What Principals Need to Know and Be Able to Do to Support Effective Secondary Transition Programming

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Dedication

To my foundation – Robert and Katherine Lehman; Darleen Lehman; Edward and Ruth Traynor; Robert, Ann and Marguerite Lehman; Mary Dooley, Helen Rochette, Grace Earley; and Ted.

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Abstract of Dissertation

What Principals Need to Know and Be Able to Do to Support
Effective Secondary Transition Programming

Despite decades of research, practice, legislative efforts, and policy implementation in the field of secondary transition, students with disabilities are still less likely to enroll in postsecondary education or training, secure competitive employment, and live independently than their nondisabled peers. This disparity in postsecondary outcomes between youth with and without disabilities exists, at least in part, due to the persistent challenges associated with the delivery of effective secondary transition programming.

Based on the standards outlined in the *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015* (PSEL 2015) (NPBEA, 2015), vital components of secondary transition programming fall directly within school principals' roles and responsibilities. Although the field of secondary transition has long recognized school-based administrators as vital stakeholders in program implementation, research into what educational leaders need to know and be able to do to support effective secondary transition in their schools was limited and lacking in both breadth and depth.

A qualitative study was used to explore the research question: *What should school principals know and be able to do in order to ensure the development and implementation of effective secondary transition programming at their schools?* Nineteen experts in secondary transition programming currently working in the field at a school, local education authority (LEA), or state education authority (SEA) completed an online survey.

Findings from this study point to six key actions that principals can take to support the development and implement of effective secondary transition programming in their schools: (1) make secondary transition a priority when allocating school-based resources; (2) recognize, respect, develop and leverage and secondary transition staff expertise; (3) incorporate a coherent system of secondary transition curriculum, instruction, assessment and student support services into the school's structure; (4) create a positive school culture that supports family engagement in the secondary transition process; (5) actively support community engagement and interagency collaboration for students with disabilities; and (6) include a vision of effective secondary transition programming in their school's educational mission as a means of articulating and advocating for an inclusive school culture with high expectations for all students.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Overview

Public schools in the United States are required to provide transition services to students with disabilities enrolled in special education to facilitate their movement from high school to adult life. Originally mandated by the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) of 1990, transition services are defined by IDEA (2004) as:

> a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that (A) is designed to be within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation; (B) is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests; and (C) includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation (§ 602, 118 Stat 2658).

This current, legal iteration of secondary transition services emerged out of decades of research and practice in career, vocational, and special education, as well as the field of vocational rehabilitation. Professionals in these related fields of study have long sought to understand the knowledge, skills, and personal capacities necessary for diverse individuals to achieve a successful transition from adolescence to adulthood.

The field of secondary transition emerged in response to persistent, poor postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities, almost a decade after the passage of the Education for *All Handicapped Children Act* (EHA) *of 1975* (Will, 1984). Although the percentage of students with disabilities who spend at least 80% of each school day in general education has increased from 34% in 1990 (McLeskey, Landers,

Williamson, & Hoppey, 2012) to 63.5% in 2012 (U.S. Department of Education, 2020), their levels of academic achievement, rates of school completion, and postschool outcomes still fall well below those of their non-disabled peers (Billingsely, McLeskey, & Crokett, 2014).

Today students with disabilities are less likely to exit secondary school with a standard diploma (Kena, Hussar, McFarland, de Brey, Musu-Gillette, Wang., …Velez, 2016; Stetser & Stillwell, 2014; U.S. Department of Education, 2016); more likely to drop out of school (Kena et al., 2016; Stetser & Stillwell, 2014; U.S. Department of Education, 2016); less likely to enroll in postsecondary education (Newman, Wagner, Cameto, Knokey, & Shaver, 2010; Newman, Wagner, Knokey, Marder, Nagle, Shaver, & Wei, 2011); more likely to be unemployed (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016; Newman et al., 2010); and less likely to live independently (Newman et al., 2010) than students without disabilities.

These gaps persist, at least in part, due to implementation challenges related to resource allocation, professional development, curriculum and instruction, student centered planning, family engagement, and interagency collaboration. Implementation challenges have plagued the field of secondary transition since its inception. A cross-state case study of the process and strategies states used to implement transition, sponsored by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS), found that five years after IDEA 1990 mandated transition services for students with disabilities, "transition policy implementation across states tended to be (a) incremental, (b) lack consensus, (c) resistant to systems change, and (d) symbolic rather than substantive" (Wermuth & Grayson, 1996, as quoted in McMahan & Baer, 2001, p.169). Subsequent

research confirmed that despite extensive support in the form of federal legislation, mandates, and research grants, the creation of a comprehensive and responsive system of secondary transition supports and services for students with disabilities was inconsistent across states, local school districts, and adult service agencies (FTP Workgroup, 2015; GAO, 2012; Hasazi, Furney, & DeStefano, 1999; Johnson, Stodden, Emanuel, Luecking, & Mack, 2002).

Examining the challenges associated with the implementation of effective secondary transition programming through the lens of the *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015* (NPBEA), highlights the potential significance of the role that school principals play in ensuring that students with disabilities have the knowledge, abilities, and skills necessary for them to succeed in adult life. Given the roles that secondary principals are required to play in resource allocation, professional development, curriculum and instruction, student centered planning, family engagement, and interagency collaboration at their schools, efforts to improve the implementation of effective transition programming must include research that fills the current gap in the literature base about what knowledge and skills principals need, in order to support effective secondary transition programming in their schools.

This qualitative study used an open-ended, online questionnaire to explore what school principals need to know and be able to do, in order to support effective secondary transition programming, from the perspectives of state and local education agency (S/LEA) administrators and school-based secondary transition experts.

Statement of the Problem

Despite decades of research, practice, legislative efforts, and policy implementation in the field of secondary transition, students with disabilities are still less likely to enroll in postsecondary education or training, secure competitive employment, and live independently than their nondisabled peers (Newman et al., 2010; Newman et al., 2011). This disparity in postsecondary outcomes between youth with and without disabilities exists, at least in part, due to the persistent challenges associated with the delivery of effective secondary transition programming (Hasazi, Furney, & DeStefano, 1999; Johnson et al., 2002; Lubbers, Repetto, & McGorray, 2008; McMahan & Baer, 2001; Riesen, Schultz, Morgan, & Kupferman, 2014; Shogren & Plotner, 2012; Zhang, Ivester, & Katsiyannis, 2005).

Based on the standards outlined in the *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015* (NPBEA), vital components of secondary transition programming fall directly within school administrators' roles and responsibilities including but not limited to the creation and maintenance of student-centered, inclusive schools; setting of curricular and instructional priorities and practices; family, community and interagency engagement; teacher development; and resource allocation. Although the field of secondary transition has long recognized school-based administrators as vital stakeholders in program implementation (Halpern, 1985; Will, 1984; Kohler & Field, 2003), research into what educational leaders need to know and be able to do is limited and lacking in both breadth and depth. The field of secondary transition can benefit from an investigation of the knowledge and skills educational leaders require to become advocates and supporters of effective secondary transition programming in their schools.

Purpose and Research Question

The research question for this study was: *What should school principals know and be able to do in order to ensure the development and implementation of effective secondary transition programming at their schools?* The researcher used an online survey of open-ended questions to explore what principals need to know and be able to do in regards to secondary transition programming from the perspectives of state, local, and school level experts in secondary transition programming.

Statement of Potential Significance

Research on educational leadership and special education suggests increased knowledge about the field of special education positively impacts what school leaders know and do in relation to special education programs (Angelle & Bilton, 2009; Praiser, 2003; Wakeman, Browder, Flowers, & Ahlgrim-Delzell, 2006). Once the field of secondary transition has a better understanding of what educational leaders need to know and be able to do to support effective secondary transition program implementation then experts can begin to develop instruments to assess school leaders' current knowledge and skills, and design tools and resources to help inform and prepare principals on effective practices. Additionally, program developers/providers and technical assistance professionals will gain insight into what aspects of secondary transition programming are best supported by explicit principal engagement.

Conceptual Framework

Given educational leaders' unfamiliarity with secondary transition documented in the literature base (Cusson, 2010; Foley & Lewis, 1999; Wakeman et al., 2006), school principals most likely do not possess the requisite knowledge to inform researchers

directly on what they need to know and be able to do to support effective programming. This lack of principal knowledge persists despite the fact that key components of secondary transition programming fall within their roles and responsibilities (NPBEA, 2015). Fortunately, there are expert transition service providers at the state, local, and school levels who possess both deep knowledge and understanding of effective secondary transition practices, and experience working with school principals that can provide insight into this research.

The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA, 2004) mandates that State (SEA) and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) monitor both compliance and student outcome data for secondary transition. Additionally, SEAs are required under IDEA funding mechanisms to provide technical assistance in secondary transition to LEAs based on Annual Performance Report (APR) data. These mandates make it necessary for SEAs and LEAs to employ individuals with expertise in secondary transition legislation, data monitoring, practices, and compliance. At the school level, expert secondary transition practitioners, most often special educators working as classroom teachers and/or secondary transition coordinators, have working knowledge of effective practices (Kohler, 2016) and implementation challenges in secondary transition programming associated with school leadership.

The combined knowledge of S/LEA administrators and school-based secondary transition experts captured what school principals need to know and be able to do to support effective secondary programming from day-to-day operations and management, to long-term vision and improvement efforts. This study explored the perspectives of both S/LEA administrators and school-based secondary transition experts, to determine

what educational leaders need to know and be able to do to support effective school-based transition programming in their schools. See Figure 1.1 for this study's conceptual framework.

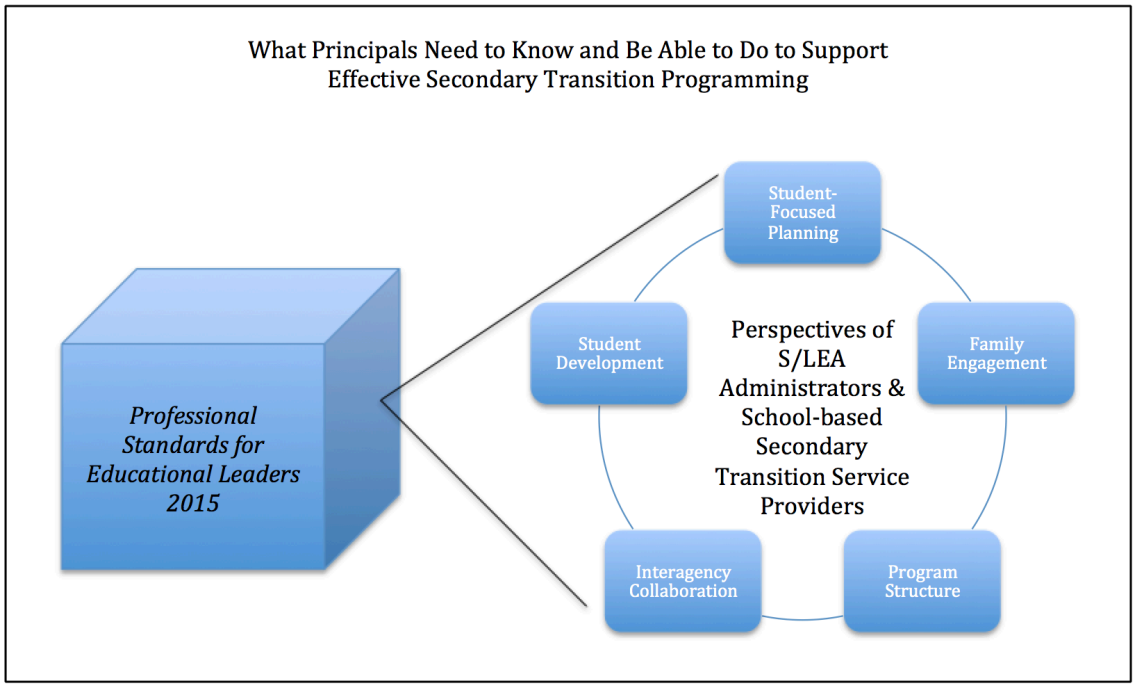

Figure 1.1. Conceptual framework of study.

Summary of the Methodology

The roles and responsibilities of school principals, as defined by the widely adopted *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015* (NPBEA) and examined through the lens of implementation challenges associated with the development and implementation of effective secondary transition programming, suggest that school principals play an important part in improving post secondary outcomes for students with disabilities. This qualitative study used an open-ended, online survey to explore what school principals need to know and be able to do, in order to support effective secondary transition programming, from the perspectives of S/LEA administrators and school-based secondary transition experts.

Participant selection focused on the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States including Delaware, New Jersey, New York, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Washington, D.C., and West Virginia. National experts with extensive experience in the area of secondary transition, and knowledge about Mid-Atlantic secondary transition program provision were consulted for participant recommendations. Leaders from the George Washington University and the National Secondary Community of Practice made recommendations.

Final expert recommendations included potential Mid-Atlantic participants from Washington, D.C., Delaware, and Pennsylvania. Following extensive Mid-Atlantic participant recruitment, one expert recommended additional participants from North Dakota. Once recommended, potential participants were screened for (a) knowledge, as defined by professional certificate/advanced degree(s) in a special education and/or secondary transition and/or professional group membership; and (b) having at least three to five years of secondary transition experience.

Ultimately, twenty-six individuals passed the screening process and agreed to participate. All worked as secondary transition service providers at the time of survey completion: 62% (n = 16) for a Local Education Authority (LEA), 23% (n = 6) for a school, and 15% (n = 4) for a State Education Authority (SEA). All LEA and SEA participants reported school-based secondary transition experience. Years of secondary transition experience for all potential participants ranged from five to 30 years. Ninety-two percent (n = 24) had ten or more years of experience, and 50% (n = 13) had 15 or

more years of experience. Nineteen out of the twenty-six potential participants completed the survey.

The survey instrument consisted of an opened-ended questionnaire (Hasson et al., 2000) designed to create an explorative space for "panelists to utilize the intellectual apparatus that makes them experts" (Mitchell, 1991, p. 334). The open-ended questions for this study were developed based on the persistent implementation challenges discussed in the secondary transition literature based, as seen through the lens of Kohler's (2016) *Taxonomy of Transition Programming 2.0* and the National Policy Board for Education Administration's (2015) *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders*. Additionally, the researcher sought feedback from a professor in the field of secondary transition, as well as peers working in secondary transition at both the school and state levels.

The survey instrument was administered online via Survey Monkey. Participants received an email from the researcher containing key information and a link to the questionnaire via SurveyMonkey. Online instruments have been found to be an effective tool for accessing a broader range of participants and reducing attrition rates (Cole et al., 2013; Gill, Leslie, Grech, & Latour, 2013). The online instrument allowed participants to engage in the study at their convenience, increased the speed of administration and analysis, and permitted for direct communication with panelists, as needed (Gill et al., 2013).

Limitations

Research has found extensive implementation inconsistencies at the state and local district levels in the delivery of secondary transition programming for students with

disabilities (FTP Workgroup, 2015; GAO, 2012; Hasazi, Furney, & DeStefano, 1999; Johnson, Stodden, Luecking, & Mack, 2002; Zhang, Ivester, & Katsiyannis, 2005). As such, generalizability represents a limitation for any local, state, or regional study of secondary transition programming. As a regional study, the findings of this study may be limited by differences in administrative, leadership, and program structures at the state, district, and school levels.

Additionally, this study represents the perspectives of one specific population, experts in the field of secondary transition, on the required knowledge and actions of school principals. As outlined in Chapter 3, the participant selection process focused on participant secondary transition knowledge and expertise. Participants were not evaluated for knowledge of educational leadership or school governance. To fully understand what principals need to know and be able to do to support the development and implementation of effective secondary transition programming in schools requires gathering information from other stakeholders including experts in school leadership.

Finally, demographic data was only captured during the participant recruitment phase and specifically for the 19 individuals that actually completed the survey instrument. This limited analysis of how participant experience and role informed the results.

Definition of Key Terms

Table 1.1 provides the definition of key terms, as they will be applied in this study.

Table 1.1. Definitions of key terms.

Term	Definition	Source
Child with a disability	IDEA (2004) defines a **child with a disability**, as a child: "(i) with mental retardation, hearing impairments (including deafness), speech or language impairments, visual impairments (including blindness), serious emotional disturbance (referred to in this title as 'emotional disturbance'), orthopedic impairments, autism, traumatic brain injury, other health impairments, or specific learning disabilities; and (ii) who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services."	IDEA § 602, 118 Stat 2652
Family engagement/ Parental involvement	Kohler and colleagues (2016) define **family engagement** as transition practices associated with family involvement, family empowerment, and family preparation. Refer to the *Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0* (2016) for evidenced based family engagement practices. Rowe and colleagues (2015) found that **parental involvement** meant, "parents/families/guardians are active and knowledge participants in all aspects of transition planning" (p. 122).	Kohler, Gothberg, Fowler, & Coyle, 2016; Rowe, Alverson, Unruh, Fowler, Kellems, & Test, 2015, p.
Free appropriate public education (FAPE)	IDEA (2004) defines **free appropriate public education (FAPE)** as "special education and related services that— (A) have been provided at public expense, under public supervision and direction, and without charge; (B) meet the standards of the State educational agency; (C) include an appropriate preschool, elementary school, or secondary school education in the State involved; and (D) are provided in conformity with the individual education program required under section 614(d)."	IDEA § 602, 118 Stat 2654

Individualized education program (IEP)	IDEA (2004) defines **individualized education program (IEP)** as "a written statement for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with section 614(d)."	IDEA § 602, 118 Stat 2655
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)(2004)	According to the U.S. Department of Education, "the **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)** is a law ensuring services to children with disabilities throughout the nation. IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education and related services to more than 6.5 million eligible infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities."	Retrieved from http://idea.ed.gov/explore
Interagency collaboration	Kohler and colleagues (2016) define **interagency collaborations** as transition practices associated with a collaborative framework, and collaborative service delivery. Refer to the *Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0* (2016) for evidenced based interagency collaboration practices. Rowe and colleagues (2015) define interagency collaboration as "a clear, purposeful, and carefully designed process that promotes cross-agency, cross-program, and cross-disciplinary collaborative efforts leading to tangible transition outcomes for youth" p. 122.	Kohler & Field, 2003, p. 178; Rowe et al., 2015, p. 122
Local education agency (LEA)	IDEA (2004) defines **local education agency (LEA)** as "a public board of education or other public authority legally constituted within a State for either administrative control or direction of, or to perform a service function for, public elementary schools or secondary schools in a city, county, township, school district, or other political subdivision of a State, or for such combination of school districts or counties as are recognized in a State as an administrative agency for its public elementary schools or secondary schools."	IDEA § 602, 118 Stat 2656
Least restrictive environment	IDEA (2004) defines least restrictive environment (LRE) as "To the maximum extent appropriate, children with	IDEA § 612, 118 Stat 2677

(LRE)	disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled, and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability of a child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily."	
Principal	The Oxford Dictionary defines **principal** as "The most important or senior person in an organization or group; the head of a school, college, or other educational institution."	Retrieved from https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/principal
Program structure	Kohler and colleagues (2016) define **program structure** as transition practices associated with program characteristics; program evaluation; strategic planning; policies and procedures; resource development, and school climate. Refer to the *Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0* (2016) for evidenced based program structure practices.	Kohler et al., 2016
School leader	The National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) defines **school leader** as "a principal, assistant principal, or other individual who is an employee or officer of an elementary school or secondary school, local education agency, or other entity operating an elementary school or secondary school; and responsible for the daily instructional leadership and managerial operations in the elementary school or secondary school building."	Retrieved from https://www.naesp.org/sites/default/files/Principal%20Wins%20in%20ECA.pdf
Secondary transition programming	Kohler and Field (2003) define **secondary transition programming** as "a comprehensive, conceptual organization of practices through which transition-focused education and services are developed and delivered" (p. 176). Rowe and colleagues (2015) found that "a **transition program** prepares students to	Kohler & Field, 2003, p. 176; Rowe et al., 2015, p. 123

	move from secondary settings (e.g. middle school/high school) to adult life, utilizing comprehensive transition planning and education that creates individualized opportunities, services, and supports to help students achieve their post-school goals in education/training, employment, and independent living" (p. 123).	
School-based secondary transition service provider	For the purposes of this study, **school-based secondary transition service provider** will be defined as a teacher or administrator with a degree in special education providing direct secondary transition services to students with disabilities in a school setting.	
Special education	IDEA (2004) defines **special education** as "specially designed instruction, at no cost to parents, to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, including— (A) instruction conducted in the classroom, in the home, in hospitals and institutions, and in other settings; and (B) instruction in physical education."	IDEA § 602, 118 Stat 2657
State education agency (SEA)	IDEA (2004) defines **state education agency (SEA)** as "the State board of education or other agency or officer primarily responsible for the State supervision of public elementary schools and secondary schools, or, if there is no such officer or agency, an officer or agency designated by the Governor or by State law."	IDEA § 602, 118 Stat 2658
Student-focused planning	Kohler and colleagues (2016) define **student-focused planning** as transition practices associated with IEP development, planning strategies, and student participation. Refer to the *Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0* (2016) for evidenced based student-focused planning practices.	Kohler et al., 2016
Student development	Kohler and colleagues (2016) define **student development** as transition practices associated with assessment; academic skills; life, social, and emotional skills; employment and occupational	Kohler & Field, 2003, p. 177

	skills; student supports; and instructional context. Refer to the *Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0* (2016) for evidenced based student development practices.	
Transition services	IDEA (2004) defines **transition services** as "a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that— (A) is designed to be within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation; (B) is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests; and (C) includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation."	IDEA § 602, 118 Stat 2658

Chapter 2

Literature Review

The purpose of this study is to determine what school principals need to know and do, to support effective secondary transition programing for students with disabilities. This literature review describes the primary constructs that are the foundation of the study: secondary transition and school leadership.

To develop this literature review several search engines were used: Education Source, ERIC (EBSCO), Web of Science, Academic Search Complete, Dissertations and Theses Online, and JSTOR. Key search words included: special education; secondary transition; disability or students with disabilities, secondary or high school; principal or administrator or leader; knowledge, skills, competencies, and experience. All searches were conducted between 1975 and the present. The researcher limited the study to literature written after the passage of the *Education for All Handicapped Children Act* (EHA) *of 1975*, which guaranteed students with disabilities in the United States access to a Free Appropriate Public Education for the first time.

There is an abundance of literature on special education, and school leadership, as well as on the intersection of the two fields. The field of secondary transition also has a broad and deep literature base, but the research found a significant dearth of literature on the relationship between secondary transition and school leadership.

Secondary Transition

Public schools in the United States are required to provide transition services to students with disabilities enrolled in special education to facilitate their movement from high school to adult life. Originally mandated by IDEA (1990), transition services are defined by IDEA (2004) as

> a coordinated set of activities for a child with a disability that (A) is designed to be within a results-oriented process, that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation; (B) is based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests; and (C) includes instruction, related services, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and, when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation (§ 602, 118 Stat 2658).

This current, legal iteration of secondary transition services emerged out of decades of research and practice in career, vocational, and special education, as well as the field of vocational rehabilitation. Professionals in these related fields of study have long sought to understand the knowledge, skills, and personal capacities necessary for diverse individuals to achieve a successful transition from adolescence to adulthood. Secondary transition services refer to the system of supports public schools are required to provide to students with disabilities for them to acquire the capacity to understand and direct their movement from school to adult life, including the knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary to access and navigate supports and services available to them through an array of postsecondary institutions, public agencies, and community-based organizations.

The following section will outline the emergence of the field of secondary transition, and trace the evolution of secondary transition practice, policy, and research to the present. Research into the challenges associated with secondary transition program implementation will be reviewed, as will the impacts of these challenges on the postsecondary outcomes of students with disabilities.

A Model of Secondary Transition Services

Many scholars mark the beginnings of the secondary transition movement in special education with Will's seminal work, *Office of Special Education Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) Programming for the Transition of Youth with Disabilities: Bridges from School to Working Life*, in which she defined transition as "an outcome-oriented process encompassing a broad array of services and experiences that lead to employment" (1984, p.2). Providing the fields of special education and vocational rehabilitation with the first conceptual framework for transition programming, Will (1984) emphasized the need to recognize and address the contrasts between the relatively organized transition supports provided by high schools and the complex array of adult employment services available to young adults with disabilities following school exit. Using a bridge analogy to capture the period of secondary transition, Will identified the foundations as high school and employment, and the span as the set of services required to support students in their journey between the two. Vestiges of these distinct, yet connected phases of transition are still evident in IDEA transition policy, but each experienced expansion as the field of secondary transition evolved during the two decades between the publication of the Will's paper and the enactment of the legislation.

The spans: Adult services, postsecondary education, and social networks. To address the individual needs of students, Will's OSERS transition programming model (Figure 2.1) included three classes of transition services that should be available to all young adults with disabilities as they attempt to span the bridge between "the security and structure of the school and the opportunities and risks of adult life" (p. 2). Organized by the nature of support provided and the eligibility requirements of the involved

provider agency or organization, the classes of transition services consisted of: (a) either no supports or generic supports, available to all community members regardless of disability status, (b) time-limited supports, for individuals with disabilities able to achieve independence over time, and (c) ongoing supports for individuals with more severe disabilities that potentially precluded full independence.

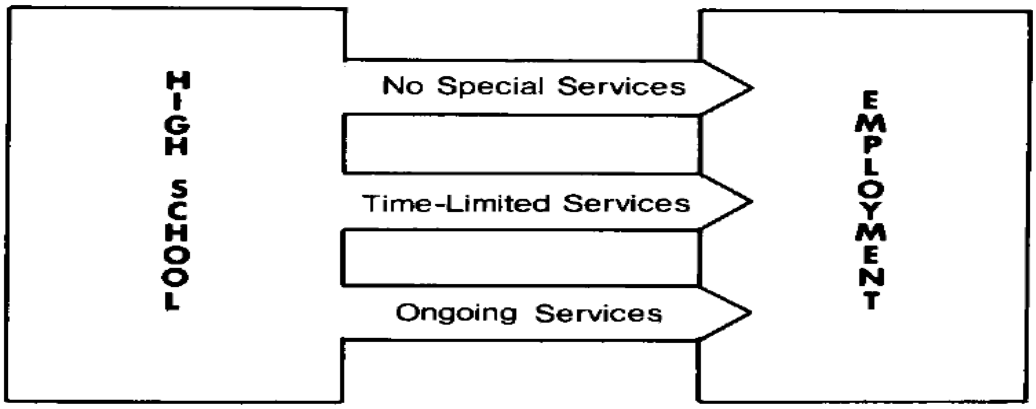

Figure 2.1. OSERS Transition Model (Will, 1984)

According to Will (1984) generic supports included but were not limited to an individual's personal and professional contacts, participation in work experience programs, and enrollment in post-secondary education institutions. These generic supports may have incorporated accommodations for people with disabilities, but did not exclusively serve people with disabilities. Today, generic supports, still include social networks, two- and four-year colleges/universities, internship and apprenticeship programs, as well as employment services available to everyone through the U.S. Department of Labor's Job Core program (http://www.jobcorps.gov/Home.aspx) and One-Stop Career Centers (http://www.careeronestop.org). In terms of accommodations, all private and public organizations receiving federal funds are required to provide equal

access to people with disabilities through the *Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990* (ADA) (§ 102 Stat 12112).

Time-limited and ongoing supports refer to services exclusively available to people with disabilities through a system of adult service agencies and community rehabilitation providers. According to Will (1984), individuals deemed capable of ultimately achieving independence became eligible for temporary services such as "vocational rehabilitation, post-secondary vocational education, and other job training programs to gain entry into the labor market" (p. 6). Today, time-limited supports may be extended to provide assistance with certain aspects of independent living that act as barriers to employment. The ongoing employment supports described in the *Bridges* article hinted at the early stages of today's supported/customized employment movement, and emphasized the need for supports that provided access to the workforce even if an individual may never achieve independence. The same holds true for ongoing supports related to all domains of adult life including independent living and community engagement. Funding for both levels of supports did and still does require flexibility to meet individual needs. A range of federal, state, and local agencies currently provide time-limited and ongoing services for adults with disabilities based on eligibility and individual need.

The adult life foundation. Simultaneously lauding Will (1984) for capturing and attempting to address the personal and societal complexity of transition while taking umbrage with the OSERS transition programming model's overly narrow focus on employment outcomes, Halpern (1985) expanded the definition of transition services to include supports for community adjustment. Asserting that community living should be

the primary focus of transition services, Halpern identified three dimensions of community adjustment requiring support from Will's (1984) three classes of transition services: (a) employment, as outlined in the OSERS' transition programming model; (b) quality residential environment, referring to the quality and safety of an individual's home and neighborhood, as well as availability of local recreational opportunities and community-based services; and (c) social and interpersonal networks, encompassing "major dimensions of human relationships such as daily communications, self-esteem, family support, emotional maturity, friendship, and intimate relationships" (p. 481).

By presenting an expanded version of the OSERS' graphic organizer for transition services (Figure 2.2), Halpern (1985) sought to highlight the importance of each of the three dimensions of community adjustment. In contrast to the assumption that employment automatically led to a successful transition in all domains of adulthood, as implied by the OSERS transition programming model, Halpern (1985) argued that (a) each dimension required individualized, targeted programming and supports to be achieved, and (b) community adjustment required success across all three dimensions. In Halpern's (1985) words, "if any of the three pillars are inadequate and do not carry their own weight, then the entire structure is in danger of collapse, and a person's ability to live in the community is threatened" (p. 480-481).

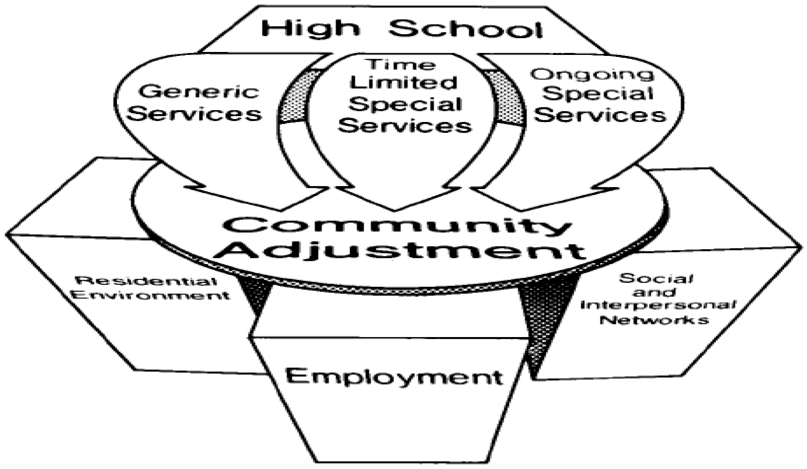

Figure 2.2. Halpern's (1985) transition model.

By the mid 1990s, the field of special education had fully embraced the belief that secondary transition services should address all critical aspects of adult life, which led to a significant expansion of adult outcomes well beyond even Halpern's (1985) original conceptualization of community adjustment (Blalock & Patton, 1996; Clark, 1996). The list of transition planning domains captured by Blalock and Patton (1996) is still reflected in research literature and practice materials today and include: "advocacy/legal, communication, community participation, daily living, employment, financial/income/money management, health, independent living, leisure/recreation, lifelong learning, personal management, postsecondary education, relationships/social skills, self-determination/self-advocacy, transportation/mobility, vocational evaluation, and vocational training" (p. 9). Originally described by Will (1984) as the employment foundation, this transition point has been broadened to include a young adult's initial years establishing him/herself in all dimensions of adult life, most of which have been extensively studied and explored by scholars and practitioners both independently and in terms of how they relate to other adult outcomes and secondary transition.

The school foundation. Although generally regarded as the easier of the two foundations for young adults and their families to navigate, transition services at the high school level are necessarily delivered in the complex environment of secondary education. In her description of the high school foundation for transition services, Will (1984) emphasized the importance of curriculum and instruction, program location and organization, assessment, student opportunities for personal decision-making, the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process, and the role of school based and vocational rehabilitation personnel in the development of the "skills, attitudes, personal relationships, and often, employer contacts that determines much of the success of later transition" (p. 5). Halpern (1985) praised the *Bridges* paper for the awareness it raised for the need of school programs to (a) integrate special education and vocational education, (b) improve the level of general administrative support for special education programming, and (c) establish working contacts between school- and community-based transition providers. Three challenges that many school-based transition programs still struggle with today. Family engagement also becomes a focal point for researchers and practitioners searching for successful secondary transition processes for students with disabilities by the mid-1980s (Wehman, Kregel, Barcus, & Schalock, 1986).

Elements of the *Bridges* (Will, 1984) article and the research that followed it are evident in both frameworks that have emerged to define school-based transition services. In 1993, Kohler developed a framework for reviewing and assessing best practices in the field of transition, which was updated in 2016. Referred to as the *Taxonomy of Transition Programming 2.0* the intervention framework divides transition services into five related categories: family engagement, program structure, interagency collaboration, student

development, and student-focused planning (Kohler et al., 2016). Similarly, the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth's (NCWD/Youth) *Guideposts for Success'* five areas of transition services include: school-based preparatory experiences, career preparation and work-based learning experience, youth development and leadership, connecting activities, and family involvement and support (NCWD/Youth, ND).

Grounded in special education research and practice, the *Taxonomy of Transition Programming 2.0* provides a transition services framework specifically for educators of students with disabilities (Kohler et al., 2016). Developed through the collaborative efforts of experts in the fields of disability, education, employment, and workforce development, the NCWD/Youth's *Guideposts for Success* provides a more expansive framework focused on successful transitions to adult life for all youth, designed to be used by youth, their families, and a diverse range of researchers and practitioners who work with emerging young adults (NCWD/Youth, ND).

Both frameworks include youth development, as a key area of focus for transition services programming. Although Will (1984) clearly bound the school phase of transition in high school, and transition services currently mandated by IDEA 2004 do not begin until the age of 16, researchers and practitioners in the field of special education have long recognized the developmental nature of transition and advocated for the extension of transition services to elementary and middle school programming for students with disabilities (Blalock & Patton, 1996; Halpern, 1994; Polloway et al., 1991; Wehman, et al., 1986). Experts asserted that waiting to start transition services for students with

disabilities until high school ignored the breadth and depth of the knowledge and skills that students and their families required for a successful transition to adult life.

By the 1980s, experts in special education emphasized the need for students with disabilities to have developmentally appropriate (Wehmen, 1983) vocational goals and experiences as early as elementary school, to give them and their families the necessary time to learn about, understand, and embrace employment as a viable and important postsecondary outcome (Wehman et al., 1986). Polloway et al (1991) argued for a subsequent environments approach to curriculum across subject areas for all students with disabilities from elementary through secondary school.

Based on the concepts of vertical and horizontal transitions, assuming a subsequent environments attitude required elementary and middle school educators to carefully consider the future environments that students would be expected to navigate when designing and implementing curriculum, taking some of the burden of postsecondary outcomes from high school teachers. Vertical transitions reflected this forward focus, in that they referred to the developmental changes that occur chronologically throughout the life span (Polloway et al., 1991). Vertical transitions related to school and curriculum development including the transitions from preschool to elementary school, elementary to middle school, and middle school to high school, in addition to the transition from high school to adult life. Horizontal transitions referred to a student's movement from one environment to another, for instance the transition from a more restrictive to a less restrictive school setting (Polloway et al., 1991).

Blalock and Patton (1996) applied the subsequent environments approach to all the domains of adulthood, in their call for "the systematic consideration of what students

need to function successfully as adults" (p. 7). Recognizing the need for a comprehensive approach to transition curriculum, instruction and programming across primary and secondary grade levels for all students with disabilities, including diploma-tracked students, Blalock and Patton (1991) proposed a system of assessment, planning and instruction starting in elementary school and extending through high school grounded in career development theory. The Council for Exceptional Children's Division of Career Development and Transition (DCDT) also applied a youth and career development approach in its definition of transition:

> Transition refers to a change in status from behaving primarily as a student to assuming emergent adult roles in the community. These roles include employment, participating in postsecondary education, maintaining a home, becoming appropriately involved in the community, and experiencing satisfactory personal and social relationships. The process of enhancing transition involves the participation and coordination of school programs, adult agency services, and natural supports within the community. The foundations for transition should be laid during the elementary and middle school years, guided by the broad concept of career development. Transition planning should begin no later than age 14, and students should be encouraged, to the full extent of their capabilities, to assume a maximum amount of responsibility for such planning (Halpern, 1994, p. 16).

As evidenced by Halpern's (1994) definition of transition, the field of secondary transition has long espoused a complex approach to youth development that necessitates not only a thoughtful approach to scholarship and practice around school-based services, but also an equally thoughtful, well researched, and collaborative approach between schools, youth, families, adult agency providers, and relevant community based organizations.

Focus on the individual. Adding to this complexity, a focus on the individual runs throughout the transition services literature base from Will's (1984) paper and Halpern's (1985) response, through the student-centered transition planning language in

both of the transition programing frameworks and the DCDT definition of transition, as well as the IDEA 2004 mandate that all transition services be "based on the individual child's needs, taking into account the child's strengths, preferences, and interests" (§ 602, 118 Stat 2658). Researchers, practitioners, and policymakers in the field of secondary transition continue to explore the best methods to meet the individual needs of students with disabilities, to prepare them to successfully navigate the "period of floundering that occurs for at least the first several years after leaving school as adolescents attempt to assume a variety of adult roles in their communities" (Halpern, 1991, p. 203).

The Evolution of *IDEA* Transition Policy

The research, practice and policy driven evolution of transition services for students with disabilities is evident in the secondary transition mandates outlined in IDEA (2004). Federal transition policy evolved along with related advances in research and practice to improve postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities. Not rating a mention in the *Education for All Handicapped Children Act* (EHA) *of 1975*, transition services were fully defined, and embedded in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) planning process for all students 16 and older by the signing of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act* (IDEA) *of 2004*.

