

Spotlight on Services

Teens 'N Transition (T'NT)



By Jen Jacky, Boone County RAMP Manager

Explanation of Program

For teenage students with disabilities, it is imperative that they prepare for their transition into adulthood. With this in mind, RAMP, in collaboration with the Freeport and Belvidere School Districts, has designed a curriculum called Teens in Transition (T'NT). The content is geared towards students who receive special education services yet often “fall through the cracks” with important transition services.

The purpose of these sessions is to help students better understand their opportunities for life after high school. The T'NT program is designed to increase students' chances of becoming prepared young adults ready to further their education, gain employment, responsibly manage a budget and live independently in the community after the completion of high school. In addition, RAMP has partnered with different community professionals to assist the students in learning the different skills.

In addition, RAMP staff has also created the Teens in Transition Booster (T'NT Booster) program, also in collaboration with Freeport and Belvidere School Districts. It is specifically designed to teach middle-school students to have the ability and confidence to self-advocate during the creation of their transition plan during their Individualized Education Plans (IEP) meetings at age 14 ½. RAMP staff developed a classroom curriculum where students will:

1. learn the terminology associated with transition plans,
2. complete a self-assessment to better understand their own disabilities, life goals, successes and struggles,
3. prepare a script, with the assistance of RAMP and school district staff, to layout what they should discuss at their upcoming IEP meeting, and
4. present their script to the staff in order to gain confidence in speaking in front of people and get feedback.

Ultimately, the students will present their scripts at their own IEP meetings and from that the team will develop a plan to help aide the students along a future path they would like to pursue and setting up the educational and skill development goals for life after graduation. It is important that students take an active role in their transition plans as this is the pivotal time to create the stepping stones for their future.

Outcome Information

The Boone County RAMP staff had the opportunity to work with 35 students at both Belvidere High School and Belvidere North High School in the Essential Skills Classroom during last school year. Through the outcome measurements RAMP is very pleased to note the following:

- **Post-Secondary Education:** 85% of students reported an increase in knowledge regarding their options for continuing education
- **Vocational Skills:** 91% of students reported an increase in knowledge regarding the skills needed to obtain and maintain employment
- **Personal Responsibilities:** 87% of students reported an increase in knowledge regarding their abilities to appropriately maintain a budget, bank account and household (note: The last class did not include the housing section. This due to 1:1 meetings with the students in the beginning of the quarter).

Overall, 88% of the students have increased their knowledge in essential life skill areas for post graduation success.

The Freeport RAMP staff worked with the 38 students at Freeport Middle School in regards to the T'NT Booster Program last school year. Through the outcome measurements RAMP is very please to note the following:

- 97% of the students attended their IEP meetings
- 97% of the students presented their transition plans that they had written

RAMP staff is very excited to continue to work with students and empowering them to realize that there are no limits to what they can do!