

Working With Schools: Improving Employment Outcomes for Youth

KTER Center's State of the Science Conference
on Employment Research
September 5, 2019

KTER•CENTER

Knowledge Translation for Employment Research

Working With Schools: Improving Employment Outcomes for Youth

Indiana School-to-Work Collaborative



INDIANA UNIVERSITY

**INDIANA INSTITUTE ON
DISABILITY AND COMMUNITY**

Goals for Today

- Share a little data
- Share some local solutions and challenges
- Discuss implications for policy and procedure changes

Effects of Embedded Employment Resources on the Employment Outcomes of Transition-Age Youth 2013–2018

*Key Project Team Members:
Teresa Grossi, Faith Thomas,
and Mary Held*

The National Institute on Disability,
Independent Living, and Rehabilitation
Research
Grant #H133A130028



How It Started . . . An Urgency for Change

- **Influential champions:** We needed to revitalize collaboration and relationships between schools, vocational rehabilitation (VR), and adult employment providers.
- **Authentic stakeholder engagement** was used throughout for design implementation and evaluation. Approached the model as a collective impact.
- **Financial resources:** Developed a white paper with VR for a sustainability plan.

Indiana School-to-Work Framework



Key Elements of Local Collaborative or the Intervention Package

- Collaborative of community employment providers
- Single point of contact: career coach
- Discovery profile
- Internship/work experiences
- Self-determination training
- Benefits planning
- Family training



Unique Aspects of the Collaborative

- The **career coach** was embedded in the school and focused on work experiences and employment outcomes, provided adult agency navigation, and focused on overlap of services.
- A **coalition of providers** worked together and served as a local collaborative to reduce the number of entities, confusion for schools, and duplication of services.

Target Group of Students

- **Primary group:** Students who have started the diploma route but at some point move to certificate of completion.
- **Secondary group:** Students receiving diploma with a postsecondary goal of going into the workforce rather than higher education or uncertain of their future.

Research Questions

Question 1: Do schools with embedded employment resources (e.g., employment specialist as a single point of contact and collaborative support) **have more students who leave school with a job** than those from schools with no embedded resources?

- Do they have **higher wages**?
- Do they work **more hours**?

Research Questions (cont.)

Question 2: Do schools with embedded employment resources **have more students who leave school with connections to adult support agencies** than schools with no embedded resources?

Question 3: To what extent, if any, did implementing the local collaborative result in **policy or procedure changes**?

A Little Bit of Data

Primary Disability

| | School-to-Work sites (<i>N</i> = 410) | Control sites (<i>N</i> = 118) |
|-----------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Autism | 13% | 9% |
| Emotional | 14% | 8% |
| Learning disability | 33% | 35% |
| Mild intellectual disability (ID) | 19% | 25% |
| Moderate ID | 3% | 1% |
| Multiple disability | 2% | 1% |
| Other health impairment | 12% | 6% |
| Hearing/deaf | 2% | 0 |
| Deaf/blind | 0.5% | 0 |
| Orthopedic | 0 | 1% |
| Traumatic brain injury (TBI) | 0.2% | 1% |
| Unknown | 0.8% | 12% |

Internship or Work Experience Outcomes

- Number of internships or work experiences: 188
- Average length of internship: 4 weeks (range, 1 day to 27 weeks)
- Average hours the student participated in internship: 9 hours (range, 1–40 hours)

Employment Outcomes

- ✓ **Ninety-one students (35%)** left school with a paid job based on their internships/work experiences
 - Average salary: \$9.23 per hour (range \$7.25–\$22.00)
 - Average hours worked per week: 24 (range, 4–40 hours)
- ✓ Of the 91 students at follow-up 3 months later:
 - **Seventy-seven (85%)** were still working.
 - Three had a career advancement.

