

## Ninth Grade Counts-2

Mary:

Slide 1: Ok, we'll try this again. Good afternoon everyone and welcome to the Smaller Learning Community's webinar on Ninth Grade Transition. Sorry about that, but I had forgotten to get the recording started. This topic is first in a series of webinars that focused on the ninth grade. Why? Because ninth grade counts big time. We're here to share our rationale for developing a new resource, [inaudible00:01:03] opportunity to hear from grantees you have developed successful transition programs and to also hear from you, our participants. We had over 140 people registered, so welcome to all of you. You're from all over the country and we're so glad to have you.

Slide 2: First, let's get a little housekeeping out of the way. It's going to be very important that you mute your phone lines throughout the presentation so that we don't have any background noise. Secondly, if you have a question, please type it in the chat room feature and click enter. For those of you who aren't familiar with chat rooms, if you look on the left-hand side of your screen you'll see the chat space and right below it is a textbox and you can type your comment or question in there, and the just to the right of the textbox click on the little bubble and it will be posted for everybody to see. Some of the questions that you ask might be very specific to the presentations that we're going to share with you today. Those questions we're going to ask publicly at the time of the presentation when they're over with. The last piece of housekeeping, if you're disconnected from the webinar or the conference link please contact our technical support at the number thought you see on the screen and they will help you get back and connected again. The one last thing to tell you is that you'll be able to access these slides on the SLCP website within five days of the webinar. Just jot down that website address there and you can see the slides again.

Slide Three: Who are we? We are the technical assistance team from the organizations who are delivering technical assistance to all the SLCP grantees across the country. The Millennium Group International is located in Washington, D.C. We at the Great Schools Partnership are located in Portland, Maine. CSSR the Center for Secondary School Redesign is located in Rhode Island. We've all enjoyed meeting you, many of you, in person at recent projects directors' meetings.

Slide 4 and 5: Now I'd like to introduce today's presenters. First off will be Dr. Leslie Rennie-Hill from the other Portland, out in Oregon. She's a consultant for the TMG team. Leslie's research on the ninth grade helped inform the development of our tool that we are presenting today. She'll provide us with some compelling data about why ninth grade is both a minefield and a pivotal year for students. Next, we

have Jill Able. She is the SLC site coordinator for the Lincoln, Nebraska schools. She and her colleague Josh Cramer, who is the district director of Federal programs, will be sharing their approach to improving success in ninth grade.

Slide 6: We also have Darlene Bruton who is from Prince George's county in Maryland. She's the project director there, and she will be focusing on the district summer bridge program and their strong collaboration with feeder middle schools.

Slide 7: Stephen Abbot, who is the director of communications for the Great Schools Partnership, will be the one introducing us to the new guide and engaging us in reflection on how the guide might be useful to you as well as answering questions that arise from the guide when he presents it.

Slide 8: Finally, I'm Mary Hastings. I'm from the Great Schools Partnership and I'll be your facilitator today. Again, I want to welcome everybody and thank you for being here today.

Slide 9: Why we created this webinar? There are four good reasons. First, it's to introduce the new resource for supporting ninth grade success which we are working on now. Second, is to share the evidence-based ninth grade transition strategies. Then, to learn from fellow grantees, Lincoln and Prince George's county as well as Leslie's presentation, on how they're engaging in ninth grade work. Then, to start a dialog on this critical school-improvement topic.

Slide 10: We do want to engage everyone in the conversation in the today about improving high school transitions for all ninth graders. We know it's a critical time in a student's life and it can be a veritable minefield so some students, but it is an incredibly important year.

Slide 11: Let me just go over the goals for today's webinar. The first one is to share proven strategies that will help you accelerate ninth grade learning and put your students back on track to on time graduation. We know this is especially important because so many of our ninth grade students arrive at high school already off the track to success and ninth grade is the time when we have to move them forward.

Slide 12: The second goal is to introduce research that will help you reflect on ninth grade policies and practices and that will be Leslie's presentation.

Slide 13: Then, we want to introduce a resource designed to help you take a more proactive approach to ninth grade success. You'll be hearing in both presentations some of the ways that the two districts did exactly that.

Slide 14: Then, the last goal is to clarify the role of the project director in ninth grade work and to talk about sustainability beyond the life of the grant.

Slide 15: You probably will want to ask some specific questions of the project directors who are presenting the work in their districts to see what their specific roles were. This slide has a quote from the National High School Center which should launch us off into thinking about why this is so important. Leslie is going to do a review and summary of why ninth grade counts so much. Leslie, it's yours.

Leslie:

Slide 16: Thank you, Mary. I'm glad we're doing this webinar. I know it can be challenging without seeing one another given that we all know that so much communication is nonverbal. I really second the request to send in your questions and comments. We've already talked about the agenda, but I'll just review it again. It's really in three parts.

Slide 17: First, we'll share what we know and have learned through research and experienced in schools, a combination of the research we conducted last year along with other studies. Then, we'll hear about ninth grade work in the field from our guest grantee presenters. These folks also contributed to the session we did at the project director's meeting last November in D.C. I know and I think many of you know on the call that they have many valuable insights to offer. Finally, we'll share the evolving resource, our attempt to pull together best practices and research into a user friendly guide.

Slide 18 & 19: First, let's talk about what we learned through our research study of ninth grade. The messages students receive in ninth grade and the self belief they adopt can define their high school years. We know that a school's ninth grade reflects its equity culture and the assumption that adults in the school have about who's likely to succeed. The messages students receive regarding expectations and opportunities can really define their high school years. When ninth grade is organized as a gatekeeper opportunities and support for students are limited and unequally distributed. When ninth grade is organized as a springboard, opportunities for student success really do open up. Ninth grade performance is highly predictive of a student's likelihood of graduating.

Slide 20: What happens in ninth grade gives students a strong message about their personal capability and value, whether they can succeed, whether there's help available, whether they'll be embarrassed if they ask for help, whether they're really worth someone's time and attention.

Slide 21 & 22: The further a student falls behind, the more difficult it is to catch up. We all know this. Losing core credits in the ninth grade quickly puts students off track. Through our research and that of others, we've learned how critical it is for

students to pass their core courses in ninth grade and the importance of what happens after a student fails a course, whether they can catch up and get back on track or whether they fall further behind. It's not only failing a course. It's also when a failure happens what systems kick in to address that student's needs.

