

**Title:** Evaluation of the Apply and Communicate for Transition Now (ACTNow) Tool for Shared Interagency Collaboration for Secondary Students with High Incidence Disabilities

**Competition:** Low-Cost, Short-Duration Evaluation of Special Education Interventions Grant (CFDA 84.324L) NCSER-LE

**Partner Institutions:** Davis School District (DSD), Weber State University (WSU), Disability Support for Davis Technology College, Vista Education Campus ages 18-22, WSU Services for Students with Disabilities, Utah State Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Utah State Board of Education, University of Kansas (KU) Life Span Institute

**Intervention:** The ACTNow tool is a shared student directed approach to engage high school students with high incidence disabilities in transition planning. Using a multi-tiered system of support to increase self-determination through student engagement in transition planning during high school, ACTNow is administered by a single educator in small groups or individually to systematically teach students to: 1) identify their strengths and needs and 2) communicate these strengths and needs as they seek and apply for appropriate disability supports in their communities. The intended outcome of the intervention is increased transition engagement though improved self-determination while still in high school.

**Purpose:** The primary goal of the evaluation will be to use administrative data to investigate the effect of ACTNow on self-determination through improved self-awareness and self-knowledge. A secondary goal will be to determine if ACTNow functions as a standardized interagency communication tool for practitioners who collaborate and work directly with children and youth.

**Setting:** A large population high school (approximately 25,000) and post high settings serving high school students in two counties in northern Utah. Settings are urban and suburban.

**Population/Sample:** Junior and senior high students with an IEP or 504 plan who are preparing to transition to post K-12. Such students are often in need of or will qualify for continued support in future academic or employment settings. Sample size is 170 students.

**Partnership Activities:** The district PI, DSD, commits funding, resources, training, materials, access to administrative data, and evaluation dissemination. The research PI, WSU, commits research and content expertise, resources, evaluation analysis fidelity, and budget management. Both PIs will collaborate to evaluate efficacy of a shared communication tool and disseminate results with partners and other service providers. Other agencies commit support and feedback.

**Research Design and Methods:** A one-year randomized controlled trial design using pairs matched on the initial combined scores of the Self-Determination Inventory: Student Response (SDI:SR) and Self Awareness + Self Knowledge (SASK) for all sample students. Students will either receive the ACTNow tool (Treatment Group) or not receive the tool (Control Group). Treatment condition is ACTNow and tiered transition services. Control condition is access to tiered transition services only.

**Key Measures:** Three main sources of data will be used: SASK assessment developed by DSD, the SDI:SR by KU, and student post-high engagement. Engagement will be measured by the number of contacts with post K-12 community providers and the number of applications to post high settings.

**Data Analytic Strategy:** A series of analyses are planned to determine effectiveness of the ACTNow on self-determination, engagement, and application to post-high school settings. The first analysis will measure self-determination differences between treatment and control groups using an independent samples *t*-test. The second analysis will use two logistic regressions to compare the engagement of those in the treatment group to those in the control group. Lastly, validation of ACTNow will be determined using a Cronbach's Alpha reliability estimate.