National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities Teleseminar
February 16, 2006

Translating National Data into State and Local Practice

MODERATOR: The National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities presents, "Translating National Data into State and Local Practice," the fourth in a series of teleseminars. Please visit www.dropoutprevent.org for more information about upcoming events and to participate in the two-week follow-up online discussion to today's program. Thank you again for joining us, and we hope that you enjoy today's program.

And at this time, it's my pleasure to introduce your presenters for today, Loujeania Williams Bost and José Blackorby.

Dr. Loujeania Williams Bost is the director of the National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities. Dr. Bost holds a Ph.D. in Special Education from Pennsylvania State University. She has an extensive background in working with students with disabilities and was the chief of statewide compliance, monitoring, and technical assistance for the Pennsylvania Department of Education. She has been a public school teacher, a program administrator for agencies serving adults and adolescents with mental retardation, and, also, a researcher.

Dr. José Blackorby is the program manager for Disability Policy at SRI, International. He has 20 years of experience in designing and implementing research focused on improving outcomes for students with disabilities. His major contributions have been to the suite of OSEP-funded studies referred to as the National Assessment of IDEA and particularly, the Special Education Elementary Longitudinal Study, which is SEELS, and the National Longitudinal Transition Study 2, the NLTS2. Both studies provide national information regarding the academic, social, and vocational development of students in all 12 federal disability categories. The SEELS and NLTS2 reports contribute to the national knowledge base in a great number of content areas, including student characteristics, disability profiles, instruction practices, accommodations, academic performance in reading and mathematics, student engagement, school completion, and post school success. Dr. Blackorby holds a Ph.D. from the University of Washington.

We'll start today's program with Loujeania Williams Bost. Loujeania, welcome to the program today. The audience is all yours.

DR. LOUJEANIA WILLIAMS BOST: Thank you, Garrett. Good afternoon, and welcome to the first of our 2006 teleseminar series. We're excited to have such a wide and diverse audience with us today, representing over 32 state education departments, including Hawaii and the Virgin Islands; parent training and information centers; OSEP; several universities and technical assistance and dissemination centers; local education agencies; and other agencies concerned about outcomes for students with disabilities.

Our quarterly seminars serve two purposes. First, to provide evidence-based information that will be useful to states and local education agencies in the design and implementation of effective dropout prevention programs that help students with disabilities stay in school and successfully graduate. And second, to create dialogue between researchers who have successfully designed and amassed important information, and state education agencies and school personnel seeking such information to assist their efforts in designing effective systems and approaches to improve outcomes for students with disabilities in the area of dropout and graduation.

As federal, state, and local education agency personnel grapple to raise school completion rates for students with disabilities, a variety of important questions come to mind. For example, what factors, or combination of factors, taken together, produce the best academic and social outcomes for students with disabilities? Do we have a solid foundation of information for improving policy and programs for children with disabilities across the school-age range and into early adulthood? What do we know about who receives special education services and how programs, experiences, achievements [inaudible] beneficial factors differ for children and youth with different characteristics?

Internal and external accountability require data to answer these questions. As such, state and local education agencies need a plan for collecting, analyzing, and representing data that will answer both internal and external questions. Data are important to help answer such questions and are compelling evidence that grounds conclusions in actual results, not in speculation. Careful analysis of data can help us dig deeper, examine the impact of state and district policies and practices, and provide a sounder basis for decision-making that can crystallize what we need to happen next.

During today's presentation, Dr. Blackorby will provide information from multiple perspectives, including parents, teachers, and students themselves, to help answer some of these important questions and discuss how these data can be used for program planning and implementation at the state and local levels. We welcome Dr. Blackorby to our teleseminar today. José, it's all yours.

MODERATOR: José, perhaps your phone is muted. If you would, take the phone off mute?

DR. JOSE BLACKORBY: Is that better?

MODERATOR: That's better.

DR. J. BLACKORBY: Okay. Thank you very much, Loujeania, for that kind introduction. It's a great pleasure for me to be here today to have the opportunity to talk with you about the work that, I, personally, and we, at SRI, have been conducting, really, for the last 30 years for the Office of Special Education Programs.

I have a couple of objectives that I would like to start with. For those of you who are familiar with the National Studies Program, I hope to deepen your understanding and help you gain a greater understanding of the context and the history of how it came to be, and what's possible with the great amount of data that's been collected, and this large, federal investment that's been made on behalf of you, on behalf of all of us.

For those of you who are *unfamiliar* with the studies, I hope to kind of wet your appetite, and I hope to give you a sense of what's there, what's possible. I hope that you will bring some creativity to the conversation, and you can think of ways that these data make sense for you in your role in the education system.

The way I'm going to proceed today is I hope everyone has gotten the presentation that was sent out earlier. And I'm going to try to go through, more or less, slide-by-slide, and I will try to indicate which slide I'm referring to as I continue to talk.

If, by chance, we do run a little bit short on time, it may be necessary for me to skip forward a couple of slides because I do want to have time for questions and discussion. In addition, I very, very much look forward to having an online discussion with you over the next couple of weeks as we digest the information that we've shared today. And I hope that you will learn some things from the data that I'll share, but I actually look forward to learning from you, too, over the next couple of weeks.

I'd like first, now, to turn it over to Garrett because I would like to get a sense of how familiar the listeners are with the National Studies Program so that I can have some sense about how much detail I should be going into. Garrett, would you mind doing that first polling question?

MODERATOR: I would be happy to, José. The first question is, *How much do listeners know about the National Assessment of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act?* Again, the question, *How much do listeners know about the National Assessment of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act?* There are four choices for you. First choice—and you would need to press 1 on your touch-tone keypad for choice number 1—is "Never heard of it." Choice number 2 would be number 2 on your touch-tone keypad—"I know some, but I need to learn more." Choice 3 is "Have considerable knowledge." And Choice number 4 on your touch-tone keypad is "Have a lot of knowledge, and use the information regularly."

So, again, we will ask the question, and I would ask that you would vote. And the question is, *How much do listeners know about the National Assessment of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act?* Press 1 for "Never heard of it." Press 2 for "I know some, but I need to learn more." Press 3 for 'I have considerable knowledge." Press 4 for "I have a lot of knowledge, and I use the information regularly."

And, José, it will take me right about two minutes to tabulate those results, and I'll be glad to share those with you in about two minutes.

DR. J. BLACKORBY: Okay. I'll come back to you in two minutes, Garrett. Thank you very much.

Okay, if you wouldn't mind going to page 2 of the materials that were provided? The top of the slide says "Background." I want to take a couple of minutes to provide some historical context about how these studies came into being. They actually have a very long and rich history, and it goes all the way back, really, to the passage of the Education for Handicapped Children's Act (EHA) in the 1970's. I'm going to start there.

