Using Technology to Support Teaching and Learning

BILL EAST: Hello. I'm Bill East, executive director of the National Association of State Directors of Special Education, or NASDSE. I want to welcome you to NASDSE's 2010-2011 Professional Development Series. Speaking for Bambi Lockland, NASDSE's president, and the board of directors, we want thank the many states that are participating in our series this year.

I also want to thank Pennsylvania's State Director of Special Education, John Thomasini, and James Palmiero, Director of the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network, or PaTTAN, for making it possible for NASDSE to bring this conference to you from WQED studio in Pittsburgh.

The coordinator for the NASDSE 2010-2011 Professional Development Series is Christine Cashman. The title of today's conference is Using Technology to Support Teaching and Learning. This conference will feature selected resources that are available today, right now, and most are almost free. They will have, if you have access to a computer and to the Internet, then resources are there for you.

Now I am pleased to introduce our speakers for this conference. We have three of them. First, let me introduce Dr. Steven Luke. Steve will take us through a national focus and look at the technical assistance and dissemination network from the US Department of Education.

He will also focus on some social media for education purposes. Steve is the director of the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities at the Academy for Education Development, and he's just embarked on a new job. He may want to tell you about that, if he has time. Steve is an experienced researcher in education psychology and sociology.

He has held research and teaching appointments at Harvard, MIT, Yale, Boston University, Cornell, to mention a few, and there are others. Steve's doctorate is in education from Harvard University. Welcome to the conference, Steve.

STEVE LUKE: Thank you, Bill.

BILL EAST: And to my immediate left is Dr. Joanne Cashman. Joanne will talk about the IDEA partnership.

That is a major project that we have at NASDSE, and she will tell us all about what that is. And then she will tell us about some resources that have been created there, and how to use them. Joanne is the director of the IDEA partnership at NASDSE, and where she works with a staff creating and leading our work that you've heard about before on one of these conferences, Communities of Practice.

We did a whole conference on that a couple of years ago. Prior to her work at NASDSE, she worked as a general education teacher, a special education teacher, a local director of special education, a building principal, a state consultant, and she's held many leadership roles in national and state and local organizations. Joanne has a doctorate in special education from George Washington University. Welcome, Joanne.

JOANNE CASHMAN: Thank you, Bill.

BILL EAST: And our third presenter is Dr. Phoebe Gillespie. Phoebe will talk about another project at NASDSE, the Personnel Improvement Center. That center works with the recruitment and retention of special education and related services personnel. Phoebe is the director of the Personnel Improvement Center, and she manages technical assistance services to states, and also coordinates the work with National Dissemination activities with national organizations, national centers focused on teacher quality.

She has worked in the special ed field for a number of years, starting off as a paraprofessional, then a K-12 classroom teacher, an early intervention specialist, an education director at a day treatment center, and also work in high school as a program administrator. Prior to working at NASDSE, she came to us from the Council for Exceptional Children where she worked with a program called the Profession's Clearinghouse.

Many of you may be familiar with that project that was operational a few years ago. Phoebe holds a doctorate from the College of William and Mary in Educational Policy Planning and Leadership. Phoebe, welcome to our conference.

PHOEBE GILLESPIE: Thanks, Bill.

BILL EAST: Okay. We're going to get right into the conference because we have a lot of content to cover today, and we're going to start with Steve Luke.

STEVE LUKE: Thank you, Bill. And again, thank you for having me on behalf of my colleagues at AED and the National Dissemination Center, very happy to participate. What I'd like to be able to do today is to provide a general overview of some of the resources within the OSEP Technical Assistance and Dissemination Network. It's a network funded out of the US Department of Education. And I'll also have an opportunity to talk a little bit about how we also have been leveraging some social media to access professional development opportunities. So I thought I'd start off with, not the last slide, pardon me. Okay.

The first thing I'd like to start off with is for to access this PowerPoint that I'm showing now, I've loaded this up to a service social media site called slideshare.net. The URL is here on the screen for you to access. You'll be able to, one nice thing about this platform is that you're able to download this PowerPoint yourself. You can add

some comments and let us know what you think of the resources here, add your own resources as well. You could share from this platform. You can share on Twitter, Facebook, your own blog. You can embed.

You can take some code from this platform and embed it on your own website, either your school website or State Department of Education website. So it's a very versatile tool, and feel free to share as you like. What I'm going to do is talk briefly about the OSEP Technical Assistance and Dissemination Network, provide a little bit of framework about, in which we all work. I'll talk specifically about some resources within the OSEP, TA&D Network to provide professional development. There's quite a bit of information and resources, including information we'll hear about more in depth from both Joanne and Phoebe.

And then I'll talk a little bit about what a lot of people are calling now learning media, or social media, to help promote professional development in the field. So first, the TA&D network. This is sort of a schematic of the US Department of Education. You can see at the very top the office of the secretary that's held by Arnie Duncan. And then there are a number of offices within the department. The one I've highlighted here in red is called OSERS, special education rehabilitative services.

And then with OSERS there are a number of offices as well, including OSEP, which is the Office of Special Education Programs. And one of the initiatives within OSEP is to fund a network of somewhere between 40 and 50 centers that operate both nationally and regionally to support information and resources to help with the care and education of children with disabilities. So you can see here there's a collection of some of those centers.

And there's a URL here that will bring you to a place where you can download what we call in the field, the placemat, so that you can find out contact information and a little more about each of the projects that are part of the OSEP TA&D network. So now let me just jump right away into some of the resources within the OSEP TA&D network that have been designed to provide professional development opportunities. I'm not going to look at any of these particular sites in detail.

I just wanted to make sure that people are aware that they're available and the type of information that one can find there. And then, as I mentioned, Joanne and Phoebe will be able to take us a little bit deeper on some of this work. So there's lot of support out there that OSEP has sort of in a strategic way funded centers to work on specific topical areas.

So there's one center called the Equity Alliance that deals with issues of access and equity to education. And they have designed a number of webinars to support professional development. And you can see here there's a listing of some of those, some of their recent webinars. And within each of the sites in the TA&D network, you would be able to sign up to receive frequent mailings. So they will alert you to when they have new professional development opportunities to view.

There's also a center called The Center on Instruction, which provides a very rich database of evidence-based approaches to all kinds of academic areas and also behavioral areas. One can find supports around reading and math, as well as specifically around special education. And they host a number of professional development events, including some webinars and live activities that people can participate in. And here is just a schematic of some of the topical areas that one can find supports on within The Center on Instruction. There's also a center called the NIMA Center, which is established to support such things as a universal design for learning.

And one of their strong focuses is on accessibility of information for all students. There's a lot of information that they have recently provided to our field around effective approaches to providing accessible education to students. And they have, at this link here, there's a series of presentations that will help sort of provide some of those supports.

Another hot topic in the field is response to intervention. We've been hearing a lot about that in our circles over the last number of years, and it's an approach that has sort of emerged from within the special education arena that has seen broader adoption across general education platforms. There are a lot of schools and districts that are moving to a response to intervention model, and it's one of those types of transformations that I feel has an opportunity to really alter, fundamentally alter for the improvement of all, education of all students.

And there's a lot of support that the RTI Center has developed, including blogs and webinars and other sorts of presentations. They'll bring in experts in the field to talk with you about different ways to implement and considerations for implementing RTI in your school. In the field of special education, there is also the need to have appropriate dispute resolutions between schools and parents. There's a center that's funded to do exactly that, and they have provided a series of trainings that people can access to assist with these needs.

As one can imagine, there's a strong interest in technology across the field, and there's a center that's funded to support, provide assistance and information around assistive technology to support students, families and students in education. And there's a series of PowerPoints from this center to support those needs. And again, I realize I'm sort of rushing through this list, but again, it's not my intention to explore any of these in any detail, but I just want to alert people to some of these very useful resources.

Another one of my favorite sites, and has been for some time, is the Reading Rocket site. This is a center that's funded to promote evidence-based practices around reading instruction and literacy. And they have a series of webcasts, blog entries, and other presentations to support literacy for students.

There's a center called the National Center in Educational Outcomes, that's designed to provide trainings and presentations to support people around assessment, including assessment, alternative assessments, and modifications of assessment for students with disabilities, and accommodations that some of these students may need to fully demonstrate their knowledge.

Early childhood is well-represented in the network as well. There are a number of funded centers, including NECTAC, The National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center, that is set up to provide professional development around early childhood issues.

And The National Center for Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports is another school-wide approach that leverages a tiered approach to behavior in schools, and there are a number of videos here. And they've recently designed, redesigned their website and have lots of useful materials to support behavior.

