

United Way of Dane County Youth Transitions Mobilization Plan

Youth with emotional and behavioral disorders transition successfully from high school to postsecondary education and/or employment.

I. Introduction

The Self-Reliance and Independence (SRI) Community Solutions Team (CST) is focused on our Agenda for Change goal that “Seniors and people with disabilities are able to live independently in their home.” The United Way of Dane County Board of Directors and Vision Council look for synergy among our Agenda for Change work to maximize our impact improving the lives of Dane County residents.

In 2013, the SRI CST took on the challenge of exploring where our efforts to support people with disabilities could be strengthened through alignment with our other Agenda for Change initiatives. Given the Agenda for Change’s focus on reducing the root causes of human conditions, the SRI team realized that the struggle that youth with disabilities have to graduate from high school and transition to postsecondary education and/or employment can lead to lifelong challenges to live independently. And among youth with disabilities, youth with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) often experience the greatest gaps in supports and services to succeed. Helping youth with emotional and behavioral disorders graduate from high school and transition to postsecondary education and employment aligns closely with three other areas of our Agenda for Change work:

- *Achievement Connections* works to increase high school graduation.
- The *HIRE Education Employment* initiative helps individuals complete their GED and find employment.
- Increasing children’s access to behavioral health screening and treatment to support their ability to engage in and complete school is a centerpiece of the *Healthy for Life* initiative.

In mid-May 2013, the SRI team formed a mini delegation, consulted with community partners, and came up with the following plan for how to help youth with emotional and behavioral disorders successfully transition from high school to adulthood. (A list of mini-delegation members and consultants to the initiative can be found in *Appendix A*.)

II. Problem Statement

The data below illustrates the prevalence of youth who have been diagnosed with an emotional and behavioral disability, as well as the postsecondary and/or employment barriers faced by individuals with disabilities. We have learned that in addition to an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), many youth in our local high schools may have a 504 status (which provides youth who may not have a physical disability with the accommodations needed to succeed within the public education setting) or may not be diagnosed with any type of disability. Because youth with emotional and behavioral disorders often have “hidden” challenges and barriers, we safely assume that the prevalence of youth with EBD in our local community is underestimated. ***The population of youth with EBD who are not provided the additional supports through an IEP or 504 Plan is our target population. These youth do not qualify for additional in-***

school supports or community supports through the County or Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. As a result, they fall through the cracks.

Prevalence of EBD across Dane County Schools:

Youth with emotional and behavioral disorders are one of the most prevalent disability types across Dane County high schools.¹ (Graphs of Dane County high school disability types under *Local Data*) The Wisconsin Information Network for Successful Schools (WINSS) categorizes the following disability types: cognitive, emotional/behavioral, learning, speech or language impairment, deaf-blind, hearing impairment, other health impairment, orthopedic, significant developmental delay, traumatic brain injury, visual impairment, and combined. Of these 13 categories, *emotional/behavioral disability* (EBD) shows up in the top 2 or 3 most prevalent disability types across Dane County high schools when removing “other health impairment” and “combined” from this list. The EBD diagnosis is a primary disability diagnosis, which means that the youth falling within this category may also be diagnosed with other disabilities. The *other health impairment* category is more broad in the sense that it might capture a range of disabilities. The category, *combined*, is a cumulative number which is representative of all disability types. Of the types of disabilities diagnosed across Dane County high schools, the prevalence of EBD for the 2012-2013 school year is as follows:

Madison Metropolitan School District	16.5%
Middleton/Cross Plains School District	12.4%
Oregon School District	10.7%
Sun Prairie School District	17.2%

Dane County School District High School Completion Rates²:

Research tells us that graduation from high school and sustainable employment can lead to greater self-sufficiency and independence. 2011-2012 data illustrates that youth with disabilities experience lower completion rates than their peers without disabilities.

	4 year completion
Madison Metropolitan	
Disabilities	46.2%
Without Disabilities	80.7%
Middleton/Cross Plains	
Disabilities	73.3%
Without Disabilities	85.4%
Oregon	
Disabilities	70%
Without Disabilities	96%
Sun Prairie	
Disabilities	74.6%
Without Disabilities	95.8%

Dane County Postsecondary Education Enrollment and Completion:

In Dane County, the student undergraduate enrollment rate for youth with disabilities was 7% in 2012. This includes Edgewood College and Madison Area Technical College (MATC), both with disability enrollment rates of 7%. MATC enrolled over 1,000 students with a disability status in 2012. Colleges with less than 3% of undergraduates with disabilities are not reported in this

¹ Wisconsin Information Network for Successful Schools (WINSS). winss.dpi.wi.gov/

² Wisconsin Information Network for Successful Schools (WINSS). winss.dpi.wi.gov/

data set.³ The University of Wisconsin-Madison is not represented in this data set, possibly because of the high rate of out-of-state students attending the university. MATC likely enrolls more local high school graduates.

