

## A High School Program for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

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Paper presented at the annual conference of the Division on Career Development and Transition, November 14, 2013, Williamsburg, VA.

### **About CSESA**

Research & Development Center

Funded by the Department of Education (IES)

 Purpose: To develop and study a comprehensive high school program for students on the autism spectrum



### **CSESA Sites**

















### The Goal of CSESA

To improve post-secondary outcomes for students by using high quality professional development and evidence-based interventions to support practitioners, families, and students



### Why is CSESA important?

...nearly 80% still live at home, almost half have no jobs or postsecondary training, 40% never have contact with friends, 17% never feel hopeful about the future, 21% never engage in outside activities, and many experience a decrease in activities, and many experience and therapy services.

— Paul Shattuck

[After high school] they are completely without any supports at that point, and from their world seems to get smaller and smaller the child is almost always at home."

Individuals with ASD have poorer outcomes compared to individuals with other disabilities – even the individuals with ASD graduating from the general curriculum with a diploma.

I can tell you that if I had had a plan
like this in place...my life would be
very different. I would not have
wasted 10 years of my life doing jobs
that I was frankly unsuited for and did
not fit in.
-Adult with ASD

It's hard to get that consistency, making sure everybody's following. That's a lot of people to get on the same page. Everybody's willing to try stuff, but we're not all using the same language, and that's confusing for somebody to work with that many people.

-Administrator

### Students with ASD

- High School
  - Difficulty navigating a complex environment
    - Frequent transitions between classes and teachers
    - Nuanced social situations
- Post High School
  - Poor post-secondary outcomes overall

"Our kids are alone. They made it through high school somehow – poorly or well. But they are all alone. They don't go to dances, they don't go bowling, and it is not because they do not want to."

-Parent from CSESA focus group





### **CSESA Content**

#### **CSESA Foundations**

- <u>Purpose</u>: professional development for school staff who are serving students with ASD
- Format: Assessment, training, and coaching

#### Independence & Behavior (PRISM)

- <u>Purpose</u>: to promote responsibility, independence, and self-management for students with ASD
- Format: Process for identifying and addressing key goals in existing instruction

#### Social Competence and Peer Connections (PASC)

- <u>Purpose</u>: to improve social competence skills and increase social opportunities for students with ASD
- Format: Combination of peer-mediated interventions and direct instruction



### **CSESA Content (contin.)**

### Academics: Literacy (Alternate Achievement and CSR)

- <u>Purpose:</u> to teach students to comprehend passages of connected text (AAL), used to support learning of content (CSR)
- <u>Format:</u> use of systematic instruction to teach question answering and related comprehension skills (AAL), use of evidence-based approach with cooperative learning component (CSR)

#### **Transition and Families**

- <u>Purpose</u>: to improve transition planning process and family knowledge of transition process
- <u>Format:</u> explicit instruction, community based instruction, coaching, and family training groups

#### **CSESA Model Framework Assessment** Student School/Community SSS Checklist Resource Mapping/APERS Online Course, Initial Training, Transition Training, and Ongoing Coaching Strengths & Needs **Planning Professional Development** IEP Involvement Equipping Student School/Community Student School/Community IEP and GAS goals A-Team 20 **Empowering Implementation** Transitioning Family Together School/Community/Student AAL, CSR, PASC, SCI-H, PRISM, WBLEs, EBPs **Evaluation** School/Community Student Re-Mapping/APERS Student Portfolio

### The Big Picture

2012-2013

Year 1

Development & piloting of individual model components (6 sites)

2013-2014

Year 2

Piloting of several components in combination (6 sites)

6 schools
2 components
at each

10 students per school

2014-2015

Year 3

Randomized control trial (RCT) of full model at 30 sites across the country (Cohort 1) 2015-2016

Year 4

Continue implementation at 30 Cohort 1 sites; enroll 30 more sites (Cohort 2) 2016-2017

Year 5

Continue implementation at 30 Cohort 2 sites, follow-up data at Cohort 1 sites



### Year 1: CSESA Study

#### Focus Groups

- With school personnel, community stakeholders, youth and young adults with ASD, and family members
- Revised and refined components from feedback

#### Pilot Studies

- Each site tried at least one component in a high school
- Collected data from school staff, families, and students
- Further revised and refined components



