

**CADRE Webinar**  
***Creating Change:***  
***Student-Led IEPs & Youth Engagement as a Dispute Resolution Option***  
**Sarah Grime, Moneé Wright, David Friedemann**  
**March 15, 2016**  
**Transcript**

>> Good morning, or good afternoon, depending on where you are calling in from. I'm Phil Moses, Director of CADRE. Thanks for joining CADRE's webinar, "Creating Change: Student-Led IEPs and Youth Engagement as a Dispute Resolution Option." Today's webinar continues a series that began in 2010 and today's webinar is being presented by David Friedemann, Moneé Wright and Sarah Grime. You should hopefully see a poll question on the screen. Hopefully there'll be poll questions appearing, if they do please take a minute to answer these questions. Phone lines have been muted to minimize interruptions. There's our poll. You can enter any questions or comments into the chat box or questions box in the bottom right-hand corner of your screen. The PowerPoint for this webinar is available at the link in the chat box, scroll to the bottom of the page, it's also in the handout pod located above the chat box. This is the first webinar that we've conducted on this new platform so please bear with us if we experience any glitches. We have three outstanding individuals presenting today. David Friedemann is 18 years old and a senior at North Eugene high school. He experiences dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyspraxia and ADHD. He was diagnosed at a young age so he spent most of his school years learning by trial and error to navigate the school system. He is active with Youth Move Oregon where he has trained in public speaking, and is currently serving as a mentor. Moneé Wright works on youth leadership initiatives at SchoolTalk, including leading workshops and helping to prepare other Washington, D.C. students to lead workshops at the Annual Secondary Transition Forum. She is a senior at KIPP D.C. College Preparatory School. After she graduates she plans on majoring in social work with a focus on toddler mental health. Sarah Grime serves as a conflict resolution specialist and project director for SchoolTalk which is a nonprofit focused on Special Education dispute resolution in Washington, D.C. Sarah manages several initiatives and projects focused on increasing collaboration to ensure the successful transition of youths with disabilities from school into post-secondary education, employment and independent living. She has been involved in implementing a student-led individualized education program process in D.C. and has been supporting its expansion. It is our good fortune to have David, Moneé and Sarah with us today, I now turn it over to them. Sarah.

>> Hello.

>> We can hear you.

>> Okay. And is my PowerPoint showing now? Here we go. All right, my name is Sarah Grime, thanks for the introduction Phil, I work for an organization called SchoolTalk and my primary focus is on youth engagement initiatives which we'll talk about as we go today. We're presenting today on student-led IEPs and youth engagement as a dispute resolution option, we'll get more into that in a minute, I'm going to have my colleague Moneé introduce herself now.

>> Hi I'm Moneé, intern at SchoolTalk. I'm a youth leader and I'm a senior at KIPP.

>> And we'll get some more information out of her as we go as well. Is David on the line?

>> Unfortunately David is not here quite yet so we're, you just need to proceed without him and hopefully he will be here very soon.

>> Okay. So I was going to just have David and Moneé start out by talking a little bit about where they're from and where they go to school to just kind of, you know, paint, set the stage for the participants. So Moneé, since you're here now, can you tell us a little bit about where you grew up and where you've gone to school along the way.

>> I grew up in Washington, D.C., I go to KIPP College Preparatory and I've been going there since fifth grade. And, that's it.

>> So today we're focusing on student-led IEPs and youth engagement as a dispute resolution option, I think a lot of you are familiar with the CADRE continuum and we're really focused, at SchoolTalk, on ensuring that youth engagement is part of the dispute resolution process in D.C., specifically in stage one prevention, increasing the capacity of students to meaningfully participate, collaborate and problem-solve in their own education, and then transferring that into their adult life as they leave school. And will you guys just let me know when David is on?

>> Yes we will.

>> And one of the things I wanted to note is a lot of today's presentation is focused on student-led IEPs but I also want to call attention to youth engagement in D.C. that has, there's a couple of different ways that's been happening but one of the things that we're really proud of that Moneé has been really involved in are peer-to-peer approaches, so students leading workshops for other students around self-advocacy, employment in a variety of topics, and so moving beyond their IEPs and leading workshops also out in the community. We have students that are involved in many different Boards, Moneé specifically has been appointed by the Mayor for our Anti-Bullying Task Force in D.C. and we have another student on our State Advisory Panel for Special Education, so when we mention youth engagement we're not just talking about involving students in the IEP process even though that's a lot of the focus of the presentation today, but also involving them and ensuring that their voice is coming across all areas of the work to ensure that their transition to adult life is as successful as it can be. So, and we'll talk a little bit about some of those things later on but the Task Force that Moneé is part of is not a disability-specific Task Force, that's a Task Force that works with our schools in D.C. and they, so that's a really cool thing to note. So I think it's important to start out by defining what we specifically mean by student-led IEPs. I know a lot of times when I give presentations about youth engagement and student-led IEPs people sometimes, and schools sometimes get nervous because, when you hear the words student-led IEP you think, okay they're going to put a kid in front of an IEP team meeting and

they're going to lead the whole thing and they're going to be completely on their own and it sometimes makes parents, teachers, educators and others a little bit nervous, but when we talk about student-led IEPs that's the term we're using but it means, it encompasses a lot more than that, it occurs within the context of the overall IEP process. The specific role that a student takes varies and is individualized based on, you know, their age, needs and abilities, and this is an approach that can be used from K to 12 and it's individualized for the child's age. So the, and it also requires investment in preparing students and parents, so in terms of substance meaning, what we mean when we say student-led IEPs is meaningful participation in the development of their IEP. That can be in an actual meeting, that can be in the development of what's written in that IEP. You know, the student takes a leadership role and decision-making role somewhere in that process so maybe they're deciding who gets invited to their IEP, maybe they are going in and doing introductions at their IEP all the way to leading it. And when David is on we can go back and provide some more examples, but I also wanted to ask Moneé. Well we'll move to the next slide and then we'll have Moneé go.

