



Strand 1: Making Connections! Ensuring the Parts of the IEP Work Together to Promote Progress

Chrissy Brown: Welcome to our session, Making Connections: Ensuring the Parts of the IEP Work Together to Promote Progress.

So, let's meet the team. Again, I'm Dr. Chrissy Brown. I am a Technical Assistance Consultant for the PROGRESS Center. I'm going hand over to Dr. Tessie Bailey Ross.

Tessie Bailey: Hi! It's Tessie Bailey and I'm excited to be here, and I was in the last session so hopefully I met a lot of you there as well, so I will pass this over to Amy.

Amy Peterson: Hi! everyone nice to see everyone again from the previous session. Again, I'm Amy Peterson and I lead out the universal technical assistance work for the PROGRESS Center.

Chrissy Brown: I'm not sure if Sacha has joined us but we are also joined by Sacha Cartagena, who helps lead our center's learning module coordinator. So, let's get to know you and in the chat please share your name role, and where you come from.

Okay. Arizona, Ohio, Ohio, Ohio, and so Pennsylvania, New Jersey, West Virginia. I see that Sarah's in Dubai Oh, welcome! Well, welcome everyone, thank you for joining us today.

So ensuring a common language and understanding of IDEA's requirements for a PLAAFP statement, and the IEP can help teams of educators develop higher quality PLAAFP statements for children with disabilities, as you will learn in this session. The PLAAFP statement is the first step and the foundation in developing a high-quality educational program through the IEP. A high-quality educational program ensures that students with disabilities have access to free appropriate public education also known as FAPE, which allows them to make progress and meet challenging goals.

But in this session, we hope that you will be able to do the following:

- Explain why the internal consistency of an individualized education program (IEP) is important, and how it promotes progress.
- Learn and practice how to review existing IEPs to determine internal consistency as well as



- Share and access resources to support the development of high quality IEPs.

And for today's sessions you will need the following materials to ensure adequate participation: a copy of at least one IEP—we asked that you did not bring an original copy— highlighters of 3 to 5 different colors, as well as a few handouts that you can also find on the PROGRESS Center website.

So, what we have is the IEP Tip Sheets for the PLAAFPs, the IEP Tip Sheets for Measurable Annual Goals, and the IEP Tip Sheets for the Overview of Services and Aids and you can find a link to the PROGRESS Center in the chat box. Also, if you do not have a copy of at least one IEP with you there is an accompany handout that will also be here in the chat.

For today's session we're going to start with discussing the role of the PLAAFP statement and how do we ensure internal consistency, then we'll move into developing the PLAAFP statement in action, we'll have a break and we'll come back at 2:20, then we'll move on to using the PLAAFP to develop services and aids and measurable annual goals, follow by a wrap up and next steps.

So, I know Dr. Bailey discussed this in our keynote today about collective efficacy. Collective efficacy is more than just beliefs. Collective teacher efficacy is strongly correlated with student achievement. It is this combined belief that allows educators to have a tremendous, sustained impact on learning. It is built on evidence. So where do we start? Collective efficiency starts with the right questions.

As a team, we must decide. where do we start in order to identify the appropriate supports to meet the needs of the student? What are the appropriate questions to help guide our discussion? Here are just a few where we can start on the screen with a few of the beginning questions: What do we want for our students and families? What is the current reality, and who are the players? What do our students and families need to be successful? And how can we maximize our resources to support students and families?

The present level of academic achievement and functional performance statement or PLAAFP statement outlines the answers to these questions. Now let's take a minute and just do a 30 second self-reflection with ourselves.

Are your teams currently asking the right questions for your students? Let's find out!

The role of the PLAAFP statement in ensuring internal consistency. So we're going to have a quick chatter fall I am going to count down to 0. And when I get to 0 I would like for you to share in the chat your answer to the following question: Per the IDEA, how many requirements does an IEP have?

And 3, 2, 1 0. Share your answer now in the chat.



Oh, I everyone's answering. Amy or Tessie can you share some of the answers in the chat. Are we on the right path?

Tessie Bailey: Yeah. So, I can see that some people put in the actual number, which is great. So, I see a lot of 9, 11, 7. I don't see a general sort of agreement across folks. I don't see anyone who says 5, so Chrissy I'm curious, what is the answer? I think I gave a little clue in the keynote today.

Chrissy Brown: You gave several clues in the keynote today, let's check it out. It is 7. There are 7 required components for the IEP per the IDEA, and let's take a minute to review these 7.

So, we're going to start clockwise and we really always start with the PLAAFP. The present levels of academic achievement and functional performance. And then we move over to measurable annual goals and the progress toward annual goals. How do we measure that? A monitoring plan, also known as a monitoring plan. And the statement of special education and aids and services. An explanation of education setting, followed by participation in an assessment. And then you have your data frequency, duration, and location of services also known as a services grid.

Now we saw this bicycle in the first session with our keynote speaker, and Dr. Bailey did a wonderful job, explaining how these parts and components must work together in order for our IEP plan to work as a whole. So, as we just discussed, we can think about those 7 parts like the parts of a bicycle. Again. We just went over these, starting with the PLAAFP, your monitoring plan, participation outside regular education and around state assessment. And again, your statement of special education and services, your measurable goals and then the date, frequency duration, the location of services.

So again, IEPs essential ingredients, but individualized, based on student needs. As noted earlier, to develop a high quality as education program it is essential to focus on individualization. Some bicycles, and their parts are designed for the Tour de France, others are for just going on a leisurely stroll, maybe for a bike right on the beach. There is no wrong bicycle. Assuming the parts work together for the collective purpose and the unique needs of that user, much like the parts of an IEP.

The critical piece here is it must be individualized for all of our students. Now we're going to move on to our first breakout activity and I'm going to hand it over to Dr. Bailey to explain.

Tessie Bailey: Hi, everybody, and I'm going to encourage folks, I know we're kind of in a weird structure, but if you have questions or comments, please put those in the chat box or raise your hand it's a little tricky for us to see if you raise your hand, so feel free to ping us, or you know, just in the chat, or even say something.

But I want to move to the next slide and you know what's really interesting is we have evolved quite a bit in our understanding of what makes a good IEP, and I saw there are some state folks that are on the call, and I will say that, you know, if we think about our general supervision system, or even those of you in LEAs who have had your IEPs reviewed, you probably remember a checklist right that goes through and looks at certain parts of it. And, as I mentioned in the intro session, is a lot of that has really been on the procedural requirements. Right like, do you have all of the parts that are necessary? And, in fact, prior to the reauthorization of IDEA, a lot of the litigation that we would see was around did you have all the parts. And now with the reauthorization of IDEA and sort of including the Rowley decision, which was then in a sense clarified by Endrew, we tried to make it clear that really a procedural piece is more around parental engagement, you know, you got to have these big buckets of work.

But really what's most important is that substantive piece, right? Do you have the parts that fit together right? Is it really a vehicle for progress? So, what I'd like you to do is to pull out your IEP, and this is something that you can do with your own teachers, your own IEPs. But it's pretty simple, right. And so, you're going to take this idea of your IEP, you're going to take your highlighters, and you're going to look first at your present level statement and you're going to find each primary

need. And I say primary because that's generally where we set our goals. And then once you've got your primary [needs], then I want you to pay attention to your other needs that are in there, right?

So, if you say the kid needs extra time in your PLAAFP that would be a need. Once you've done that, you're then going to, you're going to do each of those in a different colored highlighter and then you're going to find the corresponding aids and support. Because when we think about what an internally consistent IEP is, what we want to see is that every need that is identified in the present levels is associated to something that's around those aids and services, right? So, it's either SDI, supplementary aids or services, related service or a program modification, right?

