



Transcript of NCSET Conference Call Presentation

A Review of the National Leadership Summit on Improving Results for Youth

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DR. CRANE: Welcome everybody. My name is Kelli Crane and I'm with the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition. Today's call is a review of the National Leadership Summit. The National Leadership Summit on Improving Results was held in Washington, DC on September 18th and 19th, just a few months ago. It was hosted by the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition in partnership with 15 other federal agencies and national organizations, including agencies from the Department of Education, the Department of Labor, Health and Human Services, Social Security Administration, and several other national organizations. We had over 250 attendees at this event representing 42 states. States attended as state-level policy teams.

Today's call will highlight the purpose of the National Leadership Summit and share the outcomes and activities as a result of this event. The first speaker today will be Dr. David Johnson who is Director of the National Center on Secondary Education and Transition which is based at the University of Minnesota. Then we have David Sienko on the call. David's a state level policymaker from the Rhode Island Department of Education, and he was also the state team leader for the Rhode Island team. He'll be sharing the perspective of their state and attending the summit.

Wendy Collison unfortunately had an emergency so is not able to join us on the call today, but she was going to share the perspective from the Arizona state team that attended the summit. We will fill in for her so we can share a little bit about the Arizona state team. I am going to turn it over to David who will give you an overview of the summit. We will leave 10 to 15 minutes at the end of the call for your questions.

DR. JOHNSON: Thank you, Kelli. Welcome to the conference call. What I'm going to do is just outline a little bit more about the National Leadership Summit in terms of the organization of it. The most important part of this call, however, will be some information that David Sienko will share from the Rhode Island perspective. Kelli Crane will talk a little bit about the experience that Arizona took into the summit itself, and what follow-up actions they're looking at doing right now. Kelli's very familiar and working with Arizona on an ongoing basis. Then we will talk a little bit about some of the follow-up strategies we'll be using as a National Center here to support the teams, and then open it up to questions.

We came into Washington, DC, incidentally, for those of you who may be on the line who attended the Summit, will remember the hurricane we tried to conduct the event during. It was rather an interesting experience in and of

itself and it made the event very special for us all. Nonetheless, we came in with a specific focus around trying to support an activity which sometimes is difficult to achieve within your own state, or within the states that attended and that is to convene people around a common set of issues. And to actually devote concentrated time and effort, a two-day effort, to really thinking through, and setting and discussing some of the priorities and outlining some strategies to undertake to build solutions or improve programs.

So we had a very fundamental premise of creating an opportunity, a forum for states to come together in an environment outside of their own state for the purposes of a facilitated type of planning, and the development of some very specific strategies to carry back into their own states. It was quite remarkable. We actually ended up with 42 states and U.S. territories. People came from as far as the Pacific Rim entities and the Virgin Islands, and most of the states so we had an opportunity to really have a very broad representation of people coming with quite a variety of issues and needs.

We held a particular format for the National Leadership Summit, one which we think was very successful. At least, the feedback has given us every indication that this was the way to hold this type of event, as we are going to conduct a second summit in the spring of 2005. We wanted to engage teams, rather than individuals, for the reasons I just mentioned, in other words, so that they would work on issues that were theirs and not something we would simply craft in terms of the set of the concurrent sessions, or activities for people to engage in.

As these teams came in, we had a facilitator for each team. And the job of that facilitator was to document what was going on, and to keep the activities going. There was also a recorder present so everything was being documented. In addition, I think the use of content experts was a very important aspect of the National Leadership Summit. We had over 30 individuals who are recognized nationally and internationally in some cases, for their work on a wide range of secondary education and transition issues. The

process was that the teams could buy into 20 to 30 minutes of their time and use as many content experts as they wanted for purposes of informing, consulting, or whatever, on the specific issues that they were looking at. The model that we used is now being identified as a process that some states are trying to replicate at the state level; if you have interest in this, Kelli or I can certainly advise you further for your own state use.

Each state completed a pre-assessment and identified up to three priority issues as they were entering the summit. This was done to do some advance work to identify not only the issues, but the people who are associated primarily with those issues within the state. And we had pretty good success with that. The issue then was to come into Washington, DC, engage in the planning, and refine the priorities, identify very specific kinds of actions, steps, and strategies and then identify the types of technical assistance needed to achieve results in relation to the plan. Our role, of course, is that of following up with individual states to determine progress, or working with them in relation to the progress or action needs that they have.

I think it's important to give you a little sense of what we found and learned from the teams themselves. We did a very careful analysis of the state's priorities, the technical assistance needs. I'd like to just share with you a little bit of information about this, which will soon be available on our Web site as well.