The National Parent Technical Assistance Center is, sits as a national center that also has as part of its network, a series of six regional parent centers, and there are a lot of activities, professional development activities that link parents to schools and provide supports around issues that parents may have and families may have to approaching schools and working cooperatively with schools.

Another center that's set up to support technology in education is known as CITEd. They have a number of webinars archived on their website, and they will walk you through a lot of different technologies that teachers can use to implement in their classrooms to support children with disabilities. As you can see, there are a number of funded centers.

As I mentioned, and the fact is, I'm not showing all of them today, but again, just to give you a broad, sort of overview of some of the supports available through this network and these, most of these sites have information that they have gone through the work of looking for the best evidence-based approaches to working around a lot of these issues.

The National High School Center is one of these centers. They have been funded to support secondary school transition as well into the workforce, and to post-secondary activities, and there's a number of webinars that they've designed to support adolescent literacy and other sort of issues related to secondary school.

A national professional development center on inclusion has also been established. This is another early childhood initiative. I'm sorry, this is a project that is connected to another early child initiative called Connect. This is based at the University of North Carolina, and both of these projects have a number of useful presentations to support professional development in early childhood and inclusion.

There is a national drop-out prevention center that works closely with the national high school center and other centers as well to provide supports around retaining students and recovering students who have dropped out of school. And they have a series of videos and PowerPoint presentations as part of the work to support topics in this area.

We're going to learn a little bit more about the IRA Center when Joanne walks through her presentation, but the IRA Center as done a really good job of producing a number of modules designed to support professional development across a number of key areas. And initially this center was set up to support training and teacher training programs at university settings, but, Phoebe, I know that that the center is also now working with a lot of states to support their professional development activities.

PHOEBE GILLESPIE: Well, not a lot of states, Steve, but they're branching out into that area. We at the personnel improvement center have had requests from states to help them provide for their local school districts some high-quality professional development. Instead of reinventing the wheel, why not take the materials that the IRA Center has prepared because they are research based around what is the appropriate instruction, and use them for veteran teachers as well as emerging teachers?

STEVE LUKE: Great. Well, it's a wonderful resource. I've got a screen shot here of a way that one can interact with their site. They have done a good job of setting up across different topic areas, some modules. There are different materials that they've produced that include podcasts, information briefs.

They have some activities set up, and you can interface with their website to decide on which topical areas of interest to you and which of these materials you may be interested in. So here's an example of a search for all of their podcasts, and you can see there's a fair number of them. And these are all freely available through their website.

Another one of my favorite sites, in addition to Reading Rockets, which has been a long-time favorite, is a new site, probably the newest site to the network, and that's The Learning Port from the IDEA partnership. And Joanne is going to walk us through that in a little more detail, but I think it's one of the stronger efforts in our field to consolidate and compile a lot of resources from across, not only the TA&D network, but beyond as well.

And then finally, I thought I'd close this segment by just walking briefly through some of the sports on the National Dissemination Center's site. This is a site, our center has been designed to serve information to parents, families, and educators about the law IDEA, as well as to provide information generally to parents and teachers around effective approaches to caring for and educating children with disabilities. On our site, one of the more popular professional development offerings is one that's related to building the legacy, and this walks people through the latest iteration of the IDEA, which was reauthorized in 2004.

And we have developed a series of modules that are all downloadable from our website, and walk you through some of the changes in the law related to some of these key topic areas. So feel free to browse and download these presentations as you see fit. These presentations were also developed with training in mind so that individuals from school districts and states can download these modules and then take them on the road to do some professional development training with these in hand.

So I encourage you all to take a look at that. I showed you at the beginning that I've shared this presentation on SlideShare. If you go to slideshare.net/niche, you would also be able to access other presentations that we have provided over the last couple years, and they're all downloadable and sharable from that platform. So I have about 20 minutes left to talk a little bit more about what I'm calling learning media.

And note that I could've called this social media, and in the past, in fact, I have given a presentation like this where I have called it social media. But in some ways, I think we're seeing that schools, districts, in some states have sort of shied away from leveraging social media because of perhaps a false impression that people would be wasting time talking to their friends and sharing pictures back and forth.

While that's certainly something that's part of the social media experience, we also understand that these tools can be leveraged to great effect to promote learning. And I'm going to talk a little bit about how these tools can be leveraged, and are being leveraged, to promote professional development for educators. And I want to start by saying that we see social media and learning media as more than just a fad. It's here.

It's here to stay. And it's transforming the way we communicate. And it's something that a lot of people are asking as they sort of begin to learn about it, is it going to be worth their investment? What's the ROI, the return on investment? Well, the question I might ask is what's the risk of ignoring it? And I think if we're to be teaching our kids 21st century skills, then these are some of the tools that they will be using as part of their own experiences moving forward in their own personal, professional lives.

So it might be a good idea to understand the power of these tools, not only for professional development, but for leveraging across education more broadly. And, Joanne, you may have heard of the Facebook.

JOANNE CASHMAN: I've heard of that a few, just a few times, Steve.

STEVE LUKE: Okay. Well, Facebook is a tool that we see gaining more and more traction within our own field. Why use it? Well, it's a good question. Why would we use Facebook? Well, one of the reasons is that, first of all, look at all the people that are there, and there's at the moment over 400 million people are engaged with Facebook. In fact, half of these people log on to their accounts every day. And we might ask, how many people are coming to your website every day?

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These people, they're also, those people that do log in every day often will log on more than once a day, and often on average, four times a day. So people are very active with this platform. So those are impressive numbers, but what does that really mean to us? Well, for one thing, this has basically launched Facebook as the most popular website in the US, bigger than Google.

And you might ask the question, well, aren't they just, aren't these people just sort of communicating with their friends and family? Well, in fact, that's part of what Facebook is good for, but there's a lot more that Facebook can be leveraged for. They're doing a lot more than that. They're also sharing to great effect lots of information. In fact, five billion pieces of information, content, web links, news stories, blog posts, notes, etc., shared each week.

In fact, Facebook is recently overtaking Google as the top source of traffic to major news and entertainment sites. So for those who have a Facebook site, Facebook profile, no doubt you have seen something posted by a friend that you have followed a link to a news story or a video that's now becoming part of your information resource for your personal and professional lives.

Besides, everybody's doing it, and it's kind of fun to participate in. I've just grabbed a couple screen shots from a number of states that currently have a presence on Facebook. Here's Ohio. Here's South Carolina. Iowa, Arizona, Minnesota, Indiana, Georgia, Massachusetts, and Michigan. There's, so we're seeing more and more, here's Maryland, more and more states with, over time are realizing that this is a very powerful way for them to communicate and connect to a broad audience of not only the teachers and administrators with their own states, but also with the general public and with families. And there's a lot of activity and engagement that can take place on this platform.

JOANNE CASHMAN: Steve, we see that as more and more states are taking those first steps to open up these links to social networking, we also know that states, for quite a long time, have, and many states still have, a number of restrictions on just how open that can be because in many of the social media sites, actively using that and using it in a learning format, as you've described, Steve, requires changing some of the habits of interacting, kind of unlearning the habit of sarcastic or critical remarks, and rather, making it a learning opportunity. But I think it's interesting that you point out to us that so many states are taking that, you know, first step, first toe in the water, toward using this kind of media. Excellent.

STEVE LUKE: Right. And I think it's a trend we'll see continuing, and as people better learn how to negotiate this platform, I think it's going to be even more integral to how we all interact with each other professionally and personally.

One of the sites within Facebook, so in addition to these state sites that we've seen, there are also many cities or districts, large districts and smaller districts that are

establishing a presence, individual schools establishing a presence, and they're nice ways for these education institutions to connect, not only with each other, but to a broader audience.

There are also sites that have been set up to promote professional development in education, and here's one of the most popular sites called Facebook in Education. And you can see there's a link at the top. The URL is at the top of the screen shot.

And as it happens, this is a, I took this screen shot yesterday, and note the post that is reported here at the top is an article from *Education Week* examining training for teachers, where do we turn for career development? And if one followed that link, you'd be taken to this, a new suite of articles around professional development started by *Education Week* just published this week. So this is, unless you visit *Education Week* every day or every week, this is an opportunity to connect with information from this, in this case *Education Week*, with lots of other resources.

So that's one website that I would encourage people to take a look at. This is actually a screen shot from our own site, and you can see we have opened up our page for users to not only comment on posts that we make, but to post interesting articles themselves. So this is an article that one of our members of our Facebook page has posted, and this is a tip sheet that has been generated for setting up a classroom for a child with autism. So there's some professional development tips that our own users are providing on our page, which is nice to see.

