>> REBECCA STANDRIDGE: All right. Good afternoon and welcome to our lunch and learn. My name is Rebecca Standridge and I'm a content specialist here in the district at Brevard County in secondary schools working with our teachers and students with specific learning disabilities. Thank you for coming today. I do want to let you know that we will be recording this session. After our session, the video can be found on the FDLRS website as well as the BPS website. If you could please make sure your microphones are muted during our session today, we will be monitoring the chat box for any questions. So, if you have anything you want to say, you can type it in there. We do ask that you hold your questions until the end of the presentation and then we can discuss them. One other thing to keep in mind as this is being recorded and shared is to not share any public information regarding student names or school names if you have specific information or questions, you can always direct those towards your school or contact us directly. So, today our guest speaker is Mr. Bill Pearlman and he is with the FIN network. Without anything else, I'll hand it over to him.
>> BILL PEARLMAN: Good afternoon. Thank you, Rebecca. I'm with the Florida Inclusion Network. Started my career as an exceptional student education teacher in Brevard County almost 40 years ago, and I have also taught general education. And now I have the pleasure of supporting schools in Brevard and Volusia counties. Thank you for joining us today. I'll give you a moment to review the mission statement. I'll mention at the Florida Inclusion Network we work to ensure that students with disabilities have the same opportunities as their peers.
This slide just describes a bit of how we go about our mission. We use data to problem solve and provide professional development as well as technical assistance.
And just the final slide related to the mission of the Florida Inclusion Network. I wanted to share my objectives for today. I wanted to share how you can support your child's learning at home and I'll also share some resources with you and also share a little bit about the BPIE, which is a self-assessment tool. BPIE stands for Best Practices In Inclusive Education. So, I wanted to share a padlet with you. A padlet is a little bit like a file cabinet and a little bit like an electronic bulletin board. On this Padlet, I've placed a number of different resources, including a link to a Google Form where you can register for a wonderful resource called Special Ed Connection.
And you can access this from your smartphone by using the QR code and you can enter the short URL code, the bit.ly code, if you will, into a browser. And if I could, perhaps Rebecca would be able to provide these links in the chat. And if not, I'll make sure I do that at the conclusion of today's session. Just want to mention that one of those resources that I mentioned, Special Ed Connection provides a lot of resources and tools that school staff and also parents can use to obtain information on special education requirements and also services. And it is offered free to families of students with disabilities within the state of Florida.
I really think it's important that we do a quick review of the laws and research related to inclusion. The Every Student Succeeds Act states that all students, including students with disabilities must be taught to high standards and schools must provide supports to reach those high standards. Then we have also should mention that ESSA mentions universal design for learning, which addresses the diverse ways that learners can take in information, also express what they know, and also to engage actively in their learning. And then we have the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, IDEA, and that addresses mandates for special education, and it states that the general education classroom must be the first placement considered for all students as we consider and apply supplementary aids and services as needed.
Inclusion isn't specifically mentioned within IDEA, but the state of Florida does define it in statute and you can see that on the slide. Where it says a student receives education in a general education setting with natural proportions and age-appropriate heterogenous groups in core academics or electives and special areas. It also mentions that a student is a valued member of the class and school community. I also want to mention that natural proportions means that the percentage of students with disabilities should be similar to the percentage and the grade or in the school in general. So, for instance, if a school has 20% of their population as students with disabilities, natural proportions suggest that an individual classroom would have a similar percentage. That statute continued. And, you know, at FIN, at the Florida Inclusion Network, we're really proud of our role in providing supports in these areas. So, I think we should keep in mind that communication is critical as you work with the school to build independence in your child. It will be important to make a plan with the teachers, a plan about how you'll communicate. Are you going to use email or phone? Texts? Use the focus app or perhaps Microsoft Teams. You could use some of those or all of those. It really should be specified which are preferred. And you'll also want to specify how often you can expect feedback from the school.
Let's cover some tips to building more independent learners. One tip, have a designated and comfortable space for homework. Now, it has to work for the student. So, it would be a good idea to work together to create that space. Also important to establish a schedule that meets your expectations. For instance, having a snack and then set a period of time for the student to be active and then perhaps followed by a set period of time for schoolwork. You may want to consider using timers, clocks, perhaps a printed schedule that's posted in a conspicuous spot. And definitely want to allow for breaks. Allow your child to ask for breaks or simply schedule breaks in advance. Also, respect the fact that every child has different needs. For many students, you may want to limit distractions by turning off a TV, perhaps removing their phones unless, of course, it's required by the teacher. Possibly even use headphones to block out some ambient sound.
So, comfortable space. You may want to include an area for movement, if that would be helpful to your student.
