

II. Executive Summary

This annual grant performance report describes the progress made on objectives of Project EVOLVE (**Expanding and Validating Options for Learning through Variations in Education**), CFDA 84.234M (H324M020007). The Project EVOLVE model is a team planning process that relies on an adaptation of validated problem-solving methods. The model addresses an important need of national significance, namely the development, implementation, and evaluation of alternatives to current service delivery practices to support students with disabilities in general education classes. The need for the model builds on recent research that has described significant problems with existing service delivery support strategies that rely heavily, sometimes inappropriately, on paraprofessionals to deliver educational services. Despite the absence of efficacy data, the increasing utilization of paraprofessionals has become a prominent service delivery model for including students with disabilities. Although recent studies have highlighted numerous concerns about this approach, viable service delivery alternatives have not been described in the literature, implemented on a broad scale, or adequately evaluated. Project EVOLVE is helping to fill that void by contributing descriptive, practical, and evaluative information and strategies for school personnel, policy makers, parents and self-advocates to use in tailoring supports and building capacity to educate students with disabilities in general education settings.

The project's first seven months have been extremely productive in terms of product development, field-testing, data collection, and dissemination. The Project Status (III) sections detail the project's progress to date.