

Differences in Post-School Visions Between Latino Students with LD, their Parents, and

Teachers

BY

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THESIS

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SUMMARY

This study explored perspectives about the desired components of adult life, and the necessary supports to achieve that post-school vision for twelfth grade Latino students with learning disabilities (LD) and their parents. Student, parent, and special education teacher perspectives were triangulated to understand the similarities and differences in expectations related to post-school goals and supports using focus groups, individual interviews, and document analysis of Individualized Education/Transition Plans (IEP/ITPs). The goal of this qualitative research was to gain an empirical understanding of the preferences, support needs, and future aspirations of Latino youth with LD and their parents. A second goal of the research was to examine special education teachers' post-school expectations of their Latino students, and how they supported and prepared these students and their parents for the transition from school to adult life.

This study provided a comprehensive picture of the post-school expectations and support needs of the participants in this sample by enlisting five triads of student, parent, and teacher participants (n=16) who were related (student-parent) and worked together (student-teacher). After consenting to participate in the study, participant groups met for one focus group each (three groups total). Within two weeks after each focus group, individual follow-up interviews were conducted with each participant. Student IEP/ITP documents were collected by the researcher prior to conducting all individual interviews to ensure that these documents were analyzed and used during individual interviews.

Grounded theory was the method of inquiry and analysis used to guide this study (Charmaz, 2014). Conceptually, themes of the current study were grounded in the data as they were collected and in the ongoing analysis effort, not preconceived prior to data collection

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(Mertens, 2015). Using this approach, data were simultaneously collected and analyzed for emergent themes that drove subsequent data collection (Mertens, 2015).

The results of this study uncovered an overwhelming disconnect between what student and parent participants expressed they needed to support a smooth transition to post-school opportunities, and the services they were actually receiving. Most notably, students and parents in this study were not receiving comprehensive transition planning services. Teachers' expectations of what students' lives should look like after high school and the desires of the students and parents themselves were significantly different in key life areas. Overall, teachers expressed a lack of cultural understanding regarding students' and parents' choices for after high school. The results of this study raised significant questions about teacher knowledge of best practices in secondary transition with regard to legally mandated policies in transition planning and documentation. Equally as important, the critical component of collaboration with parents in culturally responsive ways was alarmingly absent from the discourse in this study. Implications for practice, policy, research in secondary transition, teacher education, and working with culturally linguistically diverse (CLD) students with disabilities and their families are presented.

I: INTRODUCTION

National Accountability for Adult Outcomes

Under current policy and education reform initiatives, preparing youth for life after high school has become increasingly driven by accountability procedures and mandates. States, school districts, and individual schools are now under the microscope to not only produce graduates, but citizens who are career and college ready with a rigorous set of academic knowledge and skills (Morningstar, Bassett, Kochhar-Bryant, Cashman, & Wehmeyer, 2012). For youth disabilities, current legal policies have put heavy emphasis on statewide accountability measures, including procedures for tracking data on transition planning, goals, services, and post-school outcomes. Under The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) 2004, transition services are defined as:

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

Given this federal definition, individualized transition plans (ITPs) are written to focus services, supports, and post-school outcomes in three distinct areas: 1) postsecondary education and/or training, 2) employment, and, when deemed appropriate by the individualized education plan (IEP) team, 3) independent living (IDEA, 2004). States are mandated to report annually on certain quality indicators in secondary transition to monitor compliance with IDEA 2004. State Performance Plans require data on post-school outcomes (Indicator 14) and the documentation of

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how those outcomes are reached (Indicator 13) (Erikson, Noonan, Brussow, & Giplin, 2013; Morningstar, Frey, Noonan, Ng, Clavenna-Deane, Graves, & Williams-Diehm, 2010). Indicator 13, or the quality of documentation of the transition process, is measured by the “percent of youth age 16 and above with an IEP that includes coordinated, measurable, annual IEP goals and transition services that will reasonably enable the child to meet the post-secondary goals” (20 U. S. C. 1416(a)(3)(B)). To evaluate the maintenance of post-school outcomes, data are required for Indicator 14, or the, “percent of youth who had IEPs, are no longer in secondary school and who have been competitively employed, enrolled in some type of postsecondary school, or both, within one year of leaving high school” (20 U. S. C. 1416(a)(3)(B)).

While the intent of these new accountability measures is to improve the coordination and quality of transition services and supports provided to students with disabilities in high school, several methodological problems have significantly limited the way Indicator 14 data can be used to inform practice at the school level, and policy at the state and national levels (Alverson, Naranjo, Yamamoto, & Unruh, 2010; Erikson et al., 2013; Gerber, Batalo, & De Arment, 2013; Rabren & Johnson, 2010; Vitelli, 2013). There is no research on Indicator 14 and high school program evaluation, and only one study exists measuring the relationship between Indicators (Erikson et al., 2013). Further, the impact of Indicator 13 on the implementation of transition services and supports is unknown. Additionally, the correlation between Indicator 13 compliance and student and family-driven transition plans is not yet empirically understood (Erikson et al., 2013).

Federal legislation in transition requires special educators and administrators evaluate their programs and service provision in relation to students’ post-school outcomes (Gerber et al., 2013). However, Indicator 14 data provide a limited scope of how the quality of service

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coordination and implementation impacts students' adult lives. More realistically, teachers have a minimal, and often anecdotal, understanding of the types of lives former students experience after high school. While a coordinated set of services, supports, and policy procedures are mandated; this legislation may not perform as intended by the law. As Rabren and Johnson (2010) assert, the most important outcome of special education is if youth with disabilities are successful in maintaining adult responsibilities in their lives after high school. However, federal and state policies in transition designed to increase accountability are not adequately informing teachers and administrators about how to shape services and supports for transition-age students with disabilities while still in high school.

Outcomes for CLD Youth with High-Incidence Disabilities

Pervasive inequities in urban education continue to exist for students with high-incidence disabilities from culturally linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds. More than one fourth of students with disabilities live in poverty and are more likely to live in single parent households from racial minority backgrounds (Parish, Rose, & Andrews, 2010; Parish, Rose, Grinstein-Weiss, Richman, & Andrews, 2008). Furthermore, many low-income minority youth with high-incidence disabilities are also dealing with homelessness, single motherhood (Taylor-Ritzler, 2006), substance abuse and/or higher rates of arrests by police (Levine & Wagner, 2005). Other challenges experienced by minority youth with high-incidence disabilities may include differing cultural values and beliefs and limited English proficiency (National Council on Disability, 2000; Taylor-Ritzler, Balcazar, Keys, Hayes, Garate-Serafini, & Ryerson-Espino, 2001). Many of these students attend underfunded, and therefore, under resourced schools. Additionally, low-income, urban, CLD students with high-incidence disabilities are more likely to receive inadequate secondary transition services from uncertified, novice, or not highly qualified special

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educators (Drame & Pugach, 2010; Peske & Haycock, 2006). In a qualitative study examining the experiences and decision-making of low-income, Latino dropouts, Brown and Rodriguez (2009) found that factors such as low academic expectations, racial stereotypes, and overworked educators contributed to their decisions to leave school. Overall, transition services and supports have traditionally not been culturally responsive to CLD students with disabilities and their families (Kalyanpur & Harry, 2013; Kim & Morningstar, 2007). Positive transition outcomes have largely been measured using American dominant structures of independent living and employment status which may not always be valued at the same level for CLD students and families (Ford, 2012; Gil-Kashiwabara, Hogansen, Geenen, Powers, & Powers, 2007).

Statistics for educational outcomes exemplify the risks for CLD youth with disabilities. The dropout rate for African American and Latino students with disabilities is 33% as compared to 22% for Caucasian students (U.S. Department of Education, 2011). Compared to post-school outcomes for Caucasian young adults with disabilities, African American and Latino young adults with disabilities are more likely to have a lower wage, no engagement in postsecondary education, employment, or training activities, and/or be unemployed six years post-high school (Sanford, Newman, Wagner, Cameto, Knokey, & Shaver, 2011). Regardless of CLD characteristics, youth with disabilities are at a disadvantage for positive post-school outcomes. Youth with disabilities are less likely to receive a high school diploma (62% vs. 88%), three times as likely to drop out of school (31% vs. 11%), and only one-fifth as likely to enroll in post-secondary education (U.S. Department of Education, 2007).

Accounting for one half of the nation's growth from 2000 to 2006, the Latino population is the fastest growing ethnic group in the United States and continues to qualify for special education services at the same rate as Caucasian students (National Center for Education

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Statistics, 2007). African American students, especially males, have been disproportionately represented in special education for decades often resulting in being excluded from general education curriculum by being placed in segregated special education settings (Blanchett, Klingner, & Harry, 2009; Fierros & Conroy, 2002). Moreover, CLD students and families in special education have been inadequately supported to excel in school, graduate, and transition to positive adult futures as defined by their personal desires (Trainor, 2005; Trainor, Lindstrom, Simon-Burroughs, Martin, & Sorrells, 2008). Considering these factors, it is imperative that special education services reflect the individual culture, values, and needs of the students and families served, not simply the American dominant cultural norms (Blanchett et al., 2009; Frankland et al. 2004; Gil-Kashiwabara et al., 2007; Kim & Morningstar, 2007).

Mismatch of Needs and Services

In light of the poor outcomes that CLD students with disabilities experience after high school, it is understandable that CLD families report that special education services are not responsive to their needs. Significant discrepancies exist between expectations of CLD families and educational professionals in providing special education services to students with disabilities (Blue-Banning et al., 2004; Povenmire-Kirk et al., 2010; Rueda et al., 2005; Shogren, 2013). Issues with the largest impact on positive collaborative relationships between CLD families and special education professionals are those of trust, communication, and language. CLD families report a feeling of mistrust primarily due to professionals' display of culturally biased attitudes, assumptions, and therefore lack of responsive services (Harry, Klingner, & Hart, 2005; Harry, Rueda, & Kalyanpur, 1999; Geenen, Powers, Vasquez, & Bersani, 2003; Povenmire-Kirk, Lindstrom, & Bullis, 2010; Zetlin, Padron, & Wilson, 1996). In Geenen and colleagues' (2003) study, CLD families consistently reported that they often encountered disrespect from

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educational professionals regarding their child's disability and family culture. Professional expectations of appropriate transition goals such as living outside of the family home, or more generally, differential values of independence versus interdependence, have been repeatedly cited as problematic by CLD families (Harry et al., 1999; Povenmire-Kirk et al., 2010; Rueda et al., 2005; Leake & Boone, 2007). CLD families have experienced disrespect, and often discrimination, at individual and systemic levels (Geenen et al., 2003). At the individual level, Harry (2008) referred to this perspective as professionals taking a "deficit view of families" (p. 379). Studies have shown educational professionals' generalizations about ethnic groups, poverty, family structure, and mother's education level contribute to negative perceptions, assumptions, and, in some instances, recommendations for services (Harry & Klingner, 2006; McHatton & Correa, 2005; Povenmire et al., 2010; Trainor, 2005). Additionally, CLD families have reported a lack of trust in educational professionals because of issues of undocumented citizenship (Povenmire-Kirk et al., 2010).

Language and communication between CLD families and educational professionals regarding special education services pose equally challenging barriers to positive collaborative relationships (Geenen et al., 2003; Harry, 1992; Harry et al., 1999; Landmark, Zhang, & Montoya, 2007; Povenmire-Kirk et al., 2010; Rueda et al., 2005; Trainor, 2007; Zetlin et al., 1996). Lack of basic translation and interpretation services for educational documents, meetings, and community resources pose insurmountable barriers for families trying to participate in transition planning for their child (Landmark et al., 2007; Povenmire-Kirk et al., 2010; Rueda et al., 2005; Trainor, 2007). CLD Families, including students with disabilities, have also reported inaccessible resources due to communication barriers such as community programs, information

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about related health issues, job shadowing experiences, and general information about available transition services (Geenen et al., 2003; Johnston-Rodriguez, 2006; Rueda et al., 2005).

Viewing the lack of culturally responsive supports and services through a broad lens, Latino families in particular have suffered from the historical perspective that they are a monolithic group (Moreno & Gaytan, 2013). Understanding that the term “Latino” is a geographic, panethnic label encompassing all 20 countries in Latin America is imperative to respecting the wide array of within-group diversity including languages, cultures, and beliefs (Moreno & Gaytan, 2013). Promoting a more accurate cultural understanding couched in the philosophy of individualism will foster respectful, collaborative relationships between educators and CLD families. The ultimate goal of strong teacher-family partnerships is that accessible, high quality, and culturally responsive services and supports for CLD youth with disabilities provide a seamless pathway from school to adult life.

Statement of the Problem

Lack of culturally responsive services and a growing Latino population perpetuate a cycle of isolating CLD families, implementing ineffective transition services and supports, and CLD adults with disabilities experiencing disadvantaged post-school outcomes. In addition to the specialized set of skills and knowledge needed to collaboratively plan and implement transition services with CLD families, educators need to be accurately informed about the outcomes their students are experiencing. Of the 45 states using protocols for Indicator 14 data collection, 97% ask only closed questions regarding post-school outcomes. Further, 42% of those states ask 15 or fewer closed questions, the majority probing only about employment and postsecondary education/training statuses (Gerber et al., 2013). While some states have exemplary Indicator 14 data collection protocols (i.e. Kentucky with 77 questions across 7 post-school domain categories

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including 2 open-ended questions), the national trend in Indicator 14 data collection methods certainly does not reflect the complexities of a full adult life. Therefore, special educators are provided little relevant information regarding the realities that CLD students face after high school. Insufficient information regarding the kinds of lives CLD adults lead only stagnates efforts to improve transition services and supports at the district and school levels. As long as special educators feel unprepared to effectively work with families of CLD backgrounds, CLD students with disabilities and their families will continue to feel the affects of poorly individualized and culturally unresponsive transition planning and service implementation.

Fueling policy inadequacies, a significant deficit in scholarly research specific to transition and CLD students with disabilities and their families contributes to the overall lack of knowledge regarding the needs of this population. Very few empirical studies seek to understand the perspectives, preferences, and support needs of CLD students with disabilities and their families. Furthermore, the vast majority of empirical work that does exist in this area excludes the Latino population entirely. Seventeen empirical studies from 2001 to 2013 sought to understand the transition experiences of students and/or parents from CLD backgrounds including Latino and/or Hispanic participants. Only six of these studies focus on the Latino population exclusively, and, of those six, three are qualitative in design (citations here). However, two of these qualitative studies focus on students with low-incidence disabilities, and one does not specify the disability type of its student participants. The extreme lack of empirical research for the Latino population in regards to transition is alarming given this is the fastest growing ethnic group in the United States, and high-incidence disabilities account for the largest documented disability category. As a result, it is increasingly relevant for secondary special educators to have a thorough understanding of the types of transition support needs for Latino

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students with high-incidence disabilities and their families. This knowledge will create a foundation for effective implementation of culturally responsive and individualized transition supports for Latino youth with high-incidence disabilities.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to explore perspectives about the desired components of adult life, and the necessary supports to achieve that post-school vision for twelfth grade Latino students with learning disabilities and their parents. This study also sought to triangulate student and parent perspectives with those of their special education teachers in an effort to understand the collaboration and communication between participants. Transition plans were used to further assess if student and family transition preferences and needs were being realized in the actual legal documentation of postsecondary goals, services, and supports.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following seven research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of post-school outcomes for twelfth grade Latino students with LD, their parents, and teachers? Specifically,
 - a. What types of post-school outcomes do twelfth grade Latino students with LD identify for themselves?
 - b. What types of post-school outcomes do the parents of twelfth grade Latino students with LD identify for their children?
 - c. What types of post-school outcomes do the teachers of twelfth grade Latino students with LD identify for their students?
2. What supports do students, parents, and teachers say that parents and students need to pursue their post-school vision?

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3. What do students, parents, and teachers say that teachers do to support twelfth grade Latino students with LD and their parents to develop their post-school vision?
4. How does the documentation on IEP/ITPs align with participant perceptions?

II: Review of the Literature

Theoretical Framework

Ecological theory of development. In the study of cultural diversity and transition, Urie Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems model is the most commonly applied framework used to understand the complexity of interactions between culture, individual, family, and group membership, and multiple environments (Gil-Kashiwabara et al, 2007; Trainor & Kim, 2013; Trainor et al., 2008). Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theoretical orientation highlights the interconnectedness and flexibility of the model itself, which creates a lens to view multiple dimensions of human behavior. Bronfenbrenner (1979) described the benefits of using the ecological systems model,

A theoretical conception of the environment extending beyond the behavior of individuals to encompass functional systems both within and between settings, systems that can also be modified and expanded, contrasts sharply with prevailing research models. These established models typically employ a scientific lens that restricts, darkens, and even blinds the researcher's vision of environmental obstacles and opportunities and of the remarkable potential of human beings to respond constructively to an ecologically compatible milieu once it is made available. As a result, human capacities and strengths tend to be underestimated (p. 7).

The overwhelming purpose of the research in cultural diversity and transition is to improve the quality of collaboration with, and education and services for, CLD students with disabilities and their families. With this overarching purpose in mind, researchers must collect and disseminate data that accurately represents the layers of human existence. The ecological systems theory provides a framework that grounds one's research in the understanding that the strengths, needs, desires, and challenges of CLD students with disabilities and their families are constructed through an interconnected web of interactions between people, environments, and societal structures. Bronfenbrenner (1979) further explains this concept, "In ecological research, the properties of the person and of the environment, the structure of the environmental settings, and

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the processes taking place within and between them must be viewed as interdependent and analyzed in systems terms” (p. 41). For example, Geenen and colleagues (2001) found that special education professionals described significantly less involvement of CLD parents in transition planning than CLD parents described for themselves. Viewed from a one-dimensional perspective, this perceived lack of involvement could be construed simply as lack of caring, understanding, or importance placed on the transition of their child. However, using ecological systems theory as a framework for interpreting this result allows the researcher to consider the interconnection between the person, the structure of the environment, and processes between these spheres that may influence teachers’ and CLD parents’ perceptions. Possibly school structures such as meeting times or availability of translation services were barriers for CLD parental participation in planning meetings. Conversely, CLD parents may have viewed planning in a broader sense by encompassing home and community settings, and therefore rating their involvement in planning much higher than teachers who may only view transition planning as a school-based activity (Geenen et al., 2001).

The nature of transition is the movement between environments (from school to community, employment, postsecondary education, and living settings) with, ideally, supports and services to facilitate fluidity and optimize success within those environments.

Understanding these phenomena through an ecological lens is perfectly suited for the complexities of human behavior and perspectives throughout and within multiple contexts.

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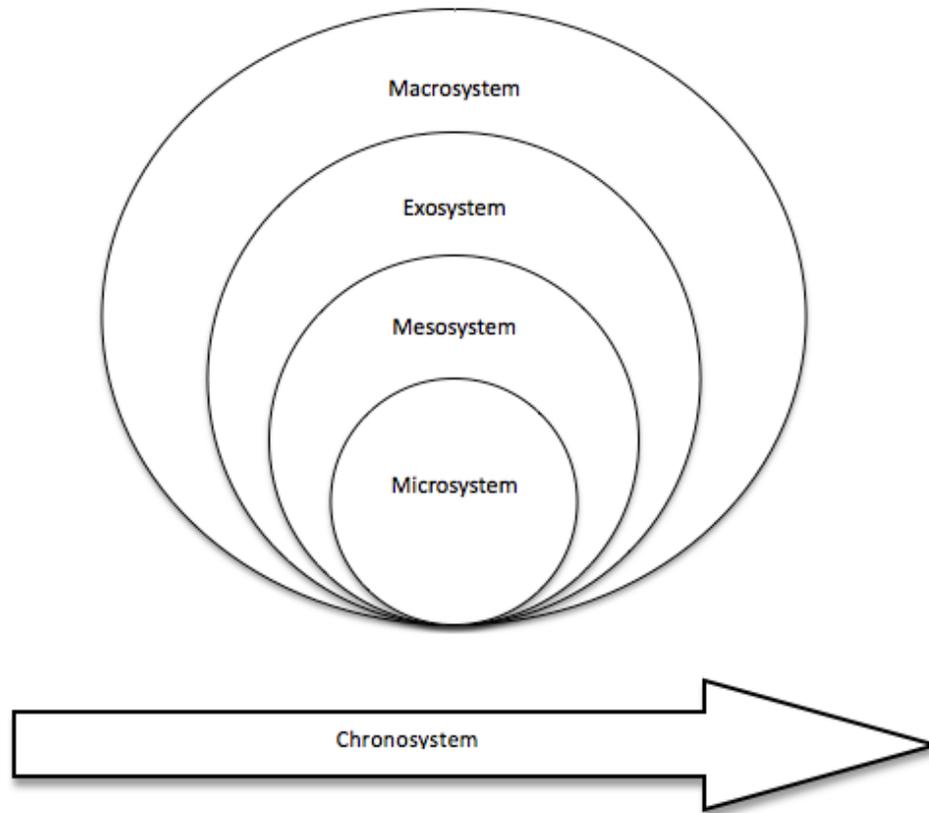


Figure 1. Ecological Systems Model. Adapted from Trainor, A. A. & Kim, S. (2013). Multicultural transition planning. In P. Wehman (Ed.), *Life beyond the classroom: Transition strategies for young people with disabilities* (p. 130). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) describes the design of the ecological model as concentric circles illustrating five different systems that affect a person's development over time (Figure 1). The microsystem is the innermost level and includes all contexts that are directly related to the individual. Bronfenbrenner (1979) defines the elements of the microsystem as, "patterns of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given setting" (p. 22). The settings of school and home and the people encountered in these settings such as family members and school staff are included in the microsystem. Research has illuminated an understanding these microsystem contextual variables in the area of cultural diversity and transition. For example, multiple studies have found that Latino students with

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disabilities and their families rely on transition planning that occurs in the home setting rather than school-based meetings (Geenen et al., 2001; Hogansen et al., 2008; Trainor, 2007). Another example of a micro-level variable significant to transition is the finding that females describe themselves as competent in practicing self-determination, but feel they have few opportunities to use these skills in their daily lives (Hogansen et al., 2008; Trainor, 2007). Understanding these microsystemic preferences and beliefs, and the rationale behind these, is crucial to provide the most responsive transition planning practices, services, and opportunities for students and families.

The next system, the mesosystem, is defined as the connections and relationships across settings in which the individual actively participates (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Trainor & Kim, 2013). The mesosystem is made up of microsystems and is formed when the individual crosses into and interacts in a new setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). For example, all home-school interactions occur at the mesosystem level. A detailed understanding of phenomena in the mesosystem is imperative to tailoring collaborative transition planning for CLD families and school professionals. Numerous studies have contributed to the body of knowledge occurring at the mesosystemic level. A meso-level variable that may impact transition outcomes is the belief of Latina youth with disabilities and their parents that teachers hold lower expectations of future goals due to gender and ethnic background (Gil-Kashiwabara et al., 2012). Additional barriers negatively affecting collaborative transition planning as reported by CLD students with disabilities, their parents, and/or educational professionals are language differences, culturally unresponsive services, or perceiving IEP meetings as threatening or disciplinary. Viewing these findings through the lens of individuals negotiating relationships and cultural differences within contrasting settings is significant to creating solutions at the mesosystemic level aimed at

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improving family-centered transition planning (Gil-Kashiwabara et al., 2007; Trainor, 2007; Trainor et al., 2008).

The third level, the exosystem, consists of system-level events that affect the individual's development and daily life. However, the individual is not an active participant in these events (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Trainor et al., 2008). Exosystem examples include events that take place in the family such as a parent traveling over extended periods of time for work, or implementation of educational policies on a local or federal level (Trainor et al., 2008). Another example pertinent to transition is the addition of supports or programs for individuals with disabilities at the post-secondary level (Trainor & Kim, 2013). While the individual may not directly participate in these activities, they are affected by the occurrence of the events. There is little empirical research in cultural diversity and transition that specifically examines exosystem events in relation to transition planning and/or post-school outcomes for CLD youth with disabilities (Trainor et al., 2008).

The fourth and broadest level impacting the individual is the macrosystem. Bronfenbrenner (1979) defines macrosystem phenomena as “consistencies” that exist, or have the potential to exist, in the larger level of culture or subculture, including belief systems or ideology within that culture or subculture (p. 26). Another way to conceptualize these consistencies is the idea that societies have certain “blueprints” for the way that communities, and everything contained in a community, such as schools, businesses, post offices, parks, etc., function (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 26). Community blueprints vary depending on socioeconomic levels, ethnic or religious groups, or other subculture differences. Bronfenbrenner (1979) includes the idea that macrosystem phenomena that have the potential to exist, such as political leaders' policy proposals, still impact the individual, thus creating an even

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broader lens to assess human development and behaviors. For example, even the proposal of a universal health care system may affect numerous decisions made by families regarding benefits for children with disabilities. Macrosystem variables that affect the perspectives and experiences (and therefore development and outcomes) of the individual are critical to contextualizing the space in which the individual functions on a daily basis. For example, current employment trends that shape the makeup of the workforce greatly affect work opportunities afforded to diverse youth with disabilities (Trainor et al., 2008; Trainor & Kim, 2013). Further compounding the complexities of transition, macro-level influences such as immigration policies and issues of documentation directly affect access to disability services during transition and into adulthood for CLD youth with disabilities and their families (Trainor et al., 2008; Trainor & Kim, 2013). While research in transition has documented the perceptions and experiences of CLD youth with disabilities, their families, and/or transition education professionals that are likely impacted by macro-level phenomena, such as employment trends, there are few direct, macro-level connections revealed in the research. For example, CLD females with disabilities, and parents of CLD females with disabilities, both reported that females in particular have fewer employment opportunities and mentors in employment setting as compared to males (Hogansen et al., 2008; Trainor, 2007). Numerous variables may influence this phenomena described by participants, including macro-level employment trends affecting females in the workplace. However, this potential macro-level variable was omitted from both studies. Most research examining diversity and transition in special education are focused primarily on micro or mesosystemic variables and their influence on students, families, and educators (Trainor et al., 2008). By viewing development and behaviors through the lens of macro-level phenomena,

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researchers gain a deeper, more contextualized understanding of an individual's perceptions of, and experiences in, the world.

The final level of the ecological systems framework is the chronosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). The chronosystem spans all levels of the ecological model and focuses on development over time. The concept of examining human development and behavior over time through an ecological lens is largely under-researched in the topics of transition and diversity. However, viewing phenomena over time allows for evolution of thought and/or behavior due to maturation (Bronfenbrenner, 2005; Trainor & Kim, 2013). The NLTS-2 is the only longitudinal research endeavor that has examined the transition of youth with disabilities. While this study has had significant impact on the field of special education, there is a strong need to continue longitudinal research efforts in the area of transition. Specifically, IDEA (2004) places importance on viewing transition of students with disabilities over time. For example, IDEA (2004) defines transition as an "ongoing process" where best practices in assessment and goal-setting follow a circular cycle allowing for frequent evaluation and adjustment (Trainor & Kim, 2013). Additionally, documenting post-school outcomes as required by Indicator 14 is designed to look at students' goal achievement after high school. There has been widespread support to extend the Indicator 14 data collection effort even longer, including multiple data points to understand the trajectory of student outcomes over time (Alverson et al., 2010; Gerber et al., 2013; Rabren & Johnson, 2010; Vitelli, 2013).

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory of development has guided the researcher's understanding of perspectives of special educators, twelfth grade Latino students with disabilities, and their parents/guardians in this study. The results of this inquiry have been interpreted using the multi-level ecological systems model. While the micro and meso-systems

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are the most relevant to the current study, phenomena that could be contextualized within the exo, macro, and chronosystems lent and even deeper understanding of implications for research and practice in transition and cultural diversity. The ecological perspective captured the complexities of the data gathered and provided a framework for conclusions that reflect the depth of perspectives related to transition from school to adult life for Latino students with LD.

Transition Policy

Legislation that impacts CLD outcomes. In addition to IDEA 2004, several seminal pieces of legislation greatly affect the post-school outcomes of CLD youth with disabilities. The 1998 amendments to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 legislated that federal monies, matched with state dollars, are given to individuals with disabilities to assist with employment goals through vocational rehabilitation (VR). This act also mandated that VR services including employment needs assessments, job development activities, and job placement services be provided to students with disabilities. Further, adult service agencies must coordinate services with school districts for students with disabilities (Wehman, 2013).

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law in 1990 and is regarded as the civil rights law for adults with disabilities. Employers are prohibited from discriminating against qualified individuals with disabilities who are able to perform the job with “reasonable accommodations.” Further, employers are mandated to provide the accommodations needed for individuals with disabilities to perform the job. If employers violate ADA regulations, they face the same consequences as discrimination based on gender or race (Wehman, 2013).

While the Rehabilitation Act and ADA have secured critical rights and services for individuals with disabilities, some CLD populations still face significant barriers due to issues of citizenship (Trainor et al., 2008). Historically, lack of citizenship has significantly impacted the

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outcomes of CLD youth with disabilities by blocking access to postsecondary education opportunities and support and services for employment (Trainor et al., 2008; Trainor & Kim, 2013). Specifically, a valid social security number is required to be eligible for VR services in employment, and financial aid for postsecondary education. Recently however, the DREAM Act (Development, Relief and Education for Alien Minors) has been passed in 17 states to provide undocumented, school-age youth who have been in the United States for several years with conditional permanent residency. This qualification allows postsecondary students access to in-state tuition prices and financial aid. Additionally, President Obama currently has an immigration proposal to allow children who are brought to the United States to earn expedited citizenship by going to college or serving in the armed forces for two years. While Obama's proposal is not legislation yet, and the DREAM Act still remains to be passed in the majority of states, these policies do show promise for undocumented youth seeking citizenship and access to postsecondary education (Earned Citizenship, The White House, 2013).

Accountability for post-school outcomes under IDEA 2004. After the reauthorization of IDEA in 2004, states were mandated to report yearly on several quality indicators in special education. These indicators were created to assist states in monitoring their adherence to IDEA 2004. In 2007, states submitted their first Performance Plans to the Office of Special Education Programs documenting the amount of compliance with IDEA 2004 requirements in secondary transition (Erikson et al., 2013).

Indicator 13. Indicator 13 measures compliance of proper documentation in an ITP. To assist states in collecting those data, the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center (NSTTAC) developed a checklist that was approved by the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) in 2006 (Erikson et al., 2013). The items on the checklist evaluate the

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completeness, quality, and coordination of the documentation of transition services on IEPs as defined by IDEA 2004. The premise of this quality indicator is that by ensuring accurate documentation of comprehensive transition plans; IEP teams will implement services that lead to achievement of postsecondary goals. However, Erikson and colleagues (2013) assert that, “the assumption that increasing the percentage of students with transition-compliant IEPs (Indicator 13) will result in improved postsecondary outcomes (Indicator 14) has yet to be empirically tested” (p. 2). In a quantitative study measuring the relationship between compliant transition documentation (Indicator 13) and postsecondary outcomes (Indicator 14), Erikson and colleagues (2013) analyzed Indicator 13 checklists and Indicator 14 survey responses using bivariate linear regression procedures. Results indicated that compliance with Indicator 13 did show a statistically significant positive linear relationship with postsecondary education and/or training outcomes. Students were more likely to complete a semester of college or a vocational training program if ITP documentation met Indicator 13 criteria. However, Indicator 13 compliance did not predict competitive employment outcomes (Erikson et al., 2013).

Erikson and colleagues (2013) suggest several explanations for the results of the study. First, given the current stress on policies such as No Child Left Behind and the increasing competitiveness of the workplace today, educational teams may be pushing students toward college or vocational training programs instead of full-time employment directly after high school. Research shows that students with disabilities entering postsecondary education after high school, rather than moving directly into full-time employment, has increased by 32% from 1985 to 2003 (Wagner et al., 2005). Supporting this trend, Erikson and colleagues (2013) found that 42% of Indicator 14 survey respondents reported participating in college or training programs within eight months after graduating from high school.

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An explanation for the positive relationship between Indicator 13 and completion of at least one year of postsecondary education/training programs may be that the process of documenting services and supports related to postsecondary education/training goals has led IEP teams to create interagency linkages with colleges and training programs in an effort to support students after graduation (Erikson et al., 2013). It is possible that through the process of documentation, IEP teams built relationships with key personnel from colleges and training programs to seamlessly support and inform about student accommodations. However, data for this study were not able to draw empirical conclusions about why the positive relationship existed between compliance with Indicator 13 and postsecondary education/training outcomes, and not employment (Erikson et al, 2013).

While there is universal agreement in special education that the accuracy of IEP/ITP documentation is important so the plan can be communicated effectively to all IEP team participants, there is very little research to support that proper documentation is related with improved postsecondary outcomes (Erikson et al., 2013; Liss, 2009; Reder, 2007). Additionally, there is no research to support that compliance with Indicator 13 results in meaningful transition plans reflecting student and family desires and values. In the current study, ITPs were reviewed to see if the documentation aligned with student, parent, and teacher perspectives revealed in individual interviews. Analyzing ITP documentation in relation to participant perspectives about transition added to the understanding of the connection between documentation on ITPs, student post-school aspirations, and teacher and parental input.

Indicator 14. Across states, Indicator 14 data are collected through surveys that can last anywhere from 10 minutes to over an hour. The inclusion/exclusion criteria of interview participants vary widely from state to state. Participants may include the former student, parent,

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teacher, or caretaker (Gerber et al., 2013). Questions are designed to address postsecondary and employment outcomes, although states have the autonomy to collect data on other topics, or ask more detailed questions regarding postsecondary and employment outcomes. States are only required to contact past students once, one year after exiting high school. Survey items and procedures for data collection vary greatly across states. The National Post-School Outcomes Center (NPSO) at the University of Oregon has created a list of eight recommended survey items with supplementary prompts that can be used in a word-for-word format, or as a guiding structure for states. Some states have incorporated items directly from this list, while others have only used it as a guiding framework, and others have not used the NPSO list at all (Gerber et al., 2013). While there is little uniformity in protocols across states, most do probe beyond the basic requirements of employment and postsecondary education or training. The majority of questions that states ask are closed-ended (97% of protocol items across 45 states), only requiring a yes/no response. According to Gerber et al. (2013), questions outside of the required categories fell under the topics of 1) personal/social, 2) community integration, 3) dropout, 4) experiences in high school, 5) adult agencies, and 6) satisfaction. While more than half of states (58%) collected data on personal/social outcomes for school exiters with disabilities such as current living arrangement and/or involvement in leisure activities in the community, less than half of states sought information in the remaining categories: dropout (18%), experiences in high school (42%), adult agencies (47%), and satisfaction (13%). Additionally, these extra categories of questions made up less than 10% of the total questions on state protocols. There was an enormous range in the number of items and categories represented across states. Minnesota asked seven questions across two categories, while Kentucky asked 77 questions across all seven

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categories. The only uniformity in protocols across states that was found was in the wording of questions due to the NPSO's recommended item list (Gerber et al., 2013).

Limitations of Indicator 14. The broad variance of the type of data that states are collecting limits the way that Indicator 14 data can be used. Comparing data at the national level is impossible given the lack of standardization in protocols (Gerber et al., 2013). For now, states can individually use the data to evaluate transition services at the state and school district level (Gerber et al., 2013). If data is collected beyond what is required under IDEA, states may also be able to evaluate specific programmatic elements regarding the delivery of transition services to students and their families (Rabren & Johnson, 2010). However, Gerber et al. (2013) point out the methodological issues of states comparing data across years due to the changes in demographic characteristics of students from year to year. Additionally, the ebb and flow of the economy affects employment opportunities and postsecondary education and training programs. Therefore, it is difficult to accurately compare student outcomes in employment and education without contextualizing the data in the economic climate of the year they were collected (Gerber et al., 2013).

Given these limitations, using Indicator 14 data to assess improvement of transition services across years at the state or local level is problematic. Gerber et al. (2013) and Vitelli (2013) make several policy recommendations to reshape and extend Indicator 14. Specific methodological changes would allow for comparison across years within district programs, and at the state and national level. Gerber et al., (2013) suggest, 1) standardizing protocols using the NPSO items, 2) using metrics that contextualize economic trends during data collection, 3) adhering to stronger fidelity in data collection efforts, and 4) conducting reliability for post-school outcome measures.

