

TRANSITION & POST-HIGH SCHOOL OUTCOMES of Youth with Disabilities

*Addressing Opportunity
Gaps in Preparation for
**Post-Secondary
Education, Employment,
and Life***

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Key Questions

1. CURRENT OUTCOMES & EXPERIENCES

How do the education, employment, and life outcomes of students with disabilities compare to their peers without disabilities?

What do stakeholders identify as key strengths and gaps in our system?

2. SERVICES AND SUPPORTS IN MASSACHUSETTS

What transition-related services and supports are upcoming or currently available to students with disabilities?

3. SERVICES AND SUPPORTS IN OTHER STATES

How can alternative approaches and programs in other states be utilized to address gaps in MA's transition supports and outcomes?

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

How can Massachusetts adjust current approaches or apply novel approaches from other states to address gaps and improve outcomes?

Our Process

1.

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS & SURVEYS

Centering of direct experience and perspectives in identification of strengths, gaps, and goals in the field

We surveyed 20 stakeholders from various state agencies, programs, service providers, caregivers and students in Massachusetts.

2.

CURRENT APPROACH: MA

Review of policies, practices, organizations, and services in Massachusetts relevant to addressing thematic gaps identified in interviews and surveys

LANDSCAPE REVIEW

Review of policies, practices, organizations, and services in other states relevant to addressing thematic gaps identified in interviews and surveys

3.

4.

SUMMATION & RECOMENDATIONS

Addressing **thematic gaps** identified during interview and survey process by applying **findings** from tasks 2. and 3. to inform

recommendations for adjustments or novel approaches in MA

What & Why of Transition Services

TRANSITION POLICIES

IDEA

MAC's
Transition
Bill, S.286

Chapter 688
"Turning 22
Law"

DEFINITION UNDER IDEA:

(1) coordinated, "results oriented" activities, focused on "improving academic and functional achievement" to "facilitate movement from school to post-school activities..."

IEP Improvement Project

- Updated forms have been redesigned to enhance the transition planning portion of the IEP by increasing the opportunity for collaboration amongst families, schools, and districts.
- It centers student's vision, identifies language acquisition issues for English learners and gives meaningful access to the curriculum framework and life out of the school.
- DESE will provide guided training on how to use and implement the new form.

1.

"CLIFFS"

What is the "Cliff":
Is the gap between child-facing and adult support services after high school and adulthood transition.

Qualitative Trends: Interviewees identified

Inconsistent opportunities,
standards, communication and
commitment throughout the state

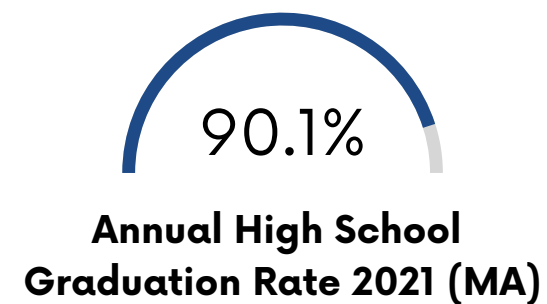
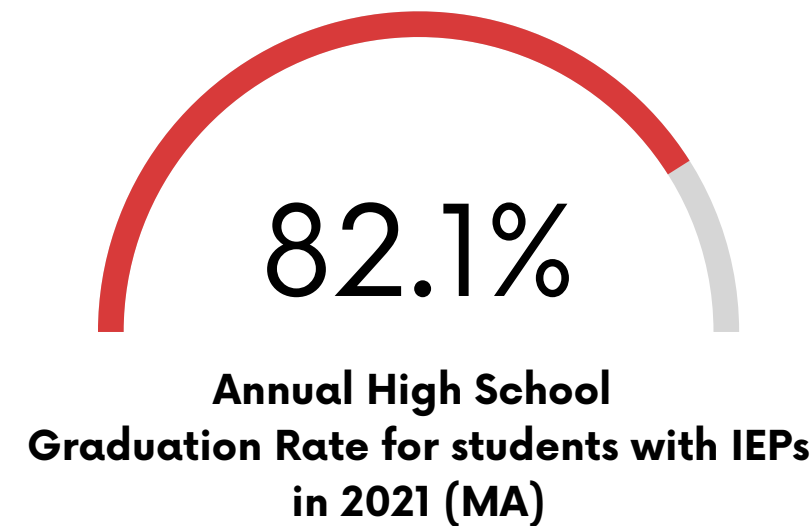
Lack of student agency,
family involvement, cross
collaboration

