

Better Together: OSPI Update

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Glenna Gallo (GG): Well good afternoon. I am excited to visit Walla Walla, for the first time, ever. So I have lived in Washington now for a year and a half. Before that I was in Utah for 20 years as you heard. And then I actually grew up in Las Vegas, Nevada. So I've done some pretty massive culture shifts in my life, moving from Vegas to Utah, and Utah to Western Washington. So it's been very exciting.

As you know, I was brought here by Superintendent Reykdal, who hired me from the Utah State Board of Education. And so I've had an opportunity in the last year and a half to really learn about what Washington's doing regarding students with disabilities, and identify some areas that we really need to improve. And so what I was gonna do is show you some data today around students with disabilities in Washington, some priorities that I'm working on, and then get your input. Where are we missing things? What would you add? What do you agree with? And then we'll just do kind of questions and answers at the end. Other than that, I'm planning to be pretty relaxed. If you have a question in the middle, just ask.

Just to let you know, I do have a hearing impairment so if I can't hear you well I'm gonna walk towards you. Don't let that scare you. I'm gonna try to stay up here for the video camera as much as possible, but I do have a hearing impairment.

Under Superintendent Reykdal we have a new strategic plan at OSPI. You can see it's making sure all students are prepared for post-

secondary pathways, whether they are college, whether they're career, we're really looking at how do we close opportunity gaps. And

when I'm talking about opportunity gaps, I'm talking about gaps that are because of equity or lack of instruction, where students with disabilities generally have not had the opportunity to learn content and show that they've mastered it. And so that's a big focus of the superintendent's.

And then down at the bottom you can see we're looking at insuring equity, collaboration and service, continuous improvement and then really focusing on the whole child. Because of that, that's why I'm here in this state. Because we really have a superintendent who's focusing on the needs of students with disabilities. And if you've had an opportunity to hear him talk, and even today, the very first day of the legislature, he is out there advocating on behalf of students with disabilities and advocating for more funding for students with disabilities. And when I say more funding, we're talking about 3 to 400 million dollars additional state funds for students with disabilities.

So I want to start off with just making sure that we are all kind of on the same page. We have about 140,000 students with disabilities in Washington from the ages of 3 thru 21. It's about 12.5% of all students in the state, which is pretty average. Less than 4% of those students with disabilities have really

significant cognitive disabilities. So of those 140,000, less than 4%. The majority of them, it says upwards of 90, and actually when I look at the data, it's about 95%, have a typical IQ but have learning disabilities that are impacting their learning.

The reason I'm bringing that out is when I'm looking at the policies and procedures that have been developed in the state around students with disabilities they do not support the broad range of students with disabilities. And they tend to have been focused on students with the most significant cognitive impairments, and designing programs and processes that address their needs without looking at the fact that the majority of students have other needs also. And so that's something that we're really looking at is making sure that when we have a policy or a program in the state, that it addresses the broad range of students with disabilities and not just any particular group.

The other part that I really want to focus on is when we look at where students with disabilities are receiving their special ed services, the majority of students in Washington do not receive them in the general ed classroom. That is different than other states in the nation. So we have about 55% of our students with disabilities who spend the majority of their day in the general ed classroom. In other states we're seeing 70 to 80% of students with disabilities. And so what that means is that we have to look at our structure of how we're providing services to those students and are we pulling students with disabilities to receive instruction for the right reasons, and do we have supports in general ed classes so that students with disabilities can access that and learn and make progress. So I just wanna make sure that you go into tonight kind of thinking about those data.

Is there anybody here that those data surprise you? I would say one. I'll tell you I was surprised when I came into this state and I started looking at policies and practices, what people were telling me and then what the data said. And the reason I'm surprised is because when I read a lot of the statutes, a lot of the policies around students with disabilities, they don't say that. They say students with disabilities should be able to graduate. Students with disabilities should access the general ed classroom. And then when I look at the data of what's actually happening, I don't always see aligned practices. One of the things I'm really excited about, and tomorrow I have an opportunity to go visit, is that some of the inclusive practices that are going on in your district, and some of the changes that have been made over the last few years.

These are state assessment data. So the SBA? How many of you guys are familiar with that? End of year assessment. Students hate it. Parents generally don't like it either. These are those data. They also have some alternate assessment data in with them, and what they show on the left hand side are end of year results for students around English Language Arts. So you can see there's one year of data. The first row, right here, is for 3rd grade students with disabilities. Right here, all students. 8th grade. And 10th grade. So we can see that all students were seeing some improvements, going up. Students with disabilities we saw trend coming down in 8th grade and then going back up. And then when we look at Math, we see a trend coming down for all students and a trend coming down for students with disabilities. One of the things -

Audience member: I just wondered, does that include like a locally determined assessment if students took something else, or is that just the SBA?