Establishing a schedule. You may want to use a countdown timer that could be used for starting work as well as during work and during breaks and allowing for breaks. Set time for a student's preferred activities, gives the students something to work towards. And limiting distractions. You can create a workstation using perhaps even a science fair board as a type of study carol. And perhaps it would be helpful to have your child, your student to assist in the creation of that.
So, what does that look like? I guess you're going to have to find out what works best for you or for your children. Some will need to work independently. Others will need to be weaned off of greater parental support over time. And I think it's important to know that just because you do everything right doesn't mean there won't be battles over homework. I have two children. The memories, they're adults now, but the memories are flooding back to me right now. It makes me appreciate that my kids are adults now and that my wife and I are empty nesters, but there are things that you can do to minimize stress. You might not be able to ever completely eliminate it related to homework, but I think sometimes it helps to know that the behaviors, no matter how inappropriate they might be, they may also be typical of kids of a certain age understanding the difference between normal, typical behavior and acceptable behavior. I think that can often help get through it. So, how am I working? I just placed an arrow underneath that. This is a self-regulation tool that allows a student to indicate to you how it's going and if help or assistance is needed. Easy to make, easy to use. I also have a picture here of a chart, school work chart. And this chart really allows the student to kind of self-track what's needed for each class, for each subject. You may want to consider laminating this type of tool or putting it in a pocket protector so you could use a dry erase or a wet erase marker and then you could reuse it weekly.
And here's an example of how you can take a resource that supports one child and adapt it for another child with more complex needs. This combines the self-regulating tool and a reward system that can be customize. So, you'll notice that on the "how am I working" self-regulated tool on the left, we've added pictures for students who may need a clearer visual for understanding.
And here you can see an example of an if-then board and you can customize it to show if a student does a certain activity, for instance their math homework, they can earn an extra snack or screen time or outside play. And this example, if the student completes an activity pictured on the top row, then they earn something you've specified from the bottom row.
And the example on the right shows a visual schedule for the day. A full day of what is coming next. Customize it and make sure you include scheduled breaks as needed. As adults, we really do set the tone in challenging situations. And our children can pick up on our emotions. These strategies support us to stay calm and they help us teach our children how to stay calm. So, you can see here under step one, it says calm yourself. Some strategies are shown in the green box on the bottom left. In step two, reflect. There's some questions that appear in the top right section under step two. And then step three would be to reconnect. Once you and your child are calm, there are some ideas for moving forward and they're offered in the yellow box at the bottom right of the slide. I'll be making this PowerPoint available for everyone. This slide emphasizes that we should be building our children's skills and self-determination, time management, and self-regulation. And it describes that self-determination skills increase independence by allowing students to be self-directed in their choices. That can reduce anxiety and increase task completion. Independent time management skills help students stay on task once they've begun a task. So, building independence really requires goal setting and self-monitoring. There are a couple of tools that may assist with that. If you're not familiar with growth mindset, I can sum it up as individuals who believe that their talents can be developed through hard work, through good strategies, and input from others. That's a growth mindset. Things can change. Talents can be developed. And people with a growth mindset tend to achieve more than those with a more fixed mindset. Fixed mindset indicates that people believe that their talents are innate gifts and can't be developed through hard work and other strategies. The power of yet is another great concept and it's a great way to help students move from saying and feeling I can't do that, and I'm sure you've all heard a student say, "I can't do that." We change that to, "I can't do that yet" that's the power of yet. It's a huge difference, right? I believe it's really helpful to have students focus on the power of yet. Adding that one word in there changes the meaning considerably. Some great tools here on the slide. There's a lot of power in goal setting. We are reminded of the importance of engaging our students in that conversation, helping them set their own goals, and helping them monitor them weekly and also celebrating their successes. Goal setting really should start early with simple goals that are developmentally appropriate. That includes guidance and praise. Goal-setting in little ones leads to goal-setting for older students, which is a really valuable lifelong skill.
Here's some examples of goal setting at home and for school. This slide and the previous slide remind me really how hard it is to be a parent. So, even under the best of circumstances, it's pretty exhausting. But I can tell you that the hard work pays off later. Hang in there. Know that it's normal for you to be frequently frustrated and tired. I don't really think there's any way around it. But you will see results. You will see results.
Be on the look out for those results. Remember to celebrate them. Consider helping your child establish some goals for home and for school.
Again, maintaining effective communication effective communication is really critical. Our students will need to communicate their feelings about school, people, routines. Communication with the school staff is really a two-way street. So, it's helpful if you can share some of the best practices that you've developed and they share the same with you. Most teachers would be thrilled to learn about things that have worked for you at home, so don't forget to share those.
I would like to shift gears a little bit now.
