



# Kentucky Post School Outcomes

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Annual Report  
2020



# Table of Contents

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Introduction.....	1
Response Rate & Representativeness.....	2
Indicator 14 Definition.....	5
Disaggregated Outcomes.....	10
Follow-up Questions (High School Experience).....	15
Follow-up Questions (Employment & Unemployment).....	17
Follow-up Questions (Postsecondary Education).....	22
Follow-up Questions (Community Participation).....	28
Follow-up Questions (How High School Helped Students in Current Life).....	29
Conclusion.....	34



# Introduction

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The Kentucky Post School Outcomes Center (KYPSO) is the Kentucky Department of Education's contractor for the collection of post-school outcome data for students who had an IEP in place at the time they exited high school. This includes data related to the federal requirement for Indicator 14 under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) as well as other post-school data necessary and appropriate to improve transition services for youth with disabilities throughout the state of Kentucky. Data are collected through the Youth One Year Out (YOYO) former student interview developed by KYPSO and administered by district level personnel who are trained by KYPSO. The YOYO is pre-populated with demographic information provided by the state and includes a series of questions related to post school employment and education; factors contributing to a student's personal experiences; involvement with agencies; living arrangements; and community engagement. The YOYO also asks for general feedback regarding how former students' high schools prepared them for adult life. Attempts were made in the spring and summer of 2020 to interview all former students who exited a public high school in Kentucky during the 2018-19 school year with an IEP in place at the time of exit. Because the YOYO includes student identification numbers, KYPSO has the potential to link findings from the YOYO to other databases to identify malleable factors related to post school success, including: LRE data, Pre-ETS data; CTE data, etc.



# Response Rate & Representativeness

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The number of students who exited high school in the 2018-2019 school year was 4,604 and 2,667 of those students responded to the 2020 YOYO survey, a response rate of 58%. Previous administrations of the YOYO have had response rates between 55.2% and 60%. Response rates had been declining over the last several years, but this year saw a slight rise (~3%). Part of this increase may be due to the COVID-19 pandemic which caused more individuals to be at home and more likely to respond to requests for interviews. Response rates in this range are acceptable for a telephone interview given to young adults and our rates are favorable when compared with other states. In response to interviewer reports that the leading cause of not being able to conduct an interview was the inability to contact former students, KYPSO worked with the Department of Education, KY Interagency Transition Council, and school districts to identify strategies for collecting more accurate and up-to-date contact information for exiting students. Having students complete a new contact information card at the time of exit and using social media to announce the start of the survey were two of the strategies identified. It is too early to tell if these strategies helped increase the response rate for the 2021 administration and beyond.

KYPSO tracks representativeness of the YOYO by comparing demographics of our target population (all eligible former students) to that of respondents. The table below (Table 1) displays how close these two groups were proportionally for several important subpopulations. Respondents were representative (within 3 percentage points) of the population in terms of gender, race, and disability; however, in terms of exit from high school, students who dropped out were underrepresented. Contacting these students has consistently been a problem when collecting post school outcome data.



# Response Rate & Representativeness

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Because the interview is voluntary for former students there is no way to compel dropouts to respond. Improving contact information will be one potential way of improving responses with this population; however, it is likely the case that persons who exited high school by dropping out are less willing to be contacted by their former school district to complete an interview. It is important when reviewing YOYO data to keep in mind that students who drop out typically have poor post-school outcomes relative to their peers, which indicates that the data is likely to indicate better outcomes than what they are for the full population. Therefore, it is important to recognize when a population is under- or over- represented as this can inform how one interprets their data. We also examined geographic representativeness by comparing response rates to population rates in each of the state's nine educational cooperative regions. Eight regions had response rates within three percentage points of their population. One urban region was under-represented.



# Response Rate & Representativeness

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Table 1

Kentucky YOYO 2020	Target Group	Respondents	Difference from target
Female	31.2%	32.2%	1.0%
African American	15.3%	13.2%	-2.1%
Dropped Out	10.0%	3.5%	-6.5%
Mild / Functional Mental Disability	23.1%	24.0%	0.9%
Emotional-Behavioral Disability	9.2%	7.3%	-1.9%
Specific Learning Disability	27.1%	27.3%	0.2%



# Indicator 14

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Federal data collection requirements mandate that states report the “percent of youth who are no longer in secondary school, had IEPs in effect at the time they left school, and were:

A. Enrolled in higher education within one year of leaving high school.

B. Enrolled in higher education or competitively employed within one year of leaving high school.

C. Enrolled in higher education or in some other postsecondary education or training program; or competitively employed or in some other employment within one year of leaving high school” (20 U.S.C. 1416(a) (3) (B).

## Definitions:

A). *Enrolled in higher education* means youth have been enrolled on a full- or part-time basis in a community college (2-year program) or college/university (4- or more year program) for at least one complete term, at any time in the year since leaving high school.

B). *Competitive employment* means that youth have worked for pay at or above the minimum wage in a setting with others who are nondisabled for a period of 20 hours a week for at least 90 days at any time in the year since leaving high school and had similar wages, benefits, and opportunities for advancement as their coworkers without disabilities. This includes military employment.



# Indicator 14

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C). *Enrolled in other postsecondary education or training* means youth have been enrolled on a full- or part-time basis for at least 1 complete term at any time in the year since leaving high school in an education or training program (e.g., Job Corps, adult education, workforce development program, vocational technical school which is less than a 2-year program).

*Some other employment* means youth have worked for pay or been self-employed for a period of at least 90 days at any time in the year since leaving high school. This includes working in a family business (e.g., farm, store, fishing, ranching, catering services, etc.). It also includes those indicating that they work in a segregated setting or do not receive comparable wages, benefits, and opportunities for advancement as their non-disabled co-workers.

"Former students who received special education" are defined as those students who had an IEP in place at the time of exit and exited school one year previous with a standard diploma, a certificate of attainment or alternate diploma, or by dropping out or aging out.

