



**Board Meeting Date:** 2.18.25

**Title:** Edina Transition Programming for Students 18-22 Years Old

**Type:** Discussion

**Presenter(s):** Jody Remsing, Director of Student Support Services; Carrie Carroll, Special Education Advisory Council Chair; and Mert Woodard, Director of Finance and Operations

**Description:** District Administration will provide a detailed overview of special education transition programming and an overview of operational and facility costs for a district transition program. Overview is aligned with requests from SEAC and school board representatives.

**Recommendation:** Review the information to determine next steps with onboarding a transition program. This item has been prepared for board discussion.

**Desired Outcomes for the Board:** After reviewing the information in the report, please be prepared to share your reactions and questions for administration to determine next steps for a decision about the transition programming option.

**Attachments:**

[Edina Transition Programming Presentation](#)

**Summary:**

1. Transition Services Overview

Special education instruction and services must be provided for eligible students with disabilities from birth until the child with a disability is no longer in need of services or turns 22. (Minn. Stat. 125A.03) Special education transition services begin at age 14 and help a student with disabilities move from school to adult life with programming in the following areas: employment, recreation and leisure, home living, community participation, and post-secondary training and learning. (Minn. R. 3525.2810 and Minn. R. 2325.2900)

Transition programming is required for students with disabilities due to the discrepancy in post-school outcomes when compared with their non-disabled peers. These services maximize a student's capacity to live as independently as possible as an adult and meaningfully contribute to their communities. Programming provides hands-on, real-life, community-based opportunities through partnerships with vocational services and community employers and organizations.

2. Out-of-District Transition Programming

This school year, we have 39 students receiving transition services through Intermediate School District 287. Our students are served at West Education Center in Minnetonka and South Education Center in

Richfield. We also have five students placed with Bloomington Public Schools at the Bloomington Transition Center and six students with Eden Prairie Public Schools at the TASSEL Education Center.

Intermediate School District 287 serves 12 west metro districts, including Brooklyn Center, Eden Prairie, Edina, Hopkins, Minnetonka, Orono, Osseo, Richfield, Robbinsdale, St. Louis Park, Wayzata, and Westonka. Edina Public Schools is the only member district that does not have its own transition program.

Some of our neighboring districts have recently made investments in transition programming. For 17 years, Minnetonka Public Schools partnered with St. Louis Park and Hopkins. In 2021, Minnetonka Public Schools launched their own transition program so that students could continue learning within their own community following high school. In 2019, Wayzata Public Schools created a transition program that utilized an existing district building. In 2024, Eden Prairie Public Schools purchased a new property for its well-established transition program. Edina Public Schools has a partnership through Project SEARCH at Fairview Southdale Hospital where we serve four students.

### 3. Community Support

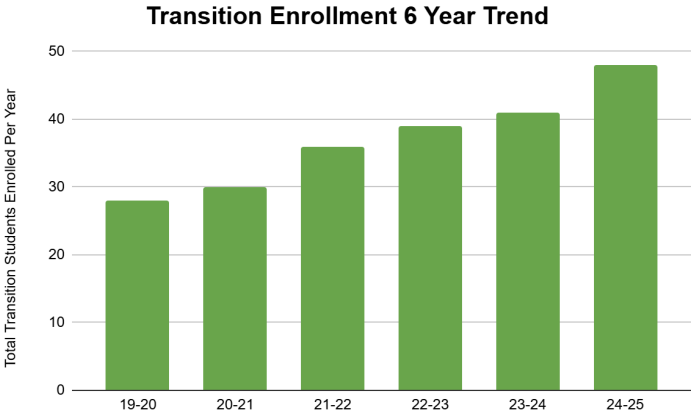
The Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) provides input, advice, and insight to District leadership on special education. For several years, SEAC members have shared their desire to have a transition program within the Edina Public Schools district their children attend, many students since birth. It is important to SEAC that students with disabilities have the ability to continue their schooling in our district throughout their entire school career. Our parents and students want to work close to home, enjoy the recreation and leisure available within their community, continue to live in Edina after graduation, and develop the skills to participate within their home community.

In addition to support from SEAC, the District conducted a survey through the Morris Leatherman Company to measure broader community support for a transition program. Survey participants indicated that a transition program is a “very important” area of study for the district.

### 4. Transition Program Planning

The development of a transition program for our district takes place in six phases.

- Phase 1: Analysis of Transition Student Population



Our district transition student enrollment has steadily increased each year and should be large enough to serve up to 50 students.

- Phase 2: Space Procurement

To serve the transition needs of 50 students, we would need a building large enough to hold five classrooms, multiple breakout spaces, a health office, a student kitchen and laundry, student restrooms with space for an adult-sized changing table, staff office space, staff lunch space and coatroom, school office, vocational assessment, and a conference room. The estimated size of such a facility would be approximately 15,000 square feet.

- Phase 3: Building Design and Renovation

After an instructional space has been procured, the district will communicate the instructional space acquisition to the community and determine the opening date for the program. Community focus groups will take place to provide input on the design and renovation. The district's appointed architects will take the feedback from the focus groups into account as well as their professional expertise and will develop and bring forth designs and blueprints for consideration. Building designs will meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) construction standards to ensure full accessibility for students with various disabilities. Planning for classroom furniture, technology, kitchen appliances, and safe food storage for student lunches will take place.