Just to sort of talk a little bit about how to formally follow a particular Facebook page of interest, this is our current page from The National Dissemination Center, and you can see I've highlighted at the top right there's a link for a button that says like. And if you click like, a couple things happen. One is that you will now see every time that we put a post of information up on our wall, you will see a feed of that appearing on your own wall. So you don't have to visit our page every time you want to see what's new.

We'll feed that to you on your own profile page. That's nice because when you're checking you page one of the four times a day, you'll have an opportunity to see some of the content we might have shared that day. The other thing that it does is it validates for us the fact that information that we're providing is of use. So it's nice to see that people have liked our page, and I think at the moment we're close to 3,000 people following us on our Facebook page.

But a really interesting thing happens as well when you click like, people in your own personal Facebook network will see that you have liked the page, and that provides an opportunity for us to reach perhaps a new audience of people who may not have known about our resources, information on our website. So that's something that's also nice about that feature.

Another way to sort of identify pages of interest to follow on Facebook is once you have identified a particular page of interest, you can take a look at some of the

pages that that center or organization has favorited themselves. In our case, we have favorited a number of other technical assistance projects, as well some of the state education centers that we, departments that we saw earlier, and a lot of our friends in the technical assistance and dissemination network are part of the pages that we have favorited. So that's a brief overview about Facebook.

I'll talk next about Twitter. Twitter is something I think perhaps we have less broad understanding about. It's not as popular as Facebook, but it's quickly becoming a very popular medium, especially for people who would like to share information efficiently. At first glance, you might not think that Twitter is of much use to you, especially when you see postings of this nature, of people talking about the weather outside, or they can't find the remote control, or they're doing the dishes listening to some music, and some person's getting ready to do their laundry.

Well, this doesn't seem like it would have much professional benefit, or even perhaps personal benefit, but these are some of the, the nature of some of the posts on Twitter. The fact is, you can choose who you'd like to follow on this platform, and I'm not going to go into the details of how to set up an account, but the fact is, you're able to, in the same way you can identify users on Facebook who might be of professional interest to you, there are tools within Twitter to also identify people who might have an interest in education or special education professional development, and you can choose to follow them directly.

And as they provide information resources, you'll have access to those resources. Another sort of efficient way to identify users to follow on Twitter is to, once you have identified a center or an individual that you'd like to follow, you can see who they follow, number one, and you can see who's following them. And you can sort of leaf through and identify other centers that may be of interest or other Twitterers that may be of interest to you.

And as you start to interact with this tool, the system will start to recommend additional users for you to follow. So that's another nice feature of this tool. Another way to find out about resources and tweets of interest on this platform is to use a convention called a hash tag. You can do searches within Twitter, and if one thinks back to a CB era, for those of us old enough to remember the CB, there were certain conventions within the language of talking on a CB radio.

Well, similar conventions have been adopted within Twitter so that if you're sharing information about education, there are ways you can tag that within your short Twitter stream to alert others to the fact that you're promoting some information of educational value. So there's some tools, in this case, there's a, one of those conventions is to use a hash tag with #Edchat, and if you do a search for #Edchat, then you'll come upon everybody who is sharing information related to education.

You can also use hash tags related to special education, and eventually you're going to follow, you're going to find and identify users who you'd like to follow. And

Twitter has sort of evolved over time, and the interface is becoming much more sophisticated and user-friendly. And here's one individual, I believe this person's actually interested in professional development and education, and they've, in this case, they've shared a number of resources information, including a YouTube video that they've embedded as part of their Twitter feed. And you can view that video right within Twitter.

Here's a video of a popular figure in professional development around education called, his name is Rick Dufour and you may not have been able to visit a conference or attend a conference that where he has presented, but through the power of the social media, here is somebody who's alerted you to a video that he has produced and is available on YouTube.

And then one final way, I mean, there are many other ways to learn about individuals to follow on Twitter, but another way is to follow, to consult a list of professional educators who have accounts on Twitter that are focused on education. So here's a link to such a list available on mashable.com, and here's a list of some of the top educational Twitterers in the field. I'm going to talk just for a couple minutes now about Ning, which is another popular social media platform.

Ning is sort of an amalgamation of Twitter and Facebook and YouTube. It's a platform that allows for sort of a number of threaded discussions or forums that people can post videos, they can start individual groups within a particular Ning network. So here's a Ning network that has been set up called iTeach, and there are several hundred members at the moment about, that are part of this Ning network.

If you create a Ning account, very similar to creating a Facebook account, you can participate and learn about some of the information that is being shared around teaching in this environment. And the most popular Ning that's been set up to support education and professional development is called Classroom2.0, and at the moment, I think there are over 50,000 members of this Ning and again, it's a great way to connect with other educators.

You can create a profile. You can list your specific areas of interest. You can join specific groups within this community that focus on a particular topic area or age group of interest. So there's a lot of useful information here. By way of an example, here is one user in this Classroom2.0 network who has provided a list of the hundred best YouTube videos for teachers. So these are the types of resources that get shared within this platform.

And then one final Ning network that I'll mention is one that's created for our own OSEP TA&D network, and it's an open network for individuals to participate. Within this network, you will find out, you will be able to connect to some of the personnel within the larger OSEP TA&D network, participate in discussions, review resources that are being shared here, and that's a useful network for us to participate in.

I'm going to close with a discussion of some YouTube and some video support around professional development, and then I'll talk a little bit about some podcasting as well. But just to alert you to some resources there, one is that YouTube just continues to blossom as a point of contact for teachers and for educators. There are professional development videos available through YouTube.

There are many, I'm not sure, I haven't counted how many RTI videos are currently available on YouTube, but if one does a search for Response Intervention, or RTI, you'll come up with a load of videos, very user-friendly videos, and very informative videos, professionally developed videos to support an understanding and the implementation of response intervention in schools. So this is just one example. Another is there are some very specific videos that have been developed to support professional development across a number of topics.

And this is, this video comes from an organization called Edutopia, which has its own website, has its own blog, has its own YouTube channel, and here is an example of a teacher discussing differentiated learning and professional development associated with that. And this is a screen shot of Edutopia's YouTube channel, but they have a lot of videos there to support professional development, project-based learning, technology integration, etc.

Another video-based website that I've recently learned about that I find very compelling is one called learnitin5.com. And these are a series of videos, these are education-related videos that are less than five minutes long that are designed to support an understanding of a particular topic area.

In this case, here's a screen shot of a video about attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder. But there's a host of videos here that are related to specific topical areas in education, as well as some videos to help support an understanding of how to leverage Twitter and some of these other social tools. And then sort of keeping in tune with sort of if people are following the latest announcement from iTunes, they've just added the Beatles catalog to their collection.

Well, in addition to the Beatles and lots of other music, iTunes has a special education section that has a lot of, some freely available, some others would require some payment, but special education related podcasts as well as applications that people can download to their computers and portable devices.

So you can see here there's support around sign language, communication, accessible readers, diagnostic and reference materials, emotional development, seeing and hearing, language development, literacy and learning, organization and life skills. So there's a lot of information within this medium, podcast that one can download iTunes, freely available across any platform. You don't need a MacIntosh or an iPad to access this stuff. So there's a lot of useful information here, and it's a database that's growing very rapidly.

Joanne, you mentioned sort of a concern about some schools that haven't sort of allowed some of these tools to be used, social media or learning tools, as I'm calling them. A lot of districts have them blocked or a lot or schools have these sites blocked. And I'm just going to close, but with a couple figures. I've done a search for a couple things on Google.

One, I did a search for Twitter and education, and you can see over 278 million hits related to Twitter and education. Twitter classroom, over 18.5 million hits. Facebook and education, you have 311 million hits. Facebook and classroom, 19.7 million hits. So there's a lot that is being done with these tools to support education, and people are teachers, educators, and others are being very creative in developing approaches to leveraging these tools in their classrooms.

And there's, as we think about developing and building on 21st century skills, these are some of the tools that are, as I mentioned earlier, that our students are going to be leveraging as part of their everyday lives to do the work that they're going to be doing. So there's a couple articles here that close by sort of discussing some of the sort of the relevance of these tools within educational institutions. So I want to thank you for your time. I think I came in under time, and I'd like to turn it over to Joanne.

JOANNE CASHMAN: I want to thank you, Steve, for ending with that discussion of how some of this media is changing and is going to continue to change some of the ways that we interact with each other and within the, with students and the families that we serve in education. And I also want to thank you for giving an overview of the OSEP TA&D Network because the other two presenters that you're going to hear today, myself and Phoebe, are both within that TA&D network.

We are investments by the Office of Special Education Programs. And Steve started out by showing you just how broadly the department has invested to provide to you the kinds of resources that would enable you to do your job better, and continue to learn as a professional or as a family member about IDEA and the services provided under IDEA. The project that I work on is the IDEA partnership, and I'm the director of the IDEA partnership.

