

National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities
Effective Approaches to Increasing Graduation Rates for All Students
Dr. Camilla Lehr and Dr. Loujeania Williams-Bost
October 5, 2005

Moderator: Thank you for participating in today's program, "Effective Approaches to Increasing Graduation Rates for All Students," brought to you by the National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities. This is the second in a series of teleseminars designed to provide state and local education agencies with resources to increase school completion rates and decrease dropout rates among students with disabilities. Please visit our web site at www.dropoutprevention.org for more information and details on future teleseminars, including our next event on December 8, 2005, and to participate in the follow-up online discussion to today's program. Thank you again for joining us, and we hope you enjoy the program today. At this time, it's my pleasure to introduce your presenters for today, Dr. Cammy Lehr and Dr. Loujeania Williams-Bost.

Dr. Cammy Lehr is a research associate at the Institute on Community Integration in the College of Education and Human Development at the University of Minnesota. Her current research interests are focused in the areas of dropout prevention, engaging children and youth with disabilities and those placed at risk in school, and promoting positive school climates. She's worked with students in grades K-12 as a school psychologist, taught at the graduate and undergraduate levels, directed federally-funded research projects, and is the author of multiple publications.

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.

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

DR. LOUJEANIA WILLIAMS-BOST: Thank you, Garrett. Good morning. Welcome to our audience. On behalf of the National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities and our partners Education Development Center, in Newton, Massachusetts; the Inter-Cultural Research Association in San Antonio, Texas; and the National Dropout Prevention Center Network at Clemson University.

Our quarterly seminars serve two purposes. One, 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 to help students with disabilities stay in school and successfully graduate; two, to create dialogue between researchers who have successfully designed and implemented effective approaches to reduce dropout rates, and state education agencies and local school personnel seeking to establish such programs.

As federal state and local education agency personnel grapple to meet the challenge of increasing school completion rates for students with disabilities, the use of scientific-based evidence to design effective programs and systems cannot be understated. To that end, we are pleased to present Dr. Cammy Lehr today, as our speaker. Cammy, it's all yours.

DR. CAMILLA LEHR: Okay. Thank you so much, Loujeania. I'd like to also thank the audience. Thank you so much for participating. I'm hoping that you will be receiving some information that will be of help to you today. I'd also like to thank the National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities, and Loujeania again, as well as their partners, for having me participate today and present some of this information.

Now, my understanding is that you have received some information and tools, materials, via the National Dropout Prevention Center. And I'd like to, just briefly, highlight some of those materials. And I'm hoping that you have access to all three.

I have a PowerPoint format that I'll be using, so you can follow along as I go through each of the slides. I have to tell you, this is a new experience for me, and I feel a little like *Frasier*. But we'll see how this goes. I can't get any response from you, but we'll just go ahead.

The first material that I wanted to highlight is material that you should have received, and it's called *Impact*. It's the feature issue on *Fostering Success in School and Beyond for Students with Emotional Behavioral Disorders*. I wanted to include this issue because it's a really good issue in terms of addressing some of the needs of our students with emotional behavioral disabilities, and the challenges that educators are facing in terms of keeping these kids in school.

It provides a variety of information at what I think is a user-friendly level. Most of the articles are one to two pages. I'm hoping you have a chance to take a look at it. It also provides information across a variety of different domains, We're looking at providing interventions across the domains of academic performance, social behavioral performance, emotional and mental health kinds of issues, and also in the areas of vocational and transition issues.

So this will hopefully be of help to you. All of this can be downloaded. And I believe on your slides, PowerPoint, you do have a bullet that gives the web address. It can also be purchased by contacting the Institute on Community Integration.

The second piece that I wanted to highlight is a piece that's published by the National Center of Secondary Education and Transition. It's one of the Essential Tools Series, and this one is entitled, *Increasing Rates of School Completion: Moving from Policy and Research to Practice*. One of the reasons why we developed this is because we wanted to have a user-friendly tool summarizing what we know about dropout prevention and provide examples of interventions. This document features about 11 different approaches. These approaches were selected very carefully in terms of them having evidence of success, and evidence that they do, in fact, impact enrollment status to some degree, whether it's graduation rates, staying in school, credit accumulation, those kinds of things. These aren't necessarily *recommended* interventions, but they certainly are ones that we thought would be good examples to provide for those of you who

are looking for some ideas.

The third piece is the National Center on Secondary Education *Transition Brief*. This is probably the most succinct summary that I was able to come up with in terms of summarizing information tied to students with disabilities who drop out of school. And it has a nice, brief summary of implications for policy and practice.

I'm hoping that those pieces of information will be of help to you. I will be drawing on some of the information from those materials, but not all by any means. So I guess we will go on.

I would like to talk a little bit about what today's seminar is going to be about. And if you look at the next slide that says, "Today's Seminar," it has several bullets. The first five bullets—I believe it's five—really speak to a conceptual piece in terms of orienting you to some basic conceptual thinking about how to approach school completion and prevent dropout for students with disabilities. Oftentimes, I'll be speaking about students without disabilities as well, but we'll kind of come up on that a little bit later.

In terms of the bullets, you can see that we're going to be talking a little bit about how big the problem is, which in and of itself oftentimes opens up a can of worms. But suffice it to say the problem is big enough that we need to attend to it.

What about students with disabilities? How are students with disabilities fairing in terms of school completion, graduation rates, and dropout? What are some of the reasons for dropping out that we know of that are actually gleaned from the research literature? What are some of the factors placing students at risk? And what are some of the keys to keeping kids in school? This conceptual piece, I think, is important to go over, and I won't spend a whole lot of time on it. But I think we need to have some of that basic understanding before we can really even move into thinking about what interventions we need to put in place.

The last piece that I will be talking about—and it will actually take up about half of the time that we're together today—is on effective approaches and examples. And here I'm going to go through some specific examples in the context of a framework, the three-tiered framework, which I'm sure many of you are familiar with in terms of universal, selected, and indicated interventions. I'll also share with you some experiences that I've had with various states in terms of how they're approaching the problem with dropouts.

First of all, we'll go through the introductory section to set the context. Then we will have a question and answer period for about 10 minutes following that. The second part is going to look at effective approaches. And as I said, I'll briefly summarize some of the examples of what interventions are being used and how some states are addressing the problem of dropout.

Let's begin by going over some national statistics. I'm pulling this information from a report that was completed by Jay Greene and Marcus Winters. This report is entitled, *Public High School Graduation and College Readiness Rates*. It's put out by the Manhattan Institute for Policy Research.

