Creating a Comprehensive Statement of Special Education and Aids and Services Within the IEP

[Slide 1- Creating a Comprehensive Statement of Special Education and Aids and Services Within the IEP] Tessie Bailey: All right, welcome to today's webinar, Creating a Comprehensive Statement of Special Education and Aids and Services Within the IEP. Today's webinar is hosted by the PROGRESS Center at the American Institutes for Research, we are an Office of Special Education Programs-funded center aimed at promoting progress for students with disabilities.

[Slide 2- Welcome to the PROGRESS Center!] Tessie Bailey: My name is Tessie Bailey, and I am the director of the PROGRESS Center. The center was funded in 2019 to provide information, resources, tools, and technical assistance to support local educators in developing and implementing high quality educational programming. Now, to support local educators we share things like guidance and tools. We have resources, and they're all based on existing research, state and federal law and policy as well as local experiences. We also partner with a select group of local educators to develop their knowledge, skills and infrastructure to promote progress for students with disabilities, and we also seek their feedback about how we can improve our supports and our resources.

[Slide 3- Why We Do What We Do] Tessie Bailey: Now, the center was developed in response to the Endrew F. Decision, and that states that an individualized education program or IEP must be reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in light of the child's circumstances. Under the IDEA, the IEP serves as the foundation of promoting progress for students with disabilities, and over the last year we have released a number of tip sheets, online modules and webinars to really support educators in the development of the individualized educational plan - or programming.

[Slide 4- Promoting Progress for Students with Disabilities] Tessie Bailey: And so to ensure that, you know, students do receive free, appropriate public education or FAPE, and improved outcomes for students with disabilities, the PROGRESS Center supports educators in the development and implementation of that programming, and as I mentioned before, that well designed IEP outlines the supports and services that are necessary to promote progress towards those ambitious goals. Now, we know that for students to really benefit, that we have to have programming that's delivered with a high degree of fidelity, using evidence-based and high-leverage practices. Today's webinar is part of a larger series of trainings and resources to support local educators in both the development as well as the implementation of that programming.

[Slide 5- Poll] Tessie Bailey: Now, before we get started, we just want to learn a little bit about you, and so we'd like you to take a moment to respond to our very simple poll question, and it asks, what is your current role that has led you to learn more about the statement of special education, services and aids for students with disabilities within the IEP? You'll see a number of options are available for you, so are you a special ed teacher, general ed teacher, maybe you're a service provider, and we do have in the chat box, if you click other, to make

sure that you tell us who you are or what role you play in your school. We're really looking forward to that interaction.

All right, we have some parent mentors, we have a lot of TA staff, interpreters, SLPs. Let's see our poll responses. We have some directors, great. So if you look at our responses, you'll see that most folks, we have a lot of faculty members or professional development providers. We do have some administrators and special education teachers on the call. So if you do have any questions as we're moving through this, please use the chat box. You can use the Q&A if you want to do that anonymously or you can use the chat box if you'd like, just an immediate response or you want to open your questions up to other folks within the session. We're so glad that you're able to join us.

[Slide 6- Objectives] Tessie Bailey: We have a couple of objectives that we're trying to achieve today. First, we want to make sure we explain IDEA's definition for the statement of special education and aids and services, and it might be surprising to you that what we often think about as four different parts of the IEP really fall under a single statement under the federal act. We're also going to clarify and provide some examples of special education, related services, and supplementary aids and services, as well as program modifications and supports which make up that statement. And we're going to share some tips and resources for developing that comprehensive needs-based statement by an IEP team. As a reminder, we can only share so much in our short period of time, so if you are looking for additional guidance and professional learning, we're going to share a number of resources at the end of today's session that can help you learn more about that.

[Slide 7- Session Presenter] Tessie Bailey: I'm pleased to introduce our primary speaker today, Steven Prater. He serves as a TA Provider for the PROGRESS Center. For almost 20 years he has worked at the state and local level in general and special education. Now, prior to joining the center, he led a project for the state of Texas in partnership with the National Center on Intensive Intervention, and it focused on training school and district staff on the use of data-based individualization. He is a former secondary math teacher, a licensed specialist in school psychology, a campus administrator, and a manager of a technical assistance project in special education at TEA. Welcome, Steven.

[Slide 8- Amanda Findley Video Presentation] Steven Prater: Thank you very much, and glad to be here, everybody. Thank you. Like Tessie said, I'm a technical assistance provider for the PROGRESS Center, but before we start my presentation, we do have a video that we want to show. This video is from one of our educators in residence, Amanda Findley. She's a national board-certified teacher; she received her master's in teaching from the University of Washington. She's been a teacher in a private school setting and spent over a decade as an elementary resource room teacher in a public school. She's been a mentor teacher for general and special education teachers, and she's been a supervising teacher to student teachers. Currently she works in a transition program. And so she's going to explain how her and her team approaches writing the statement of services and aids.

