

**Outcomes of Approved Special Education
Programs in the Private Sector:**

Results of a Statewide Survey

**Plans for Exiting Students: 2003-2004
5-Year Comparison of Findings: 1999-2004**

Report Number 7 of the ASAH Outcomes Project

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Executive Summary

Study Period 2003-2004

During the 2003-2004 school year, 1,268 transfer students and 564 graduates with available plans exited from 72 ASAH schools (81% of the membership) operating 132 educational programs in 17 counties. In total, about 8,300 students were enrolled in the schools that participated in the study.

Highlights for Transfer Students include:

1. 93% of the transfer students attended an ASAH school for 5 years or less.
2. 45% of these students left an ASAH school with plans to attend an educational program in their home district. Of these, almost 22% had plans to attend a regular education classroom within district.

Highlights for Graduates include:

1. 70% of the graduates were enrolled in an ASAH school for 5 years or less.
2. 62% of the graduates planned to enter the mainstream (2-year/4-year college or trade/technical training, competitive employment, or military service).
3. 26% planned to enter a vocational rehabilitation activity (vocational rehabilitation training, supported or sheltered employment).
4. 7% had plans to enter an adult program in the community (adult partial care or nonvocational day program).
5. Graduates from Emotional/Behavioral Disorder programs (83%) and Learning Disorder programs (61%) were the most likely to have plans to enter the mainstream.

Study Period 1999-2000 to 2003-2004

The Exit Study of student plans has been carried out for the 5-year period encompassing academic years 1999-2000 through 2003-2004.

Highlights of the 5-Year Findings include:

1. The 5-year average for transfer students to leave an ASAH school with plans to attend an in-district program is 44%.
2. The 5-year average for graduates to leave an ASAH program with plans to enter mainstream adult roles is 48%.
3. At 80%, graduates from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs were the most likely to plan to enter mainstream adult roles during the 5-year period.

Introduction

Most studies of special education have focused on the special education students for whom programs are available in the public sector. Information about the 1% of special education students who receive educational services in the private approved sector, the students who are often the most disabled of all special education students, remains scarce.

In order to gather information about this small, but significant segment of the special education population, ASAH, an association of 89 approved private special education schools and agencies, conducted a study of the students who exited from its member programs during the 2003-2004 academic year. The educational settings to which transfer students planned to move as well as the plans made by the graduates who left an ASAH program were examined. This is ASAH's 7th report with a focus on these issues. The findings from the 4 most recent ASAH studies of the plans made by the transfer students and graduates in school years 1999-2000, 2000-2001, 2001-2002, and 2002-2003 were compared to the findings for the 2003-2004 academic year (ASAH, 2001; 2002; 2003; 2004). This permits a 5-year comparison of student exit plans.

Method

Each ASAH school was asked to supply information on every student that exited from a program over the course of the previous academic year. Exiting students were defined as transfer students, students who left the ASAH program to move on to another educational program, and graduates, those who left an ASAH school because they received a high school diploma. Demographic and program information was collected on the students who dropped out of school during the course of the study. Dropouts, however, were excluded from the study because their plans were not available.

The exiting students were further identified as attending one of five specific special educational programs. The schools were given a definition for each program category and were asked to classify the program from which each student exited by using one predominant program category. The programs were defined as follows: 1) Preschool Disorders Programs – for students with any disorder identified at the Preschool stage; 2) Pervasive Developmental Disorders Programs – for students with speech/language impairments, mental retardation, autism, developmental delays; 3) Emotional/Behavioral Disorders Programs – for students with emotional and behavioral disturbances; 4) Medical Disorders Programs – for students with other health impairments, hearing impairments, visual impairments, orthopedic impairments, deaf-blindness, and traumatic brain injury; and 5) Learning Disorders Programs – for students with specific learning disabilities.

The Participating Programs

Overall, 72 ASAH schools (81% of the membership) operating 132 educational programs volunteered to participate in the study.

As Table 1 shows, participating schools were located in 17 of New Jersey's 21 counties.

Table 1

Participating ASAH Schools by New Jersey County*

	n=72	
	#	%
Bergen	8	11.0
Burlington	3	4.2
Camden	5	6.9
Essex	10	13.9
Gloucester	3	4.2
Hudson	1	1.4
Hunterdon	2	2.8
Mercer	4	5.6
Middlesex	3	4.2
Monmouth	9	12.5
Morris	5	6.9
Ocean	2	2.8
Passaic	3	4.2
Somerset	8	11.0
Sussex	1	1.4
Union	4	5.6
Warren	1	1.4
Total	72	100.0

*Schools are listed by main campus. Several schools have programs in more than one county.

