

A STUDY OF THE TRANSITION OF YOUTH FROM A DETENTION CENTER  
EDUCATION PROGRAM TO A STANDARD SCHOOL EDUCATION PROGRAM IN  
SELECTED SOUTHEASTERN STATES

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A Study of the Transition of Youth from a Detention Center Education Program to a  
Standard School Education Program in Selected Southeastern States

by

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(ABSTRACT)

The purpose of this study was to examine the factors which facilitate the successful transition of youth from a detention educational program to a mainstream educational program. The study investigated the following components: (a) informal or formalized transition programs, (b) the practices used to assist youth at the detention level transition to the educational mainstream, (c) program components used at the detention level to successfully transition youth to the educational mainstream, the importance of personnel in assisting youth in their transition, (d) factors which contribute to the successful transition from detention to the educational mainstream, (e) program components effective in moving youth from a detention education program to the educational mainstream, and (f) whether or not a detention education program with a formal or informal transition program makes a difference in recidivism rates.

A survey questionnaire was sent to 143 detention center administrators in the Southeastern United States. Descriptive data were run on all items in the survey. Cronbach's alpha test of reliability was used to assess internal consistency. Pearson correlation was used to compare consistency between independent and dependent variables. Finally, an independent sample *t*-test was conducted to examine if mean differences exist on Total Returned to a Detention Center by Transition Program.

Transitioning from a detention facility to the community is a difficult process. By making available to youth a comprehensive program during periods of incarceration, and collaborating with the local educational agency, youth are often better able to make the adjustment. This study emphasized that in order for youth to be successful once they leave a correctional facility, a linkage must exist among all stakeholders.

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I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.

*Philippians 4:13*

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Youth incarcerated in detention centers will, at some point, transition back to their base schools and communities. The school records of these students reveal that while in base schools, a large number of them experienced attendance problems, some discipline problems and some had been suspended from school or were recommended for expulsion. Due to a cycle of suspensions from school, resulting in poor attendance, school failures, and probation violations, many youth face being committed multiple times to detention facilities. Thus, for many, the detention school education program is the last chance youth associated with delinquent activities will have at obtaining a formal education.

Findings indicate more than 134,000 youth are currently detained in juvenile centers throughout the United States. As we look deeper into the records of those youth in detention centers, we soon discover that a large number of them are marginally literate or illiterate. Many have had unsuccessful experiences in school (Leone, Meisel, & Drakeford, 2002; Sickmund, 2002). Research also shows that substantial numbers of adjudicated youth do not return to public school programs following release from a secured facility. Many complete their high school experience in school programs at detention centers, while others decide to drop out of school (Nelson, Rutherford, & Wolford, 1987; Wolford, 2000). Thus, effective transition from the facility to the community is essential. Correctional educators can play an important role in motivating and preparing these youth to return to the schools and communities from which they came. Correctional educators must equip these youth with the necessary knowledge, and skills that are needed to successfully transition back into the educational mainstream.

Research has documented that by developing clear cut transitional plans for incarcerated youth while in the institutional setting significantly increases their chances of returning to the educational mainstream (Virginia Department of Correctional Education, 1988). In addition, throughout the literature, it is suggested that many of the students returning to their homes and schools often experience a great amount of anxiety and frustration. This is generally associated with past disappointments such as school failure and negative community relationships. Research also emphasizes that assistance in the form of effective communication between detention center schools and public schools during this period of time is crucial (Gilham & McArthur, 1999).

The purpose of this study was to determine the factors that facilitate the successful transition of youth from detention center education programs back into the educational mainstream in selected states in the Southeastern Region of the United States.

### Problem Background

In order to measure the effectiveness of a transitional program one must assess the practices that can be instituted at the detention level which could assist students in successfully reentering the educational mainstream. With the numbers of juveniles being released from correctional facilities and returning to communities reaching well in excess of 100,000 per year the message appears to be clear that measures must be taken to adequately prepare them for the move from detention to the mainstream.

Basically, who are these juveniles? They are largely comprised of males who are classified as learning disabled, or having mental illnesses; some are alcohol and drug dependent and have experienced numerous clashes with various law enforcement agencies. In addition, many of them lack the skills necessary to maintain any form of steady employment. Without the necessary help and guidance they will undoubtedly be unable to carry on productive lives (Griffin, 2005).

Until recently the 1997 Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act provided the basis for addressing the transitional needs of juveniles returning from correctional facilities to schools and communities. With the passage of this amendment the focus was placed on corrections and practices that were aimed at transitioning, thus providing a greater chance for the development of programs containing an all inclusive approach to services for youth within the juvenile justice system (Griller-Clark, 2001).

Even though the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997 (IDEA 97) was reauthorized and is now known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (officially known as Public Law 108-446) changes addressing the needs of children with disabilities and their families still continues to be of major concern. The most critical changes made in the Act were made in three major areas. These areas include the IEP process, due process, and the discipline provisions (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Obviously, the education of all children with disabilities will be impacted by the way in which the United States Department of Education interprets the changes and how the changes are implemented by the individual states, school districts, and local schools. These changes will not only apply to

children who are attending school in the LEA, but to all children, including those who are wards of the state as well as those confined to juvenile correctional facilities and short term detention centers (Virginia Department of Education, 2004).

As these youth transition from the correctional setting to communities it is essential that training within this setting be linked to experiences within the communities. Therefore, the development of effective transitional programs will enhance student success. Lack of a sound transitional program will almost assuredly result in significant losses in any progress made by juveniles while incarcerated (Stephens & Arnette, 2000).

#### Statement of the Problem

Who owns the responsibility for transitioning students from detention centers to communities? Some would argue that schools and communities assume this burden, while others would imply that corrections should do more to address the transitioning of students. Perhaps, the more appropriate question that should be raised is where would it be most feasible, during this period of time, for a youth to receive a comprehensive program of study aimed at transitioning him or her from a confined facility back into the mainstream community?

Clearly the problem is, unless transitional programs for youth are implemented while they are in detention and continue once students return to the base schools, the chances of success will be very slim. Students will simply continue to experience unsuccessful attempts at transitioning back into the educational mainstream and communities.

#### Significance of the Study

The significance of the study lies in its contribution to the literature available to those who function in both correctional education and regular education programs. The effectiveness of a transitional program for incarcerated youth is inevitably judged by the success of the students who return to the regular education program. There is no doubt that, in years ahead, the impact of just how well both the correctional system and the regular educational system functions in creating an atmosphere in which incarcerated youngsters can successfully achieve will be measured by either an increase or decrease in the recidivism rates of these students involved. The results of this study will be useful in supplying guidance to policy makers, facility administrators, detention principals, teachers, and parents of incarcerated youth in the development of programs focusing on the transitioning of youth who are held in short term

detention center facilities. It is noted that planning for transition should begin as soon as the student enters the alternative setting. This ensures that the necessary skills are taught to students while incarcerated and that they are provided with the necessary support needed upon leaving the alternative setting (Quinn, Rutherford, & Osher, 1999). In addition, the results of this study will also serve as a tool to be used by principals, counselors, and teachers in the educational mainstream. The results will serve as a guide toward collaboratively planning for the transition of youth from facility to the educational mainstream.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine what factors facilitate the successful transition of youth from detention center education programs back to the educational mainstream. The need for this study is the seeming lack of information and coordination that is currently available to administrators of correctional institutions as well as to regular educators. While there is a vast amount of literature available, the researcher sought through the implementation of a survey answers from education professionals, mainly program administrators of detention education programs who have a greater depth of firsthand knowledge as it pertains to the transition of young people.

### Research Questions

The current status of the use of transitional programs for incarcerated youth between detention education programs and regular education programs in a selected sample of Southeastern States was examined in this study. Specifically, the sample consisted of facilities in Texas, Louisiana, Florida, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky. It should be noted that since the researcher currently serves as a principal of a detention facility in the Commonwealth of Virginia that state has been excluded as a part of this study in order to remove any suggestion of possible bias.

In obtaining the information needed to formulate an answer to the problem, the researcher investigated responses to the following sub questions:

1. What informal or formalized transition programs exist for students who are assigned to short term detention within the detention education programs of selected states in the Southeastern Region of the United States?

2. What methods have practitioners used to assist youth at the detention level in order to promote successful transition back to the educational mainstream?
3. How important are transitional personnel in assisting youth in a successful transition from a detention center education program to the educational mainstream?
4. What are contributing factors to the successful transition of youth in moving from the detention center education program to the mainstream educational program?
5. What program components are most effective in moving from the detention center education program to the mainstream educational program?
6. Do detention center education programs with informal or formal transition program components in place make a difference in recidivism rates in a selected sample of states in the Southeastern Region of the United States?

#### Definition of Key Terms

The definitions provided for this study will serve as general descriptions. These definitions will remain the same throughout the study. They will serve as a guide in bringing uniformity and clarity of understanding to the content of the study.

Adjudicated: A judicial determination or judgment that a youth is a delinquent–status offender or an adult offender.

Aftercare: Re-integrative services that prepare out-of-home placed juveniles for reentry into the community by establishing the necessary collaborative arrangements with the community to ensure the delivery of prescribed services and supervision (Altschuler & Armstrong, 2001).

Committed: A court decision to place an adjudicated youth in a juvenile justice program.

Detention Center: A temporary, secure holding facility for juvenile offenders. Juveniles are held in local or regional facilities equipped to provide an educational component. The facility is comparable to a jail in the adult system.

Educational Mainstream: The public school environment.

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE): Recognizes that children with disabilities are entitled to a publicly financed education that is appropriate to their age and abilities.

Incarceration: An order handed down by the courts for a period of confinement/imprisonment in a secure facility.

Individualized Educational Plan (IEP): A written statement for a child with a disability that is written, developed and devised in a team meeting. The IEP specifies the individual educational needs of the child; it also states what special education and related services are necessary to meet the needs of the child.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA): Federal law requiring all schools to ensure that all identified children with disabilities have the right to a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). The IDEA was re-authorized as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004.

Juvenile: A person younger than age 18.

Short term detention: A facility in which the average length of stay for juveniles is 37 days.

Successful Transition: A process which promotes the passage of a juvenile offender from a detention center education program to a regular school, alternative school or adult education program and who is working towards (or has already obtained) a diploma or GED and have not re-offended.

Southeastern Region: According to the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools the southeastern region is comprised of: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Virginia.

Transitional Programs: Programs operated by the state and localities specifically designed to facilitate transition of incarcerated juvenile back into the educational mainstream and society.

#### Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study include, but are not limited to the following:  
This study did not try to measure the quality of the programs nor did it seek to measure which state did a better job with transitioning youth from detention center to the educational

mainstream. In addition, this study was restricted to the Southeastern Region of the United States including Texas, Louisiana, Florida, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky. The Commonwealth of Virginia was excluded from the study in order to eliminate any bias.

### Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter 1 includes an introduction to the topic, the problem background, a statement of the problem, significance of the study, purpose of the study, research questions, definitions of key terms, and limitations of the study. Chapter 2 contains a historical overview of correctional education, a view of the juvenile justice system and a review of the literature. The review of the literature contains literature related to strategies and services focusing on the facility to community transition, characteristics of transitional programs, and aftercare transitional programming. Chapter 3 contains the design of the quantitative study and methods used to gather and analyze the data. Chapter 4 reports the analysis of the data from the study, discussion of the results, and description of the population. Finally, Chapter 5 contains a summary of the study, implications, recommendations for future research, and conclusion.

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The context for this inquiry will include issues surrounding transition and an examination of factors which facilitate the successful transition of youth from detention to the educational mainstream. A historical overview of correctional education will be presented in order to provide non-correctional educators, and those unfamiliar with correctional education a record of significant events. In addition, a view of the juvenile justice system will be presented in order to shed light on the percentage of youth identified as youth with disabilities. A review of the literature will follow with an examination and an analysis of studies followed by a summary of this chapter.

#### Context for the Inquiry

With the passage of the 1997 Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, lawmakers focused attention on the transition of juvenile offenders who had been placed in correctional facilities throughout the United States. The focus of this amendment was to provide for transition of juvenile offenders from correctional facilities to schools, work, and community settings (Griller-Clark, 2001). With the re-authorized IDEIA 2004, transitional services for youth continue, but now are referred to as a results oriented process focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of youth with disabilities. Thus, the law now includes youth who are wards of the state. In addition to the law, recent research has revealed best practices for a comprehensive approach to providing transitional services for all incarcerated youth in short term jails and detention centers. The National Center on Education, Disability and Juvenile Justice (EDJJ, 2002) has outlined these practices which can be used to facilitate transition from short term jails and detention centers (see Appendix A).

The research also reveals that by including transitional programming in the individual's education program, success is evident for both juvenile and adult offenders. However, challenges exist because of the differences in philosophies between the areas of education and corrections. Three theories support the differences in philosophies and are explained as follows:

“Micro” theories focus on the behavior of the individual, and state that the responsibility for change resides with the individual.

“Systems” theories shift the attention from the individual to the relationship between the individual and his/her environment.

Finally, “macro” or “ecological” theories examine the institutions, culture, and other social forces which are active in the environment of a youth.

(Leone, Walter & Edgar, 1990).

Having an understanding of the theories encourages two important factors:

- First, they shed light on an understanding of the variables surrounding why different education and transition programs exist within the same field.
- Second, they point to an understanding of how professional and institutional roles can either support or inhibit transition.

Another issue surrounding transition especially for students with disabilities is the difficulty in providing appropriate support services while in detention. Although the law dictates special education support services must be provided, it is just recently being recognized (Hosp, Griller-Clark, & Rutherford, 2001). As a result, there is continued concern in the quality of transitional programming for incarcerated youth with disabilities. Not only is this a concern for students with disabilities, but for those without disabilities as well. As students become involved in the correctional setting, research supports the development of a sound transitional plan. It has been documented that having a transitional plan increases the chances that these students will successfully return to their base school following release (Florida Juvenile Justice Accountability Board, 1988).

### Historical Overview of Correctional Education

With the establishment of juvenile reformatories and libraries in the 1850s a vast improvement in education for juveniles was marked with many significant changes. Included in those changes were improving basic educational services and the employment of qualified teachers. In addition, during the 1870s basic reading and writing skills evolved into a system of academics to include vocational education and social education. It was felt that education was vital for all prisoners who exhibited the ability to learn, which also proved to be instrumental in developing skills to address the educational needs of the disabled (Rider – Hankins, 1992).

In understanding the historical context of correctional education one must also understand the laws governing children’s rights, especially the rights of those with a

handicapping condition. Large numbers of youth who are incarcerated in juvenile detention centers have education related disabilities and are eligible for special education services and related services under the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) re-authorized as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) 2004. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) dictates that public institutions such as detention facilities and prisons must provide programs and services to disabled individuals; they must also provide accommodations (Quinn, Rutherford, & Leone, 2001). The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) was enacted in 1975, amended and renamed under the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). The IDEA further emphasizes that entitlements exist for *all* eligible children. There is a clear definition of the children included in this Act. Children who are involved in the juvenile justice system ranging in age between 3 years and 21 years, as well as children with disabilities who have been suspended from school (Burrell & Warboys, 2000) are specifically mentioned in this legislation. The most recent legislation, impacting education, including special education, is the No Child Left Behind Act passed by Congress and signed into law by President George W. Bush. It is important to understand how NCLB and IDEA are related especially to incarcerated youth. IDEA guarantees the right to a free appropriate public education for students with disabilities, whereas, NCLB builds on the issue of accountability for students with disabilities based on the Individualized Education Program. In addition, section 1425 of NCLB stresses each correctional facility which enters into an agreement with a local educational agency must ensure that educational programs in correctional facilities are coordinated with the LEA, and at any time a youth is identified during incarceration as in need of special education, the facility must notify the local education agency. This section also emphasizes provisions for transition assistance, support programs for youth with an emphasis on reentry to the base school once a youth has been detained at a correctional facility, ascertaining qualified teachers trained to work with youth with disabilities, ensuring that educational programs in correctional facilities are aligned with programs in the regular education environment, using technology whenever possible as a means of coordinating educational programs between community schools and correctional facilities, involving parents in the education of detained youth, and coordinating funds received from local, state and federal agencies (U.S. General Accounting Office, 2004).

## A View of the Juvenile System

Today, the juvenile system is comprised largely of youth who have been identified as youth with disabilities. Those diagnosed with specific learning disabilities comprise 46% of the population and 45% have been diagnosed as emotionally disturbed, with the most prevalent conditions being learning disabilities and emotional/behavior disorders (Quinn, Rutherford, & Leone, 2001). The responsibility of educating these children generally falls to the juvenile justice system. With the numbers of juveniles in correctional facilities who have special needs hovering at rates of between 30% and 60% and increasing, the transition needs are great for this population as well as for the remaining youth population (Leone & Meisel, 1997).

While the objective for corrections is to rehabilitate, education is critical to the very existence of youth in today's society. Added pressures of fitting in and becoming a part of a school and community without this assistance often becomes an overwhelming experience for these youth. Research has documented that transitional services provides a link after confinement. Programs which are coordinated between schools and correctional facilities give children an added benefit of support. Re-enrolling in the base school, becoming gainfully employed and graduating from high school is most likely to occur with good transitional support (Stephens & Arnette, 2000).

### Review of the Related Literature

The following is a review of the literature. This literature review will be organized in the following manner: strategies and services focusing on the facility to community transition, characteristics of transitional programs, and aftercare transitional programming. In addition, other studies will be included focusing on multi-disciplinary perspectives on transition, service coordination between public schools and correctional schools, and services for youth with disabilities in a state operated facility.

Research suggests that school and community are the two most important direct factors in addressing the transitional needs of youth considered to be troubled with educational disabilities. A lack of collaborative efforts plagues the systems responsible for the education and training of youth. Successful transition into school, employment, and the community when youth are released from residential programs is a multidimensional process. Based on what is known about transition, the movement from a correctional facility to a public school is one of the transitions

that can often be a problem. Rutherford, Nelson, and Wolford (1985), state that programs geared toward transitioning of youth have been generally neglected by correctional education efforts. Thus, current literature on transitional programming used to assist adjudicated youth, both disabled and non-disabled, transition in the educational mainstream, as well as in the community, provided a framework for this study.

Research studies conducted by Pollard, Pollard, Rojewski and Meers (1997) provided an examination of strategies and services used in the correctional facility to ease the transition of adjudicated youth with disabilities from correctional facilities to the community. Hellriegel and Yates (1997) examined the role of the personnel involved in the educational process in the designing of methods to facilitate the transition for juvenile offenders from a correctional facility to the community. An additional study conducted by Pollard, Pollard and Meers (1994) provided a lens to view the most effective transition services and strategies. As we focus on intensive aftercare programming Altschuler and Armstrong (1994) used an aftercare model in which to assess program design. In addition to discussing strategies, services and characteristics, a study conducted by Whittier and Sutton (1990) looked at the extent to which transition programs for incarcerated youth disabled and non-disabled exist across the country. This study also focused on types of programs based on patterns. Finally, practitioners in the field of education (Bullis, Yovanoff & Havel, 2004) added to the body of knowledge by focusing on an outcome index referred to as “engagement.” It is suggested that this index gives a more accurate indication of success in the community.

### Strategies and Services

It is a common belief among practitioners in the field of correctional education that in order for the educational process to be successful for youth moving from a correctional facility to a community, programs must be comprehensive addressing the academic and social needs of the youth, (Whitter & Sutton, 1990). Pollard, Pollard, Rojewski and Meers (1997) study investigated strategies and services used with the transition of youth with disabilities. Pollard, et al., (1997) found in studying strategies and services of the various agencies, three areas of intervention permeated with an emphasis on instruction. These areas are individual assessment and evaluation, basic academic skills instruction, and social and independent living skills training. Social skills instruction appeared to be the area in which a large number of programs offered

training opportunities in survival skill preparation, conflict management, anger management and sex education. Another area deemed to be of importance was that of job placement, especially for students with disabilities. These students were recognized as those in the process of transitioning from a facility to the community. It was noted that throughout the process of transitioning, difficulty existed in maintaining contact with outside agencies. Additionally, gaining community support and teaching youth how to access community services further impacted on the transition process. Most importantly, it was noted that although cross-agency communication did not yield high respondents, support services such as mental health counseling and substance abuse counseling were made available to students with disabilities. In line with other services and strategies already mentioned, it was also revealed that only about half of the institutions responded to practices aimed at encouraging family involvement.

Until recently, transition programs for adjudicated youth disabled and non-disabled have not been a highly talked about component in the correctional educational process. Imagine the plethora of problems which surrounds these youth as they prepare to return to their communities and schools. With the focus of attention now on providing a comprehensive program of study for the transition of disabled youth the Pollard, Pollard and Meers (1994) study sought to determine effective transition services and strategies, in order to categorize and to prioritize effective programming aimed at supplying transition services for adjudicated youth identified with disabilities. Although the study predominantly focuses on the postsecondary transition of youth with disabilities, when examined it also appears to be relevant to youth transitioning from a facility back to school and community. By employing a three round Delphi process using a questionnaire, 76 professionals considered to be knowledgeable and experienced in working with adjudicated youth agreed to participate. In the first round, questions focusing on strategies and services were directed toward the participants. Out of this line of questioning eleven areas were identified as priorities which relate to effective services, strategies and programs for youth with disabilities who have been detained. The eleven areas include the following components:

- Assessment/Evaluation- this area was viewed as a needed component; much could be gleaned from this area including the strengths, weaknesses, learning styles and areas of interest of a given youth. While assessment and evaluation is necessary the Individualized Educational Plan was also viewed as a valuable source in obtaining

information pertaining to the academic functioning and used as resource in vocational planning for disabled youth.

- Basic Academic Skills – in this area professionals viewed academic skills such as real life situations, language skills, and reading, writing, and math skills as an entity. By incorporating a multi-sensory approach to instruction these skills were viewed as the mechanism through which these students would greatly benefit in an effort to transition.
- Career Exploration/Education – exploring realistic career choices through the use of technology was viewed by the professionals as an area in which youth would be able to advance with a better understanding of what career choices are realistic for them.
- Community Support – in this area support from the community was seen as extremely important. Arming youth and family with the necessary knowledge about accessing community services was thought to be vital in enabling youth to transition from facility to community.
- Family Involvement – in this area the professionals pin pointed a number of factors which was thought to impact on the transition process. These factors include the involvement of the parent in transition planning, providing home builders, providing parenting and family education, and providing outreach to include support services for the youth and family.
- Formal Transition Plan – in this area the professionals emphasized an individualized transition plan which consists of on-going evaluation and modification. A major focus of the plan is that of involving the youth, the probation officer, and other outside agencies. An over arching emphasis is that of acceptance of the plan for which the youth provided input.
- Interagency Collaboration - maintaining linkage with agencies and services through collaborative efforts was viewed by the professionals as essential components to transitioning for youth with disabilities.
- Job Placement –in this area the professionals felt that exposure to employment opportunities which included paid positions, apprenticeships, and community- based work experiences was also essential to the transition of youth with disabilities.

