Fast Facts
www.centerontransition.org

Center on
transition
innovations
VCU

Five Tips for Increasing Your Indicator 14 Response Rates

Why is Indicator 14 Data Important?

Indicator 14 data is collected annually each year as part of the state's requirements as dictated through the U.S. Department of Education to measure post-school outcomes for students with disabilities. The data collected provides information regarding students' enrollment in higher education, competitive employment, other post-secondary education or training, and other employment. This valuable data can help individual schools, school divisions, and states evaluate the impact school experiences have on post-school outcomes and help them to make important decisions regarding programming and services.

It is imperative that the data used to make these decisions is accurate and reliable. One factor that can affect data reliability is response rate. In other words, we want to get enough responses from school divisions to ensure that the data is representative of the larger group or groups.

Tips for Increasing your District's Response Rate

Tip #1: Update student contact information.

- ✓ Meet with students and families near the time the student graduates or exits to ensure you have the most updated and current contact information possible. Make it a practice to collect this information during the student's exit IEP meetings or meetings when the Summary of Performance is completed.

- ✓ Collect phone contact information that may not always be included in typical student databases. For example, ask students and families to provide contact information for "people who will always be able to reach them." This may include grandparents or other relatives. Try to emphasize you are looking for contact information for someone whose phone number does not change frequently.

- ✓ Try contacting students and families through social media and electronic methods, such as Facebook and email, if telephone contact has been ineffective.

- ✓ Use multiple databases as sources for contact information. Often families will update information in the school's main database more frequently than updating contact information in your school's computerized IEP program. Make sure to have both of these sources of information available to those collecting your data.

Tip #2: Use people who know the former students to make the contacts.

- ✓ Students and their families may be reluctant to return calls or answer questions from a stranger even if that person works for your central office. Consider training case managers or instructional assistants to collect Indicator 14 data; they already have an established relationship with these former students and their families. These individuals will be the ones most likely to know if the student had a younger sibling in the school system to use as a source for current contact information.

Tip #3: Determine the best time to make contacts.

- ✓ Vary the time of day you attempt to make contacts. Too often, school personnel make their mandatory contacts during the day when most families are working. Try to make one or two attempts between the hours of 5 and 8 pm when many people are home from work.

- ✓ Consider the time of the year when you are making contacts. While all schools have a window of time for the collection of Indicator 14 data, you may find using time from at least two different months may help increase your response rate. Some schools make contacts during May or early June while schools are still in session due to the fact that this is often a time when more families are at home and not away on vacation. Final attempts are then made later in the summer just in case some families are out of town during that earlier time.

Tip #4: Train those who are collecting Indicator 14 data.

- ✓ While the online data system is user friendly, school personnel who are making contacts and collecting data need training to avoid mistakes in recording contacts and saving information.

- ✓ Those making contacts also need training to understand whom they can interview for information. In certain situations, school personnel can contact other relatives, teachers/school personnel, and adult service providers when they have been unable to contact students or immediate family members.

- ✓ The Virginia Department of Education website offers a training video and survey instructions at doe.virginia.gov/info_management/data_collection/special_education

Tip #5: Prior to closing files, designate one person to make a final attempt to collect student data.

- ✓ Another possible method of increasing your response rate would be to have a "gatekeeper" or one person responsible for making the final attempt to collect student data before a file is closed. In cases other than when the student is deceased or incarcerated, this would allow another person to review earlier attempts and make any needed adjustment to the method of collection. For example, upon review of a file, the "gatekeeper" may note that school personnel made all three unsuccessful attempts before 5 pm and thus make another attempt after 5 pm.

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION