

Ready By 21 Overview

The Ready By 21 Team, chaired by Department of Human Resources (DHR) Secretary Brenda Donald, was established in January 2008 to oversee the implementation of the Maryland Children's Cabinet's Ready By 21 Action Plan.

The following are the goals outlined in the Ready By 21 Five Year Action Agenda:

1. All Marylanders will understand the urgency of providing supportive services and resources, are aware of existing gaps, and are supportive of investments that will improve the odds for youth to be Ready By 21.
2. All Maryland's youth, especially older youth (14+), will have the support of capable, competent and caring adults.
3. All Maryland's transition-aged youth, with an emphasis on youth transitioning out of public systems, will have access to safe and affordable housing that is convenient to services, supports, transportation, schools, employment and other youth.
4. All Maryland's youth, especially transition-aged youth, will receive necessary supports to ensure health and well-being.
5. All Maryland's youth, with an emphasis on vulnerable youth, will be prepared to successfully transition into post secondary education, advanced training and the workforce.
6. Maryland's social service and juvenile service systems will treat all young people equally and fairly.
7. Maryland will have an infrastructure that promotes sufficient funds and is held accountable for the preparedness of transition-age youth for college, work and life.

The Ready By 21 Leadership Team convened four subcommittees whose membership included local providers, stakeholders and state child serving agency staff to develop benchmarks in the areas of Education, Employment, Health, and Housing. Cross-cutting issues, which cross multiple age groups and subject areas, and corresponding benchmarks, were also identified. The Ready By 21 Action Plan is the compilation of all five areas, with corresponding strategic action steps. The Action Plan is intended to benefit all youth; unless otherwise specified, benchmarks and action steps apply to all youth. Benchmarks are listed according to the age level or range when services should commence and continue through adulthood, as appropriate.

Employment Benchmarks

Age	Benchmark
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth will voluntarily begin to participate in a paid or unpaid work experience, job shadowing or volunteer opportunity that is relevant to a career field of their choice. Wherever possible, experiences will count toward service hours for graduation.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth will begin the self-awareness and career exploration processes in alignment with the MSDE Career Development Framework.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth will have high-quality workplace-based learning experiences as recommended by the Emerging Workforce Committee of the Governor's Workforce Investment Board.
15/16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth will receive assistance in the exploration of employment and/or occupational interests and the mapping of degrees, skills and/or training required for possible fields of interest.
17/18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth with special needs will be educated about the employment transition services and resources available.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth with special needs will have a concrete plan for post-secondary education, employment and/or training.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth will be referred to their given LWB.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth will receive assistance in enrolling in any desired occupational skills training.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If a youth is exiting school and has a Career Development Plan that identifies a goal of going directly into a career, he/she will receive counseling regarding how to find a job, maintain employment and advance in a chosen career path.
19-21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By age 19, youth will have taken advantage of progressively responsible work experience opportunities within their chosen career pathway.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If youth is not earning a living wage, youth will be engaged in planning for additional training or skills development that will increase his or her earning potential and receives assistance in job search and career advancement.

Action Steps Current status/implementation of each step in Harford County	MD State Responsible Agencies/HC Responsible Agencies	MD Timeframe/HC Timeframe
(2.1) Support the work of the Career and Technology Education Taskforce of the P-20 Council as it deliberates and makes recommendations regarding the expansion of Career and Technology, Education programs, as recommended by the Emerging Workforce Committee of the Governor's Workforce Investment Board.	Children's Cabinet	Ongoing
Children's Cabinet: Currently no update on this action item		
(2.2) Review programs of instruction within Maryland's school systems to ensure that requirements are aligned with 21 st century workplace skills, as recommended by the Emerging Workforce Committee of the Governor's Workforce Investment Board	MSDE	Ongoing
HCPS: All Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) high school courses have been aligned to four career clusters based on the ten identified by Maryland State Department of Education and statewide industry advisory groups. HCPS is in the process of aligning its Career and Technology Education (CTE) programs to the Maryland High School Career and Technology Education Programs of Study. The Maryland State Department of Education works closely with the Governor's Workforce Investment Board (GWIB) to identify new programs of study in response to Maryland's workforce development needs and to ensure all CTE programs of study keep pace with industry expectations and prepare students for their next steps toward college and careers. In addition, the HCPS Career and Technology Education Citizen Advisory Council is actively involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of all high school CTE programs to ensure program alignment to labor market needs.	HCPS	In process
(2.3) Starting at age 14, eligible youth will be referred for participation in their local summer youth employment program.	Children's Cabinet, LWIBs	Immediately
SWN: School Counselors are made aware of Summer Programs and the application process. Youth activities disseminated through youth database, SWN website and outreach activities. HCC: Students in ABE/GED and Literacy classes are distributed all information regarding summer opportunities and are strongly encouraged by instructors to contact SWN.	SWN, HCC	Currently in place
(2.4) Connect youth who have participated in the summer youth employment program to year-round employment opportunities through the local one stop centers. Caseworkers and case management staff will refer foster youth and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) youth to summer and/or year round training and employment opportunities through MD RISE (Reaching Independence and Stability through Employment).	MSDE, LSS, DHR, DLLR, DJS, DSS, LWIB/One Stop Centers	September 2009
HCPS: Susquehanna workforce Network funded Boys 2 Men program to provide summer youth employment activities during the summers of 2009 and 2010. SWN: Summer Youth are made aware of other SWN youth services. Summer Youth RFP targets Foster Care Youth,	HCPS, SWN, DSS, DJS	Currently in place

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<p>Youth Drop-outs, and youth with disabilities. DSS: The Foster Care youth who participated in summer youth employment activities during the summer of 2010 have not been connected to year round employment opportunities through Harford County's One-Stop center (the WAGE Connection) because the youth that participated in the jobs program are in high school and are not seeking employment throughout the year. Within Harford County Department of Social Services, there is a partnership between the Child Welfare Division and the WAGE Connection that facilitates access to job skills training and employment opportunities for foster care youth through the MD Rise program. WAGE case workers further communicate with HCC Literacy staff to coordinate possible training programs offered by HCC.</p>		
<p>(2.5) Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (DLLR) and the Workforce Investment Network will promote the services of One Stop Centers and the Local Workforce Investment Board's (LWIB) youth coordinators to education and human services agencies in their respective jurisdictions. Agencies will encourage collaboration through partnerships, i.e. DHR-DLLR partnership grants.</p>	<p>Children's Cabinet, DLLR, Workforce Investment Network</p>	<p>October 2009</p>
<p>SWN: Outreach activities and Representation on the Youth Council (YC) has enabled collaborations to occur with DSS, public schools around Summer Programs. Ads are also posted in the Aegis and the Cecil Whig. SWN does not have youth coordinators. HCC: Collaborates with SWN, DSS, Reconnecting Youth, Title I HCP schools, MYC for grant possibilities and to refer to One Stops</p>	<p>SWN, HCC</p>	<p>Currently in place</p>
<p>(2.6) Engage local businesses through the LWIB/WIA (Workforce Investment Act) One-Stop Centers and local Chambers of Commerce that align with youth's career interests to increase work experience and job shadowing opportunities for youth and ensure that LWIB/WIA One-Stop Centers connect with local school systems so that youth are informed about their services.</p>	<p>MSDE, DLLR, DJS, DSS</p>	<p>October 2009</p>
<p>Note- WIA One-Stop Centers are Susquehanna Workforce Network (SWN) Workforce Centers in Aberdeen, Bel Air and Cecil County HCPS: The Partnership Coordinator collaborates with the business community to secure shadowing opportunities for students. Local businesses, Aberdeen Proving Ground, and non-profit organizations provide mentors and internships to HCPS students, when available. SWN: Participated in several public school sponsored ventures: "Working in your own backyard," "Futures 11" DSS: There has been no formalized relationship developed between the WAGE Connection and the Chamber of Commerce to develop work experience and job shadowing opportunities for youth. One Harford County foster care youth is participating in a job training program with CVS that is a partnership between DHR Central and CVS. HCC: The HCC Continuing Education Division offers short term certificate training programs, with a lot of cross referral</p>	<p>HCPS, SWN, DSS, DJS, HCC</p>	<p>Currently in place</p>

