NTACT THE COLLABORATIVE | National Technical Assistance Center on Transition

Understanding and Using Data to Improve Outcomes for Students with Disabilities

CHARLOTTE ALVERSON: All right. Welcome, everyone, to Understanding and Using Data to Improve Outcomes for Students with Disabilities. I'm Charlotte Alverson, and my co-presenter today is Missy Diehl.

MISSY DIEHL: Hi, everyone. So today, our purpose, we really just want to include you all or introduce you all to the data that's collected related to students with disabilities for both the VR program in accordance with WIOA, as well as education-related data under IDEA. And today we're going to provide a basic overview of some of the data that's collected and how it can be used for program improvement.

And we're hoping that this can be a launch point for the collaborative work for you all in the states as you move forward and understanding sharing and using data for strategic planning and data-driven decisions.

CHARLOTTE ALVERSON: So our learning outcomes, first and foremost, for today's session are to provide some historical context, so along with that overview of the performance indicators and data collection for students with disabilities, through two lens, that of special education and the VR program. We'll also describe timelines that are used for data collection and reporting to both OSEP and RSA and discuss challenges and best practices for both special education and VR, including opportunities for data sharing and data-driven decision making. We start with the purposes of IDEA and put this in the broad context.

As most people know, it's to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free, appropriate public education-- that's been around since the beginnings of special education-- and then to emphasize special education and related services. Once again, that purpose has been well established. And then since the 2004 reauthorization of IDEA, there there's this phrase that was added, "to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living." And that really is the grounding for why it is that we're doing what it is that we do.

MISSY DIEHL: And then in terms of the Rehabilitation Act that was amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, or WIOA, the purpose of the program is ultimately to increase

employment of individuals with disabilities in competitive integrated labor market. And in order to do that, the workforce system has to provide opportunities for individuals with disabilities to participate in those job-driven training programs in order to achieve not just employment, but really high-quality employment outcomes.

And this really goes back to the VR program's foundation and principle that individuals with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities, are capable of achieving high-quality employment outcomes in competitive integrated employment when they're provided with those necessary services and supports. And I would just add to that when they're provided opportunities to earn the skills and credentials in order to prepare them for those higher wages and sustainable careers.

CHARLOTTE ALVERSON: So both programs have federal reporting requirements. And the reason for that is to measure the extent to which the states are meeting those requirements related to both compliance and results. So under IDEA, states are required to submit annually-- or excuse me, every six years a state performance plan. It has to be updated at least once in those six years.

And then annually they report on the annual performance report the performance of the state and each LEA, Local Education Agency, on the targets that are set in the state performance plan. That APR SPP is reported federally February 1. I don't know where my blubbers are that coming from this morning-- February 1 of each year.

MISSY DIEHL: And then in terms of the federal reporting requirements under WIOA, the VR program is one of the core partners that are identified under WIOA and therefore subject to common performance reporting requirements that all the core partners must report. So I'm going to try to keep this on a high level for the purposes of this webinar. And under WIOA, states are required to submit a unified or combined state plan. And that's on a four-year cycle with a two-year modification process.

Additionally, the VR program submits a case service report called the RSA-911. And that's done quarterly. And this quarterly report includes all of the individuals receiving services from the program within that quarter. And this is submitted no lighter than 45 days after the quarter's end.

And then lastly, there's an annual report called the ETA 9169. And that includes the VR programs annual performance data. So this is due October 1 each year.

And the VR program's fifth-annual report is due October 1, 2022. And it would include for the program year of 2021 data. So for a VR program, the program year runs from July 1 through June 30. And that's consistent across all the core program-- partners. Sorry.

CHARLOTTE ALVERSON: So for IDEA federal reporting, the SPP APR consists of 17 part-B indicators. They measure compliance as well as results for students with disabilities. Those compliance indicators must have targets set at 100%. There's no exception to that.

For the results or the performance indicators, states have the option of setting those targets based on stakeholder input. And those targets are set annually for each of the indicators. And the final target has to be higher than the initial target or baseline. Indicator 17 is a State Systemic Improvement Plan, or the SSIP. It addresses a specific state-identified measurable result that's focused on a student outcome, such as graduation, reading, and post-school outcomes.

MISSY DIEHL: So in terms of the VR program, the RSA-911 quarterly report, it's collected all data that's required for that annual report ETA 9169 and the performance measures with the exception of the effectiveness of serving employers, which is dependent upon how the state is approaching that particular measure. The annual report includes participant characteristics for the current program year and the performance measure results. So we're going to unpack who is a participant and what those performance measures are in just a bit.

