SPECIAL EDUCATION TRANSITION OUTCOMES

An analysis of secondary transition outcomes for youth with disabilities in the District of Columbia

Prepared for the D.C. Special Education Cooperative

Logan Botts
Master of Public Policy Candidate
April 2022

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements

This report has been completed in partnership with the Washington, D.C. Special Education Cooperative. They work with special educators in D.C. 's charter schools to develop practices that offer holistic improvement to student supports in school. Their approach looks at the quality of instruction, parent engagement, and accommodations. Additionally, they are focused on transition programs for students with special needs to help them gain experience and learn the skills that will be valuable to them in employment or post-secondary education. By facilitating a network of collaboration between crucial entities throughout the city, the D.C. Special Education Cooperative hopes to create new pathways for student achievement.

My research on the continued achievement gap between general education students and special education students will compile data on the severity of the issue in D.C., best practices from around the country, and innovative alternative solutions. Including analysis of the programs currently run through the co-op will similarly offer co-op members insight into the efficacy of their own programs and offer data-driven support for other initiatives potentially worth future investment.

Executive Summary

This report analyzes causes, drivers, impacts, and potential solutions to the issue of secondary transition outcomes in Washington, D.C. In the Nation's capital, only one-third of students with special needs find employment or enroll in post-secondary education of some level after leaving high school. While rates in other states are similar, the District has been noncompliant with national disability support guidelines for over a decade. In addition to the social consequences of poor secondary transition rates, failing to support secondary transition means that down the line, the city incurs substantial costs in the form of Medicaid support for unemployed peoples with disabilities, housing assistance, and lost economic outputs.

Many systems currently exist to support students as they transition out of school. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act offer the legislative foundation for secondary transition programs and interventions through the education and employment agencies. Other support functions are contracted out to other local partners.

There is not extensive literature on effective interventions in secondary transition. A meta-analysis by Test et al. provides the framework for evidenced-based practices in secondary-transition. Current and projected outcomes are based on annually reported IDEA data on post-school outcomes. However, data collection poses a huge barrier to developing a concrete understanding of the flaws in current policy and assessing the success of future interventions.

Relying heavily on extrapolation, this report adapts some of the practices identified by Test and others, and offers a potential implementation strategy for the Washington, D.C. policy landscape. These alternative policies are then contextualized based on research findings and evaluated based on equity, cost-effectiveness, quality, how easily it can be implemented, and political feasibility.

The ultimate recommendation is that the Washington City Council invest in family to family networks through annual grants to support family involvement in secondary transition and facilitate equitable access to existing resources. The secondary recommendation is that the Council support comprehensive reform and investment in data collection to more accurately understand the nature of the problem and identify successful interventions.

Problem Definition

In Washington, D.C. too few students with disabilities enroll in post-secondary education or find employment after high school.

The nation's capital has historically struggled to provide quality public education and academic support to its residents. This is particularly true for students with disabilities. In 2020, the overall graduation rate for the city was 69%. For students with disabilities, that figure was 46%. This is a 14-percentage point increase from 2012 when the graduation rate for students with disabilities was only 32% (DCPS, 2021). Similarly, 56% of the overall graduating population in 2018 enrolled in post-secondary education within six months. However, only 35% of students with disabilities did (Coffin & Meghjani, 2020). Test scores show a similar picture. The school system considers any student who scores in level four or five "on target for college and career readiness" (DCPS, 2020). Between 2014 and 2018, the percentage of students with disabilities who were "ready" never exceeded 6%. Meanwhile, the general population saw a jump from 20 to 32% ready (DCPS, 2018). Unfortunately, Washington, D.C. has no data on long-term outcomes for students which means that there is limited information on employment for students with and without disabilities.

In 2020, there were nearly 30 million people with disabilities living in the United States. Only 18% of them were employed (BLS, 2021). In contrast, the general unemployment rate in 2020 was less than 7%, even after a year of unprecedented economic hardship caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This enormous employment disparity for individuals with disabilities has important social and economic impacts.

The question remains, how to increase employment rates for students with disabilities. Several factors drive one's post-secondary success. Academic achievement is very important for many pathways, and data has shown that those who go on to attain a bachelor's degree are more likely to be employed and earn higher incomes than those with only a high school diploma. Additionally, it has been shown that employers are more likely to hire people who are already employed (Kopp, 2021). Because jobs serve as a source of monetary as well as social capital, finding steady employment after high school is an important vehicle for student success. With regard to both post-secondary matriculation and job placement, transition support out of high school is very important for students with disabilities.

To better understand how to increase employment rates for individuals with disabilities, this report will look specifically at post-secondary enrollment and employment rates. This will be done using available data on the District of Columbia and external data from comparable cities and programs. While test scores are a common metric used to evaluate college and career readiness, the significant variation in tests across states and the lack of sufficient data from the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) make comparisons difficult. Moreover, there are questions about whether these tests fairly assess students with disabilities.

Comparative Analysis

Based on a report from the Institute of Educational Leadership (IEL), the District of Columbia out performs most states when it comes to high school diploma attainment, postsecondary enrollment, and college attainment (Cheng & Shaewitz, 2019). Data in the report was drawn from the U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey. The survey data IEL looked at was for youth ages 14-24 with federally recognized disabilities. This population does not reflect the immediate transition pool that is the focus of this report and the IEL conclusions do not capture the nuances of Washington, D.C. as a city compared to other states. Therefore, data reported by District of Columbia Public Schools will be included as well to offer a more comprehensive understanding of what the population in question actually looks like in D.C.

According to the survey, Washington, D.C. has the fifth highest rate of youth with disabilities receiving high-school diplomas with 79.7%. It is important to note that this data is incongruous with graduation data published by District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) which reports a graduation rate of 44%. D.C. has the second highest rate of college enrollment with 35.4% of students with disabilities enrolling in higher education. Enrollment data is ambiguous as to whether it is counting enrollment in two-year and four-year institutions or just four-year. However, this figure is similar to data reported by DCPS which identifies that within one year of graduating, 24% and 14% students who had an IEP were enrolled in higher education or some other secondary education or training program respectively--38% in total (OSSE, 2019). Similarly, according to the IEL, the District has the highest rate of postsecondary attainment with 13.6% of students receiving a bachelor's degree.

Despite having comparatively high statistics for high school, college enrollment, and college graduation rates, D.C. has the second lowest employment rate for youth and young adults with disabilities at 10.5%. The U.S. average is 17% (Cheng & Shaewitz, 2019). One year after graduating, DCPS reports that only 5% of students with an IEP are competitively employed (OSSE, 2019).

D.C. is very unique in terms of demographic composition, socioeconomic breakdown, and governmental structure. Therefore, comparing the outcomes of Washington, D.C. to states doesn't appropriately frame the scope of the problem of secondary transition in D.C. For that reason, D.C. should also be compared more closely to a city of reasonable size. Comparable in population size and percentage of the population with disabilities, Boston serves as an important point of comparison for D.C. Employment rates for the nondisabled population in D.C. and Boston are 73% and 74% respectively. For the disabled population, however, a gap appears. 29% of disabled Bostonians are employed while 68% are not in the workforce. While these numbers are nothing to be proud of, in DC only 23% of the disabled population is employed and 73% are not in the workforce (*Boston - DC Disability Status*, n.d.). Graduation rates for the special needs population also offer a point of contrast. At 54% for students with disabilities, Boston's graduation rate is ten percentage points higher than Washington's 44%. Though Boston's graduation rates are higher overall, the difference in rates for the general population is only four percentage points (Boston Public Schools, 2019). A measure of parent and family satisfaction, the Center for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education captures the number of special education disputes filed in the U.S. In the 2018-19 academic year, Washington, D.C.

families filed more special education disputes than the entire state of Massachusetts or any other state or U.S. territory with 279 per ten thousand children (CADRE, 2020).

Cost to Society

A failure to sufficiently prepare students with special needs for life after high school graduation and support their transition to the workforce or higher education imposes significant social and economic costs on these individuals and their families. These costs can have dramatic impacts on the quality of life experienced by these individuals and their families. However, the economic costs borne by society are also a critical component of policy analysis. Economic costs include both direct costs paid out-of-pocket by society and opportunity costs which are not directly paid. Generally, externalities are also considered. However, in this case, externalities account for a minimal part of the costs borne by society.

The direct costs of lower post-secondary attainment for students with special needs manifest through government provision of social services, a cost passed directly to taxpayers. Opportunity costs are the potential alternative outcomes had the individuals currently not participating in the labor and education market been provided a different outcome. Though important in discussions of public policy, externality costs of secondary transition imposed on other populations are minor and are therefore not considered in this analysis.

Direct Costs

Though not a complete list, the primary categories which comprise the direct costs of the achievement gap are outlined below. Not included in these major categories are the cost of adult day services and specific costs for care within government facilities. These are not included because the majority populations do not represent the population of interest and cost data for individuals who could otherwise be capable of working is not readily available. It is important to note these additional costs because despite the lack of data, they have significant implications for individuals with disabilities and the costs incurred by society.

Supplemental Security Income

At both the federal and state levels, supplemental security income (SSI) payments are made out to children and adults with disabilities that impact their ability to work. These payments are designed to help individuals cover basic living expenses that they would otherwise be unable to due to lack of income. Despite tight restrictions and rigid qualification requirements, approximately 8 million Americans rely on SSI. Of all SSI recipients in 2020, 14% were children with disabilities aged 18 and under, 57% were adults with disabilities ages 18-64. SSI payments also go to “essential persons” who live with SSI beneficiaries and provide essential care. The amount in SSI benefits paid out to individuals varies by their living situation. For individuals with disabilities, the maximum monthly payment amount is $794 ($9,530.12 annually). Based on the SSI demographic breakdown, 6.88 million people rely on SSI. Assuming that 60% of SSI recipients are single and 40% are couples, the total cost of SSI for adults with disabilities is approximately $52 billion.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

Designed to support low-income individuals' nutrition, SNAP offers a monthly benefit to be used toward purchasing food. Under current guidelines, an individual who receives SSI is also eligible for SNAP. Therefore, individuals with disabilities are eligible to receive SNAP benefits. The cost of SNAP is shared by states and the federal government. The cost of the direct benefit is held by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, while the state and federal governments share 50% of administrative costs. In 2019, the overall cost of SNAP in Washington, D.C. was $172,078,913. The District assumed $30,048,298 in administrative costs while the federal government assumed an additional $27,182,766. In total, 101,230 people were served at an overall cost of $229,309,977 (Food and Nutrition Service, 2021).