GG: This is just the SBA. So, and the reason is, is because it's accountability.

Audience member: OK.

GG: So, one of the things that happens is, when we have to look at federal accountability we have to look at are students with disabilities accessing the state assessment like all other students? And then are they proficient on it? So we're seeing these trends, but what you don't see, along with these trends, is that anybody who takes an off grade level assessment is automatically counted as not proficient, in here. So you're seeing some of these data might be made worse by the fact that we have students taking off grade level assessments. That's gonna be an important concept because as we look at graduation and preparing students for life after school, we want to make sure they have the grade level content and they have access to the grade level content that all students are supposed to have access to. And you probably know that as a K-12 learning standard. Yes.

Audience member: When you say off level, is that like the portfolio?

GG:- No. So it would be like a 10th grade student with disabilities taking a 6th grade level assessment.

Audience member: And where does the portfolio testing come in?

GG: It does not come into these data. Because it doesn't count, the portfolio doesn't count for state accountability.

It's the SBAC and then the WA-AIM that counts.

LT: Well, that's what she's talking about, I think, is the WA-AIM.

GG: Oh, so, ok, sorry.

Audience member: Well, my daughter has gotten a portfolio all her life and it always says that she's at grade level. And she's not. And so I think it's misleading.

GG: That's a whole other concept. So, the WA-AIM is the alternate assessment. And it's aligned to grade level standards. So if she's taking the grade level WA-AIM, like what grade is she in?

Audience member: Well, she's a super senior now.

GG: OK. So if she took it in 10th grade, then it was aligned to 10th grade standards.

So, we're gonna be talking about some of these results and when we look at the priorities. So, these data have to do with post-school outcome survey. Has anyone here had to do a survey? It's done a year after your child leaves school. Anyone here who's had to do that?

Audience: No.

GG: Ok, well let's talk about what's coming. Who has kids that are getting ready? So either they're getting ready to graduate or they're turning 22. Anyone? OK, so we've got some. In another year. Ok so a year after they leave school you're gonna get a call. Right? Do you call them?

LT: Mm hmm.

GG: And you're gonna get asked some questions about what your child is doing, or your child's gonna get asked questions. And what we're trying to find out is what they did a year after they left school. Did they go on to college? Training? Or are they employed? And so these data are the data from the students who left in the 2015-2016 school year. So during the 2016-2017 school year, after that they were contacted, and these are the statewide data. You can see that about 22% went on to higher ed. This would be community college or 4-year college. About 35% of them are competitively employed. The definition of competitive employment is at or above minimum wage for at least 20 hours a week. I don't know about you, but that doesn't seem very competitive to me. Right? That's a federal definition of competitive employment. Other education or training is something that doesn't fit into these two categories. Other employment, again, doesn't fit into that category. And then, no engagement. And we have about 28% of students with disabilities who don't fit into any of these other categories. When I think about no engagement, I always think in terms of my own children sitting in the basement, playing the Xbox. Right? They're not going to work, they're not learning, they're not doing anything like that. And so I want, I want these data to go up and I want to see this go down. Right? I want to make sure that children are prepared when they leave so that they go into these, and if they can't go into these, I want them to go into these.

LT: We are seeing an uptick in the upper two and engagement. Our engagement was really bad, but we've been in a pilot project with

Seattle University for the, for two years before this and we are seeing our engagement rate

GG: Go up? Go down?

LT: Yeah, our no engagement rate go down. We aren't where we should be, but we're going that way.

GG: Right. So what we want to do then is we want to figure out what causes those other things to go up. Right? What happens while we

have access to those students at school? So, one of the things that we've identified is by looking at that and talking with people that

these are the six areas that we need to change.

Before I get into those six areas into more detail though, I just want to give you a little more data. So in Washington we have two pathways towards graduation. We have a Certificate of Academic Achievement, a CAA pathway, and we have a Certificate of Individual Achievement, a CIA pathway. The CIA pathway is only available to students with disabilities. So in Washington we have one quarter of our students who graduate who go through the CAA pathway. The rest of the students go through the CIA pathway and generally through an off grade level assessment, or something called an L2 Basic. An L2 Basic means that every other student has to hit a cut score that's at a level 3 generally, and an L2 Basic means for the student with disabilities that they can hit that at a lower level. We also see a reduced graduation rate, even with those two options. So 59% compared to 80%. And then along with that, we also have some interesting data around paraeducators.

