Transitions for Special Education Students
Introductions

- Laura Cope is the Director of Student Services for Goodwill of Central and Southern Indiana. She originally began her journey at The Excel Center (Meadows) as a Teacher of Record/Lead teacher in 2012 before joining Goodwill Education Initiatives in 2014.

-Nicole Wiese has worked at Goodwill of Central and Southern Indiana since the Fall of 2012 when she interned at Excel Center Anderson while completing her bachelor's degree in education. Since then she has worked as a Coach, Teacher, and College and Career Readiness Coordinator at a variety of Excel locations. She currently works as the Manager of Disability Services.

-Kelly Tran is the Special Education Instructor at The Excel Center Shadeland (formerly Franklin Road). She has been part of The Excel Center family since June 2016.
Objective

This session will help schools analyze current transition services and push participants to think about ways to ensure every student graduating from the Excel Center has a transition plan to meet his/her specific need.
Icebreaker

On your table, there are several different photographs. Pick the picture that most closely represents your preparedness for life after high school.
Transition services for General Education Students

- Meetings with coach and CCR
- Dual Credit classes
- Certification classes
- Senior Seminar
Transition services for Special Education

- iExcel- Transition Survey
- Move-in conference transition plan
  - Service minutes with Teacher of Record
  - Service minutes with College Career Specialist
  - Discuss opportunities with Goodwill
- Ongoing conversations with Teacher of Record for post-graduation planning
- Job Certification options
- Senior Seminar
How do you know when additional transition support is needed?

Sometimes, even with small class sizes, Special Education support, accommodations and remediation; cognitively low students hit a wall and can’t progress through the curriculum to earn a Diploma. We push those students to reach THEIR individual potential.

But then what?
Since our founding in 1930, GCSI has provided employment services to individuals with disabilities. All Goodwill’s offer employment services in some capacity (population and referral sources varies). These services include supporting individuals with disabilities and other employment barriers in a multitude of employment scenarios. Programs such as Medicaid and Vocational Rehabilitation reimburse GCSI’s Disability Team in exchange for services. In 2018 GCSI’s Disabilities Services Team worked with 211 individuals in employment settings.
Partnership story

- Before working with Nicole, each of The Excel Center locations typically had one TOR who was in charge of all special education and related services.

- The ability of connecting students to outside resources was a rarity due to a lack of time after the TOR finished all other duties.

- Having worked in Excel previously, Nicole knew of resources within GCSI that would be highly beneficial to Excel Students and TOR's

- Through changes in state funding and approval processes, GCSI saw a sharp decline in referrals from Vocational Rehabilitation, leaving them in need of clients who were seeking employment
Benefits

- GCSI’s Disability Services Team relies on a steady stream of client referrals in order to remain productive.
- Historically, our team has relied on referrals coming to us, rather than us seeking referrals.
- Referrals through Vocational Rehabilitation is cyclical and does not allow for consistent workflow.
- Historically, Excel Centers within GCSI have students in need of employment and transition services.
- Students that have plateaued need opportunities naturally creating the conversation about transitions.
- Excel Centers have students with disabilities needing employment services and transition support.
- Disability Services needs clients that are seeking employment services and transition support.
Vision and planning

Our shared goal: Help students get supportive jobs and learn more about resources that are available.

- SSI, SSDI, job training, social skills training, etc.

How we planned:

- Our first meeting- prioritizing and scheduling students that were most in need.
  - Things to consider:
    - Which students are in need of jobs?
    - Which students are underemployed and have employers who are not serving their needs?
    - Which students are “job ready” but may need extra support?
    - Which students have regular school attendance?
    - Which students may be on a Certificate of Completion track someday?

**QUESTION:** How does YOUR Excel Center location collaborate with Goodwill?
Ensuring a successful start

● When visiting schools, I use my time strategically to ensure I can meet with as many students as possible

● Kelly graciously makes me a list of students to meet with, reminds them of their appointments, and provides support during meetings if needed

● Initial Meeting: Discussing work history, goals, school progress, and an overall review of the VR Process, gauging initial interest, and then scheduling follow-up

● Second Meeting: Student repeats information regarding VR Services while Nicole and Kelly discuss the intake and approval process

● If students are interested after second meeting, Nicole will send referral information with student’s consent (Name, DOB, Address, SSN, Disability Information, IEP/504). Nicole signs authorization form to work with students.
The school’s role in the process

TOR’s job:
● Continue supporting the student at school
  ○ Maintaining grades, attendance, barrier removal/troubleshooting, etc.
● Schedule upcoming meetings between Nicole and students
● Have paperwork ready for student and Nicole to utilize together (student’s IEP/504 plan, any paperwork sent to The Excel Center from VR, etc.), pre-VR meeting prep/support
● Coordinating transportation for students to/from appointments
● Directing students to Nicole as individual questions arise
● Including a parent or guardian, as needed, if the student is a minor or not their own guardian
  ○ A way to check: https://public.courts.in.gov/GRP/
Intake

- Once Vocational Rehabilitation has received student’s intake paperwork, students are contacted for Intake Appointments.

