

Parent Awareness of Transition Services for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

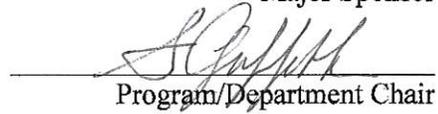
By

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Abstract

The following study was conducted to determine parents' knowledge of transition services available to their children served under the category of Autism Spectrum Disorder. The study showed that the majority of parents from the indicated school were unaware of transition services and that resources were available for their children. The majority of parents were unable to provide a definition of transition service or provide an example within their local area.

PARENT AWARENESS OF TRANSITION SERVICES FOR STUDENTS WITH  
 AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

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## Chapter 1

### *Introduction*

The concept of transition as it relates to autism can be seen across educational and social settings. These transitions can consist of moving from school to school, or to different steps towards a student's future in schooling, career, or a different living situation. A key part of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process for students with disabilities once they get to the age of 15 in the majority of states, and 14 in some of the states, is transition and developing a plan for what they want to do with their lives. This applies to all students regardless of disability and is a federal requirement of the IEP, but how this is carried out varies depending on the individual and his or her disability. The transition process has become increasingly important in recent years in order to better prepare the students for what is going to come after they discontinue their special education services. Transition includes a variety of things such as post-secondary education, which consists of the student doing some form of college or trade school. Transition can also consist of workforce preparation, and interim programs including job coaches, or alternative placements, where students are working at given jobs in the community.

The increase in focus on transition addresses the inherent societal problems of people with disabilities under-represented in the workforce. As of 2014, in the United States, 17 percent of people with a disability are employed (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2015). This percentage means that out of all the people with a disability that the census data accounts for only that small percentage are considered employed. This leaves the remaining 83 percent that are either unemployed or underemployed in the U.S.

Unemployed refers to people who are capable of working but are not employed, and underemployed refers to people who are working at jobs for which they are overqualified. This is a problem in society for people with disabilities across the country. In a study done for students with autism specifically, less than 20 percent of individuals with autism go on to some form of competitive employment or college, after they are done with high school (Taylor & Seltzer, 2011). A large percentage of students with autism are then left to be unemployed and not involved in the communities that they live in after high school.

Students with autism often have problems with the concept of transition and making their own transitions. These students often need both academic support in their schooling, and social support across other areas of life, such as school, work, public situations, or home life. High school students specifically who have autism can struggle with transitions, because changing classes is a drastic change from one setting to the next. These students might not have been taught all of the skills necessary to succeed across settings, and this can cause them to not succeed. This transition support includes both the academic and the social aspects, depending on the individual. Most transitions only focus on the academic portion.

Students with autism are also in need of a more complete transition service when making the adjustment from high school to their next step in life. The services offered to students are typically focused on the academic portion of moving on to the next educational/vocational experience. Students with autism do not always have significant academic concerns and are frequently in need of more behavioral and social support. Students with autism are on a wide spectrum and need a varying amount of support in academic and social settings. Some of these students are accomplishing their academic

goals in high school with the support structure that they have, and are not an academic concern. Since the students are often capable of doing the academic work, services once they move past the public school setting are over looked often. These students are still in need of behavioral and social support in their next setting. They had a system of support in place previously, and are now supposed to accomplish transitioning with minimum to no structural support.

#### *Statement of the Problem*

After students graduate from their special education services and fulfill their IEP goals there is a lack of effective transition services which effects the student's future in a negative way. Students with autism do not carry over the same support structure to which they are accustomed. The problems that arise in the transition from high school to higher education or work are that some schools are not providing enough options, strategies, and skills for their students with autism to utilize when leaving high school. Another problem is that students on the varying levels of the autism spectrum do not have support systems once they leave the high school environment, causing them to struggle to succeed after they leave this structure. Students with more severe forms of autism, or who require academic support, have more options available to them than those that need mainly social support (Dipeolu, Storile, & Johnson, 2014).

Students and parents are unaware of what services are available for the students after they are no longer receiving special education services (Carter, Harvey, Taylor, & Gotham, 2013). This contributes to the problems mentioned above and combined, puts students in situations they have never experienced and without support. A major challenge of autism is the social side of the disability, where students show difficulties in

new settings without some form of guidance or support already put in place (Chiang et al., 2012). This is the type of service students have had throughout their schooling, but are discontinued after graduation, causing the students to struggle in their next educational/vocational experience.

### *Background and Need*

Transition services is a mandatory part of the IEP process, and is becoming more important as a part of a student's plan. The whole process is still developing in both schools and communities. Students need not only a wider variety of services provided to them and options to choose from; they also need to be taught the acceptable social skills needed to be prepared for their future. Where on the autism spectrum the student falls can alter what services that individual might need. Students lower on the spectrum could be more likely to need both academic as well as social support and skills training. Students higher on the spectrum could just need the social piece, which is not something commonly offered now by schools and communities. These skills and services are sometimes available in a person's community or through the school or placement that they plan to attend, but the parents and students are not aware of them. Another option is that the placement that the student chooses does not yet have services for students with autism to support smooth social transitions. This is not because the facility is trying to neglect the students with disabilities, but rather because there is not sufficient evidence yet as to what strategies and skills can assist students with autism in transition.

### *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of this study is to identify what parents of students with autism know about available transition services in their region. More research is needed to figure out

exactly what strategies, skills and services are available for students with autism, and which of those are most effective. The literature review will include various research results that have been accomplished about autism as it is related to transition from the high school atmosphere. Surveys will be given to parents of children with autism from a high school in a low economic area in the northern region of Minnesota. This study will contribute to better the education of students with autism, and help them through the transitional phases of that portion of life. The goal of the study is to discern what parents know about resources available for their children with autism after they are done with high school. After the study, if the parents are not aware of what is available, information can be provided for their child to better succeed.

#### *Research Questions*

- 1) How many parents can define transition services or give an example for their teenage child with autism?
- 2) What are parents aware of when it comes to postsecondary options and services for their children with autism?

#### *Hypothesis*

Most parents cannot define, and are not aware of the transition services available for their child with autism when going to the post-secondary environment. This leaves students unprepared for their next steps, causing them to potentially fail with their post-secondary goals. Transition services are more focused on the student succeeding academically than socially.

#### *Assumptions*

The study assumes that parents of children with autism understand the concept of transition. This will be the first question. Another assumption is that the student has a parent or guardian who is able to fill out the survey in order to provide information, and provide truthful information. The author assumes the questions generated for the survey are valid for the purposes of this study. The last assumption is that the parent will return the survey for analysis.