Here's a startling fact about [inaudible00:10:26] repeat the ninth grade but only 10-15% of repeaters go on to graduate. This statistic gives me pause. The decision to have a student repeat ninth grade can be based on good intentions and a desire to ensure future high school success. Yet, the message that's conveyed to the student by the decision to make a student repeat ninth grade is such a strong message of failure. It seems to counteract the intent and cause unintended consequences.

Slide 23 & 24: Further, in high poverty schools, the data are compelling. Ninth grade attrition is far more pronounced in high poverty urban schools. If you're African-American or Latino, we all know this one, ninth underperformance and drop-out rates are much more pronounced.

The damage is really done in the ninth grade. Most high school drop-outs fail 25% of their core courses in the ninth grade, very predictive of dropping out if they fail those courses. Interesting, they may continue to come to school and not drop out until later years, particularly if some of the social events that go with high school continue, so they think of themselves as a sophomore or a tenth grader.

Slide 25: However, once off track, the students tend to get further behind academically and they can get overwhelmingly discouraged. However, there is hope. In schools with strong ninth grade programs including focused attention on successful transitions from eighth grade researchers have found a drop-out rate of 8%. In schools without such programs, the drop-out rate was 24%. Again, the data are compelling. Some organizations have developed an on-track measure to help identify those students needing attention and to inform principals, teachers, counselors, and central office administrators about the effectiveness of the eight to ninth grade transition and the ninth graders' academic success. It's really a system measure too.

Slide 26: The Consortium on Chicago School Research at the University of Chicago was the first to develop on-track measure that's been adapted now by many districts. I think many of you have heard about this. The Chicago Measure identifies students as on-track if they have not failed more than one semester course and have accumulated the credits for promotion to tenth grade. You get lots more information on this from the CCSR website that's listed there and will be available to you online.

- Slide 27: What we've learned. As we noted earlier, as part of our SLC technical assistance last year we conducted research on the ninth grade programs at six large diverse urban high schools.
- Slide 28: Our research consisted of site visits, interviews, and school observations as well as an analysis of their achievement and behavioral data. This is what we learned.
- Slide 29: We definitely learned and had confirmed that ninth grade transition is the highly vulnerable point in the educational pipeline. We found that the ninth grade can either be a gatekeeper to opportunity or a springboard for success. That is, it can be a gatekeeper that rations and limits opportunities or it can be designed as a springboard to academic success.
- Slide 30: When we identified a high school's ninth grade to be a gatekeeper staff generally assumed that all students enter school at roughly the same level of academic ability and they designed courses as if all students are ready for high school work and life. We also found that staff believed that the school sets the table, but they can't make the students dine really. They provide the learning opportunities and it's up to the students to take the initiative to get what they need. We also found in these kinds of schools that many staff acted as if only some of the students are college material who are worth their time and attention, that only some students should take more challenging and rigorous course work.
- Slide 31: When we found a high school's ninth grade to be a springboard, it was a different picture. Staff assumed all students needed personalized attention and support to succeed. They had estimated systems to analyze data to determine each student's skill level, tailor course work, and normalize extra support. Normalize is the keyword there, so that the student doesn't lose face if they need to access it. They met regularly to plan strategies to remediate student failures and proactively maximized the likelihood that all students would be successful.
- Teachers and counselors also expressed their belief that adults need to guide students to make good choices and to encourage students to stretch to reach their potential. That's really an effort of teachers, adults, and students together to help students access the opportunities that are there. Also, we found in a springboard approach that evidence was obvious throughout the school reflecting the belief that all students can succeed academically and go on to college, that each student is worth time and attention.
- Slide 32: Going on on the gatekeeper side. In gatekeeper schools, academic courses and support for students who are struggling or need extra help to understand or catch up are separate and largely uncoordinated. For example, no clear connection or accountability exists between an algebra class in a school and a

generic offering Wednesday afternoon for tutoring that's available to students where that tutoring may even be offered by juniors or seniors rather than teachers.

In gatekeepers schools, more resources are allocated to prestige courses, like AP and honors class, and older in eleventh and twelfth grade students. By resources, we mean both teachers, experienced teachers, curriculum materials, field trip opportunities, whatever.

In gatekeeper schools, courses, schedules, and curriculum are typically are built around teacher needs and desires. Often, teachers equate what and whom they teach with their status within a school, so less experienced teachers are assigned to ninth grade. In terms of a schedule, coaches often have their planning period at the end of the day to facilitate their coaching demands and consequently minimizing their likely availability to students after [inaudible00:17:44].

In gatekeeper schools, teachers tend to work more in isolation. They attend departmental meetings as needed or staff meetings as needed. By and large, they tend to work on their own courses in their own rooms.

Slide 33: In contrast, in springboard schools, academic courses and student supports for them are integrated to a larger degree. We found [inaudible00:18:16] expected that at some point a student would to get more explanation or catch up and that help would be clearly accessible for students.

In springboard schools, adequate resources and staff are allocated to support incoming students and even prioritized as in cases where particularly talented teachers who can engage reluctant learners in content are shifted intentionally to the ninth grade.

In springboard schools, courses, schedules, and curriculum are constructed around student needs identified as students enter ninth grade or sometimes before and they are adjusted as student achievement, attendance, and behavioral data indicate adjustments would improve student success.

In springboard schools, finally, teachers collaborate routinely in small learning communities, in professional learning communities, in departments. We found that teachers often collaborate initially in a more remedial way by focusing on student needs and behaviors that have been problematic and require immediate attention. Then, as teams develop and collaboration deepens and grows more comfortable, teams often move to include a more proactive approach where they're also rethinking what they're teaching, how they're teaching, and in what ways they can generate the most student success.