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<p>from partnering agencies. The college offers over 50 certifications.</p>		
<p>(2.7) Starting no later than age 14, utilize MBRT’s www.BeWhatIWantToBe.org website to develop career awareness and explore careers.</p>	<p>MSDE, MD Business Roundtable</p>	<p>October 2009</p>
<p>HCPS: Maryland Scholars is conducted by the Maryland Business Roundtable for Education in partnership with Governor Martin O'Malley, State Superintendent Nancy Grasmick, and local superintendents. The Partnership Coordinator piloted the program in Harford County for the state in 2003. Every HCPS 8th grader receives an overview of how to become a Maryland Scholar. Business volunteers deliver the message in the classroom, and school counselors provide additional information to the students and feedback of the program. Information shared with 8th graders includes financial education. HCPS has found an increasing trend in the number of youth taking rigorous course work.</p>	<p>HCPS</p>	<p>Currently in place</p>
<p>(2.8) Ensure that WIA Youth Coordinators participate in the transition planning team from Department of Disabilities (DOD) youth.</p>	<p>MSDE, MHEC, DOD</p>	<p>October 2009 – ongoing</p>
<p>HCC: Director for Adult Basic Education & Literacy serves on the WIA Youth Council and can support this initiative</p>	<p>HCC</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>(2.9) Connect youth to their local WIA One Stop Center through the MSDE Career Development Framework.</p>	<p>MSDE, DLLR, DJS, DSS, LWIB/One-Stop Centers</p>	<p>October 2009 – ongoing</p>
<p>DSS: The WAGE Connection is not familiar with the MSDE Career Development Framework. SWN: HCPS – Outreach HCPS: Works directly with SWN.</p>	<p>DSS, SWN, HCPS, DJS</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>(2.10) a) Develop a standard template for the Career Development Framework for students without an IEP; b) Utilize the student’s IEP, wherever applicable, and place the template in the student’s official school record to inform service plan development by providers and to serve as a repository of services delivered, as appropriate.</p>	<p>Children’s Cabinet</p>	<p>December 2009</p>
<p>Children’s Cabinet: Currently no update on this action item HCC: If a student enrolls in ABE/GED Literacy program and presents an IEP they are referred to HCC Disabilities Service office, if applicable, for needed assistance to assure success.</p>		
<p>(2.11) IEP Teams, as appropriate, will identify a paid employment strategy for each student with an IEP.</p>	<p>MSDE-DSE/EIS, MSDE-DORS, DLLR, MANSEF, LSS</p>	<p>December 2009-ongoing</p>
<p>HCPS: Each student identified with a disability and who has an IEP, has a Transition Plan. The IEP team crafts this plan to the specific needs of the student. Plans include a specific employment goal. Students have the opportunity to enroll</p>	<p>HCPS, DORS</p>	<p>Currently in place</p>

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<p>in Work Experience through the general education or special education offerings dependent upon learning needs. DORS: Students referred to DORS are assigned a counselor and receive services as they transition to work or attend post secondary education. Programs available include the Maryland Seamless Transition Program and Start on Success. SWN: N/A, not involved</p>		
<p>(2.12) MSDE-CTAL will provide professional development to local school system transition coordinators on the use of the individual academic and career plan as part of transition planning for students with disabilities.</p>	<p>MSDE-DSE/EIS; MSDE-DORS; MSDE-CTAL</p>	<p>March 2010</p>
<p>HCPS: MSDE provides on-going guidance in the area of Transitioning students to community living. HCPS representatives attending this meeting return to HCPS and PD is afforded to our transition resource teachers. Additionally, the Department of SE is actively involved with implementing 2 transition grants from MSDE and is a partner with a Humanim grant. A portion of these grants addresses professional development. Special Education Office: IEP Teams, as appropriate, will identify a paid employment strategy for each student with an IEP. IEP Teams are required by law (IDEA 2004) to include a measurable Post-Secondary Employment Goal, Post-Secondary Training Goal and Employment Training Activities in the Transition Section of the IEP for every student 14 of age or older who has an IEP. HCPS IEP Teams meet these requirements. The Special Education's Transition Staff assists youth in finding employment.</p>	<p>HCPS, Special Education Office, DORS</p>	<p>Currently in place</p>

Acronyms

BHYI	Baltimore Homeless Youth Initiative
CBO	Community-based organization
CTE	Career and Technology Education
DDA	Maryland Developmental Disabilities Administration
DHCD	Maryland Department of Housing & Community Development
DHMH	Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
DHR	Maryland Department of Human Resources
DJS	Maryland Department of Juvenile Services
DLLR	Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation
DOD	Maryland Department of Disabilities
DSS	Department of Social Services
GEEF	Greater Edgewood Education Foundation

HCC	Harford Community College
HCPS	Harford County Public Schools
IDA	Individual Development Account
IEP	Individualized Education Plan
ILP	Independent Living Program
LMB	Local Management Board
LSS	Local School System
LWIB	Local Workforce Investment Board
MANSEF	Maryland Association of Non-Public Special Education Facilities
MHEC	Maryland Higher Education Commission
MSDE	Maryland State Department of Education
MSDE-DORS	Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Rehabilitation Services
MSDE-CTAL	Maryland State Department of Education, Career technology and Adult Learning Services
MSDE-DSE/EIS	Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services
MVA	Motor Vehicle Administration
OST	Out of School Time
ROP	Rites of Passage (Harford Community College Program)
RTC	Residential Treatment Center
SES	Supplementary Education Services
SPP	State Performance Plan (SPP)
SWD	Students With Disabilities
SWN	Susquehanna Workforce Network
USM	University System of Maryland
WIA	Workforce Investment Act