

AN EXAMINATION OF THE JOB TRAINING AND JOB EXPERIENCES OF HIGH
SCHOOL STUDENTS AS THEY EXIT SCHOOL

By

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“To the students I have taught and those who have taught me”

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Abstract of Dissertation Presented to the Graduate School
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By

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The purpose of this investigation was (a) to determine the level of satisfaction that exiting high school students felt regarding the job preparation and training they received in high school, (b) gather data on work experiences during high school, (c) gather data on job training experiences during high school, and (d) gather data on students current job status, including number of hours worked, wages earned, if the job was chosen by the student, if the student likes the job he or she has, and if the business where he or she works is owned by someone in their family.

Data were collected using the Florida High School Exit Survey which was mailed to District Transition Contacts and then distributed to teachers in high schools. Participants included students in public schools in Florida that were age eighteen or older and would be exiting school at the end of the semester the survey was completed. To cover all Florida school districts, a three-year cycle was utilized, beginning with 2007 and ending with 2009. A total of 3,167 students participated in the survey. Comparisons were made between (a) students with and students without disabilities (b) male and female (c) race/ethnicity, including Black, Hispanic, Other, and White (d) yearly results for 2007, 2008, and 2009 (e) the five Florida Department of Education

(FLDOE) regions and (f) the five size classifications in the Florida Department of Education.

The results of this investigation showed significant differences between students with and without disabilities, race/ethnic groups, wages earned per hour, and students working for a private business or company. Fewer differences were found between Male and Female students, FLDOE regions of the state, students working for public government and having jobs in the community not as a part of school. Only a few differences were found between calendar years of data collection and district size. The results of this investigation provide implications for those involved in the transition planning process, especially those developing programs and providing job training and work experiences.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

Required Transition Planning

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004) continues the secondary transition requirement that students with disabilities have a transition plan beginning at age sixteen that provides students a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). The driving force behind transition planning is the positive adult outcomes of students after exiting school. Although many areas are addressed in the transition plan, a primary goal of those involved in the transition planning process, due to the positive correlation to positive outcomes, is the gainful employment of students in full or part-time jobs. Acquiring gainful employment upon exiting school can have a major impact on a student's success in other transition planning areas.

A secondary goal of the employment planning process is that the occupation be based on the students' interests, preferences, and focus on the students' strengths. To accomplish the employment goal, school systems support students' transition planning beginning at age sixteen, or younger if necessary, using the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP). Within the Individualized Educational Plan, a measureable postsecondary goal is written for employment, education or training, and independent living, when appropriate. As school districts develop programs to meet transition requirements in the area of employment, a continuum of services approach is often taken. Many school systems begin with career awareness activities. Next, students explore specific careers that interest them. Following the awareness and exploration stages, students often have nonpaid job experiences through on-the-job training programs on the school campus or in the community. As the student develops and learns job skills, the school

helping the student secure a job in the community may be the next step. However, many students secure their own jobs while in school without the help of school personnel or programs. The final goal is for students, upon exiting school, to be employed in a job that matches their strengths, interests, and preferences.

National And State Inquiry

The inquiry into the implementation of the requirements to provide needed transition service by school districts has focused on the national, state, and district level. At the national level, the National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS) was the first investigation into students' post-school outcomes with a nationwide focus. The NLTS collected data on students with disabilities that were in grades seven through twelve during the 1985–1986 school year. A second collection of NLTS, known as NLTS2, was conducted in 2002. In the area of employment, the outcomes for students with disabilities did not improved to the degree expected.

At the state level, the Florida Department of Education uses the Florida Education and Training Placement Information Program (FETPIP), a data collection and consumer reporting system, to evaluate student's placement in employment, secondary education, military, or incarceration one year after exiting Florida public schools. The program provides follow-up data on Florida school students one year after exiting school. The data collected describe civilian and federal employment and earnings, continuing education experiences, military service, along with other information. The data also include demographic and performance comparisons. Additionally, trends over time can be monitored.

All of the above mentioned, NLTS, NLTS2, and FETPIP, collect information after students leave school. The NLTS and NLTS2 utilize phone and paper surveys to gather

information from previous students and family members. The FETPIP utilizes state databases to collect information based on students' social security numbers. While NLTS and FETPIP provide important information about students after leaving school, the question remains as to what employment programs students have experienced while in school. With the requirements in IDEA that students to be involved in their transition planning and the Florida requirement that self-determination training be included in the transition planning process, students' opinions, perceptions, and observations should be considered by school districts when making programmatic decisions. Information on students' satisfaction and perceptions of the transition services provided while in school were identified as critical information by a research team at the University of Florida. To gather information from students in Florida, The Transition Center at the University, a project supported by the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, Career Development and Transition Project, developed the Florida High School Exit Survey (FHSES).

Florida High School Exit Survey

The Florida High School Exit Survey (FHSES) ask students age eighteen and older, with and without disabilities, leaving the public school systems in Florida to provide information on their transition experiences while in school. This study will look at differences between students with and without disabilities, gender, race/ethnicity, differences between three calendar years, location and size of school district where services were provided. The FHSES was developed after a review of the literature and data collection methods being used by other states. The survey was a paper document. Teachers were directed to instruct students on how to complete the survey on their own

if appropriate. If students needed assistance to complete the survey, directions were given for a school district employee to make accommodations to support students' completion of the survey. With the amount of paperwork that school district personnel are being asked to complete, the research team decided to collect the data from the state over a three-year cycle with each cycle including one-third of the school districts in the state and an equitable number of districts differing in size classifications and region within the state. Number of completed surveys from districts was based on the district size. Small/rural districts were asked to survey all of their exiting students with disabilities. Small/middle, Middle, Large, and Very Large school districts were given a suggested number of surveys based to be completed, based on a percentage of their enrollment. For comparison information, school districts were asked to survey an equal amount of students without disabilities. A second version of the survey was designed for students without disabilities. The second survey included the same questions but did not contain questions about the students' involvement in their Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) process, that was contained in the survey for students with disabilities. The FHSES collected student responses about their transition planning experiences while in public school. The FHSES provides valuable information from students about the transition services received by students before exiting school. This study will focus on student satisfaction with job preparation, job training, and job experiences while in high school.

Statement Of The Purpose

The purpose of this investigation was (a) to determine the level of satisfaction that exiting high school students felt regarding the job preparation and training they received in high school, (b) to gather data on work experiences during high school, (c) to gather

data on job training experiences during high school, and (d) to gather data on students current job status when exiting from high school. Specific information about the number of hours worked, wages earned, if the job was chosen by the student, if the student likes the job he or she, and if the business where the student worked is owned by someone in his or her family. The investigation used the Florida High School Exit Survey as the data source.

Statement Of The Problem

Employment is a required area of focus in the transition planning process; however, the way that this requirement is implemented in school districts varies greatly. This study was designed to investigate students' satisfaction with the job training, differences in work experiences among different groups of students, and students' employment status as they exited high school. This study was the first to survey students while still in school about satisfaction with the services provided and specific information about the work experience while in school. Comparisons were made of differences between gender, students with and without disabilities, race/ethnicity groups, school year of data collection, district size, and district location in the state of Florida.

Delimitations Of The Study

The scope of this study was limited in the following ways. First, because not all districts participated in the survey and some districts submitted small numbers of surveys, results may not be representative of the state of Florida as a whole. Also, the voluntary nature of the survey and only inviting students eighteen years old and older to participate may not be representative of all exiting students. As with the National

Longitudinal Transition Survey 2 (NLTS2) study of perceptions and expectations of students with disabilities, caution should be used when interpreting the FHSES results:

- Analyses are descriptive and do not imply that factors are related to or cause other factors.
- Surveys reflect how youth describe themselves and may not be accurate.
- Students' willingness to participate and respond to the survey may vary by disability group (Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Levine & Marder, 2007).

CHAPTER 2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Transition

Career development and transition planning are vital to successful post-school outcomes for students with disabilities. The understanding of these terms is critical to professionals having the knowledge and frameworks to support students through this process. Career Development was defined as “The total constellation of psychological, sociological, educational, physical, economic, and chance factors that combine to shape the career of any given individual over the life span” (Sears, 1982, p. 28).

Career Development stages were next described as:

- “Awareness – Schools provide opportunities for students to become familiar with the attitudes, information, and awareness needed in a work-oriented society.
- Exploration – Schools provide opportunities for students to investigate the aptitudes, interests, and requirements needed to obtain paid and unpaid work
- Preparation – Schools provide opportunities for students to acquire and practice the attitudes and skills need for paid and unpaid work roles.
- Assimilation (Placement & Follow-Along) The work role provides an opportunity to adapt to the demands and experience the rewards of labor.
- Continuing Education – The community provides opportunities to gather more knowledge and skills to increase the likelihood of job success” (Kokaska, Gruenhagen, Razeghi, & Fair, 1985).

In 1994 the Council for Exceptional Children, Division on Career Development and Transition, developed a position statement on transition:

Transition refers to a change in status from behaving primarily as a student to assuming emergent adult roles in the community. These roles include employment, participating in post-secondary education, maintaining a home, becoming appropriately involved in the community, and experiencing satisfactory personal and social relationships. The process of enhancing transition involves the participation and coordination of school programs, adult agency services, and natural supports within the community. The foundation for transition should be laid during the elementary and middle

school years, guided by the broad concept of career development. Transition planning should begin no later than age 14, and students should be encouraged, to the full extent of their capabilities, to assume a maximum amount of responsibility for such planning (Halpern, 1994).

Elements of successful transition programs were next compiled by, Charner, Fraser, Hubbard, Rogers, & Horne (1995). They include:

- Administrative Leadership
- Commitment of Program Staff
- Cross-Sector Collaboration
- Fostering Self-Determination in All Students
- School-Based Learning
- Work-Based Learning – Students must have the opportunity to experience a range of appropriate work-based learning experiences.
- Integration of Career Information and Guidance
- Build a Progressive System That Starts Before Grade 11
- Ensure Access to Postsecondary Options
- Creative Financing

The Taxonomy for Transition Planning, a framework of the transition process, was developed by Paula Kohler (1996). The following portions focus on career development relating to employment:

- Student Development
- Employment Skills Instruction
- Work-related behaviors and skills training
- Job seeking skills training
- Occupation-specific vocational skill training
- Career & Vocational Curricula
- Vocational assessment (including situational assessment)
- Structured Work Experience
- Apprenticeships
- Paid work experience

- Work study program
- Job placement services (prior to school exit)

Further studies included the review of transition research by Greene and Kochhar-

Bryant (2003) which identified 10 best practices in transition. They include:

- Interagency collaboration
- Interdisciplinary collaboration
- Integrated schools, classrooms, and employment
- Functional life-skills curriculum and community-based instruction
- Social and personal skills development and training
- Career and vocational assessment and education
- Business and industry linkages with schools
- Development of effective Individualized Education Program
- Student self-determination, advocacy, and input in transition planning
- Parent or family involvement in transition planning

Studies on transition planning report that the consideration of career development should begin at an early age (Weidenthal & Kochhar-Bryant, 2007). Having the opportunity to try careers in the area of students' interests and preferences allow students to discover what is realistic (Storm, O'Leary, & Williams, 2000). This opportunity also allows them to experience what lies ahead. The personal components of satisfaction, comfort, identity, and rewards associated with chosen career paths are needed by students during career development (Kochhar, West, & Taymans, 2000). Through career development activities, students create a profile of identity and begin to understand their abilities as they relate to their disabilities (Weidenthal & Kochhar-Bryant, 2007). Completion of transition goals and career related work experiences have an increased association with improved graduation and positive employment outcomes (Benz et al. 2000). Transition programs that focus on work-related goals have been linked with positive employment outcomes for students (Nurmi, Salmela-Aro, & Koivisto, 2002). With the literature as a resource for information and frameworks providing best

practices in transition services, there is a need to examine how these practices are being implemented (Zhang et al., 2005) by school districts.

Employment

Employment is an important adult outcome for which students need to be well prepared. “Work is a central component of a quality adult life. Employment provides a source of income, enhances self-esteem, provides important social connections, and allows people to fulfill their duties as contributing, tax-paying citizens” (Rogan, Grossi, and Gajewski ,2002, p. 104). To be prepared for careers in the twenty-first century, students must complete a course of study and have a transition plan in place that will lead to the student’s post-secondary goal. Nationally, 61% of students with disabilities take career and technical course as compared with 80% of students without disabilities (Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Levine, & Marder, 2003). Preparing individuals with disabilities to function effectively and experience success in the workplace presents many challenges that include; the nature of the workplace that is constantly changing; the need for employees to have social, academic and occupational skills; and a curriculum that is often not addressing these areas (Benz et al., 1997).

Many students are leaving high school unprepared for employment even though transition programs are required to include employment as an area of focus. Additional program components should include development of job seeking skills and opportunities to practice these skills (McDonnall & Crudden, 2009). Next, programs should include work-based learning, which involves using the workplace to gain hands-on employment experience, and improves postsecondary employment outcomes among students with disabilities. Students need to have the opportunity to experience and learn about career paths and practice job skills (Luecking & Mooney, 2002).

A study by Guy, Sitlington, Larsen & Frank (2009) addressed research questions that focus on patterns that exist in the employment preparation courses offered to secondary students with disabilities. Patterns included: (1) numbers of courses offered; (2) subject areas in which these courses were offered; (3) percentage that were classroom based; (4) percentage that were work based; and (5) percentage that were a combination of classroom and work based. Only 32% of the classes offered in reporting districts had the focus of preparing students for employment (Guy et al., 2009). Additional research has indicated that when presenting the knowledge and skills needed by youth to effectively transition to employment, the focus should include: (1) occupational awareness and exploration; (2) employment-related knowledge and skills; and (3) specific occupational knowledge and skills (Brolin & Lloyd, 2004; Clark, Carlson, Fisher, Cook, & D'Alonzo, 1991; Sitlington and Clark, 2006).

Understanding the factors that promote positive employment outcomes can help the development of educational programs which better prepare students for the future (Doren et al., 2007). The successful transition of youths with disabilities to employment has consistently been associated with work experience while in school (Stodden, Dowrick, Gilmore, & Galloway, 2001). Unfortunately, employment preparation programs are decreasing even though they have been shown to be effective in preparing youth for employment after high school (Guy, Sitlington, Larsen & Frank, 2009). A review of the research found that students with and without disabilities report the lack of relevancy of the high school curriculum as the primary reason for dropping out of school (Kaufman, Klein, & Frase, 1999; Lange & Ysseldyke, 1998; Lichtenstein, 1993). This study

provides information from students about the job experiences that they have experienced prior to exiting school.

