



Welcome and Keynote Day 2

Amy Peterson: So once again, thank you so much for joining us for *Prepping for Progress 2024: Better Together! Collectively Promoting Progress for Students with Disabilities*. We're heading into day two, and this is our welcome or general session for that. So, I want to welcome everyone back. I hope you had a wonderful time yesterday. For those that were able to join us, we know it's a busy time of the year as you're starting up school or already in school. So welcome to those who might be joining us for the first time, and welcome back to those that had an opportunity to engage in the different sessions that we had yesterday. For those that were able to join us, I'd love to have an opportunity to hear a little bit from you about kind of what are some of your big takeaways or reflections from yesterday? So go ahead, use that chat box there to engage with us. Tell us a little bit about your experience, things that you learned, things that stood out to you.

A couple things that I really heard and noticed yesterday that I thought were super powerful was just the emphasis that everyone shared, as Glenna was talking about kind of those non-negotiables and those ideas for kind of what you bring to this work as a non-negotiable, that engagement in or involvement of student voice and choice, was something that was super powerful for me. One of the other things that I reflected on and saw was the conversation there around, kind of sometimes we make things more complicated than it needs to be with our policies, our procedures, our regulations. If we think back to kind of the intention of this work, and sometimes thinking about the basics, and thinking about kind of those key critical components. Are we ensuring that we're doing those basic components accurately as we're moving forward and why are we doing what we're doing? And really keeping the heart of the individual student in mind.

Someone in our session yesterday, in our strand session, really talked about not just making something a cookie cutter, really individualizing that for individual students. I see great comments and conversation coming in there in the chat. Feel free to keep those coming. Engage with your colleagues in those conversations. Reflect and share some of those key takeaways you had because the folks that were in different strands might have heard some different key messages or some folks that got to engage with some resources might have learned about something that somebody else hadn't had an opportunity to learn about. So, great opportunity for you guys to share your engagement there.



As a reminder, this is the PROGRESS Center event and the PROGRESS Center is really a federally funded technical assistance center that's designed to support you all, leaders, educators, and so on. And so, we talked yesterday about some of our different avenues for support, both in knowledge development work and ongoing technical assistance, and then all of the freely available tools, resources, and materials that are available for you on the website. So, we hope you'll have some chances to explore those. I know you've dug into some of those already in different sessions that you've attended and hope you've learned about some resources that might be helpful for you. But with that, I'm going to turn it over to our project officer, David Emenheiser, for a brief welcome for day two.

David Emenheiser: So good morning and welcome to day two of the 2024 *Prepping for Progress: Better Together! Collectively Promoting Progress for Students with Disabilities*. Wherever and whenever you're joining us, I am so grateful that you are. But let me start this morning with just a shout-out to the PROGRESS Center, to all of the center staff. I'm not even going to try to list the individuals because I know I'll miss somebody, and they are each just individually excellent. Thank you for this event today and the other supports, resources, and services that you provide. So just a little bit yesterday, I saw in the chat that you are identifying some of the things that you took away. And for those of you, what I thought of is that Assistant Secretary Glenna Gallo reminded us of the urgency due to the time limitations for children both inspiring and challenging us. If you haven't listened to it, I encourage you to go and listen to it. If you have, I encourage you to go back and listen again. For those interconnections of the various systems improvements efforts. From her list of non-negotiables systems must collect and use data, lead toward improvement, and effectively instruct children building upon competence in order to reach excellence. The way PROGRESS Center talks about this interconnectedness references a sustained ecosystem. And yesterday, the project director, Tessie Rose Bailey, outlined a few keys to promoting progress for students with disabilities, including the collective efficacy, high expectations, belonging, and internal consistency of the development and implementation of the IEP. If you will, consider the adage about forests and trees. Don't think about it too closely because I'm not gonna really use it the way that it meant. But yesterday we heard about the forest. Yesterday was the big picture systems, the ecosystem. The sessions scaled up broad concepts. Today is about the trees, the individual living organisms that make up the ecosystem. In education, that's the people, children, and their families, school teachers, administrators. And today we'll delve deeply into some specifics: practices, strategies, and approaches that you can use throughout the 2024-2025 academic year and beyond. I will end my welcome by repeating my appreciation for each one of you. You are doing some of the most important work in the country. Thank you.

Amy Peterson: Thank you, David. And I hope you all will think about some of those considerations as we move forward. So, I want to just remind everyone about our event plan for today. We're here today in the general session. So, we will be here till about 12:30 and then we'll have about a 30-minute break until the top of the hour. Depending on where you are, on the east coast that will be 1:00. After that will be when we jump into our concurrent sessions. There you'll have an opportunity to engage with one of five sessions that you're interested in exploring a little bit more deeply about a different topic area or content area from some of the pieces that we've talked about so far over the past couple days. After that, we'll have a quick break so you can transition to a different room, and we'll jump into a second version of those concurrent sessions. You'll note that those sessions will repeat. So that means the same 5 sessions that will happen at 1:00 Eastern will happen again at 2:00 Eastern. So, you can select again from one of those five sessions. So, you'll have an opportunity to see two of the five and if you want to watch any of the other ones on the recordings after for the fact, you are welcome to do that. We'll close that out with a 15-minute break so you can stretch, grab another cup of coffee perhaps in the afternoon to keep yourself going, and then we'll end with a closing session. And we're really honored to have a great opportunity to hear from one of our partnership sites in East Baton Rouge Parish Schools. So, they're going to share a little bit about the work that they have done with the PROGRESS Center, the great outcomes that they are starting to see and have over time. And so that's going to be a really very exciting session, panel session. And we'll see a video that they have put together about some of the work that they have been doing.

So, the five different sessions that you can choose from today, I'll just review them briefly here. You can see them in the platform as well. Those different concurrent sessions include Tips and Tools to Help Coaches Support Educators in Developing and Implementing High Quality Educational Programming for Students With Disabilities, Empowering Educators Through Self-Directed Learning Strategies, Leading The Way: Fostering Collaboration Between General and Special Education, Making Sure All Means All: How One District is Ensuring High-Quality Instruction Through Collaboration and High Expectations, and then Improving Academic Success Through Cognitive and Metacognitive Strategy Instruction. So again, each of those sessions will repeat. So, you can choose up to two of those different sessions to learn a little bit more about and you'll be able to access the recordings for the other at a later date.