#### *Limitations*

The time that is available to do this study is one of its biggest limitations. The researcher has one given school year to both write, conduct the study, and to analyze the data. This time constraint also limits the number of parents and students that the survey can be given to in order to get everything accomplished with this group of students. The study will be done in a high school in a low economic area of northern Minnesota, which is a college preparation based high school. This means the population of students that attends this school are not typically on the lower end of the autism spectrum. The population of students with autism consists of all higher functioning students, besides one student who is lower on the spectrum with more needs. This affects the diversity of the population that will be studied. The high school is located in northern Minnesota, which has a high percentage of Caucasian population (Minnesota Department of Education, 2015); therefore the level of diversity in the given sample limits generalizability of the results.

#### *De-Limitations*

Things that do not intend to be measured in the study start with the level of socioeconomic status of the families. The school has a high percentage of students on the

free and reduced lunch program and come from lower to middle income households. Other information that will not be gathered is the gender of the given student or parent, as this will not play a key role in the study. The age of the parents and who the parent or guardian is will also not play a factor in the study. This will vary from student to student, but it will not affect the results. Transition will be the primary topic covered but only as it relates to students with autism, not any other disability.

### *Definitions*

- Asperger's Syndrome: a type of pervasive developmental disorder (PDD). PDDs are a group of conditions that involve delays in the development of many basic skills most notably the ability to socialize with others, to communicate, and to use imaginations. Asperger's syndrome is similar in some ways to autism, another more severe type of PDD. Students with Asperger's syndrome generally have more average levels of intelligence and language development but may develop problems communicating when they get older (Webmd.com, 2015).
- Autism: a group of complex disorders of brain development. These disorders are characterized, in varying degrees, by difficulties in social interaction, verbal and nonverbal communication and repetitive behaviors (autismspeaks.com, 2015).
- High-functioning Autism (HFA): one end of the autism spectrum, usually referring to those with above average intelligence. Children usually have language delays early on like children with autism, but are considered to be more similar to children with Asperger's Syndrome (Webmd.com, 2015).
- Transition: typically refers to the three major transitional points in the public education system: when students move from elementary school to middle school,

from middle school to high school, and from high school to post-secondary options (edglossary.org, 2015).

- Transition Service: is designed to be a results-oriented process that is focused on improving the academic and functional achievement of the child with a disability to facilitate the child's movement from school to post-school activities, including post-secondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation (wrightslaw.com, 2015).
- Spectrum: a broad range of varied but related ideas or objects, the individual features of which tend to overlap so as to form a continuous series or sequence (dictionary.com, 2015)

### *Summary of Study*

This study revolves around the concept of transition and students with autism. The review of literature will describe the different options that students with autism have after they are done with high school, in order to better succeed in the next environment. The study will be conducted with the population at a high school in northern Minnesota in an urban area specifically in the special education department, and specifically the students with autism accessible to the researcher. These students' parents will fill out a survey asking a series of questions related to transition and the services that are available to the students.

The study is being conducted because there is a lack of information on effective transition services and skills that can be taught to students with autism, especially higher functioning students as well as parent awareness of these services. It will provide a

review of research that has already been done about this given topic and compile information for a more complete look at what services are available for students. The final chapter will discuss transition in relation to findings from the survey.

## Chapter 2

### *Introduction*

Parents are often unaware of what transition options are available for their soon-to-be high school graduates with autism. This potentially leads to a lack of parent involvement and planning for this transition after the student completes high school. Research has been conducted on students with autism and transition, primarily linked to the following three fields: specific struggles and needs of students with autism when transitioning, ways to support these individuals as a team and the planning process, and the social aspect of the transition.

The following literature review will go over the previously listed areas and how those areas effect the transition process for students with autism. The first area is primarily what needs students with autism have and what aspects of the transition process with which they historically tend to struggle. The second section will include what exactly makes for effective planning and supports for students with autism, which is an individualized process and specific to the student. The last area will incorporate the social supports needed to assist higher functioning students with autism, such as social work needs, skills training, and self-awareness training.

### *Transitional Needs for Students with Autism*

The authors Wilczynski, Trammel, and Clarke (2013) describe the relationship between students with autism and unemployment. The article presents major problems for students with autism, as well as suggestions for advancement in programs for schools. The purpose of their study was to identify the problems that students with autism were

having in obtaining and maintaining employment. The current study was based on students in the United States that have autism spectrum disorder and used labor statistics, as well as other researchers' evidence on unemployment. The primary intervention that was altered in the research was the type of intervention that the students received while they were still in school. The intervention was accomplished by reviewing what other researchers have done in the field of supporting employment for students with autism.

The areas that the study looked at were natural supports for employment, job identification, evaluation of skill sets, job applications, pre-interview preparations and interview strategies, workplace supports, and assistive technology (Wilczynski, Trammell, & Clarke, 2013). The data was analyzed using an effectiveness rating that was completed by the employed individuals and those that were not employed in the studies. The data collected showed that there are a variety of supports that are beneficial for students with autism. The authors report that students benefited from the individualized support and realistic setting of the support they received in the form of interview practice, as well as social support once they were in a work place. These individualized supports are crucial to students on the autism spectrum, because they are unique and a genuine portrayal of the workplace. The limitations to the study (Wilczynski, Trammell, & Clarke, 2013) were that there still needs to be more research and statistics gathered for this topic to get a better picture of what is helping these students on a long term basis.

In a study done by Chiang et. al. (2012), the researchers break down what were predictive factors for students with autism in order to get to the post-secondary environment. The purpose of the study was to determine these factors in order to try and minimize negative factors as much as possible for students. The study included 830

students whose primary disability was autism in the United States. The issue behind the study was that students with autism often do not attend the post-secondary environment after they are done with high school. The study was conducted by doing a survey that was given to the parents of those individuals. This was broken up depending on if the students went to college and then even further depending on what type of college it was either an associates or bachelor's degree program. The variables in the study were if the students attended or not and characteristics of the student, families, and transition planning process that took place in high school.

The data was taken from the surveys given by the parents of the students with autism and separated into different categories depending on the variables of the student. Most questions were done in a yes or no format with only specific responses and no room for added comments. Some things such as student's age, household income, and parental education had various options. The data was then collected and charted based on variable factors into tables. The results of the given study were that 43 percent of the individuals in the study did attend the post-secondary environment and the other 57 percent did not (Chiang, et. al., 2012). The conclusions that can be drawn from the study are that the majority of students with autism did not attend post-secondary education. Also, that students without documentation of effective transition planning in their high school careers were not likely to attend college. The study's primary limitation was that there were not many students attending a four year college in their sample therefore, generalization of the data was limited.

According to Taylor and Seltzer (2011) both employment and post-secondary options and supports for students with autism are beneficial. The purpose of their study

was to take students with autism, break that down into two separate groups: one with intellectual disabilities and one without an intellectual disability. The sample included 66 high school students in the United Kingdom who were about to leave that setting and go on to various post-secondary options. The issue that the study covered was that students with autism have limited options for the post-secondary environment, especially those with an intellectual disability. This was a longitudinal study done with the individuals, where the parents of students with autism and the students themselves were interviewed in order to gather information. The variable that the researchers specifically looked at was did the students in an adult day activity have an intellectual disability? They also examined the level of income of the family, maladaptive behaviors that the students had both in school and at home, and functional independence in both environments (Taylor & Seltzer, 2011). The data was collected and broken down into five groups: 1) activities less than ten hours a week, 2) degree seeking program, 3) competitive employment, 4) supported employment, and 5) adult day services.