Not every need requires a goal so don't freak out if you don't see that. But every need that is identified does require a corresponding aid or service. Right, so for example, a need could be addressed by an accommodation and a need could be addressed by a program modification. So we're going to give you a little bit of time to look at your own IEPs. Remember you're going to highlight the needs. If they're hard to find, that's probably a red flag, right? But you should be able to quickly find the needs in your PLAAFP.

Then look at where your description or statement and if you look at the Regs [regulations] it's really just one statement for your special education, related services, supplementary aids and services, and program modifications, and then do a corresponding match.

[Breakout discussions]

Well welcome back everybody I hope you had a good opportunity. I know it's nice to connect with people across the country as well, and since we all have this IEP in common, it's a really good topic to be sharing about. Tracy, I'm glad it was a great conversation.

I would love to hear from a couple of folks, and you can just raise your hand if you want or you could put in the chat boxes. What were some of the things that you saw in your activity?

Right. I'm going to read in the chat, so student has an average cognitive abilities, but struggles with recall and I would like to see one of the goals that encourages some part of that self-monitoring. Yeah, yeah, and so I think that's where we sometimes in our mind know what we want to happen, but if our IEP doesn't really outline or justify in our PLAAFP statement, then we sometimes end up with a little bit of mismatch.

Did anybody find really good internal consistency? I'm curious because I will say in our work, we often find that there's sometimes some recommended supplementary aids and services that don't really align to anything in the present levels and it could be that maybe the team thought about it, but they didn't really clarify the need for that service in the present levels.

And if you think about the present levels, and Amy's going to talk a lot about this is that it's really our justification of what this kid needs, right. They need more time, because of this. Our data indicates that it looks like this, right that's the whole purpose. So and so Patricia I think this is interesting, and Tracy I'll call on you in a second, she says, I'm not sure completing 9% of the work is what he needs. And that's what we talk about the substantive piece is, if we keep functioning independently with these components we don't, we don't really get to the big picture. Tracy, do you want to share?

Tracy: I have more of like a question that kind of ties in with this. When you talk about the child's needs, so when they do the evaluation report or re-eval [reevaluation] and the child pops up for, let's say, a specific learning disability—this is the one that's like the most difficult because the other ones are kind of like the golden ticket, you can add math, reading, everything else, and put that need across all, every section if you needed to, within the IEP, because those are the needs for the child— but when you're talking about a child who has a specific learning disability, and let's say they don't pop up for math computation but they do for math word problems or problem solving and our district has said you can't write a goal for computation, because that's not something they qualified in, but isn't it, though if they qualify for math they qualify for all of math regardless.

Tessie Bailey: So, I I will say from a Federal standpoint, the needs that are addressed in the IEP are the needs that have been identified by the team using the evaluation report. There is no path, right? It's not like a one to one correspondence. You qualified as a kid with autism thus, you have these needs and that's actually why, we saw and Amy's going to talk about this too

this inclusion of academic achievement and functional performance, because what it could mean is, I qualified for example for a math calculation concern, but I'm in the club now, right—I'm in the special ed club so any of my needs that arise from having this disability should be addressed by the IEP. And it could be that while math calculation is the concern, I have some functional skill deficits that are also contributing to my challenges in math calculation.

So, I could have a goal related to some functional skills even though it's not how I qualified, right. And I think this narrowing—like you can't because of this—it is pervasive in our field, and it's caused us to step away from the kid and we need to step back and look at the kid and say what does this kid need to be successful today, tomorrow, in a year, so that we're designing programming that aligns with that.

So, your goals should address any needs and one last thing I'll say, is, that you may have qualified as a student with a math calculation, but that need may evolve over time as well. So now we have, now he's struggling in reading and now he is struggling in these areas. That's what guides it, our data that justifies needs. Great question.

Tom, I see you have your hand up.

Tom: Well, Tom Main, I use to monitor at the State level and now I work at the regional level, supporting regions that go through monitoring, and you stole my thunder a little bit in that, and it is good stuff, I'm glad, is that you look at the ETR [evaluation report] to see what the needs are.

And you've got a problem If the IEP doesn't meet the needs that are in the ETR. I mean that's the key thing and I think it's also key to think about this, this is not because the Feds want you to do it or the State wants you to do it, this should be a document that good for kids, helps that student, that closes the gap, and help that student be effective.

I know if you see it as paperwork and not getting together to discuss how we can make sure this kid is successful, you've kind of missed the boat. The other thing that came in our breakout was things like a lot of really general comments that I don't think would help someone be effective. It's got to be clear what you're trying to accomplish. You can't just say not good at math facts. you know. You have to know what the issue is, and the other thing is shortened assignments, we have to maintain proper rigor. So just, you know, having them do half and miss half of what they're supposed to know, the idea is we've we have these services, so these students can perform the same as students that have not been identified, they just learned differently. Almost all these kids have the same cognitive skills as unidentified, and we have to make sure we maintain rigor.

For instance, if a student is 3 years behind and you have a goal that's this year they're going to have a half year progress, they'll be 4 and a half years behind at the end. So proper rigor,

doing everything you can to make sure that student closes the gap and not forgetting it's about the kid and the kid being successful.

Tessie Bailey: Thanks, Tom. Yeah, I mean I think this is where we know, right, we've got to change that narrative. And for those of you are not familiar with the ETR language, that's the evaluation report and that clarifies you know the primary needs. And I want to, there is some great conversation here around an IEP with 22 goals. I will say I've worked in some states in which IEPs can be upwards of 50 to 60 pages, that's not what, like what Tom was saying a feasible document for promoting growth. It becomes more of a compliance concern. And when we have kids with 22 IEP goals, and I think you all know this, how could you realistically do that, plus make sure they meet all their curriculum goals in their core programming.

So, this idea of clarifying primary goals from you know the goals that could be addressed from supplementary aids and services, right. And you could have a single goal that addresses multiple needs, right. We need to be clear, as Tom was mentioning, what are the needs of the student based on where this kid needs to be in the future.

And I had another question, it's how is the rate of learning addressed in the present levels? It came up because they were talking in their breakouts. So there are two things around rate of learning, one is we need to in our present levels clarify previous growth, like justifying in last year's IEP this is, this was the result of our programming that we did last year. That helps us understand what's the response that we get. If we have previous progress monitoring data that gives us a rate of growth, that rate of growth has to be contextualized, right. Like that was the rate of growth under these conditions—Forty minutes of specially designed instruction in math, in this way. Because that then helps us justify our other, our current program, services, but also clarify whether you know we need to do that or not, right.

So, we have to provide that learning the rate of learning in contexts for folks. Sorry, I'm trying to keep up with some of the messages. So, with all the needs, yeah, with all the needs and how can you work on that multiple skills?

And I think this is where—I remember back in the old days when I would teach, like we generally had no more than 5 goals, 5 primary goals, but generally like 3 to 5, and the assumption is we're still working towards these other sub skills and other needs that are there but they're part of the overall program—not 22 separate activities to address 22 separate goals. Great conversation.

So, I want to make sure that I move on from a time standpoint, but this idea of looking at your present levels is really critical because it clarifies that that present levels is the child's current reality, that it has to be about their performance, their circumstances. So that we can't do—that we can't use the same statement for all kids with learning disabilities or all kids with autism. That category is how they

qualified, it doesn't define them, right. The data helps us understand how the disability affects this student and on the next slide. I'll just say one more thing so we'll move to that next slide.

