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# Teacher Perspectives of Student Transitioning in Special Education from Correctional Facilities to Public Schools

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Teacher Perspectives  
of Student Transitioning  
in Special Education  
from Correctional Facilities  
to Public Schools

Eleanor B. McCormack

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Running Head: Correctional Transitions

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore correctional special education teachers' and public high school special education teachers' perspectives of student transitioning from correctional facilities back to public schools. The point of interest was regarding what information these two groups of teachers believe to be important for transitioning to occur more smoothly from correctional education to the public schools.

Surveys were distributed to the two groups of teachers. Respondents indicated the need for collaboration between correctional facilities and public schools. They also indicated the need for transference of information about the student prior to the student's arrival in order to meet his/her educational needs and provide for a smoother transition.

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Teacher Perspectives of Transitioning in Special Education  
from Correctional Facilities to Public Schools

Over the past several decades, statistics demonstrate a high proportion of incarcerated youth with disabilities. In 1979, Smith noted the number of disabilities for adjudicated youth had appeared to be increasing over the previous two decades. Only half of the adolescents with disabilities were receiving the necessary services and as a result many of them were labeled as trouble makers and suspended or expelled from school. These events result in feelings of inadequacy and a higher probability of turning to crime (Smith, 1979).

Morgan (1979) conducted a survey of over 200 correctional facilities that indicated 42.4% of youth in juvenile corrections were disabled. These percentages were broken down as 16.23% emotional disturbance, 10.59% learning disabled, and 7.69% educable mental retardation (Morgan, 1979).

Relationships Between Youth With Disabilities And Juvenile Delinquency

Numerous studies have indicated a link between youth with disabilities and juvenile delinquency. Keilitz and Dunivant (1986) expressed that adolescents with learning disabilities are more likely to become involved with substance abuse, violence, and delinquent behaviors. They described five theories to explain this relationship. The

school failure theory basically suggests delinquent behavior results from academic failure due to a learning disability (Keilitz & Dunivant, 1986). The susceptibility theory implies youth with learning disabilities have cognitive and personality traits that simply make them more prone to become involved in delinquent incidents.

The differential treatment theory consists of three hypotheses in regard to the idea that non-learning disabled youth and youth with learning disabilities may engage in similar delinquent behaviors, but youth with learning disabilities are more likely to receive a harsher punishment by the criminal justice system (Keilitz & Dunivant, 1986). This theory is based on the characteristics of youth with disabilities such as their impulsiveness and inability to perceive future consequences. The first hypothesis under this theory, the differential arrest hypothesis, claims that adolescents with learning disabilities are more likely to be apprehended by the police than non-disabled adolescents. Youth with disabilities lack the social interaction skills that would allow them to react appropriately to a situation with the law and strategically plan a resolution. Instead, these adolescents tend to conceal their real feelings and intentions and their indifferent demeanor results in their arrest. The second hypothesis, the differential adjudication hypothesis, suggests that of the adolescents charged with breaking the law under similar conditions,

those with learning disabilities have a greater chance of adjudication than their peers without learning disabilities (Keilitz & Dunivant, 1986). Reasons for this hypothesis are attributed to the characteristics associated with youth labeled learning disabled such as lack of self-control and social abrasiveness. Using the same rationale, the third hypothesis under the differential treatment theory is that youth with learning disabilities have a greater chance of being sentenced to a correctional facility than youth without learning disabilities who have been adjudicated for the same or similar charges (Keilitz & Dunivant, 1986).

The sociodemographic characteristics theory described by Keilitz and Dunivant suggests that learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency are both related to sociodemographic factors (1986). The fifth theory linking learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency is the response bias theory which indicates adolescents with learning disabilities are more likely to display antisocial behavior similar to juvenile delinquents, whereas youth without learning disabilities are more likely to conceal these behaviors. The results of an age-cross-sectional study and a longitudinal study consisting of samples of adolescent males from public schools, juvenile courts, and correctional facilities indicate a definite linking relationship between learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency. These studies supported the school failure,

susceptibility, and differential treatment theories (Keilitz & Dunivant, 1986).

Murphy (1986) reviewed the research regarding the prevalence of disabilities among juvenile delinquents. The reports varied on the actual number but did indicate that a disproportionate number of juveniles are reported disabled, somewhere between 30% and 60%. Emotional disturbance, mental retardation, and learning disabilities were discussed as prevalent disabilities among youth in correctional facilities. The findings in this review of research indicated a need for improving identification and improvement of services because many disabled youth are not receiving the necessary special educational services (Murphy, 1986).

In 1988, Larson reviewed current hypotheses describing a relationship between learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency. Factors of age, race, and socioeconomic status are all increased risks for youth and delinquency, yet, when a learning disability was added to these characteristics, an adolescent is at a greater risk for delinquency. The school failure hypothesis, the differential treatment hypothesis, and the susceptibility hypothesis are all explanations of the link between learning disabilities and juvenile delinquency. A clear correlational relationship has been established, but information supporting a causal relationship has yet to be established (Larson, 1988).



Larson suggested a way to develop an alternative causal hypothesis would be to identify a specific skill associated with delinquent behavior yet absent in a learning disabled youth who is also socially maladjusted. Larson (1988) also suggested that social cognitive problem solving is this particular skill. Social cognitive problem solving difficulties are apparent in delinquents and socially maladjusted youth. Evidence indicated youth with learning disabilities appear to be at greater risk for delinquency when faced with social problems and cognitive deficits (Larson, 1988).

#### Law, Planning, and Implementation

Professionals engage in much planning for special services in correctional education for adjudicated youth with disabilities. Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, provides free appropriate education to meet the needs of all handicapped children and youth (Smith, Ramirez, & Rutherford, 1983). This law includes youth with disabilities who are placed in correctional facilities. Even though educators, both special and correctional, are aware of the needs of youth with disabilities, few disabled adolescents are receiving the special education services they are entitled to within the correctional facilities.

The following mandated provisions are binding on each of these agencies including correctional agencies and

their subdivisions regardless of whether a particular agency or school receives funding under P.L. 94-142:

- \* ongoing child identification activities;
- \* safeguards in evaluation materials and procedures;
- \* written individualized education (IEPs);
- \* due process procedures including assignment of a surrogate where appropriate;
- \* placement in the least restrictive environment;
- \* availability of qualified special education and related services personnel; and
- \* confidentiality of information

(Smith et al., 1983, p.108).

Smith et al. (1983) address many complications in meeting the mandates of P.L. 94-142 as far as correctional facilities are concerned. Interagency cooperation is hard to accomplish between correctional facilities and school systems to benefit adjudicated youth. The average confinement period for a juvenile delinquent is 9 months, and many correctional facilities find it difficult to meet the procedural requirements in such short time. It is difficult to get parents of incarcerated youth with disabilities to become involved in the education of their child and, moreover, many such youth have become wards of the state (Smith et al., 1983). Identification and evaluative measures become complicated for adjudicated youth

with disabilities because the requirements of P.L. 94-142 may be inapplicable during hearing time. Transference of current IEPs from an adjudicated youth's previous school system and development of an appropriate IEP by the correctional facility sometimes takes as long to complete as the youth's full incarceration period. Furthermore, the least restrictive environment provision of P.L. 94-142 is almost impossible to meet within a correctional education system since the purpose of a correctional facility is the most restrictive environment (Smith et al., 1983).

