

ROUGHLY EDITED FILE

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBLE INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS IN  
POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: So, would the commission members who are staying please take your seats? We will get started.  
>> SKIP STAHL: Can I have everybody's attention a little bit? What we're going to be doing is asking people come in, we have a few folks and we have a seat of honor and we'll be asking them, and Gaeir is going to ask who they are and if they're representing themselves or an organization or whoever, and we're allotting 5 minutes for testimony, but then a 10 minute kind of question and answer exchange period following that. So it really takes the pressure off. And one other piece of advise to suggest to people, if they're in a room, is they should not look at the CART while they're talking, because it gets really even more confusing if you're trying to talk and watch yourself at the same time.  
>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Ignore the lady behind the curtain. (Laughter).  
>> SKIP STAHL: Exactly.

You may be first

>> I think I am.

>> How do you pronounce your last name?

>> Whitten, rhymes with kitten.

>> SKIP STAHL: Joan, please join us.

>> Where would you like me to sit?

>> SKIP STAHL: Right here.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Welcome

>> Thank you.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: So could you please introduce yourself and tell us who you're affiliated with?

>> Yes, my name is Joan Whitten. Primarily I'm wearing multiple hats here. I am here first and foremost as a private educational consultant working only with students with learning differences in Maryland, Virginia and D.C. My second hat is I'm here at the conference presenting with another person at Montgomery County Schools, we have worked together almost a decade and I'm president of the GTL network and we're working with some wonderful bright children again with the learning differences and working closely with the high incidence assistive technology office and the program office to try to provide access materials so that bright kids can take challenging courses with the supports they need.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Okay. Great.

>> One more hat: I'm the parent of two children, one's now a college graduate but one will be going on to the college, she is dyslexic and I have spent my children's inheritance on assistive technology.

(Laughter).

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: I'm sure the AT vendors thank you. I would ask the Commission members to introduce yourselves. Betsey?

>> BETSEY WIEGMAN: Sure, I'm Betsey Wiegman.

>> LIZANNE DeSTEFANO: I'm Lizanne DeStefano and I'm a faculty member at the University of Illinois in Urbana- Champaign.

>> ASHLEE KEPHART: I'm Ashlee Kephart and I'm a student at Hamline University and I'm dyslexic.

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: I'm Jim Wendorf and I'm with the National Center for Learning Disabilities and Vice Chair of the Commission.

>> DAVID BERTHIAUME: I'm David Berthiaume and I'm executive director of the Commission and work at the U.S. Department of Education. And I'm thrilled to hear someone coming from Maryland and who works for MCPS and my wife is involved there.

>> I believe I know your wife. I figured that one out.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: I am Gaeir Dietrich and I'm the Commission Chair and I am the director of the High Tech Center Training Unit of the California community colleges.

>> GLINDA HILL: Joan, it's nice to see you. I'm Glinda Hill and I'm with the Department of Education's Office of Special Education programs and you've done review panels together.

>> I'm not sure, but maybe.

>> GLINDA HILL: I think we have, Joan. It's odd that we've come here to meet.

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: I'm Jim Fruchterman from Bookshare.

>> SKIP STAHL: I will be the timekeeper; I'm Skip Stahl, I'll be the timekeeper and give you a heads up when your time is up.

>> Thank you. I don't think I'll need the five minutes. I apologize in advance for speaking off the cuff, but I am here because I am sincerely looking for answers and I am deeply interested in this for all of my students.

I am embarrassed that I live in Maryland, that I didn't know about this. My husband works for the government. We should be tied into this.

I'm wondering how we in secondary education and those of us like myself preparing students for postsecondary rule prepare them to be able to access the technology that they need, and as a consumer of these technologies, I feel that it is fragmented, I'm wondering what will work in Montgomery county schools. We are fortunate, we have in every school, but what we don't have is people who know how to use it and I work hard to get it into my kids' IEP [INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN]'s and there's no one there to teach them. My daughter is famous because at her high school she is the one that teaches it to the kids who don't get to use it, I'm concerned, I feel if we don't get them started on the text to speech, speech to text, different technologies when they're younger learners, they will be at a serious disadvantage.

In my professional life, I spend 25% of my time visiting two-year schools, four-year schools, I'm getting confused who's who and I meet with the office of disability services and I ask how do you want me to prepare my kids and they're thrilled if I can get them to be conversant in it, if they have no one to train them, they say I da da da, but I don't know how, I say here it the disk, figure it out and some can, they might forget how the stuff works but if they haven't had the support of using it and the construction in it, it's very difficult to learn, so that's a problem.

Also, every school I go to, and I end up taking pages of notes, and I can tell you, Gettysburg and all this, this is craziness, I don't know who else is doing it, but it's really, really hard.

In terms of actually using the programs, they all have their glitches, so I'm not on Bookshare because I think it's wonderful, but we're talking an art history text, it was NIMAC [NATIONAL INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS ACCESS CENTER] protected and it had to go through the school and it was easy and it's months later and we're still without the text.

So the reality is most of my students have multiple learning differences. A lot of the students with print reading disabilities might also have executive functioning issues and we are building barriers so high and on top of that, you know, my joke about spending my kids' inheritance really isn't very funny, but Kurzweil is expensive and how do you make this easier and more affordable? These are the questions I really want help for.

As we get them ready for college, you know, they want to know what technology to buy, do they buy Mac, iPad, how do they get started and I would love to know how you all work and access this information to help all of the committees and groups that I work with so that they can be successful beyond high school. Thank you very much

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Thank you. So Commission members, are there any follow-up questions for Joan?

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: I have a question. You work with students to prepare them, many of them to move on to postsecondary. Are you in touch with some of those students after they get to their college campuses, and if so, what are some specific barriers or issues that they sort of articulate to you about access, in this case as you know we're focused on instructional materials, but anything you can tell us about that that would help us understand the students' experience?

>> Well, I think unfortunately the main issue with the student experience is that the fairy comes and sprinkles the dust on them over the summer before going to college and they don't have learning disabilities anymore.

So most of them are not as proactive as they should be, but I had been with students when they actually go meet with the disability services and they say what they need, and even that person doesn't really know how to do it, and I won't name colleges here, so I would say, you know, a student might walk, I'm thinking of a New York school that uses RFB&D and the student says I use Kurzweil and they don't know another system they might use, then who's going to learn that and you get lucky and someone at that school is good and gets it or will work with that student or the student flounders.

I really have met some great people in the disability services, so I would say overall if the students want to make it work, it

will work, but they can get discouraged and again, you have that executive function piece.

So too many systems, a little bit hard to get started and probably not realistic thinking on the students' part sometimes. And also they can be late coming to it and right before the exam say, "I think I do need" and that doesn't work.

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: Can you tell me what GTLD is again? And then I have another question.

>> Absolutely. Gifted and talented with learning disabilities, and Montgomery county is one of three school systems that I know of that has actually classrooms and programming for these students, and so many of these kids need the print And we start them in elementary school with Kurzweil for those kids.

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: So three schools in the country or three schools in the state?

>> Three school systems. There's one in Westchester and New Mexico and one in Maryland that has programs with set-apart classrooms for these kids.

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: I think since Glinda and I are tied into the NIMAS, what are the challenges in getting the book, no one knew how to get it or when it was asked for, it took a long time to get?

You identified barriers to getting what you need as something that's a problem, so if you tell us a little bit more about the barriers that you saw.

>> Okay. I'm thinking of one student, I'll describe one experience where she downloaded the materials and sent them in and they might have even gotten lost, but it was a long time and nothing was happening, so I asked a colleague and said this student had sent it in, how long, and said I sent mine in and was in the next day, so I had the student call back, oh, yes, something, okay, you're fine, so it was, you know, this is at the time maybe a 15-year-old, old enough to persevere, she was able to do it but it worked. It was AP art history and amazingly the book was there, I was shocked, it was, it was great, except it came back with this message about being NIMAC [NATIONAL INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS ACCESS CENTER] protected and go to the school. The school had no capability about this, they had barely heard about Bookshare and not NIMAC [NATIONAL INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS ACCESS CENTER] and this is a county I think that's pretty good, so they had to call someone to find out and then that someone had to call the person in the HIAT office, high incidence assistive technology who is wonderful, she kills herself for the kids, okay, she would contact this person, she did.

Eventually we heard that she thought she had gotten it, but it never -- this kid just never -- it never filtered down. It might have been sent to the high school and no one knew what to do with it. I don't know what happened. All I know is she's hand scanning AP art history.

So it's not on Bookshare, it's on that do we all know how to use it and when you have to go through the school system, which there knows what they're doing.

Does that make sense?

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: It makes a lot of sense. The NIMAC [NATIONAL INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS ACCESS CENTER] system is quite complex and if she couldn't get it, she had to download it, but she has to prove she has an IEP [INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN] and the school doesn't know.

Okay. I want to make sure I got where this was. And this is not an unfamiliar story.

But we have suggestions for IDEA [INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT].

(Laughter).

>> That's another commission.

>> The only thing I'll say about the Bookshare part, this one I'm not sure, I've heard from students but I haven't seen it, so I probably shouldn't even mention it, but apparently with Kurzweil it can get off a little bit because it's downloaded in a single large file so I know with Kurzweil when you scan, you have to zone at it, but I heard there's something also with the Bookshare that sometimes the bottom is messed up, so, sorry, I don't know anything. I shouldn't say, because the other one I really saw with my own two eyes.

>> GLINDA HILL: One more question. I think the student was -- so this was an individual membership that this student had.

>> Yes.

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: Use the microphone.

>> GLINDA HILL: Excuse me. An individual membership that this student had and they can't draw down the books because only teachers can draw the books down. They have to be drawn from the school, that's it.

>> Okay. So I really want my MPCS person sitting here listening to this, right?

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Any other questions?

(No response).

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Okay. Thank you so much for coming here to talk to us.

>> ALL: Thank you.

>> SKIP STAHL: Just a heads up too we don't have to use the mics.

>> LISA (CART PROVIDER): No, that would be helpful. Thank you.

>> SKIP STAHL: Scratch that. We do have to use the mics. So we have 15 minutes until we have to call the next one. So I want to share with you a video that we received.

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: Oh, good, because you talked about videos and songs and I was wondering, where did they all go?

>> SKIP STAHL: I'm trying to think if I want to do the song first or the video first.

Let me try to find the video. The sound sync is off, so this is Donnie, recent graduate, and we have her contact information, so she sends this in and I'll just go back to the beginning and play it for you.

(Video played).

>> SKIP STAHL: Wait a minute, let me stop this.

Bear with me

Okay. We'll start again.

(Video played).

>> Hi, my name is Danielle McCoy and I'm pleased to be speaking with the advisory commission on accessible instructional materials and postsecondary education for students with disabilities public hearing.

I believe it is imperative that students with disabilities have access to instructional materials in order to compete with their peers.

I, myself, have been diagnosed with a learning disability that affects my processing and ability to remember, in addition to a diagnosis of attention deficit hyperactive disorder.

Assistive technology not only allowed me to compete with my peers, but it gave me the tools to shine.

I have been able to graduate early from a four-year university, studied abroad and was able to participate in Honor Society.

Technology simple as a use of a calculator has made a world of difference.

Using a laptop and other recording devices have made it possible for me to keep up with my peers in ways that I would not have been able to otherwise.

With technology becoming more utilized on campuses across the country, the use of video technology has become beneficial for me.

Although I have not seen the use of videos is important for those with disabilities since all types of vehicles can have access to this technology has been crucial to my success and I know many others.

I have more confidence in speaking with others and writing my thoughts on paper. Therefore, video technology has allowed me to complete assignments that had been struggled to puts on paper.

Most recently the use of audio books has allowed me to use a different part of my brain that made me to remember things easier.

All types of people can use things, and all learning styles need to be accepted upon postsecondary campuses all over the world. Without the assistive technology, the role is missing out with the talent that people with disabilities has to offer. As the number of students with disabilities increases, it will become more important for people to diversify and add here to the Americans with Disabilities Act so that no student is left behind.

Talent is a terrible thing to waste. And without assistive technology, many students with disabilities will not be exposed to the realities of success that I have.

I sincerely believe in assistive technology and push for more acceptance and access to these paramount utilities.

Thank you for participating in this public hearing. Thank you for your time.

(End of video).

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: Wow. So do we get to put this on YouTube?

>> SKIP STAHL: I think it may be already. She's incredibly articulate.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: A great example of what you can do when you have the support in place.

>> SKIP STAHL: Yes, yes.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Unlike what Joan is running into.

>> SKIP STAHL: So that's Daniella and the next person we're going to hear from we'll call in about five minutes is Natalie Tamburello. She's a student at Whitman College, Walla Walla, Washington, she's the head of students with disabilities at the college and training people with document disabilities using various assistive technologies, and so we're going to call her in.

And I'll have Mary do that.

But once we do, I'll just turn it over to you and you can run with it.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: That's fine. Thank you.

So do we have five minutes?

>> SKIP STAHL: Yeah.

She was at Bentley College in Mass.

That was a pretty impressive video.

We had one other student who had wanted to submit a video or intended to submit a video and/or written comment, but we never heard back from her after the initial contact

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: I got lots of feedback from people who say oh, we would have done it but we didn't get enough notice, and I

got the, we're not sure we can fit, and they came back and said well, we'll do it next time.

>> SKIP STAHL: Right, we'll do a lot more, get out the notice of the information, contact much earlier the next round so people have a couple weeks, two or three weeks to prep for it.

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: And, for example, we would be happy to put it in our Bookshare newsletter, if you're a college student, feel free, if you have IDEA [INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT]s or you want to share your experience, let's do it.

>> SKIP STAHL: Yeah, we know the dates for May and we've been through the protocol once of posting in a federal register and we now know that our system works pretty well.

>> DAVID BERTHIAUME: After the phone in, what's our schedule?

>> SKIP STAHL: After the phone in, at 5:00, we have one other person at 6:30 and that's it

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: And a song.

>> SKIP STAHL: Oh, yes, we have a song

You might call Christopher Toff and let him know that if he wants to come in earlier, he's certainly free to do that and let him know where the meeting is, because we're navigating in from the main lobby to this space could be challenging. You may want to meet him at the door or something.

(Pause).

>> SKIP STAHL: Of course now it's making more noise than when it was running.

(Pause).

>> SKIP STAHL: What time is it?

>> DAVID BERTHIAUME: Almost 5:00.

>> SKIP STAHL: We have a couple more minutes.

(Pause).

>> SKIP STAHL: I'll track down the song while we're waiting.

>> BETSEY WIEGMAN: Is it just audio?

