

Special Needs Students in Career and Technical Education

Resource

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Introduction:

A committee, composed of state and local level representatives from career and technical education, special education and school counselors, was developed to conduct a study related to services for special needs students in career and technical education. Their mission was to determine and address barriers to appropriate placements of special education students into career and technical programs and to develop and implement written suggested guidelines for use by school personnel. This resource is the result of the study and it is hoped that it will serve as a tool in the process of developing an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and in modifying competencies for special needs students.

Description of Career and Technical Education:

Career and technical education (CTE) courses are electives available to all students at the high school level. The purpose is to provide students with training so they may enter the workforce immediately following high school or pursue further training at a technical or community college. Students may also earn a four-year degree from a college or university related to training received in a technical program. It is hoped students will earn three or more CTE credits in a single program area (or two if the state and/or local eligible recipients recognize two course sequences) to be a CTE Concentrator.

Work-based learning activities may be available to all students. This gives the student an opportunity to apply theories and skills learned in the classroom to an actual job situation. Sometimes opportunities are available for apprenticeships and the pursuit of industry certification.

Special needs students would select areas of career interest in the same way that all other students do. Some may already have selected one. Additionally, school counselors are knowledgeable about career assessment tools available from the Department of Education. These same tools are appropriate for use with students who have special educational needs.

Career and technical education currently has 16 career clusters and 71 state approved programs of study. Information on CTE career clusters, programs of study, and CTE courses is available on the Division of Career and Technical Education's website: <http://tennessee.gov/education/cte/>

Description of Special Education:

Special education services are available to all students who qualify through certification. Students who enroll in Career and Technical Education courses are eligible for the same services as those provided in any other classroom. The IEP team determines modifications to be made for these classes in the same way they are determined for other classes. Special consideration should be given to the student's interest, ability level, maturity level, and ability to pass a safety test if the course involves a lab/shop component.

Accommodations may include extended time, having material read, oral testing, abbreviated assignments, etc. The safety test can be read to students but they must understand the questions and answer correctly.

If the students are working toward attainment of a regular high school diploma, they must pass the Gateway Exam in the areas of English II, Biology I, and Algebra I. If students do not pass all three exams, they will be eligible to receive a special education diploma if they meet the requirements of their IEP.

Development of the IEP:

When developing the IEP for a high school student, career and technical courses may be considered as part of the student's education plan. These courses can provide knowledge and skills to enter the workforce or pursue postsecondary training or education. Appropriate placement for the student is very important to ensure both success and satisfaction of the student in the program.

When considering a career and technical education program, the following steps could be considered in IEP development.

1. What is the interest of the student? What are the student's plans after graduation? What are the student's career goals?
2. What is the ability level of the student? Career and technical education courses involve both hands-on activities and a certain level of reading, math and technology. These may be found in the course competencies. Consideration should also be given to all students' level of maturity with regard to safety issues. Students are required to pass a safety test before working and using tools in a lab/shop area. The IEP team should choose the most appropriate program for the student based on interest, ability and readiness of the student to not only master the safety test but to participate in the class without compromising the safety of the student and other members of the class.
3. A member of the IEP team (career and technical instructor, school counselor, special education teacher) should be able to adequately describe the course that is being considered for the student. This should include an overview of what the course is about and the competencies that are taught in the course. Course competencies can be found on the State Department of Education web page under the respective program area in career and technical education.
4. Once the course is determined, the IEP team should look at the competencies listed for the course and determine which competencies will be included in the student's IEP.

5. The IEP team should then determine the modifications that should be made for the student based on the competencies the student will be working toward mastering.

If your school system is using Easy IEP, career and technical education instructors can gain access to a student's IEP. This enables the teacher to read the information included through the "Read Only" link.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is an Individual Education Plan (IEP) Meeting?

An IEP Meeting is held to develop an Individualized Education Plan for a student with disabilities. An IEP is a legal contract between the local education agency (LEA) and the student/parent(s)/guardian(s).