In a digest by Leone, Rutherford, and Nelson (1991), statistics revealed approximately 84,000 juveniles were incarcerated. This statistic reflects a 14% increase from 1984 to 1989. An estimated 28% of these youth were identified as having disabilities, an extremely low number. Regardless, the research indicated adolescents with disabilities are disproportionately incarcerated due to inadequate social skills and lack of ability to comprehend the judicial system. Nevertheless, youth with disabilities in correctional facilities are entitled to the rights of P.L. 94-142.

Educational services are provided in many different kinds of correctional facilities. Nonetheless, with the mobility of students in these facilities, it is difficult for the records of an adolescent needing special services to keep up with the placement of the adolescent (Leone et al.,

1991). Administrative support and interagency cooperation is needed in order for an incarcerated youth with disabilities' needs to be met. This cooperation varies, however, with funding and perceptions of the criminal justice system. Although standardized assessments are conducted for youth upon entering a correctional facility, it is rare they have any value in identifying, placing, and providing appropriate educational services for those youth with disabilities. Suggestions for special education for adjudicated youth include a functional education plan, successful transition, and cooperation among courts, schools, correctional facilities, and aftercare programs (Leone et al., 1991).

Rousseau and Davenport (1993) stated despite the push to keep students in the regular classroom in public schools, the need for special education services in correctional facilities will increase. Educators within correctional facilities have trouble recruiting qualified personnel to provide and support educational services within correctional facilities. Because of the constant turnover of teachers and students in correctional education programs it is hard to plan and teach because things change day to day.

Rousseau and Davenport (1993) acknowledged that collaboration between schools, detention facilities, correctional facilities, courts, and follow-up programs often do not exist. They predicted the need for such

collaboration will become standard procedure by the year 2000. The need for transitioning programs was also indicated, for many of the youth return to the environment that contributed to delinquency in the first place. The special education procedures and practices need to become as standard in correctional facilities as they are in public schools (Rousseau & Davenport, 1993).

#### Problems and Practices

Although the law provides for incarcerated youth with disabilities to receive special education services within correctional facilities, many difficulties exist in doing so. Karcz and Sabatino (1986) found that the cooperation between public schools, juvenile facilities, community, and transition programs are virtually non-existent. They identified two essential issues that need to be initiated in the correctional education field. These include cooperative policies among agencies working with adjudicated youth, and clear, prevalent identification procedures of disabilities among these youth (Karcz & Sabatino, 1986).

Similarly, Thomas McIntyre (1993) reviewed relevant literature and found the needs of adolescents with disabilities in correctional facilities are typically not met. The reasons stated for this include financial and political issues, lack of space, lack of qualified personnel, conflicting priorities and philosophical differences of personnel, limited knowledge of law

requirements, and the attitude that those who have broken the law are not entitled to special services. Other problems include lack of interagency cooperation, negligence in transference of records, high turnover rate of population, lack of parental involvement, and lack of transitioning services (Karcz & Sabatino, 1986; McIntyre, 1993).

Richey and Willis (1982) addressed problems within juvenile correctional facilities by creating a workshop with the front-line staff to identify the problems and needs from the "inside" perspective and to generate solutions. Besides the given disproportionate number of incarcerated youth who need special services, the staff indicated a shortage of trained personnel as a problem. The more specific problems included organization and communication, lack of skill, competence, or expertise, uncontrolled excessive behavior, and lack of care or commitment (Richey & Willis, 1982). Lack of communication between organizations and institutions and the problems created by reorganization within each state causes confusion of goals, expectations, and programs. Training and increasing of skills and knowledge to work with incarcerated youth with disabilities is important. Communication between all responsible for working with disabled delinquent youth is extremely important as well (Richey & Willis, 1982).

Rutherford, Nelson, and Wolford (1985) identified compliance of correctional education with P.L. 94-142 and discussed improvements. They identified six components for effective correctional special education programs. These are as follows:

- 1) procedures for conducting functional assessments of the skills and learning needs of handicapped offenders;
- 2) the existence of a curriculum that teaches functional academic and daily living skills;
- 3) the inclusion of vocational special education in the curriculum;
- 4) the existence of transitional programs and procedures between correctional programs and the community;
- 5) the presence of a comprehensive system for providing institutional and community services to handicapped offenders; and,
- 6) the provision of inservice and preservice training for correctional educators in special education

(Rutherford et al. 1985, p.64).

Platt (1986) expressed vocational education in corrections is vital for juveniles with disabilities. Reasons stated for vocational education included are to develop independence and the necessary skills to transition back into the community. According to Platt (1986), effective vocational training must include evaluation of

interests and abilities, intervention individualized to the needs of the youth with disabilities, and systematic transitioning. In order for such a vocational program to work, teachers, both academic and vocational, community advocates, correctional supervisors, and any other person responsible for a particular youth with disability in corrections must all cooperate and work together (Platt, 1986).

Many factors reduce effective special education services in correctional facilities (Leone, 1986). These include lack of funds, inadequate space, and different views of educators and administrators. In order to provide appropriate services as best possible around these other factors, teacher training becomes an important component. Teacher training programs specifically oriented in correctional education should be developed. These teachers need to be prepared for behavior problems, and they must be street-wise, competent, and flexible (Leone, 1986).

Rider-Hankins (1992) prepared a review of correctional education literature. Key issues in this document were teacher training, skill development and rehabilitation, and transition for youth with disabilities in correctional facilities. Fewer than 10% of states' correctional facilities comply with P.L. 94-142 and the following reasons are listed:

- \* lack of interagency agreements and cooperation;



- \* communication and organizational issues;
- \* lack of Individual Education Plans (IEPs) upon the youths' arrival;
- \* shortage of trained staff and administrators knowledgeable of the needs of special education students;
- \* inadequate assessments;
- \* difficulty in locating and involving parents or guardians;
- \* shortage of money;
- \* misplacement of students in appropriate programs;
- \* high turnover of student population from transfers and releases; and
- \* lack of effective transition following release

(Rider-Hankins, 1992, p.11).

Leone (1994) wrote an article discussing the special education services provided, or not provided, for youth in juvenile correctional facilities. A case study was conducted at a state department of juvenile services over a 12 month period to evaluate the correctional education system and services for students with disabilities. This was done through interviews that were conducted with staff, students, superintendents, psychologists, principals, teachers, vocational specialists, special education teachers, and a social worker. Observations were also conducted in classrooms, vocational programs, the cafeteria,

recreational areas, and residential areas of the correctional facilities. The findings suggested that the department for juvenile services did an inappropriate job of serving students with disabilities. There were unjustified delays in providing services to the children who were eligible for services (Leone, 1994). There was no evidence of a system for referral for youth with characteristics of special needs who were not previously identified. Only the students who had received special services in their previous schools were receiving them in the correctional facilities. Another finding was that special services for all the identified youth were similar, not based on their individual needs. Also, the disciplinary system seemed to have a negative effect on students with disabilities rather than a positive outcome. Overall, a lack of understanding of special education services seemed to exist within the correctional facilities (Leone, 1994).

