



NCAPPS

National Center on Advancing  
Person-Centered Practices and Systems

## Webinar Transcript:

### **“Person-Centered Practices in Schools: Lessons from New Jersey”**

*This webinar was originally broadcast on March 29, 2021*

#### **>>Speaker:**

Hello and welcome to the NCAPPS March 2021 webinar. Our attendees are streaming in and they are glad to have you here with us. And I will get started just as soon and I see the numbers slowing down. Again welcome. This is the National Center on advancing person centered practices and systems March 2021 webinar person centered practices in schools: Lessons from New Jersey. So my name is Bevin Croft. I co-direct NCAPPS the National Center on advancing person centered practices and systems and my codirector is here with us. We are very glad that you have joined us to learn about person centered practices in the classroom. The National Center on advancing person centered practices and systems is funded by the administration for independent living and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services all webinars are free and open to the public. I will run through a few logistics with you after I think more about NCAPPS. Our goal as a national Center is to promote systems change that makes person centered principles not just an aspiration but a reality in the lives of people across the lifespan. Next slide please.

This is a zoom webinar so that means all participants are muted and you are welcome to use chat and that is wide open for you and we love to engage with our participants. We also love it when you engage with one another so if you have a reflection, a question or idea or a resource to share, please feel free to use chat and if you would like your message to be seen by everyone on the webinar today be sure to select all panelists and attendees in the to line if the default is to all panelists so it will just come to myself and the other presenters but if you select all panelists and attendees that will go out to the entire community. Toward the end of the webinar we will do our best to respond to as many questions as we can get to that have been entered into check. We are unable to get to all of them, but we will do our best. This webinar is live captioned in both English and Spanish and to access the captions simply hover your cursor down to the bottom of the Zune screen and select the CC closed-captioned button. If you would like to access our Spanish captioning you will need to use the link that is on the screen and that is also in the chat. There are just a couple of polls in this webinar so please do be prepared to interact. I am seeing some questions coming into chat about having a copy of the slide. There are no slides except logistics, which I doubt anyone wants so there will be no slides and you will receive confirmation via e-mail that you have attended this webinar. Next slide please.

Connor. You are welcome to e-mail us at [NCAPPS@HSR I.org](mailto:NCAPPS@HSR I.org) and we do this a couple of times a month and after the close of this webinar once we get a chance to get everything together we will post this recording and a plain language summary and any other resources that we identify including some written answers to questions and we will post all of that on our



website within a couple of weeks. All right, so here is a chance. Let's go back to the poll. Connor. Here is a chance for us to hear from you. We would like to know who is here and what roles you self-identify with. A poll should come up on your screen. Please select all that apply. We know a lot of you have a lot of hats to tell us who you are and we will give folks about 10 or 15 seconds to respond so take a look. All right, Connor. How is it looking. There we go. Okay. So we have a lot of -- people with a lot of different roles represented, which we love and it looks about like 1/3 of you work for government of some time. Close to 1/3 of you work for a service provider. A little more than 1/3 are social workers, counselors or care managers. We have a good number of educators here. Welcome we are so glad you are here. A good number of self-advocates, family members and people with disabilities who use long-term services and supports and a handful of specialists and researchers. So, thank you for arriving. I believe this content will be relevant for each and every one of you. We are glad you are here. We have I believe set a record today for the largest panel in a NCAPPS webcast we are known for a large panel and this is the largest. We are going to hear from each of these folks in a moment, but for now I'm going to introduce our partner in developing this webinar Michael. He is a senior training and consultation specialist on disabilities and he is the Executive Director for learning for person centered practices. He conducts training and technical assistance around development and delivery of planning and he works with schools on implementing these approaches and improvements so he's been instrumental in developing the methods and approaches that we will be sharing with you today and in pulling this panel together. I will turn things over now to you, Michael to introduce the rest of the panel.

**>>Speaker:**

Thank you very much and to everyone at NCAPPS for all of your support and all the good folks at JFK for working with us to sort of pull this whole thing together. Just to kind of kick it off, we said this was kind of JFK school sampler platter. We have a representative in pretty much every role that touches the work we are doing together there. We have a couple of people that will be joining by video so the panel that you see is even bigger, but that gives everyone an opportunity to speak and share their perspective and excited we will try a PowerPoint free webinar. That's exciting. Let's see ... we have on our panel; I am going to ask each person to introduce themselves and if you say who you are in one sentence would be what do you love about having person centered planning and person centered practices in your school. We want to start with our students. We have two students here today. We have DJs Scott and Ruby and I am going to just ask -- we are having a little trouble with the connection if I have any trouble Ruby with your connection I will try and get you on your cell phone but do we have Ruby? And if that connection got lost, why don't I start with DJ. DJ, you have her back, right?

**>>Speaker:**

Sure.

**>>Speaker:**

If you want to just introduce yourself DJ, who you are and one thing you like about having



person centered planning to help support you at JFK.

**>>Speaker:**

(phone ringing) hey. My name is DJ. I'm [inaudible] how is everyone?

**>>Speaker:**

Doing well.

**>>Speaker:**

That's good. How's your day?

**>>Speaker:**

Going great. We are talking about person centered planning. Doesn't get any better than that.

**>>Speaker:**

I guess so. So do you have any hobbies?

**>>Speaker:**

I do. But let me -- I like music but let me ask you about person centered planning DJ. Remember we facilitated your person centered plan was there one thing you liked about that process and you are rolling and having everyone come together to help you plan?

**>>Speaker:**

To me it was just [inaudible] for me.

**>>Speaker:**

Can you repeat that one more time please DJ?

**>>Speaker:**

For me it was a simple get together.

**>>Speaker:**

A simple get together so not something that was really complex or anxiety provoking, but we had a nice conversation and you played a big part of that.

**>>Speaker:**

Yes.

**>>Speaker:**

And when you saw your person centered plan you developed do you have any prescience when you look at that information or what do you think about that when you look at it?



**>>Speaker:**

I don't have an opinion on it.

**>>Speaker:**

No opinion? Do you think it's helpful?

**>>Speaker:**

Yes, I do. I think it is nice.

**>>Speaker:**

Okay, so do we have -- do we have Ruby?

**>>Speaker:**

Yes.