- Social/Living Skills – an area in which youth with disabilities, in the eyes of the professionals, would benefit. Skills involving social and interpersonal skills, survival skills, and conflict and anger management were thought by the professionals as essential to the process of transitioning.
- Support/Ancillary Services – other areas essential to transition programming and deemed important by the professionals were those covering crisis intervention and substance abuse counseling. It was felt that having youth connected to one counselor or transition specialist during the process would help in transitioning.
- Vocational /Job Search Skills – the professionals in this study felt youth should be given training in vocational transitioning skills, skills related to job preparation with a focus on searching for jobs and interviewing for jobs as well as how to keep a job.

Round two questioning of the participants focused on perceived effectiveness of services and strategies. Participants were asked to rate the statements from round one on a Likert scale from one to four with four being the most effective. Based on the ratings given, participants agreed that certain components are crucial to transitioning for youth with disabilities. Essentially those involving maintaining and developing a relationship with the community and developing a system which incorporates community-based experiences are vital to this population. Participants favored pre-release planning by involving the various agencies through collaborative efforts. Important to the participants was identifying the components of the transition plan. Participants further agreed on the need to have access to a transition counselor/coordinator.

Round three questioning focused on prioritizing the eleven transition categories cited based on just which category is more important than the other categories. Importantly, the participants indicated that family involvement was the strategy of greatest importance in assisting youth with transition. Other components were those of interagency collaboration, training in social skills, training in everyday living skills, and continued instruction in basic academic skills.

In addition, the Pollard, et al., (1994) study overwhelmingly indicates that transitioning of youth from facility to community takes the concerted efforts of many agencies. Strong community support, strong family support and the involvement of the receiving schools, as well

as the correctional institutions are all considered to be important in facilitating a successful transition.

### Extent, Characteristics and Types of Transitional Programs

Whittier and Sutton (1990) conducted a survey in which their primary focus was that of the extent of transition programs, the characteristics of transition programs and the types of transition programming for incarcerated disabled and non-disabled youth. In this study, data were collected using a questionnaire. In developing the questionnaire the researchers established four main objectives which served as a basis for the questions included in the questionnaire. The collected data reflected the following areas:

1. The goals of transitions programs.
2. Key components of transition programs.
3. Information on persons who operated the programs.
4. Students served by the program.

The overall purpose for collecting data reflective of the four objectives was to determine the types of services offered to disabled and non-disabled youth, to investigate various program components, to look at the quality of transition programs (those with qualified personnel as opposed to personnel not qualified) and to investigate whether or not programs were geared to both disabled and non-disabled youth.

Questionnaires were sent to the chief Administrators/Directors of Youth Corrections in fifty states as well as the District of Columbia. The questionnaire was completed and returned by 27 (54 %) through direct mailing. A final sample of states resulted in 37 responses (74%) to the questionnaire either by completing and returning it or responding to the survey after being contacted by phone.

The survey revealed the following from states responding to the survey: Of the states located in the Northcentral Region seven (58%) out of 12 responded, four (57%) of the seven responding indicated having a transition program. Of the states located in the Northeast Region six (67%) out of nine responded, five (83%) of the nine responding indicated having a transition program. Of the states located in the Southern Region 16 (94%) out of 17 responded, 13 (81%) of the 16 responded to having a transition program. Of the states located in the Western Region eight (62%) out of 13 responded, six (75%) of the eight responded to having a transition

program. The overall combined total for the number of states and the District of Columbia included in the survey was 51 and the total combined responding without programs as evident by the data was 37 (73%) while those responding with programs totaled 23 (78%). As indicative of the data many youth are not benefiting from transition services.

In contrast a study by Whittier, et al., (1990) three main areas related to the characteristics of transition programs were reported. These three areas of focus were educational, social, and vocational. Characteristics associated with educational goals were reflective of programs directly involved in developing and placing youth in an educational program immediately following re-entry into the community. Those associated with social goals described factors relating to educating students about available social services, improving life skills surrounding self-help, social, and survival skills, improving self-concept, developing “crime-free” attitudes, providing follow-up of students as they transition, and overcoming attitudinal deficits. Vocational factors focused on the areas associated with preparing one for the world of work, job training, vocational placement and career-vocational assessment.

This survey also yielded additional responses regarding characteristics of transition programs. The following responses were all related to program components and included the following characteristics:

1. Transition was started immediately upon a youth’s commitment to the juvenile system.
2. The importance of interagency collaboration was stressed.
3. Usually collaboration occurred between three agencies including educational, social, and vocational interest.
4. The sharing and exchanging of student records are essential to the process.

Additionally, of those states responding to factors relating to transition personnel, it was noted that the following characteristics are imperative:

1. A director is needed to oversee programs.
2. The title of the director must reflect a social focus.
3. Other agency personnel must be involved in the process of transitioning youth from facility to community.
4. A Bachelor’s degree is preferred for transition personnel.

5. Transition personnel must have previous work experience.
6. Transition personnel must have had experience working in either central office, individual facility, or the community in a similar role.

Lastly, program characteristics include the following as they related to students:

1. Programs must be provided for disabled and non-disabled youth.
2. All age groups must be served by transition services.
3. Records must be maintained on types of students.
4. Records must be maintained on students' post-placement status.

The characteristics described in this study are reflective of transition for disabled and non-disabled students. In view of the results, the characteristics are essential to all youth transitioning from a secure facility to school and community.

In an effort to promote successful transition of juveniles into communities the National Council on Disability (2003) view effective transition practices as those which are shared by all stakeholders. These stakeholders include public schools, correctional education facilities, and community interest groups, specifically those involved with mental health and social services. In addition, team-based planning is viewed as an integral part of the process. The focus is therefore on the transition of special education youth; however, the components are also necessary for the transition of non-disabled youth. In speaking of team-based planning those essential to the process include the youth, parents and family members, special educators, regular educators, school personnel as well as community-based personnel. The tracking and monitoring of youth as a means of continually assessing the achievement of transition goals and outcomes is also emphasized.

#### Aftercare Transitional Programming

The aftercare model approach stresses collaboration between juvenile justice agencies, parole and probation agencies, and community-based service agencies. The whole idea of aftercare is that it prepares youth who have been detained for reentry into the community. In so doing, it becomes necessary to form bonds with community-based agencies in a collaborative effort in order to ensure a successful transition and delivery of services and supervision. Effective aftercare requires seamless transmission across all agencies from the juvenile justice system to the community-based agencies including a continuum of services from the community

(Gies, 2003). The uniqueness of aftercare programs are that they provide intensive supervision with comprehensive ongoing services during periods of incarceration as well as after release to communities.

The call for understanding just what is needed in order to encourage law abiding behavior among juvenile offenders returning to communities from incarceration appears to be becoming widely accepted. As indicated by researchers (Altschuler et al., 1994; Altschuler and Armstrong, 2001; & Whittier et al., 1990) any gains made by youth during periods of incarceration quickly evaporate after being released. In addition, research shows that when youth are involved in structured programs following periods of incarceration a positive outcome is more likely to occur (Altschuler, Armstrong & MacKenzie, 1999).

Several aftercare programs have been used with juvenile populations. Some have had a mixture of results from the way in which programming was initiated and designed to the implementation of the program. The Intensive Community-Based Aftercare Program (IAP) model as designed by Altscher and Armstrong (1994) stresses collaboration with community-based agencies. Probation and parole are involved in the transition on an on-going basis and adds much needed structure to the transition process. Researchers, Altscher, Armstrong and McKenzie (1999) used this model as a guide to assess program design. The goal of the program as described by the researchers is to reduce the return of juveniles to facilities by providing specific services and counseling throughout the period of incarceration and post release. Other important entities of this program are that of providing supervision during reentry to communities. In addition, collaboration between the juvenile justice system and community service providers and probation officers are essential elements. Critical to aftercare is meeting the needs of youth on an ongoing basis through the use of community services. As we examine community services, the focus is on developing joint efforts in assisting youth during reentry in schooling, in maintaining family and peer relations, in developing good work habits as well as obtaining jobs and in providing necessary counseling in order to discourage drug involvement. The key to the IAP model is the providing of both supervision and treatment services to youth while in confinement and continuation after release to the community.

The distinctiveness of the IAP model is three fold. First, it must fit the conditions of each jurisdiction in their efforts in reducing recidivism. Second, the challenges in which it offers the

professional community justifies the importance of accountability. Third, the commitment by community services organizations and agencies as well as the juvenile justice system contribute to the effectiveness of this model. Therefore, the professional community is challenged with developing a comprehensive plan where ownership is attached. Knowing who is responsible for instituting a given task, how the task should be instituted and when the task will be completed, incorporates structure and stability to the model, as well as insures accountability based on community service commitment (Altschuler & Armstrong, 1994).

During periods of incarceration where is it most feasible for a youth to receive a comprehensive program of study aimed at their transitioning from a facility to the community? As pointed out by Altschuler and Armstrong (1994) what is known in reference to the question is that during periods of incarceration youth who are not prepared to make the transition to community due to a lack of sufficient programming contribute to the high rate of recidivism among parolees. Therefore, during periods of incarceration, transition should begin immediately upon entry into the juvenile justice system. It should be noted that even though certain skills may be taught during this time, youth often regress due to the lack of sufficient monitoring once they leave a facility.

The IAP model has been implemented in Colorado, Virginia, and Nevada. Each program is designed to fit the conditions of each jurisdiction in their efforts to reduce recidivism. A summary of these programs is provided:

The Colorado Intensive Aftercare Program integrates programming focusing on the implementations of vocational skill training, counseling directed toward the youth as well as family, parent orientation sessions, activities essential to practical learning , anger management and survival skills training. Key to the Colorado program is the step down measures and delivery of services after a youth is released, in addition to provisions which promote surveillance of youth and their activities. The model also stipulates the need for regular contact, usually once every week, with the supervision team.

Virginia Intensive Parole Program uses group homes as the main catalyst in which youth are served by both the community and the facility. As is evident in the Colorado program, life skills training is emphasized throughout the program. Other facets of the program include counseling

of youth and parent involvement and an extensive vocational assessment which is administered during placement. Other provisions to the Virginia program include other services such as offering a youth a chance at alternative education, offering mental health and family services in order to keep the family in tact, and offering vocational programs, and substance abuse programs. Key to the Virginia program is the step down measures which gradually reduces contact with parole supervision and service provisions which includes those existing in the community.

Nevada Intensive Aftercare Program youth are exposed to a curriculum grounded in life skills. This program is much like the Virginia and the Colorado programs. Youth in the program are considered to be serious juvenile offenders. During periods of release youth are given services to assist them and keep them from violating the program. Intensive supervision, drug testing, and monitoring activities of the youth are a part of the service provision. Ongoing contact with a case manager is stipulated and viewed as a viable part of the program. The key to this program is a provision in which levels of supervision are reduced as the youth progresses. Nevada's program lacks community involvement (Gies, 2003).

Overall, these programs have been proven effective. Collaboration and the level of communication between the juvenile justice system and the aftercare agencies within the community have greatly improved. In addition, programming has enabled youth to connect to community services available to them as they transition. All agencies involved have been able to identify mechanisms essential to improving aftercare, some of which involve effective planning, ongoing and continuous case management, incorporating structure and stability, and visiting youth once they are back in communities.

#### Additional Related Studies

There are other studies which contribute to the body of knowledge in regards to the transition of juveniles from incarceration to the base schools. Although the majority of these studies focus on the transition of disabled juvenile offenders, transition is also important for those without disabilities.

Lewis, Schwartz and Ianacone (1988) conducted a study using quantitative methods, presented an examination of current practices that facilitate the effective transition of disabled,

juvenile offenders into juvenile correctional institutions and emphasized the reintegration of youth back into the public schools. In addition, the study examined interagency cooperation between education and corrections agencies. This study indicates little research is available which focuses on practices that facilitate the transition of disabled youth. Therefore, in order to provide a basis for further study, specific issues such as service coordination, information exchange, contact during incarceration, records exchange, referrals for aftercare and support services were examined.

The most important findings suggest special education services are difficult to administer in the juvenile correction setting due partially to poor coordination between correctional education and the public school system. The study further indicates that due to conflicting mandates and the philosophy of correctional personnel it is difficult to provide appropriate educational services.

The Moran (1991) study focused on the Juvenile Corrections Interagency Transition Model developed by Webb and Maddox (1986) to gather data during a five month study period. This model focuses on procedures which can be used by both the correctional facility and the receiving school to ensure that students returning to school will have a better chance for staying in school. The model is highly systematic and addresses transition in four areas. These areas are interagency awareness, transfer of student records, pre-placement planning so as to avoid confusion when the student returns to the base school, and maintaining placement after release from a correctional facility back to school. The study focused on a key component of a transition model pertaining to special education youthful offenders. The “handoff” component was identified as the area in which accuracy in the transition process is most essential.

Both studies suggested that a linkage between corrections and the public school system is necessary in order to provide appropriate services to students with disabilities immediately upon their entering the juvenile justice system. Findings of both studies indicated inconsistencies of record exchanges and communication between education and corrections.

Both studies also indicated a need for adequate transfer of information incorporating written procedures in order to facilitate effective gathering and transfer of information. Every effort should be made to obtain records for students identified as special education students in order that the appropriate programming is made available in a timely and systematic manner.

Additionally, Leone (1994) using quantitative methods, presented an examination of a state-operated juvenile correctional system focusing on procedural and substantive aspects of services for youth with disabilities. The lens through which this case study was viewed was based in a theoretical framework of which previous knowledge through observation and evaluations of special education programs was utilized. The study examined the institutional factors impacting on the delivery of services. The premise for this case study was based on a law suit brought against a state system of juvenile justice for failure to provide special education services to youth with disabilities. The intent of this study was to determine the extent of services given to youth with disabilities during periods of disciplinary confinement as well as during the regular specified time of school as prescribed by the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP).

A major finding from this study revealed that students with disabilities are prone to receive a more “punitive fit” as a result of discipline infractions than their non-disabled counterparts. Other findings indicate that the IEP in most cases are not implemented when a youth is assigned to disciplinary isolation. Systematic problems were evident during this time of inquiry. In addition, the procedural and substantive rights of the IDEA, indicates that status and regulations were not understood by all correctional personnel.

The overall implication of this study was to insure that correctional facilities provide training to personnel with a focus on procedural and substantive aspects of the IDEA, state status and regulations. A thorough understanding of the rights to which youth with disabilities are entitled should be comprehended and understood by teachers and correctional personnel.

Hellriegel and Yates (1997) case study was three-fold: (a) to understand the relationship between two distinct groups, the educational agency and the human services agency; (b) to understand the need for collaboration between these two agencies and (c) to describe the processes of these agencies and how they align themselves with juvenile offenders. Data were collected using a qualitative design through semi-structured and unstructured interviews. Other sources of data collections were archival records consisting of resident’s files and educational records. This study sought to develop ways in which the two agencies could develop collaborative efforts which would develop into a better understanding of the roles each would play in the educational process of youth in correctional facilities. Seven themes emerged from the interview data:

1. Interagency Collaboration
2. Interagency Communication
3. Transition Plans
4. Parental Involvement
5. Correctional Facility Education Program Development and Implementation
6. Cross-Agency Knowledge
7. Special Education and Related Services

Major findings were evident in all of the above areas. Both corrections and public school personnel felt the need for an increased effort toward communicating and collaborating in order to bring about continuity in the educational process for youth during incarceration and transition. In addition to communication and collaboration, an understanding of the overall goals and missions of each were defined as being essential to the total process. These goals and missions interlock and with this connection it is vital that all parties work together under one shared mission of educating youth. Findings indicated that parent involvement was not emphasized at all levels in the educational process. As suggested in this study many of the problems associated with providing appropriate education could be alleviated when parents and professionals work together. Proactive measures are put into play when parents are encouraged to participate. While focusing on the educational programming of the facility, a lack of formal assessment was evident. Educational programming lacked procedures for testing youth in order to find the appropriate levels for which instruction should be geared. Informal or formal special education procedures were not observed during the study. The researchers pointed out that if current practices continued, this could bring about litigation for both correctional education and public schools. The overarching implication of this study focuses on effective collaboration.

Finally, practitioners in the field of education (Bullis, Yovanoff & Havel, 2004) added to the body of knowledge by focusing on an outcome index referred to as “engagement.” This study examined the transition of 531 youth from facility to community over a 12 month period. It is suggested that this index gives a more accurate indication of success in the community. Findings support the notion that getting started immediately upon reentry is essential for disabled youth and non-disabled youth. Thus, engagement time affected the success of youth remaining in the community. Those youth engaged in work and school immediately after leaving a facility

showed positive results. Those who were engaged at Time 1 were 2 ½ times more likely to be engaged at Time 2. Younger youth and SPED youth had a difficult time becoming engaged due to the lack of agencies prepared to assist youth in the community toward transitional efforts. Results indicate those who received community-based social services were more likely to be engaged at Time 1 than those who did not. This study also cautions against focusing entirely on employment and schooling for these youth and thinking that by keeping them engaged this will guarantee that they will have a positive transition and remain in the community and school. As the study indicates many of these youth who were engaged in both school and work returned to the correctional facility.

### Summary

Transitioning from detention facilities to the community can be a difficult experience. However, by making available to youth programs in transitioning during periods of their incarceration, and collaborating with the education agency outside the facility, youth are better able to adapt to the community and school.

All of the studies cited in this review are equally important and emphasize that in order for youth to be successful once they leave a correctional facility a linkage must exist between public schools, corrections, and the community. Collaboratively working toward a common goal of assisting youth in their reentry into society will greatly increase their chances of becoming productive citizens. It has been noted that seamless transition: is necessary and calls on agencies to collectively work together to assist youth in re-enrolling in school, connecting with community-based service agencies and continuing an ongoing relationship with probation officers for an extended period of time. Although many of the studies included in this review reflect the transition process as it pertains to those sentenced to long term facilities and special education youth, information can be gleaned from them and used in the development of a process which can be used to facilitate the transition of youth moving from short term facilities back to their communities and base schools.

By recognizing the strategies and services for moving youth from correctional facilities to the community, the research indicates that school and community are the two most important variables in addressing the transitional needs of youth, especially those with disabilities. We know that this population of youth can present serious issues for both correctional educators and

public school educators, therefore collaborative efforts, through effective programming of services, the implementation of social skills training during and after detainment, job placement, individual assessment, community support, family support, and continued interagency collaboration are all valuable means of assisting in the transition process.

Consequentially, as we examine the characteristics of transitional programs, the research focuses on three areas, educational, social and vocational. The three areas emphasized placing youth in educational programs, improving life skills training, making available to youth the knowledge needed to access services after release, implementing follow up procedures, providing job training, providing vocational assessment and placement, and assisting youth in preparing for the world of work.

In addition, the issue of aftercare seems ever pressing, in that a number of issues can be addressed in the transition of youth from the correctional facility to the community. The Intensive Community-Based Aftercare (IAP) model services as a catalyst for program design. Reintegrating juvenile offenders into the community is a huge undertaking, but by instituting specific services such as those provided through an intensive community-based aftercare program we can begin to prepare youth for reentry.

As indicated by the research, several promising programs exist, all of which exhibit goals central to transitioning. Colorado, Virginia, and Nevada have implemented the IAP model. These programs stress supervision and treatment services, collaboration with community-based agencies, involvement of parole and probation services, and developing joint efforts to assist youth during the transition period. Other components essential to the IAP model have contributed to the success of the program. These components include vocational assessment, step down measures, life skills training, counseling of youth and parents, intensive supervision, and monitoring and drug testing. Finally, this model with its uniqueness serves as an example upon which ongoing services can be fully assessed for effectiveness in and during the transition process.

Most importantly to the transition process is what do we do with these students? Do we continue to detain them and not offer a constructive solution and accept the revolving door scenario?

## Concluding Comments

Based on this literature review programs focused on transition must be comprehensive and must address the academic needs of youth. Transition should begin immediately upon entry into the juvenile justice system. We know that when youth are involved in a structured program following periods of incarceration a positive outcome is likely to occur. During periods of incarceration youth who are not prepared to make the transition to community due to a lack of insufficient programming contribute to the high rate of recidivism. A vast amount of the literature focusing on the transition of juveniles is directly linked to the transition of youth with disabilities.

Based on the literature review what is not known is just what programs of transition, if any, exist for all juveniles in the identified Southeastern States in this study? In addition, if programs are available to all juveniles what factors facilitate the successful transition from a short term detention facility back to school and community and as a result of having transitioning programs do they make a difference in the recidivism rate in any of the Southeastern States?

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

This study was designed to determine the factors which facilitate the successful transition of youth from a detention educational program back into the educational mainstream in selected states in the Southeastern Region of the United States. Specific objectives sought to (a) determine what informal or formalized transition programs exist for students who are assigned to short term detention within the detention education programs in the Southeastern Region of the United States; (b) determine what practices have been used to assist youth at the detention level to promote successful transition to the educational mainstream; (c) determine the importance of transitional personnel in assisting youth in a successful transition from a detention education program to the educational mainstream; (d) determine what factors contribute to the successful transition of youth in moving from the detention education program to the mainstream educational program; (e) determine what program components are most effective in moving youth from a detention education program to the mainstream educational program; and (f) conclude if detention education programs with informal or formal transition program components in place make a difference in recidivism rates in the Southeastern Region of the United States. Data were collected from detention center administrators of facilities in selected Southeastern States, using a survey design that employed a questionnaire. The methodology and procedures used to investigate the research questions is presented in this chapter as well as a description of the participants, the instrumentation, and the design for the e-mail survey, the pilot, and the data analysis procedures.

#### Participants

For the purpose of this study the participants were selected on the basis of major characteristics of juvenile detention facilities. These characteristics include the agency or entity by which they are administered, and the type of facility (secure versus non-secure). A secure facility was defined as a locked and or fenced facility with twenty-four hour supervision. Administration refers to the governing body of facilities. Some are governed by county commissions or boards, while others are governed by county executives or boards, city

commissions or boards, city executives or managers, juvenile or family court judges, state juvenile agencies, state judicial agencies, and sheriffs or police chiefs.

Detention center administrators including superintendents of facilities in ten selected Southeastern States participated in the survey. Specifically, administrators from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas responded to the survey. The survey was sent to (143) administrators of selected detention facilities and 51 (36%) were returned. A directory providing the names, addresses, and email addresses of detention administrators and superintendents of all facilities in the United States was obtained from the American Correctional Association. And the sample of the study participants was selected from this list.

#### Instrumentation

For this study a survey instrument was designed and used and can be found in Appendix B. The purpose of the survey was to elicit information that would be useful for analysis (Babbie, 2001). The survey was distributed electronically to administrators with e-mail addresses and mailed to those administrators who did not have an e-mail address. The survey incorporated a Likert scale in parts two, three, four and five. The Likert scale was used in order to determine the scope of transitional program components provided in education programs, the importance of transitional personnel, the importance of program components, and the extent of practice implementation. For the purpose of this survey an average was used in creating the scales. It was imperative that all cases were used due to the small sample size. In addition, closed-ended and open-ended questions were used in combination with the Likert scale.

As stated previously, no existing survey that would meet the needs of this study could be found. Therefore, the survey for this study was developed by extracting numerous ideas from studies used in the literature review (Whittier, Sutton, 1990 & Pollard, Pollard, Rojewski & Meers, 1997). These studies identified effective transition programs as well as characteristics and types of transitional programs. Early in the process Dr. Sutton and Dr. Whittier were contacted in hopes of obtaining a copy of their survey, but they were unable to produce it due to the time that had elapsed since their study was conducted.

