

**TRANSITION SERVICES QUALITY  
MANAGEMENT (TQM) PROJECT**

**YEAR FOUR EVALUATION**

OCTOBER 2000

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PUBLICATION T00-015.2



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This evaluation examined how parents of children with disabilities and educators view the progress and direction of the Transition Services Quality Management (TQM) initiative. Delaware's TQM Project is a joint initiative co-sponsored by the Delaware Department of Education and the Delaware Division for Vocational Rehabilitation. It is important to note when reviewing the results that almost half of the parents reported not being involved at all with transition services planning over the past four years.

The intent of the TQM Project is to enhance the provision of services to Delaware's students with disabilities as they transition from secondary school into either the workforce or higher education. This project and its attendant evaluation are funded through a five-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Selected evaluation results are highlighted below:

📖 A little over half of all parents reported they were satisfied with transition services in general while a little less than half were not satisfied. Of those parents who received information about transition services this year, over two-thirds said they were satisfied with transition services planning.

📖 When asked about their experiences with transition services planning in the past four years, parents were most *satisfied* with:

- 1) communication between the school staff and parents,
- 2) responsiveness of school staff to their son/daughter's transition needs, and
- 3) their son/daughter's involvement in transition planning.

Parents were most *dissatisfied* with:

- 1) availability of information about community resources for parents,
- 2) availability of information for parents about helping their children with disabilities, and
- 3) availability of training sessions for parents.

📖 There were several components of transition services planning that were particularly important to parents. The six components that seem to make a big difference in parent's perceptions include: 1) opportunities for student and parent involvement in transition planning, 2) availability and quality of career counseling for students, 3) availability of information for parents, 4) cooperation between the schools and state agencies, 5) involvement of the DVR counselor, and 6) usefulness of the IEP meeting in addressing transition needs.

📖 Although about half did not feel they had enough information to make a judgment, almost one-third of the parents said efforts over the past four years to increase the quality of transition services planning for students with disabilities and their families has been at least somewhat successful. One-fifth of the parents stated there has been no impact at all.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (CONTINUED)**

- 📖 About sixty percent of parents believe their son/daughter has received a good education. However, slightly less than half believe that the school has prepared their son/daughter well for life beyond high school.
- 📖 While educators identified many successes of the TQM project including transportation, educational and job opportunities for students, cooperation between employers and schools, and transition coordinators, they believe much more can, and should, be done to improve transition services planning in Delaware. Many educators saw the transition coordinator as an important and critical component to the continued success of the project.
- 📖 Parents overwhelmingly reported that job opportunities for students with disabilities was the biggest challenge for transition services planning in Delaware. Student commitment, continuing education opportunities for students, and transportation services were also identified as important challenges.
- 📖 In addition to a lack of job opportunities, educators identified vocational course offerings as another challenge to address. Principals noted that there are 1) not enough vocational course offerings for students in comprehensive high schools and most vocational courses that are offered are not geared toward special education students, 2) there is a tendency to put an emphasis on high-tech business to the exclusion of hands-on mechanic-based technology, and 3) job shadowing is a very valuable piece of vocational preparation that is lacking in many places.
- 📖 Approximately ninety percent of parents reported being invited consistently to IEP or transition meetings in a timely manner. Almost eighty percent of these parents attended a scheduled meeting. Of the parents who attended a meeting, more than eighty percent found them to be either somewhat or very helpful. Yet, some parents also expressed concerns about transition services planning beginning very late in a student's academic career, often not until the student's senior year in high school.
- 📖 About half of parents reported that a DVR counselor had been in contact with their son/daughter. [Note: Any student 18 years or older is an adult and parent notification of contact is not required.] Nearly forty percent of the parents felt that the counselor's involvement had been very helpful to the transition needs of their son/daughter, while almost thirty percent felt that the counselor's involvement had not been helpful at all.
- 📖 Most educators knew the DVR counselor assigned to their school and understood the process for referring students for services; however, many were not fully aware of the services that DVR provides.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (CONTINUED)**

📖 The majority of educators viewed the 2003 Conference as an essential and wonderful way to exchange knowledge and experiences with other professionals regarding transition services.

📖 Almost all of the educators maintained that these kinds of services should be available to students on a regular basis, and such a project should be an integral part of schools. Educators agreed that without transition services planning special education children will not have the tools and the opportunities to advance themselves and achieve independent living. Overwhelmingly, they believe, for sustainability, financial support (primarily to fund positions for transition coordinators) from the state is crucial.

The final sample upon which these results are based includes surveys from 86 parents (a response rate of 16.4%) and interviews with several high school administrators and transition coordinators. About half (55.4%) of the parents reported receiving information this year about transition services planning for their son/daughter as he/she transitions from school to adult life.

The staff of the Delaware Education Research and Development Center (R&D Center) is available to answer questions regarding analyses presented in this report or to assist in their interpretation.

## PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The Delaware Education Research and Development Center at the University of Delaware has conducted this evaluation at the request of the Delaware Department of Education Improvement and Assistance Branch, Exceptional Children and Early Childhood Education Team. The Year 4 evaluation addressed the following objectives:

- How and in what ways does Delaware's Transition Services Quality Management (TQM) Project support local and state efforts to affect needed changes in transition service delivery?
- What successes has the TQM Project experienced?
- What challenges did the TQM Project face?
- Are parents satisfied with the TQM Project?
- How do TQM Project components (e.g. training, mini-grants, target schools) influence implementation?
- To what extent have programs facilitated by the grant been institutionalized?

A copy of the evaluation plan is included in Appendix A.

## METHODS

Evaluation results are based on two primary sources of data, a parent survey and stakeholder focus groups. The **parent survey** was developed by the staff of the R&D Center upon the advice and under the direction of representatives from the Delaware Department of Education and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. The survey is based on literature reviewed regarding transition services and borrows from Everson's Strategies for Interagency Transition Programs and Millar's MCITT Transition Self-Assessment. This survey was administered to parents who have a child with a disability who completed the 12<sup>th</sup> grade of school. The TQM evaluation is intended to provide the Department with information about the progress and direction of the TQM Project.

The survey was divided into three parts. Part A was used to gather general information and opinions about transition services in Delaware. Part B of the survey gathered school information as it relates to the TQM Project as well as parent beliefs about transition services. Part C was optional and gathered any additional comments. Because parents may not be aware of the TQM Project by name, parents were asked about transition services planning in general. A copy of the survey is included in Appendix B.

In early June 2000, surveys were mailed to 568 parents who have a child with a disability (who had completed their 12<sup>th</sup> grade year in the secondary school system). A second mailing was sent in early July 2000 to those individuals who had not responded to the initial mailing. A third mailing was sent in late July 2000 to those individuals who had not responded to the first or second mailing. Several surveys were returned with invalid addresses, thus the response rate is calculated out of a possible 530 parents. The final sample upon which these results are based includes 86 parents (a response rate of 16.4%). Respondents for this sample were very much like the total population based on disability code of the child (see Table 1).

Table 1. Percent of Parents in Sample and Population by Disability Code of Son/Daughter

Disability Code	Percent of Parents		Disability Code	Percent of Parents	
	Population	Sample		Population	Sample
100	10.8%	10.5%	700	3.2%	3.5%
200	4.1%	1.2%	800	0.3%	1.2%
300	51.5%	45.3%	900	0.5%	0%
400	11.7%	12.8%	1000	4.4%	7.0%
500	6.3%	10.5%	1100	0.8%	0%
600	4.6%	8.1%			

Approximately half of the survey respondents (46.5%) were parents of children over the age of 18. Selected survey findings are discussed in the following section. A comprehensive accounting of survey results is provided after the discussion. Please note that responses for some questions may not add to 100% due to rounding. Presented in this volume are results for the respondent sample as a whole. In addition, a chi-square analysis was conducted about the satisfaction level of parents with transition services planning in Delaware with all other survey questions. Other analyses can be generated upon request.