### Transitioning

Although educational services within correctional education are improving, transition from correctional facilities back to public schools is a critical area of need. Rutherford, Nelson, and Wolford (1985) noted correctional education programs generally operate separately from the public school systems. Due to this separation, transitioning between the two systems is usually ineffective. Correctional facilities often have

difficulties in obtaining records of identification information for offenders with disabilities and, therefore, the courts need to establish effective communication standards between schools and correctional facilities. Some problems with transitioning include the incapability of facilities to develop effective transitioning programs, limited methods to exchange information, and parole considerations that often mandate full time employment (Rutherford et al., 1985). Those who are assigned to assist with transition should work at both the correctional facility and the public school. Logically, a transition aid works in some type of aftercare agency and these individuals are rarely educators. Therefore, teachers need to be more involved in transitioning procedures (Rutherford et al., 1985).

In their book, Special Education in the Criminal Justice System, Nelson, Rutherford, and Wolford (1987) identified 6 issues that need to be considered in transitioning. First, awareness is a key issue in transitioning. Sending and receiving agencies need to share information and be knowledgeable of each others' available programs. The second identified issue in transitioning is eligibility criteria. Both agencies need to understand the criteria used to determine youth eligible for special services in order to make appropriate referrals and placements. Third, exchange of information between agencies

needs to be implemented. Receiving agencies need to acquire information on their clients before the clients arrive in order to be prepared. The fourth issue discussed was program planning before transitioning. Joint planning between sending and receiving agencies can facilitate smoother transition. Fifth, feedback after transition has occurred is important. The sending agency can benefit from feedback information for program evaluation and alteration purposes. Finally, the sixth issue identified was that written procedures need to be installed in order to ensure that all transitioning actions occur effectively (Nelson et al., 1987). If these issues are met, then transitioning would be smoother for all agencies involved.

In 1988, Lewis, Schwartz, and Ianacone conducted a study to examine the communication between correctional education administrators and the public school systems from which incarcerated youth come. These researchers examined the transitional information provided and services offered for those youth previously involved in special education. Special education directors from local education areas in the five states from the Mid-Atlantic region of the country were obtained from each states Department of Education. All the juvenile correctional facilities that provided educational services within these five states were identified from a national correctional association directory. Telephone interviews were conducted with the

program directors or persons responsible for coordination of services between the correctional facilities and public schools. Data were collected through a survey and categorized as: 1) liaison issues, 2) transfer of records issues, 3) information exchange, and 4) referral issues for services upon return to public schooling (Lewis et al., 1988).

The results suggested that information about disabilities and incarceration is not always exchanged. Only 42% of the correctional education directors indicated they were usually informed of disabilities. Fifty-one percent of public school directors indicated they were informed of when their students entered correctional facilities. Results of this survey suggested problems of communication between public schools and correctional facilities (Lewis et al., 1988). Correctional facilities usually received the requested records within two weeks approximately one third of the time. Lewis, Schwartz, and Ianacone (1988) concluded that it is important for information about students with disabilities to be exchanged between public schools and correctional facilities in order for students to receive proper services and to make transitioning, in either education area, occur smoothly. When agencies lack information, many students may end up "falling through the cracks" of the system. Speedy transfer of records is important because the length of stay for a

juvenile in a correctional facility is approximately six months. When it takes a month or more for transfer of records, it results in less educational time for which necessary services are provided (Lewis et al., 1988). This study demonstrated the need for better communication practices between special educators and correctional facilities.

Grande and Oseroff (1991) suggested that a realistic approach to serving incarcerated individuals with disabilities that will meet the requirements of P.L. 94-142 would be to initiate a comprehensive or prerelease prescription. This prescription would provide the incarcerated individual with job, school, and vocational plans which would prepare him/her for reentry into the community. For example, Moran (1991) conducted a study to evaluate a transition model already in effect concerning youth offenders who are in special education. He identified that a critical issue in the transition process is the exchange of information, history, and records of the individual. Moran reviewed the procedures for how a detention center identifies the special education students who have been served by the local public schools, how academic records are obtained, and how data are compiled. The detention center required entering individuals to identify the last school they had attended. Upon gathering this information the detention center would fax the name and

date of birth to the appropriate school. Within two days of receiving this information, the school was to fax back information regarding whether or not the individual was enrolled in special education. If so, the nature of the disability, along with the last date of assessment; and, within a few more days, the most recent individualized education plan (IEP), should be sent.

Moran (1988) found that although faxing was supposed to be done on a daily basis, it was often done weekly instead. The two day time period in which the center was supposed to receive information was more of an ideal than a reality, and too often, the student had exited the center before he/she was identified as a special education student. Another problem Moran discovered was that the IEPs received by the center were often outdated and incomplete. The other half of Moran's study revealed that although the model called for exit information to be compiled and sent to a probation officer and the school the youth would be reentering, it was rare the receiving agency ever obtained this information. This particular study indicated that regardless of whether or not transition procedures are required for schools and correctional facilities, it is rare they are carried through. This issue is important and needs to be considered and evaluated for future implementations (Moran, 1991).

Statement of Purpose

The implementation plan for special education in correctional facilities in Virginia mandates that all inmates under age 22 who are eligible for special education and do not have a high school diploma or GED (Graduate Equivalency Diploma) be targeted (V.D.O.E., 1991). It is a community based plan in which local school administrators and correctional supervisors hope to meet the needs of inmates with disabilities as well as benefit the community. The Commonwealth is required to provide funds to school districts for cost of the implemented programs, provide additional security where necessary, and allocate space within the correctional facilities for services to be provided (V.D.O.E., 1991).

This implementation plan calls for interagency cooperation between the correctional facilities and local schools. An Individualized Education Program (IEP) will be developed for each inmate with disabilities according to Virginia Regulations (V.D.O.E., 1991). This program also calls for a jail education contact who will be responsible for forwarding all relevant information to other agencies upon release of an inmate. At least the following information is required to be sent: name, social security number, last known address, date of release, and reason for release (V.D.O.E., 1991).



It is important when youth with disabilities are moved from one educational facility to another that these students' educational needs are met and appropriate services are provided. Often when a youth with disabilities has completed his/her time in a correctional facility where educational services are provided, the necessary identification and background information does not accompany him/her back into public schools. Information such as the nature of a student's disability, special services required, educational history, his/her IEP (Individualized Education Program), and the most recent assessment and evaluation information is important for a school to receive prior to the student's arrival in order to meet his/her educational needs and provide a smoother transition.

Unfortunately, no systematic procedures exist in the Virginia plan to ensure that information regarding the child's special placement or needs (i.e., the IEP) are required to be sent to the public schools in a timely manner. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore correctional special education teachers' and public high school special education teachers' perspectives of student transitioning from correctional facilities to public schools. The point of interest is regarding what information these two groups of teachers believe to be important for transitioning to occur more smoothly from correctional education to the public schools.

