



POUDRE SCHOOL DISTRICT

**Integrated  
Services**

**PSD Transition  
Services**

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# **PSD Transitions Newsletter:** *serving elementary school through post-high school students*

**MARCH 2017**

## **Welcome Introduction Letter**

This edition of The Transition Newsletter is dedicated to the topic of Employment. As parents and teachers we are preparing our youth for the future! In Poudre School District students have opportunities in Middle School and High School to learn about their interests and strengths and apply that information to exploring careers and gaining entry level experiences through work based learning opportunities at the High Schools and through volunteer and internship opportunities.

We have included an article from the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability that speaks to the importance of "soft skills" that will help students get and keep a job. We have also included some tips for families as you support your sons and daughters in learning these critical skills.

The School to Work Alliance Program (SWAP) is a featured agency and is a great resource for students while they are in school as well as after school. All of the SWAP services are designed to meet the individual's needs in preparing for work as well as job seeking skills. We are fortunate to have one of the most successful SWAP teams in the State right here in Larimer County!

One of the highlights of each edition of the Transition Newsletter are the success stories of our students! Read on to learn about Jessica and Nick!

Many businesses, organizations and agencies in Fort Collins are eager to provide students with a wide variety of work based learning opportunities including, job shadowing, informational interviews, internships as well as paid employment! We are highlighting one business that has found a successful job match for one PSD graduate.

Looking ahead to summer! Check out some upcoming opportunities for working this summer!

Lets get to work! Happy reading!

**Romie Tobin, PSD Transition Coordinator**

## **Achieve With Us**

Since 2007, The Arc of Larimer County has helped individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families achieve full inclusion in every sector of the community.

Thanks to the generosity of donations made to arc Thrift! Stores, our services and supports are available at no cost.

Workshops, Services & Support Available



Visit [arclc.org](http://arclc.org) for more information.





***This InfoBrief discusses the importance of soft skills and offers strategies parents can use to help their child develop skills for employment services.***

Many parents of youth approaching adulthood worry about their child's future. Whether youth have disabilities or not, parents want to know what they can do to help their sons and daughters decide on a career, support their job hunting, and succeed in the workplace. One way family members can help is by working with and encouraging youth to develop soft skills. Even though parents may not know this term, they will discover that they are familiar with these every day, common sense skills that are important in all aspects of life. Soft skills help youth succeed in life no matter what they are doing. By improving these skills, a youth can enhance his or her social life, do better in postsecondary studies, and be more successful at finding and maintaining employment. Families can use several strategies to help develop soft skills.

### ***Which Skills are Needed to Succeed?***

In the 1990s, several initiatives attempted to classify the types of skills needed to succeed in the workplace and adult life. Included among these efforts were the 1991 Secretary of Labor's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) and the Equipped for the Future Framework (EFF), which was the result of a 10-year initiative by the National Institute for Literacy (NIFL). The NIFL effort is the most holistic in that it addresses some key foundational "hard skills,"

specifically reading, writing, and math skills, along with the important soft skills needed not only in the workplace but as members of families and society. From these 16 skills, 10 have been further validated for the

#### ***The EFF skills include:***

##### **Communication Skills**

Read with Understanding  
Convey Ideas in Writing  
Speak so Others Can Understand  
Listen Actively  
Observe Critically

##### **Interpersonal Skills**

Guide Others  
Resolve Conflict and Negotiate  
Advocate and Influence Cooperate with Others

##### **Decision Making Skills**

Use Math to Solve Problems and Communicate  
Solve Problems and Make Decisions  
Plan

##### **Lifelong Learning Skills**

Take Responsibility for Learning  
Reflect and Evaluate  
Learn Through Research  
Use Information and Communications Technology

Youth who have these skills are more likely to be hired and less likely to be fired, giving them an important advantage in today's job market.