Amanda Findley: So, when I am writing the statement of special education, related services, and supplementary aids and services, I will include within the present levels of performance separate statements of what's being provided within each area in which the student receives services. For example, if a student receives specially designed instruction and adaptive skills, I will state that the student is receiving specially designed instruction in that area, outline where the service occurs, and how often it's occurring. And the related service providers write similar statement in their particular areas within the present levels of performance.

For supplementary aids and services such as one to one support, I'll include that in each area of the present levels where it would be relevant and required. When I'm writing the comprehensive statement of special education and related services and supplementary aids and services, I want that to be as clear and concise as

possible while also incorporating all of the necessary elements. And I then include that statement within each area of the present levels of performance. This is a practice that's required for our safety net IEPs and now I carry it over into all of my IEPs.

So, an example of that would be, as a result of such-and-such's variety of needs resulting from their such-and-such disability, they qualify for and require specially designed instruction in the areas of adaptive skills, functional academics, vocational skills, and speech, qualifies for and requires related services in the areas of occupational therapy and physical therapy, and qualifies for and requires supplementary aids and service of one-to-one assistance with activities of daily living, safety and mobility within the classroom and in the community.

So when I'm writing these statements, I like to collaborate with the other service providers to make sure that I'm capturing everything that the student needs and that it sounds clear and concise and that I'm not missing anything.

To help me with this, I went to the IRIS Center, that's a great resource, and I also used the IEP tip sheets from the PROGRESS Center.

So those are two really great resources if you need help writing your comprehensive statement.

[Slide 9- Did You Know?] Steven Prater: Now, as federal law, all states must ensure their schools and districts meet the minimum criteria or minimum requirements outlined in IDEA, but many states do go above and beyond and they establish additional requirements for the IEP. They can add a shorter timeline or maybe they have additional components, but we'll be focusing on the minimum requirements outlined in IDEA, and we really encourage you to check with your state department to see if there are other additional requirements and procedures that you must also follow. So in the chat box we'll put a link to an interactive map that allows you to click and to find your state's department to look for more information.

[Slide 10- IEP Tip Sheets] Steven Prater: Did you know that the PROGRESS Center has a whole tip sheets series just on the statement of services aids and its components, so all the information I'm going to cover today is going to come from these tip seats, but if you search for them on your own, you're going to see they provide additional information including examples, questions to consider, tips for implementation, and additional resources to explore. You can find them on our website, which is promotingprogress.org, so a link will also be added to the chat box.

[Slide 11- What does IDEA say about the statement of services and aids?] Steven Prater: IDEA indicates that the statement of services and aids in a child's IEP must describe these four parts that will be provided to or on behalf of the child. Special education, and related services, supplementary aids and services, and program modifications or supports. Many people think of these as separate components of the IEP, like Tessie was talking about earlier, but each piece must be coordinated and connected to the others to form one cohesive statement developed by the IEP team using student data. On the next slide we'll talk about what the purpose of the statement is.

[Slide 12- What does IDEA say about the statement of services and aids?] Steven Prater: The reason the statement must be coordinated and cohesive is to help the child advance appropriately toward obtaining their annual goals, be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum, participate in extracurricular and other nonacademic activities, and be educated and participate with other children with and without disabilities. So having a coordinated and cohesive statement makes the sum of the statement greater than the parts.

[Slide 13- When developing the statement, teams must consider…] Steven Prater: I've mentioned a couple of times now about how the statement of services and aids includes four parts that must be developed by the IEP team based on data, and these parts need to work in concert with each other. When we develop IEPs, we have to consider the student's experience which extends beyond just the special education services. So, for example, supplementary aids and services and program modifications are necessary for success in general education, while special education and related services are necessary for success in special education and general education. The statement of services and aids should account for all of the special education and related services, the supplementary aids and services, and the program modifications and supports that a student needs. All of these services and aids come together as one complete statement to help a child make progress on their goals and in the general education curriculum and to participate in activities and with their peers.

[Slide 14- What does IDEA say about special education or specially designed instruction (SDI?)] Steven Prater: According to IDEA, specially designed instruction or SDI means adapting the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to address the unique needs of a child that result from their disability and ensure their access to the general curriculum.

[Slide 15- Elements of SDI] Steven Prater: Let's take a look at what we mean by content, methodology, and delivery of instruction. Content refers to what is taught to the student, methodology is how the instruction is given, so the practices and the approach the teacher uses, and the delivery of instruction is the who, the where, and the when the instruction is delivered.

[Slide 16- Statement Components: Special Education or SDI] Steven Prater: So here are some examples on the screen of SDI. It can be specialized instruction conducted in a classroom, a home, hospital, institution, or other setting; specialized instruction in physical education, travel training, vocational education; or speech and language pathology services or any other related services that is counted as a special education service. We'll talk more about related services here in a minute.

[Slide 17- What does IDEA say about related services?] Steven Prater: So what does IDEA say about related services? Related services refer to transformation and other developmental, corrective and other supportive services that are required to assist a child to benefit from special education.

