New Jersey Department of Education

Office of Special Education
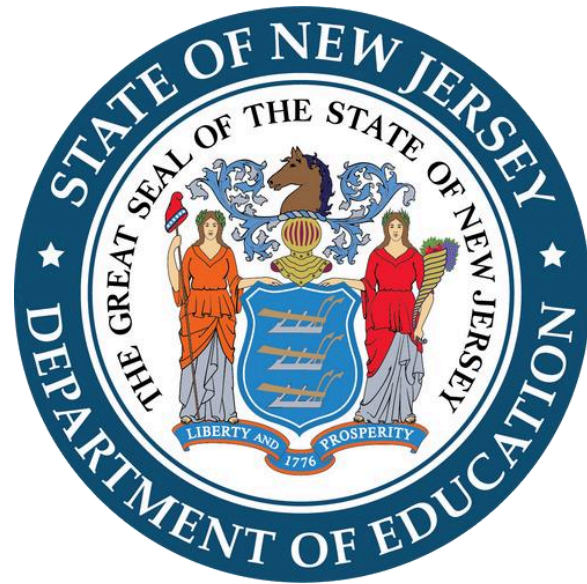
Quality Indicators for

Programs Serving Students with Disabilities 18-21-Years-Old

A Self-Assessment and Quality Improvement Guide for Programs Serving Students with Disabilities 18-21-Years-Old.
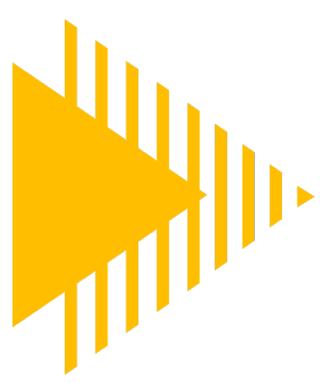
2024

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Quality Indicators for *Programs Serving Students with Disabilities 18-21-Years-Old*

New Jersey Department of Education

Office of Special Education

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Introduction

Students with disabilities who remain enrolled in school beyond the age that students typically graduate high school often do so because they, their parents or guardians, and the other members of their Individualized Education Program (IEP) team agree that they have unmet educational needs regarding their preparation for successful adult life beyond high school. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA (2004), is a federal law that allows students eligible for special education and related services to remain enrolled through the end of the school year when they turn 21. Many school districts in New Jersey have also recognized that most, if not all, students who remain enrolled in school until age 21 will be served by the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) after exiting school, as they often have complex support needs that the DDD system is designed to address.

Many school districts in New Jersey have created various educational programs to meet the unique needs of their students with disabilities who are 18-through-21-years-old who have met the required academic credits. Since these students have typically earned all the required academic credits to graduate (as per New Jersey Administrative Code (N.J.A.C)6A:8-5.1) but remained enrolled in school, the only required credits they must earn according to N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1A(1)vi are "at least 3 3/4 credits in health, safety, and physical education during each year of enrollment, distributed as 150 minutes per week, as required by N.J.S.A. 18A:35-5,7 and 8." Additional programming for students aged 18-to-21-year-old as specified in their IEP often includes individualized instruction on activities of daily living (e.g., food preparation, personal grooming, handling finances), independent living skills (e.g., using transportation, maintaining a home, clothing management), community-based instruction, and work-based learning experiences with job coaching.

Purpose

High-quality services for students aged 18-through-21 are critical for supporting the successful transition of young adults with disabilities from high school to adult life. The effectiveness of programming for these students can vary widely depending on the quality of services provided. This guidance document is designed to assist school districts with ensuring students are receiving quality services. Program quality indicators are specific, measurable criteria used to assess the effectiveness of programming. These indicators can help program administrators and educators identify areas for improvement and ensure that they are providing the most effective programming.

Examples of quality indicators for programs serving students who are 18-to-21-years-old might include student engagement and satisfaction measures, employment outcomes, connections to other agencies, participation in college and other adult education options, and independent living skills acquisition. By tracking these indicators over time, program administrators and educators can evaluate the effectiveness of their programs and make data-driven decisions to improve specific aspects of their program to maximize the post-school outcomes of their students. These quality indicators can also help staff communicate their program's effectiveness to stakeholders such as families.

What are Transition Services for Students with Disabilities 18-to-21-Years-Old?
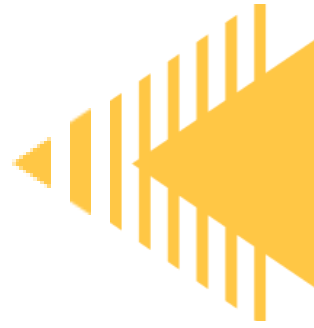
The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004 (IDEA), defines "transition services" as "a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that—(A) is designed to be within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to postschool activities, including post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation; (B) is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests; and (C) includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation." 20 U.S.C. §1401(34)

New Jersey Administrative Code

According to the New Jersey Administrative Code (N.J.A.C. 6A:14), beginning with the IEP in place for the school year when the student will turn age 14, or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP team, transition planning must be included. Students with disabilities who are 18-through-21-years-old have typically completed all their academic requirements for high school graduation, and therefore most of their school day is available to provide customized programming that directly addresses their individual needs related to preparing them to achieve their desired measurable postsecondary goals.

The IDEA (2004) and the New Jersey Administrative Code (N.J.A.C.) emphasize the importance of preparing students with disabilities for a successful transition from school to further education, employment, and independent living. Schools and agencies must provide comprehensive transition services to help students achieve their goals and become active members of their communities.

Evidence-Based Practices

Evidence-based practices refer to interventions and strategies that have been scientifically researched and shown to achieve desired outcomes effectively (Iris Center, 2023). When it comes to transition services for students with disabilities aged 18-21, several evidence-based practices have been found to be effective.

One such practice is person-centered planning. This approach involves engaging the student with a disability and their closest allies in an informal planning process and ensuring that their future goals, preferences, interests, and strengths drive this process. Person-centered planning can lead to greater student engagement, increased self-determination, and more.

Instruction in self-determination and self-advocacy is also an evidence-based practice for transition services. Self-determination skills include goal setting, decision making, problem-solving, and self-evaluation, which are essential for post-school success. Self-advocacy skills involve advocating for oneself and communicating effectively with others, including employers, service providers, and community members. Instruction in self-determination and self-advocacy can lead to greater self-confidence, improved communication skills, and increased independence.

Other evidence-based practices for transition services for students with disabilities aged 18-21 include community-based instruction, work-based learning experiences, assistive technology, and parent and family involvement. Effective transition services for students with disabilities aged 18-to-21-years-old should be based on evidence-based practices, tailored to each student's individual needs and goals, and involve collaboration among educators, families, service providers, and community members. By implementing evidence-based practices in transition planning and service delivery, students with disabilities can achieve successful post-school outcomes and become active members of their communities.

Recommended Use of the Quality Indicators

The information presented herein is designed to guide all schools' practices for educating students with disabilities who are 18-21 years old and to promote consistency of programs across educational environments throughout New Jersey. The quality indicators outlined in the next few sections can act as a roadmap for applying current best practices to a variety of delivery options. Careful attention to each indicator and its components, along with thoughtful integration of these components into an effective whole, will enable programming for 18-to-21-year-old students to continue to improve. It is designed with best practices in mind and is intended for district self-assessment and continuous improvement.