Post-School Outcomes

Employment

Engagement in work activities as a post-school outcome has long been recognized as a positive achievement indicator for students with and without disabilities (Benz et al., 1997; DeStefano & Wagner, 1991). Few studies have followed students longitudinally after leaving high school and reported on their adjustment to adult life (Seo, Abbot, & Hawkins, 2008). The post-school success of young adults is one outcome used to measure the success of the U.S. public education system (Doren et al., 2007). To ensure students with disabilities also experience this outcome, IDEA 2004 has two major areas of focus, the first, access to the general education curriculum and the second, preparation for adult living, post-secondary education, and employment. High school reform places emphasis on rigor and relevance with a closer connection with the preparation needed to enter employment (Barton, 2006). In many reports, students with disabilities' outcomes are not as positive as their peers without disabilities. The (2004) National Organization on Disability/Harris Survey of Americans with Disabilities found that 35% of people with disabilities reported being employed full- or part-time compared to 78% of people without disabilities who reported being employed full- or part-time. Only 43% of students with disabilities are employed two years out of high school compared with 55% of their nondisabled peers (Wagner et al., 2005).

As youth with disabilities exit school, many experience underemployment and unemployment. Almost 3 times as many people with disabilities live in poverty as those

without disabilities. The Northwest Policy Center, in 2001, projected that 60% of the job opportunities in 2010 providing a living wage would do so through short-term training, including a combination of basic literacy and computer skills, occupationally specific instruction and on-the-job training, and work experience (Flannery et al., 2008). The National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center along with the Council for Exceptional Children, Division on Career Development and Transition identified evidence-based secondary transition practices that predict improved post-school employment outcomes for students (Test et al., 2009). Paid work experience was a moderate predictor for all disability categories. Students were more likely to be involved in post-school employment if when they had 2 or more jobs during the last two year of school (Doren & Benz, 1998). Students in paid employment for one full year during high school were 5 times more likely to be engaged in post-school employment (Bullis et al., 1995) and students who were employed at the time of school exit were 5.1 times more likely to be found in post-school employment (Rabren et al., 2002). When Wagner and colleagues examined the “holding power” of secondary programs (Wagner, Blackorby, Cameto, & Newman, 1993; Wagner, Blackorby, & Hebbeler, 1993), several school-related factors were identified. They included (a) individualized tutoring and support needed to complete homework, class attendance, and a continual focus on school; and during the last two years of school, participation in (b) vocational education classes; and (c) community-based work experience programs.

Race/ethnicity

Through research conducted by the National Center for Self-Determination and 21st Century Leadership a clearer perspective of the transition of youth who are culturally and linguistically diverse and young adults in the foster care system has been

developed (Gil-Kashiwabara et. al., 2007). Many students who are culturally or linguistically diverse, in foster care, and experiencing poverty, experience additional marginalization and disenfranchisement that reaches beyond being a student with a disability. Often this leads to multiple levels of discrimination, creating additional barriers to achieving positive post-school outcomes (Gil-Kashiwabara et al., 2007). The U.S. Census Bureau (1997) reported more than 185,000 young Latina women with disabilities ages 15 to 24. Each year 20,000 of the 513,000 children in foster care are discharged when the age of majority is reached (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2006). The National Evaluation of Title IV-E independent Living Programs reported that among youth emancipated from care, 47% had disabilities. These students were less likely to graduate from high school, be employed, and be self-sufficient than were those students without disabilities (Westat, 1991).

Students With Disabilities and Students Without Disabilities

Students' perception of high school preparation has been identified as important to post-school outcome research (Kortering & Braziel, 1999). To gain a better understanding of post-school outcomes for youth, studying the outcomes of both youth with disabilities and youth without disabilities is needed. Student's perceptions can also bring deeper meaning and lead to a broader understanding of findings and provide a point of comparison to identify areas of concern (Chambers, Rabren, & Dunn, 2009).

Chambers, Rabren, & Dunn, (2009), studied the following questions using the Alabama Post-School Transition Survey:

- Do students with and without disabilities report similar post-school outcomes?
- Do students with and without disabilities report similar post-school barriers?

- Do students with and without disabilities report similar perceptions of their high school preparation?

Surveys were administered to students with and without disabilities who exited high school during the previous school year. The students with disabilities group contained 63% male, 36% female, and 1% unknown. The students without disabilities group contained 47% male, 51% female, and 2% unknown. The survey consisted of 27 questions pertaining to three major areas: (1) high school programs and experiences, (2) post-school outcomes, and (3) current quality-of-life indicators. Results showed the five most identified activities for students with disabilities as: spending time with friends, working, watching television, listening to music, and attending church or community activities. Results revealed the five most identified activities of students without disabilities as: spending time with friends, working, studying, doing outdoor activities, and playing sports (Chambers, Rabren, & Dunn, 2009). Results for both groups reflect common adolescent behaviors.

The survey also showed for students with and without disabilities there were no significant differences in the areas for participation in technical school, military, or General Equivalency Degree (GED) training. There were also no significant differences between the two groups in the area of employment status. When asked if school had prepared them for employment, 81% of students with disabilities, compared to only 63% of students without disabilities said that school prepared them to get a job. Over 60% of both groups reported being employed when leaving school. One year after leaving school, over 70% of both groups reported being employed. When asked what could improve their post-school outcomes, students indicated that having a better job would improve their post-school life in the community (Chambers, Rabren, & Dunn, 2009).

Gender

To better understand the differences in outcomes of students, comparisons of students is a valuable process. The issue of gender disproportionality in special education has been a concern for many years (Coutinho & Oswald, 2005). Female students usually have higher academic performance and school completion rates. However, female students' outcomes continue to report lower wages, less likelihood of employment and job stability (Doren & Benz, 1998, 2001; Harvey, 2003; Valdes et al., 1990; Wagner et al., 1991). There are several disparate outcomes between young males and females in several transition domains, including employment (Trainor, 2007). Although several studies report that females with disabilities generally demonstrate higher rates of academic performance and school completion than their male peers with disabilities, post-school outcomes include a less likelihood of employment, and less job stability (Doren & Benz, 1998, 2001; Harvey, 2003; Valdes et al., 1990; Wagner et al., 1991). Among students receiving special education services, females have less favorable outcomes than males. These outcomes include lower earnings for females and more occupational options for males (Benz, Doren, & Yavanoff, 1998; Doren & Benz, 2001; Lindstrom, Benz, & Doren, 2004; Wagner, Cameto, & Newman, 2003).

There are both educational and economic disadvantages that are disproportionately high among young females with disabilities (Rousso & Wehmeyer, 2001). The rate of employment for men and women with disabilities ages 16 to 64 is 41% and 34%, respectively, according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2004). Limited access and choice keep many females in low paying, traditional occupations (Kerka, 1999, Stephenson & Burge, 1997).

Nationally representative information available through the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) collects information by disability, age, and race, not gender, limiting the available information needed by educators to make comparisons between male and female students (Coutinho, Oswald, & Best, 2006). This includes the differences in graduation rates (U.S. Department of Education 2002). Young women with disabilities experience less opportunities to participate in employment activities and social activities during high school (Lindstrom, Benz, & Doren, 2004). Career development may be impacted by gender (Rojewski & Hill, 1998; Rojewski & Yang, 1997). Gender roles and societal stereotypes often limit career aspirations of females with disabilities (Betz, 1994). In the transition domain of postsecondary employment, youth with disabilities that become parents during the adolescent years, experience more outcomes that are negative (Trainor, 2007). One of the findings that favor females over males was the plan to graduate and move on to postsecondary school (Coutinho, Oswald, & Best, 2006). Another study by Lindstrom, Benz and Doren (2004) examined the major barriers and facilitators to career choices made by young women with learning disabilities. Variables included gender roles, disability, family and childhood experiences, and career exploration and counseling. Occupational attainment differences that still remain between genders are hours worked, wages, and types of jobs (Marder, Carduso, & Wagner, 2005; NLTS2, 2005). Compared to males with disabilities, females with disabilities are less likely to work full time (37% vs. 68%). Compared to males with disabilities, females with disabilities are more likely to work part time (63% vs. 33%). Within the special education and lower achieving groups, more

males than females left school with a high school diploma (Coutinho, Oswald, & Best, 2006).

The National Association of State Directors of Special Education recently conducted a survey of state-level data collection related to gender and special education. Gender data were collected by at least 41 states. Data are most often used to report to stakeholders, improve programs, conduct monitoring, and report to the public. Half of the states surveyed reported concerns with gender issues (Coutinho & Oswald, 2005). The likelihood of young women with disabilities being employed is less than young men with disabilities and young women without disabilities (Lindstrom, Benz, & Doren, 2004). Of those who are employed, many work in low status occupations, earn lower wages, receive fewer benefits, and are less likely to experience career advancements, such as promotions. In high school and the workplace, young women continue to struggle against gender role assumptions, lower family expectations, and disability stereotypes (Lindstrom et al., 2008). When Coutinho, Oswald, & Best, (2006) reviewed data collected through the National Education Longitudinal Study (NELS) during 1994, they compared students with and without disabilities and gender. The purpose of the study was to determine gender differences within students with disabilities and students without disabilities. Students were divided into four groups: special education, low achieving, typically achieving, and gifted and talented. They found that among groups, students with disabilities and students without disabilities, more female students were employed in clerical positions than males. Male students reported more often to be in skilled or technical positions (Coutinho, Oswald, & Best, 2006). However, when looking at the number of months employed, males who had

received special education services or who were lower achieving were employed more months than females in the same groups while males and females in the average achieving and gifted and talented groups were employed for the same number of months (Coutinho, Oswald, & Best, 2006). In all groups, males reported greater job satisfaction than females and were more likely to have employer-provided medical benefits (Coutinho, Oswald, & Best, 2006).

District size and location

Another factor impacting student's transition services is the size and location of the school district where the services are provided. Some of the first studies looking at school size were conducted in New York by Kiesling (1968). Later Fowler (1989) expanded the work to look at number of schools within each school district. Educational finance has worked for years to identify the cheapest school size or district size (Fox, 1981). Few of these studies assessed post-school outcomes, more often focusing on academics.

Average measurements for school size and school district size were reported by Jewell (1989). For school district size, the average was 2,971 students. This number can be misleading when looking at the range in the United States. The District of Columbia with 87,000 students and an average of 271 students in Montana school districts provide a wide range of school district sizes (Jewell, 1989). Florida and Maryland were states with the largest average district size of over 20,000 students. To make clear the differences between states, two measures were used. The first being average district size and the second being number of students in districts with over 20,000 students. Very large districts are very likely to have very large schools (Jewell, 1989). District size had a negative relationship with Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT)

and American College Test (ACT) scores, while smaller school districts scores were higher (Jewell, 1989). Graduation rates in larger districts with larger schools are lower than smaller districts with smaller schools. This is true even when the effects of minority enrollment are held constant (Jewell, 1989). Per pupil expenditures appeared to be unrelated.

Research suggest that transition from school to work, postsecondary education, and other postsecondary outcomes are affected by both school and community resources (Fairweather, Stearns, & Wagner, 1989). Community resources include the availability of employment for students as they exit school (Bellamy, 1985). The Education of All Handicapped Children Act, Public Law 94-192 was passed in 1975. As the first students to have attended public school while this law was in effect began to exit school, public concern about the quality of secondary education and the transition from school to adult life provided to students with disabilities led to amendments authorizing new studies and programs (Public Law 98-199) to address these concerns (Will, 1984).

One of the studies authorized by congress to provide information about students with disabilities was a longitudinal study of special education students from each of the 11 federal disabilities categories (Fairweather, Stearns, & Wagner, 1989). The study consisted of two stages. The first stage of the survey was to identify the services available in school district to support student's transition from school to adulthood. The second was to select a sample of special education students and follow them as they entered the post-school adult environments. The second stage which looked at student entrance into adult environments was the first to describe district configuration relating

to the provision of transition services to secondary special education students. Results showed that secondary programs that enhanced the transition of students included both transition in school programs such as mainstreaming, vocational education, and support services as well as non-traditional programs designed to assist students with the transition to employment through service agencies and the provision of job placement services (Fairweather, Stearns, & Wagner, 1989; Wehman, 1983).

A survey of school districts' programs that are likely to benefit special education students was developed based on literature review (Bellamy, Rose, Wilson, & Clarke, 1982; Bellamy, 1985; Brown et al., 1981; Brickey, Campbell, & Browning, 1985; Brolin, 1972; Bullis & Foss, 1983; Davis, Anderson, Linkowski, Berger, & Feinstein, 1985; Flynn, 1982; Halpern, 1985; Hasazi, Gordon, & roe, 1985; Hursh & Price, 1983; Kiernan, 1979; Moss, 1979; Pati & Morrison, 1982; Rusch & Mithaug, 1980; Schneider, Rusch, Henderson, & Geske, 1981; Vautour, Stocks, & Kolek, 1983; Wehman, 1981; Wehman, Kregel, & Barcus, 1985; Wehman, Moon, & McCarthy, 1986; Wilcox & Bellamy, 1982; Wright, Cooperstein, Grogan-Renneker, & Padilla, 1982; Zeller, 1980). The survey addressed the following items:

- “Whether the district provides services (directly or through another agency) to secondary special education students in each federal disability category.”
- “The nature of the education agency responsible for providing services to secondary special education students (i.e., the school district itself, another district, a separate special education district or cooperative, or other intermediate agency).”
- “The number of secondary special education students served by the district directly or through another agency.”
- “The richness or paucity of school-based resources available to secondary special education students, including the number of traditional and non-traditional programs.”

- “The richness or paucity of community resources available to secondary special education students (e.g., adult services, employment opportunities)” (Fairweather et al., 1989, p. 420-421).

Three variables were used to increase the accuracy of estimates:

- Region
- District enrollment
- District/community wealth

Of the districts surveyed, 86% of the very large districts were more likely to have staff whose job was to help students find a job. This compares to 22% of very small districts. Regionally, school resources did not vary. Also, district and community wealth did not affect school resources (Fairweather, Stearns, & Wagner, 1989). The size of the district is not strongly related to the availability of employment and other services in the community (Fairweather, Stearns, & Wagner, 1989). Community wealth is related to the availability of post-school opportunities (Fairweather, Stearns, & Wagner, 1989).

Reform initiatives are not new to education, with the primary focus being the student and school outcomes (Sipple & Killeen, 2004). Not as much attention has been placed on the flow of resources into school districts or the organization of the school district itself until recently. Concerns over cost-effectiveness, performance variables, and equity, have become more important (Sipple & Killeen, 2004). When looking at the contexts in which school districts operate, focusing specifically on districts’ response to state standards in New York, the study looked at:

- “Are the poorest districts devoting more resources to the least able students?”
- “Does district size or geography relate to how resources are directed toward those students failing to achieve the heightened standards?” (Sipple & Killeen, 2004, p. 458).