The **stakeholder focus groups** were used to supplement the results of the parent survey. Focus groups were held with two groups of transition coordinators. Focus group comments and themes are embedded throughout the discussion of findings. The focus group protocol is included in Appendix C.

The **principal interviews** were used to supplement the results of the parent survey and the stakeholder focus groups. Interviews were conducted with nine high school administrators (principals and assistant principals). Interview comments and themes are embedded throughout the discussion of findings to provide further evidence or clarification of survey results. The interview protocol is included in Appendix C.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### SUPPORT AND INVOLVEMENT

About two-thirds (66.5%) of the parents reported being involved to some extent with transition services planning over the past four years; however, few (20%) parents said they were very or moderately involved. Very few parents (7%) had a great deal of experience with transition services planning in general. Thus it is not surprising to find that many parents did

“My daughter is learning how to survive in the working world.”

not feel they knew enough about transition services planning to judge whether efforts to increase the quality of services had been successful (50%) or if transition services planning has changed in the past four years (77.5%). Of those parents who did have knowledge about the degree of success of transition services planning over the past four years, many believed efforts to increase the quality of transition services planning has been successful (22%) or has helped some (39%). Some, on the other hand, believed it had no impact (39%). It is important to keep in mind, however, that one can be knowledgeable about his/her level of satisfaction at a given moment without being able to assess changes (positive or negative) over time. Most parents were able to share their perceptions about their level of satisfaction with transition services planning in Delaware. About half of the parents (54.6%) felt satisfied while about half (45.4%) felt dissatisfied with transition services in Delaware.

### SUCSESSES

When asked explicitly what has been the greatest success of transition services planning over the past four years, few parents responded to this optional question. However, of those parents who did respond, many believed that being kept informed or the improvement in their son/daughter's independence was the greatest success.

*I think the greatest success is ...  
"The special education teachers were very cooperative and also advised [us] of any problems that may affect [our child's] school work. They were also there for my [child] and kept in contact with the family."*

Most of the transition coordinators and principals saw many successes and improvements in transition services planning for students with disabilities since the project was initiated four years ago. Similarly, most responses about the general quality of the project were positive. A few principals, however, indicated that they were not aware of these services nor had they participated in or benefited from the project.

The focus of the successes were numerous, but most revolved around 1) transportation, 2) educational and job opportunities, 3) public relations, and 4) transition coordinators.

Transportation. Providing means of transportation to students with disabilities was a tremendous improvement over the previously existing conditions. For example, one educator noted their school was able to purchase a vehicle to drive students to and from their places of work. Another educator described how the school van was used to accommodate his students. He emphasized the fact that this service has been an extremely practical arrangement in the school culture.

Educational and Job Opportunities. Some educators stated that most believe the objective of this kind of service is to focus on job finding. However, the spectrum of opportunities they believed should include higher education. For example, as one educator stated, "I've seen kids being made aware of opportunities, and not just employment. I think we've also pushed some

*"I would hope it's providing kids an opportunity to be successful in life, and helping them find opportunities that they otherwise would not have found. So many kids think that flipping hamburgers at McDonald's is the place to be, and we all know that's not the case."*

kids towards some post-secondary education. I hope transition is not just [directing] kids to focus on employment, but also on higher education ... I've seen our teachers in our transition program make the students more aware of what opportunities are available to them." On the other hand, some educators described the improvements as "dramatic" as they emphasized the collaboration between the district and the school to ensure job placement for all these children. As one educator summarizes, "Students are given a greater opportunity since TQM has been in existence to actually find and locate job opportunities."

Public Relations. Educators noted that in most cases the cooperation of local community employers with the schools was good. However, they indicated that in order to enhance the community involvement and awareness, more public education regarding services for students with disabilities is needed. One educator expressed that there are too many stereotypes regarding "special education kids," and, in the same way, there is a misconception about what the community businesses can offer.

"Accessibility and knowledge of what certain businesses in the community do [are needed]. And I also think there's still a misunderstanding in ... the industry [regarding] the abilities of a lot of these students. And [the problem] is not necessarily academic. They need to interface with the kids more, and allow them more access into their industries to find out where their talents lie."

Transition Coordinators. One principal described how this year his school hired a part-time transition coordinator to interact "first hand with special education students." While the impact was seen primarily in providing greater

"The main impact of hiring the onsite transition coordinator is that, her day basically revolves around pulling the kids out on one on one ... And she also took the kids out on field trips to different job sites through their interests, to help them, basically find out exactly what it was like to be on the job site."

accessibility for students to different job related resources, hiring a transition coordinator allowed the classroom teacher to focus on teaching and learning. "Because a lot of it was falling on the individual teacher, and frankly, they just don't have the time to work with all their other responsibilities, they don't have the time to put into that."

Another educator described the experience with a transition coordinator as "excellent" and "a tremendous improvement." Many educators saw the transition coordinator as an important and critical component to the success of the project.

### 2003 CONFERENCE

More than half of those interviewed said that they attended the conference. Several principals also pointed out that other educators from their school attended the conference. Many principals also said they have a basic familiarity with what transition services can offer.

Educators in the focus groups indicated that the "2003 Conference" as an important event. Although some noted that the conference had the potential to improve collaboration among high schools and middle schools, they had not seen any substantial change as yet. However, the majority said that the interactions with peers were enriching experiences. The conference was seen as

essential for exchanging knowledge and experiences among professionals. One educator stated that the big benefit of this project, as he learned from the conference, is that teachers and transition coordinators from different districts get together to share ideas and concerns.

“I haven’t seen a tremendous amount of collaboration [between high schools and middle schools], although we are beginning to through our academic disciplines. So I think there will be a natural transition, that TQM will be involved with the middle schools, more so in the future.”

### *TRANSITION MINI-GRANT*

Half of the schools represented in the study have received a transition mini grant according to the principals. Several principals noted that the main use of these grants was to provide field trips and educational opportunities outside of school for the students. The present and the long-run effects

“I think it should be fully integrated with the school improvement plan... In our case, we’re in a comprehensive school reform grant. But these things ought to be done in coordination with what they’re doing. So that they don’t contradict each other.”

of these grants, according to the interviewed principals, were the career opportunities and training for students, such as job-shadowing. In addition, principals stated that because the districts do not have sufficient resources, small grants (e.g., MBNA) would be a continual needed source of support.

For these grants to have lasting effects, principals noted that transition services should

be part of the larger school reform plan, rather than targeting a particular student population. These programs should include the entire school population. They should run in alignment with the school policy to broaden opportunities for students.

“I see that as being a tremendous opportunity for our students to gain gainful employment after they graduate from school. It’s a definite asset. There’s no question about that.”

Few principals said that they have conducted any self-evaluation of their transition mini-grant. One principal said that such an evaluation would not be

[We need] some kind of follow up survey ... to see, you know, where they are, why did they choose that profession? Was it something they experienced through this program? How did they get to where they are right now? What got them there, and what things should be done to help them get other places?”

scientific, but only his “sense of things.” Another principal said that the impact of the mini-grant was minimal, and the collected information for reviewing it was insufficient. A third principal, presenting a different view, emphasized the tremendous effect of the mini-grant on the future of school children.

Some mentioned that to yield a more accurate assessment of the impact of the transition mini-grant, a longitudinal study should be conducted that follows these students after high school.

### STUDENT TRAINING

Many parents (49.4%) did not know if their son or daughter had received training in self-determination. Few (5%) parents whose son/daughter had received self-determination training said that it had not been helpful.

Liability and accountability are two issues that some educators view as barriers to student job training. They stated that employers are concerned with being responsible and accountable for the student trainees' safety as well as their progress. As one educator explains, "If I send [a] child up there, who is going to be responsible? I can't get anything in writing from my district."