I think probably at this point, folks have gotten a little bit used to this platform, even though it's probably new to many of you. So as a reminder, how we navigate around and access some of the key information. Here is an image of the lobby which you all see when you join the session to start with. This is where you can see some of the key sessions that you might have, might be coming up, or you might want to attend down below. You can engage in that chat



over on the side if you have questions or concerns, or you want to share with others. And I encourage you to do that. And then across the top, you'll see a couple different tabs that you've used to engage with different activities over time. One of those is the sessions tab. That's probably a good one to really get comfortable with because that's an easy place for you to find all of the available sessions that will be occurring over the rest of the day. And you can also go here to find, to watch recordings for the past session. So, if you go to your sessions tab now, you'll see those three sessions from yesterday. Rather than saying start or join or things like that, they will say watch the recording. And if you want to go back and look at any of the recordings from yesterday, you can do that right in the moment. You'll be able to see the start and join buttons for the upcoming sessions as you go forward. And as a reminder, if you want to add anything to your itinerary, you can go ahead and flag those to make sure that those are sessions that you're able to attend and engage with.

So those are some things for you to think about and look at as you think about the sessions. One other thing I just wanted to flag, because I know it was a question that came up a little bit yesterday, is that our presenters will be starting the sessions a little bit early just to make sure that they can test their audio, they can make sure that everything is working OK. And so, you might see the session show up as join, and you might click on that, and then be in a waiting room or a zoom pattern, kind of holding pattern for a little bit of time. That's OK. We'll let you in at the top of the hour when those sessions start and admit you over time if you have to show up a couple minutes late. So don't worry about that. Just go ahead and click join and then we'll admit you at the top of the hour when the session starts. So just be aware of that. That's something to think about.

Another question that I know came up yesterday was about certificates of attendance. We will be sharing those out. If you, in your registration, had an opportunity to select that you were interested in a certificate. If you aren't sure if you did that or you don't think you did it, but you would like a certificate, that's OK. Just let us know. You can e-mail us at progresscenter@air.org if you want to do that and contact us there. You can contact and just share in the chat with us or in the zoom lobby. Just let us know and we'll keep track of those and make sure we get those out to you. We're going to do our best to pull those together as quickly as possible, but we need to look across all the different sessions and all the materials there so it will take us a little bit of time, but look for those. If you are interested in a certificate of attendance, we will definitely be sharing those out with everyone who has joined.

I mentioned before about watching the recordings, but those sessions are starting to be available for you. We will be cleaning up the recordings at a later date to allow us to really engage and get rid of any of the front content stuff that you might not want to look at. But the ones that automatically show up right away for you in the zoom platform will have no editing



done. So that might mean that there was a breakout session or a time where people were doing some reflections where there's some dead space that you need to skip past. Just be aware of that. We will be keeping track and kind of trying to edit those out, so it'll be a little bit cleaner for you on a later date when they're posted on the website.

And as a reminder, this is where you can find all of the event materials and recordings after the event on the PROGRESS Center website. If you go to the homepage, it's right under that news and events tab that will drop down. You'll see an option for Prepping for Progress 2024 and you'll be able to access all of the materials for the different sessions there. You can find the slides, you can find any related resources that people might have shared during the different sessions there as well. So that's a great place for you to go as a one-stop-shop for all of the materials. This will also be where we're posting the recordings after the session. So go ahead and take note of that as well if you're going to refer back to these sessions or you wanna take a look at them at a later date.

If you need to help with navigating this web page, it is set up so that each of the different sessions are kind of a different row in the accordion space. You can just click on that plus sign, and you'll see that it will expand there for you, for example, to show you the strand, the description, the slides, and any related resources and materials there. So, feel free to explore that, access those slides, pull them down. If it's a session that you weren't able to attend, but you want to explore them a little bit further, you can do that there as well.

And we have Liz Hicks, who's been a phenomenal support with any questions or issues that you might have. You can find her in the lobby chat. She's monitoring that carefully. You can e-mail her directly. Her e-mail address is up here on the website, or up here on the screen here. You can e-mail us at progresscenter@air.org. She's also monitoring that to help you and address any questions or concerns you might have about getting into the sessions, accessing the technology, accessing any materials, and so on. So, keep those questions coming as needed throughout the session with any technical challenges. She's doing a great job of hopefully getting you to where you need to be as quickly as possible. And in your sessions themselves, there are also technical support folks that are there to help you and assist you. So, if you have questions or issues during the sessions, don't hesitate to reach out with any questions about the technology or anything like that or how to engage with the technology because we'd love for people to have as smooth as possible experience here.

We hope that you guys had a great time engaging on our social medias, and Facebook, and Twitter, or X, at K12 Progress. If you are on those different social media platforms, you can use Promoting Progress 2024 as a hashtag. See what other people are posting and sharing. We'd love to encourage you to have those conversations with us as we move forward.

So, with all of those logistics out of the way, we're going to jump into the meat of the presentation here today. I want to make sure that we have some time to kind of dig into kind of what does it really take, that ecosystem that David was talking about. What does it really take for us to ensure that we are building an inclusive system in order to support students with disabilities? What are those critical elements that we need to really keep in mind as we're supporting our staff and our schools and our systems and our districts in order to ensure students with disabilities can access and progress in the general curriculum, and on their post-school outcomes, and their in-school outcomes that they're interested in. So, what is that for that high-quality instructional programming that we need to keep in mind?

And so here we have kind of a visual of these different essential elements that we have put together. When we started the center, as David mentioned yesterday, if you were on, we had the benefit of launching right into the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was right at the start. We started in about November of that year. And you know, pretty soon after that, things really went haywire for all of us, right? Our work, our world, was turned upside down. Our experiences were really shaped and changed based on that experience together, that collective experience.