Residential Support

According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 23% of individuals who receive rental assistance in the U.S. have a disability (CBPP, 2021). Housing vouchers provided through the Department of Housing and Urban Development are designed to support low-income individuals and families. Families must pay 30% of their income in rent and the voucher is designed to supplement any gaps. The program is available to those making 50% or less of the median income for a certain region. The cost of housing support varies widely across regions and is primarily administered through the local housing authorities. For families, 50% of the median income in D.C. is approximately $43,000. This figure is approximately $25,000 for individuals. The median rent in the District is $1,500 per month or $18,000 annually. Based on a market assessment that 13,000 people in D.C. receive housing vouchers, if 23% of them have disabilities, approximately 3,000 individuals with disabilities are receiving housing vouchers in D.C (*Housing Choice Voucher Program in DC*, n.d.).

Health Care

In many U.S. states, those who qualify for SSI automatically qualify for Medicaid. Individuals who don't receive SSI but are living with disabilities may qualify and instead opt to live in a Medicaid covered healthcare facility. Medicaid represents a significant cost to society because of the types of services it covers. Individuals with disabilities often have higher healthcare costs for services such as home and community-based care or assistive technology. In Washington, D.C. the estimated per capita cost of Medicaid for individuals with disabilities is $31,193. In contrast, the cost for able bodied adults under 65 is $6,172 (Medicaid.gov, n.d.). In 2015, the total population of people with disabilities in D.C. was 45,260. Of this population, 9,574 did not work full-time, and 27,566 did not work at all (Jordan, 2015). Assuming that everyone in these two populations is Medicaid eligible, the total cost of Medicaid for individuals with disabilities in the District is $1,158,508,020.

Opportunity Costs

Individuals with disabilities are less likely to be employed and less likely to have a higher-ed degree than the general population. Being unemployed means they are more likely to rely on public assistance programs as was enumerated in the previous section. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, there were nearly 30 million people with disabilities living in the U.S. in

2020. Only 18% of them were employed (BLS, 2021). Even with a conservative estimate that 55% (16.5 million) of these individuals could work if provided adequate support the U.S. lost a total of $516.5 billion in economic productivity based on a median U.S. income of $31,000. This estimate does not include people who aren't considered unemployed because they have stopped looking for a job, which is the case for many individuals with disabilities who have been discouraged and let down in the labor market.

More difficult to calculate, but also worth considering, are the lost economic contributions of caregivers who otherwise are contributing non-paid time, particularly if this time would have otherwise been spent in the workforce. Additionally, even for the small fraction of the population with disabilities that are working, their earnings are relatively lower than the general population. Fewer of them have higher education degrees which have been proven to increase lifetime earnings -- an estimate by the Social Security Administration approximates that even after controlling for sociodemographic factors, having a bachelor's degree can increase lifetime earnings by more than $400,000 (Social Security Administration, n.d.).

Major Laws and Regulations

Washington, D.C. operates its public education system through one state education agency (SEA), the Office of the State Superintendent (OSSE). OSSE oversees the operations of 64 local education agencies (LEAS). One of these agencies is District of Columbia Public Schools while the 63 others are independent nonprofit organizations managing the 133 public charter schools in the city. The DC Public Charter School Board (DCPCSB) also oversees the city's public charter schools. It is primarily through DCPS and the DCPCSB that enforcement of laws and regulations pertaining to special education are enforced, funding is distributed, and data is collected. Both bodies conduct audits of special education programs within their respective schools to evaluate how well they perform against core standards.

Federal Legislation – Local Implementation

With regard to national legislation on special education, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1975 established core standards for the provision of educational services for students with disabilities. Through IDEA, students with a disability are entitled to an individualized education plan (IEP), created in conjunction with families, educators, and administrators. Shortly after the rollout of IDEA, the need for comprehensive transition services became apparent to serve students as they transition out of high school. In 2004, IDEA was amended by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA). IDEIA included provisions for transition planning for all students with disabilities to be based on evidence-based practices.

IDEA is the primary source of funding for special education. The law is a federal entitlement grant and each year states are allocated funding based on the share of the population of children with disabilities and the number of children living in poverty (Congressional Research Service, 2019). IDEA funding is split up into parts A, B, C, and D, with B and D being of the greatest

influence for transition outcomes. IDEA Part B represents 92% of all IDEA funding and covers general provisions of special education services for students with disabilities ages 3-21. In fiscal year 2019, Washington, D.C. was allocated $20,100,949 in IDEA Part B funding (Congressional Research Service, 2019). IDEA Part D represents 1.7% of total IDEA funding and is distributed in the form of competitive grants to SEAs, LEAs, institutes of higher education, or nonprofits for personnel development, technical assistance, materials, as well as studies and evaluations. OSSE is specifically looking to award funding from IDEA Part D to "overage under-credited youth with intensive need" (Council of the District of Columbia, 2014). This population would include transition age students in the city. OSSE rewarded an IDEA Part D grant to the DC Special Education Cooperative in 2017 and 2020 for their partnership programs with DC Public Charter Schools (OSSE, 2020).

In addition to IDEA and its amendments, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) has also played a significant role in the nature of special education programming and funding. Specifically, the act was designed to increase access to transition services and help people with disabilities obtain and retain competitive employment. Oversight and enforcement of the act falls on the Department of Employment Services and various partnerships with the DC Rehabilitation Services Administration, the Department of Behavioral Health, and other agencies. These regulations and relationships manifest as vocational and rehab services provided by contractors (LEAs and nonprofits) to provide additional transition support (R. Foster, personal communication, December 12, 2021). The D.C. Special Education Enhancement Fund is a mechanism through which the city provides additional funds to other organizations with the goal to "increase the capacity of a local education agency to provide special education services" (OSSE, 2019).

A byproduct of the WIOA, the Washington, D.C. Workforce Investment Council is designed to help local business leaders, council members, and other local government officials develop and implement a "integrated and effective workplace investment system" (DC Government, n.d.). The Workforce Investment Council is run by a board featuring leaders from private sector and public sector firms, as well as representatives and advocates for specific populations. Despite having many programs listed to improve job training and employment pathways, the disabled population is notably absent from the website despite representing a huge potential workforce.

The Washington, D.C. Special Education Landscape

In addition to national trends on special education transition, there are some factors specific to Washington, D.C. that are driving poor transition outcomes. There are a total 12,596 students with disabilities in DC Public and Public Charter Schools. 13.4% of charter students are identified as special education compared to 14.2% of students in traditional public schools. Charter schools serve 47% of the overall student population in D.C (DCPCSB, n.d.). Thus, charters and public schools serve roughly the same proportion of students with special education needs. However, charter schools serve a slightly larger population of students with greater support needs. D.C. ranks support on a scale from one to four, with level four students needing the most intensive direct support. This informs the type of schooling students receive and the setting. D.C. follows the IDEA mandate of least restrictive environment and therefore the goal is for special needs students to spend as much time in the general education classroom as possible

based on their level of need. There is not a concrete number of special educators employed by the city, but teachers are staffed according to a ratio based on the number of hours per week students spend in the general education classroom. The ratio is either 15:1 or 12:1 for students who need more support outside of general education. For students who spend the majority of the week in the regular classroom, the special education student to teacher ratio is 24:1 (DCPS, 2021). Because charters serve a slightly higher percentage of level four students, they have a higher demand for special educators with the skillset to manage more hours of independent instruction outside of the general education environment.

Both public schools and charter schools are required to be IDEA compliant as enforced by the D.C. Office of the State Superintendent (OSSE). OSSE establishes IDEA guidelines, distributes funds, and collects data. However, OSSE was not established in D.C. until 2007, three years after the authorization of IDEA in 2004. During this three year period, there was no state board of education to enforce IDEA and charter schools did not have to abide by any regulations enforced by the local education agency, DCPS. Thus, D.C. started at a deficit with regard to special education and IDEA enforcement. According to subject-matter experts, this delay manifested as a vacuum in the provision and oversight of transition services for youth with disabilities (R. Foster, personal communication, December 12, 2021).

Data Deficiencies

Data collection poses a major problem and barrier to improving understanding not only how to improve transition outcomes in Washington, D.C. but many other educational goals as well. Many of the issues start at the administrative level with the state education agency, the Office of the State Superintendent (OSSE) (Roth et al., 2021). Money has been funneled into data collection but OSSE has yet to establish sufficient data collection or evaluation policies. Despite being included in the D.C. Code, there is no data warehouse to support the collection and analysis of education data. An audit conducted in 2019 found that OSSE is failing to standardize data collection across D.C.'s local education agencies (the public schools and independent LEAs operating charter schools). There is no comprehensive process for tracking longitudinal data or exit data, and enrollment data is incomplete and often flawed. Existing data collection mechanisms lack integrity and despite receiving more funding than other states, the District continues underperforming and is on the verge of being noncompliant with state and federal data requirements. These factors make it very difficult to determine what interventions are working or empower educators to improve student outcomes. Lack of data also suppresses and obscures demographic discrepancies that are crucial to a thorough analysis of education policy. The lack of data has been a significant barrier to this report and as such many conclusions were drawn using proxy data from national sources or other states.

Of the existing data on secondary transition, many of the datasets are missing important information such as disaggregated graduation, drop out and transfer rates. Only looking at these numbers in aggregate obscures students who may graduate in six years instead of four, which is covered by IDEA, or students who transfer schools within the city or beyond. Furthermore, there is no breakdown by race/ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status. Having this breakdown is imperative for understanding who current transition programs are serving and who they are

failing. Moreover, in terms of policy implementation, disaggregated data makes it easier to target programs to where they are most needed to reduce long term costs associated with implementing a given policy or unnecessarily supporting people when there is a more cost-effective preventative solution.

As was previously described, supporting an unemployed disabled population costs the city millions of dollars each year in rental assistance, health care, and other social support services. Currently, there is no mechanism to collect short or long-term transition information on post-secondary outcomes, nor is there publicly available data on outcomes for students who participate in one of the city's various job training or transition programming. This information would facilitate better targeting and better program development and ultimately reduce the overall cost burden to the city. For the time being, data collection remains one of the most pressing issues with special education transition.