Out of the 42 states, three large sets of priorities emerged. One dealt with what might be referred to as state systems. The most significant, the highest need prioritized by all of the state teams that were there, focused around the interest of strengthening interagency collaboration at the state and local levels. This was followed by concerns for professional development, use of data, such as postschool follow-up data, and planning and decision making, as well as other interests in building more support and stronger state infrastructure to work with local districts across the state. That's one cluster.

A second cluster emerged which you might label as programs and services. There the focus

concentrated on issues concerning standards and assessments, practices and policy issues concerning postsecondary enrollment. And growing concern, no doubt in relation to No Child Left Behind, concerning the exiting status of young people, most typically in the form of looking at dropout issues.

We also had a large third strand which dealt with youth and family issues. Their issues around student planning and self-determination were very high, along with increased parent involvement with their child, in relation to planning and decision making. You've heard this for many years. It was basically a process of documenting, prioritizing, and of looking at this.

We will have a proceedings document that will be available on the Web site, which details out much of what I just talked about in relation to this. We also had a whole variety of technical assistance needs that we reported out, but I think that's best exemplified by having David Sienko talk a little bit about the Rhode Island experience. And then we'll have Kelli Crane touch on the Arizona situation.

David Sienko was part of the state systems change initiative on transition back in the mid '90s, when Rhode Island was one of the 46 states that were operating and managing one of the state systems change projects. And David is currently, I don't know if you're a policymaker at Rhode Island, David, but let's call you a state transition person who has done a lot in that state to move these issues out. I regard David as a national leader on these issues and I'd like you to comment on your state's experience at the summit.

DR. SIENKO: Great, David. Thank you very much. In terms of policymakers, yes, I guess I am at that level now at the state agency, but because we're a small state, there are only two of us. That's intended as a joke.

The forum was particularly helpful to us; the summit was particularly helpful to us. And what I'd like to do is walk you through how our state team participated in the process, the steps of the process, and how it has been of benefit to us. It really kind of sent us on a trajectory here to continue to do some of this important work that

we've been doing for years, but to continue this work on secondary transition.

In terms of our planning for attending the summit, certainly there were two things that really provided an opportunity for us as a state: First of all, in refocusing our work on secondary transition, particularly in light of our state improvement plan which had been developed 18 months to two years ago; And recently, our state board of regents passed new high school regulations to address the needs of all kids in what have become very large and somewhat de-personalized high schools in our state. These two policy opportunities really got us thinking within secondary transition, how do we fit within these initiatives? And the summit certainly gave us an opportunity to do some deeper thinking about that.

The other piece that I think is always important, and compliments to David and the NCSET partners, is that these opportunities were very well structured. They're very well facilitated. There's plenty of time for team dialogue, to take the information you gained, and figure out, OK, how are we going to use this back in our state? And you can actually begin to outline some strategies for doing that. So the opportunity to learn and collaborate with others had significant positive effects for us as well.

In terms of preparing for the summit, the pre-summit activities were sent to us from NCSET, those of us who were the team leaders, to start organizing our work for the summit in advance of the summit. And that was a beneficial activity, probably for me, as the team leader, more than any of our team members per se, because it really gave me some time to think about how we wanted to prepare our state planning team time at the summit. And also to make sure we were prepared, with logistical things, like copies of our state improvement plan, copies of the new high school regulation, data on some of the indicators we already have that we're collecting in terms of high school graduation and dropout rates and so forth. So when I went down there, I went down there with a small box of materials for our team so we weren't trying to guess at where we were as a state, but we actually had the materials available

for us as we did our work.

In terms of the summit activities, as I mentioned earlier, there were two major influences that were going to affect our work at the summit. In Rhode Island's improvement plan we have seven indicators for improvement in secondary transition which is incredibly ambitious and we realize that. And I'm sure colleagues who are on the line, who are from other states are probably shaking their heads saying they must be crazy in Rhode Island. Well, maybe we are a little bit. But I think it's very indicative of the involvement of the advocacy groups, the parents, and our regional transition centers, our networks of teachers who are working in all of the schools, that have a lot of influence over those indicators, and developing those seven indicators. They are very ambitious but it's really an indication of how involved people are in helping us move this system forward.

