

# **Outcomes of Approved Special Education Programs in the Private Sector**

**Plans for Exiting Students: 2002-2003**

**Report Number 4, Part A  
NAPSEC Outcomes Project**

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National Association of Private Special Education Centers  
1522 K Street, NW, Suite 1032, Washington, DC 20005  
Phone: 202-408-3338 Fax: 202-408-3340  
E-mail: [napsec@aol.com](mailto:napsec@aol.com) Web Site: [www.napsec.org](http://www.napsec.org)

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## **Introduction**

Most studies of special education have focused on the majority of special education students, those for whom programs are available in the public sector. Information about the 1% of special education students who receive educational services in the private approved sector, often the most impaired of all special education students, remains scarce.

In order to gather information about this small, but significant segment of the special education population, NAPSEC, an association of 262 approved private special education schools and agencies, conducted a study of the students who exited from its member schools during the 2002-2003 academic year. The educational settings to which transfer students planned to move as well as the plans made by the graduates/aged-out students who left a NAPSEC program were examined. Since this is NAPSEC's fourth attempt to focus on these issues, the findings from the previous NAPSEC studies of the plans made by the transfer and graduates/aged-out students in school years 1999-2000, 2000-2001, and 2001-2002 were compared to those for the 2002-2003 academic year.

## **Method**

Each NAPSEC school was asked to supply information on every student that exited from a program over the course of the previous academic year. Exiting students were defined as transfer students, students who left the NAPSEC program to move on to another educational program, and graduates/aged-out students, those who left a NAPSEC school because of receiving a high school diploma, a certificate of completion, or aging out. Dropouts were excluded because their plans were not available.

The exiting students were further identified as attending one of five 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 disturbances as well as attention deficit disorder; 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 2002-2003 academic year, 133 NAPSEC schools (51% of the membership) operating 204 education programs volunteered to participate. The participating schools reported that 15,275 students were enrolled in their programs. Of those enrolled, 12,811 (84%) were day students and 2,464 (16%) were residential students. Of the day students, 10,902 (71%) were male and 4,373 (29%) were female. Of the residential students, 1,853 were male (75%) and 611 (25%) were female.

Participating schools were located in 8 of the federal education regions and 21 states. As Table 1 shows, about 59% of the schools were located in the Mid-Atlantic region (Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania), while a little more than 23% were in the Northeast region (Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont). About 7% were in the Appalachia region (Tennessee and Virginia), while remaining 11% were in the North Central (3% from Illinois and Minnesota), the Southwest (2% from Louisiana and Texas), the Southeast (about 2% from Georgia and Mississippi), the Mid-Continent (about 2% from Kansas and Missouri), and the Western region (2% from Arizona and California).

**Table 1****Participating NAPSEC Schools by Federal Educational Region<sup>1</sup>**

n=133

<b>Region/Participating State</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
<u>Northeast:</u> <sup>2</sup> Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont	31	23.3
<u>Mid-Atlantic:</u> <sup>3</sup> Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania	78	58.6
<u>Appalachia:</u> <sup>4</sup> Tennessee, Virginia	10	7.5
<u>Southeast:</u> <sup>5</sup> Georgia, Mississippi	3	2.3
<u>North Central:</u> <sup>6</sup> Illinois, Minnesota	4	3.0
<u>Southwest:</u> <sup>7</sup> Louisiana, Texas	3	2.3
<u>Mid-Continent:</u> <sup>8</sup> Kansas, Missouri	2	1.5
<u>Western:</u> <sup>9</sup> Arizona, California	2	1.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<sup>1</sup> No participants from Northwest or Pacific Regions<sup>2</sup> No participants from Maine, New Hampshire, Puerto Rico, or Virgin Islands<sup>3</sup> No participants from the District of Columbia<sup>4</sup> No participants from Kentucky or West Virginia<sup>5</sup> No participants from Alabama, Florida, North Carolina, or South Carolina<sup>6</sup> No participants from Iowa, Michigan, Ohio, or Wisconsin<sup>7</sup> No participants from Arkansas, New Mexico, or Oklahoma<sup>8</sup> No participants from Colorado, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, or Wyoming<sup>9</sup> No participants from Nevada or Utah

Students exited from 166 day programs (81%) and 38 residential programs (19%). About 39% of these programs were Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs (79 programs); 28% were Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs (57 programs); 14% were Medical Disorders programs (28 programs); 13% were Learning Disorders programs (26 programs); and 6% were Preschool Disorders programs (14 programs).

### **The Exiting Students**

#### **Description**

During the study period, 4,190 students exited from a NAPSEC program. The exiting students tended to be male (73%), White (52%), High School students (60%) between the ages of 12 and 17 years (53%) from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs (60%) who were in a NAPSEC program for 1-3 years (43%), and did not receive subsidized lunch (55%). Transfer students accounted for 72% of the exiting students; graduates/aged-out students were 25%; and dropouts were 3%.<sup>1</sup> According to NAPSEC school staff, 67% of the exiters experienced a “planned” exit. In short, student, family/guardian, NAPSEC program staff, and local district staff concurred that the student was ready/needed to move to a different program. NAPSEC school staff also rated the exits as positive in 71% of the cases.

Planning information was available for 3,572 students (85% of the exiting students). Of these students with known plans, 2,579 were transfer students and 993 were graduates/aged-out students.

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<sup>1</sup> 119 students dropped out over the course of the study period. Of these, 95 were male and 24 were female; 51 were White, 49 were Black, 18 were Hispanic, and 1 was of “Other” racial/ethnic background. While 108 came from day programs, 11 came from residential programs.

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=4,190

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<u>Program Classification</u>		
Preschool Disorders	229	5.5
Pervasive Developmental Disorders	698	16.7
Medical Disorders	306	7.3
Emotional/Behavioral Disorders	2,499	59.6
Learning Disorders	458	10.9
<u>Program Type</u>		
Day	3,361	80.2
Residential	829	19.8
<u>Reason for Exit</u>		
Transfer	3,018	72.1
Graduate/Aged-Out	1,053	25.1
Dropouts	119	2.8
<u>Grade Level</u>		
Preschool	281	6.7
Elementary School	551	13.2
Middle School	825	19.7
High School	2,533	60.4
<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>		
White	2,164	51.7
Black	1,370	32.7
Hispanic	492	11.7
American Indian/Alaskan Native	4	.1
Asian/Pacific Islander	70	1.7
"Other"	90	2.1
<u>Gender</u>		
Male	3,075	73.4
Female	1,115	26.6
<u>Ages at Exit</u>		
Birth to 2 years	3	.1
3-5 years	272	6.5
6-11 years	545	13.0
12-17 years	2,214	52.8
18-21+ years	1,156	27.6



Length of Stay

Less than 1 year	639	15.3
1-3 years	1,832	43.7
4-5 years	630	15.0
6-10 years	329	7.9
11+ years	142	3.4
Not Available	618	14.7

Subsidized Lunch

Yes	1,889	45.1
No	2,301	54.9

Status of Planning Information

Available in Records	3,572	85.3
Not Available	618	14.7

Staff Assessment of Exit

## Planned

Yes	2,814	67.2
No	1,376	32.8

## Positive

Yes	2,964	70.7
No	1,226	29.3

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## **The Transfer Students**

### **Description**

There were 2,579 transfer students with known plans. Of these, nearly 76% were male, while about 24% were female. Approximately 50% were White, 36% were Black, 12% were Hispanic, less than 1% (.1%) were American Indian/Alaskan Native, and Asian/Pacific Islander (.9%) and the remaining 1% were of “Other” racial/ethnic backgrounds. While 1,951 (76%) of the transfer students attended day programs, 628 students (24%) attended residential programs. Day students tended to be male (76%) and White (50%) or Black (35%). Residential students also tended to be male (77%) and White (50%) or Black (35%).

### **By Grade Level**

Approximately 42% attended High School, 30% Middle School, 18% Elementary School, and 10% Preschool. See Table 3.

**Table 3**

### **NAPSEC Transfer Students by Grade Level**

n=2,579

	#	%
Preschool	258	10.0
Elementary School	461	18.0
Middle School	778	30.0
High School	1,082	42.0
	2,579	100.0

**By Length of Stay**

Tables 4 and 5 present the length of stay for the transfer students for the duration of their enrollment in a NAPSEC program. While Table 4 shows this by grade level, Table 5 does so regardless of grade level. As these tables show, examined at each grade level and cumulatively, the majority of the transfer students attended a NAPSEC program for between 1 and 3 years.

Table 4

### Length of Stay for Transfer Students

n=2,579

	#	%
Preschool		
< 1 year	26	10.0
1-3 years	232	90.0
Total	258	100.0
Elementary School		
< 1 year	130	28.2
1-3 years	239	51.8
4-5 years	75	16.3
6-10 years	17	3.7
Total	461	100.0
Middle School		
< 1 year	150	19.3
1-3 years	392	50.4
4-5 years	172	22.1
6-10 years	64	8.2
Total	778	100.0
High School		
< 1 year	298	27.5
1-3 years	586	54.1
4-5 years	124	11.5
6-10 years	57	5.3
11+ years	17	1.6
Total	1,082	100.0

**Table 5****Length of Stay for Transfer Students**

n=2,579

	#	%
< 1 year	604	23.4
1-3 years	1,449	56.2
4-5 years	371	14.4
6-10 years	138	5.3
11+ years	17	.7
Total	2,579	100.0

**The Educational Plans By Program**

When the transfer students are examined according to the programs in which they were enrolled, the following emerges. About 62% attended Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs; 15% went to Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs; 9% attended Learning Disorders programs; 8% were enrolled in Preschool Disorders programs; and 6% were in Medical Disorders programs. See Table 6 for the distribution of the plans made by these students.

**Table 6****Educational Plans for Transfer Students from NAPSEC Programs**

n=2,579

<b>New Education Setting</b>	Preschool n=215		PDD n=391		Medical n=149		ED/BD n=1,606		Learning n=218		Total n=2,579	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Regular Education, Not Special Education	22	10.2	11	2.8	5	3.3	160	10.0	20	9.2	218	8.4
Regular Education, Private/Parochial	9	4.2	13	3.3	1	.7	12	.7	44	20.2	79	3.1
Regular Education, Vocational	0	0.0	6	1.5	0	0.0	15	.9	2	.9	23	.9
Regular Education, Supported Inclusion	52	24.2	26	6.7	18	12.1	113	7.0	12	5.5	221	8.5
Resource Room	8	3.7	15	3.8	0	0.0	65	4.0	4	1.8	92	3.6
Alternate School	0	0.0	10	2.6	3	2.0	127	7.9	2	.9	142	5.5
Special Education, Self Contained LEA	101	47.0	139	35.6	50	33.6	463	28.8	30	13.8	783	30.4
<b>Subtotal: All Returns to In-district Programs</b>	<b>192</b>	<b>89.3</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>56.3</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>51.7</b>	<b>955</b>	<b>59.3</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>52.3</b>	<b>1,558</b>	<b>60.4</b>
Out of District Special Education	21	9.8	116	29.7	56	37.6	309	19.3	87	39.9	589	22.8
Residential	0	0.0	26	6.6	8	5.4	202	12.6	5	2.3	241	9.4
Other	0	0.0	21	5.4	5	3.3	91	5.7	5	2.3	122	4.8
Home Instruction	2	.9	8	2.0	3	2.0	49	3.1	7	3.2	69	2.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>391</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,606</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2,579</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### **Results for Transfer Students**

The students who transferred from a NAPSEC program to another educational program tended to be male (77%), high school students (42%), of either White (50%) or Black (35%) racial/ethnic background, attending programs for Emotional/Behavioral Disorders (62%) who, regardless of grade level, were in the NAPSEC program from 1-3 years. See Table 5.

As Table 6 indicates, slightly more than 60% of the transfer students left a NAPSEC-member program with plans to return to an educational program within the local district. About 21% of the students planned to return to Regular Education classes (Regular Education, Not Special Education, 8.4%; Regular Education, Private/Parochial, 3.1%; Regular Education, Vocational, .9%; Regular Education, Supported Inclusion, 8.5%), while about 39.5% planned to return to Resource Room (3.6%), Alternate School (5.5%), or Self-contained classrooms within district (30.4%). About 89% of the students who transferred from Preschool Disorders programs, 56% from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs, 52% from Medical Disorders programs, 59% from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs, and 52% from Learning Disorders programs had plans to enter educational programs within their local districts.

### **Conclusions for Transfer Students**

About 23% of the transfer students stay in a NAPSEC program for less than 1 year, while about 56% stay for 1-3 years. About 60% of the severely disabled students who attend and then transfer out of a NAPSEC program develop plans to return to educational programs within their local districts. Close to 21% are able to return to regular education classrooms.

### **4-Year Comparison of Findings: Transfer Student Exit Plans**

Table 7 shows the degree to which the plans of the transfer students reflect a return to an in-district program, including regular education setting, for academic years 1999-2000, 2000-2001, 2001-2002, and 2002-2003.

**Table 7**

#### **4-Year Comparison of Transfer Student Exit Plans**

	Plans to Return to In-district Program		Plans to Return to Regular Education	
	#	%	#	%
1999-2000 n=1,232 (25% participation)	562	46	248	20
2000-2001 n=2,853 (42% participation)	1,700	60	698	25
2001-2002 n=2,344 (40% participation)	1,349	58	501	21
2002-2003 n=2,579 (51% participation)	1,558	60	541	21

The results for return to in-district programming indicate that: 46% returned in 1999-2000; 60% in 2000-2001; 58% in 2001-2002; and 60% in 2002-2003.

Those for return to regular education settings indicate: 20% in 1999-2000; 25% in 2000-2001; 21% in 2001-2002; and 21% in 2002-2003.



## **The Graduates/Aged-Out Students**

### **Description**

There were 993 graduates/aged-out students with known plans. Of these, 70% were male, while 30% were female. Approximately 61% were White, 27% were Black, 8% were Hispanic, .5% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, 2% were Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1.5% were “Other” racial/ethnic backgrounds. Approximately 24% came from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs, 11% from Medical Disorders programs, 46% from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs, and 19% from Learning Disorders programs. Finally, 87% (863 graduates/aged-out students) came from day programs, while 13% (130 graduates/aged-out students) came from residential programs.

### **Length of Stay**

Table 8 shows the length of stay in a NAPSEC-program for the graduates/aged-out students who exited.

**Table 8**

### **Length of Stay for Graduates/Aged-Out Students**

n=993

	#	%
Graduates/Aged-out Students		
< 1 year	40	4.0
1-3 years	409	41.0
4-5 years	237	24.0
6-10 years	182	18.0
11+ years	125	13.0
Total	993	100.0

As Table 8 demonstrates, 4% of the graduates were in a NAPSEC program for less than 1 year; 41% for 1-3 years; 24% for 4-5 years; 18% for 6-10 years; 13% for 11 or more years.

**The Postschool Plans By Program**

See Table 9 for an analysis of the postschool plans made by these students.

Table 9

### NAPSEC Postschool Plans for Graduates/Aged-Out Students by Program

n=993

Postschool Setting	Pervasive Developmental n=236		Medical n=109		ED/BD Programs n=454		Learning n=194		Total n=993	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Four Year College	2	.8	11	10.1	63	13.9	39	20.1	115	11.6
Two Year College	5	2.1	14	12.8	116	25.5	30	15.5	165	16.6
Trade/Technical School	3	1.3	8	7.3	40	8.8	18	9.3	69	6.9
Competitive Employment	28	11.9	16	14.7	114	25.1	31	16.0	189	19.0
Armed Forces	0	0.0	1	.9	15	3.3	2	1.0	18	1.8
<b>Mainstream Activity<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>38</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>45.8</b>	<b>348</b>	<b>76.6</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>61.9</b>	<b>556</b>	<b>55.9</b>
Vocational Rehabilitation Training Program	24	10.2	5	4.6	42	9.3	10	5.2	81	8.2
Supported Employment	56	23.7	15	13.8	13	2.9	32	16.5	116	11.7
Sheltered Employment	58	24.6	10	9.2	13	2.9	13	6.7	94	9.6
<b>Vocational Rehabilitation Activity<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>138</b>	<b>58.5</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>27.6</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>15.1</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>28.4</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>29.5</b>
Adult Partial Care	19	8.1	2	1.8	11	2.4	2	1.0	34	3.4
Nonvocational Day Program	26	11.0	17	15.6	1	.2	5	2.6	49	4.9
<b>Community-Based Program Activity<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>45</b>	<b>19.1</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>8.3</b>
Other	6	2.5	3	2.8	7	1.5	9	4.6	25	2.5
No Education/Training, Job or Program	9	3.8	7	6.4	19	4.2	3	1.5	38	3.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>993</b>	<b>100.0</b>