### Year 2: CSESA Study

- At each site:
  - One high school
  - 7-10 students with ASD
  - CSESA Foundations + 2 components

- At UNC Charlotte site
  - CSESA Foundations
  - Academic
  - Transition & Families
- At Vanderbilt site
  - CSESA Foundations
  - Academic
  - Transition & Families

Academic

Independence & Behavior



Social



Transition & Families





# The CSESA Curriculum: Peer and Social Competence Component

Exploring the promise and possibilities of peer-mediated interventions for adolescents with ASD

Social

#### **CSESA Model Framework Assessment** Student School/Community SSS Checklist Resource Mapping/APERS Online Course, Initial Training, Transition Training, and Ongoing Coaching Strengths & Needs **Planning Professional Development** IEP Involvement Equipping Student School/Community Student School/Community IEP and GAS goals A-Team 20 **Empowering Implementation** Transitioning Family Together School/Community/Student AAL, CSR, PASC, SCI-H, PRISM, WBLEs, EBPs **Evaluation** School/Community Student Re-Mapping/APERS Student Portfolio

### Peer and Social Component (PASC)

#### CSESA Peer and Social Component (PASC)

#### 1. Assess Student's Social-Related Needs

Incorporate input from stakeholders (e.g., teachers, parents, youth, and other team members), assessments (e.g., SSiS, VABS, social contact data), and IEP to identify key needs.

Although other data sources could be considered, educators will draw upon social and communication measures already used within the project.

#### 2. Craft Social-Focused Goals

Write social-related intervention goals to address both shortand long-term social needs and identify school contexts in which those goals can be addressed.

\*Social-focused goals would be articulated as part of the GAS process so progress could be monitored.

#### 3. Select Intervention Approach(es) and Contexts Determine which strategy(ies) are best aligned with the

\*Although intervention responses should be individualized, every student in the project would receive some type of peermediated intervention; only some students would participate in the SCI-H.

students' social needs, their characteristics, and the settings in which they spend their school day.

#### Implement Peer-Mediated Interventions

All students participate in at least one type of peer-mediated intervention during the academic year, taking one or more of the following types:

#### Implement Group-Based Social Skill Instruction

Some students participate in the semester-long Social Competence Intervention led by school staff

A. Peer Networks: Students interact in facilitated small groups in regular meetings held outside of instructional

B. Peer Support Arrangements: Peers provide academic and social support in an inclusive general education

C. Peer Partner Programs: Peers interact with and support students in special education classrooms as part of a credit or volunteer program

Peer-Mediated Intervention Components Include:

- 1. Identify and Recruit Peers
- 2. Orient All Students to the Intervention
- 3. Staff Facilitate Interactions and Provide Ongoing Support
- 4. Staff Provide Additional Training to Peers (as needed)

This cognitive-behavioral social skills training program, the SCI-H, consists of five units, with a range of five to eight 45-minute lessons per unit. Each unit offers introductory material, modeling, structured practice, and naturalistic practice. Additionally, review activities and homework are included to provide practice and review of previously learned skills and opportunities to generalize skills to real life situations.

The five units are

- Facial expressions
- · Communicating ideas Collaboration
- · Perspective taking
- · Problem solving

#### 4. Identify and Provide Training to Facilitators

Identify adults (e.g., special educators, paraprofessionals, school staff, community staff) who will facilitate the selected social competence intervention(s).

\*We will provide this training to facilitators Year 2. But in future years, it may be worth training special educators to provide training paraprofessionals for sustainability.

#### 5. Implement the Social-Focused Intervention(s)

Interventions are delivered to students over the course of a semester or school year following our developed manuals with active involvement of school staff.

\*We have working manuals for peer supports, peer networks, and the SCI-H. The peer partner program manual is still being adapted.

#### 6. Involve Families

Parents assist in reinforcing social-related skills, promoting interactions that extend outside of the school day, and communicating with educators about social connections.

\*Discussion of family roles in fostering social competence and connections would be addressed within the Transitioning Together meetings.

#### 7. Collect Data to Evaluate Student Progress

Progress toward social-related goals is reviewed and student/ staff feedback is sought, with adaptions to peer training and adult support made in response to review of progress.

\*Progress on social-related GAS goals would be monitored by educators, along with data from social contact surveys and any other data sources.