The second piece was particularly related to the Rhode Island high school regulations. At some point, if you're interested in that, you can contact me, and I can give you more information on what that is. But essentially there are three areas that were addressed by our board of regents in the new regulations. The first area has to do with literacy and helping all students read and perform at grade level in literacy. The second area has to do with the restructuring of high schools for a greater personalization. The third area is revisiting graduation requirements and kind of facilitating the discussion, how we can verify different ways that students are demonstrating proficiency for graduation beyond the traditional Carnegie unit approach. So there, again, is a very ambitious agenda from our board of regents. And as the guidance is going to roll out from this state agency as to how schools should be addressing these issues, it's going to be very important that all of the special education partners at the state, regional, local, and building level are actively involved in that discussion and what the high schools will look like as a result of these policies. So our three areas that emerged from looking at our role in those policies roll-outs, really boiled down to looking at outcome data, and what's hap-

pened in our state as a result of our interventions, and at some level even broadening that discussion to other initiatives that may have a clear linkage with this.

We are also collecting data on our state improvement plan indicators. We're in the process, similar to Arizona, in terms of figuring out what are the data? How are we going to collect it? And how are we going to analyze it to inform our decision making and aligning our transition work with the new high school regulations? And all of this really would come in to refocusing of our state transition council, which quite honestly, since the state improvement grant ended has, I don't want to say lost its focus, but has definitely reached a plateau. And we definitely needed to rethink how that council was going to move its work forward.

When we finished at the summit, we took our action plans, and we broke them into three areas. We looked at things that were immediate actions; things that were directly within our control through our transition council, through our regional transition advisory committees, and our regional transition centers. Those things that we have control over that we could influence and implement immediately. And we took some of our goals and we plugged those into those areas, things like reorganizing our statewide transition forum, having a forum every year on transition. We had gotten away from that. And we felt that is something that we really need to get back to because it was a major communication and capacity building tool. Information for families on transition and how we crosswalk with the new high school regulations, what parents should be looking for and asking for when they go in to an IEP meeting. We have a contract with our parent information center to do secondary transition outreach. It's very easy for us to go back and revisit that training and restructure it so we're putting in new and current information.

The second area of action was more strategic actions, things we know we needed to do but we were going to do more research. And a lot of that had to do around the data, collecting outcome information, and looking at our other indicators. And we've already begun that. Certainly, the

summit gave us a great opportunity to do that. And NCSET also had a forum as a pre-conference at the DCDT conference at Roanoke, Virginia last month which was focused on outcome studies. And they brought together a whole panel of national experts to spend a day sharing information about outcome studies, looking at that data, and how that data informs decision making. So that, right there, gave us a major technical assistance opportunity to begin to think, OK, so how are going to structure our system here in Rhode Island?

The last area of action resulted around collaborative actions, things that we're definitely going to need to involve other partners. And those other partners are those partners who are involved with our state transition council, the office of rehabilitation services, MHRH, which in our state is developmental disabilities and mental health services, the department of health, labor and training and so forth, all of the state level agencies that need to be involved in some of these discussions. And quite frankly, there are things that we need to be doing better partnering with them in as we roll out strategies within the education system. And again, there were a bunch of action steps we came up with to address the collaborative action steps we'll need to take. Some of those might take a little longer.

In terms the last two areas I'll address, in terms of these actions, federal policies, and federal interventions that may help us with these actions, there's a couple of things that I've gleaned from what we gained at the summit and from working with our team here in Rhode Island. First of all, this really has to do a lot with the outcome data. But working with the federal agencies to help identify and define the indicators, and how we're going to collect the indicators that we've identified in our state improvement plan. All states have these state improvement plans. And people are at various levels of building their capacity to collect and effectively use the data.

So I think there's an opportunity here for us in working with OSEP and other federal partners to identify data is going to be meaningful for measuring what we want to measure. And hopefully start to develop some consistency across the

states that we can begin to do some of that comparative analysis.

The other piece, I think, that's important about that at the policy level is that we also cross-walk that with other major initiatives. One of the things we started to look at here in Rhode Island is the Perkins Vocational and Career Technical Education system. There are some indicators that are collected on postschool data for students who participate in the Perkins program. The Workforce Investment Act Youth program, there are definitely very clear, and some would say rigid indicators that are collected in that data system. So how can we crosswalk what we do through the schools with those data systems, so we can develop some real meaningful comparative analysis of that data.

In terms of legislation, certainly, we've seen many things come out of Washington in the past few years that have encouraged better and stronger interagency and interdepartmental working relationships. We have a wonderful relationship in our state with our office of rehabilitation services, where we're at the point right now where we have a rehabilitation counselor assigned to every high school in the state. We have a very high percentage of kids with special needs who receive services prior to graduation. And it really has smoothed out a lot of transition issues for a lot of kids and a lot of families in our state. Now it's by no means perfect. We have a long way to go. But certainly when we get federal legislation within the rehabilitation act, within IDEA that encourages that relationship it makes it a lot easier for us at the state level, at the policy level to facilitate that to get that to happen especially when it's backed up in the federal language.

