ROUGH DRAFT FORMAT

INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY INCLUSION-UMASS BOSTON

CLEARING WAY TO EMPLOYMENT: COLLABORATION WITH TRANSITION AND SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF (ZOOM)

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>> DeBRITTANY: Good morning! Welcome to the webinar Clearing the way to employment: How transition and special education staff are facilitating career development opportunities for students with disabilities. My name is DeBrittany Mitchell a knowledge translation associate at Institute for Community Inclusion. I will help facilitate the technological end of today's webinar.

If you look at the right‑hand corners of your screens, you see a chat box projected there. Feel free to type your questions and any comments throughout the webinar presentation. All questions will be addressed throughout the presentation and also at the end.

In addition, this webinar is being recorded and closed captioned. Without further ado, I would like to hand it over to Lara Enein‑Donovan, who will introduce today's webinar and speakers. Thank you for joining.

>> LARA ENEIN-DONOVAN: Welcome today, we're excited to have three renowned speakers with us to talk about transition services, helping people with disabilities to move into career paths. As DeBrittany said, you can use the Chat box to type in questions you have. I'll be monitoring the Chat box and announce any questions posted for these speakers today. This webinar is brought to us in partnership with the Department of Developmental Services here in Massachusetts. We're excited to be able to share information about this topic. And as DeBrittany said, we have closed captioning and this is being recorded. At the end of this webinar, we will be sending you a link that you can click on to fill out a very short evaluation form to help let us know what you liked about this webinar, what you would like to see us do differently next time. It's helpful if you're able to fill that out.

We also will be emailing a copy of the PowerPoint slides after this presentation as well.

So, at this point I'm going to go ahead and turn it over to Maria.

Maria, you have to unmute yourself. Maria, you need to unmute yourself, Maria.

>> MARIA PAIEWONSKY: Can you hear me now?

Sorry. I lost my ability for muting or unmuting, so...

If everyone can hear me now... I see heads shaking. I can't hear anybody else. Thank you very much, everyone. Just so you snow, when I'm looking at our presentation, I'm looking straight at you. When I'm looking at my colleagues, I'm over here looking, so I'm not losing ‑‑ I'm not not paying attention, I'm just looking at my colleagues.

So first of all, my name is Maria Paiewonsky, and I direct a program here at UMass Boston, training people for the transition specialist endorsement in Massachusetts. I have a lot of experience working with people in the schools and in the community working on transition. And I'm going to turn it over to my two co‑presenters. First, Jerri Roach, if you would like to introduce yourself.

>> JERRI ROACH: I'm Jerri Roach, the Transition Coordinator for the Worcester public school district and I oversee an program students 18 to 22 years old. We support about 70 students there, as well as district‑wide specialists, consulting to the district on transition. So... welcome!

>> MARIA PAIEWONSKY: Thank you. And Sherry Elander.

>> SHERRY ELANDER: Hi, I'm Sherry Elander, transition specialist for the Westfield Public Schools. I've been here for 20 years. I currently run a community‑based program as well. We currently have 27 students. I also consult throughout our district, and also I am the liaison to Westfield State University and a community college through the Massachusetts inclusive concurrent enrollment program.

>> MARIA PAIEWONSKY: Excellent. Thank you. So, today this webinar is meant to kind of share some ideas that we have learned along the way both with Sherry and Jerri being such experienced veteran transition specialists, working with community programs and state agency staff, adult service staff in the community, and then the work that I'm doing training people, as well as projects that I have with Sherry and Jerri. We are identifying seven strategies that we think transition specialists and special educators could be using with our partners in the community, the community we have providers, as well as school staff and students and parents, to promote career development. So, what we are going to do today is just walk you through these seven strategies, after I give you just a little bit of information, but in general what we're looking at is establishing some very regular communication between all of these partners so that we all know what we're doing. Forming a community‑based employment team and both Sherry and Jerri are going to explain different ways that they have done this. Ways that you could be conferring and working on transition assessment together and on transition planning forms. We see that as another way that we could be better collaborating together.

Jerri and Sherry both have ways of collecting information, preparing staff in schools and out of schools on employment preparation and Jerri is going to talk about employment information forms that she uses, and Sherry is going to talk about the ways that she's also collecting that very same information. Then we're going to talk a little bit about ways that we can collaborate on planning solutions for transportation and for job coaching support.

And then finally, ways that we can be collaborating better on professional development back to the school staff around job and career development. Because we know that our partners out in the community have a lot of experience in this area.

So that's basically what we're going to walk you through. And then... but just, if you don't mind, I'm going to give you a little bit of information for maybe some of you who already know this, or know some of it, but I think it's important just to understand from the school side of things the obligations that IEP teams have to promote college career readiness for students with disabilities, and that really comes out of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act. So I just want to walk through just a little bit of an orientation to the schools' work.

So first of all, it's important to know that there are transition requirements that are really looking at career development and college preparation for students with disabilities, even students with more significant disabilities. And really IDEA or the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act is already saying that by the time a student is 16, and in Massachusetts that's 14, you really need to be identifying measurable postsecondary goals for students that are based on appropriate transition assessments that are related to education or training, employment, and, where appropriate, independent living skills.

And just so you know, somebody is already ask "Is this implemented in all states?"

This is required. This is a national ‑‑ this is a federal law, so this really is meant for everybody.

The other part of that is that the law is really ‑‑ this federal law, IDEA, is really saying that transition services needs to include a course of study that is really helping students prepare for these goals. And what that means is that by the time a student is age 14, the IEP team should be looking at that IEP that everything we're teaching the student is helping them prepare for their goals. That's really the way IEP should be looked at, by the time the student is 14 in Massachusetts, and some other states, or at least 16 in some other states.

Now, what transition services really means is that, first, you have a coordinated set of activities. That means that the IEP team and anybody else they invite into that team meeting is saying, everything that we're doing, we are doing in collaboration to help this young person pursue and prepare for their goals.

The law is also saying it has to be result oriented. It can't be a vague thing like "we hope this person is going to be prepared to pursue that goal." It really needs to be you're providing evidence that every year you are trying to create goals that are helping students to build knowledge and skills and experiences that are helping them to prepare for their post‑school activities. Also, that the services that students are getting have to take into account students' preferences, strengths and interests. That means that from the beginning you are bringing students and families into these conversations and really talking about what they want to do, what they like to do, especially when a young person is young, they don't necessarily know what they're good at, and having a process like person‑centered planning or whole‑life planning, where you're bringing so many people into the meeting to help a student understand what they're good at and maybe what they have said in the past, they really don't like, those are the kinds of things you want to take into account when you are doing some planning with students.

And then finally, the law is really saying that we really need to be thinking about age‑appropriate instruction, community experiences, and services.

