

**Outcomes of Approved Special Education  
Programs in the Private Sector: Survey Results**

**Plans for Exiting Students: 2001-2002  
Outcomes for Students from Class of 2000: Year 2 Follow Up**

**Report Number 3 of the NAPSEC Outcomes Project**

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## **Introduction**

Information regarding the outcomes for students attending approved special education programs in the private sector remains scarce. To add to this knowledge base, NAPSEC, an association of 262 approved private special education schools and agencies, conducted a study of students who exited from its member schools during the 2001-2002 academic year. We were interested in learning the educational settings to which transfer students planned to move as well as the plans made by the graduate/aged-out students who left a NAPSEC program.

We also continued our Alumni Follow-Up Study by carrying out a second interview with alumni who graduated from or aged-out of a NAPSEC school as members of the Class of 2000. As we stated in Report Number 2 of the NAPSEC Outcomes Project (2002), we plan to follow the Class of 2000 for five years to track their post-school outcomes. Our goal is to discover the degree to which members of this class are able to lead productive adults lives during the study period.

Finally, we analyzed the findings from our previous studies. We compared the plans made by the transfer and graduates/aged-out students in 1999-2000, 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 school years.

## **Method**

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

The exiting students were further identified as attending one of five specific special educational programs. The schools were given a definition for each program category and were asked to classify the program from which each student exited by using one predominant program category. The programs were defined as follows: 1) Preschool Disorders Programs – for students with any disorder identified at the Preschool stage; 2) Pervasive Developmental Disorders Programs – for students with speech/language impairments, mental retardation, autism, developmental delays; 3) Emotional/Behavioral Disorders Programs – for students with emotional disturbances as well as attention deficit disorder; 4) Medical Disorders Programs – for students with other health impairments, hearing impairments, visual impairments, orthopedic impairments, deaf-blindness, and traumatic brain injury; and 5) Learning Disorders Programs – for students with specific learning disabilities.

### **The Participating Programs and Students**

One hundred and four NAPSEC schools (40% of the membership), operating educational programs, volunteered to participate in the study. During the 2001-2002 school year, the participating schools reported that 12,556 students were enrolled in their programs. Of those enrolled, 8,951 (71%) were male and 3,605 (29%) were female.

Participating schools were located in 6 of the federal education regions and 15 states. As Table 1 shows, 70% of the schools were located in the Mid-Atlantic (Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania), while a little more than 14% were in the Northeast (Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York and Rhode Island). About 9% were in Appalachia (Tennessee and Virginia), while the remaining 7% were in the North Central (3% from Illinois), the Southeast (2% from Georgia and Mississippi), and Mid-Continent (2% from Kansas and Missouri) region. See Table 1.

About 34% of the 227 programs in the study were Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs (75 programs); 22% were Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs (50 programs); 16% were Learning Disorders programs (37 programs); 16% were Medical Disorders programs (37 programs); and 12% were Preschool Disorders programs (28 programs).

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

n=104

<b>Region/Participating State</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
<u>Northeast:</u> <sup>2</sup> Connecticut, Massachusetts, New York, Rhode Island	15	14.4
<u>Mid-Atlantic:</u> <sup>3</sup> Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania	73	70.2
<u>Appalachia:</u> <sup>4</sup> Tennessee, Virginia	9	8.6
<u>Southeast:</u> <sup>5</sup> Georgia, Mississippi	2	1.9
<u>North Central:</u> <sup>6</sup> Illinois	3	3.0
<u>Mid-Continent:</u> <sup>7</sup> Kansas, Missouri	2	1.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>100.0</b>

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

## **The Exiting Students**

During the 2001-2002 academic year, 3,554 students exited from a NAPSEC program. The demographic characteristics of these students and of the programs they attended are presented in Table 2.

The exiting students tended to be male (73%), White (51%), High School Students (57%) from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs (57%). Transfer students accounted for 75% of the exiting students, graduates/aged-out were 22%, and dropouts were 3%.<sup>1</sup> According to NAPSEC school staff, 77% of the exiters experienced a “planned” exit. In short, student, family/guardian, NAPSEC program staff, and local district staff concurred that the student was ready/needed to move to a different program.