If you look at special education today, we think of the concepts of the individualized education program, parental involvement, least restrictive environment, and multidisciplinary teams as everyday terms that are absolutely part of special education practice in the United States. But in the 1970's, shortly after the law was passed, that really wasn't the case. A lot of the procedures, all of those terms and procedures, were actually new. So, the first national study of the federal involvement in special education was to look at how the then EHA was being implemented. And there was a study that looked to see if the states were implementing Child Count, if students were being identified, if multidisciplinary teams were being appropriately put together, and whether students were actually getting services that they were entitled to under the law. It was a study that was national in scope. It included surveys of states and site visits to see what was actually happening on the ground. That study actually was conducted here at SRI, by Mimi Stearns, who is one of our famous researchers from here, and we miss her, tremendously. She died 10 years ago, but she still carries on the spirit of her work.

After that study was completed, there was a new set of questions in the early 1980s. And that was what difference does it make, now that nearly a generation of young people with disabilities have had access to special education services? What differences does it make for them? Did they finish school? Did they get jobs once they left school? Do they live independently? Did they go on to college? All of these were kind of questions we didn't have answers to. And there were some state studies that gave us some insight on the questions. There was a famous study by Susan Hazzazi in Vermont and by my mentor, Jeannette Gerr in the state of Washington. There were also very important studies in Iowa and Colorado. And those studies pointed, suggested, that there were difficulties that students with disabilities faced once they left the formal education system—that employment rates were low, that there were a host of other problems.

But none of this information was national in scope. So, because OSEP is charged with providing information to Congress so that national policy can be established, it was very important that there actually be a national study. And so, Congress in 1983, instructed the department to conduct a feasibility study for a design of such a study. Now, you would think that it wouldn't be that difficult, you know, that there would be a list of students with disabilities some place in Washington, DC, and that you could just select a sample, and that you'd be off and running. But, of course, there is no such list. There is no centralized list of students with disabilities. And so there had to be another way of collecting the information. So the strategy which was developed was to start with a sample of school districts, and that *from* the school districts, then you could collect

rosters, and then you would have something that started to look like a sample of kids who received special education services.

But there's another problem. In special education, the prevalence of students in different disability categories varies greatly. There are, comparatively speaking, lots of students with learning disabilities, but relatively few students with visual impairments. If you just took a simple, random sample of the kids on those rosters, you would have a study that would be able to tell you a lot about students with learning disabilities, but not much about other kinds of students. And so, it was necessary to come up with a strategy that would over-sample students in low-incidence categories. And so, what came to be known as the National Longitudinal Transition Study—the first one—it was the first study to over-sample students in low-incidence categories so that the resulting data would be able to speak to student outcomes, speak to student characteristics, speak to school programs with equal precision that would be possible for students with all disabilities.

So the National Longitudinal Transition study was born in the mid-1980's. It was conducted from1983 through 1993. It was a study whose results generalized to the national population of youth with disabilities in secondary schools, and, also, to each disability category individually. So it was a national study of students with learning disabilities, hearing impairments, mental retardation, all the way down the line. So we learned some very important things from the NLTS. We learned that far too many students with disabilities drop out of school. We learned that employment rates were low. We learned that many students with disabilities spend a lot of time already in general education settings. And there were a whole series of outcomes and reports that came from the NLTS that, number one, were used to inform federal policymaking. And so, in fact, some of the provisions of the '91 reauthorization, in terms of the transition plans and so on, were supported in part by the NLTS findings.

In addition, findings from the NLTS actually allowed the department to set some priorities in terms of where it would put resources for research and technical assistance, and other kinds of priorities. And, in fact, the NLTS really, up through a few years ago, still cited in many of the federal register documents related to students with disabilities. So it's about 10 years ago, 1993, the NLTS is over. And Lou Danielson and his colleagues at the Office of Special Education Programs thought about the value that the NLTS had provided to them and to the field. And, indeed, it did provide a great amount of information, and a wealth of information that they could really use. However, it didn't provide information on all of the types of students in all the content areas, as was required to provide information to the Congress and to advocacy groups and the field.

For example, it was called the Transition Study. There was nothing about babies or elementary school students nor talk about the costs of special education or anything like that. So what Lou and colleagues did was they conceptualized a program of studies that would be national in scope, that would cover the full range of students that OSEP has responsibility for under the law, as well as some specific issue areas. And over the next five, I guess five, six years, OSEP began to roll those studies out. And they have, actually, all been implemented in the field now and/or are completed. There are four—

there are seven studies in total—four of them focus on the experiences of individual students. There's a study on babies, infants, and toddlers with disabilities, called NEILS, which stands for the National Early Intervention Longitudinal Study. There is a study on preschool children with disabilities, called PEILS. There is SEELS, which I'm going to talk about today, which stands for the Special Education Elementary Longitudinal Study, the second version of the NLTS, called the NLTS2. So those studies, together at the student level, cover infants all the way up through young adults.

In addition, there are three issue areas that have studies which are national in scope, that focus on specific issues that are important for federal policymaking. The first one is in the area of personnel. It's called the Study of Personnel Needs in Special Education, or SPENSE. It was conducted by our friends and colleagues at West [inaudible]. There's a study on costs of special education, called SEEPS, the Special Education Expenditure Project, conducted at AIR. And there's a study called SLIIDEA, which stands for the State and Local Implementation of IDEA and looks at how the law is implemented at the state and local levels. So I hope that all of you will become familiar with the studies, and go to their respective web sites. You can get there from the OSEP web site. They have a wealth of information in all those areas. And I'm very proud to be part of them. I certainly hope that they get used because that's the most important thing.

MODERATOR: And, José, we do have the results from that first polling question, if you'd like me to share those with the audience.

DR. J. BLACKORBY: That would be great. Go ahead.

MODERATOR: Okay. The first question, again, was, *How much do you know about the National Assessment of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act?* And the choices were, "Never heard of it," "I know some, but I need to learn more," 'I have considerable knowledge," and the final choice was "I have a lot of knowledge, and I use the information regularly." Again, *How much do you know about the National Assessment of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act?* And 14 percent said they've never heard of it. Sixty-one percent of the attendees today know some, but need to learn more; 14 percent have considerable knowledge; and 12 percent have a lot of knowledge and use that information regularly.

DR. J. BLACKORBY: Thank you very much, Garrett.

MODERATOR: You're welcome.

DR. J. BLACKORBY: Look at that. It's almost a normal curve. Researchers love to see a normal curve. Okay, so I think the [inaudible phrase] background of what the National Studies Program is about.

I'd like to turn to page 3 in the handouts. This is what we call our elevator pitch slide. It tries to kind of summarize what you need to know about the studies if you only had a couple of seconds to describe them to someone.