So, our initial plan as we started out this work was to conduct a beating the odds analysis that would really help us to uncover these kinds of essential elements of this ecosystem. What are the facilitators for success for students with disabilities? What needs to be in place for high-quality instructional programming to actually occur? So, that beating the odds analysis, led by our knowledge development team was really focused on identifying schools that were outperforming similar schools, for example, those with similar demographic characteristics or so on in different states in terms of student outcomes, both reading and math outcomes for students with disabilities. How do we see the successes there? What are they doing? How can we learn from them about what might be impactful for students with disabilities in those schools that are outperforming what their expectation is? From that, we're going to convene focus groups with general educators, with special educators, with administrators, and others to really learn about the context of those schools and districts. To learn about what practices might be most impactful for them and contribute to their system of success.

So that sounded like a great strategy and a great approach as we kicked off and planned the center, but of course, the data was not available because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The context of schools had changed and were really different based on the COVID-19 pandemic. And our ability to do that beating the odds analysis at that time was just not as feasible. So instead, we had to shift and pivot just like everyone else to really explore other ways to learn about what are these effective essential elements in order to ensure that we can build this ecosystem elements, and identify these elements, and facilitators for success. And so, what we



did was work intensively with our partnership sites that we work with over time. Those were districts and schools that really engaged in these ongoing partnerships and iterative learning with us to learn about the context of their schools, and districts, and environments. What was working there, what wasn't. We looked at the literature and did research and lit. reviews in order to understand kind of what are some of the effective practices that were being pulled forward through there? And we learned from others in the field. We convened Thought Leader Summits and Thought Leader Forums with experts and stakeholders and learned from focus groups with parents, and families, and students, and educators, and so on to really start generating what are these potential essential elements as we thought about kind of what they looked and felt like.

Many of you probably saw these essential elements in a slightly different graphic yesterday during some of the presentations. I know in the IEP Basics strand presentation, Steven talked about each of these as well. That graphic really showed the road, right? We if you were in some of those sessions yesterday, you saw the analogy with the bike, thinking about the procedural compliance components, of the parts of the bicycle, putting them together in the substantive components, and really thinking the ecosystem elements that really enable us to implement the high-quality instructional programming and the IEP for the student. These are the things that help us get past those roadblocks, those barriers, those detours, and so on. But what we thought about as we thought about this graphic a little bit more, was as the road graphic was moving forward, it really looks like there were just these different points on the graphic right on the road that we needed to think about. We needed to think about staff collaboration. We needed to think about student belonging, we needed to think about family engagement, educator support, and so on.

And so, what we needed to do was really think about how do those all actually fit together in order to facilitate this work? They aren't stand-alone flags on a road. They are really this interactive graphic, this interactive elements here that all work together in order to promote progress for students with disabilities. We need to ensure that educators are supported in order to engage families, engage with other staff, and collaborate, and to implement effective instruction and support students, and to create the context for belonging for all students that foster the community and that belonging experience. We need to ensure that families are engaged in the process to provide information and true partnership to share what's working for their child, what's not working for their child, to help inform the needs, to help share about the student's experience of belonging, and so on. And we need to understand the students voice, and that student's response, and how they feel engaged in the community in order to think about how do we structure our learning supports and our learning opportunities for



them to create peer learning opportunities, to engage with others, to engage with other staff, and so on.

And so, we really wanted this graphic to illustrate a way to engage and connect each of those pieces together. The other pieces of the graphic that we added that kind of is different from the road are some of those kind of big facilitators across each of those dimensions or elements that we need to think about. And some of these we talked a lot about yesterday, right, high expectations, evidence-based practices, collective efficacy. We also know that effective leadership and support from leadership helps to facilitate educator support, family engagement, student belonging, and so on. And that data is a driving force throughout that process. Data really is the weaving that allows us to understand whether our instruction is working, whether students feel like they belong, whether families feel like they belong and are engaged. And so, these are all kind of elements that we need to be attentive to as well as we move forward. So, I'm going to go ahead and break us down these different elements a little bit deeper and provide us an opportunity to engage with them.

So, we're going to start off with belonging. That's our first element here. And as we think about student belonging, many of you heard us talk about this before, but it really occurs when educators create the environment where students with disabilities are present, are invited, are welcomed, are known, accepted, involved, supported, heard, loved, and needed. And as I mentioned earlier today, one of the things that really stood out to me, and some of those non-negotiables that you all put in the chat yesterday, was the involvement of students and their voice and choice in the work. And I think that piece of student belonging, that being heard, and known, and accepted, and involved is so critical, right? And it's something that we need to think about as we structure our environments. To ensure that both us as staff are creating facilitative environments that are ensuring student belonging, but that also the student's peers are creating environments that students feel like they are known, and supported, and heard, and loved. And how are we structuring our learning to create those opportunities?

This work on belonging really grew out of some of the work that we've been doing with private schools and independent schools and learning from some of the ways they've structured their learning environments, the work that we did with colleagues at the TIES Center, and with Dr. Erik Carter.

And before we jump in a little bit more to student belonging, I want to share that if you have 60 minutes of time, I really would recommend that you watch the recording of *Ten Ways Schools Can Foster Belonging Among Students With and Without Disabilities* that Dr. Carter did for us a couple years ago. It's posted on our website as a recorded webinar, and it is excellent. And it really goes through each of these dimensions. And I know 60 minutes can be hard to



carve out at times, but it really is a helpful way for us to think about student belonging, and thinking about the conditions that we're putting into place in our schools to create those opportunities, and what the research is telling us about student belonging. So, definitely recommend you do that.

But I want to go ahead and share a shorter video that we are working on. And this is kind of the sneak-peek of this video as we go through this process of sharing kind of new resources that are coming soon from the PROGRESS Center. So, it's not available yet on the website, but it will be coming soon to really talk about student belonging in a little bit of a shorter package. So, I'm going to go ahead and play that. I think I'm going to pause really quickly and re-share my screen because I didn't look and see whether or not I shared the audio portion there. So, I'll just pause for one second.

