



## Ensuring Specially Designed Instruction in Secondary Settings

**Sara Evans:** Welcome, everybody. Glad you're here. We're going to get started right away. We have a lot to cover in a short period of time, and we ran a little over. You'll see in the chat box, Tessie is dropping in some information for our Kahoot game that we'll be playing during this presentation, and just some quick, very, very quick housekeeping. We are recording.

If you know how to use zoom, of course, this is probably the fourth meeting you've been in around this, but please use the chat. Turn on close captioning if needed, anything you need, we're happy to have your video on or off, come off mute, if you have a question or throw it in the chat, we'll be answering it as we go. If you need a certificate, please change your name under participants, as we've been asking you to do in all the other one other sessions. So you should be well practiced at it.

We have our presenters, Dr. Tessie Bailey, myself, Sarah Evans, and Mia Mamone, sorry if I said that wrong, and we are happy that you're here, and we're going to get started with our conversation around SDI at the secondary level. We had some great, great conversations in our last session. So we're hoping that guys interact with us, ask your questions and join in here today. Our goal is to explain what SDI looks like and not does not look like at the secondary level, model strategies that can be used to design and deliver SDI at the secondary level, and then, of course, share out some of the resources that we have and other national centers have around providing high-quality SDI for students.

We start off talking about, especially at the secondary level, our students that are identified with a disability, really, are viewed at a much lower level than their typical developing peers or peers that have the same struggles that have not been identified.

The expectations that we have nationally through research have shown we have lowered what we expect for our students with disabilities. Our teachers, parents, and even the students do not hold themselves to the same standards as we would other peers that do not have the label. And so we start off this conversation at the secondary level, thinking about, what do high expectations look like? And how do we ensure that students with disabilities have high expectations? And how do we help our families and our special ed, general education teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, hold our students with disabilities to the same expectations as every other student?

So we're going to show a video here of a story from a classroom of a gentleman named Billy Pickens and his experience with having a teacher change their expectations of him in high school.

**Donna Sacco (in video):** In this Stories from the Classroom video, Billy Pickens tells us how his teacher's high expectations for him may not have been welcome in high school, but that as an adult who is deaf blind, he now appreciates how important it was for his future.

**Billy Pickens:** On the first couple days of school, and I was young at the time, so I didn't recognize this,



but teachers weren't really giving me the same work. In fact, in the beginning I was placed in a special ed class even though I had been mainstreamed throughout elementary school. So their automatic assumption was that I need to be in a special ed class. But they realized oh, he kind of surpassed the class and what they were doing, so they put me back in mainstream, and then when I got to mainstream, some of the teachers were very hesitant about how to teach me.

And so I definitely felt like at the time I was kind of not thinking much of it because they weren't—they weren't giving me work and I was fine with that, because I was 12 and didn't want to work. But I think that later when I realized that there was a lot of under-expectation, a lot of just wanting to pass me up and not really treat me the same way as my sighted peers.

**Donna Sacco:** One English teacher made a lasting difference for Billy's future.

**Billy Pickens:** He called a meeting, and he said your writing is really good, and he was like, why are you in standard? You should be in honors with this kind of writing. And I said, well, I don't want to do the homework and he was like, well, I can help that, you can stay in standard, but I'm going to give you honors-level work. So he kept me in standard.

I thought he was joking, but then all of a sudden points get taken off or commas here, and it got to the point where me, him, and my mom were all butting heads about it, because I needed the class to graduate and he was being hard on me. And at the time I didn't like it, because like I said I didn't want to do the work. And later on, he told my mom, I know he can do it. So really gave it my all eventually and I did pass the class and did well.

**Donna Sacco:** What does Billy recommend for educators to promote progress for students with disabilities?

**Billy Pickens:** Leave your biases at the door and just walk in and see people as individuals. I know that sometimes it can be hard, and I understand that we're all kind of judgmental in some way and time. We all kind of look at people or have a first impression of people.

But I think as a teacher, do your best to realize anyone who walks in your classroom likely wants an education. They may not realize it because they may be young and just kids, but I think everybody genuinely wants to learn something, so if you see that and see beyond what disability they have, or what race they are or whatever it might be, I think that you can realize that at the end of the day, everybody wants to learn and everybody can learn.

**Donna Sacco:** Billy graduated from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte in 2020. He now works for the Exceptional Children's Assistance Center, leading the youth advisory team and newsletter, while developing his very own podcast series.

**Sara Evans:** We shared that video today because it highlights the expectations that that Billy had of himself his parent, his mom, and how she had lower expectations and didn't realize that, and that this one teacher, an English teacher for him, had a pivotal role in seeing past Billy's disability to the abilities that he had, and how he did not want them to hold him back, and he knew he was a great writer, and he could see that in his work, and oftentimes we walk into those situations, and the first thing we see is the disability. And I think we spoke a lot about that in the in the first session on belonging and heard from several different people how that changed their course of their trajectory, because a pivotal person raised the expectations, or they raised the expectations of themselves. So we know that most students with disabilities, when given the appropriate services and aids,

can academically and functionally have the same outcomes as their non disabled peers. It really just boils down to their opportunities, and the expectations that we all hold. And we bring this up because at a secondary level, these students are likely have been in special education for multiple years. They have a perception of themselves. Teachers have perceptions of them, families do. And it's critical at that secondary level to ensure those positive post-secondary outcomes, that we work really hard to establish those high expectations.

