*\*\*Note: This example redesign of a post-secondary transitions fair at a school was written in September 2019 by Transition Coaches practicing at a meeting.*

**

**Redesign for Family Engagement**

**Choose a current school strategy/activity for engaging families. Describe it.**

 **Name the activity:**

Transition Fair at the school, on a weekday evening, 6-9 PM. Speaker to kick it off, Circulate among tables of vendors or organizations, light refreshments, in an auditorium, higher ed, trade schools, agencies (including financial assistance), for all students with disabilities in middle to high school grades (age 14-22) and their families, spring event, tied to parent/teacher nights.

**Questions:**

**1. What is the goal for the student?**

* *Spark student interest in postsecondary options*
* *Understand available options*
* *Personal contact/connect with options*
* *100% Engagement in postsecondary education, employment, independent living*

**2. What is the goal for the family?**

* *Understand available options*
* *Personal contact/connect with options*
* *Families make connections with other families*

 **3. Who would not have access? What barriers exist?**

* *Families who don’t have a good relationship/rapport with IEP team and/or district*
* *Families who forget about it*
* *Families that don’t live in town*
* *Second shift workers*
* *Those with no transportation*
* *Do not speak English*
* *Deaf or hard of hearing( no interpreter)*
* *Fear of change, unknown pieces*
* *Prior negative experiences with school*
* *The child didn’t bring home the flyer*
* *Parent unable to read*
* *On vacation*
* *Kids without disabilities*
* *Sporting events*
* *Intimidated*
* *Other engagements*

**4. What would motivate families to fully and gladly engage in this activity?**

* *Their child would want to go*
* *The invitation would be clear about the intended audience and goals*
* *Parent ‘tour guide’ to help at the event*
* *Have childcare available*
* *Availability (timewise)*
* *Movie in auditorium for younger students, MS/HS students*
* *Provide descriptions of event and possible outcomes prior to*
* *Hands-on activity for students to take away (build bird house/ cook something)*
* *Relationships (a partner or friend who invites me if I am too shy to come alone)*
* *Parent panel discussion*
* *Homework pass available*
* *Student panel discussion*
* *If my child is singing, performing, reading, sharing*
* *Good feedback from neighbors or friends from similar events*

**Redesign it!**

 **Thinking creatively, how can we revive this activity for engaging the families of all students?**

1. **What are the different options we have to eliminate the barriers for families?**
* *Food donations from the community.*
* *Partner with HS clubs for childcare provision (ex. Key Club, NHS, etc.)*
* *Encourage or incentivize families who come to things regularly to “bring a neighbor or friend” who normally doesn’t*
* *Form transportation networks or change the locations to help them learn the community or take place in a “safe, comfortable” location, i.e. have the fair at McDonald’s on a night when one of the clubs is sponsoring a pancake supper, etc.*
* *Provide information in ways other than printed material (i.e, post a video invitation on website or FB)*
* *Partner with community agencies to help with transportation*
1. **What are some other opportunities we can provide to get to the same goal? What are other ways we can communicate about this goal with families?**
* *Offer a virtual Transition Fair*
* *Instead of a big event, develop a close enough relationship with families and partners throughout the school year so that you can do more one on one personalized recommendations*
* *Offer ongoing meetings for families to talk about post-secondary planning and how to connect with resources for their child.*
* *Change the time of day or offer two time blocks that would allow different shifts to come*
* *Provide interpreters and/or cultural brokers who will walk through the fair with families*
* *Social Media for communication; encourage multiple means of marketing and outreach, including video.*
* *Have follow up virtual meetings for middle school and separately for high school families to ask questions and discuss with each other.*
* *Share with our partners and encourage them to suggest attending the event at places like Coordinated support meetings and IEP meetings*
* *Get the bus drivers and car pool adults copies of the flyers to distribute; put them on the bulletin boards at the grocery and discount stores*
* *Ask all attendees to do a video about their services/club/program/etc and make it available*
* *Encourage booths to become more interactive and get the provider out from behind the table*
* *Share the connections to a child’s “dreamboarding”, i.e. “We have this specific thing or things that directly support {XXX} part of your child’s dreamboard and more things we’d like you to know more about?”*
* *Access to webinars and videos for students and families with a contact person for more information*
* *Partner with the Parent Organization or the Booster Club(s)*
* *Survey families and students to see what they need or want*
* *Have community neighbors there “telling their story”*
1. **What incentives, hooks, or attractive options can we build in to motivate families to support their child’s transition and meet the intended goal?**
* *Provide opportunities for families to connect with agencies that they need to connect with or find rides to (i.e., having DJFS there and maybe they could have their meeting with them)*
* *Their child knowing why they want to go and sharing with their family*
* *Options for some children or parents to leave there with an actual work/intern/volunteer opportunity*
* *List out the benefits for families/students*
* *Door prizes, free stuff*
* *Homework help/tutoring for children so that families can shift right to bath, books, bed when they get home*
1. **How many different ways are there for families to be involved in supporting the goal?**
* *Include a family representative on the planning team for the event – and give them actual open time during a planning meeting or phone call to think and share their ideas in the moment – try not to talk over them with a set agenda.*
* *Having multiple conversations with the student to find out who needs to be there, getting them involved in why they need to be there so THEY CAN ADVOCATE for their family member to attend and be a part of transition planning.*
* *Networking with agencies--- face to face connection.*
* *Encourage parents to tell their stories to other parents and staff.*
* *Be respectful and give dignity to their lives and culture.*
* *Asking their employers to get involved – create pipelines in the local community*
* *Bring a neighbor or a friend*
* *Utilizing technology options*