

SCHOOL-TO-WORK TRANSITION:
THE COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY REHABILITATION PROGRAMS

by

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ABSTRACT

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Between Schools and
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The passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990 emphasized the importance of providing a smooth transition from school to work for youth with disabilities. IDEA required that school districts restructure the transition process so as to improve post-school outcomes for youth with disabilities. Upon examination of these outcomes a decade after the implementation of IDEA, it is apparent that students with disabilities remain unprepared for post-school

living. Recent efforts to increase post-school preparedness include interagency collaboration between school districts and any appropriate community agencies. Such collaboration is believed to be a key component of successful school-to-work transition. While community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) serve as significant resources for the transition of youth with disabilities, very little research exists regarding the collaborative relationship between CRPs and schools.

This study examined the extent to which school districts access CRPs to assist their students with disabilities in the transition from school to work. A sample of CRPs was surveyed in Wisconsin and Minnesota regarding frequency and type of services, ethnic characteristics of youth served, funding sources, and outcomes achieved. The outcomes of this study will identify the prevalence of CRPs that provide services to schools, the types of programs provided, and the types of students served.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

In order to achieve effective transition outcomes for students with disabilities, schools seek the development of collaborative relationships within their communities. This may include collaboration with vocational rehabilitation, the Department of Human Services, vocational technical colleges, and/or community rehabilitation programs (CRPs). While many CRPs serve as a significant resource for the transition of students with disabilities, very little research exists regarding the relationship between CRPs and schools.

Schools are responsible for the provision of transition services that will adequately prepare youth to enter adulthood as productive members of society. This responsibility was broadened to include students with disabilities by the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (P.L. 94-142). This legislation ensured a “free appropriate public education” to all handicapped children (EHA, 1975, p. 775). The Education for All Handicapped Children Act was amended in 1990 and renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (P.L.101-476) (IDEA). By expanding the requirements of transition planning for youth with disabilities, IDEA promised to improve post-school outcomes for these students.

Among several considerable changes mandated by IDEA was the requirement that a “coordinated set of activities” be included in transition planning for youth with disabilities (IDEA, 1990, p. 1103). This made interagency collaboration between schools and any appropriate community agencies imperative. Such collaboration fosters the coordination of secondary school coursework, related activities, work experiences, responsibilities at home, and community participation in an effort to maximize the students’ preparedness for post-school

living (Dowdy & Evers, 1996).

A decade has come and gone since the passing of IDEA, and in this time much research has been done in the areas of special education and rehabilitation focused on transition from school to work for students with disabilities. Despite all efforts, several studies show that students with disabilities remain unprepared for post-school living (Katsiyannis & DeFur, 1998; Levinson, 1994; Stodden & Leake, 1994). A study by Horn, Trach and Haworth (1998) reported that students with disabilities were not successful in the areas of employment, independent living, or community participation. More specifically, Getzel and DeFur (1997) found that youth with disabilities were more often chronically unemployed, dependent on family and service providers, and isolated from community activities.

While unfavorable outcomes continue to be the norm, there does appear to be an increased potential for success for students with disabilities. Researchers believe that interagency collaboration is the key to maximizing this potential (DeFur, 1997; Goldstein & Garwood, 1983). According to Katsiyannis and DeFur (1998, p. 55), the “fragmented system of services” that exists between schools and adult service agencies contributes to the unpreparedness of youth with disabilities as they face the transition from school to work. Implementing interagency collaboration strategies may promote systematic change and improve post-school outcomes for students with disabilities (Katsiyannis & DeFur, 1998).

As schools attempt to meet the requirements of IDEA and improve outcomes for students with disabilities, they can collaborate with CRPs for the provision of several necessary services. The legislation states that transition services must include instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and other adult living skills, and when appropriate, the development of daily living skills and functional evaluation (Levinson, 1998).

A transition model advocated by Levinson (1998) described, more specifically, the services that schools must provide to students with disabilities. The five primary phases of this model are assessment, planning, training, placement, and follow-up. A study by Botterbusch and Miller (1999) examined the characteristics, goals, and outcomes of CRPs. Several of the findings of this study are concurrent with Levinson's five primary phases of transition. A majority of CRPs offer programs in vocational evaluation and assessment, occupational skill development, employment readiness training (work adjustment), community-based placement, and follow-up and follow-along services such as supported employment. Many of these activities occur simultaneously with the operation of sheltered employment within the CRP (Botterbusch & Miller, 1999).

While many CRPs do serve as a significant resource for the transition of students with disabilities, there is an inadequate knowledge base regarding the types of services, provision and funding of services, and the types of outcomes for students with disabilities.

Statement of the Problem

This study obtained data on how schools utilize CRPs to assist their students with disabilities in the transition from school to work. A two-part survey was sent to a sample of CRPs in two states. Part one of the survey, "School-to-Work Transition Services," collected information on the specific services provided by the CRP. The second part of the survey, "Characteristics of the Community and Program," asked participants to provide a description of the community, the program, and the consumers served by the program. This provided much needed information on the way in which the collaboration efforts of schools and CRPs can serve as a transition resource to the community.

Research Questions

This research addressed the following four questions:

1. What proportion of CRPs are involved in serving secondary school students with disabilities while in school?
2. What type of services do CRPs provide to youth with disabilities?
3. What type of youth are served by CRPs, including ethnicity and primary disability?
4. What types of outcomes are achieved by consumers receiving CRP services?

Definition of Terms

_____The following terms are defined to increase understanding of the present issue.

_____ **Collaboration** - the requirement by federal statutes that connections be made between and among providers of special education, vocational rehabilitation, services for those with developmental disabilities, higher education, and others for the purposes of articulating specific agency responsibilities, providing fiscal supports, and coordination activities to support the provision of transition programs and services (Gloeckler & Johnson, 1998).

Community Rehabilitation Program - a facility that provides vocational rehabilitation to persons with disabilities in an effort to improve quality of life and enable the achievement of competitive employment. More specific goals include the provision of job skills training, specific vocational services, and employment of persons with disabilities. Community rehabilitation programs receive revenues primarily from public sources through fees for services (Botterbusch & Miller, 1999).

Transition Services - A coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-orientated process, which promotes movement from school to post-school activities including post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing education, adult services, independent living, or community

participation (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 1990, p. 1103-1104).

Vocational Rehabilitation Agency - State agencies that provide a variety of services and supports necessary to prepare an individual with a disability for employment. These agencies are funded under the Vocational Rehabilitation Act and its amendments. To offer direct assistance to individuals with disabilities through local vocational rehabilitation offices where counselors may have a general or specific area of expertise on a disability (Dowdy & Evers, 1996).

Assumptions and Limitations

The research assumes that CRPs presently serve secondary students to some degree in collaboration with schools for the provision of transition services to students with disabilities. The sampling strategy was designed to obtain responses from all CRPs located in the two states of Wisconsin and Minnesota. This design would apply only to these states and the generalizability of the findings are restricted by the degree to which these two states are representative of the other 48.

CHAPTER II

Literature Review

This chapter will review the pertinent literature regarding school-to-work transition for students with disabilities and the collaborative relationship between community rehabilitation programs and schools. The literature review will include the following topics: (a) the philosophy of school-to-work transition, (b) legislative mandates for youth with disabilities, (c) the transition process, (d) the role of community rehabilitation programs, and (e) the potential collaboration between schools and community rehabilitation programs.

Philosophy of School-to-Work Transition

Throughout the past three decades the school-to-work transition of students with disabilities has become a paramount issue in the fields of education and rehabilitation. Educators and rehabilitation specialists alike recognize the importance of adequately preparing students with disabilities for adult life if they are to function as successful, independent members of society.

The transition movement and the implementation of related legislation are rooted in the prominent philosophies of school-to-work transition. Several transition models based on the philosophies of school-to-work exist. To examine this philosophy more closely two prominent models, the OSERS Model (Will, 1983) and the Halpern Model (Halpern, 1985), will be reviewed.

The Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services established a national priority to improve school-to-work transition for students with disabilities with the development of the OSERS transition model (Will, 1983). The OSERS Model groups

transition services into three classes each of which serves as a possible “bridge” for the passage of students from high school to employment (Will, 1983, p.5). The first bridge involves movement either without services or with those available to the general population. The next bridge involves the use of time-limited services that are terminated with the achievement of independent employment. The final bridge makes use of ongoing supported employment, a transition option that was just beginning to take shape when the OSERS model was developed (Will, 1983).

The primary goal of the OSERS model is employment (Will, 1983). The OSERS model is based on the philosophy that employment is the critical determiner in achieving participation and integration as an adult in mainstream America (Will, 1983). The model thus assumes that all other quality of life factors are determined by the achievement of successful employment.

