

# NH Transition Realignment Project

## State Plan

December 29, 2005

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# **NH Youth Transition Realignment Project**

## **2005-2010 FIVE-YEAR STATE PLAN for INCREASING the SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS of NH YOUTH and THOSE with DISABILITIES from HIGH SCHOOL to ADULT LIFE**

### **I. INTRODUCTION: Purpose, Guidepost Framework, Role of Intermediaries, the WIA State Plan as a State Framework, Key Assumptions, and the Planning Process**

#### **A. Plan Purpose**

The basic purpose of this plan is to lay out a clear strategy – and the specific action steps to implement it – needed to make the substantial improvements in NH’s Workforce Development System to assist NH’s youth to successfully transition from high school to adult life. The plan covers all NH youth aged 14-24, with a special focus on youth with disabilities and the critical system improvements they need to succeed. The plan focuses on increasing the successful transitions by youth to meaningful employment, to appropriate post-secondary education and training, and to self-sufficiency and independent living, although the term “successful transition,” as used in the plan, includes the full range of post-secondary youth outcomes that together define a thriving young adult.

#### **B. The Project and Its Two Major Parts**

The plan is one of two major components of the NH Transition Realignment Project – a five-year national demonstration to improve secondary transition outcomes initiated and funded by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP). This project is sponsored by the Workforce Opportunity Council (WOC) and administered by the NH Developmental Disabilities Council (NHDDC). The other major component of the project is the establishment of four regional demonstration projects that create four regional intermediary organizations. The purpose of these four intermediaries is to integrate and make the other needed improvements to transition services at the local level that provide youth of all abilities with the full range of opportunities they need to make successful transitions to adult life. Each has organized itself differently to respond to different local challenges and opportunities which allows the project to test the effectiveness of different approaches. The statewide plan and the regional demonstrations are based on the same framework of what constitutes (on the basis of widely-accepted best practices) the set of essential opportunities and supports youth need to succeed and are designed to reinforce each other to put these in place. This means that the state plan is designed to support the implementation of the best practices in the four regions and that in turn, the lessons learned in the regions will be incorporated in the updates of the state plan.

The plan is designed to improve and integrate all of the many systems that provide education, services, and other supports to youth aged 14-24, and includes the most important statewide agencies that oversee, provide, and fund these systems in NH. Together, these systems make up the Workforce Development System for Youth as defined by ODEP and the U.S Department of Labor - referred to simply as the “transition system” throughout the plan.

Finally, the plan is designed to include all stakeholders in the transition process – especially the youth themselves, their families, and employers.

### **C. The NCWD “Guideposts for Success” Framework as the Plan’s Foundation**

As noted, the entire state plan is focused on implementing an integrated system of transition opportunities, supports, and services based on a widely-accepted framework that identifies - from studies of actual program experience - the specific service components and characteristics that a successful system must include. This framework is a “work in progress” and is based on the successful best practices of all major federal and state school-to-work, rehabilitation, job training and youth programs over the last 25 years including programs sponsored by the Departments of Labor, Education, and Health and Human services. The plan uses the version of this framework called “Guideposts for Success” recently developed by the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD). It incorporates and takes the same approach as the 10 Essential Elements for Workforce Investment Act Youth Programs and the most recent standards for secondary education and transition services adopted by the National Alliance for Secondary Education and Transition. The Guideposts identify 50 essential components of successful programs broken down into five categories:

- 1) School-Based Preparatory Experiences,
- 2) Career Preparation and Work-Based Learning Experiences,
- 3) Youth Development and Leadership,
- 4) Connecting Activities, and
- 5) Family Involvement and Supports.

Appendix 1 lists these 50 components that the plan seeks to make available and which were used for the resource mapping. They are further broken down by those that are to be made universally available to all NH youth (including youth with disabilities) and by those that are designed specifically to be available as needed to youth with disabilities. (Note: These are the latest Guideposts and differ slightly from the earlier version of the Guideposts used in the mapping.)

### **D. Intermediaries, their Central Role in the Plan, and the Rationale for Relying on Them**

The plan is also firmly based on the strategy of using regional intermediary organizations to strengthen the current system and implement the Guideposts. Intermediary organizations – or intermediaries - are defined here as permanent collaborative organizations made up of all transition system stakeholders working together to create a true system. Their mission is to provide “system infrastructure” and they are designed to fill in gaps and pull together fragmented services into a real transition “system” following the Guideposts. In this role, they are the primary vehicle for implementing the Guidepost framework for youth in NH.

To pilot and test this strategy, the project is funding the start-up and operation of four regional intermediaries (Strafford County, the North Country, the Monadnock Region, and Littleton). Each is sponsored by a different regional agency. Further, each sponsor currently plays a different role in the system which will allow the project to assess what types of agencies are best able to sponsor successful collaborations. Each intermediary has conducted its own regional resource mapping of system strengths and gaps (as defined by the Guideposts) and all regional stakeholders - and each is aggressively linking stakeholders through their advisory committees, outreach, and resource directories. Finally, each intermediary (with the help of the Project Oversight Committee) is developing their own plan to make improvements in their region’s transition system that are so valuable, that they will be seen by their stakeholders as an indispensable and a permanent addition to the region’s institutional landscape. All four started at the end of 2004 with the expectation they will receive funding from the project through September 2008 and become self-sufficient thereafter. They will continue to receive various types of in-kind support from the Transition Cabinet as determined by the Cabinet’s work plan (following the State

Plan), with the goal to rely primarily on local and internal resources to sustain themselves and not to depend on any new state or federal funding. Their successes in implementing Guidepost best practices will be documented by the Transition Cabinet as part of its quarterly progress review process and these will be incorporated into the State Plan by the Transition Cabinet (TC) as required to help spread the practices statewide.

**Realities Underlying Using Intermediaries** – The strategy of using intermediaries to fill gaps in the transition system and pull all the components together is a practical one that is based on three key realities of the current NH system. First, it is based on the reality experienced by all stakeholders (including agencies as well as youth, families, and employers), that the transition services currently available in NH are provided by a complicated and often confusing array of public, private, state, federal, and local organizations, agencies and departments. Second, it is based on the reality that the basic structure of this complicated and largely fragmented system is not going to change substantially and major restructuring is not expected. Finally, the intermediary strategy is based on the reality that no single agency or group in the transition system (at either the regional or state level) currently has the authority and resources to “pull it all together.” This leaves the intermediary organization – as a collaborative venture of all stakeholders able to pool and align all stakeholder resources – as one of the few available mechanisms that in the face of these realities can pull the pieces together to deliver to our youth and employers the seamless system they need. Youth and their families and employers should not have to become experts in bureaucratic complexity to access the supports and services they need to succeed – but the reality is that without intermediaries, this is often their only choice.

**The History of the Current System’s Complexity and Fragmentation** – Realistic planning for systems change not only requires an understanding of how the system operates now, but also an understanding of its evolution. Specifically, a basic understanding of how NH’s federal-state transition system has evolved helps in establishing objectives and strategies for the plan that are realistic and in designing the role of intermediaries to best address the inherent problems of the system’s complexity and fragmentation.

The complexity and fragmentation of current transition services – especially for youth with disabilities – stems primarily from the fact that they have been built up piece-by-piece over the last 50 years by many different organizations and funding sources without the benefit of a master plan. Each piece was added over time in response to advances in knowledge, technology and thinking that enabled persons with disabilities to tap more and more of their potential and to do more and more in all aspects of their lives. As a result, the system was built up piecemeal by adding specific categories of disability services for specific categories of persons utilizing a complex federal-state-local-private funding and contractual arrangement through many agencies. Given this evolutionary process, it is no wonder the current “system” is complex, fragmented, difficult to understand, and hard to change.

Without a mechanism like an intermediary to pull these parts together for families and employers, too often our youth and employers get transition supports and opportunities that are incomplete, disjointed, non-customized, and inconsistent. One result of this is widespread dissatisfaction with transition supports and results even after taking into consideration the inherent challenges facing all youth in growing up in our society. For example, in a recent survey by the NH Department of Education (DOE), 29% of the parents of children with disabilities were flat out dissatisfied with their children’s transition services - a level of dissatisfaction far greater than any other school service (see NH DOE, “2003 Special Education Annual Performance Report,” p. 112). For these parents and their children, successful transition progress and outcomes were too often not achieved and they too often found the process frustrating and time consuming in spite of the hard work of dedicated educators and providers. For employers, mapping interviews showed that while there was widespread

satisfaction with employer supports provided to them, there was also widespread lack of knowledge by employers of the supports available to them – which is why employer outreach is a core part of the State Plan Goals.

It is hard to overstate the challenges faced in reducing the system’s complexity and fragmentation and making it more coherent, understandable, and effective – even in a small state like NH with many small-scale regions. The project’s mapping of transition resources and organizations clearly shows this challenge. For example, the mapping at both the state and regional levels shows that the staff of many organizations providing transition services are not fully aware of or well connected to core parts of the transition system as defined by the Guideposts. Indeed, the fact that the project had to do extensive mapping almost from scratch to identify the major providers and their connections indicates that the transition “system” in many NH regions is more like a loose conglomeration of services (which the mapping showed vary in quality and capacity) than an integrated, comprehensive, and robust system. Further, this lack of connections occurs even though considerable efforts are made throughout the state to make connections. These include case managers, counselors, resource directories (including a 175 page resource directory “Maneuvering the Maze” recently published by the Program Manager), websites, ombudsmen, information and referral networks, agency outreach, benefits planners and other system navigators. It is for these reasons that a core component of the State Plan is to educate all stakeholders on the Guideposts so all have a common knowledge of what constitutes the core components of an effective transition system and to provide the data and links (using the regional and state mapping) that enable all stakeholders to be connected to all major systems resources and stakeholders in their region.

**Why Intermediary Roles are Critical but Often Not Adequately Performed** – Intermediaries provide a structural solution to meet the challenges of the system’s inherent complexity and fragmentation where it is most important – at the local service delivery level for the system’s major customers: youth, families, and employers. Intermediaries perform key system roles such as providing a central clearinghouse, maintaining connections between key stakeholders, coordinating services, funding, and staff, and as important – tapping the energy and resources of families and communities. Performing these functions overcomes the fragmentation, complexity, and gaps in their regional systems and provides seamless and consistent opportunities and supports to youth, families, and employers. In other words, even though an intermediary’s primary function is not to provide direct services, the integration and ultimate effectiveness of the direct services provided depends in large part on the system support functions intermediaries provide. And in spite of the fact that the national research and the experience of NH stakeholders have repeatedly recognized that these basic intermediary functions are essential for success, they are often given low priority in practice - and no agency (at any level) has been given the funds or responsibility to provide them consistently.

There are several possible reasons why important intermediary functions have often not been provided in practice. These include the simple fact that they are much more difficult to explain and justify to those outside the system than direct services. This reality – when combined with the lack of a clearly understood model of what the total system should look like (including all its Guidepost components and how they must be integrated to work) – too often results in the perception that intermediaries are simply another layer of bureaucracy overlaid on a complex and confusing conglomeration of services. The practical result in NH in the current period of state and school budget austerity (see Appendix 2) and rising enrollments of youth with disabilities (see student profiles) is that intermediary system support services are often the first to be cut, and adding them by adding new funding to the state budget is currently not a realistic option.

This budgetary and political environment poses major challenges to the reliance on intermediaries in the project. Nonetheless, because using intermediaries at the regional level is built on fundamental strengths (identified in the mapping and by the Project Oversight Committee and other stakeholders), it can overcome these challenges. These strengths include the strong commitment of the people and organizations working directly with youth to make transition work and their experience and willingness to use system “work-arounds” of the kind intermediaries are able to provide. It also builds on the willingness of key stakeholders to try new ways and learn new tools that work such as the success statewide in schools voluntarily implementing the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Program. The PBIS success provides an exemplary model for the intermediary strategy, especially since PBIS is based on universal access for all students (one of the foundations of the Guideposts) and like the intermediary strategy, relies primarily on regional and local resources (with little ongoing state funding) but backed by state agency in-kind and staff support. The regional approach also builds on the strong NH ethic of local control and relying on local solutions. Regional intermediaries most important strength, however, is the significant value they are able to bring to all their participating stakeholders. Time and time again, successful collaborations in NH have become indispensable by providing real and lasting value to their members and have shown a remarkable ability to sustain themselves in spite of state budgetary limitations through sharing and coordinating their member’s resources.