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In addition to Indicator 14's methodological issues, Vitelli (2013) discusses the neurological and behavioral implications of assessing "adult" outcomes for adolescents only one year out of high school. Under IDEA, students with disabilities are able to receive special education services from their local school district until the age of 21. However, 75% of students exit school either by dropping out, or receiving a diploma or certificate of completion by age 17 or 18 (U.S. Department of Education, 2010; Vitelli, 2013). Therefore, since Indicator 14 data is collected only one year out of high school, school districts track the majority of former students until they are 18 or 19 years old. Given this information, transition services aimed to prepare students to achieve adult life goals are being evaluated by outcomes of late-stage adolescents (Vitelli, 2013). Citing research from the field of neurological development, Vitelli (2013) asserts that the brain has not reached its full development until individuals are well into their early to mid-20s (citations). While Vitelli (2013) does not claim that this neurological development is the isolated cause of behavior, he does connect brain development to cognitive processes such as behavior regulation, planning, and decision-making. These processes have been widely recognized as crucial to students transitioning from school to adult life (Kochhar-Bryant, Bassett & Webb, 2008; Wehmeyer & Field, 2007). Furthermore, if the maturation of the brain is not complete until early to mid-20s, there is a distinct difference between an 18 and 25-year-old in the capacity of being able to react to stimuli appropriately, plan effectively, and assess risk in a regulated way (Reyna, Estrada, DeMarinis, Myers, Stanis, & Mills, 2011). All of these behaviors may impact the stability of postsecondary goal achievement in a person's late adolescence years. Therefore, Indicator 14 data may be skewed toward poorer outcomes resulting in school districts reshaping services that do not address the full scope of the needs of adults with disabilities post-high school.

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In addition to the maturation of the brain impacting cognitive processes that may affect the transition outcomes of 18 and 19 year olds, Vitelli (2013) notes the drastic differences in education, employment, and independent living status for individuals who have been out of high school for longer than three years versus less than three years. Research indicates that only 30% of individuals with disabilities are enrolled in postsecondary education or training programs two years out of high school, as compared with 60% enrollment 8 years out of high school (Newman, Wagner, Knokey, Marder, Nagle, Shaver, & Schwarting, 2011; Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Garza, & Levine, 2005). Additionally, postsecondary students with disabilities are on average 26 years old, and, at least half of the general population of undergraduate students are 24 years old or older (Snyder & Dillow, 2011; U. S. Government Accountability Office, 2009). In addition to students with disabilities waiting longer to enroll in postsecondary education or training programs, many do not graduate (52%) at all, or take much longer to graduate than their nondisabled peers (Newman et al., 2011; U.S. Government Accountability Office, 2009). Acquiring a degree or certificate from a postsecondary education or training program has been shown to significantly influence other areas in life for an individual with a disability. For example, individuals with disabilities who graduate from postsecondary education or training programs are more likely to be employed, earn a higher wage, use a checking account, have a driver's license or permit, and engage in social activities (Newman et al., 2011).

Research in the area of employment for individuals with disabilities also suggests that the farther away from high school, employment becomes more stable and consistent. Individuals ages 16 to 20 years of age are much less likely to be employed as compared to individuals ages 21 to 64 (21% vs. 36%; Erikson, Lee, & von Schrader, 2010a; Newman et al., 2011). Stability within a job varies significantly for individuals two years out of high school (eight months)

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versus being out of school for five to eight years (27 months) (Newman et al., 2011). In addition to the length of time one stays in a job, individuals farther away from high school tend to receive higher wages and benefits such as sick and vacation leave, health insurance, and retirement (Newman et al., 2011). Given the evidence, Vitelli (2013) concludes that individuals with disabilities who have been out of high school for a longer period of time are more likely to be engaged in employment that is nested in a career trajectory rather than a job. The difference between a career and job lies within the level of commitment and long-term goals one places on the employment. A career tends to have a stronger level of commitment, sense of purpose, long-term goals, and enjoyment, while the focus of a job tends to center on making a paycheck, gaining experience, and short-term employment goals (Luecking, 2009).

Currently, Indicator 14 data do not adequately inform administrators and teachers to make decisions about school-based programming, services, and supports for transition-age students with disabilities. Reshaping the way Indicator 14 data are collected through more rigorous methodology, mandating the inclusion of data in the independent living domain of transition, and collecting yearly data in a five year follow-along period would allow for a richer and fuller picture of the needs of adults with disabilities in their early years out of high school. These data would not only inform and shape programming at the school level, but could also be compared to make improvements across years at the state and national level. The proposed changes would build a strong and purposeful bridge between the services and supports provided during high school and the realities of adult life. While the limitations of Indicator 14 will not be addressed directly, understanding the policies potentially affecting service provision in transition are crucial to fully understanding the research questions of this study. Perspectives, particularly of special educators, regarding adult outcomes may be influenced by mandated policies or past

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data gathered through Indicator 14 procedures. The following section outlines the breadth of research in transition experiences and expectations of Latino youth with disabilities, their parents, and or teachers.

Transition Experiences and Expectations of Latinos

From 2001 to 2013, 17 studies sought to understand the transition experiences and/or expectations of Latino youth with disabilities and/or their parents and teachers. Eleven of those studies included Latino participants in a larger, diverse CLD sample, while six studies recruited only Latino participants for their CLD sample. Two of the six Latino studies looked comparatively at Latino and European American perspectives. The following section will outline the findings of the seventeen studies, discuss research gaps and limitations, and highlight exemplary designs for replication purposes.

Transition and females. Three of the sixteen studies sought to understand female perspectives on transition goals, preferences, needs, and supports (Gil-Kashiwabara, Hogansen, Geenen, Powers, & Powers, 2007; Hogansen, Powers, Geenen, Gil-Kashiwabara, & Powers, 2008; Trainor, 2007). Trainor (2007) focused specifically on girls with LD and their perceptions of self-determination and the transition planning process. Gil-Kashiwabara and Hogansen and colleagues (2007 & 2008) inquired more generally about transition goals, supports, challenges, and how culture impacts the female transition experience. Hogansen and colleagues (2008) triangulated perspectives from a diverse sample of 146 participants including female youth with a range of disabilities (14% Latina), parents (9% Latino), and special education teachers. Trainor's (2007) sample included seven females with LD (2 Caucasian, 3 African American, and 2 Latina), and Gil-Kashiwabara and colleagues (2007) only included Latina youth with disabilities and their parents. All three studies utilized focus groups and individual interviews as

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the primary methods of data collection. Trainor (2007) incorporated document review as an additional method of inquiry. Similarities in the findings of these studies are present in the overarching themes reported by participants. Youth participants in both Hogansen and colleagues' (2008) and Trainor's (2007) inquiries described multi-dimensional transition goals including strong desires to reach personal relationship milestones of marriage and having children, in addition to employment, living, and educational goals. Hogansen and colleagues (2008) described this phenomenon as females wanting to "have it all" (p. 220). Another similarity in findings was lack of access to opportunities for self-determination, employment experiences, and overall planning. Youth participants in both studies described minimal opportunities for employment experiences, using self-determination skills, and structured planning (Hogansen et al., 2008; Trainor, 2007). Youth participants also noted that special education was a barrier to transition goals. Females in Trainor's (2007) study reported that they associated IEP meetings with discipline and did not attend meetings or rely on special education teachers for transition planning. Youth participants in Hogansen and colleagues' (2008) study did not necessarily describe their experiences in special education and IEP meetings as disciplinary, but did refer to special education classes as not providing them with a "real education" (p. 224). Similar to Trainor's (2007) work, female youth were not involved in IEP meetings and transition planning. One youth described the meetings as "pointless" and some associated them with negative feelings such as embarrassment or frustration (Hogansen et al., 2008, p. 224).

Female youth in all three studies described looking to family members or other mentors outside of school for transition planning guidance rather than teachers (Gil-Kashiwabara et al., 2007; Hogansen et al., 2008; Trainor, 2007). For example, both Latina youth and their parents

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cited that involvement in spiritual activities was very important in their lives (Gil-Kashiwabara et al., 2007). This underscores the idea that involvement of mentors outside of the school setting may have a critical impact on transition planning. Additionally, parents discussed the potential positive impact of mentors in employment on their daughters' transition goals, and how it is more natural and likely for males to have role models in employment settings (Hogansen et al., 2008).

Trainor's (2007) study did not specifically address the influence of culture and gender on transition experiences due to the small sample size. However, Gil-Kashiwabara and Hogansen and colleagues (2007 & 2008) inquired directly about how culture and gender affects transition experiences. Female youth, parents, and special education teachers all had concerns regarding gender bias and expectations in the classroom and with transition goals. All three groups reported that teachers had different behavioral expectations for males than females and, therefore, males received more attention in the classroom. Special education teachers further addressed the perceived differences in CLD gender roles in the work place, stating that CLD females are less likely to advocate in employment settings if the supervisor is male (Hogansen et al., 2008).

Numerous challenges related to unsupportive CLD transition experiences were described by female youth, parents, and special education teachers including, 1) teachers stereotyping due to ethnic background, 2) teachers' and parents' differing definitions of disability, and 3) differing cultural backgrounds of teachers and the families they serve (Gil-Kashiwabara et al., 2007; Hogansen et al., 2008). Stereotypes that create barriers to a collaborative and effective transition experience specifically for the Latino/a population were identified by participants as, 1) Latina girls are more likely to get pregnant at a younger age, 2)

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the Latino population is uneducated, 3) teachers view Latino parents as being disinterested or unsupportive rather than examining systemic barriers such as limited English proficiency, and 4) Latino families have “lesser” goals for their children (Gil-Kashiwabara et al., 2007; Hogansen et al., 2008).

Overall, these three studies effectively isolated issues that inhibit seamless transitions for the Latina youth with disabilities. Interviewing Latina youth with disabilities, their parents, and special educators who work with this population created a detailed and layered web of understanding of the needs of Latina youth with disabilities and the potential barriers they may face as they transition out of high school. The next section discusses two quantitative studies that compare multiple perspectives in an effort to expand the empirical research on transition and Latinas with disabilities.

Latinas, European Americans, and transition. Two survey studies focused on identifying Latina transition needs by comparing the transition experiences and expectations of Latina and European American populations (Gil-Kashiwabara, Geenen, & Powers, 2012; Rodriguez & Cavendish, 2012). Rodriguez and Cavendish (2012) evaluated the differences in self-determination and family environments of European American, Latina, and Latino students with disabilities. The sample consisted of 157 Latino and European American students with disabilities. Seventy-eight percent of the entire sample identified as having LD, and 67% of the Latino group was male with 33% female. Results indicated that all females scored significantly higher than both Latino and European American males on levels of self-determination. In addition, the perception of a family environment was a much stronger predictor of self-determination levels for females than males. In regards to the role ethnicity played in self-

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determination, significant differences occurred in the perceived family environments of Latino and European American students.

The salient result that females had the highest levels of self-determination is consistent with findings from prior research stating that young women reported competency when practicing self-determination skills in their lives (Hogansen et al., 2008; Trainor, 2007). Unfortunately, however, these studies also showed that young women have few opportunities to exert self-determination skills, which may contribute to poor outcomes for females in transition (Hogansen et al., 2008; Trainor, 2007). Rodriguez and Cavendish (2012) posit that males and females may rely on different conditions to build self-determination skills. Females may need empowering family relationships to foster self-determination, while males may be reinforced to build self-determination by accomplishing tasks outside of the home. This theory may explain the result that the perception of the home environment is a stronger predictor of self-determination for females than males (Rodriguez & Cavendish, 2012). Finally, Latino students reported that family environments were more controlling than European American students, and thus, were associated with higher levels of self-determination for Latinos. This result is consistent with prior research showing that the home environments of Latinos tend to be more controlling than European Americans (Suarez-Orozco, 1995; Valdes, 1996). Given that a controlling home environment may be more of a norm for Latinos than European Americans, it is understandable then that self-determination is more likely to be fostered under these conditions for Latinos.

The final study focused specifically on Latina females and transition administered the parent and youth version of the *Young Adult Transition Expectations and Experiences* survey (YATEE; Powers, Hogansen, Geenen, Powers, & Gil-Kashiwabara, 2008) to 211 Latina and

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European American youth with disabilities and their parents (Gil-Kashiwabara, Geenen, & Powers, 2012). The majority of youth in the sample reported having a high-incidence disability. Researchers used the YATEE to assess the perspectives of Latina and European American youth with disabilities and their parents regarding transition goals, expectations, experiences, and self-determination. The results showed some interesting differences between Latino and European American perspectives, and female youth and parents. As reported in Gil-Kashiwabara and colleagues' (2007) study as well, Latinas, and parents of Latinas, placed a much greater importance on participation in spiritual activities than European Americans (Gil-Kashiwabara et al., 2012). As discussed earlier, this supports the idea of opening up the transition planning process to include mentors, such as spiritual leaders, as desired by Latino youth and their parents. Additionally, spaces such as churches or other locations where families engage in spirituality should be discussed and incorporated into transition planning related to employment or volunteer opportunities, and overall community living activities.

Gil-Kashiwabara and colleagues (2012) found Latinas and their parents also placed a greater importance on taking care of family members. Furthermore, Latina youth placed a higher importance on living in the same home with their family than European American girls. These results are consistent with the idea that the transition domain of independent living, as defined by mainstream culture, is not valued as highly by Latino families (Gil-Kashiwabara et al., 2012; Rueda et al., 2005; Shogren, 2012). Given these results, Gil-Kashiwabara and colleagues (2012) stressed that differing definitions of independent living must be considered when working with Latino families. For example, rather than moving out of the family home to live on one's own, contributing financially to the household expenses may be viewed as becoming independent.

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Other significant results highlighting the unique needs of Latina youth with disabilities and their parents are that Latinas reported the largest gap between importance (high) and occurrence (low) of 1) teachers respecting family point of view, 2) teachers respecting family culture and background, and 3) teachers sharing their experiences during transition planning (Gil-Kashiwabara et al., 2012). These results support the notion that there may be a clash in the values of Latina youth and the mainstream approach to transition planning. For example, given the desire to live with family into adulthood and the expectation to take care of family members, Latina youth may seek a more interdependent approach to independence by relying on family input to make decisions regarding their future. Additionally, family culture and background may have a significant impact on the trajectory of Latina youth in their adulthood. Therefore, the practice of teachers' respecting culture, background, and family point of view by openly acknowledging the importance and influence of these variables is imperative to cultural responsive teaching and transition planning.

Gil-Kashiwabara and colleagues (2012) discuss the Latino value of *personalismo* as, "the concept that people and personal interactions take precedence over formal rules and regulations and impersonal aspects of existence" (p. 20). This concept may explain Latina youth reporting the preference for teachers to share personal experiences during transition planning. Forming an interpersonal bond by opening up dialogue to include personal experiences, including challenges, creates the type of environment to foster mutual respect and trust when working with Latino families. Personal interaction between teachers and Latina youth and their families diminishes the standardized, formal approach to transition planning which does not allow for the unique needs and desires of each family.

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In addition to significant discrepancies between desired level of importance and actual occurrence, parents and youth reported several alarming barriers to transition. All youth and their parents (Latino and European American) felt that teachers held different expectations of what a student's future should look like than the students themselves (Gil-Kashiwabara et al., 2012). This result is echoed in Hogansen and colleagues' (2008) study where teachers described students' transition goals as too "lofty," "glamorous," and "unrealistic" (p. 221). Teachers in this study noted that it was their job to "shape" student and parent expectations of goals for adulthood (Hogansen et al., 2008, p. 221). While special education teachers bring a particular level of expertise in assessing student skill level, achievement, strengths, and challenges in relation to transition goals, "shaping" expectations may result in lowering standards of achievement, dismissing student preferences, and therefore, alienating families. Gil-Kashiwabara and colleagues (2012) suggest working with families to "map out the steps needed to make informed decisions about transition goals" (p. 21). Using this approach, rather than immediately steering students away from a particular preference, allows the teacher and student to have an open discussion about the positives and negatives of certain goals, how the student's strengths and supports match with the choice, and possible alternatives if the goal is reshaped.

In addition to teachers holding different expectations of future goals for female students with disabilities, both Latina youth and their parents felt that individuals held lower expectations of them/their daughter because of ethnic background (Gil-Kashiwabara et al., 2012). Compounding this finding, parents of Latina youth reported that lower expectations were held for their daughters due to gender, and that their daughters did not advocate for personal preferences because of the expectation that she should go along with others' ideas (Gil-Kashiwabara et al., 2012). This result is highlighted in Hogansen and colleagues' (2008)

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qualitative study where parents discussed certain stereotypes of Latinas, such as having children early and not wanting to attend postsecondary education. Lower expectations may also influence the inequities experienced by Latina youth in the workplace and classroom as compared to males (Hogansen et al., 2008). In regards to self-advocacy, lack of opportunities to practice self-determination skills may hinder Latina youths' innate abilities to lobby for their preferences (Trainor, 2007). Contrary to these stereotypes and resulting expectations, Latino parents placed a higher level of importance for their daughters to attend postsecondary education than European American parents (Gil-Kashiwabara et al., 2012).

Summary of females and transition. Results of the five studies above reveal a detailed understanding of the perspectives of female youth with high-incidence disabilities during their transition from high school to adult life. Female youth with disabilities sought to achieve multi-dimensional transition goals that highlighted personal relationship objectives such as getting married and having a family. Interestingly, Latina youth reported that they preferred teachers to take a more interpersonal approach to transition planning by sharing personal experiences. Additionally, females were more influenced by relationships in the home setting in relation to building self-determination skills. These results stress the unique importance of connected relationships in regards to supporting females as they transition in adult lives.

Most notably, females with disabilities, parents, and special education teachers identified significant barriers to transition. While Rodriguez and Cavendish (2012) found that females had significantly higher levels of self-determination, and female participants in Trainor's (2007) study spoke confidently about self-advocacy, these results were squandered by the lack of opportunities to effectively use these skills. Participants across studies also discussed the lack of opportunities for employment experiences, gender biases, and stereotyping encountered in the

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workplace and classroom for females with disabilities (Gil-Kashiwabara et al., 2007; Hogansen et al., 2008). Female participants discussed the negative impact of special education and participation in IEP meetings and school-based planning (Hogansen et al., 2008; Trainor, 2007). Given the negativity associated with school-based planning and special education meetings, Latina females and their parents stressed the importance of transition planning outside of the school. Mentors from community spaces such as churches, spiritual organizations, and in the workplace were noted as critical transition supports for females with disabilities. Additionally, Latina females cited a desire to live in the home after high school and maintain responsibilities to taking care of family members. While these distinctive preferences were expressed across studies, CLD females with disabilities, parents, and special educators reported a mismatch of teacher expectations and discrimination connected to ethnicity, culture, gender, and transition planning (Gil-Kashiwabara et al., 2007; Gil-Kashiwabara et al., 2012; Hogansen et al., 2008).

The perspectives of parents of female youth with disabilities were included in only three of the studies described above (Gil-Kashiwabara et al., 2007; Gil-Kashiwabara et al., 2012; Hogansen et al., 2008). Methodologically, all studies, excluding one (Trainor, 2007), included only one or two types of data collection methods. While Trainor's (2007) research included triangulation of focus groups, interviews, and ITP documents, only students were included in the sample. The current study used focus groups, individual interviews, and review of ITPs for students, parents, and teachers in an effort to not only triangulate perspectives, but also create a robust foundation of data to answer the research questions.

While some of the research broached the topic of transition planning activities and parent involvement, or the role of the home environment in planning, this was not the primary aim of

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the female studies. The next section discusses research targeting the involvement of CLD parents in the transition planning process.

CLD parent involvement in transition. Two studies investigated the involvement of CLD parents in transition planning (Geenen, Powers, & Lopez-Vasquez, 2001; Landmark, Zhang, & Montoya, 2007). Geenen and colleagues (2001) surveyed 154 parents of youth with disabilities and 52 special education professionals to understand which transition activities parents participate in, and which activities and type of participation are deemed important to parents and special education professionals. The researchers were also interested in how responses varied by cultural group, and any differences in how parents and special education professionals reported parent involvement levels. Thirty-four parents enrolled in the study identified as Latino while the rest were African American, Native American, or European American. Thirty percent of the parent participants reported their child as having a high-incidence disability. For the current study, researchers collapsed the three CLD ethnicity categories (African American, Latino, and Native American) into one CLD category due small individual sample sizes for Latinos and Native Americans. Therefore, specific results for Latino parents were not reported, however, important findings regarding the differences between CLD and non-CLD parents are summarized. For example, while all parents (including European American) reported that all activities related to transition were important, CLD parents placed a significantly higher level of importance on teaching their child about family values and beliefs than European American parents. However, special education professionals reported that discussing cultural values and beliefs was not an important activity related to transition (Geenen et al., 2001). This result echoes findings from studies in teacher education and transition related to competency in working with CLD families (Benitez et al., 2009; Conderman et al., 2012;

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Morgan et al., 2013). In regards to parent involvement in transition planning, European American parents reported significantly more involvement than CLD parents. However, special education professionals reported lower levels of CLD parent involvement than CLD parents reported themselves. Interestingly, both CLD parents and special education professionals reported low levels of involvement of school-based planning, such as attending IEP meetings (Geenen et al., 2001).

The results of this study have important implications for involving CLD parents in the transition planning process. Specifically, the discrepancy between professionals' perceptions of CLD parental involvement and CLD parents' perceptions of their involvement was startling. While CLD parents did rate their involvement in school-based planning as low, involvement in all other transition activities was rated as high. Geenen and colleagues (2001) offered the explanation that CLD parents may rely more on contexts outside of the school setting, along with experiences related to community and family to engage in transition activities with their children (Gil-Kashiwabara et al., 2007; Hogansen et al., 2008; Trainor, 2008). Conversely, teachers and other special education professionals' scope of planning is likely confined to school-based activities. Therefore, regardless of CLD parents engaging in transition activities outside of school, professionals may be limited in their understanding of these activities. In addition, if professionals' scope of understanding of transition planning is limited to school-based activities, and CLD parents show low levels of participation in these activities, then professionals may report a skewed level of understanding regarding CLD parent involvement in transition. Geenen and colleagues (2001) point to multiple barriers that may make school-based planning activities challenging for all parents, not just CLD, "(a) parental fatigue, (b) lack of parental knowledge about rights, school procedures, or policies, (c) logistical constraints, such as lack of childcare or

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transportation, (d) rigid or limited options for parent involvement in educational planning, and (e) language” (p. 279). Compounding these barriers in the school setting, CLD parents may face discrimination, cultural insensitivity, or stereotyping in regards to ethnicity or culture, making involvement in school activities unbearable (Geenen et al., 2001). As supported in other studies, opening up transition activities and planning efforts to include settings and team members outside of the typical school-based context may be crucial to engaging CLD parents in a collaborative planning process.

A second study focused on CLD parental involvement in transition planning sought to understand parents’ knowledge of the transition process, requirements, barriers, supports, and strategies they used to increase their child’s involvement in transition activities (Landmark et al., 2007). Nineteen parents of high school students with disabilities were interviewed over the phone. About half of the children of the parents participating in the study were identified with a high-incidence disability. Five of the 19 parents were Latino; the rest of the sample comprised of European American and African American participants, with one Asian American parent. While significant methodological limitations were a factor in this study due to a single data collection method at one time point, results are consistent with other CLD transition research. Most CLD parents were not familiar with the term “transition planning,” nor did they know the steps involved in the transition planning process. CLD parents felt transition meetings were uncomfortable and inconvenient, and Latino parents reported the lowest rates of attendance at IEP or transition planning meetings. Latino parents felt limited English proficiency was a barrier in participating in transition planning meetings. Additionally, work-related barriers such as time constraints made participation in school-based transition planning difficult for Latino parents. In regards to the type of transition knowledge that parents felt was most important about their child,

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Latino parents focused most heavily on job training experiences and opportunities than other domains in their children's transition plan (Landmark et al., 2007). Overall, all parents in this study had little knowledge of the legal requirements involved in transition planning.

Additionally, all parents found the special education and legal jargon used to describe transition activities, supports, and timelines confusing, and more of a barrier to participation. However, all parents did possess knowledge regarding their child's skills, challenges, and necessary supports needed in transition activities. While all parents discussed the importance of attending school-based IEP and transition meetings, only one half of parents actually attended such meetings regularly. Many barriers to school-based meetings were described, such as inflexible work schedules or limited English proficiency (Landmark et al., 2007).

Overall, CLD parents understand the importance of transition planning for their child. However, barriers such as limited English proficiency, work schedules, lack of cultural understanding or respect from teachers, and professional jargon create undesirable conditions for school-based planning meetings. Special education teachers must have a thorough understanding of the challenges that CLD parents may face regarding school-based transition planning meetings. Further, special educators should approach family participation with the philosophy that CLD parents understand the importance of transition planning for their child. By having a greater understanding of the preferences, needs, and barriers that CLD parents face, special educators can invoke culturally responsive strategies to create environments that encourage CLD parent participation. While both studies' findings are consistent with established research, methodological weaknesses including one data collection method, time point, and small sample sizes for Latino parents are noteworthy. The current study aims to strengthen the research base in Latino parent perspectives of transition by utilizing focus groups, individual interviews, and

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analyzing parent perspectives documented in IEP/ITPs. The next section focuses solely on the perspectives of CLD youth with high-incidence disabilities regarding topics in transition.

Youth perspectives. Three studies sought to exclusively understand the perspectives of high school students with high-incidence disabilities regarding employment, self-determination, the transition planning process, and/or post-school aspirations (Johnston-Rodriguez, Owens, Whitney, 2006; Scanlon, Saxon, Cowell, Kenny, Perez-Gualdron, & Jernigan, 2008; Trainor, 2005). The majority of participants in all studies were from a CLD background, and all samples included Latino participants. Trainor (2005) and Johnston-Rodriguez and colleagues (2006) used qualitative methods to understand youth perspectives, while Scanlon and colleagues (2008) utilized quantitative methods via survey. Results from all three studies align with previous findings from CLD, transition research described above. A description of methods, significant results, and implications of each study are presented below.

Trainor (2005) triangulated data using multiple qualitative methods including document review, observation of ITP meetings, focus groups, and follow up interviews. Participants included in this study were 15 males (4 African American, 6 European American, and 5 Latino) with LD receiving free or reduced lunch. This inquiry served as the model for Trainor's (2007) study with female participants. Similar to the 2007 study, Trainor (2005) sought to understand the self-determination behaviors of CLD males with LD, how they perceived their responsibility in transition planning, and the influence of participants' parents and teachers on the transition planning process.

As discovered with the female participants in the 2007 study, results showed a mismatch between post-school aspirations, ITP documentation, and employment or coursework experiences in high school (Trainor, 2005). For example, two Latino students expressed a desire

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to continue working in family-owned businesses where they were currently employed after graduation. However, the employment goals in their ITPs had no relation to continuing in their line of work, or building upon current work experiences to achieve different employment goals within the family companies. Several students expressed post-school aspirations to work in fields where specific coursework and experiences offered at the high school could have been greatly beneficial. For example, two students had goals of joining the military after graduation, but were not enrolled in the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) program offered by the school. Another student reported his desire to work in the culinary arts field, but was not enrolled in culinary arts classes. In the domain of postsecondary education, CLD males expressed a desire to enroll in university or community college classes after high school, yet the majority of CLD participants were listed as exempt from any standardized exit exams required for university and community college enrollment (Trainor, 2005). Trainor (2005) noted that a higher number of CLD students who expressed goals of attending college (78%) were exempted from exams as compared to European Americans (50%) with similar goals. For independent living goals, the majority of Latinos intended to remain living with their families. Again, however, a mismatch in ITP documentation occurred for those students with goals stating, "obtain independent residence without supports" after high school (Trainor, 2005, p. 238).

Other salient results of this study have been supported in the CLD, transition literature including that all participants were fairly uninvolved in the school-based transition planning process (Hogansen et al., 2008; Trainor, 2007). Additionally, participants thought their parents had little control at ITP meetings. As widely reported in other research, Latino participants reported the least involvement of their parents in school-based meetings, however, stressed their parents' strong desire for them to achieve academic goals (Geenen et al., 2001; Gil-Kashiwabara

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et al., 2012; Landmark et al., 2007). All males in the study reported relying heavily on their families for transition planning, and perceiving the context of school to be unsupportive during the transition process. This result is supported in several other studies focused on CLD students and families and transition (Gil-Kashiwabara et al., 2007; Hogansen et al., 2007; Trainor, 2007). Congruent with other findings, participants discussed practicing self-determination skills at home with great detail (Rodriguez & Cavendish, 2012; Shogren, 2012). Similar to the parents interviewed by Landmark and colleagues (2007), males in the current study were unfamiliar with the term “transition plan” and had little knowledge of what occurred at their most recent ITP meeting (Trainor, 2005). Trainor (2005) also found that existing ITPs were typically updated rather than new ITPs being written each year. Exact postsecondary goals remained present on ITP documents year after year. Further, follow up data on goal attainment was omitted from transition plan documents. For example, all 15 participants’ ITPs included a goal on enrolling in driver’s education, however two participants had already obtained their driver’s licenses, and several other participants discussed not wanting to take a driver’s education class (Trainor, 2005).

Another qualitative study focused on comparing the post-school aspirations, facilitators, and barriers of urban, CLD ninth graders with and without LD (Scanlon et al., 2008). This study sought to understand how disability influenced the post-school aspirations and pathways of ninth graders with LD. Participants included 22 students with LD and 16 students without LD. The majority of youth in both groups were categorized as CLD, and distributed fairly evenly between African American and Latino decent (86% African American and Latino with LD, 100% African American and Latino without LD). 13 students with LD were eligible for free or reduced lunch with 11 non-LD students documented as eligible.

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Findings from this study were grouped and reported by students with LD and without LD. Researchers did not attempt to report results with a focus on the CLD categorization of participants. With regard to the role of disability in attainment of post-school goals, about half of students officially labeled with LD did not think they had a disability and were unclear on their special education status. The majority of students who did self-identify as having a learning disability reported their disability would not impact future goals. Students with and without LD responded similarly to interview questions regarding post-school goals and overall life vision (Scanlon et al., 2008). Student responses in this area echoed findings from previous research in that goals and post-school visions were dynamic including multiple facets of life such as college, career or job, family, living experiences, and amenities such as having a car (Hogansen et al., 2008; Trainor, 2007). However, contrary to research stating that students reported goals that were unrealistic, out of reach, and misaligned with an overall life vision, Scanlon and colleagues (2008) found that both groups of students reported attainable, “middle-class” goals and pathways for achievement that were consistent with a broad life vision (p. 166). Participants described employment in teaching, medicine, and business and envisioned a “family-centered” life ranging from having a spouse to living with a friend to residing with their family (Scanlon et al., 2008, p. 166). An interesting finding in the area of employment was that students without LD desired a career, while students with LD expressed having a job. While no students from either group made a distinction between having a career versus a job, responses reflected the difference. Scanlon and colleagues (2008) also made note that many students were able to discuss career or job desires in relation to their interests and skills. For example, one student expressed a desire to become a designer because he was creative, and another talked about becoming a translator because he was bilingual. Again, these results are contrary to findings from studies that reported

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students' goals were largely mismatched with skills, previous experiences, and steps to achieve post-school vision (Trainor, 2005; 2007).

Both students with and without LD reported significant barriers to achieving post-school goals. Students with LD reported lack of self-motivation and general support from others more often than those without LD. Interestingly however, all other barriers including school, lack of money, friends, and family were reported more often by students without LD. Additionally, no students with LD reported that their disability was a barrier to goal achievement. Consistent with prior research, the majority of students in both groups identified either one or multiple school-based factors such as poor grades, dropping out, tardiness, teachers, and standardized testing as the most influential barrier to post-school goal achievement (Gwynne et al., 2009; Levine & Wagner, 2005; Scanlon et al., 2008).

While the research questions and study participants are incredibly relevant to understanding the needs of CLD students with disabilities, and shaping responsive services to meet those needs, only one form of data was collected to address the questions in this inquiry. Students with and without learning disabilities participated in semi-structured interviews at one time point, and there was no mention of member checking or follow up procedures to check for accuracy of data, or to add to the data collected. While this is a significant methodological limitation, the researchers did use the rigorous qualitative analysis procedures of Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR). This method consists of a systematic team approach to data coding and analysis that leads to group consensus regarding core ideas drawn from the data (Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997). While the analysis procedures were quite detailed, systematic, and rigorous, using a single data source with no member checking procedures greatly reduces the integrity of the results. Despite the methodological limitations of this study, the results do

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provide a surface level understanding regarding the post-school aspirations and barriers for this population. However, additional research is needed to probe deeper into this topic area. In contrast to Scanlon and colleagues (2008) collecting one data source, the proposed inquiry is designed to ensure accuracy of data through several reliability and validity procedures including triangulation of multiple data sources and participants that allow for an in depth analysis.

The final study specifically investigating CLD youth perspectives on post-school goals focused on identifying career barriers and the relationship between barriers and participant characteristics (Johnston-Rodriguez et al., 2006). Johnston-Rodriguez and colleagues (2006) surveyed 128 high school students with high-incidence disabilities using *The Career Barriers Questionnaire*. While 88% of the sample was categorized as CLD, only 9% of this group identified as Latino. The majority of the students did have career goals and 70% of those students indicated that they planned to pursue college or technical school to achieve those goals. Additionally, the majority of students reported that school was important to help them to reach post-school employment goals.

Broad themes of employment barriers identified by CLD students included, “1) At Risk, 2) Lack of Social Support, 3) Lack of Career Development Opportunities, 4) How Society Discriminates, 5) Concerns about Emotional Well-Being, 6) Concerns about Physical Well-Being, and 7) Concerns with Lack of Capital” (Johnston-Rodriguez et al., 2006, p. 84). When examining how individual ethnic groups scored on the level of influence of each of these barriers on future employment goals, Asian Americans and Native Americans scored the highest with the greatest influence of barriers on future employment, while European Americans scored the lowest. Latino youth were the CLD group who reported the least influence of employment barriers. For example, next to European Americans, Latino youth had the least concerns with

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social support in relation to reaching employment goals. Regardless, CLD youth with disabilities reported a much greater overall concern about employment barriers as compared to European American youth with disabilities. Significant and unique concerns reported by CLD youth included death, violence, drugs, alcohol, health, citizenship, and issues with the law. Additionally, as reported in other studies, CLD youth identified school-based factors including lack of employment experiences and information on careers (Hogansen et al., 2008; Povenmire-Kirk et al., 2010; Trainor, 2007). Other employment barriers identified by CLD youth with disabilities that are congruent with previous research included lack of financial resources, discrimination, language, access to opportunities, and lack of current work experiences (Geenen et al., 2003; Lichtenstein et al., 2008; Povenmire-Kirk et al., 2010).

While some of the results above do not align with CLD transition research, many are consistent with themes from previous studies. CLD students with high-incidence disabilities consistently reported similar barriers to transition such as school-based planning, lack of employment experiences, discrimination, language, and unsupportive teachers. CLD students with high-incidence disabilities are more likely to report barriers such as violence, poor grades, and dropping out (Gwynne et al., 2009; National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2014). Other results consistently cited in the CLD transition literature are the lack of involvement of CLD students and parents (primarily Latino) in school-based planning meetings (Geenen et al., 2001), transition planning activities including opportunities for self-determination happening at home (Rodriguez & Cavendish, 2012; Trainor, 2007), and CLD students with disabilities having multi-dimensional post-school goals (Hogansen et al., 2008; Powers et al., 2009; Trainor, 2007). Several intriguing results found in the above studies that have not been found widely in existing research are: 1) Latino students reported the fewest barriers to employment after high school

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(Johnston-Rodriguez et al., 2006), 2) post-school goals of male CLD students did not match ITP documentation, coursework, or high school activities (Trainor, 2007), and 3) Post-school goals were realistic and well-matched to students' skills and overall life vision (Scanlon et al., 2008). Further investigation is warranted to gain an in-depth understanding of how these isolated results affect CLD students with high-incidence disabilities. The next section delves deeper into the perspectives of CLD youth with disabilities and their parents by investigating the strengths, preferences, and needs of CLD students with disabilities and their families during secondary transition.