**>>Speaker:**

We have her. Ruby, are you there? Hi, is Ruby there?

**>>Speaker:**

Who are you?

**>>Speaker:**

This is Mike. We are having a webinar and trying to get Ruby on the phone because the connection on the computer is not working to well. Thank you so much.

**>>Speaker:**

Hello it.

**>>Speaker:**

Ruby! We got you! It's Michael.

**>>Speaker:**

Yeah.

**>>Speaker:**

So the computer link is not working, but you are on the webinar right now. We can see you and now we can hear you. And everybody here her? Alright it all works out. Technology. So can you introduce yourself for everyone?

**>>Speaker:**

Okay. My name is Ruby. I am a senior at JFK.

**>>Speaker:**

All right, and Ruby, you remember your person centered planning and the plan you put together with everyone.

**>>Speaker:**

Do you guys hear me!

**>>Speaker:**

Yes, we can. We can hear you.

**>>Speaker:**

Thank you.

**>>Speaker:**

Can you tell us what you appreciate most are you like most about your person centered plan?

**>>Speaker:**

I appreciate most that I can have everyone around me help me and all my family -- my mom and people that are close with me sit together and to really help me to put in pieces together.

**>>Speaker:**

All right, great. Thank you, Ruby. We will come back and talk to more. I will keep going through our panel and ask the same question of Racquel Hernandez who is DJs mom and if you could just share with us kind of who you are and what your experience was with person centered planning and what you appreciate about it.

**>>Speaker:**

Hi, everybody I am DJs mom. The one thing I really appreciated about the person centered planning and the plan we did and gave me a little more perspective on my child getting older and what he wants to do in life and what he wants to accomplish and just goalsetting with him.

**>>Speaker:**

Okay. Thank you, Racquel. So everyone knows we are here at JFK and the students we are working with our transition age but in the project we will talk about later they work and support all students at all ages. Let's move on to the teacher at JFK and the parent so introduce yourself and what you like about having person centered planning that's the cornerstone of the work being done at JFK.

**>>Speaker:**

Good afternoon everyone. I wear many hats and I work in the transition program called the tap Hogan transition program at JFK and one of the instructors that works with 18 and older students that are preparing to transfer to adult life in transition from high school to adult living



NCAPPS

National Center on Advancing  
Person-Centered Practices and Systems

and I found the PCAST portfolio to be a reliable solid plan, a very portable palpable that students can take with them to a program versus having an individual at a program like a 30 or 40 page IEP we have a two-page trifled that's reliable and will help the adults.

**>>Speaker:**

Thank you. We will go by first names. But now I want to introduce -- LaPrice. Hello LaPrice. Do you want to introduce yourself? You are on mute.

**>>Speaker:**

Good evening, everyone. My name is LaPrice. I'm a special education teacher turned transition coordinator at John F. Kennedy school turned transition coordinator for the Board of Education. The one thing I really loved about this person centered plan is the plan portion of it and I love just from the initial phone call home to the family and letting them know what we were planning and giving them an overview of what person centered planning is and I can literally hear them going over in their head about who and brainstorming about who they were going to invite. Who they were going to include in this and get with the child to make sure that everyone shows up sitting down with students and planning out what refreshments they were going to have. All the way to the student asking me can I wear my bowtie and blazer. Absolutely. Everyone they all had this glow in them and they were really, really happy to have this be all about them.

**>>Speaker:**

Great, thank you, LaPrice and finally, from our panel who are live with us on the webinar and for the initial panel we also have a principal at JFK school.

**>>Speaker:**

Hello and good evening, everyone I want to greet you with a dolphin wave. Get us going and my name is Jill Summers Phillips and I'm the principal of John F. Kennedy school in New Jersey and we are carrying committed and courageous and one of our models that fits into person centered planning is there are no limits to what we can do and that is just a model and person centered planning helps us to dig right into that model.

**>>Speaker:**

Great, thank you. And we will also hear from another teacher and a paraprofessional via video a little later on and at the end, as I say it is the desert Bill Friedman from the New Jersey Department of special education will join us so that rounds out our panel and so we are going to move into just sort of asking the question why person centered planning in schools and I've been asked to give a brief overview so we don't have PowerPoint today and I'm excited to kind of keep it simple and just hear from people so I will give you a descriptor of the project and a brief amount of time and invite you if you want more information and you want me to share things more formally I'm happy to do that and our friends at NCAPPS will provide you to links to the project and the New Jersey Department of Education in the contact. I'm going to assume that is correct. So just before we hear from Jill about how this all got started I want to



NCAPPS

National Center on Advancing  
Person-Centered Practices and Systems

tell you a little history of the project. The project is PCAST person centered approaches and transitions and in a nutshell around 2012 or early 13 I had a conversation with somebody in the Department of Ed and they are starting a project where ultimately I started working with some schools spread out in New Jersey and by the end of that year I had transition from the work I was doing which was more focused on adults supporting and working with adults with intellectual developmental disabilities to working 100 percent was school so I was excited and had a long history of working in the adult world and provided world and was excited to bring more of this into schools and seeing what a difference I could make in terms of transitioning to adult life and sort of the achievement of their goals, but also mostly just helping them have a good life they want as they envisioned it in their community. We started around 2013 and were in our ninth year and I was so low on the project for many years and my colleague who works in the southern part of the state shout out came on about four years ago. And the project was set up from the beginning as a collaboration. It was an exploration of person centered approach is so I think of myself as a roadie lugging these things into a district and just laying them out and showing people what's going on and seeing what people value and work together as a team to put together a project plan and then work both formal demonstrating planning with students so it is a tiered model and at the top of that the schools we work with are there intensively over time so that allows us to do a lot of things and unpack a lot of things so try person centered planning and see how that can be gleaned into the IP process so thinking about not just person centered planning but how do we create IP's and meetings and also breaking this down into lessons to implement the classroom and so we really have a lot of things the top tier in the middle of the triangle and so that top tier is the cohorts, the middle part is to do some short-term technical assistance in different places in the bottom is where we do a lot of work with districts providing training around person centered planning and implementation for families and educators and using this and IP meetings of the formal training and using that in the classes so we really tried to encourage families to participate as well and during COVID that has been increasing people have been able to access it more and we've seen a benefit of that or I've seen the benefit of that. That is how we are set up as a project. Probably forgetting a lot of things but I will say we draw on all different kinds of styles about person centered practices over time and we tried to collaboratively work with schools to bring them to other places then just being able to develop over time and continued in a true community of practice approach and community of interest approach where everyone is welcome to share in the learning and we have events throughout the year that allow that so I will leave it there and Bevin if I left anything out hopefully that's quick enough so I want to kind of move to Jill and I will start with Lenya so if you could talk about a history quickly, just how did this all kind of start out?