The specific set of functions each regional intermediary carries out will vary by region and be determined by its history, needs, and the extent to which these functions are currently being performed. Basic intermediary functions include: connecting stakeholders; building and maintaining key relationships (especially between schools, community providers and employers); integrating and brokering services; blending and braiding funding streams to support essential services; serving as a clearing house for information and resources; coordinating cross-agency supports such as transportation and training; identifying and filling regional gaps; helping youth, families, and employers navigate the system; mobilizing family resources, and catching those youth who fall through the system cracks. Specifically, the four regional pilots are building their intermediaries (see Goals R1-R4) by:

- working to develop plans to fill regional gaps;
- bringing together their key stakeholders toward forming a permanent organization;
- starting to carry out specific projects to put in place Guidepost components; and
- building long-term relationships between schools, agencies, communities, families, and employers.

#### **E. The Key Assumptions, Factors, and Information Used to Construct the State Plan**

The state plan has been put together using:

- (1) The basic purpose of improving transition outcomes for all NH youth – but especially for youth with disabilities – as the ultimate goal or result to be achieved;
- (2) The “Guideposts for Success” to define the specific transition system components, characteristics, and capacities for serving youth, families, and employers that are required to be in place to maximize successful secondary transitions;
- (3) The assumption that regional intermediaries are the primary vehicle, strategy, and institutional mechanism for putting regional systems for youth in place following the Guideposts;
- (4) The assessment and gap analysis of how the state as whole and regions are doing in implementing the Guideposts for Success from the Statewide Resource Mapping completed in September 2004 by the Parent Information Center (which used the specific guideposts to define the specific resources that were mapped) and mapping results from the intermediaries and other sources;

- (5) Reviews of the findings, recommendations, goals, objectives, and results of other recent state plans, studies, and projects to improve NH's transition system;
- (6) Views and recommendations by the Project Oversight Committee and other key stakeholders on what strengths from the mapping provided the most potential for launching improvements and what gaps were the most important to fill first to build the foundation and momentum for ongoing system change; and
- (7) A realistic appraisal (based on budgets, political climate, resources, etc.) of what kind of commitments the major statewide agencies responsible for transition can make in the plan. These include the Department of Health & Human Services including the Bureau of Behavioral Health (BBH), the Bureau of Developmental Services (BDS), Medicaid, and the Division of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF); the Department of Education (DOE) including the Bureau of Special Education, the Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), and vocational and adult education; the Workforce Opportunity Council (WOC); and the state institutions of higher education including the vocational and community college systems.

## **F. The Major Steps Used in Developing the State Plan**

The first major step was to select the specific Guidepost services and supports that the plan would focus on improving to start by using the above guidelines, assumptions, mapping data and analyses, and other information. Weighing all these factors, the Project Manager, in conjunction with the Project Oversight Committee, made the decision that the State Plan should focus on five Guidepost areas as integrated package as the best way to start the process of system reform:

- 1) Transition Plans and Planning,
- 2) Career Assessment and Counseling,
- 3) Parent and Student Involvement,
- 4) Assistive Technology in schools and the workplace, and
- 5) Building permanent connections with local employers.

The next step was to develop and reach agreement on the objectives and performance measures for each of these five areas. The final step was to develop and reach agreement on an action plan with timelines to achieve these objectives, including specific commitments by agencies to take on specific tasks using specific resources.

## **II. UNDERLYING TRANSITION DEMOGRAPHICS, ENVIRONMENT, and ISSUES**

### **A. Profile of the Primary Customer: Youth with Disabilities Aged 14-24**

As of 2003, there were 68,857 youth aged 14-21 enrolled in NH public schools. Of these, 11,510 were students with disabilities with Individual Education Plans covered by IDEIA, or 16.7% of the total number of public school students – which is about 2% higher than the national average. This count does not include students with disabilities with Accommodation Plans covered under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, as the state does not collect this data from the districts. There are twice as many males (67%) as females (33%) with disabilities enrolled. There are 2,078 students with disabilities aged 18-21 enrolled compared 0 (none) students 18-21 without disabilities enrolled. Approximately 75% of these 2,078 are 18 because many have been delayed one year during their schooling, especially those who participated in Readiness Programs and delayed entering first grade by a year. NH has been a leader in integrating classes with 78% of all youth with disabilities in modified regular education programs (for the majority of their school day) compared to 12% in resource room and 10% in self-contained classroom programs. This supports the project's universal design for all youth.

The Bureau of Special Education in the NH Department of Education (DOE) tracks enrollments by 11 OSER disability types through its SPEDIS system, which is in the process of being upgraded to provide more complete and accessible information. Most of the students (96%) fall into six categories:

- (1) Specific Learning Disabilities = 47%;
- (2) Other Health (excluding hearing, visual, and orthopedic impairments) = 16%;
- (3) Emotional Disabilities = 13%;
- (4) Speech and Language = 11%;
- (5) Mental Retardation = 5%; and
- (6) Autism = 4%.

**The Rapid Growth of the Number of Youth with Disabilities** - Over the last 10 years, the enrollment of students with disabilities has increased very rapidly and at rate much higher than the growth in total school enrollment. Enrollment of youth with disabilities aged 14-21 increased from 6,987 in 1995 to 11,501 in 2002, which is an increase of 65%. This compares to an increase of total enrollment for the same period of only 3%. This is a large differential, but there is evidence that it will not continue and that this period of rapid growth may be over. This is because enrollments of youth with disabilities aged 9-13 over the past two years have been the same or below what they were the year before, so that barring substantial in-migration or changes in coding, enrollments for students aged 14-21 should follow more closely the growth in total student enrollment.

The largest increase in the number of enrollments with their percentage increases from 1995-2002 have been:

- Other Health = +1,134 (196% increase)
- Learning Disabilities = + 861 (18% increase)
- Speech & Language = +470 (57% increase)
- Autism = +419 (8,380% increase from the very number identified in 1995)
- Emotional Disabilities = +385 (34% increase)
- Mental Retardation = +104 (22% increase).

There is currently little statewide data available to determine precisely what specific disabilities are causing the large growth in the broad categories of “Other Health” and “Learning Disabilities.” Nonetheless, most schools point to the large increase in youth diagnosed with Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) as the major cause of the growth in Other Health, and to better diagnoses of specific disabilities for the growth in Learning Disabilities. The large and significant increase in autism since 1995 stems from a large increase in incidence (for reasons that are not yet well understood) and the fact that youth with autism are now being more accurately diagnosed and properly counted. (The DOE’s 2004 special census on autism substantially increased the counts recorded in SPEDIS.) This increase shows no signs of slowing down, and if current trends continue, the number of youth with autism 14-24 will soon exceed those with mental retardation.

**Dropouts** – Questions have been raised over the last several years over the accuracy of the dropout rates calculated by the DOE and their methodology. This was precipitated in part by new NCLB requirements but mostly by the NH Center for Public Policy Studies publication of “One in Four: School Dropouts in New Hampshire” in 2002 followed by “Still ‘One in Four’” in 2004. These studies used a cohort analysis and calculated significantly higher dropout rates than those published by the DOE. The DOE has partially changed its methodology in response and more importantly, the DOE is (for the first time) developing a statewide database of all students that will fill many existing data gaps, resolve the

dropout reporting controversy, and be able to provide a breakdown of dropout rates for students with disabilities.

As is true in so many areas of data collection in NH with its limited statewide data collection infrastructure, because of a lack of detailed and consistently reported statewide dropout data, we have used estimates from smaller samples or surveys to estimate dropout rates for students with disabilities. Using a study of selected schools being conducted by the Disability Rights Center, it is estimated that overall dropout rates for students with disabilities are 2-2.5 times the 14% now reported by the DOE, or 28-35%. This estimate does not provide a good baseline and in light of the data limitations, it is difficult to know the real trends in dropouts for students with disabilities. One thing that is very clear from all the DOE and DRC data, however, is that there is a tremendous variation in dropout rates for students with disabilities from district to district.

Because a significant portion of students with Mental Retardation, Autism, Multiple Disabilities, Hearing and Visual Impairments are enrolled between ages 18-21, dropout rates in these groups are likely lower than those for students with other disabilities. This is reinforced by the stability in enrollments for students aged 16-17 for these types of disability. This means the higher dropout rate for students with disabilities is likely concentrated in other categories - and particularly in Other Health and Learning Disabilities, which show significant drops in enrollment in the 16-17 as well as the 18-21 age cohorts.

**Post-Secondary Enrollments** – It was also difficult to get solid statewide data on post-secondary enrollments and outcomes for youth with disabilities. The statewide survey by the DOE of students after they leave high school is voluntary (with inherent problems of getting updated addresses) and does not separate out youth with disabilities, so it is not a good source. To get an estimate, the mapping project surveyed VR and the Disability Coordinators at Keene State, the NH Vocational Technical Colleges, and the University of New Hampshire who reported that 17% of their enrolled students self-identified as having a disability.

**Analysis of Youth Profile and Its Significance for the Project** – By itself, the 65% growth of students aged 14-21 identified as having disabilities from 1995-2002 has put significant pressure on schools to increase resources, budgets, and taxes. In fact, special education costs (not including the costs of students in regular instructional classrooms and programs) are increasing more rapidly than other school costs and now make up 20% of total school budget statewide. The pressure is especially intense because, except for ADHD, the largest growth rates have been for students with disabilities such as autism and emotional disabilities. These students are among the most challenging and expensive for schools to serve well, especially since districts often face a lack of established programs and specialized staff in these areas. And because NH relies so heavily on property taxes to fund education, one result of the increase in special education costs has been the growing tendency of taxpayer groups to point to the “unfunded federal mandate” for special education to be a primary cause of higher property taxes. This puts great pressure on local school boards (regardless of the mandate) to keep special education costs down if they are to succeed in getting voters to approve their annual budgets – something that is becoming more difficult, especially in “property-poor” districts.

Agencies providing Guidepost services to youth during and after their enrollment in school have generally been less able than schools to increase their resources to serve the increase in the numbers of youth with disabilities. As the mapping of these agencies and a review of the State Budget shows, many of these agencies have been flat-funded and had to cut back services. None surveyed were able to increase their budgets to match the increase in numbers and needs of youth with disabilities.

**Waiting Lists and the Service Gap at Age 21** – The most significant and far-reaching result of this is the growing waiting lists in both the Department of Health and Human Service’s (DHHS) developmental services and mental health systems. These waiting lists hit many youth with disabilities with a total elimination of their supports and services when they turn 21 (or when they leave high school) as the school district responsibility ends and the adult agencies who then become responsible do not have the funds to pick them up and meet even their minimal responsibilities. This is why in the statewide mapping, the waiting lists and the gap in services they create were consistently cited as the single most important obstacle to successful transitions.

This shortage of resources in the adult system has not only resulted in the sudden gap of essential services once youth leave school at 21 (or earlier), but has limited the participation of these agencies while youth with disabilities are still in school. The Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) provides a good example of this widening gap between the increase in youth with disabilities and their capacity to serve them. In their special report to the legislature in November 2003 titled “Secondary Transition: Prologue to the Future,” they point out that in the period 1998-2002 when youth with disabilities aged 14-24 increased 46%, they were able to increase the number they served by only 7.5%. This reduced the proportion of youth with disabilities 14-21 they served from 16% in 1998 to 12% in 2002, both clearly below the levels of VR help youth need. Unfortunately, the mapping results indicate this is a typical example – and VR has far more reliable funding the most of the nonprofit providers who provide most of the transition services to youth after the age of 21.

