Post School Needs

of Individuals with Mild to Moderate Disabilities

in Pickaway County, Ohio, a Limited Resource Environment

A Master’s Research Project Presented to

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Abstract

This study is an investigation of the post-school needs for persons with mild to moderate disabilities in Pickaway County, Ohio. Data collected for this investigation comes from the Ohio Longitudinal Transition Survey. Information for the survey comes from both exit surveys performed before students exited secondary school, and follow-up surveys performed one year after exit. The data is used to compare state, region, and county inputs for students with disabilities. A closer analysis of the Pickaway County data within the context of six research-based practices associated with improved student outcomes, both while in high school and after leaving, is used to make some general statements regarding the post-school needs for persons with mild to moderate disabilities in the county. Data was also collected using interviews with parents, special education teachers, and county agencies regarding students’ needs. Findings revealed three areas of potential community supports for helping students with disabilities in Pickaway County. These areas include providing services relating to individual tutoring, supporting students as they acquire employment through their own efforts, and providing services after graduation to help students who want to participate in post-secondary education and employment.
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The first several years after leaving high school can be especially challenging for young adults as they transition into the world of adulthood. Finding employment, housing, transportation, and pursuing post-secondary education goals are among just a few of the challenges young adults face as they enter a new world of independence. This period is described by Halpern (1992) as ‘a period of floundering.’ Unfortunately this ‘floundering period’ according to Test, Aspell, and Everson (2006) often reaches beyond these few years after high schools and for some, can continue throughout a lifetime.

Those most significantly impacted during this time of transition are young adults with disabilities. Individuals with the most severe disabilities are often supported with residential services, supported employment, and employment in sheltered workshops, while maintaining a network of family and community supports that reach beyond high school and into adulthood. Collaboration efforts between county boards of Developmental Disabilities (formerly Mental Retardation or MRDD), state agencies, such as Ohio’s Rehabilitation Services Commission, and federal agencies, such as the Social Security Administration, often seek to improve the level of independence and autonomy for young adults with more severe to moderate disabilities. While it is true that there are major challenges and post-school needs for young adults with severe to moderate disabilities, the focus of this investigation is on young adults with mild disabilities who often ‘flounder’ when services that were formerly available under IDEA during their school years, are no longer available to them. It becomes critical for these young adults that the community steps in to take over, when IDEA steps out.
The Community

Pickaway County, Ohio is a predominantly rural county with a population of about 53,000 people (Pickaway County Auditor, 2010). The county’s seat is located in the city of Circleville, about 30 miles south of Ohio’s capital of Columbus. Pickaway County has a strong agricultural base and was once an economically thriving county predominantly supported by a number of manufacturing plants. Corporations like DuPont, General Electric, RCA, Container Corporation of America, and PPG Industries once helped Pickaway County’s economy to thrive (Styers, 2003). However, over the past 20 years, many of these corporations and many manufacturing jobs have left the region.

According to statistics (May, 2010) from the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Pickaway County currently has an unemployment rate of 11.1% which is slightly higher than the state’s unemployment rate of 10.7% and the U.S. rate of 9.7%. Though the manufacturing industry still employs a great number of residents in Pickaway County, the health industry now offers some economic support to the county’s citizens (Pickaway Progress Partnership, 2010; U.S. Census Bureau, 2002). Of the industries in the private sector, Berger Health System is currently the largest employer in Pickaway County with 700 employees (Pickaway Progress Partnership Survey, 2010). Perhaps one of the most startling indicators of the county’s economic situation is the nearly 50% of economically depressed students who receive free and reduced lunch in the county’s four district schools (Ohio Department of Education Report Card data for 2008-2009). Westfall, a district located in the western part of the county and supported predominantly by agricultural income, reported that a staggering 65% of its district’s students were economically depressed (ODE, 2010).
At a recent induction ceremony of the National Junior Honor Society at Everts Middle School in Pickaway County (2010), Commissioner, Ula Jean Meztler gave a brief history of the county’s economic history. She told of the county’s strong agricultural background and of the manufacturing boom during the 1950’s that lasted up through the 1980s. The commissioner told of a time when a family could be supported by working a farm or a job in one of the county’s plants. She introduced the term “globalization” to the students and spoke them about how, with globalization, the economic fabric of the community has changed. She spoke to the students about the importance of their education in the new economy, and the necessity of continuing their education beyond high school. Mrs. Metzler’s motto “the more you learn, the more you earn” left the middle school students with something to consider as they begin to make choices that will affect their post-secondary lives.

While Mrs. Metzler addressed the entire population of middle school students, the correlation between ‘learning and earning’ has significant impact for the population of students with disabilities. Kortering and Braziel (2001) report that “The Office of Special Education Programs suggests that youth with disabilities fail to complete school at a rate that doubles that of general education peers” (p. 3). Research regarding the general education population indicates that students who fail to graduate experience “higher rates of unemployment and underemployment (Bound & Johnson, 1995),” have “higher rates of unexpected parenthood (Coley, 1995) and drug use (Swaim, Beauvis, Chavez & Oetting, 1997)” and “account for more than half of the heads of households on welfare and in prison (Coley, 1995)” (as cited in Test 2006, (p. 6). While these statistics paint a grim picture for the general education population of
students who fail to graduate, it is likely that the picture for students with disabilities who dropout is even less optimistic.

In Pickaway County, however, there is some basis for optimism. According to Ohio’s Part B Annual Performance Report 2007-2008 (revised April, 2010), the state’s target graduation rate for students with disabilities was 86.1%. Students with disabilities in Pickaway County exceeded the state target, graduating at an average rate of 86.6% during the 2007-2008 school year (ODE, 2008-2009 report card data of the combined districts of Circleville City Schools, Logan Elm, Teays Valley, and Westfall). This rate falls only 4% behind the average total graduation rate of 90.6 % for all students graduating in the county. When compared to the average 74.9% graduation rate of the nation as a whole (percentage based on 2007-2008 results reported by the U.S. Department of Education, June 2010), both students with and without disabilities in Pickaway County seem to fare better in general. Perhaps there is something to be said about the county schools’ commitment to the mandates set forth in the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA).

**Literature Review**

To better inform and organize this investigation four works of literature were consulted extensively and referenced throughout the study. The following reviews describe these works as they are used for the purposes of this study.

**The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)**

IDEA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, has, for thirty-five years now, mandated equal access for children with disabilities to a “free and appropriate public
education.” This landmark decision by the United States Congress in 1975 (formerly Education of All Handicapped Children Act, PL 94-142), has greatly impacted the population of individuals with disabilities who were formerly “excluded entirely from the education system” or “had only limited access to the education system and were therefore denied an appropriate education (U.S. Department of Education, 2007, p. 1). Not only did this Act mandate a free and appropriate education for individuals with disabilities, but it also provided protection for the rights of children with disabilities and their parents, offered federal assistance to states and localities to provide for the educational needs of children with disabilities, and mandated measures that would assure the effectiveness of efforts to educate all children with disabilities (National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities, 1996).

The IDEA legislation requires schools receiving federal funding to create an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for each student identified with a disability. The IEP is said to be “the cornerstone” (Gartin & Murdick, 2005) of IDEA and contains six mandated components (Test, 2006). The sixth component, known as the transition component, was added in 1990 when IDEA (P.L. 101-476) was amended to require “that all IEPs address transition goals no later than the students 16th birthday” (Halpern, 1992, p. 206). In addition to the age requirement, the amendment also required IEP teams to consider each student’s needs relating to transition, each student’s preferences and interests for instruction, and desires relating to community, employment, and post-school goals (Clark, 1996).

These post-school goals were further emphasized with the 1997 reauthorization of IDEA which acknowledged that a primary purpose of the free appropriate public education guaranteed to children and youth with disabilities is to “prepare them for employment and
independent living” (Cameto, 2004, [IDEA ‘97 Final Regulations, Section 300.1(a)]). More recently, in 2004, IDEA was amended again with key changes that affected both the way transition services are viewed and implemented. Preparing students with disabilities for “further education” in addition to the previously stated goals of employment and independent living became a primary consideration in the amended law. The law was also amended to emphasize that transition services are to be:

- within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child’s movement from school to post school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. (Wright, 2004, p. 11)

Test (2006), in his explanation of the 2004 amendments, states that “schools are now required to include transition goals beyond high school in IEPs” (p. 22). It is clear that legislation is moving toward what Kohler (1996) calls a ‘transition perspective of education.’ At the heart of this perspective are the individual student’s own personal goals related to life beyond high school. According to Kohler (1996), these goals are consumer driven or determined by the student’s own individual needs, desires and preferences. Not only did IDEA 2004 contain legislation with a transition perspective, but the law also defined accountability measures to ensure that schools embrace a transition perspective by adequately and appropriately providing these services to meet the individual goals of their students.
In order to measure how well states are doing in helping students reach their education goals, IDEA (2004) contains legislation that requires each state to evaluate its efforts in implementing the Part B requirements of IDEA by requiring states to report the post-school engagement of students with disabilities in postsecondary education and employment. The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) at the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) has identified 20 indicators for which each state must develop measurable and rigorous targets. Each state must also describe how it will improve implementations by submitting a State Performance Plan (SPP) every six years. Based on each state’s Annual Performance Report (APR), which shows the state’s progress toward meeting the goals contained in the SSP, the federal government determines each state’s compliance with Part B of IDEA. The Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) in the Department of Education will review each state’s report and may determine that a state: meets requirements, needs assistance, needs intervention, or needs substantial intervention (IDEA 2004 section 616(b)). Depending on the determination, the Secretary of Education may impose certain actions that effect federal funding to states that do not meet requirements.

In 2008, Ohio was determined to be in need of assistance following a review of its Annual Performance Report. According to IDEA, for states in need of assistance, the Secretary must take one or more of the following actions: 1) impose actions that include advising states of available sources of technical assistance to meet needs in deficit areas, 2) direct the use of state level funds provided to meet areas of need, or 3) may identify the state as a high risk grantee in which the federal government may impose special conditions on the state’s IDEA Part B grant award.
The Secretary’s action for Ohio in 2008 was to advise the state of Ohio of available sources of technical assistance to meet needs in Ohio’s deficit areas. In 2009, it was determined that Ohio met the requirements of IDEA, but in 2010 the OSEP found that Ohio was in need of intervention (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). Ohio revises its SPP (last revision February 1, 2010) periodically in order to “maintain or improve performance across indicators” (Ohio Department of Education, 2010, p. 2).

