



Kentucky Post School Outcomes

Annual Report
2022



Table of Contents

KYPSO Mission	1
Introduction	2
Indicator 14	2
Disaggregated Outcomes	5
Disaggregated Outcomes by Gender	7
Disaggregated Outcomes by Ethnicity	8
Disaggregated Outcomes by Disability	9
Disaggregated Outcomes by Manner of High School Exit.....	10
Follow-Up Questions.....	11
High School Experience	11
Employment and Unemployment.....	13
Postsecondary Education	16
Community Participation	20
Benefits of High School	20
Additional Comments.....	23
Longitudinal Data:.....	24
Postsecondary Education Experiences.....	24
Conclusion.....	26

KYPSO Mission

The goal of the Kentucky Post School Outcomes Center (KYPSO) is to increase the capacity of Local Education Agencies (LEAs), teachers, parents, and adult service providers to provide exemplary transition planning and increase student post-school success.

KYPSO works closely with these units as well as Special Education Regional Technical Assistance Centers (SERTACs) and the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) to provide data and training related to improving transition outcomes for youth with disabilities.

KYPSO develops and oversees the Youth One Year Out former student interview (YOYO), which collects valuable post-school outcome data. This data includes measures of employment for students with disabilities one year after exiting high school, which includes their experiences and the degree to which they may be considered integrated and competitive. This data is often used for research by both KYPSO and partners.

Introduction

The Kentucky Post School Outcomes Center (KYP SO) is the Kentucky Department of Education's (KDE) contractor for the collection of post-school outcome data for students who had an Individualized Education Program (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) and other post-school data necessary and appropriate to improve transition services for youth with disabilities throughout Kentucky. Data is collected through the Youth One Year Out (YOYO) former student interview developed by KYP SO and administered by district-level personnel that KYP SO trains. 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 2022 to interview all former students* who exited a public high school in Kentucky during the 2020-2021 school year with an IEP in place at the time of exit. Because the YOYO includes student identification numbers, KYP SO has the potential to link findings from the YOYO to other databases to identify malleable factors related to post-school success. These other databases include Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) data, pre-Employment Transition Services (ETS) data, Career and Technical Education (CTE) data, etc.

*Important Note

As one reads through this report, it is important to remember that for the students who responded to the survey, their school experience changed drastically due to the pandemic, spending much of their last year of high school with online/virtual classes. Their entire first year out of high school was during the period in which Covid-19 variants were prevalent, and there was uncertainty regarding how/when there might be a "return to normalcy."

Indicator 14

The number of students who exited high school in the 2020-2021 school year with an IEP in place at the time of exit was 4,687, and 2,934 responded to the 2022 YOYO survey, a response rate of 62.6%.

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 has seen a five percentage point increase over last year, exceeding the goal of 60%. Response rates in this range are acceptable for a telephone interview given to young adults, and our rates are favorable compared to 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, KYP SO worked with the Kentucky Department of Education (KDE), KY Interagency Transition Council (KITC), and school districts to identify strategies for collecting more

accurate and up-to-date contact information for exiting students. Two strategies identified were having students complete a new contact information card at the time of exit and using social media to announce the start of the survey. Frequent contact by KDE staff to district leaders regarding the importance of the YOYO was thought to be an effective means of improving response rates as well. It is too early to tell if these strategies will help the 2023 administration.

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

Contacting students who have dropped out has consistently been a problem when collecting post-school outcome data. 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, people who exited high school by dropping out are likely 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 show better outcomes for the total population than what they actually are. Therefore, it is important to recognize when a population is under-or over-represented, as this can inform how one interprets their data.

Table 1

Kentucky YOYO 2022	Target Group	Respondents	Difference from Target
Female	31.6%	32.7%	1.1%
African American	13.2%	10.9%	-2.3%
Dropped Out	6.3%	2.6%	-3.6%
Mild/Functional Mental Disability	22.7%	22.7%	0.0%
Emotional Behavioral Disability	8.4%	7.1%	-1.4%
Specific Learning Disability	27.7%	27.2%	-0.5%

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.
- 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.

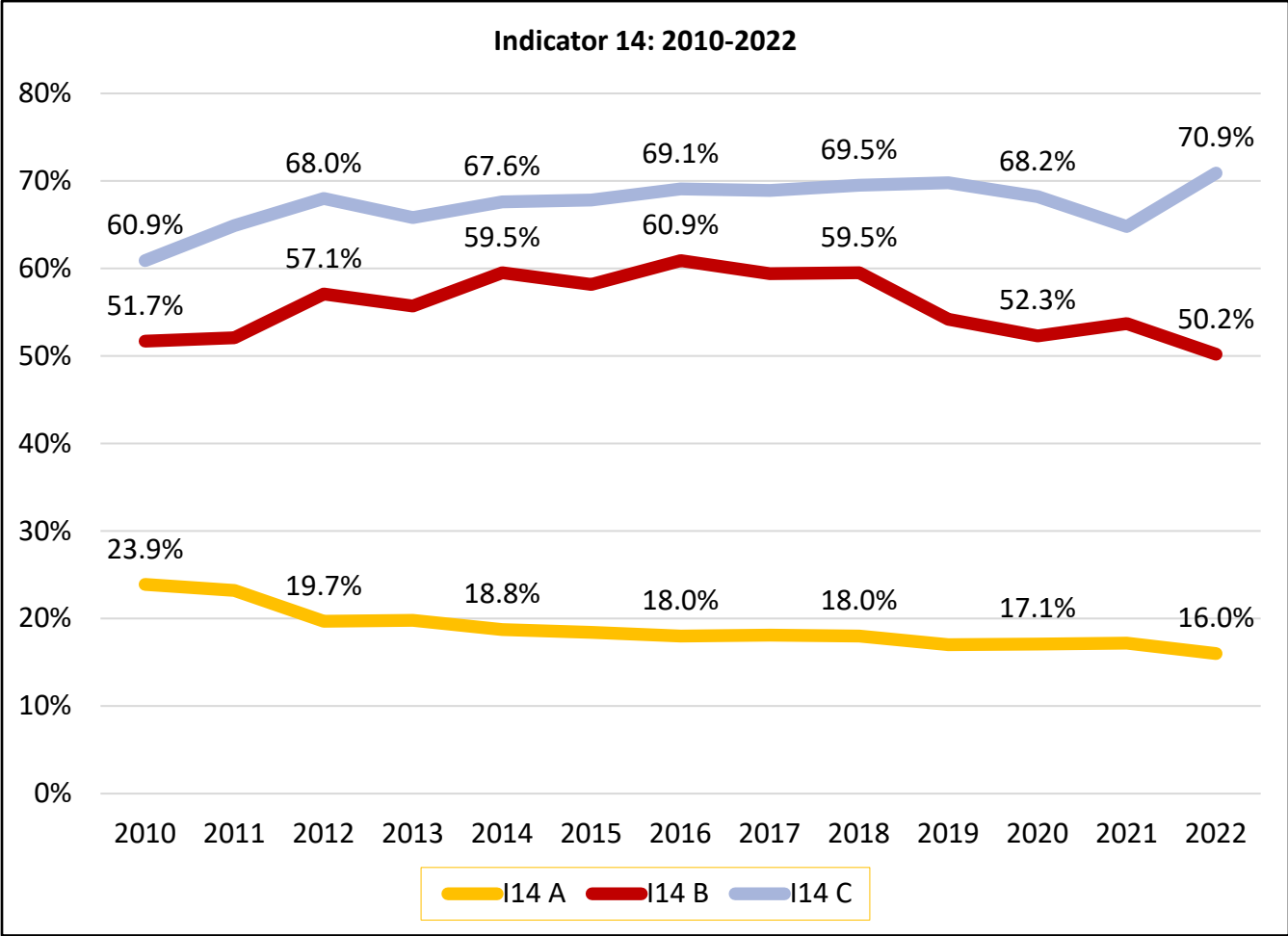
"Former students who received special education" are defined as those students who had an IEP in place at the time of exit and exited school one year previous with a standard diploma, a certificate of attainment, or alternate diploma, or by dropping out or aging out.

The 2022 YOYO data, based on 2,934 respondents, shows a rate of 16.0% for Indicator 14A, 50.2% for 14B, and 70.9% for 14C. Figure 1 shows how Indicator 14 data have changed since 2010.

Indicator 14A, which solely represents higher education, saw a slow but steady decrease from 2010-2019. Although the previous two years had seen a very slight increase, the 2022 data shows a decrease once again.

Disaggregated Outcomes

Figure 1



Indicator 14B, which includes both higher education and competitive employment, has seen a decline over the last several years, with the largest drop (five percentage points) in 2019. This decline in Indicator 14B in 2019 was expected in part due to the added requirements to the definition of competitive, integrated employment beginning that year. With the outbreak of Covid-19 in 2020, we would have expected to see a decline again; however, the 2021 survey saw a very slight increase in indicator 14B. Students interviewed in 2022 who were in the midst of the pandemic their last year and a half of high school and the outbreak of variants their first year out had the lowest percent over the last 10 years for indicator 14B, at 50.2%. In addition to higher education and competitive employment,

Indicator 14C includes the percent of former students with IEPs who go on to non-competitive employment and/or postsecondary education that is not a two or four-year college or university. This category has seen an increase of five percentage points this year.