By providing all students with disabilities between the ages of three and 21 a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for the first time, the EHA of 1975, by default, also provided them with access to vocational education and career preparation services historically available to their non-disabled peers. Unfortunately, Will's *Bridges* paper highlighted the fact that granting students with disabilities FAPE in the least restrictive environment (LRE) did not guarantee them access to pathways towards a full, self-

directed adult life. Policymakers sought to reverse this trend through a series of mandates, inducements, capacity building grants, and systems change in federal education legislation for students with disabilities.

EHA Amendments of 1983 (P.L. 98-199). The 1980s saw the first explicit mention of secondary transition services in special education law with the passage of the *EHA Amendments of 1983*. Lawmakers sought to build capacity around secondary transition services by allocating funding to:

> (1) strengthen and coordinate education, training, and related services for handicapped youth to assist in the transitional process to postsecondary education, vocational training, competitive employment, continuing education, or adult services: and (2) stimulate the improvement and development of programs for secondary special education (§ 626, 97 Stat 1367).

The "Secondary Education and Transitional Services" section of EHA (1983) granted the Office of Special Education Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) the authority to apportion over 6 million dollars annually, between 1984 and 1986, to state and local education authorities, institutions of higher learning, and appropriate public and private nonprofit institutions for research, development, and demonstration projects focused on expanding the field of special education's knowledge base on a diverse range of issues and challenges related to secondary transition (Rusch, Kohler, & Hughes, 1992). Funded projects targeted the areas of independent living, vocational training, postsecondary education, and competitive employment including strategies and techniques, model programs, information dissemination, program evaluation procedures, and demographic studies. One set of system change grants exclusively funded projects directed towards the development of collaborative models designed to align transition services between education agencies and adult service providers. Additionally, section 625 of EHA (1983)

funded inducements projects designed to expand inclusive opportunities and supports for students with disabilities in postsecondary, vocational, technical, continuing, and adult education programs.

EHA Amendments of 1986 (P.L. 99-457). The *EHA Amendments of 1986* extended funding for all the secondary transition and postsecondary education grant initiatives in EHA (1983), and expanded section 626 to contain the need to "stimulate the improvement of the vocational and life skills of handicapped students to enable them to be better prepared for transition to adult life and services" (§ 626, 100 Stat. 1164). Section 626 also highlighted the necessity to disperse secondary transition programming across the country including to urban and rural areas. Additional funding initiatives included capacity building around transition and the IEP process, dropout prevention, physical education and therapeutic recreation, and special education curriculum and instruction in adult life skills. For the first time EHA (1986) required reports from all applicants for assistance under section 626 on procedures related to the dissemination of information, and interagency collaboration, and continued the EHA (1983) provision to include direct student and parent participation in the planning, development, and implementation of funded projects when appropriate. In general, EHA (1986) reflected recognition on the part of lawmakers of the need to increase supports for students with disabilities to connect with adult services including continuing school-based transition services for recent graduates.

IDEA Amendments of 1990 (P.L. 101-476). IDEA (1990), formally known as the *EHA Amendments of 1990*, included the first definition and mandate related to secondary transition. The act defined transition services as:

> a coordinated set of activities for a student, designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational training, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation. The coordinated set of activities shall be based upon the individual student's needs, taking into account the student's preferences and interests, and shall include instruction, community experiences, the development of employment and other post-school adult living objectives, and when appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills and functional vocational evaluation (§ 101, 104 Stat 1103).

In terms of mandates, the IDEA of 1990 required IEPs to include:

> (D) a statement of the needed transition services for students beginning no later than age 16 and annually thereafter (and, when determined appropriate for the individual, beginning at age 14 or younger), including, when appropriate, a statement of the interagency responsibilities or linkages (or both) before the student leaves the school setting, and (2)….In the case were a participating agency, other than the educational agency, fails to provide agreed upon services, the educational agency shall reconvene the IEP team to identify alternative strategies to meet the transition objectives (§ 101, 104 Stat 1104).

IDEA (1990) also expanded the purposes of funded programs to include independent and community living, and assistive technology devices and services, while maintaining all previous purposes. Additionally, lawmakers created a set of competitive, one-time, five-year system change grants for state vocational rehabilitation and educational agencies that submitted joint applications. Grant recipients were required to develop policies, procedures, and systems for school-based and adult transition services, as well as to expand the capacity of professionals, families, advocates, government agencies, and the private sector to support students as they moved from school to adult life. The act also removed the caveat that funded projects only include direct student and parent participation "to the extent possible" (§ 626, 104 Stat. 1124).

IDEA of 1997 (P.L. 105-17). Most significantly, IDEA (1997) lowered the age at which schools must start to include an annual transition statement in student IEPs from

16 to 14. IDEA (1997) also required that, beginning at the age of 14, IEP teams review each student's course of study annually to ensure that it aligns with the student's postsecondary goals, and that transition goals must reflect student preferences and interests. The act also added a mandate that students receive notification of their rights at least one year prior to reaching the age of majority, listed related services under the definition of transition services, and established stricter mandates around granting students with disabilities greater access to the general education curriculum and assessments.

IDEA of 2004 (P.L. 108-446). IDEA (2004) heralded a significant expansion in federal transition service mandates. Specifically, the act included more precise language around postsecondary goals:

> Beginning no later than the first IEP to be in effect when the child turns 16, or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP Team, and updated annually thereafter, the IEP must include: (A) Appropriate measurable postsecondary goals based upon age-appropriate transition assessments related to training, education, employment and, where appropriate, independent living skills; (B) The transition services (including courses of study) needed to assist the child in reaching those goals; and (C) Beginning no later than one year before the child reaches the age of majority under State law, a statement that the child has been informed of the child's rights under Part B, if any, that will transfer to the child on reaching the age of majority under §300.520 (§ 614, 118 Stat 2709).

student participation:

> The LEA must invite a child with a disability to attend the child's IEP Team meeting if a purpose of the meeting will be the consideration of the postsecondary goals for the child and the transition services needed to assist the child in reaching those goals under §300.320(b) (§ 614, 118 Stat 2709).

and consent related to the inclusion of outside agency participation in IEP meetings:

> To the extent appropriate, with the consent of the parents or a child who has reached the age of majority, in implementing the requirements of §300.321(b)(1), the public agency must invite a representative of any participating agency that is likely to be responsible for providing or paying

> for transition services to attend the child's IEP Team meeting (§ 614, 118 Stat 2709).

To align the legislation with the newly enacted *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB), legislators (a) raised the age that transition planning must begin back to 16, which matched NCLB student assessment guidelines, and (b) increased the academic focus of IDEA by adding "further education" to the act's primary purposes in addition to employment and independent living, and the purpose of improving academic achievement to the act's definition of transition services.

Further changes include an added emphasis on child strengths, in addition to preferences and interests during transition planning process, the replacement of an exit IEP with a Summary of Performance (SOP) for students exiting special education either through graduation or full reduction of special education services, and the removal of the requirement that LEA's take further steps to ensure participation of outside agencies in the planning of transition services. In terms of funding incentives, IDEA (2004) added the development and implementation of transition programming to the list of allowable uses of state-level funds.

IDEA 2004 also included mandated reporting for State Education Agencies (SEAs) through State Performance Plans (SPP) and Annual Performance Reports (APR) for the first time. All SPP had to include specific, measurable targets monitored by 20 indicators under Part B of IDEA, which provides special education services to students with disabilities between the ages of three and 21. Four out of the 20 indicators reported to Congress by the U.S. Department of Education specifically monitor secondary outcomes and transition services for students with disabilities: (a) Indicator 1: Graduation; (b) Indicator 2: Dropout Rates; (c) Indicator 13: Secondary Transition; and

(d) Indicator 14: Post-School Outcomes (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, n.d.).

Advancements in Secondary Transition: From Best to Evidenced Based Practices

In 1996, Paula Kohler's *Taxonomy for Transition Programming* emerged as a useful framework for researchers and practitioners in the field of secondary transition. Developed out of findings from four key studies of effective secondary transition practices, the *Taxonomy of Transition Programming* provided school-based transition service providers with a comprehensive array of secondary education practices linked to improved postschool outcomes for youth with disabilities, across five categories: (a) student-focused planning, (b) student development, (c) interagency collaboration, (d) family involvement, and (e) program structure (Kohler, 1996).

Kohler (1996) took a methodical approach to the development of the framework, to identify effective practices in the field of secondary transition that were clearly grounded in theory and validated through empirical research. Using the standards set by Peters and Heron (1993), Kohler defined "best" practices as those that "(a) were well grounded in theory; (b) were supported empirically through studies that [were] internally and externally valid; (c) [had] some underpinnings in existing literature; (d) were associated with meaningful outcomes, and (e) were socially valid" (1996, p. 13). In order to accomplish this, Kohler and her team conducted four studies: (a) a comprehensive literature review of the secondary transition literature base (Kohler, 1993); (b) an analysis of 15 evaluation studies of exemplary transition programs and practices (Kohler, DeStefano, Wermuth, Grayson, & McGinty, 1994); (c) a meta-evaluation of the final reports for 42 model demonstration programs sponsored by the U.S. Office of Special

Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) (Rusch, Kohler, & Hughes, 1992); and (d) a final concept mapping process (Kohler, 1996). These research efforts culminated in the development of the *Taxonomy for Transition Programming* (Figure 2.3).

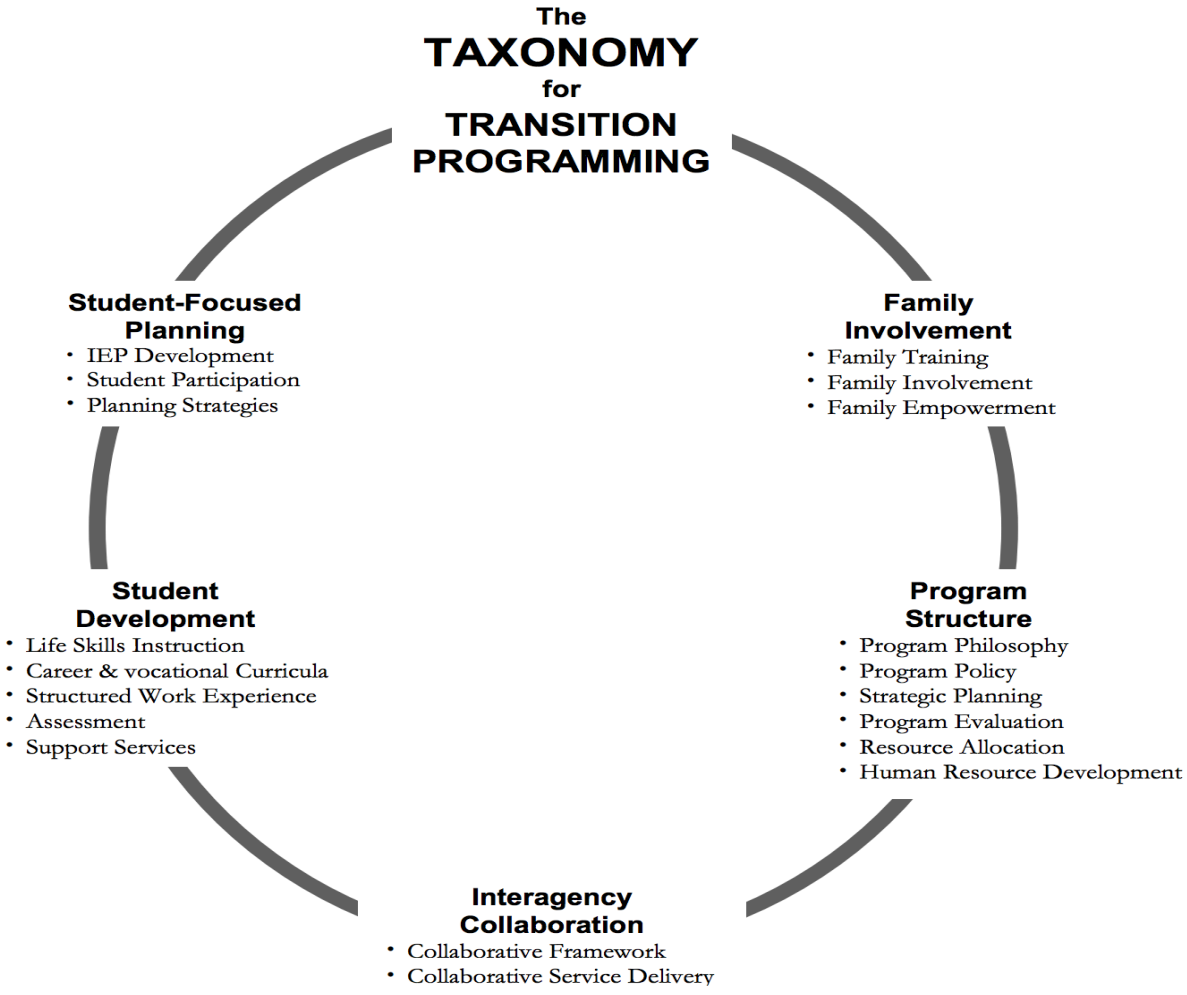

Figure 2.3. Kohler's (1996) *Taxonomy for Transition Programming*.

Since the original publication of the *Taxonomy*, the evolution of effective practices in secondary transition has been tracked via a series of literature reviews including (a) an expanded discussion and review of the *Taxonomy* (Kohler & Field, 2003); (b) an updated review of the substantiated best practices found in Kohler's (1993)

literature review (Landmark, Ju, & Zhang, 2010); (c) a systematic, practice-based review of scientifically-based, secondary transition research studies (Cobb & Alwell, 2009); and (d) a literature review of evidence-based practices in secondary transition (Test, Fowler et al., 2009a).

Kohler and Field (2003) used the *Taxonomy* as an organizing heuristic, to describe and synthesize research related to transition best practices, across each of the five categories of transition programming. A narrative rather than systemic review, the article is included here because of the updated and expanded perspective that it provided on the *Taxonomy*, which by the early 2000s had begun to emerge as the dominate framework for school-based, secondary transition planning, services, and research.

Revisiting Kohler's (1993) seminal literature review of substantiated and implied transition best practices, Landmark, Ju, and Zhang (2010) published an updated review of substantiated best practices. Using Kohler's (1993) criterion to determine if practices were empirically substantiated (i.e. included a clear connection between a practice and results/outcomes) and excluding implied best practices, the review found that the "most-to least-substantiated best practices in secondary transition were paid or unpaid work experience, employment preparation, family involvement, general education inclusion, social skills training, daily living skills training and self-determination skills training, and community or agency collaboration" (Landmark et al., 2010, p, 165).

A meta-analysis of 31 scientifically-based research studies into the effects of transition planning/coordinating interventions on the transition or transition related outcomes of secondary students with disabilities supported the effectiveness of interventions in the areas of student-focused planning and student development (Cobb &

Alwell, 2009). A product of the *What Works Transition Research Synthesis Project* (Grant #H324W01005) funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, this systematic review used federal standards outlined in the *Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002* to define scientifically-based research standards as:

> research standards that—(i) apply rigorous, systematic, and objective methodology to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs: and (ii) present findings and make claims that are appropriate to and supported by the methods that have been employed (H.R. 3801, 2002, p. 4).

The review's inclusion criteria, in addition to the standard set for scientifically-based research, also required that (a) studies had reported on the effects of transition interventions designed to support youth movement from high school to adult life, as outlined in IDEA 2004; (b) measured common transition outcomes (i.e., employment, postsecondary education, independent living, and community-engagement), and (c) had samples made up exclusively of youth with disabilities enrolled in secondary education or reported separate outcome measures for youth with disabilities. The quantitative and qualitative transition interventions studies could have come from any of the five categories in the *Taxonomy*, except for life skills interventions, self-determination curricula, and vocational/employment training curricula, all of which were reviewed separately under the same grant and captured in Test and colleagues (2009a) review of evidence-based practices.

Test and colleagues' (2009a) review, which was published in the same August 2009 edition of *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals* as the Cobb & Alwell (2009) review and designed to build on the work of the *What Works Transition Research*

Synthesis Project, was produced through the efforts of the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC). Also funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (Grant # H326J050004), NSTTAC was charged, in part, with the identification and dissemination of evidenced-based practices in secondary transition. NSTTAC's review of evidence-based practices in secondary transition (Test et al., 2009a) utilized the term "evidence-based practice", introduced by Odom, Bratlinger, Gersten, Horner, Thompson, and Harris (2005) in a special issue of *Exceptional Children* ("Criteria", 2005), to indicate "educational practices that have been demonstrated effective based on quality research" (Test et al., 2009a, p. 116), with "quality" defined by research quality indicators outlined in the same issue, according to study design: (a) group and quasi-experimental research (Gersten, Fuchs, Compton, Coyne, Greenwood, & Innocenti, 2005); (b) single subject research (Horner, Carr, Halle, McGee, Odom, & Wolery, 2005); (c) correlational research (Thompson, Diamond, McWilliam, Snyder, & Snyder, 2005); and (d) qualitative studies (Brantlinger, Jimenez, Klinger, Puguch, & Richardson, 2005).

Using checklists created from the quality indicators for each study design and validated through a panel of special education researchers, Test and colleagues (2009a) ultimately identified 32 evidence-based practices in secondary transition, two of which were supported by strong levels of evidence, 28 with moderate levels of evidence, and two with a potential level of evidence. Twenty-five of the evidenced-based practices fell in the category of Student Development, with none found in Interagency Collaboration.

The following sections provide an overview of the analysis of the research captured in the reviews mentioned above, as well as any additional relevant and/or subsequent research.

Student-focused planning. Kohler's (1996) research into best practices associated with student-focused planning revealed three key clusters: (a) IEP development, (b) student participation, and (c) accommodations and planning. Predicated upon the need for the IEP team to put students' interests, goals, and future visions at the center of the educational decision making process, best practices in this domain of the *Taxonomy* included from the start: (a) the development of IEP goals based on relevant assessments; (b) student participation in all aspects of planning and decision making; (c) the development of student self-determination including self-awareness, goal setting and attainment, self-monitoring, and self-advocacy; and (d) the use of a cyclical IEP process that allowed for the active participation of students, families and all other relevant school- and community-based stakeholders (Kohler & Field, 2003).

Analysis of three high-quality, quantitative, group studies of branded interventions of student-focused planning found an average, statistically significant effect size, in favor of the treatment groups across studies (Cobb & Alwell, 2009). This finding, coupled with the fact that all three studies met federal standards for scientifically-based research, led the review's authors to suggest that student-focused planning interventions could improve postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities (Cobb & Alwell, 2009). Analysis of qualitative studies in the same review, however, found that effective student-focused planning interventions were not universally implemented, which could

lead to low-levels of student involvement and the impression that "transition was more a promise than a reality" (Cobb & Alwell, 2009, p. 77).

Three evidence-based transition practices were found in student-focused planning, and included one general (the promotion of student participation in IEP meetings), and two specific (*Self-Advocacy Strategy*, and *Self-Directed IEP*) instruction strategies designed to increase and/or improve student participation in the IEP planning process (Test et al., 2009a). All three practices were found to have a moderate level of evidence (Test et al., 2009a). Landmark and colleagues (2010) did not find any substantiated best practices in the student-focused planning category.

Student development. Research into the development of the *Taxonomy* identified 47 best practices, in student development, which were ultimately organized into six clusters: (a) life skills instruction, (b) employment skills instruction, (c) career and vocational curricula, (d) structured work experience, (e) vocational assessment, and (f) accommodations and supports (Kohler, 1996). Student development practices are focused on providing students with the school- and community-based instruction, experiences, and assessments necessary for them to develop the skills needed to be successful in postsecondary education, employment, community engagement, and independent living. Early research supported best practices in this area associated with (a) work experience (including paid internships), (b) occupational education, (c) inclusion in general education, and (d) self-determination instruction (Kohler & Field, 2003).

Six out of the eight substantiated best practices in secondary transition, identified by the Landmark et al. (2010) study fell under the student development category. Paid or unpaid work experience during high school and/or at the time of school exit, was the

most substantiated practice in the study, and found to be linked to improved rates of postschool employment for people with disabilities including people with emotional and/or behavioral disturbances. Employment preparation program participation, the second most substantiated practice, was also linked to improved postschool employment outcomes. The third most substantiated best practice, inclusion in general education, increased the likelihood that people with disabilities would experience improved postschool outcomes, with particular emphasis placed on the receipt of a high school diploma as opposed to a certificate of completion or dropping out. Social skills and daily living skills, and training were the fifth and sixth most substantiated best practices respectively and found to be effective in targeting specific skills deficits. Self-determination training, the seventh most substantiated best practice in the study, was found to support transition planning generally, as well as act as a predictor of autonomy, competitive employment, and higher education enrollment.

Cobb and Alwell (2009) found a moderately large and statistically significant average effect size across three multigroup, student development studies in favor of the treatment groups. Analysis of six one-group pretest/posttest studies did not result in useable findings. The study's metasynthesis of qualitative research studies of student development found (a) that numerous participants perceived a lack of efficacy in special education curricula, (b) vocational training should include real life work experiences, (c) support for career planning and development with a clear focus on developing specific job skills, and (d) that extensive and seamless transition supports are required for people with disabilities to maintain employment (Cobb & Alwell, 2009).

Twenty-five out of the 32 evidence-based transition practices identified by Test and colleagues (2009a) fell under the student development category. Teaching life and purchasing skills both had strong levels of evidence. Twenty-two practices had a moderate level of evidence including 15 practices identified in teaching life skills, five in employment skills, and two in functional academics (Test et al., 2009a). Teaching job-related social communication skills was found to have a potential level of evidence by the study (Test et al., 2009a).

Interagency collaboration. The interagency collaboration category of the Taxonomy included 39 practices, divided into five clusters: (a) individual-level planning, (b) interorganizational framework, (c) collaborative service delivery, (d) organization-level planning, and (e) human resource development (Kohler, 1996). Interagency collaboration, or collaborative service delivery, required the active involvement of community agencies, organizations, and business in the development and implementation of transition programming services for students with disabilities through interagency agreements with "clearly articulated roles, responsibilities, [and] communication strategies" (Kohler & Field, 2003, p. 178).

Early research into this area found that interagency collaboration could make or break the transition planning process, in terms of individual student goal setting and attainment (Kohler & Field, 2003). The establishment of school- and community-based transition teams was identified as a best practice in this area, with the caveat that teams could face barriers related to the "ineffective use of transition planning meetings, intimidating language, and complexity of agency procedures" (Kohler & Field, 2003, p. 178).

Community or agency collaboration was the least substantiated best practice found by Landmark and colleagues (2010). That literature review found that (a) people with intellectual disabilities were more likely to be employed with the support of job placement agency follow-up services; (b) employment support during the year following high school exit could contribute to attainment of competitive employment; and (c) a lack of evidence supporting the importance of the quality of the relationship between youth with disabilities and rehabilitation counselors in terms of employment success (Landmark et al., 2010).

Cobb and Alwell (2009) did not find enough interagency collaboration studies that met the standards they set for scientifically-based research. Similarly, Test and colleagues (2009a) did not find any evidenced-based practices under this category of the *Taxonomy*.

Family involvement. Thirty-four best practices were identified under family involvement, and organized into three groups: (a) family training, (b) family participation, and (c) roles, and family empowerment (Kohler, 1996). Researchers have found that family involvement is associated with improved school attendance, higher education attendance and test scores, student self-esteem/confidence, student autonomy, as well as reduced dropout rates (Kohler & Field, 2003). Early best practices related to family involvement included the use of (a) direct and routine school communication strategies with families, (b) family interviews, (c) future planning strategies, (d) better informational materials, (e) family training, and (f) personal rather than bureaucratic relationships with families (Field & Kohler, 2003).

The follow-up to Kohler's (1993) original literature review, found family involvement to be the fourth-most substantiated best practice in transition (Landmark et al., 2010). Specifically, family involvement (a) improves employment outcomes for adults with moderate to severe disabilities, (b) improves community adjustment outcomes for young adults with emotional disorders, (c) facilitates job attainment for people with disabilities through family contacts, and (d) plays a key role in career decision making process for people with disabilities (Landmark et al., 2010).

Under the category of family involvement, Test and colleagues (2009a) found a moderate level of evidence in support of providing training for parents and families on transition related issues. Cobb and Alwell (2009) did not find enough family involvement studies that met the standards they set for scientifically-based research.

Program structure. The program structure category of the *Taxonomy* included 49 practices there were divided into six clusters: (a) program philosophy, (b) program policy, (c) strategic planning, (d) program evaluation, (e) resource allocation, and (f) human resource development (Kohler, 1996). The establishment of effective secondary transition programs has been found to require (a) foundational program policies and philosophies, (b) shared values and beliefs related to transition service provision, (c) systemic change based on research and evaluation, (d) systemic professional development, (e) visionary, supportive, and inclusive leadership, (f) interagency collaboration, and (g) connections between local and federal transition initiatives (Kohler & Field, 2003).

Three evidence-based practices were found in the program structure category of the *Taxonomy* (Test et al., 2009a). A moderate level of evidence was found for

community-based instruction, and for programs that extended transition services beyond secondary school (Test et al., 2009a). The study also found a potential level of evidence in support of the implementation of the *Check & Connect* program for students with disabilities (Test et al., 2009a).

Landmark and colleagues (2010) did not find any substantiated best practices related to program structure. Similarly, Cobb and Alwell (2009) did not find enough Program Structure studies that meet the standards they set for scientifically-based research.

Evidence-based predictors for improving postschool outcomes. In response to Test and colleagues' (2009a) identification of a gap in the literature around the impact of transition skill development on the postschool outcomes for youth with disabilities, the NSTTAC team conducted a review of secondary transition correlational literature related to evidenced-based, in-school predictors of improved postsecondary outcomes (Test, Mazzotti, Mustian, Fowler, Kortering, & Kohler, 2009b). Using the same research quality indicators for identifying evidence-based practices as the review of evidence-based practices in secondary transition, the study identified 16 predictors of for improving postschool outcomes for students with disabilities in the areas of education, employment, and/or independent living (Test et al., 2009b).

Four (25%) predicted outcomes in postsecondary education, employment, and independent living: (a) inclusion in general education was found to have a moderate level of evidence across all three outcomes areas; (b) paid employment/work experience had a moderate level of evidence for education and employment, and potential level for independent living; (c) self-care/independent living skills a moderate level of evidence

for independent living, and potential level of evidence for education and employment; and (d) student support a potential level of evidence across all three outcomes areas (Test et al., 2009b).

Seven (43.8%) predictors predicted improved outcomes in postsecondary education and employment only: (a) vocation education was found to be a moderate predictor of both education and employment; (b) transition program had moderate level of evidence for education and potential level for employment; and (c) career awareness, interagency collaboration, occupational courses, self-advocacy/self-determination, and social skills potential levels of evidence for improving both education and employment outcomes (Test et al., 2009b).

Five (31.3%) predictors were found to have supporting evidence for improving outcomes in employment only: (a) work study was found to have a moderate level of evidence, and (b) community experiences, exit exam requirements/high school diploma status, parental involvement, and program of study potential levels of evidence (Test et al., 2009b).

Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0. In 2016, Kohler and colleagues published an updated version of the *Taxonomy* that reflected the latest research on effective transition practices. The *Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0* (Figure 2.4) includes recommendations for effective program implementation across the five original program categories (Kohler et al., 2016).

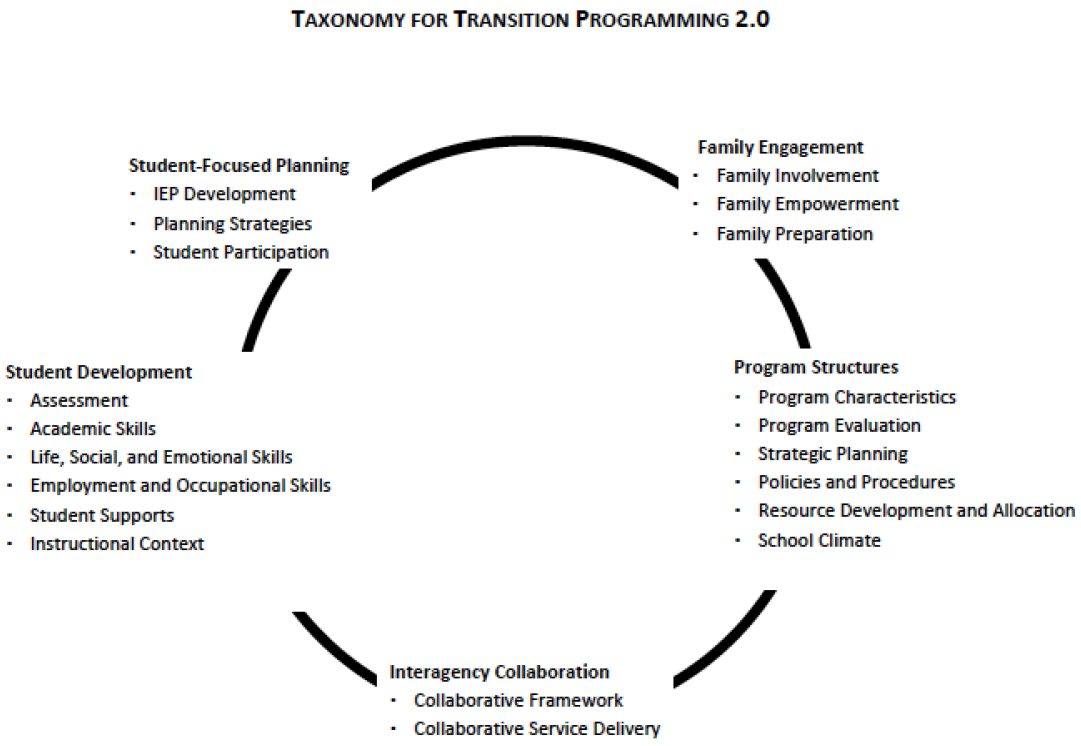

Figure 2.4. Kohler's (2016) *Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0*.

Policy to Practice: Lost in Translation

Although the percentage of students with disabilities who spend at least 80% of each school day in general education has increased from 34% in 1990 (McLeskey et al., 2012) to 63.5% in 2017 (U.S. Department of Education, 2020), their levels of academic achievement, rates of school exit, and postschool outcomes still fall well below those of their non-disabled peers (Billingsely, McLeskey, & Crokett, 2014).

In addition to IDEA State Performance Plans (SPP) and Annual Performance Report (APR) data on Indicators 1, 2, 13 and 14, current trends in school exit data and postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities are documented by two longitudinal transition studies sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). The National Longitudinal Transition Study

(NLTS) used a sample of youth ages 15 through 23 receiving special education services in the 1985-1986 school year to generate a nationally representative set of information about postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities through two waves stakeholder interviews and records review (Wagner, Newman, Cameto, & Levine, 2005). Similarly, the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2) collected secondary transition information from a sample of youth ages 13 through 16 receiving special education services in 2000 via five waves of data collection (Wagner et al., 2005).

School exit data. School exit data for all students is captured through the tracking of graduation rates and dropout rates. Both graduation and dropout rates have been historically difficult to capture and compare across district, and state levels due to the use of differing: (a) measurement techniques, (b) graduation requirements, (c) diplomas and other exit documents, and (d) definitions of dropout (National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities, 2013a, 2013b). The following sections include comparison data between the NLTS and the NLTS2 (Wagner et al., 2005), the most recent school exit data from the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT) reports on states' 2014 APRs for Indicator 1: Graduation and Indicator 2: Dropout (U.S. Department of Education, 2016), and well as supplemental data from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

Graduation rates. Defining the graduation rate as the number of students who left school with either a high school diploma or certificate of completion, the NLTS2 found a marked increase in the average school completion rate of students with disabilities, from 54% in 1987, to 70% in 2003 (Wagner et al., 2005). The study also found that school completion rates varied considerably by disability category, however, with students with

visual impairments (94%), orthopedic impairments (85.9%), hearing impairments (82.2%), speech/language impairments (79.4%), learning disabilities (74%), and intellectual disabilities (71.8%) experiencing the highest school completion rates; and those with other health impairments (58.6%), emotional disturbance (55.8%), and multiple disabilities/deaf-blindness (50.8%) the lowest (Wagner et al., 2005).

According to the United States Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) the 2011-2012 public high school, four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate (ACGR) was 80% for all students and 61% for students with disabilities, with the ACGR defined as the percentage of students who earn a high school diploma in four years (Stetser & Stillwell, 2014). NCES also reported that of the students with disabilities that exited school in the 2012-2013 school year 65% exited with a high school diploma, and 14% with an alternative certificate (Kena et al., 2016).

The National Technical Assistance Center on Transition (NTACT) analysis of state's 2014 APR and SPP IDEA Indicator 1 data, which measures the percentage of students with IEPs that graduate from high school with a regular diploma, found that graduation rates for students with disabilities ranged from 25% to 84.09% across the 59 states that reported using the required ACGR, with an average ACGR of 62.09% (Figure 2.5) (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Fifty-eight of the states used a four-year ACGR and one state used a three-year ACGR.

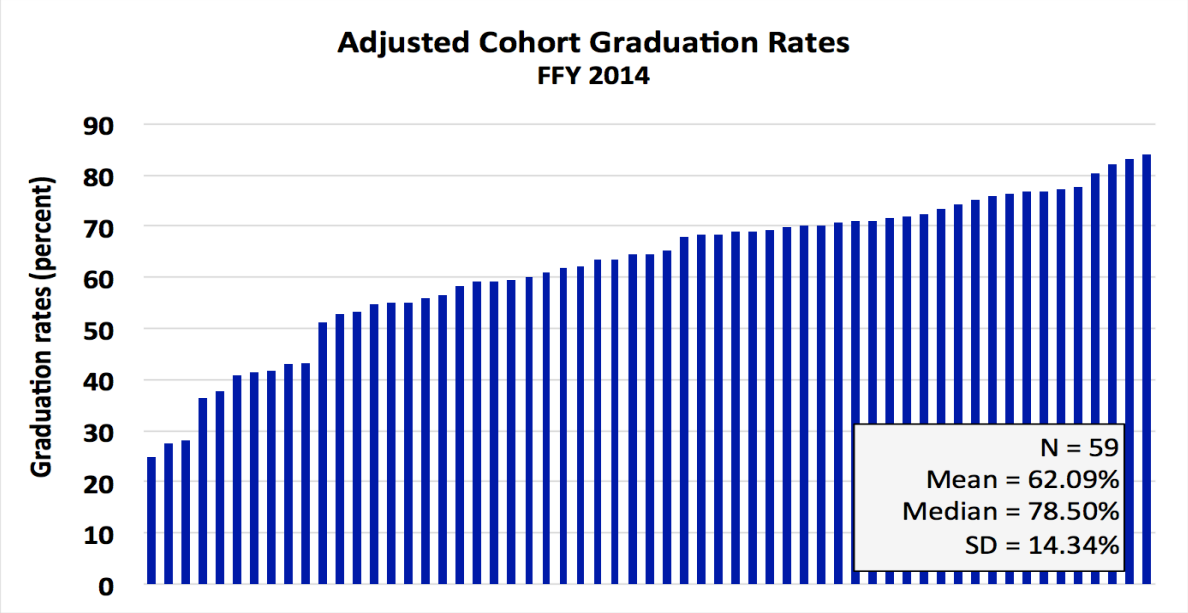

Figure 2.5. 2014 IDEA Indicator 1 ACGR.

Dropout rates. Defining school dropout as those students who left school without finishing, the NLTS2 documented a 16% decline in the dropout rate for students with disabilities between 1987 (46%) and 2003 (30%) (Wagner et al., 2005). Those rates included 6% of school leavers in cohort 1 and 1% of school leavers in cohort 2 that reported not finishing school due to either being suspended or expelled or for other reasons (Wagner et al., 2005). Similar to the studies' graduation rates, student dropout rates varied by disability category with students with multiple disabilities/deaf-blindness (49.2%), emotional disturbance (44.2%), and other health impairments (41.4%) experiencing the highest dropout rates; and those with intellectual disabilities (28.2%), learning disabilities (26%), speech/language impairments (20.6%), hearing impairments (17.8%), orthopedic impairments (14.1%), and visual impairments (6%) the lowest (Wagner et al., 2005).

Indicator 2 captures dropout data for students with disabilities, as measured by the percent of youth with IEPs that drop out of high school (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). States reported 2014 APR dropout rates using one of three methods: (a) exiter rate, and (b) event rate, and (c) adjusted cohort rate (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). The exiter rate represents a comparison of "the number of youth with disabilities who dropped out with all youth with disabilities who exited school by all methods (graduate; received a certificate; aged-out; transferred to regular education; moved, known to be continuing; died; or dropout out)" and produces higher dropout rates than both the event and cohort rates (NDPC-SD, 2013b, p. 2). The event rate captures a one-time snapshot of a single year's dropouts, and yields the lowest dropout rates (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). States reporting an event rate must explain how they define dropping out for all students and dropping out for students with disabilities, if different (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). The adjusted cohort rate reflects cohort changes due to school transfers, student emigration, and death (NDPC-SD, 2013b), and typically generates a higher dropout rates than event rate and lower than the exiter rate (U.S. Department of Education, 2016).

In the NTACT analysis of the 2014 Indicator 2 data: 35 (58%) of states used event rate calculations and reported an average dropout rate of 4.59%; 20 (33%) the exiter rate with an average dropout rate of 18.2%; and 5 (8%) adjusted cohort rates with an average dropout rate of 13.51% (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). These rates may be compared to the event dropout out rate of 3.3% for all public high school students in the United States for the same year (Stetser & Stillwell, 2014), and 2014 status dropout rate (the percentage of 16- through 24-year olds without a high school diploma or GED

and not enrolled in school) of 6.5% from *The Condition of Education 2016* report (Kena, et al., 2016).

Postschool outcomes. Postsecondary outcomes for young adults with disabilities have improved significantly over the course of the past thirty years, but they are still less likely to be employed, enroll in postsecondary education, and live independently than their nondisabled peers (Newman et al., 2010; Newman et al., 2011). Comparisons between the National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS), which collected data between 1984 and 1993, and the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2, which collected data between 2001 and 2009, indicate both progress and stagnation. While postsecondary education enrollment rates for young adults with disabilities reveal a 19% gain, increasing from 26% in 1990 to 46% in 2005 within four years of leaving high school, findings indicate declines in employment (from 62% to 56%) and insignificant gains in independent living (from 11% to 15%) (Newman et al., 2010).

