GEORGIA
HIGH SCHOOL/HIGH TECH

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A comprehensive community-based transition program for youth with disabilities which provides a link to academic and career-development experiences that enable them to successfully meet the workforce demands of the 21st century.
Why Are Transition Services Essential?

- One out of every three students drop out of school.
- Students with disabilities have a dropout rate that is twice as high as students without disabilities. National Center on Secondary Education and Transition (NCSET).
- Seventy percent (70%) of youth with disabilities remain unemployed two years after graduation from high school and have higher rates of incarceration than the general population.
Goal of HS/HT Program

To Provide Information, Services, and Activities to Students With All Types Of Disabilities To Assist Them With Identifying A Realistic Vocational Goal And Transitioning To Post-Secondary Education and/or Gainful Employment
Who is Eligible?

- Student in grades 8-12 (ages 14-22) and have a documented disability that’s physical, sensory or learning related.
- Target population: Jrs. & Srs. with a disability with average to above average IQ’s who are capable of going to post-secondary education.
Who is Involved?

- Advocacy Groups
- Families
- Voc. Rehab
- Educators
- Colleges, Universities, & Technical Colleges
- Business Leaders & Employers
- Students
Focus of HS/HT Program

- Reducing the dropout rate of students with disabilities
- Teaching students how to advocate for themselves
- Exploring career options
- Opportunity awareness
- Facilitate a successful transition to post-secondary education or gainful employment
Georgia’s HS/HT program’s services are based on research that indicates the five categories for success that supports young people transitioning out of high school.

Summary of Five Guideposts for Success

- School Preparation
- Youth Development & Leadership
- Career Preparation & Work Based Learning Experiences
- Connecting Activities
- Family Involvement
Three Statewide Initiatives

Resources to Assist with Field Trips for Career and Educational Exploration

Refurbished Computer Project
- Rising juniors and seniors
- Awards presentations and ceremonies varied from site to site—luncheons including peers, press releases, class activities, awards included teachers, parents, site coordinator.
- Most sites sent thank you notes electronically and in hard copy
- Must be on VR caseload to be eligible this year
Possible Services:

- Tours to post-secondary education sites
- Industry site visits
- Advocacy
- Motivational speakers
- Job Shadowing
- College Fair or Career Day
- Leadership opportunities
- Internships
- Awards Ceremony
- Assistive Technology
High School\High Tech Services

- HS/HT is an additional resource for students with disabilities.

- Services at each HSHT site may vary based on the needs of the students.

- All services provided should be geared to post-secondary education or employment.
Georgia’s HS/HT is not a Cookie Cutter Program. HS/HT in Georgia looks like:

- Curriculum-based
- VR – School – Community Partnership
- Club
- Elective credit
- School partnerships – CTI and Special Education
- Community Organizations
- Sponsored by Civic Organizations and Employer Committees – “Adopt a Program”
- Other Options:
  - Afterschool Program
  - Out of School Youth (WIA/RFP)
  - One Stop / Career Center
  - Partnerships with existing programs; i.e. Housing Authority, Junior Achievement
High School/High Tech Computer Project

The High School High Tech Computer Competition Is Not The Focus Of The Program, But It Generates A Lot Of Interest With The Students To Participate In The Program
Approximately 450 laptops have been awarded to rising HS/HT juniors and seniors at schools in:

Augusta, Albany, Atlanta, Columbus, DeKalb, Bibb, McDuffie, Newton and other HSHT sites

Funds are available for 100 students this year, and will be restricted to VR HSHT students.
Laptop Computer Award

Maritza is a student with orthopedic impairments...she uses a power chair and has difficulty with fine motor skills. She is unable to write legibly with pen or pencil, and uses the computer at home to complete classroom work. She has lost her ability to speak and also uses the computer for communication. She was very excited to apply for a computer and made it clear that it would help her to communicate her needs at home and at school. Her mom said that Maritza now clearly communicates her needs. Using the computer showcases skills no one realized Maritza had!
Where is HS/HT now?

High School/High Tech today:
- Approx. 20 counties
- 52 high schools
- 600 plus students
- Approx. 356 VR clients
- Primary referral agent — high schools
Where is HS/HT going?

