

Eisenman, L., & Pedicone, D. (2007, July). *Community-Based Education Alliance Students' Engagement in Campus-Based Activities*. Center for Disabilities Studies, University of Delaware.

Abstract

In the 2006-07 school year, the Center for Disabilities Studies expanded its campus and community-based transition partnerships for students with significant disabilities, ages 18-21, from one school district (Red Clay Consolidated) to three. The newly formed Community-Based Education Alliance (CBEA) included:

- Meadowood's Transition Partnership Project (*TPP*) - Red Clay Consolidated;
- Delcastle High School's Transition to Adult Life (*TAL*) - New Castle County Vo-Tech; and
- Delaware Autism Program's Student Transition Experience Program (*STEP*) - Christina.

To establish a baseline of campus activities in the first year of the expanded program operations, the project coordinator and faculty liaison conducted an evaluation in April and May 2007 guided by the following question:

Are students who participate in the Community-Based Education Alliance (CBEA) accessing a variety of inclusive, campus-based activities that respond to their individual goals, interests, and needs?

In addition to determining the scope and nature of students' activities on campus, the intent was to situate the CBEA project within a continuum of postsecondary-based transition program models that range from substantially separate to inclusive

The evaluation was conducted in two parts. First, the six CBEA teachers were interviewed regarding the campus activities and interactions of a purposive sample of CBEA students ($n=18$ of 37). Each teacher nominated three students from her caseload; those who in the teacher's judgment were the most and least integrated into campus activities and a student who represented a typical level of integration. The interviews provided information about the range and types of student engagement on campus. Second, a subset of students ($n=6$) were observed during selected campus activities. The observations allowed for development of more detailed illustrations of students' interactions in a variety of campus settings.

Based on teacher interviews and student observations, it appears that even students with exceptional medical and support needs are engaged in a variety of campus activities that relate to their vocational, social/recreational, daily living, and academic goals and interests. They also make frequent use of community locations around the university and beyond, especially for daily living activities. All of the students' campus activities typically involve a variety of interactions with university peers and staff who are not affiliated with the CBEA. However, relatively few of those interactions are reciprocal; students tend to be "present only" or on the receiving side of an interaction. Teachers most often requested a "buddy program" when asked to identify campus activities they desired for the students. They also expressed interest in students having a greater variety of vocational experiences and options for auditing university courses.

The evaluation results are intended for use by the CBEA Advisory Committee, which will discuss goals and priorities for further developing the CBEA in ways that benefit participating students and make the best use of campus resources.