Postsecondary education. In addition to the 19% gain in enrollment in postsecondary education generally, NLTS2 found that students with disabilities experienced increases in enrollment across all types of postsecondary programs measured (Newman et al., 2010). Between 1990 and 2005, students with disabilities increased their enrollment rates in: (a) community college by 19% (14% to 32%); (b) vocational, business, or technical school by 13% (10% to 23%); and four-year universities by 9% (5% to 14%) (Newman et al., 2010).

IDEA Indicator 14 requires states to report the percentage of youth with IEPs (a) enrolled in higher education; (b) enrolled in higher education or competitively employed; and (c) enrolled in higher education or other postsecondary education or training, or

competitively employed or in some other employment within one year after high school exit (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). States are permitted to report Indicator 14 data using one of two methods: (a) a census of all students with IEPs that exited school, or (b) a representative sample based on disability category, age, race, and gender, of the same population. According to NTACT analysis of 2014 Indicator 14 data: (a) 26.15% (0% to 62.86%) of youth were enrolled in higher education; (b) 61.24% (0% to 82%) were enrolled in higher education or competitively employed; and (c) 77.48% (36.93% to 100%) were enrolled in higher education or other postsecondary education/training; or competitively employed or other employment (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). Data was collected from all 60 states, 63% of which reported census data, and 37% representative sample data.

See Figure 2.6 for Indicator 14 data trends between 2009 and 2014 (U.S. Department of Education, 2016), which suggests a lack of steady growth across all three categories. Additionally, the 2014 range of state median percentages reported for each category reflect significant irregularities across states, which may result from data collection challenges and/or gaps and/or challenges in the implementation of effective secondary transition programming.

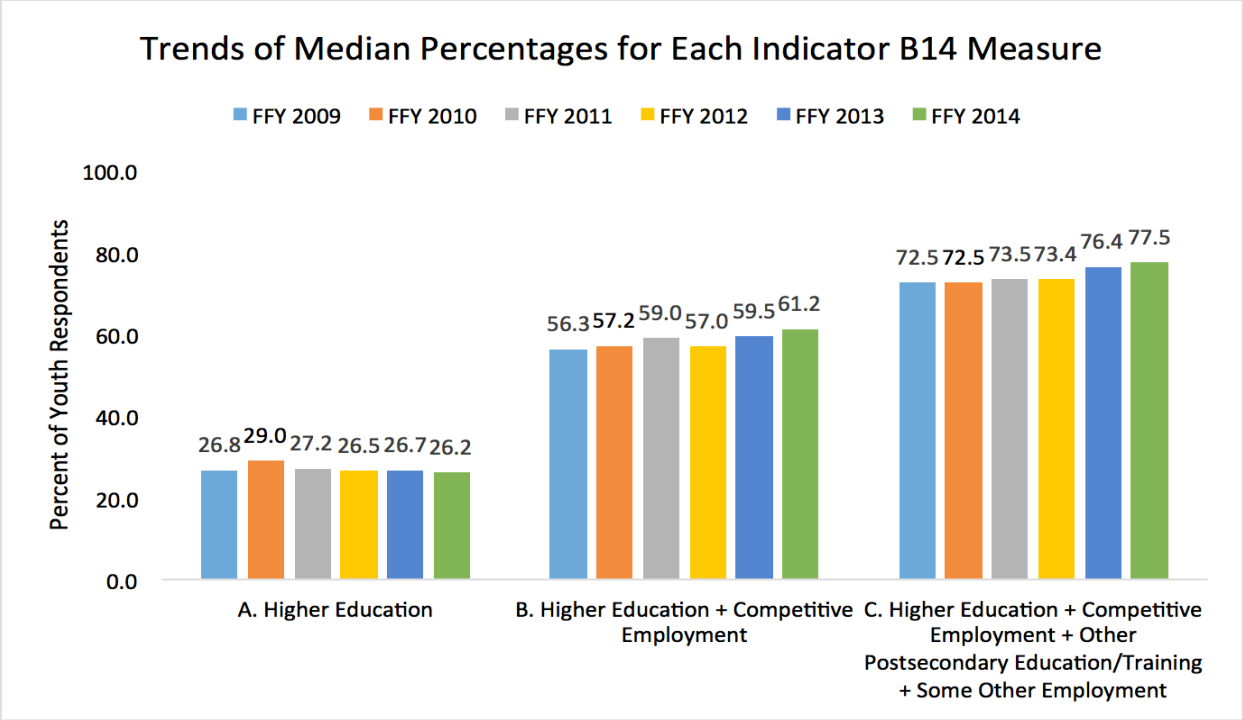

Figure 2.6. IDEA Indicator 14 data trends.

Employment. Madeline Will's *Bridges* (1984) paper began by stating, "Youth with disabilities face an uncertain future when they leave the nation's public schools." (p. 1). According to census data cited in the paper, 50 to 80% of working aged adults with a reported disability were unemployed in 1982 (p. 1). Recent census data indicate an unemployment rate for individuals with disabilities at 10.7%, and while this represents a vast improvement from 1982, it is still almost twice the rate of 5.1% for individuals without disabilities (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016). Additionally, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016) found that people with disabilities were (a) less likely to be employed across all education levels; (b) more likely to work part time; and (c) more likely to be self-employed than their nondisabled peers.

Students with disabilities experienced declines across a range of employment measures in NLTS2 between 1990 and 2005. In addition to a 6% decline in employment

rates, students with disabilities suffered a two month decline in job duration from 15 months to 13 months; a three hour per week decline in work hours from 38 hours to 35 per week; a decline in average wages from $9.10 to $9.00 with an adjustment for inflation; and a 19% decline in the receipt of health insurance from 52% to 33% (Newman et al., 2010).

See the previous section for 2014 Indicator 14 data on competitive and other employment, which is combined with postsecondary education outcome data.

Independent living. Beyond a 4% gain in independent living rates general between 1990 (11%) and 2005 (15%), other postsecondary outcomes in this category did not vary greatly between NLTS and NLTS2 including residential independence, parenting, and marriage (Newman et al., 2010). Independent living data is not currently tracked by any of the IDEA indicators.

Challenges to effective secondary transition program implementation.

Implementation challenges have plagued the field of secondary transition since its inception. A cross-state case study of the process and strategies states used to implement transition, sponsored by the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS), found that five years after IDEA 1990 mandated transition services for students with disabilities, "transition policy implementation across states tended to be (a) incremental, (b) lack consensus, (c) resistant to systems change, and (d) symbolic rather than substantive" (Wermuth & Grayson, 1996, as quoted in McMahan & Baer, 2001, p.169). Subsequent research confirmed that despite extensive support in the form of federal legislation, mandates, and research grants, the creation of a comprehensive and responsive system of secondary transition supports and services for students with

disabilities was inconsistent across state and local school districts (Hasazi, Furney, & DeStefano, 1999; Johnson et al., 2002).

A review published in 2002 of the secondary transition research base seeking to identify issues related to the implementation of federal transition mandates outlined by IDEA 1997, as well as state and local policy initiatives, found specific implementation challenges related to the need to: (a) ensure students with disabilities access to the full range of general education curricular options and learning experiences; (b) make high school graduation decisions based on meaningful indicators of students' learning and skills and clarify the implications of different diploma options for students with disabilities; (c) ensure students access to and full participation in postsecondary education, employment, and independent living opportunities; (d) support student and family participation; and (e) improve collaboration and system linkages at all levels (Johnson et al., 2002).

A state-wide survey of 99 special education teacher leaders in South Carolina, designed to examine middle and high school secondary transition practices found implementation challenges associated with staffing, and availability of employment experiences outside of the school setting (Zhang et al., 2005). In terms of staffing, the study found that district transition coordinators typically had multiple responsibilities related to secondary transition, and that considerable variably existed in the person(s) designated to coordinate transition services at both the district and school levels (Zhang et al., 2005). Participants reported that school-based work experiences were the most common work experiences provided to students, while internships and supported employment were the least common (Zhang et al., 2005). Community-based work

experiences were further limited by industry with most students gaining access to paid employment in the food-service industry (Zhang et al., 2005).

A larger and more recent state-wide survey of 533 middle and high school special education teachers and district transition contacts, in Florida, explored practitioner perceptions of effective transition practices, barriers to effective transition practices, and suggestions for improvement of the transition process (Lubbers et al., 2008). The top effective practices identified by participants were: (a) stakeholder involvement (27%), (b) systems and policy (26%), and (c) communication and collaboration (21%) (Lubbers et al., 2008). Across all participants surveyed the top barriers to the transition process were identified as: (a) lack of resources (36%), (b) lack of stakeholder involvement (35%), (c) system policy issues (25%), and (d) information and training (24%) (Lubbers et al., 2008). Finally, the top suggestions for improvement to the transition process were (a) systems and policies (35%), and information and training (23%) (Lubbers et al., 2008).

A secondary data analysis of Wave 1 (2000 – 2001 school year) NLTS2 results, comparing the state of transition planning for 11,270 students with intellectual disability, autism, or other disabilities found challenges associated with student and adult service provider participation (Shogren & Plotner, 2012). Although most students did have transition plans and services, few of them took leadership roles in the transition planning process, with students with intellectual disabilities and autism significantly less likely to take on leadership roles (Shogren & Plotner, 2012). The study also found that school-based personnel represented the majority of active participants in the transition planning process, with limited participation from other agencies and/or support persons (Shogren & Plotner, 2012).

A survey of 120 secondary educators across Oklahoma designed to determine the extent to which participants used recommended transition practices, their perception of the importance of such practices, and the role of administrative support in transition education found that educators reported overall high levels of implementation (Little, 2012). Participants reported the highest levels of implementation in the area of IEP meetings and documents, and the lowest for instructional practices related to transition. In terms of importance, the study found educators valued transition practices related to family involvement the most out of all practices (Little, 2012). Administrative support came in the form of instructional support from special education administrators, and building and management support in the form of space and training time from school-based administrators (Little, 2012).

A Delphi study designed to identify school-to-work barriers faced by students with disabilities from the perspectives of special educators, vocational rehabilitation counselors, and community rehabilitation program providers found 84 barriers across 12 domains: networking, systemic barriers, student involvement/skills, parent/family involvement, interagency collaboration, training and education, community integration and access, funding, knowledge of the transition process, transportation, diversity and multicultural issues, and postsecondary education (Riesen et al., 2014). The highest-rated domains were (a) lack of student involvement and skills, (b) parent/family involvement, and (c) interagency collaboration (Riesen et al., 2014). Participants identified the highest-impact barriers as (a) students' lack of employment skills, (b) long-term supports, and (c) unrealistic outcome expectations on the part of students and parents/families (Riesen et al., 2014). The study also found that under the systemic barriers domain, participants

perceived that community-based programs and functional skills development were lost due to an emphasis on the delivery of instruction in core grade-level standards (Riesen et al., 2014).

The role of teachers in secondary transition program implementation. As the direct service providers with arguably the most access to and time with students and their families, special educators are often seen as a primary solution to many of the challenges associated with effective secondary transition program implementation. A position statement put out by the Council for Exceptional Children's Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT) called for the (a) the explicit alignment of policy and advocacy practices with current secondary education reform efforts; (b) the engagement of transition practitioners with secondary educators; and (c) educators who work closely with families and students to ensure that they have a voice (Morningstar, Bassett, Kochar-Bryant, Cashman, & Wehmeyer, 2012).

The authors of the DCDT position statement specifically called for special education transition teachers to play a leading role in a system wide effort to combine parallel general and special education practices that include career and technical education, community-based learning, social emotional and behavioral interventions (Morningstar et al., 2012). Unfortunately, special educators, who would need to have a strong, working grasp on the transition knowledge base and emerging reform strategies in order to capitalize on developing opportunities (Morningstar et al., 2012), reported feeling unprepared to develop and implement effective transition programming in their current roles (Benitez, Morningstar, & Frey, 2009; Conderman, Johnston-Rodriguez, Hartman, & Walker, 2012; Morningstar & Benitez, 2013).

Research in the field of secondary transition suggested that while teachers understood transition planning, they felt unprepared or underprepared to effectively deliver transition services (Morningstar & Benitz, 2013). A survey of beginning special education teachers asked about their feelings of preparedness and confidence in all skill areas found that teachers reported feeling the least prepared in transition assessment, and the least confident in transition planning (Conderman et al., 2012). Benitz et al. (2009) also found a positive correlation between teachers' background experience in transition and the frequency with which they planned and delivered services. Additionally, in the same study, the authors found that some teachers who reported feeling only slightly prepared in the field of transition were still required to deliver transition services.

Lack of teacher self-efficacy in the implementation of transition services increases the likelihood that students will struggle to attain positive, postsecondary outcomes (Conderman et al., 2012; Morningstar & Benitz, 2013). A report out of the Government Accountability Office found that students face significant challenges in accessing federally funded programs for individuals with disabilities after they exit high school, at least in part because of lack of information and lack of preparedness for postsecondary education and employment (U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2012). It makes sense that teachers who feel uninformed and unprepared to implement transition programing will produce students who are uninformed and unprepared for postsecondary life. In order to continue to improve postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities, special educators need formal transition coursework focused on developing their knowledge and skill around planning and delivering, effective transition services (Benitz et al., 2009; Morningstar & Benitz, 2013).

Given the challenges that teachers reported facing in their efforts to deliver effective secondary transition programming for students with disabilities, as well as the small and preliminary connection between teacher delivery of research based transition education and administrative support found by Little (2012), a closer look at the relationship between school leadership and secondary transition is warranted.

School Leadership and Secondary Transition

Researchers have long sought to find a causal link between school leadership and student success, and while a preponderance of evidence points to only indirect links between school leadership and student achievement (DeMoss, 2002; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Witziers, Bosker, & Kruger, 2003), the literature base also suggests relationships between: (a) educational leadership and effective schools (Algozzine, Ysseldyke, & Campbell, 1994); (b) principal attitudes and program success (Kirner et al., 1993); and (c) school leadership and what students learn in schools (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004).

A Brief History of School Leadership

The quest to understand the reciprocal nature of school leadership factors and successful short- and long-term outcomes for all students, combined with ever shifting societal and political beliefs about the purpose of the United States K-12 education system, have resulted in a significant expansion of the role of school leadership over time. In addition to their historic roles and responsibilities related to organizational management, 21st century principals must also assume the roles of instructional and transformational leaders.

Managerial leadership. Predicated upon the assumption that the principalship could be broken down into a discrete set of functions, tasks and behaviors (Leithwood & Duke, 1999), the managerial approach to school leadership emerged in the 1920s and persisted until the 1970s (Hallinger, 1992). A dual, national focus on school consolidation and the corporatization of education, combined with the increased politicization of educational institutions to sweep principals out of the classroom and away from the instructional domain, starting in the 1920s through the 1960s (Hallinger, 1992).

Principals during this period were charged with buffering classrooms from "distractions and interruptions, which might interfere with the instructional process" (Rossmiller, 1992, p. 133). Principals' managerial roles and responsibilities associated with this buffering typically included (a) development and enforcement of clear, consistent school policies, procedures, and rules (Brewer, 1993; Glasman, 1984; Myers & Murphy, 1995); (b) creation and maintenance of an orderly, structured, and supportive learning environment (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1982; Brewer, 1993); (c) oversight of student discipline (Bossert et al., 1982); Brewer, 1993); (d) hiring and supervision of school personnel (Myers & Murphy, 1995); and (e) budget oversight and acquisition/allocation of resources (Brewer, 1993; Myers & Murphy, 1995).

Instructional leadership. The 1960s and 1970s brought a wave of federal mandates designed to provide equal education opportunities to students that required additional supports. Federally funded programs for compensatory education, culturally and linguistically diverse students, and students with disabilities required administrative oversight, while new initiatives around curriculum reform returned school leaders'

attention to teaching and learning (Hallinger, 1992). By end of the 1970s, school administrators had assumed a variety of additional roles and responsibilities directly related to instruction, and began to be perceived as instructional leaders and possible change agents, in the emerging school reform movement (Hallinger, 1992).

During this period, research into school-based administration of federally and state mandated education programming revealed that variations in principal practice directly related to implementation success or failure (Hallinger, 1992). These findings combined with Edmonds's (1979) article tying strong administrative leadership to instructively effective schools, brought on a renewed interest into what behavior and practices are required of a leader, to establish and maintain a high-achieving school (Hallinger, 1992). The roles and responsibilities associated with effective instructional leadership vary, but generally include (a) curriculum development and implementation (Blasé & Blasé, 1999; Lashway, 1995, (b) staff development, supervision, and evaluation (Blasé & Blasé, 1999; Lashway, 1995; Leithwood, 1994) and (c) close monitoring of student work (Lashway, 1995). Instructional leadership models with a school culture focus also include language about (a) building a shared school vision; (b) effective communication systems; and (c) collaboration (Leithwood, 1994).

Transformational leadership. The 1990s and the rise of the accountability movement reflected in both the 1994 (Improving America's Schools Act) and 2001 (No Child Left Behind) reauthorizations of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), marked another paradigm shift for school leadership, particularly secondary school leadership. Transformational leadership addressed many of the specific challenges related to leading secondary schools, during an extended period of school reform.

According to leading researchers in this area, due to the distributive nature of secondary school administration, effective transformational leaders focus the bulk of their energy on identifying and directing the capacities and motives of the school-based personnel directly involved in classroom leadership. Specifically, "transformational leadership makes use of personal relationships to facilitate not only a change in the purposes and resources of those involved in the leader-follower relationship, but an elevation of both" (Valentine & Prater, 2011, p. 8). Jantzi and Leithwood (1996) have identified six elements of transformational leadership: (a) identifying and articulating a vision; (b) fostering the acceptance of group goals; (c) providing individualized support; (d) intellectual stimulation; (e) providing an appropriate model; and (f) high performance expectations.

Professional standards for educational leaders. As of 2015, the 2008 Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards provided a framework for education leadership policy in 45 states and the District of Columbia (National Policy Board for Educational Administration, 2015). Designed to provide guidance to state policymakers around the preparation, licensure, evaluation, and professional development of school leadership, the 2008 ISLLC Standards were grounded in educational leadership research, and subsequently reflected many of the aspects of managerial, instructional, and transformational leadership outlined above.

In October 2015, the National Policy Board for Education Administration (NPBEA) published the *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015*, a 2015 refresh of the ISLLC Standards for school leaders that included an increased focus on transformational school leadership (Table 2.1.).

Table 2.1. Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015.

Standard	Description
1. Mission, Vision, and Core Values	Effective educational leaders develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of each student.
2. Ethics and Professional Norms	Effective educational leaders act ethically and according to professional norms to promote each student's academic success and well-being.
3. Equity and Cultural Responsiveness	Effective educational leaders strive for equity of educational opportunity and culturally responsive practices to promote each student's academic success and well-being.
4. Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment	Effective educational leaders develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student's academic success and well-being.
5. Community of Care and Support for Students	Effective educational leaders cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student.
6. Professional Capacity of School Personnel	Effective educational leaders develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote each student's academic success and well-being.
7. Professional Community for Teachers and Staff	Effective educational leaders foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

8. Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community	Effective educational leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student's academic success and well-being.
9. Operations and Management	Effective educational leaders manage school operations and resources to promote each student's academic success and well-being.
10. School Improvement	Effective educational leaders act as agents of continuous improvement to promote each student's academic success and well-being.

Examining the challenges associated with the implementation of effective secondary transition programming through the lens of the *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015* highlights the potential significance of the role that school-based, general education administrators, specifically school principals, play in ensuring that students with disabilities have the knowledge, abilities, and skills necessary for them to succeed in adult life.

The first three 2015 standards speak most broadly to the need for school leaders to ensure that schools create child-centered, inclusive environments with high expectations for all students, basic tenants of IDEA and the inclusive schools movement (Johnson et al., 2002). More specifically, access to the full range of general education programming (Kohler & Field, 2003; Johnson et al., 2002) and meaningful high school exit options (Johnson et al., 2002) are vital components of effective transition programming. Language related to these secondary transition programming implementation challenges are found in the following elements of standards one through three:

- Effective educational leaders:
    - Articulate, advocate, and cultivate core values that define the school's culture and stress the imperative of child-centered education; high expectations and student support; equity, inclusiveness, and social justice; openness, caring, and trust; and continuous improvement. (**Standard 1**)
    - Place children at the cent of education and accept responsibility for each student's academic success and well-being. (**Standard 2**)
    - Ensure that each student has equitable access to effective teachers, learning opportunities, academic and social support, and other resources necessary for success. (**Standard 3**)
    - Confront and alter institutional biases of student marginalization, deficit-based schooling, and low expectations associated with race, class, culture and language, gender and sexual orientation, and disability or special status. (**Standard 3**) (NPBEA, 2015, p. 9-11).

The fourth standard, "Effective educational leaders develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student's academic success and well-being" (NPBEA, 2015, p. 12), relates to transition implementation barriers in the areas of effective instruction (Little, 2012; Riesen et al., 2014), student school exit options, (Johnson et al., 2002), access to community-based instruction (Johnson et al., 2002; Riesen et al., 2014), and striking a balance between students' academic and functional skill development (Riesen et al., 2014).

Standard five, "Effective educational leaders cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student" (NPBEA, 2015, p.13), addresses secondary transition implementation issues related to student self-determination and self-advocacy, specifically school leadership efforts that create spaces in schools for students with disabilities to express their voices

(Morningstar et al., 2012) and take on leadership roles in their own transition planning (Riesen et al., 2014; Shogren & Plotner, 2012).

Standards six and seven call for educational leaders to develop a professional environment that promotes the ongoing learning and development of school personnel, teachers, and professional staff. Standard seven, "Effective educational leaders foster a professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote each student's academic success and well-being." (NPBEA, 2015, p. 15), aligns most strongly to secondary transition implementation issues around the professional development of teachers. This includes the need to ensure that special educators have the knowledge and skills necessary to deliver effective secondary transition instruction and programming (Benitez et al., 2009; Conderman et al., 2012; Morningstar & Benitez, 2013; Little, 2012; Lubbers et al., 2008), as well as calls to develop the secondary transition capacity of all educators including general education teachers (Morningstar et al., 2012).

Standard eight, "Effective educational leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student's academic success and well-being" (NPBEA, 2015, p. 16), addresses school leader secondary transition responsibilities related to family engagement, interagency collaboration, and community-based instruction and work-based experiences (Johnson et al., 2002; Morningstar et al., 2012; Lubbers et al., 2008; Riesen et al., 2014; Zhang et al., 2005).

Standard nine, "Effective educational leaders manage school operations and resources to promote each student's academic success and well-being" (NPBEA, 2015, p. 17) touches on secondary transition implementation challenges associated with resource

allocation (Lubbers et al., 2008), and staff roles and responsibilities (Morningstar et al., 2012; Zhang et al., 2005). This standard also relates to the building management and support highlighted by the participants in the Little (2012) dissertation, as key school-based administrator supports for secondary transition services.

Standard ten calls for educational leaders to "act as agents of continuous improvement to promote each student's academic success and well-being", in part by "seek[ing] to make school more effective for each student, teachers and staff, families, and the community" (NPBEA, 2015, p. 18). Effective schools for youth with disabilities, as well as their families, teachers, staff and communities, include secondary transition services that meet each student's individual needs and support the achievement of positive postsecondary outcomes.

The intersection between educational leader roles and responsibilities outlined in the *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015*, and the implementation challenges associated with effective secondary transition programming highlight the need to ensure that school leaders possess a certain set of knowledge and skills related to this vital area of special education. The following sections outline research findings related to school leadership and special education, including what has been documented in the literature based about school leadership and secondary transition.

The Impact of School Leadership on Special Education

IDEA guarantees all students with disabilities the right to a free and appropriate education (FAPE), in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Given that students with disabilities' home school building is typically both their first special education placement and LRE, building principals play a vital role in ensuring not only that students with

disabilities have full access to the general education curriculum (Ball & Green, 2014; DiPaola & Walther-Thomas, 2003; Praisner, 2003), but also that they receive an appropriate education based on their individual strengths and areas of need (Billingsley, McLeskey, & Crockett, 2014; Heumann & Heir, 1998).

Principal knowledge of special education. Researchers have identified relationships between school-based administrators' special education knowledge and practices related to special education (Angelle & Bilton, 2009; Wakeman et al., 2006). A study examining the variables that impacted the attitudes and practices of 408 elementary school principals toward inclusion, in Pennsylvania, found a relationship between the number of special education credits, and in-service hours principals had and their attitudes toward inclusion. Specially, the more time the principals surveyed spent explicitly learning about special education, either in preparation programs or on the job, the more positive their attitudes toward inclusion (Praiser, 2003).

These findings align with a 2009 study examining the importance of special education training experiences for practicing principals (n = 215) in a southeastern state, which found that participants who reported having had at least one course in special education (n = 69) also reported an increased level of comfort with special education during their first year in administration, compared with their peers (n = 113) who did not complete any special education course work (Angelle & Bilton, 2009).

An even more salient national study of 362 secondary school principals found that principals who reported having more special education knowledge also reported doing more for special education teachers and programs (Wakeman et al., 2006). Principals who reported higher levels of special education fundamental and current issue knowledge

also reported that they regularly met with special education teachers about programs and services for students with disabilities; and principals who reported more knowledge in the areas of special education legislation and characteristics of disabilities also reported supporting special education teachers with resources (Wakeman et al., 2006).

What principals know about special education. A few studies, in the past decade, examined how much general educators who assumed some level of responsibility for special education leadership within their schools knew about a range of special education topics. Most administrators, across all three studies, indicated having at least a basic level of knowledge of all special education topics surveyed (Bineham, 2014; Frost & Kersten, 2011; Wakeman et al., 2006).

Each study examined school administrator special education knowledge from a unique perspective, which impacted the aspects of special education knowledge captured. Wakeman and colleagues (2006) sought to capture secondary administrators' comprehensive knowledge of special education issues, dividing comprehensive knowledge into two domains: fundamental knowledge and current issues. The study defined fundamental knowledge as "that knowledge that is core to the basic understanding of the functioning and history of special education and the students it serves," and current issues as "those that drive the development of research, the writing of policy, and the practices in special education" (Wakeman et al., 2006, p. 155). Frost and Kersten (2011) explored principal knowledge in relationship to principals' roles as instructional leaders of special education teachers across the legal, foundational, and contextual aspects of special education, but did not define these aspects. Bineham's (2014) study of secondary, campus-based administrators examined their knowledge and

skills in terms of the instructional and programmatic needs of students in the areas of special education law, IDEA (2004), LRE, discipline of students with disabilities, and the IEP process. All three studies asked participants to rate their special education knowledge using a Likert scale.

Legal issues. Most participants across studies reported relatively high levels knowledge about legal issues related to special education administration. Bineham (2014) found that 57% (n=91) of participants reported having good levels of knowledge about special education law generally, and 58% (n=92) good levels of knowledge of IDEA more specifically, with 23% (n=36) indicating a fair level of IDEA knowledge, followed by 18% (n=29) with very good knowledge, and only 1% (n=2) with poor IDEA knowledge. Similarly, the secondary principals surveyed by Wakeman and colleagues (2006) indicated that they possessed at least a basic level of knowledge (M = 2.37) about IDEA principals, and a majority of the elementary school principals in Frost and Kersten's (2011) study reported average to good levels of knowledge about IDEA (M = 3.96).

Bineham (2014) dove a little deeper into principal knowledge of IDEA, surveying principals about their knowledge levels about the IDEA continuum of services and requirements for student placement, as well as the legally mandated role of general education teachers in special education. A majority (51%, n=81) of the study's participants reported having a good level of knowledge about the IDEA continuum of services and student placement requirements, followed by fair (26%, n=41), very good (18%, n=29), and poor (5%, n=8). In reference to their knowledge about the role of general education teachers in special education, most participants indicated their

knowledge level as good (52%, n=79) or very good (32%, n=49), with fewer reporting fair (16%, n=24) or poor (1%, n=1).

All three studies also explored principal knowledge about aspects of *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) related to special education. Bineham (2014) found that a majority of secondary principals surveyed had either good (48%, n=76) or very good knowledge (35%, n=55) about how the academic progress of students with disabilities impacted their school's adequate yearly progress (AYP) under NCLB. Similarly, secondary principals in the Wakeman (2006) study reported at least basic knowledge about the impact of NCLB on teachers (M = 2.35) and students (M = 2.32); and elementary principals in Frost and Kersten's (2011) study reported average to good levels of knowledge (M = 3.77) about the special education provisions within NCLB.

Frost and Kersten (2011) also found that the elementary principals in their study possessed at least average levels of knowledge about Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act* (M = 3.81), aspects of the *Americans with Disabilities Act* (ADA) that impact public schools (M = 3.72), and the special education rules and regulations in the Illinois Administration Code (M = 3.57). Less specifically, Wakeman and colleagues (2006) found that secondary principals surveyed reported, at least basic knowledge (M = 2.27) about key legislation related to special education.

Discipline. Study participants reported similar levels of knowledge related to the discipline of students with disabilities. The clear majority (89%, n = 138) of the secondary principals in Bineham's (2014) study reported have either good or very good knowledge about the discipline of students with disabilities, with only 13% (n=21) reporting a fair level of knowledge, and zero participants reporting having poor

knowledge in this area. Wakeman and colleagues (2006) surveyed secondary principals on their knowledge about three elements involved in the behavior management of students with disabilities: student discipline, positive behavior supports (PBS), and functional behavioral assessments (FBAs). Participants indicated basic levels of knowledge in all three areas, with their knowledge of student discipline (M=2.75) ranked third out of 26 special education knowledge items surveyed, PBS (M=2.38) seventh, and then FBA (M=1.92) twenty-fifth. Frost and Kersten (2011) found that a majority of elementary principals reported having at least a good level of knowledge (M = 4.04) of their district's disciplinary interventions and supports for students with disabilities including FBAs, behavior intervention plans (BIPs), and manifestation determinations.

The IEP process. Although the three studies each examined different aspects of the IEP process, all reflect a relatively high level of school leader knowledge in this area of special education. Most of the participants in Bineham's (2014) study reported either good (49%, n=79) or very good (30%, n=46) levels of knowledge about the IEP process, with only 20% (n=32) and 1% (n=2) reported fair or poor levels of knowledge respectively. Frost and Kersten (2011) found good levels of elementary principal knowledge about the parents' role in IEP development (M=4.28), and how school staff evaluate student IEPs (M=4.09), while Wakeman et al (2006) found basic levels of secondary principal knowledge about the special education referral process (M=2.57).

Teaching and learning. Each study included items designed to assess principal knowledge about elements of teaching and learning for students with disabilities including instruction, curriculum, accommodations, and assessment. A majority of secondary principals reported at least basic levels of knowledge about data-based

instruction (M=2.24) and best instructional practice (M=2.18) (Wakeman et al., 2006), while most elementary school principals indicated possessing average knowledge about state-learning standards for students with disabilities (M=3.55) (Frost & Kersten, 2011).

In terms of curriculum and accommodations, Bineham (2014) found that a majority (88%, n=139) of secondary principals reported good or very good levels of knowledge about how to design curriculum for students with disabilities, with only 11% (n=17) of participants reporting fair, and 1% (n=2) poor levels. The knowledge of current secondary principals in the Wakeman (2006) study about curriculum modifications and accommodations (M=2.32) ranked tenth out of 26 items measured, and fell within the basic range, while their knowledge of curriculum-based measure (M-2.00) and universal designed lesson (M=1.96) ranked twenty-third and twenty-four respectively. Elementary principals reported having average knowledge about how to design curriculum for students with disabilities (M=3.58), and good knowledge about how to accommodate for the academic needs for students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment (LRE) (M=4.15) (Frost & Kersten, 2011).

All three studies also surveyed principals about their knowledge of assessments for students with disabilities. Bineham (2014) found that a majority of secondary principals reported good or very good knowledge (78%, n=124), with only (21%, n=34) reporting fair or poor levels of knowledge in this area. Participants surveyed by Wakeman and colleagues (2006) indicated having at least basic levels of knowledge about alternate assessment (M=2.03), and nondiscriminatory evaluation (M = 2.15), and those in the Frost and Kersten (2011) study at least average knowledge about academic assessments for students with disabilities (M=3.60).

Student placement. Principals rated their knowledge about their district's special education continuum and placement procedures for special education as good in the Frost & Kersten (2011) study, with third and fourth place ranks, respectively, out of 18 items measures. Similarly, as previously noted, the majority of participants in the Bineham (2014) study reported having a good level of knowledge about the IDEA continuum of services and student placement requirements, followed by fair (26%, n=41), very good (18%, n=29), and poor (5%, n=8). Bineham (2014) also found that a majority of secondary principals (79%, n=126) reported a good or very good level of knowledge about LRE, with only 18% (n=28) reporting fair, and 3% poor (n=5) levels. The Wakeman (2006) study focused on principal knowledge of inclusion, and found that participants had at least basic knowledge about (a) inclusive climate (M=2.68), (b) inclusion in general education (M=2.20), and (c) types of inclusion programs (M=2.02).

Characteristics of disabilities. The majority of secondary principals surveyed by Wakeman and colleagues (2006) reported having at least a basic level of knowledge about characteristics of disability (M=2.19), but were not asked about their knowledge of specific disabilities. Bineham (2014), however, surveyed secondary principals on their knowledge about the characteristics of all 13 of the disability categories covered by IDEA. More than half of the study's 158 participants reported having good or very good knowledge of seven disability categories: (a) Intellectual Disability (79%, n=125), (b) Specific Learning Disabilities (73%, n=116), (c) Emotional Disturbance (72%, n=113), (d) Autism (58%, n=98), (e) Multiple Disabilities (56%, n=89), (f) Other Health Impairment (56%, n=89), and (g) Speech Impairment (55%, n=88). Conversely, over half of participants reported having poor or fair knowledge of the other six disability

categories: (a) Non-categorical Early Childhood (86%, n=136), (b) Deaf-blindness (72%, n=113), (c) Orthopedic Impairment (64%, n=106), (d) Traumatic Brain Injury (64%, n=101), (e) Auditory Impairment (60%, n=95), and (f) Visual Impairment (60%, n=95).

Other. Two of the studies surveyed principals about their knowledge of special education administration that did not fall into one of the categories discussed above. The two areas of special education that participants had the most knowledge about in the Frost & Kersten (2011) study were their district's Response to Intervention (RTI) plan (M=4.32), and related service delivery model (M = 4.30). The elementary principals in that study also reported having average knowledge about how to develop a plan for program improvement in special education (M = 3.43). Wakeman and colleagues (2006) documented principal knowledge of program evaluation as basic (M=2.13). Secondary principals in this study reported having the most knowledge about collaboration with teachers (M=2.82), collaboration with parents (M=2.78), and advocacy (M=2.65) (Wakeman, et al.). They also indicated having a basic level of knowledge about how to communicate special education issues (M=2.24), and about transition (M=2.07), and self-determination (M=1.78), which ranked last out of all 26 items.

Sources of principal special education knowledge. The seven studies listed in table # all used participant surveys to examine the sources of special education knowledge that general education administrators accessed in their work with special education teachers and students, with varying degrees of analysis focused on source type, hours, and quality. The sources of special education knowledge that general education administrators reported accessing in their work included but were not limited to (a) special education or administrative coursework, (b) special education internships or

practicums, (c) special education certificates, (d) special or general education teaching experience, (e) professional development or in-service training, (f) state or local education authority, (g) school-based personnel, (h) conferences, (i) self-taught or independent reading/research, and (j) personal experiences with people with disabilities.

Course work. The six studies that examined the sources of special education knowledge used by general education administrators described the special education specific coursework taken by administrators in their undergraduate or graduate studies, or in fulfillment of certification requirements in terms of the amount (Angelle & Bilton, 2009; Ball & Green, 2014; McHatton, Boyer, Shaunessy, Terry, & Farmer, 2010; Wakeman et al., 2006), the special education topics covered (Bineham, 2014; McHatton et al., 2010; Praisner, 2003), the and quality and/or impact on administrator practice and/or perception of own competence in special education (Angelle & Bilton, 2009; McHatton et al., 2010).

Trends across the four studies that reported the specific amount of special education coursework taken by school leaders indicated that a majority of principals surveyed had taken relatively few special education courses or credits (Table 2.2). Three studies specifically reported on the amount of special education course work in participants' principal preparation or administrative training programs. The majority of participants across these three studies reported not having had taking any special education coursework (45.9% - 53%), followed by one course (26.2% - 32%) (Angelle & Bilton, 2009; Ball & Green, 2014; McHatton et al., 2010; Wakeman et al., 2006). Wakeman and colleagues (2006) found similar results, in terms of special education courses taken at the undergraduate and graduate levels, with even larger numbers of

participants not having had taken any special education courses at these stages in their education. Conversely, only 15.9% (n = 22) of participants in a district wide study of elementary and secondary school principals and assistant principals reported not having any credits in special education coursework, with the majority (53.6%, n = 74) having had taken one to nine credits (Ball & Green, 2014).

Table 2.2. Number of special education courses/credits taken by general education administrators.

Authors (year)	Principal Type; School Level	n	SPED Course Level or Type	No Courses/ Credits	One or more courses/credits		
					# of courses/ credits	% n	n
Angelle & Bilton (2009)	Practicing; unknown	215	Principal Preparation Program	53% (n = 114)	1 course	32%	69
					2 courses	9%	19
					3 courses	6%	13
Ball & Green (2014)	Principals/ assistant principals; elementary/ secondary	138	Unspecified Special Education	15.9% (n = 22)	1-9 credits	53.6 %	74
					10-15 credits	10.1%	14
					16-21 credits	2.2%	3
					22+ credits	18.1%	25
McHatton, Boyer, Shaunessy, Terry, & Farmer (2010)	Principals/ majority elementary	61	Principal Preparation Program	49.2% (n = 30)	1 course	26.2%	16
					2 courses	13.1%	8
					3+ courses	11.5%	7
Wakeman, Browder, Flowers, Ahlgrim-Delzell (2006)	Principals/ current secondary	362	Undergraduate	57.1% (n = 207)	1* course	16.9%	61
			Administrator Training Program	45.9% (n = 166)	1* course	27.8%	101
			Other Graduate Training	66.4% (n = 240)	1* course	12.5%	45

* Read row across from SPED Course Level or Type column.