Moreover, about 30% of the 132 programs in the study were Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs; 28% were Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs, 15% were Learning Disorders programs; 15% were Medical Disorders programs; and 12% were Preschool Disorders programs.

The Participating Students

During the 2003-2004 school year, the participating schools reported that 8,671 students were enrolled in their programs¹. Of these, 8,227 were enrolled in day programs (5,661 or 69% were male; 2,566 or 31% were female). Moreover, 444 were enrolled in residential programs (330 or 74% were male; 114 or 26% were female).

Table 2 presents, according to program category, the distribution of the students enrolled in the participating ASAH programs during the study period and the students who exited from these programs during this time frame. Since age limits determine when students in the Preschool Disorders category leave these programs, students with Preschool Disorders are not shown in the table.

¹ Approximately 11,000 students were enrolled in all ASAH programs during the 2003-2004 school year. Therefore, approximately 79% of all enrolled students are represented by students enrolled in the participating programs.

Table 2

**Enrolled Students Aged 6-21 Years vs.
Exiting Students Aged 6-21 Years
In Participating Programs**

Program Category	Enrolled Students		Exiters	
	#	%	#	%
Emotional/Behavioral Disorders Program	3,420	41.7	1,294	62.9
Learning Disorders	1,470	17.9	317	15.4
Pervasive Developmental Disorders Program	2,367	28.9	303	14.7
Medical Disorders Program	938	11.5	144	7.0
	8,195	100.0	2,058	100.0

About 63% of all exiting students were enrolled in Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs; 15% came from Learning Disorders programs; about 15% from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs; and 7% from Medical Disorders programs.

The Exiting Students

Description

During the study period, 2,162 students exited from an ASAH program. The exiting students tended to be male (69%), White (54%), High School students (64%) who were between the ages of 12 and 17 years (47%), were enrolled in Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs (60%), and were in an ASAH program for 1 year to 5 years (59%). The majority of the exiting students (70%) did not receive subsidized lunch. Transfer students accounted for 71% of the exiting students; graduates were 27%; and dropouts were 2%.² According to ASAH school staff, 74% of the exiting students experienced a “planned” exit. In short, student, family/guardian, ASAH program staff, and local district staff concurred that the student was ready/needed to move to a different program. ASAH school staff also rated the exits as “positive” in 80% of the cases.

Planning information was available for 1,832 students, 85% of the exiting students. Of these students with known plans, 1,268 were transfer students and 564 were graduates.

The demographic characteristics of these students and of the programs they attended are presented in Table 3.

² 55 students dropped out over the course of the study period. Of these, 44 were male and 11 were female; 33 were White, 17 were Black, and 5 were Hispanic. All 55 came from day programs.

Table 3

**Demographic and Other Relevant Information
of Exiting ASAH Students**

n=2,162

Characteristic	n	%
<u>Program Classification</u>		
Preschool Disorders	104	4.8
Pervasive Developmental Disorders	303	14.0
Medical Disorders	144	6.7
Emotional/Behavioral Disorders	1,294	59.8
Learning Disorders	317	14.7
<u>Program Type</u>		
Day	1,958	90.6
Residential	204	9.4
<u>Reason for Exit</u>		
Transfer Student	1,525	70.6
Graduate	582	26.9
Dropout	55	2.5
<u>Grade Level</u>		
Preschool	104	4.8
Elementary School	392	18.1
Middle School	286	13.2
High School	1,380	63.9
<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>		
White	1,165	53.9
Black	647	29.9
Hispanic	280	13.0
Asian/Pacific Islander	39	1.8
"Other"	31	1.4
<u>Gender</u>		
Male	1,499	69.3
Female	663	30.7
<u>Ages at Exit</u>		
3-5 years	147	6.8
6-11 years	388	18.0
12-17 years	1,023	47.3
18-21+ years	604	27.9
<u>Length of Stay</u>		
Less than 1 year	306	14.2
1-5 years	1,274	58.9
6-10 years	169	7.8
11+ years	83	3.8
Not Available	330	15.3

Subsidized Lunch

Yes	643	29.7
No	1,519	70.3

Status of Planning Information

Available in Records	1,832	84.7
Not Available	330	15.3

Staff Assessment of Exit

Planned

Yes	1,597	73.9
No	565	26.1

Positive

Yes	1,721	79.6
No	441	20.4

The Transfer Students

Description

There were 1,268 transfer students with known plans. Of these, 72% were male, while 28% were female. About 50% were White, 33% were Black, 14% were Hispanic, 2% were Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1% were of “Other” racial/ethnic backgrounds. Among these students, 1,118 (88%) were day students and 150 (12%) were residential students.