>> SKIP STAHL: I'm not sure.

(Pause).

>> SKIP STAHL: Okay. So after we do our phone call, we'll have a little concert.

>> LIZANNE DeSTEFANO: Do we need to stay in this room until 6:30?

>> SKIP STAHL: No, no.

>> LIZANNE DeSTEFANO: I would like to go for a walk before the sun goes down.

(Pause).

>> SKIP STAHL: So we're going to call in Natalie. And I think once Mary gets her, Gaeir, I'll just let you take over.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Okay. She's going to be on the phone?

>> SKIP STAHL: Yes, she will be on the phone. And we have to make sure we use the microphones so she can hear us.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Okay.

(Telephone ringing).

>> Hello, you've reached Natalie at 377-3721.

>> MARY: Do you want to give her a couple minutes?

>> SKIP STAHL: Yes, I hope she realized it was Eastern Time.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Do you want to wait five minutes and then try again?

>> SKIP STAHL: Yeah. Do you want to hear the song?

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Yeah, song.

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: How long is the song?

>> SKIP STAHL: Not very long.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Is this a rap song?

>> SKIP STAHL: I'm not going to tell you. This was actually a submission, so this wasn't formally a witness, but it came into the National Center and he is a college student and I'll read a couple of things.

So he's now a college student, Landmark College,

>> My name is Justin McNeil, I'm enrolled in Landmark College.

I found myself thinking about the steps I took to academic steps and I was not able to do assignments or daily tasks and things that worked with my learning disability until college. School was a complete nightmare and it was every day a struggle and chaos, I was diagnosed with ADHD.

>> SKIP STAHL: The thing with this, you can have a male voice spoken by a female.

This is a song and I'll just play it for you, okay? And I haven't heard the whole thing, okay?

(Music).

(Song played).

>> SKIP STAHL: Whoa.

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: I love that. That was submitted to the national center?

>> SKIP STAHL: Yes, and Janet e-mailed me. We have a series about learning journeys and because this was a concert, she said you might want to play this if you have a moment. Even though it wasn't submitted directly for this purpose, I agreed with her, I thought it was very appropriate.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: That was great. You could play it for all those faculty members who say "you just have to try harder."

>> SKIP STAHL: Yeah, there's a whole history and a whole story there. But I remember the first time I heard the song --

>> BETSEY WIEGMAN: Is it on the website?

>> SKIP STAHL: Yes. I'll send the link.

Where's Mary? We should probably try again.

(Pause).

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: You know, Mary, if she doesn't answer this time, you might leave a message and say it is evening time and leave a message if you have a number to call.

>> SKIP STAHL: If we have an open slot, we'll call her back at quarter to 6:00.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Oh, that's better.

>> MARY: Yeah, I'll call her back.  
(Telephone ringing).

>> Hello, you've reached Natalie --

>> SKIP STAHL: Okay. Give her a call and give her another slot.

So do we have someone else?

>> MARY: Yep.

>> SKIP STAHL: Would you like to join us?

>> Sure.

>> SKIP STAHL: Right here, seat of honor. Have a seat. So, just general protocol is you have five minutes, Gaeir Dietrich is our Chair and will introduce the folks around so you know who you're talking to, and when you have a minute left I'll give you kind of a -- but there's a question and answer.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Sir, introduce yourself, please and tell us who you're affiliated with or what your interest is in testifying today.

>> My name is James Smith, I am a registered nurse in the state of South Carolina as well as the state of Florida. I'm also an honorable discharged served in the gulf war and Haiti. And I'm speaking here, because my wife is a special ed teacher and she has a doctorate in special education and I mention that my mother growing up never threw out anything and my wife being a special ed teacher was looking through my old stuff and she said did anybody ever tell you that you were disabled in mathematic computation? And I said no, I was pretty much told I needed to try harder because IQ wise I tested at around 147 and I've pick up new concepts quite readily, apply old knowledge and experience to new concepts, and I mention this because in nursing school, first semester we took a test, the math had to be done longhand and of course I failed miserably, and towards the mother/baby rotation we were given much more complicated mathematic equations such as involving drug-dose calculations and things at that point, and we were able to use calculators and I mention that because one of the tests that we actually took was so long and in-depth, I was actually the only one in my class that actually finished the test and so I didn't find this out, of course, until after I had graduated nursing school and had become licensed, so I'm thinking all this time all I needed was a simple accommodation of a pocket calculator that would have saved me so much headaches, so many headaches throughout my

life, because as a crash fire rescue man in the Air Force, one of the things that we had to do was gallon per minute comp pressure calculations and things of that nature.

So my whole life, you know, I was -- I'm one of the nurses now that -- have you ever been in the hospital and had to have somebody start an IV or on one of your loved ones and they couldn't get it and they said well, let me go get someone else? (Laughter).

>> And someone else tries two, three, four times and that someone else says let me go get that third person and that third person gets the someone else on the third try? I'm the third someone else on a lot of those tries.

(Laughter).

>> And I feel like if we don't give people adequate accommodations in postsecondary schools, this would have been one person that would have washed out of the nursing program in one semester, and that's all I have to say on that matter.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Shall we introduce ourselves so he knows who we're speaking to here?

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: I'm Jim Fruchterman from Bookshare.

>> GLINDA HILL: I'm Glinda Hill and I'm with the Department of Education's Office of Special Education programs.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: I'm Gaeir Dietrich and I'm the Commission Chair and I am the director of the High Tech Center Training Unit of the California community colleges.

>> DAVID BERTHIAUME: I'm David Berthiaume and I'm executive director of the Commission and work at the U.S. Department of Education.

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: I'm Jim Wendorf and I'm with the National Center for Learning Disabilities and Vice Chair of the Commission.

>> ASHLEE KEPHART: I'm Ashlee Kephart and I'm a student at Hamline University and I'm dyslexic.

>> LIZANNE DeSTEFANO: I'm Lizanne DeStefano and I'm a faculty member at the University of Illinois in Urbana- Champaign.

>> BETSEY WIEGMAN: I'm Betsey Wiegman.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: So does anyone have any follow-up questions on the commission?

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: So do you have family members? Did finding out help you kind of understand through your wife, basically, that there are other people you knew that had learning disabilities that hadn't been diagnosed?

>> Well, it made me realize that, you know, with appropriate accommodations, kids, adults, can achieve quite a bit. Our son is learning disabled in the English language arts, but I've using the drug calculation method, I've thrown problems at him that other nurses have struggled with and the eyes will track up

and right and he'll pop out the answer in less than 20 seconds and it will be right, and these are not simple drug problems I'm throwing at him, these are complex, things like infuse five micro grams per kilogram, this patient weighs 68 kilograms, how do you (reciting calculations).

(Laughter).

>> Don't ask me to do that one.

(Laughter).

>> Because I would need a calculator to do that.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: So I'm wondering, so you've actually sort of found the accommodation or it found you of having the calculator, but were you ever actually given any support by anyone on campus?

>> At the college level, no. I think what they -- the way I kind of perceived it at the college level was there was help available, like the dean of nursing said we have help available if you have something, but at the time, of course, I had no diagnosis and there was never anything beyond that, how do you get the help.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: So even if you tried to get a diagnosis, you wouldn't have known where to start.

>> I would have had no clue where to start.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Yeah. Okay. I'm curious, in the California community colleges we're doing a lot of work now with our returning veterans and I'm working with a person who's a speech pathologist and TDI specialist and she's found for testing a lot of vets that a huge number of them have undiagnosed learning disabilities, which we suspect is one of the reasons that they chose to go into the military in the first place.

I was just wondering if you had any sort of sense of that yourself?

>> Yes, I do, and I feel uniquely qualified to speak on that, as well as our returning vets go.

As a veteran, honorably discharged, staff sergeant, United States Air Force, I can tell you from day one they drill into our heads, "give it your best shot and do it and failure is not an option and if you're asking for help, you're too weak, you need to go find something another way" so you learn very early on to keep your mouth shut if you want to stay with the program, as it were, because boat rockers in the military do not last long, I can tell you that right now. If they can't do anything officially, you're ostracized and excuse my language, your life becomes living hell and I have seen people come out of the military time and time again and it's that mindset, I'm tough, I'm a military person, I can handle this, I would rather die than admit defeat.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: That's one of the issues we're finding, for them to go into the disabilities office and get the help they're eligible for is difficult for them to make that transition.

Any other questions for James?

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: I just want to say thank you for your service.

And I think the other thing I observed is we've heard a theme of essentially the gifts of the people that we're trying to help and trying to remove the barriers to expressing those gifts, and I think you've articulated that clearly and I want to thank you that as well.

>> GLINDA HILL: I do have a question, does your son receive services?

>> He does, but I can tell you it's been an uphill tooth and nail battle with the school district the whole way.

In fact, if you saw Dr. Anna Lisa Smith's presentation, that's my boy. And if you saw her presentation, you saw a copy of the e-mail that we had gotten from the teacher.

>> GLINDA HILL: I didn't see it but I'll see if they have a transcript of it.

>> Like I said, it's been an uphill tooth and nail battle the whole way.

>> GLINDA HILL: Thank you for sharing

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Yeah, thank you so much for taking the time to come and speak with us

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: We appreciate it. Thank you.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Very much. And welcome home

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: Wow. Hearing -- I mean, I can guess the experience they're having, right? A teacher in the future saying your kid needs to try harder kind of stuff?

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: Or worse.

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: It's the same e-mail I was talking about last time, the school district was going to sue someone who's using Kurzweil and successful and they say you need to wean yourself off that kind of stuff and basically -- we've got a big issue there.

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: You know, the last two folks who have spoken to us, you know, we've tried as a Commission I think sometimes to draw a line between K-12 and postsecondary and we're emphasizing the difference and we need to do that.

At the same time, I think what we've heard, you know, today is how interrelated they are. I mean, K-12 is a feeder system, for better or worse, coming into postsecondary and so many kids, as we've heard, are either not being set up for success, you know, to make that transition, they're just not, and IDEA [INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT] was weakened in that regard the

last time around, really weakened and I think we're seeing some effects in terms of there being more barriers, it being more difficult to actually get the documentation in order to make the transition. There's that weakened emphasis on transition.

And then on the other side of the divide, you know, the gap, so to speak, as you move into postsecondary, and then you've got continuing stigma issues for students, especially students with learning disabilities, and as we've heard, you know, magically the LD goes away when you leave high school, but so many of the protections go away at the same time, and the combination of the protections not being there, in law, and the stigma being so strong, I think it's a really deadly combination.

So, the connectivity between the two systems is there I think we need to find some way to acknowledge that as we think through recommendations

>> LIZANNE DeSTEFANO: And the importance of continuity, a student for many years who has been working with a set of materials and supports that work and then postsecondary finds that they might have to learn a new system or those supports are no longer available.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Yeah, I think, Jim, your point is so well taken about transition. That's huge. And, you know, it's not just -- if you're looking in any arena, no matter what it is, even kayaking, when you're going into the rough water into the still water, it's that transition that will flip you every time if you're not prepared for it, and those transition zones are where we lose people.

I mean, I read, some of the statistics that Skip and his crew were sending around, I mean, after the kids just don't even go on to college, they don't even try. So right there, I mean, that's huge, huge.

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: So, Skip, did we reach Natalie?

>> SKIP STAHL: We left a message on Natalie's phone and we also left a message on Christopher's phone that he's free to come earlier, if able. He's currently scheduled for 6:30.

So I would say people are, unless we have anybody who wants to testify who are signed up outside, I would say -- which I'm not aware of.

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: Well, you know, the only LDA delegates, that meeting ends at 5:30, I made a request at the podium for people coming in and going on record, so if we could hang on for at least another 10, 15 minutes to see if we get some more people. Is that okay?

>> SKIP STAHL: That's perfectly fine.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Is there anyone here in the audience who would like to speak? Please.

>> Can I speak from here?

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: No, we need a microphone.

>> SKIP STAHL: Yeah, just because of the transcript.

>> That was my question.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: If you could introduce yourself and tell us who you're affiliated with and what your interest is in speaking before the Commission.

>> I'm Arlene Stewart and I'm the director for student disability services at Clemson University in Clemson, South Carolina.

I'm not real sure that I understand the breadth of who is going on, but the point that I want to make is the number of students that we have that use accessible media, you know, we're not doing conversion of books just for kids with visual. In fact, right now, I have 40 that use books on CD or electronic books, and one of those has a documented vision impairment. So I'm really concerned about where we're going. And of course I'm concerned for the university at large. You know, every time somebody important on campus stands up, they stream it and, you know, we have to have the captioning, and that message just isn't getting out, you know. That's a real concern. Why is it that I'm the only one on the campus that seems to be saying materials, sessions, information has to be accessible You know, people don't seem to be getting that from other sources, so that's it. That's all I have to say. But I just wanted to make those couple of points. Thank you.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Yeah, and if you could stay we'll introduce ourselves and have a few questions. I have a bunch of them.

Jim, do you want to start introductions?

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: I'm Jim Fruchterman from Bookshare.

>> GLINDA HILL: I'm Glinda Hill and I'm with the Department of Education's Office of Special Education programs.

>> You have a great education.

>> Oh, great, Vanderbilt folks? So am I.

(Laughter).

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: I'm Gaeir Dietrich and I'm the Commission Chair and I am the director of the High Tech Center Training Unit of the California community colleges.

>> DAVID BERTHIAUME: I'm David Berthiaume and I'm executive director of the Commission and work at the U.S. Department of Education.

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: I'm Jim Wendorf and I'm with the National Center for Learning Disabilities and Vice Chair of the Commission.

>> ASHLEE KEPHART: I'm Ashlee Kephart and I'm a student at Hamline University and I'm dyslexic.

>> LIZANNE DeSTEFANO: I'm Lizanne DeStefano and I'm a faculty member at the University of Illinois in Urbana- Champaign.

>> BETSEY WIEGMAN: I'm Betsey Wiegman.

>> SKIP STAHL: I'm Skip Stahl and I support the Commission work.

>> Great. Yeah, I can answer questions, hopefully

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Excellent. Thank you, thank you. It won't be anything you can't answer.

Jim?

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: I always have a question, unless someone else has a question first.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Anyone else have one?

>> GLINDA HILL: What can we do to get the word out at university campuses?

>> Well, doing and providing accessibility for different kinds of things, like, you know, like this meeting, you've got somebody captioning. That's what needs to happen at all activities, you know, all -- I think the folks on campus that are in the critical positions just don't see it. They don't know that it exists.

They don't understand. I mean, it's not easy, but it really is not overwhelming to provide the services.