Of the data that is available, indicator 13 on the DCPS IDEA Part B annual report shows that the city is failing to meet its own baseline standards for secondary transition. Indicator 13 is a metric designed to evaluate first whether or not students' individualized education plans flow through the transition out of high school, and second to determine the quality of that transition plan in terms of its alignment with students' goals, support needs, and family participation. The city's target is for 100% of students to have a qualifying IEP transition plan. However, only 76% of students do. While some charter schools have rates of 100% one has a rate of 0% and two others have a rate of 38 and 55% respectively. The rate for all of DCPS is reported in aggregate at 86% but this figure contains the data from 18 different DCPS high schools compared the six independently reported rates from the public charter schools serving grades 9-12 (OSSE, 2019). These numbers show that there are huge disparities across the city in terms of the level and quality of transition planning. This is especially important given the racial and socioeconomic segregation of the city. The two lowest performing charter schools are in wards serving predominantly low-income Black populations.

Similar trends are reflected by the indicator 14 results. Indicator 14 measures the share of students enrolled in some form of post-secondary education or employed one year after graduation. The city's target rate for post-secondary success is 74% while the actual figure lies at 44%. Once again, there is a wide range of results. Combined, DCPS schools exceed the city target with a success rate of 46% while charter schools serving predominantly Black or Latinx and low-income populations have the lowest rates of post-secondary success with rates as low as 25% (OSSE, 2019). This reflects persistent trends in public education. Historically, the least qualified teachers have been sent to schools with the highest percentage of minority and low-income students and subsequently, these schools face extremely high teacher turnover rates. Teacher turnover has negative impacts on student achievement and likely factors into the lower post-secondary success rates.

Profile: Special Education in D.C.

Student and Family Realities:
Through OSSE and DCPS, Washington, D.C. has resources available to families to help them determine whether their child has special needs and qualifies for additional services. At any stage between age 3 and 21 a student in the District is entitled to special education services. A sequence of screenings and referrals are first conducted and then a team of qualified professionals and the student's guardians develop an individualized education plan based on the student's level of support needs.

Teacher Realities:
The Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics program estimates that there are 2,190 special education teachers employed in the Washington metropolitan area. Only the Los Angeles and New York city metro areas employ more special educators. The District also has the fifth highest average wage for special education teachers at $72,690. This corresponds with a DCPS job posting found at the time of writing which listed the annual salary range as $56,000 to $125,000. The base salary for a teacher with a bachelor's degree in D.C. is $56,000. Teachers see salary increases and bonuses for being highly effective according to IMPACT assessments and for the duration of their tenure with DCPS.

For both DCPS and public charter schools the requirements for special education teachers are minimal. A bachelor's degree is required, as it is for all teaching positions, but there are no additional credentials required for entry level special education positions. Previous teaching and previous special education experience are both strongly preferred but not required. Higher level special education positions, such as stand-alone autism teachers do require a higher level of education and credentialing. While low entry requirements can increase access for low-income or minority teachers who have traditionally faced barriers to access higher education, or broaden the applicant pool in the face of ongoing teacher shortages, they have the side-effect of lowering the quality of teachers entering the classroom. Occasionally, teachers are placed in special ed classrooms to fill a vacancy even if they were originally hired to teach general education. Teachers then cite minimal support in attending additional training or credentialing programs which are often cost prohibitive.

In the Classroom:
Depending on students' necessary level of support, they are assigned to special education level one-four, one is the lowest level of support whereas four is the most intensive. The level of support roughly correlates to varying amounts of time spent in or outside of the general education classroom. Similarly, student to faculty ratios are determined by the level of support needed by students. The higher the support need, the lower the student to faculty ratio. There is a 15:1 student to faculty ratio for students who spend fewer than 11 hours inside the general education classroom and a 24:1 ratio for students who spend fewer than 11 hours outside of the general education classroom. Additionally, schools are allocated teachers' aides to schools with specific special education programs for behavioral and communication support. Ten high schools in D.C. offer some form of special education support in the form of behavioral, communication, learning, independence, and specific learning support programs. Each school does not offer each type of program. Only one of the ten schools provides medical support and only one provides sensory support.

Causes and Drives of the Problem

There are several factors that influence low outcomes for students with disabilities. Many of these are structural issues at the national and local levels that create systemic barriers to advancing within K-12 and beyond. These barriers implicate a variety of institutions, from local school systems, institutions of higher education, and call into question the foundation of integral relationships between students, their families, and the systems designed to support them.

Institutional

According to the U.S. Department of Education, "personnel shortages and inadequately trained teachers in special education are among the most pressing and chronic problems facing the field". Many attribute this to the unmanageable workload, excessive paperwork, credentialing barriers, and lack of funds for recruitment and training (MacFarlane et al., 2021). This results in poor educational services and outcomes for children with disabilities and these issues manifest boldly during secondary transitions when students with disabilities are also competing with students without disabilities for jobs and acceptance into institutions of higher education.

Once students make it to the workplace or higher education, they then face additional challenges as they experience a substantial drop off in support and enter an extremely convoluted landscape of accommodation and support. This decreased support then leads to lower post-secondary matriculation rates. Because wages are so closely tied to education level, lower post-secondary enrollment leads to reduced wellbeing overall. Similarly, employed people are more likely to be hired. Not having access to a job also cuts students off from access to a social and professional network that could have huge implications for their careers and life outcomes.

Relational

Although all students are required to develop a transition plan as they approach their high school graduation, administrators are often over burdened with a large caseload of students and family expectations don't align with those of teachers and administrators. This creates a challenging and often unfulfilling experience for the students who are left without a sense of direction and parents who don't know how to navigate the various networks to get better support for their children.

Existing Evidence

Historically, the special education population has not seen the same post-secondary outcomes as the general education population. Students with special needs face lower levels of post-secondary enrollment and matriculation as well as lower employment levels. Subsequently, individuals with special needs are less independent and more reliant on public services and support. This can include both medical support through insurance and residential assistance. Much of the literature on secondary transition for students with special needs rely on a small sample of qualitative studies. While these studies cannot say anything about causality, they are

helpful for framing the landscape of evaluation and outlining the perspectives of key stakeholders (families, students, educators).

Research has consistently shown that individuals with a post-secondary education experience better life outcome compared to those with only a high school diploma. Looking at higher education as a means to improve post-secondary outcomes for special needs students, the data shows that the current U.S. higher education system is under-serving this population. While enrollment in institutions of higher education is increasing, a graduate rate of only 12% suggests serious barriers to completion. Numerous factors have been identified as contributing to this low matriculation rate. The roles and responsibilities of students and their support networks change significantly from high school to college and the legally obligated levels of support also differ. In a small survey with families of children with special needs, external attitude and perception factored greatly into how students perceived their own capabilities leading up to college.

With 13 federal recognized disability categories qualifying for special needs services under IDEA, the population of special education students is incredibly diverse and certain groups face enhanced difficulties in the secondary transition. Research has shown that individuals with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) have employment rates ranging between 4.1% and 11.8% regardless of intellectual ability. Similarly, individuals with ASD who have completed college face unemployment and under-employment at disproportionate rates. In a small study of transition services for individuals with ASD, a number of them reported a general lack of involvement in transition planning. An evaluation of practices that ex-post has shown to improve employment and post-secondary enrollment showed that inclusion in the general education classroom, paid work experience in school, training in self-care and independent living, and student support are all mechanisms that increase the college enrollment and employment rates. A drawback of this study is the small sample size and inability to determine causality from the data.

There are 32 evidence-based practices in secondary transition recognized by the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (Test et al., 2016). Many of these practices have to do with instructional methods, self-advocacy, collaboration and involvement of multiple stakeholder groups, skills-based, and community-based instruction. Each of the policy alternatives presented in this report in some way builds on these practices. The literature on special education transition is largely correlational. The ethics of causal studies on this particular issue mean that the likelihood of finding reviews of the causal effect of interventions is unlikely. However, other key issues with current research include the small sample sizes and emphasis on surveys that identify problems but don't evaluate the efficacy of solutions. The National Longitudinal Transition Survey is the only large sample panel data available on transition-age youth with special needs. This dataset offers good demographic data as well as a sense of what post-secondary outcomes look like two to five years after graduation. Data offering an assessment of the most effective interventions is limited. Despite current deficiencies, the literature continues to evolve and is updated annually to reflect new findings in secondary transition.

Criteria

The following criteria have been selected to ensure that proposed policy actions reflect research and evidence based practices compliant with IDEA and supportive of secondary transition

outcomes for a diverse population of students. The criteria were developed and weighted to give special consideration to the unique policy landscape in D.C. and longstanding challenges of secondary transition.

Equity – 30%

While the District of Columbia is currently presenting higher levels of employment and post-secondary enrollment than other states, the goal should be equivalent outcomes to the general education population. Therefore, equity will be a measure of how well a given alternative drives the special education population toward an outcome more reflective of the general population. However, even within the special education population, there are geographic and demographic communities that have historically faired poorer. While most of the data for D.C. is not broken down into these key characteristics, assumptions based on the literature and existing evidence will evaluate how well the stated programs meet the needs of diverse communities. Therefore, equity will be focused inward as well.

- Number of students served
- Access for students from traditionally disadvantaged backgrounds
- Potential barriers to access for disadvantaged communities

Cost-effectiveness – 25%

Cost-effectiveness will measure the cost per student employed or enrolled in higher ed. This report will assess cost-effectiveness only for the District of Columbia over a ten year period from a base year of 2018 to projected costs and outcomes in 2028. Cost-effectiveness will be calculated by taking the ratio of the projected outcomes of a particular policy and the total present value one can determine that program's cost effectiveness. To account for inflation, a discount rate of 3% will be applied.

$$\text{Cost Effectiveness} = \frac{Present\ Value\ of\ Total\ Cost}{Total\ Number\ of\ Youth\ Employed\ or\ Pursuing\ Higher\ Ed}$$

As an education issue, a significant portion of the costs will be personnel based. This includes teachers and program staff as well as administrative staff and their respective benefits. Consideration will also be given to building and maintenance costs and technology costs associated with program implementation. Baseline data from the Office of the State Superintendent of Education and evidence from the literature will be used to project the number of youths employed or pursuing high education as a result of each policy alternative.

Methodology

Cost-effectiveness was calculated using a variety of metrics. Because of discrepancies in the data, 2018 was used as the base year for analysis. A ten year window from 2018 to 2028 was used as the evaluation period. Looking first at the population of interest, Washington, D.C.

enrollment data was used to convert the figure from a percentage to a number. In order to project outcomes across this time period, the average growth in employment was calculated based on seven years of data. School enrollment increases an average of 2% annually. This rate is consistent with rates published by the public school system. The 2% growth rate was used to project out total grade 12 student enrollment through 2028. National statistics report the average share of students with disabilities and the growth rate over time. This percentage was used to estimate the total grade twelve enrollment of students with disabilities for each year of the observation period. Utilizing the enrollment data and the national statistics on disability, estimates were drawn about the size of the special needs student population for each year of analysis.