## **B. Other State Transition Plans and the Comprehensive WIA State Plan**

While every state agency participating in the transition system (such as NHVR, Bureau of Special Education, Division of Children Youth and Families, Division of Juvenile Justice) includes transition as a part of their overall state plans, the WIA State Plan developed by the Workforce Opportunity Council is currently the most comprehensive statewide plan in NH covering secondary transition and the workforce development system for youth. It provides a solid foundation for the Project’s State and Regional Plans because both are built on very similar goals, visions, strategies, and a best practice framework. In many respects, the Project’s State Plan is essentially a more detailed version of the WIA State Plan that focuses on youth transition. Comparison of the summary of the WIA Plans Goals and Objectives below with the Project Plan’s Goals and Objective in Section IV show this close alignment, and the State Plan (especially at the regional level) provides for strengthening connections at the operational levels through the NH WORKS one-stop centers and Labor Market Information.

In particular, under Improve the System in the WIA Plan a) – f) are identical to Guideposts in the areas of Education and Preparatory Experiences (see Appendix 1). From k) in Capture Youth at Promise which states “Support all learners in a way that recognizes and builds on their strengths” it is clear that both plans take the approach of building on youth assets rather than deficiencies. Finally, both plans clearly are working toward the same youth transition outcomes as listed in the WIA State Plan under g) - j) and m) under Capture Youth at Promise.

## **WIA State Plan Vision, Goals and Objectives for the Youth Workforce Development System**

To achieve the Governor’s vision that every youth has the opportunity for developing and achieving career goals through education and workforce training, the WIA State Plan focuses on ensuring that all youth will have the knowledge and skills they need to compete in the marketplace of ideas, reach their full potential, succeed as productive workers and citizens, and achieve economic self-sufficiency. The plan includes the following goals to achieve this vision:

**Improve the System** Develop a more comprehensive and coordinated workforce development system for all New Hampshire youth.

- a) Offer education, employment, and training services in as many ways as possible that are designed to connect learning, work and support services.
- b) Develop a smoother system of transition between and among secondary and post secondary schools.
- c) Create a system that embraces a variety of learning styles.
- d) Increase systemic capacity to identify and respond to “at-risk” youth earlier.
- e) Continue to evolve a competency-based system of standards and assessments for the K-12 education system.
- f) Align learning opportunities and curricula with statewide educational standards and with vital and emerging industries.

**Capture Youth at Promise.** Develop capacity to ensure all youth, especially our economically disadvantaged youth and those out of school, have the opportunities and support needed to become productive members of the workforce and achieve economic self-sufficiency.

- g) Improve secondary school attendance and graduation rates.
- h) Improve retention and recovery efforts for school dropouts.
- i) Increase employment opportunities for youth not in school.
- j) Decrease youth engaged in risky behaviors.
- k) Support all learners in a way that recognizes and builds on their strengths.
- l) Ensure that all youth have the opportunity for advanced training such as apprenticeship, military service, and postsecondary programs.
- m) Improve college entry and graduation rates.

**Leverage Resources.** Leverage and coordinate a wide range of local, private, community, state, and federal resources to support the system vision.

**Manage by Outcomes.** Ensure greater performance accountability for youth outcomes in workforce development and related initiatives that serve youth.

Once achieved, these goals and objectives will enable New Hampshire to realize its vision for youth. Therefore, the focus of the Youth Council will be to develop tools, methods, and program linkages that positively impact on these goals. This will involve a five-step process as follows:

1. Design a system to respond to these goals and objectives.
2. Determine ways to measure system and program results.
3. Monitor and assess these results.
4. Make system adjustments.
5. Refine the goals and objectives.

With each cycle of process, the system will improve and get closer to meeting its objectives and ultimately New Hampshire’s vision for serving youth.

### **C. Mapping Results: Strengths and Gaps in the Transition System Based on the Guideposts**

The project conducted an extensive statewide mapping of all major transition resources and organizations including all major stakeholders and customers. This was to provide the information necessary to develop the State Plan and to give the four regional projects a solid base for their planning, strategies, and operations. This effort represents the most detailed mapping of the transition system so far undertaken in NH and has provided a wealth of information useful to a wide range of stakeholders. It was conducted by the Parent Information Center (PIC) and the data and analysis were finished in the fall of 2004. It relied on four major surveys: (1) an extensive written survey of school districts; (2) a survey of all known major and statewide transition service and advocacy agencies; (3) a survey of a statewide sample of employers; and (4) separate focus group surveys of parents and of youth. In addition, the four intermediary projects have conducted their own regional mapping which has built on and extended the PIC statewide mapping – and together these provide the clearer and more detailed picture of the transition system needed for clearer and more detailed plans to improve it.

**School District Survey** - The survey of public schools was the most extensive because they are the largest and most important component of the transition system for youth. The first part was a detailed survey of the availability of 29 Guidepost elements (in five areas) in each district. This also included questions about what the districts saw as the specific things they did that worked, service gaps, operating weaknesses, most pressing needs, and estimates of the capacity of available Guidepost opportunities.

**Results on Guidepost Availability** - The results of the survey on the availability of the Guideposts (for all schools) are summarized in Table 1. This table also includes the ranking by the Project Oversight Committee of the most important Guidepost elements, which was an important piece in helping narrow the focus of the plan. 42 schools completed the survey. This was excellent participation for such a long survey and the 42 schools constituted a representative sample of NH schools by size, location, type, and community wealth.

There was a wide range of availability of the Guideposts statewide. Scores ranged from a high score of 2.5 for “learning accommodations” (halfway between being available “most of the time” and “all of the time”) to a low score of 1.17 for “training on disability issues” (close to being available “some of the time”). The mode was also included in addition to the average availability score to give a clearer picture of gaps and strengths in the many cases where there was a large range of scores for different schools on the same Guidepost. In these cases, a mode of 1 (for all schools) for a Guidepost indicates weak availability and a gap compared to a mode of 3 that indicates strong availability and potential strength (as long as there is also strong quality and capacity backing up the availability).

Overall, using the mode scores, the NH Transition System is characterized by more gaps (16 or 55% =1) in the Guideposts than strengths (5 or 17% = 3). Looking at the scores by the five Guidepost areas (see notes in Table 1), it is clear that two of the areas contain most of the strengths, one is weak but mixed, and two are uniformly weak and characterized by gaps. The strongest area is “education” with an average score of 2.17 and a mode tied between 2 and 3. This is encouraging. It is also not surprising because public schools have the most responsibility for youth aged 14-21 – especially those with disabilities – and because they spend far more resources on this age group than all other providers combined (over \$200 million and 1,200 specialized staff just for youth with disabilities). The second strongest area measured by its modal score (also tied between 2 and 3 with an average score of 1.67) is “connecting activities.” This is also encouraging for the project with its focus on pulling these together and surprising in light of the survey of transition agencies that showed most face flat or declining budgets and uncertain funding in the future.

Scoring for “Career preparatory experiences” was mixed with a mode of 1 indicating considerable gaps but the second highest average score of 1.75 indicating some areas of strength. Finally, the Guidepost areas of “work-based” and “youth development and leadership” opportunities were clearly the least available and were dominated by gaps. The mode score for availability was not only 1 for both areas, but every single Guidepost within these areas also had a modal score of 1. In addition, the average scores were the lowest at 1.48 for the work-based and 1.37 for the youth development and leadership areas. These areas are thin at best and need considerable basic development.

The parent and student focus group surveys came up with results in some areas that conflicted with the school surveys that were filled out by school staff. One such area was the result from the student focus groups that half of the students (and many of their parents) were unsure whether they had transition plans. This compares to a mode score of 3 and an average score of 2.10 from the school survey – and even though the sample of students and parents was small, this is a significant disparity. A closer look at the school survey results by school sheds some light on this because even though the mode was 3, there were still 11 of the 42 schools (26%) that said plans were only “sometimes” available and another 11 that reported they were “mostly” available. This is a remarkably candid response from school officials who know transition plans are required by law and provide the basic framework for successful transition services – so the answer should be “all the time.” Taken together, this data supports the project’s decision to make the improvement of transition planning and plans a major focus, even though the mode score for transition plans was 3. The mapping shows that transition planning is a relative strength of the system, but one that is best built up and built on because the effectiveness of so many other Guidepost opportunities depend on it, it is required by law and backed by significant resources, and the staff, parents, and youth doing the planning all want it to work.

The results for individual districts on the availability of Guidepost elements also varied widely. The high score was 2.35 and the low was .62, which is almost a 4:1 differential (see Table 2). This indicates there is a great deal of inconsistency and inequality of opportunity for students between districts. Nine districts had scores above 2.0 and these represented a wide range of sizes and wealth. This was somewhat surprising since it was expected - based on experience with most other school programs - that the larger and wealthier districts would score best. As the PIC analysis pointed out, one explanation from the data is that smaller and poorer districts that had high collaboration scores did much better than expected – and in fact, a statistically consistent correlation between collaboration and availability for many Guidepost elements was found in the Strafford County mapping conducted by the UNH Center for Adolescence.

**Summary of Comments in School Surveys** - The school survey also uncovered widespread agreement by districts in several areas. Under the category of “things that work,” a surprising number of districts cited the position of Transition Planner or Coordinator as being able to transform mediocre and inconsistent transition plans into consistently excellent “best practice” ones. This person would provide hands-on technical assistance to the IEP teams on their transition plans and would make the connections and follow-ups with employers, outside agencies, and the community necessary to actually implement them. The majority of NH districts do not have an officially designated Transition Planner, including a number of districts that cited its importance. “Hands-on” professional development, customizing plans and programs for the whole student, parental support, and the time to connect to employers and community resources were also commonly listed as “things that work.” Finally, waiting lists for adult services, isolated programs, lack of staff and staff training, poor transportation to community opportunities, incomplete knowledge of available resources, and limited time to form alliances were the specific weaknesses (in addition to the general lack of resources) most commonly mentioned in the survey.

**School Survey Collaboration Results** - The last part of the school survey asked districts what transition organizations they worked and collaborated with regularly. The survey provided schools with a list of 37 transition agencies and agency types and asked them to indicate which ones they collaborated with and to list any others not included. The survey results provided a clear picture of what groups actually are working together and which agencies were actually being widely utilized. Particularly encouraging were the strong connections reported with college and universities (especially the Institutes for Higher Education transition initiative) and the moderately strong connections to the Chambers of Commerce. Also positive were the high ratings for core service systems such as VR, Area Agencies for Developmental Services, Community Mental Health Centers, NH Assistive Technology Center, and PIC. Table 3 shows the agencies that had collaboration scores of 50% or more. The differences in collaboration between districts were again very wide, and even greater than the differences in the availability of Guidepost elements. Table 2 shows each district's collaborative score as well as their overall score for Guidepost availability. The most collaborative district (Portsmouth) worked with 69% of the 37 transition agencies compared to 6% (Newfound), which is a differential over 11:1. This shows that very collaborative districts exist in NH and that they appear to work, but also that many districts are isolated and insular with few collaborations.

**Transition Organization Survey** - Forty-four agencies providing transition services were identified with the help of the Project Oversight Committee and were thought to make up all known major (non-school) transition services agencies. They were sent an extensive survey and 30 responded. The surveys asked each agency how many youth they served; their capacity, the services they provided (using the Guidepost definitions and areas), any initiatives undertaken (especially system improvement), effective strategies, main barriers they faced, lessons learned, critical areas to be addressed, how long they had been in business, and their funding sources, reliability, and trends. With the exception of the Area Agencies for Developmental Services, the Community Mental Health Centers, and the colleges that responded to the survey, most had limited capacity (eight were either pilots or start-ups) and capability of expansion and the majority were uncertain about the future of their main funding source.

Most of the 30 agencies that responded took the time to make individual comments - especially on effective strategies, barriers, and areas to be addressed. Overall, the comments were similar to those provided by the schools. In particular, there was widespread agreement among the agencies responding that:

- The Developmental services waiting list and other unofficial waiting lists for adult services were the biggest single barriers to successful transitions for youth with disabilities
- Collaboration with schools worked and was essential to success, the earlier the better
- Connections with business worked and more were needed, but take a lot of staff time and skill
- Hands-on training that gave staff practical tools to do their jobs worked and more was needed
- Transportation of students with disabilities is a pervasive and major barrier
- Programs for youth with disabilities 18-21 supported by districts worked best when they were in the community and not in the school
- Transition counselors/planners/coordinators are effective and help create plans that work
- Youth involvement in their own planning using asset-based assessment works.