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

<sup>b</sup> Vocational Rehabilitation Activity – Vocational Rehabilitation Training Programs, Supported or Sheltered Employment

<sup>c</sup> Community-Based Programs Activity – Partial Care and Nonvocational Day Programs

### **Results for Graduates/Aged-Out Students**

As Table 9 shows, slightly more than 35% of the graduates/aged-out students planned to go on to a 4-year/2-year College or a Trade or Technical School. Nearly 21% 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. More than 29% planned to enter a Vocational Rehabilitation Activity by participating in a vocational rehabilitation training program or in supported or sheltered employment. Slightly more than 8% planned to enter Community-Based Program Activity by enrolling in an adult partial care or nonvocational day program. More than 2% planned to enter another setting, such as a medical or psychiatric facility. Finally, less than 4% 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 a secondary program in a NAPSEC school.

Moreover, it is interesting to note the rates at which graduates/aged-out students from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs (77%), Learning Disorders programs (62%), and Medical Disorders programs (46%) made plans to enter Mainstream Activity and the rates at which those from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs (59%) planned to enter Vocational Rehabilitation Activity.

### **Living Arrangements**

Almost 71% of the graduates/aged-out students had plans to live with a parent, other relative, or guardian. Nearly 18% planned to live independently (13.5%) or semi-independently (4.2%). Approximately 1.7% planned to live in a skill development home, foster home, or developmental center. While more than 8% had plans to live in a group home, less than 1% planned to enter a residential treatment center. Slightly less than 1% indicated plans for another living arrangement, such as entry into a medical or psychiatric facility.

### **Conclusions for Graduates/Aged-Out Students**

NAPSEC programs appear to be strongly involved in helping graduates/aged-out students make plans to transition into productive adult roles. While the majority of the graduates/aged-out students had plans to live in the community, primarily with a parent, other relative, or guardian, close to 18% had plans to live independently (13.5%) or semi-independently (4.2%). About 56% of the graduates/aged-out students planned to enter a 4-Year/2-Year College, Trade/Technical School, or Competitive Employment/Armed Forces. Overall, 94% 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 Programs or Supported/Sheltered Employment), or Community-Based Program Activity (Partial Care or Nonvocational Day Programs). A high percentage of those from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders, Learning Disorders programs, and Medical Disorders programs had plans to enter Mainstream Activity; those from Pervasive

Developmental Disorders programs had a tendency to make plans to enter Vocational Rehabilitation Activity.

#### **4-Year Comparison of Graduates/Aged-Out Students' Postschool Plans**

As Table 10 indicates, when the postschool plans of graduates/aged-out students from all programs are compared from academic year 1999-2000 through 2002-2003, the following emerges.

**Table 10**

#### **NAPSEC Graduates/Aged-Out Students: 4-Year Comparison of Postschool Plans**

	<u>Mainstream<sup>a</sup></u>		<u>Voc. Rehab.<sup>b</sup></u>		<u>Comm.-Based<sup>c</sup></u>		<u>Total</u>	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1999-2000 n=400 (25% participation)	186	46	161	40	27	7	374	93
2000-2001 n=643 (42% participation)	322	50	237	37	57	9	616	96
2001-2002 n=751 (40% participation)	430	57	230	32	40	5	700	93
2002-2003 n=993 (51% participation)	556	56	291	29	83	8	930	94

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

<sup>b</sup> Vocational Rehabilitation Activity – Vocational Rehabilitation Training Programs, Supported or Sheltered Employment

<sup>c</sup> Community-Based Programs Activity – Partial Care and Nonvocational Day Programs

Plans to participate in Mainstream Activity have occurred at the respective rates of 46% (1999-2000), 50% (2000-2001), 57% (2001-2002), and 56% (2002-2003). The 4-year average for Mainstream Activity is 52%. Plans to become involved in Vocational Rehabilitation Activity were reported as 40% (1999-2000), 37% (2000-2001), 32% (2001-2002) and 29% (2002-2003). The 4-year average is 34.5%. Finally, plans to enter Community-Based Program Activity were found to be 7% (1999-2000), 9% (2000-2001), 5% (2001-2002), and 8% (2002-2003). The 4-year average is 7%.