In Washington, we have 2 paraeducators to every 1 special ed teacher. Which is really interesting when we start talking about how do students with disabilities get their instruction. Right? And so it matters who's giving them their instruction, the backgrounds that they have, as well as when we do training of staff. How are we training paraeducators, and are they getting trained?

So when we look at those 3 things, along with our outcomes data, it shows us there are some things that we need to turn around in the system. Would you agree with that?

Audience: Yes.

GG: OK. So, what we found, looking at the research, talking to people, so we have to change these 6 things. And the key to these 6 things is it has to be all of them. We can't just change one and then another one. It has to be all 6 simultaneously. So I'm gonna start at the very end. Recruitment &

Retention - we have to make sure we get the right people there. Right? We need to have an adequate number of

special ed teachers. We have to have an adequate number of school psychologists, speech/language pathologists, OTs & PTs. We need to

have trained paraeducators. And when they're great paraeducators, we want to support them into becoming special ed teachers. Right? And

give them some career trajectories. The other thing we do, is we want to keep them. So we have to look at what are the supports that we need to get the right people into the field and how do we maintain them and keep them in the field, knowing that most special ed teachers tend to leave after year 5. Are you seeing those same trends here or do you keep them a little bit longer?

That's something you'll have to look at?

LT: Yeah, I mean we do keep quite a bit, there's quite a few that have been here a really long time.

GG: The other part we want to look at is the Resource Allocation. And so I talked about the fact that we're looking at how is it that can we increase special ed funding. So we know that in this state we have a funding gap of 3 to 400 million dollars. That's a big gap, when I say 3 to 400 because I know, using 2 year old data, that we have a funding gap of 308 million and then if you guys saw what happened over the summer with teacher contracts and bargaining. There's a lot of change there and I'm not quite sure how that's gonna impact us, which is why we're coming to that 400 million dollar route. So we know that we have a need for some additional funding. We also know that we have to use funding differently than we've been using it before. We have to start being able to braid it with other sources of federal funding. We have to look at how is it that we can get something called "incidental benefit," which is kind of like if right here, like if we're doing a training here and the costs have already been paid for, we can bring in whomever we wanted if it didn't cost more. And so that's something that a lot of times special education funding is held very sacred, and we want to make sure that it's used to benefit students with disabilities, but sometimes other students can get some incidental benefit and it doesn't cost us any more funding. We want to look at how we can do that and braid it with some Title funds, some LAP funds, and then really look at how is it that we

support services for students, and decrease the administrative burden. Yes.

Audience member: Is that 3 to 400 gap for services that are already in place?

GG: Yes.

Audience member: Or services you want to add?

GG: Services already in place. We have a 3 to 400 million dollar gap.

Audience member: So there's no increase being looked at for extra services? It's just covering what's already in place?

GG: That's, well, it's. So let me just repeat that. So she says, is there money looked at for additional services or just what's already in place? It's both. We're trying to make sure that we fill the gap that's already in place. Then we're looking at how is it that we can provide those additional services through, we've got some services that we're requesting for professional learning days that are around inclusive settings. We're looking at how do we increase funding for more school counselors, school psychologists. So that's coming in. Um, I'm trying to think what else. Uh, safety net funding. Are you guys familiar at all with safety net?

So safety net are for, it's a reimbursement for part of the cost for services that cost the district per student more than \$30,000. So the district has to provide the first \$30,000 and then they can request reimbursement for anything over that, provided that they meet some requirements. Yes?

Audience member: (muffled, question regarding safety net)

GG: So, we actually just did new rules. Um, and the rules went into effect I think the 18th of this month. They go into effect in a few days and so what we've done is we've reduced the requirement for the application, application's electronic. We only review a portion of the IEPs. We're relying on some (unintelligible) monitoring in the last 2 years to cover compliance. We're only looking at 7 areas of compliance that impact FAPE, and let me think what else...

LT: I know we don't have to send in like last year's copy of the IEP and this year's copy...

GG: Right. You only send in one. You don't have to redact it anymore. So what we've done is we've tried to reduce the administrative burden. I wasn't able to get beyond that because there's a lot of legislative, um effort and support for the process as it is currently. So we were able to cut it down pretty con., I would say a great deal. I'm looking to see the data on the impact. So that's one of the things though, under resource allocation, is that I'm trying to shift people from applying for funds into being able to provide, uh use that time to provide services for students. That's one of the things when we talk about the legislative activities, again which started today, one of the things they're looking at is do we want to put more funding in the allocation - what the superintendent's asking for, the \$300 to \$400 million, or put it in the safety net process, which has to be applied for. And what we're saying is, "No. We don't want to create an application process. We want the funds to go right to the district."