Over the last five years, the percentage of former students who reported being unengaged in any post-school outcome related to education or employment had consistently remained over 30%, with last year seeing a 5-point increase to 35.2%. This year the percent of unengaged dropped to 29.1%, which is the first time, within this timeframe, that it has dropped below 30%. A decline in both the percent of students in 14B and unengaged students might explain the increase in the percent reported in 14C.

KYPSO believes it is important to examine the intersection of education and employment, two important dimensions of post-school success. The table below (Table 2) shows how education and employment outcomes intersect. As stated earlier, 16.0% of former students went on to higher education. In addition, many of these students were either employed competitively (167) or non-competitively (114) while enrolled in higher education, indicating that over half of former students who went on to higher education were also employed in some manner. Alternatively, we can see that a large majority of competitively employed students are not in any school or training program.

The implications for this are clear: if a young person plans 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 in their first year out of high school.

Table 2

Kentucky (2022)	Competitive Employment	Other Employment	No Employment	Education Totals
Higher Education	167 (5.7%)	114 (3.9%)	188 (6.4%)	469 (16.0%)
Other Education	81 (2.8%)	40 (1.4%)	34 (1.2%)	155 (5.3%)
No Postsecondary Education	922 (31.4%)	535 (18.2%)	853 (29.1%)	2,310 (78.7%)
Employment Totals	1,170 (39.9%)	689 (23.5%)	1,075 (36.6%)	2,934 (100.0%)

Whenever possible, KYPSO 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, disability category, and manner of exit from high school.

Table 3

Outcomes	Higher Ed.	Other Ed.	Competitive Employment	Other Employment	Not Engaged	Total 2,934
Gender						
Male	13.7%	5.8%	42.0%	22.5%	28.8%	1,975
Female	20.8%	4.2%	35.6%	25.4%	29.6%	959
Race/Ethnicity						
White	15.7%	5.9%	39.2%	23.4%	29.9%	2,368
African American/Black	16.6%	1.9%	43.1%	20.9%	28.4%	320
Hispanic and/or Latino	13.8%	3.1%	42.3%	30.0%	21.5%	130
Two or more races	19.1%	5.6%	46.1%	24.7%	21.3%	89
Disability Category						
Autism	20.8%	3.4%	16.4%	15.8%	51.3%	298
EBD	10.1%	4.8%	44.4%	20.8%	31.4%	207
FMD	0.0%	3.6%	7.3%	8.8%	81.8%	137
MMD	8.1%	3.6%	34.0%	25.0%	36.3%	529
Multiple Disability	8.2%	2.7%	13.7%	13.7%	64.4%	73
OHI	17.7%	6.1%	48.0%	25.7%	20.1%	750
SLD	18.9%	7.1%	52.0%	27.4%	13.7%	798
Manner of Exit						
Regular Diploma	18.2%	5.5%	43.9%	24.7%	23.2%	2,570
Alternative Diploma	0.3%	3.8%	8.4%	12.2%	76.3%	287
Dropped Out	1.3%	2.6%	23.4%	26.0%	50.6%	77

Disaggregated Outcomes by Gender

When examining outcomes by gender, we see a seven percentage point difference in the rate of attending higher education for females over males, which means that females are about 35% more likely to go on to higher education the first year out of high school than males. However, there is a 6.4 percentage point difference in the rate of competitive, integrated employment for males, which means that they are about 15% more likely to be competitively employed one year out of high school than females. There was an increase in the percentage of females who went on to higher education and/or competitive employment (indicator B) last year over the previous two years; however, this year saw a

drop back to those previous year levels. In contrast, males have seen a consistent decline in higher education, especially those who are competitively employed while attending higher education. Males have also seen a drop in competitive employment from last year to this year. The drop in competitive employment for males and females may be due, in part, to businesses permanently closing because of the pandemic. We also know that females have been consistently less likely to be competitively employed than males, even prior to Covid-19. It is unclear whether these differences in employment outcomes are related to employment expectations and preparation based on gender, the career clusters offered, or other factors. The differences in the percentage of males and females likely to not be engaged one year after exiting high school has decreased to less than a one percentage point difference this year. Over two-thirds of the former students in our population are male.

A respondent can, and often does, participate in both an educational and employment outcome. For both males and females, approximately two-thirds of the students are employed in some capacity while attending higher education. As stated earlier, this has instructional implications in preparing students to succeed in higher education while working.

Disaggregated Outcomes by Ethnicity

Black students continue to fare better in terms of competitive employment and/or higher education enrollment than white students. Higher education rates for African American students exiting high school in Kentucky with IEPs have exceeded those of white and Hispanic students 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 specific to higher education as competitive employment rates have historically been similar across the groups, with black students just slightly higher than Hispanic students and white students slightly lower than both. Hispanic students have had the highest rates of non-competitive employment (i.e., less than 20 hours per week and/or not receiving minimum wage), approximately 10 percentage points higher than black students and eight percentage points higher than white students. These trends have been consistent in our data over the past three years.

Analysis of outcomes for students identified as two or more races was first included in this report last year due to low numbers in previous years. This group of students had the highest competitive employment rate at 46.1% again this year, even with a more than 13 percentage point drop from last year. Higher education for this group was the highest of all ethnicities at 19.1%, up three percentage points from last year.

Non-engagement rates for white students are the highest (29.9%); however, this is down over seven percentage points from last year. The non-engagement rate for African Americans was 28.4%. Students identified as Hispanic or Two or More Races had the lowest unengaged rates at just over 21%.

Disaggregated Outcomes by Disability

Differences in outcomes based on a former student's primary disability classification are striking. Due to student population size, we have included the seven largest disability categories in Table 3, as other disability categories had too few respondents to make meaningful inferences about their outcomes for this report.

Students with Specific Learning Disabilities and Other Health Impairments fare relatively well in terms of higher education (18%) and competitive employment (52% and 48%, respectively) and have the lowest percentage of non-engagement (13.7% and 20.1%, respectively).

Students identified as having a Functional Mental Disability (FMD) have continuously fared very poorly in 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 they consistently report the highest rates of unengagement, meaning they are not engaged in any educational or employment outcomes. This has been steadily rising, from two-thirds reporting not to be engaged in 2016 up to 87.9% last year. This year the percentage has dropped slightly but is still above 80%. The increase over the last two years may be due to health and safety concerns related to the pandemic.

Persons with autism have the best higher education outcomes (20.8%) in relation to the other disability categories referenced and far above other students in the low incidence categories. Autistic students' higher education rates exceed those of employment, which have typically averaged in the low teens. For the other disability categories, rates for higher education are much lower than those for competitive employment. Currently, there is not enough data to know if this indicates more opportunity and acceptance of autistic workers or a result of Covid-19 and the demand for 'essential' employees in minimum wage jobs (grocery, take-out food services, etc.). KYPSON will continue to watch future data to determine if this is the start of a trend.

When the data are further disaggregated for autistic students based on manner of high school exit (which can be interpreted as a function of learning environment), those who exit high school with a regular diploma have much higher rates of competitive employment (19.2%) and attendance in higher education (26.5%) and lower rates of non-engagement (44.4%) than autistic students who exit high school with an alternate diploma or age out. 76.6% of autistic students who exit high school with an alternate diploma or age out are not engaged, which is down from last year, but still up seven percentage points from the previous year. This high percentage of unengaged students 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. The increase may 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 (e.g., LRE, ILP, pre-ETS, review of IEPs, etc.) would allow KYPSON to probe more deeply into these factors, their distribution, and their relative impact.

Persons classified as having multiple disabilities report a high unengagement rate of 64.4%, but that is down eight percentage points from last year. Though the employment and education rates are low, they are both up just over three percentage points each, reporting competitive employment at 13.7% and higher education at 8.2%. When these outcomes were further disaggregated by the manner of high school exit, it was revealed that all students with multiple disabilities who went on to higher education graduated high school with a regular diploma.

Disaggregated Outcomes by Manner of High School Exit

Manner of exit is the final way in which KYP SO disaggregates outcomes. Because students who exited by aging out or receiving an alternate diploma are indistinguishable based on how districts collect data, we combine them into a single category. It is reasonable to assume that all members of this group are on the alternate diploma track. Those who graduated with a regular diploma have the best outcomes. No students who exited high school by dropping out in the 2020-2021 school year enrolled in higher education. However, students who drop out have considerably higher competitive employment rates (23.4%) than those who exited from the alternate diploma track (8.4%). More than seven out of ten 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 data-informed program improvements.

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 to learn more about one's high school experiences, employment outcomes, postsecondary education, and community living. Each question is depicted in Table 4. Note that the sample size for each question varies. We will examine the follow-up questions in greater depth.

