

STEP Program Graduate Follow Up Study

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STEP Program Graduate Follow Up Study

Presentation Overview

- This presentation will provide a description of the primary high school transition program in Illinois
- The analysis is based on a data set of 6,174 students who exited that program in FY2016, including:
 - Services provided while students are in school
 - VR outcomes achieved and earnings at closure
 - Post-VR earnings
 - Will also discuss implications for program improvement

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Key Questions

- What is STEP?
- Who do we serve?
- What services are provided?
- Who achieves success?
- How can we do better?

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What is STEP?

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Secondary Transitional Experience Program

- STEP has existed in various forms since the 1970s
- The emphasis in early years was on classroom training with occasional out-of-school work experiences
- In the last 15 years the emphasis has been on employer-paid community employment
- Younger students receive classroom training and in-school work experiences, while older students pursue community employment

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STEP Structure

- Based on a contractual agreement with each school
- Transition Services Manual describes in detail the role of the school and DRS
- Guidance and quality control provided by contract project officers (a.k.a. “transition advisors”)
- Ongoing contact between DRS VR counselors and school personnel
- VR counselors actively involved in transition planning for students

Post High School Outcomes for Transition Students in Illinois

STEP Financial Picture

- DRS has 150 STEP contracts with school districts and cooperatives as well as some private schools
- Total of 650 high schools participating
- Total contract value is \$11.1 million
- DRS also provides support for school staff in some areas at an additional \$2.4million
- Contracts range from very small rural school districts to Chicago Public Schools

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STEP Contract Format

- 131 out of 150 STEP contracts are third-party cooperative agreements (3rd Party Performance)
- These account for 98 percent of STEP spending
- 30 percent of contract amount is “non-performance” and is spent on pre-employment transition services other than paid community work experiences
- 70 percent of contract amount is tied to hours of work performed by students in “employer-paid community work experiences”

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WIOA Program Changes

- Adopted WIOA terminology (ISA, WRT, COPE, JEC, WBLE)
- Adjusted contracts and program manual for schools
- Provided training to VR staff and school staff
- Adapted online case management system to track pre-employment transition services
- Coincided with ongoing emphasis on performance-based contracting in state government

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Students Receiving PTS Services in 2018



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Who do we serve?

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STEP Statistics

- Students are referred by their high school
- Students are certified eligible and have an IPE
- Students move in and out of STEP during the year
- 6,352 students exited STEP in FY2019
- High point 11,126 in March
- Low point 9,126 in September
- End of school year count = 10,461
- STEP population closely matches the state population of students exiting special education

STEP Program Graduate Follow Up Study Data Set Disability Comparison

| Disability Category | Students Exiting 2014 | Pct of Total | STEP Exit Data 2016 | Pct of Total |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------------|---------------------|
| Specific learning disabilities | 14,152 | 53.2 | 3,618 | 58.6 |
| Emotional disturbance | 4,335 | 16.3 | 617 | 10.0 |
| Intellectual disabilities | 1,999 | 7.5 | 640 | 10.4 |
| Autism | 1,095 | 4.1 | 546 | 8.8 |
| Hearing impairments | 331 | 1.2 | 122 | 2.0 |
| Visual impairments | 98 | 0.4 | 30 | 0.5 |
| All Other Categories | 4,584 | 17.2 | 601 | 9.7 |
| All Disability Categories | 26,594 | 100.0 | 6,174 | 100.0 |

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Data Set Demographic Comparison

| Race | ISBE Count | Percent | STEP Count | Percent |
|---------------------------|---------------|---------|---------------|---------|
| Hispanic/Latino | 4,772 | 17.9 | 1,149 | 19.6 |
| American Indian | 96 | 0.4 | 7 | 0.1 |
| Asian | 369 | 1.4 | 113 | 1.9 |
| Black or African American | 7,261 | 27.3 | 1,474 | 25.1 |
| Native Hawaiian | 34 | 0.1 | 4 | 0.1 |
| White | 13,410 | 50.4 | 3,033 | 51.7 |
| Two or more races | 652 | 2.5 | 91 | 1.5 |
| | | | | |
| Total | 26,594 | 100.0 | 5,871 | 100.0 |

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STEP Customer Overview

- Typical student is 17 years old when starting STEP and stays in the program about 17 months
- About 37 percent are female
- About 50 percent are minority
- About 63 percent live in the Chicago metro area
- About 22 percent receive SSI or SSDI
- About 45 percent are engaged in a work experience
- About 97 percent receive PTS services through the school