So as I just mentioned, the IEP participation spectrum is pretty broad. Student engagement levels are based on individual needs and abilities. So the IEP can take place without the student present but maybe the student has done some pre-work, maybe they have prepared something that a teacher can show, all the way to students leading the full meeting, and then you kind of see the stuff in the middle which is that they actively participate but they might not be in charge of the whole thing. So I was wondering Moneé, could you talk to them a little bit about ways that you participated, how old you were when you went to your first IEP meeting, and then different ways that you participated in your meetings.

>> I started going to my IEP meetings when I was ten. And the way I interacted 'cause they asked me did I want to be in it and I said yes. And then they, they will talk about what my disability is and then they let me talk about it and we just set goals for myself and helped me, they'll help me help. No, I will help them help me to figure out what I need to learn or what I need to set myself, the goals that I need to set myself so I can learn better.

>> And what do you do now that you're a senior in high school when you go to the meetings? Are you participating in the same way or?

>> Yes.

>> So this is just some of the research around student engagement as well as student-led IEPs. Students develop a stronger self-advocacy and self-determination skills which lead to increased self-confidence. Students gain greater knowledge of their disability and accommodations when they're involved in the process. As well as their goals like Moneé mentioned, when they're involved in the process, they know the goals that they need to meet and they're part of coming up with those goals which holds them accountable. There's also increased, oh this is one of my favorites, increased parental and general education teacher participation. So when students are involved in the IEP meetings, parents and general education teachers are more likely to come and participate. There's also, another one of my

favorites, a lot less tension, everybody's really well behaved in meetings when students are present and they're leading part of the meeting. As I'm sure all of you know, IEP meetings can be pretty hostile and can really focus on deficits sometimes and on things that nobody wants to talk about, and can really make students feel not great by the time they walk out the door after a meeting, so when a student is actively involved and not just sitting there and listening, it reduces some of those tensions and it allows the meeting to be more focused on their abilities and the goals and markers that they need to hit. There's also reduced stigma associated with having a disability when a student is involved and can speak about their disability and knows what the meeting is for and why they're having it. And then allowing students to play a decision-making role leads to increased student engagement and accountability. They know their goals, they know what they have to hit, they're part of making those goals, so they're much more apt to strive to reach them when they're part of the decision. Also improved transition outcomes.

>> So, and let me just interject, unfortunately David is having a small situation and is unable to join us today so we're just going to need to proceed as best we can, and we also understand that we may wrap up a bit earlier than we would otherwise expect to without him participating. So just, let's just do the best we can, thank you Sarah and Moneé.

>> Yeah, and Moneé and I will try to add in some examples that we've experienced in D.C. as we go along. So here's some, these are just tips for getting started with student-led IEPs. You know first and foremost you need the buy-in and training for schools, preparing schools as well as parents. When David and I presented this topic in the past he shared from his personal experience here that, you know, when, you can't just send the student into a meeting and have them say I'm here to participate because it doesn't always go so well with the educators and parents if they're not prepared and they haven't provided a safe place for that student to participate, so getting the buy-in and the training for the schools to create those spaces where students feel like they can go in and feel like their voice is being heard. I know that David has talked in the past about going into a meeting and being allowed to talk in his meeting but not really feeling like he was being heard, so that's where the buy-in comes in because it really needs to be a space where we're not just having students talk but they're also being heard, what they're saying is being recognized. There's also assessing the student's self-advocating skills. This is a very individualized process, student-led IEPs, in terms of the ages, abilities of the students, so beginning with assessing where the student is in the process in order to meet them where they are is really important. There's a variety of assessments and self-determination checklists at [imdetermined.org](http://imdetermined.org) which is a Virginia project that we partnered with in D.C. We've used their assessments before and I'm sure all of you know a lot of different self-advocacy and self-determination assessments available across the states but we use theirs specifically and I've found them really helpful. And then using the results of those assessments to work with students to develop a specific goal and a plan for that student, which might be I'm going to go in and I'm going to lead the entire meeting or it might be I'm going to work with you to write down some goals that I want you to share in the meeting. And then there's working with the student to prepare them, and then there's actually letting them implement their plan for how they're going to participate. In D.C., the Office of the State Superintendent of Education and our Secondary Transition Community of Practice provided materials and coaching and support to our schools, we're going to talk about that a little more in a few minutes. And Moneé has there been

anything that you have had to do to prepare kind of your teachers or family when you've participated in the meetings?

>> Not really.

>> No, they were pretty prepared?

>> Yeah.

>> So Moneé's school, part of their culture is to have them start coming to their meetings beginning in fifth grade, so their teachers in school are pretty well prepared to receive them and have them participate because that's part of their school culture. So some steps for preparing students. Building self-awareness. This is working with students around understanding their disability, their abilities and limitations, we like to say needs, and their needs and supports as well as their goals. As well as understanding the IEP process because as an adult working in the education system, the IEP process is really confusing, has a lot of paperwork and legal terms, so breaking that down and working with students to help them understand the process including their rights and how they fit into that process, and it's all about them. And then planning for participation, these are some examples. Introductions and facilitation of how the meeting's going to go, setting some ground rules for when students are there participating, using technology, creating an out for a student or a safe word, so maybe a student's going in for the first time and the meeting starts to, maybe it devolves and starts getting a little hostile, or the student gets nervous and uncomfortable, having kind of a safe word that they can say, and maybe they step out of the meeting, just ensuring that it's a safe space and setting up mechanisms to provide that, and then providing students with lots of opportunities for practice. So Moneé can you talk about, when you participate in your IEP meetings what do you do to prepare ahead of time?