I think, sorry. Thanks. And so when we think about the present levels, they're not based on a disability category, even though our ETR might say the kid qualifies, kind of like what Tracy was saying, the kid qualifies because of this particular need, but it doesn't dictate their services, right. They are built, they are based on the individual needs of the students. And so I know I preceded our conversation, but we think about that clarifying those needs of what we're going to address in the IEP and why we're addressing them. And the PLAAFP statement really says that, you know we're addressing it, because it's why the kid is not able to access. And this is also why, to me, the PLAAFP is like the coolest part of the IEP.

And this is an actually an older reference, but it still holds true today—that there should be a direct relationship between the present levels and every other part of the IEP. So that if I read the present levels of any IEP, I could understand why whatever is in the IEP was proposed. Why was 30 min proposed, or why was this placement proposed? The PLAAFP outlines that information. So, we know the successful development and implementation of special education in general really depends on the quality of the PLAAFP. It's the cool part of the IEP. Amy's going to tell us what we need to know about the PLAAFP in order to make it work for us.

Amy Peterson: Alright, so I'm going to start off and one of the things that I'll start off with is one of Tessie's favorite words here, which you can see on the slide as *assumacide*.

She loves to reinforce and help us think about the fact that if we are not designing those PLAAFP statements, those well design PLAAFP statements based on the specific needs of the student, we fall into this trap of *assumacide*, right? And we can think about that in all of our life, in all of our contexts, we all fall into the trap of the *assumacide* or have that people or have experiences when other people have made assumptions based on, you know some sort of context that we are part of.

So we want to really be thoughtful and think about how we develop these PLAAFPs in order for us to really think critically about the individual and unique needs of the student, rather than relying on our assumption, based on, like Tessie said their disability category that they qualified with, or our experience with a previous student that had that disability or some other context that is really leading us to make generalizations or assumptions, based on rather than looking at the unique needs of the student.

So I want you to keep this word— I love this word too— and it's not something I have really thought about previously, but you get around Tessie long enough, you'll hear it many times.

So take this word out to your teams as well, and thinking about kind of negating that assumacide and really starting and spending the time on the PLAAFP statement to get to know the students, so that we are not making those assumptions.

So that really grounds us in thinking about our present level statement. But we also want to think about. what does IDEA say about our present levels of academic achievement and functional performance?

And so here on the slide, you can see that definition directly from IDEA. So, we want it to be a statement of the child's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, including how the child's disability affects the child's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum—for example, the same curriculum as our non-disabled peers. And then you can see also our considerations for preschool children as well. The main difference there, right, is the change from general education curriculum to appropriate activities based on the context.

We know that with present level statements you guys have heard about these statements probably over the years called many different things, right? it could be PLEPs or PLOPs, or present level statements—so many different terms that the present level has been known by—but the terminology and looking at the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance is critical, because, as we think about that, like Tessie said, we need to think about both the considerations for academic achievement and also those considerations for functional performance.

So what do we mean by academic achievement? This one is probably quite clear to you all. Really thinking about all of the kind of the considerations for academic achievement for the child's performance depending on their circumstances. It might be things like reading, writing, math, science, history, all of those academic components that we think about in our schooling.

But we also need to think about the functional performance and so when we're thinking about functional performance that can be a number of different skills and areas as well, we might think about functional performance related to things like dressing or eating or toileting or behavior, but it's also, as we think about areas around social skills, communication skills, mobility and executive functioning.

It can be a lot of different areas that help the student access their academic instruction, as Tessie talked about before. So, we need to think about critically, both about thinking about our academic achievement as well as our functional performance for those students in that present level statement. So while PLAAFP is now a very long acronym and a mouthful to say it's critical that we think both about that academic achievement and functional. performance.

So here you can think about that question of what if the student doesn't require any functional goals or they don't have any functional skills [deficits].

We might see, you know, that they have a real strong, academic need, but we need to make sure that within our PLAAFP statement we are addressing both those academic and functional needs even if there's not a specific goal related to one of those functional skills—we might be talking about some of the strength that the students have in some of those areas as well as some of those, how that might impact their academic performance. So, I want you to take a second to just stop and reflect and think, you can go back to the previous slide, and think about your PLAAFP statements and the one or the examples that you looked at during that last activity, did you see both academic and functional present levels as part of that statement? Did you see both academic achievement and functional performance in that statement? As you're thinking about that, so feel free if you want to drop that in the chat—any reflections that you have or take a note of that as well, but really thinking critically about how we're developing those statements so that it's comprehensive of both those academic and functional skills.

Tessie Bailey: And Amy I just want to share something, because this idea of functional performance has come up a lot, particularly in the case law recently—you can learn more about that tomorrow—but just remembering that even if your student is academically performing well, but is struggling with mental health disorders, or other social behaviors that is what would be an appropriate area to be focusing on with our functional skills.

So, it's not just to help them do better in academics. it's functional skills necessary for the school experience.

Amy Peterson: Great. Thank you, Tessie. Alright so on this next slide—I'm also going to drop in the chat for you all, if you didn't have any chance to pull up that IEP tip sheets that were shared earlier —this is a direct link to one of our IEP tip sheets that's focused on the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance. And on this tip sheet if you pull it up and you open it, you'll see these same icons that you see on the slide here, of 4 essential elements that we want to think of when we think about our present level statements.

There is no one size fits all for a present level statement, but we need to think about these 4 critical components as we think about developing high quality present-level statements that really start with our focus on the student needs —and back to some of the questions that Tessie was talking about in the keynote and Chrissy was sharing earlier about what we want for the student, what are those needs and areas that we want to focus in on?

So you can see on this tip sheet that you'll see some guiding questions around each of these components. So we want to look at when we're thinking about student needs both their needs and their strengths that we can grow from. We also want to think about what information we're getting from the students and from their parent and from educators and others around those needs.

As we're looking at that. We also want to think about the effect on their progress in general education, you saw that as part of the definition from IDEA. We needed to talk about their involvement in and progress in general education or the education similar to their non-disabled peers—curriculum similar to their non-disabled peers. So, we really want to look at both the effect of progress in general education and ask ourselves some questions around their access to general education, they're involvement in a general education, but also importantly their progress in general education. So just their ability to be in the room is not that what we're looking for, but really, how can we, how does their disability and their needs impact their progress in general education.

And then we'll also want 2 other critical components in our PLAAFP statements. We want baseline information —understanding where the student is starting from around those skills. So I think many people were putting some of those ideas in the chat earlier. But thinking about kind of where —what is the data telling us about where the student is —and Tessie talked about what is the context for that information as well. So it's not just a random data point that we put into the present level statement, but we're really describing kind of what that looks like and then how does that connect, then, to the goals and services that we described?

So we looked at in that last activity, finding the needs and connecting those needs to those services as well. So we want to make sure that our present level statements are making those connections to our goals and services. So these are just four kind of helpful things for us to consider, as we think about those kind of components of our present level statement, and on the next slide you can see just a helpful frame or some helpful, questions that align with the questions that we were talking about previously, right?

So we want to think about what we want for our student. We want to think about their student's current reality, and that helps to drive the context of our present level statement. And we need to think about what those students needs are to describe the present part of the present levels statement and help us connect to the services and aids and supports in our IEP. So those questions, if we look at these 4 questions are the same four questions we've been talking about throughout the keynote presentation and earlier, to really help us ground our conversation around, what do we want for the student? What do we know about what the student's current reality looks like, and their current needs, and what their current needs are? And then we can think about how do we maximize our resources, our supports, in order to support them to meet to address their needs, to move forward, a with progress.