- Phase 4: Instructional Planning

The instructional needs of the students will determine how the new space is renovated to meet student learning needs. Community focus groups will take place to provide input on the program name, district branding, course offerings, and instructional space design. Staffing allocations will be finalized, positions will be posted, and hiring will take place in the spring before the start of the school year. Curriculum will be adopted through implementation science and technology will be purchased and installed. School day hours and a daily schedule will be created and community partnerships will be developed for work-based learning, post-secondary learning, community participation, and work experience. Transition programs frequently maintain partnerships with the following community partners: restaurants, grocery stores, city offices, nursing homes, child care centers, fitness facilities, local businesses, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Metro Transit, Hennepin Technical College, Department of Vehicle Services, Social Security, and Hennepin County. Food service coordination with Chartwells will take place for student meals. Transportation will be coordinated for community-based learning opportunities and custodial service will be established.

- Phase 5: Student Planning

In the spring, before opening, students will have transition meetings where information will be gathered about student skills, interests, and needs. Based upon the information gathered the transition team will develop courses and a daily schedule to meet individual IEP goals and service minutes. When the program renovations are complete, student and family tours will be scheduled and staff will move into the new learning space.

- Phase 6: Programming

When the renovations are complete, an open house will take place in the fall for community members to tour the new instructional space and students will attend the first day of school.

## 5. Transition Program Costs

Operational costs - Currently, 43 District residents receive their services at Intermediate District 287 via tuition agreements. The students are served across four different tiers (Tiers 1-3 and Setting IV) at a **cost to the District of approximately \$1,782,400.00**

Were the students to be served at in-house programs, the District would save on the tuition costs however would incur the following, on-going program costs:

- 5.0 FTE licensed special education staff - \$590,000
- 15.0 FTE (6.0 hours per day) paraprofessional staff - \$530,000
- 1.0 FTE licensed work coordinator - \$118,000
- 1.0 FTE licensed social worker - \$118,000
- 1.0 FTE licensed special education facilitator - \$118,000
- **Total program staff costs of \$1,474,000.00**

In addition, an in-house program would **require one-time non-salary costs** that directly support programming:

- Two (2) electronic passenger lift vans with wheelchair lifts - \$360,000\*
- Classroom and staff furniture - \$82,372
- Health office supplies (lifts, changing tables, etc.) - \$15,000
- Instructional materials and curriculum - \$20,000
- **Total non-salary costs - \$477,372**

Finally, an in-house Transition program would require new facilities as the District does not currently have unused space in its portfolio to serve new programming:

#### Option 1 - Leasing Space

- School districts in Minnesota have authority to levy taxpayers for the lease of instructional space:
  - \$212 per adjusted pupil unit
  - Available revenue - \$2,011,327.00
  - Current obligations - \$1,874,402.00
  - Remaining capacity - \$136,925.00
  - Additional lease levy capacity in future years:
    - +\$144,063 in 2028
    - +\$189,902 in 2030
  - Cost per gross square foot of commercial real estate - \$20-30
    - 15,000 sq. ft. facility - \$300,000-450,000.00 per year

#### Option 2 - Constructing New Space

- School districts in Minnesota have the ability to access voter-approved monies to construct or acquire new facilities:
  - Estimated cost per square foot to acquire commercial space in the Edina area - \$650-1,000 per square foot.
    - 15,000 sq. ft. facility \$9,750,000-15,000,000.00
  - No impact to General Fund balance to acquire

Additional custodial/maintenance costs related to new square footage:

- Ongoing maintenance and utility costs:
  - ~\$1.75 per square foot in utility costs (\$26,250.00)
  - ~\$0.25 per square foot in supply/chemical costs (\$3,750.00)
  - 0.50 FTE custodial staff (\$33,750.00)

The Special Education Advisory Council, which includes school board representatives, has requested

that if the district decides not to move forward with a transition program a pilot transition program be considered. The pilot program would utilize existing district classrooms and offset staffing expenses and one-time non-salary costs that directly support programming with tuition that would otherwise be paid to partnering districts. This pilot would take place for a minimum of three school years to ensure that students can complete their transition experience without moving to a partner program to complete their education. Costs for a pilot program are detailed below.

Were the students to be served in a pilot transition in-house program, the District would save on the tuition costs however would incur the following, on-going program costs:

- 2.0 FTE licensed special education staff - \$236,000
- 4.0 FTE (6.0 hours per day) paraprofessional staff - \$140,000
- 0.5 FTE licensed work coordinator - \$59,000
- 0.5 FTE licensed social worker - \$59,000
- **Total program staff costs of \$494,000**

In addition, an in-house program would **require one-time non-salary costs** that directly support programming:

- Two (2) electronic passenger lift vans with wheelchair lifts - \$360,000\*
- Classroom and staff furniture - \$82,372
- Health office supplies (lifts, changing tables, etc.) - \$15,000
- Instructional materials and curriculum - \$20,000
- **Total non-salary costs - \$477,372**

The district may need to modify rooms to accommodate student instructional equipment (ex: washing machine and dryer, stove for kitchen, accessible bathroom remodeling). The district would finance \$100,000 for these items from its operating capital budget.