2. Who should attend an IEP Meeting?

A parent/guardian, school administrator, school counselor, special education teacher, regular education teacher, career-technical teacher and the student should attend the IEP meeting. Other resource personnel may also attend the meeting. Other service providers who are not school-based may attend to provide relevant information towards the development of goals and objectives.

3. What takes place in an IEP Meeting?

The IEP Team discusses the student's educational needs as well as the student's interests and abilities and determines the best plan to meet the student's needs and postsecondary and career goals. Your signature indicates your participation in the development of the IEP.

4. What is the role of the career-technical teacher in the IEP process?

The career-technical teacher is encouraged to attend the IEP meeting and should be prepared to:

- provide course description
- describe program of study (sequence of courses)
- review the course competencies
- discuss and document any occupational hazards that exist in the course
- discuss the safety test for the course
- participate in the discussion to
 - determine the best placement for the student
 - determine appropriate modifications and accommodations
 - determine which competencies the student will be accountable for mastering

5. What are the liability issues when students are placed in classes with dangerous equipment? (example: saws, milling machines, lathes, lifts, electrical circuits)

Safety tests should be administered to all students. All students are required to pass safety tests at 100% accuracy. Tests should be kept on file for five years.

6. What can the career-technical teacher do if a student is not succeeding in the career and technical class?

The career-technical teacher should consult with the special education teacher for assistance in providing services for the student. If the student continues to be unsuccessful, the teacher may request an IEP Team Meeting to review the student's placement in the course.

7. What is the role of the school counselor?

The school counselor is responsible for the administration of career assessment inventories (such as Kuder or TCIDS), development of the Six-Year Plan, appropriate placement of the student in a career-technical program and creation of a schedule for the student. The counselor must also be directly involved in the development of the student's Transition Plan within the IEP.

8. What is the role of the special education teacher?

The special education teacher is responsible for scheduling and conducting the IEP meeting, developing the IEP with the IEP team, maintaining the student's records and providing and/or coordinating whatever services are needed for the child.

9. What is the role of the parent/guardian?

The parent/guardian is invited to participate in the IEP meeting and in development of the IEP. Consent of the parent/guardian is required for initial evaluation and change of placement of the student unless the student has reached the age of 18.

10. What is the role of the school administrator?

The school administrator is generally the LEA designee representing the local system in IEP team decisions. He/she is responsible for obligating the LEA's resources to implement the IEP.

11. What should the team consider when discussing enrollment of the student in a career-technical course?

- career interest inventory results
- student performance
- safety
- student's abilities
- behavior plan
- student's physical limitations
- student's strengths
- CTE course competencies

12. What is a behavior plan?

It is part of an IEP that addresses assessed (Functional Behavior Assessment) behavioral issues and prescribes remedies via objectives. The team must agree on the contents of the plan.

13. What is a career-technical concentrator?

A concentrator is a secondary student who earns 3 or more CTE credits in a single program area or 2 credits if the state and/or local eligible recipients recognize 2 course sequences.

14. Is a special needs student responsible for mastery of all course competencies?

No. The IEP Team can modify the number of competencies.

15. What accommodations or modifications may be appropriate for a special needs student enrolled in a career-technical course?

See Appendix (safety test accommodations, career and technical course accommodations/modifications).

16. Can a career technical teacher ask for an IEP meeting at any time?

Yes. Contact the special education teacher.

17. If the teacher doesn't agree with the IEP Team's decision, does the teacher have to sign the IEP?

No; however, the teacher's signature does not indicate agreement with the plan; it indicates participation in development of the plan. It is the teacher's responsibility to follow the modifications recommended in the plan.

18. What should a teacher do who determines a need for assistance with a special needs student?

The teacher should request assistance from the special education teacher, counselor and an administrator. The teacher should document the request.

19. Are students with disabilities required to take the Gateway Tests?

All students must be given the opportunity to take the Gateway test unless the IEP team determines that the student is eligible for the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program Alternate Assessment. The TCAP Alternate Assessment has been developed in order to include students with the most significant cognitive/adaptive disabilities in the statewide accountability program. If a student does not take and pass the Gateway exams, the student will not receive a regular high school diploma.