After breaking the data up into these categories, the majority of students went into some form of adult day service, such as an assisted work environment, or a job coaching service. The least amount of students were going into some kind of competitive employment and an even number of students were going to college or doing no regular activities (Taylor & Seltzer, 2011). The conclusions that can be drawn from these results are that most students with autism will not likely attend college or get a job in competitive employment, and the number drastically decreases if the student has an intellectual disability. The limitations to the study (Taylor & Seltzer, 2011) were that there was still not a vast amount of long term research done on this given topic, and more

information is needed for clearer statistics on the given information.

In a study done by Adreon and Durocher (2007), they took a look specifically at what the needs were for individuals with autism in transitioning to college. The purpose of the study was to find out what services and planning was necessary for students with high-functioning autism to complete an effective transition into college. The researchers looked at students in the United States and only students with high-functioning autism. The issue brought up in the article was that students with autism experience unique challenges when it comes to transitioning to college (Adreon & Durocher, 2007). The students typically needed a variety of support in the form of organizational, academic, and social aspects of college. The procedure in which this information was gathered was first defining what high-functioning autism was, then gathering other research around the topic that has already been accomplished on transition. The study took that information and developed trends of issues that the students have historically both socially and academically.

The issues that were provided in the study (Adreon & Durocher, 2007) were the primary variables that were researched. Those included such criteria as choosing a college, independent living skills, self-advocacy, social supports, and adjusting to the new environment. The data was analyzed by looking at trends in the high school transition and then determined the difference from that to the college transition. From the data previously listed the researchers found that students often struggle with multiple facets of the transitional phase to college and need a variety of support depending on the individual. The implications that the given article has towards the topic is that students need guidance and support during the transition to college, and that multiple aspects to

that transition is what makes them effective. The limitation to the given study was that the researchers did not have a sample of their own students. Instead the researchers took others research and broke down and itemized it into different categories based on students with high-functioning autism.

*Researched Supports for Students with Autism*

In Richler (2015) the researchers included multiple aspects of the problems that students with autism have transitioning out of high school that are referenced in the article “Autism Grows Up”. This study was qualitative in nature, which took different experiences that students have had and broke them down case by case. There were three specific students upon which small case studies were completed, describing their disability and experiences in schooling and transition. The study also included various quantitative statistics from other research done on this topic. The primary issue that was discussed throughout the article were that all of the students have high-functioning autism and were in need of social support programs to aid them in the transition process. The three individuals were all labeled as Asperger's or Pervasive Developmental Disorder (PDD) while they were going through their schooling. The students were all high in the area of academics, and primarily they just required some form of social support as they were going on to their post-secondary opportunities.

The study discussed in detail different social support groups, such as Aspire, which is on the campus of the University of Missouri (Richler, 2015). The group Aspire gives an outlet for people with autism to socially connect and helps develop skills and strategies to succeed in college, as well as obtain jobs. Students are to use the given types of groups and gain the confidence necessary in order to be successful, and not only get a

job, but maintain that employment for substantial periods of time. The group Aspire is new and does not have enough data to measure the outcomes, but based on surveys from students and families they are highly satisfied with the support (Richler, 2015). The implications of the given study can be beneficial for research on autism and transition. It is one of the first major studies focused on social groups specifically giving support for people on the autism spectrum. If the group is proven to be effective, this form of group could be used across the country to better support the high numbers of students with autism. The limitations to the given study were based on the lack of time to have more concrete data to show increased levels of social, academic achievement, or employment for these given students.

Mitchell and Beresford's (2014) provided a breakdown of both autism and Asperger's syndrome and how to plan the specific move to the college environment. The purpose of the study was to show what supports are needed to have an effective transition from high school to college. The setting of the study is at the University of York, in England, where there was qualitative research completed on eighteen individuals all with either high-functioning autism or Asperger's syndrome (Mitchell & Beresford, 2014). Of the students in the study, thirteen of the eighteen had a statement of special education needs that transferred over from the high school environment that the students came from. The statement contains both the students' social and academic supports that were provided in their prior school as well the student's transition plan that was developed by previous special educators or social workers. Students that did not have a statement of needs did not have a transition plan included in their information.

The interventions that were used consisted of research on the transition plans that

the students transferred with or did not , in order to better understand the local educational system that they were coming from. Next, interviews were conducted by professionals that worked with students with either Asperger's or high-functioning autism, to see how they supported students. The researchers also included a survey that went out to the parents that had students with the given disabilities. The students ranged anywhere from the age of 15 to 24 (Mitchell & Beresford, 2014). The reasoning behind this age group of students was this is when the transition is started to be tracked in the school districts and then goes until the age where the students might be in college, or possibly have finished college. The last part included qualitative based interviews with eighteen individuals with autism to see what exactly helped them as students, or could have been better in their transition process. The procedure for these interviews began by putting the students into two separate groups; students who were transitioning to college, and students that had already made the transition. A different survey was then conducted depending on the student's circumstances.

The variables that were taken into consideration in the study were the gender of the student, their age, the type of school the student previously attended, the type of school they planned on attending, and whether or not the student was eligible for the transition process (Mitchell & Beresford, 2014). The given data obtained in the interviews was analyzed in a theme based process, where answers were grouped by the content of what the student said and sometimes directly quoted from the student. The data when broken down found that the students welcomed the services and support openly, but they were more concerned with the topics of knowledge and forms of help that applied directly to their situation (Mitchell & Beresford, 2014). This was different depending on

the student, and the facility they were attending, and the needs that they had. The implications of the study are that the transition process has services that need to be well developed for students, include multiple aspects of support, and be individualized to the students and where they would like to go to college. The limitations to this study were that a fairly small group of students were interviewed and in a different country that does not have the same laws that directly apply to the United States.

Lee and Carter (2012) looked specifically at students with autism and their transition from high school to the work force. The purpose of their study was to break down what makes for an effective transition to a meaningful job for the students, where the students are utilized to their full ability (Lee & Carter, 2012). The research was conducted at Vanderbilt University, where analysis of previous research on the topic of autism and transition in the past two decades was completed in order to compile a list of effective strategies for transition to work. The study looked at students with high-functioning autism only, and explained that this is a problem for some of these students because they might not be eligible for transition services or employment related services based on their academic levels (Lee & Carter, 2012). There were seven elements that the study addressed when analyzing research: individualized plans, positive career development, meaningful collaboration, family support, self-determination/independence, social and employment skill instruction, and job related supports (Lee & Carter, 2012).