You know, they just don't see it

I'm kind of the voice in the wildness when I say it.

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: The question is really apropos, what could we or the Department of Ed or advocacy organizations or other groups do to help with this.

I'm wondering, you mentioned 40 students. Clemson is a very big place, so I'm wondering about sort of the size of the student population that you think might actually qualify for the kinds of access to other formats, do you think it's larger than that? And if so, why haven't they come forward?

>> Yeah, yeah, I hope I didn't give you all the wrong impression. It's 40 that use digital textbooks. We have about 700 students that use services and the onus is there, you know. Every once in a while, you know, like in the wintertime the kids come in with temporary disabilities, you know? And they've been skiing over break, you know (laughs).

So, you know, I'll say "do you want us to put your books in a digital format so you don't have to carry a backpack around campus?" And they're not familiar with it.

It's just not part of anybody's reality.

And it really is frustrating to me, because it is very, very, very exclusionary.

I've had kids refuse to use the Smart Pen, and I think that's about as unobtrusive a tool as you can find and they say oh, no, no, no.

So it's hard I appreciate your question, but we really do serve about 700 students.

And I think that we are woefully underserving.

Actually I looked at my numbers last fall, and this was interesting: The new students, after the summer rush, you know, we take in all the freshmen, but from the beginning of fall semester to the end of fall semester, the largest group of students that came to our office were seniors

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Oh, interesting.

>> Is that not scary?

You know, I felt like it really was -- it says a lot. It tells us that the students are coming in scared and not willing to self-identify.

Ashlee, you may have some comments about that.

But, you know, I think after a while, the word gets out, that it's okay to self-identify.

But I think it's real interesting that during the course of the semester, the seniors are our largest groups.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: So Clemson, I don't remember, if you guys public or private?

>> We're a land-grant institution, we're very, very public. We have about 14,000 undergraduates on campus and about another 3,000 graduates, other programs.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: And a great soccer team.

(Laughter).

>> A great soccer team, that's right The first year I was at Clemson I got to go to the national quarterfinals right there in town.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: I'm interested, how is disability services funded? Do you have a general fund or do you have special money?

>> No, we are out of the general fund.

We are in a change position right now. Our office got moved admin and I have the support and I'm very aware that I get good support.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: How about assistive technology, how do that or your IT department or do you have it?

>> Yeah, we do. And it's scattered.

Our IT department does have some folks that work with instructional issues and so that's really nice.

I'm part of a committee, an ad hoc committee, we just decided to meet every Wednesday morning to talk about teaching with technology. So there are those kinds of efforts.

Some departments do their own technology thing, but most departments really are floundering.

The teachers are having a hard time understanding that this generation of students is not the same as our generation. You

know, these individuals need to use the technology and the students with the disabilities even more so, you know. Where for us, using a tape recorder was the big deal. You know, and we need to keep the information flowing, you know, as far as this is a new day and time.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: So what technology are they using to read the digital files?

>> We're using Kurzweil, we had one student use Bookshare, but we felt awful about it, because.

(Laughter).

>> I have to tell you, because the disclaimer about the student's disability, we had to kind of stretch the truth to tell you that the student had a disability that met the criteria. He's a student with Arnold-Chiari syndrome and spinal bifida.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: It doesn't sound like a stretch to me.

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: It's a physical disability.

>> GLINDA HILL: But that student can still turn the pages in the books?

>> Exactly.

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: Let me ask a different question. The 40 students that are using the test material that you guys are supplying, do you think that most of them don't qualify for a service like Bookshare, and why?

>> Oh, I think they do qualify. But the way the information is asked, it's touchy.

Like, the student that comes in with a broken leg and I want to offer him books on CD, it's not going to happen.

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: Yeah, yeah, I got that, yeah.

Interesting.

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: Just following up on that, I'm wondering, because you're talking about the decision-making process, which, you know, you have to figure this out. Where do you go for answers?

If you have -- if you feel stuck, whom do you turn to?

>> Stephan.

(Laughter).

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: Fair enough

>> And my colleagues in that organization.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: So you go to the A.H.E.A.D. conferences?

>> Oh, religiously.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Have you been to our institutes?

>> Yes, the last time I went, I interacted with Lashan.

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: Do you think the law is clear?

>> No, no, it's not clear (laughs).

In North Carolina -- South Carolina has adopted 508 but it's not happening, you know.

I know that at one time there was a state-wide 508 task force and there were some things that came out, but it's coming out to the worker bees, not to the individuals that are in the decision-making positions.

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: So if the law's not clear, is there something specific that you would change to make it clearer so that you could make decisions that would be more helpful?

>> It's probably more -- I don't think the law is clear. But I think it's probably more guidelines for implantation, you know. There is no technology police out there and it's kind of like -- and the head people on campus imply to me, "as long as we can get away with it."

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Oh, yeah, they will say we'll wait until we get an OCR [OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS] complaint and then we'll deal with it.

>> Yes, I have heard that.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Not a good plan.

>> No, it's not a good plan from a legal perspective, but then on a human perspective, it's absolutely awful.

One of the successes that I have had with technology at Clemson, and I really think this is kind of a fun story, when I first came there, I've only been there six years, I got the bright IDEA [INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT] we needed to caption graduation and it was a long, arduous task to get the equipment, to get permission, the whole thing. It was very difficult.

We finally got in there. We started doing it and last year I had to go to the admin council to ask for more money, you know. And so the president, I'm standing there making a presentation and the president was standing there and I referenced we were having captioning and he said thank goodness. And I said oh? And the reason he said thank goodness, this was universal design at work, guys, he said that the stage party does not hear what's going on.

(Laughter).

>> Because of the way of the placement of the speakers and he said that having the captioning was beneficial to the stage party

And we got a picture of the stage party looking up at the JumboTron.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Are you also the 504 coordinator or is that someone else?

>> That's someone else, we have the director of that office is the director of the 504.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Does that person have a clue or is that just part of the job title?  
>> I would say he more than has a clue.  
>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Oh, good.  
>> But I would say --  
>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: It's a common problem, guys  
>> I would say that I initiate a lot of his concern.  
(Laughter).  
>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: That's very gently put.  
>> LIZANNE DeSTEFANO: Well said  
>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Yeah, very well said.  
(Laughter).  
>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: Any other questions?  
(No response).  
>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: Thank you so much.  
>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Thank you for coming forward.  
>> You're welcome. Thank you. I appreciate the opportunity.  
>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: So do we.  
>> I'm just anxious to see what the outcomes are. Thank you  
>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: So are we  
>> I know you are.  
(Laughter).  
>> Thank you.  
>> SKIP STAHL: Mary was able to meet Christopher Toth, he is coming early, and he is coming over.  
>> LIZANNE DeSTEFANO: I saw you sent us the link of the song.  
>> SKIP STAHL: Yes, I sent you the link of the song.  
>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: What do we have then in do we have a few minutes?  
>> SKIP STAHL: I believe so. Let me check with Mary to see if anybody else is here.  
>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: I just wondered if there was anybody else that would like to testify?  
That makes it sound so formal  
(Pause).  
>> SKIP STAHL: The next person is Christopher, when he comes in  
(Pause).  
>> SKIP STAHL: Gaeir, are you all set?  
>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Yep. Waiting for Dave.  
Okay. Welcome. I am Gaeir Dietrich, I am the Chair of the Commission and I work for the California community colleges, so could you please introduce yourself, tell us who you're affiliated with and we'll go around and introduce the rest of the Commission to you.  
>> Me? Sorry, I can't see you. My name is Christopher Toth, I'm at FSU, in my third year, FSU being Florida State University.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Thank you Thanks for coming.  
Jim, would you like to start the introductions, please.

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: I'm Jim Fruchterman from Bookshare.

>> GLINDA HILL: I'm Glinda Hill and I'm with the Department of Education's Office of Special Education programs.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: I'm Gaeir Dietrich and I'm the Commission Chair and I am the director of the High Tech Center Training Unit of the California community colleges.

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: Dave has his mouth full, I'll go next I'm Jim Wendorf and I'm with the National Center for Learning Disabilities and Vice Chair of the Commission.

>> DAVID BERTHIAUME: I'm David Berthiaume and I'm executive director of the Commission and work at the U.S. Department of Education.  
We're really glad to have you here.

>> ASHLEE KEPHART: I'm Ashlee Kephart and I'm a student at Hamline University and I'm dyslexic.

>> LIZANNE DeSTEFANO: I'm to your left, I'm Lizanne DeStefano and I'm a faculty member at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign.

>> SKIP STAHL: I'm Skip Stahl and I support the Commission work.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: So, Christopher, we'll give you about five minutes to tell us what you would like to tell us and then we'll have about ten minutes where we'll do some Q&A where the Commission members might have some follow-up questions for you.

>> Okay. I'm sorry I'm not terribly prepared for this, so I'm just going to basically tell you my story as it were and let you glean what you can from it.  
I'm a blind student at FSU, as I previously stated, and I'm here tonight to speak to you about technology challenges faced as a blind student in college.  
I've been blind since infancy, I'm a jaws user and also a Braille reader and I've always had the interest in technology since the age of five, using Apple 2 E, good times.  
(Laughter).

>> So I started programming in 6th grade and I kind of got a knack for computer science as it were and all the parts and technology, and I came to FSU in 2008 with the hope of earning a computer science degree.  
Of course, as you probably know, computer science is extremely math oriented and math heavy, as it should be, because it has a lot to do with analysis of data, structures and all kinds of very math-heavy stuff.  
So I signed up for a course, Mac 1140 at FSU, a calculus course and the first day I learned something disturbing, they used an e-grade software and I learned it was 100% accessible and uses

gif images and things look like radio button one and two, extremely unuseful, as it were, when trying to get any kind of math done.

It turns out they use this E-grade software in 100% of their quizzes, tests, homework, practice assignment, just pretty much every assigned by the FSU math department is using this software.

So as you might imagine, I rather quickly informed them that their software was inaccessible and would not at all work for the blind.

I spoke with, at the time, my professor, and with a member of the student disability resource center and basically tried to get things cleared up.

Now, a little bit about me. This is actually relevant, I promise, I am a developer of accessible software in my free time. I've written the Twitter client for the blind and the Hope software, I know a little bit about accessibility, and I offered to work with the university to come in on the weekends, as it were, and work to try to make their software accessible. I was refused on this. I was refused on pretty much anything that I suggested that had them changing their own actions in any way, shape or form, I was shot down on.

The suggestion they gave me was use a human reader. If you've ever tried to do any kind of advanced mathematics with a human reader, you must be super human, because that is something I can't accomplish.

We fought this for about two years and finally filed an OCR [OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS] complaint because I learned about OCR [OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS], finally, here in June of 2010 and we just got something back from them. We're still waiting for mediation to occur.

So I'm pretty much still up in the air.

And what this has meant for me is, you know, my degree is pretty much completely ruined because I have not been able to take a single math course. And as I said, computer science is extremely math-heavy, as it should be.

But this is something that I am quite interested in. I write software for basically a living now and the only way I'm going to be able to do that is, well, it's certainly not going to involve a degree.

So, basically what I'm here kind of to ask you is I do not wish it to be legal for this to happen.

I do not think that universities should be able to utilize either, you know, things that they purchased from an outside agency or develop internally that are inaccessible and provide a barrier, as it were, to this important field, like STEM and

whatnot, it's absurd and I hope you guys can do something about it.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: We do too.

Questions for Christopher?

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: So, I'm going to -- I should not presume the answer.

You want to learn how to program, right?

>> I do not wish to learn how to program.

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: You are a programmer and you want to get better at it.

>> Yes, I wish to become much better at it.

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: Are you basically now barred from most computer science courses?

>> I am barred from every computer course and they have a math prerequisite, which I cannot satisfy.

I tried to take the simpler -- I have a pretty good background in math myself so I thought I could take their -- I didn't want to mention this -- their algebra class instead of the calculus class, I tried that, same experience. When you're trying to deal with a human reader, it's just not possible.

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: So in an IDEA [INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT] situation, and let's take two different directions, all right? One is the one of making the software accessible that does the test --

>> It's a relatively easy fix. They've got latex in the background and they convert it are using this script they wrote in pearl that takes it and all they do is they forgot to put in a conversion step, like I showed them their code and said look, you can put in a conversion step here that runs latex to txt and put in alt tags right there. It's modifying a couple of lines and testing it for a couple of hours. It's such a simple fix, and they simply refuse to do it.

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: Do you think that they would, rather than doing that, give you the test in, let's say, another program or --

>> That's not -- I think that's not an acceptable solution, because, that's like me as a special case, I think this should be accessible to everybody and the standard way of doing that is using alt tags. It's like a blind ghetto. It's not acceptable.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: So I'm just curious, outside of the accommodation of a human reader, was that the only option?

>> That was it. Not only was it a human reader but let me see if I can find someone from your class that can help you When you're going into algebra and whatnot, you start getting into Greek symbols and the reader would say, oh, that squiggly symbol. That's useful.

(Laughter).

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: So can you tell us more about your experiences? Are there things they're doing right or decently?  
>> Right? I am certain there are other students who are having positive experiences. However my experience has been those students are primarily in either social work or music, and that is not acceptable. That's not what I want to do with my life. So, if they are doing good things, I don't really know that. They certainly were of no assistance to me. They have been of no assistance to me in other manners as well.

When I learned that I was pretty much barred from CS, I started taking political science courses because it was something that I was semi interested in, and in one of the first ones of those, we had something called PRS transmitters which are basically little electronic remote control gadgets for signaling your attendance and answering quiz questions, et cetera, and these are also quite inaccessible, and I believe there's a company which makes eye clickers, I think they're called.

>> University of Illinois.

>> I think they were using a Sony model is completely inaccessible and we alerted them of this and they said oh, we realize that, you're just going to have to cope without getting bonus points.

Well, thank you. That just makes me love to come to class.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: So, Christopher, is FSU [FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY] the only university or college that you've been at?

>> In high school I did some dual enrollment time at SJRCC and I did some lab at UF, at the Harris Communications Lab, but the only actual college I've attended, yeah.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: I was wondering if your experience at those other campuses were different.

>> Those were primarily mediated through my high school at the time, so it's not really reflective.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: So your high school did the accommodations?

>> Yes. And did them quite competently.

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: Christopher, was there anyone you were able to turn to as an advocate at FSU [FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY]?

>> I spoke to the dean of undergraduate affairs, who was -- basically told me he couldn't do anything. Dean Beaumont, I spoke with someone else who I have an e-mail chain with him, he said I'm a poor student and it's not that they're violating any kind of things.