Video: Think about a time you felt like you fit in. What are a couple of words that describe how you felt? Our schools should be places of belonging for every student, including students with disabilities. We want students to feel at home in our schools and classrooms to be real, true members of their school community. We want them to feel valued and accepted by their peers, school staff, teachers, and others. As educators and administrators, we strive to create the kinds of opportunities among students that we know lead to reciprocal relationships and hopefully, friendships.

Belonging can be elusive for so many of our students with disabilities. Belonging can't be assumed, and it's not always experienced. Often, our efforts to foster relationships tend to take a back seat to our focus on academic, behavioral, and other outcomes.

So, what is belonging and what does it take to make belonging a reality? In essence, how students with disabilities have accessed the school community has changed over time. Dr. Erik Carter offers this illustration to help us understand how students' engagement in the school community has changed over time.

Prior to what we now know as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or IDEA, many students with disabilities were excluded from school communities. IDEA created greater school access for students with disabilities, although some students even today receive their education in segregated programs in the school or in some cases, in separate schools.

Early attempts to integrate students with disabilities into school communities were often limited to specific activities, such as lunch or recess, or to specific classes, or times of the day. Students with disabilities were viewed as a group within the larger school community rather than as valued individuals, and interactions among students with and without disabilities were limited. Today, most educators aim to support students with disabilities access and progress in the general curriculum. We often hear educators reference inclusion programs or classrooms



where students with disabilities are being educated with peers without disabilities. However, inclusion is just one component of being a valued member of the school community. As illustrated in the image, students with disabilities are still seen as different or as needing more support than students without disabilities. Inclusion is seen as something we do to, or for students with disabilities. Belonging is more than inclusion. It is the difference between being included in the community and being a valued, indispensable member of the community. With belonging, students with disabilities are viewed as general education students who contribute to and are supported by the school community. Doctors Erik Carter and Elizabeth Biggs identified ten key intersecting dimensions of belonging.

To belong is to be present, invited, welcomed, known, accepted, supported, heard and befriended, needed and loved. To belong students with disabilities need to be physically present. They participate with children with and without disabilities in all the general activities of a school. Being present is built on the idea of shared experiences and repeated encounters over time. It's about being part of the everyday fabric of school life.

Belonging is about being personally invited by peers and educators. Sending the message, we want you here. Being personally invited is different than a general announcement that everyone is welcome or an assumption that everyone will feel invited to participate. Being invited might include being asked to sit with peers at lunch, play games at recess, collaborate on a project, join a club, or come to a birthday party.

Belonging is about feeling welcomed, about being received by others with warmth, friendliness, and an authentic delight. Students tend to feel welcomed when others greet them, engage them in conversation, and join them in shared activities. As we think about being welcomed, it is important to assess whether our environment and schedule are set up in a way that welcomes students with disabilities.

Belonging is about being known. Helping students belong means getting to truly know each student's strengths, interests, and positive qualities, which allows students to be seen as indispensable. Having relationships with people who understand and affirm you is an important aspect of belonging.

Belonging is about being accepted as you are. Promoting acceptance means proactively addressing attitudes and ensuring all students feel embraced for who they are. Knowing you are liked by others contributes to feelings of self-worth, gives you roots, and makes school more enjoyable. As we think about acceptance, we think about the importance of what we model and the examples we provide. We know that when we hold high expectations, use affirming language, and support shared activities, attitudes start to change.



Belonging is about being supported. To ensure students with disabilities have the opportunities to meaningfully engage with peers, feel accepted, and participate in the activities they are invited to, we know that they will often need individualized supports aligned to their needs. To provide these supports, we need to build the capacity of staff and students to provide natural supports as much as possible. These supports could look like students participating in cooperative learning with classmates, working toward collective learning goals, and navigating challenges together as peers.

Belonging is about having a voice and being heard. Students must be listened to in order to build self-determination and empowerment. Ask yourself, how can we ensure the perspectives of students are sought out, listened to, and respected by others?

Belonging is rooted in being befriended, and being befriended is about having people in our lives who know us, and like us, and miss us, and love us. Friendship is at the heart of our well-being, including for students with disabilities. Fostering friendships requires facilitating shared activities, teaching appropriate social behaviors, and planning opportunities for social connections over time. Ask yourself, how can we provide students opportunities to develop relationships with their peers that are marked by reciprocity and mutual enjoyment?

Belonging is about being needed. The richest form of communities are marked by real reciprocity. Having a sense of significance and importance requires being both a recipient of support and a contributor to the community. Providing valued roles and opportunities to contribute allows students to be truly needed within the community. An indicator of being needed is when your presence is missed. We may ask ourselves, how can we ensure that all students are valued by others and considered to be indispensable members of the school community?

Belonging is about being loved for who we are. Ultimately, a sense of unconditional love and belonging flourishes in caring, mutually invested communities. How can we ensure students experience deep and gracious love from others? By intentionally addressing all ten dimensions, schools can build inclusive communities that promote belonging. Building inclusive communities requires prioritizing belonging alongside academic instruction, evaluating progress, and taking committed action. When we create authentic communities of belonging, all students can thrive and reach their fullest potential.

Amy Peterson: All right, so that was just a taste of kind of the belonging video. And as I mentioned before, sneak-peek, we're still working on some of the kinks, but that will get out and be available for everyone coming soon. But I want to shift us to the second element because we have a limited amount of time. And really think about the staff that need to be engaged and involved in this work.



Yesterday we talked a lot about the power of collective efficacy, right? The key idea there and thinking about how do we all work together, better together, that theme for our event over these past couple days. And as we think about this element of staff collaboration, we're really thinking about the partnerships among general and special educators, related service providers, those who are supporting students with disabilities regardless of their role. And how are we creating those opportunities for connections, engagement, professional learning together, being able to work collaboratively and ensuring that there's time and resources to support that collaboration? I know with the folks that I work with on a daily basis, I often wish I could collaborate even more, but sometimes time barriers or finding time on schedules gets in the way. But we also know that there's so much power in that. So, as we think about these essential facilitators and these essential elements of an ecosystem that supports students with disabilities, we really need to make sure that we are creating those times, and resources, and honoring them and the importance of that staff collaboration.