**>>Speaker:**

My son has autism and he was diagnosed I think 1997 and struggled with a lot of challenges in school and fortunate to have a lot of great people to support me and him in this process so he got a plan done and I remember the date because it's so important to me in July 152015 and it was the first time that my immediate family got to come together and actually have a say basically in his education and academic career. I had been to school and was one of those



parents that had every teacher that worked with him on speed dial so I thought I was familiar with what he needed and was important for him but I didn't know what was important to him until we got into the planning and I was able to learn things about my son and I'm a pretty involved mom and pretty intuitive and I know what goes on, but I learned so much from his professional who went out in the field while he worked into jobs so it was very important to me and I tracked Michael down because if it's this important to me it will be very valuable for my students also, so I tracked him down and had the opportunity to go suit some state trainings and brought it back and said we have to do this so we did some justification and we were able to get approved and started implementing so that's kind of how it happened.

**>>Speaker:**

Great and that's a great example of how in this project people kind of come together in different ways with training and through things they might be doing in one school and somebody working at another school so you never know how things will spark and people connect and share learnings and that's what we like to see. And Jill would you like to talk to us a little bit about kind of the initial work and where things are about JFK and why this is important.

**>>Speaker:**

OMG I just got disconnected and I'm back right on time!

**>>Speaker:**

That's what we do [chuckling]

**>>Speaker:**

That's what we do. This is what it's all about. Initially what happened when you came around and she had this binder with all these artifacts and I was like what are you talking about and she's like we have to have it it's great and the more she talked the more I knew it was in line with our tap program that we had at school and we instantly got in touch with Mike and had a set of teachers and team members and a parent and other team members come and sit and listen to the plan that was going on. And one thing I found out about this plan as I gave our children a voice and helped them to become an advocate for themselves and helped our parents to realize that their children have hopes and dreams and it's not the parents hope and dreams but their actual feelings and reality set in for a lot of parents like oh, my gosh they will not be my baby forever and I will not be able to protect them forever so this plan helps to ensure that the children's path is kind of set out there and they have a goal moving forward. I believe I answered.

**>>Speaker:**

Doing great. And I think we are right on time to the minute. So chalk some points up for all you guys. So listen I want to kind of jump back to our students and Ruby, are you with us? If you want to unmute. Let's see if your audio is working. I see you Ruby. Can you unmute. Wave your hand if you can hear me Ruby. DJ, would you mind picking it up.





**>>Speaker:**

Hello?

**>>Speaker:**

Here we go here we go here we go. Hold that thought DJ. Ruby, how are you? She's keeping me on my toes. DJ would you mind chatting with us why we sort things out with Ruby.

**>>Speaker:**

Sure.

**>>Speaker:**

Awesome. Some of the things we wanted to know is you think about planning for your future and all the things we talked about so we talked about the qualities you have as a person and your gift and things deeply important to you and how others can support you and communication and make sure, people know what you want and you can self-direct and we talk about your vision for the future and steps to get there so when you went through that process how did that strike you? What do you think was that important to you? Did that make a difference?

**>>Speaker:**

For the foreseeable future yes.

**>>Speaker:**

Do you have thoughts you want to share about the future you are planning for?

**>>Speaker:**

The future I have planned is just try to become a scientist and go to college the best way I can and get a place to stay.

**>>Speaker:**

Awesome.

**>>Speaker:**

[inaudible] as it can be.

**>>Speaker:**

Are there things you are doing day-to-day now just to plan for your next steps in the future?

**>>Speaker:**

I've been reading a lot.



**>>Speaker:**

Part of what you talked about in your planning meeting if I recall was thinking about what needs to happen in the research that needs to happen to prepare for college and where you can go and that kind of thing. Hopefully is that something you are working on now?

**>>Speaker:**

A little bit yes.

**>>Speaker:**

A little bit is enough. And I think Ruby is trying to call me right now.

**>>Speaker:**

I have her on the phone.

**>>Speaker:**

Please do. I am juggling enough balls here [chuckling]

**>>Speaker:**

[inaudible] now.

**>>Speaker:**

Ruby, can you say hello?

**>>Speaker:**

Hello. How are you?

**>>Speaker:**

So why don't you go ahead and you interview her.

**>>Speaker:**

All right, so Ruby, tell me about like your plan. What was that about when you went through your session what was exciting to you are interested in developing that plan?

**>>Speaker:**

Sure so those are good questions. That plan was refreshing because I had everyone that cared about me there and like [inaudible] so I had everyone there and everyone was kind of taking breaks [inaudible] yeah and.

**>>Speaker:**

So they had great ideas to describe you. Can you tell me after the PCAST did anything change with the people that were there with you in your meetings?

**>>Speaker:**

Oh, yeah. It changed a lot because everyone got to know me better. They didn't know me. They got to know a different side of me.

**>>Speaker:**

All right, did you get that. Things changed. They got to know her and got to know a different side of her.

**>>Speaker:**

That's something we hear a lot that people can see and learn about themselves and each other through other people's eyes and other experiences are really profound and one of the neat things is because when we have these person centered planning meetings people that they want that we have other students that have requested person centered plans in their own meeting so that something that's unusual that we are about much saying I want to have a meeting and a plan. That is great. Any other things you would like to ask Ruby? As long as you have her on the line there? May be something that has helped her in terms of her own life.

**>>Speaker:**

Ruby what has helped you and what was one of your main goals that you had that you are trying to work towards from your plan.

**>>Speaker:**

I would say like go to college and I still am trying to. I know [inaudible]

**>>Speaker:**

Okay, so she said she wants to go to college but she knows there may be some bumps in the road but nothing is perfect, but she's going to keep on trying.

**>>Speaker:**

Yeah.

