

AUCD

How UCEDDs and LEND Programs Can Partner with State and Local  
Special Education Systems During This and Future Pandemics

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>> If folks could mute their microphones. We're going to start right now. So hello and welcome. Welcome to COVID-19 how UCEDDs and LEND programs can partner with state and local special education systems during this future pandemics.

I would like to thank you for joining us today. Before we begin I would like to address a few logistical details. First we'll provide a brief introduction of our speaking, following the speaker there will be time for questions. Because of the number of participants your audio lines will be muted throughout the call. However you can submit questions at any point during the presentation

On the chat box on the webinar console and at the end during the question and answer we will be able to unmute your mics to ask the questions. The entire webinar is being recorded. There will be a short evaluation survey at the close of the webinar. We invite you to provide feedback and also to provide suggestions for future topics.

Please join me in welcoming Dr. Mary Beth who will introduce our speaker. Mary Beth?

>> I want to clarify. When questions happen we can let people ask questions but the chat box is also there throughout John's presentation. It's my pleasure to welcome you to our COVID-19 special webinar series. We will also be having another webinar next week, which will be really giving a perspective from families. We will be sharing data from a survey that we had over a thousand families tell us what's most important and we continue to do these weekly if not bimonthly as we move on.

It's my pleasure today to welcome John Eisenberg he is the executive director of the national association of state directors of special education. He is a LEND graduate. Even before the LEND program he has worn his values on his sleeve. It has taken him through a career with DeafBlind persons. He was the director of the Virginia DeafBlind project. He was a technical assistance specialist with the national DeafBlind Project and for 15 years he worked at the Virginia department of education.

Seven of those as state director of special ed. John has his finger on the pulse of the concerns we all have, which is what is happening to those students who have disabilities as we have moved into a remote model of education. And where are we going go from here. So it's my pleasure to introduce John and I look forward to hearing what he has to say.

>> John Eisenberg: Thanks, Mary Beth and welcome everybody. I'm absolutely thrilled to

be here and spend some time with you this afternoon sharing from my perspective what I think could happen and is probably happening in some capacity around the great collaboration between the UCEDDs and LEND programs. I'm going to pose some ideas I've been floating in my head about as we begin to move through this crisis and even move out of the crisis, what are some additional future ways that we can all work together.

And as MaryBeth said I am a proud LEND graduate. I had a wonderful experience at Virginia Commonwealth University and went through that program and developed some good close relationships and learned a ton of great information about working across systems. And actually worked at the UCEDD at VCU as well as Mary Beth said as the DeafBlind project director. It's an honor to come back and get a chance to talk to you all.

So I'm going to share a little bit with you just very quickly about what is NASDSE. NASDSE actually started in 1938, close to almost 35 years before the first special education law was passed in the country. Five people in states got together who were trying to figure out how to support kids in 1938 with disabilities in school. They got together and created this association and almost 70, 80-some-odd years later we're still here.

Our organization represents the state directors of education and state departments of education in the United States and U.S. territories. Our major mission is to make sure we can improve individual and organizational success for state leaders of special ed by providing relevant services. The most important part is we create positive systemic change and results for students with disabilities.

Our vision is to make sure that students with disabilities can live, learn, work and participate in their communities. So we have been actively involved in this COVID-19 nightmare for a vast number of weeks now, and we've been meeting quite heavily as an organization. We're in close contact with our members. We've been doing a lot of work in Washington and we're also doing a lot of work with a bunch of other national organizations. So I am sharing the NASDSE perspective, but it's also been informed by participating on hundreds of webinars and calls related to COVID-19.

So what I thought I would do is just share the state of the state, so to speak. Because we are in a time that is totally unprecedented. I have never seen anything like this in my entire close to 30-year career. But currently 48 states and four U.S. territories, the district of Columbia and the department of defense have decided to either order the closing the all public schools or recommended school building closures for the rest of the academic year.

And we anticipate that's affecting close to 50.8 million public school students every single day. And their families, teachers, related service providers, administrators and all the way up the food chain. The next slide is a map that kind of shows you what's been happening, which states have closed for the academic year, which have closed into May. We have Montana, which they are allowing each individual school district or division to figure out their own path.

And the states that have sort of the slash marks are states that are recommending closure to people. At the local level but still having some flexibility. So as you can see the vast majority of the country is blue or black which means for the rest of the school year we're seeing closures. We've never seen anything like this before. We've always had situation in some states that have been affected either by a natural disaster, hurricanes, but nothing at this level before.

Where the rest of the school year is canceled. So as you probably are dealing with on a day-to-day basis, that has created all kinds of craziness and all kinds of questions. All kinds of scrambling to try to make sure kids get support services and get their needs met through their IEPs. And what I thought I would share with you, just what are we seeing the impact on local administrators and special ed and state administrators in special ed.