Strengths, preferences, and needs. The final group of articles focused their inquiries on understanding the preferences and issues in transition for CLD youth with disabilities and their families (Geenen, Powers, Lopez-Vasquez, & Bersani, 2003; Grigal & Neubert, 2004; Leake & Boone, 2007; Povenmire-Kirk, Lindstrom, & Bullis, 2010; Powers, Geenen, & Powers, 2009; Rueda, Monzo, Shapiro, Gomez, & Blacher, 2005; Shogren, 2012). Five studies utilized qualitative methods to understand preferences, issues, and goals around transition and/or self-determination for CLD students and/or families (Geenen et al., 2003; Leake & Boone, 2007; Povenmire et al., 2010; Rueda et al., 2005; Shogren, 2012). Two studies used quantitative methods to investigate preferences for transition goals (Grigal & Neubert, 2004; Powers et al., 2009). A detailed description of the purpose, data collection methods, and salient results are outlined for each study below.

Qualitative inquiries. In a qualitative follow up study to the 2001 quantitative investigation centered on parent involvement in transition planning, Geenen and colleagues (2003) conducted focus groups and individual interviews in an effort to understand the barriers encountered by minority families, and issues and goals that were considered most important

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during the transition process. Thirty-one CLD parents of transition-age adolescents with disabilities participated in the study. Eight adolescents participated along with their parents. Parents reported that children's disabilities ranged mild to severe, and the sample was distributed between Native American (7), African American (14), and Latino (10) ethnicities.

Participants identified multiple barriers to effective transition including, 1) discrimination, 2) lack of accommodations, 3) unresponsive services, 4) adolescent issues like peer pressure or social isolation, and 5) "contextual barriers" such as single parenting, violence or drug issues, and poverty (Geenen et al., 2003, p. 34). Participants also identified facilitators of culturally responsive and effective transition planning. These included the "desire for optimum capability," and respecting and incorporating the importance of family and family values into transition planning (Geenen et al., 2003, p. 41). Parents expressed the desire of having their children become as self-sufficient as possible. However, this desire was tempered with the idea that self-sufficiency would develop within the context of family and community relationships. This idea of interdependency has been widely supported in the CLD transition research (Harry et al., 1999; Povenmire-Kirk et al., 2010; Rueda et al., 2005; Shogren, 2012). Additionally, relying on family for support in transition planning, facilitating skills necessary for transition (i. e. self-determination), and other natural supports has been extensively reported in the CLD transition literature (Gil-Kashiwabara et al., 2007; Hogansen et al., 2008; Rodriguez & Cavendish, 2012; Trainor, 2007). The importance of knowing family culture and incorporating that culture into the future pathways of their children was also stressed for effective transition planning and services. For example, one parent talked about the importance of teaching mental discipline to their child, not through channels of the school, but by means of their family spirituality. Understanding how family values and beliefs impact the transition activities of CLD students with disabilities

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continues to be imperative to including families in positive, collaborative, and effective planning (Geenen et al., 2003).

Povenmire-Kirk and colleagues (2010) used focus group and individual interviews to understand the transition needs of Latino youth and their families in the areas of: 1) community context (e.g. legislation, school policies, practices), 2) cultural context (e.g. family, traditions, language), 3) and individual factors (e.g. strengths, preferences, resilience). Three research questions, one for each area above, regarding the needs of Latino youth with disabilities and their families were the focus of this study. Research participants included 22 school and transition professionals, 10 Latino family members of youth with disabilities, and six Latino students with disabilities. The researchers did not specify the type or severity of disabilities of the student participants. Additionally, the article did not state if participants were linked. Rather, there was no statement confirming that the transition professionals worked with the families and students enrolled in the study, or that the parents and students were related.

One research question was explored per group of participants. While results indicated that each research area was influential to Latino youth with disabilities and their families during the transition process, five major barriers to transition emerged across all three participant groups: 1) language issues, 2) citizenship, 3) culturally unresponsive services, 4) challenges to family involvement, and 5) lack of school and community resources (Povenmire-Kirk et al., 2010). Language and family involvement barriers were reported by all participants, however from different angles. Families and students talked about not understanding the transition services offered due to lack of translation services. Families also reported not knowing who to talk to about special education services or their role in the process. Transition professionals reported their concern with the lack of family involvement, limited knowledge and resources

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regarding undocumented citizens, and not enough personnel for translation. In addition, all participants reported the lack of resources and community connections for job development including shadowing, internships, or supported work experiences for Latino youth with disabilities. Families discussed the limited availability for extracurricular opportunities for their children. Again, all participants cited the lack of bilingual staff and translated resource materials as the primary barrier to these opportunities (Povenmire-Kirk et al., 2010).

Povenmire-Kirk and colleagues' (2010) research questions and participant groups are similar to the current study. While Povenmire-Kirk and colleagues' (2010) yielded results with similar themes to other CLD studies in transition, limitations to the research design highlight some gaps accounted for in the current study. For example, with the exception of school professionals, only one data source each was used to explore two of the research questions. School professionals participated in individual interviews and four focus groups, while family members and students participated in one focus group each. Further, the aim of the individual interviews differed from the focus groups conducted with school professionals. In other words, the focus groups with school professionals sought information regarding community context, groups held with family members focused on needs related to cultural context, and students were probed on needs related to individuals factors. Due to each research question being answered through a single form of data by a single group of participants, no triangulation could occur between data collection methods or participants. Conducting one focus group to explore a research question can yield a preliminary understanding to the inquiry at hand, but is not sufficient to reach a saturation point and draw overall conclusions that address the research questions.

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The current study accounts for these gaps in methods by using a design that enlists multiple groups of participants to inform all research questions. This technique builds a robustness and depth to the data collected, and therefore, conclusions drawn as a result of that data. Additionally, linking participants as triads (teacher and parent of a student) adds another layer of depth and comparison that can be made across participants. Lastly, collecting multiple forms of data to inform all research questions ensures that triangulation can occur.

Two studies interviewed Latina mothers of transition-age youth with moderate to severe disabilities (Rueda et al., 2005; Shogren, 2012). While both studies focused on the perspectives of mothers of a child with a low-incidence disability, many of the results are consistent with research about CLD, transition-age youth with high-incidence disabilities. Rueda and colleagues (2005) utilized the focus group method to interview 16 Latina mothers about general topics in transition and transition planning, while Shogren (2012) conducted individual interviews with seven Latina mothers regarding their perspectives on self-determination during the transition of their child.

Both Rueda and colleagues (2005) and Shogren (2012) reported several similar themes. Mothers in both inquires discussed the notion of independence and how this concept applied to their family and the transition of their child. For example, both groups of mothers reported that their child would remain living in the family home. However, mothers were interested in teaching their child about personal safety and being in control of their supports and services to the maximum extent possible. Mothers also discussed the importance of belonging to a community and family network outside of the school. This desire is consistent in other research stating that Latino students and their families utilize natural community supports and instruction in a family setting more often than school-based transition supports (Hogansen et al.,

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2008; Landmark et al., 2007). Mothers discussed teaching self-determination skills including choice-making, self-awareness skills, and other independent self-care skills in the home setting. Along with this instruction was the understanding that a support network of family and community members were always there to assist and provide a stable environment where interdependence was valued and sustained (Rueda et al., 2005; Shogren, 2012).

Mothers in both inquiries reported a number of barriers to working with schools and educational professionals consistent with CLD transition research. Specifically, mothers discussed experiences where they felt discriminated against due to cultural values related to their desired transition pathways for their child. Several mothers talked about having the idea of independent living pushed on them, to the extent that these parents stopped working with school personnel to plan for their child's future. Mothers discussed transition goals that were mismatched with their cultural views. Additionally, mothers from both studies felt that their opinions in transition planning were not valued and sometimes disrespected. Several mothers described how educational professionals perceived their participation by displaying "indifference" to their input on goals for their child (Rueda et al., 2005; Shogren, 2012, p. 180). Lastly, inaccessible resources and miscommunication due to language barriers surfaced again in both studies as an insurmountable challenge to working collaboratively with educational professionals on behalf of their child's transition (Rueda et al., 2005; Shogren, 2012).

The final qualitative study focused on the preferences and needs of CLD youth with disabilities and their families (Leake & Boone, 2007). Leake & Boone (2007) sought to understand the cultural influences on self-determination by conducting a series of focus groups with a large sample (122 participants total) of CLD parents of youth with emotional behavior disorders (EBD), youth with EBD, and special education teachers of youth with EBD. The

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sample was primarily African American, Asian, and Caucasian, with only one Latino student and special educator included.

Data were reported by examining themes expressed collectively by CLD participants, and comparing those ideas with those of the White group. Additionally, results were reported of specific ethnic groups if they differed from the larger CLD participant group. Themes were consistent with CLD, transition research and included, 1) family as a central value, 2) limited opportunities for self-advocacy, 3) strong emphasis on education, 4) decision-making made within family unit regarding transition, 5) generational conflict between parents and children over transition goals, and 6) tension between independence of U.S. mainstream culture and interdependence valued by CLD families (Leake & Boone, 2007). Ethnic sub-groups exemplified some themes as compared to others. For example, East Asians discussed the importance of formal education to self-determination and achievement of post-school goals. However, other cultural groups, such as Native Hawaiians, did not regard formal education with such importance. While the majority of CLD participants deemed interdependence as significant in the process of making decisions regarding one's post-school future, African Americans favored the more typical U.S. mainstream value of independence when discussing post-school goals. There was no ability to draw conclusions on preferences or issues in transition or self-determination for the Latino population, as only two Latino participants were included in this study. Additionally, this study did not attempt to compare student, parent, and special educator perspectives.

Quantitative inquires. Two studies sought to compare the perspectives of transition preferences and supports of multiple stakeholders (Grigal & Neubert, 2004; Powers, Geenen, & Powers, 2009). Both studies were quantitative in design and surveyed participants. Grigal and

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Neubert (2004) surveyed 234 parents of transition-age students with disabilities living in an urban setting. The aim of the inquiry was to compare the perspectives of parents with a child with a high-incidence disability (70% of the sample) to the perspectives of parents with a child with a low-incidence (30% of the sample) disability. The majority of the sample identified as Caucasian or African American, with only four Latino participants. Parents were asked about the transition preferences for their child in the areas of instruction, planning, living, and other post-school options such as employment, postsecondary education, military, and adult services (Grigal & Neubert, 2004).

The research questions of this study were centered on the comparison of perspectives based on disability label. Therefore, while the sample did include participants from CLD backgrounds, no attempt was made to understand these perspectives as a result of cultural identity. Significant results of specific preferences of parents of a child with a high-incidence disability included, 1) attending community college (as opposed to a 4-year university), 2) focusing on academic and self-determination skills (as opposed to life skills), 3) owning a home (as opposed to living with family or group home setting), and 4) putting little focus on recreational and social skills during transition planning (as opposed to finding these areas important) (Grigal & Neubert, 2004). While these results are not surprising, it is important to note that these results were significant due to the differences of perspectives of parents of a child with a low-incidence disability.

Powers and colleagues (2009) also sought to compare the perspectives of preferences and needed supports in transition by surveying 242 youth with high-incidence disabilities and their parents (279). Participants represented a range of ethnicities, with 16% of the sample identifying as Latino. Specifically, research questions focused on comparing perspectives regarding

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important post-school goals, supports needed to achieve goals, and assessment of the youths' strengths (Powers et al., 2009).

Results indicated that parents and students agreed on the importance of certain transition goals and skills. Specifically, both groups of participants rated three goals as the most important to an adult future: 1) completing high school, 2) having health insurance, and 3) having a good doctor. In addition, both parents and students agreed that taking care of oneself, understanding safety, and self-advocacy were the most important skills to have when transitioning into adult life. Consensus of parents and students was also apparent in rating transition goals and activities that related to independence, self-determination skills, and family involvement in transition planning (Powers et al., 2009).

Perspectives diverged, however, in the areas of barriers, teacher support, student self-confidence, and plans for having a family. Parents placed much greater importance on their child receiving school-based or teacher support during transition planning than did the students themselves. This may reflect other studies where students place much greater value on the support and involvement of their family during transition planning rather than school-based planning efforts (Hogansen et al., 2008; Landmark et al., 2007). This result may also reflect the idea that parents felt their child needed more support in transition than the child felt they needed. Students reported having a much higher level of confidence to address issues in transition than parents thought their child possessed. Moreover, students identified more barriers to transition than parents. In contrast to the support students sought from family during transition, family was also identified as a barrier. This may stem from the pressures students may face from family to conform to a certain future pathway. Overall, students may have a heightened awareness of the barriers to their own futures, but are equipped to face those barriers with the support of family or

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other help outside of the school setting. Lastly, students placed much higher importance than their parents on the concept of having a family such as having a partner, getting married, and/or having children (Powers et al., 2009). The idea that students are cognizant of future goals aimed at building a family is consistent throughout CLD transition research (Hogansen et al., 2008; Trainor, 2007).

Summary of the Literature

Viewed through the lens of national policy in secondary transition, special educator, Latino student, and parent perspectives, the literature on transition reviewed in this chapter paints a bleak picture of the future of adult outcomes for Latino youth with disabilities. Several important considerations from the literature frame the purpose of the current study. First, while secondary transition accountability measures grounded in IDEA 2004 have increased compliance with proper documentation of ITPs (Indicator 13) and, for most states, contributed to surface-level understanding of post-school outcomes one year out of high school (Indicator 14), significant limitations of these Indicators still remain. There is limited research focused on the impact of Indicator 13 and 14 in the areas of transition services and supports, program evaluation, the relationship between Indicators, improved postsecondary outcomes, and student and family involvement in transition planning. The relationship between Indicator 13 and student and family-driven transition plans has yet to be empirically understood (Erikson et al., 2013). Additionally, significant methodological limitations of Indicator 14 restrict the access and use of data to administrators and teachers to improve school-based supports and services for students with disabilities (Gerber et al., 2013; Vitelli, 2013).

In addition to accountability measures yielding little information for special educators to improve transition programming, Latino students with disabilities and their parents

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overwhelmingly report dissatisfaction when describing their experiences with school-based transition planning (Gil-Kashiwabara et al., 2007; Hogansen et al., 2008; Povenmire-Kirk et al., 2010; Rueda et al., 2005; Shogren, 2012; Trainor, 2005). A mismatch in teacher, Latino student, and parent expectations of the transition from school to adult life is evident in multiple studies (Geenen et al. 2001; Povenmire-Kirk et al., 2010; Trainor, 2005). Most shockingly, discrimination and negative stereotyping are common themes in the research on CLD students with disabilities and transition (Geenen et al., 2003; Gil-Kashiwabara et al., 2007; Hogansen et al., 2008; Trainor, 2007). Given the conclusions from the literature, this study focused on the critical need for, a) including and respecting the perspectives of Latino students and parents during transition planning and, b) special educators to be better informed about the unique needs of the students and families with whom they work. The current study expands the extremely limited research-base in Latino student and parent perspectives on transition and transition policy. By adding to the empirical understanding of the perspectives and needs of Latino youth with LD and their parents, we can begin to inform practice in secondary transition to build culturally responsive services and supports that provide a seamless pathway from school to adult life. The next chapter outlines the methods for the current study including research design, setting and participants, data collection and analysis procedures, and measures to ensure reliability and validity.

III: Methods

The purpose of this study was to examine the perspectives of Latino students, their parents, and teachers about post-school outcomes. Additionally, the research aimed to understand the types of supports that Latino students and their parents needed to pursue post-school goals, and how teachers provided support to students and parents for post-school goal development. This chapter describes the research design used for the study, setting and participants, data collection sources and procedures, data preparation, analysis procedures, and possible threats to reliability and validity, including measures taken to minimize them.

Research Questions

This study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the perceptions of post-school outcomes for twelfth grade Latino students with LD, their parents, and teachers? Specifically,
 - a. What types of post-school outcomes do twelfth grade Latino students with LD identify for themselves?
 - b. What types of post-school outcomes do the parents of twelfth grade Latino students with LD identify for their children?
 - c. What types of post-school outcomes do the teachers of twelfth grade Latino students with LD identify for their students?
2. What supports do students, parents, and teachers say that parents and students need to pursue their post-school vision?
3. What do students, parents, and teachers say that teachers do to support twelfth grade Latino students and their parents to develop their post-school vision?
4. How does the documentation on IEP/ITPs align with participant perceptions?

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Research Design

A qualitative research design was used to address the research questions. Focus groups and semi-structured interviews served as sources of data to examine the perspectives of twelfth grade Latino students with LD, their parents, and special educators. Additionally, IEP/ITP documents were used to understand the alignment of participant perspectives with legal documentation related to post-school goals and services.

Qualitative methods were chosen as the approach to this inquiry due to the breadth and depth of information required to answer the research questions. Key characteristics of qualitative research include 1) that inquiry takes place in the natural setting, 2) multiple sources of data are collected, 3) the researcher is viewed as the instrument for data collection, 4) inductive analysis is utilized, 5) meaning-making by participants is central, 6) design is flexible, and 7) a complex, rich picture of the data is presented (Creswell, 2009). Using qualitative methods, researchers are able to follow the inquiry process with a more open-ended approach, building on data that is being collected and entertaining emerging questions as they arise (Cresswell, 2009; Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999; Trainor, 2010). Qualitative research can be exploratory in nature and lends itself to investigating research questions that require detailed description whereby the researcher makes meaning of the data collected by revealing themes and generating interpretations (Cresswell, 2009). Deeply exploring attitudes, beliefs, and settings using rich description can uncover opinions and answers about positive student outcomes, effective learning environments, and/or promising teaching practices in education (Brantlinger, Jimenez, Klingner, Pugach, & Richardson, 2005). When studying transition, many researchers have used qualitative methods to seek a deeper understanding of students' and families' personal experiences (Murray & Naranjo, 2008; Povenmire-Kirk, Lindstrom, & Bullis, 2010; Trainor,

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2007). Further, qualitative methods are an effective way to capture the individualized and intersected experiences of CLD individuals with disabilities (Mertens, 2015).

Grounded theory was the method of inquiry used to guide this study (Charmaz, 2014). Conceptually, themes of the current study were grounded in the data as they were collected and in the ongoing analysis effort, not preconceived prior to data collection (Mertens, 2015). Using this approach, data were simultaneously collected and analyzed for emergent themes that drove subsequent data collection (Mertens, 2015). For example, initial themes that emerged from focus groups and IEP/ITP data shaped the direction of the individual follow-up interviews. Utilizing qualitative methods within a grounded theory approach created the space for flexibility and allowed the researcher to follow areas of inquiry as they emerged (Charmaz, 2014). The researcher triangulated varied data sources, therefore uncovering alignment and discrepancies within and across the data (Creswell, 2009). For example, the researcher looked to see if participant perspectives shared during focus groups and individual interviews were documented in IEP/ITP paperwork.

Setting and participants. The study was conducted in two high schools (A and B) located in a school district in the metro area of a large Midwestern city. The average enrollment of each high school was over 3,500 students, with over 8,000 students enrolled in the entire school district. Of the entire student body, 8% of the students had IEPs at High School A and 14% had IEPs at High School B. The school district defined “low-income” as being eligible for free or reduced lunch, living in substitute care, or families receiving public aid. Using this definition, 93% of High School A’s student population was considered low-income with 81% of High School B’s student population. Overall, the district student body was predominately Latino with 88% identifying with this ethnicity. 96% of High School A and 78% of High School B’s students

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identified as Latino. While the majority of the student population was Latino, 85% of the teachers in each high school identified as White (Illinois State Board of Education, 2014).

Across the two high schools, a total of 16 participants (n=16) were recruited to participate in the study. Participants included senior Latino students with LD (n=5), their parent(s) (n=6), and special education teachers (n=5). To maintain confidentiality, all participants were given a pseudonym. Four female and one male student participated in the study. Four students' mothers, and one student's mother and father participated. The average student age was 18, and all students were on track and scheduled to graduate in June 2015. All students spoke English fluently. While all parent participants were Spanish speakers, four identified that they were most comfortable speaking English during the interviews, and two parents expressed that they only spoke Spanish. All parents and students identified as Latino, and described their ethnicity as Mexican and/or Puerto Rican. Teacher participants included two male and three female special educators, all identifying as White. Teachers had a range of experience (range of years teaching = 8 - 27) and all, excluding one, taught in the current district for their entire teaching career. Teachers taught in a variety of settings including co-teaching in general education classes, resource room, self-contained consumer education courses, and self-contained vocational work program courses. See complete demographic information for all participants in Tables 1 and 2.

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Table 1: Student and Parent Demographics

Student	Student Age	Parent(s)	Parent/Student Ethnic Background	Language Spoken in Study (Parent)
Eva	17	Gabriela and Carlos	Puerto Rican and Mexican	English
Selena	18	Mariana	Mexican	Spanish
Diego	18	Olivia	Puerto Rican	English
Elena	17	Alma	Mexican	Spanish
Juliana	18	Carmen	Mexican	English

Table 2: Teacher Demographics

Teacher	# Years Teaching	# Years Teaching in District	Student Participant and Class Connection	School
Diana	9	9	Eva/Work Program	A
Melissa	16	13	Selena/Resource	A
Patricia	27	27	Diego/Consumer Education	A
David	13	13	Elena/Consumer Education	B
William	8	8	Juliana/Resource	B

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Recruitment Procedures. Purposeful, homogeneous sampling was used in an effort to select participants who best supported the researcher in answering the research questions (Creswell, 2009; Mertens, 2010; Patton, 2002). Recruitment was focused in geographic areas where the student population was predominately Latino. Recruiting from schools with a predominately Latino student body increased the likelihood that special educators had at least some experience working with Latino students and families. Ideally, such familiarity would be evident in their practices during transition planning. The aim of this study was to understand perspectives on post-school visions and supports in a context where special educators were more likely to understand the needs of Latino families and students during the transition planning process. Theoretically, this “best case scenario” environment created a foundation to understand the aligned perspectives of participants, and the areas where misalignment still occurred. Students and families of Latino backgrounds were exclusively enlisted in this study in an effort to expand the extremely limited research focused on the specific needs of this group subsumed in the larger CLD category. Twelfth grade students were recruited with the intent of learning about the trajectory of transition planning throughout their high school experience. Additionally, twelfth grade students were more likely to have a better-defined post-school vision, and plan to support that vision due to legally mandated transition planning starting at age fourteen and a half. Student participants were required to have the primary disability label of LD and identify as Latino/a on their IEP. Speaking English was not an inclusion requirement for this study; translation was available if participants did not speak English with sufficient fluency to render fluid two-way communication, and stated a sense of comfort communicating in Spanish. Special education teachers were asked to participate in the study if they had at least one senior Latino

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student with LD in at least one of their classes. Additionally, teachers were required to have at least one student-parent dyad participating in the study.

Once permission was obtained from the school district and IRB was fully approved (see Appendix A), the researcher met with two school administrators to discuss the study and review recruitment procedures and consent forms. Administrators asked six special education teachers, all of who had at least one senior Latino student with LD in at least one class, to participate in the study. Of those six teachers, five gave their informed consent (see Appendix B) to participate in the study and were able to each recruit one senior Latino student with LD and their parent(s). To recruit students and parents, participating teachers sent home a recruitment flyer and parental consent form (see Appendix C) with a student who expressed interest in the study. All five interested students returned a signed consent form to their participating teacher. The researcher scheduled individual meetings at the school with students to obtain assent (see Appendix D). Additionally, the researcher (or translator) spoke with each consented parent on the phone to answer any further questions about the study, confirm their participation along with their child, and explain the research tasks.

Measures and Data Collection Procedures

Focus group protocol. A focus group protocol was developed for each group of participants (i.e. students, parents, and teachers). Similar questions were asked across groups, however language was modified accordingly for each group. The step-by-step process as recommended by Krueger and Casey (2009) was used to develop the focus group protocols. Specifically, the seven-step process for developing a series of focus group questions included, 1) brainstorming possible questions, 2) refining the phrasing of questions, 3) sequencing questions to allow participants to establish their opinions of a topic and then expand on those perspectives,

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4) estimating the timing of each question/answer exchange, 5) getting feedback on questions, 6) revising based on feedback and, 7) testing protocol, possibly followed by another revision (Krueger & Casey, 2002). Questions were created to maximize the benefits of the focus group method to illicit a comfortable, open discussion while maintaining a purposeful, research-based focus (Krueger & Casey, 2009; Patton, 2002). During the initial brainstorming phase, questions were derived from the purpose of the study and relevant literature (Defur, Todd-Allen, & Getzel, 2001; Scanlon, Saxon, Cowell, Kenny, Perez-Gualdron, & Jernigan, 2008; Trainor, 2005, 2007). Specifically, interview questions from studies that investigated similar topics such as perspectives on post-school outcomes and relationships with teachers, students, and parents during the transition planning process were used as a guide during protocol development for the current study (Povenmire-Kirk et al., 2010; Scanlon et al., 2008; Trainor, 2005, 2007).

Separate but similar question sets were initially written for parents and teachers. Once initial questions were created, phrasing was refined to eliminate jargon (i.e. post-school outcome), make language simplistic and conversational, and use open-ended prompts (Krueger & Casey, 2009; Patton, 2002). Questions were then arranged to structure the conversation flow of participants from sharing more general opinions to specific examples or ideas. In addition, “uncued” questions, or questions without specific examples given for reference, were sequenced before specific prompts or cues. This allowed for participants to construct their own meaning from the question and determine the direction of the response. To determine if questions needed to be added or deleted from the protocol, timing on each question and answer segment was estimated using Krueger and Casey’s (2002) guidelines.

After finalizing the draft protocol, feedback was sought from expert researchers in the areas of qualitative methods, transition, and CLD students and families with disabilities.

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Revisions were made incorporating the expert feedback, and the parent questions were rephrased in language best suited for students. Once the three protocols were finalized with incorporated revisions, the questions were piloted with a special education teacher, a Latino student with LD, and a Latino parent of a student with LD (none of whom were participants in this study). Feedback from each pilot participant was requested regarding the understandability and utility of the questions, and each protocol was finalized for the study.

Individual interview protocol. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to give each participant the opportunity to clarify opinions, expand statements, and revisit topics discussed in the focus groups. Additionally, information from IEP/ITPs regarding post-school goals and supports were used as a foundation for discussion outlined in the interview protocol. Using a grounded theory approach to data collection, themes that emerged from the focus groups and IEP/ITP document analysis served to shape the individual interviews. Charmaz (2006) stated, “In addition to picking up and pursuing themes in interviews, we look for ideas through studying our data and then returning to the field and gather focused data to answer analytic questions and fill conceptual gaps” (p. 29).

Hence, a separate, open-ended interview protocol was developed from the focus group questions. Feedback on the interview questions was sought from expert researchers in the areas of qualitative methods, transition, and CLD students and families, and the final protocol was revised accordingly. Individual interview questions were designed to probe deeper into specific examples or perceptions, therefore flowing from a general to narrow structure. This question flow, along with notes taken on each participant during a preliminary analysis of focus group data, was used to encourage participants to comment on larger topics discussed in the focus groups, and then delve deeper into personal opinions and examples illuminating those topics.

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Not only were themes from the focus groups targeted in probes, additional questions with the specific aim of understanding participant perceptions about IEP/ITP documentation were added to the individual interview protocol. While questions and probes were semi-structured, a conversational approach was employed to maximize the comfort level of participants given the one-on-one format (Patton, 2002).

Document review organizer. IEP/ITPs were reviewed using an organizer created from the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) Indicator 13 Scoring Rubric. The ISBE Indicator 13 Scoring Rubric is an 18-item, yes/no checklist of required components in a transition plan. It is used for IL state accountability purposes by verifying that all components are present, written properly, based on age-appropriate transition assessments, and lead to a cohesive transition plan including an array of transition services. Components of the Rubric include postsecondary goals, services, course of study, supporting IEP goals, and student and outside agency invitations. The ISBE Indicator 13 Rubric verifies that age-appropriate transition assessments were used (a yes/no question), which implies that student interests and preferences were central in creating postsecondary goals and choosing accompanying services. It does not, however, require the auditor to specify the types of assessments used or if parent perspectives were taken into account in the development of the plan. Therefore, two open-ended questions regarding formal assessment names (e.g. AIR Self-Determination Scale) and/or general assessment type (e.g. student interview), and documentation of parent perspectives (referred to as “parent input/concerns” in the accompanying IEP) were added to the organizer. The addition of these two items provided a more complete profile of how student and parent perspectives were incorporated in the creation of ITPs. The categories of focus for the present study were 1) transition assessments, 2) postsecondary goals, 3) transition services, 4) agency linkages, and 5)

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parent input/concerns. The organizer was used, not as a checklist of transition components, but as an organizational tool to gather, review, and make sense of the data from the IEP/ITPs.

Data collection. All data were collected from December 2014 through February 2015. After consenting to participate in the study, students, parents, and teachers were asked to meet for one focus group each. Focus groups lasted an average of 109 minutes (range = 98-122 minutes). The parent and student focus groups took place at the public library in the community, and the teacher group took place at a local high school where the teachers were attending a district-wide professional development session. Prior to the groups, the researcher trained a doctoral student to be the assistant moderator by familiarizing the student with the study, focus group interview protocols, and discussing the intent of observing and taking notes during the three focus groups. The assistant moderator observed during each focus group interview and took detailed notes including specific areas of interest such as non-verbal communication, overarching themes, and agreements/disagreements.

At the conclusion of each focus group, participants were asked to sign up to partake in an individual interview approximately one to two weeks after the focus group. With the exclusion of one student and her parents, individual interviews with all participants were conducted within two weeks after the respective focus group was held. Each individual interview was conducted at a location chosen by the participant. Interviews took place at participants' homes, in classrooms or school offices, at public libraries, Starbucks, and McDonalds. Individual interviews lasted from 35-88 minutes with the average length of 58 minutes.

All focus groups and individual interviews were conducted by the researcher and audio-recorded. The services of a Spanish interpreter were utilized throughout the study for translation of all IRB approved recruitment and consent materials. This interpreter also provided services

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with two Spanish-speaking mothers for scheduling, the parent focus group, their individual interviews, and to conduct member checks with those interviewees. The interpreter was Mexican and a former graduate student who specialized in transition and Latino students and families. The researcher trained the interpreter prior to the parent focus group in a similar manner as the assistant moderator. The researcher familiarized the interpreter with the study and answered any questions, provided the focus group protocol, and worked with the interpreter to create specific procedures to ensure that the two mothers were fully participatory during the focus group. Immediately after each focus group, the researcher and assistant moderator spent time memoing any reflective thoughts including personal feelings about what was discussed in the group or how it was moderated. Notes were also taken about further observations or interpretations of the discussion of the group. After both the researcher and assistant moderator completed their notes, they debriefed about the focus group and specifically discussed their impressions of overarching themes or big ideas that emerged. For the parent focus group, the interpreter also participated in the debriefing discussion.

Student IEP/ITP documents were collected by the researcher prior to conducting all individual interviews to ensure that these documents could be analyzed and used during individual interviews. IEP/ITP documents were collected for the duration of the students' high school experience, or freshman to senior year. However, for the purposes of this study, only IEP/ITPs from senior year were analyzed and referenced during individual interviews. At the conclusion of data collection, each participant was compensated \$50 total for participating in the study.

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Data Analysis

Qualitative data were analyzed in several steps concurrent with data collection procedures. All focus group and interview data were transcribed verbatim by a transcription service. After each focus group, a preliminary analysis was conducted to get a general sense of the data to inform the individual interviews. The researcher listened to the audio of each focus group and reread all observational notes and memos taken by the assistant moderator and researcher. This was done prior to conducting individual interviews to get a preliminary understanding of individual participants' general perspectives and impressions regarding post-school outcomes and supports. During this preliminary analysis, notes were taken for each participant that highlighted individual perspectives and experiences to ensure that these ideas were probed during the interview. Additionally, IEP/ITPs were reviewed in conjunction with the preliminary analysis of the focus group data. Using the document review organizer, notes were taken from each student's IEP/ITP highlighting the areas to be probed during the interview. The researcher primarily focused on specific sections of the IEP/ITP documentation including postsecondary goals, transition services, agency linkages, and parent/input concerns. These areas directly informed the discourse in the individual interviews, and each IEP/ITP document was used as a visual for participants.

At the conclusion of all data collection, focus group, interview data, and IEP/ITP documents were closely analyzed using Creswell's (2013) recommendation to "blend general steps with specific research strategy steps" (p. 184). Therefore, general steps put forth by Creswell (2013) were followed along with the specific analytic strategy of grounded theory as outlined by Charmaz, 2014. Creswell's (2013) broad organizational steps were used through the analytic process: 1) organizing and preparing data for analysis, 2) reading through all data to get

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a general sense, 3) using a detailed process of coding, 4) using coding process to generate description, 5) constructing how the description will be represented, and 6) interpreting the description of the data. For steps three and four, Charmaz's (2014) detailed strategy of initial and focused coding was employed. Initial coding was grounded in the data itself and Charmaz's (2014) guidelines of 1) remaining open, 2) keeping codes short and precise, and 3) moving quickly through the data. The initial coding phase allowed the researcher to work closely with the data to ensure that "tendencies to make conceptual leaps or adopt extant theories before doing the necessary analytic work" were avoided (Charmaz, 2006, p. 48).

Once all data were transcribed verbatim, the researcher de-identified each transcription by replacing participant names with pseudonyms and deleting any identifiable information. The researcher also reformatted the transcriptions into a table to make initial coding functional within the document. Focus group transcripts were coded first, then individual interviews. Since individual interviews expanded from themes in the focus groups, this allowed the researcher to get a general sense of overarching themes first. During the initial coding phase, small chunks of data were coded using the "line-by-line" approach (Charmaz, 2014). To establish trustworthiness and ensure rigor in the analytic process, an expert in transition and a graduate student independently coded each focus group transcript along with the researcher. Prior to initial coding, the researcher met with the expert and graduate student to provide a brief training in Charmaz's (2014) procedures in grounded theory analysis and the line-by-line initial coding process.

During the initial coding phase, focus group transcripts were fully read to get a broad sense of the data. Then, the transcript was reread and short descriptors were assigned with text using the line-by-line approach, or phrases or sentences were assigned initial codes. Once initial

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coding of each focus group was complete, the researcher met with the expert and graduate student to review and compare codes. If there was any discrepancy in coding throughout each focus group transcript, the group discussed the discrepancy and the initial code was modified based on consensus. This procedure was employed for all three focus group transcripts. The same initial line-by-line coding method was used for the individual interviews. However, before the researcher initially coded all of the interviews, the researcher and graduate student independently coded 20% of the interviews to reach inter-coder agreement. After the three interviews were coded (one interview from each participant group), the researcher and graduate student met to discuss and, if there was a disagreement, codes were revised based on consensus. Additionally, interrater reliability was calculated until 85% agreement was reached. The formula used for interrater reliability was dividing the number of agreements by the total number of agreements plus disagreements and multiplying by 100 (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Interrater reliability for the three interviews was 93.02%, 92.92%, and 92.59% with total agreement at 92.81%.

The secondary phase of coding, or focused coding, synthesized and explained larger segments of data driven by the initial coding process (Charmaz, 2014). Focused coding is the process in which initial codes are studied to distinguish codes that appear frequently or are deemed most significant. These codes are then reorganized and reworded to conceptualize large portions of the data (Charmaz, 2014). For this study, (with the exclusion of IEP/ITPs) the layered nature of the data in the focus groups and individual interviews allowed the researcher to collapse initial codes across these two forms of data to create focused codes. Within the three participant groups, the researcher reread the focus group and individual interview transcripts and accompanying initial codes. The researcher derived focused codes by collapsing the most

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frequent initial codes and extracting any other initial codes that were significant in answering the research questions. Using this process, separate focused codes emerged for all three participant groups. Then, the researcher used Charmaz's (2014) guiding questions to refine the focused codes, "Which of these codes best accounts for the data?" and "What do your comparisons between codes indicate?" (p. 141). Analysis then progressed to understanding relationships and patterns within and across participant groups. The researcher shared the focused codes for each participant group with the expert and graduate student to gain their feedback and discuss their impressions of the codes. Finally, the original data were reviewed again to challenge any theories or hunches that emerged during analysis. The final reviewing stage allowed the researcher to further compare focused codes and raw data across participant groups. Central themes were developed for each participant group and research question at the conclusion of this iterative process.

IEP/ITP data were revisited after the preliminary analysis in conjunction with developing focused codes in an effort to connect and compare the documentation with participant perspectives that emerged in individual interviews. The researcher analyzed each student's IEP/ITP within the context of the focused codes derived from the interview data pertaining to the documents. The use of the documents as an additional data source added another layer of complexity to inform the research questions (Charmaz, 2006). Once the incorporation of the documents was complete, themes were visually organized with supporting quotations as rich evidence so that multiple perspectives were revealed (Creswell, 2003) about the participating Latino students, their parent(s), and teacher perspectives about life after high school.