So taking a look at what is a typical 18‑year‑old is doing, that's what you want to be looking at. How and what ways can we accommodate a student to follow along with activities to resemble what their peers without disabilities are pursuing.

All right. Let's see...

Now, when you're thinking about this and the laws, the Office of Special Education Programs, the federal Office of Special Education, has a Technical Assistance Center for transition specialists, and really this center is meant to be for states that are trying to do transition well and follow the law. It's for the state agencies. It's for the local education agencies. It's for transition specialists. It's for special ed teachers. It's really for anybody that is really trying to do their work well and really follow the spirit of the law. And so what they have created, this national center is called the National Technical Assistance Center on Transition, a mouthful, which people often refer to as NTACT. The NTACT Center identifies a number of indicators, and I'm just going to quickly review the first four indicators that said, if you're doing transition well, you are taking into account these eight things. And today we're going to talk about just how four of them relate to the partnerships we have in the community.

In other words, this is the ideal. That a student has a transition plan, and that you are going to see IEP teams that are taking into account what a student says they want, starting with that orange circle. That once they say what they want, teams are then doing transition assessments to say, okay, the student wants to do this. Where are their skills now? And what do we need then to do to help them better prepare for those goals?

Then the measurable postsecondary goal says, okay, we've done transition assessments. We're going to now break down some goals around education and training, employment or independent living. And those IEPs now reflect measurable postsecondary goals, along with shorter smaller goals for annual goals. Then we have collaboration with outside agencies when appropriate. And that is very much evident as the students are getting to be 18 and older. You are putting this together with transition services and the student, as I said before, the course of study is reflecting, we are doing everything we can to prepare the student for their goals.

I think I'm going to turn it over to Jerri and Sherry. They both brought up an important point here. You're going to see this look a little differently in every school. I don't know if one of you wants to comment on that.

>> SHERRY ELANDER: Yes. Hi. It's Sherry. I've noticed with my work in collaboration with area transition specialists, districts currently have a range of services and actually where the services are being provided. For example, our program six years ago was fortunate enough to find a home base for our program. Up until that time, we were functioning out of the high school building. Now we have our outside facility where we're able to meet with student, have a home base where students come and go. They don't spend the full day in our building. They are being supported at college and work and other things.

So we have that. Then we have the school systems who are moving towards that model, who are in the process of developing a way to have their students out in the community. And then we have the schools that still, depending on the size of their district, have students who are being served still within a school setting. There's a lot of different things that come into play. Transportation is really a hindrance for a lot of the districts for being able to move out into the community, but I am seeing here in Western Mass that last year, two districts opened up community‑based programs. So we're seeing it move more and more towards that model.

>> JERRI ROACH: Hi, this is Jerri. I would just like to add that I know our district is very large. And when I look at my community‑based program for students that are 18 to 22, the majority of them are non‑diploma students. So it really allows us a lot more freedom to be creative about what students' individual schedules look like. And I just want to remind agencies that might be collaborating with schools, as Maria said, the diagram up here really is best practice. As you go into a lot of the schools, you probably are not always going to find that. Not all the schools have the luxury of having the time to work with students. Because we're not just looking with students, non‑diploma students. We're looking at students earning high school diplomas, and the challenge there is it really limits the school's ability at times to focus on some of these transition pieces. So if you're an outside agency coming in to work with diploma students, that can be more of a challenge around making those connections and the experiences that the students may or may not have had.

>> MARIA PAIEWONSKY: Thank you, Jerri, and Sherry. I think I'm going to put in a plug. That's why we're trying to get so many people trained, because a lot of people don't have this training either, and we really do want this to be that every student is going to get this. And I think Sherry and Jerri have both told me in the past that the more they do the work, the more other people say "I want this for my son or daughter," and that means we need to get more and more people trained to do this. And we also need many more people to help us, which is a great reason to have community providers in part of this conversation.

All right, I'm going to move us on.

The way that we document transition here in Massachusetts is through ‑‑ this is, again, NTACT and the federal Office of Special Education requires states to report on how well they are doing this. So, they do have to report to what extent they are putting these transition practices into place.

And in Massachusetts, we have a mandated form called the Transition Planning Form. And that is basically our indicator 13 checklist. That is what Massachusetts uses to report on these activities. So we are using this form. Other states are using the Indicator 13 Checklist from NTACT as a way of documenting transition.

So, the reason I'm pointing this out is just to say, schools are required to report to the extent that they are doing transition services.

So these four things that I just want to point out today, so that you see how community partners could be helping is the IEP teams have to make sure that students have measurable postsecondary goals or vision, and that means that you have asked a student what they want. By the time they're 14, you are asking them, what would you like to see? Do you have some ideas about what kind of job you would want to have?

And then if you know that, I wonder what kind of education or training you're thinking about pursuing.

And also if it's appropriate, what kind of independent living are you thinking about? Do you think you're always going to live at home? Do you think you might be living in an apartment? And then from there being able to think, what kind of skills do they need to do that?

The point is that every student has to have policies secondary goals at least addressed, education or training and employment. So that's important for people to understand, that schools are already kind of ‑‑ they have to prioritize this.

>> SHERRY ELANDER: So what I usually talk to a lot of people about is to know where you're going you need to know where you're going. So you need to begin with the end in mind. So, for us, when we get these postsecondary goals, that helps us map out what services they need, what connections we need to make, how long they're going to be provided services through the schools. What other services are out there so we're not duplicating our efforts.

So this is a great roadmap for us, beginning at age 14 is ideal. I'm finding that's not necessarily always the case. Sometimes people really look towards the 18 to 22 period as really being when the law should be followed. So, again, it depends district‑by‑district on when we're really looking at postsecondary goals and really the connection to the development of the IEP and helping them to plan their life.

>> MARIA PAIEWONSKY: Thank you.

>> JERRI ROACH: One of the things we always say around postsecondary goals is that at age 14, goals are probably going to look a lot different at 14 than they are 18, 19, 20. And that family and staff and students really need to begin to kind of work with students to kind of delve and explore, even if it's through conversations or career fears or guest speakers coming in or research that students are doing in the classroom on different fields. Because the sooner we can get them thinking, the better it will be for them in the future for planning. And I even say "before 14". I say to parents, when you're going into a store, when you're going somewhere, it's a great opportunity to talk to your child about... oh, what kind of jobs do we see in this environment? And what is that person doing? Do you think you would enjoy doing that?

A lot of it to me is common sense that we don't always do at an early age. And I think that would really help us.

>> SHERRY ELANDER: Jerri, would you agree that a couple ‑‑ from my experience, what I have found to be the two areas that we really do need to pay attention to earlier is in the area of having families understand what transportation options are going to look like and how that is going to change their life. And also around help, having young people who have ‑‑ who are taking medications that are prescribed, have health issues, to help start thinking and planning on how they're going to manage those independently. I found those two areas can be pretty big stumbling blocks when they come to me, if those conversations especially haven't happened.