LT: Right, and part of the, part of the problem with that is that with a smaller district, I mean, and a smaller district and only having a few people that can put that process together is that it is so time consuming that Walla Walla hasn't applied for safety net funding in quite a while. The time it takes the business office, the time it takes me it's just, we just don't have that time.

GG: And we don't want that to happen. So hopefully with the new process if you have any for reimbursement you'll be able to access that easier. Any other questions about resources?

Audience member: Not resources, but just the 80.9% Washington students graduation - Is that all students or all students that doesn't include the students with special needs?

GG: All students.

Audience member: About the funding, so only the school district needs to apply, or every single school or also for parents, when we see issues in school, we can recommend too? Because I have a son, he's in high school and he's having some issues and I was asking to have extra psychologist, to have a more, I mean, person where to go when he's misbehaving or something like that. And then one of my counselors was just me as a parent how to improve the public school, just me as a parent how to get funding on that?

GG: OK.

Audience member: And um, so yeah, I don't know, I mean, I'm a parent so I would like to be, I mean, to play a huge role in that, not only just for my kids but for other kids in the future. How can we improve that?

GG: OK. So, the safety net application comes from the district, but how you can help with the whole issue is to talk to your representatives. So, whomever your representatives are for this region, have those conversations about the need for change and legislation that's gonna support the changes that are needed in the district. So I would, you guys have a great resource here in that you have this group and you have your special ed director, you have your parent participant. Uh, I would have those conversations and get the information about what it is that you guys are looking to improve and then have those conversations or write your legislators and make sure that they're aware of how you feel about it. Other thoughts about resources?

OK. Professional development. So, we have, right now there are 3 professional learning days that are available statewide for educators. Superintendent Reykdal has requested an additional 3. So there would be a total of 6 learning days for teachers and, um, ESAs, including paraeducators. Those additional 3 would have to be around certain subject matters. It would be social-emotional learning, race & equity, or inclusive practices for students with disabilities. So this is a great opportunity, if that's passed, for the state to fund learning for all teachers, both general ed and special ed, around the supports that are needed for students with disabilities in their classrooms. Along with that though, what we're trying to do is, we're trying to talk to both teacher prep programs and school district personnel about the need to train general ed and special ed teachers together.

You guys are incredibly lucky because you have that starting and going on in your district already, but a lot of times what I'm finding is that special ed and general ed teachers are trained completely separately, and then they're expected to somehow work together. Um, I don't know, I don't know if you guys have ever had an experience, but it kind of reminds me when I was in college, I took a piano class and there were too many of us in the class for the number of pianos that were there. So they put us two to a piano. So the whole semester I only played the bottom half of the piano. And then when it came time for the recital, they put me in the middle of the piano, and I was supposed to play the entire piano. Right? Well, that didn't work, and that's kind of what we do to teachers here, is we train them separately when they're in college, we train them separately in the district and then we expect them to somehow know how to work together and build partnerships and help each other in areas where one is stronger than the other one. So what we're trying to get people to understand is that we really need people to have that training together and learn how it is that they can support each other. So when we have a general ed teacher and a special ed teacher the general ed teacher is the content expert, and the special ed teacher is the expert on how to provide specially designed instruction. And it's only through those two working together that we really see tremendous instruction that supports students with disabilities, unless you have a really amazing, just general ed teacher or really amazing special ed teacher. But for the majority of us, it takes both of them working together. So we're looking at how is it that we can support that. Yes?

Audience member: So, isn't it also an issue with the fact that there's not integrated services in the general education classroom? And you have to have the experience with the children, not just somebody standing in front of you telling you what you should be doing, and have experience with the child that you're supposed to be teaching.

GG: Right.

Audience member: Our children are not in the general education classroom, they're in a resource room.

GG: Right. And so we want to look at how is it that: 1) we get students with disabilities access to that general ed classroom in a way that works for both the general ed teacher to learn and support them and allows the student with disabilities to make progress.

Audience member: Is that coming then?

LT: So, I can tell you, I can tell you what we're doing here in our district if that's okay.

GG: That would be helpful.

LT: So we have a four year plan that started this year, um, about educating those that have been historically in the resource room in the general education classroom. So year one, special education teachers and gen ed teachers are figuring it out. So every, I'll just take elementary for one, every elementary school must do push in for ELA, so English, reading, those kinds of things, um, in 4th grade. Most every elementary school is doing it with more than one grade level, and then we have a progression to add other grade levels of ELA and math also, as more of a push in, so they are going, they are being educated with the general ed curriculum in the general education classroom with support that they need to be successful.