I mentioned 504, I believe it was when I sent him that e-mail and he said we do not feel that we are violating any federal rules, so....

I suppose that's something for OCR [OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS] mediation to determine.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: If it's not confidential, may I ask what was the specific complaint?

>> Just what I was telling you. The lack of Braille book in the math course because the students had the textbooks and I had the Braille book.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: So they weren't willing to accommodate with providing the Braille either?

>> It's not that they weren't willing to, but they didn't know how to, because it was an internal book that they only use on campus and they do not know how to apparently know how to use a scientific notebook.

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: When is the start time?

>> Sometime in the next month.

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: I would be interested in tracking how that goes. I know you did not dream of becoming a guinea pig in this particular way, but I think you are an exemplar in the problems we're trying to work on and if you're comfortable keeping us in the loop, we're interested in hearing what OCR [OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS] comes up with.

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: That's a great IDEA [INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT]. The other thing is the fact that the materials that you're using are specialized materials generated within the department, apparently. Also we've had a fair amount of conversation today about how many instructional materials are like that, it's not just a matter of textbooks coming from major publishers, especially in the postsecondary setting.

So what you're saying is very interesting, I think, to this Commission and what you've run up against at frankly a major institution.

>> That was my immediate surprise.

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: A major institution.

>> It's coming to FSU who is said to be a good school for the blind and then getting this. Am I the first competent blind student that's ever come?

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: Right, with a major presence in special education.

>> GLINDA HILL: I was going to say FSU has a long history of training teachers. I'm the project officer for their training programs. So I'm so shocked that they don't even know that they have resources right on their campus, too, that could provide these services.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: I think this underscores the issues of STEM [SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, MATH]. I've actually

talked to faculty members who say oh, well blind students are not going to take math I'm, like, why not? (Laughs).

>> For instance, my girlfriend, who is also partially sighted recently took a biology class for the first time and she was told, point blank when she entered the lab, oh, I don't know how you're going to take this class, we've never actually had a blind student before, and we later determined that the reason they had not had a blind student is because the biology course requires a statistics course and the statistics course requires a background from either Mac 1105 or 40, which are completely inaccessible courses.

And because math is the core of every degree of every STEM [SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, MATH] program and even the most simple math course, even Mac 1105 is completely inaccessible, it means that you cannot get a blind student basically graduating without being in social work or music.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: I just have to ask, is there no basic math requirement for the degree? For any degree?

>> Yes, there is, there is, that is a problem. That's what I'm telling you here

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: So you basically can't get a degree in anything.

>> Right. Even political science, being a relatively jokey thing.

(Laughter).

>> Sorry if I offended any of you.

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: There are some who might disagree.

(Laughter).

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: Spoken like a mathematician.

(Laughter).

>> I mean, you know, only requiring one or two math courses, that still is foreign to me, because those one or two math courses are completely inaccessible.

>> SKIP STAHL: Well, it speaks to the wholesale adoption of a digital delivery program.

>> They did this in 1999.

>> SKIP STAHL: Right.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: And also one of the things that concerns me as an AT specialist is there are courses out there that are accessible, that they could work with, and all they have to do is -- the difference in books is the difference in problem sets. There's already things that are Braille that are on the Louie database and other databases and they wouldn't be expensive by getting to resources that could be done and be worked out with independent study with the instructor where you attend the class. And there are many ways.

>> It's an optimal decision, all things considered.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: It is, but it would at least allow you to get the degree.

>> At this point, I'm not sure I will be getting a degree, primarily because I came in 2008 and now if I were to actually try to get a degree, I would be there until 2016, and I have other stuff I need to do

As I said, I started a software company about two years ago and that's been doing quite well and I need to spend my time on that and wasting time on getting a degree that I should have had now, you know, it's not really in the cards.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: I'm curious, Christopher, with the programming that you're doing, what interface are you using with jaws? I mean, are you using -- what are you writing in?

>> I write in python, which is an absolutely beautiful language. And I'm teaching myself for the more advanced tricky stuff.

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: And you wrote a program for my favorite App, Pandora, so cool.

>> Yes, that's long been accessible to the blind, and once I got the iPhone, I said I wanted to listen to something, and I could not, so I had to write the program to do it.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Well, I applaud you for finding a track that works for you in your life and I deplore the fact that you had to.

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: Yes, absolutely. And there are five Commission members here for this part of the meeting, but rest assured, we're going to bring your story back to every single member of the Commission. We're going to find a way to track your own, what we hope is progress as you go through this

>> GLINDA HILL: Yes, and we have a representative on the commission from OCR [OFFICE OF CIVIL RIGHTS] as well.

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: Yes, in Washington, right, and Glinda, you'll make sure that Betsey gets the full story.

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: I think we recognize that you're now fighting essentially on behalf of the next generation of blind students who want to come to this school.

>> Pretty much.

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: I'm glad you're continuing the fight even though you have to get on with your life, and I appreciate you taking the time.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: It takes someone taking a stand and that's a hard thing to do, and thank you for coming to testify and we appreciate you testifying in the STEM [SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, MATH] area because there are a number of us on the commission who are very concerned about that area.

>> As well you should be.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Yeah, we agree. So thank you very much.

>> GLINDA HILL: However did you come to get here?  
>> Just from Tallahassee. On the Greyhound.  
>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Thank you for coming. Any other questions?  
>> LIZANNE DeSTEFANO: And Skip, we have contact information?  
>> SKIP STAHL: We do.  
>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: Chris, can you spell your last name?  
>> Toth, T-O-T-H. Mongoose\_Q.  
>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: There's a story there, I'm sure.  
>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: No, I've heard about your client from blind users, so great, it's great to meet a creator  
>> I actually believe I follow you. You recently did a tech chat with Sarah?  
>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: Yeah, exactly. Okay Cool. Now I know who mongoose\_q is.  
(Laughter).  
>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Okay. Thank you so much, Christopher.  
>> GLINDA HILL: Yeah, thank you. And thank you for traveling.  
>> Okay. Is this where I disappear?  
>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: We're going to wrap up, because you're our finale.  
>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: So are we -- we never got the person on the phone?  
Skip, we weren't able to get the person on the phone?  
>> SKIP STAHL: No.  
>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: It's the West Coast. So at 9:00 o'clock tonight.  
But she was left a message, correct? So she knows?  
>> SKIP STAHL: Yes, we left a message and let her know and set aside another time  
(Pause).  
>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Come forward. Just in time, perfect timing.  
>> Darn.  
(Laughter).  
>> LIZANNE DeSTEFANO: We're happy you're here.  
>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: Actually we're happy to have someone.  
>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: So please introduce yourself and tell us who you're affiliated, if you would, and then the Commission will introduce ourselves to you.  
>> My name is Emily Taylor-Snell and I'm a coordinator for the Florida Outreach Project, which is federally funded through office the Special Education Programs to provide technical assistance and information for students who are deaf-blind up to 22 years of age, and we're housed out of the University of Florida and we serve the state of Florida and the Virgin Islands.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: We lost Glinda.  
Jim, would you like to introduce yourself?

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: I'm Jim Fruchterman from Bookshare.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: We'll go around and Glinda can catch up when she gets back.  
I'm Gaeir Dietrich and I'm the Commission Chair and I am the director of the High Tech Center Training Unit of the California community colleges.

>> I'm from California and I used to work for the diagnostic center.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Ah Welcome, I think.

>> DAVID BERTHIAUME: I'm David Berthiaume and I'm executive director of the Commission and work at the U.S. Department of Education.

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: I'm Jim Wendorf and I'm with the National Center for Learning Disabilities and Vice Chair of the Commission.

>> LIZANNE DeSTEFANO: I'm Lizanne DeStefano and I'm a faculty member at the University of Illinois in Urbana- Champaign.

>> SKIP STAHL: I'm Skip Stahl and I support the Commission work.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: So, Emily, please.

>> I wanted to come to just talk a little bit about some of the needs of students who are deaf-blind, as they're getting into postsecondary education.  
Access is an issue. Materials are the key to have in their hand at the same time that they're typically developing peers who don't have other communication issues, both from print and audio.  
One of the biggest challenges that we see now is that if you have something that's a DVD, that you may have something that's captioned, people need to take a look at for deaf-blind where it's being captioned, what the color contrast is and can you manipulate the size of the font and also the flow of the words that happen.  
It's also very helpful to be able to have a young person and have that on their computer, as well as having it at a distance, because for most of the young folks, they may have some residual vision or hearing, but they may not be able to access it well at a distance.  
Also, if they're using an interpreter as well as trying to watch the video and trying to read, it doesn't all work very well all together that way.  
In terms of being able to just even access what's going on in the classroom, if they're using the smart boards or some of the other technologies that are there, you need to be aware of just how that is presented, just physically the logistics. With the

smart word, you have a lot of glare. People like to use a lot of good color to highlight different pieces of information, but they need to make sure it's going to be accessible to the person with low vision, so color is usually not well taken, especially red, they like to highlight things in red and that's very difficult especially for people who have Usher's syndrome. And what's positive now, talking to a person at Bookshare yesterday at a conference held in Orlando at the end of January is that now with the accessible format through NIMAS and getting things electrically, it is greatly helping the turn around time for getting access to materials, because before it was really difficult for students who needed the materials on Braille to be able to have them readily accessible.

The things that are still a challenge is that the teacher or someone hands something out, if a speaker comes to the classroom and they have things only in print, do they have a way to share the information immediately, so you may be looking at a variety of devices that might be able to take an immediate snapshot of that particular item and be able to save it to that computer and then be able to have that into either an electronic format that is available through professional Braille or that might be something that they would be able to then enlarge and have the different color contrast too, so there are a number of vendors coming out with some of those devices as well.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Questions for Emily?

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: Sure. How many of the deaf-blind students you work with have Braille displays?

>> That's a good question. Not as many should. Money is an issue, funding is an issue. Getting them approved. I just came from the Florida school for deaf and blind, which is why I'm a little bit late tonight, sorry, and just looking at how we can put technology in their hands.

One of the devices that has become available through our Florida Technology resource is the deaf-blind communicator and essentially that's a Braille note that has a deactivated cell phone that allows the deaf-blind person to be able to have a one-on-one conversation, the hearing sighted person would text in the message, the person can read it with Braille, that one now is easier to get because of the way that it's set up, there's the FTRI and our division of blind services can do the other part.

Something that's fairly deplorable that you see oftentimes is that these devices are only available in certain rooms at certain times, so they don't have them accessible to be able to use them in other classroom settings, interpersonally in the community or when they're away from the school.

I have a young lady that we're trying to prepare for postsecondary and she has access to a Sense Plus, one hour once a week for training. Well, how is she getting trained on that? Not very well. Getting trained to do what? It's just really non-accessible.

And I think oftentimes the challenge with deaf blindness is you have people who are the assistive tech folks who do the assessments and they don't have any interplay with deaf-blind so it's hard to even do the communication.

If they have experience with blindness, then they want to provide a device that is just for blind but then it may not have -- it may have a very strong auditory component.

So the problem is you don't have enough people who have good, clear information on what's available and what is accessible to the students who have this combination of vision and hearing loss

All right. Now, we are seeing a good resurgence of Braille and we have been successful here through our Department of Ed and some of the light houses to have a strong push with the Braille challenges, after we have one of our young people who will be going to the national level.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: That's right. And you guys won last year in Florida, right?

>> Well, I don't want to brag.

(Laughter).

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: You beat California by one person. I saw those status.

(Laughter).

>> I know. It felt good.

(Laughter).

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: I'll bet it did.

>> We are seeing a resurgence, we go out and do talks and presentations, I was at the vision summit in Tallahassee and it's a collaborative effort between the Florida association serving blind and the caucus to showcase what's going on in the state from children, families, and parents of children who are vision impaired, deaf-blind, and adults, and you still get the question, people don't really use Braille anymore, do they? It's, like, well... yes, they do  
That's an issue.

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: Wow.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Other questions for Emily?  
(No response).

>> Well, what I'm positive is Bookshare will be at the AADB symposium in Kentucky, so that's great

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: We have one deaf-blind employee so she's been getting religion going with our team.

>> Hallelujah.

(Laughter).

>> I don't know if you've had a chance to hear maybe remotely from a gentleman who is referred to as Bapin, his full name is () and you don't even want to try to spell that, but he is the technology person from Helen Keller International Center and he is fully deaf-blind and he does a lot of beta testing and feedback and all and he's just fairly phenomenal and he would be a great person if your committee has not heard from him yet We can get you in touch with him.

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: I guess my other question is, and it's probably -- we've done a lot of work with outlining areas, especially in the Pacific, so Guam and other places, can you tell me just a little bit more about what's going on in the Virgin Islands as far as accessibility? I'm not sure what your population is in that area, but do you know generally?

>> Yes. Every state has a deaf-blind project. Puerto Rico also has a deaf-blind project. The Virgin Islands has not had their own deaf-blind project for many years and we were asked by the Department of Ed and Smith is our project officer, would we take on the Virgin Islands.

Right now, identified on our census, birth to 22 years of age, we have 34 children.

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: Nice.

>> Yes, we've been beating the bushes, every school, all three islands, and just kind of looking in all different places for them, and we're undercounted. I mean, it's within the statistical norm but I know they're undercounted because there are a lot of issues, very cultural, the perception of disabilities, the majority of students I see have complex needs that they're probably not going to be Braille users, that they may have different forms of informal communication, so you have a lot of different things that you're working through there. Another part that we -- partner with PEPNet which is a transition organization for deaf and hard of hearing, they want to do more with deaf-blind and instead of doing everything separately, we can do more if we do it together, so we did the three-island tour in September to talk about some of the resources, the technology, the things that are available. Just to give you a small example of what we're facing there, there are teachers and principals that are wondering why deaf students need to have an interpreter because they have an unfair advantage because they have a person feeding them the answers, so that kind of gives you a bit as the understanding piece of it.

There's definitely interest connected with a couple of people through organizations and they're interested in working in the

Virgin Islands and technology is the next piece we're trying to bring in for that, but with that needs to come training as well. Otherwise things sit on the shelf.

What we see happening oftentimes is at the end of a spin-down cycle, whatever is the most expedient to purchase may get purchased and so it's not really designed to be matched up with an individual and so it gets underutilized. So we're really trying to look at how can we match that and we've got some vendors that are interested in going and we're looking at trying to have something during the summer institute in August.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Thank you so much for coming to speak with us. We really appreciate it.

>> Thank you. Thank you for the opportunity.

>> SKIP STAHL: So we have I believe five individuals, but as a unit?

(Laughter).