- Slide 34: I'd like you to please take moment to think about your approach to ninth graders in your school or district. Do you think your school is operating largely as a gatekeeper or a springboard? I'd like to also note that oftentimes you can be doing both at the same time. There can be some aspects that are gatekeeping and some that are springboards. That's just part of the nature of what we're all about. part of our rationale for developing a ninth grade guide is to share what we've gleaned from our own and others' research and to help high school educators be strategic and thoughtful about their approach to be more springboard like and proactive in their efforts to support the success of all students.
- Slide 35, 36, 37: Our ninth grade study affirmed for us the critical importance of district and school culture, the importance of what people actually do each day as they interact with students and adults, and the degree to which the culture demonstrates equitable practices for all students, not the same one-size-fits-all type of practices, but rather differentiated practices guided by student needs and abilities that can lead to equitable opportunities to learn and equitable success at meeting standards.
- Slide 38: We also learned that success is driven by the courage and commitment of passionate school leaders. This is hard work. It's shaking the tree. It's hard work and it does take courage and a focus on what students need to move through it. Schools that take a proactive approach to ninth grade do get better results.
- Slide 39: I think I'm on target here, but I'm not sure. We learned that when you take a proactive approach to working with ninth grade students by knowing their entering abilities, meeting their needs, and keeping on an eye on any strategies likely to ensure future post secondary success that that combination really works. We also have learned that when teachers plan together regularly, review data, and modify practice students' needs are more likely to be addressed. We found strong correlations between consistent teacher collaboration and increased student success.
- Slide 40: We saw benefits derived from, I'm sorry my thing is not moving, there. We saw benefits derived from effective ninth grade programs nested in supportive policies and adequate resources. Finally, we've seen the positive impact that occurs when supports for students are systemic and integrated with core content area courses.
- Slide 41: That's pretty much a summary of what we found, and I think it's time to respond to any questions you might have.
- Mary: All right. Leslie, thank you so much for sharing the research with us and helping us cross the bridge to practices in the field and the development of our tool

which we'll be sharing later. Before we move forward, let's see, there is a question here from one of our participants. She asks, "How do you get school leaders to understand the importance of the issues and equity? Many things they know, yet the school's reflect a different picture." Can you talk a little bit about that for us?

Leslie: I think it's a combination of ... it can't be done in a sermon. It's best done by using data and showing what's happening. I think one of the strongest things can be listening to student voices, doing a student focus [inaudible00:23:59] minority student in an AP class describing what that's like, and who gets extra helps and who doesn't, or what it's like to walk in and have someone say, "Are you sure you're in the right place," many of those micro abrasions. I think that actually painting a picture of what it's like for students who's succeeding, who's not, both with achievement data and with student voice, can really make a difference. I, personally, will never forget a young woman, African-American, in a focus group who said very quietly, "I can't tell you what it means to me to have a teacher show me that I'm not worth their time or attention." When you put it in a student voice it gives people pause. The other thing is just showing the numbers, numbers of students in AP classes and honors classes, not only the number of students who are passing algebra but who are they. Who's succeeding and who's not and really painting that clear picture. I think that's the strongest way.

Mary: Ok, thank you. There's another question here. What exactly do we mean when we say systemic supports? Do you want to talk a little bit about that?

Leslie: Right, right. I think anyone who works in a system knows how hard it is to be the school that's out on a limb and you're going against the tide. Systemic supports are things like eighth to ninth grade transition, transition programs over the summer. How are the middle schools and the high schools collaborating? Is central really helping to have that happen? Data analysis and availability, how flexible are those data systems and can they be queried so that the teachers can get what they need to respond to individual students? What's the relationship between the people who are analyzing the data centrally and having to do the compliance work compared with the ability of principals and teachers to make requests in the system? Really, how flexible that is understand that not every site is going to be able to approach something in the same way. Again, is equity by the exact same FTE allotment at every school or are there some places where things need to be differentiated? You can't do it alone. That's a quick way.

Mary: Right. Ok, thank you, Leslie. I know there're a couple of other questions here, and I think what I'm going to do is ask Leslie if she can go on the chat room and respond to questions specific to her presentation and we'll move on to the next presenter so that they have a chance to share their work too. Thank you so much again.

Leslie: Ok, my pleasure.

Mary: We're going to move on now to Lincoln High School, Lincoln Public Schools, I'm sorry, in Lincoln, Nebraska. I would like to welcome the team from Lincoln Public Schools, Josh Cramer and Jill Able.

Josh:

Slide42: Hello, everybody. This is Josh Cramer and my role in this is the supervisor of Federal programs for the Lincoln Public Schools.

Jill: I'm Jill Able. I am the site coordinator at Lincoln High School that implements the programs we're going to talk about today.

Josh: First, we're just going to start with a little bit of background information about Lincoln Public Schools, Lincoln High School, and then we're going to get into our strategies rather quickly since we have a short time period. Lincoln, Nebraska, is a city of about 250,000 people. It's kind of transitioning from a big town into a small city.

Slide 43: We've actually for about the last decade have begun to see some of the things that come along with becoming a larger metropolitan area. The Lincoln Public School district is a PK-12 district that has about 36,000 students, both I think a mid-sized district. Lincoln High School is the oldest high school in Lincoln, Nebraska, and it has been the largest high school from time to time. Lincoln High School is the grantee for our Smaller Learning Communities project. I went ahead and up a slide here about a little more specific information about Lincoln High. Its 2011-2012 enrollment you can see about 1,500 students, about 26% mobility rate with an average daily attendance of 90% or you could say nonattendance rate of about 10% each day. The poverty rate of the high school is 61%, and it's about 50% minority.

Slide 44: For the 2009-2010 school year, our graduation rate at Lincoln High was 66%. You can see when we break out the achievement gap between the students that graduation rate for our Asian students is 86%, white 72%, and then we drop off in graduation rates for our African-American, Native American, and Latino students. This was the year when we were really confronted with some hard realities about graduation rates and drop-out rates.

Slide 45: It also was the second year of implementation for our Smaller Learning Communities grant at Lincoln High School. For the 2010-2011 school year, you see this jump from 66% to 73%. We believe that is largely because of some of the innovations and changes and cost objectives in our Smaller Learning Communities grant. Many things started to come together at that point in time

that Jill's going to talk about here in a minute. You can see we had gains in each category. This was a lot of hard work by teachers and administrators and district office leaders to get to this point, and we're very, very proud of that and we're hoping to sustain that or even bump again at the end of this school year.

Slide 46: With that, I guess, I would like to go into some of the specific things that went into this. Jill?

Jill: All right. At Lincoln High, we have five big initiatives that are listed below that we would have an effect on ninth grade students. The first one I'm going to talk about is teaming. We have all ninth and tenth grade students that are on a team. Teams consist somewhere between about 60-100 students. They have one administrator for all of those students, and then consistent teachers for English, science, and social studies. Each team meets two to three times a week. They discuss attendance, interventions, curriculum, and then instructional strategies to implement into their classrooms. We also have teaming administrators that oversee those teams. They meet once a month to ensure teaming strategies are consistent across the teams.

Slide 47, 48, 49, 50:

These meetings focus on student failure data, implementing study skills in the classrooms, and then data is collected and analyzed every four to five weeks. I'm going to have Josh go down to a slide here that shows you the data that we collect. When we look at this data, as you can see every mid quarter and quarter, so we're constantly looking at data, failures, what courses students are failing, and then talking about what interventions we can use to make those numbers decrease.