So, I'm going to ask you all to do a little bit of work now and just share out some of the things that have worked for you in the past as you think about this idea of staff collaboration. Maybe you're in a school right now and you have some really good strategies and tips for others about how to effectively collaborate with others. Maybe you've had a past experience working with others in different fields about how to collaboratively work together. I'm curious about some of the ideas, or strategies, or tips that you might have. So go ahead and take about 30 seconds to reflect and then type out those in the chat. Some areas that you think might be helpful for others to think about within collaboration.

I love that. I see Nicole sharing that they celebrate birthdays, and give small gifts, and create that positive experience, right? I think you can think about those dimensions of belonging, right? As we think about staff belonging, all of those dimensions really resonate with us as individuals and staff as well, right? Thinking about this idea of shared students, our students, right? I love that. Thinking about frequent feedback from others. It's not about us. It's about the kids, really focusing on our goal, and improving outcomes. Yeah. So, keep those coming. Feel free to keep adding those into the chat there.

If I move on to the third element, the next element there is effective instruction for student supports. Tessie shared about this graphic yesterday. Really thinking about all of the different supports from our statement of services and aids that are helping our students access, and benefit, and progress in the general curriculum in order to have that school and post-school success. What do we think about in all of the effective instruction and student supports that we're designing within the student's IEP and special education program as well as in the general curriculum and instructional environments for students in order to facilitate that post-school success?



Now on this slide, you can see six high leverage practices or evidence-based practices. And these were identified, many of you are probably familiar with CEC and the CEEDAR Center's High Leverage Practices. These six practices were identified by Gina Nelson and colleagues through extensive systematic meta-analysis. They really looked at what practices have the biggest evidence base and impact for supporting the implementation of high-quality instructional programming across disability categories and across grade spans. And as they looked at that research and that evidence, these six practices really rose to the top. And you can see how they align with some of the HLPs that we talked about as well. And in fact, there's a lot of additional HLPs that really undergird each of these different practices as we think about them. Yesterday, Glenna when she was talking, really talked about the importance of ensuring we're using evidence-based practices, our best evidence, in order to start designing our programming, both our core instructional programming, as well as our specially designed instruction to ensure students with disabilities have the opportunity for a success. So, really thinking about how are we leveraging these practices? Thinking about planning and designing instruction in a systematic way. Thinking about how we deliver instruction using explicit instruction practices that really focus on modeling, and think aloud, and practice opportunities, and frequent opportunities for feedback, and opportunities to respond, and receive feedback on a regular basis. And then using our data to understand whether students are responding to the instruction that we're providing and adapting that instruction or intensifying that instruction as we need to, through perhaps the data-based individualization process if you're familiar with the National Center on Intensive Intervention and the work there that we do around DBI, data-based individualization. All of this being driven by that data, right? Analyzing data, adapting when necessary. And we talked about data literacy as one of those critical components and facilitators of our essential element elements. So how are we ensuring that our instruction is designed in an iterative way that really thinks about mindful planning, really delivering with high quality practices and then adapting, and intensifying, and focusing our instruction as needed based on students' specific needs.

The next element is educator supports, and how are we ensuring ongoing professional development and coaching supports, access to instructional materials, supportive and collaborative working conditions, and opportunities to collaborate, right? That intersection there with the staff collaboration in order to design instructional programming to do that planning that we just saw in the effective instruction category. How are we thinking about some of those pieces as we're moving forward? We shared these IEP tip sheets that you guys saw throughout the different sessions yesterday that might be some helpful supports for general educators, for special educators, for related service providers. And we have found in the work that we have done that it's often really helpful for that team to do the professional



learning together in order to really learn together around this work. Each of us brings different knowledge and skills to the table and so we can have those opportunities to do that.

So, I want to pause again and encourage you to think about kind of this educator supports category. Think about what's most effective for you. What have you seen as effective or necessary in order for you to feel confident and that you have that collective efficacy? What do you think would be helpful for you? So, thinking about kind of what do you see as essential supports for staff working with students with disabilities? We'll go ahead and just give you a second to reflect and then share that out in the chat as well.

Technology literacy, I think that's a huge one. Yeah, collective vocabulary. I think one of the things that I often see, I wear a hat on the National Center on Intensive intervention as well. And one of the areas that we focused on is this idea about generalization, right? We often provide, we might use some strategies or language in some short, small group instruction or one-on-one instruction with a student, and then we throw them out into their core curriculum where there's a completely different vocabulary. There's a completely different set of strategies that are being used, and we're hoping that they can generalize the skills that they have mastered in that small group instruction in their large group, large classrooms, and thinking about the different environments and situations there. And they might not know how to do that right without intentional focus from us. So how can we make that easier by thinking about the vocabulary we use, the common messaging, the common practices and so on?

I see data literacy, ongoing feedback cycle, so many different things here. Data, really important here. Finding a safe space to have those times for problem-solving. I think that's so important, right? We know that we're continuing learning, and growing, and that we're not going to be perfect every time, right? So, we need to learn from what's not working and how can we do better. So, keep those coming. Thank you all for your engagement.

I wanted to highlight the self-paced learning module resources that are available from the PROGRESS Center. These tend to be 30-to-60 minute videos, self-paced instructional courses, that have interactive kind of checks for understanding ways to learn a little bit further. Katie McClintic, one of the people that helped us design some of these courses, is doing a session later today that really thinks about kind of how can we leverage some of these courses and similar kind of courses, self-paced learning, in order to really maximize our educator supports. And so, thinking about kind of the different ways that we might structure that learning experience in order to make sure that it's not just a sit-and-get experience. That people are able to interact, and reflect, and engage over time.

So, these are just three examples of course collections that we've put together. One around the IEP components and some big picture information around the IEP. A second collection around



special education law and really thinking about kind of where does this work come from? How do we know about the difference between federal and state laws? How do we know about the difference between IDEA and other laws that support students with disabilities as well? So, there's some good law courses that are available. They're just introductions to that work. And then if you were interested in any of those, digging deeper on those evidence-based instructional practices, there's a whole set of courses that are, you know, short modules there that you can engage with.