## Method

Subjects

Subjects of this study included special education teachers of high school students in correctional education facilities as well as public high school special education teachers who have had students return to their class from a correctional education facility. The first group of teachers were selected with the help of the Director of Academic Programs for the Department of Correctional Education. The second group of teachers were from 35 randomly selected school divisions in Virginia.

Procedures

The Director of Academic Programs for the Virginia Department of Correctional Education was contacted in order to receive permission and to distribute surveys to correctional special education teachers. (See Appendix A). Similarly, permission was obtained from the school divisions in order to make contact with the public high school special education teachers. (See Appendix B). Once permission was obtained, surveys were distributed by mail. (See Appendix C). Attached to each survey was a self-addressed, stamped envelope so the completed survey could be returned directly to the researcher.

All necessary assurances of voluntary consent and confidentiality were made prior to survey distribution. The surveys were mailed in the fall semester of 1995. No names

of students, teachers, schools, school divisions, or correctional education facilities were disclosed.

### Questionnaire

Because no standardized instrument existed to assess the transition from correctional facilities to public schools in relation to special education, two surveys were developed by the researcher. (See Appendices D & E). One was constructed for teachers of correctional special education and one for public high school teachers of special education. Transitioning was defined as the process of moving a student with disabilities from one educational environment to another, with proper identifying information preceding the student's arrival. This identifying information includes the student's special education category, most recent IEP and evaluation, stated needs and special services, characteristics, and history. In other words, a complete referral should be provided for the receiving agency by the sending agency prior to the student's arrival.

The surveys contained three parts. Part I included demographic information and questions were asked regarding what type of educational services the teacher provided in the correctional facility or in the public school. In Part II, teachers were questioned as to what information they prepared or received regarding students (i.e., current records, IEP, history, last assessment date, etc.). They

were also asked what additional information they believe would better facilitate students' transitions. Part III consisted of a Likert scale to assess teachers' perceptions regarding students' transitions to public school special education from correctional education facilities. The Likert scale was a five point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. A number 1 was assigned to responses of strongly disagree, 2 to disagree, 3 to neutral responses, 4 to agree, and a 5 to strongly agree. Subjects were assured confidentiality and no names were used in the research.

#### Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, such as percentages, were used to interpret the demographic and transition information on the questionnaire. Measurements of central tendency were calculated (i.e., mean and standard deviation) for the demographic information, where appropriate, as well. Percentages were computed for each group's responses on the Likert Scale questions. Respondents' comments and textual information were examined descriptively.

## Results

Thirty-five randomly selected school divisions in Virginia were asked to participate. A total of 19 (54.29%) participated. To the public high schools in these 19 divisions, 176 surveys were distributed to the special education teachers. A total of 116 were received by the researcher, for a return rate of 65.91%. Of these 116 surveys, 64 (55.17%) of the respondents had students who had been in correctional facilities; therefore, these surveys were used for the data analysis. Of these 64 (44.82%) surveys, 56 were fully completed and 8 were partially completed. Out of the 116 returned surveys, 52 of the respondents had not had, or were not aware of, students returned from correctional facilities; therefore, these surveys were not used in the data analysis.

There were 75 special education teachers for the Virginia Department of Correctional Education. Surveys were distributed to each of these teachers through the Director of Academic Programs. Of the 75 distributed, 26 completed surveys were received by the researcher, for a return rate of 34.67%. Of these 26 surveys, there were only 4 fully completed surveys, 8 were partially completed, 11 indicated they were teachers of adults not returning to public school, and 3 were not completed.

Surveys with information relevant to the study were divided into 3 groups. Group I consisted of the 12 surveys

from special education teachers in correctional education facilities who had students who would return to public school upon release. Group II consisted of the 11 surveys from special education teachers in correctional education facilities who had adults who would not return to public school. Nevertheless, these respondents provided information relevant to the transitioning process. Group III consisted of the 64 surveys from special education teachers in public schools who have taught or currently teach students released from a correctional education facility.

#### Demographic Information

Of the 12 teachers in Group I (i.e., correctional education to public school), the average number of years teaching special education was 11.4 years. The mean number of years Group I teachers have been teaching in a correctional facility was 7.5 years. Of the 11 teachers in Group II (i.e., correctional education teachers of adult students in special education) the average number of years teaching was 10 years. The mean number of years Group II teachers have been teaching in a correctional facility was seven years.

Of the 64 teachers in Group III (i.e., public high school special education teachers of students who have returned after release from a correctional education facility) the average number of years teaching special

education classes was 11.6 years. The mean number of years Group III teachers have been teaching was 12.3 years.

Group I teachers consisted of 8 (66.67%) females and 4 (33.33%) males. Group II teachers consisted of 8 (72.73%) females and 3 (27.27%) males. Group III teachers consisted of 48 (75%) females and 16 (25%) males.

The largest area of licensure for Group I was emotional disturbances, for which 9 (75%) of the 12 teachers were licensed. Eight (66.66%) of the Group I teachers had licensure in learning disabilities and seven (58.33%) had licensure in mental retardation. The largest area of licensure for Group II was mental retardation, for which 9 (81.81%) of the 11 teachers were licensed. Seven (63.63%) of the Group II teachers had licensure in emotional disturbances and six (54.54%) had licensure in mental retardation. The largest area of licensure for Group III was mental retardation, for which 56 (87.5%) of the 64 teachers were licensed. Also in Group III, 38 (59.38%) of the teachers were licensed in mental retardation and 32 (50%) of the teachers were licensed in emotional disturbances.

Overall, 70 (80.46%) of the 87 teachers in Groups I, II, and III were licensed to teach students with learning disabilities, the largest area of licensure. Of the 87 teachers, 54 (62.07%) were licensed to teach students with mental disabilities and 48 (55.17%) were licensed to teach

students with emotional disturbances. Under three percent of all the teachers in Groups I, II, and III were licensed in other areas such as behavioral disorders, attention deficit disorders, speech and language impairments, sight and hearing impairments, adult special education, vocational special needs, severe/profound physical and mental disabilities, other health impairments, reading specialist, and English for Speakers of Other Languages. Only 3 (3.45%) of the 87 teachers in Groups I, II, and III indicated they were not licensed in any area of special education at all.

Despite areas of licensure, the majority of the teachers responded they taught in almost all areas of special education. For Group I, 10 (83.33%) out of 12 taught students with learning disabilities, 9 (75%) out of 12 taught students with emotional disturbances, and 9 (75%) out of 12 taught students with mental retardation. For Group II, all 11 (100%) teachers taught students with learning disabilities, 9 (81.81%) out of 11 taught students with emotional disturbances, and 5 (45.45%) out of 11 taught students with mental retardation. For Group III, 56 (87.5%) of the 64 teachers taught students with learning disabilities, 42 (65.63%) taught students with emotional disturbances, and 36 (56.25%) taught students with mental retardation. Overall, 77 (88.51%) of the 87 teachers in Groups I, II, and III taught students with learning disabilities, 60 (68.97%) taught students with emotional



disturbances, and 50 (57.47%) taught students with mental retardation. Other areas of teaching in special education indicated were attention deficit (hyperactivity) disorders, other health impairments, speech/language impairments, sight/hearing impairments, vocational technology, GED and adult education, and behavioral disorders.

