

Understanding and Analyzing Transition Data to Improve Outcomes

Data collection, progress monitoring, and outcomes measurements are crucial to facilitating the transition of students with disabilities to postsecondary opportunities. It is imperative to be familiar with the state of transition both across the Commonwealth and within your own division, understand the effective in-school predictors for postsecondary success, be able to analyze your division's data, and work with stakeholders to implement action steps that will lead to increased positive post-school outcomes.

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission Report

The Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) shared a detailed report, findings, and recommendations for K-12 Special Education in December 2020. A significant portion of the information shared by JLARC focused on aspects of special education related to the transition of students with disabilities to postsecondary opportunities. The report included recommendations that could lead to action steps by the General Assembly, Virginia Department of Education, and individual school divisions.

Most Significant JLARC Report Findings Related to Transition

- Graduation rates have improved, but are still lowest for students who are Black or have more severe disabilities.
- Graduation rates for students with disabilities range from 47% to 70% across Virginia's regions.
- The dropout rate for students with disabilities has declined but remains higher than the dropout rate for other students.
- School divisions are not consistently providing transition services needed to prepare students with disabilities for life after high school.
- In 2018, 26% of individuals with disabilities did not transition into employment, higher education, or vocational training within one year of exiting secondary school.

Transition Indicators

To address the concerns raised in the JLARC report, it is important to understand the transition data that is collected annually for each state and division. There are four federal indicators (1, 2, 13, and 14) related to youths' transition from high school to their post-school outcomes. Indicators 1, 2, and 14 are performance indicators with targets that are set in the state's performance plan. These indicators address graduation rate, dropout rate, and post-school outcomes. Indicator 13 is a compliance indicator with an expectation of 100% which reviews the components of the IEP related to transition. The full definitions can be found at [VDOE](#).

Data Analysis

To improve outcomes of students with disabilities, examine and analyze division data, and increase your knowledge of and ability to identify effective predictors for post-school success. Also, collaborate with stakeholders to develop and implement a strategic action plan to improve transition planning and services for students with disabilities.

Five Steps in the Data Analysis Process Related to Post-School Outcomes

1. *Collect* - Gather data from each transition indicator for the past three years. Reviewing data over time will help you recognize trends and the analysis process will be more thorough.
2. *Analyze* - Review the transition indicator data as a team of relevant stakeholders. Look for trends, strengths, and areas for improvement.
3. *Plan* - As the data analysis concludes, develop a plan to support continued areas of strength and address areas of need. During the planning phase, it is critical to ensure that all stakeholders participating in the process are familiar with NTACT's Predictors of Post-School Success.
4. *Implement* - Implement the plan you developed. Check in periodically to make sure the responsible parties are working to complete implementation and that they have the resources they need to be successful in that implementation.
5. *Review* - The team should review progress regularly, adjust the plan as needed, and continue to collect and review annual transition indicator data.

Conclusion

The JLARC report provides an opportunity for school divisions to collect and reflect on the data to improve student outcomes. Utilizing your division's data along with evidence-based practices will yield results you are excited to share with your stakeholders.