Not only do the federal IDEA accountability measures apply to states, but states are also required to apply similar measures to Local Education Agency (LEAs), or school districts. Each year, states must report the performance of each of their school districts on the targets defined in their State Performance Plan (SPP) and the state’s Annual Performance Report (APR). States must also report to the public each district’s performance toward each target and report whether or not each district met the targets indicated.

The Ohio Longitudinal Transition Study (OLTS)

Ohio’s State Performance Plan (SPP) outlines the 20 target indicators identified by OSEP and contains measurable goals and timelines for data collection and needed improvements. Ohio’s target indicator #14 focuses on improving post-school outcomes for students with disabilities that are no longer in secondary school. It is the responsibility of the Office for Exceptional Children (OEC) to report to the federal government the percent of youth with IEPs that are no longer in secondary school and who have been competitively employed, enrolled in some type of post-secondary school, or both, within one year of leaving high school (referred to as post-school engagement). The data used to determine Ohio’s progress toward this indicator is collected using the Ohio Longitudinal Transition Study (OLTS) (Ohio Department of Education,
This study, modeled after the National Longitudinal Transition Study (Wagner, 2005), identifies students’ expectations at school exit and outcomes one year after leaving high school. The exit surveys are given to students with disabilities just prior to leaving high school. In this survey, students are asked about their postsecondary goals and how they evaluated their high school experiences. The follow-up surveys ask these same students how well their goals were met one year later. The current OLTS 2009 Annual State Report (Ohio Department of Education, 2009) is an overview of the survey findings for the state for the past five years. It is evident that for students with disabilities, there is an increasing emphasis on the main purpose of education “to prepare students for further education, employment and independent living” (IDEA, 2004, Section 601 (d) (1)). It is also evident that there is increasing accountability at all levels to ensure that it happens.

Sustaining Secondary Transition Programs in Local Schools

In an article focused on sustaining secondary transition programs in local schools, Benz, Lindstrom, Unruh and Waintrup (2004) suggest seven secondary transition practices that are associated with greater outcomes for students with disabilities while in high school and once they exit. Their research indicates that for students still in high school, these seven practices are associated with greater student success and a decreased the dropout rate for students with disabilities. After leaving school, these practices are associated with better employment and outcomes with postsecondary education.

The first practice identified by Benz et al. (2004) includes students receiving direct, individualized tutoring and support to help them complete homework assignments, attend class, and stay focused on school. These services are particularly important for students with
disabilities as academic courses become increasingly complex and completion rates for students with disabilities continues to be higher than their general education peers (Test, 2006).

The second practice suggested associated with greater student success includes student participation in vocational or career-technical classes during the last two years of high school. Classes that offer specific occupation instruction are reported as being the most beneficial. Career-technical education is a school based training which is defined by the Perkins Act (1998) as:

organized educational programs offering sequences of courses directly related to preparing individuals for paid or unpaid employment in current or emerging occupations requiring other than a baccalaureate or advanced degree. Programs include competency-based applied learning which contributes to an individual's academic knowledge, higher-order reasoning, problem solving skills, and the occupational-specific skills necessary for economic independence as a productive and contributing member of society. (U.S. Department of Education, Archived Information, 2002, p. 1).

According to Test et al. (2006), the most effective career-technical education occurs when a student takes four or more classes in one occupation area. This specialization is associated with increased employment and higher wages. However, research indicates that students with disabilities seldom specialize and often take a number of unrelated CTE courses accounting for less than 5% of students who participate in CTE concentrated occupational areas. Careful planning is needed during early high school years to ensure that students with
disabilities participate in specialized occupational training and hands-on experiences in a sequenced series in order to receive the greatest benefit.

Participation in paid work experience in the community during the last two years of high school is the third practice suggested by Benz et. al (2004) as promoting better student outcomes. Community based job experiences provide a number of benefits for students. Aside from the economic benefit of earning a pay check, students also receive authentic experiences with time and money management, developing social skills and relationships, adjusting to employer expectations and developing a sense of self-efficacy.

The fourth practice includes student competence in functional academic and transition skills. Developing academic competence in areas such as reading, math, writing, and problem solving is critical for improving student outcomes in today’s highly competitive global economy. Together mandates in NCLB (2002) and IDEA (2004) have raised the bar for educators in ensuring proficiency of all students in academics including those with disabilities. With these Acts, an increased emphasis on including students with disabilities in the general education curriculum has changed the face of traditional education. Teachers are expected to deliver research-based instruction in multiple and innovative ways that will promote learning for all students. Students with disabilities (with and without accommodations) are expected to make adequate academic progress along with their peers. While there are challenges both for students and for teachers in an inclusive classroom, the research points to improved student outcomes in math and reading for students with disabilities who are included in the general education classroom (Knokey, 2006).
Benz et al. (2004) also suggests that competency in developing transition skills such as; managing money, career awareness, self-advocacy, goal setting, and developing personal social skills are also linked to improved student outcomes. To greater emphasize the importance of providing students with opportunities for developing these skills, IDEA (2004) states the purpose of a student’s free and appropriate education is to “prepare them further education, employment, and independent living (Sec. 601 (d) (1) (A)].” The law also requires transition services to be in place by the time a student reaches his or her 16th birthday (IDEA 2004, Sec. 614 (d (1) (A) (VIII) (aa); Test, 2006). However for many students with disabilities, the need for transition services and related activities for developing competency in the areas mentioned above is needed long before a student’s 16th birthday. According to Test (2006), waiting until a student’s 16th birthday will be too late for some students to begin the transition planning process. Early planning with consideration of a student’s interests and skills may be considered best practice when it comes to transition planning for students with disabilities.

The fifth practice identified by Benz and colleagues (2004) as promoting improved student outcomes involves participation in a transition planning process that promotes self-determination. Self-determination has been defined by Raymond (2008, p. 373) as “being able to act as the primary causal agent in one’s life and make choices and decisions.” For students with disabilities, developing skills of self-advocacy, self-determination and self-efficiency can be instrumental in reaching goals during and beyond school. These skills, according to Test (2006), are “the most important skills for students with disabilities who want to pursue post-secondary education.” A growing emphasis on self-determination is apparent in recent legislation (ADA,
Post School Needs

1990; IDEA 1990, 1997, 2005 amendments; Rehabilitation Act Amendments, 1992) and in the funding available to support initiatives that help students with disabilities acquire these skills as an important outcome of the educational process (Test, 2006). Additionally, Bremer (2003) reports “students who have self-determination skills have a stronger chance of being successful in making the transition to adulthood, including employment and independence (p. 1).

Courses in self-determination can be beneficial for students with disabilities; however, to adequately develop self-determination skills, students must have daily opportunities to practice their skills in order to generalize them in other settings (Test, 2006). Educators should take particular care to ensure that students with disabilities have adequate opportunities within the school environment and in the community to develop the self-determination skills they need to meet their post-secondary goals.

Receiving direct assistance to understand and connect with resources related to post-school goals is the sixth practice Benz et al. (2004) identifies as promoting improved student outcomes. Consideration related to goals in post-secondary education, employment, independent living and community participation are all areas in which students with disabilities may need direct assistance to understand and connect with resources to meet their post-secondary goals in these areas. Direct assistance can come through a variety of school and community resources. Guidance counselors, admissions counselors, financial advisors, employment agencies, and Job and Family Services are among just a few resources that are often readily available for students. Not only is it important that students connect with the appropriate resources but it also becomes important that students have an understanding of
their own needs relating to their post-school goals. Helping students assess their own needs and getting them connected with the appropriate sources can be instrumental in helping them achieve their post-secondary goals.

The final practice identified by Benz et. al (2004) is graduation from high school. Graduation from high school has been characterized by Zhang (2005, p. 25) as a “major milestone,” marking the “transition from adolescence to young adulthood.” Since the post WWII era of manufacturing and industry and until recent decades receiving a high school diploma has traditionally been considered a valuable asset for individuals in the U.S. labor market (Dunn, 2004). However, in today’s global high-tech economy, graduation from high school, according to National Center Educational Statistics (2001, p. 1), “is a minimum requirement for entry into the labor market” and a requirement for accessing further education or training. In legislation known as the ‘Dropout Prevention Act (NCLB, 2002, Sec. 1801)’, an emphasis on improving graduation rates in the U.S. was addressed by providing funds to states for the purpose of dropout prevention and student reentry into secondary schools (NCLB, 2002, Sec. 1802). In alignment with the NCLB (2002) legislation, IDEA (2004) further emphasized the improvement of graduation rates for students with disabilities by providing funding to states that establish goals for the performance of children with disabilities that “address graduation rates and dropout rates” (IDEA 2004, Sec. 612 (a)(15)(A)(iii)). “Historically there has been limited research into the dropout rates, including causes and behaviors associated with dropout rates for students with disabilities. Perhaps with the growing attention and federal funding to ensure higher graduation rates for ALL students, this area of research will expand in the near future
giving educators a better indication of best practices related to increasing graduation rates for students with disabilities.

**Mild to Moderate Disabilities**

Individuals experience disabilities at different degrees and in various combinations. Some individuals may require very little support for a brief period of time while others require extensive supports throughout a lifetime. Research indicates that the majority of students receiving special education services are those who do not require extensive services and are considered to be students with mild disabilities. Students with learning disabilities comprise 48.3% of the total number of individuals ages 6-21 receiving special services (Raymond, 2008, p. 6). For this population of students, certain considerations should be addressed. According to Raymond (2008), students with mild disabilities are frequently perceived to require few or minor accommodations in order to be successful in the general education curriculum. Though these students often behave like students their own age, their disability may play a part in compromising their success in the general education curriculum. For these students, special education services can fill the gap between (accommodate) student deficits in learning in order to meet their educational goals. There are, however, particular challenges for this population of students. For students with mild disabilities, the disabilities are often invisible to others and therefore may not obtain the same understanding, assistance, or sympathy that students with more severe disabilities may receive from others (Raymond, 2008). Often self-esteem and competency issues arise. The challenge of ‘never-quite-getting-it’ or ‘struggling-to-get-it’ can certainly compromise an individual’s self-concept and initiative during and beyond school years.
This investigation is intended to identify the needs of these individuals in Pickaway County that go beyond the school years in order to make some recommendations that may help to improve future outcomes.

