

Karen Leggett

Transition Work Group

MCPS Community Forum – October 15, 2009

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I represent the Transition Work Group. We include adult service providers, state and county agencies, MCPS and parents. We are focused on improving the transition of young people with disabilities from high school to independent working lives. We believe MCPS should also be focused on opening as many doors as possible for students with IEPs and many others to pursue that goal.




Right now, we are concerned that MCPS has a myopic focus on one door with seven keys – we need more doors, more keys and different locks.

In a time of extremely constrained spending, this doesn't have to cost more money. It does mean less dependence on an expensive, well-crafted campaign to persuade students and parents that only these seven keys to the top universities in the country are a worthy goal. A web video by Director of Special Education Operations Gwen Mason mentions very appropriately the importance of accommodations, modifications, accessible technology and differentiated instruction. We need all of that to make sure our students with IEPs can achieve their highest potential but we need to recognize, accept and nurture a broader array of potential - **we must help all students identify and pursue their passion**, from electrician to cabinetmaker, rocket scientist to web designer, hair stylist to biochemist, teacher, data entry specialist and geriatric aide. Our society needs them all.

I would ask you for a moment to think of the skills and qualities you admire most in your colleagues or what you seek when you are hiring someone. Do you have any idea how many AP courses a person has taken or the score the candidate's SAT score? Probably not. But I suspect you appreciate and look for the person who can lead or collaborate well on a team, solve problems, bring a cheerful can-do attitude to work. Yet none of these is an MCPS key to career or college readiness which students are encouraged to acquire.

As you know, the recent Montgomery County Council Office of Legislative Oversight report on Career and Life-Readiness asks many pertinent questions about the preparation of our youth. Your discussion this past Tuesday was a good start in considering and attempting to answer such questions.

As you continue on this path, we urge you to widen your field of vision, draw attention to wider opportunities that already exist within MCPS and make plans to add more doors with more keys and different locks.



Montgomery County Transitioning Youth Resource Fair

Saturday, October 17, 2009
9:00 am – 1:30 pm

Location: TLC/Katherine Thomas School
9975 Medical Center Drive
Rockville MD 20850
Ride-On Bus #56 or #43

For students with disabilities and their families
Middle School through Post-Secondary

Drop-in Workshops on Social Security,
Selecting Adult Providers, Preparing for
College or Career and MORE!

This event is FREE!!!

For further information,
accommodations or
translation
call **240-777-1216**
or email
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