

>> Good afternoon. I'd like to welcome everyone to today's webinar on Engaging Families in the Secondary Transition Process. My name is Michael Stoehr, and I work for the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network, which is part of the Pennsylvania Department of Education Bureau of Special Education. The -- this session is being brought to you by the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network, and the mission of PaTTAN is to support the efforts and initiatives of the Bureau of Special Education and build the capacity of local educational agencies to serve students who receive special education services.

We are committed through the Pennsylvania Department of Education to educate all youth and young adults in the least restrictive environment. And for those of us that work in the secondary transition area, this is a natural fit as we prepare youth and young adults to be independent and live independent, successful adult lives.

This session is part of a series of sessions for family engagement, LEA to LEA. You'll notice on this particular slide this is the second in the series. We have three more sessions after today's broadcast. The sessions will be recorded and captioned, and will be posted to the PaTTAN website. It usually takes about a month before they'll be posted onto that site. As a reminder too, the handout for today's session can be located on the PaTTAN site. If you go to the PaTTAN site and then you click on the calendar for today, if you scroll down to today's date, which is January 25th, click -- I'm sorry, January 26th -- and click on Family Engagement Series. It will take you to this link and then the link to the PowerPoint that we're using for today's session.

So today, we are going to go over a number of aspects of engaging families and that link to secondary transition. We'll start with a presentation by Sean Roy, who works for the PACER Center. He's the Project Director for Transition and Workforce Partnerships at PACER Center in Minnesota. He's going to do a session -- section -- on understanding the transition experiences of families. We'll next move to a discussion regarding a -- a couple of different frameworks surrounding the topic of family engagement. And Dianne Malley, who works for START, which the statewide parent advocacy network in New Jersey, and she is the START Project Director, will talk about this frameworks.

Then next, we're going to have a discussion regarding the resources in Pennsylvania for schools and families around secondary transition, presented by the PEAL Center, and that's Pennsylvania's parent training initiative center, and presenting today will be Cindy Duch, the Director of Parent Advising, and Liz Healy, the Executive Director of the PEAL Center.

And then lastly, we'll talk about the new resource that we have in Pennsylvania for families, the Planning for the Future Checklist, and I'll be presenting information regarding that. I wanted to remind you folks if you have any questions during today's broadcast, feel free to type those in in the question panel, or if you're experiencing any technical issues, please feel free to type those into the question box and we'll look at addressing those throughout today's session.

I wanted to remind folks that we do embed and base our family-to-family -- or engagement practices -- with our LEA to LEA sessions on the PTA standards, and this slide is just a review of the PTA standards. And I think the nice thing about working in secondary transition is that we engage in all the six standards as part of our involvement with families with young -- youth and young adults -- and with our community partners. So this is just really a reminder of that and

Dianne is going to talk a little more about the PTA's standards when she talks about the frameworks for family engagement.

In working with families and being involved in secondary transition for the last 25 years, one of the statements that have come up from some of the families that I've worked with is that once a student, a youth, young adult leaves school; it's really the family that is still there. And the family will still be there to support their sons and daughters after they graduate, after the teachers and transition coordinators and support staff are no longer there. So it's really important that families are actively engaged in secondary transition for their sons and daughters in the process, and they have an active role in this process.

They're essential to the transition process for any youth and they really are the most helpful. They know what experiences their sons or daughters have had from little children on, you know, through adolescence, into young adulthood. They understand what they are good at, what experiences they have had, work experiences, volunteer experiences, community experiences, and they have an idea of what expectations they see for their son or daughter's future.

Families can help their sons and daughters build life skills, look at that essence or that desire to work, look at their goals for the future, you know. And really, press and work with their sons and their daughters to look at what are goals regarding future employment, what type of post-secondary education and training will they need, what type of community involvement will they be engaged with, as well as supporting self-advocacy and self-determination for their sons and daughters.

With that, we're going to move over and Sean Roy is going to pick up this next session. So Sean, let me go ahead and unmute you, and you are on.

>> Wonderful. Thank you, Michael. Wanted to say thank you first of all for inviting me to speak and how encouraging it is to have a whole webinar series on engaging families. My name is Sean Roy; I'm with the PACER Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota. PACER is Minnesota's parent training and information center, so we are essentially -- we do what SPAN does and what PO -- the field center does, we're happy to be presenting with our parent center cohorts today. And we're also a national non-profit that takes a look at disabilities through the lens of family. I've been at PACER for 13 years. I come to this work because I have a 36 year-old brother on the autism spectrum, and like many people that work at parent centers, they're either parents or siblings of people with disabilities that staff the centers.