I'm going to be passing this over to Tessie to take over. But in the chat box she has included a Kahoot link. So if you want to get on when she's talking, so you're ready to go when she brings up the first activity, I highly recommend it. If you need help, Mia and I are also here to help with that. Tessie.

**Tessie Bailey:** All right, and I have to say, when you do the Kahoot, you can put in any name, and somebody is the greatest name, and it's Hilly Vanilly. So kudos to whoever has that one. So thank you all for coming. I'll just start out by saying, I have 2 kids who are in secondary settings. I have a seventh grader and a tenth grader who started school today, and both of them disabilities, and really sort of navigating this experience of secondary education has been, I think, eye opening for one, but it's allowed us to really sort of understand: What are the contexts that people are working against? And how do we leverage that context to do it?

I will also say that here, at the PROGRESS Center over the last 3 years, we have conducted a Thought Leaders Summit specifically around service delivery and secondary education as well as in educator focus groups, in which we interviewed educators across the country around how they were providing those services and currently have several educators in residence who are sort of tackling some of the challenges that have come up with that. So if you're interested in being part of that. Keep in touch with us, because we will be bringing our next cohort of educators and residents soon.

I shared this slide in my previous sessions, and I think it's really important to bring us back to where we all need to start, right? It's easy to say, oh, that's the new shiny thing, and we're going to move forward. But there are some core things that need to occur for students with disabilities to access and benefit from school, and Sara mentioned, you know, really, the biggest one is maintaining high expectations. It is really believing that students, despite the presence of a disability, can have similar outcomes and opportunities as their peers without disabilities.

And it sort of leads into this number two, which is being able to articulate what we want to happen, and one of the things that we've seen in a secondary setting is the outcome of interest, not surprisingly, is often the diploma, and that we think about, how do we construct this IEP so they get the diploma, right? How do we set up their course schedule so they get the diploma. But sometimes the diploma is not enough to be able to have similar competitive employment, or to be able to access and be successful in a secondary setting.

So we think about, what do we want the student to be able to do? We need to be thinking more from the bigger picture. And that's why IDEA includes the transition plan. Now we're thinking about those bigger post-secondary goals that are, I want the individual to be competitively employed. I want them to be able to have healthy relationships, to function independently, be able to be successful in school. That's what really should be guiding the design and delivery of the IEP within the secondary setting.

In order for us to do that very well, we have to really know the student in their circumstances. So both in the present levels and in your transition plan, you're really sort of understanding where is the student at compared to where they want to be, right, and that then helps us determine what are the things that are going to help move the student from where they are right now to where they need to be post-secondary. And that's why you have a couple of years to be able to do that.

Some of the things they'll need are, you know, the credits in order to get the diploma. But they're likely to need very clearly define knowledge, skills, and activities or strategies to be able to function within the school environment as well as the post school environment. The transition plan will likely have other services in support some of those will be specially designed, but not all of them are. We're going to focus primarily on Number 4, which is really around, you know, based on where the kid is, our high expectations of where they're going. What are the knowledge skills and strategies needed for this student to be successful? And I shared this in a previous slide, as well as, you know, the IEP has a lot of cool features. Some of us probably don't have a very positive relationship with the IEP, but it really is, if it's done well, can be very helpful, because it outlines where the student is in comparison to where they need to be, and then it allows us to say, Well, if the kid needs to be there, what are the services and aids that I'm going to provide?

And the idea of the goals right? Or to help us measure the extent to which what we're providing is helping the student move towards those annual goals, as well as what we see in the transition plan, those post-secondary goals, and then those the services and aids that we provide help the student make progress on those annual goals, and ultimately us being able to see that progress

Where SDI fits is really within this statement of aids and services or services and aids. It's only one part of what we provide secondary students. But what we have seen is as kids get older, they often get less and less specially designed instruction, or have to make a decision of whether they're going to get a diploma or specially design instruction. Right? There's really these two competing priorities, because the schedule is kind of limited. And so when we think about, you know, where, how do we make these decisions about where kids are going to be, we've always got to start with this PLAAFP. And if we have high expectations for students, then our PLAAFP is going to be thinking about it in a relationship to those high expectations. I want the student to be more independent in their core classes. I want them to be able to get their high school diploma. But I want them to also be independent, have the executive functioning skills to be a successful post school.