The items on the survey addressed key elements of successful transition. Part I of the survey addressed demographics and general information. These are considered single items. The

purpose for Part I was to discover the nature of programs available to students, whether these programs were characterized as formal (yes = 2) or informal (no = 1) and to assess the various student populations (special education students, gifted students, and regular functioning students) receiving transition services. These were assigned percentages (1 = none, 2 = 1-20%, 3 = 21-40%, 4 = 41-60%, 5 = 61-80%, 6 = 81-100%).

Four scales focusing on transitional program components comprise Part II of the survey. The scales included were program goals, transition focus, and pre and post planning, and collaboration. Based on a 5 point Likert scale with 5 being the highest (1 Least Apply, 2 Somewhat Apply, 3 Generally Apply, 4 Apply, and 5 Strongly Apply). These items are designed to assess how much each of these components is used in schools included in the sample population.

Part III of the survey contained one scale with items focusing on the importance of transitional staffing to the process. Based on a 5 point Likert scale with 5 being always, (1 Never, 2 Seldom, 3 Sometimes, 4 Often, and 5 Always) the focus was on just: how much personnel contribute to the overall transition process.

There are five scales focusing on the importance of program components in leading to a successful transition in Part IV of the survey. This part is also based on a 5 point Likert scale with 5 being very important (1 Not Important, 2 Fairly Unimportant, 3 Fairly Important, 4 Important, and 5 Very Important). The scales are joint planning, agency input, instructional programming, pre-transitional strategies, and post-transitional strategies. The items were designed to assess the importance of program components leading to a successful transition.

Part V items focused on one scale the extent of practice implementation and are based on a 5 point Likert scale with 5 being always ( 1 Not at all, 2 Seldom, 3 Sometimes, 4 Often, and 5 Always). These items were designed to assess the extent to which the practices are implemented in facilities as well as “best practice”.

Part VI of the survey focuses on the exit and return of students to and from facilities. Specifically, questions assess the percentages (1= none, 2 = 1-20%, 3 = 21-40%, 4 = 41-60%, 5 = 61-80%, and 6 = 81-100%) of those graduating with a high school diploma, those earning a General Equivalency Diploma (GED), and the percent of those who returned due to recidivism.

In addition, questions were used to ascertain information on the methods used in following-up transitioned students, and on maintaining records as students return to the base school.

### Design of E-Mail Survey

For the purpose of this study a survey instrument was the source used to collect data. E-mail was used to obtain responses from participants with existing e-mail addresses and paper questionnaires/surveys were used for those whose e-mail addresses were not available. In this study e-mail addresses were available for approximately 100 participants from the National Juvenile Detention Directory (2003-2005) and approximately 43 participants received surveys by mail. Dillman (2000) outlined several steps one should use in considering an internet survey, all of which were utilized in the implementation of the survey used in this study. Dillman (2000) recommended beginning the contact sequence with a pre-notice prior to e-mailing the survey. Those superintendents and administrators with e-mail addresses received a pre-notice in the form of a postcard, a cover letter and the survey, and a thank you reminder with a replacement survey (see Appendix C). Superintendents and administrators who did not have e-mail addresses also received an identical pre-notice by regular mail, a cover letter and the survey, and a thank you reminder with a replacement survey. This process was repeated twice during the collection phase by e-mail and regular mail. The pre-notice is the first means of communication with participants. According to Dillman (2000) the pre-notice is important in order to avoid the discarding of messages from participants who do not use e-mail regularly. Notifying participants a few days prior to e-mailing the survey questionnaire is acceptable. In addition, the pre-notice was mailed to participants not having e-mail addresses a few days prior to mailing the survey. Dillman (2000) suggests avoiding using a listserv. Mail survey research indicates that personalizing an e-mail is important for attaining responses. Therefore, the e-mail survey was prepared individually for all participants and was e-mailed to all participants on the same day. Superintendents and administrators receiving surveys by regular mail were provided self-addressed, stamped envelopes so that the completed surveys could be returned to the researcher. Participants who did not respond after 10 days were sent a reminder either by e-mailing or by sending letters with another survey requesting that they respond. After a period of 30 days a second reminder was sent to non respondents requesting that they respond.

## Pilot Study

The validity of the instrument was established by utilizing a panel of experts. The panel consisted of two detention education program principals enrolled in a doctoral program, one special education director from a large school district associated with a detention education program, and two high school principals enrolled in a doctoral program. Panel members were asked to examine the instrument and to judge the instrument based on the extent to which the items in the instrument corresponded with the overall objectives of the study. The instrument was reviewed by the panel on four separate occasions. Each time panel members offered suggestions for improvement. The instrument was modified after each review to reflect their input. The original open ended instrument evolved into a survey instrument based on a five point Likert scale.

Following modifications of the instrument a pilot study was conducted for the purpose of testing the administration procedures as well as to ensure that data collection and data analysis procedures employed in the study were appropriate. A panel consisting of five detention center education program administrators reviewed the survey and the results of the pilot are reported in Appendix D. In conducting the pilot study participants were asked to provide feed back as it pertains to five survey instrument constructs including clarity of directions, ease of response, alignment of transition components, time required to complete the survey, and presentation and format of the survey. Recommendations were received and considered regarding all constructs and the appropriate revisions were made.

## Data Collection Procedures

Prior to collecting data, Survey Monkey and VT Survey were reviewed for the purpose of determining which one would be used to collect responses from participants in the Southeastern Region of the United States. After careful review VT Survey was selected as the instrument of choice. This instrument was easily accessible to the researcher and available through Virginia Tech. The formatting and entering of the survey into VT Survey began in early June 2006. By taking on this task early it allowed for additional proofing of all items with close attention given to assessing any spelling errors, assessing punctuation errors, assessing clarity of the directions given, assessing clarity of the choices of responses, assessing the alignment of all components throughout the survey, and assessing the presentation and formatting of the survey. In addition,

the researcher was also able to activate the instrument for the purpose of testing it to ensure the electronic process was working properly as well as to eliminate any other problems prior to activating it for data collection.

In July 2006 the Virginia Tech Initial Review Application was completed and filed with the Review Board for research Involving Human Subjects. Approval was granted effective as of July 21, 2006. Data were collected from September 2006 to October 2006.

### Data Analysis

After collecting data using VT Survey, the surveys returned by regular mail were hand entered in the Excel document. All data were then entered into SPSS version 14.0 for Windows. The review of the survey instrument shows that the survey is comprised of 12 scales and 65 items. One of the 12 scales was used to gather demographics and general information with the first question (Do you currently have a formal or informal transition program for students who are assigned to short term detention?), based on a yes/no response with an assigned value of 2 for yes and 1 for no. The second question (Do you characterize it as formal or informal?), required a response of either formal or informal with an assigned value of 2 for formal and 1 for informal. Additional questions related to percentages (What percentage of Special Education students, Gifted students, and Regular Function students receive transition services?). A value of 1 to 6 with 6 being the highest rating is assigned to these questions. The remaining items in the survey were assigned values 1 to 5 with 5 being the highest rating. By assigning values to the responses it was possible to determine which items were priorities in all scaled areas. This is representative of the descriptive data which was run on all items in the survey, giving the means, frequencies, standard deviations, and variances of each item in the survey.

In addition, a scale was created from each part and the reliability of the scales was assessed for Part I, Part II, Part III, Part IV, and Part V. Cronbach's Alpha test of reliability was used to assess internal consistency for survey scales. The scales in this study showed an alpha ranging from .642 to .941. Based on the theory that typically the more items in a scale the more reliable (refer to Table 1), it was not surprising that several scales (transition focus, instructional programming, and extent of practice implementation) containing seven to 11 items have high alphas. Results from the Cronbach's Alpha test of reliability are summarized in Table 1.

Demographics and General Information along with the variable names and number indicating the location in the survey are also contained in Table 1.

In addition, the correlation of scales was assessed for Part I, Part II, Part III, Part IV, and Part V of the survey. The Pearson Correlation was used to compare how consistently each value of *Y* is paired with each value of *X* (Heiman, 2001). The results of the correlation analyses are reported in Appendix E. The correlations table presents the correlations, asterisks (\*) indicating whether a particular correlation is significant at the .05 level or the .01 level (\*\*).

Part VI of the survey required a response indicating the percentage of students graduating from high school, percentage of students receiving a General Equivalency Diploma (GED), percentage of students who returned to the original detention center, and the percentage of students who returned to another detention center.

Table 1

*Demographics and General Information and Scale Names and Variables used to Predict the Alpha*

Scale Names	Variables Used	Item Number	$\alpha$
<b>I. Demographics and General Information</b>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you currently have a formal or informal transition program for students who are assigned to short term detention? If so, please attach a copy or describe your transition program.</li> </ul>	1	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you characterize it as formal or informal?</li> </ul>	2	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What percentage of Special Education students receives transition services?</li> </ul>	3	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What percentage of Gifted students receives transition services?</li> </ul>	4	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What percentage of Regular students receives transition services?</li> </ul>	5	
<b>II. Components of Transition</b>			
Program Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program goals include educational goals</li> </ul>	6	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program goals include social goals</li> </ul>	7	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Program goals include vocational goals</li> </ul>	8	.753
Transition Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transition begins the first day of intake</li> </ul>	9	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Informal transition plans are written for each youth while in detention</li> </ul>	10	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formal transition plans are written for each youth while in detention</li> </ul>	11	

*(table continues)*

Table 1 (continued)

Scale Names	Variables Used	Item Number	$\alpha$
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth are involved in the process of developing the transition plan to ensure acceptance</li> </ul>	12	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transition plans are shared with the local educational agency</li> </ul>	13	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transition plans are formed between the base school, detention, and the youth</li> </ul>	14	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transition plans include parent input</li> </ul>	15	.903
Pre & Post Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Records are exchanged between detention and local educational agency</li> </ul>	16	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting with base school occurs</li> </ul>	17	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pre-release planning meetings are held with the appropriate representative of the receiving schools</li> </ul>	18	.642
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Interagency collaboration is stressed throughout the transition process</li> </ul>	19	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaboration is usually initiated by the educational agency</li> </ul>	20	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaboration is usually initiated by social service agency</li> </ul>	21	.673
<b>III. Transitional Staffing</b>			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Counselor</li> </ul>	22	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Case Manager</li> </ul>	23	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mentor</li> </ul>	24	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Base School Transitional Coordinator</li> </ul>	25	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Detention Transitional Coordinator</li> </ul>	26	.861
<b>IV. Importance of Program Components</b>			
Joint Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a transition plan with input from youth</li> </ul>	27	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a transition plan with input from parent</li> </ul>	28	

*(table continues)*

Table 1 (continued)

Scale Names	Variables Used	Item Number	$\alpha$
	• Develop a transition plan with input from counselor	29	
	• Engage staff who will deliver services in joint planning early in the process	30	
Agency Input	• Collaborate with the receiving educational agency	31	.941
	• Collaborate with social services agency	32	
	• Collaborate with court services	33	
	• Meet with the appropriate representative of receiving schools	34	
Instructional Programming	• Align curriculum and educational programming between detention and base school	35	.892
	• Implement daily living skills as part of the curriculum	36	
	• Implement vocational goals as part of the curriculum	37	
	• Begin transitional programming upon entry into the facility	38	
	• Include educational goals as part of the curriculum	39	
	• Include vocational goals as part of the curriculum	40	
	• Include social goals as part of the curriculum	41	
Pre-Transition Strategies	• Assign a case manager to youth during transition	42	.912
	• Hold pre-release planning meetings	43	
Post-Transition Strategies	• Implement follow-up and periodic communication with youth during transition	44	.827
	• Implement follow-up and periodic communication with base school personnel during transition	45	
	• Share and transfer educational records to the base school before the youth returns	46	

*(table continues)*

Table 1 (continued)

Scale Names	Variables Used	Item Number	$\alpha$
<b>V. Extent of Practice Implementation</b>			
	• Conduct assessments and educational evaluations	47	
	• Provide a curriculum of basic academic skills	48	
	• Provide career and job exploration	49	
	• Initiate community support	50	
	• Initiate family involvement	51	
	• Develop a formal transition plan	52	
	• Encourage interagency collaboration	53	
	• Assist in job placement	54	
	• Teach social/living skills	55	
	• Teach vocational/job skills	56	
	• Provide support/ancillary services	57	.911
<b>VI. Respond to the following:</b>			
	• What percentage of your students went on to graduate from high schools?	58	
	• What percentage of your students received a GED?	59	
	• What percentage would you say returned to your detention center?	60	
	• What percentage would you say return to another detention center?	61	
	• Is there a formal method of following-up transitioned students? Yes or No	62	
	• Are records maintained on how many students return to the base school? Yes or No	63	
	• Position of person completing survey	64	
	• Location of Center/State	65	

In order to assess the linear relationship between the variables a Pearson Correlation was conducted on each scale and examined to see if a relationship existed between the scales and the items Return to Your Detention Center, Return to Another Detention Center, Total Returned, Graduate, GED, Total Graduating and Total GED. In addition, twenty-four point biserial correlations were conducted to examine the relationships between the scales and Transition Programs (Yes = 2 versus No = 1) and Type of Transition Program (Formal = 2 versus Informal = 1). To conclude the analysis an independent *t*-test was conducted to examine the mean differences on Total Return to a Detention Center by Transition Program (Yes = 2 versus No = 1).

The first research question examined the state by state existence of formal or formalized transition programs for students assigned to short term detention within the individual detention education programs in the Southeastern Region of the United States. The question was examined through descriptive statistics, means and standard deviation. Frequencies and percents for special education students, gifted students, and regular students were also examined and provided the basis for answering this research question.

The second research question examined procedures used by practitioners to assist youth at the detention level to promote successful transition to the educational mainstream. This question was examined through the use of descriptive statistics, means and standard deviations. The researcher was able to examine the responses to the question of implementation by looking at the extent to which practices are currently being implemented in each of the facilities included in the study.

The third research question examined the importance of transitional personnel in assisting youth in a successful transition from a detention education program. This question was also examined through descriptive statistics, means and standard deviations. The fourth research question examined contributing factors essential to the successful transition of youth in moving from the detention education program to the mainstream educational program. This question was examined through descriptive statistics, means and standard deviations.

The fifth research question sought to ascertain which program components are effective in moving youth from a detention education program to the mainstream educational program. This question was examined through descriptive statistics, means and standard deviations.

The sixth research question sought to determine if detention education programs having either a formal or informal transition program in place made any difference in recidivism rates in the Southeastern Region of the United States. Respondents answered yes or no to having a transition program in this part of the survey questionnaire. Descriptive statistics means and standard deviations were also examined. Second, Pearson Correlations were conducted on all scales to assess whether these scales had an impact on return to your detention center, return to another detention center, graduating from high school and receiving a GED. Third, twenty-four biserial correlations examined the relationship between all scales and Transition Program (Yes= 2 versus No = 1) and Type of Program (Formal = 2 versus Informal = 1). Finally, an independent *t*-test was conducted to examine if mean difference exist on Total Returned to a Detention Center by Transition Program (Yes = 2 versus No = 1).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this chapter is to present the information from the analysis of data that were collected from the study of transition of youth from a detention center education program to a standard school education program in selected Southeastern States. In addition to reporting the findings of each research question, a discussion for each will be included. The sections of this chapter include: (a) description of the population, (b) analyses of results, and (c) discussion based on the research questions.

#### Description of Population

The target sample population in this study consisted of detention center administrators, including superintendents of facilities in ten Southeastern States including Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas. The main information sought in this study was that of determining the existence of a transition program, either formal or informal, and if having either type of program made a difference in the recidivism rates.

#### *Research Question A*

**What informal or formalized transition programs exist for students who are assigned to short term detention within the detention education programs in the Southeastern Region of the United States?**

The primary reasons for examining this question were to clarify the population studied, and to provide baseline data about the prevalence of transition programs for youth within detention education programs and describe types of programs that are available throughout the Southeastern United States.

Table 2 provides the description of the population, showing the percentages of youth receiving transition services for Special Education Students, Gifted Students, and Regular Functioning Students. To answer the question the researcher looked at the number and percentage of those responding to each of the categories, as well as, the manner in which respondents answered either having a program or not having a program and whether the program was considered to be formal or informal.

In this study 33 (65%) of the 51 participants responding to the transition programs questions reported having a transition program for students assigned to short term detention, 17 (33%) reported not having a program and 1 (2%) declined to answer.

Most importantly of the 51 institutions responding, 9 (18%) reported no transition services for special education students, 15 (30%) reported no transition services for gifted students, 8 (16%) reported no transition services for regular students, and 1 (2%) declined an answer for each of the categories. These survey results are summarized in Table 2.

Of the 51 institutions responding, 12 (24%) reported 1-20% of special education students receive transition services, 15 (30%) reported 1-20% of gifted students receive transition services, 14 (27%) reported 1-20% of regular functioning students receive transition services and 1 (2%) declined an answer for each of the categories. These survey results are summarized in Table 2.

Finally, findings of the present study indicate of the 51 institutions responding, 16 (32%) reported 81-100 % of special education students receive transition services, 15 (30%) reported 81-100% of gifted students receive transition services, 15 (30%) of regular students receive transition services and 1 (2%) declined to answer for each of the categories. These survey results are summarized in Table 2.

Given the importance of transition, as indicated by the literature review, it is surprising that about a third did not report having a transition program. Taking a closer look at juvenile offenders, the research (Griffin, 2005) indicates that over 100,000 juveniles will return to the communities from which they came following periods of incarceration in residential facilities. Often these juveniles have been away from their communities and schools for up to several months, and without help or guidance before and during this time, transitioning from incarceration to the home community is a difficult process. The analysis of the data from the present study depicts that only a small percentage of these youth are receiving the services necessary to assist with transitioning. Given what we know about these youth and the problems they have once they return to communities, it is surprising that they are not getting the support and services they need to succeed following release. It is clear that a greater emphasis should be placed on transition programming during periods of incarceration aimed at helping youth make a smooth and seamless move from detention back to the home community.

Table 2

*N and Percents of Institutions with Transition Program Services for Special Education Students, Gifted Students, and Regular Students*

	Special Education		Gifted		Regular	
	M = 3.62: SD = 1.98		M = 3.10: SD = 2.11		M = 3.52: SD = 1.94	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
None	9	18.0	15	30.0	8	16.0
1-20%	12	24.0	15	30.0	14	27.0
21-40%	5	10.0	2	4.0	5	10.0
41-60%	3	6.0	1	2.0	5	10.0
61-80%	5	10.0	2	4.0	3	6.0
81-100%	16	32.0	15	30.0	15	29.0
No Answer	1	2.0	1	2.0	1	2.0
Total	51		51		51	

To further clarify findings in the present study, Table 2 depicts percentages of youth receiving transition services. Analysis of the none category indicates of the 51 institutions responding 30% of the programs reported providing no services for gifted students, 18% reported providing no services for special education students, and 16% reported providing no services for regular students.

Overall, the gifted population shows the highest percentage for receiving no services. This is most likely due to the lack of knowledge in providing educational programming, which goes beyond the core curriculum and adopts a “one size fits all” approach to providing educational services. Furthermore, in the case of gifted students, providing a more challenging curriculum and a variety of courses are necessary to meet their needs, and without properly trained personnel, services for these youth are often nonexistent. In addition, security and scheduling issues could also be a roadblock to providing services for gifted youth, coupled with the regrouping (moving youth from one unit to another without notice) of all detained youth, which often necessitates the need for additional supervisory staff. Regardless of the situation, the data clearly shows that many are not receiving transition services.

In comparison to the gifted population, data in the present study shows the percentage not receiving transitional services for the special education population to be lower. Although this is obvious, as indicated by the data, 18% of those responding indicated providing no transitional services for special education youth. Laws governing transition for youth with disabilities in the juvenile justice system is what makes it possible for these youth to receive services. In fact, transition for youth with disabilities is defined in the IDEA (1997) as a set of coordinated activities designed with a results-oriented process. For youth in the juvenile justice system it is referred to as “the passage of a juvenile offender from the community, (home and school) to a correctional program and back again” (Griller-Clark, 2001). As we look at transition for this population of youth, the focus should be on integrated support services (counseling, career planning, life skills training, social work services, and etc.). Why is it then, that these youth are not receiving services? A number of issues could contribute to this phenomenon. First, a lack of the understanding of the law as it pertains to special education and transition as it relates to a facility, be it a detention center or a correctional center. Second, the lack of case managers and a highly qualified teaching staff at the detention level, capable of overseeing the development of IEP goals essential to transition based on integrated support services, as well as those that are

academically based with a focus of moving from a facility to home and community. Third, the impact of budget constraints which could substantially reduce special education and regular education services in order to address issues of safety and security. Regardless of the situation the data clearly shows that many are not receiving services.

In addition to the gifted and special education population, the data shows that the regular populations also suffer from the lack of transitional services. As indicated in the present study 16% of the 51 responding say regular students are not receiving transitional services, this is surprising since regular education students comprise a large proposition of those detained in detention facilities. Why are they not receiving services necessary to assist in transitioning? The literature clearly suggests a major characteristic of a transition program is that it must be made available to all youth, disabled and non-disabled. Section 1425 of NCLB emphasizes provisions for transition assistance support programs for all youth moving to the base school and the community (U. S. General Accounting Office, 2004). Again, the lack of providing services at this level can be attributed to many factors, to include the lack of funding, the lack of properly trained personnel, the lack of a structured transitional program, and the lack of a common belief that all students regardless of the length of stay in a facility will need support in moving back to the community. Until this is understood by all involved in a youth's life once they have been detained, providing these services will remain a challenge, thus making it a difficult process for youth to transition.

In support of these findings, one of the major goals of the Whittier and Sutton (1990) study was to determine whether the programs focusing on transition demonstrated equity in service delivery to all youth disabled and non-disabled. In the present study when institutions were asked to clarify whether or not transition services were given to all youth, a third indicated that they provide the same set of services either formally or informally to all students. Those responding indicated that there is a need to improve the number of services available and the quality of services to support transition of all youth, disabled and non-disabled, this was also found in the Whittier and Sutton (1990) study.

Whittier and Sutton's (1990) study further investigated the extent to which transition programs for disabled and non-disabled students exist throughout the United States. Of the 12 states located in the Northcentral Region 7 (58%) responded, and 4 (57%) said they have a transition program. Of the 9 states located in the Northeast Region 6 (67%) responded, and 5

(83%) said they have a transition program. A total of 17 states were located in the south. A total of 16 (94%) responded to the survey, and 13 (81%) said they have a transition program. Of the 13 states located in the Western Region 8 (62%) responded, and 6 (75%) said they have a transition program. The overall combined total for the number of states included in the survey (Whittier et al., 1990) was 51 and the total combined responding with programs as evident by the data were 28 (78%). As indicated in the data, many youth at the time of the Whittier and Sutton (1990) study were not benefiting from transitional services. Findings from Whittier and Sutton (1990) and the present study are quite similar (Table 2). With both studies indicating that many students in detention programs do not receive transitional services and many do not receive services geared to their specific needs as gifted, disabled, or regular students. The research (Wolford, 1987) clearly emphasizes the need for effective transitional services upon a youth's entry into the juvenile system. Without these services transitioning from the facility back into the community can be a huge undertaking.