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Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness of data collection and analyzing procedures were taken into account through triangulation, member checking, peer review and external auditors, and researcher reflexivity (Brantlinger et al., 2005; Creswell, 2009; Glesne, 2005; Mertens, 2010; Patton, 2002). Triangulation is the method of finding consistency among varied data sources or methods and can occur through multiple types of data collected, use of different investigators, theories, or methods (Brantlinger et al., 2005; Mertens, 2010). In this study, triangulation was employed through the types of data collected and methods used to collect those data. First, teachers, parents, and students participated in focus group and individual interviews. These varied participant types and data collection methods allowed the researcher to check for consistency of information gathered across sources. Additionally, IEP/ITPs were collected for the students in this study. Analyzing these documents in conjunction with interview data ensured an added level of credibility to the results of the study (Charmaz, 2014).

Member checking is the process of verifying that the data collected and conclusions drawn after analysis are an accurate representation of participant opinions and perspectives (Brantlinger et al., 2005; Glesne, 2006; Mertens, 2010). Brantlinger and colleagues (2005) defined member checking as research participants reviewing the accuracy of the transcriptions of data collected. Participants in this study were contacted for member checks at the conclusion of the individual interviews. The researcher summarized each interview and contacted each participant via phone to verify and allow the participant to make any revisions or additions to the summary. Fourteen participants were able to be contacted and had an informal conversation with the researcher regarding the accuracy of the summary presented, and were provided the opportunity to add or clarify information. The interpreter conducted member checks for the two

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Spanish-speaking mothers after their individual interviews, and reported revisions or additions of interview information to the researcher. Additionally, use of information gleaned from focus group interviews was used during individual interviews and, therefore, provided further verification of accuracy.

The techniques of peer review and use of an external auditor were also employed to enhance the credibility of the study. Peer review is the process of enlisting a colleague who is familiar with the phenomena being studied to provide input on the inquiry process (Glesne, 2006). Critical feedback will be sought throughout each stage of the inquiry process. Not only was expert feedback incorporated into the creation of both interview protocols, an expert and graduate student were trained to code data from the focus groups and interviews. An iterative group analytic process was used for the initial coding of the focus groups. Interrater reliability was reached at 92.81% for 20% of the individual interviews. Additionally, feedback was sought from both the expert and graduate student on the creation of focused codes as well.

The final measure taken to ensure credibility in the qualitative data collected and analyzed is the reflexivity of the researcher. Researcher reflexivity refers to being transparent in one's assumptions, values, and biases regarding the inquiry (Brantlinger et al., 2005). Throughout this study, the researcher took consistent and structured steps to weigh the potential impact of personal perspectives through a process of reflexivity aided by writing in a journal before and after both the focus group and individual interviews. Many of these notes or memos were also discussed directly after each focus group with the assistant moderator to process any personal beliefs or assumptions made during that phase of data collection. Disclosure of this nature was imperative to ensure that a posture of openness was taken and results were communicated with credibility and authenticity. However, while steps were taken to remove

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personal biases from the inquiry process, this qualitative research was grounded in the researcher being the instrument of design, data collection, and analysis (Patton, 2002). It was imperative that the researcher used her lens and insights to design the inquiry and make sense of the data as it unfolded (Brantlinger et al., 2005; Patton, 2002).

Summary

Patton (2002) defined neutrality as not constructing the inquiry to prove a predetermined perspective or truth. The researcher should remain open to the complexities of the inquiry as they emerge, and report balanced conclusions with descriptive supporting evidence. To encourage neutrality in this study, a grounded theory approach to inquiry was employed, ensuring that themes emerged from the data collection and analytic process. Additionally, the research questions of this study were purposefully structured to encourage a broad range of perspectives, opinions, and ideas - not predefined outcomes currently dictated by IDEA or scholarly literature. Using a qualitative research design and grounded theory approach yielded a variety of data that contributed to the complex understanding of the perspectives of Latino youth with LD, their parents, and special education teachers on the expectations and desires of life after high school. Specifically, a combination of focus groups, individual interviews, and document analysis of IEP/ITPs were used to answer the research questions of this study. Procedures in trustworthiness were utilized to ensure credibility in the collection and analytic phases of the research. The next chapter describes the results of this study including rich description and analysis of the qualitative data. Further, in depth analysis of the triangulation of data will be discussed.

IV: Results

This chapter is organized by the four primary research questions. Research questions one, two, and three are further organized by participant group. Participants expanded on focus group themes in greater detail in individual interviews. Therefore, data from focus groups and individual interviews were collapsed to illustrate the themes that emerged for research questions one, two, and three. Research question four was answered exclusively by data from individual interviews and ITPs due to maintaining confidentiality of students' ITP paperwork. Themes that emerged for research question four were somewhat aligned across participant groups, therefore each theme is reported across students, parents, and teachers. Comparisons across and within participant groups are made for each research question. The following four research questions guided this study:

1. What are the perceptions of post-school outcomes for twelfth grade Latino students with LD, their parents, and teachers? Specifically,
 - a. What types of post-school outcomes do twelfth grade Latino students with LD identify for themselves?
 - b. What types of post-school outcomes do the parents of twelfth grade Latino students with LD identify for their children?
 - c. What types of post-school outcomes do the teachers of twelfth grade Latino students with LD identify for their students?
2. What supports do students, parents, and teachers say that parents and students need to pursue their post-school vision?
3. What do students, parents, and teachers say that teachers do to support twelfth grade Latino students and their parents to develop their post-school vision?

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4. How does the documentation on IEP/ITPs align with participant perceptions?

Research Question #1: What are the perceptions of post-school outcomes for twelfth grade Latino students with LD, their parents, and teachers?

Student perceptions of post-school outcomes. Several themes emerged for each participant group under the topic heading of post-school outcomes. In response to what they envisioned their lives to look like after high school, students described a) meeting expectations, b) responsibilities and stressors, and c) an overall life vision including postsecondary education and part-time employment, career, living arrangements, and social relationships.

Meeting expectations. In the context of a post-school vision, all students were greatly concerned about meeting their own expectations. Students discussed the fear of “not making it” and compared themselves to peers without disabilities, “Oh, I’m never gonna be able to do everything else that everyone else is gonna be able to do” (Juliana, Focus Group, 1/17/15). Students felt nervous about “failing” in their future. Juliana feared not being able to make it in college, “Going into it and then not being able to do it and not being able to finish, having that pressure - I’m here now and I worked so hard to do this, and now I can’t pass” (Focus Group, 1/17/15). Diego, Elena, and Eva were also concerned about starting community college or vocational school and not finishing at all, or dropping out and returning to school at an older age. Eva talked about her fear of giving up. “I’m just worried that I’m just like, ‘Oh, this is too hard,’ or, ‘I don’t want to do this. Why am I here?’ and just forget about it” (Focus Group, 1/17/15). Selena was concerned she would make the wrong choice in career, “To not have that career that you want and always ask myself, ‘Oh, why did I choose this?’” (Focus Group, 1/17/15). Overall, students wanted to be satisfied with their life path, “I don’t want to wake up one day and decide that I’m unhappy with my life” (Juliana, Focus Group, 1/17/15).

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In addition to their own expectations, all students talked about meeting or exceeding the expectations of their families. Eva stated, “I don’t want to be a failure to my family” (Individual Interview, 2/4/15). In regards to career, Elena felt like she had to convince her mother that becoming a police officer was the right choice for her. “My mom will say, ‘You really want to be a police officer as a career?’ I’m like, ‘Yes. I’m really positive. I see what they do. I feel really confident. I feel like it’s right. It fits me.’” (Elena, Focus Group, 1/17/15). Diego talked about making his parents happy, “I mean, I know I can do it. Both of my parents, and make ‘em happy that I’m doing the right thing” (Focus Group, 1/17/15). Juliana talked about fulfilling her parents’ expectations:

I think they have high expectations for me, and I have those—I have those too, but I know what I’m capable of. I always have to tried to achieve and to make sure I wanna fulfill my mom’s and dad’s feelings for me, and I’m not sure if that’s what I want though (Individual Interview, 1/24/15).

Eva also talked extensively about the strong contrast between Diana’s and her parents’ expectations. Eva discussed the closeness she felt with Diana coupled with the tension of trying to negotiate with her parents:

I feel like she sees something different. I don't know if it's cuz we have that really close bond that she wants to make decisions. It's like, I mean, some of the decisions she tells me, it's like okay, I'll go with it, but my parents are not going to allow me to do that (Individual Interview, 2/4/15).

Eva described a situation illustrating the mismatched expectations:

She [Diana] was like, “Eva, I want you to get this job right away. Call them. Email them.” I’m like, and I was trying to explain to her, “I’m trying to convince my dad to let me, but he doesn’t want to.” I told my dad how to get—cuz it’s in Community P. He’s like, “You’re not taking no bus. You don’t even know how to ride it good,” and all this. I tell him that Diana tries to help me. He’s like, “I don’t care. I’m your father. She’s your teacher. I’m your father.” He’s like, “Whatever I say goes.” I’m like, I guess (Individual Interview, 2/4/15).

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Three students said they wanted to “prove their family wrong.” Eva said her extended family members compared her to cousins who made poor choices in early adulthood and “messed up” in life:

Yeah, ‘cause my dad’s side of the family—well, my cousin, she got pregnant at 15. She didn’t go to high school. She didn’t finish. Then my other cousins, I mean, they finished high school, but then they got pregnant and they didn’t go to college. It’s like a lot of—my uncle, he would always be like, “Oh, watch, you’re gonna be the next one to get pregnant. You’re not gonna finish school (Eva, Focus Group, 1/17/15).

Eva described how she combated these low expectations for her future with her actions:

I want to be the first one to actually go far so—cuz they have a shocked reaction when they see that I’m doing something with my life. Now that I say that I’m going to graduate high school, now whatever they said is like, “Whatever, I don’t care.” Every time they tell me something, it’s like, “Okay, we’ll see. We’ll see what happens.” Another year, “Oh, I’m not pregnant. Still in school” (Focus Group, 1/17/15).

Juliana and Selena both described extended family members who compared them to cousins who were the same age and deemed highly successful in their families. Extended family members held lower expectations for Juliana and Selena compared to their cousins. In Juliana’s experience, her aunt was “really ignorant” about her learning disability:

A lot of the time, they’ll compare me to her. They’ll put us against each other. It’s like, ‘Oh, well, Jade is gonna graduate this year and you could’ve graduated with her, but you have LD and you had to do another year of school.’ I’m like, ‘Yeah, but—I want to prove them wrong and say, ‘Ha, I got my degree, and I went to college.’ A lot of stuff they say is just because they’re misinformed. They don’t understand my disability (Focus Group, 1/17/15).

Selena expressed the desire to be looked at as an individual, “I need to do my own stuff. They compare me with her. I know she has her own life, and I’m gonna do my own life now” (Focus Group, 1/17/15).

Responsibilities and stressors. Students were concerned about the added responsibilities and stress that graduating and transitioning into adult life would present. All students discussed feeling excited about moving on, but nervous about the responsibilities of adulthood. Eva

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described her feelings of nervousness about depending on her parents and new found independence, “Because it’s like I’m not gonna be depending on my parents any more. They’re not gonna be—well, they’re gonna be pushing me, but then again, it’s me. I have to do it on my own.” Diego echoed the notion that self-sufficiency would be stressful, “Because work, everything’s gonna be on you if you’re living alone. Money-wise, stuff like that. Well, I mean, it’s gonna be hard, because work and then bills and stuff like that.” Juliana’s stress was directed more at academic responsibilities and supports:

I’m nervous, too. At school, you have—you can go and see a teacher to get tests taken again. You’re not going to have that when you go to college a lot of times. I can go and see Teacher Participant William to take a test and have him read it to me. I’m nervous about that. I see myself studying a lot and I just can picture how stressful it is just to be at school and studying and making sure you have your grades up.

Selena’s nervousness and stress centered on balance and scheduling, “Confusing probably, because of homework and then you have to go to a job and different hours, not enough sleep. Yeah. Stressful, also.” Even when discussing exciting aspects of adulthood such as wanting to travel, students were still candidly aware of the stress of taking over certain responsibilities in their lives. Eva discussed the responsibilities of adulthood:

When I was younger, I used to make a whole list of what am I gonna do right after high school and when I’m out of my house, but then again, it’s like if I don’t go to college and go to work, how am I gonna get money and start a life of my own? (Focus Group, 1/17/15).

Life Vision. Students shared what they envisioned their lives to look like after high school graduation. The life visions included, a) attending postsecondary education or training programs and working part-time, b) career goals, c) living arrangements, and d) social relationships.

Postsecondary education and part-time employment. While each student had different ideas of career choices, all students expressed that they planned to pursue some type of

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postsecondary education or training program and wanted to be employed after high school. Eva and Selena both expressed the desire to attend community college while working a part-time job. Eva described what she envisioned, “A part-time job, cuz I’ll be going to school. It’s like, if I have school in the morning, then working after to make a little money” (Individual Interview, 2/4/15). Selena wanted to work in retail while attending the local community college. Elena wanted to attend community college as well, but was unsure about working, “It’s either have a job and do school or maybe a full-time student in college and just go to school every day.” Diego wanted to attend a vocational program in automotive technology and maintain his current job at Walmart or get a new job fixing cars. Like Elena, he was unsure about working while attending school, “I mean, if I could do work and school at the same time, like part-time, then yeah, but if it’s gonna be too hard, then I’ll just rather wait” (Individual Interview, 1/21/15). Juliana, Eva, and Selena expressed the desire to attend community college for two years and then transfer to a four-year university. While Eva and Selena were unsure if they would eventually attend a four-year university, Juliana expressed strong determination to attend the four-year university of her choice. Juliana was the only student who did not want to work while in school because she was concerned about maintaining focus on her studies, “I would rather just mostly focus on my schoolwork than have a job because I don’t wanna get like, ‘Oh, I have to work this day, and I have to study for a big exam, and I can’t schedule that’” (Individual Interview, 1/24/15).

Career. All students expressed the desire to have a career that they enjoyed and had a high level of interest in, but were not particularly well informed of the needed training and education required. Students talked about career options that they felt were “cool” and either already possessed some skills in the vocation, or had a rationale for their interest in the field.

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Four out of the five students discussed two potential career pathways that were very different in terms of skills needed and education required. Additionally, students tended to lack knowledge about the specific careers that interested them, both in terms of what the actual career entailed and the pathway to achieve that career. For example, Juliana wanted to be an author because she loved listening to audio books and had an idea of what that career would look like, “Just sit in my pajamas all day and write books.” However, she also discussed being a sign language interpreter and that she already had skills in that area:

I know a bunch of different signs. I always thought of how it’s an interesting culture and an interesting language to learn. One of my uncles, my great-uncle is deaf, so I would sign to him. I just always liked it. I’m like, I could do that.

Like Juliana, Diego also talked about having prior skills in a career area that he wanted to pursue:

Mechanics, I like working on cars. That’s what I’ve been doing since my dad—ever since my dad got hurt. He was teaching us, and now I do it for myself so that I don’t have to go and pay somebody else to fix my car.

Diego also mentioned being an engineer because his brothers thought he would be good at it, but was not sure what types of tasks engineers perform at their jobs. Eva envisioned a career as a kindergarten teacher or ultrasound technician because she liked teaching kids and thought that a pregnancy “looks cool on the screen.” Selena also wanted to work in early childhood in a daycare or be a physical therapist. When discussing why she wanted to be a physical therapist, Selena described a story of watching someone massage her relative’s leg while he was in the hospital. Like other students, Selena’s motivation to be a physical therapist was limited to an isolated experience that provided little understanding of the career choice. Contrasting with the majority of students, Elena had only one idea for a career choice: a police officer. Similar to Diego and Juliana, Elena’s choice was grounded in her hands-on experience, “I go to this

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program, and they basically do—you get your uniform and everything. You get all this type of equipment and stuff. It's pretty cool. I really like it.”

Living arrangements. All students expressed the desire to move out of their family's home at some point after graduating high school, but with hesitations stemming from a sense of responsibility to assist in their family's household. Eva, Diego, and Juliana all envisioned moving out into an apartment with roommates within one to two years after graduation. “After high school, well, I plan to move out—not right away, but I'm saving up money. I could get an apartment. Yeah, so then I could start being on my own and all that” (Eva, Individual Interview, 2/4/15). Selena and Elena had the same vision of continuing to live with their parents for longer than two years after graduation, but eventually moving out and renting an apartment. Elena spoke about moving out of her parents' house later in life because she would be better equipped to make her own choices:

I'll have more time to focus on school and my job instead of moving out right away because I think it's really rushed. You could get stressed about it--I plan to be 25 cuz you're more mature and more fully grown and think about more—to do better choices (Individual Interview, 1/31/15).

Eva, Juliana, and Diego described a conflicted feeling of guilt surrounding moving out of their parents' home. Diego's parents had health and financial issues that he felt he needed to provide some support with, but also wanted to live independently:

I know my dad for sure is gonna need help, but it's just like—I mean, he's too strict. I don't want to leave, but then I do want to leave. Then again, like I said, I don't want to leave, 'cause then I know they're gonna need help. My mom can't do all of it by herself (Focus Group, 1/17/15).

Eva also expressed this conflicted idea of staying connected to her parents while entertaining the idea of going to school out of state:

My dad feels like if I go out of state I'm not gonna keep in contact with him, and then that's how all his kids are gonna be. We're not gonna be there no more for them.

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They're still gonna be my parents. I'm still gonna be here, I'll just be somewhere else. I feel like they don't want that, me going out of state (Focus Group, 1/17/15).

Juliana also described a feeling of guilt when discussing moving out with her mother, "Yeah, then my mom feels bad. She goes, 'You wanna leave me? You're gonna leave me? You're gonna leave me with your dad and your baby sister?'" (Focus Group, 1/17/15). Eva mediated discussions with her parents by telling them the truth, "I mean, I say I'm gonna leave them, 'cause I am one day. I'm not gonna stay in the house forever" (Focus Group, 1/17/15).

Relationships. When discussing relationships with friends after graduation, all students expressed that their current relationships were going to change. Students discussed the idea that while there may be the intention of maintaining relationships, high school friendships will not remain intact. Juliana stated, "Everyone always says that they're still going to be friends after high school, but they're not" (Focus Group, 1/17/15). Eva echoed Juliana's opinion about not keeping in close contact with high school friends, "They keep in contact here and there when they need me" (Focus Group, 1/17/15). In addition to the idea of not maintaining relationships with high school friends, students discussed friends as negative influences on their lives. Elena talked about the influence of her high school friends:

I've been focusing more on me than my friends because some of my friends are really bad influence. Like they skip school. I sometimes tell them to stop because it's their senior year. I mean it's them. I'll be their friend; I'll support them on anything, but I'm just saying the fact that—like basically some of them wanna drop out but I just tell them, 'No. Keep going. We're almost there. It's almost May,' but they just don't listen. I just focus on me right now and school—my huge goal right now is to graduate high school (Individual Interview, 1/31/15).

Eva discussed the idea that living with her friends after high school may influence her to not attend college:

I feel like those people are gonna make me not want to go to college. I mean, they say they're gonna go to school, but then again, it's like that party life, it's gonna get to me and I'm gonna be like, "Oh, I'll go the next day or I'll go the next day" (Focus Group, 1/17/15).

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All students talked about the potential negative impact of romantic relationships and the desire to stay single after high school. Students agreed that “focusing on yourself first” rather than engaging in a romantic relationship was important to achieving personal goals. Selena agreed with her father’s advice of having a career and not asking a boyfriend for money, “You have to finish first a career, then have time for a boyfriend” (Individual Interview, 1/27/15). Diego felt like a romantic relationship was too much “drama” stating, “It’s too much drama for relationships. I’d rather just wait and then take it step by step” (Focus Group, 1/17/15). Juliana agreed that delaying a romantic relationship would allow her to focus on schoolwork:

Cause you’re gonna have to focus on your school work and then you’re gonna have to make time for that other person. I would rather just focus on my school and then get what I want first and then have a relationship later (Focus Group, 1/17/15).

Overall, students were aware of how engaging in certain relationships with peers (romantic and friendship) could divert their focus, specifically on school.

That’s what I realized this year, not to focus on relationships, to focus on school. I feel like I became my own person at school. When people see me, they see me on my own, not worrying about other things. I got much better” (Eva, Individual Interview, 2/4/15).

Parent perceptions of post-school outcomes. Parents discussed their child’s post-school outcomes in the context of several themes including a) parenting by learning from past experiences and b) an overall life vision that included postsecondary education expectations and concerns, employment, and living arrangements.

Making parenting choices by learning from my experience. Four out of six parents talked about making choices for their child’s transition based on learning from experiences in their life. Gabriela and Carlos extensively discussed their experiences in school and how those experiences influenced the choices they made with their own children. For example, Carlos

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talked about why he wanted to give Eva the opportunity to focus solely on college if she wanted to:

As soon as I turned to 16 my dad's like, "You need to find a job. You need to work." I always worked. That was most of the Hispanic community, that's what it is. Instill work, work, work, work. My dad's like—I'm like, "I think I should go to school." "For what? That's a waste of time. Stay in work. Stay in work" (Individual Interview, 2/10/15).

Gabriela discussed her experiences postponing school because she had Eva as a teenager, attending graduate school, and her experience as a Latina. She talked about her experiences in the context of affording Eva better opportunities:

I will say, I think ideally it may sound bad or racist, and I'm not trying to be, but I want my daughter to be labeled like everyone else that's white. Because if you really see the families, especially with everyone I go to school with, I've paid attention to the African American classmates and the white classmates, Caucasian ones, and the Latinos which, in my master's when I graduated, there was probably three Latinas graduating. That's it. Everyone else was African American and Caucasian.

I paid attention to how they were able to make it there. You can see a big different age-wise. The Caucasian people graduating were much younger, had the support of the parents financially. They went straight into college right after high school. The African Americans and the three little Latinas that were there, we had our families, and we had to struggle and work and suffer, and barely make it. It was a much older group as far as Latina and African American. I was one of the youngest ones in there. Everyone else was in their 50s, barely going, barely struggling to make it cuz it's much harder as they age. The white girls were going for the master's at 20 something years old.

I felt very jealous. That's the truth. I'm like if I feel like this, how's my daughter going to feel? You know, so that's why I don't want her to work and have to struggle, because I want her to have that type of life where she can go to school and not have to worry about paying for a college book, and paying for her classes (Focus Group, 1/10/15).

Carmen also talked about having Juliana as a teenager, the struggle she went through to financially support Juliana, and how that impacted her own schooling and parenting decisions that she made for Juliana today. Gabriela and Carmen both stated they wanted Eva and Juliana to attend college directly after high school. Carmen related this to her own experience:

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I went to school, dropped out. Then I was like, “Oh, I’m not going to go. I’m going to wait.” Then I waited, and then I was so scared. I was scared to go back. Could you imagine these kids with disabilities? They probably be twice as scared and not want to go back (Focus Group, 1/10/15).

When discussing needing more information about postsecondary options for Diego, Olivia talked about her mistake of attending a non-accredited community college training program, and the financial burden of making that uninformed choice:

I didn’t know where to go, and I chose the college that doesn’t have accredits, and I graduated from there, but now, I don’t know if I did the best thing, going there. I got stuck with the loans and no certification (Individual Interview, 1/21/15).

Of the three parents who talked about past experiences, two students shared that they understood their parents’ past experiences and why those experiences influenced their parenting practices. Juliana did not discuss her mother’s history and how it influenced her parenting. However, both Diego and Eva referred to their parents’ schooling experiences in regards to making better choices for their future pathways.

Life Vision. Parents envisioned full lives for their child after high school. Life visions, as described by parents, included a) concerns and expectations about postsecondary education, b) employment, and c) living arrangements after high school.

Postsecondary education expectations and concerns. All parents expected their child to attend college, community college, or trade school after graduating high school. Gabriela and Carlos, Alma, and Mariana expected their child to attend college or community college and get a degree or certification. Carlos stated his expectations for Eva, “At least go get a two-year degree and start off small. Get something in the small field and then work your way up” (Focus Group, 1/10/15). Mariana preferred that Selena went to a 4-year university, but Selena wanted to attend the local community college:

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My aspirations or expectation for Selena is to get a job and be well prepared in school to be able to continue with her life. I would like to see her go for four years but Selena really wants to go to Community College [X]. I will support Selena going to Community College [X], but I would rather Selena go to a 4-year university to be better prepared (Individual Interview, 1/24/15).

Carmen expected Juliana to attend the local community college, and then transfer to the 4-year university of Juliana's choice:

Hopefully she goes to University [Y], because that's her dream. Most likely she'll get in, because she's that determined. When Juliana wants something, she wants it. We have to first go to Community College [X] though, take baby steps to get there (Focus Group, 1/10/15).

While Olivia originally expressed that she wanted Diego to pursue only employment after graduating high school, she later changed her mind after discussing postsecondary education with other parents in the focus group. Olivia discussed her expectation of having Diego attend trade school to become a mechanic within two years after graduating high school:

Gabriela made a point that I didn't think of until I came here today. She brought it to my—she like, open my mind and you know what, it's good if he goes right after [high school]. Because it'll keep him focused. I do want him within the two years to actually make that commitment of going to the process of becoming a mechanic. Go to a trade school, to become somebody. Because I want him to become somebody (Focus Group, 1/10/15).

While all parents expected their child to continue their education after high school, they expressed significant concerns about handling the workload in college. Olivia expressed her concern, "If he starts going to school and doesn't grasp everything, he's gonna get frustrated, he's gonna wind up leaving, and you have tuition to pay" (Focus Group, 1/10/15). Gabriela echoed this concern about Eva giving up:

What would take a normal child—and I use the word normal, but I feel she's normal. "Normal" for somebody else, for them, like she was saying, somebody taking an hour to do their homework, it's gonna take her three to four hours at college level homework, even more for a very simple assignment. She's gonna wanna give up really easy (Focus Group, 1/10/15).

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Carmen talked about the realities of Juliana's needs and college:

It takes her—what it takes an hour for somebody else, it'll take her three hours to complete her homework. That's where we're at right now, because she's not gonna have the same teachers in—where they're gonna coddle her. In college they don't coddle you. They tell you this is what your work is, done, see you next week (Focus Group, 1/10/15).

Alma expressed her concern about Elena's self-esteem in college, "She needs more time to do stuff. If she sees the other kids that are doing work in two minutes, and for her it's going to take more time. That will affect and underestimate her self-esteem" (Focus Group, 1/10/15).

Employment. Despite some students' desires to get a part-time job while in college, five out of six parents preferred their child to focus fully on college rather than get a job while in school. Mariana stated her feelings, "Selena wants to work, but it's going to depend of the classes that she—how many classes that she's going to take. For me, it's more important to go to school" (Individual Interview, 1/24/15). Carlos and Gabriela had different perspectives related to Eva getting a job while in school:

She's thinking of ways to try to get out of school. She's thinking going and getting a job is her way out of school. To me, I'm actually—not that I'm gonna force her, but I'm trying to explain to her that she needs both. She can juggle both things together so she can come out in the future and be somebody that she wants to be (Carlos, Focus Group, 1/10/15).

However, Gabriela expressed different views:

I don't want my daughter to go get a job right now. I want my daughter to focus on school because of the type of people that I've been around with, and seen how they have been able to progress much easier by going to school as soon as they graduated high school and having their parents support them and allow them to attend school without having to struggle financially about, 'How am I gonna pay for this or that?' (Focus Group, 1/10/15).

When talking about employment after postsecondary education, five out of six parents echoed and supported their child's career aspirations. Alma was the only parent who did not want Elena to pursue becoming a police officer. However, Alma expressed that regardless of her

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wishes, she would always support her daughter, “My daughter told me that she would like to be a police officer. I don't like the idea of my daughter becoming a police officer, but if that's her decision, then I will respect what she wants” (Focus Group, 1/10/15). While all parents identified their child's career aspirations and predominately supported these employment pathways, many parents shared concerns about their child in the employment world. Carmen was very nervous about challenges that Juliana may experience on the job due to her disability:

Employment, that's the only thing I'm scared of because a lot of jobs expect you to read a lot, and that's where she's gonna have difficulties. I think, honestly, that's where she's gonna have to tell her boss, like, ‘I have LD. Could you work with me?’ Sometimes it makes bosses apprehensive of hiring people like this because they think it's a big disability. That they're not gonna learn. They're not fast learners. My daughter is a fast learner (Individual Interview, 1/23/15).

Alma was hesitant about what Elena would need to be successful in a job, but didn't share that concern directly with her daughter:

I didn't talk to my daughter, but I don't know if my daughter is able to do what she has to do in a job. I don't say anything to my daughter. It's only in my mind. I recommended that Elena goes full-time to school and she said okay, but at the same time I would like to see my daughter in a job to be able to see how much she is able to do in that job (Focus Group, 1/10/15).

Living arrangements. Parents' perspectives on living arrangements after high school were somewhat aligned with their child's. All students expressed that they would continue to live with their parents for at least one to two years after high school. However, when discussing the idea of living after high school, the majority of students were much more focused on discussing their plans to move out in the future. In contrast, parents focused their discussion of this topic on their child continuing to live in their home, stressing that that is what their child desired. Mariana explained Selena's desires regarding living with her parents, “Selena doesn't want to be separate—to live separately from—we are only three in our family: papa, me, and Selena. So we are going to continue to live together” (Individual Interview, 1/24/15). Carlos

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expressed why he thought Eva wanted to stay at home after high school, “She wants to stay cuz she knows she needs the support and the help” (Individual Interview, 2/10/15). Carlos went on to discuss his expectations and vision for Eva moving out in the future:

Now she’s not really focused into school. Once I see her and she’s focused into school, and she’s in her third year of college, or second year of college, and she’s like, ‘Dad I would like to move out,’ I mean I would give her a try. I would let her go (Individual Interview, 2/10/15).

Carmen discussed Juliana’s reasoning for wanting to continue living with her parents:

Me and her are so close, and her father—well, her father who is just her step-father—is so close to her. She’s like, “No, Dad, I’m not going nowhere. No, Mom, I will always stay right here because I need my food cooked and I need my clothes washed,” and that’s why (Individual Interview, 1/23/15).

Olivia described the only misalignment of child-parent perceptions regarding living after high school. Olivia preferred that Diego lived at home until he was 25 years old, and clearly communicated this to Diego. While Diego knew this was his mother’s desire, he expressed that he would like to move out in one to two years after high school. He also discussed stress around helping to financially support his parents. Olivia explained her rationale for wanting Diego to stay at home:

I wasn’t ready for my second-oldest to leave. He wasn’t ready. I knew in my heart he wasn’t ready to leave, and he left, and he made the wrong decision to leave. Once you leave, you can’t come back because it’s our rules, not yours. You have to be capable of doing that. For Diego, if he’s going to school, taking a trade, because this way, he knows that he could still help us. Because we are struggling. Like I told him, ‘If you’re staying here, you have to help us with some bills.’ Right now, he’s doing that (Individual Interview, 1/21/15).

Teacher perceptions of post-school outcomes. When discussing post-school outcomes for their students, teachers talked about themes including a) being “realistic,” b) post-school concerns about postsecondary education and self-advocacy, employment, living with family, and social relationships, and c) post-school hopes.

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Being “realistic.” Teachers expressed that students needed to be “realistic” when pursuing post-school options. Teachers discussed the idea that, often times, students did not know what a particular career pathway entailed. For example, Melissa shared her thoughts on students’ visions for a career after high school, “A lot of times our students come up with these grandiose ideas and you have to bring them down. I know one of the other teachers mentioned you have to—it’s not kind to just let their fantasy go on” (Individual Interview, 12/15/14). In response to this, teachers talked about bringing “realistic” post-school options into the school so students could access these career pathways. For example, David explained his approach with students:

I think all the kids, one of the best things you can do is to help them be realistic. A lot of them say they wanna be things that they’re just not going to be able to be. I think the kindest thing to do is to level with somebody, in a straightforward way, and just say, “Here’s the deal. Here’s what it takes to become...” (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

Melissa talked about how she worked with Selena regarding her interest in physical therapy:

You have to be honest with her and tell her, “Selena, you don’t really like math. You don’t really like science. Maybe you should look this way, instead of that way.” It’s tough, but you have to do that with them because, otherwise, it does them no favors, to set them up to fail (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

Diana discussed how she tailored the post-school opportunities she brought into the school based on “realistic” options for students:

Again, with us, it is realistic because the resources we are bringing to them are realistic. For instance, for the job program, we’ve got a security company coming out, where they can work, and then get their license there. We’ve got the beauty school. Even though they may be thinking unrealistic thoughts, we’ve got all these other things at their fingertips. That helps, guides them into the direction that they would feel more confident in (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

Patricia talked about students having “unrealistic” goals even while in high school:

Again, sometimes students have unrealistic goals of “I wanna go to regular ed classes” and they’re not going to succeed. They just can’t be going back and forth to an instructional class and to a regular class, so once they’re in a regular ed class there’s 30

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students, they are going to need to speak up if they need help and show up after school, which many of the students don't (Individual Interview, 12/12/14).

Post-school concerns. All teachers felt that their student would pursue some type of postsecondary education or training program. Teachers also described students holding jobs and continuing to live with their families. When discussing post-school outcomes for their students, teachers expressed concerns related to postsecondary education, self-advocacy, employment, living with family, and relationships. In the focus group and individual interviews, teachers initiated the discussion about post-school outcomes with comments such as “he’s ready to move on” and “she’s ready to go.” However, teachers immediately followed these comments with concerns about challenges or barriers to success that students may encounter after high school.

Postsecondary education & self-advocacy. Teachers were unsure if students would excel in postsecondary education due to academic level and self-advocacy skills. William expressed that he did not feel Juliana was ready for a 4-year university. Patricia stated that she did not think Diego would “do well in college,” but he should be able to research schools, visit, and talk to people about college experiences. David expressed his concern regarding community college for Elena, “In terms of her academic skills and college—my concern is her ability to process the information at the level that’ll be expected” (Focus Group, 12/9/14). David went on to discuss Elena not placing into credit courses and getting discouraged:

I just wonder where she’ll wind up with the placement test. I don't know that she’ll be able to be placed into college-level classes...The whole idea of going to college is to do college-level work. People who take the placement tests and have three and four classes to take, remedial classes, before they get to a college-level class. That can get discouraging. Then your two years becomes four, and you lose your way (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

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Melissa raised the concern about students not having a “go-to” person like in high school.

While Melissa felt that Selena was academically ready to attend a community college, she commented on Selena’s ability to self-advocate in a college setting:

I feel she will not have good enough self-advocacy skills and communication skills to get what she needs, if she doesn’t have a go-to person to help her, I guess, which she probably won’t in college (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

Melissa went on to explain her concern:

My concern is the student really doesn’t go to anyone. I look through her grades, and maybe she falls under the radar cuz it looks like things are okay. Then, I’ll get an email from one of her teachers, like, “Selena never turned in an essay from a week ago.” I’m like, “Oh, okay.” I’ll ask Selena about it, and she’ll be like, “Oh, I wasn’t really sure what to do.” That’s a concern, as a senior (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

Employment. Teachers expressed concerns about employment after high school such as the ability to hold a job, achieving a work-life balance, and making a career choice. William talked in depth about Juliana’s ability to “handle” a job and his impression of the conflict within her family regarding getting a job:

I don't know if she’s gonna be able to handle a job. We actually talked today about getting a job. Job-wise, her mom doesn't want her to work. Step-dad's like, “Well, she may work.” Mom doesn't want it. She [Mom] has the unrealistic goal of like, “Hey, we're gonna have this phenomenal senior year” and she's not doing that. Her mom wants her to have that senior year where you go on trips and all this stuff. She’s told her mom that’s not gonna happen. I think she wants to work. I don't know if she’ll work during those two years. I really doubt it (Individual Interview, 12/16/14).

Patricia shared her concerns regarding Diego and employment after high school. While Patricia was fully confident that Diego would be successful maintaining a job (as he currently was), she expressed concerns about him over-committing himself to fulfill financial commitments to his family:

I think it was yesterday, he mentioned he was tired. I don’t know if it’s—it should probably come from home, somebody should look over how many hours he’s working, because he’s just—with filling out an application for this next place, he basically told them he’s got another job but he wants to, on his days off, work there. It’s like he wants

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to constantly be going, and I—somebody needs to explain to him that you have to kind of balance things (Individual Interview, 12/12/14).