The first thing to know about SEELS and NLTS is that they are studies about individual students, or youth. All of the questions—even when we're talking to teachers—are about the experiences, characteristics, and outcomes of those students. The studies began in 1999, 2000 school year, and 2000-2001 school year, respectively. And those are the years to which the results generalize.

In SEELS, students were 6 to 12 years old, at the outset. In NLTS2, they were 13 to 16 years old. As I mentioned earlier, these are studies just like the original NLTS, that generalized to the national population of students with disabilities, but also to each individual disability category. Both studies are longitudinal, reflecting the fact that students change over time, and that if you are interested in how students change and how students improve and what relates [inaudible], you have to actually follow them over time.

SEELS collected data in three waves, which are now complete. NLTS2 is a nine-year study, and it has five waves of data collection. SEELS will be finished this year with its reporting and analysis agenda in August. NLTS2 has moved to the National Center of Special Education Research in the Institute for Education Sciences, and will continue for two more waves of data collection.

So if you'd go on to the next slide, we have a picture of a map of the country with black dots on it, and those black dots represent school districts who were kind enough to help us in the data collection efforts. And you can see that they are, indeed, they really do reflect the nation.

In SEELS, we have 245 school districts, and 30 special schools participating. In NLTS2, we have 501 school districts, and 38 special schools. Those school districts represent schools with very large enrollments, as well as schools with very small enrollments. They represent the entire region. They, in turn, reflect the different regions of the country, and they reflect the economic conditions of the communities they support. So there are wealthy districts, as well as districts that serve large populations of low-income students. In both studies, at the outset, there were just over 11,000 students who were eligible. And that works out to be, approximately, 11,000 per disability category.

What I wanted to mention is when both of these studies go out into the field, they represent a huge effort on the part of folks here at SRI, and our subcontractors. But more importantly, they actually represent a tremendous amount of work on the part of people in the field. When the studies were collecting data in schools, it amounted to six to seven thousand schools throughout the country. It amounted to surveys being sent to between 14 and 15 thousand teachers. It involved surveys with nearly 20,000 families, parents. It involved assessments with more than 10,000 students. And it involved assessors to actually conduct those assessments, 3,000. And so it was a huge data collection effort, and we are very indebted to all of their hard work in order that we could have this information.

So, both of these studies are very expensive, compared to other research that is conducted in special education, or even general education. They represent a very big investment of federal dollars.

And so the first question that came up coming out of the chute for both of them was, *What kind of information should be collected?* And OSEP provided the design teams with some very basic questions to start with, and they are listed on page 5. They can be distilled down to the following: What are the characteristics of students who receive special education? What educational programs and services do they receive as they age? What are their achievements, in terms of education, social adjustment, and independence? What services and experience contribute to better results? And how do programs, experiences, achievements, and beneficial factors differ for children and youth with different characteristics?

Now, when you look at those, those are kind of five simple questions, but if you look at the two studies, there are actually hundreds and, in fact, thousands of questions that fall out from those. So, almost regardless of what your interest is related to special education, these studies have something there for you. If you're interested in school dropout, both SEELS and NLTS2 can provide you a wealth of information. If you're interested in post-school outcomes, NLTS2 has a tremendous amount of information. If you're interested in technology, if you're interested in reading, if you're interested in parental involvement, if you're interested in the provision of accommodations or participation in statewide tests, these studies provide information on all of these topics, and hundreds more.

And I say this just to illustrate how these studies are different from lots of other kinds of research that's conducted in special education. A lot of our very, very best research, if you pick up *Exceptional Children,* these are studies that focus on a few, you know, handful of variables that might be related to a specific academic content area. These studies, by contrast, have a *huge* amount of data on a wide variety of things. Now, the great thing about that is that you get huge breadths—there are hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of topics that SEELS and NLTS2 have information about. The downside for that is that they don't have as much depth in any particular content area as some experts in a particular field would like.

One of the examples that we talked about, we had a post-doc here who was very interested in social development and involvement in the juvenile justice system. And we have questions about whether the students have been involved in the criminal justice system, and whether they've been arrested. But we *didn't* ask, actually, whether they were arrested, what they were arrested for, whether it was a felony, and what the sentence was. And for *him,* those were critical questions. And so it's an important thing to remember is that these studies cover a lot of ground, but they only go so deep. Not to minimize their value at all, but it's just when you ask a study to answer lots of questions about different areas, you don't go all that deep into any particular one of them.

So moving onto slide number 6. The next two slides describe the data collection components in both SEELS and NLTS 2, and they are very similar to one another.

One source of information—and probably the most important source of information—is the student's parent or guardian. We, actually, have a very good track record of finding parents. And parents, actually—even for high school kids—actually really like to talk about their children and their children's experiences. And so, this is a computer-assisted telephone interview that covers a wide range of topics. It covers issues related to the family background, the student's history, and the kinds of educational services that the student receives both in and out of school. It collects data on students' strengths as well as challenges. And it collects a lot of information about parental expectations, and also the parent perspective on how the child is faring, and how the child is doing in school.

We also speak to youth and to students. In NLTS2, we conduct telephone interviews with them as they get old enough, once they get over 18, and we ask some questions of them that we can't ask of their parents. We also conduct assessments of students in both studies. In SEELS, we conducted assessments multiple times. The purposes were, slightly different in the two studies. Both studies were interested in core academic performance and reading and mathematics. But in SEELS, there are early reading measures, as well as reading fluency measures; whereas, in SEELS you'll find academic content measures and vocabulary measures because those things are more important at the secondary level. And then we have questions that we ask students about their self-concept, and about their self-determination, in the case of NLTS2.

We also conduct surveys of teachers, two different kinds of surveys. One is focused on a specific classroom setting, the idea being there that we could get estimates of the kind of instruction that is provided to students, in which setting, how the students behave in that setting, what kind of accommodations they received, etc. In SEELS, that survey we call the teacher survey, and it's completed by the students' language arts teacher, the primary language arts teacher. In NLTS2, that survey is completed by the teacher who has the child in his or her first academic class of the day.

In addition, we also send a survey to the educational professional who knows that child best and knows the student's program best. And that survey is targeted on understanding the student's program [inaudible]. Where does he or she get English or language arts, science, social studies, and so on? [inaudible phrase] accommodations of testing issues across the student's program? And from both education professionals, we also get evidence of behavior, and how the child is faring academically.

We also send a survey to principals, regarding school characteristics and policies, things that happen at the school level, in terms of special education, referral policies, discipline policies, things like that. And in the case of NLTS2, we also collect high school transcripts, which we also did in the original NLTS. We thought that it would be easier, this time around because of computers. But it turns out that the computers also make things more complicated. So we're still in the midst of understanding what the transcripts have to say.