#### *Research Question B*

#### **What practices have practitioners used to assist youth at the detention level in order to promote successful transition to the educational mainstream?**

The purpose for examining this question was to assess best practices used by those involved in the education of juveniles, and to investigate the extent to which practices were implemented in facilities to promote a successful transition from the facility to the educational mainstream. The question was answered by using descriptive statistics including means and standard deviations. Table 3 provides statistics for all items in the scale. It is surprising that initiating community support ( $M = 2.46$ ,  $SD = 1.22$ ), developing a formal transition plan ( $M = 2.45$ ,  $SD = 1.33$ ), and assisting in job placement ( $M = 1.98$ ,  $SD = 1.12$ ), were rated lower when it comes to practices implemented in promoting successful transition. It should be noted that these areas are more concrete and in depth planning and preparation is needed at an integrated level involving the community and all stakeholders, parents, and youth. The Pollard, Pollard & Meers (1994) study emphasized community support, implementing a formal transition plan, and promoting job placement. In many cases, as indicated in the research (Pollard et al., 1994), experiences for these youth within the community have been negative. There is a need for a connection for both youth and family. By arming the youth and family (Table 3), with the

necessary knowledge and the means in which to access community services they can begin to connect to the community, in a positive manner.

Table 3

*Extent of Practice Implementation and Successful Transition*

(N = 51)	M	SD	Range	Min	Max
Provide a curriculum of basic academic skills	4.29	1.00	4.0	1.0	5.0
Encourage interagency collaboration	3.65	1.10	4.0	1.0	5.0
Teach social/living skills	3.55	1.34	4.0	1.0	5.0
Conduct assessment and educational evaluations	3.31	1.39	4.0	1.0	5.0
Provide career and job exploration	3.06	1.35	4.0	1.0	5.0
Initiate family involvement	2.63	1.25	4.0	1.0	5.0
Teach vocational/job skills	2.60	1.49	4.0	1.0	5.0
Provide support/ancillary services	2.57	1.39	4.0	1.0	5.0
Initiate community support	2.46	1.22	4.0	1.0	5.0
Develop a formal transition plan	2.45	1.33	4.0	1.0	5.0
Assist in job placement	1.98	1.12	4.0	1.0	5.0

1 Not at all, 2 Seldom, 3 Sometimes, 4 Often, 5 Always

The research further emphasizes (Bullis et al., 2004; & Pollard et al., 1994) that by developing a transition plan with youth input and by assisting the youth in job placement and employment opportunities this makes possible the transition process. Why then are these practices not viewed in the present study (refer to Table 3) as worthy of implementation in the facility? Perhaps the issue of funding is a barrier. Perhaps the lack of a trained staff is a barrier. Whatever the case, the Pollard, Pollard, & Meers (1994) study emphasized the need for trained personnel for the purpose of implementing the transition process. The transitional coordinator is deemed to be the most necessary part of the equation, this individual is essential in developing a plan, assisting in making the connection with the LEA, and exposing youth to employment opportunities.

With regard to the extent of practice implementation, a number of findings from the present study can be related to the literature on transition programs. Most of the components used in this part of the survey focused on Pollard, Pollard, Rojewski and Meers (1997) study.

Interesting to the Pollard, et al., study (1997), respondents were asked to rank 11 transition program categories by indicating the extent to which these practices are implemented in the facility (1 to 5, with 1 indicating not at all, 2 indicating seldom, 3 indicating sometimes, 4 indicating often, and 5 indicating always) thereby supporting the transition of youth from a correctional facility. Family involvement by encouraging input in the development of the transition plan was rated as the single most important transition practice in this study. While in the present study providing a program of basic academic skills was rated most important. In looking at the similarities and differences of both studies, the findings suggest that family involvement and providing a program of basic skills are equally important practices to the process of successfully transitioning youth. With the growing concern being that of preparing youth for productive lives in society, limited educational preparation does not afford the youth with the best possible advantage of being successful. We know that a major hindrance to youth who have been detained is failure in school, excessive absences, disruptive behavior, numerous suspensions from school, and grade retention. Further investigation indicates these (failure in school, excessive absences, disruptive behavior, suspensions from school, and grade retention) contributes to gaps in the educational process, thus, resulting in continued delinquent behavior. The research (Haberman & Quinn, 1986) suggests that as time goes on, a small percentage of youth, once released from a facility, return to finish their secondary education in the community. While the remainder, with limited educational preparation and limited marketable skills, find it difficult to transition. Why then are teaching vocational skills and assisting in job placement rated much lower than other components? Based on what we know and what is reflective in the data, it appears as though the practitioner's main priority is one which embraces basic academic skills training, specifically getting youth back in school. However, if school was a failure point for many of these youth, maybe programs based only on academic skills training is not the best option. Perhaps a program rich in vocational skills training combined with academic skills, GED preparation and testing, community involvement, job placement, and family involvement, would be the best option for all students and serve as a catalyst for promoting transition for delinquent youth.

Interestingly, the Pollard, et al., (1997) study and the present study rated social living skills instructions and assessment and evaluation as essential to the transition process. Respondents in both studies recognize the importance of making available to youth a

combination of training opportunities involving anger management, conflict management, conformity to social norms, access to examining career interest, and individual assessments. All of which are proven to be effective practices essential to transitioning youth from a facility to the base schools and communities. In addition, perhaps programs aimed at incorporating a counseling component in the education programming on the detention level, for the purpose of academic planning, academic advising, and collaborating with the base school coordinator would best serve youth in assisting in the transition process making it less cumbersome and more seamless.

Overall ratings in the present study reveal teaching basic academic skills ( $M= 4.29$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ), encouraging interagency collaboration ( $M = 3.65$ ,  $SD = 1.10$ ), teaching social living skills ( $M = 3.55$ ,  $SD = 1.34$ ), conducting educational assessment and evaluation ( $M= 3.31$ ,  $SD = 1.39$ ), and providing career and job exploration ( $M= 3.06$ ,  $SD = 1.35$ ), are practices presently implemented by practitioners at the detention level. These practices are evidence of “best practice”. It is fair to say that, over the 16 year span since the first study, it is evident that gains have been made; however, the focus of programming at the detention level appears to be totally that of basic academic preparation. Keeping in mind the youth population served which is comprised of males who are classified as learning disabled, have experienced school failure, experienced clashes with law enforcement, and lack the skills necessary to maintain any form of employment. Staying in school and engaging positively in the community can be difficult. Therefore, a need for programming focusing on vocational preparation, vocational skills training, and assisting in job placement is an option for getting and keeping these youth in school.

### *Research Question C*

#### **How important are transitional personnel in assisting youth in a successful transition from a detention education program to the educational mainstream?**

The purpose for examining this question was to determine the importance of transitional personnel in contributing to assisting in the transition process for youth transitioning from a detention education program to the educational mainstream. In examining this research question, descriptive statistics, means and standard deviations were conducted on all items in the area of transitional staffing. Table 4 provides statistics for all items in the scale. In addition, Table 4 shows the ratings given by the respondents indicating the importance of personnel in contributing to the overall transition process. Inspection of the data shows overall, the detention

transitional coordinator ( $M = 3.00$ ,  $SD = 1.72$ ), was given a higher rating as compared to the other personnel and therefore can be regarded as the staff thought to be most important in contributing to the transition process. However, in general all ratings were relatively low. Based on the research (Wolford, 1987) it has been pointed out numerous times, that transition should begin immediately upon a youth's entry into the facility. Who at this point would likely initiate this other than the detention transitional coordinator? Perhaps making the detention transitional coordinator a part of the intake process would be most feasible, especially at the point of entry. With transition being a multidimensional process the position of the detention transitional coordinator is essential in the development of the transition plan, in advocating for the youth and serving as a link between the facility and the mainstream. Other aspects of the transitional coordinator's position is making the initial contact with the youth, as well as, contacting and collaborating with the LEA and various support services which can assist the youth during the transition. It is fair to say that the transitional coordinator at the detention level is perhaps the most important and if used effectively the possibilities can be rewarding for youth transitioning from a facility to the mainstream.

Further analysis of data shows that the counselor ( $M = 2.65$ ,  $SD = 1.53$ ), case manager ( $M = 2.39$ ,  $SD = 1.55$ ), base school transitional coordinator ( $M = 2.21$ ,  $SD = 1.26$ ), and mentor ( $M = 1.61$ ,  $SD = 1.22$ ), were all rated lower in comparison to the detention transitional coordinator ( $M = 3.00$ ,  $SD = 1.72$ ). In general, in focusing on social services, funding is largely allocated for personnel and personnel drives the success of any program. We know that essentially personnel take care of day to day operations of any program. Yet, it seems odd that these individuals are not looked upon as important in contributing to the overall transition process. How important are these personnel to the transition process? Perhaps due to a lack of a clearly defined job description, they tend to be less important based on the misunderstanding of the roles they play in transitioning youth.

Although, additional analysis of the data from the present study revealed ratings of transitional staffing to be somewhat in the low to moderate range, the literature suggest overall, that personnel support is an important variable in addressing the transitional needs of youth. The Pollard, Pollard, & Meers (1994) study fully supports the need for youth to have access to transition staff combined with educational counseling in the educational setting.

In addition to academic support services, youth need personnel support. The detention transitional coordinator and base school transitional coordinator both provide a link between student, facility, and the educational mainstream. Hellriegel and Yates (1997) case study presented major evidence that both corrections and public school personnel felt the need for an increased effort in communication to bring about greater continuity for youth during transition. Both the transitional coordinator and the base school coordinator can serve as a liaison between the three entities and can essentially bridge the gap between the facility and the educational mainstream.

Table 4

*Transitional Staffing of Personnel Important in Assisting Youth in Transition*

(N= 51)	M	SD	Range	Min	Max
Detention Transitional Coordinator	3.00	1.72	4.0	1.0	5.0
Counselor	2.65	1.53	4.0	1.0	5.0
Case Manager	2.39	1.55	4.0	1.0	5.0
Base School Transitional Coordinator	2.21	1.26	4.0	1.0	5.0
Mentor	1.61	1.22	4.0	1.0	5.0

1 Never, 2 Seldom, 3 Sometimes, 4 Often, 5 Always

Although in the present study the ratings for other personnel (case manager, mentor, base school coordinator, and the counselor) tend to be lower than that of the detention transition coordinator, other research (Leone, et al., 1990) suggests they are equally important for a youth returning from a facility is to have a connection with a caring person, one who is able to provide support on a daily basis. It seems feasible that given the history of incarcerated youth, having a case manager would benefit youth immensely. By helping youth to connect to sources of help in the community to ensure that any gains made during placement in a facility is not lost during transition, and by assisting the youth in maneuvering through the maze of bureaucracy, case managers essentially serve as a link important to connecting the youth to the community.

As is the case with the base school coordinator, the detention coordinator, and the case manager, much of the literature supports the need for youth to be connected with opportunities within the community. These opportunities are usually accessed through a mentor and other

interested adults (Leone, et al, 1990; Pollard, et al., 1997; & Whittier, et al., 1990). In order to achieve success, youth must be able to have a feeling of acceptance in their communities. As we look deeper into the life of these youth we see that they have left negative impressions in the community. Therefore, having an advocate present in the life of youth who have been connected with juvenile delinquency, simply gives them one more resource to assist with the difficulties of transitioning back to the educational mainstream and the community. One factor which continuously recurs in research reports and descriptions of effective transition programs points to having a respected person from the community, a knowledgeable adult, who can serve as a mentor, who understands and cares about youth and can provide significant time and attention. One who can and will communicate the needs of the youth and the need for positive interactions throughout the community is essential (James & Jurich, 1999). This carries over in all aspects of a youth's life. Stephens and Arnette (2000) emphasize the mentor's role as being one of the most cost-effective solutions to juvenile delinquency and recidivism. Mentors can help create links from corrections to schools and the community. Overall, based on findings from the present study and those of earlier studies (Wolford, 1987; Leone, et al., 1990; Pollard et al., 1994; Pollard et al., 1997; Whittier et al., 1990; & James, et al., 1999) each transitional personnel play an important role in transitioning a youth. Thus, important to the role of transitional personnel is that of acknowledging and fully understanding the obligations each has to the youth and the desired outcome for each youth as the transition process evolves.

#### *Research Question D*

#### **What are contributing factors to the successful transition of youth in moving from the detention education program to the mainstream educational program?**

The purpose for examining this research question was to determine, based on the practitioners knowledge of transitioning youth from a detention education program, the importance of each factor in leading to a successful transition back to the educational mainstream. In examining this research question, descriptive statistics including means, and standard deviations were conducted on all items focusing on the importance of program components. Table 5 provides statistics for all items in the scale. In addition, five subscales comprise this section of the survey (Joint Planning, Agency Input, Instructional Programming, Pre-Transition Strategies, and Post Transitional Strategies). Each will be discussed, beginning

with Joint Planning, followed by Agency Input, Instructional Programming, Pre-Transition Strategies, and Post Transitional Strategies.

In this study, respondents were asked to rate each component beginning with the joint planning scale, indicating the importance of each in leading to a successful transition. Joint planning components of developing a transition plan with youth input (M= 4.15, SD = 1.00), developing a transition plan with input from counselor (M= 4.08, SD = 0.98), engaging staff who will deliver services in joint planning early in the process (M= 4.04, SD = 1.00), and developing a transition plan with parent input (M= 3.98, SD = 1.10), were rated in the moderate range by the respondents. Thus, indicating that the components making up this scale are viewed as an integral part of the transition process.

Several earlier studies (Pollard, Pollard, & Meers, 1994; Altscher, Armstrong & McKenzie, 1999; Hellriegel & Yates, 1997; National Council on Disability, 2003) support the findings of the present study. A major focus of transitional planning as indicated in earlier studies point to involving the youth, involving the parent, and other outside agencies. The emphasis is that of encouraging input from the youth and parent in order to gain acceptance of the transition plan and to engage staff who will deliver services through joint planning early in the process. A major finding in the earlier studies calls for a connection of both corrections (detention) and public schools. The goal is better communication and greater collaboration between agency and school to insure greater continuity for the youth returning to the educational mainstream.

As shown later in this study (Table 6), where respondents are asked to rate the components of transition (program goals, transition focus, pre & post planning, and collaboration), according to how much each statement applies to their school in leading to a successful transition ratings were low, specifically, those including involving youth in the transition process (M = 2.57, SD = 1.34), and involving parents in the transition process (M = 2.47, SD = 1.31), were quite low. However, when focusing on the importance of transition components in leading to a successful transition (Table 5) including youth input (M = 4.15, SD = 1.00), and including parent input (M = 3.98, SD = 1.10), were rated much higher. It is surprising that where the parent and youth are viewed as important in leading to a successful transition, on the other hand, they are not viewed important to include in whatever process is being implemented in facilities. Can this be due to a lack of knowledge at the detention level of how to

involve parents and youth? Or, can this be due to a lack of knowledge as it pertains to the level of interaction needed to bring parents in at the ground level in order to build a team and collaboratively work with the best interest of the youth in mind? Or, can this be due to the notion that those involved at the detention level are somewhat out of touch with the role parents and youth play in the process? Numerous studies (Pollard, Pollard, & Meers, 1994; Altscher, Armstrong, & McKenzie, 1999; Hellriegel & Yates, 1997; National Council on Disability, 2003) point to involving the youth and involving the parent, because both impact the transition process; there must be interest in the transition process by all parties, not just those initiating the process, but those who the process is intended to help.

A safe but rather realistic assumption is both parent and youth input is imperative to the process. Without input from the most important of those involved, youth most likely will continue to experience unsuccessful attempts at transitioning back into the educational mainstream and communities.

Another equally important factor to successful transition is agency input. This scale is made up of four components, collaborating with the receiving educational agency ( $M = 4.27$ ,  $SD = 1.02$ ), collaborating with court services ( $M = 4.14$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ ), meeting with the appropriate representative of the receiving school ( $M = 4.04$ ,  $SD = 1.22$ ), and collaborating with the receiving social services agency ( $M = 3.76$ ,  $SD = 1.21$ ). Respondents indicated moderate ratings for these components with collaborating with the educational agency receiving the highest rating (Table 5). While focusing on the importance of transition components (Table 5) and the application of transition components (Table 6) in leading to a successful transition, certain components share some common beliefs. Sharing records with the receiving school and collaborating with the receiving educational agency are viewed as practices applied in facilities and as practices important in leading to a successful transition. Indeed these practices are among the most important and cost effective approaches to transitioning a youth back to the school and the community. It is through collaborative effects and information exchange that school officials both at the detention level and the local educational agency level can begin to prepare for a youth's return to the educational mainstream. It would seem most feasible at this point to involve all agencies so as to make the transition a seamless process which would enable the youth to return to the school and community without interruptions. Some might question the amount of time given to interagency planning/collaboration in light of the limited time frame in which

Table 5

*Contributing Factors to Successful Transition of Youth in Moving from the Detention Education Program*

(N=51)	M	SD	Range	Min	Max
<b>Joint Planning</b>					
Develop a transition plan with youth input	4.15	1.00	4.0	1.0	5.0
Develop a transition plan with input from counselor	4.08	0.98	4.0	1.0	5.0
Engage staff who will deliver services in joint planning early in the process	4.04	1.00	4.0	1.0	5.0
Develop a transition plan with parent input	3.98	1.10	4.0	1.0	5.0
<b>Agency Input</b>					
Collaborate with the receiving educational agency	4.27	1.02	4.0	1.0	5.0
Collaborate with court services	4.14	1.04	4.0	1.0	5.0
Meet with the appropriate representative of receiving schools	4.04	1.22	4.0	1.0	5.0
Collaborate with the receiving social services agency	3.76	1.21	4.0	1.0	5.0
<b>Instructional Programming</b>					
Include educational goals as part of the curriculum	4.47	0.96	4.0	1.0	5.0
Align curriculum and educational programming between detention and base school	4.33	1.05	4.0	1.0	5.0
Implement daily living skills as part of the curriculum	4.25	0.93	4.0	1.0	5.0
Include social goals as part of the curriculum	4.25	0.99	4.0	1.0	5.0
Begin transitional programming upon entry into the facility	3.94	1.21	4.0	1.0	5.0
Implement vocational skills as part of the curriculum	3.90	1.35	4.0	1.0	5.0
Include vocational goals as part of the curriculum	3.78	1.32	4.0	1.0	5.0

*(table continues)*

Table 5 (continued)  
(N = 51)

	M	SD	Range	Min	Max
<b>Pre-Transition Strategies</b>					
Assign a case manager to youth during transition	3.78	1.51	4.0	1.0	5.0
Hold pre-release planning meetings	3.67	1.41	4.0	1.0	5.0
<b>Post Transition Strategies</b>					
Share and transfer educational records to the base school before the youth returns	4.39	1.11	4.0	1.0	5.0
Implement follow-up and periodic communication with base school personnel during transition	3.78	1.30	4.0	1.0	5.0
Implement follow-up and periodic communication with youth during transition	3.72	1.31	4.0	1.0	5.0

1 Not Important, 2 Fairly Unimportant, 3 Fairly Important, 4 Important, 5 Very Important

many youth are held in short term detention education programs. However, the research documents that by developing clear cut transitional plans through collaborative efforts while a youth is in the institutional setting this will significantly increase their chances of returning to the educational mainstream (Virginia Department of Correctional Education, 1988).

In addition, in support of the present study, earlier studies (National Council on Disability, 2003; Gies, 2003; Altscher, et al., 1999; Lewis, et al., 1988; Hellriegel & Yates, 1997; Altscher & Armstrong, 1994, Pollard, et al., 1994; Whittier & Sutton, 1990) were conclusive of the findings of those emphasized in the present study. Maintaining linkage with agencies and services through collaborative efforts was viewed as an essential component to have in place for successful transition. Collaboration occurring with educational agency, the social services agency, the court services agency, and the appropriate representative of the receiving school are viewed as practices with which all stakeholders share. It is fair to say, given these findings that it is a consensus that a linkage between the detention education school and the social service agency, the court service agency, and representatives from the community is the strength of any transition program and are therefore essential components in transitioning youth from a detention education program to the mainstream educational setting.

Furthermore, additional factors pertaining to successful transition is the instructional programming scale which is made up of seven components, including educational goals as part

of the curriculum ( $M = 4.47$ ,  $SD = 0.96$ ), including aligning curriculum and educational programming between detention and base schools ( $M = 4.33$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ), implementing daily living skills as part of the curriculum ( $M = 4.25$ ,  $SD = 0.93$ ), including social goals as part of the curriculum ( $M = 4.25$ ,  $SD = 0.99$ ), beginning transitional programming upon entry into the facility ( $M = 3.94$ ,  $SD = 1.21$ ), implementing vocational skills as part of the curriculum ( $M = 3.78$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ) and including vocational goals as part of the curriculum ( $M = 3.78$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ). Overall, including educational goals ( $M = 4.47$ ,  $SD = 0.96$ ), was given the higher of the ratings among the seven components. It is not surprising that including educational goals would be viewed as the most important of the components, given the current climate of accountability. Perhaps the drive of detention administrators and education staff is to provide a curriculum rich in basic academic skills, GED preparation, and a program which focuses on the academic needs of youth who are on target for graduation as well as to provide a program for students with disabilities.

In addition to educational goals, in a short term detention education program where the length of stay is highly inconsistent and student turnover is high, instructional programming is necessary in assisting youth before and during transition. The most pertinent part of instructional programming seems to be that of aligning the curriculum between the detention education program and the base school education program, in order to promote a positive seamless transition for youth. It should be noted that at this point, both entities should be aware of the other's role and be aware of the instructional experiences students have had while in the detention setting. Based on the school and detention having input into the youth's academics, ideally, such programming will then translate into the base school's academic program, enabling the youth to receive credit, especially at the high school level for work completed during detainment. The research states that providing a positive school experience for those who have had negative experiences about their education helps to promote a positive transition (Leone, et al., 2002) and gives youth a sense of accomplishment.

In addition, educational programming which includes daily living skills, vocational goals/skills, and beginning transitional programming upon entry into the facility exposes youth to instructionally based skills. Several studies (Whittier, et al., 1990; Pollard, et al., 1994; Altscher & Armstrong, 1994) emphasize such programming, and give emphasis to the importance in leading to a successful transition. Essentially there is general agreement that with

these components in place, youth benefit from the exposure of various experiences, thus, preparing them for transitioning to the base school and community. Altscher and Armstrong (1994) emphasized during periods of incarceration, youth who are not prepared to make the transition to community due to a lack of sufficient programming contribute to the high rate of recidivism. Overall, knowing that most of these youth have already had negative experiences in school, knowing that many for whatever reasons are not returning to school, knowing that the average stay in a short term detention education program is limited, knowing that time is a valuable resource and with the limited length of stay ranging from 5 to 37 days, the time to bring about a long term change is in some instances inconceivable. However, the best possible means of addressing the needs of these youth is tied to educational programming; putting in place a process that begins in detention, and continues through the transition once a youth returns to school, that will carry the youth forward. Hence, having these components as well as others discussed in place for youth while in detention and following release will enable facility personnel and base school personnel to work collaboratively to bring about change for youth upon returning to the school and community.

