Agents of Their Own Success:
Self-Advocacy Skills and Self-Determination for Students with Disabilities in the Era of Personalized Learning

Alliance for Excellent Education Webinar
Tuesday, June 5th, 2018
Welcome

Mimi Corcoran
President & CEO
National Center for Learning Disabilities
NCLD’s Mission

To improve the lives of the 1 in 5 children and adults who struggle with learning and attention issues.
NCLD’s Strategy

Today, we work toward inclusion of the 1 in 5 in the following ways:

- Engaging **parents** with online resources and community on Understood.org
- Building the capacity of **educators** to support all struggling learners
- Developing **young adult** leaders who can advocate for themselves and their peers
- Informing local and national **policy** efforts to ensure equal opportunity and access
- Strengthening the field through innovative **research** and collaborative partnerships
A New Equity Imperative

Winsome Waite
Vice President of Policy to Practice
Alliance for Excellent Education
Overview of NCLD’s Project

Lindsay E. Jones
VP, Chief Policy & Advocacy Officer
National Center for Learning Disabilities
Achievement Gap

Reading Scores on the 2013 NAEP

The NAEP category of students with disabilities (SWD) includes students with IEPs and 504 plans.
What we’ve done

Phase I:
- Lit Review,
- Parent Survey,
- Site Visits,
- and Expert Interviews

Phase II:
- National Convening,
- Development and Dissemination of Recommendations

Phase III:
- Deep Dive in NH, CO, and NC and General Recs

Phase IV:
- National Self-Advocacy Convening and Recommendations

2015
- January 2015
- August 2015

2016
- May 2016
- February 2017

2017-18
- Present
What is “Personalized Learning?”

Working Definition:

Students’ learning experiences—what they learn, and how, when, and where they learn it—are tailored to their individual needs, skills and interests, and enable them to take ownership of their learning.

Although where, how, and when they learn might vary according to their needs, students also develop deep connections to each other, their teachers, and other adults.

(reference: Jobs for the Future, Students at the Center)
Personalized learning systems should include students with disabilities now.

Avoid Retrofitting!!
What We’ve Learned About Self-Advocacy Skills & Self Determination in Personalized Learning Systems

Ace Parsi

Personalized Learning Partnership Manager

National Center for Learning Disabilities
What is “Self-Determination”? 

A condition by which an individual is the “origin of his or her actions, has high aspirations, perseveres in the face of obstacles, sees more and varied options for action, learns from failures, and overall, has a greater sense of well being” (Little et. al)
Self-Determination is shown by...

(1) The person acts autonomously
(2) The behavior is self-regulated
(3) The person initiates and responds to the event(s) in a psychologically-empowered manner
(4) The person acts in a self-realizing manner. (Wehmeyer)
What is “Self-Advocacy?”

A concept related to student empowerment defined by four elements:

1. Knowledge of self
2. Knowledge of rights
3. Communication of one’s knowledge of self & rights
4. Leadership where a person moves from individual self-advocacy to advocating for others as a group of individuals with common concerns (Test et. Al., 2005)
SA and SD: A Historical Context

- **Full Exclusion Lens** (Early to mid 20th Century)
- **Rehabilitation Lens** (Post-World War II to Late 20th Century)
- **Inclusion Lens** (Late 20th to 21st Century)
Research-Based Benefits of Self-Advocacy and Self-Determination

- Students with disabilities have less SA/SD skills than peers;
- SA/SD can be influenced by interventions; and
- SA/SD have significantly positive impacts on educational and life outcomes
PL Self-Advocacy/Determination Recommendations

Value It

Apply It

Make it Accessible
PL Self-Advocacy/Determination Publications

Find More Resources at www.nclrd.org/selfadvocacy

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by the National Center for Learning Disabilities

DEFINING KEY TERMS

Personalized learning: a process in which students' learning experiences are tailored to their individual needs, skills, and interests, enabling them to engage ownership of their learning.

Self-determination: a dispositional characteristic that enables a person to set and achieve personal, family, and school goals and make or cause changes to improve their lives.

Self-advocacy skills: includes understanding personal strengths, rights, and responsibilities; and communicating those understanding leading to self-determination.

TO HELP STUDENTS DEVELOP SA/SD IN PLE, YOU CAN:

1. Adopt a strengths-based approach to PLE by emphasizing student development of SA/SD skills. Example: Adopt a definition of strengths-based individualized Education Programs (IEPs) that prioritizes the employment of individuals with Disabilities (IDEA).

2. Provide students with opportunities to practice skills associated with SA/SD. Example: Engage students in peer-mediated activities to practice social skills that are critical to successful transition.

3. Value student's self-advocacy skills and work towards developing self-advocacy skills in your students. Example: Engage students in peer-mediated activities to practice social skills that are critical to successful transition.

4. Incorporate measures of SA/SD into the evaluation of student, teacher, and school outcomes. Example: Adopt self-reports and self-assessments that measure self-advocacy skills and self-determination in students.
Meet Elijah
Panelists

Will Marsh
Student
St. Joseph’s University

Amanda Fitzgerald
Director of Public Policy
American School Counselor Association

Joey Hunziker
Program Manager
Innovation Lab Network, CCSSO
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Questions???
Everyone Has a Role to Play!!!
What will YOU do?

Let us know by e-mailing

policy@nclld.org
Closing Thoughts

Winsome Waite

Vice President of Policy to Practice

Alliance for Excellent Education
Thank you!