Table 2.3. Content of special education courses taken by general education administrators.

Authors (Year)	Principal Type; School Level	n	Course Content by Leadership Area		
			Managerial (%, n)	Instructional (%, n)	Transformational (%, n)
Bineham (2014)	Principals/ assistant principals; secondary	159	• SPED law covered in general school law course (67, 106)		
McHatton, Boyer, Shaunessy, Terry, & Farmer (2010)	Principals/ majority elementary	61	• Legal issues (75.4, 46) • Funding (>50, >31) • Discipline (>35, >21)	• Characteristics of SWDs (24.6, 15) • Accommodations (31.1, 19)	
Praisner (2003)	Principals/ elementary	408	• SPED law (83, 341) • Behavior management of SWD (62, 253) • Crisis intervention (48, 196)	• Characteristics of SWDs (77.7, 317) • Academic programing for SWDs (45.1, 184) • Life skills training for SWDs (13.2, 54)	• Fostering teacher collaboration (58.1, 237) • Teambuilding (53.7, 219) • Change process (52.7, 215) • Supporting/ training teachers in inclusion (48.5, 198) • Interagency cooperation (29.9, 122) • Eliciting parent and community support for inclusion (16.2, 66) • Family intervention training

(15.7, 64)

Special education internships or practicums. Four studies surveyed participants about their hands-on experience with students with disabilities, during their administration credentialing. Praisner (2003) found that only 18.4% (n=75) of the 408 elementary school principals surveyed had field-based experiences in inclusion. Lasky & Karge (2006) reported that a 36% (n=73) of principals had no direct experience with students with disabilities during their formal administration course work, followed by those with some experience (35%, n=72), moderate experience (14%, n=29), and lots of experience (13%, n=27). Thirty percent (n=64.5) of the practicing principals in the Angelle & Bilton (2009) study indicated that they participated in an internship or practicum as part of their administration preparation program, and of those 30% 45 reported that they spent 50 hours or less on special education, while 16 reported that no part of the time was spent on special education leadership. Bineham (2014) found that 93, out of the 114 participants that reported having an internship as part of their administration preparation program, reported that their internships included some special education experience, with 88 out of the 93 indicating that their internship provided useful information around working with students with disabilities.

School-based personnel. Only one small, quantitative study captured that a majority participants (89%, n=191) specifically accessed information on special education issues through collaboration with special education staff members (Angelle & Bilton, 2009). Wakeman and colleagues (2006) found that more than half of participants reported using school-based, special education resources, but did not indicate the role of special education personnel in this process, while Bineham (2014) found that 23% (n=37)

of participants reported consulting with other professionals to gain information on special education policies and procedures, but did not make a distinction between school-based and other special education personnel.

Conferences. Less than half of participants in two of the studies reported gaining special education information through participation in conferences. Angelle & Bilton (2009) found that 42% (n =90) of principals attended professional conferences related to special education. The Bineham (2014) study made distinctions between the type of information gained through conferences, and found that 9% (n=14) of secondary school principals received information on special education policies and procedures at conferences, and 31% (n=49) gained current information on issues and laws related to special education.

Independent research. Two studies explicitly asked participants to list the sources of special education knowledge that they accessed regularly. Angelle & Bilton (2009) found that 41% (n=88) of practicing principals reported independent reading as a source of special education knowledge, but did not provide details about the reading materials. The Bineham (2014) included more specifics, documenting that in addition to the 53% (n=84) of participants who reported teaching themselves about special education through readings and research, 37% (n=61) learned about special education policy and procedures through readings, internet searches, and general research; 36% (n=57) educated themselves about current issues and laws related to special education via selected journals, magazines, and newsletters.

School Leadership and Secondary Transition

From its inception, leaders in the field of secondary transition have recognized the importance of the role that general education, school administrators play in the implementation of effective secondary transition programming (Halpern, 1985; Will, 1984; Kohler & Field, 2003). Building leaders were among the stakeholders identified as requiring more knowledge about transition, in order to provide transition services to all students including those in general education settings, in a special issue of *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals* on Personnel Preparation in Transition (Blalock, Kleinhammer-Trammell, Morningstar, & Wehmeyer, 2003).

Despite this, most of the studies that examined general education administrator knowledge, and practices related to special education did not explicitly address secondary transition services for students with disabilities. The following section reviews the studies that did explore the relationship between school based administration and secondary transition, in some capacity (Table 2.4.).

In terms of school leadership secondary transition knowledge and beliefs, Wakeman and colleagues (2006) found that administrator transition knowledge ranked 20th out of 26 special education items surveyed and self-determination ranked 26th. A study exploring administrator views on providing self-determination instruction in elementary and secondary schools found that (a) administrators reported that all seven areas of self-determination were important, (b) teachers at their schools taught these skills with moderate frequency across a wide range of classrooms and settings, and (c) few differences in importance ratings or frequency of instruction found based on student disability status or school level (Carter, Lane, Jenkins, Magill, Germer, & Greiner, 2015).

A study of exploring the learning requirements of higher education administration degree/certification programs found that 39% (n = 77) of institutions survey reported always requiring coursework in special education programming, while 20.5% (n = 40) reported rarely/never requiring coursework in special education programming, with transition plans listed as a component of special education programming in the study (Cusson, 2010). Additionally, 51.7% of professors surveyed indicated that none of their research is in special education programing, and out of all course areas surveyed special education programming was consistently included the least in professors' courses (Cusson, 2010).

A survey of principals' perceptions of their own competence across 23 areas of collaboration found that their ability to guide school involvement in interagency systems of care was 22nd out of 23 items (Foley & Lewis, 1999).

As previously discussed, a dissertation exploring teacher perceptions of administrator support of recommended practices in secondary transition found that teachers perceived the primary role of school site administrators in this area to be the allocation of materials and resources (Little, 2012).

Table 2.4. School leadership and secondary transition.

Study	Purpose	Sample	Instrument	Transition Leadership Findings
Carter, Lane, Jenkins, Magill, Germer, & Greiner (2015)	To explore administrator views on providing self-determination instruction in elementary and secondary schools	N = 333 Tennessee school-site-level elementary, middle, and high school administrators	Survey	A majority of participants reported that all seven areas of self-determination were important, and that teachers taught these skills

				with moderate frequency across a wide range of classrooms and settings Few differences in importance ratings or frequency of instruction found based on student disability status or school level
Cusson (2010)	To determine if university educational administration preparation programs were providing the training necessary for school leaders to serve students with disabilities	n = 197 professors at UCEA* member institutions	Investigator-designed online survey	51.7% of professors surveyed indicated that none of their research is in special education programing Special education programming was consistently included the least in professors' courses Transition plans were listed as a component of special education programming in the study
Foley & Lewis (1999)	To assess principals perceptions of own competence across 23 areas of collaboration	n = 230 secondary school principals (grades 7-12) - national	Survey	Participants reported that their ability to guide school involvement in interagency systems of care was 22nd out of 23 items surveyed

Little (2012)	To explore teacher perceptions of administrator support of recommended practices in secondary transition (dissertation)			Teachers perceived the primary role of school site administrators in the area of secondary transition to be the allocation of materials and resources (e.g. space and release time for training)
Wakeman, Browder, Flowers, & Ahlgrim-Delzell (2006)	To determine special education knowledge base of secondary principals	n = 362 current secondary school principals in the US, who were members of NASSP	Survey (Tailored Design model) w. descriptive and inferential statistics	Administrator transition knowledge ranked 20th out of 26 special education items surveyed Self-determination ranked 26th

*University Council for Education Administration (UCEA)

The dearth of research on what educational leaders need to know and be able to do in order to support the delivery of effective secondary transition programming represents a significant gap in the literature base. The limited research that does exist: (a) suggested that educational leaders lack essential knowledge about secondary transition (Cusson, 2010; Foley & Lewis, 1999; Wakeman et al., 2006); (b) provided limited to no insight into what administrators need to do to support the implementation of effective secondary transition programming (Little, 2012); (c) only addressed secondary transition in very broad terms (Cusson, 2010; Foley & Lewis, 1999; Wakeman et al., 2006); and (d) hinted that, when informed, administrators do believe in and support components of secondary transition (Carter et al., 2015).

Implications for the Forthcoming Study

Despite decades of research, practice, legislative, and policy efforts in the field of secondary transition, students with disabilities are still less likely to enroll in postsecondary education or training, secure competitive employment, and live independently than their nondisabled peers. This disparity in postsecondary outcomes between youth with and without disabilities exists, at least in part, due to the persistent challenges associated with the delivery of effective secondary transition programming. Special educators, the professionals most often responsible for secondary transition program implementation, report feeling unprepared for and unsupported in this work.

Based on the standards outlined in the *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015*, vital components of secondary transition programming fall directly within school administrators' roles and responsibilities including but not limited to the creation and maintenance of student-centered, inclusive schools; setting of curricular and instructional priorities and practices; family, community and interagency engagement; teacher development; and resource allocation. Although the field of secondary transition has long recognized school-based administrators as vital stakeholders in program implementation, research into what educational leaders need to know and be able to do is limited and lacking in both breadth and depth. The field of secondary transition must determine exactly what knowledge and skills educational leaders require to become advocates and supporters of effective secondary transition programming in their schools, in order to identify how to assess, inform, and prepare them.

Conceptual Framework for Forthcoming Study

Given educational leaders' unfamiliarity with secondary transition documented in the literature base (Cusson, 2010; Foley & Lewis, 1999; Wakeman et al., 2006), school administrators most likely do not possess the request knowledge to inform researchers directly on what they need to know and be able to do to support effective programming. This lack of principal knowledge persists despite the fact that key components of secondary transition programming fall within their roles and responsibilities (NPBEA, 2015). Fortunately, there are expert transition service providers at the state, local, and school levels with both deep knowledge and understanding of effective secondary transition practices, and experience working with school administrators who should possess this information.

As previously noted, IDEA mandates that State (SEA) and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) monitor both compliance and outcome data for secondary transition as measured by IDEA Indicators 1, 2, 13, and 14 on state Annual Performance Reports (APRs). Additionally, SEAs are required under IDEA funding mechanisms to provide technical assistance in secondary transition to LEAs based on APR data. These mandates make it necessary for SEAs and LEAs to employ individuals with expertise in secondary transition legislation, data monitoring, practices, and compliance. At the school level, expert secondary transition practitioners, most often special educators working as classroom teachers and/or secondary transition coordinators, have working knowledge of both effective practices (Kohler, 2016) and implementation challenges associated with school leadership.

The combined knowledge of S/LEA administrators and school-based secondary transition experts will capture what school principals need to know and be able to do to support effective secondary programming from day-to-day operations and management, to long-term vision and improvement efforts. This study proposes to evaluate the perspectives of both S/LEA and school-based secondary transition experts, in order to determine what educational leaders need to know and be able to do to support effective school-based transition programming in their schools. See Figure 2.7 for this study's conceptual framework.

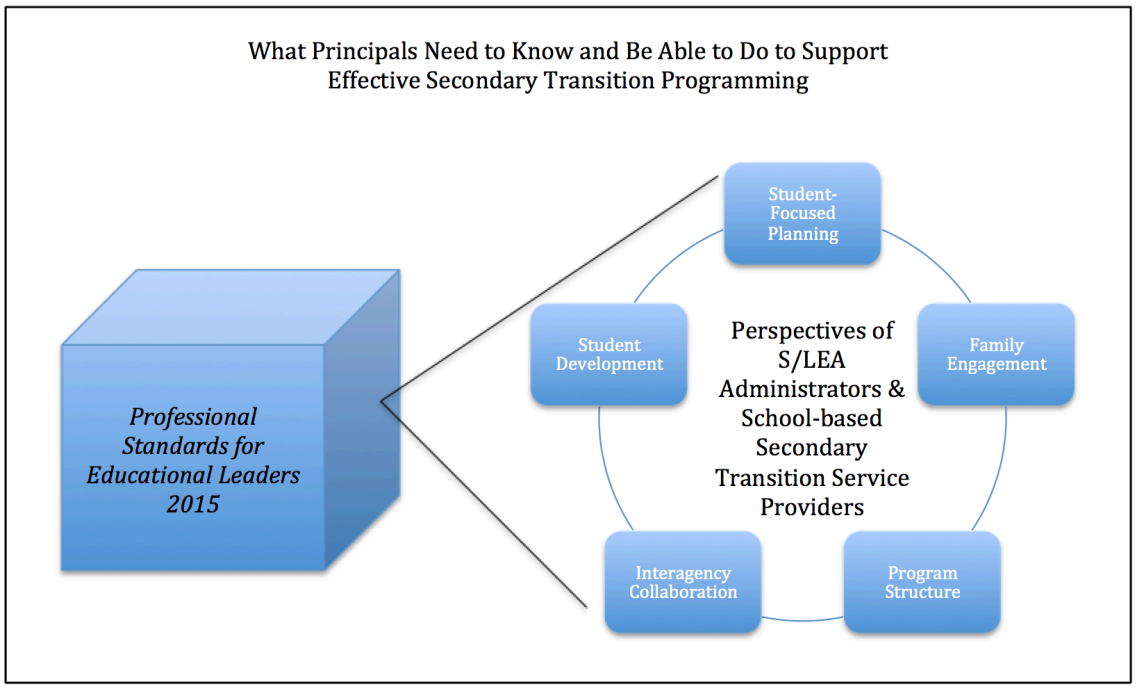

Figure 2.7. Conceptual framework of the study.

Research on educational leadership and special education suggests increased knowledge of special education positively impacts what school leaders know and do in relation to special education programs. Once the field of secondary transition has a better understanding of what educational leaders need to know and be able to do to support effective secondary transition program implementation then experts can begin to develop

instruments to assess school leaders' current knowledge and skills, and design tools and resources and to help inform and train them on effective practices.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Despite decades of research, practice, and federal and state policy initiatives in the field of secondary transition, students with disabilities still experience gaps in postsecondary outcomes compared to their peers without disabilities. These gaps persist, at least in part, due to implementation challenges related to resource allocation, professional development, curriculum and instruction, student centered planning, family engagement, and interagency collaboration. Given the roles that secondary principals are required to play in resource allocation, professional development, curriculum and instruction, student centered planning, family engagement, and interagency collaboration at their schools, efforts to improve the implementation of effective transition programming must include research that fills the current gap in the literature base about what knowledge and skills principals need, in order to support effective secondary transition programming.

The purpose of this study was to identify what school principals need to know and be able to do in order to support the implementation of effective secondary transition programming in schools. The researcher used an online survey of open-ended questions to explore what principals need to know and be able to do in regards to secondary transition programming from the perspectives of state, local, and school level experts in secondary transition programming.

Research Question

This study explored the research question: *What should school principals know and be able to do in order to ensure the implementation of effective secondary transition programming in schools?*

Research Procedures

Design

The roles and responsibilities of school principals, as defined by the widely adopted *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders* (National Policy Board for Education Administration, 2015) and examined through the lens of implementation challenges associated with the development and implementation of effective secondary transition programming, suggested that school principals played an important part in improving post secondary outcomes for students with disabilities. This study used an open-ended survey distributed at a single point in time to explore what school principals need to know and be able to do, in order to support effective secondary transition programming, from the perspectives of state, local and school level secondary transition experts.

Participants

Participant selection focused on the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States including Delaware, New Jersey, New York, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Washington, D.C., and West Virginia. National experts with extensive experience in the area of secondary transition, and knowledge about Mid-Atlantic secondary transition program provision were consulted for participant recommendations. Leaders from the

George Washington University and the National Secondary Community of Practice made recommendations.

In order to build consensus about what secondary school principals need to know and be able to do in order to ensure effective secondary transition programming, the national experts were advised that researchers sought expert opinions from both: (a) expert state (SEA) and local (LEA) education agency transition administrators, and (b) expert school-based transition service providers. Final expert recommendations included potential Mid-Atlantic participants from Washington, D.C., Delaware, and Pennsylvania. Following extensive Mid-Atlantic participant recruitment, one expert recommended additional participants from North Dakota. Nominations were received and reviewed by the researcher and the Principle Investigator (PI). Selected nominees were contacted and invited to participate, and given the opportunity to provide their own nominations.

In addition to nomination, participant expertise was determined by (a) knowledge, as defined by professional certificate/advanced degree(s) in special education and/or secondary transition and/or professional group membership; and (b) having at least three to five years of secondary transition experience (Palmer, Stough, Burdenski, & Gonzales, 2005). In a review of 27 studies on teacher expertise, Palmer and colleagues (2005) recommended social nomination and teaching experience as necessary indicators for determining educator expertise, and professional and group membership as a necessary but insufficient selection criteria. In studies of expertise in a specific subject area, a minimum of three to five years of experience was found to be an important threshold for determining teacher expertise (Palmer et al., 2005).

In this study, the researcher used a multi-gated process for selecting expert panelists (Palmer et al, 2005):

- *First Gate*: Nomination by a national expert in secondary transition was used as an indicator of exemplary performance in the field.
- *Second Gate*: Secondary transition expertise was confirmed by screening for (a) knowledge, as defined by professional certificate/advanced degree(s) in a special education and/or secondary transition and/or professional group membership; and (b) having at least three to five years of secondary transition experience.

Consideration was given to the fact that substantial variation exists in the person(s) designated to coordinate transition services at both the district and school level (Zhang et al., 2005). Specifically, roles and responsibilities for secondary transition programming were all or only one part of a participant's job description, and job titles among participants varied. Participants were selected in order to apply their expertise to a specific problem, which means that they could not be randomly selected and that representativeness could not be guaranteed (Hasson, Keeney, & McKenna, 2000).

Ultimately, twenty-six individuals passed the screening process and agreed to participate. All worked as secondary transition service providers at the time of survey completion: 62% (n = 16) for a Local Education Authority (LEA), 23% (n = 6) for a school, and 15% (n = 4) for a State Education Authority (SEA). All LEA and SEA participants reported school-based secondary transition experience. Years of secondary transition experience for all potential participants ranged from five to 30 years. Ninety-two percent (n = 24) had ten or more years of experience, and 50% (n = 13) had 15 or more years of experience.

This study was administered via the Internet, in order to reach panelists across a wide geographic area, and reduce attrition. Nineteen out of the twenty-six potential participants completed the survey.

Instrumentation

The survey instrument consisted of an opened-ended questionnaire (Hasson et al., 2000) designed to create an explorative space for "panelists to utilize the intellectual apparatus that makes them experts" (Mitchell, 1991, p. 334). The open-ended questions for this study were developed based on the persistent implementation challenges discussed in the secondary transition literature based, as seen through the lens of Kohler's (2016) *Taxonomy of Transition Programming 2.0* and the National Policy Board for Education Administration's (2015) *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders*. Additionally, the researcher sought feedback from a professor in the field of secondary transition, as well as peers working in secondary transition at both the school and state levels.

Explorations with colleagues revealed the potential for school-based practitioners to leave information out about key components of secondary transition programming when only asked to respond to general, opened questions. Conversely, because S/LEA administrators may or may not have school-based secondary transition experience, more specific questions about secondary transition implementation may be outside of their expertise. Based on these explorations, and in acknowledgement that participants can only speak to topics within their range of expertise (Rowe & Wright, 2001, as cited in Wang, 2015), the survey instrument included two broad questions to start and one two,

with 13 more specific questions to ensure that key components of secondary transition programming are thoroughly canvased.

Table 3.1. Open-ended questionnaire.

Question	School-based Expert Panel Questionnaire
1	Based on your experience as a secondary transition provider, what do you think that principals need to **know**, in order to support the implementation of effective secondary transition programming in their schools?
2	What do you think that principals need to **do**, in order to support the implementation of effective secondary transition programming in their schools?
3	What secondary transition **resources** do you directly or indirectly link to principal decision-making? (Resources may include but are not limited to financial resources, staff time, access to community-based activities, curriculum tools, etc.)
4	What secondary transition **resources** do you have or need that you wish your principal would help provide?
5	What secondary transition **professional development** resources/opportunities do you directly or indirectly attribute to principal decision-making?
6	What **professional development** resources/opportunities that you have or need do you wish your principal would help provide?
7	What components of secondary transition related **curriculum and instruction** do you directly or indirectly attribute to principal decision-making?
8	What components of secondary transition related **curriculum and instruction** do you have or need that you wish your principal would help provide?
9	What components of **student centered planning** do you directly or indirectly attribute to principal decision making? (Student centered planning may include but is not limited to student participation in the IEP process, and other methods of promoting self-determination, self-advocacy, and youth leadership.)
10	What components of **student centered planning** do you have or need that you wish your principal would help provide?

11	What components of secondary transition related **family engagement** do you directly or indirectly attribute to principal decision-making?
12	What components of secondary transition related **family engagement** that you have or need do you wish your principal would help provide?
13	What components of secondary transition related **interagency collaboration** do you directly or indirectly attribute to principal decision-making?
14	What components of secondary transition related **interagency collaboration** do you have or need do you wish your principal would help provide?
15	Out of the items that you listed in your responses to the questions above, which do you feel like principals have the power to provide?
16	Is there anything additional that you'd like to share?

The researcher piloted the survey instrument with one administrator and one school-based provider, in order to ensure that all technical aspects of the instruments were functioning correctly.

The survey instrument was administered online via Survey Monkey. Participants received an email from the researcher containing key information and a link to the questionnaire via SurveyMonkey. Online instruments have been found to be an effective tool for accessing a broader range of participants and reducing attrition rates (Cole et al., 2013; Gill, Leslie, Grech, & Latour, 2013). The online instrument allowed participants to engage in the study at their convenience, increased the speed of administration and analysis, and permitted for direct communication with panelists, as needed (Gill et al., 2013).

Data Collection

Data collection commenced once participants had been identified and confirmed. As part of the confirmation process, participant received detailed information about the

purpose of the study, the researcher, data collection procedures, plans for data use, time commitment requirements, and any risks associated with participation (Sue & Ritter, 2012). This information was communicated in an information sheet (Appendix A) that was included on the first page of the online questionnaire, a link to which was provided via email in an invitation (Appendix D) to participants. Both the information sheet and the invitation email included contact information for the researcher and principal investigator of the study. Participants provided informed consent by clinking on the survey link, and completing the questionnaire.

Researchers should take steps to identify and reduce potential participant distractions, to keep attrition low (Cole et al., 2013). To accommodate participants' schedules, initial invitations were sent out after the start of the second half of the school year, which is mid-January for most school districts. Online administration allowed for the collection of data within a six-month period (Cole et al., 2013; Gill et al., 2013). See table 3.3 for the study's complete timeline.

Table 3.2. Data collection timeline.

Activity	Timeframe
Attained IRB approval	March 2017
Invited and confirmed expert participants	March - May 2018
Sent survey and collected responses	May 2018
Analyzed survey responses	Sept 2019 - January 2020

The use of Survey Monkey links to collect data allowed for the maintenance of participant anonymity. Data collected via SurveyMonkey was exported directly to Word and Excel, which reduced the potential for data entry errors.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using qualitative content analysis techniques. To start the researcher aggregated the data into small categories of information, by question (Creswell, 2013). No items were added, and participant language was used as much as possible, with minor editing, if necessary (Hasson et al., 2000). The researcher used a lean coding technique to identify the first round of codes with the initial codes categorized in alignment with the *Taxonomy for Transition 2.0* (Kohler et al., 2016) by survey question (Creswell, 2013). Next the researcher reviewed and re-reviewed the initial codes across questions through the lens of the *Taxonomy for Transition 2.0* (Kohler et al., 2016) and the *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders* (NPBEA, 2015), which led to an expansion of codes (See Appendix F for First Round of Coding). Similar codes were then organized by categories identified and grouped by theme (Bernard & Ryan, 2010; Hasson et al., 2000).

Human Participants and Ethics Precautions

Based on the American Association for Public Opinion Research's (AAPOR) code of ethics, Sue and Ritter (2012) highlighted ethical and legal issues related to informed consent, anonymity, and confidentially that must be taken into consideration when conducting human subject research.

In terms of informed consent, participants needed to be provided with information about (a) the purpose of the study; (b) the identity of the researchers, (c) how the data will be used; (d) the length of time required for participation; and (e) any potential risks associated with participation (Sue & Ritter, 2012). The required information for this study was provided to participants in the information sheet (Appendix A), which was

included on the first page of the online questionnaire (Sue & Ritter, 2012). Participants indicated their consent to participate in the study by clicking the link to proceed with the questionnaire. They were also provided with a second link to click, if they choose not to participate.

The researcher also took steps to ensure participant anonymity and confidentiality. The questionnaire was administered via SurveyMonkey, a web-based survey provider. SurveyMonkey is a web-based survey provider that employs password protections, data encryption, firewalls, and extensive physical security to protect user data (SurveyMonkey, n.d.). SurveyMonkey enabled the researcher to keep participant identifying information separate from their responses. Additionally, all data used by researchers was stored on password-protected computers, and will destroyed five years after collection.

Chapter 4

Results

The purpose of this study was to explore the research question: *What should school principals know and be able to do in order to ensure the development and implementation of effective secondary transition programming at their schools?* A survey was administered to 19 experts in secondary transition programming currently working in the field at a school, local education authority (LEA), or state education authority (SEA). The chapter begins with a description of participants, followed by an overview of the *Professional Standards for Educational Leadership 2015* (PSEL 2015) and the importance of principal special education knowledge, and concludes with an overview of the five themes identified in the data.

Participants

As noted in Chapter 3, participant selection focused on the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States including Delaware, New Jersey, New York, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Washington, D.C., and West Virginia. National experts with extensive experience in the area of secondary transition, and knowledge about Mid-Atlantic secondary transition program provision were consulted for participant recommendations. Leaders from the George Washington University and the National Secondary Community of Practice made recommendations.

Final expert recommendations included potential Mid-Atlantic participants from Washington, D.C., Delaware, and Pennsylvania. Following extensive Mid-Atlantic participant recruitment, one expert recommended additional participants from North Dakota. Once recommended, potential participants were screened for (a) knowledge, as

defined by professional certificate/advanced degree(s) in a special education and/or secondary transition and/or professional group membership; and (b) having at least three to five years of secondary transition experience.

Ultimately, twenty-six individuals passed the screening process and agreed to participate. All worked as secondary transition service providers at the time of survey completion: 62% (n = 16) for a Local Education Authority (LEA), 23% (n = 6) for a school, and 15% (n = 4) for a State Education Authority (SEA). All LEA and SEA participants reported school-based secondary transition experience. Years of secondary transition experience for all potential participants ranged from five to 30 years. Ninety-two percent (n = 24) had ten or more years of experience, and 50% (n = 13) had 15 or more years of experience.

Nineteen out of the twenty-six potential participants completed the survey.

The Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015

The five themes aligned with elements under seven of the 10 standards outlined in the *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015* (PSEL 2015) (NPBEA, 2015). In October 2015, the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA) published the *PSEL 2015*, a refresh of the *2008 Interstate School Leaders Consortium (ISLLC) Standards*, which provided a framework for education leadership policy in 45 states and the District of Columbia (NPBEA, 2015). Grounded in theoretical and empirical research, the *PSEL 2015* were designed to communicate expectations for the work of effective educational leaders to "practitioners, supporting institutions, professional associations, policy makers and the public (NPBEA, 2015, p. 4)." Figure 4.1

depicts the relationship between the *PSEL 2015* and student learning, highlighting how the standards intersect to support student learning.

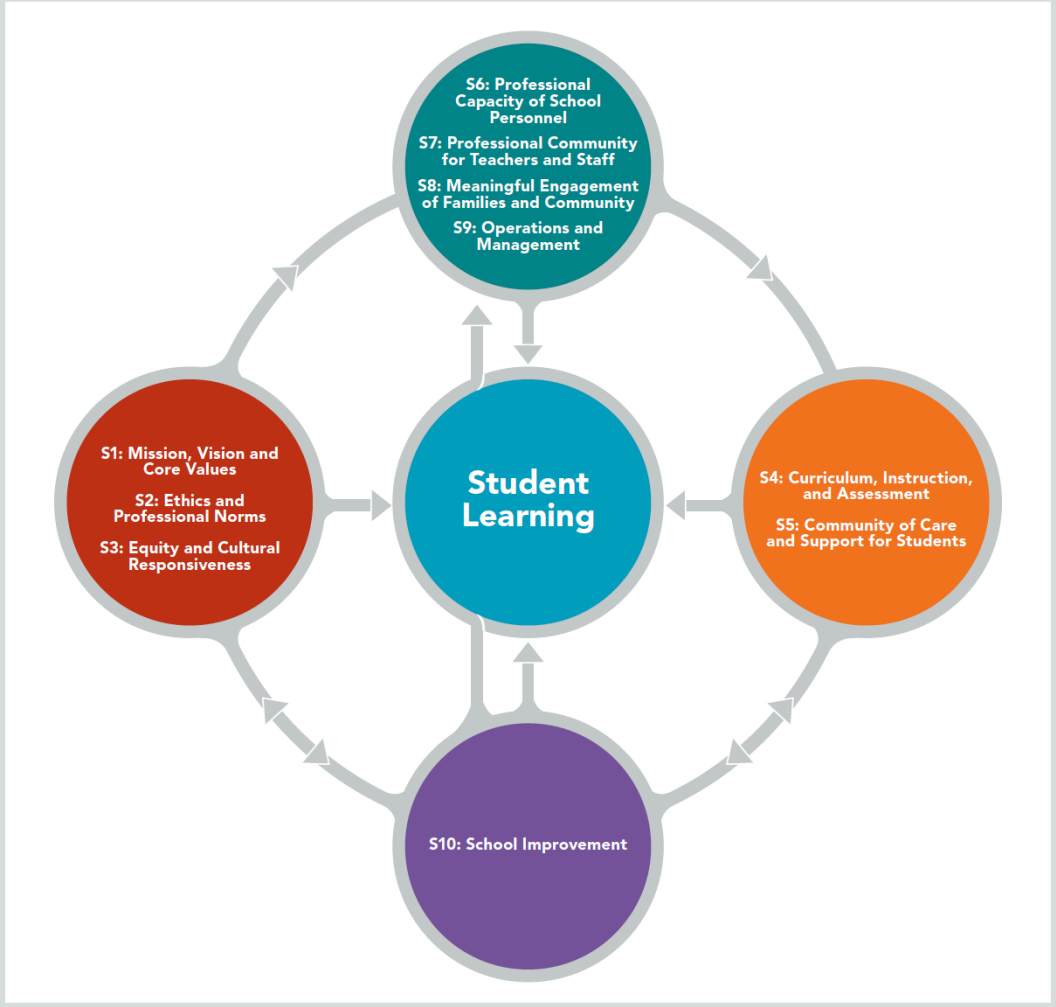

Figure 4.1. Relationship between *PSEL 2015* and student learning (NPBEA, 2015)

As noted in Chapter 2, the roles and responsibilities of school principals, as defined by the widely adopted *PSEL 2015* and examined through the lens of implementation challenges associated with the development and implementation of effective secondary transition programming, suggested that school principals played an important part in improving post secondary outcomes for students with disabilities. The

drafters of the *PSEL 2015* intentionally did not prescribe actions for effective educational leaders, but encouraged experts to adapt their application for specific purposes (NPBEA, 2015). Consistent with this charge, survey data were analyzed, in part, for principal actions related to the implementation of effective secondary transition programming in alignment with the *PSEL 2015.*

Principal Knowledge

Although intentionally not prescriptive, the *PSEL 2015* focused heavily on principal action rather than principal knowledge. The *PSEL 2015* only addressed principal knowledge through the charge that effective leaders "Tend to their own learning and effectiveness through reflection, study, and improvement...(NPBEA, 2015, p. 14)." While study participants placed more emphasis on principal actions than knowledge, they repeatedly highlighted the role that principal knowledge played in principal decision-making and action related to all aspects of effective secondary transition program implementation. This is supported by research on the relationship between principal special education knowledge, and principal support of special education and students with disabilities, which indicated that the more principals know about special education the more positive their attitudes were toward inclusion (Praiser, 2003), and the more they did for special education teachers and programs (Wakeman et al., 2006).

Participant responses related to principal knowledge were analyzed through the lens of the *Taxonomy of Transition Programming 2.0* (Kohler et al., 2016). Grounded in special education research and practice, the *Taxonomy of Transition Programming 2.0* provides a transition services framework specifically for educators of students with disabilities (Kohler et al., 2016).

Overview of Themes, Clusters and Codes

Data analysis identified five themes, which aligned with seven of the 10 standards outlined in the *PSEL 2015*. Figure 4.2 depicts the emerging relationship between the five themes and the *PSEL 2015*. Note that the three themes that addressed both principal secondary transition knowledge and actions are purple, and the two themes that only addressed principal actions are red. The three *PSEL 2015* standards that did not align with one of the five themes are white. Secondary transition is abbreviated to ST in all tables and figures.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3">Principal Vision for ST Programming
PSEL 2015: S1: Mission, Vision, and Core Values</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">PSEL 2015: S2: Ethics and Professional Norms</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">PSEL 2015: S3: Equity and Cultural Responsiveness</td></tr>
<tr><td>ST Professional Learning Community
PSEL 2015: S6: Professional Capacity of School Personnel
PSEL 2015: S7: Professional Community for Teachers and Staff</td><td>Coherent System of ST Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Student Support Services
PSEL 2015: S4: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment
PSEL 2015: S5: Community of Care and Support for Students</td><td>Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community
PSEL 2015: S8: Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">ST Operations & Management
PSEL 2015: S9: Operations and Management</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3">PSEL 2015: S10: School Improvement</td></tr>
</table>

Figure 4.2. Principal ST knowledge and action by theme and *PSEL 2015* standard

The final themes, clusters and codes are listed in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1. Themes, clusters and codes

Theme 1: ST Operations & Management (185) *PSEL 2015 Standard 9*	
Cluster 1: ST Staff Resources (93)	
Knowledge Code - *Principals need to know:*	**Action Code -** *Principals need to:*
That effective ST programming requires staff time (34)	Allocate staff time for interagency collaboration (11), family engagement (9), student-centered planning (8), and ST PD (4)
	Adequately staff ST programming (18)
	Protect ST staffs' work and learning from disruption (5)
	Develop clear roles and responsibilities for ST staff (4)
Cluster 2: Funding for ST Resources (49)	
Knowledge Code - *Principals need to know:*	**Action Code -** *Principals need to:*
That effective ST programming requires funding (17)	Allocate funds for ST curriculum and instruction (8), family engagement activities (7), student transportation to community-based ST activities (6); and staff PD on effective ST programming (2)
	Principals have the authority to allocate funds for ST programming (5)
	Ensure that IDEA funds are appropriately allocated, as required by law (4)
Cluster 3: ST Laws, Rights, Policies & Regulations (24)	
Knowledge Code - *Principals need to know:*	**Action Code -** *Principals need to:*
How to help staff understand how all local, state, and federal laws, policies, and regulations related to ST inform staff practice (10)	
How to comply with all local, state, and federal laws, policies, and regulations related to ST (9)	
Local graduation policies and regulations and how they impact students with disabilities and subsequently inform ST programming (3)	
That access to ST programming for students with disabilities is a right, and know the	

relationship between federal ST legislation and the larger disabilities rights movement (2)	
Cluster 4: ST Resources (19)	
Knowledge Code - *Principals need to know:*	**Action Code -** *Principals need to:*
	Provide resources for ST programming (15)
	Allocate space for ST programming (4)
Theme 2: ST Professional Learning Community (103) *PSEL 2015 Standards 6 & 7*	
Cluster 1: ST PD for Staff (44)	
Knowledge Code - *Principals need to know:*	**Action Code** – *Principals need to*:
	Provide access to ST PD for ST staff (38)
	Principals have the authority to set PD schedules and topics (3)
	Provide access to and encourage participation in PD on special education for all school staff (3)
Cluster 2: ST Team Capacity Development (40)	
Knowledge Code - *Principals need to know:*	**Action Code** – *Principals need to:*
	Empower and motivate ST staff to become experts in the implementation of effective ST programming (14)
	Ensure the implementation of a meaningful, research-anchored system of supervision for ST staff (14)
	Provide support and leadership to the ST team (10)
	Recruit and hire effective ST staff members (2)
Cluster 3: Development of an Open and Trusting Relationship with ST Staff (19)	
Knowledge Code - *Principals need to know:*	**Action Code** – *Principals need to:*
	Respect the expertise of ST staff and involve them in school wide decision-making (15)
	Participate in IEP meetings (4)
Theme 3: Coherent System of ST Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Student Support Services (83) *PSEL 2015 Standards 4 & 5*	
Cluster 1: ST Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (57)	
Knowledge Code – *Principals need to*	**Action Code –** *Principals need to:*

know:	
That effective ST programming requires a comprehensive system of curriculum, instruction, and assessment that includes academic, life, social, emotional, and employment skill development (10)	Develop a school schedule that allows for the implementation of effective ST programming (19)
Principals need ST knowledge in order to make informed decisions about ST curriculum, instruction, and assessment that includes academic, life, social, emotional, and employment skill development (6)	Ensure the availability and use of age-appropriate transition assessments (12)
How to incorporate work-based learning experiences into a cohesive system of ST curriculum, instruction, and assessment (5)	Principals have the authority to approve ST curriculum (5)

Cluster 2: ST Student Support Services (26)	
Knowledge Code – *Principals need to know:*	**Action Code –** *Principals need to:*
The full range of ST support services (7)	Ensure that students have opportunities to learn and apply self-determination knowledge and skills (9)
Student support needs (6)	
How student-centered planning informs effective ST programming (4)	
Theme 4: Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community (78) *PSEL 2015 Standard 8*	
Cluster 1: Family Engagement (36)	
Knowledge Code – *Principals need to know:*	**Action Code** – *Principals need to:*
Principals require specific knowledge in order to effectively engage with families about secondary transition (5)	Principals need to create a positive school culture that all families find welcoming and supportive including the families of students with disabilities (15)
That family engagement impacts student outcomes (3)	Principals need to develop and provide the school as a secondary transition resource for families (10)
	Principals need to respect family input (3)
Cluster 2: Interagency Collaboration (32)	
Knowledge Code – *Principals need to know:*	**Action Code** – *Principals need to:*
Principals require specific knowledge in order to support effective interagency collaboration (16)	Create a positive school culture that supports interagency collaboration (11)
	Support interagency collaboration by signing MOAs/MOUs (5)
Cluster 3: Community Engagement (10)	

Knowledge Code – *Principals need to know:*	**Action Code** – *Principals need to:*
	Develop community partnerships to provide access to community resources for ST programming (10)
Theme 5: Principal Vision for ST Programming (24) *PSEL 2015 Standard 1*	
Cluster 1: Advocacy for Students with Disabilities (17)	
Knowledge Code – *Principals need to know:*	**Action Code –** *Principals need to:*
	Articulate and advocate for an inclusive school culture with high expectations for all students (8)
	Prioritize and advocate for student-centered planning (5), and family engagement (2)
	Demonstrate a commitment to school-wide vision of effective ST programming to promote staff buy-in (2)
Cluster 2: ST Programming as Part of the Educational Mission (7)	
Knowledge Code – *Principals need to know:*	**Action Code –** *Principals need to:*
	Principals have the authority to include a vision of effective ST programming in their school's educational mission (4)
	Recognize the importance of effective ST programming in order to incorporate it into their educational mission for their school (3)

Figure 4.3 depicts the distribution of participant responses by theme and cluster.