Slide 46: The second intervention that we just started this year at Lincoln High is advisory. All ninth through twelfth graders are in advisory for 30 minutes each week. Advisory teachers will loop with the students, so if they start with them in ninth grade they'll have the same group all the way till they graduate. As they progress through the advisor program, they'll participate in a series of activities and lessons. These lessons are aimed at equipping students with the knowledge and skills for academic success, both in and beyond high school.

Slide 47 & 48 To measure the success of advisory, we started collecting survey data. We've given that in the fall and we'll give that again in the spring, and then we'll do that each year and continue to look at the effectiveness of advisories.

The next two programs go hand in hand. We have the summer bridge program, and then we also have Link Crew. The bridge program was implemented in the summer of 2010, so we've done two summers and this'll be our third to start for incoming ninth graders. It's available to all incoming ninth graders. We

communicate that to students and parents through a letter home. We also do presentations at the feeder middle schools trying to build that partnership with middle schools as well. We also send a special invitation. Once we meet with middle school counselors and the administrators, we find out students that are at risk of failing in high school and we send a special invitation to those students that were identified as at risk for failing so that they are doubly invited to the program.

Slide 47: We do the program for a half day every day for one week in early August, so about two weeks before school starts. They participate in a variety of activities throughout that week. As you can see from the Links Bridge Program picture that Josh is putting up for you we do some academic focus things, they're building a bridge. They are doing some science terms, and then there's some physical education. This is actually an amazing program that [inaudible00:33:20] students to introduce them to all the departments that Lincoln High has to offer.

Slide 50: One of the big highlights that a lot of students initially come to the Bridge Program is for the high ropes course. We do a team building course where students work together, there it is, there're pictures there, work together to complete a course. They do an individual high ropes course. You'll see at the bottom there looks like they're in a lake there, and actually a creek, they were doing a science project, and then they also will be involved in some English by having them write about what was found doing that project.

Slide 47: Each year we've had about 80 students out of a class of about 300 that attended the Bridge Program. Due to the fact we were happy that we were getting about a third of the freshman class to attend, but we wanted to have an impact on all freshman. What we did is we researched and we found a program called Link Crew. This was a program to improve the transition for all freshman. It started this last fall of 2011-2012. It's a high school transition program that welcomes freshman and makes them feel comfortable throughout the first year of their high school experience. It's a year-round program and it also is for all students, so it has a larger effect than the Bridge Program.

A key feature of the program is that it focuses on training mentors from eleventh and twelfth grades. They are called Link Crew leaders. They guide members of the freshman class to discover what it takes to be successful during the transition to high school and help you facilitate that success. By using students as mentors the Link Crew program promotes leadership development, so not only are those freshmen getting benefits but the upperclassmen are getting leadership benefits as well.

Four components of the Link Crew program. We have the first freshmen first day which is high school orientation. Then, we do academic follow-ups through

advisory where Link Crew members actually go to advisories and teach lessons. We've done that three times this year and we'll do that two more times. Our goal next year is to do it every month. We also have social follow-ups, invite them to footballs games and do some other things like that. Leader initiated contacts. We'll just have three leaders check in on freshmen to make sure that they're doing ok, if they have any questions throughout the school year.

Slide 51: Let's see, data. We collected data to compare from the previous year to this year. We looked at referral, suspensions, in-school suspensions, and attendance. We had a decrease in referrals from 222 to 127 when you compare semester one of last year to semester one of this year. We also had about half cut in suspensions and in-school suspensions.

Slide 52: We had about 2% increase in attendance from after implementing this program. Those are our specific programs to help freshmen transition at the beginning of the school year, and then, of course, throughout. There's that data Josh is showing you there. One more thing, is partnerships that we have. We have a partnership with an afterschool program called Lighthouse. They come in four days a week and it's like a homework help zone, but they have tutors available to help students as well. We had on average about 50 students that come each day and are affected by this program. We found that it's been a great partnership with Lighthouse.

Josh: Just to kind of close this formal session here about what Lincoln High School's been able to do here in Lincoln, Nebraska, I didn't say this at the beginning and I'm looking at some of your comments. Lincoln High was designated as a persistently low achieving high school here in Lincoln, that wonderful category of being in the lowest 5% of schools in the state and meeting some other requirements. That gives you an idea of where Lincoln High was at the beginning of this project.

Just some final thoughts and some things that have helped move this project along with the coordination of the school. Lincoln High School did not take naturally to the grant's management process. The first year was a little bit rough, and through a partnership with the district office and some folks here in my department we were able to build a strong bond and learn about all the wonderful grants management things. We actually had to transition our evaluator between year one and two of the grant. We had to get a new independent evaluator because we did not feel like we were getting the kind of feedback loop that would've helped us be the most successful. That's been a great move.

Now we have in our independent report a lot of policy recommendations and things that we can do that actually will help us sustain the program and continue

[inaudible00:37:49] successful in those things that are not successful. In fact, on the 22nd of March, next week, we will have a strategic plan about the future of the Smaller Learning Communities initiatives at Lincoln High School, so that will be district folks.

Second to the last is the integration of work. We also were fortunate. Lincoln High is one of three of the high schools here in town that are part of the high school graduation initiative grant, so we've been able to augment resources with two Federal grants. We really think over the course of the next couple years we're going to take that graduation rate through the roof for all of our students.

Finally, sustainability. I already mentioned that we're working to sustain those things that work and in those things that do not. Because remember, sustainability is a process of addition and subtraction. Thank you.

Mary: Thank you, Josh and Jill. Lots of great information there about your programs. Folks are asking a lot of questions, thank you participants for doing that. I'm going to just ask Josh and Jill to respond to a couple of the questions publicly, and then I'll ask if the two of them could maybe respond to some of the ones that are up on the chat room now on the chat room itself. One of the first questions that came up was asking if people could get a copy of your survey to assess whether advisory lessons are effective. I don't know whether there's a way that you could provide for folks, maybe if you want to send us we could get it out to all the participants.

Jill: Absolutely, we could do that.

Mary: Ok. Then, a couple of questions more about strategies. What steps do you take to motivate your teachers to support these programs and changes?

Jill:

Slide 53: When I started, as Josh said, we had a rough start for the year. It was about building relationships with teachers for me, talking about the importance of what we need to do for students, showing them the data, this is where we are, this is where we want to be. Anything you can ...?