Table 4

Category/Question	Number of Potential Responses
High School Experiences	
What are the reasons you left high school without graduating?	77
What might have helped you stay in school?	77
Please name the most important thing during high school that helped you in your life right now (e.g., high school programs, classes, agencies).	2,934
Employment/ Unemployment	
What is the main reason that you are not working, or not working more hours?	1,764
Postsecondary Education	
If you faced any problems in your postsecondary school/training program, please let us know what they were.	741
What would you say is the main reason you did not go on to postsecondary education?	2,140
Community Living	
Where do you live?	2,934
Do you have a driver's license?	2,934
Are you registered to vote?	2,934
How do you spend your time (if not working, attending postsecondary education)?	853
Additional Comments	
Is there anything else you would like to add about how things have been going for you since you left school?	2,934

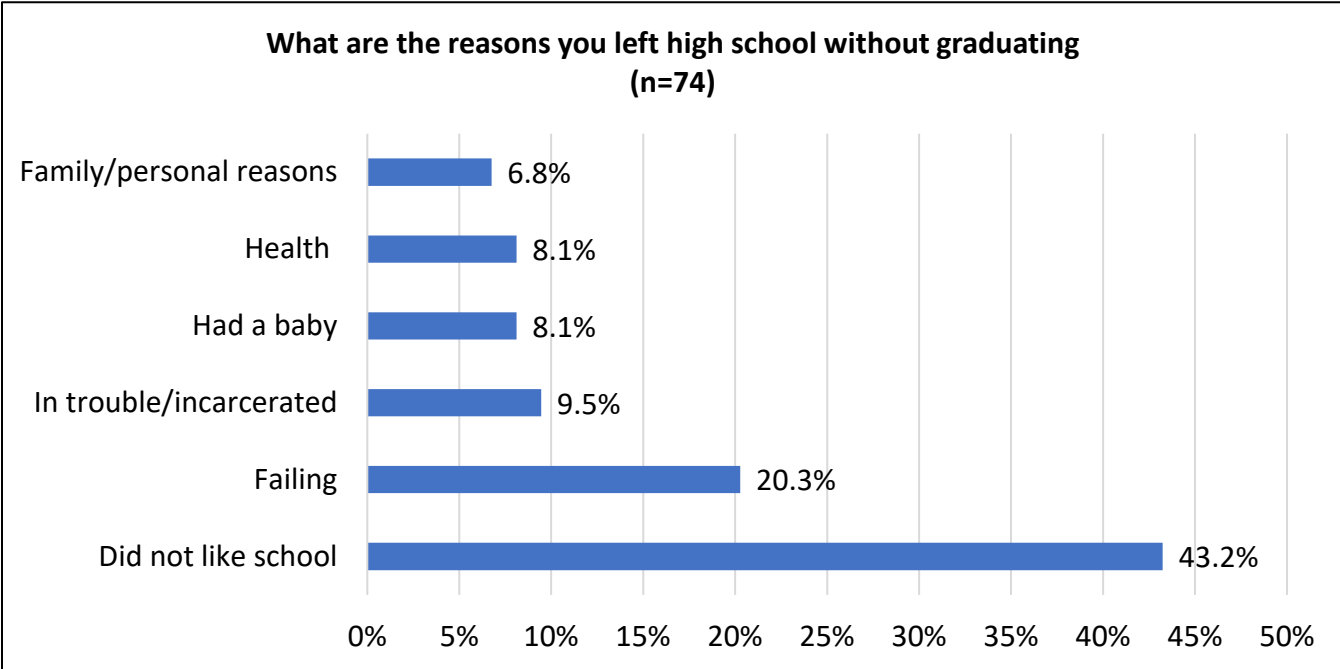
Follow-Up Questions

High School Experience

6.3% of Kentucky students who exited with an IEP did so by dropping out of high school (293/4,687) in the 2020-2021 school year. This has gone down 3.5 percentage points over the last two years. 77 of the 293 students responded to the survey. We asked them to share why they left high school without graduating. The reasons varied among the 74 respondents; if a respondent provided multiple reasons, all reasons were recorded and counted. Just over 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-fifth reported failing their classes; just under 10% reported that their behavior contributed to

dropping out, including legal issues. This is down five percentage points from last year. Other responses included having children (8%) and health issues (8%). Personal or family reasons (6.8%) included family death and illness and being overly stressed. The top reasons for leaving high school without graduating are depicted in the figure below (Figure 2):

Figure 2

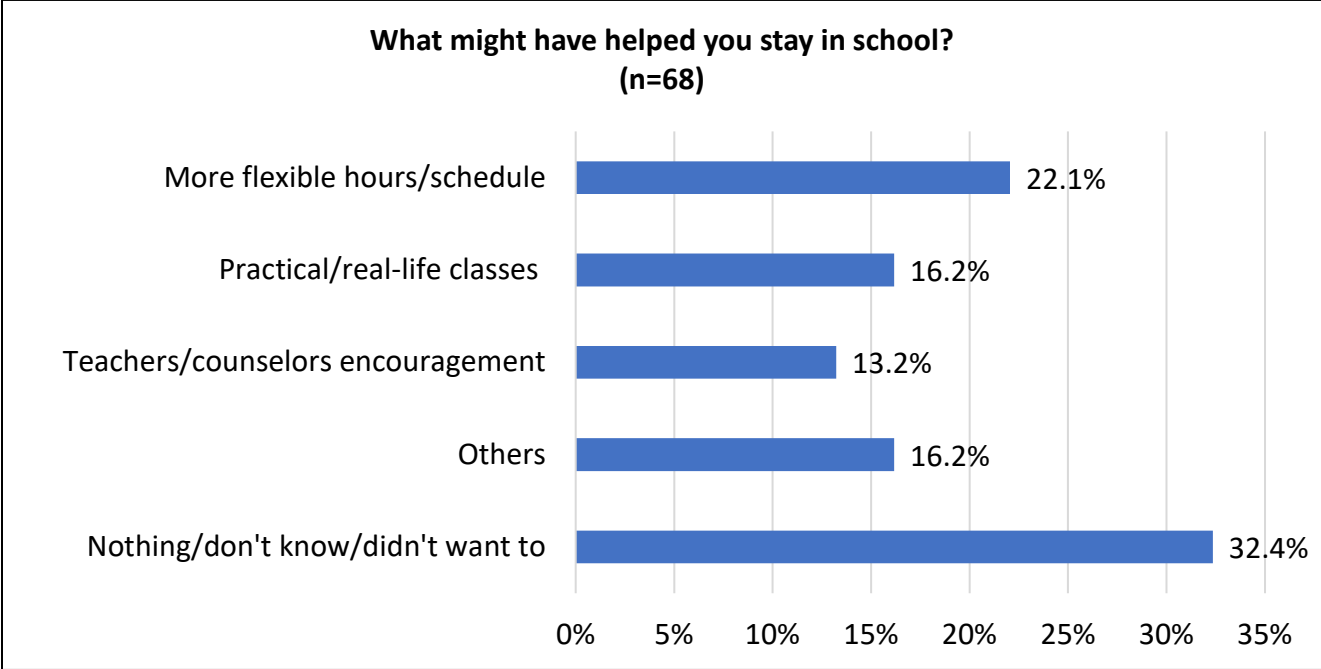


The YOYO design allows respondents to provide answers that vary in their degree of specificity, but also clarification for answers that may be too general to be prescriptive. While some reasons for dropping out, such as bullying, may help programs easily identify solutions (i.e., a prevention strategy for 'bullying' may be a bully prevention program), other reasons provided, such as the often-cited reason of "not liking school," does not offer such an apparent remedy. To provide information that may help instructional programs identify strategies to reduce future dropout rates, we asked these former students more specifically, "What might have helped you stay in school?". Of the 68 students who responded to this question, just under one-quarter indicated that more flexible hours and scheduling, including in-school learning instead of distance learning, might have helped them stay in school. One-fifth of the students stated more practical/real-life classes. A suggestion for further research would involve more detailed analyses regarding participation of these students who dropped out in vocational classes, pre-ETS, and/or CTE courses. Some students (13%) stated that more encouragement from teachers or counselors might have led them to stay in school.

While "Nothing or don't know" was still the highest response for this item, a small number of respondents also mentioned issues related to enrollment during the pandemic, difficulty transitioning to high school, and behavioral issues. Covid-19 may have caused people to feel helpless, impacting

their ability to identify helpful solutions or find support during a pandemic. The top five responses for what might have helped keep the student in school are depicted in Figure 3.