Next slide, please. Part of my job of -- at the PACER Center is to direct the programs that we have around transition and I have the privilege over the last 13 years to be working with a lot of families going through the transition process. And I find it particularly interesting to talk with them about where the struggles that they've had, the experiences that they've had in transition, to try to find out if we can't structure some better professional capacity building around engaging families.

I think it's important for -- if you're going to do that -- to truly understand the experiences that families have in transition. And so as I go through these slides in the next few minutes, I want to point out that this is not -- I'm painting with a pretty broad brush. I'm not saying that every single school falls victim to some of these things. Some schools do transition well, some don't,

but I -- I do think it's important in talking with families about their experiences to truly understand where it falls short, and I hope that that serves to help set the stage a little bit for the conversation we're going to have later about some of the models to engage families a little bit better.

Next slide, please. So some of the common misconceptions that I have seen in talking with families about transition and some of these may be familiar to some of the professionals on the line as well. If there's something that I need to know, the school is going to tell me. If there's something truly that I have to attend to, if there's a problem with my son or daughter's learning, if there's a service that they may take advantage of when they're adults, if there's anything that I need to know, the school is going to let me know about it. And if there's anything that needs to be addressed, it is being addressed because that's what the schools do.

I think the families -- families do tend to rely on schools a great deal to identify what needs to be worked on and parents should be able to work on it. A lot of the -- one misconception is that I don't have to be as involved now that my child is in high school, because the natural progression is that as a young person gets older, parents somewhat expect to pull back a little bit from their education experience. But that isn't always case -- the case -- when you have a young person with a disability and you have to be kind of mindful of advocating for them all the way through the process.

A big one that I hear quite often is there must be somebody responsible for coordinating adult services for my child. I get that phone call a lot. Sean, now that they're out of high school, who's -- who do I call that's responsible for setting everything else up? And I unfortunately have to say, "Well, that's you as the parent most of the time where it falls on to coordinate adult services." And all the paperwork that they're giving me during this transition process is not important. I've got a 12 year-old and I get paperwork all the time from the school, and frankly, I get tired of filling it out. So sometimes parents don't realize the importance of filling out the paperwork that they're getting.

Next slide, please. One of the -- I asked one of the advocates here at the PACER Center a few years back to talk through transition with me in terms of their experiences and they helped me put together this grid which I find very helpful. It talks about "Is the goal the same?" Is the goal between what the schools want and what do parents expect, is that the same and is there any disconnect that can be addressed by addressing these points? Again, I'm painting with a pretty broad brush, so generally, schools want young people to graduate in 12th Grade, right? They generally want to be compliant with state and federal rules and what's being expected of them.

For the most part, schools are unsure about parents' involvement. They're not sure about how deeply they want to get into it. They're not sure if it's going to be an effective strategy. Sometimes they find it to be a very difficult thing to pull off. In schools, they expect students to be independent in the school environment, especially as they get older, they want young people to be able to operate without supports as much as possible. And they also want young people to be able to use the existing programming that they have, either in the high school or the special education programs, or the 18 to 21 transition programs.

However, parents may expect something different. They want young people to be in school as long as it takes to meet their needs or they want young -- their son or daughter -- to graduate with

their same-age peers. They want the important things to be addressed, and sometimes parents don't understand the role of transition assessment in identifying what is addressed in a transition and an Individualized Education Program. They do expect, however, individualized programming. They want people to understand their son or daughter's disability and how it makes -- how it impacts that individually. And parents generally want to be listened to. I think sometimes the disconnect that these two -- these two areas create -- are one of the reasons why there's difficulty in engaging parents in transition.

Next slide, please. Sometimes the transition process breaks down from the very start. The term 'transition' is not one that parents intuitively know right away what it means. A lot of times, there's a failure to explain the reason for transition services, what are we trying to accomplish, and there's also a failure to explain the process of transition services. This is what we're going to do, here's the timeline, and again, here's where we hope to be by the end of it. A lot of times, we will hear, "Okay, we have to do a transition assessment now," and parents aren't exactly sure what it is that means, or what is the impact of those assessments again on long-term programming. And we know that IEP meetings are -- are crammed for time. Special education staff do not have enough time to be able to attend to a lot of these things and so I'm not sure that there's an appropriate time to speak with parents and get through some of these pieces.

