Outcomes of Approved Special Education Programs in the Private Sector

Plans for Exiting Students: 2010-2011

Report Number 10
NAPSEC Outcomes Project

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Executive Summary

For the most part, studies about the outcomes of special education have overlooked the students with the most severe disabilities. For the past decade, however, NAPSEC, a national association of the private special education centers whose members serve such students, has examined student outcomes in order to address this gap in the knowledge base of special education. Below is a summary of the results of Report #10 of the NAPSEC Outcomes Project which examines the plans of students who left a member educational program during the 2010-2011 school year.

Highlights for Transfer Students

1. 86% of the transfer students attended the NAPSEC-member special education center for 5 years or less.

2. That 62% of these students left their special education school with plans to return to or to initiate attendance in a local district educational program supports the assertion that NAPSEC-member schools are able to remediate the special learning needs of many students with severe disabilities so that they can eventually receive an education at the local districts.

Highlights for Graduates/Aged-Out Students

1. About 65% of the graduates/aged-out students were enrolled in an approved nonpublic special education school affiliated with NAPSEC for 5 years or less.

2. Taken together, 91% of the graduates/aged-out students left the NAPSEC-member school with plans for entering productive adult roles.

3. About 56% of the graduates/aged-out students planned to enter the mainstream (2-year/4-year college or trade/technical training, competitive employment, or the military)

4. Slightly more than 23% planned to enter a vocational rehabilitation activity (vocational rehabilitation training program, supported or sheltered employment).

5. Close to 12% had plans to enter an appropriate adult program in the community (adult partial care or adult nonvocational day program).

6. Graduates/aged-out students from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs (74%) and Learning Disorders programs (69%) were the most likely to plan to enter the mainstream.

7. Close to 50% of the graduates/aged-out students from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs, a student population mentioned with concern in the literature for poor outcomes, planned to enter 4-year/2-year college or trade/technical school.

Introduction

For the past decade, the National Association of Private Special Education Centers (NAPSEC), an organization of about 280 approved private education centers, has issued a report about the postschool outcomes of the preschool, elementary, middle, and high schools students whose severe disabilities and complex educational needs are addressed by the special education centers of its members. Although students with the most severe disabilities represent about 1% of all students in our country who receive special education services, they have the most challenging and unique educational needs.

From 2000-2001 through 2003-2004 and again from 2007-2008 through 2009-10, NAPSEC, carried out an annual examination of the plans of the students who exited from its members' educational facilities. This effort was undertaken because other studies of postschool outcomes of students with disabilities have often excluded students with the most severe disabilities whose needs cannot be addressed through the special education programs available in the public schools. In other words, most studies have ignored the students who attend the approved private schools operated by NAPSEC's members.

The present report continues to focus on identifying the educational settings to which the younger students planned to transfer and the adult, post-secondary school settings to which the graduates/aged-out students planned to enter upon exiting from a NAPSEC-member school during the 2010-2011 school year.

Method

Each NAPSEC-member school was asked to supply information on every student who exited from a program over the course of the previous academic year. Exiting students were defined as transfer students, students who left the NAPSEC-member program to move on to another educational program, and graduates/aged-out students, those who left a NAPSEC-member school because he/she received a high school diploma, a certificate of completion, or aged out. In addition, demographic and programmatic information was collected on the number of students who dropped out of school during the course of the study. Unfortunately, since these students dropped out, information could not be gathered on their postschool plans.

Each participating school was given a definition of and asked to place each exiting students into 1 of 5 specific special educational programs. Instructions made clear that only one category was to be used. The programs were defined as follows: 1) Preschool Disorders Programs – for students with any disorder identified at the preschool stage; 2) Pervasive Developmental Disorders Programs – for students with speech/language impairments, mental retardation, autism, developmental delays; 3) Emotional/Behavioral Disorders Programs – for students with emotional and behavioral disturbances; 4) Medical Disorders Programs – for students with other health impairments, hearing impairments, visual impairments, orthopedic impairments, deaf-blindness, and traumatic brain injury; and 5) Learning Disorders Programs – for students with specific learning disabilities.