The other thing that's going to be important in terms of federal assistance and moving these things forward is creating opportunities for schools to really become the center of a lot of these activities. I don't know how it is in other states, but certainly in many states, some programs, for instance, use initiative programs through the Workforce Investment Act. And other initiatives like that operate outside of the school and sometimes, there isn't a clear connection

between those programs and what's going on in school. I think we need to facilitate better connections there, so that the schools become the base for those kinds of relationships, for those kinds of opportunities and everyone in the school is knowledgeable about those opportunities for all kids.

In closing, just a few things in terms of the summit that I think, in reflecting back, that have been particularly helpful for us. Certainly, the way the format of the summit was helpful in the fact that we were essentially given homework. Basically, we had a meaningful dialogue while we were there. The content experts and actual experts were very helpful to us. But it really -- the way it was structured, we had enough team planning time to actually design some action steps to come back and begin to implement right away. And I know many of you have probably participated in national conferences and so forth and while you're running from breakout session to breakout session, you're thinking to yourself this is great stuff. How am I going to get this to happen in my state? And then there's no time for it because you're in your car or back in the plane on your way home, and you come back to your office. And all of the problems are waiting for you and all of that great stuff you gathered is sitting on the corner of your desk which is really where some of my stuff is still sitting right now. But the NCSET format for the summit really gave us some action steps so when we left the summit, we were ready to go the following Monday to begin to implement some of those steps. A couple of other points about the summit that I think were particularly helpful. Access to the experts was very helpful. We had experts one-on-one come in and meet with our state team. And I think it was actually helpful for the experts as well, because it gave them a chance to get to talk with some states and do some direct problem-solving. And that was very helpful to us. I know from our state team level, there's already been a couple of follow-up activities with some of those experts directly for additional information and additional support.

The facilitation that was provided by NCSET in our state team work was very helpful.

It really helped us -- by having a facilitator there it allowed us to concentrate on the work and not on taking notes, and putting flip charts on the wall and so forth. And those of you that have been in a situation where you've been a facilitator and a participant in a meeting, it's very difficult to do both and do it well. So by having an expert facilitator in the room, it really helped us concentrate on the work.

And my last point is we came back rejuvenated, quite frankly, despite the hurricane and the fact that we had to drive around branches to get to the airport. It was definitely well worth it. I think we feel a little more enthusiastic now about our work. We really did stretch our thinking and began to experiment with new ideas and new strategies. And quite honestly, it really makes you feel good when you have 42 or 43 states there; it makes you feel good for the fact that you're really part of a system, a much larger system. You're part of a movement that's about empowerment. It's about inclusion. It's about self-determination for use with disabilities. And that's always a nice feeling when you learn something like that.

DR. JOHNSON: Before we answer any questions, I'd like Kelli to comment on Arizona a little bit here. As I mentioned, Wendy Collison had to take off, but Kelli's worked with Wendy quite a bit. So Kelli, why don't you talk a little about the Arizona experience?

DR. CRANE: One of the reasons we looked at highlighting the state of Arizona in this call was they were very enthusiastic about the summit early on. When we sent out this letter of invitation to them, they called us and they said we really want to be involved, because we would like to look at re-energizing, re-engaging our inter-agency transition team at the state level. So that's one of the initial reasons they came in to this summit. The state put together a wonderful cross-agency team. They had members from the state Department of Education, vocational rehabilitation was represented, but what was particularly unique about the state of Arizona, is they had two young people on their state team and parents. One of the young persons was still in high school and the other one had exited out of high school. They

really actively involved those young people in their planning and that was unique with the state.

The three priorities that Arizona did highlight to work on, again, is one, this whole idea of interagency collaboration. How do we strengthen our partnerships across the state level? And get cross-agency representation and really look at the challenges and issues we have in our state around secondary education and transition. So again, really to re-energize, re-engage, an interagency transition team at the state level. Their second issue, similar to what David Sienko was saying in the state of Rhode Island, is this whole idea of data collection. How do we view this data to help inform the decision to help form improvements to secondary education and transition? And then, finally, their third issue was to really look at professional development and in particular pre-service, as well as in-service.

