

Students in the Driver's Seat: *Reimagining Transition Planning*



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About empowerED

Founded in 2020 by Dr. Jenna Rufo with a mission to lead inclusive change!

Currently partnering with K-12 organizations and state departments of education in 17 states as well as Australia.

We believe in an education system where...

- All children receive access to high quality grade level instruction,
- Differences are viewed as gifts to be treasured,
- Students are supported in reaching their highest potential,
- The foundation for just and responsible societies begins in schools.



About Kate

Former public school employee for 13 years.

Served as a general educator, special educator, inclusion facilitator and instructional coach.

Lifelong learner...

Passionate about personalized professional development!

Currently live outside of Philadelphia with my husband, two daughters and our boxer, Dolly.



Our Learning Intentions

- Identify actionable ways that students can participate in their IEP meetings
- Consider IEP meeting structures that support and empower students to contribute meaningfully
- Apply student centered transition practices that elevate student voice, agency and ownership



Flashback to Fourteen...

Imagine you are fourteen again...

- What did you care about most?
- What did you worry about most?
- What did you dream about for your future?





At fourteen, who in your life knew the answers to those questions well enough to plan your future?



If transition planning is about the student's future, the student's voice should be the most important one in the room.

What we know...

In an observation of **109 teacher-directed transition meetings**, participation averaged:

- Special educator: 51%
- Family members: 15%
- General educators: 9%
- Administrators: 9%
- Support staff: 6%
- **Students: 3%**

Martin et al., 2006



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What we know...

Existing literature around *self-directed, or student led*, IEPs indicates that when students learn the skills to participate in, or run their meeting they experience...

- Increased self-determination skills such as; goal-setting, problem solving, decision making and self-awareness.
- Greater understanding of their strengths, needs and strategies / tools that support their overall learning.
- Increased understanding of their rights and services resulting in long-term advocacy.



As educators, it is
our job to build
“expert learners.”

Resourceful

Knowledgeable

Strategic

Goal
Directed

CAST (2018)

Purposeful

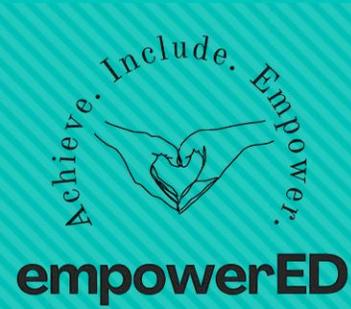
Motivated





"it seems naive to presume that students attending their transition IEP meetings will learn how to actively participate and lead this process through serendipity..."

Martin et al., 2006

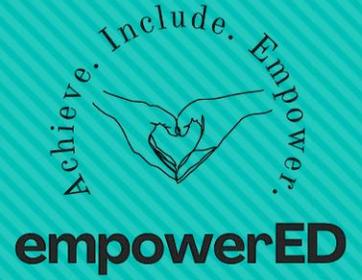


Strategies for Authentic Participation



In Transition Meetings

Adjusting Mindset



Can the student handle participating in this meeting?



How can we design our IEP meetings so that students have a meaningful role?

Adjusting Mindset



Embrace transition planning as a process, not a singular event.

The most meaningful transition work happens *before* and *after* the IEP meeting takes place.

Reimagining Transition Planning



Before the
Meeting



During the
Meeting



After the
Meeting

Before the Meeting



- Preview the components of an IEP with the student
- Design an agenda that prioritizes topics for in person collaboration
 - Consider sharing a summary of updated present levels prior to the meeting
- Ensure that transition assessments, interest surveys and strengths reflections have been completed and reviewed
- Student generates or reviews the IEP invitation, adding key players from his or her support network
 - This may include friends, siblings, employer, neighbors, etc.



Before the Meeting



- Support the student in preparing (or pre-recording) an introduction that shares an overall vision, hopes and dreams, strengths, and ideas for further support.

Video example to be linked here

During the Meeting



- Encourage the student to lead introductions and state the overall purpose of the meeting.
- Establish clear goals for team discussion and set norms for collaboration.
- Allow the student to present their progress, strengths, needs, learning preferences and hopes for the future.
 - This should be done in a way of the student's choosing --- slide show, discussion, printed portfolio, etc.



During the Meeting

- Support the student in asking clarifying questions if contributions from team members feel unclear.
 - Utilize accountable talk phrases
- Encourage the student to identify how each member of the IEP team can support progress toward their goals.



After the Meeting



- Schedule a short follow up meeting with the student to ensure full understanding of the IEP document.
- Request that the student summarize his / her goals for broader communication with teachers and staff.
 - Development of an IEP snapshot or a one-pager
- Train students to monitor their own progress towards IEP goals, and schedule bi-weekly check-ins to review and adjust.





When students learn to speak about their goals, their strengths, and the supports they need, they are not just participating in an IEP meeting — they are practicing self-advocacy for the rest of their lives.



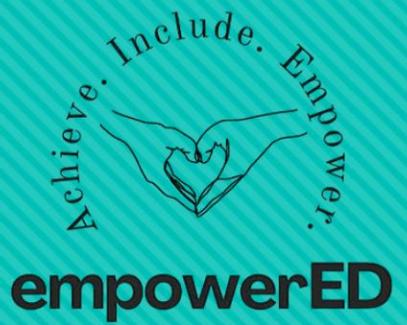
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From Page to Practice

*Cracking the Code of
Student-Led Transitions*



Your Mission!



Work together at your table to help the IEP team at Oakwood High School pull off an effective, student-led transition meeting for Thomas, a rising senior.

You will have 35 minutes to crack the code, moving this team's plan from page to practice!

When you're ready, open the large envelope at your table. Read all directions carefully!

Good luck!





In closing...



This afternoon we...

Our Learning Intentions

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You are prepared to empower
students to find their voice...

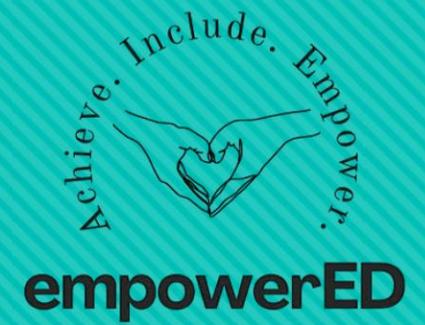


You are ready to encourage
students to celebrate their strengths
and advocate for their needs...



You hold the key to supporting your students in designing the best possible future for themselves.

THANK YOU!



Please keep in touch...



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@ChoosinInclusion

