



State of Vermont
Vermont Department of Education
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To: Special education administrators, high school completion staff, and vocational rehabilitation staff

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Subject: Students Receiving Special Education in the High School Completion Program

Field Memo #FM10-01

Act 44 of 2009 changed enrollment requirements for students who participate in the High School Completion Program (HSCP). Prior to this legislation, only students who were no longer enrolled in high school were eligible to participate. As a result of Act 44, students can be dually enrolled in their local high school and the HSCP. This change has raised questions about how this will affect students receiving special education. This field memo contains guidance on the process to follow when students eligible for special education are considering participation in the HSCP.

Step 1

Students who are considering dual enrollment initially work with high school staff familiar with this option. If appropriate, a referral will be made to the adult education and literacy system (Learning Works) to initiate eligibility screening and plan development. Currently, students must score at level 4 in reading, writing and math on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) in order to be eligible. This is roughly equivalent to grade level 7-8. In addition, a determination will be made regarding the efficacy of the program for the student. During this preliminary work it will be essential that the high school liaison to the HSCP identify any student who receives special education and review special education records as part of the initial planning process.

Step 2

When a determination has been made that a student receiving special education is a viable candidate for dual enrollment in the HSCP and his/her local high school, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) team meeting is convened to consider a change in placement for the student. The team determines what specially designed instruction, related supplemental services and accommodations the student requires. The responsibility for providing special education services and funding for these students remains with the Local Education Agency (LEA). If the student needs specialized instruction or related services those are provided at the local high school or other location determined by the IEP team. The LEA is responsible for assuring that these services are provided by qualified staff and for supervision of these services.

Step 3

The IEP team makes a placement decision and provides required notice of any change of placement. In making the placement decision, the team considers the special education needs of the student based on the student's disability, his/her ability to access and progress in the general education curriculum, the student's transition plan, the information gathered by the HSCP liaison, and any special considerations presented by the individual student. The team then makes a determination of whether dual enrollment in the High School Completion Program and the local high school along with any special education and related services provides a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) for the individual student.

Important Considerations

- Accommodations: How will these be communicated to and implemented by HSCP staff?
- Behavior Plan: How will the requirements of a behavior plan be communicated to and implemented by HSCP staff?
- Disciplinary Actions: How will HSCP staff be informed of past/pending disciplinary actions? How will HSCP staff communicate any disciplinary actions taken at the program to the student's IEP case managers? Because disciplinary requirements for students with IEPs have set timelines this communication has to be prompt.
- Physical education: How will the student participate in either a regular or adapted physical education program?
- Transportation: In determining a student's need for related services, the IEP team must consider whether the student requires transportation in order to access the program and services identified in the IEP, including the HSCP. In most instances, if a student requires transportation to get to school, then transportation to the HSCP will be required if participation in the HSCP is a part of the student's IEP transition plan.
- Progress Reporting: How will progress on meeting IEP goals and objectives be reported at least as often as progress is reported for students who do not have IEPs?

Roles and Responsibilities

Dual enrollment and participation in the HSCP offers an exciting new opportunity for students receiving special education who will benefit from the alternate programming that the HSCP provides. In order to make this a successful experience, it will be essential that all staff involved with the student understand their roles and responsibilities and that effective communication systems with students, parents, school and HSCP staff are in place. What follows is basic guidance on roles and responsibilities.

High School Liaison to HSCP:

- In consultation with the HSCP Plan Manager, determine whether a student is a viable candidate for HSCP.
- Participate in placement decision and development of HSCP Graduation Education Plan and any revisions needed to the IEP as a member of the IEP team.

Special Education Case Manager:

- Continue to carry out case management responsibilities.
- Assure that IEP is being implemented, including transportation and other related services.
- Monitor progress in meeting IEP goals at high school and HSCP.
- Maintain ongoing communication with staff at the High School Completion Program.

High School Completion Program Plan Manager:

- Provide initial counseling and assessment.
- In consultation with the High School Liaison, determine whether student is a viable candidate for HSCP.
- Participate in IEP team meetings as needed.
- In consultation with student, parents, High School Liaison, Special Education Case Manager, develop the Graduation Education Plan.
- Provide ongoing Plan management.
- Communicate any potential changes to a student's program or placement, and information on student progress, to the High School Liaison and the Special Education Case Manager.

HSCP staff and contracted providers:

- Provide educational services described in the Graduation Education Plan that are the stated responsibility of the HSCP provider.

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