In Halpern’s (1985) expansion of the OSERS philosophy the three bridges to adulthood remained the same, however the ultimate goal of transition services was broadened and titled community adjustment. This revised philosophy establishes community living as the primary goal of transition services. Employment is believed to be a critical component of community adjustment, along with the quality of the individual’s residential environment and the sufficiency of his or her social network (Halpern, 1985).

Halpern (1985) based this expanded philosophy on evidence that success in one area of community adjustment, such as employment, does not guarantee success in other areas. In his research on the adjustment of adult individuals with mental retardation living in residential settings, Halpern found that programs which successfully focused on one dimension of community adjustment did not necessarily assure improvements in the remaining two components. Thus, adequate transition programs must consider each of the three dimensions

equally for successful community adjustment to occur (Halpern, 1992).

Halpern's model (1985) was incorporated into other models being developed by Frank R. Rusch, who founded the Transition Institute for Youth with Disabilities at the University of Illinois (Rusch, Destafano, Chadsey-Rusch, Phelps, & Szymanski, 1992) and by Paul Wehman who developed the supported employment design for persons with mental retardation (Wehman, Moon, Everson, Wood, & Barcus, 1988).

The transition movement was further refined by research funded by OSERS for the goals of both employment and community adjustment. This effort led to the passage of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in 1990 (P.L. 101-476) that promoted outcomes including, "post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment, continuing education, adult services, independent living, or community participation" (p. 1103-1104). With the mandates set forth by IDEA as guidelines and considering the evolvement of transition across the past three decades, Halpern (1994) established the following philosophy of school-to-work transition.

Transition refers to a change in status from behaving primarily as a student to assuming emergent adult roles 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 foundations 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. (p. 115).

The ultimate goal of school-to-work transition for students with disabilities is consistent with that of general education, that is to provide young people with appropriate education that

will enable them to be productive adult members of society. Thus, the most current philosophy of school-to-work transition recognizes that transition initiatives must collaborate with community organizations, employers, public service agencies and the general education reform movement to move successfully into the new millennium (Halpern, 1992; Halpern, 1999; Stodden & Leake, 1994).

Legislative Mandates for Youth with Disabilities

To better understand the nature of school-to-work transition, it is important to look closely at the history of the legislative mandates that have dramatically improved the quality of life for youth with disabilities.

Legislation to improve outcomes for students with disabilities officially began in 1975 with the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, P.L. 94-142. The EHA of 1975 ensured a “free appropriate public education” to all children with disabilities, ages 2 to 22 (p. 775). Several important events led to the enactment of the EHA, the first being the racial desegregation decision in *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, which required the opportunity of an education be made equally available to all children (Weiner & Hume, 1987). Throughout the 1960s, advocates for youth with disabilities applied the 1954 decision to their cause. Nonetheless, support for students with disabilities remained minimal until 1966 when Title VI was added to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, creating the Bureau of Education for those with disabilities and establishing a grant program to assist states in the education of students with disabilities (Weiner & Hume, 1987). Shortly thereafter, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 was enacted. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act prohibits discrimination of all people with disabilities and in all programs or activities receiving federal assistance and it therefore increased educational opportunities for students with disabilities (Guernsey & Klare, 1993).

The most significant event leading up to the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA) was the Education Amendments of 1974 (P.L. 93-380). The amendments included all the components that would eventually make up the EHC, with the exception of a time line to guide required activities (Education Amendments, 1974).

The culmination of these significant events led to the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (P.L. 94-142), officially confirming the educational rights of students with disabilities. The goals of the EHA as outlined by Holland (1980, p. 1) were “to provide a free appropriate public education to all handicapped children, to protect the rights of handicapped children and their parents, and to provide financial help to schools for the education of all handicapped children.”

Holland (1980) also explained six key components of the EHA. The first, free appropriate public education, requires that all children with disabilities receive an education at public expense and under public direction. To be deemed “appropriate,” the child’s educational program must meet the requirements of his/her individualized education plan (IEP) and it must occur in the least restrictive environment. Second, least restrictive environment implies that children with disabilities must be educated in the regular classroom as much as possible. Third, evaluation/placement refers to the complete evaluation of the child’s various abilities that must occur before the development of an individualized education plan. Fourth, individualized education plan (IEP) describes the written plan developed by a team, including a district representative, the teacher, a parent, and when appropriate the student, that will guide the student’s education program. Fifth, due process explains the procedure followed when the parent or the school has a question or concern. Lastly, Holland (1980) describes the identification, location, and testing of students with disabilities that schools must do in order to qualify for

funds each year. With these goals and principles in place, the EHA initiated significant, positive changes in the education of students with disabilities.

In 1990 the Education for All Handicapped Children Act was amended and renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (P.L. 94-142), also known as IDEA. IDEA is based on the original principles and components of the EHA, and also made several additions including a research program on attention deficit disorder, a program to improve services for youth with severe emotional disturbance, and programs regarding school-to-work transition for students with disabilities (IDEA, 1990). More specific changes noted by Yell (1997) in his report on education and the law include changing the term “handicapped” to “child with a disability,” the expansion of services to include students with autism and traumatic brain injury, and the requirement that by age 16 each student’s individualized education plan would also include an Individual Transition Plan (ITP).

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 had a significant effect on the issue of school-to-work transition for students with disabilities. IDEA requires that a “coordinated set of activities” linking professionals from different agencies in the community to be established (IDEA, 1990, p. 1103). These activities are to complement one another, and all involved professionals are to be aware of one another’s roles (IDEA, 1990).

IDEA (1990) also requires that transition services include “instruction, community experiences, and the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives...” (p. 1104). The major goals of transition must be specifically outlined in the student’s individualized education plan (IEP) and must be designed with an outcome-based process in mind (IDEA, 1990).

Legislation continues to support successful school-to-work transition for students with

disabilities by addressing the issue as the laws are updated and revised. In the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997, transition planning is now required to begin at age 14. Increasing student self-determination was added as a goal of transition, and “related services” were added to the list of transition services (Yell, 1997).

Having reviewed the pertinent legislation regarding the education of students with disabilities, it is clear that law makers have greatly increased educational opportunities for all students with disabilities. It is important to note that recent legislation is particularly concerned with post-secondary outcomes which include employment, community adjustment, and post-secondary education. The development of collaborative relationships between schools and community adult agencies such as CRPs appear to be essential to improving outcomes for students with disabilities. To underscore the importance for improving outcomes, the law requires that schools provide a specific set of transition services to all students with disabilities which are coordinated with other agencies.

The Transition Process

The transition services that schools are mandated to provide to students with disabilities are outlined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The 1997 Amendments to IDEA define the transition process as a “coordinated set of activities” that promote the student’s “movement from school to post-school activities.” These post-school activities may include “post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation” (p.1103).

To provide adequate transition services, schools must consider the requirements put forth by IDEA in four major areas: (a) student involvement in the IEP, (b) parent involvement, (c)

agency responsibilities, and (d) content of the IEP (Gloeckler & Johnson, 1998).

Philosophies that have emerged throughout the past three decades, such as normalization, civil rights, and consumerism have drastically changed the delivery of rehabilitation and special education services and the level of student involvement in those services. Rather than segregating students with disabilities, current systems focus on the rights of individuals with disabilities and emphasize the importance of programs that enable independence and productive involvement in mainstream society (Symanski, Hanley-Maxwell, & Parker, 1990). Student involvement was mandated by the IDEA of 1990 (P.L. 101-476) which required that students be invited to IEP meetings regarding transition planning, and that transition goals be based on individual needs, preferences and interests. Research shows that students with disabilities who have acquired self-determination skills and are involved in the planning of their transition process perform better than peers who are not, have more successful post-school outcomes, and have overall greater quality of life (Getzel & deFur, 1997; Thoma, C. A., 1999; Wehmeyer & Ward, 1995).

A second area that schools must consider in order to provide adequate transition services is that of parental involvement. IDEA (P.L. 101-476) requires that parents have the opportunity to participate in all meetings regarding the identification, evaluation, and educational placement of their child, and parents are to be members of the team that develops the child's IEP. Research shows that parental involvement is a critical component of the transition process for students with disabilities, and, disregarding special funding or special programs, parental involvement was the primary determining factor of student success in transition programs (Morningstar, Turnbull, & Turnbull, 1995; McNair & Rusch, 1991).

Interagency collaboration, a third area that schools must consider, is a key factor in the

provision of quality transition services to students with disabilities (Anderson & Asselin, 1996; Neubert, 1997; Getzel & deFur, 1997; Cashman, 1995). The definition of transition, as put forth by IDEA (P.L. 101-476), includes “a *coordinated* set of activities,” referring to the relationship between any agencies likely to provide or pay for the transition services being considered.

Transition planning will thus include different professionals from various community agencies. Services provided must be complimentary and representatives of these agencies must be aware of one another’s responsibilities (P.L. 101-476).

