

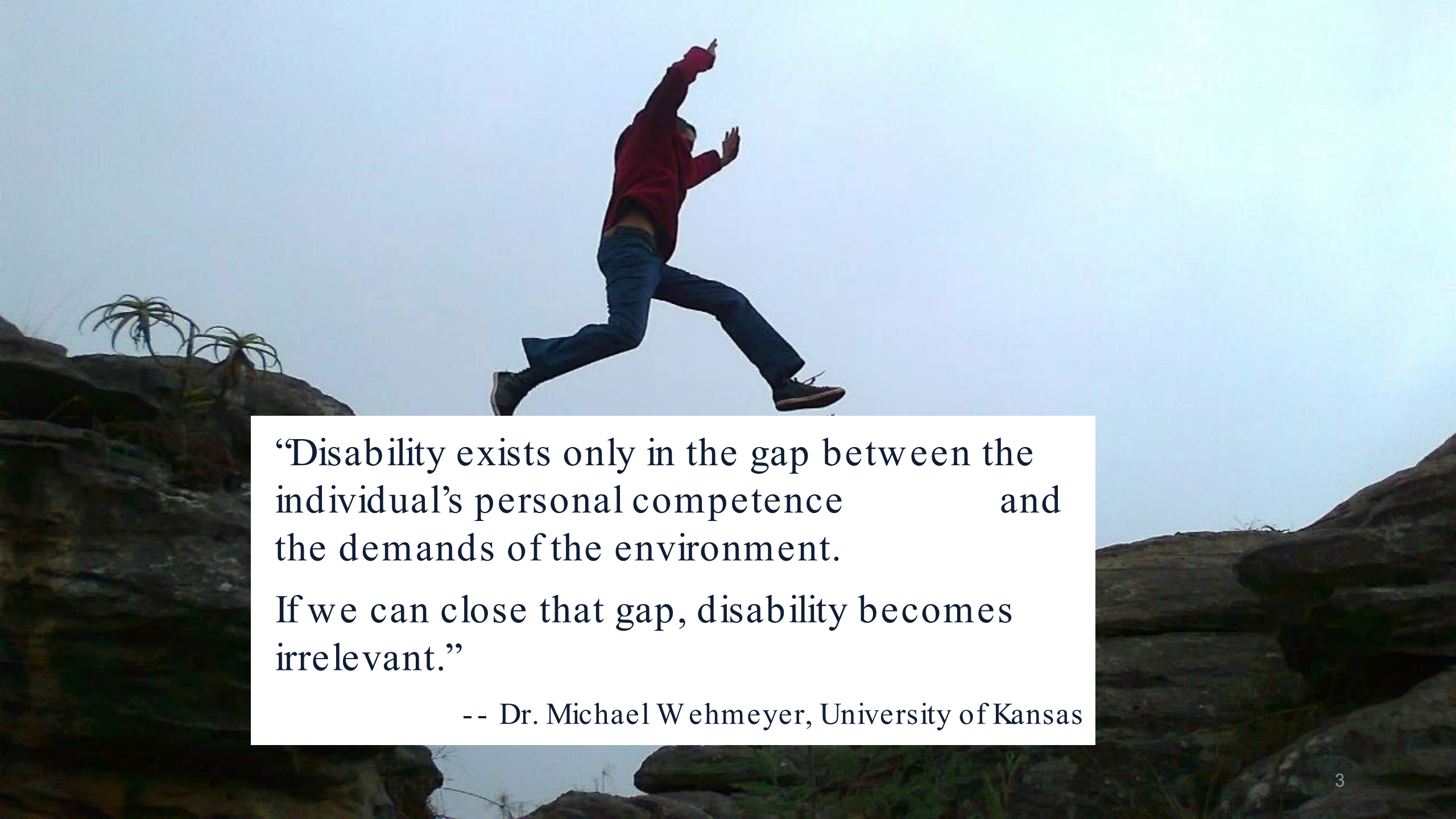
Addressing System Challenges When Preparing Students with ID/DD for Employment