Local educational agencies (LEAs) can utilize the quality indicators to evaluate and enhance the effectiveness of their programs for students with disabilities aged 18-21. These indicators provide specific, measurable criteria for assessing the overall quality of programs and services offered. There are several recommended uses of quality indicators for LEAs serving students with disabilities aged 18-21, including:

Program Evaluation

School districts can use quality indicators to assess the effectiveness of existing programs and identify areas for improvement. This can help ensure that programs meet the needs of students with disabilities and are aligned with best practices and evidence-based strategies.

Goal Setting

Quality indicators can be used to set program improvement goals and track progress toward those goals over time. This can help school districts identify priorities and allocate resources more effectively.

Professional Development

Quality indicators can be used to identify areas where staff members may need additional training or support. This can help ensure that staff members are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to serve students with disabilities aged 18-21 effectively.

Collaboration

Quality indicators can promote collaboration among stakeholders, including educators, families, and community members. Involving all relevant parties in the process of quality services will assist students in developing the skills and knowledge they need to achieve successful post-school outcomes.

This set of quality indicators for programs serving to students with disabilities aged 18-21 reflects the comprehensive and inclusive nature of educational and community environments. These indicators ensure that the program is effective, supportive, and responsive to the diverse needs of the participating students.

The following nine (9) indicators collectively contribute to educational programming that is inclusive, supportive, and effective in meeting the diverse needs of students with disabilities aged 18-21.

1 **Program Structure**

2 **Transition Assessments**

3 **Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy**

4 **Academic and Functional Curriculum**

5 **Community-Based Instruction**

6 **Interagency Collaboration**

7 **Family Engagement**

8 **Person-Centered Planning**

9 **Adult Education**

Indicator 1: Program Structure

For most students and their families, high school graduation is an important celebration that marks the departure from a way of life that they have grown accustomed to over many years. Leaving behind familiar people, buildings and grounds, routines, and structures of primary and secondary school life, most students move on to experience new and exciting adult activities, including attending college or other postsecondary education opportunities or entering directly into the workforce to start a new career.

Some New Jersey students with disabilities who remain enrolled in school after their class peers have graduated and moved on to their adult lives find themselves in a unique and incomprehensible situation. On the one hand, they participated in all the commencement ceremonies with their graduating class (per Alicia's Law, 18A:7C-5.2) while saying goodbye to childhood, and on the other hand, starting in September of that year, they continue to participate in a daily routine that looks and feels a lot like high school did. Each school day, these young adult students ride the same school bus to get to and from the high school building, follow the same bell schedule as everyone else in the building, travel the same familiar hallways, and participate in high school classes and lunch periods, often with younger students. It is not difficult to understand the confusion that many of these young adult students have about what is going on in their everyday schedule.

Researchers and other experts in special education have called for programming for these 18- to 21-year-old students to be vastly different from high school programming. Consistent with the widely accepted concept of age-appropriateness for all students, these young adult students can be best prepared for success in the next stage in life by participating in individualized, age-appropriate activities in places that are typical of other young adults (e.g., college campuses, community businesses, etc.). Research suggests these adult students should not return to high school settings and activities.

Additionally, since typically these students have already earned the academic credits needed to earn a State-endorsed diploma, there is more opportunity than ever for IEP (Individualized Education Program) teams to be flexible and creative when individualizing each student's educational program.

In addition to eliminating or avoiding the confounding situation for students described above, the following quality indicators are focused on helping school districts to maximize the effectiveness of 18-to-21-year-old programming so that their adult students can prepare for and achieve their goals for a successful adult life.

1.1 Age-Appropriate Settings

1.2 Individualized Programming

1.3 Instructional Structures

1.4 Administrative Infrastructure

Indicator 2: Transition Assessments

Transition assessment is defined by the Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT) of the Council for Exceptional Children as the "...ongoing process of collecting data on the individual's needs, preferences, and interests as they relate to the demands of current and future working, educational, living, and personal and social environments. Assessment data serve as the common thread in the transition process and form the basis for defining goals and services to be included in the Individualized Education Program (IEP)" (Sitlington, Neubert,& Leconte, 1997, p. 70-71). During the final few years of participating in transition assessment, this process can help students and the other members of their IEP team to further define and refine their desired postsecondary goals and the educational programming needed to achieve these goals.

2.1 *Assessment Methods*

2.2 *Information | Results of Assessment*

Indicator 3: Self-Determination & Self-Advocacy

Self-determination and self-advocacy are essential skills for students with disabilities transitioning from high school to postsecondary education and/or the workforce. Self-determination refers to the ability of an individual to make choices, set goals, and take responsibility for their own lives. Self-advocacy refers to the ability of an individual to speak up for themselves and their needs.

For students with disabilities aged 18-21, self-determination and self-advocacy should involve:

- Setting and pursuing goals: Encouraging and assisting students to identify their strengths, interests, preferences, and postsecondary goals and to develop a plan to achieve them.
- Making decisions: Empowering students to make informed decisions about their education, career, and personal life.

Implementing effective instructional strategies using evidence-based practices to teach self-determination/self-advocacy skills is central to ensuring students are able to advocate for themselves and make decisions. These skills enable students to take control of their lives, make informed decisions, and advocate for themselves effectively.

3.1 *Setting and Pursuing Goals*

3.2 *Making Decisions*

3.3 *Instruction in Self-Determination and Self-Advocacy*

Indicator 4: Academic and Functional Curriculum

Most of the students entering an 18-to-21-year-old program have typically earned the required academic credits needed to earn a State-endorsed high school diploma. Students remain enrolled in school because they need to continue to learn functional skills such as self-care skills, social/communication skills, work skills, using public transportation, etc. The curriculum should focus on targeting the functional skills students need currently and in the future. Research suggests that students who participated in community-based training that involved instruction in non-school, natural environments focused on the development of social skills, life skills, accessing public transportation, and on-the-job training are more likely to be engaged in post-school employment (White & Weiner, 2004). Learning experiences should be functional, age-appropriate, linked to personal interest, and taught in natural settings.

4.1 *Life Skills and Communication*

4.2 *Employment Skills*

4.3 *Health and Physical Education*

Indicator 5: Community-Based Instruction

The approach to preparing students aged 18-to-21 for post-school success is grounded in the belief that students need immersive experiences in environments that mirror the experiences of their peers. This approach recognizes that young adults with disabilities benefit most from instruction that blends academic learning with the mastery of practical, everyday activities. These activities take place in settings that closely resemble the natural landscape where their peers are engaged, such as college campuses, community businesses, and social spaces, as highlighted in research by Collins (2007) and Test & Mazzotti (2011).

Classroom-based instruction in this preparation may be necessary, but the emphasis remains on fostering seamless integration within the wider community fabric. The classroom becomes a springboard to the world outside, serving as a space to refine skills and knowledge that can be readily applied to scenarios in the community and at home. The aim is not to isolate students within the confines of a traditional high school building, but rather to anchor learning experiences in the very context where they will navigate adulthood– their home community.

By aligning instruction with the rhythms and norms of their peers' lives, young adults with disabilities can build confidence, self-esteem, and a strong sense of belonging. They can practice self-advocacy, explore their passions, and cultivate relationships that transcend the boundaries of educational environments. As instruction becomes a seamless part of the fabric of their community, the transition to adulthood becomes not just a milestone, but a journey they are equipped and excited to undertake.

The essence of this approach lies in recognizing that the most effective way to prepare students aged 18-to-21 with disabilities for success beyond school is to ensure that their learning experiences are embedded within the very communities of which they will become active members. Instruction is not confined to a classroom but flourishes within the rich tapestry of daily life experiences, creating a powerful foundation for a fulfilling and inclusive adult life.