>> JERRI ROACH: Yes, I definitely agree with that, Sherry. And I wouldn't even just look at those two areas. I look at everything, from personal care to stranger danger safety.

>> SHERRY ELANDER: Exactly.

>> JERRI ROACH: These are areas that people seem to wait until 18, and then at 18, I hate to say it's almost too late. We do the best we can, but it really needs to start ‑‑ I always say that transition really ‑‑ I used to say it starts the first day of school. But I really do say it should start at birth, truly. Because it's what we're doing with our other children, so why wouldn't we be doing it with children with disabilities?

>> SHERRY ELANDER: Exactly.

>> JERRI ROACH: We do have to think about it a little bit more. With non‑disabled children, oftentimes ‑‑ again, it's just common sense things you're doing.

>> MARIA PAIEWONSKY: So I think you can see both Sherry and Jerri are highlighting from the school end of things. They are really trying to put their heads around this career development very early, sometimes as early as birth.

And this point I don't even have to put too much time into this, because both Sherry and Jerri have already talked about this. Jerri was in particular just saying how students at 14 might not really Noel exactly what they want. Well, the law actually recognizes that and says, right, that's why you're going to do this every single year. And the reason for ‑‑ starting at 14 and putting that transition plan and form together at 14 is to say that we as a team are paying attention, we are preparing this young person and we know it's going to take time, and we know they're going to change their minds, and we are ready to change course with them. That's a really important reason why this is updated annually.

The other thing ‑‑ and we're going to talk about the importance and where we see this interconnection with people helping with transition assessment. The law requires that we actually are doing transition assessment, and it's not limited to just the IEP team. That's the beauty of transition assessment. Transition specialists are seeking information, they're seeking assessment tools in a lot of different places. Because we are looking at skills that might be happening at home. We're looking at skills that might be occurring in the community, as well as school‑based skills. And where students are building knowledge. So transition assessment, again, is meant to be based on age appropriate tools that are used to help develop these policies secondary goals and used to help identify strengths as well as the needed skills that students have. And these can be formal and informal. And we'll talk to you about the formal and informal ways, we're going to show examples, but we definitely see that our partners in the community can be contributing toward transition assessment.

And then finally, again, what transition services are, these are the ‑‑ what you should see in the IEP and from the school side, what the IEP teams are doing, are responsible for, is that they are reasonably enabling a student to meet their postsecondary goals. It doesn't mean that by the time a student leaves the school, the school is saying, good, we got you into that job, we got you into that particular college and we got you into an apartment, but it does mean they have been able to document, we are doing what we can to help prepare you, to help build the skills and knowledge you need to pursue those goals. And luckily we're collaborating with our partners in the community so that they can then help to take the lead in further developing those skills and knowledge and those experiences.

But, when we are talking about transition services, as you can see on the right‑hand side of this, we're talking about instruction. We're talking about related service. We can be talking about community experience, employment experiences, post‑school adult living, adult living skills, and maybe a functional vocational evaluation. That's what IDEA is telling us can be part of transition services, all right?

So with that said, that kind of ‑‑ I don't want to take too much time. I just want to say, from the school side, they are thinking about it, but it doesn't mean we don't need some support and expertise from the community.

As an example of transition services, I'm just going to point out, this is what transition services could look like, especially for the older students. It needs to be coordinated, as we said. It needs to be results oriented. It has to account for students' preferences and has to be age appropriate. So in this case we have a student named Carmen who wants to go to college here in Massachusetts with the conclusive concurrent enrollment. That's a true possibility, to go to college. She wants to work in a print shop. And she wants to learn independent travel.

So, when you're looking at education, employment and independent living, what this IEP team is doing is helping the student to get into an Intro to Graphics Arts class and writing courses. From an employment perspective, they've given her an opportunity to do an internship in a print shop two days a week. And for independent living skills, they're helping her to learn public transportation. And as you can see in the left‑hand column, who is supporting those goals is a team of people, which includes a transition specialist, a community rehab provider, someone from assistive technology is helping, and in this case career book specialist who is helping to make connections with the jobs in the community.

So it really is a team effort, and this is just, you know, one example of how a team of people both from the school and outside of school are working to support a student's goals.

All right, now we're going to move into these seven strategies. And I am going to introduce each one and then I'm going to turn it over to Sherry and Jerri to talk about.

So the first one is this regular ‑‑ establishing regular communication between the students and parents, CRPs and school staff. Which would like to start with this? You both have examples.

>> SHERRY ELANDER: I'll go ahead and start.

>> MARIA PAIEWONSKY: Thank you, Sherry.

>> SHERRY ELANDER: Thank you. So since we are looking at students from 14 to 22, the day in the life of a transition specialist and program in the community is much different from a program that is in the school that has the constraints of the classroom, the bells, the milling about in the building, especially teachers tied to their classrooms. They usually have one period for prepping for classes. So special ed teachers in the traditional sense do not have a lot of time to be collaborating, making connections, following up with people. So finding creative ways to help make sure that we're keeping an open mind about time constraints for everyone involved.

Intercommunication is extremely important. Working with our outside agencies, we touch base quite frequently, in person, via email. We even have each other's phone numbers and text each other, participating in combined workshops and conferences. Another thing with schools, they have different rules of who can contact students while they're in school. So making sure you understand the policy of the district and making sure you plan ahead of time, find out who in the district it is you need to be able to connect with in order to be able to have access. Often schools will create even a space for people to come in and consult with students in our district. We do have that. We open up our buildings to space for people to come in and work with the student.

And so that's ‑‑ and having the ongoing communication of what is working, what is not working, and I know that Jerri has some things that she does. Jerri...

>> JERRI ROACH: Sorry. One of the things I would say first off is, within every ‑‑ each school oftentimes has a different personality. And really for outside agencies, to really work to find the best connection in each one of those schools. Because that can vary. In one school it might be ‑‑ for example, in our high schools, each high school has a special ed department head. So it might be that person.

Some schools' principals can be really concerned about who is wanting to know... who is coming in and out of their school and what is this meeting on?

So just to kind of be aware to get the lay of the land. Schools always are very conscious of risk and making sure that everything happening is okay and that students are safe. So, to be aware of that, that's one thing I say.

Another thing that I always say, my background was first in rehab. And I remember when I was a rehab provider dealing with schools. And I would say... these people, they don't return phone calls. They don't return emails, what are they doing?

And so as an outside agency, again, to keep in mind that within the school system, in the classroom situation, people's schedules are very tight. They often have limited time, or might not even have access to a phone unless they use their own cell phones at time.