The state did when they were at the summit, they really focused their action planning in particular around that first priority issue, that being interagency collaboration. They have gone back and, like Rhode Island, they have been implementing action. What they are doing is looking for buy-in and leadership that's transitionable, they're looking at how to expand it, broaden their members and looking at a broader cross-agency mix, including mental health, Department of Corrections, workforce development. Some of these people are already engaged, but again they're looking to expand this group and strengthen this transition counsel at the state level.

And again, looking at buy-in and leadership, they have gone out and have done several presentations to different groups right now, to get more people at the table. So they are working on that. In regards to the format in particular, for the state of Arizona, they do also have an annual transition conference. And in speaking with Wendy, they loved the format of the summit, the team time and planning time. And they are taking this format back and using it in their own state for some of their state planning meetings.

I think that's pretty much a quick overview on what's going on in Arizona. If you have any particular questions, I may be able to help answer

those. But again, three big issues are interagency collaboration, data collection, and professional development. And their initial task or issue that they are working on is around interagency collaboration. And they feel once they get that well established, the other stuff will just fall in to place, and they can work on those priority issues.

So David, I'll turn it back over to you to talk about specific follow-up as it regards the summit.

DR. JOHNSON: Good. I'm going to quickly summarize this part. And I think, David has opened up the door to a number of very important issues that quite frankly cut across states. And I'd like to have some others have an opportunity to ask David some questions or us here too about process or some future activities.

The National Leadership Summit was quite frankly pivotal to a lot of the work we're engaging in in collaboration with OSEP and other agencies to support state improvement activities. That's being done through some very specific kinds of strategies. Number one, I think, David mentioned this many times, and that is to really lead from an understanding of what the data says, in other words, both state level report out data to the feds, as well as different types of data that's been gathered at the local level including outcome data. And then really how to after that, as a mechanism, really your strategy for really promoting state and local planning.

The other thing is the, I think, the importance that David stressed, and I'm sure Wendy would have also in relation to the interagency question here, how you pull together the correct partners. And David spoke to a number of partnerships that they have. Certainly moving not only from examining their own state, their own issues, within the Office of Special Ed programs there, but also to broaden it to looking at the initiatives of other agencies that support views in other ways.

We also had a very strong kind of request here through the summit to take a look at bridging and aligning standards and assessments. We do a lot of work here in surveying states and analyzing concerns around graduation policies and diploma

options, including issues around drop out. And these all have really been the major priorities around which states have focused their requests to us for technical assistance, and what are going to do about it? We have the second National Leadership Summit coming up in a year-and-a-half, which I think if we regard these as book ends to a process of technical assistance, I think we can explain what we're going to do in the interim here. We have as many of you are aware, a battery of approaches here which are both Web based publications, as well as print publications, capacity building institutes and all kinds of strategies here which we will continue to promote, and continue to develop and make available. And I think the summit has helped us, if anything, focus some of the publications and work to the exclusion of other very important topics. But certainly to drive home meaningful information that was supported by states, or indicated by states as high priorities at the summit.

We're going to take on some new strategies, as well. On our home page, you will note now that there is a place called communities of practice. This is a strategy that is being pursued by OSEP through its continuous improvement monitoring process along with its research to practice division to more closely align the work of technical assistance centers like NCSET, along with state issues concerning basically meeting the regulatory requirements of the law.

Our community of practice here, you'll note, deals with the issue of exiting, or I guess it would be better to call it school completion, dealing with both graduation and drop out issues. You can come to that Web site and sign up and you'll be basically familiarized with a network and a body of work that has been put together around the issue of drop outs and dropout prevention, graduation issues and the like. It's a facilitated experience.

We're going to use broader strategies like this to pull together states with common interests to work with the regional resource center system, and other technical assistance centers to basically organize things. So keep alerted to our Web site. We'll send things out through E-News to con-

nect you, as well as to make individual contacts to the states themselves. We're also working on a variety of individual state level negotiations, as you would anticipate here. David may have some specific needs for us to support in Rhode Island. We will, of course, respond to David and the needs that are present there.

We are also embarking on an ambitious process here, which will be kicked off this Thursday in Washington, DC, where we're pulling together approximately 45 to 50 national organizations, including those involved in special education, general education, youth development, workforce development, rehabilitation, and community services.

We're calling it the National Alliance on Secondary Education Transition. This is a national voluntary coalition of these organizations which are being convened for the purposes of examining a shared agenda around a framework and standards and indicators, best practices -really researched best practices that can support local program improvement. More information will be available about this in the future on our Web site. The end product is to create tools that might relate to self-assessment planning at the local level. There's a lot of work to do on that, but we are convinced that we are trying to create a common kind of bridging mechanism here that moves us into a conversation about all students more easily at the local level and planning perspective. And this national coalition is what we are looking at helping to achieve this. We have very strong support from these organizations thus so far with the idea itself.