If we look at some of the statistics that they came up with, they found that the percentage of ninth-grade students who graduated four years later in 2002 was about 75 percent. As you can see from this information, what they used in terms of calculation was something similar to a cohort rate, with some modifications.

In addition to that, we see that the percentage of ninth grade students who graduated four years later ranged from a low of 53 percent in South Carolina to a high of 89 percent in New Jersey. So you can see that we have a lot of variation across the states. We could argue about the numbers and discuss the different calculations and which ones are best and which ones are most accurate. We aren't going to get into that today, but there are several reports that are out now that address these issues, including I'm sure you're familiar with the National Governors Association Task Force, which came up with a compact on how high school graduation rates would be calculated so there was some consistency across the states.

There's also a task force that was convened through NCES, I believe, National Center on Education Statistics (NCES), in terms of looking at the graduation, completion, and dropout, indicators, which I would highly recommend reading. I love their definitions of graduation, completion, and dropout. And they're very helpful in terms of thinking clearly about what we want to keep track of.

In addition, there's the recent Government Accounting Office (GAO) report; and of course, Chris Swanson's ratings with the Urban Institute out of Washington, D.C. So there are lots and lots of resources to consult. *All* of those papers have come out within this past year, 2005. So there's a lot of great, leisure reading for you to do in your spare time if you're interesting in looking at the statistics.

Let's see. One other thing I wanted to mention about this report. Oftentimes, those who graduate from high school may not meet the minimum qualifications for college. So one of the things that Greene and Winters did was they actually calculated the percentage of high school students who left, that is, who graduated, who are actually ready to attend college. And they came up with a percentage of 34 percent, which I thought was really interesting. Thirty-four percent in 2002 were actually ready to attend college, in terms of meeting some minimal criteria, That is - having obtained a regular diploma, completing a minimum set of required courses, and being able to read at a basic level. Anyway, I thought that was interesting in terms of thinking about how many of our students who actually receive a standard diploma actually go on to college, and how many actually are ready to go on to college. It's even a more important issue for students with disabilities, or intense issue for students with disabilities, in terms of making sure that they meet some of those minimal requirements.

Let's turn to the next slide and just go over, briefly, some of the data on exit for students with disabilities. The data that we have here is from Daria Hall, and she has, a report out through the Education Trust, looking at graduation rates and how states calculate their numbers.

In January, states were required to report the state level graduation rates for all high school students in the class of 2002–2003, disaggregated of course, by race, ethnicity, low-income status, disability, English language, gender, and migrant status. Turns out that three states did not

report any data on graduation rates, and 24 states did not report data for students with disabilities. So I think one of the things that we can glean from this is the fact that we still don't have a whole lot of information that's being clearly reported by states with regard to the extent of graduation rates for our kids with disabilities.

One of the next things that I wanted to point out is that we do have some information from the Office of Special Education Programs. They have a 25th Annual Report to Congress, and the data from OSEP indicates that in 2000–2001, about 41 percent of students ages 14 and older with disabilities exited school by dropping out. Forty-one percent! I like to emphasize those numbers because, oftentimes, you read the number and you just see the number. But when you think about it, I mean, that's a very high percentage of students dropping out.

Now, from 1993–1994 through 2000–2001, the percentage of students with disabilities dropping out *decreased* from 45 percent to about 41 percent. So this is a *good* thing. We're seeing a decrease in the percentage of students with disabilities who are dropping out. Consistently, we're seeing that students with visual impairments consistently have the lowest dropout rates, and students with emotional behavioral disabilities consistently have the highest dropout rates.

In 2000–2001, 47 percent of students, ages 14 and older with disabilities exited school with a regular school diploma. And, of course, this is a huge issue, as No Child Left Behind counts graduation as those students who leave within four years with a regular school diploma.

Now, one of the things that we need to think about when we're looking at this slide is the fact that when we talk about students with disabilities and the extent to which they drop out of school, we have consistently the highest numbers in terms of our kids with EBD. So when I say students with disabilities in reference to dropout, I'm typically referring to kids with emotional behavioral disorders, or kids with learning disabilities, which is the next highest.

If you turn to the next slide, you'll see that I've got a chart of some selected disability categories. Learning disabilities. Speech and language. Mental retardation. Emotional disturbance. Visual impairments. And I've listed the percentages graduated and dropped out, as reported by OSEP. You'll see that these percentages, of course, do not add up to a hundred percent. And so if you look at, for example, the row of statistics for mental retardation, we see that those percentages do not account for those students who received certificates of attendance, or who reached the maximum age, etc. So there are a group of students there that are not included. That occurs in every category.

Much of the information that we get about how our students with disabilities are doing and progressing, we get from the National Longitudinal Transition Study. Of course, there was a first study, and now there's a second study looking at a cohort of, I believe, about 11,000 youth ages 13–16 who are receiving special education.

The initial study collected data on youth with disabilities in their high school years and transition to adulthood during the early 1990s. The outcomes for youth with emotional behavioral disabilities were particularly troubling. These students were more likely to be disconnected from school, have poor academic performance or academic failure, and be involved in the criminal

system.

The National Longitudinal Transition Study compared some of their data from the first study that they did to the second. So we're finding that the school completion rate of youth with disabilities has increased, and the dropout rate has decreased. An actual decrease of about 17 percentage points between 1987 and 2003. Seventy percent of the Cohort 2 youths with disabilities had completed high school, and they are increasingly leaving high school with their same-age peers. The EBD completion rate, again, continues to be the lowest of any disability category. So this is something that is very, very consistent across all of our studies.

Why attend to the problem of dropping out of school? Here I know I'm preaching to the choir because you're listening. So I'm wondering, I mean, you know why it's important. We know that there are significant costs to individuals. We know that there are significant costs to society. When students graduate they're more likely to get a job. When they don't graduate they may be more likely to be unemployed, generate fewer tax dollars, and may cost in terms of dependence on social programs.

However, this may be more of an impetus for you, of course, and that is the federal legislation. No Child Left Behind holds schools accountable for student progress using indicators of adequate yearly progress, including measures of academic performance and rates of school completion. NCLB certainly has shone a light on the problem of dropout, especially for students of varying sub-groups, oftentimes, those of whom are more likely to be at risk of leaving school without a standard diploma.

We also know that all students are required to participate in standards-based reform and accountability systems. And we are very aware of including students with disabilities in the general curriculum and in testing and assessment, either with or without accommodations. Currently, more than 25 states require students to pass tests to receive a standard diploma. Now, NCLB counts graduates as those who *do* receive a standard diploma. However, it does not require students to pass tests in order to *receive* a diploma. But more and more states are actually requiring this.