CHARLOTTE ALVERSON: So in order to help states understand and make sense of all the federal reporting requirements and the utility of them, OSEP and OSERS has technical assistance and dissemination programs. These are just some of the predecessors to 2015. So on the education side, you might have been familiar with the Regional Resource Centers. That became the Regional Resource Center Program.

Down through the different technical assistance centers focused on dropout prevention for Students with disabilities, post-school outcomes, NSTTAC, which led to NTACT. And now we are in NTACT:C, the collaborative. That's our lineage.

MISSY DIEHL: Yeah, and like you all on the education side, the VR program has kind of gone through a similar evolution. So at the top of the slide, I'm depicting we used to have those same types of regional rehabilitation and continuing education centers. And that, then, evolved into technical assistance and continuing education centers that were still regionally based.

And then in 2015, it went to a national center model. And so here I'm just depicting a few of those national centers from that previous round prior to 2020. And then I included NTACT that

Charlotte just talked about because that's when RSA started to partially fund the center that was primarily funded by OSEP.

And then in this current evolution of centers on the VR side, we have The Collaborative that Charlotte and I both work for, which is now jointly funded by RSA and OSEP, as well as some of the other RSA-funded centers, which here I'm just including the VR technical assistance centers on quality management and quality employment.

CHARLOTTE ALVERSON: So you might be wondering, why are we doing this? Well, here's our reasoning. You have on the one side the IDEA indicators. On the other side, you have the WIOA measures. But it's that intersection of the two that is really at our heart and what it is that's driving what we're doing. And that is student and program success.

And so as you think through all of the reporting requirements and the minutia detail, remember that it really is about the student. That's the ultimate outcome, our client or young adult that we're talking about. And so start to see faces where those numbers and percentages are and keep it real. Keep it at the student level.

So thinking about in-school activities, exiting-school activities, and post-school outcomes, we really have this set up like a logic model. So starting with the in-school activities, those are those things that are happening as inputs. These are things that we're investing in our students. For education, it is the transition components on the left-hand side of the IEP.

If you notice, there's a bottom bullet down there says, Pre-ETS and VR transition services aligned with the IEP and IPE. We really do want to start to encourage thinking of these two programs and the requirements around each coming together for a shared purpose. And so Missy and I have been very intentional about looking at what's happening within IDEA and where does WIOA fit into that. What's happening within WIOA, and where does IDEA fit within that?

So if our inputs are those transition outcomes, then our outputs are increased graduation rates for students with disabilities, increased measurable skill gains, and credential attainment rates for students with disabilities, and decreased dropout rates, right? That's that middle part of our logic model. For education, we often stop and focus on just getting kids to graduation or just keeping them in school in order to get them to graduation.

What we really want to do is push beyond that to look at the outcome, which is post-school outcome. That's our indicator 14 on our competitive integrated employment second and fourth quarters after exit. It's also the other related outcomes that we measure in indicator 14-- so other post-secondary education and training, credential attainment, some other employment.

And so thinking about that logically, the inputs are our school activities. Our outputs are those mid-point indicators-- increase graduation, credential attainment, decrease dropout, and then the outcomes related to post school.

MISSY DIEHL: In the next couple of slides, what we're trying to do here is we have a tool that was developed in the previous round of technical assistance that we link to in the Resources section at the end. But it really shows some alignment between the indicators under WIOA and IDEA. And so the VR program has six performance indicators that we're going to get to in a bit.

And here we're just aligning these with the four IDEA part-B indicators 1, 2, 13, and 14. So on this slide, we're showing how for the VR program, we have the credential attainment rate and how that aligns with IDEA indicators be B:1 and 2. And again, we'll be unpacking those in a bit.

And then on the next slide, you're going to see the alignment of both credential attainment rate and measurable skill gains with indicator B:13. And then lastly on that next slide, we're aligning competitive integrated employment in the second and fourth quarter after exit and median earning second fourth quarter after exit and credential attainment rate and how that all aligns with the outcomes for indicator B:14.

CHARLOTTE ALVERSON: So quickly we'll talk about the secondary transition indicators. Just a transition slide. Again, just as Missy said, B-1, percent of youth who graduate, that's a result indicator. B-2, the percent of youth who drop out, also a result indicator. Indicator 13 is the only compliance indicator related to the transition indicators. That's the percent of youth with required transition components in the IEP.