Josh: I think the biggest part of the process was making sure that the teachers and administrators not feel like something was being done to them but that they were working in partnership to do something. One example of that [inaudible00:40:17] that was implemented, and so that was a real strength. Folks knew what they were getting into. We also had a variance vote to get the advisories rolling on a school-wide level because we have an education association here that is strong and we value that. The staff had to vote on it.

Mary: Exactly. Another question was asking about students. How do you get them to stay for afterschool tutoring and do you provide transportation for them?

Jill: The afterschool tutoring that I mentioned is voluntary, but we also actually have an academic resource center that I didn't talk about. Administrators actually assign students there. They get one assignment if they don't show up for that reassignment. We actually have Saturday school and administrators contact parents. If students don't sign up for Saturday school, they are actually suspended until a parent meeting is held. There's a really [inaudible00:41:09] process that students go through to make sure that they're getting the help that they need.

Mary: You make it very obvious that there's a high expectation there for their participation.

Jill: Yes, we do.

Mary: I'm sorry, Josh, did you want to add something?

Josh: No.

Mary: All right, I think then I'm going to move us along. For those of you who asked some of the other questions, we'll Josh and Jill respond. I know a number of you have asked for copies of some of their material. Again, anything that you've asked for if Josh and Jill can send that along to us we'll make sure that they're sent out to the participants.

Slide 54: We're going to move along now to, and thanks again, Josh and Jill, we're going to move along to Prince George's County and Darlene Bruton's work there. We'd like to welcome her, and we'd also want to let you know that her colleague, Jessica Gitlis, who's the SLC program manager of the Duval High School, will be responding to your questions and comment during Darlene's presentation. Once again, feel free to put them up there. Darlene?

Darlene:

Slide 55 & 56: Thank you, Mary. Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Darlene Bruton and I am an instructional supervisor in the college and career ready office in Prince George's County and I am the SLC project director for the SLC grant in five our high schools. Before I get started, I'd like to tell you a little bit about our district. Prince George's County public schools is one of the largest school districts in the nation. We over 123,000 students, 205 schools. We have 18,000 employees of which about 9,000 are teachers and 1.6 billion dollar annual budget. Our district serves a diverse student population from urban, suburban, and rural communities. Blacks account for about 67.4% of the total population and

Hispanics about 22.6%. Our district serves students from over 144 countries, speaking over 168 languages. For the current school year, the five SLC schools have a total enrollment of close to 8,000 students. Overall, our district has about 37,000 high school students.

Slide 57: Nation wide, about 7,000 students drop out of high school every day. Over one-third of all drop-outs are lost in ninth grade. In Prince George's County, we recognized the importance of identifying students who are showing signs that they are at risk of dropping out of high school. We want to make these students to interventions to get them back on track, and it's also equally as important that we monitor student progress.

Far too many ninth graders arrive at high school academically ill prepared, and some of them have already become disengaged before they reach the high school. All of the SLC schools are using a singular approach to ninth grade transition. We have increased ninth grade middle school collaboration. We summer bridge programs in all of the schools. All of the schools have grade level advisories with curriculum. All of the schools offer collaborative planning. Most of them offer interdisciplinary and some of them also offer content planning as well.

Slide 58: Sorry, it doesn't want to move for some reason. My apologies. All of the schools are using data and data is used throughout the school by teachers, administrators. We're also spending a great deal of time building teacher capacity and our focus is on instructional practice. Our overall goal is being able to close the achievement gaps of our students by grade 10.

Slide 59: In the next slides, I'm going to speak to you briefly about what we're doing with middle school collaboration, our summer bridge program, and our district efforts to provide data to support the work in our schools.

Since the start of the SLC grant, the schools have taken a multifaceted approach to ninth grade transition. At times, it has been an uphill battle to change the mindset and operational dysfunction that has existed around this process. From the middle school level, there was little incentive to get involved in the transition as the students were preparing to exit middle school. From the high school level, the focus had been just on getting students registered, making sure they had the right number of classes, but not a lot else in that process. In an effort to bridge some of the gaps in the transition and to provide a better experience for students, parents and teachers, the SLC schools have implemented several strategies.

All of the schools visit the feeder middle schools and have developed a relationship with feeder middle schools. The high schools go down and

participate in the middle school PTSA meeting which are the parent-teacher meetings. We have eighth grade parent information night. We still have articulation meetings which are about scheduling and getting students in the right classes, but now there's more of a focus on looking at the data.

Slide 60: We have transition team meetings which involve the principals from both the middle and high school level as well as guidance counselors and a team that will meet and talk about data and instruction, both for the current eighth graders and the ninth graders who've already arrived in our schools. We have middle school summer programs, freshman orientations by all students. Again, our goal here is being proactive in our planning, preparation in the programs that we offer.

Slide 61: All of these strategies are undertaken to ensure that all stakeholders are involved in the transition process. This is really imperative regardless of the strategy that's being used.

We're very proud of Jump Start to Graduation program. This program is a transition program for middle school to high school. We know that the transition can be very challenging, so we take a great deal of effort to try to make this program help the students to make a smooth transition. The program is designed to assist students to successfully transition both academically and socially, and we want them to set their sights on graduation four years later.

Students are introduced to key high school staff during the program. Many of the teachers that they will have in ninth grade actually work in the Jump Start Program. Students get a preview of the ninth grade curriculum for English IX and Algebra I, and they begin to establish a rapport with their teachers and peers. They learn the importance of setting goals related to their college and career plans in ninth grade.

With our Jump Start Programs, all of our schools, five SLC schools, have this program. The program is a 15-day program that meets four days a week, five hours a day. We don't have the program on Friday because our district is closed on Fridays during the summer.

Slide 62: It's open to all rising ninth graders and we focus on academic and social preparation. We have a curriculum that we have written for Jump Start. It's about project-based learning. The students do a project that's based on the environment, applying the math and English skills that they have studied during the course of the Jump Start Program. The students are able to get service learning because they are doing a project that's based on the environment. We have a college visit. We usually take the students to the University of Maryland, and they participate in a challenge team day. That's been very, very effective.

As part of Jump Start, we also have an advisory period that we've broken out into units that we think are important for ninth graders. We end our program with a gallery walk and closing celebration that we invite district and other people to come to see the good work that the students have done. Based on all the feedback that we've gotten for Jump Start, both teachers and students really, really enjoy the program and feel that it has benefitted them in their transition. I think a good thing about the Jump Start Program is that the professional development and the instructional strategies of the teachers learn to participate in a program are also carried forward in the school year.