**Table 1 - Availability Scores for Guidepost Opportunities for All NH Surveyed Schools Ranked by Average and their Priority Ranking by the POC (N=42)**

\* Note: Priority Rankings are by the Project Oversight Committee (POC)

Guide-Post Area	POC Priority Rank*	Guidepost Description	MODE Availability Score	Average Availability Score
Ed		Specific/Individual Learning Accommodations (Spec)**	3	2.50
Con	<b>8</b>	Transportation (All)**	3	2.23
Prep		Information About Career Opportunities (All)	1	2.21
Ed	<b>1 (tie)</b>	Individual Transition Plans in IEPs (Spec)	3	2.10
Ed		Varied & Balanced Individual Learning Strategies (All)	2	2.09
Prep	<b>2</b>	Career Assessment & Guidance (All)	2	2.09
Con	<b>4</b>	Assistive Technology (Spec)	2	2.04
Ed		Academic & Career Education Based on State & Industry Standards (All)	2	1.95
Con		Tutoring (Spec)	3	1.93
Con		Personal Assistance Services (Spec)	3	1.80
Work		Instruction/Guidance on Workplace Accommodations (Spec)	1	1.70
Prep		Structured Exposure to Post Secondary Education (All)	2	1.69
Prep		Info. on Benefits Planning & Career Choice Options (Spec)	1	1.66
Prep	<b>5</b>	Identification & Access to Disability Supports for Community & Workplace (Spec)	1	1.66
YD&L		Opportunities to Exercise Leadership (All)	1	1.54
Con	<b>6</b>	Connection to Community Services & Opportunities (All)	2	1.54
Prep		Training on Job Seeking Skills (All)	2	1.52
YD&L		Training in Self-Advocacy & Conflict Resolution (All)	1	1.47
YD&L	<b>7</b>	Personal Leadership & Youth Development Activities (All)	1	1.47
Prep	<b>3</b>	Instruction/Guidance on Support/Accommodation Needs to Employers including Access to Employers (Spec)	1	1.45
Work		Full Range of Work-Based Exploration Activities	1	1.45
YD&L		Exposure to Mentors & Role Models With & Without Disabilities (Spec)	1	1.42
YD&L		Exposure to Role Models in a Variety of Contexts (All)	1	1.38
Con	<b>10</b>	Post Program Supports like Independent Living Ctrs (Spec)	1	1.35
Con		Post Program Supports in Post-Secondary Sch/Agencies (All)	2	1.33
Work	<b>9</b>	On-the-Job Training Linked to School Study (All)	1	1.28
Prep		Information about the Relationship between Benefits Planning & Career Choices (Spec)	2	1.16
Con		Benefits Planning (Spec)	1	1.19
YD&L		Mentoring Activities with Adults and Peer-to-Peer (All)	1	1.19
YD&L		Training about Disability Issues & Cultures (Spec)	1	1.17
Family	<b>1 (tie)</b>	Meaningful Parent Involvement - Added by the Project Oversight Committee (POC) and now in revised Guideposts		

**Scores:** 0 = Not Available; 1 = Sometimes Available; 2 = Most of the Time; 3 = All of the Time

**Guidepost Area Codes and Scores:** Ed = Education = **2.17**; Prep = Career Preparatory = **1.75**; Work = Work-Based Experiences = **1.48**; YD&L = Youth Development and Leadership = **1.37**; Con = Connecting Activities and Supports = **1.67**. \*(All) = Available to All youth; (Spec) = to youth as needed.

**Table 2 - Collaboration and Guidepost Availability Scores and Ranks by District**

District	Collaboration Percent	Collaboration Rank	Guidepost Availability Score	Guidepost Availability Rank
Portsmouth	69%	1	2.13	4
Plymouth	55%	2	2.34	2
Souhegan	55%	3	1.45	26
Whitefield	53%	4	1.69	16
Keene	50%	5	2.07	7
Jaffrey/Rindge	50%	6	1.45	25
Farmington	50%	7	1.20	32
Lincoln/Woodstock	47%	8	2.36	1
Winnacunnet	47%	9	1.51	23
Winchester	47%	10	.62	34
Pittsfield	44%	11	1.38	27
Goffstown	42%	12	1.90	10
Dresden	42%	13	2.03	5
Lebanon	39%	14	1.59	19
Concord	36%	15	2.07	6
Littleton	36%	16	1.90	12
Winnisquam	36%	17	1.38	28
Exeter	33%	18	1.69	17
Alton	33%	19	1.10	32
Gorham	31%	20	1.59	20
Colebrook	31%	21	1.55	21
Mascoma	31%	22	1.48	24
Pelham	28%	23	2.21	3
Nashua	28%	24	1.62	18
Somersworth	28%	25	1.76	14
Newmarket	25%	26	1.31	30
Merrimack Valley	22%	27	2.03	8
Newport	22%	28	1.24	31
Hillsboro/Deering	20%	29	1.76	15
Dover	19%	30	1.90	11
Shaker Regional	14%	31	1.79	14
John Stark	11%	32	1.93	9
Raymond	11%	33	.86	33
Newfound	6%	34	1.34	29

**Table 3 – Top Agencies Collaborating with Schools**

<b>Agencies Schools Collaborated With Most (&gt; 50%)</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Area Agencies for Developmental Services (+ 39% for Family Support Councils)	90%
Community Mental Health Centers (+29% for MH Peer Support Groups)	88%
Vocational Rehabilitation	85%
NH Assistive Technology Center (ATECH)	76%
Granite State College (College of Lifelong Learning)	70%
NH Community Technical Colleges	59%
Other NH Colleges	56%
Parent Information Center (PIC)	54%
Community Adult Education Programs	51%

**Employer Survey** - A sampling of 65 businesses representing every geographical area and major industry group were contacted and sent a survey asking if they hire youth aged 16-24, if they hire youth with disabilities, do they have a youth work preparation program, if not - would they be interested in starting a work preparation program with the schools, what job accommodations they offered (if any), and what employer support agencies they worked with, what skills they were looking for, and whether they would be interested in disability awareness training. 49 businesses responded with a number of results to help guide regional survey and plans (which will be immediately applicable to the intermediaries):

- 51% had youth work preparation programs and most were satisfied with the support they received
- 22% had the work preparation programs which included youth with disabilities
- 70% of those who did not have work preparation programs were willing to start them
- 43% were interested in disability awareness training.

### III. SUMMARY of FINDINGS and Their INCORPORATION into the PLAN

The picture of the NH Workforce Development System for Youth in Sections I and II provide considerable information and analysis of its characteristics, current strengths and gaps, underlying trends, and the challenges and opportunities it faces. These major findings and their lessons for and impacts on the State Plan are summarized in Table 4. The left hand column of Table 4 lists the findings broken down into four areas – (1) systems and models, (2) connections and collaborations, (3) state agencies, and (4) gaps and opportunities. The right hand column briefly describes how the findings shape and are incorporated in the plan’s strategies, approaches, goals, objectives, and action steps, including a cross reference to the plan’s goal and objectives. As indicated by the cross references, the State Plan does address and incorporate in some way most of the findings, but it was unable to address all the findings directly – although the core strategy for making system improvements is designed to impact all major findings in the long term.

**TABLE 4**  
**Major Findings from Resource Mapping and Environmental Analyses and their Implications for and How they Tie into the State Plan Strategies, Goals, Objectives, and Action Steps**

Findings	Plan Impacts, Tie-Ins, and Lessons
<b>A. Systems and Model Findings</b>	
<b>A.1</b> No comprehensive model of the transition system has been presented to all stakeholders and no general agreement exists among schools, parents, providers, advocates, state agencies, colleges and other stakeholders on what essential components (such as the Guideposts) and characteristics make up the model of an effective transition system.	<b>S2, S2.2, S1.3</b> It is not possible to plan and build a real “system” if all system builders do not use the same detailed model or blueprint of the system they are building. Similarly, to succeed, collaborations require all members use the same frameworks, language, standards, and models.

Findings	Plan Impacts, Tie-Ins, and Lessons
<p><b>A.2</b> Voluntary systems improvement initiatives such as implementing the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) system in NH schools have been proven to be successful when they are: (1) started with grant-funded pilots, (2) supported by internal resources of key state agencies, (3) rely on local internal resources and connections with colleges, (4) provide practitioners with hands-on training and tools they can use immediately to help them do their jobs, and (5) provided universally to all students and not just to students with special needs.</p>	<p><b>S3, S3.1, S3.2, R3</b> The success of the PBIS provides a model for a state transition plan which uses primarily local/regional resources, starts with local pilots (with state backing) and expands from there through existing networks, focuses on hands-on training to provide immediately usable skills and tools and to connect them, relies on college staff and centers as an ongoing resource and base, and is based on universal design and access by all youth.</p>
<p><b>A.3</b> The ongoing struggle of the State to comply fully with the 1997 Claremont II NH Supreme Court Ruling to eliminate the large disparities in local school property tax rates and student opportunities from the reliance on local property taxes has effectively eliminated resources for other initiatives like transition and created instability. For example, state school funding formulas have been changed four times in the last five years by the Legislature including elimination and then reinstatement of extra funding for special education.</p>	<p><b>S8, R1</b> The plan cannot count on stability or growth in state aid for education – including special education – or funding for new initiatives (such as supporting intermediaries) until the Claremont Ruling is officially resolved. It is anticipated that because disparities are growing and approaching 1997 levels, this resolution will likely not occur in the next five years which means the plan must rely primarily on local resources to succeed.</p>
<p><b>A.4</b> Knowledge of all available transition resources is lacking by all stakeholder groups, which limits access. At the same time, the mapping shows non-school connecting and other resources have little growth capacity, provide few direct services, commonly face uncertain and time-limited funding, and for most Guidepost elements in most regions, do not have the capacity to serve the estimated number of youth who need them.</p>	<p><b>S1, R1</b> Knowledge of and connection to existing resources by all stakeholders must be in the plan as a core system component for youth and employers. Even in the short term, making connections and sharing existing resources has the ability to eliminate some capacity limits, fill smaller gaps, and build a foundation for filling larger gaps.</p>
<p><b>A.5</b> State information and data on many basic measures of youth transition outcomes and progress and system components, characteristics, and performance are often lacking, incomplete, or not fully accurate. The mapping confirmed the conclusions from the 2004 report by NH DOE’s the Secondary Transition Project titled “Enhancing Post High School Outcomes” that: “A review of multiple data sources found a wide and conflicting range of information regarding student outcomes. There is no comprehensive and accessible data collection system in place in NH at this time.”</p>	<p><b>S7, R4</b> System reform and improvement is difficult to plan and sustain without solid data to establish baselines and targets for youth outcomes and system performance – and to measure actual results based on these. Without this data, there is nothing to prevent different stakeholders from looking at the same aspect and seeing much different results – a situation that makes it difficult to build the agreements between stakeholders and accountability necessary for real systems reform. Without data, systems builders are “flying blind” on where they are and their progress in reaching their goal.</p>
<p><b>A.6</b> There was widespread agreement that individual planning and assessments should emphasize and be primarily based on individual assets and not deficits.</p>	<p><b>S3, S3.1, S3.2, R3.1, R3.2</b> A best practices system and plan should incorporate the asset-based approach in its transition</p>

Findings	Plan Impacts, Tie-Ins, and Lessons
	planning, career assessment and guidance models, and other components.
<b>A.7</b> The Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) model (based on John McKnight’s work) of linking communities and youth is growing in NH and being used as a core strategy in two of the pilots.	<b>S3, R3</b> The overall plan should consider a basic strategy of building on system strengths to address weaknesses rather than on focusing on weaknesses directly.
<b>A.8</b> There was universal appreciation for the genuine dedication of staff and agencies throughout the system to make transition successful for NH’s youth, even when they work under difficult conditions.	The plan should build on, tap, and unleash this dedication and good will in all that it does.
<b>A.9</b> The so-called O’Leary Model of transition planning which was adopted as the best model by a consortium of colleges (IHE or the Institutes of Higher Education) and supported by the DOE State Improvement Grant has worked and been very well received by all exposed to and trained in it, including parents and non-school agencies and staff.	<b>R3.1, S3.1</b> The enthusiastic response to the O’Leary model is a major strength which mirrors the response to PBIS. Training in it by all stakeholders including parents, VR, and transition agency staff (in addition to school staff) has great potential to improve plans, allow seamless transferability from school to adult systems, and to build strong connections by providing a common tool.
<b>A.10</b> Enrollment of students with disabilities 14-21 has grown much more rapidly than total enrollment for the last 8 years.	Disproportionate growth in enrollments for students with disabilities has significantly increased budgets for classroom staff, created pressure to cut back infrastructure support necessary for expanding opportunities, making connections, and implementing best practices, and because of NH’s school funding, has created taxpayer resentment against special education.
<b>A.11</b> Enrollment growth for students with autism and emotional disabilities has been especially high.	<b>S1, R1</b> Many schools are unsure of best practices and a course of study here and not equipped to implement them.
<b>A.12</b> Overall enrollment growth rates for of students with disabilities in NH are projected to level off.	<b>S1, R1</b> Provides opportunity to implement improvements difficult during rapid growth and could reduce taxpayer resentment.
<b>B. Connections and Collaborations</b>	
<b>B.1</b> Connections, connections, connections - There is universal agreement by all stakeholders that there must be robust and durable connections between all major transition system stakeholders and agencies to consistently provide youth with the full range of opportunities they need to make successful transitions. As the mapping clearly shows, while there are pockets of strong connections throughout NH, system-wide they are often missing, inconsistent, and not well developed.	<b>S1, R1</b> Making and maintaining operating connections between all stakeholders and agencies needs to be at the core of a successful transition system, and the intermediaries provide a proven mechanism for making these connections and building a permanent collaboration around them to make them lasting, robust, and adaptable.