>> We have it sorted out so that the people that had half the vote go first.

>> SKIP STAHL: Yes, whoever's ready, please come up.

>> Good evening.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: I'd like you to ask you to introduce yourself and tell us who you're affiliated with and then we will briefly introduce the Commission to you and you will have five minutes to speak and we will have a ten-minute Q&A period where we'll ask you questions.

>> My name is Regina Cary, I am on the Board of Directors Learning Disabilities Association in Michigan and I have been in the field of special education for 21 years now.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Great.

Okay. Jim, would you like to start off?

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: I'm Jim Fruchterman from Bookshare.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: I'm Gaeir Dietrich and I'm the Commission Chair and I am the director of the High Tech Center Training Unit of the California community colleges.

>> DAVID BERTHIAUME: I'm David Berthiaume and I'm executive director of the Commission and work at the U.S. Department of Education.

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: I'm Jim Wendorf and I'm with the National Center for Learning Disabilities and Vice Chair of the Commission.

>> LIZANNE DeSTEFANO: I'm Lizanne DeStefano and I'm a faculty member at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign.

>> SKIP STAHL: I'm Skip Stahl and I support the Commission work.

>> I've never given public comment before, so I don't quite know how to do this, but I was thinking about the fact that you could look at me today, dressed as I am, and you could tell something

about me right away. You could see I'm married. Relationships are important to me. You see I'm a runner Health is important I'm here at the LDA conference. I'm into special ed. I love everything about special ed and across my career, I have worked with kids and teenagers, adults and elderly who, in all respects, you can tell some things about looking at them, but you don't see what you don't see, and you couldn't tell that just by looking at me that I can count on one hand how many books I've read cover to cover or how many additional hours it would take me to do homework, you know?

I think it's important that people with invisible disabilities have access.

Universal access.

We teach it and talk about it I don't know all the gadgets and gizmos. I know that when technology magazines come out, they've already gone beyond themselves.

I remember working with a college student who was a senior at the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill who could not tell me the sound of individual letters.

At that time some of the amazing technology we have now was not available. And it was only through sign language they actually had a font for sign language that I was able to teach her that this was an A and it sounded like a-h.

That was pretty primitive, considering what we have available.

And so if the only thing you get from my comment today is that people with invisible disabilities, they're not only carrying around this disability that is so difficult to explain, but bringing documentation, having to tell your story over and over again plays on every weakness that is the disability.

The executive functioning disabilities are hinders, but you can't see that.

And the longer I work in this field and see the faces of what is a learning disability, the more I believe that they need a voice, that they need access, just like anybody else, and they should not have to go through flaming fires of the hoops to get what they deserve and need in order to succeed

And sometimes it's not much.

I don't think they're asking for much. And I don't think it's fair to have to, again and again, prove. It's easier to not self-disclose and you run into that a lot in postsecondary. How can you be in medical school? How could you even get into this university if you didn't know what, you know, you can't fill out this form. Some people can't fill out a form. But they've had support along the way. And I think it's important we continue that support

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Thank you. Any Commission members have any questions for Regina?

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: Regina, thank you, thank you, and I think you've really in a very personal way, you've put your finger on a lot of things the Commission discussed today. We've been charged with looking at investigating barriers, okay, barriers to access, and you've touched on something, you know, related to the difficulty, the fact that there are so many hurdles and the very hurdles that are put in front of people with disabilities and in this case with learning disabilities, are the ones that make it least likely that they would be able to overcome those, to get through those barriers, so I think that's important for us to know.

You know, in postsecondary that's important for us today is the difficulty in disclosing, okay, and could you speak to that? The stigma issue and the reasons so that we can better understand those barriers?

>> The keynote speaker of our conference, Don Deshler, spoke to the belief window. We all have belief windows, and when you get instructors, especially -- I find it most in my work with veterinary professor who do not believe this works, they don't believe in ADD or learning disabilities, they don't believe they should have to do anything above and beyond, because they've made it this far, they must know what they're doing.

So the behaviors that often our students experience are very abrasive, it creates fear, and why would you tell anyone that you have a learning disability if you're going to get met with something that's going to make you feel even worse about yourself. And when you get to a certain point in your academic career, there's some sense of, "I can do this on my own." And it's not until they fail that they get into that cycle. And by the time they get into the cycle, the failure, it's too difficult to bring them up.

Self-disclosing is extremely -- it takes a lot of courage and unless you have the supports and the backing, your team behind you saying "yes, we're going to support you," it's easier to not, and to struggle and to spend those extra eight hours doing what your colleagues and peers can do in two. But you do it.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Any other Commission members have questions?

(No response).

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: Thanks so much.

>> Thank you very much

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Thank you

>> Thank you. My name is Gene Maxum and I'm the president of Learning Disabilities Association of Maine.

I myself have ADD. I have three children, my wife has three children. Together we have twelve grandchildren, and within

that group of people, not counting me, there are eight of us that have either learning disabilities or ADD. There's also possibly another three that may have those issues, but I don't have enough information yet to really be sure of that.

So I think there's a reluctance on the parents, especially, the younger members of that group, it sometimes meant that they had a learning disability or ADD and a reluctance to disclose that to other people because of the stigma attached to it.

Also some people that have ADD or learning disabilities, they experienced many failures throughout their lifetime. It's little things, but they pile up. And after a while, you get kind of discouraged and you think "I can't do anything right, I'm stupid, I'm dumb." That's not really true, because most of the people that have ADD or learning disabilities are of average intelligence or above. They just need to be taught in a way that makes it possible for them to learn.

I recently had a grandchild who has math learning disability, has been doing well in school, and because he was doing well, services were withdrawn. He was up to speed. So they took that away, he didn't need it anymore, and, of course, he fell back behind and was having difficulty. The parents went to the school principal and said "you know, we need to get those services back, because he's doing poorly in school." And the principal said "we don't do that for 7th and 8th graders." (Laughter).

>> And I said you're telling me that, that's a bunch of B.S., excuse me, but they have to do it by law.

So they have gone back and they have requested a PET meeting and the school is taking the whole 45 days it's allowed to schedule that meeting.

I suspect it will take them, once the PET is held, it's going to take a while before the services can be reestablished.

We may be into the next school year before he gets services.

I don't see how they can do this to a student. They're setting him up for failure, is what they're doing, and it's hard enough to, say, go on to high school and being successful with that increased degree of course material that they're given.

And so that's one thing I've run into.

Another issue, just personally, I have trouble with font print and some books that I look at have a number of eight or, well, maybe a nine or a ten font, but it's printed lightly and it's, like, I don't even want to look at that because it's just difficult for me to process.

The same thing if it stretches across the whole computer screen, it's really lengthy, something that's more newspaper column type stuff is just easier for me to deal with.

The other stuff I could do, but it requires a lot more work upon my part to absorb that material.

And I guess that's my comments.

I think whatever people can do to make it easier for a person with ADD and learning disabilities to thrive is important so that they can be as much as they can be, go on to be successful adults, taxpayers that will be contributing to society instead of being a drain upon it.

And I work some with the prisons back in my state and some of the people that work in the prisons have said that they think approximately 70% of the prison population has ADD or a learning disability, so....

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Questions?

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: So we're talking the issue of making college more accessible, especially through instructional materials, so do you have a couple suggestions about how to do that, in your overall issue in the college setting? Is there something you could say boy, if there's one thing they did or recommended in doing, it would be X?

>> Some of the schools I think have transition programs that help, that work with students, especially in the last two years of high school, to get them into a college program. However, I think for some students, by that time it's too late. They've already taken too many blows and think that college is not in their future, it's not something they can do. They think somehow we have to get them earlier, identify those people that have issues, but also have potential to be very successful and involve them in some kind of a program that will enable them to have college education in their future.

And I think either we spend the money when they're young or we spend it when they're older, but for different issues.

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: Yeah.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Other questions for Gene?

(No response).

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Thank you so much for speaking to us.

>> Thank you.

>> SKIP STAHL: Gene, where do you live in Maine.

>> Six miles south of the capital city. I live in Randolph. Thank you.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Welcome

>> Thank you, thank you for having me I hope I can get my message across.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Maybe try and pull the mic a little bit closer? See if that helps? Thank you

>> My name is Connie Parr. I am a parent, a grandparent, a professional, I'm a pediatric nurse practitioner. I sit on the local level of LDA, the state level of LDA, and sit currently as

the immediate past president of the National Learning Disability Association.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Okay. Commission members, would you like to introduce yourselves? Jim?

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: Did you hear us introduce ourselves earlier?

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Okay. We can skip that.

>> Thank you.

(Laughter).

>> LIZANNE DeSTEFANO: We've done it about 100 times today.

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: I thought you were there earlier.

>> Yes, I was.

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: You know who we are. We hope we know who we are.

(Laughter).

>> At this point, we don't know who we are.

I am from Illinois, so glad to see someone here from outside of Chicago.

The area that I work in, and I work at Mercy Hospital in Aurora is a very indigent area, I've sat on the juvenile justice committee and we do know that children in the criminal system have learning disabilities and/or ADHD, I am also a grandparent raising a grandson that is gifted learning disabled and severe ADHD. He just started his first year of college.

Unfortunately, driving home from the store the other day, I said, "Michael, you haven't opened your new books." And his response to me was "grandma, you know I can't read."

So we worked out a program that I will sit and read a chapter to him. So all the degrees behind my name, I'm now going back to junior college to help him.

We did well the first semester, two A's, a B and a C, and quietly I'll tell you he got a D, but he admitted that was his fault and nobody else's.

He said I learn at my own style, but I have to learn to read. And you'd think after all these years and all the fighting that I've done, this child would be able to read

He graduated, he was moved, unfortunately, long story, to an alternative school, a good one, and he left the high school with a 2.5 average. He graduated with a 3.7 average.

His self-esteem is back. He will look right at you and say "I know I'm a red headed nerd, people don't like it, that's fine" but he still want read.

Any help we can give Michael or any of my patients or any people we fight through with the national learning disability program we would partner with you and we would be on your side to do this.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Thank you. Commission members, questions for Connie?

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: Connie, I'm wondering, I mean, this must be a tough transition, you know, for both of you with the first year of college.

Can you tell us about the experience working with the DSS office or anything like that or has there been any kind of request for structural materials that wouldn't require reading?

>> I was pretty proud of him, because he said grandma, and we've raised him since birth, he said grandma, I want you to come with me, and I said Michael, I can't, welcome to the adult world. You have to let them know you want me to come in there, and so he told them that, they sat where I sat, and ironically the person that runs the program, I watched her set this up 30 years ago, so she remembered me, but he walked in there and he said "I need extended time on tests. I need this, I need books on tape, and I need" and he asked for something else, and they said tell us why.

He said "I have a very low processing speed." His processing speed is in the -- oh, note taker -- processing speed is in the third percentile. He said I can do the work, I just need time. He said I need to understand what the professors are saying so I can take the notes.

Now, what they did say to him, Jim, is that they would not give him books on tape yet, they wanted to see how he would get through the first semester, and I knew what it would be, but the courses he took the first semester were obviously okay with his grades.

These courses are hands-on computer and drawing, but he still needs to get into that book.

So I've edged him on just a little bit more to be an advocate for himself.

He has adjusted, being a red headed nerd, we've all adjusted to the first year of college very well, and I am very proud of him.

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: Thinking about if he needs to go back, if he needs to go back and advocate more, do you think he has a sense of what he could ask for? I mean, you know, books on tape or are there other kinds of tools? And would that office actually work with him to identify those?

>> Yes, yes, I was very pleased with the office that I took his neuropsychology in, they were pleased with that. We bought him the lifestyle pen and I told him to go to the blind and dyslexic association and it's part of not yet, grandma, I want to try to do it on my own. The two-year college is certainly going to be a four-year college.

So I think he knows where he has to be, but he's not there yet. He has advocated very well.

But I worry about the kids that don't advocate. I worry about the kids that I see in my office. I worry about the set of twins from Chicago when they had their blizzard that walked outside and weathered because they can't read and can't do math, the one kid's processing speed is 1%, he's just not functioning, so the school concentrates on the behaviors more than they concentrate on that. They will pass him through school just to get him through school or he'll drop out

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Thank you

Any other questions from Commission members?

(No response).

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Thank you so much, Connie, for sharing your story

>> Thank you so much I apologize.

>> SKIP STAHL: You did a terrific job.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Hi, welcome.

>> I'm Pat Kassire from Arkansas and I wrote somebody a note and asked if I could come.

(Laughter).

>> I e-mailed somebody. I was in the conference here.

I am Pat Kassire, first of all. I also have my doctorate and they call me Dr. Pat at my school, and I'm here to tell you something about print difficulties, because I understand that's what you're interested in, you're not so much interested in my history.

However, I will tell you that I was 50-years-old when I went back to get my doctorate because I was afraid of using the textbooks and I had to wait that long before I could think that I was any conceivable IDEA [INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT] that I could get my doctorate, okay.

I have some suggestions based on my background, of being in education for over 30 something years.

I just recently worked on a report on how libraries could become more accessible. I have a background in juvenile justice whereby I was the educational director of the Arkansas prison system, and so I have a few little things here that I was making on my thing.

One, I know that your commission is for books, okay, but let me say that one of the strongest things that the learning disabilities population can use are auditory system when we can't read. We have to have it matched.

So if you're going to use the auditory in any way whatsoever, it absolutely must match word for word. You cannot give me a book and then give me an auditory something or other and they don't match. That's not cricket.

The other thing that was mentioned before is that if the words get too far apart and the pages too wide, you would be better

off with narrower things, because if you don't track in either direction, the longer it gets, the harder the tracking becomes. The print should be bigger and darker, okay. Don't take away my support of bolding, when I got to college, you all took away my supports. I looked for the dark words and the things that were put in the textbooks and you all just took them all away.

(Laughter).

>> And professional journals are the world's worst, they make them teeny tiny and put them in italics and punctuation that I have no clue about whatsoever, and it was terrible for me to go back in and not be able to get my books because the books at the postsecondary level you can't get them fast enough.

I don't know what book it is that I need until I sign up for that course because the professor won't tell me so that I can go back and get them.

So one of the things that you've got to do is get me a book. I mean, print wise, just get it to me. That would help.

But it helped, the way I got through, my doctorate was I got my books the semester before, I read that book while I was working on the other one, and then by the time I got into it, I was ready to read the back the second time.

You have to give me time.

You could give me the close of the bold things, put -- whatever happened to dictionaries? You know, I mean, you could give me a little help with the vocabulary in the back of a secondary book. When I was taking medical courses and whatnot, in kinesiology, by the way I made an A, you could give it to me in the back so I wouldn't have to look, so you can make study guides in postsecondary books.