All of these are in a learning management system. So that allows you to engage with the content at your own pace. You can start a course and come back to it at a later time if you need to. You can engage with a resource collection. We are building out some note-taking guides that can go along with each of these materials as well. And each of you get a course completion certificate if you complete one of the courses. And so, you can use those for professional development credits as well moving forward as you need to. These are also housed with other modules from the National Center on Intensive Intervention. So, if you're interested in digging deeper into progress monitoring or other content there, there's a huge course around explicit instruction. So, if that's an area of interest for you, I encourage you to explore the different modules that are available there. They might be a nice way for you to use them in professional learning or other opportunities as well.

And then our fifth component here is family engagement. And again, these components as we laid them out in the slide deck are not in order of importance of course, because family engagement is such a critical component throughout all of the work that we do. We want to make sure that families are active and meaningful partners in the development and implementation of their child's programming, both their IEP development, that they're valued members of that IEP team, as well as the instructional programming that the student experiences across our school community and school day. We want to make sure that educators have time and resources in order to communicate and gather input from families and students and partner with them intentionally, right, that bi-directional, reciprocal relationship. Ensuring students or families feel like they belong and are members of that school community as well will help us as we move forward.

And so, some of you have heard about some of these resources already, but just want to re-highlight these set of tip sheets that are available for parents and families. There're two different tip sheets available, one around the IEP team and one around the overview of the IEP. They are also now available in Spanish as well. So, you can access either the English or Spanish version on the same page there. It's really helpful to empower parents with that information, the common language. We use a lot of detail and jargon, and a lot of legalese as we talk about special education. And so, we want to make sure that we spend time and ensuring parents and



families are equipped to have those conversations with us, and being those meaningful partners, and not assume that they understand, but being able to have those conversations because they bring so much to the table in creating the instructional programming for their child. There are also, in addition to these two tip sheets, as you guys have heard about, lots of other tip sheets that are available around each of the components of the IEP. And those now are both available in English and Spanish as well. So, while those were designed for educators and leaders and others working in the field, they can, and we have seen, be really helpful in conversations with parents and families as well.

As we think about promoting a meaningful engagement with parents and families, I just want to emphasize a couple things, right? We want to communicate and collaborate often. Our IEP meeting is a one, probably an annual meeting, a one-time meeting, but that's not the only time that we are communicating, or collaborating, or working with parents and families on this, right? That should be an opportunity, but it's not the sole time. And so, the more and more robust our communication and collaboration is over time, the better we are able to engage and work together as a team as we're designing that programming. So, ensure that you're continuing to connect and collaborate with parents and families. Work with them in advance of the meeting to draft the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, right? Thinking about kind of what are the student's strengths and areas of need? What has worked for them in the past? What hasn't? What information can we collect prior to the meeting so that we go into that IEP meeting with a good strong basis and understanding about the student and their needs. And really thinking about kind of the different knowledge and tools that parents and families might need in order to collaborate, to learn about the IEP, to learn about the IEP team meeting. There are some resources and tools that are available to us. And there's a robust network of parent centers across this nation that OSEP funds in order to support you all in this work and to help support parents and families in this work as well. And so, rely on them, leverage them, look at the resources and tools that they have available to support parents and families as well. They are great partners in this work as we think about creating a really robust and meaningful team that engages parents and families throughout this process.

Some of you had an opportunity to engage with some of these student meeting forms already as well. But they're just some kind of quick and easy ways to collect information from students, from parents prior to the meeting, the IEP meeting. To understand their goals, what they hope to do this year, what they hope to do in their future, and so on. So that we're really going into our IEP meetings with a thoughtful mindset for engagement.

And then lastly, before I turn it over, I wanted to just share these facilitators for the sustainable ecosystem and inclusive ecosystem, right? The high expectations. We saw that Billy Pickens



video yesterday about the importance of us thinking big-picture and challenging students, right? Sometimes they don't have the highest expectations for themselves, but we can set it for them, and we need to make sure that they see it for themselves too, right? We can all think back to how we were as teenagers or younger, you know, where you might not want to be doing the work like Billy mentioned, but when he was challenged to do it, he could do it and his teacher knew he could and pushed him to be there.

We know the important role of leaders in this work. And so, I encourage, if you're a leader, or someone who's working in that role, or wants to learn more about that, there is a session in one of the concurrent sessions that's focused around effective leadership in partnership with the Lead IDEA Center, which is a new OSEP funded TA center that is available for you and to support leaders in this work.

We've talked so much about collective efficacy, but I think it continues to be a critical component of this work and thinking positively that we can affect student achievement, including students with disabilities. We together are better. And so, we can move that forward.

Ensuring that we're using those best practices, the evidence-based practices that we know are effective in our effective instruction and supports, in our design of professional learning for educators, in our engagement of parents and families, in our structure for student belonging, in our fostering community, in our collaboration, right. We have practices from research and evidence throughout all of those different dimensions or elements that we can draw on.

And similarly, data infuses throughout all of those different elements as well. We use data to inform our instruction. We use data to understand whether our professional learning is effective, and we use data to engage, understand whether families feel engaged, and so on. So, you can see how those thru-lines kind of fit throughout all of those different elements to keep in mind there.

But I'm going to pause at this point. And I'm really excited to welcome David Cantrell, who's the Deputy Director for OSEP, and he's going to do a brief sharing and presentation. So, I'm going to turn it over to David here.

David Cantrell: Thank you, Amy, and good afternoon, everyone. Or actually it's almost good afternoon here on the east coast. Anyway, let me try sharing my screen. Thank you everyone for your patience. I appreciate it. So, I'm David Cantrell. As Amy said, I'm the OSEP Deputy Director and I'm pleased to spend a few moments with you this afternoon. You know, Amy, your words about using data to drive decisions, collaborating, and building partnerships with LEAs was a perfect springboard for my message today. So perfect.