There was a survey done with membership, both in the case organization, which is the council of administrators of special education, and we use some of that data to develop a

letter that we wrote to the U.S. Department of Education and Congress where we had a chance to survey members and get some information. So I thought I would just kind of start with some of these statistics. And share with you some of the actions that we have tried to take.

Related to the statistics. So 78% of the participants in the survey, I think there were close to 2,000 individuals who took the survey, reported they had an evaluation that was overdue because of school closures related to COVID-19. So 76% of the country, participants, were struggling with how they were going to complete special education evaluations.

60% of people surveyed reported that parents had requested a delay in mandatory timelines which could be IEP reviews, 60-day evaluations. One of the later slides I'll be talking about parent engagement and making sure students are getting services. 79% responded or reported that they will not be able to meet the requirements of the state performance plan. Hopefully you know what that is. It's the 17 indicators that the state directors have to collect data upon.

Which we hold ourselves accountable for special education performance. Half of that is compliance and the other half is improving outcomes for kids. But a lot of those data collections are going to be significantly impacted. Which means depending how you perform on that, the state would probably have to take any corrective action against the local division. So people are really struggling to figure out how to move from the traditional models of delivering services

And reporting data. 41% of the people surveyed reported they had to excuse more members of the IEP team than typically they've ever had to do. Even up to 40% of people are having connectivity issues. 43% reported that they have parents in their district requesting that special ed services cease during the COVID pandemic. And this was very shocking to me. So almost half of the people on the call had had families reach out saying they didn't want special ed services.

And primarily responding to just the health and safety of their family and to deal with the situations that are going on on their own. So I thought that number was very insightful and that's why I'm really excited that next week you'll be provided information to dig deeper into that 43%.

The common misnomer that people have been trying to say across the country is because school districts can't -- haven't been able to provide comparable IEP services to the same degree that they had in the past that, there was going to be hundreds of thousands or millions of lawsuits against local divisions and state departments, but that's not really what we're hearing. Only 3% of our respondents have said the families have either filed for due process or filed a state complaint.

Regarding to an issue or date or timeline. And it's sort of fascinating. Because we were under the impression that things would start to kick in in that gear. So there's not a lot of due process mediation or complaints going on right now, and I guess if I had to guess it Bob again people are more worried about the health and safety of their family and trying to maintain just the fiscal issues at home.

13% surveyed that parents had requested in-person meetings. Usually against the wishes of most state governors and CDC. So even though health is an issue, 13% still wanted a face-to-face. And most of them are again very comfortable with doing virtual IEP meetings. Folks have figured out some of the issues. They've done it through tell phonic means or Zoom. So IEP meetings are happening and meetings are happening with families.

And a very low number actually want face to face. And then last statistic that I wanted to share with you is that participants reported, about 68% reported they had no evaluation during the COVID-19 crisis. And another 25% of the members had between one and five parents request anal extra meeting. So it's kind of showing you that there's major issues with

some of the IEP and IDEA requirements about information evaluations or extra IEP meetings

And the families aren't readily requesting or following up on those. In states and localities are struggling to figure out if they do get those requests, how they're going to go about doing some of those evaluations and that will come up again in a future slide when I talk about some recommendations or some areas that I believe that LEND and the UCEDDs can do to help news that arena.

That came from a survey of local administrators and I want to share with you the seven or so big topics that our members at NASDSE have been telling us about and we have had weekly conversations with our members. We're doing two calls sometimes a month with our members. And weekly meetings with our advisory board. And they're hearing from people. But these seven things have come out as sort of hot topics.

Based on that survey data that you saw and from our conversations, one of the things that was readily apparent is that as you probably know on any given day -- IDEA is a very tough of piece of legislation to be in compliance with on a day-to-day basis. For any number of reasons, probably on a given day, somebody is out of compliance. During this crisis it's made things infinitely more complicated. Our members and local members felt strongly they needed additional flexibility

Around timelines and very specific requirements around process issues related to IDEA. Our folks absolutely did not want to see waivers of IDEA. They did not want to see any of the civil rights opportunities for kids to be denied. They still felt strongly to keep all the due process mediation complaint system in place, but they really did feel there's a lot of flexibility that needed to be done, especially around issues related to timelines, for initial evaluations around IEP dates.

Around reevaluation issues. If there was issues related to asking for due process mediation and complaints, having the ability to have some additional time for that. The other major hot topic which was kind of a hot topic before this already started, but is the massive shortage that we're seeing in special education of teachers. And it's become -- it was an epidemic before this epidemic, and it probably will continue to grow.

But that's been a major issue because there are many, many states where they had been unable to fill key special education positions and they've either had to use long-term substitutes or folks that are not as highly certified as we would like to see. And that has been exacerbated by this issue. And those individuals who were either temporary or part-time or fill-ins are having to teach during this crisis.

We have also seen a massive shortage in service providers. So our OT, our PT, our speech, our school counselors. We saw massive shortages then, and it's still creating an issue now, especially if we're having to provide virtual-related services to kids, and we already had a shortage in trying to find somebody that's skilled enough to be able to provide the services virtually.

The other huge hot topic is what you kind of saw reflected in the data was this concept of trying to maintain the health and safety of our students, teachers, and our staff as kind of the preeminent issue. And then facing issues. If you do that, if you're out of compliance. Because of timelines or other various issues. Weighing that with the health and safety of students. That's been a massive issue. I would say number 4 is probably the most pressing issue and one that we're struggling with as an organization.

I think a lot of folks are, is how to maintain and increase actually target family engagement during this crisis. We have some families that don't want engagement at this point. But I'm more worried, and we'll have a little bit more in-depth conversation about families in underserved communities who are struggling even when there was face-to-face school opportunities, who are now probably really struggling with some of these newer forms of

engagement using Zoom, using electronic

opportunities. Especially in parts of states or communities that have real broadband issues or poverty issues where people don't have cell phones, they don't have computers, they don't have web cams, and that's going to be a real issue. The other, as you probably are all facing, is virtual education. We have been tracking virtual education for the last, say, 10, 15 years. It's something that I was pretty passionate about, that the Virginia department of education had been involved in

In a couple of national committees about and folks weren't quite there in the best of situations. Now every state every division has been thrust into using virtual education. A lot of the research is clear. Many of the major platforms, tools, techniques that you use to provide virtual education often have massive issues related to accessibility. Either documents not being accessible, that the software application that's tie into assistive technology doesn't work right.

The reading levels are untested in some cases, if there's links to outside resources. Huge issue with teachers being competent enough to teach using some of the tools. But then the other major issue I was beginning to highlight with parent engagement is equity issues. Is being able to provide comparable education to regular education instruction for special education students and our students having access to equipment, access to broad brand

Access to high quality teachers. And for many of our students who are inclusion settings, making sure that lessons or homework or any of the instruction that's happening is being reduced to complexity or being accommodated based upon their IEP needs and we're seeing equity issues in certain communities or issues related to just clear access to the equipment and technology and quality of instruction.

Probably the hottest topic that educators at the national level, the department of education, Congress, governors are getting calls about is related to the concept of compensatory education. And those discussions are happening right now. And for many of you who are very familiar, compensatory education is one of the means of helping to address once there's been a dispute where a division or a school district has either not met the requirements of an IEP,

That it is a mechanism to remedy that situation by providing additional or compensatory services. So there's a huge discussion right now going on because of the instruction or services or key accommodations that students had in their traditional IEP, if that is not able to be done right now, are we going to be having tons if not hundreds of millions of dollars of compensatory education that's going to need to be provided to students after the crisis is over.

But there's a lot of debate whether or not it's even called compensatory education, because in essence you have to violate an IEP purposely and provide remedy for that. Well in this particular case, with the COVID is to blame, not the particular school divisions. So there's a whole new area of discussion related that IDEA doesn't really address about major pandemics or major national crises like these where if you can't provide what was in the IEP, what do you call that? And what's the remedy for that? Is there a remedy?

Do you even need to have that discussion with the families? There's a number of work with organizations including ours that are going to be engaging in the next couple of weeks about how do we handle that.

The other big topic is the actual provision of providing speech, OT, mental health counseling in virtual environments. We have had some experience with some of the areas of related services being done virtually because of some of the shortages. We have seen a lot of promising work done, especially related with speech. Speech and language-related services. But there's some areas that don't have a lot of research base or a lot of experience. Particularly in the area of counseling and school psychology. And especially

around trying to deliver initial or renewal of our continuing evaluations on kids. Because many of the tests that you psychological tests or other testing situations have very strict protocol and they are normed on certain behaviors and it requires X number of staff and there really isn't a research base yet to say whether or not the validity, reliability of those evals can be trusted.

Especially if you are talking about initial eligibilities for students joining in special ed. That is an ongoing conversation that everybody is having. So I wanted you to hear between those two groups, between our membership and the CASE organization, what the hot topics in special ed are in terms of those folks who have to implement IDEA.

So in my head I'm thinking well, there's some clear opportunities for us to collaborate with UCEDDs and LENDs and because I'm somewhat familiar with what they do. I kind of knew where the wheelhouse is for you guys. And there are huge areas of overlap, in areas that you guys have expertise in that may be extremely helpful. And I'm putting them into four kind of buckets. Health and safety; parent and family engagement, because there's a number of things that you guys do

Both in health and safety, especially in parent and family engagement. Help us take a look at best practices in virtual delivery of related services and the fourth is many of your organizations provide incredible amounts of technical assistance and professional development to our local and our state officials. And you guys also oftentimes do a lot of great research. And so all four of these areas I want to go through and talk about my thoughts about ways

That our organizations can collaborate together.

So in the first kind of bucket, health and safety. One of the things that we're seeing real issues is not a lot of -- there's a lot of disagreement about medical information about the COVID, what states should be doing or not doing. There's huge debates right now happening about whether or not we reopen schools, how do you reopen schools, what are the safety issues that you need to think about doing, making sure that our local divisions and our state people have the most up to date

CDC information and state public health recommendations. I think it's a clear area because of your connection, especially in the LEND community, such close tied to the medical community the more information you guys can provide around special education, I think that would be huge. Because you guys focus so much on developmental disabilities and chronic health issues, I think that's a primary for you guys to provide additional help to states and localities.

There is not many people that have a lot of expertise in that arena. It's a very, very small world of people that have that kind of skillset. But I think people are going to need strategies, considerations, medical recommendations about what to do during reopening. And even now, for kids with more significant disabilities and chronic health issues. And those two groups are some of the fastest rising populations that our states have seen. We've seen a high number of kids with autism being identified.

But a lot of other kids who have developmental disabilities comorbid with chronic health issues which makes them prime candidates for being infected by COVID. But even in future issues, if there is some other national crisis, how do we handle making sure that the health and safety of those students can be met, but also still their education can be delivered. So both right now, and on reentry. That's an issue where I think you guys can really help.

The other area that I would think you guys have a lot of expertise in, especially around the area of -- ideas, tips and strategies for families who have children with severe behavioral issues. It could be the first time where they've spent this much time on a day-to-day basis, of managing a job, manage a household, their mental health issues and have to provide instruction and have to deal with a child with pretty significant behavioral issues.

They might have been relying on the support of some other professionals to help them with that. But I think the more you guys can provide some ideas, tips and strategies for families who are in crisis, this has brought out some tough issues for lots of people. Even all of us are struggling with some of those. And we're not quite sure how to deal with that. But I can just imagine layering all those issues where the family member with significant behavioral issues.

And the other is, I think the mental health support of students services for students, teachers and families. Because of your work on LEND and because of the work I know some of the UCEDDs had done related to a lot of the emerging work and positive things that have happened related to trauma, this could be -- trauma-informed care and mental health first aid, this would be a prime area for the UCEDDs and LENDs to work with state systems.

And I put teachers down there, because we're hearing, and administrators, this has just been I think even after the COVID is sort of over and people are going to go back, if you think about the number of teachers in New York City who are going to have to come back either having faced the death of their immediate family or have been teaching and are stressed out, I think mental health is going to have to be a cornerstone of something we're all going to have to deal with

And look at providing mental health supports. Not just to students but to the professionals who are supporting students and families.

So I'm going to shift to parent engagement real quick. On a given day, a parent and family engagement is not easy to begin with. Under best of circumstances. But then you layer in the pandemic and having people have to use virtual resources. And I think you've exponentially increased that issue. So again, many of your organizations have done or fund significant projects around parent and family outreach.

And if we could figure out how to have best practices, best ways to do that. Using the virtual delivery systems, I think that would be crucial in a great way. A wonderful collaboration. The families that I'm most worried about are the families that were already struggling with face-to-face participation, and you're layering on this issue with virtual resources. We've got whole communities in Virginia where I live where they have no access to broadband. Their cell phone reception is almost negligible.

Making sure that families have access to computer technology or cell phones if they can't afford them. We've got families who are non-native speaking families who are struggling with this issue. Is instruction actually -- is information being delivered to families who are non-native speakers. Then you layer in families of children who are Deaf and hard-of-hearing and if they have a vision or hearing issue themselves, for using those virtual resources.

Have you accommodated for those particular situations. Ferreting out ways we can do better research for underserved families for this crisis or the next one again could be a great way. If you have looked at any of the research related to virtual learning, many of the models require a family member or a parent to be a learning coach, so to speak. And a lot of that comes out of the research from the University of Kansas and other national technical assistance organizations, like CAST.

In Boston and I think family members are going to need more tips and strategies. I think no one anticipated the crisis would be this long. I think parents are struggling with academic content. I think they're struggling with how to teach behavior, how to teach communication, how to use assistive technology. The whole host of gamuts. Parents are being almost required to be a co-teacher in many environments. And I think in a different wormed

And for the next time and if this goes on longer, I think we're going to need more technical assistance and training to families on how to do home instruction a little bit more. And the fourth area around parent and family engagement is to make sure families know what their

rights are. To make sure they have seen information that relates to IEP meetings to make sure they know services still are being delivered.

What's the rights and responsibilities for participating on those IEP meetings. What do you do if you're not happy with evaluations or services and you need to go to dispute resolution options which could be due process mediation and complaints. What's the role of providing families advocacy during this process. And I think there are a number of organizations trying to do that.

And then making sure that families know what the state policies are during pandemics and other major crises related to special education. So parent engagement is huge. It's an area that I think everybody is sort of struggling with. And again, that's why I'm fascinated to hear some of the data that you're going to hear from the turnbells next week about what they're hearing from families. We haven't heard all that much from families, as you saw in our data.

So third big bucket is virtual education. Sort of what are the best practices in special education and that's well documented. We've got a number of national TA organizations, you guys have done a lot of research, you have published a lot about that, the best ways to provide special ed, but what's that translation look like when you go to a virtual environment? It brings Upton's of questions. Tons and tons of issues. What is LRE in a virtual environment? Are there opportunities for kids to be with their non-disabled kids in virtual environment. How does co-teaching happen in

What does scaffolding look like? What does modifications and adaptations look like? Same thing related to service delivery methods. How are we making sure that if we have five therapists doing virtual service delivery, that everybody's keeping track and using that medical home model where everybody's interacting and coordinating at the level of instruction and service deliveries.

And medical information. How is all that happening? How is all that transdisciplinary method working and working together. Same with assistive technology. A lot of these platforms that deliver virtual instruction or can handle video-based technologies or computer-based technologies, how are kids' assistive technology integrating in that? If a kid is relying on a communication device or translation or a switch or whatever,

Is the platform that the school division used to deliver virtual instruction even compatible with those pieces or those devices. Or devices sent home with kids. What happens if the assistive technology sitting in a building that's been locked down. How are we dealing with the assistive technology integration piece.

And probably the hardest part is the accessibility options and strategies. The research is at least from University of Kansas and stuff that I've seen is really problematic about accessible issues in virtual instruction. And I'm not going to belabor that point anymore, but I think it's a huge issue. Because if you can't even access the information, you've already been denied access to your education. And that's not acceptable.

So we're going to need to deal with those four things pretty aggressively in the very near future. 5 is what does a virtual IEP meeting look like? What is best practices for doing that? We all know what best practices look like for face-to-face meetings and on a given day face-to-face meetings don't often go that well. How do we conduct virtual IEP meetings, how do we ensure families can have enough input into that.

What does that look like and what are best practices related to that. That's an area I think you can help with. Again, what does instruction look like in that environment. Many of our teachers were not ready to provide online instruction. They are learning, they're trying the best that they can and same with families. I think everybody is just maintaining. But I don't think that we're probably providing the best methods and in some cases we don't even know what the best methods are

For delivering online instruction. So that's a crucial thing. And I said this earlier. What is LRE in a virtual environment? How do we deal with that? Is there opportunity for kids to socialize in virtual environments? We've heard great stories of kids with pretty significant cognitive disabilities who are doing virtual education who absolutely love the opportunity to interact with their classroom peers. We know some kids are going to struggle but there are some kids who can take advantage of that.

And how are we teaching co-teaching and how are we using the techniques of co-teaching in a virtual environment. LRE in a virtual environment. Who would have thought. And the other is if virtual is the only option that we have, how are we going to make sure the kids with more significant disabilities, including sensory impairments, can access that information? We cannot wholesale say just because you have a certain disability type that we can't help you right now.

In the future all those things are going to have somebody significantly discussed and debated. Number one is the one I haven't considered it's a major issue it's the role of paraprofessional in virtual education. What do they do? What does that look like? What's best practices related to that? Were the paraprofessionals laid off during the pandemic? Were they given any training? Do they have access to the technology?

Many of them are making pretty not good money and were they given laptops? Were they given access to get on the Internet if they're in an area that didn't have high-quality broadband. All those questions have been raised for me about how do we address that issue. What about kids that had one-to-one paraprofessionals in their IEP. How are we handling that situation?

And again, because you guys do so much teaching the prep in many of your universities is that I think queer going to have to seriously think about adding a lot of that into our course work moving forward. Because there is a good chance that something like this is going to happen again, whether it be a weather phenomena or something, there's going to be something that's going to close schools.

And teachers are going to need to be more savvy how to use these virtual tools to teach kids. And I think that's going to be an area that you're going to have to debate and we'll have to figure out as a field how much of that needs to be integrated in teacher prep programs. So that's virtual education.

So the last big area that I just wanted to chat with you about was technical assistance and professional development. This is again probably one of your bread and butters. Many of you guys have lots of grants, lots of opportunities where you're doing TA and D with people. But I thought it would be a great way, much like the survey that you guys are doing with families, is to get a little bit better handle on moving forward in the next pandemic or for the next -- or

Preparing for the next pandemic or next natural occurrence of some cataclysmic event, what do people need in the future to get ready for something like that or have a comprehensive plan or a template for especially for students with disabilities. I think it took people really offguard. They weren't ready for this. And a lot of people are struggling with our population of kids making sure that there's continuity of education happening.

I think that's an area where you guys could do some great research and great TAD in the future, PD. Already kind of shouted out about teacher prep programs and I would probably say the same thing about those you in the LEND programs are in OT/PT, speech, counseling or any of the other programs, folks are going to have to know how to use virtual techniques and virtual instructions. Or virtual meetings and virtual service delivery options.

And figure out what that looks like and what the research needs to be. Again, keep continue to go do the research about best practices and the translation to virtual environments. I think there's a huge role for you to play in administrator training for both

special ed and regular education. I think there has been a high turnover of professionals in the area. And I think this is going to be a lot of our folks weren't prepared to handle this at the administrative level.

And they're doing the best they can but the more you can provide professional development to those individuals, the better. To give you an idea of the turnover. The average stay of the state director of of special ed is a little over three years now. Now the job has gotten so complex and there's so many politics and so many issues that we're seeing a high turnover of those individuals and a lot of people are coming into those roles with state level experience and need additional training.

So the more you guys can think about administrator training in the future, I think it would be very helpful. And what does again LRE and inclusion and all those issues look like? What does inclusion look like in a virtual environment? What are some techniques for kids to be able to interact with their peers and not disabled peers and to have that be a meaningful delivery of some level of inclusion for kids.

It's not ideal, but what does that look like? I don't really know. 7 again is right in your wheelhouse is making sure that folks have training and information on behavioral techniques, medical information, nutrition information, mental health supports, and I know a lot of you have done a lot of great work around trauma informed care and making sure that those between 7 and 8, that those are some of the things that educators have neglected in years past

Because we were focused on academic content. I think this crisis has brought out the need for for making sure these areas are critical part of the students' education. Both in special education and regular education. Because without that solid foundation of those techniques and core components, you're not even available for instruction if you haven't eaten or if you've got a significant mental health crisis going on.

Or you have major medical trauma happening. So dealing with that and the trauma continuing to push that kind of TA and D out would be absolutely essential to the field.

So the last sort of slide that I have is kind of wanted to share with you what I've been spending most of my time with is dealing with a lot of federal, both current and future federal issues. And so it's been nonstop fast and furious. Many organizations are meeting twice a week to work with each other. That's been sort of the nice part of this pandemic is that a lot of the national organizations that represent teachers, that represent administrators, that represent families,

Related service providers have all banded together and we are all working very, very closely together to try to get through this process. But we are working very closely with the department of education, and currently with Congress to try to get some issues resolved. But moving forward, and currently, I just wanted to make sure that you were aware of, under the U.S. Department of Education there was at least two to three guidance documents put out

Related to special education describing to states and to localities what the requirements are and if there was any additional flexibility and what are those flexibilities and what are states and localities required to do during the pandemic. As you know, technical assistance centers. Those centers have geared up to help our states and localities dealing with these issues. From data collection to instruction issues to advocacy issues to family issues.

Things are beginning to finally emerge after the immediate crisis has passed so folks are ramping up around those. I will share with you that the Secretary of Education is trying to promote additional privatization efforts especially promoting around providing vouchers, and different funding opportunities for families to be able to be portable and use their money wherever they want.

And privatization issues also related to who are the private providers that could provide a

virtual education. And that's been a major discussion and major issue at the national level for a while. But I think that will continue.

The big one that folks are struggling with is making sure that we're having a close balance between compliance of IDEA and making sure that we're tracking results for kids. And I think that conversation is going to happen even more because of this issue related to COVID. Because of the issues of being in 100% compliance with IDEA and making sure even if we're in compliance, who really cares if we're in compliance if kids aren't making progress.

Making sure that in the future and now in this environment, how can we make sure that both are being met and those needs are being met for IDEA.

I think we're all going to be monitoring the upcoming election of the President because it could have a significant shift in policy. One way or the other. We are -- if there is a swing and the D's get elected versus the R's, depending on the makeup of Congress and the Presidency we could see a radical shift in policies and procedures and staff at the U.S. Department of Ed turns over.

Those political appointees come in with an agenda. There's a potential to have significant change there so you need to have that in the back of your head and what do we want to advocate for in the next couple of months, making sure that all the folks running for political office understand about what's happening in special education but also make sure they're informed as they're running for office about what their ideas, tips, strategies, plans are to implement IDEA.

Would be really critical.

We did find out, I think about two weeks ago, one of the requirements that Congress asked the Secretary of Education to do was to take a look at all the education legislation and statutes and to see if she had any recommended additional flexibility that she was not able to provide through her office that Congress would need to be done. And she came out with her recommendations about two weeks ago. A number of our organizations asked for additional flexibility under IDEA

Around the timelines. And she decided that the only area under IDEA that she would like to provide and grant additional flexibility is in the transition from Part C to Part B. So at this point our states and localities have no additional flexibility outside those that already had been put in place by the Office of Special Ed programs. So that's going to be a major issue moving forward. Because without that flexibility, almost every school division will probably be out of compliance.

And probably many of the states will have major data reporting issues. The data collection issues are just astronomical right now and they're almost impossible and for many of us it's the last thing we're worried about. We're more worried about the health and safety of kids. But because those data collection issues have not been waived or are still required, state staff and local staff are having to do a lot of those issues especially around the state performance plan, annual performance report.

And that data drives accountability. Many states have suspended their state testing for this year. Many states are taking a look at how are they going to monitor school divisions around IDEA. When people haven't been in school. How is that going to look, what is that going to look like, what's the guidance, what are people going to be required to do by OSEP. All of those issues are going to be huge.

That will be current and future issues. In terms of Congress, a number of organizations have banded together and we are trying to ask for additional IDEA stimulus funds. Currently our number seems to be hovering between \$300 and \$500 billion that folks are going to need. In order to address the issues related to the current crisis and future issues. Particularly around infrastructure, for future issues, but also if we find out and if folks can get compensatory education.

The sheer size and weight of those kids that might need compensatory education or a different form of whatever education you want to call it to make up for services lost that can break the bank in many of our locations and many of our state departments are seeing massive shortages because of the economy and because the economy has shut down the level of tax revenue coming in is significantly reduced.

And we've heard in excess of in some small localities, \$20, \$30, \$40, \$50 million budget deficit. Think about already having teacher shortages and teacher issues there. If we're having that kind of shortage, how can we do compensatory education for the past year and provide current services when things reopen. So a lot of issues related to that. So there's going to be a significant amount of funding that will be needed to address those issues.

So we're going need stimulus funds from Congress. There are still the opportunity for Congress, even though the Secretary did not ask for additional flexibility. There are a number of organizations that are still asking Congress to address that and debate that. And we'll see what happens. They're currently in the midst of coming back after a recess. And we'll bring up that issue and I'm sure many of your organizations will keep me informed about what's happening there.

I think I already shared with you we're already hearing that many of our localities are in the midst of a recession. And I think higher education is also facing that nightmare as well. And the impact of virtual instruction. The impact on loss of revenue in higher ed is going to be a real issue. And will we even have enough professors to be able to teach our teacher prep programs moving forward if we're seeing some of these issues.

So teacher shortages again, before this crisis happened, was going to be some significant work by OSEP and OSERS related to teacher shortages. The OSEP director had a major initiative on the recruit, retain, retract -- not reextract but retain teachers, trying to come up with additional tips, strategies across systems to make sure we're not losing teachers after a period of time and not losing key areas of our workforce.

And what that means for higher ed but also what it means for local school divisions. And then debates about licensure. There's been nasty debate from state to state about what qualifications teachers need to have in terms of being able to teach kids. And I think this going to be exacerbate that issue and continue to be a point of conversation moving forward.

Reauthorization can be right around the corner, potentially. What have we learned from this crisis? Is there things we need to add into the reauthorization about ways to address either future pandemics or future issues that could cause huge amounts of communities to not be able to do face-to-face instruction. How do we deal with virtual issues and the reauthorization and just overall question is when is reauthorization going to potentially kickback in.

Common thinking is there's no chance in hell it's coming back during this administration, but we don't know if we kick right off right away during another wave of elections or whether it would be delayed again. But we're we'll past reauthorization of IDEA at this point. And again the impact of the legislation -- impact of the potential election. Because of OSEP changes, OSERS changes. Often times people leave even if the R's are reelected again in some cases, people change and they don't want to stay.

So we could have some major leadership changes. And then what would be those priorities and funding sort of issues that could come out of the impact of the election. So that's kind of what I wanted to share with you. I wanted to give you a couple minutes to ask me any questions, and I can share any insights that I might have. But the thing that I can share with you is I've heard some amazing stories. People are doing the best they possibly can right now. We've heard great stories about teachers going

Above and beyond the call of duty to help kids. Superintendents, principals, related service people just working their butts off 24/7 trying to help kids. Showing up, calling kids,

touching base with kids, talking to families as much as they can. People are just kind of slowly holding on trying to do the best they can. So I'm optimistic things sound hopefully like it might be getting a little bit better. We're hearing rumblings of a potential another wave in August and what that means

To have state departments and local divisions we're not quite sure yet. But I think together a partnership with UCEDDs and LENDs could really add to some wonderful opportunities to really help work together across systems.

So I just wanted to thank you for allowing me to talk to you guys for a little bit and it looks like we've got about 5-10 minutes for maybe some questions if you have any. So Mary Beth, I'll turn it back to you to see if there's any questions that popped up or if anybody wants to say anything.

>> Thank you, John. I have to thank you. This was absolutely perfect. Overwhelming. But we have so many opportunities that you just put down for us. And I thank you for giving us this direction. I think that you distilled it into the real critical issues. And I'm sitting here thinking oh, my gosh, I have my whole next work scope planned for me.

>> Great brain applications.

>> We need to get some additional funding.

>> Yes, we do.

>> The other issues I think we have to add on to our Congressional asks are increase in discretionary dollars because we're going to have to create new way to do things.

>> Yes.

>> And I also want to acknowledge the fact that I think we're all expecting that we're going to see an uptick August some. We're in this for a while. It is the opportunity to think of ways to help teachers, administrators and families benefit from special education that we all fought so hard to make sure they would have. And equity is an issue.

>> And yeah. That's the part that I think the UCEDDs and LENDs are so critical is that people sometimes forget about that side of the house. But you guys are almost the backbone of the PD and technical assistance in many states. So without those organizations, we're in deep doo doo if we don't get additional money and additional training to people. Because you guys do amazing things for all of us. So that would be critical moving forward.

And the more we collaborate together, the better off.

>> Right. Absolutely. Are there any questions? Can I open it up. I think if you raise your hand, Anna is going to be able to make sure you are unmuted or you can type something in the chat box for the last couple of minutes we have. Comments also. It doesn't have to be a question.

>> I do see a Jill Eisenberg. That's kind of cool.

>> Here's the issue. She works for me. She works here. Jill, you can weigh in and say hey.

>> Can you hear me?

>> Yes, I'm with an I.

>> You guys are lucky that you haven't gotten each other's emails.

>> There is a question in the chat box.

>> I just want to say Jill is one of our professional development folks also working in pre-service. Anna do you want to answer or read it out?

Q. There was a question from Pat and Ron. What strategies are states

using to create successful transitions from parts C to B.

>> I don't have a specific answer, but there is some just incredible TA centers, one of which Mary Beth happens to run. ECPC, ECTA and a number, DAISY there's a lot of groups

meeting and talking about this almost hourly in putting out some great resources to states. And now if the secretary's additional flexibility is passed by Congress, I think that will even take a higher level of conversation around.

There will be additional resources and tips and strategies for making that successful transition. It wasn't easy to do before this crisis, and there's been a lot of seamless cracks that have involved. But one of the nice things that has coalesced is there's a really nice organization, the 619 affinity group that's a part of NASDSE has been working really closely with the TA centers to really help create those seamless transitions the best they can.

>> It's a challenge because some of these -- you've got two, in some cases two separate departments that aren't even working -- or that don't share staff in some cases trying to make this happen.

>> If I can just put in a plug. Last week we had the director of the infant-toddler coordinator association and that was a topic. So I think you can download that webinar, and there are lots of questions that were answered. Agreeing totally with John. I think that the 619 affinity group and the ITCA organization have really put out a lot of information. It is a state-level decision though. For example in our state, and I know this flexibility that the secretary put in, our state is allowing children to stay in birth-3 with funding.

Until school systems, a month ago we thought school systems would open up in September we're not quite sure now and that is going to be an ongoing discussion to determine how these kids are eligible and get into a preschool that's going to look more like home visiting if schools don't open. So definitely an issue.

>> That process is harder. And in many cases services had to be delivered in the home. And it's just -- it's exponentially more difficult during this crisis because you just can't do that.

>> And I think the biggest lift that I have seen, that I have been so proud of is to watch 619 teachers who have been used to going into school systems, having their colleagues of other teachers, their classrooms have to switch to virtual reality and home visits. They've done it amazingly well.

Looking at the time, we are going to be signing off. I want to remind everybody in the chat box would you please, there is a link going to be a link to a survey that we need to take at the end of this. And there also is the recording. Thank you, Anna for putting that up there. But the Survey Monkey please do that. We take the feedback and it helps to determine the next series of webinars that we do.

John I want to thank you again.

We are going to have you back for an encore probably as we get closer to see what's going on happen in the fall. Because I think you gave us our marching orders which is we have some work we can do before this happens again, which is going to be as soon as possibly the fall. So thank you very, very much.

>> Maybe a good next step was some of the leadership of the two organizations could meet with my board and maybe talk about ways that we can collaborate in the next year or so together. And come up with some actions.

>> That would be fabulous. Great idea. Thank you.

So with that I want to thank everybody. Please stay well. And keep positive. My little thing to tell somebody if you haven't seen it watch John Krasinski. Thank you all.