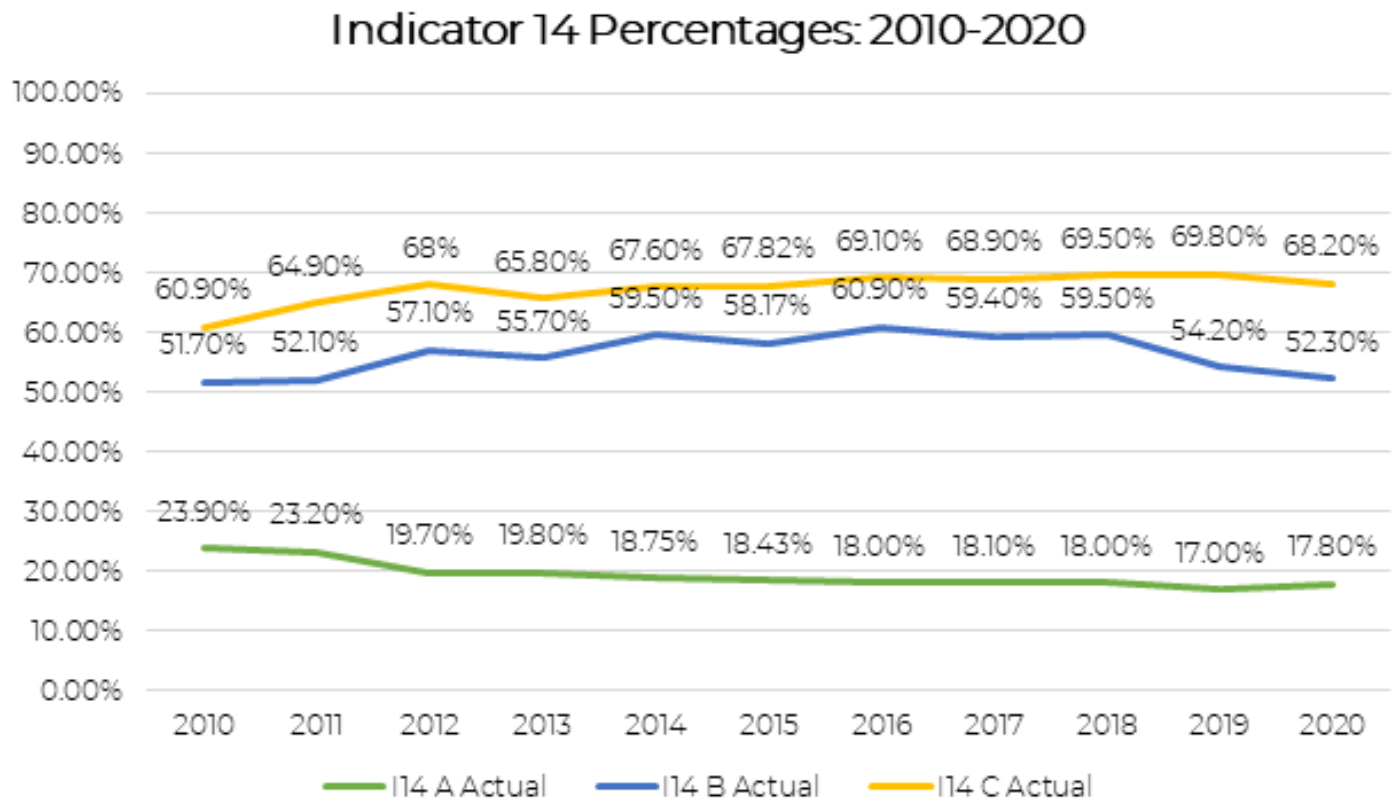
The 2020 YOYO data, based on 2,667 respondents, shows a rate of 17.8% for Indicator 14A, 52.3% for 14B, and 68.2% for 14C. Figure 1 shows how Indicator 14 data have changed since 2010.





# Indicator 14

Figure 1



# Indicator 14

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Indicator 14A, which solely represents higher education has seen a slow but steady decrease over time, however this year shows a slight increase over last year. Indicator 14B, which includes both higher education and competitive employment had improved over the first two thirds of this period but has seen a decline over the last several years, with the largest drop (5% points) in 2019. The pattern continues this year. The changes in Indicator 14B were expected in part due to the added requirements to the definition of competitive, integrated employment beginning with the 2019 YOYO. However, anecdotal responses from students in various comment sections of the instrument indicate that the COVID-19 pandemic has contributed to the drop in 2020. In addition to higher education and competitive employment, Indicator 14C includes the percent of former students with IEPs who go on to noncompetitive employment and/or postsecondary education that is not a two or four-year college or university. Over the last 5 years, the percentage of former students who reported being unengaged in any post school outcome related to education or employment had remained constant at about 30%, however this year has seen a slight increase to 31.8%. KYPSO believes that it is important to examine the intersection of education and employment, two important dimensions of post school success. The chart below (Table 2) shows how education and employment outcomes intersect. As stated earlier, 17.8% of former students went on to higher education. In addition, many of these students were either employed competitively (156) or non-competitively (113) while enrolled in higher education, indicating that over half of the former students who went on to higher education were also employed in some manner. Alternatively, we can see that a large majority of those who are competitively employed are not in any school or training program.



# Indicator 14

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The implications for this are clear: if a young person is planning to further their education after leaving high school, instructional personnel should bear in mind that they will likely have a job in some capacity as well. For those with employment as their primary post school goal, it is more likely that they will not pursue additional education after high school.

Table 2

Kentucky (2020)	Competitive Employment	Other Employment	No Employment	Education Totals
Higher Education	156 (5.8%)	113 (4.2%)	205 (7.7%)	474 (17.8%)
Other Education	76 (2.8%)	18 (0.7%)	84 (3.1%)	178 (6.7%)
No Post-Secondary Education	846 (31.7%)	321 (12.0%)	<b>848 (31.8%)</b>	2,015 (75.6%)
Employment Totals	1,078 (40.4%)	452 (16.9%)	1,137 (42.6%)	2,667 (100.0%)



# Disaggregated Outcomes

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Whenever possible KYP SO aggregates findings by demographics of interest. The following table (Table 3) considers five non-mutually exclusive outcomes: higher education, other education, competitive employment, other employment, and non-engagement based on the demographics of gender, race/ethnicity, and disability category.

A respondent can, and often does, get counted in both an educational and employment outcome. When examining outcomes by gender we can see that females fare about 6% better than males in terms of educational outcomes (this gap has declined over the last 2 years) while males fare about 9.3% better in terms of employment outcomes (this gap has increased 1.7% points from last year). Largely driven by the differences in employment outcomes, females are 7% more likely to not be engaged one year after exiting high school. This gap has increased 2% points from last year. We cannot tell from our data whether differences and employment outcomes are related to the types of jobs that are available, the type of training that young persons are receiving or some other set of factors. Over two thirds of the former students in our population are male.

Black students continue to fare better in terms of both competitive employment and enrollment in higher education than white students, a trend that has been seen in our data previously. African American students were also more likely to be non-competitively employed than were white students, although the difference is much smaller this year (2% points less).



# Disaggregated Outcomes

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Higher education rates for African Americans have exceeded those of whites for students exiting high school in Kentucky with IEPs since the YOYO first began. KYPSO staff have attempted to isolate the cause for this and have not yet been able to do so. One potential hypothesis is that African American students are over identified for special education and thus have outcomes more representative of students without IEPs. However, our attempts to analyze this have not shown a correlation between identification rates at the district level and outcomes. Further, the phenomenon seems to be specific to higher education as employment levels have historically been very similar for both groups.

