

Secondary Education and Transitional Services for Youth with Disabilities (CFDA No. 84.158)

I. Legislation

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), P.L. 101-476, Part C, Section 626 (20 U.S.C. 1425), expired September 30, 1995; operated under the authorization of the appropriations act in FY 1996.

II. Funding History

<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Appropriation</u>	<u>Fiscal Year</u>	<u>Appropriation</u>
1984	\$6,000,000	1991	\$14,639,000
1985	6,330,000	1992	19,000,000
1986	6,316,000	1993	21,966,000
1987	7,300,000	1994	21,966,000
1988	7,372,000	1995	23,966,000
1989	7,284,000	1996	23,966,000
1990	7,989,000		

III. Analysis of Program Performance

A. Goals and Objectives

This program is intended to strengthen and coordinate education and related services for youth with disabilities who are currently in school or who recently left school, to help them make the transition to postsecondary education, vocational training, competitive employment (including supported employment), continuing education, independent and community living, or adult services; to stimulate the development and improvement of programs for special education at the secondary level; and to stimulate the improvement of the vocational and life skills of students with disabilities to better prepare them for the transition to adult life and services.

B. Strategies to Achieve the Goals

Services Supported

Awards are authorized to institutions of higher education, state education agencies, local education agencies, and other appropriate public and private, nonprofit institutions and agencies. This program serves as a primary source of support and assistance to states implementing the transition services requirements of IDEA. Activities supported in FY 1995 included annual funding for 34 states (under five-year cooperative agreements) to improve transition services for youth with disabilities; evaluation and technical assistance for states implementing cooperative projects to improve transition services; technical assistance to inform personnel responsible for transition services and school-to-work opportunities projects on the most effective methods for promoting the transition of youth with disabilities to gainful employment, postsecondary education, and independent living; and model

demonstration projects to identify and develop alternatives for youth with disabilities who have dropped out of school (or are at risk of dropping out).

C. Program Performance—Indicators of Impact and Effectiveness

Information on the transition experiences of youth with disabilities in secondary school and beyond is provided through the National Longitudinal Transition Study, which is following a sample of more than 8,000 youth who were ages 13 through 21 and secondary school students in special education in the 1985–86 school year.

This study contains multiple indicators of performance, including information on the population receiving transitional services (disability, gender, ethnicity, functional ability, household composition, socioeconomic status, age, school status, and grade level), services provided, and program outcomes such as course taking, placements, performance, school completion, social activities, personal and residential independence, employment, postsecondary enrollment, and productive engagement.

In the 1990–91 school year, more than half of youth with disabilities who left secondary school in a two-year period did so by graduating (56 percent), and three-fourths of those graduates were reported by their schools to have been awarded regular diplomas. However, almost one-third of those with disabilities who left school dropped out of school (32 percent), a significantly higher dropout rate than for the general population of youth.

Youth who graduated from high school and took vocational education in their last year in high school, or had work experience as part of their vocational training were significantly more likely than other youth to be competitively employed after high school. Forty-six percent of youth with disabilities were reported by their parents to be employed in the summer of 1987, a substantially lower rate than for youth in the general population (59 percent).

Despite increasing opportunities for youth with disabilities to pursue education after high school, only 14 percent of youth who had been out of secondary school up to two years had enrolled in postsecondary schools in the preceding year. This rate is significantly below the rate of 56 percent for students in the general population. Enrollment was highest for youth who were deaf or visually impaired (about 33 percent of youth) and lowest for youth classified as mentally retarded, multiply handicapped, or deaf/blind (fewer than 10 percent). Postsecondary vocational/trade schools were the most commonly attended by youth with disabilities (9 percent). Only 4 percent attended a two-year or community college, and 1 percent attended a four-year college.

Twenty-two percent of youth with disabilities who had been out of secondary school between one and two years had not been engaged in any education- or work-related activities (so-called productive activities) in the preceding year. Engagement was most common for youth who were hard of hearing, learning disabled, or deaf, and lowest for those with multiple handicaps.

The foregoing data are based on the 1990–91 school year, prior to the implementation of the State System for Transition Services Program, which currently supports 30 projects. The intent of the state projects is to improve access to necessary transition services for all youth with disabilities by facilitating interagency cooperation. Together with the model demonstration projects supported under the Secondary Education and Transitional Services for Youth with Disabilities Program, more school districts are implementing exemplary transition services that will improve student outcomes.

IV. Planned Studies

None.

V. Sources of Information

1. Sixteenth Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Education of the Handicapped Act (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 1994).
2. Individuals with Disabilities Education Act: Program Funded Activities: Fiscal Year 1995 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, 1995).
3. Youth with Disabilities: How Are They Doing? (Menlo Park, CA: SRI International, 1991).
4. Dropouts with Disabilities (Menlo Park, CA: SRI International, 1991).
5. What Happens Next? Trends in Postsecondary School Outcomes of Youth With Disabilities (Menlo Park, CA: SRI International, 1992).
6. Program files.

VI. Contacts for Further Information

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