The Participating Programs and Student Demographics

During the 2010-2011 school year, 80 NAPSEC-member schools (29% of the membership), which offered 179 education programs, volunteered to participate in the study. Of these programs, 148 (83%) were available for day students, 12 (7%) for residential students, and 19 (10%) offered educational services to both day and residential students.

Moreover, 51 participating schools (29%) offered programs to students with Pervasive Developmental Disorders (a category which include disorders on the Autism spectrum), 47 (26%) to students with Emotional/ Behavioral Disorders, 31 (17%) to those with Medical Disorders, 27 (15%) to those with Learning Disorders, and 23 (13%) to students with Preschool Disorders.

Taken together, the participants reported an enrollment of 11,101 students with 8,109 (73%) males and 2,992 (27%) females.

Participating schools were located in 5 of the federal education regions and 12 states. As Table 1 shows, about 74% of the schools were located in the Mid-Atlantic region (Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania); about 11% were in the Northeast region (Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, and Rhode Island); more than 6% in the North Central region (Illinois and Minnesota); 5% in the Appalachia region (Virginia), and nearly 4% in the Western region (Arizona and California).

Table 1. Participating Schools by Federal Educational Region

N=80

Region/Participating State	#	%
Northeast: [1]		
Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, Rhode Island	9	11.3
MidAtlantic: [2]		
Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania	59	73.8
Appalachia: [3]		
Virginia	4	5.0
North Central: [4,5]		
Illinois, Minnesota	5	6.2
Western: [6,7,8]		
Arizona, California	3	3.7
Total	80	100.0

[1] No participants from Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Puerto Rico, or Virgin Islands
[2] No participants from the Delaware or Washington, D.C.
[3] No participants from Kentucky, Tennessee or West Virginia
[4] No participants from Southeast Region
[5] No participants from Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Ohio or Wisconsin
[6] No participants from Southwest or MidContinent Regions
[7] No participants from Nevada or Utah
[8] No participants from Northwest Region
[9] No participants from Pacific Region

The Exiting Students

As Table 2 demonstrates, during the study period, 3,591 students exited from a participating school. Outcome information was available for 3,343 (93%) of the exiting students, 2,627 transfer students (79%) and 716 graduates/aged-out students (21%). Drop outs and other students who left without plans accounted for the remaining 7%.

The exiting students tended to be male (72%), White (41%) or Black (32%), High School students (49%) between the ages of 12 and 17 years (41%) who attended an Emotional/Behavioral Disorders (47%) day program (76%) from 1-5 years (62%) and did not participate in a subsidized lunch program (72.5%). Transfer students made up 76% of the sample; graduates/aged-out students accounted for more than 23%.

According to school staff, 76% of all of the exiting students were involved in exits that were "planned" as part of the educational program and which had supports in place to enhance the transition. Moreover, more than 81% of the exits were viewed as "positive," indicating that staff agreed that the exiting students were "ready" to move on to the next setting.

Table 2. Demographic and Other Relevant Information of Exiting NAPSEC Students

n=3,591

Characteristics	#	%
Program Classification		
Emotional/Behavioral Disorders	1,700	47.3
Preschool Disorders	987	27.5
Pervasive Developmental Disorders	472	13.1
Medical Disorders	244	6.8
Learning Disorders	188	5.3
Program Type		
Day	2,715	75.6
Residential	876	24.4
Reason for Exit		
Transfer	2733	76.1
Graduate/Aged-Out	757	21.1
Dropouts	101	2.8
Grade Level		
Preschool	851	23.7
Elementary School	473	13.2
Middle School	496	13.8
High School	1771	49.3
Race/Ethnicity		
White	1692	47.1
Black	1162	32.4
Hispanic	557	15.5
Asian	128	3.5
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	31	.9
American Indian/Alaskan Native	21	.6
Gender		
Male	2589	72.1
Female	1002	27.9
Ages at Exit		
3-5 years	870	24.2
6-11 years	284	8.0
12-17 years	1477	41.1
18-21+ years	960	26.7