I also find long-term in talking with parents that there is kind of a disconnect between what -- how they get prepared for transition and the reality of adult services that they find. I often hear from families that said, "You know, a transition program did not prepare me at all for how it really was and having to structure services for my son or daughter." And then I also hear a lot from families about how they don't feel like their son or daughter's disability is always understood.

Next slide, please. So a couple of -- couple of tips that I would have in terms of preparing parents for transition, I would use the concept 'preparing for' instead of the term 'transition'. Families do understand the idea that there's a certain point in the schooling process where we are going to start focusing on the adult future, and we are going to now prepare your son or daughter for life as an adult.

There also needs to be some training for families in moving from the general -- more generalized IEP -- to an Individualized Education Program that focuses more on transition, skill building, employment, adult services, post-secondary education. I would encourage -- I would encourage schools to consider creating an introduction to transition handout or video or a booklet, or something that gives parents information about, "Okay, we are moving now into the transition process and here's what to expect."

A lot of families do need information multiple times and in smaller chunks, so because we all need to hear things three times before we -- we get it. A lot of times, families need to hear more and more than that. And I often wonder do we prepare our regular ed students? We prepare our regular ed kids to switch focus. For instance, from elementary school to middle school, there's a lot of pomp and circumstance in that. Do we prepare our special ed students the same way -- and our families? Do we put them through rituals and a process that lets them clearly know we're changing focus and here is what to expect?

Next slide, please. And finally, I wanted to touch on this idea of families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Minnesota has got a very large population of Somali and a very large population of Hmong, alongside a large Latino population and Russian immigrant population. We've had the opportunity to work a lot alongside those communities and we -- we know that the concepts of transition and independence sometimes can be tricky in those communities. For example, I talked to our Somali advocate here at PACER and he -- he knows that in his community actively trying to get a young person with a disability to be independent of their parents is not something that is received very well in that community. Cultures are based on respect of parents, elders, and relatives, so you may get multiple adults at meetings making decisions. They may be surprised again by this concept of 'age of majority', and they may fight it, frankly. And they -- there may be some statements. There are rarely are statements on the IEP and assessments and evaluations that are culturally relevant or culturally appropriate, so it's just something to keep in mind there.

I know that we've got a lot to get through today and I wanted to just be able to set the stage with some of this stuff. Again, we're -- we're painting with a broad brush and we're not -- we're not accusing. But we are trying to show that the experience of families in the transition process is often a bumpy one. And as much as we can do to engage families better, we're going to improve not only outcomes for the young people, but outcomes for the school programs as well. Thank you, Michael. That's all I have. I've looked, so it sounds like I'm going to be turning it over to Dianne.

>> Great, thank you, Sean -- appreciate it. And Dianne, we are turning it over to you, so just give me one second and get to your slide. And go ahead, Dianne. And we're not hearing you for some reason. I'm not sure why. Let's see. Dianne, I'm not sure we're not hearing you. You may want to call back in, Dianne. For some reason, we're not picking up your audio. So I think what we'll do, I'm going to go ahead and move forward while Dianne reconnects because we're not hearing -- oh, here we go. Dianne? I think we hear --

>> Hello, am I there now?

>> We got you! You're good.

>> Okay, great. Hi, everyone. Thank you so much for connecting me, Michael, and have -- listening to this webinar today. And thank you Sean, for the setting the stage, and to all our partners everywhere working to improve our family engagement efforts. So I work for SPAN, which is the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network in New Jersey, and I direct a project, which is our collaboration with the New Jersey Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs. And we focus particularly on family-school partnerships and collaboration around special education, so that's sort of what brings me to this work today. Can you give me the next slide?

Great. So we're really -- I'm -- I'm so impressed, as Sean said, that there's a whole webinar series on family engagement, and it's such a crucial piece of the puzzle for transition and for special education in general. And the families play multiple roles, both in the special education and the transition process, and these are just a couple of them that are stated on the slide here. Any of us who have been through this know how many hats we have to wear as parents. I'm currently in the throes of this process -- process with my oldest daughter, who happens to have

Downs Syndrome and is in 12th Grade, so I know very intimately and very well how important really true and respectful partnerships are for her and for me to navigate this process, and for all families really to navigate through this process.

So what we're going to talk about just briefly today is this sort of intro into a couple of different frameworks for family engagement that will help us think about what do we really want from this when we say we would want to improve our family engagement efforts. What can families really provide to schools? How can we organize our outreach efforts so that they're most effective and how can we really measure our progress? So I think in terms of having a framework, it's really a guide for the work that help -- that can help move us from sort of random acts of involvement, to much more sustained and meaningful partnership programs. Next.