And we think about this present levels, IDEA and its reauthorization added to things and it made clear it wasn't just present levels. It was clearly present levels of academic achievement and functional performance. And so you can see that here, in the actual definition and, Mia put the link to the tip sheet in there. But we think about academics. It's probably not that big a deal. You're like, of course I understand academics. It's reading, writing, math, social studies, history, all of those things that will allow the student to get the credits to be able to graduate post-school, or to graduate and then function post-school.

The other thing that was intentionally added to the regulations was around this focus on functional skills and functional skills are those things that are considered non-academic, but are really essential for school success. Some of the things we often think about are the things on the left side, getting dressed, eating, eating, and toileting, right, mobility. And we often associate functional skill needs with students who have, you know, lower cognitive disabilities. But the regulations made it clear that everybody who has an IEP has to have a PLAAFP statement that addresses the needs both from an academic and functional skills.

And for kids who maybe have things like learning disabilities or behavioral disorders or autism, what we see is the functional skills that are impacted by the disability are things like behavior, social skills, communication, and most commonly, executive functioning. And then inclusion of executive functioning was meant to help us sort of reflect back about why this kid with the disability is struggling in reading, writing, and math. All kids are born not being able to read. What distinguishes a student who has a reading disability from one who does not, is that they don't respond or benefit from the high quality instruction similar to their peers. And we have to ask, what about the disability, what functional skill or skills is preventing the kid from accessing and benefiting the curriculum which ultimately leads to these academic deficits? And why does that matter? Because if you look at what's necessary for post school success, a lot of the essential skills that are needed are functional skills.

So if we're only focusing on the academic skills for students, and as you look, this is from the U.S. Department of Ed, in the U.S. Office of CTE, is that these are the essential skills identified from employers as being essential for post school employment and ultimately secondary success. And applied academics is just one slice of that. The other skills that really predict whether a student will be meaningfully employed and maintain that employment and move up are things that we often think is more functional, building relationships, communicating, managing your time and resources. And that's where we think about what is the role of the IEP is to help the student develop the functional skills and academic skills necessary both for school success but also for those posts post-secondary goals.

So we're going to do a quick little game, and we've put it in the chat box a little bit. But you can just take your iPhone, open up the camera and you can put it right on that little QR Code, and it'll bring you to the game. You can select whatever name you would like to use for this event. and just know you can join anytime. We're going to use it throughout, so don't close it out. Alright. So I have folks that are getting on. G money. I love that. PROGRESS. Thank you. I like to play on what's happening today. Nickname quite creative. I love it. You guys are funny. I like you.

Alright. So this is how it's going to work. These are going to be, these are anonymous. So you're not really going to show up, and no one unless you put your first and last name. No one's really going to know who you are. But you'll see that everyone's joining right now and at the end of each question you'll get to see who is on the leaderboard. So I know I've got some competitive folks out there. See this Hilly Vanilly? It's genius. Alright So we're going to get started. Just remember you can keep logging on. It's in the chat box.

All right. So I'm just going to ask a question. And this is not really a right or wrong answer. It's really about, how are you seeing goal construction within your IEP. So do you see primarily academic goals? Or do you see mostly functional goals? Or are you seeing sort of an equal, you know, amount of those or something completely different? So you'll see that you can click on whatever the answer is that you want to provide. I don't think you can change it once you click it. That's how some people beat you. You fumble with your fingers. Yeah. So what we see here on the screen is exactly what we saw in our focus groups. And then in our Thought Leaders Summit is, there has been, push towards primarily academic goals at the secondary level. Now, if you think about a student with disabilities, they probably had about 8 to 10 years of academic instruction, and they are still struggling, and we have to step back and say, what about what we're providing, or the needs of this student are preventing them from, you know, accessing and benefiting from the curriculum? And a lot of that does come down to the functional skills.

And, in fact, functional skills are likely why the student is not accessing and benefiting from the curriculum. Alright. So we're going to do one more and we'll switch over. So a student with the disability uses a visual schedule to address an organization need. So what do you think? What's the kind of service that might be set, special ed, a supplementary aid and service, related services or other. I can see that related. It's about one. So I'll fix that.

Yeah. So a supplementary aid and service. And I put this, we put this question here, because when we look at the services that kids in secondary settings are primarily getting is, they tend to be more on the supplementary aid and service side, meaning they're getting those supports in the general education more so they can manage themselves within the class and ultimately come up with the credits. And it competes right with this ability to provide SDI, that's necessary for the student to develop the skills necessary to address the organizational deficit, right?



So we think about students with disabilities. We can't just manage or accommodate the functional needs that the student has. We need to figure out how to balance that out with the SDI to develop the skills so the kid can be independent. All right, we're going to move back to the other slide. And so we think about, you know our statement. And this is that balance between, you know, appropriate levels of special education. It's the primary purpose of the IEP. But what we're finding in the secondary settings is that students are not getting the special education they need because they're combating against some challenges within the system.

And that's really necessary, because the whole purpose of the IEP is to make sure they're progressing towards those goals right? And if we're only using goals that are standards. Then really, we've lowered the expectations is that we've said you don't have to do all the standards, just the standards. In reality, what we're trying to do is develop the skills necessary for the kid to access all the relevant standards.