We're going to shift now to providing you some information about the BPIE, which stands for Best Practices for Inclusive Education. This section is really designed to give families some important information about the BPIE assessment and how it can benefit students with disabilities in Florida schools. So, let me start from the beginning. This is the statute that was signed into law from Senate Bill 1108 back in July of 2013.
And you'll see that I've highlighted in bold text a few points. Once every three years every school district and school shall complete a BPIE, a Best Practices for Inclusive Education assessment with a Florida Inclusion Network facilitator. As I mentioned, I am the facilitator for the Florida Inclusion Network supporting all the schools in Brevard and Volusia. It goes onto say that BPIE is an internal assessment process designed to facilitate the analysis, implementation, and improvement of inclusive educational practices at the district and school team levels.
So, there are, as we indicated previously, two BPIE assessments. One is for districts and one is for schools. Now Brevard completed their district BPIE last year. But this year, most, all of the schools will be completing their school BPIEs sometime between next month and November through March. All schools will select a date and time to do that with me in a group setting, in a virtual format.
So, the BPIE is intended to provide a self-assessment for schools so they can evaluate their current status of inclusive practices. It really is designed also to initiate a lot of discussion among all the stakeholders and help them identify priorities, priority needs for improvement. They can go onto develop measurable goals and action steps to increase or improve inclusive best practices across the school. And, of course, they're going to validate whatever areas of strength they believe currently exist. They'll monitor and report progress. And they'll analyze data so they can better allocate resources to support inclusive practices.
Additionally, the BPIE requires teams to really analyze a broad range of needs and barriers that are related to inclusion. Things like school culture, instructional practices, social, behavioral, and peer supports, as well as family involvement. And that just really names a few. As districts and schools implement the BPIE assessment process, they engage stakeholders in the analysis, implementation, and improvement of inclusive practices to promote change so we can attain some meaningful inclusion of all students with disabilities, including students with significant disabilities.
There are 30 school indicators that are aligned with the district BPIE and they're focused on school-level practices for inclusion. Both the district and school BPIE indicators are categorized within these three domains. So, 34 indicators broken down into these three domains.
Each school administrator is provided with suggestions for who should comprise a school team. And they have been told that it is strongly recommended that each team have at least one parent of a student with a disability. And in addition to that, they also have on the team general education teachers, special education teachers, sometimes the paraprofessionals or teacher assistants are on the team. Other therapists like occupational therapists and speech and language therapists. And the guidance counselors sometimes serve on the teams. School administrators are responsible for creating their school team and it is required that an administrator participate on the team. Really, the goal is to ensure that varying perspectives and evidence of inclusive practices are shared by a diverse group of people who have a common goal and that goal is to improve inclusive educational outcomes for students with disabilities. So, I'm sharing this information with you today because, as I mentioned earlier, most every school in Brevard will be completing a BPIE between November and March of this school year and it's an opportunity for parents of students with disabilities to get involved in this process. These are the school BPIE ratings that sup port the extent to which it is in practice in place across the school. The 34 indicators will be rated by every member of the team and they'll try to reach census and that will be the final rating input into the BPIE. The ratings, what do they mean. Not yet means there is no evidence that the school is implementing the practice in the classroom. They're rating all 34 indicators. If they rate it partially, that means there's some evidence that the school is partially implementing the practice. Partially is broken down into partially beginning or partially almost. Or they could rate an indicator as fully, which means there is clear evidence that that practice is consistently practiced and in place across the entire school for all students with disabilities. As you can imagine, the most frequent rating for the indicators is either partially almost or partially beginning. It's rare that schools find that they have no evidence to support implementation, which would be not yet, or clear evidence that it's consistently practiced across the entire school for all students with disabilities, which would be a rating of fully.
Here I'm sharing an indicater from the district BPIE and the school BPIE, so you can see how closely aligned the district and school BPIEs are aligned to each other. In this example, both the district BPIE and the school BPIE are rating the degree to which data is analyzed to identify barriers and initiate improvement steps. But for the district BPIE, it's within schools across the district and for the school BPIE it's for all grades across the school. So, still data analysis very closely aligned.
This slide provides an example, actually a screen shot from a school BPIE and it's indicater one. It includes on the screen shot, you can see the sections called examples of evidence or practice. That's towards the middle.
You'll also see implementation status, that's where the ratings go, either not yet, partially beginning, partially almost, or fully. And you'll also see to the far right the column called data sources supporting evidence. And towards the bottom in purple, you see suggested measures and then you see in more of a peach tone the notes and below that comments. This is what the schools will see. The bullet points are really provided to assist teams in determining the level or extent of implementation of practice at their school. They're not intended to be rated separately, rather they're provided to clarify the meaning conveyed by the indicater. This is another screen shot and it's an example of how each indicater is rated based on data sources and supporting evidence provided by the school team. So, in this example, the team rated the indicater partially almost. You can see the yellow highlight. And they've added some notes under data sources/supporting evidence. And those notes were captured during the BPIE assessment process.
