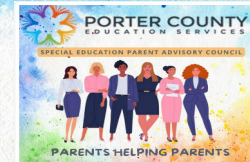


Please Sign In



WELCOME TO THE  
Porter County Education Services (PCES)  
Special Education Parent Advisory Council  
(SEPAC)

CommUNITY Meeting  
March 2026

## WHAT IS A SEPAC?

A Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) is a district-level (and/or in collaboration with an interlocal that contracts with local districts), parent-driven group that provides input to the local special education provider on system-level challenges regarding special education and related services. A local SEPAC provides direct input to school personnel and leaders about policies, programs, practices, and services that have an impact on students with disabilities and their families.

Its purpose is to advise, advocate and offer guidance, not to decide policy.

An effective SEPAC can increase the proactive involvement of families by inviting their input in ways that can be used to share local special education policy.

WE ARE  
PARENTS HELPING PARENTS

## WHO IS YOUR SEPAC TEAM?

- ❖ **Duneland** ~ Jackie Hood & Rebecca Shellito
  - ❖ **East Porter** ~ Jessica Kruger
- ❖ **Porter** ~ Alexis Kegebein & Maja Nikolov
  - ❖ **Portage** ~ Cass Pogue
- ❖ **SELF School** ~ Kaley Piercy
- ❖ **Valparaiso** ~ Jessica Witherspoon & Jill Isley

## Special Education Administration

- ❖ **Executive Director** ~ Erin Hawkins, ehawkins@pces.k12.in.us
- ❖ **CFO/Treasurer/HR** ~ Quinnlyn Van Rys, qvanrys@pces.k12.in.us
- ❖ **SELF Principal/IEP Trainer** ~ Jen Rogers, jrogers@pces.k12.in.us
- ❖ **SELF Assistant Principal/OT & PT Supervisor** ~ Erica Wood, ewood@pces.k12.in.us
- ❖ **M-Team Director/AT Supervisor/Medicaid Reimbursement/Complaint Compliance Coordinator** ~ Shannon Aardema, saardema@pces.k12.in.us
- ❖ **Shared Services Supervisor: Speech; Behaviorists & Student Service Coordinators; DHH & BLV programs; Nonpub Teacher; CPI Trainer; & Teacher Cohort** ~ Morgan Derby, mderby@pces.k12.in.us
- ❖ **Speech Coordinator** ~ Alice Tokoly, atokoly@pces.k12.in.us
- ❖ **Career & Tech Center Executive Director** ~ Audra Peterson, apeterson@pces.k12.in.us
- ❖ **Career & Tech Center Principal** ~ Kyle Becich, kbecich@pces.k12.in.us

## ~ Before We Begin ~



**Engage Fully**



**What's Shared Here, Stays Here**



**What's Learned Here, Leaves Here**



**Take Care of Your Needs**

## Transitioning Into High School & Graduation Pathways

An Informational Overview

# Case Conference Committee

=

# IEP Team

Before Transition IEP: Always includes the Parent

After Transition IEP: Always includes the Parent & The Student

# What Is A Transition IEP?

**Transition IEP:** The IEP in effect for a student who enters grade 9 or becomes fourteen (14) years of age (whichever comes first). The components required in an IEP, the transition IEPs must contain information from transition assessments, postsecondary goals, and transition services. The student *must* be invited to their Transition IEP case conference.



Article 7  
(2024)

# TRANSITION IEPs & Graduation Pathways

An overview for families

Presented by: Ezra Burke,  
Duneland Secondary EXL Coordinator  
March 18, 2026

## Overview

- Key high school pathways.
- What is the Transition IEP? Who is it for?
- What is the purpose?
- What are the required components?

