



Prepping for Progress 2024: Welcome and Keynote

Day 1

Amy Peterson: I wanted to welcome everyone again to Prepping for PROGRESS 2024: Better Together! Collectively Promoting Progress for Students with Disabilities. We are kicking off this webinar today in the starting session and the zoom event, we're trying out a new platform. And we're really grateful for you all to be able to join us. And hopefully you'll have some opportunity to engage in the lobby and meet other participants. We'll talk about some of the logistics for some of that just coming up in just a moment. If you're having any questions with the platform itself, but really excited to have you here. We are grateful for you taking the time in your busy summers. I know some of you are back to school already. Some of you are still on your vacations. Some of you are joining us from just the transition right before you head back to school, so we're grateful for you taking the time as you're starting up the new school year to join us, to really talk about this idea of promoting progress for students with disabilities.

So again, welcome. Thank you all for coming. Some of you, this might be your third time coming to a Prepping for PROGRESS event. Some of you, this might be the very first time, but we're so grateful to have you here.

I'd love to know a little bit about who's in the room, and who's here joining us in this virtual space with us today. So, in the chat, if you're willing to say where you're from. Welcome from all over the place. We have folks coming and joining from all over the country. So, thank you. Look at that. I'm seeing so many different states coming through. I'm so grateful for you all to join us today. New Hampshire and Georgia, North Carolina, Michigan, so many more. I can't even keep track. So many places, so grateful for you all coming and representing. We know it's across the different time zones. It's at different times. It's bright and early for our folks in the Pacific, and even folks that might be joining from Hawaii or other places. So, we're grateful for you all joining us across these different time zones. And hopefully, these sessions will work for you all.

So again, this event, the Prepping for PROGRESS event is hosted by the PROGRESS Center. The PROGRESS Center is an Office of Special Education Programs-funded technical assistance center, and we are in our 5th year of funding and doing this great work with you all across the country. Our focus is really on providing information, resources, tools, and technical assistance and support to local educators to help with the development and implementation of high-quality educational programming that really enable children with disabilities to make progress and meet those challenging goals. Our work focuses on the development of high-quality IEPs, as well as the instructional programming for

students with disabilities and their experience in school, things like belonging and community and the connections and collaboration that we need in order to support them.

Our work for the Center is really outlined in three kind of major buckets of work. Our first is our knowledge development team that really works to understand the current research policies, guidance, and so many more factors to support our work, right. Understanding what's the context and the experience that's going on in the field from educators, from parents, from students and other partners and stakeholders working with students with disabilities. And then we have a group of technical assistance providers that work deeply with a group of partnership sites that have really been phenomenal partners with us over these past couple of years. In order to support this work, they've helped us test out some of this training, some of the material, some of the messages that we'll share with you across the next couple of days. And then, finally, the work that I lead out is the work of the universal technical assistance. And that really is all of the freely available tools, resources, presentations, all of these different things that are available to you all, all educators, leaders, families, and those working with students with disabilities. So, everything available on our website promotingprogress.org and so many more trainings, and webinars, and all of those things that we provide.

So why are we here? And where does this work really start and come from? As we thought about in the 2017 Endrew F. decision, we really focused on that shift from just ensuring that our IEPs are high-quality and that they're procedurally compliant and ensuring access and benefit, to really thinking about this idea of making progress in light of the child circumstances. What does that look like? What does that feel like? And that was really an impetus for us as we started thinking about this work, recognizing that we need to think about this IEP and design it in a way that will help us understand how students make progress in light of their circumstances. What does it mean to understand those circumstances? And how can we ensure that we are developing IEPs that are reasonably calculated in order to help students make progress?

But, as I mentioned before, we recognize that this work spans way beyond the IEP. The IEP is a critical feature and a critical component, but as you'll hear us talk about over these next two days, it will not be the only piece of this work that we need to keep in mind. We really need to think about the high-quality instructional programming that students access and benefit from across all of their school and experiences in order for them to have post school success.

And so we ask ourselves as we start off this conversation today is, how do we ensure that every student is on that path to progress, and the different sessions that we'll talk about, and the different kind of experiences we'll have together over these next couple of days will really, I hope help you think about how can we ensure every student is on that path to progress. How do we ensure that we are creating the learning environment that ensures that they have ability to access and progress in the

general educational programming, that they are able to reach their postschool outcomes and goals and have successful lives? How are we putting those structures and supports into place?

So, with that, I'm excited to introduce our project officer, Dr. David Emenheiser, who will share a little bit more about the event and welcome you all to the event.

David Emenheiser: Yes, welcome to Prepping for PROGRESS 2024 event, Better Together, Collectively Promoting Progress for Children with Disabilities. This event will focus attention on a few practices, strategies, and resources for local schoolteachers, administrators, and other practitioners to use throughout the academic year. Wherever and whenever you are participating, thank you for engaging with us.

So, during the initial launch of the PROGRESS Center, Amy described a little bit about that. We decided not to assume, but to uncover what supported the development and implementation of high-quality educational programming for students with disabilities and what hindered that. About 6 months into the project we were handed a unique opportunity in the Covid pandemic. It might seem odd that I'm calling the shutdown of the nation's schools to be an opportunity. But suddenly, and across the country, the world in fact, all previous assumptions were no longer valid. Families, children, schools, government, businesses, communities, could no longer follow their schedules, their systems, structures, practices, as if on remote control.

In education, what we experienced was disruption to the day-to-day schooling and the annual assessments that we use to measure its effect. And as this center continued in its work, what began to emerge as crucial are people—the children and their families, teachers and administrators, that local context and its capacity were too often fragmented and overburdened. PROGRESS Center began to discover that underneath effectiveness lies collective efficacy, everyone knowing their part and doing their part. Throughout this event, you will hear specifics on how you can be, know, and do your part in promoting the progress of children with disabilities by being better together. To that end, I again thank you for participating and ask that you tell everyone you know about this event and invite them to join us. And with that I'm going to turn it back to Amy.