5.1 *Locations and Activities in the Community*

5.2 *Individualized Instruction*

According to Wehmeyer et al. 2006, "Quality services involve the active participation of adult service providers in planning and implementation." Transition mandates in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) require interagency collaboration in planning, especially those agencies that will be serving the students. Research shows that students who receive assistance from community-based agencies are more likely to be engaged in post-school employment or education. Students who received assistance from 3 to 6 community-based agencies were more likely to be engaged in post-school employment or education (Bullis et al., 1995).

Collaboration is a predictor of positive post-school outcomes for students with disabilities when it occurs across education, vocational rehabilitation (VR), families, and other stakeholders who provide instruction, pre-employment transition services, and other transition services. The Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) emphasizes the provision of vocational rehabilitation (VR) services to students and youth with disabilities to ensure they have opportunities to receive training and other services necessary to achieve competitive integrated employment. WIOA requires the state VR agencies and the state education agency to enter into a formal interagency agreement to facilitate and coordinate services needed by students with disabilities to successfully transition to employment or other post-secondary activities leading to employment.

This formal interagency agreement is essential to ensure that students with disabilities experience a smooth transition from school to post-school activities. The IDEA specifies that schools are to ensure that transition planning and services are coordinated with outside entities, agencies, and service providers as part of students' annual IEPs.

On October 23, 2019, the NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (NJDVRS), the NJ Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (NJCBVI), and the NJ Department of Education (NJDOE) entered into a formal interagency agreement. School districts must work in collaboration with local NJDVRS and NJCBVI offices to ensure the coordinated provision of needed Pre-ETS and with other state agencies and local providers as needed by their students.

WIOA requires VR agencies (NJDVRS and NJCBVI) to spend at least 15% of their annual budget to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to all students with disabilities aged 14 through 21 (those with an IEP and those considered to be an individual with a disability for purposes of section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act) as needed and in coordination with local school districts. These students with disabilities are "potentially eligible" for VR services according to WIOA, and therefore do not need to apply for eligibility with NJDVRS or NJCBVI to obtain Pre-ETS.

Indicator 6: Inter-Agency Collaboration (2 of 2)

In addition to providing Pre-ETS, WIOA requires VR agencies (NJDVRS and NJCBVI) to provide other VR services for students and youth with disabilities who have applied and been determined eligible for their agency's services, including VR Transition Services and other traditional VR services (e.g., job coaching) that facilitate the transition from school to competitive integrated employment. NJDOE, NJDVRS, and NJCBVI collaborate to develop and conduct presentations for school staff, students, parents, and others and to develop and publish resources.

The NJDOE collaborates with other state agencies, including the Department of Human Services (DHS), the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) the Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), the Department of Children and Families (DCF), and other State departments, divisions, and offices, as well as other entities including Centers for Independent Living (CILs), parent advocacy groups such as the SPAN Parent Advisory Network, the Boggs Center on Disability and Human Development at Rutgers University, and other state and local stakeholders working to assist students with disabilities to obtain a successful future.

6.1 **Making Connections**

6.2 **Responsibilities**

6.2 **Follow Through**

Indicator 7: Family Engagement

Engaging parents and other family members in the education of their young adults with disabilities who are 18-to-21-years-old remains important. Family participation in transition planning is often essential in helping students achieve positive post-school outcomes. As students with disabilities approach adulthood, they face new challenges related to preparing for a successful life beyond high school. Family engagement during this period can help students develop important skills and get support while making informed decisions and preparing for their future.

The following are some specific reasons why family engagement is important for students with disabilities 18-21-years-old:

- **Support for Transition Planning:** Transition planning is a critical process that helps students with disabilities prepare for a successful life after finishing high school. Family engagement can provide valuable support in this process by helping students identify their strengths, interests, preferences, postsecondary goals, and develop and contribute to the implementation of a plan for achieving them.
- **Connection to Resources:** Family members can help students connect with community resources and services, such as vocational rehabilitation agencies, centers for independent living, community-based organizations, and support groups. These resources can help students develop skills, receive needed support, and gain valuable experience as they prepare for a successful adult life.
- **Advocacy:** Family members can support their young adult to advocate for appropriate services and supports during the transition planning process. They can help ensure that the student's postsecondary goals, strengths, preferences, and needs are reflected in their young adult's IEP, and they can work with school personnel and other stakeholders to address any barriers that may arise.

7.1 *Family and School Communication*

7.2 *Family Engagement and School Collaboration*

7.3 *Family Learning Opportunities*

Indicator 8: Person-Centered Planning

Person-centered planning is a highly collaborative and respectful process that uses facilitated conversations and other methods to thoroughly understand each student. It involves various facilitated approaches for listening deeply to all participants in a comfortable, welcoming, and equitable environment. The person (student) who is the focus of the planning is central to the process and is present from start to finish.

This process includes discovering the student's gifts and passions, identifying what is most important to the student, establishing what supports work best for the student, and expressing the shared vision that the student and their allies have for the future. Using this vision as a guide, supporters better understand how to build on existing strengths and overcome specific barriers that could impede the attainment of the student's vision. Person-centered approaches result in decisions, goals, and outcomes that are more targeted, relevant, and specific to students.

There is evidence to support person-centered planning as a research-based practice for improving employment and employment support needs for transition-aged students with disabilities (Hagner et al., 2012). Results include: increased student achievement, maximized student ownership and participation in planning, strengthened relationships, improved culture and climate in schools, enhanced self-determination and self-advocacy skills, and increased understanding of services and supports that are available through students' communities and other State and Federal agencies.

8.1 *Person-Centered Planning*

8.2 *Family Other Ally Involvement*

8.3 *Person-Centered Plans*

Indicator 9: Adult Education Opportunities

Students aged 18 to 21 are encouraged to engage in opportunities that will support their preparation for adult life and help them achieve their goals. Depending on the student's individual needs and goals, they may be able to participate in adult education opportunities such as vocational training, apprenticeships, or adult basic education while still enrolled in their school district's 18-21-year-old program. Some school districts partner with local community colleges, vocational schools, or other adult education providers to offer these opportunities. When postsecondary education planning activities are in place, students aged 18-21 are given opportunities to explore ways to begin life-long learning after high school (e.g., career potential, social connections, and advanced knowledge).

It is important for students, parents, and educators to work together to identify the most appropriate adult education opportunities for each student, considering their interests, skills, and future goals. Students with disabilities may require additional accommodation and support to participate in these opportunities fully, and it is important to ensure that they have access to the necessary resources and services.

In some cases, students may need to balance their participation in adult education opportunities with their other educational program components, such as work-based learning or community-based instruction. However, with proper planning and support, students with disabilities can successfully engage in adult education opportunities while still in an 18-to-21-year-old program and work toward their goals for adult life.

9.1 Occupational/Vocational Exploration

9.2 Post-Secondary School Exploration

QUALITY INDICATORS
FOR PROGRAMS
SERVING STUDENTS
WITH DISABILITIES 18-
21-YEARS-OLD

MASTER SCORING FORM

2024

Program Structure Involves the parameters of how students aged 18-to-21 are served by local school districts, including facilities used and under what pattern of staffing and programming employed.

