

*A Webinar from AUCD's Council on Research and Evaluation (CORE)*

# **Writing Competitive Grants to the Institute of Education Sciences**

*Tuesday, August 9, 2016 2:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.*

*Presented by*

***Dr. Erik Carter and Ms. Kimberley Sprague***

# SUPPORTING RESEARCH THROUGH IES/NCSE

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# An Opportunity For...

- Supporting the core function of research
- Leveraging core funding
- Supporting work relevant to children and youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities, particularly individuals with severe and low-incidence disabilities
- Enabling work with larger samples (> funding ranges)
- Conducting research using multiple methodologies, including qualitative research, single-case research, descriptive studies, and secondary data analyses
- Forging new collaborations with faculty elsewhere on your campus (e.g., special education, education, related services, psychology)
- Funding the work of “early career” scholars

# Also An Place For...

- Keeping abreast of some of the most rigorous research in the field
- Accessing methodological resources, such as:
  - ***Translating the Statistical Representation of the Effects of Education Interventions into More Readily Interpretable Forms***
  - ***Designing Cluster-Randomized Trials***
  - ***Power Analysis***
  - ***Technical Methods Resources***
- Viewing IES Training Institute presentations, such as:
  - ***Single-Case Intervention Research Design and Analysis***
  - ***Cluster Randomized Trials (RCT) Workshops***
  - ***Summer Quasi-Experimental Design Workshop***
  - ***Implementation Science: Building the Bridge between Science and Practice***
- Drawing upon a variety of available datasets (NCES)

# Some Strengths of UCEDDs

- Diverse faculty and staff expertise
- Access to trainees
- Strong community partnerships
- A network for multi-state projects
- A network for consulting, advising, and other needed expertise
- Excellent dissemination pathways
- Other resources to support your school and community partners along the way



Connecting Research,  
Policy and Practice

# Writing Competitive Grants to the Institute of Education Sciences

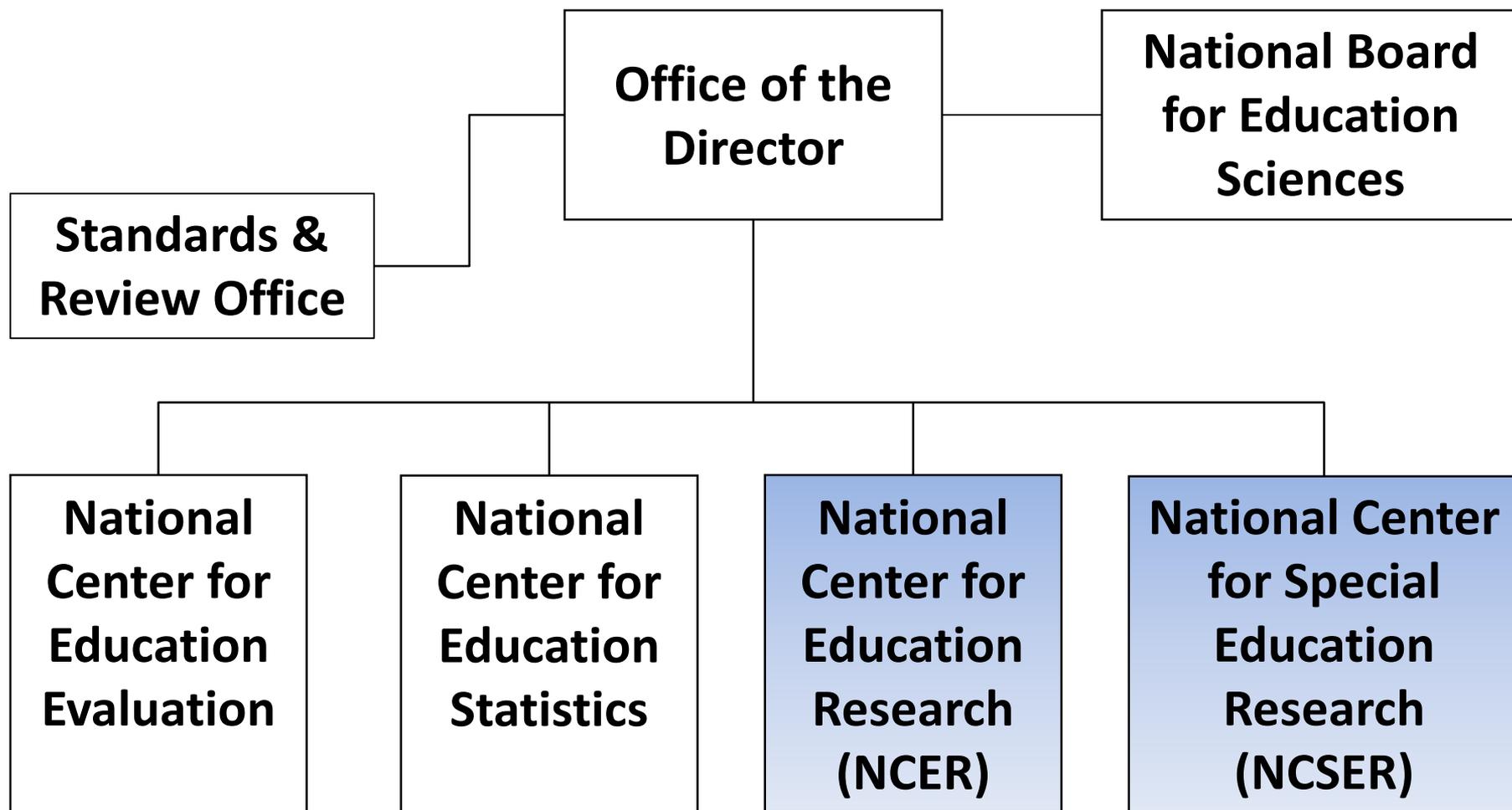
## Webinar for the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD) Network