So some barriers that we found in our work, obviously the master school schedule is always challenging. You're competing against credit bearing courses. And there's this fear of pulling the kid in any way to provide SDI so that they can be able to progress. And it really is this happy balance that if a general ed and special ed teacher are collaborating well, they can utilize that core class for both, providing the necessary SDI while the student is simultaneously accessing and benefiting from the curriculum, the competing priorities is always an issue. Our capacity to manage service delivery, especially with teacher shortages. And that sort of led to things like co-teaching, or these alternative groupings of students that have undermined our ability to provide specially designed instruction for are. People say, Oh, well, you know, Janet can do that because it's about the standards.

Really, the general education teacher is responsible for the standards-based instruction. But the special ed teacher is responsible for the design and delivery through paras, or however it's delivered to ensure the kid is getting the skills necessary to access and benefit from the standards. And I think this other thing is this imbalance between over accommodating for students and really focusing on the provision of specially designed instruction.

So what we often think about, and what sometimes overrides our SDI is the provision of supplementary aids and services. These are essential for students to be able to access and benefit from the core classes that are required for graduation. But it's not enough right if they only need the supplementary aids and services. And technically, they're not really eligible under IDEA. They're likely to be a student who needs a 504 plan.

What we're trying to focus on is, you know, while simultaneously meeting their needs in real time to access content through accommodations and modifications, we want to make sure that we're balancing that out with the development of skills, knowledge and strategies for the student. So they don't need us right? I mean, we want them to be able to graduate feeling like they can do this on their own. And if we over accommodate meaning we're always, you know, giving them lessons, so we're always providing a reader and not really helping them learn how to do that for themselves or self-advocate. It's like what you heard with Xuan yesterday. You kind of leave not really having a place, right, like you don't understand where you fit, because you're so dependent upon folks.

And I think the challenge is the more modifications we provide, then we're lowering the expectations. The student assumes this is what real life is like, and what happens is once they graduate, they lack both the skills and knowledge to be able to be successful. So it's not that we're not providing accommodations and modifications, but it's important to remember they're supplementary, right, that really, it's around this bigger piece of specially designed instruction meaning we are adapting the instruction to address the disability related need, right? And that's that to address the unique needs of the child and simultaneously ensure they have access to the general curriculum.



So that's where SDI is at, and we sometimes are just not seeing the intensity of that for secondary students. And so they they're not really benefiting, as we would expect. You know, at the beginning we talked about the objectives. And a big piece of this is making sure that students are getting skills that will allow them to be successful. I mentioned, I have 2 kids.

The biggest things that I wanted my kids to be able to do was live independently. I have a very small house. They can't live here forever. And to have healthy relationships and be able to do as well as they can in their work environment. And it's not about passing this class or this very narrow skill. It's this big picture which then requires me to make sure my kids are learning strategies. For, like right, it's like adulting in a sense.

We know that when after repeated failures, that students with disabilities who aren't being appropriately supported who aren't gaining those skills, start to develop a level of learned helplessness. And if you're in secondary and you're like, Oh, my kids aren't engaged. And my kids don't like this. We developed that kids came into school loving school, and that disengagement often starts around third grade because they're not having their needs met, and they're dependent upon everybody else to figure out what's going to happen. So we want to make sure we're involving students in the selection of the how we're going to design and deliver SDI as well as how we're going to provide those supplemental supports in the general education classroom.

And so I will say that bottom piece is what I'm going to just sort of close up on is, you know, the master of the skills to improve executive functioning processes. These are things in which we can feasibly deliver SDI to address very common disability related needs within the context of a secondary setting.

If I had to pull a kid out and teach them how to read, but I don't teach them to address the deficit in the first place, that prevented them from learning how to read, then I'm not going to build that sustainable learning or that confidence to be able to continue to learn how to read as they leave high school. right?

So there are some executive functioning skills that have been identified. And we'll put a link in the chat box. It's also linked under the materials for today's session. But executive functioning skills from an SDI standpoint is where we're going to get our biggest bang for our buck we have large effect sizes about point 5, 6. If you look at Hattie's work, and then that's in general. But if you look at some of the individual skills, and I'll share some of the effect sizes here on the next page. What we start to see is if that is taught for all kids.

Then we build on it with specially designed instruction. We are providing secondary students with the knowledge, skills, and strategies to be able to be engaged with their peers without, with and without disabilities, but also to be able to have the skills for competitive employment, have the same opportunities for success in the secondary setting.

So these are the 6 primary skills that we see there are other executive functioning. But these are the primary ones that we see, for example, in evaluation reports across disability categories that are preventing kids from accessing and benefiting from school. Right?