Method

Procedures

To investigate the post-school needs of students with disabilities in Pickaway County a mixed research method was selected. Quantitative data reported in the Ohio Longitudinal Transition Study was collected and analyzed for comparisons at state, regional and county levels. Qualitative data was also collected in interviews with parents and intervention specialists.

Participants. The primary participants were individuals with disabilities who were either exiting secondary school or who were contacted a year following exit to complete a follow-up survey for the Ohio Longitudinal Transition Study (OLTS). The 2009 Annual State Report of the OLTS includes data collected from 4,567 participants statewide. Of the survey data included in the 2009 report, data from 1,044 participants surveyed between 2005 and 2006 is included along with data collected from 3,523 participants between 2006 and 2008. Regional data included in the investigation comes from 478 participants surveyed between 2005 and 2008.

The county data used in this investigation comes from 28 students with mild to moderate disabilities surveyed between 2006 and 2008 from Pickaway County schools. Of the 28 participants from Pickaway County, twenty reported having a specific learning disability, two reported having other health impairments and two reported having intellectual disabilities. Four respondents did not report a disability type.
Of the participants surveyed, 21 reported that they attended mainstream classes for at least 80% of the time, six reported that they attended mainstream classes between 40-80% of the time and one reported that he/she attended few or less than 40% mainstream classes. None of the participants reported attending self-contained special education classes.

Data collection instrument. Data for the investigation came from the Ohio Longitudinal Transition Study (OLTS). In compliance with the requirements of IDEA (2004), the State of Ohio through the Office for Exceptional Children has contracted with the Center for Innovation in Transition and Employment (CITE) at Kent State University to collect, manage, and analyze the results of information collected from individuals just prior to leaving high school and one year later (ODE, 2010). Thirty students with disabilities in Pickaway County were surveyed between 2006 and 2008 using the OLTS survey tool (see Survey Sample, Appendix A). Since the purpose of this study was to investigate the needs of students with mild to moderate disabilities in Pickaway County; the data for two students with severe disabilities is not included. Statewide data used for this study was obtained by accessing the 2009 Annual State Report of the Ohio Longitudinal Transition Study through the Ohio Department of Education’s website (www.ode.state.oh.us/). Regional data was obtained by accessing the OLTS website (www.olts.org) at Kent State University. Pickaway County specific data was obtained by contacting CITE’s Outreach Director, Robert Baer, Ph.D.

Interviews.

Parent interviews were conducted by phone in July of 2010. To satisfy confidentiality concerns, intervention specialists or other appropriate school personnel initially contacted former students or their parents for consent to be interviewed. Contact information for
participants consenting to be interviewed was given to the investigator in this research. Two parents were contacted and asked a series of three questions regarding the post-school concerns related to their son or daughter.

**Results**

In the following section, an attempt is made at comparing some of the data reported in the OLTS by state, region, and county. The data reported in the OLTS for the state and region contains information collected for all students with disabilities. Data reported for Pickaway County, however, only contains information collected for students with mild to moderate disabilities. Since all data sets do not contain the same population, it is not possible to directly compare percentages between them.

**State Data**

In the 2009 Annual State Report (ODE, spring, 2009), the major findings were published relating to post-school outcomes in employment, postsecondary education, and independent living for students with disabilities in the state of Ohio. The findings included both the projected outcomes from the exit surveys completed before students left high school, and the actual outcomes when they were surveyed one year later.

**Anticipated versus actual post-school outcomes.** For the employment outcomes, data indicated that 80% of students planned to be working after graduation, but only 70% were actually working one year later and fewer were working full-time and part-time than expected. A major finding regarding postsecondary education indicated that of the 70% of students who planned to be enrolled in four-year, two-year, or technical/vocational postsecondary education programs after graduation, only 36% were actually enrolled one year later. Also, only half of the
students who planned to enroll in the military were enrolled. Another major finding was in regards to independent living. According to the exit surveys, 60% of the students surveyed planned to be living independently but only 20% actually were living independent from their families one year later.

**Reasons for not meeting expected outcomes.** Additional findings reported in the 2009 Annual State Report include reasons students gave for not working and not attending post-secondary education. The most prevalent reasons students reported for not working were attending some sort of post-secondary education or training (34%) and not being able to find a job or a job of interest (36%). Reasons students indicated for not attending post-secondary education included changing their plans (32%) and not having enough money (29%).

**Regional Data**

The report for Region 11 in the state of Ohio that includes Pickaway County also contains data regarding both expected and actual post-school outcomes for students with disabilities.

**Anticipated versus actual post-school outcomes.** According to the data collected between 2005 and 2008, 86% of students with disabilities in Region 11 expected to be working either full or part-time, however, only 74% were working either full or part-time at follow-up. Of the 77.3% of students that expected to be enrolled in some type of post-secondary education, only 42.3% were actually enrolled. Of the 7.5% of students that had planned to enroll in the armed forces, only 4.1% actually enrolled. Students also reported their expected living arrangements after graduation. Of the students surveyed, 46.2% planned to be living with
parents or a relative and 20% expected to be living on their own. The follow-up indicated, however, that 72.4% were living with a parent or a relative and only 7.3% lived on their own.

**Pickaway County Data**

Somewhat comparatively, data collected between May 2006 and May 2008 for Pickaway County indicates that 82% of the students with mild to moderate disabilities surveyed expected to be working either full or part-time however, only 64% were working either full or part-time at follow-up. Of the 85.7% of students that expected to be enrolled in some type of post-secondary education, only 50% were actually enrolled. Of the students surveyed, 42.8% planned to be living with parents or a relative and 21.4% expected to be living on their own. The follow-up indicated however that 67.8% were living with parent or a relative and only 17.8% lived on their own.

**Comparative Analysis of State, Region, and County Data**

Of the most significant differences between what students planned to do after graduation and what they were actually doing in the state, region, and county is the difference between students who had planned to work (82%) and students who were actually working (42.9%) in Pickaway County. When students were surveyed at follow-up, however, no student indicated that they needed work. Reasons given for not working included lack of transportation, working would cause them to lose benefits, having a baby, or being pregnant.

Table 1 provides a comparison of the OLTS data for the State, Region 11, and Pickaway County between 2006 and 2008, reported in the spring of 2009.
Table 1

OLTS Data for State, Region, and Pickaway County

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Planned to be working after graduation</th>
<th>Actually working (full or part time) one year after graduation</th>
<th>Planned to be enrolled in four-year, two-year, tech./voc. postsecondary education program after graduation</th>
<th>Actually enrolled in four-year, two-year, tech./voc. postsecondary education program one year after graduation</th>
<th>Planned to be living independently after graduation</th>
<th>Actually living independently one year after graduation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region 11</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>77.3%</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pickaway Co.</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
<td>85.7%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Secondary Transition Practices and Student Outcomes

**Individualized tutoring.** The first of the seven secondary transition practice identified by Benz et al. (2004) and described earlier in the literature review, involves providing “direct, individualized tutoring and support to complete homework assignments, attend class and stay focused on school” (p. 40).

When Pickaway County students were asked on the OLTS survey to identify services or experiences they thought helped them to reach their goals, 13 students provided specific
responses. Of the 13, seven students credited a teacher’s help and/or tutoring services for helping them reach their goals.

Circleville High School in Pickaway County recently implemented the Milestone program to offer help to at-risk and struggling students. This specialized program is designed to help high school students (both with and without special needs) improve academically, develop career skills, and graduate from high school (After School Programs Brochure, Circleville City Schools, 2009). Some activities in the program include tutoring services to help students pass difficult portions of state assessments, credit recovery software to help students recover credits for classes that are needed for graduation, employment readiness activities that help students prepare for employment, and opportunities for service oriented learning (Afterschool Programs, 2009).

Not only is the Milestone Program offered to students at the high school level, a similar program is offered to students through the Extra Mile program in grades 3-8. In Extra mile, students receive individualized tutoring and support to complete homework assignments, pass state assessments, and develop socially through service learning projects (Afterschool Programs, 2009). Preliminary data reported by the district indicates that the graduation rate increased since the Milestone program was implemented during the 2009-2010 school year going from 78% for the 2008-2009 school year to 84% in the 2009-2010 school year (Educational Forum Program, 2010). No data was referenced or analyzed during this investigation that can suggest a direct correlation between the increased graduation rate (for students with or without disabilities) and the Milestone program. Perhaps as the program continues in the future, data may be made available for further investigation.
Vocational Education. The second transition practice identified by Benz and colleagues (2004) involves participation in vocational education classes during the last two years of high school, especially classes that offer instruction that is occupation specific. In Pickaway County, students may choose to attend the Pickaway Ross Joint Vocational Center (PRJVC) during their last two years of high school. PRJVC is a school offering vocational training to students in the two Ohio counties of Pickaway and Ross. Preparation for attending the vocational school begins in 8th grade, when students are invited to tour the vocational school. The 8th grade Intervention Specialist, Ms. Donna Reed is instrumental in coordinating transition services for students coming into and moving out of one of the county’s middle schools. In a recent interview, Ms. Reed (D. Reed, personal communication, February 3, 2010) stressed the importance of planning a course of study for students with disabilities as they enter high school. She explained that students who want to attend the vocational school are required to obtain a certain number of credit hours in subjects such as health and physical education that are not offered at the vocational school in order to graduate. She noted that often times students haven’t planned in advance and therefore are unable to meet the requirements for some secondary and postsecondary opportunities. She also stressed the importance of educating both the student and the parent regarding credit requirements and secondary options such as the vocational school and post-secondary options, as many parents have very little knowledge about the requirements or available options. In accordance with IDEA (PL 105-17, Section 614 (d) (I) (A) (vii) (I)), the state of Ohio requires that:

For each child with a disability, beginning at age fourteen (or younger, if determined appropriate by the IEP team), the IEP shall include a statement, updated annually, of the
transition service needs of the child under the applicable components of the child’s IEP that focuses on the child’s courses of study (such as participation in advanced-placement courses or a vocational education program). (Operating Standards for Ohio Educational Agencies Serving Children with Disabilities, ODE, 2008)

As this investigation does not include any data related to transition statements for students at or before age 14, it is not possible to determine whether or not there were students who wanted to participate in vocational training that were prevented because they were unable to meet the requirements. Of the 28 students surveyed at time of exit, seven reported participation in Career and/or Technical Education. For students that participated in Career/Technical Education, the following programs were identified; Allied Health, Career Based Intervention Program (CBIP), auto mechanics, auto body, cosmetology, landscaping and general merchandising.