So, again, really it behooves people to find in each school you're dealing with, who is the best connecting person? It might be that classroom teacher. It might be a department head. It might be an assistant principal. It might be one teacher that really seems to get transition and rehab, and that could be the champion. So it really is looking in each environment to see what is going to make the most sense.

>> MARIA PAIEWONSKY: Thank you both. I do think this is really important. This is the first strategy that you both identified, is how important it is for people to be communicating with each other, understanding how challenging it is for everybody to find, like, the common time. And one thing that I was suggesting is finding ways from other transition specialists who have been in this program that I am in, that I direct, they have used a lot of great strategies, like using Google Docs to share between people, or meeting in person before or after school. I know people that have been meeting at 7:15 in the morning and I know for some people they're already starting to teach, but it might be a time to meet with people. You have to be kind of flexible with school staff.

Okay... so let's move on. The next one is... is it not moving?

I don't know if somebody can help me, because it's not moving.

Ah, here we go. Thank you.

The next strategy is to form a community‑based employment team. Both Sherry and Jerri have different ways of doing this. Jerri, would you like to start with talking about your community, your experience with community teams?

>> JERRI ROACH: Sure. I can tell you what we used to do and how successful it was, what we currently do now and what we need to build on. I can tell you the good, the bad, and the not‑so‑good probably.

I think we were most successful in supporting students when we are a smaller program and I have less staff and students to juggle. We had an employment team, and we also were working with just one agency, outside rehab agency, and we would meet on a regular basis with that agency and we would work together to first identify the students that we thought for various reasons made the most sense to begin work with on employment. And then we meet individual teams, with the student involved, the transition specialist involved, the parents involved, and the outside agency.

And we would really do kind of a mini‑person‑centered planning around what the students' interests are. We would work together on developing ‑‑ finalizing kind of the resume and portfolio and helping gathering references. Really it was the outside rehab agency and the transition program working very closely together with the student and family. And I saw that very successful.

We also at times shared staff too. Initially it would be the rehab agency that would provide the job coaching. Over time, though, if they were running out of funds, I would agree to free up staff to help do some of that job coaching also. And we also worked a lot on supporting that outside agency and who the student was and what the skills were and how they learned best. At times, also, we were the ones that might be making that connection to a potential employer, because we're out in the community a lot. I'd say a strength sometimes of the school system might not be actually doing the business end of developing a job, but we have a lot of community connections, so kind of sharing that and walking with the agency through that process helped a lot.

Currently we have gotten so large and we are now also working with multiple outside rehab agencies, that it has become more of a challenge. So one of the things I think we shared later that we created that we're working on is the concept of an employment information form that will be shared with all the parties involved and then getting back again to those meetings.

I also do a community agency meeting once a month. My interagency meeting, with MRC and DDS, and Independent Living Centers and other agencies that might make sense, we're addressing systemic transition as well as individual student transition needs in those meetings. So that's an ongoing one we do. And out of that we also identify some of those other needs.

>> MARIA PAIEWONSKY: Thank you, Jerri. Sherry, did you want to add to this?

>> SHERRY ELANDER: Yes. So I agree with Jerri. When the program was smaller, it was much easier to balance. So some of the ways that we've been able to sustain our connections has been, as I've gotten more students and the different agencies and additional staffing to work with my program, I went from just working with one individual from each agency to now more than one. So keeping the connections, remembering who is connected to whom. So a couple of things that we do is we have a consortium that is building here in Western Mass of transition specialists. We have partnered with three bordering districts and we have border interagency team meetings, because we're served by the same providers. And so we meet quarterly. We rotate the district that is highlighted for each one. And then we also, in addition to that, have monthly transition specialist meetings where we invite in the speakers and representatives from this past January, we had a whole group of people coming in that represent the programs through Mass Rehab Commission. The month before we had the assistant direct for DDS. So we work that way.

In addition to my individual meetings and how we work within our program meeting with people, our community has formed what is an alliance with our Chamber of Commerce. So once a month I attend a meeting that has combined representation from the community and from the Westfield Public Schools, and, again, we work on guest speakers, topics that are new, but also we break into groups based on the age category. So one group works with the younger population. One group focuses on the middle school age. And then I work with the high school and beyond. And we work together to host a career fair once a year. And, again, being able to work with the business community to have a better awareness of all the students we're providing services for.

>> JERRI ROACH: One thing I want to add, Sherry, that made me think that I throw out to people too. One important thing we've done is gotten involved with the workforce investment board and the youth council, and I have a staff person that is a member of that youth council, which has really helped, number one, to move forth the concept of individuals with disabilities being viable for employment, for volunteering, for being real community members. It's allowed us to get our feet in the door for various programs that normally our students would have been excluded from, like youth fields and youth works, and different youth activities that go on in the city that we in the past either weren't aware of or weren't allowed to be involved in.

So I say to outside rehab agencies, if you're not involved in that, that is something to kind of check out, either that or your Chamber of Commerce stuff like Sherry also does.

>> SHERRY ELANDER: I'm glad you mentioned about the youth council, because I'm a member of that too and I totally forgot to mention that. And also with the WIAO and Westfield Public Schools is the vendor for the summer youth works program, so that is a big piece as well. We're also able to support students with disability to work in the summer by matching them up with their able‑bodied peers as job coaches.

So, thank you for pointing that out, Jerry.

>> LARA ENEIN-DONOVAN: I wanted to step in here is a second. Pamela Jenkins had a question that really kind of relates to this topic that we're talking about right now. She asked: Are you working with vocational rehabilitation? Assuming like mass Rehab ‑‑ for transition services offered for job readiness training?

Maybe Jerri and Sherry, can you talk maybe about the connection and the collaboration you have with Mass Rehab?

>> JERRI ROACH: In Worcester we work with Mass Rehab on the pre‑ETS program as well as other initiatives. They are part of the interagency team that I host monthly and, again, we work on some of those system transition and youth‑related issues, as well as individual transition needs. They've worked real closely with DDS to help in the sharing and blending of funds, which is really kind of exciting. There are other districts that hear that and say, "Wow, how is that happening?"

MRC is very involved with us on employment initiatives, and the job readiness piece. And now with... and I don't know... probably providers are aware of this, the change in the pre‑ETS are different because they need to support more individuals at a younger age with disabilities, so we're walking through that process with them now and kind of giving advice, too, which is good.

>> LARA ENEIN-DONOVAN: Can you describe or define what pre‑ETS stands for? Somebody was asking if you could explain what PreETS is.

>> JERRI ROACH: PreETS is a preemployment initiative that ‑‑ as part of federal funds, Mass Rehab is required to allocate 15% of funds to youth with disabilities. And how they've chosen to do that over time, a big component of that is the PreETS program. It has just recently changed, so Sherry and Maria, feel free to chime in at any point. In the past, a lot of emphasis had been in the part that my staff and students really liked was while a student was still in school, the PreETS program was doing some job readiness workshops, and then doing paid internships in the community.