<b>Findings</b>	<b>Plan Impacts, Tie-Ins, and Lessons</b>
<p><b>B.2</b> There was also widespread agreement that strong collaborative relationships that create deeper and more permanent stakeholder connections greatly improve system integration, youth outcomes, and are able to creatively fill Guidepost gaps internally and locally. This ability to fill in gaps was supported by evidence from the Strafford mapping project that poorer districts used increased collaboration to fill in system gaps.</p>	<p><b>S1, R1</b> Establishing strong collaborations at the state and regional levels should be a core component of all the plans.</p>
<p><b>B.3</b> Collaborations between districts and transition agencies in transition plan for school age youth has frequently been limited by the lack of resources by the agencies and the taxpayer pressure on districts. Specifically, districts are often reluctant to invite outside agencies into the process because they will suggest opportunities be added they cannot pay for which the district then must provide.</p>	<p><b>S1, R1, R3.1</b> The plan must find a way through interagency agreements or other means to remove this barrier to collaborative transition planning.</p>
<p><b>B.4</b> Connections statewide between schools and transition agencies and NH Works One-Stop Centers are inconsistent, but two of the pilot site regions have found ways to make the connections.</p>	<p><b>S6.2</b> The state plan should incorporate the successful approaches of regions in connecting youth, schools, and transition agencies to the core career preparation and job placement and seeking resources of the regional One-Stop Centers.</p>
<p><b>B.5</b> The environmental scan and feedback from the Project Oversight Committee indicated that while key staff of the state agencies responsible for transition (primarily DHHS and DOE) had connections and sporadically worked together on transition projects, there was no ongoing and un-mandated collaboration between them on improving transition – even though all agreed this was important to do. Also, system reform efforts often just focused on one part of the system with little connection or ordination with other parts.</p>	<p><b>S1</b> Even though state agencies may not be able to provide significant funds to a new initiative, their unified support is essential and it is difficult to see how any real system improvement can be accomplished without it. This suggests a successful plan should include the establishment of an ongoing statewide transition collaborative of all stakeholders.</p>
<p><b>B.6</b> NH collaborations that work best as “systems glue” were those that were voluntary and where all members regularly received tangible and meaningful value in their jobs and agency’s work from their participation. Funded collaborative efforts most often disappeared soon after their funding stopped, and many collaborative efforts mandated by funders and even by statute often appeared to be more an exercise to comply with the mandate rather than a real and lasting collaborative effort.</p>	<p><b>S1.2, R1</b> State and regional intermediary collaboratives in NH cannot succeed in performing their roles and sustain themselves unless they consistently provide real value to all their members. This means careful planning must be done to make sure the functions they perform when subsidized provide so much value to all members that they will be willing to combine, blend, and braid resources to sustain them after the subsidy ends.</p>
<p><b>C. State Agencies</b></p>	
<p><b>C.1</b> The Departments of Education (DOE) and Health &amp; Human Services (DHHS) and their two commissioners have jurisdiction at the state level over most of the major transition system components except for post-secondary</p>	<p><b>S1</b> The centralized jurisdiction of all major transition services at the state level in DOE and DHHS makes it important to get the support of the two Commissioners for any</p>

Findings	Plan Impacts, Tie-Ins, and Lessons
<p>education and the NH Works one-stop employment centers. The DOE contains special and regular education, vocational rehabilitation, vocational education, adult basic education, and operates the WIA youth programs under contract with the Workforce opportunity Council. The DHHS contains early supports and services and youth corrections as well as developmental services, mental health, alcohol and drug, children youth and families.</p>	<p>system reform, makes statewide collaboration potentially simpler, and allows significant improvements to be made through inter-agency agreements.</p>
<p><b>C.2</b> The Departments of Education (DOE) and Health &amp; Human Services (DHHS) who have most of the state level responsibility for transition services are operating in a difficult and often hostile environment, have experienced continual threats of budget cuts and regular “across the board,” freezes and other cuts, have experienced rapid turnover in leadership positions, have little discretionary and almost no new state funds, rely almost entirely on competitive and time-limited federal grants for any systems change, and in general, are in a maintenance or survival mode. Also, DHHS recently reorganized their divisions dealing most with transition.</p>	<p><b>S1, S3, S8, R1</b> The plan cannot count on any substantial funding from DHHS or DOE, especially long-term and especially for anything new that is not mandated. The plan can potentially include funding support for some of its components in conjunction with projects using federal discretionary funds in transition areas such as the State Improvement Grant (SIG) and the Medicaid Infrastructure grant (MIG)</p>
<p><b>C.3</b> DOE and DHHS in their current environment continue to maintain a core of dedicated staff and the willingness to support worthwhile initiatives with existing staff and resources.</p>	<p><b>S1.3</b> In-kind staff and support from DHHS and DOE with existing resources and promoting the plan in the systems they fund and oversee is possible and valuable.</p>
<p><b>C.4</b> State support for staffing at the Department of Education has long been at minimal levels (less than 20 full-time staff supported by solely by state funds) and with the ethic of local control and funding and distaste for regulations, the DOE is often hard pressed to provide the minimum required oversight including data.</p>	<p><b>S1</b> The plan should not rely on significant top-down initiatives from the DOE but can rely on their support to disseminate best practices successfully piloted in the regions.</p>
<p><b>D. Gaps and Opportunities</b></p>	
<p><b>D.1</b> Based on Guidepost availability, there are large system-wide gaps throughout the transition system – especially in the areas of youth development and leadership, work-based learning, and employer supports.</p>	<p><b>S3, R3</b> There are so many system-wide gaps (many requiring “building from scratch” to fill) that a strategy to fill the biggest gaps first is not workable in an environment where state funding is limited and declining – especially in the areas where the gaps are the largest.</p>
<p><b>D.2</b> Even in the areas of the weak overall availability such as Youth Development and Leadership, there are effective practices working, some of which can be inexpensively and quickly disseminated.</p>	<p><b>S4</b> The plan should identify specific best practices in all areas to benefit youth that can be readily implemented and implement the best of these in the pilots regions first.</p>
<p><b>D.3</b> There was widespread agreement from the school surveys that a Transition Planner or Coordinator was a position that was necessary for districts to consistently go beyond meeting the letter of the law to create best practice transition plans customized to the student that</p>	<p><b>S1, R1</b> A core part of the plan should include the key Transition Planner functions of implementing best practice transition planning at the school including making the community connections which most</p>

Findings	Plan Impacts, Tie-Ins, and Lessons
make the needed connections beyond the school.	teachers cannot readily make time for.
<b>D.4</b> Based on estimates of capacity from the provider and parent surveys, the Project Oversight Committee, and State Budget funding levels and trends, the system-wide gaps measured by capacity in transition services (not provided by schools) are larger than that measured by availability.	<b>S7, R4</b> The plan must be realistic that filling gaps requires capacity and not just availability and that practical ways of measuring and collecting data on “capacity gaps” would add a greater reality to both the planning and assessment processes.
<b>D.5</b> As the mapping shows, within the statewide system there are very large differences between school districts in the gaps and strengths of their Guidepost system elements leading to great inconsistencies and inequalities for students around the state.	<b>S3, S7, R4</b> Especially for system components like transition planning, career assessment, parent involvement, and assistive technology that have been identified as both fundamental system building blocks and the best strategic platforms from which to launch systems change, the plan must look beyond the state averages and to the range of differences to make sure all districts are brought up to at least minimum acceptable levels for these key components.
<b>D.6</b> Official and de facto waiting lists for developmental, mental health, and other services that face youth with disabilities leaving school were cited by all stakeholders as the most significant single barrier to the ability of youth with significant disabilities to make successful transitions. Further, there is little evidence they will be eliminated soon.	<b>S6.1</b> The regional intermediaries need to use their collaborative power to find local ways to work around waiting lists (written in transition plans ahead of time) and continue essential supports so the progress youth are making in transition in school is not stopped “dead in its tracks” and reversed when they leave.
<b>D.7</b> As the surveys show, while transition plans “mostly” exist many (perhaps the majority) do not follow best practices. Further, they are rarely carried over to the adult systems when youth leave school. Best practice transition plans were seen to be especially important for successful transitions for those youth whose transition objectives and the path to them do not fit well into an established course of study offered by the school.	<b>S3.1, R3.1</b> Implementing best practice transition plans and planning, getting them to carry over and be universally used by agencies, and using them to build more courses of study should be a core part of a successful system and state and regional plans to build it.
<b>D.8</b> Based on the employer surveys, the majority are willing to hire youth including youth with disabilities, 43% are interested in disability awareness training, and over half those without work preparatory programs are willing to start one.	<b>S5, R2</b> Connections with employers at the local level have great potential for increasing work-based learning opportunities and employment for youth.
<b>D.9</b> There was universal agreement among all stakeholders that the state’s lack of a public transportation system in all but a few areas severely limits the ability of youth who cannot drive to be employed and make a full passage to adult life. A driver’s license and a car constitute the most universal “rite of passage” to adult life for youth in NH today.	<b>R5</b> The regional intermediaries must find creative ways to make needed connections for youth who cannot drive if the connections are to be real and sustained – and more importantly, the “rite of passage” of adult mobility attained.

#### IV. GOALS, OBJECTIVES, and STRATEGIC ACTION WORK PLAN

**Overview** - The plan’s goals, objectives, and action plan are built around:

- (1) The NCWD “Guideposts for Success” Framework;
- (2) Implementing the intermediary strategy at both the state and regional levels, with a focus on establishing connections between all stakeholders and the Guideposts as a unifying framework;
- (3) The findings;
- (4) The core strategy of focusing on implementing four core system elements (best practice transition planning, career assessment and guidance, parent participation and youth development and leadership, and employer connections and support); and
- (5) Piloting specific new opportunities for youth to fill specific gaps.

For example, Goals S1 and R1 are focused on establishing intermediaries, S2 and R3 on the Guidepost framework, S3, S5, R2, and R3 on the core five-Guidepost strategy, and S4, S6, and R5 on piloting and implementing new youth opportunities and work arounds for key barriers. Finally, as should be clear, the state-level and regional-level goals and objectives parallel and reinforce each other and the action steps use similar strategies and activities. The State-Level Goals and Objectives are presented first followed by the Regional-Level ones.

