

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

Outcomes for Students from Class of 2000: Year 5 Follow-Up

**Report Number 5, Part B
NAPSEC Outcomes Project**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NAPSEC's Class of 2000 was interviewed in 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005.

Highlights of the 2005 interview of 419 alumni (63% of the original cohort of 667) are:

1. 89% (373 alumni) are productively involved in the mainstream, vocational rehabilitation, or community-based adult programs
2. 53% (221 alumni) are in the mainstream:
 - a. Nearly 1% in graduate/professional school
 - b. 6% in 4-year college
 - c. Almost 8% in 2-year college
 - d. More than 1% in trade/technical school
 - e. About 37% in competitive employment, including military service
3. About 25% (105 alumni) were engaged in vocational rehabilitation activities. Over the course of the study, many of these individuals benefited from vocational rehabilitation training programs and were able to enter supportive employment
4. More than 11% (47 alumni), those with the most severe disabilities, were engaged in appropriate adult programs in the community

Highlight for NAPSEC alumni from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders Programs 3-5 years after leaving school as compared to findings from the National Longitudinal Transitional Study (NLTS):

1. 51% of the NAPSEC alumni from Emotional/Behavioral Disorder programs were competitively employed 3-5 years after leaving high school compared to 47% of alumni from public school Emotional/Behavioral Disorder programs

Introduction

Approximately 3% of the more than 6 million students between the ages of 6 and 21 years enrolled in special education in the United States attend out-of-district programs. Almost 2% attend programs that are quasi-public in their operation, while about 1% receive special educational services in approved programs administered by the private sector (U.S. Department of Education, 2001). Frequently, out-of-district programs are sought for students with the most severe impairments, including those with multiple disabilities, who require intensive, individualized interventions that are not available in the special services divisions of the local district. Although these youngsters attend school in settings that are separate from those located within the local public school district, the special education services they receive are driven and regulated by the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), the development of which is legally mandated as the responsibility of the local district. Therefore, through individual student contracts, out-of-district programs function as IEP partners with the local district.

Since the National Center on Education Outcomes (1993) reported that over 40% of school-age students with disabilities were excluded from prominent national data collection efforts, important steps have been taken to document the outcomes for students receiving special education services in public school programs within their local districts. The studies of students receiving special education services within their local districts indicate that, when compared to students in the general education population, special education students tend to

pursue postsecondary education to a lesser degree, incur high drop out rates, and lag behind in wages, independent living, and achieving social integration in their communities (Benz, Lindstrom, & Yovanoff, 2000; Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Browning, Dunn, Rabren, & Whetstone, 1995; Halpern, 1993; Heal & Rusch, 1995; Johnson, McGrew, Bloomberg, Bruininks, & Lin, 1997; Johnson & Rusch, 1993; Lindstrom & Benz, 2002; Malmgren, Edgar, & Neel, 1998; Sample, 1998; SRI International, 1993; U.S. Department of Education, 1999, 2000, 2001; Wagner, 1995; Wagner, Blackorby, Cameto, & Newman, 1993).

Moreover, students with emotional and behavioral problems who attend special education programs within their local public schools have consistently been associated with low graduation rates and a high degree of difficulty in making successful transitions to the adult world (Malmgren, Edgar, & Neel, 1998; Sample, 1998; SRI International, 1993; U.S. Department of Education, 1999, 2000, 2001; Wagner, 1995). Information about the outcomes for the approximately 180,000 students with disabilities in the U.S. who receive special education services in out-of-district programs, however, is scarce.

Given renewed concerns about accountability in special education and the absence of substantive information (Chambers, Parrish, & Harr, 2002; U.S. Department of Education, 2002), the National Association of Private Special Education Centers (NAPSEC), an organization of approximately 263 approved private special education centers, conducted a study. The investigation focused on graduates of the Class of 2000 who were followed over the course of 5 years at 4 distinct points in time: 2002, 2003, 2004, and now in 2005. (NAPSEC, 2002;

2003; 2004). The purpose of the study was to learn how the alumni of NAPSEC programs have fared in their postschool adult lives. Specifically, we sought to determine how many alumni entered mainstream and other adult roles after leaving school. This report documents the findings for the 2005 follow-up and discusses alumni patterns of productivity from 2002-2005.

