Exploring A Decade of Postschool Outcomes for Ohio’s Students

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) of 2004 established a series of special education “indicators” to measure each school district’s services and results for students with disabilities. The Ohio Department of Education works with stakeholders to set annual targets—or goals for how districts should perform on these indicators. Indicator 14 focuses on tracking postschool employment, postsecondary education, and independent living outcomes of students with disabilities. This report includes data from graduates that completed both in-school and post-school surveys.

In addressing Indicator 14, the Ohio Office for Exceptional Children contracted with the Center for Innovation in Transition and Employment (CITE) at Kent State University to develop the Ohio Longitudinal Transition Study (OLTS). The OLTS is designed to collect data not only on postschool outcomes, but also on how students’ secondary programs and services promoted these outcomes. This report highlights some of the information collected. The OLTS website (www.olts.org) contains additional information regarding regional reports, copies of publications, and journal articles.

Data Collection Procedure: The CITE works in collaboration with Ohio’s sixteen regional state support teams to collect data from a portion of Ohio’s schools each year. Teachers and transition professionals interview students before graduation and one year later to evaluate school services, student satisfaction, and postschool outcomes. Essentially all of Ohio’s schools have participated in this process. A special thanks is extended to those who have supported the OLTS process over the last 10 years.
Trends and Engagement Rates for 2015 Graduates

As part of the Annual Performance Report (APR), the Ohio Longitudinal Transition Study reports yearly the cumulative percentages of special education graduates who were: (a) in postsecondary education, (b) in competitive work or postsecondary education, or (c) in any competitive work or training. These are the reported outcomes for the class of 2015. These data are reported as percentages in the table above and as numbers (of students) in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent of youth who are no longer in secondary school, had IEPs in effect at the time they left school, and were:</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Enrolled in higher education within one year of leaving high school.</td>
<td>402</td>
<td>36.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Enrolled in higher education or competitively employed within one year of leaving high school.</td>
<td>845</td>
<td>76.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Enrolled in higher education or in some other postsecondary education or training program; or competitively employed in some other employment within one year of leaving high school.</td>
<td>926</td>
<td>84.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1103</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status Category—Number of Students Engaged in Outcomes</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled in higher education within one year of leaving high school.</td>
<td>402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competitively employed within one year of leaving high school (but not enrolled higher education).</td>
<td>443</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrolled in some other postsecondary education or training program within one year of leaving high school (but not enrolled in higher education or competitively employed).</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in some other employment within one year of leaving high school (but not enrolled in higher education, some other postsecondary education or training program, or competitively employed).</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Number of Students Engaged in Outcomes</td>
<td>926</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Surveyed</td>
<td>1103</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Fifty-one percent of the graduates in this sample were successfully surveyed by phone, one year following their exit from high school. The postschool outcomes of students who were surveyed in Ohio showed a significant drop in full- and part-time work outcomes beginning in 2009 with reported employment rates dropping nearly 30% during the recession. These employment rates began showing recovery in 2012. Two-year college enrollment rates went up slightly during the recession and four-year college enrollment rates have not shown significant changes over time.
Gender and Ethnicity across Disability Type for the Sampled Classes of 2006-2015

Nearly 80% of the follow-up sample identified as Caucasian, with another 16% African American. The “Other” category consisted primarily of students identifying as Asian, Indian, Bi-Racial, and of Middle-Eastern descent. African-American students were disproportionately more likely to be identified as having an intellectual disability (which mirrors the national statistics) and may indicate higher special education referral rates for these students.

Sixty-two percent of the follow-up sample was male and 38% was female. Males comprise the majority of students in this sample within each of the disability categories, except for visual impairments.
For students interested in postsecondary education, participation in the regular education classroom, weaning modifications, and having an understanding of needed accommodations will help in preparing for college environments.

Passage of graduation exams is predictive for successful entrance and remaining in postsecondary education programs. Ten percent of the students sampled participated in alternate assessment.

Students were asked how helpful transition activities and services were on a four-point scale—with 4 rated as “very helpful” and 1 rated as “not helpful at all”. Career and technical education, working while in high school, and referral to Developmental Disabilities (DD) services were reported by this sample to be the most helpful in preparing for life after high school.
Nearly 7,800 students were interested in postsecondary education after graduation from high school. Of the entire sample (10,026), 63% were interested in 4-year, 2-year, or technical schooling, with the remaining 10% planning some other kind of educational training (e.g., Department of Developmental Disabilities (DODD) or Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD)).