**Abbreviations Used** (in order of appearance): **WOC** = Workforce Opportunity Council (project sponsor), **PM** = Project Manager (NH Dev. Disabilities Council), **POC** = Project Oversight Committee (used interchangeably with TC), **TC** = Transition Cabinet, **ODEP** = Office of Disability Employment Policy of the US Dept. of Labor (project originators and funders), **CoP** = NH Transition Community of Practice; **IEL** = Institute for Educational Leadership (project technical assistance provider), **IA** = Interaction Associates (consultant on building collaborations), **NASET** = National Alliance for Secondary Education and Transition, **NCWD** – National Collaboration for Workforce Development for Youth (ODEP funded research and support group), **TTP** = Transition Training Partnership (consists of CARE NH, PIC, Granite State Independent Living, Alliance for Community Supports), **Pilots** = Four Regional Intermediary Pilots, **IHE** = Institutes of Higher Education (Keene State and Rivier Colleges and Plymouth State University that provide transition planning training), **CARE NH** = Community Alliance Reform Effort (SAMHSA wraparound pilot for youth with emotional disabilities), **DOE** = NH Department of Education, **VR** = Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation within DOE, **DHHS** = NH Department of Health & Human Services, **PIC** = Parent Information Center, **ATECH** = ATECH Services (NH’s assistive technology center).

NH Strategic Action Work Plan Element	Responsible	Time Line	Results Measures
<p><b>S1 - State-Level Goal #1: Establish a Functioning Statewide Collaboration (Transition Cabinet)</b> Align efforts to improve the transition outcomes for youth statewide through a permanent cross-agency collaboration of all major statewide agencies and stakeholder groups. This collaboration will focus on improving the statewide workforce development and transition system for youth following the evolving Guidepost framework and in close concert with the Community of Practice in Transition and the Governor’s Task Forces on Transportation and Employment for Persons with Disabilities.</p>			
<p><b>Objective S1.1: Create Project Oversight Committee (POC)</b> - Establish and regularly convene a Project Oversight Committee consisting of all statewide agencies and stakeholder groups to guide the Transition Realignment Project and bridge gaps between education and workforce development.</p>			
<p><b>Objective S1.1 Action Steps</b> a) POC convened and meets as needed -</p>	<p>a) PM</p>	<p>a) 11/03 –</p>	<p>a) Number of meetings,</p>

NH Strategic Action Work Plan Element	Responsible	Time Line	Results Measures
<p>and at least quarterly.</p> <p>b) POC provides guidance and oversight by developing RFP for mapping and choosing contractor, developing RFPs for four pilots and selecting groups, helping set state plan priorities and strategies.</p>	<p>b) PM, WOC, POC</p>	<p>12/06</p> <p>b) Mapping done 9/04, Pilot's contracts 11/04</p>	<p>dates, attendance, actions and agenda</p> <p>b) RFPs approved, issued, contractors selected, contracts written and approved</p>
<p><b>Objective S1.2: Develop the POC into the Transition Cabinet</b> - Help transform and build the POC into a permanent collaborative of all major statewide stakeholders by extending its mission beyond guiding the Transition Realignment Project to becoming an ongoing intermediary of statewide agencies with the broader mission of increasing the effectiveness of the transition system following the Guidepost framework. (Note: To simplify, this new collaboration will be referred to as the Transition Cabinet or TC throughout the Goals, Objectives, and Action Plan. The POC will continue until replaced by the TC, which allows the TC and POC to be used interchangeably.)</p>			
<p>Objective S1.2 Action Steps</p>			
<p>a) Train POC on Interaction Associates (IA) approach for making collaborations work in consultation with IEL.</p> <p>b) Following the IA approach, develop a "process map" to guide building the collaborative including its vision and guiding principles, core problem statements, specific functions and roles, and its governing and financial structure. (Note: The TC's structure will depend on the process and may take the form of a merger or alliance with other allied groups such as the Community of Practice for Transition (CoP) or forming of a separate group.</p> <p>c) Follow Process Map to create and make operational the "Transition Cabinet"(TC) collaborative.</p>	<p>a) PM, IA IEL</p> <p>b) PM, IA, IEL (Note: the PM role here is limited to facilitating as decided by the TC and long term, as a regular member.)</p> <p>c) PM, Designated Facilitators)</p>	<p>a) 7/06-9/06</p> <p>b) 9/06-12/06</p> <p>c) 1/07-9/08</p>	<p>a) IA and other training completed.</p> <p>b) Process Map completed.</p> <p>c) *Meeting evaluations on value conducted for every meeting *Individual member evaluations of value conducted every 6 months * Number of joint projects undertaken including amount of resources blended or braided.</p>
<p><b>Objective S1.3: Establish Work Plans Based on the Guidepost Framework and on Supporting Regional Intermediaries</b> - Develop annual and longer-term work plans that include statewide disseminating of the NCWD "Guideposts for Success" framework, establishing work groups to address key issues as needed (such as waiting lists, foster care and juvenile justice youth, increases in autism, interagency protocols and operations) to carry out the work plans, and continuing the POC's annual review and regular monitoring of the Transition Realignment Project.</p>			

NH Strategic Action Work Plan Element	Responsible	Time Line	Results Measures
<p><b><u>Objective S1.3 Action Steps</u></b></p> <p><b>a)</b> Present the NCWD for Youth “Guideposts for Success” Framework and NCWD Self-Assessment Guide to POC.</p> <p><b>b)</b> Present the NCWD Guideposts and National Standards and Quality Indicators to TC and pilots for review and development/recommendations of different presentations of the Guideposts document to different audiences as needed.</p> <p><b>c)</b> Develop first year schedule for rolling out Guideposts Framework in pilots and statewide, relying as much as possible on piggybacking on existing stakeholder meetings and interactive presentations.</p> <p><b>d)</b> Implement rollout schedule.</p> <p><b>e)</b> Provide ongoing oversight and guidance of the Transition Alignment Project including review and analysis of youth, employer, and system performance results and ODEP Quarterly Reports.</p> <p><b>f)</b> Meet with regional pilots to review progress at least two times per year to identify and document system changes made and outcomes achieved.</p> <p><b>g)</b> Review State Plan regularly and update as needed with special emphasis on incorporating lessons learned in regions.</p> <p><b>h)</b> Regularly develop and identify priority state-level transition improvement projects with special emphasis on those that support regional intermediaries including specifying the blending, braiding and other pooling or integration of resources by agencies to carry out the projects.</p> <p><b>i)</b> Establish working groups or task forces and solicit commitments of necessary resources (including people not on the TC) as needed to carry out the projects/activities selected.</p>	<p><b>a)</b> PM, IEL</p> <p><b>b)</b> PM, NH NASET Summit Members – + TC and WOC OK</p> <p><b>c)</b> TTP, Pilots, PM, TC</p> <p><b>d)</b> PM, TTP</p> <p><b>e)</b> TC, PM, WOC</p> <p><b>f)</b> TC, PM, Pilots, WOC</p> <p><b>g)</b> TC, PM, WOC</p> <p><b>h)</b> TC, PM, WOC</p> <p><b>i)</b> TC, PM, WOC</p>	<p><b>a)</b> 11/03-4/04</p> <p><b>b)</b> 12/05-2/06</p> <p><b>c)</b> 6/06</p> <p><b>d)</b> 7/06-6/07</p> <p><b>e)</b> Ongoing</p> <p><b>f)</b> Ongoing</p> <p><b>g)</b> 9/06 – ongoing</p> <p><b>h)</b> 7/06 – ongoing</p> <p><b>i)</b> 7/06 - ongoing</p>	<p><b>a)</b> Presentations completed 4/04</p> <p><b>b)</b> Presentation completed, adopted (with NH specifics added if needed) by and formats suggested by TC and WOC.</p> <p><b>c)</b> Rollout schedule completed including who, what, where, and when.</p> <p><b>d)</b> Schedule events carried out.</p> <p><b>e)</b> Quarterly TC minutes summarizing review.</p> <p><b>f)</b> Two meetings/year held with pilots and list of changes reported to DDC (also in ODEP Quarterly Reports).</p> <p><b>g)</b> Plan reviewed in September of each year.</p> <p><b>h)</b> Annual Report describing the projects the TC has decided to undertake in support of regional intermediaries (including interagency technical assistance and agreements for pooling, sharing, and integrating resources) and progress in carrying them out.</p> <p><b>i)</b> Working groups established, including their scope and responsibilities.</p>

NH Strategic Action Work Plan Element	Responsible	Time Line	Results Measures
<p><b><u>S2 - State-Level Goal #2: Disseminate and Explain to All Major Stakeholder Groups and their Leadership the NCWD Guideposts and Build Support for Them as the Common Framework</u></b>  Disseminate the Guideposts Framework of a comprehensive transition system (including outcomes for youth and employers, core components including employer supports, and performance characteristics) to all stakeholder groups, and through interactive presentations tailored to each group, achieve widespread understanding and support of the Guideposts by stakeholder groups and their leadership.</p>			
<p><b>Objective S2: Disseminate the Guideposts Framework using the NCWD/Youth “Guideposts for Success “ Brochure Using a Partnership of Statewide Youth and Parent Leadership and Training Agencies to Provide Interactive Presentations.</b></p>			
<p><b>Objective S2 Action Steps</b></p>			
<p>a) Convene key statewide youth and parent leadership training groups identified in the statewide mapping to establish a partnership to contract with the project to develop youth/parent friendly and interactive presentations for all stakeholders based on the NCWD Guideposts brochure.</p>	<p>PM</p>	<p>7/05-9/05</p>	<p>a) Group identified and convened.  b) * Transition Training Partnership (TTP) established in 8/05 as a collaborative venture of the Parent Information Center (PIC), CARE NH, Alliance for Community Supports, and Granite State Independent Living (GSIL)</p>
<p>b) Obtain agreement from partners on forming the partnership including its roles, activities, products, future, and funding - and prepare contract.</p>	<p>PM, TTP</p>	<p>9/05-11/05</p>	<p>Alliance for Community Supports, and Granite State Independent Living (GSIL)</p>
<p>c) TTP designs interactive presentations and curricula for all regional intermediaries that they will present as a four part series to help inform and educate all regional stakeholders on the Guidepost framework with special emphasis on: (1) youth development and leadership Guideposts and the evolving roles of educators, youth, and families; (2) identification of all agencies providing Guidepost supports and opportunities in each region (from the mapping) and how to access them with the help of the intermediary; and (3) how all stakeholders can use the O’Leary individual transition plan (to be part of the NH DOE’s model IEP to be issued in 2006) and Career Assessment and Guidance to incorporate best practice Guidepost elements and create bridges between the school and adult systems.</p>	<p>TTP, Pilots, PM, TC</p>	<p>1/06-9/06</p>	<p>* Two-year contract developed and executed.  c) * TTP presentations and curricula developed.  * TTP conducts series in regions.  * Number of trainings conducted by TTP, the attendance of each session by stakeholder group, the evaluation of sessions by participants by stakeholder type.  * Evaluation of each training and series by each intermediary.  * Evaluation of each training, curricula, and series by the TC on building support for Guideposts and working knowledge in regions of groups providing them.</p>
<p>d) TTP second year work plan, presentations, and contract adjusted based on first year’s experience.</p>	<p>PM</p>	<p>10/06</p>	<p>d) Second year contract adjusted and executed.</p>