Indicator	Component	Description	Implementation Level
1.1	Age-Appropriate Settings	In school districts with five or more students aged 18-through-21-years-old, most of these students participate in educational programming in facilities and environments where their same-age peers and other adults are typically found to promote inclusion, the use of natural supports, self-determination, self-advocacy, interdependence, and skill acquisition and maintenance. • Most students aged 18-through-21-years-old use local community environments (e.g., college facilities, employment sites, grocery stores, and/or other age-appropriate community environments) for instruction for most of their school day. (*Please note: Educational time spent in age-appropriate community-based settings that include individuals with and without disabilities, such as college campuses or vocational sites, should be counted as time spent inside the regular classroom to calculate placement data as per the Special Education Submission Student Data Handbook.). • As specified in their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), all students are provided with appropriate training to use forms of transportation (e.g., private cars, public buses and trains, county paratransit, Access Link, taxi service, carpooling, etc.) that they can continue to use beyond exiting school.	☐ Fully Implemented ☐ Partially Implemented ☐ Not Implemented
1.2	Individualized Programming	Educational programming is highly individualized to the specific needs, preferences, interests, and appropriate measurable postsecondary goals of each student served as specified in their IEPs. • Students receive systematic instruction (e.g., use of prompt hierarchies and task analyses, data-based decision-making, etc.) as appropriate to their individual needs. • Grouping of students with disabilities for instruction only occurs when all students in the group share the same instructional need and educational goals, as documented in their respective IEPs, and the number of students in the group is consistent with the principle of natural proportions in community environments.	☐ Fully Implemented ☐ Partially Implemented ☐ Not Implemented
1.3	Instructional Structures	Instruction focuses on teaching students to perform tasks and activities that they are likely to need or want to perform regularly now and in the future. • Systematic instruction using evidence-based strategies are used to instruct all students. • Certified teachers provide instruction in community environments other than employment sites. (Paraprofessionals may assist students in the community, however since the minimum number of hours of instructional time, (i.e. being instructed by a certified teacher), in a school day is not less than four hours exclusive of recess and lunch periods according to N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3, the time that students are with a paraprofessional and not with a certified teacher does not count as part of the four-hour minimum requirement. Also, the time students participate in school-sponsored work-based learning counts as instructional	☐ Fully Implemented ☐ Partially Implemented ☐ Not Implemented

Program Structure

Program Structure Involves the parameters of how students aged 18-to-21 are served by local school districts, including facilities used and under what pattern of staffing and programming employed.			
Indicator	**Component**	**Description**	**Implementation Level**
1.3 Continued	Instructional Structures Continued	time. • Students participate in individually determined work-based learning in the community for most of each school day. • Students learn daily living skills and activities of daily living as specified in their IEP in settings where these activities naturally occur.	
1.4	Administrative Infrastructure	Budget allocations are sufficient for all programmatic needs, including personnel, transportation, facility, activity, etc. • There are enough certified and non-certified staff for the instructional and support needs of all the students served. • All staff are provided with ongoing administrative support, including time for professional development and planning. • The funding mechanism and procedures support the daily use of funds by staff and students to support instructional activities in the community (i.e., Community-Based Instruction). • Students and their families are not asked to provide funds to operate any aspect of the educational programming. • District procedures support all aspects of the program's operation in the community. • Ongoing program evaluation is conducted to evaluate the program's effectiveness and make improvements as needed or desired.	☐ Fully Implemented ☐ Partially Implemented ☐ Not Implemented

Program Structure

		Transition Assessments: Appropriate transition assessments for 18-21-year-old students with disabilities involve the parameters of where and how these students are assisted by their local education agency to develop further and refine their measurable postsecondary goals and related transition services and other transition components of IEPs (Individualized Education Programs).	
Indicator	**Component**	**Description**	**Implementation Level**
2.1	Assessment Methods	• The district has the plan to use multiple methods (e.g., paper and pencil tests, online tools, structured student and family interviews, community or work-based assessments (situational), and curriculum-based assessments) of age-appropriate transition assessments on an ongoing basis with all students with IEPs aged 15-21 years old. • The program uses transition assessment instruments and appropriate methods for each student. Key considerations include their age and the nature of their disability (e.g., reading level and general intelligence), their post-school ambitions (e.g., college versus other training options or immediate employment), cultural and linguistic, and community opportunities (e.g., local training options, employers, and adult service providers). • The use of informal assessments (e.g., situational assessments, observations, interviews) is emphasized over formal assessments (e.g., standardized and norm-referenced methods, intelligence assessments, personality assessments, etc.). • Transition assessment methods incorporate assistive technology and accommodations that allow all students to demonstrate their abilities and potential. • Person-centered planning is used for all students in their transition assessment process.	☐ Fully Implemented ☐ Partially Implemented ☐ Not Implemented
2.2	Information/Results of the Process	• The district implements procedures to collect documentation of transition assessment information/results from all staff and others such as family members and employers for all students, securely maintain this information, and make each student's data accessible to all student IEP team members. • All transition assessment information/results are synthesized and interpreted for students, their families, and other IEP team members. • Transition assessment information/results for all students are strength-based and verified by more than one method and by more than one person. • Transition assessment information/results are the basis for identifying all students' postsecondary goals in education, training, employment, and (as appropriate) independent living (Postsecondary goals are "generally understood to refer to those goals that a child hopes to achieve after leaving secondary school (i.e., high school)." (IDEA 2004 Part B Regulations, §300.320(b), discussion of Final Rule p. 46,668).	☐ Fully Implemented ☐ Partially Implemented ☐ Not Implemented

Transition Assessments

Self-Determination/Self-Advocacy: Involves students demonstrating various skills and beliefs, including self-regulation, problem-solving, self-awareness, goal setting, choice-making, self-advocacy, and self-control.

Indicator	Component	Description	Implementation Level
3.1	Setting and Pursuing Goals	Students will demonstrate self-determination and self-advocacy as integral components of their goal setting and pursuit of process. These include: • Goal identification: students actively identify personal strengths, interests, and aspirations, setting clear and measurable goals to transition into postsecondary life. • Self-advocacy skills: students develop and apply self-advocacy skills to express their preferences, needs, and choices, ensuring their goals are aligned with their desires and long-term vision. • Active participation: students play an active role in the development and implementation of their IEP, explicitly contributing to decisions about annual goals, objectives, and postsecondary goals.	☐ Fully Implemented ☐ Partially Implemented ☐ Not Implemented
3.2	Making Decisions	Students are systematically taught essential skills for decision-making, choice-making, goal-setting, and problem-solving via evidence-based instructional methods. They are provided with hands-on experiences and meaningful opportunities to make real-life decisions, with appropriate support tailored to their needs and communication modalities. • Students actively participate in decision-making by expressing their preferences, desires, and goals during IEP development and daily activities, utilizing various communication modalities that align with their preferences and needs. • Students are encouraged to take increasing responsibility for their decisions and actions, with guidance and support provided as necessary. It's important to note that the level of independence may vary depending on individual circumstances, including guardianship status.	☐ Fully Implemented ☐ Partially Implemented ☐ Not Implemented
3.3	Instruction in Self-Determination/ Advocacy	Students receive appropriate instruction focused on developing individualized self-determination and self-advocacy skills per the student's IEP. This can be accomplished by a teacher, other school district staff, or staff from other community agencies (e.g., Center for Independent Living, Community Rehabilitation Provider, etc.), as appropriate. • Students are taught self-advocacy, awareness, knowledge management, regulation, leadership skills, and decision-making skills, among others, using evidence-based practices.	☐ Fully Implemented ☐ Partially Implemented ☐ Not Implemented

Self-Determination/Advocacy

Academic and Functional Curriculum: Successful instruction on academic and functional skills prepares students for successful adult life and should occur as much as possible in natural community settings. According to N.J.A.C. 6A:14 3.7(C)2, "When developing the IEP, the IEP team shall: …. Consider the academic, developmental, and functional needs of the student." According to Wehmeyer et al. (2006), "the general curriculum" for students ages 18-21 must consider the functional skills and knowledge that the student skill needs to live, work, and play more independently. As such, educators must provide instruction in academic and other content areas in ways that promote functional skills in inclusive settings."