Figure 3



Employment and Unemployment

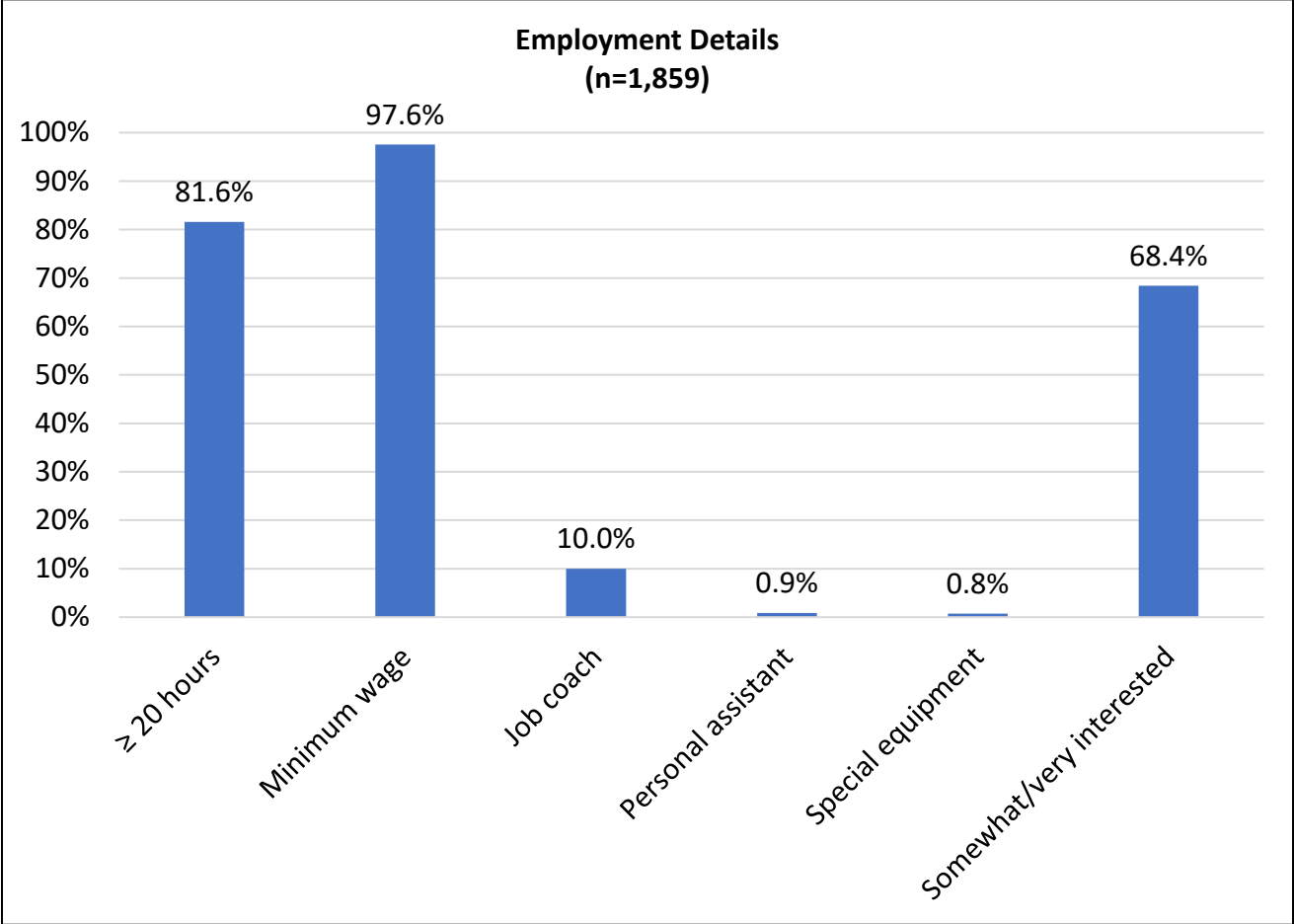
According to the Indicator 14 definition for employment, a person would be considered employed (either competitively or other) if they have worked for at least 90 days since leaving high school, even if they were not currently employed at the time of the interview. Of the 2,003 respondents who indicated that they had a paying job since leaving high school, just over 92.8% (1,859) met the Indicator 14 definition for employment, and of those, 1,634 were still employed. These findings indicate that among all former students in our sample, 63% had been employed for at least 90 days at some point in the year after high school, and 56% were still working at the time of the interview, both of which are up seven percentage points from last year.

Of the students who met the Indicator 14 definition for employment, we asked additional questions about the number of hours worked and minimum wage to determine whether the student fit the definition of competitive, integrated employment, or other employment. We also asked about employment supports that were utilized and students' interest in their job (Figure 4).

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 had been employed (2,003) 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. 10% of the respondents who had been employed indicated that they had used a job coach, which is consistent with last year, but down more than one-third from previous years. This drop in job coaching support over the last two years may be due to the pandemic, as in-person supports were stopped and changed to virtual supports. Very few respondents ($\leq 1\%$) indicated using a personal assistant or special equipment. This has remained consistent over the years.

Figure 4



We also asked respondents who had been employed how interesting they found their job. 68% indicated that they found it very or somewhat interesting, while only 8% indicated that they found it not very interesting or not interesting at all.

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 were asked an additional question, "What is the main reason you are not working or not working more hours?" (Figure 5). Of the 1,139 responses, 18.7% (n=213) chose not to work or work more hours because they were attending a university or college.

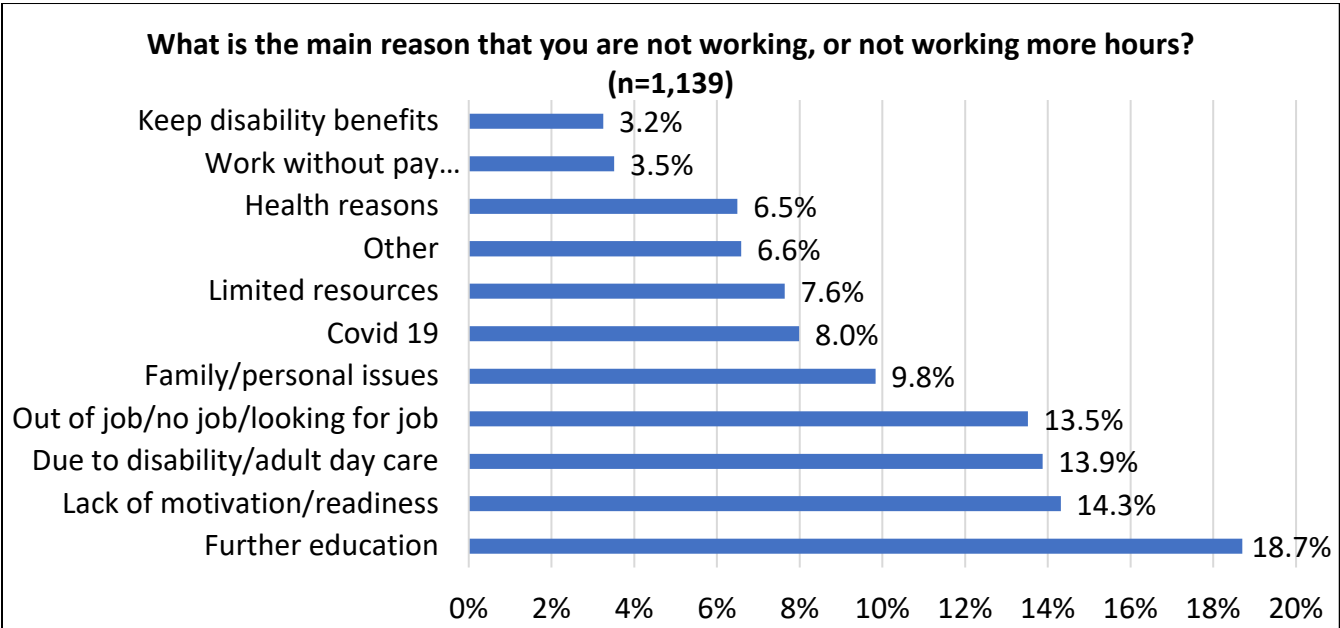
14.3% of the respondents indicated a lack of motivation and/or readiness to work, stating they were taking a gap year, didn't need to work, or didn't know what to do/how to begin. 13.9% of students who did not work indicated they could not work because of the severity of their disability or because they were attending adult day program/daycare. In addition, 3.2% of the respondents reported they did not work or limited their work hours because they were receiving disability benefits. 13.5% of respondents were not working because they could not find a job, were looking for a job, or had just lost their job through firing, layoffs, or business closings.

Just under 10% of the respondents indicated they had family or personal issues, including taking care of children or other family members. Covid-19 was reported by 8% to be a factor, half of which just generically stated Covid-19; just under half indicated caution or fear of Covid-19; and the remainder indicated their workplace shut down.

Respondents also mentioned limited resources (7.6%) such as lack of required equipment, lack of transportation, need for a personal assistant/supported employment, and waiting for OVR as a reason for not working or not working more hours. This might explain the low response rate to the question regarding accommodations used. Former students may not know how to obtain and/or request accommodations. Educators can use this information to evaluate and inform instruction in this area.

6.6% of the responses were in the category of 'other' and related to trouble with the law, issues with supervisors and/or customers, seasonal work, quitting after one day, and moving. Another 6.5% reported they were negatively impacted by their health, including physical and mental health, to which one-fourth specifically mentioned anxiety and depression.