So as Michael already put up here this slide, which I didn't realize even he was including it when I did in mine, but I think one of the best frameworks out there that is really up-to-date and provides a great guide for partnerships is this, the PTA's national standards for family-school partnerships. As many of these frameworks are, this one too is based on the work of Joyce Epstein, and it's her work around fam- -- school, family, and community partnerships. She identified a research-based framework of six basic types of involvement. And in her work, she lays out the challenges that each type poses, the expected results that you should get from a well-designed and a well-implemented practice.

So there's a lot of research behind this at this point and a lot of you know, real results that have been achieved when things are well-designed and well-implemented -- sort of that's where the rubber meets the road. But very closely aligned with Epstein's six types of involvement are these PTA national standards. The one that I really love that the PTA I think sort of updated from Joyce Epstein's is she had learning at home, and in the national PTA, it's changed to supporting student success. And I think that that's much more relates to our current goals in education with the Common Core curriculum and really seeing families as partners, not just for supporting learning at home, but also in how they can partner with schools to be involved and engaged in learning that's happening in school, at home, anytime and anywhere.

The other thing I really like about these standards is that there's numerous resources that you can access very easily on the national PTA website. Many of their materials are already translated into Spanish and the great thing for educators and families working in PA is I've been very impressed with the work that is posted on the PA Department of Education website, where they developed extensive resources for developing partnership programs based on this framework. And there's modules for each of the types of involvement with really highly interactive activities that could be the basis of numerous workshops and trainings for families and educators together. So in PA, you already have a great resource. Next.

So there are a few out there that people can really think about using at this point, which is exciting. And there are a couple on this slide as you can see, and I think Michael might have a resource list for us at the end, of frameworks that are specifically around transition. In particular, there is the *Families Engaging in Successful Transition for All Youth: The Guideposts*. And these guideposts really highlight the very proactive role that families can play in the different areas that are identified around transition, and it's a focus on families becoming very informed and supportive and engaged in a young person's transition process.

So this is -- these guideposts can really be very helpful to both professionals, you know, seeking more strategies to really effectively partner with families. Next slide.

And the one I was going to focus on just briefly is the *Partners in Education: A Dual Capacity Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships*. This is a publication of the Southwest -- Southwest Educational Development Laboratory with the US Department of Education. And it's a new framework that's just out last year and I'm very, very excited that it's getting such prominent support from our national DOE, or Federal DOE. And one of the main authors of this is Karen Mott, who's a Senior Lecturer on Education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and her work is just fabulous. If people aren't familiar with it yet, a really great resource is her book, *Beyond the Bake Sale*, has lots of very practical strategies, surveys, etc. that schools can implement. Next slide.

So the *Dual Capacity Framework* is really much more a process, rather than something that is really prescriptive, and it's a process that's really used to teach school and district staff to effectively engage parents and also a process for parents to learn to work successfully with schools to really increase student achievement. It also is a model that schools and districts can use to build the type of effective community engagement that will -- that truly can make our schools much more the center of our communities.

And I think that last area, the community engagement piece, is really sort of still for many, many places the unexplored territory, the last, you know, area that we're sort of getting to, but possibly, you know, one of the keys to really transforming our schools. So this framework was formulated using a lot of research on effective family engagement and home and school partnerships, and also really based on adult learning and motivation and leadership development, so we'll talk just a little bit more about that. Next slide, please.

So it's laid out into four components here and on the first one is really just the challenge. And, you know, I think it's a really, really common challenge as Sean said. It's, you know, something that many, many schools and districts -- districts are still really struggling with how to do it as effectively as we may like to. There is a monitoring report issued in 2008 by the US Department of Education Office of Elementary and Secondary Education, and they found that family engagement was the weakest area of compliance by states. So I think what we know at this point is that educators consistently state that they have a strong desire to work more closely with families from diverse backgrounds. But often they do not have the training and the skills to do this.

And the other thing I think is becoming more and more commonly accepted is that we now recognize that teachers and school staffs need ongoing embedded job development to be really effective. But families also need the same; it's not a one-time training. But we must move to finding ways to support families in their roles as they change over time. So like for instance in the project I directed, SPAN, we have what we call Parent Group Specialists, who have been working with parents who have moved from advocating to their own child, to becoming parent leaders on a local level, and sometimes even on a state level, but it's over numerous years. And through our organization in our project, we've been there over that course of time to really provide that development and -- and training as the parent develops their skills. Next slide.

