

Post School Outcomes 2010 Interviews with Special Education Students One Year Out



States are required to report on education and employment outcomes for students leaving school on an IEP. In FFY 2009, ODE established new baseline data, measurable and rigorous targets, and revised improvement activities for this Indicator on the State Performance Plan. Oregon districts reported 4,295 youth ages 14 to 21 left special education during the 2009-2010 school year that did not return for services the following year. Of these, 2,708 were included in the sample selected for a follow-up interview one year after leaving using a stratified sample process. Interviews were completed in 2010 with 1,911 youth or their family members for a response rate of 71%. Within one year of leaving school:

1. 462 respondent leavers were enrolled in higher education. (24.2%)
2. 505 respondent leavers were engaged in competitive employment (and not counted in 1 above). (26.4%)
3. 137 of respondent leavers were enrolled in some other postsecondary education or training (and not counted in 1 or 2 above). (7.2%)
4. 158 of respondent leavers were engaged in some other employment (and not counted in 1, 2, or 3 above). (8.3%)
5. 649 were not in any of the above groups – not engaged by the Federal definition.

Federal reporting requires the number and percents for three measurements:

- A. **24.2%** = 462 youth enrolled in higher education at least 1 term divided by the 1,911 of respondent youth who are no longer in secondary school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school
- B. **50.6%** = 967 youth enrolled in higher education or competitively employed within one year of leaving high school divided by the 1,911 of respondent youth who are no longer in secondary school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school
- C. **66.0%** = 1,262 youth who are no longer in secondary school, had IEPs in effect at the time they left school and were enrolled in higher education, or in some other postsecondary education or training program; or competitively employed or in some other employment divided by the 1,911 of respondent youth who are no longer in secondary school and had IEPs in effect at the time they left school

Based on the above baseline data, targets have been established for the state and districts based on the three measurements. For 2011 follow up interviews, the measurable and rigorous state targets are A = 25%, B=51%, and C= 67%. For the districts, measurement C is the key focus, as either higher education or competitive employment outcomes can be influenced strongly by the economy or family situation, however the overall 'engagement' during that first year out of school is a goal for the districts preparation of students.

The following sections summarize the demographics of the students, the procedures used in collecting the data, and results for the measurements. For Federal reporting requirements, some categories are collapsed (i.e. all non-white students are summarized into a 'minority' category). However, for state reporting if the number of responses is sufficient to protect confidentiality, data from more subgroups is provided for review.

What do these numbers mean? Are they representative?

Since not all of the 4295 students leaving were contacted for interviews, the group that was interviewed is compared against the actual distribution of leavers in four areas: gender, primary disability, ethnicity, and method of leaving. Oregon reported that the sampled group of interviewed students matched the population of all leavers in all comparison areas except the method of exit. While 302 students who had dropped out of school were interviewed, the drop out group was 6% less than the actual population. A \pm 3% difference is considered representative. Students who drop out often leave without providing contact information, and may not choose to complete the follow up interview when contacted in a larger proportion than other groups. Districts and the state continue to work on strategies to reach as many of these students as they can each year for the follow up interview. For all other comparison groups, the results obtained from the interviewed sample are representative, and can be used to describe the statewide population.

Demographics and procedure

Federally identified demographic variables Of the 1911 student interviews completed in 2010, 66% were male students, and 34% were female, the same percentages found in the overall population of leavers in 2008-2009. The number of interviews completed by students who dropped out (16%) was balanced by a 6% over representation of students leaving with a regular diploma (57%). Students finishing with a modified diploma made up 15% of the population, and 16% of the students interviewed. Students exiting at maximum age, or receiving an alternate certificate made up 11% of both groups. The ethnic participation for the state included 2% Asian, 3% Black, 3% Native American, 12% Hispanic, and 79% Caucasian. The participation for the disability groups included 4% low incidence disabilities, or communication disorders, 8% Emotional Disturbance, Mental Retardation, or Autism, 16% students identified as Other Health Impaired, and 52% with Specific Learning Disabilities.

Other demographic characteristics of interviewed students The follow-up interview process includes students aged 14-21 on the special education Child Count in the year before they exit. The 1911 respondents included 6% who were 14-16 on that Child Count, 74% who were 17-18, and 20% who were 19-21. The grade level for the interviewed students showed 8% left during grades 8-11, where as 92% had attended one or more years of 12th grade. At the time of exit, 93% were in public school, the remainder in private or charter schools, were district transfers, or home schooled with an IEP. The placement category reported included 72% in regular class 80% or more, 16% in a regular class 40-79% of their time, 11% in a regular class less than 40%, and the other 1% were homebound, in a separate or private school, or correction facility.