I could go on and on about these kinds of things. They're a little bit rudimentary. I think that what David has said has stimulated a lot in my mind. What I'd like to do is to open this up to questions that you would have, either to David or to us here about the National Leadership Summit. And any thoughts that you have regarding it. So I'm just going to turn it over. And Kelli, do you want to field the questions here?

DR. CRANE: Sure. We have about 15 minutes for questions.

ROMIE TOBIN: This is Romie Tobin from

Colorado. David, you mentioned the communities of practice on the Web site, is it up yet? Or is that a plan yet to develop?

DR. JOHNSON: It's up. If you go to our home page, you'll find it there referenced there.

What it is, is OSEP has developed six communities of practice. One deals with exiting. One deals with data. A couple deal with LRE, and some with early childhood issues. There's a Web based platform that's been developed by the American Institute for Research, AIR in Washington, DC, that provides an opportunity to use this type of technology for exchanges Q&As between states, facilitated discussions, resource management around these issues, resource databasing, that kind of thing.

In addition to that, though, we're also expanding to conversations and discussions through teleconferences, and other kinds of E-mail exchanges. The issue here is to say that if you're in a state office, and you need to know something about dropout, and you need to know the best of what there is to know about dropout, you should be able to rely on some entity to help you. That's what we're doing is we're creating for you, a portal of information into what is known and understood around the country about dropout research, dropout issues, as well as people concerned about these issues within individual states. So I think it's a rich resource. We weren't sure how fast it would grow, but within a couple of months here, we're up to now over 70 signed on to this and they're very active and it grows daily.

It's a nice strategy. We may expand that concept into other things given the postsecondary outcome systems design management. As well as looking at communities of practices that would relate to interagency collaboration, resource mapping, those kinds of issues, which I think are very important based on leadership summit priorities.

TOBIN: In Colorado one of the priorities, I know that we had was the redevelopment of our -- the re-energizing of our interagency group and probably some restructuring of that. Is there any possibility of getting some assistance through next step on facilitation of that?

DR. JOHNSON: Sure.

TOBIN: If we were to start up a stakeholders group?

DR. JOHNSON: Yes, let us follow up with you on that specifically.

TOBIN: OK. Great.

DR. JOHNSON: We are looking at a very specific set of processes here around resource mapping and service coordination that I think will be coming out also as product. And we're developing some very specific kinds of strategies around such as capacity building institutes and other kinds of outreach strategies.

DR. CRANE: David, this is Kelli Crane. I just wanted to point out for those of you who are on the call and may have attended the summit in September, just so you know, we will be doing some follow-up calls to the states to basically ask about the progress they're making on the implementation of the plan. And what kind of help or assistance might they be looking to receive. And then we can look at what folks are generally active across the country and see if there are some targeted kinds of technical assistance strategies.

Other questions?

BEA: Yes, this is Bea from Iowa. And the question I have is one of the issues that we deal with. We are a non-categorical state, one of the few, and we're struggling with some issues, I think, many struggling with us. But we feel like we're alone in this arena. So we don't know where we can get the technical help we need. You know, we have a postsecondary that rely on us and the K through 12 calling on non-categorical nature. So I mean I really don't know, I guess I don't know what to ask. And I don't know if anyone is online that may know where we can get help or who to call.

DR. JOHNSON: Right. Yes.

DR. CRANE: This is Kelli. And I had a little bit of trouble hearing you. What you're asking is specific technical assistance around postsecondary enrollment and completion is that correct?

BEA: No, that's not correct. The difficulty we have is two structures that are actually not designed the same. We are a non-categorical state in Iowa. We don't have -- when testing is done,

we don't have any type of, quality label. And students are coming to the University environment, and they have to have very specific, I'll say label, so we know exactly what we are accommodating. So we are struggling. The issue is not between the K through 12 and the postsecondary but the issues within the system that we work in. And we just seem that we are struggling along.

DR. JOHNSON: Anybody else have that experience on the line, to comment on that? So what you're saying is you have a non-categorical state, correct. And what's going on at the post-secondary level is that you need a much, I guess, different type of identification process.

BEA: Yes, which is very categorical.

DR. JOHNSON: Right. That smells like trouble to me. In most states, I know in this state here, is that between our Minnesota State university system, which the University of Minnesota is not a part of, but the community colleges and state universities here have what are termed articulation agreements. And it's usually around chorus work and things like that. In other words, high school equivalency -- the prior courses from high school to access course work in the postsecondary environment. The issue, though, is things much larger but that seems like a major systems kind of question for you on how you would do that. I don't doubt that that would need to be negotiated individually by institution. Is that a universal situation for your postsecondary programs?

