

## Audience Questions Answered During the Symposium

**Q. Can you give an example of EPPs that have engaged in reform and the successes they have experienced?**

A. >>> Lynn Holdheide: The University of West Florida really engaged in efforts across general education, elementary and secondary education, and special education to infuse UDL principles within general coursework. And in the end, over a number of years, they've been working on this, and they've modified 14 courses to make sure that the central components of UDL are incorporated within. And this is all coursework, and all teacher candidates are receiving this kind of instruction. It has been powerful, and they are continuing to scale it. CEEDAR has an IHE facilitation guide that is being utilized to do this kind of preparation reform in other places. And in Florida, they are using the individuals who engaged at University of West Florida to scale to other programs.

**Q. Please share with us your thoughts on personnel preparation for professionals.**

A. >> Mary Beth Bruder: In early childhood, it's becoming more and more apparent that paraeducators are becoming one of the largest workforce groups that is growing faster and faster. And when we are having a number of children in general education programs, such as childcare, Head Start, and pre-K, we usually have to rely on a very well trained paraeducator. At this point in time, most paraeducators are coming without any formal training or degree. But the community college system in Connecticut for example, is undertaking with OSEP funding a new initiative to embed within their two-year early childhood associate degree with knowledge and schedules for kids with disabilities. If they don't go into an articulated four-year program, is to go right into the paraeducator. They are underused in some cases, and undereducated, because we haven't provided enough skills and knowledge.

A. >> Lynn Holdheide: We need to think about role ambiguity for teachers and paraprofessionals, so we can hone in on what are the skill sets they need to perform well in the classroom. When you're going into a classroom with so many different roles that you're playing, it's hard to get to that level of preparation, and that we can leverage paraprofessionals as well in the classroom.

**Q. GTL and now CEEDAR have been supporting EPP's efforts to both better integrate evidence-based practices and develop partnerships with their state's education agencies. What have been some of your key lessons learned?**

A. >> Amber Benedict: The first lesson that comes to mind is that relationships matter, and that they take time to establish. One of the things that's special about the CEEDAR initiative is that they work in a really coordinated way to get the key stakeholders on board. State-level leaders, educator preparation, interdisciplinary teams from the educator preparation programs including key leadership, deans, chairs, and faculty members from leadership preparation, general education, special education, and all their district partners. And so, it's a lot of people in the same room. There's sometimes this institutionalize history between all the stakeholders that are coming together. But what happens first is we come, and we set a lens on the learner and think

about who was our target here and what are we doing this work for? It is to improve the outcomes of children with disabilities, and so we begin with data, and then we do this kind of matrix where we're looking at all the competing initiatives that are in place across all of these different agencies, and we look for common ground. Where that learner rests and their teachers, and how we best improve instruction, is really what helps move team's past impasse, because sometimes that happens. But keeping students with disabilities and their outcomes and experiences, positive experiences at school as central to the mission, helps everyone keep moving forward and builds trust in this reservoir of trust that sometimes gets depleted over time. And so, time, relationships, coordinating your efforts. And then, having the right people at the table.

**Q. What would you say are the top challenges new teachers face when they enter the classroom?**

A. >> Jennifer Bullock: One of the things mentioned came through clearly in both the professional development needs assessment we did recently and our state of the profession survey, was classroom management, behavior management. That is an ongoing challenge, just figuring out how to do that effectively. That manifests itself in a lot of different challenges throughout their day-to-day experience in the classroom. So, that's one, and then two is the family engagement that we talked about a little bit. That is multifaceted in how to help new teachers in particular with that, but even very experienced teachers run into challenges with that as well. Overall, teachers rate themselves as not feeling very comfortable or competent in that particular area. So that's an area that CEC is certainly going to look at and provide support for that. But, that is something that new teachers don't have experience with most likely when they start their career. And even if they have children of their own, may not have been on the other side of the IEP table, as an educator. It is a new role for a lot of them and it is trial and error. But how to get them feeling prepared to start those conversations and collaborate with families on the right foot from the get-go, is something we are looking at very closely.