Organizational capacity, including teachers’ professional knowledge and skills, financial resources, and leadership at the district level, is important to the district’s ability to

deliver high quality instruction (Corcoran & Goertz, 1995; Darling-Hammond, 1993; Galvin, 2001; McDonnell & Elmore, 1987; O'Day, Goertz, & Florden, 1995).

School district size influences school outcomes. Several studies looking at district size along with school size have accumulated and addressed this issue (Fowler, 1989). Larger school districts reported providing a greater number and variety of services to students with disabilities (Fairweather, Stearns, & Wagner, 1989). Do these programs being available to students impact the students' post-school outcomes? It is easy for students to get lost or fall through the cracks in large organizations (Ornstein, 1990). Educational cost per student is higher in smaller and larger schools (McGuire, 1989; Monk, 1987), which are most often found in smaller and larger districts. The efficiency of middle size districts is not well documented.

Collecting and comparing data from Students With Disabilities and Students Without Disabilities

The need for students with disabilities meaningful involvement in the transition process is well documented; however the involvement of students with disabilities in the evaluation of the transition planning services provided to them has not been documented. Students' perception of high school preparation has been identified as important to post-school outcome research (Kortering & Braziel, 1999). To gain a better understanding of post-school outcomes for youth, studying the outcomes of both youth with disabilities and youth without disabilities, males and females, students from different races/ethnic groups and students from districts of different size and located in different regions is needed, allowing a descriptive comparison to be made. Most studies collect input on students from teachers and parents, rather than the students themselves. This process of leaving the students' input out of the evaluation may be

omitting important information available from the student (Agran & Hughes, 2008).

Students' insight into the nature and quality of the education and transition services they received while in high school can provide information on students' perception of being prepared for the future. Students' perceptions can also bring deeper meaning, lead to a broader understanding of findings, and provide a point of comparison to identify areas of concern (Chambers, Rabren, & Dunn, 2009). Agran and Hughes (2008) asked students with developmental disabilities about their participation in the IEP process. Students were asked if they had received instruction to lead their IEP meetings. This study was the first in which students were asked for input on the instruction they received on how to lead their IEP meetings. Insight on the education received on self-determination and IEP meeting participation, from the student, should be invaluable for program evaluation and development.

Some studies are finding students with and without disabilities have similar outcomes. In Washington state students with learning disabilities at age 10 were followed until the ages of 21 and 24 to evaluate students' post-secondary education, employment, income and receipt of public aid; and involvement in crime compared to a cohort group of students without disabilities (Seo et al., 2008). Results showed that students with learning disabilities did not have significant differences in outcomes from the cohort without disabilities except in the area of receiving public aid at age 21. Even this difference was not significant at age 24.

Summary

Job training and work experience is well documented as having a positive impact on post school outcomes. The requirement to include job training and work experience in the transition planning process is clearly defined (IDEA, 2004). Still, many school

districts do not make job training and work experience a priority. This study will gather input from students who are exiting school. They will be asked about their satisfaction with the preparation for employment, the job training that has been provided, the work experiences they have experienced, and their current employment status. Comparisons will be made between students with and without disabilities, gender, race/ethnicity, calendar year of data collection, district size, and district location.

CHAPTER 3 METHOD

This chapter presents the methods and procedures used to investigate four questions about students' job experiences before and when exiting high school. This chapter has been divided into five sections for the purpose of presentation. The sections include descriptions of (a) the hypotheses, (b) the subjects and the setting, (c) the research instrument, (d) the procedure, and (e) the experimental design and analysis of data.

Hypotheses

This study was designed to examine (a) several areas of job experience, training and satisfaction that students experienced during high school; specifically, satisfaction with job training while in high school; (b) participation in work experiences, (c) job training experiences, (d) job experiences, and (e) employment as they exit school. For each of the above categories examination was made of the differences and similarities of students with and students without disabilities, gender, race/ethnicity, calendar year, size of district, and location of district. The research questions for this study are expressed in null hypotheses that follow.

Hypothesis 1

H₁: There will be no significant difference in student satisfaction with high school preparation for (a) finding a job (b) learning job skills (c) knowing what work they will be good at (d) knowing what kind of job student will be good at comparing disability status, sex, race/ethnicity, calendar year, district size, and district location.

Hypothesis 2

H₂: There will be no significant difference in students having (a) done babysitting for other families while in high school (b) performed chores for other persons in their neighborhood while in high school (c) volunteered while in high school (d) worked in public government while in high school (e) worked in private business or company while in high school comparing disability status, sex, race/ethnicity, calendar year, district size, and district location.

Hypothesis 3

H₃: There will be no statistically significant difference in students having (a) jobs at school as job training experiences (b) jobs in the community as part of school, as job training experiences (c) jobs in the community not as part of school, as job training experiences (d) any jobs as job training experiences comparing disability status, sex, race/ethnicity, calendar year, district size, and district location.

Hypothesis 4

H₄: There will be no statistically significant difference in (a) students having a job or more jobs as they exit school (b) total hours a week that students work as they exit school (c) wages per hour earned by students as they exit school (d) students having chosen the jobs they have as they exit school (e) students liking the job they have as they exit school (f) students working at a business that someone in his or her family owns as he or she exits school comparing disability status, sex, race/ethnicity, calendar year, district size, and district location.

Subjects And Setting

The research study included high school students who are exiting high school. Participants will be identified as male and female, students with disabilities and students

without a disability, students from different race/ethnic groups. The survey was administered during the 2007, 2008, and 2009 school years. School districts in Florida were identified for participation based on their student enrollment with an equal representation of Small, Small/middle, Middle, Large and Very Large districts from each of the five different Florida Department of Education state regions. Yearly samples will be balanced with regard to students with and without disabilities, male and female students, district size, and region, thus representing the state student population as a whole. During the three years of the study data will be collected from all Florida school districts. The school district transition contacts were contacted through a letter inviting participation in the survey. The number of students participating in the survey was based on the size of the district. Small size districts were asked to survey all students with disabilities exiting and an equal number of students without disabilities from the same school locations. Small/middle, Middle, Large, and Very Large size districts were asked to survey a percentage of students with disabilities and an equal number of students without disabilities from the same school locations.

Instruments/Data Collection

For this study, two Florida High School Exit Surveys (see Appendix A) were developed. Surveys were paper pencil surveys with one survey for students with disabilities and one survey for students without disabilities. The difference in the surveys were questions for students with disabilities about their involvement in their Individual Educational Plan. For each survey, a list of teacher instructions and checklist were developed and distributed with surveys. Additionally, instructions and a checklist for Florida District Transition Contacts were developed for each participating district (see Appendix A). Longitudinal student surveys from the National Longitudinal

Transitions Study (NLTS) and National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2) and nine states (Alabama, California, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Minnesota, New York, Texas, and Washington) (National Center on Secondary Education and Transition & the Transition Coalition, 2003; NPSOC, 2009) were reviewed in preparation for designing the survey instrument.

Questions from the reviewed surveys were classified into eight categories: employment, post-secondary education and training, daily living, quality of life, agency connections, in-school experiences, school work experiences, and transition planning. Questions included in the Florida High School Exit Survey were developed based on the reviewed questions in the state and national surveys. Initially, a pilot survey was conducted and edits made based on feedback. Survey instruments were developed based on these categories, questions, and pilot survey feedback. Two paper pencil surveys were created, one for students with disabilities and one for students without disabilities. The resulting Florida High School Exit Survey has three sections: Demographics and General Student Information (15 questions); High School Experiences (15 questions for students without disabilities and 22 questions for students with disabilities which included IEP related questions); and The Future (6 questions).

Procedures

The procedures for this exit survey consist of three yearly cycles. The three yearly cycles of surveys were distributed to districts in the second semester of school to be administered to students between February and May. Survey packets were mailed to participating Florida District Transition Contacts with instructions and a checklist. Each packet contained teacher instructions for survey administration, a

teacher checklist, informed consent form for students, and an equal number of the two types of surveys, one for students with disabilities and one for students without disabilities. District Transition Contacts were instructed to distribute the packets to teachers in their district for administration. District Transition Contacts were asked to choose a representative group of students with different disabilities and students without disabilities from the same school environments.

The exit survey was administered individually or in groups and generally took 30 to 40 minutes to complete. Accommodations were used as needed (i.e., surveys where read to nonreaders). Study procedures will comply with professional research standards and the University of Florida Institutional Review Board (UFIRB) guidelines. For the purpose of this study, only questions focusing on job training experiences while in school and being employed when leaving school will be used. The questions used include:

Question 3: Are you satisfied with your high school education which prepared you for (1) finding a job? (2) Learning job skills? (3) Knowing what work you will be good at? (4) Knowing what kind of job you will be good at?

Question 10: Have you done any of the following work during high school? (A) Babysitting for other families (B) Performed chores for other persons in your neighborhood (C) Volunteered (for example: church, community agency job, etc.)(D) Worked in public government (for example: school district, city or county job, etc.)(E) Worked in private business or company.

Question 11: Have you had any of the following job training experiences? (A) Jobs at school, (B) Jobs in the community as part of school classes, (C) Jobs in the community not part of school classes.

Question 12: (A) Do you have a job now? (B) About how many total hours per week do you work? (C) How much do you make on average per hour? (D) Did you choose your job yourself? (E) Do you like your job? (F) Do you work in a business that someone in your family owns?

Experimental Design And Analysis Of Data

The design of this study was a paper, pencil survey for high school students as they exit school. The subject pool consist of students throughout the state of Florida that are over the age of 18 and that will be exiting school the semester in which the survey was administered. The subject pool consisted of a representative group of students with a range of disabilities and students without disabilities. Both male and female students participated in the survey. Students from each of the five Florida Department of Education regions were included. The regions include: Region 1, Northwest Florida; Region 2, Northeast Florida; Region 3, East Central Florida; Region 4, West Central Florida; Region 5, South Florida. The districts were identified by size into the five district size classifications used by the Florida Department of Education, Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services: Small, Small/middle, Middle, Large, and Very Large (see Table 3-1).

Descriptive data were compiled and preliminary district, yearly, and summary reports generated. Initial data analyses consisted of percentages of students with disabilities and students without disabilities responding to each question for each participating district and for the full (all years) sample. Statistical modeling will be used

to examine each response for differences between students without disabilities and students with disabilities. A generalized linear mixed model approach will be used to accommodate possible correlation within districts. Because students differed with regard to sex and race/ethnicity, all models will contain variables for group (Students with Disabilities, Students Without Disabilities), sex (Male, Female), and race/ethnicity (White, Black, Hispanic, Other). This group of variables allows assessment of group differences without the confounding effect of sex or race/ethnicity. A p-value of less than 0.01 will be considered statistically significant, and SAS, version 9.1.3, was used for all analyses.

Summary

Chapter 3 identified the hypotheses, methods, and procedures used in this study. The purpose was to determine the job training, work experiences, and job experiences of students while in school. The data were collected in the semester that students would be exiting school. Information was collected on survey research that gathered transition information and the Florida High School Exit Survey was developed by a research team at the University of Florida. The survey utilized a paper pencil and was distributed over a three year period to all school districts in the state of Florida (see Table 3-1).

Questions asked for specific details about students' satisfaction and experiences. Satisfaction with high school education asked students if they were satisfied with their preparation for finding a job, learning job skills, and knowing what work and job they would be good at. When asked about work they had done while in school, students were asked about babysitting or performing chores for neighbors, volunteering, working in public government or private business or a company. When asked about job training,

students were asked about jobs at school, jobs in the community as part of school, jobs in the community not as part of school, and if they had any job experience. Finally, students were asked about having a job now, at the exit of school, how many hours per week they were working, how much they were earning per hour, if they had chosen their job, if they liked their job, and if they worked in a business owned by a family member. Those students responding were categorized by gender, disability, race/ethnicity, calendar year, location, and size of school district. The results of the statistical analysis to test the hypotheses will be provided in Chapter 4. Further discussion is provided in Chapter 5.

Table 3-1. Florida regions / school district size

District size	Region 1 Northwest Florida	Region 2 Northeast Florida	Region 3 East Central Florida	Region 4 West Central Florida	Region 5 South Florida
Very Large		Duval (2)	Orange (3)	Hillsborough (2) Pinellas (1)	Broward (2) Miami-Dade (3) Palm Beach (2)
Large	Escambia (1)	Volusia (2)	Brevard (2) Osceola (2) Polk (3) Seminole (3)	Lake (3) Manatee (1) Marion (3) Pasco (2) Sarasota (2)	Collier (3) Lee (2)
Middle	Bay (3) Leon (2) Okaloosa (1) Santa Rosa (2)	Alachua (3) Clay (1) St. Johns (2)	St. Lucie (2)	Hernando (1)	
Small/Middle	Jackson (3) Walton (1)	Columbia (2) Flagler (2) Nassau (3) Putnam (1)	Highlands (2) Indian River (3) Martin (2) Okeechobee (2)	Citrus (2) Sumter (3)	Charlotte (2) Hendry (3) Monroe (2)
Small	Calhoun (3) Franklin (2) Gadsden (3) Gulf (1) Holmes (1) Jefferson (3) Liberty (2) Madison (2) Taylor (3) Wakulla (2) Washington (3)	Baker (1) Bradford (2) Dixie (3) Gilchrist (2) Hamilton (1) Lafayette (2) Levy (2) Suwannee (3) Union (2)	Glades (2)	DeSoto (1) Hardee (3)	

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics Of Participants

The students responding to the Florida High School Exit Survey were over the age of eighteen and would be exiting school in the semester in which the survey was completed. All students attended a Florida Public School. A total of 3,082 students participated in the survey. A complete description is provided in Table 1.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1

H₁: There will be no statistically significant difference in student satisfaction with high school preparation for (a) finding a job (b) learning job skills (c) knowing what work they will be good at (d) knowing what kind of job you will be good at. There were significant differences in (a) finding a job: Students with Disabilities and Students Without Disabilities, with Students with Disabilities responding that they were more satisfied with their high school education preparing them for a job. Over calendar years, 69% of students in 2007 responded that they were satisfied, 59% in 2008, and 65% in 2009. When responding to their satisfaction with their high school education preparing them for (b) learning job skills, 73% of Students with Disabilities responded as being satisfied while 58% of Students without Disabilities responded being satisfied. When asked about satisfaction with their high school education preparing them for (c) knowing what work you will be good at, there was significant differences in students with disabilities and students without disabilities, with students with disabilities responding at 70% that they were satisfied with knowing what work they would be good at, while 58% of students without disabilities were satisfied with knowing what they would be good at.