**Kim Sprague**

Program Officer

National Center for Special Education Research

# Organizational Structure of IES



# Objectives of the Research Grant Programs

- Develop or identify education interventions (practices, programs, policies, and approaches)
  - that enhance academic achievement
  - that can be widely deployed
- Identify what does not work and thereby encourage innovation and further research
- Understand the processes that underlie the effectiveness of education interventions and the variation in their effectiveness



|   |                          |  |  |  |                  |
|---|--------------------------|--|--|--|------------------|
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| <b>For Researchers</b>                    | <b>NewsFlash</b>         | <b>IES Research Conference</b>                   |  |  | <b>ED.gov</b>    |
| <b>Funding Opportunities</b>              | <b>Press Releases</b>    | <b>Conferences, Training and Presentations</b>   |  |  | <b>Newsflash</b> |
| <b>News &amp; Events</b>                  | <b>RSS Feeds</b>         | <b>Bridge Events</b>                             |  |  | <b>IES Blog</b>  |
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(IES), the nation's leading source for rigorous, independent education research, evaluation and statistics.

National Center for Education Research    National Center for Education Statistics    National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance    National Center for Special Education Research

**WHAT'S NEW AT IES**

- MAY 17** [IES Releases Research Funding Webinars Schedule](#)  
 The National Center for Special Education Research and the National Center for Education Research within the Institute of Education Sciences will host a series of webinars related to research funding opportunities in May, June and July of 2016. [» More info](#)
- MAY 17** [Shy Students May Benefit Academically from the INSIGHTS Program, According to a Well-Executed Study](#)  
 The results of a recent study show that INSIGHTS into Children's Temperament, a program designed to enhance the development of students at risk for academic and behavioral difficulties in elementary school, improved academic outcomes for shy students. The program aims to improve the fit between the classroom environment and students' individual temperaments. The study is a well-executed randomized controlled trial with low attrition that meets WWC group design standards without reservations. [» More info](#)
- MAY 17** [REL Northwest Study Looks at College Readiness at the University of Alaska](#)  
 REL Northwest finds that high school GPA is a strong predictor of student

**FEATURED PUBLICATIONS**



[Guide to Elementary/Secondary Virtual Education Data](#)

The National Forum on Education Statistics, administered by NCES, created this guide to develop accurate, high-quality data on the performance of students engaged in virtual learning.

[Summary of Research Generated by Striving Readers on the Effectiveness of Interventions for Struggling Adolescent Readers](#)

The Striving Readers program aims to raise the literacy levels of middle and high school students who are reading below grade level and to build a strong research

# 84.324A Research Topics

**324A Special Education Research**

**Cognition & Student Learning in Special Education**

**Early Intervention & Early Learning in Special Education**

**Technology for Special Education**

**Professional Development for Teachers & Other Instructional Personnel**

**Special Education Policy, Finance, & Systems**

**Mathematics & Science Education**

**Reading, Writing, & Language Development**

**Social and Behavioral Outcomes to Support Learning**

**Autism Spectrum Disorders**

**Families of Children with Disabilities**

**Transition Outcomes for Secondary Students with Disabilities**

# 84.305A & 84.324A Research Goals

1. Exploration
2. Development & Innovation
3. Efficacy & Replication
4. Effectiveness
5. Measurement



# Exploration Goal

- Explore associations between malleable factors and outcomes
- Identify factors and conditions that may mediate or moderate relations between malleable factors and outcomes
- Possible methodological approaches include:
  - Analyze secondary data
  - Collect primary data
  - Complete a meta-analysis
  - Combination of above