### **PASC Intervention Process**

- 1. Assess student's social-related needs
- 2. Craft social-focused goals
- 3. Select intervention approach(es) and contexts
- 4. Identify and provide training to facilitators
- 5. Implement the social-focused intervention
- 6. Involve families
- 7. Collect data to evaluate student progress

#### Student's needs and Intervention Resources and Approach preferences context of school Choose at least one: Does well academically but Staff to facilitate meetings needs support to join peer group Enthusiastic peers to engage Peer Network Is in a more social environment student in weekly meetings Conducive space for meetings at times (e.g., clubs, lunch) 30-min block; 1-2 x per week Student is in at least one general Needs to access more academic **Peer Support** education classroom with and social activities in the teacher open to participating classroom Peers who want to be a support Support can be faded gradually Daily opportunities for contact Needs/wants either social or Peer Partner Administration open to providing academic support Course credit or volunteer hours Peers who want to be a support Staff person to coordinate the program Then consider adding: IQ > 75 and good attendance Participates in at least one 4+ students with whom to form a **Group-Based Social** general education class group Competence Needs/wants access to social Staff person to facilitate meetings skills instruction Intervention 45-min block; 2x per week

Other Factors to Consider	Peer Network	Peer Support	Peer Partner	SCI-H
A group of peers are able to meet regularly and offer support	X		X	
An educator can meet weekly and arrange activities in advance	X			
General education classroom placement with a 1:1 paraprofessional		X		
Dedicated space is available for group meetings	X			X
An adult staff member who can meet regularly and deliver curriculum				X

<sup>\*</sup> School resources must align with intervention requirements

	GOAL 1: Initiate conversations with peers	GOAL 2: Work collaboratively with classmates	GOAL 3: Develop relationship with peers
Advisory			
Math 1		Peer support	
Keyboarding			
Break			
History			Peer support
Science	Peer support		
Lunch	Peer network		Peer network
Life skills class			Peer partner

<sup>\*</sup> Chosen intervention must align with relevant social goals

### Peer Network Interventions

- A social group of students established around a student with ASD that:
  - Meets weekly around conversation and shared activities
  - Interacts outside of the meeting
  - Helps the student become more involved in school life
  - Receives regular guidance from an adult facilitator

Peer Network Strategies to Foster Social Connections Among Adolescents With and Without Severe Disabilities

Erik W. Carter, Jennifer Asmus, Colleen K. Moss, Molly Cooney, Katie Weir, Lori Vincent, Tiffany Born, Julia M. Hochman, Kristen Bottema-Beutel, and Ethan Fesnerman



TEACHING Exceptional Children | Nov/Dec 2013 51

### Peer Networks: Overview

- Identify and invite network partners
- Hold a training meeting for partners (student with ASD may or may not participate)
- 3. Hold an orientation meeting with student and partners
- 4. Facilitate regular social network meetings
- 5. Provide feedback and support
- 6. Fade direct support





### Potential Benefits of Peer Networks

- Students with ASD who are supported by peers have been found to:
  - Interact regularly with more peers
  - Enjoy more sustained interactions with peers
  - Participate in more school activities
- Peers providing support to classmates with ASD have reported:

I loved being part of this and being able to learn a little more about Jack.

I've been able to communicate better with the kids but also with other people.

My eyes are more open to my partner's needs.

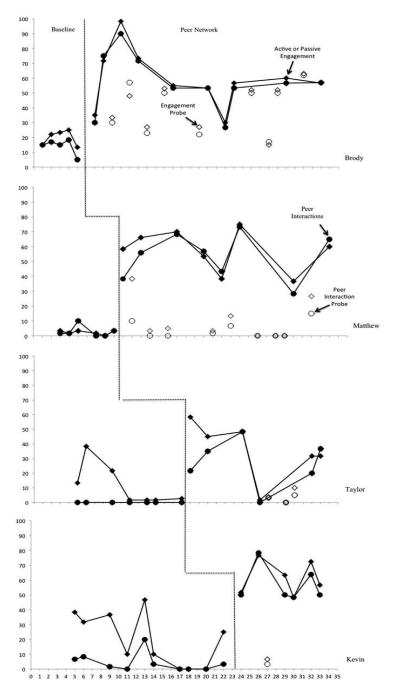
### Early Findings from Two Pilot Studies

