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Transition Services:

Results of a Statewide  
Survey

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## **I. Background: Connect-Ability**

Funded by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), Connecticut's Medicaid Infrastructure Grant, known as "Connect-Ability," is designed to support the competitive employment of people with disabilities. The grant was awarded to the Connect to Work Center at the Connecticut Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS), and is intended to facilitate enhancements to the state Medicaid program and services, to promote linkages between Medicaid and other employment-related service agencies, and to develop a comprehensive system of employment supports for people with disabilities.

Beginning in January 2006, BRS contracted with the University of Connecticut Health Center (UCHC) to conduct a statewide needs assessment to guide a year-long strategic planning process. The resulting strategic plan focused on five broad areas: youth in transition; stakeholder education; recruitment, employment, and retention; transportation; and technical assistance. CMS approved Connecticut's strategic plan, and in February 2007, the state received permission to implement state-wide infrastructure changes to promote the hiring of people with disabilities.

Over the succeeding four years, Connect-Ability has established itself as a primary source of information and single point of entry to inform employers, service providers and job seekers about employment issues and people with disabilities. It has also brought together state agencies, service providers and businesses in a partnership model to increase communications, networking and collaboration to help remove employment barriers and create a useful, accessible infrastructure.

## II. State Department of Education Transition Services Survey

From its inception, one major focus of Connect-Ability has been the “Youth in Transition” initiative, which seeks to smooth the way for students with disabilities from secondary education to employment or further education. It emphasizes practical solutions such as promoting the development of internships and summer employment, encouraging mentoring opportunities, and making tools available for identifying areas of interest and strength. Priority areas for this initiative include school transition programs, the integration of assistive technology that can follow students from school to work, work-based opportunities, mentoring, increased understanding of benefits, and increasing independence.

In order to collect baseline data on the types of transition, work experience, and community participation services currently available to students, age 16 to 21, who receive special education services, a survey was sent to all school districts in Connecticut in March of 2008. The survey effort was co-sponsored by the Connecticut State Department of Education (SDE) and Connect-Ability.

School districts were given background information about Connect-Ability and advised that this information would be used to inform the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) about the range of services available in Connecticut districts to support transition-age students in reaching their post-school outcome goals. In addition, since this information is used to disseminate resources as they become available, every school district serving transition-age students was asked to complete and return the survey.

The 2008 survey received a response rate of 100 percent from public school districts that operate secondary programs (n=126). Although there are 169 towns in Connecticut, many do not have their own high school, and are part of a regional district. In Connecticut, the Department of Correction and the Department of Children and Families operate school districts under the auspices of the SDE, and both are included in the 126 public school districts surveyed. Connecticut also has approved private special education programs and Regional Education Service Centers (RESCs) that provide special education services to transition-age students. Survey participation for these secondary programs was encouraged in 2008 but optional. Two such private programs, the American School for the Deaf (ASD) and Cooperative Educational Services (CES is a RESCs), submitted surveys and were included in the data analysis. The total number of surveys analyzed in 2008 was therefore 128. A copy of the 2008 Transition Services Survey Report may be found at: [http://www.connect-ability.com/media/pdf/research/SDE\\_Survey\\_Report\\_Final.pdf](http://www.connect-ability.com/media/pdf/research/SDE_Survey_Report_Final.pdf)

In 2011, as part of the second comprehensive Connect-Ability statewide needs assessment, the Transition Services Survey was repeated. The purpose of the 2011 survey was to update information collected in 2008 regarding the state’s strengths and challenges in providing transition services to youth with disabilities receiving special education services. While most questions from the 2008 survey were retained, some were re-worded slightly for clarity, and some were eliminated. The methodology for collecting survey data changed from a paper survey to an online survey. School districts were given the web address of the online survey and asked to enter their survey responses online by district code. Survey responses were collected in a secure database and analyzed by UCHC.

The 2011 survey once again achieved a 100 percent response rate. In 2011, all six RESCs responded to the survey, for a final count of 133. See Appendix A for a complete list of school districts surveyed.

Most surveys were completed by some combination of the district's Director of Pupil Personnel Services, Special Education Coordinator, transition specialist and/or special education teachers, frequently with input from general education staff and administrators.

Both the 2008 and 2011 surveys asked school district personnel to indicate whether they provide any of a list of services in the continuum of secondary transition services in the following general areas:

- Career/employment services
- Other transition services
- Academic services
- Transportation
- Collaboration with other state agencies serving people with disabilities
- Transition personnel/staff

The survey also asked a number of additional questions related to transition services.

### III. Survey Results

#### A. Note on Data Interpretation and Limitations

Some differences between the 2008 and 2011 surveys make comparisons between the two years challenging. First, some of the 2008 data were incomplete. Many of the returned paper surveys contained questions that were left blank or not completed, and it is unknown whether those questions did not apply to the district or whether the person(s) answering the survey did not have the information. Therefore, 2008 results were reported by number of districts rather than percent of districts.

Second, for each career and employment service, other transition service, and academic service enumerated in the survey, school districts were asked to answer a number of “sub-questions”, such as: (1) whether the service is provided to special education students and/or regular education students, (2) whether it is paid and/or unpaid; (3) whether it is for credit and/or not for credit, and (4) whether it is provided by the district and/or provided by a contractor. In 2008, “both” was not an answer option. This option was added in 2011.

In 2008 there was a great deal of missing data in the “sub-questions.” For example, a district’s response may have indicated that a certain service is offered, but failed to check whether it is for credit or not for credit, paid or unpaid, or provided through the district or contractors. In those cases, responses added up to less than the total number of districts offering the service, and no conclusions could be drawn about the districts for which the data were missing. The 2011 online survey was designed to minimize this issue, resulting in much more complete data.

Finally, districts often have multiple people or departments serving students with disabilities, and it is possible that the person(s) filling out the survey did not have all of the relevant information and did not consult with others in the district who could have supplied more complete answers. The data is only as good as the knowledge level of the person(s) filling out the survey, which varies by district. The 2011 survey explicitly encouraged districts to complete the survey in cooperation with others in the district who may have some of the requested information. If they were unable to complete the survey during a single session, they were able to save the partially completed survey, exit the website and re-enter the survey website at a later time. It is hoped that the 2011 methodology increased the comprehensiveness and accuracy of district responses.

Because of these limitations, where 2008 and 2011 comparisons are made in this report, they are directional only.

#### B. Career/Employment Services

The first section of the transition services survey covers 20 career/employment services that school districts may offer to students. This section reports the percent of the 133 districts that provide each service. In addition, this section analyzes the percent of districts offering each service:

- To special education students, regular education students, or both;
- On a paid or unpaid basis or both;
- For credit, not for credit or both; and
- Through the district itself, through contractors, or both.

The career/employment services specified in the survey include:

- Apprenticeships
- Career exploration via a career center
- Community service
- Cooperative Work Experience (CWE)
- Informational interviews
- Internships
- Job Corps
- Job shadowing
- On-the-job training
- Pre-employment skills
- Start on Success (SOS)
- Tech prep
- Transition services in the community (18-21 years)
- Transition services at college/university (18-21 years)
- Vocational evaluation/situational assessment
- Vocational training programs
- Work study
- Work experience in school
- Work experience in the community
- Volunteer work

See Appendix B for definitions of all survey terms provided to school district respondents.

The percent of districts reporting that they provide various career/employment services ranges from a high of 97 percent for pre-employment skills to a low of 3 percent for the Start-on-Success program. (Since only four districts offer Start-on-Success, it is not included in the sub-analyses of career/employment services below.) Other career/employment services offered by more than 80 percent of school districts include job shadowing, transition services in the community, community service, vocational evaluations, work experiences (both in the community and in school), volunteer work, career exploration, and informational interviews. Services offered by less than a third of districts include apprenticeships, Job Corps, and tech prep. Figure 1 illustrates the percent of districts offering each career/employment service.

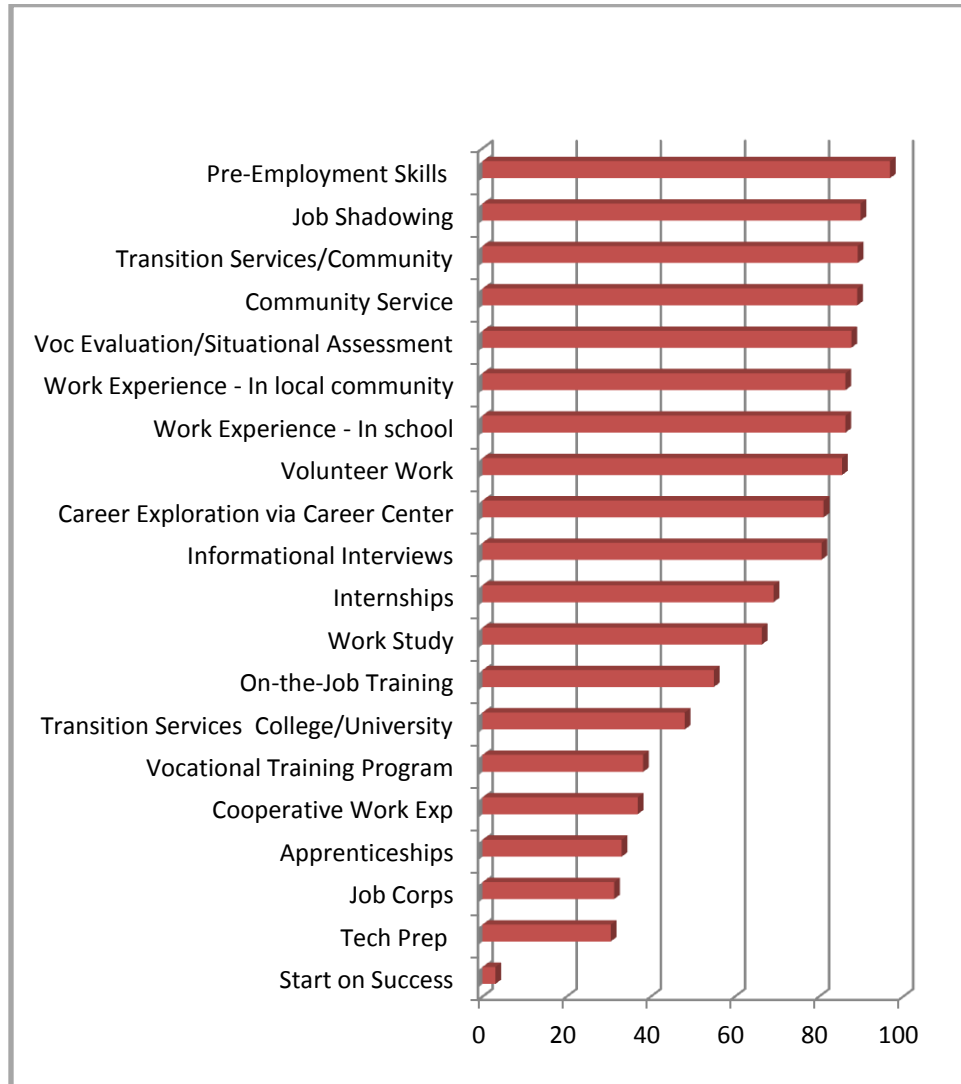
Districts offering transition services in the community and/or at college/university were asked in addition what percent of time students spend in the community or college/university setting. These results are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Percent of time spent in various settings for transition services