Equally important to program goals, transition focus, and instructional programming is pre and post transition strategies. The scale pre-transition strategies are made up of two components consisting of, assigning a case manager to youth during transition ( $M = 3.78$ ,  $SD = 1.51$ ), and holding pre-release planning meetings ( $M = 3.67$ ,  $SD = 1.41$ ). Specifically, assigning a case manager to a youth during transition received the highest rating (Table 5) when focusing on the importance of pre-transition strategies in leading to a successful transition. However, earlier findings when focusing on how much personnel contribute to the overall transition (Table 4) the rating given to the case manager was lower. This is somewhat odd that on one hand the case manager is not highly regarded as one who contributes to the overall transitional process, yet, when assessing the importance of pre-transition strategies (Table 5), specifically that of assigning a case manager to a youth during transition, the rating is much higher. Perhaps the devaluing of the case manager is related to inadequate funding, which is a major hindrance to the development and implementation of effective programs and transitional staffing. In short, having a case manager could mean the difference between seeing that the process is started while a youth is in detention and seeing that proper follow-up and support is given throughout and after release.

Unquestionably pre-transition strategies are perhaps the key to the transition process. What happens prior to a youth returning to the school and community can be regarded as essentially one of the most important of the transition components. These strategies connect all key players in the transition process. It is during this period that plans to transition youth back into the community are developed through interagency collaboration. Ideally, it is during this time that personnel from the detention facility, the courts, the base school agency, the social service agency, the parents, and the youth work together for specific purposes and outcomes. Essentially, to address the multiple needs of youth during this critical phase takes the concerted efforts of all stakeholders through collaboration of various agencies and input from the parent and the youth.

Lastly, post transition strategies are made up of three components, sharing and transferring educational records to the base school before the youth returns ( $M = 4.39$ ,  $SD = 1.11$ ), implementing follow-up and periodic communication with the base school personnel during transition ( $M = 3.78$ ,  $SD = 1.30$ ) and implementing follow-up and periodic communication with the youth during transition ( $M = 3.72$ ,  $SD = 1.31$ ). Respondents to the present study indicated overall higher ratings in this scale as opposed to those in the pre-transition scale. Specifically, sharing and transferring educational records to the base school before the youth returns received the highest rating (Table 5) when focusing on the importance of post transition strategies in leading to a successful transition. This finding is somewhat contrary when focusing on findings related to personnel important in assisting youth in transition (Table 4) in that personnel is needed in order to drive the success of programs. Conversely, sharing and transferring educational records as indicated by practitioners is important, but having the necessary personnel in place in order to achieve this is not. The research (Moran, 1991; Webb & Maddox, 1986) emphasizes a need for adequate transfer and sharing of information as well as to have specially trained personnel in place in order to facilitate the effective gathering and transfer of information, therefore making this part of the process seamless. Furthermore, the research emphasizes the period following a youth's release is the time in which increased attention should be paid to what happens once youth are released back into the community. For that reason follow-up with the youth as well as follow-up with base school personnel is imperative given that the youth is coming from a highly structured environment to an environment less structured. It is during post transition that newly released juveniles are most

likely to fall into old patterns and regress to patterns of behavior which resulted in them being incarcerated. Hence based on the research (Altschuler, Armstrong & MacKenzie, 1999) it is safe to say that when youth are involved in structured programming following periods of incarceration a positive outcome is more likely to occur.

#### *Research Question E*

### **What program components are most effective in moving youth from the detention education program to the mainstream educational program?**

The purpose for examining this research question was to determine based on the practitioner's use of the components of transitioning, how effective these components are in transitional programming in their school. In examining this research question, descriptive statistics including means, and standard deviations were conducted on all items focusing on the importance of program components. Table 6 reflects a full detail of statistics for the entire scale. In addition, four subscales comprise this section of the survey (Program Goals, Transition Focus, Pre & Post Planning, and Collaboration). Each will be discussed, beginning with Program Goals, followed by Transition Focus, Pre & Post Planning, and Collaboration.

In the present study, respondents were asked to rate each statement on a scale of 1 to 5 indicating to what extent the practice was used in their schools. In focusing on the program goals scale, the analysis of the data in Table 6 shows respondents rated program goals include educational goals ( $M = 3.94$ ,  $SD = 1.30$ ), and program goals include social goals ( $M = 3.42$ ,  $SD = 1.38$ ) as those applied to a greater extent in their school; while program goals include vocational goals ( $M = 2.47$ ,  $SD = 1.44$ ) were rated much lower. In comparison to practices used by practitioners to promote successful transition (Table 3), the importance of specific factors in leading to successful transition (Table 5), and the effective program components (Table 6), ratings fluctuated in areas associated with vocational goals and vocational skills as is the results shown in Table 6. Although inconsistencies exist in the practices used by practitioners to promote successful transition (Table 3), the importance of specific factors in leading to a successful transition (Table 5), and the application of program components for transitioning youth from a detention education program to the base school educational program (Table 6), we know that without vocational skills and GED preparation many of these youth will remain unemployed, and characterized as drop outs, thus, failing to transition successfully back to their communities. Given the importance of program goals (Table 6), in the transition process as well

as knowing the difficulties experienced by most youth involved in the juvenile justice system, especially in the academic setting, a greater need for comprehensive transitional programming that addresses educational, social, and vocational needs are imperative. We know that some youth associated with the juvenile justice system will return to school, however, for the numbers failing to return, perhaps programs with a combination of vocational components and GED preparation would equip youth with the necessary skills to either return to school or the opportunity to pursue and earn a GED. At this level while in detention, it seems feasible for programming to be linked to experiences beyond that of basic academic instructions and extend to job preparation skills with a focus on searching for jobs and interviewing for jobs, preparing for the world of work as well as how to keep a job and GED preparation and testing.

Several earlier studies (Whittier & Sutton, 1990; Moran, 1991; Pollard, Pollard, & Meers, 1994; Hellriegel & Yates, 1997; Bullis, Yovanoff, & Havel 2004) support the findings of the present study. These studies focused specifically on program goals encompassing educational goals, social goals, and vocational goals. Educational goals were reflective of programs directly involved in developing and placing youth in an educational program immediately following re-entry into the community. Social goals described factors relating to educating students about available social services, improving life skills surrounding self-help, social, and survival skills, improving self-concept, developing “crime-free” attitudes, providing follow-up of students as they transition, and overcoming attitudinal deficits. Vocational goals focused on the areas associated with preparing youth for the world of work, job training, vocational placement and career-vocational assessment. As is reflective in Table 6, overwhelmingly, educational goals yielded the highest priority as in the earlier studies (Whittier & Sutton, 1990; Moran, 1991; Pollard, Pollard, & Meers, 1994; Hellriegel & Yates, 1997; Bullis, Yovanoff, & Havel 2004), followed by social goals, and vocational goals.

Table 6

*Effective Program Components for Transitioning Youth from the Detention Education Program*

(N=51)	M	SD	Range	Min	Max
<b>Program Goals</b>					
Program goals include education goals	3.94	1.30	4.0	1.0	5.0
Program goals include social goals	3.42	1.38	4.0	1.0	5.0
Program goals include vocational goals	2.47	1.44	4.0	1.0	5.0
<b>Transition Focus</b>					
Transition plans are shared with the local educational agency	3.02	1.38	4.0	1.0	5.0
Transition plans are formed between the base school, detention, and the youth	2.65	1.45	4.0	1.0	5.0
Transition begins the first day of intake	2.62	1.34	4.0	1.0	5.0
Youth are involved in the process of developing the transition plan to ensure acceptance	2.57	1.34	4.0	1.0	5.0
Transition plans include parent input	2.47	1.31	4.0	1.0	5.0
Informal transition plans are written for each youth while in detention	2.42	1.20	4.0	1.0	5.0
Formal transition plans are written for each youth while in detention	2.22	1.38	4.0	1.0	5.0
<b>Pre and Post Planning</b>					
Records are exchanged between detention and local educational agency	3.84	1.29	4.0	1.0	5.0
Meeting with base school occurs	2.51	1.44	4.0	1.0	5.0
Pre-release planning meetings are held with the appropriate representative of the receiving school	1.65	1.05	4.0	1.0	5.0

*(table continues)*

Table 6 (continued)

(N = 51)	M	SD	Range	Min	Max
<b>Collaboration</b>					
Interagency collaboration is stressed throughout the transition process	2.92	1.25	4.0	1.0	5.0
Collaboration is usually initiated by the educational Agency	2.88	1.25	4.0	1.0	5.0
Collaboration is usually initiated by social service agency	1.94	1.61	4.0	1.0	5.0

1 Least Apply, 2 Somewhat Apply, 3 Generally Apply, 4 Apply, 5 Strongly Apply

Equally important to the application of the components of transition is the transition focus scale. This scale is composed of seven components. Findings in this study (Table 6) revealed sharing transition plans with the local educational agency ( $M = 3.02$ ,  $SD = 1.38$ ), was rated higher than the additional six components. It is apparent that this scale with the exception of sharing transitional plans with the local education agency ( $M = 3.02$ ,  $SD = 1.38$ ), is lacking in importance when it comes to the application of these components in educational programming in detention education programs. Essentially, the practitioners have indicated that these components are not a high priority in their school. On the other hand, while focusing on the practitioner's knowledge of transitioning youth from a detention education program, similar components (develop a transition plan with youth input, develop a transition plan with parent input, collaborate with the receiving educational agency, and develop a transition plan with input from counselor), all relating to factors to successful transition of youth in moving from the detention education program to the educational mainstream (Table 5), received higher ratings and are therefore considered to be an integral part of the transition process. Interesting to the study is, practitioners view similar components in one instance as important in transitioning youth, while, on the other hand, applying similar components do not appear to be of high priority (Table 6). Even so, the entire scale (transition focus) is one which requires interaction from key personnel on the detention level as well as the local educational agency, and parent. Thus, as mentioned earlier in the present study, personnel are what drive the success of all programs. Overall, imperative to the transition focus scale is the need for personnel support in order to fully address the transitional needs of youth. As shown earlier in this study, in order to successfully coordinate

programs at this level, trained personnel support as well as funding is an important variable in addressing the transitional needs of youth.

Additionally, as evident in earlier studies (Pollard, et al., 1994; Hellriegel, et al., 1997; Altschuler & Armstrong, 1994; Bullis, et al., 2004) transition focus points also to involving the youth, and the parent in the transitional process. These studies emphasize encouraging input from youth and parent in order to gain acceptance of the transition plan and engaging the local education agency and the base school in the process. In addition, written transition plans for all youth are emphasized and viewed as important to the process. Conversely, when focusing on the application of factors to successful transition of youth in moving from the detention education program (Table 6), practitioners rated all components involving the youth ( $M = 2.57$ ,  $SD = 1.34$ ), and involving the parent ( $M = 2.47$ ,  $SD = 1.31$ ), lower than other components in the transition focus scale. In comparison to the importance of specific factors in leading to a successful transition (Table 5), it appears as though the practitioner understands the importance of involving both parent and youth in the process. Both are integral in the transition process. However, when it comes to the application of program components (transition focus, pre and post planning, and collaboration) for transitioning youth from a detention education program (Table 6), at the detention level, based on the ratings, these are areas where transition efforts have been essentially neglected. It appears as though overall, the focus of many of these programs are that of providing a basic academic curriculum, one which will enable youth who have been actively engaged in school to return to school at some point following release from the facility. It appears as though at the detention level efforts to fully engage in effectively transitioning is quite limited and thus creates a barrier to successful transition. This could be due largely to funding and again not having professionally trained staff members equipped to handle all aspects of effective transition of youth once they have become involved in the juvenile justice system. An even greater hindrance could be the belief of those involved in educational programming for detention facilities that short term facilities are merely holding facilities and the time frame does not allow for long term change.

Furthermore, the scale pre and post planning is made up of three components, including records exchange between detention and local educational agencies, meeting with the base school, and holding pre-release planning meetings with the appropriate representative of the receiving school. Of the three program components making up this scale, records exchange

between detention and the local educational agency ( $M = 3.84$ ,  $SD = 1.29$ ), received the higher rating. Surprisingly, making sure that all records get to the local educational agency is important, while making contact with an individual from the base school ( $M = 2.51$ ,  $SD = 1.44$ ), and holding pre-release planning meetings ( $M = 1.65$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ), prior to the youth's release are components which based on the lower ratings indicates that practitioners consider them less important to the transition process. In comparison to the importance of similar components in leading to a successful transition (Table 5), overwhelmingly practitioners agree and understand the importance of sharing and transferring educational records with the base school before the youth returns, implementing follow-up and periodic communication with base school, and holding pre-release planning meetings. However, when it comes to the application of program components for transitioning youth from a detention education program (table 6), at the detention level, based on the lower ratings, especially those of meeting with the base school ( $M = 2.51$ ,  $SD = 1.44$ ), and holding pre-release meetings ( $M = 1.65$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ), a great level of difficulty is evident in implementing these components. Thus, the need for transitional services as a part of the overall educational programming at the detention level appears fundamental; however, transition efforts by practitioners appear to have been neglected as evident by the data (Table 6).

In support of these findings, the Moran (1991) study fully supports the need for adequate transfer of student records, pre-placement and planning, meeting with the base school, and initiating collaborative efforts so as to avoid confusion when the student returns to the base school. Unquestionably as indicated in Table 5 pre-transition and post transition strategies are crucial to the transition process for youth exiting various juvenile facilities. What happens prior to and after a youth returning to the community and the school is essentially an area where extreme time and effort should be given in order to facilitate transition as seamless as possible, thus, eliminating confusion and delays in re-enrolling in school.

Lastly, the scale collaboration is made up of three components, consisting of interagency collaboration stressed throughout the transition process ( $M = 2.92$ ,  $SD = 1.25$ ), collaboration is usually initiated by the educational agency ( $M = 2.88$ ,  $SD = 1.25$ ), and collaboration is usually initiated by social service agency ( $M = 1.94$ ,  $SD = 1.61$ ). Respondents to the present study rated this area lower than the three prior areas. In addition, this area was also rated much lower than similar components (Table 5), all relating to agency input in collaborating with the educational agency, the social service agency, and the court service agency. Although, inconsistencies exist

in rating collaboration components for transitioning youth from a detention education program to the base school (Table 6), and areas focusing on the importance of specific factors in leading to a successful transition (Table 5), we know that maintaining contact with agencies through collaborative efforts are essential to transitioning youth from the detention education program to the mainstream educational program. Given the importance of collaboration (Table 6), in the transition process, a greater need for the development of common goals and objectives developed by the practitioners are imperative. We know that for youth, transitioning from a juvenile facility without assistance can be a difficult process. Therefore, as practitioners develop relationships with outside agencies and maintain linkage with agencies and services through collaborative efforts the transition process becomes less fragmented and youth are able to benefit positively from collaborative efforts. Why is collaboration important to transition? Collaboration brings about a multidisciplinary approach to assisting youth; it encourages a connection between public schools and the detention facility on behalf of the returning youth. Thus, a major first step toward successfully transitioning youth to the educational mainstream is made possible through collaboration. Although the ratings as reflected in Table 6 indicates that these are practices not often stressed and applied in facilities by detention personnel, it is possible that these ratings are reflective of not having enough personnel and the lack of the availability of trained personnel. Further, this can be due to the lack of established goals and objectives developed by the agencies and supported by facility administrators as well as public school administrators.

#### *Research Question F*

#### **Do detention education programs with formal or informal transition programs in place make a difference in recidivism rates in the Southeastern Region of the United States?**

The purpose for examining this research question was to determine based on the practitioners response to whether or not having a formal or informal transition program in place in detention education programs makes a difference in recidivism rates in the Southeastern Region of the United States. In examining this research question, correlations were conducted in four stages. Detailed statistics for each stage of the analysis is reflected in Table 7, Table 8, Table 9, and Table 10.

The first stage of the correlation as reflected in Table 7 examines whether or not a relationship exists between the dependent variables Return to Your Detention Center, Return to Another Detention Center and the Total Returned to a Detention Center with the independent

variable scales of Program Goals, Transition Focus, Pre & Post Planning, Collaboration, Transitional Staffing, Joint Planning, Agency Input, Instructional Programming, Pre Transition Strategies, Post Transition Strategies, and the Extent of Practice Implementation.

The second stage of the correlation shown in Table 8 examines whether or not a relationship exists between the dependent variables High School Graduate, General Equivalency Diploma (GED), and Total High School Graduate with the independent variable scales of Program Goals, Transition Focus, Pre & Post Planning, Collaboration, Transitional Staffing, Joint Planning, Agency Input, Instructional Programming, Pre Transition Strategies, Post Transition Strategies, and the Extent of Practice Implementation.

The third stage of the correlation analysis found in Table 9 examines whether or not a relationship exists between the dependent variable scales of Gifted Students, Special Education Students, and Regular Students with the independent variable scales of Program Goals, Transition Focus, Pre & Post Planning, Collaboration, Transitional Staffing, Joint Planning, Agency Input, Instructional Programming, Pre Transition Strategies, Post Transitional Strategies, and the Extent of Practice Implementation.

The fourth and final correlation analysis shown in Table 10 examines whether or not a relationship exists between the dependent variables of Transition Program (Yes = 2 versus No = 1) and Type of Transition Program (Formal = 2 versus Informal = 1) and the independent variables of Program Goals, Transition Focus, Pre & Post Planning, Collaboration, Transitional Staffing, Joint Planning, Agency Input, Instructional Programming, Pre Transition Strategies, Post Transition Strategies, and the Extent of Practice Implementation.

In addition to the correlation analysis, an independent sample *t-test* was conducted for the purpose of examining if differences exist among the dependent variables of Total Returned to a Detention Center by Transition Program and the independent variables of Program Goals, Transition Focus, Pre & Post Planning, Collaboration, Transitional Staffing, Joint Planning, Agency Input, Instructional Programming, Pre Transition Strategies, Post Transition Strategies, and the Extent of Practice Implementation. Each of the correlation analysis and the independent *t-test* will be discussed in the order in which they have been described thus far.

The first stage of the analysis presented in Table 7 suggests that a significant positive relationship exists between Return to Your Detention Center with Joint Planning: ( $p < .01$ ), Instructional Programming ( $p < .01$ ), and Post Transition Strategies ( $p < .05$ ). This analysis

suggests the more Joint Planning, Instructional Programming, and Post Transition Strategies the higher the rate of Return to Your Detention Center. Based on the analysis thus far, (Table 5) in comparison to when asked of respondents to rate the importance of factors in leading to a successful transition, joint planning, instructional programming, and post transition strategies were among factors receiving ratings ranging from (M= 3.72, SD=1.31) to (M= 4.47, SD= 0.96) based on a 5 point Likert scale. This indicated that the practitioners believed these components to be important to leading to a successful transition. However, the present analysis (Table 7) shows just the opposite. What the researcher anticipated in the present analysis is the more programming, the less Return to Your Detention Center. It would seem that by exposing the youth to more programming while in detention that their chances of remaining in the educational mainstream would be greater. However, if youth are not remaining in the community and educational mainstream, perhaps the quality of programming is questionable. As discussed earlier in this study, when focusing on joint planning (developing a transition plan with youth input, parent input, counselor's input, and staff who will deliver services), instructional planning (aligning curriculum and educational programming, implementing daily living skills, implementing vocational skills, beginning transitional programming upon entry, including educational goals, including vocational goals, and including social goals), and post transition strategies (implement follow-up and periodic communication with youth during transition, implement follow-up and periodic communication with base school personnel during transition, share and transfer educational records to the base school before youth returns) emphasize the key to fully implementing these components, is that of having qualified personnel in order to impact the transition process. Furthermore, in order to implement quality programming, qualified personnel are essentially what drive the success of the program. Several studies (Whittier, et al., 1990; Pollard, et al., 1994; Altscher, et al., 1994) emphasize that during periods of incarceration, youth who are not prepared to make the transition to community due to a lack of sufficient programming contribute to the high rate or recidivism. Unquestionably, these are areas in which increased attention should be given.

In addition, the results from the analysis found in Table 7 suggests that a positive relationship exists on Return to Another Detention Center with Joint Planning ( $p < .05$ ), Agency Input ( $p < .05$ ), Instructional Programming ( $p < .05$ ), Pre Transition Strategies ( $p < .01$ ), Post Transition Strategies ( $p < .01$ ), and Extent of Practice Implementation ( $p < .01$ ). This analysis

suggests that the more Joint Planning, Agency Input, Instructional Programming, Pre Transition Strategies, Post Transition Strategies, and Extent of Practice Implementation the higher the rate of Return to Another Detention Center. In addition, the analysis (Table 7) shows Joint Planning, Instructional Programming and Post Transition Strategies to be highly significant to Return to Your Detention Center, Return to Another Detention Center, and Total Returned to a Detention Center. Can this be related to the quality of programming being offered, the amount of time given to collaboratively planning for a youth's transition, and the intent of follow-up as well as the purpose? The researcher anticipated in the present analysis the more of these components being offered to youth the less recidivism. Earlier in this study (Table 5) when asked of the respondents to rate the factors in leading to a successful transition on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being very important, the ratings reflected were moderate to high ( $M=3.67$ ,  $SD=1.41$  to  $M=4.47$ ,  $SD=0.96$ ). The practitioners seemed to agree that these components are important in leading to a successful transition. However, what is shown in Table 7 is the more components in place and offered to youth the higher the recidivism rate. This brings to question the issue of accountability as well as issues important to the reporting of students, once they return to a facility. Are accurate records being maintained as youth return to detention? Perhaps at some point, particularly during post transition, follow-up permits personnel to stay in touch with youth. As a result, detention personnel are more likely to know what happens to youth and are more likely to know that they end up in a detention center, thus, given that they are involved with the student, this could lead to higher estimates, thereby, creating reporting issues.

Table 7

*Pearson Correlation Coefficients between the Independent Variables Subscales and Return to Your Detention Center, Return to Another Detention Center, and Total Returned to a Detention Center*

	Return to Your Detention Center	Return to Another Detention Center	Total Returned to a Detention Center
Program Goals	-.09	.08	-.01
Transition Focus	.08	.14	.13
Pre & Post Planning	.16	.12	.18
Collaboration	.05	.25	.18
Transitional Staffing	-.16	.16	-.01
Joint Planning	.37**	.36*	.45**
Agency Input	.26	.30*	.35*
Instructional Programming	.36**	.38**	.46**
Pre Transition Strategies	.25	.31*	.35*
Post Transition Strategies	.34*	.35*	.43**
Extent of Practice Implementation	.06	.36**	.25

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ .

In review of the Total Returned to a Detention Center, the analysis of the data gives an overlapping effect of similar correlations as those of Return to Your Detention Center and Return to Another Detention Center. The results suggests that significant positive relationships exists on Total Returned to a Detention Center with Joint Planning ( $p < .01$ ), Agency Input ( $p < .05$ ), Instructional Programming ( $p < .01$ ), Pre Transition Strategies ( $p < .05$ ), and Post Transition Strategies ( $p < .01$ ). Essentially, the analysis suggests the more Joint Planning, Agency Input, Instructional Programming, Pre Transition Strategies, and Post Transition Strategies the higher the rate of Total Return to a Detention Center. This does not produce an overall positive outcome. The researcher anticipated the less return as a result of having these components in place. As mentioned earlier, even though programming consisting of a curriculum of basic academic skills (Table 3) specifically getting youth back in school seems to be the premise for

which detention educational programming is geared, perhaps the quality of programming combined with the inaccuracy of record keeping gives a false reading of numbers returning. Another thought might be, that of those returning to a detention center, a substantial amount are getting a GED; thus getting a GED may increase as students return to detention. Furthermore, based on earlier findings (Table 3, Table 5, and Table 6) much emphasis in working with these youth is directed toward academic skills training, thus, leading one to think that programs with more transitional and follow-up components in place stay in touch with youth and are more aware of them returning, as oppose to programs that don't have transitional or follow-up in place.

Further investigation indicates no relationship between the remaining scales of Program Goals, Transition Focus, Pre & Post Planning, Collaboration, and Transitional Staffing (Table 7). It is not surprising that the analysis produced this outcome given the caliber of responses when asked of the practitioner to rate the components of transition (Table 6) according to how much each applies to their school. Given the findings of several earlier studies (Whittier & Sutton, 1990; Moran, 1991; Pollard, Pollard, & Meers, 1994; Hellriegel & Yates, 1997; Bullis, Yovanoff, & Havel 2004) program goals (educational goals, social goals, and vocational goals) are reflective of programming aimed directly at involving youth immediately upon re-entry into the community. Educating youth about available social services, involving youth in life skills training encompassing self help, social, and survival skills, improving self-concept, developing "crime-free" attitudes, providing follow-up during transition, preparing youth for the world of work through job training, and vocational and career placement are essential pieces of comprehensive transition programming. Why then are these components lacking in importance? Perhaps, as shown earlier in this study, in order to successfully coordinate a viable transition program, trained personnel support and funding is essential to the process. Without adequate funding it is possible that many of these facilities are struggling in order to retain highly qualified personnel trained to effectively implement the transition process.

Likewise, the transition focus components (Table 6) with the exception of sharing transitional plans with the local educational agency are lacking in priority as indicated by the practitioner. On the other hand, similar components (Table 5) are considered vital in the transition process. All in all, transition focus is perhaps one of the most essential of the program components for transitioning youth from the detention education program back to the

mainstream. There are several motivating factors (forming transition plans between the base school, detention, and the youth, beginning transition the first day of intake, involving youth in the process of developing the plan, including the parent in the process, and writing a transition plan for each youth whether formal or informal while in detention) which may dictate the direction in which transitional programming should be geared. However, it appears the focus of programming at the detention level is largely aimed at providing a basic academic curriculum; one which enables youth who have been actively engaged in school to return and failing to focus on the entire population with varying abilities and interest levels. Without a doubt, barriers to successful transition are ultimately due to the overwhelming lack of urgency in making sure that once a youth leaves a facility he/she will remain engaged in school or other productive facets of life (employment, vocational training, continuing education, and career and job exploration).

Furthermore, it is surprising that pre and post planning components (Table 7) were not noted as significant. In light of the Moran study (1991) the need for adequate planning before a youth returns to school and community, as well as to have in place a process of follow-up and periodic communication with the youth, the base school, and key players in the process suggest ideal transition. This study further emphasized that pre and post transition strategies are perhaps the key to the transition process. Therefore, what happens prior to and after a youth transitions to the community and the school is the essence an area where much effort should be given in order to facilitate transition for youth.

In perspective, collaboration must occur between the educational agency, the social services agency, the court services agency, and representatives of the receiving school, and are viewed as practices which should be used by all stakeholders. Yet, this component was not seen as one which is significant to the total process of transitioning. Can this be attributed to the overall lack of understanding of the role of transitional personnel, as well as, the importance of collaboration between stakeholders? After all, collaboration brings about a multidisciplinary approach to assisting youth; it encourages a connection between all stakeholders including those in the detention facility.

Finally, as shown earlier (Table 4) transitional staffing overall did not reflect a measure of significance. Given the need for personnel support in addressing the transitional needs of youth, it would seem that this area would overwhelmingly yield a greater response. The Pollard, et al., (1994) study supports the need for youth to have access to transition staff. Why then is this

area not viewed as significant to the process? Again, due to a lack of a clearly defined job description, transitional staffing is probably one of the areas that are more or likely non-existent in detention facilities or the roles have not been defined.

The second stage of the analysis presented in Table 8 suggests that significant positive relationships exist on High School Graduate with Collaboration ( $p < .05$ ), Transitional Staffing ( $p < .01$ ), and Extent of Practice Implementation ( $p < .01$ ). Unlike the previous analysis (Table 7) this analysis (Table 8) suggests the more Collaboration, Transitional Staffing, and Extent of Practice Implementation the higher the rate of High School Graduate.

With previous findings (Table 3, and Table 5), when asked of the practitioner to indicate the extent to which practices are implemented in facilities to promote successful transition, encouraging interagency collaboration was stressed and regarded as best practice and as a contributing factor to successful transition. Given that High School Graduation is an end product, one in which success can be determined, as youth leave detention, it is through collaborative measures in which a connection to the educational mainstream is made. As shown earlier in this study (Table 3, and Table 5) it is through interagency collaboration that the process of transitioning is strengthened, thus, creating a linkage between the detention education program, the social service agency, the court service agency, and representatives from the community. Based on the analysis (Table 8) it is fair to say, given these findings and the noted significance with High School Graduate, GED, and Total High School Graduate and GED, it is reasonable to say that at some point during the transition process that someone involved with the youth is communicating with the base school in order to insure that gains made during detainment are not lost. The research indicates that a substantial number of adjudicated youth do not return to public school, and of those who do not complete their high school experience while in detention centers, the end result is often dropping out of school (Nelson, et al., 1987; Wolford, 2000).

Table 8

*Pearson Correlation Coefficients between Independent Variables Subscales and High School Graduate, GED, and Total Graduate and GED*

	High School Graduate	GED	Total Graduate and GED
Program Goals	.25	.37**	.36**
Transition Focus	.11	.36**	.27
Pre & Post Planning	.15	.40**	.32*
Collaboration	.30*	.39**	.41**
Transitional Staffing	.47**	.64**	.63**
Joint Planning	.19	.27	.27
Agency Input	.19	.21	.24
Instructional Programming	.25	.29*	.32*
Pre Transition Strategies	-.08	.17	.05
Post Transition Strategies	.08	.26	.19
Extent Practice Implementation	.49**	.62**	.66**

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ .

As shown in Table 8 the results further suggests that a significant positive relationship exists on GED with Program Goals ( $p < .01$ ), Transition Focus ( $p < .01$ ), Pre & Post Planning ( $p < .01$ ), Collaboration ( $p < .01$ ), Transitional Staffing ( $p < .01$ ), Instructional Programming ( $p < .05$ ), and Extent of Practice Implementation ( $p < .01$ ). The analysis suggests that as Program Goals, Transition Focus, Pre & Post Planning, Collaboration, Transitional Staffing, Instructional Programming, and Extent of Practice Implementation increase the higher the rate of GED. The analysis (Table 8) further shows that there is more of a relationship with certain scales (program goals, transition focus, pre & post planning, and instructional programming) for GED as opposed to High School Graduate. It could be that after returning to detention numerous times, some youth get a GED because after an experience such as being in detention many youth have no desire to go back to school; instead they choose the GED route. However, for those pursuing the High School Graduate route, a substantial amount of academic credits have already been obtained, thereby making the process of obtaining high school diploma a realistic path to pursue.

As a result and due to youth having acquired a substantial amount of credits indicates that they have been exposed to the academic curriculum, thus, making them much more likely to graduate. However, for the youth pursuing the GED route, these youth often find themselves in a dilemma. Not having earned substantial credits while in school, having experienced poor attendance, and missing valuable instructional time which impedes the process, thus, for many spending time on the basic academic curriculum is essential in order to strengthen academic skills. Perhaps, it is at this level where a heavy concentration on program goals encompassing educational, vocational and social goals is found to be necessary in order to facilitate success for this population of youth. As indicated in the literature (Pollard et al., 1994) by incorporating a multi-sensory approach through the teaching of basic academic skills students benefit in an effort to transition.

In review of the Total High School Graduate and GED, the analysis of the data suggests that significant positive relationships exist on Program Goals ( $p < .01$ ), Pre & Post Planning ( $p < .05$ ), Collaboration ( $p < .01$ ), Transitional Staffing ( $p < .01$ ), Instructional Programming ( $p < .05$ ), and Extent of Practice Implementation ( $p < .01$ ). This analysis suggests the more Program Goals, Pre & Post Planning, Collaboration, Transitional Staffing, Instructional Programming, and Extent of Practice Implementation the higher Total High School Graduate and GED. This shows that if certain transitional program components are in place the expectation is, more youth will obtain a GED or Graduate High School. Further the analysis (Table 8) shows a positive relationship on GED and Total Graduate and GED. Why positives on both? One possible answer is some youth who return (recidivate) to detention are the ones who get a GED. It is at this point, if they don't have a substantial amount of credits to get a high school diploma and have spent a considerable amount of time in detention, upon the third or fourth time in detention they become serious about getting a GED. Another answer could be a combination of factors: (1) some of the youth remaining in detention actually obtain a GED, and (2) some students who leave get a GED. What could this mean? With this type of positive relationship between both High School Graduate and GED it could mean that these scales (program goals, transition focus, pre & post planning, collaboration, transitional staffing, joint planning, agency input, instructional programming, pre transition strategies, post transition strategies, and extent of practice implementation) are not having an impact on GED, or High School Graduate. With the findings (Table 7) showing significant positive relationship exists on Return to Your detention Center and Return to Another Detention Center both suggesting the higher rate of return, this leads one to

question the overall quality of the components. An earlier study (Whittier, et al., 1990) emphasized that it is possible that inappropriately trained personnel could have an adverse effect on the quality of transition programming. Thus, indicating that training and qualifications does have an effect on the quality of transition program components.

Overall, given the findings in this section, it is very difficult to assess the quality of transition program components from the present research, even though these components are common throughout educational programming. It could be that given the current state of these components, they may not be having an impact on recidivism. It could also lead to a very difficult question of whether these programs should be eliminated or whether they should be enhanced with qualified experienced personnel able to fully implement components in order to get the best possible results.

Further investigation indicates, overall, no relationship between the scales of Joint Planning, Agency Input, Pre Transition Strategies, and Post Transition Strategies. Earlier in this study (Table 5) respondents were asked to rate components on a 5 point Likert scale with 5 being very important to indicate the importance of each in leading to a successful transition. Overwhelmingly, components making up each of the scales (joint planning, agency input, pre transition strategies, and post transition strategies) were viewed as integral parts of the transition process. It would seem appropriate that in order to assure success for youth transitioning from a secure setting that joint planning, agency input, pre and post transition strategies (developing a transition plan with input from parent, youth, counselor, collaborating with educational agency, social service agency, court services, and school representative, assigning a case manager to the youth, holding pre-release meetings, implementing follow-up, and sharing and transferring educational records ) would weigh heavily in the transition process. Research (Bullis et al., 2004) focusing on an outcome index referred to as “engagement” suggest that engagement time affects the success of youth remaining in the community. Therefore, it is essential that even though some youth will obtain High School Graduation or a GED, remaining engaged in structured programs promotes positive steps towards a successful transition in the community and less recidivism.

The third stage of the analysis presented in Table 9 suggests that significant positive relationships exists on Gifted Students, Special Students and Regular Students with Program Goals ( $p < .01$ ), Transition Focus ( $p < .01$ ), Collaboration ( $p < .01$ ), Transitional Staffing ( $p <$

.01), and Extent of Practice Implementation ( $p < .01$ ). This further suggests the higher Gifted Students, Special Students, and Regular Students receiving transitional services, the stronger the relationship with program goals, transition focus, collaboration, transitional staffing, and extent of practice implementation. This further emphasize that if well articulated program goals, transition focus, collaboration, transitional staffing, and extent of practice implementation are in place it is more likely that higher percentages of Gifted Students, Special Students, and Regular Students will be impacted. The analysis shows that these variables are instituted for all (Gifted, Special, and Regular) and that no distinction is made by the percentage of students in a program (formal or informal) and the impact is felt by all regardless of percentage. Earlier in this study, institutions were asked to clarify for the researcher whether transition services were given to all youth. A third of the institutions indicated they provide the same set of services either formally or informally to all students. Those responding indicated that there is a need to improve the number of services available and the quality of services to support transition of all youth, disabled and non-disabled, this was also found in the Whittier and Sutton (1990) study.

Overall, it would seem feasible to incorporate in educational programming a combination of all program goals, to include academic skills training on various levels so as to accommodate all groups (Gifted, Special, and Regular) making up the detention population. Additionally, these correlations (Table 9) seem to by the three groups (Gifted, Special, and Regular) suggest that even if various programs are not implementing the same types of programming for all youth, the impact is generally the same, and in the same areas. The correlations are virtually the same, and so the impact and the percentage of different groups seem to be the same. Based on this analysis it is safe to say that the practitioners give the same to everyone. No particular group is given more as opposed to another group. The same five variables for the three groups; in essence this appears to be important, but in actuality they, do not vary very much in what is done.

Further investigation indicates overall, no relationship between the scales of Joint Planning, Agency Input, Instructional Programming, Pre Transition Strategies, and Post Transition Strategies. In review of previous analysis (Table 5) components making up the scales as described above were highly regarded as contributing factors to successful transition of youth in moving from the detention education program to the mainstream educational program. Earlier studies (Pollard, et al., 1994; Altscher, et al., 1999; Hellriegel, et al., 1997; National Council on Disability, 2003) emphasized the importance of these components as major in transitional

planning, thereby establishing a framework for the successful transition of youth from the detention education program to the mainstream education program.

In addition, the fourth and final correlation, Point-Biserial Correlations examined whether or not a relationship exists between Program Goals, Transition Focus, Pre & Post Planning, Collaboration, Transitional Staffing, Joint Planning, Agency Input, Instructional Programming, Pre Transition Strategies, Post Transition Strategies, Extent of Practice Implementation with Transition Program (Yes = 2 versus No = 1) and Type of Transition Program (Formal = 2 versus Informal = 1).

Table 9

*Pearson Correlation Coefficients between Independent Variables Subscales and Gifted, Special, and Regular Education Students*

	Gifted	Special	Regular
Program Goals	.40**	.42**	.50**
Transition Focus	.42**	.49**	.43**
Pre & Post Planning	.22	.26	.27
Collaboration	.37**	.43**	.46**
Transitional Staffing	.43**	.54**	.62**
Joint Planning	.13	.16	.20
Agency Input	.03	.04	.10
Instructional Programming	.19	.19	.24
Pre Transition Strategies	-.08	.01	-.05
Post Transition Strategies	.01	.05	.09
Extent of Practice Implementation	.41**	.51**	.61**

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ .

Table 10 shows the results of the Point-Biserial Correlation Coefficients between the relationship of independent variables subscales and Transition Program (Yes = 2 versus No = 1) and Type of Transition Program (Formal = 2 versus Informal = 1). The results suggests that significant positive relationships exists on Transition Program ((Yes = 2 versus No = 1)) with

Program Goals ( $p < .01$ ), Transition Focus ( $p < .01$ ), Pre & Post Planning ( $p < .05$ ), Collaboration ( $p < .05$ ), Transitional Staffing ( $p < .01$ ), and Extent of Practice Implementation ( $p < .01$ ). This suggests that as Detention Centers tend to have a Transition Program; Program Goals, Transition Focus, Pre & Post Planning, Collaboration, Transitional Staffing and Extent of Practice Implementation tend to increase. Indicating the more transition programs the stronger the relationship with Program Goals, Transition Focus, Pre & Post Planning, Collaboration, Transitional Staffing and Extent of Practice Implementation. Therefore, the analysis

Table 10

*Biserial Correlation Coefficients between Independent Variables Subscales and Transition Program and Type of Transition Program*

	Transition Program	Type of Transition Program
Program Goals	.44**	.28
Transition Focus	.56**	.48**
Pre & Post Planning	.34*	.27
Collaboration	.34*	.18
Transitional Staffing	.42**	.32*
Joint Planning	.17	.23
Agency Input	.11	.24
Instructional Programming	.23	.25
Pre Transition Strategies	.04	.10
Post Transition Strategies	.07	.23
Extent of Practice Implementation	.39**	.19

*Note.* \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ .

shows that if transition program exists it does make a difference if the independent variable scales (Program Goals, Transition Focus, Pre & Post Planning, Collaboration, Transitional Staffing, and Extent of Practice Implementation) are present in programming.

Earlier in this study research emphasized (Webb, et al., 1986; Wolford, et al., 1987; Whittier, et al., 1990) using a comprehensive approach to transitional services. Reflective of the analysis (Table 10) significant positive relationships exist on Transition Program (Yes = 2 versus No = 1) with Program Goals ( $p < .01$ ), Transition Focus ( $p < .01$ ), Pre & Post Planning ( $p < .05$ ), Collaboration ( $p < .05$ ), Transitional Staffing ( $p < .01$ ), and Extent of Practice Implementation ( $p < .01$ ). Why a positive relationship? Given previous analysis (Table 5 and Table 6) when focusing on the importance of transition components, practitioners indicated that these components are all important to the transition process. In addition, the same components are implemented for all students (Gifted, Special, and Regular) as shown in Table 9, and no distinction is made by type of program (formal or informal), the impact is felt by all regardless of whether it is a formal or informal program. Overall the six variables apply to transition program component and the data shows that in most cases they only make a difference if you have a program.

In addition, when asked of the practitioner in this study, how they characterize their transition program (Formal = 2 or Informal = 1) of the 51 participants responding, 19 (37%) responded having a Formal Transition Program, 23 (45%) responded having an Informal Transition Program and the remaining 9 (18%) declined an answer. Given what we know about these youth and the difficulties they experience once they return to communities, getting the support and services they need to succeed while detained and following release is essential.

Table 10 further suggests that significant relationships exist on Type of Transition Program (Formal = 2 versus Informal = 1) with Transition Focus ( $p < .01$ ), and Transitional Staffing ( $p < .05$ ). Indicating the more Formal or Informal programs the stronger the relationship with Transition Focus, and Transitional Staffing. Overall, it does not seem as though type of transition program has much of an impact with the independent variable scales. It seems that this part of the analysis, overall, suggests that even through these components (Transition Focus, Transitional Staffing) are prevalent in the types of transition program (Formal = 2, Informal = 1), the remaining components associated with transition program (Yes = 2, No = 1) has no impact

on the type of transition programs. Overall, these programs are not making a difference in recidivism rates in the Southeastern Region of the United States.

In conclusion, an independent sample *t*-test was conducted and examined if mean differences exists on Total Returned to a Detention Center by Transition Program (Yes = 2 versus No = 1). Preliminary analysis, a one-sample K-S test, revealed that the Total Returned to a Detention Center was normally distributed. Levene's test of error variances was not significant—all assumptions met. The results suggests that no significant mean difference exists on Total Returned to a Detention Center by Transition Program  $t(48) = 0.81, p = .425$ ; suggesting that means for Detention Centers with a Transition Program ( $M = 5.93, SD = 1.49$ ) did not differ significantly from Detention Centers without a Transition Program ( $M = 5.57, SD = 1.58$ ).

The studies in which the present study is grounded did not contain information necessary to examine extensively recidivism within the juvenile population, due largely to the unavailability of work in this area. The researcher did however, yield one important study, The Natural Bridge Transition Program Follow-Up Study (Black, Brush, Grow, Hawes, Henry, & Hinkle (1996). This study focused on evaluating the academic and vocational programming at the Natural Bridge Correctional Center. One of the important aspects of this study is the use of a transition specialist who coordinates and develops an educational plan for all youth enrolled in the educational program. The transition specialist also makes contact with community resources prior to the youth's release. In the present study, respondents indicated that the detention transitional coordinator who essentially takes on the role of transition specialist contributed overwhelming at a high level to the overall transition process. This position is essential to the present study, as well as the Black, et al., (1996) study. In addition, the most important findings of the Black, et al., (1996) study are linked to educational achievement, and vocational education. Conversely, the present study weighs heavily on a combination of program goals, transition focus, pre& post planning, transitional staffing, joint planning, agency input, instructional programming, pre-transition strategies, post-transition strategies, and extent of practice implementation in contributing to successful transition.

Subsequently, the Black, et al., (1996) study inferred that youth who had a shorter confinement period were more likely to recidivate as opposed to those with longer confinement

periods. Conversely, the present study did not seek to predict recidivism based on confinement period. The researcher did examine transitional program (yes or no) by asking respondents to indicate whether or not they have a transition program and if the program is characterized as formal or informal. The results of this investigation revealed, when mean differences were examined on total returned to a detention center, no real differences between having a program or not having a program was evident.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

The need to identify effective factors essential to facilitate successful transition for adjudicated youth both disabled and non-disabled was the driving force behind this research endeavor. The operational definition for successful transition as used in this study is a process which promotes the passage of a juvenile offender from a detention center education program to a regular school, alternative school or adult education program and who is working towards (or has already obtained ) a diploma or GED and have not re-offended. This study shows that to be effective, transitional programming should involve critical elements of educational, vocational, and social goals. In addition to these goals, other components influence the transitional process for all youth (development of a formal or informal transition plan, collaboration, transitional personnel, joint planning, an extensive instructional program including assessment and educational evaluation, and pre and post planning).

As mentioned earlier in this study, the 1997 Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act provides the basis for addressing the transitional needs of juveniles returning from correctional facilities to schools and communities. With the passage of this amendment, the focus is placed on corrections and practices that are aimed at transitioning, thus, providing a greater chance for the development of programs containing an all inclusive approach to services for youth within the juvenile justice system (Griller-Clark, 2001).

With the focus of attention on providing a comprehensive program of study for the transition of both disabled and non-disabled youth, and as a result of findings in this study, it is clear that greater emphasis will need to be placed on transition programming during periods of incarceration aimed at helping youth make a smooth and seamless move from detention back to the school and community.

The research (Pollard, et al., 1994) shows strong support for the development of a formal or informal transition program for all youth assigned to detention facilities. In looking at what formal or formalized transition programs exist for students who are assigned to detention, the analysis of the data in this study shows that only a small percentage of youth are receiving the services necessary to assist with transitioning. It is also clear that transitional programming is

lacking in the detention education program which addresses the educational needs of all youth (special, gifted, and regular).

In addition, instead of focusing on vocational skills training, the analysis of data in this study shows a strong association with programming being that of providing a curriculum of basic academic preparation. As revealed in this study, much of the academic programming is aimed at getting youth back in school. Although, we know that a major hindrance to youth who have been detained is failure in school, excessive absences, disruptive behavior, numerous suspensions from school, and grade retention. Beyond this finding, little preparation and thought goes into developing programs rich in vocational skills training at the detention level.

Aside from programming of services, the analysis of the data in this study shows the practitioners believe the detention transitional coordinator plays the most important part in contributing to the transition process. Although this is evident by the data in this study, there is also a need for other personnel such as the case manager, the mentor, the base school coordinator, and the counselor (Wolford, 1987; Edgar, 1991; Pollard et al., 1994; Pollard et al., 1997; Whittier et al., 1997; & James, et al., 1999). All are equally important to the transition process. Transitional personnel can mean the difference between helping a youth connect to sources of help in the community to ensure that any gains made during placement in a facility is not lost, and by assisting the youth in maneuvering through the maze of bureaucracy or having the youth and parent proceed without assistants.