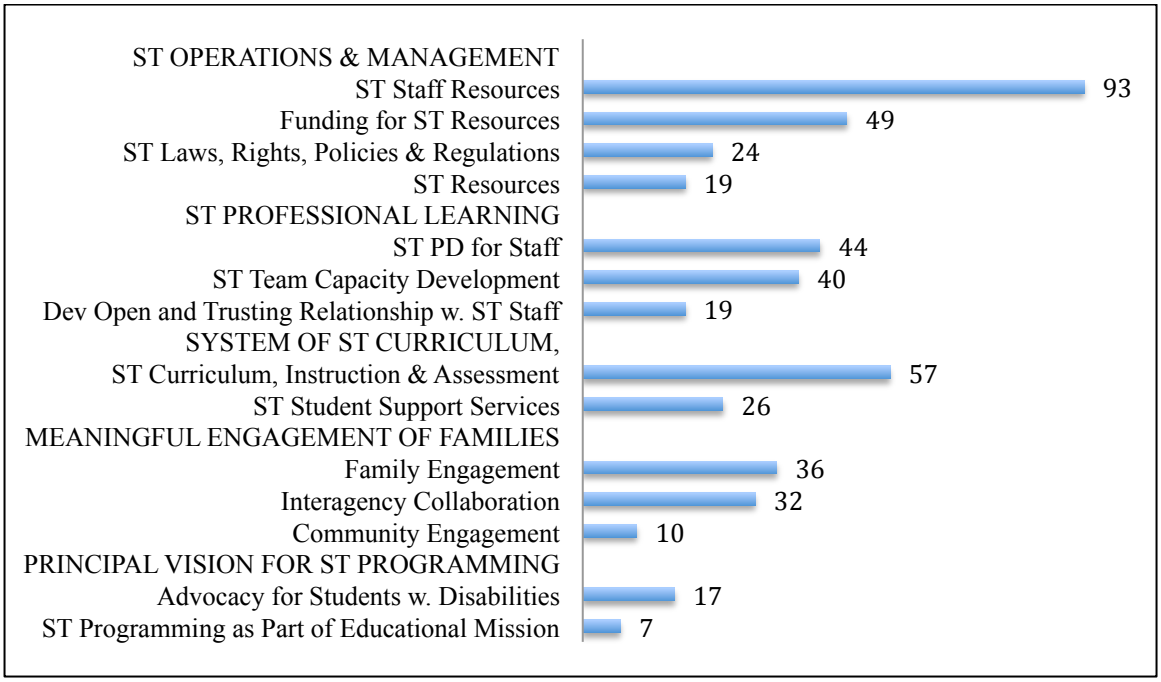

Figure 4.3. Distribution of themes and clusters

Participants identified secondary transition operations and management as the most prevalent theme, placing almost twice as much emphasis on it than the next most prevalent theme, secondary transition learning community. Participants put a similar amount of emphasis on both a comprehensive system of secondary transition curriculum, instruction and assessment, and meaningful family and community engagement. Principal vision was the least prevalent theme.

Theme 1: Secondary Transition Operations and Management

Data analysis identified secondary transition operations and management as the most prevalent theme. *PSEL 2015 Standard 9: Operations and Management* stated that "[e]ffective educational leaders manage school operations and resources to promote each student's academic success and well-being (NPBEA, 2015, p. 17)." The four clusters that made up the theme of secondary transition operations and management: (1) secondary transition staff resources, (2) funding for secondary transition resources, (3) secondary

transition resources, and (4) secondary transition laws, rights, policies, and regulations aligned with five of the 12 elements outlined under *PSEL 2015 Standard 9*.

Table 4.2. Theme 1: ST operations and management

Theme 1: ST Operations & Management (185) *PSEL 2015 Standard 9*	
Cluster 1: ST Staff Resources (93)	
Knowledge Code - *Principals need to know:*	**Action Code -** *Principals need to:*
That effective ST programming requires staff time (34)	Allocate staff time for interagency collaboration (11), family engagement (9), student-centered planning (8), and ST PD (4)
	Adequately staff ST programming (18)
	Protect ST staffs' work and learning from disruption (5)
	Develop clear roles and responsibilities for ST staff (4)
Cluster 2: Funding for ST Resources (49)	
Knowledge Code - *Principals need to know:*	**Action Code -** *Principals need to:*
That effective ST programming requires funding (17)	Allocate funds for ST curriculum and instruction (8), family engagement activities (7), student transportation to community-based ST activities (6), and staff PD on effective ST programming (2)
	Principals have the authority to allocate funds for ST programming (5)
	Ensure that IDEA funds are appropriately allocated, as required by law (4)
Cluster 3: ST Laws, Rights, Policies & Regulations (24)	
Knowledge Code - *Principals need to know:*	**Action Code -** *Principals need to:*
How to help staff understand how all local, state, and federal laws, policies, and regulations related to ST inform staff practice (10)	
How to comply with all local, state, and federal laws, policies, and regulations related to ST (9)	
Local graduation policies and regulations and how they impact students with disabilities and subsequently inform ST programming (3)	
That access to ST programming for students with disabilities is a right, and know the relationship between federal ST legislation and the larger disabilities rights movement	

(2)	
Cluster 4: ST Resources (19)	
Knowledge Code - *Principals need to know:*	**Action Code -** *Principals need to:*
	Provide resources for ST programming (15)
	Allocate space for ST programming (4)

Cluster 1: Secondary Transition Staff Resources

Data analysis identified secondary transition staff resources as the most prevalent cluster within the theme of secondary transition operations and management, and across all five themes. The first and most frequent code within the cluster identified that at the most fundamental level principals needed to know that effective secondary transition programming takes staff time. Codes two through six focused on staff roles and responsibilities and aligned directly with *PSEL 2015 Standard 9 – Element b)*: Effective educational leaders "manage staff resources, assigning and scheduling teachers and staff roles and responsibilities that optimize their professional capacity to address each student's learning needs (NPBEA, 2015, p. 17)." The eighth code in this cluster aligned with *PSEL 2015 Standard 9 – Element e)*: Effective educational leaders "protect teachers' and other staff members' work and learning from disruption (NPBEA, 2015, p. 17)."

Principal knowledge. Participants placed the most emphasis on highlighting the need for principals to know that the implementation of effective secondary transition programming takes staff time. Many participants simply noted that secondary transition requires "time" or "staff time." Other participants provided an array of examples of what they would want principals to know about the responsibilities associated with implementing effective secondary transition programming such as writing IEPs, joint meeting/planning time with colleagues, interagency collaboration, community-based instruction, and assessment administration.

Principal action – allocating staff time. Knowledge of the array of activities involved in secondary transition linked closely with participants' identification of the importance of principals' capacity to thoughtfully allocate staff time. Participants' responses gave nearly equal emphasis to the need for principals to allocate staff time for interagency collaboration, family engagement, and student-centered planning respectively. Each of these three key secondary transition activities required staff time for planning and follow up beyond time allocated for classroom instruction, administrative duties, direct meetings or family communication. Although noted, participants placed half as much emphasis on the need for staff time for professional development in secondary transition, perhaps indicating that support for daily responsibilities is a paramount concern.

Principal action – assigning staff schedules, roles and responsibilities. Related to the appropriate allocation of staff time, participants reported that principals played key roles in staffing secondary transition programming. Specifically that principals needed to (1) adequately staff secondary transition programming including full time transition specialists and support staff, as needed; and (2) understand, and clearly communicate explicit roles and responsibilities for secondary transition staff members.

Principal action – protecting staff work from disruption. A number of participants also highlighted the role principals played in protecting the work and learning of secondary transition staff members from disruption including but not limited to staff duties such as lunch and hall monitoring. This goes beyond understanding that secondary transition takes staff time and requires that there are staff assigned to specific roles and responsibilities. Participants emphasized that principals must make secondary

transition a priority, and noted that when principals do not "…[find] value in transition…they put other daily duties ahead of this piece of a student's education…." When staff are pulled to other duties their secondary transition responsibilities are either not implemented or not implemented effectively, negatively impacting student outcomes.

Cluster 2: Funding for Secondary Transition Resources

Data analysis identified funding for secondary transition resources as the second most prevalent cluster within the theme of secondary transition operation and management. The first code within this cluster emphasized the need for principals to know that effective secondary transition programming required funds. Codes two through six aligned most strongly with *PSEL 2015 Standard 9 – Element c)*: Effective educational leaders "seek, acquire, and manage fiscal, physical, and other resources to support curriculum, instruction, and assessment; student learning community; professional capacity and community; and family and community engagement (NPBEA, 2015, p. 17)." The seventh code aligned with *PSEL 2015 Standard 9 – Element d)*: Effective educational leaders are responsible, ethical, and accountable stewards of the school's monetary and non-monetary resources, engaging in effective budgeting and accounting practices (NPBEA, 2015, p. 17)."

Principal knowledge. Participants placed the most emphasis on the need for principals to know that the implementation of effective secondary transition programming required funding. Most simply noted that effective secondary transition programming required "funding" or "financial resources." One participant highlighted that, "Implementing transition activities at this caliber requires financial resources that support staff in accessing the means and methods to expose students to these

opportunities." Another stated, "I feel principals should work to find funding that can be used to support activities for transition planning and programming. Right now, the staff are responsible for that." Both statements connect funding to staff perception of principal support for secondary transition staff and programming.

Principal action – allocating funds. Participants noted that principals have the authority to allocate funds for secondary transition programming, as well as a legal responsibility to ensure that IDEA funds are allocated appropriately.

In terms of where funds should be allocated, participants focused on four specific secondary transition program resources and activities they felt required funds: (1) family engagement, (2) secondary transition curriculum and instruction, (3) transportation for community-based instruction, (4) and secondary transition professional development. Participants placed almost equal weight on the first three activities, and half as much on secondary transition professional development, suggesting a prioritization of activities that most directly touch students and their families.

Cluster 3: Secondary Transition Laws, Rights, Polices and Regulations

Data analysis identified secondary transition laws, rights, policies and regulations as the third most prevalent cluster within the theme of secondary transition operations and management. All four codes within the cluster aligned to *PSEL 2015 Standard 9 – Element h)*: Effective educational leaders "know, comply with, and help the school community understand local, state, and federal laws, rights, policies, and regulations so as to promote student success (NPBEA, 2015, p. 17)."

Principal knowledge - compliance. Participants emphasized the responsibilities principals have related to secondary transition compliance. They specifically noted the

need for principals to know and comply with all local, state, and federal laws, policies, and regulations related to secondary transition including but not limited to knowledge about: IDEA, and the differences between IDEA and ADA. Related to compliance, participants highlighted the role principals have to ensure that staff understand how all local, state, and federal laws, policies, and regulations related to secondary transition inform staff practice with a noted emphasis on the provision of secondary transition services as outlined in IDEA, and Indicator 13.

Principal Knowledge – context. Beyond compliance, participants noted the need for principals to know (1) local graduation policies and regulations and how they impact students with disabilities and subsequently inform secondary transition programming; and (2) that access to secondary transition programming for students with disabilities is a right that arose out of the larger disabilities rights movement. Both of which demonstrate the need for principals to have an understanding of the broader context of secondary education and how its provision (or lack of provision) has impacted and continues to impact students with disabilities, highlighting the importance of and need for effective secondary transition programming.

Cluster 4: Secondary Transition Resources

Data analysis identified secondary transition resources as the least prevalent cluster within the theme of secondary transition operations and management. It included two codes that aligned to *PSEL 2015 Standard 9 – Element c)*: Effective educational leaders "seek, acquire, and manage fiscal, physical, and other resources to support curriculum, instruction, and assessment; student learning community; professional capacity and community; and family and community engagement (NPBEA, 2015, p.

17).” This cluster was treated differently than cluster two, which was also aligned to *PSEL 2015 Standard 9 – Element c)* because cluster two focused on funding for resources and cluster four focused on resources that may or may not require funding such as access to free curricula, and school space for secondary transition programming.

Principal action – allocating resources. Participants highlighted the need for principals to allocate school resources to secondary transition programming. Participants specifically noted the need for principles to provide resources for secondary transition curriculum and instruction, and student-centered planning. They also emphasized the need for principals to allocate space for secondary transition programming, a physical resource.

Theme 1 Summary

The four clusters that made up the theme of secondary transition operations and management: (1) secondary transition staff resources, (2) funding for secondary transition resources, (3) secondary transition resources, and (4) secondary transition laws, rights, policies, and regulations highlighted the principal knowledge and actions required to support the daily implementation of effective secondary transition programming by school-based staff.

Participants emphasized the need for principals to understand the diverse roles and responsibilities required of secondary transition staff beyond classroom-based instruction, and allocate secondary transition staff time and positions based on this understanding. Principals should also support the implementation of effective secondary transition programming through the allocation of funding and school resources. Although principals have some discretion on how to allocate staff time, funding and school

resources, their decisions must be tied to legal requirements dictated by IDEA, as well as a school systems' graduation policy and procedures.

The transition-focused knowledge and actions outlined in the theme of secondary transition operations and management are supportive of a principal's identified role to "manage school operations and resources to promote each student's academic success and well-being (NPBEA, 2015, p. 17)." These responsibilities are best enacted based on principals' understanding of the importance of preparing students with disabilities for postsecondary success, and aligned with their schools' "mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of each student (NPBEA, 2015, p. 19)."

Theme 2: Secondary Transition Professional Learning Community

Data analysis identified secondary transition professional learning community as the second most prevalent theme. Secondary transition team capacity development, the first of the three clusters that made up this theme, aligned with three of the nine elements under *PSEL 2015 Standard 6: Professional Community for Teachers and Staff*. *PSEL 2015 Standard 6* stated that "[e]ffective educational leaders develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being (NPBEA, 2015, p. 14)." The other two clusters that made up the theme: development of an open and trusting relationship with secondary transition staff and secondary transition professional development for staff, aligned with two of the eight elements outlined under *PSEL 2015 Standard 7: Professional Community for Teachers and Staff. PSEL 2015 Standard 7* stated that "[e]ffective educational leaders foster a

professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being (NPBEA, 2015, p. 15)."

Table 4.3. Theme 2: ST professional learning community

Theme 2: ST Professional Learning Community (103) *PSEL 2015 Standards 6 & 7*	
Cluster 1: ST PD for Staff (44)	
Knowledge Code - *Principals need to know*	**Action Code** – *Principals need to*:
	Provide access to ST PD for ST staff (38)
	Principals have the authority to set PD schedules and topics (3)
	Provide access to and encourage participation in PD on special education for all school staff (3)
Cluster 2: ST Team Capacity Development (40)	
Knowledge Code - *Principals need to know*	**Action Code** – *Principals need to:*
	Empower and motivate ST staff to become experts in the implementation of effective ST programming (14)
	Ensure the implementation of a meaningful, research-anchored system of supervision for ST staff (14)
	Provide support and leadership to the ST team (10)
	Recruit and hire effective ST staff members (2)
Cluster 3: Development of an Open and Trusting Relationship with ST Staff (19)	
Knowledge Code - *Principals need to know*	**Action Code** – *Principals need to:*
	Respect the expertise of ST staff and involve them in school wide decision-making (15)
	Participate in IEP meetings (4)

Cluster 1: Secondary Transition Professional Development for Staff

Data analysis marginally identified secondary transition professional development for staff as the most prevalent cluster within the theme of secondary transition professional learning community. The three codes that made up this cluster aligned

directly with *PSEL 2015 Standard 7 – Element f)*: Effective educational leaders "[d]esign and implement job-embedded and other opportunities for professional learning collaboratively with faculty and staff (NPBEA, 2015, p. 15)."

Principal action – provide access to secondary transition professional development. Participants placed the most weight on the need for principals to provide secondary transition staff with access to secondary transition professional development. In terms of topic areas, participants highlighted best practices generally. Specific topic areas included: age appropriate transition assessments, youth leadership, family outreach, local regulations, student centered planning, accommodations, Indicator 13, and interagency collaboration, more specifically. Access included school-based professional development, as well as opportunities to attend LEA and SEA professional development offerings, and secondary transition conferences. Participant emphasis on the need for secondary transition professional development for school-based secondary transition staff suggested recognition of the fact that secondary transition staff may lack key secondary transition knowledge and skills, particularly related to their secondary transition responsibilities beyond classroom-based instruction.

Participants also noted that principals (1) have the power to provide encouragement to all staff to participate in secondary transition professional development, not just special education staff; and (2) the authority to provide staff with access to "appropriate" and "meaningful" professional development opportunities on secondary transition: "[Principals] can also make an executive decision to implement a training they feel addresses a visionary need." Both of which would imply that principals should recognize the importance of secondary transition professional development for

general educators, and consider secondary transition professional development "a visionary need."

Cluster 2: Secondary Transition Team Capacity Development

Data analysis identified secondary transition team capacity development as the second most prevalent cluster within the theme of secondary transition professional learning community with participants placing only slightly less emphasis here than on secondary transition professional development for staff.

Principal action – empower and motivate staff to use best practices. The most prevalent code within in this cluster aligned most strongly with *PSEL 2015 Standard 6 – Element f):* Effective educational leaders "[e]mpower and motive teachers and staff to the highest levels of professional practice and to continuous learning and improvement (NPBEA, 2015, p. 14)." Participants emphasized the need for principals to ensure that secondary transition teams grounded their work in effective, research-based practices. Specifically participants called on principals to: (1) "…be aware that there are best practices that should be employed in implementing an effective secondary transition program in their schools;" (2) "expect best practices to be used;" and (3) encourage staff to engage in presentation and research about best transition practices." Beyond merely providing staff access to secondary transition professional development, participant responses identified the need for more extensive, school-based capacity development.

Principal action – supervise and evaluate secondary transition staff. Participants placed the same emphasis on the second code within the cluster, which aligned with *PSEL 2015 Standard 6 – Element e)*: Effective educational leaders "[d]eliver actionable feedback about instruction and other professional practice through valid,

research-anchored systems of supervision and evaluation to support the development of teachers' and staff members' knowledge, skills, and practice (NPBEA, 2015, p. 14)." Participants first noted that principals are responsible for supervising secondary transition staff, including making sure that all staff are in compliance with IDEA. Participants also highlighted the need for principals to use "appropriate measures to evaluate secondary transition providers," and "provide meaningful feedback using measures specific to secondary transition…." Participant emphasis on "appropriate measures" hinted at a misalignment between existing evaluation metrics and the roles and responsibilities of secondary transition providers, tying this code back to Theme 1, clusters 1 (secondary transition staff resources) and 3 (secondary transition laws, rights, policies and regulations). Principals cannot authentically and effectively supervise and evaluate secondary transition staff, if they do not have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

Principal action – hire and support secondary transition staff. The final two codes of this cluster aligned most strongly with *PSEL 2015 Standard 6 – Element a)*: Effective educational leaders "[r]ecruit, hire, support, develop, and retain effective and caring teachers and other professional staff and form them into an educationally effective faculty (NPBEA, 2015, p. 14)." Participants charged principals with providing leadership and support for secondary transition staff including "encouragement," and "listen[ing] to [staff] needs and ideas." They also noted the responsibilities principals have to hire secondary transition staff.

Cluster 3: Development of an Open and Trusting Relationship with Secondary Transition Staff

Development of an open and trusting relationship with secondary transition staff was the third most prevalent cluster within the theme of secondary transition professional learning community. Participants place half as much emphasis on this cluster than the previous two. All three codes within the cluster aligned to *PSEL 2015 Standard 7 – Element e)*: Effective educational leaders "[d]evelop and support open, productive, caring, and trusting working relationships among leaders, faculty, and staff to promote professional capacity and the improvement of practice (NPBEA, 2015, p. 15)."

Principal action – respect, engage with, and include secondary transition staff. Participant responses highlighted the need for principals to respect the expertise of secondary transition staff and involve them in school wide decision-making. At the most basic level respondents highlighted the need for principals to (1) simply acknowledge special education, (2) "get feedback from secondary transition providers on [the] implementation of transition programs (specifically feedback on staff and time needs)," and (3) include "secondary transition in school wide initiatives and goals." More deeply participants elevated the need for principals to (1) "respect the ideas/perspectives of secondary transition providers;" (2) "[build] a cohesive educational team to support transition and to work collaboratively with outside agencies;" and (3) "foster collaboration among special education staff, general education staff and other support staff (guidance counselors, career counselors, etc.)."

As part of this work, respondents noted the need for principals to attend and be more involved in IEP meetings. They also highlighted the need for principals to attend

other unspecified meetings with secondary transition staff and ask questions of secondary transition providers, as a means to engage in the process. Regardless if principals have the capacity to attend IEP and other meetings with secondary transition staff, this cluster points to the sense of neglect, and even disrespect, some secondary transition staff may feel from principals, and the desire for secondary transition to be consider amongst a principal's priorities.

Theme 2 Summary

The three clusters that made up the theme of secondary transition professional learning community: (1) secondary transition professional development for staff, (2) secondary transition team capacity development, and (3) development of an open and trusting relationship with secondary transition staff highlighted the principal actions required to develop secondary transition staff into an informed, effective professional learning community.

Participants placed nearly equal emphasis on the need for principals to provide staff access to secondary transition professional development, and further develop the professional capacity of the secondary transition team by holding staff accountable to the highest standards of effective secondary transition program implementation through a research-anchored system of supervision. Participants also noted that principals should strive to develop an open and trusting relationship with secondary transition staff through the regular demonstrations of their respect, engagement with, and inclusion of secondary transition staff by including them in transition-related and school-wide decision-making.

The transition-focused actions outlined in the theme of secondary transition professional learning community are aligned with a principal's identified roles to develop

the professional capacity of school staff and foster a professional community of teachers and other staff to promote the academic success and general well-being of all students (NPBEA, 2015). Although participants only identified action codes within this theme, principal action cannot be separated from principal knowledge. The principal responsibilities outlined in this theme cannot be carried out effectively without grounding in the secondary transition knowledge related to staff roles and responsibilities outlined in Theme 1, clusters 1 (secondary transition staff resources) and 3 (secondary transition laws, rights, policies, and regulations).

Theme 3: Coherent System of Secondary Transition Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Student Support Services

Participants' identified a coherent system of curriculum instruction, assessment, and student support services as the third most prevalent theme. Secondary transition curriculum, instruction, and assessment, the first of the two clusters that made up the third theme, aligned with three of the seven elements under *PSEL 2015 Standard 4: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment,* which stated that "[e]ffective educational leaders develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student's academic success and well-being (NPBEA, 2015, p. 12)." The second cluster, secondary transition student support services, aligned with two of the six elements outlined under *PSEL 2015 Standard 5: Community of Care and Support for Students*, which stated that "[e]ffective educational leaders cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student (NPBEA, 2015, p. 13)."

Table 4.4. Theme 3: Coherent system of ST curriculum, instruction, assessment and student support services

Theme 3: Coherent System of ST Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment, and Student Support Services (83) *PSEL 2015 Standards 4 & 5*	
Cluster 1: ST Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment (57)	
Knowledge Code – *Principals need to know:*	**Action Code –** *Principals need to:*
That effective ST programming requires a comprehensive system of curriculum, instruction, and assessment that includes academic, life, social, emotional, and employment skill development (10)	Develop a school schedule that allows for the implementation of effective ST programming (19)
Principals need ST knowledge in order to make informed decisions about ST curriculum, instruction, and assessment (6)	Ensure the availability and use of age-appropriate transition assessments (12)
How to incorporate work-based learning experiences into a cohesive system of ST curriculum, instruction, and assessment (5)	Principals have the authority to approve ST curriculum (5)
Cluster 2: ST Student Support Services (26)	
Knowledge Code – *Principals need to know:*	**Action Code –** *Principals need to:*
The full range of ST support services (7)	Ensure that students have opportunities to learn and apply self-determination knowledge and skills (9)
Student support needs (6)	
How student-centered planning informs effective ST programming (4)	

Cluster 1: Secondary Transition Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

Data analysis identified secondary transition curriculum, instruction, and assessment as the most prevalent cluster within the theme of a coherent system of secondary transition curriculum instruction, assessment, and student support services. Five of the six codes that made up this cluster aligned directly with *PSEL 2015 Standard 4 – Element c)*: Effective educational leaders "[p]romote instructional practice that is consistent with knowledge of child learning and development, effective pedagogy, and

the needs of students (NPBEA, 2015, p. 12).” The sixth code aligned with *PSEL 2015 Standard 4 – Element f):* Effective educational leaders “[e]mploy valid assessments that are consistent with knowledge of child learning and development and technical standards of measurement (NPBEA, 2015, p. 12).”

Principal knowledge – secondary transition curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Participants referenced the secondary transition curriculum, instruction, and assessment knowledge that principals need in order to support effective secondary transition programming. Participants placed the most emphasis on the need for principals to know that secondary transition programming required a comprehensive system of curriculum, instruction, and assessment that included academic, life, social, emotional, and employment skill development. Participants specifically called out the need for principals to understand that “…all aspects of instruction need to lend themselves to preparing youth for meaningful outcomes, whether employment or post-secondary opportunities,” and “Education is not just about academics. It is important for students to have life and employment skills.”

Participants emphasized that principals required secondary transition knowledge in order to make informed decisions about secondary curriculum, instruction, and assessment. This knowledge should include at least “basic knowledge of transition curriculum,” knowledge of “the classes their school offers,” and an awareness of the instructional resources available to the secondary transition team. A number of participants stated that they did not feel principals had the knowledge necessary to make decisions related to secondary transition curriculum and instruction.

Principal knowledge – work-based learning experiences. Participants noted that principals be aware of the need to incorporate work-based learning experiences into a cohesive system of secondary transition curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Participants observed that principals need to know "work-based learning requirements and resources," the "[l]ogistics of developing and implementing work-based learning opportunities (liability, needed support staff, student safety, scheduling)," and "[w]ho are the community partners that are providing work-based learning experiences to students and how to support the maintenance of the relationship." Principal knowledge about student work-based learning experiences is connected to principal actions related to school scheduling, as well as principal knowledge and action related to secondary transition staff roles and responsibilities covered in theme 1, and interagency and community engagement in theme 4.

Principal action – make secondary transition a priority in the school schedule. Participant responses raised the importance of secondary transition and the need for principals to prioritize secondary transition programming in the school schedule. Principals were specifically called to: (1) "[allow] time in the students' school day schedules to participate in transition activities;" (2) "[h]ave flexibility within schedules so that students can also participate in more…activities to grow their transition skills;" (3) "time for students who need it to gain employment and independent living skill community-based instruction;" and (4) "TIME for students to meaningful engage in career development activities and to learn and apply functional skills such as action planning, problem solving." Participant responses focused on scheduling related to student transition activities beyond classroom-based instruction and assessment.

Participants acknowledged that secondary transition programming is one of many competing priorities for school-based time:

> …there are so many academic demands that are placed on teachers that time is not usually devoted to secondary transition for students with disabilities who are on a diploma track.
>
> More time in the school day that is devoted to preparing students for life after high school. A lot of time is spent preparing students for high-stakes testing; however not a whole lot of time is devoted to actually preparing students for life after high school.

Despite the pressure on educational leaders to focus heavily on academics, participants charged principals to take a whole-child approach to education, and design school schedules that provided opportunities for students to develop the knowledge and skills necessary for successful postsecondary outcomes in education, employment and independent living.

Principal action – ensure access to transition assessments. Connected to curriculum, instruction and school schedules, participants called out the need for principals to ensure the availability and use of age-appropriate transition assessments. Many responses highlighted the role that principals had in simply ensuring that secondary transition service providers had access to age-appropriate transition assessments: "Access to meaningful assessments and assessments results that are interpreted in a way students can grasp and use to fuel IEP development and implementation." It was also noted, however, that principals needed to have an "understanding of the logistics of conducting age-appropriate assessments (costs of assessments, scheduling of assessments, how results of assessments are used)," related to principal knowledge and action related to secondary transition operations and management outlined in theme 1.

Principal action – approve secondary transition curriculum. Participants noted that principals have the authority to approve secondary transition curriculum, and noted that it "[w]ould be nice if principals were more tuned into available transition curriculum and instruction or made sure they let the transition professional choose appropriate curriculum;" and "[p]rincipals and/or instructional coaches should be just as critical of curriculum selection and instructional decisions surrounding secondary transition."

Cluster 2: Secondary Transition Student Support Services

Secondary transition student support services was the second cluster within the theme of a coherent system of curriculum instruction, assessment, and student support services. Participants put slightly more than a third as much emphasis on cluster 2, as cluster 1. Two of the four codes within in this cluster aligned most strongly with *PSEL 2015 Standard 5 – Element b):* Effective leaders "[b]uild and maintain a safe, caring, and healthy school environment that meets the academic, social, emotional, and physical needs of each student (NPBEA, 2015, p. 13)." The other two codes aligned most strongly with *PSEL 2015 Standard 5 – Element c):* Effective leaders "[c]reate and sustain a school environment in which each student is known, accepted and valued, trusted and respected, cared for, and encourage to be an active and responsible member of the school community (NPBEA, 2015, p.13)."

Principal knowledge. Participants referenced what principals need to know in order to support effective secondary transition student support services. They specifically emphasized that principals need to know (1) student support needs, (2) the full range of secondary transition support services, and (3) how student centered-planning informs

effective secondary transition programming. Participant emphasis suggested a need for principals to have the knowledge necessary to ensure that school staff appropriately assessed student support needs, and individualized student supports based on those assessed needs.

Principal action – create opportunities for students to develop self-determination. Participants highlighted that principals need to ensure that students have opportunities to learn and apply self-determination knowledge and skills. According to participants, principals should take the following actions to accomplish this: (1) a general "[e]mphasis on self-determination and advocacy;" (2) "classes and curriculum in self-advocacy and leadership;" and (3) the "[d]evelopment of opportunities [for students] to self-advocate, run their own IEP meetings and ask for accommodations when needed from teachers, employers, etc." This principal action should not be separated from principal knowledge related to secondary transition curriculum, instruction and student support needs. Principals will not create opportunities for student self-determination if they do not know that it is a vital component of students' successfully transitioning from high school to adult life.

Theme 3 Summary

The two clusters that made up theme 3: (1) secondary transition curriculum, instruction, and assessment, and (2) secondary transition student support services outlined the principal knowledge and actions required to ensure that a coherent system of secondary transition curricula, instruction, assessments, and student support services was included amongst a school's educational priorities. Participants placed nearly twice as much emphasis on principal knowledge and actions related to secondary transition

curriculum, instruction, and assessment, as to those related to secondary transition student support services. Across both clusters, participants specifically highlighted principal knowledge and actions required to take a whole-child approach to education and support services, and the importance of principals including effective secondary transition programming as a key component of that approach for students with disabilities.

The transition-focused knowledge and actions outlined in the theme of coherent systems of secondary transition curriculum, instruction, assessment, and student services were aligned with a principal's identified roles to both "develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment (NPBEA, 2015, p.12)," and "cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community (NPBEA, 2015, p. 13)." As noted above, the principal responsibilities outlined in this theme were connected with principal secondary transition-related knowledge and action outlined in themes 1 and 4. Given the focus on the whole-child and prioritization of secondary transition outlined in this theme, the principal responsibilities covered above would also connect strongly with a principal's school-wide educational mission and vision discussed in theme 5.

Theme 4: Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community

Participants' responses identified meaningful engagement of families and communities as the fourth most prevalent theme. The three clusters that made up the theme aligned with seven of the 10 elements under *PSEL 2015 Standard 8: Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community,* which stated that "[e]ffective educational leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually

beneficial ways to promote each student's academic success and well-being (NPBEA, 2015, p. 16)."

Table 4.5. Theme 4: Meaningful engagement of families and community

Theme 4: Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community (78) *PSEL 2015 Standard 8*	
Cluster 1: Family Engagement (36)	
Knowledge Code – *Principals need to know:*	**Action Code** – *Principals need to:*
Principals require specific knowledge in order to effectively engage with families about secondary transition (5)	Principals need to create a positive school culture that all families find welcoming and supportive including the families of students with disabilities (15)
That family engagement impacts student outcomes (3)	Principals need to develop and provide the school as a secondary transition resource for families (10)
	Principals need to respect family input (3)
Cluster 2: Interagency Collaboration	
Knowledge Code – *Principals need to know:*	**Action Code** – *Principals need to:*
Principals require specific knowledge in order to support effective interagency collaboration (16)	Create a positive school culture that supports interagency collaboration (11)
	Support interagency collaboration by signing MOAs/MOUs (5)
Cluster 3: Community Engagement	
Knowledge Code – *Principals need to know:*	**Action Code** – *Principals need to:*
	Develop community partnerships to provide access to community resources for ST programming (10)

Cluster 1: Family Engagement

Family engagement was the most prevalent cluster within the theme of meaningful family and community engagement. The codes that made up this cluster aligned directly with the following *PSEL 2015 Standard 8 – Elements:* Effective leaders:

> a) Are approachable, accessible, and welcoming to families and members of the community.
>
> b) Create and sustain positive, collaborative, and productive relationships with families and the community for the benefit of students.

> c) Engage in regular and open two-way communication with families and the community about the school, students, needs, problems, and accomplishments.
>
> e) Create means for the school community to partner with families to support student learning in and out of school.
>
> g) Develop and provide the school as resource for families and the community. (NPBEA, 2015, p. 16)

Principal action – creating a positive school culture for all families.

Participants emphasized the need for principals to create a positive school culture that all families find welcoming and supportive including the families of students with disabilities. This included providing support for staff family outreach and engagement efforts, as a means for school staff to connect and partner with families in support of students.

Related to creating a positive school culture, participants highlighted the need for principals to develop and provide the school as a secondary transition resource for families. Examples of resources included "…transition fairs, guest speakers, workshops…," as well as the "Availability of community resources and agencies to also connect with parents and families at school events."

Participants also noted, with less emphasis, the importance of principals respecting family input: "Principals need to listen to the family and [what] they have to say as they often know the student the best. They have to take this information into consideration when making decisions for the student and develop partnerships with families."

Principal knowledge. As part of creating a positive school culture for families, participants placed the most emphasis on the need for principals to have a basic working

knowledge of secondary transition in order to effectively engage with and support parents of students with disabilities. One participant stated that principals needed to "Have knowledge of transition services so that [they] can accurately discuss and refer students to the proper programming when discussing with parents." Others noted a need for general knowledge of the secondary transition process, as well as basic content knowledge related to "agency-related information, differences between IDEA and ADA, and much more." Principal knowledge focused heavily on what principals needed to know in order to inform and help connect families to services that support students with disabilities both within schools, and in the community including adult service agencies.

Participants also noted, with less emphasis, the need for principals to understand that family engagement impacts student outcomes. Specifically, participants highlighted variance in family engagement and how strong parent advocates may secure more secondary transition services for their children, while parents who are less engaged may not have the information necessary to support their children as they transition from high school creating barriers to student postsecondary success. This aligns with the call for principals to know about school- and community-based student support programs and services.

Cluster 2: Interagency Collaboration

Interagency collaboration was the second most prevalent cluster within the theme of meaningful family and community engagement. The three codes that made up this cluster aligned directly with *PSEL 2015 Standard 8 – Element j):* Effective educational leaders: "Build and sustain productive partnerships with public and private sectors to promote school improvement and student learning (NPBEA, 2015, p. 16)."

Principal knowledge. Participants noted that principals required specific knowledge in order to provide effective support for interagency collaboration. At a fundamental level, principals needed to understand the importance of the connection between schools and adult service agencies and community-based organizations, and the role these outside organizations played in supporting students with disabilities in their transition from high school to adult life. Participants pointed out that at a more functional level principal support of interagency collaboration required, "Basic understanding of agencies and support services – including intake and eligibility determination and services provided." It would be ideal if the principal had knowledge of the transition planning process in order to understand why including these agencies is essential, and how interagency collaboration impacts IEP development and compliance. Principal knowledge about and support of interagency collaboration could help in developing school-based "processes and procedures" that support effective collaboration.

Participants also highlighted the need for principals to understand the challenges associated with interagency collaboration. Participants emphasized that principal knowledge about interagency collaboration impacted students' access to outside agencies. Some participants stated that principals lack this knowledge: "I do not feel that principals have any ideas as far as what interagency collaboration involves and who some of those community agencies involved." Principals that lack interagency collaboration knowledge cannot provide the level of support required to ensure that it is being done effectively.