Part B, indicator 1 is graduation. And the language from the measurement table is the percent of youth with individualized education programs exiting special education due to graduating with a regular high school diploma. For this indicator, states must report a percentage using the number of youth with IEPs, those ages 14 to 21 who exited special education due to graduating with a regular high school diploma as the numerator and then the number of all youth with IEPs who exited special ed. Again, 14 to 21 is the age range in the denominator.

For indicator 1, the instructions and the measurement read that use of the same data as used for reporting to the department under Section 618 of IDEA using the definitions and the EDFacts file specification FS009. That's the 618 exiting data. This represents a major change. It's different data and different calculations.

So in 2022 reporting that was just submitted, the new baseline and new targets had to be in place. States are required to describe the result of the data for the year before the reporting

year. And sampling is not allowed for indicator 1. And states must provide a narrative that describes the conditions that youth must meet in order to graduate with a regular diploma. And if that's different for youth who have an IEP, states must explain why.

Indicator 2 is drop out, and it's the percent of youth with IEPs who exited special education due to dropping out. States have two options. Option one is that states must report a percentage using the number of youth with IEPs-- same age range as for graduation, 14 to 21-- who exited special education due to dropping out in the numerator. And then the denominator is the number of all youth with IEPs who left school.

The option two was only available for FFY 20. That being that the state can use the same data source and measurement that the state used to report its FFY 2010 SPP/APR that was reported back in February of 2012.

Indicator 2 instructions and measurement-- use the same data as reported for 618 using the EDFacts specification file again, FS009, or the state special education enrollment data. For the 2023 SPP/APR submission that's going to be federal fiscal year 21. All states have to use the 618 data and calculate an exiter or leaver dropout rate.

The state is also asked to describe the results of the data for the year before the reporting year. Sampling again is not required for dropout. And states must provide that narrative that describes what counts as dropping out for all youth, explaining if there's a difference between what counts as a dropout for students with disability and what counts as a drop out for students with IEPs.

Indicator 13 is, again, the compliance indicator. And rather than reading this to you verbatim, the bold words are the eight compliance standards for Indicator 13. Give you a second to read that. OK.

Indicator 13 targets have to be set at 100% because of the compliance indicator. These data come from State monitoring or a State data system. The method varies across the states and from districts to the state. And then as a compliance, again, all non-compliant IEPs must be corrected within one year of the notice.

Back during the NSTTAC days there was an eight item checklist that was created. It's optional for states to use. It's not required. Most states use it or they have some variation of a checklist that they created in-house.

This slide is showing you the six-year trend data for Indicator 13. The box at the top shows the up and down. There's very little change until FFY 17, and then you see a slight decrease over time. The average performance for FFY 19 was 86% with a range of 11 to 100%.

Indicator 14-- post-school outcomes. So the language here is the percent of youth who are no longer in secondary school, had IEPs in effect at the time they left school, and were-- enrolled in higher ed, enrolled in higher ed or competitively employed within one year of leaving high school, enrolled in higher ed, some other post-secondary education training program, or competitively employed or in some other employment within one year. And again, we'll unpack that a little bit.

So the four outcome categories-- higher ed, competitive employment, other post-secondary education or training, other employment-- each have criteria that must be met in order to be counted in that bucket. Those outcomes are hierarchical. So a student who meets the definition for higher education and competitive employment is counted in the highest category, which, in that example would be higher ed.

States still have two options for reporting and defining competitive employment. Option one is to use the same criteria that was used in 2010. States that want to align with the WIOA definition of competitive integrated employment can use option two. And on the right-hand side there, you see the different elements of the criteria for alignment with that outcome. Customary pay rate, benefits, and opportunities for advancement are the additional requirements related to option two.

Those four outcomes get collapsed into three measures-- A, B, and C. And so you see the four numbers across the top. 1, higher ed, 2, competitive employment, 3, other post-secondary education or training, and 4, some other employment. Those are the real numbers that can start to move the post-school outcomes.

But it's that fifth number that isn't required for reporting, and it's that not engaged group. That really is where rubber meets the road. If we can reduce the number of students who are not engaged and move those into one of the other four categories, now we have real effect with what's happening in school.

And digging into that not engaged category to understand our students leaving school and not attempting to do anything. So they're not enrolling. They're not seeking competitive employment. Or do we have a group of students who are attempting to be engaged by the federal definitions but aren't being successful?

That's where we can really start to understand what's happening with our students and what our program needs to do in order to meet their needs. And so it's those five numbers-- 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5-- that are most beneficial when we talk about using data beyond just reporting A, B, and C.