## High School Overview

- Teacher of Record (TOR) as a liaison
  - May or may not directly teach the student
  - Communicates with the student's team
  - Supports and facilitates provisions, accommodations, IEP goal monitoring, and check-ins
- Classes = Credits Earned
- Diploma opportunities

	CURRENT INDIANA CORE 40	FUTURE NEW INDIANA DIPLOMA
ENGLISH	8 CREDITS • 2 credits: English I • 2 credits: English II • 2 credits: English III	8 CREDITS • 2 credits: English 9 • 1 credit: Communications-focused course • 5 additional English credits
MATH	6 CREDITS • 2 credits: Algebra I • 2 credits: Geometry • 2 credits: Algebra II	7 CREDITS • 2 credits: Algebra I • 1 credit: Personal Finance • 4 additional math credits
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND ENGINEERING	6 CREDITS • 2 credits: Biology I • 2 credits: Chemistry I, Physics I, or Integrated Physics • 2 credits: Any Core 40 science course	7 CREDITS • 2 credits: Biology I • 1 credit: Computer Science • 2 additional science credits • 2 STEM-focused credits
SOCIAL STUDIES	6 CREDITS • 2 credits: U.S. History • 1 credit: U.S. Government • 1 credit: Economics • 2 credits: World History/Civilization or Geography/History of the World	6 CREDITS • 2 credits: U.S. History • 1 credit: U.S. Government • 2 credits: World Perspectives (flexible options, including advanced world language or world-focused social studies courses)
PE/HEALTH	3 CREDITS • 2 credits: Physical Education • 1 credit: Health & Wellness	2 CREDITS • 1 credit: Physical Education • 1 credit: Health & Wellness
DIRECTED ELECTIVES	5 CREDITS Any combination of World Languages, Fine Arts, and/or Career & Technical Education	N/A
PERSONALIZED ELECTIVES	6 CREDITS	12 CREDITS <small>Students are encouraged to utilize the new readiness seats to align these personalized electives with their unique goals. Personalized electives can include a variety of courses, such as ICC, Performance or Fine Arts, and World Languages.</small>
COLLEGE & CAREERS	N/A	1 CREDIT
TOTAL	40 CREDITS	42 CREDITS

Hoosier high school students have the opportunity to earn approximately 60 credits.

- ### Comparison of Diploma Types
- Class of 2029 (current 9th grade) earns the New Indiana Diploma
  - Class of 2028 and older may opt-in, but otherwise remain on Core 40 track
- |                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| CORE 40            | NEW DIPLOMA        |
| + Academic Honors  | + Honors Seal      |
| + Technical Honors | + Honors Plus Seal |
- Enrollment
  - Employment
  - Enlistment
- BOTH HAVE:  
ICC Diploma  
IB Diploma  
Alternative Diploma

## SPREAD THE WORD: ALTERNATE DIPLOMA

In May 2021, the Indiana State Board of Education approved a proposed rule amendment for 511 IAC 6-7.1 (Graduation Requirements) to establish an Alternate Diploma and make corresponding changes to the existing regulatory language in 511 IAC 7. The Alternate Diploma is standards-based and will be available to students with significant cognitive disabilities that are participating in the alternate assessments and satisfy graduation requirements. The first exiters able to take advantage of the Alternate Diploma will be the 2022-2023 cohort (Class of 2023). *Note: Administrative Rulemaking Action (LSA 2-325) for the Alternate Diploma is not complete.*

**Graduation Rate** Students who receive the Alternate Diploma will be counted towards the overall graduation rate of the school or school corporation they are exiting.

**Alternate Diploma** Nothing in the proposed rule shall limit a school corporation's authority to award a locally developed certificate, such as a certificate of completion, to those students who do not meet the graduation requirement set forth in IC 20-32-4.

The Case Conference Committee (CCC) determines, based on the criteria provided and the student's individual and unique needs, whether a student with disabilities will participate in general education assessments with or without testing accommodations, or in the alternate assessment with or without accommodations. The alternate assessment is based on alternate academic achievement standards/content connectors. The CCC must be informed that the decision to participate in an alternate assessment means the student will have limited or modified exposure to the grade level standards that may have a significant impact on the student's academic outcomes and postsecondary opportunities.

## SPREAD THE WORD: ALTERNATE DIPLOMA

For the purpose of identifying students eligible to participate in the statewide alternate assessment program in lieu of participation in the general assessment program, the student's CCC must determine that the student is a student with the most significant cognitive disability.

