

# Kennedy Krieger School Programs: Student Outcomes

## Who We Are and Who We Serve

Kennedy Krieger School Programs serve nearly 500 public school students with complex disabilities. Students come to us from more than half of the school districts across Maryland and are referred by their local school systems. Our five schools are accredited and approved as nonpublic special education schools by the Maryland State Department of Education and the National Commission for the Accreditation of Special Education Services (NCASES).

While attending Kennedy Krieger School Programs, students work toward a diploma or certificate of completion. After school, some go on to jobs, higher education, volunteering, and/or community-based experiences, often with the support of Maryland's Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) and Division of Rehabilitation Services (DORS). Additionally, some of our graduates continue to receive postsecondary supports through Kennedy Krieger Institute's Neurodiversity at Work programs.

## How Our Students Do After High School

Our goal is to assist each student in finding meaningful activities in which to participate after high school. We reached out to 262 Kennedy Krieger School Programs graduates (from the classes of 2014 through 2021) to assess postsecondary outcomes and get their opinions on the supports that Kennedy Krieger School Programs offered them. Fifty-two respondents provided insights (an approximately 20% response rate). From them, we learned that:

25%

25% of responding students took college or trade school classes in the years after high school, enrolling in postsecondary classes at a rate comparable to that of the broader population of graduates with disabilities and individualized education programs (IEPs), according to data from the U.S. Department of Education.

85%

85% of responding students reported that our schools helped them improve their social and communication skills, an important foundation for ongoing community integration during and after high school.



46%

46% of responding students reported having paid employment since graduation—**more than double the national rate** of their peers—and 65% reported volunteering and/or having paid employment since graduation, citing that our schools helped them improve their work skills and capabilities.

66%

66% of responding students who had paid employment reported that they were happy with their jobs and that they liked their supervisors and co-workers.

Responding students (from both the certificate and diploma tracks) who were involved with the DORS were about **five times more likely** than their peers to obtain paid employment after high school.

83%

83% of responding students who obtained a certificate reported being connected to the DDA, which is critical for accessing adult services and supports.

## About the Findings

These survey results are encouraging, as they suggest our graduates are successfully engaging in paid employment, volunteering, and postsecondary education. Facilitating and establishing connections with state agencies such as the DORS and the DDA before completing high school is a transition priority for our program. These efforts appear to be yielding results, as our graduates with connections to state agencies are more likely to obtain paid employment and access to adult services.

## Student Story

Sydney's story highlights our approach to success. She came to Kennedy Krieger High School as a certificate-track student after her public school IEP team determined that a more specialized placement was required to meet her needs. Among other things, she needed smaller class sizes, individualized accommodations, and speech-language services, with an emphasis on assistive technology and augmentative communication.

Specifically, Sydney uses a communication device to interact with others, including her teachers and fellow students, and we integrated this technology into her education plan to help her finish high school. During her last year of high school, Sydney completed a full-immersion workforce training program that prepared her to enter competitive integrated employment.

After graduation, Sydney continued to receive innovative community-based services through Neurodiversity at Work. This enabled her to integrate her communication device and supports into the workplace. This integration became critical as she started volunteering for Meals on Wheels. Her supervisor noticed her hard work and encouraged her to apply for a paid position. Meals on Wheels hired Sydney for that position over two years ago, and she now works about 30 hours a week!



When not volunteering or working, Sydney is active in her community and independently navigates the Maryland paratransit services to get to all of these activities. Sydney and her family attribute her postsecondary success—paid employment, volunteer experiences, and improved self-confidence—to her experience at Kennedy Krieger High School.

## How to Refer Students to Us

We partner with local school districts, who refer students with IEPs to our schools. Email us at [ACTOffice@KennedyKrieger.org](mailto:ACTOffice@KennedyKrieger.org) for more information about nonpublic placements, referrals, and our admissions process.

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