Indicator	Component	Description	Implementation Level
4.1	Life Skills and Communication	Life Skills refer to skills that contribute to successful independent functioning of an individual in adulthood. - Ecological inventories identify the sub-environments, activities and skills students need to perform to function appropriately in the community, employment sites, and in-home environments. - Systematic instruction given to students focuses on teaching age-appropriate functional skills, is of personal interest to students, is taught in natural community settings, and prepares students for their future. - Based on individual student's needs, strengths, preferences, interests, and their IEPs, students are provided instruction in: - Planning, shopping, managing money, and budgeting. - Use a meaningful and functional communication system that is efficient, effective, functional, and understandable across various people and environments. - Social/interpersonal skills to establish appropriate communication skills and social relationships with others in community settings. - Time management and organizational skills. - Recreation and leisure skills. - Daily living skills, including hygiene, personal safety, meal preparation, using transportation, and participating in community activities; and - Strategies to handle emotions.	☐ Fully Implemented ☐ Partially Implemented ☐ Not Implemented
4.2	Employment Skills	Students with disabilities participate in work-based learning experiences in their local community and receive needed instruction and support to develop positive work habits (e.g., staying on-task, completing assigned tasks, asking for help and a break when needed, working with co-workers, supervisors, and customers, how to request a day off, etc.) and learn and practice specific work and social skills. New worksites in the community are continuously developed by program staff so that students who can work in the community can have work experiences in businesses that are intentionally matched to their strengths, interests, and preferences as indicated in their completed vocational profile.	☐ Fully Implemented ☐ Partially Implemented ☐ Not Implemented

Academic and Functional Curriculum: Successful instruction on academic and functional skills prepares students for successful adult life and should occur as much as possible in natural community settings. According to N.J.A.C. 6A:14 3.7(C)2, "When developing the IEP, the IEP team shall: …. Consider the academic, developmental, and functional needs of the student." According to Wehmeyer et al. (2006), "the general curriculum" for students ages 18-21 must consider the functional skills and knowledge that the student skill needs to live, work, and play more independently. As such, educators must provide instruction in academic and other content areas in ways that promote functional skills in inclusive settings."

Indicator	Component	Description	Implementation Level

4.2 Continued	Employment Skills Continued	• As appropriate and needed, students receive assistance creating resumes, applying for jobs, practicing interview skills, etc.
		• Natural supports (e.g., co-workers, supervisors, signs/prompts, and onboarding activities used by everyone, etc.) are facilitated and promoted to increase student competence and integration within the workforce.
		• To supplement natural supports when needed and appropriate.
		    o Students are assisted on the job by a job coach who provides support while simultaneously and systematically fading these supports (reduces frequency, saliency, and proximity of prompts/assistance *while maintaining student performance*) from the student to promote competence and social integration.
		    o Job and task analyses are used with ongoing student performance data to inform all instructional/support decisions at the worksite.
		    o Students receive on-the-job academic skills instruction (e.g., reading directions or labels, using a computer, calculating percentages, etc.) and other skills specific to a particular job or industry.
		    o Students have access to technology and receive needed instruction on how to enhance independence in the community and at worksites.
		    o Students are instructed on job expectations, workplace culture, and how personal skills and characteristics (e.g., positive attitude, self-discipline, honesty, time management) affect their employability.
		    o Students are provided instruction in self-advocacy skills that relate to worksites.
		    o Students are provided instruction in conflict resolution and in social/ emotional areas that apply to the workplace.
		• Students participate in ongoing career awareness opportunities (worksite tours, guest speakers, career fairs, etc.)
		• School staff receive training, supervision, and ongoing support to develop jobs effectively, match students to jobs, job coach, facilitate natural supports, use assistive technology, and other topics.	

Academic/Functional Curriculum

Academic and Functional Curriculum: Successful instruction on academic and functional skills prepares students for successful adult life and should occur as much as possible in natural community settings. According to N.J.A.C. 6A:14 3.7(C)2, "When developing the IEP, the IEP team shall: …. Consider the academic, developmental, and functional needs of the student." According to Wehmeyer et al. (2006), "the general curriculum" for students ages 18-21 must consider the functional skills and knowledge that the student skill needs to live, work, and play more independently. As such, educators must provide instruction in academic and other content areas in ways that promote functional skills in inclusive settings."

Indicator	Component	Description	Implementation Level
4.2 Continued	Employment Skills Continued	• Training on the use of public transportation or other sustainable means of transportation is provided as needed and appropriate to assist students with how to get to and from a worksite. • As appropriate and needed, students and their families receive information about Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and other Social Security Administration programs and work incentives.	

4.3	Health and Physical Education	All students earn the required credits in health, safety, and physical education during each year of enrollment by receiving individualized instruction during activities in age-appropriate settings in the community or school setting if the opportunity to earn these credits is not possible in the community.
		• As appropriate, students use the "independent study" option to earn the required 3 ¾ credits in health, safety, and physical education by participating in age-appropriate activities in the community, if possible (such as using a community gym, YMCA, etc. for at least 150 minutes per week) and having documentation of these activities (attendance, activity, progress, etc.) collected by a teacher who can issue the student a grade.
		• As appropriate and needed, students are provided information and taught about:
		   o reproductive health and sexuality,
		   o self-management,
		   o responsible decision-making regarding health choices,
		   o healthy relationships,
		   o nutrition,
		   o maintaining and managing their health,
		   o personal hygiene, and
		   o managing illness, including managing prescriptions (going to the pharmacy, requesting prescriptions, renewing medicine, etc.).
		• Students are provided with various activities and exercise routines to choose from to earn required credits.
		• As appropriate and desired, students learn to join and maintain membership in a community gym, community recreation facility, and/or adult sports league.
			☐ Fully Implemented
			☐ Partially Implemented
			☐ Not Implemented

Community-Based Instruction: Involves the parameters of where and how students aged 18-to-21 receive most of their instruction provided by local school districts.			
Indicator	**Component**	**Description**	**Implementation Level**
5.1	Locations and Activities in the Community	Students participate in community-based instruction (CBI) in locations that are specific to their interests, preferences, and educational needs and promote competence with activities that the students will likely continue to perform regularly after graduation. • Locations and activities used for CBI are the exact locations and activities students are expected to use and perform regularly after graduation (e.g., shopping at a local grocery store, exercising at a local gym, etc.). • Travel training using public and other forms of transportation that can be used in adult life (walking, private taxi, Uber™, Lift™, etc.; See Indicator 1.1). • Activities to be taught to students in locations for CBI are chosen based on their needs, preferences, and interests. They should be prioritized based on the likelihood that students will want and need to use these activities before and after exiting from secondary education (e.g., graduating).	☐ Fully Implemented ☐ Partially Implemented ☐ Not Implemented
5.2	Individualized Instruction	CBI is provided daily to individual students, with appropriate support from educators as needed. • Students receive intensive systematic instruction from teachers during CBI as appropriate and specified in their IEP. • Certified teachers provide instruction in community environments other than employment sites. (Paraprofessionals may assist students in the community, however since the minimum number of hours of instructional time (i.e., being instructed by a certified teacher), in a school day is not less than four hours exclusive of recess and lunch periods according to N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3, the time that students are with a paraprofessional and not with a certified teacher does not count as part of the four-hour minimum instructional time requirement. Also, the time students participate in school-sponsored work-based learning counts as instructional time even though they are not always in the presence of a certified teacher at worksites. • Related services personnel consult other educators and direct instruction for students during CBI for skills in community living, recreation/leisure, and career exploration. • Students are prepared prior to engaging in CBI (e.g., hygiene, clothing, etc.) • Staff promote the use of natural supports in the community (e.g., training from coworkers, assistance from a store clerk).	☐ Fully Implemented ☐ Partially Implemented ☐ Not Implemented