Hispanic students have had far better competitive employment and educational outcomes than any other sub-group examined across the years. This year, Hispanic students continue to have the highest percentage in competitive employment (45.9%) and the second highest in higher education outcomes, back up from last year's drop by more than half, to 15.3% this year. KYPSO is not able to identify the reason for this drop but believes that it is worthy of attention.

Not surprisingly, non-engagement rates for whites are the highest (33.1%) while rates for African Americans is 28.4% and Hispanics is 20.4%. There were not enough data on former students of other ethnicities to be publicly reported.

Differences in outcomes based on a former student's primary disability classification are striking. Due to space limitations, we have only included four disability types in the table below (Figure 4).



# Disaggregated Outcomes

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Students with Specific Learning Disabilities fare relatively well in terms of higher education and competitive employment and have the lowest percent of students who are non-engaged. Students with Other Health Impairments fared almost as well in higher education (up 5% from last year) and competitive employment (down 4% from last year), and non-engagement.

Students identified as having a Functional Mental Disability fare very poorly in both higher education and competitive employment. These students are more likely to engage in “other employment” which is often based in a segregated setting or “other education.” The biggest area of concern for students in this disability category is that three fourths report that they are not engaged in any educational or employment outcomes and this has been steadily rising since 2016, when two thirds reported to be not engaged.

Perhaps the most interesting disability category is autism. In terms of higher education, persons with autism have among the best outcomes. However, rates for competitive employment are among the worst. When the data are further disaggregated, autistic students who exit high school with a regular diploma have much higher rates of competitive employment and attendance in higher education, and lower rates of non-engagement than students who exit high school with an alternate diploma or age out. 67.8% in this subset are not engaged. This may reflect the presence or absence of certain indicators of post school success, such as inclusion in general education, high expectations, paid work experience, or self-determination.



# Disaggregated Outcomes

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It may also reflect an important disparity in how students on the regular vs. alternative diploma track are being prepared for life after high school. Access to additional data would give KYP SO the ability to probe more deeply into these factors, their distribution and relative impact.

Persons classified as having multiple disabilities have poor outcomes in both dimensions. Persons with a traumatic brain injury have generally positive outcomes in higher education, but much lower outcomes in competitive employment. Persons with hearing impairments have the lowest rate of non-engagement of all disability groups at 4.2%, and high rates of higher education and competitive employment. Most other disability types have too few respondents to make meaningful inferences about their outcomes.

A final way in which KYP SO disaggregated outcomes is based on manner of exit. Because students who exited by aging out or by receiving an alternate diploma are indistinguishable based on our data, we combine them into a single category. It is fair to assume that all members of this group are on the alternate diploma track. It is not surprising that those who graduated with a regular diploma have the best outcomes. Students who exited high school by dropping out are very unlikely to enroll in higher education (1.0%) but have considerably higher competitive employment rates than those who exited from the alternate diploma track. More than two-thirds of students on the alternate diploma track are unengaged a year after exiting high school. These trends have remained consistent for several years, indicating a need for informed program improvements.



# Disaggregated Outcomes

Table 3

Outcome	Higher Ed	Other Ed	Competitively Employed	Other Employed	Not Engaged	Total
<i>Gender</i>						
Male	15.9%	7.0%	43.4%	16.9%	29.6%	1809
Female	21.8%	5.9%	34.1%	17.1%	36.5%	858
<i>Race/ethnicity</i>						
White	17.2%	6.6%	39.6%	17.0%	33.1%	2117
African American / Black	19.3%	5.4%	44.6%	15.6%	28.4%	352
Hispanic	15.3%	9.2%	45.9%	25.5%	20.4%	98
<i>Disability Category</i>						
SLD	22.6%	6.7%	55.7%	19.5%	15.4%	727
EBD	15.5%	5.2%	42.3%	13.9%	34.5%	194
MMD	7.8%	4.1%	37.0%	16.3%	40.3%	486
FMD	0.6%	8.4%	6.5%	13.0%	74.7%	154
Autism	20.1%	12.0%	14.7%	12.0%	52.5%	259
<i>Manner of Exit</i>						
Regular Diploma	20.6%	6.5%	45.0%	17.5%	25.8%	2273
Alt. Diploma / Aged Out	1.0%	7.3%	6.7%	14.0%	73.0%	300
Dropped Out	2.1%	8.5%	38.3%	12.8%	45.7%	94

One of the strengths of the YOYO is that it allows us to probe deeper into a young person's outcomes. We do this by asking a series of follow up questions about one's high school experience, employment, education, and community living.



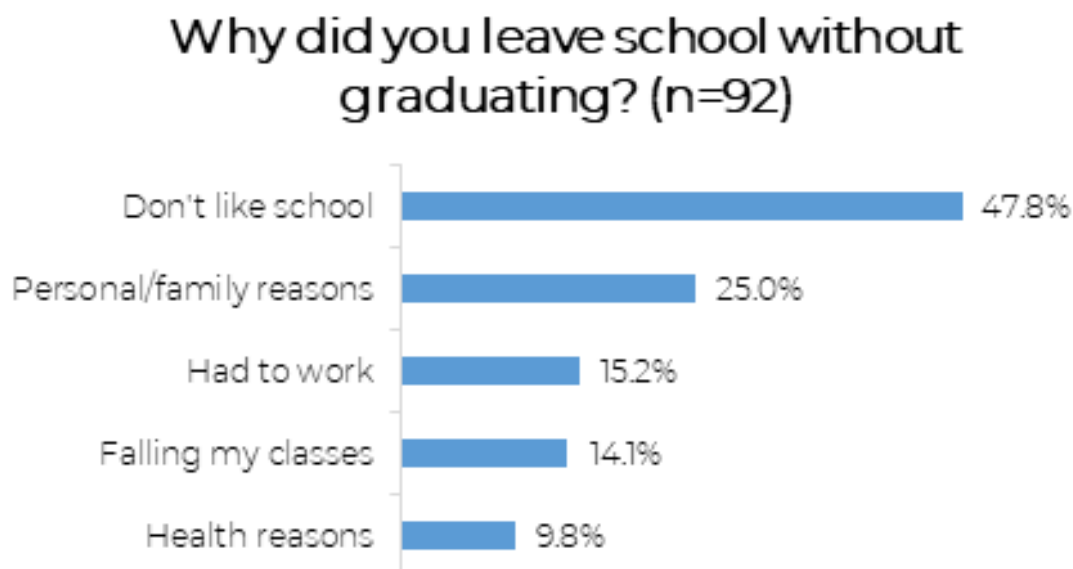


# Follow-Up Questions (High School Experience)

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Ten percent of KY students who exited with an IEP did so by dropping out of high school (460/4,602) in the 2018-2019 school year. 94 of the 460 students responded to the survey. We asked them to share the reasons why they left high school without graduating (Figure 5). The reasons varied among the 92 responses and if the respondent provided multiple reasons, all reasons were recorded and counted. Just under half of the respondents indicated that their reason for dropping out was simply that they did not like school, which is consistent with the last several years. One fourth reported personal or family reasons including pregnancy or childcare issues (16%), legal issues (7.4%), lack of support and bullying. Other responses included the need to work (15.2%), failing classes (14.1%), and behavioral and/or health issues (9.8%). The top five reasons for leaving high school without graduating are depicted in the figure below (Figure 2):