# Development & Innovation Goal

- Develop an innovative intervention (e.g., curriculum, instructional approach, program, or policy) **OR** improve existing education interventions
- **AND** collect data on its feasibility, usability, and fidelity of implementation in actual education settings
- **AND** collect pilot data on promise



# Efficacy & Replication Goal

- Evaluate whether or not a fully developed intervention is efficacious under limited or ideal conditions

OR

- Generate additional evidence for an efficacious intervention by directly replicating or varying the original conditions

OR

- Gather follow-up data examining the longer term effects of an efficacious intervention

OR

- Analyze retrospective (historical) secondary data to test the efficacy of an intervention implemented in the past

# Effectiveness Goal

- Evaluate whether a fully developed intervention that has evidence of efficacy is effective when implemented under typical conditions through an independent evaluation
- Prior to submitting an effectiveness proposal, at least one efficacy study of the intervention with beneficial and practical impacts must have been completed

# Measurement Goal

- Development of new assessments or refinement of existing assessments, and the validation of these assessments

**OR**

- Validation of existing assessments for specific purposes, contexts and populations

**RESOURCES FOR RESEARCHERS**

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**Webinars**

To view presentations for current and past research funding opportunities webinars, [click here](#).



**Methodological Resources**

For methodological resources to assist in preparing an IES research grant application, [click here](#).



**Video Presentations**

To view selected presentations, handouts, and videos from previous IES Research Conferences and Summer Research Training Institutes, [click here](#).



**Available Datasets and Tools**

To learn more about datasets available to researchers, [click here](#).



**Peer Review Process**

For additional information about the IES peer review process for research grants and reports, [click here](#).



**Public Access to Research**

For information on IES' policy regarding public access to research, [click here](#)



**How Can I Learn About IES Funded Research?**

A listing of education conferences where IES-funded researchers typically present their findings, and when available, information about IES-funded presentations at those conferences throughout the year.

Click [here](#) for printable flyers about IES resources for researchers and grant applicants.

# When Writing a Grant Application

- Read the Request for Applications
  - <http://ies.ed.gov/funding>
- Look at abstracts of funded projects
  - <http://ies.ed.gov/ncer/projects>
  - <http://ies.ed.gov/ncser/projects>
- Take part in IES webinars
  - <http://ies.ed.gov/funding/webinars/index.asp>
- Discuss your research idea with a program officer
  - Email a synopsis and schedule a time for a call
  - Email short questions

# A COUPLE EXAMPLES...

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IES/NCSER-Funded Research Projects

# Goal 2: Transition Outcomes

- *Project Summer: Improving Summer Employment and Community Inclusion Outcomes for Transition-Age Youth with Disabilities*
- Development and Innovation Project (\$915,346)
- Some Example Components
  - Descriptive studies of summer experiences of youth with disabilities, transition-related skills of youth, and views of administrators and employers
  - Qualitative studies focused on special educators, youth, parents, employers, community connectors, and community members
  - Secondary analyses of NLTS-2 employment data
  - Randomized design to evaluate pilot interventions (one variation for youth with severe disabilities, another for youth with EBD)

# Our Development Process

## Phase 1

- To what extent are youth with disabilities involved in employment and other community experiences during the summer months?
- What factors influence youth participation in these activities?



## Phase 2

- What are the key barriers to and facilitators of youth employment?
- What recommendations do stakeholders have for improving summer opportunities for youth with disabilities?