The outcome of interest is the number of students enrolled in some post-secondary education or training or employed. Indicator 14 in OSSE's annual IDEA reports captures this figure as a percentage. These figures were converted using the population estimates previously explained. In estimating the outcome, an assumption was made that all grade twelve students were leaving the school system and were therefore eligible to be employed or enrolled in some higher education. For the status quo the outcomes were projected by using the standard growth rate of Indicator 14. The outcome for each of the policy alternatives was calculated using an estimated effect size found in the literature and inferred based on the D.C. policy landscape.

Comprehensive cost estimates for each policy were calculated using market data. The primary cost categories considered included personnel, maintenance and overhead, rental costs, technology, and per-pupil costs. For each year included in the analysis, a 3% increase was included to account for inflation. The final cost-effectiveness calculation divided the net present value of the total cost with a 3% discount rate by the total projected outcome.

Implementation – 20%

The policy alternatives presented above are designed to be implemented within the current D.C. administrative landscape. As such, they must be evaluated on how easily they can be implemented at the intended level of government and how the effects will make their way to the target population. The special education landscape in D.C. is extraordinarily convoluted and thus intentional consideration must be given to the steps required to see a policy recommendation instituted.

- How many administrations are involved?
- How many rules and regulations are required?
- How much discretion is there in implementation
- How easily can success be evaluated – reliance on data collection
- How easily can modifications be made
- Does the program need to be phased in (over how long)
- Would the change require an act of Congress?
- Will educators support or oppose the direction?
- Do staff have the appropriate technology and expertise to implement?

Quality – 15%

Quality should consider the extent to which a given program applies evidence-based practices to support transition outcomes. Though each of the policy alternatives previously presented approach a different component of the issue, they should all rely on research-based practices that have a demonstrated to improve outcomes for youth with disabilities. Quality will be specifically concerned with the gap between a policy or program's intended goals and its reality. This moves beyond legal compliance and places key emphasis on stakeholder satisfaction. The following categories are based on evidence from the research and will be used to assess the quality of a program.

- IDEA Compliance
- Employment in competitive industries
- Emphasis on self-advocacy
- Long term career trajectory
- Student and parent involvement
- Student and parent satisfaction
- Teacher satisfaction
- Equitable compensation
- Sustainability

Political Feasibility – 10%

As a fairly pro-education environment, the political feasibility of the new alternative will depend on how much the program will cost, how it will influence teachers, and the level of government at which action will be required. Most of these policies require an increase in funding and therefore will be passed at the City Council level. They will require legislation to be passed by the City Council and the mayor. Because D.C. is not a state many laws passed by the Council must receive final approval from Congress. However, this report assumes that anything passed by the Council will receive congressional approval and therefore does not consider political feasibility at the congressional level.

- Does it require an increased budget or shift in allocation
- Increase in taxes at the local level?
- How much does it burden teachers/implications of the teacher's union
- Does it ask more of parents and families
- Does it align with measures previously passed by the City Council

Policy Alternatives And Findings

Will be evaluated by analyzing the current agendas of city council members particularly
The policy alternatives that will be explored further in this report are increased funding for F2F networks, increased funding for school-based transition services, increasing hiring requirements

and professional development opportunities for special education teachers, and implementing a universal internship-based transition program for all students with special needs.

Status Quo

Under the status quo, special education transition involves numerous disjointed stakeholders and agents across Washington, D.C. Students and families make up the most prominent stakeholder while the agents providing transition information and services range from the Office of the State Superintendent, each local education agency, the Department of Labor, and various independent organizations and nonprofits. Current programs are opt-in meaning that the onus is on students and families to apply for the programs they are interested in and information is publicized on various websites. Under the Rehabilitative Service Administration (RSA), every student with a disability (IEP or 504 plan) is eligible to receive transition counseling. The RSA has 13 counselors with standing dates to visit schools across the city. During this time they offer workshops on the transition and employment process, as well as referrals and intake for other RSA or Vocational Rehabilitation programming. However, other RSA services are provided based on eligibility not entitlement. This means that not every student with a disability qualifies to receive services (A. Spinella, personal communication, March 2022). Although the RSA does not track longitudinal data on participants, nor does it track students across services, they have observed a decline in school-based referrals since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the baseline in 2018, only 44% of students with an IEP enrolled in some form of higher education or were employed after graduating (OSSE, 2019). Along with 2017 (54% enrolled or employed), this seems to be an outlier. The average rate of post-high school enrollment or employment for the previous four years (2013-2016) was 33%. There is also discrepancy within the quality of IEPs. More recent data is unavailable, but the last released data showed that in 2011, only 41% of IEPs were compliant with IDEA transition requirements. This figure fell to 38% in 2012, and again to 34% in 2013 (OSSE, 2013).

Equity: Moderate (2)

According to data collected by the D.C. Workforce Investment Council, in 2020, 88% of students who were eligible for pre-employment transition services received them, either through RSA or their school (DC Works, 2022). The equity rating of the status quo suffers because of large variations mean that students can have very different outcomes depending on what school they attend and family involvement. The students whose families are able to navigate the application process for RSA services receive more in depth support than those who are not and the fact that these services are based on eligibility rather than entitlement further reduces the equity of this policy. The positive attributes of this policy are that every student has access to counseling through schools which reduces barriers to accessing external programming.

Cost Effectiveness: $239,565

Enrollment in post-secondary education or training programs or employment is reported in Washington, D.C.'s annual IDEA compliance report. Indicator 14 is the specific measure that captures data and is recorded as a percentage of total students leaving high school. By looking at total grade twelve enrollment and assuming that all students were leaving the school system, the percentage can be converted to a numeric figure. Based on seven years of data enrollment was increasing an average of 2% annually. This rate is consistent with rates published by the public school system. Using the 2% growth rate, total grade twelve enrollment was projected out through 2028. The share of the student population with a disability was calculated using national statistics and the growth rate over time.

After deriving the population of students with disabilities for each year, Indicator 14 was used to determine the number of base student outcomes by calculating the average annual Indicator 14 growth rate and then applying the percentages to each respective year's student population projection. In this projection, two years of positive Indicator 14 outliers were excluded. Under the status quo, it is projected that only 2,341 students will be enrolled in postsecondary education, employment, or training out of a total population served of 9,127 students (25%). The net present value of the status quo is $560,823,675.83. Total cost effectiveness is equal to $239,565.00.

$$\text{Cost Effectiveness} = \frac{\$560{,}823{,}675.83}{2{,}341}$$

Implementation: Low (1)

Although OSSE and RSA are the primary agencies involved in the current provision of secondary transition services, their integration is neither transparent nor efficient which is detrimental to student outcomes. The two primary laws, IDEA and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act are questionably enforced. Moreover, the discretion in implementation of these laws means that there are few ways to monitor and evaluate success. The inability to track success and discretionary implementation in an already noncompliant system drive down the implementation score.

Quality: Low (1)

Currently, secondary transition policy in the District is not informed by evidence-based practices that have demonstrated positive student outcomes. Data shows that many IEPs and transition plans are not compliant with IDEA guidelines. Even though many students receive RSA pre-employment transition services, there is no data on student outcomes following participation in said services and thus no way to assess quality and success. Parents and administrators alike complain that family engagement is minimal and counselors are overburdened with student caseloads. Ultimately, the status quo will not be sustainable if the U.S. Department of Education

and Department of Justice intervene on the issue of IDEA noncompliance (National Council on Disability, 2018).

Political Feasibility: Moderate (2)

Because the status quo requires minimal interagency interaction and cooperation and no shift in current budget allocations it is politically feasible for most stakeholders in D.C. government and bureaucratic agencies. Proceeding with the status quo has no implications for additional burdens on teachers that would instigate a response from the teachers union. However, issues with IDEA compliance threaten political feasibility from a federal standpoint. If DC continues to be noncompliant, the federal government is authorized to withhold funds and/or proceed with litigation under the Department of Justice.

Increase funding for family-to-family (F2F) networks

Family-to-family networks (F2Fs) are local organizations designed to unify parents with children facing special healthcare or education needs. The goal is that these networks facilitate the transfer of information and resources to help parents be better advocates and providers for their children and find support from families facing similar situations. Additionally, as local grassroots based organizations, F2Fs often embrace cultural and linguistic diversity which is particularly important in Washington, D.C. where many of the students with special needs are from minority backgrounds. There is currently only one F2F in D.C., Advocates for Justice and Education Inc. (AJE). AJE serves families with transition age youth[1] by ensuring that they have "appropriate transition plans, and are equipped to self-advocate to achieve their desired goals". The Transition Advocacy Project is one such initiative through which AJE connects with students and their families to prepare them for a successful transition. Thus far, this program has been implemented in only a few schools and institutions in the District. Trainings, workshops, and parent meetings are also facilitated by AJE to connect parents to the resources, information, and support they need to support their children. During the COVID 19 pandemic, these meetings all shifted to a virtual format.

Secondary transition outcomes vary not only by disability but also by race and ethnicity. Based on data from the National Longitudinal Transition Study, 62.5% of white American students with special needs graduate from high school as compared to 49.2% of African American students and 39.2% of Latinx students. Students with emotional and behavioral disturbance and learning disabilities are disproportionately minority students, and more likely to drop out of high school before receiving a diploma. The authors also explored the theoretical concepts of social and cultural capital in the special education environment. Cultural capital includes things like access to college prep courses while social capital refers to the networks that people use to acquire capital. As with many resources across the country, access to said resources is skewed toward more affluent, white students and families.

A small qualitative study of three black families found that parent engagement is fueled by the "activation of their social networks" including ones to help cope and manage the challenges of

[1] AJE defines transition age as 13-26. D.C. defines this as 14-22

parenting a child with special needs and those that produce leverage and help one access resources and improve their opportunities. Parents reported that they often feel a sense of discomfort and discouragement when interacting with teachers and school administrators. F2F networks serve to unite families on the basis of mutual understanding and have parents teach other parents how to be better advocates for their children and navigate the complexities of the school system with regard to services and entitlements for children with special needs and disabilities.