So this building -- this capacity building activities, they're really -- there's a lot of process conditions that must be met, and I think these are really very powerful conditions if -- if we really embrace them. So I -- I think these process conditions can also be very powerful for identifying what sort of activities will have the most impact when we're looking at what -- what should we spend our time, our dollars, and our resources on. So each of these process conditions is described in more detail in the publication I referenced and you'll get a link to. But for instance, there's a link to learning, so it discusses how initiatives now need to be aligned with school and district achievement goals, and that we also need to be connecting families to what the teaching and learning goals are for their students.

So it's no longer sufficient to hold events at school that have nothing to do with academic goals for students. These are really sort of missed opportunities to enhance the capacity of families and staff to collaborate with one another to truly support learning. The one other process condition I think is so important to everything is relational, so at the core of everything is really building respectful and trusting relationships between home and school.

This is especially true when there's a history of mistrust between families and the school or possibly when families come not really understanding, possibly from other countries and don't really understand our school culture. So this is the foundation for all the future shared learning that's going to happen and I think oftentimes schools may be doing lots of the right things in terms of communications and calls and flyers. But if there is a core foundation of respectful relationships at the base of it, these communication efforts don't end up working. So these process conditions are really something to explore a little bit more. Next slide.

And so here they lay out in this next block the four C's of capacity building and what's really, really key here is this is for both staff and families. So sometimes what happens is we spend a lot of effort in training up families on supporting learning with the school, but educators and staff at the schools have not gotten the same sort of training, and so they're not met with a productive response when families do try to engage. So this capacity building framework is really, really based on building that capacity of both school staff and families simultaneously.

And the capabilities -- some of the capabilities that school staff might need include skills in cultural competency and we really have to stop and start to build the skills of school staff to build those trusting and respectful relationships, well then which can be the basis of a lot of other things that may need to be done. And families need to really learn how to start supporting the -- their student learning and understand the workings of the school system, how to really advocate for their own child, and really support their educational development.

Another thing that maybe sometimes is not -- is overlooked -- is really helping people create connections, so one of the four C's is connections, so this is helping families really build the cultural path that they may need by building networks, and these networks may be family-teacher relationships, parent-to-parent relationships, and connections with community agencies and services. So again, this is a framework, it's a process, it's not completely prescriptive, but more giving us a way to think about developing our partnership programs. The other thing I like about these four C's: they can also be used to develop not a set of criteria from which to develop activities as I mentioned, and also to identify metrics to measure and evaluate program effectiveness. Next slide.

So in the coming months, there's the Federal DOE, we are anticipating will provide additional resources and information to really build on this framework. And I love Arnie Duncan's vision for family engagement is incredibly ambitious, as he says, "I want to have too many parents demanding excellence in our schools," and a few of his other key points include, "Parents and students should feel really connected and teachers should feel supported." So if teachers aren't feeling supported in this, then there's still something in the school capacity that needs to be addressed. And ultimately, we're really hoping that parents become -- demand agents for better options for their children and real accountability for the educational system. So again, it's a common language; it's a common framework that I think many others will start to work off of, has a lot of power to guide some of our efforts. Next slide.

So one -- what I wanted to lay out just very briefly too is some supports that you have in this process of really developing your family engagement efforts. And as I said, I work for SPAN, the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network, and SPAN now is also the -- the site for the -- the center for parent information and resources, so it's also known as the CPIRA, and this is the central resource of information and products to the community of parent training and information centers and the community -- excuse me -- community parent resource centers.

So -- and so the CPIRA is providing the resources and the information and a hub for the information so the PTIs and the CPRCs can really focus their efforts on serving families and children with disabilities across the country. And so the CPIRA also really wants to increase the parent centers' knowledge and capacity to effectively do their work and the CPIRA really tries to use very user-centered processes as the focus of everything they develop. Next slide.

So just in case anyone's not familiar with the PTIs and the CPRCs, they're -- they're here to assist parents of children with disabilities on a number of efforts, and transition is certainly one of the big areas that all of the PTIs work -- do a lot of work around. But they're also here as partners with many schools and districts and states in system reform efforts. That may not be something people are quite as familiar with. Next slide.