Students surveyed one year later were asked to identify the type of job they were currently working: three students reported working in construction, two reported working in health care, two reported working industrial/factory work, one student reported working in marketing/sales/retail, two students were working as auto mechanics, one student reported working as a cosmetologist and one reported working in the secretarial/clerical/business area. Five students reported ‘other’ as their current job category. In this category, students reported their current job as detailing cars, working security, babysitting, farming and working for FedEx.

Responses for ten of the students regarding job type were missing at the time of follow-up. Though the data does not make a direct connection between students who participated in vocational education classes during high school and the jobs students were working at the time
of follow-up, a reasonable assumption could be made that there is a connection between at least four of the students who participated in vocational training (Allied Health, cosmetology, auto mechanics and auto body) and the area in which they were currently working.

**Community-based work experience.** The third practice identified by Benz et al. (2004) for improving outcomes for students with disabilities while in school and after exit is associated with participation in paid work experience in the community during the last two years of high school. Since developing an economic base of support is critical to independent living, it makes sense that students who participate in authentic work experience during high school will gain those important skills instrumental in obtaining and maintaining employment. School-based training such as integrating employment and academic skills, using a functional curriculum and offering career-technical courses can play a critical role in preparing students for future employment.

For students with disabilities, however, gaining an edge by participating in the real world of work is critical since statistics indicate that for individuals between 18 and 29, the employment rate is only 57% which is considerably lower than the 72% employment rate of individuals without disabilities in the same age range (National Organization on Disability, 2004; Test et al., 2006). Of the different types of work experiences that students with disabilities in Pickaway County participated in during high school (in-school work, job shadowing, volunteering, and work acquired on their own), more students rated the work experiences that they acquired on their own as being helpful or very helpful.

According to the OLTS data for Pickaway County, of the 28 students with disabilities who graduated during the years 2006-2008, twenty-one (75%) reported having at least one job at
exit, six reported having no job at exit and data for one student was missing. When students were surveyed a year after exit, 12 reported that they were working either full or part time (paid employment) which is about 14% below the national average reported by National Organization on Disability (NOD) in 2004.

Though only 12 of the 28 students reported working at the time of the follow-up survey, interestingly, 18 students reported a current job type. It is unclear why students who did not report that they were working reported a job type. One possibility could be that some of the students were working more than one job, the data, however, does not clarify the difference. When asked during follow-up if there were any services or experiences students perceived as being particularly helpful in preparing them to meet their goals, only one student credited employment (working in different places during the school) as being helpful.

**Functional academic and transition skills.** The fourth practice identified by Benz et al. (2004) as improving outcomes for students with disabilities is competence in functional academic and transition skills. When Congress authorized the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act in 2001, students with disabilities became a part of the ALL students that must meet academic proficiency by the year 2014. The requirements of NCLB and the mandates set forth in IDEA, theoretically, combine to create the best possible learning situation for students with disabilities ensuring that students are educated in the least restrictive environment, by highly qualified teachers, and are making adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward state content standards.

**Highly qualified teachers.** The most current data (ODE, Report Card Data 2008-2009) measuring the percentage of core academic subject classes taught by highly qualified teachers
in Pickaway County indicates that 98.1% of core academic subject classes are taught by highly qualified teachers. The most current data reported for measuring the progress of students with disabilities toward AYP indicates that two schools, Circleville and Logan Elm, met AYP in both content areas measured (reading and math) for the 2008-2009 school year and two districts, while Teays Valley and Westfall, met AYP for math but not for reading (ODE, Report Card Data 2008-2009).

Academic proficiency. According to the OLTS data collected between 2006 and 2008 for students with disabilities in Pickaway County, 23 of the 28 students surveyed were proficient in math, 22 students were proficient in reading, 24 students were proficient in writing, 18 were proficient in science and 18 were proficient in citizenship. Of the 28 students surveyed, 27 participated in state assessments and only one student participated in an alternate assessment. Students were also asked at the time of exit to rate a number of items according to how helpful they were in preparing them for life after graduation. When asked to rate proficiency testing; 12 students indicated that the proficiency tests were not helpful at all, eight students said they were somewhat helpful, four students indicated the tests were helpful and two students thought the tests were very helpful. There were two students whose responses were missing from the data.

Students were also asked to rate a number of items that may fall into the category of transition services which, according to federal mandates, are:

to be within a results oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational
education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. (IDEA 2004, Section 602 (34) (A)]

**IEP and Transition Meetings.** An instrumental element in helping students with disabilities reach their goals related to transition is the IEP team. The IEP team includes the student, parents, and other individuals (teachers, intervention specialists, etc.), and agencies who meet together (at least annually) to help review a student’s progress and set future goals and objectives that are student-directed. By age 16, students should have a service plan that is coordinated to focus on each student's preferences, interests, needs, and strengths and should include both in-school supports as well as supports in the community that are identified in the student’s IEP (Olsen, Platt, & Dieker, 2008).

Of the 28 students surveyed by the OLTS in Pickaway County, 12 students (43%) rated their IEP and transition meetings as very helpful in preparing them for life after graduation, 10 (36%) rated the meetings as helpful, four (14%) said they were somewhat helpful and two (7%) students indicated that they thought the meetings were not helpful at all.

Students also rated a number of school-based training opportunities when surveyed at exit from high school. An in-school job is one type of school-based training that some students participate in during high school. An in-school job is one in which work situations are similar to situations they might find in the real workplace.

**In-school work.** In-school work situations allow instructors to control a number of variables and may be a good first step in preparing high school students for community-based work situations (Test et al., 2006). Nine of the 28 students surveyed by the OLTS in Pickaway
County rated how well they thought their in-school jobs prepared them for life after graduation; one student indicated that the work was very helpful in preparing them for life after graduation; six indicated that the work was helpful, and two thought the work was somewhat helpful.

**Career-technical education.** Students also rated career-technical education (CTE) for how well they thought it prepared them for life after graduation.

Of the students surveyed by the OLTS in Pickaway County, eleven rated how well they thought CTE prepared them for life after graduation; eight students indicated that CTE was very helpful in preparing them for life after graduation, one indicated that CTE was helpful, one thought that CTE was somewhat helpful and one indicated that CTE was not helpful at all in preparing them for life after graduation.

**Community-based training.** Students also rated a number of community-based training opportunities when surveyed at exit from high school. One type of community-based training students participate in during high school is paid work in the community. According to Test et al. (2006), one indicator of a student’s future success in employment after graduation is paid employment prior to graduation. A study by Colley and Jamison (1998) supports this statement. The study found that 52% of students with disabilities who had paid work experience prior to graduation were employed after graduation and for students who did not have prior work experience, only 30% obtained jobs (Test et al., 2006).

Eleven of the 28 students surveyed by the OLTS in Pickaway County rated how well they thought school supervised paid work in the community prepared them for life after graduation; three indicated the work was very helpful in preparing them for life after graduation, three
indicated that the work was helpful, three reported that the work was somewhat helpful, and two indicated the work was not helpful at all.

**Independent employment.** Students also rated the paid work that they acquired on their own. Of the 20 students who responded to this item; 11 students indicated they thought the paid work they acquired on their own was very helpful in preparing them for life after graduation, four thought it was helpful, and five students indicated the work they acquired on their own was somewhat helpful. No student reported the paid work they acquired on their own was not helpful at all.

**Job shadowing.** Students were asked to rate their job shadowing experiences during high school in preparing them for life after graduation. Job shadowing is a community-based activity that allows students to try out different jobs in the community while working alongside of an established employee. While job shadowing, students learn valuable skills related to employment as well exploring their own interests and abilities (Test et al., 2006). These experiences can be helpful as student with disabilities develop their plans for adult life after school.

Nineteen of the 28 students surveyed by the OLTS in Pickaway County students rated how well they thought job shadowing prepared them for life after graduation; eight students indicated that they thought job shadowing was very helpful, seven thought job shadowing was helpful, three said somewhat helpful, and one student felt job shadowing was not helpful at all in preparing for life after graduation.

**Volunteering.** Volunteering is another community-based training experience students often participate in during high school. Volunteering provides students with valuable
employment skills such as attendance, punctuality, showing an interest in work, and responding properly to supervision and co-workers. Volunteer experience can often help students develop a more positive self-concept as they work in the community as well as valuable experience for scholarship and employment applications. Some volunteer programs not only help students develop employment skills, but may also help to identify future employees (Luecking, 2004).

Students were asked on the OLTS survey to rate their volunteer experience. Of the 13 students in Pickaway County who rated volunteering in preparing them for life after graduation; eight found their volunteer experiences to be very helpful, two indicated that their volunteer experiences were somewhat helpful; two said volunteering was somewhat helpful, and one student felt the volunteer experience was not helpful at all.

Students were asked to rate a total of eighteen academic and transition services/activities in all, including those previously discussed, a table (appendix B) shows how students rated each of the eighteen areas according to how helpful they thought each was in preparing them for life after graduation.

*Academic preparation.* On the OLTS survey, students were also asked to rate how well they felt the school prepared them to get a job or go on to further study. Of the 26 students who responded; 12 stated that they felt that their school prepared them very well to get a job or go on to further study, nine felt their school did well, and five felt their school did somewhat well. No student indicated feeling their school did not do well at all in preparing them to get a job or go on to further study.