### IEP AND TRANSITION PLANNING MEETINGS

Nearly all parents (90.4%) stated that they had consistently and in a timely manner been invited to IEP or transition meetings. Many (79.7%) attended an IEP or transition meeting since last September. Most (82.3%) said that the IEP meetings they had attended were either very or somewhat helpful. They viewed them as an opportunity to discuss progress being made, make changes for the future, and gain valuable information about their role as a parent. For some parents, however, the experience was not always positive. Some of the difficulties parents experienced included IEP meetings scheduled at times when working parents could not attend, not scheduling an IEP meeting because the student was a senior, and giving parents inaccurate information about their son/daughter's eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services. Some parents also expressed a concern about transition services beginning very late in a student's academic career, often not until the student's senior year in high school.

### INVOLVEMENT WITH DVR

About half (45.7%) of the parents stated that a DVR counselor had been in contact with their son or daughter. However, it is important to note that any student 18 years or older is an adult, and parent notification is not required according to DVR policies. Since about 90% of the respondents in this study are parents of adult students (18 or older) with disabilities, the percent of students who have had contact with a DVR counselor may be underrepresented by

"Speaking on behalf of his most recent counselor ..., she has been very helpful."

"Other than being introduced at [an] IEP [meeting] -- not much interaction [with DVR counselor]."

asking parents for this information. Additionally, it is DVR's policy to contact students with disabilities about two years prior to graduation. Therefore, if a student plans to stay in high school until age 21, a DVR counselor will likely not be in contact with this student until he/she reaches 19 or 20 years of age.

Although many parents (39.5%) felt the counselor's involvement was very helpful, about one-fourth (28.9%) felt their involvement was not helpful at all. Nearly all comments shared by parents

regarding DVR's involvement related to the level of rapport developed (or lack thereof) by the individual counselor with the student and his/her parents. While several described their experiences with the DVR counselor as very positive, some experienced difficulties. Some of these difficulties included repeated meeting cancellations, lengthy time waiting for a first appointment, being given papers with no accompanying explanations or clarifications, receiving no follow-up from the DVR counselor, and unexpected case closures. It is important to note that DVR's policy of closing cases states, "if two appointments are missed without good cause, the student's service record may be closed and not reopened for six months." Furthermore, the policy states, "if an individual scheduled for an assessment procedure does not keep the appointment and does not notify the VR counselor... the individual's service record may be closed."

More than half of the educators said they knew about the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and are familiar with the process of referring students to DVR. While three-quarters of them noted that they knew the VR counselor who was assigned to their school, many were not fully aware of the services DVR provides. Principals and assistant principals were less likely to be informed about DVR services.

### VOCATIONAL PREPARATION

In general, educators emphasized the importance of the vocational classes at the high school level. Many also saw job shadowing as a very valuable piece of vocational preparation. Yet, the financial resources, many claimed, were not going in that direction.

Although many believed that vocational education is important, several also saw some gaps in the current arrangement. As one educator states, there is a shortage of bricklayers, plumbers, electricians, et cetera, but the administration and schools still tend to be more "academic" and high-tech, instead of vocational. Another described that while schools offer different pathways including

"Our high schools now have to go back to the old way, and [offer vocational courses] ... but administration hasn't bent that way yet. They just don't see it. It's still very academic programming."

high-tech oriented courses, there is a tendency to put an emphasis on sophisticated high-tech business that is different from hands-on mechanic-based technology. But, in order to have a comprehensive plan, the school needs to work with employers that offer this kind of high-tech business as well as businesses that offer hand-on mechanics-based activities. In addition, there has to be a job coach to guide, assist, and monitor the student progress. One educator stated that more could and should be done in this area. "We instituted a program last year to expose kids to work experiences. I think more of that [is needed]. I think that [it] is probably the most

practical thing to do with kids who are going to seek employment after high school." Another educator reiterates the importance of on-the-job training for students. "There has to be a system, if you want these kids to stay in school and move closer to a diploma, or actually get diplomas or certificates. There has to be a mechanism for them to earn credit for on-the-job career type jobs ... where they can actually build skills."

## CHALLENGES

Several challenges were voiced by parents; however, the biggest challenge cited by most parents was job opportunities for students. Over three-fourths (78.1%) of the parents stated that this was one of the top three challenges for transition services planning.

**Job Opportunities for Students.** While parents saw all challenges as important, inadequate availability of job opportunities for students was by far the most important challenge. In fact, over twice as many parents identified job opportunities for students as a problem than they did any other challenge. Educators also identified a lack of job opportunities as an important challenge to overcome.

“I would like to see ...employers ...actually work with people with disabilities, not to just work at McDonald's and the Goodwill. [My child] wants to have [a] good job with benefits.”

**Other Challenges.** When polled specifically about the relative importance of 13 challenges to delivering effective transition services (see survey in Appendix B for a list of the challenges parents were asked to rank), parents ranked the top three

challenges facing transition services planning in Delaware. As mentioned in the preceding paragraph, the number one challenge cited by parents was job opportunities for students. The next three challenges were 1) student commitment, 2) continuing education opportunities for students, and 3) transportation services, respectively. Availability of vocational courses for students, teacher commitment, and parent commitment all ranked equally as the next challenges.

In addition to a lack of job opportunities, educators identified vocational course offerings and transportation as challenges to address. Most educators maintained that the schools need to emphasize the importance of the vocational courses and to improve the availability of these courses. There are not enough vocational course offerings for students in comprehensive high schools, principals noted, and those that are offered are more geared toward regular education students than to special education kids. They recommended these courses be broadened to include special education students. Another educator shared a similar view. They felt while the state was moving in the right direction, the needs of non-diploma track students were not being met. These students, they believed, were being put into the workforce and the only thing they were able to do is very minimal jobs because they were lacking the skills. They stressed that the focus should be on the lower functioning students.

“High schools need to address much more extensively the vocational areas. They closed down all the workshops, and wood shops, and electrical shops, and plumbing. And now they have to reinvent the wheel according to what is needed out in the work force. Unfortunately, they’ve been very resistant to change. They’re still college prep oriented, and not meeting the needs of 60 to 70 percent of the kids that are in their schools.”

PARENT SATISFACTION

When asked about their experiences with transition services planning of the past four years, parents were most *satisfied* with:

- 1) communication between the school staff and parents (76.5%),
- 2) responsiveness of school staff to their son/daughter's transition needs (61.9%), and
- 3) their son/daughter's involvement in transition planning (57.3%).

Other areas with which over half of parents said they were satisfied include opportunities to communicate their opinions about transition services for their son/daughter (52.6%) and cooperation among special education, general education, and vocational education teachers (54.7%).

Parents were most *dissatisfied* with:

- 1) availability of information about community resources for parents (41.5%),
- 2) availability of information for parents about helping their children with disabilities (39.1%), and
- 3) availability of training sessions for parents (37.8%).

Overall, parents seem to be most satisfied with the communication they receive from the school, but are dissatisfied with the lack of information available about community resources for parents. Parents seem to want and need more information about how they can best help their son/daughter. They also shared their frustrations about instances when they were unable to receive the assistance they believed they/their child needed. In addition, some parents expressed their feeling of exhaustion about always needing to be proactive.

PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

Almost all of the educators maintained that these kinds of services should be available to students on a regular basis, and such a project should be an integral part of schools. Without it, special education children, they noted, will not have the tools and the opportunities to advance themselves and achieve independent living.

“[The project should continue] as part of a larger school [program] for all students, and the TQM could be specific to ensure that our special kids’ needs are addressed.”

One principal suggested that the school should strive to keep the project going by creating more site-based decision making which would involve the administration, parents, businesses, students, and teachers. Then the schools should be directly accountable to the state. As one educator stated, “Provided with the technology that we have today, and the software packages, schools can keep their own records, and report to a county office ... And make the schools, themselves, accountable to the state ... Eliminate the interference that is often offered by district personnel, who have the best of intentions, but have no idea what’s going on in schools.”