The categories described were collected from various research, that all included students with high functioning autism as their primary disability group, and focused on the transition to the work force. Once all of the research was analyzed, the researchers concluded that strengths that students with high-functioning autism possess often are

what makes the students not receive the support or services that are required in order to effectively transition (Lee & Carter, 2012). These students can often obtain some form of job, the problem comes when the students need to then maintain that given job. The weaknesses of the study were that it lacked literature about what the students need to do to maintain jobs specifically with high-functioning autism. The researchers gathered data from students with various forms on the autism spectrum but state that there was not yet enough research in this field in order to accurately aid in maintaining of a job for those students. The researchers do provide good ideas, and have a very individualized strength based focus on their study, which is key for successful transitions. Also, a list of very detailed services and supports was provided which were all guided towards the students' needs.

In a study done by Carter et al. (2013) teenage students with autism were specifically looked at both during and after their high school careers. They also looked at how the students were projected to be incorporated into the community and post-secondary education. The purpose of the study was to look at various forms of research that dealt with students with autism and built social connections in different settings in order to aid in a successful transition. The study was also done at Vanderbilt University, where the researchers compiled information from research done on the field of autism and transition, and focused on the community aspect of social living skills and ability to attend and succeed in the college setting. The issue brought up in the research was that there were a growing number of students with ASD, and there was not a focus on how these students were going to transition to the community aspect after high school.

The research dealt specifically with how the student not only fit in socially, but

became an active member within that community. Participating in such events can be key in order to promote success, according to the authors. The procedure for choosing articles was based on if it was primarily focused on students with autism, the topic of transition, and had a component within the given research about adjusting to the community life (Carter et al., 2013). The goals were measured based upon the level of connection that the research had with how in depth the involvement in the community looked. The study breaks the data that the researchers found into four separate sections; first the transition team and its members, second when the decision on post-secondary options was made, third having multiple post-secondary options available for the students in each study, and last what opportunities were provided for the students to learn skills, strategies, and knowledge about what choice that they make (Carter et al., 2013). The authors found that the transitions that showed beneficial effects for students were primarily focused on social and communication skills that the students will utilize, a focus on working with other people effectively, and the transitions that took place in a social supportive environment where practice of skills was encouraged. The implications of their study were that fostering a sense of community and making connections was possible and beneficial for students with autism. The next was effective transition planning, now a requirement under the federal law Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The limitations from the article was that it is a large breakdown and review of previous research.

### *Social Needs for Students with Autism*

According to Szidon, Ruppard, and Smith (2015), there are aspects of social needs

that needed to be addressed in a transition plan for students with autism. The focus of the researcher was primarily on students who were academically sound but still had complex needs for the post-secondary environment. The purpose of the study was to develop effective transition plans for students with autism that have different forms of social problems, such as communication issues, self-management, and social behavior. The students in this study came from Lakeview High School, which is in a rural farming community, where the special education team of the building wanted to focus all of their professional development time on this issue (Szidon, Ruppap & Smith, 2015). The issue that underlies this study was that these students are sound academically, but lack major social skills that could cause them to struggle in the post-secondary environment.

In order to accomplish the goals the teachers taught sections of their class for the students with autism solely on development of social awareness and self-management skills. The teachers then broke this process into different steps in order to see if each student would reach that benchmark. The first step was to identify a transition goal, second was to link post-secondary goals with IEP goals; third was to troubleshoot and adjust transition and IEP goals as needed; step fourth was to provide opportunities to teach skills, and fifth was to evaluate the progress that the students made (Szidon, Ruppap & Smith, 2015). Data was analyzed on an individual basis on whether that given student completed his IEP transition based goal, with the different benchmarks made individually for that student. Students showed significant progress when following this model and had successful plans in place for their post-secondary options (Szidon, Ruppap & Smith, 2015). The planning process was vital to transition, and linking it directly to the students' IEP goals was an effective way to make the goal measurable. Limitations to this study

were that it was done recently, and data could not be collected at this time on the level of effectiveness for the students after the post-secondary environment.

In a study done by Dipeolu, Storlie, and Johnson (2014), researchers focused only on students with high-functioning autism, and social strategies that could be used for school counselors. The purpose of this article was that school counselors are often the people that are working with students with high-functioning levels of autism, more often than special educators in many settings. The article outlines the social challenges that the group of students faces, and provide strategies that are effective to assist these individuals (Dipeolu, Storile & Johnson, 2014). The setting for their study was based on students with high-functioning autism in the United States. The issue discussed was that the given students were not often served by a special educator on a consistent basis but still needed the support when transitioning.

In order to assist students with autism Dipeolu et a. (2014) broke down what legislation applies to the students, the responsibilities of the students and parents, accommodations that the students could use, college classroom expectations, social skills training, extracurricular activities, vocational rehabilitation services, self-awareness, and self-advocacy. The goals listed were the different areas that a school counselor could provide services for a student, depending on the student's needs. The conclusions of the study were that the more the students were made aware of the options of resources that the students have, and the connection to an individual they can go to, in order to utilize the resources, provided for a more effective transition (Dipeolu et al., 2014). The limitation to this study was that there was limited other research at that time on the topic of school counselors working with students with high-functioning autism. The

information given was beneficial for the study at hand as the bulk of the population is students with high-functioning autism.

According to Dente and Parkinson (2012), social workers play an important part in the transition process for students with autism. The purpose of their study was to identify what school social workers could do for students with autism to aid in the transition after high school. Social workers typically have direct contact and service with students with autism, so can serve as a guide to social skills training. This study focused specifically on students with Asperger's disorder, now categorized under the autism spectrum (Dente & Parkinson, 2012). The researchers also focused on students that are already in some form of college or university in the United States. The issue identified in the study states that students with Asperger's often struggle with the social aspect of the transition, such as social demands of a college classroom and independent living skills in the college atmosphere.

In order to gather data for the study the Dente and Parkinson (2012) looked at studies done in the United States, and statistics were based on social work services obtained, and goals set while the students were in high school. The variables that were taken into account were the social demands of the individual, the transition preparation the student had in high school, and the academic needs of the students (Dente & Parkinson, 2012). The factors listed were then gathered from data reported by social workers as well as information from the universities that the students attended. The results stated that the school social workers needed to include a variety of skills training, and preparation in the area of transition (Dente & Parkinson, 2012). The implications of the study were that school social workers are one group not previously mentioned that

have service minutes with many students with autism, and can help guide the transition process, and teach social skills. The weakness to the study was that the study did not do a sample group of its own students and instead gathered information from various sources to make conclusions.