Of the 61% of youth in Dane County with disabilities who are or have attended some type of postsecondary education or training since leaving high school, only 4% have completed the program they began. Of those who participate in higher education, 34% participate in a two-year technical college.⁴

Dane County Employment Rates⁵:

According to the American Community Survey, of the individuals employed in Dane County, 4.6% have a disability status. Of the unemployed in Dane County, 12.9% of those individuals have a disability status.

The transition from high school to adulthood is difficult for any youth, but for youth with emotional and behavioral disorders who lack the necessary community supports and resources, the transition becomes more tenuous.

III. Why this Matters

National data illustrates that challenges such as low wages, less professional advancement, and poverty are among many faced by individuals who do not have a high school diploma and/or competitive employment. These challenges are exacerbated for individuals with disabilities because of the lower rates of high school completion and competitive employment. The SRI team's goal is to identify and support strategies that help individuals remain independent and self-reliant. According to the National Longitudinal Transition Study of Special Education Students-2 (NLTS2), only 59% of young adults with disabilities had a paid job at the time of the NLTS-2 survey in 2009; 48.2% of young adults with emotional disturbances had a paid job. A total of 29.9% of young adults with disabilities had received Food Stamps anytime in the past two years; 30% of young adults with emotional disturbances received Food Stamps, the highest of any disability type. 42.7% of all young adults with disabilities had household incomes less than \$10,000; 47.7% of young adults with emotional disturbances had incomes less than \$10,000.⁶ These challenges are further discussed under *National Research*.

The goal of identifying effective strategies to help youth with EBD graduate from high school then successfully advance to postsecondary education and/or gain competitive employment is to help this population achieve independence and self-reliance.

IV. National Research

A. Youth with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders

For youth with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders (EBD), school completion, postsecondary education enrollment and completion, competitive employment, arrest rates, and parenting

³ U.S. Department of Education. Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System.

<http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/>

⁴ Wisconsin Post School Outcomes Survey. 2012-2014 Combined Wisconsin Statewide and County Survey Year Data. <http://posthighsurvey.org/reports.statewide.php>.

⁵ American Community Survey.

http://factfinder2.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_12_3YR_C18120&prodType=table

⁶ National Longitudinal Transition Study – 2. 2009. http://www.nlts2.org/data_tables/

indicators are dismal, and often result in youth disconnecting from their community.⁷ Data analyzed through the National Longitudinal Transition Study of Special Education Students provides alarming statistics. Youth with EBD completed school at rates 14 times lower than their non-disabled peers, at a rate of 48.4%. 50.3% dropped out and/or were expelled. Three-to-five years out of high school, only 25.6% of youth with EBD were enrolled in some type of postsecondary education. Only 47.4% of youth with EBD were employed 3-5 years out of high school. The unemployment rate four years out of high school for EBD youth is 52%, which is the highest of any disability type. Three-to-five years out of high school, 58% of EBD youth had been arrested, and for EBD youth who had dropped out of high school, that arrest rate jumped to 73%. “Young women with EBD are 6 times more likely than their peers to have had multiple pregnancies at a young age, and to have lost custody of their babies”.⁸

B. Youth Transitions at the National Level

An intentional focus on youth with disabilities transitioning from high school to adulthood emerged in the 1980s. Studies showed that post school outcomes for youth with disabilities varied greatly from the post school outcomes of their non-disabled peers. The National Longitudinal Transition Study of Special Education Students (NLTS) is a national study that has now been administered twice. The first study collected data from 1983 to 1993; the second study (NLTS-2) spanned 2000-2009.⁹ Among the outcomes evaluated, data showed that outcomes such as employment, postsecondary enrollment and completion, independent living, and community integration were not obtained by disabled youth at the levels obtained by their non-disabled peers. Youth with disabilities were also experiencing much higher drop-out rates than their peers. These findings led to the adoption of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990.¹⁰

The primary goal of IDEA was to foster more inclusive and integrated processes to improve employment, post-secondary education, and independent living outcomes for youth with disabilities.¹¹ To accomplish these goals, IDEA articulated that youth with disabilities must have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) which would start the high school to adulthood transition planning process. Schools are required to ensure that the IEP helps students with disabilities along the path to achieve their goals post high school. IDEA led to an increase in collaborative partnerships with the community since it was imperative that community agencies be involved in the transition planning process.¹² The reauthorization of IDEA in 1997 built upon IDEA 1990 by tightening objectives, such as including parents/guardians in transition planning, promoting interagency collaboration, increasing the role of the school in service coordination, broadening curricula and programs, and increasing performance expectations for students.¹³

⁷ Kathleen L. Lane and Erik W. Carter. *Supporting Transition-Age Youth with and At Risk for Emotional and Behavioral Disorders at the Secondary Level: A Need for Further Inquiry*. Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders. Summer 2006. Vol. 14, No. 2, pp. 66-70.

⁸ Lynn Boreson. *Transition to Adulthood: Resources for teachers working with students with emotional behavioral disabilities (EBD)*. Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. 2006.

<http://dpi.wi.gov/sped/doc/ebdtransit.doc>.