Equity barriers: Employment First and
other disability initiatives leave out
intersectional marginalized communities
from these programs such as race,
ethnicity, language

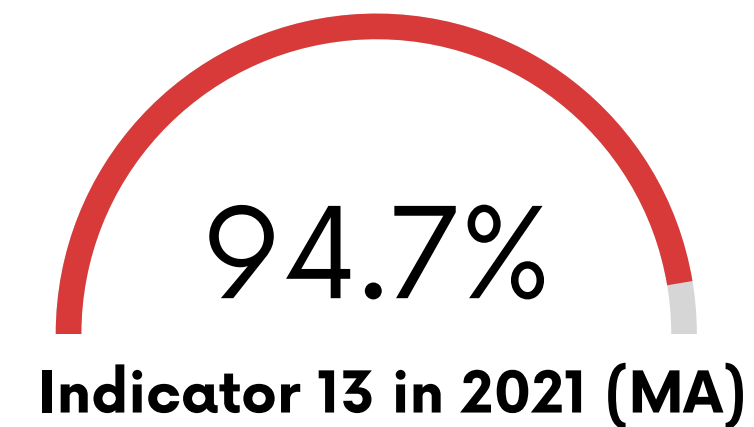
Massachusetts Current Outcomes: Indicators 1, 2, & 13

17 State Indicators collecting data on the Knowledge, Skill, and Experiences students with disabilities have gained in order to complete secondary education, training, or job

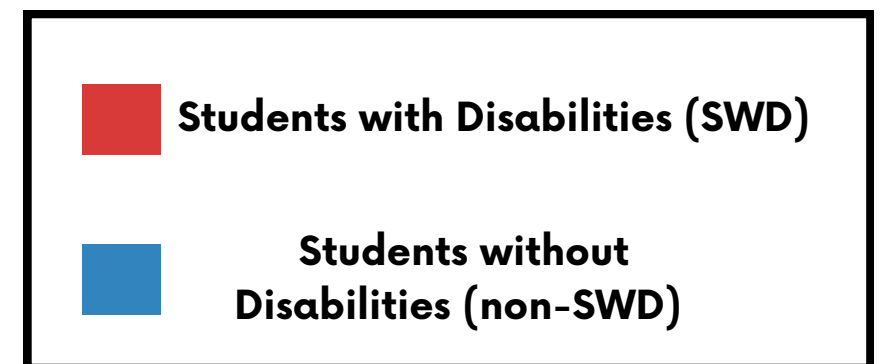
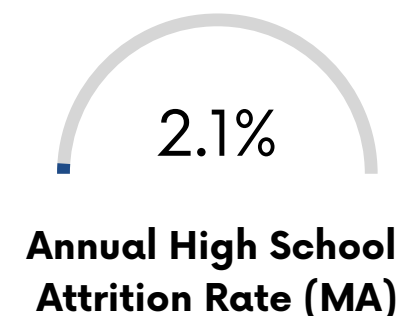
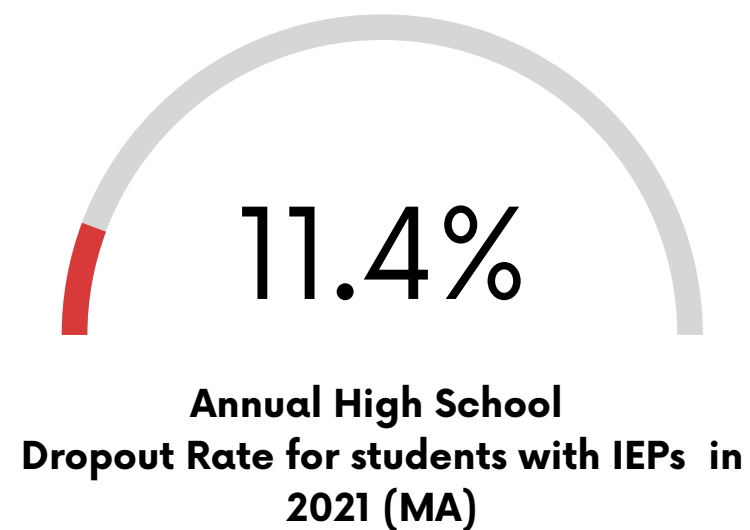
INDICATOR 1: REPORTS THE PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WITH IEPs WHO EXIT K–12 EDUCATION WITH A HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA.