[Slide 18- Statement Components: Related Services] Steven Prater: There are many services that can be considered related services. So here's a few common ones. Again, you see the speech and language pathology there, interpreting services, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, and some others listed there, those are the main ones you would see at a school.

[Slide 19- Other Common Types of Related Services] Steven Prater: On this next slide you're going to see some more examples of common types of related services, counseling services, transportation, orientation and mobility services, parent counseling and training, and some other ones listed here. The tip sheets of related services goes into more details about each of these services.

[Slide 20- What does IDEA say about supplementary aids and services?] Steven Prater: So the third component we're going to go over is the supplementary aids and services. According to IDEA, this refers to aids, services, and other supports to enable children with disabilities to be educated with nondisabled children to the maximum extent appropriate. Notice that it states that these aids and services are provided in the regular education classes, other education-related setting, and in extracurricular and nonacademic settings.

[Slide 21- Statement Components: Supplementary Aids and Services] Steven Prater: Some examples of supplementary aids and services are, instructional accommodations, modifications, testing accommodations, and other aids and services.

[Slide 22- Supplementary Aids and Services: Common Types and Examples] Steven Prater: Let's take a closer look at each of these types of supplementary aids and services. Instructional accommodations change the delivery of the instruction or the accompanying materials but they don't change what the student learns. So these can be things like large print books, special seating or extended time for assignments, but modifications, on the other hand, do change what a student is expected to learn or what a test is expected to measure. Examples of modifications would be students learning different content or not required to complete similar materials as their peers. Testing accommodations, similar to instructional accommodations, they just change the format or the administration procedures of a test but not what it measures. Examples of this would be having the test read aloud or testing in a small group setting. It's important to align testing and instructional accommodations, for example, if the student needs a test read aloud, they'll also need classroom and assignments and quizzes read aloud, you want the student to be familiar with and use the accommodation successfully in the classroom before they use it on a test. Other aids and services that could be considered supplementary aids and services are having a healthcare assistant, a peer tutor, assistive technology services or one-on-one aid.

[Slide 23- What does IDEA say about program modifications and supports?] Steven Prater: So lastly, let's talk about the program modifications and supports. Although IDEA doesn't define program modifications and supports for school personnel, each child's IEP must contain the program modifications or supports for school personnel that will enable the child to advance appropriately towards attaining their goals, their annual goals, be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum and be educated and participate with other children with and without disabilities. So these are the things that are going to help teachers be most prepared to support students.

[Slide 24- Statement Components: Program Modifications and Supports] Steven Prater: Some examples of program modifications and supports include training for staff and parents to support implementation, special equipment or resources for providing instruction and supports, and collaborative planning time between the general education teacher, the special education teacher and the related service providers.

[Slide 25- Program Modifications and Supports: Questions to Consider] Steven Prater: So on this slide you're going to see some questions to consider when the IEP team is determining if and what program modifications and supports are needed. For program modifications, you want to think about, are there modifications to the physical classroom environment or to the school schedule or program that are necessary. For program supports, you want to think about is there professional learning on training needed for school personnel or families, is there special equipment or materials that are necessary, are there additional support from other staff or administrators necessary, or does the teacher need additional support in the classroom, such as having an aide.

[Slide 26- Tips for Choosing and Implementing Services and Aids] Steven Prater: Now that we've gone over these four components of the statement of services and aids, here's some tips to help choose and implement those necessary supports.

Number one, ensure that the PLAAFP statement justifies the services and aids to be provided for the statement, so everything should connect back to that PLAAFP statement, it shouldn't be just something you decide on your own. The PLAAFP should decide what's needed and you connect those services to the PLAAFP.

Second, avoid identifying specific programs and instead focus on the nature of the services and the supports.

Number three, make sure the aids and services are chosen based on the unique needs of the student, and not based on a disability label or the location of the services.

Number four, consider what knowledge and skills school personnel will need to successfully implement the IEP.

Number five, when students are nonresponsive to evidence-based programs, consider using a research-based process such as data-based individualization to individualize those supports. The National Center for Intensive Intervention has many resources about data-based individualization on their websites if you want to check that out.

Number six, review the research and resources from the OSEP-funded centers, such as the PROGRESS Center and the National Center on Intensive Intervention, they offer free resources that are created and vetted by experts and they are supported by evidence.

[Slide 27- Let's hear from you!] Steven Prater: All right, so now we want to hear from you. Which of the four components included in the statement of special education and services and aids does your team feel most confident with? So the special education, the related services, the supplementary aids and services, or the program modifications and supports? If you just want to put your answer in the chat, that way we can kind of see and everybody can see how others are responding, so in the chat, just put which component that your team feels the most comfortable with. Our first brave soul: special education, we have related services coming up. We see somebody has trouble or they do not feel comfortable with the supplementary aids and services. Some more people feeling good about the special education part. All right. Let's go ahead and go to our next slide, I think it's going to talk about the ones that you feel least confident with.