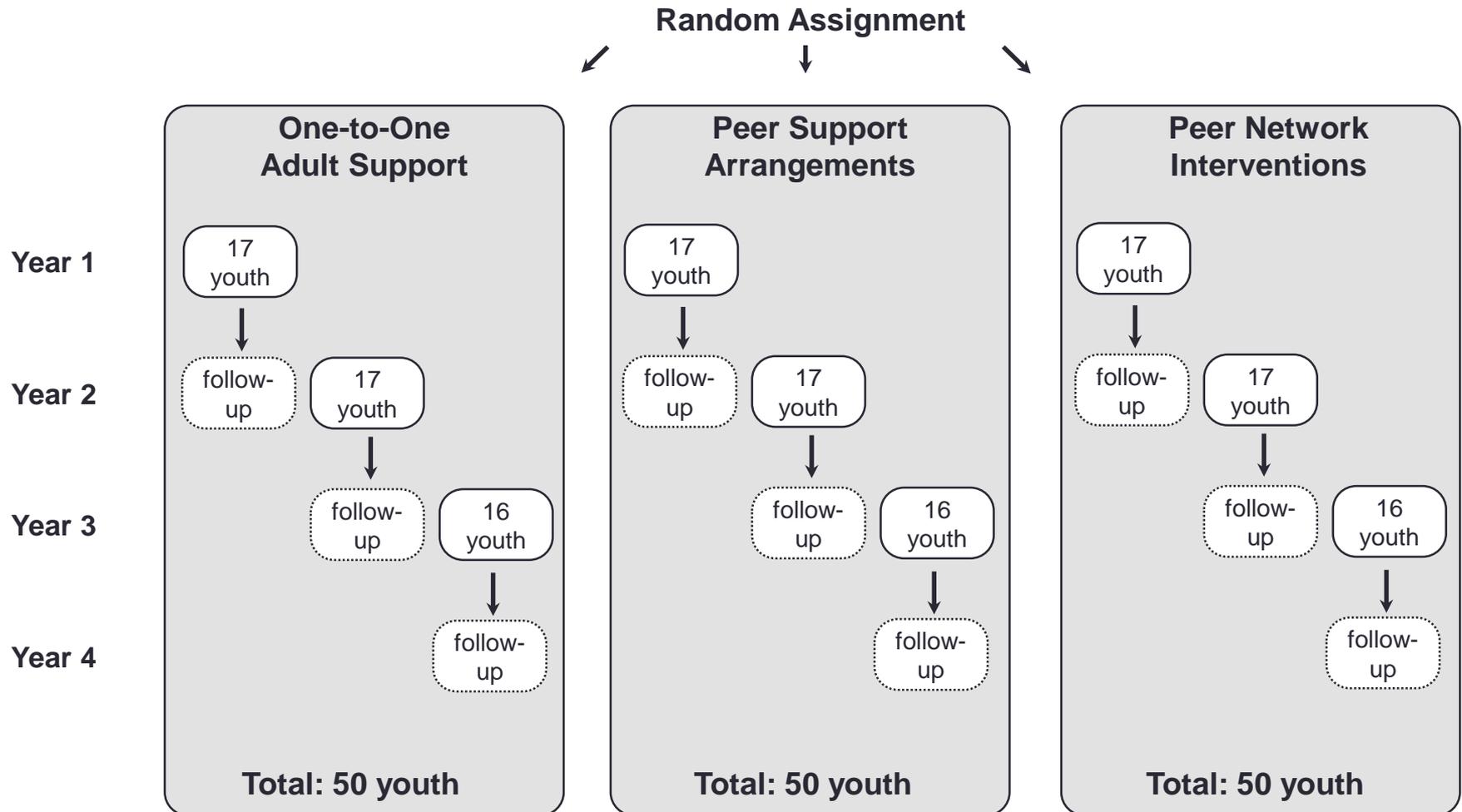
## Phase 3

How might we design transition planning, instruction, and supports to increase employment and other community experiences for youth with severe disabilities or EBD during the summer months?

# Goal 3: Transition Outcomes

- *Peer Support and Peer Network Interventions to Improve Peer Relationships and School Engagement*
- Efficacy and Replication Project (\$2,279,679)
- Vanderbilt Kennedy Center + UW-Madison Waisman Center
- Some Example Components
  - Observational study of social interaction and access to general education
  - Descriptive studies of social skills, community involvement, and peer relationships of youth with severe disabilities
  - Qualitative studies involving youth with and without disabilities, special educators, and parents
  - Randomized design to evaluate efficacy of two interventions: peer support arrangements and peer networks

# Original Study Design



# Some Benefits as a UCEDD...

- Developed a number of practitioner resources (TEC, book chapters, guides) to support stakeholders throughout our state (and nationally)
- Forged new relationships with schools throughout the state, which we accessed for other projects
- Draw upon our findings and newly intervention components to obtain additional funding (e.g., AIDD, DOE, state contracts)
- Integrated findings and interventions into trainings and professional development offerings