Although educators have differing views on how the project should be supported after the federal funding ends, none suggested that the schools should exclusively carry the load. Some suggested that part of the state surplus could be utilized to fund this initiative. Most believed for sustainability, it is crucial for the state to be supportive not just in words, but also in action. They viewed a financial contribution to this initiative by the state as one very important way to show their support.

“That’s just a matter of where legislators want to put their money. They’re screaming, education. Well, put your money where your mouth is. Put it into education.”

### PROFILE OF PARENTS

An additional analysis was conducted that compared parents who stated they were satisfied with transition services planning in Delaware with parents who stated they were dissatisfied. Only survey items for which there was a very large difference in the responses patterns for the two groups are presented in this section. A chi-square analysis ( $p < .01$ ) was performed to determine if significant differences exist.

Parents who stated they were satisfied with transition services planning in Delaware were much more likely to have been involved with the transition services planning and to believe that efforts to increase the quality of transition services planning for students with disabilities and their families have been at least somewhat successful. In fact, parents who were satisfied with transition services planning were almost 9 times more likely to be very or moderately involved with Delaware's transition services planning as parents who were dissatisfied. Satisfied parents were also 36 times more likely to think that efforts over the past four years to increase the quality of transition services planning have been at least somewhat successful as compared to parents who were dissatisfied with transition services planning in Delaware.

There were also several components that were particularly important to parents. The four components that seem to make the most difference (estimated odds ratios greater than 35) in parents' perceptions include: a) opportunities for student and parent involvement in transition planning, b) availability and quality of career counseling services for students, c) availability of information for parents, and d) cooperation between the schools and state agencies. For example, parents who are satisfied with transition services planning were about 50 times more likely to have had opportunities to communicate their opinions about transition services for their son/daughter. The estimated odds ratio for each of these survey items is included in Table 2. In addition, many survey items reflected the large difference in perceptions and experiences of parents who were satisfied with transition services planning in Delaware compared to those who were not satisfied. The results of these survey items are listed in Table 3. In addition, this table shows the importance of the role of the DVR counselor and the IEP/transition meeting to the parents' level of satisfaction with transition services planning.

Table 2. Estimated Odds Ratios for Selected Survey Items (Ratios > 35)

Indicate your Level of Satisfaction	Estimated Odds Ratio
My son/daughter's involvement with transition services planning.	70.9
Opportunities to communicate my opinions about transition services for my son/daughter.	49.6
Availability of career counseling services for students.	67.9
Quality of career counseling services for students.	67.9
Availability of information for parents about helping their children with disabilities.	41.4
Availability of information about community resources for families and students.	37.7
Cooperation between schools and state agencies that serve students with disabilities.	38.0

Table 3. Parents Who Are Satisfied/Dissatisfied with Transition Services Planning in Delaware

**If you attended an IEP or transition meeting,** how helpful has the meeting been to the transition needs of your son/daughter?

Satisfied with Transition Services Planning	<b>52%</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>7%</b>
Dissatisfied with Transition Services Planning	<b>9%</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>36%</b>
	Very Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Not Helpful

**If a DVR counselor has been in contact with your son/daughter,** how helpful has the DVR counselor's involvement been to the transition needs of your son/daughter?

Satisfied with Transition Services Planning	<b>59%</b>	<b>9%</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>18%</b>
Dissatisfied with Transition Services Planning	<b>0%</b>	<b>18%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>18%</b>
	Very Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Not Helpful	Not Sure

	Satisfied with Transition Services Planning		Dissatisfied with Transition Services Planning	
	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied
For each of the following statements, please <b>reflect on your experiences over the past year</b> and indicate your level of satisfaction.				
Communication between school staff and parents.	92%	8%	59%	41%
Responsiveness of school staff to my son/daughter's transition needs.	94%	6%	41%	59%
My son/daughter's involvement in transition planning.	100%	0%	30%	70%
Opportunities to communicate my opinions about transition services for my son/daughter.	91%	9%	17%	83%
Cooperation among special education, general education, and vocational education teachers.	82%	18%	44%	57%
Cooperation between schools and higher education institutions.	86%	14%	24%	77%
Cooperation between schools and state agencies that serve students with disabilities.	80%	20%	10%	91%
Availability of career counseling services for students.	78%	22%	0%	100%
Quality of career counseling services for students.	78%	22%	0%	100%
Availability of continuing education for students.	73%	27%	26%	74%
Quality of continuing education for students.	74%	26%	28%	72%
Availability of vocational courses for students.	73%	27%	28%	72%
Quality of vocational courses for students.	79%	21%	31%	69%
Availability of information about community resources for families and students.	77%	23%	8%	92%
Availability of information for parents about helping their children with disabilities.	84%	16%	12%	89%
Availability of training sessions for parents.	59%	41%	6%	94%
Progress made over the last four years in providing transition services to students with disabilities.	83%	17%	15%	85%
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
The school has prepared my son/daughter well for life beyond high school.	68%	32%	26%	74%

## CONCLUSIONS

During the past year, Delaware's Transition Services Quality Management Project has continued to improve the quality of transition services available to students with disabilities as noted in the previous sections and the project is successfully expanding quality components of the program and communicating with key transition stakeholders including parents. While the project has brought transition services in Delaware a long way, there is still considerable work to be done. Additional improvements are needed as noted by educators and parents alike to ensure that special education children have the tools and opportunities to advance themselves and achieve independent living.

Educators identified many successes of the TQM project including transportation, educational and job opportunities for students, cooperation between employers and schools, and utilization of transition coordinators. In fact, many viewed the transition coordinator as an important and critical component to the continued success of the project. The majority of educators also viewed the 2003 Conference as an essential and wonderful way to exchange knowledge and experiences with other professionals regarding transition services.

Some accomplishments as well as disappointments were also noted by comments from parents. For example, almost one-third of the parents said efforts over the past four years to increase the quality of transition services planning for students with disabilities and their families has been at least somewhat successful; however, half did not feel they had enough information to make a judgment. Also, slightly less than half of the parents believed that the school has prepared their son/daughter well for life beyond high school. With regard to IEP meetings, parents are consistently and in a timely manner being invited to and attending IEP and transition meetings. For the most part, parents also find them at least somewhat helpful. However, some are concerned about transition services planning beginning very late in a student's academic career, often not until the student's senior year as noted by one parent. Furthermore, about half of parents reported that a DVR counselor had been in contact with their son/daughter. [Note: Any student 18 years or older is an adult and parent notification of contact by DVR is not required.] Nearly forty percent of the parents felt that the counselor's involvement had been very helpful to the transition needs of their son/daughter, while almost thirty percent felt that the counselor's involvement had not been helpful at all.

While a little over half of all parents reported they were satisfied with transition services, when parents are involved, they are more likely to be satisfied with the changes they have seen. For example, of those parents who received information about transition services this year, over two-thirds said they were satisfied with transition services planning. In general, parents were most satisfied with the communication between the school staff and parents, the responsiveness of school staff to their son/daughter's transition needs, and their son/daughter's involvement in transition planning. On the other hand, parents were most dissatisfied with availability of information about community resources for parents, the availability of information for parents about helping their children with disabilities, and the availability of training sessions for parents. As a result, there were several components of transition services planning that were particularly important to parents. The six components that seem to make a big difference in parent's perceptions include: 1) opportunities for student and parent involvement in transition planning, 2) availability and quality of career counseling for students, 3) availability of information for parents, 4)

cooperation between the schools and state agencies, 5) involvement of the DVR counselor, and 6) usefulness of the IEP meeting in addressing transition needs.

As the project commences its final year, it will become increasingly important to significantly break down the major barriers to transition services in Delaware. Parents overwhelmingly reported that job opportunities for students with disabilities was the biggest challenge for transition services planning in Delaware. Student commitment, continuing education opportunities for students, and transportation services were also identified as important challenges. In addition to a lack of job opportunities and transportation services, educators identified vocational course offerings as another challenge to address. Principals noted that there are 1) not enough vocational course offerings for students in comprehensive high schools and most vocational courses that are offered are not geared toward special education students, 2) there is a tendency to put an emphasis on high-tech business to the exclusion of hands-on mechanic-based technology, and 3) job shadowing is a very valuable piece of vocational preparation that is lacking in many places.

