

National Association of Private Special Education Centers
Outcomes of Private Special Education Programs
Plans for Exiting Students: 2014-2015; Report Number 14, NAPSEC Outcomes Project

Executive Summary

For over a decade, NAPSEC, a national association representing private specialized education programs serving both publicly and privately placed students with disabilities, has examined the discharge plans for the students with disabilities. These students are placed through the local school district to be served by the therapeutic special education programs offered by its members.

NAPSEC has supported this investigation because most examinations of the outcomes of special education focus on students in public school programs and do not fully explore the results for the students with perhaps the most severe and complex disabilities who are served by the highly specialized NAPSEC-member programs.

Students who attend NAPSEC-member programs in the private sector do not attend local public schools because their complex needs cannot be met by programs in the local public school district. In partnership with the local school district, which develops an IEP (Individualized Education Program) to prescribe the intensive therapeutic services and curriculum modifications required for each special education student to succeed, NAPSEC-member programs implement the IEP. In so doing, these nonpublic special education facilities play a vital role on the continuum of special education service delivery.

The current study focuses on reporting the plans made by students at the time they were discharged from a NAPSEC-member's facility. Students who left were either transfer students, graduates, or those who reached the legal age-limit for receiving educational services. Below are the highlights of the current study, which examined the plans of students who were discharged during the 2014-2015 academic year.

Transfer Students

During the 2014-15 school year, the study results indicate that NAPSEC-member schools provided the necessary educational remediation and support to the students who transferred from their programs to enable these students, upon discharge, to enter or re-enter educational programs within their local public school districts:

- 61% of the transfer students planned to enter or re-enter an educational program within their local public school district.
- 29% of the transfer students planned to enter or re-enter regular, not special, education settings in their local public school district. While 16 % planned to do so with appropriate supports, supports were not needed for the remaining 13%.
- 96% of the transfer students were enrolled in the NAPSEC-member program for 5 years or less.

Graduates/Aged-Out Students

During the 2014-15 school year, the study results show that NAPSEC-member schools provided prescribed instruction, support and guidance to graduate/“aged-out” students making the transition to adulthood so that these students were able to plan, upon discharge, to pursue productive and engaged adult roles in their communities, in accordance with their individual capabilities and capacities:

- 90% of the graduates/aged-out students left a NAPSEC-member program with plans to enter productive and/or engaged adult roles.
- 47% of the graduates/aged-out students planned to enter a mainstream activity. This included 32% with plans to enroll in post-secondary 4-year/2-year college or trade/technical school; and 15% with plans to join the competitive employment workforce or military.
- Almost 25% had plans to enter vocational rehabilitation, including vocational rehabilitation training, supported employment or sheltered employment.
- More than 18% made plans to enter an appropriate adult program in the community, including adult partial care or non-vocational day programs.
- Graduates/aged-out students from Learning Disorders programs (87%) and Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs (75%) were the most likely groups to make plans to enroll in postsecondary education, obtain a competitive job, or enlist in the military.
- Graduates/aged-out students from Developmental Disorders programs were the most likely group to plan to participate in vocational rehabilitation (41%) as well as community-based programs (32%).

It is important to highlight that 75% of graduates/aged-out students from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs, a population often associated with poor outcomes, had plans to enroll in a 4-year college/2-year college (30%), trade/technical school (7%), or to enter the job market or the military (20%).

By offering individualized, intensive, therapeutic services, NAPSEC-member schools educate and support students with severe disabilities and continue to fulfill a critical role along the continuum of special education. Because of the programs provided by NAPSEC members, children with serious disabilities can not only gain access to the benefits of education, but can also look forward to finding meaningful and productive roles in their communities as adults.