# CRAFTING A COMPELLING PROPOSAL

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A Few Tips

# A Few Observations

- Preparing these grants is a substantial undertaking—begin very early
- Most grants do not fund the first time (3x for our Goal 3)—submit often
- Colleagues in the field will (usually) share elements of their applications
- Project officers are invested in supporting strong applications—converse with them
- Master the RFA—address every component fully and align your language
- Rigor, relevance, and reach all matter, each more than the others—fully attend to all three

# Significance Section

- The importance of a good idea
  - To you
  - To the field
  - To partnering schools
- Craft a compelling case for the need
  - Theoretical support
  - Prior empirical work or pilot data
  - Legislation or policy
  - Personnel needs
- Tell reviewers why this work is essential
- Clearly articulate the project goals or research questions

# Research Plan Section

- Align directly with the RFA; use its language when appropriate
- Be clear, concise, and comprehensible
- State what do you plan to do, how you plan to do it, and when you plan to do it
- Make it easy for reviewers to find essential information; use headings and visuals
- Think like a reviewer
- Be ambitious...but keep the project feasible

**Figure 1: Overview of Project Summer Studies**

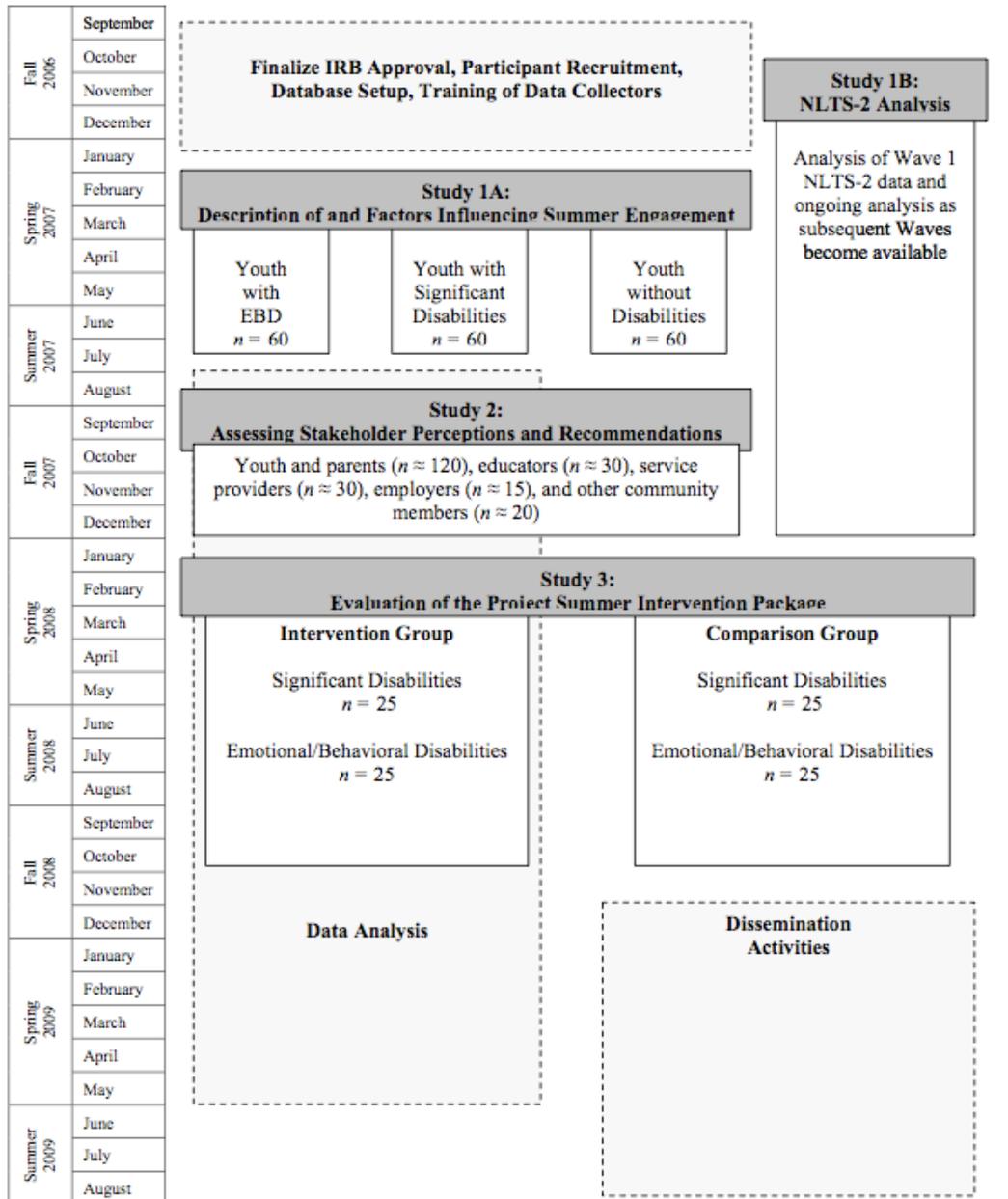


Figure 2: *Project Timeline and Persons Responsible* (continued)

