**Key points:**
- Assign specific staff member to keep track of each student's services
- Devise tracking system, keep records of provision of services
- Follow up with outside agencies to ensure services are provided appropriately

Don't let transition services fall through the cracks

You've taken care to write detailed transition plans that lay out the transition services your students will receive.

But have you followed up to make sure those services are being provided as written?

In *In re: Student with a Disability, 116 LRP 25375* (SEA OH 05/26/16), a charter school failed to carry out the specific transition services listed in the transition plan of a teenager with an intellectual disability. As such, the school was held liable for compensatory services.

Ultimately, it's the responsibility of the district, not the student or parents, to ensure that the transition services outlined in a student's IEP are implemented.

Make sure your students' transition services don't fall through the cracks. Take the time to develop thorough recordkeeping and service tracking systems, recommended Marcy Gutierrez, a school attorney and senior counsel for Lozano Smith in Sacramento, Calif.

Consider using these strategies to ensure you're following through on the services you've agreed to provide:

- **Designate specific staff to keep track of services**

Assign a staff member, or "case manager," to each student's transition plan, Gutierrez recommended. This person should be responsible for keeping track of the student's transition services, she said.

Consider having your guidance counselors serve as a "hub" for postsecondary services for students with and without disabilities, said Kristin Dudek, director of pupil personnel services for Salamanca (N.Y.) City Central School District. That way, counselors can partner with special education staff to carry out services for students with disabilities.
• Keep records of services provided

Develop a system to document the provision of transition services, Gutierrez said. Have staff keep a log whenever a service is provided with the time, date, and location of the service, as well as a brief description of the service. This log can then be submitted to the case manager on a monthly or quarterly basis, she said.

Look at what your district uses in terms of maintaining documentation and model your tracking system on that, Dudek recommended.

Once you have a system in place, ensure staff use it on a consistent basis to track and monitor when transition services are implemented, as well as to track students’ progress toward postsecondary goals, Gutierrez said.

• Ensure outside agencies provide agreed-upon services

Districts often contract with outside agencies -- such as vocational rehabilitation agencies, internships, work placements, or other adult agencies geared toward individuals with disabilities -- to obtain transition or community services.

Make sure any outside agency your district works with provides correct services as specified in the student's IEP, Gutierrez said. Follow up on your students' interactions with outside agencies to find out what the agency is saying and providing, she said.

• Compensate for missed services

During the school year, you suddenly realize you've failed to provide a service listed in a student's transition plan. What recourse should you take?

As a best practice, a transition plan should only list services that can be accomplished or provided within the school year (not to be confused with postsecondary goals, which should address the student's plans for after high school), Dudek said. So, ideally, no service should fall through the cracks, she said.

However, if it does happen, first send a letter to the student's parents notifying them that the service has not been provided, Gutierrez advised. Remedy the situation by offering compensatory services to the student and adhering to a tracking system to ensure services are provided this time, she said.
• **Follow proper procedures to change, substitute transition services**

Remember that changes to a student's transition plan must be made through the IEP process, Dudek said. If you'd like to change a student's transition services, first provide prior written notice to the parents, especially if there is a disagreement over the proposed change, Gutierrez said.

If appropriate, hold an IEP meeting to discuss the proposed changes and gather input from all team members. Make sure you document all changes in writing in the IEP, Gutierrez said.

You may also make changes to a transition plan without an IEP meeting via an IEP amendment as long as the parent and district agree to the changes and the agreement is documented by written consent, she said.

• **Train staff, encourage open communication**

Ultimately, in order to ensure transition services are provided appropriately, staff need to have adequate training in the transition assessment and planning process, Gutierrez said.

Encourage communication and collaboration between staff members so that everyone is aware of a student's needs and required services, she said. In addition, maintain open communication with families and outside agencies to keep track of students' progress.

*Ragini Algole* covers postsecondary transition, charter school, and transportation issues for LRP Publications.

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