	100 percent of the time	80-99 percent of the time	Less than 80 percent of the time
Students are in the community setting	19%	47%	34%
Students are in the college/university setting	28%	23%	48%



Figure 1. Districts Offering Career/Employment Services

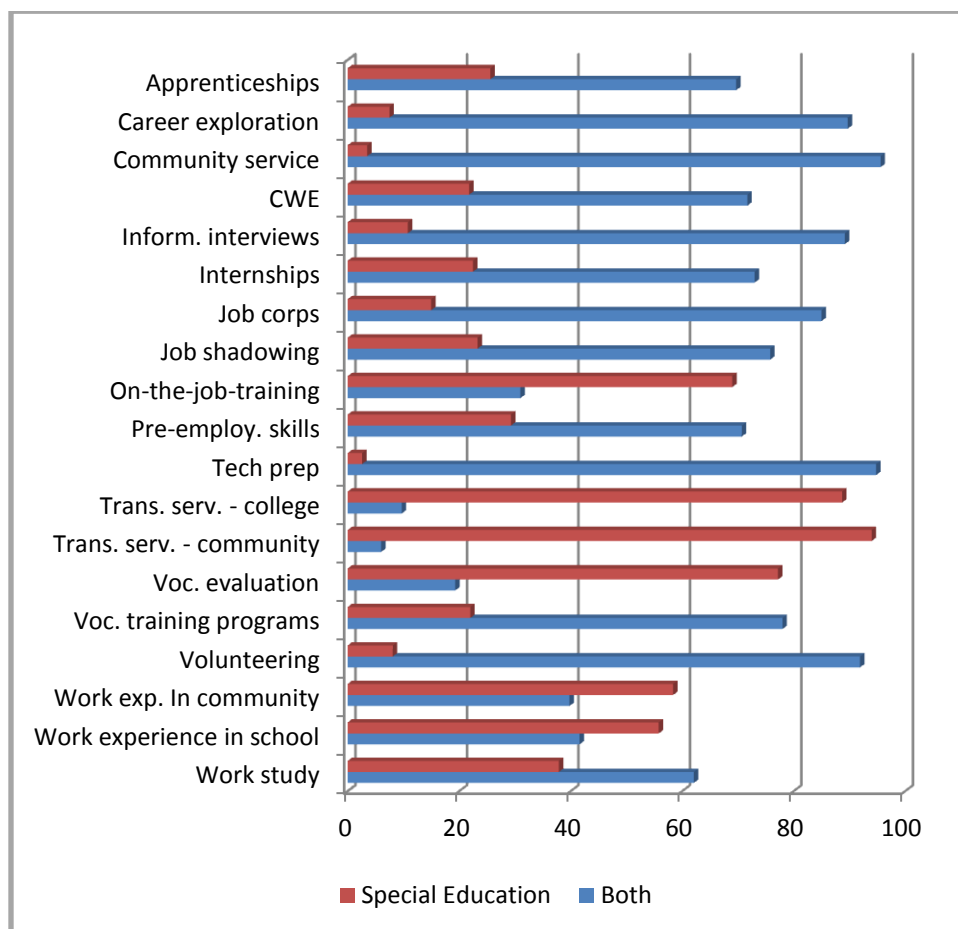


Services offered to special education and/or regular education students

If a district indicated that it offered a service, it was then asked to indicate whether the service was offered to special education students, regular education students, or both. Virtually no career/employment services were offered solely to regular education students. Services most likely to be offered to both regular education and special education students include community service (96%), tech prep (95%) and volunteer work (92%). Services that are more likely to be offered only to special education students include transition services (in both the community and at a college/university at 94% and 89% respectively), vocational evaluation programs (77%), on-the-job training (69%) and work experiences (both in the local community and schools at 58% and 56% respectively). Figure 2 summarizes the percent of school districts offering each career/employment service by student designation.

In the 2008 survey, the services most likely to be offered to both regular education and special education students included career exploration, community services and job-shadowing. Similar to the 2011 findings, services that were offered substantially more frequently to special education students in 2008 included transition services (in both the community and at a college/university), vocational training programs, and work experiences (both in schools and in the local community).

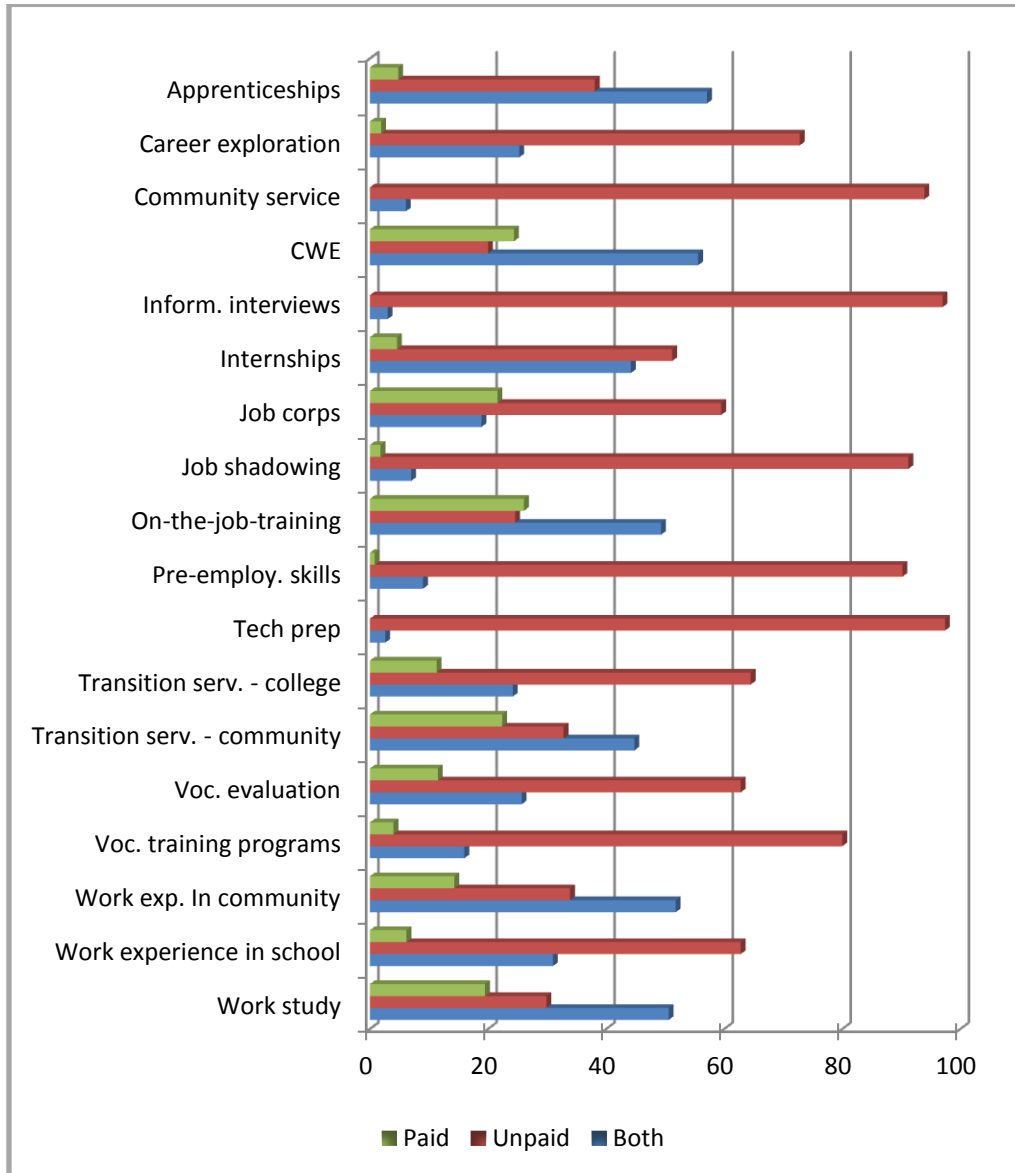
Figure 2. Career/employment services  
Percent of school districts offering programs by student designation



Services offered on a paid or unpaid basis

For career or employment services, districts that offered a service were asked to indicate whether it is paid, unpaid or both. If “paid” or “both” was checked, districts were further instructed to check how the student was paid (employer, stipend or other). A large majority of career/employment services are unpaid. Transition services in the community, on the job training, co-operative work experience, work study, apprenticeships, and work experience in the community are the top six services offered by districts for pay. Figure 3 summarizes these results. In 2008, respondents were not asked if these services were offered as both paid and unpaid; however, the large majority of career/employment services were also unpaid at that time.