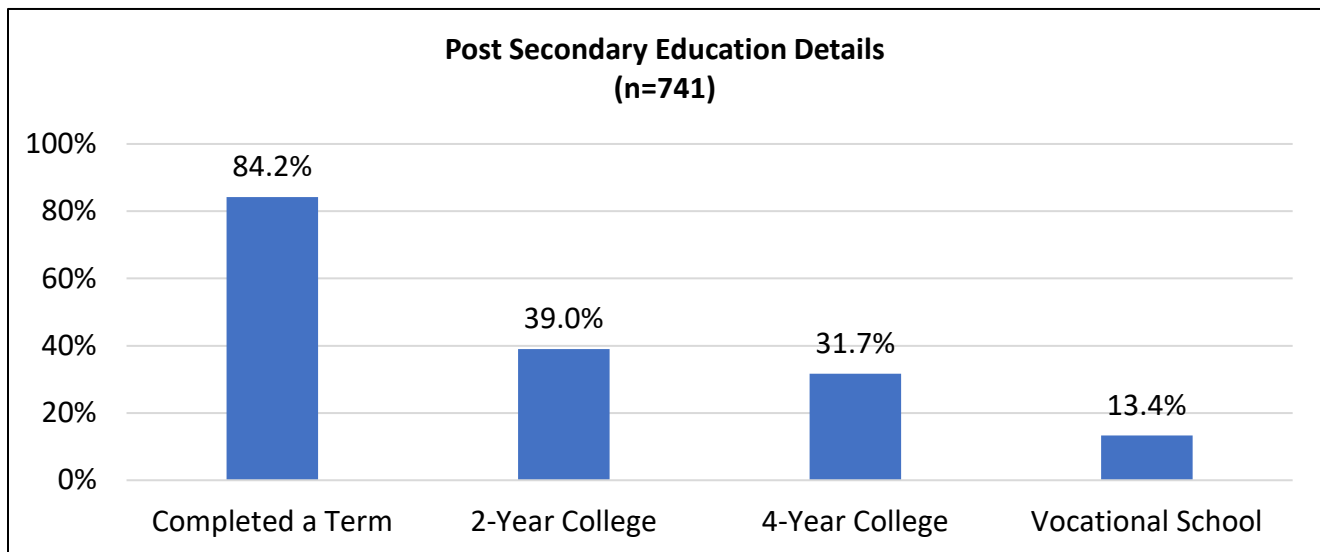
Figure 5



Postsecondary Education

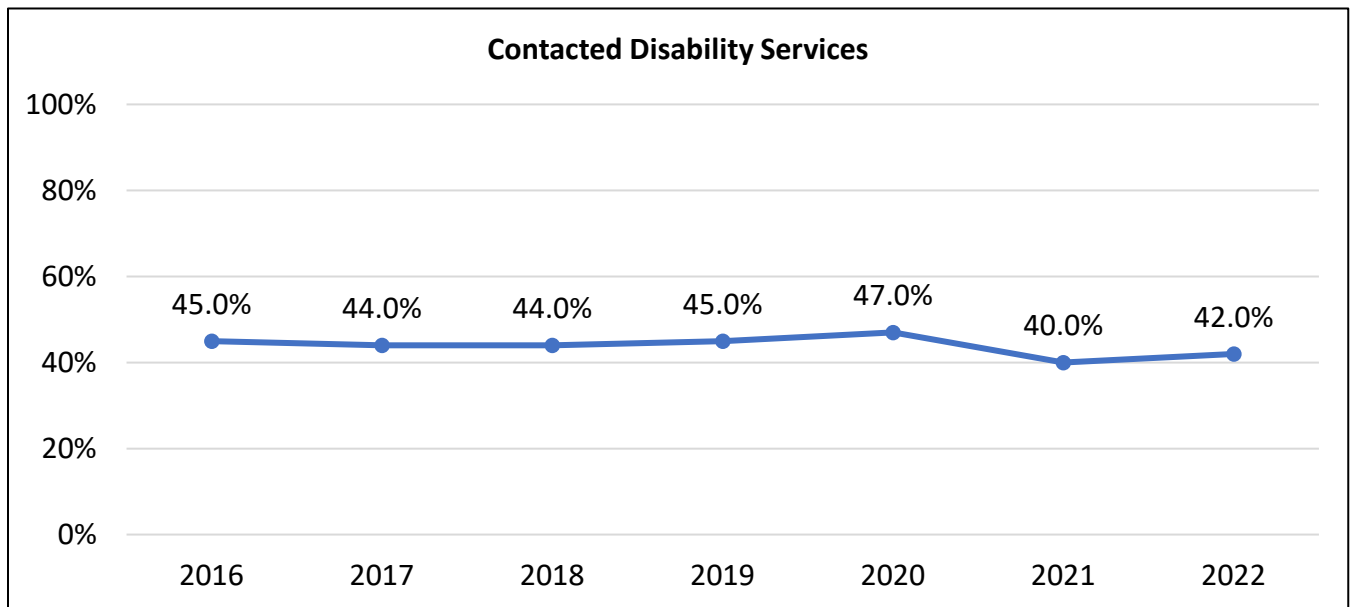
Of the 741 respondents who indicated that they had gone on to some form of postsecondary education, 624 (or 84%) completed at least one entire session or semester, which is consistent with previous years. We also asked what type of school or training program they had enrolled in (Figure 6). The highest number, 289 (39%), indicated that they had enrolled in a two-year college, 32% indicated a four-year college, 13% indicated enrollment in a vocational school, 11% indicated that they were enrolled in some type of short-term program, and 1% indicated that they were pursuing some form of adult education or GED. We also asked what degree they expected to get when they finished school. 33% indicated they were pursuing a bachelor's degree, 27% indicated an associate degree, 21% stated they were in a certificate program, and 11% indicated that they were not seeking degree credit, including those who were auditing classes. While having high expectations and setting goals is a good thing to do, achieving these degrees and certifications does not always pan out as indicated by longitudinal data shared by the Kentucky Center for Statistics (KYSTATS). See longitudinal data regarding post-school education on page 24.

Figure 6



Finally, we wanted to know whether a student who was pursuing further education had contacted their Disability Services Coordinator (DSC). Less than half of the respondents indicated they had. This has been a consistent trend over the years (Figure 7).

Figure 7



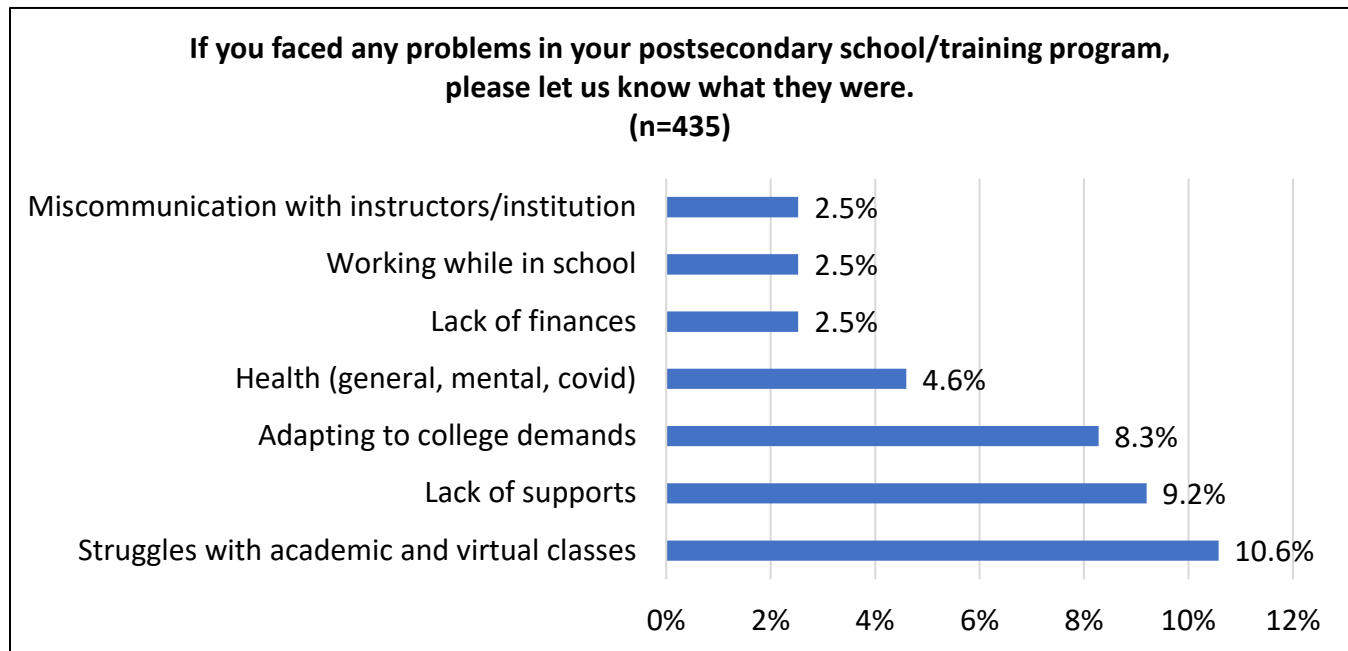
To better understand the experiences of students who were attending postsecondary education, we asked the following additional questions:

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

When asked, "If you faced any problems in your postsecondary school/training program, please let us know what they were," 435 participants responded. Of those, half reported that they did not experience any problems. The top five challenges reported in postsecondary school/training programs were struggles with academics and virtual classes (10.6%); lack of supports and services, including transportation (9.2%); adapting and adjusting to college demand (8.3%), including time management; health (4.6%), including mental health, general health, and Covid-19; lack of finances (2.5%); working while in school (2.5%), and miscommunication with institution and/or instructors (2.5%) (Figure 8). Academic struggles included the pace of the classes, struggles with English and writing, and keeping up with the class assignments. Comments related to supports and accommodations included not contacting disability services initially, not being provided supports by instructors, and lacking transportation. This may indicate that students did not understand the differences in the provision of support services between high school and college.