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Data Set Overview

- A total of 6,174 students exited STEP in FY2016
- Of that number, 363 had open cases as of 5/15/19
- Another 1,089 students had a VR case closed before having an IPE written
- A total of 4,722 students had a VR case closed after participating in planned services
- Of that number, 1,808 were closed as a successful rehabilitated case for a rehab rate of 38.3

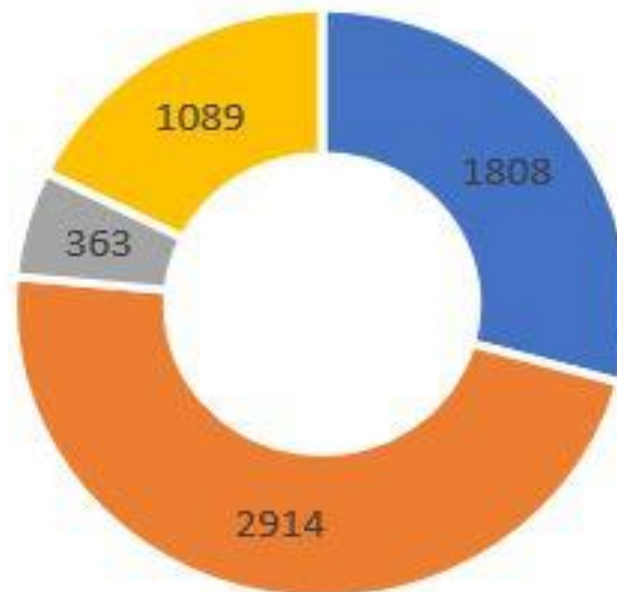
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What Does “Exit” Mean?

- Exit typically means the student has left school
- About 88 percent of students exit at graduation
- The remainder exit for various reasons:
 - Moved to another school
 - Dropped out
 - Transferred to another program
 - Refused further services
 - Deceased

STEP Program Graduate Follow Up Study Data Set Overview Graphic

Case Status 2019



■ Rehab ■ Not Rehab ■ Open ■ Pre IPE

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What services are provided?

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STEP in the Classroom

- Pre-employment transition services (PTS) typically provided in classroom settings include:
- Workplace readiness training
- Job exploration counseling
- Instruction in self-advocacy
- Counseling on opportunities for post-secondary education

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STEP Curriculum

- There is no standard curriculum for providing pre-employment transition services to STEP students
- Many schools develop their own curriculum while others use a commercial curriculum
- Schools report information on the specific PTS services being provided to each student using the DRS WebCM system

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Work Based Learning Experiences

- Work-based learning experiences may be paid or unpaid, may include in-school or after school opportunities, or experiences outside the traditional school setting (including internships), that are provided in an integrated environment to the maximum extent possible
- STEP includes a variety of WBLE, with the greatest emphasis on paid work in the community
- STEP work experiences are not designed to achieve a VR closure

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STEP Work Experiences

- Three categories of work experiences:
 - On-Campus On-the-Job Evaluation or On-the-Job Training (OJE/OJT)
 - Off-Campus (Community) OJE/OJT
 - Employer Paid – Work experience that is competitive, integrated and fully employer funded with no subsidy from any source.
- Students may participate in multiple work experiences at the same time

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STEP Contract Outcomes

- STEP 3rd Party Performance contracts are based on a “STEP Outcome” or “contract outcome”, not to be confused with a VR employment outcome
- To earn a contract outcome, a student must work at least 60 days and 240 hours during the school year in a job that meets the requirements of competitive integrated employment and where wages are paid by the employer (i.e., unsubsidized)
- Outcome payment is higher in urban areas

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STEP Organization

- Students receive pre-employment transition services through the school in accordance with an IEP and transition plan
- At any time, about 45 percent of students have a “work site” recorded on the system
- Of those, 53 percent are Employer Paid, 35 percent are Community OJE/OJT and 12 percent are On-Campus OJE/OJT

Post High School Outcomes for Transition Students in Illinois STEP System Data

- The contract system creates a lot of data to track
- For paid community work or unpaid work experiences, we track the employer, the work location, the work schedule, the hours worked for each month
- This is managed through our online case management system (WebCM) where school staff can report directly to DRS

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Who achieves success?

