

Outcomes of Approved Special Education Programs in the Private Sector

Plans for Exiting Students: 2008-2009

**Report Number 8
NAPSEC Outcomes Project**

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Executive Summary

Study Period 2008-2009

During the 2008-2009 school year, 2,575 transfer students and 900 graduates/aged-out students with available plans exited from 95 NAPSEC schools (38% of the membership) operating 203 educational programs in 13 states and 5 federal educational regions. In total, about 63% of students with emotional/behavioral disabilities, 13% with pervasive developmental disabilities, 11% with preschool disabilities, 8% with learning disabilities, and 6% with medical disabilities were enrolled in the schools that participated in the study.

Highlights for Transfer Students include:

1. 95% of the transfer students attended a NAPSEC-member school for 5 years or less.
2. 63% (1,624 students) of these students left a NAPSEC-member school with plans to attend an educational program in their home district. Of these, 24% (616 students) had plans to attend a regular education classroom within district.

Highlights for Graduates/Aged-Out Students include:

1. About 70% of the graduates/aged-out students were enrolled in a NAPSEC school for 5 years or less.
2. Almost 58% of the graduates/aged-out students planned to enter the mainstream (2-year/4-year college or trade/technical training, competitive employment, or military)
3. 22% planned to enter a vocational rehabilitation activity (vocational rehabilitation training, supported or sheltered employment).
4. 10% had plans to enter an adult program in the community (adult partial care or nonvocational day program).
5. At 74%, graduates/aged-out students from Learning Disorders programs and Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs were the most likely to have plans to enter the mainstream.

Introduction

For over a decade, the National Association of Private Special Education Centers (NAPSEC) has been collecting and analyzing data about the postschool outcomes of students with severe disabilities who attend the approved private special education programs of its members. Little attention has been paid to the postschool outcomes of these students with severe disabilities who comprise about 1% of all students in our country who receive special education services.

From 2000-2001 through 2003-2004, NAPSEC, an association of about 250 approved private special education schools and agencies, conducted an annual exit study of the students who exited from its member schools. During the 2007-2008 academic year, this effort began again. The present report for the 2008-09 academic year documents the postschool plans of these students by reporting the educational settings to which the transfer students planned to move and the adult settings to which the graduates/aged-out students planned to enter.

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. Demographic and program information was collected on the students who dropped out of school during the course of the study. Dropouts, however, could not be included because their plans were not available.

The exiting students were further identified as attending 1 of 5 specific special educational programs. The schools were given a definition for each program category and were asked to classify the program from which each student exited by using one predominant program category. 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 Students

During the 2008-2009 academic year, 95 NAPSEC schools (38% of the membership), which operated 203 education programs (172 day, 31 residential students), volunteered to participate. The participating schools reported that 13,891 students were enrolled in these programs. Of those enrolled, 11,775 (85%) were day students and 2,116 (15%) were residential students. Of the day students, 8,642 (73%) were male and 3,133 (27%) were female. Of the residential students, 1,577 were male (74%) and 539 (26%) were female. One hundred sixteen students (2.8% of all exiting students) dropped out of school in the 2008-2009 academic year. Of these, 75 were male and 41 were female; 51 were White, 57 Black, 8 Hispanic.

Participating schools were located in 5 of the federal education regions and 13 states. As Table 1 shows, about 77% of the schools were located in the Mid-Atlantic region (Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania) and about 11% were in the Northeast region (Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maine, New York, and Rhode Island). While 4% were in the Appalachia region (Virginia), the remaining 8% were in the North Central (about 3% from Illinois) and the Western region (about 5% from Arizona, California, and Utah).

Table 1

Participating NAPSEC-Member Schools
by Federal Educational Region

n=95

<u>Region/Participating State</u>	<u>#</u>	<u>%</u>
<u>Northeast:</u> ¹		
Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, Rhode Island, Maine	10	10.5
<u>MidAtlantic:</u> ²		
Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania	73	76.8
<u>Appalachia:</u> ³		
Virginia	4	4.2
<u>North Central:</u> ^{4,5}		
Illinois	3	3.2
<u>Western:</u> ^{6,7,8}		
Arizona, California, Utah	5	5.3
Total	95	100.0

¹ No participants from 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, Minnesota, Ohio or Wisconsin

⁶ No participants from Southwest or MidContinent Regions

⁷ No participants from Nevada

⁸ No participants from Northwest Region

⁹ No participants from Pacific Region

Students exited from 172 day programs (85%) and 31 residential programs (15%). About 32% of these programs were Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs (64 programs); 26% were Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs (53 programs); 18% were Medical Disorders programs (36 programs); 14% were

Learning Disorders programs (29 programs); and 10% were Preschool Disorders programs (21 programs).