*Self-determination and self-advocacy.* The fifth secondary transition practice that Benz et al. (2004) indentified as being associated with better outcomes for students with disabilities
is participation in a transition planning process that promotes self-determination. In an e-mail communication with Intervention Specialist and Lead Teacher for the Special Education department at Circleville High School, the question was asked regarding students’ desires for post secondary goals. Ms. Coole responded by saying,

We do a pre-assessment or interview the student that indicates their interests and desires, talk with guidance counselors, etc to gather data on what might be a good career choice for the students. We then support the career goals they have in mind with services offered in our framework that will assist them in achieving their goal. (C. Coole, personal communication, February 17, 2010)

There is no data available that can establish a connection between self-determination curriculum for schools in Pickaway County and the success of students who participated in the curriculum. There is, however, data from the OLTS that reports student perceptions of their Individual Transition Plans at the time of exit. Of the students that rated their Individual Transition Plans for Work; 14 reported that the plan went very well; seven reported that it went well, and three reported that it went somewhat well. Data for three students was either not applicable or was missing.

Of the students that rated their Individual Transition Plans for College; nine reported the plan went very well, eight reported it went well and one reported it went somewhat well. Data for ten students was either not applicable or missing.

Of the students that rated their Individual Transition Plans for Independent Living; seven reported the plan went very well, 12 reported that it went well, and four reported it went somewhat well. Data for five students was either not applicable or missing.
Of the students that rated their Individual Transition Plans for Leisure Activities, 12 reported that the plan went very well; nine reported it went well, and four reported it went somewhat well. Data for three students was either not applicable or was missing. No students indicated they were dissatisfied with their transition plan in any of the areas surveyed.

**Assistance to access resources.** The sixth practice Benz et al. (2004) identify as contributing to greater student outcomes involves students getting direct assistance to understand and connect with resources related to post-school goals. The items on the OLTS associated with this practice are: preparing for college entrance exams, help applying for college, taking classes at a community college, vocational rehabilitation services and MR/DD services.

Of the 14 students surveyed by the OLTS in Pickaway County that rated assistance in preparing for college entrance exams; four indicated that the assistance was very helpful, three thought that the assistance was helpful, five said somewhat helpful and two students thought the assistance was not helpful at all. Of the 17 students that rated help applying for college; four indicated the assistance was very helpful, seven thought the assistance was helpful, three said somewhat helpful, and three students thought the assistance was not helpful at all.

Three students rated taking classes at a community college; one student felt that the classes were somewhat helpful and two felt that the classes were not helpful at all. Seven students rated vocational rehabilitation services; one student felt the services were very helpful, four felt the services were helpful, and two felt vocational rehabilitation services were
somewhat helpful in preparing them for life after graduation. One student rated MR/DD services as somewhat helpful.

**Graduation from high school.** Graduation from high school is the final practice Benz and colleagues (2004) identify as being associated with greater student outcomes. In Ohio, students must meet specified curriculum requirements as well as pass all five sections of the Ohio Graduation Test (OGT) in order to graduate. Students with disabilities must also participate in (with or without accommodations) and pass all five areas of the OGT in order to graduate. However, once a student with a disability takes the initial OGT, it may be determined by the student’s IEP team that the student should be excused from the consequences of the test and therefore is no longer expected to participate in future OGT tests in order to graduate (ODE, The Ohio Statewide Testing Program Rules Book, 2009). Students with more severe disabilities must also participate in state assessments but have the option of taking an alternate assessment if decided by the IEP team.

Though research indicates students with disabilities graduate at a significantly decreased rate from their peers (McMillan, Kaufman, & Klein, 1997; Special Education Drop-Out Rate, 1997), for students with disabilities in Pickaway County who graduated during 2007-2008 school year, there is little change between the graduation rates of students with disabilities compared to those without. As reported earlier, the combined average for all districts in the county showed only a 4% difference between the graduation rate of students with and without disabilities. The most significant difference occurred in the Circleville City School district where graduation rates for the 2007-2008 (ODE, 2008-2009 Report Card Data) school year was 81.1% for students without disabilities and 69% for students with disabilities. There are a number of
things that could be considered that could account for the difference in graduation rates between Circleville City Schools and other more rural schools in the county. Some factors may be differences in school setting, poverty levels, difference in graduation requirements, and parent and community involvement.

It is difficult to determine from the OLTS data for Pickaway County how many students surveyed actually graduated with a diploma since there is no question in either the exit survey or the follow-up survey that asks specifically whether a student graduated. Students, however, were asked at exit how old they would be when they received a diploma. Of the 27 students who responded; two reported they would be 17 when they received a diploma, 20 indicated they would be 18, and five reported they would be 19 when they received their diploma.

Postsecondary Concerns

Satisfaction ratings. At follow-up one year after graduation, participants were asked to rate their degree of satisfaction in five areas since leaving high school. Of the twenty four former students who rated satisfaction with their current job; four were very satisfied, 15 were somewhat satisfied, one was dissatisfied, and four gave no opinion.

Of the 28 who rated satisfaction with their residence; 15 indicated they were very satisfied, eight were somewhat satisfied, and three were dissatisfied, while two gave no opinion.

Of the 28 graduates who rated satisfaction with transportation; 16 reported they were very satisfied with transportation, 11 indicated they were somewhat satisfied, and one was dissatisfied with transportation.
Of the 12 participants who rated satisfaction with adult services; three indicated they were very satisfied, one was somewhat satisfied, and eight gave no opinion.

**Areas needing assistance.** Graduates were asked to identify where they needed help in areas related to independent living and postsecondary education. Surprisingly, the only needs identified were needs related to postsecondary education. Of the graduates surveyed, seven indicated they needed a scholarship to help pay for things. One indicated that he/she was not in college because he/she needed money, one reported needing help applying for college, and one reported he/she was not in college because of the need for other courses.

**Available resources.** Graduates also identified a number of resources they currently had at the time of the follow-up survey related to independent living and postsecondary education. The following areas are the most significant where graduates reported having resources; 17 reported having work, 16 reported having family support, seven reported having scholarships, six reported having tutors, and nine reported having extra time for taking tests.

**Preparation for goals.** Graduates were asked to identify any service or experience they thought was particularly helpful in preparing them for their goals. Of the graduates who responded to this item, one indicated that the Allied Health class and teacher was particularly helpful, one identified art class as being helpful, one said his teachers were helpful at keeping him on track, four credited tutors for helping them reach their goals, one credited having extra time, three identified the teachers and tutors at PRJVC for helping them reach their goals, one identified FFA class, and one said working in different places during the school day helped in reaching goals.
Interviews with Parents

Ankeny, Wilkins and Spain (2009) discuss the experiences of four mothers and their experiences with their children’s transitions experiences. They write, “Parents are the constant thread in their children’s lives, and the responsibility for obtaining and following through with adult services for their children typically falls on them” (p. 28).

A parent’s involvement is important for all children as they transition from high school to adulthood, but this role can be particularly important for students with disabilities who have received special services while in school and are now basically on their own to fend for themselves. A critical element in investigating the needs of students with disabilities is finding out how parents view their son’s or daughter’s transition into life after high school.

To better understand parent perceptions, two parents of students who received special education services while in high school were interviewed and asked three questions: 1) What obstacles have been present either while in, or since leaving high school?, 2) Which services, agencies, or persons have been most helpful to your son/daughter in reaching his/her goals either while in, or after leaving high school?, and 3) Are there other services that, if they existed, would have been or could be helpful to your son/daughter in pursuing his/her goals and plans upon leaving high school?

Interview with Parent #1. The parent of a 2005 graduate from one of the local high schools was interviewed through a phone conversation. The parent explained that while her son was in high school there were several obstacles that her son faced that, if they had been removed, may have made it easier for him to reach his goals after school.
Obstacles. The first obstacle she discussed had to do with a lack of appropriate services while in high school. She stated there were just too many students with disabilities that needed help for the number of teachers available. She stated the aides were a tremendous help to her son, but they were often too stretched to give the individual attention that her son and other students needed. She expressed concern over what she perceived to be a growing number of students with disabilities in the school system and the ability of the schools to have the resources to meet a growing demand.

Another obstacle the parent discussed was the lack of communication between her son’s teachers and special education services. She told of a time when she asked for a meeting with all of her son’s teachers to discuss his progress and the difficulties he was having in his classes. During the meeting, she discovered that some of his teachers did not even know he had a disability, did not have knowledge of the information in his IEP, and were not making the accommodations her son needed in order to be successful. She noted that her son’s teachers did not have a common planning time and that she knew communication was difficult for them.

She identified the stigma attached to receiving special education services as another obstacle her son faced. She said it didn’t bother him too much because he liked his aides, but knew some of her son’s friends would not participate in special education services available to them because they did not want to be singled out or made fun of.

Useful services. When asked what things have been helpful in helping her son reach his goals, she offered several suggestions. She explained that her son participated in the Option 4 program at PRJVC after leaving high school. She said that Option 4 helps students prepare for employment, provides job coaching, and other employment services designed to help students
get a job. She stated that her son was able to do this because of his eligibility for services until age 21 through MR/DD services. She also reported that she circumstantially found out about these services through a relative and that if she hadn’t pursued the services, he would not have known about or participated in the programs that have been instrumental in helping him be successful.

She suggested that she felt the services her son received at the vocational school were better designed for her son’s special needs. She said students at PRJVC are so busy doing hands-on things that they don’t get so frustrated with academics. She believed the school personnel were exceptionally accommodating to her son’s needs, even making it possible for him to arrive and leave early so he did not have to drive through the congested student traffic.

This mother felt the atmosphere surrounding students with special needs was more positive at the vocational school than it was at the high school. Another thing she identified as being helpful was her son’s employer’s sensitivity to his special needs. She explained that her son has very limited short-term memory and often forgets things he just learned. His employer was very accommodating as he learned to do the multiple duties required for one of his jobs. Her son currently works two jobs and she believes he feels good about the things he has achieved since graduation.

This parent also named a number of teachers, aides, school personnel, administrators, and other persons involved with her son both during and after high school that were instrumental in helping him reach his goals. She noted the importance of communication between all involved in the education of a student with a disability.
Other services. During the interview, the mother was asked if there were other services that, if they existed, would have been helpful to her son in pursuing his goals and plans after exiting high school. She stated she thought a follow-up person, a person the student could develop a relationship with after graduating, would be very helpful. A person that could act as a middle person in job situations, help individuals with disabilities locate resources, get the services they needed for college, and just be there to care. She ended by saying that just having someone who cares goes a long way in helping students with disabilities develop a sense of self-worth and in reaching their goals.