**Q. Earlier, the challenge of preparing special educators as specialists or generalists was mentioned. Can you talk a bit more about strategies states can consider?**

A. >> Lynn Holdheide: Going back to role ambiguity, you don't have enough time to adequately prepare a teacher, so you really, from the get-go, need to realize that this is meeting across the career continuum. You don't go from a novice teacher, to an expert, to a teacher leader without a lot of time and practice. That being said, within preparation programs, to exit in the short period of time you have, it is hard when they're so much role ambiguity happening. So, am I an inclusion classroom teacher, am I a resource room teacher, am I an intensive interventionist? And all of these are necessary. It is not an either or, there is a need for generalist knowledge and the need for intensive interventionist knowledge and specialized instruction. And so strategies, I will point to a resource developed by CCSSO and CEEDAR called Promises to Keep. Which really talks about licensure policy in the context of MTSS. What is it that teachers need to know and be able to do for core instruction? Because if core instruction is not strong, then we're leveraging, or we're taxing out, or maxing our resources and our personnel to try to make up for poor core instruction. If you look at that resource, it outlays how you can leverage MTSS to think differently about how you prepare general education teachers, and then reserve the special-education teachers to provide that more intensive instruction.

***Q. How would you sustain your partnerships as people leave their roles and new people join?***

A. >> Kim Paulsen: These partnerships were due to the state in February. They are now reviewing them, and they will give us feedback on that. As we have developed these, the people from the Metro Nashville schools, it includes people from exception education curriculum instruction and also from HR, to help at that shortage piece. Once that is in place, our hope is that whoever comes in and whoever changes that, we will do that and there will be enough things in place that are actually working that we can do and follow through with everything. The other thing not mentioned, is that there are 12 universities that place students in the Metro Nashville schools, and so they could not do a primary partnership with all of us, it would have been a very heavy left. And so, we are also in this consortium with our primary partnership with three other universities. So, Tennessee State University, which is an HBCU, which really helps us think about the diversity part, and then two other private schools, Belmont University and Lipscomb University. Those universities are really the primary pipelines for the Nashville Public Schools. Hopefully once this is all in place, it will sustain, because we have so many people involved, that we won't all jump ship at the same time.

***Q. OSEP primarily focuses on disabilities. Could you address linkages with Early Head Start, Head Start, and Child Care?***

A. >> Mary Beth Bruder: One of the things we know about early development in particular is that it is fluid. There are numbers of children, all the time, coming through child find activities and being identified as being eligible for IDEA and then maybe even testing out of IDEA. So, one thing that we have seen happen successfully at state levels, is when there is a partnership started off with Part C and the 619 coordinators and their offices, with for example the Head Start collaborative office with the Office of Child Care. And where that does come together, is when people realize we're talking about all of our kids, because even though, as Lynn alluded to, we need a specialist, especially for working with children with behavior challenges and with severe disabilities. We need to have teachers who know how to do those consultations that are so necessary to keep them in those inclusionary settings, because if we can't include them from birth to five, we should think differently about our own skillset. That means to me, that we're looking at a broader workforce than just those certified to teach kids under IDEA, but were not making them special educators just like we are not making special educators like PTs, or OTs, or speech, everybody has their own licensing and professional standards they have to meet. And in Head Start, they also have standards. They have been broadening to make sure there is more diversity in the preparation they require. Head Start is at the forefront since 1972, requiring 10% of kids having disabilities. Childcare is just because parents are working that kids with disabilities are there. The Part C and 619 individuals are doing a good job of making sure those outreaches are happening.

***Q. How can data be used to inform and improve EPPs?***

A. >> Amber Benedict: There's lots of data we can use to improve EPPs. However, we have a history of not really doing a great job of using it. The best thing to do, would be to showcase a program that's doing a thoughtful job using data in this iterative way, to improve the quality of

the program over time, and also just test themselves. Are we preparing educators that are effective and learner ready on day one? The one is another CEEDAR institution, and in fact it's one where our video guest Marquita was the Dean at the time that the program was developed. It is CSU Long Beach, and it's the Urban Teacher Residency Program. One of the things, one of the reasons, their program is successful is that their candidates exit their program with dual licensure. So, having both the background in general education and special education. Their program is designed, to touch on a couple key ideas that I've heard with an MTSS framework in mind, the candidates really are fluid in the knowledge and skills necessary to be effective across and within the MTSS system. But one of the ways, another way, this program is pretty interesting is that they are collecting a lot of data and using that information to make changes over time to ensure their candidates are best prepared. The data is multilevel. At the candidate level, they are being pretty thoughtful about facilitating focus group interviews about their candidates' experiences. They have information from, the assessment that is in place for credentialing in the state of California, but they are looking at job placement as well as how long it takes for the candidates to work, from beginning to end, through their program. The piece that is pretty innovative is the data they are collecting at the student level, and looking to see across the MTSS systems, the way that their candidates' impact is improving the P12 learners that they are serving. It is a pretty cool program.