Thirty-six (36) percent of the students sampled attended postsecondary education within one year after graduation (of the 73% who planned to attend after graduation). Sampled students reported that extra time (40%), tutoring (34%), and remedial courses (22%) were the most frequent accommodations received in postsecondary education. A discrepancy is seen between these accommodations versus those students reporting registration with disability services (16%).

Nearly 2,500 students did not attend postsecondary education as planned. “Other” reasons included unrealistic goals, pregnancy, family and mental health issues. Failure to register with disability services potentially indicates the need for self-advocacy, disability, and accommodation, and disability awareness training.
Students with orthopedic and visual impairments showed the highest percentage of postsecondary education enrollment (based on the number of students identified). Students with intellectual, emotional, and multiple disabilities had the lowest rates of enrollment in postsecondary education.

Rates of college enrollment showed variance across regions in Ohio. These differences must be cautiously interpreted due to the smaller samples in certain regions leading to greater chance variations.
A little more than 7,000 students in this sample were interested in full- or part-time work or enlisting in the military after graduation. Of the entire sample (10,026), 6,635 students were employed one year later (30% full-time, 21% part-time, 7% working less than 20 hours a week, and 3% in sheltered employment).

More than 11% of the sampled students were not employed one year after graduation. Sampled students indicated that enrollment in college, “other” (e.g., fired, laid off, incarcerated, medical issues), and lack of jobs were the most common reasons for not working one year after graduation.

Students were generally working in positions where on-the-job training was available for entry level positions. Retail, hospitality, manufacturing and human services were the highest reported employment categories one year after graduation.
Sampled Classes of 2006-2015

The highest rates of employment are seen for students identified as having specific learning disabilities, other health impairments, and speech/language needs. Lower rates for full- or part-time employment was reported among students with more moderate/intensive disabilities stressing the importance of authentic community-based training for students interested in work after graduation from high school.

Over 60 % of sampled students across the state of Ohio indicated that they were working in some capacity (full-time, part-time, less than part-time) one year later. Postschool goals need to be aligned with the course(s) of study to enable students to better meet those goals.
The sample of students with mild disabilities includes students with specific learning disabilities, other health impairments, emotional disorders, visual impairments, hearing impairments, and orthopedic impairments. (N=7,479). Students with specific learning disabilities have comprised the majority of students in this sample throughout the graduating classes from 2006 to 2016.

Participation in regular education classes for more than 80% of the day have remained a fairly constant predictor over time for this sample. Career and technical education also remains constant as a predictor of positive outcomes.

Engagement rates for this sample show some variability over the years with college engagement ranging from 15% to 34%. Additionally, some decreases can be seen in work engagement rates during the recession years with increases in more recent years.
The predictors of postsecondary education for the sample of students with OHI, SLD, ED, and other mild disabilities (N=7,540) focused on regular education and the percentage of graduation tests passed. Females and African Americans in this group were more likely to report college enrollment. Above line (or 1) means a positive predictor. Below line means a negative predictor.

The predictors of full-time work outcomes for the sample of students with OHI, SLD, ED, and sensory impairments focused on career-technical education and work study. Predictors of part-time work focused mainly on work study. Females and African-American students were significantly less likely to go into employment after high school. Overall, regular education, work study, and career-technical education best predicted any work after high school.
The makeup of the OLTS moderate/intensive sample includes students with autism, traumatic brain injury, intellectual disabilities, and multiple disabilities (N= 2,547). The prevalence across disabilities has shown decreasing rates of students with intellectual disabilities and increasing rates of students with autism over the 2006-2015 class graduation years.

Students in this sample show lower rates of engagement in both postsecondary education as well as employment. Differences in college engagement are more significant than the differences in employment.

Over the years, increasing rates of participation in the regular education classroom can be seen (19%-41%) while participation in career and technical education remained somewhat constant. Work study rates declined over the years and job training coordination services showed variability.
Students with Moderate/Intensive Disabilities

Predictors of postsecondary education for students sampled with autism, TBI, ID, and MD (N= 2,172) focused on regular education and a higher percentage of passage of graduation tests. Females and African American students were more likely to report two year college or any college outcomes.