While the project is reaching some, the sustainability of the project depends on reaching a wider audience. Getting parents involved even when they have received information is a particularly challenging problem. About half of the parents reported receiving information this year about transition services planning for their son/daughter as he/she transitions from school to adult life. In addition, almost half of the parents reported not being involved at all with the transition services planning over the past four years. But above all, educators believe the commitment on the part of the state to transition services planning is critical to its continued success. They believe that true commitment comes in the form of words as well as actions. Without the financial support of the state, they believe the underlying message being sent to all school districts will be that transition services planning is not important.

Additionally, this project has the added difficulty of directly assessing how TQM has touched the lives of students and families. Because many of students touched by this project are at least 18 years of age and are legally considered adults, parents may not be knowledgeable about the services that their son or daughter has received. Furthermore, due to disabilities that hinder communication, understanding students' perceptions about transition services planning can also prove to be extremely challenging. Therefore, due to these difficulties, these methods of evaluation have not been as effective as anticipated and may under represent the impacts made.

**TRANSITION SERVICES QUALITY MANAGEMENT (TQM) PROJECT**

*~ OVERALL PARENT SURVEY RESULTS ~*

**PART A: GENERAL INFORMATION**

1. What is the age of your son/daughter who is (or will be) receiving transition services?

<b>1.2% (1)</b>	<b>8.5% (7)</b>	<b>41.5% (34)</b>	<b>23.2% (19)</b>	<b>13.4% (11)</b>	<b>12.2% (10)</b>
16 Years Old	17 Years Old	18 Years Old	19 Years Old	20 Years Old	21 Years Old

2. What grade was he/she in this past school year?

<b>1.4% (1)</b>	<b>4.1% (3)</b>	<b>83.8% (62)</b>	<b>10.8% (8)</b>
10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	11 <sup>th</sup> Grade	12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	Ungraded Class

3. What is his/her gender?

<b>56.0% (47)</b>	<b>44.0% (37)</b>
Male	Female

4. Have you received information **this year** about transition services planning for your son/daughter as he/she transitions from school to adult life?

<b>55.4% (46)</b>	<b>44.6% (37)</b>
Yes	No

5. How involved have you been with Delaware's transition services planning over the **past four years**?

<b>7.1% (6)</b>	<b>12.9% (11)</b>	<b>36.5% (31)</b>	<b>43.5% (37)</b>
Very Involved	Moderately Involved	A Little Involved	Not Involved At All

6. How would you say transition services planning has changed in the **past four years**?

<b>14.3% (12)</b>	<b>6.0% (5)</b>	<b>2.4% (2)</b>	<b>77.4% (65)</b>
It Has Improved	It Has Stayed About the Same	It Has Gotten Worse	Don't Know

7. How satisfied are you with transition services in Delaware?

<b>16.7% (11)</b>	<b>37.9% (25)</b>	<b>34.8% (23)</b>	<b>10.6% (7)</b>
Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Not Satisfied	Very Dissatisfied

**PART A: GENERAL INFORMATION (CONTINUED)**

8. Do you think efforts over the **past four years** to increase the quality of transition services planning for students with disabilities and their families have been successful?

They have been successful.	11.0% (9)
They have helped some but have not been successful enough.	19.5% (16)
They have had no impact.	19.5% (16)
Don't know.	50.0% (41)

9. Of the following challenges for transition services planning in Delaware, please **rank the top 3** where **1 is the biggest challenge, 2 the next biggest, etc.**

Job Opportunities for Students	78.1%	Training for Professionals	20.5%
Student Commitment	30.1%	Integration of Services Across State Agencies	15.1%
Continuing Education Opportunities for Students	28.8%	Training Opportunities for Parents	8.2%
Transportation Services	24.7%	School Administer Commitment	5.5%
Availability of Vocational Courses for Students	23.3%	Integration of Standards with Transition	5.5%
Teacher Commitment	23.3%	District Office Commitment	4.1%
Parent Commitment	23.3%	<i>Other</i>	11.0%
Employer Commitment	20.5%		

For each of the following statements, please <b>reflect on your experiences over the past year</b> and indicate your level of satisfaction.	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know
10. Communication between school staff and parents.	<u>30.6%</u> (26)	<u>45.9%</u> (39)	<u>14.1%</u> (12)	<u>7.1%</u> (6)	<u>2.4%</u> (2)
11. Responsiveness of school staff to my son/daughter's transition needs.	<u>23.8%</u> (20)	<u>38.1%</u> (32)	<u>15.5%</u> (13)	<u>11.9%</u> (10)	<u>10.7 %</u> (9)
12. My son/daughter/s involvement in transition planning.	<u>19.5%</u> (16)	<u>37.8%</u> (31)	<u>20.7%</u> (17)	<u>3.7%</u> (3)	<u>18.3%</u> (15)
13. Opportunities to communicate my opinions about transition services for my son/daughter.	<u>14.0%</u> (12)	<u>38.6%</u> (32)	<u>26.5%</u> (22)	<u>8.4%</u> (7)	<u>12.0%</u> (10)
14. Cooperation among special education, general education, and vocational education teachers.	<u>19.0%</u> (16)	<u>35.7%</u> (30)	<u>13.1%</u> (11)	<u>13.1%</u> (11)	<u>19.0%</u> (16)

**PART A: GENERAL INFORMATION (CONTINUED)**

For each of the following statements, please <b>reflect on your experiences over the past year</b> and indicate your level of satisfaction.	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know
15. Cooperation between schools and higher education institutions.	<u>12.2%</u> (10)	<u>30.5%</u> (25)	<u>12.2%</u> (10)	<u>12.2%</u> (10)	<u>32.9%</u> (27)
16. Cooperation between schools and state agencies that serve students with disabilities.	<u>6.0%</u> (5)	<u>30.1%</u> (25)	<u>20.5%</u> (17)	<u>14.5%</u> (12)	<u>28.9%</u> (24)
17. Availability of career counseling services for students.	<u>8.5%</u> (7)	<u>29.9%</u> (24)	<u>22.0%</u> (18)	<u>13.4%</u> (11)	<u>26.8%</u> (22)
18. Quality of career counseling services for students.	<u>6.2%</u> (5)	<u>29.6%</u> (24)	<u>23.5%</u> (19)	<u>12.3%</u> (10)	<u>28.4%</u> (23)
19. Availability of continuing education for students.	<u>9.6%</u> (8)	<u>31.3%</u> (26)	<u>16.9%</u> (14)	<u>13.3%</u> (11)	<u>28.9%</u> (24)
20. Quality of continuing education for students.	<u>11.0%</u> (9)	<u>26.8%</u> (22)	<u>19.5%</u> (16)	<u>8.5%</u> (7)	<u>34.1%</u> (28)
21. Availability of vocational courses for students.	<u>11.3%</u> (9)	<u>30.0%</u> (24)	<u>10.0%</u> (8)	<u>18.8%</u> (15)	<u>30.0%</u> (24)
22. Quality of vocational courses for students.	<u>12.2%</u> (10)	<u>26.8%</u> (22)	<u>11.0%</u> (9)	<u>13.4%</u> (11)	<u>36.6%</u> (24)
23. Availability of information about community resources for families and students.	<u>8.5%</u> (7)	<u>29.3%</u> (24)	<u>24.4%</u> (20)	<u>17.1%</u> (14)	<u>20.7%</u> (17)
24. Availability of information for parents about helping their children with disabilities.	<u>14.6%</u> (12)	<u>29.3%</u> (24)	<u>23.2%</u> (19)	<u>15.9%</u> (13)	<u>17.1%</u> (14)
25. Availability of training sessions for parents.	<u>8.5%</u> (7)	<u>18.3%</u> (15)	<u>25.6%</u> (21)	<u>12.2%</u> (10)	<u>35.4%</u> (29)
26. Quality of training sessions for parents.	<u>6.1%</u> (5)	<u>19.5%</u> (16)	<u>19.5%</u> (16)	<u>12.2%</u> (10)	<u>42.7%</u> (35)
27. Progress made over the last four years in providing transition services to students with disabilities.	<u>9.8%</u> (8)	<u>24.4%</u> (20)	<u>13.4%</u> (11)	<u>14.6%</u> (12)	<u>37.8%</u> (31)

**PART B: SCHOOL INFORMATION**

1. Have you consistently and in a timely manner been invited to attend IEP or transition meetings?

<b>90.4% (75)</b>	<b>9.6% (8)</b>
Yes	No

If yes, have you attended an IEP or transition meeting for your son/daughter since September?