So the question that I am most interested in, based on looking at the numbers in the higher proportions of students with disabilities dropping out, is what do we know that's research-based? And how can that information be used to inform practice and improve graduation rates? What can we do to keep our kids in school? And not only what *can* we do, but have those things been proven to be effective? And how do we go about replicating these interventions, and making sure they're implemented with integrity, and actually being successful in more than one setting? Again, if we have information about why kids drop out and who is *most* at risk, this information can help us to shape interventions.

So that brings us to looking at some of the research on who drops out and why. Based on a lot of information gathered through national studies using either survey methodology or longitudinal data collection using retrospective studies or interviews, we've gathered a lot of information about who drops out and why. Much of this information is gathered, as I said, through student-level surveys and/or interviews. Larry Kortering was just on one of the teleseminars and had a

most interesting presentation about what kids have to say. He views students as consumers of education, and is interested in what they have to say about why they left school.

When you put all this information together from this variety of sources, we find that the reasons fall into four different domains. Some of the reasons are school-related. For example, kids say they have problems getting along with teachers, they left because they kept getting suspended and expelled, they thought that the discipline practices in the schools were unfair, etc.

Some of the reasons are peer-related. They had friends who were dropping out of school, and so they tended to hang out with those kids instead of attending school. It wasn't as important to them.

In addition, a lot of the students have other things happening outside of school that they need to attend to in terms of external stressors, such as pregnancy, teenage parenthood, or needing to support a family.

In addition, we have students who have more individual kinds of reasons for leaving school early. And that often has to do with their attitude or relevance of education. I did have the opportunity to interview students who are attending alternative schools, which is a great population of students to talk with because these are students who typically have had a history of dropping out of school and then return to continue their schooling at the alternative school. These students often admitted, at the time that they dropped out, they didn't see the relevance of school. It didn't seem important to them. Their attitude wasn't good, in addition to some of these other school-related reasons, peer-related reasons, and external stressors. But they were real open about 'I needed to get myself together, and then I would be able to come back to school.'

Oftentimes, the reasons for their continued attendance *at* the alternative school had to do with school-related reasons, in terms of these settings providing a more nurturing environment, respect for relationships between staff, etc. When I speak about alternative schools, you have to realize I'm speaking from the framework of Minnesota. Minnesota has schools of choice. Alternative schools are places that students who are at risk of school failure can actually choose to attend. So they're not disciplinary alternative schools, or punitive, although they are typically geared for kids at risk.

Let's go to the next slide that has to do with understanding why students drop out, but looking at it in a slightly different way. One of the things that has happened is that when we get the information about why students drop out, it becomes sort of categorized into these two kinds of effects. These are often referred to as Push Effects and Pull Effects.

Push Effects are those situations or experiences *within* the school environment that aggravate feelings of alienation, failure, and dropout. So these are the kinds of things that are occurring in schools that kids are not comfortable with. They feel alienated, whether it's bullying, being intimidated by peers, or continually being suspended. Some attendance policies end up pushing kids out of schools. So those, as I said, are referred to as Push Effects.

Pull Effects are those factors that are external to the school environment that weaken or distract

from the importance of school completion. And these are the factors that educators typically have less control over. They're factors that draw a student out of school, in terms of issues that they need to deal with, such as pregnancy, or having to raise money for their family, having to choose employment over being able to be in class until three o'clock. So I think, oftentimes, the push effects are ones that we need to concentrate on in terms of trying to limit their effect on our students, in terms of pushing them out of school.

In addition to this kind of a framework for looking at why students drop out of school, we also have information about variables placing students at risk. These are variables that are *associated* with kids dropping out of school, and they have been categorized into status variables and alterable variables.

Now, status variables are those that are difficult to change or influence, whereas alterable variables are really more a source of hope in terms of impacting that trajectory aiming towards dropping out of school.

The value of these variables lies, oftentimes, in linking them to interventions. *Certainly*, they can also be used to identify students who are at risk, and those who may need or benefit from some intervention services. For example, we know that kids who come from low SES, or a single-parent family, or have a disability, or high levels of mobility are more likely to be at risk of dropping out of school.

But, I'm thinking that the value of these does lie in planning the interventions. Let me give you an example. Let me take the status variables first. For example, we know that a sub-set of students lives in poverty. They may have limited access to technology, to computers in their homes, for example. So, if we know that, we can work to provide accessibility to this technology.

Let me give you another example. Mobility. We know that in urban settings we have high mobility and high turnover in terms of our urban schools, in terms of kids moving in and out. I mean, I think there's like a 50 percent turnover in some of the Minneapolis schools, here in Minnesota, and that mobility is especially high for students with emotional behavioral disabilities. Some of the research has shown that. And so this, again, is something that we have little control over. There's not a lot we can do about whether or not a family moves. However, there is a *lot* we can do in terms of easing transition. We can set up a buddy system for the student when they come into the school. We can set up an orientation, a procedure. We can set up an adult who does a regular check-in, etc.

The ones that are more amenable to change are really some of the alterable variables. We *can*, indeed, influence a student's attendance, whether it's regular attendance, or moving poor attendance towards regular attendance. We *can*, in fact, influence school policies. We *can*, in fact, affect the school climate. A positive school climate is associated with greater holding power in terms of kids staying in school. Students feel welcome and have a sense of belonging. Many initiatives exist in terms of creating more positive school climates, even ranging from something as simple as greeting students at the door when they come *into* the school to providing systemic, positive behavioral supports, or creating welcoming environments. So we do have lots of things that we know that we *can* do based on some of the research that shows what variables are

associated with risks in terms of kids dropping out of school.

One more point about variables placing students at risk. We have to remember that the presence of multiple risk factors does, in fact, increase risks. But the presence of multiple risk factors does not *guarantee* that a student will drop out. If we have a student, and I think educators see this, often, they see a student who has multiple risk factors, whether they're alterable or status variables, and they have a sense the student will not graduate. *But*, nevertheless, those predictors are not a hundred percent for sure in terms of the student dropping out of school. So we need to continue to be persistent with these kids. And it also points to the power of resilience in terms of promoting protective factors that can help students to be resilient in the face of some of these factors that *do* place them at risk.

How about for students with disabilities? What do we know about alterable variables for students with disabilities? Interestingly or not, some, most of them are the same as for students *without* disabilities. But students with disabilities may engage in these risk factors at a higher rate. You can see some of the alterable variables listed there. High rates of absenteeism. History of course failure. Low participation in extracurricular activities, etc.