Practitioners acknowledge that by having a structured program, one which encompasses joint planning, agency input, instructional programming, pre-transition strategies, and post transition strategies, and involving youth in structured programming, a positive outcome is more likely to occur. The goal for transitioning is greater collaboration between agencies, and schools, developing a transition plan, implementing strong educational programming to include educational, vocational, and social goals, holding pre and post release meetings, all in an effort to insure greater continuity for the youth in returning to the educational mainstream.

Similarly, in looking at the components most effective in moving youth from the detention education program to the mainstream educational program, educational goals once again are noted as the priority of all programming in detention. It is probably the one component

in which detention practitioners see they are doing well, given the added barriers of not having trained personnel due to funding in order to fully implement the transition process.

Likewise, important to the transition focus scale is the need for personnel support in order to fully address the transitional needs of youth. In order to successfully coordinate programs at this level, trained personnel support as well as funding is an important variable in addressing the transitional needs of youth. As mentioned throughout this study, personnel support is essentially an area in which funding and training must be allocated.

Further, pre-transition and post transition strategies are crucial to the transition process for youth exiting various juvenile facilities. What happens prior to and after a youth returning to the community and the school is essentially an area where intense time and effort should be given in order to facilitate transition as seamless as possible, thus, eliminating confusion and delays in re-enrolling in school. These components in combination with collaboration, contributes to a multidisciplinary approach to assisting youth; by encouraging a connection between public schools and the detention facility on behalf of the returning youth. Essentially, it appears as though overall, the focus of many of these programs are that of providing a basic academic curriculum, one which will enable youth who have been actively engaged in school to return to school at some point following release from the facility. It appears as though at the detention level, efforts to fully engage in effectively transitioning are quite limited and thus creates a barrier to successful transition.

### Implications

Although, there is a consensus in the literature that educational programming containing effective transitional components aid in the post release of juveniles. The implications of this study begin with the need for a formal transition program for students returning to the base school from detention education programs. Unless transition programs are fully implemented to include all students unsuccessful attempts at transitioning to the community will continue. Additionally, the results of this study support the need for involvement from all levels (detention, base school, social service agency, court services, youth, parent, and counselor) in order to bring about continuity in the educational process and in the process of transitioning all youth disabled and non-disabled.

The results of this study imply that providing a curriculum and aligning curriculum focusing on the basic academic skills as well as advanced studies is essential in order to equip youth with skills they will need in order to compete once they return to the base school. By providing a well rounded curriculum youth who have been engaged in advanced studies as well as youth engaged in basic academic level courses will be able to compete as they return to the base schools.

This study further imply the need to begin the process of transition immediately at the point of entry for all youth to the secure facility by planning with all agencies and obtaining input from the youth and parent. In addition, the findings of the study imply the need for personnel support (detention transitional coordinator, base school transitional coordinator, case manager, counselor, and mentor) in order to provide a link between the student, the facility, and the educational mainstream. Having access to transitional staff both at the detention level and the base school level is imperative for all youth. Most importantly, the research (James & Jurich, 1999) supports the need for a youth to have a meaningful relationship with a caring person from the community who can advocate and create a link between the community and the facility.

Finally, this study emphasizes and brings to light the need for interagency collaboration in order to ensure continuity for the youth returning to the educational mainstream. It is through collaborative effects that both the detention agency, the local educational agency, the social service agency, the court service agency, the parent, the youth, and community agencies can work together to insure transitional services are available to all youth.

### Recommendations

Youth incarcerated in detention centers will at some point transition back to their base schools and communities. For many, the detention education program is the last chance of having a formal education. As indicated in the research (Nelson, Rutherford, & Wolford, 1987; Wolford, 2000) many have had unsuccessful experiences in school and many complete their schooling in programs at the detention center. While others return to the base school and continue to experience unsuccessful attempts at transitioning. Thus, effective transition from the facility to the school and community is essential. The recommendations offered in this section are based on the findings of the study, current literature, and personal experiences. The recommendations are not in any order but are included for their relative importance for

promoting successful transition of youth from the detention setting to educational mainstream and the community.

1. Employing qualified transitional personnel and funding of these personnel is essential. Transitional personnel can mean the difference between helping a youth connect to sources of help in the community to ensure that any gains made during placement in a facility is not lost, to assisting in making the connection with the LEA. Emphasis for this study should be placed on the role of the transitional coordinator and the impact in providing transitional services to youth in the detention center.
2. A transition plan must be developed for all youth, and transition should begin at the point of entry. Developing the transition plan (formal or informal) for disabled and non-disabled youth are essential for successful transition. A study to determine the barriers practitioners/transitional coordinators face in implementing the transition plan and what strategies are being used to monitor youth.
3. In order to address the academic needs of all youth, programs geared toward all academic levels, especially for youth coming into detention having been involved in advanced studies programs designed to obtain advanced studies diploma is essential. A study focusing on the impact of offering students focusing on an advanced studies diploma a different program of studies geared toward satellite studies, connecting with the local community college, and possibly connecting via satellite with the home school would prove meaningful to the education of these youth. The focus of such a study would look at the impact of distance learning on youth in detention seeking advanced studies diplomas through satellite studies.
4. Much of what is done in correctional education is driven by legislation. Policy makers may want to consider more closely the need to include in the education program vocational skills training, with an emphasis on extensive career exploration, and vocational aptitude testing. Therefore, successful vocational skills training programs should be studied to ascertain specifically what programs are suitable for the detention setting.
5. Both GED and High School Graduate are considered meaningful end products. Detention education programs typically work with youth in completing requirements

- for high school graduation, and GED completion. A study focusing on the rate of GED completion and the rate of High School completion for youth, who have been in detention, and if there is a connection with intervention from a person responsible for transition, and if so, what are the duties and responsibilities of that individual?
6. In addition, to the above recommendations, given the era of accountability there should be much better record keeping and understanding of what happens to youth following release from detention facilities. If the goal is to prevent recidivism, thereby decreasing the cost to incarcerate, now and in the future, one would think that having a better understanding of what the detention programs are accomplishing is important for the practitioner, local education agencies, court service agencies, and for taxpayers. As we look at the cost associated with running these programs, vast resources are utilized and money is being spent and essentially we don't know the effects of these programs. This study shows how difficult it is to get solid information about programs that exist within detention facilities. There is not enough uniformity to ask those associated with detention common questions and receive common answers. A qualitative study using items from the present survey in question format is recommended in order to get an in depth view and an understanding of what transition is for this population.
  7. This study is largely based on answers from education professionals, mainly program administrators of detention education programs who have a greater depth of knowledge as it pertains to the transition of youth from a detention education program. However, to continue to add to the literature as well as to gain an introspective view of what works for youth during detainment and following detainment a more in depth study utilizing interpretive interviewing techniques through a case study method may yield a wealth of knowledge. A look at transition based on the youth's perception of what they say is needed in order to successfully transition to the mainstream could greatly affect the methods used to guide transition and services.

## Conclusion

Unless assistance is given to facilitate the transition of youth releases from detention facilities, they will continue to face many negative factors as they attempt to transition back to their schools and communities. While the research (Wolford, 1987) emphasizes maneuvering through the maze of re-entry is a difficult process without resources. It is often assumed that the process of transitioning back to the communities and schools can be successful based on the youth's comment and willingness to do so. Focusing on the youth's past experiences of school failure, school suspensions, poor attendance, and probation violations, failure to provide assistance ultimately results in unsuccessful attempts at transitioning back into the educational mainstream and the community. In many cases, these youth often return to the same environments from which they came. Thus, the same factors initially contributing to their delinquency continue to impact the cycle of recidivism.

Based on the findings of this study, in an effort to promote the successful transition of juveniles into communities and schools, a network of stakeholders must jointly engage through interagency cooperation in bridging the gap and assisting in the transition process. Therefore, effective transition should integrate, and collaborate through an interdisciplinary team, composed of the following stakeholders:

The Local Education Agency and the Detention Education Program: By collaborating with the detention education program and the receiving educational agency in an effort to prepare youth to return to the educational mainstream the transition can be a seamless process.

The Base School: By providing programs which are coordinated between schools and correctional facilities, youth are afforded an added benefit of support.

The Parent and Youth: By encouraging input and involvement in the development of the transition plan from youth and parent ensures acceptance of the transition plan.

Community Agencies: By forming collaborative bonds with community-based agencies, in order to meet the needs of youth on an ongoing basis, a successful transition through delivery of services and supervision will more likely occur.

Court Service Agencies: By involving probation and court services ongoing, the much needed structure to the transition process thereby serves as a means of reducing the return of juveniles to facilities.

Social Service Agencies: Critical to care during detainment and following release is treatment offering mental health and substance abuse programs and counseling in an effort to reduce recidivism and promote a successful transition.

In closing, in an effort to promote successful transition of juveniles into communities, the National Council on Disability (2003) viewed effective transition practices as those shared by all stakeholders. Based on this finding, a network of stakeholders can provide the services and the support essential to a successful transition.

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APPENDIX A  
EDJJ PROMISING PRACTICES IN TRANSITION FOR YOUTH IN THE JUVENILE  
JUSTICE SYSTEM  
SHORT TERM JAILS AND DETENTION CENTERS

*EDJJ Promising Practices in Transition for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System*

*Short Term Jails and Detention Centers*

1. Staff awareness of and familiarity with all county, state, local, and private programs that receive and/or send youth to/from jail or detention center.
2. The immediate transfer of youth's educational records from public and private educational programs to jails or detention centers.
3. The existence of an extensive diagnostic system for the educational, vocational, and social, emotional, and behavioral assessment of youth.
4. Students in jails or detention centers should have access to a resource center which contains a variety of materials related to transition and support services.
5. Special funds are earmarked for transition and support services.
6. Interagency meetings, cooperative inservice training activities, and crossover correctional and community school visits are held regularly to ensure awareness of youth and agency transition needs.
7. A process exists for the immediate identification, evaluation, and placement of youth with disabilities.
8. An *individualized education* program is developed for each student with disabilities that includes a transition plan.
9. An individual transition plan is developed with **all** students which includes the student's educational and vocational interests, abilities, and preferences.

10. To the extent possible, individualized pre-placement planning prior to the transfer of youth from jails or detention centers to the community or long-term correctional facilities should exist.
11. The immediate transfer of youth's educational records from jails or detention centers to community schools, long-term correctional facilities, or other programs.
12. Coordination with probation to ensure a continuum of services and care is provided in the community.
13. Coordination with public and private educational program personnel to ensure that they advocate for these youth, cultivate family involvement, maintain communications with other agencies, and place students in classes with supportive teachers.
14. The existence of a system for periodic evaluations of the transition program and all of its components.

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APPENDIX B  
SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Survey Questionnaire

Transition/Moving Students

For the purpose of this questionnaire, transition will be defined as the process which promotes passage of a juvenile offender from a detention center education program back to the regular school, alternative school and is working towards (or already obtained) a diploma or GED and have not re-offended.

I. Demographics and General Information:

**Do you currently have a formal or informal transition program for students who are assigned to short term detention?**

- Yes
- No

**If so, please attach a copy or describe your transition program.**

**Do you characterize it as formal or informal?**

- Formal
- Informal

Please respond to the following as they apply to your facility:

**What percentage of Special Education students receives transition services?**

- 1 = None
- 2 = 1-20%
- 3 = 21-40%
- 4 = 41-60%
- 5 = 61-80%
- 6 = 81-100%

**What percentage of Gifted students receives transition services?**

- 1 = None
- 2 = 1-20%
- 3 = 21-40%
- 4 = 41-60%
- 5 = 61-80%
- 6 = 81-100%

**What percentage of Regular Function students receives transition services?**

- 1 = None
- 2 = 1-20%
- 3 = 21-40%
- 4 = 41-60%
- 5 = 61-80%
- 6 = 81-100%

II. Components of Transition: Based on your school, on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 5 being Strongly Apply) rate the following according to how much it applies to your school. Please click/check one response per row.

Program Goals:

**Program goals include educational goals**

- 1 Least Apply
- 2 Somewhat Apply
- 3 Generally Apply
- 4 Apply
- 5 Strongly Apply

**Program goals include social goals**

- 1 Least Apply
- 2 Somewhat Apply
- 3 Generally Apply
- 4 Apply
- 5 Strongly Apply

**Program goals include vocational goals**

- 1 Least Apply
- 2 Somewhat Apply
- 3 Generally Apply
- 4 Apply
- 5 Strongly Apply

Transition Focus:

**Transition begins the first day of intake**

- 1 Least Apply
- 2 Somewhat Apply
- 3 Generally Apply
- 4 Apply
- 5 Strongly Apply

**Informal transition plans are written for each youth while in detention**

- 1 Least Apply
- 2 Somewhat Apply
- 3 Generally Apply
- 4 Apply
- 5 Strongly Apply

**Formal transition plans are written for each youth while in detention**

- 1 Least Apply
- 2 Somewhat Apply
- 3 Generally Apply
- 4 Apply
- 5 Strongly Apply

**Youth are involved in the process of developing the transition plan to ensure acceptance**

- 1 Least Apply
- 2 Somewhat Apply
- 3 Generally Apply
- 4 Apply
- 5 Strongly Apply

**Transition plans are shared with the local educational agency**

- 1 Least Apply
- 2 Somewhat Apply
- 3 Generally Apply
- 4 Apply
- 5 Strongly Apply

**Transition plans are formed between the base school, detention, and the youth**

- 1 Least Apply
- 2 Somewhat Apply
- 3 Generally Apply
- 4 Apply
- 5 Strongly Apply

**Transition plans include parent input**

- 1 Least Apply
- 2 Somewhat Apply
- 3 Generally Apply
- 4 Apply
- 5 Strongly Apply

Pre & Post Planning:

**Records are exchanged between detention and local education agency**

- 1 Least Apply
- 2 Somewhat Apply
- 3 Generally Apply
- 4 Apply
- 5 Strongly Apply

**Meeting with base school occurs**

- 1 Least Apply
- 2 Somewhat Apply
- 3 Generally Apply
- 4 Apply
- 5 Strongly Apply

**Pre-release planning meetings are held with the appropriate representative of the receiving schools**

- 1 Least Apply
- 2 Somewhat Apply
- 3 Generally Apply
- 4 Apply
- 5 Strongly Apply

Collaboration:

**Interagency collaboration is stressed throughout the transition process**

- 1 Least Apply
- 2 Somewhat Apply
- 3 Generally Apply
- 4 Apply
- 5 Strongly Apply

**Collaboration is usually initiated by the educational agency**

- 1 Least Apply
- 2 Somewhat Apply
- 3 Generally Apply
- 4 Apply
- 5 Strongly Apply

**Collaboration is usually initiated by social service agency**

- 1 Least Apply
- 2 Somewhat Apply
- 3 Generally Apply
- 4 Apply
- 5 Strongly Apply

III. Transitional Staffing: Rate the following personnel on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 5 being Always) indicating how much the personnel contribute to the overall transition process. Please click/check one response per row.

**Counselor**

- 1 Never
- 2 Seldom
- 3 Sometimes
- 4 Often
- 5 Always

**Case Manager**

- 1 Never
- 2 Seldom
- 3 Sometimes
- 4 Often
- 5 Always

**Mentor**

- 1 Never
- 2 Seldom
- 3 Sometimes
- 4 Often
- 5 Always

**Base School Transitional Coordinator**

- 1 Never
- 2 Seldom
- 3 Sometimes
- 4 Often
- 5 Always

**Detention Transitional Coordinator**

- 1 Never
- 2 Seldom
- 3 Sometimes
- 4 Often
- 5 Always

IV. Importance of Program Components: Based on your current knowledge of transitioning youth from a detention education program to base schools, on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 5 being Very Important) rate each statement indicating the importance of each in leading to a successful transition. Please click/check one response per row.

Joint Planning:

**Develop a transition plan with input from youth**

- 1 Not Important
- 2 Fairly Unimportant
- 3 Fairly Important
- 4 Important
- 5 Very Important

**Develop a transition plan with input from parent**

- 1 Not Important
- 2 Fairly Unimportant
- 3 Fairly Important
- 4 Important
- 5 Very Important

**Develop a transition plan with input from counselor**

- 1 Not Important
- 2 Fairly Unimportant
- 3 Fairly Important
- 4 Important
- 5 Very Important

**Engage staff who will deliver services in joint planning early in the process**

- 1 Not Important
- 2 Fairly Unimportant
- 3 Fairly Important
- 4 Important
- 5 Very Important

Agency Input:

**Collaborate with the receiving educational agency**

- 1 Not Important
- 2 Fairly Unimportant
- 3 Fairly Important
- 4 Important
- 5 Very Important

**Collaborate with social services agency**

- 1 Not Important
- 2 Fairly Unimportant
- 3 Fairly Important
- 4 Important
- 5 Very Important

**Collaborate with court services**

- 1 Not Important
- 2 Fairly Unimportant
- 3 Fairly Important
- 4 Important
- 5 Very Important

**Meet with the appropriate representative of the receiving schools**

- 1 Not Important
- 2 Fairly Unimportant
- 3 Fairly Important
- 4 Important
- 5 Very Important

Instructional Programming:

**Align curriculum and educational programming between detention and base school**

- 1 Not Important
- 2 Fairly Unimportant
- 3 Fairly Important
- 4 Important
- 5 Very Important

**Implement daily living skills as part of the curriculum**

- 1 Not Important
- 2 Fairly Unimportant
- 3 Fairly Important
- 4 Important
- 5 Very Important

**Implement vocational skills as part of the curriculum**

- 1 Not Important
- 2 Fairly Unimportant
- 3 Fairly Important
- 4 Important
- 5 Very Important

**Begin transitional programming upon entry into the facility**

- 1 Not Important
- 2 Fairly Unimportant
- 3 Fairly Important
- 4 Important
- 5 Very Important

**Include educational goals as part of the curriculum**

- 1 Not Important
- 2 Fairly Unimportant
- 3 Fairly Important
- 4 Important
- 5 Very Important

**Include vocational goals as part of the curriculum**

- 1 Not Important
- 2 Fairly Unimportant
- 3 Fairly Important
- 4 Important
- 5 Very Important

**Include social goals as part of the curriculum**

- 1 Not Important
- 2 Fairly Unimportant
- 3 Fairly Important
- 4 Important
- 5 Very Important

Pre-Transition Strategies:

**Assign a case manager to youth during transition**

- 1 Not Important
- 2 Fairly Unimportant
- 3 Fairly Important
- 4 Important
- 5 Very Important

**Hold pre-release planning meetings**

- 1 Not Important
- 2 Fairly Unimportant
- 3 Fairly Important
- 4 Important
- 5 Very Important

Post-Transition Strategies:

**Implement follow-up and periodic communication with youth during transition**

- 1 Not Important
- 2 Fairly Unimportant
- 3 Fairly Important
- 4 Important
- 5 Very Important

**Implement follow-up and periodic communication with base school personnel during transition**

- 1 Not Important
- 2 Fairly Unimportant
- 3 Fairly Important
- 4 Important
- 5 Very Important

**Share and transfer educational records to the base school before the youth returns**

- 1 Not Important
- 2 Fairly Unimportant
- 3 Fairly Important
- 4 Important
- 5 Very Important

V. Extent of Practice Implementation: To what extent does your program implement the following? Please rate on a scale from 1 to 5 (with 5 being Always) indicating the extent of program implementations. Please click/check one response per row.

**Conduct assessments and educational evaluations**

- 1 Not at all
- 2 Seldom
- 3 Sometimes
- 4 Often
- 5 Always

**Provide a curriculum of basic academic skills**

- 1 Not at all
- 2 Seldom
- 3 Sometimes
- 4 Often
- 5 Always

**Provide career and job exploration**

- 1 Not at all
- 2 Seldom
- 3 Sometimes
- 4 Often
- 5 Always

**Initiate community support**

- 1 Not at all
- 2 Seldom
- 3 Sometimes
- 4 Often
- 5 Always

**Initiate family involvement**

- 1 Not at all
- 2 Seldom
- 3 Sometimes
- 4 Often
- 5 Always

**Develop a formal transition plan**

- 1 Not at all
- 2 Seldom
- 3 Sometimes
- 4 Often
- 5 Always

**Encourage interagency collaboration**

- 1 Not at all
- 2 Seldom
- 3 Sometimes
- 4 Often
- 5 Always

**Assist in job placement**

- 1 Not at all
- 2 Seldom
- 3 Sometimes
- 4 Often
- 5 Always

**Teach social/living skills**

- 1 Not at all
- 2 Seldom
- 3 Sometimes
- 4 Often
- 5 Always

**Teach vocational/job skills**

- 1 Not at all
- 2 Seldom
- 3 Sometimes
- 4 Often
- 5 Always

**Provide support/ancillary services**

- 1 Not at all
- 2 Seldom
- 3 Sometimes
- 4 Often
- 5 Always

VI. Exit, Return and Follow-Up: Please respond to the following for 2002-2005 as they apply to your facility.

**What percentage of your students went on to graduate from high school?**

- 1 = None
- 2 = 1-20%
- 3 = 21-40%
- 4 = 41-60%
- 5 = 61-80%
- 6 = 81-100%

**What percentage of your students received a GED?**

- 1 = None
- 2 = 1-20%
- 3 = 21-40%
- 4 = 41-60%
- 5 = 61-80%
- 6 = 81-100%

**What percentage would you say returned to your detention center?**

- 1 = None
- 2 = 1-20%
- 3 = 21-40%
- 4 = 41-60%
- 5 = 61-80%
- 6 = 81-100%

**What percentage would you say returned to another detention center?**

- 1 = None
- 2 = 1-20%
- 3 = 21-40%
- 4 = 41-60%
- 5 = 61-80%
- 6 = 81-100%

**Is there a formal method of following-up transitioned students?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

**If yes, please describe your method.**

**Are records maintained on how many students successfully return to the base school?**

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

**Position of person completing survey**

- 1 Program Administrator
- 2 Superintendent
- 3 Principal
- 4 Other

Location of Center/State: Please click/mark the appropriate state.

- 1 Alabama
- 2 Florida
- 3 Georgia
- 4 Kentucky
- 5 Louisiana
- 6 Mississippi
- 7 North Carolina
- 8 South Carolina
- 9 Tennessee
- 10 Texas

**I HAVE PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION AND WOULD LIKE A COPY OF THIS STUDY UPON COMPLETION.**

**If you have additional thoughts relevant to successful transition please write in the space provided.**

I SINCERELY THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION AND TIME IN COMPLETING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

ALL INFORMATION PROVIDED IN THIS SURVEY WILL BE KEPT STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL.

APPENDIX C  
CORRESPONDENCE TO DETENTION CENTER ADMINISTRATORS  
SURVEY PRE-NOTICE  
COVER LETTER TO SUPERINTENDENTS AND PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS  
FOLLOW-UP THANK YOU REMINDER

(Postcard sent prior to e-mailing survey)

(Personalize in manuscript)

My name is Cheryl G. Watkins and I am a doctoral candidate at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. The focus of my dissertation research is on transition, specifically on moving youth from detention education programs back to the standard school education program. In one week you will receive a survey on this topic by e-mail. I would greatly appreciate your expertise and sharing.

