

Effective Strategies for Interagency Collaboration: What Works from Districts that are Doing It!

From: P. Noonan (2005) Developing Interventions to Improve Interagency Collaboration in Providing Transition Services for Youths with Disabilities



June 2, 2006

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Why focus on Interagency Collaboration?

- Adolescents with disabilities in transition have complex support needs
- Inability of different systems to work together
- 88% of all states have failed to establish interagency linkages under IDEA
- No single agency has all that is needed to effectively plan and provide comprehensive transition services

What is interagency collaboration? 4 stages—Networking, Service Coordination, Cooperation, and Collaboration

General Information about Research Study:

- Descriptive, Qualitative Study
- Human Subjects Committee Approval
- Product of OSEP Student-initiated research grant
- Spans 5 Diverse States
- Completed under advisement of Mary Morningstar and Gary Clark at University of Kansas

Key Research Questions:

1. What key strategies do high-performing LEAs implement to meet the interagency collaboration requirements for transition services for students ages 16 and older? What capacities facilitate interagency collaboration at the local-level?
2. What key strategies do SEAs implement to support districts in meeting the interagency collaboration requirements for transition services for students ages 16 and older? What capacities facilitate interagency collaboration at the state-level?
3. What attitudes characterize LEAs and SEAs who are high performers in interagency collaboration?

Study Overview

Sample: 42 representing the five States [36 Focus Group Participants and 6 SEA Transition Coordinators]

- 20 transition coordinators
- 3 blended staff
- 3 Department chairs

- 1 special education teacher
- 4 special education directors
- 5 assistant special education directors

Study Results: Research Question 1

What key *strategies* and *capacities* do high-performing LEAs implement to meet the interagency collaboration requirements for transition services?

LEA Capacities

- Scheduling and staffing
- Early planning
- Flexibility in location of services
- Follow-up after transition
- Administrative support
- Funding
- State support

LEA Strategies

- Collaboration with adult agencies
- Meeting with students and families
- Training students and families
- Joint training of staff
- Meeting with agency staff and transition councils
- Transition portfolios
- Disseminating information widely

Study Results: Research Question 2

What key *strategies* and *capacities* do SEAs implement to meet the interagency collaboration requirements for transition services?

SEA Capacities

- State Transition Councils
- Expertise and partnerships
- Funding
- Legislative support

SEA Strategies

- Local input
- Ongoing support and training
- Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs)
- Widespread Dissemination

Study Results: Research Question 3

What attitudes characterize LEAs and SEAs who are high performers in interagency collaboration?

- Clear value of relationship building
- Relationship Building Capacity: Positive Attitudes
- Relationship Building Strategies:
 - Advocacy
 - Ongoing meetings
 - Transition councils