I had an interesting discussion with a colleague of mine, actually, at the University of Maine. Bill Davis. He and I were talking about the fact that students with disabilities are more likely to drop out, and that some folks might automatically think that a student with a disability is more likely to drop out. But what is it about that disability that makes that student more at-risk? We know that students with disabilities, oftentimes, especially kids with EBD, are more likely to have the presence of some of these risk factors that are associated with dropout. Even if you think about a student with a learning disability, one of the biggest predictors of dropout, or factors associated with dropout, is poor academic performance. And we know that this is highly correlated with dropout.

Now, for a student with a learning disability who has trouble in reading, certainly that's compounding this link to poor academic performance. What we're *hoping* is that special education services can provide the supports that the student with a learning disability needs so that that factor doesn't compound to make the likelihood of dropout even greater.

Now let's shift a little bit, addressing these alterable variables. There is a study by Wagner, and I believe this was in conjunction with NLTS—National Longitudinal Transition Study—that looked at school-level alterable variables associated with school completion. I like this because it shows some very specific kinds of things that were associated with school completion. For example, providing direct, individualized tutoring; and support to complete homework assignments; providing support to attend class and stay focused on school; providing opportunities for participation in vocational education classes; providing opportunities for participation in community-based work experience, etc.

Interestingly, if you look at some of these and you try to kind of simmer it down to three words, you find those three words popping up—*relationships*, the importance of relationships, *rigor*, and *relevance* of school and/or course work to students' lives.

Let's talk a little bit about keys to keeping kids in school. On the next slide, you'll see bullets, and these bullets were put together from an article that was written in 2002 by Christenson, Sinclair, Lehr, and Hurley. I can't remember where it's published now, but the list is developed based on a synthesis of information from a variety of studies. If you look at the different bullets, they fall into three major domains.

The influence of family, home, and community, and keeping kids in school; the influence of individual student attitudes, which we've talked about a little bit, in terms of keeping kids in school; and the importance of the school environment, in terms of keeping kids in school.

If we think about conceptual orientation, in terms of keeping kids in school, we think about building connections early on. I am a strong believer in starting dropout prevention as such, or promoting school completion, in elementary schools. And one of the projects that I've been involved with was Check and Connect. Check and Connect is a model of student engagement that helps to essentially keep kids in school. And the model was initially started and intended for students in secondary level schools, but we modified it and used it with students in elementary school. And the way that we did this was through a county truancy prevention initiative, so one of the criteria for selecting our students to receive this intervention had to do with a history of having poor attendance. And we had some students in our schools that were missing between 30 and 45 days of school within one year, and these were kids in elementary school.

In addition, you'll find so much support for developing all of the literacy skills early on. So one of the things that we need to keep in mind, although we focus a lot on middle school dropout prevention strategies and approaches for students in middle schools and high schools, we also need to think about what can we be doing at the elementary level to solidify that engagement of kids in school at that level.

Another sort of conceptual orientation to think about in developing interventions has to do with thinking about addressing school completion rather than just preventing dropout. Certainly we can get kids to school, but that's the tip of the iceberg. We need to give kids the skills that they need to complete school successfully. So an approach that corresponds with school completion is really much more of a strength-based approach. It focuses on kids' strengths and capitalizes on them. It occurs over time because we know that dropping out of school is a process that begins early. So this approach to promoting school completion has to begin early, and is a process, and occurs over time.

We need to work on building skills, whether they're social, behavioral, or academic skills. Also, when we think about addressing school completion, we need to think about involving multiple contexts, those of the home, the community, and the school.

The last and probably bottom line, I think, in terms of keeping kids in school—and I see that this slide says “Keys to Keeping *Kinds* in School,” but it should be “Kids in School”—has to do with student engagement in school and learning.

Sandy Christenson, here at the University of Minnesota, has done a lot of work with her colleagues, and with some of her graduate research assistants, looking at student engagement.

Student engagement is a multidimensional construct. It involves associated indicators and facilitators. I think it's helpful to *think* about what it means for a student to be engaged in school? And Sandy's come up with these different dimensions, including academic engagement, cognitive engagement, and psychological engagement. Now, if we think about academic engagement, how is that operationally defined? What does it look like? What does it look like for a student to be academically engaged? Well, it means that they're doing their homework; they're on task; they're holding their own; they're not failing classes; you know, they're tied in, academically.

You can think of some kids, I'm sure, that are engaged at all levels. I think of my son who's in high school now. Academically, is he doing the homework? Behaviorally? He attends regularly. Cognitively? Does he understand the relevance of going to high school in terms of post-secondary, going on to college? Does he have a sense of belonging? Does he feel that the school he attends is something that he's proud of? That he feels a part of? And some of that might be evidenced by involvement in extracurricular activities. For example, the Pep band, or something to that effect.

So we can certainly think of some kids who are very engaged across all four of those domains, but we can also think of kids, I'm sure, that are not engaged across those domains. Maybe they only come to school because they want to see their friends and are doing poorly in the academic realm. Maybe a teacher has established a relationship with them, and *that's* one of the only reasons that they come to school. Maybe they're only engaged through an extracurricular activity. Maybe it's a particular course that interests them. Perhaps they see the relevance of school with respect to the course that they're taking in small engine repair because they have a four-wheeler. So there are lots of ways of thinking about this.

And, again, when we think about this, we can see that there are indicators of these dimensions of engagement, but there are also facilitators. So how do we facilitate academic engagement for our students in our schools? How do we facilitate cognitive engagement? How do we show that education is relevant to their future, etc?

One of the theories that I always like to bring up when I do a presentation in terms of dropout prevention is McPartland's Four Components, in terms of keeping kids in school. And he really seems to hit these on the head, in terms of thinking about whatever intervention we are putting together. Does it provide opportunities for success in school? Does it communicate the relevance of education to their future? Are we creating caring and supportive environments? And another thing that tends to keep kids in school—and a lot of this information, again, I think was gleaned from student interviews—students indicated that when teachers were interested in them as a person or helped with personal problems, that they felt more connected to school and were more likely to stay at school.

Interestingly, in my work with alternative schools, some of the quality alternative schools that I see do all four of these things very, very well. They do provide opportunities for success; they communicate the relevance of education; they make course work relevant; they create a caring and supportive environment, and help students, again, with personal problems. Perhaps, a smaller environment can help to promote opportunities to be able to do these things rather than a

large, large high school. But we do see a movement towards creating smaller learning communities so that some of these things can occur more easily.

We are now kind of...

[END OF SIDE A]

DR. C. LEHR: ...point in terms of breaking for some questions. So I'm going to turn it back to our moderator.