| <b>Year 2 Activities (2007-2008)</b>            | Sep               | Oct | Nov | Dec    | Jan    | Feb | Mar    | Apr | May | Jun    | Jul | Aug |
|---|-------------------|-----|-----|--------|--------|-----|--------|-----|-----|--------|-----|-----|
| Biweekly project meetings                       | All Project Staff |     |     |        |        |     |        |     |     |        |     |     |
| Advisory board meetings                         | PI PC             |     |     |        |        |     | PI PC  |     |     |        |     |     |
| Analyze descriptive data (Study 1a)             | PIs PA            |     |     |        |        |     |        |     |     |        |     |     |
| Refine data collection instruments as needed    |                   |     |     |        |        |     | PIs PC |     |     |        |     |     |
| Ongoing analysis of NLTS-2 data (Study 1b)      | PI PA             |     |     |        |        |     |        |     |     |        |     |     |
| Refine focus groups protocols (Study 2)         | PI PC             |     |     |        |        |     |        |     |     |        |     |     |
| Develop and distribute questionnaires (Study 2) | PIs PAs           |     |     |        |        |     |        |     |     |        |     |     |
| Analyze stakeholder perception data (Study 2)   |                   |     |     | PI PA  |        |     |        |     |     |        |     |     |
| Obtain consent and assent forms (Study 3)       | PC PA             |     |     |        |        |     |        |     |     |        |     |     |
| Identify/train community connectors (Study 3)   | PC PI             |     |     |        |        |     |        |     |     |        |     |     |
| Refine preliminary intervention package         | PIs               |     |     |        |        |     |        |     |     |        |     |     |
| Begin Project Summer intervention (Study 3)     |                   |     |     | PIs PC |        |     |        |     |     |        |     |     |
| Data collection (Study 3)                       |                   |     |     |        |        |     | PAs    |     |     |        |     |     |
| Disseminate project findings (Studies 1 & 2)    |                   |     |     |        | PIs PC |     |        |     |     |        |     |     |
| Develop project website                         |                   |     |     |        | PI WC  |     |        |     |     |        |     |     |
| Prepare and submit annual performance report    |                   |     |     |        |        |     |        |     |     | PIs PC |     |     |

Note: PI = Project Investigator(s), PC = Project Coordinator, PA = Project Assistant(s). WC = Waisman Center staff.

students. We anticipate limited student attrition, as this segment of the school population is fairly stable and unlikely to drop out. Our previous work also indicates teacher/paraprofessional attrition will be minimal, as these intervention strategies have evidence of social validity (Carter & Pesko, 2008; Copeland et al., 2002), paraprofessionals typically have few professional development opportunities (Carter, O'Rourke, Sisco, & Pelsue, in press), and staff will be provided stipends for their time.