Principal action – support interagency collaboration. Participants highlighted the need for principals to create a positive school culture that supported interagency collaboration. Actions related to this included to: (1) "…be open to outside agencies and

organizations coming into the building to support students;" (2) "…invit[e] outside agencies to work with students and families…;" and (3) have "…meetings with interagency when applicable." Participants also noted the need for principals to "implement protocols for interagency collaboration."

Related to this, participants separately called out the need for principals to support interagency collaboration by signing Memorandums of Understanding/Agreement (MOAs/MOUs). This is significant, in that the principal is one of, if not the only, person authorized to do this at the school level. This is not something that school staff can accomplish without principal support. Participant language related to interagency "processes and procedures," "protocols," and MOAs/MOUs in this cluster all relate to principal authority, and suggest that school-based staff perceive principals as playing a key role in exercising and/or transferring this authority through clear, school-based interagency collaboration policies and procedures.

Cluster 3: Community Engagement

Community engagement was the least prevalent cluster within the theme of meaningful family and community engagement. The codes that made up this cluster aligned directly with the following *PSEL 2015 Standard 8 – Element d):* Effective educational leaders: "Maintain a presence in the community to understand its strengths and needs, develop productive relationships, and engage its resources for the school (NPBEA, 2015, p. 16)"

Principal action. Participants highlighted the need for principals to develop community partnerships to provide access to community resources for secondary transition programming. Some participants simply listed generic "community resources,"

while others focused on partnerships with local employers to support work-based learning experiences for students: "Engage with community to allow for the development of community based work experiences." Principal actions related to work-based learning experiences cannot be separated from principal knowledge about work-based learning experiences outlined in theme 3, cluster 1: secondary transition curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Theme 4 Summary

The three clusters that made up theme 4: (1) family engagement, (2) interagency collaboration, and (3) community engagement highlighted the principal knowledge and actions required to meaningfully engage extended members of the school community in support of students with disabilities. Participants placed almost equal emphasis on principal knowledge and actions related to family engagement and interagency collaboration, and a third as much on community engagement. In terms of family engagement and interagency collaboration, participants specifically highlighted principal knowledge and actions required to recognize the importance of both in terms of secondary transition, as well as the roles that principals played in creating a welcoming school environment and supporting related staff activities. Participants also noted the role that principal authority played in interagency collaboration, highlighting principal actions that could not necessarily be assumed by other staff members in this area such as MOU's. This authority has the capacity to impact partnership development and maintenance both interagency- and community-based.

The transition-focused knowledge and actions outlined in the theme of meaningful engagement of families and community aligned with a principal's identified

role to "engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student's academic success and well-being (NPBEA, 2015, p.16)," The principal knowledge and actions outlined in this theme connect with related principal secondary knowledge and actions outlined in themes 1 and 3. Additionally, given the big picture thinking and long-range planning required for effective family and community engagement, the principal responsibilities covered above also connected strongly with a principal's school-wide educational mission and vision reviewed in theme 5.

Theme 5: Principal Vision for Secondary Transition Programming

Principal vision for secondary transition programming was the least prevalent of the five themes, and aligned with *Standard 1: Mission, Vision, and Core Values* of the PSEL 2015 (NPBEA, 2015). *PSEL* 2015 *Standard 1* stated that "[e]ffective educational leaders develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of each student (NPBEA, 2015, p. 19)."

Table 4.6. Principal vision for ST programming

Theme 5: Principal Vision for ST Programming (24) *PSEL 2015 Standard 1*	
Cluster 1: Advocacy for Students with Disabilities (17)	
Knowledge Code – *Principals need to know:*	**Action Code –** *Principals need to:*
	Articulate and advocate for an inclusive school culture with high expectations for all students (8)
	Prioritize and advocate for student-centered planning (5) and family engagement (2)
	Demonstrate a commitment to school-wide vision of effective ST programming to promote staff buy-in (2)
Cluster 2: ST Programming as Part of the Educational Mission (7)	
Knowledge Code – *Principals need to know:*	**Action Code –** *Principals need to:*
	Principals have the authority to include a vision of effective ST programming in their school's educational mission (4)
	Recognize the importance of effective ST programming in order to incorporate it into their educational mission for their school (3)

Cluster 1: Advocacy for Students with Disabilities

Advocacy for students with disabilities was the most prevalent cluster within the theme of principal vision for secondary transition programming. Three of the four codes that made up this cluster aligned with PSEL 2015 *Standard 1 – Element c)*: Effective educational leaders "articulate, advocate, and cultivate core values that define the school's culture and stress the imperative of child-centered education, high expectations, and student support; equity, inclusiveness, and social justice; openness, caring, and trust; and continuous improvement (NPBEA, 2015, p. 9)." The third code aligned with PSEL 2015 *Standard 1 – Element f)*: Effective educational leaders "develop shared

understanding of and commitment to mission, vision, and core values with the school and the community (NPBEA, 2015, p. 9)."

Principal action – advocate for students with disabilities. Participants emphasized that the importance of a principal's mission, vision, and core values articulating and advocating for an inclusive school culture with high expectations for all students Specifically, participants noted that principals need to advocate for students with disabilities by "understanding the importance of inclusive classrooms," "promoting the least restrictive environment," and "believ[ing] in great future possibility for all students."

Participant responses also explored the principal's role in advocating for specific aspects of effective secondary transition programming: student-centered planning and family engagement. Participants highlighted the need for principals to "embrace student centered planning as part of the school-wide practice," and observed "that principals are the leaders of the school building and if they make family engagement a priority, it will be a priority."

Participants also noted the role principals played in staff buy-in. Specifically participants emphasized that principal commitment to a school-wide vision of effective secondary transition programming impacts staff buy-in: "If the principal does not appear to 'buy in' in getting the supports and opportunities and time to help students adequately prepare for transition…then the supporting staff won't buy in either."

Cluster 2: Secondary Transition Programming as Part of the Educational Mission

Secondary transition programming as part of the educational mission was the less prevalent of the two clusters within the principal vision for secondary transition

programming theme by more than half. The two codes that made up this cluster both aligned directly with *PSEL 2015 Standard 1 – Element a)*: Effective educational leaders "develop an educational mission for the school to promote the academic success and well-being of each student (NPBEA, 2015, p. 9)." Participants placed almost equal emphasis on codes one and two within this cluster.

Principal action. Participants highlighted that principals must recognize the importance of effective secondary transition programming in order to incorporate it into their educational mission for their schools. Most notably, participants emphasized that principals need to connect effective secondary transition programming to positive postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities, in order to prioritize it as part of a school's educational mission. Participants also noted that principals have the authority to include a vision of effective secondary transition programming in their school's educational mission.

Theme 5 Summary

The two clusters that made up theme 5: (1) advocacy for students with disabilities, and (2) secondary transition as part of the educational mission highlighted principal actions required to ensure that the needs of students with disabilities are considered and addressed as part of a school's educational mission with a focus on secondary transition. Participants placed nearly twice as much emphasis on principal actions related to advocacy for students with disabilities, as to those related to secondary transition programming as part of the educational mission. Participants specifically highlighted principal actions required to create an inclusive school environment with high expectations for all students, including students with disabilities. It was noted that

effective secondary transition programming should be considered part of the inclusive school environment for students with disabilities, and that principals have the authority and responsibility to ensure that secondary transition is included in schools' educational missions and that all school staff buy-in to secondary transition related components of the mission.

The transition-focused actions outlined in the theme of principal vision for secondary transition aligned with a principal's identified role to "develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of each student (NPBEA, 2015, p.9)." Although participants only identified action codes within this theme, as previously noted, principal action cannot be separated from principal knowledge. Conversely, principal vision should not be separated from principal knowledge and actions. Subsequently, the principal responsibilities outlined in this theme are related to the principal knowledge and actions across the other four themes. Most notably, principal actions within this theme cannot be carried out effectively without grounding in the secondary transition knowledge outlined in themes 1, 3 and 4, and in alignment with principal actions in themes 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Conclusion

Data analysis identified five themes related to the research question: *What should school principals know and be able to do in order to ensure the development and implementation of effective secondary transition programming at their schools?* The five themes aligned with seven of the 10 standards outlined in the *Professional Standards of Educational Leadership 2015* (NBPEA, 2015). Participants identified secondary transition operations and management as the most prevalent theme, placing almost twice

as much emphasis on it then the next most prevalent theme, secondary transition learning community. Participants put a similar amount of emphasis on both a comprehensive system of secondary transition curriculum, instruction and assessment, and meaningful family and community engagement. Principal vision was the least prevalent theme.

Across all five themes was the sense that in order for students with disabilities to have access to the effective secondary transition programing required to successfully transition from high school to adult life, principals must possess fundamental secondary transition knowledge; understand secondary transition staff roles, responsibilities and developmental needs beyond classroom-based instruction; prioritize secondary transition when making resource allocation and school scheduling decisions; and include secondary transition as part of the school's educational mission. Key to this work is principal recognition, respect and leveraging of the expertise of school-based secondary transition service providers, the creation of a welcoming school environment for families and the community, and advocacy for inclusive educational settings.

The principal knowledge and actions participants elevated as required for the implementation of effective secondary transition programming were highly interconnected. Principal knowledge and actions related to school operations and management; staff development; comprehensive systems of instruction, curriculum, and assessment; school support services; family and community engagement; and school educational mission do not operate independently of one another. The same is true when these knowledge and actions are examined through the lens of secondary transition. Figure 4.4 depicts the interconnectedness of the themes and *PSEL 2015* standards in relationship to secondary transition. Note that the three themes that addressed both

principal secondary transition knowledge and actions are purple, and the two themes that only addressed principal actions are red. The three *PSEL 2015* standards that did not align with one of the five themes are white.

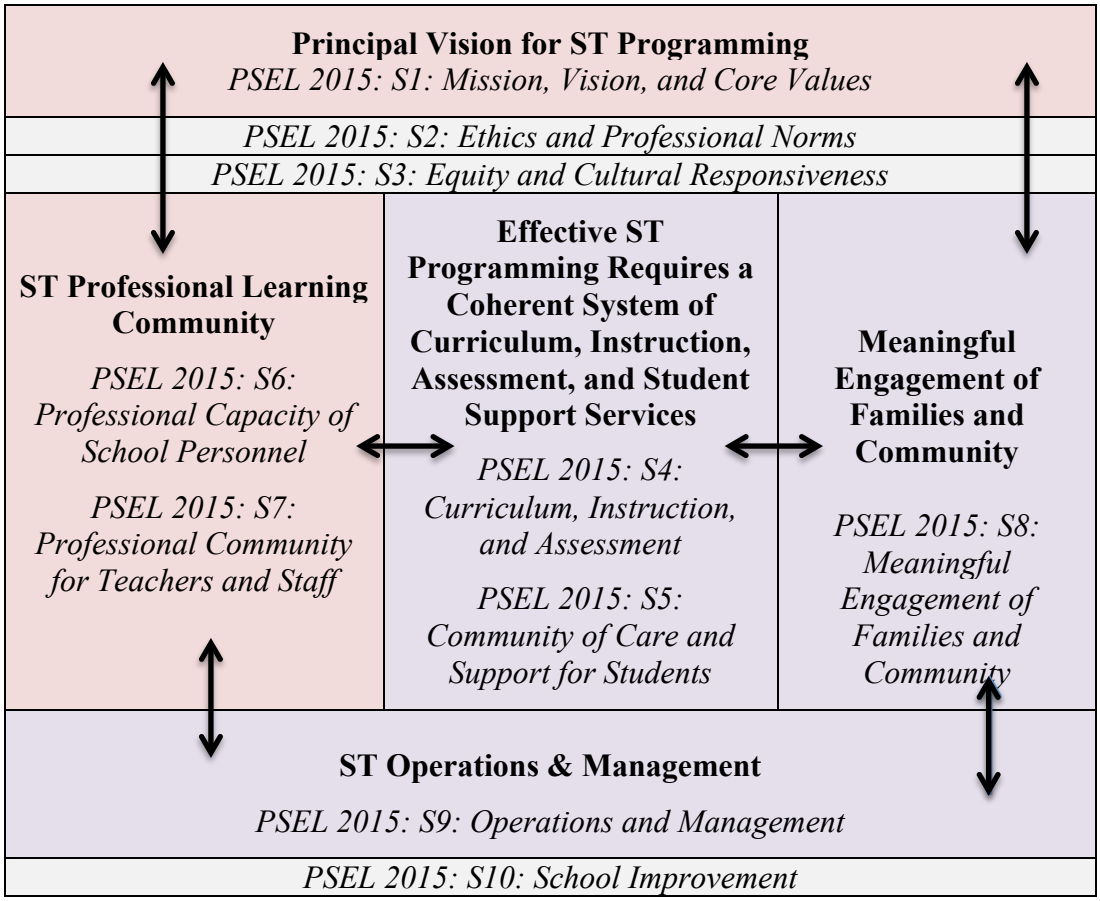

Figure 4.4. Interconnectedness of themes

Chapter 5 includes a deeper discussion the themes outline above, and an examination of how they are grounded in the secondary transition literature base and intersect with educational leadership.

Chapter 5

Despite decades of research, practice, legislative efforts, and policy implementation in the field of secondary transition, students with disabilities are still less likely to enroll in postsecondary education or training, secure competitive employment, and live independently than their nondisabled peers (Newman et al., 2010; Newman et al., 2011). This disparity in postsecondary outcomes between youth with and without disabilities exists, at least in part, due to the persistent challenges associated with the delivery of effective secondary transition programming (Hasazi, Furney, & DeStefano, 1999; Johnson et al., 2002; Lubbers, Repetto, & McGorray, 2008; McMahan & Baer, 2001; Riesen, Schultz, Morgan, & Kupferman, 2014; Shogren & Plotner, 2012; Zhang, Ivester, & Katsiyannis, 2005).

Based on the standards outlined in the *Professional Standards for Educational Leaders 2015* (PSEL 2015) (NPBEA, 2015), vital components of secondary transition programming fall directly within school principals' roles and responsibilities including but not limited to the creation and maintenance of student-centered, inclusive schools; setting of curricular and instructional priorities and practices; family, community and interagency engagement; teacher development; and resource allocation. Although the field of secondary transition has long recognized school-based administrators as vital stakeholders in program implementation (Halpern, 1985; Will, 1984; Kohler & Field, 2003), research into what educational leaders need to know and be able to do to support effective secondary transition in their schools was limited and lacking in both breadth and depth.

The purpose of this study was to help begin to close this gap in the literature base through the exploration of the research question: *What should school principals know and be able to do in order to ensure the development and implementation of effective secondary transition programming at their schools?* Nineteen experts in secondary transition programming currently working in the field at a school, local education authority (LEA), or state education authority (SEA) completed a survey.

Data analysis of survey responses identified five themes related to the research question. The five themes aligned with seven of the 10 standards outlined in the *PSEL 2015.* Participants identified secondary transition operations and management as the most prevalent theme, placing almost twice as much emphasis on it then the next most prevalent theme, secondary transition learning community. Participants put a similar amount of emphasis on both a comprehensive system of secondary transition curriculum, instruction and assessment, and meaningful family and community engagement. Principal vision was the least prevalent theme.

This chapter includes a discussion of the results of the study outlined in Chapter 4, a presentation of the study's limitations, and recommendations for future research and practice.

Interpretation and Conclusions

The results in Chapter 4 point to a number of important actions principals should take to ensure the development and implementation of effective secondary transition programming in their schools. As noted in previous chapters, researchers have found that the more principals know about special education the more they did for special education teachers and programs (Wakeman et al., 2006). This suggests that principal action in

support of secondary transition programming cannot be separated from principal knowledge about secondary transition. Principal authority must also be considered in a discussion of principal action. Principal authority varies widely across the public, private and charter school sectors, as well as by school level (primary vs. secondary) and LEA size. Principal capacity to act in support of secondary transition programming is limited by their authority to act in a given area of educational leadership.

Below key principal actions required to support the development and implementation of effective secondary transition programming are discussed through the lens of the results of this study and the research literature presented in Chapter 2. Limits to principal authority to act and required principal knowledge to act are discussed where relevant.

Theme 1: Secondary Transition Operations and Management

Data analysis identified secondary transition operations and management as the most prevalent theme. *PSEL 2015 Standard 9: Operations and Management* stated that "[e]ffective educational leaders manage school operations and resources to promote each student's academic success and well-being (NPBEA, 2015, p. 17)." The four clusters that made up the theme of secondary transition operations and management: (1) secondary transition staff resources, (2) funding for secondary transition resources, (3) secondary transition resources, and (4) secondary transition laws, rights, policies, and regulations aligned with five of the 12 elements outlined under *PSEL 2015 Standard 9*.

The four clusters with secondary transition operations and management and the requirements of effective leadership outlined in *PSEL 2015 Standard 9* both corresponded to documented secondary transition implementation challenges associated

with resource allocation (Lubbers et al., 2008), staff roles and responsibilities (Morningstar et al., 2012; Zhang et al., 2005), and building management (Little, 2012). *Standard 9* also identified education leadership responsibilities related to compliance with federal, state and local legislation and regulations, while the data outlined in cluster 4 spoke specifically to responsibilities related to secondary transition compliance. Research into school administrator knowledge about special education indicates that the majority of participants across studies reported relatively high levels of knowledge about legal issues related to special education administration generally, but none of those studies included administrator knowledge of legal issues specifically related to secondary transition (Bineham, 2014; Frost & Kersten, 2011; Wakeman et al., 2006). This points to the need for further research in this area.

Principal action – make secondary transition a priority when allocating school-based resources. As highlighted in survey results and supported by the literature base, effective secondary transition programming requires resources (Kohler et al., 2016), and principals play a key role in the allocation of school-based resources (NPBEA, 2015). Resources are required for secondary transition staffing; curriculum, instruction and assessment; and activities such as service learning, community-based instruction and work-based learning (Kohler et al., 2016). Additionally, secondary transition programming for students with more significant support needs may require specialized school spaces not found in traditional classrooms including space for independent living instruction, career exploration and training, and school-based enterprises.

Limits to principal authority to act. Principal capacity to allocate resources to secondary transition programming is tied to local school funding mechanisms. As such,

principal authority to act is limited first by the availability of funds and second by the role a principal plays in the annual budgeting process. For example, the majority of U.S. schools receive state and local funding, which is typically allocated to individual schools within an LEA through a per pupil funding metric set outside of principal authority. Subsequently, although principals have some discretion on how to allocate staff time, funding and school resources within their school buildings and may have a voice in the annual budgeting process, their decisions are ultimately limited by their school's annual budget and impacted by competing priorities.

Required principal knowledge to act. Principals require fundamental secondary transition knowledge in order to recognize secondary transition programming as a priority for school-based resource allocation. At the most basic level, principals must know that all U.S. public schools are mandated to provide transition services to students under IDEA (2004), which should be informed by local graduation polices and regulations. Once a principal understands that secondary transition is tied to their school's capacity to maintain compliance with local, state, and federal secondary transition laws, policies, and regulations, they need to know that effective secondary transition programming requires funding, and staff time for secondary transition activities beyond classroom instruction.

Principals equipped with advanced secondary transition knowledge about how all secondary transition local, state, and federal laws, policies, and regulations inform secondary transition staff roles and responsibilities; and the relationship between federal secondary transition legislation and the larger disabilities rights movement may be more inclined to prioritize secondary transition when allocating school resources. Advance

secondary transition knowledge requires principals to have an understanding of related legal issues and polices and how they should impact principal actions.

Assuming that most principals will have gaps in their secondary transition knowledge, it also becomes important for them to have the knowledge and capacity to recognize and leverage the expertise of secondary transition providers in the school (theme 2) when making decisions about secondary transition staffing and resource allocation. School-based secondary transition experts can help principals to (1) understand and define secondary transition staff roles and responsibilities, and (2) make informed decisions about how to efficiently allocate available secondary transition resources to maximize impact on student learning and outcomes.

Theme 2: Secondary Transition Professional Learning Community

Data analysis identified secondary transition professional learning community as the second most prevalent theme. Secondary transition team capacity development, the first of the three clusters that made up this theme, aligned with three of the nine elements under *PSEL 2015 Standard 6: Professional Community for Teachers and Staff*. *PSEL 2015 Standard 6* stated that "[e]ffective educational leaders develop the professional capacity and practice of school personnel to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being (NPBEA, 2015, p. 14)." The other two clusters that made up the theme: development of an open and trusting relationship with secondary transition staff and secondary transition professional development for staff, aligned with two of the eight elements outlined under *PSEL 2015 Standard 7: Professional Community for Teachers and Staff*. *PSEL 2015 Standard 7* stated that "[e]ffective educational leaders foster a

professional community of teachers and other professional staff to promote *each* student's academic success and well-being (NPBEA, 2015, p. 15)."

As noted in Chapter 2, *PSEL 2015 Standards 6 and 7* corresponded to documented secondary transition implementation challenges related to staff professional development including the well-recognized need to (1) ensure that special educators have the knowledge and skills necessary to deliver effective secondary transition instruction and programming (Benitez et al., 2009; Conderman et al., 2012; Morningstar & Benitez, 2013; Little, 2012; Lubbers et al., 2008); and (2) develop the secondary transition capacity of all educators including general education teachers (Morningstar et al, 2012). Data analysis from this study, as presented in Chapter 4, outlines the actions that principals can take to address implementation challenges associated with staff capacity.

Principal action – recognize, respect, support, develop and leverage secondary transition staff expertise. Survey results suggested that in order to address implementation challenges associated with staff capacity and ensure staff have the knowledge and skills necessary to implement effective secondary transition programming, principals must go beyond simply providing staff with access to secondary transition professional development and focus on empowering and motivating secondary transition staff to become experts in the implementation of effective secondary transition programming.

Principals must make an effort to develop an open and trusting relationship with secondary transition staff. Survey results indicated that secondary transition staff may feel that principals overlook and/or undervalue special education generally and secondary transition more specifically, and do not respect the expertise of secondary transition staff

enough to involve them in school wide decision-making. This may be due, in part, to principal lack of knowledge of range of expertise required to ensure school-based compliance with secondary transition mandates. The creation of a school-based secondary transition professional learning community (PLC) represents one possible vehicle for principals to demonstrate their respect of and commitment to the work of secondary transition staff (Siguroardottir, 2010). Secondary transition PLCs also represent a way for principals to ensure that the "[i]mplementation of evidence-based and promising practices is supported and facilitated through professional development, coaching, and feedback systems," as called for in the *Taxonomy for Transition Programming 2.0* (Kohler et al., p. 10)"

Development of a secondary professional learning community would create a school-based space for educators to access, explore, practice and model evidence-based secondary transition practices (Siguroardottir, 2010). Additionally, it would provide principals with a school-based source of secondary transition expertise that could be leveraged to provide school-based secondary transition professional development to staff including general educators; and inform decision making about resource allocation, staffing and school structures in an effort to ensure that students with disabilities have access to the effective secondary programming necessary for them to transition successfully from high school to adult life.

Limits to principal authority to act. Staff development represents a significant portion of principal responsibility (NPBEA, 2015; Valentine & Prater, 2011). Consequently, principals possess a considerable amount of authority in relation to the development and maintenance of secondary transition PLCs. Although, principal

authority to set professional development schedules and topics varies by school sector (public, charter, private), level (primary, secondary), and size, generally principals do have at least some authority to dictate professional development requirements and structures for their staff. This includes providing (1) access to secondary transition professional development for secondary transition staff, and (2) access to and encouragement to participate in professional development on special education for all school staff. Principal capacity in this area may, however, be limited by principal knowledge, belief in and prioritization of secondary transition and special education; and staff time.

Staff supervision and evaluation represents a key aspect of staff capacity development (NPBEA, 2015), as well as the provision of effective secondary transition program implementation (Kohler et al., 2016). Survey results indicated the need for principals to use meaningful metrics when evaluating secondary transition staff. This suggests a possible misalignment between existing evaluation metrics and secondary transition staff roles and responsibilities. Principal capacity to address any misalignment in evaluation metrics may be limited by LEA teacher evaluation systems developed and monitored at the district-level. Conversely, principal secondary transition knowledge level may mitigate the impacts of this misalignment on transition staff, in terms of their capacity to recognize and address the misalignment in their staff evaluations. This issue suggests the need for further research in this area.

Required principal knowledge to act. The transition-focused actions outlined in the theme of secondary transition professional learning community are aligned with principal's identified roles to develop the professional capacity of school staff and foster

a professional community of teachers and other staff to promote the academic success and general well-being of all students (NPBEA. 2015). Although participants only identified action codes within this theme, principal action cannot be separated from principal knowledge. The principal responsibilities outlined in this theme cannot be carried out effectively without grounding in the secondary transition knowledge related to staff roles and responsibilities outlined in theme 1 clusters 1 (secondary transition staff resources) and 3 (secondary transition laws, rights, policies, and regulations) noted above.

Theme 3: Coherent System of Secondary Transition Curriculum Instruction, Assessment, and Student Support Services

Participants' identified a coherent system of curriculum instruction, assessment, and student support services as the third most prevalent theme. Secondary transition curriculum, instruction, and assessment, the first of the two clusters that made up the third theme, aligned with three of the seven elements under *PSEL 2015 Standard 4: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment,* which stated that "[e]ffective educational leaders develop and support intellectually rigorous and coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment to promote each student's academic success and well-being (NPBEA, 2015, p. 12)." The second cluster, secondary transition student support services, aligned with two of the six elements outlined under *PSEL 2015 Standard 5: Community of Care and Support for Students*, which stated that "[e]ffective educational leaders cultivate an inclusive, caring, and supportive school community that promotes the academic success and well-being of each student (NPBEA, 2015, p. 13)."

PSEL 2015 Standards 4 corresponded to transition implementation barriers related to effective instruction (Little, 2012; Riesen et al., 2014), student school exit options (Johnson et al., 2002), access to community-based instruction (Johnson et al., 2002; Riesen et al., 2014), and striking a balance between students' academic and functional skill development (Riesen et al., 2014). *PSEL 2015 Standard 5* aligned to secondary transition implementation issues around student self-determination and self-advocacy, specifically school leadership efforts that created spaces in schools for students with disabilities to express their voices (Morningstar et al., 2012), and take on leadership roles in their own transition planning (Riesen et al., 2014; Shogren & Plotner, 2012).

Principal action – incorporate a coherent system of secondary transition curriculum, instruction, assessment and student support services into the school's structure. Effective secondary transition programming requires a comprehensive system of curriculum, instruction, and assessment that includes academic, employment, independent living, social, emotional, and self-determination skill development (Kohler et al., 2016). This includes activities outside of traditional classroom instruction such as school-based enterprises, service learning, community-based instruction and work-based learning.

In order for students with disabilities to successfully transition from high school to adult life, principals need to include secondary transition as a key element of their school's larger "coherent systems of curriculum, instruction, and assessment that promote the mission, vision, and core values of the school, embody high expectations for student learning, align with academic standards, and are culturally response (NPBEA, 2015, p. 12)." To accomplish this principals need to develop school schedules that allow for the

implementation of effective secondary transition programming, which requires varying degrees of student and staff time depending on student support needs.

Limits to principal authority to act. Principals are considered the instructional leaders in their schools, and consequently have considerable authority to set their schools' schedules (NPBEA, 2015; Valentine & Prater, 2011). Principal capacity to include a comprehensive system of secondary transition curriculum, instruction, and assessment as a part of their school's educational agenda may be limited, however, by school-based resources including staff time and funding for secondary transition activities, as well as competing agendas and priorities.

Required principal knowledge to act. Principals require fundamental secondary transition knowledge in order to recognize secondary transition programming as a priority for school-based resource allocation. At the most basic level, principals must know that students with disabilities require access to a comprehensive system of secondary transition curriculum, instruction, and assessment that includes academic, employment, independent living, social, emotional, and self-determination skill development, in order to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully transition from high school to adult life (Kohler et al., 2016).

Additionally, the principal responsibilities outlined above cannot be carried out effectively without grounding in the secondary transition knowledge related to staff roles and responsibilities outlined in theme 1 above. Principals would also benefit from basic knowledge about student support needs, and how student-centered planning informs effective secondary transition programming.

Again, assuming that most principals will have gaps in their secondary transition knowledge, it also becomes important for them to have the knowledge and capacity to recognize and leverage the expertise of secondary transition providers in the school (theme 2) when making decisions about secondary transition curriculum, instruction, assessment and student support services. School-based secondary transition experts can help principals to (1) identify evidence-based secondary transition curriculum, instruction and assessment tools, and (2) make informed decisions about how to design a school schedule to maximize impact on student learning and outcomes

Theme 4: Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community

Participants' responses identified meaningful engagement of families and communities as the fourth most prevalent theme. The three clusters that made up the theme aligned with seven of the 10 elements under *PSEL 2015 Standard 8: Meaningful Engagement of Families and Community,* which stated that "[e]ffective educational leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student's academic success and well-being (NPBEA, 2015, p. 16)."

PSEL 2015 Standard 8 corresponded to secondary transition implementation challenges related to family engagement, interagency collaboration, and community-based instruction and work-based learning experiences (Johnson et al., 2002; Morningstar et al., 2012; Lubbers et al., 2008; Riesen et al., 2014; Zhang et al., 2005).

Principal action – create a positive school culture that supports family engagement in secondary transition. Family engagement is a key element of effective secondary transition programming (Kohler et al., 2016) and educational leadership

(NPBEA, 2015). Effective family engagement for secondary transition includes but is not limited to providing: (1) a structured method for the identification of family needs, (2) supports for families to engage youth in community experiences, (3) college application assistance, (4) linkages to adult service provides, and (5) information and preparation around key aspects of the secondary transition process (Kohler et al., 2016).

As reported in the survey findings, principals can support family engagement for secondary transition by (1) creating a positive school culture that all families find welcoming and supportive including the families of students with disabilities; (2) develop and provide the school as a secondary transition resource for families and the community; and (3) respecting family input. In order to accomplish this, principals will have to leverage the expertise and time of school-based secondary transition staff.

Limits to principal authority to act. Typically principals have full authority to act in support of family engagement in terms of authority granted to them from the district level. Principal capacity to act may be limited by the school's annual budget, and staff time.

Required principal knowledge to act. Principals need to know that family engagement is a key aspect of secondary transition programming, and that lack of family engagement may negatively impact student secondary transition outcomes. Principals would benefit from basic knowledge about how to create a welcoming school culture for all families including families of students with disabilities and culturally and linguistically diverse families, as well as information about the roles that family members typically play in the secondary transition process (NPBEA, 2015; Kohler, 2016).

Family engagement in the secondary transition and IEP process falls under secondary transition roles and responsibilities as dictated by secondary transition legislation and evidence-based practices. This, again, makes it important for principals to have knowledge about secondary transition staff roles and responsibilities outlined in theme 1 above, and/or the knowledge and capacity to recognize and leverage the expertise of secondary transition providers in the school (theme 2) when making decisions about family engagement.

Principal action – actively support community engagement and interagency collaboration for students with disabilities. Interagency collaboration and access to community-based resources are vital components of an effective secondary transition program (Kohler et al., 2016) and fall within a principal's leadership responsibilities (NPBEA, 2015). As leader of their school communities, principals have specific responsibilities to "[m]aintain a presence in the community to understand its strengths and needs, develop productive relationships, and engage its resources for the school (NPBEA, 2015, p. 16)." In terms of secondary transition, this means in part supporting the engagement of community resources to provides students with disabilities access to opportunities for community-based instruction, work-based learning experiences, and service learning (Kohler et al., 2016). It also means supporting interagency collaboration between the school community and key adult service providers that students with disabilities should engage with prior to high school exit (Kohler et al., 2016).

As reported in the survey findings, principals can support community engagement and interagency collaboration for secondary transition by developing community partnerships to provide access to community resources for secondary transition

programming. They can support interagency collaboration (1) creating a positive school culture that supports interagency collaboration; and (3) signing Memorandums of Understanding/Agreement (MOU/A) with community-based organizations and adult service agencies. Survey finding suggest that principals create a positive school culture that supports interagency collaboration by (1) "…be[ing] open to outside agencies and organizations coming into the building to support students;" (2) "…invit[ing] outside agencies to work with students and families…;" and (3) have "…meetings with [outside] agencies when applicable."

Limits to principal authority to act. In terms of authority to sign MOU/As, it should be noted that the principal might be one of, in not the only, person authorized to do this at the school level. This is not typically something that school staff can accomplish without principal support, and depending on LEA guidance principals also may not have this authority. If a principal does not possess the authority sign MOU/As, however, they should have the authority to secure the necessary signature(s) at the district level. Authority to sign agreements with outside organizations/agencies may be further limited if an agreement includes the transfer of funds.

Required principal knowledge to act. Principals need to know that interagency collaboration is a key aspect of secondary transition programming, and that access to work-based learning instruction, community-based instruction, and linkages to adult service providers impacts student outcomes (Kohler et al., 2016). Principals would also benefit from knowledge about LEA and outside agency policies and procedures, formal interagency agreements including the process for entering into an agreement, and common barriers to effective interagency collaboration.

Theme 5: Principal Vision for Secondary Transition Programming

Principal vision for secondary transition programming was the least prevalent of the five themes, and aligned with *Standard 1: Mission, Vision, and Core Values* of the PSEL 2015 (NPBEA, 2015). *PSEL* 2015 *Standard 1* stated that "[e]ffective educational leaders develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of each student (NPBEA, 2015, p. 19)."

PSEL Standard 1 corresponded broadly to the need for school leaders to ensure that schools created child-centered, inclusive environments with high expectations for all students, basic tenants of IDEA and the inclusive schools movement (Johnson et al., 2002). More specifically, the capacity of students with disabilities to access to the full range of general education programming and meaningful high school exit options (Kohler & Field, 2003, Johnson et al., 2002) are vital components of effective secondary transition programming.

Principal action - include a vision of effective secondary transition programming in their school's educational mission as a means of articulating and advocating for an inclusive school culture with high expectations for all students. In an effective secondary transition program students with disabilities receive their education and services in integrated least restrictive environments where instruction is rigorous and relevant (Kohler et al., 2016). Results from this study and the *PSEL 2015* emphasize the need for principals to advocate for an inclusive school culture with high expectations for all students. Principals can do this, in part, by including a vision for

effective secondary transition programming in their school's educational mission, and promoting staff buy-in and commitment to this vision.

Limits to principal authority to act. Principals should experience few to no limits on their authority to include a vision of secondary transition as part of their school's educational mission.

Required principal knowledge to act. As reported in Chapter 4, participants highlighted that principals must understand the importance of effective secondary transition programming in order to incorporate it into their educational mission for their schools. Most notably, participants emphasized that principals need to connect effective secondary transition programming to positive postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities, in order to prioritize is as part of their school's educational mission.

Limitations

Research has found extensive implementation inconsistencies at the state and local district levels in the delivery of secondary transition programming for students with disabilities (FTP Workgroup, 2015; GAO, 2012; Hasazi, Furney, & DeStefano, 1999; Johnson, Stodden, Luecking, & Mack, 2002; Zhang, Ivester, & Katsiyannis, 2005). As such, generalizability represents a limitation for any local, state, or regional study of secondary transition programming. As a regional study, the findings of this study may be limited by differences in administrative, leadership, and program structures at the state, district, and school levels.

Additionally, this study represents the perspectives of one specific population, experts in the field of secondary transition, on the required knowledge and actions of school principals. As outlined in Chapter 3, the participant selection process focused on

participant secondary transition knowledge and expertise. Participants were not evaluated for knowledge of educational leadership or school governance. To fully understand what principals need to know and be able to do to support the development and implementation of effective secondary transition programming in schools requires gathering information from other stakeholders including experts in school leadership.

Finally, demographic data was only captured during the participant recruitment phase and specifically for the 19 individuals that actually completed the survey instrument. This limited analysis of how participant experience and role informed the results.

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings from this study represent a first step in understanding what principals need to know and be able to do in order to ensure the development and implementation of effective secondary transition programming at their schools. Getting feedback from the results of this study from a broader group of secondary transition experts would help to establish consensus in the field, and improve generalizability. Sharing the findings with a group of experts in educational leadership would help to explore and better understand both the potential limits to principal authority to act in support of effective transition programming, and required principal secondary transition knowledge to act.

This study presents a strong case for the need for principals to understand the full range of roles and responsibilities secondary transition staff must assume in order for schools to remain in compliance with federal, state, and local legislation. This points to the need for further research into what principal knowledge levels about secondary

transition legal issues. Given research that found that the more principals know about special education they more they did for special education teachers and programs (Wakeman et al., 2006), it would also be interesting to explore how principal knowledge of required secondary transition staff roles and responsibilities impacts what principals do to support secondary transition staff and programs. Related to principal knowledge of secondary transition roles and responsibilities, this study's research findings point to a potential misalignment between evaluation metrics and secondary transition staff roles and responsibilities that may warrant further research.

Recommendations for Practice

School principals have clear responsibilities related to the development and implementation of effective secondary transition that should be included as part of educational leadership preparation programs and principal professional development. This information may be incorporated into principal preparation not only as part of discrete special education trainings, but also embedded across leadership preparation curricula and professional development offerings related to school operation and management, creating inclusive school environments with high expectations for all students, and effective practices for student college and career preparation.

Conclusion

All students with disabilities in the United States desire to have access to effective secondary transition programming that helps them to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for them to experience the same levels of postsecondary success as their peers without disabilities. This study points to six key actions that principals can take to

support the development and implement of effective secondary transition programming in their schools:

1. Make secondary transition a priority when allocating school-based resources;
2. Recognize, respect, develop and leverage and secondary transition staff expertise;
3. Incorporate a coherent system of secondary transition curriculum, instruction, assessment and student support services into the school's structure;
4. Create a positive school culture that supports family engagement in the secondary transition process;
5. Actively support community engagement and interagency collaboration for students with disabilities; and
6. Include a vision of effective secondary transition programming in their school's educational mission as a means of articulating and advocating for an inclusive school culture with high expectations for all students.