The final requirement of IDEA that schools must consider when providing transition services to students with disabilities is the content of the Individualized Education Program (IEP). The IDEA (P.L. 101-476) asks that the IEP address each of the following areas: instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment objectives and other post-school adult living objectives, and, if appropriate, the acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation. This latter portion of IDEA focuses on the development of what is now called an Individual Transition Plan (ITP). The term ITP refers specifically to the area of transition, in contrast to the IEP which encompasses areas other than transition. The remainder of this review will examine details related specifically to transition services addressed within the ITP.

To begin the transition planning process and for the development of the ITP, various assessment procedures are used to determine student needs and the need for specific services provided in the five areas of the ITP. A functional vocational evaluation will be conducted in order to gain information that is relevant, useful, and of direct benefit to the individual (Levinson, 1998). The National Transition Alliance (1997) provided the following definition of vocational evaluation:

...a comprehensive process conducted over a period of time, usually involving a multidisciplinary team....with the purpose of identifying individual characteristics, education, training, and placement needs, serving as the basis for planning an individual's education (and/or employment) program and which provides the individual with insight into vocational potential. (p. 4)

The vocational assessment process varies between school districts and may involve various professionals including special education teachers, guidance counselors, vocational educators, vocational assessment specialists, rehabilitation specialists, vocational support service personnel, school psychologists, and social workers. Through the vocational assessment process students with disabilities are able to recognize their transition, educational, vocational, and career strengths. This information enables the student to identify needs and preferences and begin the development of an effective transition plan (“Vocational Assessment”, 1997).

Instruction, also referred to as curriculum design, is a second critical area that must be addressed within the ITP. Taking into consideration the information collected by the functional vocational assessment, curriculum design must be based on the needs of the students and the mastery of skills necessary for him/her to function successfully as an adult (Patton & Cronin, 1997). Therefore, instruction will not only be provided in regular education and general academic skills, but may also include vocational education, daily living skills and community living skills (Gloeckler & Johnson, 1998). In their study on the curriculum development process, West, Taymans, & Gopal (1997) found that one of the most positive changes in the field of special education has been the development of curriculum that focuses on transition, self-determination, and the provision of skill specific training. The authors stated that, “curriculum design is the critical component in delivering meaningful instruction to students with special

needs” (p. 121).

There is increased emphasis by schools on the importance of school-business partnerships to establish apprenticeships and internships for students with disabilities (Sandow, Darling, Stalick, Schrock, Gaper, & Bloom, 1993). This type of community experience is a third area that the ITP must consider. A publication by the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (Kellog, 1997) regarding vocational programs for students with disabilities suggests several activities that may provide valuable community experiences for students with disabilities. Included are work-study, job shadowing, community volunteer positions, and experiences in public transportation, shopping, recreation, and college and technical schools.

A fourth area addressed by the ITP is the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives. Gloeckler and Johnson (1998) suggest several options for the development of these objectives, including: conducting career vocational assessments; providing paid community experiences and unpaid community-based work training; providing instruction in employability skills; providing school-based vocational course work in areas such as computer literacy, typing, and auto mechanics; and providing career guidance and counseling and instruction in preparation for post-secondary education.

A study by the National Council on Disability (1999) found that students with disabilities who had taken primarily vocational education courses earned nearly \$2000 more than those who had earned minimal vocational education credits. Furthermore, the study reported that students with disabilities who had two or more community-based jobs while in high school were twice as likely to be competitively employed following graduation.

Lastly, if appropriate, the ITP will address the need for the acquisition of daily living skills. This will include training and instruction in any of the following areas: meal preparation,

personal hygiene, money management, recreation, and parenting. Information may also be provided in areas related to self-advocacy, including legal rights, assertiveness training, and citizenship awareness and participation (Kellog, 1997).

Research shows that transition planning varies greatly between state, school districts, and individual students (Basset & Smith, 1996; Taymans, Corbey, & Dodge, 1995; Patton & Cronin, 1997). IDEA (P.L. 101-476) permits state and local discretion and was, thus, translated with much variability at both levels. Some states require only the federal minimum while others go well beyond it (Taymans, Corbey, & Dodge, 1995). While all school districts must adhere to state and federal guidelines, variability there can be attributed to differences in resources, school policy, and community support (Patton & Cronin, 1997).

The greatest amount of variability can typically be found between individual students. One student may have academic needs while another requires social skills training. Likewise, one student may require preparation for post-secondary schooling whereas another seeks training for employment. The transition process must be designed to meet the unique needs of each student (Bassett & Smith, 1996).

The Role of Community Rehabilitation Programs (CRPs)

In reviewing the history of CRPs, there is an obvious link between their evolution and the priorities and funding of the state and federal vocational rehabilitation (VR) system. However, with the development of their own identity, CRPs have come to serve a broad population outside of the funding of the state and federal rehabilitation system (Giodano & D'Alonzo, 1995; Shaw, 1998).

Botterbusch and Miller (1996) surveyed a national sample of CRPs and collected data regarding goals, outcomes, consumers, finances, and changes. General goals of most CRPs were

to improve quality of life and enable consumers to achieve competitive employment. More specific goals included the provision of job skills training, employment, and specific vocational services. The most common outcomes were supported employment, competitive employment, and earnings enough to be self-supporting. All of the facilities provided services to persons with disabilities and most served persons with severe or multiple disabilities. Finances varied widely among the surveyed CRPs. The CRPs ranged from small business to large organizations with yearly revenues exceeding \$40 million. Often revenues from production in business enterprise exceed service revenues. The majority of all service revenues, however, came from public fees for services, the three most common sources of these fees being state VR, developmental disabilities, and mental health.

CRPs not only vary greatly in size and total revenues but also in terms of the programs and services provided. A study by Czerlinsky & Gilbertson (1985) surveyed 293 CRPs to determine what services were most prevalent among rehabilitation facilities. The two most common programs offered were vocational evaluation (82.8% of the facilities) and work adjustment training (81.3% of the facilities). Other programs offered included sheltered employment (67.1%), job placement (67.6%), vocational counseling (65.8%), job seeking skills training (63.0%), and work activities (60.7%).

A recent pilot study by Johnson, Botterbusch, and Menz (1996) found that CRPs typically offer services in the areas of employment preparation, community-based employment, on-site production, and independent living. The following specific services were included within each of the four program areas: (a) *employment preparation* - vocational evaluation, work adjustment, work skills, job placement and job development, school-to-work transition services, and Projects With Industry; (b) *community-based employment* - individual supported

employment; enclave; mobile work crew; long-term supported employment; affirmative industry; (c) *on-site production* - sheltered employment; and work activity center; (d) *independent living* - day activities center and independent living services. The study found that the most prevalent services were those provided in employment preparation, with 94.7% of CRPs surveyed providing work adjustment services and 94.5% offering job placement and job development services.

The prevalence of employment preparation services is typical of the CRP service profile in the past 25 years. The study by Johnson, Botterbusch, and Menz (1996) did recognize a shift in service provision when comparing community-based employment and on-site production. Less than 50 percent offered sheltered employment, and 85 percent provided individual supported employment. This finding being representative of the shift in recent years from production in sheltered workshops to community-based programs.

Many of the services provided by CRPs are needed by students with disabilities in their transition from school to work. Thus, there is the potential for collaborative relationships between school districts and CRPs.

Potential Collaboration Between Schools and CRPs

Symanski and Danek (1985) referred to the transition of school to work as the “domain of no one profession.” Rather, they stated, “assisting adolescents in negotiating this complex life task requires the collective efforts of a number of professions in a coordinated, multidisciplinary approach” (p.82). Collaborative efforts of this type have become an increasingly important aspect of the transition from school to work for students with disabilities.

Researchers agree that by pooling resources and reducing the overlap of services, interagency collaboration facilitates more effective outcomes for students with disabilities

(Cashman, 1995; Ciulla-Timmons, McIntyre, Whitney-Thomas, Butterworth, & Allen, 1998; Horn, Trach, & Haworth, 1998). Furthermore, by recognizing the interconnectedness of systems, namely special education and rehabilitation, community resources can be identified and coordinated with school services to provide greater opportunities for students with disabilities (Cashman, 1995; Goldstein & Garwood, 1983).

Students with disabilities often have specific individual needs. By linking themselves to community-based adult service agencies schools can provide students with “hands on” opportunities and enable them to experience the real “world of work” (Goldstein & Garwood, 1983, p. 21). This type of collaboration also ensures a smoother transition period by guaranteeing continued services with another agency when public school services have ended (Horn, Trach, & Haworth, 1998).