Figure 3. Career/employment services  
 Percent of districts offering programs on a paid basis, unpaid, or both

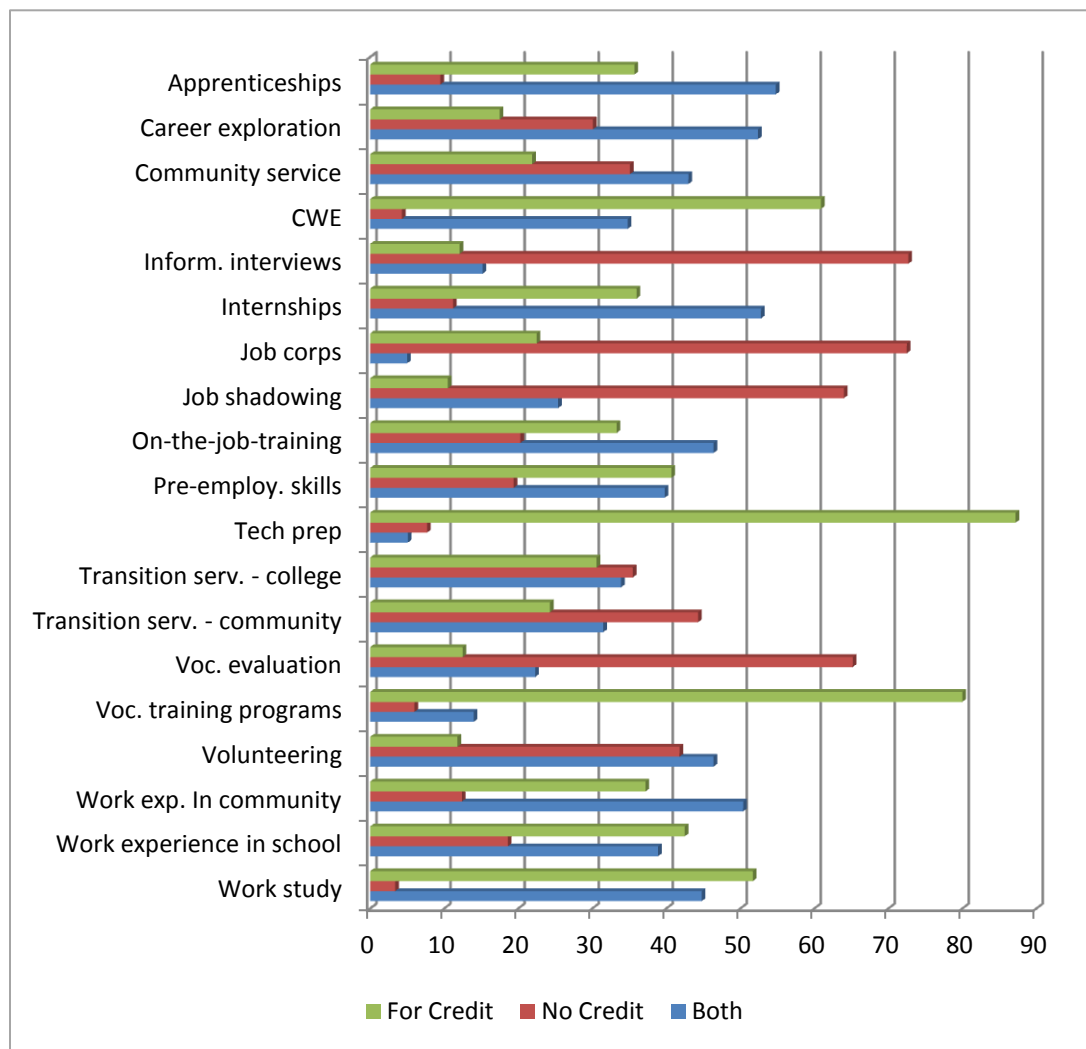


For the career/employment services that are paid, districts were further asked whether payment came from employers, stipends, or another source. Many services were too infrequently paid to produce meaningful results to this question. However, for the nine services most likely to be paid, an average of 32 percent are paid by the employer, 38 percent are paid by stipend, and 30 percent are paid by “other.” Respondents who indicated “other” were asked to specify the source of payment. There were a wide variety of responses, including ARRA, Perkins, district or board of education funding, transition agencies, private special education schools, contracted vendors, and other grant funding. Respondents who replied that students were paid by stipend were asked to specify whether it was an IDEA stipend or not. About a third (32%) were funded by IDEA.

Services offered for credit or not for credit

More career/employment services provided by school districts are offered for credit than not for credit, but results vary tremendously by service, and many districts offer these services on both a for-credit and not-for-credit basis. The six services that are least likely to be offered for credit are, informational interviews, Job Corps, job shadowing, vocational evaluation, transition services in the community, and volunteer work. Figure 4 summarizes the percent of school districts offering career/employment services for credit, not for credit, and both. In 2008, the five services least likely to be offered for credit were similar: career exploration, informational interviews, job shadowing, vocational evaluation and volunteer work.

Figure 4. Career/employment services  
Percent of districts offering programs for credit, not for credit or both



### Services provided by the district and/or provided by contractors

As reported in 2008, most career/employment services are currently provided by school districts more often than by providers. Job Corps is the only service more likely to be provided exclusively by contractors (67%). The services most likely to be offered by both school districts and contractors include on-the-job-training (54%), transition services at college (49%) or in the community (40%), internships (48%), vocational evaluation (46%), and apprenticeships (44%). The services most likely to be offered by contractors in 2008 included transition services in the community, vocational evaluation, on-the-job training, and work experience in the community. These numbers may differ somewhat from the 2011 results because the districts were not asked in 2008 if the career/employment services were offered by both the district and the contractors.

### C. Other Transition Services

Section II of the survey concerns nine “other transition services” that districts may offer to their students. This section describes the percent of districts offering these services, and whether they provide them:

- To special education students, regular education students, or both;
- For credit, not for credit, or both; and
- Through the district itself, through contractors, or both.

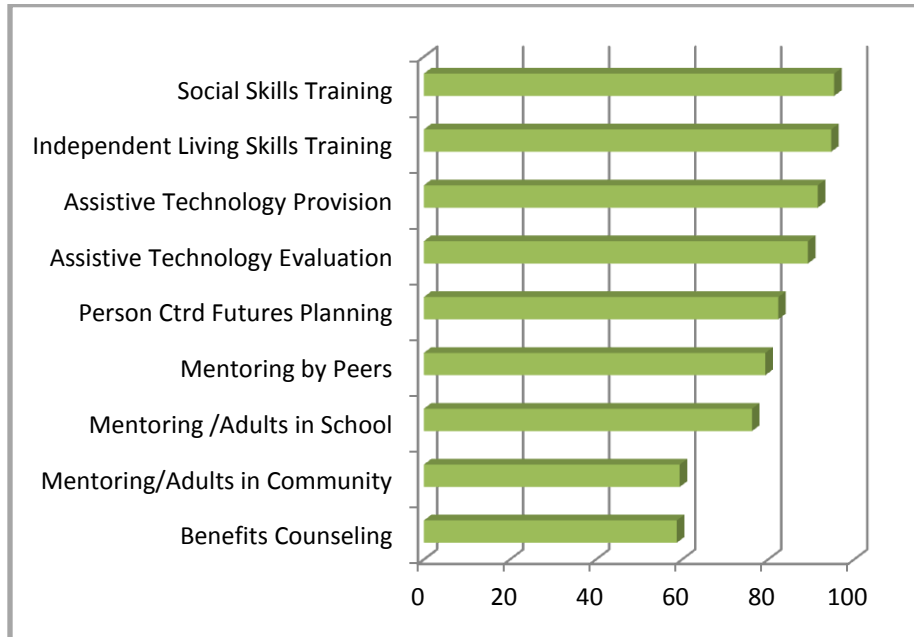
Other transition services in section II included:

- Assistive technology (AT) evaluations
- Assistive technology provision with training
- Benefits counseling
- Independent living skills training
- Mentoring by peers
- Mentoring by adults in school
- Mentoring by adults in the workplace or community
- Person centered/futures planning
- Social skills training

Definitions of all survey terms may be found in Appendix B.

More than half of school districts offer each of the other transition services, with a range from 95 percent offering social skills training to 59 percent offering benefits counseling. The three types of mentoring are offered most often by peers (79%) and least often by adults in the community (60%). Figure 5 summarizes these results.

Figure 5. Districts Offering Other Transition Services

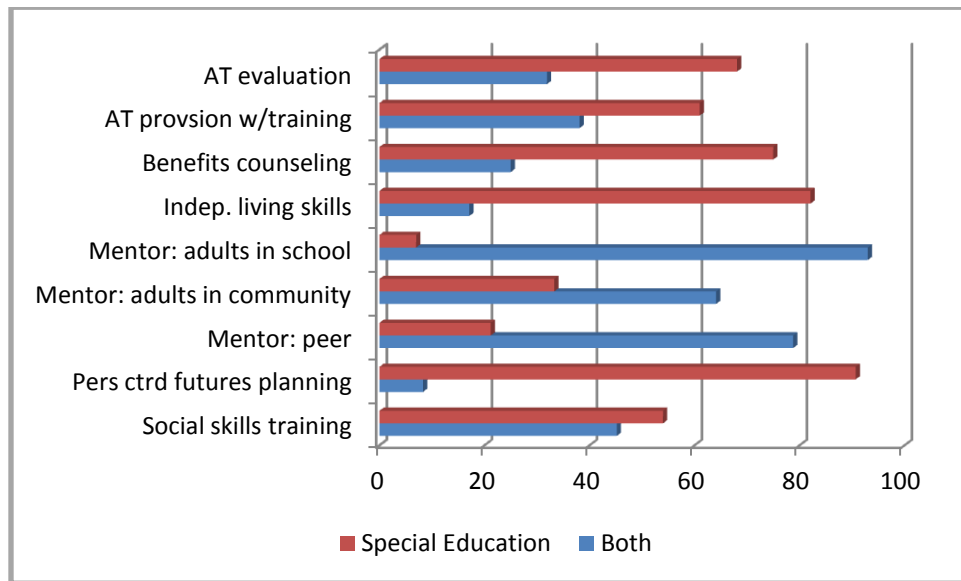


Other transition services offered to special education and/or regular education students

Six of the nine other transition services are most likely to be offered solely to special education students, while three of the nine (mentoring by peers, by adults in school and by adults in the community) are most likely to be offered to all students regardless of designation; none of the other transition services are offered solely to regular education students. In 2008 the services most commonly offered to special education students were the evaluation for, and provision of, assistive technology, independent living skills, and person centered/futures planning. In 2008, mentoring programs for both special education and regular education students were offered most often by peers, and less frequently by adults in either the school or workplace/community. However, districts were not asked in 2008 if these programs were offered to both populations.