By Grade Level

Approximately 45% attended High School, 20% Middle School, 27% Elementary School, and 8% Preschool. See Table 4.

Table 4

ASAH Transfer Students by Grade Level

n=1,268

	#	%
Preschool	102	8.0
Elementary School	340	26.8
Middle School	251	19.8
High School	575	45.4
Total	1,268	100.0

By Length of Stay

Tables 5 and 6 present the length of stay for the transfer students. While Table 5 shows this by grade level, Table 6 does so regardless of grade level. As these tables show, examined at each grade level and cumulatively, the majority of the transfer students attended an ASAH program for between 1 and 5 years.

Table 5

Length of Stay for ASAH Transfer Students

n=1,268

Grade Level	#	%
Preschool		
< 1 year	14	14.3
1-5 years	84	85.7
Total	98	100.0
Elementary School		
< 1 year	67	19.7
1-5 years	264	77.7
6-10 years	9	2.6
Total	340	100.0
Middle School		
< 1 year	37	14.7
1-5 years	193	76.9
6-10 years	21	8.4
Total	251	100.0
High School		
< 1 year	161	27.8
1-5 years	366	63.2
6-10 years	39	6.7
11+ years	13	2.3
Total	579	100.0

Table 6**Length of Stay for ASAH Transfer Students**

n=1,268

	#	%
< 1 year	279	22.0
1-5 years	907	71.6
6-10 years	69	5.4
11+ years	13	1.0
Total	1,268	100

Educational Plans for Transfer Students

When the transfer students are examined according to the programs in which they were enrolled, the following emerges. About 58% attended Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs, 12% went to Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs, 15% attended Learning Disorders programs, 8% were in Medical Disorders programs, and 8% were enrolled in Preschool Disorders programs. See Table 7 for the distribution of the educational plans made by these students.

Table 7

Educational Plans for Transfer Students from ASAH Programs

n = 1,268

Education Setting	Preschool n=102		PDD n=149		Medical n=100		ED/BD n=730		Learning n=187		Total n=1,268	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Regular Education, Not Special Education	45	44.1	7	4.7	11	11.0	66	9.0	17	9.1	146	11.5
Regular Education, Vocational	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	14	1.9	9	4.8	23	1.8
Regular Education, Supported Inclusion	11	10.8	11	7.4	21	21.0	45	6.2	19	10.2	107	8.4
Subtotal: Returns to Regular Education	56	54.9	18	12.1	32	32.0	125	17.1	45	24.1	276	21.7
Resource Room	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	26	3.6	7	3.7	33	2.6
Alternate School	0	0.0	2	1.3	2	2.0	52	7.1	6	3.2	62	4.9
Special Education, Self Contained LEA	13	12.7	28	18.8	13	13.0	130	17.8	13	7.0	197	15.6
Subtotal: All Returns to In-district Programs	69	67.6	48	32.2	47	47.0	333	45.6	71	38.0	568	44.8
Out of District Special Education	31	30.4	81	54.4	38	38.0	217	29.7	97	51.9	464	36.6
Residential	0	0.0	13	8.7	4	4.0	56	7.7	7	3.7	80	6.3
Home Instruction	1	1.0	2	1.3	2	2.0	66	9.0	4	2.1	75	5.9
Other	1	1.0	5	3.4	9	9.0	58	8.0	8	4.3	81	6.4
Total	102	100.0	149	100.0	100	100.0	730	100.0	187	100.0	1,268	100.0

Results for Transfer Students

The students who transferred from an ASAH program to another educational program tended to be White (50%), male (72%), High School students (45%) who attended programs for Emotional/Behavioral Disorders (58%) and who, regardless of grade level, were in an ASAH program from less than 1 year to 5 years. (See Table 4.)