INDICATOR 13: WHETHER MASSACHUSETTS STUDENTS WITH AN IEP RECEIVE SERVICES THAT COMPLIES WITH THE FEDERAL INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA).



INDICATOR 2: REPORTS THE PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WITH IEPs WHO DROPPED OUT OF HIGH SCHOOL.



Sources: Massachusetts Department Of Elementary And Secondary Education—2022 Special Education Report—Performance. (n.d.). DESE. Retrieved December 7, 2023, from https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/special_education.aspx

Indicator 14

Indicator 14 reports whether our students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are in school or have a job one year after they leave high school by graduating, aging out at age 22, or dropping out.

INDICATOR 14: POST-SCHOOL OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS WITH IEPs



INDICATORS 14: ENROLLED IN HIGHER
EDUCATION (2022)



INDICATORS 14: COMPETITIVELY
EMPLOYED (2022)



INDICATORS 14: TRAINING PROGRAM
OR OTHER EMPLOYMENT (2022)



INDICATOR 14 - MEASURE C:
OVERALL POST-SCHOOL OUTCOMES
(2022)

Top 3 Industries - U.S. BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

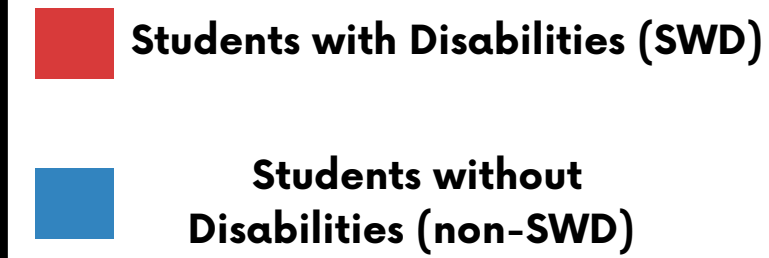
- Education and health services (Total: 20.7 %)
- Retail Trade (Total: 13.4 %)
- Professional and business services (Total: 11.7 %)

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2023, February 23). Table 4. employed persons by disability status, industry, class of worker, and sex, 2022 annual averages - 2022 A01 results. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

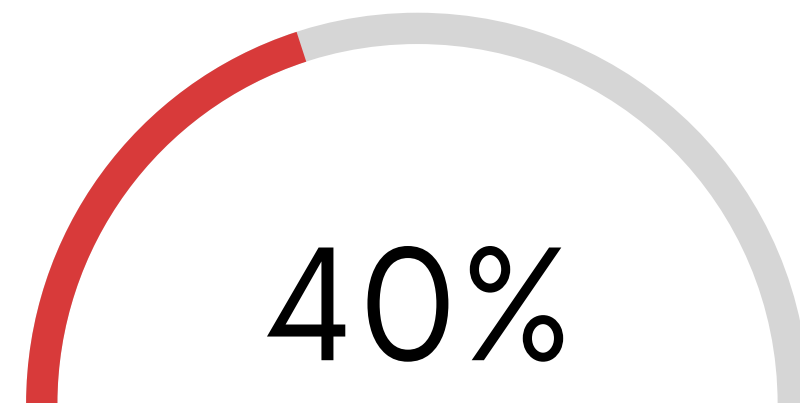
<https://www.bls.gov/news.release/disabl.t04.htm>

1.