Now, I'm going to give you a little tale here because I go way back with this, okay? I go back so far is that when books on tape came out or whatnot, my program in Missouri was training Missouri prisoners to read books, okay, and that was one of the starts of all of this and whatnot.

And what we have found over the years of me working with this and training college professors how to deal with kids that come before them is that it is oftentimes not the student that is threatened as much as it is the professor. And I know you all are into print and all this kind of thing and that's what your commission is all about, but until you train the professor to understand who I am, there's a problem.

The sample of this is that when I was in Missouri, we trained at the medical school the doctors to give their lectures on their book and put it at that time on an overhead, okay, and give their lecture and we taped it, okay, and then we would put the tape and the overhead in the library, all right.

And then you had the fast readers, you know, where you could speed it up and whatnot and what the professors found, and all these were not learning disabled adults that were taking this, of course, is that all of a sudden he would call me and say you can't do this anymore and I said what do you mean, what do you mean I can't do this anymore, and he says I don't have anybody attending my classes.

(Laughter).

>> And I said what? He said because what we have learned is, is that if you have -- if they have my overhead and we would have to train them, so we took the overhead away from them immediately so they didn't write on it again, that they could go and they could go see it and hear it three times in the same amount of time they were spending in class.

Now, I don't know how you do that. But you have to be able to have what's there and what the professor is doing in some sort of manner in a way that I could read it.

But I could read the overheads because they were bigger and brighter and he did things with them.

And print wise, that doesn't make for a nice, neat, concise 500 page book at the postsecondary level, because what I'm asking you for is to make the letters bigger and bolder and brighter, to make a little underline here and there on important issues when you change would not hurt or taking a few looks at an elementary book would help, you know, and make them a little more like that.

People who come back and are learning even at the postsecondary level are learning something new, so you need to make the newness of what they're trying to learn be available to them. Later on you can give me the professional journal and I can look at it, but you must consider that postsecondary people going back are trying to learn and so I'm not just reading a book, I'm trying to learn.

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: Pat, thank you. I think you're reinforcing, actually, a lot of themes that have come up over the course of the day.

Yes, we're dealing with print here but it's accessible here, how to make print more accessible electrically and improvements, text to speech, and so that students at the postsecondary level really can access and show what it is that they know and demonstrate that they can learn.

So you're reinforcing that.

You're also, I think, you know, you're identifying a component here that we've also heard from some other people who have given comment, which is that, you know, our Commission is certainly focusing on some technology issues, of course, legal issues and all sorts of things like that, but you're also making a case

for, call it training, call it enculturation, people teaching or administering in postsecondary need to understand the students who are coming in the door and coming to them and we just heard just a few minutes ago from a student who's blind and who has run into an absolute brick wall, not because he's blind, but because the university put up barriers to his desire to study computer science.

So I think you're really getting at a lot of key issues.

So that's not a question, that's a comment.

So I thank you for that.

But I'm wondering if anyone else --

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: I think we need to actually move on.

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: I think we do because of time. Okay.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Thank you so much.

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: Thank you.

>> Hello.

>> ALL: Hi.

>> I've been sitting back here so you don't have to introduce you, although I won't remember.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: That's okay. Some of us have name tags here.

>> My name is Ann Witten, all I had back there was a little bit of on flows, I'll tell you my background, I'm from Akin, South Carolina, near Augusta, I've been teaching in public/private settings and I run a private practice in Akin, we have no services, we have no one in the immediate Akin area that understands learning disabilities and dyslexia so I see children one to one, teaching 30 sessions a week with kids.

And one of the reasons I said I'd like to speak, and you have to know, I work with young kids, because my goal is that my students won't need accommodations, preferably, I'm working with bright kids, 5 K through 7th and our goal, I talk with the parents about it, our goal by 9th grade, if you can have this long-range goal here, by 9th grade they would be in college-grade classes and could handle reading, that's what we hope. Some of these kids will need the technology support, so the reason I wanted to come in and talk to you is just to tell you about a couple of kids, what's happened with a couple of kids that I've taught.

For one thing, I'm in a -- I'm not in a rural area, but it's a small town, and I felt like when we moved to South Carolina about 15 years ago from Florida, I felt like they were about ten years behind Florida and people in Florida would have said they were behind.

I still feel like there's still some catching up to do in the area, but I want to tell you about a boy I taught from 3rd through 5th grade when he came, this was in public school, I was

a resource teacher at that time, he had a year in a private school that since closed in Augusta Georgia, we're talking a dyslexic young man but very bright. He is a senior this year, going to college, his mom periodically contacts me, every year, not just this family but I hear this as soon as they start moving into middle school, every year the families have to fight for books on CD, and I tell you, not only do they have to fight for them, they don't get them until at least six weeks after the school year has started, so now that bookshare.org has opened reading for the blind and dyslexic, they have bypassed some of my kids, but it's like forget it, just bypass it and get them a student membership, but I try to keep up on the teaching of these kids, but I cannot keep up with all the technology. I did get a two-week loner for the Intel reader and we tried it out with every student and I'm going to kind of write that up for people what it was like for elementary kids.

But I can't keep up with all the technology, it happens too fast.

But back to this student. He is now a senior. I just want you to know, I never would have predicted this, he got interested in science, he is an outdoor kid, he started reading things, don't give him a novel to read for fun, he got into competing with the compound bow, last year Garrett was on the U.S. compound bow team in Yugoslavia, the team or he came in second or third, he came back a world champion, I can't remember.

But they had an IEP [INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN] and they wanted him off it, all he uses is books on CD, they said, he still uses it, for the very severe kids, fluency is always an issue and he is severe and fluency is an issue and he uses the books on CD, he is using that and not a lot of other accommodations at this point, so they insisted they take him off an IEP [INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN], and his mom was so upset, at the IEP [INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN] meeting they said they didn't see what the fuss was about, and Garrett was there, they said you're performing average, you're an average student, and when they left the meeting, Garrett looked at his mom and said don't worry, mom, world champions are not average. (Laughter).

>> But they walked out of that meeting and you can see he competed and came out a world champion, and I think since then they send me the messages, he competed in South America and he came out higher than that but he's competing in college on the bow team, earlier this year his mom was talking to me, they had to pay for more testing because he's not on an IEP [INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN] anymore and when he took the SAT, he did fairly well, like early 20's in most things, except reading and he could not -- the timed element, he really did

pretty poorly, I was sorry about, I was hoping he would do better, but I think it's a time element. So they're now trying to go through that process of how do you get accommodations if you're not on an IEP [INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN], so he will need accommodations for that through college. He is going to go on to college, there's no doubt about that in some kind of scientific field, I'm sure.

But there's no training in our high schools for how to use technology. I mean, I can't supply that to everybody. I'm trying to teach them to read at the younger ages.

But this student should know how to use Kurzweil and all that stuff out there but there's been no training out there in high school how to do that, and I've got more students now beginning to graduate since I moved to Akin 15 years ago and there are more students coming through the pipeline, and one student I'm thinking of, she aid all A's but there's no doubt in my mind that she's going to need books on CD. They use them, but her mom is bypassing the school system to get them They're on an IEP [INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN] still. I'm saying it's such a struggle and this student needs to be taught in high school how to access all this technology, she's growing up in this, she ought to be exposed to it but they're not being.

So as you look at what -- I guess what I wanted to talk to you because my heart is with the younger kids getting to where they won't need it preferably, but a lot of them are going to need it and it needs to start at the high school, at least level, middle school and high school so they know what to ask for.

The other thing you need to know is my brother was severely reading disabled, he's just two years younger than me and his son also, so I have a nephew that hasn't done real well. He's okay, but he's, you know, has -- I don't think he's ever had any technology exposed to him, all the way through school, and he's in Florida. Thank you.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: I think we have maybe time for one --

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: Thank you. No, again, the fact that your students are now, some of them are ready to enter college and yet here's the case of a kid who's done very well, and yet still needs the kinds of accommodations and supports that have now been taken away from him So would they have taken away his eyeglasses because he can see without his glasses? He doesn't need them anymore, right? It doesn't make sense.

You're putting your finger on this barrier for a lot of students with learning disabilities as they move to college, not necessarily having the documentation, perhaps, or not really having had exposure to the kinds of technology, the kind of technical solutions that would really educate them about what

they might need in college in order to be successful, so I thank you for that.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: I just have to make one comment here, because one of the things that high stakes testing of many, SAT is one example, the MCAT, LSAT, one of those things the testing agencies look at is has there been continuous use of assistive technology and if there's been a time when it wasn't there, then they basically look at that and say well, you did without it then, why should we give it to you now.

So I think what people don't realize, and I'm going to use this word very purposefully in the lower schools here is they are handicapping that student's potential success in life and that is just....

Well, I'm very upset.

>> What you said about the GRE, my daughter that's a senior at Davidson college just took the GRE, she doesn't have learning disabilities issues but she commented how difficult it was to do it on computer and not be able to look back and I thought oh my gosh, generally you read something and look back, and she said you couldn't skip a question and go back to it And I know that everything is going to computer but there are some real disadvantages to some of that and especially for our kids with learning disabilities that are going to need to read it and then maybe re-read it and then maybe look at the questions and then go back and read it again. Well, if the GRE doesn't allow you to do that, they're going to be having extreme difficulty, and Becky said it was hard.

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: I have a quick question. When they go off IEP [INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN], does that mean they lose all accommodations or do they say do you want a 504 and get extra time or something?

>> If you start talking to some parents, you know, of these younger kids, you'll hear them talk to me and say they never offered me a 504 Legally, they're supposed -- I try to keep up with this stuff but instruction is my primarily, I don't know if I told you, I serve on the national board of the LDA and the state board for the dyslexia state board, the international reading association, I'm just a member, so I try to stay up on the instructional issues but it's hard to keep up with everything. They're supposed to mention a 504, but they don't, I know not in my area.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Thank you very much.

>> It's going to take me the five minutes to get there.

>> SKIP STAHL: We'll wait.

>> Sorry. Thank you. It's been a long day

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Yes.

>> I'm sure for all of you.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Welcome

>> Thank you. Good evening. I'm Nancy Payne and I'm from Olympia Washington and I'm an adult with learning disabilities and attention deficit disorder and recently completed a doctoral program, I have children, adult children and grandchildren who all have non-apparent disabilities and I want to focus on an area that may not have as much focus throughout the day and that is that I'm a business owner and I work with businesses in our community. I particularly work with the work force system, the welfare to work systems, and correction, inmates moving into the community, in helping folks with non-apparent disabilities access full employment, gainful employment in livable ways. I'm the immediate past chair of our work force development council board and I'm a member of our economic development council for 20 plus years.

So what I would like to share with you is that there is a huge need for individuals who are dislocated, who are underemployed or unemployed, undereducated or uneducated, especially when we talk about incumbent workers, dislocated workers, welfare to work, typically moms who have families who have non-apparent disabilities and don't understand the methods and techniques and tools that are available, nor do our vocational rehabilitation counselors understand things that are available so they can't guide as well as they should.

But the sad part is that there's no bridge to transition from the community perspective. We're beginning to build bridges from high school to postsecondary, we're training, and I don't know whether you're aware or not, and I apologize for not doing as much homework, but individuals who are dislocated only get nine months of schooling or twelve months of schooling. There's only limited funds

So the time that they're in school is absolutely incredibly important to build the skills and have a livable way.

Typically they take an entrance test They don't know that they could have those accommodations, even though they had them on the GED or they had them in some other environment and so they get a lower than average score and they get relegated to the developmental education classes which eats up a lot of their financial aid and all of a sudden they're through the nine month or twelve month program and they're not completed.

The second thing that I think is incredibly important is that individuals in those areas -- I hate the word categories -- those areas don't always understand how to use the tools. They tell you that they know how to use the tools. They're aware that the tools might exist, or maybe I can help or somebody guides them to the tools, gives them a few kind of by the brush -- that's a weird way -- but, you know, a kind of, okay,

here you go, here's how to use it, here's when to use it, and the individual, because of the non-apparent disability, learning disabilities, attention disorders, sequencing disorders, doesn't understand all the pieces, so they take it, they try to use it and it doesn't work and so they don't use it, and that's a really important piece.

We need more education, more training, more online training, more things that people can access where they could just go online and get that CD again and say -- or that, sorry, that's the old term -- that little clip again and go through the steps. It's absolutely incredibly important.

The second thing is that individuals with the types of disabilities that I work with don't understand how to implement the tools so that they become habitual. They need to -- we can create all the tools in the world and we can train them, but the folks that I work with are 20, 30, 40, sometimes 50, and it's not that they don't want to move forward and use the tools, but they don't have the skill or the sequence or the organization to get it into their routine so it becomes automatic.

I can tell you that if it wasn't for our computers and my computer readers and my Dragon and my Microsoft friends because I live close to Seattle and I work on the suites on the systems, I wouldn't have made it through my doctoral program I am not a print reader, you will not see me carrying a book as I'm on the airplane and traveling and doing my thing. I had to have it in audio, I had to have it in print, I had to be able to highlight and change the screen colors, I had to be able to enlarge it and some days I needed to be able to cut and paste and pull out the things that I needed to do. And some texts you can't do that with, so I'm obviously more probably than what I experienced. The last thing so that I don't ramble on is that I'm very discouraged, I heard you ask, I should preface this, you asked an earlier gentleman about postsecondary education and that type of thing, I'm very discouraged about the access to postsecondary education and accommodations.

If you have to do -- I'm a businesswoman now -- if you have to do more than two clicks, you're gone. I have done 10 to 15 clicks and not found the site that says, here's how you apply for accommodations. Yes, we have a disability services office and if you do find it and there are many kinds of applications, they're not electric, you can't pull them up, they're just the template, you have to print them out and handwrite them and my folks are not into that, as you probably know.

With that, I do travel around Canada and the states and Puerto Rico and do some training and do all this stuff. And I'll go sit down.

(Laughter).

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Thank you so much for making the trek up here.

>> I'm sorry, I didn't say, I'm on the Learning Disabilities Association Board.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: And I really appreciate the different perspective coming from the business side and looking at that transition. We've been looking and talking about a transition into postsecondary but you're talking about a transition that is still a transition and I think we need to remember that, that there are other non-college postsecondary pathways that will be affected by what we do as well.

>> And many of my folks go to the community colleges, the junior colleges, the trade schools, but they don't have the access the same way as the high school and transition.

I'm sorry to interrupt you, sir.

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: No, you said what I'd hoped you'd say.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Thank you.