Glossary/Terms

Accommodations – Accommodations are practices and procedures in the areas of presentation, response, setting, and timing/scheduling that provide equitable access during instruction and assessments for students with disabilities. Accommodations are intended to reduce or even eliminate the effects of a student's disability; they **do not** reduce learning expectations. Examples of accommodations include extended testing time, using magnifying equipment, oral test responses, testing in a separate room, and listening to a technical manual instead of reading it.

Articulation – An agreement between the high school and a postsecondary institution for a postsecondary credit to be earned in high school.

ACTE (Association for Career and Technical Education) – The largest national education association dedicated to the advancement of education that prepares youth and adults for successful careers. ACTE's mission is to provide leadership in developing an educated, prepared, and competitive workforce.

BIP (Behavior Intervention Plan) – A component of a child's IEP that describes positive behavioral interventions and other strategies that the district must implement to prevent and control unacceptable behaviors.

Career and Technical Education (CTE) Concentrator – A secondary student who has earned three or more CTE credits in a single program area or two credits if the state and/or the local eligible recipients recognize two course sequences.

Cluster – Career Clusters are groupings of similar occupations and industries. These groupings are used as an organizing tool for curriculum design, technical skill assessments, instructional and guidance models, sequencing for four or six year plans, and to provide seamless transitions between secondary and post-secondary education. Tennessee currently has 16 career clusters.

Consulting Teacher – A special education teacher who provides services for special needs students by working with the regular classroom teacher as a consultant. The consultant may also serve the student in a resource program.

Course Competencies – Learning expectations designed for each course standard. Also known as course objectives.

CTE (Career and Technical Education) – A program that provides middle, high school, and adult learners with training in a particular career. The careers require varying levels of education, with some students gaining enough training to enter the workforce immediately following high school, while others may require a four-year college degree. Students may elect to take only a single course or a concentration in a particular program area. The CTE program areas of study in Tennessee include agricultural education, business technology education, family and consumer

sciences education, health science education, marketing education, technology engineering education and trade and industrial education.

DECA – The student organization for Marketing students formerly known as Distributive Education Clubs of America.

Elective – Any course that a student may choose to meet the total number of credits required for graduation.

ELL (English Language Learners) – Non-English language background students who have problems meeting the same high educational standards set by the state as their English-speaking counterparts because of a lower level of proficiency in English and have difficulty in the regular classroom because of limited English proficiency.

FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education) – Students with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate educational placement.

FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America) – One of the student organizations for Business Technology students.

FCCLA (Family, Career and Community Leaders of America) – The student organization for Family and Consumer Sciences students.

FFA – The student organization for Agriculture students (formerly Future Farmers of America).

Gateway Exams – Exams that students must pass in order to receive a regular high school diploma. Areas tested include Algebra I, Biology, and English II.

HOSA – The student organization for Health Science students formerly known as Health Occupations Students of America.

IEP (Individualized Education Plan) – A written document that describes the abilities and needs of a child with a disability and prescribes the placement and services designed to meet the child's unique needs.

IDEIA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act) – Federal legislation that requires states to provide all children with disabilities with a free appropriate public education.

Informed Parental Consent – Informing the parent of all information relevant to the activity for which consent is sought, in the parent's native language or mode of communication.

LEA (Local Education Agency) - The school system in which the student attends.

LRE (Least Restrictive Environment) - Educating a special needs student with his/her peers without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate.

Modifications - Changes that are designed to "level the playing field" for students with disabilities. Examples of modifications include: requiring less material (fewer competencies, shorter units or lessons, fewer pages or problems) and abbreviating assignments and assessments so that the student only has to complete certain problems or items.

Program Areas - The career and technical education program areas include: agricultural education, business technology education, family and consumer sciences education, health sciences education, marketing education, technology engineering education and trade and industrial education.

Program of Study – Recommended sequence of courses that end in credentials such as industry certification, associate degree, baccalaureate degree, or higher credential.