As Table 7 indicates, nearly 45% of the transfer students left an ASAH program with plans to return to an educational program within the local district. Nearly 22% of the students planned to return to regular education classes (Regular Education, Not Special Education, 11.5%; Regular Education, Vocational, 1.8%; Regular Education, Supported Inclusion, 8.4%), while slightly more than 23% planned to return to Resource Room (2.6%), Alternate School (4.9%), or Self-contained classrooms within district (15.6%). About 68% (69 students) of those who transferred from Preschool Disorders programs, 32% (48 students) from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs, 47% (47 students) from Medical Disorders programs, about 46% (333 students) from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs, and 38% (71 students) from Learning Disorders programs planned to enter educational programs within their local districts. Of these, 56 students from Preschool Disorders programs (about 55%), 18 students from Pervasive Developmental Disorder programs (12%), 32 students from Medical Disorders programs (32%), 125 students from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs (17%), and 45 students from Learning Disorders programs (24%) planned to return to in-district regular education classrooms.

Conclusions for Transfer Students

About 22% of the transfer students remained in an ASAH program for less than 1 year and 71% stayed for 1-5 years. Taken together, 93% of the transfer students attended an ASAH school for less than 1 year to 5 years. About 45% of the severely disabled students who attended and then transferred from an ASAH program in the 2003-2004 school year developed plans to return to educational programs within their local districts. Of these, students from Preschool Disorder programs (68%), Medical Disorders programs (47%) and Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs (46%) were the most likely to return to an in-district program. Almost 22% were able to return to in-district regular education classrooms. Of these, students from Preschool Disorders programs (55%) and those from Medical Disorder programs (32%) were the most likely to plan to return to regular education classrooms.

5-Year Comparison of Findings: Transfer Student Exit Plans

Table 8 shows the degree to which the plans of the transfer students reflect a return to an in-district program, including plans to enter a regular education setting, for academic years 1999-2000 through 2003-2004.³

Table 8

5-Year Comparison of Transfer Student Exit Plans

	Regular Education ^a		Other In-district ^b		Total In-district	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
1999-2000 ^c (60% participation) n = 150	34	23	39	26	73	49
2000-2001 (58% participation) n = 826	132	16	143	17	275	33
2001-2002 (66% participation) n = 1,077	259	24	260	24	519	48
2002-2003 (69% participation) n = 1,093	197	18	311	29	508	47
2003-2004 (81% participation) n = 1,268	276	22	292	23	568	45

a Regular education, including supported inclusion

b Resource room, alternate school, self-contained LEA

c A sampling procedure was used. Schools were asked to report on 1 out of every 5 exiting students whom they randomly selected. Beginning in 2000-2001 and for all subsequent years, every existing student has been included.

³ It is important to note that in the 1999-2000 study, a sampling procedure was used; schools were asked to report on 1 out of every 5 exiting students whom they randomly selected. As the study developed, the method was modified. Beginning in 2000-2001, and for all subsequent years, every exiting student has been included.

The results for return to in-district regular education classrooms are: 23% in 1999-2000; 16% in 2000-2001; 24% in 2001-2002; 18% in 2002-2003; and 22% in 2003-2004. The 5-year average is 21%. The results for return to “Other” in-district educational settings (Resource Room, Alternate School, Self-contained Classroom) are: 26% in 1999-2000; 17% in 2000-2001; 24% in 2001-2002; 29% in 2002-2003; and 23% in 2003-2004. The 5-year average is nearly 24%. The results for return to in-district programming are: 49% in 1999-2000; 33% in 2000-2001; 48% in 2001-2002; 47% in 2002-2003; and 45% in 2003-2004. The 5-year average is 44.4%.

The Graduates

There were 564 graduates with known plans. Of these, 66% were male, while 34% were female. About 65% were White, 20% were Black, 10.5% were Hispanic, 2.5% were Asian/Pacific Islander, and 2% were of “Other” racial/ethnic backgrounds. When the graduates are examined according to their educational programs, we learn that 22% came from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs, 5% from Medical Disorders, 54% from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs, and 19% from Learning Disorders programs. About 97% (546 graduates) came from day programs, while 3% (18 graduates) came from residential programs.

Length of Stay

Table 9 shows the length of stay in an ASAH program for the graduates.

Table 9

Length of Stay for Graduates

n=564

Length of Stay	Graduates	
	#	%
< 1 year	27	4.8
1-5 years	367	65.1
6-10 years	100	17.7
11+ years	70	12.4
Total	564	100.0

As Table 9 demonstrates, close to 5% of the graduates were in an ASAH program for less than 1 year; about 65% for 1-5 years; about 18% for 6-10 years; and about 12% for 11 or more years. In summary, about 70% of the graduates were in an ASAH program for 5 years or less.

