

ASK A REL RESPONSE

Postsecondary Outcomes for Students With Disabilities

Ask A REL received a request from the Community Center for Education Results (CCER) for research on the postsecondary outcomes of students supported by special education services. CCER is a nonprofit organization that supports the [Road Map Project](#), a partnership of seven high-poverty, racially and linguistically diverse school districts in the Seattle area, community-based organizations, and Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest.

Below, we share a sampling of the publicly accessible resources on this topic, found in a search of research databases and websites of federally funded organizations and other research and policy centers. The abstracts have been adapted from published material.

Ask A REL responses are tailored to meet the needs of each individual request and include copies of full-text articles from peer-reviewed journals. This is a free service. If you would like additional research on students with disabilities or other topics, please contact Jennifer Klump at relnw@educationnorthwest.org for personalized assistance.

Cobb, R. B., Lipscomb, S., Wolgemuth, J., Schulte, T., Veliquette, A., Alwell, M. ... Weinberg, A. (2013). *Improving post-high school outcomes for transition-age students with disabilities: An evidence review* (NCEE 2013-4011). Retrieved from U.S. Department of Education, Institute for Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance website: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/pubs/20134011/>

Despite the efforts of policymakers and practitioners, a gap remains between the postsecondary outcomes of students with disabilities and those of other students. To help close that gap, this report reviews the research literature on programs (strategies, interventions, or sets of services) designed to help students with disabilities make successful transitions to college and careers.

Johnson, C., & Bube, S. A. (2014). *Post-school outcomes for students with disabilities*. Retrieved from State of Washington, Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction website: <http://www.k12.wa.us/LegisGov/2014documents/StudentTransitionServicesDec2014.pdf>

The Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's education data center monitors the postsecondary outcomes of all student who are eligible for an individualized education plan. This report includes an analysis of data for secondary students leaving school during the 2011/12 school year.

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Sanford, C., Newman, L., Wagner, M., Cameto, R., Knokey, A.-M., & Shaver, D. (2011). *The post-high school outcomes of young adults with disabilities up to 6 years after high school: Key findings from the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2)* (NCSE 2011-3004). Retrieved from U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Special Education Research website: <http://ies.ed.gov/ncser/pubs/20113004/>

This report uses data from the National Longitudinal Transition Study 2 to provide a national picture of postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities. The report includes postsecondary enrollment rates; employment rates; engagement in employment, education, and/or job training activities; household circumstances (e.g., residential independence, parenting status); and social and community involvement.

Selected findings include:

- Fifty-five percent of young adults with disabilities reported having continued on to postsecondary school since leaving high school, compared to 62 percent of their same-age peers in the general population.
- Seventy-one percent of students with disabilities were reported to have a paid job at the time of the interview. They were just as likely to have a paid job at the time of the interview as were their same age peers in the general population.
- Eighty-five percent of students with disabilities were reported to be productively engaged in the community since leaving high school, either through employment, postsecondary education, or job training. In comparison, 95 percent of their same-age peers in the general population reported being engaged in employment, postsecondary education, or job training since leaving high school.
- Thirty-six percent of young adults with disabilities were reported to be living independently at the time of the interview.
- Sixty percent of young adults with disabilities had a checking account at the time of the interview, and 45 percent had a credit card in their own name, compared to 71 percent and 55 percent, respectively, of their peers in the general population.

Trainor, A. A., Kim, H., & Murray, A. (2014). *Postsecondary transition and English learners with disabilities: Data from the Second National Longitudinal Transition Study* (WCER Working Paper No. 2014-4). Retrieved from University of Wisconsin-Madison, Wisconsin Center for Education Research website: http://www.wcer.wisc.edu/publications/workingpapers/Working_Paper_No_2014_04.pdf

English learners with disabilities face even greater obstacles to achieving the benchmarks of postsecondary success, such as college enrollment, degree completion, and employment. Identifying and providing access to appropriate educational opportunities and positive postsecondary outcomes for adolescents identified as both English learners and students with

disabilities is a complex endeavor that is further complicated by limited knowledge about the diverse sociodemographic, linguistic, and disability characteristics of members of this group. Research is sparse, reflected in the dearth of studies about these students' secondary education experiences, including access to general education, transition planning and instruction, and postsecondary outcomes. This descriptive study is an initial examination of a nationally representative group of English learners and students with disabilities, including the population's characteristics, high school experiences, and postsecondary outcomes, in alignment with special education transition education framework.