NH Strategic Action Work Plan Element	Responsible	Time Line	Results Measures
<p><b>S3 - State-Level Goal #3: Create Ongoing Statewide Capacity for Training in Core Guideposts</b>            Build and maintain on-going statewide access for all stakeholders to training in and support for the four Guidepost supports/opportunities (as successfully piloted by the intermediaries) that together are the core elements of the project’s strategy to improve outcomes for youth by instituting lasting structural improvements to the workforce development system for youth. These are ongoing training and support in: (1) The O’Leary transition planning approach and especially its components included in the DOE’s model IEP; (2) Career assessment and guidance using standard tool; (3) Assistive technology for school, home and the workplace; and (4) youth leadership and development and meaningful parent involvement.</p>			
<p><b>Objective S3.1: Work to BUILD Ongoing Statewide Capacity for Training in Transition Planning-</b>            Ensure that the transition planning approach selected by the IHE partners and successfully piloted by the DOE’s State Improvement Grant 1 (SIG1) and the intermediaries (based on Dr. Ed O’Leary national model) is ongoing and accessible to school staff and to all stakeholders so as to create a common tool used by all providers that bridges services systems and provides consistent person-centered planning.</p>			
<p><b>Objective S3.1 Action Steps</b></p> <p>a) Convene the key staff in the Institutes of Higher Education (IHE) to assess current training capacities, funding, future plans, adaptations for different stakeholders, and options for providing ongoing training (such as training the trainer) for O’Leary transition planning.</p> <p>b) Based on results from the IHE meeting, convene the DOE, school districts, statewide agencies such as VR and the Association of Special Education Administrators Association, to develop a strategy or plan to sustain ongoing training on transition planning. A task force of the TC is a possible mechanism to develop and forge agreement on this.</p> <p>c) Develop and implement a plan to continue the Summer Training Institute on transition planning including involving the full range of non-school stakeholders.</p> <p>d) Work with the NH Transition Community of Practice (CoP) to form a “Transition Resources Bridge” working group of 7-15 leaders in transition planning from the schools and the adult system including the TTP to meet to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop a universal transition plan for youth 14-24 that can be carried over - all or in part -from school to adult and community providers.</li> <li>2. Identify the Guidepost elements to be most directly and significantly improved and how by better</li> </ol>	<p>PM</p> <p>TC, PM</p> <p>PM, IHE, DOE</p> <p>PM, CoP, DOE, IHE, TTP</p>	<p>1/06-2/06</p> <p>3/06-6/06</p> <p>3/06-8/06</p> <p>4/06-ongoing</p>	<p>a) *IHE convened.            *Written assessment of O’Leary training capacity and options for sustaining it completed.</p> <p>b) *A completed and agreed-upon one year plan to provide O’Leary transition planning training for at least 50 stakeholders for a including the agreements for pooling resources necessary.            * Strategy of next steps or plan for ongoing training agreed-upon.</p> <p>c) Summer Institute for at least 50 persons is run in 2006 (# trained including non-school stakeholders).</p> <p>d) * Working group formed and number of meetings, attendance and agenda            * Number of specific reports and recommendations produced.            1. Parts (or all) of a seamless transition plan format are completed.            2. List completed of NCWD Guidepost</p>

NH Strategic Action Work Plan Element	Responsible	Time Line	Results Measures
<p>transition planning;</p> <p>3. Review all existing transition guides and checklists used by schools and youth agencies and make recommendations for combining;</p> <p>4. Identify the largest gaps transition planners face and how they compare with the gaps from the statewide mapping; and</p> <p>5. Make recommendation for customizing plans and Guidepost/ opportunities to meet needs of the growing number of youth with autism and emotional disabilities.</p> <p>e) Develop a basic logic model that identifies and traces how expected changes in transition plans (from training stakeholders in the O’Leary transition planning and Robinson CAGC process and tools) lead to changes in the availability and content of Guidepost opportunities for youth, and youth outcomes over time. And from the logic model, develop measures and benchmarks to assess the impact of the O’Leary model on the transition process and youth outcomes.</p>	IHE, PM, DOE	1/06 – 4/06	<p>elements most impacted by O’Leary training</p> <p>3. List of guides, checklists and other tools compiled and recommendations for universal design made.</p> <p>4. List of largest gaps in Guidepost opportunities encountered using O’Leary model compiled</p> <p>5. Number of specific recommendations produced for customizing plans for youth with autism and emotional disabilities</p> <p>e) Completed logic model that helps get maximum system and youth outcomes improvements from training; helps identify, track and measure outcomes; and helps guide strategic planning on selecting which Guidepost elements to next target for improvement and how.</p>
<p><b><u>Objective S3.2: Maintain Ongoing Statewide Capacity for Career Assessment Training</u></b> - Ensure that the youth-centered and universally-designed Career Assessment, Guidance, and Counseling (CAGC) model is accessible to all stakeholders and which was successfully expanded by the DOE’s State Improvement Grant 1 (SIG1) and the Transition Realignment Project (in all four regions) is available as a permanent resource for grounding transition and career plans in meaningful youth input and realistic youth-based and understood career goals and the specific steps they need to take to achieve them. This includes access to CAGC (already used by VR Counselors) other stakeholders.</p>			
<p><b><u>Objective S3.2 Action Steps</u></b></p> <p>a) Meet with Dr. Robinson who provides the training and support for the CAGC model to assess current training capacities, future plans, adaptations for different stakeholders, expanding the “training the trainer” component, and linking more closely to the</p>	PM	4/06-5/06	<p>a)* Number of meetings held</p> <p>* Written assessment completed</p>



NH Strategic Action Work Plan Element	Responsible	Time Line	Results Measures
<p><b>Objective S4.2: Integrate Regional Results and Employ Youth to Field Test Resource and System Guide for Youth</b> - Revise for each region using regional results and tools the statewide resource and system guide for youth called “Plugged In” - a transition guide for young people with disabilities and special health care needs developed as part of the statewide mapping. Employ at least 24 youth from all four pilot sites (6 per site) to revise and field test the guide as needed.</p>			
<p><b>Objective S4.2 Action Steps</b></p>			
<p>a) Revise guide for regional results. Select youth to participate. Develop core questions for field test interviews with help of selected youth and focus groups and set up interview schedule.</p> <p>b) Distribute “Plugged In,” conduct field tests per schedule, and convene youth to compile and discuss results.</p> <p>c) Convene youth from all pilot sites to use their results to recommend any changes to “Plugged In.”</p> <p>d) Make changes to “Plugged In” based on youth recommendations and distribute statewide.</p>	<p>a) Pilots, TTP</p> <p>b) Pilots, TTP, UNH Ext.</p> <p>c) PM, TTP,</p> <p>d) PM, PIC</p>	<p>a) 1/06-3/06</p> <p>b) 4/06-6/06</p> <p>c) 6/06</p> <p>d) 7/06-9/06</p>	<p>a) *Number of youth involved in developing questions * List of questions and schedule</p> <p>b) Number of interviews and focus groups conducted</p> <p>c) Number of meetings held and recommendations offered.</p> <p>d) *Revised “Plugged In” completed * Number of copies distributed</p>
<p><b>Objective S4.3: Develop and Implement a Statewide Plan to Blend and Braid Resources of State-Level Agencies to Provide Integrated Support for Self-Advocates with Developmental Disabilities</b></p>			
<p><b>Objective S4.3 Action Steps</b></p>			
<p>a) Convene representative self-advocates and all major groups supporting them to come up with a common definition and benefits and results of self-advocacy for the individual, her or his peers, the self-advocacy group, and communities and support systems.</p> <p>b) Develop state plan by pooling existing stakeholder resources to support transition of youth as school-age self-advocates to ongoing youth and adult self-advocacy through groups and other opportunities.</p> <p>c) Implement plan.</p>	<p>PM, TTP, TC</p> <p>PM, TTP, TC</p> <p>PM</p>	<p>10/05 – 1/06</p> <p>2/06-6/06</p> <p>7/06</p>	<p>a) *Number of meetings held and number of self-advocates and groups participating. *Written report defining self-advocacy, benefits, and available resources completed.</p> <p>b) Plan completed.</p> <p>c) Plan implemented.</p>
<p><b>S5 - State-Level Goal #5: Conduct Statewide Employer Forum(s)</b> Establish a statewide forum for employers to come together to address specific issues on employer supports for transitioning youth and specific proposals to improve these statewide – with special consideration to projects successfully piloted in the regions. These forums would be organized around a specific theme and could be self-standing or integrated as part of a regular statewide business meeting such as those regularly held by the Business and Industry Association, Statewide Association of Chambers of Commerce, or the NH Association of Human Resource Professionals.</p>			

NH Strategic Action Work Plan Element	Responsible	Time Line	Results Measures
<b>Objective S5.1: Establish Forum Steering Committee-</b> Establish and convene a steering committee to plan the first forum.			
<b>Objective S5.1 Action Steps</b>			
a) Conduct an environmental scan of all statewide business, business professional, and employer groups.	PM, WOC, TC	10/05 - 12/05	List of business groups with contacts and their activities completed.
b) Select 4-6 statewide employer representatives (identified as actively involved in the workforce development system for youth) to invite to the organizing meeting of the steering committee from a candidate pool suggested by the TC and after one-on-one interviews.	TC, PM	1/06 – 2/06	List of state-level candidates compiled.
c) Select 4-6 employer representatives actively involved in the pilots from the four regions recommended by the pilots and the PM after interviews.	Pilots, PM	1/06 - 2/06	List of regional candidates compiled.
d) Select 2-4 Steering Committee Members from the TC in addition to the PM and WOC.	TC	1/06 - 2/06	List of selected members
e) Convene and organize Steering Committee.	PM	3/06-ongoing	Number of meetings and participation.
<b>Objective S5.2 - Plan and Implement First Forum</b>			
<b>Objective S5.2 Action Steps</b>			
a) Steering Committee meets as needed to determine theme and focus issues, goals and outcomes, sponsors, date, format including whether it will be part of other events/meetings or separate, speakers, and meeting logistics and publicity.	a) – c) = Steering Committee, PM, TC	3/06-9/06	a) *Number of meetings and attending * Forum details decided
b) Hold forum.		9/06 –	b) *Number of business and other participants *Results of session evaluations
c) Compile and analyze forum results and determine next steps including next forums or other events.		12/06	c) *Future plans *Possible writing up of proceedings
<b>S6 - State-Level Goal #6: Develop Work Arounds for Waiting Lists and Better Access to Resources through NH WORKS Centers</b>			
Develop strategies, protocols, and methods to reduce the barrier to successful transition from waiting lists for adult services for youth leaving high school, and develop intermediary’s expertise and capacity to use the career resources in their NH WORKS Centers and on the web such as CareerOneStop.org.			
<b>Objective S6.1: Convene Waiting List Stopgap Solutions Task Force</b> - Convene a broad task force through the CoP and TC of transition service providers that have waiting lists, parents, youth representatives, schools, colleges, and other stakeholders to develop a list of stopgap measures that can			

NH Strategic Action Work Plan Element	Responsible	Time Line	Results Measures
be implemented primarily through pooling and better tapping existing agency and community resources.			
<b>Objective S6.1 Action Steps</b>			
a) Conduct a statewide and national search for specific programs, projects, contingency planning, or approaches that help youth and their families bridge waiting lists for services after high school.	PM, CoP, DHHS, DOE	11/05 – 4/06	Written list of possible solutions to coping with waiting lists completed
b) Convene in coordination with the CoP a task force of agencies (possibly as a committee of the TC) already engaged in bridging gaps - and other stakeholders identified as potentially playing a role from the list of waitlist solutions - to review the list of stopgap solutions for helping youth and select the most promising.	PM, TC, CoP	4/06-ongoing	List of stopgap solutions with highest potential and the rationale for selecting them completed.
c) Develop and implement interagency “Waitlist Stopgap Plan” to provide youth and families with ways to lessen the service gaps after high school from waiting lists. The plan shall include specific projects, mechanisms, and opportunities and the pooling of state-level, regional-agency, and community resources to carry them out.	PM, TC	8/06-ongoing	The written plan is completed and adopted by the TC and all parties to it.
<b>Objective S6.2: Increase Expertise and Capacity of all Regional Stakeholders to Access Career Resources in their NHWORKS Centers and through Web Resources</b>			
<b>Objective S6.2 Action Steps</b>			
a) Work with the Department of Employment Security to provide hands-on training and follow-up support to intermediaries and TTP on accessing NH WORKS resources for youth, parents, and employers Based on interviews, select and convene working group to develop plan for replicating success in other regions.	a) WOC, PM, NH Dept. of Employ. Security (DES) TTP, Pilots	a) 12/05-3/06 for initial training	a) *Arrange for training with DES, pilots, and TTP. *Number of people trained persons trained. * Increased use of NH WORKS and web resources.
<b>S7 - State-Level Goal #7: Make Recommendations for a State-Level Transition Information System for Tracking Youth Outcomes and System Performance based on NCWD Guideposts</b> On the basis of regional experience, make specific recommendations for a statewide information collection system on youth transition outcomes, system resources and capacity, and system performance based on the NCWD Guidepost Framework			

