

SEAC History of CII Transportation – Concerns and Recommendations

January 19, 2021

Steven Covey says to "begin with the end in mind." That idea is the heart of transition planning. If the "end" we have in mind is "educated employees," then the transition planning is the "beginning." It sets the education course for middle and secondary students with disabilities that leads to access to adult services, postsecondary education, and the world of work. The legislators who developed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA PL 101-476) included transition components in the legislation with the goal of preparing students with disabilities to access the supports and services they need to become as independent as possible.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics reported in 2019, 19.3 percent of persons with a disability were employed. In contrast, the employment-population ratio for persons without a disability was 66.3 percent. Building independence in living skills, workplace readiness and job training are the culmination of early education, what students and parents are striving for. This grim statistic indicates a continuing need to build upon the early intervention services to maximize the outcomes of their education to prepare our students to exit LCPS with the skills they need to be productive in their communities.

There is a significant need for independent living skills, workplace readiness, and job training for our LCPS students with disabilities that are not college bound. Despite reports of having 250 business partnerships for our CII programs, many of these programs do not have LCPS students in them and their situational time, training and work is severely limited by several factors. Transportation has been a long-standing barrier for our students to gain the independent living skills, workplace readiness, and job training they need to enter the workforce.

SEAC recommends removing the 5-to-8-mile radius limitation while keeping bus routes under an hour to maximize work experiences unique to the high school student's individual needs versus limiting their options based on demographic location. Elementary and middle school clusters can work together to plan for CII versus individual schools.

SEAC Annual Report October 28, 2014	
RECOMMENDATIONS 2013	STATUS SEPTEMBER 2014
RECOMMENDATION 3B: The transportation limitations addressed in last year's annual report have not improved. Last year and again this year, teachers have limited access to buses during the times needed and/or are required to change a scheduled activity for students with very little notice. For example, buses must be scheduled by Wednesday for the following week and employers typically do not present schedules until Fridays. Adequate transportation is not guaranteed due to the restrictions of route buses and also due to work	The Office of Special Education continues to work with the Transportation Department to achieve this goal. It should be noted that this goal is impacted by the funding that is provided to the Transportation Department.

<p>schedules that are not designed by the employer to accommodate school route buses. It is likely that a dedicated bus or buses for the CBI and CAST programs are necessary to ensure the success of these transition activities. Also, transportation to community sites such as INOVA Hospital, Dulles Airport and other local businesses would provide the opportunities for students with disabilities to participate in internships, volunteer opportunities or paid employment. The expansion of these options would afford secondary students with disabilities training in future employment opportunities; however, due to the lack of transportation, students are unable to access these opportunities, thus impacting post high school employment in the community.</p>	
<p>SEAC Annual Report December 1, 2015</p> <p>RECOMMENDATIONS 2014</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION 3B: TRANSPORTATION Adequate funding be provided so that transportation is available to ensure reasonable (less than one hour) bus support for student transition services in the IEP such as Community Based Instruction (CBI) and Community and Schools Together (CAST) programs. The transportation limitations addressed in last year's annual report have not improved. Insufficient transportation vehicles and drivers are the contributing factors to the problem, as well as some scheduling processes. Transition services and programs continue to have limited access to buses during the times needed and transportation arrangements are not flexible when there are schedule or activity changes with little notice. Transition staff has submitted the recommendation to utilize LCPS approved transportation providers to supplement the LCPS fleet of buses. Specific recommendations are to contract services for half buses and vans, due to the small number of students generally being transported and the cost efficiency and flexibility</p>	<p>STATUS NOVEMBER 2015</p> <p>The Office of Special Education continues to collaborate with the Transportation Office to achieve this goal. Discussion includes transportation alternatives to the use of school buses as the primary mode of transportation.</p>

<p>it would provide. The request for this fleet supplementation has been expressed as urgent and for surplus funds to be utilized for this year.</p>	
<p>SEAC Annual Report November 29, 2016</p> <p>RECOMMENDATIONS 2015</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION 3C: TRANSPORTATION <i>Provide adequate transportation for community-based transition programs, including Community Independence Instruction (CII) program and the Community and Schools Together (CAST) program.</i> Transportation for transition services continues to be challenged by LCPS limitations and also by limitations of the public transportation system. Existing transportation vehicles and number of drivers are insufficient to support the transition program. Having individual vans available for each of the four CAST sites, use of contracted transportation service, and expanded use of LCPS transportation are necessary to expand the CII program and CAST program opportunities. The programs are limited because transportation is not always available when partnered businesses are available. This is an ongoing recommendation from previous annual reports.</p>	<p>STATUS NOVEMBER 2016</p> <p>Special Education Director Response: <i>CII has now been restructured to provide students with opportunities within a 5-8 mile radius of the school of which they attend. This provides students with more time training on the work skills rather than transporting on the bus.</i></p> <p><i>CAST has 4 locations throughout the county Purcellville Library, Rust Library, Cascades Library and Regal Woods Community Center. CAST has been restructured this year to be able to provide more instructional opportunities for a more diverse student population.</i></p> <p><i>Even with the restructuring and the addition of Project Search, most students are not traveling more than an hour at this time.</i></p>
<p>SEAC Annual Report November 2017</p> <p>RECOMMENDATIONS 2016</p> <p>Recommendation 3C: Career/Transition - Provide adequate transportation for community based transition programs, including Community Independence Instruction (CII) program and the Community and Schools Together (CAST) program.</p>	<p>STATUS NOVEMBER 2017</p> <p>Special Education Director Response: The Office of Transportation has hired a coordinator dedicated to transportation activities for students with disabilities.</p>