⁹ Boreson 2006; www.NLTS2.org.

¹⁰ Leena Jo Landmark, Song Ju, and Dalun Zhang. *Substantiated Best Practices in Transition: Fifteen Plus Years Later*. Career Development for Exceptional Individuals. Aug. 2010

Mary E. Morningstar and Jeannie P. Kleinhammer-Tramill. *Using Successful Models of Student-Centered Transition Planning and Services for Adolescents with Disabilities*. Focus on Exceptional Children. May 1999, Vol. 31, Issue 9.

¹¹ L. Allen Phelps and Cheryl Hanley-Maxwell. *School-to-Work Transitions for Youth with Disabilities: A Review of Outcomes and Practices*. Review of Educational Research. Vol. 67, No. 2. Summer 1997. pp. 197-226.

¹² Morningstar and Kleinhammer-Tramill, 1999.

¹³ Morningstar and Kleinhammer-Tramill, 1999

Unfortunately, youth with EBD often do not qualify for support under IDEA and are falling through the cracks. Youth with more severe disabilities often qualify for County and/or Division of Vocational Rehabilitation services. Youth who have Individual Education Plans (IEPs) often receive more support and guidance within the K-12 education system than those youth who may not have an IEP and who may or may not be diagnosed with a disability. Many youth with emotional and behavioral disorders may not qualify for services in the school environment and/or in the community, thus they experience higher rates of unemployment, lower wages, less opportunity for advancement, and greater rates of poverty.

C. Best Practices for Youth Transition

The 1990s led to more innovative practices at the state level to complement IDEA. Many of these programs focused on transition, including school-to-work programs. The 1994 School-to-Work Opportunities Act (STWOA) provided state funding for programs that enhanced school-work partnerships for youth. Specifically, STWOA intended to help guide students through career exploration and selection, connect school and work-based learning, and emphasize soft skills, such as interpersonal relationships. STWOA also ensured that youth were appropriately linked to work opportunities, employers were equipped with the tools needed to provide a positive work environment, and that there was a liaison at the school to serve as a mentor to the student.¹⁴ While these programs were attempts at improving post school outcomes for youth with disabilities, there was still a lack of empirical evidence to support their efficacy and effectiveness. When IDEA was reauthorized in 1997, research turned to delineating best practices among transition programs.¹⁵ Additional provisions to IDEA were made in 2004, called the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act. Through this Act, it was mandated that transition services include “instruction, related services, and development of employment objectives.” The transition team is tasked with clearly articulating goals, objectives, and specific responsibilities of each member of the transition team to carry through tasks to achieve goals.¹⁶ IDEA 2004 also stipulates that transition planning begin at age 14 for youth with disabilities.¹⁷

“[...] a primary purpose of public education is to equip students to engage more fully and meaningfully in their communities, enabling them to assume roles of productive citizens as they enter adulthood [...] IDEA 2004 affirms this purpose, reiterating a national policy aimed at ‘ensuring equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency for individuals with disabilities’”.¹⁸

It has only been more recently that researchers have started exploring outcomes for youth with specific *types* of disabilities. To date, the body of research is somewhat limited for empirically tested best practices for disability types.¹⁹ Since the inception of IDEA in 1990, it has become evident that while there are some all-encompassing best practices for transition success, certain best practices are more effective for specific disability types.

According to *The Youth Transition Demonstration: Lifting Employment Barriers for Youth with Disabilities* by Thomas Fraker, “work-based experiences, self-determination, family involvement, and interagency collaboration are the strongest predictors of success for students with

¹⁴ Phelps and Hanley-Maxwell, 1997; Morningstar and Kleinhammer-Tramill, 1999.

¹⁵ Landmark, Ju, and Zhang, 2010.

¹⁶ Maureen P. Walsh. *Employers' Perceptions of Transition Programming for Students with Emotional Disturbances*. Journal of Employment Counseling. Sept. 2010. Vol. 47.

¹⁷ Boreson, 2006.

¹⁸ Lane and Carter, 2006.

¹⁹ Lane and Carter, 2006.

disabilities post high school.” Fraker, along with other researchers, have affirmed that these practices are predictive indicators of success for youth transitioning out of high school.

i. Youth Guide Their own Goals and Future Planning (Self-Determination).

Research tells us that when youth are directing their own goals and future planning, they have more ownership, are more engaged, and are more motivated to fulfill their goals. This may include choice-making, decision-making, problem-solving, goal-setting and attainment skills, independence, risk-taking, safety skills, self-advocacy, and self-observation.²⁰ Self-determination means having the skills, attitudes, and motivation to express one’s needs and desires. Conversely, the environment in which that student operates must be receptive to their expression of needs and desires. Merely attending an IEP meeting does not signify self-determination; the student must be empowered to drive their own IEP.²¹ “Benitez et al. (2005) found that teaching self-determination skills in high school was positively correlated with improved post school outcomes for students with disabilities, and Wehmeyer and Palmer found that self-determination skills in high school were significant predictors of postschool education and independent living success.”²²