Figure 2

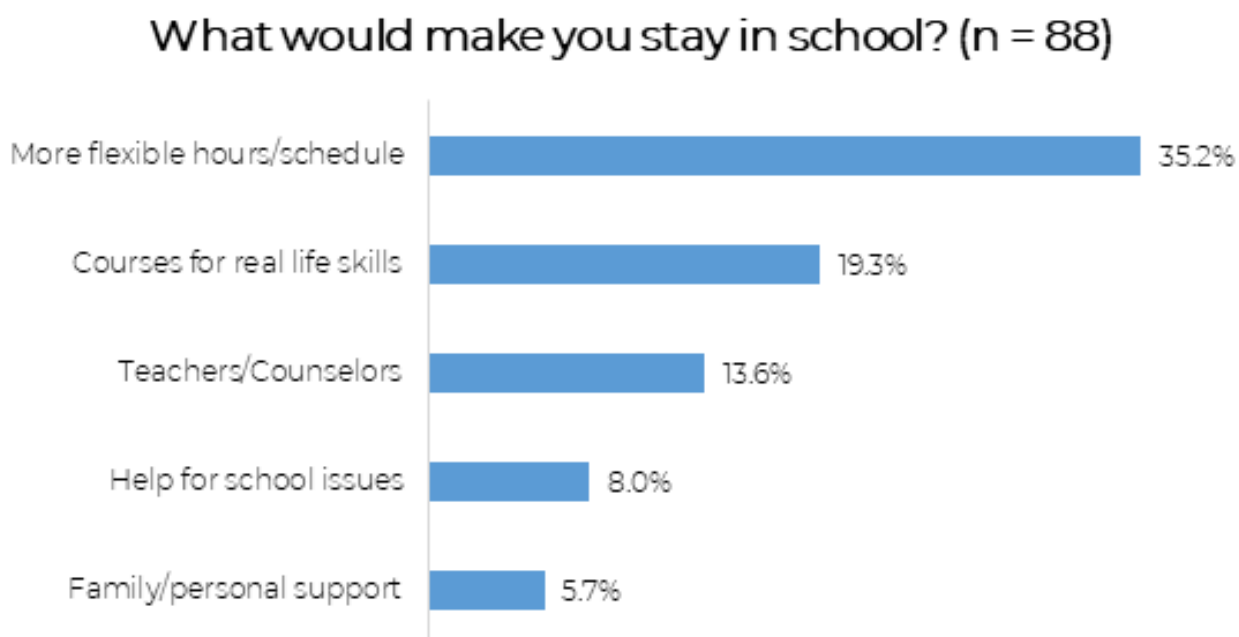


# Follow-Up Questions (High School Experience)

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To provide information that may help instructional programs identify strategies to reduce future dropout rates, we asked these former students “What might have helped you stay in school?” Of the 88 students who responded to this question, just over one third stated more flexible hours/scheduling, including distance learning. Other responses included more relevant/real-life classes, including vocational preparatory opportunities; more encouraging teachers and counselors; help with school issues such as more in-school support and a bully-free environment; and finally, more family and/or community support, such as childcare and transportation. The top five suggestions for what might have helped keep the student in school are depicted in the table below (Figure 3):

Figure 3



# Follow-Up Questions (Employment & Unemployment)

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We asked all respondents who indicated that they had worked in the past year (1,688) if they were still working at the time of the interview. 77.5% (1,308/1,688) responded that they were. This indicates that among all former students in our sample approximately 49% were currently working for pay at the time of the interview. These rates are down over 6% from the last several years. It should be noted that interviews took place during the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to the federal definition for employment, a person could be considered employed (either competitively or other), if they have worked for a total of at least 90 days since leaving high school even if they were not currently employed at the time of the interview. Of the 1,688 respondents who indicated that they had had a paying job at some point since leaving high school, just over 90% (1,530) met the federal definition for employment, and of those, 1,230 were still employed.

For a young person with a disability, finding and maintaining a job can be dependent upon employment supports. We asked respondents who indicated that they have been employed (1,530) since leaving high school whether they received any of the following supports/accommodations at their job: job coach; personal assistant; special equipment; or other accommodations. 16.3% of the respondents who had been employed indicated that they had used a job coach. Very few ( $\leq 1\%$ ) indicated the use of a personal assistant or special equipment.



# Follow-Up Questions (Employment & Unemployment)

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We also asked respondents who had been employed how interesting they found their job. 73% indicated that they found it very or somewhat interesting, while only 9.4% indicated that they found it not very interesting or not interesting at all.

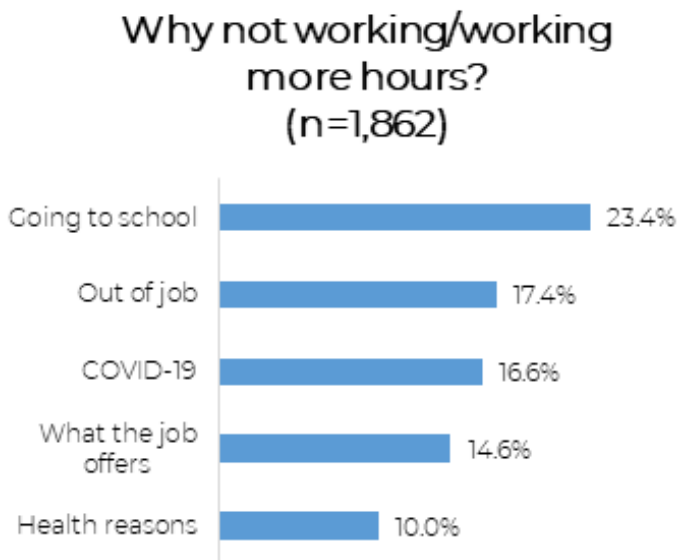
We asked students who reported that they were not employed, had not been employed for at least 90 days since exiting high school, or worked less than full time an additional question, “What is the main reason you are not working or not working more hours?” (Figure 4). Of the 1,862 responses 23.4% (n=375) chose not to work or not to work more hours because they were going to a university or college. 14.6% reported that their work time was limited by the position for which they were hired (summer job, part-time job, on-call job, etc.). Another 17.4% of respondents were not working because they could not find a job, had just lost a job, or were in the process of job hunting or training. 10% of students who did not work indicated they were negatively impacted by their health, with half reporting the severity of their disability as the reason. In addition, 3.7% of the respondents reported that they limited their work time to receive disability benefits. Other respondents mentioned reasons that included lack of motivation/readiness, joining the military, limited resources such as transportation, volunteering without payment, incarceration, and self-employed.