MODERATOR: All right. Thanks, Cammy. At this time, if you have a question for Cammy, all you have to do is press Star 1 on your phone's touchtone keypad. That will put you into our question queue. When your turn comes up, I'll call on you by city and the first name of the person registered at your location. If the question is answered while you're in line, simply press the pound key, and it 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 your speaker phone, or pick up the handset when you ask your question, as we'll all be able to hear you much better that way.

And this reminder, when replacing the handset, remember to press the speakerphone button so you're not disconnected. However, if you do disconnect, just dial back in, re-enter your pin number, and you'll be immediately reconnected to the program today. So if you have a question, go ahead, press Star 1 now. If your question is answered while you're in line, pressing the pound key will take you out of queue. And just another note, you can also send your questions by email today. That email today, which is active during today's program, is M-O-D-E at K-R-M dot come. That's mode@krm.com.

And we do have a caller, Cammy. And we're going to go to Russ's site in Hartford; and Hartford, Connecticut, the line is open this afternoon. Go ahead.

MAN: What is the connection between school violence and not having this culture of belonging that you talk about [inaudible]?

DR. C. LEHR: Thank you for your question. I don't have a specific study that I can talk with you about, except that I can draw on some of my broader experiences in terms of working with students in alternative schools, for example.

There is a connection, in terms of school violence, a very *strong* connection, in terms of school violence. When kids don't feel safe in schools, of course they're not going to feel as though they want to go that school. And that links in with attachment to school and/or sense of belonging. So safety issues are critical, in terms of when I talk about school climate oftentimes I am thinking about safety issues. Kids who feel safe in school have a much greater likelihood of continuing to attend that school, be engaged, and hopefully end up completing school. So there's definitely a very strong link.

One thing that's kind of interesting in your bringing that up is that we have a new report out by Brian Cobb and colleagues over in Colorado. And they actually looked at effective interventions

in dropout prevention, but they looked specifically at the effects of cognitive behavioral interventions on dropout. And, actually, these cognitive behavioral interventions were aimed at decreasing aggressive behavior because, of course, aggressive behavior is disruptive behavior that is associated with increased likelihood of dropping out of school. So I think it's interesting that, you know, we're trying to link those variables with interventions, and this review, in particular, out of the What Works In Transition Project, focuses on addressing aggression and violent behavior in order to keep kids in school and prevent dropout. So, thank you for a good question.

MODERATOR: Hartford, does that answer your question?

HARTFORD: Yes, thank you.

MODERATOR: Okay. Thank you. We do have one more call in the queue this afternoon, and this time we're going to go to Deb Hall's site in Newton. And Newton, Massachusetts, your line is open. Go ahead.

NEWTON: Hi, how are you. I have a question. My name is Carlos [inaudible]. I work here at EDC. Can you talk a little bit about the academic profiling that goes on within schools? And how that sometimes affects dropout?

DR. C. LEHR: Can you explain, first, what you mean by academic profiling? I just want to make sure I'm on the right track here.

CARLOS: Teachers and counselors talking to one another about the kids who are at risk, and labeling those kids as non-achievers. So the approach that teachers would take to those students would be different from those who are achieving.

DR. C. LEHR: Right. Well, I think expectations can have a very positive, or a very detrimental, effect on whether or not a child continues to stay in school. And I think it all goes back to what you said in terms of the labeling issue. You see a child, and you think they're not going to make it. And then that definitely affects, for example, the level of work that you give the students, the expectations in terms of what they might achieve. This is a critical issue for kids with disabilities, and, increasingly, I believe that we're seeing increased expectations for our kids with disabilities in terms of them being able to achieve.

I have several thoughts running through my head, so it's hard to focus. But in terms of students with disabilities, we need to continue to keep those expectations at a reasonable level and at a higher level, as long as we provide support so that they can be successful.

I guess I'll give you an example, just in terms of participation in assessment. There was a student that I worked with as a school psychologist, and we were doing some testing. It was a school-wide test, and the expectation was that the student wouldn't be able to concentrate, or wouldn't be able to show what he knew. So he was excluded from participating in the testing program. When I think back on that, I think *what kind of a message were we sending to the student? We should have said 'we want you to show what you know, and we will provide some*

accommodations so that you *can* let us know what you can do.’ So, indeed, I believe that that’s a huge issue in terms of setting lower expectations. One thing NCLB has done, it seems, is that we need to try to hold those expectations to a higher level so that all of our kids can graduate, even our kids with emotional behavioral disabilities. Thank you for your question.

MODERATOR: All right. Newton, does that answer your question? Okay. We do have two more calls in the queue here today on the program. We’ll go back to the phones right now. Colorado Springs, Colorado, and to Yvette’s site. And Colorado Springs, the line is open. Go ahead.

COLORADO SPRINGS: Yes, I had a question about little boys, African American boys and Latino boys who are in elementary school, and they may pose as having behavioral problems ‘cause they’re disruptive in class, and what not. Do you think there’s a connection between the teachers tending to be female and the boys tending to be, you know, boys are, I think it’s harder for them to sit still and to pay attention in a classroom. Do you think that maybe it would be different if there were more male teachers in elementary classrooms? And they’d probably be, not to be sexist or anything, but that they may be able to handle the disruptive behavior [background noise] boys better? And that they may not go to class, segregated classes, and get punished as easily or quickly?

DR. C. LEHR: I can’t speak to whether the male teachers might be able handle the behavior better. I don’t know of studies like that. But I *do* know that, of course, we all need role models. We need positive role models. And, certainly, for any male of, whether it’s Latino descent, or African American descent, to have a role model who *is* a male, even of similar ethnicity, or background, or culture can be a helpful thing in terms of promoting positive behaviors and expectations, and promoting respect and all those kinds of things.

One thing that I *can* speak to is the importance of creating a welcoming environment and helping kids so that they don’t feel alienated. We need to make concerted efforts to make students who are from cultural backgrounds that are different from the majority within the school—whatever majority that might be—feel comfortable in that setting. Whether it’s celebrating certain holidays that might be shared in a certain culture, or whether it’s having messages posted in different languages throughout, inviting parents and from various cultures to show strengths that they might have, in terms of cooking, or work that they do, etc. There are some schools that do a very good job of this. And we have such a high rate of dropout for some of these sub-groups that I think this is something that we need to concentrate on, in terms of making classrooms culturally-friendly for all of the variety of students that are in them. Thank you for your question.

MODERATOR: And we do have two more callers in the queue, and we have a couple of emails with about two minutes left in this Q&A. Would you like to take some emails, or some more calls, Cammy?