That has changed because there has been a mandate that they now begin to support students at a younger age, at age 14 to align with Massachusetts laws.

So in order to do that, they're not getting additional funds. So what they've done is they have kind of stepped back and said, okay, for the majority of students, it looks like the paid internship piece won't be as strong because they need to support more individuals, and it will be looking more like job readiness workshops. They tell me they are going to be as individualized as possible.

I know in our area, the agency ‑‑ the adult agency that is assigned to us, I'm hoping to work with them on developing what might make sense for our students. And in the past, a student had to be an MRC client to be able to access PreETS. In the new form of PreETS, that is not the case. They are not being referred to MRC initially. The referral is going to go directly to that adult rehab agency. MRC would be aware of them and may have some decision making in who does and who doesn't, but it's not ‑‑ they're not a client of MRC at that point. That's probably confusing information then.

>> LARA ENEIN-DONOVAN: Maria, do you have other additional stuff to add to that?

>> MARIA PAIEWONSKY: I know the primary reason for a change is to make sure that all potential students could have some pre‑employment training services, and that's why it looks a little bit different. It doesn't preclude people from being able to provide some students with some paid employment experience. It's really how the individual providers are using their budget. That's what I've heard from MRC. So I know it's a little different in every district. I'm going to move us on, if that's okay, just because we have five more strategies we want to share. But I would say that for people that are ‑‑ and everybody probably has some opportunity for pre‑employment transition services through their local VR office. Forming a community‑based employment team with the school and these providers to do this work would probably be an excellent use of the team. I'm just going to end there with that.

All right. Again, I'm having trouble getting my slides to move forward, if somebody can help me.

Here we go...

The next thing is that, as I said before, transition assessments are required for transition age students, so IEP teams are focused on transition assessment. They really are meant to be ongoing assessments, not ‑‑ they're not meant to be three‑year evals and not meant to be something you do once a year. They are meant to be ways you're collecting information all along the way to inform teams about students' status. What we have done is brainstormed a number of ways that our community partners could be assisting and do assist with transition assessment. So what we have the travel and mobility skills in which many people may be contributing to that. Safety and community awareness. Job skill assessment. Job endurance or independence. Assisting with online applications, the skills that you need to do online applications.

Using social media. Some of these are going to have Jerri and Sherry zone in on a little bit. The way students communicate. Their problem‑solving skills. Following directions and using technology and accommodations. All of these are work readiness skills. And these are things that IEP teams are looking at, but they also could be using information that could come from their community partners.

So Sherry or Jerri, on that list, is there anything that you might want to ‑‑ I know that both of you have talked about helping students to understand the use of social media.

>> LARA ENEIN-DONOVAN: Sherry and Jerri, if you could highlight an example where you have connected with a community provider to help students with this? Because that was another question: Can they share specific examples how they collaborated?

>> SHERRY ELANDER: Sure. First I want to highlight one key important point. It's very important for us as school people to get the perspective from people who don't know our students. Often we are with the same students for 1 to 4 years. So working with our audit agencies to identify, from their perspective, from their professional judgment, what ‑‑ you know, how they see them as an employee is very, very helpful.

So looking at the list here, I could highlight a lot of them, I think what I'll talk about is the travel and mobility skills. Because that, again, is one of the biggest barriers. So we work with our local transit authority, working with a travel trainer. In our program, of the 27 students, 15 qualify for what some people call "the ride," the paratransit service, the door‑to‑door service. About half my students. The other half do not. So it's working on helping our young people move away from the school bus to the type of transportation that they're going to need to be sustainable. So we work with our local travel trainer, who we didn't have one for many years, so we figured out ourselves. And she has really been instrumental in helping us with some of the students who traditionally would need the paratransit, but we have been able to train them to use the traditional fixed group PTDA bus. Working with her, she does amazing assessment, gives us great feedback. She will test for safety and stranger danger by, you know, making herself not visible and showing up unexpectedly, having a couple of coworkers test our students to see how much information they would give to a stranger, things like that.

So that has been extremely helpful. We also work with our local community police department, again, to help them understand who our young people are and to help guide us in ways that we can help teach them and have them connected to our public safety folks and how to reach out to them if they were in need. Because it's fairly new that this age group is out and about during the school day. Traditionally they've been in a high school.

So, again, really working with our community members in addition to our various adult service agencies. It really is a community effort, a combined effort.

>> JERRI ROACH: One of the areas that I see as a challenge for our students is building that independence. And so one of the areas I think we've been able to work with outside agencies on is that concept of fading back, and sometimes we might have some tools that they're not used to using or maybe they haven't used with a certain student. For example, you know, having a student that isn't able to tell time and a parent who is like, well, no, he can't take the paratransit because he can't tell time to know when to go out to get his ride and things like this. over time what we taught the student and got the provider involved in helping with this is how to use the cell phone as an alarm. Okay, 12:15, my ride is coming, so I have to set my alarm. And what we trained, if the alarm goes off and my cab isn't here, then his mom's number was plugged into his phone, and then he would call his mom.

Because for this young man, there's no way he would have been able to call paratransit and get through that whole crazy system of wondering where his ride was. So without kind of beginning that process with the adult agency, I don't think this was a young man who ever would have been able to work independently.

So we kind of look at trying to use simple tools like that. For some things ‑‑ it's a young man who wouldn't remember to wear his uniform on a certain day and show up to work not having the proper clothes. So it was nice to begin the process really of a morning or nighttime task analysis, on his phone again, a picture chart or words, depending on the student, of what he needs to have ready in the morning. You know, his ID, his para tickets, you know, what he needed for a uniform for that day. Those are the kinds of things that helped the student be successful. Because I oftentimes say, it's usually the job that our students can do. It's almost soft skills that they need supports for. And if we can't work together to figure out how to get around that, or how to accommodate that, they're never going to be able to be independent in the workplace and hold down a job.

>> MARIA PAIEWONSKY: Thank you. We have about 15 more minutes before we ask you to do a poll, maybe 20 minutes. I'm going to move us along a little bit. The next one, I'm going to be patient as I wait for this to move and not panic that it's not going to move.

Okay. I'm just ‑‑ very quickly some examples of the kinds of transition assessments. These are some assessments that transition specialists have identified that they use. So you'll see that a lot of them are from the person‑centered planning perspective, informal tools. They might be looking at academic skills or college career readiness skills. These are all very important skills. When we think about partnering with our community partners, I'm just going to say, for example, I'm just going to take Sherry's example about safety in the community and partnering with the safety awareness or police in the community. You can imagine how they might be able to help inform. What would it mean to prepare and assess somebody's safety skills in the community. So this isn't something on this list, but with assistance from a community provider, you could see about how you could better inform assessment by partnering with someone who has better assessment tools.