Audience member: So 1st graders are not part of that right now?<

LT: So every elementary student does 30 minutes of work in the general education classroom for the reading curriculum. But this is totally going to be totally in the classroom by the time we get to the four year mark, for all students. We're in year one right now. So what that doesn't mean though is that you have to wait for four years. It means that you have those conversations with your IEP teams and you start looking at what are the inclusive opportunities that we need right now for my child.

Audience member: Yeah, I was told that he, uh, that they don't offer it and so he's (muffled).

LT: So, contact me down here at the district office and we can meet and talk about particulars and get that going, because it's a mind shift. Here in this district it hasn't been done that way. This is only my 4th year here, but I don't think it's been done that way for a long time, and so it's a mind shift for everybody, special education staff, general education staff,

GG: What's required versus what should be done.

LT: I mean, yeah, it's been, you know, well this is just historically how we've done it, and so now we're shifting the mindset to "No, research shows that kids make improvements when they're using the same curriculum in the general ed classroom with accommodations and supports needed. So that's what we're working towards. And that doesn't mean only 4th grade ELA right now. We're not going to be doing separate curriculums because the research shows that that is not effective for kids. So, yeah, I mean we can do things with other grade levels too at this point. That was just, like, everyone has to do it in 4th grade this year. And like I said, almost every school district is doing it multiple grade levels, at least in ELA. Some are doing it in math also.

GG: Any other questions about that? OK. The next one we're gonna talk about is evidence based practices. So we've kind of already started to touch on that, but we want to make sure that students with disabilities have access to the grade level learning standards. Again, that's the purpose of your general ed teacher, is to have that content expertise. You want to make sure that they're in your IEP meeting and that they're participating. What that means on the special ed side is that we need to work with general ed teachers to prepare them to participate in IEP meetings. Right? If something that they aren't understanding, what the skills that they're bringing, and what they're bringing is that knowledge of the general ed classroom, that knowledge of the core, and any supports the child may need to access that. So one of the things I'm gonna tell you is in IEP meetings you want your general ed teachers there. There's a process where you can excuse them, and I would just be very hesitant to do that, because they bring such a skill set to the IEP conversation.

We're also looking at what is it that you can do with a multi-tiered system of support. And that's something that OSPI is supporting statewide, looking at how is it that we insure students with disabilities have access to core instruction, and then receive interventions

they need in addition to that core instruction. Again, that's research based. It's evidence based. We're really looking at how do we change practices and how do we get teachers to understand the most effective ways of providing instruction. That is a tough thing to change in the state. Not because teachers don't know or don't want to, but because they don't always have access to the latest research. And so that's something that we're looking at is how do we get that information out to them.

The second one is a growth mindset. How many of you guys are familiar at all with growth mindset? Ok, so I'm just going to sum it up. A growth mindset means something may be hard, but I can learn to do it if I keep trying. Right? And so what we want is we want teachers to have a growth mindset about the students that they're working with and we want students to think that they can learn to do things even when they're really really hard. So think about something that you had to do in your life that was difficult, and then you did it. How did it make you feel?

Audience: Good.

GG: Good, right? I always think about, I had this class that I took on Global Economics. Right? I just thought, "Oh my gosh, I hate this. I'm never going to use this. I don't even know that I can do this." So I just buckled down and did it and then I was like, "Oh my gosh, I did it." Right? Global Economics. Again, something I'm never gonna use, but I still pulled it off. And what we want, is we want students to think that. We don't want them to say things like, "I can't do math." And we don't want to make decisions when we're doing IEP meetings that say to students, "You can't do math." One of the things I'd say to you as a parent is that when you're doing your IEP, think about what the ultimate goal is for your child. So, uh, for my child, I always wanted her to go to college. Right? That was kind of the end goal. So when we did the IEP for her, everything had to do with what are the skills that she's gonna need to go to college. If your goal is employment, what type of job do we want them to have? We want to make sure that those IEP team decisions are leading them to that end result. It's kind of a long term plan, and a lot of times what I see with IEPs, is I see people do them as a one year thought process, like if we just get through this year. Right? If I can just get through middle school. If I can just get through this one math class because I don't like that teacher, so we'll substitute a class. And what's the long term impact that we're having on the child? So I'd say when you're looking at this, especially you, first grade, right? We want every year that IEP to support our ultimate goal. And so making sure that when we make a decision we're not thinking about what gets us through this year, but what gets us to that end goal. And it's gonna have to do with this growth mindset, and really pushing it through.