<b>79.7% (59)</b>	<b>20.3% (15)</b>
Yes	No

If yes, how helpful has the meeting been to the transition needs of your son/daughter?

<b>37.1% (23)</b>	<b>45.2% (28)</b>	<b>16.1% (10)</b>	<b>1.6% (1)</b>
Very Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Not Helpful	Not Sure

Please comment:

*Most parents felt that the IEP meeting they attended was at least somewhat helpful. They viewed it as an opportunity to discuss progress being made, make changes for the future, and gain valuable information about their role as a parent. For some parents; however, this was not their experience. Some of the difficulties that were shared included being given inaccurate or very little information; meetings held at times when working parents could not attend; and not scheduling an IEP meeting because the student was a senior. A few parents were told that their son/daughter would not be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services, but later found this information to be incorrect. Some parents also expressed concern about transition services including meeting with a vocational rehabilitation counselor starting too late -- frequently not until students' senior year in high school.*

2. Has your son/daughter received training in self-determination?

<b>15.2% (12)</b>	<b>35.4% (28)</b>	<b>49.4% (39)</b>
Yes	No	I Don't Know

If yes, how helpful has this training been to the transition needs of your son/daughter?

<b>22.7% (5)</b>	<b>31.8% (7)</b>	<b>4.5% (1)</b>	<b>40.1% (9)</b>
Very Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Not Helpful	Not Sure

Please comment:

*Most parents were not sure what this training was or did not know training was available.*

3. Has a Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Counselor been in contact with your son/daughter?

<b>45.7% (37)</b>	<b>44.4% (36)</b>	<b>9.9% (8)</b>
Yes	No	I don't know

If yes, how helpful has the counselor's involvement been to the transition needs of your son/daughter?

<b>39.5% (15)</b>	<b>15.8% (6)</b>	<b>28.9% (11)</b>	<b>15.8% (6)</b>
Very Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Not Helpful	Not Sure

**PART B: SCHOOL INFORMATION (CONTINUED)**

Please comment:

*There was a great amount of disparity among the experiences of parents and their children with regards to DVR. Typically, they felt that the DVR counselor was either very helpful or not helpful at all. Some described their experience as very positive especially with regards to the DVR counselor. Other parents had very different experiences with their DVR counselor. For example, some explained that they had to deal with repeated meeting cancellations, still waiting for the first appointment, being given papers with no verbal explanations, receiving no follow-up from the DVR counselor, or having student's case closed.*

4. Have you received any information about parent training opportunities through the Parent Information Center?

<b>39.5% (32)</b>	<b>60.5% (49)</b>
Yes	No

If yes, did you attend the training sessions?

<b>27.3% (12)</b>	<b>72.7% (32)</b>
Yes	No

If yes, how helpful has this training been to your son/daughter's transition needs?

<b>20.0% (4)</b>	<b>60.0% (12)</b>	<b>10.0% (2)</b>	<b>10.0% (2)</b>
Very Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Not Helpful	Not Sure

Please comment:

*While few parents attended the parent training sessions, those that did felt there should be more workshops, better advertised events, and better information shared. While at least a few parents did not know these services were available, some stated they could attend the sessions because they were held at times when a working parent could not attend.*

5. How much knowledge does your son/daughter have about the world of work?

<b>20.5% (16)</b>	<b>46.2% (36)</b>	<b>32.1% (25)</b>	<b>1.3% (1)</b>
Very Knowledgeable	Somewhat Knowledgeable	Not Very Knowledgeable	Not Sure

Please comment:

*While most parents indicated that their son/daughter does have some knowledge about the world of work, they felt some important information/skills were lacking. For example, some felt that there is a need to develop skills in interviewing as well as completing a job application. Most cited their son/daughter's part-time job as evidence of their level of knowledge. Some also explained that the extensive knowledge about the world of work gained by some students came from their own initiative rather than any assistance from a state agency or the school he/she is attending.*

For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
6. The standards set by my son/daughter's school are realistic.	<u>7.2%</u> (6)	<u>14.5%</u> (12)	<u>49.4%</u> (41)	<u>14.5%</u> (12)	<u>14.5%</u> (12)
7. My son/daughter has received a good education.	<u>9.6%</u> (8)	<u>21.7%</u> (18)	<u>34.9%</u> (29)	<u>25.3%</u> (21)	<u>8.4%</u> (7)
8. The school has prepared my son/daughter well for life beyond high school.	<u>18.3%</u> (15)	<u>24.4%</u> (20)	<u>32.9%</u> (27)	<u>13.4%</u> (11)	<u>11.0%</u> (9)
9. My son/daughter has high expectations for his/herself.	<u>8.9%</u> (7)	<u>15.2%</u> (12)	<u>35.4%</u> (28)	<u>25.3%</u> (20)	<u>15.2%</u> (12)
10. My son/daughter has realistic expectations about his/her future.	<u>12.8%</u> (10)	<u>19.2%</u> (15)	<u>41.0%</u> (32)	<u>12.8%</u> (10)	<u>14.1%</u> (11)

As you read this list of personal traits, please indicate whether you believe teaching this trait is <b>primarily</b> the responsibility of the school or the parent..	Primarily the school's responsibility	Primarily the parent's responsibility	I Don't Know
11. Respect for others	<u>5.1%</u> (4)	<u>94.9%</u> (75)	<u>0.0%</u> (0)
12. Being a hard worker	<u>21.3%</u> (17)	<u>73.8%</u> (59)	<u>5.0%</u> (4)
13. Being on time	<u>15.4%</u> (12)	<u>82.1%</u> (64)	<u>2.6%</u> (2)
14. The ability to follow through	<u>32.9%</u> (26)	<u>64.6%</u> (51)	<u>2.5%</u> (2)
15. Politeness	<u>7.5%</u> (6)	<u>91.3%</u> (73)	<u>1.3%</u> (1)
16. Honesty	<u>6.3%</u> (5)	<u>91.1%</u> (72)	<u>2.5%</u> (2)

**PART C: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS (OPTIONAL)**

1. *In your opinion, what has been the greatest success of transition services over the **past four years**?*

Very few parents could cite any example of a success of transition services. However, some examples that were shared related to the improvement they see in their son/daughter's skills in academics or in their independence.

"Has helped people with disabilities be more independent."

"My daughter is learning how to survive in the working world."

"My greatest success of transition services is math and English."

Some parents also discussed that being kept informed was the greatest success.

"School teachers kept us informed and we kept in touch with any problems."

" I like that they let me know what's out there after school..."

"The special education teachers were very cooperative and also advised of any problems that may affect school work. They were also there for my daughter and kept in contact with the family."

Some parents also cited specific programs as being helpful.

"The involvement of O.U.R."

"The consortium was and still is a great help."

"Network Program is a very good concept. It should be expanded -- there are more students who could benefit from it and duplicated in other districts (not a hidden resource)."

2. *Please use the remaining space for additional comments about Delaware's transition services.*

Some parents shared comments about the program aspects with which they were very pleased.

"I would like to take this time to thank the school and staff at the high school..."