Melissa and David discussed their thoughts about Selena and Elena's areas of career interest.

Both teachers felt that the students expressed interest in career areas that were a mismatch for their skill sets:

With Selena, she says, "Oh, I want to be a physical therapist or maybe work in a daycare." Two great jobs. Completely different skill set though. She's a very caring person, so I could see how she could look into both fields. Like I said, academically, I don't know that she would be able to do the physical therapy route. I just feel that the daycare is a better fit for her (Melissa, Individual Interview, 12/15/14).

David explained why pursuing police work was the wrong match for Elena:

She's not tough enough. I think the thinking demands in the moment—she's not a quick thinker. She's a reflective person. Criminal justice, to me, is police work. Police work is—effective police people have great judgment. She has very good judgment, but—when she's been put on the spot in class, she balks. Why? Because she needs time to process. Then you might see her look at you, and then you'll go, "Elena?" Then she'll offer her thoughts, and they're pretty decent. Police people have to have immediate response in the moment, and it's behavioral. It calls for—I think she has really good personal judgment, regarding behavior. I don't think that she would have, also, the wherewithal to take action, the physical action (Individual Interview, 12/16/14).

Living with family. Teachers expressed multiple concerns about students continuing to live with their families after high school such as stress of helping financially support family, becoming "complacent," being a caretaker, and not pursuing an independent life. Melissa and William were concerned about their students being caretakers at home. In Selena's case, Melissa discussed her taking care of her parents:

She has a great relationship with her parents. Her parents are older, so I feel like, a lot of times, she's taking on a caretaker role, instead of doing typical teenage things. I think she's doing a lot of household work and that sort of thing at home (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

William described Juliana being responsible for her little sister, "It seems like she does a lot of taking care, when the dad's at work, or mom needs to go out. I think she definitely does a lot of

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babysitting (Focus Group, 12/9/14). William explained why taking on a caretaker role in the home was concerning to him:

I get worried that she's gonna fall in that trap of staying at home, watch the kid. She even said today she had to babysit while the parents went to go Christmas shopping. To see that maturity level, it's like getting out on your own, but she always had that backup plan. She could stay at home. I see her potentially wanting to go out, but I feel that she's gonna fall in that trap with the family (Individual Interview, 12/16/14).

When asked about her greatest concerns for Selena after high school, Melissa felt unsure when describing the possibility of Selena becoming “complacent” if she stayed at home with her family:

Just that Selena and her family would become complacent with her being at home, and that would be okay, that maybe she wouldn't have to get a degree, or she wouldn't work full-time, but that'd be okay. There's a lot of much more horrible things that could happen, so, in the scheme of things, I don't know if that's right to say that's my greatest concern with her. It's just the withdrawing, staying home. I guess, but who am I to judge? If that works for their family, I can't say that that's wrong (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

Diana, who also worked with Diego, explained her concerns and about Diego and his twin brother living at home and financially supporting their parents:

They're twins, but they're both very heavy workers. Right now, they're supporting the family. On another respect, I could see both of them living together, away from their house, as far as they can go, because they wanna be on their own, to have their own money (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

Relationships. Three out of five teachers expressed concerns about the negative impact of social relationships (romantic or friendships) on their students after high school. Melissa felt that friendships would be positive for Selena after high school, but was unsure about a romantic relationship. David was the only teacher who felt that a romantic relationship would not negatively impact Elena's trajectory in her life after high school. William and Melissa's perspectives on romantic relationships and friendships for their students aligned with student perceptions in that these relationships would change after high school. For example, William

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talked about his concern about Juliana's maturity level and how friendships may change if a boyfriend is introduced:

See, I'm a little concerned with Juliana and the fact of—she's awesome with her friends. You've met her. She's a very nice girl. I just think, when it comes down to meeting that right person, even with her friends, they're all—immaturity-wise, they're not there yet. I'm just concerned that—there's about four or five of them—gets that first boyfriend or girlfriend. What's gonna happen? Right now, I don't think she's there, emotionally, or even maturity level, and with her friends, too. That is a concern. I think that's gonna be a big thing, when that does happen. How is she gonna handle it? How is that group of friends gonna handle it? That is concerning because something's gonna happen, and I don't know how she'll handle it when one of her best friends gets one, or she does. That nucleus, and how that changes (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

Diana's impression of relationships for Eva aligned with Eva's opinion of herself, "She can find herself in trouble, too. Some relationships with her girlfriends and boyfriends. A lot of times—sometimes, she'll go for the wrong guy, right?" (Focus Group, 12/9/14). When describing her greatest concern for Eva, Diana was adamant that a romantic relationship and certain friendships would have a negative influence on Eva's future, "Well, short-term, not pursuing anything, getting pregnant, and after—yeah, and then, if not getting pregnant, getting with the bad crowd" (Focus Group, 12/9/14). Patricia's description of romantic relationships for Diego after high school aligned with Diego's vision:

The ultimate—I think the issue of money is there, where he would not want to take a girl out, pay for—that money situation. Maybe it's just right now, that the family is struggling, that he's not really interested in a girlfriend because of maybe having to take someone out, or possibly get someone pregnant. That's like no way. He's working hard for his money, and he's just not going to give it away, or treat anybody. I see that in him (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

David had a different impression of romantic relationships for Elena:

I think Elena's gonna meet some nice person, if she doesn't already have a nice person in her life. I don't think that'll get in the way of her wanting to become something more than just, "run off with your boyfriend" kind of young lady (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

David went on to describe Elena as self-assured and not swayed by negative peer pressure:

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I think she walks her own path, and kids respect her for it. It's very interesting. I haven't seen that a lot. I've seen the stream heading this way, and the kids jump in it. I see her as just being in it for a little bit, and then, when it doesn't suit her and her goals, as getting out of it, drying off, and then walking her own path. I really do. I think she'll choose very well (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

Post-school hopes. In the context of what their student's life would look like after high school, teachers discussed their hopes or, "ideal vision," for their students. Teachers' hopes centered on living outside of their parents home and being "independent." Four out of five teachers stressed the idea that they would like to see their student move away from their family's home after high school. Teachers discussed moving away from family in the context of leading an independent life, not becoming "complacent," being absolved of a caretaker role, and not having the pressure of financially supporting their family. For example, Melissa described her hopes for Selena:

My expectation, what I would like for her, was that she went through the Community College X program, received official certification to work in a daycare, and that she was working full-time, and that she had a little bit more of an independent life, outside of her home and her parents. Which is great that she has that support, but I feel like she needs a little bit more getting out of her shell and opening up a little, cuz she's so quiet (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

William wanted Juliana to experience life away at a 4-year university and not have the primary caretaker role of her baby sister:

For Juliana, my hopes and dreams—I hope she takes the chance, a leap of faith, and leaves the family. Move on, and get away, and not get in that trap of being the babysitter. Realistically, I'd love her to go to a four-year school and leave and go away and experience life in a different manner than being at home. Which, again, she's taking care of a kid. I'd like to see that maybe, on the weekends, come up to do that. Live her own life, that's what I would like to see from her (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

Patricia discussed her hope for Diego to leave home as a result of the family financial pressure:

I think the pressure, the family pressure, and money problems—and I think sometimes he just feels like he needs to do as much as he can to help out. Where, if that pressure was off of him, I think he could focus more on his education, certifications, and getting into something that he would like to do (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

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David was the only teacher who did not express the hope for Elena to move out of her home, stating, “I don't foresee her leaving her house. I think it's comfortable, and she's got that strong sense of family” (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

In addition to living out of their parents' home, teachers discussed the hope that their student would be “independent” in life and find happiness pursuing their dream. Diana described her ideal vision for Eva, “If she did do the beauty school and get licensed, maybe even doing her own shop, or having her own chair somewhere, and being very independent, and getting rid of all the emotional stress in her life” (Focus Group, 12/9/14). Diana went on to discuss what she thought was important for Eva to have in her life after high school, “She has to feel successful at what she does. That would be the first. Being able to take care of herself” (Focus Group, 12/9/14). Patricia talked about her hopes for Diego by stressing the idea of independence and self-sufficiency:

My hopes and dreams for Diego would be that hopefully his family gets to be less dependent on him, and that he goes into some sort of a program that he likes, enjoys, that's challenging, and that he succeeds in. As far as becoming a mechanic, or working maybe in a dealership or some sort of a—being part of an organization. Then, getting his own apartment, and just getting the things that he wants to do. I think, if his family—if he didn't have the pressure of helping them, I think he would be able to focus on himself and be able to stand on his own feet (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

Melissa also expressed this idea of independence for Selena:

What I would hope for Selena in one to two years is that she is in community college, that she's working towards a degree, specifically a certificate in daycare, that she keeps a close group of friends to support her, and that she gains independence and self-advocacy skills along the way. Then, in five to ten years, at some point, she would move out of her home and have full-time employment (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

Diana and David both discussed the hope for Eva and Elena to be independent to pursue their passion in life. Diana stated her long-term hopes for Eva, “Find what she wants to do, stay with it, and be successful. Have her own car. Be on her own completely” (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

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Research Question #2: What Supports do Students, Parents, and Teachers say that Parents and Students Need to Support their Post-School Vision?

Student perceptions of supports. Students discussed themes of a) relying on family, b) academic supports, c) self-advocacy, d) youth programs, and e) the support needs of their parents when identifying what they needed to help them achieve their goals after high school.

Relying on family. Students relied on family including extended family members and parents for advice, encouragement, and support in their post-school pathways.

Seeking advice. Students identified parents, siblings, cousins, and aunts as primary sources of guidance to achieve life goals after high school. All students said they would seek advice from family members if they were struggling in some way, or guidance for making choices in life. Students cited family members who had certain life experience or professional expertise. Diego talked about getting advice from his older brother, “Cause, he knows more. I think I would rather just talk to him and have him give me advice on what to do and what to not do in life” (Focus Group, 1/17/15). Selena thought she would go to her aunt, “She’s a teacher. I would go to her to give me advice - like what do I need and the reasons why” (Focus Group, 1/17/15). Elena talked about seeking advice from an older cousin who struggled in school, “Basically, we grew up together, so I saw him struggle through college and high school. I’m not struggling that much now, but I’ll go to him for advice” (Focus Group, 1/17/15). Eva said, despite their differences, she would go to her parents, “They may not say things that I agree with, but I know that they’re trying to help me out. We’ll bump heads here and there, but I know they’re just trying to get me to the right path” (Focus Group, 1/17/15).

Parental support. All students reported that they would need their parents as their primary source of support to achieve future goals. Students spoke about the constant

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encouragement and advocacy that parents provided and how it influenced them to achieve their goals. When asked who helped him the most in preparing to graduate and leave high school, Diego described his mother as his advocate, “She’s mostly like, if I’m having trouble or whatever, she’ll go to the school and talk to the teachers. She went there and she was talking to them, saying that she knows what I need and what I don’t need” (Individual Interview, 1/21/15).

Elena described her parents’ as a positive influence:

They’ve helped me to stay in school. They helped me to do my homework. They told me not to stop going to school so I could have a more brighter future and be positive and not go to the negative stuff and drop out of high school. They just tell me to keep going (Individual Interview, 1/31/15).

Selena described similar encouragement from her parents:

They want the best for me. They tell me, ‘Go to school every day. Do your best. Even though you don’t know how to do it, but try your best. Ask for questions. Stay after school if you want to’ (Individual Interview, 1/27/15).

Students also talked about their strong need for unconditional parental support. While students wanted guidance and support from parents, they also desired the autonomy to make choices without negative consequences from their parents. Eva explains:

I just want them to be there if I want to do this for my life, for them to be like, ‘Okay, yeah, that’s good for you,’ instead of saying, ‘No, that’s not what I want you to do.’ I feel like they’ll throw it in our face at the end when they get mad or something (Focus Group, 1/17/15).

Juliana echoed Eva:

It’s like they’re not on the same page. I’m like, ‘You guys need to get my decisions, what I choose.’ Even if it’s the wrong decision, later on, that’s not right—what she said, them throwing it back in your face (Focus Group, 1/17/15).

Diego discussed this idea around borrowing money from his father. Diego borrowed money from his father, but wanted him to have the confidence that he would pay him back in a timely way when he had enough money. Diego expressed frustration that his father kept reminding him

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about the loan, “I know what I gotta do, just let me do it. When I got it, I’ll give it to you. Or if I have to give you \$25 every month then, I’ll do that” (Focus Group, 1/17/15). Overall, students expressed this idea that they wanted to continue to lean on their parents for guidance, a living situation, and financial support, but, at the same time, wanted the flexibility to make autonomous choices about their lives. As Eva expressed, “I wanna make my own decision, and for them to be agreeing with me” (Individual Interview, 2/4/15).

Academic supports. All students talked about needing academic support to reach their goals in postsecondary education or training programs. Students spoke openly about accommodations that assisted them in learning such as books on tape, speech recognition software, and getting extended time to take tests. Selena and Juliana discussed asking friends to summarize text. “I have trouble in reading. I don’t understand it. Instead of reading it, I would like to listen to it or ask one of my friends to summarize it for me.” (Selena, Focus Group, 1/17/15). Diego noted that he would learn mechanics best with hands-on modeling, “Basic stuff I know, but stuff that got to do with the motor, I would need help. I mean, I get it—if I’m seeing it, somebody doing it, I would learn quick” (Focus Group, 1/17/15).

All students were nervous about the availability, and how to access, educational support services in college. Students did not know how to access services, or if services were offered at the postsecondary institutions of their interest. Eva talked about needing a person to go to for help in college, but was unsure if there would be a teacher or counselor available, “Yeah, and I feel like I would need somebody over there. I heard that they were saying that there was this lady that you could go to, but I don’t know if it’s true at Community College X. Diego was also unsure about services in college:

I feel like it’s gonna be like—cuz right now I got Special Education classes, so I feel like when I’m in college, I mean they’re not gonna have that, right? Are they? It’s gonna be

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a lot faster. Teachers talking a lot more and stuff like that (Individual Interview, 1/21/15).

Additionally, students had some misinformation about educational services in college. For example, Juliana thought that all of the services listed in her IEP would be provided in a college setting, “The one thing that I heard in college is if you had an IEP, then you could take that to the college and then they’ll provide you everything you need for in your IEP for you to graduate” (Focus Group, 1/17/15).

Self-advocacy. The idea that students would need to advocate for their academic needs was a salient theme when discussing supports in postsecondary education. All students talked about the importance of learning how to advocate for themselves in high school. “If you don’t ask, then you’re never gonna know. That’s what I learned. I never used to ask questions. I’d just sit there and struggle, but now that I go and ask, I understand better” (Eva, Focus Group, 1/17/15). Selena said that in her younger years in high school she did not want her teachers to know she was struggling with academic content. Selena described what changed for her:

Probably cuz I was seeing my grades. They were good then bad. They were more bad and more bad. I’m like, ‘Oh, no. I need to get help.’ I’m asking more questions this year cuz the past years I was shy and everything. I’m asking for more help and more questions” (Individual Interview, 1/27/15).

Juliana discussed being nervous or embarrassed to ask questions:

I was always scared to go ask teachers for help and tell them that I didn’t understand or if they could read it again. I was just afraid that someone was gonna make fun of me or they were gonna yell at me. I would just rather not ask, and then learned that it’s just better to ask them and be okay with it, and learn from it (Juliana, Focus Group, 1/17/15).

Diego explained that he would be nervous to ask questions in front of a new group of students, but could still ask for help:

Like, if it was a whole new group of kids, I would be nervous to raise my hand or whatever. Like, if I’m in a regular ed class, I get nervous cuz to me I feel like they’re gonna make fun of me, but I mean everybody ain’t perfect, so. I’ll just wait after class or

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I'll just pull them over like, 'Oh, can I talk to you outside?' and just let 'em know that I can't do it in front of all the class. Like, I need help doing it one on one or after class (Individual Interview, 1/21/15).

Youth programs. Three out of five students talked about the impact that youth programs directed at supporting post-school goals had on their pathways after high school. Two programs were community-based while one program was sponsored through the school. In addition to students discussing the positive impact of these programs, two teachers and one parent also referred to these programs as helpful community outlets and providers of activities that supported the future pathways of their student/child. Elena and her mother, Alma, both referred to a community program that she attended that trained and encouraged youth in criminal justice/law enforcement. Elena discussed different skills she learned through the program:

They teach us how to talk in the radios and the codes and your alphabet. It's an alphabet, but it has names. For example A is for Adam, B is for Boy, C is for Charles. Once you have a driver's license or a license plate, you have to use the code and then like for every letter, you have to describe the letter of the alphabet and say the name. We have to stand up and hear the commander or the sergeant. Notes. I take a lot of notes in class during the program. It's really interesting (Individual Interview, 1/31/15).

She went on to explain how the program supported her goals for after high school:

I feel like this program has—not changed my life, but how to succeed and prepare more for goals later on. Well, it's prepared me for life later on, because I actually want to be a police officer. It has helped me a lot, like a lot of stuff that I didn't even know. I know stuff (Individual Interview, 1/31/14).

Eva and her teacher, Diana, talked about her involvement in a different community-based program. Eva described engaging in community volunteer work, going on college visits, and seeking out program staff for assistance with college applications and recommendation letters:

It's just like they help around the community. We go out and help people that need help. They do presentations, like for middle school students, about bullying, eating disorders, and all this other stuff. For colleges, they'll take us to colleges to look around and see. Last time we went to University [X] and University [Y]. They're always on it. If we have any questions, they'll help us out. We just talk to them about it, and they'll help us

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look about it. They bring colleges to the program. People from different colleges to come in to talk (Focus Group, 1/17/15).

Eva thought this program improved her self-advocacy skills, “I think I became more, with the program—I talk—I ask more questions and all that. I’m not—I used to be really quiet. That helped me a lot open up” (Individual Interview, 2/4/15). Juliana and her teacher, William, also talked about a program that supported her transition out of high school. This was a school-based program sponsored by a local university. Juliana talked highly about the program, and how it provided opportunities to learn about different interest areas to explore in college:

There was a program, but it got cut. They were really good because they would take us on field trips to museums and let us see different cultures. Then they would also take us to colleges. They would have this guy from an art college come in and teach us different things. They would get us interested in different things and see what we really wanted to learn in college (Focus Group, 1/17/15).

While the majority of teachers and parents did not discuss youth programs as a transition support, Diana, William, and Alma each spoke positively about the involvement of their student/child in the corresponding youth program.

Support needs of parents. When asked what their parents needed to help them with their future goals, students talked about financial support only. Students discussed the financial stress of attending postsecondary institutions, and how their parents are going to need assistance in paying for college or trade school. Students seemed to take responsibility for the financial burden that college might bring to their household. Eva stated:

I don’t ask for them, like nothing anymore. I get my own money. I help around and I get money. They just look at me like, ‘Where did you get the money?’ I babysit or I help my grandma and she gave me money. I don’t depend—I’m trying not to depend on them to give me money (Individual Interview, 2/4/15).

Diego described a conversation he had with his dean about how he got into trouble at school because he was stressed out about finding a job to help his parents pay bills:

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I'm like, 'Well, I'm messing up because I've been stressing and I need to find a job. My parents are struggling.' That's the only thing. That's what I told him. Like, I'm going to be the way I am until I find a job and actually helping who I gotta help (Individual Interview, 1/21/15).

Parent perceptions of supports. Parents discussed a) their concerns about postsecondary supports and self-advocacy for their child, b) that they are their child's primary support system, and that c) parents need guidance on postsecondary education when talking about transition support needs after high school.

Concerns about postsecondary supports and self-advocacy. Like students, parents were concerned and unsure about the types of academic accommodations available at postsecondary institutions. Parents talked about their lack of support in finding postsecondary educational options for their child. When discussing finding postsecondary education options, Gabriela stated, "Basically there's like no hand guide there for us" (Focus Group, 1/10/15). Olivia spoke about finding a college that provided academic support:

Even though they say there's some college that do help, you have to look for that. You have to be sure that the college provides the help. But we don't have the capability of finding out so much places that can provide the simple necessity of colleges for our labeled children. We don't have the support. We don't have actual counselors, social workers, principals, nobody. (Focus Group, 1/10/15).

Carmen discussed doing her own research for colleges with academic supports for Juliana:

I mean, to me, it's like—where could you go? You gotta research everything. Who has IEP classes for college for your kids? What college does take IEP classes? What college would actually sit there and—you gotta actually read the reviews, see what's— (Focus Group, 1/10/15).

While Mariana preferred that Selena attended a university, she had little knowledge about academic supports in college and was concerned for Selena:

I know that school is very important, but I am listening here that there are no universities where my daughter can receive some support. My daughter needs help because—my daughter needs help. She will need a lot of support in the university because she is going to try and continue studying. They are not going to be able to help in the university, or

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maybe they're not going to have the same kind of teacher that she has right now in high school (Focus Group, 1/10/15).

Parents did have a clear understanding that there would be less supports than what were available in high school, and their child would have to display self-advocacy skills to get their needs met.

Gabriela talked about Eva:

She's going to go to college where there's basically no support unless she takes the step and educates herself on who helps where, when and how, which is going to be very difficult for her to do. She's not the type of person to go ask people for help (Focus Group, 1/10/15).

Carmen understood that Juliana was going to need to be comfortable asking for what she needed in a college setting, "She has to learn how to discuss this [need of audio books] with her teachers when she goes to college" (Individual Interview, 1/23/15). Olivia talked about Diego learning to advocate for himself in the correct way:

If he struggles and needs help, he need to learn to ask for it and not stay shut. Learn to use your mind and your words softly to get where you wanna go. If you use 'em abruptly, you're not going to get nowhere (Individual Interview, 1/21/15).

Parents as primary support system. Echoing their child's views, all parents reported that their child needed their mother and father as the main resource and source of support in their life after high school. Parents discussed supporting their child financially, emotionally, and academically. Gabriela stated:

I just think that my child needs her mother and father. Because once she's done with high school, that's it. There's no other help anyway else. If she doesn't have us to find the resources for her, she's going to be lost (Focus Group, 1/10/15).

Mariana thought having a counselor to guide Selena would be an important source of support as well, but parents are the most crucial, "My daughter needs support from her parents, from her mom and dad. It's also important to have a counselor who can guide in a good college for her. It's more important to have parents" (Focus Group, 1/10/15). Parents discussed providing

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endless encouragement to their child despite the challenges experienced from their disability.

For example, Carmen had a thorough understanding of how Juliana's learning disability impacted her reading, but refused to let these challenges stand in the way of her future path:

I refuse for her to just be nothing. I refuse it cuz she is something. It doesn't make you—LD does not make you. It does not break you. It just makes you learn differently. That's all it does. That's how I believe (Individual Interview, 1/23/15).

Olivia also expressed that her encouragement helped Diego the most in preparing for his future, "I keep on verbalizing how important it is to go to college, and keep on letting him know that just because he has little obstacles of having trouble reading and understanding, it is not going to stand in his way" (Individual Interview, 1/21/15).

Parents also expressed an understanding of the idea of "letting go" and not pushing their child too much in one direction for fear that they would push them away or shut down. This idea of being the main support for their child yet not being overbearing aligned directly with students' desire to have parents provide unconditional support while students had more autonomy in their life choices. Gabriela explained, "As parents we can only push them so much. If we push them too much, they break, and then they shut down, and that's it. I know exactly how her limitations are" (Focus Group, 1/10/15). Carmen echoed Gabriela, "I just don't want her to rebel against it if we keep on pushing her. I think, if you force the ideas upon them, that's when they pull back and say, 'Bye, I'm doing what I want to do'" (Focus Group, 1/10/15). Mariana discussed the concepts of independence and responsibility when discussing her unconditional support of Selena, "I say, 'If you really want to study, we are going to support you. It's on you.' Selena is on her own. 'Do your part. We are going to always support you, but do what you need to do'" (Individual Interview, 1/24/15). Carmen expressed a similar opinion about Juliana assuming independence in her future:

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I have to let go, and she has to realize, ‘This is my job.’ This is like a job. If she wants to get anywhere in life, she has to do it, and I can’t sit there and coddle her no more, like I did for many years (Individual Interview, 1/23/15).

Olivia discussed Diego learning for himself:

He’s going to have to learn that on his own because there’s only so much that I can do to guide him. I can’t be guiding him through his life. He has to learn through his mistakes and then fix it. I’ll help him the best we can as parents, but every children of mine has to learn on their own (Individual Interview, 1/21/15).

Parents need guidance on post-school options. All parents described needing the same type of support to guide their child in their life after high school. Parents wanted individualized guidance on post-school options for their child. Most parents talked about wanting a counselor who could provide information about specific colleges that would support students with learning disabilities. Parents felt strongly that their child would attend trade school, community college, and/or college, but had little information about appropriate postsecondary education options and available academic supports. Parents also expressed that the timing of providing this information should be earlier in the high school experience so planning could take place for at least two years prior to graduation. For example, Carmen wished the school was inviting parents in earlier than senior year to encourage college, “I think, if you talk about college sooner than later, then they won’t be rushed. Bring the parents in junior year to get them ready for college, to say, ‘Your kid could go to college’ (Individual Interview, 1/23/15). Gabriela discussed the poor timing of a parent workshop on filing out the FAFSA application that was offered at the school:

I think to myself, parents are getting this phone call in English or Spanish, whatever. They have no clue. They’re gonna go for the FAFSA? What are colleges? They’re supposed to fill out the FAFSA and decide right there what colleges? When they realize it, ‘Oh, well I want my daughter to go—oh, she doesn’t even qualify for University D. Oh, I want her to go to University C, but, oh, she doesn’t have the qualifications, because none of this was brought to us before January senior year (Individual Interview, 2/10/15).

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Olivia described the type of individualized guidance she wished she had for her and Diego to help make a choice for postsecondary education:

For these kids, why don't you just grab the list, write their names down, and individualize them? Bring 'em down one by one and see what they want. You write down the colleges that you think is best for them, and then you tell 'em, 'Do you want me to call your mom so you both can visit?' Be attentive to the individual (Individual Interview, 1/21/15).

Teacher perceptions of supports. There was little consensus in teachers' perceptions of the types of supports that their students would need after high school. Teachers discussed individual students needing a schedule, guidance, hands-on learning, better self-advocacy skills, and a social network. The only post-school support that all teachers agreed upon was that accessing academic accommodations through an educational services center would be vital in postsecondary education. Teachers shared that parents needed guidance for finances and the realities of postsecondary education, but that parents were not involved in school-based activities.

Social network for guidance and support. While teachers predominately discussed social relationships as a negative influence for students after high school, Diana and Melissa spoke about positive friendships creating a network of support for their students. Patricia also briefly discussed Diego needing guidance to make decisions after high school, and how friends could provide that outlet for advice, "Basically, I think Diego needs support and guidance. Yeah, or even friends of the family can talk to him and, again, give him some guidance. I think he's doing a good job, just needing to bounce off ideas and information" (Focus Group, 12/9/14). Diana was mostly concerned about negative relationships for Eva, yet also expressed that "good" friends would be important, "She'll need friends. She'll need a good social friendship group, which she's already got a social network" (Individual Interview, 12/15/14). Melissa reflected on the importance of supportive friendships for Selena:

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When I think of Selena, she's got a really nice group of friends, girls. They're all very similar, very hardworking, quiet girls. I think that's good for her because I don't know that she'll always be able to have her parents helping her. I know her parents will want to help her as much as possible, but I don't know that they're having the same experiences as Selena and her friends, going through what life is like here, as a second-generation person, and what that means in society, and how different that is from the way her parents were raised and brought up. I think, culturally, it really helps to find them a little bit stronger, to have those peers (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

Stronger self-advocacy skills. Melissa, William, and David stressed the idea that their students would need to strengthen their self-advocacy skills for college. These teachers viewed self-advocacy skills as necessary to get academic supports, but thought their students needed to improve in this area. For example, David talked about Elena:

She's not the kind to really ask, at this point in her life. She doesn't really do a lot of asking. She needs to learn the art of asserting herself. Knowing what her needs are, and then asserting herself to make requests (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

Melissa expressed that she was unsure of how to teach self-advocacy skills to her students.

Melissa's perspective was aligned with students' views of being reliant on a "point person."

Melissa expanded:

I just think she needs to be a stronger self-advocate. That's a really difficult thing to instill in a student. I think we all try to teach our students self-advocacy, but it's almost like how do you teach someone to self-advocate without babying them almost. Yes, I tell her, "Go to talk to your teachers," but is that that different than me going to talk to her teachers? The fact that I have to say, "Go talk to your teachers," as opposed to her going to talk to—waiting for me to tell her to go talk to them. That's not really a good thing. I think that's her weakest area. She may not have someone who can tell her, "Go ask your boss this, or go ask your teacher that" (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

William also expressed concerns about Juliana making improvements in advocating for herself,

"She flies under the radar a lot. She's afraid to ask some teachers for help. She could be more forthcoming, if there's issues at all with teachers. She really needs to really step it up"

(Individual Interview, 12/16/14). Diana and Patricia, however, did not specifically speak about self-advocacy as a needed support for after high school. Rather, they discussed their students as

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having good self-advocacy skills. Patricia stated, “I think he’s a good advocate. He’s just taking all the information in, which I think is ideal. I think he’s on his way” (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

Despite Gabriela’s concerns about Eva not readily asking for help, Diana had a different impression, “She does need help when it comes down to it, but she seeks what she wants, and gets that support. She’ll make sure she finds it” (Individual Interview, 12/15/14).

Seeking academic accommodations in postsecondary education. All teachers expressed that students would need to access accommodations through an educational services center. Teachers did not speak in detail about the types of services or accommodations students would need, but felt strongly that students would need to seek out academic supports. David talked about Elena:

Elena needs to go to a place that definitely has a student support center, for people with processing deficits and reading issues, and text, and what something really means, versus some kind of an educated, or mis-educated sense of what a concept means. She needs somebody to work with her (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

Melissa expressed that Selena should use an educational services center for a “point person:”

That she should utilize their student service program there. I know they have a faculty member who works with students that come in with IEPs. My thinking is that would be her point person. Very similar to my role. Someone to check in with, but to point Selena in the direction that she needs to go. To show her this is where you can get your papers looked at. This is where you can go to test when you get extended time. That sort of thing (Individual Interview, 12/15/14).

Patricia discussed the areas that Diego would need to seek academic support in if he attended trade school for automotive technology, “I mean, I could see him having problems with the vocabulary. Maybe his hands-on skills would be good, but again, the vocabulary, the communication if anything needs to be written down” (Individual Interview, 12/12/14).

Parents need guidance. When discussing supports that parents needed as their child transitioned from high school to adult life, teachers predominately talked about general guidance

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in the realities of college life and finances. Teachers reported that the majority of students' parents had not been to college, and therefore had little understanding about what college life entailed, and the financial burden of paying for college. William discussed the idea of offering parent training, Melissa discussed parents learning about FAFSA, while other teachers spoke more generally about the need to provide guidance to parents during their child's transition out of high school. Diana stated, "The parents need to be more informed, not only through me, but through the counselors, about what's going on" (Individual Interview, 12/15/14). William discussed his thoughts in more detail:

I think they need guidance. I think a lot of our parents, especially the parents I have, never went to school. Or, if they did, they went to community college for a year or so, and that's it. Even if it's just someone that's like them, friends and all, and just what to do when your child's done with high school, and the expectation of what's next, and what, realistically, college is like. Are they just thinking what they see on TV or in movies? I think that's the kinda training that I mean. Or even how to pay for it, and what's out there, what financial aid packages are out there. Just that whole scope of what college is (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

Melissa felt that understanding the cost of postsecondary education was most the valuable resource for parents regarding their child's transition:

It's just a really big struggle for many of our students. I think that's really frightening for our parents to think about, the cost of education. This is not something that is very well planned or discussed. I think, now, it's scary. I'm encouraging Selena's parents, and any parents that want to, to come in next semester for help with the FAFSA (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

Regardless of teachers' perceptions that parents needed guidance on the "realities" of postsecondary education, there was a stark misalignment in teacher and parent perspectives related to needed supports for the transition of their child. Despite Gabriela and Olivia's desires to have more guidance from the school regarding post-school options for their children, Diana and Patricia's impression was that these parents did not need further supports for Eva and Diego's transition. For example, Diana discussed her impression of Gabriela and Carlos's

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knowledge of transition resources, “I think Eva’s parents have all that. I think the mother’s very professional, and knows. She guides her [Eva] in that way” (Focus Group, 12/9/14). Patricia talked about Diego’s parents’ expectations and lack of needing resources from the school:

I don’t think that they want any kind of four-year degree or anything like that. I think they just want him to be able to financially support himself. I don’t think that they—I don’t think there’s anything that they absolutely need from the school (Individual Interview, 12/12/14).

Lack of parental involvement. When discussing the kind of help parents might need during their child’s transition from high school to adult life, teachers talked about the lack of parental involvement and “investing in the student” instead. Teachers reported that parents consistently attended yearly IEP meetings, but had little involvement in other activities related to transition offered by the school such as a FAFSA training or open houses. Teachers expressed that when parents did attend IEP meetings, they “take a back seat” and “defer” to the teacher as the expert. Teachers also discussed the frustration of only parents of honors level students attending school events, and having more interaction with non-Latino parents. William stated, “Again, it seems like it’s a cultural thing, too. My seniors who are non-Hispanic, you see a couple more parents are a little bit more involved in the process” (Individual Interview, 12/16/14). David explained his opinion:

I think that’s a good thing for you to know about, that the Latino parents, in general, as their children age, they tend not to—they tend to withdraw from the educational institution as a place where they would accompany their children. This is not for everybody, but in general. The better students’ parents usually come. Then, it’s the students you really wanna talk to the parents, and you really wanna see the parents, and those are the parents who don’t come (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

William described his frustration with hosting open house events at the school:

Another thing that I wish more parents would take advantage of, but a lot of parents haven’t, is open house, as especially a senior. Yeah, cuz I only had three parents come this year. I don’t think they [Juliana’s parents] were one of them. I think that’s something that’s important. That’s what I try to do. Sometimes, it’d be nice if the

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parents would come through. The open house is a big—we have three of them a year, and they don't come (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

Melissa described her experience with parental involvement during IEP meetings:

They do come when we have the students' IEP meeting, once a year. I'd say, as a whole, the parents tend to take a back seat at those meetings. They defer to what everyone else says, cuz you're the expert. You know what we're doing. We're here cuz we support our kid, and we appreciate what you're doing, but that's about it (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

Teachers also expressed that as students moved into upper grades in high school, they directed their parents as to what type of school involvement was beneficial. Patricia explained:

I think, at this point, their parents seem to—I think they're getting some control over telling their parent. Yes, there's open house, but you don't have to come. They listen to them. They're making decisions for their parents. I think their parents are like, "Well, if you think it's going to be boring, if it's not anything I have to go to, okay" (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

Melissa added to Patricia's thoughts, "As the students get older, I think the parents do withdraw a bit. Then, the students do start to take charge" (Focus Group, 12/9/14). Patricia expanded that translation from student to parent was part of the parental involvement problem, "Part of the issue is our students have to translate to their parents about what's happening at school" (Focus Group, 12/9/14). As teachers began to discuss the challenges they had experienced involving parents, the idea of "investing in the student" emerged. David explained:

Your best bang for buck is to invest in the student, really. I just see the parents as basically, especially in the last ten years with the economic downturn, it really hit this area hard. The parents are struggling to survive. The students are, by and large—many of them are fending for themselves. Really, the bottom line is they're the ones who are going out into the world next year. To invest in the parents, to me, doesn't make a lot of sense (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

Diana shared this opinion:

I think the other schools don't invest in the student as much as we do. They think the parents are going to do it. Our kids, we're all focused on the kid. We act like it's just them, living by themselves. We all put a lot of effort in that— (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

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Research Question #3: What Do Students, Parents, and Teachers Say that Teachers Do to Support Twelfth Grade Latino Students and their Parents to Develop their Post-School Vision?

Student perceptions of what teachers do. When discussing what teachers do to help develop their post-school vision, students identified specific teachers who provided individual academic and organizational support. Students also discussed two teachers who implemented transition activities.