In the race/ethnicity group, 73% of Black students were satisfied, 60% of Hispanic students 68% of Other students, and 62% of White students. When asked about satisfaction with their high school education preparing them for (d) knowing what kind of job they would be good at, there were no significant differences found. Table 4-1 summarizes hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 2

H₂: There will be no statistically significant difference in students having (a) done babysitting for other families while in high school (b) performed chores for other persons in their neighborhood while in high school (c) volunteered while in high school (d) worked in public government while in high school and (e) worked in private business or company while in high school. There were significant differences in (a) babysitting for other families between male, 37%, and female, 75%, students. When asked if they had (b) performed chores for other persons in their neighborhood, 54% of White students, 45% of students identifying as Other, 44% of Black students, and 40% of Hispanic students reported they had. When asked if they (c) volunteered, 72% of Females and 65% of Males had volunteered. Students with Disabilities reported volunteering 60%, and Students without Disabilities, 75%. Students reporting having (d) worked in public government while in high school varied with Students with Disabilities reporting 29% and Students without Disabilities 19%. When looking at race/ethnicity, 37% of the Black students, 21% of the Hispanic students, 21% of White students, and 10% of students identifying as Other reported having worked for public government. Students in Region 1 reported working for public government at 32%, Region 2, 25%, Region 3, 23%, Region 4, 21%, and Region 5, 19%. Finally, students responding that they had (e) worked in private business or a company included significant differences between

gender with, 63% of the males and 55% of the females. Differences were also significant between Students without Disabilities where students responded at 65% and 52% of Students with Disabilities. White students reported, 66%, Other students, 58%, Hispanic students, 55%, and Black students at 39%. There were also differences in calendar years with 63% of students reporting having worked in public government in 2007, 60% in 2008, and 50% in 2009. When looking at regions in the state, 65% in Region 4, 57% in Region 5, 56% in Region 2, 55% in Region 3 and, 53% in Region 1. Table 4-2 summarizes hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 3

H₃: There will be no statistically significant difference in students having (a) jobs at school as job training experiences (b) jobs in the community as part of school, as job training experiences (c) jobs in the community not as part of school, as job training experiences (d) any jobs as job training experiences. There were significant differences in the areas of (a) jobs at school as job training experiences with Students with Disabilities, 37%, Students without Disabilities, 18%, Black, 35%, Other, 27%, White 25%, Hispanic, 23%, (b) jobs in the community as part of school, as job training experiences Students with Disabilities, 39%, Students without Disabilities, 24%, (c) jobs in the community not as part of school, as job training experiences, Students without Disabilities, 63%, Students with Disabilities, 54%, Other, 62%, White, 62%, Black 53%, Hispanic, 48%, 2007, 78%, 2008, 74%, 2009, 65%, Region 4, 63%, Region 3, 57%, Region 1, 56%, Region 2, 56%, Region 5, 44%, (d) any jobs as job training experiences, 2007, 78%, 2008, 74%, 2009, 65%. Table 4-3 summarizes hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 4

H₄: There will be no significant difference in (a) students having a job or more jobs as they exit school, (b) total hours a week that students work as they exit school, (c) wages per hour earned by students as they exit school, (d) having chosen the jobs they have as they exit school, (e) students liking the job they have as they exit school, or (f) students working at a business that someone in their family owns as they exit school.

There were significant findings in the areas of; (a) students having a job or more jobs as they exit school with 64% of Students without Disabilities having a job compared to 51% of Students with Disabilities. When comparing race, 64% of White students had a job compared to 46% of the Black students. Over the calendar years of the survey, 58% of students in both 2007 and 2008 had a job, compared to 64% in 2009. Region 5 had the highest number of students with a job at 64%, down to 46% in Region 2. District size differences ranged from 64% for Middle size districts to 46% for Small size districts.

Next the study reported (b) total hours a week that students work as they exit school. Hours worked were broken down into three categories. The first category was 1-20 hours, the second, 21-30 hours, and the third, more than 30 hours. Results for category one, 1-20 hours, were 49% Female, 42% Male. Over calendar year, 58% in both 2007 and 2008, 64% in 2009. For the second category of 21-30 hours, Female and Male students reported very similar hours. Females reported 39% while Males reported 38%. For calendar years, in 2007, 41% of students reported working 21-30 hours, 39% in 2008 and 29% in 2009. In the final category, more than 30 hours, Males more often worked over 30 hours with 20% of the Males reporting and 12% of Females. For calendar year, there was a steady decrease in the number of students working over 30 hours, beginning with 20% in 2007, 15% in 2008, and 14% in 2009.

When reporting on (c) wages per hour earned by students as they exit school, three categories were used to divide student wages. The first category of less than \$7.00 per hour, the second category of \$7.00 to \$7.99 per hour, and the third category of \$8.00 or more per hour. Findings in the first category showed 26% of Females and 20% of Males of making less than \$7.00 per hour. Among race/ethnicity groups, Black students most often made less than \$7.00 per hour at 33%. Over calendar years, there was a steady decrease in the number of students making \$7.00 or less, 29% in 2007, 20% in 2008, and 18%, 2009. Region 1 had the highest percentage at 36% of students making \$7.00 or less and Region 4 the fewest at 15%. Small size districts has the largest percentage of students making \$7.00 or less, 32%, and Large the fewest at 17%. For the next category of earning \$7.00 to \$7.99 per hour, Female students were more likely to be found earning in this category at 38% compared to Males at 33%. Among race/ethnicity, 43% of Black students compared to 33% of White students. Over calendar years results ranged from 47% in 2009 to 32% in 2007. Region 2 students reported earnings in this category at 39%, while students in Region 1 reported at 29%. Very large districts reported at 43%, Middle size district, 36%, Small size districts, 36%, Small/middle, 35%, and Large at 33%. In the final category of wages at \$8.00 or more per hour, 47% of the Male students compared to 36% of the female students made \$8.00 or more. Other students reported making \$8.00 or more 48%, while Black students reported making \$8.00 or more at only 24%. Calendar years varied from 45% in 2008, 39% in 2007, and 35% in 2009. South Florida regions had the highest percentage of students making \$8.00 or more with 51% in Region 5, 50% in Region 4, 42% in Region 3, 35% in Region 1, and 29% in Region 2, 29%. Large size districts had

the highest percentage of students making \$8.00 or more at 50%, followed by Small/middle districts at 43%, Very Large at 35%, Middle size districts at 35%, and the fewest in Small districts at 32%.

Students (d) having chosen the jobs they have as they exit school had significant findings in only two categories. Students without Disabilities reported having chosen their job 92% of the time while Students with Disabilities only reported having chosen their job 83% of the time. White students reported having chosen their jobs 91% of the time, Hispanic students 83% of the time, Black, 81% of the time, and Other, 80% of the time. In the areas of (e) student liking the job they have as they exit school, there were no comparisons that were significant. There were also no significant findings of (f) students working at a business that someone in their family owns as they exit school. Table 4-4 summarizes hypothesis 4.

Summary

Chapter 4 will provided the results of the Florida High School Exit Survey questions about satisfaction with job training, work, and specific job information. When asked about satisfaction with high school preparation, Students with Disabilities were more satisfied than Students without Disabilities. Although not a significant difference, Females were more satisfied than Males in every area, as were Black students. Student in Region 1 and Small size districts were more satisfied in all but one area. There were no significant differences when looking at location or size.

When asked about work done during school, some questions provided the results expected with Females most often babysitting and Males doing chores for neighbors. When asked about volunteering, significant differences were found, with Black, Female, Students without Disabilities, volunteering more often. Black, Female, Students with

Disabilities, were more likely to be working for public government, especially in Region 1. Male, White, Student without Disabilities, were much more likely to work for private business, especially in Region 4, with percentages dropping significantly in 2009.

Students with Disabilities were twice as likely to have had a job as a part of school, more likely to have a job in the community as a part of school, and more likely to have had any job before exiting school. Students identifying as Other were more likely to have had a job in the community not as a part of school and to have had any job before exiting school. Black students were more likely to have had a job at school. A steady decline was reported from 2007 to 2008 and again in 2009, most likely a result of the economic decline. Students in Region 4 were more likely to have had a job in the community not as a part of school. District size was not a factor with significant differences; however, Small/middle districts had the highest percentages in all but one area, jobs at school.

In the final question, students without disabilities more often reported having a job now, and more often reported working fewer hours. When asked about choosing your job, there were significant differences between Students with and Students without Disabilities, with Students without Disabilities more often choosing their job, along with students identifying as White. Calendar year 2009 had the highest number of students working 1 to 20 hours per week, the fewest students working 21 to 30 hours and more than 30 hours per week. The year 2009 also had the most students working in public government. Students in Small/rural districts most often reported liking their job and choosing their job. These results show many differences in job training and work experiences for students in Florida. The purpose of collecting and analyzing these data

has been to provide information to those involved in transition program development and program improvement. Many additional variables not reported may be impacting these results.

Table 4-1. Question 3

	Male	Female	Students without disabilities	Students with disabilities	Black	Hispanic	Other	White
Are you satisfied with your high school education which prepared you for-								
1. finding a job?	62.54	64.09	57.36*	69.23*	69.31	59.63	58.72	62.60
2. learning job skills?	64.72	67.17	58.01*	72.12*	71.84	58.75	63.91	64.31
3. knowing what work you will be good at?	62.80	65.27	57.76*	70.31*	72.51*	59.90*	67.65*	62.22*
4. knowing what kind of job you will be good at?	66.16	68.32	61.79*	72.37*	73.25	65.89	71.68	65.18

* p < .0001

Table 4-1. Question 3 continued

	2007	2008	2009	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5
Are you satisfied with your high school education which prepared you for-								
1. finding a job?	69.08*	59.11*	65.12*	67.79	63.60	61.43	62.29	60.38
2. learning job skills?	68.99	62.13	66.11	68.66	67.04	67.15	61.89	61.73
3. knowing what work you will be good at?	66.98	60.43	68.32	67.55	65.19	64.44	63.27	51.25
4. knowing what kind of job you will be good at?	67.51	64.46	72.68	68.69	68.34	70.38	64.92	62.66

* p < .0001

Table 4-1. Question 3 continued

	Very Large	Large	Middle	Small/Middle	Small
Are you satisfied with your high school education which prepared you for-					
1. finding a job?	64.80	63.71	63.75	59.42	63.76
2. learning job skills?	62.70	65.49	65.92	63.30	66.82
3. knowing what work you will be good at?	63.91	64.87	64.68	58.80	66.59
4. knowing what kind of job you will be good at?	66.20	67.57	67.97	62.74	70.35

* p < .0001

Table 4-2. Question 10

	Male	Female	Students without disabilities	Students with disabilities	Black	Hispanic	Other	White
Have you done any of the following work during high school?								
A. Babysitting for other families	36.95*	74.98*	58.49	51.62	57.91	50.28	48.82	56.00
B. Performed chores for other persons in your neighborhood	52.99	45.72	51.90	46.92	43.81*	40.00*	44.91*	53.56*
C. Volunteered	65.03*	71.88*	75.39*	60.48*	67.32	60.50	65.88	70.34
D. Worked in public government	22.73	24.36	18.81*	29.00*	37.04*	21.11*	10.43*	21.10*
E. Worked in private business or company	63.10*	54.99*	64.89*	52.37*	38.89*	54.70*	57.56*	65.89*

* p < .0001

Table 4-2. Question 10 continued

	2007	2008	2009	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5
Have you done any of the following work during high school?								
A. Babysitting for other families	55.39	57.79	48.42	51.78	53.32	59.75	57.66	42.76
B. Performed chores for other persons in your neighborhood	49.69	51.21	45.15	51.80	52.19	48.59	48.60	40.94
C. Volunteered	63.31	71.65	66.96	66.83	67.67	73.67	67.79	66.67
D. Worked in public government	24.69	22.36	25.13	31.97*	24.97*	23.14*	20.52*	19.46*
E. Worked in private business or company	62.79*	60.30*	49.91*	53.25*	55.91*	54.52*	64.51*	57.05*

* p < .0001

Table 4-2. Question 10 continued

	Very Large	Large	Middle	Small/Middle	Small
Have you done any of the following work during high school?					
A. Babysitting for other families	51.17	57.92	50.88	56.63	56.37
B. Performed chores for other persons in your neighborhood	42.25	48.80	48.89	52.35	57.53
C. Volunteered	64.33	69.61	65.50	71.08	69.71
D. Worked in public government	21.79	22.88	22.05	22.04	30.81
E. Worked in private business or company	52.99	59.83	60.99	64.02	55.15

* p < .0001

Table 4-3. Question 11

	Male	Female	Students without disabilities	Students with disabilities	Black	Hispanic	Other	White
Have you had any of the following job training experiences?								
5. Jobs at school	25.49	28.06	17.77*	36.72*	34.62*	22.93*	26.79*	24.90*
6. Jobs in community as part of school	29.65	32.73	24.05*	38.70*	34.91	29.09	28.57	30.48
7. Job in community not as part of school	58.33	59.33	63.27*	53.55*	53.22*	47.63*	62.42*	62.35*
8. Any job	71.88	75.14	71.64	74.93	73.56	63.99	77.14	74.82

* p < .0001

Table 4-3. Question 11 continued

	2007	2008	2009	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5
Have you had any of the following job training experiences?								
1. Jobs at school	30.57	25.05	25.53	31.55	28.36	30.30	22.92	25.33
2. Jobs in community as part of school	34.70	28.26	32.98	32.14	30.11	30.71	31.27	31.33
3. Job in community not as part of school	60.95*	60.85*	49.55*	56.47*	56.46*	56.52*	63.48*	43.54*
4. Any job	78.03*	73.79*	64.97*	75.94	71.20	71.60	75.52	62.96

* p < .0001

Table 4-3. Question 11 continued

	Very Large	Large	Middle	Small/Middle	Small	
Have you had any of the following job training experiences?						
1. Jobs at school		30.79	24.76	25.76	30.04	24.01
2. Jobs in community as part of school		31.91	32.18	29.00	34.23	25.37
3. Job in community not as part of school		51.19	60.40	59.87	63.02	56.31
4. Any job		69.76	74.75	73.62	76.86	68.60

* p < .0001

Table 4-4. Question 12

	Male	Female	Students without disabilities	Students with disabilities	Black	Hispanic	Other	White
A. Do you have a job or more jobs now?	57.89	57.67	63.88*	51.43*	45.76*	48.21*	54.02*	63.73*
B. About how many total hours a week do you work?								
a. 1-20	42.44*	49.02*	47.01	43.27	42.18	42.17	53.61	45.83
b. 21-30	37.64*	38.54*	38.10	38.24	39.46	37.19	38.14	38.00
c. More than 30	19.92*	12.44*	14.89	18.49	18.37	20.10	8.25	16.17
C. How much do you make on average per hour?								
1. Less than \$7.00	19.98*	26.05*	20.20	26.11	33.45*	20.21*	16.84*	21.07*
2. \$7.00 to \$7.99	32.80*	38.02*	34.98	36.55	42.70*	39.36*	34.74*	33.25*
A. \$8.00 or more	47.22*	35.93*	44.83	37.34	23.84*	40.43*	48.42*	45.68*
D. Did you choose your job yourself?	87.22	89.09	92.16*	82.82*	80.60*	83.08*	79.57*	91.42*
E. Do you like your job?	78.20	82.93	80.35	80.02	76.27	75.88	72.16	82.50
F. Do you work in a business that someone in your family owns?	17.43	11.96	13.80	16.54	16.22	14.95	19.59	14.22