BEA: Yes, it is. And we don't want to negotiate institution by institution. What we are thinking is if we can have something universal, that way, we are not limiting the options of students.

DR. JOHNSON: It sounds like a sit down time, one of your priorities. I know that Barbara Guy when she came into the, maybe she's on the phone, I don't know.

BEA: No. She's in a meeting right now, so she asked me to sit in on the call.

DR. JOHNSON: I know that you came in -- the Iowa team came into the process here with specific focus around full secondary education. And I'm not sure what your plan detailed out because I was not involved in that conversation. But it would seem like if that was not part

of your original plan, that that needs to be put on the table, because that involves a fairly intensive level of conversation, I think. And discussion dialogue between some pertinent parties who can do something about it. Because you've created, I think, a little bit of -- well it obviously is creating some tensions or you would not have brought it up. So I think I would get it on the plan. And as we can work with Iowa in relation to some discussion, I think you're quite unique. I don't think I've heard of that situation before and I've been in this for quite a while.

BEA: Well that's what we are hearing that we are unique.

DR. JOHNSON: Yes, I would call it unique. You are the systems -- you have a real systems problem here particularly that limits access for young people. Or if creates another layer of assessment at the front end of your postsecondary experience to become labeled.

BEA: Yes.

DR. JOHNSON: I think I would get it on your plan. Get it kind of squared off. And make sure that Barbara who is leading your team there, has it laid out in that plan, so we can deal with it a little bit differently or a little bit more in depth when we do contact her.

BEA: It's on the plan. Right now, we are just looking for where we can turn for additional help. We are coming together, we are discussing this.

DR. JOHNSON: Well that's the first step, you know, getting around the table and discussing it. I think the question certainly looms, are the right people around the table? And what is a real strategy necessary to make it happen? So I think we can continue a dialogue about that. It seems like perfect big issue for you. Thank you for sharing that.

BEA: Thank you.

DR. JOHNSON: Other questions? Not so hard on the questions like that. It's a hard question.

JOYCE: I'm not sure that I really formulated this question. This is Joyce in Phoenix, Arizona. It just is something that kind of keeps coming back to me when we talk about inter-

agency collaboration and we talk about the school based centers and things like that. Rather than having groups operate outside of the schools, to try to bring some programs into the school setting itself. And I think it was David from Rhode Island that talked about that a little bit.

I really wish we could go in that direction, somehow. I think that's just a really important link. I know you're sort of talking more about what happens after high school. But to me, I think, it almost is the logical place to begin forming some of those interagency relationships in a school besides using their existing guidance counseling offices, or whatever can be used in that mechanism. But I'm not quite sure that this is a question. It's just that I keep hearing things sort of dancing around this issue, and I'm wondering if anybody has any other thoughts on that.

DR. SIENKO: Joyce, yes, that is probably my biggest -- the thing I think about and muse over the most is that issue because I've seen the impact of silos of funding. I mean there was a time when I came to this agency, and that was only three years ago, where money would come from a specific federal initiative right to a cubicle in this office at the state agency and right out to school district. When two cubicles over, some of the indicators, and some of the outcomes were expected to be the same, but there was no communication, there was no relationship.

One illustration that happened just this week, in fact, our child youth and family system, Department of Children, Youth and Families, has done an audit of foster care systems in the state, and now is rolling out to the different regions. And have conversations at the community level about the need for more community based foster care opportunities for kids in crisis. And they know the families are there. They know their neighbors. And there are relatives that are available, but we're not making those connections as well as we could. And it was interesting because one of the regions of the state that I cover, they had the form at, and it was after hours. It was like a four to six p.m. and it was held at the senior center. And when I showed up as a state department of education official, they were thrilled that

I was there. They were thrilled that someone from the state department of education would come down. And they were troubled about the fact that they just can't seem to get in to the schools and develop the relationships with guidance counselors who see the problems before they become the point where a child needs foster placement and et cetera, et cetera. And my first suggestion was, well, why aren't we meeting at the high school?

JOYCE: Right.