Over the course of the four specific academic years studied, the plans of graduates/aged-out students from NAPSEC-member programs appear to reflect the intention of these young adults to lead productive lives upon leaving the private approved school. The rates of their planned postschool productivity are: 93% (1999-2000), 96% (2000-2001), 93% (2001-2002), and 94% (2002-2003). The 4-year average is 94%.

### **Comparison of Plans by Program**

Tables 11A, 11B and 11C compare the plans of the NAPSEC graduates/aged-out students for the four academic years 1999-2000 through 2002-2003 by program and activity category.

Table 11A focuses on the plans for postschool Mainstream Activity for graduates/aged-out students who entered 4-Year/2-Year college, Trade/Technical School, Competitive Employment, or the Military.

Table 11A

**3-Year Comparison of Plans of  
NAPSEC Graduates/Aged-Out Students  
by Program: Mainstream Activity**

	Pervasive Developmental Disorders		Medical Disorders		Emotional/ Behavioral Disorders		Learning Disorders		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
2000-2001 n=643 (42% participation)	11	12	26	33	201	62	84	54	322	50
2001-2002 n=751 (40% participation)	28	25	46	53	254	77	102	46	430	57
2002-2003 n=993 (51% participation)	38	16	50	46	348	77	120	62	556	56

Plans for Mainstream Activity for students from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs vary from 12% (2000-2001) to 25% (2001-2002) to 16% (2002-2003) with an average of 17.6%. These plans for students from Medical Disorders programs were 33% (2000-2001), 53% (2001-2002), and 46% (2002-2003) with an average of 44%. For graduates/aged-out students from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs, plans for Mainstream Activity range from 62% (2000-2001) to 77% (2001-2002) to 77% (2002-2003) with an average of 72%. Finally, for graduates/aged-out students from Learning Disorders programs, the rates were 54% (2000-2001), 46% (2001-2002), and 62% (2002-2003) with an average of 54%.



Table 11B

**3-Year Comparison of Plans of  
NAPSEC Graduates/Aged-Out Students  
by Program: Vocational Rehabilitation Activity**

	Pervasive Developmental Disorders		Medical Disorders		Emotional/ Behavioral Disorders		Learning Disorders		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
2000-2001 n=643 (42% participation)	51	58	23	29	101	31	62	40	237	37
2001-2002 n=751 (40% participation)	57	50	11	13	58	18	104	47	230	31
2002-2003 n=993 (51% participation)	138	59	30	28	68	15	55	28	291	29

Table 11B sets forth the plans for the graduates/aged-out students who plan to enter Vocational Rehabilitation Activity, which includes vocational rehabilitation training programs as well as supported or sheltered employment. The students from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs planned to enter Vocational Rehabilitation Activity at the rates 58% (2000-2001), 50% (2001-2002), and 59% (2002-2003) with an average of 56%. For those from Medical Disorders programs, plans to enter Vocational Rehabilitation Activity were 23% (2000-2001), 11% (2001-2002), and 28% (2002-2003) with an average rate of entry of 21%. The rate of planned entry for graduates/aged-out students from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs was 31% (2000-2001), 18% (2001-2002), and 15% (2002-2003) with an average of 21%.

Graduates/aged-out students from Learning Disorders programs made plans to enter this type of postschool activity at the rate of 40% (2000-2001), 47% (2001-2002), and 28% (2002-2003) with an average of 38%.

**Table 11C**

**3-Year Comparison of Plans of  
NAPSEC Graduates/Aged-Out Students  
by Program: Community-Based Activity**

	Pervasive Developmental Disorders		Medical Disorders		Emotional/ Behavioral Disorders		Learning Disorders		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
2000-2001 n=643 (42% participation)	23	26	25	32	4	1	5	3	57	9
2001-2002 n=751 (40% participation)	20	18	13	15	2	.5	5	2	40	5
2002-2003 n=993 (51% participation)	45	19	19	17	12	3	7	4	83	8

Table 11C shows the plans of the graduates/aged-out students who intended to enter Community-Based Program Activity, such as partial care and nonvocational day programs. Students from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs made such plans at the rates of 26% (2000-2001), 18% (2001-2002), and 19% (2002-2003) with an average of 21%. For graduates/aged-out students from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs, the rates were reported as 1% (2000-2001), .5% (2001-2002), and 3% (2002-2003) with an average of 1.5%. Those from Medical Disorders programs had plans to access these services at

32% (2000-2001), 15% (2001-2002), and 17% (2002-2003) with an average of 21%. Finally, the rates for graduates/aged-out students from Learning Disorders programs with plans to enter Community-Based Program Activity were 3% (2000-2001), 2% (2001-2002), and 4% (2002-2003) with an average of 3%.