The current challenge with F2F policy is incorporating informal or semi-formal networks of support into formal systems of care. Without the connection, transition policy may continue struggling to develop "patient-driven" approaches. Unfortunately, the majority of literature on the subject focuses anecdotally on the challenges that are being faced and the theoretical solutions. There is a lack of evidence on the efficacy of F2F networks and the benefits of additional investment. Conversations with leaders of F2Fs reveal that additional funding would increase the capacity of existing networks by allowing them to hire and fund additional parent leaders and liaisons. Anecdotally, parents have found these networks to be beneficial but proving causality is difficult and data on population served and changed outcomes is limited.

Increasing support for local F2F networks would require D.C. Council to authorize an annual fund to be disbursed annually to D.C. F2Fs in the for of a grant. AJE offers training workshops and resources for parents and families of students with disabilities to help them navigate the secondary transition process and access the services for which they are entitled or eligible and advocate when the quality of services is poor. The annual funding from D.C. government would go towards outreach initiatives to increase the number of families being targeted, compensation to support parent volunteers, and virtual tech support to facilitate accessibility for more families.

Equity: High (3)

The virtual model that many F2Fs including AJE have adopted means that a larger number of parents can be served and access services outside of real time which reduces time and transportation barriers for many families. Connection to a social network creates levels of support beyond formal structures while the connection to formal expertise and legal advice reduces information asymmetries that otherwise prevent families from accessing the highest quality services for their children. AJE's culturally competent programming and outreach by ward creates an inclusive environment for people of various cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Cost Effectiveness: $185,183

Though F2Fs provide parent services in communities across the country, there is a dearth of literature evaluating their impact on student outcomes. As a result, proxy studies were used to estimate the impact of this policy on student transition outcomes in D.C. A particularly strong study found that community-based services supporting families of students with disabilities increased the number of satisfactory transition plans by 29%. Setting 29% as the overall effect size over the 10 year time horizon translated to an annual growth rate of 3.5%. Assuming that

progress will be slow, the initial rate of increase is 2% for the first year of implementation. The total projected outcome is 3,037 (33%). The cost of implementing the policy is $156,860 which accounts for outreach efforts, technology licenses, and compensation for parent volunteers. Adding this to the cost of the baseline means a total cost of $57,539,768.00 and a net present value of $562,356,724.69. Given the projected outcome, the total cost effectiveness is $185,183.00.

$$\text{Cost Effectiveness} = \frac{\$562{,}365{,}724.69}{3{,}037}$$

Implementation: High (3)

Establishing the fund for ongoing support of F2Fs would require an authorization to be passed by City Council. The office of the Deputy Mayor for Education would be responsible for overseeing distribution of the funds. The bill will require reauthorization on regular intervals, but otherwise the administrative burden is low and there is minimal need for interagency collaboration. Though the funds will be designated for specific purposes, there will be significant amounts of discretion in how they are ultimately used. The virtual model of many F2F services with simplify data collection regarding engagement, participation and satisfaction and OSSE would not be involved in any of the data collection procedures. Because F2Fs are non-governmental entities, with small staffs, and strong ties to the community they are able to make reasonable modifications with ease though they may encounter capacity constraints. The technological capacity has already been established and will be additionally supported through the authorization.

Quality: High (3)

The overall goal of F2Fs is employment and self-advocacy for students and their families. Self-advocacy is one of the practices identified by industry experts as most influential in securing successful transition outcomes for youth with special needs (R. Foster, personal communication, December 12, 2021)(Test et al., 2005). According to a study by Boone, community-based training of parents increased the number of satisfactory IEPs by 29% (Boone, 1992). By looking holistically and comprehensively at student outcomes and support systems, F2Fs are equipped to support transition pre and post high school exit. Satisfaction rates and parent testimonials demonstrate high levels of parent satisfaction. Implementing the new policy with compensation for parent leaders increases the quality of F2Fs from a recipient and provider standpoint. F2Fs have integrated sustainability by offering services at various stages throughout the school experience. The formal administrative structure offers additional support through the preservation of procedural and systemic knowledge.

Political Feasibility: Moderate (2)

Advocates for Justice in Education has previously received funding through grants from the D.C. Department of Behavioral Health, the D.C. Department of Health, the D.C. Child and Family

Services Agency, the U.S. Department of Education, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This demonstrates that political support for their work exists but has not yet risen to the level of City Council. The Council's legislative history suggest an emphasis on solutions based in employment or education services rather than community based entities.

Streamline Transition Services

Under IDEA, school-based transition services are supposed to be available to every special needs student in a school system. Because the city did not have a state education agency until 2007, the responsibility of providing D.C. students with transition counseling has been outsourced beyond the school system to entities such as the Rehabilitation Service Administration and the Special Education Cooperative. Some partners serve only local charter schools while others serve public schools as well. The City also offers smaller scale programs such as Project SEARCH and the CEO program, both of which place students in the workplace and offer training programs to help them identify career goals and develop necessary skills. Currently these offerings are publicized on multiple platforms and each have a different application process and eligibility criteria. Therefore, families find it incredibly difficult to navigate and access all of the services available to them. Streamlining the school-based transition services would mean developing a new user friendly interface that aggregates all relevant transition information and programming in one website. In order to accommodate charter and public school students, this website project should be initiated by OSSE. Alongside the website will be a revived outreach campaign to ensure that students, families, teachers, and IEP coordinators all know of the resource and how to access it. In addition to the website, OSSE should increase the number of create an integrated body with the Rehabilitation Service Administration to develop common standards for transition planning and counseling and ensure that the number of individuals staffed appropriately matches the number of students eligible for and receiving services.

Despite the expectation under IDEIA that research-based practices will inform transition services, surveys have shown that disconnects between researchers and educators prevent best practices from becoming ubiquitous. Correlational studies suggest that a few practices, in particular, are effective in supporting students through the transition out of high school. These include opportunities to work during high school, participation in the general education setting, vocational education, and work-study programs. Additional research is required to identify the specific costs of these interventions and the benefits of each dollar of investment. Due to the limitations of the data on special education, reviews from general education will need to be consulted for more quantitative data on outcomes.

States have also reported on what have been perceived as the largest systemic barriers to quality transition services. Overwhelmingly, the issues are linked to insufficient special education infrastructure and unqualified personnel. The effectiveness of innovations depends upon the competence of the personnel who implement them and the availability of institutional resources and support. The researchers identified that some states are testing personnel preparation programs that try to establish an empirically based comprehensive framework that considers the students and families in planning to promote development, involvement, and collaboration between support agencies. Additional information regarding the costs of such preparation

programs and the outputs in terms of post-secondary enrollment and employment after implementation of these programs will offer better insight into how well they improve outcomes for students with special needs.

To implement this policy, the Office of the Deputy Mayor of Education would establish an interagency council to unify major governmental and bureaucratic stakeholders on the creation of a new centralized website for secondary transition. The council will include representative from OSSE, RSA, VR, DCPS, and DCPCSB. The primary objective of this council will be to the support the development of an integrated website with all of the information, resources, and applications currently spread across dozens of pages operated by myriad actors. The website would be public facing, intended for use by parents, families, and students with disabilities. The council will continue meeting annually after website development to continue promoting information and data exchange.

Equity: Moderate (2)

This alternative does not do anything to change the provision or capacity of current services. As was previously mentioned, the DCRSA is currently serving the vast majority of eligible or potentially eligible students under their pre employment transition services. However, there are equity implications in the reduction of information asymmetries with increased transparency. Inequity may increase with RSA services. Currently there is no waitlist, but if barriers are reduced and applications increase, the agency may be required to turn individuals away.

Cost Effectiveness: $205,659

This policy would involve centering all transition related services on a single web platform to ease the burden of access for students and families. In the literature, the most similar intervention was described as interagency collaboration and demonstrated no evidence of an effect (Test et al., 2005). Therefore, based on conversations with administrators at the Rehabilitation Services Administration, it was assumed that streamlining services would at least slightly increase the take-up rate of existing services. Thus, the effect of the policy was set at a 1% annual increase in student outcomes. Over the period of analysis, the expected total number of students enrolled in postsecondary education, employment, or training with transition services streamlined is 2,728 out of a total enrollment of 9,127 (30%). This is a 5 percentage point increase over the status quo.

The cost of this program includes the cost of web development and maintenance, the first year costing $57,417,908.00 and each subsequent year costing $59,119,845.24 plus inflation. The net present value of this policy is $561,041,355.15 and overall cost-effectiveness is $205,659.00.

$$\text{Cost Effectiveness} = \frac{\$561{,}041{,}355.15}{2{,}728}$$

Implementation: Moderate (2)

Each of the implicated agencies has its own application and data collection process that are not standardized. Overcoming this variation will pose a major administrative and technical hurdle. Engagement will be easier to measure through site visits and application rates, but without a full overhaul of D.C.'s data collection procedures, any longitudinal data indicating success will still be difficult to obtain, store, and process. Moreover, should any modifications be necessary, they may be complicated by the website maintenance system and the out of date status of many D.C. sites suggests that the transition will be difficult.

Quality: Low (1)

Though this policy has the potential to improve data collection and information sharing, it does not adopt any student-focused practices that have demonstrated positive outcomes. Quality is also impacted by considerations of stakeholder satisfaction from an administrative perspective. The program would add additional burdens on agency administrators without stipulating a mechanism for fair compensation for this work.

Political Feasibility: Moderate (2)

Many councils have been established in the District to address education and employment challenges. This precedent increases the political feasibility of introducing a new council. However, this may also indicate potential resistance from key agencies that are already part of other councils and face the additional administrative burden of participation. There are no major considerations for other stakeholders such as parents and teachers.

Increase Professional Development Opportunities and Requirements for Special Educators

In the 2021-22 school year, DCPS had 17 professional development days scheduled (*School Year 2021-22*, n.d.). What is less transparent, however, is how teachers are spending those days with children out of school. Since 2012, DCPS has quadrupled its spending on professional development and implemented a routine performance data collection system called IMPACT (DCPS, n.d.). These efforts drive the "job-embedded" professional development model which utilizes instructional coaching to support teachers. The District claims that this model fits within the city's strategic plan, A Capital Commitment. However, none of the quantifiable goals outlined in the plan pertain to special education.

Studies from outside the District offer some considerations for how to make professional development more effective. One observational assessment of professional development programs for special education noted that two commonly observed issues are a lack of focus on specific content areas, and a gravitation toward collaboration among teachers who need more support and instruction prior to collaboration (Leko & Brownell, 2009). Part of the reason that

these approaches fail is because high poverty, and urban districts such as Washington, D.C. experience high rates of teacher turnover and use alternative route pathways to compensate and get teachers accredited in as little time as possible. The drawback, however, is that these teachers are then unprepared to implement research driven routines and approaches.