MISSY DIEHL: All right. So now in terms of the WIOA performance indicators, let's go check out what we've got here. So under Section 116 of WIOA, it establishes six primary indicators of performance, and they include employment rate 2nd quarter after exit. So here we're looking at the percentage of unsubsidized employment or competitive integrated employment, which is unsubsidized employment, the employment rate in the 4th quarter after exit, median earnings in the 2nd quarter after exit, that credential attainment rate, measurable skill gains, and lastly, the effectiveness in serving employers.

And for students with disabilities, even though pre-employment transition services is not specifically a performance measure under WIOA, once a student with a disability applies and is determined eligible for services and begins to receive services under an IEP or individualized employment plan, they become a participant and their outcomes are included in these performance measures.

So this data ultimately will help us determine if pre-employment transition services, for example, is effective or did it do what it was designed to do when WIOA was written. And in the future, we hope to be able to see if the receipt of pre-employment transition services makes a difference for students with disabilities in terms of their employment and earnings and their credential attainment or skill gains and how effective it's been from that lens and the lens of employers.

All right, so we thought we'd take just a minute to kind of pause and just make sure we all understand on the VR program who is a participant for the purposes of the program and then thus would be included in these performance measures that I just outlined. So as I shared on the previous slide, a program participant-- someone who's an applicant for the VR program-- they're determined eligible and they have an approved and signed IPE and they've begun to receive at least one service on that IPE.

And so this is the group of individuals who's going to be included in the calculations for performance measures, and this is the group of individuals whose data is going to be included on that annual report or ETA-9169.

So however, VR collects much more data. And that's in the RSA-911, and that's done quarterly. And VR agencies are required to report data on all-- what we call-- reportable individuals. So a reportable individual includes those students with disabilities who elect to receive pre-employment transition services as potentially eligible students. So this means there are those students who have not yet applied for or been determined eligible by the VR program.

A reportable individual is also someone who may be an applicant or an eligible individual but they don't yet have an IPE or begun to receive services on that IPE. So all of these reportable

individuals, while they continue to get reported in the RSA-911, they're not yet included in the calculations for the common performance measure. So I just wanted to kind of make that distinction that when we look at these program participants, this isn't everyone that the VR program is serving and there is that distinction between reportable individuals and program participants.

And the last term I wanted to just put out there was exit. And so exit for the VR program is the date the individual's case is closed in accordance with the VR programs regulations. So that's regardless of whether or not that individual was closed successfully or unsuccessfully. And this was kind of a big deal for the VR program because prior to WIOA, the program used to only report on closed case data. And now we have this rich set of data where we are reporting quarterly on open cases as well as the data we now collect for the program participants who exit the program.

So I wanted to just point out that although we're talking today about data that's applicable to all reportable individuals and program participants, WIOA introduced pre-employment transition services which are a unique set of services that VR can provide both to potentially eligible and VR program participants who are students with disabilities.

So the purpose was really to improve transition from secondary to post-secondary education by increasing those opportunities for students with disabilities to improve their practice and work skills, explore work-based learning experiences, and exploring post-secondary education training options that will ultimately lead to higher earnings and those students earning those industry recognized credentials.

So we start to look at some of these measures. Here we have both the employment rate at 2nd and 4th quarter after exit. And these measures are the percentage of participants in unsubsidized employment or competitive integrated employment during the 2nd and 4th quarter after exit from the VR program.

All right. And go to the next one. So here we just have some data on employment rate at 2nd quarter after exit, just to put into context what we're talking about. So this is those participants who exited, for the most part, in the prior program year with a few exceptions. So for example, in program year 2020, this reflects those exiters from program year 19.

And this is where Rachel Anderson-- she's with the VRTAC quality management. I think she's here with us today. She could probably give you a master class on all the cohorts of exiters because it provides a great deal of technical assistance to agencies on that topic. But just for our purposes today and in terms of this data, what we know is that from program year 18 to

program year 20, performance declined in this measure by about 4%. Where in 2018, the rate of those employed 2nd quarter after exit was about 50%, little over, and that declined to about 46.4% in program year 2020.

So now in terms of median earnings in the second quarter after exit. So this is a measure that's looking at those median earnings of those in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit. And this includes part-time and full-time employment. And here when we look at the data from 2018 to 2020, we see a slight increase where those median earnings were about 3,875, and that increased to just a little over 4,000 in those median earnings.