### ***Why is This Important?***

Learning soft skills is a process. Soft skills are necessary for youth to succeed in education, job training, independent living, community participation, and, ultimately, in the workplace. However, because educators and others have assumed that children learn soft skills at home, or through observing others, youth are seldom taught such skills in school. Unfortunately, this approach means that some youth whether they have disabilities or not will not have developed these important skills by the time they leave high school.

Many youth experience difficulties as they transition from classroom to the workplace. For youth with disabilities, who face higher unemployment rates than their peers without disabilities, soft skills are especially important and may need more focused attention to master. Some youth have specific disabilities that make it hard for them to control impulses. Other youth may have limited insight into themselves or difficulty getting along with others. Youth have varying amounts of exposure to the working world. Some young people need to learn the importance of being at work on time, calling in when they are ill, and getting along with co-workers. For these reasons, it's vital that families help youth with disabilities develop soft skills.

### ***Families Can Help Build Soft Skills***

Families of youth with and without disabilities play a key role in helping their children learn expected behaviors, understand the unspoken rules of the workplace, and deal with personality conflicts. Parents are also aware of their child's strengths and can build upon those assets in the process of developing soft skills. In addition to promoting soft skills at home, families of youth with disabilities can make sure that the development of soft skills is adequately addressed at school through their child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) during the transition planning process of high school. If your family member does not have an IEP, soft skills development can also be addressed through other formal and informal goal setting plans. Another effective way for parents to help their family member develop basic employment skills, including soft skills, is to ensure that youth access, learn, and understand their career interest assessments, and engage in career exploration and real work experiences during the high school years.

Research shows that work experience during high school, paid or unpaid, helps youth get jobs at higher wages after they graduate— this is true even for youth with significant disabilities. Parents and family members can use this information to advocate for work-based learning programs at school or help their son or daughter find summer jobs or volunteer opportunities in the community.

When considering transition programs or community rehabilitation providers during and after high school, remember that real work experiences linked to classroom instruction is a much more effective approach than classroom instruction alone. *This article is an abridged version of a much longer article. Follow this link to the complete article.*

<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/information-brief-28>





## Activities for Helping Students Develop Employment-Related Skills

It is never too early to prepare students for employment! The following lists are suggestions, by grade level, of activities that encourage the development of employment-related skills.

### Grades K-5<sup>th</sup>

- Introduce the concept of work into everyday activities.
- Students should become familiar with all types of careers.
- Talk about what you do at your job. If appropriate, invite your youth to your place of employment.
- Make your child a productive part of the household, introduce chores and an allowance.
- Encourage good personal hygiene and stress that most workplaces require their employees to be well-groomed and dress appropriately.

### Grades 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>

- Begin Career Exploration, watch movies, read books, go to work with adults, etc.
- At home parents can also help their children explore careers by chores around the house, volunteering in the community and participating in community service projects.
- Parents should attend Poudre School District Transition Series.
- Discuss high school programming and post school outcomes that relate to employment, independent living, education/training and social awareness/activities.
- Plan for work-based learning opportunities in high school.
- Look for opportunities for your son or daughter to work cooperatively with others by participating in a team sport, volunteering in the community, or engaging in teamwork at home when doing chores.
- Teach personal responsibility by helping youth create an organizational system to keep track of appointments, school work, and social events.

**BOWL FOR THE FUN OF IT**

LASER TAG BOWLING ARCADE

**CHIPPER'S Lanes ENTERTAINMENT**

The advertisement features a blue bowling ball and a pair of blue sneakers. It lists activities: Laser Tag, Bowling, and Arcade. The logo for Chipper's Lanes Entertainment is prominently displayed.

**MISHAWAKA AMPHITHEATRE**  
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13714 POUDRE CANYON HIGHWAY - BELLVUE, COLORADO 80812

The advertisement features a logo for The Mishawaka Amphitheatre with a mountain and sun scene. Below it, it promotes 'Colorado's Musical Playground' and provides contact information and website details.