Thank you for your willingness to take the time to complete this survey.

Note: This postcard will read similarly for those receiving the survey by regular mail with exception of the following sentence.

In one week you will receive a survey on this topic by mail.

Cheryl G. Watkins  
301 Lake Caroline Drive  
Ruther Glen, VA 22546  
[chwatkin@vt.edu](mailto:chwatkin@vt.edu)  
(804)448-3940-H or (540)658-1481-W

Dear Superintendents and Program Administrators:

I am writing to ask your help in a study of the transition of youth moving from a detention center education program to the mainstream educational setting. This study is part of an effort in determining what factors facilitate successful transition from a detention facility.

I have reviewed a vast amount of literature and while I value what the researchers have found, I feel that you may have a greater depth of knowledge of the transition process as it exists in your geographical area.

It is my hope that the study I have undertaken will be useful in guiding facility administrators, detention principals, and program administrators in the development of programs focusing on transitioning students from short term detention facilities to standard school educational programs as well as to the community.

Your responses will be anonymous and will not be attributed to you or to your school. This survey is voluntary and will take approximately 25 minutes to complete. You can help me by responding to the survey and sharing your expertise. Please submit responses by September 15, 2006.

If you have questions or comments about this study, I would be happy to talk to you. Please refer to the address and telephone numbers on the letterhead.

Thank you for your willingness to take the time to complete this survey. Please click on the link below to begin the survey.

Sincerely,

Cheryl G. Watkins, Doctoral Candidate

<https://survey.vt.edu/survey/entry.jsp?id=1151961448229>

Cheryl G. Watkins  
301 Lake Caroline Drive  
Ruther Glen, VA 22546  
[chwatkin@vt.edu](mailto:chwatkin@vt.edu)  
(804)448-3940-H or (540)658-1481-W

(Personalize in manuscript)

About one week ago I sent a questionnaire to you that asked about your knowledge of transition specifically on youth who have been detained in detention facilities. To the best of my knowledge it has not yet been returned.

Others have already responded and their comments will contribute to the body of knowledge in successfully transitioning youth from a detention facility to the standard school educational program as well as to the community.

I am writing again because of the importance that your questionnaire has for helping to obtain accurate information and accurate results. Although questionnaires were sent to approximately 145 superintendents and program administrators of detention center facilities, it is only by hearing from all that I can be sure that the results are meaningful and will prove useful in the development of programs focusing on transitioning students from short term detention facilities to standard school educational programs and communities.

Enclosed is a replacement questionnaire. I ask that you please fill it out and return the questionnaire by September 22, 2006. Your responses will be anonymous and will not be attributed to you or your school.

If you have questions or comments about this study, I would be happy to talk to you. Please refer to the address and telephone numbers on the letterhead.

Again, thank you for your willingness to take the time to complete this survey. Please click on the link below to begin the survey.

Sincerely,

Cheryl G. Watkins, Doctoral Candidate

<https://survey.vt.edu/survey/entry.jsp?id=1151961448229>

APPENDIX D  
CORRESPONDENCE TO PILOT STUDY PARTICIPANTS  
PILOT STUDY THANK-YOU LETTER  
PILOT STUDY SUMMARY OF RESPONSES  
PILOT STUDY SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

May 25, 2006

Thank you for agreeing to pilot this survey.

In review of the attached document please provide feedback in the following areas:

- Clarity of direction
- Ease of response
- Alignment of transition components included in the survey
- Time required completing survey
- Presentation & Format of survey

Please rate the areas on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 5 being Excellent). Indicate by placing a check mark under the appropriate number.

Constructs	1	2	3	4	5
Clarity of directions					
Ease of response					
Alignment of transition components included in the survey					
Time required to complete survey					
Presentation & Format of survey					

Please add any information in which you feel I should consider adding, deleting, or changing.

Thank you for taking a part in this pilot.

*Pilot Study Summary of Response*

Constructs	Panelist A	Panelist B	Panelist C	Panelist D	Panelist E
Clarity of directions	5	4	5	5	5
Ease of response	5	5	4	4	5
Alignment of transition components included in the survey	5	5	4	4	4
Time required to complete survey	5	5	4	4	5
Presentation & Format of survey	5	5	5	5	5

*Summary of Feedback*

<b>Panelist A</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I found the constructs to be excellent and very acceptable.</li> <li>• I found the directions to be straightforward and easy to understand.</li> <li>• I also like the simplistic presentation format that was used.</li> <li>• I found nothing that needed to be added, deleted or change.</li> <li>• The survey is clear-cut, uncomplicated and should require a maximum of 20 minutes to complete.</li> </ul>
<b>Panelist B</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good survey, easy to read.</li> <li>• Directions clear.</li> <li>• Difficult to follow lines, put more space between lines.</li> <li>• Took about 20 minutes to complete.</li> <li>• Define transition on the survey itself.</li> </ul>
<b>Panelist C</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Somewhat difficult to visually follow sentence boxes.</li> <li>• Possibly space lines more.</li> <li>• It took approximately 25 minutes to complete the survey.</li> <li>• Presently transition is only available to post disposition youth in my facility.</li> <li>• This survey made me reflect on what is available to youth in my state.</li> </ul>
<b>Panelist D</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Took about 20 minutes to complete.</li> <li>• All transition components you have in the survey are excellent.</li> <li>• They made me reflect on what is presently available at my facility.</li> <li>• Transitional personnel in part III are important to the overall process.</li> <li>• I am sure your study will prove to be helpful in establishing formal transition for youth in short term detention programs.</li> </ul>
<b>Panelist E</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Part I. Demographics and general information very clear and to the point. Change “it” to “your transition program” in line four.</li> <li>• Part II. Components of Transition allowed me to focus on what I believe should be included in a formal transition plan for youth in detention. Be sure to define transition.</li> <li>• Part III. Transitional staffing this is certainly an area in which we as administrators should focus on in terms of having the proper personnel in place.</li> <li>• Parts IV-VI. Excellent job. There is much to be gained from the overall survey. The survey was clear. It took me about 25 minutes to complete.</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX E CORRELATION RESULTS CHART

Correlation Analysis		Program Goals	Transition Focus	Pre Post Planning	Collaboration	Transitional Staffing	Joint Staffing	Agency Input	Instructional Programming	Pre Transition Strategies	Post Transition Strategies	Extent Practice Implementation	SMEAN (GRAD)	SMEAN (GED)	SMEAN (REDETEN)	SMEAN (ANDETEN)	Grad GED	Total Deten	SMEAN (GIFTED)	SMEAN (SPED)	SMEAN (REG)
Program Goals	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 0 51	.628(**) 0 51	.699(**) 0 51	.491(**) 0 51	.533(**) 0 51	0.237 0.094 51	.294(*) 0.036 51	-.437(**) 0.001 51	-0.033 0.818 51	0.044 0.76 51	.661(**) 0 51	0.249 0.078 51	-.370(**) 0.008 51	-.086 0.549 51	0.082 0.567 51	.364(**) 0.009 51	-0.008 0.956 51	.401(**) 0.004 51	.423(**) 0.002 51	.500(**) 0 51
Transition Focus	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.628(**) 0 51	1 0 51	.686(**) 0 51	.715(**) 0 51	.554(**) 0 51	.397(**) 0.004 51	0.217 0.126 51	.429(**) 0.002 51	0.119 0.404 51	0.225 0.112 51	-.512(**) 0 51	0.106 0.459 51	.362(**) 0.009 51	0.077 0.589 51	0.141 0.323 51	0.269 0.056 51	0.134 0.348 51	.419(**) 0.002 51	.485(**) 0 51	.430(**) 0.002 51
Pre Post Planning	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.699(**) 0 51	.686(**) 0 51	1 0 51	.595(**) 0 51	.489(**) 0 51	.461(**) 0.001 51	.452(**) 0.001 51	.389(**) 0.089 51	0.089 0.536 51	0.267 0.058 51	.499(**) 0 51	0.148 0.302 51	.402(**) 0.003 51	0.164 0.251 51	0.124 0.385 51	.318(*) 0.023 51	0.181 0.204 51	0.219 0.123 51	0.263 0.062 51	0.267 0.058 51
Collaboration	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.491(**) 0 51	.715(**) 0 51	.595(**) 0 51	1 0 51	.654(**) 0 51	.388(**) 0.005 51	0.241 0.089 51	.368(**) 0.008 51	0.057 0.693 51	0.239 0.091 51	.550(**) 0 51	.298(*) 0.034 51	.390(**) 0.005 51	0.048 0.737 51	0.245 0.083 51	.406(**) 0.003 51	0.176 0.216 51	.365(**) 0.008 51	.427(**) 0.002 51	.463(**) 0.001 51
Transitional Staffing	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.533(**) 0 51	.554(**) 0 51	.489(**) 0 51	.654(**) 0 51	1 0 51	.302(*) 0.031 51	0.211 0.138 51	0.241 0.088 51	0.111 0.44 51	.276(*) 0.05 51	.728(**) 0 51	.436(**) 0.001 51	.637(**) 0 51	-0.164 0.25 51	0.16 0.261 51	.632(**) 0 51	-0.013 0.926 51	.429(**) 0.002 51	.535(**) 0 51	.617(**) 0 51
Joint Staffing	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	0.237 0.094 51	.397(**) 0.004 51	.461(**) 0.001 51	.388(**) 0.005 51	.302(*) 0.031 51	1 0 51	.816(**) 0 51	.770(**) 0 51	.641(**) 0 51	.813(**) 0 51	.290(*) 0.039 51	0.189 0.185 51	0.267 0.059 51	.367(**) 0.008 51	.357(*) 0.01 51	0.268 0.057 51	.452(**) 0.001 51	0.127 0.376 51	0.157 0.271 51	0.198 0.164 51
Agency Input	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.294(*) 0.036 51	0.217 0.126 51	.452(**) 0.001 51	0.241 0.089 51	0.211 0.138 51	.816(**) 0 51	1 0 51	.710(**) 0 51	.580(**) 0 51	.742(**) 0 51	0.272 0.053 51	0.192 0.176 51	0.21 0.139 51	0.259 0.066 51	.298(*) 0.034 51	0.239 0.091 51	.346(*) 0.013 51	0.026 0.855 51	0.037 0.795 51	0.101 0.483 51
Instructional Programming	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.437(**) 0.001 51	.429(**) 0 51	.389(**) 0.005 51	.368(**) 0.008 51	0.241 0.088 51	.770(**) 0 51	.710(**) 0 51	1 0 51	.555(**) 0 51	.642(**) 0 51	.429(*) 0.002 51	0.254 0.072 51	.290(*) 0.039 51	.362(**) 0.009 51	.380(**) 0.006 51	.323(*) 0.021 51	.461(**) 0.001 51	0.188 0.186 51	0.185 0.195 51	0.235 0.096 51
Pre Transition Strategies	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-0.033 0.818 51	0.119 0.404 51	0.089 0.536 51	0.057 0.693 51	0.111 0.44 51	.641(**) 0 51	.580(**) 0 51	.555(**) 0 51	1 0 51	.786(**) 0 51	0.099 0.492 51	-0.076 0.595 51	0.173 0.226 51	0.25 0.076 51	.311(*) 0.026 51	0.048 0.738 51	.348(*) 0.012 51	-0.076 0.598 51	0.011 0.936 51	-0.05 0.725 51
Post Transition Strategies	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	0.044 0.76 51	0.225 0.112 51	0.267 0.058 51	0.239 0.091 51	.276(*) 0.05 51	.813(**) 0 51	.742(**) 0 51	.642(**) 0 51	.786(**) 0 51	1 0 51	0.215 0.129 51	0.079 0.583 51	0.257 0.069 51	.337(*) 0.016 51	.345(*) 0.013 51	0.193 0.175 51	.425(**) 0.002 51	0.007 0.961 51	0.049 0.735 51	0.085 0.554 51
Extent Practice Implementation	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.661(**) 0 51	.512(**) 0 51	.499(**) 0 51	.550(**) 0 51	.728(**) 0 51	.290(*) 0.039 51	0.272 0.053 51	.429(**) 0.002 51	0.099 0.492 51	0.215 0.129 51	1 0 51	.489(**) 0 51	.619(**) 0 51	0.06 0.678 51	.358(**) 0.01 51	.655(**) 0 51	0.25 0.076 51	.407(**) 0.003 51	.508(**) 0 51	.605(**) 0 51
SMEAN (GRAD)	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	0.249 0.078 51	0.106 0.459 51	0.148 0.302 51	.298(*) 0.034 51	.436(**) 0.001 51	0.189 0.185 51	0.192 0.176 51	0.254 0.072 51	-0.076 0.595 51	0.079 0.583 51	.489(**) 0 51	1 0.003 51	.409(**) 0.003 51	-0.047 0.741 51	0.173 0.226 51	.861(**) 0 51	0.071 0.622 51	.416(**) 0.002 51	.379(**) 0.006 51	.520(**) 0 51
SMEAN (GED)	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.370(**) 0.008 51	.362(**) 0.009 51	.402(**) 0.003 51	.390(**) 0.005 51	.637(**) 0 51	0.267 0.059 51	0.21 0.139 51	.290(*) 0.039 51	0.173 0.226 51	0.257 0.069 51	.619(**) 0 51	.409(**) 0 51	1 0.225 51	0.173 0.003 51	.404(**) 0.003 51	.816(**) 0 51	.352(*) 0.011 51	.403(**) 0.003 51	.449(**) 0.001 51	.514(**) 0 51
SMEAN (REDETEN)	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-.086 0.549 51	0.077 0.589 51	0.164 0.251 51	0.048 0.737 51	-0.164 0.25 51	.367(**) 0.008 51	0.259 0.066 51	.362(**) 0.009 51	0.25 0.076 51	.337(*) 0.016 51	0.06 0.678 51	-0.047 0.741 51	1 0.225 51	.286(*) 0.042 51	0.066 0.643 51	.825(**) 0 51	-0.068 0.634 51	-0.091 0.524 51	-0.139 0.329 51	
SMEAN (ANDETEN)	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	0.082 0.567 51	0.141 0.323 51	0.124 0.385 51	0.245 0.083 51	0.16 0.261 51	.357(*) 0.01 51	.298(*) 0.034 51	.380(**) 0.006 51	.311(*) 0.026 51	.345(*) 0.013 51	.358(**) 0.01 51	0.173 0.226 51	.404(**) 0.003 51	.286(*) 0.042 51	1 0.016 51	.334(*) 0 51	.777(**) 0 51	0.066 0.644 51	0.034 0.811 51	0.192 0.177 51
Grad GED	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.364(**) 0.009 51	0.269 0.056 51	.318(*) 0.023 51	.406(**) 0.003 51	.632(**) 0 51	0.268 0.057 51	0.239 0.091 51	.323(*) 0.021 51	0.048 0.738 51	0.193 0.175 51	.655(**) 0 51	.861(**) 0 51	.816(**) 0.643 51	0.066 0.016 51	.334(*) 0 51	1 0.089 51	0.241 0 51	.488(**) 0 51	.491(**) 0 51	.615(**) 0 51
Total Deten	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-0.008 0.956 51	0.134 0.348 51	0.181 0.204 51	0.176 0.216 51	-0.013 0.926 51	.452(**) 0.001 51	.346(*) 0.013 51	.461(**) 0.001 51	.348(*) 0.012 51	.425(**) 0.002 51	0.25 0.076 51	.352(*) 0.011 51	.825(**) 0 51	.777(**) 0 51	0.241 0.089 51	1 0 51	-0.006 0.968 51	-0.04 0.782 51	0.022 0.879 51	
SMEAN (GIFTED)	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.401(**) 0.004 51	.419(**) 0.002 51	0.219 0.123 51	.365(**) 0.008 51	.429(**) 0.002 51	0.127 0.376 51	0.026 0.855 51	0.188 0.186 51	-0.076 0.598 51	0.007 0.961 51	.407(**) 0.003 51	.416(**) 0.002 51	.403(*) 0.003 51	-0.068 0.634 51	0.066 0.644 51	.488(**) 0 51	-0.006 0.968 51	1 0 51	.826(**) 0 51	.874(**) 0 51
SMEAN (SPED)	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.423(**) 0.002 51	.485(**) 0 51	0.263 0.062 51	.427(**) 0.002 51	.535(**) 0 51	0.157 0.271 51	0.037 0.795 51	0.185 0.195 51	0.011 0.936 51	0.049 0.735 51	.508(**) 0 51	.379(**) 0.006 51	.449(**) 0.001 51	-0.091 0.524 51	0.034 0.811 51	.491(**) 0 51	-0.04 0.782 51	.826(**) 0 51	1 0 51	.831(**) 0 51
SMEAN (REG)	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.500(**) 0 51	.430(**) 0.002 51	0.267 0.058 51	.463(**) 0.001 51	.617(**) 0 51	0.198 0.164 51	0.101 0.483 51	0.235 0.096 51	-0.05 0.725 51	0.085 0.554 51	.605(**) 0 51	.520(**) 0 51	.514(*) 0 51	-0.139 0.329 51	0.192 0.177 51	.615(**) 0 51	0.022 0.879 51	.874(**) 0 51	.831(**) 0 51	1 0 51

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).  
\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

APPENDIX F

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES AND DEPENDENT VARIABLES

*Independent Variables and Dependent Variables*

Independent Variables	Dependent Variables
<p>Formal or Informal Transition Program</p> <p><b>Program Goals</b></p> <p>Educational Goals</p> <p>Social Goals</p> <p>Vocational Goals</p> <p><b>Transition Focus</b></p> <p>First day Intake</p> <p>Informal Plan</p> <p>Formal Plan</p> <p>Youth Involved</p> <p>Plans Shared</p> <p>Plans Formed Base School</p> <p>Plans Include Parent Input</p> <p><b>Pre &amp; Post Planning</b></p> <p>Records exchanged detention and local education agency</p> <p>Meeting with base school</p> <p>Pre-release planning</p> <p><b>Collaboration</b></p> <p>Interagency collaboration</p> <p>Educational Agency Collaboration</p> <p>Social Service Agency Collaboration</p> <p><b>Transitional Staffing</b></p> <p>Counselor</p> <p>Case manager</p> <p>Mentor</p> <p>Detention Transitional Coordinator</p> <p><b>Joint Planning</b></p> <p>Input from Youth</p> <p>Input from Parent</p> <p>Input from Counselor</p> <p>Engage Staff</p> <p><b>Agency Input</b></p> <p>Collaborate receiving educational agency</p> <p>Collaborate with social services</p> <p>Collaborate with court services</p> <p>Meet with appropriate representative</p>	<p>Percentage graduate from High School</p> <p>Percentage receiving a GED</p> <p>Percentage return to your detention center</p> <p>Percentage return to another detention center</p>

<p><b>Instructional Programming</b>  Align curriculum  Implement Daily living skills  Implement vocational skills  Begin transitional upon entry  Include educational goals  Include vocational goals  Include social goals</p> <p><b>Pre-Transition Strategies</b>  Assign a case manager  Hold pre-release meeting</p> <p><b>Post-Transition Strategies</b>  Implement follow-up with youth  Implement follow-up with base school  Share and transfer educational records</p> <p><b>Extent of Practice Implementation</b>  Conduct assessments and educational evaluations  Provide curriculum of basic academic skills  Provide career and job exploration  Initiate community support  Initiate family involvement  Develop formal transition plan  Encourage interagency collaboration  Assist in job placement  Teach social/living skills  Teach vocational/job skills  Provide support/ancillary services</p>	
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APPENDIX G  
SURVEY MATRIX

*Survey Matrix*

The purpose of the survey matrix is to indicate where in the survey answers to the research questions are being sought.

A. What informal or formalized transition programs exist for students who are assigned to short term detention within the detention education programs in the Southeastern region of the United States?
Do you currently have a formal or informal transition program for students who are assigned to short term detention? If so, please attach a copy describing your transition program.
Do you characterize it as formal or informal?
What percentage of Special Education students receive transition services?
What percentage of Gifted students receive transition services?
What percentage of Regular students receive transition services?
B. What practices have practitioners used to assist youth at the detention level to promote successful transition to the educational mainstream?
Conduct assessments and educational evaluations
Provide a curriculum of basic academic skills
Provide career and job exploration
Initiate community support
Develop a formal transition plan
Encourage interagency collaboration
Provide a curriculum of basis academic skills
Assist in job placement
Teach social/living skills
Teach vocational/job skills
Provide support/ancillary services
C. How important are transitional personnel in assisting youth in a successful transition from a detention education program to the mainstream educational program?
Counselor
Case Manager
Mentor
Base School Transitional Coordinator
Detention Transitional coordinator

D. What are contributing factors to the successful transition of youth in moving from the detention education program to the mainstream educational program?

**Joint Planning**

Develop a transition plan with input from youth  
Develop a transition plan with input from parent  
Develop a transition plan with input from counselor  
Engage staff who will deliver services in joint planning early in the process

**Agency Input**

Collaborate with the receiving educational agency  
Collaborate with social services agency  
Collaborate with court services  
Meet with the appropriate representative of the receiving schools

**Instructional Programming**

Align curriculum and educational programming between detention and base school  
Implement daily living skills as part of the curriculum  
Implement vocational goals as part of the curriculum  
Begin transitional programming upon entry into the facility  
Include educational goals as part of the curriculum  
Include vocational goals as part of the curriculum  
Include social goals as part of the curriculum

**Pre-Transition Strategies**

Assign a case manager to youth during transition  
Hold pre-release planning meetings

**Post-Transition Strategies**

Implement follow-up and periodic communication with youth during transition  
Implement follow-up and periodic communication with base school personnel during transition  
Share and transfer educational records to the base school before youth returns

E. What program components are most effective in moving youth from the detention education program to the mainstream educational program?

**Program Goals**

Program goals include educational goals  
Program goals include social goals  
Program goals include vocational goals

**Transition Focus**

Transition begins the first day of intake  
Informal transition plans are written for each youth while in detention  
Formal transition plans are written for each youth while in detention  
Youth are involved in the process of developing the transition plan to ensure acceptance  
Transition plans are shared with the local educational agency

Transition plans are formed between the base school, detention, and the youth  
Transition plans include parent input

**Pre & Post Planning**

Records are exchanged between detention and the local education agency  
Meeting with base school occurs  
Pre-release planning meetings are held with the appropriate representative of the receiving schools

**Collaboration**

Interagency collaboration is stressed throughout the transition process  
Collaboration is usually initiated by the educational agency  
Collaboration is usually initiated by social service

F. Do detention center education programs with informal or formal transition program components in place make a difference in recidivism rates in the Southeastern region of the United States?

Do you currently have a formal or informal transition program for students who are assigned to short term detention?

- 1. yes
- 2. no

Do you characterize it as formal or informal?

- 1. formal
- 2. informal

What percentage of your students went on to graduate from high school?

What percentage of your students received a GED?

What percentage would you say returned to your detention center?

What percentage would you say returned to another detention center?

Is there a formal method of following-up transitioned students?

- 1. yes
- 2. no

If yes, describe your method.

Are records maintained on how many students successfully return to the regular school?