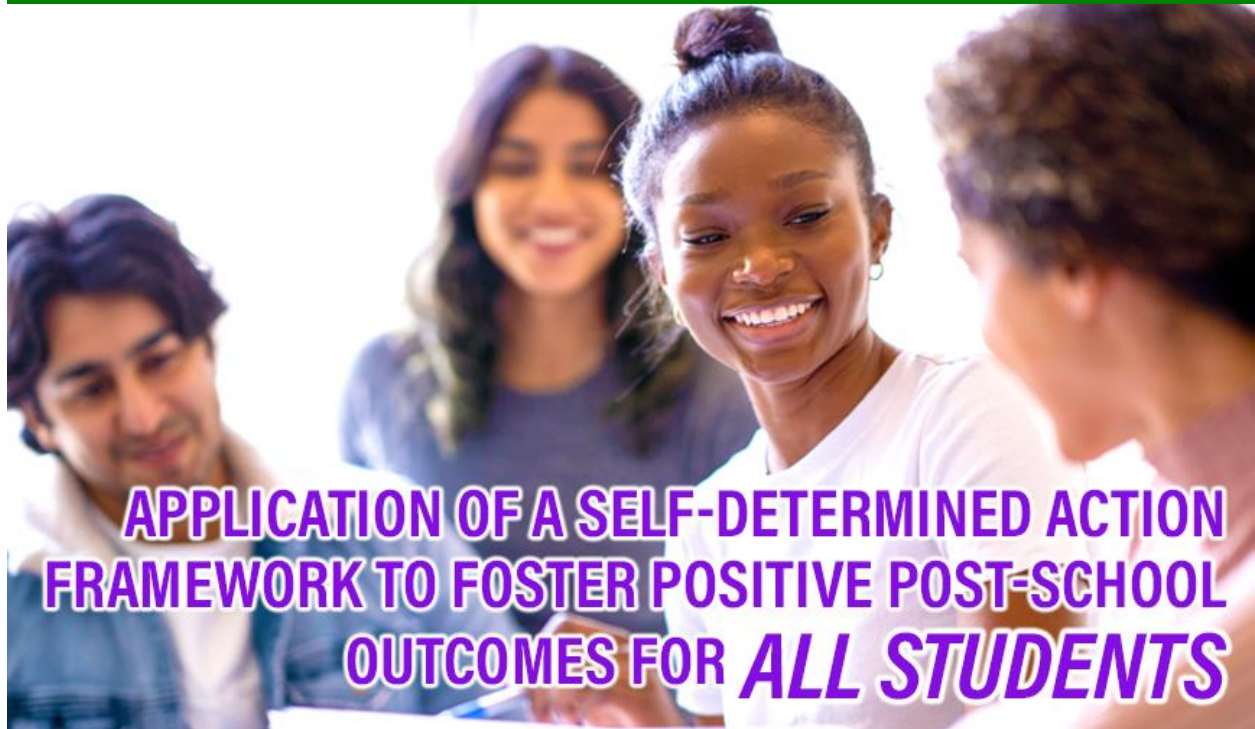




# Ready, Set, Go

*Success for All*

An e-Newsletter linking people and resources to support quality practices in the education of all students



Critical to positive post-school outcomes, self-determination skills increase student's ability to make decisions independently, enhance problem solving abilities, establish and attain personal goals, and promote self-awareness (Test et al., 2014). Infusing instruction of self-determined actions into school curriculum and providing opportunities to exercise skills leads to student identification of meaningful learning goals across multiple curricular domains. Students with higher levels of self-determination competencies present with improved employment and community outcomes, greater access to job benefits, increased earning potential, a measurably higher quality of life, and higher levels of post-secondary success (Mumbardó-Adam et al., 2017).

## Get Ready

Educators are often indirectly targeting skills associated with self-determination. A self-determined action framework can formalize the delivery of transition planning and services for acquisition of self-determination skills and provide an instructional foundation for educators to support student development and achievement of personal goals (Shogren et al., 2019). A self-determined instructional model promotes student-directed learning for transition planning and can be integrated into existing curriculum in core content areas (Raley et al., 2018). The Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction (SDLMI) is an evidence-based instructional model that promotes attainment of post-secondary goals and development of skills associated with self-determination. The framework's specific instructional strategies provide opportunities for students to practice self-determination skills and guide teachers in supporting student achievement of self-set goals (Shogren et al., 2019). The SDLMI has three distinct phases:

- Phase 1: Set a Goal
- Phase 2: Take Action
- Phase 3: Adjust Goal or Plan

Each phase is comprised of student directed questions linked to teacher objectives and educational supports (Shogren et. al., 2019). Educators can individualize instruction based on student needs using strategies such as systematically designing instruction, adapting curriculum and materials, and providing positive and constructive feedback to guide student learning. Students receiving instruction through the SDLMI model show significantly higher goal attainment over a school year (Raley et al., 2020).