This measure on credential attainment rate. So this is the measure of the percentage of those participants who are enrolled in an education or training program who attain a recognized post-secondary or secondary school diploma or its equivalent during participation in or within one year of exit from the program. So here what we wanted to note is that the rate more than doubled, and the number of participants earning a credential tripled from 2019 to 2020.

So just to give you the types of acceptable credentials-- secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, associate degree, Bachelor degree, graduate degree for purposes of VR program, occupational licensure or an occupational certificate, including like registered apprenticeships or career and technical education educational certifications, occupational certifications, or those other recognized certificates of industry occupational skill completion that's sufficient to qualify for entry level or advancement in employment.

So a credential is a recognition of a measurable technical industry occupational skill, and they're really based on the standards endorsed by the industry or employers. So again, they're technical in nature or are advanced skills necessary to work in that specific occupation or industry.

All right. And then in terms of measurable skill gains, this is the percentage of participants who, during the program year, are in an education or training program that's going to lead to a recognized post-secondary credential or employment, and who are achieving documented, academic, technical, or occupational progress toward that credential or employment. So here's some data to compare the number of all the VR participants versus those participants who are students with disabilities and the total number of measurable skill gains that are reported.

And what we really wanted to highlight here was that for program year 2020, most of the MSGs that were reported were through secondary or post-secondary transcripts, which represents over 66% of all the MSGs. So again, just kind of highlighting how important this collaboration is and the demonstration of how we kind of need each other, both to improve the outcomes for students but for our common performance measures and reporting.

CHARLOTTE ALVERSON: And so in terms of the longitudinal progress of post-school outcomes, this graph is showing you the trends of the median percentages for post-school outcomes from FFY 14 through FFY 19. There's another typo. Measure A on the left-hand side is pretty flat. You see it at 26.1 in FFY 14 and then 24.8 in FFY 18. It's essentially very little change over time.

When you add in the competitive employment with measure B, there's hardly any change at all across those six years. And then looking at measure C, they combined all the outcome categories. It's actually a slight decrease, similar to what's reflected in measure A. So our outcomes have been pretty flat.

Remember I said that category 5, those not engaged, those are the ones you're not seeing here. So it's that difference between 77.5% and 100%. Personally, I would really like to see closer to 100% of our students engaged a year after school in supported employment, competitive integrated employment. I really believe if we have the right supports in place-- our VR partners being one of those supports that are so critical for our students' success-- we can increase that number.

MISSY DIEHL: Yeah, and I think that part of the value and one of the reasons why Charlotte and I wanted to show you some of the national data as we're walking through these is because number one, you can kind of see how you're comparing to these national averages. But also, we're hoping it starts to kind of spark questions for yourselves about what is our specific data in our state look like? And how can we use it to kind of get at why does it look the way that it is? And what is it telling us? And how can we use it to improve some of those outcomes? And where are those gaps?

So this slide is kind of looking at almost about 10 years of data on the employment outcomes of individuals with disabilities who receive services from the program. And so what we basically were just kind of showing is just this decline in the percentage of individuals who are leaving the program with an employment outcome.

All right. And then this slide kind of is telling a little bit of a different story. But what we wanted to show here was just the number of total participants. So these are those eligible individuals with the VR program, right? So we had about 586,000 of those who are not students with disabilities and about 225,000 students with disabilities who were program participants. And so again, you're kind of seeing that representing about 28% of the participants.

And then of those, how many were applicants to VR, right? So we have about 25% of students with disabilities who became applicants to VR. And when we look at that, and we look at how many students with disabilities were potentially eligible? So that's what this middle circle

represents, those individuals who weren't participants in the program but just were receiving pre-employment transition services as potentially eligible. And then of those individuals who received services as potentially eligible, how many got at least one pre-employment transition service?

And so one thing for the 2020 data that we were slightly concerned to see was that only about 42% of those potentially eligible students actually received at least one service. And so that potential consequence-- and we have some data from 17, 18, and 19, and we start to see that there's this growing trend of more and more students being served as potentially eligible and less students receiving at least one pre-employment transition service.

So that creates this idea that maybe we're parking these kids here and we have to figure out a way to make sure that we are engaging students with disabilities and they are continuing to receive services. And really using pre-employment transition services the way that it was intended to really be that on-ramp to give kids more opportunities at an earlier age, receiving more services so they can ultimately achieve higher earnings and credential and skill gains.

All right. And then this slide, what we thought we would do is kind of take a look of those pre-employment transition services that potentially eligible students did receive. And here we're looking at three program years, so 18, 19, and 20. And we've got all five pre-employment transition services. So there's job exploration counseling, work-based learning experiences, counseling on enrollment and post-secondary education opportunities, workplace readiness training, and self-advocacy.