Figure 6 summarizes the percent of school districts offering any of the nine “other transition services” to special education students, or to both types of students.

Figure 6. Other transition services  
 Percentage of school districts offering programs by student designation



Services offered for credit, not for credit, or both

Other transition services are predominantly not eligible for credit. The two exceptions are independent living skills (53% offer for credit; 13% not for credit; and 34% for both credit and not for credit) and social skills training (16% offer for credit; 54% not for credit; and 30% for both credit and not for credit.) Similarly, the other transition services offered in 2008 were also independent living skills (51 districts offered for credit; 21 not for credit) and social skills training (19 districts offered for credit; 30 not for credit).

Services provided by the district or by a contractor

As with career/employment services, other transition services are provided primarily by the districts themselves. Services most often provided by contractors include person centered/futures planning (16%), and the evaluation for assistive technology (10%). Other transition services most often offered by both the district and contractors include the evaluation for and provision of assistive technology (40% and 33% of the districts respectively), mentoring by adults in the work place (35%), person centered/futures planning and benefits counseling (34% each).

D. Academic Services

Section III of the survey asked districts for information on eight types of academic services, which are courses or skills training that may be offered to special education students, regular education students, or both. This section reports the prevalence of these academic services, and notes the percent of school districts that provide each service:

- To special education students, regular education students, or both;
- For credit, not for credit, or both; and
- Taught by regular education teachers, by special education teachers, or both.

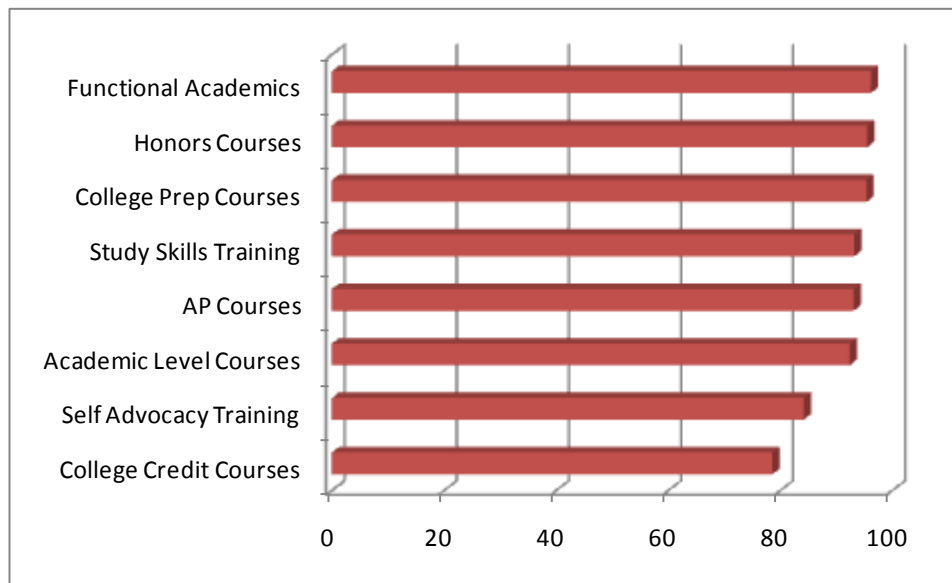
The academic services enumerated in the survey include:

- Advanced Placement (AP) courses
- College credit courses
- College prep courses
- General academic level courses
- Honors courses
- Functional academics (practical applications)
- Self-advocacy training
- Study skills/learning strategy training

Definitions of all survey terms are included in Appendix B.

Most academic services are offered by more than 90 percent of districts. The exceptions are college credit courses (79%) and self-advocacy training (84%). Figure 7 indicates the percent of districts offering each academic service.

Figure 7. Districts Offering Academic Services



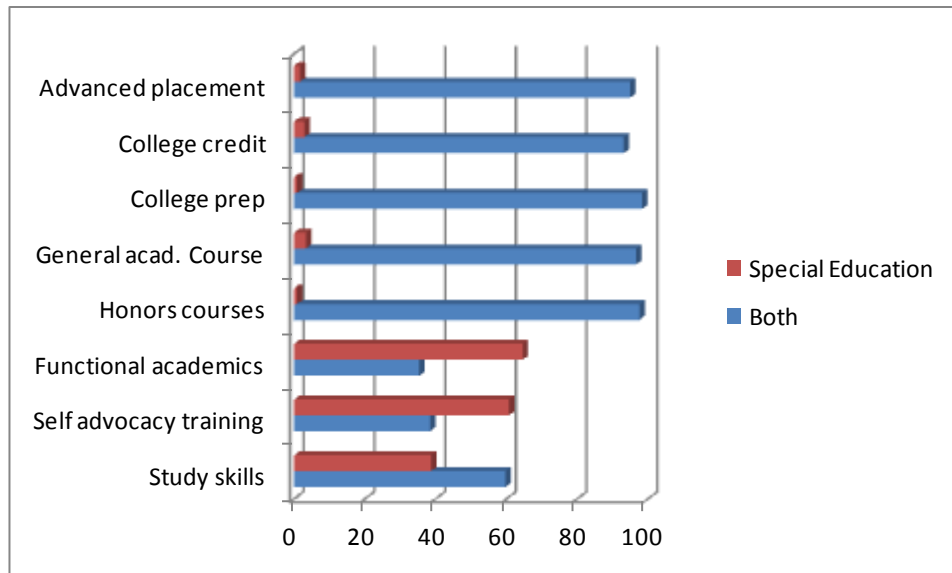
Echoing the 2008 survey results, despite the high percentages there appear to be some anomalies in the percent of districts reporting that they offer certain courses. For example, it would seem likely that ALL school districts offer “general academic level courses” as defined in the survey, yet eight percent of districts said that they do not.



### Academic services offered to special education and/or regular education students

Almost no academic services are offered solely to regular education students. Most academic services are offered to all students. Only three are frequently offered solely to special education students rather than to all: functional academics (65%), self advocacy training (61%), and study skills (38%). Figure 8 summarizes these results.

Figure 8. Academic services  
Percent of school districts offering programs by student designation



### Academic services offered for credit, not for credit or both

Six of the eight academic courses are offered almost exclusively for credit. Only self advocacy training (23%) and study skills training (10%) are offered exclusively on a not-for-credit basis. These two services are also offered on both a for-credit and not-for-credit basis by about a third of school districts.

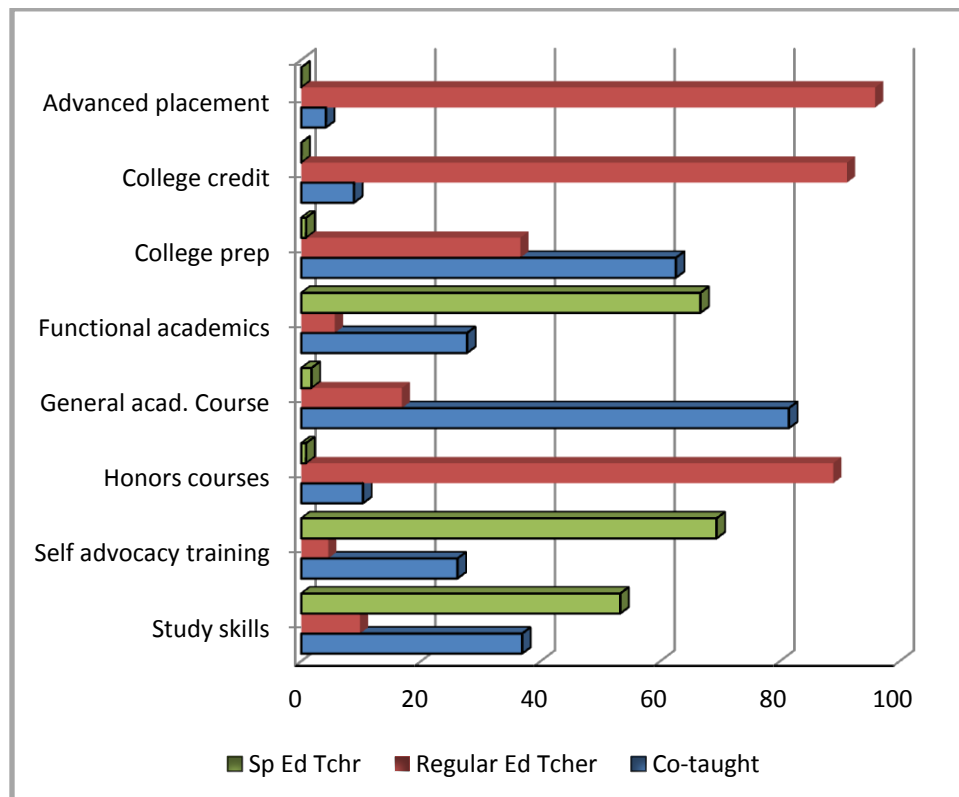
### Academic courses by type of teacher

Districts were asked to indicate whether academic services were co-taught or taught solely by special education teachers or by regular education teachers. “Co-taught classes” were defined as an approach in which two teachers (regular and special education) share teaching responsibilities within a regular education classroom. Both teachers interact with all students at various times and are jointly responsible for the curriculum and for monitoring and recording student performance.