- Six high school boys with ASD (ages 14-18)
- 15 peer partners (without disabilities)
- 5 network facilitators (special educators, paraprofessionals
- Three high schools (urban, high-poverty)
- Network Context: Cafeteria or Advisory Period

### Measures & Design

- Observational Measures
  - Peer interactions (i.e., partners, others, students with disabilities)
  - Social engagement (i.e., active, passive, unengaged)
  - Social-related goals (individualized)
  - Peer and adult proximity
- Experimental Designs
  - Multiple baseline across participants
  - MBL/Withdrawal (ABAB, ABA)

### In the Cafeteria



Hochman, Carter, Bottema-Beutel, Gardner, Harvey, & Redding (in preparation)

### In the Classroom (Advisory)

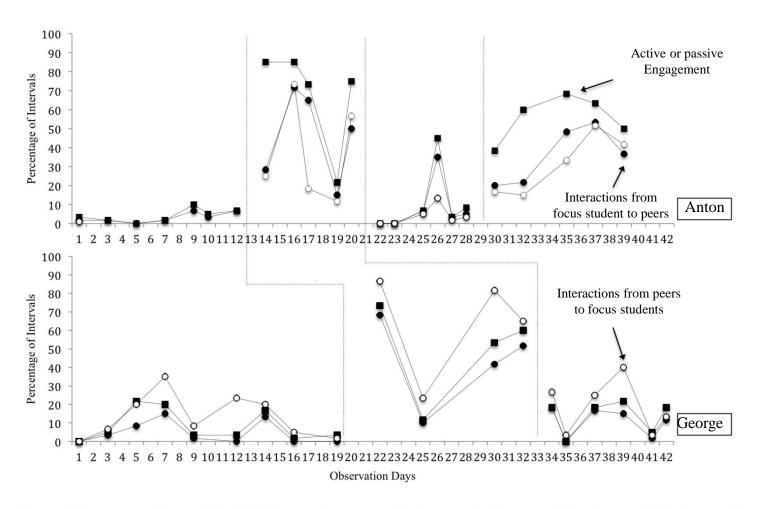


Figure 1. Percentage of intervals in which focus students were actively or passively engaged (closed squares), the focus student interacted socially with peers (closed circles), and a peer interacted socially with the focus student (open circles).

### Focus Groups and Interviews

- Nine focus groups (61 stakeholders)
  - Three with educators and administrators
  - Four with parents of children with ASD
  - Two with community representatives and providers
- Individual interviews (28 youth and young adults with ASD)
- Research Questions
  - How do key stakeholders understand the concept of "social competence and social connections" and its importance within the high school curriculum?
  - What factors might impact the development of social competence and connections for high school students with ASD?
  - How should school services and supports be optimally designed to promote social competence in effective and socially valid ways?
  - How should such interventions be addressed alongside other transition priorities within a comprehensive intervention approach?



### Stakeholder Recommended Strategies for Promoting Social Skills and Connections

- 1. Begin intervention and awareness efforts as early as possible to ensure positive outcomes
- 2. Ensure strong support exists among school leaders and promote schoolwide commitment
- 3. Make sure intervention and/or programming efforts have the buy-in of *all* stakeholders
- 4. Reflect on the school's capacity and ensure interventions are sustainable and feasible
- 5. Actively promote awareness and positive views about disability (and ASD specifically) widely
- 6. Involve families in meaningful ways responsive to the strengths and needs of each family
- Identify each student's social-related needs, strengths, and goals using meaningful assessment procedures
- 8. Consider how issues of privacy and disability disclosure will be addressed
- 9. Decide with a planning team how the intervention will be implemented and by whom
- 10. Decide on avenues for recruiting peers and qualities they should possess
- 11. Orient peers to their roles and responsibilities within any intervention efforts
- 12. Consider the contexts for interventions and how opportunities for interaction will be designed
- 13. Make sure students with ASD receive effective instruction to build social competence
- 14. Consider generalization at the beginning of and throughout intervention efforts



# The CSESA Curriculum: Transition & Families Component



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### **Transition & Families**

- Transitioning Together (family component)
- Transition Process
  - School and Community Resource Mapping
  - Transition Planning Process
  - Student Involvement in the IEP
  - Work Based Learning Experiences in preparation for postsecondary goals (college, careers, independent living)



