



Prepping for PROGRESS! Adding New Tools to Your Backpack for the Start of School: Day 2 Welcome Session and Stories from the Classroom Panel

Amy Peterson: With that, welcome to Prepping for PROGRESS Day 2, Adding New Tools to Your Backpack or Toolbox for the Start of School. And I want to welcome everyone back who joined us yesterday. Welcome to the new folks joining for the first time this morning. We're excited to have you with us as we kick off this second day of content.

As I mentioned yesterday, this event is being hosted by the PROGRESS Center. The PROGRESS Center really intends to provide information, resources, tools, technical assistance, and services intended to support local educators and leaders in developing and implementing high-quality educational programs for kids from kindergarten through transition age that enable children with disabilities to make progress and meet those challenging goals.

We talked about how we're structured around our knowledge development work, understanding the context of special education in the field, what we can learn from research and policy and experiences from educators and leaders and parents and students to help guide our work.

We also partner with a set of partnership sites, and we have some representation from our partnership sites here with us in the event. But we work with them to really problem-solve this work and learn from them alongside and test out some of the materials and information that we've been sharing across these past two days.

Finally, we have this opportunity for everyone, the materials and resources that are freely available for all of you to really dig in and learn more. We hope you visit our website at promotingprogress.org to explore the tools and resources available, to share those with others that aren't here for the events today, to share the recordings from this session, to share tip sheets we've shared, training modules, all the different resources and tools that are available.

On that website we also try and highlight resources and tools from partners from the OSEP T&D network. That includes our friends at the TIES Center—and we'll have a session in partnership with them around belonging later today. We have resources and tools from the National Center on Intensive Intervention, from CADRE, from IRIS, and others that really help supplement the work we're

doing at the PROGRESS Center with work they are doing to support states and schools and districts and teachers and students across the levels of the system.

So, I encourage you again to visit us at promotingprogress.org. Before we jump into new content, I want to do a recap of some things we learned yesterday if you weren't able to join us. We started with the path to PROGRESS. Tessie did a keynote address that shared about how we can think about developing and implementing high-quality educational programming for students with disabilities. We looked at that bike analogy, about the procedural and substantive and implementation considerations within FAPE.

And then we had two strand opportunities. One was around making connections and ensuring we have a coherent and consistent IEP that starts with the needs and present level statement and connects that to the services we design and deliver and the goals we set for students.

We also had an opportunity to explore how to better prepare, think about preparing in-service and pre-service educators, to really think about promoting progress and leverage tools and resources available, thinking about using a flipped model for professional learning or instruction and course content. A lot of content and conversation in those strand sessions.

We had an exciting time having some networking time and conversation yesterday afternoon and again this morning, to have some time to talk with others. We hope you exchanged some information with peers or had conversations with others in your states or across the levels of the system that helped you to think about those different topics of interest to you.

You might be thinking, where can I get those materials that were shared yesterday and where can I get the materials that we'll be talking about today? You can find all of that information on our event archive and materials page. You'll see an example of what that page looks like up here on the slide, and we'll put a link to that web page in the chat for you so you can access that directly. You can find it at <https://promotingprogress.org/news-events/prepping-progress-event-2022>. When you come to that page, you'll see a layout here that has these expand and collapse features.

For each session across the event, you can expand each of those kind of accordions to access tools and resources available for the sessions.

If you expand that, you'll see a view like this that shows you a little description about the sessions, the session materials, you can access the slides, the PowerPoint slides, for that session, any handouts or associated materials that were used in that session and related tools and resources that are available from that session. You might not have been able to capture every link that went in the chat yesterday during your session, but if you come back to this main landing page, you'll be able to find key links to resources and tools shared in that session.

This is just an example from strand 1 yesterday. This will also be where you can find the recordings for the session after the fact. So if you're interested in—you went to strand 2 yesterday but you really wanted to hear what happened in strand 1 and making connections, you can come back to this page and we will be posting the recordings for those sessions there for you to access so you can then take a look at that after the event as well.

It may take us a little bit of time to get those cleaned up and ready for you. And we want to make sure the front-end part, you don't have all the background information, we'll take out any breaks or conversations that were had in breakout groups so you don't have to sit through some dead time, but we'll get those recordings up and out for you as soon as we can and you'll be able to find them right here on this page.

You'll also be able to find them on our YouTube channel. If you want to follow us along on YouTube, you can do that and that will help you find out when those resources and tools are available. We'll share it out to our social media and share it out to our newsletter and email as well.

If you're thinking, gosh, I can't remember where that link is, it's hard for me to remember that long link, or I didn't take it—track it down, you can find it as well in the toolbar on the top of the PROGRESS Center website.