To combat this, the authors recommend grounding professional development in content standards and following that up with instructional support that combines multiple teaching elements. Teaching principles, and knowledge of student performance are all recommended elements of quality professional development. With content standards being the primary goal, it is important for teachers to look at student data but also have access to resources and support outside of the professional development landscape (Leko & Brownell, 2009).

A case study focusing on three special education reading teachers observed teachers from various backgrounds and evaluated their teaching practices pre and post professional development. It must be acknowledged that a case study of this size cannot say anything about causality or best practices. It can, however, serve as an anchor for how to consider teacher perspectives and classroom realities in the absence of teacher interviews.

The case study followed teachers before and after a six month long intensive professional development program. The program consisted of a training "institute" and several follow up opportunities to receive additional training and support. The training was content driven and teacher centered and was delivered through an active learning environment where teachers were encouraged to collaborate with one another and problem solve. The three teachers observed fell into different categories of teacher. The first was a career teacher with over two decades of special education experience. This teacher struggled to implement the new strategies she had learned and was demonstrably comfortable though dubiously effective with her traditional model of direct instruction. The second teacher had been teaching for nearly a decade but was brand new to teaching special education. As a result, she was very eager to learn and implement new teaching strategies, but in the post-evaluations it was evident that she still struggled translating her teaching experience to the needs of her new students. The last teacher had been teaching special education for almost five years after going through an alternative route training program. He acknowledged his own shortcomings and was eager to learn but similarly struggled in implementation and execution of the strategies due in large part to being overextended and lacking a deep enough background in the content (Dingle et al., 2011).

Despite external validity issues, there are some considerations to take away from this case study. The first is the matter of external accountability. Researchers noted that teachers were more likely to implement new teaching practices if they knew that their principal was interested in said practice. Additionally, the backgrounds of the second and third teacher presented in this case study resemble many of the special education teachers in Washington, D.C. overworked, new to the job, and lacking sufficient training. Understanding the limitations these teachers had in executing the new methods once they had learned them underscores the need for continuous support.

Credentials and professional development programs for special educators are cost-prohibitive for many teachers. Though teachers recognize that these courses would likely improve their teaching

practices and benefit students, they are unable to afford them out of pocket. By implementing a new rule about professional development requiring all high school teachers to attend four training sessions about secondary transition. In these sessions, educators will learn from providers about how to incorporate transition into their regular curriculums and promote skills and conversations that will facilitate student engagement in the transition planning process. The Special Education Cooperative is currently offering such professional development services to charter schools in the District on a case-by-case basis.[2] This professional development would include general and special education teachers so that students with various support needs are all getting exposure to transition related topics in the classroom.

Equity: Moderate (2)

After the program is fully phased in, every student will be served equally with regard to transition curriculum. This means that regardless of background students will have access to any improvements offered through this policy. However, there are equity concerns surrounding the phase in and which schools and teachers are prioritized and how. With wide variation in teaching style and accountability measures some students might experience significantly higher or lower quality instruction.

Cost Effectiveness: $189,937

In the literature, increasing transition related classroom instruction had a moderate positive effect on transition outcomes (Test et al., 2005). This type of instruction is integrated into the general curriculum but has strong work or community themes which prime students for the skills they will need for transition conversations and life beyond school. Considering professional development as the vehicle through which new transition related programming will enter the classroom, a correlation was drawn and data on teaching and curriculums served as a proxy for professional development requirements. Because of the moderate effect, it was assumed that in the first years of the program the effect would start at 2% annually and then increase to 3% annually for an overall increase of 29%. Over the ten year time horizon, the total outcome of the program is projected to be 2,955 (32%).

The cost of implementing the policy lies in the cost of paying professional development providers. Based on the cost of services provided by the D.C. Special Education Cooperative and the estimated number of teachers receiving training, the annual cost of the policy would be $44,000 plus inflation. The net present value: $561,253,703.56 and the overall cost-effectiveness is $189,937.00

$$\text{Cost Effectiveness} = \frac{\$561{,}253{,}703.56}{2{,}955}$$

[2] Although this level of professional development support can and should begin as early as ninth grade, the policy as written in this report would not take effect until twelfth grade. This enables more equivalent comparison with the other school based initiatives presented in the report.

Implementation: Low (1)

Although the Special Education Cooperative is currently providing services to charter school teachers, the capacity to expand district wide does not currently exist. Because the service is so niche, there is minimal discretion in terms of who is providing training, when, and how. On the other hand, however, there is lots of discretion in how teachers then apply what they learn in practice. With the insufficient data collection system and huge variation across teachers and schools it would be nearly impossible to attribute an outcome to this program and measure success. There is a teacher evaluation that could monitor teacher execution, but this is not linked to exit data. In addition to capacity constraints at the provider level, the lack of centralized authority from OSSE would impede efforts to enforce this policy across all of the LEAs in D.C.

Quality: Low (1)

Learning about transition skills in the classroom has demonstrated some level of success (Test et al., 2005). However, this alternative does not involve families or student's broader support network. It puts additional burdens on teachers who will likely take time to acclimate and adjust to integrate transition based lessons into their curriculum in an effective way. With regard to sustainability, teacher turnover threatens the efficacy and long term viability of the program. Turnover combined with the loose evaluation structure make it unclear what the long term implementation will look like beyond the ten year observation period.

Political Feasibility: Moderate (2)

Because this policy imposes new expectations on teachers and invokes a new utilization for D.C.'s teacher evaluation system IMPACT, it would likely be unpopular with the teacher's union. However, from a governmental standpoint, the Special Education Enhancement Fund has been established since the Special Education Quality Improvement Act was passed in 2014 (OSSE, 2020). The D.C. Special Education Cooperative has been a recipient of those grants through which it has funded professional development programs. Because the framework and precedent exist for this type of support from City Council, the political likelihood of expansion is high.

Implement a Universal Internship Program for All Graduating High School Students

Internships have been proven to translate to better employment outcomes for students with disabilities. A longitudinal study conducted between 1993 and 1997 followed 3,024 high school students with disabilities at seven different sites across the country. One of those sites was Washington, D.C. and two others were within the Washington metropolitan area. 81% of participants in the sample were minorities and they were representative of national disability distributions, with 57% having mild to moderate learning disabilities (Luecking & Fabian, 2000).

Students were paired with an employer representative trained and employed by the Bridges Program; an initiative led by the Marriott Foundation. The employer representative would help the students assess their career goals and find compatible employers to reach out to. After being placed, students would have a 12-week internship where they would work for their employer and receive support and assistance from their employer representative if necessary. All interns were paid.

Of the original 3,024 participants, 2,524 were able to find a paid internship. 84% (2,119) of those who found internships completed the twelve-week internship program, and ultimately ¾ (1,586) of these students were invited to stay on with the host company. Overall, 52% of the participants completed the program and were employed by the internship host (Luecking & Fabian, 2000). Though seemingly low, the nationwide employment rate for individuals with disabilities in 1997 was 31% (McNeil, 2001).

Another article outlining a conceptual framework for internship accommodations at institutions of higher education identified some crucial considerations for why schools are an important avenue through which students with disabilities should receive internship support. One of the underlying problems driving limited post-secondary success for students with disabilities is the decline in the level of administrative support they receive. Despite the drop off, institutions of higher education are still required to provide accommodations for students with disabilities which can be an asset in internship searches. Accommodations must extend to internship programs if they are run through the school (Severance & Starr, 2011). This can be helpful for students navigating the workplace to the first time, determining the extent of services and accommodations they need, and navigating various networks to receive them. In this sense, schools can provide a very important resource in terms of navigating the legal landscape of support.

Though the article focused on institutions of higher education, the idea of supporting a transition to self-efficacy can also be applied to high school students and high school internship programs. High schools face similar accommodation requirements and can similarly help students bridge gaps that might otherwise serve as barriers to them finding and holding an internship position.

Real-world job experience is one of the best practices that leads to better student outcomes. Many models exist demonstrating how to integrate career experience into student transition plans. The Rehabilitation Service Administration currently offers a work-based learning program to eligible students. Students are placed with local businesses in paid internships where they work up to 20 hours per week and are paid minimum wage through the City.

This policy would convert the current program from an eligibility to an entitlement program in which every student could participate for one semester during their final year of schooling. In addition to job placement, student would undergo job skills training as well as interest and aptitude assessments. The policy would continue RSA's current strengths based approach which matches students based on their strengths and abilities rather than their deficiencies. Because this is an employment based program, it would continue to be run out of the Vocational Rehabilitation Service and Rehabilitation Service Administration.

Equity: Moderate (2)

When the program is fully phased in, equity will be high as the program will be available to all students with qualifying disabilities. However, there is the potential for inequity during the phase in process. An equity barrier currently influencing take up of VR services is parent involvement. Administrators report difficulty coordinating with parents on referrals and necessary authorizations for students who are still minors. This would continue to be a problem under the new policy. As an entitlement, students must get all of the support they need which improves the equity of this alternative.

Cost Effectiveness: $170,172

Internships and work-based learning during high school is very strongly correlated with job retention and post-secondary employment outcomes. In one study, internships during high school increased post-school employment retention by 54%. Results in other studies are similarly high. Washington, D.C. currently has a small work-based learning program but it does not have sufficient capacity to support all students. Implementing this in the District would involve gradually scaling up the current program to accommodate more students. Thus, I assumed a growth rate of 5% annually in student outcomes. With the highest outcome projection, this policy would yield a projected placement of 3,381 (37%).

Though this program yields the highest projected outcome, it also carries the highest estimated price tag. The annual cost of the program includes baseline costs plus an additional $1,490,432. Included in this cost are student wages, salaries for additional RSA support staff, and instructional support/job training. The net present value of this policy alternative is $575,390,200.63 and the cost-effectiveness comes out to $170,172.00.

$$\text{Cost Effectiveness} = \frac{\$575{,}390{,}200.63}{3{,}381}$$

Implementation: Low (1)

As an entitlement, this policy would require both authorization and appropriation from the City Council and a formal rule change by the Rehabilitation Services Administration. Though only one agency would formally oversee the program, effective implementation would require extensive interagency collaboration, partnership with entities such as the D.C. Special Education Cooperative, as well as buy in and support from the local business community. The scale and scope of the program necessitate that it will need to be phased in over several years. As scale grows, it will become increasingly difficult to make modifications. Educators might not be supportive of the program because it will modify classroom time and potentially influence what they will be expected to teach to align with the employment program. As students enter the program data will be collected via their applications, but this program does nothing to address the current deficit in exit data protocols which will make success difficult to measure. To accommodate all students as defined in the entitlement will require different levels of assistive

technology and supports which there is no way to predict or plan for but can be assumed will be an administrative responsibility of program coordinators.