To create a receptive environment and to empower a student to become more self-determined, there must be strong group support – also known as “champions” for the student. This team may include mentors, role models, school administration, teachers, parents, etc. The team must start with a positive description of the student’s skills and attributes. Using an asset-based approach will help empower the student. Developing a vision for the future must be included in the plan – how will the student be included in school, their community, home, work, etc.? How will they integrate and contribute to their surrounding networks and environment? Then the plan must articulate the action to be taken. How will responsibilities among group members (including the student) be divided to ensure success?²³

For youth with emotional and behavioral disorders, an example of fostering self-determination skills within a work environment might include providing clear instruction on self-management strategies so that the student can evaluate their own work performance. Oftentimes, students with EBD may not self-identify as having a disability within their work environment. This may be to their detriment because it could prevent them from being connected to supports and accommodations that would otherwise assist them in their performance. Conversely, it may also stigmatize them which is sometimes the reason why youth do not self-identify as having a disability.²⁴

We must expand our current view of successful transition as being just employment and/or postsecondary success to also include integration into one’s community, happiness, and fulfillment.²⁵ Youth with EBD will undoubtedly feel more engaged within their community when encouraged to be the driver of their own success.

²⁰ Landmark, Ju and Zhang, 2010;

Gloria K. Lee and Erik W. Carter. *Preparing Transition-Age Students with High-Functioning Autism Spectrum Disorders for Meaningful Work*. Psychology in the Schools. Vol. 49(10). 2012;

Erik W. Carter and Lauren B. Lunsford. *Meaningful Work: Improving Employment Outcomes for Transition-Age Youth with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders*. Preventing School Failure. Vol. 49(2). 2005. pp. 63-69.

²¹ Morningstar and Kleinhammer-Tramill, 1999

²² David W. Test, et al. *Evidence-Based Secondary Transition Predictors for Improving Postschool Outcomes for Students with Disabilities*. Career Development for Exceptional Individuals. Oct. 2009.

²³ Morningstar and Kleinhammer-Tramill, 1999.

²⁴ Carter and Lunsford, 2005.

²⁵ Morningstar and Kleinhammer-Tramill, 1999.

ii. Hands on Employment Experience During High School

Youth with disabilities who have hands on experience with employment (paid or unpaid) during high school are more likely to find sustainable employment post high school.²⁶ “Increasing early work experiences seems to be an important vehicle for improving postschool employment outcomes”.²⁷ In addition to actual work-related experience, Carter and Lunsford posit that youth with emotional and behavioral disorders often don’t participate in vocational classes during high school, but they would benefit from doing so. Youth with EBD would also benefit from “soft skills” training to help them foster positive relationships in the work environment.²⁸

An employment preparation program might include job searching skills, participation in career education, and participation in work study programs. Vocational courses are strongly related to lower drop-out rates and strongly correlated to positive employment outcomes. On a parallel path, while students are engaged in employment opportunities during high school, they must also have the supports needed to complete a high school diploma, another key predictor for success post high school.²⁹ Integrating vocational education classes into academic curriculum is a beneficial practice that would achieve both goals of working towards a high school diploma and providing the tools needed for a successful work experience during high school.³⁰ Course failure is a common predictor of high school drop-out rate. Our target population, EBD youth, is most at risk for dropping out. And failure to complete a high school diploma creates additional barriers for postsecondary education and/or employment opportunities.³¹

Ways to foster healthy employment experiences during high school might include school supervised work experiences and curriculum that is linked to specific occupational skills.³² Also identifying employers who can provide social and environmental supports in the work place is important to help meet the needs of the student.³³ The National Longitudinal Transition Study of youth with disabilities found that youth who participated in occupationally oriented vocational education during the last year of high school were more likely to transition more successfully to employment and/or postsecondary education programs. Family connections and networks have also proven to be helpful to students as they’re looking for employment opportunities post high school.³⁴

iii. Parent/Guardian Involvement

Strong parental/guardian involvement through a youth’s transition from high school to postsecondary education and/or employment is another predictor of transition success.³⁵ Parents/guardians play a critical role in making sure that their youth graduates by being actively involved in his/her life. In cases where the parent/guardian encourages learning and communicates high yet reasonable expectations for the youth’s education and future career,

²⁶ David W. Test, et al. *Evidence-Based Secondary Transition Predictors for Improving Postschool Outcomes for Students with Disabilities*. Career Development for Exceptional Individuals. 2009. 32:160.

²⁷ Erik W. Carter, Diane Austin and Audrey A. Trainor. *Predictors of Postschool Employment Outcomes for Young Adults with Severe Disabilities*. Journal of Disability Policy Studies. 2012. 23:50.

²⁸ Carter and Lunsford, 2005.

²⁹ Landmark, Ju, and Zhang, 2010.

³⁰ Carter and Lunsford, 2005.

³¹ Mary M. Wagner and Jose Blackorby. *Transition from High School to Work or College: How Special Education Students Fare*. The Future of Children. Vol. 6, No. 1. Spring 1996. pp. 103-120.