The PROGRESS Center toolbar at the top says "development, implementation, news and events, resources and tools, training, about and contact." if you go to that "news and events" tab, you'll see there's two drop-downs. One is "what's new" that's where all of the new updates for an upcoming event or webinar or some activity that's happening will be posted. And then underneath that you'll see the "preparing for progress 2022," if you click that it will take you to this landing page for the preparing for progress event archive and materials. So you can find all that easily, available for you right there on the website.

Now, before we really jump into new content for today—I'm excited for the day—I want you to take a second to reflect if you were here yesterday on something you were excited that you learned yesterday and some questions that you still have. So I'll give you a little bit of time to start jotting those down. You can put them on a paper you just want to take note of. If you want to share those in the chat, we can do that. We would love to hear from you.

If you want to just take note on your computer, you can do that, but take a second to reflect on one or two things you heard yesterday that you were excited about that you learned yesterday and some questions that you still have. What more do you want to know? What else could you want to explore a little bit deeper? Take a second to think about what are some things that excited you. I heard a lot of

good conversations yesterday so I'm excited for that.

I'm seeing some learning around flipped classrooms, thinking about IEP goals that best meet students' individualized needs. Love that. How important the PLAAFP statement is. We spent a lot of time in that strand session, if you joined us in that session, really focused on the students' needs and developing a coherent story in our present-level statement to help guide the IEP. Keep those coming.

Please keep reflections going as we keep going forward. But with that, I want to share a little bit about who is going to talk today. This will be a brief introduction and we'll also introduce our panelists because we're excited to have a panel conversation during this session today.

As I mentioned before, I am Amy Peterson. I'm a senior researcher here at American Institutes for Research and lead the universal technical assistance work for the PROGRESS Center. I'm excited again to be joined by Dr. David Emenheiser, who's our project officer for the PROGRESS Center at the Office of Special Education Programs at the Department of Education.

And then we'll also hear from Donna Sacco. And some of you might have heard Donna talk yesterday in the strand 2 session, but Donna is going to help facilitate our panel conversation with our great panel of stakeholders later in the session today.

Donna is a senior TA consultant for AIR and at the PROGRESS Center, she really helps to do some of that intensive partnership work for the center. We're excited to welcome Donna a little bit later on to facilitate our panel conversation and introduce our panelists. I'm going to briefly turn it over to David for a welcome for day 2 of the session.

David Emenheiser: Thanks, Amy. I want to start again today with just another thank you for everyone who's on participating and being part of these discussions. I've popped in and out of as many of these conversations as I could and the stuff that I'm hearing is really rich. And it's exciting to hear your passion, your energy, your expertise being shared with one another. Along those lines, I definitely want to thank the presenters and the facilitators of those discussions yesterday as well as the ones we're going to have later today.

And I know that up next we're going to have a panel and my little addition to the introduction to today and kind of a thought of how to reflect back on yesterday, these go along with the questions that Amy just asked, is I love the name of this event, "new tools for your backpack," because I am a commuter. So I never had a backpack when I went to high school. I'm old enough that was not the trend. I just did the big stack of books under my arm. But as a commuter, I have a backpack. And in my backpack, I have an umbrella and medications and I have the wipes for my glasses, and I have ear buds and, you know, whatever other things that are in there that I don't necessarily need every day, but you never

know when the weather is going to change while you're standing waiting for your bus. And so, you have to have your umbrella ready. And I think of this event, these past few days, yesterday and today, being an opportunity to pack some new things into your backpack so that as you're coming to whatever your role is in the upcoming school year, you're going to be able to pull out something new and, that's really going to be effective because you've had these opportunities to really hear from some experts, you're going to hear more of that today.

You've been able to be in conversations where you've been able to drill down and maybe ask some questions about how does that really work? How do we really do that and what are the challenges with that and being able to make these things, these tools, your own. Because that is really where the strength of our work comes from. So, with that, I would be remiss if I didn't give a specific shout-out and thank you to the progress center team.

Especially Amy and Tessie, who have just really brought —and Mia —brought so much to this event today and yesterday where, at least from my perspective, it's been pretty seamless. And I am not a great Zoomer. So this is just really great work, and I appreciate that so much.

So with that, I'm just going to again encourage you to really just bring all of you to the discussions today, and best —my best wishes for you to have a really great 2022-23 school year. Thanks again.

Amy Peterson: Thanks so much, David. And as David mentioned, we recognize there's lots of moving pieces and logistics with this event. So we wanted to rehash a little bit of some of the basics for the virtual event and reshare the program with you. If you don't have easy access to it, I put it in the chat. That provides you with an overview of all the different sessions we had yesterday but also those that we'll take on today.

And you'll find a QR code and a link in there if you need to register for sessions for the rest of the day, you have time to do that. We encourage you to do that. You can find information about the descriptions for the different sessions as well. So we're excited for digging into this next day of content. Just to go over a little bit of what this day looks like, we're at that general session at 11 am eastern time for you. After this session we'll do a break, and then we'll come back together at 12:40 eastern, that's 11:40 central time, 10:40 mountain time and bright and early still, 9:40 am on the pacific time zone. That will be our first round of concurrent sessions.