They struggle with attention. They struggle with being able to sort of attend to what's relevant and what's not relevant to be able to identify how to get a task done. My youngest has the worst anxiety you've ever seen because of some early childhood events that if you gave him a task, it's so overwhelming, he doesn't know how to start, so it never gets done, right? The self-monitoring, being able to stay on track, being able to switch between tasks. I think a lot of you probably have goals around that, or this idea of working memory, rapid recall. All of these things are essential for reading, for math, for engaging in appropriate behavior, right? There's sort of the prerequisite.

And so when we think about how we design our SDI at the secondary level, we can't just do reading, right? We can't just teach math. We have to sort of focus on these skills in connection with the academic skills that the kid will need to be successful. Otherwise, they're just learning the strategies outside of contexts, and they won't be able to use them.

So some areas in which we've seen large effect size for the delivery of SDI in secondary settings, as well as elementary. And, to be honest, if you started in elementary, you're going to set the kid up for the greatest level of success. But assuming you're just coming in as a secondary level teacher, these are the skills that we think about the SDI needs, whether it's a content adaptation. We're going to teach them specific strategies. It's a methodology we're going to teach them through a guided practice, through, you know, explicit instruction or technology, right? Or the way we deliver it. And I think this, that last piece of the way we deliver it is sometimes where we may fall short.

So if I'm teaching kids a strategy through SDI as part of the IEP, it doesn't do any good. If I do it on my own and hope the kid transfers, because you will notice there's actually this transfer strategies. We have to explicitly teach kids that that can be part of our specially designed instruction.

That collaboration with general ed and special ed. So special ed is teaching the specially design instruction on the strategies then working in a collaborative way with the general and teacher to you to teach transfer strategies. So the kid can generalize that skill to the general classroom. That's the ultimate way in which the kid is still in the classroom getting their credit bearing courses. But they're getting their specially designed needs met through this collaboration of general ed and special it.

And I think you know as a parent, I would hope that all kids are getting access to these skills. It would ensure our workforce coming out is much more resilient and effective. But for kids with disabilities they need this platform, these opportunities to access and get feedback on these skills that are being taught as part of that specially design instruction. So cognitive task analysis, so somebody asked about that, this is really breaking down a task in a way that we can manageably do it. And I think task analysis has been a huge part of special ed success for more than 40 years, but it's to take let's say, writing a paper or being able to—silly things right, like some kids have very severe challenges, and trying to introduce themselves or engage in a party, we can break those tasks down and focus on each of the steps, which makes it more manageable. And we can teach kids to do the same thing so that they can address those similar Co complex cognitive activities in the future. I hope that helps.

**Sara Evans:** Thank you, Tessie, for sharing. I'm going to turn off my screen because we're going to bring a panel up of 2 educators and residents at the progress center. we are lucky here at Progress Center to have 43 educators and residents across 23 States. both of my educators that are here today are part of that. Denise has been with us for 2 years, and Jessica's been with us this year. They are both sitting on the middle school, high school small group where they are working through some of these pieces of research and information that we have received from different findings that we had.

They're building materials and resources for the field that we will then turn out After some time of Q&A. So we're really excited about the work that they're doing, and they were willing to come here today and share some of what they're experiencing in the field, but before we do that I'm going to give them an opportunity to introduce themselves and share just a tiny bit about their background and their experiences with secondary services and SDI, specifically. Denise, do you want to start?

**Denise Griffin:** Sure, my name is Denise Griffin, and I am starting my thirtieth year in special education. I spent the last 27 years working with high school students, with severe and profound multiple disabilities so limited time in the general classroom. But we do have electives. Now, I'm working in a small rural area with 6 to 12th grade, and then we'll also have a transition program.





**Sara Evans:** Thank you. And Jessica, you want to introduce yourself.

**Jessica Lairson:** Sure, my name is Dr. Jessica Lairson, and I am the coordinator for exceptional learning for college and county school district. You're in Walter Borough, South Carolina. I am coming into my sixteenth year of education. I have taught my entire career in high school. I have ranged in self-contained classrooms, and then I also spent some time while I was teaching in Arizona co-teaching, I currently work with teachers. I am a mentor and a coach. And now I work at the district level, overseeing compliance and implementation.

**Sara Evans:** Thank you. So our goal today with this panel is to highlight some of the work that's happening. We know there's a lot of barriers. We address those at the beginning of the presentation test. He did a nice job talking us through some of the barriers that we found through our focus groups. But we want to talk about some success stories and how practitioners in the field are currently trying to address this at some of those barriers at the school level.

So I'm going to start with Denise and asking her a question. Can you tell us how you have worked to support general education teachers as you've incorporated your lower incident population into the general education setting, what types of supports do you have? What have you put in place to allow that to be a successful experience both for this student and the general education teacher? Ope, you're muted.

**Denise Griffin:** I keep doing that. I think, first and foremost is just communication, positive communication, highlight what the students can do, not just their disabilities, and maybe even highlight what the teachers are already doing that might help that student in their classroom. I know you've said that before. If a teacher, a good teacher already does some of those functional executive functional skills. And so if you can show them that, that's what the child needs, it'll make it a lot smoother and time for collaboration, so that you know what you need to do for the student, and they know what they need to do for the student and the student knows what to do.