Regular Diploma – A diploma awarded to students who successfully complete path requirements or goals of the IEP and pass the Gateway exams.

Required Course – A course that the state requires a student to pass before he/she may graduate.

S-Team – Building-level problem solving teams that address the needs of students with academic or behavioral difficulties.

SkillsUSA – The student organization for Trade and Industry. Formerly VICA (Vocational Industrial Clubs of America).

Specialized Diploma – A diploma awarded to students who qualify for special education services and who successfully complete the goals outlined in their Individualized Education Plan.

Technology Student Association (TSA) – The student organization for Technology Engineering Education students.

Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program Alternative (TCAP-Alt) – An alternate assessment that has been developed in order to include students with the most significant cognitive/adaptive disabilities in the statewide assessment and accountability program. The TCAP-ALT includes a determination of participation by the IEP team and a development of a portfolio assessment.

Transition Planning – A coordinated set of activities designed within a results oriented process based upon the functional and academic abilities of the student that facilitates movement from school to post-school activities.

Transition Work-Based Learning Activities – Transition WBL activities are designed to facilitate community-based instruction, employment experiences and socialization skills for the student with disabilities. The transition WBL method includes both paid and non-paid training activities for both credit and/or completion of the IEP goals and objectives.

Work-Based Learning (WBL) – WBL activities are part of a structured system—for all students—at the high school level that allow students to apply classroom theories and explore career options at the work site or connect classroom learning to work.

Websites

<http://acteonline.org> (includes a lesson plan library, information about Special Needs Division, and a link to Techniques which is the ACTE magazine)

<http://acteonline.org/about/division/snd.cfm> (direct link to the ACTE Special Needs Division resources)

<http://www.tennessee.gov/education/cte/> (link to State of Tennessee, Division of Career and Technical Education webpage; links to CTE Program information)

<http://www.state.tn.us/education/speced> (link to State of Tennessee, Special Education Division)

<http://www.tennessee.gov/education/cte/wb/> (link to Work-Based Learning manual and resources)

http://www.teach-nology.com/teachers/lesson_plans/vocational_ed/ (link to both CTE and Special Education lesson plans)

<http://vocserve.berkeley.edu/CenterFocus/CF6.html> (National Center for Research in Vocational Education)

<http://www.disabilityresources.org/> (disability resources on the net)

<http://www.heath.gwu.edu> (National Clearinghouse on Postsecondary Education for individuals with disabilities)

<http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/ped/tsal/tsal.html> (employment and disability)

<http://www.cec.sped.org/index.html> (Council for Exceptional Children)

<http://web.utk.edu/~lre4life/lreinfo.htm> (Least Restrictive Environment for Living, Inclusion, Friendships, & Employment)

<http://kc.vanderbilt.edu/kennedy/> (Vanderbilt Kennedy Center for Research on Human Development)

<http://www.pathfinderscareerdesign.com/> (Career Inventory)

<http://www.state.tn.us/education/mcurriculum.htm> (TN Department of Education curriculum links)

<http://www.tennessee.gov/education> (TN Department of Education)

http://www.awesomelibrary.org/Library/Special_Education/Blind_and_Visually_Impaired/Blind (collection of Web resources)

Safety Test Accommodations

Accommodations are techniques, means, etc., in helping the student reach mastery of Safety Test contents.

Safety Test Accommodations	
Modifications	Person Responsible
1. Teach test	
2. Test used as study guide	
3. Read test	
4. Tape test	
5. Extended time to take test	
6. Test taken in alternative setting	
7. Retake test	
8. Other	

Career and Technical Course Accommodations/Modifications

Modifications are techniques, means, strategies, etc., for helping the student reach mastery of critical course competencies.

Career and Technical Course Accommodations/Modifications	
Accommodations/Modification	Person Responsible
1. Extended time	
2. Shortened assignments	
3. Alternative materials	
4. Preferential seating	
5. Notes taken by designated person(s)	
6. Tape recording of lecture	
7. Study guides	
8. Tests taken in alternative settings	
9. Open book tests	
10. Retake tests	
11. Other:	