ABCs of Transition Fairs

Putting it all together

Rhonda King
Catalina Foothills School District,
Transition Coordinator
Catalina Foothills High School,
Department Chairperson

Introductions

Rhonda King
Catalina Foothills School District,
Transition Coordinator

Catalina Foothills High School,
Support Services Department
Chairperson

Who else is here?

Insert Picture here

Learning Objective

Participants will develop an understanding of how to host a successful transition fair.

Transition Fairs: What are the benefits?

- Make connections with community resources
- Have an opportunity to learn about college and training programs
- Learn about employment services
- Discover options for independent living
- Gain insight about the future to share with the IEP team

Adapted from the Transition Fair Toolkit,Western Michigan University Career Connections Research Center, NSTTAC, Rashell Bowerman, Lydia Schuck, June Gothberg, Jennifer Coyle, Paula Kohler

Planning: the Components of a Transition Fair

1. The audience
2. Presenters for breakout sessions and/or keynote
3. Vendors and exhibitors
4. Refreshments, prizes and giveaways
5. Advertising: getting the word out!
6. Evaluation: Was the fair a success?

The Audience/The Theme

Some things to consider:

1. Will the fair focus on students with IEPs, 504s, or the entire student body?
2. Will parents be invited?

Your audience will determine the best time of day.

Students? Consider having it during the day.

Parents? Consider having it in the evening.

Encourage teachers and other district staff to attend.

Presenters and break out sessions

Will you have a :

- Keynote presenter?
- Panel presentation?
- Presenters?
- Break out sessions?

Former students may be good candidates. Parents and staff members may also add a different perspective.

Vendors and Exhibitors

VENDOR AND EXHIBITOR IDEAS:

- Local businesses
- Community Resources
- Colleges
- Trade and Educational Institutions
- Employers
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Adult service agencies
- Government entities
- Healthcare, housing, and transportation providers
- Banks and local credit unions
- Vendors of products and services

WORKABILITY

Raising Special Kids
families helping families

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC SECURITY
Your Partner For A Stronger Arizona

Pima Community College

DIRECT Center for Independence
ENCOURAGE – EQUIP – EMPOWER

RSA

PIMA COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

Refreshments and Prizes

Refreshments are a nice addition to your transition fair and are always welcomed, and door prizes add a lot of fun to your event! **No budget? No problem!**

- seek donations for food and beverages through your local area restaurants. For example: (cookies, Eegees, water, etc)
- seek donations for door prizes through local restaurants, places of entertainment, etc.

Door prizes

Now I have the door prizes, what should I do with them?

Advertising your event

Get the word out! There are multiple ways to advertise your event:

- Posters
- Emails and school announcements
- Websites

Use your students! Students pass on the information to their parents. Students can also help with graphic design, create written material, flyers, posters, and more!

Use your teachers! Case managers can personally invite each parent and student to the transition fair.

INFORM PARENT and STUDENTS

Contact Early and Contact Frequently

- Post it on the school website/calendar
- Mail information home
- Post flyers
- Emails
- Post it on the school marquee
- Advertise it on local/social media
- Make phone calls
- Include it in the school newspaper

Evaluation

Once the transition fair is over, it is important to allow participants (presenters, vendors/exhibitors, parents, and students) an opportunity to complete an evaluation of the transition fair, from the planning process to the day of.

This information is important and should shape the planning process for the next transition fair.

Timeline

6-12 months before the event:

- Identify your team members
- Hold a meeting to discuss the four areas of focus: who, what, when and where.

3-4 months before the event

- Finalize the date, time, and place.
- Contact and invite vendors and exhibitors.
- Invite Speakers
- Begin to solicit donations (some business require time, so plan accordingly)

Timeline

2 months before the event:

- Send out a Save the Date notice.
- Design your flyer
- Create an organizational system to manage your communication.

1 month before the event:

- Send information out to all parents of students on an IEP or 504.
- Create a press release (perhaps a student could write it?)
- Plan the layout of the event.
- Determine what will be needed and the logistics (tables, audio visual needs, etc).
- Confirm speakers and presenters.

Timeline

Month of event:

- Send follow up information to vendors and exhibitors (schedule, directions, etc).
- Create a program that lists the organizations in attendance and their contact information.
- Ask case managers to reach out to their parents personally and invite them.
- Make signs to welcome attendees and to direct them to the event (students can help with this).
- Prepare sign in sheets.
- Assign roles at the event (emcee, greeter, etc)
- Develop evaluations of the event.
- Assign someone to photograph the event.
- Notify teachers and administrators of the final details.
- Prepare students so that they know what to expect and how this will benefit them.

Timeline

Event Night:

- Post signs
- Set up and final prep for the event.
- Have event schedule and resource list with sign in sheets and press release with extra pens next to the greeter.

After the Event:

- Review the evaluations.
- Sent out thank you letters to presenters, agencies and vendors.
- Review checklist and make changes for next time.

Evaluation: What Went Well and Things to Change

- What was the feedback from the attendee evaluations?
- Were the overall goals and objectives met?
- Did you reach your target audience? (outreach and marketing)
- Were you in-line with your budget? Why or why not?
- Think about the conference materials. (packets/programs/signage)
- Were you satisfied with the exhibitors and vendors?
- How was the facility? (flow/layout/access)
- Were the speakers effective in delivering the content?
- What worked well? Did you face any barriers?
- Lessons learned – what could have gone better?
- What recommendations would you make for next time?

Best Practice Tips

Make the event interactive.This might include agency-related activities, computer kiosks demonstrating career interest inventories/games, inviting community members and students to participate in mock interviews and provide feedback, or an **information-gathering scavenger hunt.**

Individualized outreach from school staff to families that they are familiar with builds relationships and results in higher attendance

Best Practice Tips

Many activities at a transition fair could be linked to post-secondary goals or annual goals in the IEP such as doing a college search or researching affordable housing in your area.

Make sure there is a greeter at all times to welcome guests, hand out programs and ask people to sign in.

Additionally, provide name tags or some kind of identifier in case guests or vendors have questions.

Best Practice Tips

Share the data from your transition fair to build awareness and get support for your next event!

Make a presentation to the school board and/or school team meetings; inform parents and community members using email, social media, and the local and/or school paper.

Closure

Hosting a transition fair every year exposes students and families to supports and resources that they will need upon graduation from school. These resources include multiple stakeholders throughout the community, including representatives from universities, colleges, trade schools, financial aid information, employers, housing, and benefits specialists, health and mental health care professionals. Several benefits of hosting a transition fair include exposure to community resources, researching colleges and training programs, learning about employment services, discovering options for independent living, and allows families to gain insight about the future to share with the IEP team.

Contact Information

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