NH Strategic Action Work Plan Element	Responsible	Time Line	Results Measures
<b>Objective S7.1: Add State Mapping Data from Regions if Feasible and Put on Line Using Community Youth Mapping Software through the WOC</b>			
<b>Objective S7.1 Action Steps</b>			
a) Review regional mapping studies including youth mapping to see if information collected not in the statewide mapping would help guide the TC and state plan and could be collected at the state level.	TC, PM, CoP	12/05-9/06	a) List of proposed added elements to state resource mapping completed.
b) Select information (if any) to be added and collect with help of regional youth and disseminate.	TC, PM, PIC	10/06-ongoing	b) List of added mapping information to be collected at the state level and how it is to be collected is completed.
<b>Objective S7.2: Select State-Level Data and Collection Methods Needed to Measure Plan's Attainment of its Goals and Objectives for Youth and Transition System Performance - Select information to be collected based on the plan's goals, objectives, frameworks, and best practice standards.</b>			
<b>Objective S7.1 Action Steps</b>			
a) Compile list of information sources on transition outcomes, resources, and system performance and assess their completeness, accuracy, and status.	a) UNH Center for Adolescence CoP, DOE	a) 1/06-5/06	a) Report on information availability and accuracy completed.
b) Compile information needed to measure attainment of goals and objectives in plan.	b) WOC, PM, TC	b) 1/06-4/06	b) Master list of information needed to track attainment for each goal and objective is completed.
c) Convene working group of information specialists to select most important information to be collected and the best way to do it and make recommendations to TC.	c) PM, CoP, WOC, TC	c) 5/06-10/06	c) *Number of working group meetings and attendance * Written recommendations on system design completed.
<b>S8 - State-Level Goal #8: Track Sustainability of Intermediaries Based on their Value-Added to Members and Youth</b>			
Regularly evaluate the sustainability of the project's intermediaries and their improvements for youth by evaluating the strength of the statewide (TC) and regional collaborative intermediaries, the degree to which they have become "indispensable," and the willingness of the members to sustain them and their functions based on the value-added they receive.			
<b>Objective 8.1: Develop Intermediary Survey and Use it Every Six Months</b>			
a) Develop a confidential survey for intermediary members on the specific value they and the youth they serve receive from their participation by major intermediary function, what they contribute now, and what they would be able and willing to contribute to operating	PM, IA, IEL	11/05-2/06	Survey form completed.

NH Strategic Action Work Plan Element	Responsible	Time Line	Results Measures
<p>the intermediary or its functions after their subsidies end.</p> <p>b) Survey each intermediary member every six months and develop a “sustainability” index based on the survey results to track progress and trends.</p>	PM, WOC	3/06-ongoing	Surveys conducted and written summaries completed.
<b>REGIONAL LEVEL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES</b>			
<p><b>R1 - <u>Regional Level Goal #1: Establish Permanent Regional Intermediary Collaboratives</u></b> Align efforts to improve the transition outcomes for youth in four regions by establishing an ongoing collaboration representing all regional stakeholders, which serves as an intermediary to integrate services and pool resources to fill in gaps and create an effective and seamless transition system for youth and all system customers.</p>			
<p><b><u>Objective R1.1 - Establish advisory committees representing all stakeholders to the four pilot projects.</u></b></p>			
<p><b><u>Objective R1.1 Action Steps</u></b></p>			
<p>a) Four regional pilots selected through a competitive RFP identify, invite, and convene advisory groups for their projects consisting of representatives of all major system stakeholders.</p>	Pilots, PM	11/04-2/05	Advisory Committees formed with list of members provided.
<p>b) Advisory groups meet regularly and as need to guide and support each regional pilot.</p>	Pilots, PM	2/05-ongoing	Number of meetings, attendance, agendas, and results
<p><b><u>Objective R1.2 - Develop and transform advisory committees into ongoing intermediary collaborative organizations (formally or informally structured), which represent all regional stakeholders with their primary mission to improve youth transition outcomes through creating an integrated regional transition system.</u></b> The intermediary is focused on making the connections necessary to create a real “system” based on the NCWD Guidepost framework and best practices and which is able to pool existing resources and tap new ones in agencies and the community.</p>			
<p><b><u>Objective R1.2 Action Steps</u></b></p>			
<p>a) Train pilot staff on Interaction Associates (IA) approaches for establishing inclusive, working, and ongoing cross-agency and cross-stakeholder collaborations.</p>	PM, IA, IEL	12/05-5/06	All staff training completed.
<p>b) Train advisory committee on IA and other approaches to building lasting collaboratives and identify core functions that make intermediaries indispensable.</p>	PM, IA, IEL	6/06-8/06	All advisory committee training completed with number trained Four Process Maps completed.
<p>c) Following the IA model, develop a “Process Map” to guide building the collaborative and for making key decisions such as vision, guiding model and problem statements, specific functions and roles, structure, and resource pooling and other arrangements</p>	Pilots, PM, IA, IEL	9/06-11/06	

NH Strategic Action Work Plan Element	Responsible	Time Line	Results Measures
<p>to achieve sustainability.</p> <p>d) Follow the “Process Map” to establish and operate the ongoing intermediary. (Note: The structure adopted will depend on the process and may be a merger or alliance with another group as well as a transformation of the advisory committee.)</p>	Pilots, PM	11/06-ongoing	Implementation of “Process Maps” and intermediary development following its schedule tracked regularly in Quarterly Reports.

**R2 - Regional Level Goal #2: Establish an Ongoing Regional Employer Task Force in Each Pilot**  
 Create an ongoing regional employer task force representative of all major regional employers (by both industry and occupation) that would meet only as needed to give advice on specific proposals provided through the intermediary collaborative on the design and operation of employer supports, work-based opportunities, accommodations for youth, and other specific workplace and job placement and retention issues. The employer task force as a general rule would not be expected to give advice on aspects of the transition system not directly connected to their business and workplaces and in particular, would not be expected to attend all or any parts of meetings focusing on the youth-serving part of the workforce development system. (Note: It is felt that NH employers will readily participate and provide invaluable guidance in this time-limited role focused on sharing their expertise and experience on tangible workplace topics, but not if structured otherwise.)

**Objective R2.1 - Pilot Sites Identify major regional employers, make connections with them, and build one-on-one and working relationships.**

<b>Objective R2.1 Action Steps</b>			
<p>a) Identify major employers in their labor market areas including estimated openings by occupation and industry.</p> <p>b) Major outreach to the major employers (including public and nonprofit) and business, professional, and employer groups in their region including joining groups such as Chambers of Commerce, Rotaries, HR Associations, and Main Street Programs.</p>	<p>WOC, One-Stops</p> <p>Pilots, WOC</p>	<p>11/05</p> <p>11/04-ongoing</p>	<p>a) Comprehensive list of employers with job data completed.</p> <p>b) Number individuals and groups contacted and groups joined regularly reported in Quarterly Reports</p>
<p>c) Conduct one-on-one interviews with top 10-20 employers at the administration or human resources levels and hold informational meetings for employers, both self-standing and as part of regular business meetings.</p>	Pilots, WOC	3/05-ongoing	<p>c) *Number of interviews completed</p> <p>* Number of events and meetings held for employers and number attending</p>

**Objective R2.2 - Select task force members and establish ongoing employer task force to provide guidance, and support on employer projects and job placement and support issues as needed**



NH Strategic Action Work Plan Element	Responsible	Time Line	Results Measures
group, and status of plan to provide ongoing O’Leary training and support.			
<b>Objective R3.2</b> - Provide hands-on training to schools, parents, and other stakeholders on the Robinson Career Assessment, Council, and Guidance system.			
<b>Objective R3.2 Action Steps</b>			
a) Intermediary staff and members and key stakeholders given basic training on CAGC model and tools including current availability in area high schools and VR offices, its universal design, and its connection to best practice transition planning and person-centered planning.	Dr. Robinson or trained staff	4/05-1/06	a) Number and percentage of intermediary staff and members given CAGC basic training.
b) With support from state-level plan, schedule and conduct practitioner training on CAGC model and computer and other tools.	Pilots, Dr. Robinson, PM	4/05-ongoing	b) Number and percentage of regional practitioners from all agencies given CAGC professional training
<b>Objective R.3.3</b> - Provide hands-on training to schools, parents, employers, and other stakeholders on ATECH accommodations and the do-it-yourself adaptive technology toolkit.			
<b>Objective R.3.3 Action Steps</b>			
a) Conduct training for all major stakeholder groups on ATECH Services assistive technology services and how families, youth, employers, schools, and connecting service providers can access and use it to increase opportunities and options for youth.	ATECH, pilots, PM	1/05-10/05	a) Number of trainings conducting and people attending
b) Make ATECH Do-It-Yourself adaptive toolkits available to families, youth, employers, schools, and providers.	ATECH, pilots, PM	4/05-ongoing	b) *Number of toolkits distributed *Number of modifications made
<b>Objective R3.4</b> - Provide basic information and training to all stakeholders on the Guidepost transition framework elements making up an effective transition system for youth with special emphasis on the importance meaningful youth and parent participation and youth leadership.			
<b>Objective R3.4 Action Steps</b>			
a) Identify main regional stakeholders that need basic Guidepost training and schedule Transition Training Partnership (TTP) presentations to provide it.	Pilots, TTP, PM	5/06-ongoing	List of stakeholders to get information completed Schedule for presentations completed
b) TTP provides training following the schedule.	Pilots, TTP	7/06-ongoing	Number of presentations and number of people attending
<b>R4 Regional Goal #4 – Develop and Implement a Regional Five-Year Plan to Improve Youth Transition Outcomes by Creating an Integrated Transition System Based on the NCWD Guidepost Framework and Best Practices</b>			
<b>Objective R4.1</b> - Conduct regional resource mapping and analysis to determine transition system strengths, gaps, and opportunities			

NH Strategic Action Work Plan Element	Responsible	Time Line	Results Measures
<b><u>Objective R4.1 Action Steps</u></b>			
a) Using the statewide mapping as an example and the Guidepost Frameworks, identify major transition system resources, capacities, youth outcomes, performance, and characteristics to be to be mapped.	Pilots, PIC	9/04-12/05	a) List of information to be compiled completed
b) Develop and execute contract for mapping and make provision for including youth in the mapping process.	Pilots, Contractor	9/04-2/05	b)* Contracts developed and executed *Number of youth who map
c) Complete mapping and analyze results and their implications for the regional plan.	Pilots, Contractor	6/05-11/05	c) Mapping reports and analysis completed.
<b><u>Objective R4.2 - Draft plan</u></b>			
<b><u>Objective R4.2 Action Steps</u></b>			
a) Develop contract for planning consultant or meeting facilitator and engage if needed	Pilots, PM	12/05-2/06	a) Contract developed and executed
b) Reach agreement on the major goals and objectives for region's youth.	Pilots	3/06-6/06	b) List of goals and measurable objectives completed
c) Member and staff assess effectiveness of current projects and activities to determine which have most potential for sustaining system improvements to achieve youth goals and objectives.	Pilots	Ongoing 6/06-9/06	c) List of most effective projects and activities completed with effectiveness primarily by increases in capacity, coordination and customization, and adoption of best practices
d) Based on mapping results and assessment of core state and current projects, establish priorities for system improvements as defined by the Guidepost Frameworks that will meet youth goals and objectives (measured as improvements to current conditions) using facilitated planning sessions as required.	Pilots, Consultant	7/06-9/06	d) List possible projects to be carried out in priority order competed.
e) Options for implementing priority improvements developed by staff and members including the pooling of resources and tapping new ones required.	Pilots, IEL, PM	10/06-11/06	e) List of options for implementing priority projects completed.
f) Projects to be carried out for the next five years selected and action steps developed.	Pilots, Consultant	11/06-12/06	f) List of projects to be carried out completed.
g) Draft of plan consisting of youth goals and objectives, projects to be carried out to achieve them, and proposed actions steps given to all stakeholders for review, comments, and recommendations.	Pilots, Consultant	12/06-3/07	g) *Plan draft completed. *Number of draft distributed and number of comments received.
h) Plan revised and adopted by intermediary members.	Pilots		h) Final draft completed including list of changes made from original draft.