³² Phelps and Hanley-Maxwell, 1997.

³³ Carter and Lunsford, 2005.

³⁴ Phelps and Hanley-Maxwell, 1997.

³⁵ Landmark, Ju, and Zhang, 2010; Morningstar and Kleinhammer-Tramill, 1999; Lee and Carter, 2012.

success is more likely.³⁶ Parents play an integral role in the transition process for their youth by being a cheerleader – providing support and encouragement, helping them identify their own strengths, utilizing personal networks for potential job opportunities for their youth, providing transportation, and assisting with everyday problem solving.³⁷

Parents of youth with disabilities are faced with numerous challenges both in supporting their child but also in navigating systems of support. Parents often find that the communication silos amongst providers and schools make it difficult to create a comprehensive network of supports for their youth. It is important that practitioners partner with families throughout the transition process. They can take several simple steps to provide clear information about the purposes and processes of transition services. This might include open and frequent communication about school services and activities, training options for parents, flexible meetings times and locations that might be outside of the normal school or work hours, and validation for parents for the important role they play in their child's life.³⁸ Parents and guardians are often the ones piecing the various pieces of the puzzle together. Youth who have engaged parents are often more successful because their parents are “champions” and advocates for their success.

Parents play a unique role in the life of a youth with a disability because through that youth's transition from one life stage to another, oftentimes, the one consistent force is a parent or guardian. Parents are also able to empower their youth when they may not be getting empowerment support elsewhere. For many youth, parents and guardians also serve as safety nets, providing financial, moral, and emotional support. Parents can often identify the strengths, interests, experiences, etc. of their youth which helps them become better advocates for their youth.³⁹

While parents and guardians play an important support role in the lives of youth, families themselves also need a support structure to provide them with the skills and coping mechanisms needed to successfully support their youth.⁴⁰ Support groups are often an effective way of helping provide parents with a community that may provide guidance, as well as emotional support.

iv. Interagency and School Collaboration During and After High School

Research tells us that a best practice for successful youth transitions is when agencies work with one another and are closely linked to the school to ensure a smooth transition of support services from high school to post high school.⁴¹ The system of supports in place for youth in the K-12 system is different from the adult system of supports. The transition from high school (K-12 supports) to adulthood is often when youth fall through the cracks because the systems of supports aren't streamlined. Research shows that job placement and employment support for at least one year post high school graduation is important for long-term success.⁴²

As part of a student's transition support team, external organizations that provide adult systems of supports should also be engaged in the transition discussion. Commencement

³⁶ qtd. in Deborah Leuchovius. *The Role of Parents in Dropout Prevention: Strategies that Promote Graduation and School Achievement*. Parent Brief: Promoting effective parent involvement in secondary education and transition. July 2006.

³⁷ Carter & Lunsford, 2005.

³⁸ Carter and Lunsford, 2005.

³⁹ Carter and Lunsford, 2005.

⁴⁰ Phelps and Hanley-Maxwell, 1997.

⁴¹ Carter and Lunsford, 2005.

⁴² Landmark, Ju, and Zhang, 2010.

programs are one model that streamlines supports by linking the K-12 system with organizations that assist young people with life skills. The school district often gets reimbursed for these services; however, the services take place outside the school environment. Initially, this model was geared towards students with severe disabilities but has since expanded to include those with behavioral disorders.⁴³

Oftentimes, multiple tiers of transition teams help ensure success. At the highest level, state transition teams evaluate current services and provide fiscal and legislative guidance to local communities. At the local level, school and community professionals, family members, and students help improve transition services for students. And at the individual level, the focus is directly on the student and may include that student's personal support team (school administration, teachers, parents, mentors, role models, etc.).⁴⁴

Another best practice to foster interagency and school collaboration is having a transition coordinator at the school. This is someone who builds relationships with community agencies and does the follow up with students up to a year post high school.⁴⁵

⁴³ Morningstar and Kleinhammer-Tramill, 1999.

