

2014 Disability Task Force Report

Pursuant to Senate Bill 5180 (2013 Session)



RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The State Board of Education, in conjunction with the Disability Task Force, should develop guidelines for school districts that provide direction on how the Essential Elements of a High-Quality High School and Beyond Plan can be incorporated into and support IEP secondary transition services.
2. The Disability Task Force and Washington Student Achievement Council should develop online content and printable materials to help students with disabilities and their families identify target benchmarks to work toward at various stages of their middle and high school careers. This content should be available on ReadySetGrad.org.
3. The state should allocate new funding to postsecondary institutions so they can offer more comprehensive services and provide more staff support to students with disabilities.
4. The state should ensure that all students—regardless of income—have access to the formal evaluations required by postsecondary institutions.
5. The state should allocate funding to increase professional development opportunities for K-12 and postsecondary educators and staff on disability-related training, specifically:
 - Secondary transition training for K-12 counselors, educators, and administrators.
 - Training on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act for postsecondary faculty, staff, and administrators.
 - Training on recruiting students with disabilities for any postsecondary personnel responsible for outreach to high schools.
6. The state should allocate funding to:
 - Develop and support more postsecondary in-person and web-based student leadership, peer mentoring, and outreach opportunities.
 - Provide additional work-based learning opportunities.
7. The task force should establish a workgroup to address the barriers that prevent adaptive devices from following students over the course of their education.

Classes of 2011 & 2012	All Students	Special Education Students
Number of high school graduates	132,177	11,110
Number of high school graduates enrolled in postsecondary	75,886	2,596
Percentage enrolled in postsecondary	57%	23%

BACKGROUND



Substitute Senate Bill 5180 passed during the 2013 Legislative Session, creating a task force to identify and recommend strategies for improving

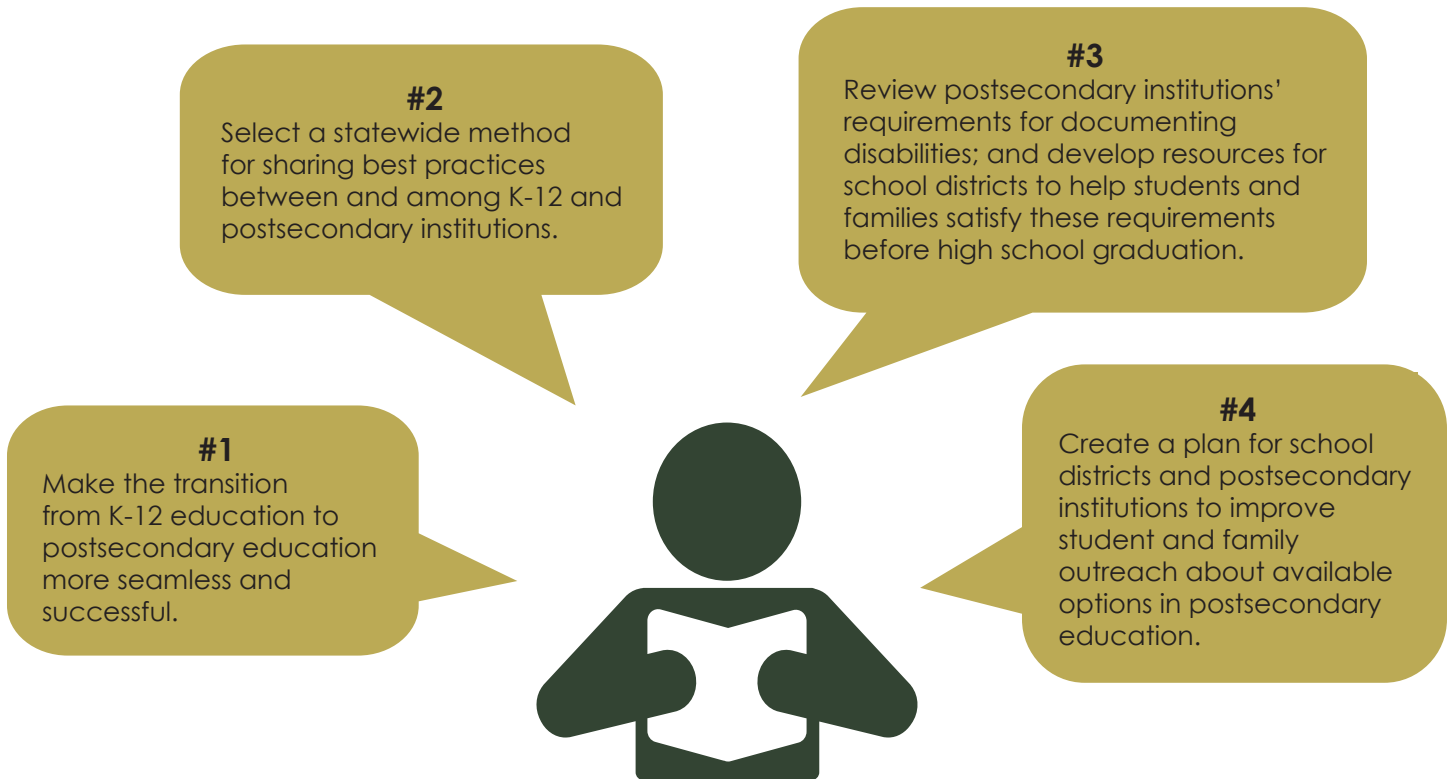
access to postsecondary education for students with disabilities. The 27 member task force represents a wide variety of interests and groups, including both K-12 and postsecondary education, citizens, as well as government and non-government organizations. This report focuses on critical issues and recommendations associated with student transitions, postsecondary documentation requirements, outreach, and sharing best practices among K-12 and postsecondary institutions.



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DISABILITY TASK FORCE GOALS



CHALLENGES

Students with disabilities face challenges that prevent them from entering and succeeding in postsecondary education programs. Some of these challenges include:

- Lack of meaningful planning for transition services as part of the Individualized Education Program (IEP). This planning begins when a student reaches age 16, or earlier if deemed appropriate.
- Inadequate preparation for college-level demands and the skills needed to be successful in postsecondary education. These include study skills, time management skills, communication skills, self-advocacy skills, and the ability to employ effective learning strategies.
- The change in governing laws between K-12 and postsecondary education shifts responsibility from the school system in K-12 to the student in postsecondary education. This is because K-12 education is governed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and postsecondary education is not.
- Difficulty obtaining professional disability documentation required to receive accommodations in postsecondary education.

For students with disabilities, these challenges impact their ability to transition successfully to postsecondary education. Special education graduates continue onto postsecondary education at less than half the rate of the total student population.