A. >> Lynn Holdheide: Data is critically important and it's also how it comes into the conversation. What we will learned the most with CEEDAR is the time that it takes and the relationships, and that the work isn't being done to them, they own the process. In the beginning that was hard, they said just tell us what you need us to do for this grant. Like, nope, we've got to sit back. Look at your data and be engaged and empowered into that improvement process. That is sustainability, when you see people that engage in are excited about the reform, no matter who leaves, it continues on.

**Q. How can Part C and 619 coordinators work more closely with their IHE partners? Can you give us a few examples?**

A. >> Mary Beth Bruder: This whole panel has addressed the need for ongoing continuing education, professional development, Inservice, or whatever you want to call it, because none of us can train our students in four years or even at a master level. When you look at the professionals who are involved in Part C or 619, we know the PTs have to have a doctorate as their entry level. OTs are moving to doctorate. Speech path people have a CCC year after their master's degree. Teachers can be bachelors moving into masters. So, when you look at that, and look at the Part C coordinator and the 619 coordinator, they have a huge new learning curve in regard to working with the folks who are preparing. Up until now, we've seen a big disconnect. We have seen PD provided by state offices, sometimes the flavor of the month, sometimes the person who's just kind of on the circuit, sometimes it's one area of development. And yet at the higher ed, we're meeting accreditation standards that cross developmental domains for young kids, cross core academic requirements for school-age kids, and our Part C and 619 need to be educated and we need to educate from the higher ed, the C and 619, about the fact that if we're building toward accreditation, those standards matter, and they do have knowledge and skills that the field has really adopted. And for example, DEC for early childhood, CEC for school age, especially those institutions being certified. We need to work together so we can create an create personalized learning journeys for these folks once they graduate with whatever degree

or accreditation, so if they are in an inclusive setting, they know what specific skills that they. If they're working with kids with intensive needs, what skills that they need. And that if you can't do that for everybody, people have to be able to individualize as they're going through. So higher ed has just as much responsibility and the C and 619 Office to really start dialoguing. In the states we are working with, we mandate two things. Number one, that C and 619 work together, we won't take a state on if they are only birth to three, or three to five. And two, that they connect and have other early childhood partners, as well as a higher education system. So sometimes, it's just that we bring in one or two, like you guys have experienced, we work with them and they spread out to the whole state. We can't just work with one higher education. The way you were talking about Florida scaling up is perfect, because that's what we want to do. Is be able to make sure that there's consistency for our learners whether preservice and then in service.

**Q. How do Associations support new teachers in their daily practice, as opposed to larger-scale events like Annual Conferences, etc.?**

A. >> Jennifer Bullock: Those annual conferences are still important. The national conferences really do bring everyone together at the same place for great learning opportunities. Individually, at the practitioner level, associations provide a sense of that more individualized learning that Mary Beth just talked about. You can dig in and find resources you need on a given topic areas or if you have a student on your caseload this year, you've never worked with those specific challenges or exceptionalities before, you can find vetted research-based information and strategies on how to help you improve your practices and ultimately help serve that student better. Also, one of the things we often don't talk about with associations, is that provides a sense of empowerment to new teachers and connects you immediately with thousands of other people that just get it. They know what you're talking about, what your challenges are. It helps you celebrate the field and choosing this as a profession. We are all trying to figure out how to meet these challenges, which is so necessary, and take a pause and just say, you are doing the right thing and we've got you, and there are people and resources available to you when you need them that can help you with these challenges that we know they are facing. That, and helping them become leaders in the field. Starting at the association level as a member, you can get involved in committees, and really help affect change through the Association first. Connecting our members with other organizations doing fantastic things and amazing research, and then getting them involved in, and getting them exposed to more leadership positions and helping them become an advocate for their field. At the end of the day, feeling good about what they are doing every day is an important role that associations certainly give to our members.

**Q. How do you get buy-in from school districts?**

A. >> Kim Paulsen: Carefully. The policy in Tennessee states that EPPs have to engage in, and have these primary partnerships, but nowhere does it say that school districts have to participate with us. It was this process of identifying school districts, where you are placing your students. Part of it is, we have to have a primary partnership, but every other district we work with we have to have a state recognized partnership. And so, we were nervous at first that school districts were not going to want to do this. There are two things we have done in this partnership to get that ready to be sent to the state has taken 14 months, and lots of meetings

to talk through what we wanted to do and how we want to think through things. In that time, we placed most of our candidates in the Metro schools, and so that is the school district we wanted to partner with. In the last 12 months, we have had three other school districts come to us and ask if we would be a primary partner with them. And we have said no to that, but what has happened is that with our primary partnerships, in the way we have structured that, when we go to our state recognized partnerships with all of the other districts, a lot of the work we have done in that primary partnership will transfer over into the state recognized. I do not know any school or any EPP in Tennessee that had trouble with getting the buy-in and from the local school districts. We thought there would be, because there wasn't a mandate for that, but we have not had any trouble. And we have to meet three times a year to go through the data and continue, that's part of the agreement. What we will have to figure out is, how we can bring in our state-recognized partners with our primary partners, so we are not having 18 to 21 meetings every year with our different partners.