* p < .0001

Table 4-4. Question 12 continued

	2007	2008	2009	Region 1	Region 2	Region 3	Region 4	Region 5
A. Do you have a job or more jobs now?	57.89*	57.67*	63.88*	51.43*	45.76*	48.21*	54.02*	63.73*
B. About how many total hours a week do you work?								
a. 1-20	39.01*	45.54*	56.86*	50.00	42.64	54.55	41.87	51.81
b. 21-30	40.96*	39.24*	29.43*	31.15	40.22	31.62	42.25	28.92
c. More than 30	20.04*	15.22*	13.71*	18.85	17.14	13.83	15.88	19.28
C. How much do you make on average per hour?								
a. Less than \$7.00	28.85*	20.49*	18.15*	35.90*	31.71*	19.50*	15.30*	15.58*
b. \$7.00 to \$7.99	32.44*	34.18*	46.98*	28.63*	39.47*	38.17*	34.96*	33.77*
c. \$8.00 or more	38.71*	45.33*	34.88*	35.47*	28.82*	42.32*	49.74*	50.65*
D. Did you choose your job yourself?	90.70	88.61	81.19	87.03	88.43	84.27	89.45	86.25
E. Do you like your job?	83.16	79.50	76.90	86.36	79.87	78.43	79.47	76.54
F. Do you work in a business that someone in your family owns?	13.51	14.48	19.45	16.74	13.29	16.60	15.16	13.33

* p < .0001

Table 4-4. Question 12 continued

	Very Large	Large	Middle	Small/Middle	Small
A. Do you have a job or more jobs now?	57.89*	57.67*	63.88*	51.43*	45.76*
B. About how many total hours a week do you work?					
a. 1-20	44.56	42.17	46.31	51.41	44.68
b. 21-30	39.30	39.62	38.59	35.42	35.74
c. More than 30	16.14	17.67	15.10	13.17	19.57
C. How much do you make on average per hour?					
a. Less than \$7.00	22.43*	17.31*	28.96*	22.08*	31.62*
b. \$7.00 to \$7.99	42.65*	32.69*	36.35*	35.06*	35.90*
c. \$8.00 or more	34.93*	50.00*	34.68*	42.86*	32.48*
D. Did you choose your job yourself?	86.51	88.29	87.29	87.67	90.38
E. Do you like your job?	79.58	80.26	81.31	78.68	81.47
F. Do you work in a business that someone in your family owns?	14.03	14.88	12.29	18.15	15.81

* p < .0001

Table 4-5. Demographic characteristics

Gender			Disability			Calendar year		
Male	1,644	53.34%	Students with Disabilities	1,569	49.54%	2007	900	28.42%
Female	1,438	46.66%	Students without Disabilities	1,598	50.46%	2008	1620	51.15%
						2009	647	20.43%
Total	3,082	100%		3,167	100%		3,167	100%

Table 4-5. Demographic characteristics continued

Race/ethnicity			District size			District Location		
Black	616	19.91%	Very large	534	16.86%	Region 1	444	14.02%
Hispanic	400	12.93%	Large	1,141	36.03%	Region 2	830	26.21%
Other	178	5.75%	Middle	514	16.23%	Region 3	433	13.67%
White	1900	61.41%	Middle/small	538	16.99%	Region 4	1,286	40.61%
			Small	440	13.89%	Region 5	174	5.49%
Total	3,094	100%		3,157	100%		57	100%

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

Findings and implications of the present investigation of students' satisfaction with high school education preparation for a job, work experience, training experiences, and job information when exiting school are discussed in this chapter. The research questions of this study were as follow: (1) Are you satisfied with your high school education which prepared you for finding a job, learning job skills, knowing what work you will be good at, and knowing what kind of job you will be good at? (2) Have you done any of the following work during high school; babysitting for other families, performed chores for other persons in your neighborhood, volunteered, worked in public government, or worked in private business or company? (3) Have you had any of the following job training experiences: jobs at school, jobs in community as part of school, jobs in community not as part of school, or any job? (4) Do you have a job or jobs now? About how many hours a week do you work? How much do you make on average per hour? Did you choose your job yourself? Do you like your job? Do you work in a business that someone in your family owns? Variables considered for each question were gender, disability, race/ethnicity, year, location, and size of district.

Hypothesis 1

Hypothesis 1 stated that there would be no statistically significant difference in student satisfaction with high school preparation for (a) finding a job, (b) learning job skills, (c) knowing what work they will be good at, and (d) knowing what kind of job you will be good at. There were significance differences in all areas of this hypothesis between students with and Students without Disabilities. In each area Students with Disabilities responded more positively than Students without Disabilities. Another area

of significance showed that Black students felt most prepared for knowing the job they would be good at.

Part one of hypothesis 1 asked students their satisfaction with high school preparation for (a) finding a job. Students with Disabilities responded that they were more satisfied, responding at a rate of 69%, than Students without Disabilities, responding at a rate of 57%. This difference in responses may be a result of the supports in many districts to help students with disabilities with finding employment, a requirement of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) 2004. There were also significant differences when looking at data from different years. Student in 2007 responded with the highest level of satisfaction, 69%, decreasing in 2008 to 59%, and increasing 2009 to 65%. This difference may be a result of the economic downslide that began during this time. When responding to their satisfaction with their high school education preparing them for (b) learning job skills, Students with Disabilities responded more positively at a rate of 72%, while Students without Disabilities responded at a rate of 58%. This difference may be a result of the transition planning requirement to focus on post-school employment. When asked about satisfaction with their high school education preparing them for (c) knowing what work you will be good at, there was significant differences in Students with Disabilities and Students without Disabilities. Students with Disabilities responded that they were more satisfied with knowing what work they would be good at, responding at 70% than Students without Disabilities who responded at 58%. In the area of race/ethnicity, 73% of Black students responded that they knew what they would be good at. Students identifying as Other responded at 68%, White students 62% and Hispanic students at

60%. When asked about satisfaction with their high school education preparing them for (d) knowing what kind of job they would be good at, the only area with statistically significant findings was 72% for Students with Disabilities who responded that they knew what job they would be good at, compared to 62% for Students without Disabilities.

Overall when looking at hypothesis 1, differences between students with disabilities and students without disabilities were significant in each area of satisfaction with high school preparation at (a) finding a job, (b) learning job skills, (c) knowing what work they will be good at, and (d) knowing what kind of job you will be good at. In each case, students with disabilities more often responded that they were satisfied with their high school education. Although not statistically significant, the categories with the highest percentage of for each question were Female and Black students. There were no findings with significance in the areas of districts size and districts location for this question however, in three areas Region 1 had the highest percentage of satisfaction and in three areas Small districts had the highest percentage of satisfaction. With this information we could make the assumption that Female Students with Disabilities who are Black and live in a Small district in Region 1 are most satisfied with their high school education having prepared them for work. Table 4-1 summarizes hypothesis 1.

Hypothesis 2

Hypothesis 2 stated that there would be no statistically significant difference in students having (a) done babysitting for other families while in high school, (b) performed chores for other persons in their neighborhood while in high school, (c) volunteered while in high school, (d) worked in public government while in high school, and (e) worked in private business or company while in high school. There were

statistically significant differences in (a) babysitting for other families between Male, 37%, and Female, 75%. The large number of female responses may reflect the traditional practice of females caring for younger children. The data also show a large number of Male students having done babysitting for other families. When looking at students having (b) performed chores for other persons in their neighborhood, 54% of the White students responded that they had performed chores for other families, 45% of students identifying as Other, 44% of the Black students, and 40% Hispanic students. Although not significant, Male students living in Regions 1 and 2 Small districts had the highest responses to having done chores for their neighbors. This finding may be a reflection of the practice in more rural areas of adolescent males doing chores for neighbors.

When asked if they had (c) volunteered, 72% of Females and 65% of Males responded that they had volunteered. Another area of significance was between Students with Disabilities who responded at a rate of 60% and Students without Disabilities who volunteered at a rate of 75%. Although not significant, findings in Region 3 and districts that are Small/middle and Small had the highest percentage of students volunteering. Another area without findings of significance was race/ethnicity; however, students who are Hispanic were the least likely to volunteer.

When questioned if they had (d) worked in public government, 29% of the Students with Disabilities responded while 19% Students without Disabilities responded that they had worked in public government. There was also a significant difference between race/ethnicity groups, with 37% of the Black students responding that they had worked in public government. This was finding considerably more than the 21% of

Hispanic students, 21% of White students, and 10% of Other students. Another significant difference was between regions. Students in Region 1 had worked in public government the most with a response of 32%, followed by Region 2 at 25%, Region 3 at 23%, Region 4 at 21%, and the fewest in Region 5 at 19%. This difference in working in public government may be due to the large number of Small and Small/medium districts in Region 1. Small and Small/medium school districts would have smaller county government structures that might be more welcoming to students having work experiences in county government.

One question with several areas of significant findings was if the student had (e) worked in a private business or company. When looking at gender, 63% of the Males responded while 55% of Females responded. Students without Disabilities responded that they more often worked in private business, 65% while Students with Disabilities responding 52%. Significant findings between race/gender showed White students at 66%, Other students at 58%, Hispanic students at 55%, and significantly fewer Black students at 39%. Each year of data collection declined starting with 2007 at 63%, decreasing in 2008 to 60%, and again in 2009 to 50%. This difference may have been tied to the economy and the increase in the overall yearly unemployment rate in Florida. Another statistically significant and interesting finding shows the southern regions of the state having a greater number of students working in a private businesses or companies. In Region 4 the percentage of students working in a private business or company was 65%, in Region 5, 57%, in Region 2, 56%, in Region 3, 55% and in Region 1, 53%. This finding may reflect the greater number of jobs and businesses in the southern regions. Table 4-2 summarizes hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 stated that there will be no statistically significant difference in students having (a) jobs at school as job training experiences, (b) jobs in the community as part of school, as job training experiences, (c) jobs in the community not as part of school, as job training experiences, and (d) any jobs as job training experiences. Findings showed there was significance in the areas of (a) jobs at school as job training experiences with Students with Disabilities, 37%, and Students without Disabilities, 18%. This finding may be a result of the many on-the-job training programs within transition programs for students with disabilities in school districts throughout Florida. Another area with significant findings was race/ethnicity with Black students having had a job as job training at school, 35%, which is significantly more than students identifying as Other, 27%, White students, 25%, and Hispanic students, 23%. This finding correlates to the finding in Hypothesis 2 where students who were Black were least likely to have a job in a private business or company. In both areas, Hispanic students participated less.

There were significant findings when asked about (b) jobs in the community as part of school, as job training experiences. Only 39% of Students with Disabilities responded, while even fewer, 24% of Students without Disabilities reported having a job in the community as part of school. Although not significant in differences between school districts, the lowest percentage responses to jobs in the community as part of school, were in small districts. This may be due to the limited number of jobs outside of school available in small districts. Another interesting finding was the minimal difference in location between all five regions which ranged from 30% to 32%.

When asked about (c) jobs in the community not as part of school, as job training experiences, Students without Disabilities responded at a rate of 63%, while Students with Disabilities responded at a rate of 54%. When looking at differences in race/ethnicity, students identifying as Other reported working at 62%, followed by White students at 62%, Black students at 53%, and Hispanic students at 48%. Here again Hispanic students are reporting working less than other race/ethnic groups. When looking at data over three years, in 2007, students reported having had a job in the community, not as a part of school, 78%, decreasing in 2008 to 74% and again decreasing in 2009 to 65%. This decline may be directly tied to the economic decline during this time. Significant differences were found between regions in the state. When asked about having jobs in the community, not as a part of school, 63% of the students in Region 4 responded positively, while in Region 3, 57% of the students, 56% of the students in Region 1, 56% of the students in Region 2 and 44% in Region 5. These results would support the findings in hypothesis 2 where students in Region 4 were more likely to have worked in a private business or company during school. Although not significant, students in Very Large districts were the least likely to have had a job in the community not as part of school when compared to other size districts.

Only one area with statistical significance was found when asked about having (d) any jobs as job training experiences. Students in 2007 responded at 78%, fewer students in 2008 responded at 74%, and decreasing once again students in 2009 responded at 65%. Although not significant, students the most likely to have had any job while in school were Female, Students with Disabilities, identifying as Other race/ethnic group, living in Regions 1 in a Small/middle size school district. Overall,

Students with Disabilities more often responded to having; (a) jobs at school as job training experiences, (b) jobs in the community as part of school, as job training experiences, (c) jobs in the community not as part of school, as job training experiences, and although not significant, responded more often to having had (d) any job as job training experience. Table 4-3 summarizes hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 4

Hypothesis 4 states that there will be no statistically significant difference in (a) students having a job or more jobs; (b) the total hours a week that students work; (c) wages per hour earned; (d) having chosen the jobs they have; (e) students liking the job they have; and (f) students working at a business that someone in their family owns, as they exit school. There was significance in the areas of (a) students having a job or more jobs as they exit school. Results showed 64% of Students without Disabilities responded that they had a job compared to 51% of Students with Disabilities reported having a job. Differences between race/ethnicity showed 64% of students who are White having a job when exiting school, 54% of students identifying as Other, 48% of Hispanic students, and 46% of Black students. Over the three years of data collection there were statistically significant findings with 64% of students in 2009 reporting having a job declining to 58% in 2007, and again, to 58% in 2008. Students in Region 5 reported having a job when exiting school at a rate of 64%, followed by Region 4 at 54%, Region 1 at 51%, Region 3 at 48%, and the fewest in Region 2 at 46%. Among different size school districts, students in Middle size districts reported being employed when leaving school at 64%, those in Very Large, 58%, student in Large, 58%, Small/middle, 51%, and students in Small districts, 46%. The only category without

significant differences for this hypothesis was gender with Males reporting having a job at the rate of 58% and Females reporting at 58%, the closest results of this study.