The Postschool Plans By Program

See Table 10 for an analysis of the postschool plans made by the graduates.

Table 10

ASAH Postschool Plans for Graduates by Program

n=564

Postschool Setting	Pervasive Developmental n=124		Medical n=30		ED/BD Programs n=305		Learning n=105		Total n=564	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Four Year College	0	0.0	1	3.3	29	9.5	22	21.0	52	9.2
Two Year College	3	2.4	0	0.0	106	34.8	27	25.7	136	24.1
Trade/Technical School	4	3.2	0	0.0	40	13.1	4	3.8	48	8.5
Competitive Employment	22	17.8	0	0.0	70	22.9	9	8.6	101	17.9
Military	0	0.0	0	0.0	9	3.0	2	1.9	11	2.0
Mainstream Activity^a	29	23.4	1	3.3	254	83.3	64	61.0	348	61.7
Vocational Rehabilitation Training Program	4	3.2	12	40.0	16	5.2	4	3.8	36	6.4
Supported Employment	21	16.9	0	0.0	9	3.0	29	27.6	59	10.5
Sheltered Employment	40	32.3	0	0.0	7	2.3	5	4.8	52	9.2
Vocational Rehabilitation Activity^b	65	52.4	12	40.0	32	10.5	38	36.2	147	26.1
Adult Partial Care	13	10.5	2	6.7	1	.3	1	.9	17	3.0
Nonvocational Day Program	9	7.3	13	43.3	3	1.0	0	0.0	25	4.4
Community-Based Program Activity^c	22	17.8	15	50.0	4	1.3	1	.9	42	7.4
Other	1	.8	2	6.7	7	2.3	0	0.0	10	1.8
No Education/Training, Job or Program	7	5.6	0	0.0	8	2.6	2	1.9	17	3.0
Total	124	100.0	30	100.0	305	100.0	105	100.0	564	100.0

^a Mainstream Activity – 4-Yr./2-Yr. College, Trade/Technical School, Competitive Employment or Military

^b Vocational Rehabilitation Activity – Vocational Rehabilitation Training Programs, Supported or Sheltered Employment

^c Community-Based Program Activity – Partial Care and Nonvocational Day Programs

Results for Graduates

As Table 10 shows, almost 42% of the graduates planned to go on to a 4-year/2-year College or a Trade or Technical School. Nearly 20% had plans to enter Competitive Employment or the Military. Taken together, nearly 62% of the graduates planned to enter Mainstream Activity by participating in postschool education or technical training, seeking employment, or enlisting in the military. Moreover, 26% planned to enter Vocational Rehabilitation Activity by participating in a vocational rehabilitation training program or in supported or sheltered employment. More than 7% planned to enter Community-Based Program Activity by enrolling in an adult partial care or nonvocational day program. Nearly 2% planned to enter another setting, such as a medical or psychiatric facility. Finally, only 3% made no plans to enter an educational, vocational, rehabilitative, or supportive program or to obtain a job after completing a secondary program in an ASAH school.

Moreover, graduates from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs (83%) and Learning Disorders programs (61%) were the most likely to make plans to enter Mainstream Activity. Graduates from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs (52%) were the most likely to plan to enter Vocational Rehabilitation Activity. Finally, graduates from Medical Disorders programs (50%) had the greatest tendency to plan to enter Community-Based Program Activity.

Living Arrangements

More than 75% of the graduates had plans to live with a parent, other relative, or guardian. Nearly 19% planned to live independently (15.6%) or semi-independently (3.2%). About 5% planned to live in other settings such as skill development homes, foster homes, developmental centers, group homes, residential treatment centers, or medical or psychiatric facilities.

Conclusions for Graduates

ASAH programs appear to be strongly involved in helping graduates make plans to transition into productive adult roles. Close to 62% of the graduates planned to enter a 4-Year/2-Year College, Trade/Technical School, or Competitive Employment/Armed Forces. Overall, 95% of these students planned to enter Mainstream Activity (4-Year/2-Year College, Trade/Technical School, Competitive Employment or Military), Vocational Rehabilitation Activity (Vocational Rehabilitation Training Programs or Supported/Sheltered Employment), or Community-Based Program Activity (Partial Care or Nonvocational Day Programs). A high percentage of those from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders (83%) and Learning Disorders (61%) programs had plans to enter Mainstream Activity; those from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs had a tendency to make plans to enter Vocational Rehabilitation Activity (52%); and finally, those from Medical Disorders programs had a tendency to plan to enter Community-Based Program Activity (50%). While the majority of the graduates (75%) had plans to live in the community, primarily with a parent, other relative, or guardian, close to 19% had plans to live independently or semi-independently.