Five-Year Follow-Up: Class of 2000

The Participating Programs

Seventy-three schools operating 95 programs in 14 states from 7 federal educational regions participated in the study. The regions represented were Northeast, Mid-Atlantic, Appalachia, Southeast, North Central, Southwest, and Mid-Continent. Table 1 shows the distribution of the participating schools by state and federal region. Twenty-nine percent of the 95 participating programs were categorized as Pervasive Developmental Disorders, 20% as Medical Disorders, 36% as Emotional/Behavioral Disorders, and 15% as Learning Disorders programs.

Table 1. Class of 2000 Study
Participating NAPSEC Schools by Federal Educational Region

Region/Participating State	#	%
N=73		
<u>Northeast:</u>		
Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, Rhode Island	11	15.0
<u>Mid-Atlantic:</u>		
Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania	48	65.8
<u>Appalachia:</u>		
Tennessee, Virginia	8	10.9
<u>Southeast:</u>		
Mississippi	1	1.4
<u>North Central:</u>		
Illinois, Minnesota	3	4.1
<u>Southwest:</u>		
Texas	1	1.4
<u>Mid-Continent:</u>		
Kansas	1	1.4
Total	73	100.0

In 2002, two years after graduating, aged-out or receiving a certificate of completion, 579 alumni were available for this study, 87% of the original cohort of 667. In 2003, three years after graduating, aging out, or receiving a certificate of completion, 509 alumni were interviewed, 76% of the original 667. In 2004, four years after graduating, aging out, or receiving a certificate of completion, 451 alumni were contacted, 68% of the original cohort. For the present contact in 2005, 419 alumni, 63% of the original cohort were available. Table 2 highlights the characteristics of the alumni who were available as compared to those in the original cohort and those who were unavailable.

Table 2. Characteristics of Alumni from Class of 2000: Year 5 Follow-Up
(2005)

Characteristics	Original Cohort N=667		Available in 2005 N=419		Unavailable in 2005 N=248	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
<i>Gender</i>						
Male	464	70	278	66	186	75
Female	203	30	141	34	62	25
<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>						
White	392	59	303	72	89	36
Black	194	29	79	19	115	46
Hispanic	66	10	28	7	38	15
Asian/Pacific Islander	15	2	9	2	6	3
<i>Program Classification</i>						
Emotional/Behavioral Disorders	277	42	166	40	111	45
Learning Disorders	137	21	101	24	36	14
Pervasive Developmental Disorders	124	18	93	22	31	13
Medical Disorders	129	19	59	14	70	28

Method

Each participating program was asked to contact every student who graduated from their school in June, 2000. The alumni were contacted by phone during the 4-month period of March 15 – July 15, 2005. Every effort was made to interview the alumni as well as a parent, other relative, or guardian. Each respondent was asked whether the alumni were engaged in Mainstream Activity (enrolled in Graduate/Professional School; attending 4-Year or 2-Year College, Trade/Technical School; participating in Competitive Employment or the Military); Vocational Rehabilitation Activity (enrolled in a Vocational Rehabilitation Training Program or Supported or Sheltered Employment); Community-Based Program Activity (participating in an Adult Partial Care or Nonvocational Day Program);

“Other” Activity (e.g., volunteer; admitted to a hospital, correctional, or drug rehabilitation facility; deceased); or was without any Postschool Education/Training, Employment, Vocational Rehabilitation or appropriate Adult Program. They were also asked about the alumni’s living arrangements (independent; semi-independent; with parent, guardian or other relative; in a skill development or foster home; in a group home; in a residential treatment facility; in another facility, such as a development center, psychiatric hospital, correctional facility). These responses were then recorded and analyzed.

Results for Class of 2000: Year 5 Follow-Up

As Table 3 indicates, when entry into Mainstream Activity, which includes entry into Graduate/Professional School (3 alumni, nearly 1%), 4-Year/2-Year College (57 alumni, close to 14%), Trade/Technical School (5 alumni, over 1%), and Competitive Employment/Military (156 alumni, about 37%), was examined, almost 53% of the alumni were found to be engaged in such activities.

Moreover, about 25% of the alumni were enrolled in Vocational Rehabilitation Activity, while more than 11% were participating in Community-Based Program Activity. Taken together, about 89% of the alumni were engaged in a productive activity. More than 4% (19 alumni) were in the “Other” category. Of these, 1 alumnus was found to be volunteering at a thrift shop; 1 alumnus was hospitalized; 1 alumnus was in a nursing home; 4 alumni were reportedly in a correctional facility; and 12

alumni were reported as “deceased.”¹ About 6% (27 alumni) were not engaged in any postschool activity.