[Slide 28- Let's hear from you!] Steven Prater: So which of the four components in the statement of special education and related services and aids is most challenging for your team? Is it the special education, related services, somebody already mentioned supplementary aids and services, or the program modifications or supports? Which part of the statement do you feel is the most challenging for your team? Go ahead and put it in the chat and that way we can see how everybody's responding. I see somebody put program modifications and supports. I feel that is kind of the one that's the most perplexing for IEP teams, what I've seen in schools, that's the one that's kind of left off to the side a little bit. Several people are putting program modifications and supports, so don't feel alone. You see other people are having trouble with this, too, so hopefully this is what we're going to help you with.

So that concludes my part of the presentation. I think we're going to turn it over to Tessie and the panelists now. Thank you all very much.

[Slide 29- Panel Discussion] Tessie Bailey: Thanks, Steven. I'm just reading, if a child has an IEP, and something is already modified, in some cases it may be accommodated versus modified, and I think that's the challenge that we all see in our schools is, to what extent do we need to make those modifications in order for this student that we're working with to be successful?

What we're hoping to hear is from our distinguished panelists about what we just talked about looks like in the local context. It's really easy to break it down and say theoretically these are what the parts are, but as you saw in the chat box, there's always some areas that are a little more challenging than maybe some of the others.

[Slide 30- Meet the Panel] Tessie Bailey: So we have five amazing folks joining us today.

Our first one is Bart, and I've known Bart for a long time, and he currently works with the Uinta County School District #4 in Mountain View, Wyoming, as a special education director. And he's got his bachelor's degree in Business Management with a minor in School Psychology, and additionally became an educational specialist, got his Educational Specialist degree in School Psych from BYU. As a University of Utah graduate, I'll let that one pass. He's done other postgraduate work as well in school neuropsychology as well as educational leadership, and he has had a very extensive career that's generally been focused on the practices of school psychology, but he's also been an MTSS coach in his state and worked as an outreach program director for a Region V BOCES.

Andrea Boykin is a manager for assistive technology in the Division of Specialized Instruction in the Office of Teaching and Learning and Social, Emotional, and Academic Development at the District of Columbia Public Schools. She is also an adjunct faculty member at GMU, or George Mason University. As a former special education teacher and researcher in the field of assistive technology, she's been using her experiences to really develop policy and procedures for assistive technology, which just falls under several of these parts that we'll talk about today, as well as supporting the decision making and implementation of the assistive technology within the district she works.

We're also joined by a team, kind of like a smaller version of the IEP team. Nicole Bucka, who is also a PROGRESS Center advisor and implementation specialist in Rhode Island, is also a parent and has been through this process actually on multiple sides. She began her career as a teacher in California. She's worked in special education, secondary English, English language development, evolving to hold a variety of leadership positions. From there, she moved to teacher training and administrative support. She has supported RTI technical assistance in the state of Rhode Island as well as PBIS supports with social and emotional learning through a continuum of supports within an MTSS model. Her current role is MTSS implementation specialist, she supports state implementation of data-based individualization, which you heard Steven mention, and contributes to the development and facilitation of online professional learning for what's called BRIDGE-RI, which has some amazing online professional learning opportunities. She is a proud parent of two children with autism spectrum disorder.

Giana Gray is joining her from her team, she works with Nicole. She is a licensed board-certified behavior analyst in Rhode Island. She has been serving children and families with Autism Spectrum Disorders since 2002 and started an agency called Assent ABA, LLC in 2020, and the purpose of that was to support those living with ASD. She graduated from Rhode Island College in 2009 with a bachelor's in Psychology, and then received her master's degree from the University of Massachusetts Boston in 2012. And she is a dedicated person, improving the lives of children and families that she works with, collaborating and learning, as you'll hear today, from other disciplines as well as offering alternative ways in which we can deliver the aba services.

Finally, Emmah Mitrano is an ASHA-certified speech and language pathologist. She received her bachelor's degree in Communication Disorders from the University of Rhode Island in 2015. And she has worked as a school-based SLP since graduating with a master's degree in SLP or speech-language pathology from the Southern Connecticut State University in 2018. And she currently works as a third through fifth grade elementary school and middle school life skills classroom teacher, supporting students with a variety of communication needs.

[Panel Discussion] Tessie Bailey: I want to give our folks a round of applause, and you'll see there's little emoticons that you might be able to use in the chat feature if you want to say hello. We'll put on our videos. Thank you all.

I'm so glad you're here, and so I actually want to start with our team, because it's kind of rare that we have like an IEP team that's able to come together, and as you think about your work in developing this comprehensive statement based on everything you heard, how are you thinking about the four components when you develop it?

I'll pass this to Nicole first.