### Family Support-Transitioning Together Program Goals

Provide education and support for parents

Emphasize positivity and problem solving

 Share relevant resources and referrals based on results of school and community mapping



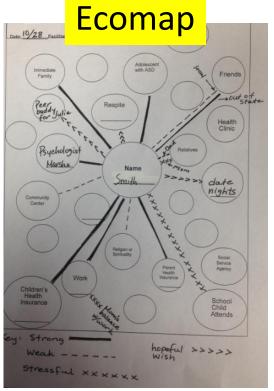
### Family Support-Transitioning Together Program Components

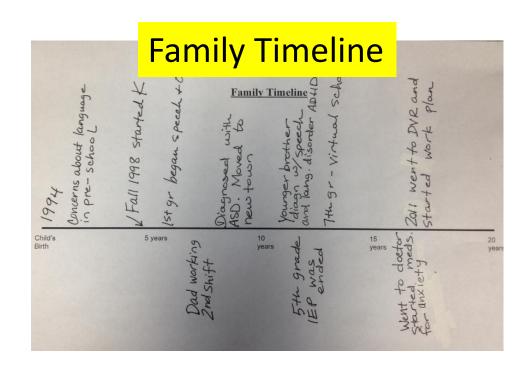
2 individual family "joining sessions"

8 multi-family weekly group sessions

8 sessions for teens

Joining Session





#### Family Goals might be:

- Finding respite opportunities so mom and dad can go on dates.
- A peer buddy for their daughter to have social opportunities.



### The problem solving process

STEP 1: DEFINE PROBLEM

STEP 2: LIST ALL POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

STEP 3: DISCUSS ADVANTAGES AND

**DISADVANTAGES** 

STEP 4: CHOOSE THE BEST SOLUTION

### Transitioning Together Topics

- Autism in adulthood
- Transition planning
- Family Topics
- Problem-solving
- Risks to adult independence