LT: We've been working a lot on growth mindset, district wide, and one of the things that I worked with the special education teachers last year was about growth mindset and we're seeing it pay off in dividends of kids who are now answering - Charlene is here, and I won't make you talk - but she's one of our great special education teachers that is pushing in with almost everything in the general education classroom, and kids are saying, are now raising their hands and asking questions in their general education classrooms. They're answering questions. They're being a part and they are saying, "I can do this." Where it used to be, "Oh no I don't do reading here, I do it over in that classroom over there." So we are seeing that pay off in dividends, just with the mindset from staff believing that "yes, you can do this" and they're believing it too. So I think we're on the right path.

GG: Yes?

Audience member: I agree with that completely. I think it's really good and I also would just say that for my son, I would like it, so he could teach the other kids so when he grows up and goes to college or gets a job that he can fit in with them and they accept him as just like everybody else.

GG: Right. So the fact that, the fact that students with disabilities learn with non-disabled peers is creating a different society now, right? Where students just accept that that's the way it is, right? And that's great. Right? They're not viewing that as differences that cause you to not be worthy of being included. And we know that, you know, everybody has the right to be included. Everybody has the right to have some differences, and so that's a great attitude. Anything else? Yes?

Audience member: I wanted to just take a step back about the IEP and including the general ed teachers with the IEP meetings. In my experience, it's not something that has happened very often in my IEP meetings and now that we're where my middle schooler is actually reading first grade level, let's say, so I feel like maybe the access to the general education teachers might not be available in that school or the IEP meeting, because her education level is so low, so how can we, how can we bridge that gap or what might you suggest for parents there?

GG: So the IDEA says it has to be a general ed teacher who's teaching that student or would be teaching peers of the same age. So it's actually age, not cognitive ability, so you're still going to want general ed teachers from the middle school setting. I would say, if you're, if you've not seen general ed teachers there, and I'm not even going to get into a conversation of compliance with the law. I'm gonna say make it clear up front when they're scheduling it.

LT: Please do that, because I, we need your help. There are times that general ed teachers think that they don't need to be there and I know that special education teachers in this district at some buildings struggle to get them to understand that it's part of the law and that they need to be there, so please do that. At the IEP meeting say, "We are not meeting unless there's a general education teacher at the meeting."

Audience member: So who, who, who do we say that to? The principal?

LT: So say that to your case manager and if it doesn't, if it's, if they're still saying that "I don't have one" then the principal, or myself.

Audience member: I've noticed, for me, it helps as a parent, I always, like, when I talk to the school, I always copy the teacher on the email with the regular ed, the special ed, and the case manager so they all know what I'm saying and they're all my request at the same time.

GG: That's a great strategy.

Audience member: And they work great together. I've been very lucky.

GG: Good.

Audience member: It seems to be more of a challenge at middle school and high school.

GG: Yes.

Audience member: That was my question. Because when my daughter was in elementary school, general ed was always involved. Once we got to, once she got to middle school and high school, she wasn't in general ed classes, except for electives most of the time. So who would you have come? She was in Life Skills for middle school and high school. They did do a science class, but then the whole classroom went, instead of just her going. Yeah, the whole classroom went and sat in the very back, so she didn't have any general ed teachers, and some of the middle school and high schoolers, I don't think they do. So, who would you ask?

GG: So, I would work with your case manager and, before the meeting, and talk about, kind of what your goals are, right, like if you're looking at more inclusive options in English Language Arts, then I would probably have a teacher from that area. If you're looking at more electives, then I think having someone who teaches an elective might be good, but I would have that conversation first. Because, and I was a former middle school teacher so believe me I understand, I understand how this works, they're gonna get whoever's available. Kind of at the best time for the meeting, but if you talk to them ahead of time and let them know this is something that you really prioritize and the reason behind it, they're gonna work with you. Yes.

Audience member: We're all kind of asking, "Who's the case manager?" I actually don't know who

LT: So that's your main special education teacher.

GG: The person who usually writes and holds the IEP meeting. Yes.

Audience member: I'm gonna be honest. I'm not here to talking about people of color but as an immigrant and people of color, it's like 3 times harder to navigate in public school education. It's really hard for us. Just when we go in and I try my best to be there, and also just my own recommendation is to have all the teachers involved with my child. But it's really hard, because, just, you're listening to what they say, what curriculum they have, and always I am fighting how to allocate the minutes that my kids have to academics and not like recycling or extra things, and one of the things that was really hard for me was in middle school, the principal was very sarcastic, in middle school, and I was ready to move my child from the middle school, but we didn't have any other school with the special education in

Walla Walla. In high school it's getting better. At the beginning, always, I try to meet the teacher, and I knew that my son has recycling in one of the classes that he has, and when I was in the IEP that happened just 3 weeks ago and I go, "What happened with recycling?" "Oh, we discontinued that." And upset why I didn't know about this. You know, like, a lot of things that is happening, and I go, not because my son, he can talk, but I'm his voice. And how we can improve this, not to getting worse? But it's a lot of things that is going on with the special education and, I don't know, for some way I'm happy to be here and I'm happy how we can improve it. But I don't want other kids to be in the same place that my kids are in now. And also we don't have extra classes, we don't have pretty much problem and also ?? saying oh we don't have that much funding and that's true. And also when I was asking teachers, just me as a parent, they didn't say, "Oh we have funding coming up." You know, at least to give us a hope. How we can improve that?