"DelTech's job fair was very nice and helpful. Vocational Rehabilitation was swift and helpful in getting the ball rolling."

Other parents shared comments about how they would like to see transition services improved. They would like to see transition services started when a student enters high school, not when they exit.

"...transition planning for regular special education students is limited and started way too late."

"They need to start at middle school..."

Parents would like to be kept informed.

"Agencies should get together more with the school to have all options available to the students."

"I attended an IEP but did not know my son was in transition or that such services exist."

"...because I don't speak fluent English I feel that I miss out on a lot. My daughter helps me read and write when needed, but she is not always around. Information in Spanish would be good."

"The student may be 18 years old legally but parents need to know too, the tools and services available such as transitioning to work or college, insurance, and living arrangements. It just adds to the struggle as parents have to always have to keep up on the school and agencies while they are trying to work too."

Some parents also would like more high quality options for students with multiple or severe disabilities.

"I believe there should be more choices for disabled and mentally challenged students transitioning from school to other facilities especially more than one with a place for diapered student to have a place to get changed. Easter Seals is the only place and it is overcrowded and the ratio is 1 staff to 12 people. Hopefully (other than nursing homes) this problem can be solved in the near future."

They also want people to have high expectations for their son/daughter with disabilities.

"I would like to see that employers being professional and to actually work with people with disabilities, not to just work at McDonald' and the Goodwill. She wants to have good jobs with benefits."

"I feel that special education students are not challenged enough in most of the classes they take, they are given little, if any homework, also no projects."

**APPENDIX A: TQM EVALUATION PLAN**

Outcome Areas	Measure	Source of Data	Timeline	Responsibility
<p><b><i>IMPLEMENTATION</i></b></p> <p><u>Sample Questions:</u></p> <p>How and in what ways does Delaware’s Transition Services Quality Management Program support local and state efforts to affect needed changes to transition service delivery?</p> <p>What successes have the transition services program experienced? What program components have been important to these successes?</p> <p>What challenges does the transition services program face? In what ways have these been addressed?</p>	<p>Stakeholder survey - with items focusing on implementation (Years 2-5).</p> <p>Phone interviews (Year 1).</p>	<p>School and district transition coordinators, parents, teachers, and employers.</p>	<p>Years 1-5 (Spring 1997-Spring 2001)</p>	<p>Questionnaire developed by the R &amp; D Center and completed by stakeholders.</p> <p>Interviews conducted by the R &amp; D Center.</p> <p>Analysis and reporting by the R &amp; D Center.</p>
<p><b><i>INSTITUTIONAL IMPACT</i></b></p> <p><u>Sample Questions:</u></p> <p>Have changes made during the grant been institutionalized? If so, to what extent?</p>	<p>Stakeholder survey - with items focusing on institutional impact.</p>	<p>School and district transition coordinators, parents, teachers, and employers.</p>	<p>Years 2-5 (Spring 1998-Spring 2001)</p>	<p>Questionnaire developed by the R &amp; D Center and completed by stakeholders.</p> <p>Analysis and reporting by the R &amp; D Center.</p>

Outcome Areas	Measure	Source of Data	Timeline	Responsibility
<p><b><i>STAKEHOLDER SATISFACTION</i></b></p> <p><u>Sample Questions:</u></p> <p>Are families satisfied with the TQM program?</p> <p>Are employers and higher education satisfied with the TQM program?</p> <p>Are state and local transition staff, teachers, and counselors satisfied with the TQM program?</p> <p>Do stakeholders believe the program is responsive to their needs?</p>	<p>Stakeholder survey - with items focusing on satisfaction (Years 2-5).</p> <p>Phone interviews (Year 1).</p>	<p>School and district transition coordinators, parents, teachers, and employers.</p>	<p>Years 1-5 (Spring 1997-Spring 2001)</p>	<p>Questionnaire developed by the R &amp; D Center and completed by stakeholders.</p> <p>Interviews conducted by the R &amp; D Center.</p> <p>Analysis and reporting by the R &amp; D Center.</p>
<p><b><i>TRAINING, PROGRAMS, AND MATERIALS</i></b></p> <p><u>Sample Questions:</u></p> <p>How does the TQM program training influence implementation?</p> <p>How do TQM programs, namely the mini-grants, influence implementation?</p> <p>How do the TQM program materials (including transition notebook, transition planning worksheet, newsletter, etc.) influence implementation?</p>	<p>Stakeholder survey - with items focusing on implementation (Years 2-4).</p> <p>Phone interviews (Year 1).</p>	<p>State and local transition staff, parents, and teachers.</p>	<p>Years 1-4 (Spring 1997-Spring 2000)</p>	<p>Questionnaire developed by the R &amp; D Center and completed by stakeholders.</p> <p>Interviews conducted by the R &amp; D Center.</p> <p>Analysis and reporting by the R &amp; D Center.</p>

Outcome Areas	Measure	Source of Data	Timeline	Responsibility
<p><b><i>STUDENT IMPACT</i></b></p> <p><u>Sample Questions:</u></p> <p>In what ways do the educational and employment status of special education students change during the project?</p> <p>In what way does the dropout rate of special education students change during the project?</p> <p>Do the above analyses differ by disability or race?</p>	<p>Student records (DELSIS).</p> <p>Delaware Department of Education exiter follow-up survey.</p>	<p>Delaware Department of Education.</p>	<p>Years 3-5 (Spring 1999-Spring 2001)</p> <p>(Data will be analyzed to the extent that it exists)</p>	<p>Data request generated by R &amp; D Center.</p> <p>Data request filled by the Delaware Department of Education.</p> <p>Analysis and reporting by the R &amp; D Center.</p>

**APPENDIX B: TQM PARENT SURVEY**

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**Transition Services Quality Management (TQM) Project Survey**

Dear Parent,

This survey is being conducted by the University of Delaware Education Research & Development Center, an independent research and evaluation organization, at the request of the Delaware Department of Education and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. **The purpose of the survey is to determine the impact of the Transition Services Quality Management (TQM) Project upon how transition service planning occurs for students with disabilities as they transition from school to adult life.** So as to ensure that there is an adequate response rate, surveys are numbered to allow follow-up with those people who do not complete the survey. No individual person will be identified in our analyses; the Delaware and U.S. Departments of Education will receive summary report of aggregated data.

The survey has been designed so that you can complete it quickly and easily. Part A of the survey gathers information about the TQM Project's impact upon transition services planning; Part B gathers general information on how well the transition services planning process is working in secondary schools. Your comments will be appreciated and closely read but are purely optional. A postage-paid envelope has been included for your convenience. **Please return the survey in this postage-paid envelope by June 30.**

**Thank you for your time and for sharing your experiences and thoughts.** If you have any questions about this survey or if you would like a copy of the final report, please contact the Delaware Education Research & Development Center by email at [ud-rdc@udel.edu](mailto:ud-rdc@udel.edu) or by phone at [302/831-4433](tel:3028314433).