>> Well, I meet with my counselor person, and we just talk about the goals that I want to set for myself and my grades and stuff, about what I'm going to do after high school.

>> So it's part of your transition plan.

>> Yeah.

>> And sorry, who helps you prepare? You have a counselor?

>> Yeah.

>> Awesome. So another tool to use in IEP meetings is assistive technology. Some students really like to get in front of a group and talk about what their needs are, other students prefer to use PowerPoints or show short videos. Another thing that has been effective in other states are students demonstrating how their assistive technology works, specifically for general education teachers, some, and there's a video from I'm Determined that we don't have time to show today but I encourage you guys to watch it,

where students talk about, I believe he's in college and he talks about a professor saying he can't use his assistive technology, and then he demos how it works for the professor and the professor's like, oh yeah, you can definitely use that, so doing that in an IEP meeting too for educators or for parents who might not know what the assistive technology is for, showing them how you're specifically using it to participate in your education. Videotaping presentations ahead of time if a student is nervous is a really effective strategy. Recording the IEP meeting and then using that as a way to debrief with the student after so that they can make changes for their next meeting. For students who may just be more nervous or for students who may have limited verbal abilities, using pictures to kind of show the story of your day can also be a way to participate.

So there's a variety of different ways that students can participate, they can prepare and send invitations and decide who receives an invitation, they can also conduct introductions. One of the schools that we did a focus group with in D.C. had, we were working with elementary age students, and they came in and they pointed at different people in the meeting and introduced each of them. Students can also make a presentation, they can communicate their strengths, weaknesses, needs and interests. In D.C., some of the students we've worked with, after the project ended, have since then, now they're in high school and they're, they've called me and told me that they're now requesting their own accommodations. Defining your goals, writing portions of the IEP that might be your goals or your present levels of performance, and then all the way to facilitating all or part of the meeting. So Moneé how do you, when you participate do you lead the entire meeting, do you?

>> I start off the meeting and mostly I kind of take over until I don't want to take over no more.

>> So what do you mean by take over, can you describe to them the kind of things that you talk about in your meetings and kind of what you, the way you lead it?

>> I start off with my name and the reason why we here, and then I give them, like the goals that I set for myself and what I will do for myself in the future, and the, how my disability don't affect me too much. And then they ask me questions and then I answer them. And, yeah.

>> Awesome. So these are just some tips for student-led IEPs. Be flexible about the way each school builds in time to work with students, it can all look completely different at different schools depending on how the schools are structured. Encourage students to apply self-advocacy skills beyond the IEP meeting, the skills that they learn through participating in the IEP process are broadly applicable to, you know, making decisions about college, about work, about a variety of things after high school. Involving students in many different ways that work for them. Each student is at a different place and this process is really about meeting them where they are, there's no kind of cookie cutter approach that we can use for all students, so really meeting them where they are in that moment and then supporting them to participate in ways that work for them. And then providing teachers and parents with tools for talking to students about their disability, this is a big piece of this, is the student really understating their disability and how it impacts them, so that they can participate and be involved in making decisions about their education. So these are just some of the impacts of increased participation. Students who

lead IEP meetings gain greater awareness about their disability and the ways it impacts them. Understanding how their disability impacts their academic performance, and then being able to set goals based on that. Increased self-determination skills. Knowledge about available and appropriate accommodations, and just an overall familiarity with the IEP process. The quote at the bottom, we did a focus group with self-advocates that are all adults when we were first starting this work with OSSE, and one of the adult, and I loved that he said this, that when you're out of school, an adult, you have to take care of everything and you need practice. If only the parents talk, the kids won't be prepared for life. So he was saying that in reference to him wishing that he had been involved in his IEP process before he left high school.

So I've referenced a little bit of a project in D.C. This was a collaborate initiative with our, funded by our Office of the State Superintendent of Education, but done collaboratively with our D.C. public school system, charter schools, the D.C. Secondary Transition Community of Practice and SchoolTalk. So we had, I think, two charter schools and two public schools, or three charter schools and two public schools involved in the project and we did, we produced a video about it called "The Best Me I Can Be" video, and also a toolkit. The video and toolkit modules are listed here. Getting Started, Building Self-Awareness, Understanding Your IEP, Preparing for Participation, and then Student-led IEPs, so that features some of the students leading their IEP meetings. This link is currently down but we're working on sending you guys a link as soon as possible that will be able to get you to the video and the toolkit. The toolkit has descriptions of why each of these steps is important, descriptions of how to assist the student to accomplish the step, and then a list of tools, resources and activities, and then there's an inspirational page with recommendations and tips. The toolkit is also divided by audiences so there's specific information for students, specific information for educators and specific information for families. And then the video is geared towards educators on how to implement a process like this, and features educators, parents, staff from OSSE as well as staff from the schools, and students, doing this work. I'm not sure, were we able to get the video to work, we were going to show a short clip. If you want to try it.

>> Yes I think we should try it, there's also, perhaps before you do that there's a question in the chat box from the audience, at what age do you think a student should take the lead in his or her IEP meeting? And also, it may be helpful when Moneé speaks again, she might also be able to speak to that question, if she can either speak a little louder or perhaps move the, whatever device you're using, a little closer to her.

>> So I just moved it towards Moneé, she's soft-spoken.

>> Yeah.

>> How old were you when you started participating?

>> Ten.

>> Yeah, so she was ten years old which is fifth grade?

>> Yes.

