

## **Winner School District**

### **Transition Plan**

A Transition Plan is used as a planning tool for year-round transition activities and as a management tool to help guide implementation. The goals of this transition are to coordinate communication between early childhood education programs and public school as well as to build a more continuous educational experience for young children and families.

### **Program Development**

The coordination and transition plan for early childhood children in the Winner School District is developed with input from existing district preschool programs, Rosebud Sioux Tribe Head Start, parents and staff. The plan will be evaluated annually and revised as needed. The Winner School District and Rosebud Sioux Tribe Head Start Birth through Five annually sign an interagency agreement (attached).

### **Special Education Services**

Much uncertainty comes with being the parent of a young child with special needs. Early intervention service providers and school districts should share as much information as possible to prepare families for the transition to preschool or kindergarten. The Winner School District is required to identify individuals in need of special education or special education and related services. For those not identified, the identification system includes all individuals residing within the jurisdiction of the district (between the ages of birth through 21) regardless of severity of their disability, including individuals in all public/private agencies and institutions and private schools, including children receiving alternative instruction under SDCL 13-27-3.

At the beginning of each school year, the Winner District notifies and informs the general public that the district provides full educational opportunities to all individuals with disabilities ages birth through 21. The district has developed a system to identify, locate, and evaluate individuals in need of special education or special education and related services. This child-find process includes a preschool screening that is held each fall and as well as Kindergarten screening which is held each spring.

The district utilizes school newsletters, the Winner Advocate and student handbooks to inform residents of the school district of all public notifications. The school district is responsible for advertising and accepting referrals to district programs.

### **Screening**

A comprehensive screening program is designed to help locate or identify individuals that may be in need of special or prolonged assistance. A voluntary preschool screening

(DIAL-R) is available to families and takes place through parent contact and awareness activities, i.e. in-service, and Head Start programs. Individual screenings are also available and conducted covering all developmental areas for children birth through five years of age.

Available data of children new to the district shall be reviewed by a multi-disciplinary team which may include an administrator, classroom teacher, special education teacher, related service provider, evaluators or other staff members. As previously written, goals and timelines will be followed to continue a child's smooth transition.

Annual vision screenings are conducted by the school nurse for grades 1 through 5. Hearing screens are conducted by the speech therapists for all kindergarten students and the County Health Nurse conducts hearing screenings for grades 1, 3 and 5. Speech and language screenings will be conducted by the speech therapists. Kindergarten screening is to be held each spring to screen for kindergarten readiness.

### **Referral, Evaluation and Placement Procedures**

An essential component of the transition plan is to assess student individual needs. This usually begins with a referral. Referrals for special or prolonged assistance may be initiated by parents, public/non-public school personnel, and agencies or other individuals (with parent's consent).

A referral may include a written request. A referral by a parent may be submitted verbally and documented by an administrator. This begins the process of a staffing to review the referral. This staffing may be presented as a Teacher Assistance Team (TAT), informal review or consultation meeting. Members of this meeting will often include an administrator, special education teacher, related service provider, school psychologist, regular educator, school counselor, parent and/or student. At this time assignments are made for team personnel to conduct an informal assessment, which consists of an interview of the referring person, a review of the student's school records, a teacher observation/checklist form, and student observation in the classroom setting.

Placement in special education will be determined by above mentioned multi-disciplinary team and will also be dependent on evaluation results and possible area(s) of need. The school district will schedule meetings in a timely manner to connect the families and service providers in discussing evaluation results.

### **Communication**

Channels of communication are established between school staff and their counterparts in Head Start agencies and other early childhood development programs to facilitate coordination of programs. Meetings are conducted involving parents, kindergarten or elementary school teachers and Head Start teachers or, if appropriate, teachers from other

early childhood development programs, to discuss the developmental and other needs of individual children.

Communication from the school district will be determined appropriately and may include the following:

- Provide parents with information on programs and/or services including enrollment requirements and registration.
- Communicate with agency staff to facilitate continuity of programming and/or services.
- Involve parents/guardians in transition planning:
  - a) to advocate for children and,
  - b) communicate with personnel in the next service setting
- Coordinate with other agencies to transfer relevant records to next service setting.
- Release demographic information/screening evaluation to the next service setting with parental permission as necessary.
- Hold open houses for families and children.

### **Transition**

Formal transition meetings are held with special education teachers, the preschool and kindergarten teacher and parents. The preschool program here in Winner is not housed within a school district building. The preschool is privately owned but the Winner School District has employed the staff at the Winner Preschool, the main purpose for this is to serve the special needs students who attend the preschool. During our last two CIMP state reviews, the Winner Preschool has been labeled a “Promising Practice.” Preschool and Head Start personnel also conduct parent meetings throughout the year and with the kindergarten staff at the end of the school year to maintain a smooth transition. Both entities also set up numerous visits to our elementary school throughout the school year. All students that transition into kindergarten are provided opportunities during the year to visit next year’s classroom and meet their new teacher. Parents are encouraged to give their children several opportunities to build readiness.

Along with the areas of communications previously listed, early childhood transition includes the following:

- Provide transition related training to prepare staff
  - a) to follow appropriate procedures and,
  - b) to support children and families in the transition process.
- Provide training for parents regarding transition process and future.
- Plan to prepare child for next service setting.
- Arrange visits to the next service setting for children, families, and staff from the sending program or service.

For children and families transitioning from Birth to Three/Early Head Start (ages infancy to 3) staff members will help facilitate areas listed:

- Initiate meetings to discuss developmental progress of individual children among parents and professionals
- Obtain the parent consent/authorization for release of information for a referral.
- Release relevant assessments and health records.
- Participate in Individual Family Service Plan (IFSP)/Individual Education Plan (IEP) meeting.

### **Parent Involvement and Education**

Parents are involved in transition planning and ongoing evaluation of their child's program. IFSP and IEP meetings address and refer to the educational transitions through discussion and clarification of areas of concern.

Early Childhood and kindergarten staff members involve parents in transition planning to advocate for children and assist with communication in the next service setting.

District staff members will involve parents in transition:

- Initiate meetings to discuss developmental progress of individual children among parents and professionals.
- Obtain from parents consent/authorization for release of information for a referral.
- Release relevant assessment and health records.
- Coordinate with other agencies to transfer relevant records to next service setting.

### **Monitoring/Evaluation**

Transition is discussed yearly as a child approaches kindergarten. Transition is evaluated at transition IEP meetings in which parents attend along with teachers and related service providers to determine a child's needs for the next year. The coordination and procedures for a smooth transition into kindergarten are assessed with ongoing evaluations and suggestions for areas of concern or improvement. The plan is reviewed by district staff and Head Start personnel annually. Parents are an integral part of the transition process.

Children's booklists, resource books, South Dakota Early Learning Guidelines and South Dakota Kindergarten Standards can be found at <http://doe.sd.gov/contentstandards/>