So some of the ways that states and school districts -- schools and districts -- can connect with your parent center is we really like for any school districts to share information about -- what the PTI is doing in your community. Share the events and activities that are happening with families directly. Also, you know, it's a resource for staff in your district for training. A lot of the training that families get could also be building the dual capacity of staff. And also consider your PTI as a partner to improve the systems in your state and your schools and your districts for serving children and families. So I know in New Jersey, you know, we partner one to like the project that I direct, but also in many, many other ways in helping, you know, the state really improve all the systems for serving children with disabilities in our state. The PTIs are also a great resource because we're often collecting a lot of data about what families really need, so they may be a spot to turn to really help assist what families need in your state. Next slide.

So I had the opportunity in the Fall to help facilitate a session in Cleveland, along with Sean, who presented earlier, and Amy [INDISCERNIBLE]-Odall, and this is where we met Michel. And the session was for the division of career development and training. And so as part of this, a team of us came up with what we saw as many of the key challenges to engaging families as partners in the secondary transition process. And I -- I don't really have time to go over each of these today, but we developed a session for that day, which had people from states -- state

partners across the country -- and my theory really typically is that the -- the answers to our toughest problems and are most challenging situations like family engagement and transition are really already in the room. So they're already on the call; they're already in our state. And if we could spend a little effort, you know, sort of sharing what is already working and connecting to the resource -- connecting each other to things that are happening -- you know, we could go a long ways with that.

So around each of these, we had a session where people got to rotate around and record and share some of the things that they're doing that are working in their states around each of these challenges. Can you give me the next slide, please?

And so just with time, I just picked the one that was around dual capacity building. So we asked people to think about what were some of the activities that were going on in their own state that were really supporting the development of building both the capacity of parents to partner with schools and the capacity of school personnel to really empower and work with parents as partners. And here are just a few of the things that some people in states across the country, you know, are already doing, they feel like they're working, they're collecting some data on it. And I know that Michael has some contact information for each of these states, you know, if anybody is interested in connecting with them.

So with that, you know, I hope people will take a look at this dual capacity framework or any of the others, and really think about how we can use these frameworks, connect with others in the field, and really move our family engagement activities from sort of random acts of involvement, to much more sustained, respectful programs that really develop that partnership, which many of us believe will have more impact in creating the -- and improving. I think that's it.

>> Great, thank you, Dianne. I appreciate that great presentation on the various frameworks across the country. And with that, I'm going to move to our next presenters, so we're going to go over and turn this over to Cindy and Liz from the PEAL Center.

>> Thank you, Michael. This is Liz Healey. I'm the Executive Director of the PEAL Center. The PEAL Center in October was awarded the statewide Parent and Training Information Center grant. We've been serving as the Parent Training and Information Center that's funded by OSEP in Western and Central Pennsylvania for nine years, and now OSEP has made the decision that there would be one single parent center statewide, and we were awarded that contract and we're thrilled to be able to now expand the work that we've been doing into the East. I'd like to introduce to you Cindy Duch, who is our Director of Parent Advising. Cindy?

>> Thanks, Liz. Based on Michal, Sean, and Dianne for having us today and to Sean, thank you for the support that you give the PEAL Center as a PTI, and for Michael, for the collaborative work that we do with the Pennsylvania Department of Ed and with PaTTAN. We've been mentioning the PEAL Center. PEAL stands for Parent Education and Advocacy Leadership. The mission of the PEAL Center, because this is so important to the work that we do, is to ensure that children, youth, and adults with disabilities and special health care needs: lead rich, active lives and participate as full members of their schools and communities. By providing training, parent leadership development, information and technical assistance based on best practices to individuals, families, and all people who support them.

The PEAL Center does have a real focus on transition. The PEAL Center is statewide, as Liz mentioned, and federally funded. The Parent Training Information Center was funded through the Office for Special Education Programs and serves families through age 26. The PEAL Center specifically has a strong history of work with parents, and we are parents of children with disabilities. The added direction of this new grant is work with transitioning youth and young adult mentors. That work is being done locally and in the state in providing parent and youth leadership.

And as mentioned -- Liz mentioned -- we are now serving the Eastern PA, formerly served by the Parent Education Network. Any school districts who were formerly being assisted by PEN can now call the PEAL Center for assistance. The training and information that the PEAL Center offers is that that enables children to, as [INDISCERNIBLE] says, "...be prepared to lead productive, independent adult lives to the maximum extent possible."

And also the PEAL Center, being the umbrella organization, is also serving families through the Family-to-Family Health Information Center, and this is funded through the Department of Health and Human Services. We assist families through that grant through age 21, working with parents, youth, and healthcare providers in providing medical and information -- medical and insurance information -- to families of children with special health care needs. Can you advance this slide?