GG: So, like more home - school communication, not only about your child, but about ways that you can get involved in, like, improving the program?

Audience member: Yeah. Improving the program, but also I heard from my case manager for the long term care, "Oh did you know that they have Buddy Club in high school?" And I go, "No. I didn't hear anything about this." And then I went to the ASB and I go, "Tell me a little about the Buddy Club. Maybe my son can be..." "Oh, yeah, he's in that." But other way, if you don't know what is going on, if you don't go to the meeting, and you're not participating, it's so difficult to navigate in the education system. I mean what programs

they have to offer. How we can move that child. As a people of color, it's really hard for me. And I'm gonna be honest, I'm not here to talk about other kids, but at least for my child. And I consider myself like a ??? person, but I feel like it's really hard because I don't know when to move and also even I didn't know that my child can attend college after, I mean, high school. Just the only thing that was put in my mind, "Oh, you can leave him 4 more years, and that's all. And he's 10th grade right now and he's like a kindergarten child. That is what I thought, so I go, "really? I don't really think so." Because he's doing so good, but ok, that's fine you know, like, and it's really hard.

GG: Let's talk after about some ways to build in some navigation systems. Anything? Yes.

Audience member: Just one thing. I do feel like in middle school and high school there's a tendency to really lean heavily on certain gen ed teachers too.

GG: Like PE teachers?

Audience member: No. We have an excellent science teacher at middle school that is excellent at inclusion, adapting work. She has the kids participate in teaching our kids. It just feels like these are examples in a model where you can have them around other general educators. This is how we can, you can easily adapt your message to fit any kid in the class.

GG: That makes a lot of sense. Right? Like how is it that we can use those excellent teachers as models to build the program and not burn them out also, right? Yeah.

Audience member: There's just definitely, definite teachers in, that they lean on heavily, I feel like, um, for their gen ed time.

GG: Ok. Anything? All right, leadership. So, one of the things that we really want to focus on when we talk about leadership is, I'm talking about everybody on the IEP team. So we have a school principal, right, or assistant principal on the IEP team. We have a special ed teacher. We have a general ed teacher. We have the parent. Sometimes we have a student. And then sometimes we have other

related service providers or ESAs. We really want all those people to have leadership opportunities throughout the school year. So outside

of the IEP and within the IEP. What we don't want is we don't want people saying everytime a decision needs to be made about a

student with disabilities, "Oh let's let the special ed department make that decision. Right? We really want principals standing up and

taking responsibility for their students with disabilities. We want general ed teachers taking responsibilities. We want all those people

involved, because when the special ed department makes all of those decisions, that's how we start to develop these two siloed systems of

education, right? Because all of us are supposed to work together. So one of the things that I'm gonna ask you is to serve as a parent

leader or as a district leader, if you're here in kind of a professional capacity, but how is it that we can really get people to think about the needs of students with disabilities and support them, and not just say, "Oh, I don't understand that." Because a lot of it isn't just understanding the needs of the disability, a lot of it's just that human nature, right? How is it that we grow up to be better citizens and a better society by including people, and thinking about their human needs. Um, and so that's the 6th priority.

Um, so those are the six that we're focused on. We're really looking at how is it that we can change graduation rates. I'm looking at how is it that I can change the graduation process, because what I want to see is I want to see students with disabilities graduate and have the skills to graduate the same pathways that students without disabilities. I don't want to set criteria that are lower. And one of the things that concerns me is that when I hear about students with disabilities who can't graduate, the

conversation is always how can we waive that requirement, not how can we provide more services so that the student can achieve that. And so that's something that I'm really looking at at the state level - is changing those graduation pathways, looking at how is it that we use personnel more effectively. I want to make sure that we use paraeducators to provide supports, but that students with disabilities get content instruction from content experts, whether it's a general ed teacher in partnership with a special ed teacher, or whatever. I don't want to see people who don't have those expertises providing those services. This is, I think this is almost my last slide, because I want to make sure we open it up. Um, you can see we have some areas of strengths. We have people who are really committed towards improvement. We're seeing great rates of compliance overall. We have some areas that we need to improve: graduation, inclusionary practices, grade level learning. We really need to look at what is it that we're making decisions. How are IEP teams making decisions? Are they really individualized? And one of the things that I always wonder, is if I go to a school and I pull the IEPs of various students in that school, do I see the same decisions made over and over, across all the students, or do I see individualized decisions made on behalf of students.

