

Interagency collaboration is highlighted in federal legislation such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004), Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015), and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA, 2014) as necessary for preparing students for postschool life, including employment. Although recently appearing in legislation, the idea of interagency collaboration is not new. Over 25 years ago, Halpern (1994) noted interagency collaboration should occur early to foster “a seamless transition of agency responsibilities” (p. 123). Despite being an important predictor of employment success (Mazzotti et al., 2021), interagency collaboration can be difficult to establish and maintain. Periodic assessments of interagency collaboration can help to identify opportunities for growth and improvement.

What are Interagency Collaboration Evaluations?

Interagency collaboration has been defined as “a relationship between two or more people, agencies, or organizations that is well defined and mutually beneficial” (Test et al., 2006). To address the effectiveness of these mutually beneficial relationships between people, agencies, and organizations, education professionals and collaborative partners can use interagency collaboration evaluations. These evaluations assess levels of collaboration among people from different agencies and organi-

zations. To maximize the usefulness of interagency collaboration evaluations, it is critical participants from all agencies involved complete the evaluations (Frey et al., 2006; Noonan et al., 2013).

Research on Interagency Collaboration Evaluations

The *Transition Collaboration Survey* (TSC; Noonan et al., 2013) is based on research-supported quality indicators of collaboration. The TSC consists of 15 items that are self-rated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (not true of me now) to 5 (very true of me now). Items measure beliefs (e.g., “I feel that transition meetings with others are productive”), abilities (e.g., “I can summarize the shared vision in transition education/services”), and actions (e.g., “I regularly work with staff outside my school/organization to coordinate transition services”).

Like the TSC, the *Levels of Collaboration Scale* (LCS; Frey et al., 2006), is a self-evaluation designed to be completed by each collaborative partner (e.g., teacher, rehabilitation counselor, parent, social services coordinator). The scale defines five levels of collaboration (see Table 1). Users of the scale are asked to review the definition of each level of collaboration and then rate the level of collaboration they experience with every collaborative partner. Level of collaboration is rated using a 6-point scale ranging from 0 (no interaction at all) to 5 (collaboration).

Table 1

Sample Descriptions of the Levels of Collaboration from the LCS

Networking	Cooperation	Coordination	Coalition	Collaboration
Aware of organization Little communication	Provide information to each other Formal communication	Share information and resources Frequent communication	Share ideas and resources Frequent and prioritized communication	Members belong to one collaborative system Frequent communication and mutual trust

Note. Table based on Frey et al. (2006). LCS=Levels of Collaboration Scale

Guidelines for Practice

When conducting interagency collaboration evaluations, it is important to ensure that there is consistency in how participants are responding to the assessment. Frey et al. (2006) recommend that collaborative partners complete the evaluation based on their personal experience rather than their beliefs about how the collective group is functioning. Also important, choose an assessment that matches the type of information needed about interagency collaboration efforts. For example, the TSC provides information about the experiences of team members as it relates to quality transition indicators while the LCS provides information specifically about the level of collaboration present among team members.

Interagency collaboration evaluations can be used whenever there is a need to assess the effectiveness of interagency collaboration. Some groups may find them helpful to use at the beginning and end of the school year to determine whether changes have occurred over the year. Others may find them useful when new members join the team or when a team appears to be experiencing increased challenges working together. By conducting periodic evaluations, teams can identify opportunities for growth that help maximize the collaborative efforts of their interagency partnerships.

Additional Resources

Interagency Collaboration Toolkit
transitionta.org/interagency-agreement-toolkit/

Levels of Collaboration Scale
journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1098214006290356

Transition Collaboration Survey
doi.org/10.1177/2165143412451119

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