In his description of the role of the rehabilitation facility in the 21st century, Shaw (1995) addresses the need for collaboration between education and community-based organizations. He explains that effective transition programs must provide workplace experiences, career education and development, and the development of academic and occupational competencies, all of which are offered by CRPs. Specific skill training needed by students in the transition from school to work, and provided by CRPs, includes basic academic skills in communication, problem solving, economic self-sufficiency, and maintaining personal hygiene; vocational-technical training including course work, on-the-job training, and work simulations; and employability skill training in job search, job application, and interview preparation (Shaw, 1995).

CRPs provide these specific services to students with disabilities under various program titles including literacy assessment, aptitude skills assessment, interest assessment, occupational exploration, job seeking skills, and living skills assessment. The literacy assessment is provided

to determine the student's basic academic abilities. While the aptitude/skills assessment is conducted using non-reading and dexterity tests to assess the student's aptitudes and basic vocational skills, it is combined with the results of the interest assessment to find a suitable job for the student. In an effort to provide realistic information regarding occupations, occupational exploration services are also provided to students with disabilities. If appropriate, services will also include job seeking skills and living skills assessment (Botterbusch & Smith, 1988).

Successful collaboration between schools and CRPs requires an understanding of one another's roles and responsibilities and written agreements regarding the provision of service (Steere, Rose, & Gregory, 1996). Unfortunately, research shows that many schools can afford neither the time nor the money to coordinate transition services (Anderson & Asselin, 1996; Braer, Simmons, & Flexer, 1996). Anderson and Asselin (1996) found that only four percent of 135 school districts surveyed nationwide had full time staff dedicated to transition services. Likewise Braer, Simmons, and Flexer (1996) found that more than 30 percent of special educators, administrators and coordinators in Ohio schools had less than two hours of training on transition issues.

Despite these findings, legislation increasingly links education agencies to community-based programs via required coordinated and cooperative activities. The issue of collaboration emerged in the passage of the Vocational Rehabilitation Amendments of 1992 and has remained firmly established an educational practice under Goals 2000: The Educate America Act (Cashman, 1995). Regardless of the ever-increasing emphasis on coordinated transition services, research on the collaboration between schools and CRPs remains limited, and thus warrants a survey of CRPs on their provision of transition services to youth with disabilities.

This study obtained data on the contractual relationships that exist between school

districts and CRPs to assist students with disabilities in their transition from school to work. The research addressed the following four questions.

1. What proportion of CRPs are involved in serving secondary school students with disabilities while in school?

2. What type of services do CRPs provide to youth with disabilities?

3. What type of youth are served by CRPs, including ethnicity and primary disability?

4. What types of outcomes are achieved by consumers receiving CRP services?

A survey titled “Community Rehabilitation Program Provision of Transition Services to Post-Secondary Youth in Support of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)” was developed to collect data regarding these four questions and to subsequently provide much needed information on the collaborative efforts of school districts and CRPs (see Appendix A).

The following chapter will describe the sample under study, and the instrumentation being used to collect information. The data collection method and data analysis procedures will be discussed as well. Lastly, the chapter will consider possible methodological limitations.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Subjects and Sample Selection

The subjects for this study were community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) in a two state geographic region. CRPs are facilities that provide vocational rehabilitation to individuals with disabilities in an effort to improve quality of life and assist in the achievement of competitive employment (Botterbusch & Miller, 1999). The research instrument was sent to the total population of CRPs in Wisconsin and Minnesota. The sample, then, consisted of all those CRPs that responded to the research instrument.

Instrumentation

This survey was designed to identify the ways in which CRPs can collaborate with school districts to provide transition services to students with disabilities (Appendix A). The survey instrument consisted of two parts: I. School-to-Work Transition Services and II. Characteristics of the Community and Program. Part I asked participants to describe the specific services provided by the CRP. Sections A - F of Part I requested specific information on the activities included in the following service categories: (a) intake, assessment, and planning services; (b) occupational skill development services; (c) employment development services; (d) job placement services; (e) post-placement services; and (f) other supports and/or forms of assistance.

Part I also included a section G which consisted of a table that addressed the following characteristics of school-to-work transition services: (a) the number of school districts served by the CRP; (b) the number of students served annually; (c) the minimum age of students served; (d) the time of service availability; (e) the total dollar amount of contracts under each of the

aforementioned service categories; (f) the rate per unit of service and unit type; (g) the duration of services; and (h) the sequence in which services occurred. The information provided in section G was collected for the purposes of the Research and Training Center, University of Wisconsin-Stout (UW-Stout) and will not be addressed in this study.

The second part of the survey instrument described the characteristics of the community and the program. Information collected in Part II for the purposes of this study included the ethnicity and primary disabilities of the consumers served and the most common consumer employment outcomes. Further information collected in Part II, also for the purposes of the Research and Training Center, UW-Stout, included the geographic area served by the CRP and the size of the CRP. This additional information will not be addressed by the current study.

Because the instrument was developed specifically for this study, no measures of validity and reliability have been documented.

Data Collection Procedures

By examining the services that CRPs provided and the type of youth served, the instrument gathered much needed information regarding the existing and potential working relationships between CRPs and schools. The survey was sent to all CRPs within the two-state geographic region in September 1999. A cover letter stating the purpose of the research and requesting the assistance of the CRP was included. All CRPs were asked to complete and return the first section of the survey. Those who contracted with schools in the school-to-work transition of secondary students were asked to also complete and return section two of the survey instrument. Data collection was to be completed by October 1999.

Data Analysis

Each question addressed on the research instrument was analyzed following completion

of data collection. The frequencies and percentages of responses to questions regarding the geographic characteristics, CRP variables, the ethnicity and primary disability characteristics of youth served by CRPs, and the type of services provided to youth with disabilities by CRPs were determined. A narrative analysis was completed for questions regarding the scope of services provided by CRPs and the most common outcomes achieved by students with disabilities receiving CRP services.

Limitations

Possible limitations were identified by the researcher. The list of addresses used to distribute the first phase of the research instrument was somewhat outdated and therefore had a negative effect on the response rate. Distributing the first phase of the instrument in mid-summer also negatively affected the response rate. Finally, the selection of a population that consisted of only two states limited generalizability.

CHAPTER IV

Results

This chapter reports the responses of the survey items corresponding to each of the four research questions:

1. What proportion of CRPs are involved in serving secondary school students with disabilities while in school?
2. What type of services do CRPs provide to youth with disabilities?
3. What type of youth are served by CRPs, including ethnicity and primary disability?
4. What types of outcomes are achieved by consumers receiving CRP services?

Following the two mailings, the surveys were returned by 63 of the 107 CRPs in a two-state region, for a 58.9% rate of return.

The Extent to Which School Districts Contract With CRPs

Table 1 presents the responses regarding whether CRPs contract with school districts to provide services to students with disabilities. Nearly 75% of the respondents had formal contracts with local school districts (47.6%) or at a minimum had some special education students participating in CRP programs (27.0%).

Table 1. Extent to Which School Districts Contract With CRPs

	Number of CRPs	Percent
CRP has formal contracts with at least one school district	30	47.6
CRP does not have formal contracts with school districts but some special education students attend CRP programs	17	27.0
CRP does not have formal contracts with school districts and no special education students attend CRP programs	16	25.4

Total	63	100
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The Types of Services Provided to School Districts by CRPs

This section deals only with the 30 respondents who indicated that they had formal service contracts with schools to serve secondary youth with disabilities. The percentages of respondents providing services in six distinct service areas are presented in Table 2. All but one respondent provided services to school districts in the area of Intake, Assessment, and Planning, making it the most commonly provided service area (96.7%). About three-quarters of the respondents provided services in the areas of Employment Development, Job Placement, and Post-Placement (73.3%-76.7%). Only about half of the respondents provided Occupational Skill Development services (53.3%).

Table 2. Types of Transition Services Provided to School Districts by CRP Contracts

Service Area	Number of CRPs	Percent
Intake, Assessment, and Planning	29	96.7
Occupational Skill Development	16	53.3
Employment Development	22	73.3
Job Placement	23	76.7

Post-Placement	23	76.7
Other Supports and/or Assistance	11	36.7

For each service area, respondents were asked to describe the types of activities that occurred within each service area and to list up to three titles for their services. The questions about Intake, Assessment, and Planning were designed to elicit just one response from each respondent¹, while the other five questions would lead to multiple responses and totals higher than the number of respondents to each service areas. In the following tables on the six service areas, the percentage of CRPs providing a specific activity is based on the number of respondents as given in Table 2 rather than as a percentage of the total number of activities checked. For each service area, Table “A” will detail the service activities and Table “B” will list the titles used by the CRP for the service area.

