Common strategies in addressing barriers for Special Populations (SP)

There is not a one-size-fits-all approach to ensuring equity and access for all students. To do this well, takes an individualized approach; first identifying the barrier that a student is facing, then doing what is needed to remove it. In addition to getting input from relevant stakeholders, some resources you may find helpful include:

1. Promoting Excellence for All (PEFA) training and resources.
2. DPI Civil Rights Compliance Equity and Diversity webpage has sample resources
3. Pupil Nondiscrimination Self Evaluation
4. Reference LEA Title I, Part A plans. https://dpi.wi.gov/title-i
5. Wisconsin Response to Intervention (RtI)
6. The National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE) training and resources.

Some examples of the types of activities local education agencies might implement include the following:

1. District will put a process in place for school counselors to identify students who are members of SP annually.
2. Quality hands-on experiences will be provided to all students.
3. Ensure that every student participates in skill and interest assessments through identification and follow-up with non-engaged students.
4. Coordinate with personnel who work in various capacities with SPs to assess abilities, interests, aptitudes, unique learning needs, and styles and identify strategies for engagement.
5. Expand CTE opportunities through after school and summer programs for those unable to participate during school year. Provide transportation for economically disadvantaged students (including those in foster care or homeless) during these out-of-school timeframes.
6. Design programs to breakdown career stereotypes related to gender, race/ethnicity and disability status such as speakers who represent SPs.
7. Work with students and caregivers to ensure that each student participates in a wide range of career exploration activities both within and outside of school.
8. Involvement of career specialists and school counselors to develop a process and procedure that ensures every student is on an appropriate path to college and career readiness.
9. Identify students who need additional adult support and connect them to programs and mentors who can assist them and their caregivers in the processes for career and college planning.
10. Work with community agencies and organizations, including the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) or English as Second Language, to ensure that all students and caregivers can access and knows how to use career and college planning resources.
11. Ensure that all students not just know of, but understand the dual-credit options available and how to access them.
12. Expand work-based learning opportunities for broad range of careers and abilities and NTO. Work with employers to provide a student friendly environment for learning. Put learners in work opportunities that capitalize on their strengths.
13. Provide professional development related to addressing barriers to student success.
14. Professional development on how to engage the broader community in supporting SP
15. Professional development related to implicit bias of LEA and/or community.
16. Ensure access to vital support services, including transportation, flexible scheduling, financial assistance for fees, books and tutoring, preparatory training and support groups for SPs.

Common strategies in addressing barriers for
Special Populations (SP)

17. Facilitate connections between CTE, academic and special education instructors; school counselors; ESL personnel; Workforce Investment Opportunity Act (WIOA); and Health and Human Services personnel
18. Ensure adaptive equipment when needed for classroom or work for students with disabilities
19. Identify businesses willing to train and prepare SP students and organize transition planning group to work with learners who have disabilities, are in foster care and others who made need additional support.
20. Create a mentoring program enabling students to meet/talk with others who have had similar circumstances
21. Provide information, written and oral in the parent's native language.
22. Use of bilingual staff to serve as interpreters when involving parents. Consider engaging a nearby college or bi-lingual community or church group or ask fluent college students to assist as translators for certain activities.
23. Offer meetings and activities at a variety of times and locations.
24. Development of self-advocacy skills SP students to access opportunities/services

Examples of ways that districts describe how support for students who are members of SP will be addressed:

1. Professional development on personal bias awareness, in order to seek a more balanced perspective regarding members of special populations
2. Ensure student voice in Academic and Career Plan development and activities through… (xyz)
3. Evaluate student assessments for implicit bias
4. Consultation with experts schooled in the various areas of special populations
5. Use of bilingual staff to serve as interpreters when needed for parent night or student/parent meetings
6. Offer and activities and meetings at a variety of times and locations to make them easily accessible
7. Collaborate with organizations… (xyz) that already evidence commitment to equitable activities and practices

Examples of how NTO training and activities could be supported, encouraged and promoted.

1. Work with stakeholders to design training to breakdown career stereotypes related to gender, race/ethnicity and disability status
2. Arrange workplace experiences in at least one NTO as part of an academic and/or CTE class
3. Organize support groups for NTO learners in technology or advanced math and science courses
4. Expose learners to NTO careers and role models (of varying race or gender) a few times a year (more than twice) through field trips, guest speakers, partnerships with business and career shadowing
5. Develop dual-credit curriculum across a broad range of career fields, especially NTO
6. Expand work-based learning opportunities for broad range of careers and abilities
7. Connect students with NTO mentors that understand the challenges that come with working in NTO setting