- Community involvement
- Legal issues
- Risks to parental health and well-being



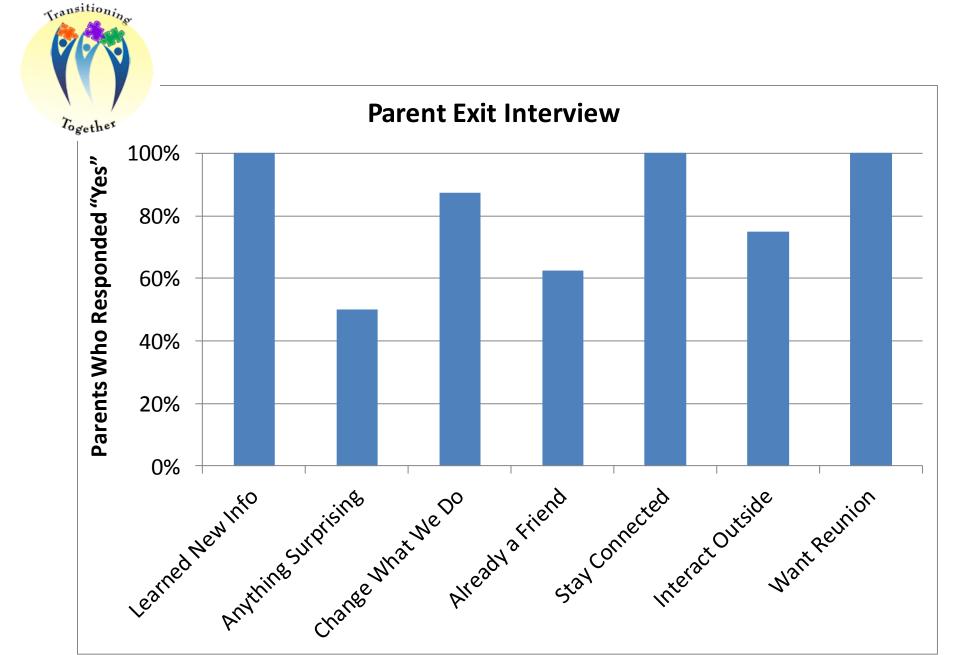
# **Early Findings**

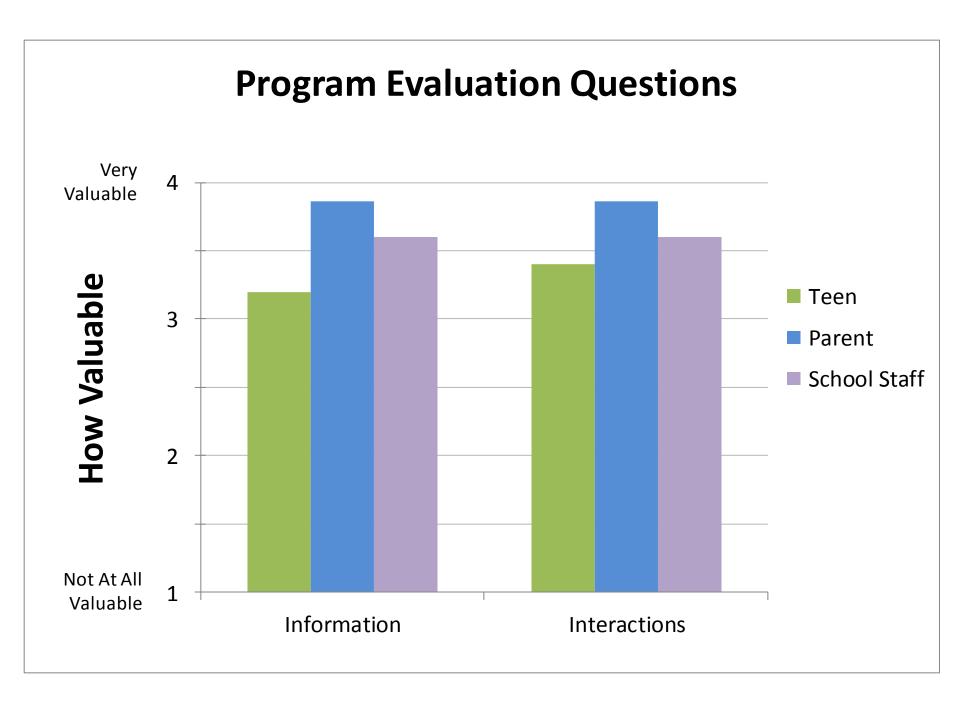
### **Positives**

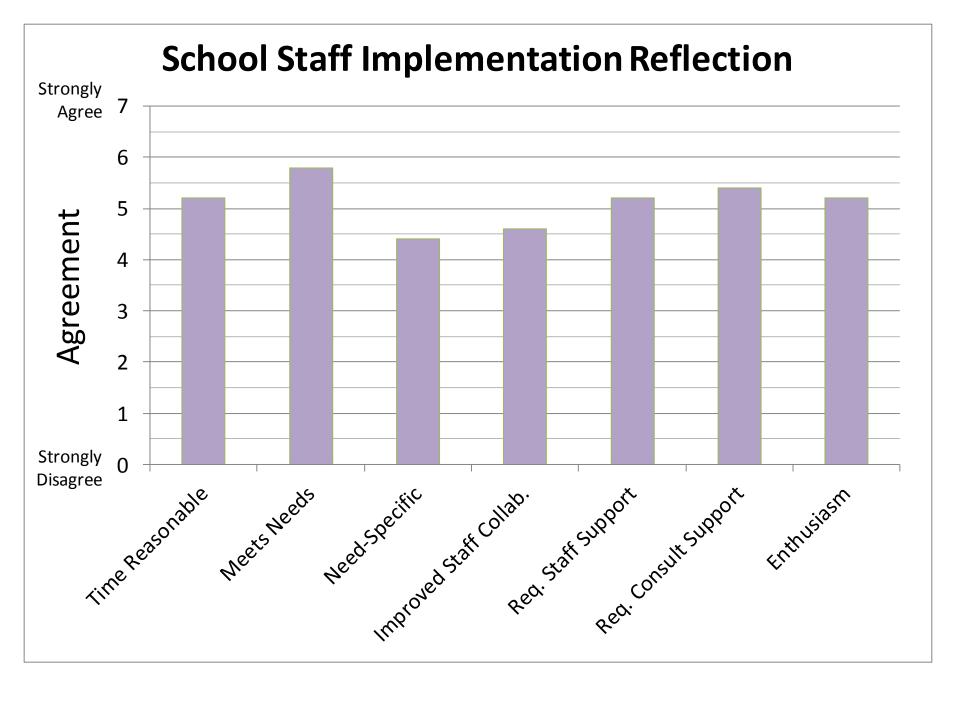
 Parents, teachers, and teens reported satisfaction with the program and were highly engaged