The Exiting Students

Description

As Table 2 shows, during the study period, 4,119 students exited from a NAPSEC-member program. The exiting students tended to be male (74%), White (48%) or Black (38%), High School students (62%), between the ages of 12 and 17 years (52%), from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs (63%). These students tended to be in a NAPSEC-member program from 1-5 years (58%) and the majority (67%) did not receive subsidized lunch. Transfer students accounted for almost 74% of the exiting students; graduates/aged-out students were about 23%; and dropouts were almost 3%. According to NAPSEC-member school staff, close to 71% of the exiters experienced a “planned” exit. In short, student, family/guardian, NAPSEC-member program staff, and local school district staff concurred with plans for the student to move to a new educational program. NAPSEC-member school staff rated the exits as “positive” in 78% of the cases. Again, program staff from the NAPSEC-member school agreed with local school district staff that the student was ready to move to another appropriate educational program.

The demographic and other relevant characteristics of these students are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

**Demographic and Other Relevant Information
of Exiting NAPSEC Students**

n=4,119

Characteristic	n	%
<u>Program Classification</u>		
Emotional/Behavioral Disorders	2,589	62.9
Pervasive Developmental Disorders	521	12.6
Preschool Disorders	447	10.9
Learning Disorders	305	7.4
Medical Disorders	257	6.2
<u>Program Type</u>		
Day	3,471	84.3
Residential	648	15.7
<u>Reason for Exit</u>		
Transfer	3,043	73.9
Graduate/Aged-Out	960	23.3
Dropouts	116	2.8
<u>Grade Level</u>		
Preschool	438	10.6
Elementary School	466	11.3
Middle School	658	16.0
High School	2,557	62.1
<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>		
White	1,976	47.9
Black	1,551	37.7
Hispanic	506	12.3
Asian	70	1.7
American Indian/Alaskan Native	11	.3
Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander	5	.1
<u>Gender</u>		
Male	3,062	74.3
Female	1,057	25.7
<u>Ages at Exit</u>		
3-5 years	437	10.6
6-11 years	461	11.2
12-17 years	2,160	52.4
18-21+ years	1,061	25.8

<u>Length of Stay</u>		
< 1 year	677	16.4
1-5 years	2,399	58.2
6-10 years	302	7.3
11+ years	97	2.4
Not Available	644	15.6
<u>Subsidized Lunch</u>		
Yes	1,365	33.1
No	2,754	66.9
<u>Status of Planning Information</u>		
Available in Records	3,475	84.4
Not Available	644	15.6
<u>Staff Assessment of Exit</u>		
Planned		
Yes	2,913	70.7
No	1,206	29.3
Positive		
Yes	3,229	78.4
No	890	21.6

Planning information was available for 3,475 students (84% of the exiting students). Of these students with known plans, 2,575 were transfer students and 900 were graduates/aged-out students.

The Transfer Students

Description

There were 2,575 transfer students with known plans. Of these, 1,961 students (76%) were male, while 614 (24%) were female. Approximately 47% were White, 39% were Black, 12% were Hispanic, 1% were Asian, .3% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, and the remaining .1% were of Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander origin. While 2,191 (85%) of the transfer students attended day programs, 384 students (15%) attended residential programs.

By Grade Level

More than 46% attended High School, nearly 23% Middle School, almost 16% Elementary School, and close to 15% Preschool. See Table 3.

Table 3

Transfer Students by Grade Level

n= 2,575

	#	%
Preschool	381	14.8
Elementary School	402	15.6
Middle School	598	23.2
High School	1,194	46.4
	2,575	100.0

By Length of Stay

Table 4 presents the length of stay for the transfer students for the duration of their enrollment in a NAPSEC-member program. As this table shows, more than 71% of the transfer students attended a NAPSEC-member program for between 1

and 5 years. Almost 24% were in attendance for less than 1 year. Taken together, about 95% of these students were in a NAPSEC-member program for less than 1 year up to 5 years.

Table 4

Length of Stay for Transfer Students

n= 2,575

	#	%
< 1 year	613	23.8
1-5 years	1,836	71.3
6-10 years	123	4.8
11+ years	3	.1
Total	2,575	100.0

The Educational Plans By Program

The transfer students were examined according to the programs in which they were enrolled. More than 63% (1,635 students) attended Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs; about 15% (390 students) were enrolled in Preschool Disorders programs; 11% (282 students) went to Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs; slightly more than 5% (137 students) attended Learning Disorders programs; and another 5% (131 students) were in Medical Disorders programs. See Table 5 displays the distribution of these student plans.