When the postschool activities of alumni who attended Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs were examined, almost 80% were found to be engaged in Mainstream Activity. Of these, 54% were found to be competitively employed, including military service. The remaining 26% were in postsecondary education or trade/technical training programs. Of these, 3 alumni were found to be in graduate or professional school; they had successfully completed 4-year college.

About 66% of those from Learning Disorders programs were involved in Mainstream Activity. More than 47% of these alumni were found to be engaged in competitive employment, including military service.

Those from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs had a tendency to enter a Vocational Rehabilitation Activity (about 55%). About 3% were involved in vocational rehabilitation training programs, 38% in supported employment, and about 14% in sheltered employment. However, about 13% were involved in Mainstream Activity (1% in 2-year college, 12% in competitive employment).

Finally, about 36% of alumni from Medical Disorders programs were enrolled in Community-Based Program Activity (10.2% in adult partial care and 25.4% in nonvocational day programs), while 27% were involved in Vocational Rehabilitation Activity (about 2% in vocational rehabilitation training programs, 17% in supported employment, and about 8% in sheltered employment).

¹ Eleven of the 12 deceased alumni came from Medical Disorders or Learning Disorders programs and died from complications related to severe medical and/or neurological disabilities. The 12th alumni was killed in a car accident.

Table 3. NAPSEC Alumni: Class of 2000: Year 5

Programs by Disorder Postschool Setting	ED/BD N=166		Learning N=101		PDD N=93		Medical N=59		Total N=419	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Graduate/Professional School	3	1.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	.7 ^d
Four Year College	21	12.7	2	2.0	0	0.0	2	3.4	25	6.0
Two Year College	14	8.5	16	15.8	1	1.1	1	1.7	32	7.6
Trade/Technical School	4	2.4	1	1.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	1.2
Competitive Employment	79	47.6	44	43.6	11	11.8	7	11.9	141	33.7
Military	11	6.6	4	4.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	15	3.6
Mainstream Activity^a	132	79.6	67	66.4	12	12.9	10	16.9	221	52.8
Vocational Rehabilitation Training Program	2	1.2	2	2.0	3	3.2	1	1.7	8	1.9
Supported Employment	8	4.8	17	16.8	35	37.6	10	16.9	70	16.7
Sheltered Employment	3	1.8	6	5.9	13	14.0	5	8.5	27	6.4
Vocational Rehabilitation Activity^b	13	7.8	25	24.7	51	54.8	16	27.2	105	25.1
Adult Partial Care	2	1.2	0	0.0	2	2.2	6	10.2	10	2.4
Nonvocational Day Program	1	.6	0	0.0	21	22.6	15	25.4	37	8.8
Community-Based Program Activity^c	3	1.8	0	0.0	23	24.8	21	35.6	47	11.2
Other	6	3.6	3	3.0	0	0.0	10	16.9	19	4.5
No Education/Training, Job or Program	12	7.2	6	5.9	7	7.5	2	3.4	27	6.4
Total	166	100.0	101	100.0	93	100.0	59	100.0	419	100.0

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

^b Vocational Rehabilitation Activity – Vocational Rehabilitation Training Program, Supported or Sheltered Employment

^c Community-Based Program Activity – Adult Partial Care or Nonvocational Day Program

^d These 3 alumni were previously reported as enrolled in 4-year college (NAPSEC 2002; 2003; 2004); they have completed college and entered graduate/professional school

Living Arrangements

When the living arrangements were examined for alumni from all NAPSEC program categories, about 56.8% were found to be living in the community with a parent, other relative, or guardian. Almost 23.9% of the alumni were living independently (21.5%) or semi-independently (2.4%). Moreover, 11.4% were living in group homes, while less than 2% (1.9%) were in skill/foster homes (1.4%) or development centers (.5%). Finally, 6% were in other living arrangements, such as, nursing homes and medical/psychiatric settings (5.1%), hospitals or correctional facilities (.9%).

OUTCOMES OVER TIME: 2002 – 2005 Follow-Up Periods

Overview

Table 4 provides an overview of the results for the Class of 2000 for follow-up periods 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005 by Activity category.