>> GLINDA HILL: I have one question. You mentioned -- I'm Glinda Hill, I work with the Department of Education and I have a question -- you said you work with the justice system?

>> I do.

>> GLINDA HILL: And I'm assuming you see lots of people there with learning disabilities.

>> Absolutely, absolute. High levels of learning disabilities, mental health disorders and attention deficit disorders as well.

>> GLINDA HILL: And they're high school dropouts or junior high school dropouts?

>> Many are dropouts. What's fascinating is a colleague of mine are both very interested in inmates and education and what's fascinating is most of the time if you ask an inmate what he or she would like to do when they grow up, that's a funny kind of way of putting it, they don't know, no one's ever asked them, and if you explore with them, they're delighted, no matter what crime they've committed, you cared enough to ask and guide them when they leave the institution they have something to look forward to.

>> GLINDA HILL: Thank you.

>> You're welcome. Thank you.

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: I want to thank the LDA Board for showing up.

(Participants overtalking).

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Thank you This is exactly what we were hoping for when we chose to be here at this conference, so thank you so much.

>> JIM FRUCHTERMAN: I think you guys know I have to leave at 7:30

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: We'll see you later.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: So Jim is done but the rest of us are not

So please, who do we have next? Welcome.

>> Thank you. Mark Calvert, I am a parent of two kids with learning disabilities who survive college and run a corporation called learning disabilities association -- I mean a company called 3 D learner and teach kids how to learn, I'm a board member for the LDA national and host president here and Jim, we had some conversations about making this happen, and I'm glad we could make this happen at this event.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Thank you for inviting us.

>> Well, it works. Collaboration is the key.

The couple issues I wanted to talk about, one is a lot of laws are changing and they sort of don't make sense when you put them all together. One of the issues is let's say a college kid in Escambia County here in Florida who had LD for nine years, still LD The school is saying she doesn't need testing because you no longer need testing every three years to qualify for LD, and the college boards are saying you need testing within the last three years, okay.

And the psychologists are saying that the most cost effective psychologist you could find is \$1,200 and her mother doesn't have a dime.

Now, you could say, well, the district should pay. Why? Why should anybody pay? She has a learning disability. It's clear as can be. There is nobody in the world that's arguing with her.

But, you know, it's very easy for the mom to say and mom's right, if somebody should pay, it should be the district, not that, but then you ask the question, why should anybody pay? And I'd asked a lot of people, I was in a room once with six professionals who were asking 32 kids in a private school to assess and I said that's nice but are you going to do anything differently when you get these assessments and there was dead silence in the room The principal said you understand you're asking somebody to spend \$80,000. Well maybe the district should spend \$80,000. We don't have \$80,000 to spend. I'd rather have the district spending money on educating the kids than assessments and I would certainly rather have no assessment and have the kid get the help they need.

So I just really find -- there is a problem with especially -- I mean the rich kids can pay it but it's a waste of money. The districts can pay it but they have much better things to do with their money. But we have to find some way of getting these kids the help.

The other problem I've seen is our four letter word is the FCAT, so kids pass the FCAT, Florida Comprehensive Achievement Test and we get them to our office and the kid is reading six years below grade level so he's not able to access college information and it goes back to our school system or whatever and you take a look at the kid's eyes and he skips lines and words that he's reading like it's going out of style.

Yes, we should catch it going backwards and say we want the kids to be college ready, that has a lot of profound implications from what we have to do way back, and when college comes, everybody is saying we shouldn't have to remediate the kids. Well you have to fix it now, so to speak, but our problem is we've gotten so hyper focused on our system and we grade them and we threaten to close down schools we forget the object is to get the kids be college ready or career ready, and so the real thrust is focus on -- let's focus our money on educating the kids and not make it so difficult.

The other thing is somebody said -- I come from South Florida, so they say one of the ways to get older people to a meeting is to give food, okay.

(Laughter).

>> I think the same thing is true with college kids, okay?

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Oh, yeah.

(Laughter).

>> And if you want to get them to the disabilities office, okay, you gotta give them a reason to show up at the disabilities office, you know.

I told my son, you know that car you wanted? Or whatever it was at the time. You gotta show up at the disabilities office, because these people actually know how to help you, okay. But make a requirement even the first semester that somebody who's got a disability takes a course that includes a certain number of visits to the disabilities office. Because strange as it may seem, these people know how to help, but they have tools that are never actually utilized because the kids -- no, I will say this, too, cutting the parents out of this equation when you go to college is a great thing to do if you want a kid to fall off a cliff, okay.

Because what you're doing is you're driving a kid with all the help to here and then it goes like this. Now they wouldn't talk to my wife. She's got her masters in education. Her expertise in assist in material, and now you're putting my daughter in this situation for the first time in her life.

God knows you should wean. I'm all about this for support, but we believe the road from stress to success is one step at a time, not a magic bullet.

So having this, I don't know, is it a federal law that says --

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: It's privacy.

>> DAVID BERTHIAUME: Access to education records?  
(Participants overtalking).

>> SKIP STAHL: Once the student turns 18.  
(Participants overtalking).

>> GLINDA HILL: You still have to pay the bills.

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: The parents write the checks but you don't get anything back. Grades are anything.

>> If you're talking about something that doesn't make sense, that fits right up at the top of my list, so it's an amount of challenge as the status quo, but going back and saying, if you have to enter college, you have to take this summer, you have to get ready for college, because so many kids we see aren't ready.

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: Mark, thank you.  
I think, you know, you're hitting on a theme that we have spent some time discussing, which is this, you know, this transition and the burden is all on the shoulders of the student who's a freshman dealing with all the stress of being a freshman, and we will talk about some of the legal issues tomorrow.  
And this issue about privacy, though, that's not come up before, you know, sort of the parents being cut out of the equation. The fact that, you know, kids succeed in school in K-12 often because parents serve as their children's most effective advocate, so I think you've given us something to think about there.  
I'm not sure where that will lead, but that's an interesting one.

>> GLINDA HILL: I think that's an excellent one and I'm glad you brought that up.

>> My wife will say thank you for your response, because it drove her insane. Thank you.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Thank you.

>> GLINDA HILL: We all agree with you on that.

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: I'm trying to get a 1098 tee out of my daughter's college, but they won't even send it to me.

>> GLINDA HILL: We'll share that over the break.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Do we have someone else who would like to speak to the Commission?

>> Do we need to go by her list?

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: At this point I think you know who's here.

>> Okay. Good evening, thank you for this opportunity to come and share information with you. I'm Judy McKinnley, I'm president of the Los Angeles learning disability association, I'm past president of the learning disabilities association in California and this is a subject very near and dear to my heart.

We have major problems in California with kids K-12 having access to the services that are available within California. Our state Department of Education, and I can't remember, it's media something, what used to be our cape text library, school districts refuse, deny, will not write into IEP [INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PLAN]'s that kids should have, and it's not tape text anymore, it's CD's and things that they can download and I can't tell you all what that looks like.

I have talked to this department at the State Department of Education many times. They also do not understand why school districts are not utilizing the services that they have available for our kids.

It is an ongoing issue. It's been an issue I have been involved with LDA for 35, 36 years. It is an issue that has always existed. It's like they're funded and they have the materials there, but nobody knows that it exists. The special ed teachers don't know it exists and most of the school districts do not acknowledge the existence of this wonderful gift that could help so many kids

I think our postsecondary schools in California, and we have one of the professors over here, and maybe she will agree or not agree with me, our community colleges do a much better job of providing those kinds of accommodations to the kids within California than our K-12 programs do.

In the K-12 programs, yes, I'm sure there are school districts that are enlightened and do that because that's what they should be doing. I work in the Pasadena unified school district, the home of the rose parade and the rose bowl, it is a school district I think at this point about 19,000 students Those accommodations are hard fought for by parents who are savvy enough to know that those accommodations are available to their students.

There was a wonderful school in Hollywood, actually, I think that was run by the National Charity League in connection with the University of Southern California that probably closed 20 years ago, and I can't remember the name of the system they used They had materials at many different grade levels in their curriculum center. Every one of those had a tape of that book available to the kids.

It is my belief that every school, it should be mandatory that they have electronic educational materials available in their curriculum centers where they maintain their curriculum, and it should be as easy as a teacher calling that curriculum center and saying "we need a copy of that book for this student" and that absolutely is not happening

I believe that -- and obviously our kids also have, with learning disabilities, have the ability to go through the

Braille Institute in Los Angeles. That information is not available to parents. That information is not provided to parents by school districts. It is something that if they're lucky, they come across it. I mean, we have a lot of tenacious parents who do a lot of research, but for the most part, that information is not provided to parents.

I believe that this is a tragedy, travesty that has gone on in our state probably for as long as I can remember, 30 some years. There was a wonderful little man who ran that state department library and we would invite him to conferences and we would just go "oh, my gosh, you're inviting me. Nobody knows we're here Nobody will tell anybody."

(Laughter).

>> Well, it is still happening in California. So whatever you can do as far as getting that information to the folks at some national level, Bookshare is a secret unless -- to school teachers. They don't know it exists, okay.

I can take and I do take them information on Bookshare. They don't do anything with it, all right. But for the majority of them, they don't even know that it exists and it's something that's basically free that their students could be taking advantage of that is just being wasted, okay.

All this money has been put into creating this wonderful program and nobody knows that it's there.

And, I don't know. Can I answer any questions?

(Laughter).

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Judy, I don't know if you were here when I introduced yourself, I am with the California Community Colleges.

>> Who are you with?

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: California community colleges I work with a grant program that funded the --

>> By Mr. Jack Scott who comes from Pasadena. We know him well.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Yes, Pasadena City College is a great school.

>> My son is a student there going back. He doesn't have a reading problem, he has Dyscalculia and he's going for his MBA, but Jack Scott knows that program well.

Those programs are also being cut drastically.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Oh, yeah.

>> And students getting programs from that, it is difficult. The community colleges, some, they're cutting us back. A student can get assessed at our community college without any cost. It is the only process by which we can get postsecondary folks assessed. There is no system in California that will assess them without costing a lot of money. If you go to UCLA,

they do not assess. You've got to come to them with an assessment in hand or you aren't part of that program. The lack of assessment for postsecondary adults is a travesty, because we don't have places to send people, and if they're assessed, then they may have the opportunity to go into some postsecondary education. We have to send everybody to the community college, which you need to know, okay, to get assessed because there is no other avenue to get assessed

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: Question maybe as much to Gaeir, is free assessment in community colleges standard elsewhere in the country or just in California?

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: No, not that I know of. It's something that California's been doing for quite a number of years. I'm not aware that any other state does it at a systemic level like we do. But as Judy said, we were cut over 40%, over 40% I mean, you know, that had to affect staffing because that's what we spent our money on and the LD testing now, the list is taking forever.

>> Joan, do they do assessing?

>> Can I sit next to you? I was going to say -- I'll come up there, is that all right?

>> Is that okay? I'll hand the baton off to her.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Please introduce yourself.

>> I'm Dr. Joan Levine from Irvine, California.

I'm listening to what you said, some has changed and some has not, particularly with assessment at the community colleges and also the four-year universities, it's gone. Very few are doing it, and I know I personally happen to be dyslexic and LD and ADHD myself I did not get assessed until 1981. I was married with a child. Of course, you know, old school, I was in school, but we had remedial reading, writing and math and all this other stuff and I just having to keep repeat classes and failed and I never got any services until 1981, but I was not tested at a university. By that time I was at Cal State working on my masters and my best friend said if you don't do something about getting assessed and go to the student services offices at Cal State, I will throw you off the tower Well, she's bigger than me They wouldn't do it. I was assessed by the Department of Rehabilitation.

>> GLINDA HILL: That's what I was going to say. And there's not much money.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: It's very hard to get that done.

>> That was in '81. They paid for the testing, they paid my tuition, up to a masters, they paid for my tutors, they paid for my tape recorder, which I used in class and paid for everything. But that's gone, that's gone

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: It is.

>> I don't know, at our school at Cal State, the students, I think I was hired at a role model or something, they sent all the disabilities students to me first. Well, a lot of them, when they go down, if they go down to the disabled students office, they're given a stack of papers that are blue like this and asked to fill them out. Well, if you've got a learning disability, and I know well, I have to help them fill it out and it's a stumble with some of them. It's the same thing when you go to a doctor's office and you're a new patient, they give you all this stuff fill out, if my husband wasn't with me, I couldn't do it. I heard somebody said when you're a child, they'll grow out of it. I'm still waiting.

(Laughter).

>> Is there a certain age that it goes away?

(Laughter).

>> I don't know. But, you know, whether I'm going to be turned away, they know me now, I go down to the disabled students office and uh-oh, Dr. Levine is with them. I will not let them slough off a student.

I know by law it is written that you must have a piece of paper that says you are a client of the disabled students office, you bring it to your instructor and it marks off what accommodations that you're supposed to have.

Well, what am I going to do, say no to the student? I know I've been yelled at a couple of times that you're not supposed to do that, but I know in my experience, I will not do that and help them anyway you can.

Judy, you were mentioning accommodations. It's the strangest thing. Not this year, I have too many students, I'm going into schools and observing my students, you were talking about what the teachers don't know or principals don't know or being told, I will be watching somebody struggle and say why don't you do so and so, I'm not allowed to do that. Why? The teacher aid services only at the college level. Where is it written in IDEA [INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES EDUCATION ACT] or ADA that only these accommodations are used at this grade level and these are used at the university level? That's nonsense.

I remember one student who was trying to do a book report.

Well, if he was anything like I am, thinking of what you want to say, picking up the pencil, holding it write, and I'm a terrible speller, which is common for learning disabilities, getting it down on the piece of paper, by the time I got it there, I had forgotten what I wanted to say. Use a tape recorder, you can go back to your tape recorder, stop it a million times, I've been doing this for 30 years. Teacher said no, that's only at the college level. We try to do something at Cal State to tell

these teachers, as a matter of fact my dissertation was accommodations.

And another thing, Judy, my short term memory is going -- about rights, parents not knowing. The big issue is a lot of administrators say don't tell the parent this, that or the other thing, it might cost them money. The whole issue is about dollars and cents and not about kids learning.

That's my two cents. Questions? Anybody ask me anything.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Any questions for Joan?

>> Nothing? Okay.

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: You've been so thorough, so, and very helpful. Thank you. Thank you.

>> SKIP STAHL: We have one more.

>> LIZANNE DeSTEFANO: You've been waiting very patiently.

>> I'm used to it Good evening I'm going to wish to remain anonymous because some of the things that I have to say may affect me.