And just one thing I wanted to point out here was, you'll notice in the middle of this bar graph, work-based learning experiences and counseling on enrollment and postsecondary opportunities are the two services that are provided the least often throughout all three program years. And what's concerning about that is those are the two services that are probably most likely to lead to getting students into higher wage earning careers, sustainable wages, and earning those skill gains and credentials so that they can be more independent and reduce the likelihood that they're going to live in poverty, ultimately.

CHARLOTTE ALVERSON: So how do we start to use our data to get to the improvement categories? Well, we want to talk about some data considerations and some caveats. First and foremost, let's not throw the baby out with the bathwater, right? If you look at your data and it's not perfect, that's OK. Don't expect perfection.

What we know from experience is that using outcome data even cautiously to inform our decision leads to improve data quality. There's nothing more powerful to me to have a group of

educators and service providers sitting at the same table, looking at data, asking questions critically, recognizing where there are strengths, recognizing where there's opportunities to improve.

And watching those light bulb moments come on and realize that, oh, the way we ask the question in follow up interviews for Indicator 14 can affect the outcome result. If a student or a respondent family member doesn't understand what the question is asked, they're not going to give the right information. And as an interviewer, it's important for me to know which of those questions are generating dubious data and which ones are not being understood so that we can make those corrections.

As we've watched educators using their PSO data look at who's responding and who isn't responding to the interviews, one of the things that has happened is those light bulbs again come on and realize, oh, that's why you're asking that question. I didn't realize that. I'll be more attentive to how I posed that question in the future.

Or we actually sat in a room one year with a group of stakeholders, and they looked at the data and they said we've got kids who are missing on the list and come to find out a whole district had just chosen not to do the interviews because they didn't understand the purpose behind it. So if your data are less than perfect, use that as information to understand why and to drive those decisions around data quality.

Another caveat we want to point out is that states shouldn't be compared. Every state has different circumstances. There's a different context. And so when you look at one state's data, the natural inclination is often to compare it to another. That isn't fair to the state. It isn't fair to the programs. It isn't fair to the students. So we discourage that comparison across states.

Recognizing that states have a lot more data than is federally reported, look at those data. Talk about those outcomes. For Indicator 14, those five outcome categories, each of those can be disaggregated by gender, race, ethnicity, geographic location. That's going to help you identify what's working and for whom is it working and what isn't working and where do we need to make changes.

I have yet to meet local program staff who don't want to know the outcomes of their students. Close that loop. Give the feedback back to the local data collectors. Give the feedback back to the interviewers. Show the strengths of the programs. Identify both the data quality improvements that can be made, but then also encourage conversation around improving local programs.

Use your post-school outcome data to drive that linkage between pre-employment transition services, predictors, and outcomes. For example, we know that interagency collaboration, working with our VR partners in education, is a predictor of positive post-school outcomes.

We also know that work-based learning experiences while they're in school, whether those are paid or unpaid experiences, lead to positive post-school outcomes, are more likely to lead to positive post-school outcomes. Those are just two of the beginning connections that can be made between our two programs.

MISSY DIEHL: All right. And then in terms of our role at the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition, The Collaborative, we do a number of things. And Charlotte, I don't know if you want to kick off the first one. This is more on the education side of the house.

CHARLOTTE ALVERSON: Yeah, so take a look. One of the things that we do in NTACT:C is we get all of the state submissions for the indicators, 1 to 13, 14, and we summarize those and submit a report back to OSEP. So what the districts report to the state, the state reports to OSEP. OSEP gives it to us to summarize and report back to OSEP. That's available through our NTACT:C website if you want to see that federal report.

MISSY DIEHL: The other thing that we do is we engage a lot with both our OSEP and RSA partners, whether it is the folks that are our liaison with our grant or the monitoring staff who are working directly with the states. And we participate on monthly and quarterly calls and share the needs that we're seeing out in the states as well as any questions that we might have to better provide technical assistance to you all.

CHARLOTTE ALVERSON: Part of our role is to respond to request TA requests-- whoops, let me go back. Thank you-- whether that request comes from a state lead or local teacher, VR counselor, support staff. We do that through a variety of means-- our website, individual phone calls. One of the things that we will always do is reach out to others when we don't have the answer at our fingertips in order to find the answer for you.