DR. SIENKO: Because I know the principal at the high school, all of the high schools in this region, and they would want to know who are these people coming in my building after hours and having a meeting. They'd pop in for five minutes. And that would give the opportunity to begin to develop that relationship. So I think we have some policy level opportunities. And I see more things coming out of Washington. One of the things was the Department of Labor this past summer had an RFP available for intermediary organizations within the labor side of the house, Richard Horne, who used to be involved with NTN and NTA, has been involved with that. And I think if we can keep getting that kind of seed money coming out of the federal initiative, to get us to work at the regional and more importantly local level, to have that kind of a dialogue and create our schools as a hub of those kinds of services and those opportunities. And Rhode Island, quite frankly, it's going to boil down to relationships, we're a small state. And when you go to get something done on your house in Rhode Island, you say gee I need a new roof, and they say you need to call Tony. They don't say you need to call XYZ Roofing. They say you need to call Tony.

Well that's the way it has to get to in our high schools. I call it the first name phenomena. We have to get to the point where when I walk in to a school, and I can say to a high school principal, who's your rehabilitation counselor? And they're going to say well that's Janice. And she's here every Tuesday and Thursday, and she meets with the kids in the guidance office. What do you do when you have a kid who's in crisis and they may be homeless? That's Jill and she works with youth and families. You know, how we get to that

point because that's where the rubber is going to hit the road. If the schools don't have the tools to solve these problems, they're going to continue to avoid these problems. And our kids are going to suffer as a consequence. So I'm where you are, I don't have the answer. But I think we need to keep challenging ourselves with that.

JOYCE: Right. I really appreciate your comments. I think certainly there are significant issues at the policy level and also at the funding level. And you talk appropriately about the importance of the relationships. But I'm wondering in schools, you know, funding and relationships kind of go hand in hand. And just like schools are compensated on certain head counts, I'm wondering whether we don't need to try to look at some kind of funding mechanism that looks at the head-count of students with disabilities, and ties some level of funding from source to that earmarked specifically for this kind of thing. I'm sure it's been thought about and discussed in many ways, and may even have been tried in your state. But thanks a lot for your comments, I appreciate that.

DR. SIENKO: Well Joyce that's excellent. And I think, you know, maybe if I can kick this back to David Johnson, there is a topic David that may be a piece of a national dialogue for more of a formal kind dialogue. Because I heard that a lot from my colleagues in the northeast. We do quarterly conference calls with all of the transition people in the states in the northeast region through our RRC. And, you know, that's coming up more and more as an issue. And I think we do have some opportunities there. And I think, we also have some responsibilities, because the schools can deliver on some of these things, they just don't know how. So as a result, they avoid it, and the needs go unmet.

DR. JOHNSON: Well taken, David. Well taken. Thank you, Joyce for that comment. We will work with you on this. Other comments, or questions here? We have a couple more minutes to go here. Just to follow up David, and Joyce, just for a second here. Yes, there are strategies going on. And there are some good examples, and models across the country. One of the things we're doing right now, part of this is resource

alignment, OK. Part of it is trying to get -- I mean everybody else is charged with spending everybody else's money first, I mean that's the issue.

But there are some good cautionary and resource pooling and kind of co-location models that have gone on where you're seeing an expansion of services on the same dollar or on at least a more efficient level. I don't mean to get into efficiency conversations, but through kind of shared responsibility. And everyone talks about shared responsibility but it's a different thing when you put the dollar down to say we're going to actually share this type of service. So we're trying to scoop up the knowledge around that or the understanding around. And then lead somewhat, I hope, in terms of some good examples, and models to begin to think about not all of the solutions are going to come out of that, but at least we begin to focus on it. And I think the more we focus on it, the more chance there is to change.

DR. SIENKO: I think, also, David, we also have to be clear with people about what they are allowed to do. Because I see that happen often where funding will come into a school, say for instance under a Title I program. And they'll make up their own rules, that once a kid goes on an IEP they can't be receiving the Title I resource any more, you know. And we need to be in there working with people to help them understand that they can match -, and be creative in terms of supporting the kids.

DR. JOHNSON: Exactly.

DR. CRANE: And I just want to make a note on this whole idea of resource mapping and intermediary grants that were just funded out of the department of labor. The next call, on education, secondary education and transition, is scheduled for December 16th. And it will be looking at resources spent and specifically we're hoping to get somebody on who is involved with those intermediary grants.

DR. JOHNSON: And that will be on the intermediaries, picking up on those centers that are funded under transition outcome intermediaries. I think we've reached the end of the time slot here, before the operator comes on and throws us off. I'd like to thank everyone for participat-

ing in this. If you have any follow up questions, concerns or remarks to make, please contact me directly or Kelli Crane or anyone of us here via the Web site if you need information which is <http://www.ncset.org>. We look forward to having you on the next call. Thank you.

END OF TELECONFERENCE

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