We're sponsored by the National Association of State Directors of Special Education, NASDSE, and we are OSEP's investment in stakeholder collaboration. The idea that if we are going to improve the outcomes for individuals with disabilities, it's unlikely that we can do that by just dealing with special education and special educators. We really need to engage with our general ed partners. We need to bring families in as real partners.

We also need to look beyond education to some of the social service agencies and other community serving agencies that actually impact how well the students that we serve in our systems under IDEA, 3 to 21, or in some states beyond that. What happens and what systems serve them in the future?

So we're all about collaboration, and as you can see in this slide, we basically, our motto is we're better together. So let's take a little look at some of the things that the IDEA partnership has done to make this more than a slogan. We come together around the issues we share.

We're an affiliation of 55 national organizations, and many of you that are tuning in today either belong to the organizations that are in the IDEA partnership, or you work with people that belong to the organization and the IDEA partnership because we represent decision-makers, administrators, practitioners, and families. And we conduct our work by asking ourselves, who cares about this issue and why? When an issue has surfaced, we always say who else cares about this?

It's one thing, and for too long this is what we've done, is to, it's one thing to take a look at an issue and ask those that you typically work with about their opinion on that issue. It's quite another thing to look at that issue and say, who else cares about this issue and why? And then to go beyond that and say, who's already doing something on this issue, because, again, our typical pattern of interacting has been to say, what do I know about this issue? What's my district doing on this issue? What's my organization, my state doing on this issue?

What we really are encouraged by is the new views that we see, the new perspectives on an issue. When we say, who is already working on this, what's already going on on this issue, let's take a look at the big picture of this. And then, after doing that, go on to say, what new work might bring all of us together around this issue? And lastly ask how can we use our networks, our sphere of influence to share information and influence practice around this issue that we've identified that we care about in common?

That's the way we work in the IDEA partnership, and we bring national organizations together, and as you can imagine, when you're bringing national organizations together, you have a huge range of networks that extend out from 55 national organizations through all the states that affiliate with them and then all their members at the local level.

So we think that this is a way, by connecting through organizations, connecting to state departments of education, and connecting to all the other resources that you saw Steve demonstrate, through OSEP's investment in technical assistance, it's a great way to bring some common messages about IDEA out to a wide range of people.

And quite honestly, bring them to people that you need on your side to change what happens in education every day by helping that message come to them through the organizations that they voluntarily affiliate with. So that's the way the IDEA partnership is organized. And we have worked together to create something we call bridging tools. And let me just explain a little bit about these bridging tools. The bridging tools basically are designed to be used at the local level, at state level, or organizational level because we know that there's never going to be enough direct technical

assistance for everybody that needs it. We know that stakeholders need some simple materials to help them take the first steps when they're exploring these topics.

We know that there's a lot of professional development available in some states, but sometimes people need a little bit more information to help them get ready for this deeper work that they may hear about when they go to a regional workshop or state workshop or state meeting. And we know that sometimes people would like the opportunity to be able to be part of that change process, and to use their own personal influence in their own networks to help bring more people to these ideas.

And if they had a little bit of coaching, a little bit of mentoring, they would actually be able to deliver some of this material as well. So our strategy is what we call bridging tools. And our partners work together to create tools to bring the best of these TA centers that Steve has presented to you, and even others, to the field. We do this by taking the information and we re-craft it to meet people where they are. So it means sometimes simplifying it, simplifying the language. Maybe it means shortening it.

But we work together to bring all the people, all the stakeholders that care about an issue, together to look at good, high-quality materials and say, what would it take for people to actually be able to use this in the field? We try to make these tools so straightforward and have so much coaching available, either in them or virtually after you decide to use them, that almost anybody out there that's seeing this video would be empowered to use these tools wherever you feel that someone needs this information.

And we really think that enabling people to do that really helps them to create a new kind of behavior, the same kind of behavior that we talked about in being able to turn these electronic tools, these electronic social networks into learning networks by changing our behavior. And the idea that we might be able to help individuals learn to be kind of the conduit for this information through some of the tools that we're able to provide for them.

We did this through two kinds of tools, collections and dialogue guides, and I'm going to walk you through these tools today. And I'm going to walk you through another tool that Steve showed you, our national professional development library where the partners have cataloged some of the things that we think are really great, and also free.

So I'm going to start out by talking about these bridging tools, and as I said, the first one is a partnership collection. When the partners do a collection, an important thing to remember is that what differentiates this from anything else is this is done collectively by all these organizations, that superintendents, principals, teachers, family members, technical assistance providers, researchers, all come together to create these materials. So that in any of the partnership collections, it would be difficult to look at it and find a group that's not represented.

So we think that using that kind of idea makes it so that you are going to find these tools to be more usable at the local level. When you click on one of these tools,

almost any audience that you have will find that someone from their particular perspective was involved in developing these tools. And again, we're using the stakeholder perspective. We're really trying to make this available to people at all levels of knowledge. We really want to take some of the best research and make it tangible to the field, and we really want to lead you to this comprehensive set of resources that Steve has outlined for us in talking about the TA&D network supported by OSEP.

So right now we have four collections currently available, Autism, which is the one I'm going to take you through today, Response to Intervention, which is a huge collection with many, many parts from the simplest look at response to intervention to the most complex that involves progress monitoring, graphing, and even bridges the idea of what response to intervention's role in identifying exceptionality.

We have two collections on Secondary Transition, and we have a collection on Creating Agreement, or early dispute resolution, actually even moving beyond early dispute resolution to not having a dispute at all, but actually learning the skills to create agreement before there is a dispute. We have three more collections that will be developed this year, one on Universal Design for Learning, or UDL, one on Related Services, and one on the Overarching Frame of the Federal Investment in Education, P-16/ P20 as it's called in some states, or as the administration calls it Cradle to College and Career.

So this is our current and our upcoming list. Let's just go and take a look at what this might look like. Clicking on that site takes you to the IDEA partnership website, and www.ideapartnership.org. And I'm going to go right up here in the right hand corner to the quick links, and I'm going to go to the collection on Autism Spectrum Disorder. Now when you look at the collection on Autism Spectrum Disorder, the first paragraph here gives you a little bit about this, and tells you a little bit about the idea of how this was created, gives you some of the language on autism spectrum disorder from the law, and then talks about the charge in creating this work.

So the first thing, and this is going to be a reiteration of what I've told you, is to think about autism from a stakeholder perspective at all levels of knowledge, to look at things differently, to speak practically, and to take the ideas of researchers and make them tangible to the field. So you have a number of tools here that have been designed to do that. So let me show you a little bit about some of these things.

The first couple of tools you're going to see here, Guiding Principles, Fact Sheet, Essential Elements, Grounding Assumptions, and Needs of the Field, are all designed to help you create some sense of consensus because it may be difficult for you as an individual to be able to talk about what the field needs in terms of autism, but it's much more likely that you might actually use this document, and let's see if we can get this one up on the screen.

If you actually had it framed that when a ray of stakeholders were asked about the needs of the field in the current practice of autism, here's what they said. So what

you might do would be to put this up in a workshop, a meeting, a school community meeting, a teacher professional development activity, and ask the group, to what extent do we agree with some of the things that these national stakeholders said as they thought about the needs of autism?

How does that relate to what we might feel back here in our district? Let's see if I can get back to the Web page, and here we are. There are three, essentially three tools that are done that same way, Guiding Principles, I mean, I'm sorry, Essential Elements, Grounding Assumptions, and Needs of the Field. There's also a stakeholder-developed glossary. This is a plain English glossary of the terms that are going to be used in this, on this website.

There's also a resource guide, and what that does is to take you to the best resources on autism from all the states, all the organizations, all the technical assistance centers categorized by autism. So in one site we've put together some tools you can use to bring people together. We've given you a plain English glossary. We're giving you a resource guide to some of the best things that the most knowledgeable people in the field, from an array of stakeholder roles, believe have quality. And now we're going to go to some workshops that you can actually use at the local level.

There are two kinds of, on this particular site, there are two workshops. Both of them can be used either in an hour long presentation, or I'm sorry, a 75-minute presentation or a 45-minute presentation because one of the things that we know is that you have to have workshops that are done to fit in the kinds of periods of time we have available in schools. And because we're working with practitioners, this was important to them. So we created a PowerPoint and a presenter guide. Now the PowerPoint is what you would use during a workshop. The presenter guide gives you everything that you need to know to be able to run a workshop on autism spectrum disorders.