Planning information was available for 3,095 students, 87% of the exiting students. Of these students with known plans, 2,344 were transfer students and 751 were graduates/aged-out students.

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<sup>1</sup> 94 students dropped out over the course of the study period. Of these, 65 were male and 29 were female; 46 were White, 42 were Black and 6 were Hispanic. Of the dropouts, 80 came from day programs and 14 from residential programs.

Table 2

## Demographic Information of Exiting Students and Their Programs

n=3,554

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
<u>Program Classification</u>		
Preschool Disorders	394	11.0
Pervasive Developmental Disorders	350	10.0
Emotional/Behavioral Disorders	2,030	57.0
Medical Disorders	305	9.0
Learning Disorders	475	13.0
<u>Program Type</u>		
Day	2,930	83.0
Residential	624	17.0
<u>Reason for Exit</u>		
Transfer	2,671	75.0
Graduate/Aged-Out	789	22.0
Dropouts	94	3.0
<u>Grade Level</u>		
Preschool	389	11.0
Elementary School	536	15.0
Middle School	588	17.0
High School	2,041	57.0
<u>Ethnicity</u>		
White	1,820	51.0
Black	1,242	35.0
Hispanic	386	11.0
American Indian/Alaskan Native	5	.5
Asian/Pacific Islander	52	1.5
"Other"	49	1.0
<u>Gender</u>		
Male	2,602	73.0
Female	952	27.0
<u>Subsidized Lunch</u>		
Yes	1,158	33.0
No	2,396	67.0
<u>Status of Planning Information</u>		
Available in Records	3,095	87.0
Not Available	459	13.0
<u>Staff Assessment of Exit</u>		
<u>Planned</u>		
Yes	2,741	77.0
No	813	23.0
<u>Positive</u>		
Yes	1,818	51.0
No	1,736	49.0

\*Please note that some students carry the Preschool Disorder classification, although their grade level is Elementary School.

## **The Transfer Students**

There were 2,344 transfer students with known plans. Of these, nearly 75% were male, while about 25% were female. Slightly more than 50% were White, 35% were Black, almost 12% were Hispanic, less than 1% (.1%) were American Indian/Alaskan Native, 1% were Asian/Pacific Islander, and the remaining 1% were of "Other" racial/ethnic backgrounds. Approximately 42% attended High School, 22% Middle School, 20% Elementary School, and 16% Preschool. Of these students, about 57% attended Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs, 9% attended Learning Disorders programs, 16% were enrolled in Preschool Disorders programs, 9% went to Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs, and 9% were in Medical Disorders programs.

One thousand seven hundred twenty-four (73.5%) of the transfer students attended day programs, while 620 students (26.5%) attended residential programs. Day students tended to be male (74%) and White (51%) or Black (45%). Residential students also tended to be male (75%) and White (48%) or Black (41%).



**Table 3****Educational Plans for Transfer Students from NAPSEC Programs**

n=2,344

<b>New Education Setting</b>	Preschool n=375		PDD n=209		ED/BD n=1,346		Medical n=203		Learning n=211		Total n=2,344	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Regular Education, Not Special Education	92	24.5	2	1.0	118	8.8	1	.5	22	10.4	235	10.0
Regular Education, Private/Parochial	11	2.9	3	1.4	17	1.3	4	2.0	26	12.3	61	2.6
Regular Education, Vocational	0	0.0	12	5.6	29	2.1	0	0.0	4	1.9	45	1.9
Regular Education, Supported Inclusion	51	13.6	15	7.2	83	6.2	4	2.0	7	3.3	160	6.8
Resource Room	0	0.0	3	1.4	75	5.6	0	0.0	2	.9	80	3.4
Alternate School	4	1.1	8	4.0	99	7.3	2	1.0	6	2.8	119	5.1
Special Education, Self Contained LEA	138	36.8	87	41.6	313	23.2	64	31.5	47	22.3	649	27.7
<b>Subtotal: All Returns to In-district Programs</b>	<b>296</b>	<b>78.9</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>62.2</b>	<b>734</b>	<b>54.5</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>37.0</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>54.0</b>	<b>1,349</b>	<b>57.5</b>
Out of District Special Education	59	15.7	43	20.6	266	19.8	43	21.2	82	38.9	493	21.0
Residential	0	0.0	27	12.9	188	14.0	67	33.0	2	.9	284	12.1
Other	13	3.5	6	2.9	89	6.6	7	3.4	8	3.8	123	5.3
Home Instruction	7	1.9	3	1.4	69	5.1	11	5.4	5	2.4	95	4.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>375</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>1,346</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2,344</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Preschool Disorders Programs – For students with any disorder identified at the Preschool stage.

