute for Community Inclusion, UMASS/Boston, as they move forward in becoming an Employment First state. The DDA is initiating an Employment Outcomes Data project that will report on the employment status and other day activities for all people in DDA funded services, including TY. At the time of this report, the DDA supported a total of 535 Transitioning Youth for FY13. Among those 535 Transitioning Youth, 47% of the youth chose day services and 46% chose supportive employment. In addition, 5% chose individualized support serves 3% chose self-directed services. As Maryland moves forward with becoming an, "Employment First" state, the DDA will continue to adopt an approach to support access to integrated, community-based employment opportunities for transitioning youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- Maryland Healthy Transitions Initiative<sup>ii</sup> (HTI), a five year systems change project providing comprehensive services for transition age youth with mental health and co-occurring disorders, and support to their families, is entering its fifth and final year. This initiative creates developmentally appropriate and effective youth-guided local systems of care to decrease youth contact with the juvenile and criminal justice systems while working towards a goal of effecting statewide policy change and replication that improve outcomes in the areas of education, employment, housing, and community connectedness. The project, which has served 76 youth in Frederick and Washington Counties during fiscal year 2012, integrates traditional and nontraditional supports, and has developed and/or enhanced transition related collaboration (including youth and family representation) in the state of Maryland. The State Project director has relocated to the University of Maryland School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry, Evidence Based Practice Center to better facilitate expansion of the HTI model and service provision methodology to other regions throughout the state.
- On October 5, 2012 the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) partnered with the Annual C3 Conference: Cyberethics, Cybersafety, & Cybersecurity to sponsor the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Bullying and Harassment Conference. The conference was held at the University of Maryland, College Park. Each local school system was asked to send a team of at least eight identified

team members. Approximately 400 participants attended the conference. Other agencies also participated in the planning of this event. Special recognition and an award were given to First Lady Katie O'Malley for her support on this important issue. The conference provided time for local teams to come together for workgroup action planning and provided a variety of informative sessions. The focus of the conference was on bullying and harassment and the increasing impact on students, parents, schools, and communities. In addition, information was shared about recent research and best practices for intervening.

- As part of the Maryland Department of Labor's (DLLR) approach to enhance services to youth with barriers to employment, DLLR has planned the implementation of an on-line mentoring portal that will provide a powerful opportunity for youth, guidance counselors and parents that may otherwise lack access to career development resources. The internet based tool will be launched in 2014. DLLR continues to examine efficient and strategic ways to educate and empower Maryland's youth and youth service providers with tools and resources designed to guide career exploration. Using technology and social media DLLR seeks to provide exposure to careers that youth may have never considered or heard of.
- House Bill 813 (2013), signed by the Governor, established the Task Force to Study the Impact of Expanding Credit and Noncredit Courses for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. The task force includes several members of the IATC and is required to study the costs, distance learning options, pathways to meaningful credentials or gainful employment, barriers, logistics and make recommendations to the Governor on expanding credit and noncredit course offerings at public institutions of higher education in the state by January 1, 2014.

#### **Proposed Activities for 2013-2014**

- Develop webinar series for professionals working with transition age youth.
- Further develop recommendations and implementation for improving transition services for youth with disabilities in the foster care system.
- Identify additional opportunities to gather input from youth with disabilities
- Develop a Transition Flow Chart.
- Work with MD AHEAD members to identify strategies for improving outcomes for college students with autism.
- Provide support to local jurisdictions in the creation of local transition councils.
- Conduct a survey with local school systems on dual enrollment programs for students with disabilities.
- Provide expertise, if requested, to the Task Force to Study the Impact of Expanding Credit and Noncredit Courses for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities.
- Support the implementation of the federal PROMISE grant if Maryland receives award
- Host the *Annual Transition Conference* scheduled for November 16, 2013.
- Continue to promote and expand the *Transitioning Youth Website*.
- Continue to distribute the *Transitioning Youth Quarterly Newsletter* and expand listserv.

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<sup>i</sup> As required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004, the Maryland Department of Education-Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services (MSDE-DSE/EIS) coordinated the collected of data for Indicators 13 and 14 of Maryland's State Performance Plan related to IEP transition planning goals and post-school outcomes.

<sup>ii</sup> HTI, a state/community partnership aimed at addressing issues transition-age youth encounter as they transition to adulthood is funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and administered through the Maryland Mental Hygiene Administration (MHA).

# INTERAGENCY TRANSITION COUNCIL FOR YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

## Membership List 2013 Reporting Period

**Catherine A. Raggio**, Secretary, Maryland Department of Disabilities, *Co-Chair*  
**Tom Barkley**, Designee of Assistant Superintendent, Maryland State Department of Education  
Division of Special Education/ Early Intervention Services, *Co-Chair*

*Appointed by Governor to 3-year terms: Ann Geddes; Dawn Koplos; Catherine E. Lyle; Linda Schnapp, Ph.D.; Sara Sorensen; one vacancy. Terms expire 2013.*

*Student representative appointed by Governor: one vacancy*

*Representing Maryland State Dept. of Education: Suzanne R. Page (Incoming Co-Chair), Assistant State Superintendent for Rehabilitation Services; Nancy Hauswald, designee of Assistant State Superintendent for College & Career Readiness; Richard D. Scott, designee of Assistant State Superintendent for Student Family & School Support Services; Joyce Serio, Baltimore County Public Schools; two vacancies.*

*Representing Dept. of Health & Mental Hygiene: Sequaya Tasker, designee of Director, Developmental Disabilities Administration; John Coppola, designee of Director, Mental Hygiene Administration.*

*Representing Dept. of Human Resources: Jeffrey O'Donnell.*

*Representing Dept. of Juvenile Services: Pamela Hardy-Cyran.*

*Representing Dept. of Labor, Licensing, & Regulation: Mary O'Connor.*

*Representing Maryland Commission on Disabilities: Lauren Newman.*

*Representing Maryland Higher Education Commission: Glennis Daniels-Bacchus (MD AHEAD); Amy Kania.*

*Representing Maryland Technology Assistance Program: Joel Zimba.*

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