Employment First: Expanding Job Opportunities and Pathways to Work
June 11, 2019



Agenda

- Goals for today's session
- Understanding secondary transition in schools
- Real-life stories and lessons from Amherst-Pelham Regional
- Small group discussions
- Large group wrap-up

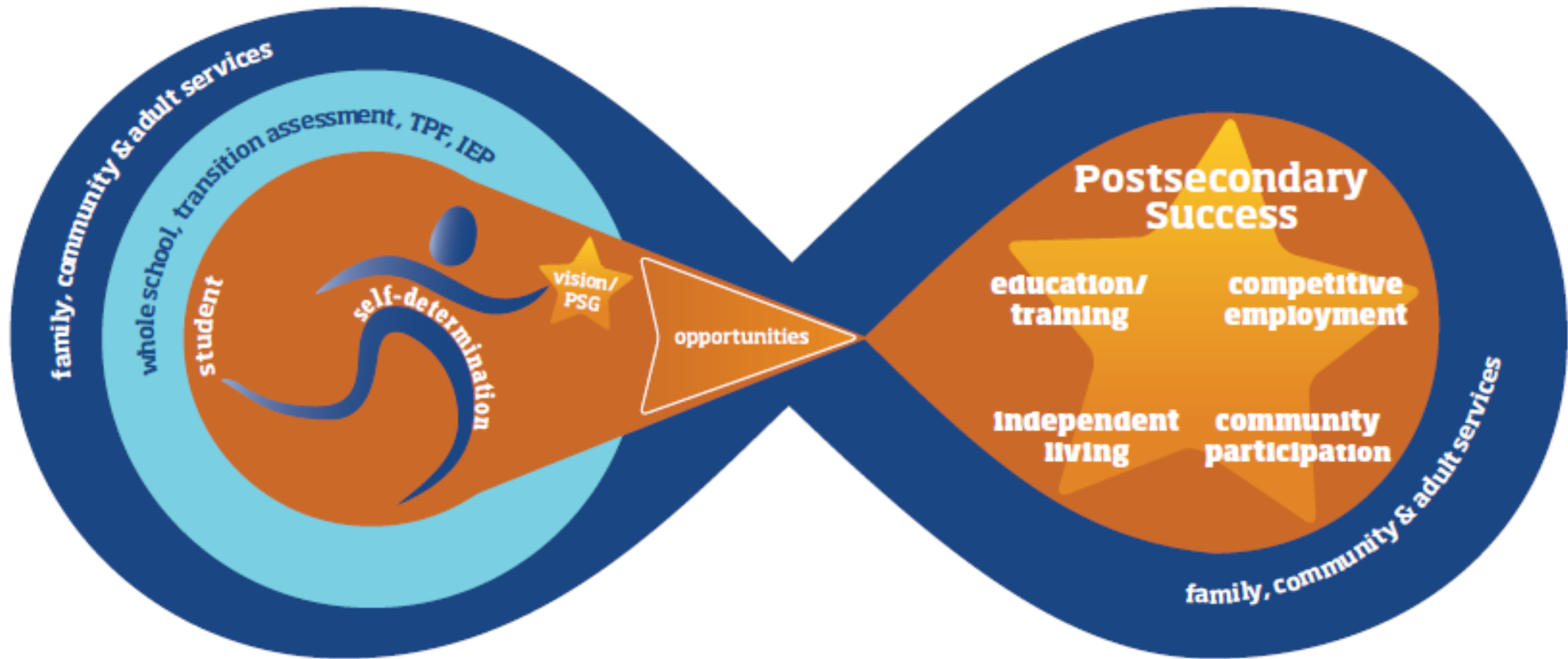
A person wearing a red jacket and blue pants is captured mid-jump, clearing a gap between two dark, rocky cliffs. The person's arms are outstretched forward, and their legs are in a jumping position. The background is a clear, light blue sky. The scene is set in a rugged, natural environment with some small plants on the left cliff.