<p>SEAC Annual Report November 2018</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION 2017 – Focused on CII within the high school building</p> <p>SEAC Annual Report documents transportation needs for funding and expansion of transportation from the annual survey.</p>	
<p>SEAC Annual Report November 2019</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION 2018</p> <p>Recommendation 3C: Career/Transition - Provide funding to contract with a transit service provider to use smaller buses or vans to provide more flexible transportation for Community Independence Instruction programs that only allow 6 students at a time.</p>	<p>STATUS NOVEMBER 2019</p> <p>The LCPS Transportation Department works very collaboratively with the Office of Special Education for all transportation matters. There is required planning, organization, justification and approval required for all CII requests which include timelines for requesting transportation.</p> <p>Career and Transition Services has worked with the county's public transit providers to train students and staff in schools to utilize public transit services to provide more flexible transportation for CII. The protocol to request transportation requires that the trip is planned by no less than ten days, so transportation can coordinate their efforts. Any transportation options aside from public transit must be provided through the department of transportation/support services.</p>
<p>SEAC Annual Report November 2020</p> <p>RECOMMENDATION 2019</p> <p>Recommendation 3B: Career/Transition - Provide adequate funding to utilize a transit service provider to provide frequent and flexible transportation for CII that accommodates more students in a wider “allowable” geographic proximity.</p>	<p>STATUS NOVEMBER 2020</p> <p>Travel training through partnership with public transit and funding for fare cards has been available through CII funds for several years and accommodates a wider geographic area. Please note that travel time to the job site impacts the time working at the sites.</p>

SEAC Public Comment:

Community Independence Instruction (CII) 5-Mile Radius Restriction

From Laura Stapleton

In late Fall 2016, with a full schedule of CBI trips planned, I was notified by my son's SPED teacher, that CBI was changing and the class schedule would be changing with it. Now instead of Community Based Instruction-CBI, it would now be Community Independence Instruction-CII. At first, I was upset by the change but the more I heard about the proposed changes, the more it sounded like it could have awesome potential.

With that said, one aspect of the new CII program still sent up red flags. Schools would now **only** be able to participate in CII trips within a 5-mile radius of their school. For a good number of schools in Loudoun County, this is probably irrelevant, as they are surrounded by a variety of venues. But for schools in Dulles South, as well as those in more remote areas of the county, this poses a problem. It puts our students at an unfair disadvantage based solely on where they live.

The 5-mile radius significantly shortened our list of approved places we can attend. The list no longer includes Target, Dulles Town Center or Bowl America, which is extremely disappointing. But the most devastating aspect is that two amazing programs right in our community, are now out of the allowable 5-radius.

Sprout Therapeutic Riding and Education Center (5.9 miles away from our school): When traveling here for CII, the kids are exposed to an outdoor setting as a place of business. There are animals to care for, work that requires physical labor, different tools used (ie. Not a computer), as well as a variety of activities available on a daily basis. Sprout has been more than accommodating for all our kids needs when attending past CBI trips. In addition, Sprout has a penchant for working with kids with special needs, both through the therapy programs they offer year-round and their willingness to hire young adults with special needs.

Heeling House (7.3 miles from our school): My son's class used to have twice-monthly sessions with a therapy dog in their classroom, but since this type of therapy was recently banned from schools county wide, this is no longer an allowed option. Our teacher was encouraged to arrange a visit to their training facility as a CII trip, yet their facility falls outside the 5-mile radius from our school.

In addition, there are two other locations that offer value to the CII program and were included in previous years, but now are well outside the 5-mile radius and out-of-bounds for our students to access.

Claude Moore (13.9 miles from our school): This location includes a Farming Museum that houses a variety of Loudoun County history displays. These displays are interactive and hands on, which is a perfect learning environment for all kids, and provides background about the history of the community these kids call home.