Community-Based Instruction

Indicator	Component	Description	Implementation Level
Community-Based Instruction: Involves the parameters of where and how students aged 18-to-21 receive most of their instruction provided by local school districts.			
		• In keeping with natural proportions, students participate in CBI individually or in small groups. • Students participate in individually determined work-based learning in the community for most of each school day. • Academic and social/communication skills are taught to all students during CBI as specified in their IEPs.	

Interagency Collaboration: Strong interagency collaboration includes agreements between agencies and family members that specifically define roles, responsibilities, approaches to communication, and other collaboration strategies that improve instruction practices and program development (Morningstar, 2013).

Indicator	Component	Description	Implementation Level
6.1	Making Connections	Students, family members, and schools are provided with information and all other assistance needed to connect with appropriate service agencies. • School district implements procedures that promote the inclusion of students, families, school staff, and other agency staff in the IEP development and implementation process. • School district has written agreements as needed and desired with other agencies to facilitate collaborative efforts and services for students. • School staff actively assist students and family members in navigating and connecting with appropriate service provider agencies to assist with obtaining needed services (e.g., financial planning, health care system, employment services, mental health services, and transportation). • Accurate information about the options available for services from other agencies is provided to students and their families. • School staff inform students and their families about agency resources and information-sharing opportunities (e.g., fairs, conferences, workshops, webinars). • Educators use community mapping or other tools to locate and share agency resources with students and families. • School staff have an established working relationship with each local and state agency contact person. • School staff make referrals to appropriate agencies as needed by students. • School staff assist students and their families to identify and use community resources.	☐ Fully Implemented ☐ Partially Implemented ☐ Not Implemented
6.2	Responsibilities	Shared responsibilities and roles are clearly defined between school staff, students and other family members, and service agencies. • IEP teams (student, family members, Child Study Team, teachers, others) meet and decide what agencies students should be referred to for current and future services. • After receiving written consent from an adult student (or that student's guardian), the school district invites representatives of agencies to attend IEP meetings if the agencies are likely to provide or pay for transition services for the student. • The IEP Team decides which, if any, Pre-Employment Transition Service the student needs, and working in collaboration with staff from NJDVRS or NJCBVI decides which agency (the school or NJDVRS/NJCBVI) will provide the needed services.	☐ Fully Implemented ☐ Partially Implemented ☐ Not Implemented

Interagency Collaboration

Interagency Collaboration: Strong interagency collaboration includes agreements between agencies and family members that specifically define roles, responsibilities, approaches to communication, and other collaboration strategies that improve instruction practices and program development (Morningstar, 2013).			
Indicator	**Component**	**Description**	**Implementation Level**
6.3	Follow Through	After the initial connection is made between agencies, and students, and their families, the school staff follow through to ensure the student is set up to receive needed services. • Every student's IEP specifies the school staff person by title (e.g., Case Manager, Transition Coordinator) responsible for making referrals to other agencies as appropriate. • Special, general, and career and technical educators, as appropriate, engage in collaborative consultation. • Staff from the school district, NJDVRS, NJCBVI, and other agencies and relevant stakeholders collaborate on the delivery of services. • School staff facilitate meetings between agency staff and students and their families. • The school district promptly transfers all appropriate student records to other agencies as needed and with written consent from the family or adult student. • All agencies involved with a student are aware of that student's needs and the services other agencies that are involved provide to the student.	☐ Fully Implemented ☐ Partially Implemented ☐ Not Implemented

Interagency Collaboration

Family Engagement: Family engagement promotes equitable partnership among schools, families, and communities to actively advance student achievement through shared commitment, decision-making, and responsibility. Family members and school professionals maintain open, transparent, and ongoing communication throughout the transition process, fostering a collaborative partnership that actively involves both parties.

Indicator	Component	Description	Implementation Level

7.1	Family & School Communication	The school provides to students' parents and other family members as appropriate timely and comprehensive updates on students' progress in program activities, including academic and functional achievements, vocational skill development, and other programmatic areas as specified in students' IEPs. The district provides information to families in various formats and is collaborative and reciprocal while respecting the diversity of family cultures, traditions, and values.
		• The district provides family members with information and resources:
		    ○ to make informed decisions regarding their young adult's plans for life after high school (e.g., how college/universities support students with disabilities, career exploration resources, DVRS, DDD, etc.),
		    ○ about self-determination and self-advocacy to support their young adult's preparation for successful adult life.
			☐ Fully Implemented
			☐ Partially Implemented
			☐ Not Implemented

7.2	Family Engagement & School Collaboration	The school actively involves family members in the goal-setting process, ensuring their input and insights contribute to developing and refining the student's IEP. • The school provides multiple options for family involvement (e.g., pre-IEP meeting planning input, flexible IEP meeting times) and alternate ways to obtain input in the IEP planning process.	☐ Fully Implemented ☐ Partially Implemented ☐ Not Implemented
7.3	Family Learning Opportunities	The school ensures that families have access to educational opportunities that: • Provide training and information on conducting transition assessments, helping families understand their child's strengths, needs, interests, and preferences for determining postsecondary goals. • Disseminate information through fairs, brochures, and workshops to educate parents and other family members about various community agency services and supports (e.g., vocational rehabilitation, Centers for Independent Living, mental health resources, postsecondary education institutions, etc.). • Foster family interaction by organizing training sessions or interest-based activities on relevant topics. • Deliver ongoing information to students and families regarding transition services, postsecondary education/training options, employment opportunities, other agency support services, and their integral role in the IEP process.	☐ Fully Implemented ☐ Partially Implemented ☐ Not Implemented

Family Engagement

Person-Centered Planning: The student with disabilities and their circle of support (e.g., family members, friends, professionals, community members) develop person-centered plans collaboratively to tailor support to individual strengths, needs, and preferences with the goal of fostering self-determination and community inclusion (Holborn et al., 2000).