So let's take a look. Here's what the presenter guide might look like, and I'm going to skip through the, well, let's see, I'll show you some of the things in the beginning. First of all, it shows you that it's been created by the partnership and with all the involvement of the technical assistance center by OSEP, and it's sponsored by NASDSE. So it's got some credibility at that level.

Then you go to the acknowledgement, and you start to see the list of organization, national and state, that have participated in developing this tool for you. And it becomes clear that a full range of stakeholders were involved in doing this. And we go into the table of contents, but I'm going to skip through that, and I'm going to go straight to page seven. And page seven begins the presenter guide format.

So this is where we have talked about what it's actually going to take for somebody watching this today to actually be able to conduct this workshop and feel confident in doing it. So here's what the partners have done. They've taken a look here, and they said if you're going to use this for the longest period of time, that would

be the 75-minute presentation, you should spend about six minutes on this slide, and here is the slide that you should show.

Here are your presenter notes, and here are some of the points that you would want to share. If you're going to spend the shorter amount of time, sorry, if you're going to spend the shorter amount of time on this slide, okay, then you should spend about this amount of time on this slide, and again, capsulize the things that are there written for you about this slide.

So let's just skip through and see the kinds of things that are on this slide. You can see that, again, we start out with the definition, and again, it's got all the material that you may need to be able to present to actually use this in your school district, in your school, in your family meetings, in your PTA meetings. You're completely enabled to use this because all the material that you need is there to the extent of even providing for you other websites that you might want to go to.

And as I scroll down through here, I'm going to take you to one of the websites that is acknowledged here. Here is a link to an ABC News website, where as one of the activities in this video, you go to this ABC News website, and you download about a four-minute segment on a girl that is on the spectrum, young girl on the spectrum, and it shows some of the characteristics of that young girl.

And actually, this young girl's mother was part of the development team for this slide. The next slide is a YouTube video of a young boy who's also on the spectrum. And using these two videos together allows you to show why we talk about autism as a spectrum disorder because the difference between the abilities of these two young people really demonstrates to those what it means to be on the spectrum, which is a key point when you're talking about autism spectrum disorder.

Okay. So let's go back now. And so you see that these were available, both available, there's the first one that I showed you was on characteristics of autism spectrum disorder. The second is on supports and interventions, and again, it would be the same kind of format available to you.

So let's go, I talked to you a little bit about dialogue guides as the second investment that we're making in customizing material for audience. And right here, you'll see the dialogue guides that are available in the autism spectrum collection. Now just as these have, the presenter guides I showed you had coaching available, so does the dialogue guide. Here is a whole facilitator's guide.

And I'm not going to click on that because of the time it'll take to download that, because it's about 27 pages long, but it's a step-by-step guide, written again by all the partners, about how to invite people into a true dialogue, not just giving a lecture or having a conversation, but to really conduct a dialogue. So there's your coaching piece.

And then let's go to a dialogue guide themselves. Dialogue guides have two pieces. They have a source document, which is an important piece of information,

which the partners have decided, identified together, as something that is important for the field to see. And then it's got dialogue starters. And dialogue starters are questions that these stakeholders working together have written to help you start this dialogue.

Not to say these would be the only questions, but we think it makes it much more likely, if you have a set of questions to start from, that you would actually use the information provided. So this particular piece of information is a guide that is written by AFT, the American Federation of Teachers, and Easter Seals, and together they produced this guide, Helping Students with Autism, Tips for Educators.

And although it's designed for educators, it's got important information that all groups can use. Administrators could benefit from this. Policy-makers could benefit from this. Legislators could benefit from this. But here is the, a short, straightforward, accurate, and accessible guide that we think is something that those of you in the field could use, and might use, in your professional development opportunities, and in your school community meetings.

It's completely accessible from the website, totally downloadable, and again, free. Now the thing that we have done beyond that is to bring the partners together and create for you two kinds of questions. The first are reaction questions about pieces of this particular document.

And then the second, to move beyond reactions and to actually really think about how the information in this document can help you move to thinking about what you can do to change your practice, or to change the things, improve the things that you have going on in your education system, whether it's your school, your district, your PTA. These are things which will be able to direct you to what is actionable from this information that is presented.

So again, this is just the first of those dialogue guides. As you look down through here, you'll see that the next dialogue guide is something from school psychologists, the next from the Texas Autism Network, the next from the Autism Society of America, and it goes on and on to be able to provide for you important documents that have questions ready for you to use in the, in your meetings.

You can select one. You can select two. You can take them and hold it over a course of one question a week for ten weeks. In whatever way that you think it makes this usable, this is the way in which that we would hope that you would use those dialogue guides. So I'm going to click out of this right now. We're going to go to a few other things that we talked about. Again, these dialogue guides have one purpose, and that is to really help you be able to use this information in actually customizing your professional development.

The dialogue guides and all the information that we've provided here so far are really to get this idea going, making, creating this interaction among those that have a role in changing outcomes for individuals with disabilities, to examine the assumptions

that we hold, to find common ground, to support consensus, and always to make it so that it's just not learning about something, but always moving on to what could we do together to change practice around this?

So that's the IDEA Partnership, and that's some of the things that we have been developing, again with all the stakeholders at the table. There's one other important thing that we think is quite unique, and Steve brought this up as we talked a little earlier. The Department of Education, the Office of Special Education, when the stimulus dollars went to a number of, well, all the states, were very interested in having us develop for them a way in which these materials, that have been developed by all this incredible array of investments, could be brought to you in a way that you could use them to improve your professional development.

Whether it's a professional development on a half-day that you have in your regular schedule, whether it's something that you might be able, that you're running in the summer, whether it's a family group that is meeting together on a particular issue, or a standing family organization that meets to support schools or to support those that are involved in a particular disability, we wanted to be able to bring to you the best of all of these resources, and organize it in a way so that it was more likely that you would be able to find what you need, and then you'd be able to use what you need.

So what we came up with was a professional, a national, professional development library that we call Learning Port. This was the idea of those that are in the leadership at the Office of Special Education Programs, and their desire for you to really be able to use the investments that we've been talking about here today. So this is a charge that they gave to the partnership because, again, we're affiliating all the stakeholders, and it's important that all the stakeholders know about this and see the value of this for their networks.

That it isn't just special ed teachers that know about this, or special ed administrators, or families of students that have children with disabilities, but that all educators see the value of these investments in this larger picture of outcomes for all students while we serve the individual needs of specific groups of students. So Learning Port is our intent to bring to you the best of the professional resources that are available to you at no cost because we felt that no cost is really a significant piece. There are lots of places that have strong and well-funded professional development departments, but across the nation, there are even more that do not have that kind of resource available to them. So our idea here was that we have a tremendous number of professional development resources that are available for free, let's help you find them and let's help you use them. So here's the Learning Port.

And the first thing you'll see when you come to the Learning Port, I don't know if you can see the whole thing on your screen, but on the bottom is sort of a, rotating on a regular basis, is sort of a preview, kind of a teaser of what's inside. So there are four or five resources that circulate, we change them about once a week, that just as you're coming to this, it gives you a little preview of what's inside.

But up at the top, right under the name Learning Port, you'll be able to see the ways in which you can access information. And the first thing I'm going to show you is that, suppose you came to the Learning source and you just wanted to put in a search term. So Steve talked a little bit about universal design for learning and some of the investments that are available on universal design for learning, so let's put that in. U-D, and you can see a number of things start to show up, but one of those things is UDL.

So it kind of tells you some of the things that are available here that you might want to look at. And then you just go to go, hit go, and let's see what comes up. So if we look here, this tells us that there are 20 results in Learning Port for universal design for learning. So let's take a look at what this might be. On the right-hand side of the screen, you'll see a little description of each resource. It tells you the format. It tells you the duration, and in this case, it's a self-paced guide.

In other words, you could explore this at your leisure. The cost is free as everything currently that you're going to see in Learning Port is free. It's public access. There is not a certificate available for it, but some of the things that are cataloged on the Learning Port are available, in particular states, by completing them you may be moving toward a certificate or hours of professional development. And if that's the case, it provides you that link to be able to know where you can go to get that information. Is it, does it contain video? Does it contain an assessment? And is it compliant, in other words, is it accessible to screen readers. And then, of course, it gives you the date completed.

So that's the information that you'll get on the Learning Port. And I wanted to just show you, although this is, that some of these are listed, and right now we have, I think, 817 resources on the Learning Port, many of the things that are listed as one resource, and let's take a look at this, many of the things that are listed on the Learning Port actually have multiple resources. So although this is one resource, when you click on it, you'll see that there are two modules here, and each of those modules has multiple parts.

