

**Institute on Disability – *RENEW Initiative for Youth and Community* program (RENEW)  
Need Statement**

Research on education and transition outcomes for youth with emotional and behavioral disorders (EBD) has shown that these youth have the highest dropout rates (40-60%), are taught in segregated settings at higher rates, and have the poorest transition outcomes of any other disability group (Cheney & Bullis, 1999; Wagner & Davis, 2006). Further, these youth often have been subjected to trauma and/or neglect and are involved in the juvenile justice and adult criminal systems more than any other group of youth.

Nationwide, youth with an EBD are half as likely as their peers to graduate from high school, and more than three times as likely to be arrested while still in school. Close to three quarters of those that drop out will be arrested within five years, and after leaving school, they will be twice as likely as other youth with disabilities to be living in a correctional facility, halfway house, drug treatment center or on the street. Reports show that nationally, adolescents with an EBD have high rates of academic failure, high dropout rates, higher criminal justice involvement, and lower rates of employment (Bullis & Cheney, 1999; Wehman, 1996; Wagner, 1991; Wagner, Kutash, Duchnowski, Epstein, & Sumi, 2005). Youth with EBDs also have consistently high rates of mental health utilization, are more likely to be poor, and are incarcerated at significantly higher rates than the general population (Wagner, Marder, Blackorby, Cameto, Newman, Levine, & Davies-Mercier, 2003; Wagner, et al., 2005).

These youth need individual behavior support, career development, and connections to reciprocal social relationships and networks that can help them to make the successful transition from school to adult life (Lane & Carter, 2006; Wagner & Davis, 2006). The RENEW model provides youth the support they need to develop a personalized school-to-adult-life transition plan, with relevance and guidance for individual academic and career development.