Indicator	Component	Description	Implementation Level

8.1	Person-Centered Planning	The school facilitates person-centered planning for all students as desired to provide a focus on students' vision for their future and their strengths, abilities, preferences, interests, and needs.
		• During person-centered planning, students;
		  o identify their current strengths, interests, and preferences for their future, and needed supports and services,
		  o create goals for their future beyond exiting secondary education,
		  o learn about the resources available to them in the community,
		  o evaluate their progress on achieving previous IEP goals and objectives and personal goals (if applicable).
		• Person-centered planning helps school staff learn what activities students want to be doing, where they want to live, and their ambitions for their future.
		• All school staff who facilitate person-centered planning meetings receive training from qualified experts (e.g., PCAST staff at the Boggs Center at Rutgers University) and ensure follow-up and follow-through to assist students to implement their person-centered plans.
			☐ Fully Implemented
			☐ Partially Implemented
			☐ Not Implemented

8.2	Family and Other Ally Involvement	In preparation for person-centered planning, school staff assist students to identify people in their lives who know them best and are their allies to assist them with planning for the future. • Students identify the people in their "inner circle." • Students learn how these individuals can assist with goal setting. • Students attend and actively participate (as they can) in their planning process and meetings. • Person-centered planning fosters positive working relationships between students, families, and school staff. • Person-centered plans include students' vision for the future, created with the help of their allies, and how to build on their strengths to attain their vision. • Person-centered plans include connecting students and their families to other service agencies as needed while the school district still serves students.	☐ Fully Implemented ☐ Partially Implemented ☐ Not Implemented
8.2 Continued	Family and Other Ally		

Person-Centered Planning: The student with disabilities and their circle of support (e.g., family members, friends, professionals, community members) develop person-centered plans collaboratively to tailor support to individual strengths, needs, and preferences with the goal of fostering self-determination and community inclusion (Holborn et al., 2000).			
Indicator	**Component**	**Description**	**Implementation Level**
	Involvement Continued	• Person-centered plans help identify and cultivate natural supports in the community for students.	
8.3	Person-Centered Plans	Person-centered plans identify students' personal goals and vision for the future and help students and their allies to create specific plans that support students in reaching their goals and vision for the future. • Person-centered plans help school staff to ensure that services and support provided to students help them to attain their personal goals and their vision for the future. • Personal needs are also addressed during person-centered planning (ex. Medical, financial, guardianship, etc.) • Person-centered plans are used to enhance students' IEPs by providing more detailed and specific information about students and their desires for the future.	☐ Fully Implemented ☐ Partially Implemented ☐ Not Implemented

Person-Centered Planning

Adult Education: The IEP team assists youth in identifying the post-secondary education or training aligned with the requirements needed to succeed in postsecondary school.

Indicator	Component	Description	Implementation Level
9.1	Occupational and Vocational Exploration	Occupational courses support career awareness, allowing students to explore diverse career pathways and develop occupation-specific skills through targeted instruction and experiences aligned with their employment goals. The school's program ensures implementation by: • Embedding career awareness activities, career planning, and vocational assessments. • Design instruction and lesson plans to include technology, 21st-century skills, and employability skills for specific career/career cluster content. • Provide work-based learning opportunities in the community to learn occupational- specific skills within each occupational course. • Incorporate Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles in all course lesson plans and group instruction. • Enhancing accessibility to CTE courses by providing course offerings at various times in the day so scheduling conflicts do not restrict student access to occupational courses. • Providing diverse CTE courses representing various career clusters, offering students choices that align with their strengths, interests, preferences, and needs.	☐ Fully Implemented ☐ Partially Implemented ☐ Not Implemented
9.2	Post-Secondary School Exploration	Students with college aspirations explore and refine career goals that require a two- or four- year degree or certificate completion. This includes: • Unpacking postsecondary education options collaboratively with students and allowing them to explore possibilities and interests. • Ensuring students are enrolled in courses that prepare them for postsecondary education, considering their specific needs and accumulating credits, as applicable. • Actively assist families and students with researching college programs, including the support available for students with disabilities. • Provides comprehensive guidance to families and students on changes to their rights to disability-related supports and accommodations in college (e.g., Section 504 and ADA).	☐ Fully Implemented ☐ Partially Implemented ☐ Not Implemented

Adult Education

Quality Indicators for Programs Serving Students with Disabilities
18-21 Years Old
MASTER SCORING FORM

Reviewer Name: _____   Building/Class: _____   Date of Review: _____

Directions: Using the scores for each indicator transfer the data to the Master Scoring Form. For each classroom within the 18–21-year-old program in the district fill out one form per classroom. Begin with the indicators and their corresponding components, place a number in the column next to the component for that indicator that most accurately describes the building/classroom.

Domain	Indicator	Component	Implementation Level		
			Implemented	Partially Implemented	Not Implemented
Quality Indicators for Programs Serving Students with Disabilities 18-21 Years Old	Program Structure	1.1 Age-Appropriate Setting			
		1.2 Individualized Programming			
		1.3 Instructional Structures			
		1.4 Administrative Infrastructure			
		Sum of Implementation Level:			
		Total Indicator Score:	/4		
	Transition Assessments	2.1 Assessment Methods			
		2.2 Information/Results of the Process			
		Sum of Implementation Level:			
		Total Indicator Score:	/2		
	Self-Determination and Advocacy	3.1 Setting and Pursuing Goals			
		3.2 Making Decisions			
		3.3 Instruction in Self-Determination/ Advocacy			
		Sum of Implementation Level:			
		Total Indicator Score:	/3		
	Academic and Functional Curriculum	4.1 Life Skills and Communication			
		4.2 Employment Skills			
		4.3 Health and Physical Education			
		Sum of Implementation Level:			
		Total Indicator Score:	/3		
	Community Based Instruction	5.1 Locations and Activities in the Community			
		5.2 Individualized Instruction			
		Sum of Implementation Level:			
		Total Indicator Score:	/2		
	Interagency Collaboration	6.1 Making Connections			
		6.2 Responsibilities			
		6.3 Follow Through			
		Sum of Implementation Level:			
		Total Indicator Score:	/3		

Domain	Indicator	Component	Implementation Level		
			Implemented	Partially Implemented	Not Implemented
Quality Indicators for Programs Serving Students with Disabilities 18-21 Years Old	**Family Engagement**	7.1 Family and School Communication			
		7.2 Family and School Collaboration			
		7.3 Family Learning Opportunities			
		Sum of Implementation Level:			
		Total Indicator Score:	/3		
	Person Centered Planning	8.1 Person-Centered Planning			
		8.2 Family and other Ally Involvement			
		8.3 Person-Centered Plans			
		Sum of Implementation Level:			
		Total Indicator Score:	/3		
	Adult Education	9.1 Occupational and Vocational Exploration			
		9.2 Post-Secondary School Exploration			
		Sum of Implementation Level:			
		Total Indicator Score:	/2		
		TOTAL SCORE:	/25		

Self-Assessment Score Card		
# of Indicators per Implementation Level:	___ Fully Implemented ___ /25 = __ %	___ Partially Implemented ___ /25 = __ %	___ Not Implemented ___ /25 = __ %
Total Program Review Score:	/25	

Additional Comments/Considerations:

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Glossary

This resource provides access to a list of commonly used terms and acronyms in special education.

A

Academics: Academics refer to the learning content set forth by the state.

Adapted Supports: These are the changes or modifications to existing instructional materials, resources, or tools that reflect the individual needs of the student to enhance independence within the educational environment.

Antecedent: A stimulus such as a verbal cue, physical prompt, person or event that precedes a behavior.

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA): The science of studying the observable patterns of behavior and environmental interactions. The techniques allow the observer to have a clear knowledge of how specific interventions or techniques may be affecting certain behaviors.

Appropriate: An appropriate goal or activity for one student may be completely inappropriate for another student. The word "appropriate" in this document does not have a different meaning from its common usage. Generally, the word "appropriate" is used to mean "suitable" or "fitting" for a particular student, condition, occasion, or place (Commentary in the Federal Register, page 46661).

Assessment: The process of gathering information to make a decision about what actions should be taken.

B

Baseline: The condition or phase in which there is no intervention. The baseline data are then compared to data collected during an intervention to determine whether behavior change has occurred.