#### Transition Information

Of the 12 teachers in Group I (i.e., special education teachers in correctional facilities who responded in regards to students returning to public schools), 4 (33.33%) indicated they usually receive 1 to 2 weeks notice of a student's upcoming release in order to prepare for his/her transition back to public school. For the rest of the teachers in Group I, 2 (16.66%) indicated they receive no notice, 2 (16.66%) indicated they receive less than a week notice, 2 (16.66%) indicated they receive 2 to 4 weeks notice, and no one indicated he/she receives more than a month notice.

Of the 11 teachers in Group II (i.e., correctional education teachers of adult students in special education), 5 (45.45%) responded they receive less than one week notice of release to prepare for the students' transition back to the community. One (9%) of these teachers indicated there was no notice prior to release of a student and another (9%) responded more than a month notice was given prior to a student's release. Five (36.36%) of the teachers in Group

II did not indicate a length for notification given prior to release.

Of the 64 teachers in Group III (i.e, public high school special education teachers of students who have returned after release from a correctional education facility), 28 (43.75%) indicated they do not receive notification of a student's placement prior to his/her entering their class after being released from a correctional education facility. For the rest of the teachers in Group III, 23 (35.94%) indicated they receive notification of a student's placement less than one week before his/her entering their class after being released from a correctional education facility, 11 (17.19%) responded they receive 1 to 2 weeks notification, 1 (1.56%) indicated 2 to 4 weeks notification, and 1 (1.56%) indicated more than one month notification.

In response to information correctional education facilities forward to the public school, 10 (83.33%) of the 12 teachers in Group I indicated information is forwarded. Of the group indicating information was forwarded, 60% responded it is sent prior to the students' return to public school and 40% responded it is not sent prior to the students' return. One of the teachers in Group I did not know if information is forwarded or not. Group II teachers were not applicable to this portion of the study because their students are adults who are not returning to public

school. However, out of the 11 teachers, 45.45% indicated information is often forwarded to other institutions or adult education programs.

Group III was asked if any information is received from the correctional education facilities. Out of these 64 teachers, 30 (46.88%) indicated information is received and 33 (51.56%) indicated information is not received. One (1.56%) teacher was not sure if information is received. Of the teachers in Group III indicating information is received, 10 (33.33%) out of 30 responded it is received prior to the students' arrival, 18 (60%) responded it is not received before the students' arrival, and 2 (6.67%) did not know if it is received before the students' arrival.

As far as the type of information sent, 8 (80%) of the 10 teachers in Group I indicated the IEP; however, only 75% (n=8) of these teachers responded it is a current IEP. Sixty percent (n=10) indicated a current evaluation is sent. Sixty percent (n=10) also indicated background history on the student is sent. Background history included information such as home study, psychological, criminal, special education, educational, behavioral, and any other information that was requested. In the information area of standardized assessments, 60% (n=10) of Group I indicated this information is sent. Respondents (n=10) indicated the types of assessments sent are intelligence tests (60%), achievement tests (70%), behavior rating scales (50%), and

any other test information that is requested by the public schools (10%).

The type of information Group II teachers send to other institutions or adult education programs is similar to Group I. Of the five teachers indicating information is forwarded, 80% responded an IEP is sent and 60% responded a current evaluation is sent. Sixty percent (n=5) also indicated background history, such as educational and psychological information, is sent. As far as standardized assessments, 60% (n=5) responded intelligence and achievement tests are sent and 40% (n=5) indicated behavior rating scales or other requested information is sent.

Of the 30 teachers in Group III indicating information is received, 66.67% responded an IEP is received and 50% responded a current evaluation is received. For background history, 43.33% indicated information, such as family and social background, psychological, educational, medical, and behavioral records, is received. Fifteen of the 30 (50%) teachers responded standardized assessments are received, all indicating intelligence tests. Fourteen (46.67%) responded achievement tests and/or behavior rating scales are received. Five (16.67%) of the teachers responded the only information received is grades.

Group I and Group II teachers were questioned for what types of assessments they have on their students. Seven (58.33%) of the 12 Group I teachers indicated the Woodcock-

Johnson Psychoeducational Battery, 3 (25%) indicated the TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education), 2 (17%) indicated the Literacy Passport, 2 (17%) indicated WISC-R, 2 (17%) indicated KeyMath, and 1 (9%) indicated psychological and/or vocational assessments. Two (17%) of the teachers in Group I indicated they had no assessments on their students.

Eight (72.73%) of the 11 Group II teachers responded they had the TABE on their students and 6 (54.55%) responded they had the Woodcock-Johnson. Only 1 (9.09%) of the 11 teachers indicated the WISC-R and/or the WAIS. Other assessments indicated by Group II teachers were psychological (18.18%), personality (9.09%), and intelligence assessments (9.09%).

Group III teachers were questioned on what types of assessments they receive from the correctional facilities. Qualitative analysis was conducted for these responses. Few of the Group III teachers responded they received any assessments at all. Many of the teachers responded they only receive IEPs and grades for their students, which are not very useful. Several teachers listed types of assessments they find useful. Some of these included: CELF-R, Piat-R, Peabody, WISC-R, Woodcock-Johnson, language processing tests, word recognition tests, informal language sampling, intelligence tests, achievement tests, psychological assessments, social and medical assessments, behavior rating scales, and their own informal assessments.

Teacher Preparations and Comments

Qualitative analysis was conducted for responses indicating teacher preparation, comments, and any other textual information on the surveys. In regards to what preparations correctional education teachers of high school students in special education (Group I) make for a student to return to public school, participants gave a variety of responses from none to many. Several of the teachers indicated they update the students' IEPs, stating which goals and objectives have been completed and which ones still need to be completed. A few of the teachers indicated they make suggestions for vocational education to help students to acquire skills to go into the work field. Some of the teachers indicated, although eligible, their students would not go back to public school and they provide the students with information on vocational and adult training programs. At some of the correctional education facilities the teacher prepared a transcript to be forwarded to the public school; however, most of the facilities have a transition specialist to compile information and discuss options with the student.

Teachers of adults in special education at correctional education facilities (Group II), who had students who would not return to public school upon release, made a variety of preparations for their students to transition to the community. These preparations included providing

information on GED classes and adult education programs, vocational counseling, and completion of IEP goals and objectives if applicable. With this group as well, most of the teachers relied on the facility's transition specialist to make preparations and discuss options with the students.