Okay. I'd like to turn, now, to some results from the two studies. Sometimes I will be providing information that comes from SEELS, sometimes from NLTS2, sometimes both. And in a couple of instances, I will also be providing comparative data from the original NLTS and the current one. And what I've tried to do here is to ask of the data just a few questions. And I was coming up with questions that have been kind of a consistent problem in the field. They keep coming up, we keep asking them in different ways. And so I thought it would be important to just organize it that way. And, also, I just want you to get a sense of the diversity of kinds of questions that can be answered.

So the first one is, *Who are the children who are served by special education?* It sounds like a basic question, but it really isn't. Our understandings of what disability is and how we define it and how we measure it have changed over time, and even at the level of which disabilities are included under IDEA. So if we go to the next slide, which, I believe is slide 9, this shows data on elementary and middle school students, and this shows the number of students in each of the disability categories that make up the full population. So if you look at that, you can see that something north of 70 percent of the students ages 6 to 12 are either students with learning disabilities or students with speech impairments. Nine percent are students with mental retardation; about six percent are students with emotional disturbance; five percent are kids with other health impairments, and a large number of that group are students who have ADHD. But if you look in all the other categories—the low-incidence categories—there are relatively small numbers of students.

Moving on to the next slide, we have the same information presented for NLTS1 and NLTS2. This slide provides a couple of important comparisons. The first one is that you can see how the distribution across disability has changed, from younger children to the youth. And we can also get how kids have been placed in different disability categories over time. So the first thing to notice, of course, is at the secondary level relatively few students receive services in the speech and language impairment category. That's not surprising, because many of those students have reticulation issues. Some of those students actually are declassified. They leave special education. Others of them go to other disability categories. So consistent with that, there are more students with learning disabilities in secondary schools than in elementary schools. There are also more students with emotional disturbance, and there are more students with mental retardation.

When you look at these distributions over time, you see a couple of interesting trends. Really, two of them. One is that there are fewer students being identified over the last 13 years or so in the category of mental retardation. And there are many more students receiving services in the area of other health impairment. That, as I mentioned earlier, reflects a number of students who [inaudible phrase] for attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder.

Okay. The next slide is slide number 11, and this requires a little bit of background. In the original NLTS—as we do in all our reports, we provide information on programs, characteristics and outcomes by disability category, learning disability, speech impairment, mental retardation, etc.—we were, rightly, I think, criticized for using the label of disability as a lens to describe who the children were. And, in fact, of course that

makes sense. It really is not, you know, specifically what the label is that we were interested in. But we were interested in how the student's disability, as well as the student's challenges, affected his or her ability to function in school and in the community context.

So in NLTS2 and in SEELS, we tried to collect information on a whole range of functional areas that would allow us to have a more complete picture of what the students were able to do. And what we did for this, we adapted a scale called the Ability Scale, created by Runa Simeonson at the University of North Carolina, to collect this information. And, essentially it's asking parents to talk, to rate their children in the range of functional areas in comparison to students of the same age who don't have disabilities.

So the first slide, here on page 11, asks if the children have any limitation in the use of arms, hands, legs, or feet. And slightly over one-third of students with disabilities are reported to have a limitation in one of those areas. Not surprisingly, that is the most common amongst students with orthopedic impairments. But it's important to note—and this will be the theme, throughout—that you find this across all the other disability categories as well. Fifty-five percent of students with autism, 57 percent of students with multiple disabilities, 43 percent of students with mental retardation.

The next slide asks parents about their student's vision, about how well they see relative to peers their own age. And, again, not surprisingly, here you see the long bars are students with visual impairments, [inaudible] deaf-blindness. But it's interesting to see that parents in all of the other categories actually mention that they believe that their children have problems related to vision. Now, that may not be a problem that gets to the level where it would qualify for a disability, but nonetheless, it's still reported as a difficulty.

The next slide asks the same question in the area of hearing. Again, we have long bars in the areas of hearing impairment and deaf-blindness. But, again, just as in the case of vision, there are small numbers—admittedly, small, but still students in each of the other disability categories—who also have problems in that area.

The next slide addresses speaking ability. This, of course, is related to communication. It's obviously a very important skill in the school, in the community, and in the workplace. And 43 percent of students with disabilities were reported by their parents, to have a difficulty in this area. Notice here that this really cuts, in a more even way, across all of the disability categories. And it's interesting that students with speech and language impairments do not have this problem to the highest degree. Students with autism, multiple disabilities, have it to the highest degree. But you find, again, it's very common across the disability spectrum.

The next slide, this is another area that we struggled with. When you're conducting research at a national level it's difficult to collect data that go in great depth on individual students. And so we often were asked the question, well, is the [inaudible phrase] learning disabilities, for example, are not created equal, right? Some students have more

severe learning disabilities than others, and that's true for students in all the disability categories. And we still don't have a really good way to address that. But one of the ways we came up with was we simply added up the number of functional areas in which either teachers and/or parents reported that there was a problem. And then we just added them up. And so the chart that you see on page 15 shows those distributions. So, for example, 65 percent of students with learning disabilities were reported just to have that single one. But 27 percent were reported to have two, six percent had three, and so on. The interesting thing here is that across all of the disability categories, there are some students who were reported just to have difficulties in one area, but there are also some who were reported to have difficulties in two, three, or more areas. Again, the lesson here for us is that this is a more, disabilities is a complicated construct.

The next slide—we're up to 16 at this point—is student gender. Most of you are probably aware about this that disabilities, disproportionately, affect boys, as opposed to girls. That's been true for some time. About two-thirds of students and youth with disabilities are boys, compared to one-third, who are girls. This distribution, though, is particularly pronounced in the areas of emotional disturbance and in autism, where you find where boys outnumber girls 4 to 1.

The next slide refers to the race/ethnicity of students with disabilities in comparison to the general population. I'm sure most of you are aware that there's been a long-standing difficulty in special education related to disproportionality, especially as that relates to African American students. What this tells us, looking at this chart, is that the number of White students is 63 percent in the general population, and also 63 percent amongst students with disabilities. African American students, by contrast, are 19 percent of the population of students with disabilities, with 17 percent of students in the general population. That is a significant difference. Hispanic students are underrepresented in special education, but that difference is not significant.

The next slide tries to look at these differences as they pertain to students in different disability categories. And what I want to illustrate for you is that the disproportionality that we observe, particularly, amongst African American students is that it's centralized, or most evident, in four of the disability categories. Those are the categories of mental retardation, emotional disturbance, traumatic brain injury, and multiple disabilities.

The next slide—I think we're up to 19 at this point—looks at the economic status of households where students with disabilities live. It compares students with disabilities to the general population in five different income categories, as well as the number of students living in poverty. The first thing to notice I think is that there are students in both groups across the spectrum. There are students who live in low-income settings who are students with disabilities, but there are also many students with disabilities who live in high-income settings, as well. However, when you add it up, on average, students with disabilities are more likely to live in lower-income families. And when we look at poverty rates in families, we find that 1 in 4 students with disabilities would qualify to be considered to be living in poverty, which is considerably more than the percentage who do so in the general population.