Interview with Parent #2. The second phone interview was with the parent of a 2008 graduate.

Obstacles. During the interview, the parent was asked about obstacles her daughter faced in meeting her post-secondary goals. The mother reported that one of her daughter’s greatest obstacles had to do with acting independently. She stated her daughter has had difficulty initiating most things related to her education: registering for classes, financial aid, ordering books and studying for exams. This mother felt her daughter was struggling to get through most of her courses but that her daughter’s school has been very accommodating with extra time and tutoring services.

The parent also stated her daughter is experiencing difficulty with her part-time job. Her daughter processes things very slowly and often needs instructions to be repeated or needs to be shown how to do something rather than just being told. She told of her daughter’s frustration with the employer’s expectations and critical comments. She reported her daughter wants to do well and that she earnestly tries to do her best, but the employer is not sensitive to
her disability. When asked if there have been any attempts at trying to communicate her daughter’s needs to the employer, the parent said her daughter does not want the employer to know about her learning disability and will not let her mother intervene. The parent stated she does not think her daughter does a very good job self-advocating.

**Useful services.** The parent was asked to identify services, agencies, or persons that have been most helpful to her daughter in reaching her goals. The first thing the parent credited was the portfolio her daughter completed during her senior year. She stated that the information in the portfolio has been helpful in completing both job and scholarship applications. She credited the guidance counselor at her daughter’s high school with encouraging her to enroll in college and then helping her find a program that fit her abilities and interests. The parent also credited some of her daughter’s college instructors for allowing extra time, providing study guides, and offering testing options.

**Other services.** During the interview, the parent was asked if there were other services that, if they existed, would have been helpful to her daughter in pursuing her goals and plans upon exiting high school. The parent said it would have been helpful for someone to work with her daughter after graduating to create a yearly schedule for when, how, and where to do things related to college and to work with her through college to help keep her on track. The parent stated that she has been trying to keep her daughter on track, but felt that she was lost most of the time too, figuring things out after the deadline and always one step behind. She believes it would be good if there was someone who could help her daughter learn to advocate for herself and communicate her needs to her employer without any negative consequences.
Discussion

This study investigated the postsecondary needs for students with mild to moderate disabilities in Pickaway County. An analysis of data collected by the Ohio Longitudinal Transition Study (OLTS) at state, regional, and county levels provided an opportunity for comparison and discussion within the context of the six secondary transition practices Benz et al. (2004) associate with improved outcomes for students with disabilities while in high school and once they exit.

Anticipated Versus Actual Employment

The first significant difference between what students anticipated and what they actually experienced following high school had to do with employment expectations. Some things to consider that may account for the difference between students who planned to work and students who were actually working in Pickaway County are the high unemployment rates in the county. Information from the Ohio Labor Market (May, 2010) reports Pickaway County unemployment rates at 11.1% when compared to the state at 10.7% and the region at 9.1%. One resident reports that “competition in the county, even for minimum wage jobs, is tough” (personal communication, May, 28, 2010).

Another consideration is the higher percent of students surveyed who reported enrollment in postsecondary education (50%) as compared to state (36%), and regional (42.3%) data. Perhaps one possible indication for why fewer students are working may be because more students are enrolled in postsecondary education. Consequently, the reverse may also be considered; perhaps more students are enrolled in post-secondary education because there are no jobs available.
**Anticipated Versus Actual Independent Living**

Another significant difference occurred in the number of students who planned to be living independently and the number of students who were actually living independently at follow-up. The data indicates a large difference (40%) in the state data, a moderate difference in the regional data, and only a slight difference in the county’s data. There were no sources of information consulted in this investigation that could account for the difference in independent living perceptions indicated by the state, regional, and county data. One observation may be that the students in the county were just less optimistic or possibly more realistic about independent living after leaving high school.

**Graduation Rates**

Findings from the study indicate that graduation rates for students with disabilities in Pickaway County exceeded the state’s target graduation rate and the national graduation rate as a whole, with the exception of students from Circleville City Schools. As part of the Ohio Improvement Process, Circleville City Schools recently identified in its District School Improvement Plan a target goal of increasing the rate of graduates from 78% in 2008 to at least 90% by 2012 for school improvement (Circleville City Schools, 2009). Strategies have been identified at the kindergarten level and continue through high school that will positively affect the rate of students graduating from the district. The recently implemented Milestone Program is a change that may have already positively impacted the graduation rate for this district. How this goal will directly impact students with disabilities may be a topic for future investigation.
Helpful Services

Of the services or experiences students in Pickaway County credited as being the most helpful to them in reaching their goals was the tutoring they received in high school either from a teacher or other school personnel. Six students reported having tutors to help them reach their postsecondary goals. Tutoring services also came up in the interviews with parents when describing services that were the most helpful both during and after high school.

Students in Pickaway County reported having several different job experiences while in high school including in-school work, job shadowing, volunteering, school-supervised work, and work they acquired on their own. Of the different job experiences, more students rated the work they acquired on their own as being the most helpful in reaching their goals. This may indicate that students are more invested and therefore receive more perceived benefit from the work they acquire on their own, versus the work acquired for them through school programs.

Employment

Twenty-one (75%) of the students surveyed by the OLTS at follow-up reported having at least one job before leaving high school while only 12 (42.9%) reported they were currently working. Unemployment rates have been steadily on the rise in Pickaway County since 1999 when the unemployment rate was 2.7% (Exner, 2010) until the most recent reported rate of 11.1% (ODJFS, 2010) unemployment in the county. High unemployment in the county may account for why fewer students were working at follow-up and the reason 40% of the students who expected to be working were not.
For individuals with disabilities the importance of working for a decent wage becomes critical since, according to the NOD (2004), three times the number of people with disabilities live in poverty when compared to the number of people without disabilities. For individuals with disabilities in Pickaway County, the current employment situation is not optimistic since jobs are scarce and the competition for them is tough.

**Post Secondary Education**

In today’s global economy and information driven systems, the need for a well-educated workforce continues to increase. The disparity between levels of educational attainment and rates of employment (U.S. Department of Labor, 2010) and income (Wagner, 2005) make it even more evident that education is critical to an individual’s well being. For students with disabilities in Pickaway County, the need to acquire education beyond high school is especially important since the manufacturing base that once supported the community continues to dwindle. Therefore, gaining academic and transition skills during high school is critical for students with disabilities. According to the OLTS data for Pickaway County, 75% of the students surveyed attended mainstream classes for more than 80% of the day. Though data is not available to indicate how well students with disabilities performed in general education classes, research indicates that while students with disabilities often get lower grades in general courses than their typically developing peers, they are closer to grade level in math and reading than students with disabilities who participate in fewer general education courses (Knokey, 2006).

Data from the OLTS indicates that 85% of the students with disabilities in Pickaway County that took the Ohio Graduation Test (OGT) in reading passed, 89% passed the OGT in
writing, and 81% passed the math OGT. Though the number of students with disabilities in Pickaway County who planned to participate in postsecondary education (82%) is considerably lower than the actual number who reported participating in postsecondary education (50%), the percentage for actually attending in the county is still higher than reported for the region and the state.

**Connecting to Resources**

Though it is difficult to establish a connection between how well students connected with resources in the community to help them meet post-secondary goals, all students who participated in the OLTS indicated some level of satisfaction with their transition plan in the areas of work, college, and independent living and leisure activities. One theme that emerged during interviews with parents regarding services that would have been or could be helpful to students after exiting high school is having a follow-up person that could develop a relationship with the student and help with postsecondary concerns related to school and employment.

**Limitations**

Confidentiality requirements prohibited the investigator to view records in order to contact students in the county in order to collect achievement data. Former students were contacted by special education teachers or other appropriate school personnel in order to get the student’s permission for the investigator to contact them for an interview. Since the investigation took place in the late spring and early summer, most of the school personnel authorized to make contact were too busy with end-of-the-year responsibilities to participate, or on break for the summer and were not available for contact. A more comprehensive
investigation may be possible if the investigation were to begin earlier in the school year allowing authorized school personnel time to contact former students for the investigation.

County data collected for this investigation was provided by the Center for Innovation in Transition and Employment (CITE) at Kent State University. Data fields in which there was no response or information collected is indicated with the entry “missing.” Certain assumptions were not possible since the data reported was inconclusive based on the missing data. For example, data collected at the time of exit indicated that information for the survey was collected by at least two parents and information about four of the informants was missing. Follow-up data indicated that at least 10 parents provided data at follow-up for the survey, but information about five of the informants was missing. Information that is perception-based (i.e., “satisfied with adult services”) is difficult to interpret since it is unclear whether or not the perception being reported is that of the student or the parent.

Another limitation involves the question of whether or not data for Logan Elm School District was included in the OLTS data. The data provided reported the zip codes for students that participated in the survey at the time of exit. For the Logan Elm District, it is unclear whether or not students from the district participated since the only zip code for students in that district is also shared by students in the Circleville City School District. No other zip codes for the Logan Elm District are reported. When contacting the Logan Elm District, there was no one available with access to the information regarding Logan Elm’s participation in the OLTS at the time of the investigation.

A final limitation includes the omission of comparative data for students without disabilities. Without comparative data, it is not possible to conclude that any information is
specific for students with disabilities or whether it applies to students in the general education population as well.

**Implications for Practice**

This investigation revealed that students from Pickaway County credited help from teachers and tutoring services, both while in high school and in college, as being the most helpful to them in reaching their goals. It also was indicated during a parent interview, that giving individual attention to students with special needs is difficult since there are large numbers of students with special needs and few teachers and tutors to meet their individual needs. Therefore, it seems essential that districts ensure adequate teaching and support staff (i.e., aides, tutors, etc.) to meet individual needs of students with disabilities.