Special education teachers in public schools, who have taught or currently teach students released from a correctional education facility (Group III), indicated a large assortment of preparations they make prior to a student's arrival in their classroom. Responses varied from teacher to teacher. Some of these included meeting with student and parents prior to return, meeting with staff who would be working with the student in order to discuss and plan, reviewing IEP goals and objectives, preparing materials and schedules in advance to provide for a smoother transition, preparing a behavior management system with the student or a highly structured behavior modification program, making referrals for transfer evaluation, scheduling IEP meeting, and providing a school tour. Many of the teachers indicated the need to provide an environment where the student has a chance to build his/her self esteem and become successful. These teachers indicated a need to inform the student's classmates to treat him/her as a peer and not as a criminal, to place the student in groups less likely to have behavior problems and conflict, to have extra help pre-set and available if necessary, and to schedule

challenging classes but on a level at which the student has the opportunity to succeed.

Group I and Group II (i.e., special educators in the correctional education facility) teachers were asked what additional information they felt would be helpful to provide for a smoother transition for their students upon release. Group I indicated the following information: report cards and/or progress reports, comments on the IEP, anecdotal behavior records, preferred learning modality, plan of action, and follow-up services. Group II indicated learning style, behavior record, medical history, mental health information, vocational aptitude testing, anger control management programs, and community services and contacts. Some of the Group II teachers also indicated the need for feedback from the students themselves and an exit interview for transition back to the community with provision of resources upon release.

Group III (i.e., public high school special educators) teachers were asked what additional information they could have used to prepare for arrival of the student and provide a smoother transition. All of these teachers responded they wanted more information about the student. Specific information requested included academic, social, emotional, behavioral, medical, and personal interest of the student. Another popular request among the Group III teachers was the need for better strategies to work with the students and



provide a smoother transition. One suggestion was the need for an educational support team to work with students returning to public school upon release from a correctional education facility.

Most of the teachers from each group provided additional comments concerning transitioning from a correctional education facility to public school or into the community. Several of the public school special educators stated they did not even know their students had been adjudicated until they "heard it through the grapevine" and requested more information. One of the most repeated comments among the teachers in all three groups was the need for collaboration of teachers, counselors, and social workers between the schools and facilities. There was a strong indication for the need of a plan of action, strategies, or simply the knowledge of how to provide for a smoother transition. Some of the special educators of adults in the correctional education facilities suggested life skills should be incorporated into adult programs.

#### Likert Scale

Of the 17 correctional special educators who responded, none of them strongly disagreed their students were academically prepared to return to school. However, 5 (29.41%) of the 17 correctional special educators disagreed their students are academically prepared to return to school. In comparison, 27 (44.26%) of the 61 public school

special educators strongly disagreed (n=8) or disagreed (n=9) students from correctional education facilities are academically prepared to return to school. Four (23.23%, n=17) of the correctional special educators and 24 (39.34%, n=61) of the public school special educators did not know if the students were academically prepared to return to public school after release from correctional education facilities. Seven (41.18%, n=17) of the correctional special educators agreed (n=3) or strongly agreed (n=4) their students are academically prepared to return to school. Ten (16.39%) of 61 public school special educators agreed students from correctional education facilities are academically prepared to return to school. None of the 61 public school special educators strongly agreed. (See Table 1.)

Six (35.29%) of the 17 correctional special educators strongly disagreed (n=3) or disagreed (n=3) they prepared information to be sent to public schools prior to their students' release and return. One (5.88%, n=17) of the correctional special educators responded neutrally on preparing information. Of the 62 public school special educators who responded, 44 (70.97%) strongly disagreed (n=21) or disagreed (n=23) they received information about students prior to their return from correctional education facilities. Seven (11.29%, n=62) responded neutrally. Nine (52.94%, n=17) of the correctional special educators agreed (n=7) or strongly agreed (n=2) they prepared information to

be sent to public schools prior to their students' release and return. Eleven (17.74%, n=62) of the public school special educators agreed (n=9) or strongly agreed (n=2) they received information about students prior to their return from correctional education facilities.

Of the 15 correctional special educators who responded, 8 (53.33%) strongly disagreed (n=4) or disagreed (n=4) they make recommendations regarding students' appropriate academic placements in public schools. Two (13.33%, n=15) of them remained neutral. Nine (14.52%, n=62) of the public school special educators strongly disagreed (n=8) or disagreed (n=1) students are placed in the appropriate academic level when they return from correctional education facilities. A large number, 23 (37.10%, n=62), of the public school teachers remained neutral on this issue. Five (33.33%, n=15) of the correctional special educators agreed (n=4) or strongly agreed (n=1) they make recommendations regarding students' appropriate academic placements in public schools. In comparison, 20 (32.26%, n=62) of the public school special educators agreed, and none strongly agreed, that students are placed in the appropriate academic level when they return from correctional education facilities.

Of the 9 correctional special educators who responded, only 2 (22.22%) strongly disagreed and none disagreed they communicate continuously with students' social workers about

students' progress. One of the 9 (11.11%) remained neutral. Of the 55 public school special educators who responded, 34 (61.82%) strongly disagreed (n=20) or disagreed (n=14) they continuously communicate with students' parole officers about student progress. Five (9.09%, n=55) remained neutral. Four (44.44%, n=9) correctional special educators agreed (n=2) or strongly agreed (n=4) they communicate continuously with students' social workers about students' progress. Sixteen (29.09%, n=55) public school special educators agreed (n=13) or strongly agreed (n=3) they continuously communicate with students' parole officers about student progress.

Five (71.43%, n=7) correctional special educators strongly disagreed (n=2) or disagreed (n=3) they only communicate with their students' social workers at a time of crisis. One (14.29%, n=7) remained neutral. Of the 55 public school special educators who responded, 24 (43.64%) strongly disagreed (n=14) or disagreed (n=10) they only communicate with students' parole officers at a time of crisis. Six (10.91%, n=55) remained neutral. None of the seven correctional special educators agreed and only one (14.29%) strongly agreed they only communicate with their students' social workers at a time of crisis. Twenty-five (44.45%) of the 55 public school special educators agreed (n=22) or strongly agreed (n=3) they only communicate with students' parole officers at times of crisis.

## Discussion

Due to the small sample of respondents from correctional education facilities, a quantitative statistical analysis and comparison to public high school special education teachers could not be completed. Oddly, the majority of the correctional special education respondents stated their students rarely returned to school. Yet in comparison, a large number of public school special education teachers, who teach students upon return from correctional education facilities, responded. However, only 26 of the 75 surveys distributed to special education teachers in correctional education facilities were returned. Perhaps the other 49 teachers who did not respond are the special education teachers of students in correctional education facilities who return to public school upon release.

Regardless of areas of licensure, the majority of the special education teachers in the correctional facilities and in the public schools appeared to teach in all areas of disabilities. Those who are not teaching in their area of licensure should be provided with information and resources to educate and facilitate them in the area they are teaching.

Correctional special education teachers receive little, if any at all, notification of a student's release. They need more time to prepare the student and to compile

information in order to provide for a smoother transition back to public school or into the community. Similarly, the majority of public high school special education teachers receive insufficient notification, less than one week or none at all, of a student's placement prior to his/her entering their class after being released from a correctional education facility. In order to provide for a smoother transition, these teachers need more time to prepare the student's classmates to be welcoming, to read information about the student, to familiarize themselves with the student's IEP, and to compile materials for the student.