If we move to the next slide, we see that this is particularly evident in several disability categories, and those are mental retardation and emotional disturbance.

Okay, the next slide asks the question of the data, *Where should specialized education services take place?* The next slide lists a few terms that we have used over time to refer to this. We've used [inaudible phrase] environment, mainstream [inaudible]. Regular education initiative was focused on this issue of inclusion, of course, inclusive education. We have lots of different terms, but all of them focus in one way or another on the issue of place, and where is the best place for kids with disabilities to receive instruction?

Now, moving on to the next slide, this is the slide 23, I believe. This presents placement data, where students receive most of their instructional services, in the same way that OSEP organizes. And what it means is it's the amount of time that students spend outside the general education setting. So what that means is that on the left, that's the bar that is the students spend less than 20 percent of their time outside the general education setting. So that's the most included group. Then the next one is 21 to 60 percent, then the next one is more than 60 percent outside the general education class. And there's another group where it's a special school where the kids are not attending regular school at all.

So, again, as we look at these data across disability categories, we see again, the first thing we see is that there is tremendous diversity for students in every single category. So, there are students who are included in general education settings most of the time. There are students who are outside the general education class from 20 percent to 60 percent, but that's true in all categories. And there are some who spend more than 60 percent of their time outside of general education. That said, there are some students who are more included than others, and this won't surprise you. Students who have speech and language impairments are most likely to spend the most time in general education settings. And students with mental retardation and autism and multiple disabilities are most likely to spend time in segregated settings. However, there are, its' pretty equal, in terms if you look at students with hearing impairments, visual impairments, orthopedic impairments, and so on. There's quite a diversity both across and within disability categories.

The next slide looks at this same information but organizes it by age, and organizes it by race/ethnicity. The first thing to see is that as students get older they spend less time in the general education setting. And that's the significant difference. In areas of race/ethnicity, African American students are more likely to be in segregated settings, and less likely to be in integrated settings, in comparison to White students, Hispanic students, and Asian/Pacific Islanders.

And if we move to the next slide, it presents again, this same information but does so by the severity index that we mentioned, that I brought up earlier, the numbers of students with 1, 2, 3, or 4 disabilities identified. And if you look at that, there's almost a straight linear relationship, that there are students who spend, who have just one disability

[inaudible phrase] spend the most time in general education settings. Students that have four or more are most likely to be in the segregated settings.

And then this next slide—we're up to 26 now, just for your information—just asks the question, *Who are the children that are 100 percent included, who are included all of the time?* And that ranges from 5 percent to 55 percent, but there are some students in all of the categories who spend all the time in general education.

Slide 27 compares students with disabilities in general education and special education. We organize data this way because when we sent out surveys, particularly for the teacher survey, some of them went to general education teachers because they were the primary language arts instructors for the kids, and some of them went to special education students. And so we wanted to compare those two groups to see what they look like. And if you look at this, it compares general education and special [inaudible phrase] disability. And, of course, this is just dominated by the highest incidence groups [inaudible phrase] the most would be in [inaudible] disability and speech language categories. But what you can see is that you do see kids within each category, in each kind of setting. So there are [inaudible] disabilities and general ed. language arts, as well as in special education language arts, and that's true for kids in all those categories.

So what happens then, if we move to 28, what happens when you compare those two sets of students? And we find on lots and lots of dimensions when we compare them, we actually find important differences. So we ask, *What kind of health are they in?* We find kids who spend more time in general education language arts are reported to be in better health than their peers in special ed. We asked parents how well they understand other children. Again, the students in general education are reported to understand better. Same thing with speaking, right? Students who are in general education language arts settings can speak better than their peers in special education language arts, although, not to the same degree. The same pattern is true for social skills, self-care skills, and cognitive skills. So these two groups of kids, even though they share a disability category, [inaudible phrase] these other dimensions, as well.

Okay, I guess I realized I lied, actually, 'cause I said I was going to talk about SEELS and NLTS2, and here's a question which asks what this costs. And, those are not data that we actually collect in SEELS and NLTS2. But it's data that people generally tend to be very interested in, and so these data come from the Special Education Expenditure Project, conducted by AIR, and I just thought I would share that because people are interested in it. When you look at the total amount of money spent per year on delivering services to students with disabilities, it works out to be about $80 billion. Fifty of that is special education funding, 27 of that comes from regular education, and then there's a small amount on special programs.

Slide 31 shows how those costs distribute across the disability spectrum, and again, that won't surprise you that students with multiple disabilities and autism, providing services to those kids is more expensive than providing services to students with learning disabilities or speech impairments. The multiplier, interestingly enough, in the 1980s,

was thought to be about 2 to 1, the costs for educating students with disabilities compared to general education peers. And that actually holds up here, too, as well.

Okay, the next question—and this is a question that was posed to me in my doctoral program, by my mentor, Tina Edgar—and it was a very powerful question. It's *Special Education, how would we know? What would the measure of success be? How would we know that we were doing a good job?* In SEELS and NLTS2, and indeed across all of the national studies, we've tried to look at this question from a number of perspectives. And indeed, when you look at things from two perspectives, you actually get a somewhat different answer to the question. So the first thing you can do is, as we do on page 33 and on 34, is you could ask parents. You can say, you know, *How satisfied are you with the education that your son or daughter is receiving?* And we show on page 34, parents responses to that. And it kind of makes sense, if you think about this from a consumer satisfaction perspective. I mean, this is [inaudible] would evaluate it, effectiveness, responsiveness to its customers, and we find that 52 percent are very satisfied, 34 percent are somewhat satisfied, and a relatively small number are somewhat or very dissatisfied.

If we move to slide number 35—which shows the information, except just shows it by disability category—what is interesting is that we see high levels of satisfaction across all the disability categories. Now, it's true that some of the categories have slightly higher rates of dissatisfaction, notably, students with emotional disturbance and other health impairment, but it's not huge.

We also asked the parents, on page 36, about student grades. What kinds of grades do they get? And it's quite interesting, because, you know, grades are the ways that schools communicate to parents on a regular basis about how their children are doing. And if you look at this, you see that this shows A's and B's at the top, and D's and F's at the bottom. And you can see that there are many more students getting A's, B's, and C's than students at the lower end. And so parents would be, you know, would be right in assuming that their children are actually making progress.

The next slide shows these parents' reports of students' grades by disability category. On the top bar shows students getting mostly A's and B's; underneath, it shows students getting D's and F's. Again, you're not surprised when you look at the previous slide that the number of students who are succeeding, as defined by getting high grades, is much greater than the students who are failing. Some students are doing somewhat better than others. Students with visual impairments and students with language impairments are more likely to get A's than the students say, with learning disabilities and mental retardation. But, still, there are lots of kids who are succeeding, according to this metric and relatively small numbers of kids who are failing. Students with emotional disturbance have the highest rates of [inaudible] are getting low grades 7 percent of the time.