Teacher as point person. The majority of students discussed having one teacher, special or general educator, who took on the responsibility to provide verbal reminders about homework assignments, tests that needed to be taken, schedule changes, or other responsibilities that students had throughout the school day. While students spoke very highly about the identified teacher who provided this type of support in high school, they were unable to explain how this support prepared them for life after high school. For example, Selena talked about her resource teacher, Melissa, “She tells me, ‘Oh, you need to do this paper for this class.’ She pushes me. If I forget, she reminds me of it. She gets me prepared for my college (Focus Group, 1/17/15). Juliana talked about how helpful it was to have William (Juliana’s resource teacher) remind her about taking tests and completing make-up assignments, but did not connect this to how it would benefit her in college. Elena talked about her literature teacher who gave multiple reminders to turn work in on time. When asked about how these reminders would help in a college setting, Elena replied, “Do our work and not miss a day” (Focus Group, 1/17/15). Eva discussed her relationship with Diana in great detail, noting that not only did Diana provide verbal reminders about academic responsibilities, she made sure Eva followed through on these tasks:

She’ll make sure that—I have to do it there right away. She’ll be like, ‘Here, call this person for a work thing,’ or something. ‘Call this person or email this person.’ She’ll be

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like, ‘Oh, I emailed this person for you for school and all that.’ She’s always on top of it with me (Focus Group, 1/17/15).

When asked how this helped with preparing her for life after high school, Eva did make the connection that this type of support may be not available in college:

That’s why it’s like, ‘How am I gonna do it in college?’ Cause I always had these teachers on me when I didn’t—when I would fall off task, they would always be like, “Eva!” I only have myself now (Focus Group, 1/17/15).

Diego was the only student who did not identify a teacher who assisted him to prepare for his life after high school:

I really talk more to my family about stuff like this. More my uncle, because his daughter is in college. He says, ‘Well, you gotta do this and do this.’ I depend more on my family than people at school (Focus Group, 1/17/15).

Transition activities with teachers. Only two students identified specific transition activities or experiences that teachers provided to help students prepare for life after high school. Juliana discussed William taking students on college trips to the local community college and having extensive conversations about college life. Juliana reported that William spoke about the differences between going away to college and staying at home:

He usually tells us, “I’m going to be honest with you guys, and tell you that if you guys stay home then you’re not going to want to go anywhere else. You’re just going to be home.” He goes, “But you guys should go out and go on the campus and see things, and see what you like.” He goes, “You don’t really want to go to a school that you’re going to stay home, and you know you’re going to be hangin’ out with the same people. You want to meet new people and broaden your horizon.” (Individual Interview, 12/24/15).

Juliana also mentioned William talking to students about the finances of college, “He tells us how much it costs, and how some colleges cost more than others, and he explains things to us about that” (Individual Interview, 1/24/15). While Eva described Diana’s support primarily as strong guidance and motivation, she did discuss Diana worked with students to secure employment opportunities while in high school, “‘Cause she’s a work program teacher, so she

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helps students get jobs. She's always on it with kids helping them out to get jobs, find them jobs. She'll be like, 'Here, call this person for a work thing,' or something" (Focus Group, 1/17/15).

Parent perceptions of what teachers do. Parents discussed conflicting themes when describing what teachers have done to support their child's post-school vision. Parents shared themes of a) teachers or other school professionals not supporting their child in school, and b) teachers instilling confidence in their child to support their child's post-school vision.

Teachers discourage my child. Five out of six parents talked in depth about the discouragement that their child felt from teachers throughout their school-age years. Parents relayed stories of their child being discouraged and having low self-esteem from interactions with teachers and school counselors from as early as third grade. Parents discussed this discouragement in the context of the impact it had on their child's career aspirations, future performance in postsecondary education, and overall self-worth. Carmen told a story about Juliana aspiring to be a doctor in third grade:

Juliana wanted to be a doctor when she was in third grade. She had a teacher named Ms. Z. I never forget cuz me and her had a big falling out. She told me not to give my daughter unreal dreams. She said it like that, 'Don't give your daughter something she can't accomplish because she cannot do it with dyslexia and audio deficiency.' I said, 'Who are you to tell my daughter anything because my daughter could do whatever she puts her mind to' (Individual Interview, 1/23/15).

Gabriela explained a scenario between Eva and her school counselor about gathering information for colleges:

Her counselor, I wanted to curse her out on the phone because she had the nerve to tell me, 'Why are you looking into colleges for Eva?' I was so upset with that. I mean I wanted to rip her head off the phone because how can she tell me that about my daughter? If she's telling me this over the phone, I could only imagine what she's telling my daughter when she's sitting with her one-on-one. How rude is that for her to discourage my daughter? That she can't go to college (Focus Group, 1/10/15).

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Mariana described a situation in which Selena elected to discontinue math class second semester senior year. While the course was not required for graduation, and Mariana allowed Selena to make this choice for herself, the school counselor voiced an opposing opinion that Mariana felt was disrespectful to Selena, and unsupportive of her decision-making:

Selena wanted to change classes—to leave math class and take another one. That's why she went with her counselor to talk about it, and try to leave the math class. Her counselor in the school told her that if she were her daughter, the counselor's daughter, she would force Selena to learn math. That's what the counselor said. I was not there in the school. After this Monday, Selena is not going to continue taking math. Even if she is crying, the counselor would force her? Her child to learn math? Because the counselors, they don't want to change the classes. I'd like to have a meeting with that counselor to say, "Okay, why did you say that to my daughter?"

Teachers instilled confidence in my child. Three parents discussed two teacher participants (William and Diana) who instilled confidence in their child. Parents felt that this was the most meaningful interaction to support their child in his/her future path after high school. Carmen discussed how William gave Juliana and understood their family situation:

Oh, he is so wonderful, because he gave my daughter confidence. When she didn't have confidence, he gave my daughter confidence. Cuz he knew what's happening with my other daughter. My other daughter had two heart surgeries. He knew last year I couldn't get on the ball. He's seen those two years prior, he's like your mom was always on the ball. Then he's like I understand. He understood. He's like, you know what Juliana, go to community college for two years, and then go to DePaul. Let your mom save up a little bit of money (Focus Group, 1/10/15).

Olivia talked about Diego becoming more independent due to Diana's encouragement:

That's how I feel, Diana identified with my son and his capability of doing much more than he was doing. She encouraged him so much, support while he was in school that he, little by little, was breaking out of his shell and was doing for himself, pushing himself, being a little bit more independent (Focus group, 1/10/15).

Teacher perceptions of what we do. Teachers described a host of transition-related events, activities, communication, and follow-up procedures that predominately did not align with the perspectives expressed by parents or students in this study. Only two students discussed

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transition activities that they engaged in at the school, and one parent talked about the poor timing of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) workshop. While Melissa discussed the student theme of teachers as “point people” for students in high school, this was not conveyed as central to how she was preparing students to transition out of high school, nor did other teachers talk about this concept. Overall, teachers described activities that were isolated events and not connected to fluid transition planning, and one-way communication efforts. Teachers also shared the difficulties they had in implementing transition activities and ideas for improvement in this area. Teachers discussed themes of a) school-based events for parents, b) communication efforts with parents, c) transition activities with students, d) systemic barriers, and e) Indicator 14.

School-based events for parents. Teachers described two main school-based events for students and parents. While the FAFSA workshop was specifically related to educating students and parents on financial aid for college, the open houses that William discussed were not specifically transition-related. Regardless, teachers stated that parents did not attend these events, and therefore did not receive information from the school about financial aid for college or other post-school information distributed at the open houses. William also talked about a transition-related mailing that he sent to parents at the beginning of each year. Melissa discussed why she thought the FAFSA workshop was beneficial:

We have someone who specifically helps students and parents fill out a financial aid application, the FAFSA. I think that’s great that we have that resource for parents. I don’t know how many of them will take advantage of that, or be able to come in to school to do that with their students, but I think it’s really important (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

William talked about the potential of the open house event:

Another thing that I wish more parents would take advantage of, but a lot of parents haven’t, is open house, as especially a senior. Because that’s where I talk more about college. Hey, your kid is doing this. Being a minority, there’s scholarships out there for

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you. Take advantage of that. Our school does a great job, I think, of, on open house, you could talk to people about FAFSA. You could talk about colleges (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

William also described the mailing that he sent to parents:

At the beginning of the year, with Juliana and all my students—the easiest one that I do is I send a mailing home every year. It basically, for this year, being seniors, it was just a summary of what's important, so the FAFSA, and when does that need to be taken care of, and certain colleges. Also a big thing for my students is the ACT. So when's ACT retakes? (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

Communication with parents. Diana and William talked about their strategies for communicating with parents. While William felt that communication with parents was “an issue,” he discussed his fruitless efforts to convey information on a regular basis:

I also think communication is an issue with some of my parents, especially with Juliana's mom. As a resource teacher, one of my jobs is to say, “Hey, your student is failing a class.” I've probably sent dozens of emails through the times to her mom, and maybe have gotten one reply. It's hard, when you're trying to communicate, and there's no thank you, or oh, okay, what does she need to do. There's usually none of that interaction (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

Diana talked in depth about her participation policy with parents:

I do an open-door policy for my parents to join any of my field trips, or come in for any of my guest speakers, or join us at any job fair. Because I know everyone's looking for employment, so they're always welcome. I've had mothers meet me at the mall with their students (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

She went on to discuss her strategy for, and success with, communicating with parents:

Most teachers prefer email. I prefer phone call. I'm a type who would rather walk down to your office, and talk to you, than do email. I feel like the email writing just gets screwed up. The verbal, over the phone, is much easier. Even though I don't speak the language, I can still communicate with them, either through the student, or somebody in the classroom will help me. I mean, you can tell how it's going on with the student next to 'em. You can pick out certain words that you're on the same track. Also, they can call me. I always tell them you can call me any time, any time of the day or night—doesn't matter—about your child. Letting them know we're there to support them, and whatever questions they have. That's how I like to do it, yeah. 'Cuz it's just open, very open (Individual Interview, 12/15/14).

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Transition activities with students. Teachers described a host of transition-focused activities that they engaged in with students. Diana, who exclusively taught the work program that focused solely on employing students with disabilities, described the majority of activities, but all teachers referenced at least one transition-related skill that they taught students. Additionally, the activities reported by teachers were isolated, meaning they were not described as part of a larger transition planning process. For example, Diana talked in great detail about the types of field trips she takes students on:

We do a lot of field trips. We've gone to—we've gone everywhere there is to go. We've been to the fire department—maybe they want to get into paramedics. We've actually gone to the fire department by University [Y]. We've done college visits. We've gone down to the auto show. On top of doing where we're going in the city, we do public transportation, so they all know how to take public transportation from the L to the bus all the way down, and then learn to know that they can do that. The reason why I like to go as far as we can go—we go as far as west sometimes, to Community [A]. They know if there is a job opportunity out there, "Oh yeah, I've been there" (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

Diana went on to discuss guest speakers, job opportunities coming into the school to recruit students, and a bevy of job-related skills she taught such as creating resumes, business cards, writing thank you notes, and compiling everything into an employment portfolio.

Patricia and David both taught a required life skills course called consumer education. Melissa discussed why she thought this class was extremely helpful for students as they exited high school:

I think one of the most helpful things for our students is consumer ed, because every student has to take that class, whether they're in special ed or not in special ed classes. I think it's such a good class for our students. It's all life skills. Budgeting is a huge component of that. Even the concept of banking, having a savings account, it's something that I take for granted, but they're learning about it. It's a really good life preparation step for them, to know about these things. Now I have students who are working. I had a student tell me that she was so excited to open a checking account, cuz she has a place to put her check now (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

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Melissa discussed having her students complete a to-do list focused on transition and handing out a timeline detailing optimal timing for transition activities:

They have to check off did I do my application, did I do my financial aid, did I look into schools is one of the first things on there. I also give them a timeline of this is what you should be doing throughout this year (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

Both Melissa and William discussed having frank conversations with students about what to expect in college life:

Just honestly, I talk about my college experiences, and anything to that nature, of playing sports in college, being in a fraternity in college, just anything of that aspect of life. Living on campus, being away from home for the first time, what I missed, why I transferred schools, from going from a small town back to the large Midwestern city. Just sharing my experiences. Really being open with them and telling them what it is about. Telling them what college is like, and visiting schools, and telling them to go online (William, Focus Group, 12/9/14).

William also talked about trips that he had organized to take students to visit colleges. Lastly, Patricia talked about micro-skills that she taught in her class such as knowing what a signature was or the “cc” line of an email:

They haven’t learned, and I’m sure some regular ed students haven’t either, but special ed students just kind of—it’s just too complicated. Now that they need it, there’s the possibility of being employed, it’s difficult—what do you put on the cc: line? They just need so much support, and it’s—sometimes you don’t even realize what kind of support. It could be the, filling out an application where it says MI or middle initial, or sometimes permanent address. There’s an address and a permanent address and they just don’t know (Individual Interview, 12/12/14).

Systemic barriers to supporting students in transition. Teachers discussed systemic barriers they faced when teaching transition-related skills or engaging in transition activities with students. Teachers expressed that they wanted to engage in activities and planning that would prepare students to exit high school and pursue postsecondary goals, but district expectations and other systemic barriers made this difficult during the school day. For example, Melissa discussed district, state, and even national expectations related to academic achievement:

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When I got into this field, I really wanted to work with transition and helping students. I did. I do to some extent, but it's very—that's on my own time. Other than getting the paperwork done which there's a piece in there called summary of performance—other than getting that done, that's it. That's what my obligation to her is according to the school. My real responsibility is to help her in her deficit areas which are reading and writing. Transition. Yeah. Type it in there. Okay. You're done. Boom. (Individual Interview, 12/15/14).

Melissa went on to discuss the current focus and expectations of education for students with disabilities in the school:

District expectations. I also feel that that's coming from state, if not national, with all the increased focus on testing and test scores. They really want them to be getting better academically. Any type of transition is that one class we have. The work-related class or to their counselors, but, again, with the counselors having caseloads of hundreds of students I don't know how much they can do. I and other resource teachers—we definitely try to help the students as much as possible, but that's not something we're even assessed for. I mean not that they don't care, but that it's like, "Okay. You want to do that. That's on your own time" (Individual Interview, 12/15/14).

William also talked about the restrictions of working with students on transition planning and skills as a resource teacher:

Before resource was an hour-long class in which we would actually go over strategies, how to do things. Now it's more like, "How can I help you?" and I'm limited on time. It is a 30-minute schedule. Basically, kids can stay for an hour, but it's during their lunch. Our school cut an hour about five years ago. We cut a whole hour out of the day. Kids are tight on how many classes they can take. Resource became just 30 minutes a day that they get their minutes. During that 30 minutes, I'm not teaching a lesson. It's more one-on-one. "What can I assist you on? What can I help you with?" kind of thing. Before, it was more of an actual class setting (Individual Interview, 12/16/14).

Diana explained that, as the work program teacher, she was given early release time toward the end of the school day to work with students in community employment settings and do job development, but she consistently had to "fight" for transportation to take students out into the community:

Because I get release time in the afternoon. Each class I teach in the morning, I have release time in the afternoon, so it makes sense. My most precious thing I have been fighting. I fight constantly for transportation within the district, to get buses, to get this. It's not easy. My biggest fight is against the district. My biggest goal this year is, I said,

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"I need a van on Thursdays, to just take a few students out, so I can work with them." But I feel I should have access to a van at all times (Individual Interview, 12/15/14).

David expressed that his challenge was teaching too many different academic content classes and did not have early release time to support students in community employment settings:

I need fewer content classes thrown at me, so that I'm not dealing with a whole new class or set of classes, materials, 180 days of instruction for that, at the last minute. Then, I'm not able to head out in the end of the day—or, if I do, then I'm putting off grading and planning for the next day. I need the release time, so I can do the job the way it's meant to be done. I did have that for three years. It was a lot more satisfying. I just need to have that time. My principle frustration, for me, is having to teach other content classes that I don't know about, and I have to, then, learn that, as I move along. That's my reality. I have sophomore English, two sections of consumer ed. I have one section of the work program. Then, by the time I'm prepped for the next day, it's 3:30, and I'm frickin' tired (Individual Interview, 12/16/14).

Indicator 14. When discussing how teaching practice could be improved to support students in transition, teachers talked about the desire to implement a follow-up procedure to be informed about the post-school outcomes of their students. Interestingly, without mentioning Indicator 14 directly or expressing formal knowledge of this policy, teachers described the intent of the Indicator 14 state requirement. William described his vision for follow-up with students:

I'd say the big thing that I would love to have, since this is my first real group of seniors—and maybe this has nothing to do with the topic. I'd love to be able to communicate with our kids after they leave here. It's very difficult. I've had valedictorians that have graduated. Once in a blue moon, you might see them. I wish there was some kinda program, some kinda, I don't know, alumni basis, something where we would really get a better idea of what kids are doing afterward. Instead of seeing the summer kids working at Starbucks, I'd like to see what they're doing in their lives. You know what I mean? I'll see a lot of my kids that coach football at the gym, so you get to catch up, but there's really—I've taught 8 years, 800 kids, and I'll see maybe 20 of them. It'd be really nice to see what, exactly, is going on when they leave (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

Patricia talked about Indicator 14 without having formal knowledge of the procedures of this policy:

In their summary of performance for the seniors, there is a—where they sign off something about if we could contact them a year later. It would be nice if it was

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somebody's job to actually contact them. I think it would be good for us, just to know what they're doing, and maybe have them come, every two years, every three years, so that we could see their progression. I think there's a lot that our current students could learn by talking to somebody who was there, in their shoes, two years ago, three years ago. This is where they're headed. I think it'd be a great learning experience for teachers and students (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

Patricia continued on about learning from a particular student's post-school outcome:

Just to see what—because you remember where they were, and what their plans were when they were a senior. Then, seeing where they are. This was just last year. I had a student. We went through all the IEPs. She was a senior. She was going into veterinary school. Then, this August or September, she comes in and she's in culinary school. It was like whoa. In that particular student's case, an uncle was a major influence, which, for the teachers that worked with the student, had no idea that would—that her career focus would go a different direction (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

Melissa expressed how knowing about students' post-school outcomes would improve practice:

I was just going to say I think it is a learning experience, if they come back, and if we were able to see students and be able to talk to them, more than just, "Oh, hey, you need your transcript signed, okay," or whatever it is. It just would make us be more aware of our impact on students. Have we helped them transition? What were some challenges they're having? We can take that back to our current students and ping-pong off that (Focus Group, 12/9/14).

Research Question #4: How Does the Documentation on IEP/ITPs Align with Participant Perceptions?

In the context of looking at student participants' IEP/ITPs, all participants discussed the themes of a) the creation of the ITP, b) their lack of involvement in this process and understanding of the document, and c) parent concerns. Therefore, individual opinions from participants in each group were used to illustrate these themes, yet participant groups were collapsed under each heading for this research question.

Process for ITP creation. Teachers and students talked about how the ITP was completed, and their lack of involvement in the process. All teachers reported that, regardless of if they were a student's case manager, the documentation on ITPs were based on a short

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interview with the student and guidance counselor. For example, David explained how the ITP was created for students:

That transition plan is based on an interview that lasts seven to ten minutes with the guidance counselor. There's no digging deep. There's no intensive observation. There's no time. A huge, huge, challenge. Plus, they [counselors] have—in addition to a student like this [Elena], they have maybe 50 to 700 other kids they have to counsel, get schedules—that's the reality (Individual Interview, 12/16/14).

David went on to describe how the ITP was filled out, “Usually, they're [counselors] filling it out in the meeting, and the meeting may take place the same day, or the next day” (Individual Interview, 12/16/14). Melissa echoed the same procedure, “No, I don't fill that out. I fill out the summary of performance, only for a senior student. I don't fill out any of that. That is what the counselor does” (Individual Interview, 12/15/14). She went on to describe the process before the IEP meeting:

The counselor meets with her [Selena]. When a staffing notice is given out that goes to everyone involved. Everyone has their part. I do my part. The nurse has to assess vision, hearing. Counselor has to bring a student in and they complete this [ITP] with their counselor (Individual Interview, 12/15/14).

Melissa also talked about revising the ITP at the IEP meeting:

It's generally written ahead of time, but, of course, at the IEP things can always be changed. As we get to the transition plan, if something in there doesn't make sense the counselor can right way change that on the computer (Individual Interview, 12/15/14).

Students described meeting with their counselors once or twice per academic year primarily related to “having problems” or “getting into trouble.” When discussing the ITP, students did not know what the document was, but reported that they met with their guidance counselor and were asked questions about what they wanted to do after high school. For example, Eva stated that she met with her counselor once about, “What am I going to do after high school and all that” (Individual Interview, 2/4/15). Diego stated that he only went to see his guidance counselor for situations such as, “Like last time I got in trouble from English, she

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[English teacher] wrote me up cuz of my phone” (Individual Interview, 1/21/15). However, he did report meeting with his counselor before an IEP meeting to, “Answer some questions--like what I wanna do and stuff” (Individual Interview, 1/21/15). Juliana described meeting with her counselor regarding post-school aspirations, but the counselor was unaware that she received special education services:

Okay, so then I went to my counselor and he was telling me—he’s like, “Well, where do you want to go to school?” He brought me down and asked me. He’s like this, “You havin’ an IEP meeting come up?” Before that he didn’t even know that I had dyslexia cuz my counselor, my old counselor, retired, so I had a new one. He goes, cuz I asked him, I’m like, “Are there any scholarships for students with learning disabilities, and can you look in to that for me?” Yeah, and he’s like, “You have a learning disability?” I’m like, “Yeah, I’m dyslexic.” Then he didn’t really know about that, and they should know about this stuff before I—I shouldn’t have to be telling all my teachers that I have dyslexia. They should already know this, but I get it cuz they have so many students that they don’t know everybody, and they can’t do that for everyone (Individual Interview, 1/24/15).

All parents reported they had no understanding of how the ITP was created, and had no involvement in planning, or creation, of the ITP document. Gabriela and Carlos stated that they had never participated in the creation of the ITP and the IEP meeting itself was, “A rushed process. They have a million other things to do” (Carlos, Individual Interview, 2/10/15).

When discussing her lack of involvement in creating Eva’s ITP, Gabriela discussed her experience at Eva’s last IEP meeting:

I have never been a part of this [ITP creation, transition planning]. These meetings, it’s more about them talking in their teacher lingo about other things that are not even about Eva. It took us—what was actually about the IEP, I’d say was about ten minutes. Everything else, all the other 30—because we were there about 30 minutes, everything else was rush, rush, rush. It was about being late, her not coming to class, her not liking this teacher, her English teacher not liking her. Disciplinary type meeting. Then when we would bring something up about the special ed, and I would say what kind of college programs are there out there? “Okay, well we’re going to get to that. We’re going to get to that.” You’re trying to steer it in the direction of hey, what are these postsecondary options. Then nothing gets answered (Individual Interview, 2/10/15).

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Mariana also reported that she was not involved in transition planning or the creation of the ITP, and did not have a copy of the IEP/ITP, “No, I am not involved. Because all the papers—the school keeps all those papers” (Individual Interview, 1/24/15). Carmen also stated that she was not involved in any school-based transition planning or ITP creation. She reported that planning for academically advanced students was thorough, but there was minimal transition planning for students with disabilities:

No, I did not with Juliana [school-based transition planning]—I think it’s much planning when the kid’s a genius—well, going to university, genius level. I think they plan for them very well, but then, when it comes to average students or students who have LD, they don’t plan for them. They think, “Well, they’ll get a normal job. They’ll work at retail. They’ll work at this factory. They’ll work at somethin’ that’s low” (Individual Interview, 1/23/15).

Misalignment of ITP creation and transition assessments. Transition assessments listed on the ITP document are theoretically used to guide the development of the ITP, along with team planning which includes the student and parent/guardian. While participants reported that they were not involved in ITP development, or ITPs were based off of a short interview with the student and guidance counselor, only Eva’s ITP listed an interview as a transition assessment. Diego’s ITP listed an interview with Division of Human Services (DHS), but it was post-dated and therefore had not yet occurred. Other assessments listed on students’ ITPs were technically not assessments, such as a consumer education course listed for Elena. In addition, four students had assessments listed that were post-dated or out of date, meaning they had not yet occurred or occurred over a year ago. For example, Elena, Selena, and Diego all had a “college entrance exam” that was post-dated “Spring 2015” listed as a transition assessment. Elena’s ITP also listed a “college exploration inventory” that was dated from “2011-2015.” Juliana’s ITP listed the “Plan Test” that was dated as “sophomore year.” Eva’s ITP was the only document that

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reflected an interview had been conducted with her prior to the creation of the plan, or IEP meeting.

Lack of understanding of ITP document. All ITPs had missing postsecondary goals, and goals that were present were not written according to Indicator 13. However, if there was text for a postsecondary goal, it did align with what students' expressed they wanted to pursue after high school. For example, Elena's ITP stated that she was going to pursue a career in criminal justice. Eva's ITP stated that she wanted to enter into a college program to become an ultrasound technician. Regardless of this alignment, all participants appeared to have a general lack of understanding of the ITP document. When asked about postsecondary goals and how accompanying transition services were chosen for students, teachers seemed confused about the question and the different components of the ITP. For example, when asked, "In terms of the postsecondary goals that are at the front page of the transition plan, how are those created?" William asked, "What goals are you talking about?" (Individual Interview, 12/16/15). Later, after William was oriented with the ITP paperwork and stated that Juliana met with her counselor to create postsecondary goals, he was still unsure about the accompanying services stating, "I think this is when she—with that career cruising. I think that's their big thing. They see what they have and then basically what her interests are. I think that's how they go" (Individual Interview, 12/16/15). When asking Diana about postsecondary goals and services on Eva's ITP, she was unsure and referred to another document, the summary of performance. Diana went on to describe interagency connections that she had facilitated such as Helping Hands and DHS, but was still unable to describe how other services listed on Eva's ITP were chosen and implemented. Later she explained, "That's all team-based, yeah. Mm-hmm. If she was I think—to see the social worker, if she had minutes like that? Is that what you were talking

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about?” (Individual Interview, 12/15/14). While some transition services listed on Elena’s ITP were not appropriate special education services such as “classes leading toward graduation” and “consumer education class,” David was unaware that these were incorrect. When looking at Elena’s ITP and discussing the process for the creation of the document, David replied, “The state chooses the required classes. The student chooses the electives” (Individual Interview, 12/16/15).

In direct alignment with the lack of involvement in the creation of the ITP document, students and parents had little understanding of the ITP document itself or the transition services listed. When shown Selena’s ITP and asked if she knew about the document, Mariana replied, “I don’t know about this” (Individual Interview, 1/24/15). A transition service documented for Selena was “meet with a counselor at Community College X to do a placement test.” While this service was dated as “Spring 2015” and the providers listed were “student, community college,” Mariana did not have an understanding of how this would take place stating, “I don’t know the process, if she [Selena] has to call or go straight to the college? I don’t know about it at all” (Individual Interview, 1/24/15). Alma also reported that she did not know about the ITP document, “No, I wasn’t involved. I don’t know it” (Individual Interview, 1/24/15). Eva’s ITP listed “referral to DHS” in the transition services, yet Gabriela had no understanding of this referral or potential service after high school, stating:

I’m not going to lie, I have no clue what they’re talking about. They told my daughter that the Department of Human Services would help her with a scholarship. They would help her with paying for school. I have never in my life even heard about that, because I only think of all these people on public aid knew about that, everybody would be in school. Are they trying to think she’s going on public aid? Where is she supposed to get this from? That’s what she’s like, “Mom, I don’t know. They keep saying that to contact this department of—you know, the Department of Human Services.” Who am I supposed to contact? There’s like a hundred different departments. They never gave us any information. Anything (Individual Interview, 2/10/15).

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Regarding DHS being listed on her ITP, Eva stated, “What was—it was to meet this lady for Diana? Yeah, we met last year. I’m all signed up” (Individual Interview, 2/4/15). Diego also had DHS listed as a linkage after high school. Like Gabriela, Olivia was unaware of this reporting, “I don’t think so. I didn’t hear out of his mouth that he was going meet with a Department of Human Services for other jobs” (Individual Interview, 1/21/15). Diego was also unaware of DHS and other services listed on his ITP. In response to the service “transportation training,” Diego stated, “What is that? Maybe that’s the work program?” (Individual Interview, 1/21/15).

Parent concerns. Eva and Elena’s IEPs had parental concerns written in the “Parent Educational Concerns/Input” section. When Gabriela and Alma discussed these issues, they expressed that their concerns were not alleviated at the IEP meeting or at any other time. Alma expressed concern about Elena’s English grade at the IEP meeting:

She didn’t receive any extra support or service. Elena was the one who made the effort to get a better grade. I don’t remember the letter that Elena got, but Elena was the one by herself that got a better grade. She didn’t receive any—no, there weren’t any more support or service for her after the meeting. No, they didn’t address my concern in the document. (Individual Interview, 1/24/15).

Elena discussed the concern that her mother raised at the IEP meeting about her grade in English class:

They just told my mom that I was—how can I say it? I was on track of graduating. Yeah, and she said—she told me not to worry about—well, they told my mom not to worry about that—well, to worry about all my classes—but like I’ll raise it up and I did actually raise it up to a B. My teacher ended up giving me extra credit, so that raised me up to a B (Individual Interview, 1/31/15).

Gabriela discussed her issues of time and disorganization that were documented in the Eva’s IEP:

They made us wait 40 minutes to start the meeting. After the time that we were scheduled, because they were busy. I was really upset. I told them. We only meet once

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a year because you guys don't have any time, and you guys are going to do this to me? My daughter is not a concern to you? Apparently it doesn't matter. Everything that we were talking about was from the previous year, which wouldn't even help and benefit her for the next year. For the scheduling issue they actually told me that I didn't care about my daughter because I couldn't meet on a Thursday. Their meeting, the IEP whole meeting was the most disorganized thing. This has been since day one. They sit there, and they look at the computer—while we're sitting there, it's like we're invisible to them. They just talking amongst themselves. Not loud. They're talking amongst themselves. Like, "What do you think about this?" Without even addressing us until the end of the meeting (Individual Interview, 2/4/15).

While teachers did not address specific concerns that parent participants may have had, they did convey that parent concerns were adequately addressed in IEP meetings. William described the protocol he was familiar with:

If there were concerns, they would be dealt with. They would be dealt with in the IEP meeting. It would be really more of what the parents would do on it. If they have those concerns, that's why we have—the first thing the administrator asks is if they have any concerns. If not, they can just call and call. I've seen it firsthand. The mom didn't like what happened in the class with the dean, she goes right to the principal. Again, some parents are more stronger than others. Some parents really know their rights. Usually, more parents that understand those rights know how to use it to their benefit when it comes to, "Well, what are you guys doing to meet their IEP? Well, this is not being done." That's where those concerns get taken care of (Individual Interview, 12/16/14).

Patricia and Melissa echoed that any concerns that a parent may have were always addressed at the IEP meeting. Patricia explained:

The IEP is usually already filled out when we're there, but if there's any concerns, we talk about it, as far as like what classes to take or whatever else comes up. If they have some sort of a concern, that's at the meeting (Individual Interview, 12/12/14).

While students generally discussed their parents' overall concerns regarding their post-school pathways, only Elena discussed her mother's concern that was also documented in her IEP.

Parent and teacher perceptions starkly contrasted in that parents reported their concerns were not addressed at IEP meetings, while teachers shared that all parental concerns were rectified at IEP meetings.

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Summary

This chapter reported results for each of the four research questions using rich description from the voices of the participants in this study. Themes addressing post-school visions, supports needed to achieve those post-school visions, teacher support, and IEP/ITP documentation were presented for Latino students with LD, their parents, and teachers. The following chapter will provide a summary of the results and conclusions about the multiple perspectives on post-school expectations and supports of the participants in this study. Implications for practice, policy, research, as well as limitations are presented.

V: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine the perspectives of Latino students with LD, their parents, and teachers regarding their expectations of post-school visions and transition supports. To fully examine these perspectives in the complete context of current transition services, supports, and preparation in high school, it was as equally important to include teacher perspectives in this research. By enlisting five triads of student, parent, and teacher participants who were related (student-parent) and worked together (student-teacher), this study aimed to provide a comprehensive picture of the post-school expectations and support needs of the participants in this sample.

This chapter includes a review the results and conclusions for each research question. Within this discussion, perspectives are triangulated and the analysis of IEP/ITP documents are incorporated research question four. Final conclusions, study limitations, and future directions for practice and research are also presented.

Research Question #1: What are the perceptions of post-school outcomes for twelfth grade Latino students with LD, their parents, and teachers?

Student perceptions of post-school outcomes. Students' perspectives of what their lives would look like after high school consisted of a multi-dimensional vision including postsecondary education or training, part-time employment, career aspirations, living independently, and removing negative social influences to stay focused on life goals. Students discussed how they would need to navigate across different settings such as living at home, going to work, and attending college. While students shared enthusiasm for their post-school visions, this excitement was tempered by variables including meeting expectations and newly added stressors of taking more responsibility in their lives. Feelings of negotiation and tension

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steeped students' post-school visions when describing balancing their pursuit of aspirations with other's expectations, doubts in self-motivation, and taking on new responsibilities.

The overarching scope of the findings of students' perceptions of their post-school vision painted a rich picture of full lives beyond high school coupled with the stress of navigating the uncharted independence of adulthood. Many of the individual findings for students were consistent with existing research. Most notably, students clearly described lives after high school that consisted of multiple goals such as attending college, pursuing part-time employment and long-term career goals, eventually living on their own, travelling, and/or owning a car. The finding that students with high-incidence disabilities envision multi-faceted lives is widely supported in transition research (Hogansen et al., 2008; Scanlon et al., 2008; Trainor, 2007). However, contrary to findings that youth with disabilities described having a family and getting married as part of their post-high school vision (Hogansen et al., 2008; Scanlon et al., 2008; Trainor, 2007), all students in the current study distanced themselves from the idea of having a romantic relationship and children. While these personal relationship milestones could have been longer-term visions in previous research (Hogansen et al., 2008; Scanlon et al., 2008; Trainor, 2007), students in the current study were fairly adamant that having romantic relationships would divert them from pursuing their future goals. Additionally, students in the current study discussed some peer friendships as negatively impacting their post-school goal achievement. This finding is similar with Murray and Naranjo's (2008) study in which resilient African American high school students with LD discussed avoiding peer relationships and remaining isolated to focus on the goal of graduation. While students in the current study did not desire to isolate themselves completely, they did discuss being on their own to stay focused on their goals.

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Existing research shows inconsistencies related to students' career aspirations and their understanding of the pathways to reach career goals (Scanlon et al., 2008; Trainor, 2005, 2007). Students in the current study envisioned careers for themselves that were connected with prior skills. Students described careers in childcare, automotive technology, sign language interpreting, and criminal justice, all of which they confidently connected to prior experience and skills. Scanlon and colleagues (2008) reported a similar phenomenon regarding students identifying careers and jobs in areas where they already had foundational skills. Another consistency with existing research is that when discussing employment, all students in this study described long-term career goals first (Johnston-Rodriguez et al., 2006). Students also made clear distinctions between part-time employment while pursuing further education, and long-term stability and fulfillment in having a career. However, in contrast with the current study, participants in Trainor's (2005, 2007) studies were unable to describe career goals that had any connection with prior knowledge, skills, or experience. Further, Scanlon and colleagues (2008) found that students with LD described jobs in their futures, while students without LD described careers.

Students also discussed the life vision components of living arrangements after high school and attending community college, college, or vocational training programs. All students maintained that they would continue to live with their parents for at least two years after high school. Two students reported that they would continue living with their parents longer than two years after graduation. Regardless of how long students wanted to live in their parents' home, all proudly articulated that they planned to move out and live on their own at some point in their adult lives. Gil-Kashiwabara and colleagues (2012) found that Latina youth placed greater importance on living with family than European American girls. Latino participants in Trainor's

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(2005) study confirmed that they would continue to live with their parents after graduation. To date, few articles describe that while Latino youth do express the desire to live at home after high school graduation, they aspire to live outside of the family home at some point in early adulthood. Students described the comfort of living at home while attending some type of postsecondary education program. All students wanted to attend community college, college, or vocational school soon after graduating high school. Additionally, all students made the connection between attending postsecondary education and achieving career goals. Participants in Trainor's (2005) study expressed the desire to attend postsecondary education, but did not connect career goals to further education. In contrast, the majority of students in Johnston-Rodriguez and colleagues' (2006) study did aspire to attend postsecondary education and understood its importance in facilitating future career goals.