Although the majority of correctional special education teachers responded information is forwarded to the public schools, there was a strong indication from the public school special educators that more information is needed. These teachers indicated IEP and grades as the most common types of information received. Many of the public school special educators replied grades are not very useful and indicated the need for comprehensive evaluations including educational, psychological, behavioral, social, and personal interest information about the students. Not only does more information need to be compiled and sent to public schools, but also it needs to be done well in advance of the student's arrival in order to provide for a smoother transition.

The majority of correctional special education teachers felt their students were academically prepared to return to school. However, the majority of public school special education teachers disagreed that students returning from correctional facilities were academically prepared to enter their class. Most of the special educators in correctional facilities responded they do not make recommendations regarding their students' placements in public schools. Conversely, many of the public school special educators were not sure if students returning from correctional education facilities are placed in the appropriate academic level. These responses indicated the need for collaboration among the teachers. Many of the teachers at correctional education facilities agreed they continuously communicate with students' social workers and disagreed communication occurs only at a time of crisis, if at all. However, many public school teachers disagreed they continuously communicate with students' parole officers and agreed communication occurs only at a time of crisis, if at all.

Many interesting opinions were given by the respondents. One of the correctional education teachers commented transition is student preparation not paperwork. Perhaps more time needs to be spent teaching rather than completing paperwork. Another admitted that often the legal requirements are barely met. A correctional special educator stated he/she felt like he/she was picking up the

pieces where the public schools have failed. This teacher believed his/her students were eager to learn but they were so far behind it seemed impossible. A few of the public school teachers made disturbing remarks such as adjudicated youth have no business returning to public school classrooms. However, most of the public school teachers really wanted to help students returning from correctional education facilities but needed more information and resources in order to be successful.

The majority of the comments made by the teachers indicated the need for communication among courts, social workers, correctional facilities, and public schools. Collaboration by all who work with adjudicated youth is essential to provide the student with necessary services and a smooth transition between facilities.

The strongest two points indicated in this study consistent with previous research are the need for interagency collaboration and the transference of records between the correctional education facilities and the public schools. These points have been made in related studies since 1983, yet nothing seems to have been done about them.

One expectation of this study was that the number of public school teachers who actually have had students return from correctional education facilities would be small. Surprisingly, they were the largest group. Another surprise was the low response rate of the special education teachers



from correctional facilities who have had students that return to public school upon release.

Several limitations to this study existed. One was the inaccessibility of special education students in order to get their perspectives on transitioning from correctional education facilities back to public schools. An unexpected limitation was the low number of respondents from correctional education facilities. Another unexpected limitation was the number of respondents who were teachers from correctional facilities who taught adults who were not returning to public schools.

It would be interesting to examine students' perspectives regarding what information they believe to be important for transitioning to occur more smoothly from correctional education to the public schools. Another interesting study would be investigation of the special education practices and procedures within the correctional education facilities alone. Moreover, something must be done to improve interagency cooperation among groups who work with adjudicated youth as well as to facilitate the transference of students' records between these facilities.

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APPENDIX A

Letter to Director of Academic Programs  
for the Virginia Department of Correctional Education

To whom it may concern:

My name is Ellie McCormack and I am a graduate student at Longwood College working on my Master's degree. I am conducting a study for my thesis exploring teacher perceptions of special education transitioning from correctional facilities to public schools. I am examining what the teachers consider to be problem areas and how such transitioning can be better facilitated. The point of interest is regarding what information special education teachers believe to be important for transitioning to occur more smoothly.

I am writing to request permission to use teachers from your department. Enclosed is a copy of the survey for you to examine. Upon your consent, a questionnaire would be distributed to the high school special education teachers, hopefully through you. Participation will be voluntary and confidentiality will be assured prior to distribution. No names of students, teachers, or school districts will be disclosed.

I will contact you within the next two weeks to see if you agree to the survey. If there are any questions, I can be reached at the above address and phone number. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ellie McCormack

APPENDIX B

Letter to School Divisions



To whom it may concern:

My name is Ellie McCormack and I am a graduate student at Longwood College working on my Master's degree. I am conducting a study for my thesis exploring teacher perceptions of special education transitioning from correctional facilities to public schools. I am examining what the teachers consider to be problem areas and how such transitioning can be better facilitated. The point of interest is regarding what information special education teachers believe to be important for transitioning to occur more smoothly.

I am writing to request permission to use teachers in your school division. Enclosed is a copy of the survey for you to examine. Upon your consent, the survey would be distributed to the high school special education teachers. Participation will be voluntary and confidentiality will be assured prior to distribution. No names of students, teachers, or school districts will be disclosed.

I will contact you within the next two weeks to see if you agree. If there are any questions, I can be reached at the above address and phone number. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ellie McCormack

APPENDIX C

Letter to Teachers

Dear Teacher:

My name is Ellie McCormack and I am a graduate student at Longwood College working on my Master's degree. I am conducting a study for my thesis exploring teacher perspectives of special education transitioning from correctional facilities to public schools. I am examining what teachers consider to be problem areas and how such transitioning can be better facilitated. The point of interest is regarding what information teachers believe to be important for transitioning to occur more smoothly.

I am writing to request for you to participate as a teacher in this study. Your participation is entirely voluntary. I have requested and received permission from the Director of Academic Programs/Director of Special Education/school division. Attached is a questionnaire I ask you to please respond to upon voluntary consent. Confidentiality is assured as no names of students, teachers, or school districts will be disclosed.

If there are any questions I can be reached at the above address and phone number. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ellie McCormack

APPENDIX D

Surveys Sent to Correctional Teachers

Correctional Teacher Questionnaire

PART I. Demographic Information

Fill in the Blanks or Check the appropriate answers:

1. Male \_\_\_\_\_ Female \_\_\_\_\_

2.a. Number of Years Teaching Special Education \_\_\_\_\_

b. Number of Years Teaching Correctional Special Education \_\_\_\_\_

3. Special Education Endorsements

LD \_\_\_\_\_ ED \_\_\_\_\_ MR \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please indicate) \_\_\_\_\_

4. Special Education Students Currently Serving

LD \_\_\_\_\_ ED \_\_\_\_\_ MR \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please indicate) \_\_\_\_\_

PART II. Transition Information

1. How much notice of a student's upcoming release do you receive in order to prepare for his/her transition back to public school? Please circle appropriate answers:

Less than                      1 to 2                      2 to 4                      More than  
 one week                      weeks                      weeks                      one month

2. What preparations do you make, if any, for the student to return to public school? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

3.a. Does your facility forward information to the public school the student will be attending?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes    \_\_\_\_\_ No    \_\_\_\_\_ Don't Know

b. Prior to his/her release and return to public school?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes    \_\_\_\_\_ No