Table 5

Educational Plans for Transfer Students

n=2,575

Education Setting	Preschool n=390		E/BD n=1,635		PDD n=282		Learning n=137		Medical n=131		Total n=2,575	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Regular Education, Not Special Education	58	14.9	84	5.1	17	6.0	12	8.8	13	9.9	184	7.1
Regular Education, Vocational	0	0	9	.6	3	1.1	1	.7	0	0	13	.5
Regular Education, Supported Inclusion	86	22.0	263	16.1	19	6.7	31	22.6	20	15.3	419	16.3
Subtotal: Returns to Regular Education	144	36.9	356	21.8	39	13.8	44	32.1	33	25.2	616	23.9
Resource Room	0	0	8	.5	3	1.1	4	2.9	0	0	15	.6
Alternate School	0	0	130	7.9	12	4.3	5	3.6	6	4.6	153	5.9
Special Education, Self -Contained LEA	196	50.3	513	31.4	73	25.9	30	21.9	28	21.4	840	32.6
Subtotal: All Returns to In-district Programs	340	87.2	1,007	61.6	127	45.1	83	60.5	67	51.2	1,624	63.0
Out of District Special Education	45	11.5	273	16.7	115	40.8	47	34.3	37	28.2	517	20.1
Residential	0	0	188	11.5	28	9.9	5	3.6	11	8.4	232	9.1
Home Instruction	4	1.0	64	3.9	8	2.8	2	1.5	7	5.3	85	3.3
Other	1	.3	103	6.3	4	1.4	0	0	9	6.9	117	4.5
Total	390	100	1,635	100	282	100	137	100	131	100	2,575	100

Results for Transfer Students

As Table 5 indicates, 63% of the transfer students left a NAPSEC-member school with plans to return to an educational program within the local district. Moreover, 24% of the students planned to return to regular education classes (Regular Education, Not Special Education, 7.1%; Regular Education, Vocational, .5%; Regular Education, Supported Inclusion, 16.3%), while 39% planned to return to other programs within the district (Resource Room, .6%; Alternate School, 5.9%; or Self-contained Classroom, 32.6%). When the plans to return to regular education are examined by disability, the following emerges. Students from Preschool Disorders programs (36.9%) and Learning Disorders Programs (32.1%) were the most likely to plan to return to regular education classrooms. Students from the other categories made plans to return as follows: from Medical Disorders programs, 25.2%; from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs, 21.8%; from Pervasive Development Disorders programs, 13.8%. Altogether, 87% of the students who transferred from Preschool Disorders programs, almost 62% from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs, 60% from Learning Disorders programs, 51% from Medical Disorders programs, and 45% from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs had plans to enter educational programs within their local school districts.

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, for 2007-2008 as well as 2008-2009.

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

a Regular education, including supported inclusion

b Resource room, alternate school, self-contained LEA

Taken together, 1,624 students (63%) planned to return to in-district programs. Of these 616 students (24%) planned to return to regular education classrooms, while 1,008 students (39%) planned to enter “other” in-district programming, such as, resource room, alternate school, or self-contained LEA.

Conclusions for Transfer Students

Almost 24% of the transfer students remained in a NAPSEC-member program for less than 1 year, while 71% were enrolled from 1 to 5 years. Taken together, more than 95% of these students remained in a NAPSEC-member program from less than 1 year up until 5 years. Moreover, 63% of the students who transfer out of a NAPSEC-member program have plans to return to educational programs within their local school districts. The plans of 24% of these students call

for a return to regular education classrooms. Of those who planned to return to regular education classrooms, students from Preschool Disorder programs (36%) and Learning Disorders programs (32%) were the most likely to plan to return to their district. When all plans to return to in-district programs are examined, students from NAPSEC-member schools make such plans at the following rates: 87% from Preschool Disorders programs; 62% from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs, 60% from Learning Disorders programs; 51% from Medical Disorders programs; and 45% from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs.

The Graduates/Aged-Out Students

Description

There were 900 graduates/aged-out students with known plans. Of these, 68% (608) were male, while 32% (292) were female. Approximately 58% were White, 27% were Black, 12% were Hispanic, 2% were Asian, and .4% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, and .2% were of Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander origin. About 52% (472 students) came from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs, approximately 21% (191 students) from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs, 15% (137 students) from Learning Disorders programs, and 11% (100 students) from Medical Disorders programs. Finally, 86% (777 graduates/aged-out students) came from day programs, while 14% (123 graduates/aged-out students) came from residential programs.