Sincerely,

Susan P. Giancola, Ph.D. and Pamela J. Brown, Ph.D.  
TQM Evaluation Team  
Delaware Education Research & Development Center

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**PART A: GENERAL INFORMATION**

1. What is the age of your son/daughter who is (or will be) receiving transition services? \_\_\_\_\_
  
2. What grade was he/she in this past school year?  
 7th     8<sup>th</sup>     9th     10<sup>th</sup>     11th     12th
  
3. What is his/her gender?     Male     Female
  
4. Have you received information **this year** about transition services planning for your son/daughter as he/she transitions from school to adult life?  
 Yes     No

5. How involved have you been with Delaware's transition services over the **past four years**?  
 Very involved     Moderately involved     A little involved     Not involved at all

6. How would you say transition services planning has changed in the **past four years**?  
 It has improved.     It has stayed about the same.     It has gotten worse.     Don't know

**PART A: GENERAL INFORMATION (CONTINUED)**

7. How satisfied are you with transition services planning in Delaware?  
 Very Satisfied                       Satisfied                                       Not Satisfied                                       Very Dissatisfied

8. Do you think efforts over the **past four years** to increase the quality of transition services planning for students with disabilities and their families have been successful?  
 They have been successful.  
 They have helped some but have not been successful enough.  
 They have had no impact.  
 Don't know

9. Of the following challenges for transition services planning in Delaware, please **rank the top 3** where **1 is the biggest challenge, 2 the next biggest, etc.**

- |                                                   |                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| ___ student commitment                            | ___ training for professionals, e.g., teachers      |
| ___ parent commitment                             | ___ training opportunities for parents              |
| ___ teacher commitment                            | ___ availability of vocational courses for students |
| ___ school administrator commitment               | ___ continuing education opportunities for students |
| ___ employer commitment                           | ___ job opportunities for students                  |
| ___ district office commitment                    | ___ integration of standards with transition        |
| ___ integration of services across state agencies | ___ other: _____                                    |
| ___ transportation services                       |                                                     |

For each of the following statements, please **reflect on your experiences over the past year** and indicate your level of satisfaction.

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Don't Know
10. Communication between school staff and parents.	1	2	3	4	9
11. Responsiveness of school staff to my son/daughter's transition needs.	1	2	3	4	9
12. My son/daughter's involvement in transition planning.	1	2	3	4	9

13. Opportunities to communicate my opinions about transition services for my son/daughter.	1	2	3	4	9
14. Cooperation among special education, general education, and vocational education teachers.	1	2	3	4	9
15. Cooperation between schools and higher education institutions.	1	2	3	4	9
16. Cooperation between schools and state agencies that serve students with disabilities.	1	2	3	4	9
17. Availability of career counseling services for students.	1	2	3	4	9
18. Quality of career counseling services for students.	1	2	3	4	9
19. Availability of continuing education for students.	1	2	3	4	9
20. Quality of continuing education for students.	1	2	3	4	9
21. Availability of vocational courses for students.	1	2	3	4	9
22. Quality of vocational courses for students.	1	2	3	4	9
23. Availability of information about community resources for families and students.	1	2	3	4	9
24. Availability of information for parents about helping their children with disabilities.	1	2	3	4	9
25. Availability of training sessions for parents.	1	2	3	4	9
26. Quality of the training sessions for parents.	1	2	3	4	9
27. Progress made over the last four years in providing transition services to students with disabilities.	1	2	3	4	9

**PART B: SCHOOL INFORMATION**

1. Have you consistently and in a timely manner been invited to attend IEP or transition meetings?

- Yes                       No

**If yes,** have you attended an IEP or transition meeting for your son/daughter since September?

- Yes                       No

**If yes,** how helpful has the meeting been to the transition needs of your son/daughter?

- Very Helpful               Somewhat Helpful               Not Helpful               Not Sure

Please comment: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

2. Has your son/daughter received training in self-determination?

- Yes                       No                       I don't know

**If yes**, how helpful has this training been to the transition needs of your son/daughter?

- Very Helpful               Somewhat Helpful       Not Helpful               Not Sure

Please comment: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Has a Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Counselor been in contact with your son/daughter?

- Yes                       No                       I don't know

**If yes**, how helpful has the counselor's involvement been to the transition needs of your son/daughter?

- Very Helpful               Somewhat Helpful       Not Helpful               Not Sure

Please comment: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Have you received any information about parent training opportunities through the Parent Information Center?

- Yes                       No

**If yes**, did you attend any training sessions?

- Yes                       No

**If yes**, how helpful has this training been to your son/daughter's transition needs?

- Very Helpful               Somewhat Helpful       Not Helpful               Not Sure

Please comment: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. How much knowledge does your son/daughter have about the world of work?

- Very Knowledgeable     Somewhat Knowledgeable     Not Very Knowledgeable     Not Sure

Please comment: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know
6. The standards set by my son/daughter's school are realistic.	1	2	3	4	9
7. My son/daughter has received a good education.	1	2	3	4	9
8. The school has prepared my son/daughter well for life beyond high school.	1	2	3	4	9
9. My son/daughter has high expectations for him/herself.	1	2	3	4	9
10. My son/daughter has realistic expectations about his/her future.	1	2	3	4	9

As you read this list of personal traits, please indicate whether you believe teaching this trait is **primarily** the responsibility of the school or the parent.

	Primarily the school's responsibility	Primarily the parents' responsibility	Don't Know
11. Respect for others	1	2	9
12. Being a hard worker	1	2	9
13. Being on time	1	2	9
14. The ability to follow through	1	2	9
15. Politeness	1	2	9
16. Honesty	1	2	9

**PART C: ADDITIONAL COMMENTS (OPTIONAL)**

1. In your opinion, what has been the greatest success of transition services over the **past four years**?
2. Please use the remaining space for additional comments about Delaware's transition services.

Please return your completed survey in the enclosed postage-paid envelope by *June 30, 2000*.

Thank you for your time and effort in completing this survey.

## APPENDIX C: PRINCIPAL & TRANSITION COORDINATOR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Introduction: Thank you very much for being here today. My name is <name> from the Delaware Education Research & Development Center at the University of Delaware. We have been asked to do annual evaluations of the Transition Services Quality Management (or TQM) Project.

As part of the evaluation, we are conducting focus groups with transition coordinators, principals, and counselors who have been involved with the program. In addition, we are administering a survey to a sample of parents.

Because of your involvement with this project, we would like to spend the next 45 minutes to an hour with you to discuss your views and opinions regarding the progress and direction of the project. Specifically, we would like to discuss your opinions regarding the impact of the Transition Services Quality Management (TQM) Project upon how transition service planning occurs for students with disabilities as they transition from school to adult life.

In our reporting, your names and affiliations will be held in the strictest confidence. Also, I would like to tape record the session to assure that my analyses accurately reflect what has been said here. Before we start, I would like to thank you one more time for taking the time to share with me your experiences with and opinions of the TQM Project.

### Protocol:

- 1) Have you seen improvements in transition services planning for students with disabilities since the TQM Project began about four years ago?

PROBES: If so, what kinds of improvements have you seen?

In what way have these been improvements?

What do you think has been the impact of these improvements?

Are there still areas of transition planning that you struggle with? Is so, what could be done to help?

- 2) Did you attend the 2003 Conference last year?

PROBES: If so, to what extent do you think it has improved the collaboration between middle and high school staff?

Could you give me an example of how the conference improved this collaboration?

Do you think the 2003 conference should be revisited, either through another large conference or through district level meetings?

How could the TQM Project assist with this?

- 3) Have you heard of the Division for Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)?

PROBES: How familiar are you with DVR services? Do you know what services VR provides?

Do you know what process to go through to access those services?

Do you know when to refer students to DVR? Do you know what process to go through to refer students to VR?

Do you know the VR counselor assigned to your school?

In your opinion, what could DVR do to enhance their services to students?

- 4) Has your school received a transition mini-grant through the TQM Project?

PROBES: Do you think the mini-grant made an impact at your school? If so, in what ways? What makes you think this?

Were you able to self-evaluate the impact of the mini-grant at your schools? If so, how?

What kind of information would have been helpful for you to evaluate the effectiveness of your mini-grant as well as any improvements the transition services your school provides? Is their data that the TQM Project could help you gather that would help in self-evaluation? If so, what would that be?

What do you think will be the long-range effects of mini-grants on transition at your school?

If there were no more money for the mini-grant program, do you think what you have implemented through the mini-grant program will continue?

Is so, in what ways? If not, why?

5) Do you think some of the major transition challenges have been adequately addressed?

PROBES: Transportation?

Vocational course offerings?

Work opportunities?

6) Would you like to see the TQM Project continue?

PROBES: What components of the TQM Project should be continued?

How should the TQM Project be sustained after federal funding ends?

What could you do at your school to keep the project going?

How can the project best work with districts?

*THANK YOU VERY MUCH!*