Nicole Bucka: Thank you. I just wanted to say that, you know, my child, the one that we are a part of a team for, is very complex, nonverbal, he uses AAC, he needs behavioral supports, so I think he's probably on the further end of the spectrum as far as the needs, and I think that our team, we approach the IEP very much different than I think most teams do, and it really starts with a clear vision for where we want my son to get to, my husband and I, in life, and where he's at right now. And then we try to identify broad areas of need, like he needs to be able to communicate across all contexts, with different people, so he can engage in school and enjoy it.

So we think about those big goals like that, and then we start thinking about what would that look like entering the building, what would that look like in his first academic session, what would it look like in circle, in PE, at recess, and so you start mapping it out holistically around him as a child. I think one of my teammates here said, and I think it's very true, is, a lot of parents don't know that A) they have the expertise of their child, but that their thoughts are actually really important to this process. They think that, you know, they should come to the table and just be very, "You're the expert, you tell me," and, you know, for better or for worse, that's not the approach I take. I think that this is the approach that needs to be taken, you have to come in as a team member.

Tessie Bailey: so it sounds like, and I think Emmah or Giana can reinforce this, if that's true, it sounds like this process of developing this statement starts well before the actual IEP meeting, is that correct? And how do you guys go about preparing for this discussion around the statement? Giana?

Giana Gray: Sure. Well, I think it's an evolving document. To Nicole's point, and I think everyone else's here, that the IEP statement isn't written in the hour that you have at the IEP meeting; it's written over time. And with all of the different disciplines collaborating with one another, it's helpful for us to really learn one another's approach while, you know, operating within our scope of practice, but trying to learn as much as possible. And that happens over time, especially with unique learners.

Tessie Bailey: Emmah?

Emmah Mitrano: I agree with everything Nicole and Giana said, but it's also, you know, in the real world, there needs to be a lot of communication back and forth through email, is really kind of the most realistic thing. And when there's open communication prior to the IEP meeting about some of the overall goals maybe that the family is looking for, it helps to come together as a team at the official meeting, and it is a little bit smoother when there's an ongoing communication that happens throughout the year, really.

Tessie Bailey: Yeah, and I think that ongoing communication is something that we're starting to really, you know, remember or reinforce as essential for effective development of IEPs. It's not a, let's wait till the end of the year, let's do all our testing, you know, and then get it done. It's really around this evolving process, and Emmah, I'm glad that you sort of reinforced that.

Bart, as an administrator, I mean, how does your role ensure that we are sort of taking these processes and developing this comprehensive statement?

Bart Lyman: Yeah, you know, thank you. I think that's the critical pieces, as a director, just overseeing that process and recognizing that, and, again, it was mentioned before, it happens long before the IEP. So even starting with that problem solving team referral, making sure that problem solving team practices are in place, that the referral for special education is appropriate and informational, that the evaluation is comprehensive. I think as a sped director, just making sure that each of those pieces really are building and providing information as we get to that comprehensive statement of services. That's one area.

The other area is, I think it's really important to provide context and forum for these discussions. So as I'm having my team meetings, being sure I'm using those opportunities to reinforce that idea of the interrelated nature of these activities and then helping people understand how they can communicate what they need to communicate that will really help us build those comprehensive statements. So those are the two areas that I really would focus on.

Tessie Bailey: Yeah, and I think something else that we have talked about is the professional learning. Sometimes, we kind of saw it in the chat box, it sounds like certain people know certain parts of the statement, and if you're trying to develop a comprehensive statement, that means we all have to understand how the parts go together.

So I'm curious, just from your roles and I'll start with you, Andrea, how do we encourage this greater understanding of how all of the parts fit together so it's not just the, you know, school psych puts their part in, and OT puts their part in, and we sign off on it?

Andrea Boykin: What we recommend is the use of the student environment task and tools framework which was developed by Joy Zabala, and I think that's a great starting point when thinking about how interconnected all these pieces are and it really helps to develop that collaboration. So that way everybody can bring their lens and areas of expertise when we're thinking about the student's strengths and areas of concerns, the environments that are impacted, tasks that are challenging for the student, thinking about what students are required to do in this educational environment, and then some potential tools that can help. So it brings in everyone's strengths, expertise, opinions, and it also makes sure the parents' voices are heard.

And once we've had that discussion across all the areas, we can see that there's different pieces of that statement that may show up, depending on the strengths and needs of the students, the environment, so it may turn into program modifications, it may turn into some strategies and evidence-based practices that were embedded in the IEP, it may be specific assistive technology tools or other supports that the student requires. So we recommend just using that framework to start that conversation, and then see, based on that endpoint, where that would appear within the statement in the IEP.

Tessie Bailey: Excellent. Now, we have a question that came from our chat box, and it's in reference to interpreters, and we have a couple on the call today. Do your interpreters participate as professionals within these discussions? And, you know, do they contribute to the development of the statement? I don't know if any of you want to take a chance, otherwise I'll pin this on Nicole as a first start.