Additional difficulties reported included adjusting to college life (e.g., lack of social support, work-school balance, and health and medical issues, including general feelings of stress).

Figure 8



Many of the difficulties reported by students (i.e., academic struggles, lack of supports and accommodations, and adjustment to college demands) may have been mitigated by supports from Disability Services Coordinators. Yet less than half (42%) of those who went on to postsecondary education contacted their Disability Services Coordinator. This has been consistently low over the years and is an important factor for which high school personnel should be aware.

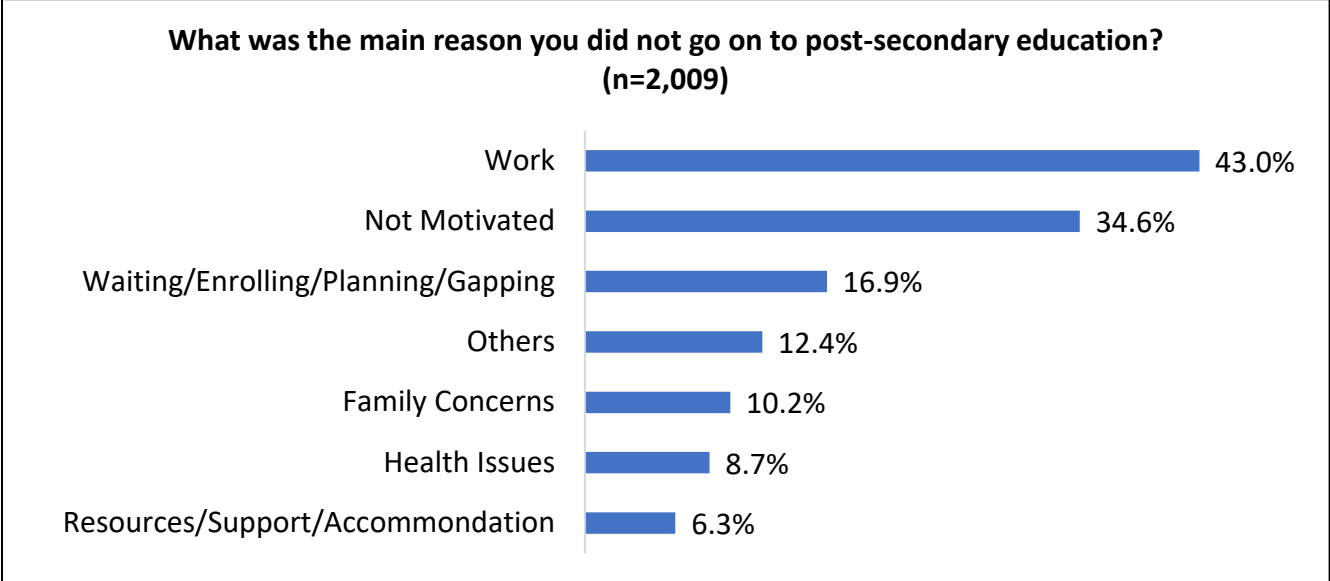
We recognize that it may seem liberating to some students to not disclose their disability to anyone at their college or university; however, it is important for students to know that services and accommodations are not available if they choose not to do so. This is a major impacting factor of which educators need to be aware. Students who were taught how to access student support services and the importance of disclosing their disability have indicated that this was one of the most beneficial learning experiences in high school.

We also asked where young people who enrolled in postsecondary education lived while classes were in session. 68% indicated that they lived with their family. 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. This may also reflect the increasing prevalence of virtual higher education.

For students who did not go on to postsecondary education, we followed up by asking the reasons for not continuing their education (Figure 9). Among 2,009 respondents who answered this question, 43% chose to go directly into the workforce, and another 35% did not want to go to school (not motivated). Many students reported that school was not for them, they did not like school, and they did not have a good experience with school. However, 16.9% of the students indicated they were enrolling or planning to enroll in the near future.

Other reasons students reported for not enrolling in higher education included health conditions (mental, behavioral, and medical issues), family or personal issues (e.g., taking care of family members, getting pregnant/married), limited resources/accommodation (e.g., lack of transportation and financial support), and graduating qualifications.

Figure 9



Some students reported that they did not believe they were able to go to college because of their disability or because they believed that they were not smart enough. Some students reported that their parent or guardian did not want them to go to school.

One predictor of positive post-school outcomes is parent and teacher expectations. This is an area where schools and districts can work with parents by addressing the barriers and fears associated with student safety and success after high school. Parents may need to be informed of the availability of accommodations, support services, and the importance of including their child in the larger community to become independent and productive members of that community. To ensure students are prepared for the transition to higher education, as with employment, more instruction and practice utilizing self-determination and self-advocacy skills paired with structured career planning may be needed

throughout the high school years to increase enrollment in postsecondary education and 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.

Community Participation

The format of the YOYO allows us to gather details on community participation that, along with employment and postsecondary education, gives us a broader picture of students' post-school outcomes. Two items relevant to community participation addressed in the YOYO are whether a young person has a driver's license and is registered to vote. Half (50%) of respondents indicated that they had a driver's license.

Although the national trend for young persons with driver's licenses has been dropping for years, and the rate of our respondents (students with an IEP) has consistently been below the overall (students with and without disabilities) national average, that gap is getting smaller. The percentage of respondents with driver's licenses has remained consistent for the past two years, while the national average for students aged 18, with and without disabilities, has dropped from 62.1% in 2016 (FHWA, 2017) to 58% in 2018 (FHWA, 2020).

Respondents to the YOYO indicated that they are slightly less likely to be registered to vote than the general population. 52% of respondents indicated that they were registered to vote, a seven percentage point drop from last year, while Kentucky's general population of 18-24-year-olds reported a 61% registration rate (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021).

Another question asked in the YOYO regarding community participation is where students have lived for most of the past year. The vast majority (79%) indicated living with their family, while 5% indicated living alone. Another 5% indicated they lived most of the previous year in a college dormitory or military housing. 4% indicated that they live with a spouse or partner, and another 4% indicated that they live with friends. Roughly 1% indicated that they lived in a foster home, group home, shelter, or correctional facility. These percentages have remained consistent over the last several years.

Benefits of High School

To gather more information about the benefits of high school, students were asked to "Name the most important thing during high school that helped you in your life right now" (Figure 10). 2,382 respondents answered this question with a response rate of 81.2%. Many students (38.5%) reported that the support and encouragement they received from teachers and other staff (e.g., coaches, guidance counselors, speech therapists, and principals) were most helpful. One-fifth of the respondents (20.4%) mentioned many of the transition programs designed to prepare students for life after high

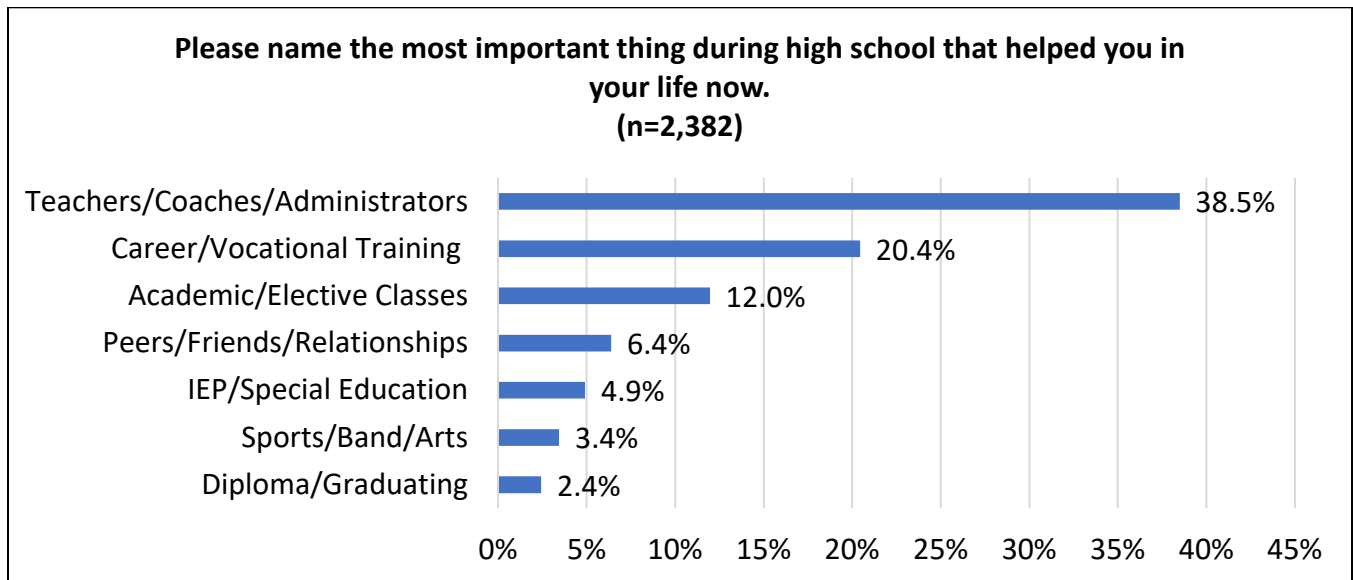
school as the most important. Transition programming mentioned included the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR), the Community Work Transition Program (CWTP), Career and Technical Education (CTE), Area Technology Centers (ATCs), specific career clusters and certifications, Future Farmers of America (FFA), Jobs for Kentucky's Graduates (JAG KY), United Parcel Service (UPS), job exploration, job coaches/employment specialists, and paid work experience, as well as military development programs such as Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps (JROTC) and Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC).