“Disability exists only in the gap between the individual’s personal competence and the demands of the environment.

If we can close that gap, disability becomes irrelevant.”

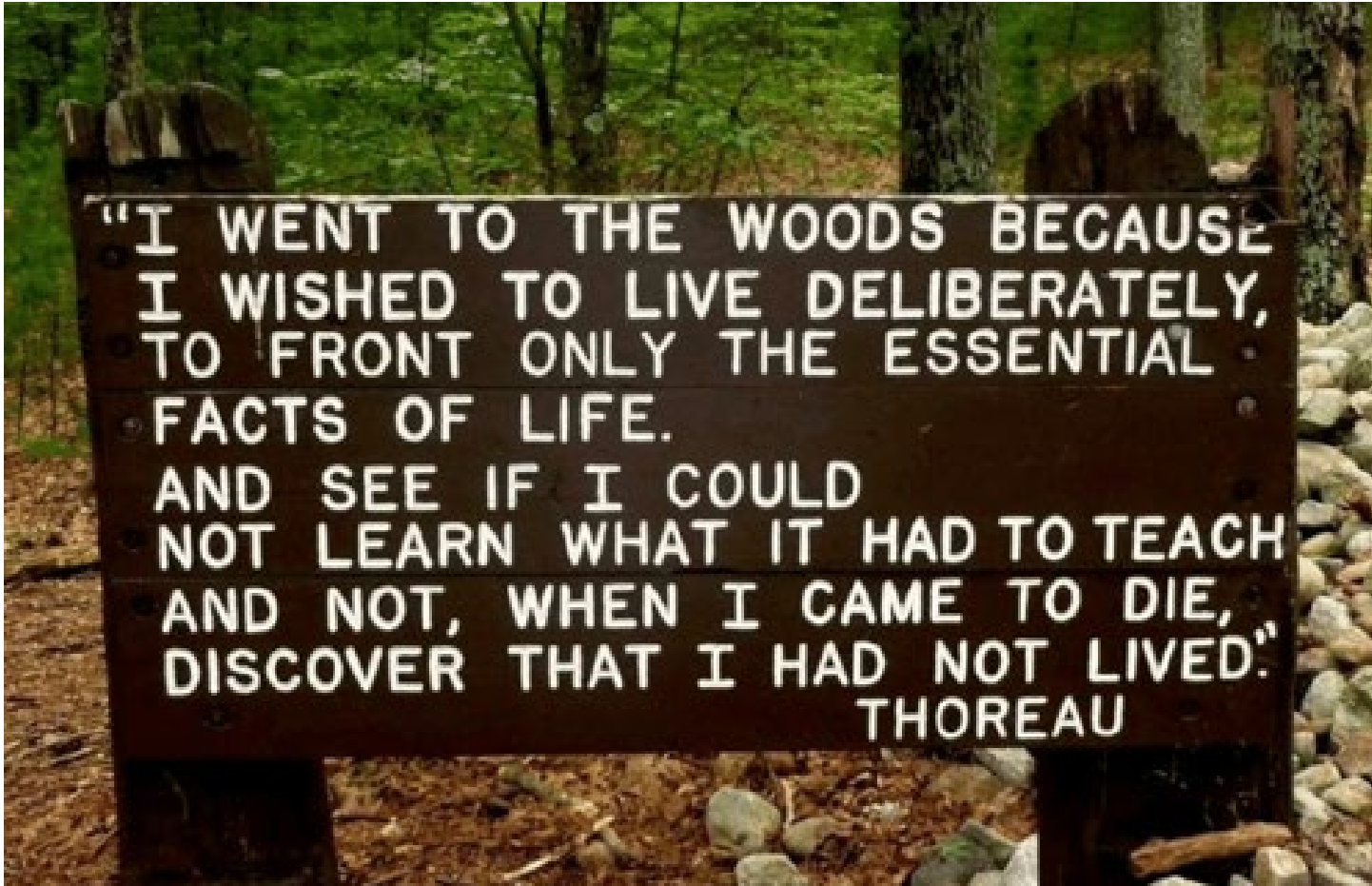
-- Dr. Michael Wehmeyer, University of Kansas