MISSY DIEHL: And we also try to be proactive with supports and technical assistance. So we have a lot of communities of practice, one on Indicator 14, one for VR blindness agencies, one for individuals with complex support needs, and many more. I'm going to miss some so I'll stop with the list.

But we also hold office hours monthly. We have some self-studies on IDEA and transition. We do huddles with smaller groups of individuals around specific topics as well as webinars like the one that we're doing today and over 250 tools and resources that you can find on our website.

CHARLOTTE ALVERSON: In addition to coordinating in-house with our TA colleagues, we also coordinate with other TA centers. RSA and OSEP provide a wealth of resources through the TA centers that they support. So NCSI, IDC, the Quality Employment and Quality Management VR programs, those are our colleagues, too. And so again, when we don't have the answers at our fingertips, we reach out to either coordinate with the other TA center and state or to share resources across the different centers.

MISSY DIEHL: And that flows right into this next one, that for the purposes of students and youth with disabilities, really just helping support states in looking at not just data collection but the quality of the data and how you analyze it and how you're reporting it and using it for program improvement, looking at the strategies that you can implement to make some program improvements, and really get to do some strategic planning across your partners within VR in education.

CHARLOTTE ALVERSON: And to do that, we work with states to identify those connections with other data that are collected. We do that through the data sharing agreements but also starting to help states structure the questions that will guide the data use, the data analysis piece. Collecting data just for the sake of federal reporting is a huge investment of resources that then aren't being used if we're not moving into data sharing and data use.

MISSY DIEHL: Now, and just to give a nod to the model within our upcoming Capacity Building Virtual Institute, there's some considerations for state teams as you go back and think about how to implement some things regarding the use of your data and what it looks like to look at student outcomes.

Do both agencies between VR and education really understand how our respective performance indicators support each other's goals? So when we're looking across to our partners, instead of saying, this is what I need, we can come to the table saying, this is what I have and can possibly support what you need.

CHARLOTTE ALVERSON: Yeah, and along with that, it's really important that we understand the documentations that are required for each outcome across each program, to understand why it is that Missy as a representative for WIO is asking for these data and what it is that I have as a representative for IDA have available to support what Missy's needing. And so understanding what documentation is required is critical to that collaboration.

MISSY DIEHL: And that goes along with that next one of how we can partner to help support those specific documentation requirements.

CHARLOTTE ALVERSON: Do local practices support the shared cases and common outcomes? Are we working towards the same common outcome, or are we at odds with each other?

MISSY DIEHL: Where do we need to do some cross-training? So kind of like what we're trying to do today and set a baseline about what we know about each other's data. How do we take that down to the state and local level about where that cross-training can happen?

CHARLOTTE ALVERSON: Each agency, we have our own reporting requirements and responsibilities, but that intersection should always be the same shared outcome, improved programs, positive outcomes for students, youth, clients. And so if we keep that as our ultimate focus, then we can start to ask the questions around what systems and processes need to change in order to support those shared outcomes rather than staying in those silos and saying, this is what I have to do, this is what you have to do, and never the two shall meet.

MISSY DIEHL: Yep, and in addition to that, how can we help each other increase response rates and the ability to gather some of that long-term data that we want to see to really see what is happening as a result of the things that we're implementing?

CHARLOTTE ALVERSON: And to kick off this conversation, start by identifying those areas of celebration, the areas in which there are strengths, but then also, look at what do we need to improve, and how do we start to move towards improvement in those areas?

MISSY DIEHL: Is this one you or me, Charlotte? I'm sorry.

CHARLOTTE ALVERSON: I think it's me. Successful outcomes for collaboration with education-- so increase the number of students participating in work-based learning. How do we do that? We can do that. We do that within our transition services. And so starting to look at those paid and unpaid work experiences.

We want to increase graduation rates and decrease dropout rates. The benefit of a collaboration with our VR partners is we help that student to see and achieve his or her long-term post-school goal. And so when we can make those connections for a student, you want to do this. These are the classes that you need to take. This is why it's important for you to stay in school and get to your potential attainment because that's needed in order to advance in this program.

Increase the number of students that achieve those positive post-school outcomes-- if we look at the data between students who participate in VR services before they exit high school and after, we're going to see that students who have those supports in place make a smoother transition and have more positive outcomes.

And then increase in students participating in postsecondary education and training that leads to credential attainment and measurable skill gains and jobs within that upward trajectory. Not just getting them a job because it's a job-- that closes their program-- but actually, helping them, again, look at their post-school goal that they want to achieve for employment and building that stair step that leads to that.