**Sara Evans:** I love that you brought the student into it, because at the secondary level it's critical that they are learning those self-advocacy skills and how to communicate with what works for them and what does not work for them. And I think Tessie really shared how her own experience with her own children have been. But I think highlighting that use, bringing the student into the conversation, is critical. But I also appreciate how you highlighted the need for collaboration between the special ed and general education teacher. I know time is precious in a school setting but focusing on that ability to find even just 5 min to do. That collaboration is going to make a big difference.

Jessica, will you share some of the work that your district is doing around capacity building for your general education teachers to be able to support our students with disabilities in their general education setting, no matter the impact that the disability has on the student?

**Jessica Lairson:** Sure. As we all know, and I'm sure that our district is not alone here. We're experiencing a critical shortage of teachers. So right now, we're doing an inclusion-first initiative with our teachers and working more on inclusive learning strategies in our classroom and really focusing on, I didn't talk about this in the last session, but I am going to in this one, the fact that inclusion and these types of inclusive learning strategies are not specially designed and learning and really helping our teachers understand that accommodations and inclusive learning strategies that they provide in class may be great for all students. They may be useful for all students.

As general education teachers are thinking about grouping as they're thinking about their MTSS groups, as they're thinking about their response to intervention, the types of accommodations that our students are

getting. They may be beneficial to other students as well. And just because our student, you know, they, our students, are getting those accommodations from teachers. They may not be able, or they may not be getting them from other teachers, so it is still an accommodation. It is still an appropriate use of that instructional piece to be able to utilize that in that setting. But it's really helping teachers to understand that this is that that a general educator, a general educator's role, is not to provide the specially designed instruction, that is the special educator's role and to help define who is in charge of doing what, but to actually work on the collaborative piece of that. And we're really, we're really trying to hit that.

**Sara Evans:** That's really awesome to hear that your district has that focus on an inclusion mindset and you shared in the earlier session that you did a presentation yesterday, with all your general education teachers, and you address the fears. Would you just touch on that? Because I thought that was powerful kind of having that monkey in the room out in the room conversation and what that did for opening up the minds and the doors for your general education teachers?

**Jessica Lairson:** Sure. We're doing our back-to-school teacher PDs this week. And one of the professional developments that I did was really talking with teachers that are going to be, I don't want to say responsible for it, but teachers that are going to be implementing our inclusive learning strategies this year. And really, like you said, addressing the monkey in the room, you know, what are, what are your fears and what are the well, but when you think about this, what are some things that immediately come to mind? And you're like, well, but this is not going to happen. Well, but what about this? And we wrote them all down, and as we did that, we really addressed the challenges, and then how to overcome them. What are some things that we can do to overcome them? And as they started going through and thinking about it, they really started thinking. And they really started, seeing that a lot of their well, but their fears about having students in their class that they had never taught before that they had, the implementing strategies, that they were unsure about that, and that they were really unsure about how they could utilize grouping strategies. So really what it came down to is a lot of a lot of these teachers, we're asking them to do new things, and a lot of it came down to fear of change and fear of something new. So we were able to show how these strategies could be incorporated into their existing learning and or into their existing teaching styles and into their existing teaching plans. But we're just asking them to do something that's just good teaching. Yes, yes.

**Sara Evans:** And I really I love to hear that your district is trying to take a difficult barrier that everyone's doing with a teacher shortage and turn it into a positive that may end up having an amazing outcome. I will love to check back with you in about a year, to see how, by not having as many special education teachers, and that push back towards students being included in those general education classes, how that's impacted the outcomes for your students and maybe a positive, and will come out of our struggle. And I always try to find that silver lining.

Denise, you have shared with me when we were preparing for this, some really cool success stories about taking some of your more significantly delayed students, that more intense population, and having them involved with peers at their age. And would you just take a minute to share a couple of those success stories you've had?

**Denise Griffin:** Sure. Well, you know, as you know, when you have students with severe and profound multiple disabilities, mobility is often an issue and trying to get them around the school can be an issue. So we solve that with the reverse mainstreaming kind of thing, the leadership class would come into our room, and they would usually help them with an art activity or play a game where we kind of took the back seat and let them do the interaction with the students. We also had leadership go on CBI trips with this as well, because it was difficult to get around all the places by ourselves, and so we could split up a little bit better, and then they had more people asking them questions or trying to get them to interact.



I didn't share this last time, but I did have a student one year who went to a science class, partly because he liked the teacher, but he took his communication board with him, and so they could ask him yes, no questions and some other things. So it's collaborating with that teacher and letting them know what your expectation is. You know I wanted that student to stay in class, and I wanted him to participate to the best of his ability. I did not expect him to do exactly what the other students were doing. So it's about finding that finding the teacher. This year, my students are out, of course they're a little, I mean they're moderate to severe students, so they will be out more for science and social studies. But I think I like the idea of maybe keeping them for the beginning of the hour and helping them get started on the vocabulary and some other concepts, and then letting them go to class and finish out with this with their peers. But that'll be something we have to look at next week when we start planning our schedules and routines.