Quality: High (3)

By collaborating with local businesses and specifically preparing students for these positions, this program is preparing students for employment in competitive industries. Additionally, these relationships can potentially serve as a foundation for an inclusive and supportive employment environment for people with disabilities. There is a huge emphasis on self-advocacy in all aspects of the program from exploring interests to actual on the job experience. Student and parent involvement is important but not guaranteed and could pose a barrier to the quality of the experience. The program would build and prepare for long-term planning and goal orientation. Equitable compensation through the payment of minimum wage is another integral to promoting equity.

Political Feasibility: Moderate (2)

The City Council has demonstrated strong and consistent investment in youth employment. The Summer Youth Employment Program, the Apprenticeship Council, and Workforce Innovation Council all project the importance of youth employment to the City's ongoing agenda. The most recent state plan for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Because of the scale of the program, it is likely to attract more constituent attention and support from residents and local businesses who see the policy change as a move to promote equity for a vulnerable population. The high cost of the program is the biggest threat to political feasibility as it may require a reallocation of funds.

Figure 1. Outcomes Matrix

	Equity 30%	Cost-Effectiveness 25%	Implementation 20%	Quality 15%	Political Feasibility 10%	Weighted Total
1.Status Quo	Moderate 2	$239,365/student	Low 1	Low 1	Moderate 2	59842.4
2.Increase Support for F2Fs	High 3	$185,183/student	High 3	High 3	Moderate 2	46297.9
3.Streamline Transition Services	Moderate 2	$205,659/student	Moderate 2	Low 1	Moderate 2	51416.1
4.Increased Professional Development Opportunities	Moderate 2	$189,937/student	Low 1	Low 1	Moderate 2	47485.4
5.Establish Universal Internship Program	Moderate 2	$170,172/student	Low 1	High 3	Moderate 2	42544.45

Recommendation

Based on the analysis, I recommend that the Washington, D.C. City Council increase support for family to family networks. Despite not being the most cost-effective option, this option scores highest on equity, the most highly weighted of all the criteria. Of the alternatives presented, it is the only one that directly supports both employment and post-secondary enrollment outcomes. Additionally, this alternative scores high on quality and implementation. Advocates emphasize the importance of evidence-based practices in secondary-transition and using some of these practices as a quality metric ensures that the recommended policy meets expectations of practitioners and families. Moreover, the unique landscape of D.C. policy implementation presents many barriers and hurdles that will have to be overcome. The flexibility of this alternative and reliance on networks outside of government agencies strengthens its ease of implementation.

This policy is not the most cost effective of the alternatives presented in this report. An internship program would be more cost effective and support more students over the observation period. While not weighted as heavily in the evaluative criteria, implementation and feasibility are both very important in considering the final recommendation. Because an internship program would involve extensive interagency collaboration, substantial funding, and external partnerships with local businesses and nonprofits it will likely take several years to initiate and will take additional time to achieve maximum impact. Moreover, the success of the program is based on the assumption that the local business community is willing, prepared, and equipped to support students with disabilities. For these reasons, the recommended policy is increased support for family to family networks as it is more practical and easier to implement in the D.C. policy landscape.

As a secondary recommendation, the District must invest in comprehensive data collection and processing procedures. Many of the conclusions drawn in this report are based on incomplete or obsolete data which thus limits the validity and generalizability. None of the policy alternatives can be fairly assessed nor evaluated without sweeping reform of data collection policies. D.C. already has a data collection framework which includes establishing a data warehouse and active guidelines on data collection expectations. The issue is that the reality fails to meet these expectations. A lack of accountability from the many LEAs mean that data is asymmetrical and varies by school. Data that is collected often lacks integrity and is tremendously skewed and flawed. To address this, City Council must commit to enacting the data collection agenda that has previously been set. This will involve strong administrative oversight at every level. Additionally, a comprehensive procedure must be developed such that the integrity of data can be ensured across a variety of stakeholders.

Implementation

The first step in advancing this policy is extensive advocacy and outreach at the grassroots level to increase engagement and support from D.C. Council. This effort should be spearheaded by Advocates for Justice in Education, Washington, D.C.'s F2F. However, parents, educators, government agencies, and other local stakeholders should be involved in the lobbying effort to simultaneously spread awareness to families but also to city council members. Advocacy efforts

should be coordinated by school and by ward to mirror the operational structure of AJE. Politically, this also increases the likelihood that funding is appropriated by increasing the stakes for each individual councilmember.

Accessibility is a key strength of AJE and F2F programming that must be enhanced through implementation of this policy. To further increase awareness about their services, AJE must use some of the funds to conduct more outreach directly in schools, coordinating with teachers to bridge the gap with parents. Moreover, even as COVID-19 pandemic restrictions loosen, F2F programming should remain in an online virtual format as this has increased accessibility for many families by alleviating transportation and time burdens. The technology funds offered in the authorization should be used for virtual meeting but also content storage and sharing so that families have access at the times that are most convenient for them.

A major barrier to F2F efficacy and growth has been the time commitment and burden placed on parents, many of whom have other jobs and manage increased healthcare needs for their children. As such, an imperative element of this policy is designated funding to compensate parent volunteers for their time. This compensation is intended for the parents who lead the formal and informal training and networking sessions. An additional benefit to this funding may be the reduction of turnover caused by parents' inability to commit to the time expectation. As a recruitment tool, the parent compensation may also help attract parents from communities that have historically been absent in F2F programming, but critical to provide culturally competent services for multicultural and socioeconomically diverse audiences.

In conjunction with my secondary recommendation, it is imperative that AJE commit to data collection. Demographic data and longitudinal data on student outcomes are particularly important because it is chronically absent from most major datasets on secondary transition in Washington, D.C.

Though other programs and entities are currently supporting secondary transition through schools or employment services, F2Fs offer a community based empowerment that helps families become their own advocates. It will enable families to demand the most out of the services currently available to them and achieve more equitable outcomes for their children.

Appendix A. Cost Effectiveness – Status Quo

Base Case		
Year	Cost	Outcome
2018	$52,513,489.65	238
2019	$54,088,894.33	146
2020	$55,711,561.17	154
2021	$57,382,908.00	175
2022	$59,104,395.24	186
2023	$60,877,527.10	197
2024	$62,703,852.91	209
2025	$64,584,968.50	237
2026	$66,522,517.55	251
2027	$68,518,193.08	266
2028	$70,573,738.87	282
		2341
DR	3.00%	
NPV	$560,823,675.83	
CE	$239,565.00	

Appendix B. Cost Effectiveness – Family to Family Networks

Family to Family Networks		
Year	Cost	Outcome
2018	$52,657,038.77	238
2019	$54,236,749.93	243
2020	$55,863,852.43	250
2021	$57,539,768.00	258
2022	$59,265,961.04	267
2023	$61,043,939.87	275
2024	$62,875,258.07	283
2025	$64,761,515.81	293
2026	$66,704,361.28	301
2027	$68,705,492.12	311
2028	$70,766,656.89	320
		3037
DR	3.00%	
NPV	$562,356,724.69	
CE	$185,183.00	

Appendix C. Cost Effectiveness – Transition Streamlining

Transition Streamlining		
Year	Cost	Outcome
2018	$52,545,519.60	238
2019	$54,121,885.19	238
2020	$55,745,541.75	240
2021	$57,417,908.00	243
2022	$59,119,845.24	245
2023	$60,893,440.60	248
2024	$62,720,243.82	250
2025	$64,601,851.13	253
2026	$66,539,906.66	255
2027	$68,536,103.86	258
2028	$70,592,186.98	260
		2728
DR	3.00%	
NPV	$561,041,355.15	
CE	$205,659.00	

Appendix D. Cost Effectiveness – Professional Development

Professional Development		
Year	Cost	Outcome
2018	$52,553,755.88	238
2019	$54,130,368.56	243
2020	$55,754,279.61	248
2021	$57,426,908.00	253
2022	$59,149,715.24	258
2023	$60,924,206.70	265
2024	$62,751,932.90	273
2025	$64,634,490.89	282
2026	$66,573,525.61	290
2027	$68,570,731.38	299
2028	$70,627,853.32	308
		2955
DR	3.00%	
NPV	$561,253,703.56	
CE	$189,937.00	

Appendix E. Cost Effectiveness – Internship Program

Universal Internship		
Year	Cost	Outcome
2018	$53,877,446.06	238
2019	$55,493,769.44	250
2020	$57,158,582.52	262
2021	$58,873,340.00	276
2022	$60,639,540.20	289
2023	$62,458,726.41	304
2024	$64,332,488.20	319
2025	$66,262,462.84	335
2026	$68,250,336.73	352
2027	$70,297,846.83	369
2028	$72,406,782.24	388
		3381
DR	3.00%	
NPV	$575,390,200.63	
CE	$170,172.00	

References

About IDEA. (n.d.). *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*. Retrieved September 7, 2021, from https://sites.ed.gov/idea/about-idea/

Artiles, A. (2002). Over-Identification of Students of Color in Special Education: A Critical Overview. *Multicultural Perspective*, *4*(1), 3–10. http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.509.8751&rep=rep1&type=pdf

BLS. (2021). *PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY: LABOR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS — 2020*. U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/disabl.pdf

Boone, R. (1992). Involving Culturally Diverse Parents in Transition Planning. *CDEI*, *15*(2), 205–221.