Students in Pickaway County participated in a number of job related experiences; however, they credited jobs they acquired on their own as being most helpful in reaching their goals. Increasing opportunities (flexible scheduling, time for working, and finding jobs, increasing the numbers of employers in the community who will hire students with disabilities) and providing resources (job finding services, transportation, job interview training) for students with mild to moderate disabilities to acquire jobs on their own as opposed to in-school and school-supervised jobs for students could prove to be beneficial. One parent expressed the importance for students with disabilities of achieving things on their own. This can be a particular challenge for parents and educators focused on accommodating, and supporting students with disabilities, while at the same promoting self-determination.

Finally, as the need for advanced degrees grows in the changing face of employment, students with disabilities will need to be among those receiving higher education in order to
compete in an increasingly complex world. Providing support and follow-up services after graduation for students who desire to participate in post-secondary education could possibly bridge the gap for students who plan to attend and those students who actually enroll.

Future investigations may offer valuable information for stakeholders in Pickaway County. Areas of investigations may include analysis and comparisons of transition program curriculum used in the different school districts, comparison of student attitudes related to self-determination and self-perception, teacher perceptions of student needs related to post-school success, employer perceptions and needs when hiring students with disabilities in Pickaway County, and investigations in to the post-secondary resources available in the community.

Data is increasingly becoming available through surveys such as the OLTS (final report to be completed by 2012), perhaps the post-school needs of individuals with disabilities in Pickaway County and in other communities can be better served as educators and communities become better informed.
References


Luecking, R., Ed. (2004). *Essential tools: In their own words: Employer perspectives on youth with disabilities in the workplace*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota, Institute on Community Integration,


APPENDIX A

Student Exit Survey (SES)
Ohio Longitudinal Transition Study
Permission Form
(To be kept by school)

Dear student or family member,

You have been selected to participate in a study "Follow-up of Special and Regular Education Graduates in Ohio." The purpose of this study is to identify programs and activities that were effective in preparing you or your family member to live and work in the community. This research will be conducted by your school and all information will be confidential and recorded anonymously.

We hope that you will agree to participate in this survey and allow us to call you up to three times over the next five years to see how you are doing. Of course, you may choose not to participate in this study or withdraw at any time without penalty. If you would like further information on how this research will be used, you may contact:

Robert Baer, Ph.D
Kent State University
300 White Hall
Kent, OH 44242-0001
(330) 672-0722
rbaer@kent.edu

For rules governing this study contact:

Dr. John West
Vice President and Dean
Division of Research and Graduate Studies
(330) 672-2704

☐ Yes, I will participate. The following are phone numbers where I can be reached or contacted after graduation:

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<th>Name</th>
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Signature

Print Name

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA

[Redacted area]
OLTS Surveyor Instructions

A. How do I select students to be surveyed?
   1. Obtain a list of all graduating students with disabilities from your program.
   2. Decide the portion of graduating students to be interviewed (e.g., all, 1/2).
   3. Randomly select students to be interviewed from list (e.g., for 1/2 of graduating students, select every 2nd graduating student).

B. How do I obtain permission to conduct the survey?
   1. Go over the permission form with the student and family.
   2. Obtain the student’s permission unless there is a guardian.
   3. Schedule times to conduct interviews (at IEPs, evenings, weekends).
   4. Obtain several phone numbers where student and/or family members can be reached for 1 year post school survey.

C. How should the survey be conducted?
   1. Page one of the exit survey should be done by reviewing the student’s record and EMIS data. Only one person with access to students records should conduct this part of the survey.
   2. The interview section of the exit and follow-up surveys should be administered orally in person or by phone.
   3. Questions should be presented clearly and consistently while recognizing needs for paraphrasing or explanation. Use examples, if necessary.
   4. Make every effort to interpret and code responses accurately.
   5. Leave questions blank if there is no response.

D. What happens with the completed surveys?
   1. Tear off permission form and keep with you records (IMPORTANT).
   2. Be sure to save list of students to contact for follow-up.
   3. Place surveys in a manila envelope with no student identifiable information.
   4. Mail to:
      Robert Baer, 202 White Hall, Kent State University, Kent, OH 44242-0001
   5. If questions, call (330) 672-0072 or E-mail rbaer@kent.edu
OLTS In-School Transition Survey
Record Review (EMIS)

**MARKING INSTRUCTIONS**
- Use a No. 2 pencil or a blue or black ink pen only.
- Do not use pens with ink that soaks through the paper.
- Make solid marks that fill the response completely.
- Make no stray marks on this form.

**CORRECT: •**  **INCORRECT: ☒ ☒ ☒**

**Survey Number:**

**Interviewer:**

**Home School:**

**Career Tech Program:**

**Other:**

**Date of Interview:**

---

**Fill out the following before the interview. This data can be retrieved from EMIS.**

### 1. Projected Graduation

<table>
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<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>01</th>
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<th>04</th>
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<th>06</th>
<th>07</th>
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### 5. How old will the student be when he or she receives a diploma?

- [ ] 18
- [ ] 19
- [ ] 20
- [ ] 21
- [ ] Other:

### 6. In what type of school setting was the student educated?

- [ ] Small City (<50000)
- [ ] Suburban
- [ ] Rural
- [ ] Large City (>50000)

### 7. What type of school? (at graduation) Bubble all that apply.

- [ ] Career Tech School
- [ ] High School
- [ ] Other

### 8. Disability Type (Please mark identified disability from EMIS record. Do not ask on telephone interview.)
- [ ] Autism
- [ ] Deaf-blindness
- [ ] Deafness and hearing impairment
- [ ] Mental retardation (DH, CD)
- [ ] Multiple disabilities (MH, MD)
- [ ] Orthopedic impairment (OI)
- [ ] Serious emotional disturbance (SBH, ED)
- [ ] Specific learning disability
- [ ] Speech and language impairment
- [ ] Traumatic brain injury
- [ ] Visual impairment
- [ ] Other health impaired (OHI)

### 9. In what types of classes did the student participate in regular classrooms 9-12th grade? (Bubble all that apply)

- [ ] Special Education (less than 21%)
- [ ] Special Education (21%-60%)
- [ ] Special Education (60% or more)
- [ ] Special Education classes

### 10. What transition services did the student receive? (Bubble all that apply)

- [ ] Work Study
- [ ] VOSE
- [ ] Option IV/JTC
- [ ] Special Needs CTE

### 11. Was the student in Career/Technical Education?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No

If yes, what program?
In-School Transition Survey
Interview
(You may paraphrase questions, if necessary)

Informant was:

Student ...........................................  
Parent/Guardian ................................  
Other ................................................

Student Zip Code: ________________________
Date of Interview: ________________________

3. Where do you plan to live one year after graduation? (Bubble ONE)

   a. Living with parents or relative ...............  
   b. Living on own ...................................  
   c. Living with friends ..............................  
   d. Living with a husband or wife ...............  
   e. Living with children ...........................  
   f. Living with a foster family ....................  
   g. Living in a group home .........................  
   h. Living on a college campus ...................  
   i. Other ...........................................

   Specify: ______________________________________

4. What are your leisure and community participation goals after graduation?
   (Bubble all that apply)

   a. Voting ..........................................  
   b. Drivers license ................................  
   c. Own a car ......................................  
   d. Use public transportation .....................  
   e. Use a computer ................................  
   f. Playing sports ..................................  
   g. Doing hobbies ...................................  
   h. Going to church or religious activities ....  
   i. Going to the mall or movies .................  
   j. Doing outdoor activities .....................  
   k. Other ...........................................

   Specify: _____________________________________

5. How well were the following post school goals addressed in your IEP and transition plan?

   a. My work goals ................................  
   b. My college goals ..............................  
   c. My independent living goals ...............  
   d. My leisure and community participation goals
   e. Other ...........................................

   Specify: _____________________________________

   Very Well          Well          Somewhat Well    Not Well    N/A
6. How do you plan to pay for the things you need after graduation? (Bubble all that apply) 
   a. Competitive Work
   b. Sheltered Work
   c. Medicaid for health expenses
   d. Family members help
   e. Disability benefits (such as SSI)
   f. Food stamps
   g. Job and Family Services
   h. Aid in paying rent
   i. Scholarships
   j. Student loans
   k. Other
   Specify _____________________________

7. When you were in high school how helpful were the following in preparing you for life after graduation? (Bubble all that apply)
   a. Proficiency testing
   b. IEP/Transition meetings
   c. School supervised paid work in the community
   d. School supervised volunteer work
   e. In-school job
   f. Job shadowing
   g. Paid work on your own
   h. Classes at a community college
   i. Career/Technical Education
   j. Extracurricular activities
   k. Preparing for college entrance exams (SAT, ACT)
   l. Help applying to college
   m. Visits to college
   n. Coursework (specify)

8. If you took career/technical classes, how many semesters did you take in your field (e.g., auto mechanics)?
   6 or more

9. How well did the school prepare you to get a job or go on to further study?
   - Very well
   - Well
   - Somewhat well
   - Not well at all
   Specify if possible:

10. Which high school courses or activities were you not able to take that would have better prepared you for life after graduation? (Bubble all that apply)
    - Proficiency testing
    - IEP/Transition meetings
    - School supervised paid work in the community
    - School supervised volunteer work
    - In-school job
    - Job shadowing
    - Paid work on your own
    - Classes at a community college
    - Career/Technical Education
    - Extracurricular activities
    - Preparing for college entrance exams (SAT, ACT)
    - Help applying to college
    - Visits to college
    - Coursework (specify)
    - Career assessment
    - Vocational Rehabilitation (BVR, BSVI) services
    - MR/DD services
    - Other school-to-career activities (specify)

Comments:

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA
Do you have any additional comments?
Post-School Data Collection Survey
OLTS Phone Interview:
(You may paraphrase questions)

Hello, my name is and I am a teacher at . You may remember that we had asked for your approval to call you and see how you are doing after graduation. All of your responses will be strictly confidential and no identifiable information will be on this survey. Do you have time to talk now?

- If "yes" proceed with the questions.
- If "no" then say "Is there a better time to call you?"

