NTACT THE COLLABORATIVE | National Technical Assistance Center on Transition

Support to Success: Scaling Professional Development Across Utah

Imagine a ripple effect: a focused effort to improve the lives of students with disabilities, starting with empowering their educators. That's what happened in Utah through a partnership between the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition: the Collaborative (NTACT:C) and the Utah State Board of Education (USBE).

This collaboration wasn't just about another "sit and get" training; it was about equipping teachers and administrators with the tools and knowledge to create meaningful transition plans, ensuring students with disabilities are prepared for life after high school. USBE worked with NTACT:C to scale up a team driven and actionable professional development approach, the Transition Coalition (TC) Self-Study.

The TC Self-Study model of professional development (PD) delivers a blended, team-based learning process where community partner, district, or building level teams engage in six weeks of structured learning, followed by six weeks of action planning and implementation with support from experts, print and online resources, and culminating in measurable improvements in compliance and student outcomes.

This effort in Utah meant USBE was able to support local education agencies to evaluate their own current transition practices, while increasing knowledge and implementation of effective transition planning practices. The specific actions, collaborative contributions, and impactful outcomes resulted from this PD scale up initiative, revealing how technical assistance can translate into tangible improvements for students across the state.

NTACT:C Actions

- Met with UT state and regional PD providers to understand the content and approaches found within the TC Self-Study.
- Provided information and regular communication with the UT PD providers on how to coach local TC Self-Study teams.
- Provided materials and resources so UT PD providers could support local teams.
- Supported the Utah P D providers in planning meetings, recruiting local teams, and how to coach local teams in the online learning management system.
- Assisted UT to coach teams to analyze current practices related to IEP compliance, prioritize local needs, develop a SMART goal and action plans and use Goal Attainment Scales to measure progress.
- Participated in evaluations developed by NTACT:C as well as feedback regarding the PD scale-up initiative (planning meetings with State leads), and shared results from pre/post knowledge surveys of local teams.
- Provided support to implement the TC Self-Study process statewide.
- Maintained the website and all TC Self-Study resources.

Utah Contributions

- The Utah State Board of Education committed to participating in the state scale-up of the TC Self-Study PD Model.
- Utah PD coaches worked to outline future scale-up plans.
- Recruited additional local teams to participate each semester.
- Provided incentives to team members participating and completing the TC Self-Study.

Overall Impact

- Teams reported a significant increase in knowledge of secondary transition requirements of IDEA and effective secondary transition planning practices.
- Self-study participants reported greater levels of achievement on almost all the quality indicators following participation.
- Approximately 66 practitioners were trained, resulting in approximately 8220 students with disabilities being positively impacted by the implementation of the self-study action plan.

Lessons Learned

- The PD scale-up approach was considered effective, and the Utah leadership team determined more focused and intentional recruitment of local teams was necessary.
- It is critical that leadership within the state is committed to this level of intensive professional development and is supportive of local districts that participate.

The technical assistance provided by NTACT:C has had a positive impact on the knowledge, skills, and practices of Utah educators involved in secondary transition planning for students with disabilities. The collaboration between NTACT:C and Utah stakeholders has resulted in improved outcomes for students and increased capacity within the state's educational system.

For more Information:

- NTACT:C Secondary Transition Resources: https://transitionta.org/topics/secondary-education/
- Professional Development Resources: https://transitioncoalition.org/training/