>> You were. And that was kind of the, the way their school is structured is that students with IEPs start going to the meetings in fifth grade, that was a decision made by that specific school. There's no, I wish there was an answer, there's not, it really depends on the parent as well as the school. In our focus groups that we did prior to the project there were some schools that had kids as young as second and third grade coming in and doing introductions, there are other schools that the students start going to the meetings when IDEA says that they're mandated to invite them to the meetings. So it really depends I think on the comfort of the school, the student and the parents, or family, as to when, you know, that happens, but it can, I would encourage it as young as possible, and I think David, I can't remember exactly when he started going but he was younger as well. But then he talks a little bit about he had participated in different ways as he got older, to the point where he says now he goes and doesn't need his parents to come to the meetings, which is also really cool.

>> Thank you, do you want to try and show that video?

>> Yeah that would be great. So do I click on it from my end?

>> Right.

>> Um-hum.

>> It's like it's not my kid. This is not my kid because there's a lot of guilt and shame behind it thinking that maybe I've done something wrong that contributed to my child's disability, not realizing that it's not anything that you've done, we all learn differently.

>> So Preston learned that he is a visual learner.

>> This is how I prefer to like, visual learn it, when I see the stuff on the board it is easy and when I, and when the stuff is highlighted.

>> When he found out and he took the test and did the activity that we have along with the lesson, he really began to internalize what does it mean to be a visual learner, and he asked my colleague, who's the teacher of the program, well, can I ask for visual aids in all my classes, and of course the teacher said well yes, definitely.

>> Preston's just face when he was like, I mean I can tell teachers that I need visual representations of things that we're learning? I was like yeah you can do that, and he was just so genuinely like, oh a huge weight had been taking off his shoulders.



>> He began to get the visual aids and the teachers of course were very receptive because he was asking for it.

>> We just need to <video goes out>

>> Okay so that was just, the full video I think is 56 minutes but the modules, you can watch it as an entire video or you can watch, the modules can be viewed alone, and this is a film produced by OSSE, you know, in collaboration with the other folks and it's a really great film, and the students that are featured in the film are doing really cool things now, this was a few years ago, the student that you guys just saw in that clip, Preston, he is in a youth leadership peer network in D.C. and he leads workshops for other students, he is really great at talking to other students about his IEP. In another clip in the film he talks about, or his aunt talks about how she was driving home one day and he started telling his younger brother what an IEP was and why he has it, and that that just really helped her because she realized that he knew what it was and that he was starting to be able to advocate for what he needed from his teachers to the point where he's now in an inclusive math class, a decision he made with his IEP team which I think is also talked about in the film, so I really encourage everybody to watch the full thing, it's a really great piece.

These are just some quotes that we pulled from the, that specific film. One of the students said, "Now I can tell people like my teachers what I need in my goals and what I don't need." And that was a big thing for a student that we worked with through this process, was sometimes they felt like they were given things that they didn't need, and so communicating that was just as important as communicating what they did need. Another student said, "When I get to middle school I want to achieve all my goals, especially my math goals, and when I grow up I want to be an archeologist, a scientist, a biologist and a basketball player. My career goals all involve math which makes it important for me to strengthen my skills." So, you know, for students that are not participating in their meetings or not aware that their meetings are happening, it's really difficult to expect a student to achieve a goal if they don't know that that goal exists so, you know, she got really involved and realized that she needed to improve in math to meet her career goals. And then this is an educator, this last one is an educator, "I've seen that what really determines a student's success is not the severity of their disability, it's how engaged they are and using strategies to overcome. The kids who really say yes, I know that strategy works for me and I'm going to try it, are the ones who do well."

So this is just a little bit about the expansion in D.C. Our public school system has a self-advocacy curriculum available in all of our high schools, I believe also available in middle schools. The Office of the State Superintendent of Education and the Secondary Transition Community in Practice took the lead on the video that you guys just saw, they have also developed additional resources and videos for how to talk to students about their disabilities, also a video geared towards parents as well as a video for talking to students with more severe disabilities. And they're using all of these resources and videos as part of a public awareness campaign, getting them out to all of the schools, they do lots of instructional webinars for the schools and trainings for the schools as well that are aligned with their, it's a, they're now calling it a self-determination film series so the original film on student-led IEPs is part of

a three video series now, and they're working in the coming months on students leading a video that's for students, so that's really exciting as well. The Office of the State Superintendent of Education also has a professional learning community for student-led IEPs, students with more significant disabilities, and the focus of this is art-based initiatives. And then beyond IEPs, as I mentioned earlier in the presentation, youth engagement is also just dispute resolution option and there's many ways to engage students in their education and planning for their future. So CIRCLES is one initiative that's also led by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education. There's Restorative Justice in Special Education which is being led by SchoolTalk and another group called Restorative D.C. We also have the D.C. Youth Leaders Peer Network, and Moneé can talk to you a little more about that in a second but that's a network or D.C. youth who are involved in their schools as well as involved in meetings in the community, as well as they lead workshops for other youth on a variety of topics from employment to self-advocacy to disability history. So I joke with them all the time, I'm their adult contact for that network but I joke with them all the time that it's my job to get students to do all of the talking and then I would just go and watch. And then we also have, SchoolTalk is working collaboratively with a couple of different organizations on a grant from the HSC Foundation, to lead some self-advocacy workshops in the D.C. metro area, so the students coming to these workshops are from Maryland, Virginia and D.C., and the students that are designing and leading the workshops are also from Virginia and D.C. and Maryland. And then the D.C. Special Education Cooperative is a nonprofit in D.C. that provides technical assistance to the charter schools, they are doing a program over spring break called Alternative Spring Break, and some of the sessions are being led, the self-advocacy and youth leadership sessions that are part of that program are being led by members of the youth leaders peer network, for other youth that are participating in the program.

And then, this is just another example, D.C. has partnered with I'm Determined Virginia, and they are funded by the Virginia Department of Education, they have a big annual youth leadership conference that's designed and led by youth and they've graciously allowed D.C. youth to come and participate in the past and they've also been working with D.C. to help us build similar practices in D.C. Their youth have led workshops at our conferences and then they're now leading workshops alongside D.C. youth, and I've provided their website, they have a lot of great youth engagement resources. So I was hoping David could talk a little bit about Youth M.O.V.E. Oregon and maybe Phil can jump in, and I was going to have Moneé talk about the D.C. Youth Leaders Peer Network.