MISSY DIEHL: And just going along those same lines, when we're looking at the types of outcomes that folks are getting, are they getting outcomes that are consistent with what they said they wanted to do, their chosen career field? Are their outcomes quality outcomes, meaning are they earning a livable wage? Are they getting employer-provided medical benefits? Are they earning those credentials and skill gains?

How are we meeting the workforce needs, and how are we aligning up with what those labor market demands are telling us? And then ultimately, just how do we improve business engagement and the relationships we establish in the community across both VR and education?

CHARLOTTE ALVERSON: So just a note here that the contents of this presentation were developed by NTACT:C, a funded project under our grant. There's our grant number from the US Department of Education. However, these content do not necessarily represent or reflect policy of Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the federal government.

MISSY DIEHL: In the next several slides, we just linked you to a ton of resources both for the VR-related data and some trainings to take a deeper dive that our partners over at the Quality Management Grant have done as well as a ton of resources for special education and the indicators. And I think we have a few minutes for some questions, right?

CHARLOTTE ALVERSON: I think so.

MICHAEL STOEHR: So as you're looking at that, just a couple reminders-- let me click through all the resources-- that you will receive an email from Zoom tomorrow with the evaluation link and Stephanie can put that evaluation link into the chat box. If you have any questions, you can contact us directly at ntact-collab@uncc.edu area. And then as a reminder, the evaluation as well as the PowerPoint and any other material are available on our website, transitionTA.org, and there's a direct link there.

And I know there were a bunch of questions that came in in Q&A and in chat. I don't know if you all had a chance to look at any of those, Missy or Charlotte. But one of the questions that came

in, it was asked, they were curious if there were other options for measuring Indicator 14 other than self and caregiver report.

CHARLOTTE ALVERSON: Yeah, so the methodology that the state uses is up to the state to make that determination. However, beyond self-report, there are states who are using administrative databases. So they've got partnerships with higher education to look at which students are enrolling and completing a term of higher ed, the partnership with VR in order to look at which students are tracked beyond high school and whether they're enrolled again in higher ed or competitive employment at second and fourth quarters. So yes, states can use administrative databases to get to Indicator 14 outcomes.

MICHAEL STOEHR: Another question that came in. Missy, I think this is one for you. How are potentially eligible students determined successful or unsuccessful when a case is closed?

MISSY DIEHL: That is a great question because it's not a requirement to be reporting that data on potentially eligible students. But that's one thing that we work with states all the time about is how do you know that how you're providing those services is having an impact on students if we don't start to look at what are the expectations or what are we hoping these students are going to get. So that's really something that the states at least for now because it isn't a federal requirement to determine outcomes for potentially eligible students, but that you get to determine based upon what you're seeing in your state.

So if you have a lack of students that are enrolled in career technical education programs or that are earning certain types of credentials or you want to see how you can make improvements in students with disabilities getting in more STEM careers, that's some of the things that you can bake in your cake of the services that you're providing and the outcome expectations you want to see as a result of the participation in those services.

MICHAEL STOEHR: Another question that came in, and we have time for probably two more, are college or university certificates from inclusive higher education programs included as an accepted credential?

MISSY DIEHL: So typically-- I'm going to say it depends. And if Rachel's here, she could give a much more eloquent answer. But typically, they do not result in a credential because they're often students are getting a certificate of completion more so than they are earning an industry-recognized credential or completing a number of credits.

So a lot of times, we'll see comprehensive transition programs where students are auditing courses, but they're not earning credits. Other programs, they are. So it's really, you have to look

on a case by case basis about what your program and your state is offering and whether that lines up with what would equate to an industry-recognized credential.

MICHAEL STOEHR: And one final question, how is data on enrollment in higher education obtained by schools once a student has left high school?

CHARLOTTE ALVERSON: So most states, again, are doing interviews with the young adult or with a family member or designee to find out if that student has enrolled in higher education and completed one term. Or through administrative databases, looking to see across the databases.

MICHAEL STOEHR: Great. So again, thank you all for joining us this afternoon and a special thank you to Charlotte and Missy. Their email addresses are listed on this screen as well as ways to connect to The Collaborative. So either, through our website, transitionTA.org or could email us directly at ntactmail@uncc.edu.

Someone did ask, is this webinar going to be recorded? It will be, and it will also be posted on our website. So you can look for it there. So again, thank you all for joining us. We greatly appreciate it. Have a great rest of your day.

MISSY DIEHL: Thank you.

CHARLOTTE ALVERSON: Thanks, everyone.