So they're really helpful and critical conversations for us to have as we're designing that present level statement and grounding our conversations, in what we want for our student, where they are currently, and what their needs are.

And this is just a helpful frame of reference or example of a sentence frame for how we might think about putting the parts of the present level statement together, right? We often give students those sentence frames or structures in order to help them to develop a high quality paragraph with the different key components that we might need to be in place, but when we're thinking about how to kind of package, our present levels statement with those key ingredients that we talked about, what is our data, and what is the source for that data? What is that objective data? And how do we know about that information? What is what data do we have to tell us about that information that's indicating the students' needs and then also kind of filling out the impact on their involvement in progress in the general education, curriculum and the justification for any services and supports that we're providing based on their needs.

So this is not kind of a word for words. You don't just throw in an example of a new word in each kind of piece of the sentence frame—you'll see in an example from Tessie in just a moment kind of how those pieces can fit together in thinking about what this might look like in a in a larger statement—but it will help us to kind of think about what are we putting in the critical components of a present-level statement in order for us to access that information.

Tessie Bailey: Now Amy, so you're saying this is not a mad lib, so I'm just not like putting it in there?

Amy Peterson: you can add adjectives or verbs or anything.

Tessie Bailey: yeah, so we're going to take a break here, but I want to just reinforce what Amy said before we do that, is that this is a, it's like a writing routine. And when we think about the professional learning for ourselves, right, this takes practice, like writing is like my least favorite thing to do, but it really requires us to develop a process for how we write. That we then articulate what we mean. And so that's where something like this can help and this is just an example, but think about what it takes to tell a story about a student, and when we come back, I'm going to share a sample PLAAFP.

And we have to be careful around PLAAFPs that are chunky, meaning each person on our team sends their section of the PLAAFP and then we put it together. And if you imagine in college when you wrote your papers, if you did that your professor probably said it doesn't really flow, or it doesn't go together, and that's ultimately, what we're trying to create in a PLAAFP is this picture or the story about the student that intertwines the academic and the functional needs that this student has that we need to collectively address, right?

Otherwise, we're probably doing these independent services that we hope will happen and we'll hope will help the student but won't necessarily.

So, we're going to come back right at 2:20 and they we will get into the meat of how do we make this process easier and more effective for ourselves.

[Break]

Tessie Bailey: So welcome back everybody, and I know we got a little close to the time so I just wanted to share something to close up the morning session or the first session. It's morning on my side. But there were some questions around the ETR in our PLAAFP, and how it might be addressed. In the document that you have, the handout example, there's something there. And people always ask is that a perfect example? To be honest, there's no such thing as a perfect example, but what I want to be able to do is read the PLAAFP statement and really understand what this student needs, and who this student is, right. So here's an example of—I'm going to have 3 slides related to this of something similar to what you see in the resource that Amy just put in the chat box—is we want to give some reference to the ETR, or your evaluation report whatever you call it in your State, and we want to include the relevant information not just related to that academic need that often shows up there, but also those functional needs that are really sort of clarified in multiple data sources.

But they should be summarized. They should be presented with context. What you want to avoid is just listing a bunch of numbers and hoping people make sense of it. We also want to clarify that what do we want for the student, and you'll see that it could be as simple as this last sentence that says G.H. would like to graduate with this peers and attend college. That just keeps it out there.

This is not related to your transition plan—that would be obviously as part of the students based on your State law who require that—but it really just reinforces that we're expecting similar outcomes as non-disabled peers. And we're putting it out there on the table. We also then address any circumstances and even though you might say well, that's not really related to the disability, it's kind of the reality and what it means is we need to be clear about it as we start to design and deliver the services that Chrissy is about to talk about.

So in the next slide you'll just see some text and this probably looks very similar to what you see in your present levels. I have seen present levels documents in which there's like a table for example, and it'll say need one this and then there's a description, need two this and a description, that's not really recommended because it doesn't really illustrate the connection, right, between those needs it's not that kids have these isolated needs, it's generally a collection of needs that might result from the disability.

And so we clarify the objective data that describes the needs for the student, whatever that might be. And I know folks mentioned in the chat box their CBM data, informal data, standardized assessment data, any of that data that's quantitative right or qualitative is providing us a greater understanding of the extent of the need and you'll see that there is this impact and I've highlighted where you might see some of these components of a high quality PLAAFP is that we're explicitly saying it affects the kid in this way, and by doing that it helps the team understand what we need to do next, Right?

Or why, that's an important part of it because as a parent I might not know why you think that's important or as a related service provider I might not see how they these two needs connect. So, by clarifying what's the impact, of that need, it helps us understand what are we going to do. The last piece you'll see where it says rationale for proposed services. Really think about it, thinking about the PLAAFP as a way to justify the goals that we're going to set, or the services that we're going to provide helps the team understand why it's done this way. If you ask parents they'll often say, well, I think they're doing it because of this, or I don't know why this accommodation is on there and it's likely because the present levels hasn't made the justification that there is something needed to address some area of concern for the student.

Now this part here really illustrates a math need, and this is the need that is outlined. For example, in the evaluation report, and somebody had mentioned that, you know. Do we just talk about those needs? And is that really where our goals are from? But if you look at the second piece, of this present levels, it gives you a better picture of this kid, and says, you know, maybe you know, he just has this need in math, but there's some other functional things or some other pieces that are getting in the way of the students access and benefit. And so in this case, the students' performance is impacted by his engagement, right? And if you think about kids in middle school in high school and they're probably this persistent feeling of not being successful often leads to lower academic engagement, which then leads to worse issues in the future so clarifying that in quantifying what it is that we see because we've now hypothesized that it effects, it's like creating a greater need for services for the kid, helps folks understand why we're going to do the services that we end up doing.

So, in this case we provided baseline for our academic engagement for the student, 32, and then we've made some comparisons around what are the typical peers in this class doing. That statement right there will help us to determine what would be a realistic goal if the team chooses to focus on this as a primary IEP goal. The impact is also there, and you'll see that there are some other data that help us understand the nature of the need, but are not likely to result in an IEP goal. On the example handout we shared, you'll see that, but the team may say we don't really need a goal around turning in math assignments on time. We know it's a need and we're addressing that need through our academic engagement and supports that we're providing to this student.

But you'll see that that last, piece. and Chrissy is going to talk a lot about this is, it helps us think about what services we propose to address those needs. And while we don't really focus, do things because the courts want us to do this, this is where, if for some reason, you ever had the very rare opportunity to go to court for some reason that's what people are looking at is that you're expertise is justifying why, you're proposing the goals and services that you're proposing.

So, I just wanted to share that so you see the example that's used for the handout, that's in the handout. But to just give an illustration of where those things that Amy talked about in the present levels what they might look like right, and they're not all going to look the same,

but we want to make sure that we have the same sort of substance, right, impact, quantitative data that justification. All right, Chrissy.

I'm going to pass this over to you and I think you're going to quiz us.

Chrissy Brown: I am. So, we are going to start with our very first knowledge check. Okay, so and Amy are these polls or are we doing chatter falls. Just double checking?

Amy Peterson: For both those questions we have a poll for both of the questions.

Chrissy Brown: So, the first question, which are the following most closely represents a PLAAFP statement, and the poll has been launched at the first question, and you actually can jump ahead and do the second question at this same time. If you want. You sure can. And the second question is, why is there? Why is the PLAAFP statement an important part of the IEP?

We'll give everyone another minute or 2 to answer as we hit 60% participation, and it's climbing. Great participation rates got to 70 so I'll give you guys one more second to fill it out if you haven't had a chance, and then we'll go ahead and share those results.