About 12.0% 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 used in daily life. In addition, respondents reported that friendships and peer relationships (6.4%) and support from family members (1.5%) were very important to their post-school success. Some students specifically indicated that they benefited from special education and their IEP (4.9%), including 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 involvement in extracurricular activities (3.4%) such as sports, art programs, band, and clubs. Students also indicated that earning their high school diploma or alternative diploma was the most important (2.4%).

It is interesting to note that of the students who exited high school with an alternate diploma or aging out and responded to this question, 22% were employed. Of those employed, just over one-third specifically mentioned transition activities as the most beneficial. Activities mentioned included CWTP, job coaching, on-the-job training, and job exploration. Students were allowed to identify multiple factors, so in addition, one-third mentioned daily living skills, including learning to ride the bus (public transportation) and learning to get along with others. And finally, one-third responded that teachers were the most important.

It is important to clarify that students who did not specifically mention transition activities as the most important does not mean they did not participate in those programs. Therefore, KYPSO is interested in documenting the actual frequency with which students with IEPs take CTE courses and, more importantly, the impact that doing so has on their post-school outcomes. More information regarding CTE and students with disabilities will be reported as KYPSO is able to obtain such data.

Figure 10



Students who had not been employed or enrolled in further education since high school were asked how they spent their time and were able to report multiple ways. Of the 701 students who responded to the question, the majority (77%) indicated that they spend their time simply "at home," and 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 could give multiple answers, just over half of the respondents reported spending time on hobbies, including community organizations and church groups. Other responses included spending time at appointments (17%) and working without pay outside the home (5%). These percentages have remained consistent over the last several years.

At the end of the YOYO, the interviewer asks the respondents if they would like more information regarding transition and transition services discussed throughout the survey. If so, they would provide corresponding contact information. Interviewers then note what information was shared. Just over 300 YOYO participants indicated they would like additional information. One-third requested local school contact information, including that of the interviewer, school counselors, and the special education office, for requesting copies of transcripts and IEPs and to find out more about employment and education services available.

Interviewers often voluntarily share their own information as a resource with respondents, possibly indicating that YOYO interviewers feel more knowledgeable about the types of resources available and more confident in their ability to share those resources. Directors of Special Education (DOSE's) may also be identifying interviewers who are knowledgeable in these areas and personally invested in the outcomes of their former students.

Information on how to contact disability resources for the college they were attending was requested by 18% of the respondents. This supports the data already discussed regarding the low percentage of students who contact disability services coordinators and the importance of providing instruction during high school in self-determination for the purpose of accessing and advocating for support services post-high school. As one interviewer reported, "This student failed 3 out of 4 classes in the first semester due to not being proactive. The Office for Students with Disabilities helped, and the student passed all second-semester classes."

Information about Vocational Rehabilitation was shared with 14% of the participants, and another 14% received information on employment resources (frequently mentioned were Eastern KY Concentrated Employment Program, Build Inclusion, and local employment offices), and information on trade schools. Another 10% wanted to know about community programs such as adult day programs, transportation and driver's license offices, and other community resources. Finally, 14% indicated they already had the contact information for OVR and the resources needed.

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 below:

- *"I can't recall any special classes or programs, but making friends in school was the most important thing for me. I think friends carry you through life. "*
- *"Student did what her transition plan always was and obtained competitive employment in childcare."*
- *"I thought I knew what was best for me but turns out I was wrong." (quote from a student who dropped out).*
- *"She was unsure of how to ask for the help (accessing services for her disability) that she needed in school."*
- *"After high school you just have to get a job and figure this life thing out."*
- *"I am doing on the job training for my career as a welder."*

Longitudinal Data: Postsecondary Education Experiences

KYPSO and our stakeholders have been interested in learning about longer-term outcomes than the YOYO measures. This year we attempted to begin an examination of retention and completion of postsecondary education outcomes for students who exited High School with IEPs and compare these rates to those of the general population. Although we could not directly follow the former students who were part of previous years' YOYO's, we were able to work with longitudinal data provided by KYSTATS to make some general inferences.

KYSTATS provided KYPSO with data on students who exited high school during the 2015-16 school year (presumably, most graduated in the spring of 2016). They were able to separate students who had IEPs from those who did not. Both groups were then followed from their high school exit in 2016 through 2021 to determine if they were enrolled in postsecondary education during each year (defined by being enrolled in a certificate, associate, or bachelor's program) and whether they completed such a program by 2021.

The data obtained through KYSTATS indicated that 16% of students that exited high school with IEPs in 2015-16 were enrolled in postsecondary education during the 2016-17 school year. The YOYO puts this number at 25%. This difference could be due to a number of factors: the YOYO counts students that have completed at least one semester, whereas the KYSTATS data only looks at enrollment at any point during the year. The YOYO also captures students that may not be in a formally recognized state degree or certificate program. KYSTATS data includes approximately 500 more exiters than the YOYO, which may indicate that they are counting some students that exited and returned for further services (which the YOYO removes) or are counting students with inactive IEPs. The YOYO has a good response rate (57% in 2017) but does not capture the full population as extant data, which KYSTATS uses. The YOYO's sample is likely positively biased toward those former students with better outcomes. We think that it is best to recognize that these two datasets represent similar, but not identical, populations and that the YOYO is more suited for Indicator 14, while KYSTATS is more suited for longitudinal investigation and comparisons between students with and without IEPs.

The first thing evident in examining data from KYSTATS is the difference in the overall postsecondary enrollment between students with and without IEPs. As noted, this dataset indicates that the rate for enrollment in postsecondary education for students with IEPs one year after exiting high school is 16%. The rate for students without IEPs is 55%. This alone is a staggering difference and should be noted by policymakers seeking to improve outcomes of students with disabilities. One might consider that students with disabilities simply take longer to prepare for postsecondary education and that a one-year out measure does not capture this phenomenon. However, when we examined the percentage of

former students who had not enrolled within one-year post-exit but enrolled two years post-exit, we saw little difference between students with IEPs (6%) and students without (8%).

Tracking actual year-to-year retention was difficult because we did not know what type of program students were enrolled in or if they changed programs. Instead, we examined completion rates for each type of outcome: certificate, associate degree, and bachelor's degree. For this analysis, we used only those students who had gone on to some type of postsecondary education in their first year after exiting high school and again looked at their completion rates five years post high school exit. It is important to note that these outcome categories are not mutually exclusive (i.e., a student may have earned a certificate as well as an associate degree). Students with IEPs were actually more likely to obtain a certificate (12%) compared to those without IEPs (6%) if they enrolled in some type of postsecondary education. For those earning associate degrees, the completion rates were nearly identical, with students with IEPs completing 11% of the time and students without IEPs completing at a rate of 10%. The big difference was in the completion of bachelor's degrees. 34% of students without IEPs who enrolled in postsecondary education completed a bachelor's degree within five years. Only 7% of students with IEPs who began postsecondary education completed a bachelor's degree. Finally, we examined whether or not students who enrolled in postsecondary education obtained any type of credential within five years. For students with IEPs, 31% obtained any type of credential, while 50% of those without IEPs did. When we look at ALL students who exited high school, whether or not they entered postsecondary education, we see that 5% of students with IEPs obtained any type of postsecondary credential within five years of exiting high school. For students without IEPs this figure is 27%.

These figures are disheartening for both students with and without IEPs, but abysmal for those with IEPs. Only half of those students that enroll in postsecondary education have anything to show for it five years later. Whether using data from the YOYO or KYSTATS, the number of students with IEPs enrolling in postsecondary education is a fraction of what it is for students without IEPs, and it appears that their retention rates are no better.

It may be the case that students with IEPs are more likely to enter certificate type programs than their non-IEP peers, which could explain the higher proportion of students with IEPs who have enrolled in postsecondary education finishing with a certificate than students without IEPs. Still, this figure of 12% is not one to celebrate, especially given that it is numerically the lowest of the three completion categories.

As KYPSO continues to examine longer-term outcomes, we will work with KYSTATS to attempt to probe these figures more deeply. Knowing more about students' goals in postsecondary education could tell us more about their true 'success' rate and help future students prepare for higher education. We also hope to be able to track longer-term employment outcomes, both in terms of gaining employment after a student's first year post-exit and in terms of increased earnings for those employed over time.