Length of Stay		
< 1 year	667	18.6
1-5 years	2246	62.6
6-10 years	332	9.2
11+ years	98	2.7
Not Available	248	6.9
Subsidized Lunch		
Yes	988	27.5
No	2603	72.5
Status of Planning Information		
Available in Records	3343	93.1
Not Available	248	6.9
Staff Assessment of Exit		
Planned		
Yes	2741	76.3
No	850	23.7
Positive		
Yes	2928	81.5
No	663	18.5

The Transfer Students

Demographics

Overall, 2,627 transfer students had planned exits. Of these, 1,928 students (73%) were male, while 699 (27%) were female. When race/ethnicity was reported, 1,228 students (47%) were White, 911 (35%) were Black, 363 (14%) were Hispanic, 82 (3%) were Asian, and the remaining 43 students (about 1%) were either American Indian/Alaskan Native (18) or Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (25).

Grade Level

As Table 3 shows, 35% attended High School, about 17% Middle School, 17% Elementary School, and nearly 31% were Preschool students.

Table 3. Transfer Students by Grade Level

n= 2,627

	#	%
Preschool	808	30.8
Elementary School	447	17.0
Middle School	453	17.2
High School	919	35.0
	2,627	100.0

Length of Stay

Table 4 shows how long the transfer students were enrolled in a NAPSEC-member school.

Table 4. Length of Stay for Transfer Students

n= 2,627

	#	%
< 1 year	607	23.1
1-5 years	1,658	63.1
6-10 years	286	10.9
	76	2.9
Total	2,627	100.0

More than 63% of the transfer students attended their special education program from 1 to 5 years. About 23% were in attendance for less than1 year. Taken together, about 86% of these students were in a NAPSEC-member program for 5 years or less.

The Educational Plans By Specialized Program

The transfer students were examined according to the programs in which they were enrolled. About 44% (1,161 students) attended Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs; about 33% (882 students) were enrolled in Preschool Disorders programs; close to 17% (444 students) went to Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs; more than 4% (117 students) attended Medical Disorders programs; and another 3% (83 students) attended Learning Disorders programs. Table 5 displays the distribution of these student plans.

Table 5. Educational Plans for Transfer Students by Specialized Program

n=2,627

Education Setting	**Preschool n=822**		**E/BD n=1,161**		**PDD n=444**		**Medical n=117**		**Learning n=83**		**Total n=2,627**	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Regular Education, Not Special Education	230	28.0	34	2.9	10	2.2	13	11.1	9	10.8	296	11.3
Regular Education Vocational School	0	0	0	0	4	.9	0	0	0	0	4	.1
Regular Education, Supported Inclusion	129	15.7	151	13.0	19	4.3	9	7.7	5	6.1	313	11.9
Subtotal: Returns to Regular Education	**359**	**43.7**	**185**	**15.9**	**33**	**7.4**	**22**	**18.8**	**14**	**16.9**	**613**	**23.3**
Resource Room	43	5.2	26	2.3	2	.4	4	3.4	0	0	75	2.9
Alternate School	1	.1	214	18.4	19	4.3	9	7.7	6	7.2	249	9.5
Special Education, Self -Contained LEA	339	41.2	258	22.2	62	14.0	20	17.1	18	21.7	697	26.5
Subtotal: All Returns to In-district Programs	**742**	**90.2**	**683**	**58.8**	**116**	**26.1**	**55**	**47.0**	**38**	**45.8**	**1,634**	**62.2**
Out of District Special Education	77	9.4	224	19.3	297	66.9	30	25.6	34	40.9	662	25.2
Residential	0	0	135	11.6	23	5.2	9	7.7	3	3.6	170	6.5
Home Instruction	1	.1	52	4.5	2	.4	11	9.4	3	3.6	69	2.6
Other	2	.2	67	5.8	6	1.4	12	10.3	5	6.1	92	3.5
Total	**822**	**100**	**1,161**	**100**	**444**	**100**	**117**	**100**	**83**	**100**	**2,627**	**100**

Results for Transfer Student Educational Plans

As Table 5 indicates, more than 62% of the transfer students left school with plans to return to an educational program within the local district. While 23% had plans to return to regular education classes (over 11% for Regular Education, Not Special Education, including Vocational School; almost 12% for Supported Inclusion), 39% planned to return to other programs within the public school district (Resource Room, about 3%; Alternate School, more than 9%; or Self-contained Classroom, about 27%).