Alright. let's look at those results Alright, and Amy, can everyone see the results or just my screen?

Amy Peterson: I think everyone should be able to see them. Okay? Oh, thank you.

Chrissy Brown: So the first question, which of the following most closely represents the PLAAFP statement? The leading answer was Number 3, with 84%, saying, The PLAAFP is a statement that serves as the foundation on which the rest of the IEP is built and let's check. That would be correct and let's look at the second one. Why is the PLAAFP statement an important part of the IEP. And we had number 2 leading. It describes all students needs that will be addressed with 77% of our participants selecting number 2. And that is correct.

It describes all the students needs that will be addressed by the IEP. Tessie. Did you want to add anything?

Tessie Bailey: I just wanted to make just a real quick comment around the last statement for the first question and I saw that a couple of you selected the PLAAFP statement is a summary of predicted performance. I would say that we can't really predict what's going to happen. The way that Endrew states it is, we're designing something that's reasonably calculated to help the student get to the goals that are in the next section of the IEP but we don't make claims in a sense about where the kid will be.



We can share where we want them to be, right, but not necessarily where we predict them to be.

Chrissy Brown: And Tessie not for the second question. number one actually had 12 or 11 of the 94 participants.

Tessie Bailey: Yeah, and it and this is where it doesn't necessarily describe the services it justifies the services because your statement of special education, related services, supplementary aids and services, and program modifications, a really long section, that's where we describe the services and document those services. But the present levels justify the needs for those particular services. So hopefully, that helps. And same with that third one around the program components. It's really sort of making claims like you know that previous data indicates that 30 min results in this type of performance. And so it seems like when we then propose we're going to do 30 min for whatever that is, we have some rationale or justification for why we might do that.

Chrissy Brown: Thank you, Tessie. So, we are going to move on to the next section of our training.

Now we're going to focus on using the PLAAFP to design services and aids as well as discuss measurable annual goals. So connecting the PLAAFP statement to goals, the statements of special education, aids and services. As mentioned in the previous section, the PLAAFP statement helps us develop the remaining components of the IEP.

Every need identified in the PLAAFP statement must be correlated with a special education, aid or service, supplementary aid and service, or program modification found in our statement of services. For some needs we will need annual goals that allows us to measure the overall impact of the program we are offering to the student. The goals are also connected to the aids and services described in the statement of the services outlined in the box.

If we have a well-developed IEP, all of the proposed aids and services will allow the student to demonstrate progress, appropriate progress toward their IEP goals as measured by the monitoring plan. So as we can see it's all connected. The PLAAFP, same as a special education, aids and services, the annual goals, again how that's connected to a monitoring plan, as well as participation outside of the regular education as well as with assessments.

So it's this demonstration of internal consistency that allows us to meet the procedural and substantive requirements of an IEP and ultimately support the fidelity of the implementation of the IEP and specially designed instruction.

So what does IDEA say about the statement of services and aids? According to IDEA, each child's IEP must contain the following: a statement of the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services based on peer reviewed research to the extent practicable to be



provided to the child or on behalf of the child. These tip sheets can be found on our on the PROGRESS Center website. Again, there is a tip sheet correlated with every section of the IEP that's required by IDEA.

What does IDEA say about the statement of services and aids? To advance appropriately towards attaining the annual goals the statement of services and aids should be developed for students to advance appropriately, including involvement in and make progress in the general education curriculum, as well as participation in nonacademic activities, and be educated and participate with children, with disabilities as well as nondisabled children, and the activities described in this section.

So when developing the statement, teams must consider the following: statement of special education aids and services must enable a child to advance appropriately towards attaining the annual goals as well as be involved in and make progress in a general education curriculum and participate in extracurricular and non-academic activities.

So here's a very clear graphic that you can use to help identify each of those sections and make sure that these are discussed in the child's IEP. And to learn more about the statement of services and aids again we have our tip sheets on the statement of special education or special design instruction (SDI), related services, supplementary aids and services, as well as program modifications and supports.

Now we're going to take a minute to pause and reflect. To what extent are the needs identified in your IEP aligned to the services, aids, or program modification. So we're going to ask everyone to take a moment and pause and reflect on this question, and then, in the moment or so we'll have anyone who would like to share out and you can share in the chat box or you can come off of mute. While we're reflecting on what extent our needs identified in your IEPs currently aligned the services aids or program modification

Tessie Bailey: And I guess I would be curious too, I mean, when you did your activity, did you have some that weren't highlighted? You know that maybe you had a bunch of accommodations listed, and they don't necessarily address a need. So please feel free to share. I think it's a learning curve. You know we want to, we sometimes assume things are happening but maybe we're not as explicit or clear about it. So, I've learned a lot.

Chrissy Brown: So, and I've definitely learned a lot by working with the PROGRESS Center. So does anyone want to share on? To what extent do you feel your current IEPs the needs are identified or aligned to the services, aids or program modification? Or do you often see that the needs are just clearly aligned with goals

Vicki: Well, I can say that when we first got a computerized program for our IEPs, we decided not to have any dropdowns, no dropdowns for present levels, no dropdowns for goals,



everything had to be individually driven that way you could see that if anything was in the present levels and it didn't get addressed someplace else on that IEP, we knew there was a problem. So it has to be has to go in both directions. You can take the back part of an IEP and look at it and if you can't go back to the present levels and see why it's in the IEP. I actually had a principal say why is that in the IEP there wasn't even anything in the present levels to suggest you needed that, and it was like, the teacher was like, oh, my goodness.

Tessie Bailey: That's a great example, and Vicki I'm excited your principal said it. I mean that really shows that collective efficacy.

Chrissy Brown: Yeah, thank you for sharing, Vicki. That is great to hear. A lot of people are moving away from those dropdown boxes and those very selective and limited things that you can put into an IEP. Glad to hear. Well, we are going to move on and we're going to share a few tips. Tips for choosing and implementing services and aids.

And so these tips helps us ensure that the present levels of academic a and functional performance statement justifies the IEP teams selection of special education, aids, and services to be provided to the student. Making sure that we're avoid identifying specific programs instead focus on the features of an individual program necessary for the student to benefit. Identify special education, aids and services based on the unique needs of the student as opposed to a disability label or the location of services. And I think Tessie spoke about this earlier, you can't just have a one size fits all model or goal for a student with a specific disability. It must be individualized, based on the student needs. Consider what knowledge and skill school personnel will need to successfully implement IEPs and support the child across learning environments, making sure that those aids and supplementary aids and services are generalizable. For students who are non-responsive to evidence-based programs, consider a using a research-based process thinking about that DBI [data-based individualization]. You know, how are we adopting and adapting some of our programs to meet the needs of our students who may be non-responding to the general structure of a program or curriculum. As well as reviewing the research and resources from Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) funded centers, like the PROGRESS Center, to identify specialized instructional approaches and strategies plus aids and services that are, you know, have been filtered and implemented with fidelity.

And now I'm going to hit it over to Dr. Bailey, who's going to go ahead and discuss goals those lofty lovely goals.

Tessie Bailey: Yeah, and I will say that you know the present levels there's a big piece, we think about the Endrew decision, that child circumstances that current reality, that's why there's such a focus on the present levels.



But the other piece of that decision was really around progress appropriate, right or and we often talk about in the description or the response to it is appropriately ambitious goals. Otherwise, we're not really setting those expectations for kids that are likely to set them up for success.