Amy Peterson: Thanks so much, David. Alright! So, I get the benefit now of just going through a couple of our logistics before we jump into the real content in the meat of the session today, because I want to make sure everyone feels comfortable accessing all the different sessions that we have available. As you know, we'll have a 2-day event here. Some sessions today on July 29th and some sessions tomorrow on July 30th, a range of different types of sessions that we'll go through in just a second.

So, the schedule for today, we are in this general session. You've made it into this session. We'll be in here till about 12:30 Eastern time, and then we'll have a break. If you're on the East Coast, it might be a great time to grab some lunch. If you're on the West Coast, it might be a great time to grab some breakfast. And somewhere in between, maybe it's a coffee break or just a stretch break. There's a good



30-minute chunk of time there for you just to get yourself going. And then we'll spend the most of the rest of the time today in strand sessions. We'll talk about those in just a second. But there's two different strands that you can select to choose from. We'll have a break within that time. It looks like a large chunk of time, but there will be a break available for you in there, and then we'll have a short break, and finally end our day in some resource spotlights that are in the Expo Hall. Our Expo Hall is open from 4:00 to 4:30, and I'll talk about that in just a second.

So, there's two different strand options for today. Our strand one is Back to Basics: How the IEP Helps to Promote Progress for Students with Disabilities, and that's really focused on and designed for folks that are newer to special education and the IEP. Or maybe you're just looking for an overview or review of some of the basics. Or maybe you're somebody who's providing training and support to folks that are newer to the IEP. And so, you want to think about, how can I best provide that support? That might be a good strand for you.

The second strand is to dig a little bit deeper, particularly into the statement of services and aids and what is specially designed instruction. How is that different and distinct from supplementary aids and services, or related services, and so on? And really unpacking what do we mean by specially designed instruction? How do we think about that? What are some of the common myths, or challenges or misconceptions, as we think about SDI, specially designed instruction? So, you can select one of those strands. If you're interested in both of those strands, and you're not able to attend both because you can only attend one, we will be, as I mentioned at the start, recording all of these different sessions. And so, if you want to refer back to one of the other strands at a later date, you're welcome to do that as well.

So tomorrow our schedule looks a little bit different. We'll start with resource spotlights. And so, then you'll again have that time in the Expo Hall to navigate around, learn about those different resources. We'll take a short break, and then we'll have a general keynote kind of session like we're doing right now. After that you'll have the opportunity to choose concurrent sessions. So, there's two different concurrent session options, and they will just be repeated sessions. So, you'll have an opportunity to choose from two of the different five sessions available. We'll have another short break, and then we'll come together as a closing and hear from one of our great partner sites from East Baton Rouge, Louisiana, to really help us understand kind of how this work has unpacked and unfolded in their setting.

So, tomorrow's sessions, there's 5 different sessions, as I just mentioned, for the concurrent sessions, and you can choose up to two of those five. Again, if you want to choose more than two, those other ones will be recorded, and you'll be able to access them after the fact. So, if you're interested in supporting coaching or learning about coaching around this high quality educational programming, that first session might be good for you. If you're really thinking about how to benefit most from self-directed learning strategies or create self-directed learning for educators, that second session might be

great. There's a session that is in collaboration with our partners that Lead IDEA Center focused on Leading the Way and Fostering Collaboration Between General and Special Education. We have a session with a great panel from Tomball ISD in Texas thinking about, how do we ensure that all means all, and really creating high expectations and opportunity and collaboration to support all students, including students with disabilities and achieving high outcomes. And then, finally, we have a session really focused on cognitive and metacognitive strategy instruction. So again, you can choose 2 of those sessions to attend, and those will be happening tomorrow.

So just to give you a little bit of sense of the system as a whole, think about navigating the lobby. You all got to the lobby to get into this session. You joined it from your welcome link. You can navigate around that at any point. That lobby will be open until about August 30th so you can navigate around here after the event is over as well. But you can see the different sessions that are available, different speakers, and the lobby chat is an ongoing way to engage with other participants or our staff here at PROGRESS Center. If you have any questions or need, feel free to make any comments there in the lobby chat, and we'll be monitoring that. But really think about the lobby kind of as our one stop shop. Our place where we will be so that we're easily accessible and available for everyone to navigate within the session.

All of the different sessions are available under the sessions tab. That will show you which sessions are happening at what time and so on. You can flag a session that you're interested in attending with that little yellow flag, and if you do, it will show up on your itinerary, so you'll easily be able to access that and know which sessions you're most interested in participating with. So, all of those, again, are available for you on that sessions tab which you'll see right next to the lobby, up on the top toolbar there on your screen.

And then finally, as I mentioned before, on that sessions tab. If you've elected to put something on your itinerary, it will show up on that itinerary tab as kind of a calendar of what you want to do. In order for everyone to be able to, or for you to easily be able to access that, and you can download that to your calendars. So, if you want to make sure that you attend a session at a specific time, if you export that to your calendar, it will download right to your Outlook calendar or your Google calendar, or whatever that might be, so that you can easily access that.

I think you guys probably figured this out when you joined this session, but to join a session you'll see that little green button that says Join that will allow you to know that the session is live. And again, you'll see also a little red now, showing that the session is live. If the session is not live, you won't see the access to those different buttons. But once the session is started and live, you can go ahead and click, join. You'll come into this zoom experience. It will open up as a separate zoom window on your computers, and so you can easily access that. You can stay and look in the lobby at the same time, and you'll still have, like all of your tabs and everything open on your computer. You won't be able to join more than one zoom session at a time, but you will be able to access the lobby as well as your Zoom

session at the same time. And just as a heads-up there are waiting rooms enabled, for each of those sessions that you'll be participating in, so you might join a couple of minutes early. If the presenters are testing out their audio or other things like that, that will allow them to make sure that the session is ready for you. But you'll be in that waiting room until they start the session, and so they'll bring you back into the session at the start of the session

The one other thing that I wanted to point out that's not part of your sessions tab is the Expo. And, as I mentioned before, that's this afternoon from 4:00 to 4:30, and then tomorrow morning from 10:15 to 10:45 am. Those are the Eastern times. So those can adjust for your different time zones. Those sessions are really focused on allowing you to talk to some of our Educators in Residence who help support us in the PROGRESS Center and understanding, kind of the context at the local level. They provide great feedback on our resources and tools and our messaging and help us to shape this work on an ongoing basis and help present for us and things like that. So, they will be there as well as our PROGRESS Center staff in order to help you understand and dig a little bit deeper into some of the resources you might hear about in different sessions that are available. So, in order to do that, you'll go ahead and click on the Expo up at the top of your toolbar on your lobby. And you'll be able to see the different expo sessions and click enter the booth. You won't be able to access that prior to the Expo Hall being open, so you might get a message that says, hey, the Expo is not open till 4:00, or something like that at this point.