Nicole Bucka: You know, first of all, if there's an interpreter present because the parent and the family speaks another language in the home or their native language, then, you know, the interpreters are going to be there regardless functionally, you know, to make sure that we're pausing, that information is getting back and forth the way it needs to in that realm, but also then they are a professional at the table.

And so particularly, I guess I would say, what is the language proficiency of the student, so if the student is already a proficient English speaker, then, you know, maybe the interpreter is there only functionally for the family and communicative access, but if the student is also learning English, you know, I'm thinking, well, if the English language specialist is there and sort of bringing that lens, you know, I think the bottom line is the IEP table needs to be a friendly and welcoming place to anybody who's there and everybody has something to offer, so, you know, if it was me, I don't turn away anyone's professional judgment.

Tessie Bailey: It sounds like, in the chat box you can clarify, there might actually be some interpreters for sign language as well, and where that might be a service that's being offered to the student, and I would think of course they would be part of these conversations because they make up the comprehensive set of services that are available to the student. And we did get a question about the framework, and we dropped that in the chat box. Yes, thanks, Colleen, for clarifying, it's around interpreters for the deaf as a related service provider. I think that comes along with, we had several related service providers on the call, is that they should always be part of the conversation.

All right, and so this is for Emmah, and Giana, how do you work collaboratively? This might come back to the question we just heard, how do you physically work together? You know, what are some of the things that are important for you as a service provider to keep in mind to work with other service providers? Emmah, I'll start with you.

Emmah Mitrano: So, I mean, I have the benefit of seeing Giana when I'm working with our shared student, so that helps with the collaboration, but I think what's the most essential thing to remember is, considering our different scopes of practice and then problem solving together when there are needs to be either problem solved or just we want to move forward to identify goals, and to be willing to kind of be flexible in that problem-solving as well as awareness maybe of personal weaknesses in the profession, and how you can seek support from the other, and within their field and what they can bring to the table.

Tessie Bailey: Giana?

Giana Gray: Sure, to reinforce what Emmah was speaking to, I think just willingness of all team members to learn from one another and to be open and accepting of their own weaknesses, and we do have a recent example of my own weakness, if I could share that.

We were taking some data on math tolerance and increasing the duration of time that the mask was being tolerated for, and I had put my BCBA hat on and suggested that there be maybe a creation of a button on the AAC for, "May I remove my mask?", and I had suggested maybe that be on the home page, thinking of learning and immediacy and the learning history of this particular student, and Emmah shared her expertise, which made a whole lot of sense, and said, "This is where it should go, and the student is sophisticated enough to find it, you know, through this pathway."

And I think that opened communication. We all have the same goal for this particular student, for every student, right? But we all have a different expertise, so that just particular example and the ability to communicate that and make it happen for the next day or sometimes 30 minutes from the conversation for this particular student, it really helped him get through the day and access reinforcement and be independent and happy. So the willingness and the communication, I think, is really important.

Nicole Bucka: Can I just give them a shoutout, too, from the other end?
That day I heard about that as a parent, that that button was added, and that if we're out in the community and he seems to be pulling at his mask, that this was in there so that now I can ensure it. So I want to say two things,

communication, that frequent checking in, but also the way that we write these things, it's a global communication thing, right? But they're very live time in vivo implementing it in different ways all the time.

Tessie Bailey: Go ahead, Emmah.

Emmah Mitrano: I agree in communication and flexibility, but without trust, I think, for Giana to put that out there in an email and for me to trust that she knew that I was going to give feedback and that I knew that when I gave my feedback, it would be taken and listened to, if you don't have that trust, then you're kind of dead in the water because then it can become more frustration, and then therefore communication may suffer and therefore the ball doesn't continue to roll.

Giana Gray: Yeah.

Tessie Bailey: And it sounds like what you're reinforcing is that there's no one entity, whether it's the special ed teacher, the parent, the related service provider, that has all the answers, and I think that's what's so cool about this statement, right? It actually is forcing us to come together with our collective expertise and say, how can we combine that to meet the individualized needs for this student, and knowing that it's going to be a discussion. I don't have to come with all the answers, is that I'm coming with my knowledge and expertise of my practice and the student, and then we work together to figure out: how do we make this a good statement for this student?

Welcome back, Bart. We missed you there for a second.

Bart Lyman: My apologies.

Tessie Bailey: That's okay. Andrea, I'm curious, thinking about your work as an at specialist, your work kind of falls across – it's not necessarily in one part of it, so how is it that you ensure that assistive technology is reflective across each of those parts?

Andrea Boykin: Yes, so after we support teams have the initial recommendation, they tend to have a lot of questions, and one is where does this go in the IEP, so we kind of break it up to say, okay, if it's a low-tech solution, many of the low-tech solutions overlap with evidence-based practices, and that can go in a special education piece of it, and we can embed some of those strategies in the goals, present levels of performance, because we know this is what the student needs to access the curriculum. And then there's other highly specialized tools, like high-tech AAC systems that are required for the student's communication needs, and we may put that in the services and supplementary aids section of the IEP because the child requires that piece to access the curriculum.

