**PRESENT LEVELS and the SUMMARY of PERFORMANCE**

Some services performed by school districts in the past have been reduced, such as doing any assessment not required by Federal or State law. In other words, SDs are generally only able to provide those assessments necessary to determine special education eligibility and age appropriate assessments needed for transition planning. In the past, many SDs completed additional assessments as a courtesy, so that students would have current assessment available when applying for Vocational Rehabilitation eligibility, Community College requirements, and/or Developmental Disability eligibility.

In this time of increased collaboration between education and other agencies which will provide support as students transition out of education, the Summary of Performance can be used as a tool to assist Vocational Rehabilitation and other agencies in determining eligibility. If the district can use appropriate functional performance descriptions, then Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors can better translate the information to help students who qualify gain services.

For transition-aged students, a well written PLAAFP can provide the academic and functional performance of the child. It becomes a matter of transferring the information from the most recent IEP to the Summary of Performance. Then, the SD would need to include the most current postsecondary goals, and recommendations on how to assist the student in meeting the student’s postsecondary goals.

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| **Components of a PLAAFP** | **Components of a SOP** |
| 1. **Strengths of the student** 2. **Concerns of the parents for enhancing the education of their child** 3. **Present levels of academic performance, including the student’s most recent performance on State or District-Wide Assessments** 4. **Present level of developmental and functional performance (including results of the initial or most recent evaluation)** 5. **Student’s disability’s effects on the involvement and progress in the general education curriculum.** 6. **Student’s preferences, needs, interests; and,** 7. **Results of age-appropriate transition assessments** | 1. **Summary of Academic and Functional Performance (may include the following)**  * *How the student’s disability has affected the student’s academic achievement and functional performance, including strengths* * *Results of the student’s most recent state or district assessments, or any college entrance examinations* * *Results of most recent special education evaluation* * *Diploma Type, any honors or awards achieved, any vocational or extracurricular accomplishments* * *Any information of function performance in the following domains: Interpersonal skills, mobility, self-care, self-direction, communication, work tolerance, work skills*  1. **The students postsecondary goals** 2. **Recommendations to assist student in meeting postsecondary goals**  * *May include accommodations in the workplace, postsecondary educational setting or other transition activities* |

As shown above, there are many overlaps between the Present Levels and the Summary of Performance. When an IEP develops a strong PLAAFP, the summary of performance is basically already written for the student upon exiting high school.

**How to Write a Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance for**

**Transition-Aged Students**

Although the PLAAFP and SOP overlap, the challenge becomes writing the PLAAFP in a way that supports *adult* services as well as the K-12 system. Below are steps and tips to help an IEP team write a Present Levels document that meets this need.

1. **ALWAYS BEGIN WITH AN AGE-APPROPRIATE TRANSITION ASSESSMENT**

A compilation of several good assessments will write the PLAAFP for you. Assessments can be formal (Woodcock Johnson, ACT, ASVAB) or informal (student interviews, interest inventories, surveys).

Use assessments to gather information on to help you identify student

* **P**references
* **I**nterests
* **N**eed
* **S**trengths
* Academics
* Self-determination
* Vocational interests, aptitudes, and explorations
* Independent living and Adaptive Behavior

***Tips for Teachers!***

* *Students can “interview” each other to gather information for you*
* *Students give better information when interviewed one on one*
* *Assessments with checkboxes and numbering often give more information than asking students to write responses in words*

1. **BUILD YOUR TEMPLATE**

There is a clear structure for the Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance. Begin your PLAAFP by organizing the sections and headings according to the required components. This will make the blank PLAAFP page less daunting, and will provide direction for the team. An example of a template is below.

For students who turn **16** when the **most recent** IEP is in effect or who are older than 16, the IEP

contains Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance including all of the following:

* *Strengths of the student*
* *Concerns of the parents for enhancing the education of their child*
* *Present level of academic performance, including the student’s most recent performance*

*on State or district-wide assessments;*

* *Present level of developmental and functional performance (including the results of the*

*initial or most recent evaluation);*

* *Student’s disability’s effects on the involvement and progress in the general education*

*curriculum.*

* *Student’s preferences, needs, interests; and, the results of age-appropriate transition*

*assessments.*

1. **FOCUS ON FUNCTIONAL PEFORMANCE**

Although academic performance continues to be a critical component of the IEP, team members need to know how the student’s functional performance will support or impede his or her success in postsecondary options.