It is worth noting that over 300 respondents reported the impact of COVID-19 on their employment condition (Figure 5). Among those students, about one in three were laid off or lost their jobs, 11% could not find any positions, 6% reduced their working hours, and more than half were negatively impacted by COVID-19 in other ways.



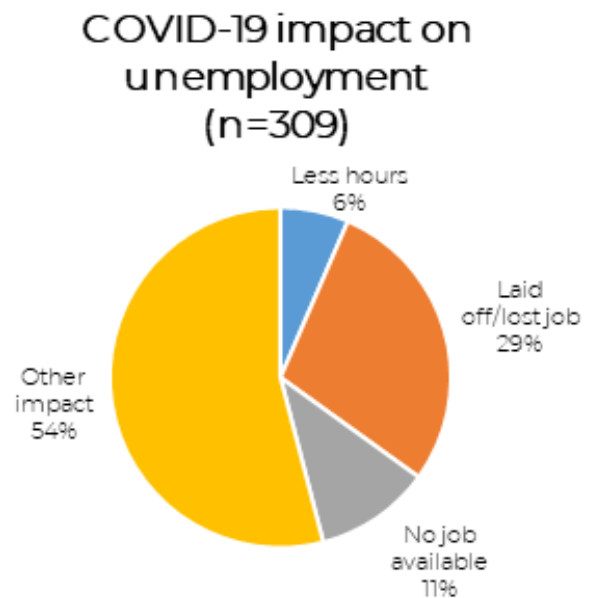
# Follow-Up Questions (Employment & Unemployment)

Figure 4



Bar graph displaying why students were not working or working more hours. 23.4% indicated it was because they were going to school. Other reasons included: out of a job, COVID-19, what the job offers, and health reasons.

Figure 5



Pie chart displaying different ways that COVID-19 may have impacted student unemployment.

KYPSO also asked whether respondents had any contact with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) since leaving high school. Of the 412 respondents who indicated that they had, 385 described the kind of help they received (Figure 6). Almost 38% (n=135) reported to have received help with further education, including enrollment, tuition, books and supplies, and accommodations such as contact with student support services and tutoring.



# Follow-Up Questions (Employment & Unemployment)

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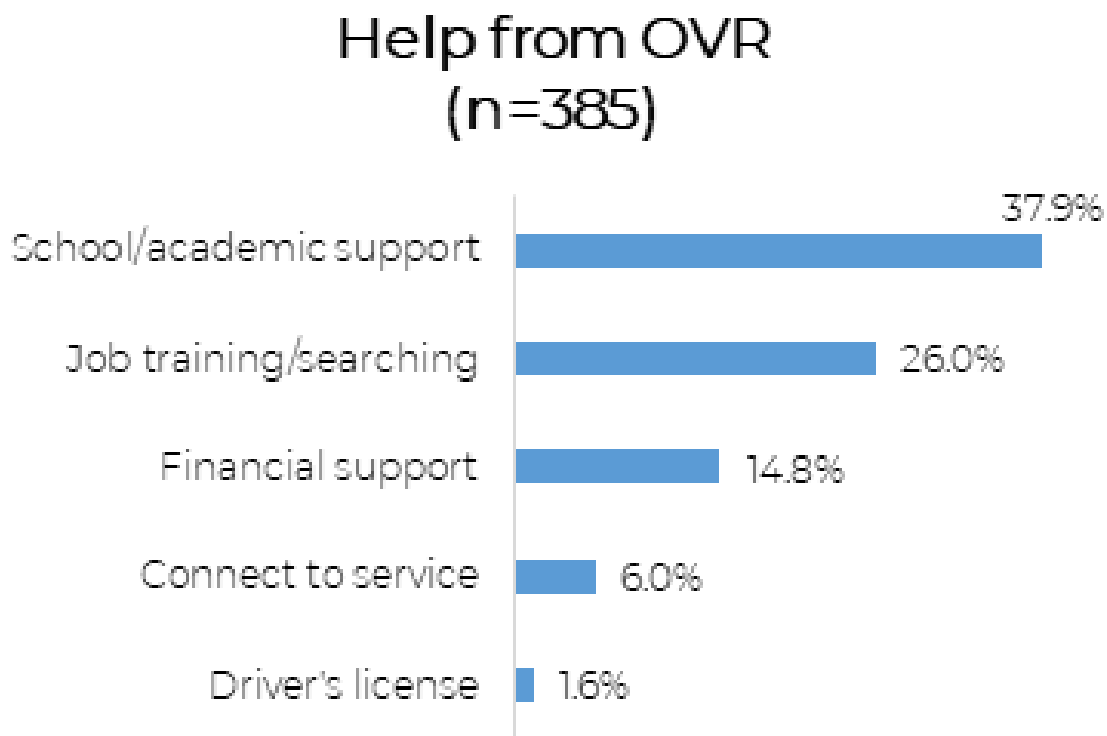
OVR supports for further education more than doubled from the previous year. However, during the same period supports for employment went down from 40% last year to 27%. Approximately one in four students reported receiving help with pre-employment services, such as finding a job, job coaching, and supported employment. Other OVR supports included connecting students to other services such as day programs, helping students get a driver's license, and offering transportation assistance. About one in twenty students had not obtained any services after contacting OVR, which is double that of the last several years. Of these students, some did not qualify for services, some decided not to pursue those services, and just over 4% reported to have not heard back from OVR since the initial contact. It is important to note that three fourths of those who had not heard back from OVR mentioned the COVID-19 pandemic as the reason. It was unclear why most students did not ask for help from OVR. It might be helpful to offer more education and communication about the services provided by OVR with students, parents, and teachers to help improve utilization of those services.



# Follow-Up Questions (Employment & Unemployment)

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Figure 6



# Follow-Up Questions (Postsecondary Education)

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Of the 788 respondents who indicated that they had gone on to some form of postsecondary education, 652 (83%) completed an entire term or semester. We asked what type of school or training program they had enrolled in. The highest number (42%) indicated that they had enrolled in a two-year college, 25% indicated a four-year college, 15% indicated enrollment in a vocational school, 12% indicated that they were enrolled in some type of short-term program, while 2% indicated that they were pursuing some form of adult education or GED. We also asked what degree they expected to get when they were finished school. 27% indicated a bachelor's degree and 30% indicated that they were pursuing an associate degree. 23% indicated that they were in a certificate program, while 10% indicated that they were not degree seeking, including those who were auditing classes. While all these percentages are consistent with last year, the actual number of students who completed a semester of postsecondary education increased.

To understand the experiences of students who were attending postsecondary education we asked the following, additional questions:

- If you faced any problems in your post-secondary school/training program, please let us know what they were.
- Have you ever contacted the Disability Service Coordinator at your post-secondary school or training program?
- Do you live with your family while you go to school?