And I always remind teams to write this so clear that the student -- if the student transfers to another classroom or another district, we know exactly where these pieces go and how it all fits together to help the student. But assistive technology is very broad, so we start with the recommendations, and what I typically recommend is the development of an implementation plan as well so we can really see if the student is using this tool, this is how it can look when they're integrating it in the classroom, and we use that implementation plan to determine where that would fall within the IEP, based on how it would be used and how the student would access the tool.

Tessie Bailey: Yeah, I can see that. Do you need specially designed instruction to utilize the tool, the teacher might need some program modifications to the class or training, so it really does fall across, and I think that's confusing for teachers in the development as we're really focused on where it goes, right, in our IEP. But as

we've talked about today, it really is this comprehensive statement, and it's okay that it goes across as long as it sounds like what you're saying is, very clearly define what we're offering for the student.

Andrew Boykin: Yes, yes.

Tessie Bailey: Now, Bart, I'm sure you've seen some challenges as you've gone across multiple teams in this implementation, and I'm curious what some of those challenges you're seeing, and what are some of the recommendations or tips that you've used or would recommend for people to avoid those challenges?

Bart Lyman: Yeah, you know, I've worked with great teams, highly skilled people. I think the structure and processes in special ed are a little bit of a double-edged sword, and by that, I mean, the structure helps us get to this comprehensive statement of services, but often it's so repetitive that I think people build habits sometimes that, with no ill intent, just stop kind of seeing the student as an individual student. They just get in their habits of how they're building these statements, the services they're offering, things like that.

So I think that's the primary challenge, is just constantly reinforcing that idea, reteaching that idea that each student is an individual, and making sure the team is approaching each student however many times a year with that fresh mindset. People know the answers. It's just about, hey, let's really make sure we're doing the mental work to problem solve what is needed for the student, problem solve the communication piece, all of that, to make sure that it's really dialed in. I don't know that there's any silver bullet for that or any sexy answer. I think it's just about that continual conversation. Again, how are we making sure that these are individualized services, how are we making sure that we're communicating, and even though teams maybe get tired of those, you know, quote/unquote simple conversations, I think they're absolutely necessary to make sure that we're getting to where we need to go and students are getting what they need.

Tessie Bailey: Nicole, you mentioned something that makes me think, to address that particular issue, is, we start every conversation, what do we want, right? What do we want for this child from the family, the school's perspective, because if we have that focus, right? Then it becomes the kid and not the process that we're looking at.

Now, we're coming close to time, but I want to give each of you an opportunity to share a tip or a trick or something that you think is really important for folks to know as they move forward in thinking about the development of this. Andrea, we'll start with you.

Andrea Boykin: One thing I can say, and Nicole mentioned earlier, was starting with what we want for the student and always thinking beyond graduation, so I think sometimes school teams think about this school year or this quarter, but we really need to think about where we want the student to go and the life everyone wants this child to have once they graduate. And the tip or resource I mentioned earlier has been so helpful in the development of these statements, gives the student, environment, task and tools framework or the sec framework that gives everyone a very good starting point. It appears to be very systematic and people like things that seem to be very systematic, but it's a great start point for the conversation of what does the student need to access the curriculum.

Tessie Bailey: Thanks, Andrea. Emmah?

Emmah Mitrano: I think probably the best tip that I could offer is being willing to think out of the box and with flexibility, willing to co-treat with others and collaborate on goals when writing that part of the IEP, to think about it in that out of the box way.

Tessie Bailey: Nicole?

Nicole Bucka: So if I think about the parent lens and the tips that I have for parents is, you know, as Andrea mentioned, you know, even when my son was in kindergarten, I started the IEP with, we believe you will need assistance, he will need assistance his whole life but here's our goal for a functional level of independence, that we are looking for for him, right? Which quickly moved us to the areas of AAC and communication, of independence, and a functional level of reading. And then I said, and this team, we wrap around these three problems. I shouldn't say problems, areas of focus. And I would say that, you know, I think a lot of parents are a little intimidated to do that or they don't think it's their role, and I would really encourage you to say what you need.

Another example, just as a side one, every year, since he was a baby, I say, I want the general education students trained on him, when he does this, what does it mean; when he makes noises, what does it mean, and if it's developmentally appropriate to use the term autism, I as a parent, I ask for it, and then I explain to the team that what happens when I'm out in the community is, if we train the kids, they come up and they say hi to him and they wait because they know he's got to find his talker, and if we don't do that, they're uncomfortable and they stare and parents take them away. That's not the life I want for him, right? I want this life where kids in this community know him. Parents, you gotta speak up.

Tessie Bailey: Thanks, Nicola. Giana.