One of the defining characteristics of employment and often unreported characteristic is the number of hours worked per week. When asked the (b) total hours a week that students work as they exit school, those reporting between 1-20 hours, with significant differences, were 49% of Females and 42% of Males. Over the years of collecting data, 64% reported working 1-20 hours per week in 2009, 58% in 2007, and 58% in 2008. The next category of hours worked looked at students reporting working 21-30 hours per week. Results showed 39% of Female and 38% of Male students worked between 21 to 30 hours per week. When looking at data over years, 41%, in 2007, 39% in 2008, and 29% in 2009. When looking at students working more than 30 hours per week, 20% of Male students reported, compared to 12% of Female students. Over school years of data collection, 20% of students in 2007 reported working more than 30 hours, 15% in 2008, and 14% in 2009. The year 2009 had the fewest numbers of students working 21-30 and 30 hours or more. This may be a result of the economic recession during that period of time. The data also shows that females more often worked a fewer number of hours per week and males worked a greater number of hours per week.

The (c) wages per hour earned by students as they exit school is a critical factor in determining the quality of life a student will experience. Three categories were developed to divide students' earnings per hour. The first category for amount of pay for students was less than \$7.00 per hour. There were significant findings in the category of gender with Female students reporting making \$7.00 or less at 26%, and

Male students reporting at 20%. Students who are Black reported most often making \$7.00 or less at 33%, those who are White, 21%, Hispanic students, 20%, and those reporting as Other at a rate of 17%. When looking at the year of reporting, in 2007, 29%, in 2008, 20%, and in 2009, 18%. Between regions, 36% of students in Region 1 reported making \$7.00 or less, 32% of students in Region 2, 20% in Region 3, 16% in Region 5, and 15% in Region 4. When looking at students earning \$7.00 or less, by district size, 32% of students in Small districts, 29% in Middle size districts, 22% in Very Large districts, 22% in Small/middle districts, and 17% in Large districts

Moving to the next wage category of students' earnings \$7.00 to \$7.99 per hour, Female students reported earning \$7.00 to \$7.99 per hour, 38% of the time while Male students reported earning \$7.00 to \$7.99 per hour 33% of the time. Wages at \$7.00 to \$7.99 were reported by students who are Black, 43%, Hispanic students, 39%, students identifying as Other, 35%, and White students, 33%. Over the three years of collection, students in 2009 reported \$7.00 to \$7.99, at a rate of 47%, while in 2008 it was 34% and in 2007, 32%. Among regions, students in Region 2 reported making \$7.00 to \$7.99, 39%, student in Region 3, 38%, students in Region 4, 35%, students in Region 5, 34%, and students in Region 1, 29%. When looking at size, students in Very Large district reported making \$7.00 to \$7.99, 43%, Middle, 36%, Small, 36%, Small/middle, 35%, Large, 33%.

The largest rate of pay per hour for students, \$8.00 or more found 47% of male students compared to 36% of the female students making \$8.00 or more per hour. Among race/ethnicity, students identifying themselves as Other responded at 48%, White students at 46%, Hispanic students at 40%, Black students at 24% reported

making \$8.00 or more. Over years of data collection, the year with the greatest number of students making \$8.00 or more per hour was 2008 at 45%. In 2007, 39% reported making over \$8.00 and in 2009, 35% reported making over \$8.00. The pattern of the 2009 school year having the lowest rate of pay held consistent for all pay categories. Results showed 51% of student in Region 5, just over 50% of students in Region 4, 42% in Region 3, at falling again to 35% in Region 1, and the fewest students making \$8.00 or more per hour being 29% in Region 2. When looking at significant differences in district size, Large districts had 50% or their students making \$8.00 or more per hour, Small/middle districts 43%, Very Large districts 35%, Middle size districts 35%, and Small districts 32%. Although not statistically significant in the findings, 45% of Students without Disabilities reported making \$8.00 or more while 37% of Student with Disabilities reported making \$8.00 or more per hour. Taking a look at all categories showed that Male Students without Disabilities, identifying as Other in the race/ethnicity category, in 2008, living in Region 5, in a Large size district were making the most per hour. The largest percentage of students reporting making the wages in the lowest category were Female Students with Disabilities, identifying as Black, in 2007, in Region 1, living in a Small district. The largest percentage of students reporting making the wages in the highest category were male students without disabilities, identifying as Other, in 2008, in Region 5, living in a Large district.

An important part of adult life is making one's own choices. When asked if they have (d) chosen the jobs they have as they exit school, 92% of Students without Disabilities reported having chosen the job they have, while 83% of Students with Disabilities reported having chosen the job they have. In the race/ethnicity groups, 91%

of students that were White reported having chosen their job followed by Hispanic students, 83%, Black students, 81%, and Other students, 80%. Although not significant, Female students, in Region 4, in a Small size districts, during the 2007 school year were more likely to have chosen the job they have as they exit school. When asked about (e) students liking the job they have as they exit school, where there were no findings that were significant. Results did show however, that Female, White students, living in Region 1, in a Small district, in 2007, were more likely to like their job. The difference between Students with Disabilities and Students without Disabilities was less than one percentage point. When looking at (f) students working at a business that someone in their family owns as they exit school, there were no comparisons that were statistically significant. However, those most likely to work at a business that someone in their family owns were Male, with a disability, in the Other category of race/ethnicity, in Region 1 in a Small/middle district. Across years, 19% of students worked in a business that someone in their family owned in 2009, 14% in 2008, and 14% in 2007. Overall, Students with Disabilities reported (a) having a job or more jobs as they exit school and (d) having chosen the jobs they have as they exit school. This finding may be a result of school districts focus on employment for Students with Disabilities and the Florida requirement that students receive self-determination training to support students making their own choices.

Characteristics with Significant Differences

Four hypotheses were developed focusing on student satisfaction, job training, and work experience. To evaluate each hypothesis, the study compared students using individual characteristics, years of collection, and district characteristics. The following

is a summary of findings in the areas of gender, disability, race/ethnicity, year, district location, and district size.

Gender

Extensive research has substantiated the fact that there are differences in education experiences and outcomes between Male and Female students. There were significant differences in certain questions within hypothesis 2. When students were asked have you done (a) babysitting for other families, 37% of the Male student and 75% of the Female students said that they had. When asked if they had (c) volunteered, 72% of the Female students said they had, compared to 65% of the Male students. When asked if they had (e) worked in private business or company, 63% of the Males and 55% of the Females said they worked in a private business or company.

Hypothesis 4 also contained areas where gender differences were significant in the (b) total hours a week that students work as they exit school, 49% of Females, and 42% of Male said they worked 1-20 hours per week. Between 21-30 hours per week, 39% Females compared to 38% Males. Over 30 hours worked per week, 20% of the Male students responded they did and 12% of the Female students. These results show Females working fewer hours and Males more hours per week.

Another area with significant differences in responses was (c) wages per hour earned by students as they exit school. Those earning less than \$7.00 per hour included 26% of the Female students and 20% of the Male students. Those earning \$7.00 to \$7.99 per hour included 38% of the Female students and 33% of the Male students. Those earning \$8.00 or more per hour included 47% of the Male students and 36% of the Female students. These results show more Male students in the higher wage category.

Although not statistically significant, Females were more satisfied with finding a job, learning job skills, knowing what work they would be good at and knowing what job they would be good at. They were more likely to work in public government and less likely to do chores for other persons in their neighborhood. Females were more often found having had the following job training experiences of jobs at school, jobs in the community as part of school, jobs in the community not as part of school and having any job. Females more often reported choosing their job, and liking their job. Males reported having a job when exiting school only 0.22% more than Females at exit. Males were more likely to work in a business that someone in their family owned.

Disability

Within hypothesis 1 there were several areas with significant differences in (a) finding a job between Students with Disabilities and Students without Disabilities. Students with Disabilities responded that they were more satisfied, 69%, than Students without Disabilities, 57%. When responding to their satisfaction with their high school education preparing them for (b) learning job skills, 73% of Students with Disabilities responded while 58% of Students without Disabilities responded positively. When asked about satisfaction with their high school education preparing them for (c) knowing what work you will be good at, there was significance with Students with Disabilities responding that they were more satisfied, 70%, with knowing what work they would be good at than Students without Disabilities at 58%. When asked about satisfaction with (d) knowing what kind of job they would be good at, 72% of Students with Disabilities were satisfied in comparison to 62% of Students without Disabilities. All of these results show Students with Disabilities reporting being more satisfied with their high school preparation for jobs in the future. This may reflect the transition planning focus on

employment and students having post-secondary goals for employment after high school.

There were significant differences in hypothesis 2, also. When asked if they had (c) volunteered, 60% of the students with disabilities responded they volunteered while 75% of the Students without Disabilities responded that they volunteered. When asked if they had (d) worked in public government, 29% of Students with Disabilities while only 19% of Students without Disabilities had worked in public government. When asked if they had (e) worked in private business or company, 65% of Students without Disabilities responded that they had while 52% of the Students with Disabilities responded that they had. These findings may lead transition planners to look at all career options for Students with Disabilities and increase the focus of Students with Disabilities being involved in volunteer activities that are typical for high school students without disabilities.

Hypothesis 3 had significant findings for Students with Disabilities. When asked about (a) jobs at school as job training experiences, 37% of Students with Disabilities, compared to 18% for Students without Disabilities. When asked about (b) jobs in the community as part of school, as job training experiences, 39% of Students with Disabilities reported having had a job, compared to 24% of Students without Disabilities. When asked about (c) jobs in the community not as part of school, as job training experiences, 63% of the Students without Disabilities responded more often than the 54% of Students with Disabilities. These findings reflect the job training services provided to Students with Disabilities but also reflect the large number of students who are not having job training experiences while in school.

Hypothesis 4 had significant finding in two areas, both with findings that favored Students without Disabilities. The first area was (a) students having a job or more jobs as they exit school, where 64% of Students without Disabilities reported having a job, while 51% of the Students with Disabilities reported having a job. When asked if they had (d) chosen the job they have as they exit school, 92% of the Students without Disabilities responded they had chosen their job and 83% of Students with Disabilities responded they had chosen the job they had. The first of these two areas of significance reflects the overall employment rate of people with disabilities lagging behind the general population and should continue to be an area of improved outcomes. The second finding of Students with Disabilities having chosen their job less often than Students without Disabilities may reflect the practice of professionals and family members making choices for Students with Disabilities and not allowing them to make their own choices. This supports the continued need for students with disabilities to receive self-determination training.

Race/Ethnicity

When looking at students' race/ethnicity, hypothesis 1 focused on satisfaction with their high school education preparation. Significance was found in only the question that asked students about their high school education having prepared them for (c) knowing what work you will be good at. Responses showed 73% of the Black students knowing what they would be good at, 68% of the Other students, 62% of White students and 60% of the Hispanic students. Although not statistically significant, Black students responded most often that they were satisfied with their high school education preparing them for (a) finding a job, (b) learning job skills, and (d) knowing what kind of job they would be good at.

Hypothesis 2 had significant differences in work done during high school for responses to (b) performed chores for other persons in their neighborhood with White students, 54%, Other students, 45%, Black, 44%, and Hispanic, 40%. When asked if they had (d) worked in public government, findings were 37% of Black students, 21% of Hispanic students, 21% of White students, and 10% of Other students. When asked if they had (e) worked in private business or company, 66% of White students said they had, 58% of Other students, 55% of Hispanic students, and 39% of Black students. Although not statistically significant, Black students were more likely to babysit for other families. White students were more likely to volunteer.

Hypothesis 3 found significant responses in the areas of (a) jobs at school as job training experiences where findings were 35% of Black students, 27% of Other, 25% of White students and 23% of Hispanic students. When asked about having had (c) jobs in the community not as part of school, responses showed 62% of Other students, 62% of White students, 53% of Black students and 48% of Hispanic students. Although not statistically significant, students who were Black were most likely to have had a job in the community as part of school as a job training experience. Students identifying as Other were the most likely to have had any job. Hispanic students were the least likely to have had jobs at school, jobs in the community not as a part of school, or any job.

For hypothesis 4 there was significance in the areas of (a) students having a job or more jobs as they exit school with 64% of White Students, 54% of Other students, 48% of Hispanic students and 46% of Black students responding they have a job or jobs as they exit school. Another area of significance was (c) wages per hour earned by students as they exit school. In the first category, less than \$7.00 per hour, with 33% of

Black students, 21% of White students, 20% of Hispanic students and 17% of Other students responding. For wages of \$7.00 to \$7.99 per hour, 43% of Black students, 39% of Hispanic, 35% of Other, and 33% of White students. The highest wages category was \$8.00 or more per hour and responses for students identifying as Other was 48%, White, 46%, Hispanic, 40%, and Black, 24%. The last area of significance where race/ethnicity is divided was students (d) having chosen the jobs they have as they exit school. The responses showed 91% of White students having chosen their jobs, 83% of the Hispanic students, 81% of Black students, and 80% of Other students. Although not statistically significant, information on how many hours a week students work showed over 20% of Hispanic students working over 30 hours per week. Another question without significant results for race/ethnicity was students liking their job with 83% of white students responding. When asked do you work for a business that someone in your family owns, students identifying as Other responded, 20%, that they did.

Year

There were significant findings in hypothesis 1 in students' satisfaction with their high school education preparing them for (a) finding a job, with 69% of students in 2007 being satisfied, 59% were satisfied, in 2008, 65% were satisfied in 2009. In hypothesis 2 there were significant differences in work done during high school for those who had (e) worked in private business or company. In 2007, 63% of students surveyed had worked private business. In 2008 fewer students, 60%, and in 2009, even fewer students, 50%. Hypothesis 3 had significant differences in the areas of (c) jobs in the community not as part of school, as job training experiences, between calendar years with 78% of students in 2007, 74% in 2008, and the fewest, 65% in 2009. When asked

about having (d) any jobs as job training experiences, again there was a steady decline with 78% of students in 2007, down to 74% in 2008 and 65% in 2009. In hypothesis 4 there were significant differences in the areas of (a) students having a job or more jobs as they exit school. In 2009, 64% of students surveyed reported having a job, in 2007, 58%, and in 2008, 58%. When looking at (b) total hours a week that students work as they exit school, students working 1-20 hours, in 2009 reported 64%, fewer in 2007, 58%, and even fewer in 2008, 58%. Students working 21-30 hours also declined each year beginning with 41% in 2007, 39% in 2008, and again declining in 2009 to 29%. Students working more than 30 hours held to the same pattern with, 20% in 2007, 15%, 2008, and only 14% in 2009. When looking at (c) wages per hour earned by students as they exit school, in the lowest category of less than \$7.00 per hour, 29% of students in 2007, 20% in 2008, down to 18% in 2009. In the \$7.00 to \$7.99 per hour category, the largest percentage was 47% in 2009, followed by 34% in 2008, and the lowest percentage at 32% of students making \$7.00 to \$7.99 in 2007. Students reporting making \$8.00 or more per hour were at 45% in 2008, 39% in 2007, and the lowest percentage of 35% in 2009, which reflects the unemployment and underemployment trend as a result of the economy.