So many of the resources on Learning Port, although we know that there are 817 available to you, many of them have many more resources that just one resource as it's cataloged. So let's go back to the Learning Port, the front page of Learning Port. And let's go to find another way that you might be able to explore. And let's go to explore topics. Now here's a list of all the topics.
And this is a controlled vocabulary, and as Steve discussed with you, he works for the National Dissemination Center, and they are a partner with the National Coordinating Center for Technical Assistance projects, and together all of us are using a controlled vocabulary to make sure that we're able to point you to materials in a common way.

So we have shared this control vocabulary, and we have used it to catalog the various kinds of things that are on Learning Port. So let's just take a look at some of the

things that might be in here in the Learning Port under topics. And let's go to this category of equity because equity is important to all of us.

And one of the things that you'd see is that every one of those has, exactly as I've shown you before, the description of what's available, but let's take a look at the kinds of organizations that whose resources are cataloged here. The first we see is an equity center, and the equity center investments by the Office of Elementary and Secondary Ed, and there are ten equity centers across the country. So we've cataloged their resources.

We've cataloged universities such as the Harvard Project. We've cataloged other investments by other agencies. And there's just a huge array of information that's provided by both states and organizations and TA investments in the Learning Port. So I want to just make something else clear. The, you know, I showed you on the first slide that although the site for UDL showed up as one investment, it was actually multiple investments. Let's take a look at this one available from Harvard.

The Harvard Project, although it looks like one investment, as you scroll down through, is actually 131 individual PowerPoints and videos by national experts talking about achievement gap and equity in education. So this is one of the things that probably would interest quite a lot of individuals as they think about creating their own professional development.

Okay. Let's take a look at one other way that you might be able to, we've entered search term, we've explored topics, let's take a look at organizations. And this is a list of all the organizations whose information is cataloged in the Learning Port. So let's take, let's just browse through, and see if we can find some of the groups that Steve has described to us today. First, one is the consortium for appropriate dispute resolution in special education.

So if you click on that, you're looking for information on creating agreement or early dispute resolution, you click on cadre, and comes up the three of the video resources that they have available. Let's just go a little bit further, and you can see that we have departments of education. We have investments by departments of education, state technical assistance centers, and as you go down a little further, you begin to see that you've got just tons of stuff here that you're able to use.

One of the things that Steve described to us was the IRA Center. So if you go down here to IRA Center, and you're looking, if you learned about the IRA Center through this or other ways, you might take a look at, put IRA Center in, and you find out that some of the things that are in the IRA Center, in this particular network, you can find over here under the topics covered. And you'll see that cataloged here for you are all the things available from the IRA Center. Okay.

You, one of the things that I wanted to show you is that it's not just technical assistance investments, but some of the largest organizations that serve the

practitioners that you may want to reach are also on this network. And let me just go down here to National Education Association. Where did I go here? I've lost them. Okay. I went by it? Okay. Thank you. There we go. All right. Thanks. Thanks. So the National Education Association has a site called the NEA Academy.

These are free information that is available to all individuals. And the idea here is that what they do is to create a video format of a national expert, and they video that expert, and they catalog with it other materials. This is available at no cost, and the NEA was quite interested in having their information displayed on Learning Port. So if you are meeting with a group of teachers, you may be interested in showing to them some of the things that NEA has contributed to the Learning Port.

It's a great way to bring the information from national experts into your local, professional development. So as I've shown you through some of the things that we were able to explore today, the IDEA partnership has really gone to the, taken up the challenge of really reaching across all of our stakeholders to try to show what we can do if we work together.

If you're interested in receiving more information about any of this information or updates to Learning Port or the partnership site on collections and dialogue guides, you just go to the partnership site, www.ideapartnership.org, sign up over here on the left-hand side, receive updates, and you can stay in touch with this work as it develops. So thanks so much. And we're anxious to learn how you were able to use some of the things we provided for you.

PHOEBE GILLESPIE: Thanks, Joanne and Steve. We've heard about some great resources at the federal level, and as well as at the project level, and today you're going to hear a little bit more about project level resources from the personnel improvement center. I'm Phoebe Gillespie, director of the National Center to Improve Recruitment and Retention for Qualified Personnel of Children with Disabilities. We are an OSEP-funded project at NASDSE, and our goal is to increase the nation's capacity to recruit and retain highly qualified early intervention, related service providers, and special education teachers.

And so with that goal, we have developed some technology tools that we're using in our work and that I would like to share with you all to see if you can use them in your work as well. First, I'd like to share with you our personnel improvement center website. We believe it is a state of the art website. It has streaming video. It has searchable databases.

It has connections to our Facebook page and to also a dedicated site for our videos, which we have been collecting and presenting for you to use also, and to learn from around increasing recruitment and retention at the state and local level. So before I go any further, let me go ahead and give you an idea of what our website looks like. It's at personnelcenter.org. And here you will see a video that begins playing, and it is a very short little video about recruitment in urban areas.

We also have a nice ten-minute video here about a day in the life of an early intervention specialist. We have this on hard copy as well and can mail it to you if you would like to get in touch with us so that all of the local programs that serve early intervention children in your state can have a means of recruiting persons to the field locally. But I also want to take you to our Facebook page. We have a newsletter that we send out bimonthly.

But our Facebook page is our main recruitment page in addition to the career section of this website that we use. So let's first go to the Facebook page and see what we have posted there. We use our Facebook page to inform the general public that uses Facebook about what careers are like in early intervention and special education and the related services. So here's, our latest post is about a day in the life of a special education teacher. We do use YouTube.

I'm glad Steve brought YouTube up because we use YouTube a lot to find high-quality videos of short length that give a really good idea of what it's like to be a special educator in various scenarios. We have, we can find YouTube videos of what it's like to be a special educator with kids who have more severe disabilities. We can find a video of what it's like to be a collaborative special education teacher, and we have them all posted on our website, our Facebook page.

We actually select a type of professional every week, and we concentrate our information on it that we post. We'll also find stories about what people have written, what it was like for me when I was, as I am a special ed teacher, say at the middle school level. And we have featured that as well. Here's a career story about an eight-grade special education teacher. You click through that, and you see the written description of that teacher. So we do a lot with early intervention careers on this website as well, and the other related services. We partner with all of the related service provider national organizations, and they provide us with as many of the resources as they have as well, and we use them on our site. As you can see, we have quite a few people who like us.

We have almost 1,500 people who like us. We get a weekly update of how much activity we had on our Facebook page, and I'm very pleased to say that we have as much activity on our Facebook page as we actually do on our website. And, of course, it costs us nothing to maintain a Facebook page, but we do have a funding investment in our website page.

So using both of those things really gets us to the audience I think we need to be to as far as recruiting people to careers. So let me go back then to our own website where what we also post the things that we've been doing lately. The webinars that we've been sponsoring, we've sponsored one on e-mentoring, which you're going to hear about a little bit from me today.

We've done webinars on recruiting and retaining for early intervention personnel that are available on our website, and we feature a different special educator or related service provider or early interventionist as well, as far as what type of careers. Another thing that our website does is takes you to a page where you can actually see how you become a special educator, related service provider, or early interventionist, but not only who they are and why choose that career, but what, a real good description of what each of these types of careers entails.

For instance, we could talk, you can see a whole page on what it's like to be an art therapist. And so we call these our nature of work pages. They'll tell you about what the nature of the work is, what education is required, what are the personal qualities that an art therapist would have, what is the job outlook in advancement, and how to prepare for that career, and then refer you to the various professional organizations that are associated with that career.

We also have an interactive searchable database of all the preparation programs in the country, by state, by program characteristic, whether that be associate's degree, BS, MA, MS, MED, doctorate, post-baccalaureate, and then what position would you like to be prepared for?

For instance, would you like to be an audiologist, or a school psychologist, or a special education teacher working with students in self-contained settings, or a special education teacher working in collaborative settings? Those are just a few of the choices you have in searching our database. We also ask you, what age level do you want to work with? And then the most important thing that you can know about our database is that we have all the OSEP funded. The Office of Special Education Program funds about 300 programs any given year that includes all these different professions.

So as you click through your search here, and then hit submit, you'll be given a list of all the programs, the contact person's name for that program, the location of the program, and then a short description of the program, as well as some additional information if it is an OSEP-funded program. The important thing to know about OSEP-funded programs is that they offer tuition assistance for those that are accepted into the program.

So when people call us and say, we're interested in knowing about financial aid to become an early interventionist or a related service provider or a special education teacher, we say, let's go look at our OSEP-funded programs. What state would you like to be prepared in? What disability area are you interested in? What profession would you like to be? And we'll look for that under the OSEP programs and see, and refer them then to those programs to see if they can get entrance into that program and receive tuition assistance.