A. >> Lynn Holdheide: The important piece here is that, when you're thinking about a professional learning center across the career continuum, you're going in and out of state, district, educator, preparation program roles and responsibilities. Sometimes it's hard to come to the table, not thinking about your own agenda or requirements and figuring out how we partner together to make a seamless system from pre-service to in-service. That is not an easy thing, but as Amber said earlier, once you get down, it takes a long time to get to that point, then you really start to be able to distinguish roles and responsibilities and play together well.

**Q. What are strategies that faculty can implement to ensure that scholars are prepared to support a diverse population of families?**

A. >> Mary Beth Bruder: In early childhood, it's nonnegotiable. We know the families are our target under birth to three, and they should be more of the target for the three to five, because kids are spending most of their time with parents. Any early childhood program, there's a separate course on families. And there's lots of ways, starting with experience shadowing families, experience having a multitude of families to go into homes, and visit and find out how kids really learn, and what those learning opportunities are, and what families value from that culture and ethnicity. And then we could do a whole section on interpreters. That is another challenge we have. We have challenges, but it is nonnegotiable. One more thing, having families as co-instructors, you cannot get around that.

A. >> Kim Paulsen: The early childhood faculty at Vanderbilt would say the very same thing. And quickly, going back how to use data to make improvement in your EPPs, every year we do exit surveys and surveys of our employees and employers of our candidates. Every year, they don't know how to work with families. They need more experience. And so, we have tried to build in some activities, we have them attend parent-teacher conferences, and attend as many IEP meetings as they can, and we have them send newsletters home, and we have them contact parents for positive things and corrective things. It is still under that nurturing of their mentor teachers. They are not going to let them really have those tough kids of conversations without somebody being there. But, it has helped, and it has given more opportunity for them to do that. It is something you cannot teach in a class, you have to experience it.

A. >> Amber Benedict: We are also seeing some EPPs used the practice-based opportunities around cultivating these experiences they can't get organically because they are just novices.

And so they are using virtual simulation to have the conversation with a parent around a really serious issue, or case-based instruction to think about looking at a data profile to formulate a response that's sensitive to the family's culture and needs.

A. >> Lynn Holdheide: And this isn't specific necessarily to families but diversifying the workforce. Not only doing that but ensuring that teachers are prepared with culturally-responsive practices, whether working with families, students or colleagues. That is critically important. We are seeing that emerge across the country, in states and in educator preparation programs as content that they are really infusing into coursework.

## Audience Question Answered After the Symposium

***Q. In what ways are the University Centers for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) and Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and Related Disabilities (LEND) being involved in Personnel Prep grants when not a direct initial partner?***

A. >> Deana Buck: UCEDDs and LENDs can be important partners in Personnel Prep grants. Some ideas to consider include assisting with identifying placement opportunities for students and serving as a potential placement site; serving as subject matter experts for faculty and for students in completing course assignments; and linking students and faculty with partners in the LEND/UCEDD network (<https://www.aucd.org/template/page.cfm?id=667>) and with state and regional stakeholders. In addition, collaborating with UCEDDs and LENDs on future Personnel Prep grants (and other program development efforts) can strengthen workforce development efforts in states that are responsive to state and regional needs.

***Q. How is the work done by CEEDAR with some EPPs in states shared with other EPPs in those same states?***

A.>>Lynn Holdheide: One of the guiding principles that has advanced the Center's efforts is the sharing and use of resources, tools, and exemplars from EPPs that have engaged in and benefited from the educator preparation reform process. States vary in the degree and their approach to sharing and scaling work as described below:

- The state leadership team (which includes representatives of the participating EPPs) recruits additional EPPs to join the team and the state efforts.
- Strategic communications plans are established and implemented that highlight EPP reform efforts.
- Statewide convenings are held where EPPs share their work and connect with other EPPs.
- EPP faculty that have already engaged in reform are provided funding or a stipend to support additional EPPs in reform efforts.

In addition, as a Center we release and share resources and exemplars via our [state pages](#) on our website and cultivate peer to peer sharing via our annual convening, Cross State Learning Groups, and through the use of Implementation Specialists. Implementation Specialists that have both knowledge and experience in teacher and leader preparation, educator preparation policy, and systems change are employed through CEEDAR and leveraged to support EPP reform.