After that we'll have another short break and then come back for the second round of concurrent sessions starting at 2 o'clock eastern. That means it's 1 o'clock central time and noon mountain time and back at 11 am on the pacific time zone. That will be the second round of concurrent sessions. And then we'll have a short break and then we will close out at the end of the day with a closing session and wrap-up back with the full group here as well. If you haven't had a chance to register yet for this

session that you're interested in, don't worry. There's still time. You can use that link that I shared in the chat to the program event —event program in order to access all the links to the different sessions for the rest of the day. If you changed your mind and want to try out a different session than the one you originally registered for, that's totally fine. You can definitely still register for another session there, join that session, and that will be great.

We'll really appreciate it. So take some time during the break, if you need to, to register for the sessions for the rest of the day you're interested in. For those concurrent sessions, I mentioned this yesterday, but I wanted to clarify for everyone that those sessions will run two times. So the same four topics you can see on the screen, "belonging," "family engagement" and "partnering with families on the path of progress," "the importance of implementation and fidelity, did we do what we said we would" and "providing a free appropriate public education, lessons from the due process hearing front," all four sessions will occur both at the 12:40 eastern timeframe and then again at the 2 o'clock timeframe. So you can choose two of those four session to attend. If you're interested in more of those sessions than the two, you can watch the recordings for those other sessions after the fact. They will be posted and shared on the event page. Definitely encourage you to join one of those sessions or both of those sessions if your time allows.

You can see the transition for the time zones. I realize I live by my calendar, my calendar reminders and all that. So, the download for when different sessions happen automatically was an assumption for me. I'm not sure everyone also lives by their calendar same way. We want to make sure everyone is clear on what's happening when and what time zone. We know there were some challenges with that yesterday so hopefully this will help clarify some of that. If you missed a session yesterday because of a time zone issue, those were recorded and will be shared after the fact so you can access that content information. If you're on a different time zone, make a note for yourself about when these happen so you make sure you'll get to the session at the time you're interested in.

I mentioned this yesterday but I want to share again that our go-to technical support expert with any questions with technology, session materials, accessing sessions, please reach out to Mia. She has been doing a lot of work behind the scenes to keep this event moving smoothly, and she's our go-to person if you have any challenges or questions. Feel free to email her directly. Her email address is up on the screen and we will put it in the chat, but you can find her at mmamone@air.org. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out to Mia. She'll make sure you get where you need to be.

And I just wanted to feature a couple of the tweets that came in yesterday on the promoting progress 2022 hashtag and encourage people if you are a twitter user to definitely keep those messages coming. We want to challenge you to have even more messages today, sharing what you've learned in these sessions and resources and tools, sharing information that you found useful, and follow along with friends from the event to learn more about what they are hearing and sharing.

Connect with us on Facebook and Twitter at @k12progress and use the hashtag #promotingprogress2022 to keep the conversation going. If you're interested in sharing about, thinking about our goals or key questions to consider when designing your present-level statement, please use that space to share information and resources you're learning across these days.

So excited to turn it to Donna to facilitate this panel conversation because that's really the excitement of the session today. If you have any questions, reach out to us in chat

Donna Sacco: Thanks, Amy. I am so excited. I'm so fortunate to be able to share this session with these panelists to discuss our theme, "It takes a team to promote progress for students with disabilities." These panelists are going to share their perspectives and stories with a focus on what it takes to implement high-quality educational programming that promotes progress for students with disabilities as a team.

So Mia is going to go pin all our guests, but —so I learned by meeting with them that it's best to have them introduce themselves because that becomes awesome. They have so much more to say about what they do than I could ever begin to tell you. But I'll give you a little hint to start.

We have Billy Pickens, a young adult, and he works at the ECAC, Exceptional Children's Assistance Center. We have Nicole Bucka, a parent, and she also is an implementation specialist in Rhode Island. Shari Dukes is Director of Student Services for J.O. Combs Unified School District, Andrea Boykin, Manager of Assistive Technology in the District of Columbia Public Schools and then we have Amy Campbell, a special educator and was the 2020 Washington state teacher of the year.

Now, we're flexible. We are educators. And I'm going to say that Shari and Andrea may have to join us a little bit later. Being in the school districts, Shari's school started three weeks ago and she had an emergency this morning so I'm hoping she can pop in as soon as she can. Same thing with Andrea. She's being called as an expert witness and that was a last-minute thing and she's hoping to be done in time to join us.

So we're going with the flow today. But we have some awesome panelists, the other three, here with us. Mia, let's take down the slide and can we also pin me and Nicole so that we can see who's speaking. Billy, I'm going to ask you to introduce yourself. I got to know Billy when I was a professor at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte, and he would come to my classes and talk about what it's like to be him and his experiences. Billy, give us an introduction.