Massachusetts Student-Driven Secondary Transition Model



<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/2013/SecondaryTransition/VisualModel.pdf>

Interdependence versus Independence



*But his Mom did
his laundry and
brought him food.*

Secondary transition services in federal law

- A **coordinated** set of activities for a child with a disability that is designed to be within a **results-oriented** process, that is focused on improving the **academic and functional achievement** of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation.

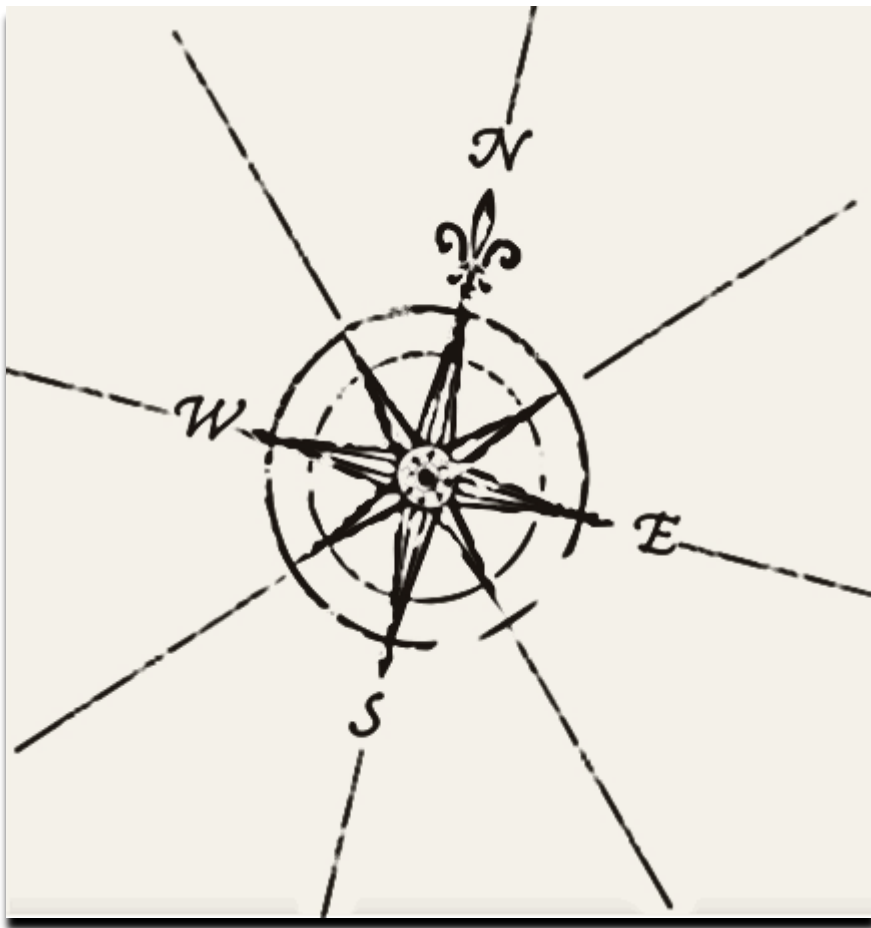
-- IDEA 2004: 34 CFR 300.43

The coordinated set of activities **must**:

- Be based on the **individual child's needs**, taking into account the child's **strengths, preferences, and interests**, and includes:
 - Instruction;
 - Related services;
 - Community experiences;
 - The development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives; and
 - If appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and provision of a functional vocational evaluation.