Temple Hall Farm (21.4 miles from our school): This location is a working farm and includes opportunities for kids to see the daily requirements necessary to run a farm. Besides offering information and hands-on experiences about how a working farm conducts business, the kids also used to deliver the baby chicks, which they raised and hatched in their classroom, back to this farm. This location is also home to **Legacy Farms**, which hires older students and adults with special needs.

As if the 5-mile radius restriction hasn't caused enough issues, now it has been explained that certain locations, within this radius, have been deemed unsafe. All trips to the Dulles South Food Pantry have been banned because it has been deemed unsafe for the bus to enter and exit the parking lot. In addition, the following locations also have restrictions because the parking lot has been deemed unsafe by the LCPS Transportation Office: Gum Spring Library and the Harris Teeter in Stone Ridge as well as Giant, Home Depot and Panera in South Riding.

Although it has been explained that my child's class is still allowed to attend CII at these locations, the buses are required to drop our children off on the main roads near the location, versus closer to the main entrance. My son's teacher was told it would be up to her to determine if her student's safety is at risk entering and exiting the bus, as well as navigating through the associated parking lots they now walk through. The responsibility has been placed squarely on her shoulders to decide between the benefits of a program and the safety of her students. How is this fair for anyone?

By limiting the CII experience both through a five-mile radius and through the various safety precautions put in place, you are essentially limiting the exposure that my son and his fellow classmates have to different types of work experience, which goes against the entire premise of the CII program. I'm not expecting the staff of LCPS to surmise what my son will do when he grows up based on where he heads for CII in elementary school, but I do expect LCPS to do their due diligence and follow through on a program's full potential for all students, no matter where they live in the county. Your first step is reevaluating the 5-mile radius rule.

And this brings me to my request. The Special Education Department and the Transportation Office need to work together to consider letting schools, who are in less developed areas of the county, extend the 5-mile radius OR make exceptions for CII trips to go outside the assigned radius, at a minimum of once a quarter. The blanket rule of a 5-mile radius is unfair and not at all in the spirit of what the CII program should be. My son, his classmates and really all LCPS special education students deserve better. They deserve for you to stop looking at the odometer and start looking at the value of each individual program available through CII.

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[EXTERNAL] CII formerly Community Based Instruction (CBI)

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Thu 12/3/2020 12:55 PM

To: Beth Barts <Beth.Barts@lcps.org>; Ian Serotkin <Ian.Serotkin@lcps.org>; Denise Corbo <Denise.Corbo@lcps.org>

Cc: SEAC Chair <SEACChair@lcps.org>

Hi there. I understand there might be an "opt in" and "opt out" option for transportation. I was assuming it is only for drop off and pick up and not for things like, CII, ROTC, AOS, CAST, and/or any other programs I left out. However, just in an overabundance, I would like to add if it is for those items as well, then CII should not be included in that roll-out as it wouldn't be an appropriate place for it.

The intention for CII was supposed to cover the functional achievement and is a data-driven, guided outing that occurs in a natural setting where the student can work toward an IEP goal. Here's the regulation from

IDEA: Statute/Regs Main » Regulations » Part B » Subpart A » Section 300.43 » a

(a) Transition services means a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that—

(1) Is designed to be within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation;

(2) Is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests; and includes—

(i) Instruction;

(ii) Related services;

(iii) Community experiences;

(iv) The development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives; and

(v) If appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and provision of a functional vocational evaluation.

Just a little back story, we had an AMAZING ECSE teacher who explained what CBI was at that time. She said the teacher would teach the kids over a couple of weeks about (for example) a grocery store.

Here's the skills for a grocery store in ECSE:

- They worked on acceptable behaviors Safety in the parking lot,
- Putting together thoughtful shopping lists, Concept of money,
- Waiting to checkout,
- Interacting with strangers in public places Getting on the bus to go back to school.
- Then they would take a recipe for the items they gather at the grocery store and make the food.

It was such an amazing experience for my child in ECSE-A (autism) because it helped his anxiety in public places and all those skills were important. His Kindergarten year, Lori Padgett stood up in the Kindergarten transition seminar and said we made changes and it's now called CII but we didn't change anything else about CBI. Except they did.

They said there was a five mile requirement that will only travel to. Our son's CII for K-2 was to take a drink cart and hand out sodas and snacks within the confines of the school. They never once traveled outside school during those

school years and my son now has a phobia of school buses that he developed from K-2. I don't blame the school for his severe fear of buses but it does show he regressed greatly. In ECSE when they did the community instruction, he loved the buses.

The five mile radius requirement is so limiting for our population. Even when the parent of the older students jump through hoops and find job related skills at business (older teen CII essentially), the school will deny because it's outside of the 5 mile radius.

I appreciate you time. I know you receive LOTS of emails so I apologize for adding one more to your inbox.

Respectfully,

Heidi Bunkua