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Moderate Success

- Overall, exiting students were fairly successful in achieving employment
- Hours worked were mostly part time
- Hourly wages were near the minimum wage
- Annual earnings rose over a three-year period where data was available
- Results varied by student characteristics
- Program impact was moderate but consistent

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Associations with Success

- Race, gender, geographic location
- Type of disability
- Length of time in STEP
- Graduation from school
- Type of work experiences during STEP
- Total hours of paid work during STEP
- Participation in VR post high school

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Hourly Wage Distribution at Closure

| Wage | Count | Percent |
|----------|-------|---------|
| \$ 8.25 | 674 | 37.3 |
| \$ 9.50 | 606 | 33.5 |
| \$ 11.00 | 342 | 18.9 |
| \$ 15.00 | 154 | 8.5 |
| Higher | 32 | 1.8 |

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Monthly Earnings Distribution at Closure

| Monthly Earnings | Count | Percent |
|-------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| \$ 500 | 215 | 11.9 |
| \$ 1,000 | 856 | 47.3 |
| \$ 1,500 | 440 | 24.3 |
| \$ 2,000 | 196 | 10.8 |
| Higher | 101 | 5.6 |

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Earnings by Year Post High School

| Category | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | All |
|--------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| No earnings | 2,528 | 2,496 | 2,005 | 1,320 |
| Any earnings | 3,646 | 3,678 | 4,169 | 4,854 |
| Mean | \$ 6,735 | \$ 9,704 | \$ 12,423 | \$ 23,077 |

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Relative Success Factors

| Category | Case Count | Rehabs | Rehab Rate | Average Earnings All Years | Average Monthly Earnings |
|-------------------|------------|--------|------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Rehab Closure | 1,808 | 1,808 | 1.000 | \$ 32,095.62 | \$ 1,017.37 |
| Not rehab closure | 2,914 | - | - | \$ 14,021.64 | |
| Grand Total | 4,722 | 1,808 | 0.383 | \$ 20,941.96 | \$ 1,017.37 |
| | | | | | |
| Significant | 726 | 307 | 0.423 | \$ 29,561.90 | \$ 978.49 |
| Very significant | 1,891 | 740 | 0.391 | \$ 21,642.70 | \$ 1,061.67 |
| Most significant | 2,105 | 761 | 0.362 | \$ 17,339.51 | \$ 989.99 |

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Other Characteristics

| Category | Case Count | Rehabs | Rehab Rate | Average Earnings All Years | Average Monthly Earnings |
|-----------------------|------------|--------|------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| No SSI | 3,812 | 1,556 | 0.408 | \$ 23,895.31 | \$ 1,060.40 |
| Receives SSI | 910 | 252 | 0.277 | \$ 8,570.34 | \$ 751.71 |
| | | | | | |
| No work site | 1,710 | 340 | 0.199 | \$ 17,076.44 | \$ 1,111.08 |
| Any Work Site | 3,012 | 1,468 | 0.487 | \$ 23,136.53 | \$ 995.67 |
| | | | | | |
| STEP contract outcome | 1,325 | 896 | 0.676 | \$ 31,155.13 | \$ 999.51 |
| No STEP outcome | 3,397 | 912 | 0.268 | \$ 16,958.31 | \$ 1,038.36 |

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Gender and Race

| Category | Case Count | Rehabs | Rehab Rate | Average Earnings All Years | Average Monthly Earnings |
|------------------|------------|--------|------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Female | 1,705 | 609 | 0.357 | \$ 17,450.13 | \$ 928.44 |
| Male | 3,017 | 1,199 | 0.397 | \$ 22,915.30 | \$ 1,062.54 |
| | | | | | |
| White | 2,438 | 1,086 | 0.445 | \$ 20,958.83 | \$ 1,031.55 |
| Minority | 2,273 | 719 | 0.316 | \$ 20,953.00 | \$ 995.43 |
| African American | 1,161 | 343 | 0.295 | \$ 16,736.39 | \$ 985.26 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 950 | 317 | 0.334 | \$ 26,988.61 | \$ 1,024.16 |

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Type of Disability Part 1

| Category | Case Count | Rehabs | Rehab Rate | Average Earnings All Years | Average Monthly Earnings |
|-------------------------|------------|--------|------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Learning disability | 2,300 | 941 | 0.409 | \$ 25,464.29 | \$ 1,077.93 |
| ADHD | 502 | 211 | 0.420 | \$ 24,067.09 | \$ 1,042.09 |
| Intellectual disability | 501 | 174 | 0.347 | \$ 12,703.45 | \$ 887.14 |
| Mental health | 453 | 121 | 0.267 | \$ 16,684.01 | \$ 915.94 |
| Autism | 429 | 149 | 0.347 | \$ 11,006.11 | \$ 802.10 |