4. If information is sent to the public schools, please indicate what type. Check all appropriate responses:

IEP \_\_\_\_\_ Current? yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_

Current Evaluation \_\_\_\_\_

Background History \_\_\_\_\_ What type? \_\_\_\_\_

Standardized Assessments \_\_\_\_\_

Intelligence Test \_\_\_\_\_

Achievement Test \_\_\_\_\_

Behavior Rating Scale \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

5. Please indicate in the following space what assessments you have on student(s), if any, and if they are current enough to be useful \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

6. What additional information could you have prepared, or could the facility have sent, for return of students to public schools that would facilitate and provide a smoother transition? (Please be specific.) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. Please feel free to use the following space and/or back of this questionnaire for additional comments or responses:

PART III. Likert Scale

Please circle the most appropriate answer according to the following scale:  
SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, N= Neutral, A= Agree, SA= Strongly Agree

1. My students are prepared academically to return to school.

SD                    D                    N                    A                    SA

2. I prepare information about students to be sent to the public school prior to their return.

SD                    D                    N                    A                    SA

3. I make recommendations regarding students' appropriate academic placements in public school.

SD                    D                    N                    A                    SA

If any of your students have a social worker please answer questions 4a & b. If not, stop now. Thank you for your time and cooperation. Please return the completed survey in the self-addressed, stamped envelope.

4a. Students' social workers and I communicate continuously about the student's progress.

SD                    D                    N                    A                    SA

4b. Students' social workers and I communicate only at a time of crisis.

SD                    D                    N                    A                    SA

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION. PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED SURVEYS IN THE SELF-ADDRESSED, STAMPED ENVELOPE.

APPENDIX E

Survey Sent to Public School Teachers

Public School Teacher Questionnaire

PART I. Demographic Information

Fill in the Blanks or Check the appropriate answers:

1. Male\_\_\_\_\_ Female\_\_\_\_\_

2.a. Number of Years Teaching Special Education\_\_\_\_\_

b. Number of Years Teaching\_\_\_\_\_

3. Special Education Endorsements

LD\_\_\_\_\_ ED \_\_\_\_\_ MR \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please indicate)\_\_\_\_\_

4. Special Education Students Currently Serving

LD\_\_\_\_\_ ED \_\_\_\_\_ MR \_\_\_\_\_ Other (please indicate)\_\_\_\_\_

PART II. Transition Information

A. Have any or are you aware of any of your students having previously been in a correctional educational facility?  
 Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_ Don't Know \_\_\_\_\_

If No, or Don't Know, Please stop here and return the completed survey in the self-addressed, stamped envelope.  
 Thank you for your time and cooperation.

If Yes, Please Continue.

B. If you are aware of a student recently returning to public school from a correctional education facility and placed into your classroom, please answer the following questions:

1.a. Did you receive notification of this student's placement prior to his/her entering your classroom?

Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_ Don't Know\_\_\_\_\_

b. If Yes for 1.a., How much time did you have to prepare for his/her transition back to public schools?  
 Please circle appropriate answer:

Less than one week	1 to 2 weeks	2 to 4 weeks	More than one month
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2. What preparations, if any, did you make for this student prior to his/her arrival in your classroom? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

3.a. Did you receive any information from the correctional education facility?

Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_ Don't Know\_\_\_\_\_

b. If Yes, Was this information received prior to student's return to the public school?

Yes\_\_\_\_\_ No\_\_\_\_\_ Don't Know\_\_\_\_\_



4. If you have been sent information on a student returning from a correctional facility, please indicate what type by checking all appropriate blanks.

Have received information? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ Don't Know \_\_\_\_\_

IEP \_\_\_\_\_ Current? yes \_\_\_\_\_ no \_\_\_\_\_

Current Evaluation \_\_\_\_\_

Background History \_\_\_\_\_ What type? \_\_\_\_\_

Standardized Assessments \_\_\_\_\_

Intelligence Test \_\_\_\_\_

Achievement Test \_\_\_\_\_

Behavior Rating Scale \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

5. Please indicate in the following space what assessments you did receive, if any, and if they were current enough to be useful. \_\_\_\_\_

6. What additional information could you have used to prepare for arrival of the student from the correctional education facility to your classroom to provide a smoother transition? (Please be specific.) \_\_\_\_\_

7. Please feel free to use the back of this questionnaire for additional comments or responses:

PART III. Likert Scale

Please circle the most appropriate answer according to the following scale:

SD= Strongly Disagree, D= Disagree, N= Neutral, A= Agree, SA= Strongly Agree

1. Students from correctional education are prepared academically to return to public school.

SD                      D                      N                      A                      SA

2. I receive information about students prior to their return from correction education facilities.

SD                      D                      N                      A                      SA

3. I feel students are placed in the appropriate academic level when they return from correctional education.

SD                      D                      N                      A                      SA

If any of your students have a parole officer or social worker please answer questions 4a & b. If not, stop now. Thank you for your time and cooperation. Please return completed surveys in the self-addressed, stamped envelope.

4a. The students' parole officer(s) or social worker(s) and I communicate occasionally about the students' progress.

SD                      D                      N                      A                      SA

4b. The students' parole officer(s) or social worker(s) and I communicate only at a time of crisis.

SD                      D                      N                      A                      SA

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND COOPERATION. PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED SURVEYS IN THE SELF-ADDRESSED, STAMPED ENVELOPE.

TABLE

Table 1

Likert Scale Statements and Responses

Statements	Respondents			
	Correctional		Public School	
	SA/A	D/SD	SA/A	D/SD
Students are prepared academically to return to public school.	41.18%	29.41% (n=17)	16.39%	44.26% (n=61)
Information is prepared to be sent to the public school prior to students' release and return.	52.94%	35.29% (n=17)		
Information is received from the correctional facility prior to students' return.			17.74%	70.97% (n=62)
Recommendations are made regarding students' appropriate academic placement in public schools.	33.33%	53.33% (n=15)		
Students are placed in the appropriate academic level upon return.			32.26%	14.52% (n=62)
There is continuous communication with students' social workers about student progress.	44.44%	22.22% (n=9)		
There is continuous communication with students' parole officers about student progress.			29.09%	61.82% (n=55)
Communication with students' social workers occurs only at a time of crisis.	14.29%	71.43% (n=7)		
Communication with students' parole officers occurs only at a time of crisis.			44.45%	43.64% (n=55)

\*Note. Neutral responses were not included; therefore, percentages do not add up to 100.

## Biography

The author was born and raised in Fredericksburg, Virginia. She is a 1990 graduate of Stafford Senior High School and a 1994 graduate of Longwood College with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Psychology. Ellie will be a December, 1995, graduate in the Masters program for Special Education at Longwood College in Farmville, Virginia.

Ellie is currently a member of the Council for Exceptional Children. She was involved in the Psychology Club and Women's Rugby Club as an undergraduate. She has volunteered as an aide for special education classes, for the Special Olympics, and at a Head Start program. In the fall semester of 1995, Ellie traveled to Honduras, C.A., to fulfill her student teaching experience.

Ellie experienced her graduate internship at STEPS, Inc. in Farmville, Virginia, which is a sheltered workshop as well as a job training and placement service. Her future plans include teaching individuals with disabilities, travel, and possibly volunteer work in the Peace Corps.