Giana Gray: Okay, well I guess, you know, as a BCBA and collecting data, that is what we're good at, that's what we do, but the analytic piece, I think, is really helpful when we're trying to increase independence, and I think in my experience at least, if I'm working with a student and that student has been working on the same skill for a length of time that I'm not comfortable with, then I need to change what I'm doing. I have no control over that student's behavior but I have control over my behavior and I can modify what I'm doing in order to make it, you know, less prescriptive, less like a menu, that one size fits all, and more individualized, and capitalizing on their strengths, I guess, that would be my nugget is, I have to change my behavior in order for this student to be able to succeed.

Tessie Bailey: Thanks for sharing that. And Bart, you're going to close out our panel. What's your tip for success?

Bart Lyman: You know, my tip for success is really about structuring staffing or assessment planning meetings, making sure that, and I'm not, I mean, I want to avoid predetermination like the plague for sure, but I do think when we have staffing where we're preparing, you know, proposed IEP, where we're talking about present levels, really making sure that those are productive and that the team, before they're discussing the evaluation or the proposed IEP with the parent, getting their input, that they're really dialed in on what the student needs, again, individual planning, just making that effective so that they know what they're talking about so it makes sense for the parent. The parent can come in again, give input, and a good decision can be made for a plan moving forward, based on that comprehensive statement of services.

Tessie Bailey: Great. Nicole?

Nicole Bucka: So sorry, can I just say one more thing? This conversation reminded me, too, that administratively, I've noticed as a parent, because I have two different children, that schools that loop their special needs teachers and related providers, I feel have more of their infrastructure to do this well, so I just wanted to put that out there. And they don't have providers that are spread across multiple buildings because that limits collaboration, communication and the ability to be responsive.

[Slide 31- Where Can We Learn More?] Tessie Bailey: Yeah, and I think Colleen has given a big yes for that, because if we don't have the infrastructure to support our ability to cross, you know, to collaborate and meet, it sounds good on paper but it doesn't ever really make it to practice. So thanks for closing us out with that, Nicole. So in the chat box, feel free, there's a little emoticon smiley face, you can give a round of applause for our panel. So thank you all very much.

We're going to close out today with a couple of resources, and we'll also be putting in the chat our evaluation for today. This is the first in a number of professional development opportunities that we have for folks.

[Slide 32- Path to PROGRESS Podcast] Tessie Bailey: There's a lot of places to learn more, and on the next slide you'll see that we have a Path to PROGRESS Podcast that's coming up, we have a number of educators in residence who are on with the center for a year and they come from all different levels of the system, and so they are discussing hot topics. You can find that link in the chat box, but also on our website. It's just more of a fun way to hear about educators in the field discussing these topics.

[Slide 33- PROGRESS Resources to Support the Development of High-Quality Educational Programming] Tessie Bailey: Our next one is our tip sheets, which you heard about today. We have a number of tip sheets specifically around this statement, and because it's much more complex, you'll find four additional supplemental tip sheets to help you knock down each of those parts, and some of you mentioned program modification, supplementary aids and services, you will see a specific tip sheet for that.

[Slide 34- Stories from the Classroom: Finding the "Just Right" Assistive Technology] Tessie Bailey: You'll see Andrea was here today. We have a number of folks who are doing some of our stories from the classrooms and sharing what does it really look like in practice, so check out our stories from the classroom. There will be some supplemental materials over time that support each of those that you can use them in your staff meetings to really start some of those discussions and talk about how does this apply to the local setting.

[Slide 35- Resources to Support Developing the Statement of Special Education] And then there are additional resources from other centers, and Steven mentioned a couple of these. The National Center on Intensive Intervention, which is in its third iteration of funding, offers a number of resources to help you in the design of specially designed instruction, thinking about how you collaborate or coordinate your teaming meetings, and there are also a number of high-leverage practices that are used across all of those four parts for implementation. You can see the links in the chat box.

[Slide 36- Resources to Learn More About Supplementary Aids and Services] Tessie Bailey: We also heard about the IRIS Center today. We have a number of national resources that we'll be sharing across this next year to help you with various parts of it, whether it's an accommodation or a modification or if the student needs some different type of assistive technology, or any related services; there are additional supports on the IRIS Center's website.

[Slide 37- Resources to Learn More About Related Services] Tessie Bailey: And so just a couple more, and I mentioned the parent center, and then we'll go to the next one. And then if you are looking, there are so many free national resources that are out there.

[Slide 38- Resources to Support Program Modifications] Tessie Bailey: There's the deaf/blind project, there are resources for interpreters and designing specially designed instruction in those areas, but there are also other centers that work with various groups; learning needs and of resources.

[Slide 39- Stay Connected With the PROGRESS Center] Tessie Bailey: I'll close this out by thanking you for attending today. As always, we appreciate you taking the time. Please consider following us to hear about all the

new resources, including our tip sheets and podcasts, and other online training modules that will be coming out over the year. But either on Facebook or Twitter, you can find us @K12PROGRESS and on our website you can sign up for our newsletter. Thanks again for joining us today, and we look forward to having further conversation. And thanks again to our panelists and Steven for sharing their knowledge and expertise.