>> Yeah we're actually, we're trying to, we think David may be able to join us in the next six or seven minutes remotely so we're working on that so we'll let you know, so perhaps Moneé can speak a bit more about her experiences, and get that phone real close to her, and then hopefully we'll have David on the line too shortly.

>> So Moneé, can you tell everybody a little bit about the event that we just had and the way that you guys designed and led the workshops, and talk really loudly.

>> Friday we had a event that we, that some students led, and other students from like different schools had to sit down and listen, but it's like, the youth leaders we just talk to the students about, well this

year the subject was about jobs, so we talked about what not to wear and what to wear in a interview and problem-solving at work and we presented to them how we got, how we plan <inaudible> all the way to that happen, and then we come and we present.

>> So hopefully everybody could hear her but we just had a big annual Secondary Transition fair and Moneé is being humble, she designed the workshops, the topics were problem-solving at work and dressing and interviewing for work. So Moneé and I went to schools and worked with their members of the Peer Network to prepare them for the presentation. They did really cool presentations, some of them used posters, some of them did mock interviews and pulled people from the audience to act out how to do an appropriate interview. Moneé's group specifically did problem-solving, so they had scenarios of, you know, problems you might face at work, and then they acted out how to solve them, and then gave students steps that they could do for solving conflicts at work. And it was just really cool to see, they led the workshops, I think there were 54 of them and they led workshops in teams of two, and they led them for other D.C. high school students with IEPs. I think we had like 400, or 420 students come so, you know, we divided them and they all led workshops for their peers. And Moneé is also involved in leading workshops for, she works with SchoolTalk, so she leads workshops for a whole bunch of different projects and programs, self-advocacy on determining your interests, strengths, abilities and needs, disability history, problem-solving, a whole bunch of different, a whole bunch of different topics, so the members of the network do that and they also, the logo was envisioned by members of the network and then it was sketched by a member of the network too, so really trying to move towards youth leading all of the components and the adults stepping back, and providing support when needed but allowing them to lead. So that's going kind of beyond the IEPs across D.C. and they've been doing a really great job and now people can't get enough of them so, they're calling all the time and requesting them to speak at different things.

>> Sarah I don't know if you can see the question in the chat box. There's a question about the involvement of Voc. Rehab and when did they start getting involved.

>> I'm trying to find the Voc. So, is the question specifically when does Voc. Rehab go to an IEP meeting?

>> I think that's right.

>> I think that depends. Voc. Rehab has to have an invitation from the school and I think it varies from state to state, D.C. does their, their transition plan starts at age 16, we've now moved it back, we just had legislation passed in D.C. where it's moved back to age 14. And also, with the passing of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, that pushes a lot of funding towards pre-employment transition services, so in D.C. our Voc. Rehab counselors are in all of the different schools. They go to IEP meetings when it makes sense, when they're working on the employment piece of the transition plan, and when there's a specific service that Voc. Rehab would provide tied into that transition plan, that is when they would go, but Voc. Rehab in D.C. is certainly involved in the schools even before that point, in order to provide the pre-employment transition services.

>> Okay. There's also a couple of questions about some of your resources, or some of the OSSE resources, the videos, etcetera, and if they're available on the website as the modules.

>> They are, the website is [ossesecondarytransition.org](http://ossesecondarytransition.org), the website is currently down, we're working on getting it back up, so I will get you guys a link that can be used. We also have hard copies of the DVDs that we can mail. But we're also working on fixing the links to the website, so those are all publically available.

>> Do you expect the web address to change any, or it'll remain the one you just shared?

>> It'll remain the one that we shared, we just have to reactivate it, yeah.

>> Excellent.

>> And then I see a question on why the student-led IEP is considered a dispute-resolution practice. For me, coming from a conflict resolution background, all parties in a conflict have to be involved in ensuring that it can be resolved, and so student-led IEPs is a way to center it around the students, and if a student is involved it relieves some of the tension. It also, you know, this process is about the student, and so for any issue to kind of be resolved related to Special Education, the student has to remain at the center, and the student-led IEPs is a way that they can remain at the center of the process and be part of anything moving forward if they're at the center of it and that can help reduce conflict. There's another question, is there a specific curriculum you use to teach the students self-advocacy and help prepare them to participate in their IEP meetings? Our public school system in D.C. has a self-advocacy curriculum, but it really varies from school to school and state to state. I can give a couple of examples. One of the charter schools that participated, to prepare their students they were having them help with their present levels of performance and they were working with them during the lunch period 'cause that's the time of day that they had available, and so their students would come in during lunch, and there are some very dedicated teachers who would work with them at lunch. The DCPS at a school, one of the schools that participated, they had a curriculum, so they had a class designated to teaching self-advocacy, so it really varies from school to school.

>> Great. Folks are asking for you to share your contact information too as well Sarah. We think we have David on the call but we're not sure if we, we'll actually be able to get him to do audio. We can see that he's online but I don't know if he's actually called in or not.

>> Yeah, David if you're there, if you enter your audio PIN you'll be able to speak.

>> Yeah. Hopefully you heard that, enter your audio PIN and then you'll be able to speak to everybody. And you can also use the chat box David if you're having a problem. We apologize for our little technical glitch here, we appreciate your patience. And Sarah, feel free to keep speaking until we get David on.

>> Yeah, and do you just want to email out my contact information or should I type it into the chat?

>> You can type it into the chat box.

[typing]

>> This is Mel, would you like me to try to unmute David Friedemann?

