

Education Summary Report

This report summarizes the key results for the education priority (Goal 4) of Nebraska’s Olmstead Plan. Findings are based on data collected and compiled as part of the full evaluation. Those are summarized in Appendix A of the evaluation report.

Goal

- 4 Nebraskans with disabilities will have increased access to education and choice in competitive, integrated employment opportunities.

46% of other states’ Olmstead Plans that were reviewed included education.

“Families need support. The education doesn’t just exist with the individual with the disability. The education has to happen with all of the caregivers and all of the [people close] to those who need those types of support.”

Vision for the Goal

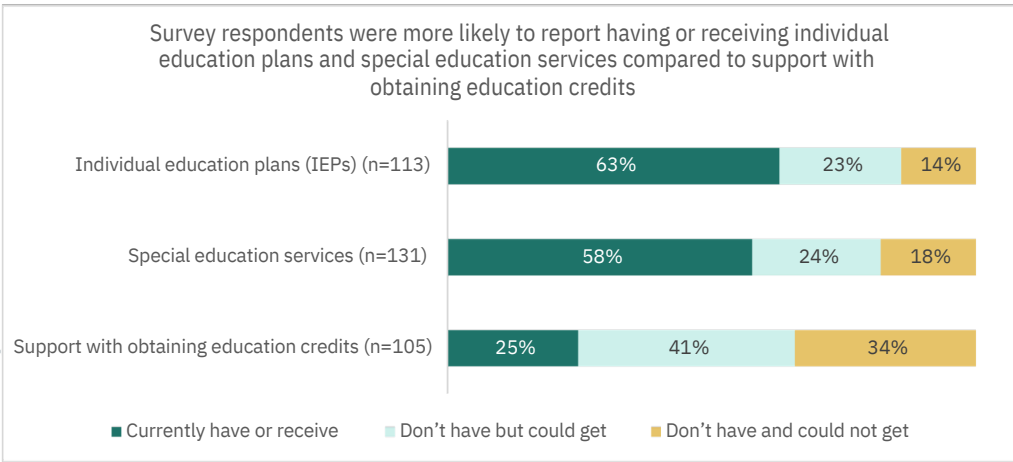
Focus group and interview participants who discussed community supports would like to see:

- Shared data across partners to better understand what supports and services look like for consumers being served.
- Additional supports for consumers and their caregivers, including providing information to families and individuals, prior to their 18th birthday. It may also be important to increase support for younger age children so they can become independent and advocates in their own lives.
- Better integration into the community with a focus on pre-employment and ensuring people are fully integrated into their employment roles. Key partners reported it was essential to ensure that employment is considered while youth were still in school.

Public Experiences

From the survey of individuals with disabilities and their caregivers:

- There was a smaller number of people who felt the questions about education on the survey for individuals with disabilities applied to them. Specifically, many participants reported “not applicable” to the questions about support with obtaining educational credits and Individual Education Plans (these were omitted from the analysis below).
- People were slightly more likely to report having an Individual Education Plan than special education services.
- About one-third reported they don’t have and could not get access to support with obtaining education credits.



Support with obtaining education credits was not defined on the survey

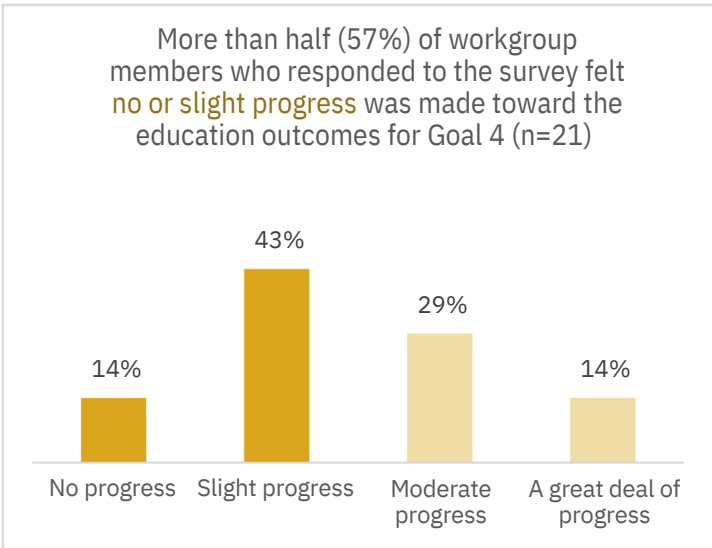
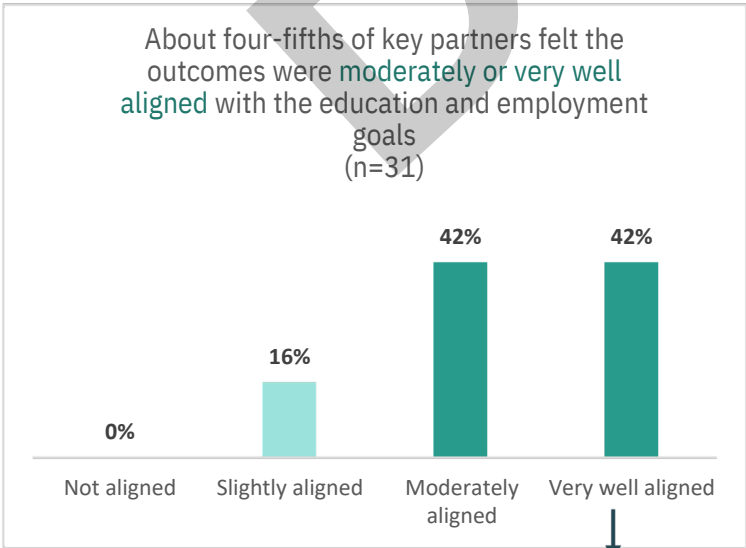
Progress Toward & Perception of Outcomes