Yesterday as our Assistant Secretary, Glenna Wright-Gallo, spoke to you about why educational systems need to be updated in many instances and how specific tools or levers for change can be utilized. So today I'm going to speak with you about designing and developing appropriate educational services and supports for students with disabilities. I was following along at the presentation that Amy was doing. This is exactly what the PROGRESS Center has been working on and what Amy was referring to as well.

I'll also be talking about what OSEP has communicated nationally to our partners. And then what are some resources that I'd like to highlight that are available for educational leaders in the field, but also special educators and related service providers as well. Your work has, is, has been, and continues to be critical for improving the outcomes of children with disabilities. And your work ensures that LEAs understand what is required for each child with a disability to have an individual development plan.

My team of state leads here in OSEP, their charge is to meet regularly with SEAs to review their special education data to inquire...So as I was saying, we have about 48 state leads and their charge is to speak with states on a regular basis to help states analyze their data, to engage in collaborative probing conversations about how those data identify, what are some measurable gaps, particularly with subgroups of students looking at the data by race, ethnicity, and then also how does that data inform the subsequent development of policy within the state or development of professional development training needs and activities for leaders within the districts as well?

So those conversations are happening ongoing with my special education state leads. Every state has one person identified. As we learned with the 2017 Supreme Court ruling *Endrew F. Decision*, all students with disabilities must receive appropriate FAPE, free appropriate public education, right? We all know this. But what *Endrew F.* made very clear is that even though a child with a disability on an IEP plan must be receiving challenging objectives, and they also must receive access to the same general education curriculum as their non-disabled peers. So, this really just underscores what our mission here is in OSEP. And what are the activities that you're doing to support districts and leaders within the field.

Even prior to the pandemic...Well, so we had this thing called the pandemic, right, four years ago, right? So that made my sharp pivot to address the needs that were evolving from the pandemic. But even before that, when the *Endrew F. Decision* was made, my office was really focusing on what can we do to highlight the individual needs of students and to support states to develop systems that provide the necessary steps for students to receive individualized instruction, special accommodations, and the necessary supports as well.



OK. So, building upon the Endrew F. Decision in 2017. In 2021, OSEP issued a guidance. Even though this was during the period of COVID, the guidance was really focusing on returning students to school, the OSEP road map to school, the OSEP return to school road map, development and implementation of IEPs and the least restrictive environment. We issued this in 2021 just as we were in the midst of COVID or in some instances in some communities trying to get out of COVID. But even though this was released during the period of COVID, this guidance is really a cornerstone for what the fundamentals are for developing individual education plans for students with disabilities. It's a really relevant resource. My office continues to reference it to this day.

The other point that I wanted to mention that Endrew F. underscored is that students should have access to the general education curriculum. Well, what this really means is they should have access to higher level mathematics courses, higher level English courses, science courses, and even foreign language courses. Just because a child with a disability is receiving IEP services, the IEP committee must consider how that student is accessing the general education curriculum so that they can participate in higher level math courses, so that they can participate in foreign language courses with the appropriate supplements and accommodations. One point that I'd like to note is that nationally we see that students with disabilities are really not participating in college credit advanced placement courses as their non-disabled peers. It is probably about 4% of students with disabilities nationally. This really should be a call for action for us to recognize that students with disabilities really should be participating in these college level courses.

So, we all know that for quite some time data have been very clear. The students with disabilities, particularly those of color, are significantly inappropriately receiving discipline services actions, I should say whether it's in school suspension or out of school suspension. In 2022, as a result of our analysis of data for several years, my office issued a guidance on addressing the needs of children with disabilities and IEP discipline provisions. The goal of this document is really to clarify for those students with social, emotional, or behavioral needs, what are the best practices, interventions that should be employed by not only special educators, but general educators in the school setting versus going to a reactive disciplinary model such as pulling the child out of the general education or special education classroom or having them in in-school suspension or in many instances unfortunately out-of-school suspension as well.

The data are very clear. There are trend analysis data for several years. The students with a disability, particularly those are black or other colors, are disproportionately receiving discipline actions greater than their non-disabled peers. Another point that I wanted to mention, and I'm sure that Glenna had mentioned this yesterday, was in addition to looking at the appropriate



accommodations and supports that students may receive when they're identified as having a disability and the IEP is developed is the importance of assistive technology. And just this year, I believe we released in January or February, my office released a guidance on assistive technology. It's really a myth buster's document. It includes questions and answers for how everything from how assistive technology should be considered to how assistive technology services should be paired with students based upon their unique disabilities. But also, the importance of training for not only special educators, but also general educators who interact with the student and use that assistive technology device in the school setting. If you haven't taken a look at this guidance, I encourage you to do so. Let's see here. OK.

So, for quite some time, certainly during the period of COVID to support States and students return to the brick-and-mortar setting, my office has been very proactive identifying what are the sources of guidance that are needed to support our national stakeholders. My office continues to work across the department, particularly with our colleagues in the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, to identify what are those topics that we can collaborate with at a national level to ultimately support the outcomes of students with disabilities. One such topic that we're currently working on with OESE is inclusive practices and how students are placed in the general education setting. And they're placed in such a way that they're receiving the appropriate accommodations, supplementary supports, and that the general education teachers are also receiving the necessary training and supports from us in the special education site. I'm particularly excited of our collaborative efforts with OESE. And so be on the lookout for in the 24-25, the fall of 24-25, when my office will be issuing guidance along with OESE on inclusive practices.

So, I know many of you are aware of our differentiated monitoring and support process. We actually rolled this out in 21 just after the initial COVID pandemic hit in 2020. To date, my office has monitored about 26 states to include Part C and Part B, and we monitor over several different, we call them puzzle pieces. These are the components that are necessary for a state to develop and implement a robust system of general supervision. We continue to provide ongoing technical assistance to the states and consequently for the states to provide guidance to the district special education leaders so that they understand what is OSEP looking for in terms of a robust general system of supervision so that students will receive FAPE in the general education system to the greatest extent possible. Let's just go to the next slide here.

So, in recent months, in the last couple years particularly, my office has been really excited about what is happening in the national front. Yes, we all still have more work to do to support those children with disabilities, but we are seeing some encouraging examples and I'm highlighting a few here. And these slides are hyperlinked. I do hope all of you participating can receive a copy of the slides because these hyperlinks take you to the actual articles.