### *Summary*

Students with autism have unique needs in the transition process, and struggle with aspects that other students with disabilities might not. Some of these students might have academic and social issues in school which will require them to have different levels of support for each setting. The student could also struggle in the area of communication, making it difficult describing the needs that the students have. There are different forms of support that have been used previously with students and are being tried by post-secondary settings. Transition planning and making the plan linked to the student's IEP can increase the student's chances to achieve their post-secondary goals. These goals are something that are individualized to that student, where the students and the entire IEP team had input.. Having a team of support and knowing what options are available will benefit the student. The other part of goals team can cover were some of the unique features of the student and determine the social needs or support that might be necessary. Students with autism generally have some form of social need, whether it comes in the form of problem solving skills, self-advocacy skills, communication, or need skills training. The listed aspects are all specific to the student, and all students will not need each individual area. There are team members of an IEP and transition process such as a school counselor or social worker, which can aid in the transition process for these students.

## Chapter 3

### *Introduction*

The research conducted in the different areas of the transition needs of students with autism, the social needs of these students, and what has previously been used and suggested for students with autism has been discussed. The literature review has shown that there are many needs for the students with autism when it comes to the topic of transition in both an academic and social need. Most students need a variety of supports, and there is not concrete information as to what is beneficial for these students and what is not. Since there is minimal information on the topic, it is likely that parents are not aware about what helps to make for an effective transition for their child with autism. Do parents know what transition resources are available for their student with autism? Research needs to be done on whether these parents are aware or not of resources available to their children in order for these parents to be able to aid in the transition to the post-secondary environment. In order to gather research on the information listed above a survey was conducted with a select group of parents of students with autism. This consisted of finding out whether the parents knew what transition services are, what examples of them are, and if they can list one in their own local area. The following survey research used a sample of convenience and untested questionnaire.

### *Setting*

The setting in this study was all parents of students with autism from a high school in northern Minnesota. Sixty-five percent of the students that attended this school qualify for free and reduced lunch, and 35% of the students were in special education (Totten-Hall, 2015). The school's student population consisted of 84% Caucasian, 3%

Asian, 6% Native American, 5% African American, and 1% Hispanic (Minnesota Department of Education, 2015). The data was collected at the individuals' homes where they decided to fill out the survey (or not) and return it to the researcher. The setting therefore was different for each individual depending on how their homes were set up and structured. The school was college preparatory focused where the academic expectations were set high. The average class size throughout the school is 20 students per teacher, which is a much lower teacher/pupil ratio than the statewide average of around 31 students (Totten-Hall, 2015). Class size and teacher/pupil ratio help to support an environment where students are held to a high standard on a constant basis.

#### *Participants*

The participants for the given study were selected by examination of the students entered in special education under the category Autism Spectrum Disorder. The researcher had access to this information through the use of the special education director, the principal, and the researcher's individual case load as a special education teacher at the school. All parents of students with autism accessed in the given study were available to the researcher; therefore this was a sample of convenience.

The participants for this study consisted of thirteen students from the central area of the city, which was primarily a low income area of the city. There was one student from an outside school district who chose to come to this school. The remaining students all came from the west region, which was also one of the larger low income areas of the city (Totten-Hall, 2015). The students whose parents selected varied in grade: some were seniors, juniors, sophomores, and freshman. Their ages vary from 14 to 18. The federal levels of the students varied as well. Students were included from level three, level two,

and level one. Federal levels were based on the amount of time spent in special education, from level one where it is less than twenty percent of the day, level two anywhere from twenty to sixty percent of the day in special education, and level three with more than sixty percent of the day spent in special education.

### *Method*

The materials used for the study were a survey that only parents of students with autism were given. The parents were first given a letter of explanation (see Appendix A). They were then given an informed consent to fill out and return (see Appendix B). The survey consisted of various identifying questions, if they had a student, what the disability was, and the student's grade. The other questions all required the parents to write out their responses, and not just select from the given ones listed. (See survey as attached as Appendix C.) Parents were asked to return surveys in a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

### *Measurement Instrument*

The survey shown in Appendix C had various questions listed in it to gather data from the individuals. This instrument was created by the researcher from sample questions pulled from articles within the literature review. The first question was whether or not the student receives special education services. The next was what the student's disabilities were, and what grade he/she was in. Next was if they knew if the student's planned to attend college after high school. The major question was knowing what a transition services were, and gave the parents space to fill out what they knew about them. The last question provided examples of transition services and asked if the parents knew of any transition services available in their local area. The final question was once

their child graduated from high school, if they know if their student would utilize one of the transition services or not. The questions were chosen to first indicate some general demographics of the student, and then to identify the amount of information that the parents knew about transition resources in their region.

#### *Procedure*

Permission was granted from the school principal and special education director to conduct the survey as described above. Permission was also granted from the University's Internal Review Board. Then the information was given to the parents directly through the mail. The informed consent, sample letter, and survey were all sent to the participants with students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The informed consent was signed by the participants prior to receiving a survey to fill out. The participants had the option to fill out the survey as it was not mandatory. Information was to be mailed back, or given directly back to the researcher by the student or parent.

#### *Data Analysis*

The plan for the collected data was to categorize it in terms of the research based questions that were asked in the survey. Information would be grouped based on whether or not the parents knew what a transition service was. This would be broken down into the first major two groups, and from there broken down further based on if the parents knew of an example of a transition service. Group one would consist of parents that knew what a transition service was and group two would consist of those that did not.

## Chapter 4

The following results were collected by the researcher based on the surveys that were returned in the procedure listed in the prior chapter. The survey was sent to 13 separate parents in a stamped envelope, along with a consent form, a letter to the parents, and a stamped return envelope. There were eight of the 13 given surveys returned to the researcher for the results that will follow. The survey consisted of eight questions starting with three demographic based questions, and five informational based questions relaying the parent's knowledge of transition services.

The results taken on the first question of the survey were based on whether or not the child was receiving special education services. The surveys were only sent out to a specific set of individuals, therefore all of the individuals that completed the surveys answered this question stating yes, their child was receiving services. The second question of the survey had similar results of the first with all 100% of parents stating that their child was receiving special education services under the category of Autism Spectrum Disorder. The only outlier was one parent labeled their child as also having an Other Health Impairment as a secondary disability because the student had Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder. The third question asked parents what grade their student was in. Of parents that returned the survey there were two students from each of the grades 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>.