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Type of Disability Part 2

| Category | Case Count | Rehabs | Rehab Rate | Average Earnings All Years | Average Monthly Earnings |
|----------------------|------------|--------|------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Cognitive impairment | 275 | 125 | 0.455 | \$ 20,562.42 | \$ 1,067.07 |
| Physical impairment | 127 | 32 | 0.252 | \$ 11,742.01 | \$ 811.33 |
| Deaf/hearing | 82 | 39 | 0.476 | \$ 17,618.60 | \$ 1,159.60 |
| Other disability | 40 | 11 | 0.275 | \$ 20,635.03 | \$ 1,078.49 |
| Blind/visual | 13 | 5 | 0.385 | \$ 13,727.77 | \$ 811.35 |

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DRS Regions

| Category | Case Count | Rehabs | Rehab Rate | Average Earnings All Years | Average Monthly Earnings |
|----------|------------|--------|------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Region 1 | 1,812 | 479 | 0.264 | \$ 20,403.98 | \$ 1,027.96 |
| Region 2 | 1,453 | 587 | 0.404 | \$ 21,488.75 | \$ 826.32 |
| Region 3 | 535 | 275 | 0.514 | \$ 17,228.08 | \$ 1,057.96 |
| Region 4 | 423 | 189 | 0.447 | \$ 25,111.39 | \$ 1,232.84 |
| Region 5 | 490 | 275 | 0.561 | \$ 21,967.67 | \$ 1,217.75 |

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Geographic Areas

| Category | Case Count | Rehabs | Rehab Rate | Average Earnings All Years | Average Monthly Earnings |
|-----------------|------------|--------|------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| City of Chicago | 695 | 128 | 0.184 | \$ 16,527.43 | \$ 1,234.14 |
| Suburbs | 2,331 | 840 | 0.360 | \$ 22,209.69 | \$ 870.60 |
| Downstate Metro | 827 | 356 | 0.430 | \$ 19,549.62 | \$ 914.37 |
| Rural Areas | 869 | 484 | 0.557 | \$ 22,397.05 | \$ 1,290.54 |

Post High School Outcomes for Transition Students in Illinois

Geographic Area Detail

| Category | Case Count | Pct with Work Hours | Average Hours Worked | Pct Minority | Pct with SSI |
|-----------------|------------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------|--------------|
| City of Chicago | 695 | 0.037 | 10.51 | 0.934 | 0.209 |
| Suburbs | 2,331 | 0.608 | 348.69 | 0.503 | 0.208 |
| Downstate Metro | 827 | 0.659 | 354.17 | 0.394 | 0.203 |
| Rural Areas | 869 | 0.682 | 391.45 | 0.133 | 0.130 |
| All Areas | 4,722 | 0.527 | 307.74 | 0.483 | 0.193 |

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PTS Services Received

| Category | Case Count | Rehabs | Rehab Rate | Average Earnings All Years | Average Monthly Earnings |
|-------------------------|------------|--------|------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Counseling on PSEd | 1,838 | 816 | 0.444 | \$ 20,739.62 | \$ 1,039.63 |
| Instruction Self Advoc | 2,262 | 955 | 0.422 | \$ 19,400.34 | \$ 984.06 |
| Job exploration counsel | 2,278 | 962 | 0.422 | \$ 19,602.60 | \$ 989.02 |
| Workplace readiness | 1,898 | 810 | 0.427 | \$ 19,058.01 | \$ 992.34 |
| WBLE | 1,446 | 833 | 0.576 | \$ 22,488.46 | \$ 975.90 |

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Type of Work Site

| Category | Case Count | Rehabs | Rehab Rate | Average Earnings All Years | Average Monthly Earnings |
|--------------------|------------|--------|------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| No work site | 1,710 | 340 | 0.199 | \$ 17,076.44 | \$ 1,111.08 |
| Any Work Site | 3,012 | 1,468 | 0.487 | \$ 23,136.53 | \$ 995.67 |
| Any Full Paid Site | 2,008 | 1,220 | 0.608 | \$ 28,710.79 | \$ 990.33 |
| Any OJE/OJT | 1,575 | 582 | 0.370 | \$ 16,315.90 | \$ 931.01 |
| Any Work Hours | 2,927 | 1,438 | 0.491 | \$ 23,257.10 | \$ 991.23 |
| 500 or more hours | 1,069 | 689 | 0.645 | \$ 28,756.09 | \$ 963.54 |