Pervasive Development Disorders Programs – For students with speech/language impairments, mental retardation, autism, developmental delays.

Emotional/Behavioral Disorders Programs – For students with emotional disturbances as well as attention deficit disorder.

Medical Disorders Programs – For students with other health impairments, hearing impairments, visual impairments, orthopedic impairments, deaf-blindness, and traumatic brain injury.

Learning Disorders Programs – For students with specific learning disabilities.

### **Results for Transfer Students**

The students who transferred from a NAPSEC program to another educational program tended to be White or Black, male, high school students attending programs for Emotional/Behavioral Disorders. As Table 3 indicates, more than 57% of the transfer students left a NAPSEC-member program with plans to return to an educational program within the local district. Slightly more than 21% of the students planned to return to Regular Education classes (Regular Education, Not Special Education, 10%; Regular Education, Private/Parochial, 2.6%; Regular Education, Vocational, 1.9%; Regular Education, Supported Inclusion, 6.8%), while about 36.2% planned to return to Resource Room (3.4%), Alternate School (5.1%), or Self-contained classrooms within district (27.7%). About 79% of the students who transferred out of NAPSEC schools from Preschool Disorders programs, 62% from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs, 54.5% from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs, 37% from Medical Disorders programs, and 54% from Learning Disorders programs had plans to enter educational programs in their local districts.

### **Conclusions for Transfer Students**

More than half (57.5%) of the severely disabled students who attend and then transfer from a NAPSEC program develop plans to return to educational programs within their local districts. A little more than 21% are able to return to regular education classrooms. Moreover, in 77% of the cases, the transfers were planned cooperatively by student and family, NAPSEC school staff, and local district staff.

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

By studying the results for academic years 1999-2000, 2000-2001, and 2001-2002, Table 4 shows the degree to which the plans of the transfer students reflected a return to an in-district program. Furthermore, it records the number of students who entered a regular education classroom.

**Table 4****3-Year Comparison of Transfer Student Exit Plans**

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

The results indicate that: 46% returned in 1999-2000; 60% in 2000-2001; and 58% in 2001-2002. Thus, findings to date appear to indicate that students in NAPSEC-member schools make plans to return to their local districts at rates between 46% and 60% with an average planned return rate of 55%. Moreover, for the academic year 1999-2000, transfer students planned to return to regular education classes at the rate of 20%. During the 2000-2001 school year, the rate of planned return to regular classrooms increased to 25%. However, during the 2001-2002 school year, this rate decreased to 21%. The average for these three academic years is 22%. These findings point to the need for on-going longitudinal studies so that a clear and stable pattern may emerge.

**The Graduates/Aged-Out Students**

There were 751 graduates/aged-out students with known plans. Of these, 69% were male, while 31% were female. Approximately 59% were White, 28% were Black, 8% were Hispanic, .1% were American Indian/Alaskan Native, 3%

were Asian/Pacific Islander and 1.5% were “Other” racial/ethnic backgrounds. Approximately 15% came from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs, 44% from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs, 12% from Medical Disorders programs, and 29% from Learning Disorders programs. About 88% (or 662 graduates/aged-out students) came from day programs, while 12% (or 89 graduates/aged-out students) came from residential programs.

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

As Table 5 shows, about 34% of the graduates/aged-out students planned to go on to a Two-year/Four-year College or a Trade or Technical School. Another 23% had plans to enter Competitive Employment or the Military. Taken together, about 57% of the graduates/aged-out students planned to enter the Mainstream by participating in a post-school educational or training program, seeking employment, or enlisting in the military. About 31% planned to enter Vocational Rehabilitation by participating in a vocational rehabilitation program or supported/sheltered employment. Slightly more than 5% planned to enter Community-Based Adult Programs by enrolling in an adult partial care or nonvocational day program. Less than 2% planned to enter another setting, such as a correctional facility or psychiatric hospital. Finally, about 5% of the graduates/aged-out students made no plans to enter an educational, vocational, rehabilitative, or supportive program or to obtain a job after completing secondary school.