Finally, similar to findings in Scanlon and colleagues' (2008) study, students expressed nervousness in maintaining personal motivation to reach self-imposed goals. Students stressfully described a greater sense of responsibility and need for balance of life priorities after high school. Students also kept a range of expectations at the forefront of their life vision discussing personal hopes, fulfilling family expectations, the satisfaction of exceeding low expectations, and negotiating mismatched teacher and parent expectations.

Parent perceptions of post-school outcomes. While students' life visions were steeped in expectations and impending adult responsibilities, parents' visions for their child were driven by their past experiences in childhood and education. Parents' experiences in education and childhood guided their specific preferences in their child's pathway after high school. Parents included similar components in the vision of their child's life after high school as students. Interestingly, the majority of parents did not incorporate social relationships when describing

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what their child's life would look like after high school. Parents' discussion of a post-school vision was also riddled with concerns about their child's self-esteem, motivation to persevere, and ability to handle an academic workload. In fact, the majority of parents expressed the preference that their child pursues postsecondary education only, not part-time employment after high school. Not only did parents share concerns about their child's ability to succeed in a job, most parents wanted their child's focus to be directed only at school due to the complexity of navigating and thriving in work and postsecondary education settings. For example, Olivia's original preference was for Diego to focus only on work due to the overwhelming nature of taking on difficult academic tasks in a community college setting at the same time.

All parents in the current study wanted their child to attend a postsecondary education or training program (Gil-Kashiwabara et al., 2012; Leake & Boone, 2007). This finding dispels the negative stereotype described by Latino parents in Hogansen and colleagues' (2008) study that Latino parents do not want their children to attend postsecondary education. Further, despite the stereotype that parents of Latinas do not want their daughter to attend college (Gil-Kashiwabara et al., 2012), all of the parents of females in the current study had the strongest expectations that their daughter would attend a university or community college.

When discussing living arrangements after high school, parents and students had mismatched visions. Students were quick to state that they would initially continue to live with their parents. However, most students primarily wanted to talk about their eventual goal of moving out into their own living situation. This finding was an interesting contrast to parents' eagerness to discuss their child's wishes to live in their home for an extended time after high school graduation. Further, most parents did not even discuss the possibility that their child would eventually live outside of their home. Despite Rueda and colleagues (2005) and Shogren

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(2012) targeting the transition of young adults with low-incidence disabilities, this finding was consistent with the expectations of mothers in their samples regarding living arrangements after high school and into adult life. Leake and Boone's (2007) finding that generational differences between parents and students resulted in different expectations of post-school goals may also illustrate the mismatch of parents and students in vision of living arrangements. It is possible that the younger generation of Latino students is eager to experience living away from their parents, while parents' visions remain consistent with that of an older generation: that the child should stay at home indefinitely.

Teacher perceptions of post-school outcomes. Teachers' discussion of what their student's life would look like after high school initially centered on teacher expectations that students needed to "be realistic" about post-school goals. Teachers expressed the need to "bring them down" and "level" with students about attainable goals and pathways after high school. This finding is identical to teachers' description of "shaping" students' post-school goals to be realistic in Hogansen and colleagues' (2008) study. Teachers also described bringing employment and postsecondary education options into the school that they deemed as "realistic" opportunities for students. While these were excellent opportunities and exposed students to potential employment and education pathways, it is important to note that teachers did not discuss the best practice of matching student preferences with accessible opportunities. Rather, teachers' chose post-school options to feature based on their perceptions of what was "realistic" for students.

Similar to parents, teachers' descriptions of post-school visions for students were dominated by multiple concerns. Parent and teacher perceptions aligned when discussing concerns about postsecondary education. Teachers were apprehensive about students' ability to

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excel in college-level coursework or advocate for their academic needs. Additional teacher concerns about achieving a healthy work/life balance and succeeding in a work environment were echoed in parent perceptions as well. When talking about desired employment pathways being attainable for some students, teachers circled back to the topic of students needing to set realistic goals. Teachers and students shared similar views about social relationships after high school. This may stem from teachers having the ability to observe the interactions and impact of students' social relationships in the school setting.

The largest component of the post-school vision discussed by teachers in this study was living with family and its negative impact on students' independent trajectories. All teachers excluding one discussed their perceptions of students' living with their families as a negative influence. This discussion included concerns of students being in a caretaker role, helping to financially support the family, and the idea that students would become stagnant or complacent if they continued to live with their parents.

In response to these concerns, teachers expressed that their greatest hope for their student was for them to move out of their parents' home and achieve independency in their adult pathway. This finding is not surprising and has been supported in the research on teachers, CLD students and families, and secondary transition (Rueda et al., 2005, Shogren, 2012). While students in this study expressed that they would eventually move out of their house, and three students described feelings of tension and guilt around moving out, all students clearly stated they wanted to remain living at home after graduation for one to two years. Youth and parents in Gil-Kashiwabara and colleagues' (2012) study reported that teachers held different expectations of what students' lives should look like after high school than the students themselves. More specifically, studies have found that Latinos' home life is more structured regarding household

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norms and expectations than European Americans (Rodriguez & Cavendish, 2012; Suarez-Orozco, 1995; Valdes, 1996) and Latinos place great importance on family caretaking (Gil-Kashiwabara et al., 2012). Therefore, the perception that staying at home is a barrier to independent goals due to living in a household focused on caretaking responsibilities is expected. However, it is troubling that within the discussion of optimal living arrangements for students after high school, there was little to no mention of the potential positive influence of continuing to live with family, or the notion of respecting family desires. Although it is likely that teachers had no knowledge of what students and parents desired in this life domain, teachers' predominately maintained that living with family was a barrier without reference to student or parent input or preference. This is consistent with Gil-Kashiwabara and colleagues' (2008) finding that Latinas placed high importance and experienced low occurrence of teachers respecting family point of view during transition planning. David was the only teacher who expressed that Elena continuing to live with her family after high school was positive for her future due to the family's closeness. In Melissa's final comments about her hopes for Selena, she briefly and reluctantly stated that she should not "judge," and if Selena did stay at home it would be ok "if that works for their family." Research on CLD students and families and transition consistently marks the life domain of independent living as the most problematic in teachers working with CLD students and families (Harry et al., 1999; Povenmire-Kirk et al., 2010; Rueda et al., 2005; Leake & Boone, 2007). Supporting this, Rueda and colleagues (2005) and Shogren (2012) both found that Latina mothers' reported that school pushed the concept of independence and living outside of the home on them, so much so that these previously involved mothers stopped their school-based involvement in transition planning for their child.

Research Question #2: What Supports do Students, Parents, and Teachers Say that Parents and Students Need to Support their Post-School Vision?

Student perceptions of supports. Students described family, highlighting parents, as the most significant support to help them reach goals in their futures. Students sought advice from extended family members on life choices, and relied on parents for encouragement and advocacy. These findings are congruent with studies that show that students rely more on their families to plan for transition than school-based planning efforts and activities (Hogansen et al., 2008; Landmark et al., 2007; Trainor, 2007). Students also described the desire for unconditional parental support in the context of making choices about their life pathways. The description of students wanting their parents to trust them more, and support autonomy in decision-making about life choices is typical for young adults experiencing new freedoms and responsibilities after high school graduation.

Students were very articulate when describing academic supports that benefitted them in school. They were able to eloquently describe the types of accommodations they needed to be successful in college-level coursework. Students also spoke at length about understanding the importance, and positive impact, of advocating for themselves in the classroom, and their personal improvement in this area over the course of their high school career. This finding is similar to participants in Trainor's (2007) study who spoke confidently about their self-determination skills. Students in the current study also explained the differences in expectations of self-advocacy in a college as compared to a high school setting. Unfortunately, however, students did not know how access services in college or vocational school. Students had little understanding of the availability of services, how to seek out services and, even shared misinformation about support services for accommodations in postsecondary institutions. It is

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hopeful that all students were able to express their academic needs, and that having self-advocacy skills were imperative to a successful academic experience in college. However, it is unfortunate that students were not armed with the knowledge of how to access support services in college. Prior research cites that students and parents have reported lack of post-school options and transition planning opportunities as barriers to successful transition (Hogansen et al., 2008; Povenmire-Kirk et al., 2010; Trainor, 2007), but there is no research specific to students and parents not having the understanding of how to access accommodations in postsecondary education institutions.

Students also expressed that involvement in outside programs helped to support their transition out of high school. The idea that activities and mentors outside of the school support the transition of Latino youth is widely supported in the literature (Gil-Kashiwabara et al., 2007; Hogansen et al., 2008; Trainor, 2007). Gil-Kashiwabara and colleagues (2007) found that Latina youth and their parents described involvement with spiritual leaders in church as central to their successful transition into adult life. Students and parents in the current study did not reference spiritual involvement at all. In fact, aside from three students and one parent referencing outside programs, all students and parents stated they received no support from community programs or mentors outside of school. Lastly, the finding that all students stated that money was a concern for college, and their parents would need financial assistance for tuition is echoed in Johnston and Rodriguez's (2006) research. Although cited as a barrier to successful employment and not postsecondary education, CLD students with disabilities reported that lack of financial resources were a concern (Johnston-Rodriguez, 2006).

Parent perceptions of supports. Parents' perspectives directly aligned with students' in regards to parents providing primary support and encouragement for their child's future goals.

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While both participant groups spoke strongly about the importance of parental support, within this conversation, students also discussed the desire for parents to allow more autonomy in their decision-making. This matched parents' discussion of "letting go" and allowing students to take responsibility of their future. However, it appeared that there had not yet been open parent-child communication about parents' willingness to "let go" and students' desire for more autonomy, as both participant groups discussed these concepts as if they were hopeful for these types of interactions after high school.

Parents' perspectives focused on accommodations in postsecondary education when discussing supports for after high school. Similar to students, parents' had little knowledge about the types of accommodations available in college settings or how to access services, yet were certain their child would need academic accommodations and self-advocacy skills to be successful in college or vocational school. This finding is echoed in existing research that shows that parents know their child's needs regarding transition (Geenen et al., 2001), yet reported lack of transition planning and post-school options (Hogansen et al., 2008; Povenmire-Kirk et al., 2010). Parents spoke at length about the need to have timely, individualized guidance from the school to seek out post-school options that matched their child's aspirations, strengths, and challenges. For example, Olivia described an individualized process in which students' specific preferences, strengths, and learning difficulties would be matched with appropriate post-school options. She also described parental involvement in this process. Parents did not explicitly refer to transition service requirements in IDEA (2004). However, the discussion of their support needs in finding and accessing post-school options for their child directly reflected best practices in transition planning and the types of individualized services that should be provided to students with disabilities.

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In contrast to student perceptions, parents expressed concerns about their child's ability to self-advocate. While students described scenarios of confidently self-advocating in their later years of high school, parents painted the picture that their child was unable to ask for help, or know that this would be required in a college setting. These findings are supported by Powers and colleagues' (2009) study that found that both students and parents rated self-advocacy skills as most important when transitioning from high school to adult life. Additionally, Powers and colleagues (2009) found that students reported having a much higher level of confidence to address barriers in transition than parents thought their child possessed.

Teacher perceptions of supports. When teachers discussed post-high school supports for students, there was little consensus or reference to students' individualized needs. Some teachers noted the positive aspects of a peer social network and the need for students to increase self-advocacy skills for optimal success after high school. However, peer relationships were also seen as a negative influence, and two teachers noted that their students currently possessed adequate self-advocacy skills. All teachers did, however, agree that students would need to access accommodations in postsecondary education. This is an interesting finding given that this teacher perception aligned with parents and students, and yet, parents and students still did not have knowledge or resources to access accommodations in college settings. The majority of teachers perceived that parents needed guidance on the "realities" of college and finances primarily because parents had not attended college themselves. However, while all parents reported that they greatly needed guidance, they spoke about individualized services to choose and access post-school options for their child, not guidance on finances and college life. Further, two teachers perceived that their students' parents did not need guidance in post-school options at all due to one parent being "professional" and already having this knowledge, and the other

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student only wanted to pursue employment after high school and, therefore, the parents did not need direction. Again, this was a grave misperception as evidenced by these two parents reporting their need for guidance in transition options from school personnel. The mismatch in teachers' perceptions of what parents needed (or did not need) to support their child is supported in the CLD literature (Blue-Banning et al., 2004; Povenmire-Kirk et al., 2010; Rueda et al., 2005; Shogren, 2013). Additionally, CLD students and parents have reported the lack of post-school opportunities and the need for guidance in post-school options (Hogansen et al., 2008; Povenmire-Kirk et al., 2010).

As expected and widely supported in the CLD, transition literature, the discussion of needed post-school supports for students and parents was overshadowed by teachers' perceptions that parents were not involved in school-based transition planning opportunities (Geenen et al., 2001; Povenmire-Kirk et al., 2010; Wandry, Webb, Williams, Bassett, Asselin, & Hutchinson, 2008). Teachers reported that parents did attend IEP meetings but, due to Latino culture, did not participate as active team members and "deferred" to teachers to make decisions and guide the process. Teachers noted that as students entered upper grades in high school, they noticed a shift in students guiding parents rather than parents guiding students. Teachers also referenced that students acting as a translator for parents was a conduit for students to take more control, and parents to withdraw from involvement in their child's education. These responses gave way to teachers stating their decision to focus their efforts on students. The idea that teachers would provide student-focused transition planning and support aligns with best practices (IDEA 2004). However, simultaneously disengaging and ceasing to improve parental involvement, or discounting the role of the family is incredibly problematic due to the evidence that parents are pivotal in students' lives after high school (Landmark et al., 2007; Leake & Boone, 2007; Rueda

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et al., 2005; Shogren, 2012; Trainor, 2005). Additionally, chalking up the lack of parental involvement to Latino culture, economic difficulties and work-related commitments, or translation and control issues without seeking to understand the barriers and bolster new ways to connect with parents in the transition process is troublesome.

Research Question #3: What Do Students, Parents, and Teachers Say that Teachers Do to Support Twelfth Grade Latino Students and their Parents to Develop their Post-School Vision?

Student perceptions of what teachers do. When asked what teachers did to help students prepare for their future, students primarily discussed the organizational support such as verbal reminders about academics and scheduling they received to fulfill responsibilities in high school. However, the majority of students were not able to accurately connect this type of assistance in high school to how it prepared them for life after graduation. Eva was the only student who expressed a potential downside to this support stating that, given this assistance in high school, she was unsure of how to support herself in college in this area. This finding is significant in that these students were graduating and intending to attend postsecondary education institutions without having the organizational skills to be self-sufficient with coursework and scheduling responsibilities in those settings. Interestingly, one teacher discussed the notion of being the “point person” for her student, and that this continued assistance was concerning given the level of academic independence that would be required in a postsecondary setting. This teacher also expressed that it was difficult to teach the self-advocacy and sufficiency skills to students given stringent daily academic requirements.

Two students in this study referenced that their participating teacher provided specific transition activities such as having purposeful dialogues about college, visiting college

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campuses, and securing employment opportunities. In the discussion of what teachers did to support students as they transitioned out of high school, these activities did not have a strong focus given that they were quickly referenced and only mentioned by two students. In relation to this finding, parents did not discuss any transition activities that their child engaged in with teachers at school. For students, these findings may be related to the idea that students primarily thought of transition as a home or family-centered topic, and therefore did not relate teacher-directed or school-based activities as transition-related (Geenen et al., 2001; Gil-Kashiwabara et al., 2007; Hogansen et al., 2008; Trainor, 2007). It is also likely that, as referenced by a teacher participant, there were minimal transition activities outside of the work program or required consumer education course due to the increased school-wide focus on academics. Additionally, parents likely had no knowledge of how teachers were working with students related to transition activities because there was little parental involvement in school-based events.

Parent perceptions of what teachers do. Parent perceptions about what teachers did to support their child's transition were overwhelmingly negative. Parents initiated the topic with scenarios of how teachers or counselors lowered their child's self-esteem and demeaned post-school aspirations with negative comments about course requirements, career choices, or college opportunities. Alternatively, three parents discussed two teacher participants as enhancing their child's self-confidence through encouragement and supporting postsecondary aspirations. All parents reported that instilling confidence in their child was the most important factor in teachers' supporting post-school goals. Gil-Kashiwabara and colleagues (2012) discussed the idea that Latinos may place more value on personal interactions between people than formal rules, regulations, or impersonal interactions. This concept is illustrated in the finding that parents predominately talked about interactions (negative and positive), rather than activities or

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formal school procedures such as IEP meetings, as having a profound impact on the future trajectory of their child after high school.

Teacher perceptions of what we do. Teachers' responses about what they were doing to support students' transition out of high school provided the most evidence for the vast disconnect between school-based transition events, classroom activities, and student and parent knowledge and involvement in these activities. Teachers described two events and multiple efforts in communication with parents that, given teacher report and triangulation of data with parents and students, likely had little impact on preparing students for life after high school. While teachers expressed that the school-based events had value, they coupled that with the frustration of nonattendance of the majority of parents they were trying to reach. Additionally, when discussing strategies to communicate with parents, William described his frustrations of consistently unreciprocated efforts via email. In both instances (school-based events and William's email communications), there was no attempt to troubleshoot why these efforts were not reaching parents, or how to modify these efforts to increase parental involvement. However, on the topic of communication, Diana described her successful approach to communicating with parents and promoting involvement in her work program activities. Despite language differences, Diana's "open door policy" and phone call approach yielded more positive engagement with parents. This finding is not surprising given that parents and students referred most frequently to Diana in the context of positive transition supports and activities for their child. Additionally, Gil-Kashiwabara and colleagues' (2012) findings support the idea that establishing a more personalized connection with Latino parents such as speaking directly via phone call or face-to-face interaction garnered increased communication and involvement.

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In addition to sharing communication strategies, teachers reported a range of transition activities and related skills they taught students. These activities were isolated and programmatic, not necessarily drawn from students' individualized goals or transition plans. For example, teachers discussed the skills and activities within two courses: the work program and consumer education. Outside of the two classes, teachers discussed field trips to postsecondary education institutions and informal conversations regarding transition domains.

While all teachers listed a range of activities and skills being taught, only two students' referred to two teachers leading transition activities that helped prepare them for life after high school. Further, no parents reported any school-based transition activities or skills occurring with their child. This misalignment likely occurred from the lack of communication and involvement with parents regarding transition. For students, there is a possibility that since activities were primarily embedded within classes, and not drawn from an explicit transition planning process, that students did not connect these activities with preparation for their future goals. All students were required to take consumer education, and, at the time of the study, Elena, Juliana, and Diego were enrolled in this course. Diego and Eva were the only students involved in the work program at the time of the study. However, Eva was the only student who reported one transition activity connected with Diana and the work program, and Juliana reported two transition activities connected with William and her resource class.

Teachers quickly followed the discussion of transition activities by describing school, district, and national restrictions that made engaging in transition-related activities and skills challenging. Teachers brought up the national-level barrier of the intense focus on academic achievement. District-level challenges were transportation accessibility and allocation of time and required classes for students. School-level barriers consisted of teaching assignment and

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creative scheduling issues such as early release time to engage in vocational coordination and monitoring in community employment placement. The barriers identified by teachers, such as flexible scheduling, have been highlighted as strategies to effective collaboration in transition (Noonan, Morningstar, & Gaumer Erikson, 2008). However, there is no existing research notating teacher descriptions of specific barriers to implementing transition activities.

Finally, in the context of what teachers do, teachers' discussed what they would like to do with their students to improve transition services. All teachers talked about the desire to formally follow-up with graduated students to learn about what their lives looked like after high school in relation to postsecondary goals in employment, education, or challenges they experienced in their adult lives. Teachers talked about using this follow-up information to bolster transition services for current students. Without formal mention of Indicator 14, this conversation organically emerged when discussing engaging in, and barriers to implementing, school-based transition activities. In fact, one teacher made reference to a space on the summary of performance form that asked the student if they could be contacted for follow-up one year after graduation. This teacher posed to the group that she wondered whose job it was to connect with the students who checked this box on the form. It is clear that, while Indicator 14 data may have been collected by the school district in this study, these data were not being used to improve services at the school level. Teachers revealed no formal knowledge of Indicator 14, yet instinctually discussed an identical follow-up process that they perceived would improve their practice in transition. This finding greatly supports not only the implementation of Indicator 14 (collection post-school data), but also the fluid use of Indicator 14 data to enhance practice in secondary transition at the district and school-levels (Vitelli, 2013).

Research Question #4: How Does the Documentation on IEP/ITPs Align with Participant Perceptions?

The themes that emerged for the alignment of IEP/ITP documentation with participant perceptions were consistent across students, parents, and teachers in this study. It was clear that all participant groups were not involved in the ITP creation, and had little knowledge about the ITP document. It was also evident that little to no planning took place for students' transition out of high school and into adult life. The ITP document was merely being filled out prior to an IEP meeting, not used by any party to guide services or shape post-school outcomes. Students met with their counselor for a short interview directly before an IEP meeting so that the counselor could fill out ITP paperwork. Parents were physically present at IEP meetings, but little meaningful involvement was reported. Parents were not familiar with the ITP document or what it contained, and discussed confusing jargon that was used in the document and during IEP meetings. Existing research supports the findings that students and parents have little knowledge about IEP/ITP paperwork and view special education jargon to be barriers to fluid involvement during planning (Landmark et al., 2007; Trainor, 2005). Teachers did attend IEP meetings but were not involved in the ITP paperwork, and did not know about the structure of the ITP, or the information in the document. Teachers appeared unaware of best practices in transition planning such as utilizing transition assessments to guide the creation of postsecondary goals, and then choosing accompanying services, supports, and courses to build a holistic plan for achieving postsecondary goals. It was also evident that counselors, who filled out ITP paperwork, were unknowledgeable about transition assessments guiding the creation of postsecondary goals and services. This was revealed in ITP paperwork by transition assessments that were inaccurate, post-dated, or out of date. Lack of teacher knowledge about transition requirements and proper

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documentation, and misalignment of ITP content and student aspirations are supported in the research on teacher education, transition, and CLD students (Trainor, 2005; Benitez, Morningstar, & Frey, 2009; Wandry et al., 2008). Regardless of prior research supporting these findings, they continue to be alarming given the potential negative impact on the services and supports students should legally have access to during high school and after they graduate.

Finally, the last area of inquiry regarding documentation and participant perceptions was if parental input or concerns were addressed for parents. This was relevant in this study because it is the only area of the IEP/ITP that formally documents parental involvement. There is no other formal documentation showing that parents have provided input or shared concerns regarding their child's educational or transition planning. Two students' IEP/ITPs contained parent concerns, and these parents reported that their concerns were not addressed to their satisfaction. Elena was the only student who discussed her mother's documented concern, and gave an explanation that seemed to resolve the issue. However, it appeared that this explanation was not clearly discussed with Alma, Elena's mother. It is relevant to note that Alma only spoke Spanish, which, unfortunately may have contributed to the lack of communication or understanding in this situation. Contrary to parents' dissatisfaction, teachers shared that they were confident that established procedures at IEP meetings allowed ample time for parent concerns to be addressed. Teachers did not allude to the possibility that parents were dissatisfied in this area and, in fact, described quite the opposite stating that it was customary to address any parental concerns or input first on the agenda at IEP meetings. This finding further highlights the extreme lack of responsiveness by teachers to the needs and concerns of parents regarding their child's educational programming. It is unknown why teachers felt confident that parent concerns were being adequately addressed, and yet parents had the opposite opinion. However,

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it was evident from the results of this study that parent participation was not encouraged, and surface level interaction took place at IEP meetings. These findings echo similarities in the way participants in Trainor's (2007) study described IEP meetings as not helpful or conducive to meeting educational or transition goals.

Conclusion

The results of this study uncovered an overwhelming disconnect between what student and parent participants expressed they needed to support a smooth transition to post-school opportunities, and the services they were actually receiving. Most notably, students and parents in this study were provided no transition planning services at all. Students and parents had no knowledge of postsecondary education options and how to access services and supports after high school. Further, teachers perceived that due to Latino culture, parents did not actively participate in school-based events. There was a grave disconnect between teachers' expectations of what students lives should look like after high school and the desires of the students and parents themselves. These differential expectations appeared most predominately in the discussion of students living with their parents after graduation and into adult life. Overall, teachers expressed a lack of cultural understanding and respect regarding students' and parents' choices of living for after high school. Teachers also approached parental involvement with the attitude that the current outreach was adequate, and it was parents' responsibility to attend the events that were organized by the school. No discussion occurred about how to improve parental involvement or about why families were not being reached. The overt assumption that Latino parents do not participate in school-related activities drove the lack of problem-solving to enhance parental participation. Further, teachers missed the opportunity to bolster students' support network by not utilizing the natural support of the family connection. This was a

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significant oversight given that parental support was reported as the most important to students after high school. Unfortunately, the lack of communication and collaboration between parents and teachers resulted in students having very few resources, services, and supports to launch them into post-school opportunities that matched their goals in adult life.

Compounding the lack of transition planning and guidance provided to students and their parents in this study, the legal transition documentation also revealed that students and parents were not receiving transition services to bridge them to supported postsecondary opportunities. Not only were transition plans written incorrectly, all participants had no knowledge of the plan itself or its purpose in transition planning. Parents and teachers described vastly different experiences in regards to concerns being raised and addressed during IEP meetings. While the poor quality of transition plans was not surprising given the lack of understanding and implementation of the transition planning process, the results of this analysis further emphasized the alarming lack of teacher knowledge about secondary transition practices and lack of communication between parents and teachers.

The results of this study raised significant questions about teacher knowledge of best practices in secondary transition with regard to legally mandated policies in transition planning and documentation. Equally as important, the critical component of collaboration with parents in culturally responsive ways was alarmingly absent from the discourse in this study. The three overarching themes of lack of 1) transition planning, 2) collaboration with families, and 3) cultural responsiveness laid the foundation for the students and parents in this study to fend for themselves to create fulfilling and supported opportunities after graduation. Without a bridge from high school with tools and resources to access opportunities and supports in adult life, it is uncertain if the students and parents from this study will find fulfilling post-school options and

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services they deserve. The unfortunate realities of 1) poor outcomes for CLD youth with disabilities, 2) lack of teacher knowledge of transition and culturally responsive practices when working with families, and 3) CLD students and parents being dissatisfied with transition services are all underscored by the results of this inquiry. Given these conclusions, significant implications for teacher education and policy are outlined in the following sections.

Additionally, limitations of the study and implications for future research are described with the intent of creating a broader, more rigorous research base to inform practice in secondary transition to build culturally responsive services and supports that provide a seamless pathway from school to adult life for youth with disabilities.

Limitations

Although the present study contributes important information about the different perspectives of Latino students with LD, their parents, and teachers regarding post-school visions and supports, there are several limitations that must be considered. First this study took place in two high schools in one school district in the metropolitan area of a large Midwestern city. While the intent of qualitative research is not generalize to a larger population (Creswell, 2009), it is up to the reader to determine the applicability of this research to another setting (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Given the small sample size (n=16) and the disproved assumption that teachers working with a predominately Latino population utilized best practices in transition with CLD families, it is unknown whether students, parents, and teachers would have similar perceptions in other school districts.

A second limitation of this study was the translation from Spanish to English due to the researcher's primary language of English. Mertens (2015) stated that there are no rigorous standards for translation in qualitative research. For this study, a Mexican graduate student with

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content knowledge in secondary transition facilitated all translation with IRB documents, interviews, the parent focus group, and member checks. However, the nature of translation from one language to another is a threat to validity and reliability given the potential for interpreter bias and the affect that translation may have on data collection and the interpretive process in qualitative research (Lopez, Figueroa, Connor, & Maliski, 2008). In addition, the translator's first language was Spanish. This enhanced her ease in understanding participants' perspectives in Spanish, but translating concepts spoken in Spanish into specific words in English was challenging in a few instances during data collection process.

The final limitation is that this study was conducted over a relatively short time span. Allowing more time would have opened up the possibility for additional time points or utilizing other data collections methods such as observing IEP meetings. This would create a fuller, more intricate picture of the perceptions and transition experiences of students, parents, and teachers over the years of high school. Flexibility in inquiry is a characteristic inherent in grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014). Conducting this study over a longer time period to pursue gaps or unanswered questions in the data by returning to the field to continue collection would be ideal.

Implications for Practice

Teacher education. Mandatory transition services have been included in IDEA since the 1990 reauthorization. The 1997 and 2004 reauthorizations of IDEA improved the scope and comprehensiveness of transition services and planning provided to students with disabilities (U.S. Department of Education, 2010). Further, competencies in secondary transition including family involvement, interagency collaboration, and continuous consultation were validated and recommended for inclusion in special education teacher preparation programs over fifteen years ago (deFur & Taymans, 1995). However, an overwhelming number of teacher preparation

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programs have yet to incorporate transition-related content into coursework. Research in teacher education and transition has shown that teachers reported having a knowledge gap in the competency areas of transition assessment and family involvement, with one study noting that teacher participants indicated transition assessment was omitted from preparation coursework completely (Benitez et al., 2009; Wandry et al., 2008). Further, about half of studies in teacher preparation and transition have shown that special educators feel unprepared in skills related to diversity such as working with CLD families, language differences, and providing resources specific to the needs of a CLD population (Benitez, Morningstar, & Frey, 2009; Conderman, Johnston-Rodriguez, Hartman, & Walker, 2012; Kim & Morningstar, 2007; Lichtenstein, Lindstrom, & Povenmire-Kirk, 2008; Morgan, Callow-Heusser, Horrocks, Hoffman, & Kupforman, 2013). This is especially alarming considering widely acknowledged best practices (coupled with federal mandates in IDEA 2004) require ITPs to be based on age-appropriate transition assessments and family involvement. The findings of this inquiry directly reflect the teacher education literature showing underprepared teachers in secondary transition and working with CLD students and families. Specifically, findings such as the overt omission of transition planning and parental involvement provide the rationale for basic teacher education in best practices and policy in secondary transition for in-service and pre-service special educators. Improved teacher education in transition and strategies for CLD family involvement become even more significant with the accompanying results that teachers had a lack of knowledge of the ITP, and students and parents reported that parents and family are their primary source of support in achieving life goals. Therefore, for the present study, the minimal transition planning that did take place coupled with no involvement of parents in the process, resulted in a missed opportunity to arm students with a knowledgeable, and natural, support system after graduation.

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Luckily, established research shows teachers have positive attitudes towards working with CLD families and implementing culturally responsive transition practices (Morningstar & Kim, 2007; Lichtenstein et al., 2008). Additionally, research has shown that after receiving coursework or professional development in transition, teachers feel more efficacious and are more likely to implement transition practices (Benitez et al., 2009). Given that most research on best practices does not specifically focus on CLD youth, caution must be taken when using a one size fits all approach. Using the concept of individualization, adapting evidence-based practices to meet the needs of CLD students and families is crucial (Blanchett et al., 2009). Educational professionals must take into account that the values, desires, and challenges viewed by CLD youth with disabilities and their families may be different than those of the typical mainstream culture. Additionally, by seeking to understand certain ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and social characteristics of students and families, transition professionals will thwart stereotypical service delivery and assumptions (Blanchett et al., 2009).

As recommended by Kalyanpur and Harry (2012), using a posture of cultural reciprocity when communicating with CLD students and families goes beyond just understanding elements difference (Trainor, 2010). Improving the collaboration between CLD students, families, and professionals takes more intensive teacher preparation in cultural diversity and responsiveness (Kim & Morningstar, 2007). Once professionals can move beyond the surface identification of differences, true collaboration and communication can occur (Kalyanpur & Harry, 2012). Blanchett et al. (2009) recommend avoiding using jargon and terminology that is specific to the professional community when working with families. Creating barriers using this type of language hinders trust and reciprocal collaborative relationships (Rueda et al., 2005). Collaboration and building trust among practitioners and families should also include increased

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efforts in dissemination of resources and family education of post-school opportunities (Johnston-Rodriguez et al., 2005; Rueda et al., 2050). Combining efforts to 1) enhance teacher preparation coursework to include focused competencies in working with CLD youth and families (Km & Morningstar, 2007), 2) take a posture of cultural reciprocity to improve communication and collaboration (Kalyanpur & Harry, 2012), 3) understand the individualized post-school aspirations and supports of CLD students and families (IDEA, 2004), and 4) include the policy requirements of Indicator 13 emphasizing the connection between planning, documentation, and service provision (Flannery, Lombardi, & Kato, 2015) will greatly improve the implementation of best practices in transition when working with CLD students and families.

Policy. Implications for revised practices in policy specific to transition were drawn from the conclusions of this study. First, guidance counselors were charged with interviewing students with disabilities and then filling out ITP paperwork. Given the ITP documents and participant perspectives, these professionals had little knowledge of Indicator 13 requirements. Having guidance counselors take the lead in working with students with disabilities on behalf of their ITP documentation appeared to have simply been an administrative choice about the division of labor. While guidance counselors may illustrate a more inclusive approach to school-wide transition planning, these professionals are typically burdened with hundreds of students on their caseloads. In the present study, this approach undermined the foundational concept of individualization in special education, especially related to personalized planning of postsecondary goals and options. As a result, this practice had significant consequences and was not conducive to implementing best practices in transition planning and including parents or teachers in the process.

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As suggested by the teachers in this study, implementing Indicator 14 would create a more complete picture of the lives of adults with disabilities. Mandating the collection of data about the personal lives of individuals with disabilities in the areas of living, community engagement, social relationships, and other functional skills would provide a comprehensive view of how school exiters with disabilities truly transition into all aspects of adult life. Collecting data about how about individuals are living in their communities also reflects the federal definition of transition, which includes independent living and community participation as central to the full picture of transition services and supports. These data would contribute to a much more comprehensive evaluation of coordinated services at the school, district, state, and national levels.

Extending the collection period of Indicator 14 data would allow for a more accurate reflection of the outcomes that adults with disabilities experience post high school. As Vitelli (2013) summarized, there are significant differences in outcomes for individuals who are out of high school for three years or less as compared to individuals out of high school for longer periods. Post-school outcomes in employment, education and training, and independent living are more likely to be established for individuals with disabilities three or more years after their high school experience. While understanding what individuals experience in their lives immediately after high school is valuable in shaping services and supports for students in high school, understanding more permanent outcomes in transition, and the path to these outcomes, would allow for a long-term evaluation of programmatic components. Therefore, using a follow-along method by tracking exiters each year out of high school, for five consecutive years, would yield critical information at each stage of transition for young adults with disabilities (Vitelli, 2013). Extending the data collection period could yield specific details about outcomes such as

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postsecondary school completion or barriers to completion, job duration, benefits, and compensation. These details, along with information about living independently, are more likely to be relevant for individuals with disabilities five years after high school.

Implications for research

Given the results of this study, several implications for future research have been identified. First, comparative studies on the same topic should be conducted in a broad range of school districts with samples including students and parents of Latino and other CLD backgrounds. Additionally, given the best practice of inclusion, and that school guidance counselors were responsible for ITP paperwork in this study, a comparative study with senior Latino students without LD and their parents would provide an interesting contrast and context to the current study. Broadening the current study to specifically ask research questions related to ethnicity and culture in relation to transition would provide clarity of this variable and its significance. Further, the results of the current study touched on a wide range of domains in secondary transition. Extending any of these domains as areas of further inquiry with Latinos or other CLD populations would be extremely valuable to add to the research base in transition and CLD students and families. In addition, there is a significant need to increasing the literature base in teacher education and transition. The lack of knowledge in transition and use of best practices in this study highlights the extreme need for research on teacher knowledge and skills in secondary transition related to CLD populations. Empirical research in this area is critical to enhancing teacher preparation programs and professional development for teachers currently in the field. Finally, policy research increasing the understanding of the relationship between the quality of IEP/ITP documentation and the implementation of services, supports, and ultimately, outcomes is necessary to fully understand the impact and significance of Indicator 13.

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Longitudinal research focused on Indicator 14 in relation to improving current services, supports, and future outcomes for students with disabilities would provide empirical evidence to inform the implementation of current policies in secondary transition.

Summary

Only three qualitative inquiries have sought to exclusively understand the transition support needs of Latino youth with disabilities and their parents. Two of these studies focused on transition-age Latino students with low-incidence disabilities and included Latina mothers in the samples (Rueda et al., 2005; Shogren, 2012). The remaining qualitative study did include Latino students, parents, and teachers, but did not state if the participants were linked and omitted the disability type(s) of the student participant group (Povenmire-Kirk et al., 2008). While these studies have greatly contributed to the body of knowledge around Latino student and parent support needs and expectations during secondary transition, there is a significant need to continue conducting high quality qualitative research directed at understanding the transition expectations and support needs of Latino youth with high-incidence disabilities and their parents. Using a qualitative research design and a grounded theory approach to inquiry, this study utilized the data collection methods of focus groups, individual interviews, and document analysis to examine the perspectives of Latino students with LD, their parents, and teachers. Triangulation of methods and participant groups yielded a dynamic and interconnected story of the perceptions of post-school visions and supports needed to reach those visions. The results of this study revealed an overwhelming need for increased efforts in teacher education and transition and working with CLD students and families. The implementation of improved transition policies including Indicator 14 and numerous avenues for continued research are also recommended.