- Nicole works closely with VR to ensure students are actively engaged in communication and taking ownership of the process.

- The actual appointment itself takes roughly an hour with discussion items including:
  - Student’s work and education history
  - Student’s career goals and interests
  - Overall health history and accommodation needs
  - Interest in employment providers

- If Vocational Rehabilitation sees the need for additional diagnostic information, a referral for a psych eval will be made.

- Once students have completed the necessary steps they are either approved or denied for services.
## After Intake

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<tr>
<th>If Eligible:</th>
<th>If Not Eligible:</th>
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<tr>
<td>● Student is given a “Pick List” that includes all employment providers in their county</td>
<td>● Student will work with the TOR and Goodwill’s Disability Services to find other avenues (Goodwill’s Disability Services job connections, direct connections to local jobs, finding disability-friendly training programs, etc.)</td>
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<td>● Student will then select an employment provider from the “Pick List,” and a referral will be sent to that provider</td>
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<td>● Once the referral process is complete, the student will then start services</td>
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Keys to Success

- Communication: Actively planning meeting times and compiling a schedule
- Preparedness: Ensuring students are ready for appointments
- Student Selection: Students with good attendance and engagement
- Follow-Through: Supporting students on staying connected and attending appointments
- Support (As Needed): Meeting the middle ground between support and independence
Data

Excel Center Shadeland
- 28 students referred in the 2018-2019 school year
- 16 students are waiting to begin services with Vocational Rehabilitation (4-6 week process)
- 12 students have begun services with Vocational Rehabilitation
- 1 student was not approved for immediate services (is not employed with Goodwill)

Marion County Excel Centers
- 41 students referred in the 2018-2019 school year
- 25 students are waiting to begin services with Vocational Rehabilitation (4-6 week process)
Success Story: LaShondria

Academics: An Excel Center (Shadeland) student since January 2017.

Admirable Fact: LaShondria has attended school at The Excel Center (Shadeland Avenue, formerly Franklin Road) since January 2017. Before our school moved to Shadeland, Shon walked miles to/from school everyday (rain, show, or shine!) for a year and a half and maintained nearly perfect attendance.

Hobbies: LaShondria provides care for her mother as well as enjoys spending time with friends and family.

Anticipated Graduation Date: Term 2/Term 3, 2019
LaShondria, continued

Work History:

- Prior to returning to school, Shon worked many jobs where she was underemployed but could not move up in leadership without her diploma.

- Shon worked at a local business in their employee cafeteria for over 10 years. While she loved her job, she did not have benefits or room to move into a leadership position.

- Kelly connected Shon to Nicole early in their partnership, and Nicole quickly saw what made Shon so special.

- Nicole and Shon navigate the Vocational Rehabilitation process together, but Shon did not qualify as someone with “most significant needs.” Nicole and Shon then turned to exploring other options to find meaningful, long term employment for Shon.

- Through our work with Shon, we were able to place her at a janitorial contract site near school where she makes $11.30 an hour with benefits. She also has the chance to move into management when she graduates.
Success Story: Derrick

Academics: An Excel Center (Shadeland, formerly Franklin Road) student since September 2017. Derrick came to The Excel Center when the VA program wouldn’t accept him into his vocational program because he didn’t have a high school diploma.

Work History: Initially, Derrick worked many cooking careers before going into the Army. After the Army, Derrick was employed as an Amtrak laborer and engineer in the trainyard for 25 years before losing his job due to injuries.

Admirable Fact: Derrick is a disabled veteran.

Hobbies: In his free time, Derrick enjoys going to church and visiting his mother.

Anticipated Graduation Date: Term 3/Term 4, 2020
Personal Application

What are different ways that you and your teams can build connects for the people you serve who have additional needs?

- Who are current people in your network that can help with these efforts?
- What are some local organizations that can help you reach these goals?
- Where can these meetings and connections be made on an ongoing basis?
- How much time do you need to invest in order to get plans off the ground and keep plans moving?
- How do you plan to track your progress/effectiveness?

Be prepared to share!

Main Point: How can you ensure your non diploma students are prepared to exit? Talk at your table and share out.
Handouts

- Consent for Release of Information
- “You Have A Meeting” Form
- Meeting decision sheet (based on questions from slide 11)
Contact Information

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