Table 5

**Post-School Plans for NAPSEC  
Graduates/Aged-Out Students By Program**

n=751

Post-School Setting	Pervasive Developmental n=113		ED/BD Programs n=330		Medical n=87		Learning n=221		Total n=751	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Four Year College	0	0.0	30	9.1	9	10.3	13	5.9	52	6.9
Two Year College	10	8.8	84	25.5	26	29.9	30	13.6	150	20.0
Trade/Technical School	1	1.0	34	10.3	3	3.5	13	5.9	51	6.8
Competitive Employment	17	15.0	97	29.4	8	9.2	43	19.5	165	22.0
Armed Forces	0	0.0	9	2.7	0	0.0	3	1.3	12	1.6
<b>Mainstream Subtotal<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>28</b>	<b>24.8</b>	<b>254</b>	<b>77.0</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>52.9</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>46.2</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>57.3</b>
Vocational Rehabilitation Program	14	12.4	23	7.0	5	5.8	16	7.2	58	7.7
Supported Employment	24	21.2	25	7.6	6	6.9	61	27.6	116	15.4
Sheltered Employment	19	16.8	10	3.0	0	0.0	27	12.2	56	7.5
<b>Vocational Rehabilitation Subtotal<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>57</b>	<b>50.4</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>17.6</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12.7</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>47.0</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>30.6</b>
Adult Partial Care	10	8.8	1	.25	1	1.1	0	0.0	12	1.6
Nonvocational Day Program	10	8.8	1	.25	12	13.8	5	2.3	28	3.7
<b>Community-Based Program Subtotal<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>20</b>	<b>17.6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>.5</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14.9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>5.3</b>
Other	2	1.8	0	0.0	9	10.3	0	0.0	11	1.5
No Education/Training, Job or Program	6	5.4	16	4.9	8	9.2	10	4.5	40	5.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>330</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>751</b>	<b>100.0</b>

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

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

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

To date, the research about special education students with emotional/behavioral problems who attend programs in the public school has consistently discovered low graduation rates as well as difficulties in accomplishing a successful transition to adulthood. (Malmgren, Edgar, & Neel, 1998; Sample, 1998; SRI International, 1993; U.S. Department of Education, 1999, 2000, 2001; Wagner, 1995). It is encouraging to learn that less than 5% of such students left a NAPSEC-member program without plans to pursue productive post-school plans. In fact, 77% of graduates/aged-out students from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs had plans to enter the Mainstream (45% to 4-year/2-year college or trade/technical school; 32% to competitive employment/armed forces) and about 17% had plans to enter Vocational Rehabilitation (7% to vocational rehabilitation programs, 10% to supported and sheltered employment).

Few graduates/aged-out students from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs (5%), Medical Disorders programs (9%), or Learning Disorders programs (about 4%) left a NAPSEC-member school without plans to engage in productive adult activity.

### **Living Arrangements**

Almost 70% of the graduates/aged-out students had plans to live with a parent, other relative, or guardian. More than 20% planned to live independently (17%) or semi-independently (3.5%). Approximately 1% planned to live in a skill development home, foster home, or developmental center. While more than 6% planned to live in a group home, less than 2% had plans to enter a residential treatment center. Slightly more than 1% indicated plans for another living arrangement, such as entry into a correctional facility or psychiatric hospital.

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

NAPSEC programs appear to be strongly involved in helping graduates/aged-out students make plans to transition into productive adult roles. The majority of the graduates/aged-out students had plans to live in the community, primarily with a parent, other relative, or guardian, while 17% had plans to live independently or semi-independently. About 57% of the graduates/aged-out students planned to enter a 4-Year/2-Year College, Trade/Technical School, or Competitive Employment/Armed Forces. Overall, 93% of these students planned to enter the Mainstream (4-Year/2-Year College, Trade/Technical School, Competitive Employment or Military), Vocational Rehabilitation (Vocational Rehabilitation Programs or Supported/Sheltered Employment), or Community-Based Adult Programs (Partial Care or Nonvocational Day Programs).