>> Yeah, we've unmuted him but it says that he can't be unmuted until his audio PIN is put in. But if you're able to do it that would be great.

>> Yeah if you can do it.

>> Just press.

>> And there's another question Sarah in the chat box.

>> Yeah I see that. Read the question.

>> Do you need me to read it?

>> No I see it, it says.

>> Can you read it? Yeah, go ahead.

>> If we view student-led IEPs as a dispute resolution option is it implying that there is a dispute when there isn't? And the student is just exercising his or her rights, it should be a proactive process. I guess the, the entire presentation is on student-led IEPs and youth engagement so, and that's why we kind of see it in the prevention stage of the CADRE continuum 'cause you're exactly right, if we get the students involved early on, then it's a, and they're involved in the process and they're engaged in their IEPs and engaged in their education, then we view it as prevention so, I'm calling it a dispute resolution option but specifically in the prevention stage of the CADRE continuum because you're right, this would be a proactive process before there's a dispute. So, yes.

>> Okay. Others should feel free to go ahead and type questions into the chat box.

>> And then it said, there's another question about the age and should the student have a PowerPoint or a written request to aid. I think that really depends on the student, this is a really individualized process, so it depends on the age, on the abilities of the student and on what they're comfortable with. Some students go in with an IEP meeting with a PowerPoint or an aid, some go in having filled out their present levels of performance, some go in with visual aids, they might be nonverbal, they might have photos or something so it really, that part really depends on the student, there isn't an exact age, so

yeah.

>> Do you want to read that question, the next one?

>> Yeah.

>> Great.

>> Sure. So the next one is, would you consider this more of a proactive approach to dispute resolution? I would say yes, definitely proactive on the prevention side. The next one is, have you ever had parents be resistant to their child knowing about their disability and being part of the process? Absolutely. And then how do you handle this? I think that's kind of a case to case basis, there is a video that's part of the self-determination film series specifically featuring parents talking about how they talk to their student about their disability, or about that they have not talked to their student about their disability and why. And we got that question a lot during the demonstration project and that's kind of where that film was borne from. A lot of parents and educators asked for resources on how to talk to students about disabilities. I found a really great way to talk to them is to have other students talking to them and it really depends on, you know, the parent and the student and, you know, what they're comfortable with, so we've definitely had that happen and our response to it has been trying to develop new resources that can help address that.

>> Great, and there's another question about a decrease in the number of filed complaints since the implementation of this process, I'm not sure if you can speak to that but if you can.

>> That will definitely have to be a question for our Office of the State Superintendent of Education, the project I was speaking about was a demo project with a small number of students in a small number of schools but they've definitely continued the work and the training, so I'd have to get that information from them.

>> And is David by any chance on the, able to speak, David?

>> Hello.

>> There he is.

>> Can you hear me?

>> Yay.

>> I can hear you. Awesome.

>> David do you want to go ahead, go ahead and share some of your experiences. Please, go ahead.

>> Oh. Right, let me put you on speaker, so I finally figured it out, I'm so happy to hear that. All right. I'm so sorry I missed this so far guys. Hello?

>> We can hear you David but you won't hear anything else other than yourself.

>> Okay. Okay. Let's talk about social anxiety and how to prepare yourself in a room full of adults. One thing you need to address when preparing students with social anxiety is overcoming those mental obstacles. I think that social anxiety needs to be something they touch on. I say this because that's the main obstacle that I had to face, not just in day-to-day life but in these meetings. When you're this young and being put into meetings with your teachers and your parents, generally you associate it with things that you've done wrong. In my experience, even though these meetings were for me to express what was tough or hard for me to do during school and find out how to change that problem, it was also an environment that things I had done wrong were brought up. Instead of being voiced first, the teachers would voice themselves about the most recent incident they had with me. I remember having to talk about the boy sitting across from me was very distracting, he smelled, he would often pick on me, and he would tell others how I didn't get my work done as fast as him. Instead of me being able to talk about this to my teachers, the teacher began to tell my parents why I was sent to the office that week. I had been provoked by this boy all day so I pulled his chair out from under him before he sat down. In the end, I hadn't voiced myself and I hadn't expressed what I needed to do because the environment wasn't a comfortable place for me to be in where I was used to voicing myself and actually getting across what I needed to do. I had a very large amount of social anxiety in IEP meetings and various other meetings with teachers and other people that I didn't see as peers and instead I saw them as mentors and that was very intimidating to me. So what I wish that I had was somebody to tell me that I can talk to my teachers, or other people that were adults like they were peers, because I do have a voice in these meetings and I did have some power to like, like if I had said something, I would have been heard and something would have been done about it but I didn't know that for a really long time. That was more than one page, do you guys want me to continue?

>> Yeah, oh sure, please do, fascinating.

>> Okay.

>> David this is Sarah, I was wondering if you could share, during the last ten months you have a speech you have written, I was wondering if you could share that?

>> Sure, about what? Sorry my phone.

>> You have a speech you have written.

>> Oh, yes. Well do you want me to do that first or last?

>> Whatever you want to do, I just love that one.

>> Okay. Well I'll share one more experience and then I'll give the speech. So Sarah where are you in the slideshow? Sarah?

>> I have it on the page that has the Youth M.O.V.E. logo but I can move it back, where would you like me to move it?

>> It just depends on what slide you're on because I have slides, I have things for slide four, six, 11 and 12.

>> Okay, you tell me which one and I'll move it.

>> Let's go to slide 11.

>> Okay.