### **Conclusions for 3-Year Comparison by Program of Graduates/Aged-Out Student Postschool Plans**

The graduates/aged-out students from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs (62% in 2000-2001, 77% in 2001-2002, and 77% in 2002-2003) were the most likely to plan to enter Mainstream Activity roles after leaving a NAPSEC program. Students from Learning Disorders programs were the next group who tended to make such plans with rates of 54% in 2000-2001, 46% in 2001-2002, and 62% in 2002-2003. Those from Medical Disorders programs followed with rates of 33% (2000-2001), 53% (2001-2002), and 46% (2002-2003).

Graduates/aged-out students from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs were most likely to plan to enter Vocational Rehabilitation Activity with rates of 58% (2000-2001), 50% (2001-2002), and 59% (2002-2003). They are followed by those from Learning Disorders programs with rates of 40% (2000-2001), 47% (2001-2002), and 28% (2002-2003).

Finally, graduates/aged-out students with plans to enter Community-Based Program Activity tended to come from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs (26% in 2000-2001, 18% in 2001-2002, and 19% in 2002-2003) or from Medical Disorders programs (32% in 2000-2001; 15% in 2001-2002, and 17% in 2002-2003).

## **Discussion**

That more than 60% of the transfer students left their out-of-district NAPSEC-member programs with plans to return to their home districts and, in 21% of the cases, to enter the less restrictive educational environment of a regular classroom is encouraging, especially when coupled with the finding that 80% of these students are in NAPSEC programs from less than 1 year to 3 years. This helps demonstrate that some students may need the highly specialized, individualized supports that a private approved school provides before they can benefit from in-district programming.

It is also encouraging that such a high proportion of the graduates/aged-out students with serious impairments who exited from a NAPSEC-member program had transitional plans in place to pursue careers in Mainstream Activity (56%), Vocational Rehabilitation Activity (30%), or Community-Based Program Activity (8%), and that about 94% of the graduates/aged-out students had plans to engage in productive postschool activities. After all, studies show that when students in the general public school population are compared to special education students who receive special education services within the public schools, the special education students are less likely to complete high school or receive further education or vocational training (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Johnson, McGrew, Bloomberg, Bruininks & Lin, 1997).

When the outcomes for special education students with serious emotional and behavioral difficulties who attend programs within the public school are specifically investigated, the low graduation rates, poor work histories, and involvement in the criminal justice system underscore the problematic transition

of these students into stable adult roles (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). It, therefore, seems particularly encouraging that only 19 of the 454 graduates/aged-out students from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs left a NAPSEC-member program without plans for pursuing productive postschool roles. In fact, 77% of graduates/aged-out students from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs had plans to enter Mainstream Activity (48.2% to 4-year/2-year college or trade/technical school; 28.4% to competitive employment/armed forces); 15% had plans to enter Vocational Rehabilitation Activity (9% to vocational rehabilitation training programs, 3% to supported employment and 3% sheltered employment); and 3% had plans to enter Community-Based Program Activity (adult partial care and nonvocational day programs). Only 4% left without any definitive plans.

Moreover, few graduates/aged-out students from Medical Disorders programs (6.4%), Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs (3.8%), or Learning Disorders programs (1.5%) left a NAPSEC-member school without plans to engage in productive postschool activity.

NAPSEC's approved private special education centers continue to assist a broad and diverse range of special education students. For some students, NAPSEC's intensive programs are the necessary, but temporary, educational settings where the skills needed to ultimately succeed in the programs available in the local public school can be developed. For other special education

students, NAPSEC's education centers offer the optimal educational setting for those whose special needs cannot be met elsewhere.

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