In the 2008 survey, many districts did not answer this question with respect to advanced placement courses, college credit courses, or honors courses, probably because those courses are taught solely by regular education teachers, which was not an available answer choice at the time. The 2011 survey added this choice. The courses most likely to be taught solely by regular education teachers are advanced placement (96%), college credit courses (91%), and honors courses (89%). The courses most likely to be co-taught are general academic (82%) and college prep courses (63%). The courses most

likely to be taught by special education teachers alone include functional academics (67%), self advocacy training (69%), and study skills (53%). The courses reported as most likely co-taught or taught by special education teachers echo the 2008 results. Figure 9 summarizes these results.

Figure 9. Percent of districts offering academic services by type of teacher

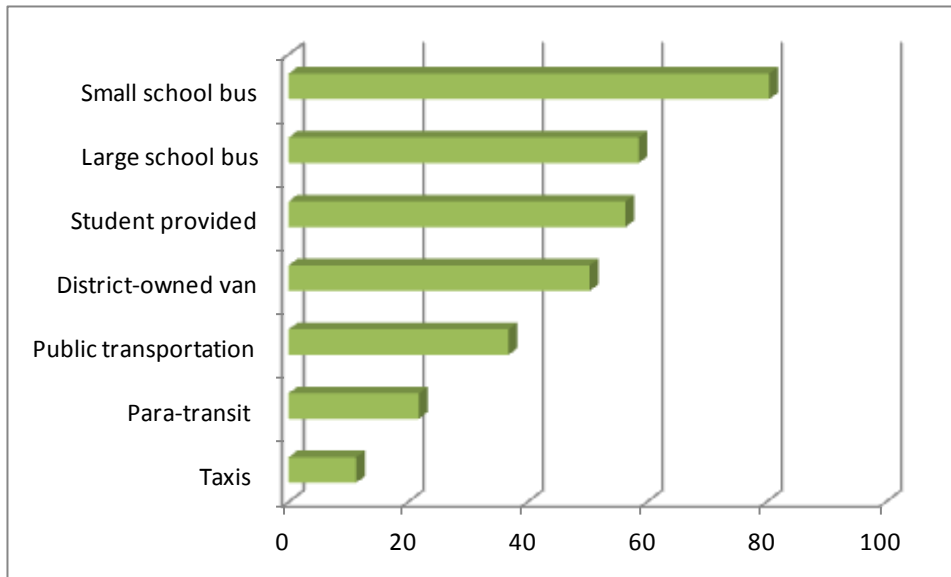


#### E. Transportation

One section of the transition survey asked districts to indicate in what ways special education students in the district obtain transportation to work, education, or community sites, and were asked to check all that apply. School districts employ a variety of different transportation modes including large and small school buses, district-owned vans, para-transit, taxis, public transportation, and student-provided transportation. Para-transit is an alternative mode of flexible passenger transportation that does not follow fixed routes or schedules and is usually operated by public transit agencies, community groups or private operators. Typically vans or mini-buses provide services along a more or less defined route and pick up or discharge passengers upon request or may offer on-demand, call-up, and door-to-door services.

Small school buses (81%) and large school buses (59%) are the most common transportation options for special education students, while para-transit and taxis (22% and 11% respectively) are the least common (Figure 10.) The 2008 results were similar, except that large school buses were less common: small school buses (94 districts) and district-owned vans (60 districts) were the most common transportation options for special education students in 2008, while para-transit and taxis (21 and 16 districts, respectively) were the least common.

Figure 10. Transportation  
 Percentage of school districts using various transportation types\*

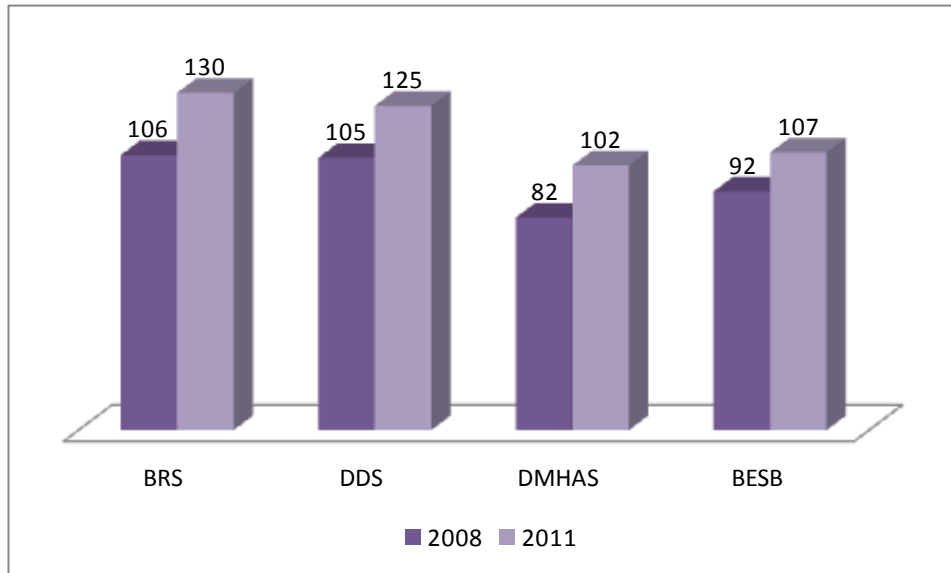


\*categories are not mutually exclusive

F. Collaboration with adult service agencies

As in 2008, the 2011 survey asked districts to indicate whether they collaborate with any of four state adult service agencies that work with people with disabilities. These agencies include the Bureau of Rehabilitation Services (BRS), the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), and the Board of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB). The term “collaborate” was defined in the survey as “work closely with a representative of the agency on a plan for obtaining services from that agency”. A large majority of the districts report that they collaborate with each of the agencies, ranging from 102 (DHMAS) to 130 (BRS). Since 2008 the number of districts reporting that they collaborate with all four agencies increased (Figure 11).

Figure 11. Agency Collaboration  
 Number of school districts reporting collaboration with various adult service agencies\*



\*categories are not mutually exclusive

#### G. Personnel/Staff

The survey asked districts to report whether five job categories typically associated with services for special education students are available in the district and if so, how many of each is available either full or part time. The five job categories include:

- School (guidance) counselor
- Transition coordinator/transition specialist
- Job coach
- Job developer
- Life coach

Nearly all districts employ school (guidance) counselors and most of those (89%) employ three or more. Transition coordinators/specialists and job coaches are also fairly common, with nearly three-quarters of districts reporting that they employ at least one. However, whereas 81 percent of districts with transition coordinators employ only one, most districts with job coaches (57%) employ three or more. Job developers are employed by less than half (47%) of districts, and life coaches are rare (11%). Table 2 summarizes the survey data concerning these job categories.

Table 2. Availability of five job categories to special education students

	Yes, Available n (%)	Number of Professionals Available Either Full or Part Time		
		1	2	3 or more
School (Guidance) Counselor	131 (99)	3 (2)	11 (8)	117 (89)
Transition Coordinator/Specialist	98 (74)	79 (81)	15 (15)	4 (4)
Job Coach	96 (72)	24 (26)	16 (17)	53 (57)
Job Developer	63 (47)	40 (64)	17 (27)	6 (10)
Life Coach	15 (11)	5 (33)	2 (13)	8 (53)

Districts with transition coordinator/specialists were also asked whether that person is a certified teacher. About three quarters of the districts (74%) said yes. This number is lower than it was in 2008, when 81 (88%) of the 92 school districts that responded to the question indicated that their transition coordinator or specialist was a certified teacher.

The 2008 survey asked districts for slightly different information about six similar job categories, including whether people in these positions are employed full-time (a dedicated position), part-time (as part of larger job responsibilities), or as a dedicated part-time position. School counselors were most likely to be full-time dedicated positions, while job coaches and job developers were most likely to serve in that role part-time as part of their job responsibilities. Life coaches were also rare in 2008.

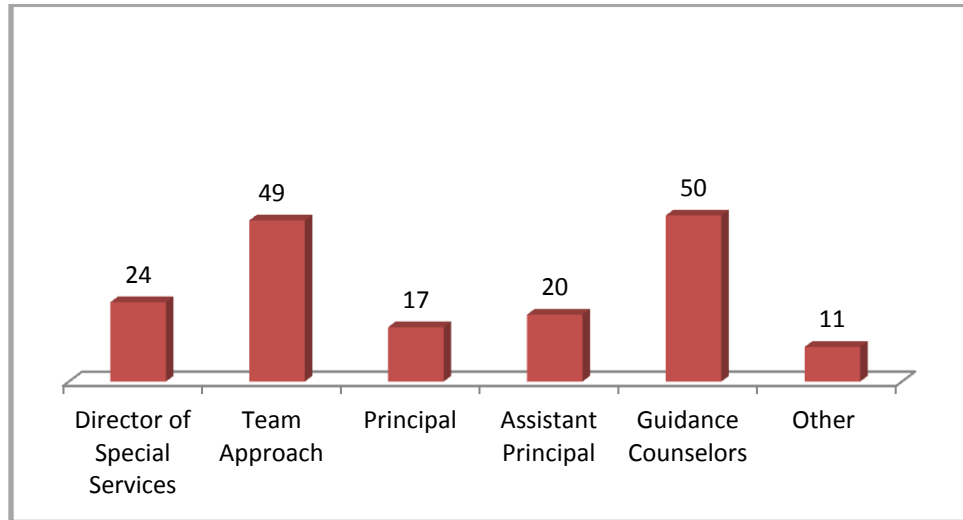
H. Other transition related questions

In addition to asking about specific services and courses offered by school districts, the survey included questions pertaining to other aspects of transition services. Districts were asked who is responsible for developing Section 504 Plans (see Appendix B for definition), how students are advised about accessing assistive technology after high school, how students are advised about accessing benefits after high school, and whether the district has a transition service or transition service component that they consider exemplary, unique or very successful. In 2008, all four of these additional questions were open-ended. For the 2011 survey, the first three questions offered answer choices that were the most commonly mentioned responses in 2008, as well as the option of checking “other.”