Of these two statewide federally funded grants, our focus is to try to provide families with a one-stop shop; one place to go to get the information they need to support their -- their child, or have their child getting that self-determination to -- to have that independence during transition. The Parent Training and Information Center focuses chiefly on education, starting that early intervention, school age, and post-secondary education, assisting with employment and community living. The Family-to-Family grant provides families with access to health care, health insurance, Social Security, medical assistance waivers, and community services.

The transition services that PEAL offers to families includes training on transition and IEPs, better understanding IEPs, how to request collaborate partnering during IEPs. We provide one-on-one consultation, families will call into the PEAL Center looking for information on laws, their rights, and how to plan for IEP meetings. The PEAL Center also offers parent leadership sessions to assist families in advocating on their own. We generally do not provide support at IEP meetings, with the idea of empowering parents to be their child's best advocate. We service the youth through self-advocacy development, understanding their rights and [INDISCERNIBLE] with different agencies, understanding that entitlement to eligibility piece, and through youth leadership institutes and learning advocacy regarding systems change.

The resources that the PEAL Center offers are an online IEP course with a specific transition section, and that anyone can access by going to www.pealcenter.org, go into the Trainings section, and then going to Online Trainings. It's a really great course for families and for educators. *Medical Assistance, SSI, and Waivers* -- it's a webinar that we have for transitioning youth, health care transition video series that's also online, and one of our hallmarks is the PEAL Center Inclusive Communities Conference. This year coming up on March 25th, [INDISCERNIBLE] at the Doubletree, with the keynote speaker being Serena Lowe with the Department of Labor, and she will discuss the vital need for people with disabilities to be in the workforce. This is a -- should be a huge interest to those regarding transition.

>> And Cindy, let me just also, just in thinking about the conference, the -- we designed the conference so that we really feel it's important that we bring together on a level playing field professionals and families, so they hear the same information, they learn the same kind of language or jargon, and we want to prepare folks to be able to come together at IEP meetings and other times to have a -- a shared understanding and a shared language they can use in planning for their -- for a particular child's educational program. So it's a terrific event; we usually have 50% or more of the folks who participate are educators and health care professionals, we just wanted to let everyone as well to know they're welcome at that conference. Thanks, Michael. You can grab the next slide.

>> Now again, similar to what Sean and Dianne had mentioned earlier, there's a lot of support within the PTI community. RAISE, Resources for Access, Independence, Self-Advocacy and Employment Technical Assistance Center, is the technical assistance center that assists PTIs in technical assistance for transition. That's just getting off the ground now with the new -- a new grant -- and we look forward to the support that they can provide to the PTIs. Next slide.

And here's some of the goals that will be used by RAISE to support the PEAL Center and other parent centers. To contact RAISE, there's the phone number and email addresses for the leaders in that project.

The next slide we'll see that REACH, the Resources for Employment, Access, Community Living and Hope, is the regional technical assistance for transition. This is more direct service to families than RAISE, providing assistance to families regarding transition. The purpose includes a Community of Practice that enhances participating parent center capacity, again using RAISE, reach and partnerships around transition and adult service systems. Next slide.

The work that REACH does for families will include information, training, technical assistance, and support to the youth and families around innovative work regarding transition, innovative ideas to assist families. So who should contact the PEAL Center? Families of children with disabilities and special health care needs should contact the PEAL Center. We help families when they call in, via email, and even face-to-face. We have families stopping by the PEAL Center, assisting them with IEPs, evaluations. Friends of children with disabilities and special health care needs, we have agency personnel that will call in order to find out how they can help families, youth with disabilities and special health care needs, especially with the new focus that the PEAL Center has on youth. Professionals in education, health care, and human service fields, in order to better help families and in general, people who support families and children.

Contact information for the PEAL Center -- because we now serve the Eastern part of the state, we now have an office in Philadelphia. And we have a toll free phone number for families to call either of those offices.

>> Okay, great. Thank you, Liz and Cindy. We greatly appreciate the information that you provided and it's really exciting to know about the efforts around secondary transition that the PEAL Center is expanding on in our state. Thank you both.

>> Thanks, Michael.

>> Thanks, Michael.