Billy Pickens: Thank you for your amazing introduction, Donna, and to the PROGRESS center for allowing me this amazing platform. I haven't had a chance to hear all the sessions, but what I'm

hearing so far, I'm definitely going to go back and click on the recording at a later time. But, anyway, hello, everyone. My name is Billy Pickens and I'm the youth outreach coordinator at the Exceptional Children's Assistance Center. That is the parent training and information center for North Carolina.

So they serve families that have children with disabilities from birth to 26, and they help them with IEPs, 504s, anything school-related. But I have the amazing job of helping the youth. And I mentor—we have a youth advisory team, so we do webinars together. We've actually done a webinar with the PROGRESS Center that's on the website, I hope you get a chance to check that out. But we also have a newsletter. And so I mentor youth with disabilities.

So part of the reason I do that is because I, myself, am a person is a disability. I'm totally blind with progressive hearing loss from a rare genetic condition called Norrie Disease, which affects the retinas of eyes and inner ear cells. So I've had that since birth. I have firsthand experience and feel it's my purpose to pass that down to others. I'm definitely excited to give my perspective, and I love the perspective of team effort. Looking forward to sharing my story with you all.

Donna Sacco: You may have heard some of Billy's story in our stories from the classroom yesterday in the opening session. And, if not, we'll put that link in the chat box for his video on stories from the classroom. Next, Nicole, I don't think you're pinned right now, but I see you there, Nicole Bucka. Go ahead and introduce yourself.

Nicole Bucka: Hi. I'm Nicole Bucka. I'm a parent of two children with IEPs for autism spectrum disorders and some related disabilities. One of my sons is intellectually disabled and the other son has significant anxiety and some of the common comorbidities that come with a spectrum disorder. As a parent—well, I was an educator, special educator, before I had children with disabilities—it's been a very interesting evolution for me to experience it on the other side of the table, even though we're all on the same table, but it's been—I've learned a lot and I just recently have even an expanded into running for the school board in my community because that's how much I feel that the lens of children with disabilities is not really a focal point systematically. So I look forward to sharing my reflections with you today. Thank you.

Donna Sacco: Thanks, Nicole. And next we have Amy Campbell. If you could introduce yourself, Amy.

Amy Campbell: Thanks, Donna. So my name is Amy Campbell. My pronouns are she/her and I want to give a super brief visual description of myself for participants. I'm a white woman with brown straight hair, about shoulder length. I have purple rimmed glasses and a slightly larger than average nose, and I'm — I'm joining you from Vancouver, but I teach in Washington. And this is my 15th year as a special education teacher serving students with moderate to profound disabilities.

My job has changed a lot over those 15 years in part because of the—what I'm doing but then the investment also of the community I work with, my families, my students, the administrators, other educators. So when I first started teaching, it was a very self-contained program, and now we do—I would consider us an inclusion program, but we call ourselves something a little bit different. Programs end up with names. So I don't have my students. I share students in the school. They're our students. And it's a fabulous experience.

My work around inclusion brought me recognition in 2020 as the state teacher of the year, and I got to spend the last few years advocating around inclusion practice. And I've gotten a lot of fun experiences that helped me understand the impacts we can have at a variety of levels. Nicole, I love that you're running for school board because they're all the way—I don't even want to say top and bottom because there isn't a top and bottom. It's lateral. It should all be equal contribution, family and policy, community. We're all making an impact. So that's me.

Donna Sacco: While you're talking about that, you were just invited by the state to—do you want to talk about your work in attracting and retaining special educators and what the state invited you to work on?

Amy Campbell: Oh, dear. Which project—so I was just—I do a lot of things. I was recently appointed by the governor to be on the professional educators' standards board which—

Donna Sacco: That's what I'm talking about.

Amy Campbell: That's just been amazing. And a passion of mine. How do we bring this special education perspective into the decision making around teacher credentialing? And so how do we bring that into the conversation, what do we need all educators to be able to understand to be able to serve all students? And so I went to my first PESB [Professional Educator Standards Board] meeting with the state of Washington and it was, it was very exciting.

Donna Sacco: That's so important, right? It's nice to see all that extra work you're doing there. I'm going to turn to Billy for a second, because he was so instrumental when I was teaching pre-service teachers at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte. He would come to all my classes and tell his story. And one of the things that really stuck with me was that he would write letters to his teachers. I think it started, was it in middle school or high school, Billy?

Billy Pickens: Started in middle school.

Donna Sacco:—in middle school to say what he needed. Tell us about that, and tell us a little bit about, you know, how you progressed as a student in learning about advocating for yourself and how

you're helping other students today.