Table 1

<b>Student of Participant</b>	<b>ASD</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>College Bound Post High School</b>
1	Yes	9th	Male	Yes
2	Yes	9th	Male	Yes
3	Yes	10th	Male	Yes
4	Yes	10th	Male	Yes
5	Yes	11th	Male	Yes
6	Yes	11th	Male	Yes
7	Yes	12th	Male	Yes
8	Yes	12th	Male	No

Question 1: Does your student receive special education services? This question was to verify the demographics selected that the student was indeed receiving special education services. Question 2: What is your student’s disability? (Circle the category below): the listed categories included Autism Spectrum disorder, Specific Learning Disability, Emotional Behavioral Disorder, Physical Impairment, Other Health Impairment, and Speech and Language. The question listed was to verify that the students were all under the category of Autism Spectrum disorder. All eight of the parents in the survey responded with the Autism category, one of the given parents also circled Other Health Impairment as a secondary disability, and indicated that the student also had Attention Deficit Hyper-Activity Disorder. This information was written in by the given parent to the side of one of the categories. Question 3: What grade is your student in? The

parents had the options of 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade, since it was only given to parents of high school students. Question 4: Does your student plan to attend college after high school? The parents were required to circle a yes or no response to the question, where only one parent indicated that their student was not going to attend college. The following demographic information is broken down in the table listed above (Table 1).

The next group of questions asked more specifics about the parent's child starting with whether or not the child was going to attend college after high school. Of the surveys returned only one parent reported that their student was not going to attend college, and that was a 12<sup>th</sup> grade student. This implies that the student has a general knowledge about college and knowledge about his post-secondary options, and is choosing options besides college, such as an employment opportunity. Question 5: What is a transition service? (Fill in anything you know about them below). In order for the parent to answer this question completely the parent had to provide information about any form of transition service. This could include such things as services from high school to college, social skills training, independent employment, or some form of assisted employment. Of the parents that completed the survey, 38% were able to accurately define a transition service in some form. The parents that answered this question correctly gave responses such as "A program like Oh No 18, which helps with cooking and socialization skills." Other answers included things such as "I'm assuming something that helps the student transition from high school to college". The other 62% of parents were either not able to accurately define transition, or did not attempt to provide an answer to the given section.

The question that followed the definition of a transition service was asking the parent to provide an example of a transition service in general. Question 6: What is an

example of a transition service? This question had the exact same results as the previous question, having 38% of the parents being able to give an example of a transition service. As in the previous question 62% were unable to provide the given example. Some of the examples included answers such as: a program to help students succeed after high school, college preparatory classes, and courses specifically around the concept of transition. The parents that answered the first question about defining what a transition service was were also the ones that were able to provide the example. This group of parents had students in 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> grade, and all indicated that their student was going to college. The parents also all stated services that are offered through their child's school that they are currently attending. There were no parents that identified any outside agencies as a form of transition service for this question. One of the parents that did identify an outside agency for the first question asking for a definition, just went to further elaborate what that program did in the following question, but did not list the specific program again.

Question 7: What is one example of a transition service that we have in our local area? The next question of the survey consisted of giving a specific example of a transition service in the local area in which the parent resides. Only 25% of parents could answer this question with a service that was offered in the area. Many parents did not attempt this question, or wrote "I don't know" as the response. Of the parents that were able to answer this given question correctly one had a student as a 9<sup>th</sup> grader, and the other as a 12<sup>th</sup> grader. These responses were the names of specific agencies that worked with students transitioning to either the college atmosphere or more of a social skills training and support group for students getting out of high school offered in the area. These parents that responded were also the same ones that were able to answer the

previous questions.

Question 8: Do you think your child will utilize a transition service after graduation? This was just a simple yes or no based question, where 38% of the parents thought that their student would utilize a transition service. Of this 38%, 2 of the 3 parents that identified that their children would, also could not answer what a transition service was, or provide an example of one in either our area, or in general (See Table 2). The following findings were all based on an untested researcher created survey, with the assumption that the questions included were all valid.

Table 2

<b>Survey Question</b>	<b>Percentage Responded Positively</b>	<b>Percentage Responded Negatively</b>
College Bound	88%	12%
Transition Service Definition	38%	62%
Transition Service General Example	38%	62%
Transition Service in Local Area	25%	75%
Utilization of Transition Service Post Graduation	50%	50%

## Chapter 5

### *Introduction*

The following study was set to gather data on what parents knew about transition services for their children served in school under the category of Autism Spectrum Disorder. Previous research suggests that students served under the category of autism require a variety of services in order to effectively transition to the post high school environment. This is because the students often require both academic and social aspects of a transition plan to succeed in the post-secondary environment (Szidon et al., 2015). The current study was conducted about eight high school students served under the category of Autism Spectrum Disorder. The given school was lower income in nature and had a large population of high functioning students with disabilities. The parents of these students were given a survey laying out demographic information and asking what they knew about transition services available to their children. The information provided by the surveys showed that the majority of parents could not define what a transition service was or provide an example of what it was. This is where the problem lies (hypothesis); parents of these high school students are unaware of transition services that are available for their children, and they will be attending post-secondary options in the near future. The purpose of the study was to gather what information these parents knew about transition services in order to more effectively plan and prepare both students and parents for future years.

### *Discussion*

The following information was retrieved and interpreted based on the results provided from the transition services survey as broken down in the previous Chapter 4.

Question 1: Does your student receive special education services? The results from this question were, as the researcher expected, that 100% of the parent respondents identifying that their child was receiving special education services. The researcher sent out 13 given surveys, and received eight back with signed consent forms. Parents were selected from the special education coordinator at the given school, therefore all parents should have indicated that their student was receiving services. The question was conducted as a safeguard to ensure that all students were receiving special education services and the parents were aware of this.

Question 2: What is your student's disability? (Circle the category below): The listed categories included Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Specific Learning Disability, Emotional Behavioral Disorder, Physical Impairment, Other Health Impairment, and Speech and Language. The results were the same as the first question 100% response of ASD. This question was to also ensure parents knowledge of what disability category their child was being served under. The question also shows that all the students in the study were being served under the category of Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Question 3: What grade is your child in? The survey was given out to parents of students from grades 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup>. This question helps conclude that there were students of different age groups included in the study, through all the stages of high school.

Question 4: Does your student plan to attend college after high school? The following question was important to indicate that the students represented in the study did have plans of pursuing college after graduation from high school. Several out of eight

students in the sample were planning on attending college, which means that these parents should know what transition services were available for their children. The transition plan and services provided could be crucial to all of the students in the study especially considering what transitional needs the given students had while they were in high school (Chiang, et. al., 2012). The students in the study had transition plans in place through their special education services, but the parents were not aware of them, or what other kinds of services that the students could be utilizing.

The questions more specifically on what parents knew about transition were obtained through the survey in the following questions. Question 5: What is a transition service? (Fill in anything you know about them below). Of the parents that returned the surveys, 38% of them were able to successfully give a definition of a transition service, whether that was by giving examples or specifying what a transition service does. Less than half of the parents of these high school students could successfully provide adequate information about transition services. An example of an answer provided was “a service that aids students going from high school to college”. Other examples including things such as college readiness programs, or life skills training. This lack of information by the parents could make the transition to the post-secondary environment more difficult for the students. The students would be lacking one of the important aspects of an effective transition plan which is parent/family involvement. The more people that are involved in the transition plan process and enacting it, the more likely the student is to be successful (Mitchell & Beresford, 2014).