Length of Stay

Table 7 shows the length of stay in a NAPSEC-member program for the graduates/aged-out students who exited.

Table 7 Length of Stay for Graduates/Aged-Out Students

n= 900

	#	%
Graduates/aged-out students/Aged-out Students		
< 1 year	64	7.1
1-5 years	563	62.6
6-10 years	179	19.9
11+ years	94	10.4
Total	900	100.0

As Table 7 demonstrates, about 7% of the graduates/aged-out students were in NAPSEC-member programs for less than 1 year; 63% for 1-5 years; close to 20% for 6-10 years; more than 10% for 11 or more years. The majority of the graduates/aged-out students (70%) were in NAPSEC-member programs from less than 1 year up until 1 to 5 years.

The Postschool Plans by Program

Table 8 presents an analysis of the postschool plans made by these students.

Table 8

Postschool Plans of Graduates/Aged-Out Students by Program
n=900

Postschool Setting	E/BD n=472		PDD n=191		Learning n=137		Medical n=100		Total n=900	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Four Year College	71	15.1	3	1.6	28	20.5	9	9.0	111	12.3
Two Year College	126	26.7	11	5.8	28	20.5	8	8.0	173	19.2
Trade/Technical School	57	12.1	6	3.1	14	10.2	6	6.0	83	9.2
Competitive Employment	85	18.0	21	11.0	31	22.6	3	3.0	140	15.5
Military	11	2.3	0	0	1	.7	2	2.0	14	1.6
Mainstream Activity^a	350	74.2	41	21.5	102	74.5	28	28.0	520	57.8
Vocational Rehabilitation Training Program	31	6.6	26	13.6	6	4.4	9	9.0	72	8.0
Supported Employment	16	3.4	45	23.6	4	2.9	11	11.0	76	8.4
Sheltered Employment	3	.6	27	14.1	12	8.8	5	5.0	47	5.2
Vocational Rehabilitation Activity^b	50	10.6	98	51.3	22	16.1	25	25.0	195	21.6
Adult Partial Care	7	1.5	9	4.7	0	0	16	16.0	32	3.6
Nonvocational Day Program	4	.8	24	12.6	6	4.4	21	21.0	55	6.1
Community-Based Program Activity^c	11	2.3	33	17.3	6	4.4	37	37.0	87	9.7
Other	18	3.8	1	.5	5	3.6	3	3.0	27	3.0
No Education/Training, Job or Program	43	9.1	18	9.4	2	1.4	7	7.0	70	7.7
Total	472	100	191	100	137	100	100	100	900	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 Graduates/Aged-Out Students

As Table 8 shows, nearly 41% (367) of the graduates/aged-out students planned to go on to a 4-year/2-year College or a Trade/Technical School. About 17% (154 graduates/aged-out students) had plans to enter Competitive Employment or the Military. Taken together, 58% 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 22% (195 graduates/aged-out students) planned to enter a Vocational Rehabilitation Activity by participating in a vocational rehabilitation training program (8%) or in supported (8.4%) or sheltered (5.2%) employment, while close to 10% (87 graduates/aged-out students) planned to enter Community-Based Program Activity by enrolling in an adult partial care (3.6%) or nonvocational day program (6.1%). Finally, 3% (28 graduates/aged-out students) planned to become a homemaker or to enter another setting, such as a psychiatric, drug rehabilitation, or correctional facility. Finally, over 7% of the 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.

Moreover, at 74% graduates/aged-out students from Learning Disorders programs and Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs were the most likely to make plans to enter Mainstream Activity; those from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs (51%) were the most likely to plan to enter Vocational Rehabilitation Activity; and those from Medical Disorders programs (37%) were the most likely to plan to enter Community-Based Program Activity.

Table 9 shows the postschool plans for graduates/aged-out students for 2007-2008 and 2008-2009.

Table 9

Postschool Plans of Graduates/Aged-Out Students by Activity

	<u>Mainstream^a</u>		<u>Voc.Rehab^b</u>		<u>Comm.-Based^c</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
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

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

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

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

Living Arrangements

Close to 77% of the graduates/aged-out students planned to live with a parent, other relative, or guardian. Nearly 14% made plans to live independently (11%) or semi-independently (3%). Finally, 9% had plans to live in a skill development home, foster home, developmental center, group home, residential treatment center, an “other” living arrangement, such as, a medical or psychiatric facility.