Table 4. NAPSEC Class of 2000: 2002-2005 Follow-Up

	Mainstream		Vocational Rehabilitation		Community-Based Program		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
2002 Follow-Up N=579	327	57	132	23	61	10	520	90
2003 Follow-Up N=509	292	57	111	22	56	11	459	90
2004 Follow-Up N=451	228	51	102	23	56	12	386	86
2005 Follow-Up N=419	221	53	105	25	47	11	373	89

Table 5 represents the outcomes for the alumni who became involved in Mainstream Activity. On the whole, postschool education and training decreased over time (31.1% in 2002; 22.9% in 2003; 16.9% in 2004; and 15.5% in 2005) as individuals completed coursework and training programs, including entering graduate/professional school, while competitive employment, including entry into the military, increased from 2002 (25.5%) to 2003 (34.3%) went down slightly in 2004 (33.7%), and rose again in 2005 (37.3%).

Table 5. Mainstream Activity: 2002 - 2005

Follow-Up Year	2002 (N=579)		2003 (N=509)		2004 (N=451)		2005 (N=419)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Graduate/Professional School	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	.7
Four-Year College	63	10.9	49	9.6	40	8.9	25	6.0
Two-Year College	84	14.5	50	9.8	31	6.9	32	7.6
Trade/Technical School	33	5.7	18	3.5	5	1.1	5	1.2
Competitive Employment	134	23.2	158	31.0	141	31.3	141	33.7
Military	13	2.3	17	3.3	11	2.4	15	3.6
Total	327	56.6	292	57.2	228	50.6	221	52.8

According to Table 6, which focuses on alumni involved in Vocational Rehabilitation Activity from 2002-2005, the overall rates are nearly 23% (2002), almost 22% (2003), about 23% (2004), and slightly more than 25% (2005) for a small increase. Although the rate for attending vocational rehabilitation training programs shows a decrease (5.5% in 2002; 2.7% in 2003; 2.6% in 2004; and 1.9% in 2005), the pattern for supported employment shows slight fluctuation and an overall increase: 11.2% in 2002; 10.8% in 2003; 12.9% in 2004; and 16.7% in

2005. Sheltered employment also shows a slightly fluctuating pattern: 6.0% in 2002; 8.3% in 2003; 7.1% in 2004; and 6.4% in 2005.

Table 6. Vocational Rehabilitation Activity Comparison: 2002-2005

Follow-Up Years	2002		2003		2004		2005	
	(N=579)		(N=509)		(N=451)		(N=419)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Voc Rehab Training Program	32	5.5	14	2.7	12	2.6	8	1.9
Supported Employment	65	11.2	55	10.8	58	12.9	70	16.7
Sheltered Employment	35	6.0	42	8.3	32	7.1	27	6.4
Total	132	22.7	111	21.8	102	22.6	105	25.1

Table 7 summarizes the outcomes for the alumni who entered community-based programs for adults with disabilities. Overall, the rates are 10.5% (2002), 11% (2003), 12.4% (2004), and 11.2% (2005). These alumni entered either a partial care program or a nonvocational day program. Overall, the rates for adult partial care show a steady pattern: 2.4% in 2002; 1.8% in 2003; 2.4% in 2004, and 2.4% in 2005. The rates for involvement in a nonvocational day program show a slight fluctuation from 2002 through 2005: (8.1% in 2002; 9.2% in 2003; 10.0% in 2004, and 8.8% in 2005).