Intake, Assessment, and Planning Services. As can be seen in Table 3A, one-half of the respondents who provided Intake, Assessment, & Planning Services offered a combination of one or more approaches to assessment. Not one respondent relied upon a psychometric only approach and one used a work samples only approach. The remaining 40% of the respondents provided only situational assessment in which the individual’s abilities are assessed on the work

¹As indicated on Table 2, 29 respondents provided Intake, Assessment, and Planning Services, however, the total in Table 3A equals 30 due to one respondent’s provision of both situational assessment and “other” programming,

site in the CRP or community. The two respondents to the other category indicated that they utilized a career planning and an interviewing assessment approach.

Table 3A. Specific Programs Provided Under Intake, Assessment, and Planning Services

Program	Respondents = 29	
	Frequency	Percent
Combination of Any Two or All Three of the Programs Below	15	50
Situational Assessment Only	12	40.0
Other	2	6.6
Work Samples Only	1	3.3
Psychometric Testing Only	0	0.0
Total	30	100

Table 3B presents the various titles of services provided under Intake, Assessment, and Planning. Respondents were asked to provide up to three service titles, therefore the total number of titles (43) exceeds the number of respondents providing services within Intake, Assessment, and Planning. Titles were divided into two categories: General Intake, Assessment, and Planning (37) and Assessment for Program Entrance (6).

Table 3B. Titles of Services Provided Under Intake, Assessment, and Planning

Titles	Frequency
General Intake, Assessment, and Planning Titles	37
Vocational Assessment/Vocational Evaluation	15
Intake/Admission/Screening	8
Planning Services	3
IEP Meeting	3
Situational Assessment	3
Center-based (Assessment)	1

Community-based (Assessment)	1
Employee Development	1
Individual Habilitation	1
Transition	1
Assessment for Program Entrance Titles	6
Work Experience Program	2
Work Skills Training	2
Affirmative Industry	1
Supported Employment	1
Total	43

Under the general titles, Vocational Assessment/Vocational Evaluation was the most common service title in this area (15), followed by Intake/Admission/Screening (8). The remaining titles referred to an event like the IEP, the goal of a program-like transition, or the type of assessment such as center-based. While it was expected that Vocational Evaluation would be used most often since CRPs receive funding from Vocational Rehabilitation, CRPs also appear to provide programs specific to the needs of youth in transition.

There were six titles used that appear to reflect an assessment that was related to entrance to specific programs such as work experience, work skills training, and supported employment. One CRP referred to an Affirmative Industry which is a CRP that attempts to replicate the regular business environment in an integrated setting focusing on workers with disabilities.

Occupational Skill Development Services. The majority of the 16 respondents to Occupational Skill Development Services provided programs in assembly operations (81.3%) and janitorial (75%). Nearly half also provided skill development programs in food service (50%) and salvaging manufactured goods (43.8 %). The remaining six activities were checked by 25% or less of the respondents.

Table 4A. Specific Programs Provided Under

Occupational Skill Development Services

Program	Respondents = 16	
	Frequency	Percent
Assembly Operations	13	81.3
Janitorial	12	75
Food Services	8	50
Salvage of Manufactured Items	7	43.8
Lawn Maintenance	4	25
Retail Sales	3	18.8
Other	3	18.8
Prime Manufacturing	2	12.5
Computer Training	2	12.5
Graphic Communications	1	6.3
Total	55	

While respondents provided a broad range of programs under Occupational Skill Development Services, the titles for the Occupational Skill Development area tends to suggest that much of the training occurs on the job rather than as a formal skill training course. Only three of the titles presented in Table 4B include a technical training area: Construction Skills Training, Retail Sales Training, and Service Technician Training. The rest of the titles refer to general skill development and indicate that CRPs tend to use their own work setting to provide “on-the-job” training for Occupational Skill Development.

Table 4B. Titles of Services Provided Under Occupational Skill Development

Titles	Frequency
Work Experience Program	4
Supported Employment	2
Affirmative Industry	1
Construction Skills Training	1
Customized Job Training	1
Day Training and Habilitation	1

Employment Skills Development	1
Enclave	1
Hands-on in Shop	1
Independent Placements	1
Retail Skills Training	1
Service Technician Training	1
Transition	1
Work Adjustment	1
Work Service	1
Total	19

Employment Development Services. The total number of respondents providing services in Employment Development was 22 with Table 5A presenting the specific programs provided under this area. The most frequently provided programs in this area were community-based work adjustment training (77.3%), center-based work adjustment training (68.2%), and formal on-the-job training (63.6%). The titles of services provided in this area, shown in Table 5B where as expected, the most common title was Work Adjustment. The title of On-the-Job Training was reported by two of the 22 respondents providing services in this area, while all other titles were reported by only one respondent.

Table 5A. Specific Programs Provided Under Employment Development Services

Program	Respondents = 22	
	Frequency	Percent
Community-based Work-Adjustment Training	17	77.3
Center-based Work Adjustment Training	15	68.2
Formal On-the-Job Training	14	63.6
Community Survival Skills	6	27.3
Remedial Skills for Vocational Training	3	13.6
School-based Work Adjustment Training	1	4.5
Other	1	4.5

Total	57	
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Table 5B. Titles of Services Provided Under Employment Development

Titles	Frequency
Work Adjustment	10
Employee Readiness Training	2
On-the-Job Training	2
Affirmative Industry	1
Community Participation	1
Employee Development	1
Functional Academics	1
Integrated Day Service	1
Job Club	1

Transition	1
Work Training	1
Total	22

Job Placement Services. The specific programs for the 23 respondents providing Job Placement Services are given in Table 6A. There was a surprising commonality among the respondents on the specific activities provided. The most frequently cited programs were resume development and identification of employers for job search (87%) which were followed closely by referral information on adult service agency providers (82.6%) and information on benefits (78.3%). More than half also provided services to students working in an employment setting, mock face-to-face interviewing, job search strategies, and employer interviews by students (65.2% - 69.6%). Telephone interviewing (mock or real) was used by less than a third of the respondents and none of the respondents used the Other category for this area. The consistency in programs carried over to the titles. In Table 5B, the most common titles of services used in this area were Job Placement (8) and Job Development (8). The remaining titles were reported by only one or two respondents.

Table 6A. Specific Programs Provided Under Job Placement Services

Program	Respondents = 23	
	Frequency	Percent
Resume Development	20	87
Identify Employers for Job Search	20	87
Provide Referral Information on Adult Service Agency Providers	19	82.6

Provide Information on Benefits	18	78.3
Students Begin Working in an Employment Setting	16	69.6
Mock Face-to-Face Interviewing	15	65.2
Job Search Strategies	15	65.2
Employer Interviews by Students	15	65.2
Telephone Interviews by Students	7	30.4
Mock Telephone Interviewing	6	26.1
Other	0	0
Total	151	

Table 6B. Titles of Services Provided Under Job Placement

Titles	Frequency
Job Development	8
Job Placement	8
Supported Employment	2
Case Management	1
Community-based Employment	1
Enclave	1

Follow-up/Retention	1
Job Club	1
Job Skills Readiness	1
Work Adjustment Training	1
Total	25

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Post-Placement Services. Tables 7A and 7B present specific programs and the most common titles provided by the 23 respondents providing Post-Placement Services. Nearly all of the respondents provided a One-on-One Job Coaching program (95.7%). There was a strong emphasis on providing Natural Supports (87.0 %), Follow Along Services, and Advocacy/Crisis Intervention (78.3%). At least 60% of the respondents also provided Assistive Technology, Job Re-Engineering and Design, and Assisting in Obtaining Services From Other Agencies. A little less than half, provided Assistance in Obtaining Benefits (47.8%). Given the emphasis on job coaching, it is not surprising that the most common title of services in this area was Job Coaching. Two of the respondents reported Support Services as a title used in this area with the remaining titles used by only one respondent.

Table 7A. Specific Programs Provided Under Post-Placement Services

Program	Respondents = 23	
	Frequency	Percent
One-on-One Job Coaching	22	95.7
Developing Natural Supports	20	87.0
Advocacy/Crisis Intervention	18	78.3
Provide Follow-Along Services	19	82.6
Job Re-engineering or Design	15	65.2
Application of Assistive Technology	15	65.2
Assist in Obtaining Services From Other Agencies	14	60.9
Assist in Obtaining Benefits	11	47.8
Other	4	17.4
Total	138	

Table 7B. Titles of Services Provided Under Post-Placement

Titles	Frequency
Job Coaching	8
Support Services	2
Case Management	1
Community-based Employment	1
Customized Arrangement	1
Follow-Along Job Support Services	1
Total	14

Other Supports and/or Forms of Assistance. The 11 respondents' replies to activities provided in Other Supports and/or Forms of Assistance are presented in Tables 8A and 8B. Respondents cited 13 different aspects covering a variety of needs of youth in transition. The most frequently provided program was Adaptive/Medical Equipment Services (36.4%) followed by Community Orientation, Independent Living, and Recreation and Leisure (all at 27.3%).