### **3-Year Comparison of Graduates/Aged-Out Students' Post-School Plans**

As Table 6 indicates, when the post-school plans of graduates/aged-out students from all programs are compared from academic year 1999-2000 through 2001-2002, the following emerges.

**Table 6**

#### **NAPSEC Graduates/Aged-Out Students: 3-Year Comparison of Post-School Plans**

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

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

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

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

Plans to participate in Mainstream activities have occurred at the respective rates of 46% (1999-2000), 50% (2000-2001), and 57% (2001-2002). The 3-year average is 51% for the Mainstream. Plans to become involved in Vocational Rehabilitation were reported as 40% (1999-2000), 37% (2000-2001), and 32% (2001-2002). The 3-year average is 36%. Finally, plans to enter Community-Based Adult programs were found to be 7% (1999-2000), 9% (2000-2001), and 5% (2001-2002). The 3-year average is 7%.

Thus, over the course of the three specific academic years studied, the plans of graduates/aged-out students from NAPSEC-member programs appear to reflect their intention to lead productive adult lives upon leaving the private approved school. The rates of their planned post-school productivity are: 93% (1999-2000), 96% (2000-2001), and 93% (2001-2002); the 3-year average is 94%.

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

Tables 7, 8, and 9 compare the plans of the NAPSEC graduates/aged-out students for the two academic years 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 by each discrete program and plan category.<sup>2</sup>

Table 7 focuses on the plans for post-school Mainstream activity for graduates/aged-out students who entered 4-Year/2-Year college, Trade/Technical School, Competitive Employment, or the Military.

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<sup>2</sup> Different program categories were used in the 1999-2000 school year that academic year cannot be compared.

**Table 7**

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

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

The Mainstream plans for students from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs vary from 12% (2000-2001) to 25% (2001-2002) with an average of 18.5%. For graduates/aged-out students from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs, plans for Mainstream activity fluctuated between 62% (2000-2001) to 77% (2001-2002) with an average of 69.5%. These plans for students from Medical Disorders programs were 33% (2000-2001) and 53% (2001-2002) with an average of 43%. Finally, for graduates/aged-out students from Learning Disorders programs, the rates were 54% (2000-2001) and 46% (2001-2002) with an average of 50%.

**Table 8**

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

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

Table 8 sets forth the plans for the graduates/aged-out students who planned to enter Vocational Rehabilitation Services, which include vocational rehabilitation programs as well as supported or sheltered employment. The students from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs planned to enter Vocational Rehabilitation at the rates 58% (2000-2001) and 50% (2001-2002) with an average of 54%. The rate of planned entry for students from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs was 31% (2000-2001) and 18% (2001-2002) with an average of 24.5%. For students from Medical Disorders programs, plans to enter Vocational Rehabilitation were 23% (2000-2001) and 11% (2001-2002) with an average rate of entry of 17%. Graduates/aged-out students from Learning Disorders programs made plans to enter this type of post-school activity at the rate of 40% (2000-2001) and 47% (2001-2002) with an average of 43.5%.

**Table 9**

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

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

Table 9 shows the plans of the graduates/aged-out students who intended to enter Community-Based programs, such as partial care and nonvocational day programs. Students from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs had such plans at the rates of 26% (2000-2001) and 18% (2001-2002) with an average of 22%. For graduates/aged-out students from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs, the rates were reported as 1% (2000-2001) and .5% (2001-2002) with an average of .75%. Students from Medical Disorders programs planned to access these services at 32% (2000-2001) and 15% (2001-2002) with an average of 23.5%. Finally, the rates for graduates/aged-out students from Learning Disorders programs with plans to enter Community-Based programs were 3% (2000-2001) and 2% (2001-2002) with an average of 2.5 %.

### **Conclusions for 3-Year Comparison by Program of Graduate/Aged-Out Student Post-School Plans**

Using the 2-year average, the graduates/aged-out students from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs (62% in 2000-2001 and 77% in 2001-2002) were the most likely to plan to enter Mainstream roles after leaving a NAPSEC school. Students from Learning Disorders programs were the next group who tended to make such plans with rates of 54% in 2000-2001 and 46% in 2001-2002.