### **Information for CSESA**

 Having a very heterogeneous group of families resulted in less discussion of autism-specific concerns







#### **Community Resources**

- Recreational
- Religious
- Consumer
- Local autism societies

### Services for Individuals with Disabilities

- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Mental health services
- Social security benefits
- Adult service providers
- Legal services
- Local autism societies

### Transportation Information

- Public transportation
- Taxi service
- Others

# **Community Mapping**

#### **Independent Living**

- Local agencies
- Adult service providers

Postsecondary, Vocational, Adult and Continuing Education

#### **Employment Resources**

- Job openings sources
- Businesses within 5-mile radius of school
- Community adult service providers
- Local autism societies

Adapted from: Neubert, D.A. & Moon, M.S. (2006). Community assessment. College Park, MD: University of Maryland, Department of Special Education.

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#### **Case Manager**

- Guidance counselor info
- Supplemental aids & supports

#### Extracurricular

- Clubs and sports
- Honor societies
- Social events
- Proms
- Homecoming
- Class trips

#### **Hallways**

- Hall monitor info
- Helpful info about school or class

#### **Technology**

- Technology aide info
- Assistive technology
- Access to internet or computer



School Mapping



#### Class Activities

- Class advisor info
- Graduation
- Class trips

#### **Health Suite**

- School nurse info
- Alcohol & drug prevention services
- Others



#### **Post-School**

- Diplomas options at school
  - College fairs info

## **Community Service**

- Clothing drive
- Food drive
- Community service projects



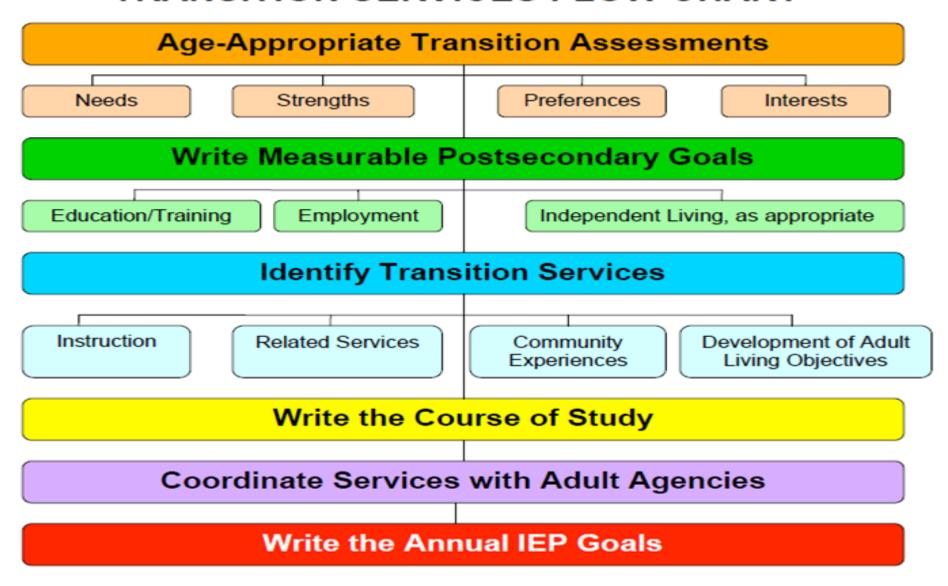
# **Transition Planning**

- Conducting transition assessment to
- Develop postsecondary goals
- Identify transition services
- Identify appropriate course of study
- Identify annual goal instruction
- Identify agencies to engage in planning
- Planning/ writing IEPs that meet I-13 (legal) requirements

### **Indicator 13**

- Percent of youth with IEPs aged 16 and above with an IEP that includes appropriate measurable postsecondary goals that are annually updated and based upon an age appropriate transition assessment, transition services, including courses of study, that will reasonably enable the student to meet those postsecondary goals, and annual IEP goals related to the student's transition services needs.
- There also must be evidence that the student was invited to the IEP Team meeting where transition services are to be discussed and evidence that, if appropriate, a representative of any participating agency was invited to the IEP Team meeting with the prior consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority. (20 U.S.C. 1416(a)(3)(B))