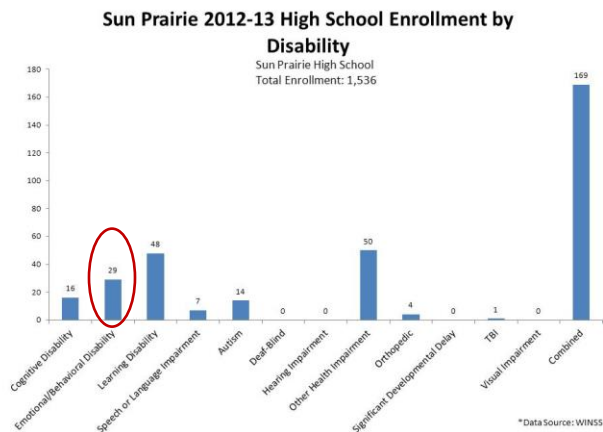
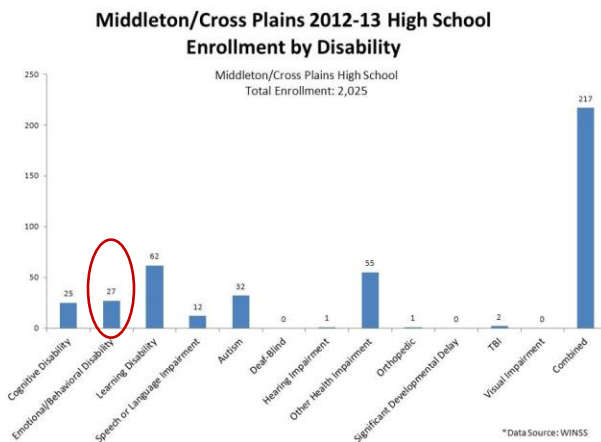
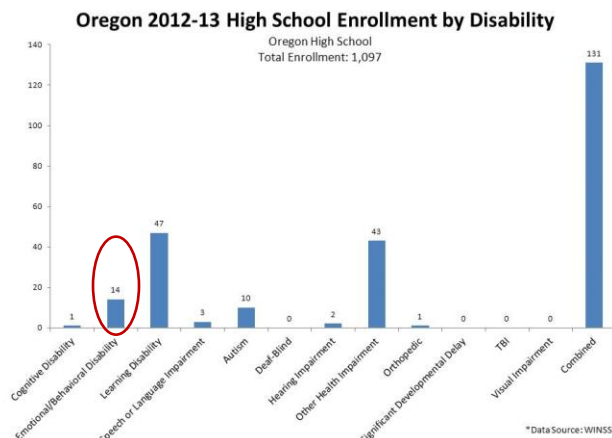
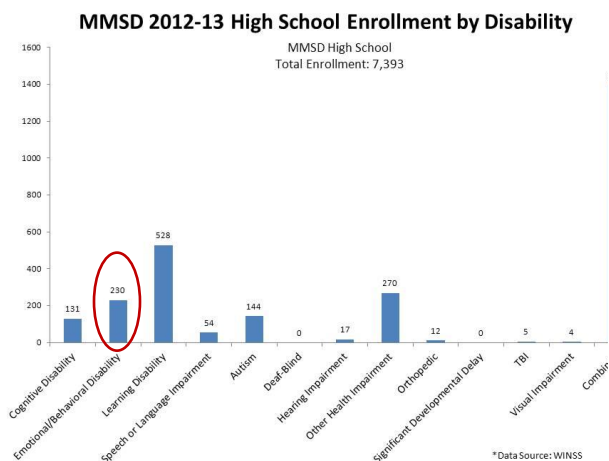
⁴⁴ Morningstar and Kleinhammer-Tramill, 1999.

⁴⁵ Patricia M. Noonan, Mary E. Morningstar, and Amy Gaumer Erickson. *Improving Interagency Collaboration: Effective Strategies Used by High-Performing Local Districts and Communities*. Career Development for Exceptional Individuals. 2008.

V. Local Data

A. Dane County High School Data by Disability Type

As evidenced by local Dane County high school data, Emotional and Behavioral Disabilities is one of the most prevalent disability types across the county. At UWDC, we are focused on graduation rates and behavioral health support across the following four school districts because they face the greatest challenges.



B. Community Engagement

- i. **Community Meetings/Conversations** – Over the course of several months, UWDC staff and members of the Self-Reliance and Independence CST met with community partners currently working with youth who have disabilities. Partners included the following:

School Districts: Madison Metropolitan, Middleton/Cross Plains

Colleges: Madison Area Technical College, UW-Madison

Non-profit partners: Wisconsin Statewide Parent-Educator Initiative (WSPEI), National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), Dane County Aging and Disability Resource Center, Community Partnerships, Operation Fresh Start

Government Agencies: Dane County Human Services

Parents

The purpose of these meetings was to engage experts in a dialogue about current gaps in services, as well as learn about effective services and programs for the population of

youth with EBD. These conversations, coupled with national research, helped inform the framework for a broader community engagement – the Design Lab.

- ii. **Design Lab** – On March 13, 2014, over 30 individuals representing five school districts, non-profit organizations, parents/guardians, and government personnel gathered for a half-day interactive discussion about how to best align our work around youth with emotional and behavioral disorders. Two panel discussions were held to help set the context for the day. The first panel included representatives from each of the five school districts to talk about their respective high school data on youth with EBD. The second panel included representation from a non-profit partner, the Division for Vocational Rehabilitation, a representative from the Madison Metropolitan School District, and a parent to discuss the importance of four proven strategies for transition success. The entire group then



delved more deeply into exploring issues, potential solutions, and action steps for each of the four strategies: 1) Youth guide their own goals and future planning (self-determination), 2) Hands on employment experience during high school, 3) Parent/guardian involvement, and 4) Interagency and school collaboration during and after high school. Each group had the opportunity to provide feedback and insight on each of the four domains. At the end of the day, all participants were able to prioritize the

top two action steps they deemed most urgent. The prioritized action steps (listed under *Strategies* below) formed the framework for the request for concept papers.