Students from Preschool Disorders programs (44%) were the most likely to return to regular education programs. Students from the other disability categories made plans to return to regular educational programs as follows: 19% from Medical Disorders programs; 16% from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs; more than 7%; from Pervasive Development Disorders programs. Finally, when plans to enter other educational programs within the local school district, such as Resource Room, Alternate School, and Self-Contained Special Education programs within district, were examined by disability the following emerged. Ninety per cent of the students who transferred from Preschool Disorders programs, about 59% from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs, 47% from Medical Disorders programs, 46% from Learning Disorders programs, and 26% from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs had plans to enter these other in-district educational programs.

Return to In-District Education

Table 6 summarizes the degree to which the plans of the transfer students reflect a return to an in-district program, including a regular education setting, from 2007-2008 through 2010-2011.

Table 6 Transfer Student Return to In-District Education

	Regular Education[a]		Other In-District[b]		Total In-District	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
2007-2008 (37% participation) n= 2,881	554	19	1,311	46	1,865	65
2008-2009 (38% participation) n=2,575	616	24	1,008	39	1,624	63
2009-2010 (30% participation) n=1,955	430	22	764	38	1,194	60
2010-2011 (29% participation) n=2,627	613	23	1,021	39	1,634	62

a Regular education, including supported inclusion
b Resource room, alternate school, self-contained LEA

For the 2010-2011 school year, 1,634 students (62%) planned to return to in-district programs. Of these, 613 students (23%) planned to return to regular education classrooms, while 1,021 students (39%) planned to enter "other" in-district programming, such as, resource room, alternate school, or self-contained LEA.

On average, over this 4-year period, nearly 63% of the students had plans to return to in-district programs, 22% to regular education classrooms and close to 41% to other in-district programs.

Living Arrangements

About 78% of the transfer students (2,040) reported that they planned to continue to live with their parents or legal guardians. Less than 1% (21 students) planned to live independently (10

students) or semi-independently (11 students). About 9% had plans to live in a skill development/ foster home (96 students) or group home (126 students). The plans of about 9% (242 students) were to live at a residential treatment facility. More than 1% planned to go to a developmental (7 students), psychiatric (16 students), or medical (17 students) center. Nearly 2% were to enter a correctional facility. Finally, the plans of less than 1% called for living in another situation, such as, a drug treatment facility.

Summary for Transfer Students

The transfer students tended to be White (47%) or Black (35%) males (73%) who remained in their approved, private (nonpublic) special education center for 5 years or less (86%) and planned to continue to live at home with a parent or legal guardian (78%).

About 62% of the students who transferred out of the NAPSEC-member setting had plans to return to educational programs within their local school districts; 23% of these students planned to return to regular education classrooms. About 90% of the students from Preschool Disorders programs, 59% from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs, 47% from Medical Disorders programs, 46% from Learning Disorders programs, and 26% from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs had plans to return to their local districts.

The Graduates/Aged-Out Students

Demographics

There were 716 graduates/aged-out students with known plans. Of these, 499 students (70%) were male, while 217 students (30%) were female. Moreover, 414 students (58%) were White, 206 (29%) were Black, and 83 (11%) were Hispanic. The remaining 2% were Asian (11 students), American Indian/Alaskan Native (1 student), and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander (1 student). About 41% (297 students) came from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders

programs, about 30% (214 students) from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs, 15% (107 students) from Medical Disorders programs, and 14% (98 students) from Learning Disorders programs.