### Guidelines

- A comprehensive understanding of the whole student, including a review of educational considerations and data obtained through the individualized education program (IEP) process, is required to make this determination. The CCC must agree that the student:
- has a disability that significantly impacts intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. Adaptive behavior is defined as essential for someone to live independently and to function safely in daily life;
  - requires extensive, repeated, individualized direct instruction and substantial support that is not of a temporary nature; and
  - requires substantially adapted materials and individualized methods of accessing information in alternative ways to achieve measurable gains on the state academic content standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled.

⚠️ The CCC may not base its decision for determining participation in the alternate assessment solely on any of the following: a disability category or label; poor attendance; native language; social, cultural or economic difference; expected poor performance on the general education assessment; special education placement and services; emotional, behavioral, or physical challenges; English language learner (ELL) status; impact of student scores on accountability system; or need for accommodation to participate in the assessment process.

Minimum total 40 high school credits/applied units, or a combination of both. It is expected that these requirements are met through enrollment in a combination of general education courses for credit, modified general education courses in which non-credit applied units are earned, and special education courses in which non-credit applied units are earned.

## Alternate Diploma Requirements

<b>Transition Goals</b>	At least one (1) of the following activities aligned with the student's transition goals: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete an industry-recognized certification, one year certificate, or state approved alternative.</li> <li>Complete a project or work based learning experience, as determined by the case conference committee.</li> <li>Earn a work ethic certificate.</li> <li>Participate in paid/semi employment or other work related activities, as determined by the case conference committee.</li> </ol>	<b>4 Credits/Applied Units</b> Including a balance of physical science, Earth science, life, science, and engineering and technology.
<b>English/Language Arts</b>	<b>8 Credits/Applied Units</b> Including a balance of literature, composition, vocabulary, and speech or communication.	<b>4 Credits/Applied Units</b> Including a balance of U.S. history, U.S. government, geography, and economics.
<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>4 Credits/Applied Units</b> Including a balance of number sense, expressions, computation, data analysis, statistics, probability, equations and inequalities, and personal finance. <i>Required to take a mathematics or applied mathematics course each year the student is enrolled in high school.</i>	<b>2 Credits/Applied Units</b> Adapted as necessary
		<b>1 Credit/Applied Unit</b>
		<b>10 Credits/Applied Units</b>
<b>Employability</b>	Including a balance of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Job exploration;</li> <li>Work based or project based learning experiences;</li> <li>Employability skills related to mindsets, self management, learning strategies, social skills, and workplace skills;</li> <li>Introduction to postsecondary options, including an investigation into opportunities for enrollment in postsecondary programs, workplace readiness training programs to develop employability/independent living skills; and</li> <li>Instructional programs designed to teach self-advocacy.</li> </ol>	

Indiana Alternate Diploma Transition Portfolio

Develop a transition portfolio that demonstrates the work experience, credentials, or work certificates the student completed during high school.

### IDOE Alternate Diploma [Link](#)

## What is a transition IEP?

- Begins no later than age 14 (Indiana)
- Focused on life after high school
- Based on student strengths, interests, and goals
- Updated every year... can and does change often!

A Transition IEP helps answer the question:  
"What does my child want their adult life to look like — and how do we start preparing now?"

## Who is it for? and Why it matters.

- Students with IEPs (beginning at age 14 in Indiana)
- Their Families
- Members of the Case Conference Committee (CCC)

**Purpose:**

- Build a plan for:
  - Employment
  - Education/training
  - Independent living (if needed)
- Increase independence and self-advocacy

## 3 Main Areas of Transition

**Education & Training**  
College, trade school, certifications, apprenticeships, on-the-job training, Voc Rehab support

**Employment**  
Competitive employment, Union apprenticeships, supported employment, military

**Independent Living (if needed)**  
Housing, transportation, budgeting, health, daily living skills, day programs

## How it all connects



Everything in the IEP should connect.  
If something doesn't connect to your child's future, you can ask why.

## Understanding SPIN

### STRENGTHS

What is your child good at?

### PREFERENCES

What do they like?

### INTERESTS

What draws their attention?

### NEEDS

What supports do they require?

Transition planning starts with who your child is — not just what they struggle with.

## How do TORs Gather Information?



Student interviews  
Parent interviews  
Career interest surveys  
Independent living assessments  
Classroom observations  
Job shadow reflections  
CTE course reflections



Assessments are tools to help students discover direction — not to lock them into a path.