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Appendix A

Information Sheet Template

You are invited to participate in a research study under the direction of Dr. Juliana Taymans and Ms. Emily Lehman of the Special Education and Disabilities Studies Department of the Graduate School of Education and Human Development (GSEHD) at The George Washington University (GW).

The purpose of this study is to identify what school principals need to know and be able to do in order to support the implementation of effective secondary transition programming in schools.

Study Participation
You have been nominated to participate in this study as an expert in secondary transition. Your participation in this study will provide invaluable insight into this issue. Taking part in this research is entirely voluntary.

If you choose to take part in this study, you will complete a total of four questionnaires, over the course of a five-month period. See the table below for detailed information about the study's schedule, instrumentation, and participant time commitments for each round of questionnaires:

Round	Schedule	Instrument Type	Participant Time Commitments
1	March 2017	Open-ended Questions	[*20 – 30 OR 30 – 60*] minutes
2	April 2017	Likert Scale	10 – 20 minutes
3	June 2017	Likert Scale	10 – 20 minutes
4	July 2017	Likert Scale	10 – 20 minutes

Participation is this study will require between [*50 to 90* OR *60 to 120*] minutes of your time between March and July 2017. You may refuse to answer any questions and end your participation at any time.

The risks and discomforts associated with participation in this study are no greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life. There is a possible risk of the loss of anonymity and confidentiality.

In order to make every effort to keep your information confidential, all four questionnaires for this study will be hosted on SurveyMonkey. SurveyMonkey is a web-based survey provider that employs password protections, data encryption, firewalls, and extensive physical security to protect user data. Additionally, all data used by researchers will be stored on password-protected computers, and be destroyed five years after collections.

All of your identifying information will be kept separate from your responses, in order to preserve your anonymity with researchers. None of your identifying information will be included on the questionnaires that you complete, or be shared without your written consent. The identities of study participants will not be shared, in the event that the results of this study are reported in professional journals or at scientific meetings.

You will not receive any benefits from participating in this research. However, the research may benefit the field of secondary transition, and subsequently society, by providing important information about what principals need to know and be able to do, in order to support the implementation of effective secondary transition programming in schools.

If you have questions or concerns about the research, you can contact a member of the research team:

Ms. Emily Lehman
Phone: (774) 261-0401
Email: elehman@gwu.edu

Dr. Juliana Taymans
Phone: (240) 351-7194
Email: taymans@gwu.edu

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) in GW's Office of Human Research (OHR) is overseeing this study. The IRB can provide further information about your rights as a research participant. They can be reached by phone at (202) 994-2715, and by email at ohrirb@gwu.edu.

For technical support, contact **Emily Lehman** or the **SurveyMonkey Help Center** (https://help.surveymonkey.com/?l=en_US&uid=4_2Fn42G7EsvLlimQz99qC7IrvAL9QkwoqTh87TemdMVxVJJ_2BLAcdhnVSE8M_2FMGAWP2amRtGYLpF7706ysUoDrzw_3D_3D).

Providing Consent
Your signature is not required on this document, in order to preserve your anonymity. By proceeding with this questionnaire, you are providing your consent to participate in this research study.

If you would like to refrain from participating in this research study, please click this link: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2KMLMTJ

Please keep a copy of this document for your records.

Appendix B

National Expert Nomination Request Email Template

Dear [*Name of National Expert*],

I am emailing to request your help identifying expert panelists for a Delphi study exploring what principals need to know and be able to do in order to support the implementation of effective secondary transition programming in schools. Emily Lehman is conducting the study for her dissertation research, under the direction of Dr. Juliana Taymans at The George Washington University.

Emily is working on recruiting two panels of experts on secondary transition, in order to explore what school principals need to know and be able to do to support secondary transition from two different perspectives: expert state and local education agency administrators, and expert school-based transition service providers.

One panel (*S/LEA Expert Panel*) will be made up of secondary transition administrators at the state and local education agency levels. The other panel (*School-based Provider Panel*) will be composed of school-based secondary transition service providers.

Each of the two panels requires 20 participants. Participants must have extensive knowledge, training, and experience in secondary transition. Specifically, to be selected for the study, participants must:

1. Be **nominated by an expert** in secondary transition;
2. Possess **extensive knowledge** in secondary transition, as defined by professional certificate/advanced degree(s) in special education and/or secondary transition; and
3. Have a minimum of **three to five years of secondary transition experience**.

All participants will be selected from the Mid-Atlantic region including DE, DC, MD, NJ, NY, PA, VA, and WV. Study participation will take 50 to 120 minutes from March to July of this year, and include four rounds of questionnaires.

As an expert in secondary transition, any nominations that you may have for participants for either the *S/LEA* or *School-based Provider* panels would be greatly appreciated. Emily will be contacting nominees at the end of February through the beginning of March, and is more than happy to work with you to determine the best way for contacting anyone that you nominate.

Please feel free to contact myself or Emily (elehman@gwu.edu; 774-261-0401) with any questions and/or concerns.

Sincerely,
[*Name of Researcher*]

Appendix C

Panelist Initial Invitation Email Template

[*Date*]

Dear [*Name of Nominee*],

I am emailing to request your participation in a Delphi study exploring what principals need to know and be able to do in order to support the implementation of effective secondary transition programming in schools. You have been nominated to participate in this study as an expert in secondary transition, by [*name of national expert*] of [*name of national expert's organization*].

As stated, the purpose of this study is to identify what school principals need to know and be able to do in order to support the implementation of effective secondary transition programming in schools. As an expert [*state/local education agency administrator OR school-based secondary transition service provider*], your participation in this study will provide invaluable insight into this issue.

The study will utilize the Delphi method, an iterative process that builds expert group consensus through the administration of a series of questionnaires. This study consists of four rounds of questionnaires that will be administered over the course of a five-month period. The time commitment to complete Round One is between [*20 to 30* OR *30 to 60*] minutes, while the three subsequent rounds only require 10 to 20 minutes to complete.

All participants must meet the following criteria:

1. Be **nominated by an expert** in secondary transition;
2. Possess **extensive knowledge** in secondary transition, as defined by professional certificate/advanced degree(s) in special education and/or secondary transition; and
3. Have a minimum of **three to five years of secondary transition experience**.

Participants' identities and data will be kept private and confidential by administering all four questionnaires via SurveyMonkey. Additionally, no identifying information will be included on the questionnaires, or be shared without written consent.

Please contact me, at elehman@gwu.edu or (774) 261-0401, if you are interested in participation and meet all of the eligibility requirements.

I am conducting this study, under the direction of Dr. Juliana Taymans at The George Washington University. You can also feel free to contact her, at taymans@gwu.edu or (240) 351-7194, with any questions and/or concerns that you may have.

Sincerely,
Emily Lehman

Appendix D

Panelist Final Invitation Email Template

[*Date*]

Dear Colleague,

Below you will find a link to the first of four questionnaires that I am administering for my doctoral dissertation research at The George Washington University. The purpose of this study is to identify what school principals need to know and be able to do in order to support the implementation of effective secondary transition programming in schools.

You have been nominated to participate in this study as an expert in secondary transition, by [*name of national expert*] of [*name of national expert's organization*]. Your participation in this study will provide invaluable insight into this issue.

Your time and expertise in this matter is very much appreciated and respected. This study will utilize the Delphi method, an iterative process that builds expert group consensus through the administration of a series of questionnaires. This study consists of four rounds of questionnaires that will be administered over the course of a five-month period. The time commitment to complete Round One is between [*20 to 30* OR *30 to 60*] minutes, while the three subsequent rounds only require 10 to 20 minutes to complete. The Round One Questionnaire is now open for participant completion.

To access the Round One Questionnaire and the study's information sheet, please click here: [*survey link to be added*]

Your identity and data will be kept private and confidential by administering all four questionnaires via SurveyMonkey. SurveyMonkey is a web-based survey provider that employs password protections, data encryption, firewalls, and extensive physical security to protect user data. Additionally, none of your identifying information will be included on the questionnaires that you complete, or be shared without your written consent.

If you have any questions and/concerns, or if you experience any technical issues with the questionnaire, please contact me at elehman@gwu.edu or (774) 261-0401. You may also contact my dissertation advisor, Dr. Juliana Taymans, at taymans@gwu.edu or (240) 351-7194.

If you would like **to refrain from participating** in this research study, please click this link: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2KMLMTJ

Again, to begin the first questionnaire, please click here: [*survey link to be added*]

The Round One Questionnaire link will remain open until [*date*].

Thank you, in advance, for your time and expertise.

Sincerely,
Emily Lehman

Appendix E

Participant Instructions Templates

See below for the participant instructions that will be included in the instrument for each Delphi Round:

Round One Questionnaire

[*S/LEA Administrator* OR *School-based Practitioner*] Panelists,

Thank you, again, for taking time out of your demanding schedule to complete this questionnaire. Your time and expertise are very much appreciated. This work could not be done without you.

The Round One Questionnaire that you are about to complete consists of [*five* OR *sixteen*] open-ended questions, and should take you between [*20 to 30* OR *30 – 60*] minutes to complete. Your responses may be in bullet form, and do not need to be in complete sentences.

The Round One Questionnaire will be close on [*date*].

If you have any questions and/or concerns, please contact me at elehman@gwu.edu or (774) 261-0401.

If you experience any technical issues with the survey, you may contact me, or the SurveyMonkey Help Center at (https://help.surveymonkey.com/?l=en_US&uid=4_2Fn42G7EsvLlimQz99qC7IrvAL9QkwoqTh87TemdMVxVJJ_2BLAcdhnVSE8M_2FMGAWP2amRtGYLpF7706ysUoDrzw_3D_3D).

Sincerely,
Emily Lehman

Appendix F

Coding

Question 1: *Based on your experience as a secondary transition provider, what do you think that principals need to **KNOW**, in order to support the implementation of effective secondary transition programming in their schools?*		
No. of Responses (Respondents)	**Reponses**	**Theme** (Sub-theme)
11 (8)	• Federal and state transition legislation requirements. - What those requirements require their staff to do. **(Q1, P1)** • Laws and regulations re: Secondary Transition **(Q1, P5)** • Transition programming is actually mandated by federal law. It is not an option. **(Q1, P12)** • They should know and understand the law regarding transition. **(Q1, P17)** • differences in the laws (Rehab Act, IDEA & ADA) **(Q1, P6)** • IDEA **(Q1, P2)** • the law (IDEA, Indicator 13 & non-academic services references,) **(Q1, P6)** • Thorough understanding of IDEA transition provisions - including related IEP requirements **(Q1, P8)** • Federal and state transition legislation requirements. - What those requirements require their staff to do. **(Q1, P1)** • LEA's responsibility for providing transition services **(Q1, P5)** • They need to be aware of the shifting landscape how legislation and expectations about PWD have changed **(Q1, P3)**	**Legislation** (All laws related to secondary transition) **Legislation** (Differences in Laws) **Legislation** (IDEA) **Legislation** (Roles & Responsibilities) **Legislation** (Shifting landscape/Expectations)
10 (7)	• the transition planning process (per NTACT) & best practices **(Q1, P6)**	**Effective ST Programming**

	• Evidence-based practices to teach and reinforce self- determination skills (goal setting, action planning, problem solving, disability disclosure, self evaluation, etc.). Evidence-based practices for career interest assessment and career planning. Understand evidence-based student engagement and drop-out prevention practices. **(Q1, P8)** • Principals also need to be aware that there are best practices that should be employed in implementing an effective secondary transition program in their schools. **(Q1, P11)** • transition programming is more than just writing the plan and being compliant. there are best practices that will increase the success of students. **(Q1, P12)** • what the research says **(Q1, P6)** • predictors of post-school success **(Q1, P6)** • Predictors of postsecondary outcomes and how secondary transition programming relates to them. **(Q1, P9)** • It's important that the principal understands that the transition plan is ultimately what fuels the IEP development process, and should be treated with the same level of seriousness as the academic portions of the IEP. **(Q1, P11)** • First, I believe administration needs to be trained on what transition is and how it is part of the IEP. **(Q1, P19)** • All that goes into the transition process with families and students. **(Q1, P7)**	(Best/Evidence-based Practices) **Effective ST Programming** (Research Base) **Effective ST Programming** (Predictors of Postsecondary Success) **Effective ST Programming** (IEP Process) **Effective ST Programming** (Student & Family Engagement)
5 (4)	• Employment First **(Q1, P6)** • Understand community mapping and networking **(Q1, P8)** • Basic understanding of agencies and	**Interagency collaboration**

	support services - including intake and eligibility determination and services provided. **(Q1, P8)** • It involves understanding of outside agencies and how schools need to work collaboratively with them. **(Q1, P12)** • Understand how intake process of local agencies and services provided by said agencies (DDS, DDA, RSA) **(Q1, P18)**	
10 (6)	• The needs of their students. **(Q1, P1)** • being in the community working, developing social skills, and learning everyday needs is an important part of a students education. **(Q1, P10)** • Providing opportunities for youth apprenticeships and youth options is also important for students with disabilities and should not have a GPA requirement. **(Q1, P10)** • Education is not just about academics. It is important for students to have life and employment skills. **(Q1, P12)** • Knowing what programs (A-Step, Job Core, Life Education, etc.) are available for students on varying levels of academic ability **(Q1, P7)** • Development of opportunities to self advocate, run their own IEP meetings and ask for accommodations when needed from teachers, employers, etc... **(Q1, P10)** • offering accommodations to students is not about the grades they earn, but the access to the material **(Q1, P6)** • the need for accommodations and modifications, **(Q1, P10)** • Knowing about transition assessments and what they are, why we implement them, where they are used on the IEP and why. **(Q1, P7)** • An understanding of the logistics of	**Student Development** **Student Development** (Accommodations) **Student Development** (Transition Assessment)

	conducting age appropriate assessments (costs of assessments, scheduling of assessments, how results of the assessments are used). **(Q1, P9)**	
3	• Services and resources currently available to their students. (either through local agencies or within the school itself). **(Q1, P1)** • Basic knowledge of resources available to support transition services **(Q1, P5)** • community resources **(Q1, P6)**	**Knowledge of Secondary Transition Resources**
3	• Roles and responsibilities of staff who coordinate transition services **(Q1, P5)** • Understanding the role of para educators and the importance of having enough staff to complete the work is important **(Q1, P10)** • then they will understand that staff needs to be made available into their work schedule so they can implement these services. **(Q1, P19)**	**Staffing (Allocation of Staff Resources)**
3 (2)	• Understand work-based learning requirements and resources **(Q1, P8)** • Logistics of developing and implementing work based learning opportunities (liability, needed support staff, student safety, scheduling). **(Q1, P9)** • Who are the community partners that are providing work based learning experiences to students and how to support the maintenance of the relationship **(Q1, P9)**	**Work-based Learning**
3	• Rationale for secondary transition **(Q1, P2)** • Principals need to the importance of secondary transition. Basic knowledge of the principals of transition are helpful for principals to know as well. However, I think that once principals understand that secondary transition prepares students with disabilities for life after high school,	**Knowledge of/Belief in the Importance of Secondary Transition**

	they are more amenable and accepting of the practices associated with effective transition. **(Q1, P15)** • Second, my hope is that they find transition to be meaningful and beneficial **(Q1, P19)**	
2	• They should know different levels of support available post grad-different providers in the community and job and college supports that are available for students with disabilities after graduation. **(Q1, P3)** • Principals need to know what opportunities are available to students as they prepare to transition out of public schools, and how to prepare students to gain access and succeed in those programs **(Q1, P13)**	**Postsecondary Landscape** (Knowledge of postsecondary supports, services and opportunities)
1	• I think principals can provide the greatest help to IEP teams by knowing their state graduation requirements and how the individual students can meet those requirements with the classes provided in their school **(Q1, P14)**	**Graduation Requirements**
1	• Additionally, principals should understand that time has to be allotted for transition programming. **(Q1, P11)**	**Time Requirements**
1	• Principals need to understand the importance of inclusive classrooms, **(Q1, P10)**	**Inclusion**
1	• Understand how to adapt academic standards to meet instructional needs of life skills, vocational practice, and community based instruction. **(Q1, P18)** • Need to understand the importance of internships and work experience connected to learning outcomes in order to support authentic transitions plans. **(Q1, P18)** • Need to understand that traditional academics should not be priority nor	**Program Structure** (Move to Effective ST Programming?)

	measure of success for students, teachers, and programing. **(Q1, P18)**	

Question 2: *What do you think that principals need to **DO**, in order to support the implementation of effective secondary transition programming in their schools?*		
No. of Respondents	**Reponses**	**Theme**
11 (5)	• acknowledge special education **(Q2, P2)** • - include special education leadership in high level conversations **(Q2, P2)** • - include special education including secondary transition in school wide initiatives and goals **(Q2, P2)** • Foster collaboration among special education staff, general education staff and other support staff (guidance counselors, career counselors etc.) **(Q2, P2)** • Principals should have another team that informs him. My school has a separate transition team **(Q2, P3)** • Ongoing meetings with transition staff **(Q2, P5)** • Get feedback from secondary transition providers on the implementation of transition programs (specifically feedback on staff and time needs). **(Q2, P9)** • trust the Certified Rehabilitation Counselor **(Q2, P3)**, • -Respect the ideas/perspectives of secondary transition providers. **(Q2, P9)** • I think the principals need to come to meetings, ask questions regarding transition, and also be an active participant in the process. **(Q2, P16)** • in the They should ask questions **(Q2, P3)**,	**Engage w. SPED Team/ST Providers** (Include) **Engage w. SPED Team/ST Providers** (Foster Staff Collaboration) **Engage w. SPED Team/ST Providers** (Meet w. Transition Staff) **Engage w. SPED Team/ST Providers** (Trust/Respect Transition Staff) **Engage w. SPED Team/ST Providers** (Ask Questions)

9 (6)	• Provide training to staff on transition requirements and best practices. **(Q2, P1)** • allow Transition staff to attend trainings to keep up with best practices re: transition prep, **(Q2, P3)** • encourage staff to engage in presentation and research about best transition practices to inform to field of providing transition programming in schools. **(Q2, P3)** • Help transition based staff access transition specific professional development and technical assistance. **(Q2, P9)** • Principals should commit to ongoing school-based professional development on offering effective secondary transition programming in their schools. **(Q2, P11)** • Encourage/support professional development trainings for staff **(Q2, P5)** • They need to bring training to their staff or send their staff to training where they can learn how to implement best practices. **(Q2, P6)** • Principals need to keep ALL staff informed about changing landscape and what's available for post graduation **(Q2, P3)** • They need to require their staff to pursue best practices. **(Q2, P6)**	**Staff Secondary Transition PD** (Provide Access to PD) **Staff Secondary Transition PD** (Inform) **Staff Secondary Transition PD** (Require)
4	• Allow the designated staff the time to complete transition services and documentation (IEPs, referrals) **(Q2, P1)** • Consider the allotting staffing to full time transition specialists. **(Q2, P9)** • They need to free of time in their staffs day to provide transition services. Administration has yet found value in transition, therefore they put other daily duties ahead of this piece of a students education therefore limiting the time and	**Staff time**

	energy into the transition activities that should be provided to the students **(Q2, P19)** • Support the staff providing the transition support. Staff often get pulled to do other tasks that are not related to transition. **(Q2, P17)**	
6 (5)	• Engage with community to allow for the development of community based work experiences **(Q2, P1)** • ...Keep plugged into the community **(Q2, P3)** • Support family and community engagement efforts (provide clear guidelines on staff can keep clear, consistent, and open communication with families; support community partnerships-- e.g. provide business to a restaurant that hosts student interns). **(Q2, P9)** • I think the best thing a principal can do to support implementation of effective secondary transition programming is be open to outside agencies and organizations coming into the building to support students. **(Q2, P15)** • ensure that school staff works collaboratively with outside agencies **(Q2, P12)** • Principals support of field trips and transition events outside of the buildings in order for students to gain exposure to outside resources that will support them in their transition. **(Q2, P15)**	**Interagency Collaboration/Community engagement**
3	• Allowing time in the students school day schedules to participate in transition activities **(Q2, P1)** • As much as possible, the students' schedule to allow time for the implementation of their transition plan. **(Q2, P11)** • - schedule time in the school day to address transitional skills and allow time	**ST Programming** (Student Schedules)

	for opportunities for students to learn about the world of work **(Q2, P12)**	
4 (3)	• They need to implement a process that holds the teachers accountable for implementing the transition planning process with fidelity. **(Q2, P6)** • -Use appropriate measures to evaluate secondary transition providers (i.e. CEC standards for Special Education Transition Specialist). **(Q2, P9)** • - expect best practices to be used **(Q2, P12)** • require teachers to attend IEP meetings **(Q2, P12)**	**Staff Evaluation**
2	• promote an inclusive culture for special education students (among staff as well) **(Q2, P2)** • promote the least restrictive environment. **(Q2, P3)**	**Inclusion**
2	• utilize special education funding appropriately **(Q2, P2)** • support us with budget **(Q2, P4)**	**Funding**
2	• support special education staff by providing necessary resources **(Q2, P2) CODE TO PLC ST? rather than ST resources?** • Support teachers and listen to their needs and ideas. **(Q2, P10)**	**Support ST Staff**
2	• Attend trainings where/when feasible (i.e., Our local PaTTAN office offers trainings re: secondary transition for principals/school administrators but most do not attend) **(Q2, P5)** • Educate themselves on the importance of transition so they understand the needs. **(Q2, P10)**	**Administrator PD**
1	• Being more involved with the IEP meetings. Offer more input since this is a team decision. Talking with staff about what courses can work directly and be	**Principal Participate in IEP meetings**

	related to the transition process for all students. **(Q2, P7)**	
2	• Ask what it would take to get the things the student wants. Be creative. **(Q2, P3)** • Listen to students and families **(Q2, P8)**	**Student Focused Planning**
2	• Listen to students and families **(Q2, P8)** • Support family and community engagement efforts (provide clear guidelines on staff can keep clear, consistent, and open communication with families; support community partnerships-- e.g. provide business to a restaurant that hosts student interns). **(Q2, P9)**	**Family Engagement**
1	• Hire and supervise staff (and provide training, time and resources for them) to: - • Assist students as they assess their interests and skills through reflecting on their experiences – • Assist students in developing step by step action plans to acquire information and experience toward their goals – • Provide information to students and families - in a way they can understand - about available resources and supports. – • Provide effective instruction to students in self determination skills, employability skills, self regulation and self evaluation skills, etc. – • Assist student and families to develop effective transition portfolios – • Negotiate work-based learning experiences - Engage relevant persons from the community (postsecondary education, employment, agencies, health care, social security, etc.) – • to communicate directly with students and families to provide the information they need to make informed decisions. – • Assist students and families to navigate the intake process for agencies. –	

	• Communicate clearly verbally and in writing with students, families, educators, agency representatives, businesses, postsecondary education providers - understanding the language and processes of each. **(Q2, P8)**	
2	• Observe students partaking in work based learning opportunities. **(Q2, P9)** • Supporting job experiences for students and supporting the need for transportation to job sites would be hugely beneficial. **(Q2, P16)**	**Work-based Learning**
3	• Support tiered approaches to transition programming: (a) whole school level (e.g. college and career counseling, career portfolios, long term goal setting with programs such as Naviance, college and career fairs, etc.); (b) targeted level (e.g. various CTE course options, Work Based Learning Opportunities, soft skill electives); (c) intensive level (e.g. individualized transition planning through the IEP). **(Q2, P9)** • Principals need to create environments where students can practice and learn the skills they will need to transition successfully to adult life **(Q2, P13)** • CLOSELY monitor their transcript for compliance with state requirements **(Q2, P14)**	**ST Programming/Program Structure**
1	• Need to understand that all aspects of instruction need to lend themselves to preparing youth for meaningful outcomes, whether employment or post-secondary opportunities. So principals need to be prepared to allow transitions teachers to utilize resources and opportunities that support such outcomes, which will greatly differ from traditional curriculum and/or programing. **(Q2, P18)**	ST Curriculum Support?

Question 3: *What responsibilities do you feel that principals have in relationship to secondary transition?*		
No. of Respondents	**Reponses**	**Theme**
3	• Understanding legislation and requirements **(Q3, P1)** • Knowledge of Indicator 13 as it applies to IEP's **(Q3, P5)** • implementing special education law by expecting teachers to participate in the process by using best practices **(Q3, P12)**	**Legislation**
2	• designating dedicated staff to complete transition services and programming **(Q3, P1)** • 4) Understand the roles and responsibilities of staff who support transition-aged students **(Q3, P5)**	**Staffing**
1	• design a school/master schedule that would allow time for transition related activities. **(Q3, P1)**	School Schedule
1	• acknowledging special education - promoting an inclusive culture for special education (among staff as well) **(Q3, P2)**	Inclusion
1	• They should believe in great future possibility for all students…. encourage staff to have the perspective of possibility for all students and support transition activities **(Q3, P3)**	High expectations for all students
3	• Responsible to make sure up to date practices are used by staff **(Q3, P3)** • Oversee compliance in regards to IEP's and ensure teachers/staff are maintaining compliance **(Q3, P5)** • Provide meaningful feedback using measures specific to secondary transition provider job description. -Collect and incorporate feedback from secondary transition providers. **(Q3, P9)**	Staff Evaluation
4	• full support of the students **(Q3, P4) – ST Centered Planning**	General Support

	• Support programing **(Q3, P18)** • Support community based instruction and vocational practices. **(Q3, P18)** • Supporting the special education staff in completing these services. **(Q3, P19)**	
2	• 1) Attend IEP meetings **(Q3, P5)** • Currently the only role that principals play in the secondary transition in being part of the IEP team with very limited input. **(Q3, P7)**	Principal as Member of IEP team
1	• Principals can support the implementation of projects that impact post-school outcomes. There is a lot of research behind the predictors of postschool succeess. Principals can require that their transition programs incorporate the predictors. There is also a lot of research behind the impact of college and career competencies. Principals can lead the effort to change the culture on their campuses to support all students (including students with disabilities) to further develop the interpersonal and intrapersonal skills that can be generalized no matter what field the student pursues. In essence, the principal can develop a vision and support the creation of a scope of work that supports improved outcomes for the students. **(Q3, P6)**	Predictors of postschool success/Inclusion
	• I believe that all of these areas should be included in the responsibilities of the transition coordinator. However - transition coordinators often have other responsibilities - such as teaching and managing the overall special education program of a caseload of students. Principals need to develop explicit job descriptions for transition staff **(Q3, P8)**	Staff roles and responsibilities
	• and they need to supervise them and provide sufficient time for them to address all aspects of transition	Staff supervision

	assessment, planning and instruction. **(Q3, P8) - SUPERVISON**	
1	• Principals have limited resources, and they need to work with their staff to be sure sufficient time is provided for transition-related assessment, planning, instruction, interagency collaboration, parent engagement. In particular, instruction and experiences related to person-centered planning and the development of self determination skills is essential. In my experience interacting with special education administrators, principals, and transition coordinators in 18 districts - I find that responsibilities related to secondary transition are addressed differently in each district. Indeed - the special education administrator and the high school principal are very influential in determining the amount of time allowed for transition-related assessment, planning and instruction, inter- agency collaboration, family outreach, community mapping, and community-based instruction. **(Q3, P8)**	Time
4	• To understand transition and how, if done correctly can effect the post-school outcomes of students with disabilities. **(Q3, P10)** • - know existing services. **(Q3, P1)** • and to be aware of secondary transition and its importance for students with disabilities. **(Q3, P15)** • Understanding what transition is and how it affects students, and supporting staff. **(Q3, P17)**	General ST knowledge
4	• Principals are responsible for ensuring that stakeholders such as central office, LEAs, community agencies, and local government understand the challenges students with disabilities may and can face in the three major areas captured in	Interagency collaboration

	the transition plan: independent living, employment, and post-secondary. This allows for a more thoughtful approach to how all agencies can help support students with exceptionalities. **(Q3, P11)** • They need to be aware of the shifting landscape how legislation and expectations about PWD have changed **(Q1, P3)** • • Greatest responsibility a principal has is to be accepting of the agencies that support secondary transition **(Q3, P15)** • Participate in meetings with community stake holders and related service agencies so they have a clear understanding of what services are provided. **(Q3, P18)** • Principals are responsible for ensuring that students leave their schools with entry to an adult service provider **(Q3, P13)**	
2	• providing time for training of staff **(Q3, P12)** • Allow for transitions teachers to participate in professional developments that are directly related to instruction of transitions and related outcomes. **(Q3, P18)**	Staff PD
1	• Principals should know the classes their school offers and be able to guide IEP teams to completing an academic plan for a student based on their needs **(Q3, P14)**	Knowledge of School Schedule
2	• I feel the principals should work to find funding that can be used to support activities for transition planning and programming. Right now, the staff are responsible for that. **(Q3, P16)** • For some districts it may be a matter of funding as well. **(Q3, P19)**	Funding

Question 4: *What secondary transition resources do you directly or indirectly attribute to principal decision-making? (Resources may include but are not limited to financial resources, staff time, access to community-based activities, curriculum tools, etc.)*		
No. of Respondents	**Reponses**	**Theme**
16 (15)	• Staff time **(Q4, P1)** • staff time (substitute coverage for community-based activities - time for collaboration with general education staff - time to build community based relationships) **(Q4, P2)** • and staff time **(Q4, P4)** • Staff time (typically focused on academics, testing, and/or general education initiatives) **(Q4, P5)** • staff that can focus on just transition service provision **(Q4, P6)** • staffing and time for staff to work with students on these activities and skills. **(Q4, P7)** • Staffing allotment **(Q4, P9)** • staff time, **(Q4, P11)** • enough staff, **(Q4, P12)** • and staffing **(Q4, P14)** • Staff time **(Q4, P15)** • staff planning, **(Q4, P16) x2** • teaching staff, **(Q4, P17)** • Staffing Resources **(Q4, P18)** • Staff time is absolutely the number one thing. **(Q4, P19)** • Having the ability to have more community-based outings but are limited due to time, staffing, transportation, etc. **(Q4, P7)**	**Staffing/Staff Time**
11	• I think funding and being used to the same thing and lack of parent interest attributes to some principal decision making **(Q4, P3)** • Financial **(Q4, P4)** • Implementing transition activities at this caliber requires financial resources that support staff in accessing the means and methods to expose students to these opportunities. **(Q4, P6)**	**Funding**

	• Financial resources, **(Q4, P7)** • Financial resources **(Q4, P9)** • Many of the resources are cited in the examples, but financial resources or lack of **(Q4, P11)** • Financial resources, **(Q4, P12)** • Financial, **(Q4, P13)** • and financial resources **(Q4, P15)** • monies available. **(Q4, P17)** • Funding for programing **(Q4, P18)**	
8 (6)	• academic and district demands/requirements, emphasis, or lack of, issued from LEAs or Central Office, **(Q4, P11)** • and awareness of best practices in implementing effective transition programming are resources that attribute to principal decision-making. **(Q4, P11)** • knowledge of the big picture of transition **(Q4, P12)** • and general knowledge of adult service providers **(Q4, P13)** • Needs of students and families **(Q4, P18)** • I think funding and being used to the same thing and lack of parent interest attributes to some principal decision making **(Q4, P3)** • knowledge of current services available & knowledge of agency services **(Q4, P1)** • A well-informed principal will see the value in an improved transition program and will want to allocate some resources to support a scope of work that offers students various opportunities to increase the knowledge and skills in a chosen career field in order to help them make an informed choice about continuing to pursue that career or to switch it. These experiences should align with evidence-based practices, like the predictors. **(Q4, P6)**	**Administrator Knowledge**
4	• career & self-exploration curriculum	**ST curriculum**

	(Q4, P6) • Availability of appropriate curriculum and assessment tools **(Q4, P9)** • curriculum tools **(Q4, P14)** • curriculum, **(Q4, P16) x2**	
4	• a van for off-campus activities **(Q4, P6)** • funding for transportation, **(Q4, P16) x2** • and or funding for transportation **(Q4, P18)** • Having the ability to have more community-based outings but are limited due to time, staffing, transportation, etc. **(Q4, P7)**	**Transportation**
4	• Time is the key. Transition planning and instruction time with students, staff training time, time to collaborate with agencies and community resources. Many of the related tools are available free from advocacy organizations. The key is time. **(Q4, P8)** • Scheduling and time allotment **(Q4, P9)** • time, **(Q4, P12)** • Having the ability to have more community-based outings but are limited due to time, staffing, transportation, etc. **(Q4, P7)**	**Time**
3	• access to community, **(Q4, P13)** • community resources for job sites, etc. **(Q4, P16)x2** • Having the ability to have more community-based outings but are limited due to time, staffing, transportation, etc. **(Q4, P7)**	**Community Engagement** Community access
3	• Pressures to design a class/master schedule that allows the students in PPS to acquire 26.5 credits in order to reach graduation requirements. **(Q4, P1)** • Having flexibility with schedules so that students can also participate in more of these types of activities to grow in their transition skills. **(Q4, P7)**	**Student schedules**

	• Scheduling and time allotment **(Q4, P9)**	
2	• Availability of appropriate curriculum and assessment tools **(Q4, P9)** • An age appropriate transition assessment should drive the transition plan along with a good understanding of the student and the students needs through observation and discussions with the students family. **(Q4, P10)**	**ST Assessment**
2	• Access to meaningful professional development **(Q4, P9)** • access to training for staff about best practices, **(Q4, P12)**	**Staff PD**
2	• family outreach supports **(Q4, P2)** • I think funding and being used to the same thing and lack of parent interest attributes to some principal decision making **(Q4, P3)**	**Family engagement**
1	• A space allotment (i.e. assigning classroom space) **(Q4, P9)**	**Space Allotment – Standard 9?**
1	• Staff evaluation metrics **(Q4, P9)**	**Staff Evaluation**
1	• Access to assistive technology **(Q4, P9)**	**Assistive Technology**

Question 5: *What secondary transition resources do school-based providers have or need that you wish principals would help provide?*		
No. of Respondents	**Reponses**	**Theme**
12 (9)	• Our school district has some very strong existing transition programs and has just been approved to become an OVR provider of PETS services. I feel we do have the resources (e.g. curriculum, assessments, community partners), we just need principals to allow the staff time to actually implement these services. We have transition counselors who are rehabilitation counselors with CRC certification, as well as teachers	**Time**

	who teach transition courses, who are highly qualified special education teachers. **(Q5, P1)** • Time for staff to meet/plan/etc. **(Q5, P5)** • Also - transition staff are often responsible for academic skill instruction and are not allotted time to teach these functional skills or to engage in agency collaboration and community networking to support student transition goals. TIME is a key resource. **(Q5, P8)** • Planning time **(Q5, P9)** • time to implement best practices, **(Q5, P12)** • and time in the schedule to work with students on their transition goals. **(Q5, P11)** • and time. **(Q5, P3)** • Time **(Q5, P10)** • time **(Q5, P17)** • Again - the key is time. So often students are in academic classes all day - every day - without the opportunity to engage in person-centered planning, career development, self determination skill development, work based learning, executive function and employment skills development. **(Q5, P8)** • Time for staff to attend training/professional development re: secondary transition **(Q5, P5)** • time for training **(Q5, P12)**	
5	• curriculum and other materials **(Q5, P2)** • As a school we have discussed a lot about having hands on transition type activities. So many of the assessments, workbooks, etc. that we have are paper pencil. More and more students are need the hands on type approach. This would also give them lots of experience to get ideas of a bunch of different transition style activities. **(Q5, P7)** • Curriculum tools **(Q5, P9)** • the ability to purchase curricula materials	**ST Curriculum**

	to support transition planning that is specific to the unique needs of the students and school, **(Q5, P11)** • Transition curriculum, **(Q5, P12)**	
4	• Would be great to have more funds **(Q5, P3)** • higher budget consideration **(Q5, P4)** • Ideally IDEA funds would be distributed on a school-based level, **(Q5, P11)** • Funding for additional staff hours and/transportation **(Q5, P18)**	**Funding**
3 (2)	• Knowledge of IEP compliance (Indicator 13) Knowledge of transition laws and reg's **(Q5, P5)** • Knowledge of transition resources and supports **(Q5, P5)** • Knowledge of meaningful transitions programs **(Q5, P18)**	**Administrator Knowledge**
3	• Time for staff to attend training/professional development re: secondary transition **(Q5, P5)** • Appropriate PD **(Q5, P9)** • time for training **(Q5, P12)**	**Staff PD**
3	• Support staff **(Q5, P9)** • and enough staff to provide programming to increase post school outcomes for students such as community employment. **(Q5, P10)** • Full time staff person at the school level who is devoted to secondary transition programming. **(Q5, P15)**	**Staffing**
3	• Is attitude a resource? With so many changes recently, I think some schools can do better for students if the principal pushes for positive thinking and trying all things to learn about transition skills and strengths and abilities and support the transition programming providers by letting them take the lead and utilize their expertise and give support resources or opportunities to follow through on	**School Climate/Culture/Vision**

	recommendations. If the principal does not appear to "buy in" in getting the supports and opportunities and time to help students adequately prepare for transition (because they have been doing the same thing for so long) then the supporting staff won't buy in either. It has to be a team approach and people have to believe that being in the community and a part of the community is important for students with the most significant disabilities. **(Q5, P3)** • It would be ideal if principals created a vision of their transition program. Using staff to create/ develop the vision would be perfect. To do this, it would require staff time and possibly training first. A principal can offer guidance, leadership, development of culture etc. & hire people that agree with what is being implemented. **(Q5, P6)** • I believe they have an impact on staff buy in of transitions services. Often times staff does not see the importance therefore will not be supportive and assist with the process **(Q5, P19)**	
2	• We have direct relationships with state adult service providers, but need to have direct relationships with more employers and day programs **(Q5, P13)** • Community partners and/or connections to link youth to transitions programing and/or employment. **(Q5, P18)**	**Interagency Collaboration/Community Engagement**
1	• and support **(Q5, P3)**	**Support**
1	• To have transition programming for students with significant disabilities be more of a theme across the schools. **(Q5, P3)**	**ST Programming**
1	• family outreach supports **(Q5, P2)**	**Family engagement**
1	• Appropriate assessments that meet the needs of students with different abilities	**ST Assessment**