Procedures Districts were asked to make at least six attempts to complete the interview. However, 68% were completed in one or two attempts, an additional 23% in three or four attempts. Some districts kept trying, and 2% were completed after nine or more attempts. Districts could select the staff to make the calls and complete the interviews: statewide 39% were completed by teachers/specialists, 19% by Educational assistants or Paraprofessionals, 18% by Youth Transition Program personnel (YTP), 12% by clerical staff, 10% by Administrators and 3% by other staff. Interviews could be completed with the former students (53%) with a family member (41%) or other person who knew the situation for the student (7%). Districts have the option of completing an exit interview with students during their last year before exiting, asking about further education and employment plans: 870 of the 1911 students (46%) completed the exit interview.

Districts with 15 or fewer leavers were required to interview all their exited students. Districts with more than 15 leavers were provided with 15 students per building or program to interview. The following table presents information on the districts by size of leaver group.

District Size Information	District size				Total
	<i>Very Small</i>	<i>Small</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Large</i>	
<i>Leavers per district</i>	1-4	5-15	16-50	51-350	
<i>Number of districts</i>	51	48	46	20	165
<i>Total leavers</i>	104	426	1321	2444	4295
<i>Selected for interviews</i>	104	411	899	1294	2708
<i>Number interviewed</i>	48	277	633	953	1911
<i>Response rate</i>	46%	67%	70%	74%	71%
<i>Engagement Rate</i>	52%	62%	64%	69%	66%

<i>Locale descriptions</i>	<i>Very small</i>	<i>Small</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Large</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Rural, outside or inside large/med city</i>	47	28	8	1	84
<i>Town (population 2,500 – 25,000)</i>		13	15	3	31
<i>Suburb, urban fringe of mid size or lg city</i>	3	7	21	6	37
<i>City (mid-size or large city)</i>	1		2	10	13

What have we learned about Oregon's special education students one year after leaving?

The outcome categories reported here were changed by federal requirement for the students leaving in 2008-09. Previously students could be engaged in work, school, or both. Currently, a student is included in the top category for which their experiences in the 12 months after leaving high school fit. If their education includes a 2 or 4 year higher education program with attendance of at least one complete term, they are excluded from the competitive employment group, regardless of whether or not they might meet the definition.

Higher Education Of the 1911 students, 462 were enrolled on a full- or part-time basis in a community college (two-year program), or college/university (four- or more year program) for at least one complete term, at any time in the year since leaving high school. This has been broken down by the size of the district providing services. For those districts with 1-4 total leavers, 8% were in this group. For districts with 5-15 leavers, 19% went on to higher education. For districts with 16-50 leavers, 23% were in the higher education group, and for the largest districts with 50-350 leavers, 27% were reported in the higher education group.

Competitive Employment Of the 1449 students who were not in the higher education group, 505 met the federal definition of competitive employment: worked for pay at or above the minimum wage in a setting with others who are nondisabled for a period of 20 hours a week for at least 90 cumulative days at any time in the year since leaving high school. This includes military service. For those districts with 1-4 total leavers, 31% were in this group. For districts with 5-15 leavers, 28% were competitively employed. For both districts with 16-50, and district with up to 350 leavers, 26% were competitively employed.

While size of the leaver group for a district seems to have an effect on the selection of activity after leaving school, when the two measurements above are combined the overall participation rate levels out, with the very small groups reaching 40% involvement in higher education or competitive employment, the small districts reaching 47%, the medium districts at 48% and the large districts reaching 53% involvement. The actual answers to the individual questions are provided below.

The federal outcome definitions also include some other education or training and some other employment. Of the 944 students who were not in higher education or competitively employed, 295 were included in this measurement. The size of the district did not seem to matter as much for this outcome, with 13% of students in very small districts, 15% of small or medium size districts, and 16% of students in the largest districts included.

Not Engaged Federal reporting requirements do not include students who fail to qualify for the three outcome measurements. However the factors describing these 649 students are of great interest to the districts and to the state. For the 258 that completed exit interviews before they left high school, 44 included both education and employment in their student goals. An additional 90 mentioned going on to post secondary education, 85 to a job, and 38 were unsure of their plans.