Behavior: Behavior is the activity of a living organism that is observable and measurable.

Behavioral Engagement: This is the observable act of students being involved in learning; it refers to the student's participation in academic activities and efforts to perform academic tasks.

Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP): A complete description of the assessment and interventions conducted and/or planned for a student's problem behavior. The plan contains specific information regarding the functional assessment conducted, the hypothesis statement stating the possible function of the problem behavior, an explicit description of the antecedent and consequent interventions implemented or planned, and the new skills that will be taught to replace the problem behavior.

C

Communication: Communication is transferring information from one person to another. It occurs in various forms, including, but not limited to, verbal communication, American Sign Language (ASL), picture exchange communication system (PECS), augmentative communication (AC) system, and written communication.

Curriculum: The curriculum is what is taught to students in school.

D

Data: This is measurable, factual information, used to make individualized, educational decisions regarding student programs (adapted from Merriam-Webster).

E

Evidence-Based Practices (EBP): EBPs are derived from or informed by objective, peer-reviewed research. They are practices proven through research to be effective.

F

Family Engagement: Family engagement for students with disabilities refers to the active participation and involvement of family members in supporting the educational and developmental needs of students with disabilities. It involves a collaborative approach between the family, school personnel, and other relevant stakeholders to ensure that the student's needs are met. Family engagement can take many forms, such as attending parent-teacher conferences, participating in school events, and volunteering in the classroom. It can also involve working with school personnel to develop IEPs or participating in meetings to review the student's progress. Research has shown that family engagement is a critical factor in promoting positive outcomes for students with disabilities. When families are involved in their child's education, students have better academic and social outcomes, higher attendance rates, and greater overall success in school.

H

Hidden Curriculum: The term "hidden curriculum" refers to an amorphous collection of "implicit academic, social, and cultural messages," "unwritten rules and unspoken expectations," and "unofficial norms, behaviors and values" of the dominant-culture context in which all teaching and learning is situated.

I

Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA): IDEA is a federal law that makes available a free appropriate public education to eligible students with disabilities.

Imitation: Imitation refers to the emission of behavior that has point-to-point correspondence. In other words, imitation means mimicking another person's behavior.

I

Individualized Education Program (IEP): An IEP lays out special education instruction and supports and services for students with disability needs in school.

Instruction: How the curriculum is delivered.

Instructional Methods: Instructional methods consist of principles and methods used by teachers to enhance and relate instruction to learners. They are defined by the process that a teacher uses to instruct students on a particular topic.

Intensity: Intensity can include the length of time in instruction (hours per week, days, per year), student-to-teacher ratio, and rate of learning opportunities (N.J.A.C. 6A:14-4.7(c)).

Interagency Collaboration: A process in which education professionals establish partnerships with personnel from multiple agencies to achieve a common goal: to improve the postsecondary success of students with disabilities. Interagency collaboration is a means to:
- *Coordinate services and supports*
- *Identify and address gaps in services within the community*
- *Share and leverage resources to reduce cost*
- *Promote efficient service delivery*

L

Language Development: This is the process by which children come to understand and communicate language.

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE): In accordance with the IDEA, students with a disability must be educated within the same classroom as non-disabled peers to the fullest extent possible.

M

Motivation: The variables or factors that influence a student's actions or the reason a student behaves in a certain way. An internal state of desire or willingness to emit a behavior.

P

Paraprofessional: A school classroom aide who assists appropriately certified personnel with the supervision of student activities (N.J.A.C. 6A:32).

Personnel: Refers to those persons providing services within an educational setting. Educational personnel include, but are not limited to teachers (both specialized and general), paraprofessionals, related service providers, and child study members.

Preventative Measures: Any reasonable measures or steps taken to prevent, minimize, or mitigate classroom safety (e.g., alarms, speakers/intercom system, movement around the classroom, secured fixtures, electrical equipment [e.g., plug sockets, cables, switches, etc.], ventilation/heating, etc.).

R

Reinforcement: Reinforcement is the function of the relation of a consequence immediately following a behavior, which increases the future probability of the behavior occurring again in the future.

Related Service Providers: Related Services are, " . . . transportation and such developmental, corrective and other supportive services as required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education . . . " (Section 300.34(a)). They include speech-language pathology and audiology services, interpreting services, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, recreation, including therapeutic recreation, early identification and assessment of disabilities in children, counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling, orientation, and mobility services, and medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes. Related services also include school health services and school nurse services, social work services in schools, and parent counseling and training.

S

Self-Management: The ability to regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively. The NJDOE defines self-management as "Understanding and practicing strategies for managing one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors. Recognizing the skills needed to establish and achieve personal and educational goals and identifying and applying ways to persevere or overcome barriers."

Social Skills: A social skill is not a "service" but a functional skill necessary for daily living activities. These are the skills used daily to interact and communicate with others. They include verbal and non- verbal communication, such as speech, gestures, facial expressions, and body language.

Staff: For the purposes of these program quality indicators the term staff is defined as teachers, paraprofessionals (e.g., assistants, aides), related service providers, child study team members, administrators, and other support staff.

Student Engagement: Refers to the degree of attention, interest, and passion that students show when they are learning or being taught, which extends to the level of motivation they have to learn and progress in education.

T

Teams: Refers to two or more professionals directly involved in planning and implementing a student's educational program, particularly those on the IEP team and paraprofessionals directly supporting a student.

Transition Supports: Instructional resources, tools, and aides specifically designed to increase student ability in navigating successfully between learning contexts and various environments.

V

Visual Supports: Concrete cues that provide students with information about classroom routines, tasks, activities, skills, or expected behaviors, which can include, pictures, schedules, labels, text, environmental arrangements, visual boundaries, maps, organization systems, timelines, and scripts (modified from Sam, A, & AFIRM Team, 2015).

Appendix A
NJ Educational Resources

New Jersey-specific educational resources for serving students with disabilities ages 18-21.
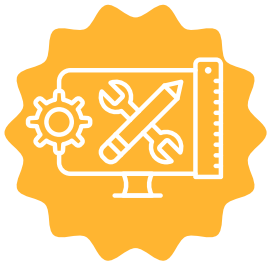
New Jersey Transition Toolkit

New Jersey Transition Toolkit for Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

IEP Transition Components

Facilitated IEP

New Jersey Student Learning Standards

Community Based Instruction

Post-School Outcome Survey

Transition E-Learning Opportunities

New Jersey Special Education Code

Appendix B
Other Statewide *Agencies*

+ Autism Family Services of NJ `CLICK HERE`

+ Autism NJ `CLICK HERE`

+ Autism Speaks `CLICK HERE`

+ Center for Outreach and Services for the Autism Community (COSAC) `CLICK HERE`

+ Children's System of Care | Perform Care Behavioral Health Services `CLICK HERE`

+ Centers for Independent Living (CILs) `CLICK HERE`

+ Department of Children and Families | Children's System of Care `CLICK HERE`

+ Department of Health | Family Centered Care Services `CLICK HERE`

+ Department of Labor and Workforce Development | Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) `CLICK HERE`

+ Department of Human Services | Division of Developmental Disabilities `CLICK HERE`

+ Department of Human Services | Division of Disabilities Services `CLICK HERE`

+ SPAN Parent Advocacy Network `CLICK HERE`

+ The Arc of New Jersey | Family Institute `CLICK HERE`

The resources provided are for informational purposes only and are not endorsed by the NJDOE.

Contact

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