DR. C. LEHR: Well, maybe the emails can go to the online discussion afterwards?

MODERATOR: All right. Would you like to take a couple more calls, then?

DR. C. LEHR: Sure.

MODERATOR: All right. We are going to go to Honolulu to Paul's site. Honolulu, the line is open. Go ahead.

HAWAII: Hi, this is Lorraine [inaudible] from Hawaii. I work with the state's special education. I have a question on one of your PowerPoints on who drops out and why. You name four domains. I was wondering if they were in rank order, because you have them bulleted. So are they in rank order?

DR. C. LEHR: I don't think they are. Which slide was that?

HAWAII: That's "Who Drops out and Why?"

DR. C. LEHR: Oh, the school-related, peer-related?

HAWAII: Yeah.

DR. C. LEHR: No, they are not rank ordered. However, in my—

HAWAII: I had a concern, because when it had school-related, it seemed like the critical point is the teacher and supporting the student. Do you have any programs to help teachers to get on board, and to have their relationship built with the student? Because many times the teachers feel that the students have pretty much caused their own problems. How do you change that behavior with the teachers?

DR. C. LEHR: That is a tough, tough thing to change, having been there myself. And, certainly, a teacher and an educator have a very difficult job in terms of working with all of the challenges and children that they need to work with. However, it seems that there needs to be a basic philosophical belief permeating the school - *we do persist with all students, we do believe that all students can be successful*. And I think a lot of that needs to come from the leadership.

There is mounting research evidence showing the importance of caring relationships between teachers and students in terms of keeping them in school. And I think Larry Korterling emphasized this in his last teleconference as well. When you talk with kids and you ask, 'what kept you in school?' It was the fact that I could tell this teacher cared about me. That is critical.

In terms of changing teacher attitudes, we need to promote an awareness of what motivates students to behave the way they do. Recognizing the important role relationships play is a constant message that we need to give our educators. Thank you for your question.

MODERATOR: All right. Honolulu, does that answer your question?

HAWAII: Yes, it did. Thank you.

MODERATOR: All right. Thank you. And we have one more call that we'll go to right now.

Then we'll go back to the main body of the program, Cammy. And this is to Barbara's site, in Anchorage, Alaska. Anchorage, the line is open. Go ahead.

ALASKA: Good morning. My name is Donny Bowling, I'm with the Parent Training and Information Center here for the state of Alaska, Parent Think. My question has to do with the first question that was asked, kind of tying that up for children with disabilities. I'd like to know how much of this information that we received in the PowerPoints and the research, if you can point me to any information in there about bullying of children who have disabilities, and the effect that that has on their completing school successfully.

DR. C. LEHR: Sure. Certainly, students who feel as though they are being the victim of bullying have increased risks of dropping out of school. There are multiple bullying programs. I don't have them at the tip of my tongue here, but if you would like to email me, I can certainly refer you to some resources that could assist with that.

Conflict resolution kinds of programs. Dealing appropriately with aggression. All of those kinds of things, again, help to foster an environment that is welcoming to students, and where we don't get students who feel alienated. And, certainly, students with disabilities can be significant targets for those who are bullying. So that's a huge issue. But if you want to contact me individually, I can get some resources to you. Thank you for your question.

MODERATOR: Okay, Cammy, at this time, we can go back to the main presentation. And if there's time at the end, we'll try and do another Q&A segment then.

DR. C. LEHR: Okay.

All right. Let's move on. Now we're going to focus a little bit more on some concrete kinds of examples of effective approaches to preventing dropout. Again, I want to begin by pointing out that there've been some very recent, relevant pieces of literature that have examples in them that I could refer you to.

One is the example that I have spoken about with respect to Brian Cobb and Effective Interventions in Dropout Prevention, *The Effects of Cognitive Behavioral Interventions on Dropout*, put out by the What Works In Transition Center at the University of Colorado, I believe it is. In addition, there's a report out that I believe was published by the Educational Testing Service called *One Third of Our Nation*. And that, actually, has several programs that they talk about that they believe are effective in dealing with promoting school completion and preventing dropout. Some of those include the use of alternative schools, The Talent Development Program, The Quantum Opportunities Program. I would refer you to that particular resource to find out more. And the Government Accounting Office has put out a publication on how education could do more to help states better define graduation rates and improve knowledge about intervention strategies. And they refer specifically to six effective interventions, including Check and Connect, Project Grad, and Talent Development, among others.

One of the things that the GAO report, Government Accounting Office report talks about is three

specific intervention approaches. Actually, they're not specific; they're general intervention approaches. One they sort of categorize in terms of effective approaches. They talk about restructuring schools, which we are hearing a lot about now, in terms of moving towards the smaller learning communities and using a homeroom as an advisor so that they connect with kids, organizing schools into teams or pods, etc., so that there's more individualized attention to help kids to feel that they *are* a part of the school, and so that they can receive more individualized support, if necessary.

In addition, the other sort of grouping of interventions they talk about is providing supplemental services. Whether they are additional tutoring services, programs that provide work study opportunities, or skill-building kinds of supplemental services, in terms of, for example, conflict resolution or bullying, as we've just talked about.

Then the third intervention approach that they talk about is alternative learning environments, which are what I would refer to as alternative schools.

So, again, I would refer you to those documents for additional information as well. And, again, those have all come out, I believe, within the last year, so we've been swamped with new information, but it's helpful.

I'm going to talk a little bit about the focus of dropout prevention. I don't want to spend a whole lot of time on this, but this was a study that we did in terms of reviewing dropout interventions that were found in the literature. We actually looked at 45 studies and grouped them in terms of what the focus of the intervention or the approach was. Basically, they fell into five different domain areas, including a personal affective focus—those were the programs that worked on building positive relationships between kids, between peers, and peers and staff. Counseling programs, etc. Nearly 71 percent of the programs that we looked at, or studies that we looked at, actually had this personal affective focus as a part of what they worked on.

The other areas were academic focus, family outreach focus, school structure, and work related. About 50 percent of the programs that we looked at had this academic focus that offered special classes or tutoring to kids who needed additional assistance.

Again, we see interventions focused on school structure, and if we did another review—this review was done several years ago—the school structure probably would be more visible, or frequent, at this point.

If we go to the next slide, I want to talk a little bit about looking at interventions in terms of a framework for thinking about how to offer them. This has been arrived at based on a review of effective programs. Effective programs and approaches occur at different levels. It's really useful to think of them in terms of this three-tiered model that offers interventions at three levels. And as I was looking at my handouts today, I thought, gosh, I should've included a visual of the triangle that is typically used to show this model. But I'm hoping that you are familiar with it. To review, for those of you who aren't familiar, we do know that interventions to keep kids with disabilities, as well as kids without disabilities but who are at risk of dropout *in school*, can be implemented at multiple levels. And these interventions vary in complexity and

comprehensiveness.