Now I'll just quickly share this. It probably, you've probably taken a ton of training on writing goals. But you'll see that there is a statement it is not pluralized, and you'll see that with the services as well.

A statement around the measurable annual goals and there's nothing in IDEA that says you have to have an academic and you have to have a functional, but you have to have at least one of those which is aligning to the needs that are outlined in the present levels, and the whole point of those is to really help the kid be involved in and make progress in the general curriculum.

And to meet the needs of, you know, to address the needs that were outlined as a result of the disability. And where we looked at that that slide that Chrissy showed with all the lines and going there we often see that in order for us to really see growth on a measurable annual goal there has to be some associated specially designed instruction, we wouldn't write a goal for something that we're just going to accommodate and hope it happens, we write goals around areas, those primary needs, that need specially design instruction in order for the change in that performance to occur.

So that's why you saw on that document the PLAAFP goes to the statements of aids and services, but also specifically to the goals. And then to the services, and then back. For some kids, we will have benchmarks depending on your state. You may also have individual benchmarks for that. But generally, we focus for most students on these broader goals.

Look at the next slide and so the reason that the goals are really so important is because they sort of clarify the big picture about where we're going. Remember we talked about, what do we want for our kids? It's the big picture. But these are really thinking about why, we're doing what we're doing on a regular basis, right?

It ensures that there's high expectations that there's grade level access, but it really is also helping us be able to evaluate the extent to which what we are proposing as the aids and services actually are benefiting the student. So the goals are not just around us looking at the kid, but also as an indicator of our success as a program. That what we've put together for this kid, is actually helping them meet those goals.

Now there are three sort of essential features of a goal and there's no one way or right way. And some of you may be familiar with SMART goals, but in general, our best wisdom says at a minimum these are the three primary things that you would see. They're indicators of measurable as defined by you know IDEA, measurable annual goals. And that first is that we have to clarify one is the target behavior, the actual thing that we will see. If we can't see it then it's probably not a measurable annual goal. Like kid



will think before they act. I can't really tell if a kid is thinking, they might look like they're thinking, but in reality they might not be, right. We want to provide some information about the condition, and I shared this a little bit earlier is what's the context in which we would expect this to happen. Some challenges that we see are people think they need to include every context. Remember the goal is an indicator of benefit it's not necessarily covering everything.

We don't need 22 of them, but it's an indicator of overall benefit and success of our special education program that we have proposed—so we look at the condition under which we'll be able to measure that.

And then we look at some indicator of proficiency, right. Let's say I do the behavior once, is that a good indicator of proficiency? If not, how many times would be a good indicator of proficiency? This is where the engagement of our team really helps us clarify what would be a measurable annual goal, because me as a parent might say, Oh heck no, one times not enough. And the school might say, oh we need to do it at least 3 times consistently, one right after another, before we see that. Now the timeframe itself, no need to go back, but the timeframe itself, you know every goal is annual.

So one of the things that I just want to clarify is that if your student is going to achieve that goal before the annual, you know, timeframe, then it may not necessarily be an annual goal. It might be a short-term benchmark to help the kid reach a bigger goal. So that's where we think about prioritizing the goals that we're going to select for the student.

We'll use those benchmark goals or short-term goals for instructional decision making. And so we think about this idea of a single goal it could address multiple needs and that's where we've got to get to what is realistic, right? You know, we can think about reading as a good example.

There can be an overall single goal for reading proficiency, or we could have 6 goals and look at each component of the reading process. In reality that bigger proficiency goal is probably more relevant for the student and a better indicator of our overall effectiveness of our program, right?

So the other ones become these short-term benchmarks, or the way that we think about the design of our specially design instruction, right?

So it's that scope and sequence that we've outlined. And some things that we want to really look for in our present levels, that help us create that annual goal, is we want clarity around what's the primary needs, right, we want to know all the needs, that's the purpose of the PLAAFP, but we really want clarification from the team of what are the primary needs.

We want to also know the target, right? Like what is the behavior itself? What does it look like that we have collectively agreed upon? We want to have some level of proficiency, right? That if is 76%

proficient, is it 3 times per session? Is it doing it a certain number? Those are the things that we're looking for from our present levels that help us make better decisions, and ultimately, without the baseline, we can't determine whether what we proposed is reasonably calculated, because we don't know where we came from. So, the baseline is a critical piece that we need. We don't have to include it in the goal.

I know some folks get that guidance around, you know, when you write your goal going from here to here. But a goal by definition is the outcome or the intended effect. So you don't have to put the baseline in the goal itself, unless that's what's recommended by your state or your district.

So and I see Sherry, that people really struggle with the behavioral goals in regard to measurement, and I would Sherry they're not alone. There is some great work that's coming out of the National Center on Intensive Intervention. That's really around thinking about systematic behavior measurement or what we refer to as direct behavior measurement.

And that's do we want to see the behavior which are often those sub skills that I just talked about similar to reading? Or are we looking at something that's a collection of behaviors like being respectful, academically engaged? There are some measurements, tools like direct behavior rating that can help us be more thoughtful about our goal development and not be focused on raise hand, you know like, will sit in seat, right. That's a very discreet goal that your kid might achieve in a short period of time, but then a new behavior occurs, so that bigger piece. And Amy put the link in the chat box.

So, I shared this earlier you know is that whole idea of looking at this and trying to determine what do we do next. And I've highlighted some things in here that might be an area of primary need, I think, from our evaluation we know it's around math. So we've got to do something and we've clarified that it's really around these more specific math fact fluency. And so if you can go to the next page Chrissy, that's where we think about this idea of goal setting is thinking more collectively what we want.

You know we can do a single skill of subtraction fluency. But holy heck, if it takes us a year to teach subtraction fluency, it's probably not going to benefit this student, because they also have these other needs that we outlined in the PLAAFP.

So, so we make sure that we're looking at what over the course of a year we would expect this student to achieve, and that's really this mixed math fluency. Although we might start with just subtraction in our specially designed instruction, we don't necessarily need to document that in the IEP. That's the deference to the district or the professional educator.

So in this next one I'll just share, you know, this is something that we look at the PLAAFP and say as a collective or an IEP team, what do we want to focus on? Well, we've identified this academic

engagement is a really big need for this student that if we don't address it, they're not going to be able to access and benefit from any of the SDI that we do around math instruction.

So we've identified it as a primary need—what's nice is we wrote this PLAAFP really well—that we see the baseline data. It's at 32%, and we have a comparison to 76%, and that's the same age peers. So that gives me a sense about what's necessary. Peers without disabilities is 76%. So that helps us determine more likely what the goal is going to be.

Now the team comes together and says, are we looking for behaviors that are similar to the non-disabled peers and in our case we're saying without that level of engagement, the kid is not going to be able to benefit. So that's where we need to be, right. Then we think about the intensity of services in our statement of aids and services that help us get to that level of 76% academic engagement. So that's where you can see pulling from the PLAAFP helps us be more confident in our goal development.

Chrissy Brown: Can I ask a follow up question? You know, oftentimes we see like 90% or 80%. Based on the peers being around 76% would it be appropriate to put maybe a 70 or 75% in there for our targeted student?

Tessie Bailey: And I think this is what comes down to the question that Chrissy had put in, or Sherry had put in there around struggling with behavioral goals is we sometimes arbitrarily come up with a percentage, but in reality we have to know what is similar to their peers.

You know, and so that 80 and 90%, I don't know we just like that number, because it makes us feel like we made an A or a B, but our best approach for behavioral goals is what do same age, non-disabled peers, what are we typically seeing, right? Because there is not benchmarks or growth rates, and we see the same around attention that sometimes we set goals around building kids stamina for attention are unrealistic, right. They're more than what you would expect kids at the same age or grade to be able to achieve.