Some examples are reading scores have improved in Mississippi. The participation rates in general education courses and graduation rates have improved in Alabama, which is particularly exciting. Participation rates, excuse me, in statewide assessments and comparable scores with their non-disabled students is also happening across the nation as well, and this one article highlights in Los Angeles ISD. If you have any examples that you're aware of within your local community, please send them my way. One thing my office is doing is identifying what we're calling impact stories, or best-case scenarios or research based examples of schools, or districts, or even of states where they're collaborating with various partners, where their initiatives are really pushing the envelope, and improving outcomes for students with disabilities. If you have any such examples, please shoot them my way. OK, just a few more slides here. I think we're...there we go. OK.

So, while we recognize we are making some improvement, I think our guidance has helped over the last couple of years. Your efforts in the field has been tremendous as well. We all recognize we have some way to go. As I said a moment ago, my office continues to partner with the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education because we recognize not only here in my office, but in the field at the state level, the district level, and certainly at the school level, it's really paramount for the general educators and special educators to collaborate, for those leaders across the districts to collaborate, to identify what are the commonalities, what are some of their challenges so that those robust partnerships are established.

There are some recipes for success that we all know that when employed, the likelihood of outcomes for students increases. Some of those examples include empowering teachers, fostering the importance of collaboration, setting up systems so that teachers in the school setting have enough time to collaborate during the day. I know scheduling is a challenge, but that collaboration is so important. Additionally, focusing on the success of various coaching models, coaching for general educators as well as coaching for special educators to understand how to address some children with challenging behaviors. And of course, analysis of student data is really a must. As I mentioned earlier, states have a robust set of data that they should be analyzing, and consequently, the districts and even the schools for that matter, should be analyzing their student education data and their special education data to try to triangulate what are some of the trends, what are some of the gaps, and what are the data telling us about the needs of students with disabilities.

OK, so during the period of COVID, we all recognize that the department pushed out monies to support students not only returning to the brick-and-mortar school, but also when that gap when students receiving home services. The funds were designed to support stipends for teachers to stay in their positions, stipends to hire new teachers, related service providers as well. While we recognize that some of these funds are running out or have expired to date, my



office is engaging in conversations with states and also along with our partners in OESE to identify what are some ways to continue some of those excellent programs and services that were begun when the ARP funds were available.

OK, so how do we keep the momentum going? I want to draw your attention to CEIS, or the Coordinated Early Intervention Services, which does allow up to 15% of IDEA Part B funds to be provided for those students who are in need of special education or related services, but they also need additional academic and behavioral support in the general education curriculum. These funds also cover the cost of professional development services as well for gen. ed. and for special educators as well. The OSEP funded a fiscal center, CIFR, provides excellent resources to include how CEIS funds can be utilized, but also provides additional assistance and clarification in using IDEA funds such as MOE and also MFS. I'm sure many of you are aware of CIFR, but I wanted to draw your attention yet again to this exceptional center. And I think this is my last slide. Let me just double check here.

OK, so as I said a moment ago, we're continuing to collaborate with OESE and one of the topics that we're collaborating on is the blending of IDEA funds along with the title program funds. As many of you know, this isn't an easy activity to engage in, but we're having conversations with our state directors of special education and also our partners at OESE just to remind states that it is very possible, and it really furthers the benefit of both general education and special education students when these funds are blended as much as possible. Additionally, my office issued a document titled Supporting School Reform by Leveraging Federal Funds in a School Wide Program. This is an excellent resource just to clarify how funds can be blended. What are some of the success stories, and what are some of the challenges that should be considered when beginning these conversations when you're utilizing both pots of money, IDEA and the title programs? So let me just see here, OK, I believe I've stopped sharing my screen. I apologize for the technology issues here.

I have spent a few moments just talking about what my office is doing, how we can support you. And yet again, thank you for all of your efforts to support and improve the outcomes for students with disabilities. So back to you, Amy.

Amy Peterson: Great. Thank you so much. And I get the pleasure of just closing us out with our last couple slides here. And just some reminders, right, for where we're going next as we move forward. So, we are here in the general session. We're going to have a break until the top of the hour. So, you'll get a little bit of an extended break, then we'll come back together at 1:00 Eastern or 12:00 Central, 11:00 Mountain, 10:00 Pacific Time, depending on where you're located. So, at the top of the hour where you're located, that will be our first opportunity for the concurrent sessions. So go ahead and decide which one you would like to select first. We'll



move on, have a little bit of a break and transition, and then have the opportunity for the second concurrent session after that. Once we do that, we'll come back together as a full group and close out starting about 3:00 Eastern Time here on the east coast. Depending on where you are, adjust those time zones as appropriate. So those are all those different options for you today to engage with us throughout the sessions.

And just finally, again, if you have a need to find any of the slides or resources shared during presentations, this one-stop-shop on the website is a great place to look. We can drop that link for you in the chat one more time, I think, in order for you to easily get there, get access to any of the slides. We will be adding the slides that David Cantrell just shared with us into the slide deck for Day Two, Welcome and Keynote. So, look out for those in the next couple days or so. Those will get added into that deck that's already up there, so you can access those ones as well and get to those great links that he was sharing in the presentation. So again, go ahead, explore those different opportunities there. Hopefully you'll join a concurrent session or two and engage with us in those next couple opportunities. Let us know if you have any questions. We're on the lookout for any needs and I think we've been collecting a lot of the different requests for certificates.

Again, please feel free to e-mail the PROGRESS Center e-mail box at progresscenter@air.org if you need a certificate, you don't think you registered and let us know that. I think many of you probably checked yes in that opportunity in the registration form. So, we've got you all set if you selected yes in the registration form. But reach out if you have any questions or concerns and we'll get you on to the next session. So, we look forward to seeing you at the top of the hour in those concurrent sessions of your choice. Thank you again for a great session this morning, your engagement in the chat, lots of good ideas for staff collaboration, and for all of the different connections there for support as well. So, thank you. Have a good one.