Understanding Indicator 14

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VCU Center on Transition Innovations
November 2021

Introduction

Each year school divisions gather educational data to comply with the federal requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Divisions collect, compile, submit, and check these tasks off our list, feeling good that we have once again confirmed the data needed for state review. But, did you know that when regulations for monitoring and enforcement of the law were established, the primary emphasis was placed on improving educational results and outcomes over compliance (Ahearn, 2001)? This topical paper will guide you through understanding Indicator 14 and provide educators and administrators with tips to better collect, analyze, and use data for improved student outcomes.

Achieving the Real Promise of IDEA

While the 1990 and 1997 Amendments welcomed the beginning of transition planning and services, it was the 2004 Reauthorization that added provisions to hold schools accountable to achieve the *real* promise of IDEA and ensure educational results for children with disabilities. What followed was a focus on creating performance goals and indicators for the purpose of reporting and tracking student progress (Luster & Coulter, 2013).

To ensure states' compliance with the IDEA of 2004, the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) monitors both states' and individual school divisions' data through the State Performance Plan. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) collect data on 20 indicators and report outcomes to the state education agency that in turn compiles the State Performance Plan. Transition services are a priority measure, and this includes Indicator 14. Indicator 14 looks specifically at the "percentage of youth who are no longer in secondary school, had IEPs in effect at the time they left school,"(*Part B SPP/APR Related Requirements*, 2012) and identifies their level of engagement in various postsecondary outcomes.

Engaged in Postsecondary Outcomes

What does it mean to be "engaged" in postsecondary outcomes? Students might be enrolled in higher education, competitively employed, enrolled in some other postsecondary education or training program, or employed in other settings.

Below is a review of each stated outcome (VCU Center on Transition Innovations, n.d.).

Enrolled in Higher Education

Students are considered enrolled if they are either full or part-time students for at least one semester at any time since leaving high school. Higher education enrollment may be at either a 2-year community or technical college or a 4-year college or university. This includes students with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities that are enrolled in an inclusive higher education program.

Competitive Employment

Youth are employed at or above minimum wage in worksites with nondisabled co-workers for an average of at least 20 hours per week for at least 90 days over the course of the previous year. This category includes military employment.

Other Postsecondary Education or Training Programs

Youth are engaged in full or part-time enrollment at a variety of education or training programs for at least one completed term in the year since exiting school. This could include Job Corps, apprenticeships, Wilson Workforce and Rehabilitation Center (WWRC), adult continuing education, workforce development program, Peace Corps, day support, pre-vocational programs, or other designated training programs. Youth opportunities in this category generally do not confer diplomas and take less than 2 years to complete.

Other Employment

Youth have worked for pay or been self-employed for a period of at least 90 days at any time in the year since leaving high school. This could include working in family businesses or entrepreneurships.

Calculating the Percentage of Completers

Once the raw data from the students' surveys are processed and outcomes are identified, the percentage of completers in each of the outcomes outlined in the previous paragraph is calculated. These percentages are combined to report out the subcategories of Indicator 14.

Subcategories of Indicator 14 indicate percentages of students involved in specific outcome categories as outlined below (National Post-School Outcomes Center, n.d.).

Indicator 14a

Percentage of students enrolled in higher education.

Indicator 14b

Percentage of students enrolled in higher education **+** percentage of students working competitively.

Indicator 14c

Percentage of students who enrolled in higher education **+** percentage of students in some other postsecondary education or training program **+** percentage of students competitively employed or in some other employment.

Survey Questions

School divisions collect data for Indicator 14 by contacting students who exited on an IEP, have been completely separated from school services for a year, and use a survey to amass the responses. Each state generates its own survey questions that each school division utilizes, and surveys differ from state to state. For example, in Virginia, questions include not only information on their post-school outcomes, but also demographic information, life satisfaction, referrals and involvement in adult agencies, high school programming, and other information potentially impacting post-school outcomes.

Tips for Educators and Administrators

Below are some tips for educators and administrators on how to collect and analyze data, and develop action plans for improved postsecondary outcomes.

Tips for Educators

1. Review the past three years of Indicator 14 data for your division. An accurate understanding of data is essential to identify ways to improve pathways to postsecondary options. When reviewing your data, note areas of strength and areas of need.

2. Educate yourself regarding evidence-based practices related to transition outcomes. Review Evidence-Based Predictors for Post-School Success developed by the Ohio Employment First team. This document is based on the work of NTACT and its user friendly format describes eight categories of practices, evidence from research for each predictor, and implications for practice.

3. Identify one way you can:

   - Increase the division's student participation rate in the survey
   - Increase the division's commitment to ensure students are career and college ready
   - Decrease the number of "unengaged" respondents for your division

Tips for Administrators

1. Lead a division team that includes representatives from all stakeholder groups to analyze Indicator 14 data from the past 3 years. Once areas of strengths and needs are identified, work as a team to develop and implement an action plan that will improve student outcomes.

2. Be thoughtful about the data collection process. Choose data collectors who have relationships with students and their families and train everyone who will conduct the survey or input data. Refer to CTI's Five Tips for Increasing Your Indicator 14 Response Rates for more tips about increasing response rates.

3. Reflect on how you will support your educators to:

   - Increase the division's student participation rate in the survey
   - Increase the division's commitment to ensure students are career and college ready
   - Decrease the number of "unengaged" respondents for your division

Conclusion

This paper summarizes important considerations for collecting Indicator 14 data and utilizing that data as part of school divisions' planning to improve the post school outcomes for students. IDEA establishes civil rights protections for children with disabilities and upholds the belief that all children have the right to an education, but this is only the first step. Both educators and administrators play an important role in ensuring the accurate collection and analysis of data. Ultimately, monitoring and reviewing transition data, such as Indicator 14, allows us to focus on results and not just compliance to make good on our promise to improve student outcomes.

References

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