I'm currently a student at the number one university about an hour and a half from here

But just to kind of start from the beginning and listening to a couple of these other speakers, I did fall through the cracks as well, in elementary and high school. Believe it or not, I actually skipped school more my senior year than I actually went. I was arrested six times. I was kicked out of my parents' house when I was 15-years-old. I've been homeless, lived on the streets, asked for spare change. I was addicted to drugs or alcohol or abused it at a very, very young age.

I started working, switching job after job after job. Six months was the longest I held a job.

I started in the hotel industry when I was 19. Found out hospitality was for me. I was a people person by that point. Within three years, I was assistant general manager. Did very well in that industry.

Felt that I would go to college when I was ready in due time, in a few years. I wanted to figure out what to be when I grew up rather than waste my money at college.

So I ended up becoming a part owner of the hotel. Sold it. Relocated to Flagler Beach, Florida, where I worked on my associate's degree at Daytona Beach college, it was a great school, I work with Dr. Kent Sharpels, got involved in Rotary, involved in the community The real estate market started to crash and I finished my associate degree with high honors, honor society, executive vice president of anything you could think of.

Took a job in Tampa, Florida working for a private investment banking firm, was making 47,5 a year, full benefits, and I still

had not been diagnosed with a learning disability, I had ADHD, I had to figure out how to make my life work.

Started the online college at the University of Florida, read a book, watch a lecture, take a multiple choice test. Failing miserably.

The access that I have to the disability resource services is there's a mediator for note taking testing, you don't have access. I didn't realize there was a disabilities resource center on campus.

After failing again and again, and I'm thinking something's wrong with the curriculum, right? I sent an e-mail to President Machen, the president with the university, what is up with this, give me 21st century learning, hands on, integrated teams, here's where to get your transcripts. Maybe you should go somewhere else.

And when I sent an e-mail to the dean, Dr. Brian Ray at the head of the college of business, I met with him, he said honey, I think you need to work a little harder, that I'm lazy and dumb, and I asked my boss to lay me off so I could live on unemployment of \$250 a week and financial aid in order to focus on my academic 100%. I accumulated my belongings and moved to Gainesville so I could focus on school and get ahead and get a job that's a best fit, I could form well and get back to society.

It has been a struggle, and I tell you, I moved there to get the resources and the accommodations, but what I'm finding is it is the people and the support that comes with that and getting involved with the disability resource center.

I did a retroactive withdrawal. I started completely over on my education (laughs), from ground one.

Now, I'm doing a specialization in education as well as a DSPA specializing in education and added, added, more IT in information -- I'm sorry, a minor in information technology and operations management.

I hope to help other students with learning disabilities in the postsecondary, you know, environment that are struggling with e-learning or even just using the technology in order to learn.

Through working with the Disability Resource Center on campus, we spearheaded a mentor/mentee which I'm the coordinator and we started an organization I believe it's only the second in the state of Florida, we call it right now, club DRC, I'm the president of that, and we are hoping to create awareness on campus, because I tell you, these professors don't have a clue on how to teach.

I'm a month into classes and I still don't have a syllabus, I don't have a textbook, I've got graduate students teaching me that have never even been taught how to teach. They don't even

have their test date scheduled so I can plan my time accordingly, because, like the other woman was saying, I have to start studying for the next coming semester while I'm currently in a semester. I need that much time to familiarize myself with the materials so I can perform at the best level.

The other thing was when I was doing the online College of Business, when I first got diagnosed, I went out and I bought every book I could find, 40 to 50 different books and I read, like, all of them, all the top, top books and I went out and bought all the assistive technology, Kurzweil, all the ones, text to speech, I spent thousands of dollars that I had saved up. Gone on these things. When I didn't even know they had them at the DRC.

Not only that, but I can't quite figure this stuff out yet. So it would be great if I could get some assistance with that as well.

I don't know. I think that's it.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Thank you. And thank you for highlighting one of my pet peeves, which is the fact that online education often is essentially a picture of text online with no interactivity, beyond an occasionally a synchronized chat and when I took a course online, I was so disappointed, I couldn't believe how bad it was, it's so less than a classroom experience and that's a big issue.

And I can see especially for people with learning disabilities, great, you get a chance to read more, oh, boy, that's really helpful.

>> And I read in the 17th percentile so it takes me a long time anyways.

I'm actually one of the students that I need something in hand. I don't like to read on the computer very much.

And at Warrington's online college of business, they actually videotape the lectures and post them online, but that's really so that those professors can have 1,000 students in their class and they still have classroom space, spell the space, but you don't have access to that teacher.

And the other colleges, even the College of Education, there is no lecture, there is no interaction, it's, "here's your book, here's your syllabus," two months in the classes, I hadn't been able to meet with my professor to give him my accommodation testing form, to get it and assigned a note taker, I still don't have that and we're halfway through the semester.

They're graduate students. They haven't been taught how to teach and what disability is all about.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: There is no such thing as a teaching certificate or teaching credential at that level, so most of the professors don't know anything about teaching unless they happen

to intuitively are good at it. That's a big issue for students for sure.

>> There was a video called "fat city" it's very updated and it gives the message across, and my professors are receptive, I don't think they actually watched it, but I tried.

(Laughter).

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: Rick Lamoy.

>> Yes, yes, there you go. Thank you.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Other questions, Commission members?

(No response).

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Thank you so much for presenting your perspective.

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: Yeah, thanks for sharing.

>> MARY: We have one more.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: One more? Great.

(Pause).

>> Hello. Where would you like me to sit?

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Right here

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: We have a place for you.

>> Thank you.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: So if you would, please, tell us your name and your affiliation and then we'll introduce ourselves to you.

>> My name is Maureen Powers, I am the senior scientist with the gem stone foundation, which is a private foundation out of California I came here to attend the LDA conference and present a poster here. I'm a former professor of psychology of neuroscience at Vanderbilt University for 20 years.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Where's Glinda? Do you hear this?

>> Hi, how are you? We visited in Washington about two years ago.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Vanderbilt Good to see you.

Okay. Jim's not here anymore, I can't pick on him.

Skip, why don't you start for a change.

>> SKIP STAHL: Skip Stahl from CAST.

>> LIZANNE DeSTEFANO: I'm Lizanne DeStefano and I'm a faculty member at the University of Illinois in Urbana- Champaign.

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: I'm Jim Wendorf and I'm with the National Center for Learning Disabilities and Vice Chair of the Commission.

>> DAVID BERTHIAUME: I'm David Berthiaume and I'm executive director of the Commission and work at the U.S. Department of Education.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: I am Gaeir Dietrich from the California community colleges.

Okay. You can speak for five minutes and then we'll have ten minutes for Q&A.

>> I just found out about this three minutes ago, so this is an opportunity I couldn't pass up, because my understanding is that part of the charge of the commission is to try to get information to college students in forms that they can understand, is that correct?

>> VICE CHAIRMAN WENDORF: Absolutely.

>> One of the things that -- I'm a vision scientist, I'm a neuroscientist, I deal with issues of vision processing in the brain and one of the things that we know is that sometimes students, of any age, and even adults, have problems coordinating the two eyes to get the information to the brain together.

If the two eyes are not coordinated, the brain gets different messages. I don't know how sophisticated you are in understanding this, so I'll just say that, and then you can ask me questions later.

What we find is that this issue transcends levels of education, starting from about grade 3. Now, prior to grade 3, children are still learning neurologically to move their eyes and we're not concerned with it, after about grade 3 and up to adulthood, if they're not moving at the same place at the same time, it's difficult to read. Bottom line.

We have data from the University of California Berkeley, we gathered maybe three, four years ago from athletes, we were going to do a program there which never obtained fruition to try to help the athletes, many of whom come to the university without adequate academic background. I don't know how else to say that.

And so what we wanted to do was to see if we to identify those children, students, and you can see I moved from K-12 -- (Please standby. Technical difficulties).

>> Athletes and non-athletes alike tend to have problems, we give them a survey, there's a 15 item survey that's been validated against clinical data, those clinical data separated out individuals, children from age nine to 18, nine to 18 who have a thing called convergency sufficiency from those who did not and they compared the responses on the services, what happened was the athletes depending on their sport, it turns out, actually tended to school highly on this survey, that is they scored in the stomach range, compared to non-athletes, I have to go back and look at the actually data, I'm going to say something that's inaccurate here, what we're doing is the athletes and non-athletes and the kids who have this problem, I believe from my research, which has now gone on ten years and has gone from grade three up through college and into adulthood, that approximately the same number of people who suffer from needing glasses, not my age but younger than my age, when you

would get -- when you get older that doesn't count any more but younger, approximately that percentage is around 15 to 20 to 25%, you can go into any school and we find that percentage is constant, test the eye chart, that's what you're going to find, it's about the same percentage that have this issue, the issue being the eyes do not work well together. Right?

It's not the same kids. You can't tell from the typical eye tests that we do now across the room, whether these kids are going to have this problem or not.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: I'm sorry, I just have to jump in here, because you're answering something that's been a pondering for me for many, many ears.

I started out in our local community colleges as a visually impaired specialist and because I was a blind and visually impaired specialist, people doing the disability model saying we want people to come and have an eye exam before we take them through the LD testing model and we had this hold machine that came out of the K-12, you look through it, it was like 80 or 90%, and I'm not exaggerating of the people I tested, remember they were going through the LD testing had this fusion problem. I actually thought my machine was broken, because, I mean, it was so high, it was rare for me not to have somebody test that, and then we would get the Lion's Club to work with them to get the glasses and that kind of thing, but nobody was able to explain it to me, but it was clearly off the charts in terms of the correlation of people who were having these LD issues

>> There are two points I would like to say in response to that. One is that we are now working in juvenile offender facilities and those -- we've spoken about this before, and those facilities have very high portions of kids, they tend to be males, but I've done things in male and female populations who have this issue, so if you're going to test them with the Keystone --

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Yes, that's what it is.

>> You would have found that 60, 70, 80% of these kids are focused out there but hard to come in there, their entire life is out in the world and not close to their faces.

That's one thing.

The other thing is that if you look at kids in the community colleges, now, I don't have a whole lot of experience in community colleges, my experience is in higher ed and K-12, I don't know much about the community colleges but I suspect that many of the children who come to the community colleges have the issue too, they're highly motivated to achieve, but they've been held back by a simple physical thing, and if it's a simple physical thing, and this is what I want to bring up, if there's a simple physical problem, there are ways to fix it and we

happen to have one. I'm not here to sell anything, I'm here to bring up a problem, but there are solutions and ours is only one, which can alleviate this issue for 80% of students.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: So I have a question. Is the Keystone, is that just not used in K-12 anymore? Because I wondered how did people not get this seen earlier?

>> Right, this is a political question. So it turns out that to require children to have a complete visual exam, which is what everyone ought to have every single year probably from the year they're born, they ought to have a visual exam every year. Have you done that? Have I done that? I'm in vision science, no. We don't do that.

(Laughter).

>> In California, we require kindergarten, second grade and fifth grade. That's it. Done. And you're done. After fifth grade, there's no further testing.

To require that we do and that, and, that test is a -- one two three four five six seven eight nine ten -- so, from about where -- from about the edge of that table to back here is where the student would be sitting and the chart would be here and you test whether they're 20/20

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Just acuity.

>> Right. What that does, I don't want to get off on a tangent here but I probably will, what that does is find kids who are myopic, who can read here and not there, those are the kids who don't suffer from vision problems because they can see up here, it's the farsighted kids and lack of coordination.

So back to the question. So there are tele binoculars, some schools require that, Kansas did that at a particular time. If we could get every child an adequate visual exam, it would be wonderful.

Practically speaking, that's not going to work for a couple of reasons. One is -- well, we don't need to go into the reasons, but it's not going to work. So when it is there, yes, it's a very valuable tool, it can help identify those children. When it's not, it's not, and unfortunately where it is not tends to be place where it's needed the most, our data shows we find not only higher incidences of these issues where there are places of juvenile offenders but places like WATS in L.A. and that's the way it is.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Thank you. Commission members, any questions for Maureen?

>> GLINDA HILL: I did want to say, Maureen, there are two efforts going on right now is an interagency group in the Federal Government, it's been there for 14 years that I know of since I've been on the group, but there's finally some corporate movement out of NIH and MCHD, and I'm at the meeting today, I

almost left the meeting for two hours to be at that meeting, but they're moving forward and really pushing because there was a GSA look -- or report.

>> DAVID BERTHIAUME: GAO report?

>> GLINDA HILL: Yes, a report on lack of screening and there's an effort to look at the screening particularly before children enter school, so at least we're seeing that.

And then the ontological association is having a conference next month and they're pushing this on making sure that kids have their complete vision exam before they enter school.

>> I applaud those efforts. They're fantastic.

>> GLINDA HILL: And the department, I've been the department's rep on that, too, for the last year and a half, but they send -- the department has at least sent a rep to be part of this.

>> That's great. And that's truly excellent.

>> GLINDA HILL: It's not me, but it is good.

>> It is good. But I'll imagine that that emphasizes K-two, probably. It's early childhood.

>> GLINDA HILL: It's actually below that because I've been pushing that.

>> I think that's super.

>> GLINDA HILL: I've been pushing in our age group, which is birth to 3 too and looking at children very young, because we look at screening young, birth, so a child will have some kind of developmental delay.

>> That's right and that's extremely important. And I don't mean to say that that's not important at all. However, I'm talking about kids third grade and beyond.

>> GLINDA HILL: And they're talking about annual.

>> Annual and every school district ought to look at kids' vision every single year.

>> GLINDA HILL: Send me an e-mail and I'll send you the notes from that meeting.

>> Good. I'll start with this. I was in a school last week and the number of children who need glasses is very high. The number of children who need some kind of visual skill training is equally high. Both of those things the children tell me I would love to have any member of the Commission, I would invite anyone to come look over my shoulder when I'm screening these kids. When I ask them how do you read when they can't even focus, it's not necessarily glasses, it might be binocular vision.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Thank you Maureen. You say you're in California?

>> I am.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: One thing I would be interested, if you wanted to look at the cape head, California association of

postsecondary educators for disability, we have a conference in the fall, if you wanted to submit a presentation proposal, I think people would be very interested in this topic.

>> I would be pleased to do that. Thank you very much. Thank you for your time.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Okay. Thank you so much.

Did we do it?

>> SKIP STAHL: Lock the door.

>> CHAIRWOMAN DIETRICH: Thank you everyone.

Thank you, Lisa, whose fingers were flying.

(End of meeting)

(8:11 p.m. ET)

\* \* \* \* \*

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