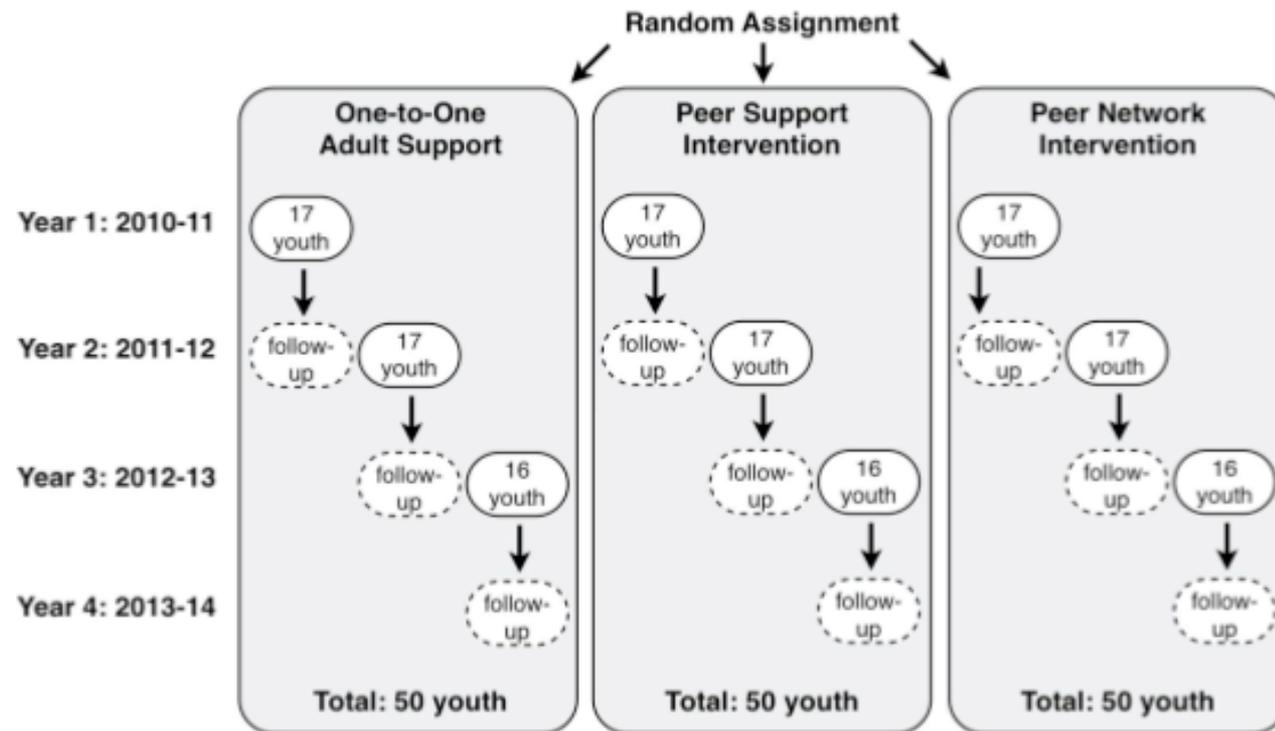
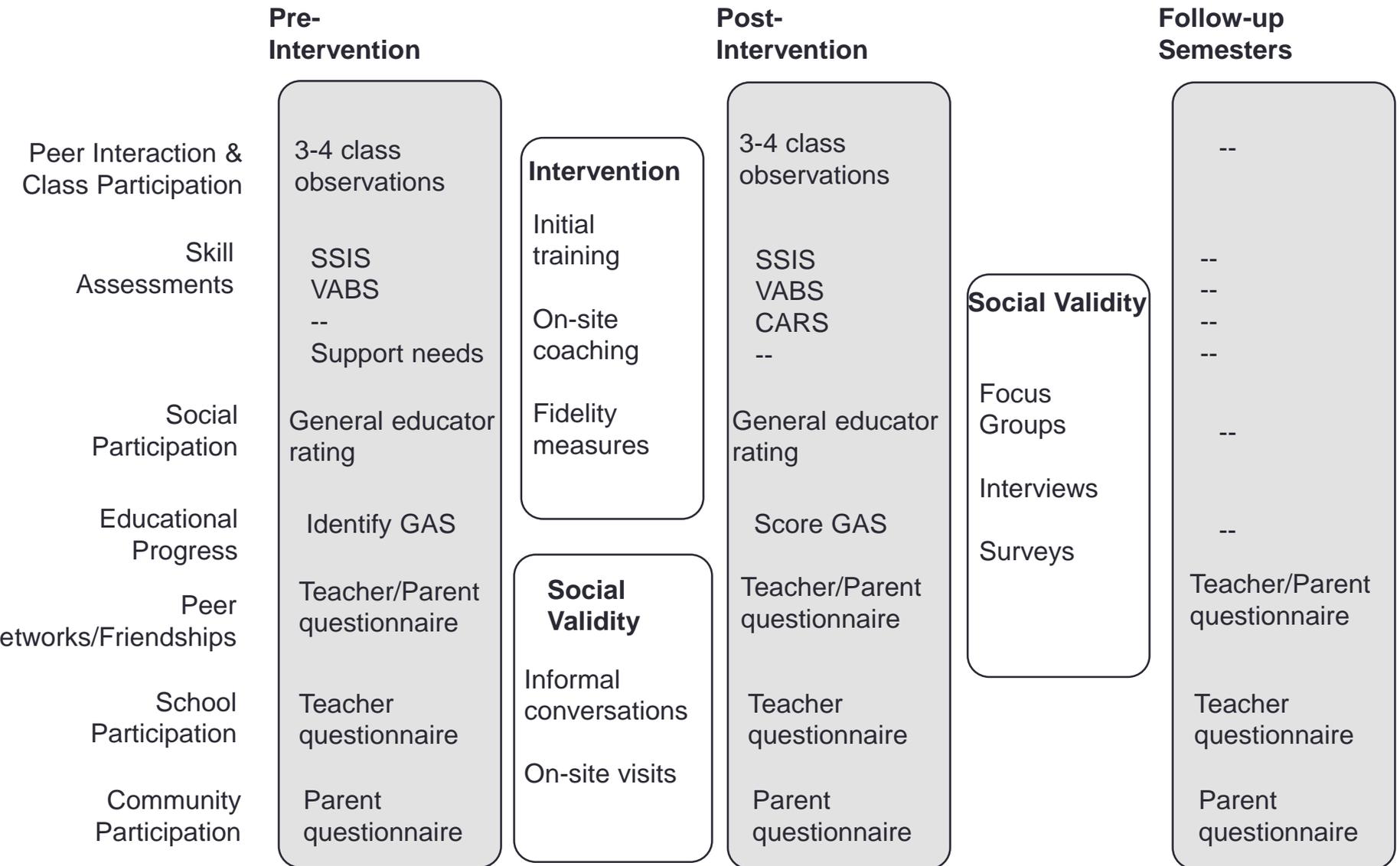