Various other programs were provided in this area by two or less of the respondents. The titles of services provided in this area was also extremely varied. Two respondents reportedly used the title Community Assistance, while 11 other titles were reported by just one respondent each.

Table 8A. Specific Programs Provided Under Other Supports and/or Forms of Assistance

Program	Respondents = 11	
	Frequency	Percent
Adaptive/Medical Equipment Services	4	36.4
Community Orientation	3	27.3
Independent Living Skill Training	3	27.3
Recreation and Leisure	3	27.3
Coordination With Other Service Providers	2	18.2
Counseling	2	18.2
Residential Options	2	18.2
Training on Use of City Bus	2	18.2
Citizen Advocacy	1	9.1
Presentation on Work Skills/Ethics	1	9.1
Respite Care	1	9.1
Supported Parenting	1	9.1
Tours to Adult Service Providers	1	9.1
Total	26	

Table 8B. Titles of Services Provided Under Other Supports and/or Forms of Assistance

Titles	Frequency
Community Assistance	2
Coordination	1
Equipment Loan	1
Home and Daily Living	1
Housing Maintenance	1
Individual Supports	1
Integrated Day Services	1
Interpersonal Communication	1
Leisure	1
Presentations	1
Store Certifications	1
Transition	1
Total	13

The Type of Consumers and Referral Sources of CRPs

Table 9 presents the ethnic distribution of consumers served by the total 59 CRP respondents who completed this section of the survey. The survey asked respondents to report the ethnic categories based on all consumers assuming that the distribution for youth with disabilities would be similar to the distribution for the adult consumers of the CRP. Independent T-Test comparisons were made to determine if there were differences between those who had formal contracts with school districts (n=26) and those who did not (n=33). Nearly 90 percent (89.6%) of consumers served in Wisconsin and Minnesota are of the White ethnic category. Various minority ethnic groups made up the remaining 10 percent of consumers in this two-state region. A majority of this remaining 10 percent are from the Black ethnic category (6.1%). About one and a half percent of consumers from American Indian or Alaskan native and

Hispanic ethnic groups with the Asian/Pacific Islander making up about one percent.

Table 9. Ethnic Characteristics of Vocational Consumers

	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p
White				1.630	57	.109
Total	59	89.6034	14.7694			
Contracts	26	93.0846	11.4982			
No Contracts	33	86.8606	16.5674			
Black				-2.094	57	.042
Total	59	6.1119	10.8479			
Contracts	26	3.1231	5.4717			
No Contracts	33	8.4667	13.3013			
Hispanic				-1.776	57	.083
Total	59	1.3349	2.0790			
Contracts	26	.8446	1.0702			
No Contracts	33	1.7212	2.5671			
Asian/Pacific Islander				.243	57	.809
Total	59	.9185	2.0444			
Contracts	26	.9919	2.1821			
No Contracts	33	.8606	1.9623			

American Indian or Alaskan Native						
Total	59	1.5093	2.2420	-1.812	57	.075
Contracts	26	.9250	1.7572			
No Contracts	33	1.9697	2.4904			
Other²						
Total	59	.4915	2.8790	.990	57	.332
Contracts	26	.9615	4.3126			
No Contracts	33	.1212	.4151			

The consumer ethnic distribution of those respondents having formal contracts with school districts was compared to those not having formal contracts. There were no differences among the White, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and other ethnic groups. The mean for those consumers of the Black ethnic group was significantly higher for those respondents who did not have formal contracts with school districts ($t=-2.09$, $df=57$, $p<.05$). A potentially similar trend for greater numbers in the American Indian/Alaskan Native category and Hispanic ethnic groups being served by those CRPs without contracts is suggested, but the differences did not reach the required minimum level of significance in this study ($t=-1.81$, $df=57$, $p= .075$ and $t=-1.78$, $df=57$, $p= .083$, respectively).

Table 10 presents the distribution of referral sources for consumers served by respondents. The survey asked respondents to report the distribution among referral sources based on all consumers, the assumption again being that the distribution will follow the same

²As indicated on Table 9, 49% of consumers served by the respondents were of the Other ethnic category, the Other ethnic categories reported by respondents included Deaf and Sudanese.

trend for youth. Referral sources are closely tied to the type of target population. State vocational rehabilitation provides funding for a variety of severe disabilities for a specific time period usually up to 18 months. Developmental disabilities provides long-term support for individuals with developmental disabilities and mental retardation which are administered at the county level as is funding for those with mental illness through Mental Health Funds. Other sources for CRPs are for welfare to work at the local county level and for Workforce Development through regional areas to serve the economically disadvantaged.

The funding source for nearly one-half (47.2%) of the consumers served by respondents was Developmental Disabilities. Another one-quarter (26.2%) of respondents were funded by Vocational Rehabilitation. The referral sources for the remaining 25 percent were distributed among Mental Health (13.2%), Local School District Referrals (6.2%), Welfare to Work (3.1%), Other Sources of Funding (2.1%), and Other Economical Disadvantages (2.0%).

A comparison was also made of the distribution of referral sources for those respondents having formal contracts with school districts and those not providing services to school districts. There were no differences except for Mental Health source. As was true for ethnicity, the mean number of consumers funded by Mental Health was significantly higher for those CRPs who did **not** have formal contracts ($t=-2.09$, $df=43$, $p<.05$).

Table 10. Referral Sources for Consumers

	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p
Developmental Disabilities				1.109	57	.272
Total	59	47.2288	38.2156			
Contracts	27	53.2222	36.3787			
No Contracts	32	42.1719	39.5574			
Mental Health				-2.082	43.252	.043
Total	59	13.1949	21.1961			
Contracts	27	7.4444	11.0813			
No Contracts	32	18.0469	26.1628			

Vocational Rehabilitation						
Total	59	26.1525	31.1386	-.434	57	.666
Contracts	27	24.2222	30.1373			
No Contracts	32	27.7813	32.3476			
Welfare to Work						
Total	59	3.0856	7.7884	-.110	57	.913
Contracts	27	2.9630	4.8949			
No Contracts	32	3.1891	9.6630			
Other Economical Disadvantages						
Total	59	2.0178	10.0368	-1.412	31.249	.168
Contracts	27	.1852	.7863			
No Contracts	32	3.5641	13.5117			
Local School District Referrals						
Total	59	6.1864	14.5395	1.470	57	.147
Contracts	27	9.1852	19.9828			
No Contracts	32	3.6563	6.7947			
Other Sources						
Total	59	2.1186	6.0517	.766	57	.447
Contracts	27	2.7778	8.0543			
No Contracts	32	1.5625	3.6627			

The Types of Outcomes Achieved by Consumers Receiving CRP Services

The final question asked respondents to indicate what type of outcomes are achieved by their consumers. The respondents were given definitions of the employment models and asked to rank those which they provided. These definitions can be found in Appendix A which contains the survey instrument. The mean ranks for the eight different models are given in Table 11.

Table 11. Vocational Outcomes of Consumers

	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p
Competitive Employment				.239	46	.812
Total	48	2.8958	1.4327			
Contracts	21	2.9524	1.5645			
No Contracts	27	2.8519	1.3503			
Individual Supported Employment				1.051	50	.298
Total	52	2.4615	2.8933			
Contracts	24	2.9167	4.1485			
No Contracts	28	2.0714	.8997			
Enclaves in Industry				-3.139	32	.004
Total	34	3.0588	1.2539			
Contracts	19	2.5263	1.0733			
No Contracts	15	3.7333	1.1629			
Mobile Work Crew				1.031	23	.313
Total	25	4.0400	1.3687			
Contracts	12	4.333	.9847			
No Contracts	13	3.7692	1.6408			
Transitional Employment				.235	6	.822
Total	8	6.1250	1.8077			
Contracts	3	6.3333	.5744			
No Contracts	5	6.0	2.3452			
Entrepreneurial Models				1.633	4	.178
Total	6	6.6667	1.6330			
Contracts	2	8.0	0			
No Contracts	4	6.0	1.6330			
Work Center-Based Employment				-.800	13	.438
Total	15	3.1333	1.9591			
Contracts	8	2.7500	1.6690			
No Contracts	7	3.5714	2.2991			
Other Facility-Based Employment				1.991	22.295	.059
Total	38	2.2368	1.6013			
Contracts	17	2.8235	2.0073			
No Contracts	21	1.7619	.9952			
Other Models³				.063	2	.956
Total	4	3.7500	3.7749			
Contracts	1	4.0	0			
No Contracts	3	3.6667	4.6188			

³As indicated in Table 11, 3.8% of respondents had outcomes in the Other category, the Other outcomes reported by respondents included Affirmative Enterprise and Individual Community Employment

They range from Competitive Employment through community-based supported employment models (Individual, Enclave, and Mobile Work Crews) to traditional sheltered employment (Other Facility-Based Employment). Also included are special employment outcomes for persons with mental illness (Transitional Employment), employment in CRPs who are replicating normal business operations such as the Affirmative Industry (Entrepreneurial Models), and employment in CRPs who have a NISH contract from the federal government (Work Center- based Employment). Each of these models operate somewhat differently than each other with different wage levels and different levels of support (Coker, Osgood, and Ritland Clouse, 1995). The mean ranks in Table 11 are based on one (1.0) equaling the most common outcome for the consumers from that CRP and up to eight (8.0) equaling the least common outcome. If a CRP did not have a particular outcome, they were not to rate that model. Both the rank and number of CRPs ranking the model provide information about the most common outcomes across all CRPs. The Vocational Outcomes are listed in order of the mean rank.