Billy Pickens: Absolutely. So a little bit of my back story. I chose to go to a public school. I was at a mainstream classroom from kindergarten through 12th grade. However, first few years of my schooling, I was also getting help from the TVI, which stands for teacher of the visually impaired. So I go to the TVI room and learn braille and would learn “O and M” skills, which stands for orientation and mobility. I started that in preschool. But I would learn how to use a cane and navigate hallways and navigate outside independently. I was learning all these things. But I think one of the things that early on, naturally, I didn't focus on—and I knew how to— was to share my disability with others and talk to people.

But when it came to asking for what I need, I wasn't really a conversational person, so I wasn't always out there expressing my needs or talking to my teachers. I let my teachers and parents do it for me because that was the easiest route. I didn't go to my IEP meetings at that point. In elementary school, this really worked. It wasn't really a huge issue in elementary school. But then I got to middle school and there really began, as the work got harder, especially in certain subjects like math, which is a very visual subject, it really became difficult because my teachers and parents were communicating, but there was no communication with me specifically.

And at the time I didn't always know what I needed, but at least I knew what may have worked for me at that time. But being that I wasn't conversational or didn't want to address it, I didn't say anything. It really led to a big communication breakdown where it got to the point where my parents were ready to remove me from public school and put me in the school for the blind. I was pretty upset about that. I don't want to leave my friends. I have all these people I've met here.

So one of my teachers actually stood up for me—one of the things you said, it really stuck with me—my math teacher, he told my mom – I wasn't in the meeting to witness this, but apparently, he told my mom that she was basically keeping me from succeeding by not allowing me to have a voice. And it really made me realize the importance of my voice and importance of speaking up.

And so when I was in 7th grade –got through that year. When I was in 7th grade, my VI teacher started mentioning advocacy – I'd never even heard the word before– and said you need to start speaking up for yourself with your teachers. And I said I'm not really someone who likes to verbally speak up all the time.

He suggested, you should write a letter. And so I started writing letters to my teachers, I started talking about my accommodations and what I needed. But, most importantly, I said if you have a question about me, it's important that my parents are involved, it's important that my teachers are involved. Let's work together directly to come up with solutions.

And it really made teachers feel comfortable communicating with me and made me have a one-on-one relationship with teachers which really helped them really show me that they cared and helped us work together to find solutions. And that worked for me. So I wrote letters through high school and college and it was something that really helped me have that one-on-one communications with teachers and feel comfortable expressing my needs and accommodations.

Donna Sacco: Thanks, Billy. It makes me think –and, Nicole, thinking about your boys and the kind of inspiration that perhaps, at least with one of your students I think one of my biggest regrets as a teacher was that perhaps I didn't help students speak up for themselves as much as they could. And I wonder with your kiddos, because you –before you had children, you were an educator, and now you're a parent of two boys with disabilities. And how is that for you in terms of helping them to being self-advocates?

Nicole Bucka: I think, similar to what Billy was describing, my older son is typically –previously had been in public schools and he had been in inclusion general education classroom all day long, and similar to Billy, he wasn't feeling ready to advocate for himself. Every year I would ask him to come, every year I would encourage it.

I did want to share with you that, similar to Billy, before my son felt ready to advocate, which he started recently, but he's only going into ninth grade, I used to do –and I just dropped the link in the chat – I used to do an “All About Ethan.” That's his name. I'm comfortable sharing his name. And I used to do this because I think one of the challenges that –I was previously a high school special educator, but I didn't realize as a parent how incredibly challenging it is for students who have behavioral needs, behavioral-type disabilities and social-type disabilities, to have seven different teachers all day long who have all different expectations often unstated.

So my son– imagine someone who has trouble with social cues but has to change socially every 50 minutes, that's just the adults not even the peers–so like many kids on the spectrum, he started to develop a lot of anxiety and behaviors that resulted from that fight-or-flight experience. So I would ask for my son's input on this one-pager, front and back, which is a lot, and I would say to him, "What picture do you want to put? What strengths do you want me to tell your teachers about you?" and then I would share this.

I did find it really helpful. It was helpful. It was still a unique challenge to have to support, to be in an environment that I think is –presents challenges for both the student and the adults to meet the kids' needs like they want to, but it's a uniquely challenging environment. The other thing I would say about that would be that now he's in a smaller setting, a smaller program, that is created for behavioral reasons. Even though he's very intelligent, very similar to Billy's parents, I had to make a decision. And

he's doing a lot better, because I think that sometimes the team—the team has to also acknowledge when they can't meet the needs. So there's a need for something. We tried everything we could, and it can't be accommodated. We need to actually think about placement, we need to think about modifications.

For my younger son, he's nonverbal. So I think the advocating for himself is very, very different. I think you can see that. Hopefully you can. One example is I would say my son speaks with Proloquo2Go, an app used to speak. And I would say that one of the things we've done -- first of all, collaboration and wrap-around with his home-based providers is, like, bar none, the most important thing. School and home working together is so important.