**>>Speaker:**

Great. Thank you, Ruby. And so let's see ... now I think if we could -- Connor if you can queue up the paraprofessional clip I think we will hear audio. Is that right Connor? And here is our paraprofessional we got to speak so hit it whenever you are ready. Individual facilitated planning meetings for students and teams, but also -- group work in both individual facilitated planning meetings with students and teams, but also group work in the classroom. So why do you think it's important that paraprofessionals are given the opportunity to participate in person centered planning and support?

**>>Speaker:**



Michael and my personal opinion I believe it's important because paras like myself we are the ones that spend most of the day with the student so it is important, our input -- it is relevant.

**>>Speaker:**

Absolutely. And given your experience and some planning meetings what did you appreciate about the environment or the way the meetings were facilitated?

**>>Speaker:**

From the beginning I appreciate even being invited to the meeting getting an invite to the meeting. Letting me know the student and family wanted me there, so I appreciate that. Walking into the meeting the way everything was set up I felt included. We were in an oval position with all chairs -- we were not separated family and child study team and teachers, students, everyone, we were just all there together sitting in the same role as an equal.

**>>Speaker:**

100 percent. And what did you think about the difference you saw in the students and their participation in an event like that?

**>>Speaker:**

I felt like as I participated the students they enjoyed it. They laughed. They were happy to see everyone there to support them. To come up with this plan for them for the future. I felt like students really enjoyed it.

**>>Speaker:**

Awesome awesome. A couple of things. Really quick you've been doing classroom work and so any kind of reflections on what has happened there?

**>>Speaker:**

In our class we did a person centered approach for everyone in the class including the paras adults and students and we moved our boards to the hallway and we had everyone in the building that wanted to participate had a chance to write a positive word about all of us it was a really cool experience.

**>>Speaker:**

Okay, cool and any parting advice you would have two schools if they are considering involving paraprofessionals or two paraprofessionals if they are asked?

**>>Speaker:**

Go forward. Your wording you see right there on paper. It's not -- it doesn't get put right there on paper it gets put in the plan and you see your ideas in the plan and I would say go for it.

**>>Speaker:**



Okay, great. Thank you, Connor. I think -- one thing I will say before we move on to if you want to queue up I think we are moving on to Don. Let's start with our teachers and one thing I wanted to mention was that L'Tonya was describing a way of setting up the room that goes all the way back to the 1980's with work that John O'Brien and Marsha Forrest started so this work is really kind of combining different approaches and future planning work with Michael small Bill and Susie Harrison around the central lifestyle planning so really have created something where we create equity of participation and value and kind of not having an expert model having a shared display of information at all times as we have done in the old days when we are facilitating maps work in similar to maps helping people see what the future is that the student and the team are seeing and what we don't want to move toward so the dream and the nightmare they used to call it and there's other strands that have carried on that these days. So I want to kind of look at what the teacher perspective is so we have Dawn LaSalle so we can queue that video.

**>>Speaker:**

Let's kick it off starting with students and how they have been responding to the PCAST lessons you've been implementing in your class.

**>>Speaker:**

My students are always very excited when we are getting ready to do a PCAST lesson and they just love anything to do with social emotional learning and the whole PCAST units because I think it is just that they find it very relaxing and it's a chilled atmosphere and they will learn more about themselves and their classmates and wind up leaving generally feeling good about themselves so they respond very well.

**>>Speaker:**

You see these lessons on the way you set up the units and lessons how do you see that as the benefits of preparing students for learning the skills needed to have a good future?

**>>Speaker:**

I think being that they are in learning more about themselves every single lesson we go through, their likes and dislikes and bad days and good days and what they look like and why gives them some power. It's very powerful knowing I will have a great day because I know what a great day looks like and just giving themselves a voice and choices and their opinions matter so I think the self-determination comes right along with all these lessons.

**>>Speaker:**

A couple more question so what do you value boast about the collaboration and engagement over the years with the person centered approach.

**>>Speaker:**

So my biggest value what I take away is having been a teacher over 30 years I always prided myself on having really good relationships with students and I knew them really well and now I



know I didn't, but with PCAST and forging relationships with students and they know me when they see -- when my collaboration and my worst day and my inner circle they learn a lot more about me as well so we all get to know each other very well so relationship building is my biggest take away.

**>>Speaker:**

You mentioned some boards are like tablet and things like that that the lessons are sort of easily adapted.

**>>Speaker:**

Technology is your biggest best friend when it comes to these lessons and being virtual and anything you can think of you can use with these lessons and they are easily adaptable so it's just been fantastic.

**>>Speaker:**

Awesome. So last thing so if you met a teacher considering implementing person centered approaches and using these lessons in their classroom what advice would you give them?

**>>Speaker:**

Just do it it doesn't matter what subject are special ad or Jen and I would do it and wouldn't care what age group it's valuable for everyone including teachers and anyone who can do it it doesn't even have to be in the education field I think it is valuable to everybody.

**>>Speaker:**

All right, so thanks to Don LaSalle and Tonya Johnson and one thing I will mention is with our project we haven't missed a beat when it comes to doing every single thing we ever did in this project and now we do it virtually, so it certainly is not our preference. I wouldn't say it is equal to what I will say we can plan and go into classrooms and do training and do everything and as a matter fact we can do more of it because not driving an hour and a half between schools and running around the state so there are pros and cons to accessibility as well as you can see from what we have going on on this video on this webinar. I want to jump to LaPrice. How are you doing?

**>>Speaker:**

Very well Michael, thank you.

**>>Speaker:**

I know you thought about some things but just in terms of what difference you have seen in students and students' lives and what the benefits are and what you see in terms of your role and I should specify both LaPrice and Lenya I trained as plan facilitator so I also work with classroom teachers in a different approach which Lenya is also one but go ahead and take it away LaPrice.

**>>Speaker:**

Just taking from the information about how successful this is for students we've seen first-hand in ours will so for me it's like how do we get the word out? Someone in the chat box mentioned this is nothing new so why have it any other involved or many other schools involved so for me it's really just getting the word out and this year, as you know I've been appointed transition coordinator so when you talk about wishful thinking it happened. So now I have opportunity to have other members and teachers and families and students all across the district and just getting the word out and I'm doing it now informally and so indirectly, but it is a way to shift the mindset and getting folks thinking about person centered and just using the language that the student first. Using the language and ultimately just having them facilitate their own education and transition plan. I really want to see it get to a point where I do students IEP meeting the adults, educators we sit back and allow the student to actually just tell us what they want and how can we help them and support them. We come up with a plan that way.