So these are just some examples that people use.

I think I just figured out... okay.

The example that ‑‑ we have three examples of how assessments are used for preparing students for work. The one in the middle is a young man named Brandon, and maybe ‑‑ I don't know if Jerry, in like one minute, you might be able to walk people through some of the assessment tools that might have been used to help this person with his goals.

>> JERRI ROACH: Sure. I think probably the biggest tool ‑‑ two tools we used here, observation, situational assessment. Brandon started doing the job he currently has as an intern, and his dream of dreams was to have this job. And there were a lot of road blocks in the way. And really Brandon had to prove to the company that he could do the job. And we kind of had to support him in doing that. So those situational assessments and work‑based learning plan really were helpful in working with the director of dietary to really look and see, okay, what are his skills in and what are the areas where you have some concerns?

And we would sit with that director in with Brandon and the three of us would sit and review that. And then the job coach would be involved, and from there we kind of build on that. Okay, so what are the areas we need to work on? And it involved a lot of task analysis that he had on his home and thing like this.

He went through the food safety serve curriculum and past that. Again, we used the job coach to help support him through that and study for that.

When it came ‑‑ he also had a desire for his learner's permit and driving. He went to the Independent Living Center for living and working and got his learner's permit and support to get accommodations to take that test. And then Mass Rehab provided the funds to do the driving classes.

He also ‑‑ while he was doing all of that, we also continued to support him in learning to use a city bus, because sometimes you might not have a car, or if you don't get your license after all of this. So he now actually is working with some of our students and being a mentor and travel training them he's gotten so good at it.

So those are some ideas of some of the ‑‑ that work‑based learning plan for this situation really was good, because I think it really put him on the company, too, that, look, he's got a lot of great skills, but also put it on us and the company and Brandon to... okay, these things he needs to work on, and how can we work together to figure this out?

>> MARIA PAIEWONSKY: Thank you. I think the one thing I'm going to say about Brandon before we move on is, when you think about how a lot of times people feel like, in the school side of things or even on the community side, they might feel like they need to have these very formal tools for assessment, but when you look at Brandon's, you can see, these are not formal tools. These are functional. These are really targeted tools that are helping the team, the IEP team and community team, to really understand the student's skills. So driver's permit test is a great assessment tool, as well as the driving lesson. The serve safe assessment is a great assessment.

Informal interviews with family, because this young man was living in his own apartment. Those are good tools and a work base learning plan. I just want to say this is a really good example of how you really have to customize assessment tools, and everyone can help with that.

All right... the next thing is really just kind of contributing towards these IEP goals. Remember that the teams are responsible for coming up with these measurable postsecondary goals and annual goals, and there's lots of ways that partners can help to kind of shape IEP goals.

I don't know, Sherry, if you want to take an example here to talk about that.

>> SHERRY ELANDER: Hi! I had to unmute.

Yeah, so I think a really great example was a couple years ago we had a young lady who ended up getting an intern ‑‑ a paid internship, and was able to work for a local collaborative, a jewelry, a creative arts kind of collaborative jewelry. While she was there, the lady who put the collaborate together took her under her wing and realized she had creative aptitudes and wanted to learn how to do macramé. This young girl ‑‑ we'll call her Paula ‑‑ she learned to do it that she ended up getting her own space in the collaborate and had the same duties as other people, responsible for pricing her items, to display them, to interact with the customers and keep her ledger of items that she sold.

So at her IEP meeting, the woman who was her mentor was invited by the family to join at the IEP meeting. What was amazing was the woman brought an example of Paula's very first work and also an example of what she was doing currently. And talk about jaws dropping on some of my colleagues who just did not have an awareness of the potential of a student who did not pass the MCAST, who requires one‑to‑one support for a pretty complicate medical issue. It was amazing.

You know, and I think of that often. Also, working with a local ‑‑ we collaborate with an owner of a local driving school, and so he allows us to use his space during the school day because he doesn't have customers then. And my staff and I provide the classes for some students to kind of see who might be able to pass their permit and go on to get it. And this gentleman does informal assessments as well and takes us aside and really helps us to really determine who really does have the potential to go on to driving school, to go on for their permit, and we don't ever say "no" to any young person who might want to study for their permit. That has been tremendous. With his support and guidance we've had several students get their permit and a few of them also get their license. So that's been really amazing as well.

>> MARIA PAIEWONSKY: Thank you. Jerri, we can move on and maybe you can take on an example from the next slide, if that's okay. Just so we can ‑‑

>> JERRI ROACH: Sure.

>> MARIA PAIEWONSKY: Just so you know ‑‑ and thank you, Sherry, because that's a great example of an employer coming and helping to shape what a good employment goal is for this young woman.

There's a lot of ways that we were thinking and we've seen that people can contribute to IEP goals to help the IEP team, and a lot of it is really helping to shape what work readiness skills a student could be working on, or what is a relevant IEP goal for the student. Even coming to the meetings is very helpful, as Sherry just pointed out. And also really helping to contribute to progress reporting. Which Sherry's story really highlights.

All right. I'm going to ‑‑ this is a perfect segue, Jerri. Jerri is using an employment information form that is really kind of gathering information on students. I think the next slide, too, is really getting at the forms. So Jerri, I'm going to turn this over to you so you can talk a little about how you're using this form in collaboration with others.

>> JERRI ROACH: This is a form that I used years ago, and kind of as we got bigger lost sight of. I just recently redeveloped it, pushed it out for staff and students to be able to use, to really kind of help.

What we find sometimes is while somebody comes up with a great job lead ‑‑ that would be great for Johnny, but, darn, we have all this information, and do we know if he can do those hours, and can we work in that area, and on and on and on. So this form really helps the student, the family, the school staff and the outside agency that might be working with them to be prepared ahead of time, to be on the same page. It allows the student the opportunity to really kind of put on paper with assistance what they're interested in for work, what they don't definitely want to do for work, as well as family input.

We've had situations in the past where a student has got a job and, you know, said, yes, they can work all these hours, gets the job and then the parent looks at the schedule and says, oh, Johnny can't work Saturdays, he has to go to church on Saturday. Whoops!

So this form really details for everyone that type of information, what hours they can work, what type of transportation they can use, how independent they are with that. What are their learning needs? If you're going to teach a job, how would you teach it? Would you break it down, would you teach a whole task? How long can they attend for? What is their stamina?