Whenever Owen presents with a behavior, like something's happening because he's trying to say "I don't want do this," then we have to work together with the speech provider to say, okay, we got to show Owen on the app how to say "I don't want to do this," and then, behaviorally, we have to reinforce that no matter what so he learns the functional communication. Even though you don't want to give him that choice, right?

But even beyond that, we need to train his peers. And I find that training his peers trains the general education teachers as well. What I put in the chat, because it's something the teachers loved and the staff, my team, appreciated, was instead of Valentine's Day cards this year, I wrote a book with Owen, and the book "All About my Friend Who has Autism." And what I really liked was that this book will go home. The school put it on the projector and read it with the class. And then they brought the book home and they read it with their parents.

So very similar to Amy, who I know wants to talk, I have come to learn the importance of how much the whole community needs to learn these things. And I try to—part of my being on the school board is trying to build the awareness. When I go to the library with my son and your kids stare at him because they don't understand and you teach them to turn away and walk away, that's really hurtful. And so I'm trying to, rather than focus on telling people it's hurtful, I'm trying to focus on what would be what I want to see. Okay. I'll stop. Thanks.

Donna Sacco: I love you so much. And, Amy, you know, I'm sure Amy has a lot to say about this because if you see her stories from the classroom, it's about that. How do you communicate with the families and keep—it's an equity issue about making sure that all students connect and are heard. Amy, I'm going to pass it to you. I'm sure you have some things to say.

Amy Campbell: To all of this, it just—it resonates. I think that for me, as I was listening around, first of all, the advocacy, and I think about the ways that as I've—as I've moved to more inclusive model, it's really forced me to consider, especially for students with significant disabilities, non-speaking students

who are using AAC devices, how am I aligning their reading and writing and math IEP goals to the common core? When I look at what we're teaching students in the general education setting, we're teaching them, especially at the earlier grades, but there's a thread throughout the common core state standards around narrative writing.

When we think about writing narratives, we're thinking about writing our own stories, telling our stories, talking about ourselves, and I think—so that's been really powerful for me, and then aligning that, again, wrapping with that speech language pathologist, using the AAC devices to help students understand, all students, how to use this device to tell about your experience.

And we've been using a few methods—because I absolutely agree, Nicole, we need to demystify the AAC devices and need to create this, these spaces where they're just seen as clear as common communication. So in my program, how do I think, Mrs. Campbell's classroom is just another classroom. So we do social skills. I lead social skills groups, game-playing and other social skills, where students from general education classrooms come in and receive similar instruction in social skills or these are students who haven't necessarily been identified, but they get an opportunity to come have a lesson in my room, which is really them getting to learn how to play maybe a board game like Cariboo with a student who is non-speaking using the AAC devices.

We're all practicing together on AAC devices, and kids are fast and fluent. They learn those patterns to find words quickly. And it's so validating for students who use these devices to see them being used by a number—like this voice is—a lot of people are using it, and they can communicate with peers. And I think about how we're building in as communities; I think a lot of people ask where do we start with inclusion? And I'm excited about social-emotional learning in classrooms and community circles and the ways we ask students to share experiences.

Because absolutely we need individuals with disabilities to be able advocate for themselves and tell about what they need to be successful, but I would argue that all students in schools will benefit from the opportunity to be able to contribute to the community, share their experiences, and this is how we're going to build empathy, I think, from our educators and other students. The more I hear from students, the more I'm able to develop my empathy. So I think starting early. In the building where I work, we do community circles in the morning and the students get to talk about their zone of regulation. I'm feeling red, I'm feeling yellow, I'm green and ready, I'm blue and tired.

So my students -- sorry, I'm -- I think all of our students are learning the language of sharing and advocating and hearing, not just saying it, but hearing other people. And I think how do we start to build those social experiences and learn about narrative telling and build that AAC.

Donna Sacco: And providing the opportunities. I'm sorry that Andrea isn't here with us yet. So I'm

hoping she does join us. But we've had some questions in the chat, and I want to address those as well.

So one of the things that Billy included me in when he was graduating from the university was person-centered planning. And one of the questions we had -- let me see where it is -- David Donnelly was asking about what you would suggest for getting students to self-advocate. And I know one thing that, Billy, you might be able to talk about is your group of students and, actually, they talk about student-led IEPs. They're having another session. Maybe you could do a little talking about how you would suggest students' self-advocate but also the work you do with students right now in your group, in your youth group

Billy Pickens: Absolutely. So I think, like everyone mentioned, I think it's definitely important to start as early as possible. And one thing I've learned, even though it took me a while to start, I started at the right time, but it took me a while to start, but it really impresses me how much -- in the work that I do, I work with young people who start as early as five or six, contributing to their IEP in some way, even if it's going and sitting in the room and just hearing what's said.