So we can turn to test scores, as well. That's another metric of how kids are doing. The data that I'm going to present here come from the direct assessment provided to students in SEELS. The data are quite similar in NLTS2. And we're up to page 39 here. These are data from the letter word identification test from the Woodcock Johnson. That's a test

that asks the [inaudible phrase] asks students to identify letters. And at the top end of the scale, it asks students to identify [inaudible phrase] words of increasing complexity. The way to read this chart, again, is these are percentile bands, so the bottom one, it says 0 to 20, 21 to 40, 41 to 60—those are the students whose score landed somewhere within that band. So if my percentile score was 15, I would be in the 0 to 20 group. So the high scores are on the right-hand side; the low scores are on the left-hand side.

Again, as we've seen in many other dimensions, we see diversity here. We see students who have scores in the 0 to 20 percentile for students across all disability categories, but we also see students who have performances at or above the general population mean in most of the disability categories. That said, there are more students in the low category—in the 0 to 20 category—[inaudible phrase] in most disability categories. And, not surprisingly, it is students with mental retardation, multiple disabilities, and traumatic brain injury who have, proportionately, the lower scores; and students with speech impairments and visual impairments have, proportionately, the high scores.

The next slide presents the same letter word identification data but does so by their placement numbers we provided earlier. And this shows the top bar is the group of students who are most included, and the bottom one is the students who are in special schools. What's interesting here is that the students who are most included do have the highest scores, but there really isn't much difference between the students who are out of the general population, out of the general education environment, a little of the time or a lot of the time. But there is a difference between all of those students and students who spend most of their day in special schools.

The next slide shows student performances on the Woodcock Johnson 3 Calculation Sub-test. This is a test that presents students a bunch of calculation problems, and they don't need to figure out what the operation is. It's right there for them on the worksheet. The thing to note here is that all of the patterns that I just referred to are the same; however, all of the students in all the disability categories tend to do somewhat better in mathematics than they do in reading. So what about other indicators? What are other things that we could look at [inaudible phrase] the metric of success?

So if we move to page 43, one thing we could look at is suspension or expulsions, right? Those are things that research has shown if you have a lot of suspension and expulsions, that the chances of you dropping out are definitely elevated. This shows students in elementary schools compared to students in secondary schools by disability category. So 14 percent of kids had been suspended or expelled in the last year in elementary school. That's about double in secondary school, goes up to 30 percent. Now, the interesting thing is that the biggest problem, in terms of suspension and expulsion, is students with emotional disturbances. About half of them have been suspended or expelled within the last year, regardless of whether they're in secondary or elementary school. But the jumps actually in numbers of students being suspended or expelled are not the highest in that group. So students with speech impairments go from 5 percent in elementary school up to 18 percent in high school. That's a three times increase. Same thing is true of students with visual impairments. And so it's important to note that as this contributes to school

completion, there are relatively large numbers of students across the disabilities spectrum who are being suspended or expelled.

The next slide looks at—this is 43 by the way, or 44, I beg your pardon—looks at the number of school changes. And this is trying to look at this notion of stability, that students who have stability in their school careers are more likely to complete school. This chart shows students who were not having stable school careers. These are students who changed schools, and these are non-normative school changes, it doesn't count the change from elementary to middle school; non-normative school changes, at least four times. So in elementary school, 4 percent of students have changed school at least four times; that goes up by a factor of three when kids get to secondary school. It's highest [inaudible] students with emotional disturbance, but it's also a high number for kids in most other disability categories, too, hovering around 10 percent. So it's not something that just affects students with emotional disturbances.

Same thing is true with grade retention, on the next slide. We see that 26 percent of students overall had been retained at some point in their school career. That goes up to almost 36 percent for kids in secondary school. That, again, is a predictor of students who fail to finish school. The interesting thing here, too, is that this really cuts across students across all disability categories. There are lots of kids who have been retained across the range.

Next, you could actually ask kids. How about that? We can ask kids what they think of school. And we were instructed to—so this is a kind of funny story in the design process because we had three days of design meetings in Washington, D.C., where we had lots of smart people there giving us guidance to what the study should collect. And then the last 15 minutes of the last day, someone said you have to include the student voice in the study. If you don't, you will have missed the boat. Everybody agreed that it was a really good idea, and then it was time to go home, and everybody left, and they never told us how to do it. And McGraw-Hill doesn't have a test that does that. We were able to find, after some looking, a measure that allowed us to look at the student voice. It's called the Student Attitude Measure, and it actually presents a bunch of statements to kids, and just asks them to say how much like them, or not like them, those things are. You can sum these up into a scale, but it actually is more telling when you present the individual items, so that's what I'd like to do.

On page 47, we asked kids the questions, we present the statement to kids, "I don't know how to do better in school." If you look at the bar on the left-hand side is the number of kids who never agree with that. So 41 percent of kids don't always say, they say that's not at all like me. [inaudible phrase] with that. The flip side of that, though, is that almost 60 percent of students actually do say that they don't know how to do better in school, at least some of the time. And that's a pattern that's fairly consistent across all the disability categories.

The next slide, 48, has another statement. "I have no control over the grades I get at school." Again, 35 percent of the students say that's not like me at all. But the flip side of

that is 65 percent are saying that they kind of agree with that, at least some of the time. And so it's an interesting perspective on the students, what influence they have on their own success in school.

The next slide asks a different kind of question. "School will help me have a better life." This, we have exactly the opposite, that students overwhelmingly agree that school is part of helping them succeed in life later on.

And the next slide says, "School's the best place for me to learn." We have the same thing, that students tell us that they agree with that statement. So on the one hand, we have students recognizing that school is a part of their success in life, but also expressing some hesitation, some reservations about whether they're actually going to be able to do that.

Okay, we're up to 51 now. This is, what about No Child Left Behind? And I think all of you are familiar with No Child Left Behind. It asks schools to hit increasing targets over time for adequate yearly progress, and that those targets need to be hit for the school, as a whole, in each individual sub-group. And so we asked the question, well, do the national studies have anything to say about that? And they do. I think they do tell us something about where we are currently. If you did a review of proficiency to cut scores in the country, and, of course, they vary greatly, by state. But the 48 percentile as being a sub-score for proficient seemed like a reasonable [inaudible]. Of course, these would change [inaudible phrase] score.

But on page 53, we have the number of students who are, across disability category in elementary and in middle school scoring at or above the 43 percentile. So this would be the number of kids who would be considered proficient now. So I think the good [inaudible] that there are students in all disability categories who would be considered proficient, most in elementary school and in high school. There's great variation by disability category. Students with speech impairments, students with visual impairments, orthopedic impairments, and other health impairments have the largest numbers of students who exceed that proficiency cut score. Students with multiple disabilities, mental retardation have smaller numbers. Of course, I think the flip side of this is that there are large numbers of students who have quite a long way to go, and some students who have 25 percentile points to go, so there is a lot of ground that is to be covered for these students to make the proficiency cuts.

The next slide is the same data, except looking at mathematics. And, of course as you would expect, kids are doing better in mathematics, we find that more kids are exceeding the percentile cuts, I mean, for proficiency in mathematics, than they do in reading. Still, there are significant numbers of students who are some distance off that cut score, and some of them have a very long way to go. So what I'd like to do at this point is entertain some questions. I think this is a good time to stop and do that. Garrett, would you like to get some questions that we could respond to?

MODERATOR: I sure would, José. At this time, if you have a question for José, all you have to do is press Star 1 on your phone's touch-tone keypad. That will put you into our question queue. When your turn comes up, I'll call on you by the city and the first name of the person who registered at your location. Now, if the question is answered while you're in line, simply press the pound key. That will take you out of the queue. If you're listening on a speaker phone and it's at all possible, please move as close as possible to the speaker phone, or pick up the handset when you ask your question; we'll all be able to hear you much better that way. And this reminder, when replacing the handset, remember to press the speaker phone button so you're not disconnected. However, if you do disconnect, just dial back in, re-enter your pin, and you'll be immediately reconnected to the program today. So if you have a question, go ahead press Star 1 now. If it's answered while you're in line, press the pound key, that will take you out of the queue. And, again, the email address—if you'd like to send questions via email today—is M-O-D-E@krm.com. That's M as in Mary, O as in Oscar, D as in David, E as in Edward, at K-R-M dot com. And, José, we've got several calls in the queue right now, and several emails which have come in through the course of the program today. We'll go to the phone first to Paul's site in Honolulu, Hawaii. And Honolulu, the line is open. Go ahead with your question for José today.

MAXINE: Good morning. This is Maxine from Honolulu, and my question is *What was the response rate to your survey for both parents and students?*

DR. J. BLACKORBY: That's a very good question. The answer is that it varies by year and by data collection instrument. Our highest response rates, by far, are with parents, where the response rates are between 75 and 95 percent, across the waves of data collection. The response rates for our assessments improved over time. They started at about 60 percent and got up to nearly 80 percent in the third wave. Our lowest response rates are in surveys to schools, the teacher surveys and the school program surveys. I should note, though, that the data are all weighted, and so they all still weight up to the population. In instruments where we have lower responses, they just get higher weights. So it all still reflects the population.

MAXINE: Thank you.

DR. J. BLACKORBY: You're welcome.

MODERATOR: And thank you, Honolulu, for your question today. We've got calls in the queue from Concord, New Hampshire, from Chicago, Illinois. And we'll go to Clarksburg, West Virginia, and Pat's site, go ahead, Clarksburg. The line is open today. Clarksburg, perhaps your line is on mute?

WOMAN: Hi.

DR. J. BLACKORBY: Hello.

WOMAN: My question was you had said at the beginning there were questions you asked the parents that you could not ask the students. Could you give me some examples of what those questions were?

DR. J. BLACKORBY: Yes, that refers to the, to NLTS2. There was interest in student risk behaviors—so drug taking, questions about violence, things like that, and we asked kids those questions after they turn 18. The thinking was that we might get good answers from parents about that.

WOMAN: Oh. Okay, thank you.

DR. J. BLACKORBY: You're welcome.

MODERATOR: Thank you, Clarksburg. And we'll go to Chicago, Illinois, to Milton's site. Go ahead, Chicago, the line is open with your question for José today.

WOMAN: I have a question. When you surveyed the parents and you asked them how satisfied they were in different categories, how did you operationalize what they meant by 'satisfied?'

DR. J. BLACKORBY: We didn't. We asked them the question straight out, just like that. We said, "How satisfied are you with your _____?" We asked it in a number of different ways. We asked about the school, the school program, but we provided categories—very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, and provided those response categories to the parents, and then picked which one met their response best.

WOMAN: Okay. And then can you go over a little bit on page 40? I was a little confused on how you interpreted that data.

DR. J. BLACKORBY: Page 40, sure, let me go back here. Oh, sure. This is, page 40—for those of you that are listening in—this is the students' performances on the Woodcock Johnson in letter word identification, in light of how much time the students spend in general education versus outside of general education. And so that top bar, those are the students who spend less than 20 percent of the time outside the general education class, so that's the most included group. And then, of course, at the other end of the scale, then, the students in special schools are the ones who are the most excluded. And it shows that the students who are most included, who are out of the general education class for the greatest proportion of their school day are the ones who have the best distribution scores.

WOMAN: Okay, thank you.

DR. J. BLACKORBY: You're welcome.

MODERATOR: And thank you, Chicago. We will go to an Internet question, then back to some phone questions. And this question is about the collection of information from teachers and schools, regarding the accommodations and modifications for the student. *Is*

the question asked about the accommodations written in the IEP, or are the accommodations actually provided by the school? And is this information verified in the survey questions asked of both students and families?

DR. J. BLACKORBY: That's a very good question. The accommodations questions focus on accommodations actually provided. We did not collect IEP's, directly, so we had no direct way of comparing those data, and we were not sure that teachers would be, you know, good, reliable reporters of what was actually in the IEP at that level of specificity. And we did not actually ask about accommodations provided of the parent. But we do ask them of both, both teacher respondents responded to the same set of items.

MODERATOR: Very good. And another question, José. *Did you include private schools in your studies?*

DR. J. BLACKORBY: Private schools were not part of the original sample. However, the study designs are such that we follow students wherever they go. And so there are a number of students who actually did go to private schools, and we followed them there.

MODERATOR: And part two of the question of this email. *Are the grades based on grade-level material or based on the child's current level?*

DR. J. BLACKORBY: You mean the grades given or the grade level?

MODERATOR: It doesn't state that. It just says, "*Are the grades based on grade-level material, or based on the child's current level?"*

DR. J. BLACKORBY: I think based on the child's current level.

MODERATOR: And very good. We have just about 7 minutes left in the program today. Couple more calls in the queue. We'll go to San Francisco, California, momentarily. First, it's Barbara's site in Concord, New Hampshire. Concord, go ahead with your question for José, today.

MAN: Yes, can you hear me?

DR. J. BLACKORBY: Yes, I can.

MAN: The, page 37, a report of grades [inaudible phrase]?

DR. J. BLACKORBY: Yes.

MAN: Did you control for the grades, reflecting a less rigorous standard for the kids on IEPs versus their peers?