Question 6: What is an example of a transition service? The same parents that answered Question 5 correctly, answered this question correctly. This question in the

study is where trends started to form. For example, if parents could correctly answer the definition, they were more likely to be able to provide an example. If the parent did not provide a definition, they did not answer any of the following questions with valid responses. The researcher believes that it is essential that the parents not only know what a transition service is but to be able to also provide an example of one. The students are currently receiving some form of transition service in school, under their special education services, and parents could have answered with one of the options in which their child was currently participating.

Question 7: What is one example of a transition service that we have in our local area? The question listed had the lowest results of all questions in the survey. Only 25% of parents were able to identify some form of local agency or resource that their child could use for transition service post-graduation. Since all but one of these parents identified that their child would be going to college, it is a problem that only 25% of them could identify a local agency. These students do not necessarily have to utilize these resources to be successful but should at least have the knowledge of them, and their parents should as well to act as a support system. If parents are unaware of the resources provided there is probably little chance that the child will utilize them once they are out of the structured environment of high school.

Question 8: Do you think your child will utilize a transition service after graduation? While 38% of parents identified that their children would utilize a transition resource after graduation, they were not the same ones that could also identify what a transition resource was. Only one parent that could effectively define a transition resource or provide an example of one identified that their child would utilize one of the resources.

The other two parents that identified their students as utilizing a transition resource could not provide a definition. This could mean that those parents might be uninformed as to what transition resources are, but know that it sounds like a resource that could be beneficial to their children's futures.

There are many factors that could have contributed to the parents answers of the given questions in the transition survey. These factors could include things such as socioeconomic status, age of the parent, if they have any older children who have already gone through this process, job the parent currently holds, or educational level of the parent. These things could influence the knowledge that the parent has about transition resources, and directly affect the answers they supplied to the given questions listed. The grade level of the student also can play a role as to how much information that the parent has on transition resources, as the parents could be already preparing for the future. In the study of the three parents that were able to give definitions of what transition services were, two of those parents have children that would be considered upperclassmen, in the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> grade. Only one parent of a 9<sup>th</sup> grade student was able to provide a definition and example of what a transition service was. This parent is known to the researcher as someone with a background in the special education field, so her job experience affects her knowledge of services.

Parents need to be informed of the different services that are available to their children after they graduate. Some things that could be done in order to educate them could include sending them informational handouts of the different agencies in the local area. Other things include spending a portion of the time at the student's annual IEP meeting to cover this topic more in depth or possibly have representatives from the

agencies attend. The special educator could also send out group emails to the parents outlining resources available and what they entail.

#### *Limitations*

The given study was based on a school with a small population and the entire study was based off of 13 individual students. Of those 13, only eight parents participated; of those eight all the children with ASD were males. There was one female included in the study, but the parents decided not to participate in the given study. This could limit the ability to generalize the given information based on the gender provided in the study to just those parents of male students. The majority of the students in the school the study was conducted were of lower socioeconomic status, which could also limit the studies ability to be generalized to a variety of populations. The students were all also considered high functioning autism and taking college preparatory based classes in most circumstances. The data collected in the study would not directly apply to students with lower functioning forms of autism, however it still could be used to provide some indicators. The information gathered is also only on those students with autism and does not directly apply to students of any other disability categories.

#### *Recommendations for Future Research*

This study touched upon the lack of knowledge parents of high school students with autism have about their child's transition options. The study utilized a sample of convenience in one school in one location. Any replication of the study would be welcome. More research is needed in the area to help pave the way for support, the areas of females in this same category, along with students with low functioning autism. This would help broaden the research for students across the autism spectrum and benefit

those students and parents. Further research could be done to see what the students themselves know about transition services. The given study questioned parent's knowledge, but did not take into account what the students themselves might know. It is very likely that since the students are undergoing this process, they may have more knowledge about transition services available than do their parents. The students are the primary participant in their transition planning, and should be an integral part of the acquisition of the resources they see fit.

Another area that could provide a more complete picture of the research presented is to assess the special education teachers in the area to see what knowledge they have of transition resources in their region and if they know how to access them. This would have to be a more in depth questionnaire and be given to teachers of students of a variety of age groups. It is based on this researcher's assumption that the elementary level special education teachers would not provide as adequate information of post-secondary options for students as the middle and upper level teachers. The transition team consists of a variety of members, and all the members should be held accountable for knowing the components of the students' transition plan, as well as resources that are available for the students regardless of grade level.

Further research that could enrich existing literature on the topic of transition is on what resources students with autism are most likely to utilize in the post-secondary atmosphere. This could provide guidance to parents, students, and the teachers of these students. There are some resources that have proven to be effective, but minimal research has been conducted to show which resources are used, and why. That information could provide evidence as to what makes an effective transition resource for this population,

and future implications when constructing transition resources for students.

### *Conclusion*

The following study was conducted to assess parents' knowledge of transition resources based on a high school population of students with autism. The conclusions that can be made from the study were that the majority of parents of students with autism at the specific school were unaware of what transition resources were available for their child. This was indicated through a survey given to the parents in which the majority of them could not accurately define a transition service. This also highlights that the majority of parents in this study were unaware of transition services in their region. The awareness of transition services is a vital part to a student's success in the post-secondary environment. The last conclusion inferred was that since students with autism need a variety of transition services, it is unlikely they will receive adequate services if their parents are unaware of them. These conclusions imply that parents need to be educated by the special education teachers in their child's life on the concept of transition services. Parents attend IEP meetings on an annual basis but need more education on what kinds of resources are going to be available for their students after graduation, and how to access them.

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Appendix A

IRB Submission Form

**\*\*\*NOTE TO RESEARCHERB: ALL DOCUMENTS FOR RESEARCH MUST BE INCLUDED IN A SINGLE FILE!!!\*\*\***

Name:John Peterson  
Email:jpeter99@uwsuper.edu  
Phone number: 218-348-1504

Status: Staff/faculty                      **Graduate Student**                      Undergraduate Student  
Name of faculty sponsor/mentor (if applicable): Mary Jane Burdge  
Faculty member's email address: mjburdge@uwsuper.edu

Anticipated start date: 1/15/16  
Anticipated end date:3/15/16

Does this project specifically recruit any vulnerable populations including but not limited to:

Minors?	Yes	<b>No</b>
Pregnant women?	Yes	<b>No</b>
Prisoners?	Yes	<b>No</b>
People with cognitive delays?	Yes	<b>No</b>
People hospitalized in nursing homes, etc?	Yes	<b>No</b>
Other vulnerable groups:		

Will you be deceiving your participants? Please note: withholding details about the specifics of your hypothesis **does not** constitute deception. However, misleading participants about the nature of the research question or about the nature of the task they will be completing **does** constitute deception.  
Yes                      **No**

Are the names/identities of your participants included on the data itself? Or, if someone looked at your data would s/he be able to identify the participant from the data or instrument?                      Yes                      **No**

Are you gathering any biological samples as part of your research?                      Yes                      **No**

Minimal risk is when the likelihood that participating in your research will not cause harm or discomfort (including physical, mental, emotional, social, or economic) that is greater than those a person would normally encounter in daily life.