### 9<sup>th</sup> Grade

- Discuss vocational options and expectations for employers.
- Consider self-employment in the community as an option, such as babysitting or doing lawn care.
- Write transition goals into the IEP; post school goals, plan of study, accommodations.
- Attend Poudre School District Transition Series.
- Discuss transportation options and plan for community access; driving, bus training, Dial a Ride.

### 10<sup>th</sup> Grade

- Find and check out volunteer sites within the community.
- Update transition goals at the IEP meetings; if applicable, discuss college options and financial aid.
- Explore and take ACE (Alternative Cooperative Education/on site work experience) and/or CTE (Career Tech Ed) classes in high school.
- Learn about services provided through DVR/SWAP.
- Attend Poudre School District Transition Series.
- Use web-based resources to research labor market trends and occupations that align with your son or daughter's skills and interest areas. A place to start is [careerinfonet.org](http://careerinfonet.org).

### 11<sup>th</sup> Grade

- Continue taking ACE (participate in on site work experience)/CTE/Vocational classes; participate in and or consider a community internship.
- Begin resume and collect letters of recommendation.
- Obtain Colorado State ID card or Driver's License.

### 12<sup>th</sup> Grade

- Revisit plan for graduation (social or diploma) by October.
- Apply for SSI (Supplemental Security Income) and Medicaid. Learn about work incentive programs through Social Security.
- Discuss professional job skills and give opportunities to practice being on time, proper hygiene, ethics, etc.
- Update transition goals in IEP. Fill out application for post school programs/college.
- Complete referral to SWAP/DVR.

### Post School

- Attend post school program.
- Be in close contact with the adult service agencies (Foothills Gateway, DVR/SWAP, Larimer County Workforce Center, etc.) chosen to serve the student after graduation.
- Introduce budgeting and the real cost of living on your own.
- Participate in volunteer/internship experiences that can lead to employment. Discuss working conditions, accommodations, schedules, etc.

**The School to Work Alliance Program (SWAP)** is designed to provide employment-related assistance to youth and young adults with disabilities, who are experiencing mild to moderate barriers to employment. Disabilities can take the form of physical, emotional, or learning disabilities. SWAP provides assistance that produces competitive, integrated employment outcomes and can help build career pathways for students through job exploration, work experiences, post-secondary exploration, workplace readiness skills, and self-advocacy instruction. SWAP is a collaborative initiative between the Colorado Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and local school districts, and is supported by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE).

***The SWAP program provides case management and direct services to youth who:***

- Have mild to moderate needs in employment;
- Are applicants of or are eligible to receive DVR services (meeting disability documentation requirements and able to benefit from the program)
- Need support to become competitively employed and to achieve successful community outcomes.

**Purpose of SWAP** is to provide successful employment outcomes, increased community linkages, and new patterns of service for youth within all categories of disabilities.

***The program's goals include:***

- Building on current transition planning efforts;
- Filling the case management gap for the targeted population; and
- Supporting collaboration between DVR, the Colorado Department of Education, and local school districts.

***PSD SWAP contact info:***

- *Jean K. Greuel, SWAP Coordinator*  
phone: 490-3286
- *Chris Jobin, SWAP Specialist*  
phone: 490-3288
- *Michelle Wright, SWAP Specialist*  
phone: 490-3287

To find out more about SWAP and upcoming SWAP summer activities: [https://www.facebook.com/swappsd/ref=aymt\\_homepage\\_panel](https://www.facebook.com/swappsd/ref=aymt_homepage_panel)



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### Spotlight on an Employer

#### Gallegos Sanitation

Poudre School District’s School to Work Alliance Program (SWAP) would like to recognize Gallegos Sanitation for their ongoing support and employment education with students in the SWAP program. Gallegos Sanitation’s human resource manager, Elena Winter, has provided students a unique opportunity by graciously volunteering to come into the classroom and present on what an employer may look for in a potential employee, how to interview effectively, what to disclose and not to disclose to an employer, and even taking the time to do mock interviews with students. Elena also took the time to allow students the chance to ask any general questions students had about becoming employed and why an employer might not hire someone.