So that's really how these essential components—why we design our or PLAAFP in the way that we do, because it helps us for our goals, but also think about the services necessary to support the kid. Now I know we're pretty close to the end, and I we're just going to do a really short activity—but this is where you know going back to the IEP that you have and you've identified those needs and maybe when you read it, you're like oh heck, this is a primary need—I want you to see is, do you see the connection between the goals that were proposed and the needs that are there. And I'm super curious, whoever said about the 22 goals, you know are we really focusing on goals that can be impacted by specially design instruction?

And I think that's the part that helps us recognize like this isn't really appropriate for a goal,

right. You know this kid needs an accommodation or modification, whatever, that's part of the statement of aids and services, but from a goal standpoint, is every goal that we proposed can we change the student's behavior if we provided specially designed instruction? That's where we want to see that those effects.

So just from a time standpoint. I don't want to give too much, and I super apologize for that. But I want to also make sure that we have some time for discussion around you know what are you seeing. And so just take a couple of minutes and we'll do a broader group discussion if that's okay, and just tell us you know what it is that you're seeing in terms of the alignment of the goals that you selected and the primary needs outlined in your present level statement. So I'll give about 3 min, and then we'll come back.

Alright, so we want to make sure that we have some time for questions and answers and I'm just curious what you saw in terms of the alignment in the IEP that you reviewed, right. And we're assuming that you're reviewing any IEP.

So I see Sherry says there's a lot of goals based on programs. Thank you for sharing that. It is a common concern and I will say that sometimes we have district or state programs that say, all reading goals must be using our MTSS assessments. We can't really say that. What we can do is leverage those assessments, but we still have to allow for individualized goals for students.

Yeah, and I think a lot of people default to that because there's the goal setting supports that go along with that or rates of improvement. There's not anything like that for functional behaviors. I'm sure you've seen in your IEPs.

Thanks for sharing that Sherry. How about others? What else are you seeing in your goal and PLAAFP alignment? Anybody seen some good examples.

Mara: Hi! I'm Mara. So the one that I pulled actually, I wrote in 2019 and it's really interesting because we did change some of the things—of the ways that we wrote it—so like this is just a citizenship behavior goal, and it was very—I did do things broad like you said, like we didn't do like just raise your hand—it was like, line up, transition, quit, so it was like lumped together, but the difference is that now we're saying for like 3 consecutive days or I don't know 3 times a day for 2 consecutive weeks, whatever it is, you know, whatever makes sense to the team, but we did change that several years ago and I feel so much more comfortable with, like the documentation of it, because before it was like, what? How are we showing that there actually is progress in this. So Yeah.

Tessie Bailey: And then and then that, and Mara that goes back to the collective efficacy, right, because then I can't really see if I'm making progress because the way I'm measuring it is so convoluted

that it's I'm unsure and that that lack of confidence it's just not good for us, right to be able to feel success.

Mara: Because I know what I'm looking for, but until we kind of came up with that, like we all kind of started writing consecutive, whatever it is, it just made it more solid for me. So it just kind of, so we kind of started already doing it, but you had mentioned it so I just did want to bring up that I'm looking at an old one where I didn't do that. I'm like this isn't right.

Tessie Bailey: Well, and I mean all of us have been there, right. I mean I don't know how many people—I think I did, an IEP my second day of teaching and I see Ruth is saying, still learning, and we probably didn't write it correctly, the best way, and we depend on our team, but we evolve, right. And this process that we've shared today is a way to self-reflect and be more intentional and more precise in our language so we do feel more confident in what we do the way we do it.

So, Ruth, I want to just say something to you as you say, what if the same standards apply to kids who are nonverbal and have more significant disabilities? I would say yes, and in fact, my background is in low incidence disabilities, is actually where I started, and to me it's got to be more clear and it actually is probably more challenging for us because we don't have access to these public tools for progress monitoring, and goal setting and it really forces us to understand the student and collectively agree about what it is we would expect the student to do, for us to say we've achieved what we wanted to achieve, right. And so we want to you know utilize the PLAAFPs, our assessment tools are probably more observational, ecological assessments that help us understand the circumstances and the extent to which would be an a properly ambitious goal for the student. So great question.

And I know Sarah is saying the PLAAFPs show weaknesses in math fact fluency and then the weakness is addressed in the IEP goal, which is great, right. That at a minimum is what we're looking for, and then what we would say is, then, is there, SDI, maybe supplemental aids and services, maybe they use a calculator for example, when they're in general education, that is that internal consistency that we're looking for.

Theresa mentioned that the one you reviewed did not address the needs that were in the present levels. Right? And this is where we say maybe we need to meet again, or if it's already, you know, past that we're looking for that refinement. And I think that's what, I'm moving back, the reading is aligned but there's no SDI, and that sort of clarity the way that you just said that Theresa helps us clarify what we need to do next to make this IEP reasonably calculated, right.

That's really that Andrew F. decision is heck, we need to make sure there's SDI to address the writing goals, for example, or the reading goals that are in there or we need to have a writing goal or math, goal because that's a primary need. And David thank you so much for sharing your 22

measurable annual goals—It had 7 different PLAAFP statements—and that goes back to the chunky part where each member of the team is really functioning in isolation, and if we are to be a team, right everyone, the PLAAFP, somebody needs to synthesize the present levels into a single picture for the student, otherwise you get this idea of 22 goals for the kid.

Oh, yeah, Had a feeling took the recommendation straight from the test results.

Okay, So you can see there's some great examples— There you're writing goals without a connection to baseline data. I don't even know how you do that, right. How you write a measurable goal, and actually that's where Andrew said, if you don't have that baseline. How are we to even know that it's appropriately ambitious? Yeah, that idea of higher expectations or that high achievement, or that sort of generalized outcome.

It's challenging. When it's so specific and that's research to recognize that maybe mastery on a sub skill is not necessary for general success, and so sometimes, sometimes they're appropriate, but not always. Well, great feedback, I am so excited to hear, and we're excited to be learning with you over the next year is, how do we improve these?

I know Amy had shared a couple resources, but we want to just talk about what are some of the stickier things, and what is the regs and some of the case laws say about how do we do this better. So, Amy, I'm going to pass it over to you.

Amy Peterson: Great thanks, Tessie, and a lot of these as we'll go through, you'll see some of the issues that you all brought up already, so it won't be anything too new or different from some of the challenges that we've already uncovered, or some of the strategies we've already talked to.

I think, one area that we all think about as we're looking at these measurable annual goals is this connection, especially on the academic side, with standards-based IEP goal writing. We wanted to bring forward a couple quotes from an OSEP letter in 2015 that really talked about this idea of standards-based IEP goal writing and you can see from these quotes here, the first one we expect annual IEP goals to be aligned with state academic content. That connection with alignment is really important. We want to make sure that those goals are aligned with those State standards, but we also recognize as you look at that second quote that it doesn't mean that the annual goal necessarily results in the child reaching their grade level in that year, right, if particularly for students that are significantly below grade level.

So, if we look at the information provided in this OSEP letter, we can see some of that content in that that nuance that we need to think about as we look at that individual student needs and to make sure that we're making sure we're thinking about the alignment to the state standards and recognizing what is ambitious, but also thinking about that reasonably calculated component as well.

And then, as we think about, you know that same idea with the millions of goals or things like that, it's not that we need a goal per state standard, or that as well, we're also thinking about broadening our focus in order to making sure that we have that alignment to the standards and outcomes.