**>>Speaker:**

Awesome. Great. I know the whole idea of you being in one role and have the opportunity to impact more district wide is something we see all the time people come through training and through different specific districts that and bring it to the next place so the comment is spot on. New Jersey has 600 it could be 670 school districts and there are two of us on this project so we are training hard and we get a lot done. Small, but mighty, but I agree we want a greater impact and see change at scale and we know education like a lot of systems doesn't change overnight. It takes a lot of work so let me move to Ms. Morgan Tanner and Lenya you spoke as a parent; you are a teacher and also a facilitator of person centered planning for students and team so what are the things you have come to value and see in your students and some of the work you've done in the classroom.

**>>Speaker:**

I will share a little bit about both one of my main takeaways from my son's plan is his teacher said I wish I had this six months ago. That would have alleviated a lot of problems because my son experienced a lot of behaviors and often times we focus on the behavior but we don't look at the antecedents like what was the behavioral trigger so in the plan there is an actual section where you are able to see what it looks like if a child is becoming -- having anxiety or they will have a trigger you will look at their facial expressions and you look at body language so these things we pay more attention to now once a student has a plan and when they transferred to an adult program or work or what have you anyone would be able to see that this is happening if he is like blinking his eyes and starting to Rocky starting to get anxiety so look at this behavior and trigger and his behaviors were reduced significantly after having this plan and the teacher actually implement the process in the classroom and throughout job sampling I had the privilege of facilitating Ruby's plan and one thing that stuck out as a facilitator for me as Ruby's mom had no idea that Ruby wanted a family. Her mom is like what she wanted to get married and own a home and be able to travel independently, so we looked



at different resources and we got student signed up with excess link as a result of different planning and we have a young man, Malachi who is able to go. He goes to a job at the jazz house and they pick him up from school using access link to travel independently so these are just some things and we had students that come and they are proud to be invited by their friends and we had someone come to rubies plan and she said she wanted husband and of family so they were helping her get her hair together come on. We've got to help you and get you together because you will find a husband. It was hilarious but the students love it and now they all want a plan.

**>>Speaker:**

I remember being in that facilitating with Ruby and I remember one of the other things very important is she was motivated to work because she wanted to be in a place where she could look out for her mother and that was important for people to understand because they understand on a deeper level what's important to her and to support her around the things that some of U.S. educators thought was important for her so seeing the connection and how to get everyone more engaged in one of the takeaways is that with person centered practices, schools and wherever you are where there are humans it's relevant and it means that we are all subject to change and we change how we think and support each other and there is reciprocity in that. So, thank you for sharing all that. Is there something else you want to add?

**>>Speaker:**

So we talked about it. So start making tacos or something on Friday and mother never thought she could do that.

**>>Speaker:**

Right, right, right.

**>>Speaker:**

If I can ask you really quick, as a facilitator and just being in those meetings, is there something -- one stands out in terms of the dynamic and what you see because we focus not just on process but facilitation skills and how every little thing we do so as a facilitator and you are a great one and you are amazing. What stands out for you in those experiences?

**>>Speaker:**

They forced me to step out of my role as a teacher because we at JFK have the privilege of having students -- I've always had high school so some kids I've had at 14 and now they are 20 or 21 so I know them very well. We spend a lot of time with them so I had to -- it forced me to step out of the role as the teacher because I want to answer all the questions, but it forced me -- it put me in a position so I had to not focus on what I knew about them but getting information and being able to write down the information I learned more from the families than I thought I knew about the kids.



**>>Speaker:**

And that's a great point and I know that sort of having to step outside of the things in the ways we typically do things allow us to get a new perspective and that is something we see all the time because when you are working in education doing the same things every day all day you start to believe certain things and you have assumptions about each other that happens on all sides of the equation so being able to have a model where you have to do something very different and think about it what did we experience what do we value and what do we want to do to improve and move in the direction where we want this district to move in. Thank you, both. Let's keep moving because I want to hear from a parent on board. That is you Racquel Hernandez. Thank you for coming.

**>>Speaker:**

Thank you for having me.

**>>Speaker:**

Stitch, thank you for joining us as well. So just from a parent's perspective, this kind of walk through these pieces in support of DJ, what was that like for you to participate in and bear witness too?

**>>Speaker:**

It opened up my eyes to exactly what he wanted to do getting older. I didn't know what he wanted to go to college and get a job, things I did not know he wanted to do because he never expressed it, but now seeing it on paper and working with you guys it made it more of a reality that he is getting older and he does want to be independent and wants to venture out and go to college and he wants to do what I would say what a normal young adult would want to do as far as that goes and as a parent just holding him back just like Ms. Morgan Banner had mentioned you want to protect them and you want to guard them from everything and it just opens up your eyes to see where his head is at the end where he wants to go in life.

**>>Speaker:**

And that happens every time we plan so there are reasons we have concerns. Good reasons and they are important so we call them things you are concerned about and we have to reckon with them in the light of what's important to DJ and find person centered support input filters and technology and natural supports and adult services that will be there we can use in a certain way so everything having the ability to step back is something we see every time I plan, so thanks for sharing that. Is there anything we can add or something to say to other family members?

**>>Speaker:**

I would recommend that even -- not even with you guys facilitating it in the school district, sit down and talk to your children. You would be surprised exactly what they would want tend need and plan out and what their goals are and it's the most important things and it is an



NCAPPS

National Center on Advancing  
Person-Centered Practices and Systems

eye-opener.

**>>Speaker:**

Thank you, Racquel. Greatly appreciate you being with us. I will now get to our friend Jill kind of just sort of hearing about the big picture stuff. JFK is on a journey. You are the captain and you took on person centered approaches as being a pivotal kind of piece of how you will get where you are going. So why and what is going on?