Once you get into the Expo Hall and you enter a booth, this is kind of what you'll look and feel like. So you can enter the booth that you're interested in exploring. You'll click the join button if you want to go and talk to the presenters, hear a little bit more about the resources, or ask any questions that will open in a separate Zoom window. Once you're done with that you can go ahead and close out the Zoom Meeting and click Leave Booth right at the bottom. To allow you to access, access and exit the booth, you can join another booth. Just think about it like an Expo Hall at a conference or an event. You can go around and learn about the different tools and resources that are available for you. I just wanted to point out that there are two different views in the Expo Hall. We have set it at what we think is the easier way to access the different resources and materials. But there is a spatial view that's also available to you, if you want to set it into the spatial view, it makes it feel a little bit more like an expo booth. You can navigate yourself around like you're walking around an Expo Hall, but it is a little bit harder to move around. So instead of kind of using your arrows up and down, you'll have to use your cursor to kind of jump around or scroll yourself around the page, so it feels a little bit more challenging in that view. So hopefully you won't have to worry about that, but if you prefer a spatial view, you're more than welcome to use that.

And then finally, we do want to encourage you to have conversations with others, network, and connect with other participants that are here at the event. You might have noticed when you set up your account, that you had an opportunity to set up a profile. You can see mine here. And you can adjust here. If you're interested in simply exploring and not talking with anyone else, you can set that

up if you're not feeling social and you want to click over to feeling social and have people connect with you and have conversations with you. You can go ahead and select feeling social, and if you don't want to appear at all, but you still want to engage in the session. You're welcome to do that. You can go ahead and click hide me and then you won't show up as a participant in the session or the overarching system. But you still can engage in all the different sessions, and so on. So, you can choose how you want to interact and engage with others. But you can go ahead and have conversations. You can connect with somebody who you might have met in one of your strand sessions, or something like that, and have an ongoing conversation, make a connection, share contact information and so on. You can use the matching feature. I haven't really explored that too deeply, but the system will automatically connect you to other people that are feeling social in the system that you might want to touch base with and have a conversation with. So, some other ways to engage with and network with other participants that are here at the event.

And then some of you, as I mentioned before, might not be able to attend all the sessions that you're interested in. Maybe you have a conflict. Maybe you have multiple sessions at the same time that you're interested in. All of the recordings will be available to you immediately after the session ends, and so you can go ahead and click, watch the recording after the session ends and they will appear in that lobby or in the Sessions page for you to be able to access. The biggest thing to note is those recordings will not be edited at all. And so, they are automatically generated right after the session. And so, you can access them. But just be aware of that.

We'll keep the lobby open until about August 30th so that you can easily access and watch any of those recordings at that time, but after that we'll have all of the materials archived on the PROGRESS, on our website. So, you can access those recordings after the fact as well. If we get those recordings, the cleaned-up recordings up before the August 30th date. We might close out the recording a little bit earlier. But we'll be able to do that. And then all of the event materials are available on the PROGRESS Center website. This is also where the recordings will live after the fact, we'll put a link for this page into the chat, so you can easily access that here. But you can access the slides for the different sessions and some related resources related to each of those sessions. If you didn't get a chance to join one of our other sessions, you can also do that from the website there at news and events. Under that news and events, tab on the PROGRESS Center website.

And then, finally, if you have questions or challenges related to anything in the system, Elizabeth Hicks or Liz Hicks, is going to be our go to. She will be accessing and monitoring the Progress Center email box. Her email is also available for you here on the screen. If you have any questions, you can contact her directly, she will monitor the lobby chat in order for you to access those materials and make sure that you're getting to the right sessions. Everything that you want to ensure that you have a great experience in this event.

And we hope you will stay connected with us throughout the session. If you hear something interesting, you want to promote that on Facebook or on Twitter, or X, or whatever it's called these days, we hope that you'll connect with us. We'll hope that you'll use the hashtag #PromotingPROGRESS2024 in order to highlight this learning and all of the activities that you have across the day.

And with that I'm going to turn it over to our center director, Dr. Tessie Bailey, who's going to tell us a little bit about keys to implementing high-quality instructional programming, and then we'll go ahead and move on from there.

Tessie Bailey: Thanks, Amy, and I'm so excited to be here, and I'm actually more excited to follow up behind Glenna, or be in front of Glenna as she presents today. This is a wonderful opportunity. I want to give a special thanks to Amy and her team for really helping get this event up and running. It is a yearlong activity, and you all are going to experience some wonderful sessions. Feel free to continue with the chat box and putting in your questions and responses. We just love to hear from you.

So, I also want to give a shout out to Dr. David Emenheiser. As our project officer over the last five years, he's been instrumental in helping us really shape the Center so that it's promoting a collective messaging about, how do we develop and implement high quality instructional programming for students. So, if you see him in some of your other sessions make sure you give him a shout out as well.

I'm going to just share some of our lessons learned, you know five years ago, as David mentioned, we experienced Covid. We've been working with our Educators in Residence, our technical assistance sites, and we've learned a lot. We started with no assumptions, as David mentioned, and really said, how do we ensure that students with disabilities are accessing high-quality instructional programming? I'm going to share a little bit about what we've learned. Tomorrow you'll hear some more about that, and then Glenna is going to actually talk about, how do we develop inclusive systems to implement this high-quality instruction.