So just thinking critically there. And Tessie talked a lot about this Endrew context and consideration, right. We're thinking about making our goals ambitious, making sure that we can think about students making progress appropriate in the light of the child circumstances. So we're always thinking back to that individualization in light of the child circumstances, but thinking about what is it take to provide progress appropriate for the child.

On the next slide you'll see some additional case law, as we think about, Oh, the one back, unambitious goals. Right, so here in this Carter versus Florence County Four, District Court Opinion, you can see a quote here, now a while back, right.

This IEP prepared in May First, 1985 did not provide Shannon with free, appropriate public education as required, even if all of the goals in the document had been met, Shannon would continually continue to fall behind, her classmates at an alarming rate. So thinking critically about kind of creating those ambitious goals.

And as we look at Endrew as well, we also need to think about that, that consideration for unambitious goals, right so we're thinking about, you know are our goals ambitious enough in light of the student circumstance?

Oh, no! I just saw Angel your streets are flooding so good luck with that.

Oh, We've got lots of things going on today. So, another caution that we want to consider is whether our goals are measurable enough.

We talked about that in some of the examples as well. But you can see an example of here from this Rio Rancho Public schools case in thinking about whether the student goals are measurable. So just saying, improving or increasing, you can see some of the quotes there. Will the student improve that's not going to really tell us what does improvement look like? What is it going to be if the student is improving we don't know we haven't really defined that.

So really thinking about, you know, looking at this as the stranger test and thinking about, if somebody else looked at your IEP or somebody else, looked at an IEP are they able to figure out how to measure that same goal? If they don't have the context of the information is maybe in your head, or they don't have that information.



I think, Mara, you talked about that really clearly, and really being thoughtful about laying out a measurable goal so that someone could look at that goal even if it wasn't you and be able to document whether the student is making progress toward that goal. So really thinking about kind of that, I think often times the stranger test across our IEPs is a good idea, right?

Because we might have some context that we don't put into that document, but we also know that IEPs often travel with students, students that might change schools or grades or whatnot and without that information we really need to make sure that it's something that makes sense to another person who will pick up that document and see it, and can take that information and build from it for the next year, or something like that.

Another caution that we'll want to think about our example for is it measurable enough, is really thinking about kind of how we're thinking about measuring. So, is it something that we can graph? Is it something that we can document over time developing writing skills by monitoring usage of rubric provided in class?

From this example, not measurable nor was it verifiable it's just having something, if it's not something that we can document over time clearly to illustrate it. It is important to carefully consider our words that we use in our statements. It can help. It can put us into trouble.

So we think about kind of developing those goals making sure it's something that's measurable and thinking about the what the words mean. Can we apply that goal or that strategy to measure that goal over time? Have we been clear about what our target behavior is, our conditions and our outcome of interest?

And then oh, one more, and then finally, this one up percentages.

And I think Chrissy mentioned this before. We talked about this a little bit as well. You know, percentages just by themselves are meaningless, right? If we just throw a percentage in that has no context for what that percentage is for, or why we have selected that percentage, that alone will not provide us with a measurable goal. So we need to think clearly, critically about what, why we selected that percentage. Is it a comparison with the same age peer or a national norm, or something like that that we're selecting for that percentage? If we're just putting a percentage in our goals by itself.

And then last I think there was the one thing that we wanted to point out, I put a link to the behavioral goals guide in the chat earlier when we were talking about behaviors. There is also an academic, high-quality academic, individualized education program goals guide that was developed by NCII that is actually in the process of being updated or revised, right now.

So a newer version of that should be available shortly for you all. And there is a tip sheet for measurable annual goals, just like we shared for the other two strategies as well.

Both the PLAAFP and the statement of services and aids, and so that measurable annual goals tip sheet, a great reference point to go back to think about the condition the target behavior the level of proficiency and timeline as well.

And then finally, we talked about FAIR earlier. I think Tessie mentioned it in the keynote session. This acronym, right? Is it feasible? Is it acceptable? Is it impactful, is it relevant but it's important for us to think about both in the services and that we're selecting as well as and the practices we're selecting as well as our goals that we're setting? So, if we are you know have 22 goals? Is that feasible, right. If we're thinking about the goals that we're selecting, are they feasible for us to actually put into place? Or can we appropriate, are they appropriately ambitious? And can we realistically achieve them during that time frame? And also do they really reflect the needs of the student overall? Or are they a specific sub skill, or something like that? That would be in the short term. We also want to think if they're acceptable to the student to the family, to the educators are they meaningful for us. If achieving that goal, does that have meaning for people, and then also thinking about the impact. You know, if the student achieves that goal, what is the impact of that goal? And then, finally, is it relevant? Does it have meaning again and is it acceptable and meaningful for this student, the families, will it have, be an outcome of interest for them.

So, if we think back to our original 4 questions, does it really connect with what we want for the student? So, I would recommend, This is an just like assumacide, FAIR is another acronym that I'd love for you to put in your pocket after today.

But really thinking about critically, as we look at our IEPs about whether they're feasible, they're acceptable, they're impactful, and they're relevant. And that might be just a helpful frame for us, as we think about kind of making things that are meaningful and based on the individual and unique needs of the student and that connect to our overarching goals for where we want the student to be.

So, I'm going turn it back to Chrissy for the last couple minutes to close this out with some other related resources and tools, and a little bit of time for questions if we're able.

Chrissy Brown: And I have to unmute myself, talking to myself for a moment. So, this is just tips for progress, for the powers of team working together, the collaborative team collecting and summarizing data for the development of the PLAAFP statement prior to the IEP and meeting to help facilitate more robust discussions, making sure that everyone's on the same page, and really including parents as well as families and students, and the general education teachers making sure that they also have a voice at the table.

We'll come back to this one. If you're interested in going deeper, the PROGRESS Center has self-paced training modules. These are just a few of the topics. We have an IDEA and the IEP: From Compliance to Progress, which is just a general overview. We have the What and Why of Measurable Annual Goals, The Path to PROGRESS: Developing and Implementing High Quality Educational Programs as well as The What and Why of the Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance. I know there are a few additional modules in the works.

Amy can add those titles there's one on law is that correct, Amy. That will be available soon.

Amy Peterson: Yeah, we actually had one that came out, sorry I'll turn my camera on, relatively recently on Introduction to Federal and State Laws Impacting Students with Disabilities. There'll be a second one in that series that will also be coming out. And then we just recently released one that really looks at planning for instruction and some considerations for planning for instruction. So that one's another one that's exciting but there's a range of different modules that are available. One on the IEP team, and so on and so what we'll continue to build and add on this over time. But these are some of the key ones that really aligned with the session today.

Chrissy Brown: Thank you. And these online courses are intended to build educator and administrator knowledge, with the focus on how to develop as well as implement high quality IEPs.

We also have these amazing tip sheets and resources to support the development of the high quality, educational programming. And so, as you can see there's one for each of the 7 components of the IEP.

That's required by IDEA, and then we have a few suggested next steps as follow up to, with your attendance to this session, you can complete the IDEA and the IEP from Compliance to PROGRESSs module as well as completing the What and Why of the Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance module.

And remember, these are also a self-pace module, so you can stop and pause and come back to them at any time. And we also recommend you or your team evaluating the internal consistency of at least 2 or 3 additional IEPs to help build that clear thread and great for practicing and noticing and identifying any areas of growth for your IEP development. And then staying connected with the PROGRESS Center. Please feel free to connect with us on Facebook as well as Twitter at @k12progress. If you have not, please sign up for our newsletter.