Conclusions for Graduates/Aged-Out Students

NAPSEC programs appear to help the vast majority of the graduates/aged-out students make transitional plans to enter productive adult roles. While the majority of the graduates/aged-out students planned to live in the community, primarily with a parent, other relative, or guardian, close to 14% had plans to live

independently (11%) or semi-independently (3%). About 58% of the graduates/aged-out students planned to enter a 4-Year/2-Year College, Trade/Technical School, or Competitive Employment/Military. Overall, 90% 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 Learning Disorders (74%) and Emotional/Behavioral Disorders (74%) programs had plans to enter Mainstream Activity; those from Pervasive Developmental Disorders (51%) planned to enter Vocational Rehabilitation Activity; and those from Medical Disorders programs made plans to enter Community-Based Activity (37%) after leaving a NAPSEC-member secondary school.

Discussion

Among the exiting transfer students, 95% were enrolled in a NAPSEC-member program for 5 years or less during the 2008-2009 school year. (As Table 4 indicates, 23% stayed for less than 1 year; 71% stayed from 1 to 5 years). About 63% of the transfer students left a NAPSEC-member program with plans to return to their home districts; 24% of these students planned to enter the less restrictive educational environment of a regular classroom. This demonstrates that NAPSEC-member schools actively participate in supporting the continuum of special education. Most of the special education students who attend these highly specialized educational programs do so temporarily. Once they remediate or strengthen their skills in a NAPSEC-member program, they are able to transfer into

and take part in programming within their local district. Other studies, such as Gagnon & McLaughlin's (2004), have reached a similar conclusion.

When the findings for the graduates/aged-out students are examined, there are several national studies available for comparison (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). These studies, however, fail to include the students with severe disabilities who attend NAPSEC-member schools or to comprehend the justification for the enrollment of such students in these highly specialized, therapeutic facilities (Lange & Sletten, 2002).

Students in NAPSEC-member programs represent a different population of individuals with disabilities than those who attend public school special education programs. In short, these students present with more severe cases of educational, medical, and psychiatric disorders, are more likely to have multiple and complex disorders, and have manifested these disorders for longer periods of time. Furthermore, few studies focus on the postschool outcomes for adults with disabilities who must shift from entitlement programs to eligibility programs. Finally, studies also indicate that special education students in public school settings, whose disabilities are not as severe as those students who attend NAPSEC-member programs, are, when compared to their peers in general education, less likely to complete high school or receive further education or vocational training (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Wagner & Blackorby, 1996).

It is, therefore, very promising that such a high proportion of the graduates/aged-out students who exited from a NAPSEC-member program made transitional plans to pursue adult careers in Mainstream Activity (58%), Vocational Rehabilitation Activity (22%), or Community-Based Program Activity (10%). Taken together 90% of the graduates/aged-out students had plans to be productive adults.

Because of their well-documented low graduation rates, poor work histories, criminal justice involvement, and problematic transition into stable adult roles, the outcomes for public school-based special education students with serious emotional and behavioral difficulties have been intensely investigated (Reddy, 2001; Malmgren, Edgar, & Neel, 1998; Mattison & Spitznagel, 1998; Sample, 1998; SRI International, 1993; Tobin & Sugai, 1999; U.S. Department of Education, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2001; Wagner, 1995; Wagner & Cameto, 2004; Gagnon & McLaughlin, 2004). It is, therefore, reassuring that 74% of the graduates/aged-out students from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs left a NAPSEC-member program in 2008-2009 with plans for pursuing adult roles in the mainstream. In fact, about 42% of these students graduated/aged out with plans to pursue 4 year/2 year college, 12% trade or technical school, and over 20% competitive employment or military service. Moreover, the vast majority of graduates/aged-out students from all programs (90%) left a NAPSEC-member school during the 2007-2008 school year with plans to engage in productive postschool activities.

NAPSEC-member schools continue to offer an array of individualized, highly intensive therapeutic programs that are not available within the local school districts to assist special education students with a broad and diverse range of severe disabilities. The plans made by the transfer students demonstrate that these

students successfully make use of the services offered by the NAPSEC-affiliated programs to develop, remediate, and strengthen skills so that a return to in-district educational programs becomes feasible. The plans of the graduates/aged-out students demonstrate that they benefit from the intensive, specialized services available in NAPSEC-member schools, including transitional planning services, by developing plans to enter productive adult roles after graduation. NAPSEC-member programs remain focused on assuring success along the continuum of special education for students with severe disabilities and special needs.

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