Traditional Sheltered Employment was the most frequent outcome for consumers from the responding CRPs (6.13) followed by Individual Supported Employment (2.46), Competitive Employment (2.90), and Enclaves in Industry (3.06) in the second to fourth positions. Note that the total number of CRPs ranking the outcomes was the highest for Individual Supported Employment (n=52) followed closely by Competitive Employment (n=48) with Other Facility-Based Employment (n=38) and Enclaves in Industry (34) having fewer respondents.

Work Center-Based Employment was the fifth most common outcome at 3.13 over 15 respondents with the Mobile Work Crew averaging 4.04 based on 25 respondents. The least likely outcome was Entrepreneurial Models at 6.67 (n=6) with Transitional Employment just slightly above that at 6.13 (n=8).

A comparison was made of the rankings of the outcomes between those who had contracts with school districts and those who did not. The mean rank for Enclaves in Industry for those CRPs who did not have contracts was greater than the mean rank for those CRPs who did have contracts ($t=-3.14$, $df=32$, $p<.05$.) Thus, consumers from CRPs who have contracts with school districts are more likely to have Enclaves in Industry as an outcome than do those consumers from CRPs without contracts. There was a potential trend for Other Facility-Based Employment being a less likely outcome for CRPs contracting with school districts, but the significance level was not achieved ($t=1.991$, $df=22$, $p=.059$). Even so, it would make sense that if one outcome is more common for those who contract over those who do not, then another outcome would be less common. While it is certain that Enclaves are more common, it is not firmly established that traditional sheltered employment (Other Facility-Based Employment) is the outcome that is less frequently provided by those who have contracts with school districts.

CHAPTER V

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the extent to which school districts access CRPs to assist their students with disabilities in the transition from school to work. In this chapter, the data from 107 surveys sent to all CRPs in a two-state region will be discussed. Sixty-three of the 107 surveys were returned for a 58.9% rate of return, indicating high interest by CRPs in collaborating with school districts to serve students with disabilities in their transition from school to work. This chapter discusses the findings of the study in relationship to the extent to which school districts contract with CRPs, the types of services provided to school districts by CRPs, the type of youth served by CRPs, and the types of outcomes achieved by consumers receiving CRP services.

The Extent to Which School Districts Contract With CRPs

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, P.L. 101-476) requires that transition planning include different professionals from various community agencies to establish a “coordinated set of activities.” It appears that school districts frequently utilize the services provided by CRPs as nearly three-fourths of the CRPs had some type of contact with students with disabilities and about one-half had formal contracts with school districts. Only one-quarter of the CRPs had no relationship with students with disabilities.

The Types of Services Provided to School Districts by CRPs

The survey asked CRPs to list the types of services designed to enhance the transition from school to work. Specifically, the survey requested that CRPs provide details about the assessment of the student’s abilities, the way in which skills specific to an occupation were

provided, and how general work skills were developed. They were also asked how placement in an employment setting occurred and whether they provided post-placement services for job retention. Finally, CRPs were asked about the provision of other services to meet the special needs of persons with different disabilities or situations.

CRPs provided services in all of these areas. Almost all of them provided Intake, Assessment, and Planning Services and about three-fourths provided Employment Development, Job Placement, and Post-Placement Services. Only about one-half provided Occupational Skill Development Services and less than one-half provided Other Supports and/or Assistance.

Intake, Assessment, and Planning Services. Before any transition planning can begin, IDEA clearly states that assessment must occur to ensure that the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) will be based on the needs and abilities of the individual (Harrington, 1997). Intake, Assessment, and Planning is the first step in developing an effective transition plan and is required by IDEA (P.L. 101-476) in providing transition services to students with disabilities, therefore it is expected that nearly all CRPs would provide such services. IDEA also requires that within the student's IEP certain areas be addressed, including the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, community experiences, and instruction.

The vocational assessment, as defined by The National Transition Alliance (1997), must collect various information on the individual including the identification of individual characteristics, education, training, and placement needs. About 90% of the CRPs provided a combination approach or relied on situational assessment only rather than relying on psychometrics or work samples only. CRPs tend to use their production operations or community job placements as the basis for evaluating student's potential utilizing in vitro (situational) assessments. These types of assessments rely on observations obtained while the student is on

the job and allows for examination of the student's ability to complete tasks, respond to supervision, and form relationships with co-workers. CRPs tend to use a situational assessment or a combination of approaches rather than relying solely on the psychometric or work sample approach.

Occupational Skill Development Services. The IDEA (P.L. 101-476) mandates that within a student's IEP the area of instruction, also known as curriculum, be addressed. Instruction is to be provided not only in general academic skills but also in other areas such as vocational education and skill specific training (P.L. 101-476). This type of training refers to the "hard skill" area which is specific to an occupation. (The next section on Employment Development Skills refers to the "soft skills" that are a part of any job.) The programs most frequently provided by CRPs under Occupational Skill Development were assembly operations (81.3%) and janitorial (75%), followed by food services (50%), salvage of manufactured items (43.8%), and lawn maintenance (25%). To a lesser extent were retail sales and other (18.8%), prime manufacturing and computer training (12.5%), and graphic communications (6.3%). A wide variety of titles was provided under Occupational Skill Development but showed no consistent pattern (see Table 4B). It is important to note that of the 15 different titles provided just three referred to a specific skill training related to an occupational track.

The relatively low reported utilization of Occupational Skill Development may be due to several reasons. Even though skill specific training is a component of the instructional area addressed by the student's IEP, the field of special education has only recently seen the actual development of curriculum that focuses on skill specific training (West, Taymans, & Gopal, 1997). School districts may just be beginning to emphasize this area prior to exiting school. Another factor may be that school districts tend to look to technical colleges as the primary

source for technical training.

As suggested by the titles, the occupation skills that CRPs develop appear to parallel the production focus of the CRPs through on-the-job training. CRPs provide skill training in food services, janitorial, lawn care, and assembly/packaging areas. This type of training is not often found at the technical colleges. The lower utilization of skill training may stem from school districts' lack of emphasis on skill training, a lack of interest in the type of skill training provided by the CRPs, or a lower need for such type of skill training found in CRPs.

Employment Development Services. According to IDEA (P.L. 101-476), various employment development activities must also be provided to meet the needs of students. Employment Development Services address transition goals by providing general employability skills relating to employment and post-school adult living objectives. Employment Development Services covers the basic “soft skills” that are necessary for success in any job and is one of the strengths of CRPs. Over 60 percent of the CRPs provided community-based work adjustment training, center-based work adjustment training, and formal on-the-job training. About one-quarter of the CRPs offered community survival skills and less than 15% provided remedial skills for vocational training. Less than 5% of CRPs provided programs in school-based work adjustment training and other program areas.

In contrast to the wide range of titles provided under Occupational Skill Development, a very consistent pattern of titles emerged under Employment Development Services. These titles focus on work adjustment training whether it is within the CRP or in the community for developing general work skills to prepare the student for the world of work. CRPs have the ability to utilize either their own work setting in which they have the flexibility to structure the work setting and provide close supervision, or use direct community placement along with the

necessary supervision and support.

Job Placement Services. According to IDEA, to meet further transition goals related to employment and post-school adult living objectives, activities must be provided that lead to actual job placement. CRPs provide such activities within their Job Placement Services that includes a very specific set of activities following a consistent pattern. As was true for work adjustment training, CRPs' strength lies in providing job placement services. Over three-quarters of CRPs provided programs for resume development, identification of employers for job search, referral information on adult service agency providers, and information on benefits. Over 60% provide mock face-to-face interviewing, actual employer interviews by students, and place students in employment settings. Mock and actual telephone interviews by students were utilized by less than one-third of CRPs. The titles for Job Placement Services were consistent with the services for achieving actual placement in a job.

Post-Placement Services. Similar to Job Placement, a consistent set of activities suggested CRPs follow a standardized pattern for Post-Placement Services. Again over 80% of CRPs provide one-on-one job coaching, development of natural supports, and follow-along services. Sixty percent or more of CRPs provided advocacy/crisis intervention, job re-engineering or design and the application of assistive technology, and assistance in obtaining services from other agencies while nearly one-half provided assistance in obtaining benefits. Less than 20% of CRPs provided other services in this area.