One of the things we grappled with early on in the PROGRESS Center is really, what is progress for students with disabilities? And I think a lot of us think about it as progress on annual goals, or we might be situated at the district, or state, or even federal level, where we're looking at these other indicators of progress, like state assessments, measures that we might share with Congress to make policy decisions. So, we really had to take a step back and think about, what does it mean for a student to experience progress within our educational system?

I think all of us are familiar with the annual goals. The fact that we're reporting progress to families, and that is a big piece of the work that we do, particularly in association with specially designed instruction. But I want to just remind folks that progress on annual goals are really focused on a more narrow set of needs that are being addressed, that are impacted by the disability. And if you think



about the purpose of the IEP, it's really about ensuring that students can progress in the general curriculum. So, they're kind of like a short-term measure that helps us really look at the broader outcome that we're trying to achieve which is grade level progress.

Sometimes we think about grade level progress as performance on state assessments. But this also might be just progressing in the curriculum. Your district measures, grades. But it's also about being part of the school community, the social, the emotional skills that students develop to sort of be educated alongside their peers. If you're at the state, or maybe at the federal, or district level, you're also looking at these other indicators of progress, which are performance on your state assessments, particularly graduation rates. And these are these broader indicators of whether students as a whole are making progress. But if you think about individual students, that school completion is part of this indicator of whether the IEPs that the student has had access to and the high-quality instructional program at general education classroom actually helps the student develop those knowledge and skills necessary to graduate.

But what we want to encourage you to do throughout our sessions today is think even bigger than that about progress because really the purpose of all of the IEP that students have their access to their grade level instruction. Attaining their graduation, being prepared for post school success, that we're thinking big picture progress that students are able to access higher education if that's what they would like to do. They want to participate in post-secondary education or training programs, be competitively employed, and really have postschool healthy living with their families and friends, and experience independent living to the extent practical.

When we think about the development of this high-quality instructional programming, really to access and benefit from the general curriculum, there are two things I want you to think about. One: we have to ensure that the core programming, that students have access to the curriculum that you choose. The standards-based instruction, the evidence-based practices, that has to be of high-quality for all students. Before students with disabilities can actually benefit from their IEPs, are sometimes seen, but shouldn't be seen as replacement. They're really sort of this enhancement or building this broader program to ensure that a student with a disability can benefit from the schooling experience. So, we think about how well our core programming is developed and implemented for students with disabilities as well as the design and implementation of the IEPs that we put together.

Now we've learned over the last five years that there's a lot of ingredients that go into this. You know, the IEP is really a document, but if you think about what goes into that document as well as what goes into the implementation of what's in the document, there's a lot of things that have to come together. So, these are five things that we've really identified from our work that are essential for successful implementation of high-quality instruction. And David mentioned this as well as Amy, but it really comes down to that collective efficacy, our collective belief that we can positively impact the students within our setting. And it's not just individual teachers, but it's the collective of the teachers that we're



working with that sees students as, you know, able to achieve high expectations and that we as a system, maybe not me by myself, but we as a system can positively impact the student.

Part of that is developing a system, and you're going to hear part of this from Tomball as well as EBR tomorrow, is ensuring that students, including students with disabilities, feel like they belong within the school community. That they're not guests. They're not trying to earn their way in, but in reality, are an essential piece of the complete community. And tomorrow we'll share a video around belonging that we will be launching soon that really sort of looks at those dimensions of belonging. It's more than physical presence. It's about feeling wanted, missed, befriended. Part of that is we need to know our students and their circumstances. And Amy mentioned about the Andrew F. decision, in light of the child's circumstances.

All of us come with our unique characteristics and backgrounds and we need to know those about our students, understand how the disability impacts the child's access and progress in the general curriculum, and then make sure that we're providing the appropriate support so they can benefit from the schooling that we're putting together. We also need to be clear about what we want for our students. Something that we've noticed is that in some cases, and it goes back to that, those steps of progress is that sometimes we're looking at one outcome. One group of teachers is looking at one outcome for the student while another group are looking at another outcome, or families are thinking about another outcome. We need to articulate what we want for our students, have a common vision about where we're going so that we can align our efforts both in their special education programming and in our general education programming, and the work that we do at home to really help students fully benefit from the schooling opportunities that are being provided.

We're going to share a couple of strategies, instructional strategies, today as well as tomorrow. But we need to also be experts in the way that we provide instruction, the way that we select curriculum. And then we need to know what knowledge, and skills, and strategies our students need because of the impact of the disability to really be able to meet those ambitious goals and be successful in the general curriculum.

Collective efficacy, you saw was the first step, and it was really intentional. I think it became very apparent in our first year that there's no way that a single teacher has all the time, knowledge, and skills to be able to meet all of the students, either on their caseload or within their general education classroom. But I think sometimes we feel whether we're a special ed teacher, or general ed teacher, or related service provider, the burden of educating an individual child. And we need to really depend upon that collective efficacy, the expertise of the players within the system, to ensure that we're providing a high-quality, appropriately intensive program for the students that we work with. All of us play a role, whether we're a family member, a paraprofessional, a special ed teacher, or general education teacher, and ensuring that students are able to access and progress within the schooling opportunities that we have within our system.



And this is where we come down to that better together. And there's evidence that supports this. So, if you think about this hinge point, this is where Hattie sort of talked about a year's growth within a school system is about 0.4 effect size. Now, effect size is really a quantitative way to measure the strength of the impact of something. And if you look at that blue box, that's the impact of an individual teacher. And teachers provide some of the strongest impact in terms of students' ability to experience a successful schooling opportunity. But if you look at that green bar, what you start to see is that collective impact. That we are better together. That our impact is, you know, quadrupled in terms of how we can progress, help students progress in both their academic and functional skill development, so they can achieve those short-term annual goals. Their progress within the general curriculum and ultimately achieve those postsecondary goals.

