



The Tennessee Department of Education provides an array of services to teachers, students, and families in the public school system.

What services or resources does this agency provide?

The TN Department of Education Division of Special Populations focuses on providing educational services for all students across the state. The TDOE's services and professional development incorporate ideas for all students whether it's work-based learning, postsecondary readiness, instructionally-appropriate individualized education programs (IEP's), and more. The TDOE also provides transition consultants, assistance, and professional development for secondary transition for schools and teachers upon request by partnering with the Arc of Tennessee, the University of Tennessee Center for Literacy, Education, and Employment, and STEP, Inc. Further, the TDOE partners with the Boling Center for Developmental Disabilities to provide assistance in writing standards-based transition IEPs. They also offer assistance reviewing and making recommendations regarding IEPs.

What areas of Tennessee do they serve?

The TDOE covers the entire state. While their main office is located in Nashville, they have 8 offices in core regions across Tennessee where educators can find support on various topics.



Is there a cost and, if so, who pays?

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandates that the TDOE provides free and appropriate public education to all students, therefore they focus on providing supports to all students to help them succeed in school free of charge.

For which students might this agency be appropriate?

The TDOE is appropriate for all students, birth to age 21, in a public school in Tennessee. Tennessee focuses on students when they turn 14 to provide transition planning to help students facilitate their movement from school to where they want to be postsecondary. The department is important not only to students, but to educators, service providers, and families.



What is the family's responsibility?

It is the family's responsibility to form a strong working relationship with the school, teachers, and representatives from the TDOE by attending meetings, using available resources provided by the state, and keeping informed of different initiatives the TDOE is working on. All stakeholders and families are invited to provide input on new initiatives the state plans to pursue.

What is the responsibility of an educator?

It is the responsibility of the educator to consult with the TDOE when they need assistance, resources, or input. The TDOE offers resources and support for teachers. Thus, teachers should attend the different professional developments the TDOE offers as related to transition to stay abreast of the most recent research related to improving transition outcomes for students.

How (and when) do you involve them in the transition planning process?

- The TDOE has resources available online that would be useful for both educators and families to pursue as they begin the transition process.
- Teacher's should explore Transition Tennessee, a website developed between TDOE and Vanderbilt Kennedy Center, which has helpful modules with evidence-based practices that teachers can use to improve their transition planning for students.
- On the Transition Tennessee website, parents, teachers, and students can explore the highlighted organizations and agencies in the state that can be key in partnering with for a successful transition to adulthood.

Where can I learn more?

Visit the state website at:

<https://www.tn.gov/content/tn/education.html>

What questions should I ask of the Department of Education?

- How does the TDOE incorporate early work experiences for students in high school?
- Can parents and other community members attend the Advisory Council for the Education of Students with Disabilities meetings?
- Who can I contact at the TDOE if I have questions regarding the school's compliance with IDEA, want guidance on parental and student rights/responsibilities, and general information on procedural safeguards and more?

Additional contact information:

- Visit their Transition in TN website at: www.transitiontn.org
- Give them a call at: (615) 741-5158
- Send them an email at: Special.Populations@tn.gov