Special Education and Work-Based Learning: Partners in Positive Post-School Outcomes for Students with Disabilities
Early work experience is a predictor of adult employment and other outcomes. It is the #1 thing that assists students for competitive employment.
Building a working partnership between Special Education and Work-Based Learning Coordinators is an essential component to achieving post-school success for students with disabilities.
So how can Work-Based Learning Coordinators help to build a working partnership?

• Understand that students with disabilities are STUDENTS first, then students with disabilities second.

• Understand that students with disabilities are the responsibility of all education professionals, not just Special Education staff.

• Understand that all students have unique learning needs and challenges.

• Familiarize yourself with regulations and laws concerning the provision of services for students with disabilities, such as the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Workforce Innovations Opportunities Act (WIOA), and the Alabama Administrative Code (AAC).

• Develop an understanding of diploma pathways, requirements for each pathway, and reasons for selecting a certain pathway.

• Know how to be an active, knowledgeable participant in students’ Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings.
• Understand that students with disabilities are STUDENTS first, then a student with a disability second.

• Understand that students with disabilities are the responsibility of all education professionals, not just Special Education staff.

• Understand that all students have unique learning needs and challenges.

• When all education professionals take ownership of all students, including those with disabilities, everyone benefits.

• Student with disabilities have the same needs, wants, desires, and dreams as everyone else.

• For students with disabilities, it takes a team of caring professionals to help make their dreams and desires a reality.
Familiarize yourself with regulations and laws concerning the provision of services for students with disabilities, such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Workforce Innovations Opportunities Act (WIOA), and the Alabama Administrative Code (AAC).

- Knowledge of the regulations and laws provides protections for the student that his or her rights are being provided.
- Knowledge of the regulations and laws provides protection for education personnel so that they do not violate the student’s rights.
- Knowledge of the regulations and laws provides protection against potential liability issues.
Develop an understanding of diploma pathways, requirements for each pathway, and reasons for selecting a certain pathway.

- Currently Alabama has three pathways to the Alabama High School Diploma:
  - **General Education Pathway** – available to all students, follows the Alabama Courses of Study content.
  - **Essentials Pathway** - beginning in August 2017, only available to students with IEPs, follows Alabama Curriculum Guide to the Standards bulleted objectives, The Essentials Pathway is closely, but not fully, aligned with the Alabama Courses of Study content standards. It emphasizes vocational preparation and job readiness skills with required work-based learning coursework.
  - **Alternate Achievement Standards Pathway** – designed for students with significant cognitive disabilities, follows the Alabama Extended Standards.

- Students who meet the requirements for their pathway **graduate with an Alabama High School Diploma**.
Always start with the highest, most appropriate pathway. However, if you need to consider another pathway, some reasons might be:

- reading or math levels significantly below grade level
- Goal of work after graduation
- Need for work readiness skills
The Work Component of the Essentials Pathway

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<tr>
<th>PREREQUISITE COURSE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Career Preparedness  (Career and Academic Planning, Computer Applications, and Financial Literacy)</td>
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<th>REQUIREMENTS</th>
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<td>Students who take 4 or more Essentials Pathway courses must complete the following:</td>
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<td>• Community-Based Work Training</td>
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<td>• Two Career/Technical Education courses in a sequence (Concentrator plus 1 CT class = Completer)</td>
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<td>• Workforce Essentials or Transition Services II</td>
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<td>• Cooperative Education/Work-Based Learning and/or *Essentials Career Preparation (*New name for Life Skills Occupational Preparation)</td>
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**IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

- **Community-Based Work Training** should be completed before applying for Cooperative Education/Work-Based Learning.
- Community-Based Work Training should be completed at **two different work sites** and will be considered successful when the student has two Community-Based Work Training Performance Evaluations with scores of three or four for each site.
- Community-Based Work Training **can be waived with successful paid work experiences** documented on the Community-Based Work Training Performance Evaluation form (minimum of two).
- Cooperative Education/Work-Based Learning and Essentials Career Preparation can consist of an **apprenticeship (paid) or internship (unpaid) experience**.
- Students must have a minimum of **140 hours** of apprenticeship or internship experience. The student will be awarded one credit for each 140 hours of the career experience.
- Apprenticeship and internship hours can only be **earned in the summer** if the student is enrolled in summer school and the system **Cooperative Education Coordinator is on a 12-month contract.**
- The Career Preparation course can count as a career/technical education course, regardless of the instructor’s teacher certification.
Know how to be an active, knowledgeable participant in students’ Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings.

IEP Team Membership Composition

• Parent of the child
• At least one regular education teacher of the student
• At least one Special Education teacher of the student
• An LEA representative
• An individual who can interpret the educational implications of evaluation results
• When ever appropriate, but definitely age 16 or thereafter, the student
• Career Technical Education representative, when appropriate
• Secondary Transition Services participants (with consent from parents)
Know how to be an active, knowledgeable participant in students’ Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings.

What is the CTE Representative’s role in the IEP Meeting?

(f) A CTE designee having knowledge of the content standards of the CTE course(s) which the IEP team is considering for the student shall serve as a member of the IEP team.

(g) A Career and Technical Implementation Plan (CTIP) shall be developed as part of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process prior to the student entering the CTE program if accommodations and/or modifications are required. The plan shall remain on file with the CTE teacher while the student is enrolled in the program. Each plan shall be evaluated, as needed, using student performance objective criteria as prescribed by the plan.

(h) Students with a CTIP that requires program modifications as defined by the IEP team will be counted as two students for the purposes of enrollment counts.
Know how to be an active, knowledgeable participant in students’ Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings.