



Symposium #1

Belonging: Building and Sustaining Environments that Support High Expectations, Engagement, and Empowerment for All!

October 25, 2023

1:00 – 2:30 pm

Virtual Event

Opening Remarks

Valerie Williams, Director, Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education

Carol Dobak, Commissioner, Rehabilitation Services Administration, U.S. Department of Education

Why does belonging matter in secondary transition?

Hunter Steinitz, MDiv., Youth Engagement Specialist, Pennsylvania Bureau of Special Education, and Office of Vocational Rehabilitation.

What is belonging?

Erik Carter, Luther Sweet Endowed Chair in Disabilities, Baylor University

Belonging in school-based settings – Panel/video

Dawn De Lorenzo (moderator), Special Education Teacher, Union Township School District, Hampton, NJ

Devin McKenney, Student, Union Township School District

Stephen McKenney, Legal Guardian of Devin McKenney

Lisa Schoberl, Paraprofessional, Union Township School District, Hampton, NJ

Rob Frinzi, Health and PE Teacher, Union Township School District, Hampton, NJ

Caiden, Ty, and Gianni, Friends of Devin

Belonging in college and workplace settings – Panel/video

Tonya Stellar, Rehabilitation Services Administration, U.S. Department of Education

Chris Carter, College Student, Wyoming Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Transition Client

Brandon Chavez, DVR Client, Colorado DVR

Callie Davis, Program Coordinator, Wyoming DVR

Whitney Martinez, Disability Coordinator and Counselor, Central Wyoming College

Mary Dick, Regional Coordinator, Colorado DVR

Katrina Ruggles, Employer, Center High School

Carmen Pavlovsky, Employer, Center Viking Youth Club

How do you measure belonging in different contexts?

Erik Carter, Luther Sweet Endowed Chair in Disabilities, Baylor University

Questions and Answers

Valerie Williams (moderator), Director, Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education

Erik Carter, Luther Sweet Endowed Chair in Disabilities, Baylor University

Dawn De Lorenzo, Special Education Teacher, Union Township School District, Hampton, NJ

Closing Remarks

Valerie Williams, Director, Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education