Length of Stay

Table 7 shows the length of stay in a NAPSEC-member program for the students who graduated or aged out.

Table 7. Length of Stay for Graduates/Aged-Out Students
n= 716

	#	%
< 1 year	30	4.2
1-5 years	433	60.5
6-10 years	179	25.0
11+ years	74	10.3
Total	716	100.0

As Table 7 demonstrates, about 4% of the graduates/aged-out students were involved in their special education program for less than 1 year; about 60% for 1-5 years; 25% for 6-10 years; and 10% for 11 or more years. About 65% of the graduates/aged-out students were enrolled in their programs for 5 years or less.

The Postschool Plans by Specialized Program

Table 8 presents an analysis of the postschool plans of the graduate/aged-out students according to the specialized educational programs from which they graduated/aged-out.

Table 8. Postschool Plans of Graduates/Aged-Out Students by Specialized Program

n=716

	E/BD n=297		PDD n=214		Medical n=107		Learning n=98		Total N=716	
Postschool Setting	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Four Year College	16	5.4	1	.5	10	9.4	25	25.5	52	7.3
Two Year College	99	33.3	20	9.3	20	18.7	13	13.3	152	21.2
Trade/Technical School	27	9.1	9	4.2	2	1.8	8	8.2	46	6.4
Competitive Employment	73	24.6	28	13.1	23	21.5	21	21.4	145	20.3
Military	6	2.0	1	.5	1	.9	1	1.0	9	1.2
Mainstream Activity[a]	**221**	**74.4**	**59**	**27.6**	**56**	**52.3**	**68**	**69.4**	**404**	**56.4**
Vocational Rehabilitation Training Program	22	7.4	21	9.8	3	2.8	6	6.1	52	7.3
Supported Employment	11	3.7	43	20.1	8	7.5	17	17.4	79	11.0
Sheltered Employment	8	2.7	24	11.2	1	.9	2	2.0	35	4.9
Vocational Rehabilitation Activity[b]	**41**	**13.8**	**88**	**41.1**	**12**	**11.2**	**25**	**25.5**	**166**	**23.2**
Adult Partial Care	3	1.0	20	9.3	8	7.5	2	2.0	33	4.6
Nonvocational Day Program	1	.3	21	9.8	26	24.3	2	2.0	50	7.0
Community-Based Program Activity[c]	**4**	**1.3**	**41**	**19.1**	**34**	**31.8**	**4**	**4.0**	**83**	**11.6**
Other	5	1.3	5	2.3	1	.9	0	0	11	1.5
No Education/Training, Job or Program	26	8.7	21	9.8	4	3.7	1	1.0	52	7.3
Total	**297**	**100**	**214**	**100**	**107**	**100**	**98**	**100**	**716**	**100**

[a] Mainstream Activity – 4-Yr./2-Yr. College, Trade/Technical School, Competitive Employment or Military

[b] Vocational Rehabilitation Activity – Vocational Rehabilitation Training Programs, Supported or Sheltered Employment

[c] Community-Based Programs Activity – Partial Care and Nonvocational Day Programs

Results for Graduate/Aged-Out Student Postschool Plans

As Table 8 shows, 35% (250) of the graduates/aged-out students planned to go on to a 4-year/2-year College or a Trade/Technical School. More than 21% (154 graduates/aged-out students) had plans to enter Competitive Employment or the Military. Taken together, about 56% of the graduates/aged-out students planned to enter a Mainstream Activity by participating in postschool education or technical training, seeking employment, or enlisting in the military.

About 23% (166 graduates/aged-out students) planned to enter a Vocational Rehabilitation Activity by participating in a vocational rehabilitation training program (7%) or in supported or sheltered employment (16%), while nearly 12% (83 graduates/ aged-out students) planned to enter Community-Based Program Activity by enrolling in an adult partial care (5%) or nonvocational day program (7%). About 2% (11 graduates/aged-out students) planned to enter other adult settings. While 3 students planned to become homemakers; the remaining 8 plans called for entry into psychiatric, drug rehabilitation, or correctional facilities. Finally, about 7% of the graduates/aged-out students (52 graduates/aged-out students) made no plans to enter an educational, vocational, rehabilitative, or supportive program or to obtain a job after completing their secondary program.