	(especially for students with significant disabilities) **(Q5, P9)**	
1	• resources as such stated in Question #4 **(Q5, P16) x2 above**	**Stated Above**
1	• not sure **(Q5, P14)**	**Unsure**

Question 6: *What secondary transition professional development resources/opportunities do you directly or indirectly attribute to principal decision-making?*		
No. of Respondents	**Reponses**	**Theme**
7	• Professional development on what transition is and how schools can provide transition to increase post school outcomes. **(Q6, P10)** • Upper administration providing/requiring the training to principals about transition. **(Q6, P12)** • Principals need to be more knowledgeable about the issues related to transition **(Q6, P14)** • It would be beneficial to provide some training to my area administrators in this area. Going through a mock transition IEP so that they can see what is all covered in that as far as the need for transition assessment, activities, and outside agency responsibilities. **(Q6, P16)** • There is a lack of PD around transition services that is offered to principals. It is often very hard to get time on the PD schedule, as the principal PD schedule is always full. Dedicated PD time would be helpful. **(Q6, P1)** • There are currently no ongoing professional development resources/opportunities available for principals. Unless a principal's background is special education, they are less inclined to attend or participate in	**Principal Secondary Transition PD** **Principal Secondary Transition PD** (Lack of) **Principal Secondary Transition PD** (Aligned to Principal/School Performance Evaluation Metrics)

	transition conferences. **(Q6, P11)** • Principals are evaluated in our state based upon "School Performance Profile" indices. These are mostly related to academic test scores. However - student graduation rates are also part of this evaluation. Therefore - I always structure professional development opportunities for principals in a way that relates to student engagement and drop out prevention as well as helping them see the connection to regulatory compliance. Bottom line - principals need to understand WHY in relation to the measures by which they are evaluated. **(Q6, P8)**	
3	• Not sure **(Q6, P13)** • not sure **(Q6, P17)** • In general, I think there is not enough PD in regards to transition and what is available to our students. I'm not sure how much a principal could play a part in this process. For our district it comes from our Special Ed department **(Q6, P19)**	**Unsure**
2	• family outreach **(Q6, P2)** • Tone of professional development. For example, many professional developments in the area of secondary transition are focused on maintaining IDEA indicator 13 compliance rates, not best practices. -The availability of appropriate assessment measures. Many times assessment resources provided are intended to support convenience (time saving) and not collecting meaningful data to support quality transition planning. **(Q6, P9)**	**PD Content**
2	• work shops **(Q6, P4)** • We were able to attend a conference this year which was helpful in the transition process. I think more opportunities for	**PD Format**

	training/observation of programs, tools, etc. that others are using us always helpful. **(Q6, P7)**	
2	• Principals decide if staff can go to training and decide which activities for students can be funded. Or are you asking which professional development are the principals doing that are related to secondary transition that effect the principal's decision making?? Our transition team manager does overall training yearly about what transition looks like in IEP, assessments, audits, changing regs, and etc. but it's hard to cram that much into a short time. I think that informs principal decision making. The most persistent parents shape principal decision making. **(Q6, P3)** • Allowance for staff to attend secondary transition PD given at the district or state level. **(Q6, P15)**	**Staff Access to PD**
1	• special education training for all school staff **(Q6, P2)**	**Whole School SPED Training**
1	• Principals rely heavily on Special Educ staff to provide oversight, training, etc. without making the attempts to understand the laws and reg's re: secondary transition **(Q6, P5)**	**Over Reliance on SPED Staff/Principal ST PD**
1	• Principals have access to all staff. They can poll their department heads or pockets of folks to see what training is needed. They can also make an executive decision to implement a training they feel addresses a visionary need. They can either support the requests or deny them. **(Q6, P6)**	**All**
1	• District mandates What school district provides and/or requires **(Q6, P18)**	**Legislation/regulations**

Question 7: *What secondary transition professional development resources/opportunities that school-based providers have or need do you wish principals would help provide?*		
No. of Respondents	**Reponses**	**Theme**
12 (11)	• building community based relationships **(Q7, P2)** • family outreach **(Q7, P2)** • Also, additional training for all staff writing IEPs on Indicator 13. **(Q7, P1)** • More professional development on attitude and inclusion and to learn about successful transitions programs that have led to post graduation success in community... or to encourage a rep from the school to participate in stakeholder/advocacy meetings **(Q7, P3)** • work shops pertinent to transition **(Q7, P4)** • Professional development in the area of job development and job coaching. This is an area in which teachers are often not given training on in their education but becomes a big part of their job once they work in transition. **(Q7, P10)** • training about IDEA, how to embed transition into curriculum, collaboration with outside agencies to understand **(Q7, P12)** • Principals need to make sure their staff knows how to accommodate for kids on IEP's in their classrooms. It's their job to provide those accommodations. **(Q7, P14)** • Indicator 13 training **(Q7, P17)** • Education around requirements and intake processes of local agencies such as DDS, DDA, RSA Education around curriculum focused on life skills and community based instruction **(Q7, P18)** • It would be ideal if principals incorporated a transition planning training every year where the focus	**PD Content**

	was the process, Employment First, best practice strategies for each component. **(Q7, P6)** • Our district's LEA and/or central office should provide re-occurring professional development surrounding transition planning and implementation. Outside of "Transition Planning in Under 30 Minutes" and an occasional transition conference, there are no immediate and accessible professional development resources/opportunities that school-based provides have. Often principals are also not aware of where to direct teachers to build their understanding of transition programming. **(Q7, P11)**	
2	• Time for staff to meet/plan/etc. Time for staff to attend training/professional development re: secondary transition **(Q7, P5)** • In our area - our transition coordinating council (a cross-systems collaboration of high schools, agencies, businesses, and postsecondary education programs) identify and compile key transition-related information and resources for schools, students, and families. We need principals to provide time for staff and students to participate in these learning opportunities and to utilize these resources. **(Q7, P8)**	**Staff Time for PD**
2	• Money in the budget to attend conferences related to secondary transition practices. **(Q7, P15)** • Funding, accessing transition PD opportunities. **(Q7, P19)**	**PD Funding**
1	• I wish they would support these staff to go to area/state conferences that address secondary transition. **(Q7,**	**PD Format**

	P16)	
1	• Principals typically have visions of what they want their programs to look like and they will hire someone they believe can meet that vision. Principals can continue including other staff in the hiring process to confirm that the vision is appropriate and going in the right direction. **(Q7, P6)**	**Principal Vision/Hiring Practices**
1	• The staff in our schools who do implement transition programming do have the necessary PD time, but it would be helpful for PD to be offered to other school teachers (spec. ed and reg. ed), so that they understood requirements and why students may periodically be missing classes to participate in transition activities. **(Q7, P1)**	**SPED PD for Gen Ed**
1	• Appropriate staff evaluation metrics. For example, I have often been evaluated using the same metrics of a teacher leading to a lack of meaningful feedback to help me grow. -Access to collaborative learning teams. For example, I am often the only secondary transition service provider in the building, leading to a departmental collaborative learning team of 1. However, a meaningful collaborative learning team for a secondary transition specialist is not homogeneous as transition is an interdisciplinary field. Barriers to transition programming are more likely to be solved using a collective effort with all stakeholders. **(Q7, P9)**	**Staff Evaluation Metrics**
1	• More outreach to community employers **(Q7, P13)**	**PD Content?/Unclear**
1	• Answered in the above questions. **(Q7,**	**Stated Above**

	P7) [We were able to attend a conference this year which was helpful in the transition process. I think more opportunities for training/observation of programs, tools, etc. that others are using us always helpful.]	

Question 8: *What components of secondary transition related curriculum and instruction do you directly or indirectly attribute to principal decision-making?*		
No. of Respondents	**Reponses**	**Theme**
3	• I work in a large urban school district with 10 high schools and a centralized Special Education Dept. Within, the spec. ed. department we do have strong programming and curriculum resources available, however I don't believe that principals know what we currently have in regard to instructional resources. **(Q8, P1)** • Generally, principals are not aware of the curriculum and instruction used to support secondary transition **(Q8, P5)** • As stated above, I do not believe principals have the knowledge to appropriately make decisions related to curriculum and instruction related to transition. **(Q8, P16)**	**Lack of Principal Knowledge**
3	• Curriculum aligning with standards **(Q8, P13)** • Curriculum aligning with standards **(Q8, P14)** • the scope of work for the entire program **(Q8, P6)**	**Curriculum Content**
3	• approving current curriculums **(Q8, P4)** • Principal decides to allow professionals to choose (within a set of approved options) what curriculum and instruction to use **(Q8, P3)** • Right now they assist in making the decision of if we attend certain trainings, etc. The have been a small part	**Curriculum Approval**

	(observing) our discussion and transition work in our PLC. **(Q8, P7)**	
2	• time in school day schedule to implement curriculum and instruction, stressing importance of curriculum **(Q8, P12)** • I think that curriculum is directly attributed to the principal. However, there are so many academic demands that are placed on teachers that time is not usually devoted to secondary transition for students with disabilities who are on a diploma track. **(Q8, P15)**	**Implementation Time**
2	• Scheduling **(Q8, P9)** • Availability of various electives and CTE courses. **(Q8, P9)**	**School Schedule/Courses**
2	• none **(Q8, P2)** •	**None**
	• Based on how central office and our district's LEA measure transition planning compliance, a principal is less inclined to truly consider curriculum and instructional decision making within the classroom. **(Q8, P11)**	**Laws/regs inform principal decision making**
1	• Too often, I see students with no transition related curriculum and instruction. Principals need to see the difference it makes when students have the opportunity to engage meaningfully in career development activities, learn about disability disclosure decision making, practice action planning and problem solving skills, engage in person-centered planning and actively participate in their IEP. (Resources - 411 on Disability Disclosure, Self-Directed IEP, resources at zarrow center - university of oklahoma http://www.ou.edu/education/centers-and-partnerships/zarrow **(Q8, P8)**	**Belief in Value of ST Curriculum**
1	• School district requirements **(Q8, P18)**	**LEA/SEA Requirements**

1	• Student needs **(Q8, P18)**	**Student Development/Student-Centered Planning**
1	• Family needs **(Q8, P18)**	**Family Engagement**
1	• Community resources **(Q8, P18)**	**Community Engagement**
1	• Physical space (classroom allotment) **(Q8, P9)**	**Space Allotment**
1	• Staff allotment (both instructional and support staff) **(Q8, P9)**	**Staffing**
1	• Funding to access curriculum and instruction. **(Q8, P19)** • -Access to resource funds (i.e. funds that allow for Community Based Instruction and Independent Living Skills). **(Q8, P9)**	**Curriculum Funding**
1	• not sure **(Q8, P17)**	**Unsure**
1	• **- (Q8, P10)**	**No Response**

Question 9: *What components of secondary transition related curriculum and instruction do school-based providers have or need that you wish your principal would help provide?*		
No. of Respondents	**Reponses**	**Theme**
6	• Resources are available for free. TIME is what is needed. http://www.ou.edu/education/centers-and-partnerships/zarrow **(Q9, P8)** • Scheduled time to implement **(Q9, P12)** • More time in the school day that is devoted to preparing students for life after high school. A lot of time is spent preparing students for high-stakes testing; however, not a whole lot of time is devoted to actually preparing students for life after high school. **(Q9, P15)** • Time to do their job, training on what transition is. **(Q9, P17)** • and then could then allow the appropriate staff the time in the school day to implement this instruction and services. **(Q9, P1)**	**Time**

	• Joint planning time with collaborative learning teams (**Q9, P9)**	
5 (3)	• financing for curriculum **(Q9, P2)** • Basic knowledge of transition curriculum Financial support for curriculum/instructional materials Support for teachers/staff to implement transition curriculum (including community-based instruction) **(Q9, P5)** • Funding to access curriculum and instruction. **(Q9, P19)** • Access to funds to buy transition related supplies **(Q9, P9)** • Access to fund to provide community based instruction **(Q9, P9)**	**Curriculum Funding**
3	• Training and understanding of age appropriate transition assessment and how to use the outcomes of these assessments. **(Q9, P10)** • Time to do their job, training on what transition is. **(Q9, P17)** • PLCs or PDs on making curriculum and instructional decisions would be beneficial in developing a teacher's understanding of implementing an effective transition program for each student. **(Q9, P11)**	**Staff PD**
2	• Would be nice if principals were more tuned into available transition curriculum and instruction or made sure they let the transition professionals choose appropriate curriculum **(Q9, P3)** • Basic knowledge of transition curriculum Financial support for curriculum/instructional materials Support for teachers/staff to implement transition curriculum (including community-based instruction) **(Q9, P5)**	**Administrator Knowledge**
2	• better curriculum **(Q9, P4)** • an organization tool that files optional assessment tools for teachers to use during the first step of the transition planning	**Curriculum Resources**

	process so that after a training on this component teachers are less likely to administer the same assessment to all students **(Q9, P6)**	
2	• Basic knowledge of transition curriculum Financial support for curriculum/instructional materials Support for teachers/staff to implement transition curriculum (including community-based instruction) **(Q9, P5)** • We do not have a lot of curriculum and instruction. It has gotten a lot better since we have a had a transition coordinator in our building through the Voc-Rehab grant. But this person doesn't always have the time due to students schedules. They also don't have a lot for curriculum and instruction. It would be beneficial to possibly provide that support for them. **(Q9, P7)**	**Implementation Support**
1	• Staff allotment (**Q9, P9)**	**Staffing**
1	• Meaningful evaluations based off of position specific standards (**Q9, P9)**	**Staff Evaluation? Student? Unclear**
1	• Appropriate physical space (**Q9, P9)**	**Space Allotment**
1	• Access to appropriate assessments **Q9, P9)**	**ST Assessment**
1	• PD needs to be offered to the principals so that they know what is available **(Q9, P1)**	**Principal PD**
1	• Principals and/or instructional coaches should be just as critical of curriculum selection and instructional decisions surrounding secondary transition. **(Q9, P11)**	**Curriculum Evaluation**
1	• We created our own curriculum, but in general secondary transition related curriculum is lacking and what I have seen is not relevant/effective **(Q9, P13)**	**Teacher Created Curriculum/Lacking Curriculum**

1	• in our rural schools I wish principals would look at providing more functional classes for kids to take that are outside of the special education classroom setting **(Q9, P14)**	**Curriculum Content**
1	• Stated above **(Q9, P16)** [As stated above, I do not believe principals have the knowledge to appropriately make decisions related to curriculum and instruction related to transition. **(Q8, P16)]**	**Stated Above**
1	• Student needs **(Q9, P18)**	**Student Development/Student-Centered Planning**
1	• Community resources **(Q9, P18)**	**Community Engagement**

Question 10: *What components of student centered planning do you directly or indirectly attribute to principal decision-making? (Student centered planning may include but is not limited to student participation in the IEP process, and other methods of promoting self-determination, self-advocacy, and youth leadership.)*

No. of Respondents	Reponses	Theme
2	• I believe that most principals do value student centered planning, including what is listed above, but these are skills that need to be taught and that takes time, staff and resources. **(Q10, P1)** • Time needed to provide students with the tools (self-determination skills, communication skills, knowledge of the IEP process, appropriate assessment data) to successfully engage in all steps of the IEP process. **(Q10, P9)**	Time
1	• I believe that most principals do value student centered planning, including what is listed above, but these are skills that need to be taught and that takes time, staff and resources. **(Q10, P1)**	Resources for Student-Centered Planning
1	• I believe that most principals do value student centered planning, including what	Staff

	is listed above, but these are skills that need to be taught and that takes time, staff and resources. **(Q10, P1)**	
2	• an inclusive school culture - all students should be encouraged if not required to attend their IEP meetings. - general education staff should be aware of this commitment **(Q10, P2)** • A principal needs to embrace student centered planning as part of the school-wide practice, otherwise, this practice will only be in pockets at the school level. **(Q10, P15)** • I also think the principal plays a role in how inclusive our schools is. **(Q10, P19)**	Inclusion/School Culture
1	• Not many. All professionals are trained in student centered planning and should just be doing it. Principals can choose to promote it, offer support if needed and challenge staff to promote it and check for consistent student centered planning or not. **(Q10, P3)**	Leadership/Vision
1	• participation in IEPs is key **(Q10, P4)** • Student participation on the IEP **(Q10, P17)** • Having the principal attend IEP meetings is beneficial and meaningful. **(Q10, P19)**	IEP Participation
1	• Lack of understanding re: student-centered planning Lack of understanding re: secondary transition Time constraints in schedules don't allow principals to be as involved as some would like to be **(Q10, P5)** • Principals need to see the difference explicit instruction and student engagement can make. For example - a student who has participated in sessions such as Self-Directed IEP lessons or has used resources from IMDetermined.org to prepare for their IEP meeting will be actively engaged in the IEP meeting. A student who has not had this preparation	Lack of Administrator Lack of Knowledge/Time

	will - understandably - likely just sit through their IEP meeting without understanding or participating. Principals need to see the difference that instruction makes. **(Q10, P8)**	
1	• A principal could impact the training received on these topics. A principal can also set standards of performance. ~student-led IEPs would be ideal ~self-regulation, self-determination, self-advocacy & even autonomy (all of which have much research stating that a students likelihood of post- secondary success increases if those skills are further developed). ~ways to increase these skills could include >imbedding skill into course content >participating with activities like a Youth Leadership Forum and/or conference >reading biographies of people who demonstrate the skill set etc **(Q10, P6)**	Staff PD/Staff Evaluation
1	• I would say the indirect way is how they support special education staff and are present at the meetings that we have. **(Q10, P7)**	SPED Staff Support/Meeting Attendance
1	• Access to meaningful assessments and assessment results that are interpreted in a way students can grasp and use to fuel IEP development and implementation **(Q10, P9)**	Assessment Tools
1	• Every component of student centered planning should attribute to the decision making for the student. This plan is what drives the work of what should happen next and throughout the school year. **(Q10, P10)**	
1	• A principal's mindset directly attributes to her/his decision making surrounding student-centered planning. If the school environment promotes self-determination, self-advocacy, and leadership then	Principal Mindset

	students are more inclined to be pilots in their educational experience. Because of pressures and emphasis to be timely and compliant, there leaves little room to consider the content and actions schools are taking for students to be active participants and advocates in their educational experiences. **(Q10, P11)** • At our school our principal values student centered planning and it is important **(Q10, P13)**	
1	• opportunities to learn and practice the skills **(Q10, P12)**	Opportunities
2	• Nothing- our case managers to all of that with their students **(Q10, P14)** • Again, for students who advocate for themselves and run their IEP meetings, it has nothing to do with principals decision making. It comes from case managers working hard to teach the students in these services these skills. **(Q10, P16)**	None
1	• Student needs and the availability of resources that connect to them in addition to district wide resources and initiatives **(Q10, P18)**	

Question 11: *What components of student centered planning do school-based providers have or need do you wish your principal would help provide?*		
No. of Respondents	**Reponses**	**Theme**
6	• time to plan with student and time to collaborate with student's teachers **(Q11, P2)** • In addition, staff time to allow for student-centered planning is necessary. **(Q11, P1)** • Many excellent instructional resources are available for free (NCWD Youth, zarrow center, university of Oklahoma, Charting the Life Course http://www.lifecoursetools.com/planning/, etc. Again - what is needed is dedicated	**Time**

	instructional time. **(Q11, P8)** • Time to prepare students to engage meaningfully in the entire IEP process **(Q11, P9)** • Student centered planning needs more time in the school devoted to it if the practice is going to take off school-wide. **(Q11, P15)** • Again a lot of the planning and implementation comes down to having time to do these things. **(Q11, P19)**	
4	• Encouraging Student Led IEP meetings and making Self Determination a priority **(Q11, P3)** • leadership programs **(Q11, P4)** • classes and curriculum in self-advocacy and leadership **(Q11, P14)** • Emphasis on self-determination and self-advocacy **(Q11, P18)**	**Youth Leadership Opportunities**
2	• PD for staff could be increased related to person-centered planning. **(Q11, P1)** • Guidance and PLCs on what student centered planning can look like would help teachers carefully consider how they promote self-determination, leadership, and advocacy. **(Q11, P11)**	**Staff PD**
2	• Knowledge of transition requirements and importance of student centered planning **(Q11, P5)** • same as above. Understand what student centered planning is and let it drive the work to accomplish positive post school outcomes. **(Q11, P10)**	**ST Knowledge**
1	• A principal can share the vision and have the expectation that providers incorporate skill development into their services. For example self-efficacy strategies can be taught and implemented during OT or PT or even ST **(Q11, P6)**	**Vision**
1	• School-based providers have helped with being able to direct/discuss the student	**???**

	centered plan for after high school and/or the items they are working on currently. **(Q11, P7)**	
1	• Meaningful assessment data **(Q11, P9)**	**ST Assessment**
1	• Buy-in from the rest of the IEP team **(Q11, P9)**	**Staff Buy-in**
1	• allowing resources to work with students around student centered planning **(Q11, P12)**	**Resources for Student Centered Planning**
1	• Principals need to take on a more involved role in IEP meetings. I wish they would ask the students more questions as far as their post secondary plans/options. **(Q11, P16)**	**Administrator IEP Participation**
1	• none **(Q11, P17)**	**None**
1	• Not sure **(Q11, P13)**	**Unsure**

Question 12: *What components of secondary transition related family engagement do you directly or indirectly attribute to principal decision-making?*		
No. of Respondents	**Reponses**	**Theme**
2	• I feel that in some instances students with parents who are strong advocates, have knowledge know their rights related to transition services, may receive more services. **(Q12, P1)** • Also, in other instances, we have challenges with parental engagement and can sometimes not get the proper permissions to allow students to participate in various activities, including the OVR applications. **(Q12, P1)**	**Variability of Family Engagement**
3	• encouraging family participation in the IEP process **(Q12, P2)** • They are also present at the meetings when secondary transition are discussed. **(Q12, P7)**	**IEP Process**

	• Once again I don't see our principals doing much of anything in the secondary transition process for kids on IEP's. They attend IEP meetings and make sure parents know where their child is sitting with credits and that's about it **(Q12, P14)**	
1	• The principal chooses some events and engagement activities and sharing transition information might not be the priority of info to share or focus on unless the principals decide it is. Principals can decide to spend time and money sharing resources with families and allow transition experts to engage with family about post graduation options. **(Q12, P3)** • Principals can support campus activates (allocating funds as needed or simply staff time). **(Q12, P6)** Campus activities can include transition fairs, guest speakers, workshops (all of which parents would be invited to. **(Q12, P6)** • Courses of study can be an issue. Principals can decide to allow students receiving SPED services to enroll first (especially into vocational courses/programs such as CTE). **(Q12, P6)** • supporting family engagement programs **(Q12, P4)** • Family and student need Availability of community resources and agencies to also connect with parents and families at school events. **(Q12, P18)** • Family engagement requires time, communication, trust, and tailoring the format, content, and timing of the information to the needs of the family. A combination of online resources, live events, audio, video, and print resources are needed. Content includes understanding agency-related information, differences between IDEA and ADA, and much more. To prevent re-inventing the wheel - districts can partner with other	**Resource Allocation**

	districts and with agencies in the area to design and offer parent-engagement materials and opportunities. Again - time is needed for this. **(Q12, P8)**	
2	• Time constraints Financial resources Staffing-related concerns **(Q12, P5)** • I think the principal could assist with setting aside funding and time to plan events to engage families in the secondary transition process. **(Q12, P19)** • The principal chooses some events and engagement activities and sharing transition information might not be the priority of info to share or focus on unless the principals decide it is. Principals can decide to spend time and money sharing resources with families and allow transition experts to engage with family about post graduation options. **(Q12, P3)** • Principals can support campus activates (allocating funds as needed or simply staff time). **(Q12, P6)**	**Time**
2	• Time constraints Financial resources Staffing-related concerns **(Q12, P5)** • They provide the funding for transition assessments that are sent home to the parents to assist with the transition making. **(Q12, P7)** • I think the principal could assist with setting aside funding and time to plan events to engage families in the secondary transition process. **(Q12, P19)** • The principal chooses some events and engagement activities and sharing transition information might not be the priority of info to share or focus on unless the principals decide it is. Principals can decide to spend time and money sharing resources with families and allow transition experts to engage with family about post graduation options. **(Q12, P3)** • Principals can support campus activates (allocating funds as needed or simply staff	**Family Engagement Funding**

	time). **(Q12, P6)**	
1	• Time constraints Financial resources Staffing-related concerns **(Q12, P5)**	**Staffing**
1	• School culture -Availability of interpretation services **(Q12, P9)**	**School Culture**
1	• School culture -Availability of interpretation services **(Q12, P9)**	**Interpretation Services**
1	• Family engagement is one of the most important parts of transition. Principals need to listen to the family and with they have to say as they often know the student the best. They have to take this information into consideration when making decisions for the student and develop partnerships with families. **(Q12, P10)**	**Family centered decision making**
2	• Again, the mindset of the principal attributes to whether she/he actively engages with family. If treated as a contributing member and decision maker of the IEP and transition programming, then principals will encourage and ensure that teachers are adequately including family input, insight, needs, and wants during their planning and implementation. **(Q12, P11)** • Again, I think that principals are the leaders of the school building and if they make family engagement a priority, it will be a priority. This issue in DC Public Schools is there are so many competing priorities that secondary transition and its many components are last on the list of important things in a school. **(Q12, P15)**	**Leadership /Principal mindset**
2	• understanding how to work with parents who have students with disabilities **(Q12, P12)** • Again, building a knowledge base of the process would be great help. **(Q12, P16)**	**Principal Knowledge**

2	• Not sure **(Q12, P13)** • not sure **(Q12, P17)**	**Unsure**

Question 13: *What components of secondary transition related family engagement that school-based providers have or need do you wish your principal would help provide?*		
No. of Respondents	**Reponses**	**Theme**
4	• family resource center **(Q13, P4)** • Resources/Training **(Q13, P5)** • Principals need to get creative and identify resources that can be pulled on-campus with minimal cost to the school. A principal can support the idea of staff. **(Q13, P6)** • A class devoted to secondary transition where theses topics related to secondary transition can be discussed. **(Q13, P15)**	**Resources**
4	• TIME to develop resources and implement family engagement events. **(Q13, P8)** • Teachers of full time program (or self-contained) students typically have more interactions with families, so they are able to truly engage with parents/guardians to build a collaborative environment. For other school-based providers, this may be more challenging. It would help that, again the principals allow time in the teacher's schedule to be able to connect with family members who and agencies that support the students. **(Q13, P11)** • I think the principal could assist with setting aside funding and time to plan events to engage families in the secondary transition process. **(Q13, P19)** • Allow more time for parental outreach activities. **(Q13, P1)**	**Time**
3	• more family outreach supports for special education teachers **(Q13, P2)** • Principals need to get creative and identify resources that can be pulled on-	**Supports**

	campus with minimal cost to the school. A principal can support the idea of staff. They can also offer guidance on available funds to host certain projects. **(Q13, P6)** • Support for transition **(Q13, P17)**	
3	• Opportunities to engage families Resources/Training **(Q13, P5)** • Offering opportunities for parents to connect with other parents **(Q13, P12)** • Allowing parents to participate in school days to see students in vocational practice and community based instruction settings to provide parents a fuller picture of what their students are receiving and how to support them. **(Q13, P18)**	**Opportunities**
2	• Principals need to get creative and identify resources that can be pulled on-campus with minimal cost to the school. A principal can support the idea of staff. They can also offer guidance on available funds to host certain projects. **(Q13, P6)** • I think the principal could assist with setting aside funding and time to plan events to engage families in the secondary transition process. **(Q13, P19)**	**Funds**
2	• Have knowledge of transition services so that principals can accurately discuss and refer students to the proper programming when discussing with parents. **(Q13, P1)** • An understanding of the importance of family input. **(Q13, P10)**	**Administrator Knowledge**
2	• Our school-based providers had direct communication with families throughout working with them. **(Q13, P7)** • I think principals should have WAY more engagement with families than they do. Even something as simple as a beginning of the year meeting with families to go over requirements, etc. would be helpful **(Q13, P14)**	**Direct Communication with Families**

1	• Resources/Training **(Q13, P5)**	**Training**
1	• all of them **(Q13, P3)**	**All**
1	• Positive school culture that welcomes all youth and families especially youth and families in special populations (culturally and linguistically diverse families) **(Q13, P9)**	**School Culture**
1	• Collect data from youth families to inform practice **(Q13, P9)**	**Data Informed Practice**
1	• Written and oral interpretation services **(Q13, P9)**	**Interpretation Services**
1	• We struggle to get parents to our school to provide them information. Parent attendance at info sessions is lacking and can contribute to information getting lost. We need to come up with better ideas to get parents to our school. **(Q13, P13)**	**???**
1	• stated above **(Q13, P16) [**Again, building a knowledge base of the process would be great help. **(Q12, P16)]**	**Stated Above**

Question 14: *What components of secondary transition related interagency collaboration do you directly or indirectly attribute to principal decision-making?*		
No. of Respondents	**Reponses**	**Theme**
4	• Again, knowledge or lack of knowledge of that agencies do can greatly impact who is let into the school and what services can be offered. **(Q14, P1)** • Lack of understanding re: secondary transition Time constraints in schedules don't allow principals to be as involved as some would like to be **(Q14, P5)** • Principals typically do not seek out interagency collaboration as it relates to transition programming. This typically falls on the desks of the special education director and/or teacher. As a result,	**Administrator Lack of Knowledge**

	principals are often unfamiliar with the resources available to students with exceptionalities. **(Q14, P11)** • I do not feel that principals have any ideas as far as what interagency collaboration involves and who some of those community agencies involve. **(Q14, P16)**	
3	• None **(Q14, P7)** • Nothing **(Q14, P14)** • None **(Q14, P19)**	**None**
2	• staff time to build relationships **(Q14, P2)** • Time/staff allotment to joining an interagency team. **(Q14, P9)** • In our region, we have an active cross-system "transition coordinating council" that includes representatives from schools, businesses, agencies, families, and postsecondary education. The council identifies important gaps in communication and services for transition students and families - and works to bridge those gaps by developing resources, programs, or events. When a principal sees the effectiveness of this interagency collaboration in preparing youth for postsecondary education or employment - s/he may be willing to allot time for staff and students to engage in these activities. **(Q14, P8)**	**Time**
2	• Signing contracts based on funds, allowing staff to assist with visits and support families and attend trainings or collaborative meetings **(Q14, P3)** • Signing of MOUs and MOAs with outside government agencies who support youth with disabilities as they transition. **(Q14, P15)**	**Contract Approval**
2	• getting groups together **(Q14, P4)** • Connection to youth and families to agencies and services provided **(Q14, P18)**	**Convening**

2	• The activities section of the transition plan allows room for incorporating interagency collaboration. It would be ideal if the principal had knowledge of the transition process in order to understand why including these agencies is essential. It could help in developing processes and procedures that support the collaboration. **(Q14, P6)** • Principals need to understand the importance of the connection between schools and agencies that they can partner with for support in transition planning. **(Q14, P10)**	**Administrator Knowledge**
2	• encouraging staff to work with outside agencies **(Q14, P12)** • Our principal encourages interagency collaboration but understands they can be unreliable partners **(Q14, P13)**	**Encouragement/Support**
1	• Meetings with interagency when applicable **(Q14, P18)**	**Interagency Meetings**
1	• not sure **(Q14, P17)**	**Unsure**

Question 15: *What components of secondary transition related interagency collaboration do school-based providers have or need do you wish your principal would help provide?*		
No. of Respondents	**Reponses**	**Theme**
8	• support related to staff time **(Q15, P2)** • Dedicated time to have person- centered planning meetings once a student is connected with an agency/services. **(Q15, P1)** • He is very flexible with staff time to collaborate with other agencies and will sign contracts for services as appropriate. We need more money **(Q15, P3)** • Again - the key resource principals can provide is TIME - for staff to learn about and engage in agency collaboration activities. **(Q15, P8)** • time to meet with agencies for planning	**Staff Time**

	purposes within their counties. **(Q15, P10)** • time to attend training **(Q15, P17)** • time to attend training **(Q15, P18)** • Assign a staff member to participate in an interagency team. **(Q15, P9)**	
5	• actually providing this **(Q15, P4)** • Opportunities to collaborate with outside agencies Resources/Training in regards to available resources **(Q15, P5)** • Our school-based providers were involved in the collaborating with Voc-Rehab and other outside agencies. **(Q15, P7)** • inviting outside agencies to work with students and families, providing time with students **(Q15, P12)** • We collaborate on our end with adult service state agencies, but ultimately cannot control how effective they are and they can be unreliable partners **(Q15, P13) ???**	**Opportunities for Collaboration**
3	• He is very flexible with staff time to collaborate with other agencies and will sign contracts for services as appropriate. We need more money **(Q15, P3)** • -Memorandums of understanding with interagency partners (VR, DDA, community partners, Department of Labor, etc.). **(Q15, P9)** • I think that inter-agency collaboration is lacking severely at the ground level. I think that principals could provide their support for interagency collaboration through MOAs and MOUs signed with outside agencies to support students with disabilities. **(Q15, P15)**	**Contract Approval/MOUs**
2	• It is important to understand the law. If the principal knew the requirements he could support the process by confirming that a protocol was in place in order to allow the invitation and inclusion of outside agencies with the IEP meetings/ transition planning process (i.e. release of information form	**Administrator Knowledge**

	that could serve for both school and agency) **(Q15, P6)** • School-based providers are able to connect with agencies that will help with the planning and implementation of transition program, but to hold agencies accountable, to address the needs of our students, it's imperative that principals be more involved in understanding agency roles and how they can best support the students in their schools. **(Q15, P11)**	
2	• Nothing **(Q15, P14)** • None **(Q15, P19)**	**None**
1	• He is very flexible with staff time to collaborate with other agencies and will sign contracts for services as appropriate. **(Q15, P3)** We need more money **(Q15, P3)**	**Funding**
1	• PD on various agencies, both for the principal and then to staff. **(Q15, P1)**	**Staff/Administrator PD**
1	• stated above **(Q15, P16) [**I do not feel that principals have any ideas as far as what interagency collaboration involves and who some of those community agencies involve. **(Q14, P16)]**	**Stated Above**

Question 16: *Out of the items listed in your response to the questions above, which do you feel like principals have the power to provide?*		
No. of Respondents	**Reponses**	**Theme**
7	• I feel allowing the staff who complete transition related activities the dedicated time to do so (without the assignments of other duties - e.g. lunch, hall monitor) is possible and could greatly impact services. **(Q16, P1)** • Time for teachers **(Q16, P4)** • TIME for students to meaningfully engage in career development activities and to learn and apply functional skills such as action planning, problem solving **(Q16,**	**Time**

	P8) • and time for students who need it to gain employment and independent living skill community-based instruction **(Q16, P8)** • Time **(Q16, P9)** • Time **(Q16, P19)** • More staff or more time for staff to devote to secondary transition planning for students with disabilities **(Q16, P15)**	
6	• Principals have the power to ensure that IDEA funds are used appropriately and therefore staff time could be a support provided **(Q16, P2)** • allocation of funds **(Q16, P3)** • budget **(Q16, P4)** • Funding **(Q16, P9)** • allocating staff and money when available **(Q16, P6)** • I believe that principals can work to support the financial support so that appropriate curriculum, staffing, and activities can be provided to students. **(Q16, P16)**	**Funding**
3	• Encouragement **(Q16, P3)** • support **(Q16, P3)** • Support **(Q16, P9)**	Support
1	• opportunities for staff training **(Q16, P3)**	Staff PD
2	• leadership to allow transition team to provide best practice transition programs **(Q16, P3)** • leadership **(Q16, P6)**	Leadership
1	• Support Time Oversight/Management **(Q16, P5)**	
1	• Guidance **(Q16, P6)**	Guidance
1	• development of a vision/ development of a scope of work for the transition program **(Q16, P6)**	Vision
1	• setting expectations of best practice **(Q16,**	Expectations

	P6)	
1	• implement protocols for interagency collaboration **(Q16, P6)**	Interagency Collaboration
4	• allocating staff and money when available **(Q16, P6)** • Staffing **(Q16, P9)** • More staff or more time for staff to devote to secondary transition planning for students with disabilities **(Q16, P15)** • curriculum, classes, staffing **(Q16, P14)**	Staffing
1	• Appropriate evaluations **(Q16, P9)**	Evaluation
1	• School culture **(Q16, P9)**	School Culture
1	• Space **(Q16, P9)**	Space – Standard 9?
1	• Data collection **(Q16, P9)**	
2	• All of them. Principals drive a major focus on education and the stronger understanding they have of each component of transition, the stronger their transition programming will be which will result in positive post school outcomes for students in their district. **(Q16, P10)** • All of the things listed, principals should have ability to provide. **(Q16, P17)**	All
1	• Principals have the power to create environments of student centered planning, choosing and delivering the most appropriate evidence-based practice, and being the advocates for the students outside of the school building. **(Q16, P11)**	
1	• support for staff to embed transition in the curriculum, such as providing the leadership to encourage creativity, and problem solving **(Q16, P12)** • - building time in the day for students to learn about transition skills and the world of work **(Q16, P12)** • - building a cohesive educational team to	

	support transition and to work collaboratively with outside agencies **(Q16, P12)**	
2	• Identifying curriculum and curriculum resources **(Q16, P13)** • curriculum, classes, staffing **(Q16, P14)**	Curriculum Resources
1	• curriculum, classes, staffing **(Q16, P14)**	Classes
1	• Primarily what curriculum is used **(Q16, P18)** • and creating authentic measurements of student, teacher, and programing success that may diverge from those used when looking at more traditional school programing. **(Q16, P18)**	
1	• None **(Q16, P7)**	None