

Transition Timeline – Your “To Do” List

Pre-High School Tasks

- Take challenging classes in English, mathematics, science, history, geography, foreign language, and the fine and practical arts
- Develop study skills and strategies that you know work for you
- Investigate which high school classes will best prepare you for the colleges you want to attend
- Investigate your options among schools and programs of study and choose ones that will promote your academic and career interests
- Investigate how to save money for college and options for financial aid
- Your IEP should include the course of study needed for you to transition smoothly to higher education
- Remediate basic skill deficits in reading, mathematics, oral and written language
- Plan to graduate with a Standard Diploma or Advanced Studies diploma and plan your course of study accordingly
- Plan to take the SOL tests in English: Reading/Literature and Research, English: Writing, and Mathematics at the end of eighth grade
- Begin a transition portfolio of important documents and work samples that may be helpful in college planning

Freshman Year Tasks

- Learn the specific nature of your disability and how to explain it so others will understand your needs
- Learn how to participate actively in your IEP, especially your transition plan, which is your plan to help you achieve your goal of attending college.

- Learn how to advocate for yourself in developing your transition plan with your case manager and IEP team
- Prepare academically by carefully planning your course of study
 - See <http://www.pen.k12.va.us/2plus4in2004/> for information for students regarding Virginia's diploma options.
- Work with your guidance counselor to be sure that you will have the standard and verified credits you need to obtain the desired diploma
- Prepare for and pass the end-of-course SOL tests required for verified credits
- Develop your academic independence by learning how to use the academic adjustments, auxiliary aids and services, and learning strategies that you will need in college – LEARN HOW TO LEARN!
- Ask your guidance counselor to teach you about the college resources available in your school
- Explore career options with your guidance counselor and visit your school career center
- Become involved in school- or community-based activities that interest you and that might lead to a career
- Talk to people in various professions to find out what they like and dislike about their jobs and what kind of education is needed
- Continue to remediate basic skill deficits
- Learn strategies to help you access the same course work as your peers
- Continue to add to your transition portfolio

Sophomore Year Tasks

- Continue to actively participate in your IEP transition planning with your case manager and IEP team

- Continue taking courses to prepare you for college
- Continue to remediate basic skill deficits
- Continue to add to your transition portfolio
- Add to your understanding and use of learning strategies to help you access the same course work as your peers
- Participate in extracurricular activities, hobbies, and work experiences
- Identify interests, aptitudes, values, and opportunities related to occupations in which you are interested
- Meet with your career or guidance counselor to discuss colleges and their requirements
- Register and take the *Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test* (PSAT) in the fall — consider using testing adjustments and auxiliary aids
- Speak with college representatives that visit your high school and are at college fairs
- Visit college campuses and talk to college students about their campus experiences
- Continue to save for college and investigate funding sources

Junior Year Tasks

- Continue to participate in your IEP transition planning with your case manager and IEP team
- Continue your involvement in school- or community-based extracurricular activities
- Focus on matching your interests and abilities to the appropriate college choice
- Look for college campuses that have majors in which you might be interested and the kind of campus community in which you would like to live

- Identify the appropriate academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services that you will need in the postsecondary setting and learn how to use them efficiently (Be sure to include assistive technologies such as electronic devices and specialized computer software)
- Keep a current list of the academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services you use in high school in your transition portfolio
- Consider taking a course to prepare for the *Scholastic Aptitude Test* (SAT) Test or for the *ACT Assessment* (ACT).
- Take the SAT or ACT in the spring. Consider taking them more than once – once with testing adjustments and once without them
- Establish a possible career goal (you can always change your mind!)
- Determine a college major consistent with this career goal
- Learn time management, study skills, assertiveness training, stress management, and exam preparation strategies
- Learn how to advocate for yourself – not everyone will understand your disability or be sensitive to your needs
- Gather information about college programs that offer the disability services you need (you may want to add these to your transition portfolio)
- Speak with college representatives who visit your high school and at college fairs
- Visit campuses and especially service providers to verify the available services and how to access them
- Consider people to ask for recommendations — teachers, counselors, employers, coaches, etc.
- Investigate the availability of financial aid from Federal, State, local, and private sources

- Investigate the availability of scholarships provided by organizations, such as corporations, labor unions, professional associations, religious organizations, and credit unions
- Continue saving for college
- Contact the Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) Counselor who serves your school to determine your eligibility for DRS services
- Invite the DRS counselor to attend your IEP meeting
- Make sure that the documentation of your disability is current. Colleges usually want current testing, usually less than three years old when you begin college

Senior Year Tasks

- Meet with your school guidance counselor early in the year to discuss your plans.
- Continue to develop your advocacy skills and to polish study skills
- Plan to visit campuses early in the year
- Learn how to be interviewed
- Role-play college interviews with counselors, family members, and teachers
- Finalize your transition portfolio so that it contains at least the following:
 - Copies of your psychological and educational evaluations
 - Transcripts
 - ACT or SAT scores
 - Your current or latest IEP
 - Your medical records (if appropriate)
 - A writing sample or other work samples related to your choice of a major

- Your letters of recommendation from teachers and employers
- The current list of academic accommodations and auxiliary aids and services you may need in college (be sure to include assistive technologies)
- College visits
 - Write letters to college admissions officers and service providers requesting a visit.
 - Be prepared when you visit colleges to write or talk about your experiences and to take placement tests.
 - Admissions officers will provide information about admissions procedures and financial aid opportunities
 - Take your transition portfolio with you to share with disability service providers, if appropriate.
 - Evaluate the disability services, service provider, and staff
 - Talk with college students receiving disability support services about their experiences
- Compare the various colleges and think about living in the campus community (e.g., housing, social activities, classrooms, leisure activities, athletic activities, comfort level with support service)
- Apply to two or more of your preferred colleges – choose one that is a “reach,” one where you expect to be accepted, and one where you KNOW you can be accepted.
- Prepare your applications carefully, paying close attention to the instructions and deadlines. Be neat. Be accurate.
- When accepted, consider attending the pre-admission summer program (if available). It will be worth your time and ease the process when classes start in the fall.

- Take the SAT again, if appropriate
- If not done in your junior year, contact the Department of Rehabilitative Services (DRS) counselor to determine your eligibility for DRS services while in college

Excerpted from
Virginia's College Guide for Students with Disabilities (2003 Edition).
Available at www.pen.k12.va.us