#### TRANSITION SERVICES FLOW CHART



Seattle University - Center for Change in Transition Services, 2010

# Indicator 13 Quality Rubric

- 0 3 point rating for each item
- Adapted from Rhode Island's quality I-13 review rubric

# Student Involvement in the IEP

Career

College

Community

 Choice of 3 evidence-based curricula to teach

- Engages student in identifying strengths, needs, and goals
- Teaches about IEP process
- Prepares student to participate in the meeting at various levels

# **Student Directed Meeting Resources**

- Self Directed IEP
- Self-Advocacy Strategy
- Whose Future is it Anyway?



# **Work Based Learning Experiences**

Career Exploration	"Career Exploration involves visits by youth to workplaces to learn about jobs and the skills required to perform them. Visits and meetings with employers and people in identified occupations outside of the workplace are also types of career exploration activities from which youth can learn about jobs and careers." (Luecking, 2009, p.13)
Job Shadowing	"Job Shadowing is extended time, often a full workday or several workdays, spent by a youth in a workplace accompanying an employee in the performance of his or her daily duties." (Luecking, 2009, pg.l3)
Job Sampling/Work Sampling	"Work Sampling is work by a youth that does not materially benefit the employer but allows the youth to spend meaningful time in a work environment to learn aspects of potential job task and "soft skills" required in the workplace." (Luecking, 2009,p. I3)
Service Learning	"Service Learning is hands-on volunteer service to the community that integrates with course objectives. It is a structured process that provides time for reflection on the service experience and demonstration of the skills and knowledge required." (Luecking, 2009, p. 13)
Internships	"Internships are formal agreements whereby a youth is assigned specific tasks in a workplace over a predetermined period of time.  Internships may be paid or unpaid, depending on the nature of the agreement with the company and the nature of the tasks." (Luecking, 2009, p.13)
Apprenticeships	"Apprenticeships are formal, sanctioned work experiences of extended duration in which an apprentice learns specific occupational skills related to a standardized trade, such as carpentry, plumbing, or drafting. Many apprenticeships also include paid work components."  (Luecking, 2009, p.I3)
Paid Employment	"Paid Employment may include existing standard jobs in a company or customized work assignments that are negotiated with an employer, but these jobs always feature a wage paid directly to the youth. Such work may be scheduled during or after the school day. It may be integral to a course of study or simply a separate adjunctive experience." (Luecking, 2009,p.13)
Mentoring	"Mentoring is a person who through support, counsel, friendship, reinforcement and constructive example helps another person, usually a young person, to reach his or her work and life goals. Mentoring relationships provide valuable support to young people, especially those with disabilities, by offering not only academic and career guidance, but also effective role models for leadership, interpersonal and problem-solving skills."(Office of Disability Employment Policy, 2012)

# **Sample Work Sampling Activities**

Career Ready		
Student Activities	<ul> <li>Rotation through various community workstations</li> <li>Sampling various job tasks</li> <li>Career Assessments</li> <li>Unpaid Workplace Experience</li> </ul>	
Resources	Education for Employment in Kalamazoo County, Michigan provides Work Sampling experiences in real workplaces. For more information see: <a href="http://kresa.org/efe">http://kresa.org/efe</a>	
College Ready		
Student Activities	<ul> <li>Review an introductory, general syllabus from a college/ university level course. Choose one sample paper or project from the course. Map out a method of you completing one of the assignments. Create a time that includes all the steps you would take in order to make sure you completed the assignment.</li> </ul>	
Resources	<ul> <li>http://www.facstaff.bucknell.edu/rickard/101Syll.html is a link to Professor John Rickard's English 101: Introduction to Fiction syllabus. Many of the fictional samples are synchronous to canonized texts found in most English 101 courses.</li> <li>http://www.virginia.edu/vpsa/stdnt-disabilities-accom-hndbk07-08.pdf provides you with the guidance that the University of Virginia disseminates to their Faculty and Staff to help with accommodations for students with disabilities</li> </ul>	

## Contact CSESA

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