And this is something that the student signs off on, the staff signs off on. And the parent is going home and they're a part of that where they're signing up and saying, yes, Johnny can work these hours. Because even if we say a student has 19 and they're ‑‑ you know what, they're living at home, the family is still involved. And one thing for providers to be aware of ‑‑ and this is just overall ‑‑ in working with families, families are very concerned about safety, about risk‑taking. So you really have to ‑‑ I always say you have to meet the family where they're at and then kind of inch them along. I hope we do a lot of that within the school, but it really is a lot of building those relationships with the family. Even though the focus is the student, if we don't have the family buy‑in, the student isn't going to be successful at work.

The other component of this form is the particulars, having the SSI card and the birth certificate. And if someone has to do a check, they need to have the mother's maiden name and things like this.

It sounds very simple, but a lot of the families that we work with, they're not going to give up that paperwork. For various reasons. Some of them, it's fear of immigration or fear of other things that they kind of might be hiding from. So we need to work with families and you need to be aware also that it can be a struggle to get that information. So we're trying to do that ahead of time.

>> MARIA PAIEWONSKY: Thank you, Jerri. And a question was: Do you have an example to share? And I'm saying "you're reading our minds," because we actually have the form. And along with this PowerPoint, Jerri is sharing her form with everybody. And I assume, Jerri, that you're okay with people borrowing ‑‑

>> JERRI ROACH: Absolutely.

>> MARIA PAIEWONSKY:  ‑‑ heavily from it?

>> LARA ENEIN-DONOVAN: Maria, we had a question from Elizabeth. She asked, are you required to have an annual goal every IEP, not the postsecondary vision goal, from age 14 and up that is labeled transition?

>> SHERRY ELANDER: I had a talk with the Department of Ed a couple years about that. They would prefer that we don't label it transition because that is too broad. They would prefer that we identify what it is within transition we're looking at. So it could be self‑advocacy, self‑determination, health, travel training, communication, safety. A lot of these things that we've talked about that fall within transition, but I've been told in transition they prefer you don't because it's too broad.

>> JERRI ROACH: And part of the concept is, too, that at age 14, really everything is considered transition. If you have a map goal, that's...

[chuckles]

>> SHERRY ELANDER: Exactly, and you weave into... exactly.

>> MARIA PAIEWONSKY: I'm going to move us on because we just have 7 minutes left because we also want to do a poll with everybody. So I'm going to move us on.

Lessons learned. These are two things that Sherry and Jerri pointed out. One is please don't bring a student to a job that they're not going to be able to take, because of everything Jerri was just outlining, geographic issues or scheduling issues. The more you can collaborate with people, the better, to make sure that doesn't happen.

And also we have had a very long conversation in preparing for this about just how important it is to really help students with preparing documentation. Right?

We have two more points to go, but if anybody wants to talk about how important that documentation is.

>> SHERRY ELANDER: It's extremely important, because we're mandated to collect this type of information, current performance, ongoing, connected. And so we can't stress enough how important it is to have all these little details in line.

>> MARIA PAIEWONSKY: The documentation to get a job is so critical but it's not something that ‑‑ it's hard enough for all of us to pull it together. It can be really hard for young people to kind of pull that information together.

>> LARA ENEIN-DONOVAN: And I've had parents actually sometimes think that it would be okay if they just give me a photocopy to take along on an interview with an individual. And, you know, they've forgotten because they've had their job 30+ years now. Photocopies are not acceptable. Employers cannot accept photocopies of your Social Security ID to fill out information to start the job.

Hopefully family find a safe way, maybe they come to with any documentation and hold it themselves. Sometimes they're afraid the individual is going to lose the papers. But trying to figure out with them what the best way is to ensure you have that paperwork when they go to fill out the forms to start a new job.

>> MARIA PAIEWONSKY: All right. The next ‑‑ thank you, Lara.

The next one is really having a plan for some solutions for transportation and job coaching support. There are some restrictions. Pithy Sherry and Jerri can tell you there are restrictions that teachers have for actually putting students in their cars, and that makes it hard for them to help with transportation. All the more reason why it takes collaboration to really work out the issue. Before we move on, there's a question, can students hold competitive employment during the school day hours if this is a postsecondary goal? Sherry?

>> SHERRY ELANDER: I have students who have gotten competitive jobs during the school day, yes.

>> JERRI ROACH: I do also. Again, it's on an individual basis. Actually, the difference sometimes can be if you're working with a student that is a diploma student, sometimes the challenge is they need to be focusing on that academic piece during the day in order to be successful and earn a diploma. But that's something you individually work with each school on.

>> MARIA PAIEWONSKY: Just to move on to transportation for a minute, I think one thing our conversations were about is it seems like a quick solution to rent a van if you want to get students around. But Sherry, you were saying, you have no idea how expensive that can be.

>> SHERRY ELANDER: Right. It's prohibitive. That's the real challenge in our district. Because we make every effort we cannot to use ‑‑ not to rely on the school transportation because we're not helping our families and young people move on to the real world and having to figure out and brainstorm how that is going to work. Obviously we have some students we know are going to go to community‑based program that they will receive the door‑to‑door van just like they did in school. So it's really working with the adult service agency to know what the options are so that we can provide a seamless transition experience as possible.

>> MARIA PAIEWONSKY: And both Sherry and Jerri have a lot of experience taking advantage of every public transportation option there is. And they both have been very active in their transportation ‑‑ their regional transportation councils, right?

>> SHERRY ELANDER: Yes.

>> JERRI ROACH: Yeah.

>> MARIA PAIEWONSKY: Is there anything, Jerri, you want to add to that before we move on?

>> JERRI ROACH: I think that actually covers it.

>> MARIA PAIEWONSKY: I know you even have had ‑‑ I think you both have had students advocating for transportation solutions with these advisory committees, right?

>> SHERRY ELANDER: Yes.

>> MARIA PAIEWONSKY: So take advantage of that.

They both listed a number of ways that they have supported students in using non‑school transportation. Frankly, anybody who is involved with the inclusive concurrent enrollment knows that's one of the priorities, helping students to wean off of school transportation, because it really, as Sherry said, doesn't them any good, because they can't use it for employment or college when they leave school.

>> JERRI ROACH: And really emphasizing the families, that you know what, now is the time to begin, while there are more supports around, to begin to work on travel training, whatever the student is going to use. Because the day that little yellow school bus or little man or whatever is gone, what is the student to do? If they get a job, if they have outside relationships and activities they want to be doing. If they're going off to college, they want to get to a doctor's appointment, they're not going to have success in life if they have no way to get there. And I certainly have had parents say, oh, Johnny has got a job and it's not on a bus route, or I'm not safe with him traveling, even though we trained him and he's independent... we'll take him every day. Usually two or three months the parents have had it with the transporting to the job. I had one student who literally had to give up his job because it wasn't on a bus line or the parent wouldn't allow it and after two or three months they were sick of driving him.