C. Scaling Up Analysis

To ensure success of meeting our goals, we must make sure our strategies have the capacity to meet the scale and scope of the identified goals. The combined total of youth with emotional and behavioral disorders *who have Individual Education Plans* in the four Dane County schools listed above is 300. However, according to Madison Metropolitan School District data for the 2012-2013 school year, approximately 18% of the student body has a mental health issue. 2013-14 enrollment numbers for the four high schools are below. If we multiply the high school population for each school by 18%, this gives us an estimate of the number of potential total youth with an emotional and behavioral disorder.

School District	High School Total	Potential EBD
Madison Metropolitan	7,358	1,324
Middleton/Cross Plains	2,077	374
Oregon	1,106	199
Sun Prairie	1,612	290
TOTAL	12,153	2,187

This data tells us that the total population of youth who potentially have an emotional and behavioral disorder in the Dane County high schools for which we are focusing is 2,187. Since our target population is youth *without* an IEP (youth without additional resources and supports), we are focusing on approximately 1,800 youth with emotional and behavioral issues.

VI. Hypothesis

If youth with emotional and behavioral disorders successfully transition from high school to post-secondary education and/or employment, they will become independent and self-sufficient. Through collaborative efforts among schools and community partners, youth transitioning out of high school will have the supports they need by guiding their own futures planning, being offered hands-on employment experience during high school, and through integration of parent/guardian involvement. Programs will support and strengthen these best practices to ensure successful outcomes.

Aspirational Goals: (to be refined once we have more specific Dane County baseline data for EBD youth)

Due to the nature of the population we seek to serve, there is a lack of specific Dane County data on youth with emotional and behavioral disorders who may or may not have a diagnosis or an IEP. Over the next year or two, we will gain more clarity about data for this specific population. The goals set below are aspirational in nature meaning we will adjust them as needed as we learn more about the EBD population in Dane County. While we do not want to set a low goal, we also acknowledge that our success depends upon setting a realistic, yet aspirational goal that challenges us and our community partners.

- 1) **85%** of youth with EBD are provided with work experience opportunities during high school by 2020. (Dane Co rate for youth with all disability types is 74% participation in some type of work experience while in high school⁴⁶)
- 2) Graduation rates of youth with emotional and behavioral disorders in Dane County will be **95%** by 2020 (national graduation rates for youth with emotional and behavior disorders is approximately 50%⁴⁷) – *The 95% goal is the same goal held by Achievement Connections*
- 3) **85%** of youth with emotional and behavioral disorders transition to post-secondary education and/or employment by 2020 (Dane Co rate for youth with all disability types is 78% employment⁴⁸ and 61% postsecondary education post high school⁴⁹)

Target population: Youth with emotional and behavioral disorders between 14-21 years old

Measurements*:

- 1) Track # of youth with emotional and behavioral disorders provided with work experience opportunities during high school
- 2) Track graduation rates of youth with emotional and behavioral disorders in Dane County
- 3) Track # of youth transitioning from high school to post-secondary education and/or employment

**We will need to explore the feasibility of getting this measurement data from the Dane Co school districts*

⁴⁶ Wisconsin Post High School Outcomes Survey. 2012-2014.

<http://posthighsurvey.org/reports.statewide.php>.

⁴⁷ Boreson, Lynn. 2006.

⁴⁸ Wisconsin Post High School Outcomes Survey. 2012-2014.

<http://posthighsurvey.org/reports.statewide.php>. (*have been employed for 3 months at any time within the year since leaving high school*)

⁴⁹ Wisconsin Post High School Outcomes Survey. 2012-2014.

<http://posthighsurvey.org/reports.statewide.php>. (*are or have attended some type of postsecondary education or training since leaving high school*)

VII. Strategies

All strategies will work with youth while they're in high school; **have meaningful agency-school, as well as interagency collaboration, during and after high school**; and link students and parents to resources (such as transportation) that can support the student's success. Other strategies include the following:

- A. **Youth guide their goals and future planning (self-determination).**
 - emphasize student-centered futures planning, and/or
 - emphasize career exploration.
- B. **Provide hands-on employment experience during high school.**
 - create work experience opportunities with employers in which students can be successful and employers' needs are met, and/or
 - support the development of employment readiness (including "soft skills"), and/or
 - allow students to pursue work credits, school credits, or apprenticeships (starting early).
- C. **Integrate parent/guardian involvement.**
 - Promote and support parent support plans (plans that articulate steps for a parent to successfully support their child through this transition) for use by parents, agencies, schools, and parent support/advocacy groups to help reduce road blocks that prevent children from gaining the necessary work experience and additional education.

