

TPS

Transition Partnership School

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Introduction

The impetus for the Transition Partnership School (TPS) proposal and design came from parents of Menomonie High School students. The initiative began as a grass roots proposal, parent to parent and parent to teacher. These parents expressed concern about their children and talked about the profound lack of opportunities for them after high school. Many of these students move through the K-12 education system at a significantly different pace than their peers. Students frequently cannot compete academically or in the job market upon exiting their existing high school program. The choice to remain in their local schools for additional transition services and coursework is a difficult one. Many students are emotionally and psychologically ready for a transition. In research done by these parents over the past several years, there are few schools designed to take these young people from this point in time and provide support, education, job skills, and the structure to move these students forward. The parents' vision was a school for students that required transition and academic education beyond what is traditionally offered in the high school to better prepare these students for earning a competitive earning wage and living independently.



In essence, the purpose of this school is to extend and enhance the high school experience for those students in a variety of settings with individualized programming.

The Life Centered Career Education curriculum is taught daily. The curriculum is designed to provide general education, special education, and at-risk students with important skills needed to function productively in the home and community. An arrangement with the University of Wisconsin-Stout's Vocational Rehabilitation Institute (SVRI) provides vocational services and the option for the student to live in a supervised residence hall.

During the 2004-05 school year, we began a pilot program with three students. The students participated in all aspects of the program, including living on campus from Sunday through Friday. During the 2005-



06 school year, eight students are participating in the program with seven of the eight students living on campus. We plan to continue the program for 2006-07 with a minimum of ten students.

Population:

High school students who are 18 years of age or have senior status have access to the TPS. Entrance/participation criteria is contingent on the student's desire to live independently and acquire the vocational, academic, and social skills necessary to become gainfully employed or go on to post-secondary education.

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Cooperation Entities

The partnership includes the Menomonie School District and Stout Vocational Rehabilitation Institute at UW-Stout. Surrounding school districts have indicated an interest in involvement and referral of students. This year, a student from a nearby school district is attending TPS on a tuition agreement and living on campus. Other community resources such as Dunn County Human Services, Center for Independent Living, and local employers also partner with TPS to provide a full compliment of services and opportunities for the students.

Goal:

Provide a comprehensive, individualized program of education and experience to meet the vocational, educational and independent living needs of students preparing to transition from school to adult life.

Objectives:

1. Provide students with skills and support necessary to succeed in post-secondary level educational opportunities.
2. Secure employment or a postsecondary education program for students upon completion of Transition Partnership School.
3. Prepare students to live independently in a community.

PROGRAM:

TPS provides a full time curriculum focusing on the transition process. The following principles of design will be implemented:

- Flexible curriculum centered on the student's vocational and independent living skill development
- Individualized plan/schedule for each student
- Access to the capacities of SVRI, other Stout departments/facilities, and worksites
- Vocational decision making, development of independent living skills, and/or preparation for pursuit of post-secondary education.
- Community based, experiential learning
- Access to mentors through UW-Stout and Center for Independent Living
- Residential programming on campus
- Development of skills through work experience, job shadowing, postsecondary courses, and structured community activities

COSTS:

- Attendance for Menomonie students is free.
- Out-of-district students may attend with a tuition agreement between districts (cost per student estimated around \$6000 per school year-determined by state aid)
- Option of living on campus is available for students-some scholarship funds are available
- Costs such as transportation may be picked up by the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation based on individual student needs