Slide 63: What are the results? Now we're going to look at Duval's first cohort of students. These students are now in the eleventh grade. The data shows that this first cohort of students is making steady progress in several areas.

Slide 64: If we look at the slide the promotion rate, we looked at it from ninth to tenth grade. As you can see, the Jump Start students are in the lighter color, they have shown in the first year 82% promotion rate versus 47% for the non-Jump Start students. This trend also continued when they were promoted from grade 10 to 11. The Jump Start students was 91% and the non-Jump Start students 50%. I also like to note that the promotion rate of the non-Jump start students also improved by 3%.

Slide 65: Next, I'd like to share with you data on the high school assessments. This is our state exam that all students are required to pass before they graduate from high school. The tests are offered in Algebra I, English 10, biology and Ellison government.

One of the district's goals is that all of our students will pass the high school assessments by the end of tenth grade. We admit that there's still work to be done but the HSA pass rate during grade 10 for Duval's first cohort was quite significant. If we look at Algebra I, we see that the Jump Start students have a 71% pass rate versus 50% for the non-Jump Start students.

Slide 66, 67, 68: In English 10, 62% versus 47%. In biology, 67% versus 51%. Then, in Ellison government which is the last high school assessment test, the Jump Start students had an 80% pass rate and the non-Jump Start students a 59% pass rate. Results from this year's test, which have already been given in October and January, still show these continuous gains. Our students will have one last opportunity to take the HSA's in April of this year.

Slide 69: The next set of slides that I'm going to share with you is sampling of Duval's current tenth graders which will [inaudible00:53:52] in Jump Start. The average

days you can see are different. Jump Start students are actually attending school more frequently.

Slide 71: No discipline referrals for the Jump Start students.

Slide 72 & 73: GPA's we're still working. We're getting those kids who need a lot of work, but as you can see, the Jump Start students are still at least four-tenths of a percent better. Their pass rate for Algebra I is 53% compared to 42%.

Slide 74: In order to monitor student progress, it's essential to have access to reliable data. The district has taken the lead to ensure that schools have the necessary data to support the specific needs of all students. Additionally, our district offers principals, leadership teams, teachers, and other faculty members ongoing professional development to ensure that they are equipped with the skills to analyze data and use the results to serve the academic and behavioral needs of our students.

The district provides a variety of data from multiple sources for use by district and school level staff. The data warehouse is a one-stop repository of district data designed to help monitor and track the performance of schools, administrators, teachers, and students. To specifically monitor rising ninth graders and freshmen during their ninth grade year, the district provides a freshman watch list and quarterly success reports.

This first chart that you see here is the freshman watch list. You'll see that it is a color coded chart. The orange shows a student with attendance issues; the blue, students with grade issues; and the yellow, student with both attendance and grade issues. We receive this watch list in the summer. This is data on the incoming ninth graders. This is just an additional set of data that we receive. It allows our staff over the summer to continue trying to refine the schedules of these students to ensure that they are in the right classes and that we have been able to identify interventions early.

This freshman watch list has changed in that this year now all the schools have data walls that has index cards of all the ninth graders on the wall separated by basic proficient and advanced. These are being used in collaborative planning and other data talks that the schools are having. We get this information and it provides us a lot as we move to get these kids ready to start high school.

Slide 75: The chart is our quarterly success report. While you don't see any orange on our example here, the same thing applies in that the orange is for attendance, the blue for grades, and our students with both attendance and grade issues are in yellow. The schools get these quarterly as well. Again, this helps them to monitor

student progress, so assess interventions and to make the modifications that they need.

Slide 76: What needs to be done to successfully transition students from middle school to high school? Let's face it, ninth grade is the make-or-break-it year. Our students arrive at our high schools with their own set of unique needs. Some are prepared to meet the rigors of high school, and others are really not prepared at all. We must meet these students where they are and do everything in our power to help them experience academic success.

While the SLC schools have put many strategies in place which will ultimately have a positive impact on student achievement, we're not there yet. Successfully transitioning ninth graders to high school requires a culture shift. We must continue to forage a strong partnership with our feeder middle schools, continue to offer summer bridge programs for the rising freshman and make sure that we basically reassess after each program to ensure that we're making the necessary modifications to make the program better every year. Have those rich data discussions at both the district and school level because this is how you will begin to make change in your school, and you will be able to begin to see your students progress. Build teacher capacity in their ability to make data driven decisions. Schedule collaborative planning for teachers, and use advisories to build relationships.

Speaker ?: Darlene's off.

Mary:

Slide 77: Thank you so much, Darlene. I think that you've really helped us see both what you've done and the outcomes as well just as Josh and Jill did. There are a few questions that haven't been answered yet, and I wanted to just share those with you. One was talking about the focus of the professional development for building teacher capacity to do this work in the school. You mentioned that, but this questioner wants to know what the focus of the professional development was and how did you involve teachers in determining the focus?

Darlene: Our professional development is all about building teacher capacity to improve instructional practice we have professional development around the framework for teaching. That's a big, actually a district, professional development that all schools do, but in the SLC schools it has been a major focus in helping teachers to improve their practice.

We have professional development around technology integration because we know that in our schools students are bored sitting in classrooms where people are lecturing to them. We actually currently are running an SLC teacher technology institute where teachers are learning technology, they're practicing

it, they're going back into their classrooms and using it themselves and with their students. I'm trying to think of all the other types of professional development that we do.

All of the schools actually have professional development plans that they put together that are based on what they identify as the needs of their students. Some of them vary, but a lot of them are around data and collaboration in, as I said, in strategies to improve instructional practice.

Mary: Ok. Another question that came up and I don't know whether Jessica had a chance to see it, wondering if students are referred to Jump Start or if they just come once the invitation is issued?

Darlene: Jump Start is a choice. It's not a mandatory program. We have Jump Start, but we have other rising ninth grade programs as well. Jump Start is just one of the programs that our district offers.

Mary: I see. Then, there was one more here. One of our listeners wondered if the analysis efforts that you've showed us with the multicolored charts, are those only done for ninth graders in the school or have they been done for other grades as well?

Darlene: We maintain data on all of our students, but specifically we start with the Jump Start students when they come. We actually monitor that cohort of students throughout, but we also monitor our ninth graders overall as they come in. That continues through, ninth graders become tenth graders, so we're actually monitoring students throughout their time in high school.