VIII. Timeline

Activity	Responsible Party	Timeline
Youth Transitions Concept Paper RFP released	SRI CST	March 28, 2014
Youth Transitions Concept Paper proposals due	Community Partners	April 25, 2014
Invitation extended to select applicants for full proposal application	SRI CST	May 30, 2014
Youth Transitions Mobilization Plan presented to Vision Council for approval	Vision Council	June 20, 2014
Youth Transitions Mobilization Plan presented to UWDC Board of Directors for approval	UWDC Board of Directors	June 24, 2014
Youth Transitions Mini-Delegation reviews full proposals	Youth Transitions Mini Delegation	1 st /2 nd weeks of August 2014
Engagements occur with employers and youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizations/companies that employ youth with disabilities • Youth with emotional and behavioral disorders 	Fall 2014
Full SRI Team recommends Youth Transitions proposals to Vision Council	SRI CST	August 21, 2014
Funding for Youth Transitions begins		January 1, 2015
Announcement of Youth Transitions alignment to community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRI CST • UWDC Marketing Department 	January 2015

Funded programs meet together monthly to promote collaboration and to foster problem-solving	Community Partners	2015
Evaluate data to better define goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRI CST • Community Partners 	June 2015
Review impact of funded programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRI CST • Community Partners 	June 2015
Impact Report completed to evaluate program(s) effectiveness and efficacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SRI CST • UWDC Community Impact Department 	January 2016

Appendix A

Self-Reliance and Independence Mini-Delegation

Name	Affiliation/Association
Enid Glen	Director-Bureau of Management Services, DWD/Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Fran Genter	Division Administrator, Dane County Human Services
Tim Heaton	Chief Operating Officer, Epic Life Insurance
Gene Kroupa	Community Leader
Debbie Kretchmar	Senior Vice President- Internal Audit, Cuna Mutual
Sue Petkovsek	Community Leader
Jack Turcott	Owner, Turcott & Associates, LLC
Peggy Weber	Community Leader

Consultants to the Initiative

Name	Affiliation/Association
Dee Bernard	Executive Director, Access to Independence
Linda Cottington	Program Specialist, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
Dr. Bonnie Doren	Assistant Professor, Rehabilitation Psychology and Special Education, University of Wisconsin-Madison
Pat Godar	SWD Coordinator, Middleton/Cross Plains School District
Joanne Grassman	Assistant Director, MMSD Division of Special Education and Section 504
Deborah Hall	CESA 2 WSPEI Parent Coordinator and Educational Consultant, Wisconsin Statewide Parent-Educator Initiative (WSPEI)
Sandy Hall	Director, Madison Area Technical College Disability Resources Services
Bill Huisheere	Supervisor, Aging and Disability Resource Center
Doug Hunt	Community Program Specialist, Dane County Human Services
Bonnie Loughran	Executive Director, National Alliance on Mental Illness
Madison Metropolitan Special Education Administrators and Teachers	Madison Metropolitan School District
Gregory Markle	Executive Director, Operation Fresh Start
Adam Schroeder	TIP Program Supervisor, Community Partnerships
Cheri Sylla	CESA #1 WSPEI Family Engagement Coordinator, Wisconsin Statewide Parent-Educator Initiative (WSPEI)
Matthew Zellmer	Transition Coordinator, WI Facets

Appendix B

Summary of Terms

<p>Emotional and Behavior Disorder/Emotional and Behavioral Issue/Emotional Disturbance/Emotional and Behavioral Disability</p> <p><i>“Emotional and Behavioral Disorder” is the term chosen by the SRI CST because our target population of youth may or may not have a diagnosis or may not self-identify as having a disability. The term “disorder”, as opposed to “issue”, “disturbance”, or “disability”, is more inclusive.</i></p>	<p>Emotional disturbance means a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely affects a child's educational performance:</p> <p>(A) An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.</p> <p>(B) An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.</p> <p>(C) Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances.</p> <p>(D) A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.</p> <p>(E) A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.</p> <p>(ii) Emotional disturbance includes schizophrenia. The term does not apply to children who are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have an emotional disturbance under paragraph (c)(4)(i) of this section.⁵⁰</p>
<p>Community Solutions Team</p>	<p>A UWDC volunteer leadership group that identifies issues, creates solutions, and evaluates results for the community's Agenda for Change.</p>
<p>Self-Determination</p>	<p>The act of making and driving one's own decisions based on needs and preferences.</p>
<p>Scaling Up</p>	<p>Calculating a strategy or intervention that yields community-level impact because large enough numbers in relation to the population are achieved.</p>
<p>Design Lab</p>	<p>A structured brainstorming session engaging multiple stakeholders to help formulate and shape ideas, strategies, and action.</p>
<p>Soft Skills</p>	<p>Desirable qualities for certain forms of employment that do not depend on acquired knowledge: they include common sense, the ability to deal with people, and a positive flexible attitude.⁵¹</p>
<p>Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)</p>	<p>The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a law ensuring services to children with disabilities throughout the nation. IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education</p>

⁵⁰ United States Department of Education. Authority: 20 U.S.C. 1401(3); 1401(30).
<http://idea.ed.gov/explore/view>.

⁵¹ www.dictionary.reference.com

	and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities. ⁵²
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⁵² United States Department of Education. <http://idea.ed.gov/>