



Key points:

- **Set up career development classes to assist with transition**
- **Keep students engaged in Tier 2 with 'Check & Connect'**
- **Employ intensive person-centered planning in Tier 3**

≤ Apply tiered intervention model to postsecondary transition

While the three-tier intervention model is often affiliated with RTI in the classroom, it also works quite well for transitioning students to life after high school, sources say.

"This model is similar in structure to RTI, but the difference is that it looks at academics and functional skills along with specific transition areas that we address," said Michael Stoehr, an educational consultant for the [Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network](#), or PaTTAN.

Stoehr recently discussed the benefits of a three-tier postsecondary transition model in the Aug. 20 PaTTAN webinar, [Successful Practices in Secondary Transition for Continuous Improvement](#).

For instance, Tier 1 focuses on assessment and career planning for all students. Supplemental assistance is provided at Tier 2 for students who may need more targeted interventions. And at Tier 3, school staff engages in intensive transition assessment and planning for the student, Stoehr said.

"We've been encouraging school districts to look at postsecondary transition for all students, not just students with disabilities," Stoehr said. "The most important thing I think this model has done in schools that have really embraced it is ... it has broken down the silos between general and special education because you are working more collaboratively. It's an approach that looks at all our kids, whether they have an IEP or not."

Consider these steps:

Break down support barriers between special, general ed in Tier 1

Tier 1 looks at the entire student body and focuses on student-directed transition planning and progress monitoring.

Students with disabilities who receive Tier 1 supports are fully included in general education classrooms and complete the same coursework -- they may just need extra support for transition planning, Stoehr said.

For example, extra support at Tier 1 could involve biweekly or monthly postsecondary advisory sessions with a guidance counselor. In addition, the student may be required to create a personal plan of study, which could include employment interests, postsecondary goals, and courses to take to reach those goals.

"To go along with Tier 1, you would ideally have a specific class or elective open to all students that looks specifically at transitional programming, such as a career readiness or career development course," Stoehr said. Usually districts will offer these classes at key transition times in seventh and eighth grade, and again in 10th and 11th grade, he said. IEP teams can incorporate such classes into students' transition plans and goals, he said.

Consider supervision, student engagement in Tier 2

"Students at Tier 2 are engaged in more specific instruction around supports for developing employment skills," Stoehr said. They may have more intensive disabilities or could be in jeopardy of dropping out, he said.

Examples of Tier 2 interventions include using work-based assessments, which evaluate a student's performance in the workplace, conducting FBAs, and using the "Check & Connect" approach, Stoehr said.

Check & Connect assesses students' learning engagement by "checking on students" through close monitoring of their attendance, behavior, and grades, and "connecting with students" by offering individualized support through partnership with school personnel, families, and community service providers.

Furthermore, while students in Tier 1 may not need targeted supervision during internships and work experiences, this is something to consider for students in Tier 2, Stoehr said.

Engage in person-centered planning in Tier 3

"In Tier 3, most of the students have IEPs and are in the 18-21 age group," Stoehr said. The interventions here are much more concentrated on small group instruction and intensive person-centered planning.

For students with disabilities, person-centered planning involves having IEP teams come together to look at the students' needs and map out their futures, Stoehr said. Oftentimes this is done in the presence of staff members from community-based organizations or social services agencies.

To provide person-centered planning in Tier 3, Stoehr has been working with project [RENEW](#), an organization that provides transition-based training to school staff.

Other Tier 3 interventions include one-on-one job coaching and individualized instruction on self-determination, social skills, and independent living, Stoehr said.

Incorporate 6 constructs of college and career readiness

The tiered transition model was originally developed in part by Mary Morningstar, director of the [Transition Coalition](#) and associate professor in the Department of Special Education at the University of Kansas, Stoehr said.

Morningstar has since applied the tiered model across six [constructs](#) of college and career readiness.

Consider the first construct, which is critical thinking, Morningstar said. A student with significant disabilities can still work on his critical thinking, she said. But to do so, he may need more significant supports such as increased intervention or assistive technology. Therefore, the student would move from Tier 1 to either Tier 2 or Tier 3, she said.

"The construct would stay the same across tiers, but how you implement it changes at the instructional level," she said.

See also:

- [Use 6 constructs as 'blueprint' for your transition planning](#) (Aug. 27)
- [Launch school-based enterprise for students with significant disabilities](#) (July 24)
- [Avoid 3 common mistakes in postsecondary transition planning](#) (Dec. 6)

For more stories and guidance on this topic, see the [Postsecondary Transition Roundup](#).

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