**>>Speaker:**

Why? The big Y is having our students be able to advocate for themselves and that is my biggest push when they leave JFK they are able to go to the store and purchase items and feel confident enough to do that and I think through the planning process we are able to work with them so they know how to do that in their own way and I think about DJ wanting his license and go to college but I also know DJ does not like crowds and I also know he doesn't want you to be too close so now as a team we can work through that process with him so he can get where he needs to be and go stand on line at the DMV or go to college and be in a big classroom with students and we can work through that plan. The planning has overall in our school has put us in a place where we had some unexpected challenges so I think about Ruby who wants to go to college but she is great in the office and so we had to start planning new job experiences within our building to match what students started saying they wanted to do. Not enough to say the normal you will go and shadow the custodian and go shadow this month but we had to come up with real thoughtful experiences for our students so with Ruby to be she started in the office and the next thing you know, she is like the goodwill and the Vice President's office as his clerk. Working in the office and unlike how did that happen and I know how it happened because we started at our school with a plan. We have application processes, but it really started communication between our students and our staff. I use it and students tend to be off task I can bring them back and say well this get us where we need to be and you said you wanted to do this so to do that we have to change your focus and your direction and I just like the aha moments with our families when they say oh, my gosh I did not realize because it's part of the letting go and release the DJ's mom will doing now, but our parents are like this they don't want to let go, but we can't hold them the whole time and we have to let them go and have this plan that there is some safety and letting go a little bit there some safety there.

**>>Speaker:**

Thank you so much and I know I was talking to Ruby and we got her and when we come back for questions she will be available at that point, but we are right on time doing really well, but now we thought it would be important for everyone to hear from kind of who funds the project, what is the scope and what is the experience from a state agency so we have the New Jersey Department of Education office of special education here. And I would be remiss if I didn't shout out to Peggy McDonald and Bob who worked in the past on the project and we've had a lot of support at the Department of Ed from them so Bill has been our Project Officer for the last few years and we have some questions how do you want to do a quick intro bill?

**>>Speaker:**

Good afternoon everyone. This is Bill Friedman I work in the office of special education at the New Jersey Department of Education and my work focuses on providing assistance to school districts throughout New Jersey primarily in the area of transition to adult life but I also help in other areas as well and I was very happy to be working on this project and helping out to spread the word throughout the whole state.

**>>Speaker:**

Fantastic. Thanks for joining us and I know we have a lot of different people on the webinar and I know some of them will be interested in what you have to say. The first question is why fund statewide initiative supporting the use of person centered approaches in schools. What do you think that came from and why is it valued at the Department of Ed?

**>>Speaker:**

It's interesting because something I learned prior to coming to the Department of Ed many, many years ago was that person centered thinking and planning was something that was spreading in the adult service system so when I came to the Department many years ago I said to my colleagues in the transition unit that this will be something that will be helpful to start at a younger age for school students and that seed that was planted many, many years ago finally came to flower and grow and turned into the project eventually, so it is clear it's a very needed step to happen sooner for kids they don't need to wait until they are adults to start the process.

**>>Speaker:**

I know and this is not a plug for more staff but there was the question of what challenges have there been in terms of funding this effort over the last eight years there were questions in the chat about we have some new approaches and we have things we have gathered around facilitation so how we do this is in many ways unique and innovative, but what we are doing goes back to the '70s. So we have all these school districts. What do you see as the challenges past and present in terms of broadening they use of person centered approaches and schools?

**>>Speaker:**

We sort of have a happy problem so to speak in that the demand for this project, the demand for people to learn about this topic has grown so much to the point where we really need more staff and we need more resources to be able to share this and so we started with just a little on the project and we have two full-time people on the project and.

**>>Speaker:**

Darn near had a third.

**>>Speaker:**



And that's really been our challenge how do we keep this project growing and meeting the demand out there.

**>>Speaker:**

And that is part of it the demand comes from families and students and educators and there have been times I'm in a school where maybe leadership changes and that's where you can see projects like this fade away if educators wanted to fade away and that's what we are not seeing educators come in and say this is something we want to keep moving and that has happened time and time again so I'm deeply appreciative and it keeps the fire burning. What about evidence. That is tough. There is not much of our research agenda round person centered approaches and not a lot recently, but what supports the use of that in schools.

**>>Speaker:**

It's interesting Michael because one of the things New Jersey is unfortunately known for is a very high rate of litigious behavior. We have some pretty active parent organizations that historically have not always been able to come to consensus on helping kids with disabilities to succeed in schools and transition to adult life so one of the advantages that we have seen in the places where they used person centered approaches is there a reduction in that litigation and that due process hearing behavior so we are seeing people come together in ways we have not seen before and that's not necessarily hard evidence, but it is certainly pointing in the right direction that this will help everybody.

**>>Speaker:**

We know that every district we work with reports stronger relationships with families, parents and increased participation with students both in terms of being part of their planning before and during meetings, but also increasingly leading their planning and there is research to support that that it leads to post school outcomes so [inaudible] so let's see. What advice would you give to other states, territories, tribes, everyone who the NCAPPS folks are trying to support on how to generate interest and initiate an effort like this in those places. I will say this, I was debating whether it's best to have you as the advertiser or dessert we saved you for dessert but I hope people stick around to hear it because leveraging the fact New Jersey has a statewide effort hopefully will inspire other departments of ads and organizations throughout the states and territories and tribes to do that but what advice would you give folks?

**>>Speaker:**

I think if folks were interested in getting started with an initiative like this like the PCAST initiative it would make a lot of sense to do some small projects and partner with the University Center like we did but to be able to begin just small and shoot video, advertise what you are doing, get the word out and the more that we get a chance to talk about this the more demand will grow.

**>>Speaker:**

I think you are right and that's something we saw just being able to start somewhere and start



small and capture some of that so you can share it easily and you can find this on the website we will share that link if it has not been shared already that is helpful in helping people get around this so it is similar on that system scale to what we do on the organization or school scale which is when we come in it's not a prescription it's a collaboration so we can start small or maybe we bite off a little more if the school has more -- has been doing more earlier through our trainings and things like that so it's very much mirrors the tenants in the principles of person centered practice or the project level and organizational level so I think there are so many demands on schools and educators you have to be able to sort of take the things we are doing and infuse person centered approach into that and be innovative and create something super collaborative and not come in with a prescription and a handbook because you don't want parents doing everything when they bring it to the team or the team creating something you want to find ways to bring people together to support them in creating their own plan. So thanks Bill. Any other words to part with?