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Graduation Expectations

| Category | Case Count | Rehabs | Rehab Rate | Average Earnings All Years | Average Monthly Earnings |
|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Graduated -Employment | 2,006 | 1,115 | 0.556 | \$ 25,644.91 | \$ 961.99 |
| Graduated - Training | 909 | 323 | 0.355 | \$ 19,960.22 | \$ 1,195.13 |
| Graduated - Other | 1,106 | 201 | 0.182 | \$ 17,369.97 | \$ 1,039.22 |

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Post High School Services

| Category | Case Count | Rehabs | Rehab Rate | Average Earnings All Years | Average Monthly Earnings |
|-------------------------|------------|--------|------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Job placement post HS | 2,056 | 989 | 0.481 | \$ 20,006.06 | \$ 1,092.03 |
| SEP Post HS | 117 | 63 | 0.538 | \$ 13,117.50 | \$ 710.39 |
| Supportive Svcs Post HS | 938 | 425 | 0.453 | \$ 19,505.39 | \$ 1,082.82 |
| Any Post HS Svc | 2,409 | 1,118 | 0.464 | \$ 20,035.79 | \$ 1,079.75 |

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Types of Jobs and Employer Categories

- Over 1,000 employers
- 159 different occupational titles
- A majority (55%) in just 10 job titles
- Most students worked in either food service or retail industries
- Students in industries other than food and retail have higher earnings over time

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Top 10 Employers

| Employer at Closure | Count | Average Earnings All Years |
|---------------------|-------|----------------------------|
| JEWEL | 87 | \$ 26,728 |
| MCDONALDS | 81 | \$ 27,824 |
| WALMART | 79 | \$ 34,541 |
| MARIANOS | 49 | \$ 31,340 |
| HYVEE | 28 | \$ 23,031 |
| TACO BELL | 23 | \$ 36,292 |
| WALGREENS | 18 | \$ 31,708 |
| STEAK N SHAKE | 14 | \$ 30,964 |
| PORTILLOS | 14 | \$ 30,201 |
| WENDYS | 12 | \$ 26,593 |

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Most Frequent Job Titles

| Job Title | Count | Average Earnings All Years |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| Food Preparation Workers | 256 | \$30,442 |
| Stock Clerks | 130 | \$28,609 |
| Cashiers | 113 | \$34,856 |
| Sales and Related Workers | 97 | \$30,653 |
| Retail Salespersons | 88 | \$30,089 |
| Dishwashers | 67 | \$30,040 |
| Dining Room Attendants | 65 | \$22,114 |
| Laborers and Material Movers | 62 | \$33,306 |
| Food Preparation, All Other | 55 | \$32,690 |
| Janitors and Cleaners | 53 | \$34,313 |
| Packers and Packagers | 52 | \$28,510 |
| Cooks, Fast Food | 40 | \$24,752 |

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How can we do better?

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Hours and Earnings

- Students in retail and food industries work irregular part time schedules with lower wages
- Counselors should consider job categories with more regular hours and full time schedules
- Post school counseling should look at earnings potential as well as job stability

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Implementation Issues

- The proportion of students with a work experience varied widely across the state
- Areas where most students had no work experience showed very limited student success
- More information is needed on the intensity of classroom training on job readiness skills

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Student Population

- Some have expressed concern that the performance contract format reduces the likelihood that students with the greatest need will participate in STEP
- More information is needed about the students who exit from STEP prior to graduation, and how those students will continue to receive PTS services

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Moving Forward

- In July 2018 DRS implemented a new method of providing PTS services through a Fast Track Transition program serving potentially eligible individuals
- The goal is to reach more students each year
- DRS increased outcome payment rates for STEP performance contracts for FY2020.

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Data Issues

- We have a ton of data about students, but are just now getting a good handle on PTS
- Data on work experiences is strong (wages, time sheets, etc.) but is very labor intensive
- Data on earnings is useful but overall the range of earnings was limited for students
- Trying to learn more about the curricula being used for specific PTS services

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Conclusions

- Work predicts work, earnings predict earnings
- Number and variety of work experiences had a moderate impact on success
- Increase in earnings over three years is a hopeful sign for future success
- Students continue to gain valuable work experience as well as some earnings after leaving the program

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Conclusions

- The performance based emphasis in STEP reflects solid management principles, but may bias the program toward students that take less preparation to become employed
- Regardless of the category or student, at least some experienced success in terms of achieving a rehab closure and having earnings in a competitive job

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Finally

Direct any questions regarding this presentation to:

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Note: Offer void after 12/31/2019.