As you start your new year, we want to just pose some questions. And these sort of help us focus on the right things as you collaborate with your paraeducators, your special ed teachers, your general ed teachers, your parents, the leaders. We have to be clear about what we want for our students. What is the vision that we're setting for the kids? And then we need to take an honest look at what is the current reality? How does the disability impact this child's learning? What are some of those circumstances that we need to be aware of that make it a little bit more challenging for the student to fully benefit? And we need to know who all the players are, the friends of the student family members, other adults within our system. And once we take stock of that system and we see where kids need to go, we see that there's likely to be a gap. And that's where we need to identify what are the needs that the students and families in our system have to help move the student from that current reality to that vision that we have. And once we've identified those needs, then we can come together and develop our high-quality educational programming. For one, what's in the IEP, and you can learn a little bit more about that in our strand sessions. But also, what is the broader system? How do we maximize the resources within our school system to ensure that we're meeting the needs of all of our students and our families to be able to achieve their best.

Part of this work really starts with high expectations. And I know some of you have seen this video before. It's Billy Pickens. But I think it's a very powerful video because it shows that any adult within that system can have huge impacts on students with disabilities access and progress in the general curriculum. So, we're going to share this video real quick. It takes about 4 minutes, and there are captions. And then feel free to put some of your comments and chats within the chat box.

Video: In this *Stories from the Classroom* video, Billy Pickens tells us how his teachers' high expectations for him may not have been welcome in high school, but that as an adult who is deafblind, he now appreciates how important it was for his future.

From the first couple of days with 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. And so, their automatic assumption was that I needed 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 mainstreamed some of the teachers were very kind of 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 really giving me work. And I guess I was fine with that because I was 12 and I didn't want 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 try, not really treat me the same way as my sighted peers.

One English teacher made a lasting difference for Billy's future.

He called a meeting, and he was like, 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. And 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 a point where me, him, me and my mom were all kind of butting heads about it because I need the class to graduate, and he was being extremely hard on me. And at the time I didn't really like it because, like I said, I didn't want to do the work. And later on, he told my mom, he's like, I know he can do it. I know he can do it. So, I really gave him my all eventually. And I did pass the class and did well.

So, what does Billy recommend for educators to promote progress for students with disabilities? 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, we're all kind of judgmental in some way. At times we all kind of look at people or have a first impression of people. But I think, as a teacher, do your best to try to realize that anyone who walks in your classroom likely wants an education. They may not realize at that point, because they may be young, just kids. But I think everybody genuinely wants to learn something. And so, I think 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 everybody can learn.

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 Youth Newsletter while developing his very own podcast series.

Tessie Bailey: So, I want to share that this video, along with a number of other videos are available for you to also use within your professional learning. And these were developed by individuals with disabilities or family members and helps, there are some discussion guides that go along with this can help sort of facilitate these hard conversations sometimes. The reason we developed this video at the very beginning is because the data that we were finding was indicating that even, you know, we once



students with disabilities were identified as having a disability the expectations for them changed. Even when other kids were engaging in that same behavior. And as you prepare for this upcoming school year think about, you know, how do we view students with disabilities? Do we see that label as a justification for why they're not succeeding? Or do we see that as a way to understand the needs of that student so that we can better prepare for providing instruction for those students. I'm just going to look quick at the chat box. But please keep it going. We have a great belonging video as well, and if you want to hear more from Billy, our last year's panel had a great discussion by him. So, check out the Prepping for Progress 2023, and you'll hear more from him.

I'd mentioned the 10 dimensions of belonging, and tomorrow we'll share a short video that you can use within your own professional learning. But in the work that, our initial work around schools that are beating the odds, which means schools who have students with disabilities outperforming academically in reading and math. Belonging is a key component is that students with disabilities are not only present within that classroom, but are welcomed, are known as valuable members of that school community, feel heard, are adequately supported, and are missed. And I think that's a big piece about this concept of belonging is that when you're not there, people miss you, and they wish you were there. So, we have found through the work that was initially launched by Erik Carter, that these are some of the critical dimensions for setting the stage for us to be able to provide high-quality instruction.

Something that you'll see in the next two strand sessions is really around better leveraging the IEP. I think some of us maybe have a negative relationship with it, but it can be a very powerful tool because in the PLAAFP statement, for example, it outlines those needs. It outlines the vision that we have for the student and really helps us develop the instructional programming, and aids, and supports the student might need in the general education classroom to be able to access and progress in that general curriculum. It also outlines those bigger goals, right? That we as a system are helping the student achieve and provides us a way to monitor whether the student is progressing and make decisions if the student is not. About how do we maybe change the way that we implement, or intensify, or adapt the instructional programming both in our special education and within the general education.

We do have a number of high leverage, evidence-based practices. We've identified 6 of them. You'll hear about the metacognitive and cognitive strategy instruction tomorrow. But I do want to just highlight how they fit together. There are a set of practices around planning for instruction. And I mentioned at the beginning, we really need to know our kids. We need to clearly articulate what skills and knowledge and strategies they need to learn so that we can better provide the instruction that's going to help students achieve those or master those skills. The other thing around that is once we've done our initial planning, which is likely what we're going to do from now until the start of school, is really ensure that we are using high leverage practices and evidence-based practices to deliver that programming. We know that data is a critical piece of it. Our learning management system has some



progress monitoring modules from the National Center on Intensive Intervention that really help us look at the extent to which our specially designed instruction is leading to the outcomes that we expect it to lead to as well as the general curriculum in terms of helping students progress towards those general standards.

In this next sessions, the strand sessions, too. You'll really be able to understand how we can leverage the parts of the IEP. It's kind of become a little bit nebulous and maybe a little more complicated than it needs to be so. Part of the work of the PROGRESS Center is trying to break it apart to help folks understand where the team members fit within the design and implementation of that. That related services work with the special educators to ensure that specially designed instruction helps students achieve their annual goals, that students are provided supplementary aids and services in the general education classroom. And that those 2 or those 3 aids and services work together to ensure that students can access and progress in the general curriculum. Something that's often underutilized is, you know, we have this piece of the IEP is around the supports for the school personnel to really be able to build their capacity to design and implement the programming for individual students. And those services together, which include leaders, general ed, special ed, families, and related service providers working together really helps the student achieve those postschool outcomes.