>> MARIA PAIEWONSKY: We can't emphasize enough how important it is to prioritize the transportation. And all hands on deck for helping to come up with those solutions.

The final thing before we ‑‑ let me just check our time here. I just want to make sure ‑‑ okay. The final thing is a suggestion ‑‑ a strategy is to offer joint professional development to school staff related to job and career development. As important as the laws are around transition, most people graduating from special education programs are not getting very much transition, unless they're taking a program like ‑‑ that I direct, they're not necessarily getting much training in their ‑‑ on their pre‑service work on transition.

So a lot of people that are teachers are really ‑‑ their focus really was more on academics and content and accommodations and not necessarily on transition. So this is a great opportunity for our community partners to help transition teachers to teach and train and support their colleagues and orienting them to transition services.

With that said, Sherry or Jerri, do either of you want to take one of these examples or talk any more about that?

>> JERRI ROACH: Sure, one of the things we're looking at is one of the outside agencies that are doing the new PreETS program. They contacted me and was wondering if I would provide consultation to them around the new RFP in regards to developing those soft skills training, the job readiness training.

So really looking at collaborations on both ends where we're used to doing a lot of that in school and they may not be used to that as much. So how to provide that. I, myself and some staff just developed for our staff internally a job coaching training. And we're really looking at my staff who sits on the youth board is beginning to ‑‑ fill people in on the thought of, you're not used to supporting folks with disabilities. We can provide some training to you around that. And not just us as staff but also our student mentors as part of that training also.

So really to look at that piece too. Because we all have a lot to offer.

>> MARIA PAIEWONSKY: Before we move on, Sherry, did you want to add to any of that?

>> SHERRY ELANDER: No, I think that's ‑‑ Jerri summed it up very well.

>> MARIA PAIEWONSKY: Thank you. Well, one thing that I heard both Sherry and Jerri talk about was their collaboration with the youth employment board, the WIBS. I can't emphasize how important the leadership they show, and they have been doing this quite a while and how beneficial it has been for the students they're working with.

I'm going to move us on. We have some resources that we will share with everybody, two pages of resources. Some things that you have heard Sherry and Jerri talk about or maybe I talked about it, and these are also a lot of resources that we use in the program at UMass Boston for preparing transition specialists. We also have a lot of these resources here. We are ‑‑ we think these would be very helpful.

Our last thing is we really appreciate all the questions you have given us. This actually has been very helpful for us as well.

And DeBrittany, I was wondering if we might be able to put the poll up now to see what people might be interested in doing or what experience they have had with any of these strategies.

So... here we go.

The first one is...

We were going to do this before, but can you indicate which of these transition collaboration strategies you may have experience with.

Multiple choice.

We would love to know which ones you might have already done.

On my end I can't see responses, so I'm assuming you're contributing.

Ah!

So, let's see... this is great. I'm just going to move mine down a little bit so I can see.

I'm happy to see the number of people contributing to IEP goals. That's very nice to see. And also contributing to students' assessments. That's nice to see. So helpful for student and their planning when you get contributions towards those assessments. So those seem to be the two that people have the most experience with. Am I right? Collaborating on developing student IEP goals and also contributing to student transition assessment. That is great to see.

Thank you very much.

If we can end that one now, we just want to ask you... oh, contributing to student ‑‑ 19 out of 24, excellent.

Okay. The next poll is: What might you try if you haven't done this before? What would you consider trying out in the next two months?

These are really the same options but now is there something new you might try?

Okay. I think we're getting to a minute that we opened this poll. I appreciate those of you who answered this poll.

And maybe you could see what ‑‑ where we stand here.

I got the impression maybe it was going to be using an employment form.

So the two ones are setting up regularly support meetings, I think that's fantastic because that's building collaboration from the start. And also setting up some kind of online documentation of collaboration. Again, great choice there as well.

It really documents your collaboration in your efforts for many stakeholders.

And I think what I can say, too, is ‑‑ first of all, I just want to thank Lara and DeBrittany for organizing this webinar. And Sherry and Jerri, thank you so much for your time. I think anybody who is a transition specialist knows how precious your time is, so we appreciate that you gave us this opportunity.

And the only other thing I wanted to say before we move on to evaluation... which Lara will do... is I wanted to say we will be sharing the PowerPoint and we will be sharing Jerri's employment form.

>> LARA ENEIN-DONOVAN: Yes, absolutely, we will. We'll be emailing that to all of you at the email address that you put down when you registered. And in addition, there is a link that DeBrittany just set up in the Chat. If you click on that, you can fill out the very, very short evaluation form that lets us know what you really loved about today's webinar and what you would like to get more information about, what you think we could do to improve it even further.

So we hope that you'll fill out the evaluation form. It really does help us out. And I want to thank Maria and Jerri and Sherry for taking time this morning to be with us. We really appreciate the information you were able to give us.

And DeBrittany, are we leaving the room open for a few minutes so people can get the link?

>> DeBRITTANY: Yes.

>> MARIA PAIEWONSKY: If I can jump in, Elizabeth is asking ‑‑ she said she was piqued by Sherry's mention of the consortium specialist out at Western Mass. So you know, the leadership, too, as well, that both Sherry and Jerri belong to statewide transition special groups. Sherry out at Western Mass and Jerri out ‑‑ even though she's Western Mass ‑‑ she's Central Mass, she's part of Central/Eastern Mass, there are two groups I know of and I think others are forming. But if you're interested, Elizabeth, feel free to email us. I think our email addresses are somewhere.

>> LARA ENEIN-DONOVAN: They're on the PowerPoint.

>> MARIA PAIEWONSKY: Feel free to email any of us because we can help to direct you to one of those coordinated groups. And I'm glad that you brought that up, because they really are an excellent way for people to stay connected to other transition specialists.

>> JERRI ROACH: And that truly is great. That's kind of my ‑‑ those are my go‑to people. We have a monthly meeting. Actually I'm missing it because I'm doing this today, but we have a monthly meeting that we hold, and every month we have different agendas. Once a year we have Jessie who attends and gathers information. And I think it's March we have the different adult funding sources, DMH, DDS, MRC, those folks coming to present. And then again use those times also for our issues that we work on. So it really is a great, great thing to be involved in.

>> LARA ENEIN-DONOVAN: Thank you. And we've hit 11:31, actually. So we're going to let our speakers take a breather and we're going to go ‑‑ DeBrittany will leave the room open a couple minute. You have to scroll up the Chat to get the link to the evaluation form again, but if you wouldn't mind, take a moment to fill that out before you leave the meeting, that would be wonderful. And thank you again, Maria and Jerri and Sherry, I look forward to working with you again in the future.

>> SHERRY ELANDER: Thank you, everybody! Have a great day!

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