Figure 2. Design overview and recruitment timeline.

### Settings

This project is a collaborative effort with at least 10 high schools in Dane county, Wisconsin. The very diverse student populations served by these nine districts, and the emphasis



# Personnel Section

- Assemble a strong team
- Clear expertise in the areas addressed by the project
- Documented experience
- Include a more experienced researcher
- Add needed consultation
- Make sure sufficient time is committed



**As part of this project, these districts and high schools express their commitment to:**

- Assist the project team in identifying and inviting youth, teachers, paraprofessionals, and families to participate in the project.
- Review and offer input into research protocols and permission forms for their appropriateness to and readability for parents and school staff.
- Provide ongoing collaboration and communication opportunities between project staff and educators serving these youth.
- Support project staff to implement research project activities (e.g., classroom observations, completion of project assessments, training of special educators and paraprofessionals) that lead to the development and implementation of peer support interventions in general education classroom and peer networks outside the classroom for students involved in the project.
- Allow project staff access to student records for participating youth with disabilities.
- Review and critique project findings in terms of their validity for and value to educators, students, and families of youth with severe disabilities.
- Provide input and suggestions regarding dissemination efforts within and beyond the district

### **Memorandum of Understanding**

*Peer Support and Peer Network Interventions to  
Improve Peer Relationships and School Engagement*

...nities to disseminate project

The social and learning opportunities that high schools provide to students with severe disabilities (i.e., moderate-to-severe intellectual disabilities, autism) really do matter. Adolescent peer relationships provide a rich context within which students develop social, academic, leisure, and other life skills; learn about peer norms and values; and exchange important emotional, social, and practical support. Participation in a range of academic and elective classes, extracurricular offerings, and other school activities provide a context for students to expand their interests, develop their strengths, become more self-determined, and raise their aspirations.

# Resources Section

- Relationships with schools and other organizations
- Strong letters of support
- Tightly tailor the institutional boiler plate to your proposal

# Other General Tips

- Read the structured abstracts of projects funded in your competition and/or goal area
- Watch the research funding webinars (<http://ies.ed.gov/funding/index.asp#webinar>)
- Get feedback on early drafts:
  - Collaborators and consultants on the project
  - Colleagues who have had similar funding
  - Project officer
  - Others not directly involved in the writing or have some distance from the topic
  - Remember: Reviewers will not always be intimately familiar with your area of the field
- Be persistent, responsive, and patient

The screenshot shows the IES search interface. At the top, it says "IES Institute of Education Sciences" with a search bar. Below that, it says "FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES | SEARCH FUNDED RESEARCH GRANTS AND CONTRACTS". There is a "Search Term(s):" field with a "Search" button and a "Show Results" link. Below that, there are "Search by:" options: "Title", "Award", "Principal Investigator", "Organization", "Program", and "Award Number". Underneath, there are "ADDITIONAL SEARCH OPTIONS" with dropdown menus for "Award", "Program", "Principal Investigator", "Goal", "Center", and "Fund Type". There are also "Show All" links for each dropdown menu.

***Thank you!!***

***Please take a few minutes to  
complete our survey!***