Does this research pose greater than minimal risk to participants? Yes No

Title of project:

**1. Briefly describe your research question (50 words or less):**

Do parents know what forms of transition resources are available for their students with autism spectrum disorder after they graduate high school?

**2. Will participants include individuals from specific populations (e.g. children, pregnant women, prisoners or people with cognitive delays)?**

No it will not include any on from those specific populations.

- a. **If your participants will include individuals from specific populations, please specify the population(s) and briefly describe any special precautions you will use.**

**3. Briefly describe how you will recruit participants from your study (make sure to include any institutional affiliations of your participants). Please include any recruiting materials in an appendix.**

Participants will be recruited based on the students that attend the school I currently work at, Harbor City International School. These students are all receiving special education services under the category Autism Spectrum Disorder, and I will have access to parents directly.

**4. How many individuals do you expect to participate in your study?**

13 parents

**5. Briefly describe what participants in your study will do and where it will take place. Make sure to reference any and all materials/surveys/tests/assessments that will be used. (All materials *must* be included in an Appendix.)**

Parents will fill out a survey (attached in appendix). They will do this at their own homes, and then return the survey to me.

**6. Please describe any risks and benefits your research may have for your participants. Please make sure to include whether the data could**

**damage your participants' reputation or make them liable to conviction. (For example, one study's risks might include boredom and eye-strain. The same study's benefits might include satisfaction from contributing to scientific knowledge and greater self-awareness.)**

Benefits might include a greater awareness as to resources for their students in the future.

- 7. What procedures will you use to ensure that the information your participants provide will remain confidential? In other words, how will you keep your data secure?**

All data will be kept in secure locked location, unless being used specifically by the researcher for analysis.

- 8. Will your study use deception? (Please note: withholding details about the specifics of your hypothesis *does not* constitute deception. However, misleading participants about the nature of the research question or about the nature of the task they will be completing *does* constitute deception.)**

**NO.**

- a. **If your project includes deception, please fully describe the process you will use, why the deception is necessary and a full description of your debriefing procedures. Projects using deception should include their full debriefing statement here.**

- 9. Do you have funding for this research? Yes No**

- a. **If so, state the name of the funding agency or department (For example, NIH, NSF, Faculty Development Grant, McNair Scholar).**

- 10. Where do you plan to present/publish or share your research?**

Research will be presented in the form of a thesis paper at the end of the masters degree program.

- 11. Will participants be compensated? How?**

**NO.**

**12. Will a written informed consent form be used and signed by participants?**

**YES**

- 1 If yes, attach the informed consent form (see below)**
- 2 If no, explain how the research meets each of the following criteria such that the research qualifies for a waiver of informed consent:**
  - .2.1 Research could not be conducted practicably without the waiver;**
  - .2.2 Research involves no more than minimal risk to participants;**
  - .2.3 Waiver will not adversely affect the rights and welfare of participants;**
  - .2.4 Participants will be provided with pertinent information in some other format.**

**ONLY FOR PEOPLE USING RECORDING (VIDEO OR AUDIO):**

- 1. Will you conduct all interviews yourself or will you have assistance (including a translator)?**  
Alone                      With Assistance
- 2. How will you secure the data so that the participants' image and/or voice are kept confidential?**

Please read the following statement carefully:

I have read the UWS IRB Regulations. I will comply with the informed consent requirement, and I will inform the IRB if significant changes are made in the proposed study. I certify that all the information contained in this proposal is truthful.

***Submitting this proposal means that you affirm the above and will comply with the content. This counts as your legally binding signature.***

**WAIT!!!**

Did you include your Informed Consent Document and any materials that you will use during your study?

Appendix B  
Informed Consent

1. Purpose:

The purpose of this experiment is to study how much information the parents of students with autism spectrum disorder know about the transition resources that are available.

2. Procedure:

You will be asked to fill out a survey based on your knowledge of the services available for your student, and return it to the researcher.

3. Time required:

Survey should take anywhere from 15-30 minutes at your convenience.

4. Risks:

It is not anticipated that this study will present any risk to you other than the inconvenience of the time taken to participate.

5. Your rights as a subject:

- (i) The information gathered will be recorded in anonymous form. Data or summarized results will not be released in any way that could identify you.
- (ii) If you want to withdraw from the study at any time, you may do so without penalty. The information collected from you up to that point would be destroyed if you so desire.
- (iii) At the end of the session, you have the right to a complete explanation ("debriefing") of what this experiment was all about. If you have questions afterward, please ask your experimenter or contact:

John Peterson

Dr. Maryjane Burdge

Dept of Special Education, UW-SUPERIOR, (715) 394-8408

Also, once the study is completed, you may request a summary of the results.

6. If you have any concerns about your treatment as a subject in this study, please call or write:

Eric Edwards

IRB Chair

Telephone: (715) 394-8283

Email: [irb@uwsuper.edu](mailto:irb@uwsuper.edu)

This research project has been approved by the UW-Superior Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, protocol # \_\_\_\_\_

I have read the above information and willingly consent to participate in this experiment.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Subjects should be given a copy of this form for their records.

Appendix C

Transition Survey

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(Please Circle the answer that applies to your student)

1. Does your student receive special education services? YES NO

2. What is your student's disability? (Circle the category below)

Autism Spectrum Disorder    Specific Learning Disability    Emotional  
Behavioral

Physical Impairment    Other Health Impairment    Speech and  
Language

3. What grade is your student in currently?

9<sup>th</sup>                      10<sup>th</sup>                      11<sup>th</sup>                      12<sup>th</sup>

4. Does your student plan to attend college after high school? YES NO

5. What is a transition service? (fill in anything you know about them below)

6. What is an example of a transition service?

7. What is one example of a transition service that we have in our local area?

8. Do you think your child will utilize a transition service after graduation? YES  
NO

Appendix D  
Letter to Parents

Dear Parent of student in participatory group,

Hi my name is John Peterson, I am a special education teacher at your child's school. I am currently completing my master's thesis at the University of Wisconsin Superior. As a parent of a student with autism you fit the criteria of parents that I am trying to gather information on in order to try and better their educational process. If you would be willing to fill out the following survey, returning it in the stamped envelope enclosed I would greatly appreciate it.

Any questions feel free to email me at [jpeterson@harborcityschool.org](mailto:jpeterson@harborcityschool.org), or call me at 218-348-1504. Please let me know if you would be willing to do this quick survey or not either way. The survey takes approximately 15 minutes.

Sincerely,

John Peterson