Informant was:
- Graduate
- Parent/Guardian
- Other:

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<th>Number of Attempts</th>
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<td>Comments</td>
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1. Since you left high school have you: (Bubble all that apply)

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<th>Part</th>
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- a. Paid Employment (32 hours or more)
- b. Attended 2 yr. college/technical school
- c. Attended a vocational school (less than 2 yrs)
- d. Attended a 4 year college
- e. Enlisted in the military
- f. Received vocational rehabilitation (BVR/BVSI) services
- g. Received MR/DD Services
- h. Received other training or services

Specify:
- i. Sheltered employment
- j. Completed college or training

Major or program - Specify:

2. Are you currently doing any of the following: (Bubble all that apply)

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<th>Full</th>
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- a. Paid Employment
- b. Attending a 2 yr college or a technical school
- c. Attending vocational school (less than 2 yrs)
- d. Attending a 4 year college
- e. Working in the military
- f. Receiving vocational rehabilitation (BVR/BVSI) services
- g. Receiving MR/DD services
- h. Receiving other services

Specify:
- i. Sheltered employment

3. If you are currently working, what kind of job do you have? (Bubble ONE)

- a. Computers/technology
- b. Industry/Factory work
- c. Marketing/sales/retail
- d. Secretarial/clerical/business
- e. Janitorial/custodial
- f. Agriculture/farming
- g. Human services (counseling, teaching)
- h. Auto mechanics
- i. Construction
- j. Food service
- k. Child care
- l. Cosmetology/barbering
- m. Health care
- n. Other:

4. How did you find your job?
- Parent Helped
- Friend Helped
- Agency Helped (please specify):
- Found on Own
- Other

5. If you are not currently working, what are the reasons for not working? (Bubble all that apply)

- a. Enrolled in post-secondary education
- b. Cannot find job that fits my interest
- c. Cannot find any job
- d. Need assistance finding a job, but none is available
- e. Lack of required skills
- f. Transportation problems
- g. Don't want to lose my benefits (e.g. SSI)
- h. Don't want to work
- i. Other

Specify:

6. What are your current living arrangements? (Bubble all that apply)

- a. Living with parents or relative
- b. Living on own
- c. Living with friends
- d. Living with a husband or wife
- e. Living with children
- f. Living with a foster family
- g. Living in a group home
- h. On a waiting list for residential service
- i. Other:

7. Do you currently have: (Bubble all that apply)

- a. Registration to vote
- b. Medical benefits from employer
- c. Medical benefits from family
- d. A driver's license
- e. A car
- f. A bus pass
- g. Someone who provides transportation
- h. A computer at work/school
- i. Assistive technology (e.g. Wheel Chair, communication device)
- j. Other:
8. Please rate how satisfied you are with the following:
   a. Your current job
   b. Your current residence
   c. Your current contact with friends
   d. Your current transportation arrangements
   e. Adult services (BVR, MR/DD)

Comments:

10. If you went on to a post-secondary education, did you receive any of the following? (Bubble all that apply)
   a. Remedial classes
   b. Note taking services
   c. Tutoring
   d. Extra time for tests
   e. Tapes of books or lectures
   f. Accommodations for visual impairments
   g. Reduced schedule loads
   h. Sign language interpreters
   i. Register for disability services
   j. Other:

11. Did you have a paying job at the time you left high school?
   ○ Yes
   ○ No

Specify if possible:

12. Did you choose your current job?
   ○ Yes
   ○ No

13. If you did not go on to post-secondary education as planned, can you tell us why? (Bubble all that apply)
   a. Changed plans
   b. Not enough money
   c. Needed help applying
   d. Was not accepted
   e. Did not have required courses
      Specify:
   f. Other
      Specify:

14. In retrospect, was there any service or experience that was particularly helpful in preparing you for your goals?

Specify:

15. How many paying jobs have you had since graduation?

16. (Optional) If working, what is your hourly wage?

17. Approximately how many hours per week?

18. Are you experiencing any problems currently that require assistance?
   ○ Yes
   ○ No

Specify if yes:

COMMENTS:

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA
### Post-School Data Collection Survey

**OLTS Phone Interview:**

(You may paraphrase questions)

Hello, my name is __________ and I am a teacher at __________. You may remember that we had asked for your approval to call you and see how you are doing after graduation. All of your responses will be strictly confidential and no identifiable information will be on this survey. Do you have time to talk now?

- If "yes" proceed with the questions.
- If "no" then say "Is there a better time to call you?"

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<th>Informant was:</th>
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<td>Graduate</td>
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1. Since you left high school have you:
   (Bubble all that apply)

   a. Paid Employment (32 hours or more)   ☐ ☐ ☐
   b. Attended 2 yr. college/technical school   ☐ ☐ ☐
   c. Attended a vocational school (less than 2 yrs)   ☐ ☐ ☐
   d. Attended a 4 year college   ☐ ☐ ☐
   e. Enlisted in the military   ☐ ☐ ☐
   f. Received vocational rehabilitation (BVR/BSVI) services   ☐ ☐ ☐
   g. Received MR/DD Services   ☐ ☐ ☐
   h. Received other training or services   ☐ ☐ ☐
   Specify: __________
   i. Sheltered employment   ☐ ☐ ☐
   j. Completed college or training   ☐ ☐ ☐
   Major or program - Specify: __________

2. Are you currently doing any of the following:
   (Bubble all that apply)

   a. Paid Employment   ☐ ☐ ☐
   b. Attending a 2 yr college or a technical school   ☐ ☐ ☐
   c. Attending vocational school (less than 2 yrs)   ☐ ☐ ☐
   d. Attending a 4 year college   ☐ ☐ ☐
   e. Working in the military   ☐ ☐ ☐
   f. Receiving vocational rehabilitation (BVR/BSVI) services   ☐ ☐ ☐
   g. Receiving MR/DD services   ☐ ☐ ☐
   h. Receiving other services   ☐ ☐ ☐
   Specify: __________
   i. Sheltered employment   ☐ ☐ ☐

3. If you are currently working, what kind of job do you have? (Bubble ONE)

   a. Computers/technology   ☐
   b. Industry/Factory work   ☐
   c. Marketing/sales/retail   ☐
   d. Secretarial/clerical/business   ☐
   e. Janitorial/custodial   ☐
   f. Agriculture/farming   ☐
   g. Human services (counseling, teaching)   ☐
   h. Auto mechanics   ☐
   i. Construction   ☐
   j. Food service   ☐
   k. Child care   ☐
   l. Cosmetology/barbering   ☐
   m. Health care   ☐
   n. Other: __________

4. How did you find your job?

   a. Parent Helped   ☐
   b. Friend Helped   ☐
   c. Agency Helped (please specify): __________
   d. Found on Own   ☐
   e. Other: __________

5. If you are not currently working, what are the reasons for not working? (Bubble all that apply)

   a. Enrolled in post-secondary education   ☐
   b. Cannot find job that fits my interest   ☐
   c. Cannot find any job   ☐
   d. Need assistance finding a job, but none is available   ☐
   e. Lack of required skills   ☐
   f. Transportation problems   ☐
   g. Don't want to lose my benefits (e.g. SSI)   ☐
   h. Don't want to work   ☐
   i. Other: Specify: __________

6. What are your current living arrangements?
   (Bubble all that apply)

   a. Living with parents or relative   ☐
   b. Living on own   ☐
   c. Living with friends   ☐
   d. Living with a husband or wife   ☐
   e. Living with children   ☐
   f. Living with a foster family   ☐
   g. Living in a group home   ☐
   h. On a waiting list for residential service   ☐
   i. Other: __________

7. Do you currently have: (Bubble all that apply)

   a. Registration to vote   ☐
   b. Medical benefits from employer   ☐
   c. Medical benefits from family   ☐
   d. A driver's license   ☐
   e. A car   ☐
   f. A bus pass   ☐
   g. Someone who provides transportation   ☐
   h. A computer at work/school   ☐
   i. Assistive technology (e.g. Wheel Chair, communication device)   ☐
   j. Other: __________
8. Please rate how satisfied you are with the following:

- **Very Dissatisfied**
- **Dissatisfied**
- **Somewhat Satisfied**
- **Satisfied**
- **Very Satisfied**
- **No Opinion**

a. Your current job
b. Your current residence
c. Your current contact with friends
d. Your current transportation arrangements
e. Adult services (BVR, MR/DD)

Comments:

9. How do you pay for the things you need? (Bubble all that apply)

- Competitive Work
- Sheltered Work
- Medicaid for health expenses
- Family members help
- Disability benefits (such as SSI)
- Food stamps
- Job and Family Services
- Aid in paying rent
- Scholarships
- Student loans
- Other:

10. If you went on to a post secondary education, did you receive any of the following? (Bubble all that apply)

- Remedial classes
- Note taking services
- Tutoring
- Extra time for tests
- Tapes of books or lectures
- Accommodations for visual impairments
- Reduced schedule loads
- Sign language interpreters
- Register for disability services
- Other:

13. If you did not go on to post-secondary education as planned, can you tell us why? (Bubble all that apply).

a. Changed plans
b. Not enough money
c. Needed help applying
d. Was not accepted
e. Did not have required courses
f. Other

Specify:

14. In retrospect, was there any service or experience that was particularly helpful in preparing you for your goals?

Specify:

15. How many paying jobs have you had since graduation?

16. (Optional) If working, what is your hourly wage?

17. Approximately how many hours per week?

18. Are you experiencing any problems currently that require assistance?

- Yes
- No

Specify if yes:

COMMENTS:

PLEASE DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA
# APPENDIX B

## Rating of Eighteen Academic and Transition Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th># Students responded</th>
<th>very helpful</th>
<th>helpful</th>
<th>Somewhat helpful</th>
<th>Not helpful at all</th>
<th>Specified</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IEP/Transition meetings</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School supervised paid work in community</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Volunteer work</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>In-school job</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job shadowing</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paid work on your own</td>
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<tr>
<td>Classes at a community college</td>
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<tr>
<td>Career/Technical Education</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Extracurricular activities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preparing for college entrance exams (SAT, ACT)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Help applying to college</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visits to college</td>
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<td>Coursework</td>
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<td>Career assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voc. Rehab,(BVR, BSVI) services</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>MR/DD services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other school-to-career activities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allied Health, CBIP, Life Planning,, Art, FFA/AG, Foods, Resources, Home Instruction, Math, English PRCTC Courses</td>
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<td>DECA, Career Passport, Cosmetology Teacher, State Conference Skills USA</td>
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</tbody>
</table>