Gallegos has also had a presence at career fairs at the high schools and provided students the chance to hear more about the job opportunities, as well as the growth potential, that Gallegos could potentially offer the right candidate. Recently, Gallegos Sanitation did hire a recent high school graduate, who is in the SWAP program, to be on the back of their trash trucks. The employment support this individual has received has been above and beyond and has assisted in making this student successful in a potential career path.

**Thank you Gallegos for everything you’ve done and your continued support to PSD and SWAP!**



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## Fossil Ridge High School Graduate to Receive Award at The Arc of Larimer County's 5th Annual Film Festival

Jake McCartney, recent graduate of Fossil Ridge High School, will be honored as the winner of the Film Festival Submission Contest at The Arc of Larimer County's 5th Annual Film Festival.

Jake's film, "Special Talents," addresses the talents and dreams of students who attend Cooper Home alongside McCartney.

The Arc of Larimer County, an advocacy organization that protects the civil rights of individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), holds the Film Festival to coincide with National Developmental Disability Awareness Month. The event works to dispel stereotypes through short films about or made by individuals with I/DD. Some of the films are humorous, some are serious, but all work to spread awareness.

"We are thrilled to have the opportunity to honor a former Poudre School District Student at this year's festival," Marilee Boylan, The Arc of Larimer County Executive Director said. "Jake's film really represents everything we're trying to communicate with the festival."



"Special Talents" and all other films in the festival will be showcased 6-8 p.m. March 28 at the Lory Student Center Theater on the Colorado State University campus. Student tickets are \$3, and community tickets are \$5; both are available directly through the CSU box office.



  
The Arc  
of Larimer County

**5<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL FILM FESTIVAL  
REFRAME DISABILITY**

**MARCH 28, 2017 • 6-8 P.M. • LORY STUDENT CENTER, CSU**

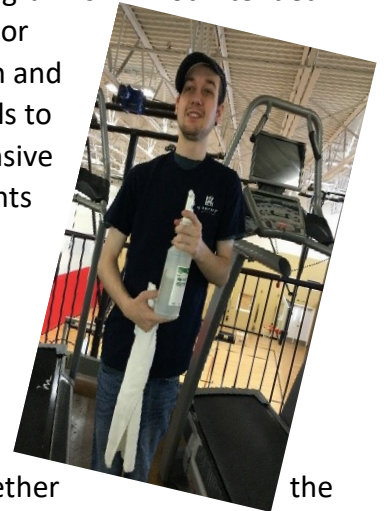
Visit [www.arclc.org/film](http://www.arclc.org/film) for more information.



## Poudre School District ACE Supported Employment



The Alternative Cooperative Education Supported Employment (ACE-SE) program is a Career and Technical Education program in Poudre School District providing students with IEP’s appropriate transition planning that prepares them for postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment, and volunteerism. The program is not intended to be an employment service for either students or employers. Students in the ACE-SE program learn and develop post-secondary workforce readiness skills to prepare them for success after graduation. Intensive assistance and support is provided to help students learn vocational skills needed for employment in adulthood. The level of participation in the program is individualized for each student taking into account factors such as; age, grade, experience, future employment goals, and work abilities. Student ACE-SE experiences are educational and they may earn school credit whether experience is paid or unpaid as part of their high school or post school class participation.



### ACE-SE serves:

Students with disabilities who require a higher level of supports  
 Students attending Community Connections Transition program (ages 19-21 & High School upper classmen in the Integrated Life Skills and Autism classrooms)

### Services provided to the student:

- Vocational exploration, assessment and training
- Interest inventory to determine student’s interests and preferences
- Job coaching
- Student work site evaluations
- Social and communication skills training at the job site
- Implementation of accommodations/modifications necessary for student success at the job site
- Transportation to and from work sites



**Contact Information:** Maggie Atkinson – ACE Supported Employment Specialist

PSD Partnership & Volunteer Center, 630 S. Stover St., Fort Collins, CO 80525

matkinson@psdschools.org, Office 970-490-3289, Mobile 970-219-6663

## Success Stories



### Project SEARCH: Jessica Grady

Hi, my name is Jessica Grady and I went through the Project Search Program 8 years ago. I got hired by Columbine Health Systems to be a mail carrier back in 2009 with Project Search and am in the same position today. I live in my own apartment and have two cats. I love working for Columbine and being of part of their team!