Graduates/aged-out students from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs (74%) and Learning Disorders programs (69%) were the most likely to have plans to enter Mainstream Activity. In fact, 115 of these graduates/aged-out students (39%) made plans to attend 4-year (16) or 2-year college (99), while another 27 graduates/aged-out students (9%) were planning to go on to trade or technical school. Moreover, 27% (73 graduates/aged-out students) planned to enter competitive employment (25%) or the military (2%).

Those from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs (41%) were the most likely to plan to enter Vocational Rehabilitation Activity with about 10% with plans to receive vocational rehabilitation training, 20% to supported employment, and 11% to sheltered employment. Graduates/aged-out students from Medical Disorders programs were the most likely to plan to enter Community-Based Program Activity (32%) with 24% with plans to attend nonvocational day programs and about 8% to for attending partial care programs.

Postschool Plans Over Time

Table 9 shows the postschool plans for graduates/aged-out students from 2007-08 through 2010-2011.

Table 9. Postschool Plans of Graduates/Aged-Out Students by Adult Activity

	Mainstream[a]		Voc.Rehab[b]		Comm.-Based[c]		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
2007-2008 (37% participation) n=930	563	61	227	24	75	8	865	93
2008-2009 (38% participation) n=900	520	58	195	22	87	10	802	90
2009-2010 (30% participation) n=681	369	54	173	25	73	11	615	90
2010-2011 (29% participation) n=716	404	56	166	23	83	12	653	91

Mainstream Activity – 4-Yr./2-Yr. College, Trade/Technical School, Competitive Employment or Military

b Vocational Rehabilitation Activity – Vocational Rehabilitation Training Programs, Supported or Sheltered Employment

c Community-Based Programs Activity – Partial Care and Nonvocational Day Programs

For the 2010-2011 school year, 404 graduates/aged-out students (56%) planned to enter the mainstream; 166 (23%) to enter Vocational Rehabilitation; and 83 students (12%) to gain admission to adult partial care and nonvocational day programs that were community-based. On average, over the 4-year period spanning the 2007-2008 to 2010-1011 school years, 57% of the students who graduated or aged out planned to enter the mainstream; 24% to engage in

vocational rehabilitation activity; and 10% to enter supportive community-based programs for adults with disabilities.

Living Arrangements

About 86% of the graduates/aged-out students (618) planned to live with a parent, other relative, or guardian. Nearly 7% (48) made plans to live independently (5%) or semi-independently (2%). Approximately 7% (50) had plans to live in a skill development or foster home (6), group home (24), residential treatment center (5), developmental center (10), correctional facility (2), or another living arrangement, such as, a medical, psychiatric, or drug treatment facility (3).

Summary for Graduates/Aged-Out Students

The graduates/aged-out students tended to be White (58%) males (70%) who remained in their approved, private (nonpublic) special education center for 5 years or less (65%) and planned to continue to live at home with a parent or legal guardian (86%). About 7% had plans to live independently or semi-independently, while the remaining 7% had plans to enter supervised settings.

More than 56% of the graduates/aged-out students planned to enter a 4-Year/2-Year College, Trade/Technical School, or Competitive Employment/Military. Overall, 91% of these students planned to enter Mainstream Activity (4-Year/2-Year College, Trade/Technical School, Competitive Employment or Military), Vocational Rehabilitation (Vocational Rehabilitation Training Program or Supported/Sheltered Employment), or Community-Based Program Activity (Partial Care or Nonvocational Day Program). A high percentage of those from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs (75%) had plans to enter the mainstream; those from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs (41%) to enter vocational rehabilitation activities;

and those from Medical Disorders programs (32%) to access supportive services based in the community (23%).