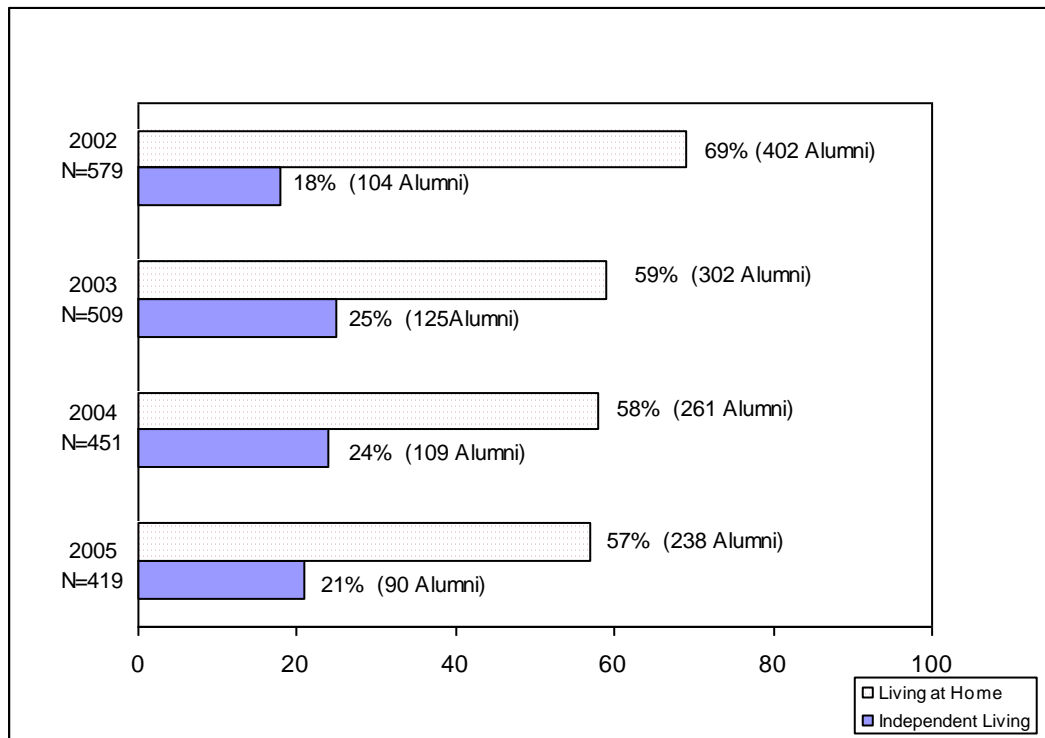
Table 7. Community-Based Program Activity Comparison: 2002-2005

Follow-Up Years	2002		2003		2004		2005	
	(N=579)		(N=509)		(N=451)		(N=419)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Adult Partial Care Program	14	2.4	9	1.8	11	2.4	10	2.4
Nonvocational Day Program	47	8.1	47	9.2	45	10.0	37	8.8
Total	61	10.5	56	11.0	56	12.4	47	11.2

Living Arrangements: 2002-2005

The rate for living at home was 69% in 2002; 59% in 2003; 58% in 2004 and 57% in 2005. The rate for independent living was 18% in 2002; 25% in 2003; 24% in 2004; and 21% in 2005.

Figure 1. NAPSEC Alumni: Living at Home and Independent Living: 2002-2005



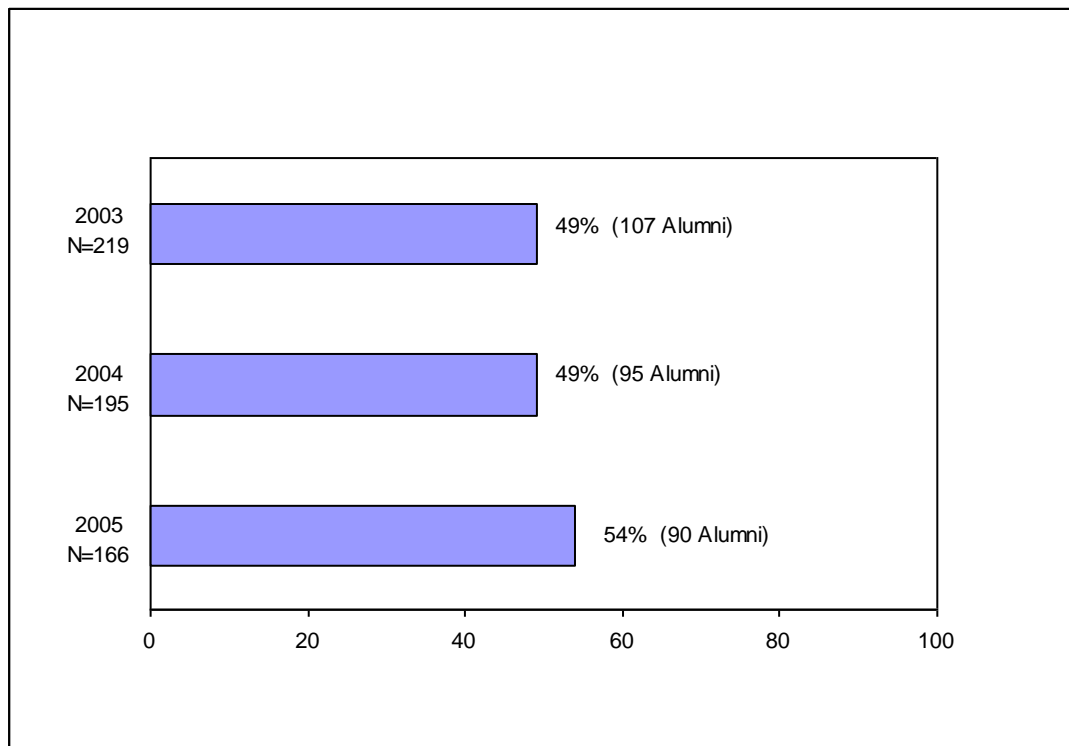
Alumni from Programs for Emotional/Behavioral Disorders