Symbol	Description
✓	Benchmark met
➡	Benchmark in progress
▲	Progress is delayed or pending
■	Benchmark not met
No Report	Data was not available

Progress toward the education and employment benchmarks for FY23 (July 2022 – June 2023) are mostly unknown due to limited reporting.

Benchmarks for Goal 4

	FY23 Status	FY24 Status
1 The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) will support the development of improved processes to offer education, advocacy, and support to all parents of children eligible for special education services.	No Report	No Report
2 Increase the percentage of children ages 3-5 and 5-21 with Individual Education Plans (IEP)s who receive their special education and related services inside the regular class 80% of the day.	No Report	No Report
3 Increase the number of clients served by the Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visual Impaired (NCBVI).	✓	✓
4 Increase the number of credentials received by clients who are assisted by the Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visual Impaired (NCBVI).	✓	▲
5 Increase the 4-year and 5-year graduation/completion rate for students identified as Special Education statewide.	No Report	No Report
6 Increase the number of individuals supported by the Nebraska Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (NCBVI) or Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services who exit with and maintain competitive employment.	■	■
7 Increase the number of students who participate in Project SEARCH and are employed.	■	No Report (data not available)



This is the goal area that had the highest percentage of people reporting “very well aligned”.

“As part of the education program we talk about what's going on in the different agencies ... so that we can make those connections with the individuals that we work with to make sure that they're able to take advantage of the different resources that are out there.”



Noted Successes

Partners reported specific wins that occurred within these Olmstead Plan goal areas.

- Strong collaboration between the different entities within education. Nebraska VR has an interagency agreement with NDE to ensure the same messaging is being sent to schools throughout the state. This ensures that persons with disabilities are getting outreach and being provided information about resources.
- The NCDHH has provided educational advocacy and has been involved in Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), 504 plans, and Individualized Family Service Plans (IFSPs). They also have a staff member who works with young people and their families one-on-one to address their needs.

Facilitators & Barriers

Factors that aid the workgroup and partners with making progress on the data goal as well as the challenges to progress were identified through focus groups, surveys, and interviews.

Facilitators to Progress

✓ *None noted during data collection*

Barriers to Progress

- There are limited opportunities for continuing education. One individual noted that “I wish there were more options for continuing their education at colleges, institutes, universities where they can experience and keep learning.”
- Limited funding opportunities to address new goals and to fill gaps in services – particularly for those who are 18 to 21 years of age.
- Workforce shortages among special educators and DD providers. “We have a lot of kids right now just slipping through the cracks because we don't have enough educators to provide for them.”
- Misconceptions are still prevalent about people with disabilities and their ability to work and partner organizations are not leading by example. Several of the entities that are working on the Olmstead Plan are not hiring people with disabilities to work for them.

Recommendations

- 1 **Clarify each of the outcomes to be distinctly linked to the “increased access to education” portion of the goal statement or the “choice of competitive, integrated employment opportunities” portion.** This would minimize confusion about how each of the outcomes are connected to the larger goal.
--- Another option would be to **make education and employment separate goals in the Olmstead Plan.** While many other states address these topic areas, they are more often treated as separate priorities or goals. Separating the goals may also help align with the new workgroup structure.
- 2 **Consider adding an objective related to collaboration.** Although there were many successes related to collaboration, a handful of respondents noted additional collaborations would create a more unified approach to the work.