## Post-Secondary Goals

How Do We Get There?

Transition Services & Activities might include:

- Career & Technical Education (CTE)
- Job shadows
- Career Research
- College visits
- Work-based learning
- Self-advocacy instruction
- Independent living practice

"What Families Can Ask"

- Does this reflect my child's voice?
- Does the transition support future plans?
- How are we building independence?
- What skills are we working on right now for adulthood?

## Transition Assessment Examples

Student's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

STRENGTHS	INTERESTS	PREFERENCES
Check the statements that are true for you	Check the statements that are true for you	Check the statements that are true for you
<input type="checkbox"/> I am reliable	<input type="checkbox"/> I enjoy playing sports	<input type="checkbox"/> I'd rather work alone
<input type="checkbox"/> I'm easy to get along with	<input type="checkbox"/> I enjoy outdoor activities	<input type="checkbox"/> I'd rather work with a partner or group
<input type="checkbox"/> I try to follow instructions	<input type="checkbox"/> I like pets & animals	<input type="checkbox"/> I like to be leader
<input type="checkbox"/> I like to keep things neat & organized	<input type="checkbox"/> I like gardening &/or taking care of plants	<input type="checkbox"/> I prefer to be others lead
<input type="checkbox"/> I stick with things until they get done	<input type="checkbox"/> I enjoy watching TV or movies	<input type="checkbox"/> I learn best by reading information
<input type="checkbox"/> I ask others for help when I need it	<input type="checkbox"/> I enjoy listening to music	<input type="checkbox"/> I learn best by listening to information
<input type="checkbox"/> I'm good with mechanical things	<input type="checkbox"/> I enjoy playing an instrument	<input type="checkbox"/> I learn best by doing
<input type="checkbox"/> I'm good with my hands	<input type="checkbox"/> I enjoy drawing &/or doing crafts	<input type="checkbox"/> I like to keep my things neat & organized
<input type="checkbox"/> I'm hardworking	<input type="checkbox"/> I enjoy helping others	<input type="checkbox"/> I really don't care if am read & organized
<input type="checkbox"/> I'm athletic	<input type="checkbox"/> I enjoy spending time on the computer	<input type="checkbox"/> I like to meet new people
<input type="checkbox"/> I'm musical	<input type="checkbox"/> I like to read in my free time	<input type="checkbox"/> I prefer to interact with people I know
<input type="checkbox"/> I'm creative	<input type="checkbox"/> I enjoy to challenge myself	<input type="checkbox"/> I prefer to be outdoors
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> I enjoy collecting things	<input type="checkbox"/> I prefer to be indoors
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> I enjoy socializing with friends	<input type="checkbox"/> I prefer to be active & on the go - not sitting at a desk
Other Strengths: _____	Other Interests: _____	Other Preferences: _____
Other Strengths: _____	Other Interests: _____	Other Preferences: _____

**Positive Personal Profile**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Details	Details
<b>Dreams and Goals:</b> What do you really want to be or do? What is your dream job? What do you hope your life looks like in 5 to 10 years?	<b>Interests:</b> What activities are you enthusiastic about? Do you have hobbies? What are your passions?
<b>Talents, Skills and Knowledge:</b> What are you good at? What are your natural gifts?	<b>Learning Styles:</b> How do you learn best? Tell me about a thing you have learned successfully.
<b>Values:</b> What is important to you? What are your passions? What guides your life?	<b>Positive Personality Traits:</b> What do people compliment you on? What makes you a good friend?
<b>Environmental Preferences:</b> Do you prefer to work alone?	<b>Challenges:</b> What types of jobs would you hate? What kind of jobs would you like?

## Case Study 1



### SPIN

**Strengths:** creative, reliable, punctual, analytical thinker, strong teamwork skills, able to follow multi-step directions

**Preferences:** hands-on learning, being with other people rather than independent, routine, predictability, and clear tasks.