I'm going to close before I pass this over to Glenna and just share a resource that comes from one of our other national centers, which is the National Center on Systemic Improvement. And it really gets us thinking about the instructional programming that we design and deliver for students. And it's this FAIR test. Is what we're doing fair? We need to ensure that what we're providing is feasible. That it can be implemented with a high degree of fidelity which is necessary for us to be able to achieve the impact that was intended from that programming. We want to ensure that the way that we design and implement our instructional programming is acceptable to the families, the students, the educators, and the professionals that are responsible for the delivery of that. Because if students aren't engaged and families don't see the value of it, then we may be working against each other versus working with each other. We want to ensure that we're selecting high leverage evidence-based practices to implement, to design and implement that instructional programming so that we can see the impact both on academic and functional outcomes for the students that we're working with. And we also need to make sure that what we design and implement is relevant within the context that it's relevant for the individual student. That it's relevant for the location in which we're providing those services, and the context, and the vision that the student has for their future. So, as you think about and you're starting to prepare for, you know, prep for the upcoming year think about ensuring that what you're doing is fair. So that you can achieve those outcomes for your students.

I'm excited to pass this over to Glenna. And Glenna has done an amazing job over the last two decades impacting the quality, the positive quality of life for students. And she's going to share around designing systems for improved outcomes for children with disabilities. And so, I want to pass this over. I don't sure I see it. Hi, Glenna.



Glenna Wright-Gallo: Thank you. Good morning, Tessie. And thank you so much to you and the PROGRESS Center as well as to David, who's serving as a project officer. It's great to be here with all of you this morning or this afternoon depending on where you're located. I'm Glenna Wright-Gallo. I'm the Assistant Secretary here at the U.S. Department of Ed. at OSERS, the office of special education and rehabilitative services. And I just want to spend about the next 20 to 30 minutes talking with you about how we can prep for progress by designing systems that lead to and result in improved outcomes for students with disabilities. It was really reinforcing to hear the information that was shared out this morning as a special educator myself. This is why I went into this field, right? It was about the outcomes. And so, I want to talk about the ways that we need to work together to develop and implement high-quality educational programming that ensures that students with disabilities of all needs and desires are able to access and benefit from general education programs and the need for all of us to work together, right? This is not about one of us working on our own to devise a system that is successful for a small group of individuals with disabilities. But how it is we work together across the education system, with our families, with our communities, and really build a strong system that leads to those outcomes. So, with that, I'm going to jump into a couple of things to kind of set the stage. And then we're going to talk about some strategies.

So, I'd like to start off with Secretary Cardona's Raise the Bar, Lead the World initiative. And with it we're focusing on three main areas, right, achieving academic excellence, boldly improving conditions, and creating pathways for global engagement. I think it's important that we use this as we set the stage because it really talks about expectations and expectations that we have for every student enrolled in attending public education across the United States and the territories. Our expectations that we have for each student with a disability as well. And so, with that, we're looking at, how do we accelerate learning for each student and for students with disabilities. I really want to know, how is it that I get more than one year's growth out of every school year, right? Because we know that sometimes our students are lagging behind, and we have a gap. And so, we need to focus on, how do we close that gap? How do we make more progress? And then part of that is delivering a comprehensive and rigorous education for every student. And that is code, right, for accessing and making progress in grade level standards. And so, for students with disabilities, how do we make sure that that happens? How do we leverage the IEP system in making sure that that happens. How do we use evidence-based strategies to provide specially designed instruction, SDI, as well as evidence-based strategies for the provision of general education? We also want to make sure that we've addressed the educator shortage, and this is something that we have long been facing. But how is it that we recruit educators to the field, both in general ed, and special ed, and related services. And how do we keep them in the classroom? And so, this is something that we're actually focusing on a great deal here at the Department of Ed. Both the recruitment and the retention piece. And we're looking at retention over the next six months and doing a series of listening sessions. So, listen for an opportunity to participate in that. And then how is it that we invest in mental health and wellbeing? And here we're talking about for students. But also, we want school staff. How is it that we make sure that our schools



are safe, supportive, inclusive environments for everyone involved, both children and adults. And then, last, but not least, how do we create pathways to college and career? And for our students with disabilities we want to make sure that they have multiple pathways not fewer based on their disability. We want to bring in the strength of school to post-school transition planning. And if you're not familiar at all with OSEP's 3E transition initiative and 3E stands for, expect, engage, and empower. I encourage you to look into that and the work that's been done there as well as collaboration opportunities with the vocational rehabilitation, VR, system where you're located. So that's the Raise the Bar initiative.

And on the next slide I really want to link that to our OSERS mission and priorities. And so, I have a fabulous opportunity to represent the Department of ED and OSERS, and our mission is to improve early childhood education and employment outcomes and raise expectations for all people with disabilities, their families, their communities and the nation. And I just want to take a moment and reflect on that right. How often is it that we get to work in a job where we get to say our purpose is improving outcomes and raising expectations. And so that is really leading the work that we're doing and we're calling it leading for equitable outcomes. And you can see the five main areas that we're looking at. And I'm thinking you are probably doing something similar because we didn't just pull these out of a hat. These came from conversations with stakeholders, data analysis, looking at laws and regulations, and then talking with parents and families and individuals with disabilities. But to lead for equitable outcomes we're looking at how do we have a prepared workforce. How is it a diverse workforce that represents the communities that we serve, as well as has the skill set that's needed to provide high quality educational opportunities? How do we amplify and promote evidence-based practices around instruction, intervention, services, and support for individuals with disabilities of all ages, whether they're infants and toddlers their school age, or they're entering the workforce? How is it that we're using the ample research base and evidence base that is available to us? And are we engaging in that work using those evidence bases? Third is, are we really using accessible technology, inclusive materials and assistive technology, in ways that are most beneficial to learning and demonstrating outcomes? And David started us off this morning by talking about the opportunity provided to us during the Covid pandemic. And this truly is an opportunity for us to learn about what was successful in that time of rapid change and implement new skills and technologies that we were able to use then that are more successful. Fourth is stakeholder engagement. And we know that this is a really important premise and component of IDEA. But how do we engage people with disabilities and their families? How do we get diverse perspectives? And how do we use that to improve the systems and improve outcomes? And then, last, but not least, are how do we use resources strategically? And I'm going to ask you, as you go into this conference and as you look at your work, we know that additional funds are needed and that we're looking at a shortage of funds. But we also really need to consider ways that we use the funding that we have differently. How is it that we're using it to support a prepared workforce to leverage evidence-based practices? To make sure we have accessible materials, and that we're engaging stakeholders? And how do we do that differently?