Graduates/aged-out students from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs were most likely to plan to enter Vocational Rehabilitation with rates of 58% (2000-2001) and 50% (2001-2002) and an average of 54%.

Finally, graduates/aged-out students with plans to enter Community-Based programs had a tendency to come from Medical Disorders programs (32% in 2000-2001; 15% in 2001-2002).

### **Conclusions**

It is interesting to observe that the rate of graduates/aged-out students from programs for Pervasive Developmental Disorders, Emotional/Behavioral Disorders and Medical Disorders with post-school plans to enter the Mainstream increased between 2000-2001 and 2001-2002. (Pervasive Developmental Disorders from 12% to 25%; Emotional/Behavioral Disorders from 62% to 77%; and Medical Disorders from 33% to 53%). The rate of graduates/aged-out students from Learning Disorders programs with post-school plans to enter Vocational Rehabilitation also increased during this 2-year period (40% to 47%).

The rate of entry into Community-Based programs decreased for all programs. Further longitudinal study is needed for a clear and stable pattern to emerge.

### **Discussion**

That more than 57% of the transfer students left their out-of-district NAPSEC-member programs with plans to return to their home districts and in 21% of the cases to enter the less restrictive educational environment of a regular classroom is significant. Some students may need the highly specialized, individualized supports that a private approved school provides before they can benefit from in-district programming.

It is also promising that such a high proportion of the graduates/aged-out students exited from their NAPSEC-member programs with transitional plans in place to pursue careers in the Mainstream (57%), Vocational Rehabilitation (31%), or Community-Based programs (5%). Taken together, about 93% of the graduates/aged-out students had plans to engage in productive post-school activities.

The approved private school special education programs which are members of NAPSEC appear to continue to help a diverse student population succeed. For some students, these programs are the necessary, but temporary settings in which the skills needed to ultimately succeed with in-district programming can be developed. For other special education students, NAPSEC-member schools offer the programs of choice throughout these students' educational careers, since these schools provide the optimal educational environment for those whose special needs cannot be effectively met in any other setting.

## **Two-Year Follow-Up: Class of 2000**

### **The Programs and the Alumni**

Seventy-six schools operating 107 programs in 14 states from 7 federal educational regions participated in the study. The regions represented were Northeast, MidAtlantic, Appalachia, Southeast, North Central, Southwest, and Mid-Continent. The 107 participating programs were categorized as: 32% Pervasive Developmental Disorders, 35% Emotional/Behavioral Disorders, 18% Medical Disorders, 15% Learning Disorders.

In Year 1, we were able to contact 551 alumni. In Year 2, 509 alumni were interviewed, 92% of the original 551. They were 66% male, 34% female, 70% White, 21% Black, 7% Hispanic, 1% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1% from "Other" racial/ethnic backgrounds. None of the 509 Alumni were of American Indian/Alaskan Native heritage.

### **Method**

Each participant was asked to contact every student who graduated, received a certificate of completion from, or aged-out of one of their school's programs in June, 2000. The alumni were contacted by phone and every effort was made to interview the alumni as well as the parent, guardian, or another relative. Each respondent was asked whether the alumni were engaged in the Mainstream (attending 4-Year or 2-Year College, Trade, Technical, or other Training Program; participating in Competitive Employment or the Military); Vocational Rehabilitation (enrolled in a Vocational Rehabilitative Program or Supported or Sheltered Employment); Community-Based Program (participating



in an Adult Partial Care or Nonvocational Day Program); or was without any post-school Education/Training, Employment, or appropriate Adult Program. They were also asked about the alumni's living arrangements (independently; semi-independently; 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 developmental center, psychiatric hospital, correctional facility). These responses were then recorded and analyzed.

### **Results for Class of 2000, Year 2**

When entry into the Mainstream, 4-Year/2-Year College or Trade/Technical School (23%), or involvement in Competitive Employment or the Armed Forces (34%) were examined, 57% of the alumni were found to be engaged in such activities at the two-year follow-up (See Table 10).

