Positive Highlights:

- Teachers are very supportive of transition services and TWC counselors
- Some schools are willing to accommodate students/parents as necessary (e.g., hold ARD meetings towards end of school, open schools on Saturdays)
- Great rapport with SPED department and transition
- A consistent person (VR contact) -> (present, worked well with teachers, invite to team meetings) all spoke same language and was present
- District hires our students (interns) - cafeteria, transportation, child development

Challenges:

**School Level Roles and Responsibilities**

- **Teachers**
  - Currently, teachers are supportive and very involved in the transition planning process for the purpose of ensuring quality transition support for their students. Although a strength, this level of involvement, paired with other responsibilities, is overwhelming for teachers
  - More time is needed to allot for transition, and transition training is needed for teachers
- **Transition Specialists**
  - Incorrectly viewed as the sole person accountable for special education students in transition planning
- **Administration**
  - Do not recognize themselves as being participants in student transition planning
  - More concerned with test scores and with Indicator 13 being met
- **More funding is needed to effectively support transition personnel and services**
- **School’s perspective of vocational high school is negative (e.g., a “bad word”)**
- **District is “reactive” — “Parents have to sue in order to make things happen”**
- **Some school personnel have low expectation of special education students (e.g., “bars are set so low”)**
- **Referrals**
  - Low numbers of referrals from schools at times
  - Students referred for TWC services are often low functioning; 504 students are not routinely being referred
  - Some schools invite TWC counselors too late in the school year to their campus to effectively help graduating seniors

**TVRC/VRC Roles and Responsibilities**

- **Mentors**
  - Some mentor counselors’ methods of training are ineffective and largely hands-off (e.g., provides only knowledge, does not become more involved/interactive in training)
  - Some mentor counselors are so overwhelmed that they are unable to provide effective training
  - Turnover of mentors leads to insufficient training of new counselors

**Working with Parents**

- **Some parents are over-involved or under-involved in the transition planning process**
- **Expectations**
  - Some parents have unrealistic expectations for their student (e.g., low or negative, high) which impact parent involvement and student goals/services
  - “When parent expectations, whether realistic or unrealistic, are not met, parent threatens to sue the school district and schools comply”
  - Parent expectations are subject to frequently change
  - Some parents are so overwhelmed with present student challenges that they at times refuse to think about and discuss future planning
  - Some parents are reliant on the student to “bring in a paycheck”
  - Guardianship concerns
  - Immigration concerns (e.g., legal fears, language barriers)

**Working with Students**

- It is difficult to provide long-term support for students who are in CPS custody due to multiple relocations (e.g., homes, districts)
- Students are not being taught necessary skills to successfully navigate the world independently (e.g., living skills, social skills, signing up for college classes, transportation skills, communication skills)
Transportation
  ○ Transportation of students is a challenge due to lack of funding and/or parent concerns
  ○ Transportation - DON'T want to travel (parent) - not covered with pre-ETS

Who is in your team?:
  ● Parent
  ● Student
  ● Teacher
  ● TWC counselor
  ● Transition specialist
  ● Education support specialists
  ● Transition coach
  ● Employment coach
  ● Deaf and hard of hearing service
  ● Family to Family
  ● Parent network
  ● CPS personnel
  ● Mental Health Authority
  ● Community Rehabilitation Provider
  ● Career Technical Education staff
  ● Houston ISD case manage

Supporting Organizations and Agencies
  ● Agency
    ○ Department of Health and Human Services
    ○ State Department of Health
    ○ Down Syndrome Association
    ○ Autism Speaks
    ○ MHIDD (Mental Health/Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities)
    ○ Navigate Life Texas
    ○ CPS (Child Protective Services)
    ○ Adult Protective Services (information about how to protect themselves)
    ○ NTACT
  ● Education
    ○ School Personnel
      ■ Special education clerks
      ■ Special education transition teachers
      ■ Transition coach
      ■ TEDS
    ○ Communities in Schools
    ○ Programs offered by local community colleges
    ○ Garrett Center
    ○ Texas Transition Conference
    ○ Region 4
    ○ Region 11
    ○ TEA
    ○ Junior Achievement
    ○ TX Oncourse
    ○ Easter Seals
    ○ Adult parole officer
    ○ Goodwill
  ● Preparing for Adulthood and Work
    ○ PATHS program
    ○ Biking safety classes provided by the Police Department
  ● Community Supports and Solutions
    ○ Houston Center for Independent Living
    ○ Harris Center
    ○ Community centers (for individuals 65+)
    ○ Girl Scouts of America
    ○ Disability Rights
    ○ Adult parole officer
    ○ Goodwill
  ● Transportation
    ○ MetroLift
    ○ Connect Transit
    ○ Biking safety classes provided by the Police Department
  ● Family Support
    ○ Jewish Family Services/Faith communities
    ○ Foster Youth
  ● Health Resources
    ○ Transition Medical Clinic at Baylor University
    ○ Texas Children’s Hospital
    ○ Junior Achievement
    ○ TX Oncourse
    ○ Easter Seals
    ○ Adult parole officer
    ○ Goodwill
  ● Early Childhood
    ○ Early Childhood Intervention (ECI)
    ○ Preschool Program for Children with Disabilities (PPCD)