Competitive Employment

The National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS) looked intensely at special education students in emotional/behavioral disorders programs in the public schools because of the many concerns about their poor postschool outcomes. As per the 3-5 year follow-up period designated by NLTS (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Wagner & Blackorby, 1996), outcomes for NAPSEC alumni

from emotional/behavioral disorders programs were documented 3-5 years after graduation. The rates of competitive employment, including military enlistment, for NAPSEC alumni from these programs were 49% in 2003 (NAPSEC, 2003); 49% in 2004 (NAPSEC, 2004); and 54% in 2005 (See Table 3, p. 12) with an average of 51%. (See Figure 2).

Figure 2. Competitive Employment for NAPSEC Alumni from Emotional/Behavioral Disorder Programs: 3-5 Years Later



Using the NLTS findings (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Wagner & Blackorby, 1996), Table 8 compares the results for NAPSEC alumni from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs out of school for 3-5 years to public school alumni from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs and alumni attending regular public school classrooms along the dimension of competitive

employment for the same follow-up time frame. NAPSEC alumni attained a rate of 51% for competitive employment, while the alumni from public school Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs achieved a rate of 47%.

Table 8. Competitive Employment: Alumni from NAPSEC E/BD Programs vs. Alumni from Public School E/BD Programs

Out of School for 3-5 Years	Competitive Employment %
NAPSEC Alumni from E/BD Programs	51
Alumni from Public Special E/BD Programs	47 (NLTS)

Summary of Findings

About 63% (419 alumni) of the original cohort of 667 graduates from the Class of 2000 were available for an interview 5 years after leaving their NAPSEC program. (See Table 2, p. 9). Nearly 89% of the 419 available alumni, the vast majority, appear to be leading productive lives: 53% are engaged in mainstream activities, 25% in vocational rehabilitation, and 11% in appropriate supportive day programs in the community.

Among those who are functioning in the mainstream, about 37% (156 alumni) are employed competitively, including military service. Two alumni are presently enrolled in Master's degree programs and 1 has entered law school; these 3 alumni completed the Bachelor's degree within the expected 4-year time

frame. At the time of this interview, 25 alumni (6%) were enrolled in 4-year colleges and 32 alumni (more than 7%) in 2-year colleges. In summary, of the 419 available alumni, about 53% (221 students) either successfully completed postsecondary education, are currently enrolled in a 4-year or 2-year college program, or trade/technical school, or are competitively employed.

The rate for alumni involved in Vocational Rehabilitation Activity in 2005 is about 25%. Although the overall rate of engagement for this category appears to have remained relatively stable throughout the four follow-up periods (about 23% in 2002; 22% in 2003; 23% in 2004; 25% in 2005), participation in vocational rehabilitation training programs appears to have decreased (about 5% in 2002; about 3% in 2003; 3% in 2004; about 2% in 2005) as involvement in supported employment has steadily increased (11% in 2002; 11% in 2003; 13% in 2004; 17% in 2005). The slight fluctuation that is evident in the area of sheltered employment (6% in 2002; 8% in 2003; 7% in 2004; 6% in 2005) most likely reflects that these alumni, whose severe disabilities cannot be easily remediated, are involved most appropriately in vocational rehabilitation activity.

When the rates for alumni involved in adult programs in the community is examined at the four follow-up periods, a steady pattern emerges (about 11% in 2002; 11% in 2003; 12% in 2004; 11% in 2005). Given the serious medical, neurological, and psychiatric issues faced by these individuals, these alumni have also most likely been placed in the most appropriate adult activity. In fact, the severity of disability for these alumni is underscored by the finding that about 60% of them were previously enrolled in Medical Disorders Programs (35%) or

Pervasive Developmental Disorders Programs (25%). In fact, 9 alumni from the Medical Disorders Program categories were reported as “deceased” 5 years after leaving school due to their medical condition.