Table 10

**NAPSEC Alumni Post-School Activity of  
Class of 2000: Year 2**

n=509

	Pervasive Developmental n=111		ED/BD Programs n=219		Medical n=63		Learning n=116		Total n=509	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Four Year College	1	.9	21	9.6	11	17.5	16	13.8	49	9.6
Two Year College	2	1.8	31	14.2	4	6.3	13	11.2	50	9.8
Trade/Technical School	0	0.0	11	5.0	1	1.6	6	5.2	18	3.5
Competitive Employment	15	13.5	93	42.5	7	11.1	43	37.1	158	31.0
Armed Forces	0	0.0	14	6.4	0	0.0	3	2.6	17	3.3
<b>Mainstream Subtotal<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>18</b>	<b>16.2</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>77.7</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>36.5</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>69.9</b>	<b>292</b>	<b>57.2</b>
Vocational Rehabilitation Program	1	.9	6	2.7	0	0.0	7	6.0	14	2.7
Supported Employment	33	29.8	9	4.1	6	9.6	7	6.0	55	10.8
Sheltered Employment	16	14.4	7	3.2	4	6.3	15	12.9	42	8.3
<b>Vocational Rehabilitation Subtotal<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>50</b>	<b>45.1</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>24.9</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>21.8</b>
Adult Partial Care Program	3	2.7	4	1.8	2	3.2	0	0.0	9	1.8
Nonvocational Day Program	24	21.6	4	1.8	19	30.1	0	0.0	47	9.2
<b>Community-Based Adult Subtotal<sup>c</sup></b>	<b>27</b>	<b>24.3</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>33.3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>11.0</b>
Other	6	5.4	2	.9	4	6.4	0	0.0	12	2.4
No Education/Training, Job or Program	10	9.0	17	7.8	5	7.9	6	5.2	38	7.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>219</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>509</b>	<b>100.0</b>

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

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

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

In addition, almost 22% were enrolled in Vocational Rehabilitation, while another 11% were participating in Community-Based programs. Less than 8% were not engaged in post-school education/training, employment, or an appropriate adult program.

When the post-school activities of alumni who attended Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs were examined, 78% were found to be engaged in a Mainstream activity. More specifically, 49% of alumni from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs were found to be involved in competitive employment, including the military. This yields a higher rate than the 41% employment rate achieved by special education students with behavioral problems from the public schools, students with presumably less severe problems than those in private special education, who have been out of school for about 2 years (Malmgren, Edgar, & Neel, 1998). See Table 11.

**Table 11**

**Competitive Employment: Regular Education Students vs. Public School Special Education Students with Behavioral Disorders vs. NAPSEC Special Education Students with Behavioral Disorders**

Out of School for 2 Years	Competitive Employment %
Alumni from Regular Education Programs	59 (from Malmgren, Edgar, & Neel, 1998)
Alumni with Behavioral Disorders from Public School Special Education	41 (from Malmgren, Edgar, & Neel, 1998)
Alumni with Behavioral Disorders from NAPSEC Programs	49

### **Living Arrangements**

When the living arrangements were examined for alumni from all program categories, about 59% were found to be living in the community with a parent, other relative, or guardian. Moreover, 25% of the alumni were living independently, a rate that exceeds the 13% independent living rate reported for special education students from public schools who have been out of school for approximately 2 years (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996). See Table 12.

**Table 12**

**Independent Living: Regular Education Alumni vs.  
Special Education Alumni from Public Schools vs.  
NAPSEC Alumni**

Out of School for 2 Years	%
Alumni in Regular Education Programs	33 (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996)
Alumni from Public School Special Education	13 (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996)
Alumni from NAPSEC Programs	25

## **2-Year Comparison of Class of 2000 Outcomes**

Table 13 compares the post-school activities of the NAPSEC alumni from the Year-One Follow-up to the Year-Two Follow-up.

**Table 13**

### **NAPSEC Class of 2000: 2-Year Comparison**

	Mainstream		Vocational Rehabilitation		Community-Based	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Year 1, 2001 Follow-Up n=551	296	54	132	24	61	11
Year 2, 2002 Follow-Up n=509	292	57	111	22	56	11

The rate for Mainstream engagement has increased from 54% to 57%. The rate for Community-Based involvement (11%) has remained stable from Year 1 to Year 2. Vocational Rehabilitation activity has decreased from 24% to 22%.