**>>Speaker:**

I just want to remind folks that ever since the advent of computerized IEP we have seen really a reduction in the individualization and customization of planning and I think this process is like an antidote to that because it forces everybody to get back to what matters and that students.

**>>Speaker:**

So true and I see so many educators thousands right now during the same thing that that information and those drop-down answers is not necessarily at all what you think it is. So that is a problem on many levels so we really want to work to not do something over here separate from what we have to do but bring it together and that person centered IEP and discovery in advance of those meetings getting students. So we are a little behind now, so I have stolen some of your time Bevin I know you have a couple of things to do so I'm excited about the next part and being able to chill out and listen so, thank you.

**>>Speaker:**

I love that insight Bill. And what is more valuable a 30 page copy and paste in a form or a simple trifold that displays a person's hopes and dreams for the future and how to get to where they are. It seems like a no-brainer to me so, thank you for that insight. That's powerful. All right. I am super impressed that this gigantic panel was able to keep on time.

**>>Speaker:**

Came off.

**>>Speaker:**

Michael, expert. I'm going to bring it home was some Q&As. We've gotten some fantastic questions and chat we will get through as many as we can but first, I would like to close this out with a question for Ruby and then a question for DJ. Let's get Ruby and Jill I believe on the line. Awesome.



**>>Speaker:**

Do you have Ruby with you?

**>>Speaker:**

Yes, I do.

**>>Speaker:**

All right.

**>>Speaker:**

All right, Ruby. My question for you is would you recommend person centered planning to your friends and if so why and if not why not?

**>>Speaker:**

Let me start by saying [inaudible] who care about you.

**>>Speaker:**

We may rely on you gel [Overlapping Speakers]

**>>Speaker:**

So Ruby said yes first of all, she said yes, that's a good question and it's an easy answer yes, she would do it because you can see people that you can rely on. Yes, Ruby. Yes, rely on and how your family cares about you. Anything else Ruby?

**>>Speaker:**

And you should all public schools.

**>>Speaker:**

She said you should recommend it to all public schools not just JFK, but all public schools. All schools.

**>>Speaker:**

Endorsement for Ruby. One more question for Ruby and then DJ LS give the same question this is a question from our audience that is pretty great. Who knows your likes and dislikes the best?

**>>Speaker:**

Who knows your likes and dislikes the best?

**>>Speaker:**

She said me. [chuckling]

**>>Speaker:**

She set herself because she spent a lot of time with herself and she got comfortable with herself so that's why she knows her likes and dislikes.

**>>Speaker:**

Yes. I'm a proud principal right now. Thank you, Ruby.

**>>Speaker:**

DJ. I would like to hear from you. Would you recommend person centered planning to your friends DJ?

**>>Speaker:**

It depends on the person I guess if they are comfortable with doing it then I recommended. If they don't then I would recommend something else.

**>>Speaker:**

Why wouldn't you recommend it for people that said I'm not comfortable.

**>>Speaker:**

It would be a good experience for them to experience other people and no opinions and personalities.

**>>Speaker:**

Okay, and same question I asked Ruby who knows your likes and dislikes best.

**>>Speaker:**

Besides myself I would say my father.

**>>Speaker:**

Okay, yourself and then your father thanks DJ. Anything else you want to add?

**>>Speaker:**

I love bananas. That's all. And that disco sucked.

**>>Speaker:**

I'm not going to follow up on that.

**>>Speaker:**

I just finished one if that counts for anything [chuckling]

**>>Speaker:**

We got a lot of really good logistical questions that I would love to go through if that's alright



and whoever would like to answer just chime in. First question is what age do you think the person centered planning should get started what age would we get the best outcome?

**>>Speaker:**

I'm sorry, Ruby would like to answer.

**>>Speaker:**

Yes, please, Ruby.

**>>Speaker:**

In high school because high school is the way to like [inaudible] you have to know your dislikes and likes what you prefer and what you don't prefer.

**>>Speaker:**

Did you get that? High school because you find yourself, you know, your likes and dislikes and you know what you prefer and don't prefer.

**>>Speaker:**

Thanks Ruby. Anyone else want to weigh in? Would you say you have seen person centered planning most effective?

**>>Speaker:**

Middle school and anyone that is transitioning from middle school to high school and students that are in ninth grade and especially those transitioning in from school to adult world and adult services I've seen it be very helpful.

**>>Speaker:**

Another way to look at it is every school is different and just like a person they have different strengths and struggles and visions and where they might start can depend but our project intends and does support throughout 3-21 and person centered approach ' of a pulse and breathing it applies to you so we want to make sure.

**>>Speaker:**

To echo that Tabatha said as young as possible.

**>>Speaker:**

Absolutely.

**>>Speaker:**

And our expert in education agreed.

**>>Speaker:**

You know what Bevin with schools a lot you have to start somewhere so there are things





people in school say we may want to do this. We don't want to go into adult life without having all the things they learned help them hit the ground running and not teach their staff and get things wrong 10 times because people are not supporting them but the truth is if you keep broadening and deepening this work you really want to have this happening from day one, early intervention, pre-k, different ways of seeing each other, growing information. Not so much the plan are the planning meeting the centered speaking skills they develop as we all change through this work that's the evolution that can transform a school or district or system where it really is about culture and climate and the confluence of things coming together.

**>>Speaker:**

How long is a typical person centered planning process? How long is the meeting? What are the logistics?

**>>Speaker:**

I can chime in on that. The process literally took for me about 2-3 weeks long because you have to do the planning with the family and make sure all the persons who are invited they are available on that day and sometimes if they are not you have to choose another day so the planning period normally goes for two or three weeks.

**>>Speaker:**

How long is the meeting itself?

**>>Speaker:**

The meeting itself can go from one and I have-2 hours in the longest I facilitated was two hours with a break in between they would break for refreshments or the restroom or anything like that. But two hours.

**>>Speaker:**

Can you say more about the refreshments I've never been served a refreshment.

**>>Speaker:**

It's research-based [chuckling]

**>>Speaker:**

Don't forget about the music. The best move.

**>>Speaker:**

When we plan our PCAST meeting and I tell you our students are like so involved all the way down to the choice of music and say is this the radio version of this song it is literally person centered. They choose whatever music they want and whatever refreshments they want. They don't have to wear their school uniform on that day because it's all about them so it is really all about the student on that day and that is their day and their meeting.