When used appropriately, the BPIE assessment process can yield some pretty meaningful results that are used to identify priority needs, to establish some improvement goals, and then to implement steps for change. Improvement goals from the district BPIE are reported in the district's ESE policies and procedures and it's recommended that the goals and improvement steps from these school BPIE be included in the annual school improvement plan. And the Florida Inclusion Network makes a template available just for that purpose that schools can utilize.
So, it's the intention that the district and school BPIE assessments will lead to positive outcomes for students with disabilities.
The next slide is perhaps the most important of all. How can you get involved at your school? Well, family members are a really important part of making inclusion work for all students with disabilities. There are a lot of resources that can provide information on ways to be involved with the school and district levels. You see here I've listed a few. If you were to ask for and then read a copy of your school's BPIE assessment results, you would be able to see their priority goals and perhaps even ask for a copy of the school improvement plan. That would be three years old, because we're about to do another one sometime between November and March. Now would be a really good time to ask your school's administrator, the principle, how you can get involved in supporting inclusion in and out of school, specifically you may want to ask if you can support and serve on the school BPIE team. Remember between November and March almost every school will be completing a BPIE. The only exception would be if they've done one more recently than three years ago, and that's only a couple of schools that have done one more recently than three years ago. And remember, the statute said at least every three years. So, with only a couple of exceptions, every school in Brevard will be doing a BPIE between November and March and I strongly encourage you to contact your school to see if you could be included in the school BPIE team.
So, the Florida Department of Education has a lot of projects that are designed to provide various types of supports to students and to families. I've provided links to some of the projects on this slide and also on the next slide. I would encourage you to become familiar with some of these projects to see how they can support you.
There's a few more.
But I saved the best for last. Here is my project the Florida Inclusion Network's website has a lot of information and resources available for you. Check us out at w ww.floridainclusionnetwork.com.
And some additional resources on this slide. Websites. Again, I'll be putting this PowerPoint onto a Padlet that you will have access to. I apologize that it's not there yet, but it will be on before the close of business today.
And this is an exit slip that I would hope that you would take advantage of and allow us to reflect and modify on today's webinar.
And I'll pause here. Rebecca, were you able to, or would you like me to add those links for the Padlet and the exit slip onto the chat? Are they on the chat?
>> REBECCA STANDRIDGE: If you go back one, I will put the exit slip one on there. The Padlet one is there.

>> BILL PEARLMAN: Let me stop sharing my screen so I can access the chat.
Did you get them all there? Can you repeat that?
>> REBECCA STANDRIDGE: No, I didn't do the exit slip one yet. It disappeared.
>> BILL PEARLMAN: I'm sorry. Let me do that one for you. I did put them all in one place. Let me copy and I'll paste them into the chat.
There they are.
>> REBECCA STANDRIDGE: Thank you, Bill.
>> BILL PEARLMAN: I'm happy to entertain any questions, if there are any. Are there some in the chat?
>> REBECCA STANDRIDGE: There are none in the chat. If anyone has questions if you want to unmute and ask or type them in the chat.
>> Yeah, I actually have been looking to find something for our school. I've been proposing it at the SAC committee, but I guess I'm going to get involved in the BPIE. But is there some kind of resource or something I can find to push my school? Like, I was thinking like having our school have a disability awareness week or assemblies or some kind of push. Is there any information on your Family Network, where I could find resources or a program? I proposed it and they wanted me to come back with a program. Where could I find it?
>> BILL PEARLMAN: Well, there are a number of things that might be useful to you and I think the best way so that I can get just a little bit more information, if you were to contact me and I'll go ahead and put my contact information in the chat. And then we can have kind of a more specific dialogue and I can provide whatever resources you might be interested in. Let me type that into the chat now.
>> Oh, thank you.
All right. So, there's my email. Pearlman.william @brevardschools.org. If you shoot me an email, I would be happy to provide whatever resources I can.
>> REBECCA STANDRIDGE: Do we have any other questions?
All right. Well, if we don't have any other questions, I do want to thank you guys for coming today and participating in our lunch and learn. Our next one for our K-12 track will be on November 17th at 12 o'clock and the title of that one is Understanding Resources Available to You. So, there's more information on the FDLRS website and the BPS website as well as the link to register for our next lunch and learn. And if we don't have any other questions, again, thank you for participating today and joining us. And we hope you have a great day!
>> BILL PEARLMAN: Thank you very much.

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