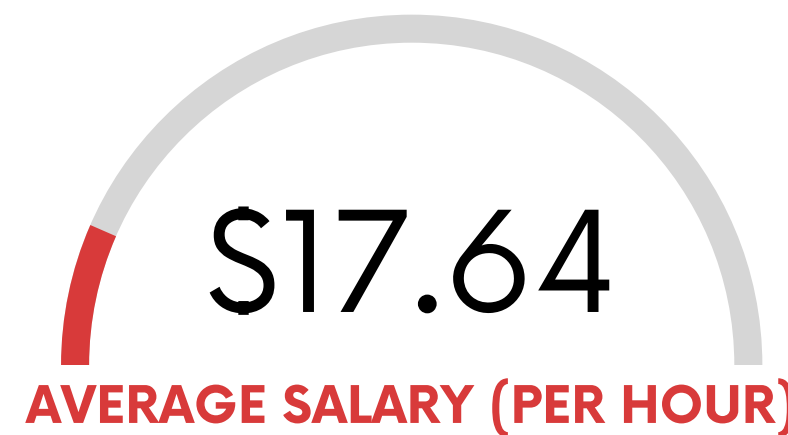
Current Outcomes: MRC



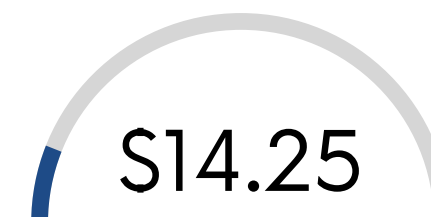
- Competitively employed MRC clients vs Natl. Average 2019: 40.10% vs 25.80%
- Average Massachusetts's Salary SWD: \$17.64 per hour (2022)
- Open Checking Account: 59% (SWD) vs 74% (Non-SWD) (National - NLTS-2)



EMPLOYED VOCATIONAL
REHABILITATION CLIENTS



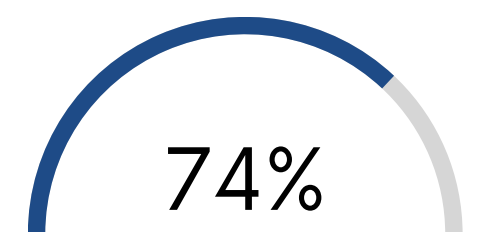
AVERAGE SALARY (PER HOUR)



MA MINIMUM WAGE IN 2019



OPEN CHECKING ACCOUNT



OPEN CHECKING ACCOUNT

Source:

Disabilities.<https://www.mass.gov/doc/massachusetts-rehabilitation-commission-employment-data-presentation/download>

U.S. Department of Labor. (1968, January 1). State Minimum Wage Rate for Massachusetts. FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis; FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis.

<https://fred.stlouisfed.org/series/STTMINWGMA>

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. (2019) MRC 2019 Annual Report. Mass.gov.

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission. (2022) MRC 2022 Annual Report. Mass.gov.

4. Recommendations

Data Gathering Task Force

U.S. Department of Labor and DESE to create a data task force to collect the following data:

- Longitudinal data for postsecondary outcomes in Massachusetts
 - Job retention and Satisfaction former students with IEPs
 - Income former students with IEPs
 - Top industries former students with IEPs
- Demographics among students in transition services
 - Social Economic Status
 - Race
 - Gender
 - Age



FINDINGS: Gaps, Alternatives, & Recommendations

1.

Gaps & Goals Identified by Interviewees



A. MENTAL MODELS / FRAMEWORKS

Neglected topics,
limited conceptions of
students capabilities,
failure to center student
vision of a "good life"



B. KNOWLEDGE GAPS

A gap in the knowledge and
practices of teachers and
administrators supporting
students with IEPs throughout
the transition period.



C. PARTNERSHIPS

Limited collaboration and
communication restrict
dissemination of information,
equitable access, and
coordination between
stakeholders



NOTE: CLIFFS

Critical moments at point of
transition to new settings,
service providers and periods
of life which exemplify the
width and consequence of
gaps in transition services

1.

Additional Gaps & Goals

WORKFORCE SHORTAGE

- Post-pandemic problems in staffing across the country.
- Limits the support for people with disabilities.
- Creates limited resources for outreach.