*Who is responsible for developing Section 504 Plans in your district?*

Consistent with the 2008 report, school (guidance) counselors and the team approach are the most frequent source for development of Section 504 Plans, with about half of the districts choosing each (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Percentage of school districts utilizing various sources for development of 504 Plans\*



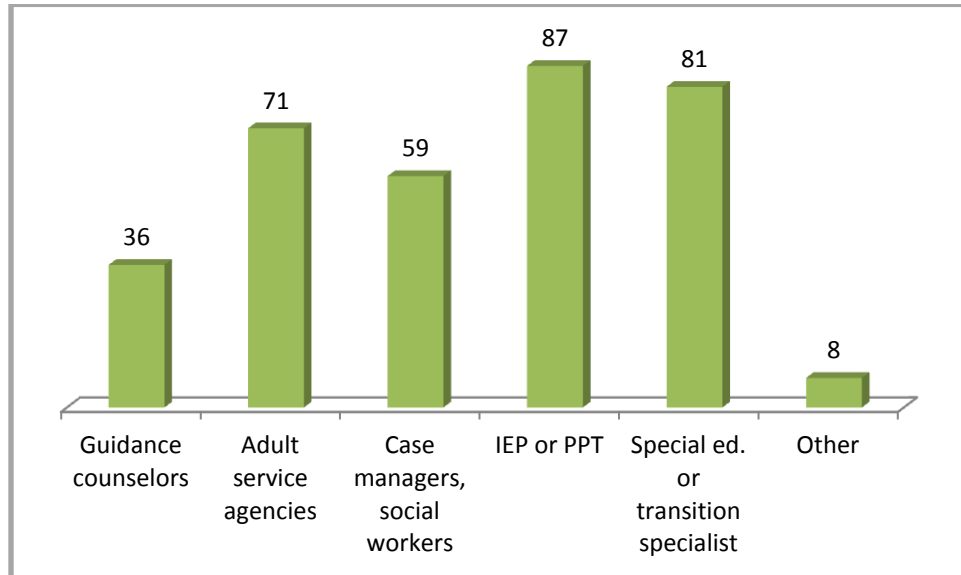
\*categories are not mutually exclusive

Those who checked the “team approach” noted a variety of interdisciplinary teams including two or more of the following: transition coordinators, parents, school psychologists or nurses, social workers, school (guidance) counselors, teachers and administrators.

*How are students advised about accessing AT after exiting high school?*

After exiting high school, students are advised about AT through multiple sources. The most common methods are through the Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Planning & Placement Team (PPT) processes (87%), and through the special education teacher or transition specialist (81%). Various adult service agencies such as BRS, BESB, DDS and DMHAS provide this information in 71 percent of the districts, and case managers or social workers provide this information in about over half (59%). These results are summarized in Figure 13.

Figure 13. Percent of school districts that utilize various sources for advising students about accessing AT\*



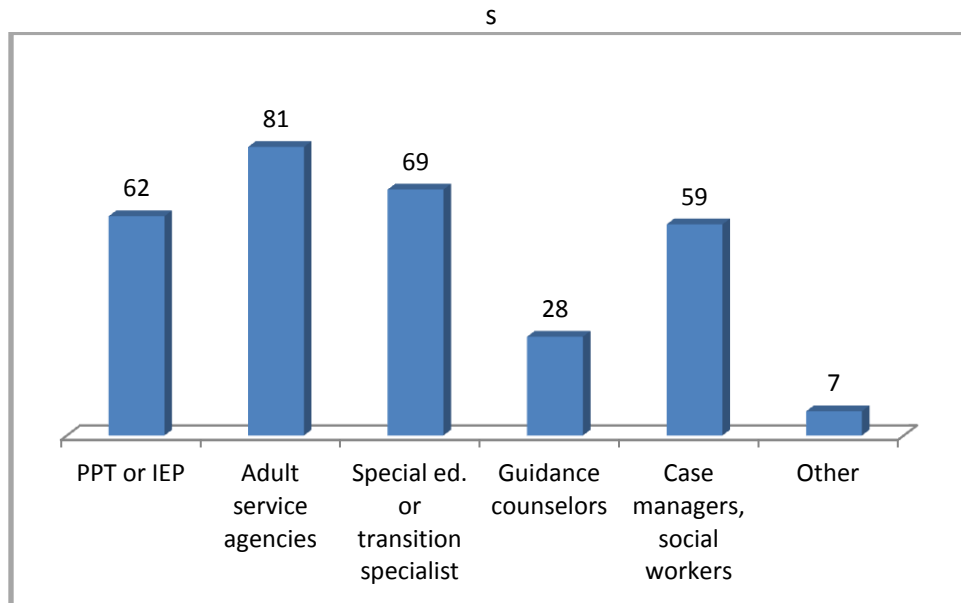
\*categories are not mutually exclusive

In 2008, of the 100 school districts that answered this question the most common methods were through the IEP/PPT processes (42), and through various adult service agencies such as BRS, BESB, DDS and DMHAS (39). The transition specialist or special education teacher provided this information for the students in 20 districts, and school (guidance) counselors provided this information in 14 districts.

*How are students advised about accessing benefits (e.g. SSI, Medicaid, food stamps, Section 8 housing) after exiting high school?*

The most common sources of benefits information are adult service agencies (81%) and special education/transition specialists (69%). The IEP/PPT process is also a frequent source of information (62%). Case managers and social workers are utilized by 59 percent of the districts and school (guidance) counselors are the least frequently used (28%) for providing information about benefits. The primary sources of information in 2008 were similar, with adult service agencies and case managers/social workers most often mentioned, followed by special education teachers and transition specialists. Figure 14 summarizes the 2011 results.

Figure 14. Percentage of districts that utilize various sources to inform students about benefits\*



\*categories are not mutually exclusive

*Does your district have a transition service that is exemplary?*

The full survey question about exemplary transition services was: “Does your district have a transition service or transition service component (e.g. job development, transportation, internships, portfolio development, career counseling) that is exemplary, unique and/or VERY successful that you would like to share with others as a model?” A quarter of the districts (32 of 133, or 24%) checked “yes.” This compares to 54 districts who answered “yes” in 2008. Respondents who checked yes were asked to describe the exemplary service or component. Answers were wide ranging, with examples of services given in many different categories. The following examples are for purpose of illustration only. All responses are being analyzed by the State Department of Education for feasibility and future use in technical assistance training.

*We have two examples that showcase our small district's ability to plan and implement work experiences for special education students. One takes place during the summer when students work on campus cleaning, moving equipment and preparing the school buildings for the following school year. This is a paid experience and students work with their non-disabled peers. The second program involves in house work experiences that disabled students can do as prevocational opportunities. Each student's experience is tailored to his or her unique disability. This experience is not paid and covers a gamut of jobs. After members of the department brainstormed various tasks our students could do we were amazed! Implementation occurs when the students work side by side with office personnel, custodians, and clerical workers.*

*We have a transition binder/portfolio for every student. What it contains includes some standardized information and some unique to the student. We also do video resumes and video transition information for some students. We are very proud of our STAAR program in cooperation with UCONN.*



*We have a fully inclusive program that incorporates a double period of Life skills-- Independent living, employment, postsecondary education/training skills as its curriculum. We also have numerous work sites that students attend daily. [Town] also has a two level vocational class structure that is open to all students, not just special education students.*

*We have developed a Transition portfolio which has certain requirements to be completed during each year. The Transition Coordinator reviews and works with students at least once per quarter. We have many opportunities for students to gain employability skills through a special education class and participate in a job shadow. Students also have the opportunity to participate in a work experience as a junior or senior work high school credit. There is also a work experience program that seniors are able to participate in for credit. There is also an opportunity for those who need continued vocational support to enroll in our Next STEP program (18-21) once they have completed graduation requirements.*

#### IV. Conclusions

The 2011 statewide transition services survey of 133 Connecticut school districts, which concerned transition, work experience and community participation services for students receiving special education services, repeated a similar survey conducted in 2008. Both surveys achieved a 100 percent response rate, indicating a high level of interest in documenting and improving services to special education students.

Career/employment services most likely to be offered to both regular education and special education students include community service, tech prep and volunteer work. Services that are offered more frequently to special education students include transition services (in both the community and at a college/university), vocational evaluation programs, and work experiences (both in the local community and schools). A large majority of career/employment services are unpaid, are offered for credit, and are provided by the district rather than by contractors. Transition services in the community, on-the-job training, and work experience in the community are the top three services offered by districts for pay. Career exploration, informational interviews, job shadowing, vocational evaluation and volunteer work are least likely to be offered for credit.

Other services frequently viewed as transition services, such as independent living skills, person centered/futures planning, and the evaluation for, and provision of, assistive technology, are also offered most frequently to special education students. Mentoring programs, particularly by peers, are common for both regular and special education students, and are generally not for credit. Services that are commonly provided by contractors include peer centered/futures planning, the evaluation for assistive technology, and mentoring by adults in the workplace.

Academic services such as functional academics, self-advocacy training, and study skills are far more common for special education students, and those courses are most likely to be taught by special education teachers. Honors, college prep, and advanced placement courses are offered most frequently by districts to both regular and special education students. College prep and general academic courses are most likely to be co-taught by special education and regular education teachers. Nearly all courses of every type are for credit, and are provided almost exclusively by the districts themselves.

Small and large and school buses and student-provided transportation are the most common transportation options for the transition/vocational needs of special education students, while para-transit and taxis are the least common. Most districts reported that they cooperate with state adult service agencies.

Transition services are provided by a wide variety of personnel in different job categories. School (guidance) counselors, transition coordinators/specialists and job coaches are the leading job categories associated with services for special education students. Life coaches are rare.

Comparisons between 2008 and 2011 results are challenging because of the difference in survey administration (online vs. paper surveys) and because of some additional answer choices allowing "both" as a response. However, a few directional differences can be ascertained:

- While career exploration and job shadowing were among the top three career/employment services in 2008, tech prep and volunteer work are more common in 2011.
- Large school buses have surpassed vans as the second most common transportation method for special education students.

