

Nancy S. Grasmick
State Superintendent of Schools

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December 30, 2008

Mr. William Knudsen
Acting Director
Office of Special Education Programs
Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20202-7100

Dear Director Knudsen,

The Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) has been conducting the Maryland Longitudinal Transition Study (MD-LTS) since September 2001. The MD-LTS is a ten year long study, modeled after the National Longitudinal Transition Study 2 (NLTS 2). The study identifies the characteristics, experiences, and outcomes of a sample of youth with disabilities representative of those in Maryland who were 13 to 16 years old and receiving special education services in grade 7 and above on December 1, 2000.

The study is designed to collect data on the participating youth from multiple sources in five waves, beginning in 2001 and ending in 2009. As with the NLTS 2 the Wave 3 report from the MD-LTS addresses the post-school outcomes of Maryland's youth with disabilities. All of the statistics presented in the report are weighted estimates of the population of young adults in Maryland with disabilities who received special education services in the MD-LTS age group.

To attain the goal of appropriate State representation, participating students were selected to represent the diversity within the State and were selected in the same proportions that their disability categories occur in the Statewide population. Approximately 1,000 students with Individualized Education Programs were selected to participate in this study.

In a letter dated December 15, 2005, MSDE received permission from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) to use the data from the Wave 2 Report of the MD-LTS as the baseline for the FFY 2006 SPP Indicator 14 submitted on January 31, 2008. The Wave 2 report presented a first look at the post school experiences of youth with disabilities. The data collected for that report included:

- Postsecondary Education (e.g., community college, vocational school, or 4-year college)
- Employment (e.g., type of job, hours working, benefits, job stability, and jobs applied for)
- The extent to which dropouts from secondary school pursue and earn a GED after leaving high school.

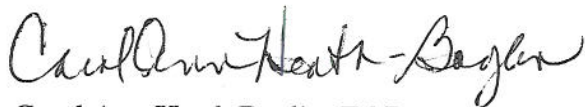
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For the FFY2007APR report related to Indicator 14, MSDE proposes to use a combination of data sources: MSDE will be using data from the December 2008 Wave 3 MD-LTS report. The data from the Wave 3 consistent with permission granted in 2005, the report will be specific to students who exited secondary education in the 2006-2007 school year. The Wave 3 report data contains data on the same 3 categories as the Wave 2 report that was used for the FFY 2006 baseline data. The report provides data analysis that meets the best practice recommendations from the National Postsecondary Outcome Technical Assistance Center. The data will be very useful to MSDE and local school systems when evaluating the effectiveness of transition planning as reported in Indicator 13. The data analysis will be used as the basis for determining professional development needs related to coordinating transition services and creating appropriate measurable annual goals related to transition.

In addition, MSDE will use a process of administrative record exchange to match all students exiting secondary education with employment and postsecondary enrollment systems. This record exchange will be conducted in collaboration with the MSDE Division of Career Technology and Adult Learning (DCTAL), Maryland Department of Labor and Licensing Regulations, (DLLR) and the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC). DLLR will provide data on high school graduates who are employed within one year of exiting school. These records include employment records within an 8 state region as well as those employed by the military. MHEC will provide data on the number of young adults with disabilities who have enrolled in any type of postsecondary education within the State.

By utilizing the administrative record exchange, MSDE should gather more accurate data since it will not have to rely on student self-reported information. In addition, the data MSDE receives from this process will be aligned with the official Maryland State Report Card outcome data. As a result, MSDE will be conducting the administrative record exchange for all subsequent Indicator 14 SPP/APR reporting years. If you need further clarification regarding the content of this letter, please contact Mr. Tom Barkley, Transition Specialist, at tbarkley@msde.state.md.us.

Sincerely,



Carol Ann Heath Baglin, Ed.D.
Assistant State Superintendent
Division of Special Education/Early Intervention Services

CAHB/TB: nb

c: Ruth Ryder
Sharon West
Tom Barkley
Donna Riley