District Location

District location was statistically significant in hypothesis 2 where students were asked if they had (d) worked in public government. Students responded at a rate of 32% from Region 1 students responded at a rate of 25% from Region 2, 23% from Region 3, 21% from Region 4, and 19% from Region 5. Other findings that were significant were students that had (e) worked in private business or company. Responses ranged from 65% in Region 4 to 57% in Region 5, 56% in Region 2, 55% in

Region 3, and 53% in Region 1. Hypothesis 3 asked students about job training experiences. There was statistical significance in only the area of (c) jobs in the community not as part of school, as job training experiences. Students responded, 63%, in Region 4, followed by 57%, 56%, 56%, in Regions 3, 1, 2, respectively, and 44% in Region 5. Although not statistically significant, both Regions 1 and 4 had over 75% of students responding that they had any job, as job training experience. There were statistically significant findings in hypothesis 4 also. When asked about the job students have when exiting school, specifically (a) students having a job or more jobs as they exit school, 64% of the students in Region 5 said they had a job, followed by Region 4 with 54% of students saying they had a job, Region 1, 51%, Region 3, 48%, and in Region 2, 46% of students reporting they had a job as they exit school. Other significant findings were in the (c) wages per hour earned by students as they exit school. The largest number of students earning less than \$7.00 per hour were in Region 1, at 36%, highest percentage of students reporting earning \$7.00 to \$7.99 per hour were from Region 2 at 39%, and students earning \$8.00 or more per hour were in Region 5 at 51%, followed closely by Region 4, at 50%.

Although not significant, students in Region 1 were most satisfied with their high school education having prepared them for finding a job, reporting at 68% and learning job skills, reporting at 69%, knowing what they would be good at, reporting at 68%. Students in Region 1 also had the jobs at school as job training experiences, reporting at 32%, jobs in the community as part of school, reporting at 32%, and any job, reporting at 76%. Additionally, students in Region 1 reported liking their jobs most among regions, 86%, and most often working for a business that someone in their

family owns, reporting at 17%. Region 2 students reported having done chores for other persons in the neighborhood during high school, reporting at 52%. Region 3 students were most satisfied with their high school education preparing this for knowing what kind of job they will be good at, reporting at 70%. They had most often done babysitting for other families, reporting at 60%. They had also most often volunteered, responding at 74%. When asked about hours worked per week, 55% of students in Region 3 responded that they were working 1-20 hours per week, being the highest percentage between regions and 14% working more than 30 hours per week, being the lowest percentage between regions. Region 4 students were students were most likely to have chosen their job, responding at 89%.

District Size

Significant findings when comparing school district size were not found in hypothesis 1, 2, and 3. Hypothesis 4 had statistically significant finding in the areas of (a) students having a job or more jobs as they exit school with 64% of students in Middle size district reporting having a job, 58% of students in Very Large districts having a job, 58% of the students in large districts having a job, 51% of students in Small/middle districts having a job, and 46% of the students in Small districts having a job. There were also significant findings in the areas of (c) wages per hour earned by students as they exit school. Students reporting earnings of less than \$7.00 per hour were 32% in Small size districts, 29% in Middle size districts, 22% in Very Large size district, 22% in Small/middle size districts, and 17% in Large size districts. The next earnings range was \$7.00 to \$7.99 per hour. The highest percentage responses were 43% from Very Large size districts, 36% in Middle size districts, 36% from Small size districts, 35% from Small/middle, and 33% in Large size districts. The highest earnings

range options was \$8.00 or more per hour. Students in Large size districts responded making \$8.00 or more at 50%. The next highest response came from Small/middle size districts at 43%, followed by Very Large size districts at 35%, Middle size districts at 35%, and Small size districts at 32%. These facts support previous findings reporting that students in Small districts make lower earnings than students in Larger size districts.

Although not significant, students in Small districts reported being the most satisfied with their high school education which prepared them for learning job skills, reporting at 67%, knowing what they would be good at, reporting at 67%, and knowing what kind of job they would be good at, reporting at 70%. Students in Small districts had most often done chores for other persons in their neighborhood, 58%, and worked in public government, reporting at 31%. Students in Small districts were the highest percentage among district sizes working over 30 hours per week, reporting at 20%. Additionally, 90% of students in Small districts said they chose their own job and 81% liked their job, the highest response of any group. When asked about working during high school, 57% of students in Small/middle and 56% of students in Small districts had done babysitting for other families. Student in Small/middle districts most often reported volunteering, at 71%, having job training experiences of jobs in the community as part of school at 34%, job training in the community not as part of school, 63%, and most often reported having any job at 77%. Students in Small/middle districts also reported working the least number of hours, 51%, and most often worked in a business that someone in their family owned, 18%. Students in Very Large districts reported at the highest percentage that they were satisfied with their high school education which

prepared them for finding a job at 65% and having a job at school as a job training experience at 31%.

Limitations

The limitations of this study relate to: (1) dissemination of the survey, (2) district participation in the survey, and (3) student participation in the survey.

Dissemination of the survey. The survey was mailed to District Transition Contacts in each district identified to participate in the survey each year. District Transition Contacts were asked to distribute the Florida High School Exit Survey (FHSES), Form E, to high school students in their district that were exiting school and who were 18 years of age. Additionally, they were asked to distribute the same number of Florida High School Exit Surveys, Form G, to students without disabilities that were comparable to the students with disabilities. A report on how this process was conducted was not requested.

District participation in the survey. Participation in the survey was not uniform across all districts. Not all districts participated in the survey, and small numbers of surveys returned from some districts. A suggested number of participants chart was sent to each District Transition Contact. Several districts did not return the number of surveys suggested for their district size.

Student participation in the survey. The voluntary nature of student participation may have allowed students that were disenfranchised with their high school educational experiences to not participate. Also, only inviting students 18 years old and older to participate may not be representative of all exiting students, perhaps leaving valuable information unreported. Finally, directions were provided with surveys for accommodations to be provided for students that might need the survey read to them.

The person providing the accommodations most likely would have been school district personnel and could have influenced the student's responses.

Caution should be used when interpreting the FHSES results used in this study as they may not be representative of all exiting students in the state of Florida. The perceptions and expectations of certain students with disabilities may vary from students without disabilities. The survey reflects how youth describe themselves and may not be accurate. (Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Levine & Marder, 2007).

Summary

Throughout this study, the differences between students' satisfaction with job training, work experiences, and jobs, were often identified, and many times significant. When looking at satisfaction with high school having prepared students for work, students with disabilities consistently reported more satisfaction with being prepared for work. Students with disabilities also responded more often to having a job while in high school. In many other areas, students with disabilities responses were not as positive as their peers.

Differences in work experiences between males and females, race/ethnic categories, and the region of the state where students live, show trends that most likely need to be considered by those in transition program improvement. Students who have disabilities and are Black were far more likely to be working at school while students that are White and do not have disabilities were far more likely to work in private businesses or companies. Females were more likely to have volunteered and have babysat for neighbors. Males were more likely to make higher wages. The overall differences in hours worked and wages earned reflected the national economic downslide we experienced beginning in 2007 and continuing into 2009. Higher wages

were reported by students in the southern regions of the state where salaries and the cost of living are higher. Higher wages were also reported more by students living in Large districts where more jobs are available, while lower wages were reported more often in Small rural districts where fewer jobs are available. Interestingly, students in Middle sized districts most often reported having a job now, which may reflect the transition program provided to students in the district and the importance of being employed at the time of school exit.

Finding of this study need to be considered by those involved in the transition process when looking at program improvement or evaluation. At the state, district, and school level there is the need to strive to improve the transition programs offered to students as they move from school to adulthood. Our goal is continually improve outcomes for all students. Several specific areas warrant further research:

- A comparison study of employment programs by school district size and region for students with and without disabilities would offer insight into these finding and inform practice.
- A study comparing regional economic trends with these findings by region would further explain the change in the number of students employed.
- The differences in race and ethnicity should be further studied and compared to data from the National Longitudinal Transition Study 2 to inform practice.

APPENDIX A
FLORIDA HIGH SCHOOL EXIT SURVEY

High School Exit Survey – 2008

Form E

This survey asks you questions about your experiences in high school and your plans for the future. The information will be used to plan high school programs that prepare students for adult life. Please help us improve programs and services for students attending Florida public schools by answering the following questions. Your answers will remain **confidential**. Thank you.

Directions. Please answer all the questions. If you need help ask your teacher.

State student ID* _____

* *Make sure this is about your state student ID, NOT your internal school ID*

Date of Birth _____

County: _____

1. Are you Male Female

2. How old are you? If younger than 18 years old, **STOP**, you cannot complete the survey.

18 19 20 21 22 23

24

3. Are you

American Indian/Alaska Native Asian/Pacific Islander Black Hispanic

Multiracial

White Other

Part I. General Information

1. How many people including yourself live in your home? (Please check one.)

- 1 2-4 5-9 10 More than 10

2. Please describe your living situation: (Please check all that apply.)

- I live with both parents.
 I live with my mother.
 I live with my father.
 I live by myself.
 I live with my guardian(s).
 I live with grandparents.
 I live with other relatives.
 I live with friends.
 I live with one parent and one step parent.
 I live in an independent living program.

3. What is the highest education level achieved by your **father**? (Please check one.)

- Less than high school
 High school graduate
 Some college
 College graduate
 Don't know

4. What is the highest education level achieved by your **mother**? (Please check one.)

- Less than high school
 High school graduate
 Some college
 College graduate
 Don't know

5. Do you have a disability? Yes No

If yes, please check all that apply:

- Learning disabilities
- Hearing impairment (including deafness)
- Speech or language impairment
- Visual impairment (including blindness)
- Emotional disturbance
- Orthopedic impairment (cerebral palsy, spina bifida, etc.)
- Autism
- Traumatic brain injury
- Mentally handicapped
- Other health impairments (ADHD, ADD, Tourette's syndrome, Cystic fibrosis, etc.)
- Other (Please list.) _____
- Don't know

If yes, how much does your disability affect your school achievement?

- Not at all A little Somewhat A lot

6 A. How is your health? Poor Fair Good Very Good Excellent

B. About how many hours do you sleep each night? Less than 4 4 to 5.9 6 to 7.9
 8 to 9.9 10 or more

7. How many friends do you have?
 0 1 to 2 3 to 10 11 to 50 more than 50

8. What do you do the most in your free time? (Please check all that apply.)

- Watching TV
- Listening to music
- Read
- Play video games
- Sports or exercise (for example: martial arts, team or individual sports, etc.)
- Talk on phone
- Mechanical (for example: car repair, building, etc.)
- Community recreation/leisure activities (for example: movies, arcade, mall, etc.)
- Artistic activities (for example: play instrument, ballet, painting, etc.)
- Visit with friends and/or relatives
- Church or religious activities
- Organizational/club activities
- Browse the Internet
- Outdoor activities (for example: camping, hunting, fishing, hiking, riding, going to beach etc.)

9. How much time do you spend in ESE classes?

- No ESE classes
- 1 ESE class per week
- 1 ESE class per day
- More than 1 ESE class per day to half day of ESE classes
- Half day or more of ESE classes but not all day
- All ESE classes

10. Please check your diploma option (Please check one.):

- Standard
- Special Diploma Option 1
- Special Diploma Option 2

11. Do you have a driver's license? Yes No

12. Is public transportation available? Yes No

If yes, do you use it? Yes No

Part II. My High School Experiences

1. Who helped you to get ready for what you want to do after high school? (Please check all that apply.)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Agency representatives | <input type="radio"/> Nurse |
| <input type="radio"/> Employer | <input type="radio"/> Parents/family members |
| <input type="radio"/> Friends/acquaintances | <input type="radio"/> School counselors |
| <input type="radio"/> General education teachers | <input type="radio"/> Special education teachers |
| <input type="radio"/> Job coach | <input type="radio"/> No one |
| <input type="radio"/> I helped myself | |

2. Did you take classes in high school about...

Health and safety?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
If yes, was this helpful?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
Vocational?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
If yes, was this helpful?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
Job training?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
If yes, was this helpful?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
Career Education?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
If yes, was this helpful?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
FCAT Remediation?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
If yes, was this helpful?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
Recreation/leisure course (for example: tennis, art, dance, etc.)?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
If yes, was this helpful?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
Social skills (for example: marriage, family living, etc.)?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
If yes, was this helpful?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
Independent life skills (for example: cooking, managing money, living on your own, getting a place to live, keeping house, etc.)?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
If yes, was this helpful?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No

3. Are you satisfied with your high school education prepared you for ...

Reading?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not Sure
Writing?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not Sure
Doing math?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not Sure
Finding a job?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not Sure
Getting more education or training (like a college or vocational school)?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not Sure
Receiving information about careers?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not Sure
Learning job skills?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not Sure
Knowing what work you will be good at?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not Sure
Knowing what kind of work you want to do?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not Sure
Deciding what you want to do with your life?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not Sure
Knowing how to achieve what you want to do with your life?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not Sure
Using computers?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not Sure
Using community resources after graduation (like Social Security Administration, the Center for Independent Living, Vocational Rehabilitation, or Agency for Persons with Disabilities)?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not Sure
Using public transportation?	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not Sure

4. Do you know what a IEP or Transition IEP is? Yes No
5. Have you had training that prepared you to participate in your Transition IEP meeting? Yes No
If yes, what type of training? _____
6. Did you participate in your IEP or Transition IEP meeting ...
- | | | |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| During the eighth (8 th) grade? | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| During the ninth (9 th) grade? | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| During the tenth (10 th) grade? | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| During the eleventh (11 th) grade? | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
| During the twelfth (12 th) grade? | <input type="radio"/> Yes | <input type="radio"/> No |
7. What did you do at your IEP or Transition IEP meeting? (Please check all that apply.)
- I understood the contents of the meeting.
 - I talked in the meeting about my needs and interests.
 - I asked questions at the meeting.
 - I set educational and career goals for myself.
 - I talked about my courses/credits at the meeting.
 - I helped make the decisions.
 - I talked about my FCAT scores.
 - Nothing, others did all the talking.
 - I don't remember.

8. Did your IEP or Transition IEP include a desired Post-School Outcome or “Dream” statement? Yes No

If yes, what was included in your statement? (Please check all that apply.)

- Work you want to do.
- Where you want to live.
- Social activities you want to do.
- How you will be part of your community.
- How you will get around in your community.
- Further education you want to pursue.

