



September 17, 2024

Dr. Daniel P. Corr, President
Arizona State Board of Education
1700 W. Washington St
Executive Tower, Suite 300
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

RE: Support for Proposed Rule: Lowering the Age for Transition Services and Requiring a Year's Notice Before Graduation of Students with Disabilities

Dear Dr. Corr,

I am writing on behalf of Raising Special Kids to express the organization's strong support for the proposed rule to lower the age at which transition services are initiated for students with disabilities and to mandate a year's notice prior to the anticipated graduation date for a student with a disability which ends their right to a free and appropriate public education.

As Arizona's parent training and information center, our organization receives hundreds of calls each year from parents who are caught off guard by unexpected information from schools about their child's upcoming graduation.

This proposed rule is a critical step toward ensuring that students with disabilities are provided the comprehensive support they need as they transition from school to adult life, a phase that requires thorough planning and coordination. The proposal addresses several critical areas, which we have outlined below:

1. Earlier Transition Planning Enhances Long-Term Outcomes

Lowering the age for initiating transition services allows for earlier identification of a student's strengths, needs, and aspirations. This additional time enables educators and families to develop a more customized and meaningful plan that equips students with the necessary skills and supports for success in post-secondary education, employment, or independent living. Starting these services earlier allows for a proactive approach to addressing the unique challenges faced by students with disabilities.

2. A Year's Notice Before Graduation is Essential for Continuity

For students with disabilities, the transition from school can be especially challenging. Providing a year's notice before graduation gives families, students, and service providers ample time to plan and prepare for the next phase of life. Whether it's accessing vocational training, higher education, or other adult services, this timeline ensures a smoother transition and prevents any gaps in crucial services that students may rely on post-graduation.

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3. Alignment with Federal Guidelines and Best Practices

The proposed rule aligns with the best practices outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which emphasizes early and comprehensive transition planning as part of the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP). By starting transition services earlier and requiring a year's notice before graduation, the rule ensures that schools are adhering to federal guidelines and providing students the best opportunity for post-secondary success.

4. Empowering Families with Time and Information

Families of students with disabilities often face complex decisions regarding their child's future. This proposed rule empowers families by giving them sufficient time to make informed choices about the services and supports their child will need after graduation. It promotes collaboration between schools, students, and families, ensuring that everyone involved has the necessary resources and information to create a thoughtful and effective transition plan.

In conclusion, Raising Special Kids fully supports this proposed rule as it represents a proactive, thoughtful, and evidence-based approach to improving transition services for students with disabilities. By initiating transition planning at an earlier age and providing adequate notice before graduation, the rule will significantly enhance the chances for successful transitions into adulthood. We strongly urge its adoption.

Sincerely,



Christopher Tiffany, M.Ed.
Executive Director