HOUSING SHORTAGE

- Due to this “cliff”, there is a barrier to families accessing services for adults who seek independent living
- Misinformation surrounding public benefits and funds
- Equity barriers associated with cost, access, and availability

VARIATION IN NEEDS & AVAILABILITY OF SERVICES

- Specific services by type of disability
- Graduation & employment track (vs non.)
- Translations Services
- Culturally Relevant Services

SERVICES AVAILABLE

- In school programing
- expansion of MAICEI
- long term connection to services for lower needs, one off insuffic (interview doc)
- difference in quality & quantity by locality

A. Mental Models

Changing the Conversation

by improving
training
opportunities and
digital resources

What is Charting the Life Course?



A curriculum that includes students, caregivers, employment specialists, teachers, counselors, caseworkers, and more to provide a **framework** for improving the quality of life for an individual with a disability through **independent future-building** across stages and areas of one's life.

Stakeholder Perspectives

on critical aspects of a transition-based curriculum:

1.

- self-advocacy
- consistent support for job and life coaching
- experiential learning
- considering for areas of need outside employment
- an asset-based mindset

Current Approach: MA

What Gaps Need to Be Closed?

- Stakeholders identified limited guidance for families, the state needs to ensure that CLC is understood and completed by families
- Ensure that employers utilize CLC with these individuals so that the framework is transferable

History & Current Work

State partnered with Arc of Mass., a disability advocacy nonprofit, in 2021 to create videos that streamline opportunities and services for families to access (DDS, 2021)

Employment First MA's Blueprint for Success 2.0: Moving Forward Together, Department of Developmental Services road map to expand employment opportunities and meaningful community engagement (DDS, 2023)

DDS plans to integrate the CLC framework for families to support employment and day services, improving guidance for implementation rather than stopping with availability

State Comparison

3.

Remaining Gaps:

- Post-Pandemic Struggles
- Implementation: How can states use CLC data
- How to collaborate across different orgs

Utah

Adopted the framework Missouri created

As of May 2023, Utah's Parent Center is using CLC to identify and bridge gaps for families accessing state services (Utah Parent Center, 2023)

Using data from charting the life course to integrate peer supports

This means placing individuals with disabilities with peers and staff to support quality of life development

B. Knowledge Gaps

Improving Access to Information



by expanding
training
opportunities and
digital resources

Stakeholder Perspectives

About 70% of our interviewees indicated that there is a gap in the **knowledge and practices of teachers and administrators** supporting students with IEPs throughout the transition period.

Knowledge Gaps Identified by Stakeholders:

1.
 - Pedagogical practices: Teacher-facing supports
 - lack of continuous and accessible training provided for teachers in transition services.
 - Need for better pedagogical practices in meeting diverse learner needs
 - Pedagogical practices: Student-facing supports
 - More effort to develop agency and autonomy among their students.
 - Support students in developing basic life skills.
 - Teachers and administrators lack knowledge of the different resources available to their students.

Current Approach: MA

Services & Organizations

- Comprehensive System of Professional Development (CSPD)
 - Module 3
 - Introduction of the issues related to youth with disabilities as they transition into adult life.
 - Recognizing the central role of the student in transition planning
 - Understanding how to use the Massachusetts Transition Planning Form (TPF) and the IEP in the transition process;
- CSPD Trainers
 - Have limited trainers to provide training on the CSPD modules.

2

Takeaways from Other States

3.

CONNECTICUT

- State Education Resource Center (SERC)
 - An agency from the CT State Board of Education designed to provide quality transition training, professional development, and technical assistance to CT schools.
 - They make PD accessible by creating calendars for a variety of professional learning opportunities related to Secondary Transition with registration links and detailed descriptions of the training.

4. Recommendations

Trainings for Teachers & Families

Mandate CSPD module 3 & Charting the Life Course for all SPED teachers that serve students aged 14-22 & expand the CSPD trainer program to provide more support for district trainings.

Expansion of continuous training for teachers and administration throughout the school year for CLC and transition services.