### ACE Supported Employment Featured Student: Nick Manning

Nick is a transition student at Community Connections. He is in his first year with the ACE Supported Employment program. Nick has completed an internship with ACE Coffee as well as the Food Bank of Larimer County. Through the ACE Coffee program Nick has learned to roast, package and sell coffee in the community. He has done an excellent job as a salesman selling at sites in the district as well as Foothills Gateway and the Foothills Mall. At the Food Bank of Larimer County Nick is working in the Kids Café learning to do basic food prep and packaging of food for distribution in the PSD schools. Nick is a fabulous worker. He is attentive, follows directions, completes his work accurately, and is very cooperative. Nick's internships have provided him opportunities to build not only job skills, but social and communication skills he can use in future employment as an adult. Excellent work Nick!

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*Contact Bonnie Cowen - (970) 658-0687*

*Bonnie@tscaschools.com*



The School  
Communications  
Agency

# Summer Opportunities

**Make the most of your summer.** Every spring, creative programs are launched to prepare young action-takers for their next step in employment. Summer program participants gain exposure to interesting careers, entrepreneurship and winning summer job hunt practices.

## Featured Spring & Summer Programs

### Young Entrepreneur Tournament (YET)

**Youth ages 18 and younger.** This 5-part workshop will assist you in identifying and preparing a business plan and will wrap up with youth presenting their business plan to local business leaders and compete for a cash award.

**The Young Entrepreneur Tournament applications are now OPEN for Spring 2017.** For more information, please contact Andrew Minor at (970) 498-6683 or [aminor@larimer.org](mailto:aminor@larimer.org).

### Career Road Trips Interest Form 2016

**For ages 14-24.** Take a ride with the Larimer County Workforce Center to experience careers of the future. See behind the scenes of local businesses and get ideas from real professionals on how to get to your dream career. Just like the open road, the possibilities are endless and you just need a glimpse in the right direction to find your way! Career Road Trips is a summer program. **Summer 2016 is complete. Thank you for your interest!**

### **Summer Employment — Set Your Summer for Fun and Profit**

The Larimer County Workforce Center invites youth, young adults & parents to:

- \* Get the inside scoop from local employers
- \* Learn about summer jobs, internships & MORE

Loveland Public Library Fort Collins Workforce Center  
300 N. Adams Avenue, Loveland, CO 200 W. Oak Street, Fort Collins, CO

**Wednesday, March 22nd, 2017 Wednesday, March 29th, 2017**  
**from 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM from 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM**

*Pizza and refreshments are provided.*

Sponsor This  
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Contact

Bonnie Cowen

(970) 658-0687

[Bonnie@tscaschools.com](mailto:Bonnie@tscaschools.com)



The School  
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## Summer Employment Night 2017

Youth, Young Adults, and Parents are invited to Summer Employment Night 2017 on March 22 & 29, 2017!

Get the scoop from local employer panel  
Apply to the Larimer County Conservation Corps (14-24)  
Learn about summer jobs, internships & **MORE**

### Loveland Public Library

300 N. Adams Avenue, Loveland, CO

**Wednesday, March 22nd from 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm**

### Fort Collins Workforce Center

200 W. Oak Street, Suite 5000

**Wednesday, March 29th from 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm**

## Poudre School District

***Transition Series Presents: Transition 101: Transition to Adulthood.***

Workshops will be held from 5-8PM: March 21 @ Rocky Mt HS

March 23 @ Fort Collins HS, March 27 @ Fossil Ridge HS.

Please RSVP at <http://tinyurl.com/zcylgf4>