- Across the board, more districts in 2011 report that they collaborate with adult service agencies.
- The percent of transition coordinators who are special education teachers fell from 88 percent to 74 percent.
- Fewer districts (32 in 2011 compared to 54 in 2008) reported that they have an exemplary transition services component.

As in 2008, the survey gained valuable additional information about the variety of approaches used by districts to develop Section 504 Plans, identify Assistive Technology (AT) resources and accommodations, and advise students about their benefits and post-high school AT resources.

The Bureau of Rehabilitation Services will use the results of this survey to target materials and resources for schools where there may be apparent need. The State Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education, will use the results of this survey to disseminate resources and guide technical assistance and professional development opportunities to school districts. The Department is currently analyzing the feasibility of continuing the collection of transition services survey information from Connecticut school districts on a biennial or triennial basis.

**Appendix A**  
**Connecticut School Districts Surveyed**

Ansonia	Middletown	Waterford
Avon	Milford	Watertown
Berlin	Monroe	Westbrook
Bethel	Montville	West Hartford
Bloomfield	Naugatuck	West Haven
Bolton	New Britain	Weston
Branford	New Canaan	Westport
Bridgeport	New Fairfield	Wethersfield
Bristol	New Haven	Wilton
Brookfield	Newington	Windham
Canton	New London	Windsor
Cheshire	New Milford	Windsor Locks
Clinton	Newtown	Wolcott
Colchester	North Branford	Woodstock Academy
Coventry	North Haven	Reg. Dist. 1
Cromwell	North Stonington	Reg. Dist. 4
Danbury	Norwalk	Reg. Dist. 5
Darien	Norwich (Norwich Free Academy)	Reg. Dist. 6
Derby	Old Saybrook	Reg. Dist. 7
East Granby	Oxford	Reg. Dist. 8
East Haddam	Plainfield	Reg. Dist. 9
East Hampton	Plainville	Reg. Dist. 10
East Hartford	Plymouth	Reg. Dist. 11
East Haven	Portland	Reg. Dist. 12
East Lyme	Putnam	Reg. Dist. 13
East Windsor	Ridgefield	Reg. Dist. 14
Ellington	Rocky Hill	Reg. Dist. 15
Enfield	Seymour	Reg. Dist. 16
Fairfield	Shelton	Reg. Dist. 17
Farmington	Simsbury	Reg. Dist. 18
Glastonbury	Somers	Reg. Dist. 19
Granby	Southington	CORRECTION/DOC – USD 1
Greenwich	South Windsor	DCF – USD 2
Griswold	Stafford	CT Tech HS
Groton	Stamford	American School for the Deaf
Guilford	Stonington	Cooperative Educational Services
Hamden	Stratford	Capitol Region Education Council
Hartford	Suffield	EDUCATION CONNECTION
Hartland HS (Gilbert School)	Thomaston	Area Cooperative Educational Services
Killingly	Thompson	LEARN
Lebanon	Tolland	EASTCONN
Ledyard	Torrington	
Litchfield	Trumbull	
Madison	Vernon	
Manchester	Wallingford	
Meriden	Waterbury	

**Appendix B**  
**Definitions of Survey Terms**

Term	Definition
<b>Advanced Placement Courses (AP)</b>	Administered by the College Board, high school students may take one or more college-level courses in a variety of subjects. Though intended to be representative of introductory college study, AP courses do not use actual college curricula. Students may earn college credit for AP courses by scoring well on an end-of-course exam.
<b>Apprenticeship</b>	Training opportunities offered by sponsors who provide work experience, education and training for people entering certain occupations.
<b>Assistive Technology</b>	Assistive Technology (AT) is any item or piece of equipment that is used to increase, maintain or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities in all aspects of life, including at school, at work, at home and in the community. Assistive Technology ranges on a continuum from low tech to high tech devices or equipment
<b>Benefits Counseling</b>	Professionals providing information on work incentives and examples of how wages impact state and federal benefits (e.g., SSI, Medicaid). To assist individuals to become more independent by understanding how work may allow them to earn more money and be active in their community while still retaining their health benefits.
<b>Career Exploration via Career Center</b>	The process of finding a rewarding career path, as well as specific jobs within a particular career path through the career center offices located within the school system.
<b>College Credit Courses</b>	Courses that secondary students take at either their high school or a college or university campus for which they earn BOTH credit toward their HS diploma AND college credits.
<b>College Prep Courses</b>	Courses offered at the secondary level that are typically provided to assist students to meet the more stringent scholastic requirements for entrance into a college or university and/or that would give students the knowledge and skills to be successful at the postsecondary level
<b>Community Service</b>	Service/volunteer work that a student performs for the benefit of his or her local community and for which students may earn academic credit. Typically organized or supervised by a school district as a graduation requirement or to obtain elective credits.
<b>Cooperative Work Experience (CWE)</b>	Classroom instruction (regular education) that includes, but is not limited to employability skills, career exploration and planning, life skills, entrepreneurship and goal setting, combined with paid credit-bearing, work-based experience. CWE teachers must hold a valid CT teaching certificate with an endorsement to teach Cooperative Work Education/ Diversified Occupations (CWE/DO).
<b>Co-Taught Classes</b>	An approach to program delivery in which two teachers (regular and special education) share teaching responsibilities within a regular education classroom. Typically, both teachers interact with all students at various times and are jointly responsible for the curriculum and for monitoring and recording student performance.
<b>Functional Academics</b>	Academic skills that can be applied in everyday life activities.
<b>General Academic Level Courses</b>	Average level coursework at a secondary school that prepares all students with a wide range of skills and knowledge – not specific to college or a vocational path.
<b>Honors Courses</b>	Advanced academic structure is similar to college prep courses but requires more effort from the student. (May be equivalent to Advanced Placement coursework).
<b>Independent Living Skills Training</b>	One-on-one, or group, training of life skills to help people with disabilities learn whatever skills they need to know to live more independently, such as, cooking, cleaning, budgeting, and menu planning.
<b>Informational Interviews</b>	Interview of a person in a career field that the student has researched in order to give the student an opportunity to explore a profession. The student uses the information gathered to determine if a particular career field is a good match.

<b>Internship</b>	Student working in a specific career field for a specified period of time to develop skills needed and to gain a better understanding of the demands of the career. Internships may be paid or non-paid experiences; supervised by the school; and credit is granted if the student masters the goals and objectives of the experience.
<b>Job Coach</b>	Paraprofessional who accompanies a student to a work site and assists the student to varying degrees to develop and maintain competitive work skills and behaviors and to adapt to the work site environment.
<b>Job Corps</b>	Job Corps is a no-cost education and vocational training program administered by the U.S. Department of Labor that helps young people ages 16 through 24 improve the quality of their lives through vocational and academic training.
<b>Job Developer</b>	Professional who is responsible for finding employment opportunities or restructuring workplace experiences or jobs for students with a disability. Such Customized Employment is based on an individualized determination of a student's strengths, requirements, preferences and interests.
<b>Job Shadowing</b>	Observing of/shadowing an individual working in a career field that a student has researched; usually lasting for a day or part of a day. Student gathers information to assist in making a career decision.
<b>Life Coach</b>	Trained professional who assists a student to identify and achieve personal goals related to transition goals and objectives (e.g., making friends, finding a job, navigating a college campus).
<b>Mentoring</b>	Trusted friend, counselor or teacher. Mentors provide expertise to less experienced individuals in order to help them advance their careers, enhance their education and build their networks. Mentors may be peers, adults, or employees and may support individuals in the worksite, during recreational/social situations, or in academic environments.
<b>On-the-Job-Training (OJT)</b>	Training that is given in a normal work environment, using the actual tools, equipment, documents or materials that a student will use when fully trained. On-the-job training is usually most effective for vocational work. Paid and supervised by the employer.
<b>Paratransit Transportation</b>	Alternative mode of flexible passenger transportation that does not follow fixed routes or schedules. Typically vans or mini-buses provide services along a more or less defined route and pick up or discharge passengers on request or may offer on-demand, call-up door-to-door services. Typically operated by public transit agencies, community groups or private operators.
<b>Person-Centered Planning</b>	A process designed to assist an individual in making plans for his/her future with a group of caring professionals, friends and family. Used most often as a life-planning model to help individuals with disabilities to actualize their dreams in education, employment, independent living, self-advocacy and self-determination. Common person-centered planning tools include MAPS, PATH, and Circles of Support.
<b>Pre-employment Skills</b>	Skills to prepare an individual to obtain and keep a job, such as job search, resume writing and/or interview skills
<b>Section 504 plan</b>	Students with documented disabilities who do not need special education services are entitled to receive appropriate educational services and accommodations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 through a written Section 504 Plan
<b>Self-Advocacy Training</b>	Training to develop knowledge of personal strengths, needs and rights as a citizen and the ability to act in an assertive, yet appropriate, manner to make needs known to others.
<b>Social Skills Training</b>	Social skills training (SST) is a form of behavior therapy or instructional approach used by teachers, therapists, and trainers to help persons who have difficulties relating to other people.
<b>Start on Success (SOS)</b>	Introductory job training and paid internship program for at-risk high school students with physical, mental or sensory disabilities. Sponsored initially by the National Organization on Disability (NOD), this program helps high school students with disabilities transition into the workforce.