5-Year Comparison of Graduates' Postschool Plans

As Table 11 indicates, when the postschool plans of graduates from all programs are compared from academic year 1999-2000 through 2003-2004, the following emerges.

Table 11

ASAH Graduates: 5-Year Comparison of Postschool Plans

	<u>Mainstream^a</u>		<u>Voc. Rehab.^b</u>		<u>Comm.-Based Programs^c</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1999-2000 ^d n=143 60% participation	84	59	32	22	18	13	134	94
2000-2001 n=298 58% participation	167	56	100	34	22	7	289	97
2001-2002 n=405 66% participation	217	54	137	34	24	6	378	94
2002-2003 n=511 69% participation	305	60	133	26	40	8	478	94
2003-2004 n=564 81% participation	348	62	147	26	42	7	537	95

^a Mainstream Activity – 4-Yr./2-Yr. College, Trade/Technical School, Competitive Employment or Military

^b Vocational Rehabilitation Activity – Vocational Rehabilitation Training Programs, Supported or Sheltered Employment

^c Community-Based Program Activity – Partial Care and Nonvocational Day Programs

^d A sample of 1 out of 5 exiters was studied for the academic year 1999-2000.

Plans to participate in Mainstream Activity have been developed at the respective rates of 59% (1999-2000), 56% (2000-2001), 54% (2001-2002), 60% (2002-2003), and 62% (2003-2004). The 5-year average for Mainstream Activity is 58%. Plans to become involved in Vocational Rehabilitation Activity were reported as 22% (1999-2000), 34% (2000-2001), 34% (2001-2002), 26% (2002-2003), and 26% (2003-2004). The 5-year average is 28%. Finally, plans to enter Community-Based Program Activity were found to be 13% (1999-2000), 7% (2000-2001), 6% (2001-2002), 8% (2002-2003), and 7% (2003-2004). The 5-year average is 8%.

Over the course of the five specific academic years studied, the plans of graduates from ASAH-member programs appear to reflect the intention of these young adults to lead productive lives upon leaving the private approved school. The rates of their planned postschool productivity are: 94% (1999-2000), 97% (2000-2001), 94% (2001-2002), 94% (2002-2003), and 95% (2003-2004). The 5-year average is 95%.

Comparison of Plans by Program

Tables 12A, 12B, and 12C compare the plans of the ASAH graduates for the four academic years 1999-2000 through 2003-2004 by program and activity category.

Table 12A focuses on the plans for postschool Mainstream Activity for graduates who entered 4-Year/2-Year college, Trade/Technical School, Competitive Employment, or the Military.

Table 12A

**5-Year Comparison of Plans of ASAH Graduates
by Program: Mainstream Activity**

	Pervasive Developmental Disorders		Medical Disorders		Emotional/ Behavioral Disorders		Learning Disorders		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1999-2000 n=143* (60% participation)	4	21	2	12	69	78	7	37	82	57
2000-2001 n=298 (58% participation)	1	6	0	0	109	76	57	47	167	56
2001-2002 n=405 (66% participation)	6	14	3	12	119	80	89	47	217	54
2002-2003 n=511 (69% participation)	14	14	2	12	202	82	87	61	305	60
2003-2004 n=564 (81% participation)	29	23	1	3	254	83	64	61	348	62

* For the 1999-2000 academic year, a sampling procedure was used in which 1 out of every 5 exiting students was randomly selected for the study.

Plans for Mainstream Activity for students from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs range from 21% (1999-2000); to 6% (2000-2001); to 14% (2001-2002); to 14% (2002-2003); to 23% (2003-2004) with a 5-year average of 15%. These plans for students from Medical Disorders programs were 12% (1999-2000); no students (2000-2001); 12% (2001-2002); 12% (2002-2003); to 3% (2003-2004) with a 5-year average of 8%. For graduates from

Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs, plans for Mainstream Activity range from 78% (1999-2000); to 76% (2000-2001); to 80% (2001-2002); 82% (2002-2003); to 83% (2003-2004) with a 5-year average of 80%. Finally, for graduates from Learning Disorders programs, the rates were 37% (1999-2000); 47% (2000-2001); 47% (2001-2002); 61% (2002-2003); and 61% (2003-2004) with a 5-year average of 51%.