So, with that, I am going to jump into where I think is one of the biggest parts of building an equitable system is starting with that expectation piece. And Tessie talked about this you know, in her lead up. But how is it that we really have high expectations? And I saw in the chat that people were talking about like when they see lower expectations. We saw a video about the importance of this. But I just want to take a moment and show you what my non-negotiables are. And I'm thinking that you probably have similar. And there's probably some that you have that are in addition. So, I think I always try to start with presuming competence. If you have a disability, I still presume competence and I'm going to go with the least dangerous assumption, which is, you are entitled to all of the protections of anyone else. You are able to learn when you're provided effective instruction, and you should be able to demonstrate that learning when I provide you an opportunity to do so with the supports that you need. I'm not going to remove you from opportunities because I perceive that you cannot do it, or I think that, based on your disability, you shouldn't have to. So, with that, I think this is something that we need to talk about with our teams. Are we having those conversations? Are we identifying where we don't presume competence? Where our long-term historical policies and practices do not support this.

Second, and if you know me, this is probably going to irritate you. But I have a strong sense of urgency. I feel like time is ticking. Every day we've lost a day in the life of a child and their opportunity to learn. And so, I am proceeding with a we have to do something, and we have to do it now, and I don't have time to sit back and admire the problem and watch it continue to occur. I feel like I have to do something now. I have to change my behavior now, and that this is impactful and important to the life of a child.

One I want to make sure that I'm leading towards the vision that I'm not managing things. And here I just want to share a quote that is one of my favorites. But it's from a book called *The Work of Leaders* and it says, "If you're a leader, you're leading people somewhere else. Somewhere that's not here. That's the job. If the group is staying in the same place, they may need a manager, but not a leader. Leadership is all about change. But changed to what? That's why a vision is so important. The leader needs to have a crystal-clear vision of where the group is headed." And so, I want to ask you as you're thinking about this as you're going into this work, are you leading? Are you leading towards the changed outcome? Or are you managing towards the same things that we've seen and that we've had? I also want to identify and address ableism and discrimination in everyday actions, those that I see and those that I commit myself. I also want to make sure I'm using data. And I'm using data accurately and effectively to make changes and identify areas that need to change. I want to make sure that I'm comprehensively using universal design. That I'm looking at not only access but also progress in general curriculum. I want to make sure that we are ensuring accessibility and seamless provision of materials, technology, and accommodations across the system. That I'm demonstrating the importance of instruction. And that I'm ensuring that special ed services are supplemental and not in replacement. And last, but not least, I need to be accountable. I need to hold myself accountable for my actions and my messages, not just my words. But what am I doing with my nonverbal actions? So, this is just a



quick summary of my non-negotiables that I am attempting to live, and some days I do that better than others, but every day I have an opportunity to wake up and try again.

Drop in if you have non-negotiables that you've lived towards, so we can share those as well. While you're dropping in your non-negotiables and the things that you're thinking about, and I really appreciate if you're engaging with me in the chat because it does help me know that I'm not just out here talking to myself. I just want to hit on some quick data points.

And so, I have, you know, 2021 data from the 45th Annual report to Congress. But in those data, we know that there were about 740,000 children with disabilities ages 3 through 5 and about 6.5 million ages 6 through 21. With that I'm also looking at state assessments, right? And we know that of students taking the state assessment in math we saw about 68 to 76% of our population, and in English written language we saw about, I'm sorry, 65 to 75 were taking that. We also saw that we have about 75% of our youth with disabilities graduating with a regular diploma and about 15 dropping out. I think this is really important data to look at. One, because it really demonstrates what our expectations are regarding students with disabilities. Right? When we have less than 80% of our students with disabilities taking statewide assessments that is saying a lot. That is saying we don't think they are capable of participating in this assessment. It may be saying they are not given access to effective grade level instruction that allows them to participate and be assessed. That may be part of our assumptions or expectations. We know that only 75% are graduating with a regular diploma. That is talking about what's happening with those outcomes. And we really have to dig into those data and look at what we're doing that is resulting in those outcomes, whether it's our assumptions, whether it's our practices, whether it's the long-term decisions and impacts that we get from annual IEP decisions. All of those things matter.

I want to go to the next slide. And I'm just going to hit these really quickly. But then we have educational environment trends, right? And here we can see the percent of students that's school age served in the regular class 80% or more of the day. You can see that that's in the 60 to 70% range in these data. And then you can see down below we see around the 20 percent and dropping down slightly inside the regular class, 40 to 79%. We saw a slight increase in the 80% or more of the day, and the other two other environments. And inside the regular class, less than 40% of the day are pretty standard.

What I think is really important here is that it's not just about where students are located. It's about the instruction that students are provided. And we know that those decisions need to be made by IEP teams. What I'm asking though is, are you looking at those decisions that are being made by IEP teams. And are they truly individualized based on student needs? And I asked that because if you're looking at them by school, or you're looking at them by special ed teacher, special ed leader are you seeing similar decisions and trends that may indicate that those decisions are not based on student needs but are based more on historical practices or expectations. Another set of data that I encourage you to



look at our course-taking by students with disabilities. And here you can see less than 2% of the students enrolled in advanced placement, or AP courses, are students with disabilities. Less than 3% are in gifted and talented, and less than 4% are in dual enrollment. And this is a major missed opportunity. We know that part of the issue with IDEA is the focus on preparing students with disabilities for life after school and college and career readiness, right? Whether you think about further education, employment, and independent living. And transition planning is designed to support them. And dual enrollment is a great opportunity to support them in accessing that additional postsecondary education. And yet less than 4% of students with disabilities are engaged in that process. Think about these data, use these data to really dig in, and hold yourself and your systems accountable and your IEP teams.