Boston Public Schools. (2019). *Boston Public Schools 2019 Graduation Rate Report*. Boston Public Schools Focus on Children. https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/cms/lib/MA01906464/Centricity/Domain/238/2019%20BPS%204-Year%20Cohort%20Graduation%20Rate%20Report.pdf

CADRE. (2020). *IDEA Dispute Resolution Data Summary for: U.S. and Outlying Areas*. Center for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education. https://www.cadreworks.org/sites/default/files/resources/National%20IDEA%20Dispute%20Resolution%20Data%20Summary%202018-19%20-%20Final%20Accessible_0.pdf

CBPP. (2021, February 8). Policy Basics: Supplemental Security Income. Council on Budget and Policy Priorities. https://www.cbpp.org/research/social-security/supplemental-security-income

CBPP. (2021, June 1). Federal Rental Assistance Fact Sheets. Council on Budget and Policy Priorities. https://www.cbpp.org/research/housing/federal-rental-assistance-fact-sheets#US

Cheng, L., & Shaewitz, D. (2019). *The 2019 Youth Transition Report: Outcomes for Youth and Young Adults with Disabilities*. https://iel.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/IELYouthTransitionReport2019.pdf

Coffin, C., & Meghjani, T. (2020, June 30). *Transition to College or Career for the District's High School Students*. D.C. Policy Center. https://www.dcpolicycenter.org/publications/student-transition-college-career/

Council of the District of Columbia. (2014). *§ 38–2613. Special Education Enhancement Fund. | D.C. Law Library*. Council of the District of Columbia. https://code.dccouncil.us/us/dc/council/code/sections/38-2613.html

DC Government. (n.d.). *DC Works: Workforce Investment Council*. DC.Gov. Retrieved December 17, 2021, from https://dcworks.dc.gov/

DC Works. (2022). *DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT (WIOA) UNIFIED STATE PLAN*. DC Works. https://dcworks.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dcworks/publication/attachments/District_of_Columbia_WIOA%20State%20Plan%20Final%202-28-2022.pdf

DCPCSB. (n.d.). *DC Public Charter Schools Serve Higher Percentages of At-Risk Students and High Needs Special Education Students than DC's Traditional Public Schools | DC PCSB*. Retrieved December 17, 2021, from https://dcpcsb.org/dc-public-charter-schools-serve-higher-percentages-risk-students-and-high-needs-special-education

DCPS. (2021, January 27). *DCPS Data Set - Graduation Rates | dcps*. District of Columbia Public Schools. https://dcps.dc.gov/publication/dcps-data-set-graduation-rates

DCPS. (2021). *FY 22 Education Campus - Comprehensive Staffing Model - DCPS Budgets*. https://dcpsbudget.com/budget-model/comprehensive-staffing-model-overview/fy-22-education-campus-comprehensive-staffing-model/#Special_Education

DCPS. (2020). *DCPS Fast Facts 2019-2020*. District of Columbia Public Schools. https://dcps.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dcps/publication/attachments/DCPS-Fast-Facts-2019-20.pdf

DCPS. (2018, October 30). *DCPS Data Set - PARCC*. District of Columbia Public Schools. https://dcps.dc.gov/publication/dcps-data-set-parcc

DCPS. (n.d.). *Reaching High Expectations: Professional Development at DCPS | dcps*. District of Columbia Public Schools. Retrieved December 8, 2021, from https://dcps.dc.gov/page/reaching-high-expectations-professional-development-dcps

Food and Nutrition Service. (2021). *Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program State Activity Report Fiscal Year 2019*(pp. 5–12). U.S. Department of Agriculture. https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/FY19-state-activity-report.pdf

Hehir, T. (2014). *Review of Special Education in The Commonwealth of Massachusetts: A Synthesis Report* [Synthesis]. https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/cms/lib/MA01906464/Centricity/Domain/249/Hehir%20SynthesisReport.pdf

Housing Choice Vouchers Fact Sheet. (n.d.). U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Retrieved October 4, 2021, from https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/public_indian_housing/programs/hcv/about/fact_sheet

Housing Choice Voucher Program in DC. (n.d.). Nomadic Real Estate. Retrieved October 4, 2021, from https://www.nomadicrealestate.com/housing-choice-voucher-program/

Jordan, C. (2015). 2015 Disability Characteristics Among DC Residents. Dc State Data Center. https://planning.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/op/publication/attachments/2015%20Disability%20Characteristics%20Among%20DC%20Residents.pdf

Kopp, C. (2021, May 2). *Why Is It Easier to Find a Job While Employed?* Investopedia. https://www.investopedia.com/articles/personal-finance/062015/why-it-easier-find-job-while-employed.asp

Leko, M. M., & Brownell, M. T. (2009). Crafting Quality Professional Development for Special Educators: What School Leaders Should Know. *TEACHING Exceptional Children*, *42*(1), 64–70. https://doi.org/10.1177/004005990904200106

Luecking, R. G., & Fabian, E. S. (2000). Paid Internships and Employment Success for Youth in Transition. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals*, *23*(2), 205–221. https://doi.org/10.1177/088572880002300207

MacFarlane, S., Leslie, K., Piper, J., & Jones, S. (2021, September 3). DC Parents Describe Annual 'Fight' Securing Special Education Services. *NBC4 Washington*. https://www.nbcwashington.com/news/local/dc-parents-describe-annual-fight-securing-special-education-services/2791302/

McNeil, J. (2001). *Americans With Disabilities Household Economic Studies 1997* (No. 70–73; Current Population Reports). U.S. Census Bureau. https://www.census.gov/prod/2001pubs/p70-73.pdf

Medicaid Per Capita Expenditures | Medicaid. (n.d.). Medicaid.Gov. Retrieved October 4, 2021, from

https://www.medicaid.gov/state-overviews/scorecard/how-much-states-spend-per-medicaid-enrollee/index.html

National Council on Disability. (2018). *Federal Monitoring and Enforcement of IDEA Compliance* (IDEA Series). National Council on Disability. https://www.ncd.gov/sites/default/files/NCD_Monitoring-Enforcement_Accessible.pdf

Nichols-Barrer, I. (2016, May 17). Testing College Readiness. *Education Next*. https://www.educationnext.org/testing-college-readiness-massachusetts-parcc-mcas-standardized-tests/

OSSE. (2013). *INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT (IDEA) PART B SPECIAL CONDITIONS PROGRESS REPORT # 4* (Progress Report No. 4; Progress Report). U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OFFICE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS. https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/publication/attachments/FFY%202012%20Progress%20Report%204%20%28August%206%2C%202013%29.pdf

OSSE. (2019). *District of Columbia IDEA Part B Local Education Agency Report for Federal Fiscal Year 2018* (District of Columbia IDEA Part B). Office of the State Superintendent. https://osse.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/osse/publication/attachments/FFY%202018%20IDEA%20Part%20B%20Report%20to%20the%20Public.pdf

OSSE. (2019). *SEEF Competitive FY20 (Cohort 3).* Office of the State Superintendent https://osse.dc.gov/page/seef-competitive-grant-fy20-cohort-3

OSSE. (2020). *Special Education Enhancement Fund (SEEF) Competitive Grant | osse*. https://osse.dc.gov/page/special-education-enhancement-fund-seef-competitive-grant

OSSE. (2020). *Special Education Enhancement Fund (SEEF) Competitive Grant*. Office of the State Superintendent. Council of the District of Columbia. (2014). § 38–2613. Special Education Enhancement Fund. | D.C. Law Library. Council of the District of Columbia. https://code.dccouncil.us/us/dc/council/code/sections/38-2613.html

PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY: LABOR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS — 2020. (2021). U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/disabl.pdf

Research Summary: Education and Lifetime Earnings. (n.d.). Social Security. Retrieved October 4, 2021, from https://www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/research-summaries/education-earnings.html

Riser-Kositsky, M. (2019, December 17). Special Education: Definition, Statistics, and Trends. *Education Week*. https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/special-education-definition-statistics-and-trends/2019/12

Roth, E., Cratty, D., Keaveny, B., & Patterson, K. (2021). *Measuring What Matters: More and Better Data Needed to Improve D.C. Public Schools*. Data Ethics, LLC. https://zd4l62ki6k620lqb52h9ldm1-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Education.Data_.Report.Final_.3.10.21.pdf

Sandelius, S. B. (n.d.). *Analysis: What Do Washington, D.C., School Data Tell Us About Special Education? New Breakdown Has 3 Key Takeaways*. Retrieved August 30, 2021, from https://www.the74million.org/article/analysis-what-do-washington-d-c-school-data-tell-us-about-special-education-new-breakdown-has-3-key-takeaways/

School Year 2021-22. (n.d.). District of Columbia Public Schools. https://dcps.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dcps/publication/attachments/SY21-22%20Final%20Calendar_English%20081321.pdf

SELECTED ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS FOR THE CIVILIAN NONINSTITUTIONALIZED POPULATION BY DISABILITY STATUS. (n.d.). United States Census Bureau. https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=disability&g=1600000US1150000,2507000&tid=ACSST1Y2019.S1811&hidePreview=true

Severance, T. A., & Starr, P. J. (2011). Beyond the Classroom: Internships and Students with Special Needs. *Teaching Sociology*, *39*(2), 200–207. https://doi.org/10.1177/0092055X11399560

Special Education / Programs. (n.d.). Boston Public Schools. Retrieved September 7, 2021, from https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/Page/http%3A%2F%2Fwww.bostonpublicschools.org%2Fsite%2Fdefault.aspx%3FPageID%3D6122

Spinella, A. (2022, March). *Conversation with DC RSA* [Zoom].

SSI Federal Payment Amounts for 2021. (n.d.). Retrieved October 4, 2021, from https://www.ssa.gov/oact/cola/SSI.html

Test, D., Fowler, C., Brewer, D., & Wood, W. (2005). A Content and Methodological Review of Self-Advocacy Intervention Studies. *Exceptional Children*, *72*(1), 101–125.

Test, D., Fowler, C., & Kohler, P. (2016). *Evidence-Based Practices and Predictors in Secondary Transition: What We Know and What We Still Need to Know*. National Technical Assistance Center on Transition.

Profile Sources

DCPS. (2020). *Child Find Guidelines* (No. 2; Child Find Guidelines). District of Columbia Public Schools. https://dcps.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dcps/page_content/attachments/ChildFindGuidelines-Version02-Final2-26-20.pdf

Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2021, May). *Special Education Teachers, All Other* [Government]. Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics. https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes252059.htm#(1)

DCPS. (n.d.). *Compensation and Benefits for Teachers* [Government]. District of Columbia Public Schools. Retrieved April 19, 2022, from https://dcps.dc.gov/page/compensation-and-benefits-teachers

DCPS. (2019). *ET-15 FY 19 Pay Schedule* [Government]. District of Columbia Public Schools. https://dcps.dc.gov/node/1294871

DCPS. (2017). *SY16-17 Self-Contained DCPS Classroom Locations*. District of Columbia Public Schools. https://dcps.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/dcps/publication/attachments/FTP%20Vertical.pdf