It's quite an investment by the U.S. Department of Ed, Office of Special Ed Programs to provide that tuition assistance for those that want to become special

educators. We also link directly to the preparation databases for all the related service provider, or many of the related service provider organizations because we do not have all of the prep programs for them.

We have only those funded by OSEP. We also have a page on financial aid that will tell you how to access every state's website on financial aid. Click on the map, and it will take you to that state's financial aid website. Many, of course, special educators can take advantage of the financial aid that's available to all higher ed students. But then several states do actually have dedicated financial aid for special education professions because it is the highest need area in the country.

We also have a website that takes you to the state licensure websites as well as if they have a separate alternative routes website for you to get information about what's required in that state.

We also connect you to some major employment websites. Teachers-teachers.com is a partner of the personnel improvement center, actually functions with us, and I'll talk a little more about that in recruitment, but we also list others that are available as well. Okay. I think enough about our website, and moving on to what else we do.

We have posted our professional development series that is available here under videopersonnelcenter.org. We've posted these on Vimeo and YouTube so that they're accessible to anybody who's searching those more generic sites, but then we also have them as well connected to our website. This is a dedicated website just for the professional development series that we are doing.

But we've also added things like our recruitment video here, or a video that I did around describing the center in general. But these are also webinars that we did with, one with Alyson Mike around e-mentoring, and then others that we did, this one with the state of Oklahoma about what their, how they offer resources to local school districts around recruitment and retention.

You'll see some of our related service providers here, Fred Demay, George Anne Rice, who work with states, and these are the professional development videos that we did that you can learn those same strategies that they're working with states and local districts that apply for our services, you can learn them by going to our video website as well.

But this is not just what we are doing. The important thing is this is what you can do. This is what you can do with your states and your local districts to create your own websites, your own Facebook and Vimeo dedicated pages, and your own professional development dedicated pages. All right. Let's move on to some examples of what other states have done, especially with information about careers in special education and how to get jobs and how to apply for them.

So first of all, the state of California has long been funded very, very well actually to have a professional development site called TEACH-ing California. And TEACH California is a very colorful, very exciting site and has, this page is totally dedicated to special education. So here, as you can see, they have created videos that you can watch about people who are in the role of special educator. They answer the question, what is special education? They include the California Education Code.

They include definitions of kids with different kinds of disabilities on their site. Who are special education students? What is the role of the special educator? But they, so they really have a very well-enhanced recruitment page for special education and the related services.

Here they're talking about speech language pathologists because that is one of their greatest areas of need.

Now they also click down here to tell you if you're looking for a job, you've already been prepared, you've already decided what you want to do, go here to look for a job. And they take you immediately to their funded, EDJOIN, which is their online recruitment tool and hiring tool for their school districts to place their vacancies on, and for people who are interested to find those jobs.

So as you can see, they've been able to really fund a really nice website around special education, and they've actually partnered with math and science to create this, but they've used partial funding by the California Special Education Personnel Development grant money.

Virginia also has a very nice website that, called TeachVirginia. Here is their page on special education. Again, neither the California nor the Virginia website is totally devoted to special education, but they have pages that do a nice job of featuring special education careers. So this is the page of the TeachVirginia website that features what they have around special education, prep programs here, information about tuition assistance, information about the colleges and universities, and the special ed programs that they have there in their state.

Arizona also has a website that's for all teachers, but notice that they have a huge focus here around careers in special education as well. What that tells us is that the state as a whole has recognized this to be one of the highest need careers in their state, and that they're devoting their time, their effort, and their funding to really highlight these careers and provide resources that will bring people into the field.

Because we're not just trying to get people to apply for jobs in their states, they're trying to get people to understand what people do in these professions around special ed careers and get them attracted to becoming one. So you'll see, they've got their shortage areas, here are special ed teachers, occupational therapists, physical therapists, speech language pathologist.

They've even listed para-educators and school psychologists. And then they have a nice job of connecting to websites that have nice definitions of all these different careers right here. So again, they're not just trying to match jobs and people on these recruitment websites. They're really trying to interest people in careers in this area. And again, they have their own dedicated job board here. It's called The Arizona Education Employment Board, and search for a job, post a vacancy, and, of course, the highest-need area as we know there is special education as well.

So let me move on to what we want to talk a little bit longer today, and that's basically about a project that the Personnel Improvement Center has engaged with with the new teacher's center at Santa Cruz, and that is called e-Mentoring for Special Educators. This project was begun in February of 2010. It's based on technology developed from the New Teacher's Center's eMSS Project for Math and Science.

It was co-funded by the Personnel Improvement Center and the states of Louisiana and Nevada. It was piloted for five months with both states, and that was last spring, and now it's currently accepting state and local contracts for the fall of 2010. So with that, I want to enter the site, and then I'll show you some more information about it just with our PowerPoint.

But the site itself has a lot of information on it. It is online mentoring, like I said for math, science, and special education. It started with math and science, nicely funded for that, and then we tapped into the technology that was already there and had them establish the content and the connectivity for special education mentors, mentees, and the other participants to the site. So with this I'd like to spend just a few minutes letting you listen to a virtual tour of the site, and then I'll give you some more specifics about it.

[Videotape played]

WOMAN: Welcome to e-Mentoring for Student Success, also known as eMSS. It is an online, content-focus, mentoring program for beginning math, science, and special education teachers. eMSS uses the New Teacher Center's learning environment or LE, an online learning tool powered by Sakai.

This provides a secure password protected site where resources, best practices, activities, and communication are safely shared between mentors and mentees.

Soon we will start our tour of the LE and see how new teachers are provided structured opportunities to work individually with a mentor and a small community of teachers, all with a common vision. First, let's hear from a beginning teacher. Being able to communicate with the whole eMSS community through posts, I was able to find new activities to try in my classroom, and ask questions when I was stuck. I appreciate how I can pose a question and quickly get many different educated responses.

Take a look inside the LE to see the forms for communication and professional growth for teachers new to the teaching profession. After completing an online orientation, a beginning teacher enters into their respective math, science, or special education home site. eMSS starts with Our Place where mentors and mentees work together to address individual goals and needs. Mentees can discuss teaching practice, lesson planning, classroom management, and anything else on their mind.

Participants interact with the larger community of educators in the topic of the month. Participants discuss research-based best practice topics applicable to all content areas. Dilemmas, which are short, open-ended discussions, build off the topic of the month. There are also pedagogical dilemmas of practice. Below topic of the month are content-specific discussions. Content experts and teacher leaders engage teachers in professional discussions to deepen their subject understanding.

A vast array of vetted resources are also available on the home sites for the beginning teachers, saving them valuable time. For math, these discussions are divided by middle and high school. For science, you would see discussions organized as chemistry, earth science, life science, and physics. And for special education teachers, discussions are divided between early childhood and elementary, for middle and high school, developmental delay, mild-moderate disabilities, significant disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, and emotional disability. Remember that all of these areas are supported by content area teachers and specialists in the field or university.

Inquiries are a foundational part of the eMSS. They provide a structured and facilitate curriculum that guides participants through a cycle of plan, prepare, and reflect. Inquiries last eight weeks and offer an opportunity to work with a small community of online educators focused on improving classroom practice. During the planning phase, teachers develop, adapt, or design the lesson plan. This leads to a clear plan for a specific lesson.

The prepare phase involves the teacher in making the necessary preparations in implementing their plan, including learning, teaching, and content strategies. The final phase includes reflection when teachers reflect on results to measure student impact and learning successes. Modifications are identified and next steps are established to be applied back to the planning phase in a continuous improvement cycle. Inquiry topics are self-selected by participants based on need and mentor guidance.

Some topics include managing student behavior, looking at student understanding, using technology in the classroom, lesson design, effective labs, uncovering student ideas, and many more . . . inquiry was very applicable to my classroom. They allowed me to focus on one aspect of my teaching, create an action plan, and carry it out. Such a direct approach allowed me to take a large, unmanageable problem and break it into manageable pieces.

I was able to focus on a few things at a time, which made the whole first year much more bearable. When we are overwhelmed with students, it is together that teachers can help each other. That is why I like eMSS . . . our job feels solitary at times

when we are alone in our rooms with the kids. We need to reach out to our fellow teachers to share help, advice, and most of all laughter.

PHOEBE GILLESPIE: The rest of the site also shows you the information you need about becoming a mentor teacher, what the role is of the mentee, the community of practice that they have, that's connected to this, as well as the role of districts, educational organizations, and departments of education. The beginning teachers section is relating to what we call the mentee. So we encourage you to go the site and look at it and decide of that's something that you think you would be interested in.