**Sara Evans:** Awesome. I really loved how you talked about giving the students access to their typical peers in a very authentic way, where you guys as staff step back and let those conversations take place and making those students feel like they were a part of the activity with their same peers where they don't have as much opportunity. Thank you for sharing that. And just one last question for you, Jessica.

One of the barriers that you talked about at the beginning was scheduling, and how our high school schedules are set up to ensure that students get credits and they have the right classes in order to graduate and this can often be a barrier when we're looking at providing services for students at the secondary level and that SDI. Can you talk a little bit about some of the unique ways that your district is dealing with that barrier, and how, you know, it's not perfect, but how you guys have started down that path to try to find better ways to meet the student's needs?

**Jessica Lairson:** Yes, and I'm just going to say again, by no means is my district perfect in this initiative. What we have to, what we're collaborating on right now, and what we're working with our high school team on, is really is really working. Our master schedule to where our students, with exceptionalities, can be scheduled first. They get into PowerSchool first, they get into the classes that they need first, and then our students that are that that do not have an IEP, or our general students, then we can go in and we can plug them in second, because they don't have the difficulties in scheduling that our students do that has required a paradigm shift in thinking.

Because right, wrong, or indifferent a lot, you know, some of our teams still use it as our, you know, our students are not going to, they're not the diploma students. They're not going to be our graduation track. So they're not going to spend as much time. And it's like, Well, no, we need to think about these as our students, our general students first. These students are going to be diploma track. These students are going to graduate, and we need to have high expectations, regardless of which class that they're in. And it's really, it's really trying to shift from an achievement mindset to a growth mindset.

**Sara Evans:** Thank you for sharing that. Go ahead, Denise.

**Denise Griffin:** I just like what she said about the growth mindset versus the achievement mindset. I think in education we are always so focused on the achievement, the end result. We don't think about how we should get there. And that's where that growth mindset comes into play very much

**Sara Evans:** I appreciate you sharing that. And I appreciate you guys recognizing that there's barriers, and that you're not perfect, and your districts are not--I don't mean you--the districts are not perfect in what they're trying to do, but they're starting to really try to address the needs. We see them and we're trying to shift mindsets. And there's some great comments for you guys to look at in the chat when you're done.



Thank you guys for joining us for our panel today, I am going to jump back to the other screen as we finish out and play Kahoot. But, we greatly appreciate all your time and energy and that you're devoting to helping the PROGRESS Center develop high quality resources as well as sharing your insight from the practitioner lens of the day to day work that's happening. I'm going to turn it back over to Tessie, who loves to play games, is going to bring up the Kahoot and get us going to kind of check your knowledge of what you've learned today from our panel and our presentation.

**Tessie Bailey:** Yeah, I just want to share. We do have a very close tie for first place. So this is really going to test your knowledge. And I also want to just say thank you to our presenters. I think it highlights some of the constructs that we're coming into, we're not expecting rapid change. And I think that Dr. Lairson mentioned this paradigm shift, and it came up in our last session as well, that we have to rethink how special, what special education's role in supporting students, whether, you know, how are we ensuring they're getting that special education, SDI, and that supplementary aid and service?

So we're going to do just a little fun activity. And this is just a true race, it's based on how fast you are, is differentiation a form of SDI? Very common in secondary settings there's a big push to make sure we differentiate. Does that constitute SDI? Your last chance. Here we go.

That is correct. Yeah. So it's definitely not SDI. And as you heard from our panelists, like those who are using that in their general education classroom, increase the access so students can benefit. But it alone is insufficient, because if it was sufficient, then the kid probably wouldn't have been found to have a need for special education. Alright, see how we're moving. Alright, here's our next one.

Which of the following is not an example of a supplementary aid or service? It's my note to myself, you get about 10 seconds. We've got extended time, access to a para, training for a general teacher, or modified worksheet. Yeah. So that training for that we would provide to school personnel under the statement of services and aids. You can get this support for school personnel, and as you heard it in both in the chat and in the panel is this shift, like it's feeling uncomfortable. Just know that if there are students with disabilities participating in those course in those classes, there is available support that can be written into the IEP to help the general ed, and special, a teacher, work together to implement an individual student' IEP.