Data from the 51 districts with one to four students exiting must be looked at with caution, due to the very small number of students for each district. Overall, for these districts, about half of the exiters they interviewed were Engaged. They were not able to reach about half of their students, and there may be a relationship between the success expected for students who stay in the community, and those who relocated elsewhere in the year after high school. Without contacting a larger group of their leavers, or combining these results with another year of data collection, it is hard to interpret the results.

The following two tables present the responses to questions on the follow up survey for all students interviewed (1911) and the non-engaged students (649) by district size group. Not all students answered all questions.

Three additional data pages are provided, summarizing the response and engagement rates for the four groups based on number of exited special education students ages 14-21. Additional details are provided by number and percent for different methods of exit, primary disability classifications, and race/ethnic groups. Results showing cell sizes less than three have been noted.

These results are by individual question, not summed questions used for Federal definitions.

All 1911 interviews	Percent answering question with Yes				
	Very small	Small	Medium	Large	All
Attend school during the 12 months? % yes	35%	38%	44%	49%	45%
Attend a 2-4 year college or university?	15%	21%	27%	31%	28%
Voc/tech school, mission, short term training	8%	10%	7%	9%	9%
High School completion document	6%	3%	4%	4%	4%
Completed entire term or semester?	21%	26%	34%	39%	35%
Ever worked during the 12 months?	75%	72%	67%	64%	66%
Competitive setting or military?	42%	57%	51%	52%	52%
Self employed or Family business	21%	12%	8%	6%	8%
Sheltered or Supported employment	4%	2%	7%	4%	5%
Employed in jail/prison	4%			1%	<1%
No answer, skipped or missing	29%	29%	34%	38%	35%
Work 90 cumulative days?	38%	47%	42%	45%	44%
Work at least half time?	48%	52%	51%	49%	50%
Receive same benefits as coworkers?	52%	47%	44%	40%	43%
Earn at least minimum wage?	58%	61%	59%	55%	57%
Why haven't you worked since high school?					
Don't want or need to work	8%	2%	3%	3%	3%
Baby/family	2%	1%	2%	3%	2%
Disability	2%	5%	5%	4%	5%
No drivers license	6%	1%	1%		1%
Haven't found job		9%	8%	10%	9%
Incarceration	4%		1%		1%
No answer or other	77%	81%	82%	80%	79%
Have a driver's license? Learners permit?	42%+6%	46%+7%	47%+5%	42%+6%	44%+5%
Where are you currently living?					
Family	48%	61%	63%	67%	64%
Campus or military base	2%	7%	7%	5%	6%
Independently or with friend	38%	21%	23%	21%	22%
Foster home, group home	2%	1%	3%	4%	3%
Homeless/ jail	4%	1%	2%	1%	1%
No answer/ other	6.3%	9%	2%	3%	4%

The following information reports on students who did not meet the federal definitions for employment (working at least half time for at least minimum wage for at least 90 cumulative days), or higher education (completing at least one term or semester of specific training or education). A total of 649 students were in this group, however not all students answered all questions.

	Percent answering question with Yes				
	Very small	Small	Medium	Large	All
Attend school during the 12 months? % yes	22%	20%	16%	18%	18%
Attend a 2-4 year college or university?	9%	5%	6%	8%	7%
Voc/tech school, mission, short term training	9%	11%	7%	5%	7%
High School completion document	4%	4%	3%	5%	4%
Ever worked during the 12 months?	57%	45%	43%	30%	38%
Competitive setting or military?	26%	33%	29%	22%	27%
Self employed or Family business	17%	11%	8%	4%	7%
Sheltered or Supported employment		1%	5%	3%	4%
Work at least half time?	35%	37%	35%	22%	30%
Receive same benefits as coworkers?	35%	29%	27%	15%	22%
Earn at least minimum wage?					
Why haven't you worked since high school?					
Don't want or need to work	17%	3%	3%	5%	5%
Baby/family	4%	3%	4%	6%	5%
No drivers license	9%	2%	1%		1%
Haven't found job		20%	16%	21%	19%
Incarceration	9%	1%	2%	1%	2%
Have a driver's license? Learners permit?	30% + 8%	38% + 3%	27% + 5%	19% + 5%	25% + 5%
Where are you currently living?					
Family	57%	61%	64%	66%	64%
Independently or with friend	22%	22%	20%	17%	19%
Foster home, group home		2%	4%	6%	5%
Homeless/ jail	9%	1%	4%	3%	4%