Now, in general, universal interventions are those that are designed for all students, and are usually implemented at the school or classroom level. Selected interventions are designed to address the needs of students who have been identified as having several risk characteristics associated with school failure. And the third indicated interventions are typically geared for a very small percentage of students who are at high risk and are showing clear signs of leaving school early. So what I want to do is go through each of these intervention levels separately, and give you an example of an intervention at each level.

So at the universal level, we have, basically, interventions that are implemented with all students, regardless of the presence of risk factors. The cost for these interventions is typically lower than for interventions delivered at the secondary or tertiary levels. Some examples of primary prevention, which incorporates universal interventions, would be student advisory programs that monitor academic and social development, deliberate outreach efforts to involve students in extracurricular activities, school-to-work programs that foster success in school through linkages to employers and educational opportunities, systematic school-wide positive discipline and behavioral support programs, initiatives that work to build welcoming school environments or a favorable school climate, and caring relationships, etc.

Oftentimes these universal interventions have *indirect* effects on variables associated with increasing rates of school completion. So the universal intervention doesn't specifically, aim to increase graduation rates, but in fact, what it does is helps kids to feel welcome, or helps them to feel that school is a place that they want to be *at*, for example, in terms of school climate issues. So then they're more likely to have a sense of belonging; they're more likely to attend; they're more likely to stay in school; and then, hopefully, they're more likely to graduate. So it's kind of an indirect effect.

But these kinds of interventions can provide a strong foundation for connecting children and youth to school and learning, and preventing dropout. They can be used with children who have, or do not have, identified disabilities. And perhaps one of the most primary preventions is providing students' access to quality, early childhood programming. It's kind of a precursor in terms of getting kids off to a good start. You know, if kids aren't getting off to a good start initially, that impacts the rest of their school career. So early intervention, of course, is one of the key preventive approaches in terms of preventing dropout. Research clearly supports the positive impact preschool education can have on readiness to learn and school performance in the early grades, as well as long-term outcomes linked to school completion.

Now, we have lots of effective universal interventions, but one that I'd like to highlight is positive behavioral supports. We know that school-wide discipline is an emphasis right now. It can include proactive strategies for defining, teaching, and supporting appropriate student behaviors applied universally, so it's for all students. The implementation of positive behavioral supports works to create positive school environments and decrease incidents of disruptive behavior. Not *just* for kids with disabilities—and here, I'm speaking, primarily, emotional/behavioral disabilities—but for all kids.

There is, specifically, an example that I wanted to mention in Illinois, that I ran across. Apparently, 35 schools in the state of Illinois receive training—and maybe there's somebody from Illinois out there who knows about this that can share some experiences—but receive training and technical assistance to implement school-wide positive behavior supports. And the goal in this initiative was to create effective environments for implementing strength-based interventions around students *with* or at risk for EBD, as well as preventing the development of behavior problems in the general student population.

So the leaders were taught to guide their schools in the use of effective instructional strategies, high levels of reinforcement, and clear, consistent rules. Staff members received ongoing training in the implementation of TBS, and schools were evaluated using a school-wide evaluation survey. Results from the evaluation showed an increase in the use of proactive behavioral strategies, reduction in discipline referrals, and a decrease in school suspensions. And we know that high rates of discipline referrals, behavior problems, school suspensions, all those sort of wrapped into one, are very strongly associated with increased likelihood of dropping out of school.

Let's move on to selected interventions. This is the secondary prevention level. Secondary prevention incorporates interventions that are considered selected, that is, the intervention is designed to address the needs of students who have been identified, who *are already* exhibiting some risk factors that are associated with increased chances of dropping out. For example, students that might benefit from selected interventions including those who might have some failing grades, might have poor attendance, might have history of suspension, etc. And examples of selected interventions might include programs that work to build specific skills, such as problem-solving, anger control, or interpersonal communication skills; providing additional support to an identified group of at-risk students using a school-within-a-school model; or perhaps providing an adult mentor who works with students to foster engagement in school and deliver the message that school's important.

Selected interventions may focus directly on promoting school completion, or they can address those risk factors that we were talking about. They're usually delivered to a select group of students, and the cost is usually more per student than for universal interventions because it's delivered at a more individualized level.

Let me use as an example for a selected intervention, alternatives to suspension. Policies that contribute to alienating students from school increase the likelihood that they'll leave without obtaining a diploma. Although students who pose a safety threat may require suspension or expulsion from school, these disciplinary strategies should be used sparingly.

Research suggests that zero tolerance policies are not effective in changing behaviors and may be applied in a discriminatory or subjective manner. The work of Russ Skiba, Reece Peterson, and others have clearly pointed some of this out, and they make a very strong research-based argument indicating that zero tolerance policies really are not effective in decreasing the behavior that not desired, or increasing desired behavior

We know that students who are suspended from school typically fall farther behind academically

and have difficulty transitioning back into class when it's time for them to return. Some alternatives to suspension have been developed that attempt to keep students engaged in school and learning. For example, restorative justice models, they incorporate a process that can be used to assist students with re-entry.

Here's a kind of a concrete example of an alternative to suspension program. Let me refer you to alternative to suspension in the impact materials that you have. It's an article by Reece Peterson that has, I think, 10 alternatives to suspension, or something similar to that.

In Chicago—maybe there's somebody listening out there from Chicago—the alternatives to suspension program helps students build emotional and social learning skills. Here we go back to building skills, again, in terms of what do we want our interventions to do that are actually focused on helping kids complete school? Anyway, they're focused on building these skills to reduce inappropriate behavior, and students develop positive coping strategies that enable them to modify behavior and demonstrate ability to control their conduct within norms of pro-social behavior. What this program actually is, is that students attend a referral-based, instructional, after-school detention program in lieu of suspension. Students are provided opportunities to learn, practice, and exhibit pro-social skills in a variety of contexts. I would imagine this also helps to build positive relationships with students who are having these kinds of problems. And again, when we think about the factors that push students out of school, when a student is continually suspended, they just become more and more disengaged, and that is something that we would like to limit.

Let's move to tertiary prevention. Tertiary prevention incorporates interventions that are considered indicated or targeted. That is, the intervention is designed to address the needs of a *smaller* percentage of students who are at high risk. Typically, I think it's about 1-7 percent of the student population. These students may be at risk, as evidenced by the presence of multiple status and alterable risk factors. Typically designed for the most severely at-risk students, targeted programs are meant to accommodate the needs of students who require support *beyond* what is offered through universal or selective services.