_Above line (or 1) means a positive predictor. Below line means a negative predictor._

Predictors of full-time work for students sampled with autism, TBI, ID, and MD generally included regular education, career-technical education, and work study. Job training coordinator services were an additional predictor for part-time work and any work.
What is Important in Transition Planning?

The Transition Flowchart illustrates the importance of tying activities and goals to a student’s desired postschool outcomes. Age-appropriate transition assessment enables IEP teams to identify and specify students’ postschool goals, academic and social skills needed, as well as accommodations set in place to support student learning. Introductory transition modules are available through your SAFE account at the Office for Exceptional Children’s website—providing teachers and other professionals foundational information on transition.

- Ongoing Age-Appropriate Transition Assessment (AATA)
- Measureable Postschool Goals
- Course(s) of Study
- Transition Services and Activities
- Annual IEP Goals and Objectives

Ongoing, formal and informal assessments identifying student preferences, interests, needs, and strengths (PINS).

Based on future planning and AATA, what are the measureable postschool goals for education/training, employment, and living?

What course(s) of study will enable the student to meet their goals? College prep? Extended Standards? CTE? A combination?

What services and activities (i.e., instruction, career development, adult services) will help prepare students for postschool success?

How will annual progress be measured?
How to use your OLTS Data for Continuous Improvement

(Detailed steps for continuous improvement at www.olts.org)

Using Transition Indicators to Improve Region/District Level Services

Post-School Outcomes
~Indicator 14~
- Postsecondary education and/or training
- Employment
- Independent living

Good?

Why? Why Not?

Not so good?

Graduation
~Indicator 1~
- Expectations and standards?
- Various pathways available?
- Linkage to post-school environments?

Dropping Out
~Indicator 2~
- Why?
- Appropriate programs?
- Address student and family needs?

What's the Quality of Our IEPs?
~Indicator 13~
- Measurable post-school and annual goals
- Transition-related assessments
- Course of study, services, and activities
- Coordination of services

Step 1: Pull together Indicator Data
- Gather OLTS district, regional and state data.
- Use special education profile for Indicators 1, 2 and 13.
- Use Indicator Organizer (found at www.olts.org) to illustrate strengths and needs regarding transition services and activities.

Step 2: Evaluate district in Predictor Areas
- Use research-based predictor resource, such as Ohio Employment First, to identify predictor strengths and needs.
- Prioritize predictor area for district plan of action.

Step 3: Identify Evidence-Based Practices
- Research evidence-based practices resources, such as those developed OEC/ODE, Ohio Employment First, NTACT/NSTTAC.
- Determine which practices will be implemented within your plan.

Step 4: Develop a plan of action
- Consider using the S.M.A.R.T. format to develop your action plan goal.
- Break the goal down into obtainable steps.

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# Evidence-Based Practice Checklist

*The following list is designed to help improve student postsecondary outcomes.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Indicator</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Were students who planned to enter four-year colleges participating in general education classes or college preparation courses?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Were students who planned to enter full-time employment immediately after high school receiving career and technical education training?</td>
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<td>3. Were students who planned to enter college applying for scholarships or financial aid by March of their graduation year?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Were students who planned to enter full-time employment participating in work-based learning experiences before graduation?</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Were students who planned to enter college taught how to register with postsecondary disability or accessibility services?</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Were students with intellectual disabilities who planned to enter employment after high school offered school supervised work-based learning experiences?</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Were students who planned to work full-time after high school applying for employment prior to school exit?</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Were students who received SSI or other disability benefits given training or counseling regarding the use of Social Security work incentives?</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Were students who planned to enter college participating in college placement tests (i.e. ACT, SAT) prior to graduation?</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Were students who planned to live independently after graduation provided exploration of transportation options? And, if appropriate, was a mobility plan for independence created?</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Were students who planned to receive or needed to receive adult services (i.e., OOD, DD) referred to the appropriate agency prior to graduation?</td>
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If you answered “No” to any of the questions above, you may want to consult the NTACT web site for other evidence-based practices that can promote the desired outcomes, www.transitionta.org. Additional information for employment can be found at http://www.ohioemploymentfirst.org.

This page is designed to be copied and used by school districts for continuous transition improvement.