APPENDIX A



**Approval Notice
Amendment to Research Protocol and/or Consent Document – Expedited Review
UIC Amendment # 3**

September 9, 2014

Lisa Cushing, Ph.D.
Special Education
1040 W. Harrison St.
3322 EPASW, M/C 147
Chicago, IL 60612
Phone: (312) 355-1794 / Fax: (312) 996-5651

RE: **Protocol # 2012-0338**
“Project SET: Seamless Effective Transition”

Dear Dr. Cushing:

Members of Institutional Review Board (IRB) #2 have reviewed this amendment to your research and/or consent form under expedited procedures for minor changes to previously approved research allowed by Federal regulations [45 CFR 46.110 (b)(2)]. The amendment to your research was determined to be acceptable and may now be implemented.

Please note the following information about your approved amendment:

Please note that key research personnel, Kristen McShane, is not up to date with investigator training requirements and is not currently eligible to engage in research protocols submitted to the UIC Institutional Review Board (IRB). All investigators and key research personnel involved in human subject research must complete a minimum of two hours of investigator training in human subject protection every two years.

Amendment Approval Date:

September 4, 2014

Amendment:

Summary: UIC Amendment #3 (response to modification) dated and received August 18, 2014 is an investigator-initiated amendment about the following:

- 1) Adding a transition-focused sub-study of Project SET with the purpose of investigating the perceptions of post-school outcomes for 12th grade Latino students with learning disabilities (LD), their parents and teachers, as well as assessing what support systems are needed and available for students and their families to develop and pursue their post-school vision. The sub-study includes 3 types of data collection methods: 1) focus groups, 2) individual interviews, and 3) school records. The sub-study will recruit a separate group of

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- 2) Participant groups (6-10 participants in each group totaling 18-30 participants) include:
Special education teachers who have at least one 12th grade Latino student with LD; 12th grade Latino students with LD; Parents of 12th grade students with LD. All participant groups are linked. Special education teachers must have at least one student-parent dyad participating in the study. Therefore, if consent and/or assent are not obtained from at least one identified student-parent pair, the teacher will be dropped from the study. Additionally, consent/assent must be obtained from both the parent and the student in the dyad.
- 3) Recruitment procedures will include 1) obtaining permission from participating school districts, and names and contact information of special education teachers who service secondary students with disabilities from school administrators, 2) consenting eligible teachers, 3) with the help of participating teachers recruiting and consenting parents of eligible 12th grade Latino students with LD 4) obtaining assent from students in one-on-one meetings between a student whose parent/guardian has consented and a researcher. The researcher will always re-enroll student participants as adults if they turn 18 during the course of the study.
- 4) Subjects will participate in the fall (2014) and spring (2015 semesters only). Subjects will only participate in spring if research tasks are not completed by winter break.
- 5) Each participant group (a teacher and a parent-student triad) will participate in one 2-hour focus group and one 60-minute maximum individual follow-up interview. Teacher participants will be asked to collect and copy each student's IEP/ITP records for their high school career (for most it will be 4 years of IEP/ITP documentation).
- 6) There are minimal risks associated with this study. All collected data will be confidential. All participants will be assigned a pseudonym and all identifying information in all forms of data (focus groups, interview transcripts and IEP/ITP documents) will be deleted/blacked out prior to analysis and before dissemination of findings. At the end of the sub-study (fall 2015), the list linking the participant name to the pseudonym will be destroyed. For the focus groups and interviews, all identifying participant information in the transcription of the audio recordings will be deleted. Detailed information regarding data security procedures and encryption was added to the protocol (p. 7) and initial application (pp. 22 and 28).
- 7) The lead researcher, Joanna Keel, and a Project SET staff person will complete the transcription of the focus group and individual interview audio data.
- 8) Participants will be paid \$30 for their time.
The following documents reflecting the above are submitted:
Revised Initial Application
Revised Protocol, v. 6, 8/18/2014
Appendix B
Appendix S
SET Sub-Study Flyer (English), v.1, 8/4/2014
SET Sub-Study Flyer (Spanish), v.1, 8/4/2014
SET Sub-Study Parental Consent (English), v. 1, 7/22/2014
SET Sub-Study Parental Consent (Spanish), v. 1, 7/22/2014
SET Sub-Study Student Assent, v. 1, 7/28/2014
SET Sub-Study Student Assent Addendum, v. 1, 7/28/2014
SET Sub-Study Interview Protocols, v.1, 7/31/2014.
SET Sub-Study Phone Recruitment Script, v.1, 8/18/2014
SET Sub-Study Recruitment Email, v.1, 8/18/2014

APPENDIX A (continued)

Approved Subject Enrollment #: 176
Performance Site: UIC
Sponsor: Office of Special Education Programs, ED
PAF#: 2011-06048
Grant/Contract No: H325K110509
Grant/Contract Title: Seamless Effective Transition: Preparation of Transition Specialists for High Need Youth with Disabilities (Project SET)

Research Protocol:

- a) SET Research Protocol; Version 6, 08/18/2014

Recruiting Materials:

- a) SET Sub-Study Flyer-English Version 1, 08/04/2014
- b) SET Sub-Study Flyer-Spanish Version 1, 08/04/2014
- c) SET Sub-Study Recruitment Email Version 1, 08/18/2014
- d) SET Sub-Study Phone Recruitment Script Version 1, 08/18/2014

Informed Consent:

- a) SET Sub-Study Teacher Consent Version 2, 08/28/2014

Assents:

- a) SET Sub-Study Assent Addendum Version 1, 07/22/2011
- b) SET Sub-Study Student Assent Version 1, 07/28/2014

Parental Permissions:

- a) SET Sub-Study Parental Consent-Spanish Version 1, 07/22/2014
- b) SET Sub-Study Parental Consent-English Version 1, 07/22/2014

Please note the Review History of this submission:

Receipt Date	Submission Type	Review Process	Review Date	Review Action
08/04/2014	Amendment	Expedited	08/07/2014	Modifications Required
08/18/2014	Response To Modifications	Expedited	08/25/2014	Modifications Required
08/29/2014	Response To Modifications	Expedited	09/04/2014	Approved

Please be sure to:

Use only the IRB-approved and stamped consent document enclosed with this letter when enrolling subjects.

Use your research protocol number (2012-0338) on any documents or correspondence with the IRB concerning your research protocol.

Review and comply with all requirements on the enclosure, **"UIC Investigator Responsibilities, Protection of Human Research Subjects"**

APPENDIX A (continued)

Please note that the UIC IRB #2 has the right to seek additional information, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

Please be aware that if the scope of work in the grant/project changes, the protocol must be amended and approved by the UIC IRB before the initiation of the change.

We wish you the best as you conduct your research. If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the OPRS at (312) 996-1711 or me at (312) 355-2764. Please send any correspondence about this protocol to OPRS at 203 AOB, M/C 672.

Sincerely,

Betty Mayberry, B.S.
IRB Coordinator, IRB # 2
Office for the Protection of Research Subjects

Enclosures:

- 1. Informed Consent Document**
 - a) SET Sub-Study Teacher Consent Version 2, 08/28/2014
- 2. Assent Documents:**
 - a) SET Sub-Study Assent Addendum Version 1, 07/22/2011
 - b) SET Sub-Study Student Assent Version 1, 07/28/2014
- 3. Parental Permissions:**
 - a) SET Sub-Study Parental Consent-Spanish Version 1, 07/22/2014
 - b) SET Sub-Study Parental Consent-English Version 1, 07/22/2014
- 4. Recruiting Materials:**
 - a) SET Sub-Study Flyer-English Version 1, 08/04/2014
 - b) SET Sub-Study Flyer-Spanish Version 1, 08/04/2014
 - c) SET Sub-Study Recruitment Email Version 1, 08/18/2014
 - d) SET Sub-Study Phone Recruitment Script Version 1, 08/18/2014

cc: Elizabeth Talbott, Special Education, M/C 147

APPENDIX B



**University of Illinois at Chicago
Teacher Consent for Participation in Research**

**Project SET Sub-Study: Post-School Visions of Latino Students with Learning Disabilities,
their Parents, and Teachers**

You are being asked to participate in a research study. Researchers are required to provide a consent form such as this one to tell you about the research, explain that taking part is voluntary, describe the risks and benefits of participation, and help you to make an informed decision. You should feel free to ask the researcher any questions you may have.

Principal Investigator Name and Title:

Dr. Lisa Cushing, Associate Professor
Dr. Michelle Parker-Katz, Clinical Professor

Lead Researcher and Title:

Joanna Keel, Doctoral Candidate

Department and Institution:

Department of Special Education
University of Illinois at Chicago

Address:

College of Education
Department of Special Education
3343 EPASW
1040 W. Harrison M/C 147
Chicago IL 60607

Sponsor:

Grant funded by Office of Special Education Programs

APPENDIX B (continued)

Dear Educator,

Why am I being asked to participate?

You are being asked to participate in a research study, "Post-School Visions of Latino Students with LD, their Parents, and Teachers." This study is focused on understanding the aspirations of twelfth grade Latino students with learning disabilities (LD), their parents' aspirations for their children, and teachers' aspirations for their students after they leave high school. You have been asked to participate in the research because you are the teacher of a twelfth grade Latino student with LD who is in the process of preparing to graduate and transition into adult life. Based on this, you are eligible to participate. Your participation in this research is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future dealings with the University of Illinois at Chicago. **If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting that relationship.**

What is the purpose of this research?

The aim of this study is to explore perspectives about the desired components of adult life, and the necessary supports to achieve that post-school vision for twelfth grade Latino students with LD and their parents. This study also seeks to compare student and parent perspectives with those of their special education teachers in an effort to understand the collaboration and communication between participants. Individualized Education Plans and Transition Plans (IEPs/ITPs) will be used to further assess if student and family transition preferences and needs are reflected in the legal documentation of postsecondary goals, services, and supports. Overall, this study will focus on the critical need for, 1) special educators to be better informed about the unique needs of the students and families with whom they work, 2) including and respecting the perspectives of Latino students and parents during transition planning, and 3) providing culturally responsive transition services and supports to Latino students with disabilities.

What procedures are involved?

You will be asked to engage in the following research activities:

Focus Group: You will be asked to participate in a two-hour, audio recorded focus group with other teachers.

Individual Interview: You will be asked to participate in a one-hour maximum, audio-recorded, one-on-one follow-up interview.

School Records: You will be asked to provide the researcher with the IEP documents including Transition Plans of your participating students from each year of high school. No student names or school names will be used or connected in any way during the write-up of the research.

You will be asked to engage in the following recruitment activities:

As a participant, you will be asked to send home two copies of the parental consent form and recruitment flyer with the students on your caseload who are eligible to participate. Parent/guardians have the option to sign the consent form and send it back to school with their

APPENDIX B (continued)

child. You will give the researcher all returned parental consent forms. If parents/guardians consent for themselves and their child to participate in the study, you will arrange private, one-on-one meetings with the consented students and the researcher for the assenting process. These meetings must be arranged outside of instructional time.

What are the potential risks and discomforts?

This research has minimal risks. All information you provide is confidential, and all identifying information will be deleted from findings that will be disseminated. No one other than the researcher will have access to the data collected for the study. However, there is the potential risk of a breach of privacy and confidentiality by accidental disclosure of identifiable data from other subjects participating in the focus group.

Are there benefits to taking part in the research?

Taking part in this research study may not benefit you personally. However, the information will help to improve the quality of transition services provided to Latino students with LD and their families.

What other options are there?

You have the option to not participate in this study.

What about privacy and confidentiality?

The only people who will know that you are a research participant are members of the research team and other study participants. Although we ask everyone in the group to respect everyone's privacy and confidentiality, and not to identify anyone in the group or repeat what is said during the group discussion, please remember that other participants in the group may accidentally disclose what was said. No information about you, or provided by you during the research will be disclosed to others without your written permission, except:

-if necessary to protect your rights or welfare (for example, when the UIC Institutional Review Board monitors the research or consent process); or

-if required by law.

When the results of the research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your identity. Information will only be shared during dissemination of research findings (e.g., conference presentations, journal articles) and only in the aggregate without any individual identifying information. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law.

The data collected for research purposes will be confidential and will not contain any identifying information. All data from this sub-study will be stored in locked file cabinets in the Project SET office on the UIC campus. All electronic files will be password protected. All hard copies of the data will be destroyed after 5 years and electronic files after 7 years. For confidentiality purposes, you will receive a pseudonym that is linked to your name. Only the lead researcher will know the pseudonym connected with each participant. A master list of pseudonyms linked

APPENDIX B (continued)

with participant names will be kept in a password-protected document on a password-protected computer. This master list will be stored separately from all data. At the end of the sub-study (fall 2015), the master list linking your name to the pseudonym will be destroyed.

For the focus group and individual interviews, all identifying participant information in the transcription of the audio recordings will be deleted. The transcription of the audio recording and the de-identification process of the data will take place immediately after the interviews. The electronic audio files of the focus groups and individual interviews will be destroyed immediately after the recording is completely transcribed and de-identified. For IEP/ITP documents, all student names and school ID#s will be blacked out in each document before analysis. Pseudonyms will be used during analysis of all school records.

Will I be reimbursed for any of my expenses or paid for my participation in this research?

Yes. You will be paid \$50 for participating in the research study.

What are the costs for participating in this research or will I be reimbursed for any expenses?

There is no cost to you for participation in this study. You will not be reimbursed for such as items as telephone costs, mileage, or parking for participating in the study.

Can I withdraw or be removed from the study?

Your participation in this research is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting that relationship. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study. You will have the opportunity to view the questions asked during the focus group prior to the start of the session.

What if I am a UIC student?

You may choose not to participate or to stop your participation in this research at any time. This will not affect your class standing or grades at UIC. The researcher may also end your participation in the research. If this happens, your class standing or grades will not be affected. You will not be offered or receive any special consideration if you participate in this research.

Who should I contact if I have questions?

The lead researcher conducting this study is Joanna Keel. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact the researcher at (312) 413-1806 or email at jross7@uic.edu.

What are my rights as a research subject?

If you feel you or your child have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may call the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS) at 312-996-1711 (local) 1-866-789-6215 (toll-free) or e-mail OPRS at uicirb@uic.edu.

APPENDIX B (continued)

Remember: Your participation in this research is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting that relationship. You will be given a copy of this form for your information and to keep for your records.

Signature of Subject

I have read (or someone has read to me) the above information. I have been given an opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____ I give my consent to participate in the study, "Post-School Visions of Latino Students with LD, their Parents, and Teachers" as described above. I understand that the focus group and individual interview will be audio-recorded. I understand that the researcher will ask for my participating students' IEP/ITP records.

_____ I do **not** give my consent to participate in the study, "Post-School Visions of Latino Students with LD, their Parents, and Teachers" as described above.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

Signature of Researcher

Date (must be same as subject's)

APPENDIX C



**University of Illinois at Chicago
Parental Consent for Participation in Research**

**Project SET Sub-Study: Post-School Visions of Latino Students with Learning Disabilities,
their Parents, and Teachers**

You and your child are being asked to participate in a research study. Researchers are required to provide a consent form such as this one to tell you about the research, explain that taking part is voluntary, describe the risks and benefits of participation, and help you to make an informed decision. You should feel free to ask the researcher any questions you may have.

Principal Investigator Name and Title:

Dr. Lisa Cushing, Associate Professor
Dr. Michelle Parker-Katz, Clinical Professor

Lead Researcher and Title:

Joanna Keel, Doctoral Candidate

Department and Institution:

Department of Special Education
University of Illinois at Chicago

Address:

College of Education
Department of Special Education
3343 EPASW
1040 W. Harrison M/C 147
Chicago IL 60607

Sponsor:

Grant funded by Office of Special Education Programs

APPENDIX C (continued)

Dear Parent or Guardian,

Why are my child and I being asked to participate?

You are being asked to participate in a research study, "Post-School Visions of Latino Students with LD, their Parents, and Teachers." This study is focused on understanding the aspirations of twelfth grade Latino students with learning disabilities (LD), their parents' aspirations for their children, and teachers' aspirations for their students after they leave high school. You and your child have been asked to participate in the research because you are the parent or guardian of a twelfth grade Latino child with LD who is in the process of preparing to graduate and transition into adult life. Based on this, you and your child are eligible to participate. You and your child's participation in this research is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future dealings with the University of Illinois at Chicago. **If you and/or your child decide to participate, you are free to withdraw at any time without affecting that relationship.**

What is the purpose of this research?

The aim of this study is to explore perspectives about the desired components of adult life, and the necessary supports to achieve that post-school vision for twelfth grade Latino students with LD and their parents. This study also seeks to compare student and parent perspectives with those of their special education teachers in an effort to understand the collaboration and communication between participants. Individualized Education Plans and Transition Plans (IEPs/ITPs) will be used to further assess if student and family transition preferences and needs are reflected in the legal documentation of postsecondary goals, services, and supports. Overall, this study will focus on the critical need for, 1) special educators to be better informed about the unique needs of the students and families with whom they work, 2) including and respecting the perspectives of Latino students and parents during transition planning, and 3) providing culturally responsive transition services and supports to Latino students with disabilities.

What procedures are involved?

You will be asked to engage in the following research activities:

Focus Group: You and your child will each be asked to participate in a two-hour, audio recorded focus group. Parents and children will participate in separate groups.

Individual Interview: You and your child will each be asked to participate in a one-hour maximum, audio-recorded, one-on-one follow-up interview. Parents and children will be interviewed separately.

School Records: You and your child will each be asked to allow your child's teacher to provide the researcher with IEP documents including Transition Plans from each year of high school. No student names or school names will be used or connected in any way during the write-up of the research.

What are the potential risks and discomforts?

This research has minimal risks. All information you and your child provide to us is confidential, and all identifying information will be deleted from findings that will be

APPENDIX C (continued)

disseminated. No one other than the researcher will have access to the data including your child's teacher. However, there is the potential risk of a breach of privacy and confidentiality by accidental disclosure of identifiable data from other subjects participating in the focus groups.

Are there benefits to taking part in the research?

Taking part in this research study may not benefit you or your child personally. However, the information will help to improve the quality of transition services provided to Latino students with LD and their families.

What other options are there?

You and your child have the option to not participate in this study.

What about privacy and confidentiality?

The only people who will know that you are a research participant are members of the research team and other study participants. Although we ask everyone in the group to respect everyone's privacy and confidentiality, and not to identify anyone in the group or repeat what is said during the group discussion, please remember that other participants in the group may accidentally disclose what was said. No information about you or your child, or provided by you or your child during the research will be disclosed to others without your written permission, except:

-if necessary to protect your rights or welfare (for example, when the UIC Institutional Review Board monitors the research or consent process); or

-if required by law.

When the results of the research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal you or your child's identity. Information will only be shared during dissemination of research findings (e.g., conference presentations, journal articles) and only in the aggregate without any individual identifying information. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you or your child will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law.

The data collected for research purposes will be confidential and will not contain any identifying information. All data from this sub-study will be stored in locked file cabinets in the Project SET office on the UIC campus. All electronic files will be password protected. All hard copies of the data will be destroyed after 5 years and electronic files after 7 years. For confidentiality purposes, you will receive a pseudonym that is linked to your name. Only the lead researcher will know the pseudonym connected with each participant. A list of pseudonyms linked with participant names will be kept in a password-protected document on a password-protected computer. At the end of the sub-study (fall 2015), the list linking your name to the pseudonym will be destroyed.

For the focus group and individual interviews, all identifying participant information in the transcription of the audio recordings will be deleted. The transcription of the audio recording and the de-identification process of the data will take place immediately after the interviews. The electronic audio files of the focus groups and individual interviews will be destroyed

APPENDIX C (continued)

immediately after the recording is completely transcribed and de-identified. For IEP/ITP documents, all student names and school ID#s will be blacked out in each document before analysis. Pseudonyms will be used during analysis of all school records.

Will I be reimbursed for any of my expenses or paid for my participation in this research?

Yes. You and your child will be paid \$50 each for participating in the research study.

What are the costs for participating in this research or will I be reimbursed for any expenses?

There is no cost to you or your child for participation in this study. You and/or your child will not be reimbursed for such as items as telephone costs, mileage, or parking for participating in the study.

Can I withdraw or be removed from the study?

You and your child's participation in this research is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate, and consent to have your child participate, will not affect your current or future relations with the University. If you and/or your child decide to participate, you and/or your child are free to withdraw at any time without affecting that relationship. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and still remain in the study. You will have the opportunity to view the questions asked during the focus group prior to the start of the session.

What if I am a UIC student?

You may choose not to participate or to stop your participation in this research at any time. This will not affect your class standing or grades at UIC. The researcher may also end your participation in the research. If this happens, your class standing or grades will not be affected. You will not be offered or receive any special consideration if you participate in this research.

Who should I contact if I have questions?

The lead researcher conducting this study is Joanna Keel. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you may contact the researcher at (312) 413-1806 or email at jross7@uic.edu.

What are my rights as a research subject?

If you feel you or your child have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may call the Office for the Protection of Research Subjects (OPRS) at 312-996-1711 (local) 1-866-789-6215 (toll-free) or e-mail OPRS at uicirb@uic.edu. Parents please be aware that under the Protection of Pupils Right Act 20 U.S.C. Section 1232 (c)(1)(A), you have the right to review a copy of the questions asked of or materials that will be used with your students. If you would like to do so, you should contact Joanna Keel at (312) 413-1806 or jross7@uic.edu to obtain a copy of the questions or materials.

APPENDIX C (continued)

Remember: You and your child's participation in this research is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not affect your current or future relations with the University. If you and your child decide to participate, you and your child are free to withdraw at any time without affecting that relationship. You will be given a copy of this form for your information and to keep for your records.

Signature of Subject

I have read (or someone has read to me) the above information. I have been given an opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I have been given a copy of this form.

_____ I give my consent to participate in the study, "Post-School Visions of Latino Students with LD, their Parents, and Teachers" as described above. I understand that the focus group and individual interview will be audio-recorded. I understand that the researcher will ask my child's teacher for his/her IEP/ITP records.

_____ I do **not** give my consent to participate in the study, "Post-School Visions of Latino Students with LD, their Parents, and Teachers" as described above.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

Signature of Researcher

Date (must be same as subject's)

_____ I give permission for my child to participate in the study, "Post-School Visions of Latino Students with LD, their Parents, and Teachers." I understand that he/she will be asked to participate in an audio-recorded two-hour focus group and one-hour maximum, individual follow-up interview.

_____ I do **not** give permission for my child to participate in the "Post-School Visions of Latino Students with LD, their Parents, and Teachers."

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Printed Name of Parent/Guardian

Print Name of Child (first and last name)

APPENDIX D

~~STARTS~~ APPROVAL EXPIRES

University of Illinois at Chicago

OCT 16 2014 TO APR 25 2015

ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

**Project SET Sub-Study: Post-School Visions of Latino Students
with LD, their Parents, and Teachers**

1. My name is Joanna Keel and I am a PhD student in special education at the University of Illinois at Chicago.
2. I am asking you to take part in a research study because I am trying to learn more about what you envision your adult life to look like after you graduate from high school. I am also interested to know your thoughts about what helps you achieve that life vision after high school.
3. If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to participate in a two-hour group interview with other students your age who are getting ready to graduate and start life after high school. Along with the group interview, I will ask you to participate in a one-hour (at the longest) one-on-one follow-up interview with me. The group interview and one-on-one interview will be audio recorded so I can focus on listening to you rather than taking notes while you are talking. The last part of your participation will be to give me permission to look at your Individualized Education and Transition Plan (IEP/ITP) records from your high school years. I would like to look at these records so I know the types of goals that have been written down in your IEP for after high school.
4. There are very few risks to participating in this research. You may be uncomfortable answering questions about yourself. You may be uncomfortable to talk about these topics in front of other students. You have the choice to not answer any questions that you feel uncomfortable with, or not participate in the research at any time.
5. There may not be direct benefits to you immediately, but I hope that by understanding your vision for your adult life I will be able to help other students like you when they go through the transition from high school to adult life. Also, I hope that by understanding your life vision, and what helps you achieve that vision, I may be able to help teachers do a better job when they work with students like you. If you decide to participate, you will be compensated \$50 for your time.
6. Your mom, dad, or guardian have already given their permission for you to participate in this study, but you do not have to agree to participate even though they said "yes." Remember, this is up to you and no one will be upset if you don't want to participate or if you change your mind later and want to stop.
8. You can ask any questions that you have about the study. If you have a question later that you didn't think of now, you can call me at (312) 413-1806 or email me at jross7@uic.edu.

APPENDIX D (continued)

9. Signing your name at the bottom means that you agree to be in this study. You will be given a copy of this form after you have signed it.

Name of Subject

Date

Signature

Age

Grade in School

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POST-SCHOOL VISION AND SUPPORTS

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- Wehman, P. (2013). Transition: New horizons and challenges. In P. Wehman (Ed.), *Life beyond the classroom: Transition strategies for young people with disabilities* (3-39). Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes.
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VITA

Joanna M. Keel

EDUCATION

University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) Chicago, IL
2008-2015
Ph.D. in Special Education

University of Illinois at Chicago Chicago, IL
2005-2007
M.Ed. in Special Education

Indiana University Bloomington, IN
1997-2001
B.S. in Special Education
Learning Behavior Specialist I Standard Certification

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

UIC Department of Disability & Human Development Chicago, IL
2011-2015
UIC/Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) Transition Project
Project Coordinator and Graduate Research Assistant

- Supported and consulted on DRS/Chicago Public Schools (CPS) partnership including policy, interagency structure, and service delivery
- Planned and facilitated large scale Professional Learning Community meetings for over 40 DRS, CPS, and UIC professionals including DRS and CPS city and statewide leadership teams
- Planned, organized, and led professional development workshops in best practices in secondary transition for 50 DRS vocational rehabilitation counselors and over 100 CPS educators and administrators
- Supervised and managed three graduate assistants
- Co-created, presented, and packaged 8-session parent and student workshop series focused on secondary transition
- Co-created the CPS/DRS brochure outlining the interagency partnership, services, and supports for students and families in all CPS schools

UIC Department of Special Education Chicago, IL
Project SET: Seamless Effective Transition
2010-2011
Project Coordinator

- Contributed to personnel preparation grant proposal writing
- Coordinated all operations of 5-year personnel preparation grant upstart including hiring, recruitment, admissions, logo and website design, and event planning
- Assisted in design and alignment of program coursework
- Supervised and managed one graduate assistant and two student workers

Youth Connection Charter School Chicago, IL
2007-2009
Transition Coordinator and Special Education Teacher (grades 9-12)

POST-SCHOOL VISION AND SUPPORTS

- Planned, organized, and led professional development workshops in transition for 15 special education teachers
- Created and compiled extensive resource materials for transition service delivery including assessments, best practices, and adult and community services
- Facilitated linkages with DRS for graduating seniors
- Supported and structured transition service delivery at nine high school campuses

Armour Elementary School 2002-2006

Chicago, IL

Special Education Teacher (grades 7 & 8)

- Designed and co-taught inclusive language arts curriculum
- Facilitated transition from middle to high school program for students with disabilities
- Led team problem-solving and IEP meetings
- Advocated for and supported students with special needs in the general education classroom

Hinsdale Central High School 2001-2002

Hinsdale, IL

Adult Opportunities Transition Teacher

- Led transition program serving students ages 18-21 in areas of community-based instruction including independent living skills, employment, leisure activities, and continuing education
- Led a professional program team in problem-solving, planning curriculum, and person-centered planning using Planning Possible Positive Futures (PATH)
- Supervised and trained three program teaching assistants

Indiana University, School of Education Cultural Projects *Kulachi Hansraj Model School* 2001

New Delhi, India

Transition Teacher

- Worked with students with a range of physical and developmental disabilities, ages 5-19
- Taught community-based and functional skills to students, ages 13-19

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

UIC/DRS Transition Project 2012-2015

Chicago, IL

Graduate Research Assistant

- Co-developed and conducted semi-structured interviews with DRS Vocational Rehabilitation Transition Counselors focused on interagency collaboration and service delivery within CPS
- Analyzed interview data and co-prepared final report of themes and supporting evidence for DRS city and statewide leadership team

Project SET: Seamless Effective Transition (UIC) 2011-2015

Chicago, IL

Funded by Office of Special Education Programs

Graduate Research Assistant

- Created semi-structured interview and focus group protocols for Project SET Scholars, parents, students, and program partners
- Co-developed pre-post competency survey grounded in national and statewide transition specialist standards and performance indicators

POST-SCHOOL VISION AND SUPPORTS

- Wrote, submitted, and organized all IRB paperwork including initial review application, amendments, and continuing reviews
- Wrote all IRB approved research documents including consent and assent forms, recruitment scripts, and flyers
- Recruited and submitted proposals to outside school districts for participation in university research including CPS
- Analyzed semi-structured pre/post interview data

Elmhurst College

Elmhurst, IL

2010-2011

Research Consultant

- Conducted evaluation of freshman orientation program including students with disabilities enrolled in Elmhurst Life Skills Academy
- Developed and conducted semi-structured interviews with Elmhurst College staff
- Conducted observations of Elmhurst College students and staff
- Developed online survey for Elmhurst College students
- Analyzed qualitative and quantitative data and prepared final report submitted to Elmhurst College administration and faculty

Teacher Supporting Teachers in Urban Schools (UIC)

Chicago, IL

2009-2011

Funded by Institute of Education Sciences (IES)

Graduate Research Assistant

- Developed professional development curriculum in the area of engaging and motivating elementary students for CPS educators
- Coordinated professional development sessions for CPS educators
- Conducted semi-structured interviews of CPS educators
- Developed focus group protocols
- Conducted classroom observations using the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)
- Analyzed qualitative interview data using the consensual qualitative research (CQR) method and Atlas.ti software

Links to Learning (UIC)

Chicago, IL

2009-2010

Funded by National Institute of Mental Health

Graduate Research Assistant

- Conducted parent interviews and surveys in CPS

Collaborative Teacher Network (UIC)

Chicago, IL

2008-2010

Funded by IES

Graduate Research Assistant

- Developed and presented professional development curriculum in the area of literacy instruction for over 40 CPS educators
- Coordinated professional development sessions for CPS educators
- Conducted interviews and classroom observations of middle school educators in CPS
- Led recruitment activities of CPS educators
- Facilitated focus groups
- Collected and analyzed qualitative and quantitative data

POST-SCHOOL VISION AND SUPPORTS

UNIVERSITY TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Elmhurst College Department of Special Education **Chicago, IL**
Fall 2015

MTL 535: Curriculum and Instructional Strategies for Learners with High-Incidence Disabilities
Adjunct Professor

UIC Department of Special Education **Chicago, IL**
Fall 2012

SPED 448: Special Topics in Special Education
Co-instructor

UIC Department of Special Education **Chicago, IL**
2010-2011

SPED 515: Transition Planning and Vocational Programming for Students with Disabilities
Co-instructor

- Co-designed graduate level blended coursework on secondary transition
- Co-taught graduate level blended course
- Facilitated weekly online learning and assessment using Blackboard

UIC Department of Special Education **Chicago, IL**
2006-2007

Field Instructor and Teacher Educator

- Observed and consulted with over 30 special education student teachers in CPS elementary and high school settings
- Planned and led graduate level seminars for student teachers and interns in special education
- Provided weekly teaching and guidance to student teachers on special education instruction, lesson planning, and student behavior

INVITED PRESENTATIONS & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SESSIONS

Keel, J. (2015, July). *Cultural Diversity: Working with CLD Students and Families*. Presented to UIC students in SPED 516: Transition Planning and Vocational Programming for Students with Disabilities, Part 2. Chicago, IL.

Keel, J. (2014, June). *Cultural Diversity: Working with CLD Students and Families*. Presented to UIC students in SPED 516: Transition Planning and Vocational Programming for Students with Disabilities, Part 2. Chicago, IL.

Keel, J. (2014, April, June, August). *Foundations in Transition Planning*. Professional development sessions presented to vocational rehabilitation professionals. Chicago, IL.

Keel, J. (2011, September). *Transition Services in a School Reform Model*. Professional development session presented at the Illinois Transition Planning Institute. Bloomington, IL.

Keel, J. (2011, August). *Transition Services: A Coordinated Set of Activities*. Action planning session presented at the Chicago Public Schools Transition Kick-Off Day. Chicago, IL.

Keel, J. (2011, March). *Self-Determination: A bridge to post-secondary success*. Presented at Elmhurst College. Chicago, IL.

POST-SCHOOL VISION AND SUPPORTS

Keel, J. (2011, March). *Transition Assessment*. Presented at National Louis University. Chicago, IL.

Keel, J. (2010, March). *Working in Inclusive Secondary Classrooms*. Presented to NU Teach Secondary Cohort (Northwestern University). Chicago, IL.

PUBLICATIONS

Keel, J. M. (in press). Transition. In *Disability in American Life: An Encyclopedia of Concepts, Policies, and Controversies*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

Keel, J. M. (in press). Self-Determination. In *Disability in American Life: An Encyclopedia of Concepts, Policies, and Controversies*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO.

Balcazar, F., Keel, J. M., Roos, J. (2014). Secondary transition for youth with high-incidence disabilities in Gullotta, T. P. & Bloom, M. (Eds.) *Encyclopedia of Primary Prevention and Health Promotion, 2nd*. New London, CT: CFA Press.

Balcazar, F., Oberi, A., & Keel, J. (2013). Predictors of employment and college attendance outcomes for youth in transition: Implications for policy and practice. *Journal of Applied Rehabilitation Counseling, 44*(1), 38-45.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Cushing, L., Parker-Katz, M., Keel, J., Balcazar, F., Awsumb, J., Hovland, J., & Buren, M. (2015, November). *Multi-level urban-based transition education research: Studies addressing students, parents, and agencies in one urban setting*. Oral panel presentation at Division of Career Development and Transition Conference. Portland, OR.

Keel, J. (2015, November). *Differences in post-school visions between Latino students with LD, their parents, and special educators*. Pat Stilington Student Research Poster Presentation at Division of Career Development and Transition Conference. Portland, OR.

Balcazar, F. E., Awsumb, J. M., Keel, J., Oberoi, A., Langi, F., Dimpfl, S., & Maass, A. (2015, May). *Interagency collaboration: An examination of university/community partnerships*. Symposium presented at the Midwestern Psychological Association Conference. Chicago, IL.

Keel, J. M., Sanchez, J., & Balcazar, F. (2013, May). *Your child's future: Family education series for youth with disabilities*. Poster presentation at the annual Midwestern Psychological Association Conference. Chicago, IL.

Awsumb, J. M., Balcazar, F. E., Sanchez, J., Keel, J., Turner, C., & Clay-Wilson, P. (2013, May). *Improving outcomes for youth with disabilities: An interagency collaboration model*. Roundtable discussion at the annual Midwestern Psychological Association Conference. Chicago, IL.

Tejero Hughes, M., Parker-Katz, M., Zurheide, J. L., Olson, J., Muhammad, G., Lee, G., Ko, T., Keel, J., Bryant, A. (2011, April). *Collaborative Teacher Network: Professional development to enhance inclusion instruction in middle school*. Poster session presented at the Council for Exceptional Children Convention. National Harbor, MD.

Tejero Hughes, M., Parker-Katz, M., Bryant, A., Keel, J., Ko, T., Lee, G., Muhammad, G., & Zurheide, J.L. (2011, April). *Collaborative Teacher Network: Findings related to increasing teachers'*

POST-SCHOOL VISION AND SUPPORTS

knowledge of content area reading strategies. Roundtable discussion presented at the meeting of the American Educational Research Association. New Orleans, LA.

Shernoff, E.S., Frazier, S.L., Maríñez-Lora, A., Jakobsons, L.S., Atkins, M.S., & Keel, J. (2011, March). *Development of the Teachers Supporting Teachers in Urban Schools Program: What iterative research designs can teach us.* Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness. Washington, DC.