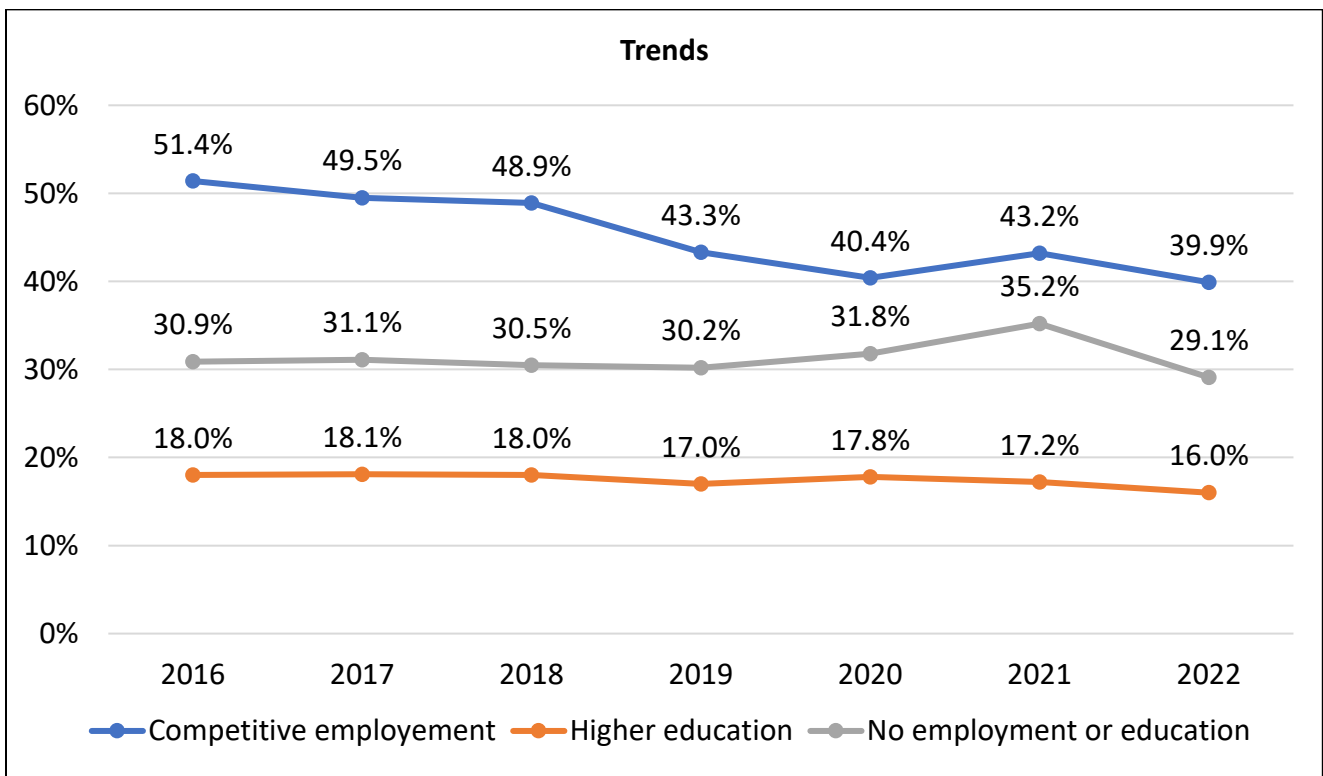
Conclusion

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 impacted these trends. The figure below (Figure 11) shows that from 2016 to 2020, the percentage of students who entered competitive employment within one year after exiting high school was steadily declining. Then in 2021, students who entered competitive employment rose slightly, even though this was during the start of the pandemic. However, students interviewed in 2022 have reported the lowest rates of competitive employment.

During this same time frame, the percentage of students who enrolled in higher education one year after high school was fairly steady, between 17 and 18 percent, until this year when it fell to 16%.

Unengagement rates remained fairly steady between 30 and 31%, then rose to 35.2% last year. This year, the unengagement rate dropped to 29.1%, the lowest it has been in this time frame.

Figure 11

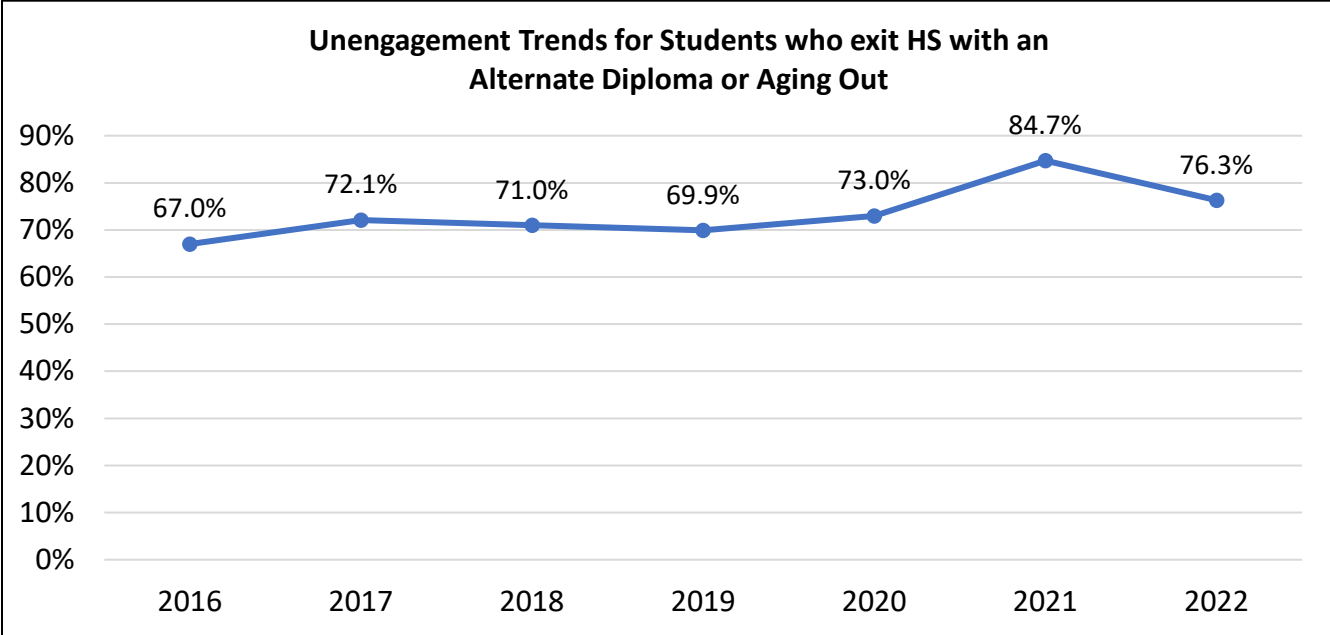


Although KYSO does not have information on the types of jobs obtained in 2020 when employment rates appeared to rise as reported in the 2021 YOYO, it would be interesting to see if this increase was

related to the demand for employees in the service industry and whether those types of jobs are more prominent in transition activities for students with disabilities vs. all students.

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. The figure below (Figure 12) shows that students who exit high school with an alternate diploma or age out continue to have the lowest percentage of successful outcomes and the highest rates of non-engagement. These rates of non-engagement had not changed significantly, averaging 68%, except for a spike last year, when it increased over 11 percentage points to 84.7%, and although it has dropped back down slightly, it is still above that average at 76.3%. The Covid-19 pandemic has most likely impacted the increase; however, this still does not explain why this population of students continues to be unengaged in post-school employment and education at such high rates. This continues despite an increased emphasis on career readiness, the availability of pre-employment transition services and transition services mandated by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and the option of supported higher education programs.

Figure 12



Of these students, approximately 40% report that they do not work because of their disability. 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 a vision and expectation for employment.

The data continues to suggest a need to help parents and educators form a vision of the future for their children and identify the supports and services needed to pursue that vision. 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 (special education, general education, and CTE), parents, and vocational service providers. KYPSO is uniquely positioned to analyze the effectiveness of many of these programs if data were to be made available.

Access to additional data (LRE, OVR services, student in-school surveys, IEP review, etc.) alongside YOYO data would allow for a deeper analysis of 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. 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 hope 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.

The ongoing changes KYPSO makes to its reporting system continue to give 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 showing the intersection of education and employment outcomes are publicly available on our website (kypso.org). These data can be disaggregated by gender, race/ethnicity, disability category, and manner of exit. For those administrators who have created accounts within our system and are eligible to view more granular data, we have made reports available at the district and co-op levels, including 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 has worked with Special Education Regional Technical Assistance Centers (SERTACs) and districts on using this reporting system, analyzing the results, and making data-based decisions to improve transition programs and instruction.

Although our data are unique to Kentucky, many of the best practices related to secondary transition hold true throughout the United States and elsewhere. Our national partners have praised us 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. KYPSO has led the effort to pull together a collaborative state transition planning team with an emphasis on sharing transition-related data across state agencies.

We have a great deal of expertise both within KYPSO and the Human Development Institute (HDI) working with schools and school systems, as well as other stakeholders, and we hope that we will continue to have opportunities to work at all levels to improve transition outcomes for students exiting high school with disabilities.

If you would like to discuss the findings presented in this report, please contact Tony LoBianco, KYPSO Project Director, at tflobi1@uky.edu.



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