Mary: I see. That's terrific. I think that Jessica will continue to respond to lingering questions that people have. I want to thank her as well as Darlene because she's been madly typing away here in the chat room. Darlene, thank you so much for all the things that you put together to share with us.

Darlene: Ok, thank you.

Mary:

Slide 78: Now we're going to move on to our final presenter and that is Steve Abbott who is our communications director here at the partnership. He's going to discuss the first section of our new guide. You might want to get out the draft section of the guide that was sent to you yesterday by email so you can follow along with Steve.

Stephen: Thank you, Mary, appreciate the introduction. As Mary said, I am the director of communications for the Grade Schools Partnership and I'm also the co-author of

Ninth Grade Counts which is a new self assessment and planning guide for Small Learning Community grantees. My presentation today will provide a brief introduction to the tools and how it works. While I provide this introduction, just keep in mind that this tool is still being developed and that's why you haven't received a complete copy yet. The guide will be published in three parts and the first of which will be introduced today and the complete guide will be officially released early this summer.

Slide 79: The guide is based on research, in particular the research that has been discussed throughout the presentation today, on site visits that were conducted to schools around the country, interviews with dozens of practicing educators, and first-hand leadership experience. My colleague and co-author, Pamela Fisher, she was the principal of a high school that underwent a highly successful conversion to a Smaller Learning Community, ninth grade teams, and a more personalized first year program. Today, nearly two decades later, many of the practices that she implemented years ago are still in place and the high school is a nationally recognized SLC model school.

The goal of this tool is pretty straightforward. We want to equip you with a simple step-by-step process that you can use with school leaders and faculties to take an honest look at where you are at and where you'd like to go, both in terms of the improvement strategies that you pursue for ninth grade and the student outcomes that you want to achieve for ninth and tenth grades. The point of departure for this tool, the lens through which we really viewed everything, was how to ensure that every student gets a fair shot at success. Equity is the cornerstone of the whole thing. As you have today, ninth grade poses some unique challenges for schools and districts. This guide is a way to help clarify and simplify the process of addressing those challenges head on.

Slide 80: After a school or district works through the process, the self assessment activity and three-planning road map, it should have a much clearer direction for it's ninth grade work and ideally a set of concrete action plan priorities.

As we mentioned earlier, Ninth Grade Counts will ultimately be a three-part guide. Today, we'll just be introducing you to the first installment. The focus of this first tool is really on systems thinking, encouraging both districts and schools to consider the systemic interrelationships that can make or break the ninth year for many students. For example, considering the ways in which district grading, reporting, assessment, or credit policies, for example, may either help or hinder the goals in your ninth grade program. That's the kind of thing that we really wanted to stimulate, that kind of thing. The other two tools will provide a similar but more focused process for districts and schools, working to create, one, effective summer bridge programs, and two, support systems for English

language learners. The second and third installments of the full guide should be published later this year.

Slide 81: Our general approach to creating this guide was keep it simple, just really, really simple and focused. We wanted to instill some of the most important research findings and guidance and present it in a way that would be useful to a practicing educator. We know you're busy and we wanted to create an efficient concentrated process that schools could tackle and complete in less than a day. In three to five hours, school [inaudible01:07:26] in terms of ninth grade support and interventions.

The first step is assess and reflect, teams come together, engage in honest appraisal of what's working and what could use some improvement. Having detailed performance [inaudible01:07:37] on hand would certainly be recommended during this first part of the process. The next step is plan and align. Once you have your strengths and weaknesses, your actions and priorities mapped out, it's all about softly integrating those important strategies into your existing action plan. Finally, the guide can be revisited from year to year as part of your ongoing school improvement work. There's a lot of information packed into the guide and there are a lot of options that schools can pursue when it comes to ninth grade transition.

Slide 82: No district or school is going to be able to tackle everything at once. That's why this guide is also about prioritization, identifying the most critical needs and coming up with sound ways to address them.

Sorry, back one slide there. The guide has three major sections. A graphic overview of effective ninth grade transition programs from the district to the classroom levels. This was not included in the draft pages you received, but it will be in the finished guide and it will give you a sense of how all the moving parts work together.

Self assessment activity. This can be found on the first two draft pages you received. I will describe it in greater detail in a moment as well. Three series of three planning road maps that will help your school determine action plan priorities for strengthening freshman transition. Again, the first of these three sections was sent to you yesterday.

Slide 83: This stage of the process, the first stage here, is focused on the preconditions, what you can do to set the stage for successful ninth grade experience. As we know, less concrete factors such as the relationships among teachers or the messages students receive and the policies in place at the district level can have a big impact on the effectiveness of any school improvement process. That's why

we devoted a full section such as culture, expectations, resources, and leadership.

In the next section, we broke out the preparation and planning activities that define the student's first experiences of high school life, orientation programs, summer learning, and reviewing middle school performance data early on and using that data to guide your planning and teaming strategy, for example.

- Slide 84: The third section of the guide, as I'm sure you all know, it addresses instruction support which is really the foundation of any effective ninth grade transition. One great learning experience can change a student's world view dramatically and set them on a totally different life path and that's really what this tool is all about, making ninth grade the learning experience that will keep more kids in school, accelerate their learning, and put them on track to graduation, college, and rewarding careers.
- Slide 85: In this section, we address not only effective academic instruction interventions but also social and emotional support.
- Slide 86: Now I'm going to walk you through the two draft sections that you received yesterday and we'll begin with the self assessment activity. Here we have the first half of the self assessment activity. If this tool is printed out and you received a printed copy, you would see this page on the left-hand side and the second page, the passive-reactive proactive section's on the right. On the left-hand side of the slide, you can see that we have included a placeholder for school vignette. The final version of the tool will feature four brief profiles of effective ninth grade transition strategies from real SLC school around the country like Lincoln and Duval. The purpose, of course, is to give you a quick snapshot of some of these strategies in action, that is a few just critically important takeaways and details that have a play out when these strategies land in real schools.

On the right side, you'll find the self assessment protocol. The directions to this protocol will be pretty self explanatory. It's based on a protocol that my colleagues here at the Grade Schools Partnership have many used many times before and that seems to work quite well. Protocol is designed for small groups of four to five, and the activity should take between 60 and 90 minutes, depending on how much time you want to allocate for reporting out to the full group. This is a warm-up activity. It's designed to get your district or school thinking critically about how you approach the ninth grade transition and about all the parts work together. Honest self reflection, robust dialog, and systems thinking really are the goals here.