Alright. Here's the next one, let's see how. Oh, go Bills. We got a lot of Bills fans out there. Is this true or false: universal design for learning is SDI. Lots of people answering this one really quickly. And UDL and differentiation also often go together right? And so when we think about that universal design for learning, it's the design of the overall programming that we're providing. That is correct. It is false. The key term is universal, meaning it's to make something accessible for the greater good. And in schools in which teachers are using UDL and differentiation, the need for supplementary aids and services is often reduced. But it doesn't necessarily mean that the student's getting their specially designed instruction needs met. So that needs to be in addition to

Bills are still in the lead. Here we go. Another true false. Co-teaching is SDI. And Dr. Lairson talked a little bit about co-teaching, and it is a common strategy that we see within secondary settings. And this is often where a special ed and general ed teachers are in the same classroom. Your last chance, pick something. Correct. This is false. Co-teaching in and of itself is not SDI, just like, you know, you providing a special class is not SDI. There are locations or opportunities in which SDI can be delivered, but the SDI is unique to the individual child, and so while in a co-teaching model, the team can work together to deliver the SDI, that is a way for us to maximize our resources and ensure students are for one making progress on their disability-related needs on the skills and strategies while also accessing the curriculum.



Here we go, true, false. Special education math classes are SDI. So what do you think? So you have on your graduation, you can have, like algebra one, or you have like a special education class. Is that considered SDI? Oh, a little bit of not so sure. It definitely is false. And that's because, similar to the co-teaching model that opens up an opportunity for SDI. But in and of itself is not SDI. You are still obligated to provide individualized SDI for students or groups of students based on their individual needs. But just saying, I'm putting you in a special ed math class does not necessarily meet the legal definition of SDI. Remember, you need adaptation of content, methodology, or delivery.

I'm going to pass this back to Sara and then we'll stay on to answer any questions. But I want to make sure that you and you can keep doing the Near Pod if you like. I'll keep it running so you can see who won.

**Sara Evans:** Awesome. Thank you. It's always fun to play a little game and make some of these topics that seem hard and not always easy to wrap our mind around a little bit more fun, and in an engaging way.

So just to wrap it up and bring our presentation to a conclusion. We want to ensure that high quality programming instruction happens at the secondary level. And we know through research in our conversations with practitioners that these four steps are critical to having high quality programming, we need appropriate grade level assignments, a strong core, deep engagement with students, deep engagement with their learning and teachers holding high expectations for students. We know that through many different ways. And so if you, there's been some questions about, how do we start making the mind shift? How do we start helping our district look at this different?

And my response was, we have to start small. You won't shift the entire district. I think Jessica jumped on and said that she's been working on this for 6 years, and although it's getting better, it still has a long way to go. So if you can start small with one or two teachers who are willing to engage and really think about that collaboration piece and changing how? What they expect to students with disabilities in their classroom, start there, build some success, and use those stories to share in your classroom.

So as we finish out the rest of the presentation if you have questions, please feel free to put them in the chat box. And we're here, we'll be on for a few minutes. if you want to come off of mute and ask us a question that's fine, too. We appreciate you being here today and make sure that you've changed your name. if you would like credit for being here and we hope you look forward to the closing session for PROGRESS Center and then join again tomorrow for the NCII focused day. So thank you for coming and enjoying our session with us.

**Tessie Bailey:** Thanks, everybody, and thanks for who's still playing. We've got some gamers out there who are definitely awesome. I didn't know you were still playing. That's awesome.

**Sara Evans:** Who is winning?

**Tessie Bailey:** Right now? JM's got the hot fire streak one more and then we'll see who's the ultimate winner.

**Sara Evans:** And just you know there is a 15 min break between now and our final session, I believe, or is it 30 min? I don't know. Mia, when does it start?

**Mia Mamone:** In 15 minutes, it will be a 45 minute long session. So at the top of the next hour.

**Sara Evans:** Awesome. Thank you.

**Mia Mamone:** No problem.



**Tessie Bailey:** And I don't know if Mary Jacob is still on. But they asked about the suggestions for changing mindset. That is why we created that video that we showed at the very beginning. And there are some supplemental resources that go with that video to help engage in discussion and it has been successful with some of our PD. Where we've done both General Ed and special educators. So, and I will just share this, because I'm sure these people want everyone to know that they did awesome.

So kudos to you all but Mary Jacob, I will put that in the chat box for you so that you can have the link to that page again, and it has some facilitator guides to start those discussions.

All right, Mary, I just did. You might have jumped off. I don't see you around so yeah, on that page. If you scroll down to the bottom, you'll see the link to the video. And then there are, it's really like a 5 to 10 minute activity. It's not meant to be long, but we know this discussion is not done in a single setting, that it needs to be over time. And then the belonging resources that were shared in the panel in the morning, and I'll share those as well also have been very beneficial in helping general and special education. Teachers sort of understand. You know the roles, and where students with disabilities belong. Right? They belong in the general curriculum in the school setting. and so there are some great resources to help sort of facilitate those discussions. I'm going to put the right in the chat box as well.

**Sara Evans:** I'm so glad to see so many people said this has been a good conference. I'm glad to hear you're learning and just know that we're learning a lot from you guys and your questions really help us. understand how we can support better as we move forward. So thank you for participating in our sessions. We really appreciate it. and thank you again to Jessica and Denise for joining us and sharing your experiences in the field.

**Tessie Bailey:** Alright. See you on the other side, everyone. We're going to move everybody out and end the meeting. Have a great day.