Um, and then the last one is how is it that we use everybody to kind of come into this, lean into the issues and help support changes. And that's one of the things that I'm asking you guys tonight is what are the changes that we need to make in the state level and at the district level? And how is it that we really look at where we want to be and how do we get there? And to do that, it's gonna take everybody working together. So we have both the federal and the state education agencies, your ESD, your school district, and then the parents, the families, and the communities coming together to say, "This is what we want to happen for our students with disabilities. These are the areas that we think are going great. Here's where we want to improve." And then just remember that we all have roles to play. So over here is the role of the general ed teacher, and I think this comes right out of IDEA. Their role is to determine appropriate behavior interventions and supports, determine the supplementary aids and services needed to help the student make progress towards their goals, be involved in and make progress in the general curriculum, participate in extracurricular activities, and then be educated and participate with non-disabled students. And so I think that, just that language right out of IDEA, is very helpful in helping a general ed teacher prepare for an IEP.

Audience member: Has there been any research on how, um, what percentage of general education teachers are reading IEPs? Because our daughter's IEP is 30 pages. I just don't know. Are they are gen ed teachers really...

GG: They generally would not have seen the entire IEP. They might, they should see the parts that they're responsible for. That's a requirement in IDEA.

Audience member: But, could the IEPs be in a simpler format where parents and general ed teachers could...I know that there's that one pager that is super helpful, but I feel like that's the key here, is getting the gen ed teacher on board with what you're, if it's even more easily understood.

GG: Right. So I think that's a great thing to look at.

LT: We have IEP online and we have IEP at a glance, which shows all their accommodations, their goals, help me special ed teachers, with all that's on there.

Audience member: Any medical problems.

LT: Yeah, so, those things that you're talking about, and, so, we get those to general education teachers. And, at the high school, at the middle school and high school level we have gone to, especially at the high school...middle schools are doing good on their own, but at the high school level we have gone to...We actually, in conjunction with the high school, make up notebooks of those for all the kids in a teacher's class, and then I have special ed teachers that then they come and pick it up for them on a certain day. They can come all

day. And then they can get any accommodations or anything else explained, like how you could do it in their content area, and they

sign for their notebook. So, to make sure they're getting the information that they need at the high school and middle school

level.

Audience member: I want to ask too, and this is going to be... Is our daughter's social security number on the IEP? Is that what "SS" stands for? That's not her social security number?

GG: No.

Audience member: I had to double check to see.

LT: No, it's a unique identifier. It's not a social security.

GG: Yes?

Audience member: So, do general education teachers develop the Life Skills curriculum?

GG: Generally not. Generally, that's going to be developed by a special ed teacher.

Audience member: Then how do you get the...

GG: How do you get them?

Audience member: Well, no. Because it says that, didn't you say earlier that they're supposed to, you know. So if they're not using, the same even curriculum, then how can we push them together?

GG: So I think it comes, I mean, for me I think it comes down to what are the goals for your child? And then how are we going to support

those goals and make sure that she has the services she needs to be successful. And so, you know, that could be elective classes and those

kinds of things. I mean, and so I think each student is individual, and as part of the IEP team, we need to be hearing from parents that say, "This is where I see my child, and how can you help us to get there?"

LT: One of the things that the district's looking at, too, is providing training, or is planning to provide training on standards based IEPs.

GG: Yeah, that'll be in August.

GG: Which is going to take those K-12 learning standards that are in place across the state and show teachers how to break them down

into components that can be applied. So even if a student is struggling and is not on grade level, you start with a grade level

standard and kind of task analyze down to where the student is. And so that is, that is a fairly new endeavor. And by "fairly new," I

mean in the last 8 years. It's gone through a lot of change and had a lot of attention. So that's the way you're going to bring that in too. Yes.

Audience member: Are parents and the teachers supposed to write the IEP together?

GG: The district can bring in a draft, as long as it's clearly a draft and it can be changed in the meeting. So, the district can do some pre-work before, and kind of bring some recommendations. But then as a parent, if you're looking at it and you're like, "You know what,

I don't understand where this is coming from" or, "I want to look at something that's more aligned with grade level or meet's my

child's needs." That's where you address it. I actually thinks it's a good idea to have a draft coming in.

LT: Yeah, otherwise you're going to be there 5 hours, like, creating something. But it is, when you come into an IEP meeting, it is

always a draft. Anything can be changed on there.