Slide 87: On this slide, is the second part of the self assessment activity, the reading and the prompt; three sections, passive, reactive, and proactive. They come out of the research study that Leslie shared with you earlier in the presentation. When they dig into the research, and again visiting schools as Leslie pointed out, a pattern began to emerge. The most successful ninth grade transition programs were the most proactive when it came to everything from data collection to personalization, interventions, and orientation.

The less effective scores, in terms of first year outcomes at least, tended to be those that did not fully recognize or embrace the fact that ninth grade might demand specialized strategies. These would be the passive approach schools. While the reactive schools were those that recognized the need for additional support during the freshman year, possibly because they had a significant drop-out issue or a large number of course failures, for example, but their attempts to address those issues were a little too late or too scattered to really have a significant impact.

When faculties dig into these descriptions and discuss which elements seem to best represent their school's approach to ninth grade and the transition in the freshman year, they should arrive at a more focused understanding of what's working or what needs to change. The goal here is to activate self reflection and dialog, not to force, and I just wanted to be very clear about this, not to force your school into any one of these boxes. If the activity produces a consensus, that's wonderful. You know exactly where you need to go. If not, then maybe that's one of the first things you want to address.

Slide 88: The next slide I'll walk you through a draft of the first of the three planning road maps which are designed to focus your school's action planning in three primary areas.

Slide 89: The preconditions that need to be in place to create a strong transition program, how to effectively plan for and induct ninth grade students, and how to teach and support them once they come through your doors.

Here is the, again, the draft of the first of the three planning road maps. If you've had an opportunity to review the draft pages we sent you yesterday you should have a pretty good sense of how the tool will work. All three sections like the self assessment activity we just reviewed will include a school vignette relevant to the section. Each of the three major sections have been subdivided into four subsections that address the discrete and important areas of the ninth grade experience. In this case, culture and expectations, leadership and resources, professional development, and policies and accountability.

The subsections feature a selection of essential practices that research and site visits at SLC schools have revealed to be effective. Think of this section as an idea generator and definitely not as a must do checklist. If the school has the capacity or resources to tackle most or all of these strategies, that's fantastic. Really, the most important thing here is to create a ninth grade important program that works for your school or district and that meets the needs of your student and requirements of your grant. Again, the goal here is zero on some things that work and that really make a difference for your students.

Slide 90: In each of the three sections, you also find a column called what leaders can do and three blank work spaces. Guidance for school leaders offers a few things to think about that go beyond specific action plan strategies. These recommendations will obviously be a little more relevant to program directors, superintendents, principals, leadership teams, but I'm pretty confident that faculty and staff will also find them useful as well. This part of the process again is not a checklist by a way to get school leaders thinking about the leadership strategies they're using to shape the ninth work.

The last part of the process is getting some of these thoughts down on paper. In this case, really taking a hard look at what's working when it comes to the ninth transition and what's not. When you get stuff down on paper sometimes you begin to really see how everything fits together. Our hope is that when you work through this process, you'll [inaudible01:16:47] a much clearer sense of the direction you need to take and critically what the important urgent priority areas are.

In the last column, you begin to map out those priorities so that they can be addressed in your action plan. Incorporation in the action is really the final step in this process. We very intentionally decided not build a separate planning process or template into this tool because we want the outcomes of this experience, this activity, this process, to be integrated into your action plan. One important takeaway here, the best ninth grade strategies, as Leslie pointed out earlier, are not stand-alone programs or add-ons, they're embedded, deeply embedded in the culture of the school and really in every course and learning experience.

Slide 91: Just a final few thoughts here before we go and move on to questions, as I mentioned earlier, the profiles and strategies in this guide are merely concise representative examples. No tool or process, really no matter how well devised, how good of a job we do, we'll be able to anticipate every factor to address every need. Schools are pretty complex ecosystems as you know. Importantly, no two schools need to look alike. The guide is not intended to remake your district or school in its image. The purpose is really to help your school leaders

and faculties engage in the frank, constructive, forward looking discussion that will really help move you from where you are to where you want to be.

Finally, like everything else in life, you really will get out of it, I think, what you put into it. [inaudible01:18:30] is really specifically applicable to any sort of written tool, I think, because it simply can't do the work for you. That said, this guide is not based on research but on other self assessment and planning resources that I and my colleagues have developed and we found that many of the approaches that we've taken in this guide have really worked to help schools achieve their goals. It's a responsive thing. We have worked with many schools and educators to refine some of these processes and it seems to work, and we really hope it works for you too. Thank you.

Mary: Thank you very much, Stephen. There may be some further questions that folks have. One of the questions online had to do with when the guide will be published. We do know that we have to submit the final guide by the beginning of May, so I imagine it will take some time before it's published after that. It would be nice if we could get it out to folks before the summer starts so you could start doing this work but we'll see what we can do about that.

I'd like to encourage anybody who has further questions to put them up for Stephen with regard to the guide. I would ask that those of you participating would consider the questions that are up on your screen now. How do you think this resource can help you in your work as you begin to plan to either continue your ninth grade transition or refine it in some way? How can you get your teachers involved in using the guide as a resource? What's support will you need from us at the technical assistance team in terms of being able to utilize the guide?

I have one question here asking is it ok to take the guide right out for a test drive now and Steve's already responding. You're on the ball there, Steve. Do you have anything else you want to say about this at this point?

Stephen: As you can clearly see, we really only have one section ready to go, although I would say that the self assessment activity is in perhaps a little bit better shape. We are definitely going to go through a group editorial process where we'll have a lot of [inaudible01:21:03] really select the most critical strategies and the most useful information. Yeah, I don't see any problem with taking those first four pages for a test drive, getting a jump on things, but do know that the actual content that appears in there might change, but I'm pretty confident that what does appear in there currently won't lead you astray.

Mary: Ok. I would also encourage and welcome, I think, any input that any of you participating today might have about those four pages. You could certainly email

us, let us know what your thoughts are, especially if you do test drive it maybe how it worked for you and if there's anything else we need to know. That would be great.

Slide 92: We are at the end of our webinar today. We do want to, once again, thank all of you for taking the time to participate in this. I would like to thank our presenters once again, Leslie, Josh and Jill, and Darlene, and all of our participants, and also our technical assistance team. The webinar is offensively over now, but we're going to keep the chat room open for another 15 minutes. That will be an opportunity for people who maybe are still processing some questions that they would like to ask. We did appreciate hearing from all of you and we hope this webinar will help you with either developing or refining your ninth grade transition policies and programs. Remember, that ninth grade counts big time. Thank you all very much.