Table 12B

**5-Year Comparison of Plans of ASAH Graduates
by Program: Vocational Rehabilitation Activity**

	Pervasive Developmental Disorders		Medical Disorders		Emotional/ Behavioral Disorders		Learning Disorders		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1999-2000 n=298* (58% participation)	2	10	6	35	12	14	12	63	32	22
2000-2001 n=298 (58% participation)	8	47	4	27	30	21	58	47	100	34
2001-2002 n=405 (66% participation)	20	47	1	4	24	16	92	49	137	34
2002-2003 n=511 (69% participation)	57	55	2	12	27	11	47	33	133	26
2002-2003 n=564 (81% participation)	65	52	12	40	32	10	38	36	147	26

* For the 1999-2000 academic year, a sampling procedure was used in which 1 out of every 5 exiting students was randomly selected for the study.

Table 12B sets forth the plans for the graduates who plan to enter Vocational Rehabilitation Activity, which includes vocational rehabilitation training programs as well as supported or sheltered employment. The students from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs planned to enter Vocational Rehabilitation Activity at the rates of 10% (1999-2000); 47% (2000-2001); 47% (2001-2002); 55% (2002-2003); and 52% (2003-2004) with a 5-year average of 42%. For those from Medical Disorders programs, plans to enter Vocational Rehabilitation Activity were 35% (1999-2000); 27%(2000-2001); 4% (2001-2002); 12% (2002-2003); and 40% (2003-2004) with a 5-year average rate of entry of 24%. The rate of planned entry for graduates from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs was 14% (1999-2000); 21% (2000-2001); 16% (2001-2002); 11% (2002-2003); and 10% (2003-2004) with a 5-year average of 14%. Graduates from Learning Disorders programs made plans to enter this type of postschool activity at the rate of 63% (1999-2000); 47% (2000-2001); 49% (2001-2002); 33% (2002-2003); and 36% (2003-2004) with a 5-year average of 46%.

Table 12C

**5-Year Comparison of Plans of ASAH Graduates
by Program: Community-Based Program Activity**

	Pervasive Developmental Disorders		Medical Disorders		Emotional/ Behavioral Disorders		Learning Disorders		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1999-2000 n=143* (60% participation)	10	53	8	47	0	0	0	0	18	13
2000-2001 n=298 (58% participation)	7	41	10	67	2	1	3	2	22	7
2001-2002 n=405 (66% participation)	14	33	10	40	0	0	0	0	24	6
2002-2003 n=511 (69% participation)	23	22	10	59	0	0	7	5	40	8
2003-2004 n=564 (81% participation)	22	18	15	50	4	1	1	1	42	7

* For the 1999-2000 academic year, a sampling procedure was used in which 1 out of every 5 exiting students was randomly selected for the study.

Table 12C shows the plans of the graduates who intended to enter Community-Based Program Activity, such as partial care and nonvocational day programs. Students from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs made such plans at the rates of 53% (1999-2000); 41% (2000-2001); 33% (2001-2002); 22% (2002-2003); and 18% (2003-2004) with a 5-year average of 33%. Students from Medical Disorders programs had plans to access these services at 47%

(1999-2000); 67% (2000-2001); 40% (2001-2002); 59% (2002-2003); and 50% (2003-2004) with a 5-year average of 53%. For graduates from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs, the rates were reported as no students (1999-2000); 1% (2000-2001); no students (2001-2002); no students (2002-2003); and 1% (2003-2004) with a 5-year average of .4%. Finally, the rates for graduates from Learning Disorders programs with plans to enter Community-Based Program Activity were no students (1999-2000); 2% (2000-2001); no students (2001-2002); 5% (2002-2003); and 1% (2003-2004) with a 5-year average of approximately 2%.

Conclusions for 5-Year Comparison by Program of Graduate Postschool Plans

The graduates from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs (78% in 1999-2000; 76% in 2000-2001; 80% in 2001-2002; 82% in 2002-2003; and 83% in 2003-2004 with a 5-year average of 80%) were the most likely to plan to enter Mainstream Activity after leaving an ASAH program. Students from Learning Disorders programs were the next group who tended to make such plans (37% in 1999-2000; 47% in 2000-2001; 47% in 2001-2002; 61% in 2002-2003; and 61% in 2003-2004 with a 5-year average of 51%).