To give you a better overview of the program itself, it is not only professional development and networking where the mentor and mentee are involved in dialogue, online dialogue together. It is also an online learning environment. It extends the relationship between the mentor and the mentee into discovery and inquiry and discussion forums with other participants on the site. One of the best parts of this program is the program management piece, which I'll talk about a little bit more in a few minutes.

But also to know that there is content and a curriculum that goes along with this as well. And so what does eMSS provide? It's a professional development and networking for new teacher growth. It provides the online teacher orientation for your teachers. It provides highly skilled, fully trained mentors. You don't have to find the mentors. They have the mentors there for you. However, if you are a state or a district and you would like to help select the mentors, you can do that with your contract with them.

It has access to both content and disability specific experts from across the country that are leaders in their field from the institutions of higher education. There's an option for mentees, and that's the new teachers, to receive academic credit for their participation, and there's professional development certificates that are available for all participants, both mentors and mentees. This is, the program management piece, as I mentioned, is very inclusive as far as a one-package deal. You will get informational website, an informational website that includes the online applications and a participant database.

You will have comprehensive recruitment materials that are part of the service itself. They do the program monitoring and reporting to you. There's ongoing program evaluation, and you receive very nice program participant evaluation reports periodically. And, of course, they're in charge of all the technical support.

So you turn it over to them basically, but it's using technology at its best. What else can they do for you? They can actually assist you in recruiting your special education teachers to participate in the program like I said. They already have the recruitment materials ready. They can also assist in helping recruit mentors if you decide that you want the mentors to be directly from your state or your local school district.

But if one of your problems is you're so small that you don't have a large enough pool of experienced mentors, then that's the advantage of this service because they already have them for you. They will work with you toward integrating this project with your own state and local induction programs, which many of you already have.

But at the same time, many of you have those rural, remote areas where you really can't find an experienced mentor that matches your new teachers at developmental level of child and disability level of child. And so this is where this really comes in as a real resource for you in those areas. These are the participants, just a description of the different kinds of participants that are a part of the service. You, of course, have your mentors.

You have your content specialists, and those are the people that we talked about that were at university programs, that are often on the site looking at the conversation, and putting in their expertise and their knowledge and skills to help both the mentor and the mentees to navigate whatever situation is they're working out together.

And then you have actual facilitators within the community that are a part of the New Teacher Project itself, that help make sure that all the technology's working right, that they monitor how many times the mentee is on the site. They monitor the value and the quality of the mentor suggestions. So there's a lot of quality built into this.

Four different areas of the project include Our Place, which is that special place where the mentor and the mentee actually have their online discussions. And then there is Mentor Place, which I particularly like because it's a dedicated site for only mentors to discuss with one another what it is that they're grappling with with their mentees. And then there are the inquiries. They're additional professional development that the mentees engage in to expand and deepen their learning.

And then there are community forums and other resources, like monthly discussion groups where they can get in not only with their special education teacher peers, but the beauty of this site is that they can use the math and science mentor and mentees and content experts as special educators to have their content knowledge of math and science go even deeper into the classroom.

Do new teachers have time to mess with something like eMSS? We believe they do for these reasons. This program is asynchronous. That means that they can get on at any time they need to. It's not a timed meeting. You don't have to have common planning time to be a part of this. We know that's a huge issue in schools and school districts is do the mentee and the mentee have common time to be together? They have common time because they're on it at different times.

They could be on it together, but they get on at any time, post their inquiry, make their comment, and the mentor and mentee come in and look at that, and that's how the conversation goes in an asynchronous way. Teachers can log at any time that is convenient for them, day or night. New teachers use their mentor in the eMSS

community for support in planning, instructional techniques, and using the most effective resources.

There's actually a part of this site that has them put their resources on there that they've discovered, and so it captures the resources that they are discovering for them to come back, and it archives them. Past participants of this program report that regular participation actually saves them time with lesson planning and class preparation.

Just a couple of other things I wanted to share with you real quickly that the Personnel Improvement Center participates in and sponsors, works with other states in, and that's other kinds of online communities of practice. The state of Texas, the Part C lead agency in the state of Texas, requested that there be an opportunity for the state staff and the local program administrators to get on together, on a website, and talk about what their issues were around recruitment and retention.

And so we developed for them that kind of an online, dedicated communication site, and we did it right off of the grouply.com website. And so grouply.com is where you go to create your own, but the community that they have in Texas with the early intervention group is this website right here.

You cannot get to this website because it is password protected, but it is an example of how you can create either locally or with other local programs or local school districts, a private, password-protected, dedicated website for communication around sharing strategies, asking about what are your challenges, let's solve these problems together, much of what they do at the national and state level with the IDEA partnerships.

This Grouply website enables you to have a white board for message posting. There are separate topic sections for private blogging. You can have a private blog or conversation with somebody who's a part of the community, or you can make it public to those that are in the dedicated community. It provides space for the personnel to receive support and recognition from the administrators and the field experts. So we encourage you to use the Internet for that kind of online conversation.

The Personnel Improvement Center has also created for itself a project management website, which is also another free software. It's called projectpier.org, p-i-e-r. We named our site personnelcenterproject.org, but it comes off of the Project p-i-e-r.org website, which allows you to put your activity and your action plans about whatever it is you're working on on a website that enables automatic e-mails to the members of the community that are registered there that helps you track your milestones, your tasks.

It lets you share documents that you're working on together, whether they be PowerPoints, you can post video. And so it is a project management website. And it gives you updates about when your tasks are due. So we have opened that up to the

states that we're working in so that they can have their own part of that website to manage their activity plans with our service providers.

Something else that you could do, if you're providing technical assistance at the state or local level so that your plans can be monitored and implemented, and you can keep track of whose responsibility it is to complete the next task. Well, that's about all I have for you today. Just wanted to let you know that this is where you can contact me as the director and Allison Mike is the director of the online professional development at the New Teacher Center, if you're interested in pursuing the e-Mentoring project. And now back to you, Bill.

BILL EAST: Well, thank you, Phoebe. And I want to thank all of our presenters, Steven Luke and Phoebe Gillespie and Joanne Cashman, for your great presentations. I want to share a takeaway from my point of view, and I want you to be thinking if you have one thing that you want to share with the audience as a takeaway before we leave, I'll give you the opportunity to do that. I hope all of you will take our presentation today very seriously and look at all the materials that are available to you.

We've tried to provide just a sample of what's out there. And I am so impressed with just the number and the quality of what's available to help us in our jobs and to help you, whether you're in a school, a district, or state to do your job. So it's, the takeaway from me is, wow, there are so many resources out there to help us do our jobs, and it's just up to us to take advantage of those. I also want to remind you that NASDSE as an organization has a website as well.

The website is www.nasdse.org. That's n-a-s-d-s-e.org. You can go there as an entry point to get to NASDSE's projects and services. So at this time, I'll see if we have any parting comments from any of the group. And I'll just start on the other end with Joanne. Do you have anything that . . .

JOANNE CASHMAN: Well, I'd just like to encourage those that are with us today to think about the, if you're seeing this in a setting where most of the people that are around you share your role or share, you know, your, are in the same school district as you, think about your role as a kind of a change agent to be able to bring this to other people, whether that is your principal, whether that's your school board, whether that's your superintendent, whether that's the neighboring school district because these investments have been made by the Office of Special Education to, for you, and you can be a part of spreading the information and join us in that goal. Thanks.

BILL EAST: Thank you, Joanne. And, Steve, you talked about the big picture, OSEP's investments in all this. Do you have anything that you'd like to share with us?

STEVE LUKE: I have a couple of thoughts that, well, first, Bill, I agree with you that there are a tremendous amount of quality resources available through these funded projects, very thoughtful and very high-quality products that have been produced.

Joanne's group with the IDEA partnership and the Learning Port that we saw, I think, is the next step for the network to sort of consolidate a lot of these offerings.

And it's up to you, I think, now then to share back with us through some of the social media tools, or the learning media tools that we shared before, to let us know, as a network, what's working for you, what's not working for you. And it's also a great opportunity for you to share with us other resources that you have found to be effective in your own practice.

BILL EAST: Thank you, Steve. And, Phoebe, you lead us in trying to provide sufficient numbers of quality personnel, in not only recruiting, but retaining them in the profession. Do you have anything that you would like to leave us with?

PHOEBE GILLESPIE: Well, you know, listening to the other two that were here today, it really came to my attention that there are so many more resources that we even, as a center, can be helping you as states and locals. So I encourage you to take not only just what they're doing at the national level, but take it down to the local level. Take it at . . . and if you're a state staff person, use it with your locals, and we will certainly be doing more of that ourselves because these were great resources that we can use at the center, and you can use in your neighborhood.

BILL EAST: Thank you very much, presenters, and I want to thank you for joining us today, and that's our conference for today. Thank you.