# Follow-Up Questions (Postsecondary Education)

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When asked what, if any, problems they have faced in their postsecondary school/training program, 59.4% of respondents (n=540) reported that they did not experience any problems. This number showed no significant difference over previous years. The top five challenges reportedly faced in post-secondary school/training programs included academic challenges, impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, services and supports, adjustment, and health (Figure 7). 13.3% of respondents stated that they had academic problems including difficulty with class schedules, coursework, choice of a major, and registration for courses; 6.7% had difficulties in adjusting to college life (e.g., lack of social support, work-school balance, time management, and generally feeling stressed); 5.9% reported that they had difficulty accessing needed supports (e.g., transportation, financial aid, accommodations and other services); and about 1.3% struggled in health and medical issues while enrolled in postsecondary education. About 7.6% of the respondents highlighted the new challenges from COVID-19 including online study, cancelation of courses, and other related issues. Juggling school, work and family was another common barrier students encountered.

These difficulties may have been mitigated by supports from disability services coordinators, yet less than half (45%) of those who went on to postsecondary education had contacted their Disability Services Coordinator. This percentage is consistent with last year.

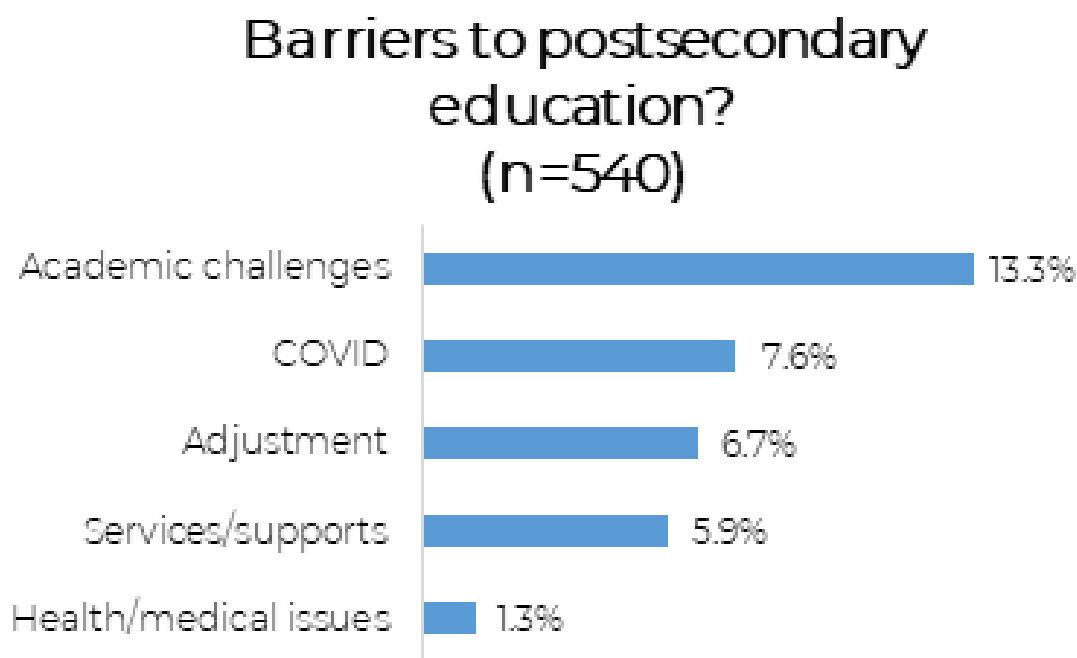


# Follow-Up Questions (Postsecondary Education)

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We recognize that some students may not be comfortable in disclosing their disability or may feel liberated by not disclosing their disability to their college or university, however it is important to realize that the services and accommodations are not available to someone who chooses not to do so. **We believe this is an important indicator for which educators should be aware.** It is important to point out that students who were taught about the importance of disclosing their disability and how to access student support services stated that was one of the most beneficial learning experiences in high school.

Figure 7



# Follow-Up Questions (Postsecondary Education)

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We also asked young people who enrolled in postsecondary education where they live while classes are in session. Two thirds indicated that they lived with their family. This has remained consistent across the years, therefore, while it is tempting to believe that “going to college” involves a residential experience whereby young persons may learn valuable social skills (e.g., independent living in a relatively safe environment), educators should be aware that for most of this population their residence is likely the same as it was while they were in high school.

For students who did not go on to postsecondary education we followed up by asking the reasons for not continuing their education (Figure 8). Among 1,804 respondents who answered this question, approximately one third of the students chose to directly enter the workforce and 27.8% did not want to go to school. About 9.6% of students responded that they could not go on to further education for health reasons, including physical, behavioral, and mental health issues. Some students (8.1%) reported that they could not attend post-secondary education for personal reasons, such as providing care for family members, having a baby, getting married, or parents discouraging further education. The percentage of respondents who planned to go back to school after a break or saving enough money was 7.7%, which falls within the range of the last several years (7.4%-8.45%). The ability to collect more long-term data, even with a smaller sample of former students could provide information regarding whether students were able to follow through with those plans.

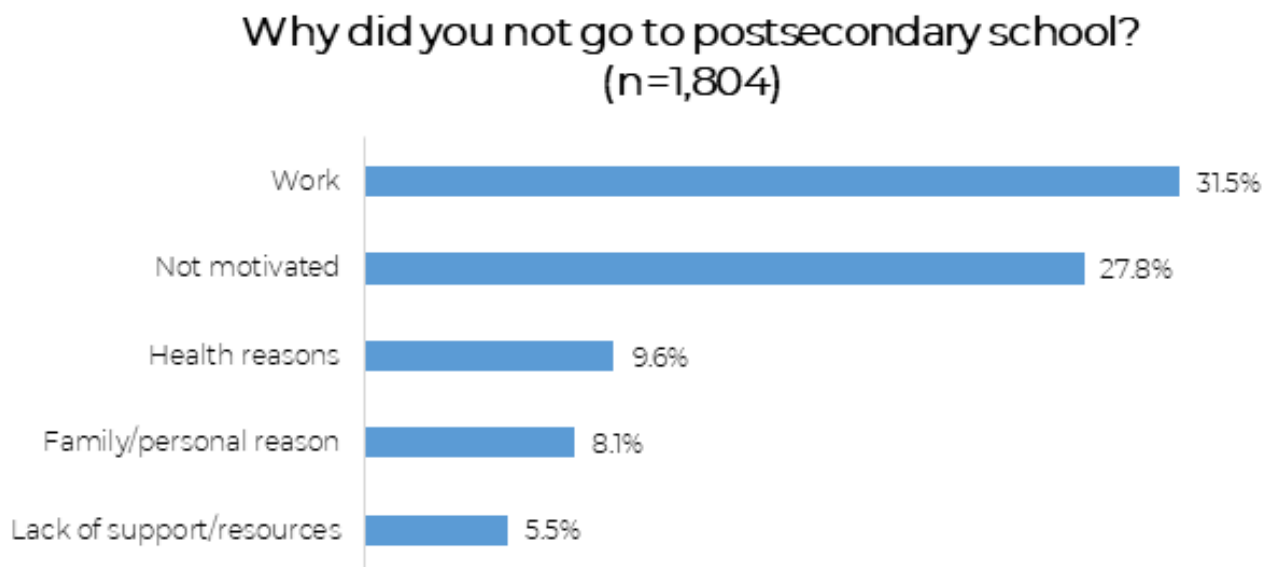


# Follow-Up Questions (Postsecondary Education)

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Other students (5.5%) indicated a lack of support or resources for things such as a need for extensive supervision, financial help/affordability, and transportation. Other reasons for not enrolling in postsecondary education included: severity of their disability, not having a high school diploma, incarceration, and needing assistance from OVR.