Discussion

Students with special education needs who attend approved, private (nonpublic) special education programs comprise a unique subgroup within the population of students with disabilities. When compared to their special education peers who are able to receive services in their local public school districts, the students who attend NAPSEC-member schools usually present with more severe, and often, multiple disabilities. This study shows, however, that the majority of these students with serious disabilities are able to transfer to and be integrated into their local district's educational programs when they are given the supports to remediate and/or strengthen their skills in the highly specialized, individualized programs offered by the approved private special education sector (Gagnon & McLaughlin, 2004). Most of the transfer students (86%) were enrolled in NAPSEC-member programs for 5 years or less during the 2010-2011 school year and exited with plans to return to programs within their home districts (62%).

This finding underscores the importance of the partnership between the public and private sectors of special education, one that is often omitted from discussion. This report's findings indicate that the public-private partnership can make it possible for children with severe disabilities to receive appropriate services along the continuum of special education as described in IDEA. A future study to track these students after their entry (or reentry) into the public school programs could provide invaluable information regarding the process and progress of students with severe disabilities whose careers have spanned the public and private systems of special education.

When the results for the graduates/aged-out students are examined, it is encouraging to note that 91% had plans to enter productive adult roles. Overall, 56% planned to enroll in the mainstream, 23% in vocational rehabilitation, and 12% in community-based adult day programs. Clearly, the approved private special education programs succeed in assisting most of the graduates/aged-out students with severe disabilities to make plans for assuming productive adult roles.

Much concern is consistently expressed in the literature for the outcomes for special education students with emotional and behavioral difficulties. For the most part, studies that have focused on this group have examined the less disabled students in public school programs (SRI International, 1993; Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Wagner & Blackorby, 1996; U.S. Department of Education, 1999; U.S. Department of Education, 2000; U.S. Department of Education, 2001; Wagner & Cameto, 2004; Newman, Wagner, Cameto and Knokey, 2009; Newman, Wagner, Cameto, Knokey, and Shaver, 2010). The troubling results have included low graduation rates, poor work histories, involvement in excessive antisocial behavior and the criminal justice system, and difficulty establishing stable adult roles (Chen, Symons, & Reynolds, 2011; Gagnon & McLaughlin; 2004; Malmgren, Edgar, & Neel, 1998; Mattison & Spitznagel, 1998; Reddy, 2001; Sample, 1998; SRI International, 1993; Tobin & Sugai, 1999; U.S. Department of Education, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2001; Wagner, 1995; Wagner & Cameto, 2004). It is, therefore, encouraging that during the 2010-11 school year, over 74% of the graduates/aged-out students from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs left a NAPSEC-member program with plans to pursue adult roles in the mainstream. Moreover, close to 50% of these students had plans to attend 4-year/2-year college or trade/technical school. Perhaps these students will be able to maintain stability as adults due to the highly individualized and intensive

services they received in the NAPSEC-member programs, services that were specifically tailored to their unique educational needs (Lange & Sletten, 2002). Evidence is beginning to emerge to indicate that helping students with emotional and behavioral difficulties adjust to the classroom helps to curtail antisocial behavior (Chen, Symons, & Reynolds, 2011). The small classroom size and individualized programs available in the approve private sector works in favor of positive classroom adjustment. Future studies should track the graduates/aged-out students with emotional and behavioral difficulties as they transition into adulthood to determine whether they are able to maintain role stability. Unfortunately, few studies focus on the barriers faced by adults with disabilities as they move from the supports of youth entitlement programs to the requirements of adult programs and adulthood itself.

The approved, private special education facilities with membership in NAPSEC remain dedicated to the success of students with severe disabilities along the continuum of special education. While most transfer students exited with plans to attend educational programs within their local public school districts, most of the exiting graduates/aged-out students had plans to assume productive adult roles. NAPSEC-member special education facilities continue to play a vital role in providing the intensive, individualized services that are needed to educate students with a wide range of severe disabilities along the continuum of special education.

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