-- IDEA 2004: 34 CFR 300.43 (a)(2)





- When we look through a secondary transition lens, we ask:
 - Does the student have a **coordinated plan and services** that address the student's disability-related needs and **build skills that the student will need to succeed in their desired future** in:
 - Postsecondary education/training?
 - Competitive employment?
 - Independent living?
 - Community participation?

Katherine's Story

- Katherine was a student a few years ago who came to our transition program with intellectual impairment, autism, and anxiety.
- She loved animals.
- We set up a volunteer opportunity at Dakin Animal Shelter with a job coach. She cleaned cat areas and fed them.
- She built some foundation skills for employment through this site.

Katherine's Story

- School got her an internship at Dave's Soda and Pet City.
- Went with a 1:1 job coach for over a year.
- Used the MA Work-Based Learning Plan to do performance reviews and set goals. <http://www.skillslibrary.com/wbl.htm>
- Over time, we faded para. support as Katherine was increasing her job skills and becoming more confident
- We did this by having the para. go with her and leave early, then just pop in randomly, to then not going at all.

Katherine's Story

- Katherine had a specific job duty she enjoyed, was comfortable with and good at (pricing the deliveries and putting the products out on the floor).
- Towards the end of her time with school before age 22, I worked closely with her supervisor on what goals she needed to meet in order to be considered to be a paid employee
- Katherine met her goals and was offered a paid position to continue the job. She is still working there but only 2 hours a week.

John's Story

- John came to us with an intellectual impairment and OCD/anxiety.
- He wanted to work and be as independent as possible.
- He did not like being around others with visible disabilities.
- John started an internship at Primos Pizza. Had a 1:1 until he mastered his routine and had the employment and self-advocacy skills to be able to go independently.
- Through assessment and this internship, we learned he does great with having a checklist, a clear routine, an identified person he can go to, and reminders set on his phone.

John's Story

- John's next internship site was at UMass in their dining commons.
- We supported him with a 1:1 until he mastered his routine, had accommodations in place, and he was confident enough to start going independently. This took a little over a year.
- Once going independently, if there was an issue or concern, he or his supervisor would notify me and I would come in for us all to meet, problem solve, and correct the issue. (Ex: gloves, punching in)

John's Story

- John's mom also worked at UMass.
- Before John aged out, his mother and I supported him getting a paid position there. I spoke with his supervisor on how to apply, his mom supported him with the application, school helped him create a resume and do any follow up.
- MRC agreed that they would continue to support him when he aged out if there was an issue or concern.
- John worked there independently after aging out for 1 school year. They let him go saying there were budget cuts for the next school year

John's Story

- John's mom called me at this time (1 year later) and told me he was let go. She had seen an ad for a position at Amherst College in the dining commons and asked me to write a reference letter.
- DDS had John working with someone from Regional Employment Services who assisted him with the application for Amherst College.
- John was hired and continues to work there today at age 25.
- DDS continues to support John if there is an issue (change in dish-room). They will provide job coaching when needed, this has been very helpful.

Questions for discussion

- How do schools and providers communicate about students?
 - Timeline?
 - Types of information about the student?
 - Who are the school contacts?
 - How could communication be improved?
- From a provider perspective, what types of skills would it be helpful for students to acquire in school, before they exit? Do you communicate with schools about this? How?
- What types of skill acquisition can schools expect providers to work on?

Questions for discussion

- What are transportation solutions for exiting students who have gained competitive employment but live in an area there are no public buses?
- If a student is not yet ready to be **independently** competitively employed when aging out, but is already working in a competitive employment environment, what supports can providers supply so that the student can continue to experience competitive employment (e.g., a job coach)?
- What are your best-practice suggestions for supporting families and their exiting students?

Questions for discussion

- What do you think are the main challenges in the student/ family hand-off from schools to providers?
- What works well in the hand-off?
- What are your suggestions for improvement?

THANK YOU

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THANK YOU

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 Amherst-Pelham Regional Schools