So I think it's really awesome to see that happening. It's important to start as early as possible. Even if you don't know everything, like Amy was saying, how are you feeling today? What will help you? What will help you get to where you need to go and just making them feel in control. That's one thing that I really tried to express to my youth on the team.

We get together, and one thing I love is that we plan webinars, we plan all these events, we plan all of these great things. But the one thing I care most about is them. So any time we get together, the first thing that's on our agenda is a welcoming catch-up. It's amazing how much they go through during high school. I feel like I'm not that far removed from high school. I kind of feel old hearing their stories.

But it's really amazing to get to know them and have people that may come in, like I don't know if I'm going to be part of this, but they realize they have a voice and their voice matters and they speak up and share their heart and story and what really matters to them. So I really try to give them as much control as possible and expressing how they feel and what they want for their life and really encouraging them and making them feel not intimidated but that they have the space to do that. That's really important. But now that I've mentioned the person-centered planning, person-centered planning is another great way.

And it's something that -- my mom also works part of that. She makes sure that I need to mention that it's -- we're apart of the East Carolina University and the Exceptional Children's Assistance Center. And so what happens is there are specialists at East Carolina University that can actually come out throughout the state and they can focus on it. It's person-centered. It's all about the person. So I did it



in college. And what it is, is a gathering of students, friends, family, anyone that matters to that person, and they can come together and they can come up with strengths, come up with challenges, and they can form a plan as to how that student can proceed going forward, how that individual can proceed going forward in life, whether it's career or life choices.

Especially after the IEP expires after high school—also the person-centered is more personal and focuses not only what you do as a career, educationally, but in life. For example, I really have been into podcasting. So one of the things that my person-centered planning focused on was how to get me an internship at a radio station. And it just so happens that one of my friends who was there actually knew someone who worked at Seacrest studios at the children's hospital, so I was able to get an internship there. It's awesome when you bring people together.

To go back to the word "teamwork" and really connecting with others, and really you never know who you might meet through those connections. Yes, all of these institutions are important and you shouldn't shy away from getting help from voc rehab or whoever, but to me the most important thing to me, it's connections and finding people in those fields. I know that's a lot. But --

Donna Sacco: Billy, Amy has been putting links in because we do have the webinar that y'all did on student-led IEPs, where the students lead the webinar. We have that linked on our website. Amy also put in a link for person-centered planning. Yeah, please, Nicole, piggyback on what Billy just said.

Nicole Bucka: I want to say a couple things that Billy said that really resonated with me when I think about my children. The first thing that I took away was the importance of empowering them and empowering their voice.

So just as an example, when I had spoken to you a little bit ago about how my son, who is nonverbal and speaks with an app, might be presenting with a behavior, some approaches would be like, well, we need to stop that behavior. No, our approach is, okay, we got to empower that voice. What's happening is his voice is not empowered, so we have to give him of way to say that, which is essentially what Billy is also saying, people have to recognize that my voice and pushing me to advocate matters.

I would say also that from my nonverbal son, that it also resonates to his IEP in the sense that I tried to encourage, even as young as preschool and kindergarten, to start the IEP with a transition plan in mind. Which I have to tell you, people were like deer in headlights. You want to talk transition in preschool? I'm like, okay, so realistically my son has been in speech therapy and it's clear that speaking in the traditional way is not going to happen. So we were, like, there's no shortage of things we could do specially designed instruction on. There's plenty. So how are we going to prioritize what we work on?

So my husband and I would say this is —we believe Owen would want supervised, but as independent as possible, living. So far we know he loves music. He loves construction, which is interesting. He's really good at gross motor things but really struggles with x, y, z and we would try to say, okay, so from the standpoint of the general education curriculum and inclusion and functional skills, what is in the proximity right now to work on.

And I think the way that I was responded to says to me that we don't do that a lot with kids with significant needs. So I would say that to me that was me helping him have a voice. And as he grows --

Donna Sacco: You know, you were saying a couple of things that really resonated, that all behavior is communication. So how important that is. If you can't communicate—if we're taking students means of communication away by not utilizing them, then they're going to have behaviors, right? And I wanted to say the transition — so important —because there's also the transition from moving from preschool to elementary, elementary to middle, middle to high school.

And I had a student who was using Proloquo2Go who did -- all fifth graders said a few words as they were graduating, their graduation, and he wrote his — I have actually two students who used it. They wrote their graduation speech, three minutes, on their Proloquo2Go, and it was powerful for the whole school. The school had learned to communicate with them. Amy, I think you probably are — I know you work with students who are nonverbal all the time, and that connection is so important. I had a feeling you wanted to say something.