When we talk about designing a system for improved outcomes think about that. We want students to graduate prepared for college and career. That takes evidence-based instruction and rigorous grade level standard, supplemented with specially designed instruction, focused on school to post-school transition planning and looking at long term outcomes. I'm a parent, and I have to tell you as a parent. I looked back at my children, and said, "This is what I want from you when you graduate." And every year we moved towards that. Are we doing that with the IEP team decisions and the conversations that we're having with our individuals with disabilities and their families? Are we prepping them for that system? Are we building that system together?

So, I showed you data? I've talked about kind of historical practices. I've talked to you about my non-negotiables. And as I look forward I'm thinking, how do we build a system that has persistent equities where it's supported by diverse and prepared personnel, students have access to the services that they need, including that mental health supports. We have high expectations where we're using evidence-based instruction and intervention using data. Everything is timely, right, evidence-based instruction, data driven. Family engagement is used to celebrate success and be responsive. And we have built a system that has inclusive placements with proactive supports that address positive behavior, communication, and learning together. This is what it takes to have that system of persistent equities where students have access to rigorous curriculum and instruction, and we see the improved post school outcomes that we desire. Part of that is as part of our system we're looking at levers of change. And we're focusing on all of those levers on the next slide that really help us engage in changes.

And so here you can see these are the levers of change that are available to us. Have we identified a vision. And is it driving the changes that we want? Are we using informal and formal agreements with stakeholder engagement and using our platform of influence around common beliefs? Are we using our monitoring and accountability system and designing funding and grants that all support the system of persistent equities. When we're training people, are we training special ed and general ed teachers together? And are we training them in evidence-based practices that move students towards a persistent system of equity? Or are we training them on the same things that have resulted in the outcomes that we see now. An example of this would be, I see, as we come back into schools a lot of



times general ed teachers and special ed teachers going through separate trainings. Not trainings that are designed to have them collaborate. And I see special ed teachers trained in IEP writing and the law, and not focusing on instruction and evidence-based practices. I see school administrators trained on the law rather than equitable practices, how to use IEPs to design systems, how to support evidence-based instruction, all of those things. And so, I ask you to think back to our non-negotiables and the change that we want? And are we using these levers? Are we using our collaborative efforts to move us forward? Or are we using them to do the same things and to create the same systems that we have now?

And so on our next slide I just want to ask you to think about, what do our current actions say? What are they saying? Are they demonstrating our commitment, our non-negotiables, our sense of urgency to improve outcomes. When people see the work that we're engaged in, when they read our emails, when they read our newsletters, when they're seeing the professional development that we're making available, is that demonstrating those non-negotiables? Is it leading to improved outcomes?

On the next slide I just want to say I'm a great proponent of repurposing for impact rather than adding on to impact. So, think about the meetings, the types of activities that you're engaged in. How do we repurpose those so that we're showing we're demonstrating the work that we want to do? Whether that's staff meetings, whether it's IEP meetings, external meetings with families and our communities, internal communications with our own team and staff, our professional development. How is it that we're using all of those opportunities and those levers for change to create the system of support? How? So I'm going to ask you to think about that. Think about what is it that we need to do differently? What do we need to do more of? What is it we need to stop doing? And what is it that we need to hold on to and really double down on? Right? And so that is where we're at as we go into the school year. I know I've thrown a lot at you in a really short amount of time. And that's that sense of urgency, right? That how do we come together? How do we repurpose our work? How do we have a greater impact? And how do we improve outcomes for individuals with disabilities?

On the next slide I'm going to bring it back to instruction. We cannot improve outcomes and be silent as leaders when it comes to instruction. We cannot delegate this opportunity to others. I don't care what role you play in this system. If you're an administrator, if you're a general ed teacher, if you're a special ed teacher, if you're a family member. If you think I don't need to worry about instruction, somebody else is doing it. You are wrong. I don't know any other way to say that, but we have to be able to talk about evidence-based instruction. It's crucial to improving outcomes. And we cannot be silent when we are talking about this.

So, with that, I'm going to just leave it on my favorite quote on the last slide which is from Maya Angelo. "Do the best you can until you know better. Then, when you know better, do better". That is what I'm trying to live by. What I knew yesterday. What I knew last month. What I knew last year is very different than what I know today and what I'm doing today. You know, I wake up every day and



try to be a better version of myself to apply the learning that I've been through. And look at what I need to do differently moving forward. And so, with that, Tessie, I'm just going to leave it to you to close this out. But I'm going to go back and read the comments and thank you so much to those of you that dropped in information in relationship to my requests. So, thank you and have a wonderful conference.

Tessie Bailey: Thanks, Glenna. And I thanks folks in the chat. It was very inspiring. And I want to thank you for being such a champion both for educators and leaders of students with disabilities, but as well as students with disabilities themselves. So, we are in good hands. So, thank you so much. Keep your chats coming. I can see them sort of coming in and give your kudos to Glenna and ask your questions and leave your comments. I'm going to just close this out really quickly, so that you have time to take your break. As a reminder, at one o'clock we will start our strand sessions. You will have two sessions to choose from. The first one is really around how do we leverage the IEP to support the instructional design and delivery. And then the second session will really be around specifically, specially designed instruction. And so, pick the one that best meets your needs. There will be a break after that strand session. There'll also be a break within the strand session. But come back and join us for our resource spotlights because these are the tools that can help you in your collaborative efforts to develop some of your professional learning that promotes collaboration, and you'll be able to see some of those in action tomorrow as well.

Finally, you'll be able to access all of the event materials for the strand sessions and the other sessions that will happen today. You'll find it under the news and events for the 2024 Prepping for Progress. You'll see on the left-hand side if you're attending strand session one you can click on the plus sign, and it will open up. You'll be able to access all the activity materials and the PowerPoint presentation for each session. To join us for the expo though check out the expo in your upper right-hand toolbar and you'll be able to click on the ones and move about the booths as you see fit.

I want to thank you again for joining us today. We will see you at one o'clock eastern. Make sure you check your time zones. It's updated in your platform based on your computer time. First strand sessions, one and sessions two.