- Providing a variety of asynchronous and in-person trainings.
 - (i.e. video trainings and in-person workshops)

Adopt the framework and workshops that the Utah Parent Center is rolling out that aim to walk families through accessing services and using the CLC.

4. Recommendations

Revamp the DESE Website's Transition Services Page

Create drop-down subpages on the DESE website that are content specific to providers, students and educators.

Student-Facing: promotes student voice through resources within social awareness, education, employment, housing, life documents, and money management.

Providing an online calendar of each training, professional development, and workshop for the year on a living document with registration links and descriptions.

C. Partnerships

Enabling Coordination,
Communication and Collaboration

A woman with blonde hair and glasses is pointing her right index finger at a whiteboard. The whiteboard is covered with several orange and grey sticky notes. In the background, other people are visible, also looking at the whiteboard. The entire image has a red overlay.

Network of
Transition
Coordinators
and Liaisons

Stakeholder Perspectives

1.

Areas of Concern:

- **Not reaching families and students with information** on existing resources and services, future opportunities, current requirements for future programs (skills, paperwork, eligibility, etc.)
 - leaving to students and families to find
 - **Absence of a point person at the state level** to advocate, coordinate, create opportunities for collaboration, dedicated funding
 - **Lack of consistency** in availability of information and services between districts
-
- **Limited opportunities for employment** exploration & opportunity, internships, volunteering
 - responsive to students needs, strengths, & interests
 - **Employer** misconceptions, awareness, procedures
 - **Limited engagement with community** – pride, connection, life skills, resources, employment
 - **Limited access & preparedness** for higher education opportunities
 - (concurrent & future)

Stakeholder Perspectives

1.

GOAL:

- improve **communication** of information on available services, opportunities, rights, and guidance to students & families
- enable **collaboration and communication** between service providers to improve quality & access as well as educator preparedness

Suggestions:

- **State Coordinator, School or District Liaisons**
- **Additional transition team members:** liaisons, reps from DDS, MRC, DMHS, etc.
- Annual **state conference**
- **Student resource & employment fairs**
- **Direct communication** opportunities with students, families, teachers, admin

2.

Current Approaches: MA Transition Partnerships

Partnerships and Programs

MRC with DESE plan to include 3000 SWD to **Pre-Employment Transition Services** (MRC)

MA Transition to Adulthood and local Facebook groups for parents, families, and students

VR agencies, SEPACs, LEA Transition Coordinators Organize **Local Transition Programs**

Secondary Transition Coordinators for each District

DDS Chapter 688 Transition Coordinators for SWDs 18-22 transitioning with LEA Referral (DDS)

New 2022 law requires state colleges and universities to include **concurrent enrollment programs** (DESE, 2022)

Services and organizations

Department of Developmental Services (DDS)

MA Rehabilitation Commission (MRC)

Department of Education and Secondary Services (DESE)

Inclusive Concurrent Enrollement (MAICEI)

Department of Mental Health (DDH)

Department of Children and Families (DCF)