**Interests:** science, technology, politics, and the trades (specifically electrical).

**Needs:** time management skills, self-direction, confidence, social skills, and communication.

## More Transition Surveys

### Part 1: Work Environment Preferences

Which type of environment do you enjoy most? (Check all that apply)

- Working with people
- Working with animals
- Working with computers or technology
- Working outdoors
- Working in a laboratory or office
- Working with tools or machinery
- Others: \_\_\_\_\_

### Part 2: Preferred Activities

Which activities do you enjoy or feel confident doing? (Check all that apply)

- Helping others
- Organizing information or data
- Solving problems or puzzles
- Creating art, music, or design projects
- Fixing or building things
- Writing or speaking
- Others: \_\_\_\_\_

	Often	Sometimes	Seldom
1. I can remember best about a subject by listening to a lecture that includes information, explanations and discussions.			
2. I prefer to see information written on a chalkboard and supplemented by visual aids and assigned readings.			
3. I like to write things down or to take notes for visual review.			
4. I prefer to use posters, models, or actual practice and other activities in class.			
5. I require explanations of diagrams, graphs, or visual directions.			
6. I enjoy working with my hands or making things.			
7. I am skillful with and enjoy developing and making graphs and charts.			
8. I can tell if sounds match when presented with pairs of sounds.			
9. I can remember best by writing things down.			
10. I can easily understand and follow directions			

## Case Study 2



### SPIN

**Strengths:** self-advocacy skills, tech savvy, verbal communication, stress management, attention to detail, perseverance

**Preferences:** visual, hands-on, and discussion based learning, collaborative work

**Interests:** sports, health, and physical education, environmental studies, cultural studies, cooking, baking, and fitness

**Needs:** study & organizational skills, help with writing, encouragement and motivation, assistance navigating online data bases



**THANK YOU, Ezra!**

Questions?

## Vocational Rehabilitation Process



### Vocational Rehabilitation Online Referral

This statewide program helps youth and adults with disabilities or chronic medical conditions to:

- Explore employment and career options
- Find a job
- Keep a job
- Return to employment after a serious injury
- Get a better job or pursue a career pathway

Individuals can refer themselves or others using our online platform.

If your disability or chronic medical condition interferes with reaching your employment goals, Vocational Rehabilitation can help! Scan here to get started today! →

INDIANA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION | VRS.IN.GOV



## General Resources

- NWI First Steps - [indianafirststeps.org](http://indianafirststeps.org)
- IN\*SOURCE - [insource.org](http://insource.org)
- CoAction - [coaction.care](http://coaction.care)
- Area Agencies on Aging - [in.gov/fssa/da/area-agencies-on-aging/](http://in.gov/fssa/da/area-agencies-on-aging/)
- BDS - [in.gov/fssa/ddrs/developmental-disability-services/](http://in.gov/fssa/ddrs/developmental-disability-services/)
- Social Security - [ssa.gov/benefits/disability/](http://ssa.gov/benefits/disability/)
- Vocational Rehabilitation - [in.gov/fssa/ddrs/rehabilitation-employment](http://in.gov/fssa/ddrs/rehabilitation-employment)
- Family to Family (Indiana) - [inf2f.org/](http://inf2f.org/)
- The Arc of Indiana - [arcind.org](http://arcind.org)
- Indiana Department Of Education - [in.gov/doe](http://in.gov/doe)
- IEP Technical Assistance Center - [iepta.org](http://iepta.org)

## HOW DID WE DO?



## Wrap-Up Announcements

- ◆ Final CommUNITY Meetings this academic year
  - May 20th: Don't Agree w/ IEP? Now What? PCACS (Valpo)
- ◆ Stay Tuned: End Of Year Parent Survey
- ◆ SEPAC Opportunities
  - Don't have the time to join SEPAC but interested in helping the mission? Chat with a SEPAC member to discuss opportunities that may fit you!
  - Share what ideas you may have for SEPAC - We're eager to hear from you!
- ◆ Save The Date: Access & Inclusion Disability Fair, Chesterton High School, 4/21/2026, 5pm-7pm -

## CONTACT US

### PCES Special Education Parent Advisory Council

✉ - [pcesparentgroup@pces.k12.in.us](mailto:pcesparentgroup@pces.k12.in.us)

🌐 - [www.pces.k12.in.us/sepac/](http://www.pces.k12.in.us/sepac/)

📘 - [www.facebook.com/PCESSEPAC](https://www.facebook.com/PCESSEPAC)