>> All right. So, my experience with using assistive technology. My social anxiety didn't only necessarily become a problem when I was in IEP meetings, it was also a fear of being seen different in a classroom setting. For me, to be able to agree to actually use an accommodation in a class that would help me learn, it had to be as non-disruptive as possible, and easy to accommodate with the curriculum. I didn't ask for many things because I didn't think that it was possible for them to meet these goals. In the end, I think it would have benefited me to have someone sit down with me and help me build my self-confidence in a social setting, and help reassure me that everyone learns different. All I wanted to do is fit in but really, if I had the confidence to use the tools like a laptop or an audio recorder and owned them, making them seem that's just how I learned, I would have been able to help people accept me and excel in my own learning. I definitely think this is a big problem 'cause I did try using various assistive technologies when I was in school and I was made fun of constantly about it, but it's because I didn't necessarily like, fight anybody on it, it's like somebody would call me out and say, oh he's a dork because he's using like a squishy ball or whatever, and I wouldn't stand up for myself and say well, like, of course you had this squishy ball like, I know you want it, but the thing about it was is that I didn't have the self-confidence to go through the multiple like two weeks of having everybody get used to me having some strange thing in class, because you have to get over that first hump of everybody kind of accepting that's just what you do, and I didn't understand that for a very long time. And, can we go to slide 12?

>> Yep it's up there.

>> Awesome. Okay. Why is student participation so important? From the start, I wish I had someone to tell me that I had a voice, not just a voice, but that my voice was the only one that matters. When I was first getting on an IEP I was very young, so learning to voice my frustrations and problems in school, to my mentors, felt like I was doing something wrong. For example, if I were to say, sometimes I have



trouble paying attention in class, I have trouble paying attention to my teacher because she talks too fast, I felt that I had said something wrong, something that I wasn't supposed to, that it wasn't my place to tell her how fast she could or could not speak. I needed someone to tell me that I could talk to these people as peers and not mentors when in this setting. My participation would have been a key to a successful learning environment if I had started out with the confidence to say what I was experiencing. With me, when I'm not actively problem-solving with my teachers, I cannot create a solution that works. My success in school highly relies on me being able to voice myself. I can tell you that I'm, that when I'm not proactively involved in my education and teachers, that it becomes almost impossible for me to keep up with my peers. I spend time working on assignments past due that I have no idea how to do while I should be working on today's homework. It slowly builds up and eventually ends up affecting everything else in my life. I walk around with a big dark cloud of angry, anxious, upset paperwork, and my backpack is a little bit heavier. When I'm actively a part of my education, all these problems go away. And, I can spend time, my time, not anxious and actually doing things that I like to do. All right. So I can either do the speech or I can go back to, and do slide four and six.

>> Phil how much time do we have left?

>> Well we, you know we have seven or eight minutes but if we go over that's not a problem.

>> Okay.

>> Okay, so. Yeah, so slide four first I guess. Sorry I didn't do these in order I was kind of, I figured you guys were crunched for time so. Yeah.

>> Oh no worries, you're doing great David.

>> Okay, go ahead.

>> Okay. Why is youth involvement important in help solve conflict? I definitely did read this one. I'm sorry about that. I read all of these. Awesome, I can give my speech now.

>> Okay great, on you go.

>> All right. So I felt like I was repeating myself a little bit here because it wasn't all progress and the whole slideshow but I'm a very big advocate for finding your voice and being able to speak up and it took me a very long time to find my voice. I spent many years being angry and depressed because I was in school and I hated going to school, I didn't even make it through a full day of school for a very long time, and the once things started to click and I started to be able to be successful in school, I was able to make friends, not be angry, and have a successful school grade, like I was just, it affected everything else in my life. And this is a speech that I've made solely to let people know what it's like to find your voice and how, yeah, I'm just going to get started. Speaking as a form of art. Some people think that as long as you follow the rules and guidelines learned in a basic literature class, that you can make a good

speech. This is true, but just like any other form of art, these rules and techniques didn't exist until someone discovered and made them their own. Art comes in many other forms other than traditional color on canvas, but one thing stays the same no matter what form of expression it takes, all art holds some form of message. No matter how basic the tools used to craft, or the length of words used to write, the message is still sent out to be interpreted however the receiver chooses. So what is my message? My message comes from a boy who could not speak if asked. My ideas and dreams could not be expressed until practiced. This practical use of rhetorics eluded me, seeming to be so far away. It wasn't until years later that the eloquence that I strived for seemed tangible. Tension grew to friction and friction turned to heat. A burning desire now lay inside me with no means of an exit other than the motivation to grasp a tool of expression. The boy who could not speak chose to whisper, then talk, then speak, then yell and scream. With my new tools I could not help but refine my expression and redefine myself. I now know what I want to say. I now know that with seldom words I can make a speech and make a difference. So what is my message? Speak from your heart and people will listen. Thank you. And that was it.

>> Wow David that's very, that was incredibly powerful. Thank you to all three of you, we, let's see if we can get some of our questions asked and answered and there's one here from you David, do you have suggestions on how parents and teachers could have helped you build your self-confidence, and how would you have wanted them to help you understand why you may have needed a squishy ball for example?

>> Yeah. So, I definitely can give Amy and, Amy Walsh and my mother a lot of the credit for the amount of self-confidence that they helped me build and regardless of, how much I had and how much I have now isn't really the point, but what is the point is like, when they were helping me build my self-confidence and they were doing things to help build this, it wasn't like they did specific things, it was spending time with me and making me feel good about myself and making me understand that I can succeed in a school setting because, when you're failing all your classes and you have no friends and you're mad and you're angry and it's affecting everything else in your life, the one thing that you're stuck on is you're stuck on those thoughts, you can't think any other way, so if there's somebody there telling you eventually you will succeed, you can do these things, I believe in you, I'm giving you the tools that you need and all you have to do is learn how to use those tools and eventually you'll be a successful person in the schooling system. And being told those things over and over may, it just, it helps, and I think that's the one thing that helped, and if there was some other like, a curriculum or something that was made to help build kids with special needs, like build their confidence, I think that would be awesome, but I don't even know where to start with something like that.