**>>Speaker:**

What about waffles?

**>>Speaker:**

I have one student meet me in Walmart after work get a waffle what you call that a toaster because he wanted breakfast food at his PCAST meeting we had waffles and orange juice.

**>>Speaker:**

They are delicious.

**>>Speaker:**

Sorry, I wanted to add one thing because here's the thing, if we are demonstrating -- some schools are using this full process and we are not doing a training on that but there's a lot that goes into it that we work on together and some schools can do a 90 minute or to our planning process because they feel like that is the right tool for this student and that's what they will do. Nobody will do this at school or scale like that, but you have to do that two really have an idea of what it can be. And how to back out of it because the truth is we want to a person centered IEP and a person centered IEP process and in most places that's not what we have so there are things that happen in the classroom and like DJ made a great point we want to recommend this to somebody who is not a fit because this is not the only way you can plan and a person centered weight lots of different ways to do that. This is simply the most powerful way to get a comprehensive plan in this and you learn from that.

**>>Speaker:**

This is a logistics question and does this take the place of the IEP. You can put us all on gallery.

**>>Speaker:**

That would be cool so if folks want to change their view no need to spotlight us.

**>>Speaker:**

The short answer is it depends on the school and how we do it. They dovetail a process like this that goes right into the more system requirements of getting that document done. Other places that try to fully create a person centered IEP so it's a different way of satisfying the system requirements but doing it in a person centered way and other schools they will do comprehensive planning process and have a separate IEP meeting so there's a lot of inequity in schools and in equity in terms of what is possible in different places so my job is to facilitate and meet people where they are at and let them be the driving I just provide the raw materials.

**>>Speaker:**

So next question I will ask is some of our facilitators can speak to this, how does the teamwork with students who find it hard to put their goals into their own words?

**>>Speaker:**

We've had students that have been able to draw and use pictures to express themselves and then you have family members and teachers and aides and they are able to bring devices like kids use iPads as a voice so they are able to use their accommodations and devices that help support them getting their thoughts and opinions out to the community.

**>>Speaker:**

Anyone else want to chime in on that? I think we lost someone.

**>>Speaker:**

I am here.

**>>Speaker:**

That was Lenya.

**>>Speaker:**

Sorry, I mean, LaPrice.

**>>Speaker:**

I don't see LaPrice either. There she is. There she is she's just muted.

**>>Speaker:**

I am here!

**>>Speaker:**

Don't put LaPrice in a corner.

**>>Speaker:**

I adjusted my view and it made things all wonky.

**>>Speaker:**

Bevin you know what I said in one of our first meetings with a student who is autistic and so she is a verbal. She talks and says what she wants to say and she is sassy and it's really cool. But what happened is as we asked the questions her mom and grandfather would respond and the responses were polar opposite and then we were able to meet in the middle and put a plan together based on what was going on with the student and you see her being affirmative like at one house she watches dishes and the other when she doesn't know what a dishes so they are like what you mean, you know, how to wash dishes and she put her head down so from that point we were able to have them start to communicate and put plans together.

**>>Speaker:**



One thing to add Bevin is the process we use it works for most people and there is no student, wherever anybody is out there saying that wouldn't work for this student. There is no student we haven't planned with an a lot of our assumptions are about the process we are used to and the fact it would not work for a lot of people but this is about having a facilitator be as objective as possible to use allies and people who know and care and love a student to really help that student have their voice and it's even more critical for students that don't use words to communicate so doesn't matter whether you use communication or words to communicate, that means it's more important we have somebody objectively trying and verifying what is important to you. What is the life that will be a good life for you and that is the only way a person who doesn't use words to communicate in that way will self-direct? That's where person centered planning is critical.

**>>Speaker:**

Great. I would like to give the last word to our students and just see DJ and Ruby if there are any parting words you would like to leave this audience with about your experiences with person centered planning at JFK. DJ, we will go first to you.

**>>Speaker:**

I have to say the experiences interesting. That's where I will leave that off at. And just have a great day everyone. I will catch you next Monday.

**>>Speaker:**

Thank you, DJ.

**>>Speaker:**

Okay, and Ruby via Jill.

**>>Speaker:**

Yes, any parting words you want to leave everyone with Ruby?

**>>Speaker:**

Goodbye.

**>>Speaker:**

[inaudible] it was a good meeting.

**>>Speaker:**

Try to be safe and it was a good meeting.

**>>Speaker:**

Thanks Ruby. I thought so too. Let's hear from our audience about what you thought this meeting was like. I'm going to wrap us up with a quick poll. Connor if you want to bring the slides up. Before we leave -- here we are now. Okay, so if you could please complete these



NCAPPS

National Center on Advancing  
Person-Centered Practices and Systems

questions. You have to scroll down. There are six questions in all and we will leave this up for the remainder of the webinar so you can take your time to walk through those questions. We really do appreciate your feedback. It helps us to continuously improve our webinar offerings so, thank you in advance. We are also always open to e-mail. So feel free to reach out to us if you have ideas about future webinar topics and how we can make our webinars more accessible or interactive or anything like that and while the poll is up I will tell you about next month's webinar. And that is person centered strength based planning for worst-case scenarios the role of person centered planning and disaster preparedness. I don't need to remind you all the past year plus has been challenging and we've had many curve balls thrown our way and we at NCAPPS believe person centered planning becomes more important not less important when we are in crisis mode so we brought together a panel of experts to share their expertise in this area so we welcome you all to register for that webinar and do so on our website and for future webinars. This won't be the last time we talk about person centered practices for children and youth so if you are an educator, stick with us and if you are one of our regulars keep going. All right. So with that thank you to our illustrious panel. I have appreciated hearing from each and every one of you. We can all do the dolphin wave, right? Jill's got it. With that I will leave you to the rest of your day. Take care everybody.

**>>Speaker:**

Thank you all.

**>>Speaker:**

Thank you everybody.

**>>Speaker:**

Thank you, everyone.

**>>Speaker:**

Good timing!

**>>Speaker:**

Thanks for having us.

**>>Speaker:**

Thank you, everyone. Thank you for having us. Thanks