>> Okay, we next are going to talk briefly about a new resource that the Department of Education Bureau of Special Education through the PaTTAN system developed. It's called the *Planning for the Future Checklist*, and it came out of a concern that as youth and young adults are getting ready to graduate or graduating and moving on to adult life, that there was not an easy flow of information. And as a result of that, through the United Way of Allegheny County, in an initiative that they have developed called 21 Enable, they looked at developing the *Planning for the Future Checklist*.

Now the *Planning for the Future Checklist* was actually a collaborative effort between the Department of Education Bureau of Special Education, the PaTTAN system, representatives from local school districts, involvement of family members, youth and community agencies, as well as support from the PEAL Center. They actually helped in the piloting of the *Planning for the Future Checklist*.

The *Planning for the Future Checklist* is designed to be a roadmap for youth and families to start the discussion on what are those post-secondary goals that a young person has regarding employment, going on for further training, and living independently in their communities. It's designed to be a resource to help the youth and the family and to generate that critical conversation around secondary transition during -- before, during, and after an IEP meeting -- or a meeting with an agency representative.

The *Checklist* addresses top considerations that parents and families and youth have around this whole secondary transition process. And I'm going to take you now actually to the PaTTAN site briefly to show you where you can locate the *Planning for the Future Checklist*, so just give me one second. And you can find it on the PaTTAN website under Secondary Transition, and we have this section under Pennsylvania Community on Transition & Resources, Additional Information, *Planning for the Future Checklist*.

And there is some information regarding the *Checklist*. There is a brief video on its use and then you can go and download the *Checklist*, and there are two versions of the checklist that you can download in a writable PDF. This is what the *Planning for the Future Checklist* looks like. You'll notice that there is a place to put the individual student's name, the date that it is being used, and then you can go through the different discussion point topics.

You'll notice that it's broken down by age spans, so 14 -15 year olds, 15 - 16, 16 - 17, and then 18 to 21. And then on the left-hand side, it's broken into those post-secondary goal areas: further training, employment, and community living. On the reverse side of the *Checklist*, you'll notice at the bottom is information regarding adult agencies. Now, this particular example that I'm showing you is the statewide version, so it lists statewide numbers. Different counties, as well as school districts could also utilize the version of the *Checklist* that allows for them to list the agencies in their particular area.

And again, you can find out more information on the *Planning for the Future Checklist* on the PaTTAN website. I wanted to also let you folks on the call know, especially those in school districts, that we are rolling out the *Planning for the Future Checklist*, a cover letter, and a copy of the *Checklist* was sent to all of the superintendents and CEOs of the school districts, charter schools, and career and tech ed centers across the state. By the end of March, a paper copy of the *Checklist* will be provided to all students ages 14 to 21 years of age, and these actually will be

given to the LEA, the school district, charter school, and career tech ed representative by their BSE advisor. And then we're going to do another follow up by May 15th, just to touch base with the school districts, charter schools, career tech ed centers, to check on the usage of the form.

I wanted to mention too as we're wrapping up today's webinar, some additional resources. Dianne had mentioned the various frameworks that exist for family engagement, and in the PowerPoint that accompanies today's webinar, you'll notice there are links for the *Dual Capacity Building Framework for Family Partnerships*, the *Guideposts for Success*, and the *PTA National Standards*.

I also added and Dianne did mention the Center for Parent Information and Resource, that parent center hub, and that link is listed. Also wanted to mention the *PA Secondary Transition Guide*, which is our secondary transition website for the State of Pennsylvania. You'll find on that site resources for families, youth, and agency members, it really is a hub site in our state for secondary transition.

And then lastly on this slide, I wanted to mention the National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center and their site, which provides information on secondary transition from a -- I'm sorry -- a national perspective. And then finally, the PEAL Center, when they were discussing the various resources that they have, these are the direct links to those resources that Cindy and Liz discussed.

Finally, on the last page, the contact information for our presenters today, so there's information and contact websites for the PEAL Center, the PACER Center, and then SPAN in New Jersey, as well as my contact information. If you have any questions or would like to follow up with any of today's presenters, please feel free to do so. I know they would welcome any questions or comments you may have. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank our presenters today: Cindy Duch and Liz Healey from the PEAL Center, Dianne Malley from the SPAN in New Jersey, and Sean Roy from the PACER Center. Greatly appreciate you taking the time to help us put together this presentation, as well as present this information to our audience here in Pennsylvania. As a reminder to the participants, we will be recording today's session, it will be closed captioned, and it will be posted onto the PaTTAN -- I'm sorry -- PaTTAN website, underneath of the Family Engagement section. Thank you and have a great rest of today.