Nicole Bucka: Can I just say one thing that you said, Donna? I also think we tend to think about the problem behaviors with our nonverbal students. Whereas I'm also pointing out that the things he clearly enjoys is a behavioral that says, if I had a voice, or when I do, I will tell you I like this.

And so I'm always watching for those things, too. So, for example, he loves music. He always has. Right? When we talk inclusion—and he also like sports. Gross motor. When we talk inclusion, I'm immediately, like, if he had voice, which he kind of does he likes music and he likes gross motor. That's where we should be putting him with peers. Okay. I'm done.

Donna Sacco: Look at the comment. I want you to see the comment. "I'd love to know how Nicole was able to help her son's teachers understand that SDI is much more than accommodations and modifications, that it's about instruction. How did she do that?"

Nicole Bucka: You know, I think I've been a change agent. I don't think I've always been a very liked, at sometimes, change agent. But, I hope, I believe, that after I move on from teams to move to next teams, what I hope people say about me, what I believe they say, is that I didn't always like what we were, where we were going. I didn't always agree, but after I tried it, I think I understood better what

she was trying to do.

And I think from my standpoint, I think I've gotten better at articulating. Like sometimes I think in the past I just sort of came in like a bulldozer of, I'm only about my child, and now I've really tried to understand a little bit more about where other people might not be getting it. That just took me some years of understanding the culture my kids are in. That's also part of why I'm a school board member, because I think the culture that I am in is run locally, and I want to see a culture change.

It's not the fault of the adults. Nobody's bad. My system is not bad. The educators aren't bad. But my kids are in it now so I don't have a decade for us to change pre-service. I just have to say—and, again, I think I've gotten a lot better at starting from him, really trying to be like, okay, let's focus on Owen, and I've just gotten better.

But you're right. When I describe you —starting from the end in mind wasn't their process. Every team member came to the table with their own thoughts on what we were going to work on, they were all disjointed and they didn't really have meaningful application in the community. So it's been a big change.

Donna Sacco: I just want say, we have a three-minute warning, and I need a minute to put people out so they know what's happening for the rest of the day. But, Amy, I know you're connecting with parents as well, and maybe you have some last words real quickly to give —

Amy Campbell: Yes.

Donna Sacco: -- to encourage that SDI work and --

Amy Campbell: I totally agree with Nicole, starting with the end in mind. I don't know if I have enough time. I had a parent come to me five, six years ago, and they said they wanted their significantly disabled son, multiply impacted, to go to college. And it really struck me. I was glad they started with this conversation as a third grader, but it forced me to really look at what would it take for him to go to college and start to align those IEP goals.

I looked at the program, yes, the program, and there's a fact sheet that said he needed to be able to use a calculator and he needed to be able to manage his schedule and—and suddenly we were writing math goals and reading goals and writing goals because we knew it would take him many years to get in these skills. And he's already making significant progress. And it's — I think being able to hear that and work collaboratively with parents and not be afraid to ask and let my own perceptions or barriers into fear with we can be working on. Because really the skills we added to the IEP weren't going to ever hurt him; they were going to build for him.

Donna Sacco: Reminding us of that question that we brought about yesterday, what do we want for our students? What do we want for them? And Billy's video is all about high expectations. And that's another thing, like whoa, you know? There's hope, you can have high expectations. And include families and students in it.

Guys, you all are amazing. I wish we had another hour to speak to you. This has just been great to hear from you, I'm sure you have so much more to share. But I'm going to go back to the slides, say thank you, thank you, thank you so much. And read the comments in the chat, because there's so many kind comments to all of you. We're going to go back to the slides just so that I can –Mia–let's see.

Amy Peterson: Donna, let's skip going back to the slides, because we only have two minutes left, but I want to plug for people, one, Donna has shared a number of folks –both Billy and Amy have Stories from the Classroom videos. We will put a link to that in there. It's on that landing page, too, if you want to access those. Nicole was actually in one of the webinars last year with some of the members of her son's IEP team and you can hear her there. Maybe we need to reconvene this group again for a longer conversation because I could listen to them forever.

Thank you all for your presentation and sharing. I see lots of shout-outs going out in the chat. I want to remind you two things, one, our next round of concurrent sessions will start in 40 minutes. So at 12:40 eastern, 11:40 central, 10:40 mountain and 9:40 pacific. And that link to all of those resources where you can find all of that material for the session events is also there, all of the archive. We will post this panel conversation there as well for you. We'll also post it as just the panel conversation, so you don't have to listen to me talk about the basics of the event.

So definitely refer back to that, go back there, we'll share these stories and maybe we're going to reconvene this group again in the future to have even more conversation, because I really wish we could have heard from Shari and Andrea, too. We have to go with the roll, like Donna said. But thank you guys so much for sharing. Thank you all for attending.

See you back in your sessions in 40 minutes. So select one of those concurrent sessions you're looking for. So thank you so much and we'll look forward to seeing you later.