**Table 14**

**NAPSEC Class of 2000  
Mainstream Activity Comparison:  
Year-1 to Year-2 Follow-up**

	Year 1 (n=551)		Year 2 (n=509)	
	#	%	#	%
Four Year College	52	9.4	49	9.6
Two Year College	78	14.2	50	9.8
Trade/Technical School	30	5.4	18	3.5
Competitive Employment	123	22.3	158	31.0
Military	13	2.4	17	3.3
Total	296	53.7	292	57.2

When Mainstream activity alone is examined in Table 14, an increase of 3.5% is noted from Year 1 to Year 2.

**Table 15**

**NAPSEC Class of 2000  
Vocational Rehabilitation Comparison:  
Year-1 to Year-2 Follow-up**

	Year 1 (n=551)		Year 2 (n=509)	
	#	%	#	%
Vocational Rehabilitation Program	32	5.8	14	2.7
Supported Employment	65	11.8	55	10.8
Sheltered Employment	35	6.3	42	8.3
Total	132	23.9	111	21.8

As Table 15 shows, the rate of involvement in Vocational Rehabilitation has decreased slightly from 24% to almost 22%. This appears to derive from a

decrease in involvement in vocational rehabilitation as well as supported employment. Sheltered employment, however, has increased slightly from about 6% to about 8%.

Finally, the rate of Community-Based program activity has remained constant at about 11%.

**Table 16**

**NAPSEC Class of 2000  
Community-Based Program Comparison:  
Year-1 to Year-2 Follow-up**

	Year 1 (n=551)		Year 2 (n=509)	
	#	%	#	%
Adult Partial Care Program	14	2.5	9	1.8
Nonvocational Day Program	47	8.6	47	9.2
Total	61	11.1	56	11.0

**Conclusions for Alumni: Class of 2000 at 2-Year Follow-up**

Two years after leaving a NAPSEC-member program, the alumni from the Class of 2000 seem to be engaged in socially productive activity. When examined by program focus, 86% of the alumni from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs, 91% of the alumni from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs, 86% of the alumni from Medical Disorders programs, and 95% of the alumni from Learning Disorders programs were engaged in the Mainstream, Vocational Rehabilitation, or Community-Based programs.

Two years later, the rate of entry into competitive employment for alumni with behavioral problems from the Class of 2000 has grown from 37%, a rate which closely follows the 41% employment rate for presumably less severely disabled special education students with behavioral problems out of public school programs for 2 years or less (Malmgren, Edgar, & Neel, 1998), to 49%. More than 78% of the alumni from the Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs are involved in Mainstream activities. Moreover, the rate of independent living for alumni from all program categories has risen from the Year 1 Follow-up rate of 15%, which compares favorably to the 13% rate reported for special education students from public schools out of school two years or less (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996), to the rate of 25%.

### **Discussion for Class of 2000 Alumni Study**

The two-year follow-up study of the alumni from the Class of 2000 marks an important first step toward learning the degree to which productive post-school activities are maintained over time. That 57% of these alumni reported involvement in the mainstream is noteworthy. Moreover, two years after graduating/aging out, the high risk group of alumni from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs reported a rate of 29% for participation in post-school education or training and a rate of 49% for involvement in competitive employment, including the military. In short, 78% of these alumni were engaged in Mainstream activities. Furthermore, the alumni appear to make positive movement toward productive life goals. In fact, the findings may indicate that



alumni who were previously enrolled in two-year college or trade/technical school program are now competitively employed.

Finally, two years after leaving a NAPSEC-member program, 90% of the alumni of the Class of 2000 are functioning as productive members of society. The rate of competitive employment for alumni with emotional and behavioral problems exceeds the rates for their presumably less disabled public school special education peers with behavioral problems who have been out of school for a comparable time period. The rate of independent living for alumni from all program categories also compares favorably to that of their public school special education cohort. In fact, it is nearly twice as prevalent. Continued longitudinal studies are needed to learn the degree to which these young adults maintain this positive entry into the world of adulthood over time.

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