Targeted interventions are generally a collaborative effort, and they involve those communities that we were talking about, external to the school, including business, community, or family. So they involve multiple resources from community, home, and school.

Examples of indicated interventions might include specific behavior plans or contracts designed to address individual student needs and produce positive outcomes in terms of wrap-around services that provide an individualized package of coordinated community and school-level services, or alternative programs that provide parenting education classes and on-site daycare for pregnant and parenting youth who have not finished school.

Indicated interventions are usually highly individualized to meet each student's unique needs and set of circumstances. And the intensity of service and cost, because it's so much more highly individualized, is probably more than what it would be for implementing a universal or selected intervention per child.

Let me talk a little bit about an example with regard to the indicated interventions at the tertiary level, the third level. We know that students feel a positive connection to school when they're more inclined to remain, that they're more inclined to remain in school. And often, students feel that no one cares for them.

Mentoring programs can provide students with a chance to build a positive relationship. Mentors work closely with students to assure that they're attending school, completing their work, as well as providing healthy social interaction. When a student believes someone else is invested in their success, they will be as well. And I can give you an example of this.

Check and Connect is a very structured mentoring program that has very specific messages that it delivers to students. Check and Connect is actually referenced in the Essential Tool Manual, and it has been used with students with emotional/behavioral disabilities and learning disabilities, as well as kids *without* disabilities. It's also been used with kids in kindergarten through twelfth grade and has evidence of success using experimental design. As I said, I've been involved with Check and Connect, and I believe there's a web site listed in the Essential Tool under that section.

Let me just give you a brief synopsis of what Check and Connect is about. Check and Connect was developed in 1990 at the University of Minnesota's Institute on Community Integration and was originally funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. The model is designed to encourage student engagement in school and learning through a comprehensive approach that includes monitoring of alterable risk factors. So we look at things like attendance and behavior and academic performance, and we see how the kids are doing. We offer individualized interventions, offer long-term commitment, the mentor is in place for, we hope, at least two years with each student. There's a core belief that we have to continue to be persistent with these kids, provide persistence plus, never give up on a child, provide continuity in the message that school is important. We offer a problem-solving framework that kids use to build skills in terms of coping and problem-solving. And we also try to build affiliation with school and learning, and build relationships *between* the student and other staff within the school so that there's a stronger link there.

The model is designed to be carried out through an individual referred to as a 'monitor,' or 'mentor,' and this person essentially serves as a mentor/case manager and advocate. A full-time Check and Connect mentor would have about 40 students on their caseload. So they work with a wide, a pretty large number of kids. It consists of two different components checking and connecting. The Check component involves monitoring indicators of student engagement, such as attendance, behavior, and academics, as I said before. The Connect component incorporates both basic and intensive interventions designed to meet individual student needs.

Intensive interventions may include providing tutoring services, facilitating meetings between home and school, linking with community resources, assisting with the development and implementation of behavioral interventions, assisting with understanding of IEP meetings, transition planning, etc.

As I said, Check and Connect has been replicated with students with and without disabilities.

And there have been longitudinal studies that have provided evidence that Check and Connect can be effective with these students. Overall outcomes from research have yielded decreases in truancy and dropout rates, as well as increases and accrual of credits and school completion. So, Check and Connect is an example of one of the kinds of interventions that can be implemented at a tertiary level.

Let's see, where are we now? Let's talk a little bit about some examples of what states are doing. And I know we're getting close to the end here, because I want to leave a couple minutes for questions. But I do want to mention quickly, Maine is doing some wonderful things in terms of dropout prevention. They held a summer workshop this year. They've developed a draft of a dropout prevention guide. It's a resource tool that assists in efforts to keep currently enrolled students in school and on track towards school completion. And it encourages those who've dropped out to return to school and complete graduation requirements. We have to be aware that we're reaching out to those students as well. Oftentimes, students who leave school may not want to return to *high* school, but they *do* want to continue their schooling. So we need to make these kinds of opportunities available.

Maine actually requires a dropout prevention committee for each individual school unit, under superintendent supervision. And the roles and responsibilities of those on the committee are clearly specified. They include setting the problem of dropout, making recommendations, and actually submitting a plan of action.

MODERATOR: And Cammy, you have about 60 seconds left.

DR. C. LEHR: Oh, really?!

MODERATOR: Yes.

DR. C. LEHR: Oh, my clock is off. Minnesota and Nebraska, if you have questions about dropout prevention efforts in those states, give me a call. Both are doing good things in terms of staff development, holding forums, providing intervention examples, and also developing web sites to be used as a resource.

Can I say one last thing? I wanted to say, in terms of a summary that the intent of the journey is really not just to raise rates of graduation, but it's to engage children and youth in school and help them graduate with the knowledge and skills necessary to successfully meet the challenges life brings after completing high school. So it's not just raising that rate of graduation. It's helping them to be successful. All right. I guess I'm finished. Thank you.

MODERATOR: All right. Thanks, Cammy. And Loujeania, you had some closing comments today, as well. Loujeania, is your line muted?

DR. L. WILLIAMS-BOST: Yes, I do. I'd like to thank our audience again for their participation today.

I'd also like to mention that the report by Cobb and Associates out of Colorado State University

that Cammy mentioned can be found on our web site, as well as a number of the pertinent resources that were mentioned here today, at www.dropoutprevention.org.

MODERATOR: All right. Thanks, Loujeania. And thank you, Cammy. That concludes today's program, "Effective Approaches to Increasing Graduation Rates for All Students," brought to you by the National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities, and presented by Dr. Cammy Lehr and Dr. Loujeania Williams-Bost. This is the second in a series of teleseminars designed to provide state and local education agencies with resources to increase school completion rates and decrease dropout rates among students with disabilities. Please visit our web site at www.dropoutprevention.org. That's www.dropoutprevention.org, for more information and details on future teleseminars, including our next event on December 8, 2005, and to participate in the follow-up online discussion to today's program. Should you have additional questions after today's seminar, you can send those to L-E-H-R-X-0-0-1 at U-M-N dot E-D-U. That's Lehrx001@umn.edu. That information is also listed on the bottom pages of the first segment of your materials.

We encourage each person attending to fill out the evaluation form and fax it to the number listed on that form. Your comments and suggestions are important to us, as they help us provide you with future quality programming. Today's program is copyright 2005 by the National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities, all rights reserved.

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

[END OF TAPE]