Figure 8



# Follow-Up Questions (Postsecondary Education)

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As stated above, several students reported that their parent or guardian did not want them to go to school, while a few respondents noted that they believed they were “not smart enough for school.” Approximately 5.9% reported they could not attend because of their disability.

**One predictor of positive post school outcomes is parent expectations.** This is an area where schools and districts may need to work with parents on addressing the barriers and fears associated with student safety and success after high school. Parents may need to be educated on the availability of accommodations, support services, and the importance of including their child into the larger community so that they can become an independent, productive member of the society. To ensure students are prepared to transition to higher education, as with employment, more instruction and practice utilizing self-determination and self-advocacy skills paired with structured career planning throughout high school may be needed to not only increase enrollment in postsecondary education but make it a successful experience. Additionally, mentorship and encouragement from teachers and counselors during high school may improve self-efficacy and increase young people’s interest in pursuing higher education.



# Follow-Up Questions (Community Participation)

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The format of the YOYO allows us to gather details on community participation that, along with employment and post-secondary education, gives us a broader picture of students' post school outcomes. Two items that we think are relevant are whether a young person has a driver's license and is registered to vote. Just under half (48%) of respondents indicated that they had a driver's license, while 58% indicated that they were registered to vote. Although the national trend for young persons with driver's licenses has been dropping for years, the rate of our respondents has consistently been well below the overall national average of 69% for students with and without disabilities (Sievak and Schoettle, 2016). Respondents are slightly less likely to be registered to vote than the general population. 58% of respondents indicated that they were registered to vote, while Kentucky's general population of 18-24-year-olds report a 61% registration rate (US Census Bureau, Current Population Survey 2020). Registration among the general population has increased in recent years, while it has remained flat for our population. While a larger percent of our population may be less engaged in post-school education, employment, and community living than their non-disabled counterparts, our data suggest that they are not less interested.

We also asked respondents where they lived for most of the past year. The vast majority (81%) indicated that they live with their family. 5% indicated that they live with a spouse or partner. 3% indicated that they live with friends, while another 4% indicated that they live alone. 5% indicated that they lived most of the previous year in a college dormitory or military housing. Roughly 1% indicated that they lived in a foster/group home, a shelter/correctional facility, or had unknown whereabouts.



# Follow-Up Questions (How High School Helped Students in Current Life)

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To gather more information about how high school benefited students after high school, they were asked to “name the most important thing during high school that helped you in your life right now” (Figure 9). 2,256 respondents answered this question with a response rate of 84.6%. Many students reported that the support and encouragement they received from teachers and other staff (e.g., coaches, guidance counselors, speech therapists, principals) were most helpful, as well as support from friends (4.5%) and family members (2.0%). Some students specifically indicated that they benefited from educational supports such as extra time for testing, one-on-one instruction, small classes, and hands-on learning. Others stated that they liked the benefits of the social aspect of high school including support from friends, social interactions, and involvement in extracurricular activities, as well as earning their high school diploma or alternative diploma.

About 16.3% of students reported that the academic courses in high school not only prepared them for their pursuit of further education, but also offered basic math, science, and computer skills for daily life. Almost a quarter of the respondents (22.5%) mentioned many of the transition programs designed to prepare students for life after high school as the most important, including: vocational education and training programs such as CWTP, FACS, CTE, FFA, ECE, AIDE, JAG; job exploration, job coaches, paid work experience, and community work transition services; and military development programs such as JROTC, ROTC, and SRO.

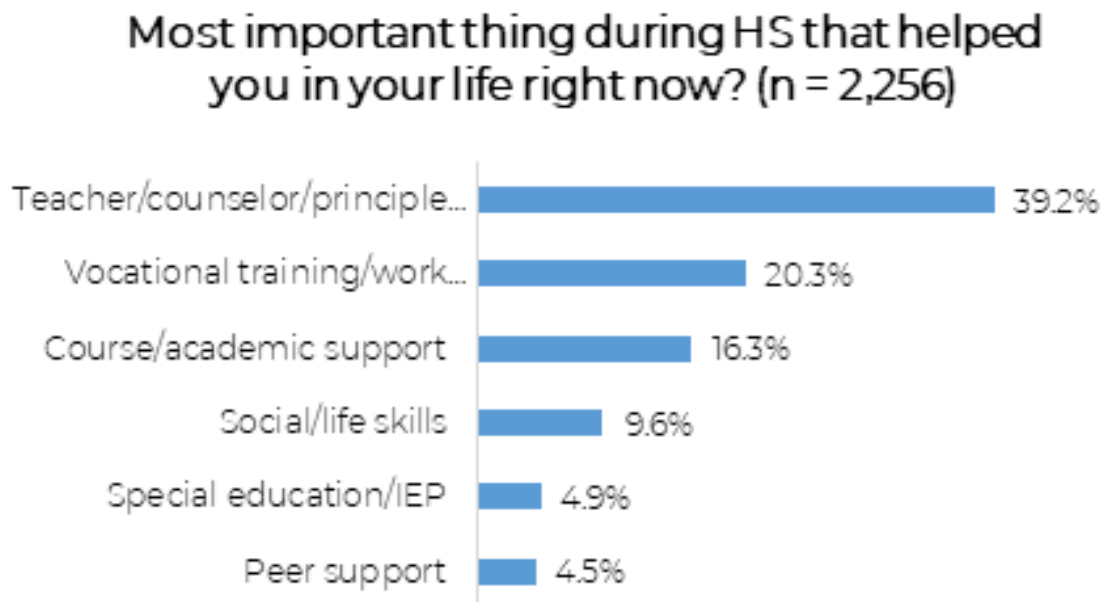


# Follow-Up Questions (How High School Helped Students in Current Life)

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It is interesting to note that although 22.5% of students who exited high school with an alternate diploma or aging out mentioned transition activities as the most beneficial, these activities related specifically to CWTP, job coach, job exploration, cooking and cleaning. None of these students identified vocational school, OVR, or career and technical education programs such as welding, agriculture, nursing, business, carpentry, culinary arts, or auto mechanics as the most beneficial.