Georgia’s High School/High Tech’s future calls for:

• Expansion
• Stability
• Sustainability
2001: Augusta HSHT established
- 4 Students in Richmond County

2012 Statistics:
- 300 Students in 5 counties – Richmond, Columbia, Burke, Wilkes, & McDuffie
- 15 Participating High Schools

Dropout Rate?? Only 2% for HSHT participants!!
HSHT in Columbia County

- 5 High Schools with 74 Student Participants!!

- 38 received laptops (51%) – Of those, 26 also included software tailored to the student’s needs

- 3 Ipad (High Achievers)

- 15 Live Scribe Pens (High Achievers)
HSHT High Achievers

Made Possible by a Grant through the Workforce Investment Act

- 15 students (Jr’s and Sr’s) from Columbia and/or McDuffie Counties

- Recommended by Teachers; On Track to Graduate; Motivated & Responsible; EFFORT!!

- All receive laptops (11th) and I pads (12th) – including software which is helpful for that student’s disability
HSHT High Achievers

- Live Scribe Pen – records teacher lecture while student takes notes, but can “fill in the blanks” for the students later

- Additional Field Trips (CDC in May to include Charter bus, lunch, and gift cards)

- Incentives for participation in HSHT activities
  - Gift cards
  - School supplies (backpacks, paper, etc.)
Center for Disease Control
Monthly Activities

- Kick Off with Motivational Speaker
- College Fair
- Augusta Tech Tour
- Aiken Tech Tour
- Georgia Regents University Tour
- Plant Vogtle
- Awards Luncheon
HS/HT Awards Luncheon

Lakeside High Students with their New Laptops
HSHT Awards Luncheon
Job Shadowing

Columbia County

• 27 Students
• 15 Job Sites
  • Several sites provided multiple job shadowing experiences
Richard Gayle, D.V.M.
“I have often told people that I can’t explain to them all the benefits of HSHT because I don’t know what they can’t do – I have never asked for something and not received it.”
“...tutoring services for seniors, financial assistance, career planning assessments...”

“The various field trips to colleges and businesses, along with the college/career fair open up a whole new world of possibilities for these students.”

“The computer awards supply an item many cannot afford, and it truly helps them.”
“Many students have been encouraged by professional, motivational speakers to make smart choices, earn better grades, and go to college.”

“Our students have spent time job shadowing with area professionals, which has helped create and develop meaningful transition plans.”
“My favorite trip was the kick-off at the beginning of the year because the speaker said that you can find what you want to do.”

“The job shadowing experience at T’s Computers was the best thing because I gained a good understanding of what people do with computers. It cemented my desire to work in the computer field.”
“HSHT has been a great experience. I won a computer and feel really great. I have already used it.”

“I was surprised to learn there are Disability Services Coordinators at the colleges.”

“I appreciated the one-on-one tutoring I received.”
HSHT Benefits for School Systems

- Keeping the students interested and engaged, thus lowering the drop-out rate for students with disabilities
- Additional resources to provide field trips, opportunity awareness, career exploration, advocacy, job shadowing, and other services
- Opportunity for students in HSHT to participate in the laptop computer competition and possibly be awarded a laptop computer
HSHT Benefits for School Systems

- Opportunities for students to participate in all local HSHT activities such as:
  - field trips to post-secondary education sites
  - industry tours
  - job shadowing
HSHT Benefits for School Systems

- Opportunities for students to receive information on advocating for themselves after graduation
- Building stronger partnerships between school systems and Vocational Rehabilitation
- Building additional partnerships with local employers
- Increasing employer awareness about students with disabilities
A secure web based reporting system has been developed to track data on students served in the High School High Tech Program.

Data entry is simple and requires the following:

- Students complete a simple high school high tech application that is entered into the web based reporting system.
- Each service that the students receives must be entered into the system.
- Narrative reports on services provided are requested at the end of each quarter.
To start a program......

- HS/HT State Coordinator
  Karen Royston (706) 353-7987 or (706) 202.4792
  Royston.Karen@gmail.com

- Identify site coordinator and partners
  - Define your program
  - Identify students
  - Complete student application
  - Submit student applications for entry into database
  - Ask for technical assistance
  - You are on your way!!
Questions?