9. Which agencies attended your Transition IEP meetings? (Please check all that apply.)

- Center for Independent Living
- College or University
- Community College
- Agency for Persons with Disabilities
- The ARC
- Health Care Provider
- Social Security Administration
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Vocational Technical Education Center
- Mental Health Provider
- Other (Please specify.)_____

10. Have you done any of the following work during high school?

A. Baby sitting for other families	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
B. Performed chores for other persons in your neighborhood	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No
C. Volunteered (for example: church, community agency job, etc)	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No

D. Worked in public government (for example: school district, city or county job, etc.) Yes No

E. Worked in private business or company Yes No

11. Have you had any of the following job training experiences? (Please check all that apply.)

Jobs at school Yes No

Jobs in the community, as part of your school classes Yes No

Jobs in the community, not as part of your school classes Yes No

12 A. Do you have a job or more jobs now? Yes No
(If no, go to question 13.)

B. About how many total hours per week do you work? (Please check one.)

- 1 to 10 hours per week
- 11 to 20 hours per week
- 21 to 25 hours per week
- 26 to 30 hours per week
- 31 to 40 hours per week
- More than 40 hours per week

C. How much do you make on average per hour? (Please check one.)

- \$1.00 to \$6.66 per hour
 - \$6.67 (minimum wage) to \$6.99 per hour
 - \$7.00 to \$7.99 per hour
 - \$8.00 to \$9.99 per hour
 - \$10.00 or more per hour
-

D. Did you choose your job yourself?

Yes

No

If no, who chose the job for you? (Please check all that apply).

- Parents/relatives
 - Friends/acquaintances
 - School employee (for example: teacher or job coach, etc.)
 - Community Agency
-

E. Do you like your job?

Yes

No

F. Do you work in a business that someone in your family owns?

Yes

No

G. Who helped you get your job? (Please check all that apply.)

- Myself
 - Parents/relatives
 - Friends/acquaintances
 - School employee (for example: teacher or job coach, etc.)
 - Community Agency
-

H. Please describe your job: (Please check all that apply.)

- Business (for example: office work, receptionist, filing, etc.)
- Child care (for example: babysitting, child care helper, etc.)
- Construction
- Automotive (for example: changing oil, changing tires, etc.)
- Computer repair
- Information (for example: data entry, customer services, etc.)
- Medical (for example: working in a hospital or assisted living facility, etc.)
- Food service (for example: waiter, waitress, hostess, cook, cashier, etc.)
- Retail (for example: stocking shelves, cashier, customer service, bagging groceries, etc.)
- Agriculture (for example: plant nursery, farm hand, etc.)
- Custodial
- Motel/hotel services
- Landscaping/yard work
- Construction work
- Entertainment (for example: movie theater, video arcade, etc.)
- Animal hospital/animal care
- Doctor/dental office
- Self employed

13. What do your parents want you to do after high school?

- Work Continue education Stay at home No expectations

14. Please check all extra activities in which you participated: (Check all that apply.)
- Service organizations (for example: Key Club, Anchor Club, etc.)
 - Special interest organizations (for example: FFA, HOSA, DECA, Spanish club, art club, etc.)
 - Sports teams (for example: football, basketball, volleyball, etc.)
 - Academic teams (for example: Odyssey of the Mind, academic competition team, math team, etc.)
 - Music activities (for example: band, chorus, etc.)
 - Student government
 - JROTC
 - None
 - Other

15. Are you satisfied that **other students** at your high school treated you with respect ? Yes No Not Sure

16. Are you satisfied that **teachers** at your high school treated you with respect ? Yes No Not Sure

17. Did other students “bully” you or pick on you in high school? Yes No Not Sure

18. Do your parents support your plans to continue your education after high school? Yes No Not Sure

19. Were your parents involved in your high school education? Yes No Not Sure

20. A.	I understand my strengths, interests, preferences, limits, and needs.	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not Sure
B.	I discussed my choices of possible careers that match my abilities with teachers.	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not Sure
C.	I have taken an active role with my family, school, and friends.	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not Sure
D.	I understand the importance of taking responsibility for my actions.	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not Sure
	I understand my rights.	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not Sure
	I express my opinions.	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not Sure
E.	I wrote goals and discussed with my teacher the steps needed to reach the goals.	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not Sure
F.	I often read stories or see movies about people who needed and found help from others.	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not Sure
G.	I write about how I feel when I am stressed or upset.	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not Sure
H.	I have discussed ‘warning signs’ of stress and how to use coping strategies.	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not Sure
I.	I feel comfortable expressing my needs and asking for help.	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not Sure
J.	I believe that I will be successful in achieving my post-school goals (for example: work, living, etc.).	<input type="radio"/> Yes	<input type="radio"/> No	<input type="radio"/> Not Sure

21. When I get a low score on an exam, I usually: (Please check all that apply.)

- Study harder
- Ask for teacher or others help
- Get frustrated
- Give up

22. If you attended an IEP meeting, what did you do?

Part III. Future

1. What would you like to do after you leave high school? (Please check all that apply.)
 - Attend 4 year College
 - Attend 2 year College
 - Attend Vocational or Technical school
 - Get an Apprenticeship
 - Don't know
 - Work Full Time
 - Work Part Time
 - Join the Military

2. If you have no plans, what are the main reasons for that? (Please check all that apply.)
 - Financial or money issues
 - Academic readiness
 - Haven't thought about it
 - Health issues
 - Family issues

3. After you leave high school, what problems do you worry about in the future? (Please check all that apply.)
 - Parents don't agree with what I want to do
 - I won't be able to get a job
 - Loss of benefits if I work (for example: SSI, etc.)
 - Not enough money to live on
 - Concern about independent living
 - No problems
 - No place to live
 - Lack of transportation
 - Being bored
 - No or too few friends
 - Health issues

4. What things would you add or change in order to make your life better? (Please check all that apply.)
 - Make more choices about my life
 - Find solutions to personal problems
 - Have a better job
 - Move into a place of my own
 - Improve family situation
 - Have more money
 - Finish high school
 - Go to college or vocational/technical

- Have car/driver's license
- Have reliable transportation
- Lose weight

school

- Have more friends
- Learn to read

5. What are your goals for the next year?

6. What are your goals for the next three to five years?

To help us with future surveys:

1. How was this survey completed?

- By myself, with no assistance.
- By myself, with some assistance.

If so, who assisted you: Other student

Teacher

School personnel

Parent/Guardian

**Thank you so much for your time and effort !
Your participation will improve Florida's high schools!**

If there is anything else you would like us to know about your high school experiences please attach your comments on a separate sheet of paper. If you have any questions, please call Hua Wang at (352)392 – 0701 ext 292 or e-mail hwang@coe.ufl.edu
Si necesita ayuda en español, envíe un email a hwang@coe.ufl.edu o llame al (352)392 – 0701 ext 292

**The Transition Center at the University of Florida
G315 Norman Hall - PO Box 117050 - Gainesville, FL 32611-7050
www.thetransitioncenter.org**

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APPENDIX B
LETTER FROM BUREAU CHIEF TO SCHOOL DISTRICTS

**High School Exit Survey for Students with Disabilities/12th Grade Exit Survey
Overview**

The Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services is required to report annual progress on Florida's State Performance Plan to the Office of Special Education Programs. Indicators 2, 13, and 14 of the plan are being addressed through many of the activities conducted by the Career Development and Transition Project (The Transition Center) at the University of Florida.

The project has developed and piloted a High School Exit Survey for Students with Disabilities as well as a 12th Grade Exit Survey for students who do not have disabilities for comparative purposes. Both instruments have been revised based on feedback from participating pilot districts and are ready for statewide implementation.

To simplify the process, The Transition Center is planning a three-year implementation of the exit survey that will eventually involve all of Florida's 67 school districts. The exit survey implementation plan, which outlines proposed district involvement for 2006-2007, 2007-2008, and 2008-2009, is attached.

The information gathered from the High School Exit Survey and 12th Grade Exit Survey will help our state, and your school district, in planning and delivering effective transition activities, which will in turn impact high student achievement.

Copies of both surveys will be distributed at the annual conference - Transition: The IDEA Way being held in Jacksonville, Florida, on February 14, 2007, and/or via mail in mid-late February. Copies of the surveys are also available by contacting Drew Andrews, Director, The Transition Center, at (352) 392-0701, ext. 260 or by electronic mail at drewa@coe.ufl.edu.

For additional information, please contact Drew Andrews as indicated above, or Dr. Jeanne Repetto, Principal Investigator, by phone at (352) 392-0701, ext. 261 or by electronic mail at jrepetto@coe.ufl.edu.

Thank you in advance for your participation in this important activity.

Exit Survey Implementation Plan
Schedule

<u>2006-2007 School Year</u>	<u>2007-2008 School Year</u>	<u>2008-2009 School Year</u>
Baker	Bradford	Alachua
Brevard	Charlotte	Bay
Broward	Citrus	Calhoun
Clay	Columbia	Collier
DeSoto	Duval	Dixie
Escambia	Flagler	Gadsden
Franklin	Glades	Hardee
Gilchrist	Hillsborough	Hendry
Gulf	Lafayette	Indian River
Hamilton	Lee	Jackson
Hernando	Leon	Jefferson
Highlands	Levy	Lake
Holmes	Liberty	Marion
Manatee	Madison	Miami-Dade
Martin	Monroe	Nassau
Okaloosa	Palm Beach	Orange
Okeechobee	Santa Rosa	Polk
Osceola	Sarasota	Seminole
Pasco	St. Johns	Sumter
Pinellas	St. Lucie	Suwannee
Putnam	Union	Taylor
Walton	Volusia	Washington
	Wakulla	

APPENDIX C
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

High School Exit Survey – Form E

You are being asked to take part in a research study that is being conducted by The Transition Center at the University of Florida. This form provides you with information about the research purpose. Please read the information below and ask questions about anything you don't understand before deciding whether or not to take part in this study.

1. Study Title: A Pilot High School Exit Survey for Student Outcomes and Analysis Reporting System (SOARS) Project

2. What is the purpose of the research study?

The purpose of this study will be to acquire information related to factors that help students' transition from high school to adult life.

3. What will be asked of you if you choose to take part in the study?

This survey asks you questions about your experiences in high school and your future plans. The information will be used to plan and improve high school transition programs and services that help preparation of students for adult life.

The study also requests your permission to access your school records maintained by the Florida Department of Education (DOE) and by school districts. To ask for your consent (permission) for release of the information about your school records, we are providing you with a form, "Release of Information Form", which describes state and district data element to be accessed after getting your signature.

The survey will not have the name of the participant. Educational records of survey participants to be released from Florida Department of Education and school board of district will not have the name of the participant either. Your state student ID only will be used in order to insure confidentiality. Thus, we request your Florida state student identification (ID) number on the survey questionnaire so that we will be able to associate survey data with the administrative records kept by the State of Florida and by school districts.

4. What is the time requirement associated with participating in this study?

The survey takes approximately about 30 ~ 40 minutes to complete.

5. What are the possible discomforts and risks?

We do not anticipate any discomfort or risks associated with participation in this study.

You are free to withdraw from participation in this study at any time for any reason. Your participation is strictly voluntary.

6. What are the possible benefits or compensation to you for participating in the study?

There are no direct benefits or compensation for participating in this research.

7. What are the possible benefits to others?

By participating in our research study, you will be helping us understand the factors that are associated with successful transition of students to adult life such as employment and enrollment in education after high school.

8. How will your privacy and the confidentiality of your research records be protected?

This survey was designed by The Transition Center Research Team at the University of Florida for research purposes. No one except the researchers will have access to any of your responses. The survey will not have the name of the participant. Educational records of survey participants to be released from Florida Department of Education and school board of district will not have the name of the participant either. Your state student ID only will be used in order to insure confidentiality. Your identity will be kept confidential to the extent provided by law.

The survey data will not be available to anyone other than student and those who may assist the student (with the student's permission) in completing the survey. The data will not be available to teachers, school administrators, or parents in order to respect the rights of participants. Completed surveys will be put in a sealed envelope and mailed directly to researchers to the Transition Center at the University of Florida.

No identifying information about students will be used in any written or oral report of this study. The final report will be presented to the Florida Department of Education and other constituents interested in transition outcomes of high school students, and educational journals and magazines for possible publication.

9. Do you have to answer every question in the survey(s)?

You do not have to answer any question(s) that you do *not wish to answer*

10. Can you withdraw from this research study?

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Please be advised that you may choose not to participate in this research, and you may withdraw from the study at any time. There is no penalty for not participating.

11. Whom should you contact if you have questions about the study?

If you have any question about this study, you may contact the following principal investigators:

Hua Wang, The Transition Center at the University, G315 Norman Hall, PO Box 117050, Gainesville, FL 32611 – 7050, Phone: (352) 392 – 0701 Ext.292, Fax: (352) 392 – 4443, hwang@coe.ufl.edu.

Drew Andrews, The Transition Center at the University of Florida, G315 Norman Hall, PO Box 117050, Gainesville, FL 32611-7050, (352) 392-0701, Ext. 260, Fax (352) 392-4443, drewa@coe.ufl.edu.

Dr. Jeanne Repetto, The Transition Center at the University of Florida, G315 Norman Hall, PO Box 117050, Gainesville, FL 32611-7050, (352) 392-0701, Ext. 261, Fax (352) 392-4443, jrepetto@coe.ufl.edu.

12. Whom should you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant in the study?

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a research subject, you may contact the UF IRB Office at the University of Florida at (352) 392-0433 or email UFIRB at irb2@ufl.edu.

13. Agreement

By completing the enclosed survey I give my agreement to participate in this research study.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

W. Drew Andrews was born in Gainesville, Florida. Drew grew up in the New River community and attended elementary school in Brooker. Drew graduated from Bradford High School in 1982 and attended Lake City Community College.

In 1983, he married, moved to the Fort Call area and soon after started a family. Sondra was born in 1985, Andrea in 1987, and Parker in 1989. In 1989, he returned to Lake City Community College and then transferred to the University of North Florida (UNF) in 1991. His second son, Chason was born in 1992. He graduated with a Bachelor of Art in Special Education from UNF in 1993.

After graduation, Drew began teaching special education at Lake Butler Elementary School in Lake Butler, Florida. At Lake Butler Elementary, Drew taught students with learning disabilities. He also began taking courses through a distance education program offered by UNF to earn his master's degree. He earned his master's degree in educational leadership in 1995. In 1996, he began teaching at Union County High School in Lake Butler, Florida. During the spring of 1998, Drew applied to the University of Florida, Department of Special Education, to begin a doctoral program.

While serving as a graduate assistant in the Florida Network, Drew became the assistant director in the fall of 1999. The Florida Network became The Transition Center in 2000. Drew remained at the center until the summer of 2008. In the fall of 2008, Drew took a position as a special education teacher with the Bradford County School System and began teaching at the Bradford Middle School, which he attended as an adolescent. The following year, he took a position at the Bradford-Union Area Career Technical Center, where he is currently an Exceptional Student Education teacher with the Bradford Transition Academy.