DR. J. BLACKORBY: It's a very good question. We didn't have any way of doing that. We didn't think that the parent would be able to tell us that. We did, in the teacher

survey, we do ask the teachers to tell us what they consider when they grade, give students grades. So we asked them if they compare students' performances to their own prior performance, if they compare student performances to other students in the class, if they compare students to a set standard, a number of other possibilities are in there, too. So we do *have* those data, but I haven't run the cross-tab of those by the parent data, although, I probably should.

MAN: Okay. One thing that we are concerned about, especially at the high school level, where the standard for students, mostly like on LDIEP's, should be the same rigorous standard, and then the accommodations should support that. So there's always a real danger, as you know, when you try to make accommodations that you sort of water it down, and make it less rigorous.

DR. J. BLACKORBY: That's right. That's right.

MAN: Thank you.

DR. J. BLACKORBY: Thank you.

MODERATOR: Thank you, Concord. We'll head to the other side of the country right now. We'll talk with Eugene, Oregon, momentarily, and then to John's site right now in San Francisco, California. San Francisco, go ahead with your question.

MAN: Hi. My question has to do with the study particular to African Americans.

DR. J. BLACKORBY: Yes.

MAN: When you mentioned that African Americans were more likely to be segregated based on disabilities, you gave these statistics. Can you just get into some more details, particularly, around the [inaudible] disabilities? And I was, particularly, struck with the GBI and the mental retardation. Can you clarify that for me?

DR. J. BLACKORBY: Well, it's a huge issue. Those, you know, the way that the slide is constructed is that we have the disability category, which is the one that was provided to us by the school districts. So this is the, you know, this is the category that we serve this child in. And then we got ethnicity data from both from schools and from parents and that reflects, actually, the comparison of the two. And so that slide, actually, you know, shows that the disproportionality amongst African American students is located in those few categories. It's not across the board. And I think the placement rates, I mean, I think it shows that, I mean, I think it just supports other research that's out there, that African American students are more likely to be in segregated settings, unfortunately.

MAN: And then the second part of my question, when you decided in the group when you met there should be student voices in this survey, so I'm glad you guys decided to do that. My question is, [inaudible phrase] decided to use student attitude measures?

DR. J. BLACKORBY: Yeah.

MAN: What made you decide to use *that* measure, as opposed to getting youths' direct input, versus the written comments, or [inaudible phrase]?

DR. J. BLACKORBY: We had some requirements about the kind of data that we would collect. We needed to make sure that the data that we collected had some kind of general population norm so that we would know, you know, if the data that were, if the responses we got were high or low. And so when you apply those technical characteristic requirements to the kinds of survey items you might select, the group got very, very small, very quickly. So we were, actually, you know, we were, actually, happy to find the student attitude measure that we did.

MAN: Wow. Okay. [overlapping voices]

MODERATOR: And thank you very much, San Francisco. We'll go to Eugene, Oregon, quickly. And we have about two minutes left on the Q&A today. This is Daphne's site, and Eugene, go ahead with your question for José today.

WOMAN: Hi, this is actually Jane Falls, at the National Post-School Outcomes Center and the Western Regional Research Center.

DR. J. BLACKORBY: Hi, Jane.

WOMAN: José, question. This sort of gets at the title of today's conference call, "Translating the Data into State and Local Practice." And this question, probably, will require more than 2 minutes to respond to, so it may be for a future discussion. But I'm just wondering if you have some application suggestions. What do you see as the factors that help kids stay in school, after looking at all this data?

DR. J. BLACKORBY: You're right, that's not a two-minute question. I think the answer to that is the answers are different for different kinds of kids. And I think that's our challenge, and, of course, that's the field's challenge to look at these data, going forward, to try to understand how they play out differently for different kinds of kids. I have some hunches about these differences that we see in, for example, kids who are in more segregated, versus integrated, settings. There's a chicken and egg phenomenon that's going on there that we need to disentangle. But I think that there are some markers that are pretty clear across all the kids, right? So the kids who have lots of instability in their school careers, I would identify that as a risk, pretty much, for all kids. Kids who are suspended and expelled, that's a risk for all kids. Kids who've been retained, that's a risk for all kids. And I know in my own mind, I think, I had applied those, probably, disproportionately to students with emotional disturbances, and, in fact, they represent risks for all the other kids who are served under IDEA as well.

MODERATOR: And thank you, Eugene, for that question today. And José, that will wrap things up for the Q&A and for the program. And you have time for closing remarks right now.

DR. J. BLACKORBY: Okay. Well, I just want to thank everyone. I did not get through all of my slides, and I apologize for that. But I would like just to orient you towards the slides that are at the back of the presentation, which show the NLTS2 web site, and show just a short illustration of how to use the web site, and how to get cross-tabulations of the literally thousands of variables and different kinds of information that are available there. So I really, really, really encourage you to use this information. This was a huge amount of work, but, more importantly, it was a big investment of all of our, you know, tax dollars to do this. And I know that there are lots of ways that the data can be used that I haven't thought of, and OSEP hasn't thought of, and I urge you very much to do that. And I look forward to engaging in a conversation with you online, over the next couple of weeks, to help you any way I can. I would like to say I did a training last week, in North Carolina, about how to use this information. And I was really, really gratified because all of, there were 12 participants, and all of them had really cool and unique perspectives on how to use this information that I had never thought of. So I'm sure you will do the same. And I appreciate your time and your attention. [overlapping voices]

MODERATOR: Thank you very much, José. And, Loujeania, you had some closing remarks, as well. Loujeania, are you there with closing remarks?

DR. L. WILLIAMS BOST: Yes.

MODERATOR: Go ahead.

DR. L. WILLIAMS BOST: I would like to also thank our audience today for their participation, and I would also like to inform you of our next teleseminar on May 25. Dr. Brian Cobb, from Colorado State University, will be with us to talk about "Dropout Prevention and Youth with Disabilities: What the Research Says Really Works." Dr. Cobb has spent a number of years doing intense analysis of the data on dropout prevention and is ready to share that information with us at this time. So join in, and again, thank you for your attendance today. And have a great rest of your afternoon.

MODERATOR: Thank you very much. That concludes today's program, "Translating National Data into State and Local Practice," brought to you by the National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities, and presented by José Blackorby and Loujeania Williams Bost. Thank you for joining us for today's program. Please visit us at the web site at www.dropoutprevention.org to participate in that follow-up online discussion. And, again, for more information about the National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities, should you have additional questions after this program, you can send those to dhall@edc.org. That's d-h-a-l-l at e-d-c dot o-r-g, until 5:00 P.M. today. We encourage each person attending to fill out the evaluation form, and fax it to the number listed on the form. Your comments and suggestions are important to

us. You may also fill out that evaluation form online by going to the web address listed on the top of the form.

 Thank you for joining us for this program, and enjoy the rest of your day. You may disconnect now.

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