One-on-one job coaching was utilized to meet the needs of students with transition goals related to employment objectives, as mandated by IDEA (P.L. 101-476). Other programs provided in this services area, such as assistance in obtaining benefits and services from other agencies, would meet the community experience needs of students mandated by IDEA.

Other Services. CRPs provided many other forms of support ranging from adaptive/medical equipment services and respite care to community orientation, independent living skills training, and recreation and leisure services. None of the 13 activities provided in this service area were offered consistently across CRPs, with the highest frequency only being four (see Table 8A). The titles of services provided in this area followed a similar pattern. While 13 titles were provided, ranging from Community Assistance to Equipment Loan, the highest frequency here was only two. This pattern of high variety and low consistency indicates that CRPs are very flexible in customizing activities to meet the needs of each consumer.

The Type of Youth Served by CRPs

As would be expected for Wisconsin and Minnesota, 90% of consumers served by CRPs were from White ethnic groups. Half of the minority ethnic groups were Black with remaining consumers spread over Hispanic, American Indian or Alaskan Native, and Asian/Pacific Islander.

The ethnic distribution of consumers served by CRPs having formal contracts with school districts and those not having such contracts was analyzed for differences. In making this comparison there were clearly no differences among White, Hispanic, Asian/Pacific Islander, and other ethnic categories. There was, however, a significantly higher number of consumers of the Black ethnic category served by CRPs not having formal contracts with school districts. One explanation is that school districts are less likely to contract with CRPs who have a higher percentage of Black ethnic groups. Another explanation for this finding may be more market-based rather than a discriminatory bias. It may be that Black ethnic groups in these two states are more numerous in urban areas than rural areas. Urban school districts may be more likely to pool resources and offer transition services within the urban area to serve students with

disabilities internally rather than contracting with CRPs for such services. It is possible that CRPs in urban areas who have a higher concentration of Black ethnic groups are less likely to have formal contracts with school districts than those in rural areas where Black ethnic groups are less numerous and where the school districts seek external community resources for transition services.

The distribution of referral sources for consumers served by CRPs was also examined. Nearly one-half (47.2%) were funded by Developmental Disabilities, while Vocational Rehabilitation served another one-quarter (26.2%). The remaining 25% of consumers were referred by Mental Health (13.2%), Local School District Referrals (6.2%), Welfare to Work (3.1%), Other Sources of Funding (2.1%), and Other Economical Disadvantages (2.0%).

School district referrals did not make up a large percentage of the total consumer referral sources. On average, even those CRPs that had formal contracts with school districts received only about 10 percent (9.2%) of their total referrals from school districts. Those CRPs that did not have formal contracts with school districts received less than four percent (3.7%) of their total referrals from school districts. The age range for students in transition from school to work is only 16 to 22, whereas the age range for the remaining consumers served, about 18 to 64, is much larger. Because CRPs serve the adult population, these lower rates are to be expected.

The only difference among referral sources for those who had contracts and those who did not was found for mental health referrals. CRPs without contracts with school districts tend to serve a greater number of individuals from mental health referrals. It may be that those who serve this population are not as active in seeking referrals from school districts as other CRPs. Or it may be that those who serve more persons with mental illness may not be viewed as an attractive transition resource by school districts.

The Types of Outcomes Achieved by Consumers Receiving CRP Services

There has been concern over the type of outcomes achieved by CRPs from several sources. Since the mid-1980s, questions have been raised as to the extent to which CRPs provide only sheltered employment in segregated setting with unskilled jobs and low wages. Supported employment in the community gained much attention over this time. The data shows that CRPs have responded to these criticisms by providing an array of employment models. While traditional sheltered is still the most common outcome for all consumers from CRPs, individual supported employment was offered by more CRPs than any other employment model. Job coaching and follow-along were cited as post-placement services and is consistent with the emergence of supported employment. Other forms of supported employment include group approaches such as enclaves in industry and mobile work crews.

There are two factors that should be noted about the provision of supported employment in the two states. The Wisconsin Division of Vocational Rehabilitation defines supported employment only as referring to the individual models and does not recognize the group forms (enclaves and mobile work crews) as being supported employment models. Wisconsin's policies increase the use of the individual model over the other two. In contrast, Minnesota not only recognizes all three models as supported employment, but also provides additional state funding to encourage the use of supported employment models. Minnesota leads the nation in the ratio of supported employment placements to the population served in CRPs. Consequently, the sampling design may have resulted in a positive bias toward the use of supported employment placements in general, and a positive bias toward the use of the individual model specifically that may not be true for other states.

The comparison of the outcomes for CRPs who contract with school districts to those

who did not indicated a significant difference in the use of the enclave model. CRPs contracting with school districts were more likely to use the enclave model than those who do not. This model involves the placement of a small group of persons with disabilities in a competitive employment setting. The group works as a unit within the industry and receives supervision from the CRP and the company representative. The CRP often contracts with the company and pays the wages of the group members and the CRP supervisor. Enclaves provide an intermediate step toward more independent functioning and may be a tool favored for the transition from school to work. The outcome data from this study is for all consumers of the CRP and cannot confirm the validity of this explanation for the differences between contracting and non-contracting CRPs.

The relationship between services provided and outcomes is an important one. Those CRPs who do not provide supported employment tend not to have the capacity or desire to provide long-term support to students in the community. Another consideration is the type of employment within the CRP. CRPs who consider themselves a Work Center or an Affirmative Industry tend to have more sophisticated work settings, which replicates competitive employment. Though there are CRPs who provide only supported employment without having a production capacity and there are CRPs who provide only employment within the CRP, it is much more common for CRPs to provide an array of employment models. None of the employment models are mutually exclusive and the configuration of services and emphasis on outcomes is a decision left to each CRP. Schools districts need to be aware of the way that each CRP is configured to determine the appropriateness of the CRP's program to the transition needs of each student. Student characteristics must also be considered for they impact on the progress and direction of the transition plan.

Conclusions and Recommendations

To meet the mandates set forth by the IDEA (P.L. 101-476) school districts must provide specific transition services in the areas of assessment, planning, training, placement, and follow-up (Levinson, 1998). The services offered by CRPs in Intake, Assessment, and Planning, Occupational Skill Development, Employment Development, Job Placement, and Post-Placement correspond directly with the services sought by school districts. To begin the transition process IDEA clearly states the importance of student-centered assessment and planning. This type of assessment and planning is offered by almost all CRPs and adequately assesses the needs of each individual by using a combination approach to assessment.

Further transition services in planning and training are provided by CRP services in Occupational Skill Development and Employment Development. Because CRPs typically offer a wide variety of activities in these service areas they have the ability to be flexible, and, as it was in the initial assessment process, the transition process continues to be student-centered.

Following assessment, planning, and training, schools must provide transition services in placement. CRPs offer these types of activities in their Job Placement Services. Because this area involves the actual process of getting a job, CRPs typically offer a very standardized set of activities, ensuring that students will be placed successfully in a job appropriate to their needs, abilities, and interests.

Lastly, schools must provide follow-up services to students in transition from school to work. CRPs offer these types of services in Post-Placement. Like the activities in Job Placement, Post-Placement activities are standardized, technical, and consistent. Such activities occur on the job and ensure that the placement is a success.

While data on the actual relationship between CRPs and school districts is extremely

limited, it has long since been recognized that interagency collaboration of this type is a key factor in the provision of transition services to students with disabilities (Anderson & Asselin, 1996; Neuber, 1997; Getzel & deFur, 1997). Furthermore, IDEA (P.L. 101-476) describes transition services as “a *coordinated* set of activities” and requires that it include different professionals from various community agencies, such as CRPs.

The study shows that school districts frequently utilize the services provided by CRPs, and the high rate at which the surveys were returned indicates high interest by CRPs in the effects of these collaborative efforts. It would be worthwhile to note whether school districts currently rely more or less on CRPs than in the past, however, due to the lack of data in this area an increase or decrease cannot be indicated. Further research might provide this type of comparison.

School districts must provide students with disabilities specific services in the transition from school to work, according to IDEA (P.L. 101-476). The services provided by CRPs are congruent to those activities that must be provided by school districts, and CRPs are an available resource in every community. School districts need to be aware of the way in which CRPs are configured with regard to services and outcomes. CRPs are very flexible in terms of customizing individual programs to meet the needs of youth in transition. School districts will likely find that CRPs will work with them to develop a range of services that can assist an individual student, or a group of students, to successfully transition from school to a wide variety of work settings. Such programs can be entirely community-based, only CRP-based, or a combination of CRP-based and community-based, depending on the goals of the individual student and their families.

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APPENDIX A

Cover Letters and Instrument