<b>Student Work Stipends</b>	Payment to students for working in district or the community. May be paid by school district or employer. May be below minimum wage during an evaluation or exploratory situation.
<b>Study Skills/Learning Strategy Training</b>	Strategies or skills to assist students with learning how to learn – such as: note-taking, test-taking, and organizational strategies or memorization techniques
<b>Tech Prep</b>	A sequenced program of study that combines at least two years of secondary and two years of postsecondary education; designed to help students gain academic knowledge and technical skills; intended to lead to an Associate's degree or a certificate in a specific career field.
<b>Transition Coordinator/Transition Specialist</b>	School staff person whose primary responsibility is to assist students receiving special education services (or other staff members working with those students) with transition/vocational planning for life after high school
<b>Transition Services at a College or University</b>	Transition services for students between the ages of 18 – 21 that may include functional academics, auditing or enrolling in college-level courses, independent living skills, age-appropriate social experiences, and paid or un-paid work experiences in a college or university setting.
<b>Transition Services in the Community</b>	Transition services for students between the ages of 18 – 21 that may include functional academics, independent living skills, age-appropriate social experiences, and paid or un-paid work experiences in a community setting other than a college or university.
<b>Vocational Evaluation/Situational Assessment</b>	An assessment where the individual is evaluated in one or more real work situations in the community in an individual placement. The assessment site(s) must be developed based on the individual consumer's interests, abilities and needs. All consumers are expected to be paid at least minimum wage and in accordance with state and federal labor laws during the assessment.
<b>Vocational Training Programs</b>	Prepares learners for careers that are based in manual or practical activities, traditionally non-academic and totally related to a specific trade, occupation or vocation. Sometimes referred to as technical education, as the learner directly develops expertise in a particular group of techniques or technology. More than one or two courses in a particular area.
<b>Volunteer Work</b>	Student performs service work of his/her own free will without pay or academic credit to benefit the local community. Used as a way to explore careers and gain work experience, often prior to the legal employment age.
<b>Work Experience in a School</b>	Placement at a work site located at the high school that the student attends. The school is the employer. Non-competitive and no wages are paid. Based on individual interests.
<b>Work Experience in the Community</b>	Placement off-campus at a business or another school or district location. The school is the employer. Non-competitive and no wages are paid. Based on individual interests.
<b>Work-study</b>	A school supervised training experience, competitive or non-competitive, for a wage or for credit, developing transferable skills and appropriate work behaviors for future employment.

**Appendix C**  
**Career/Employment Services: Detailed Results**

Please indicate for each work experience or community participation activity listed below whether it is available in your district. If yes, answer the additional questions for each.													
Characteristics of Transition Services													
	Percent Offering Service	Special Education	Regular Education	Both	Paid	Unpaid	Both	For Credit	No Credit	Both	Provided by District	Provided by Contractor	Both
<b>Career/Employment Services</b>													
See Appendix B for Definitions	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Apprenticeships	43 (33)	11 (26)	2 (5)	30 (70)	2 (5)	16 (38)	24 (57)	15 (36)	4 (10)	23 (55)	20 (49)	3 (7)	18 (44)
Career Exploration via Career Center	107 (81)	8 (8)	3 (3)	95 (90)	2 (2)	75 (73)	26 (25)	18 (18)	31 (30)	54 (52)	69 (68)	4 (4)	29 (28)
Community Service	114 (89)	4 (4)	1 (1)	109 (96)	0	107 (94)	7 (6)	25 (22)	40 (35)	49 (43)	65 (59)	5 (5)	41 (37)
Cooperative Work Experience (CWE/CWEDO)	48 (37)	10 (22)	3 (7)	33 (72)	11 (24)	9 (20)	25 (56)	28 (61)	2 (4)	16 (35)	29 (63)	2 (4)	15 (33)
Informational Interviews	104 (81)	11 (11)	0	91 (89)	0	97 (97)	3 (3)	12 (12)	72 (73)	15 (15)	71 (71)	1 (1)	28 (28)
Internships	90 (69)	20 (23)	4 (5)	65 (73)	4 (5)	44 (51)	38 (44)	32 (36)	10 (11)	47 (53)	43 (48)	3 (3)	43 (48)
Job Corps	40 (31)	6 (15)	0	34 (85)	8 (22)	22 (60)	7 (19)	9 (23)	29 (73)	2 (5)	10 (26)	26 (67)	3 (8)
Job Shadowing	116 (90)	27 (23)	1 (1)	88 (76)	2 (2)	104 (91)	8 (7)	12 (11)	73 (64)	29 (25)	73 (64)	3 (3)	39 (34)
On-the-Job Training (OJT)	71 (55)	49 (69)	0	22 (31)	18 (26)	17 (25)	34 (49)	23 (33)	14 (20)	32 (46)	30 (42)	3 (4)	38 (54)
Pre-Employment Skills	126 (97)	36 (29)	0	87 (71)	1 (1)	110 (90)	11 (9)	50 (41)	24 (20)	49 (40)	95 (77)	0	28 (23)
Start on Success (SOS)	4 (3)	3 (75)	0	1 (25)	2 (50)	1 (25)	1 (25)	2 (50)	1 (25)	1 (25)	4 (100)	0	0
Tech Prep	39 (31)	1 (3)	1 (3)	37 (95)	0	38 (97)	1 (3)	34 (87)	3 (8)	2 (5)	28 (74)	2 (5)	8 (21)
Transition Services in the Community (18 - 21 yrs)	116 (89)	109 (94)	0	7 (6)	26 (22)	38 (33)	52 (45)	28 (24)	51 (44)	36 (31)	56 (49)	12 (11)	46 (40)
Transition Services at College/University (18 - 21 yrs)	62 (48)	55 (89)	1 (2)	6 (10)	7 (11)	40 (65)	15 (24)	19 (31)	22 (36)	21 (34)	23 (38)	8 (13)	30 (49)
Vocational Evaluation/Situational Assessment	114 (88)	88 (77)	4 (4)	22 (19)	13 (12)	71 (63)	29 (26)	14 (13)	73 (65)	25 (22)	48 (42)	14 (12)	52 (46)
Vocational Training Program (e.g., Welding)	50 (38)	11 (22)	0	39 (78)	2 (4)	40 (80)	8 (16)	40 (80)	3 (6)	7 (14)	33 (66)	4 (8)	13 (26)
Volunteer Work	112 (86)	9 (8)	0	102 (92)	n/a	n/a	n/a	13 (12)	46 (42)	51 (46)	73 (67)	2 (2)	34 (31)
Work Experience - In school	113 (86)	63 (56)	3 (3)	47 (42)	7 (6)	71 (63)	35 (31)	48 (43)	21 (19)	44 (39)	100 (89)	4 (4)	8 (7)
Work Experience - In local community	113 (86)	66 (58)	2 (2)	45 (40)	16 (14)	38 (34)	58 (52)	42 (37)	14 (12)	57 (50)	65 (59)	6 (5)	40 (36)
Work Study	87 (66)	33 (38)	0	54 (62)	17 (20)	26 (30)	44 (51)	45 (52)	3 (3)	39 (45)	59 (68)	3 (3)	25 (29)



**Appendix D**  
**Other Transition Services: Detailed Results**

Please indicate for each other transition services listed below whether it is available in your district. If yes, answer the additional questions for each.										
Characteristics of Transition Services										
	Percent Offering Service	Special Education	Regular Education	Both	For Credit	No Credit	Both	Provided by District	Contractor Provided	Both
<b>Other Transition Services</b>										
See Appendix B for Definitions	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n(%)	n(%)
Assistive Technology - Evaluation for school/work settings	117 (89)	79 (68)	0	37 (32)	n/a	n/a	n/a	58 (50)	12 (10)	47 (40)
Assistive Technology - Provision of AT w/appropriate training	120 (92)	72 (61)	1 (1)	45 (38)	n/a	n/a	n/a	75 (64)	4 (3)	39 (33)
Benefits Counseling (SSI, Medicaid, Health Insurance)	77 (59)	57 (75)	0	19 (25)	n/a	n/a	n/a	46 (61)	4 (5)	26 (34)
Independent Living Skills Training	124 (95)	101 (82)	1 (1)	21 (17)	64 (53)	15 (13)	41 (34)	84 (68)	3 (2)	36 (29)
Mentoring by peers	104 (79)	22 (21)	0	82 (79)	n/a	n/a	n/a	93 (90)	4 (4)	6 (6)
Mentoring by adults in school	100 (76)	7 (7)	0	93 (93)	n/a	n/a	n/a	83 (83)	2 (2)	15 (15)
Mentoring by adults in workplace or community	78 (60)	26 (33)	2 (3)	50 (64)	n/a	n/a	n/a	45 (58)	6 (8)	27 (35)
Person Centered/Futures Planning (MAPS, PATH, Circles of Support)	108 (82)	98 (91)	1 (1)	9 (8)	n/a	n/a	n/a	54 (50)	17 (16)	37 (34)
Social Skills Training	125 (95)	67 (54)	1 (1)	56 (42)	20 (16)	66 (54)	37 (30)	92 (75)	3 (2)	28 (23)

**Appendix E  
Academic Services: Detailed Results**

Please Indicate for each academic service listed below whether it is available in your district. If yes, answer the additional questions for each.										
Characteristics of Transition Services										
	Percent Offering Service	Special Education	Regular Education	Both	Co-taught	Regular Ed Tchr	Sp Ed Tchr	For Credit	Not for Credit	Both
Academic Services										
See Appendix B for Definitions	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n(%)	n(%)
Advanced Placement Courses	122 (93)	2 (2)	4 (3)	115 (95)	5 (4)	116 (96)	0	114 (94)	0	7 (6)
College Credit Courses (dual enrollment: college and high school credit)	103 (79)	3 (3)	4 (4)	95 (93)	9 (9)	93 (91)	0	95 (93)	0	7 (7)
College Prep Courses	125 (95)	1 (1)	1 (1)	122 (98)	77 (63)	45 (37)	1 (1)	115 (94)	1 (1)	7 (6)
General Academic Level Courses	121 (92)	4 (4)	0	116 (97)	97 (82)	20 (17)	2 (2)	114 (95)	0	6 (5)
Honors Courses	126 (96)	1 (1)	2 (2)	122 (98)	13 (10)	112 (89)	1 (1)	122 (98)	0	3 (2)
Functional Academics (practical applications)	128 (96)	82 (65)	0	45 (35)	35 (28)	7 (6)	84 (67)	111 (87)	0	16 (13)
Self-Advocacy Training	112 (84)	68 (61)	1 (1)	43 (38)	29 (26)	5 (5)	77 (69)	49 (44)	26 (23)	37 (33)
Study Skills/Learning Strategy Training	124 (93)	48 (39)	2 (2)	74 (60)	45 (37)	12 (10)	65 (53)	73 (59)	12 (10)	39 (32)