The rates for alumni living at home decreased sharply from 69% in 2002 to 59% in 2003. Subsequently, a more gradual decrease was observed: 58% in 2004 and 57% in 2005. The rates of independent living increased from 2002 (18%) to 2003 (25%) and then fluctuate (24% in 2004 and 21% in 2005).

When the rates of competitive employment for Class of 2000 alumni from Emotional/Behavioral Disorder programs was examined 3-5 years after they graduated from a NAPSEC school and compared to the rates for alumni from Emotional/Behavioral Disorder public school programs as reported in the NLTS (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Wagner & Blackorby, 1996), the results were encouraging. The rate of competitive employment for NAPSEC alumni from Emotional/Behavioral Disorder programs was 51% and exceeded the 47% rate reported for their public school peers.

Conclusion

The alumni from the Class of 2000 were sent to NAPSEC approved private special education programs by their local school districts because the presence of their severe disabilities and the absence of the appropriate services within their local districts to promote their education necessitated these out-of-district placements. That the NAPSEC programs succeeded in helping these alumni become productive adults is clear. Five years after leaving a NAPSEC program, few members of the Class of 2000 (6.4%, 27 alumni) were languishing

at home without being involved in postschool education or training, employment, vocational rehabilitation, or an appropriate adult program in the community. Moreover, 3-5 years after leaving school, the alumni of the Class of 2000 who had attended Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs were found to be doing as well as their special education peers from public school programs along the dimension of competitive employment when compared to the findings of the NLTS (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Wagner & Blackorby, 1996). This is significant because deep and consistent concern is often expressed for the adjustment and functioning of children and adults from this disability group. (e.g., Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Wagner & Blackorby, 1996; Malmgren & Neel, 1998; Sample, 1998).

As the National Longitudinal Transitional Study-2 (NLTS2) makes clear, success in special education most likely begins with the characteristics of the school. Small school size, small class size, and small caseloads for support personnel are probably critical for creating a learning environment in which special education students receive the individualized and intensive services that lead to favorable results (SRI International, 2003). Although these organizational traits may not be readily available in public school special education settings, they are the hallmark of the private approved schools that belong to NAPSEC.

The services and supports that special education students receive also help determine their achieving successful outcomes. In assessing special education in the public schools along this dimension, the NLTS-2 found that intensive school-based health services and counseling services are frequently

not provided. In addition to highlighting parental concerns about the unmet service needs of students with autism, this report also notes that “youth with emotional disturbances and other health impairments join youth with learning disabilities as among the least likely to have received services through or from school.” (SRI International, 2004; p. 2-12)

In contrast, NAPSEC programs are distinguished by the intense and individualized school-based services and supports that are available to the severely disabled students who attend their programs and to their families as well. Many students in NAPSEC’s Medical Disorders programs are physically fragile and might require intensive school-based health services to, for example, carry out feedings through a tube. In order to function and communicate, autistic students attending one of NAPSEC’s Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs might require one-on-one assistance; the parents might require special school-based training programs, held in the evening, to assure that the gains made in the NAPSEC classroom are carried over into the home and vice versa. Students from NAPSEC’s Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs are likely to present with multiple psychiatric diagnoses that indicate complex anxiety, depressive, behavior, and psychotic disorders. These youngsters require intensely individualized mental health services, including psychiatric evaluation and counseling, that are part of the school program; their parents may need support, education about mental health issues, and counseling at school with their offspring.

Perhaps the alumni of the Class of 2000 from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs have been able to experience employment success precisely because of the exemplary level of individualized service and support delivered within comparably small educational settings. They compare favorably to their public school peers 3-5 years after leaving school when competitive employment is examined. In fact, 5 years after leaving a NAPSEC program 90 of the 166 alumni (54%) from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs are competitively employed, while 42 more alumni (25%) are enrolled in graduate/professional school, 4-year/2-year college or trade/technical school.

This study demonstrates that 5 years after leaving a NAPSEC program the alumni of the Class of 2000, individuals with disabilities that cannot be or are not easily remediated, are in their communities involved in productive roles and programs. These are indeed positive findings. They demonstrate that NAPSEC programs are effective in helping their alumni to effectively bridge the critical passage into the adult world.

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