MA Special Education Advisory Board

MA Special Education Advisory Board

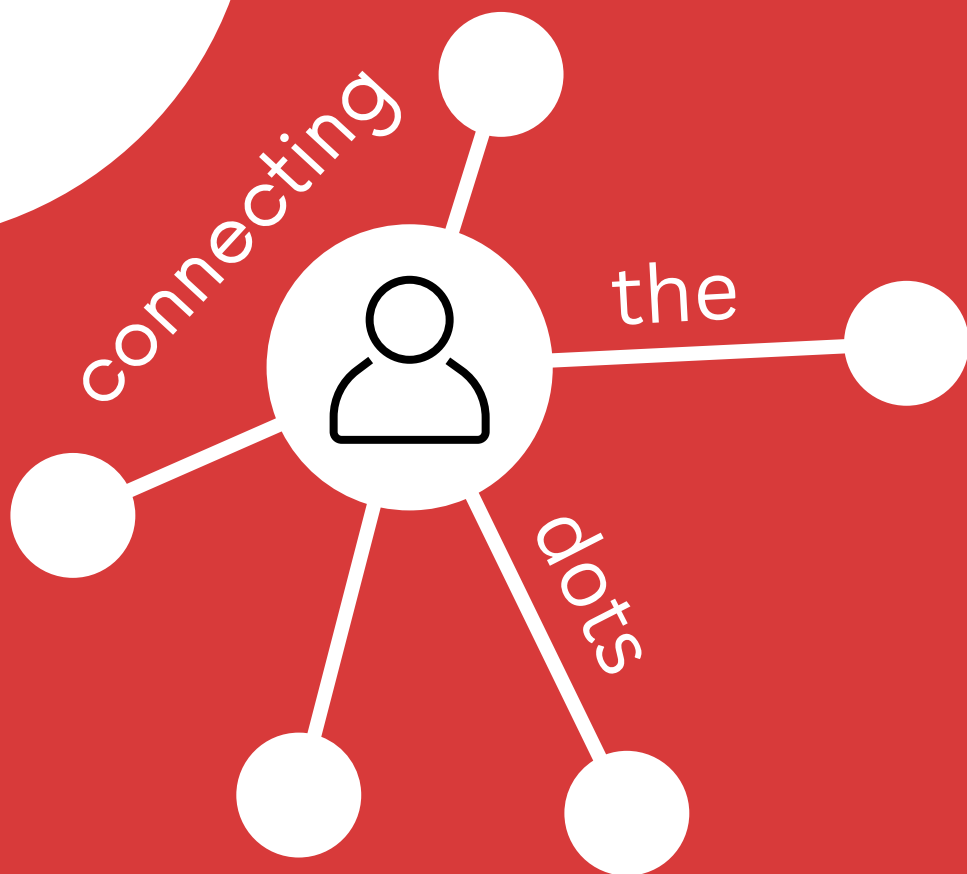
Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA)

Arc of Massachusetts

Massachusetts Commissions

Takeaways from Other States

3.



MARYLAND - (A) STATE & (B) LOCAL TRANSITION SPECIALIST

- **LOCATION:**

- (A) Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services,
State Dept. of Education
- (B) Local School System (LSS)

- **UNIT:**

- (A) State
- (B) District

- **ROLE:**

- (A) program & technical support to LSS, rep. div. and dept. on state
& federal councils and committees
- (B) student counseling and support to address challenges,
collaborate with school staff, community partners, and families

4.

Transition Coordinators

State-level coordinators organize district liaisons and serve as centralized, state level point of coordination and advocacy on transition

- Create state wide opportunities for **connection and collaboration** among stakeholders
- Organize, train, and plan workshops in cooperation with **district liaison network**
- Sit on relevant **state level committees, commissions, and advisories** and attend **BESE** meetings when appropriate to provide evidence and recommendations on transition services.
 - Continued advocacy for inclusive, student-centred policy and additional resources to support evidence based practices
 - Facilitate interagency coordination and collaboration
- Conduct and lead **data collection efforts**
 - Beyond Indicator 14
 - Collaborating with different agencies.
- Initiate state-wide **employment bridge programs** and **employer education** in support of people with disabilities.
 - Annual student employment fair(s)
- Act as **channel for advocacy** directly from stakeholders (including self advocates) at the state level
- Improve **standardization of supports** available to SWD and families for transition planning
- Identify and spearhead implementation of **evidenced based approaches** in the field of transition services

4.

Transition Liaisons

On-the-ground, full-time, district-level transition liaisons

Responsibilities to Community

Responsibilities to Students

- **Collaborate** with local DDS, MRC etc. branches.
- Host events and advertise with local post-secondary institutions for their **MAICEI/concurrent enrollment** programs
- Organize **workshops and annual summit** to facilitate outreach among stakeholders
- Ensure **LEAs and SEPACs** have up to date information on services, best practices, and evolving requirements
- Maintain online **resource list** and distribute physical materials on **available resources**.

- Participate in **IEP creation**
 - Work with LEA IEP representative and Special Ed teachers.
- Help with **ABLE accounts** (OSERS, 2020)
- Assist in process for **referrals**
- Navigate complex applications alongside families.
- Provide **materials (brochures, reports etc.)** from VR and other agencies
- Support **dispute resolution**



QUESTIONS & FEEDBACK