## Get Set

School divisions in Region 4 are providing students with more opportunities to develop and practice skills associated with self-determination by incorporating SDLMI key words and prompts into instruction across all content areas. The instructional practices enhance student's knowledge of self-determined actions and create an inclusive instructional environment for all students. Each division has taken a distinctive approach based on division goals and long-range plans and are in various stages of action framework implementation.

## Go

Frederick County Public School District is promoting acquisition of skills associated with self-determination through a Student Leader Program at Sherando High School that began in August of 2022. George Mason University Training and Technical Assistance Center (GMU TTAC) guided program start-up and provided ongoing support and assistance throughout its implementation. The goal of the program is to improve student's post-secondary outcomes using an instructional model that provides explicit instruction on skills associated with self-determination, and opportunities to practice and use those skills (Shogren et al., 2019). Students in the program employed

self-determined actions towards personal goal attainment; thereby, increasing overall academic and social-emotional success. Students in the Leader Program served as youth leaders in their home school and modeled the qualities and behaviors of self-determination when engaging with peers and adults. The division fostered family involvement by engaging in on-going open dialogue about self-determination and integrating families' unique preferences, beliefs, and values into the process (Shogren et al., 2019). The division also held a Mini-Youth and Parent Summit in October 2022. Frederick County will expand the Student Leader Program into its two additional high schools in the fall of 2023. GMU TTAC will continue to provide technical assistance and support to the division.

Shenandoah County Public School District began a Youth Leader Program in October 2022. The SDLMI action model served as the instructional framework for student development of self-determined actions. GMU TTAC guided program start-up and provided ongoing support and assistance throughout its implementation. Youth leaders supported the SDLMI instructor by modeling the application of self-determined behaviors during classroom instruction. The Youth Leader program enabled students to effectively initiate self-determined actions and extended the delivery of explicit instructional practices into classrooms. The divisions' next phase of implementation will incorporate the use of a video series developed through the I'm Determined Project. The videos feature three high school students facing challenges on their journey to becoming more self-determined individuals and are designed to help youth, teachers, and parents have meaningful conversations about the elements of self-determination. The division will incorporate professional learning for educators provided by GMU TTAC and ongoing instructional assistance and support.

Warren County Public School District focused on enhancing educator's instructional practices through a self-paced professional learning series provided by GMU TTAC. Modules incorporated use of High Leverage Practices (HLPs) into the secondary transition flow of services. Each module offers instructional strategies for educators to ensure students take a meaningful role in the transition planning process. Key SDLMI terms, examples related to postschool outcomes, and opportunities for students to practice skills associated with self-determination are incorporated into each phase of the service model. Activities that encourage special educators to reflect on current practices are embedded into the modules and application projects for participants to apply information learned in each session. On-going coaching and technical assistance are provided by GMU TTAC.

**GO check out additional resources and tools:** Begin infusing instruction of self-determined actions into school curriculum and providing opportunities to exercise skills.

[Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction](#)

[Zarrow Center: Assessments to Target Self-Determination Skills](#)

[Zarrow Center: Self-Determination Curriculum](#)

[The I'm Determined Project](#)

[The Field Hoffman Self-Determination Assessment Battery](#)

[McGill Action Plan System](#)

## References

- Mumbardó-Adam, C., Shogren, K. A., Guàrdia-Olmos, J. & Ginè., C. (2017). Contextual predictors of self-determined actions in students with and without intellectual disabilities. *Psychology in the Schools*, 54(2), 183-195.
- Raley, S. K., Burke, K. M., Hagiwara, M., Shogren, K. A., Wehmeyer, M. L., & Kurth, J. A. (2020). The self-determined learning model of instruction and students with extensive support needs in inclusive settings. *Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities*, 58(1), 82-90.
- Raley, S. K. Shogren, K. A., & McDonald, A. (2018). A. How to implement the self-determined model of instruction in inclusive general education classrooms. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 51(1), 62-71.
- Shogren, K. A., Raley, S. K., Burke, K. M., & Wehmeyer, M. L. (2019). *The Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction Teacher's Guide*. Lawrence, KS: Kansas University Center of Developmental Disabilities.
- Test, D. W., Smith, L. E., & Carter, E. W. (2014). Equipping youth with autism spectrum disorders for adulthood: Promoting rigor, relevance, and relationships. *Remedial and Special Education*, 35(2), 80-90.  
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0741932513514857>

This e-Newsletter is a collaborative effort of the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Training and Technical Assistance Centers (TTACs) at George Mason University and James Madison University. This issue was prepared by the staff at the VDOE TTAC at George Mason University. For questions about content, please contact Dr. Patricia Morgan, [pmorga2@gmu.edu](mailto:pmorga2@gmu.edu).

TTAC @ GMU

VDOE

TTAC Online

VA Family Website