Graduates from Learning Disorders programs were also the most likely to plan to enter Vocational Rehabilitation Activity with rates of 63% (1999-2000); 47% (2000-2001); 49% (2001-2002); 33% (2002-2003); and 36% (2003-2004) with a 5-year average of 46%. They were followed by students from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs with rates of 10% (1999-2000); 47% (2000-2001); 47% (2001-2002); 55% (2002-2003); and 52% (2003-2004) with a 5-year average of 42%.

Finally, graduates with plans to enter Community-Based Program Activity had a tendency to come from Medical Disorders programs (47% in 1999-2000; 67% in 2000-2001; 40% in 2001-2002; 59% in 2002-2003; and 50% in 2003-2004 with a 5-year average of 53%). They were followed by students from Pervasive Developmental Disorders programs (53% in 1999-2000; 41% in 2000-2001; 33% in 2001-2002; 22% in 2002-2003; and 18% in 2003-2004 with a 5-year average of 33%).

Discussion

Among all exiters, those enrolled in an Emotional/Behavioral Disorders program (nearly 63%) were the most likely to leave an ASAH school in 2003-2004. (See Table 2). Among exiting transfer students, almost 94% were enrolled in an ASAH program for less than 5 years during the 2003-2004 school year. While 22% stayed for less than 1 year, 72% stayed from 1-5 years. (See Table 6). Close to 45% of the transfer students left their out-of-district ASAH-member programs with plans to return to their home districts, while 22% of these students planned to enter the less restrictive educational environment of a regular classroom. From 1999-2000 through 2003-2004, the 5-year average for plans to return to in-district regular education was 21%, while plans to return to "Other" in-district settings was 24%. Overall, the 5-year average for all returns to in-district educational programs was over 44%. These data help to demonstrate that many students attend ASAH schools on a temporary basis in order to receive highly specialized, individualized supports before they are able to sufficiently cope with and benefit from in-district programming. This compares favorably with other

studies which show that a high proportion of students in out-of-district programs return to less restrictive education settings within the public schools (Gagnon & McLaughlin, 2004).

Studies show that when students in the general public school population are compared to special education students who receive special education services within the public schools, the special education students are less likely to complete high school or receive further education or vocational training (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Wagner & Blackorby, 1996; Johnson, McGrew, Bloomberg, Bruininks & Lin, 1997). It is encouraging that a high proportion of the graduates who exited from an ASAH program had transitional plans in place to pursue careers in Mainstream Activity (62%), Vocational Rehabilitation Activity (26%), or Community-Based Program Activity (7%), and that 95% of the graduates made plans to engage in productive postschool activities. When the outcomes for special education students with serious emotional and behavioral difficulties who attend programs within the public school are specifically investigated, the low graduation rates, poor work histories, and involvement in the criminal justice system underscore the problematic transition of these students into stable adult roles (Reddy, 2001; Malmgren, Edgar, & Neel, 1998; Mattison & Spitznagel, 1998; Sample, 1998; SRI International, 1993; Tobin & Sugai, 1999; U.S. Department of Education, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2001; Wagner, 1995; Wagner & Cameto, 2004; Gagnon & McLaughlin, 2004). It, therefore, seems particularly reassuring that more than 83% of the graduates from Emotional/Behavioral Disorders programs, the most highly represented of all of the programs, left an ASAH-member program

in 2003-2004 with plans for pursuing productive postschool roles in the mainstream. In fact, from 1999-2000 through 2003-2004, 80% of the students who graduated from an Emotional/Behavioral Disorders program made plans to engage in a mainstream role. Moreover, few graduates from any program (less than 5%) left an ASAH school during the 2003-2004 school year without plans to engage in productive postschool activity through participation in Mainstream, Vocational Rehabilitation or Community-Based Activity.

As IEP partners with the public schools, ASAH's schools continue to furnish a broad and diverse range of students with appropriate special education programs that are not available within their local districts. For some students, ASAH's intensive programs are the optimal settings in which students can shore up the skills that will be needed in the future to succeed in programs available in their local public schools. For other special education students, ASAH's schools offer services which assure the development of transition plans that lead to productive functioning in the adult world.

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