Functional performance are life activities or skill areas in which the ability to function is significant to successful independence and/or employment. Seven areas have been defined by Vocational Rehabilitation for the purposes of identifying functional limitations and determining the severity of an individual’s disability. These areas are:

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| **INTERPERSONAL SKILLS** | *The ability to establish and maintain positive personal, family, and community relationships necessary to school and work.* |
| **MOBILITY** | *The purposeful movement and control of the body and its members to achieve results.* |
| **SELF-CARE** | *The ability to care for self and living environment* |
| **SELF-DIRECTION** | *The ability to regulate behavior in a purposeful and predictable way, taking into account personal goals, environmental conditions, cultural values, and expectations* |
| **COMMUNICATION** | *The ability to give and receive information* |
| **WORK TOLERANCE** | *The capacity to meet the physical and psychological demands of school and work* |
| **WORK SKILLS** | *The capacity to learn and perform school and job tasks* |

When writing all components of the PLAAFP, think through as an IEP team how these seven areas are impacted and document this throughout your present levels. Even a college-bound student with a math disability will have areas of functional performance that need to be considered and supported. Organizational skills, financial planning, and long-term goal setting are areas of need for even the highest performing students. It always comes back to the age- appropriate transition assessment and the student’s postsecondary goal; what is the goal and what does the student need to be successful in reaching that goal?

***Tips for Teachers!***

* *For students with fewer barriers to function performance, here are some specific areas to consider:*
  + *Is the person able to handle constructive criticism? (Interpersonal skills)*
  + *Can the person perform tasks at a competitive work pace? (mobility)*
  + *Is the person able to manage financial responsibilities? (Self-care)*
  + *Does the person initiate work activity? (Self-Direction)*
  + *Can the person work or go to school for a six to eight hour day? (Work Tolerance)*
  + *Can the person transfer learning from one job task to another? ( Work Skills)*

1. **USE VOCATIONAL LANGUAGE COMPATIBLE WITH EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

When functional performance areas are addressed in the PLAAFP using vocational rehabilitation language versus educational language, they can be easily transferred into the Summary of Performance when the student exits high school. Below are examples of how this may occur in each of the areas identified.

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| **INTERPERSONAL SKILLS** | |
| **Educational**  **Language** | Does student have friends? Does student like to work on teams? |
| Does student answer when spoken to? |
| Does student know when teacher is giving constructive criticism? |
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| **Vocational Rehabilitation Language** | Does person enjoy being with other people or prefer to be alone? |
| Is person able to recognize social cues? |
| Is person able to handle constructive criticism? |

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| **MOTOR SKILLS** | |
| **Educational**  **Language** | Is the student able to write and work with the fine skills of his hands? |
| Is the student able to participate in physical education? Does the student need extra time to complete assignments/tests? |
| Does the student have accommodations/modifications on IEP to assist with lack of energy? |
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| **Vocational Rehabilitation Language** | Does person have control and coordination of fine/gross motor movements? |
| Does person perform tasks at a competitive work pace? |
| Does the person move slower than average? Fatigue easily? |

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| **SELF CARE** | |
| **Educational**  **Language** | Is the student able to get to class on time and organize work for each class? |
| Does the student have trouble deciding what he wants to do after he completes high school? |
| Is the student impulsive and/or behave without thought toward consequences? |
|  | |
| **Vocational Rehabilitation Language** | Is the person able to manage a daily schedule? |
| Does the person have difficulty making decisions? |
| Does the person have a lack of “common sense” ability? |

***Tips for Teachers!***

* *Try to phrase present levels in a way that is transferrable from the school setting to the workplace*
* *Not all areas of functional performance need to be addressed; just focus on the things are most important in helping the student meet his or her postsecondary goal*

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| **SELF DIRECTION** | |
| **Educational**  **Language** | Is the student able to read/listen to and follow directions? |
| Does the student complete homework assignments? |
| Does the student learn appropriate behavior in the resource room but then cannot generalize that appropriate behavior to her general classes? |
|  | |
| **Vocational Rehabilitation Language** | Is the person able to follow directions? |
| Is the person able to complete tasks? |
| Does the person have difficult generalizing, transferring and/or assimilating information (written, spoken, receptive, or expressive)? |

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| **COMMUNICATION** | |
| **Educational**  **Language** | Is the student able to speak clearly enough to be understood by peers and staff? |
| Do you often have to ask the student to repeat herself? |
| Can the student clearly tell the teacher/aide what he needs? |
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| **Vocational Rehabilitation Language** | Is the person’s speech difficult to understand? |
| Is repetition often necessary? |
| Is the person able to communicate his/her needs effectively? |

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| **WORK TOLERANCE** | |
| **Educational**  **Language** | Does the student have a shortened work day? |
| Can the student sit still for a regular class period? |
| Does the student get along with teachers, aides, and fellow classmates? |
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| **Vocational Rehabilitation Language** | Can the person work for an eight hour day? |
| Can the person sit or stand for more than two hours? |
| Is the person able to establish adequate working relationships, especially with coworkers and supervisors? |

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| **WORK SKILLS** | |
| **Educational**  **Language** | Does the student work on an assignment for a reasonable amount of time? |
| Is the student often tardy to class or school? |
| Can the student start an assignment without being told to start? |
|  | |
| **Vocational Rehabilitation Language** | Is the person able to maintain attention to a task for a reasonable amount of time? |
| Is the person able to tell time and be on time for work? |
| Does the person take initiative or does he need cues to perform? |