Agency Connections

| | 2014–15 | | 2015–16 | | 2016–17 | | 2017–18 | |
|----------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|----------|------------|----------|------------|------|
| | EXP | CONT | EXP | CONT | EXP | CONT | EXP | CONT |
| Developmental disabilities | 5% | 8% | 6% | 6% | 2% | 4% | 5% | 0 |
| Case manager | 6% | 0 | 6% | 0 | 1% | 4% | 2% | 0 |
| Employment provider | 67% | 0 | 65% | 0 | 57% | 0 | 45% | 0 |
| Day/habilitation provider | 8% | 0 | 6% | 0 | 2% | 0 | 4% | 0 |
| Mental health center | 4% | 0 | 17% | 19% | 1% | 0 | 3% | 0 |
| Vocational rehabilitation | 90% | 15% | 88% | 0 | 76% | 0 | 53% | 0 |
| Division of Family and Children | 1% | 8% | 3% | 0 | 0 | 4% | 2% | 0 |
| Juvenile justice | 8 | 3% | 0 | 7% | 1% | 0 | 2% | 0 |
| Work One | 0 | 2% | 0 | 13% | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Note. EXP = experimental sites; CONT = control sites.

What Families Told Us (Survey and Focus Group)

- The school staff was the predominate way parents are learning information about the transition process.
- The career coach was the predominate way parents learned about VR and helped and/or understood how to apply for services.
- The career coach was the central person for communication and keeping things moving.

What Families Told Us (cont.)

- Appreciated agency connections at an earlier age.
- Families continue to struggle to understand how the transition individualized education program, VRS, and employment providers all work together or have the same goal.
- Families expressed frustration related to the discontinuity of services because of staff turnover (starts and stops of services)

Policy and/or Procedure Changes Impacting Local Practice

Policy and/or Procedure Changes

- Statewide implementation of self-determination training funded by the Indiana Department of Education
- Federal and state policy changes: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014; Indiana VR new employment model; Order of Selection
- Pre-employment transition services (Pre-ETS): the school-to-work collaborative model was replicated with Pre-ETS.
- VR changed enrollment procedures to earlier in junior year to ensure last year of work experiences.

Policy and Procedural Changes

- VR moved to a new employment services model (second year of implementation)
- WIOA was passed and Pre-ETS started (third year)
- Final year of study
 - Pre-ETS being used as part of sustainability
 - VRS: Order of Selection is implemented



SOURCE: iStock.com/Frimages

Challenges, Barriers, and Solutions

Staff Turnover

- ✓ 19 vocational rehabilitation counselors
- ✓ 16 career coaches
- ✓ 8 teachers
- ✓ 3 special education department chairs
- ✓ 1 transition specialist
- ✓ 2 special education directors
- ✓ Number of job coaches: turnover is unknown

While Students Were Waiting. . . Strategies for Engagement

- Company tours
- Transportation training
- Informed choice of employment provider
- Mock interviews
- Assisting in job fairs

Fashion Show at Job Fair: What to Wear and Not Wear

- Cosmetology students
- Goodwill store
- Employer human resources staff



Source: All pictures used with permission.

Quality Work Experiences

- Allowed students to explore occupations that impacted future decisions (e.g., workforce or attend postsecondary education).
- Lack of diversity of work experiences.
- Students in traditional first jobs were part of discovery process for VR.

Implications for Practice

- Authentic engagement
- Planning for turnover
- Empowering students and families with their information
- Ongoing professional development
- Planning for new policy or procedural changes

THANK YOU!!!!

Teresa Grossi, PhD
Director of Strategic Developments
Indiana Institute on Disability and Community
Indiana University
tgrossi@indiana.edu
[812-855-4070](tel:812-855-4070)

 kter@air.org

 kter.org

 4700 Mueller Blvd, Austin, TX 78723

 800.266.1832

The contents of this presentation were developed under grant number 90DP0077 from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR). NIDILRR is a Center within the Administration for Community Living (ACL), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The contents of this presentation do not necessarily represent the policy of NIDILRR, ACL, HHS, and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.