Figure 9





# Follow-Up Questions (How High School Helped Students in Current Life)

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Students who had not been employed or enrolled in further education since high school were asked how they spend their time. Just over three fourths of these students gave responses, with the majority (80%) indicating that they spend their time simply “at home.” Half of the students who noted spending their time at home indicated that they help with family chores or caring for family members. Since students were able to give multiple answers, just over half of the respondents reported spending time on hobbies, including community organizations and church groups. Others reported spending time at appointments (20%) and working without pay outside the home (8%). These percentages have remained consistent over the last several years.

Part of the YOYO involves the interviewer having the opportunity to share information with the respondent. We asked interviewers to note at the end of the interview what information they shared with the interviewees. Information about Vocational Rehabilitation was shared with 23% of the participants. Even though this number is lower than last year’s 25%, it is still a robust figure and one trending in a positive direction. It is also encouraging because contact with OVR may help transitioning students get the supports that they may be lacking, and it indicates that school systems and their personnel are invested in their former students with disabilities. 23% of interviews ended with the interviewer giving information about their special education transition consultant, double that of last year, which KYPSO recommends as the “go to” resource when an interviewer is unsure where to direct a respondent.



# Follow-Up Questions (How High School Helped Students in Current Life)

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The information provided about higher education and employment also doubled from last year, from 9% to 17.5% for higher education and from 7.7% to 15.4% for employment, bringing them back in line with previous years after a dip in 2019. Information was also provided about the Michelle P waiver and Medicare/Medicaid at a much smaller rate (2.8%). Interviewers voluntarily shared their own information as a resource with 31% of the respondents. This is more than triple last year, which may indicate that YOYO interviewers feel more knowledgeable about the types of resources available and more confident in their ability to share those resources. DOSE's may also be identifying interviewers who are knowledgeable in these areas and personally invested in outcomes of their former students.

## **Additional Comments:**

When asked "Is there anything else you would like to add about how things have been going for you since you left school?" respondents provided additional insight into the transition experience of youth with disabilities. Several quotes are presented on the next page:



# Follow-Up Questions (How High School Helped Students in Current Life)

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The mother was...a little frustrated, disappointed with the difficulty her son has faced in secondary education and the workforce. She feels like he has "slipped through the cracks".

Being introduced to the Office for the Blind...also being directed to the Office of Disabilities at Berea by my high school.

A great example of CWTP/OVR helping students become productive citizens.

Job training and experience in CWTP (helped the most)

Due to COVID...  
Because of COVID...  
Before COVID...  
Until COVID...



# Conclusion

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Given the number of years for which we have consistent data, we could typically speak with greater certainty about developing trends, however the introduction of the COVID-19 pandemic in the spring of 2020 has started to impact the trends. Prior to this year, the trend seemed to be that young persons are more and more likely to go on to competitive employment outcomes while they are somewhat less likely to go on to education outcomes. This past year we saw a drop in employment outcomes and a slight rise in education outcomes. COVID-19 has had an impact on employment in general, but especially in the service industry. A rise in education outcomes may be a result of more time due to layoffs to take classes and more options to attend classes virtually. Because lockdowns associated with the pandemic began in March it should have had only limited effect on overall numbers but could have disproportionately impacted those who began their employment later as well as outcomes related to actual employment at the time of interview.

Disparities continue to exist in many outcomes related to gender, disability type, and exit from high school. This report highlights some of the disparities and draws some conclusions and assumptions. Students who exit high school with an alternate diploma or age out continue to have the lowest percent of successful outcomes and the highest rates of non-engagement at 71.5%. These rates of non-engagement have not changed over time, even with the increased emphasis on career readiness and availability of pre-employment transition services. Of those students reporting that they did not work because of their disability, approximately three fourths were students who were identified in the following disability categories: autism, functional mental disability, mild mental disability, and multiple disabilities. This may suggest that parents, educators and/or students may not be aware of employment and further education possibilities for individuals with significant disabilities, therefore lacking high expectations for employment.



# Conclusion

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This might indicate a need to help parents and educators form a vision of the future for their children. Students may need more opportunities and instruction in self-determination and self-advocacy skills across the grade levels, so that students with disabilities learn how to advocate for needed supports, resources and accommodations in education, employment, and community involvement. Research consistently demonstrates that these factors can improve outcomes for students with significant disabilities. Transition programs may also want to analyze the opportunities students with low incidence disabilities have for paid work experience, as this is the number one indicator of positive post-school outcomes in employment. Much of this will need to be done collaboratively between education and vocational service providers.

Access to additional data (CTE, LRE, etc.) alongside the YOYO data would allow for deeper analysis into student outcomes and which, if any, specific indicators of positive post school outcomes are influencing student success and which ones are not provided to students, especially those students who are unengaged. For instance, with access to CTE data, we could better determine the significance of the self-reported benefits of transition activities in high school by comparing the numbers of students who reported they are working in relation to the number of students who participated in CTE classes. KYPSO is well positioned to evaluate the relative impact of many initiatives related to post school outcomes if data on students participating in programs can be shared.

We are hopeful that this report highlights some findings that will allow educators to make informed decisions that help students succeed. KYPSO staff are available to work with districts, co-ops, and the state to identify best practices based on data.



# Conclusion

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The changes KYP SO made to its reporting system in 2017 give both educators and representatives from other agencies (as well as parents, students, and the public) greater access to data from which to make decisions. Trends and changes in data can be analyzed in relation to the implementation of services such as pre-employment transition services and/or changes in instructional programs. Statewide data, which show the intersection of education and employment outcomes, are publicly available from our website ([www.kypso.org](http://www.kypso.org)). These data can be disaggregated by gender, race/ethnicity, disability category and manner of exit. For those administrators who have created accounts with our system and are eligible to view more granular data, we have made reports available at the district and co-op levels, which include a detailed analysis of the items in this report. Districts can now also review their data across three years to see if changes are noted over time.

Our staff have worked with regional educational cooperatives and districts on how to use this reporting system, analyze the results, and make data-based decisions to improve transition programs and instruction.

Although our data are unique to the state of Kentucky many of the best practices related to secondary transition hold true throughout the United States and elsewhere. We have been praised by our national partners as being among the most innovative in terms of data collection and reporting. We rely heavily on the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: The Collaborative (NTACT:C) for our knowledge regarding best practices. We have a great deal of expertise both within KYP SO and HDI at working with schools and school systems, as well as other stakeholders and hope that we will continue to have opportunities to work at all levels to improve transition outcomes for students exiting high school with disabilities.



# Conclusion

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If you would like to discuss the findings presented in this report, please contact Tony LoBianco at [tflobi1@uky.edu](mailto:tflobi1@uky.edu).