>> And another question perhaps to any of you or all of you, how would you help get a student interested in participating in their IEP?

>> Do you want me to answer?

>> Sure.

>> Okay. How I would get a student interested in his IEP. Well my little cousin, he just moved to my town, I've been talking to him and from what I hear it is we are going to get him on an IEP, he definitely needs it, but he isn't necessarily happy to go talk to his teachers about issues that he's having in class because he wants to feel normal, he doesn't want to say like hey, I'm having trouble with this because when he's having trouble with that he's looking around the classroom and he's thinking to himself well, like, all these other kids are having an easy time working on this. So what I'm going to do is I'm actually going to try and go to his IEP meetings with him 'cause, I mean, he kind of thinks I'm awesome and really cool and fun, but I can also tell him and teach him ways to talk to his teachers that make it not seem so bad, but because I'm there, I think that I might be given him some of the confidence, and how I'm going to get him to go to these meetings is I'm going to tell him that if he starts going to these meetings that he'll be able to find things and ways to be successful and then he won't have such a hard time at school.

>> Great. Another question and Sarah might be able to speak best to this, has student-led IEPs increased parent participation?

>> So according to research, yes. Specifically in D.C., we did a very, I mean the demonstration project we did was small and the parents were involved in the demonstration project, but in terms of like, actual data on increasing parent participation, if you look at the national data it does increase parent participation.

>> Great. Another question has to do with suggestions to support nonverbal youth to advocate and fully participate in their IEP meetings.

>> Yeah that was a question that came up when we were doing some of this work is how to support nonverbal students as well as students with more significant disabilities. I know that the Virginia I'm Determined project is focusing on that now so I would suggest reaching out to them for some resources. Also assistive technology, getting creative about the ways the students participate. Students can show pictures, they can use assistive technology, they, it doesn't have to be a 20 slide PowerPoint where the student gets up and presents for 30 minutes, it can be a film that shows the life of the student, a day in the life of the student and you show the film, so it's really about getting creative about different ways to approach how they can participate. You know, how do they participate in class, and what mechanisms can be borrowed from that and translated into an IEP meeting? A lot of it's assistive technology, the use of images, but I do know that I'm Determined Virginia is, that's one of their focus areas and I think they're developing resources, so I'd also encourage everyone to check out their website as well.

>> Great. Another question that, I think for David and perhaps Moneé, give some examples of how you handle social anxiety. What are some of the activities that you engaged in to help you manage that?

>> So Moneé has an example I think.

>> Great.

>> Like how did you handle get, were you anxious about getting up in front of a group of adults?

>> Yes.

>> Who me? Oh sorry.

>> I'm really shy in front of people so, I get nervous, so I probably like shut down for a little bit and then I'll, once I get comfortable, I eventually start talking.

>> So what did you do to get comfortable? Were there strategies that you used?

>> I just sat there and listened and then I took a minute to get myself together and get back up.

>> So I don't know if everybody could hear Moneé she's very soft-spoken, but she said that she sometimes shuts down when she has social anxiety and that she is really shy, and I've put her in a situation where she has to talk to a hundred people on a webinar but, she says that she takes time during her meetings to sit calmly and she chooses to listen to the other people in the meeting for a little bit, so maybe she just doesn't participate first, and she waits until she's comfortable and then picks that time to participate.

>> Great, and David do you want to go ahead and answer that question and then we'll wrap it up.

>> Sure. So I don't think I ever really prepared myself to go into an IEP meeting, it was more of having the experience of many, many IEP meetings over, through grade school till middle school, and then it started becoming easier and I started learning these skills that I needed. But I didn't necessarily fully need them because I had such great advocates with me most of the time and, but it definitely did help once I started participating in my own IEP meetings, it was a great skill to learn. I think what really just happened was that there was one week in like middle school where I was not doing very well and I went into an IEP meeting that week and all of a sudden it clicked and I just realized that if I didn't speak up and say exactly what I needed that I wasn't going to get it and that I was going to continue to go into this cycle of not being able to be successful in class. But I definitely had my mother and various other people telling me very often that I needed to speak up, but I didn't speak up until I was ready to, and it definitely took a long time of finally being able to be comfortable in that scenario.

>> Wow, well, you know, we want to thank you, all three of you, Sarah, David, Moneé, for sharing such rich experiences with a national audience, we really appreciate it and thank you, everybody, for joining us today and helping us try out a new platform. Right now, if you can, there's going to be a link in the chat box for a very brief Survey Monkey that would help us understand today's webinar, it'll help us evaluate it, so if you can click on that link that would be fantastic and that will just take a minute or two. Also we want to announce our next webinar which is titled "Constructive Individual and Systemic Approaches to Helping Frequency Filers." It will occur on June 8th from 11:30 to 12:45, that's 11:30

Pacific time. This webinar will be conducted by Suzanne McDougall from the Pennsylvania Office of Dispute Resolution, and Marshall Peter, the CADRE former Director. More information about the webinar will soon be available on the CADRE website and we look forward to you joining us again. And I believe the link is in the chat box right there in the bottom, if you click on that you'll be able to evaluate today's webinar and again, deep appreciation to all of you for joining us, and we know we ran a little bit long today but it was well worth it and, again, thank you, we'll leave this link up for a little while longer which is, again, at the bottom of the chat box, to help us evaluate today's webinar. Again thank you very much and a special thank you to all three of our outstanding presenters.

>> Well I just want to thank you guys for listening and I definitely like being able to have a voice and you guys are giving me the opportunity to do that.

>> You're very welcome. You and Moneé have outstanding use of voices and represent your peers very, very well.

>> Thank you from Sarah and Moneé at SchoolTalk.

>> All right, well that will end the webinar, thank you to everybody for joining us today.

>> Thank you.