

## FROM THE EDITOR

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Student and family input in planning instructional objectives, career goals, and where the student wishes to live in the community is the critical missing link in most transition programs for very young people with disabilities. In too many cases professionals meet to review student progress and generally decide what *they* think students and families need or want. Although most professionals are very well intentioned, the reality is that the specific views of the student and the family are not well represented. Unfortunately, the school program and the long-term transition plan used in the community after school become a function of what the professionals think is required as opposed to what the family and student want the plan to do.

It is this problem that Rud and Ann Turnbull have championed by devoting much of their life work to involving students and families as the leaders of instructional plans, leaders in transition plans, and leaders in Post 21 life options. This issue of *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, and the way it has been designed, reflects the philosophies of Rud and Ann Turnbull and is an excellent issue for people who work in the rehabilitation, special education, and vocational fields, as well as parents, consumers, and other family members.

This issue is about involvement, that is, how students and parents should get involved in the transition and adult planning process. The first aspect of involvement is to be aware of the individualized education program and how an individualized transition plan should be developed. If a school has no individualized transition planning opportunity, it is necessary to incorporate all transition goals into the individualized education program. It is even better if parents and students advocate for individualized transition plans with

administrators and teachers. Students and families *must* speak for themselves and establish annual transition plans. The second aspect of transition involvement is to follow up with the school system regularly to ensure that the transition plans that were developed previously are being implemented. Even the most well meaning schools get caught up in the bureaucratic challenges that they face in daily administration, and subsequently, the detailed implementation of students' transition plans get lost in the shuffle. The students and families who are most outspoken and follow up regularly with the schools for the services identified are most likely to receive the services fully delivered.

The third element of transition involvement is one of accountability. This is the area where most parents and students fall short. Accountability means determining whether the Individual Transition Plan is working and whether positive differences are resulting from it. What this means is regularly following whether the goals of the plan are in reality occurring or not. Families and students must hold school systems and rehabilitation counselors accountable for their promises. Those who are more outspoken will get more services than families who are passive or indifferent.

This journal issue is especially unique because of the involvement of parents, families, and members of the community speaking out about the importance of transition needs and what young people with disability need. The people and articles assembled in this issue of *Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation* are rich in practical examples and real-life illustrations. We hope that this issue will be welcomed by all who work in the field of disability.

*Paul Wehman, PhD*